AFNMR Users' Manual
(Version 1.0)

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The AFNMR package provides a useful method to estimate chemical shifts in biomolecules, density functional calculations on fragments. The program automatically creates the fragments from an input pdb file, prepares a model for environmental effects, then creates input files for various quantum chemistry programs. Once these quantum runs are complete, results can be extracted from their output files and collected into simple database files.

The basic literature references are:

1. X. He, B. Wang, and K.M. Merz, Jr. Protein NMR Chemical Shift Calculations Based on the Automated Fragmentation QM/MM Approach. *J. Phys. Chem. B* **113,** 10380-10388 (2009)

2. T. Zhu, X. He, and J.Z.H. Zhang. Fragment density functional theory calculation of NMR chemical shifts for proteins with implicit solvation. *Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys.* **14,** 7837-7845 (2012)

3. T. Zhu, J.Z.H. Zhang, and X. He. Automated Fragmentation QM/MM Calculation of Amide Proton Chemical Shifts in Proteins with Explicit Solvent Model. *J. Chem. Theory Comput*. **9,** 2104-2114 (2013)

4. S. Tang and D.A. Case. Calculation of chemical shift anisotropy in proteins. *J. Biomol. NMR* **51,** 303-312 (2011).

5. D.A. Case. Chemical shifts in biomolecules. *Curr. Opin. Struct. Biol.* **23,** 172-176 (2013).

6. J. Swails, T. Zhu, X. He and David A. Case. AFNMR: Automated fragmentation quantum mechanical calculation of NMR chemical shifts for biomolecules. *J. Biomol. NMR* **63,** 125-139 (2015).

7. H. Zhang, G. Hou, M. Lu, J. Ahn, I.-J. Byeon, C.J. Langmead, J.R. Perilla, I. Hung, P.L. Gor'kov, Z. Gan, W. Brey, D.A. Case, K. Schulten, A.M. Gronenborn, and T. Polenova. HIV-1 Capsid Function is Regulated by Dynamics: Quantitative Atomic-Resolution Insights by Integrating Magic-Angle-Spinning NMR, QM/MM, and MD. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **138,** 14066-14075 (2016).

Ab initio chemical shifts can be computed using the automated fragment approach implemented in the AFNMR program and described in references [1], [2] and [6]. The explicit solvent formalism described in reference [4] is planned for future versions, but is not included in the present version; however, the current code works well for snapshots taken from MD simulations that include explicit water molecules. Paper [7] is a recent example of applications of the af-nmr method.

1 Installation

The *afnmr* package is available on the web at:

```
http://casegroup.rutgers.edu
```

(Click on the "AFNMR" menu item.)

The first step in installing shifts is to extract files using the UNIX commands:

```
tar zxvj afnmr-1.0.tar.bz2
```

The path to this new directory should be defined as the environment variable `$`AFNMRHOME.

```
setenv AFNMRHOME "insert-your-path-here/shifts-5.4" # csh or tcsh
export AFNMRHOME="insert-your-path-here/shifts-5.4" # sh, bash, ksh, or zsh
```

Next,

```
make install
```

will make the required executable files, and put them into `$SHIFTSHOME/bin`. Again, this assumes that AmberTools has been properly installed. If you see an error about a file config.h that does not exist or if the "nab" command cannot be found, then your AmberTools installation either does not exist or is incomplete.

After you have installed *shifts*, the command

```
make test
```

will run some test calculations and report results. This is important to make sure that your installation is working correctly.

2 AFNMR

This is a program for carrying out automated fragment NMR (AFNMR) chemical shift prediction. In this approach, the chemical shielding tensors for ^{1}H, ^{13}C, ^{15}N, and ^{31}P are computed using an approached based on density functional theory. Because chemical shielding is a local property, the shielding tensors can be computed by including only a relatively small region around the nuclei of interest. AFNMR automates the procedure of breaking the input structure into fragments small enough to be treated with a high-level quantum mechanical theory (e.g., various density functionals). The shielding tensors are then computed using one of the supported QM packages, *deMon*, *Orca*, *Q-Chem*, or *Gaussian*. Users are directed to the relevant citations at the beginning of this manual for details regarding the fragmentation scheme for various systems.

Solvent contributions to shielding tensors can be included by modeling the solvent implicitly (e.g., with the Poisson-Boltzmann or 3D-RISM formalisms). A procedure for including nearby water molecules explicitly in the QM calculation has been proposed to improve amide chemical shift predictions and is planned for future versions of AF-NMR.

2.1 General workflow

The first thing that AF-NMR does to the system is perform a local energy minimization using the Amber ff12SB force field. After that, the electrostatic potential (ESP) at the surface of the system is computed and surface point charges are fitted to reproduce this potential. AF-NMR then proceeds to break the system up into manageable fragments and writes input files for the requested QM package. It is then up to the user to run the QM calculations. While these calculations may take several hours to finish, each fragment can be done at the same time. The general workflow for AF-NMR is shown in Figure 1 on page 3.

