

Research Note

## An Investigation of Antioxidant Properties of Zinc and Molybdenum Dithiocarbamates in Hydrocarbons

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### ABSTRACT

The oxidation and degradation of hydrocarbons at high temperature and pressure in the presence of oxygen is one of the common oil product problems. There are many antioxidants to prevent or inhibit oxidation processes; molybdenum and zinc dithiocarbamates are known as powerful antioxidants. In this paper, the oxidation inhibition time of cumene has been investigated using zinc and molybdenum dithiocarbamate substituted with different alkyl groups as antioxidants and azobisisobutyronitrile (AIBN) as the initiator. The best result obtained for molybdenum dibutyl dithiocarbamate was about 210 min, while zinc dialkyldithiophosphate (ZDDP), a well known commercial antioxidant, showed an oxidation inhibition time of about 14 min under the same conditions. It was shown that antioxidant properties decreased with increasing the chain length of the substituted alkyl groups. This can be explained by the fact that alkyl groups participate in the oxidation process and thus increasing the alkyl chain length reduces antioxidant effect. The synergism effect of molybdenum dibenzyl dithiocarbamate on ZDDP was also investigated and the oxidation inhibition time of about 110 min was obtained, which was greater than that of any individual antioxidant.

**Keywords:** Antioxidants, Molybdenum Dithiocarbamate, Zinc Dithiocarbamate, Alkyl Group, Lubricants

### INTRODUCTION

Most petroleum products such as lubricants, engine oils, polymers, and fuels are oxidized in the presence of oxygen and metals (from metal surface), especially under severe application conditions such as high temperature and pressure; this reaction is called autoxidation. Hydrocarbon autoxidation is a free radical chain reaction and produces the corresponding peroxides or hydroperoxides in the propagation step. Alcohols, organic acids, ketones, and aldehydes are obtained in the termination step [1].

Antioxidants are used to inhibit oxidation reaction, and they react with free radicals to form stable species and prevent the degradation process. They can act as chain breaking by radical scavenging or peroxide destroying [2]. The first group inhibits oxidation by reacting with chain propagating free radicals to form stable molecules, and is known as primary antioxidants. The second group or peroxide destroying antioxidants are known as secondary antioxidants and act by specifically decomposing peroxide radicals. In some cases, antioxidants can be regenerated as part of this

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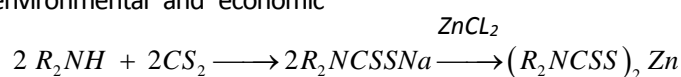
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process. Examples of primary antioxidants are hindered phenols and secondary arylamines such as alkylated diphenylamines. Phosphorous and a variety of sulfur compounds such as dithiophosphates or dithiocarbamates fall into the secondary antioxidant category [3].

Engine oils are one of the most important lubricants because vast markets and modern automobiles need more stable and high performance lubricants. Therefore, additive packages containing antioxidants, antiwear compounds, detergents, and dispersants are used for improving the performance of engine oils. Life time of engine oils has been an attractive area of research due to the environmental and economic

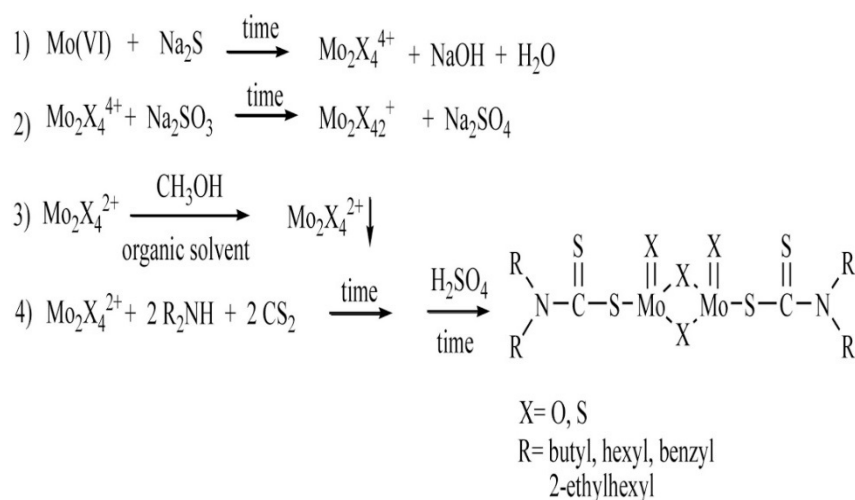
aspects. Several efficient antioxidants have been developed for engine oils such as hindered phenolic compounds [4], metal dialkyldithiophosphate [1, 2], metal dithiocarbamate [5, 6], and borate esters [7, 8].

Zinc and molybdenum dithiocarbamate (ZnDTC and MoDTC) are known as multifunctional lubricant additives used as antiwear, antioxidant, anticorrosion, and extreme pressure additives [9]. There are some methods for the preparation of these materials. Synthesis routes for zinc and molybdenum dialkyldithiocarbamate are shown in Schemes 1 and 2 respectively [10-12].



R= n-butyl, hexyl, cyclohexyl, 2-ethylhexyl, benzyl

**Scheme 1: Synthesis of zinc dialkyldithiocarbamate (ZnDTC).**



**Scheme 2: Synthesis of molybdenum dialkyldithiocarbamate (MoDTC).**

In this work, we report our study on the antioxidant characteristics and measurement of the oxidation inhibition time of zinc and molybdenum dithiocarbamates containing different alkyl groups. These antioxidants are then compared with zinc dialkyldithiophosphate and the synergism effect of MoDTC and ZDDP is investigated.

## EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

All reagents and solvents were purchased from Merck Chemical Company and used without further purification. Zinc and molybdenum dithiocarbamates were synthesized according to the procedures reported in the literature [10, 11].

