Pacific Journal of Mathematics

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Vol. 94, No. 1 May 1981

PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS
Vol. 94, No. 1, 1981

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The purpose of this note is to prove the following theorem.

THEOREM 1.1. **Let (R, m) be a Noetherian local ring of dimension $d \geqq 1$ and depth $d-1$. By $\hat{R}$ denote the completion of R in the m-adic topology. Then the following are equivalent:**

(1) $\hat{R}$ is equidimensional and satisfies Serre's property S_{d-1}

(2) $H_m^{d-1}(R)$ has finite length

(3) There exists an $N > 0$ such that if $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ is a sequence of elements R with $\text{ht}(x_{i_1}, \cdots, x_{i_j}) = j$ for all j-elements subsets of $\{1, \cdots, n\}$, $1 \leqq j \leqq n$, and if $m_i \geqq N$, $1 \leqq i \leqq d$, then $x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, x_d^{m_d}$ is an unconditioned d-sequence.

Recall the local ring (S, N) is *equidimensional* if for every minimal prime divisor p of zero, $\dim S/p = \dim S$.

Serre's property S_k is that

$$\text{depth } R_p \geqq \min [\text{ht } p, k]$$

for all primes p.

We will always denote the local cohomology functor by $H_m^j(\_\_)$ ([1]).

We recall the definition of a d-sequence due to this author [3].

DEFINITION 0.1. A system of elements $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ in a commutative ring R is said to be a d-sequence if

(1) $x_i \notin (x_1, \cdots, \hat{x}_i, \cdots, x_d)$

(2) $((x_1, \cdots, x_i): x_{i+1}x_k) = ((x_1, \cdots, x_i): x_k)$ for $k \geqq i+1$ and $i \geqq 0$.

A d-sequence is said to be unconditioned if any permutation of it remains a d-sequence.

These have been studied extensively by this author and have been useful to determine the "analytic" properties of ideals generated by them. In [3] the following was skown:

PROPOSITION. *Let (R, m) be a local Noetherian ring. Then R is Buchsbaum (see* [10] *for a definition and discussion) if and only if every system of parameters forms a d-sequence.*

Thus Theorem 1.1 may be seen as a related result, characterizing rings in which "almost all" s.o.p.'s form a d-sequence. Independent of this characterization of rings with "lots" of d-sequences, Theorem 1.1 is the generalization of a result due to Steven McAdam [7] which in turn is related to a characterization of unmixed 2-dimensional local rings proved by Ratliff [8].

Let (R, m) be a 2-dimensional local domain and let b, c be a system of parameters. By $S(b, c, n)$ denote the least k such that

$$(b^n : c^k) = (b^n : c^{k+1}) .$$

Recall a local ring R is said to be *unmixed* if for each prime divisor p of (0) in $\hat{R}$, $\dim \hat{R}/p = \dim \hat{R}$.

Ratliff showed, [8],

PROPOSITION. *The following are equivalent for a 2-dimensional local domain*

(1) *R is unmixed.*

(2) *$S(b, c, \_)$ is bounded.*

(3) *$R^{(1)} = \bigcap_{\mathrm{ht}\, p=1} R_p$ is a finite R-module.*

McAdam discussed this and obtained the following improvement:

PROPOSITION [5]. *Let (R, m) be as above. Then the following are equivalent*:

(1) *R is unmixed*, i.e., *for all prime divisors p of* (0) *in $\hat{R}$*, $\dim \hat{R}/p = \dim \hat{R} = 2$.

(2) *$R^{(1)}$ is a finite R-module.*

(3) *There exists an N such that for every* s.o.p. x, y

$$S(x, y, \_) \leqq N .$$

In particular, (3) is equivalent to saying for all $n \geqq N$ that $(x^n : y^n) = (x^n : y^{2n})$ and this is equivalent (in this case) to saying x^n, y^n form a d-sequence.

To see our statement (1) is equivalent to (1) of the above proposition, note that if $\dim R = 2$ and R is a domain, then to say R is unmixed is precisely to say $\hat{R}$ satisfies S_1 and is equidimensional.

