

211

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Chromatography for Sustainable Polymeric Materials

Renewable, Degradable and Recyclable

Volume Editors:

Ann-Christine Albertsson · Minna Hakkarainen

With contributions by

A.-C. Albertsson · L. Burman · M. Hakkarainen

M. Gröning · C. Strandberg

The series *Advances in Polymer Science* presents critical reviews of the present and future trends in polymer and biopolymer science including chemistry, physical chemistry, physics and material science. It is addressed to all scientists at universities and in industry who wish to keep abreast of advances in the topics covered.

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Volume Editors

Ann-Christine Albertsson

Department of Fibre
and Polymer Technology
School of Chemical Science and Engineering
Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)
10044 Stockholm, Sweden
aila@polymer.kth.se

Minna Hakkarainen

Department of Fibre
and Polymer Technology
School of Chemical Science and Engineering
Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)
10044 Stockholm, Sweden
minna@polymer.kth.se

Editorial Board

Prof. Akihiro Abe

Department of Industrial Chemistry
Tokyo Institute of Polytechnics
1583 Iiyama, Atsugi-shi 243-02, Japan
abe@chem.t-kougei.ac.jp

Prof. A.-C. Albertsson

Department of Polymer Technology
The Royal Institute of Technology
10044 Stockholm, Sweden
aila@polymer.kth.se

Prof. Ruth Duncan

Welsh School of Pharmacy
Cardiff University
Redwood Building
King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff CF 10 3XF, UK
DuncanR@cf.ac.uk

Prof. Karel Dušek

Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry,
Czech
Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
Heyrovský Sq. 2
16206 Prague 6, Czech Republic
dusek@imc.cas.cz

Prof. Dr. Wim H. de Jeu

Polymer Science and Engineering
University of Massachusetts
120 Governors Drive
Amherst MA 01003, USA
dejeu@mail.pse.umass.edu

Prof. Hans-Henning Kausch

Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne
Science de Base
Station 6
1015 Lausanne, Switzerland
kausch.cully@bluewin.ch

Prof. Shiro Kobayashi

R & D Center for Bio-based Materials
Kyoto Institute of Technology
Matsugasaki, Sakyo-ku
Kyoto 606-8585, Japan
kobayash@kit.ac.jp

Prof. Kwang-Sup Lee

Department of Polymer Science &
Engineering
Hannam University
133 Ojung-Dong
Daejeon 306-791, Korea
kslee@hannam.ac.kr

Prof. L. Leibler

Matière Molle et Chimie
Ecole Supérieure de Physique
et Chimie Industrielles (ESPCI)
10 rue Vauquelin
75231 Paris Cedex 05, France
ludwik.leibler@espci.fr

Prof. Timothy E. Long

Department of Chemistry
and Research Institute
Virginia Tech
2110 Hahn Hall (0344)
Blacksburg, VA 24061, USA
telong@vt.edu

Prof. Ian Manners

School of Chemistry
University of Bristol
Cantock's Close
BS8 1TS Bristol, UK
ian.manners@bristol.ac.uk

Prof. Martin Möller

Deutsches Wollforschungsinstitut
an der RWTH Aachen e.V.
Pauwelsstraße 8
52056 Aachen, Germany
moeller@dw.rwth-aachen.de

Prof. Oskar Nuyken

Lehrstuhl für Makromolekulare Stoffe
TU München
Lichtenbergstr. 4
85747 Garching, Germany
oskar.nuyken@ch.tum.de

Prof. E. M. Terentjev

Cavendish Laboratory
Madingley Road
Cambridge CB 3 0HE, UK
emt1000@cam.ac.uk

Prof. Brigitte Voit

Institut für Polymerforschung Dresden
Hohe Straße 6
01069 Dresden, Germany
voit@ipfdd.de

Prof. Gerhard Wegner

Max-Planck-Institut
für Polymerforschung
Ackermannweg 10
Postfach 3148
55128 Mainz, Germany
wegner@mpip-mainz.mpg.de

Prof. Ulrich Wiesner

Materials Science & Engineering
Cornell University
329 Bard Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853, USA
ubw1@cornell.edu

