

Analytical Solutions

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for BioTechnology

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Contact Lenses: Understanding Surface Chemistry Critical to Optimizing Design

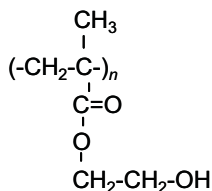
Discussion

Contact lenses are complex biomaterials that must provide a range of physical properties in order to be effective, safe and comfortable to wear. These properties include: (1) high oxygen permeability in order to transmit O₂ to the cornea, (2) hydrophilic surface so that a continuous tear film coats the lens providing lubrication and (3) resistance to bacterial and protein adsorption. Understanding both the surface and bulk chemistry of lenses is critical to engineering optimal performance. The combination of surface sensitivity (0-5 nm sampling depth), standardless quantification and ability to detect not only elements but also functional groups make XPS/ESCA a powerful analytical tool for determining the near-surface chemistry of these polymers.

Survey scans below show a common hydrogel lens material (poly hydroxyethylmethacrylate (HEMA) without (Figure 1) and with (Figure 2) the incorporation of a hydrophilic polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP) co-polymer. It is clear that XPS can detect PVP based on the nitrogen in the PVP-containing lens.

Lens Material	C	N	O
HEMA lens	69.1	0.0	30.9
HEMA + PVP lens	78.5	2.5	19.0
HEMA (theory)	66.7	0.0	33.3
PVP (theory)	75.0	12.5	12.5

polyhydroxyethyl methacrylate (HEMA)



polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP)

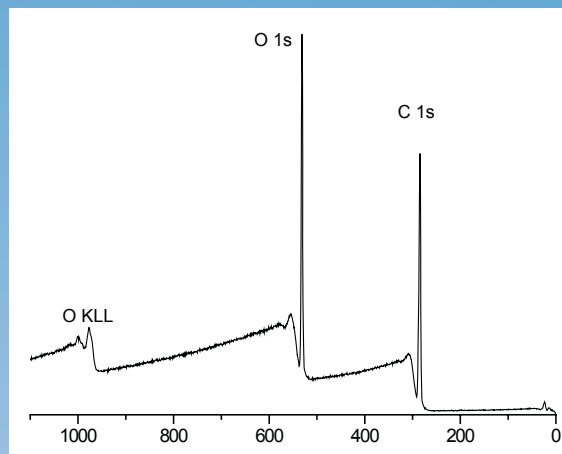
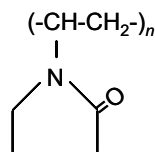


Figure 1. HEMA-based contact lens spectrum

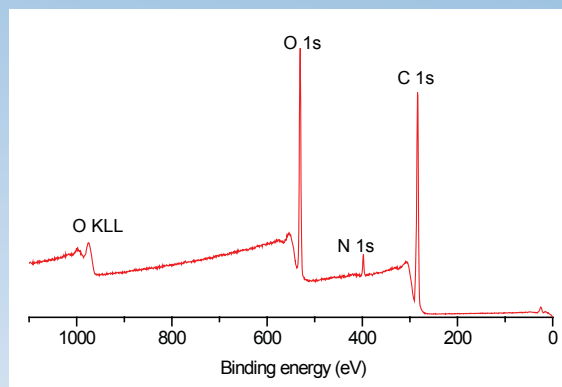


Figure 2. HEMA + PVP contact lens spectrum

For the pure HEMA lens there is excellent agreement between the observed and expected HEMA concentrations and carbon 1s spectrum (Figure 3) indicating a pure, uncontaminated lens surface. PVP is added to the second lens to improve the tear wettability of the lens surface and so it is important to be able to quantify the fraction of PVP at the surface. This is done by comparing the observed nitrogen concentration with that expected for pure PVP. Lens 2 contained 20% PVP at the surface. This result is confirmed by the presence of a O=C-N peak in the carbon 1s spectrum (Figure 4).

