

用于检测生物硫醇的荧光探针的研究进展

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摘要

生物硫醇类化合物, 包括L-半胱氨酸、L-同型半胱氨酸和谷胱甘肽等, 在许多生理过程中起着十分重要的作用, 因此高选择性、高准确度地识别和定量这类化合物对疾病的预防和诊疗起着重要的作用。对生物硫醇的分析方法有很多种, 其中荧光探针法由于其选择性高、抗干扰能力强、准确度高且能够用于细胞或动物体内原位成像而受到了越来越多学者的重视。本篇综述按照与生物硫醇发生反应的结构位点, 分别介绍了近些年来几种不同类型的荧光探针, 不仅有利于生物硫醇分析方法的科学普及, 还可以有效地促进新式荧光探针的结构设计和开发。

关键词

生物硫醇, 荧光, 荧光探针, 半胱氨酸, 高半胱氨酸, 谷胱甘肽

Research Progress of Fluorescent Probes for Detection of Biological Thiols

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Abstract

Biothiols, including L-cysteine, L-homocysteine, and glutathione, play important roles in many

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physiological processes. Therefore, the identification and quantification of such compounds with high selectivity and accuracy plays an important role in the prevention and diagnosis of diseases. There are many methods for the analysis of biological thiols, among which the fluorescent probe method has attracted more and more scholars due to its high selectivity, strong anti-interference ability, high accuracy and can be used for in situ imaging of cells or animals. This review summarizes several different types of fluorescent probes for the analysis of biothiols in recent years according to the structural sites that react with biothiols. This review is not only conducive to the scientific popularization of biological thiol analysis methods, but also can effectively promote the structural design and development of novel fluorescent probes.

Keywords

Biothiols, Fluorescence, Fluorescent Probes, Cysteine, Homocysteine, Glutathione

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1. 引言

生物硫醇化合物, 例如半胱氨酸(Cys), 同型半胱氨酸(Hcy)和谷胱甘肽(GSH), 这些细胞中的小分子硫醇化合物与复杂生物环境中的生理和病理过程关系密切[1], 它们的含量异常与许多疾病息息相关。正常细胞内的 GSH, Cys 和 Hcy 水平分别为 1~15 mM [2], 30~200 μ M [3]以及 12.4 μ M [4], 这些生物硫醇的缺乏与过量都会相应与一些疾病相关[5]。详细地说, 半胱氨酸的缺乏与生长迟缓, 皮肤损伤和肝损伤有关[6]。半胱氨酸的过量会引起类风湿关节炎, 心血管疾病和帕金森氏病[7]。骨质疏松症, 缺血性中风和阿尔兹海默氏病与高水平的 Hcy 相关[8]。GSH 的异常升高与神经退行性疾病, 艾滋病和癌症相关[9] [10]。因此, 高选择性地、高灵敏度地检测生物体内小分子生物硫醇化合物对于这些疾病的治疗思路非常重要。由于重要的生理相关性和疾病风险, 人们对开发有效的分析方法来选择性和灵敏地检测这些生物硫醇化合物非常感兴趣。

从这些硫醇化合物的结构上观察, 我们可以发现 Cys, Hcy 以及 GSH 上都含有巯基, 氨基和羧基这些相同的官能团, 所以如何正确且快速区分这几种化合物, 是现在科研工作者面临的巨大挑战。

到目前为止, 随着科学的发展, 我们已经发现了许多有效检测生物硫醇化合物的方法, 如高效液相色谱法(HPLC), 电化学方法, 紫外可见分光光度法, 质谱(MS)和荧光法。在这些方法中, 荧光探针因其操作简单, 灵敏度高, 选择性好和实时快速分析而受到越来越多的关注。经过大量文献查阅, 总结了近年来检测生物硫醇化合物方法的优缺点, 见表 1。

