

Interactive comment on “Formation of secondary organic aerosols from the ozonolysis of dihydrofurans” by Yolanda Díaz de Mera et al.

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Answer to referee #3. We sincerely thank the comments of the referee. Additional information is now included together with data from new experiments carried out during these few weeks in line with the requirements of the referee.

High reactant concentrations. We have carried out experiments at lower concentrations. Thus, for example, for 2,5-DHF no particles were detected for 0.02, 0.04 and 0.02 ppm concentrations of 2,5-DHF, ozone and SO₂, respectively. For 0.05, 0.1 and 0.05 ppm concentrations (2,5-DHF, ozone and SO₂) NPF could be observed but particle number concentration, particle size diameter and particle mass concentration were very low and noisy and could not be measured accurately. To assess the effects of water, SO₂ and ozone, the concentrations had to be increased. “Completely dry

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conditions” and sulphuric acid measurements. This term has been removed from the manuscript. For the experiments with dried synthetic air (passing through a liquid nitrogen trap), the concentration of water in the reactor has been estimated. We have conducted a series of experiments to test the possibility of SO₃ –water reaction in the reactor and to estimate the water concentration. We have used a degassed sample of solid sulfur trioxide (99.5%, stabilized, Aldrich) contained in a glass flask to obtain different SO₃ concentrations in the reactor (as it was done in previous studies (Jayne, 1997). Freshly dried synthetic air was mixed with SO₃ in the teflon reactor and the mixture was continuously monitored by the CPC for 40 minutes. The figure shows the results for experiments with SO₃ concentration in the range 1 to 12 ppb. No particles could be observed for experiments with low initial SO₃ concentrations. On the other hand, NPF was observed for the experiments with SO₃ in the range 6 to 12 ppb. Under these experimental conditions, nucleation is attributed to the formation of H₂SO₄ from the reaction of SO₃ and the residual H₂O. The overall gas-phase reaction H₂O + SO₃ → H₂SO₄ exhibits a second-order dependence on water vapor concentration, the first-order rate coefficient for the SO₃ loss being $k = 3.90 \times 10^{-41} \exp(6830.6/T) [H_2O]^2$ (Jayne, 1997). Taking into account that the approximate H₂SO₄ gas phase concentration able to nucleate is around 5×10^6 molecule cm⁻³ (Metzger, 2010), the concentration of water in the reactor may be obtained by simulating the SO₃ and H₂SO₄ profiles for different guessed H₂O profiles. Thus for example, since no NPF was observed for the experiment with 2 ppb of SO₃, the water concentration must be below 15 ppb. On the other hand from the experiment with 6 ppb of SO₃, a 20 ppb water concentration is required to reproduce the observed nucleation. From all the experiments carried out, we estimate that water concentration in the reactor is 20+10 ppb. To check for permeation through the reactor wall, some experiments have been also carried out with dry air after 1 hour in the reactor. The results were similar to those carried out with freshly dried air.

Figure 1

This figure and the related discussion has been included in the supporting information.

C2

SO₂ time series. According to the SO₂ comments, direct measurements of SO₂ are included in this reply and in the revised manuscript. We have also carried out new experiments with lower SO₂ concentrations in the range 10-20 ppb. In all cases the profile of SO₂ remained nearly constant. For example it was 10.0 ± 0.2 ppb during the whole experiment for the experiments with 10 ppb of SO₂. A first order loss rate constant may be derived from the SO₂ profile: $k = 8.5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$. Thus, SO₂ losses (if they occur) are very low. See the figure. Figure 2

