Supplementary information

Novel nanostructured Hematite-Spongin Composite developed using Extreme Biomimetic approach

Tomasz Sztatkowski,a Marcin Wysokowski,a Grzegorz Lota,b Daria Pęziak,b Vasili V. Bazhenov,c Grzegorz Nowaczyk,a Juliane Walter,c Serguei L. Molodtsov,cef Hartmut Stöcker,c Cameliu Himcinschi,g Iaroslav Petrenko,c Allison L. Stelling, d Stefan Jurga,di Teofil Jesionowski,ae,* and Hermann Ehrlich, c,*

a Institute of Chemical Technology and Engineering; Faculty of Chemical Technology, Poznan University of Technology, Berdychowo 4, PL-60965 Poznan, Poland. E-mail: teofil.jesionowski@put.poznan.pl; Fax: +48 61 665 36 49; Tel: +48 61 665 37 20.

b Institute of Chemistry and Technical Electrochemistry; Poznan University of Technology, 60965 Poznan, Poland.

c, *Institute of Experimental Physics; TU Bergakademie Freiberg, Leipziger Str. 23, 09599 Freiberg, Germany.

E-mail: hermann.ehrlich@physik.tu-freiberg.de;
Fax: +49 393731394314; Tel: +49 393731392867.

d NanoBioMedical Centre, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Umultowska 85, 61614 Poznań Poland.

e Institut für Oberflächenphysik und Mikrostrukturphysik, TU Dresden, 01062 Dresden, Germany

f Institut für Oberflächenphysik und Mikrostrukturphysik, TU Dresden, 01062 Dresden, Germany

ITMO University, Kronoverskiy pr. 49, 197101 St. Petersburg, Russia

g Institute of Theoretic Physics; TU Bergakademie Freiberg, Leipziger Str. 23, 09596 Freiberg, Germany.

h Department of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science, Duke University, Hudson Hall, 27708 Durham, NC, USA

i Department of Macromolecular Physics, Faculty of Physics, Adam Mickiewicz University, Umultowska 85, Poznan, Poland

Materials and Methods

Particles size distribution

In order to measure size of hematite particles a Zetasizer Nano ZS analyzer was used. The measurement is based on Brownian motion, and is performed by colloidal particles. The frequency of those movements increases with decreasing particle size, thus enabling their size to be measured. The motion is registered by Non-invasive Back Scattering (NIBS) method.

For sample preparation, 10 mg of synthesized hematite was added to 25 cm$^3$ of isopropyl alcohol and dispersed with an ultrasonic bath (Elmasonic GmbH, Germany) for 15 minutes in order to break down agglomerates and achieve a high degree of dispersion.

XRD measurements

X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis was employed to determine the crystalline structure of the hematite as well as the α-Fe$_2$O$_3$-spongin composite. The measurements were performed using a TUR-M62 diffractometer, operating at 30 kV and 25 mA, with CuKα (λ = 1.5418 Å) radiation, Ni filtered. The XRD pattern data were collected in step-scanning mode with steps of Δ2Θ = 0.04°.

Thermogravimetric analysis

For investigation of the thermal behavior of the samples a thermogravimetric analyzer (TG, model Jupiter STA 449F3, Netzsch) was used. Measurements were carried out under air atmosphere at a flow rate equal to 10 cm$^3$/min. The heating rate was set to 10 °C/min in a temperature range of 25–1000 °C, with an initial sample weight of approximately 5.5 mg.

X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy

X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy was performed with an ESCALAB 250Xi (Thermo Scientific, USA), equipped with a monochromatic Al Kα X-ray source (1486.6 eV), which was focused to spot size of 650 μm and operated at 14,8 kV and 19,1 mA. Scans were taken with a pass energy of 20 eV. The binding energies were corrected for the charge shift using the C1s peak (BE= 284.6 eV) as reference.
Results

Fig. S1 Particle size distribution of hematite nanoparticles obtained via the hydrothermal route.

Fig. S2 XRD patterns of $\alpha$-Fe$_2$O$_3$–spongin composite and hematite standard.
Fig. S3 Thermogravimetric (TG) curves of hematite standard, spongin, and $\alpha$-Fe$_2$O$_3$–spongin composite.

Fig. S4 XPS wide scan of hematite standard, spongin, and $\alpha$-Fe$_2$O$_3$–spongin.