

Measuring experimental cyclohexane-water distribution coefficients for the SAMPL5 challenge

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Small molecule distribution coefficients between immiscible nonaqueous and aqueous phases—such as cyclohexane and water—measure the degree to which small molecules prefer one phase over another at a given pH. As distribution coefficients capture both thermodynamic effects (the free energy of transfer between phases) and chemical effects (protonation state and tautomer effects in aqueous solution), they provide an exacting test of the thermodynamic and chemical accuracy of physical models without the long correlation times inherent to the prediction of more complex properties of relevance to drug discovery, such as protein-ligand binding affinities. For the SAMPL5 challenge, we carried out a blind prediction exercise in which participants were tasked with the prediction of distribution coefficients to assess its potential as a new route for the evaluation and systematic improvement of predictive physical models. These measurements are typically performed for octanol-water, but we opted to utilize cyclohexane for the nonpolar phase. Cyclohexane was suggested to avoid issues with the high water content and persistent heterogeneous structure of water-saturated octanol phases, since it has greatly reduced water content and a homogeneous liquid structure. Using a modified shake-flask LC-MS/MS protocol, we collected cyclohexane/water distribution coefficients for a set of 53 druglike compounds at pH 7.4. These measurements were used as the basis for the SAMPL5 Distribution Coefficient Challenge, where 18 research groups predicted these measurements before the experimental values reported here were released. In this work, we describe the experimental protocol we utilized for measurement of cyclohexane-water distribution coefficients, report the measured data, propose a new bootstrap-based data analysis procedure to incorporate multiple sources of experimental error, and provide insights to help guide future iterations of this valuable exercise in predictive modeling.

Keywords: partition coefficients; distribution coefficients; blind challenge; predictive modeling; SAMPL

Abbreviations used in this paper

I. INTRODUCTION

SAMPL - Statistical Assessment of the Modeling of Proteins and Ligands

log P - \log_{10} partition coefficient

log D - \log_{10} distribution coefficient

LC-MS/MS - Liquid chromatography - tandem mass spectrometry

HPLC - High-pressure liquid chromatography

MRM - Multiple reaction monitoring

PTFE - Polytetrafluoroethylene

DMSO - Dimethyl sulfoxide

PBS - Phosphate buffered saline

RPM - Revolutions per minute

CV - Coefficient of variation

MAP - Maximum *a posteriori*

MCMC - Markov chain Monte Carlo

Rigorous assessment of the predictive performance of physical models is critical in evaluating the current state of physical modeling for drug discovery, assessing the potential impact of current models in active drug discovery projects, and identifying limits of the domain of applicability that require new models or improved algorithms. Past iterations of the SAMPL (**S**tatistical **A**ssessment of the **M**odeling of **P**roteins and **L**igands) experiment have demonstrated that blind predictive challenges can expose weaknesses in computational methods for predicting protein-ligand binding affinities and poses, hydration free energies, and host-guest binding affinities [1–4]. In addition, these blind challenges have contributed new, high-quality datasets to the community that have enabled retrospective validation studies and data-based parameterization efforts to further advance the current state of physical modeling.

By focusing community effort on the prediction of hydration free energies in the first few iterations of this challenge, the SAMPL experiments have now brought physical modeling approaches to the point where they can reliably identify erroneous experimental data [5]. While hydration free energy exercises have shown their utility in improving the state of physical modeling, they are laborious, require specialized equipment no longer found in modern laboratories, are (at

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least using traditional protocols) limited in dynamic range, and are of questionable applicability in their ability to mimic protein-to-solvent transfer. As a result, no experimental laboratory has emerged to provide new hydration free energy measurements to sustain this aspect of the SAMPL challenge. We sought to replace this component of the SAMPL challenge portfolio with a new physical property that was easy to measure, accessible to multiple laboratories, had a wide dynamic range (in a free energy scale), and better mimicked physical and chemical effects relevant to protein-to-solvent transfer free energies, but was still free of the conformational sampling challenges protein-ligand binding affinities present. As the measurement of partition and distribution coefficients is now widespread in pharma (due to its relevance in optimizing lipophilicity of small molecules), we posited that a blind challenge centered around the prediction of distribution coefficients—which face many of the same physical and chemical effects (such as protonation state [6, 7] and tautomer issues [8]) observed in protein-ligand binding—might provide such a challenge.

While the measurement of octanol/water distribution coefficients is commonplace (a 2008 benchmark of structure- and property-based log P prediction methods used 96,000 experimental measurements [9]), a number of previously-reported complications in the physical simulation of 1-octanol suggested that this might be too complex for an initial distribution coefficient challenge [10–13], despite some recent reports of success [14]. In particular, water-saturated octanol is very wet, containing 47 ± 1 mg water/g solution [15], and forms complex microclusters or inverse-micelles that create a heterogeneous environment that persist for long simulation times [10–13]. For the inaugural distribution coefficient challenge in SAMPL5, we therefore chose to measure cyclohexane/water distribution coefficients. The water content of water-saturated cyclohexane is much lower than water-saturated octanol—0.12 mg water/g solution, approximately 400 times smaller [16–18], and possesses no long-lived heterogeneous structure [19].

The number of freely available sources of cyclohexane-water partition is very limited, and for the purpose of the SAMPL5 distribution coefficient challenge [20], blind data was required. As part of an internship program at Genentech arranged by the coauthors, the lead author was dispatched to work out modifications of a high-throughput shake-flask protocol [21] currently in use for octanol/water distribution coefficient measurements. In particular, the low dielectric constant of cyclohexane (2.0243) compared to 1-octanol (10.30) [22] and cyclohexane’s surprising ability to dissolve laboratory consumables presented some unexpected challenges. In this report, we describe the modified protocol that resulted, and provide suggestions on how it can further be refined for future iterations of the distribution coefficient challenge. Of 95 lead-like molecules with diverse functional groups selected for measurement, we report 53 log D measurements that passed quality controls that were used in the SAMPL5 challenge.

To ensure the reported experimental dataset is useful in assessing, falsifying, and improving computational physical

models of physical properties, we require a robust approach to estimating the experimental error (uncertainty in experimental measurements). We explored several procedures for propagating known sources of error in the measurement process into the final reported log distribution coefficients, and report those efforts here. Our primary approach features a parametric bootstrap, which allows the use of a physical model of the data generating process to sample additional realizations of the data, using distributions specified in the model. These additional realizations are new data points, over which estimates can be calculated. We compared this to a nonparametric bootstrap, which can be useful if a physical model can not be constructed. This method generates new data points as well, but it constructs them from selection with replacement from the existing data. We also calculated the arithmetic mean and standard error of the measured data. We hope that future efforts to measure cyclohexane-water distribution coefficients can benefit from the model we have developed, so that this work will also be useful for future challenges.

All code used in the analysis, as well as raw and processed data, can be found at <https://github.com/choderalab/sampl5-experimental-logd-data>.

