## Electronic Supplementary Information

## Facile fabrication of fluorescent Fe-doped carbon quantum dots for

## dopamine sensing and bioimaging application

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Fig. S1 FT-IR spectrum of the as-prepared Fe-CQDs.



Fig. S2 Wide scan XPS full spectrum of Fe-CQDs.



**Fig. S3** UV-vis absorption spectrum of the Fe-CQDs. Insert: the optical photograph of the Fe-CQDs dispersed in water illuminated under UV light (365 nm).



Fig. S4 The stability of Fe-CQDs over time under the UV light irradiation.



Fig. S5 (a) Effect of pH on the detection of dopamine. (b) Effect of incubation time on the fluorescence intensity of the Fe-CQDs-DA system. The concentration of DA is  $50 \mu$ M.



Fig. S6 Effect of pH on fluorescence intensity of the CQDs-DA system.



Fig. S7 Comparison of quenching efficiency between nitrogen-saturated (red line) and oxygen-saturated system (black line).  $F_0$  and F are fluorescent intensities of the Fe-CQDs without and with dopamine, respectively.



**Fig. S8** Comparison of quenching efficiency in the presence (red line) and absence of free iron(III) ion (black line).



**Fig. S9** Comparison of quenching efficiency in the presence (red line) and absence of ethylenediamine (black line).



**Fig. S10** Comparison of quenching efficiency by adding pre-prepared quinone (red line) and dopamine (black line).



**Fig. S11** Confocal fluorescence images of HeLa cells labeled with Fe-CQDs. (a) HeLa cells under bright field, by excitation at (b) 405 nm and (c) 488 nm.

| Probe system                | Linear range (µM) | Detection limit (nM) | Refs.     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Abtz-CdI <sub>2</sub> -MOF  | 0.25-50           | 57                   | 1         |
| MoS <sub>2</sub> nanohybrid | 0.0025-5          | 0.9                  | 2         |
| Carbon dots                 | 0.1-3             | 37                   | 3         |
| β-CD@AuNCs                  | 0.1-80            | 20                   | 4         |
| BSA-CuNCs                   | 0.5-50            | 280                  | 5         |
| pDA NPs                     | 0.01-5            | 5.5                  | 6         |
| Resorcinol                  | 0.01-20           | 1.8                  | 7         |
| CDs/CuNCs nanohybrid        | 0.1-100           | 32                   | 8         |
| CDots-AuNCs hybrid          | 0.005-0.18        | 2.9                  | 9         |
| r-QDs@SiO2-PDA              | 10-80             | 120                  | 10        |
| Fe-CQDs                     | 0.01-50           | 5                    | This work |

**Table S1** A brief summary of different nanomaterials-based fluorescence probes for the detection of DA.

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