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Supplemental Information

BODIPY-Decorated Nanoscale Covalent

Organic Frameworks

for Photodynamic Therapy

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Supplemental Figures

Figure S1. Cytotoxicity of Common Polymeric Nanoparticles to Normal Tissue Cell Lines, Related to Figure 1. Human mammary epithelial cell MCF-10A (A, B) and human normal liver cell HL-7702 (C, D) were cultured with the medium supplemented with LZU-1 (1), UiO-66, ZIF-8, ZIF-90, and PS-NH2 for 48 h (A, C) or 96 h (B, D). Then, the relative cell viabilities were detected by the standard MTT assay. Data was presented as mean±SD (n=4).

Figure S2. Standard Curves of 2 and 4, Related to Figure 1.

 (A, C) UV-vis spectra of $2(A)$ and $4(C)$.

(B, D) Standard curves of 2 (B) and 4 (D).

Figure S3. Spectroscopy Characterization of 1 and 5, Related to Figure 2.

- (A) Powder X-ray diffraction (PXRD) patterns of 1 and 5.
- (B) FT-IR spectra of 1, 4, and 5 powders.
- (C) UV-vis absorption spectra of 1, 4, and 5 in DMF.
- (D) N2 adsorption-desorption isotherms (77 K) of 1 and 5. Inset images: pore width distribution plots.

Figure S4. 13C ss-NMR spectra of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, Related to Figure 2.

- (A) 13 C ss-NMR spectra of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- (B) Ownership of major 13C ss-NMR peaks.

Figure S5. Control Experiments, Related to Figure 2.

(A) The content of BODIPY in different samples. Data was presented as mean±SD (n=3).

(B) BODIPY release rate as a function of time.

(C) Pore width of 1 and molecular dimensions of 2 and 4.

Figure S6. Characterization of the LZU-1 which was generated from the direct reaction of TFB and *p*phenylenediamine under the same solvothermal conditions, Related to Figure 3.

(A) PXRD pattern of micron sized LZU-1.

(B) DLS size profiles of micron sized LZU-1 in PBS (pH=6.5).

(C) SEM images of micron sized LZU-1. Scale bar: 1 μm.

Figure S7. Chemical Stability of 3 and 5, Related to Figure 2. (A) PXRD of 3 after soaking in PBS (pH=6.5) for different time. (B) PXRD of 5 after soaking in PBS (pH=6.5) for different time.

Figure S8. Light Stability of 3 and 5, Related to Figure 2.

(A) UV−vis spectra of 3 after exposure to green laser for different time.

(B) Absorbance at 418 nm and 530 nm of 3 as functions of illumination time.

(C) UV−vis spectra of 5 after exposure to green laser for different time.

(D) Absorbance at 428 nm and 500 nm of 5 as functions of illumination time.

Figure S9. Colloidal Stability of 1, 3, and 5 PBS Dispersion, Related to Figure 2.

(A) Digital photos of 1, 3, and 5 PBS (pH=6.5) dispersion before and after standing for 24 h.

(B) Particle sizes measured by DLS of 1, 3, and 5 PBS (pH=6.5) dispersion before and after standing for 24 h. Data was presented as mean±SD (n=3).

(C) Zeta potentials of 1, 3, and 5 PBS (pH=6.5) dispersion before and after standing for 24 h. Data was presented as mean±SD (n=3).

Figure S10. H&E Stained Images, Related to Figure 9.

H&E stained images of the major organs, including heart, liver, spleen, lung, and kidney. Scale bar: 100 μm.

Figure S11. Synthetic Routes of 2 and 4, Related to Figure 1.

Supplemental Tables

Table S1. Summary of Recent Typical COF-Based Biomedicine Systems, Related to Figure 10.

Table S2. Summary of COFs Post-Synthetic Modification Methods, Related to Figure 10.

Table S3. Summary of Recent Typical BODIPY-Based PDT Systems in Cancer Cells, Related to Figure 10.

