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# Heat transfer correlations for open-cellular porous materials<sup>☆</sup>

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#### **Abstract**

A general correlation for volumetric heat transfer coefficient between stream of air and open-cellular porous materials was derived utilizing experimental data obtained by several researchers. The derived correlation is written in form of  $h_v = (A/D_s^{2-n})u^n$ . Here,  $h_v$  denotes the volumetric heat transfer coefficient, A is the constant, n is the velocity exponent, u is the mean fluid velocity and  $D_s$  is the equivalent strut diameter of Dul'nev's unit cell for open-cell foam. The parameters, A and n, were determined by a least-square fit of the expression to the above-mentioned experimental data to give A = 13.0 and n = 0.791. Moreover, from the  $h_v - u$  correlation thus determined, the following Nusselt vs. Reynolds number heat transfer correlation was proposed:  $Nu_s = 0.124(Re_sPr)^{0.791}$ , where  $Nu_s$  represents the Nusselt number defined by  $h_vD_s^2/k_f$ ,  $Re_s$  denotes the Reynolds number defined by  $uD_s/v_f$ , Pr is the Prandtl number,  $k_f$  is the thermal conductivity of fluid and  $v_f$  is the kinetic viscosity of fluid. It is found that this correlation approximates 78.1% of the available experimental data with an error of less than  $\pm 40\%$ . © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Open-cellular porous material; Volumetric heat transfer coefficient; Heat transfer correlation; Nusselt number; Reynolds number

### 1. Introduction

High-porosity open-cellular porous materials, consisting of pentagonal dodecahedron unit cells with open cell-walls as shown in Fig. 1(a), are recognized to be very promising as heat transfer elements of convection—radiation—converters, regenerative heat exchangers, combustor—incinerators and so forth

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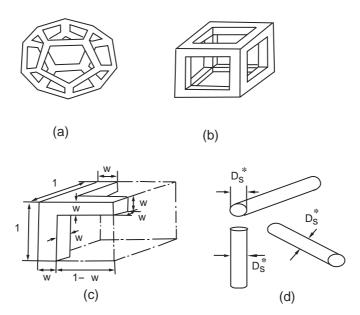


Fig. 1. Model systems for open-cellular porous materials: (a) perspective view, (b) unit cell model by Dul'nev, (c) rearranged unit cell model and (d) equivalent cylindrical struts derived from the unit cell model.

[1,2]. Thermal design and operation of these facilities require fundamental knowledge of the heat transfer characteristics of this kind of porous medium to be known.

When local thermal equilibrium between a fluid stream and the solid phase does not exit within a porous medium, a two-energy-equation model must be utilized as a heat transfer model: the volumetric heat transfer coefficient between a fluid stream and the solid phase  $h_v$  appears as parameter and must be prescribed beforehand as a function of relevant system parameters.

Considerable efforts to determine the volumetric heat transfer coefficient between air and open-cell foams [3–9] and to derive dimensionless heat transfer correlations have been made during the recent few decades, but a general Nusselt versus Reynolds number heat transfer correlation covering experimental data obtained by many researchers has not yet been established. To establish such a general heat transfer correlation, it is most important to select appropriate characteristic lengths of open-cellular porous materials. In the present paper, we propose use of an equivalent strut diameter of open-cell foam based on Dul'nev's unit cell model [10] as a representative characteristic length *l* and derive a Nusselt versus Peclet number correlation on the basis of the proposed equivalent strut diameter of open-cell foam.

### 2. Derivation of heat transfer correlations

To determine the volumetric heat transfer coefficient  $h_v$ , two kinds of experimental method have been adopted in literature: unsteady and steady methods. Almost all the previous studies have adopted the unsteady transient method called a single-blow method. In this method, transient temperature response of the solid phase of a porous medium suddenly exposed to a fluid stream with different temperature or response of exit fluid temperature of a porous medium subject to abrupt change in inlet fluid temperature are recorded and then inverse analyses of these data are conducted. On the other hand, there exist two

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