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# DETERMINATION OF INTRINSIC VISCOSITIES AND MARK-HOUWINK-SAKURADA CONSTANTS FOR SODIUM ALGINATES

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## Keywords

*Sargassum natans*, sodium alginates, intrinsic viscosity, molecular weight, Mark-Houwink-Sakurada

## Introduction

The islands of the Caribbean have been affected by an influx of *Sargassum natans* on their beaches (Hotel 2015). This influx creates a wide range of problems for fishermen and their livelihoods as it results in complications in launching boats, restricts access to fishery resources and lastly, they decompose to give a very foul smell, thus affecting tourism.

Sodium Alginate may be extracted from the cell walls of *Sargassum natans* (Mohammed et al. 2018), and its derivatives have many useful applications in a number of areas including the chemical, cosmetic, medical fields and also as a bio-absorbent of heavy metal ions in wastewater treatment. In modelling this absorption, a knowledge of the molecular weight ( $M_w$ ) of the alginate would aid in the understanding of the interaction between the monomers of the alginate and the heavy metal ions.  $M_w$  may be found by firstly determining the intrinsic viscosity,  $[\eta]$  of the alginate and applying the Mark-Houwink-Sakurada (M-H-S) equation which correlates  $[\eta]$  and  $M_w$ .

The objectives of this work are three-fold. Firstly, to determine the applicable concentration range to be considered for determination of  $[\eta]$  of sodium alginates using the multi-point dilution method. Secondly, to determine the  $[\eta]$  of four sodium alginates – one extracted from *Sargassum natans* obtained from the East Coast of Trinidad and three commercial (Sigma-Aldrich, Manugel LBA and Protanal LF) using both the multi-point dilution method and two, single-point methods. Thirdly, to determine the constants in the M-H-S Equation for alginates of this particular  $M_w$  size range using independently obtained  $M_w$ 's for the four alginates (obtained previously via Gel Permeation Chromatography, GPC)

The significance of this work is that once the M-H-S constants are known, the values of the  $M_w$  of the alginates may be determined via dilute solution viscometry rather than more detailed and expensive methods such as GPC.

## Materials and Methods

Between 0.015 and 0.65 g of commercial Protanal LF Sodium Alginate was dissolved in 100 mL 0.1 M NaCl solution. 10 mL of solution was charged to Size OB Ubbelohde viscometer placed in a Cannon CT 600 Constant Temperature Bath. Efflux times were repeatedly measured until consistent readings were obtained as per ISO (2019). Two subsequent in situ dilutions were made each with 5 ml of the NaCl solution and efflux times measured. This procedure was repeated using 0.1 g of Sodium Alginate extracted from *Sargassum natans* obtained from the East Coast of Trinidad and from two other commercial Sodium Alginates (Sigma-Aldrich and Manugel LBA).

## Theory

The M-H-S equation relates  $[\eta]$  (which is a measure of a solute's contribution to the viscosity,  $\eta$  of a solution) and  $M_w$ , according to (Rudin and Choi 2012)

$$[\eta] = K M_w^a$$

$[\eta]$  can be determined by extrapolating plots of reduced,  $\eta_{red}$  and inherent,  $\eta_{inh}$  viscosities versus concentration  $C$  to infinite dilution according to

$$\lim_{c \rightarrow 0}(\eta_{inh}) = \lim_{c \rightarrow 0} \left( \frac{\ln \eta_r}{C} \right) = \lim_{c \rightarrow 0} \left( \frac{\eta_i}{C} \right) = [\eta] = \lim_{c \rightarrow 0}(\eta_{red})$$

where  $\eta_r$  and  $\eta_i$  are the relative viscosity and relative viscosity increment respectively (all of these viscosities are related to ratios of  $\eta$  for the solution to that of  $\eta$  for the solvent).

The efflux time  $t$  for a liquid through a capillary tube viscometer is related its viscosity  $\eta$  by the Poiseuille-Hagenbach-Couette Equation (ISO 2019)

$$\frac{\eta}{\rho} = C't - \left( \frac{A}{t^2} \right)$$

For the same viscometer, at fixed temperature and pressure, suitable choice of viscometer bore and solution concentration, the ratio of  $\eta$  for a solution and its solvent is given simply by the ratio of  $t$  for the solution and for the solvent. If however the range of concentrations measured is too high, then the density  $\rho$  for the solution and for the solvent will differ. If the concentration range is too low there may be absorption of polymer on the capillary wall. These factors could cause plots of  $\eta_{red}$  and inherent,  $\eta_{inh}$  to curve away from the  $C$  axis and the extrapolation would no longer be linear (Rudin and Choi 2012)

$[\eta]$  may also be determined using single-point methods such as (Rudin and Choi, 2012)

$$[\eta] = \frac{0.25(\eta_r - 1 + 3 \ln \eta_r)}{C} \qquad [\eta] = \frac{[2(\eta_r - 1 - \ln \eta_r)]^{1/2}}{C}$$

## Results and Discussion

Values  $\eta_{red}$  and  $\eta_{inh}$  were calculated using measured efflux times and plotted versus  $C$ . As expected, these plots did show a curve at high and at low concentrations (Fig. 1). It was determined that a concentration range starting with 0.1 g of alginate dissolved in 100 mL of the 0.1 M NaCl solution gave the best straight lines (Fig 2.), which, when extrapolated to zero concentration (i.e. infinite dilution), gave  $[\eta]$ .

