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Graphene-based composite with high stable dispersion in ethanol / Martis, Alberto; Pirri, Candido; Bocchini, Sergio. - ELETTRONICO. - (2022). (Intervento presentato al convegno SMS 2022 / NanoMed 2022 / Sensors 2022 / EGF 2022 Joint International Conferences tenutosi a Athens, Greece nel 26-28 October 2022).

Availability:

This version is available at: 11583/2973607 since: 2022-12-06T10:18:15Z

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Graphene-based composite with high stable dispersion in ethanol.

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Abstract

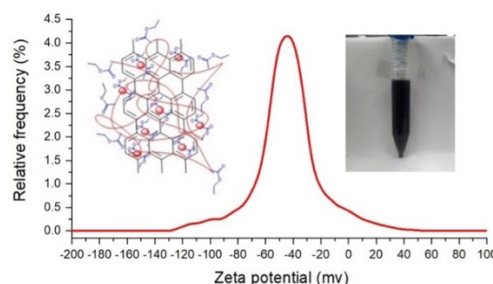
Graphene is a 2D carbo-material with very particular physical features such as electro-conductivity, thermo-conductivity, mechanical stability, and its peculiar aspect ratio with a high surface and a negligible thickness (¹⁻³). Graphene can be dispersed at high concentration only in polar aprotic solvent such as n-methyl-2-pyrrolidone or dimethyl formamide (⁴) both solvents with a high boiling point and high toxicity for the human and the environment.

For these reasons is preferred to use the oxidised form of graphene, graphene oxide (GO), most easy to disperse, and reduce it to reducer graphene oxide (rGO). However, GO have more defects on the surface than pristine graphene losing a part of the natural performance of the graphene.

Other solutions to solubilise/suspend pristine graphene is the use of molecular surfactant (⁵) or polar polymer such as the PVP (⁶⁻⁸) to disperse of the material with a good concentration in water.

In this work a new surface modification obtained by reaction with ethyl maleate made graphene easy to disperse in organic polar solvents such as ethanol. Uncontrolled growing of polymer (ethyl maleate derivate) on the surface of the material was performed by microwave reactor that allows the formation of of polymer maleate on the surface of the graphene. This material has good stability in ethanol and maintains that feature after a long time.

This process allows production of graphene-based inks or the deposition on other surfaces by simply removal of the solvent. At the same time the polyethylmaleate can be removed by simply ablation originated from heating of the material in an inert atmosphere to obtain pristine graphene with a low number of defects.



Graphene with poly maleate stability in ethanol

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