To check the possibility of SO₃ production, we can assume a simple mechanism where any lost SO₂ molecule would be converted exclusively into SO₃: $\text{SO}_2 \rightarrow \text{SO}_3$ $k = 8.5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$ $[\text{SO}_2]_0 = 10 \text{ ppb}$ And then SO₃ would exclusively react with water to produce H₂SO₄: $\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{SO}_3 \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ $k = 3.90 \times 10^{-4} \text{ exp}(6830.6/T) [\text{H}_2\text{O}]^2$ (Jayne, 1997) Simulating the SO₂, SO₃ and H₂O profiles for a 20 ppb water concentration and for 10 ppb initial SO₂ concentration, it would require more than 1 hour to generate $5 \times 10^6 \text{ molecule cm}^{-3}$ of H₂SO₄, which is the approximate concentration able to nucleate (Metzger, 2010). For 20 ppb initial SO₂ concentration it would require 28 minutes. Nevertheless, for these experiments nucleation was visible at 2 minutes (almost instantaneous if we take away the mixing time of reactants). Thus, considering the low levels of water vapour in the reactor and the observation of nearly constant SO₂ for the experiments with lower SO₂ concentrations, the contribution of SO₃-H₂SO₄ pathway to NPF seems to be minor and unable to lead to nucleation by itself. In this sense the catalytic pathway releasing SO₂, which is thermodynamic-favourable, may be the key to NPF.

Cyclohexane - OH scavenger. Relatively high levels of OH would deplete SO₂ if SO₂ concentration were very low. Nevertheless, even in those experiments where OH level could be higher (the experiments with dihydrofurans and ozone concentrations in the range of 0.5 and 1.0 ppm, respectively) and low SO₂ concentration (in the range of 10 ppb), the SO₂ concentration did not fall during the experiment. These results suggest that residual OH concentration must be negligible in the system.

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Main changes in the manuscript. Page 1, line 14. It has been rewritten. Water presence at ppb-ppm concentration may have an effect on SOA production. Nevertheless, for higher concentrations, no effect was found. Page 1, line 18. SO₃ role is not overall ruled out. SO₂ catalysed reactions are suggested as an additional pathway to NPF.

Page 1, line 18. SO₃ is not excluded as a possible intermediate to produce SOA.

Page 3, line 31. The term "completely dry conditions" has been removed.

Page 4, line 4. The estimated water concentration inside the reactor is stated.

Page 4, line 22. The experiments carried out with the ozone analyser are introduced.

Page 6. Line 9. New data and discussion about SO₂, SO₃ and sulfuric acid is introduced.

Page 7, line 21. New data and discussion about SO₂, SO₃ and sulfuric acid is introduced.

Page 9, line 29. The energy of the first step of the ozonolysis is introduced.

Page 10, line 18. From the results of this study, (R4) is suggested as the probable pathway to NPF.

Page 10, line 24. Vapour pressure estimates are given.

Page 11, line 14. SO₃ role is not overall ruled out. The statements concerning SO₂ are restricted to low SO₂ concentration conditions.

Table 2. The optimized energies of the reactants and first ozonides are included in the table.

Figure 2 includes experimental gas-phase profiles for SO₂ and O₃.

Figure 3 includes the O₃ experimental profile.

Figure 5a. Reactants and the first ozonides have been included in the mechanism

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scheme.

New figures, S1 and S3, have been introduced in the supporting information.