Theory of distribution coefficients

The *distribution coefficient*, D , is a measure of preferential distribution of a given compound (solute) between two immiscible solvents at a specified pH, usually specified as log D in its base-10 logarithmic form,

$$\log D_{\text{solvent1/solvent2}}^{\text{pH}} = \log_{10} \frac{[\text{Solute}]_{\text{solvent1, pH}}}{[\text{Solute}]_{\text{solvent2, pH}}} \quad (1)$$

Typically, one solvent is aqueous and buffered at the specified pH (e.g. Tris pH 7.4), while the other is apolar (e.g. 1-octanol). At the given pH, the solute may populate multiple protonation or tautomeric states, but the total concentration summed over all states is used in the calculation of concentrations in Equation (1). The total salt concentration of the aqueous phase can also play a role, in case salts can provide stabilization of an ionic state of the ligand in the aqueous phase [23]. Additionally, temperature can cause shifts in the equilibrium populations [23]. Because of this, care must be exercised when comparing distribution coefficients obtained under different experimental conditions.

For the SAMPL5 challenge, we concern ourselves with the cyclohexane-water distribution coefficient, where phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) at pH 7.4 is used for the aqueous phase, at a temperature of 25 °C:

$$\log D_{\text{chx/wat}}^{\text{pH 7.4}} = \log_{10} \frac{[\text{Solute}]_{\text{cyclohexane}}}{[\text{Solute}]_{\text{PBS, pH 7.4}}} \quad (2)$$

Another commonly reported value is the *partition coefficient* P , which quantifies the relative concentration of the neutral

157 species in each phase, again usually specified in \log_{10} form, 203

$$\log P_{\text{chx/wat}} = \log_{10} \frac{[\text{Solute}]_{\text{cyclohexane}}^{\text{neutral}}}{[\text{Solute}]_{\text{PBS, pH 7.4}}^{\text{neutral}}} \quad (3)$$

158 For ligands with a single titratable site and known pK_a , one 204
159 can readily convert between $\log P$ and $\log D$ for a given pH 205
160 (see, e.g. [23]), but ligands with more complex protonation 206
161 state effects or tautomeric state effects make accounting for 207
162 the transfer free energies of all species significantly more 208
163 challenging. 209
210

164 II. EXPERIMENTAL METHODS

165 In the following sections we describe how we measured 211
166 cyclohexane/water distribution coefficients for the 53 com- 212
167 pounds displayed in Figure 1. The compound selection pro- 213
168 cedure is described in Section II A. 214

169 Distribution coefficient measurements utilized a shake- 215
170 flask approach based on a liquid chromatography–tandem 216
171 mass spectrometry (LC–MS/MS) technique previously devel- 217
172 oped for 1-octanol/water distribution coefficient measure- 218
173 ments [21]. The approach is described in Section II B, and the 219
174 procedure is schematically summarized in Figure 2. 220

175 The measured data was subjected to a quality control pro- 221
176 cedure that eliminated measurements thought to be too un- 222
177 reliable for use in the SAMPL5 challenge (Section II C). Re- 223
178 maining data were analyzed using a physical model of the 224
179 experiment by means of a parametric bootstrap procedure. 225
180 We compared this approach to a nonparametric bootstrap 226
181 approach, and the arithmetic mean and standard error of the 227
182 data without bootstrap analysis. In Section II D, we describe 228
183 each approach. The results for each approach can be found 229
184 in Table 1. 230

185 A. Compound selection

186 Compounds were initially selected from a database of 231
187 9115 lead-like molecules available in eMolecules that were 232
188 present in the Genentech chemical stores in quantities of 233
189 over 2 mg, with molecular weights between 150–350 Da. The 234
190 lower bound on molecular weight was chosen to increase 235
191 the likelihood of detectability by mass spectrometry, and the 236
192 upper bound to limit molecular complexity. 237

193 We initially chose approximately 88 compounds based on 238
194 several criteria: 239

- 195 • First, we selected 8 carboxylic acid compounds. These 240
196 were of potential interest for the purpose of the chal- 241
197 lenge, since it was suspected these could potentially 242
198 partition along into the cyclohexane phase together 243
199 with water or cations [23]. 244
- 200 • The software MoKa, version 2.5 was used to obtain cal- 245
201 culated $\log P$, $\log D$, and pK_a values [24, 25]. This ver- 246
202 sion of MoKa was trained with Roche internal data to 247

improve accuracy. We selected 20 compounds with 248
predicted pK_a values that would potentially be meas- 249
urable with a Sirius T3 instrument (Sirius Analytical) 250
so validation with an orthogonal technique (electro- 251
chemical titration) could be performed in the future. 252
The pK_a predictions for compounds in our final data 253
set have been made available in the Supplementary 254
Information. 255

- The remaining compounds were divided into 10 equal- 256
size bins that spanned the predicted dynamic range of 257
 $\log P$ values (–3.0 to 6.6), and 6 compounds were 258
drawn from each bin, to a total of 60. 259

260 This set of 88 molecules was later reduced to 64 molecules 261
262 due to the unavailability of some compounds or the inability 263
264 to detect molecular fragments by mass spectrometry at the 264
265 time of measurement. This selection was expanded to in- 266
267 clude 31 compounds used as internal standards for the previ- 267
268 ously developed octanol/water assay protocol [21], bringing 268
269 the total number of compounds for which measurements 269
270 were performed to 95. These compounds were randomly 270
271 assigned numerical SAMPL_XXX designations for the SAMPL5 271
272 blind challenge. After the quality control filtering phase (Sec- 272
273 tion II C), the resulting data set contained 53 compounds, 273
274 which are displayed in Figure 1. Canonical isomeric SMILES 274
275 representations for the compounds can also be found in 275
276 Table S1. These were generated using OpenEye Toolkits 276
277 v2015.June by converting 3D SDF files, after manually ver- 277
278 ifying the correct stereochemistry. 278

231 B. Shake-flask measurement protocol for cyclohexane/water 232 distribution coefficients

233 We adapted a shake-flask assay method from an original 233
234 octanol/water LC–MS/MS protocol [21] to accommodate the 234
235 use of cyclohexane for the nonaqueous phase. Our modified 235
236 protocol is described here, and the procedure is explained 236
237 schematically in Figure 2. 237

238 The $\log D$ is estimated by quantifying the concentration of 238
239 a solute directly from two immiscible layers, present as an 239
240 emulsion in a single vial. Capped glass 1.5 mL auto-injector 240
241 vials with PTFE-coated silicone septa¹ were used for parti- 241
242 tioning, as cyclohexane was found to dissolve polystyrene 242
243 96-well plates used in the original protocol. 243

244 For each individual experiment, 10 μL of 10 mM compound 244
245 in dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO)² and 5 μL of 200 μM propanolol 245
246 in acetonitrile (an internal standard) were added to 500 μL 246
247 cyclohexane³, followed by the addition of 500 μL of PBS so- 247
248 lution⁴. The ionic components of the buffer were chosen to 248
249 replicate the buffer conditions used in other in-vitro assays at 249

¹ Shimadzu cat. no. 228-45450-91

² DMSO stocks from Genentech compound library

³ ACS grade $\geq 99\%$, Sigma-Aldrich cat. no 179191-2L, batch #00555ME

⁴ 136 mM NaCl, 2.6 mM KCl, 7.96 mM Na_2HPO_4 , 1.46 mM KH_2PO_4 , with pH adjusted to 7.4, prepared by the Genentech Media lab

250 Genentech. Unlike the original protocol, neither phase was
251 presaturated prior to pipetting.

252 The solute was allowed to partition between solvents while
253 the mixture was shaken for 50 minutes using a plate shaker⁵
254 at 800 RPM, while the vials were mounted in a vial holder and
255 taped down to the sides of the vial holder⁶. The two solvents
256 were then separated by centrifugation for 5 minutes at 3700
257 RPM in a plate centrifuge, using the plate rotor⁷, with the
258 vials seated in the same vial holder.

