Supporting Information for

Original article

Harnessing antimicrobial peptide-coupled photosensitizer to combat drug-resistant biofilm infections through enhanced photodynamic therapy

Duoyang Fan ^{a,b}, Xiaohui Liu ^{a,b}, Yueming Ren ^c, Ziheng Luo ^{a,b}, Yanbing Li ^d, Jie Dong ^{a,b}, Seraphine V. Wegner ^e, Fei Chen ^{a,b,*}, Wenbin Zeng ^{a,b,*}

^aXiangya School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Central South University, Changsha 410013, China

^bHunan Key Laboratory of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Drug Research for Chronic Diseases, Central South University, Changsha 410013, China

°Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, University of Oxford, Oxford OX1 3RE, UK

^dXiangya Hospital of Central South University, Changsha 410013, China

^eInstitute of Physiological Chemistry and Pathobiochemistry, University of Münster, Münster 48149, Germany

*Corresponding authors.

E-mail addresses: wbzeng@hotmail.com (Wenbing Zeng), fechen@csu.edu.cn (Fei Chen).

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1. Materials and Experiments

1.1 Materials and Chemicals.

The antimicrobial peptide (CysHHC10, sequence: Cys-Lys-Arg-Trp-Trp-Lys-Trp-Ile-Arg-Trp-NH₂, HHC10, sequence: Lys-Arg-Trp-Trp-Lys-Trp-Ile-Arg-Trp-NH₂) were purchased from China Peptides Co., Ltd. (Shanghai, China). Pyridine-4-boronic acid [1,1'and bis(diphenylphosphino)ferrocene]dichloropalladium(II) were purchased from Aladdin (Shanghai, China). 4,7-dibromo-2,1,3-benzothiadiazole, 4-(diphenylamino)phenylboronic acid. aminobenzenethiol, N-hydroxysuccinimide and 1-(3-dimethylaminopropyl)-3-ethylcarbodiimide hydrochloride were purchased from Energy Chemical (Shanghai, China). 1,4-dioxane, DMSO, trifluoroacetic acid, methanol, ethanol, acetonitrile, ethanol, THF, ethyl ether and paraformaldehyde were purchased from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd (Shanghai, China). Polymyxin B, Nutrient broth and LB agar were purchased from Solarbio (Beijing, China). Vancomycin was purchased from Yuanye Bio-Technology (Shanghai, China). MTT (3-(4,5-dimethyl-2-thiazolyl)-2,5-diphenyl-2-H-tetrazolium bromide), Hoechst 33342 and YO-PRO-1 were purchased from Beyotime Biotechnology Co. (China). All other chemicals were purchased and purified using standard procedures.

1.2 Characterization

The ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were measured on a Bruker AV 400MHz and 500MHz spectrometer (Billerica, USA). The HPLC profiles were acquired on an Agilent 1260 II Infinity LC (California, USA) with 0.1% TFA/acetonitrile and 0.1% TFA/H₂O as the eluent. The high-resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were measured on an Orbitrap Velos Pro LC-MS spectrometer (Thermo Scientific, American). UV-vis absorption spectra were recorded on a Shimadzu UV-2450 UV-Visible spectrophotometer (Kyoto, Japan). Photoluminescence (PL) spectra were taken on a Hitachi F-2700 spectrofluorometer (Hitachi, Japan). SEM images were acquired by a Quanta 250 FEG (FEI make).

1.3 Synthesis of TPI-CysHHC10

Synthesis of TPI-Br

A mixture of 4-(diphenylamino)phenylboronicacid (578 mg, 2.00 mmol), 4,7-dibromo-2,1,3-

Benzothiadiazole (588 mg, 2.00 mmol), [1,1'-bis(diphenylphosphino)ferrocene]dichloropalladium (II) (20 mg) and K₂CO₃ (200 mg) in a solution of THF (5 mL) and MeOH (10 mL) were refluxed under nitrogen for 8 h. After cooling down to room temperature, the mixture was poured into water and then extracted with DCM. The organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄ and evaporated. The residue was purified by column chromatography over silica gel using petroleum ether and DCM. **TPI-Br** was obtained as an orange powder (594 mg, yield: 65%).¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.91 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.83 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.56 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.37-7.29 (m, 4H), 7.25-7.17 (m, 6H), 7.11 (dd, *J* = 11.5, 4.2 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 153.96, 153.15, 148.44, 147.33, 133.55, 132.39, 129.92, 129.83, 129.43, 127.34, 125.05, 123.53, 122.63, 112.19.

Synthesis of TPIP

A mixture of **TPI-Br** (914 mg, 2.00 mmol), pyridine-4-boronic acid (369 mg, 3.00 mmol), K₂CO₃ (200 mg), [1,1'-bis(diphenylphosphino)ferrocene]dichloropalladium (II) (20 mg) and THF (5 mL) was refluxed under nitrogen for 20 h. After cooling down to room temperature, the mixture was poured into water and then extracted with DCM. The organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄ and evaporated. The residue was purified by column chromatography over silica gel using petroleum ether and DCM. **TPIP** was yielded as an orange powder (565 mg, yield: 62%). ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.79 (d, *J* = 5.1 Hz, 2H), 7.94 (d, *J* = 5.1 Hz, 2H), 7.90 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.87-7.75 (m, 2H), 7.31 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 4H), 7.22 (t, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 6H), 7.10 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 154.03, 153.60, 150.17, 148.49, 147.32, 144.70, 134.65, 130.13, 130.10, 129.46, 129.17, 128.98, 126.87, 125.10, 123.58, 123.50, 122.56.

