

Abstract: Rational modulations of molecular interactions are of significant importance in compound properties optimization. We have previously shown that fluorination of conformationally rigid cyclohexanols leads to attenuation of their hydrogen-bond (H-bond) donating capacity (designated by pK_{AHY}) when $OH\cdots F$ intramolecular hydrogen-bond (IMHB) interactions occur, as opposed to an increase in pK_{AHY} due to the fluorine electronegativity. This work has now been extended to a wider range of aliphatic β -fluoroalcohols with increasing degrees of conformational flexibility. We show that the observed differences in pK_{AHY} between closely related diastereomers can be fully rationalized by subtle variations in populations of conformers able to engage in $OH\cdots F$ IMHB, as well as by the strength of these IMHBs. We also show that the Kenny theoretical $V_a(r)$ descriptor of H-bond acidity accurately reflects the observed variations and a calibration equation extended to fluoroalcohols is proposed. This work clearly underlines the importance of the weak $OH\cdots F$ IMHB in the modulation of alcohol H-bond donating capacity.