259 Aliquots were extracted from each separated phase using a
260 standard adjustable micropipette, and transferred into a 384-
261 well glass-coated polypropylene plate for subsequent quan-
262 tification⁸. Cyclohexane wells were first prepared with 45
263 μL of 1-octanol⁹ per well. 5 μL of cyclohexane was extracted
264 from the top phase by micropipette and mixed with 45 μL of
265 octanol in the 384 well plate. 50 μL of aqueous solution was
266 subsequently extracted from the bottom phase. The octanol
267 dilution was performed mainly to prevent accumulation of
268 cyclohexane on the C18 HPLC columns¹⁰ that were used. For
269 the aqueous (bottom) phase, the aliquot of 50 μL was trans-
270 ferred directly into the 384-well plate, into wells that did not
271 contain octanol. The 384-well plates were sealed with using
272 glueless aluminum foil seals¹¹, and fragment concentrations
273 assayed using quantitative LC-MS/MS.

274 Measuring solute distribution into the two phases depends
275 on two separate mass spectrometry measurements¹²:

- 276 • The solute is analyzed to identify and select parent
277 and daughter ions, and optimize ion fragment param-
278 eters¹³.

279 We used a flow rate of 0.2 mL/min, mobile phase of
280 water/acetonitrile/formic acid (50/50/0.1 v/v/v) and 1.5
281 min run time. All parameters were automatically stored
282 for further multiple-reaction monitoring (MRM) anal-
283 ysis. For several compounds, the fragment identifi-
284 cation LC-MS/MS procedure did not yield high inten-
285 sity fragments, and these could therefore not be mea-
286 sured using the MRM approach. All identified parent
287 and daughter ions are available as part of the Supple-
288 mentary Information.

- A separate mass spectrometer is employed using MRM
to select for parent ions and daughter ions of the so-
lute identified in the previous step. The mass/charge
(m/z) intensity (proportional to the absolute number of
molecules) is quantified as a function of the retention
time¹⁴. Information on the gradient can be found in
Supplementary Table 1 of Lin and Pease 2013 [21].

Highest m/z intensity fragments were selected using 5 mM
solutions consisting of 50% DMSO, 50% acetonitrile.

From each solvent phase in the partitioning experiment,
one aliquot was prepared, and replicate MRM measurements
were performed 3 times per aliquot. The log D can be cal-
culated from the relative MRM-signals, obtained by integrat-
ing the single peak in the MRM-chromatogram, using Equa-
tion (4).

$$\log D_{\text{chx/wat}}^{\text{pH } 7.4} = \log_{10} \frac{\text{MRM signal}_{\text{cyclohexane}} / [d_{\text{chx}} v_{\text{inj, chx}}]}{\text{MRM signal}_{\text{PBS, pH } 7.4} / v_{\text{inj, PBS}}} \quad (4)$$

The cyclohexane signal is normalized by the dilution fac-
tor of our cyclohexane aliquots, $d_{\text{chx}} = 0.1$, and the injec-
tion volume $v_{\text{inj, chx}}$. As the PBS aliquots were not diluted,
this is only normalized by the injection volume $v_{\text{inj, PBS}}$. Ex-
periments were carried out independently at least in dupli-
cate, repeated from the same DMSO stock solutions. Injec-
tion volumes of the MRM procedure were 1 μL for cyclohex-
ane (diluted in octanol), and 2 μL for PBS samples. To op-
timize experimental parameters, we carried out two addi-
tional repeat experiments with 2 μL injections for cyclohex-
ane (diluted in octanol), and 1 μL for PBS. This set included
SAMPL5_003, SAMPL5_005, SAMPL5_006, SAMPL5_011,
SAMPL5_027, SAMPL5_049, SAMPL5_050, SAMPL5_055,
SAMPL5_058, SAMPL5_060, and SAMPL5_061. The addi-
tional repeats were carried with higher cyclohexane injection
volumes to increase the strength of signal in the cyclohexane
phase, and lower PBS volumes to decrease the chances of
oversaturation of PBS phase signals.

C. Quality control

In order to eliminate measurements thought to be too
unreliable for the SAMPL5 challenge, we utilized a simple
quality control filter after MRM quantification. Compounds
where the integrated MRM signal within either phase var-
ied between replicates or repeats by more than a factor of
10 were excluded from further analysis. We additionally re-
moved compounds that exceeded the dynamic range of the
assay because they did not produce a detectable MRM signal
in either the cyclohexane or buffer phases during the quan-
tification.

⁵ Thermo Fisher Scientific, Titer Plate Shaker, model: 4625, Waltham, MA, USA

⁶ Agilent Technologies, Vial plate for holding 54 x 2 mL vials part no. G2255-68700

⁷ Eppendorf, Centrifuge 5804, Hamburg, Germany

⁸ 384-well glass coat plate: Thermo Scientific, Microplate, 384-Well; Web-seal Plate; Glass-coated Polypropylene; Square well shape; U-Shape well bottom; 384 wells; 90 μL sample volume; catalog number: 3252187

⁹ ACROS Organics, 1-octanol 99% pure, catalog number: AC150630010, Geel, Belgium

¹⁰ Waters Xbridge C18 2.130 mm with 2.5 μm particles

¹¹ Agilent cat no 24214-001

¹² All LC solvents were HPLC-grade and purchased from OmniSolv (Charlotte, NC, USA)

¹³ This was done using a Shimadzu NexeraX2 consisting of an LC-30AD (pump), SIL-30AC (auto-injector), and SPD-20AC (UV/VIS detector) with Sciex API4000QTRP (MS)

¹⁴ This was done using a Shimadzu NexeraX2 consisting of an LC-30AD (pump), SIL-30AC (auto-injector), and SPD-20AC (UV/VIS detector) with Sciex API4000 (MS)

D. Bootstrap analysis

2. Nonparametric bootstrap

Since our ultimate goal is to compare predicted distribution coefficients to experiment to evaluate the accuracy of current-generation physical modeling approaches, it is critical to have an accurate assessment of the uncertainty in the experimental measurement. Good approaches to uncertainty analysis propagate all known sources of experimental error into the final estimates of uncertainty. To accomplish this, we developed a parametric bootstrap model [26] of the experiment based on earlier work [27], with the goal of propagating pipetting volume and technical replicate errors through the complex analysis procedure to estimate their impact on the overall estimated log D measurements.