Finally, we will show that $R^{(1)}/R$ is isomorphic to $H^1_m(R)$ in this case, and show that $R^{(1)}/R$ has finite length if and only if $R^{(1)}$ is a finitely generated R-module. Hence our Theorem 1.1 is the exact generalization of the above proposition of McAdam.

1. Proof of Theorem 1.1.

For details on local cohomology we refer the reader to [1]. We note the following facts.

(1) Since $\operatorname{depth} R = d - 1$, $H^i_m(R) = 0$ if $i < d - 1$.

(2) There is a canonical isomorphism, $H^{d-1}_m(R) \cong H^{d-1}_{\hat{m}}(\hat{R})$.

(3) If S is a complete regular local ring mapping onto $\hat{R}$ (see [6]) and M is the maximal ideal of S, then $H_m^{d-1}(R) \cong H_M^{d-1}(\hat{R})$ where $\hat{R}$ is regarded as an S-module.

(4) If S is chosen as in (3), $e = \dim S$, and we let $E = H_M^e(S/M) =$ an injective hull of S/M, then

$$\mathrm{Hom}_S\,(H_m^j(R),\, E) \cong \mathrm{Ext}_S^{e-j}\,(\hat{R},\, S)$$

and $H_m^j(R) \cong \mathrm{Hom}_S\,(\mathrm{Ext}_S^{e-j}\,(\hat{R},\, S),\, E)$. This is local duality.

(5) We may compute $H_m^{d-1}(R)$ as follows: let $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ be an s.o.p., and consider the complex,

$$\bigoplus_{i<j} R_{x_1,\cdots,\hat{x}_i,\cdots,\hat{x}_j,\cdots,x_n} \longrightarrow \bigoplus_{i} R_{x_1,\cdots,\hat{x}_i,\cdots,x_n} \longrightarrow R_{x_1,\cdots,x_n} \longrightarrow 0$$

where the subscripts denote localization at the elements subscripted. Then $H_m^{d-1}(R)$ is isomorphic to the middle homology of this complex. If we denote by $\mathrm{syz}\,(x_1, \cdots, x_d)$ the module defined by K/L where $K \subseteqq R^d$ is the module of syzygies of $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ and L is the submodule of syzygies which come from the trivial ones given by the Koszul relations, then

$$H_m^{d-1}(R) \cong \varinjlim \mathrm{syz}\,(x_1^{n_1}, \cdots, x_d^{n_d})$$

where if $m_i \geqq n_i$, the map

$$\mathrm{syz}\,(x_1^{n_1}, \cdots, x_d^{n_d}) \longrightarrow \mathrm{syz}\,(x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, x_d^{m_d})$$

is defined by mapping a syzygy $(r_1, \cdots, r_d)$ of $(x_1^{n_1}, \cdots, x_d^{n_d})$ to the syzygy $(r_1 x_2^{m_2-n_2} \cdots x_d^{m_d-n_d}, \cdots, r_d x_1^{m_1-n_1} \cdots x_{d-1}^{m_{d-1}-n_{d-1}})$ of $(x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, x_d^{m_d})$. We now turn to the proof of Theorem 1.1.

The fact (1) if and only if (2) holds is well-known but we give the details here for completeness.

We first observe that $H_m^{d-1}(R)$ has finite length if and only if $\mathrm{Hom}_S\,(H_m^{d-1}(R),\, E) \cong \mathrm{Ext}_S^{e-(d-1)}\,(\hat{R},\, S)$ has finite length. (See [5].)

