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## THE MICELLAR PROPERTIES OF DODECYLTRIMETHYLAMMONIUM ALKANESULFONATES IN AQUEOUS SOLUTIONS

By

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#### Abstract

The potentiometric and fluorescence probe techniques were applied for the determination of the micellar parameters of dodecyltrimethylammonium alkanesulfonates with chain length from 1 to 6 in aqueous solutions. The critical micelle concentration was found to decrease regularly with increasing counterion chain length, while the reverse changes were found for the degree of counterion binding to the micelle and the micelle aggregation number. The solubilizing properties of these surfactant solutions were also studied. These surfactants are supposed to form a mixed micelle in which the hydrocarbon tail of the counterion participates in the hydrophobic interaction with the micellar core.

#### Introduction

A number of papers have been concerned with the micellar properties of ionic surfactants with organic counterions (1-23). In these surfactant solutions, an additional hydrophobic interaction between micelle core and hydrophobic moeity of counterion plays an important role in determining the micellar properties such as critical micelle concentration (CMC), micelle aggregation number (m), and the degree of counterion binding to the micelle  $(\beta)$ . For example with ionic surfactants with homologous series counterions, an increase in the counterion chain length is always accompanied by a regular decrease in CMC (1-5), while a regular increase in  $\beta$  (1, 2, 5, 6), and m (5). Similar characteristic behaviors are also noted for the mixed solutions of anionic and cationic surfactants (7-9), as well as for the ionic surfactants with tetraalkylammonium counterions (10-12). In the case of aromatic counterions, such micellar parameters as CMC, m, and  $\beta$  depend significantly on the substituent position (13-20). A typical example is decyltrimethylammonium bromide in excess sodium hydroxybenzoate solutions, in which CMC and m of ortho isomer are quite

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different from those of metha and para isomers (16).

These studies shed light on the importance of the structure and hydrophobicity of organic counterion in the micellization process of ionic surfactants. So far as we now, however, little is known about the ionic activities in solutions of ionic surfactants with organic counterions. In this paper, we studied the micellar properties of dodecyltrimethylammonium alkanesulfonates with hydrocarbon chain length (n) from 1 to 6, with special attention to the concentration dependences of surfactant ion and counterion activities.

#### **Experimental**

**Materials.** The stock solutions of dodecyltrimethylammonium alkanesulfonates (DTAC<sub>n</sub>S) were prepared by titrating dodecyltrimethylammonium hydroxide (DTAOH) with the corresponding alkanesulfonic acid (HC<sub>n</sub>S). DTAOH and HC<sub>n</sub>S were prepared by passing the aqueous solutions of DTABr (Tokyo Kasei Kogyo Co., Ltd., guaranteed grade) and NaC<sub>n</sub>S (Tokyo Kasei Kogyo Co., Ltd., extra pure grade) through an anion-exchange column (Amberlite IRA-400) in the OH<sup>-</sup> state and a cation-exchange column (Amberlite IRA-400) in the OH<sup>-</sup> state and a cation-exchange column (Amberlite IRA-400) in the OH<sup>-</sup> state and a cation-exchange column (Amberlite IR-120B) in the H<sup>+</sup> state, respectively. Pyrene (purity>98%, Wako Pure Chemical Industries Co., Ltd.) was passed through silica gel in cyclohexane solution and recovered as white crystals.

**Electromotive Force Measurements.** The surfactant ion activities in  $DTAC_nS$  solutions were measured potentiometrically by using the following nitrobenzene liquid membrane electrode.

Reference electrode (Ag-AgCl) | 1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> NH<sub>4</sub>Cl agar bridge | Reference solution (DTABr, 1 mmol dm<sup>-3</sup>) | Nitrobenzene (DTADS, 5 mmol dm<sup>-3</sup>) | Sample solution | 1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> NH<sub>4</sub>Cl agar bridge | Reference electrode (Ag-AgCl)

Here, DTADS denotes dodecyltrimethylammonium dodecylsulfate which was prepared by mixing aqueous solutions of DTABr and NaDS, and recrystallized twice from acetone. The experimental setup of the cell is described elsewhere (24).

The following cell based on the anion-exchange membrane (Tokuyama Soda Co., Ltd., Neosepta AVS-4T) was used for the determinations of counterion activities.

