## **Electronic Supplementary Information**

Water-soluble MoS<sub>2</sub> quantum dots for facile and sensitive fluorescent sensing of alkaline phosphatase activity in serum and live cells based on inner filter effect

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**Figure S1.** The emission wavelength of  $MoS_2$  QDs prepared under (A) different ultrasonic time (5 to 20 h), (B) 0.4 g different alkalis (LiOH, NaOH, KOH), (C) 11 mL different ethanol aqueous solution (15%, 45% and 85%) and (D) different NaOH concentrations (0.140 mol/L to 1.820 mol/L).



**Figure S2**. (A) The best fluorescence emission spectra and (B) hydrodynamic diameter (HDD) of MoS<sub>2</sub> QDs synthetized under different volume ratio of ethanol (15%-85%).



**Figure S3.** (A) Fluorescence excitation and emission spectra of MoS<sub>2</sub> QDs in the reaction solution (85 vol% ethanol alkaline aqueous solution), (B) fluorescence emission spectra of the reaction solution under different synthesis procedures (in the presence of a) NaOH, b) MoS<sub>2</sub> and c) both MoS<sub>2</sub> and NaOH), (C) fluorescence excitation and emission spectra of MoS<sub>2</sub> QDs after post-treatment (neutral aqueous solution) and (D) excitation depend emission spectra of MoS<sub>2</sub> QDs in neutral aqueous solution (excitation from 360 nm to 500 nm). The black line and red line in A and C refers to the excitation and emission spectrum, respectively.



**Figure S4**. (A) XRD patterns and (B) Raman spectra of bulk  $MoS_2$  powder (red line) and  $MoS_2$  QDs (black line).



**Figure S5.** The FL intensity change of  $MoS_2$  QDs (A) under different pH range (1-12), (B) from pH 1 to pH 12 for different circles, (C) under different NaCl concentration (0-800 mM) and (D) under different storage time (0-6 month).



**Figure S6.** (A) Absorption spectrum of (a) p-nitrophenol, (b) p-nitrophenylphosphat and fluorescece (c) excitation spectrum, (d) emission spectrum of  $MoS_2$  QDs. (B) The fluorescence change of  $MoS_2$  QDs upon addition of various concentrations of PNPP from 0 to 5 mM.



**Figure S7.** The influence of  $MoS_2$  QDs concentration on the (A) fluorescence intensity and (B) fluorescence quenching efficiency of the reaction system when 10 U/L ALP was added.



**Figure S8.** Cell viabilities of  $MoS_2$  QDs using MCF-7 cells as tested model. Cells were treated by 0-200 µg/mL of  $MoS_2$  QDs for 12 h and 24 h. Data were expressed as the means ± SD of data obtained from triplicate experiments.



**Figure S9.** Confocal fluorescence microscopy of  $MoS_2$  QDs (100 µg/mL) applied to ALP sensing in MCF-7 cells. Fluorescent images and merged fluorescent images of  $MoS_2$  QDs located MCF-7 cells in the presence of (A1-A2) 0 mM PNPP, (B1-B2) 1.25 mM PNPP, (C1-C2) 2.5 mM PNPP and (D1-D2) 3.75 mM PNPP with an incubation time of 2 h. (E) Mean FL intensity of MCF-7 cells with different concentrations of PNPP in A-D (0-3.75 mM). The emission intensities collected in optical windows were collected at 475-525 nm upon the excitation at 405 nm for  $MoS_2$  QDs.

Method	Materials used	Linear range (U/L)	Detection limit (U/L)	Application		
				Human serum samples	Cell imaging	Ref.
FL	PPi-Cu <sup>2+</sup> /CQDs	16.7–782.6	1.1	NO	NO	[1]
FL	Au NCs	0.1–10	0.1	NO	NO	[2]
FL	coumarin@ Tb-GMP	25–200	10	NO	NO	[3]
FL	β-CD/QDs	0–800	10	NO	NO	[4]
FL	PPESO <sub>3</sub>	0–30	0.5	standard addition method	NO	[5]
FL	SAHH-based probe	8–100	1	NO	NO	[6]
FL	AAP/CQDs	4.6-383.3	1.4	NO	NO	[7]
FL	Pdots@RB-hy	0.005–15	0.0018	standard addition method	NO	[8]
FL	AAP/GQDs	1.0–90	0.14	standard addition method	NO	[9]
EC	FAPP	_	0.4	NO	NO	[10]
ECL	PP/CdSe NPs	2.0–25	2.0	standard addition method	NO	[11]
EC	PMB/HP	0.1–10	0.1	NO	NO	[12]
Abs	ATP/Cit-AuNPs	-	8.0	NO	NO	[13]
Abs	AAP-Au/AgNRs	5.0–100	3.3	Clinical diagnosis	NO	[14]
FL	β-CD/CQDs	3.4–100	0.9	NO	NO	[15]
Abs	ATP/CTAB-AuNPs	100–600	10	Clinical diagnosis	NO	[16]
FL	PLP/AuNCs	1.0–200	0.05	standard addition method	NO	[17]
FL	MoS <sub>2</sub> QDs	0.1–5	0.1 (Lowest detect activity)	Clinical diagnosis	Yes	this work

Table S1 Comparison of performance of the new method with other reported ones.

CQDs: carbon quantum dots; Au NCs: gold nanoclusters; GMP: guanine monophosphate;  $\beta$ -CD/QDs:  $\beta$ -cyclodextrin-modified quantum dots; SAHH: S-adenosylhomocysteine hydrolase; GQDs: Graphene quantum dots; FAPP: ferrocenylaminophenyl phosphate; PMB/HP: 3'-Phosphorylated methylene blue labeled hairpin probe; PP: Phenyl phosphate;

FL: Fluorescence; EC: Electrochemistry; Abs: Colorimetry; ECL: Electrochemiluminescence.

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