Synthesis of TPI-PN

TPIP (456 mg,1.00 mmol) and 2-bromoethylamine hydrobromide (307 mg, 1.50 mmol) were dissolved in CH₃CN (4 mL) and stirred for 6 h at 90°C. After cooling down to room temperature, the CH₃CN was removed under a vacuum. The mixture was separated by HPLC (solvent A: water with 0.1% TFA, solvent B: CH₃CN) and lyophilized under vacuum to obtain the desired product **TPI-PN** as a purple solid (250 mg, yield: 43%). ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ 9.08 (dd, *J* = 102.2, 6.6 Hz, 4H), 8.52 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.11 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.06 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.39 (t, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 4H), 7.13 (dd, *J* = 18.2, 8.3 Hz, 8H), 4.92 (t, *J* = 5.2 Hz, 3H), 3.61 (t, *J* = 5.3 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (126 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ 153.71, 153.13, 152.67, 148.92, 148.88, 147.02, 145.72, 136.95, 132.83, 131.15, 130.28, 129.40, 127.23, 126.89, 125.46, 124.56, 121.88, 57.88, 55.37. HRMS (EI):

calculated for C₃₁H₂₆BrN₅S [M-Br]⁺: 500.1904; found: 500.2321.

Synthesis of TPI-PA

TPI-PN (290 mg, 0.50 mmol) and triethylamine (115 µL, 1.00 mmol) were dissolved in a dry DCM (10 mL) solution. After the mixed system was cooled to 0°C, acryloyl chloride (80 µL, 1.0 mmol) was added into the system and stirred evenly. The reaction system was taken out and reacted at room temperature for 10 h. After the reaction was completely monitored by TLC, the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure, and **TPI-PA** was purified as a purple solid by silica gel column chromatography (184 mg, yield 58%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ 9.19 (d, *J* = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 8.92 (d, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 2H), 8.66 (t, 1H), 8.51 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.14-8.01 (m, 3H), 7.46-7.34 (m, 4H), 7.22-7.08 (m, 8H), 6.26-6.14 (m, 1H), 6.04 (dd, *J* = 17.1, 2.1 Hz, 1H), 5.61 (dd, *J* = 10.1, 2.1 Hz, 1H), 4.77 (t, *J* = 5.4 Hz, 2H), 3.81 (q, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ 165.82, 153.71, 153.12, 152.15, 148.90, 147.05, 145.45, 136.79, 132.79, 131.54, 131.13, 130.26, 129.45, 127.19, 126.50, 125.44, 124.53, 121.94, 60.22, 40.89. HRMS (EI): calculated for C₃₄H₂₈BrN₅OS [M-Br]⁺: 554.2010; found: 554.1982.

Synthesis of TPI-CysHHC10

CysHHC10 (30 mg, 0.02 mmol) was dissolved in 3 mL HEPES buffer (H₂O: DMSO = 1:1, 10 mM, pH = 8.4). 2 mL HEPES buffer containing **TPI-PA** (19 mg, 0.03 mmol) was added to the reaction system and stirred for 10 h at room temperature. After the reaction was completed, it was lyophilized under vacuum, purified by HPLC (solvent A: water containing 0.1%TFA, solvent B: CH₃CN), and lyophilized under vacuum to obtain purple **TPI-CysHHC10** powder (13 mg, yield 32%). ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ 10.90-10.61 (m, 4H), 9.08 (d, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 2H), 8.10-8.01 (m, 6H), 7.87-7.65 (m, 6H), 7.61-6.83 (m, 46H), 4.79-3.39 (m, 16H), 3.23-2.84 (m, 16H), 2.73-2.65 (m, 6H), 2.04-1.96 (m, 1H), 1.53-1.18 (m, 26H), 0.80-0.72 (m, 6H). HRMS (EI): calculated for C₁₁₁H₁₃₅BrN₂₈O₁₁S₂ [M-Br]⁺: 2101.0335; found: [M-Br]⁺: 2101.0049, [M-Br+H]²⁺: 1051.0133, [M-Br +2H]³⁺: 701.0117, [M-Br +3H]⁴⁺: 526.0113, [M-Br +4H]⁵⁺: 421.0105.

1.4 AIE property

The AIE property of **TPI-CysHHC10** was demonstrated by studying its fluorescence behavior in a mixture of H_2O and 1,4-dioxane with different volume ratios. Each group contained 10 μ M AIEgens and the FL spectra were collected under 500 nm excitation.

1.5 Bacteria culturing

Gram-positive bacteria including *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S. aureus*), and *methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus* (*MRSA*) and gram-negative bacteria including *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), *multidrug-resistant Escherichia coli* (*MDR E. coli*), and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (*P. aeruginosa*) were used for the antimicrobial tests. Different bacteria were grown on an agar plate overnight based on the streaking method to afford a single colony. Then, 3-5 colonies isolated from the agar plate were cultured in an appropriate volume of broth culture for several hours at 37°C with a shaking speed (180 rpm), respectively. The optical density (OD) at 600 nm was used to monitor the concentration of bacteria. OD₆₀₀ of the bacteria solution was adjusted to 1.0, and then the bacterial experiments were performed.

1.6 SEM assay

The bacterial suspensions (*E. coli* and *MRSA*) of $OD_{600} = 1.0$ were taken from 1 mL and 10 µL **TPI-CysHHC10** (1 mM) was added to it. The Light(–) group was incubated with 37°C under the condition of dark for 2 hours, and the Light(+) group was incubated with 30 min under the dark condition of 37°C, then 15 min was irradiated with white light, and was incubated for another 75 min under the dark condition of 37°C. Subsequently, the bacterial samples were fixed with 2.5% glutaraldehyde, dehydrated, sputtered and observed by scanning electron microscope.

