

Essential Practical NMR for Organic Chemistry

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AND
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We would like to dedicate this book to our families and our NMR colleagues past and present.

Contents

Introduction	xi
1 Getting Started	1
1.1 The Technique	1
1.2 Instrumentation	2
1.3 CW Systems	2
1.4 FT Systems	3
1.4.1 Origin of the Chemical Shift	6
1.4.2 Origin of 'Splitting'	7
1.4.3 Integration	9
2 Preparing the Sample	11
2.1 How Much Sample Do I Need?	12
2.2 Solvent Selection	13
2.2.1 Deutero Chloroform (CDCl ₃)	14
2.2.2 Deutero Dimethyl Sulfoxide (D ₆ -DMSO)	14
2.2.3 Deutero Methanol (CD ₃ OD)	15
2.2.4 Deutero Water (D ₂ O)	16
2.2.5 Deutero Benzene (C ₆ D ₆)	16
2.2.6 Carbon Tetrachloride (CCl ₄)	16
2.2.7 Trifluoroacetic Acid (CF ₃ COOH)	16
2.2.8 Using Mixed Solvents	17
2.3 Spectrum Referencing (Proton NMR)	17
2.4 Sample Preparation	18
2.4.1 Filtration	19
3 Spectrum Acquisition	23
3.1 Number of Transients	23
3.2 Number of Points	24
3.3 Spectral Width	25
3.4 Acquisition Time	25
3.5 Pulse Width/Pulse Angle	25
3.6 Relaxation Delay	27
3.7 Number of Increments	27
3.8 Shimming	28
3.9 Tuning and Matching	30
3.10 Frequency Lock	30

3.10.1	Run Unlocked	30
3.10.2	Internal Lock	30
3.10.3	External Lock	31
3.11	To Spin or Not to Spin?	31
4	Processing	33
4.1	Introduction	33
4.2	Zero Filling and Linear Prediction	33
4.3	Apodization	34
4.4	Fourier Transformation	36
4.5	Phase Correction	36
4.6	Baseline Correction	38
4.7	Integration	39
4.8	Referencing	39
4.9	Peak Picking	39
5	Interpreting Your Spectrum	41
5.1	Common Solvents and Impurities	44
5.2	Group 1 – Exchangeables and Aldehydes	46
5.3	Group 2 – Aromatic and Heterocyclic Protons	48
5.3.1	Monosubstituted Benzene Rings	50
5.3.2	Multisubstituted Benzene Rings	54
5.3.3	Heterocyclic Ring Systems (Unsaturated) and Polycyclic Aromatic Systems	57
5.4	Group 3 – Double and Triple Bonds	61
5.5	Group 4 – Alkyl Protons	63
6	Delving Deeper	67
6.1	Chiral Centres	67
6.2	Enantiotopic and Diastereotopic Protons	72
6.3	Molecular Anisotropy	74
6.4	Accidental Equivalence	76
6.5	Restricted Rotation	78
6.6	Heteronuclear Coupling	82
6.6.1	Coupling between Protons and ^{13}C	82
6.6.2	Coupling between Protons and ^{19}F	84
6.6.3	Coupling between Protons and ^{31}P	87
6.6.4	Coupling between ^1H and other Heteroatoms	89
6.6.5	Cyclic Compounds and the Karplus Curve	91
6.6.6	Salts, Free Bases and Zwitterions	96
7	Further Elucidation Techniques – Part 1	101
7.1	Chemical Techniques	101
7.2	Deuteration	101
7.3	Basification and Acidification	103

