## **Supporting Information**

for

## MoO<sub>3-x</sub> Quantum Dot for Photoacoustic imaging Guided Photothermal/Photodynamic Cancer Treatment

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Figure S1 Full range XPS spectra of  $MoO_{3-x}$  quantum dot



Figure S2 FT-IR spectra of MoO<sub>3-x</sub> quantum dot. Chitosan and MoO<sub>3</sub> were used as control.



**Figure S3** Cytotoxicity assay. The cells were coincubated with  $MoO_{3-x}$  nanocubes for 24 h, and then examined for cellular viability by MTT assay. (a) HeLa, (b) L02.

## Calculation of the photothermal conversion efficiency

The photothermal conversion efficiency,  $\eta$ , can be determined by following eqution:

 $\eta = [hS (T_{max} - T_{surr}) - Q_{dis}] / I(1-10^{-A_{880}})$  Equ.S1

where **h** is heat transfer coefficient;

S is the surface area of the container;

 $T_{max}$  is the equilibrium temperature;

**T**<sub>surr</sub> is ambient temperature of the surroundings;

 $Q_{dis}$  is heat dissipated from light absorbed by the quartz sample cell itself (it was measured independently to be 11.34 mW using a quartz cell containing pure water)

I is incident laser power (2 W/cm<sup>2</sup>)

 $A_{880}$  is the optical absorbance of nanocubes at 880 nm (0.47)



**Figure S4**. Temperature variations of solution containing 1 mg/ml nanocube. The NIR laser irradiation lasted 10 min and then was turned off.

It easily found that only the hS remains unknown for calculating  $\eta$ . To obtain the value of hS, a dimensionless driving force temperature,  $\theta$  is introduced using the maximum system temperature.

 $\Theta = (T - T_{surr}) / (T_{max} - T_{surr})$  Equ.S2

At the cooling stage of the aqueous dispersion, the cooling time t and  $\theta$  abide by the following equationS3;

## $t=\tau_s \ln(\Theta)$ Equ.S3

Therefore, time constant for heat transfer from the system could be determined by plotting linear time data from the cooling period against negative natural logarithm of driving force temperature.



Figure S5. Linear relation between the t and  $\ln\theta$ .

The  $\tau_s$  is calculated to be 154 s.

 $hS = \Sigma m_i C_{p, I} / \tau_s$  Equ.S4

Where m, Cp,  $\tau_s$  are the mass, heat capacity of water and time constant, respectively.

The m is 0.45 g and C is 4.2 J/g. The hS is determined to 12.27 mW/ °C according to Equ.S4. Substituting hS =12.27 mW/ °C into Equ.S1 produces  $\eta$ =25.5%.



Figure S6 The XPS spectra of MoO<sub>3-x</sub> QDs before and after heating treatment.



Figure S7 (a) Photoacoustic signal of  $MoO_{3-x}$  solutions with different concentrations. (b) Plot of photoacoustic signal at 880 nm versus  $MoO_{3-x}$  concentrations.



Figure S8 In vivo PA image via tail intravenous injection after 24h.



Figure S9 Fluorescence images and dead circle area of HeLa cells received different concentration of  $MoO_{3-x}$ .





**Figure S10** Fluorescence images and dead circle area of HeLa cells under different power density of NIR laser.