Reference electrode (Ag-AgCl) | 1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> NH<sub>4</sub>Cl agar bridge | Reference solution (DTAC<sub>n</sub>S, 1 mmol dm<sup>-3</sup>) | Anion-exchange membrane | Sample solution | 1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> NH<sub>4</sub>Cl agar bridge | Reference electrode (Ag-AgCl)

Prior to the measurements with  $DTAC_nS$  solutions, the anion-exchange membrane was soaked in 1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> NaC<sub>n</sub>S solution for a week.

The electromotive forces of these cells were measured with an accuracy of  $\pm 0.1 \text{ mV}$  by using a Corning Digital 112 pH Research Meter. The electromotive forces of these cells can be described as

$$E_i = E_i^{o} + S_i \log a_i, \quad i = + \text{ or } - \tag{1}$$

where  $E_i^{o}$  refers to the standard electromotive force,  $a_i$  to the ionic activity of component i, and  $S_i$  to the observed slope of  $E_i$  vs. log  $a_i$  plot, respectively. The estimation of the

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surfactant ion and counterion activity coefficients requires a knowledge of the respective ionic radius in solution. According to Shinoda and Soda (25), the partial molal volume per methylene group of singly dispersed surfactant ion is the order of  $15 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1}$ . The use of this value together with the volumes of ionic head groups (26) permits the tentative estimation of the radii of DTA<sup>+</sup> and  $C_nS^-$ . The ionic radii so determined are 0.26, 0.29, 0.31, 0.33, 0.35, and 0.36 nm for  $C_nS^-$  with n=1 to 6, and 0.44 nm for DTA<sup>+</sup>, respectively. In solutions of  $DTAC_nS$ , the semilogarithmic plot of  $E_+$  vs.  $a_+$  gave a straight line down to ca.  $1 \times 10^{-4}$  mol dm<sup>-3</sup> with a slope (S<sub>+</sub>) of -60.0 mV for n=1, -59.6 mV for n=2, -59.5 mV for n=3, and -59.1 mV for n=4, respectively. An excellent agreement between the observed slopes and an ideal Nernst slope (59.2 mV at 25°C) suggests that the nitrobenzene liquid membrane is completely permselective to dodecyltrimethylammonium ion. The semilogarithmic plot of  $E_{-}$  vs.  $a_{-}$  also gave a straight line down to ca.  $1 \times 10^{-3}$  mol dm<sup>-3</sup> with a slope (S<sub>-</sub>) of 56.7, 56.3, 56.6, 55.8, 56.0, and 56.2 mV for n=1 to 6, respectively. Although observed slopes are somewhat smaller than the ideal Nernst slope, we can still estimate the counterion activity  $(a_{-})$  from Eq. 1, since these slopes are reproducible on replicate measurements.

Fluorescence Decay Measurements. Fluorescence decay curves were measured by using the time-resolved fluorescence spectrometer (NAES-1100, Horiba Ltd.). Pyrene was solubilized in DTAC<sub>n</sub>S solutions by sonicating the mixture for 30 min in such a way that the average number of pyrene molecules per micelle is less than 1. Prior to the measurements, all of the sample solutions were thoroughly deoxygenated by repeated freeze-pumpthaw cycles. Pyrene was excited at 337 nm and its emission was monitored through the filters (Toshiba, V-V40 monochrofilter and UV-35 cut-off filter). After fluorescence decay measurements, the concentration of solubilized pyrene was determined spectrophotometrically at 337 nm ( $\varepsilon$ =48400).

Solubilization Measurements. The solubilization of toluene in  $\text{ETAC}_n$ S solutions was determined spectrophotometrically at 261.5 nm.

All measurements were conducted at 25°C.

### **Results and Discussion**

In Figs. 1 and 2 are shown the plots of  $E_+$  and  $E_-$  vs. the logarithm of DTAC<sub>n</sub>S concentration (C), respectively. The break point in these figures corresponds to the CMC  $(C_0)$  at a given counterion chain length (n). In analogy with a variety of ionic surfactants with inorganic counterions (27 and references therein), an increase in the surfactant concentration above CMC causes a monotonous decrease in the surfactant ion activity  $(a_+)$ , while the reverse change in the counterion activity  $(a_-)$ . As is clearly shown in Fig. 2, however, an increase in n results in a successive decrease not only in  $C_0$  but in the slope of  $E_-$  vs. log C plots above the CMC. Figure 3 shows the typical plots of  $a_-$  vs. C constructed from Fig. 2 for DTAC<sub>6</sub>S. The counterion activity is seen to increase linearly with increasing concentration through a break point which corresponds to  $C_0$ . Similar results are also obtained for all of the surfactants studied. The values of  $C_0$  thus



Fig. 1 The semilogarithmic plots of  $E_+$  vs. C for DTAC<sub>n</sub>S with n=1 to 4. The curves for n=2, 3, and 4 are displaced downward by 10, 20, and 30 mV, respectively.



