Spectroscopic Analysis of Tautomeric Forms of 5-Phenyltetrazole*

A. Tempczyk, Z. Gryczyński**, A. Kawski, and Z. Grzonka
Institute of Chemistry and Institute of Experimental Physics, University of Gdańsk, Poland

Z. Naturforsch. 43a, 363–368 (1988); received January 28, 1988

Experimental and theoretical directions of electronic transition moments and the UV spectra of anionic and neutral 5-phenyltetrazole (5-PhTH) have been determined. Based on the correlation between the theoretical and experimental data it has been found that the 2 H-tautomeric form is predominant in polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) film.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of tautomerism plays an important role in chemistry and biology. 5-phenyltetrazole (5-PhTH) and its derivatives belong to the group of chemical compounds which exhibit tautomerism. The tautomeric equilibria involving this compound have been studied by many investigators [1–19] but the results reported are still doubtful. This is due to the fact that the difference between the tautomeric forms consists only in the position of the proton in the tetrazole ring. The physicochemical properties of these tautomers are therefore almost the same. On the other hand, the position of the proton is responsible for the value of the electric dipole moment and the direction of the electronic transition moment, parameters which are readily accessible by quantum mechanical calculations. Therefore, the experimental determination of these parameters and their comparison with the theoretical values can enable the tautomeric equilibrium to be analyzed, deciding which of the tautomers is predominant.

2. Experimental

2.1. Samples and Methods

5-PhTH was synthesized and purified as described elsewhere [6]. Polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) films were prepared using a technique resembling that employed by Tanizaki [20]. The PVA films were five-fold stretched at about 350 K, the rate of stretching being controlled. For the measurements, films were selected which displayed the least heterogeneities. Since 5-PhTH is a relatively strong acid (its dissociation constant being $1.05 \times 10^{-5}$ in 50% ethanol [6]), in the PVA environment with pH of about 6 it occurs mainly in the anionic form. The undissociated form was obtained by acidifying the aqueous solution of tetrazole in PVA with 0.1 N H$_2$SO$_4$, after which the pH of the film amounted to about 3. It has been proved that at this pH the plastic properties of the film do not change. Such a procedure enables to obtain high concentrations of the compound investigated in the film (about $10^{-2}$ M), contrary to the method of diffusion of a compound from acidic solution to a PVA film [21,22]. The method of acidifying the 5-PhTH solution in H$_2$SO$_4$ thus enables the weak absorption band at 35.5 kK to be investigated.

Polarized absorption spectra were measured by means of an apparatus described in [23].

2.2. Basic Equations of the Analysis of Linear Dichroism

For the analysis of the polarized spectra different models were used. The general Matsuoka and Norden [24] equation for the reduced linear dichroism (LD') as a function of the orientation parameter $S_i(i = x, y, z)$ and the angle $\alpha$ between the long molecular axis and the transition moment vector (cf. Fig. 2), can be expressed in the diagonal reference system by the formulae

$$LD' = 3(S_{y} \sin^2 \alpha + S_{z} \cos^2 \alpha),$$

$$\frac{LD'}{3} = K = \frac{A_{||} - A_{\perp}}{A_{||} + 2 A_{\perp}} = \frac{R_d - 1}{R_d + 2}. \quad (2)$$

* This work was sponsored by the Polish Ministry of National Education under Projects CPBP 01.06. and CPBP 01.13.
** Permanent address: Zakład Fizyki, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, ul. Arciszewskiego 22, 76-200 Słupsk, Poland.
Reprint requests to Prof Dr. Alfons Kawski, Uniwersytet Gdański, Instytut Fizyki Doświadczalnej, ul. Wita Stwosza 57, 80-052 Gdańsk, Poland.

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$K$ is the absorption anisotropy \cite{23}, $A_{\parallel}$ and $A_{\perp}$ are the components of the absorbance ($A = \varepsilon C l$, where $\varepsilon$ is the molar absorption coefficient in litres per mol·cm, $C$ the concentration in mol/l, and $l$ the length in cm) parallel and perpendicular to the distinguished stretching direction of the film (e.g. the $z$-axis), and

$$R_d = \frac{A_{\parallel}}{A_{\perp}}$$

the measured dichroic ratio.