Bootstrap approaches provide new synthetic data sets, denoted as realizations, sampled using some function of the observed data that approximates the distribution that the observed data was drawn from. For each compound that was measured, suppose our data set provides N independent repeats (from the same stock solution, typically 2 or 4), and 3 technical replicates for each repeat (quantitation experiments from each repeat, typically 3). Each realization of the bootstrap process leads to a new synthetic data set, of the same size, from which a set of synthetic distribution coefficients can be computed for the realization. We applied two additional approaches for comparison to assess the performance of our parametric bootstrap method (Section II D 1). One features a nonparametric bootstrap approach (Section II D 2), which does not include any physical details. The other is a calculation of the arithmetic mean and standard error that is limited to the observed data (Section II D 3).

1. Parametric bootstrap

We used a parametric bootstrap [28] method to introduce a random bias and variance into the data, based on known experimental sources. This procedure allows us to use a model to propagate known uncertainty throughout the procedure [28]. This allows us to better estimate the distribution that the observed data was drawn from, so that more accurate estimates of the means and sample variance can be obtained.

Uncertainties in pipetting operations were modeled based on manufacturer descriptions [29, 30], following the work of Hanson, Ekins and Chodera [27]. Technical replicate variation was modeled by calculating the coefficient of variation (CV) between individual experimental replicates. We then took the mean CV of the entire data set, which was found to be ~ 0.3 . As a control, we verified that the CV did not depend on the solvent phase that was measured. We included this in the parametric model by adding a signal imprecision, modeled by a normal distribution with zero mean, and a standard deviation of 0.3. We perform a total of 5 000 realizations of this process, and calculate statistics over all realizations, such as the mean (expectation) and standard deviation (estimate of standard error) for each measurement.

A traditional nonparametric Monte Carlo procedure was applied to resample data points [26]. This approach can estimate the distribution that the observed data was drawn from by resampling from the observed data with replacement, to generate a new set of data points with size equal to the observed data set. Nonparametric bootstrap can be a useful approach if larger amounts of data are available, and a detailed physical model of the experiment is absent. We implemented the procedure in two stages:

1. A set of N repeats is drawn with replacement from the original set of measured repeats.
2. For each of the repeats, we similarly draw a set of 3 technical replicates from the original set of technical replicates.

This yields a sample data set with the same size as the originally observed data (N repeats, with 3 replicates each). We perform a total of 5 000 realizations of this process, and calculate statistics over all realizations, such as the mean (expectation) and standard deviation (estimate of standard error) for each measurement.

3. Arithmetic mean and sample variance

We calculated the arithmetic mean over all replicates and repeats, and estimated the standard error from the total of 6 or 12 data points, to compare to our bootstrap estimates.¹⁵

E. Kernel densities

As a visual guide, in Figure 3 data are plotted on top of an estimated density of points. This density was calculated using kernel density estimation [31], which is a nonparametric way to estimate a distribution of points using kernel functions. Kernel functions assign density to individual points in a data set, so that the combined set of data points reflects a distribution of the data. We used the implementation available in the python package seaborn, version 0.7.0 [32]. We used a product of Gaussian kernels, with a bandwidth of 0.4 for log D and 0.3 for the standard error. To prevent artifacts such as negative density estimates for the standard errors, they were first transformed by the natural logarithm \ln , and the results were then converted back into standard errors by exponentiation.

¹⁵ For the purpose of the D3R/SAMPL5 workshop, we originally erroneously reported the standard deviation $\cdot\sqrt{3}$ instead of the standard error $\cdot\sqrt{3}$. The factor of $\sqrt{3}$ corrects the sample standard deviation across all MRM measurements for the correlation between the 3 replicate measurements belonging to a single independent experimental repeat.

III. DISTRIBUTION COEFFICIENTS

The log D values and their uncertainties for the 53 small molecules that passed quality controls are presented in Table I. In the following two sections, we describe the differences between the analysis results in more detail.

A. Mean and standard errors in log D

The results from the arithmetic mean and sample variance calculation (Section II D 3) are plotted in Figure 3c.

Despite the compound selection effort, the distribution of data along the log D-axis is less dense in the region -1 to 0 log units. The data outside this region seems to be centered around -2 log units, or around 1 log unit. We could attribute this distribution of data to coincidence, though this may warrant future investigations into systematic errors. Using the arithmetic mean of the combined repeat and replicate measurements (Section II D 3) the distribution coefficients measured spanned from -3.9 to 2.5 log units.

The log D measurements distribution appears bimodal along the uncertainty axis. A subset of mostly negative log D values (Figure 3c) has a smaller estimated standard deviation, though this is not the case for the majority of negative log D values. The average standard error, rounded to 1 significant figure, is 0.2 log units for the arithmetic mean calculation.

B. Bootstrap results

Estimates of the log D span the range between -3.9 to 2.6 log units, using either of the two bootstrap approaches (Section II D 1 and Section II D 2). The log D estimates do not differ significantly from the arithmetic mean calculations. The difference between the results is seen when we compare the estimated standard errors. When applying our bootstrap procedures (Section II D 1 and Section II D 2), we see an upwards shift in the uncertainties, compared to the sample variance calculations. The nonparametric approach yields an average uncertainty of 0.3 log units. The parametric approach yields an average uncertainty of 0.4 log units. The parametric bootstrap suggests that by propagating errors such as the cyclohexane dilution, and the replicate variability into the model, some of the observed low uncertainties might be an artifact of the low number of measurements. This suggests that simply calculating the arithmetic mean, and standard error of all measured data might not reliably capture the error in the experiments. We also note that for certain compounds, bootstrap distributions exhibit multimodal character and as such, standard errors might not accurately capture the full extent of the experimental uncertainty. We provide the bootstrap sample distributions of the parametric model in the supplementary information.

Using the parametric scheme, we see an average shift of uncertainties to larger values compared to the nonparametric bootstrap. The density estimate suggests we should expect a lower bound to the error that we have now incorporated

into the analysis. Not every compound shows the same increase in uncertainty, though if we compare the two bootstrap approaches, results are similar above this empirically observed lower bound. The nonparametric approach returns higher uncertainties for some data on average, but estimates lower uncertainties for some as well. It can be concluded that the error would typically be underestimated without the use of a bootstrap approach. Without a physical model, a nonparametric approach might still underestimate errors due to the limited sample size for each measurement (either 2 or 4 fully independent repeats, and a total of 3 replicates per data point).

C. Correlation of uncertainty with physical properties

We investigated whether there was an obvious correlation between the uncertainty estimates obtained from our analysis and the properties of the molecules in our data set. A set of simple physical descriptors including molecular weight, predicted net charge, and the total number of amines and hydroxyl moieties were plotted against the bootstrap uncertainty. None of the descriptors tested had an absolute Pearson correlation coefficient R whose 95% confidence interval did not contain the correlation-free $R = 0$, according to methods described by Nicholls [33]. The analysis can be found in the Supplementary Information as an Excel spreadsheet.