1.7 Zeta potential measurement

The bacterial suspensions (*E. coli* and *S. aureus*) with $OD_{600} = 1.0$ of 1 mL were added with 10 µL **TPI-CysHHC10** (1 mM) and incubated in 37°C for 10 min. Untreated bacteria were also incubated under the same conditions. Then the zeta potential was measured by Zeta potential analyzer.

1.8 Antibiofilm assay

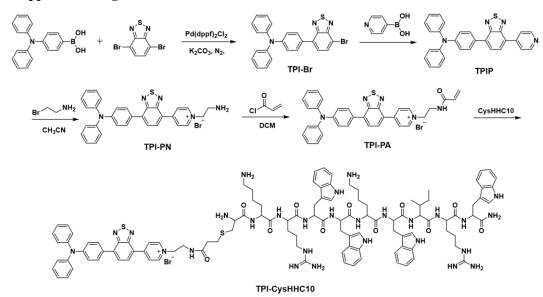
MRSA in logarithmic growth phase was diluted to 3×10^6 CFU/mL in LB medium as working suspension, and then added to confocal dishes (2 mL for each dish) or 24-well plate. Then divided into control group, non-light group and light group. 20 µL PBS was added to the control group, and 20 µL **TPI-CysHHC10** (1 mM) was added to each dish in the non-light group and light group. Then the light group was incubated in the dark for 1 h and then irradiated with 15min under white light.

All the confocal was incubated dishes under 37°C for 24 h, 48 h and 72 h, then the culture medium was gently removed and washed with PBS, and the *MRSA* biofilm was stained with Hoechst 33342 and YO-PRO-1. After 10 min, the biofilm was imaged by CLSM.

In the mature biofilm destruction experiment, *MRSA* in logarithmic growth phase was diluted with LB medium to 3×10^6 CFU/mL and added to confocal dishes (2 mL for each dish). All confocal dishes were incubated under 37°C for 24 h, 48 h and 72 h to form mature biofilms at different stages. They were divided into control group, non-light group and light group. 20 µL PBS was added to the control group, and 20 µL **TPI-CysHHC10** (1mM) was added to each dish in non-light group and light group. The non-light group was incubated in the dark for 2 h, and then the light group was exposed to white light for 1 h and then incubated in the dark group. The culture medium was gently removed and washed with PBS, and the *MRSA* biofilm was stained with Hoechst33342 and YO-PRO-1. After 10min, the biofilm was imaged at different wavelengths by CLSM.

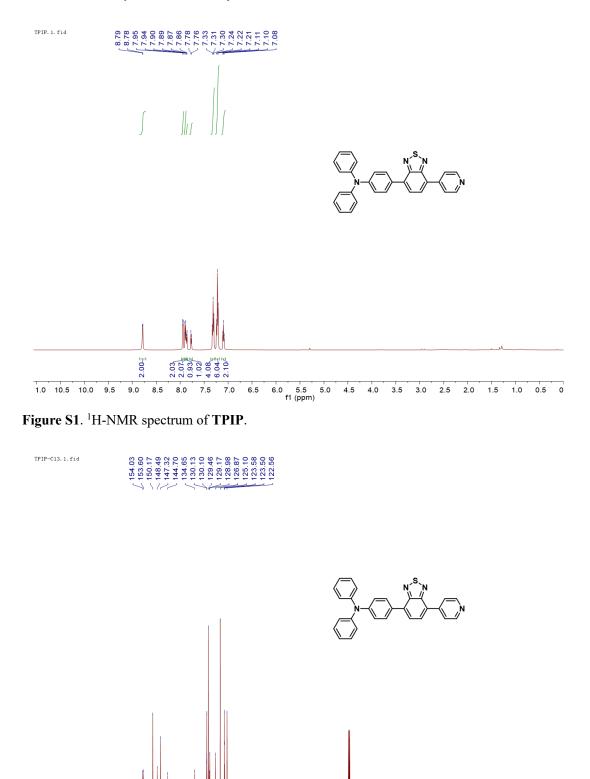
1.9 Aggregation experiments

Bacterial suspensions (1.5 mL) of (*E. coli*, *MDR E. coli*, *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, and *MRSA*) with $OD_{600} \approx 2.0$ was added to an ultraviolet cuvette, and measure and record OD_{600} . Then, added **TPI-CysHHC10**, HHC10, or TPI-PA (30 µL, 1 mM) to each bacterial suspension. The OD_{600} quickly recorded (t = 0) and the change in OD_{600} was monitored with time.



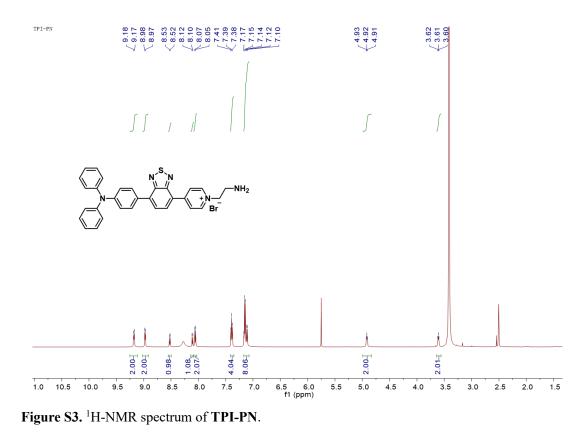
2. Supplemental Figures

Scheme S1. The synthesis of TPI-CysHHC10.