Norden's orientation parameters $S_d$ \cite{25} are unequivocally related to parameters $K_i$ proposed by the TEM model \cite{26-28}:

$$S_d = \frac{3}{2} K_i - \frac{1}{2}.$$  

$$D = \frac{A_{\parallel} - A_{\perp}}{A_{\parallel} + A_{\perp}} = \frac{R_d - 1}{R_d + 1} = \frac{(3 A - 1) [(3 C (1 - B) - 1) + 3 C (2 B - 1) \cos^2 z]}{(3 - A) + C (3 A - 1) (1 - B) + C (3 A - 1) (2 B - 1) \cos^2 z}.$$  

A simple reducing procedure for the TEM model \cite{26-28} was employed to determine the orientation parameters $K_i$. For molecules of high symmetry ($C_{2v}$), the observed components of the absorption spectra (parallel $A_{\parallel}$ and perpendicular $A_{\perp}$) are a linear combination of pure polarized transitions along the $y$- and $z$-axes. For the overlapping absorption bands, when creating the linear combination of the spectral components, $A_{\parallel}(\bar{v}) - d_i \cdot A_{\perp}(\bar{v})$, the value of $d_i$ corresponding to a separated $i$-th transition can be readily determined \cite{29}. The orientation parameters can be obtained by this method:

$$K_i = d_i/(2 + d_i).$$

The angles $\alpha$ obtained from (1) and (7) are given in Table 2.

### 3. Quantum Mechanical Calculations

The absorption spectra were calculated by the CNDO/S-Cl method with the original parametrization of DelBene and Jaffe \cite{33}. The electrostatic nPDQ model \cite{34} (n point dipoles and quadrupoles) was used to determine the influence of the environment on the position of the absorption bands. The electrostatic field produced by the solvent molecules according to this model can be used for the calculation of the solvation energy of the ground state in the CNDO/S method \cite{35}. Obviously, this is only the electrostatic part of the energy of the interaction between the solute and the solvent molecules. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for a qualitative description of the solvation phenomenon. The same geometry of the tetr唑ole ring as in our previous paper \cite{9} was used in the calculations. The geometry of the phenyl ring has been calculated using the standard values of the bond lengths and angles. The length of the bond linking these two rings has been optimized with the MNDO method and found to be 1.43 Å. Thirty singly excited configurations were used in the CI method.
The tautomeric equilibrium constant, $K_{1,2}$, can be expressed by the equation

$$K_{1,2} = \exp \left(-\frac{\Delta E_{1,2}}{k T}\right),$$

where $\Delta E_{1,2}$ is the difference between the microscopic energies of the ground states of two tautomeres, the values of which can be calculated by quantum-mechanical methods. If $\Delta E_{1,2} < 0$, then the $1\text{H}$-tautomer has the lower energy, and vice versa. Therefore the difference in energy is sufficient to determine which of the tautomeric forms of 5-PhTH will be predominant in the gas phase. The change in the ground state energy of a given tautomer when passing from gas phase to solution can be expressed by

$$\delta E_{1\text{H}} = E_{1\text{H}}(S_i, s) - E_{1\text{H}}(S_i, v),$$

where $E_{1\text{H}}(S_i, s)$ is the ground state energy of the $1\text{H}$-tautomer in the solution and $E_{1\text{H}}(S_i, v)$ in the gas phase. Similarly, for the excited states we can write

$$\delta E_{1\text{H}}^{(i)} = E_{1\text{H}}(S_i, s) - E_{1\text{H}}(S_i, v),$$

where $S_i$ denotes the $i$-th excited state. The relative change in the ground state energy resulting from the influence of the environment is given by

$$\Delta \delta E_{1\text{H}, 2\text{H}} = \delta E_{1\text{H}} - \delta E_{2\text{H}},$$

and for the excited states by [34]

$$\Delta \delta E_{1\text{H}, 2\text{H}}^{(i)} = \delta E_{1\text{H}}^{(i)} - \delta E_{2\text{H}}^{(i)}$$

$$\Delta \delta E_{1\text{H}, 2\text{H}} = \Delta \delta E_{1\text{H}, 2\text{H}}^{(i)} + h c (\Delta \tilde{v}_1 - \Delta \tilde{v}_2)$$

$$= \Delta \delta E_{1\text{H}, 2\text{H}}^{(i)} + h c [\Delta \tilde{v}_{1,2}(v) - \Delta \tilde{v}_{1,2}(s)],$$