**Zinc Dithiocarbamates:** To a solution of 0.1 mole of dialkylamine in a mixture of water and



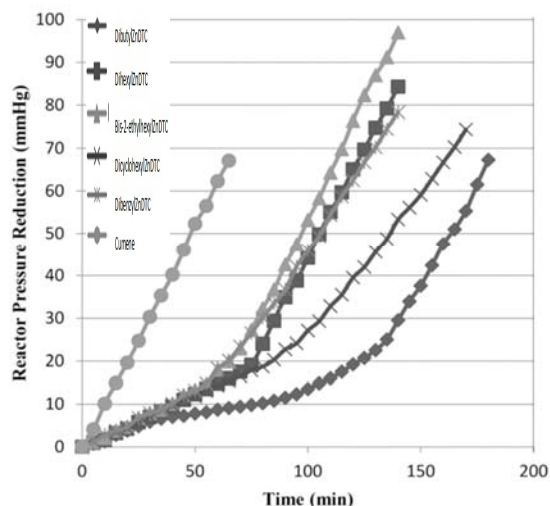


Figure 1: Effect of ZnDTC's (0.0005 M) on the oxidation of cumene

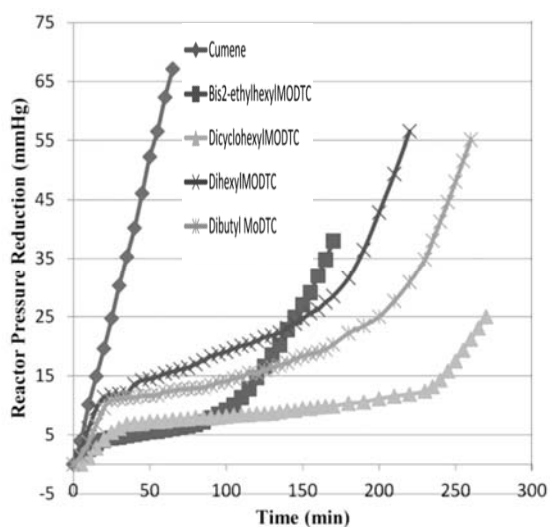


Figure 2: Effect of MoDTC's (0.0005 M) on the oxidation of cumene.

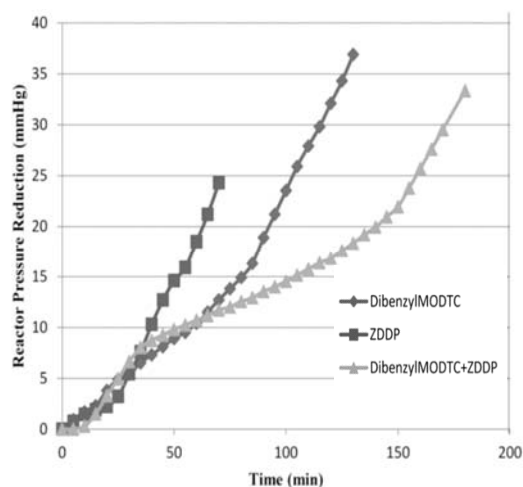


Figure 3: Synergism effect of MoDTC and ZDDP.

The synergism effect of MoDTC (oxidation inhibition time 60 min) on ZDDP (oxidation inhibition time 14 min) was also investigated and the oxidation inhibition time of about 110 min was obtained, which was greater than that of any individual antioxidant (Figure 3).

Table 1 shows the oxidation inhibition time results of ZnDTC's and MoDTC's.

Table 1: Oxidation inhibition time of ZnDTC and MoDTC.

Entry	Sample	Oxidation inhibition time (min)
1	Cumene without antioxidant	0
2	Zn dialkyldithiophosphate (ZDDP)	14
3	Zn Dibutyldithiocarbamate	105
4	Zn dicyclohexyldithiocarbamate	60
5	Zn dihexyldithiocarbamate	58
6	Zn bis (2-ethylhexyl)dithiocarbamate	50
7	Zn dibenzyl dithiocarbamate	51
8	Mo Dibutyldithiocarbamate	210
9	Mo dicyclohexyldithiocarbamate	175
10	Mo dihexyldithiocarbamate	130
11	Mo bis (2-ethylhexyl)dithiocarbamate	110
12	Mo dibenzyl dithiocarbamate	60
13	Mo dibenzylDTC + ZDDP	110

As shown in Table 1, the length of the alkyl chain is inversely proportional with the antioxidant effect of the antioxidant although the solubility of the antioxidant in the oil increases as chain length increases. This can be explained by the fact that alkyl groups participate in the oxidation, and thus increasing the alkyl chain length reduces the antioxidant effect. Thus dibenzyl group, which forms a highly stable

radical, gives the lowest oxidation inhibition time since the higher stability of the radical formed brings about a lower antioxidancy effect. molybdenum dithiocarbamates are excellent antioxidants for hydrocarbons and lubricants such as engine oil in comparison with well-known commercial antioxidants (ZDDP). It was also shown that by increasing carbon atoms in alkyl groups, the solubility of dithiocarbamate in the lubricant increased, but antioxidant characteristics decreased. Molybdenum dibutyl dithiocarbamate showed the best antioxidancy and the oxidation inhibition time was about 210 min. The synergism effect of the combined molybdenum dibenzyl dithiocarbamate and ZDDP was also observed. Molybdenum dibenzyl dithiocarbamate and ZDDP showed an oxidation inhibition time of 60 min and 14 min respectively, while the combined sample showed a higher oxidation inhibition time (110 min).

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## CONCLUSIONS

In this study, it was shown that zinc and

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