* T: lighting time; C: PS concentration; CV: cell viability; NPs: nanoparticles.

Transparent Methods

Materials, Instrumentations, and Cell Culture

All reactants were reagent grade and were used as purchased without further purification. 2,4-Dimethyl-1*H*pyrrole, benzene-1,3,5-tricarbaldehyde (TFB), trifluoroacetic acid (TFA), boron trifluoride ethyl ether complex (BF3·Et2O), iodine, iodic acid, stannous chloride (anhydrous), polyvinyl pyrrolidone (PVP, Mw=8000), 2-methyl-1*H*-imidazole (Melm), 1*H*-imidazole-2-carbaldehyde (IcaH), Zn(NO₃)₂·6H₂O, trioctylamine (TOA), ZrCl₄, terephthalic acid, and amine-modified polystyrene microsphere (PS-NH₂, 0.05~0.1 μm) were purchased from Aladdin Reagent Co., Ltd. Palladium on activated charcoal (Pd, 10 wt%), hydrazine hydrate (N₂H₄·H₂O, 85 wt%), sodium sulfate (anhydrous), triethylamine (TEA), and benzene-1,4-diamine (PDA) were purchased from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd. *tert*-Butyl (4-aminophenyl)carbamate (NBPDA) was purchased from Ark Pharm, Inc. 4-Nitrobenzoyl chloride and 1,3-diphenylisobenzofuran (DPBF) were purchased from TCI (Shanghai) Development Co., Ltd. All organic solvents were purchased from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd. Dehydrated solvents were obtained after treating solvents with standard procedures. Ultra-pure water was prepared with an Aquapro System (18 MΩ).

Chlorpromazine hydrochloride (CPZ), methyl-β-cyclodextrin (MβCD), and amiloride hydrochloride (AMR) were purchased from MedChemExpress Co. Ltd. Sodium dichloroacetate (DCA) and 3-(4,5-dimethyl-2-thiazolyl)-2,5 diphenyl-2*H*-tetrazolium bromide (MTT) were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (Shanghai) Trading Co. Ltd. Phosphate-Buffered Saline (PBS), Dulbecco's Phosphate-Buffered Saline (DPBS), and Hank's Balanced Salt Solution (HBSS) were purchased from Biological Industries USA, Inc. Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium (DMEM), Fetal Bovine Serum (FBS), Penicillin Streptomycin Mixtures (Pen-Strep), and Trypsin-EDTA Solution (0.25%) were purchased from HyClone Laboratories, Inc. Normocin was purchased from Invivogen (San Diego, CA, USA). Mammary Epithelial Cell Growth Basal Medium (MEBM) and Mammary Epithelial Cell Growth Medium (MEGM) SingleQuots Kit were purchased from Lonza Inc.

Singlet Oxygen Sensor Green (SOSG), LysoTracker Red DND-99, MitoTracker Deep Red FM, Hoechst 33258, and JC-1 were purchased from Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. Calcein-AM/PI Double Stain Kit was purchased from Yeasen Biotech (Shanghai) Co., Ltd. Acridine orange (AO) and formalin fixative were purchased from Beijing Solarbio Science & Tecnology Co., Ltd.