7.4	Changing Solvents	104
7.5	Trifluoroacetylation	104
7.6	Lanthanide Shift Reagents	106
7.7	Chiral Resolving Agents	106
8	Further Elucidation Techniques – Part 2	111
8.1	Instrumental Techniques	111
8.2	Spin Decoupling (Homonuclear, 1-D)	111
8.3	Correlated Spectroscopy (2-D)	112
8.4	Total Correlation Spectroscopy (1- and 2-D)	116
8.5	The Nuclear Overhauser Effect and Associated Techniques	116
9	Carbon-13 NMR Spectroscopy	127
9.1	General Principles and 1-D ^{13}C	127
9.2	2-D Proton–Carbon (Single Bond) Correlated Spectroscopy	130
9.3	2-D Proton–Carbon (Multiple Bond) Correlated Spectroscopy	133
9.4	Piecing It All Together	136
9.5	Choosing the Right Tool	137
10	Some of the Other Tools	143
10.1	Linking HPLC with NMR	143
10.2	Flow NMR	144
10.3	Solvent Suppression	145
10.4	Magic Angle Spinning NMR	146
10.5	Other 2-D Techniques	147
10.5.1	INADEQUATE	147
10.5.2	J-Resolved	147
10.5.3	Diffusion Ordered Spectroscopy	148
10.6	3-D Techniques	149
11	Some of the Other Nuclei	151
11.1	Fluorine	151
11.2	Phosphorus	152
11.3	Nitrogen	152
12	Quantification	157
12.1	Introduction	157
12.2	Relative Quantification	157
12.3	Absolute Quantification	158
12.3.1	Internal Standards	158
12.3.2	External Standards	158
12.3.3	Electronic Reference	159
12.3.4	QUANTAS Technique	159
12.4	Things to Watch Out For	160
12.5	Conclusion	161

13 Safety	163
13.1 Magnetic Fields	163
13.2 Cryogenics	165
13.3 Sample-Related Injuries	166
14 Software	167
14.1 Acquisition Software	167
14.2 Processing Software	167
14.3 Prediction and Simulation Software	169
14.3.1 ¹³ C Prediction	169
14.3.2 ¹ H Prediction	171
14.3.3 Simulation	172
14.3.4 Structural Verification Software	172
14.3.5 Structural Elucidation Software	172
15 Problems	173
15.1 Ten NMR Problems	173
15.2 Hints	194
15.3 Answers	195
Glossary	205
Index	211

Introduction

This book is an up-to-date follow-up to the original “Laboratory Guide to Proton NMR Spectroscopy” (Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1988). It follows the same informal approach and is hopefully fun to read as well as a useful guide. Whilst still concentrating on proton NMR, it includes 2-D approaches and some heteronuclear examples (specifically ^{13}C and ^{19}F plus a little ^{15}N). The greater coverage is devoted to the techniques that you will be likely to make most use of.

The book is here to help you select the right experiment to solve your problem and to then interpret the results correctly. NMR is a funny beast – it throws up surprises no matter how long you have been doing it (at this point, it should be noted that the authors have about 60 years of NMR experience between them and we still get surprises regularly!).

The strength of NMR, particularly in the small organic molecule area, is that it is very information rich but ironically, this very high density of information can itself create problems for the less experienced practitioner. Information overload can be a problem and we hope to redress this by advocating an ordered approach to handling NMR data. There are huge subtleties in looking at this data; chemical shifts, splitting patterns, integrals, linewidths all have an existence due to physical molecular processes and they each tell a storey about the atoms in the molecule. There is a *reason* for *everything* that you observe in a spectrum and the better your understanding of spectroscopic principles, the greater can be your confidence in your interpretation of the data in front of you.

So, who is this book aimed at? Well, it contains useful information for anyone involved in using NMR as a tool for solving structural problems. It is particularly useful for chemists who have to run and look at their own NMR spectra and also for people who have been working in small molecule NMR for a relatively short time (less than 20 years, say! . . .). It is focused on small organic molecule work (molecular weight less than 1000, commonly about 300). Ultimately, the book is pragmatic – we discuss cost-effective experiments to solve chemical structure problems as quickly as possible. It deals with some of the unglamorous bits, like making up your sample. These are necessary if dull. It also looks at the more challenging aspects of NMR.

Whilst the book touches on some aspects of NMR theory, the main focus of the text is firmly rooted in data acquisition, problem solving strategy and interpretation. If you find yourself wanting to know more about aspects of theory, we suggest the excellent, *High-Resolution NMR Techniques in Organic Chemistry* by Timothy D W Claridge (Elsevier, ISBN-13: 978-0-08-054818-0) as an approachable next step before delving into the even more theoretical works. Another really good source is Joseph P. Hornak’s “The Basics of NMR” website (you can find it by putting “hornak nmr” into your favourite search engine). Whilst writing these chapters, we have often fought with the problem of statements that are partially true and debated whether to insert a qualifier. To get across the fundamental ideas we have tried to minimise the disclaimers and qualifiers. This aids clarity, but be aware, almost everything is more complicated than it first appears!

Thirty years in NMR has been fun. The amazing thing is that it is still fun . . . and challenging . . . and stimulating even now!

Please note that all spectra included in this book were acquired at 400 MHz unless otherwise stated.