Fig. 2 The semilogarithmic plots of  $E_{-}$  vs. C for DTAC<sub>n</sub>S with n=1 to 6. The curves for n= 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are displaced downward by 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 mV, respectively.



Fig. 3 The typical plot of  $a_{-}$  vs. C for DTAC<sub>6</sub>S.



Surfactant	$\frac{C_0}{\text{mmol dm}^{-3}}$	β	т	S mol/mol surfactant
n=1	22.9	0.68*	65	0.41
n=2	20.8	0.72*	67	0.48
n=3	14.7	0.76*	69	0.60
n=4	11.6	0.80*	74	0.87
n=5	7.2	0.84**	84	2.03
n=6	4.5	0.90**	205	2.53

Table 1. The Micellar Parameters of  $DTAC_nS$ 

\*: The average of the values estimated from Eqs. 2 and 3.

\*\*: The value estimated from Eq. 3.

determined are summarized in the second column of Table 1 and plotted in Fig. 5 against n. As would be expected, the  $C_o$  vs. n profile resembles the results obtained for similar ionic surfactants with homologous series counterions (1–5, 7–9). The observed decrease in  $C_o$  suggests that the dodecyltrimethylammonium ions aggregate with alkanesulfonate ions to give rise to a mixed micelle in which the hydrocarbon chain of the latter extends toward the micellar core.

An increase in *n* should necessarily be accompanied by a regular increase in  $\beta$ , since the hydrophobic interaction increases with increasing counterion chain length. In fact, the conductometric determinations of  $\beta$  for alkylammonium and alkyltrimethylammonium dodecy-lsulfates (1) and dodecyltrimethylammonium alkanoates (5) revealed that the value of  $\beta$  increases monotonically as *n* increases. Similar behaviors were also obtained by NMR self-diffusion measurements for decylammonium alkanoates (2, 6). In the present systems, we estimated the value of  $\beta$  from  $a_{-}$  vs. C plots shown in Fig. 3 according to the method first advanced by Botré *et al.* (28) and later extended by Maeda and Satake (27) to include the concentration dependences of counterion activity coefficient and the concentration of monomeric surfactant ion above CMC. According to this treatment, the value of  $\beta$  can be described as

$$a_{-}/a_{-}^{o} = 1 + (1 - \beta) (C - C_{o}).$$
 (2)

Here,  $a_{-}^{\circ}$  refers to the counterion activity at the CMC. An information about  $\beta$  can otherwise be obtained by the charged phase separation model (29) written as  $a_{+}a_{-}^{\beta} = \text{constant} = \text{K or}$ 

$$\log a_{+} = -\beta \log a_{-} + \log K. \tag{3}$$

Thus,  $\log a_+ vs. \log a_-$  plot is expected to give a straight line with the slope of  $-\beta$  provided that this model is also applicable to the present systems. The typical example for DTAC<sub>4</sub>S is shown in Fig. 4. Similar results are obtained for all of the systems studied. These observations imply that the charged phase separation model is valid for solutions of ionic surfactants not only with inorganic counterions but with organic counterions which lead to the mixed micelle formation. The values of  $\beta$  thus determined are summarized in the third



Fig. 4 The typical plot of  $\log a_+$  vs.  $\log a_-$  for DTAC<sub>4</sub>S.



Fig. 5 The changes in  $C_0$  and  $\beta$  with counterion chain length, n.  $\bigcirc: C_0$ .  $\bullet: \beta$ .

column of Table 1 and plotted againt n in Fig. 5. It is interesting to note that the value of  $\beta$  increases monotonically with increasing counterion chain length and tends eventually to unity at n=7-8. This in turn suggests that the mixed micelle with n=7-8 behaves virtually as a nonionic micelle composing apparently of 1:1 ionic complex unless precipitation occurs.