Table 1. Comparison of biothiols detection methods

表 1. 生物硫醇检测方法的比较

检测方法	优缺点	文献
高效液相色谱	灵敏度高, 准确度高, 设备造价高, 前处理麻烦, 往往和 UV、质谱等联用	[11] [12] [13] [14]
电分析方法	灵敏度高, 准确度高, 设备简单, 抗干扰能力较差, 选择性较低	[15] [16]
紫外可见分光光度法	灵敏度高, 准确度高, 设备简便, 抗干扰能力较差, 选择性较低, 往往和 HPLC 联用, 联用后设备复杂造价高	[17] [18]

Continued

质谱法	灵敏度高, 选择性高, 前处理麻烦, 设施造价高, 往往和 HPLC 联用, 联用后设备复杂造价高	[19] [20]
荧光探针法	灵敏度高, 准确度高, 选择性高, 抗干扰能力强, 设备简单, 生物相容度高, 可在细胞、组织、活体中原位显像。前期需要合成制备荧光探针。	[21] [22] [23] [24] [25]

由上表可知, 荧光探针以其优越的灵敏度、选择性, 抗干扰能力、生物相容性、设备简单等特点, 受到了学者的广泛关注。

2. 反应机理

到目前为止, 学者们基于生物硫醇中巯基的强亲核反应性或过渡金属的高亲和力, 多种荧光探针被设计出来用于三种生物硫醇的检测和区分。根据探针与生物硫醇的反应机理, 大致可以把生物荧光探针分为以下几类。

2.1. 迈克尔加成

迈克尔加成, 即亲核体(巯基)直接与 α , β -不饱和羰基发生加成反应, 已广泛用于设计探针用于检测生物硫醇。探针中发生迈克尔加成的结构单元包括马来酰亚胺、角鲨烯和丙烯酰胺衍生物。

Jong-Ah Hong 等[26]将富马酸单乙酯通过乙二胺结构连接到荧光团 1,8-萘甲酰亚胺上, 亲电的富马酸酯基团阻止了萘酰亚胺荧光团的光诱导电子转移(PET)过程; 在与生物硫醇反应后, 富马酸酯基团中的双键与巯基发生加成反应, 导致 4-氨基位置的电子密度增加, 从而增强了荧光信号, 此探针可用于 HeLa 细胞中生物硫醇的检测。Hyo Sung Jung 等[27]将香豆素-334 与甲酰基苯甲酸结合, 合成了一系列具有 α , β -不饱和羰基结构的探针, 此探针可以选择性的识别 Cys, 并用于 HepG2 细胞中 Cys 的显像。Jin Kang 等[28]将硝基烯烃单元引入 BODIPY 染料中, 形成了一个强的迈克尔受体, 并成功应用于 A549 细胞中生物硫醇的显像。Xiaolei Wu 等[29]将马来酰亚胺基团与罗丹明 B 结构结合, 制备了荧光探针 Probe-M。此探针的马来酰亚胺基团可以选择性的与 GSH 发生迈克尔加成反应, 并用于活细胞中 GSH 的显像。

2.2. 丙烯酸酯的共轭加成环化

巯基化合物与丙烯酰基的迈克尔加成反应可以高选择性的鉴别 Cys 和 Hcy。与上述基于迈克尔加成反应的探针不同的是, 在反应过程中, Cys 及 Hcy 可以与探针中丙烯酸酯结构发生反应, 分别生成 7 元或 8 元硫醚酰胺环, 从而使丙烯酰基从荧光团上脱离下来, 并使荧光团的荧光恢复。

Beibei Liang 等[30]将丙烯酸酯结构引入带有溶酶体靶向基团的萘酰亚胺荧光团中, 成功实现了对 A549 细胞中生物硫醇的显像研究。Xingjiang Liu 等[31]将丙烯酸酯结构引入 1,3-双(双吡啶-2-基亚氨基)异吡啶-4-醇染料中, 通过 PET 效应使染料的荧光淬灭。当与 Cys/Hcy 反应后, 丙烯酸酯结构被生物硫醇脱除, 从而使染料的荧光恢复。该探针成功应用于 4T1 细胞中 Cys/Hcy 的显像。Fengyang Wang 等[32]将连接有丙烯酸酯结构的香豆素与罗丹明 B 基团连接, 制备了比率型荧光探针。该探针在与生物硫醇反应前显示罗丹明 B 的红色荧光, 在与生物硫醇反应后显示香豆素的蓝色荧光和罗丹明 B 的红色荧光, 检测极限低至 0.13 μ M。该探针被用于胎牛血清中 Cys 的含量检测。

