

基于太赫兹超材料芯片的生物混合物定量检测研究

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摘要 太赫兹波的指纹光谱特性使其对生物分子具有良好的识别能力。然而,传统压片方法对应太赫兹技术的最低检测限为毫克量级,不能满足生物医学领域低浓度检测(微克及以下)的应用需求。为此,以 7-甲基鸟嘌呤为例,基于电容电感效应,设计了一款增强太赫兹检测灵敏度的超材料芯片。其最小检测限度可达 $6.30 \mu\text{g}$,约为传统压片法测得的 2.95 mg 的 $1/500$,具有灵敏度高、无需标记、响应快、测量简单等优点。而且,当 7-甲基鸟嘌呤物质和其他物质混合在一起,在芯片上会表现出不同的频移变化规律,既可以有效地实现定性区分,也可以利用芯片的高检测灵敏度从混合物中定量检测相关物质。这些结果为临床医学中分子甲基化相关疾病的快速准确诊断提供了重要参考价值。

关键词 太赫兹技术; 超材料芯片; 混合物定量检测; 7-甲基鸟嘌呤

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1 引言

鸟嘌呤(G)是脱氧核糖核酸(DNA)的四种碱基之一,在 DNA 双螺旋结构中 与胞嘧啶(C)配对,维持生命活动的稳定。鸟嘌呤甲基化会影响 DNA 的正常工作。一旦鸟嘌呤甲基化就会立即发生脱嘌呤作用,形成无嘌呤位点,从而造成 DNA 烷基化损伤,导致细胞毒性增加,而且鸟嘌呤甲基化与基因突变频率(MF)有很强的相关性^[1-2]。7-甲基鸟嘌呤(7-MG)是鸟嘌呤甲基化的产物之一,占甲基化产生加合物的 70%~90%^[3],且其修复速度比其他致诱性和致癌性损伤(如 6-甲基鸟嘌呤)慢得多,所以常被作为测量烷基化损伤的生物标志物^[4],是膀胱肿瘤、结肠癌、胃癌等疾病的致癌机制中测量的一个主要因素^[5-7]。例如,在膀胱肿瘤组织的 DNA 中,7-甲基鸟嘌呤的浓度约为 $0.26 \mu\text{mol 7-MG/mol deoxyguanosine } 3'\text{-monophosphate (dGp)}$ ^[8],相当于正常膀胱组织的 5 倍^[5]。此外,据统计,吸烟者的支气管中 DNA 加合物的含量明显高于非吸烟者^[9]。目前,对 7-MG 检测的医学标准方法有气相色谱-质谱联用法(GC-MS)、高效液相色谱法(HPLC)等^[10-13]。然而,这些方法都

是基于材料的分离(依赖于吸附特性、表面电荷、配体特异性和蛋白质分子大小的差异)。检测过程通常耗时数小时,预处理过程繁琐且成本高^[14],无法应用于常规疾病检查。因此,医学研究亟须一种准确、快速的新方法对鸟嘌呤甲基化进行检测。

太赫兹波($1 \text{ THz} = 10^{12} \text{ Hz}$)是一种频率在 $0.1 \sim 10 \text{ THz}$ 之间的电磁辐射。与其他波段相比,太赫兹波在生物医学检测方面有很多优势^[15]:1)太赫兹波有穿透性,可以检测表皮下的生物组织信息^[16];2)可以区分不同的生物组织或材料,太赫兹层析成像和检测技术尤其有助于区分界限清晰的不透明物体^[17];3)它有很低的光子能量,对机体和生物组织没有损害^[18];4)对极性物质的灵敏度很高,由于大部分生物大分子的振动和转动能级都处在太赫兹波段^[19-21],所以太赫兹吸收光谱可以根据其特定的特征谱确定构象、构型及环境的影响。

然而,在常规的太赫兹光谱检测中,样品通常在测量前被压制成片状^[22-24]。在这种方法中,THz 谱的吸收峰会随着样品浓度的降低而迅速减少,检测阈值下限在毫克量级,无法满足一些低浓度样本的检测分析。因此,一些研究者提出将太赫兹光谱与超

