

Analysis and Quantification of
2,2',4,4'-Tetrabromodiphenyl ether using Gas
Chromatography Coupled with a Low-Resolution
Mass Spectrometry
CHEM 4303
Analytical Separations

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Abstract

Gas chromatography with a mass spectrometer was utilized for analysis.

1 Introduction

Gas chromatography (GC) is a separation technique that analyzes volatile compounds [1]. Consequently, this analysis can lead a lot of useful situations such as the determination of the purity of a compound or even quantifying individual components in mixtures [1]. In GC, the analyte is volatilized and carried through the column by the mobile phase, often called the carrier gas [2]. This carrier gas can either be He or H₂ [2]. These gases are often chosen as the carrier gas as they are chemically inert and would therefore not react with the analytes [1].

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are a class of halogenated compounds that are commonly used as flame retardants [3]. These compounds are an environmental health hazard as they have the potential to accumulate in the food chain [4]. In addition, 2,2',4,4'-Tetrabromodiphenyl ether, also known as BDE-47 [5], is a PBDE congener, and has been found to cause neurotoxic effects in adults [4]. Commonly used detection techniques for PBDEs are high-resolution mass spectrometry and low-resolution mass spectrometry (LRMS) [3].

LRMS is commonly done with selected ion monitoring (SIM) [3]. SIM increases the selectivity of mass spectrometry for analytes and reduces its response to everything else [2]. It does this by setting the mass spectrometer to detect just one or even a few m/z values [2]. One of the advantages of SIM is that the signal-to-noise ratio greatly increases as the mass spectrometer spends its entire analysis time measuring that particular ion, or a couple of ions [2].

Internal standards are used for a number of reasons, such as when sample loss is expected during the sample preparation step, or when the response of the quantity of sample detected differs at each analysis [2]. Essentially, an internal standard is a known quantity of a compound that differs from the analyte, and is added to the mixture containing the analyte to be detected [2].

A splitless injection mode is used for trace analysis.

An injection mode of splitless rather than a split is used when attempting to analyze trace chemicals [2]. Furthermore, a splitless injection mode minimizes solvent tailing by opening the split vent after around 1 min so that the any remaining sample in the injection port can be purged [1].

The main objective of this entire experiment is to detect as well as quantify BDE-47 in a sample of fish oil. This is accomplished by making a method that utilizes a SIM.

2 Chemicals, Methods and Instrumentation

2.1 Chemicals

In the first week, BDE-47, PBB-77 and '2-HCH, all of each were at a concentration of 50 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ in isooctane, were used as standard solutions. In the second week, fish oil (Exact Norwegian Cod Liver Oil), dichloromethane (emd, Lot 5Q160, CAS: 75-09-2) and PBB-77, at a concentration of 10 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ in isooctane, were used as chemicals. Finally, in the last week, BDE-47,

PBB-77 and '2-HCH, each at a concentration of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ in isooctane, were used. Throughout the entirety of the experiment, hexane (Caledon Laboratory Chemicals, CAS no. 110-54-3, LOT: 89001) and isooctane (OmniSolv, CAS: 540-84-1, LOT: 52054) were used.

2.2 Instrumentation

The separation and analysis of the entire experiment was performed on an Agilent 7890A GC, coupled with a 5975C inert XL EI/CI MSD with a triple axis detector. The dimensions of the column used was $30\text{m} \times 0.250\text{mm} \times 0.25\mu\text{m}$, by Agilent Technologies. The stationary phase was (5%-Phenyl)-methylpolysiloxane. Each analysis was performed with the injection mode at splitless, with He as the carrier gas, and the flow rate was set at 1 mL/min. The injection mode used for each analysis was splitless, and the injection volume was 2 μL for each analysis.