2.3. 磺酰胺和磺酸酯的裂解

2,4-二硝基苯磺酰基(DNBS)常用来设计为荧光探针对生物硫醇的识别单元。由于巯基的强亲核性, 生物硫醇可与 2,4-二硝基苯磺酸酯或 2,4-二硝基苯磺酰胺基团发生反应, 使强吸电子的 DNBS 基团从

荧光发射单元上脱落并使探针荧光恢复, 从而实现对生物硫醇的检测。

Dugang Chen 等[33]将 DNBS 基团连接到 2-(3-cyano-4,5,5-trimethylfuran-2(5H)-ylidene)propanedinitrile (NT-OH)染料上, 成功将 NT-OH 的荧光淬灭。在与生物硫醇发生反应后, DNBS 基团被从染料上消除, 染料的红色荧光恢复, 从而实现了生物硫醇的识别。此探针可以用于 MCF-7 细胞中的内源性生物硫醇的显像研究。Fanghui Liang 等[34]首先合成了近红外荧光染料 EQR, 之后将 DNBS 基团与 EQR 染料上的酚羟基进行反应制备了探针 EQR-S。EQR-S 可用于快速、灵敏地测定 GSH 浓度, 检测限低至 69 nM。之后作者将 EQR-S 成功地应用于研究高温压力下活体细胞 GSH 浓度的波动。Aishan Ren 等[35]设计了一个通过 6-二甲氨基-2-甲基喹啉的 4 位上羟基的保护-脱保护策略, 实现了喹啉到喹啉酮的荧光增强型荧光探针。他们选取 DNBS 作为 4 位上羟基的保护基团。在与生物硫醇反应后, DNBS 被脱除, 从而恢复了染料的荧光, 实现了对 HeLa 细胞中生物硫醇的监测。Chengjun Wang 等[36]报道了一种新型的近红外荧光探针 BODIPY-ONs 用于敏感和选择性地检测谷胱甘肽(GSH)。该探针以 DNBS 为淬灭基团, 不具有荧光性。加入 GSH 后, 观察到明显的以 656 nm 为中心的近红外荧光恢复。与 Cys 和 Hcy 相比, 探针对于 GSH 的反应最高。对 GSH 的检测极限为 131 nM。该探针被用于 MCF-7 细胞内源性和外源性 GSH 的检测。

2.4. 醛基加成(醛环化)

醛基可与含有巯基的氨基酸、多肽及蛋白质的氨基和巯基发生反应生成噻唑烷, 这种反应通常用于肽以及蛋白质的标记和固定。很多基于此反应的荧光探针被设计出来, 用于巯基化合物的检测。

Jun-Ying Xie 等[37]通过引入刚性共面结构的罗丹明染料, 开发了具有高荧光量子产率的近红外荧光探针。该探针具有一个醛基反应基团, 可以通过醛基加成反应高选择性的识别 GSH, 荧光可增强 75 倍, 并且不会受到其他生物硫醇(Cys、Hcy)和氨基酸的干扰。Zhen Huang 等[38]设计合成了一种含有醛基的分子(E)-2-(2-(4-甲酰苯乙炔)-4H-色烯-4-亚基)丙二腈, 在与 Cys 反应后可以观察到 440 nm 处的荧光明显增强。该探针对于 Cys 的选择性低至 63 nM, 可用于血清中 Cys 含量的分析检测。Aabha Barve 等[39]报告了一种使用荧光素醛基探针选择性检测 Hcy 的新方法。高半胱氨酸通过与探针的醛基反应, 生成的噻唑烷-4-羧酸比半胱氨酸衍生的噻唑烷-4-羧酸更具碱性, 而通过调整 pH 值和激发波长可以实现对高半胱氨酸的选择性荧光增强反应。