IV. DISCUSSION

1. Solvent conditions

It is important to consider the influence of cosolvents on the measured values. The solutions contained approximately 1% DMSO, as well as approximately 0.5% acetonitrile. Further work would benefit from a comparison with experiments starting from dry stocks, and thereby not adding extra solvents. This would eliminate DMSO and acetonitrile, by dispensing compound directly into either cyclohexane, or the mixture of cyclohexane and PBS. In this case, care must be taken that the compound is fully dissolved. If found to be necessary all experiments could be started from dry compound stocks, to entirely eliminate effects from cosolvents such as DMSO and acetonitrile. This would make experiments more laborious, and would therefore reduce the bandwidth of the method.

Differential evaporation rates of cyclohexane and water could be an additional source of error. Cyclohexane (vapor pressure 97.81 torr [34]) is more volatile than water (vapor pressure 23.8 torr [35]). Evaporation from the cyclohexane-water phase-separated mixture or aliquots from individual phases could increase the concentration of the cyclohexane phase more rapidly than the water phase, leading to an overestimation of the log D. For future investigations, it would be prudent to verify that evaporation rates are sufficiently low to ensure no significant impact on the measured log D.

2. Compound detection limits

Calculations using COSMO-RS software[36] suggested a systematic underestimation of $\log D$ values in the negative \log unit range, in particularly past a $\log D$ of -2. Without further experimental investigation, we can not draw definite conclusions as to whether this is the case, or if so, where the source of the systematic error lies.

One possibility that may cause an artificial reduction of the dynamic range—especially at high $\log D$ values—is the potential for MS/MS detector saturation at high ligand concentrations. Previous work (Figure 2 from [21]) examined detector saturation effects, finding it possible to reach sufficiently high compound concentrations (generally $\geq 10 \mu\text{M}$) that MRM is no longer linear in compound concentration for that phase. This work also found that different compounds reach detector saturation at different concentrations [21], in principle requiring an assessment of detector saturation to be performed for each compound. While we could not deduce obvious signs of detector saturation in our LC-MS/MS chromatograms, these effects could be mitigated by performing a dilution series of the aliquots sampled from each phase of the partitioning experiment to ensure detector response is linear in the range of dilutions measured. This may also reveal whether compound dimerization may be a complicating factor in quantitation.

3. Experimental design considerations

In order to adjust our experimental setup, we had to switch away from using polystyrene 96 well plates, as these were dissolved by cyclohexane. We attempted the use of glass inserts, and glass tubes but these were too narrow and provided insufficient mixing when shaken. We switched to glass vials because their larger diameter provides improved mixing when shaken. For future work, we would recommend the use of glass coated plates, which have the automation advantages of the plates used in the original protocol [21].

Plate seals need to be selected carefully. We experimented with silicone sealing mats, but these absorbed significant quantities of cyclohexane. We also had to discontinue use of aluminum seals that contained glue, since the glue is soluble in cyclohexane and would contaminate LC-MS/MS measurements. In the end, we used aluminum PlateLoc heat seals and glass coated 384 well plates to circumvent these issues.

Sensitivity also suffered due to the need to dilute cyclohexane in octanol to prevent its accumulation on C18 columns used in the LC-MS/MS phase of the experiment. Trial injections on a separate system and chromatograms showed accumulation of unknown origin at the end of each UV chromatogram. Accumulation was reduced by injecting less cyclohexane. As a result, we diluted the cyclohexane with 1-octanol for the experiments described here, and ran blank injections containing ethanol between batches of 64 measurements to ensure the column was clean.

Another change to the protocol that we would like to consider for future measurements is to optimize the time spent

equilibrating the mixture. In this work, we separated phases via centrifugation and sampled aliquots for concentration measurement within minutes. The post-centrifugation time prior to sampling aliquots could be extended to 24 hours to allow for more equilibration for the solute between phases. This may have a downside, since we would have to consider the effects that may follow if compounds prefer to be in the interface-region between cyclohexane and water, or water and air. These could cause high local concentrations, introducing a dependency of the results on exactly which part of the solution aliquots are taken from. We can get around this by only taking samples from the pure cyclohexane and aqueous regions, avoiding the interfaces. This way, we still get the right distribution coefficients for partitioning between bulk phases even if some compound is lost to the interfaces.

It may be worthwhile to consider other effects of pipetting operations on the procedure. Some compounds could potentially stick to the surface of pipettes, or glass surfaces. This could adversely affect our measurements by changing local concentrations.

We also consider that assay results might be less variable if we presaturated water and cyclohexane before mixing them. While cyclohexane and water have much lower mutual solubility than octanol, it is still possible that this affects the measurement.

For future challenges, we would recommend that these assays are carried out at multiple final concentrations of the ligand in the assay. This could be achieved using different volumes of 10 mM ligand stocks. This would help detect dimerization issues, and may help account for issues with detector oversaturation. Note that the absolute errors in these stock volumes will not be critical, since the measurements rely on the relative measurement between the two phases. We could build models that allow for extrapolation to the infinite dilution limit, which should then provide simpler test cases for challenge participants to reproduce. On the opposite end, it may be useful to even investigate ways to design an experimental set that represents these type of issues, such as compound dimerization, so that we can focus more on these.

4. Uncertainty analysis

We hope the experience from this challenges will lay the groundwork for improving the reliability of data sets regarding the physical properties that we as a modeling community rely on. Many computational studies are limited in the amount of high-quality experimental data that they have access to. Unfortunately, most data are taken straight from literature tables, without much thought being spent on the data collection process. By performing the experimental part of the SAMPL5 challenge we were in the position to provide new data to the modeling community, with an opportunity to decide on an analysis strategy that suits modeling applications. This not only allows for blind validation of physics-based models, but also a re-evaluation of the exact properties a data set should have to provide utility to the modeling community. An important fact that we feel needs reemphasizing

636 is that experimental data are limited in utility by the method
637 that was used to analyze it.

638 Among the lessons learned from this challenge, we would
639 recommend that future challenges would also feature a rig-
640 orous statistical treatment of the experimental analysis pro-
641 cedure, ideally going beyond these initial efforts. One crucial
642 part of the analysis procedure is obtaining not only accu-
643 rate estimates of the observable, but also its uncertainty.
644 As indicated in our data set, standard error estimates from
645 small populations may underestimate the error. Several ap-
646 proaches can be taken to resolve part of this issue. Among
647 the options are the use of statistical tests, such as the boot-
648 strapping methods we applied in this work. These can help us
649 both propagate information on uncertainty into the model
650 (such as a parametric bootstrap) or extract uncertainty al-
651 ready available in the data (such as nonparametric bootstrap).
652 The parametric approaches can be improved in terms of the
653 physical models that are used to analyze the data. These
654 models should ideally include all known sources of error,
655 such as pipetting errors, evaporation of solvent, errors in in-
656 tegration software, fluctuations in temperature, pressure and
657 likewise many other conditions that could affect the results.