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Preface

Polymeric materials, both “inert” and degradable, constantly interact with the surroundings. Because of this interaction changes take place in the polymer matrix and small molecules are released to the environment. Reliable methods for testing biodegradability and environmental interaction of renewable resources and biodegradable polymers are required to answer the remaining questions concerning the environmental impact of these future materials. In the case of degradable polymers multiple factors affect the degradation process and small changes in the chemical structure or product formulation may change the susceptibility to degradation or cause different degradation product patterns, rendering the product less environmentally adaptable. Development of sustainable polymeric materials also demands the development of more migration-resistant polymer additives. Chromatographic techniques especially gas chromatography and liquid chromatography preferentially coupled to mass spectrometric detection are ideal tools for studying these low molecular weight compounds and polymer–environment interactions.

In the first chapter of this volume chromatographic fingerprinting and indicator product concepts are presented as tools for evaluating polymeric materials. These concepts have great potential in evaluation of degradation state and life-time/service-life of polymeric materials, evaluation of anti-oxidant or pro-oxidant systems, degradation mechanism and processing parameters as well as rapid comparison and quality control of materials. The solid-phase microextraction technique has rapidly found applications in numerous fields. The second chapter reviews the extraction of polymer degradation products and additives, monomer-resets, odour compounds, migrants from packaging and medical products as well as extraction of polymer additives from environmental samples and biological fluids by solid-phase microextraction demonstrating the high versatility and potential of this technique also in polymer analysis. In the third chapter the possibilities and limitations in the headspace extraction of volatiles from solid polymer matrixes are discussed. Examples of the use of multiple headspace extraction to remove matrix effects are shown and finally the application of headspace analysis for early degradation detection and quality control of recycled materials is presented. The fourth chapter summarises the literature on chromatographic analysis of degradation products from the most common aliphatic and aliphatic–aromatic polyesters. Espe-

cially the effect of macromolecular architecture and copolymer composition on the resulting degradation mechanism and degradation product pattern is discussed. The last two chapters deal with the analysis of polymer additives. The fifth chapter overviews different extraction techniques and aspects of analyzing antioxidants in polymeric materials. The sixth chapter discusses the migration of monomeric and polymeric PVC plasticizers with the focus on migration from medical products and food packaging. Especially the possibilities of improving the migration resistance and plasticizing properties of polymeric PVC plasticizers through the right plasticizer design are presented.

The interest in degradable and/or renewable materials is increasing rapidly. Degradation of these materials is still often studied only by measuring the weight loss or changes in molecular weight, which can be misleading. Especially in the case of bioresorbable materials the knowledge of degradation products is a crucial point for biocompatibility of the materials. As an example we have in chapter four presented results showing the influence of macromolecular design on the formation of acidic degradation products, a possible cause of negative impacts in the body. We have also shown that copolymer composition influences the stability, degradation mechanism and amount of degradation products formed during radiation sterilization. Hopefully these chapters will inspire more extensive use of chromatographic techniques for polymer analysis and result in increased understanding of polymeric materials, which in turn will provide tools for the development of sustainable future materials.

Stockholm, April 2008

Ann-Christine Albertsson
Minna Hakkarainen

Contents

Indicator Products and Chromatographic Fingerprinting: New Tools for Degradation State and Lifetime Estimation L. Burman · A.-C. Albertsson · M. Hakkarainen	1
Solid-Phase Microextraction for Analysis of Polymer Degradation Products and Additives M. Hakkarainen	23
Quantitative Determination of Volatiles in Polymers and Quality Control of Recycled Materials by Static Headspace Techniques M. Gröning · M. Hakkarainen · A.-C. Albertsson	51
Degradation Products of Aliphatic and Aliphatic–Aromatic Polyesters M. Hakkarainen · A.-C. Albertsson	85
Chromatographic Analysis of Antioxidants in Polymeric Materials and Their Migration from Plastics into Solution C. Strandberg · A.-C. Albertsson	117
Migration of Monomeric and Polymeric PVC Plasticizers M. Hakkarainen	159
Subject Index	187