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材料生物传感器相结合,使其具有样品需求量少、灵敏度高、检测无标记、响应快、测量简单等优点^[25-26]。然而,目前这些超材料生物传感器仅局限于检测一种纯物质,不能进行物质的定性鉴别,也不能进行混合定量分析,在实际应用中具有较大局限性。

以 7-MG 为例,本文设计了一种超材料芯片,实现了分子甲基化的定性鉴定、浓度检测和定量混合物分析。首先测量了 7-MG 在室温下的吸收光谱,得到了它的特征吸收峰。接下来,设计了基于电容电感效应的太赫兹超材料芯片,该超材料芯片针对不同样本表现出不同规律的太赫兹吸收峰频移。通过识别不同浓度下样品的频移量及频移规律,在芯片上实现了混合物中对 7-甲基鸟嘌呤和鸟嘌呤的定性识别和定量检测。本研究为后续快速检测人体细胞 DNA 中的 7-甲基鸟嘌呤含量提供了参考,对实现疾病的早期发现和治疗具有重要参考价值。

2 样品制备与实验装置

2.1 样品制备

实验材料纯 7-甲基鸟嘌呤(粉末,纯度>99%)样品购自 Sigma-Aldrich 公司,按照供应商说明妥善存放。在纯样品中加入聚乙烯(PE)粉末,这是因为 7-MG 不易成型需要添加 PE 粉便于压片,然后进行特征峰测试。7-MG 与 PE 粉的质量混合比分别为 2.65:100 和 6.95:100,对应质量分数为 2.58% 和 6.50% (7-MG 的质量/片的总质量)量/片剂。混合后的粉末用 3 t(1 t=9800 N)的力压成 13 mm 的片

表 2 不同混合比例的腺嘌呤(A)、G、胸腺嘧啶(T)、胞嘧啶(C)和 7-MG

Table 2 Adenine(A), G, thymine(T) cytosine(C), and 7-MG with different mixing ratios

| Sample No. | A / (mg·mL ⁻¹) | T / (mg·mL ⁻¹) | C / (mg·mL ⁻¹) | G / (mg·mL ⁻¹) | 7-MG / (mg·mL ⁻¹) |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 2.590 | 3.260 | 6.160 | 4.650 | 3.670 |
| 2 | 4.590 | 7.790 | 2.170 | 5.640 | 2.940 |
| 3 | 6.450 | 3.680 | 4.250 | 2.560 | 6.060 |
| 4 | 4.496 | 6.300 | 3.610 | 5.686 | 1.996 |
| 5 | 5.120 | 3.036 | 4.510 | 5.316 | 0.880 |

2.2 实验装置

本实验采用的装置是一个太赫兹时域光谱系统,其动态范围约为 60 dB,有效光谱范围为 1.0~3.5 THz,光斑尺寸约为 2 mm,以 512 个单点累积数和 7.9 GHz(纯品实验)/1.9 GHz(混合物实验)的分辨率进行测量。每个待测样品制备 3 个样本,每个样本重复测量 4 次得到误差条。所有测量都在

剂。取样期间的质量损失全部控制在 1% 以内^[27-28]。

进行超结构芯片性能测试时,将纯品以不同质量加入至 1 mL 水(色谱纯)中混合均匀,得到 7-甲基鸟嘌呤的质量浓度为 1.26、2.53、5.06、10.12、30.36、40.48 mg/mL,鸟嘌呤的质量浓度为 3.48、6.96、13.92、27.84、41.76 mg/mL。将试样溶液滴于超材料表面,彻底干燥进行测试。这里用电动移液管取 5 个样品,每次取 5 μ L,以保证滴样的准确性。通过固定移液枪的高度来确保每次样品的覆盖面积一致(约为直径 5 mm 的圆形范围内),使得样本厚度与样本量呈线性关系,因此在光斑下的等效样品量与实际样品量之间为线性关系。7-MG 的有效质量分别为 6.30、12.65、25.30、50.60、151.80、202.40 μ g,鸟嘌呤的有效质量为 17.40、34.80、69.20、139.20、208.80 μ g。