AF-NMR currently provides three ways to compute surface charges to model solvent effects.

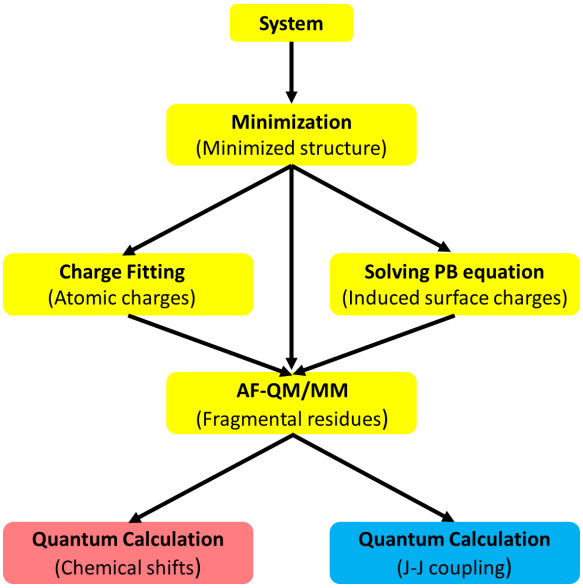

Figure 1: *Workflow followed by AF-NMR to compute chemical shifts*

1. The first uses the PBSA program included with AmberTools to compute the ESP at the surface of the system, setting the dielectric constant of the system interior to 1 and that of the solvent to 80. These surface charges are then used for every fragment while the atoms outside the fragment region are treated as point charges whose values are equal to the partial atomic charges assigned by the Amber force field. The PBSA program from AmberTools must be installed to use this approach.

2. The second approach also solves the PB equation, but instead uses a 3-dielectric model. In this case, the QM region is assigned a dielectric constant of 1, the interior of the system that is *outside* the QM region is assigned a dielectric constant of 4, and the region outside the system is assigned a dielectric constant of 80. With this approach, each fragment is assigned a separate set of surface charges at the surface of the QM region (as defined by the atom radii assigned by the force field). This approach helps to alleviate the overpolarization that occurs from the point charges of the atoms outside the QM region. However, it takes longer to compute the surface charges since a separate solution to the PB equation is required for each fragment; (however, this is still nowhere near the cost of the QM calculations themselves). This approach uses the *solinprot* program that is bundled with *MEAD* (see `http://stjuderesearch.org/site/lab/bashford`). This is the default option, and the one that has been most extensively tested.

3. The final approach supported by AF-NMR to compute surface charges uses the 3D-RISM formalism to compute the electrostatic potential. This approach uses a rigorous statistical mechanical approach to compute solvent distributions around solutes with arbitrary charge distributions. Like the first approach we described, it is applied to the entire system and a single set of point charges at the surface of the whole system are used to reproduce the ESP for every fragment.

2.2 Using AFNMR

A shell script, *afnmr*, is provided as the user interface to apply the AF-NMR method to a whole system. It takes a set of flags that can be used to control program flow and specify user-controlled options. If you run *afnmr* without arguments or with the `--help` flag, you receive a brief help and usage statement.

```
Usage: afnmr [flags] basename
```

The file "basename.pdb" must be present. Currently, all protein or nucleic acid residue must be placed first, followed by "general" residues, such as ligands, water molecules, ions, etc. The commonly used flags are described below in more detail.

- *residues to analyze:*

  -list list of residues to create fragments for; *List* uses bash syntax and must be quoted, e.g. "{1,2,{4..9},13}", "46", "{5..8}" (Note: unlike earlier versions of *afnmr*, the residue numbers are those in the pdb file, and need not start from 1, nor do they need to be sequential. Residue numbers, however, must be unique: *afnmr* does not use chainID's.) If *-list* is not present, fragments will be made for residues 1 up to the last protein or nucleic acid residue.

- *basis set selection:*

  -mixedb Uses a mixed basis set in which the central residue whose shifts are being computed are treated with a larger, (*pcS-seg1*) basis set while the surrounding QM residues outside the primary region use a smaller (*pcSseg0*) basis.

  -tzp Use a larger basis (*pcS-seg1* by default) for all residues

  -dzp Use a smaller basis (*pcS-seg0* by default) for all residues

  Note: If you want to use a different DFT functional, or different basis sets, you can edit the input scripts that *afnmr* provides. The question of the "best" way to carry out shift calculations is still an active area of research.

- *method to represent atoms outside the fragment:*

  -solinprot Compute the surface charges using the 3-dielectric model implemented by the *solinprot* program from the MEAD package. (default behavior)

  -pbsa Compute the surface charges using the PBSA program from AmberTools

  -rism, -3drism use 3D-RISM to get surface charges

- *quantum program to use:*

  -deMon, -demon Set up QM input files to run with the deMon program, version 3 (default)

  -orca Set up QM input files to run with the Orca program

  -gau Set up QM input files to run with the Gaussian program

  -qchem Set up QM input files to run with the Q-Chem program

  -tc Set up QM input files for TeraChem: no shifts are computed, just a quantum geometry optimization of the primary residue (plus solvent molecules), keeping the remaining residues in each fragment fixed.