Liquid-state ¹H and ¹³C nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded using a Bruker AVANCE III HD 400 MHz NMR Spectrometer. Chemical shifts were reported as *δ* values relative to tetramethylsilane (TMS) as internal reference. Solid-state 13C NMR spectra (cross-polarization magic angle spinning) were recorded using an Agilent VNMRS 600 MHz NMR Spectrometer. Chemical shifts were reported as *δ* values relative to TMS as internal reference. MALDI-TOF mass spectra were recorded using a Bruker BIFLEX III Ultra-High-Resolution Fourier Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance (FT-ICR) Mass Spectrometer. Ultraviolet–visible absorption spectra were recorded on a Shimadzu UV-2700 Double Beam UV-Vis Spectrophotometer. Fourier transform infrared (FT-IR) spectra were obtained in the 4000~400 cm-1 range using a Thermo Scientific Nicolet iS50 FT-IR Spectrometer equipped with single reflection diamond ATR module. Elemental microanalyses (EA) were performed with an Elementar Vario EL Cube Elemental Analyzer. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) micrographs were recorded on a Hitachi SU8010 Scanning Electron Microscope. Transmission electron microscope (TEM) micrographs were recorded on a Hitachi HT7700 120kV Compact-Digital Transmission Electron Microscope. Powder X-ray diffraction (PXRD) patterns were obtained on a Bruker D8 ADVANCE X-Ray Powder Diffractometer with Cu Kα line focused radiation (*λ*=1.5405 Å) from 2*θ*=3.8° up to 50.0° with 0.01° increment. Nitrogen isotherms were measured at 77 K using a Micromeritics ASAP2020 HD88 Surface Area and Porosity Analyser. Before measurement, the samples were degassed in vacuum at 120°C for 12 h. Hydrodynamic particle size and zeta potential were measured using Malvern Zetasizer Nano ZS90 System. Laser scanning confocal fluorescence images were captured with a Leica TCS SP8 Confocal Laser Scanning Microscopy with an objective lens (×20, ×10). Microplate assays were carried out on a Molecular Devices SpectraMax i3x Multi-Mode Microplate Detection System.

The HeLa (human cervical cancer cell line), MCF-7 (human breast adenocarcinoma cell line), and HL-7702 (human normal liver cell line) were provided by Institute of Basic Medicine, Shandong Academy of Medical Sciences (Jinan, China). The MCF-10A (human mammary epithelial cell line) was provided by Stem Cell Bank, Chinese Academy of Sciences (Shanghai, China). The HeLa, MCF-7, and HL-7702 cell lines were cultured in DMEM supplemented with FBS (10%), Normocin (50 μg/mL), penicillin (100 U/mL) and streptomycin (100 μg/mL) in an atmosphere of 5% CO₂ and 95% air at 37°C. The MCF-10A cell line was cultured in MEBM supplemented with MEGM SingleQuots Kit in an atmosphere of 5% $CO₂$ and 95% air at 37°C.

Synthesis of NCOF LZU-1 (1)

A mixture of benzene-1,3,5-tricarbaldehyde (20 mg, 123 μmol), *tert*-butyl (4-aminophenyl)carbamate (40 mg, 192 μmol), PVP (160 mg, Mw=8000), and trifluoroacetic acid (720 μL) in ethanol (8 mL) was heated at 120°C for 12 h under autogenous pressure. Then, the reaction system was cooled to room temperature. After 5 days standing, the particles were isolated by centrifugation at 12000 rpm for 30 min. The solid was washed with ethanol/triethylamine (v/v=9:1) for three times, and washed with ether for additional one time. Finally, the solids were dried in air at 40°C to generate 1 nanoparticle as claybank powder. Yield: ~10 mg. FT-IR (cm⁻¹): 3358 (m), 2971 (m), 2871 (m), 1682 (m), 1621 (s), 1495 (s), 1440 (m), 1368 (m), 1288 (m), 1249 (m), 1155 (s), 1052 (w), 970 (w), 883 (w), 837 (m), 732 (w), 685 (m), 615 (w).