If p is a prime in S and $\hat{R} \cong S/I$, then if $p \not\supseteqq I$

$$(\mathrm{Ext}_S^{e-(d-1)}\,(\hat{R},\, S))_p = 0\ .$$

Hence, $\mathrm{Ext}_S^{e-(d-1)}\,(\hat{R},\, S)$ has finite length if and only if

$$(\mathrm{Ext}_S^{e-(d-1)}\,(\hat{R},\, S))_p = \mathrm{Ext}_{S_p}^{e-(d-1)}\,((\hat{R}_p,\, S_p) = 0 \quad \text{for all} \quad p \supseteqq I\,, \quad p \neq M\,.$$

If $i < d-1$, then since $\mathrm{depth}\,\hat{R} = \mathrm{depth}\,R = d-1$, we see

$$H_{\hat{m}}^i(\hat{R}) = H_M^i(\hat{R}) = 0$$

and so

$$\mathrm{Ext}_S^{e-i}\,(\hat{R},\, S) = 0$$

or, otherwise put,

$$\operatorname{Ext}^k_{S_p}(\hat{R}_p, S_p) = 0$$

for all $k \geqq e - (d - 1)$ if and only if $H^{d-1}_m(R)$ has finite length. (Note for $k > e$, $\operatorname{Ext}^k_S(M, S) = 0$ for all M.)

Since S_p is regular,

$$\operatorname{Sup}_n \{\operatorname{Ext}^n_{S_p}(\hat{R}_p, S_p) \neq 0\} + \operatorname{depth} \hat{R}_p = \dim S_p . \quad \text{(See [9.])}$$

From this we may conclude that $H^{d-1}_m(R)$ has finite length if and only if $\operatorname{depth}(\hat{R})_p > \dim S_p - (e - (d - 1))$ i.e., if and only if

$$\operatorname{depth}(\hat{R})_p \geqq \dim S_p - \dim S + \dim \hat{R} .$$

We claim that

$$\dim S_p - \dim S + \dim \hat{R} \geqq \dim (\hat{R})_p$$

in any case. For since S is regular, $\dim S = \dim S_p + \dim S/p$ and so the left side is just

$$-\dim S/p + \dim \hat{R} .$$

Thus it is enough to show

$$\dim \hat{R} \geqq \dim S/p + \dim (\hat{R})_p$$

but this clearly always holds since p contains I.

Thus we have shown $H^{d-1}_m(R)$ has finite length if and only if

$$(*) \qquad \operatorname{depth}(\hat{R})_p \geqq \dim S_p - \dim S + \dim \hat{R} \geqq \dim (\hat{R})_p .$$

We claim these last two inequalities occur if and only if $\hat{R}$ satisfies S_{d-1} and is equidimensional.

If (*) occurs then clearly $(\hat{R})_p$ must be Cohen-Macaulay for all $p \neq \hat{m}$, and since $\operatorname{depth} \hat{R} = d - 1$, this shows $\hat{R}$ satisfies S_{d-1}. Since we must have

$$\dim (\hat{R})_p = \dim S_p - \dim S + \dim \hat{R}$$

in this case, the work above shows that for all $p \supseteqq I$,

$$\dim \hat{R} = \dim S/p + \dim (\hat{R})_p ,$$

and this shows $\hat{R}$ is equidimensional.

Conversely, since $\hat{R}$ is catenary, if $\hat{R}$ satisfies S_{d-1} and is equidimensional then

$$(\text{a}) \qquad \operatorname{depth}(\hat{R})_p = \dim (\hat{R})_p$$

for all primes $p \neq \hat{m}$, and

(b) $$\dim \hat{R} = \dim S/p + \dim (\hat{R})_p$$

for all primes p. Thus in this case (*) holds and so $H_m^{d-1}(R)$ has finite length.

We now show (2) if and only if (3). Assume (2). Then there is a N such that $m^N H_m^{d-1}(R) = 0$. It was shown in [2] that if $R \to S$ faithfully flat and $x_1, \cdots, x_n \in R$ then these elements form a d-sequence in R if and only if they form a d-sequence in S. Thus we may work in $\hat{R}$ and assume R is complete for the remainder of this implication. By (1), R is locally Cohen-Macaulay on the punctured spectrum, i.e., R satisfies Serre's condition S_{d-1}.