在超材料芯片测试混合物的实验中,配置了一系列不同的二元混合物和五元混合物溶液样品用于进行混合物分析实验。其具体的配置如表 1、2 所示。

表 1 不同混合比例的鸟嘌呤和 7-MG

Table 1 Guanine and 7-MG with different mixing ratios

| Sample No. | G / (mg·mL ⁻¹) | 7-MG / (mg·mL ⁻¹) |
|------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 1.528 | 1.074 |
| 2 | 1.674 | 2.832 |
| 3 | 3.056 | 2.150 |
| 4 | 6.114 | 4.298 |
| 5 | 12.230 | 8.596 |

小于 3% 的环境湿度下进行。

2.3 光谱计算

本实验的吸光度计算公式为

$$\alpha(\omega) = I_{\text{ref}}(\omega) / I_{\text{sam}}(\omega), \quad (1)$$

式中: $\alpha(\omega)$ 为吸光度;对于片剂的测试, $I_{\text{ref}}(\omega)$ 是太赫兹信号穿透 PE 背景样片的频域强度; $I_{\text{sam}}(\omega)$ 是太赫兹信号穿透 7-MG 样片的频域强度。这里,PE

背景样片中的 PE 质量与 7-MG 样片中的 PE 质量相同。对于芯片的测试, $I_{\text{ref}}(\omega)$ 是未放置超结构时的空扫信号(干燥的空气), $I_{\text{sam}}(\omega)$ 是放置不同浓度 7-MG 样本的芯片信号。

3 分析与讨论

3.1 7-甲基鸟嘌呤的 THz 光谱

太赫兹吸收峰来自辐射太赫兹波与分子中原子/官能团的振动/旋转之间的共振吸收^[27],

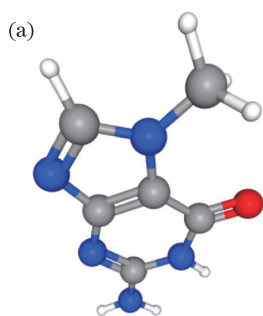


图 1(a) 显示了 7-甲基鸟嘌呤的分子结构, 对应其分子结构的太赫兹特征吸收光谱图如图 1(b) 所示。可以看到, 在 6.50% 的质量分数下, 它的吸收峰非常清楚, 分别位于 1.37 THz、2.39 THz 和 2.90 THz。然而, 当样品质量分数下降到 2.58% 时, 太赫兹吸收峰衰减很多, 除了 1.37 THz, 另两个特征峰基本无法认定有效。因此, 对于 2.95 mg 以下含量的 7-MG, 常规压片测试方法无法有效识别。

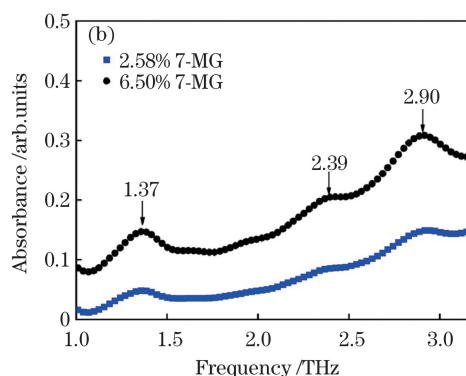


图 1 7-甲基鸟嘌呤。(a) 分子结构; (b) THz 特征光谱(灰色、白色、红色和蓝色原子分别代表 C、H、O 和 N 原子)

Fig. 1 7-methylguanine. (a) Molecular structure; (b) THz characteristic spectra (gray, white, red, and blue represent the C, H, O, and N atoms, respectively)

3.2 超结构芯片的仿真结果

基于电容电感效应, 本文使用 COMSOL 软件设计了一种特征吸收型谐振环。为获得较强的透射响应, 提高灵敏度, 衬底的吸收应越低越好^[29]。因此本文选用聚酰亚胺(PI)作为衬底, PI 的介电常数较低, 为 $\epsilon_{\text{pi}} = 3.5 + 0.01i$, 超结构单元构造如图 2 所示, 衬底厚度 $t = 25 \mu\text{m}$, 单位结构的周期 $p = 100 \mu\text{m}$, 衬底表面用 100 nm 厚的金(Au)金属薄膜(黄色部分)在衬底上形成谐振环, 环开口的大小 $g = 4 \mu\text{m}$, 金属臂的宽度 $w = 5 \mu\text{m}$, 两边宽度分别为 $h_1 = 30 \mu\text{m}$ 和 $h_2 = 96.5 \mu\text{m}$ 。对于该金电极, 可以视作为等效电路中的电感, 而环开口可以视作为电容, 整体形成了一个具有电容电感效应的电路。