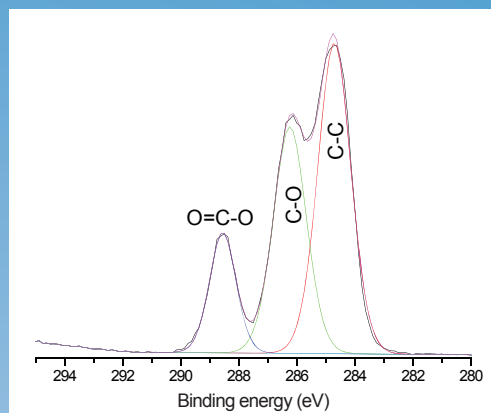


Figure 3. Curve fit of high resolution carbon 1s spectrum from pHEMA lens. Note the 2:1 ratio of C-O : COO consistent with known HEMA chemical structure. Expected concentrations are [C]=66.7% and [O]=33.3%, in excellent agreement with Table 1.

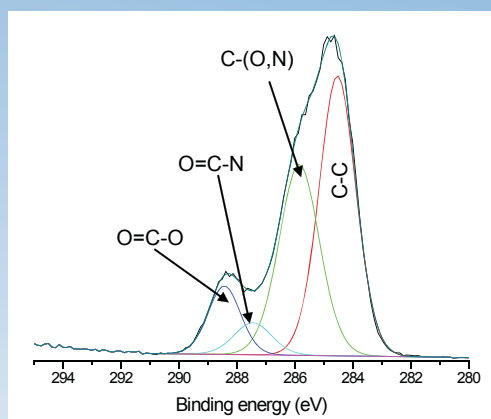
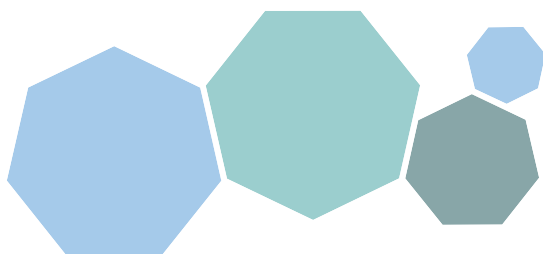


Figure 4. Curve fit of high resolution carbon 1s spectrum from pHEMA-PVP lens. Note the O=C-N component at 287.4 eV indicative of PVP (and absent in Figure 3 above).



United States Locations

Tempe, Arizona
+1 480 239 0602 info.az@eaglabs.com
+1 602 470 2655 fax

Sunnyvale, California
810 Kifer Road
+1 408 530 3500 info.ca@eaglabs.com
+1 408 530 3501 fax

1135 E Arques Avenue
+1 408 738 3033
+1 408 738 3035 fax

785 Lucerne Drive
+1 408 737 3892
+1 408 737 3916 fax

Peabody, Massachusetts
+1 978 278 9500 info.ma@eaglabs.com
+1 978 278 9501 fax

Chanhassen, Minnesota
+1 952 828 6411 info.mn@eaglabs.com
+1 952 828 6449 fax

East Windsor, New Jersey
+1 609 371 4800 info.nj@eaglabs.com
+1 609 371 5666 fax

Syracuse, New York
+1 315 431 9900 info.ny@eaglabs.com
+1 315 431 9800 fax

Raleigh, North Carolina
+1 919 829 7041 info.nc@eaglabs.com
+1 919 829 5518 fax

Round Rock, Texas
+1 512 671 9500 info.tx@eaglabs.com
+1 512 671 9501 fax

International Locations

Shanghai, China
+ 86 21 6879 6088 info.cn@eaglabs.com
+ 86 21 6879 9086 fax

Tournefeuille, France
+ 33 5 61 73 15 29 info.fr@eaglabs.com
+ 33 5 61 73 15 67 fax

Frankfurt, Germany
+ 49 (0) 693053213 info.de@eaglabs.com
+ 49 (0) 69307941 fax

Tokyo, Japan
+ 81 3 5396 0531 info.jp@eaglabs.com
+ 81 3 5396 1930 fax

HsinChu, Taiwan
+ 886 3 5632303 info.tw@eaglabs.com
+ 886 3 5632306 fax

Uxbridge, United Kingdom
+ 44 (0) 1895 811194 info.uk@eaglabs.com
+ 44 (0) 1895 810350 fax