Now let $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ be in R such that $\operatorname{ht}(x_{j_1}, \cdots, x_{j_i}) = i$ for each i, $1 \leqq i \leqq d$.

Then since R satisfies S_{d-1}, $x_{i_1}, \cdots, x_{i_{d-1}}$ form an R-sequence for any $d-1$ of $\{x_1, \cdots, x_d\}$. Hence to show (3) it is enough to show for $m_i \geqq N$ that

$$((x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, \hat{x}_i, \cdots, x_d^{m_d}) \colon x_i^{2m_i}) = ((x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, \hat{x}_i, \cdots, x_d^{m_d}) \colon x_i^{m_i}) .$$

Since we may rearrange the x_i we may assume $i = d$. Suppose $(r_1, \cdots, r_d)$ is a syzygy of $(x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, x_{d-1}^{m_{d-1}}, x_d^{2m_d})$. Since $m^N H_m^{d-1}(R) = 0$ we see that $x_d^{m_d}$ must kill the image of this syzygy in $H_m^{d-1}(R)$.

By the construction (5) above we see this means that

$$(r_1 x_d^{m_d}(x_2, \cdots, x_d)^M, \cdots, r_d x_d^{m_d}(x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1})^M)$$

becomes a trivial syzygy of

$$(x_1^{m_1+M}, \cdots, x_{d-1}^{m_{d-1}+M}, x_d^{2m_d+M}) .$$

In particular,

$$r_d x_d^{m_d}(x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1})^M \in (x_1^{m_1+M}, \cdots, x_{d-1}^{m_{d-1}+M}) .$$

As $x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}$ forms an R-sequence, this shows (see [4]) that

$$r_d x_d^{m_d} \in (x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, x_{d-1}^{m_{d-1}})$$

which shows (3).

Now assume (3) and let us show (2). First, we show,

LEMMA 1.1. *Let (R, m) be a local Noetherian ring of dimension. d. Suppose for every $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ in m such that height $(x_1, \cdots, x_j) = j$, there exist integers $m_1, \cdots, m_d \geqq 1$ such that $x_1^{m_1}, \cdots, x_d^{m_d}$ form a d-sequence. Then R_p is Cohen-Macaulay for all $p \neq m$.*

Proof. Let p be a minimal prime in R with R_p not Cohen-Macaulay. If height $p = n$, choose $a_1, \cdots, a_n$ in p such that height

$(a_1, \cdots, a_i) = i$. Complete $a_1, \cdots, a_n$ to a system of parameters $a_1, \cdots, a_n, a_{n+1}, \cdots, a_d$ of R with $\operatorname{ht}(a_1, \cdots, a_i) = i$. Since p is the minimal prime which is not Cohen-Macaulay, we may assume p is associated to $(a_1, \cdots, a_i)$ with $i < n$. Let $m_1, \cdots, m_d$ be chosen so that $a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_d^{m_d}$ form a d-sequence. Then p is still associated to $a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_i^{m_i}$. By [3],

$$(a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_i^{m_i}) = ((a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_i^{m_i}): a_{i+1}^{m_{i+1}}) \cap (a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_d^{m_d}) .$$

Now since $(a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_d^{m_d})$ is primary to m, this decomposition shows that p is associated to $((a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_i^{m_i}): a_{i+1}^{m_{i+1}})$. However $a_{i+1}^{m_{i+1}} \in p$ and $a_{i+1}^{m_{i+1}}$ is not a zero divisor modulo $((a_1^{m_1}, \cdots, a_i^{m_i}): a_{i+1}^{m_{i+1}})$. This contradiction proves the lemma.

Now assume (3). By Lemma 1.1 R satisfies S_{d-1}. (Note we may *not* assume $\hat{R}$ satisfies S_{d-1}!)