100 90 f1 (ppm) ò

Figure S2. ¹³C-NMR spectrum of TPIP.



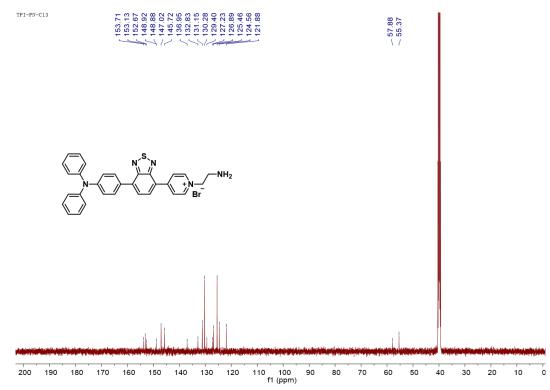
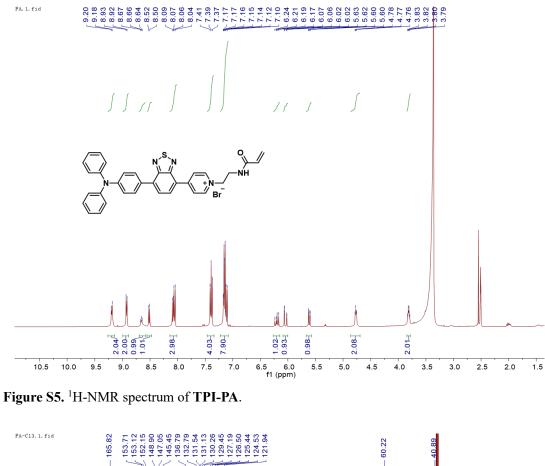


Figure S4. ¹³C-NMR spectrum of TPI-PN.



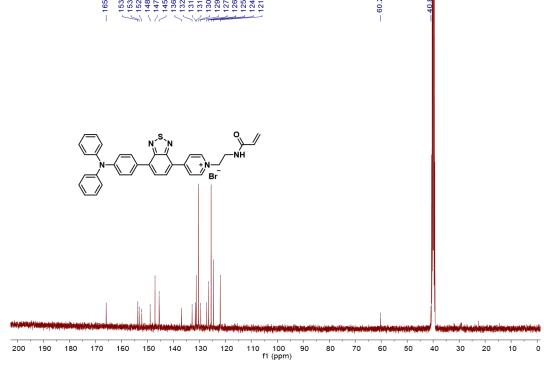


Figure S6. ¹³C-NMR spectrum of TPI-PA.

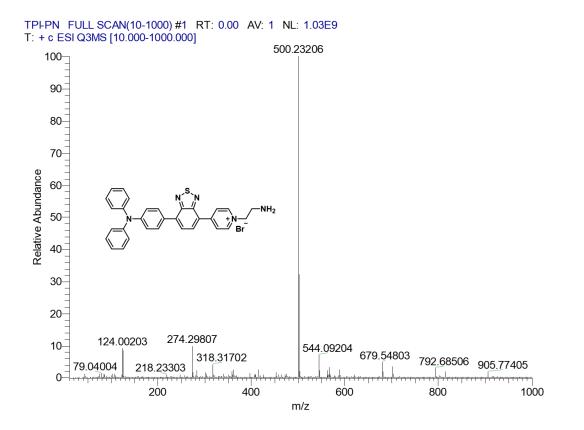


Figure S7. HR-MS spectrum of TPI-PN.

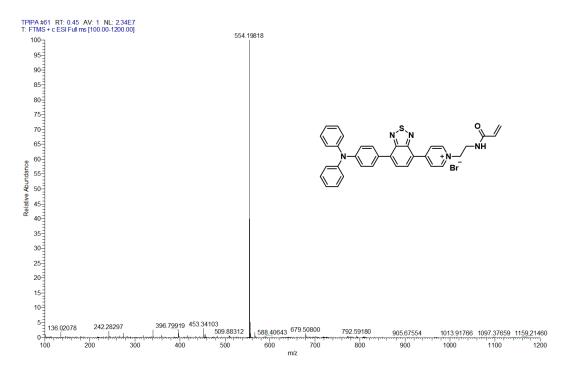


Figure S8. HR-MS spectrum of TPI-PA.

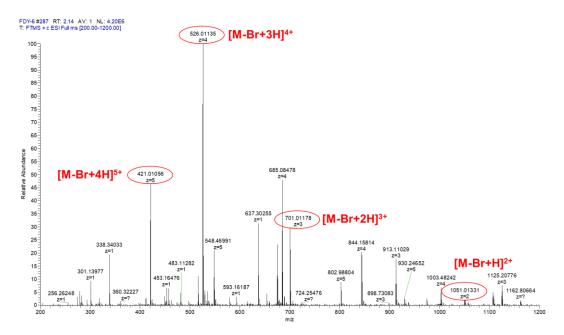


Figure S9. HR-MS spectrum of TPI-CysHHC10.

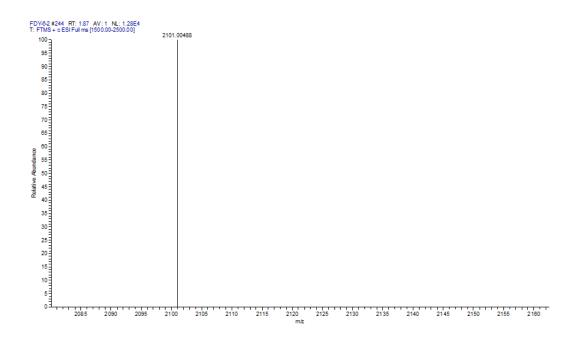


Figure S10. HR-MS spectrum of TPI-CysHHC10.

