## Electronic Supplementary Information

## Living cells imaging and sensing for hydrogen sulfide by a high-efficiency fluorescent Cu-doped carbon quantum dots

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**Fig. S1** (A) Fluorescence spectra of the Cu-CQDs at different excitation wavelengths. (B) The corresponding normalized fluorescence spectra.



Fig. S2 XRD pattern of as-prepared Cu-CQDs.



Fig. S3 Wide scan XPS full spectrum of Cu-CQDs.



Fig. S4 High-resolution XPS spectrum of Cu  $2p_{3/2}$ .



Fig. S5 TGA curve of as-prepared Cu-CQDs.



Fig. S6 The effect of pH on the fluorescence intensity of Cu-CQDs.



**Fig. S7** Fluorescence response and linear plot of Cu-CQDs probe with increment of NaHS in presence of human blood serum.



Fig. S8 UV-vis absorption spectra of Cu-CQDs in the absence and presence of NaHS.



Fig. S9 Fluorescence response of bare CQDs toward NaHS.



**Fig. S10** The fluorescence lifetimes of Cu-CQDs (black line) and Cu-CQDs+NaHS (red line).



**Fig. S11** Time scan of Cu-CQDs measured by fluorescence spectrophotometer upon illumination at 365 nm UV light.



**Fig. S12** Cells viability (%) obtained by MTT assay. Lung cancer cells were incubated with Cu-CQDs at the concentration of 0, 50, 100, 200 and 500  $\mu$ g mL<sup>-1</sup> for 24 h. The error bars represent the standard deviation of three measurements.



**Fig. S13** Cu-CQDs based system toward various potential interfering substances. The concentrations of all anions are 1 mM.  $F_0$  and F are fluorescent intensities of the Cu-CQDs before and after adding the corresponding substances, respectively. The error bars represent the standard deviation of three measurements.



**Fig. S14** Cu-CQDs based system toward various metal ions. The concentrations of all tested sbustances are 1 mM.  $F_0$  and F are fluorescent intensities of the Cu-CQDs before and after adding the corresponding substances, respectively. The error bars represent the standard deviation of three measurements.

Probe system	Linear range (µM)	Detection limit (nM)	Refs.
DCM-PBA	0-10	1.1	1
NIR	0-200	270	2
Lyso-Nap	1-100	330	3
DUT-52-(NO <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	100-700	20000	4
Red-emitting	1-7	90	5
Ratiometric	0-100	2400	6
DPP-NO <sub>2</sub>	0-30	5.2	7
MOF	0-100	16	8
Metal complex	30-90	2240	9
Two-photon	0-5	20	10
Cu-CQDs	2-500	500	This work

**Table S1** Comparison of analytical parameters between present probe and some other fluorescent probe for the sensing of HS<sup>-</sup>.

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