Normal Tissue Cytotoxicity Test

For demonstrating the biocompatible of COF, we evaluated the growth inhibition of the obtained nano LZU-1 herein on normal tissue cell lines (human normal liver cell line HL-7702, and human mammary epithelial cell line MCF-10A), furthermore, compared with other widely used polymeric nanocarriers, e.g. UiO-66, ZIF-8, ZIF-90 and amine-modified polystyrene microsphere (PS-NH₂). As shown in Figure S1, when using medium supplemented with different NPs for continuous cell culture, for the MCF-10A cell line, ZIF-8 showed the greatest cytotoxicity at 48 h, while LZU-1, UiO-66, and ZIF-90 exhibited the similar toxicity, the cell viabilities were still >80% at concentrations up to 100 μg/mL. When the culture time was extended to 96 h, the cytotoxicity of LZU-1 and ZIF-90 was still at a low level, while the toxicity of UiO-66 and PS-NH2 was slightly increased. For the HL-7702 cell line, ZIF-8 and UiO-66 had higher cytotoxicity at 48 h, while the toxicity of LZU-1 and ZIF-90 was almost negligible, even at concentrations up to 500 μg/mL. When the culture time was extended to 96 h, LZU-1 showed the lowest cytotoxicity among the UiO-66, ZIF-8, ZIF-90, and PS-NH₂. These results are consistent with the previous reports.(Guan et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2019; Ruyra et al., 2015; Tamames-Tabar et al., 2014) This suggested that the metal-free inherent nature of COFs such as LZU-1 herein provided an excellent biocompatibility and minimal normal tissue toxicity, which might be one of the key advantages of COFs for biomedical applications.

Experimentally, HL-7702 and MCF-10A cells were cultured with the medium supplemented with LZU-1 (1), PS-NH₂, ZIF-8, ZIF-90, and UiO-66 (100 µL, 0~500 µg/mL) at 48-well plates in CO₂ incubator for 48 h or 96 h. Then, the relative cell viabilities were detected by the standard MTT assay.(van Meerloo et al., 2011) ZIF-8(Zheng et al., 2016), ZIF-90(Guan et al., 2018), and UiO-66(Zhou et al., 2018) were synthesized according to previous report.

Synthesis of BODIPY-2I (2)

As shown in Figure S11, firstly, the precursor compound 5,5-difluoro-2,8-diiodo-1,3,7,9-tetramethyl-10-(4 nitrophenyl)-5*H*-4*λ*4,5*λ*4-dipyrrolo[1,2-*c*:2',1'-*f*][1,3,2]diazaborinine (2a) was synthesized as previously reported.(Guan et al., 2018) Next, under N₂ protection, 2a (0.5 g, 0.8 mmol), anhydrous SnCl₂ (2.3 g, 12.0 mmol), hydrochloric acid (0.2 M, 12 mL) were dissolved in methanol (60 mL) and dichloromethane (60 mL). The mixture was refluxed for 12 h and then cooled to room temperature. Then, the mixture was washed with NaOH solution (1 M) and water. The precipitate and the aqueous layer were discarded, and the organic layer was dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The product was purified by alkaline alumina column chromatography (eluant, dichloromethane) to provide the product as deep red powder. Yield: 0.2 g (42%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 6.97 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 6.79 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 3.90 (bs, 2H), 2.63 (s, 6H), 1.51 (s, 6H). 13C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl3) *δ* 156.26, 147.59, 145.42, 142.49, 131.95, 128.89, 124.22, 115.59, 85.35, 17.28, 15.99. MALDI-TOF MS, Calcd. For [M], 590.965, Found, 590.999; Calcd. For [M-F], 571.967, Found, 572.010. FT-IR (cm-1): 3459 (m), 3378 (m), 3233 (w), 2924 (m), 2853 (w), 1625 (m), 1521 (s), 1455 (s), 1399 (s), 1343 (s), 1305 (s), 1264 (m), 1171 (s), 1117 (m), 1081 (m), 991 (s), 826 (m), 763 (m), 703 (m), 587 (m), 523 (m). Anal. Calcd. For C₁₉H₁₈BF₂I₂N₃ (%): C, 38.61; H, 3.07; N, 7.11, Found: C, 38.90; H, 3.17; N, 7.32.

