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Quantum sensing enabled by spin qubits in diamond

Fedor Jelezko¹

¹ *Institute of Quantum Optics, Ulm University, Germany.*
fedor.jelezko@uni-ulm.de.

Single nitrogen vacancy (NV) color centers in diamond currently have sufficient sensitivity for detecting single external nuclear spins and resolve their position within a few angstroms. The ability to bring the sensor close to biomolecules by implantation of single NV centers and attachment of proteins to the surface of diamond enabled the first proof of principle demonstration of proteins labeled by paramagnetic markers and label-free detection of the signal from a single protein. Single-molecule nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) experiments open the way towards unraveling dynamics and structure of single biomolecules. However, for that purpose, NV magnetometers must reach performance comparable to that of conventional solution state NMR. We will discuss new techniques allowing to combine high spectral resolution and sensitivity in nanoscale NMR. The ability to sense nuclear spins by NV centers also enables the transfer of polarization from optically polarized spins of NV centers to external nuclear spins. Such diamond based techniques for dynamic nuclear spin polarization are very promising for the enhancement of sensitivity of conventional MRI imaging.