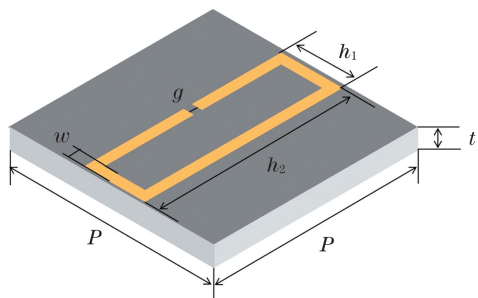


图 2 谐振环的单元结构示意图

Fig. 2 Unit structure diagram of resonant ring

在太赫兹电场的作用下, 产生振荡电流, 从而产生对应频率的太赫兹吸收。

谐振环测试方式的装置示意图如图 3(a) 所示, 实验是以 512 个单点累积数和 7.9 GHz 的分辨率

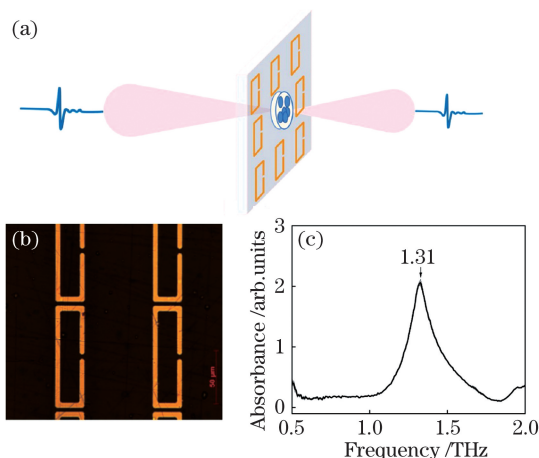


图 3 太赫兹谐振环芯片参数。(a) 芯片测试原理装置示意图; (b) 显微镜下的超材料芯片的部分结构照片(200×); (c) 芯片的太赫兹光谱图

Fig. 3 Terahertz resonance ring chip parameters. (a) Schematic diagram of chip testing principle device; (b) microscopic photographs of partial structure of metamaterial chip (200 ×); (c) terahertz spectrum of this chip

进行测量, 每个样本重复测量 4 次得到误差条。加工出的超材料芯片在 200 倍显微镜下的部分结构如图 3(b) 所示。由太赫兹时域光谱系统测得的芯片的太赫兹光谱如图 3(c) 所示, 结构的谐振峰中心频率处于 1.31 THz 处。

3.3 超材料芯片对样品的浓度响应规律

对于本文中的超结构而言, 当样本覆盖在超结构表面时, 其整体的电容和电感由于表面介电常数的变化而发生改变, 导致因电容电感相应产生的振荡电流发生频率上的改变, 最终导致其太赫兹吸收峰发生频移^[30-31]。考虑到不同浓度、不同种类样本覆盖在超结构上后具有不同的整体介电常数变化, 因此这种频移变化会体现出不同的规律, 这些规律

有助于实现对样本的定性和定量识别。

本文实验以 7-甲基鸟嘌呤和鸟嘌呤为例, 测试了超结构对该两种样品的响应。首先将 7-MG 纯品滴到超材料芯片上进行不同浓度下的光谱测试, 如图 4(a) 所示。芯片频移与样品用量的关系如图 4(b) 所示。从样品用量为 50 μg (质量浓度为 10.12 mg/mL) 开始, 7-甲基鸟嘌呤的频移量约为 0.04 THz。当样品用量增加, 即浓度增加时, 特征峰开始向更低的频率移动 (红移)。通过函数拟合得到非线性方程 $f(x) = a \exp(bx) + c \exp(dx)$, 其中 $f(x)$ 为频移量 (THz), x 为样品的有效质量 (μg)。对应系数为 $a = 0.04336, b = 0.002242, c = -0.04559, d = -0.05696$, 可以获得决定系数 $R^2 = 0.9915$ 的拟合优度。