658 Another approach would be to perform statistical infer-
659 ence on the data set, to provide uncertainty estimates from
660 the data itself. The model structure can provide ways to in-
661 corporate data and propagate uncertainty from multiple ex-
662 periments. Common parameters, such as variance in mea-
663 surements between experiments could be inferred from com-
664 bining the entire data set into one model. When prior knowl-
665 edge on the experimental parameters is available, a Bayesian
666 model can be used to effectively infer this type of uncertainty
667 from the data, and use it to propagate the error into $\log D$
668 estimates. Distinctions could be made between an objective
669 treatment of the problem, or an empirical Bayesian approach,
670 where prior parameters are derived from the data. One could
671 use a maximum *a posteriori* (MAP) probability approach to ob-
672 tain an estimate of one of the modes of the parameter distri-
673 bution. This has obvious downsides when posterior densities
674 are multimodal, and in such a case, one may wish to estimate
675 the shape of the entire posterior distribution instead. An ap-
676 proach like Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) [37] could pro-
677 vide such estimates, and will allow for calculation of credible
678 intervals. MCMC methods can be computationally intensive
679 compared to MAP, though if the resulting posterior is compli-
680 cated, a MAP estimate can give poor results. Unfortunately,
681 we were unable to construct a Bayesian model of the exper-
682 iments within our time constraints. We would encourage
683 future challenges to make an attempt at creating a Bayesian
684 model, since this would allow for robust inference of all ex-
685 perimental parameters.

686 5. Funding future challenges

687 The execution of this work would not have been possi-
688 ble without the resources provided by Genentech. Access
689 to a rich library of compounds onsite allowed us to select a
690 dataset that was both challenging and useful for the purposes

691 of the SAMPL challenge. At the same time, the instrumenta-
692 tion provided us with the bandwidth to perform many mea-
693 surements. Rapid redesign of experiments by trial and error,
694 as a result of the difficulties with cyclohexane compatibility
695 of laboratory consumables and equipment, would not have
696 been possible without the expertise shared by Genentech
697 scientists and the opportunities to do many measurements.

698 Future iterations of this challenge would benefit from con-
699 tinued collaboration between industry and academia. Aca-
700 demic groups can partner with industry groups to pair avail-
701 able skilled academic labor (graduate students and postdoc-
702 toral researchers) with specialized measurement equipment
703 and compound libraries. The graduate student industry in-
704 ternship model proved to be a particularly successful ap-
705 proach, with measurements for a blind challenge providing
706 a well-defined, limited-scope project with clear high value to
707 the modeling community.

708 V. CONCLUSION

709 The experimental data provided by this study was very
710 useful for hosting the first small-molecule distribution coeffi-
711 cient challenge in the context of SAMPL. It revealed that $\log D$
712 prediction, as well as measurement, is not always straightfor-
713 ward. We showed that it was possible to perform cyclohex-
714 ane/water $\log D$ measurements in the same manner as the
715 original octanol/water assays, though further optimizations
716 are needed to reach the same level of throughput. Cyclo-
717 hexane did pose several challenges for experimental design,
718 such as the need for different container types, and the po-
719 tential accumulation of substrate on reversed phase HPLC
720 columns.

721 Many details, such as protonation states, tautomer states,
722 and dimerization might need to be accounted for in order to
723 reproduce experiments. This challenge taught us considera-
724 tions that should be made on the experimental side. Cases
725 where dimerization were pointed out as possible reason for
726 discrepancy between experiment and model, could only be
727 hypothesized from the modeling end and not tested exper-
728 imentally. Issues with detector saturation could also be af-
729 fecting the overall quality of the data set. Future experiments
730 would benefit from more rigorous protocols, such as mea-
731 surements at multiple concentrations, and models of all ex-
732 perimental components.

733 We recommend that future challenges, and experiments in
734 general, use physical models of experiments in the analysis
735 of experimental uncertainty. These should be part of the
736 analysis procedure, but also in experimental design. These
737 will reveal abnormalities in data more clearly.

738 We recommend that future challenges look into the use of
739 bootstrap models such as those considered here. Addition-
740 ally, the use of Bayesian inference methods, that allow the
741 incorporation of prior information should lead to a more ro-
742 bust estimate of experimental uncertainty. They will allow for
743 joint inference on multiple experiments, thereby increasing
744 the information gain by using the model.

745 Lastly, the sponsoring of this internship by Genentech was

746 fundamental to generating this data. Access to compound
747 libraries, and the equipment to perform the experiments is
748 crucial to the design and execution of a study. Close collabo-
749 rations with Genentech scientists were important in solving
750 many technical challenges. The collaboration between indus-
751 try and academics was not only fruitful, but fundamental in
752 establishing standardized challenges for the modeling field.
753 The amount of data we were able to gather would have been
754 hard to come by without industry resources. At the same
755 time, the need and expertise in investigating these challeng-
756 ing physical chemical problems provided by the community,
757 and the forum provided by the SAMPL challenge was essen-
758 tial in turning this challenge into a success. We welcome
759 such future efforts and collaborations, as it is apparent that
760 both experimental and computational approaches for ob-
761 taining log D estimates for small molecules, would benefit
762 from further optimization.

763 VI. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

764 Canonical isomeric smiles for each of the measured com-
765 pound are available in Table S1. An sdf file containing all com-
766 pounds, including the measured distribution coefficients is
767 available as part of the Supplementary Information. Parent
768 and daughter fragment ion information is available as part of
769 the Supplementary Information. Integrated MRM data includ-
770 ing excluded data points are available as part of the Supple-
771 mentary Information. Bootstrap distributions from the para-
772 metric bootstrap samples for each compound are provided
773 in the Supplementary Information. A correlation analysis be-
774 tween the parametric bootstrap uncertainty, and the chemi-
775 cal properties of the compounds in the dataset is available
776 as an Excel spreadsheet in the Supplementary Information.
777 We also include a csv file containing a full list of SAMPL5_XXX
778 identifiers and canonical isomeric smiles, including unmea-

779 sured compounds. Source code of the bootstrap uncertainty
780 analysis is available on Github at [https://github.com/
781 choderalab/sampl5-experimental-logd-data](https://github.com/choderalab/sampl5-experimental-logd-data). A copy
782 of this source code is also included in a zip file, as part of the
783 supporting information.

