Supporting Information

Light-facilitated Drug Delivery System from Pseudo-protein/Hyaluronic Acid Nanocomplex with Improved Anti-Tumor Effect

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Figure S1. Synthesis scheme for A) arginine based poly(ester amide)s (ArgPEA) with amino end groups (NH$_2$-ArgPEA-NH$_2$), and activation of amino groups with SPDP crosslinker; B) thiolated hyaluronic acid (HA-SH) functionalized with polyethylene glycol (PEG) and AlPcS2a photosensitizer (HA-SH (AP)); and C) the formation of reduction-sensitive nanocomplex ArgPEA-ss-HA(AP) from NH$_2$-ArgPEA-NH$_2$ activated by SPDP and HA-SH(AP) via disulfide linkage.
Figure S2. $^1$H NMR spectra of A) NH$_2$-ArgPEA-NH$_2$; B) HA-SH functionalized with PEG and AlPcS$_2$a (HA-SH(AP)).
Figure S3. To further prove the chemical reaction between MAL-PEG-NH$_2$ and AlPcS$_2$a, AlPcS$_2$a conjugated with PEG or AlPcS$_2$a physically mixed with PEG were dispersed in ethanol with equivalent AlPcS$_2$a concentration of 10 µM and centrifuged at 10,000 rcf for 20 min. Due to the poor solubility of free AlPcS$_2$a in ethanol, significant precipitation was observed in the physical mixture. However, uniform solution was observed after centrifugation in the case of AlPcS$_2$a conjugated with PEG, as PEG improved the solubility of the photosensitizer. Dispersion of AlPcS$_2$a conjugated with PEG or AlPcS$_2$a physically mixed with PEG were dispersed in ethanol and centrifuged at 10,000 rcf for 20 min. The image of the two samples right after centrifugation was recorded.
Figure S4. H&E staining of major organs (heart, liver, spleen, lung and kidney) from tumor bearing mice on day 28 treated with: A, Saline; B, free DOX; C, blank ArgPEA-ss-HA(AP) with irradiation; D, DOX-loaded ArgPEA-ss-HA(AP) without irradiation; E. DOX-loaded ArgPEA-ss-HA(AP) with irradiation. Scale bar represented 200 µm. Histological examination was applied to examine the toxicology of DOX-loaded nanocomplex. Tumor bearing mice were injected with saline, free DOX, blank ArgPEA-ss-HA(AP) nanocomplex with irradiation, DOX-loaded ArgPEA-ss-HA(AP) nanocomplex (with equivalent DOX dosage of 2 mg/kg/week) with or without light irradiation. 3 injections were given at day 1, day 8 and day 15. And 24 hrs post-injection, tumor tissues were irradiated by 671 nm He-Ne laser (100 mW/cm², 50 J/cm²). At day 28, all mice were sacrificed and the weight of the tumor was measured. The major organs (heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney) were collected and sectioned at 5-10 µm. The specimen was fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde, embedded in paraffin and subjected to haematoxylin and eosin (H&E) staining. In H&E staining, haematoxylin stained the nuclei and eosin stained the intracellular and extracellular protein component. As indicated in Figure S2, compared to saline-treated control, we didn’t observe any swelling of cells in heart, or any void/lesion in lung and liver. Abnormality or noticeable organ damage was absent on all the studied organs when compared to the saline-treated group. The treatment of DOX-loaded ArgPEA-ss-HA(AP) nanocomplex with or without light irradiation was well-tolerable on tumor bearing mice. The results showed consistency with the result of body weight in Figure 9B, which further supported the good biocompatibility of the DOX-loaded nanocomplex.