Synthesis of LZU-1-BODIPY-2I (3)

1 (5 mg) and 2 (10.6 mg, 18 μmol) was added in ethanol (5 mL). The mixture was dispersed with ultrasonic dispersion for 10 min. Then acetic acid solution (50 μL, 3 M) was added, and the mixture was heated at 75°C for 4 h under autogenous pressure. Then, the reaction system was cooled to room temperature, and the particles were isolated by centrifugation at 12000 rpm for 30 min. The solid was washed with ethanol until the supernatant liquid was colorless, and washed with ether for additional one time. Finally, the solids were dried in air at 40°C to generate 3 as orange-red powder. FT-IR (cm⁻¹): 3368 (m), 2794 (m), 2926 (m), 2872 (m), 1696 (m), 1623 (s), 1599 (s), 1508 (s), 1455 (m), 1420 (w), 1393 (w), 1379 (m), 1344 (w), 1305 (w), 1287 (w), 1266 (w), 1251 (w), 1195 (w), 1158 (m), 1087 (w), 1052 (w), 972 (m), 885 (m), 835 (m), 764 (w), 733 (w), 687 (m), 617 (w), 587 (w), 521 (w).

Synthesis of BODIPY-2H (4)

As shown in Figure S11, firstly, the precursor compound 5,5-difluoro-1,3,7,9-tetramethyl-10-(4-nitrophenyl)-5*H*-4*λ*4,5*λ*4-dipyrrolo[1,2-*c*:2',1'-*f*][1,3,2]diazaborinine (4a) was synthesized as previously reported.(Guan et al., 2018) Next, under N₂ protection, 4a (0.6 g, 1.63 mmol), hydrazine hydrate (15 mL, 85 wt%), Pd/C (2.0 g, 10 wt%) were dissolved in tetrahydrofuran (100 mL) and ethanol (100 mL). The mixture was refluxed for 12 h and then cooled to room temperature. The product was purified by alkaline alumina column chromatography (eluant, dichloromethane) to provide the product as red powder. Yield: 0.43 g (78%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.00 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 6.77 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 5.97 (s, 2H), 3.88 (bs, 2H), 2.54 (s, 6H), 1.49 (s, 6H). 13C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl3) *δ* 154.90, 146.99, 143.20, 142.65, 131.99, 128.88, 124.60, 120.92, 115.42, 14.66, 14.55. MALDI-TOF MS, Calcd. For [M], 339.172, Found, 339.658; Calcd. For [M-F], 320.173, Found, 320.585. FT-IR (cm-1): 3481 (m), 3384 (m), 3217 (w), 3066 (w), 2029 (w), 2952 (w), 2922 (w), 2856 (w), 1622 (m), 1537 (s), 1504 (s), 1468 (s), 1406 (s), 1369 (m), 1298 (s), 1265 (m), 1190 (s), 1151 (s), 1084 (s), 1051 (s), 976 (s), 820 (m), 762 (m), 731 (m), 702 (m), 580 (m), 472 (m). Anal. Calcd. For C₁₉H₂₀BF₂N₃ (%): C, 67.28; H, 5.94; N, 12.39, Found: C, 67.43; H, 6.11; N, 12.65.

Synthesis of LZU-1-BODIPY (5)

1 (5 mg) and 4 (6 mg, 18 μmol) was added in ethanol (5 mL). The mixture was dispersed with ultrasonic dispersion for 10 min. Then acetic acid solution (50 μL, 3 M) was added, and the mixture was heated at 75°C for 4 h under autogenous pressure. Then, the reaction system was cooled to room temperature, and the particles were isolated by centrifugation at 12000 rpm for 30 min. The solid was washed with ethanol until the supernatant liquid was colorless, and washed with ether for additional one time. Finally, the solids were dried in air at 40°C to generate 5 as orange powder. FT-IR (cm-1): 3378 (m), 2970 (m), 2870 (m), 1682 (m), 1621 (s), 1495 (s), 1439 (m), 1368 (m), 1288 (m), 1250 (m), 1154 (s), 1050 (w), 970 (m), 882 (w), 838 (m), 732 (w), 686 (m), 614 (w).

