Supporting Information

A dual channel sulphur-containing macrocycle functionalised BODIPY probe for the detection of Hg(II) in mixed aqueous solution

Maria Lo Presti, Ramon Martínez-Máñez,* José Vicente Ros-Lis, Rosa M. F. Batista, Susana P. G. Costa, M. Manuela M. Raposo,* and Félix Sancenón

Materials and methods

4-Methoxybenzaldehyde (I), 2,4-dimethyl pyrrole (II), dry CH Cl and dry toluene were purchased from Aldrich and Acros. All commercially available reagents and solvents were used as received. The precursors BODIPY 1b [1], crown ether III [2] and 1a [3] were synthesized using the experimental procedures reported before. Reaction progress was monitored by thin layer chromatography, 0.25 mm thick pre-coated silica plates (Merck Fertigplatten Kieselgel 60 F254), and spots were visualized under UV light. Purification was achieved by silica gel column chromatography (Merck Kieselgel, 230-400 mesh). NMR spectra were obtained on a Brucker Avance II 400 at an operating frequency of 400 MHz for ¹H and 100.6 MHz for ¹³C, using the solvent peak as internal reference. The solvents are indicated in parenthesis before the chemical shifts values (δ relative to TMS). Peak assignments were made by comparison of chemical shifts, peak multiplicities and J values, and were supported by spin decoupling-double resonance and bidimensional heteronuclear HMBC (heteronuclear multiple bond coherence) and HMQC (heteronuclear multiple quantum coherence) techniques. Melting points were determined on a Gallenkamp apparatus and are uncorrected. Infrared spectra were recorded on a BOMEM MB 104 spectrophotometer.

Synthesis of BODIPY derivatives 1b and 1

The precursor BODIPY derivative 1b was synthesized through reaction of 4-methoxybenzaldehyde (I) and 2,4-dimethyl pyrrole (II) in the presence of a catalytical amount of TFA, followed by oxidation with DDQ and treatment with BF 3·OEt 2 in 33 % yield. Earlier the synthesis of compound 1b was reported in 38 % yield by Boens et al [1]. On the other hand, the precursor crown ether III was prepared by the Richman-Atkins reaction using the synthetic procedure described by some of us [2], in which the mesylated N,N'-phenylethanolamine was initially synthesized by reaction of N,N'-phenylethanolamine with methanesulfonyl chloride in 96 % yield. In a second step, the mesylated precursor obtained above reacted with the 3,6-dioxaocane-1,8-dithiol, yielding the crown ether III as a colorless solid in 40 % yield. Vilsmeier formylation of compound III with POCl 3 in DMF gave the formylated crown ether 1a [3], in 80 % yield (see Scheme S1).

The target BODIPY 1 was prepared by a condensation reaction of 1b and crown ether 1a, in toluene, at reflux, under a N 2 atmosphere using piperidine-p-toluenesulfonic acid as catalyst (see Scheme S2).
Purification of the crude product 1 by preliminary dry flash chromatography followed by column chromatography on silica, both using ethyl acetate/petroleum ether (1:2) as eluent afford the pure compound as a blue greenish solid in 30% yield. The new BODIPY derivative 1 was completely characterized by the usual spectroscopic techniques.

The most characteristic signals in the $^1$H NMR spectra for compound 1 were those corresponding to the BODIPY nucleus such as the singlets assigned to H-2 and H-6 at 5.97 and 6.59 ppm respectively, and the singlet at 3.88 ppm assigned to the OCH$_3$ group in 4´ position. Functionalization of the BODIPY 1b with the crown ether moiety in order to obtained compound 1 can be also confirmed by $^1$H NMR. Therefore it was observed the substitution of two singlets at 1.44 ppm (s, 6H, CH$_3$-1 and CH$_3$-7) and 2.56 ppm (s, 6H, CH$_3$-3 and CH$_3$-5) in the $^1$H NMR spectra of 1b by three singlets at 1.44, 1.48 and 2.59 ppm assigned to the N,N-dimethylamino groups in positions 1, 7 and 3 respectively. Additionally, five new signals at 2.78 ppm (t, J = 5.2 Hz, 4H, S-CH$_2$-CH$_2$-O), 2.92 ppm (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H, N-CH$_2$-CH$_2$-O), 3.66 ppm (s, 4H, O-(CH$_2$)$_2$-O), 3.69 ppm (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H, N-CH$_2$-CH$_2$-O) and 3.82 ppm (t, J = 5.2 Hz, 4H, S-CH$_2$-CH$_2$-O), assigned to the protons of the crown ether moiety were also observed in the $^1$H NMR spectra of 1.