2.5. 芳香亲核取代

基于芳香亲核取代反应的探针结构中一般含有一个或多个卤素或醚键, 强亲核性的硫醇将卤素取代或醚键打断后, 往往会使探针的发射光波长改变, 从而实现对生物硫醇的检测。

Han Zhang 等[40]将染料二氰基异佛尔酮与离去基团 4-氯-7-硝基-1,2,3-苯并恶二唑(NBD)连接合成探针 HZ-NBD。GSH 或 H₂S 通过亲核取代反应将该探针的醚键打断, 使染料的荧光恢复, 从而可以实现对 GSH 及 H₂S 的检测。此外, 该探针还支持基于颜色变化裸眼识别 GSH 及 H₂S。Lihui Zhai 等[41]将香豆素和 NBD 基团以醚键结合, 合成了 CA-NBD 探针。该探针在 330 nm 激发下可以选择性鉴别硫醇类化合物, 而在 460 nm 波长激发下可以区分 Cys/Hcy 和 GSH。此外, 该探针还用于检测 HeLa 细胞中的 Cys。Yuuta Fujikawa 等[42]合成了 4-溴-1,8-萘甲酰胺 N-羟乙基衍生物探针 HE-BrNaph。在探针的结构中有一个能与 GSH 发生芳香亲核取代反应的溴原子。溴原子在谷胱甘肽 S-转移酶(GST)催化下被 GSH 的巯基取代后, 荧光强度大大增加, 从而实现对 GST 的灵敏检测。该探针成功用于活细胞中 GSTP1 活性的细胞内 GSH 检测。Xiaole Sheng 等[43]将近红外探针 IR780 与对氨基苯硫醚反应成功制备了含有硫醚键的探针。该探针的硫醚键可选择性的与 GSH 发生亲核取代反应, 而与其他硫醇和氨基酸基本不发生反应。该探针成功用于 HepG2 细胞中 GSH 的近红外成像。

2.6. 氧化还原反应

生物硫醇具有良好的还原性, 利用这一点, 许多基于氧化还原反应的探针被设计出来。

Yuannian Zhang 等[44]发现, 无荧光的 1,8-萘二酮可被半胱氨酸和色氨酸还原为强荧光的 1,8-萘二醇, 从而实现半胱氨酸和色氨酸的分析检测。Lin Yang 等[45]设计了一种含有二硫键的探针。他们将萘酰亚胺荧光团与吩嗪能量受体通过二硫键连接起来, 构筑了一个具有荧光共振能量转移(FRET)效应的结构。而二硫键可以选择性的被半胱氨酸还原成巯基, 从而破坏原有的 FRET 效应, 使萘酰亚胺荧光团的荧光得以恢复。Chao Yin 等[46]将近红外荧光染料 IR806 与 2-(吡啶-2-基二硫烷基)乙胺-1-胺连接, 形成一个含有二硫键的荧光探针。该探针可以高选择性的与 GSH 发生氧化还原反应, 断开二硫键后形成 IR806-S-NH₂。该探针不仅可以在近红外区对 GSH 进行监测, 还可以通过光声转化实现对 GSH 的可视化监控。Jun Han Lee 等[47]以 2-甲氨基-6-乙酰萘为原料合成了一种分子内含有二硫键的荧光探针, 该探针可以与生物硫醇发生氧化还原反应, 打开二硫键后发生分子内的亲核消除反应, 最终生成再次生成 2-甲氨基-6-乙酰萘, 表现出显著的双光子荧光增强效应。该探针比已知探针 8-氧代-苊-并吡咯衍生物的双光子荧光激发强度大 10 倍以上, 可以实现较深处组织中生物硫醇的可视化检测。