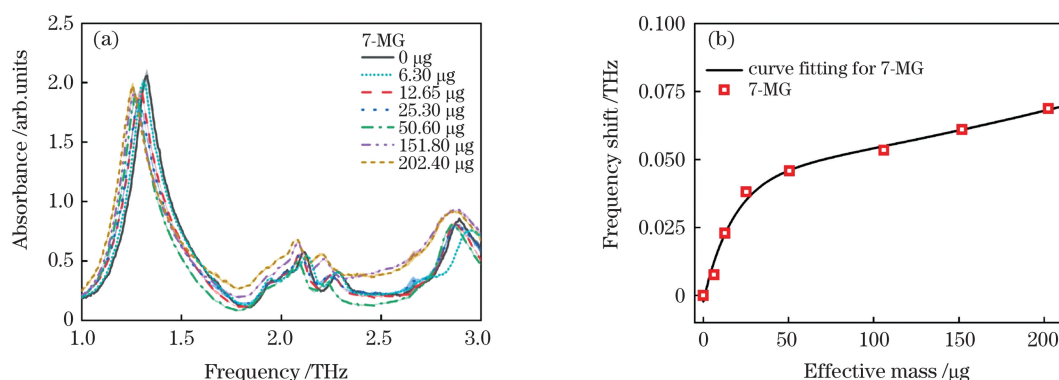


图 4 不同浓度下的光谱测试。(a) 不同量 7-甲基鸟嘌呤覆盖的超结构的光谱; (b) 谐振峰频移量对 7-甲基鸟嘌呤量的依赖
Fig. 4 Spectral tests with different concentrations. (a) Spectra of superstructures covered by different amounts of 7-methylguanine; (b) dependence of resonance peak shifting on the amount of 7-methylguanine

下一步, 实验以同样的测试流程对鸟嘌呤纯品进行了测试, 如图 5(a) 所示。芯片频移与样品用量的关系如图 5(b) 所示, 当样品用量增加, 即浓度增加时, 特征峰开始向更低的频率移动 (红移)。经过分析芯片频移与鸟嘌呤用量之间的关系, 发现满足如下函数关系: $f(x) = a \exp(bx) + c \exp(dx)$, 其中

$f(x)$ 为频移量 (THz), x 为鸟嘌呤的有效质量 (μg), 鸟嘌呤的对应系数 $a = 0.06861, b = 0.002499, c = -0.06831, d = -0.02969$, 可以获得决定系数 $R^2 = 0.9895$ 的拟合优度。

这些结果表明, 对于已知的样品, 本实验能够通过对应的频移关系检测出其含量。而对于未知的

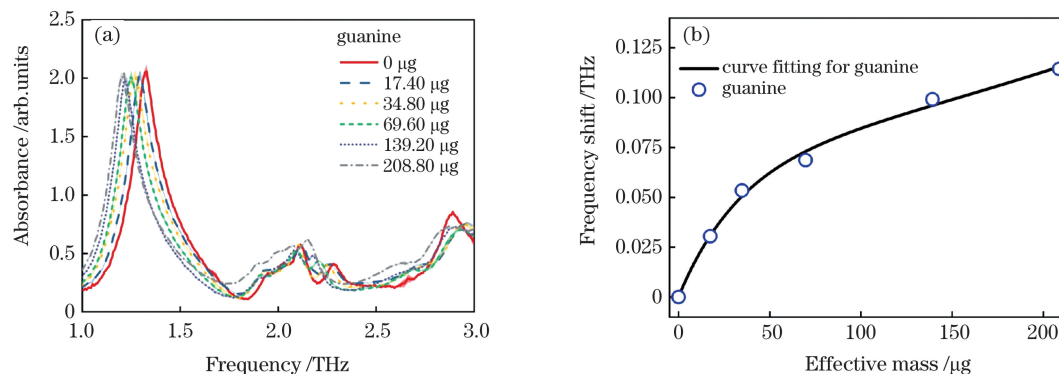


图 5 不同浓度下的光谱测试。(a) 不同量鸟嘌呤覆盖的超结构的光谱; (b) 谐振峰频移量对鸟嘌呤量的依赖
Fig. 5 Spectral tests at different concentrations. (a) Spectra of superstructures covered by different amounts of guanine; (b) dependence of resonance peak shifting on the amount of guanine