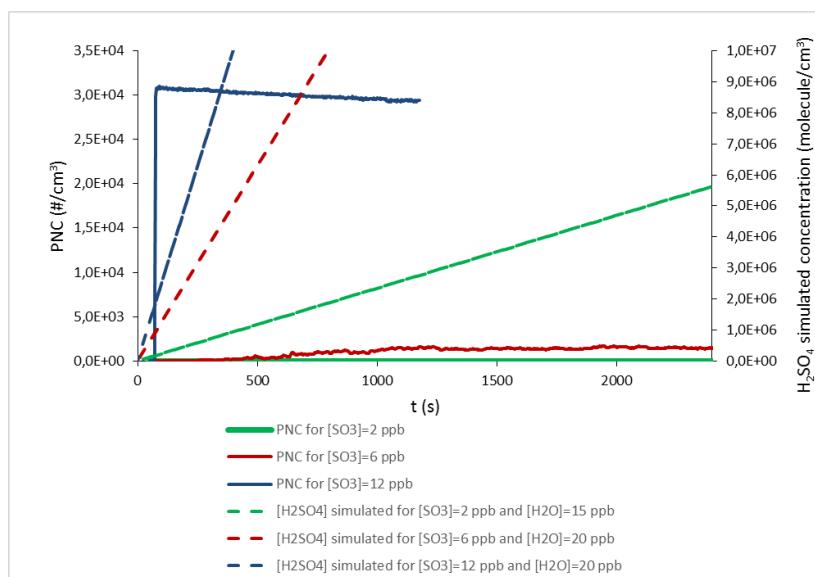
References: Jayne, J. T., Po1schl, U., Chen, Y., Dai, D., Molina, L.T., Worsnop, D.R., Kolb, C.E., Molina, M. J.: Pressure and Temperature Dependence of the Gas-Phase Reaction of SO₃ with H₂O and the Heterogeneous Reaction of SO₃ with H₂O/H₂SO₄ Surfaces. *J. Phys. Chem. A*, 101, 10000-10011, 1997. Kurtén, T., Lane, J. R., Jørgensen, S., Kjaergaard, H. G.: A Computational Study of the Oxidation of SO₂ to SO₃ by Gas-Phase Organic Oxidants. *J. Phys. Chem. A*, 116, 6823-6830, 2011. Metzger, A., Verheggen, B., Dommen, J., Duplissy, J., Prevota, A. S. H., Weingartner, E., Riipinen, I., Kulmala, M., Spracklend, D. V., Carslaw, K. S., Baltensperger, U.: Evidence for the role of organics in aerosol particle formation under atmospheric conditions. *PNAS*. 107, 6646-6651, 2010. Murphy, D., M. and Koop, T.: Review of the vapour pressures of ice and supercooled water for atmospheric applications, *Quart. J. Royal Meterol. Soc.*, 131, 1539–1565, 2005. Vereecken, L., Harder, H., Novelli, A.: The reaction of Criegee intermediates with NO, RO₂, and SO₂, and their fate in the atmosphere, *Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys.*, 14, 14682–14695, 2012.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

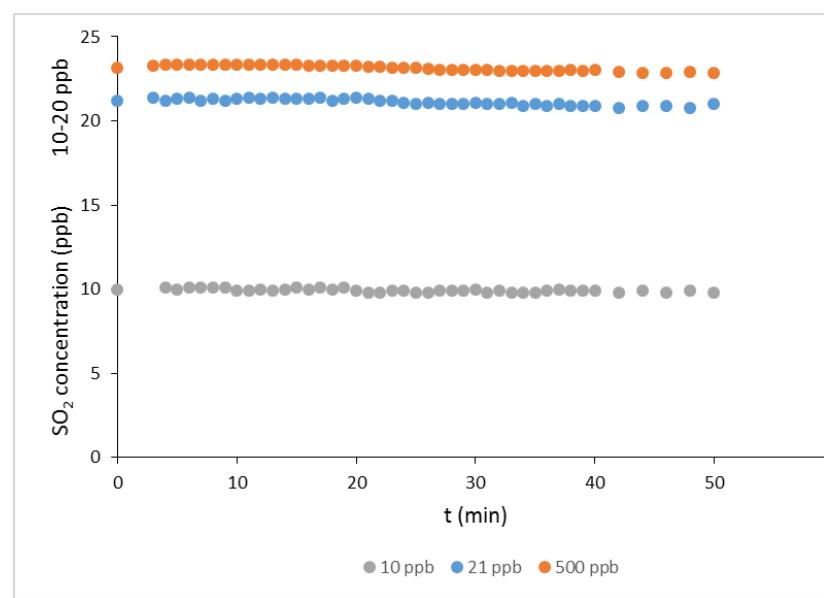
<http://www.atmos-chem-phys-discuss.net/acp-2016-891/acp-2016-891-AC3-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on *Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss.*, doi:10.5194/acp-2016-891, 2016.

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