where $\Delta \tilde{v}_1 = \tilde{v}_1(v) - \tilde{v}_1(s)$ and $\Delta \tilde{v}_2 = \tilde{v}_2(v) - \tilde{v}_2(s)$ denote the changes in the transition wavenumbers of the $1\text{H}$- and $2\text{H}$-tautomer, respectively, when passing from the gas phase ($v$) to the solution ($s$). Certainly, the solvent affects also the values and directions of the transition moments.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the calculations carried out for both tautomeric forms and the anion of 5-PhTH are summarized in Table 1 (for transitions $S_0 \rightarrow S_i$, $i = 1 \div 5$). Based on (9), we calculated the energies of stabilization of the tautomeric forms of 5-PhTH by water molecules within the 3PDQ model. They were found to be 35 kcal/mol for the $1\text{H}$-tautomer (average per one point dipole-quadrupole amounting to 11.6 kcal/mol) and 41 kcal/mol for the $2\text{H}$-tautomer (average 13.6 kcal/mol). Considering the fact that in the gas phase the $2\text{H}$-tautomer has a lower energy than the $1\text{H}$-tautomer, and that it is better stabilized by the water molecules, it can be presupposed that the $2\text{H}$-tautomer dominates in the ground state in aqueous solution. The difference between the hydration energies of the tautomers is $\Delta \delta E_{1\text{H}, 2\text{H}} = 6$ kcal/mol to the advantage of the $2\text{H}$-form. The calculated hydration energy for the anion of 5-PhTH in the 4 PDQ model is 51 kcal/mol (12.7 kcal/mol average for one point dipole-quadrupole). Analysing the results given in Table 1 it can be observed that hydration of the $1\text{H}$-tautomer does not cause a great change in the electronic spectra. On the other hand, hydration causes significant changes in the evaluated spectrum.
with simultaneous inversion of states, which makes the spectrum of the 2H-tautomer very similar to the spectrum of 1H-tautomer for $\pi_0 \rightarrow \pi_i^*$ transitions. Apart from this, it should be noted that the spectrum of the 5-PhTH anion in the gas phase differs from those of the 1H- and 2H-tautomers, that the hydration, however, makes them very similar, in particular for $\pi_0 \rightarrow \pi_i^*$ transitions. Due to these facts, a straightforward interpretation of the experimental spectra in order to establish the tautomeric equilibrium for 5-PhTH in solution is impossible.

Analysing the results shown in Table 1 ($\pi_0 \rightarrow \pi_i^*$ transitions) it can be inferred that the three forms studied have different values of electronic transition moments. In Figs. 1a and 1b, the experimental absorption spectra are presented in the UV range for both components, parallel $A_\parallel$ and perpendicular $A_\perp$, as well as the value of the dichroic ratio $R_d = A_\parallel / A_\perp$, measured in five-fold stretched PVA films for the anionic and neutral forms of 5-PhTH. It can be observed that the neutral and anionic forms differ in the values of dichroism. For the anionic form it ranges from 1.52 (minimum) to 3.03 (maximum), while for the neutral form the values amount to 1.05 (minimum) and 2.44 (maximum). It is worth noticing that the measured spectra in methanol and in the isotropic PVA system are almost the same. Based on the spectra obtained, it seems that the short-wave absorption band (41 kK) of both the anionic and neutral molecule is a transition of pure polarization, occurring along the C$_2\gamma$ symmetry axis. The long-wave absorption band (35.5 kK) lying in the background of the short-wave band is a band of weak oscillator strength ($f$). The transition from the anionic form of pure C$_2\gamma$ symmetry to the neutral molecule changes the position of the long axis by a small angle $\gamma$ (Figure 2). As is well known [21, 22, 24, 34–38], the changes in teh position of the long axis (orientation axis) accompanied with gaining
or losing the proton are very slight. As a consequence, the orientation parameters are approximately the same for the anion and the neutral molecule. Therefore, the orientation parameters were determined for the anionic form, and the same values were assumed for the neutral molecule. Figure 2 shows the tautomers with theoretically calculated directions of the electronic transition moments ($\alpha_1$, $\alpha_\Pi$) and the values of $\gamma_1$ and $\gamma_\Pi$, modified by the angle $\gamma$.

Taking into account the small change of the orientation axis of the molecule compared with the orientation of the anion in the PVA film (angle $\gamma$), a correlation can be established between the theoretical and experimental values of the directions of the electronic transition moments. Assuming the $\gamma$ to be small ranging from 0° to 15°, the theoretical value of $\alpha$ can be estimated for both absorption bands (see Fig. 2):

for 1H-tautomer

$$\alpha_1' = \alpha_1 + \gamma$$

I transition (36.5 kK)

$$\alpha_\Pi' = \alpha_\Pi - \gamma$$

II transition (39.5 kK)

for 2H-tautomer

$$\alpha_1' = \alpha_1 - \gamma$$

I transition (35.9 kK)

$$\alpha_\Pi' = \alpha_\Pi + \gamma$$

II transition (39.7 kK)

The data presented in Table 2 show that there is good agreement between the theoretical and experimental values of the direction of the electronic transitions. It should also be noted that varying the value of $\gamma$ causes no qualitative change of the results. On the other hand, it has been shown that the solvent effect must be included in the calculations to get properly the direction of the shift of the band positions and the direction of the electronic transition moments. Based on the correlation between the theoretical and experimental values of the angle $\alpha$ it can be established which of the tautomers is predominant. In our case, such a combination of calculations and measurements carried out in an ordered system (PVA film) has unambiguously revealed that the dominating form is the 2H-tautomer of 5-PhTH.