样品,则能通过测试不同浓度的样品并拟合频移曲线,然后与现有的曲线参数比较来推断未知样品的曲线最符合哪一种样品规律,从而实现对该未知样品的定性分析。

3.4 混合物测试

进一步,为了验证本文的芯片是否可以用于预测混合物样品中的 7-MG 浓度,本文进一步对二元混合物和多组分混合物进行了一些测试。

首先,对于二元混合物的测试,这里本实验用鸟

嘌呤(G)和 7-甲基鸟嘌呤(7-MG)来进行混合制样。实验测试了 5 组含有 G 和 7-MG 的混合物,其混合比例不同,测试的二元混合物太赫兹光谱如图 6(a)所示。利用上文获取的频移与有效质量的关系函数,可以计算出特定质量 7-MG /G 的频移量。在这里,本文发现混合物的频移是每一组中单个物质频移的叠加,如图 6(b)所示,其中, R 为计算结果与实验结果的偏差百分比。结果表明,在混合物中,每种组分的频移影响可以单独计算,且其频移量遵循纯品的频移规律。

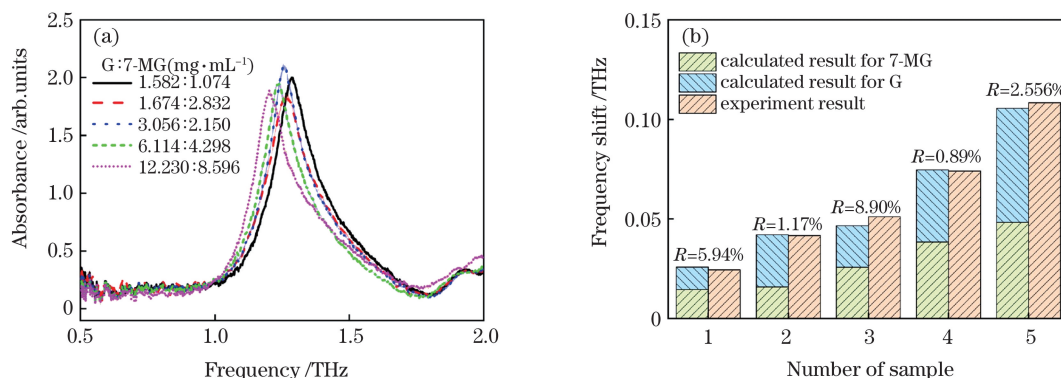


图 6 二元混合物太赫兹光谱。(a)不同混合比(G:7-MG)二元混合物覆盖的超材料芯片的光谱;(b)二元混合物的总频移和其组分单独频移之间的关系

Fig. 6 THz spectra of binary mixture. (a) Spectra of the metamaterial chip covered by the binary mixture with different mixing ratios (G:7-MG); (b) relationship between the total frequency shift of the binary mixture and individual frequency shift from the components in the binary mixture

基于上述结果,实验进一步对多组分混合物进行了测试,先制备了 5 组含有 7-MG 和 A、G、T、C 四种 DNA 碱基的混合物。测试的混合物与 7-MG 混合前后的太赫兹光谱如图 7(a)所示。鉴于原混合物中 7-MG 的含量是非线性变化的,且变化规律遵循 7-MG 纯品的变化规律,通过添加额外的 7-MG,观察附加频移,然后通过解决以下公式来分

析其含量 x 。

$$f(x + \Delta x) - f(x) = \Delta f, \quad (2)$$

式中: Δx 为 7-MG 的附加质量; $f(x)$ 为 7-MG 纯品的频移量; Δf 为通过实验测得的由内标产生的额外频移量。混合物频移的实际值和计算结果对比如图 7(b)所示。可以看到,其中各物质的总频移几乎是各物质单个频移的叠加,准确率在 85% 以上。实