BODIPY Contents Determination

After the end of the synthesis, the supernatants were collected by centrifugation, and all the washing liquids produced during the washing were collected. The contents of BODIPY in the supernatant and the washing liquid were calculated using standard curves. These contents were subtracted from the total reactants to obtain the BODIPY contents in 3 and 5.

BODIPY contents in 3 and 5 were further confirmed by the ICP-OES results. 3 or 5 (25 mg) was dissolved in the mixed acid (5.0 mL, H_2SO_4/HNO_3 , v/v=1:1). Subsequently, the solution was diluted with water to 50.0 mL, and the content of B was determined using ICP-OES.

Control Experiments

A mixture of 1 (5 mg) and 2 (10.6 mg, 18 μmol) in ethanol (5 mL) was dispersed with ultrasonic dispersion for 10 min. Then, water (50 μL) was added, and the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 4 h. Then, the particles were isolated by centrifugation at 12000 rpm for 30 min, and the obtained solids were dried in air to generate BODIPY-2I⊂LZU-1 (3') nanoparticles as orange-red powder.

A mixture of 1 (5 mg) and 4 (6 mg, 18 μmol) in ethanol (5 mL) was dispersed with ultrasonic dispersion for 10 min. Then, water (50 μL) was added, and the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 4 h. Then, the particles were isolated by centrifugation at 12000 rpm for 30 min, and the obtained solids were dried in air to generate BODIPY-2H⊂LZU-1 (5') nanoparticles as orange powder.

The content of BODIPY in different samples were shown in Figure S5A determined by the standard curve method (Figure S2). The release curves of BODIPY were determined as follows: 3, 3', 5, or 5' (3 mg) were added to boiling ethanol (100 mL); dispersions were taken at different times to test UV-vis spectra and converted to the release rate of BODIPY using standard curves (Figure S2).

Chemical Stability

3 or 5 (10 mg) in PBS (10 mL, pH= 6.5) was centrifuged at different time, and dried to examine their powder Xray diffraction (PXRD). For more information about chemical stability, see (Chandra et al., 2013; Kandambeth et al., 2012).

Light Stability

A PBS (pH=6.5) dispersion of 3 or 5 (2 mL, 50 μg/mL) was exposed to green laser (1 W/cm2) at room temperature for 30 min. The UV-vis spectra were recorded at 5 min intervals. The ratios *A*/*A*₀ of absorbance *A* and the initial absorbance *A*⁰ at 418, 530 nm for 3 or 428, 500 nm for 5 at different irradiation times were calculated and plotted as the ordinate for the irradiation time. PBS (pH=6.5) was used as the reference for this UV−vis measurement.

Colloidal Stability

A PBS (pH=6.5) dispersion of 1, 3, and 5 (50 μg/mL) were allowed to stand at room temperature for 24 h, and their zeta potentials and hydrodynamic particle sizes were measured by dynamic light scattering (DLS).

Singlet Oxygen Generation in PBS

Pipetted the PBS (pH=6.5) dispersions of 3 or 5 (2 mL, 10 μM, BODIPY equiv) into quartz cuvette, and DPBF DMF solution (100 μL, 1mM) was added. Then the mixture was exposed to green LED (40 mW/cm²) at room temperature for 60 s. The absorbance of DPBF at 414 nm in the mixture was recorded at 10 s intervals. The ${}^{1}O_{2}$ generation rate was determined from the reduced the absorbance over time. To characterize the difference in the rate of ¹O₂ produced by different samples, the ratios $A/A₀$ of absorbance *A* and the initial absorbance $A₀$ at 414 nm at different irradiation times were calculated and plotted as the ordinate for the irradiation time. PBS (pH=6.5) dispersions of 3 or 5 (2 mL, 10 μM, BODIPY equiv) was used as the reference for this UV−vis measurement.