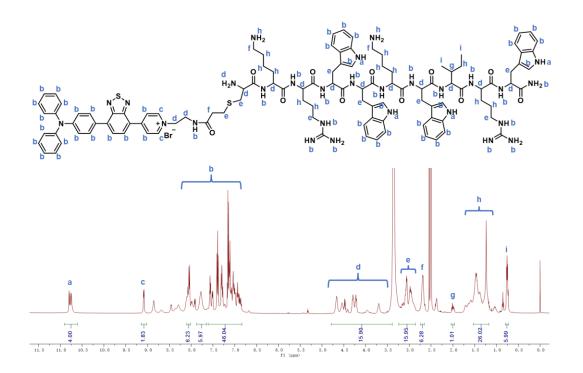


Figure S11. ¹H-NMR spectrum of TPI-CysHHC10.

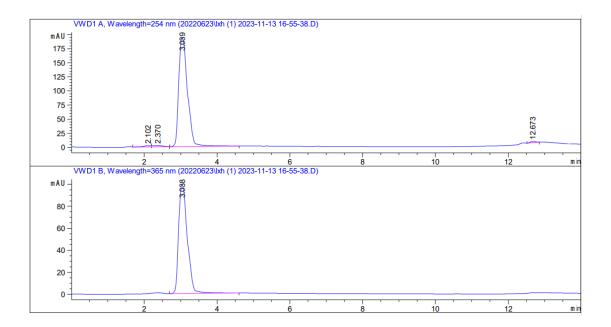


Figure S12. HPLC spectrum of purified TPI-CysHHC10.

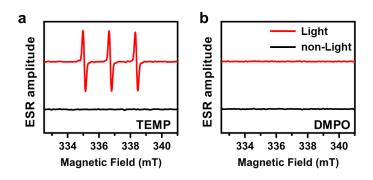


Figure S13. (a) ESR spectra of ${}^{1}O_{2}$ generated by **TPI-CysHHC10** before (black line) and after (red line) light irradiation for 15 min. (b) ESR spectra of O^{2-} and \cdot OH generated by **TPI-CysHHC10** before and after light irradiation for 15 min.

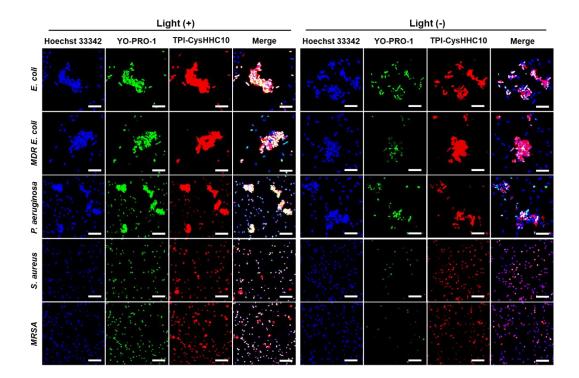


Figure S14. Dead-alive staining assays. CLSM images of *E. coli*, *MDR E. coli*, *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, and *MRSA* after incubation with **TPI-CysHHC10** (5 μ M) (red fluorescence) and then without or with light irradiation for 15 min. Then co-staining with Hoechst 33342 (blue fluorescence, a nucleic acid dye for all bacteria) and YO-PRO-1 (green fluorescence, a dye for dead bacteria). Light intensity: 60 mW/cm². Scale bar: 10 μ m.

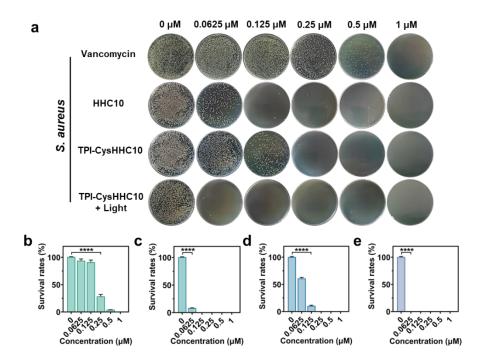


Figure S15. (a) Plate photographs of *S. aureus* LB plates treated with vancomycin, HHC10, **TPI-CysHHC10**, and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light at different concentration. (b-e) Quantized survival rates of *S. aureus via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with vancomycin (b), HHC10 (c), **TPI-CysHHC10** (d), and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (e). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). *****P* < 0.0001.

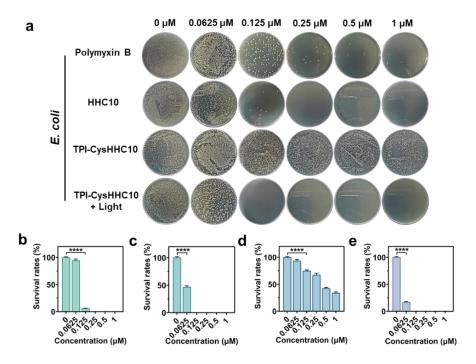


Figure S16. (a) Plate photographs of *E. coli* LB plates treated with vancomycin, HHC10, **TPI-CysHHC10**, and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light at different concentration. (b-e) Quantized survival rates

of *E. coli via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with polymyxin B (b), HHC10 (c), **TPI-CysHHC10** (d), and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (e). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). *****P* < 0.0001.