Scheme S1. (a) Synthesis of BODIPY 1b and (b) crown ether 1a.
Synthesis of BODIPY 1b: 2,4-Dimethyl pyrrole (II, 559 mg, 5.80 mmol) and 4-methoxybenzaldehyde (I, 400 mg, 2.9 mmol) were dissolved in anhydrous dichloromethane (990 mL). One drop of trifluoracetic acid was added in catalytic amount and the mixture was allowed to stir for 50 min at room temperature under N₂ atmosphere. A solution of DDQ (2.62 g, 7.6 mmol) in dichloromethane (50 mL) was added to the mixture. Stirring was continued for another 45 min and then triethylamine (13.3 mL, 95.2 mmol) was added. After stirring for 15 min BF₃·OEt₂ (13.3 mL, 161.1 mmol) was added and further stirred for 30 min. The mixture was evaporated under reduced pressure and the crude residue was subjected to a preliminary dry flash chromatography (petroleum ether/ethyl acetate, 4:1), followed by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/ethyl acetate, 4:1). The compound was obtained as reddish solid (337 mg, 33 %). Mp = 221–223 ºC (lit.[1] 214-216 ºC). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.44 (s, 6H, CH₃-1 and CH₃-7), 2.56 (s, 6H, CH₃-3 and CH₃-5), 3.88 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 5.98 (s, 2H, H-2 and H-6), 7.02 (dd, J = 7.2 and 2.4 Hz, 2H, H-3'and H-5'), 7.17 (dd, J = 7.2 and 2 Hz, 2H, H-2' and H-6') ppm. ¹³C NMR (100.6 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.5 (CH₃-1, CH₃-3, CH₃-5 and CH₃-7), 55.3 (OCH₃), 114.5 (C-3' and C-5'), 121.0 (C-2 and C-6), 126.9 (C-1'), 129.2 (C-2' and C-6'), 131.8 (C-7a and C-8a), 141.8 (C-8), 143.1 (C-1 and C-7), 155.2 (C-3 and C-5), 160.1 (C-4') ppm.
Synthesis of BODIPY 1: The previously prepared BODIPY 1b (50 mg, 0.14 mmol) was reacted with the formylated crown ether 1a (50 mg, 0.14 mmol) in dry toluene (10 mL) in a round bottomed flask fitted with a Dean-Stark and a condenser, in the presence of piperidine (0.12 mL, 1.21 mmol) and a trace amount of p-toluenesulfonic acid. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux under nitrogen inert atmosphere for 2 h. After cooling, the mixture was transferred to a separation funnel and washed with water (10 mL). The organic phase was dried with anhydrous MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was evaporated. The crude residue was subjected to a preliminary dry flash chromatography followed by column chromatography on silica, both using ethyl acetate/petroleum ether (1:2) as eluent. The product was obtained as a blue greenish solid (45 mg, 30 %). Mp = 211–213 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.44 (s, 3H, CH₃-1), 1.48 (s, 3H, CH₃-7), 2.59 (s, 3H, CH₃-3), 2.78 (t, J = 5.2 Hz, 4H, S-CH₂-CH₂-O), 2.92 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H, N-CH₂-CH₂-O), 3.66 (s, 4H, O-(CH₂)₂-O), 3.69 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H, N-CH₂-CH₂-O), 3.82 (t, J = 5.2 Hz, 4H, S-CH₂-CH₂-O), 3.88 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 5.97 (s, 1H, H-2), 6.59 (s, 1H, H-6), 6.63 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H, H-3’ and H-5’), 7.01 (dd, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H, H-3’ and H-5’), 7.17–7.21 (m, 3H, Hβ, H-2’ and H-6’), 7.47–7.51 (m, 3H, Hα, H-2’ and H-6’), ppm. ¹³C NMR (100.6 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.4 (CH₃-1), 14.6 (CH₃-3), 14.9 (CH₃-7), 29.6 (N-CH₂-CH₂-O), 31.3 (S-CH₂-CH₂-O), 51.9 (N-CH₂-CH₂-O), 55.3 (OCH₃), 70.7 (O-(CH₂)₂-O), 74.3 (S-CH₂-CH₂-O), 111.8 (C-3’ and C-5’), 114.4 (C-3’ and C-5’), 114.6 (Cα), 117.5 (C-6), 120.4 (C-2), 124.8 (C-1’), 127.4 (C-1’), 129.5 (C-2’ and C-6’), 129.6 (C-2’ and C-6’), 131.6 (C-8a), 133.4 (C-7a), 137.2 (Cβ), 139.0 (C-8), 140.9 (C-1), 142.8 (C-7), 147.7 (C-4’), 152.9 (C-3), 154.5 (C-5), 160.0 (C-4’) ppm. IR (liquid film): ν 2922, 2856, 1737, 1591, 1539, 1520, 1501, 1467, 1413, 1353, 1295, 1247, 1200, 1177, 1119, 1076, 1030, 985, 813 cm⁻¹. HRMS-El m/z: calcd for C₃₇H₄₄BF₄N₂O₃S₂ + H⁺: 692.2963; measured: 692.2958.
Figure S1. $^1$H NMR spectrum of probe 1 in CDCl$_3$.

Figure S2. $^{13}$C NMR spectrum of probe 1 in CDCl$_3$. 
**Figure S3.** HRMS of probe 1.

**Figure S4.** UV-visible and fluorescence spectra of 1 (5.0 x 10^-5 mol L^-1) in water-acetonitrile 95:5 v/v solution at pH 7.0 upon addition of Hg(II) (20 eq.).
**Figure S5.** Fluorescence spectra of 1 (5.0 x 10^{-5} mol L^{-1}) in water-acetonitrile 95:5 v/v solution at pH 7.0 upon addition of selected anions (10 eq.).

**Figure S6.** Calibration curve for probe 1 (5.0 x 10^{-5} mol L^{-1}) in water-acetonitrile 95:5 v/v solution at pH 7.0 upon addition of increasing concentrations of Hg(II).
**Figure S7.** $^1$H NMR fragment of probe 1 (deuterated acetonitrile) showing the macrocycle signals in the absence (down) and in the presence (up) of Hg(II) cation (1 eq).

**References**