Intracellular Singlet Oxygen Generation

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 μ L, 0.2 μ M, BODIPY equiv) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, washed with DPBS twice, and further incubated with SOSG (5 μM, 200 μL) for 15 min. The cells were exposed to green LED (40 mW/cm²) for different times and imaged with a laser scanning confocal microscope. The green images were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 525±20 nm. The mean fluorescence intensity (MFI) was analyzed by ImageJ software.(Schneider et al., 2012)

In Vitro PDT Experiment

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 2, 3, 4 or 5 (100 μL, 0, 0.2, 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, 4.0 μM, BODIPY equiv) in CO2 incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Then, the cells were exposed to green LED (40 mW/cm2) for 0 or 15 min. After additional 24 h incubation, the relative cell viabilities were detected by the standard MTT assay.(van Meerloo et al., 2011)

Calcein-AM/PI Double Stain

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 μ L, 2.0 μ M, BODIPY equiv) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Then, the cells were exposed to green LED (40 mW/cm²) for 0, 5, 15 min. After additional 4 h incubation, the cells were collected using Trypsin-EDTA Solution (0.25%), washed with DPBS twice carefully, and were stained with Calcein-AM (500 μL, 2 μM) and PI (500 μL, 4.5 μM) for 15 min. Finally, the cells were washed with DPBS twice carefully, and imaged with a laser scanning confocal microscope. The green images of living cells were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 520±20 nm. The red images of dead cells were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 640±20 nm.

In Vitro Scratch Assay

MCF-7 cells were seeded into 12-well plates and grown to confluence. Then, cell monolayer was damaged by scratching with a sterile 1000 μL pipet tip to obtain scratches. Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (500 μL, 0.5 μM, BODIPY equiv) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, and carefully washed with DPBS twice. The 0 h reference images of the scratched areas were taken using inverted microscope. Then, the cells were exposed to green LED (40 mW/cm²) for 0 or 5 min. After additional 24 h incubation, the scratched areas were taken again. The cells that were not incubated with 3 and 5 were used as a control. The scratch widths were measured by ImageJ software,(Schneider et al., 2012) and the width ratios of 0 h and 24 h were calculated. The data was the result of 3 independent experiments.

Cellular Uptake Mechanism

Cells were subjected to different treatments before the incubation of 3 and 5 as follow: (i) DPBS, CO_2 incubator, 1 h; (ii) HBSS, air atmosphere, 4° C, 1 h; (iii) sodium dichloroacetate (DCA), 15 mM, CO₂ incubator, 1 h; (iv) chlorpromazine (CPZ), 10 μg/mL, CO₂ incubator, 1 h; (v) methyl-β-cyclodextrin (MβCD), 10 mg/mL, CO₂ incubator, 1 h; (vi) amiloride (AMR), 75 μ g/mL, CO₂ incubator, 1 h. After these different treatments, the cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 μL, 5 μg/mL) in CO_2 incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. After additional 4 h incubation, the laser scanning confocal fluorescence images were captured. The green images of 3 or 5 were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 540±20 nm. The mean fluorescence intensity (MFI) was analyzed by ImageJ software.(Schneider et al., 2012)

Subcellular Localization of Cell Nucleus

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 µL, 5 µg/mL) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. After additional 4 h incubation, cells were fixed in paraformaldehyde fix solution (4%) for 15 min, washed with DPBS twice, subsequently incubated with Hoechst 33258 (200 μL, 5 μg/mL) for an additional 15 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Then, the laser scanning confocal fluorescence images were captured. The green images of 3 or 5 were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 540±20 nm. The blue images of cell nucleus were excited by 405 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 461±30 nm. Colocalization was analyzed by ImageJ software.(Schneider et al., 2012)

Subcellular Localization of Mitochondria

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 µL, 5 µg/mL) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. After additional 4 h incubation, cells were incubated with MitoTracker Deep Red FM (200 μL, 25 nM) for an additional 15 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Then, the laser scanning confocal fluorescence images were captured. The green images of 3 or 5 were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 540±20 nm. The red images of mitochondria were excited by 633 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 665±20 nm. Colocalization was analyzed by ImageJ software.(Schneider et al., 2012)