2.7. Se 键的反应

Se 键是一类极容易被生物硫醇的巯基裂解的化学键[48], 如果通过 Se 键将荧光团和强吸电子基团连接起来, 可以基于光电子转移机理将荧光团的荧光淬灭, 从而合成对生物硫醇敏感的荧光探针。

Rui Wang 等[48]以 Cy7-Cl 为原料, 合成了两种结构中含有 Se-N 键的荧光探针 Cy-NiSe 和 Cy-TfSe。这两种探针对生物硫醇非常灵敏, 具有适用 PH 值宽、反应快速、近红外等特点。Yong Tian 等[49]以 1,2-二氨基蒽-9,10-二酮为原料合成了硒二唑衍生物, 该化合物中的两个 Se-N 可与硫醇发生逐步裂解反应, 从而发生荧光及颜色的显著变化。该探针与 Cys、Hcy 以及 GSH 的反应速率不同, 可有效地区分三种不同的生物硫醇。Yuan Mei 等[50]合成了带有 3,5-二甲基基团的 8-氟苯基硒 BODIPY 类荧光探针, 分子结构中的 Se-C 键可被 GSH 打断并生成硫醚类化合物, 显示很强的绿色荧光; 而与 Cys 和 Hcy 发生反应时, Se-C 键首先被巯基打开, 然后分子内快速发生氨基对硫醚键的亲核取代重排反应, 显示较强的青色荧光。该探针成功应用于检测活体细胞中的生物硫醇。

2.8. 金属配合物中金属离子的夺取

在基于这一机理的探针设计中, 往往需要合成一个具有荧光发射的配体, 在配体与金属离子络合后, 配体本身的荧光发生显著淬灭。由于生物硫醇中的巯基与金属离子更强的配位作用, 生物硫醇可将络合物中的金属离子夺取并与之形成更稳定的络合物, 同时使配体的荧光恢复, 从而实现对生物硫醇的检测。

Hui Huang 等[51]合成了具有强烈荧光的苯乙炔类直线型化合物 PPESO₃, 该化合物可与 Cu²⁺形成较稳定的静电配合物, 从而使 PPESO₃ 的荧光强度大大降低。而生物硫醇的加入可以使 PPESO₃ 再次游离出来从而使荧光恢复。该系统成功地作用于 HepG2 细胞中生物硫醇的荧光成像。Xueying Yu 等[52]合成了一种二乙基氨基吡啶甲酰席夫碱化合物, 此化合物可与 Cu²⁺络合并使原化合物的荧光大大降低。在加入生物硫醇后, 由于硫醇与铜离子更强的络合作用, 使得席夫碱化合物游离出来恢复荧光, 从而实现对生物硫醇的检测, 该化合物成功地应用于活细胞的生物成像。

3. 总结和展望

生物硫醇类化合物在体内的重要性是毋庸置疑的, 准确、简单、快速地检测这些物质是化学家们一直追求的目标。本文综述了近几年来在荧光探针领域检测生物硫醇类化合物的一些分类、方法, 例如

基于迈克尔加成、丙烯酸酯的共轭加成环化、磺酰胺和磺酸酯的裂解、醛基加成、芳香亲核取代、氧化还原反应、Se 键的断裂、金属配合物中金属离子的夺取等设计思路和方法。通过总结大量文献我们发现,虽然目前为止生物硫醇的荧光探针分析法已经取得了令人瞩目的成就,但是还有一些地方存在不足,例如 Cys 与 Hcy 之间往往难以很明显的区分;这些探针的应用大部分停留在细胞层面,应用于动物层面的探针相对较少;对于精细亚细胞结构的生物硫醇检测类探针相对较少等。在未来,能够更好地区分 Cys/Hcy/GSH 三者的荧光探针,能够应用于更复杂环境的动物体内生物硫醇的检测、能够对精细亚细胞器内的生物硫醇进行准确定位和检测的荧光探针可能会是此类探针发展的主要方向。

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