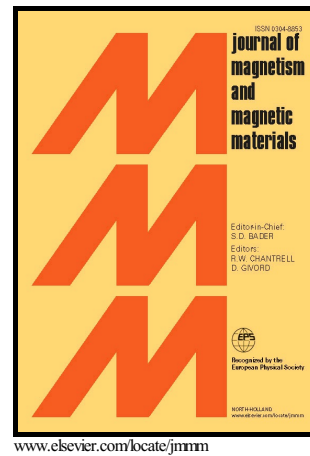


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Subrata Chakraborty, Amrendra Vijay



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Spin-Orbit Interactions and Magnetic Phase Transitions

Subrata Chakraborty and Amrendra Vijay*

Department of Chemistry, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai 600036, India

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Abstract

With the spin-orbit interaction (λ) as a tuning parameter, we show a non-trivial quantum phase transition that unambiguously links the ferromagnetic (F) and antiferromagnetic (AF) phases of the spin system wherein the Heisenberg isotropic exchange is positive. Using a spin-only exchange Hamiltonian that also faithfully accounts for the spin-orbit interactions and the double-time Green function formalism of quantum statistical mechanics, we obtain an implicit analytical expression for the average magnetization. As expected, the high temperature phase is paramagnetic (P). For $\lambda = 0$, the spin system displays a P-F transition. If the spin-orbit interaction is not quenched ($\lambda \neq 0$), the susceptibility curves reveal a robust P-AF transition. The present λ -mediated F-AF phase transition arises due to the broken inversion symmetry in the effective spin-only Hamiltonian. This is physically distinct from the Néel-VanVleck-Anderson mechanism, which posits a negative Heisenberg isotropic exchange for the existence of the AF phase, and thus offers a new perspective on quantum magnetism and other analogous complex systems.

* Correspondence to: avijay@iitm.ac.in

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