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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

# Systematic optimization of poly(vinyl chloride) surface modification with an aromatic thiol

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#### Abstract

The efficient covalent functionalization of poly(vinyl chloride) (PVC), which is widely used in medical device manufacture, allows an array of potential property-enhancing surface modifications to be made. To demonstrate a general method of functionalization *via* substituted (functional) thiols, we describe a systematic approach to the optimization of PVC surface modification by nucleophilic substitution with 4-aminothiophenol through control of reaction conditions: solvent composition, sonication, reaction time and presence of base and/or phase transfer catalyst (PTC). Efficient thiol attachment was confirmed using solidstate NMR and Raman spectroscopies, and the extent of surface modification was quantified using ATR-FTIR spectroscopy. Sonicated samples exhibited a lower degree of modification than their statically immersed counterparts (21.7 vs 99.6  $\mu$ g cm<sup>-3</sup>), and mechanical integrity was compromised. In DMSO/H<sub>2</sub>O systems with a PTC, resultant degrees of PVC surface modification were up to 12.5% higher when caesium carbonate was employed as the base than in corresponding systems with potassium carbonate.

#### Keywords

PVC, thiol, nucleophilic substitution, surface modification

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