## **Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI)**

## Bioinspired synthesis of poly(phenylboronic acid) microgels with high glucose selectivity at a physiological pH

Qingshi Wu,<sup>a</sup> Xue Du,<sup>a</sup> Aiping Chang,<sup>a</sup> Xiaomei Jiang,<sup>b</sup> Xiaoyun Yan,<sup>a</sup> Xiaoyu Cao,<sup>a</sup> Zahoor H. Farooqi<sup>c</sup> and Weitai Wu\*<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> State Key Laboratory for Physical Chemistry of Solid Surfaces, Collaborative Innovation Center of Chemistry for Energy Materials, The Key Laboratory for Chemical Biology of Fujian Province, and Department of Chemistry, College of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Xiamen University, Xiamen 361005, China. E-mail: wuwtxmu@xmu.edu.cn

<sup>b</sup> Clinical Laboratory, Huli Center for Maternal and Child Health, Xiamen 361009, Fujian, China <sup>c</sup> Institute of Chemistry, University of the Punjab, New Campus, Lahore 54590, Pakistan







**Fig. S2** DLS size distribution of the microgels synthesized with different mol ratios of 4-VPBA/pp-PTCDI/SDS. To show the effect of the feeding amount of (a) pp-PTCDI and (b) SDS, the feeding amount of 4-VPBA was set to  $5.0 \times 10^{-4}$  mol. All measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C. (c,d) IR spectra of the samples.



Fig. S3 The p $K_a$  the PBA groups as a function of feeding molar ratio  $r_{pp-PTCDI:4-VPBA}$  in the synthesis of the microgels. The pKa was measured by titration, and defined as the pH corresponding to the peak position on the  $\Delta pH/\Delta V$ -V<sub>NaOH</sub> plot.



**Fig. S4** <sup>11</sup>B NMR spectra of (a) a control sample synthesized with the 4-VPBA monomer using MBAAm (feeding molar ratio  $r_{\text{MBAAm:4-VPBA}} = 11:100$ ) as a crosslinker, and (b) a mixture of this control sample and pp-PTCDI upon simple mixing. All measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



**Fig. S5** (a) DLS size distribution of the control sample synthesized with the 4-VPBA monomer using MBAAm (feeding molar ratio  $r_{\text{MBAAm:4-VPBA}} = 11:100$ ) as a crosslinker. (b) Saccharide-dependent  $\langle D_h \rangle$  values of the microgels dispersed in PBS with glucose ( $\blacksquare$ ), fructose ( $\bullet$ ), galactose ( $\blacktriangle$ ), and mannose ( $\blacktriangledown$ ). DLS measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



Fig. S6 DLS size distribution of the microgels (10.0 µg/mL) dispersed in the solutions with [Glu] = 0.0 mM (■,□), 5.0 mM (●,○), and 30.0 mM (▲,△), before (solid symbols) and after (open symbols) adding/removing Glu for twenty cycles. All measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



Fig. S7 DLS size distribution of the microgels (10.0  $\mu$ g/mL) dispersed in the solutions with 30.0 mM fructose ( $\bullet$ ), galactose ( $\bullet$ ), and mannose ( $\blacktriangle$ ). All measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



Fig. S8 Saccharide-dependent  $\langle D_h \rangle$  values of the microgels dispersed in PBS with glucose ( $\blacksquare$ ), fructose ( $\blacklozenge$ ), galactose ( $\blacktriangle$ ), and mannose ( $\blacktriangledown$ ), showing the impact of the feeding molar ratio  $r_{pp-PTCDI:4-VPBA}$  in the synthesis of the microgels: (a) 0.20; (b) 0.15; (c) 0.11; (d) 0.09; (e) 0.07; (f) 0.06; (g) 0.05; (h) 0.03; and (i) 0.01. DLS measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



**Fig. S9** The swelling ratio,  $\langle D_h \rangle_{30.0\text{mM}} / \langle D_h \rangle_{0.0\text{mM}}$ , as a function of feeding molar ratio  $r_{\text{pp-PTCDI:4-VPBA}}$  of the microgels. DLS measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS with glucose ( $\blacksquare$ ), fructose ( $\square$ ), galactose ( $\circ$ ), and mannose ( $\Delta$ ) of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



**Fig. S10** [Fru]-dependent (a) PL spectra and (b)  $I_{[Fru]}$  and  $I_0/I_{[Fru]}$  values. All measurements were made on the microgel dispersion (10.0 µg/mL) at 25.0 °C.



Fig. S11 [Gal]-dependent (a) PL spectra and (b)  $I_{[Gal]}$  and  $I_0/I_{[Gal]}$  values. All measurements were made on the microgel dispersion (10.0 µg/mL) at 25.0 °C.



**Fig. S12** [Man]-dependent (a) PL spectra and (b)  $I_{[Man]}$  and  $I_0/I_{[Man]}$  values. All measurements were made on the microgel dispersion (10.0 µg/mL) at 25.0 °C.



Fig. S13 DLS size distribution of the microgels in the presence of absorbed dextran ( $M_r \sim 6,000$ ) (■), dextran ( $M_r \sim 40,000$ ) (●), dextran ( $M_r \sim 100,000$ ) (▲), RNase B (♥) and HSA (♦). All measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



Fig. S14 PL spectra of the microgels in the presence of absorbed dextran ( $M_r \sim 6,000$ ), dextran ( $M_r \sim 40,000$ ), dextran ( $M_r \sim 100,000$ ), RNase B and HSA. All measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.



**Fig. S15** [Glu]-dependent  $I_{[Glu]}$  and  $I_0/I_{[Glu]}$  values of SPBA microgels dispersed in PBS with in the presence of (a) 30.0 mM of fructose (■), mannose (●), or galactose (▲), and (b) absorbed dextran ( $M_r \sim 6,000$ ) (■), dextran ( $M_r \sim 40,000$ ) (●), dextran ( $M_r \sim 100,000$ ) (▲), RNase B (♥) and HSA (♦). The results in the absence of those non-glucose constituents (□) are given for comparison. All measurements were made in 5.0 mM PBS of pH = 7.4 at 25.0 °C.