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Transport of polymer particles in an oil-water flow in porous medium: enhancing oil recovery

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We study a simple model for the transport of polymer particles injected along with water in a porous rock containing oil. The main goal of this technique is to recover oil that remains trapped after waterflood. Such enhancement occurs through a microscopic diversion of the water flow caused by clogging of narrow pore throats by the injected particles. The diverted flow may lead to the mobilization of oil which was initially trapped. Experimental results indicate that heterogeneous cores are more favorable to accumulation of particles in pore throats. Moreover, that the accumulation of particles is a dynamic process: unclogging may occur as well. We propose a simple model which accounts for the transport of polymer particles and accumulation and release of them at pore throats. We show that a non-equilibrium reaction model can reproduce qualitatively the experimental results.

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