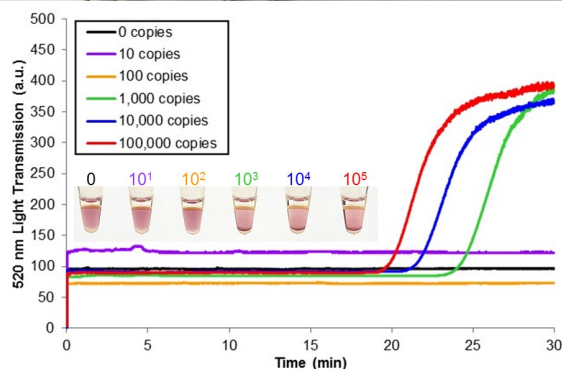
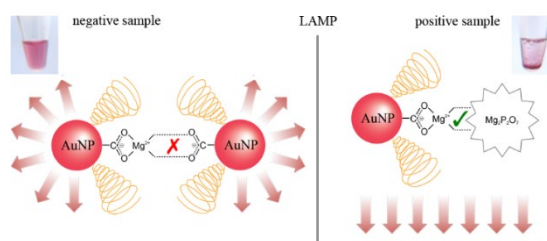


PEG/Carboxyl-Modified Gold Nanoparticles for Point-of-Care Nucleic Acid Detection

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Diagnostics

Gold nanoparticles have proved to be promising for decentralized nucleic acid testing by virtue of their simple visual readout and absorbance-based quantification. A major challenge toward their practical application is to achieve ultrasensitive detection without compromising simplicity. The conventional strategy of thermocycling amplification is unfavorable (because of both instrumentation and preparation of thermostable oligonucleotide-modified gold nanoparticle probes). In this work, on the basis of a previously unreported co-precipitation phenomenon between thiolated poly(ethylene glycol)/11-mercaptoundecanoic acid co-modified gold nanoparticles and magnesium pyrophosphate crystals (an isothermal DNA amplification reaction byproduct), a new ultrasensitive and simple DNA assay platform is developed. The binding mechanism underlying the co-precipitation phenomenon is found to be caused by the complexation of carboxyl and pyrophosphate with free magnesium ions. Remarkably, poly(ethylene glycol) does not hinder the binding and effectively stabilizes gold nanoparticles against magnesium ion-induced aggregation (without pyrophosphate). When the gold nanoparticle probe is incorporated into a loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) reaction, it remains as a red dispersion for a negative sample (in the absence of a target DNA sequence) but appears as a red precipitate for a positive sample (in the presence of a target). This results in a first-of-its-kind gold nanoparticle-based DNA assay platform with isothermal amplification and real-time monitoring capabilities. Moreover, a palm-sized and low-cost homemade device is used for achieving the required temperature control and real-time signal readout in a simple manner.



Publication

A. Qin, L. T. Fu, J. K. F. Wong, L. Y. Chau, S. P. Yip, T. M. H. Lee, Precipitation of PEG/Carboxyl-Modified Gold Nanoparticles with Magnesium Pyrophosphate: A New Platform for Real-Time Monitoring of Loop-Mediated Isothermal Amplification, *ACS Appl. Mater. Interfaces*, 2017, 9, 10472–10480.



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