Assignment No. 2

BIO503 SPRING 2024

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Total Marks: 10

Due date: 23-May-2024

Instructions:

- **Make sure that you upload the solution file before due date. No assignment will be accepted through e-mail after the due date.**

Formatting guidelines

- Use the font style "Times New Roman" and font size "12".
- Compose your document in MS-Word, any file created in any format will not be accepted and marked zero.
- Use black and blue font colours only.

Solution guidelines

- To solve this assignment, you should have good command over lectures 77 to 121.
- This is not a group assignment; it is an individual assignment so be careful and avoid copying others' work
- Give the answer according to question only and avoid irrelevant details.

Please note that your assignment will not be graded if:

- It is submitted after due date
- The file you uploaded does not open
- The file you uploaded is copied from someone else
- It is in some format other than .doc
- Cheating or copying of assignment is strictly prohibited. The cheated or copied assignment will be marked **'Zero'**.

Question1: 10 Marks

Explain the process of Micelle formation in terms of Gibbs energy change.

(Keeping in view the hydrophobic effect mentioned in notes)

Micelle Formation and Gibbs Energy Change: Understanding the Hydrophobic Effect

Introduction

Micelles are supramolecular assemblies formed by surfactant molecules in a colloidal solution. These structures are crucial in various biological and chemical processes, including drug delivery and detergency. The formation of micelles is driven by the need to minimize the free energy of the system, a process intimately linked with the hydrophobic effect. This discussion will delve into the process of micelle formation in terms of Gibbs energy change, emphasizing the hydrophobic effect's role as described in the provided document.

Gibbs Energy Change and Micelle Formation

The formation of micelles is a thermodynamically favorable process, primarily because it leads to a decrease in the Gibbs free energy (ΔG) of the system. The Gibbs free energy change for a process can be expressed as:

- **Delta G = Delta H - T(Delta S)**

where:

- Delta G is the change in Gibbs free energy.
- Delta H is the change in enthalpy.
- T is the temperature in Kelvin.
- Delta S is the change in entropy.

Micelle formation is driven by both enthalpic and entropic factors, which are influenced by the hydrophobic effect.

The Hydrophobic Effect

The hydrophobic effect refers to the tendency of nonpolar substances to aggregate in aqueous solutions to minimize their exposure to water molecules. This phenomenon is critical in micelle formation. In water, surfactant molecules have a hydrophilic head and a hydrophobic tail. When dispersed in water, the hydrophobic tails disrupt the hydrogen-bonded network of water molecules, creating an energetically unfavorable situation .

To reduce this unfavorable condition, surfactant molecules self-assemble into micelles, where the hydrophobic tails are sequestered in the core of the micelle, away from water, while the hydrophilic heads interact with the aqueous environment. This arrangement minimizes the disruption of water's hydrogen bonding, thus lowering the system's free energy .

Entropy and Enthalpy in Micelle Formation

The entropic and enthalpic contributions to Gibbs energy change during micelle formation are significant:

1. Entropy (ΔS):

- **Increase in System Entropy**: When surfactant molecules are dispersed individually in water, they cause high structuring of water molecules around the hydrophobic tails, leading to a decrease in entropy. However, as micelles form, the hydrophobic tails aggregate, releasing structured water molecules back into the bulk water, increasing the system's entropy.

- **Decrease in Solute Entropy**: The surfactant molecules themselves lose some translational and rotational freedom when they aggregate into micelles. However, this loss is often outweighed by the increase in entropy of the water molecules .

2. Enthalpy (ΔH):

- **Hydrophobic Interactions**: The formation of micelles often involves a small decrease in enthalpy. Hydrophobic interactions among the surfactant tails are typically weak van der Waals forces. The formation of these interactions within the micelle core slightly reduces the enthalpy compared to when these tails are solvated by water.
- Overall, the increase in entropy (both of the system and of the water molecules) and the slight decrease in enthalpy make Delta G negative, driving the spontaneous formation of micelles .

The Critical Micelle Concentration (CMC)

The formation of micelles occurs only when the concentration of surfactant molecules in the solution reaches a certain threshold, known as the critical micelle concentration (CMC). Below the CMC, surfactant molecules exist primarily as monomers. Once the CMC is reached, any additional surfactant molecules aggregate to form micelles .

At the CMC, the free energy change for micelle formation from monomers is zero:

- **Delta G_micelle = Delta G_aggregate - Delta G_monomer = 0**

Beyond this point, the free energy continues to decrease, favoring micelle formation.

Thermodynamics of Micelle Formation

To quantitatively understand micelle formation, we can consider the standard free energy change for the process:

Delta G_micelle^0 = RT ln (CMC/[surfactant])

where:

- R is the universal gas constant.
- T is the temperature in Kelvin.
- [surfactant] is the concentration of the surfactant.

At the CMC, this equation shows that the free energy change is minimized, making micelle formation energetically favorable .

Conclusion

Micelle formation is a classic example of a self-assembly process driven by thermodynamic principles. The hydrophobic effect plays a crucial role in reducing the Gibbs free energy of the system, leading to the spontaneous formation of micelles. By aggregating the hydrophobic tails into the micelle core and exposing the hydrophilic heads to water, the system minimizes free energy changes through favorable enthalpy and entropy contributions. This process highlights the intricate balance of molecular interactions and thermodynamic forces that govern biological and chemical systems.

Understanding the thermodynamics of micelle formation provides insight into many biological processes and the design of various industrial and pharmaceutical applications .

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