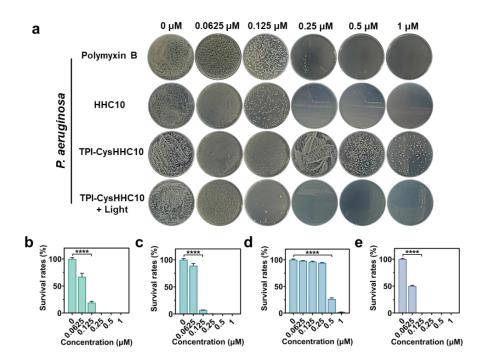


Figure S17. (a) Plate photographs of *P. aeruginosa* LB plates treated with vancomycin, HHC10, TPI-CysHHC10, and TPI-CysHHC10 + Light at different concentration. (b-e) Quantized survival rates of *P. aeruginosa via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with polymyxin B (b), HHC10 (c), TPI-CysHHC10 (d), and TPI-CysHHC10 + Light (e). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). *****P* < 0.0001.

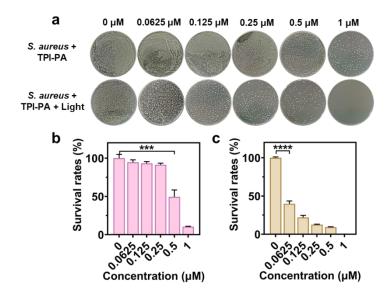


Figure S18. (a) Plate photographs of *S. aureus* LB plates treated with **TPI-PA** and **TPI-PA** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *S. aureus via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-PA** (b) and **TPI-PA** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). ****P* < 0.001, *****P* < 0.0001.

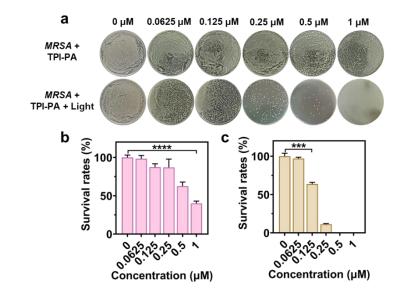


Figure S19. (a) Plate photographs of *MRSA* LB plates treated with **TPI-PA** and **TPI-PA** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *MRSA via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-PA** (b) and **TPI-PA** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). ****P* < 0.001, *****P* < 0.0001.

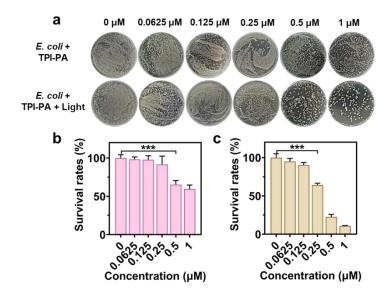


Figure S20. (a) Plate photographs of *E. coli* LB plates treated with **TPI-PA** and **TPI-PA** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *E. coli via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-PA** (b) and **TPI-PA** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). ****P* < 0.001.

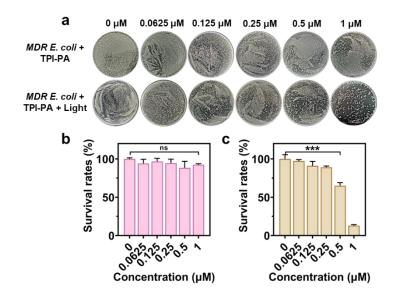


Figure S21. (a) Plate photographs of *MDR E. coli* LB plates treated with **TPI-PA** and **TPI-PA** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *MDR E. coli via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-PA** (b) and **TPI-PA** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). ****P* < 0.001, ns: no significance.

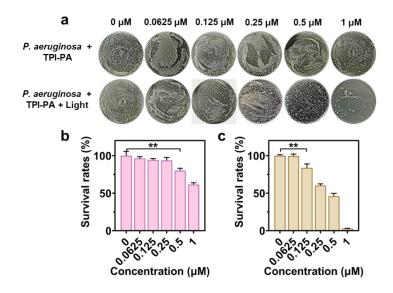


Figure S22. (a) Plate photographs of *P. aeruginosa* LB plates treated with **TPI-PA** and **TPI-PA** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *P. aeruginosa via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-PA** (b) and **TPI-PA** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). ***P* < 0.01.

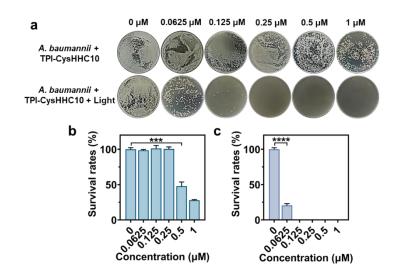


Figure S23. (a) Plate photographs of *A. baumannii* LB plates treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *A. baumannii* via colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** (b) and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). ****P* < 0.001, *****P* < 0.0001.

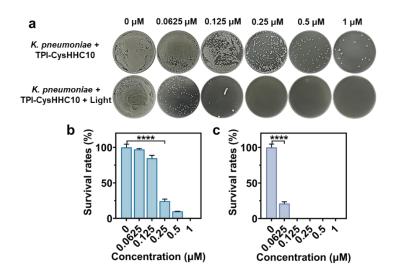


Figure S24. (a) Plate photographs of *K. pneumoniae* LB plates treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *K. pneumoniae via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** (b) and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). *****P* < 0.0001.