We can now estimate the transfer free energy per methylene group  $(\omega)$  of counterion from bulk to micellar phase. By taking into account the fact that the transfer free energy of a homologous series hydrocarbon is a linear function of the chain length (30), the standard free energy change associated with the micellization process of DTA<sup>+</sup> and  $C_nS^-$  can be written as  $\Delta\mu^{\circ} + \beta n\omega$ , where  $\Delta\mu^{\circ}$  denotes the transfer free energy of DTA<sup>+</sup>. On ignoring the activity coefficients, we immediately have The micellar properties of dodecyltrimethylammonium alkanesulfonates in aqueous solutions

$$(1+\beta) \ln (C_0/55.5) = (\Delta \mu^0 + \beta n \omega)/kT.$$
(4)

This equation implies that  $(1+\beta) \ln (C_0/55.5)$  is linearly dependent on  $\beta n$ , since  $\Delta \mu^0$  is constant in the present systems. The resulting plot shown in Fig. 6 gives in fact a straight line above n=4. It should be noted that the estimated value of  $\omega$  of -1.2 kT is comparable to that of -1.1 kT for ionic surfactants with inorganic counterions (31). The decrease in slope at shorter chain length indicates that the contribution of the first two or three methylene groups of alkanesulfonate ion to the hydrophobic interaction with micellar core is much smaller than that of the rest of the hydrocarbon chain.



Fig. 6 The plot of  $(1+\beta) \ln (C_0/55.5)$  vs.  $n\beta$ .

In their study of the micellar properties of dodecyltrimethylammonium alkanoates, Brady *et al.* (5) reported the regular increase in the micelle aggregation number (*m*) with counterion chain length. A similar increase in *m* was also noted by Anacker and Underwood (7) for decyltrimethylammonium bromide in 0.5 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> sodium alkanoates. In this connection, we determined the counterion chain length dependence of *m* by flourescence probe technique. In Fig. 7 is shown the typical fluorescence decay curve of pyrene solubilized in DTAC<sub>3</sub>S solution at C=50 mmol dm<sup>-3</sup>. This type of decay curve has been known to be described by the following equation based on the Poisson distribution of the probe molecules in micelles (32).

$$I = I_{o} \exp \left[ R \{ \exp (-k_{E}t) - 1 \} - k_{1}t \right]$$
(5)

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Fig. 7 The typical fluorescence decay curve of solubilized pyrene in DTAC<sub>3</sub>S solution at C = 50 mmol dm<sup>-3</sup>.

Here, I and  $I_o$  are the fluorescence intensities at time t and zero,  $k_E$  and  $k_1$  are the first-order rate constants for the intramicellar excimer formation and decay processes, and R is the number of fluorescence probe per micelle, *i.e.*, R=[pyrene]/[micelle], respectively. The values of  $I_o$ , R,  $k_E$ , and  $k_1$  were determined by the nonlinear least squares treatment based on modified Marquardt method. The value of m can then be evaluated from the following relation.

$$m = R(C - C_0) / [pyrene].$$
(6)

It must be kept in mind, however, that the value of m calculated from Eq. 6 for the present systems represents the number of dodecyltrimethylammonium ions per micelle. The results are summarized in the forth column of Table 1. The value of m was virtually independent of the surfactant concentration regardless of the counterion chain length. It is seen that the value of m increases regularly with increasing n upto n=5 and rises abruptly to 205 at n=6. A drastic increase in m at n=6 will be ascribed to an increase in  $\beta$ . In such a system as  $\beta=0.90$ , the electrostatic free energy term of micelle formation is expected to be small enough to facilitate the micellar growth.

Zhao and Li studied the solubilization of n-octane and n-octanol by polyoxyethylenated cationic-anionic surfactants (23). In equimolar mixed surfactant solutions ( $C_8H_{17}$ · $C_6H_4$ ·  $(OC_2H_4)_{9.8}$ ·SO<sub>4</sub>Na~ $C_pH_{2p+1}NC_5H_5Br$ ), they found that the solubilization of octane increases regularly from 1.31 for p=8 to 2.58 mol/mol surfactant for p=16. This is also the case for the present systems. The last columm of Table 1 shows the solubilization of toluene (S) in mol/mol micelle forming surfactant in DTAC<sub>n</sub>S solutions. In conformity with the result obtained by Zhao and Li, the value of S increases rapidly with increasing counterion chain length. Apart from the detailed structural consideration of solubilized

micelle, an abrupt increase in S at n=5-6 will be attributed to an increase in the overall hydrophobic moeity of the mixed micelle arising from the increase both in m and  $\beta$ . The change in micellar shape presumably play an important role in determining the value of S, especially at higher counterion chain length.

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