Hence if $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ are chosen so that height $(x_{j_1}, \cdots, x_{j_i}) = i$ for all $1 \leqq i \leqq d$, to show $H_m^{d-1}(R) = 0$ it is enough to show in this case that if such an $x_1, \cdots, x_d$ are a d-sequence, then

$$\operatorname{syz}(x_1, \cdots, x_d) \longrightarrow \operatorname{syz}(x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}, x_d^2)$$

is onto. For if we can show this, then it is clear that the map

$$\operatorname{syz}(x_1^N, \cdots, x_d^N) \longrightarrow H_m^{d-1}(R)$$

will be onto, where N is as in (3). This will show $H_m^{d-1}(R)$ is finitely generated; as $H_m^{d-1}(R)$ satisfies the descending chain condition, this will show (2).

So let $(r_1, \cdots, r_d)$ be a syzygy of $x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}, x_d^2$. Then since

$$r_d \in ((x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}): x_d^2) = ((x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}): x_d)$$

we see

$$0 = r_d x_d + \sum_{j=1}^{d-1} s_i x_i , \qquad \text{and hence}$$

$$(r_1 - s_1 x_d)x_1 + \cdots + (r_{d-1} - s_{d-1}x_d)x_{d-1} = 0 .$$

Thus, $(r_1 - s_1x_d, \cdots, r_{d-1} - s_{d-1}x_d, 0)$ is a syzygy of $(x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}, x_d^2)$. Since $x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}$ will form an R-sequence, this syzygy of $(x_1, \cdots, x_{d-1}, x_d^2)$ will be trivial. Hence the image of $(s_1, \cdots, s_{d-1}, r_d)$ in $\operatorname{syz}(x_1, \cdots, x_d)$ will map onto $(r_1, \cdots, r_d) \in \operatorname{syz}(x_1, \cdots, x_d^2)$. This finishes the proof of Theorem 1.1.

Finally, we wish to relate condition (2) of Theorem 1.1 to the finiteness of $R^{(1)}$. To this end, let (R, m) be a 2-dimensional Noetherian local domain and let $S = R^{(1)} = \bigcap R_p$ taken over all height one primes p. If t is in S, then $J = \{r \in R \mid rt \in R\}$ is not contained in any height one prime and is thus primary to m. Hence if x, y is an s.o.p., $x^k \in J$ for some k. Then $x^k t = r \in R$ and so $t = r/x^k$. Thus $J = (x^k : r)$

is primary to m, and so $y^m \in J$ for some J which shows $r \in (x^k: y^m)$ for some m. Thus (see McAdam [7]), $S = \{r/x^k \mid r \in (x^k: y^m) \text{ some } k, m\}$. (The converse is easy to see; i.e., such r/x^k are indeed in R_p for all height one primes p.)

Now $H_m^1(R)$ in this case is the middle homology of

$$R \longrightarrow R_x \oplus R_y \longrightarrow R_{xy} \longrightarrow 0 .$$

That is, if

$$\{(r/x^k, s/y^e) \mid r/x^k - s/y^e = 0\} = N$$

and $M = \{(r, r) \mid r \in R\}$ then

$$H_m^1(R) \cong N/M .$$

(Note $r/x^k + s/y^e = 0$ if and only if $ry^e + sx^k = 0$ since R is a domain.)

We map S onto $H_m^1(R)$ as follows: if $t \in S$, let $g(t) = (t, t) \in N/M$. The discussion above shows $t \in R_x \cap R_y$ and so the map $g(\_)$ makes sense. This map is clearly onto since

$$S = \{r/x^k \mid r \in (x^k: y^m) \text{ for some } k, m\} .$$

The kernel is the set of $t \in S$ such that $(t, t) \in M$; this is precisely if $t \in R$.

We have therefore shown

$$H_m^1(R) \cong S/R .$$

Now if S is finitely generated over R, then $H_m^1(R)$ is also and so it has finite length. Conversely, if $H_m^1(R) = S/R$ has finite length, then S is obviously a finite R-module.

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Received October 18, 1979. Partially supported by the National Science Foundation.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR, MI 48109

Printed in Japan by International Academic Printing Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan

Pacific Journal of Mathematics

Vol. 94, No. 1 May, 1981