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791 VIII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

792 DLM and JDC are members of the Scientific Advisory Board
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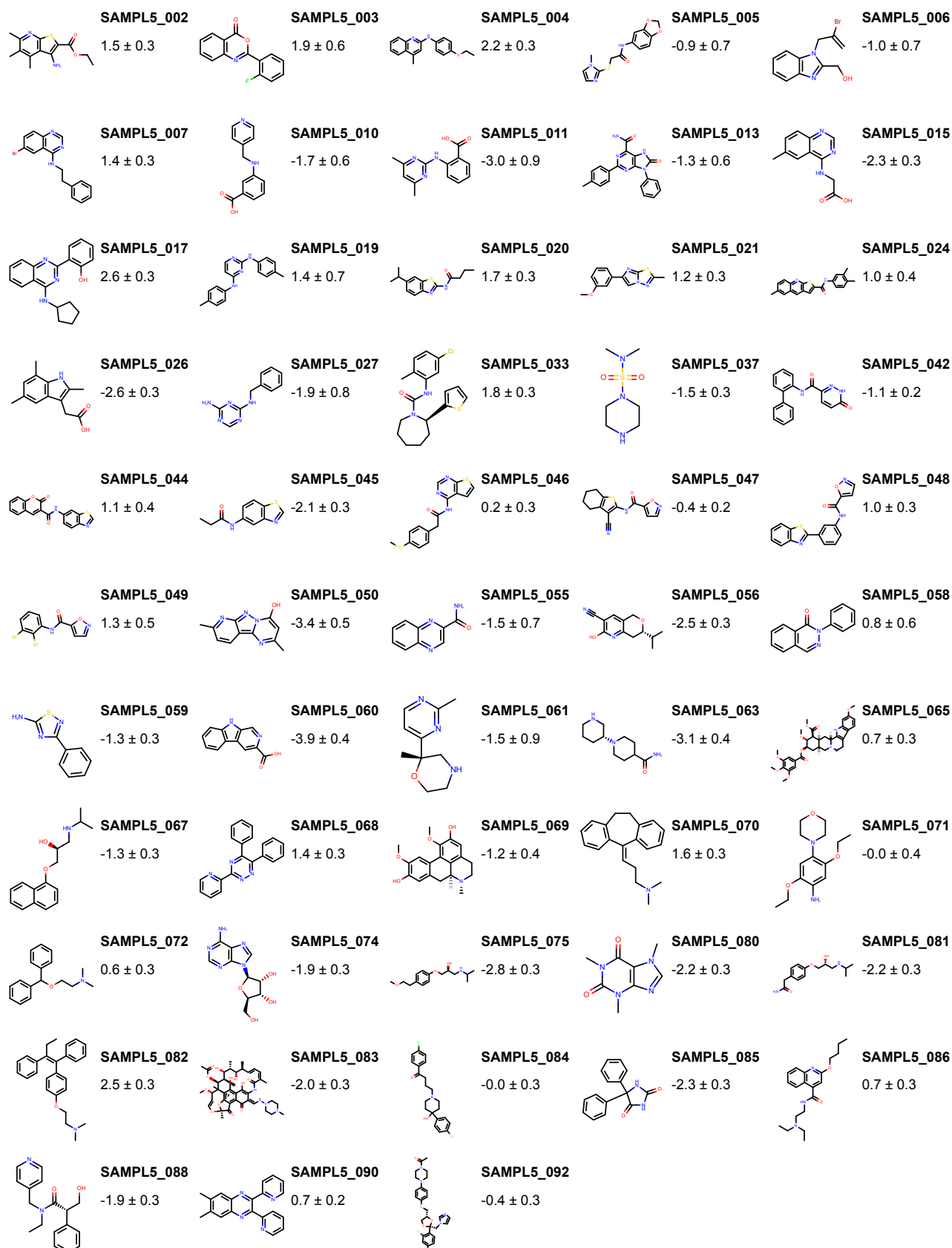


FIG. 1: Molecules and corresponding measured log distribution coefficients for measurements that passed quality controls. Log D measurements are reported as expectation ± standard errors, calculated using our parametric bootstrap method (Section II D).

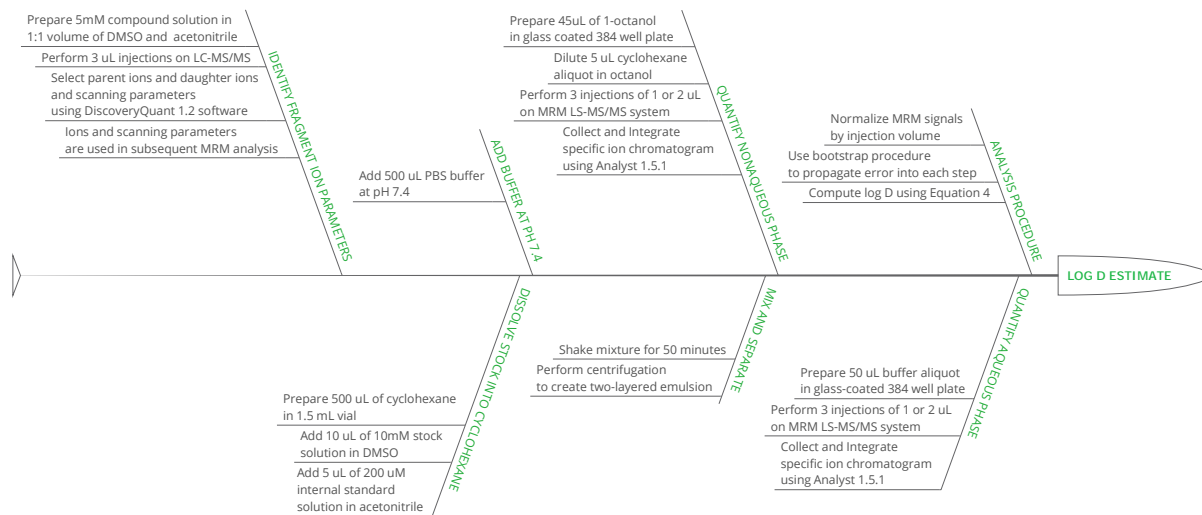
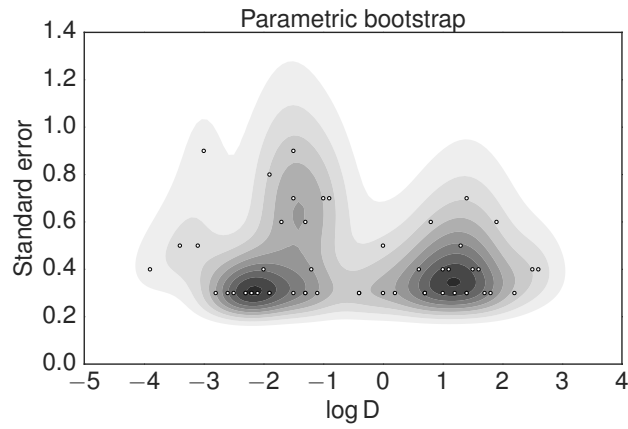


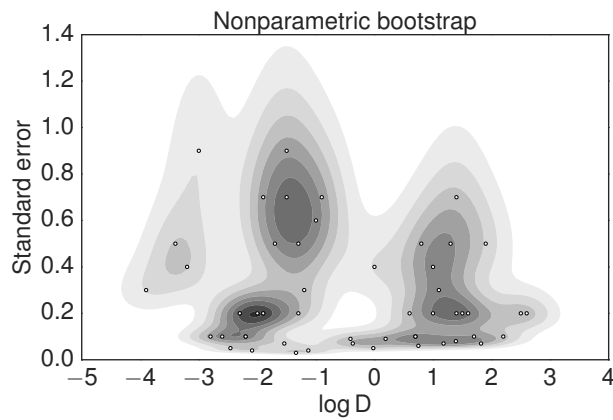
FIG. 2: Illustration of the shake-flask procedure used for cyclohexane-water distribution coefficient measurements.

