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Precise, Rapid and Scalable Size Selection of Nanoparticle Populations

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Reference: Size Selection

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Reference

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Kitchens, C. L.; Roberts, C. B.
Nano Lett.; (Letter); 2005;
5(3); 461-465. (pdf)

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Overview

Auburn University seeks a licensee for a method for the precise and rapid size selection of nanoparticles from a polydisperse population. When compared to existing processes, Auburn's CO₂-based process is faster, less expensive, cleaner, more precise, tunable and scalable. This technology has potential applications throughout the nanotechnology industry, including optics and imaging.

Advantages

- Significantly reduces time needed for a size fractionation compared to centrifugation
- Reduces expense and increases throughput (as compared to chromatographic methods)
- Narrows particle distributions as compared with existing methods
- Allows for mean particle size and polydispersity to be predetermined by simply choosing the proper CO₂ pressurization
- Reduces operating costs and environmental impact through use of CO₂ as the antisolvent
- Reduces post-processing time and costs through use of CO₂, allowing simple particle cleaning and solvent/antisolvent recycling
- Allows easy and precise separation of various nanostructures, including nanorods or quantum dots

Description

This method for precise, rapid and improved separation of nanoparticles by size relies on a solvent/antisolvent method that uses a gaseous antisolvent (e.g., CO₂) to create a tunable gas-expanded liquid. Pressurized gaseous CO₂ is placed over a nanoparticle solution. By changing the pressure of CO₂, the resulting fraction of liquid CO₂ in the solution can be increased or decreased. Given that particle dispersibility is a function of CO₂ concentration in the liquid, particles of any given target size can be made to precipitate by simply manipulating the CO₂ pressure. Multiple monodisperse particle populations can be rapidly fractionated by adjusting only the CO₂ pressure and the liquid location, thereby eliminating the difficulties associated with other methods that are time and solvent intensive, expensive and/or have limited throughput.

Status

- A companion technology exists that uses a similar methodology to [deposit nanoparticles as dense films](#) with more uniformity, less processing and less cost than existing methods
- Two US (including [20070243716](#)) and one EU application have been filed
- This invention has been successfully verified by laboratory experiment with various ligand-coated metallic and semiconductor nanoparticles
- A scalable prototype system has been created and tested (see figure)