- *miscellaneous flags:*

  -qopt do a quantum mechanical geometry optimization in place of a molecular mechanics optimization. (Work in progress: only fully implemented for terachem so far.)

  -workdir AF-NMR creates many temporary files. By default, they are all created inside the current directory. If this flag is specified, a new directory named `<basename>` will be created and all temporary files will be put there. This is useful, for instance, when running multiple AF-NMR calculations in the same directory.

  -nobuild Skip all steps requiring the Amber force field

  -nomin Do not minimize the structure.

  -frcmod <file> An additional frcmod file to load into *tleap*

  -offlib <file> An additional unit library file to load into *tleap*

multiafnmr.sh Several structures in the protein data bank (PDB) were solved by refining structures with restraints imposed by NMR experiments. Many of these entries in the PDB contain several conformations. The *multiafnmr.sh* script will split apart the PDB file and run *afnmr* on each of the structures independently. The PDB basename must be the first argument to *multiafnmr.sh*, and the rest of the arguments are the command-line options described above for *afnmr*. The -workdir argument is used by default so that each conformation gets processed in a separate directory.

The processing of structures is parallelized, and setting the environment variable `NCPUS` to an integer will inform *multiafnmr.sh* to process the given number of structures simultaneously. This is primarily useful when using the -solinprot option, which takes longer to compute surface charges with.

2.3 Computing the shielding tensors

After running *afnmr* (or *multiafnmr.sh*), you will have a handful of input files to the QM program you requested—one for each of the fragments (residues) in your system. You can either run the QM program directly at the command-line or you can run the command in a cluster using some type of batch scheduling system like torque, slurm, or Sun grid engine.

We suggest that you pick the QM program you are most familiar with, which will help in debugging problems should they arise. If you've chosen *Gaussian*, the input files will be named `<basename>XXX.com`, where `XXX` ranges from `001` to the total number of fragments. If you've chosen *Orca*, the file name suffix will be `.inp` and a number of other files ending with `.pos` will be written to define the positions of the external point and surface charges. Input files for *deMon* also end with `.inp`, whereas those for *Q-Chem* end with `.in`. You may wish to modify the control headers of the input file to change the amount of requested memory or number of CPUs based on your available hardware.

Sample commands to run with each of the programs is shown below for the first fragment of the `1d3z1` system found in the `test/` directory of the SHIFTS package.

```
g09 < 1d3z1001.com > 1d3z1001.log # For Gaussian calculations, g03 or g16 also work
orca 1d3z1001.inp > 1d3z1001.out  # For Orca calculations
qchem 1d3z1001.in 1d3z1001.out    # For Q-Chem calculations
deMon 1d3z1001.inp                # For deMon calculations
```

2.4 Extracting chemical shifts

Following the QM calculations on all of the fragment input files, you will have a large number of output files whose chemical shielding tensors need to be extracted. Because we are modeling systems in solution, the molecules are free to tumble in every direction. As a result, we are only interested in the isotropic shielding at each nucleus. If only the shielding tensor is given in the output file, the isotropic shielding can be computed from the trace of the tensor. A reference shift (which is basis set-dependent) need then be subtracted to get the predicted chemical shift. Also, care must be taken to make sure that you extract only those chemical shifts from the nuclei primary QM region and not those in the immediate surroundings—those shifts are computed more rigorously in a different output file.

Included in the SHIFTS package are a set of parsers written in Perl that will extract the relevant chemical shifts from each output file for *deMon*, *Orca*, or *Gaussian* calculations (no parser is available for *Q-Chem* currently). These parsers use the PQR files that were generated by AF-NMR to determine which nuclei reside in the primary QM region to determine which chemical shifts to extract from each output file. The script responsible for parsing the QM output file is *make-shiftsrdb*. To use this script, the first argument must be the QM program you used (`-demon`, `-demon3`, `-orca`, or `-g09`) and the second argument must be the basename of the system (i.e., the name of the original PDB file you used without the `.pdb` extension).

make-shiftsrdb will try to parse all `<basename>XXX.out` files where `XXX` are any characters (typically numbers from 001 to the number of residues). If you used *Gaussian*, the output file suffix `.log` will be used instead. The output file will be printed in a simple tab-delimited text file that should be self-explanatory; it is also compatible with the RDB relational database format (see the description at `http://compbio.soe.ucsc.edu/rdb/`). Here is an example:

```
# results from afnmr-demon3:
# reference shifts used for H,C,N:  32.00 182.50 242.00 OLYP TZVP 1d3z1
res       atomname  resname   1C44
8N        8         8         10N
1         CA        SER          57.41
1         CB        SER          68.32
1         H1        SER           5.49
1         H2        SER           4.67
1         H3        SER           4.58
1         HA        SER           4.11
1         HB2       SER           4.20
1         HB3       SER           4.59
1         HG        SER           2.87
1         N         SER          27.88
```