Subcellular Localization of Lysosomes

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 μL, 5 μg/mL) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. After additional 4 h incubation, cells were incubated with LysoTracker Red DND-99 (200 μL, 50 nM) for an additional 15 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Then, the laser scanning confocal fluorescence images were captured. The green images of 3 or 5 were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 540±20 nm. The orange images of lysosomes were excited by 561 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 590±20 nm. Colocalization was analyzed by ImageJ software.(Schneider et al., 2012)

Mitochondrial Membrane Potential (MMP, ΔΨ)

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 μ L, 0.2 μ M, BODIPY equiv) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Then, the cells were exposed to green LED (40 mW/cm²) for 4 min. The cells without green LED irradiation were used as control. After additional 4 h incubation, the cells were incubated with JC-1 (200 μL, 10 μg/mL) for 10 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Next, the laser scanning confocal fluorescence images were captured. The green images of monomer were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 530±15 nm. The red images of J-aggregate were excited by 514 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 590±17 nm. The mean fluorescence intensity (MFI) was analyzed by ImageJ software.(Schneider et al., 2012)

Lysosomal Membrane Permeabilization (LMP)

Cells were incubated with DPBS dispersion of 3 or 5 (200 μL, 0.2 μM, BODIPY equiv) in CO₂ incubator for 30 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Then, the cells were exposed to green LED (40 mW/cm²) for 4 min. The cells without green LED irradiation were used as control. After additional 4 h incubation, the cells were incubated with AO (200 μL, 5 μg/mL) for 10 min, and washed with DPBS twice. Next, the laser scanning confocal fluorescence images were captured. The green images were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 530±20 nm. The red images were excited by 488 nm light, and the emission wavelength range was collected at 640±20 nm.

MCF-7 Xenograft Model

Animal experiments were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Shandong Normal University (Jinan, China). All methods were performed in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations on experimental animals.

Nude mice (BALB/c-nu♀, aged 5 weeks, 15~20 g) were purchased from the Beijing Vital River Laboratory Animal Technology Co., Ltd. MCF-7 cancer cells (5×106 cells) suspended in DPBS (100 μL) were subcutaneously injected into the flanks of each mice to establish MCF-7 xenograft model. Length (*L*) and width (*W*) of the tumor were determined by digital calipers. The tumor volume (*V*) was calculated by the formula: *V* = 1/2 × *L* × *W*2. When the tumor size reached \sim 150 mm³, animals were used in the experiments.

In Vivo PDT Experiment

The nude mice bearing MCF-7 tumors (n=30) were randomly distributed into 6 groups: (i) control group, DPBS injection (50 μL); (ii) 2+laser group, DPBS dispersion of 2 injection (50 μL, 0.09 mg/mL, 150 μM, BODIPY equiv), green laser irradiation (1 W/cm², 10 min); (iii) 3 group, DPBS dispersion of 3 injection (50 μL, 1.1 mg/mL, 150 μM, BODIPY equiv); (iv) 3+light group, DPBS dispersion of 3 injection (50 μL, 1.1 mg/mL, 150 μM, BODIPY equiv), green laser irradiation (1 W/cm2, 10 min); (v) 5 group, DPBS dispersion of 5 injection (50 μL, 0.97 mg/mL, 150 μM, BODIPY equiv); (vi) 5+light group, DPBS dispersion of 5 injection (50 μL, 0.97 mg/mL, 150 μM, BODIPY equiv), green laser irradiation (1 W/cm², 10 min). After intratumoral injection, the nude mice were feeding for 24 h, and for the treatment group, light treatment was performed on the tumor site. The mice continued to be fed for 14 days. The tumor volume and nude mouse body weight were recorded daily during the experimental period.

Histopathological Examination

At the end of the treatment, the nude mice were dissected, and major organs (heart, liver, spleen, lung, and kidney) were harvested and fixed in formalin fixative to make paraffin section for hematoxylin and eosin (H&E) staining.

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