TABLE I: **Log distribution coefficient measurements and standard errors.** Estimates of log distribution functions and their associated standard errors are described for parametric bootstrap (Section II D 1), nonparametric bootstrap (Section II D 2), and arithmetic mean and corrected sample variance (Section II D 3).

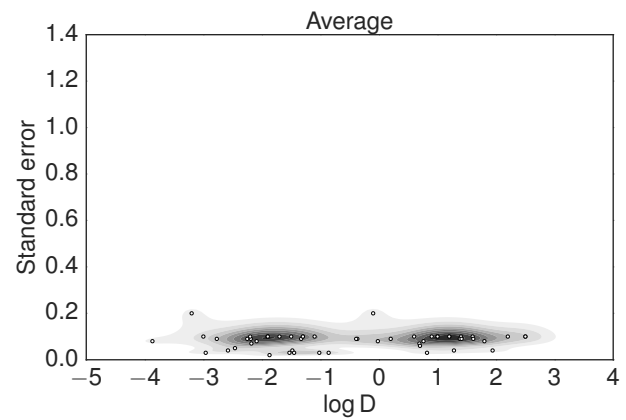
Compound ID	Uncertainty analysis method		
	Bootstrap		Arithmetic mean
	Parametric	Nonparametric	Standard error
SAMPL5_002	1.5 ± 0.3	1.5 ± 0.2	1.4 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_003	1.9 ± 0.6	1.9 ± 0.5	1.94 ± 0.04
SAMPL5_004	2.2 ± 0.3	2.2 ± 0.1	2.2 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_005	-0.9 ± 0.7	-0.9 ± 0.7	-0.86 ± 0.03
SAMPL5_006	-1.0 ± 0.7	-1.0 ± 0.6	-1.02 ± 0.03
SAMPL5_007	1.4 ± 0.3	1.39 ± 0.08	1.38 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_010	-1.7 ± 0.6	-1.7 ± 0.5	-1.7 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_011	-3.0 ± 0.9	-3.0 ± 0.9	-2.96 ± 0.03
SAMPL5_013	-1.3 ± 0.6	-1.3 ± 0.5	-1.5 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_015	-2.3 ± 0.3	-2.3 ± 0.2	-2.25 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_017	2.6 ± 0.3	2.6 ± 0.2	2.5 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_019	1.4 ± 0.7	1.4 ± 0.7	1.2 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_020	1.7 ± 0.3	1.7 ± 0.1	1.6 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_021	1.2 ± 0.3	1.18 ± 0.07	1.2 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_024	1.0 ± 0.4	1.0 ± 0.4	1.0 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_026	-2.6 ± 0.3	-2.6 ± 0.1	-2.58 ± 0.04
SAMPL5_027	-1.9 ± 0.8	-1.9 ± 0.7	-1.87 ± 0.02
SAMPL5_033	1.8 ± 0.3	1.82 ± 0.07	1.80 ± 0.08
SAMPL5_037	-1.5 ± 0.3	-1.54 ± 0.07	-1.53 ± 0.03
SAMPL5_042	-1.1 ± 0.2	-1.13 ± 0.04	-1.1 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_044	1.1 ± 0.4	1.1 ± 0.3	1.0 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_045	-2.1 ± 0.3	-2.09 ± 0.04	-2.09 ± 0.08
SAMPL5_046	0.2 ± 0.3	0.19 ± 0.09	0.20 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_047	-0.4 ± 0.2	-0.37 ± 0.07	-0.37 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_048	1.0 ± 0.3	1.0 ± 0.2	0.9 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_049	1.3 ± 0.5	1.3 ± 0.5	1.28 ± 0.04
SAMPL5_050	-3.4 ± 0.5	-3.4 ± 0.5	-3.2 ± 0.2
SAMPL5_055	-1.5 ± 0.7	-1.5 ± 0.7	-1.48 ± 0.04
SAMPL5_056	-2.5 ± 0.3	-2.46 ± 0.05	-2.46 ± 0.05
SAMPL5_058	0.8 ± 0.6	0.8 ± 0.5	0.82 ± 0.03
SAMPL5_059	-1.3 ± 0.3	-1.34 ± 0.03	-1.33 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_060	-3.9 ± 0.4	-3.9 ± 0.3	-3.87 ± 0.08
SAMPL5_061	-1.5 ± 0.9	-1.5 ± 0.9	-1.45 ± 0.03
SAMPL5_063	-3.1 ± 0.4	-3.2 ± 0.4	-3.0 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_065	0.7 ± 0.3	0.7 ± 0.1	0.69 ± 0.07
SAMPL5_067	-1.3 ± 0.3	-1.3 ± 0.2	-1.3 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_068	1.4 ± 0.3	1.4 ± 0.2	1.41 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_069	-1.3 ± 0.4	-1.2 ± 0.3	-1.3 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_070	1.6 ± 0.3	1.6 ± 0.2	1.61 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_071	-0.0 ± 0.4	-0.0 ± 0.4	-0.1 ± 0.2
SAMPL5_072	0.6 ± 0.3	0.6 ± 0.2	0.6 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_074	-1.9 ± 0.3	-1.9 ± 0.2	-1.9 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_075	-2.8 ± 0.3	-2.8 ± 0.1	-2.77 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_080	-2.2 ± 0.3	-2.2 ± 0.1	-2.18 ± 0.07
SAMPL5_081	-2.2 ± 0.3	-2.2 ± 0.1	-2.19 ± 0.09
SAMPL5_082	2.5 ± 0.3	2.5 ± 0.2	2.5 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_083	-2.0 ± 0.3	-2.0 ± 0.2	-1.9 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_084	-0.0 ± 0.3	-0.02 ± 0.05	-0.02 ± 0.08
SAMPL5_085	-2.3 ± 0.3	-2.3 ± 0.2	-2.2 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_086	0.7 ± 0.3	0.7 ± 0.1	0.70 ± 0.06
SAMPL5_088	-1.9 ± 0.3	-1.9 ± 0.2	-1.9 ± 0.1
SAMPL5_090	0.7 ± 0.2	0.75 ± 0.06	0.76 ± 0.08
SAMPL5_092	-0.4 ± 0.3	-0.41 ± 0.09	-0.39 ± 0.09



(a) **Parametric bootstrap** (Section II D 1). Standard error estimates calculated by using a parametric bootstrap (circles) and a kernel density estimate (contours) of the entire set.



(b) **Nonparametric bootstrap** (Section II D 2). Standard error estimates calculated using a nonparametric bootstrap (circles), and a kernel density estimate (contours) of the entire set.



(c) **Arithmetic mean and sample variance** (Section II D 3). Standard error estimates calculated using corrected sample variance (circles), and a kernel density estimate (contours) of the entire set.

FIG. 3: Joint kernel density estimates of log distribution coefficient (log D) measurements and measurement error estimates. log D measurements are plotted with their corresponding estimated standard errors (circles) for the three analysis approaches described in Section II D. A kernel density estimate (contours, described in Section II E) is shown to highlight the differences in error estimates for the different methods.