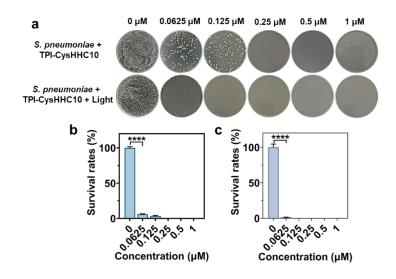


Figure S25. (a) Plate photographs of *S. pneumoniae* LB plates treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light at different concentration. (b-c) Quantized survival rates of *S. pneumoniae via* colony counting on LB agar plates treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** (b) and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (c). Data are mean \pm SD (n = 3). *****P* < 0.0001.

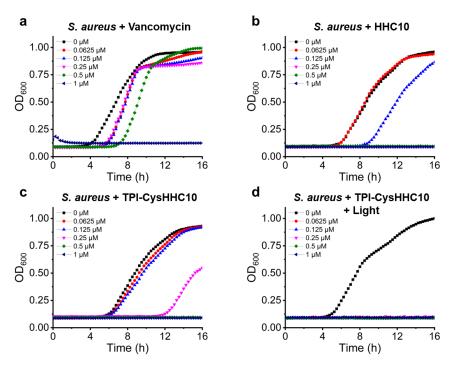


Figure S26. Growth inhibition curve of *S. aureus* with the treatment of vancomycin (a), HHC10 (b), **TPI-CysHHC10** (c), and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (d) at different concentrations.

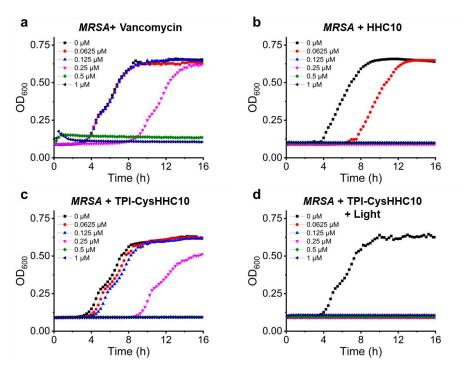


Figure S27. Growth inhibition curve of *MRSA* with the treatment of vancomycin (a), HHC10 (b), **TPI-CysHHC10** (c), and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (d) at different concentrations.

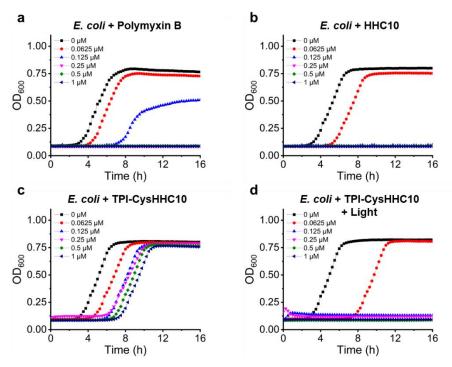


Figure S28. Growth inhibition curve of *E. coli* with the treatment of polymyxin B (a), HHC10 (b), **TPI-CysHHC10** (c), and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (d) at different concentrations.

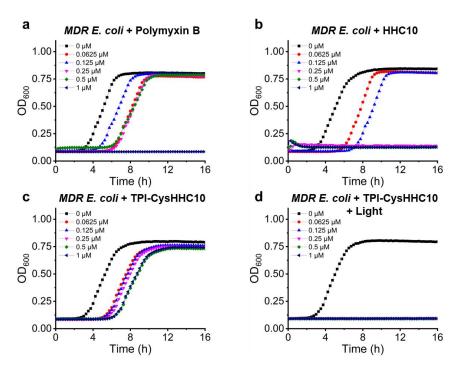


Figure S29. Growth inhibition curve of *MDR E. coli* with the treatment of polymyxin B (a), HHC10 (b), **TPI-CysHHC10** (c), and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (d) at different concentrations.

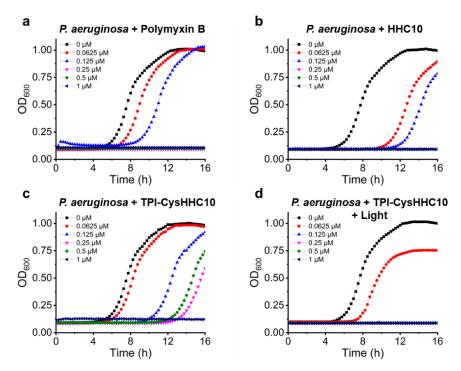


Figure S30. Growth inhibition curve of *P. aeruginosa* with the treatment of polymyxin B (a), HHC10 (b), **TPI-CysHHC10** (c), and **TPI-CysHHC10** + Light (d) at different concentrations.

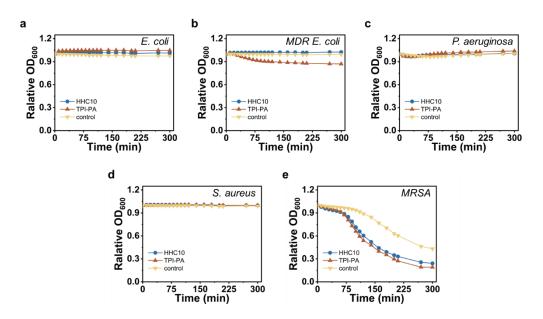


Figure S31. Aggregation as measured by turbidimetry for *E. coli, MDR E. coli, P. aeruginosa, S. aureus, and MRSA* in the absence and presence of HHC10 and TPI-PA.

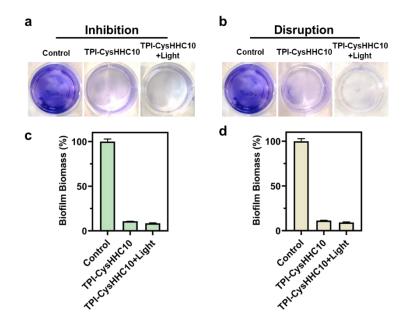


Figure S32. Investigation of biofilm (24 h) inhibition/disruption *via* crystal violet staining method. (a-b) Images of *MRSA* stained by crystal violet after different treatments. (c-d) Biofilm biomass of *MRSA* after different treatments.

