

Bottlebrush polymers: from dilute solutions to super-soft rubbers

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Polymer bottlebrushes provide intriguing features being relevant both in nature and in synthetic systems. While their presence in the articular cartilage optimizes synovial joint lubrication, bottlebrushes offer pathways for fascinating applications, such as within super-soft elastomers or for drug delivery. However, the current theoretical understanding lacks completeness, primarily due to the complicated interplay of many length scales. During the talk new analytical model of bottlebrush polymers will be presented. The model applies to solutions ranging from dilute concentrations to dense melts. The validity of our model is supported by data from extensive molecular dynamics simulation. We demonstrate that the hierarchical structure of bottlebrushes dictates a sequence of conformational changes as the solution concentration increases. The effect is mediated by screening of excluded volume interactions at subsequent structural parts of the bottlebrushes. Our findings provide important insights that should enable improved customization of novel materials based on the architectural design of polymer bottlebrushes.

Primary author: PATUREJ, Jaroslaw (University of Szczecin)

Co-authors: BURDYŃSKA, Joanna (Carnegie Mellon); MATYJASZEWSKI, Krzysztof (Carnegie Mellon); RUBINSTEIN, Michael (University of North Carolina); SERGEY, Panyukov (Russian Academy of Sciences); SHEIKO, Sergei (University of North Carolina); KREER, Torsten (Leibniz Institute of Polymer Research Dresden); DANIEL, William (University of North Carolina)

Presenter: PATUREJ, Jaroslaw (University of Szczecin)

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