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Vacuum Film Etching Effect of Carbon Alumina
Mixed Matrix Membranes

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Abstract

This work investigates the preparation and performance of carbon alumina mixed matrix membranes (CA-MMM) by a novel vacuum-assist method by impregnating phenolic resin into a porous alumina substrate followed by pyrolysis. Increasing the precursor concentration from 1 to 20 wt% led to greater carbon pore filling and a reduction in water flux. Systematic recording of vacuum pressure showed a sharp decrease in pressure for vacuum time (t_v) < 30 s, followed by an over spike and then a steady state pressure for $t_v \geq 120$ s. A more interesting finding was the key role played by the vacuum time as water fluxes increased by almost three-fold when t_v increased from 90 to 120 s. For instance, water fluxes reached $25 \text{ L m}^{-2} \text{ h}^{-1}$ at 3.5% NaCl feed solution (75 °C) and NaCl rejection or 90%, though as high as 99.7% at 25 °C. A remarkable finding in this work is that the depth of impregnation increased to over 10 μm for $t_v \geq 120$, producing much thicker impregnated films, though delivering much higher water fluxes in desalting water. To explain this

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