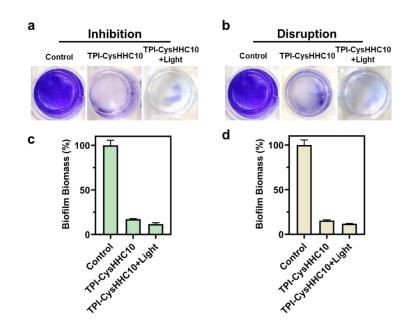


Figure S33. Investigation of biofilm (48 h) inhibition/disruption *via* crystal violet staining method. (a-b) Images of *MRSA* stained by crystal violet after different treatments. (c-d) Biofilm biomass of *MRSA* after different treatments.

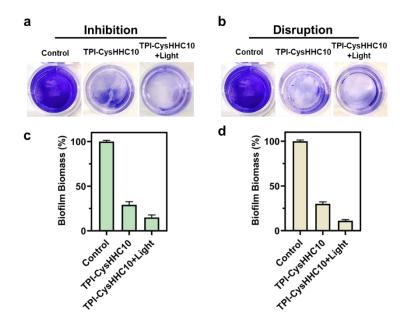


Figure S34. Investigation of biofilm (72 h) inhibition/disruption *via* crystal violet staining method. (a-b) Images of *MRSA* stained by crystal violet after different treatments. (c-d) Biofilm biomass of *MRSA* after different treatments.

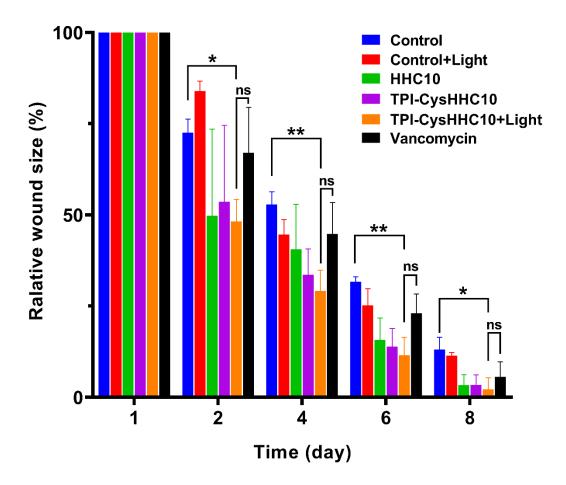


Figure S35. Relative wound area of mice with different treatment on day 1, day 2, day 4, day 6, and day 8. Data are mean \pm SD (n = 4). **P < 0.01, *P < 0.1, ns: no significance.

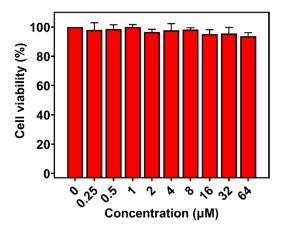


Figure S36. Cell viability of HeLa cells treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** for 24 h determined by MTT assay (n = 3).

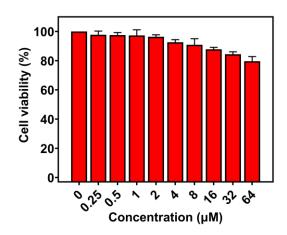


Figure S37. Cell viability of HeLa cells treated with **TPI-CysHHC10** for 24 h after 15 min irradiation determined by MTT assay (n = 3).

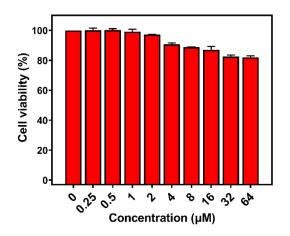


Figure S38. Cell viability of HeLa cells treated with **HHC10** for 24 h determined by MTT assay (n = 3).

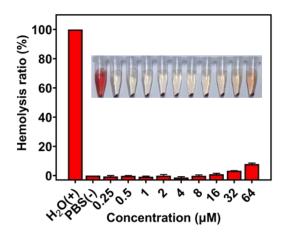


Figure S39. Hemolysis ratio of TPI-CysHHC10 at different concentrations (n = 6).

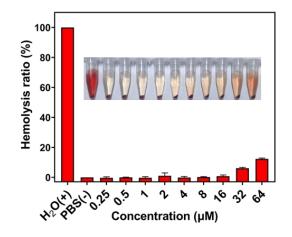


Figure S40. Hemolysis ratio of HHC10 at different concentrations (n = 6).

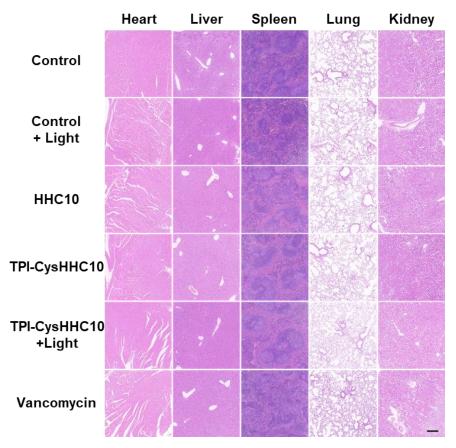


Figure S41. Representative images of H&E-stained heart, liver, spleen, lung and kidney slices from mice 8 days post treatment at each group. Scale bar: 200 μm.