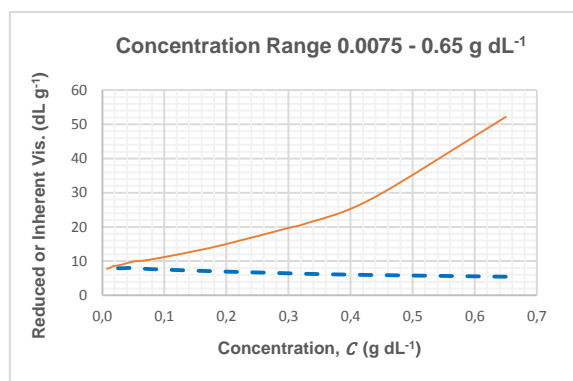


Figure 1. Conc. Range for Dilution method (Protanal LF)

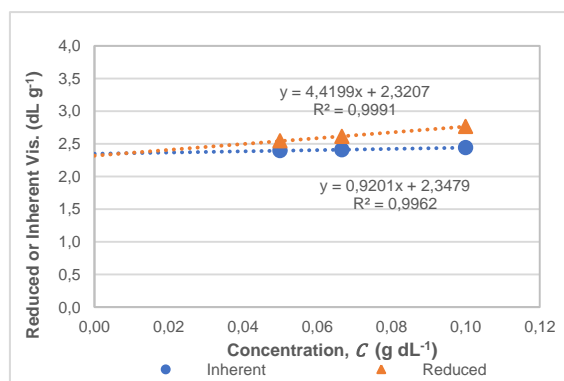


Figure 2. Intrinsic Viscosity for Sargassum Natans

Using a starting concentration of 0.1 g dL<sup>-1</sup> (with subsequent dilutions to 0.0667 and 0.05 g dL<sup>-1</sup>)  $[\eta]$  was determined for all four alginates. Additionally,  $[\eta]$  was determined using the two single-point methods. Using the experimentally determined  $[\eta]$  and values of  $M_w$  obtained independently for the four alginates, the constants  $K$  and  $a$  in the M-H-S equation were determined, with a correlation of 0.97.

These results are summarised in Table 1, which includes values of  $M_w$  calculated using the M-H-S equation, and determining the error between the calculated and experimentally found  $M_w$ .

Table 1. Intrinsic Viscosities and M-H-S Constants

Dilution method	Intinsic Viscosity	Mol Wt (GPC)	M-H-S $K$	M-H-S $a$	Mol Wt (cal.)	% Error
<b>Sargassum Natans</b>	2.59	344.6	1.44E-04	1.699	320.4	7.0%
<b>Sigma-Aldrich</b>	2.47	296.2			311.6	-5.2%
<b>Manugel LBA</b>	8.38	668.6			639.6	4.3%
<b>Protanal LF</b>	8.43	600.4			641.9	-6.9%
<b>Billmeyer</b>	Intinsic Viscosity	Mol Wt (GPC)	M-H-S $K$	M-H-S $a$	Mol Wt (cal.)	% Error
<b>Sargassum Natans</b>	2.59	344.6	1.74E-04	1.6682	317.8	7.8%
<b>Sigma-Aldrich</b>	2.54	296.2			314.3	-6.1%
<b>Manugel LBA</b>	8.53	668.6			649.3	2.9%
<b>Protanal LF</b>	8.16	600.4			632.1	-5.3%
<b>Solomon-Ciuta</b>	Intinsic Viscosity	Mol Wt (GPC)	M-H-S $K$	M-H-S $a$	Mol Wt (cal.)	% Error
<b>Sargassum Natans</b>	2.62	344.6	1.63E-04	1.680	317.8	7.8%
<b>Sigma-Aldrich</b>	2.57	296.2			314.3	-6.1%
<b>Manugel LBA</b>	8.69	668.6			649.2	2.9%
<b>Protanal LF</b>	8.30	600.4			632.1	-5.3%

## Conclusions

- Using the Protanal LF, a concentration range of 0.10 to 0.05 dL g<sup>-1</sup> was determined to be most suitable for carrying out multi-point analysis
- $[\eta]$  values were determined to be between 2.47 and 8.69 dL g<sup>-1</sup>
- The constants in the M-H-S Equation were determined to be  $K=1.44 \times 10^{-4}$  dL g<sup>-1</sup>, and  $a=1.70$  for the multi-point method and for the single-point methods the average values were  $K=1.69 \times 10^{-4}$  dL g<sup>-1</sup> and  $a=1.67$
- The  $[\eta]$  vs  $M_w$  data fitted the M-H-S equation with a correlation of 0.97.
- Once the M-H-S constants are known, the values of the  $M_w$  of the alginates may be determined via dilute solution viscometry rather than more detailed and expensive methods such as GPC.

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