2.3 Methods

In the first week of the experiment, a (normalized) full scan spectrum was obtained for BDE-47, PBB-77 and '2-HCH. The upper limit of the scan range was set to 30 u more than the molecular weight of the respective analyte that was being analyzed. For each analysis, the oven temperature was initially set to 100 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 5 min, then it was increased to 280 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ at a rate of 10 $^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min}$, and it was held at that temperature for 7 min. Furthermore, the temperature of the splitless injection port was set to 260 $^{\circ}\text{C}$, the electron energy was set to 70 eV, and the temperature of the GC-MSD interface was fixed at a temperature of 280 $^{\circ}\text{C}$.

In the second week of the experiment, two samples of fish oil were prepared by adding 2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ of PBB-77 as the internal standard to the sample, and then having it undergo solid-phase extraction in order to extract lipids. Afterwards, the majority of the solvent was then removed from the sample through rotary evaporation.

In the last week of the experiment, a calibration solution was produced by adding each of BDE-47 and PBB-77, at a volume of 10 μL , to a 0.5 mL of isooctane contained in an auto sampler vial, and it was diluted all the way to 1.0 mL with the solvent. 50 μL of '2-HCH was added to the calibration solution, while 10 μL was added to the fish samples that was prepared last week. Finally, the GC-MS was set to scan only two ions per analyte, the parameters that was selected is shown in table 1. Refer to table ref to see which 2 ions was monitored.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Table 1 shows some cool stuff, and table 2 shows the molecular weight of BDE-47, PBB-77 and '2-HCH. Table 3 shows the mass of fish oil that was weighed out for the experiment.

Table 1: Selected Ion Monitoring Parameters

Compound	Ions monitored (m/z)	Time window (min)
‘2-HCH	181, 219	0.5 - 19
BDE-47	326, 486	19 - 22.5
PBB-77	470, 310	22.5 - 24

Table 2: Molecular weight of BDE-47, PBB-77 and ‘2-HCH

Compound	Molecular weight (u)
BDE-47	486
PBB-77	470
‘2-HCH	291

Table 3: Mass of fish oil weighed out

Sample number	Mass (g)
1	1.1234
2	0.9062

3.2 Discussion

- maybe talk about the difference between internal standards and standard additions?
- maybe talk about LRMS?
- maybe talk about why we use splitless mode of injection rather than a split or even a on-column injection?

4 References

References

- (1) Vitha, M. F., *Chromatography: Principles and Instrumentation*; Wiley: Hoboken, New Jersey, 2017.
- (2) Harris, D. C., *Quantitative chemical analysis*, 8th ed; W.H. Freeman and Co: New York, 2010.
- (3) Björklund, J.; Tollbäck, P.; Östman, C. *Journal of Mass Spectrometry* **2003**, 38, 394–400.
- (4) Thomsen, C.; Småstuen Haug, L.; Leknes, H.; Lundanes, E.; Becher, G.; Lindström, G. *Chemosphere* **2002**, 46, 641–648.
- (5) Erratico, C. A.; Moffatt, S. C.; Bandiera, S. M. *Toxicological Sciences* **2011**, 123, 37–47.

5 Appendix

5.1 Calculations

Calculating the response factor

$$\frac{\text{Area of Analyte Signal}}{\text{Concentration of Analyte}} = F \left(\frac{\text{Area of Standard Signal}}{\text{Concentration of Standard}} \right)$$
$$\frac{A_X}{[X]} = F \left(\frac{A_S}{[S]} \right) \quad (1)$$

Equation 1 was taken from [2], where $[X]$ and $[S]$ represent the concentrations of analyte and of the standard, respectively.

Calculating the capacity factor of chlorobenzene for figure 2 of the chromatogram

$$K = \frac{t_r - t_m}{t_m}$$
$$K = \frac{2.343 - 1.438}{1.438} \quad (2)$$
$$K = \frac{0.905}{1.438}$$
$$K = 0.629346 \approx 0.629$$

Equation 2 was taken from [2].

5.2 Chromatograms

There are ? sheets of GC-MS chromatograms.