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Thu, Nov 5, 2020 at 7:42 AM

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05-Nov-2020

Dear Mr Fahmi:

TITLE: Comparison method effect on synthesize B, N, S, and P-doped carbon dots as dual high photoluminescence and selective to HeLa tumor cells

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Mon, Nov 23, 2020 at 7:30 AM

23-Nov-2020

Dear Mr Fahmi:

Manuscript ID: RA-ART-11-2020-009403

TITLE: Comparison method effect on synthesize B, N, S, and P-doped carbon dots as dual high photoluminescence and selective to HeLa tumor cells

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I have carefully evaluated your manuscript and the reviewers' reports, and the reports indicate that major revisions are necessary. In particular, you can see that the referee suggest that the novelty of the work needs to be outlined and the results need to be discussed in the context of the field.

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Yours sincerely,
Dr Alexey M Glushenkov
Associate Editor, RSC Advances

REVIEWER REPORT(S):

Referee: 1

Recommendation: Reject

Comments:

In this work by Wibrianto et al. the authors prepare several CDs with various dopants and compare their optical properties. They use boron doped CDs in deeper studies including aqueous stability measurements at different pH and ionic strengths and test these CDs with HeLa cells for viability and imaging capability. The authors' comparison of different dopants and methods is a good idea, but there is not much new information obtained. Additionally, the use of CDs with cells appears promising, but this is not a new phenomenon for CDs. Some comments to improve the manuscript are below:

1. The wording and grammar throughout the manuscript should be revised for clarity purposes. This revision should begin with the title as the use of the words "dual" and "selective" are not clear.
2. The caption for Scheme 1 refers to "internalization into HeLa cells", but this is not seen anywhere in the figure.
3. The abstract mentions the dopant atoms are on the surface and in the core of the CDs, but evidence for the location of these atoms does not seem to be present in the manuscript. Scheme 2 suggests they are just located on the surface.
4. Why is a pyrene-based model used for modeling of CDs computationally?
5. The emission plots should be plotted in a consistent order! (e.g. low excitation wavelength to high excitation wavelength).
6. In figure 4a, d, and e, there should be a check for the Raman solvent peak. These spectra have a significantly different shape, so this may be a possible reason for that.
7. Why is Rhodamine 6G used as a reference for quantum yield? This molecule absorbs and emits above 520 nm and is not suitable for the blue emitting CDs in this work. Quinine sulfate, the most common standard for CDs, would be a better choice.
8. Considering the typical error associated with quantum yield measurement for CDs, there is basically no difference between all the samples. This is not believable, since the intensities in the in the PL plots are very different (although concentration is not reported). The poor choice of reference standard may contribute to this similarity.
9. The AFM images in Figure 6c, d, and h show repeating shapes throughout the images suggesting that the tip may have been dirty when these measurements were acquired and may not be reliable.
10. AFM measurements are able to reliably show z-axis information for CDs, but because they are so small AFM does not measure x,y-axis information. TEM is needed for this, so the CDs cannot be declared as spherical from AFM alone.
11. The sharp XRD peaks look more crystalline than amorphous. The peaks at 27 degrees comes from a graphitic structure. It does not necessarily show evidence for the presence of boron as the authors state.
12. It would be good to integrate the XPS data to show the relative amounts of C, O, and B in the tested CDs.
13. What is the connection between sialic acid and boron? Why would CDs cross through this receptor?
14. For all CDs, is a passive diffusion believed to be the mechanism? Only the abovementioned pathway is suggested for boron, but the other element-doped CDs also enter into the cell.

Additional Questions:

Does the work significantly advance the understanding or development in this field?: No

Is this work of relevance to the chemistry community?: Yes

Are the conclusions of the work convincing and sufficiently supported by experimental evidence?: Yes

Is the experimental section sufficiently detailed to allow others to reproduce the work?: Yes

Are the reported claims adequately discussed in the context of the literature?: Yes

Are the number of tables and figures in the manuscript appropriate and clear?: Yes

Referee: 2

Recommendation: Major revisions

Comments:

This work presented the synthetic method influence of B, N, S, and P-doped carbon dots on HeLa tumor cells' toxicity. The authors conducted comparison experiments on the doped carbon dots with the following characterizations and HeLa tumor cell testing. However, the synthesis method and the doped carbon dots are not novel. The carbon dots HeLa tumor cell applications have already been reported too many times. The authors have not given any discussion or analysis to identify why the toxicity is different, for example: Why the B-CDs2 carbon dots showed significant precipitation on pH 3-4? What are the involved factors during different synthesis method result in the toxicity? Hence, I strongly recommend that the authors focus on the research question of the comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the method-induced toxicity by introducing more detailed evidence on the reason for the toxicity differences. The authors should explain the phenomenon rather than only present experimental results. Those issues have to be addressed before the publication.

Furthermore, some questions need to be noted:

1. The synthesis method of B, N, S, and P-doped carbon dots need to give references on previous reports.
2. In Fig 1, I would recommend to normalize the UV-vis curves.
3. In Fig 2, How to identify the exact band positions of CDs? The authors need to mention the molecular modelling details in the manuscript.
4. In Fig 6, the resolution of AFM can't support to identify the clear morphology. I suggest to conduct the TEM instead of AFM.
5. The success of doping on the carbon dots should be discussed associated with PL and FTIR.

Additional Questions:

Does the work significantly advance the understanding or development in this field?: Yes

Is this work of relevance to the chemistry community?: Yes

Are the conclusions of the work convincing and sufficiently supported by experimental evidence?: Yes

Is the experimental section sufficiently detailed to allow others to reproduce the work?: Yes

Are the reported claims adequately discussed in the context of the literature?: Yes

Are the number of tables and figures in the manuscript appropriate and clear?: Yes

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Mon, Nov 23, 2020 at 9:30 AM

Best Regards,

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04-Dec-2020

Dear Mr Fahmi:

TITLE: Comparison method effect on synthesize B, N, S, and P-doped carbon dots with high photoluminescence property on HeLa tumor cells

AUTHORS: Wibrianto, Aswandi; Khairunisa, Siti; Sakti, Satya Candara; Nimah, Yatim; Purwanto, Bambang; Fahmi, Mochamad Zakki

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04-Dec-2020

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Dr Alexey M Glushenkov
Associate Editor, RSC Advances

REVIEWER REPORT(S):
Referee: 2

Recommendation: Accept

Comments:

Regarding the molecular modeling, the references need to be cited in the main article. The specific details need to be provided in the Experimental part.

Additional Questions:

Does the work significantly advance the understanding or development in this field?: Yes

Is this work of relevance to the chemistry community?: Yes

Are the conclusions of the work convincing and sufficiently supported by experimental evidence?: Yes

Is the experimental section sufficiently detailed to allow others to reproduce the work?: Yes

Are the reported claims adequately discussed in the context of the literature?: Yes

Are the number of tables and figures in the manuscript appropriate and clear?: Yes

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Best Regards,

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