

DOCTORAL THESIS

The application of iridium(iii) complexes in luminescent sensing

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Abstract

Luminescent transition metal complexes have arisen as viable alternatives to organic dyes for sensory applications due to their notable advantages. This thesis aimed to synthesize different kinds of iridium(III) complexes as chemosensors and G-quadruplex probes for the detection of metal ions, small molecules, proteins and DNA to demonstrate the versatility of iridium(III) complex in luminescence sensing.

Iridium(III) complex chemosensors were synthesized and developed for the detection of Cu^{2+} and cysteine. The iridium(III) complex plays the role of the “signaling unit”, which transduces the analyte binding event into an optical (luminescent) signal and the “receptor unit” attached to the metal complex selectively binds the analyte of interest. Meanwhile, a series of iridium(III) complexes incorporating a variety of C^N and N^N donor ligands were synthesized and were shown to exhibit G-quadruplex-selective binding properties *via* emission titration, fluorescence resonance energy transfer melting and G-quadruplex fluorescent intercalator displacement experiments. These G-quadruplex-selective Ir(III) complexes were utilized as signal transducers to monitor the conformational changes of oligonucleotides in label-free oligonucleotide-based luminescent detection platforms for metal ion (Ag^+), small molecules (cocaine), protein (insulin and AGR2) and gene deletion.

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv-vi
Illustrations	vii-xxii
Chapter 1 Introduction	
1.1 G-quadruplex	1–4
1.2 Luminescent metal complexes as chemosensors	4–7
1.3 Luminescent metal complexes as G-quadruplex probe in DNA-based sensing platform	7–13
1.4 Reference	14–20
Chapter 2 A colorimetric chemosensor for Cu ²⁺ ion detection based on an iridium(III) complex	
2.1 Introduction	21–25
2.2 Result and Discussion	26–38
2.3 Experimental section	39
2.3.1 Chemicals and materials	39
2.3.2 General experimental	39–40
2.3.3 Cu ²⁺ ion detection	40
2.3.4 Water sample analysis	40–41
2.3.5 Synthesis of compounds i2.2 and i2.3	41–42
2.3.6 Synthesis of compound i2.5	42–43
2.3.7 Synthesis of compound i2.6	43–44
2.3.8 Synthesis of complexes 2.1–2.3	44–46
2.4 Conclusion	47
2.5 Reference	48–50

Chapter 3	A long lifetime switch-on iridium(III) chemosensor for the visualization of cysteine in live zebrafish	
3.1	Introduction	51–53
3.2	Result and Discussion	54–66
3.3	Experimental section	67
3.3.1	Chemicals and materials	67
3.3.2	General experimental	67–68
3.3.3	Photophysical measurement	68
3.3.4	Synthesis	68–70
3.3.5	Cysteine detection	70
3.3.6	Time-resolved emission spectra (TRES) measurement	70–71
3.3.7	Imaging of zebrafish	71
3.4	Conclusion	72
3.5	Reference	73–77
Chapter 4	Utilization of iridium(III) complex for the construction of G-quadruplex-based sensing assay for the detection of metal ion, DNA, small molecule and protein	
4.1	Introduction	78–89
4.2	Result and Discussion	89
4.2.1	Label-free luminescent detection of LMP1 gene deletion using an intermolecular G-quadruplex-based switch-on probe	89–104
4.2.2	G-quadruplex-based, label-free, switch-on luminescent detection assay for Ag ⁺ ions based on the exonuclease III-mediated digestion of C-Ag ⁺ -C DNA	105–117
4.2.3	A Luminescent Cocaine Detection Platform Using a Split G-quadruplex-Selective Iridium(III) Complex and a Three-Way DNA Junction Architecture	118–137
4.2.4	Development of an iridium(III) complex as a G-quadruplex probe and its application for the G-quadruplex-based luminescent detection of picomolar	138–156

insulin	
4.3 Experimental section	157
4.3.1 Chemicals and materials	157
4.3.2 General experimental	157–158
4.3.3 G-quadruplex fluorescent intercalator displacement (G4-FID) assay	158
4.3.4 Fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) melting assay	158–159
4.3.5 Synthesis	159–160
4.3.6 Detection of LMP1 gene deletion	160
4.3.7 Ag ⁺ ion detection	160–161
4.3.8 Detection of Cocaine	161
4.3.9 Detection of insulin	161–162
4.4 Conclusion	163
4.5 Reference	164–170
Chapter 5 Conjugating a groove-binding motif to Ir(III) complex for the enhancement of G-quadruplex probe behavior	
5.1 Introduction	171–174
5.2 Result and Discussion	175–199
5.3 Experimental section	200
5.3.1 Chemicals and materials	200
5.3.2 Synthesis	200–208
5.3.3 Preparation of oligonucleotides	208–209
5.3.4 Luminescence response of Ir(III) complexes towards different forms of DNA	209
5.3.5 Circular dichroism (CD) measurement	209–210
5.3.6 Detection of AGR2 in aqueous solution	210–211
5.4 Conclusion	211–212
5.5 Reference	213–216
Chapter 6 Conclusion	217–219