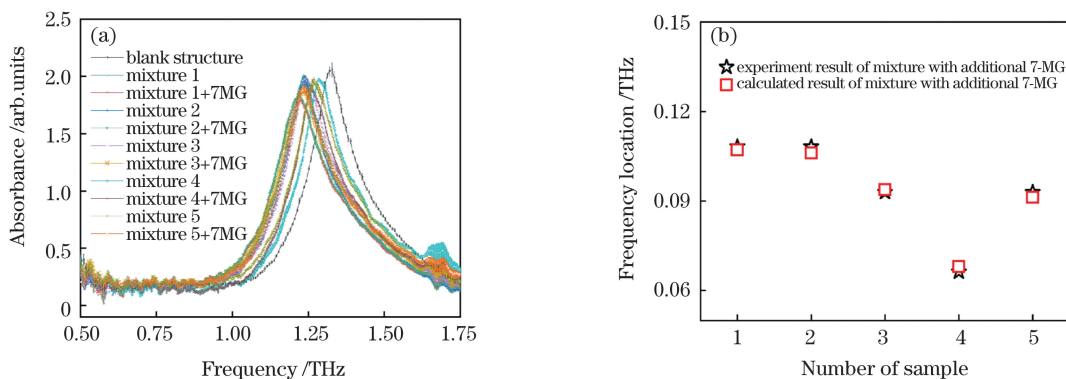


图 7 混合物与 7-MG 混合前后的太赫兹光谱。(a)多组分混合物覆盖的超材料薄片在加入 23.35 μg 7-MG 前后的光谱;(b)多组分混合物中总频移和个别频移之间的关系

Fig. 7 Terahertz spectra of the mixture before and after mixing with 7-MG. (a) Spectra of the metamaterial chip covered by the multicomponent mixture before and after the addition of 23.35 μg 7-MG; (b) relationship between the total frequency shift and individual frequency shift in a multicomponent mixture

验和理论结果的 7-MG 质量及其相对误差的比较见表 3。这里本文分析其误差来源主要来自测试系统的分辨率(影响频移量)和超材料芯片的设计(影响物质灵敏度),因此,误差幅度的降低依赖于提高 THz-TDS 系统的分辨率和设计更敏感的超材料结构。总的来说,与传统压片的分子甲基化检测相比,基于超材料芯片的电容电感效应实现了鸟嘌呤甲基化的无损、高灵敏度、定性鉴定和定量混合检测。

表 3 7-MG 质量实验结果与理论结果的比较及相应的相对误差

Table 3 Comparison of 7-MG mass between the experimental and theoretical results and the corresponding relative error

| Sample No. | Actual mass /(μg) | Calculated mass /(μg) | Relative error /($\Delta\omega \cdot \omega^{-1}$) |
|------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 18.35 | 20.24 | 0.1030 |
| 2 | 14.70 | 15.34 | 0.0435 |
| 3 | 30.30 | 38.60 | 0.2739 |
| 4 | 9.98 | 11.51 | 0.1533 |
| 5 | 4.40 | 3.43 | 0.2205 |

4 结 论

本文提供了一种无损、快速、准确检测分子甲基化的新方法。以 7-甲基鸟嘌呤和鸟嘌呤为例,本文设计了一种基于电容电感效应的太赫兹超材料芯片,其检出下限可达 $6.30 \mu\text{g}$,约为传统压片法测得的 2.95 mg 的 $1/500$,解决了传统方法检测灵敏度有限的问题。在这里,用不同浓度的 7-MG 和 G 覆盖超材料芯片,通过吸收峰频移的具体变化,可以实现对 7-MG 和 G 的定性和定量分析。此外,通过混合物实验,验证了混合物的频移是单个物质频移的叠加。继而,通过内标法和 7-MG 纯品的变化规律函数计算出了混合物中的 7-MG 含量。该方法也有可能用于识别其他分子甲基化产物,如鸟嘌呤甲基化形成的 6-甲基鸟嘌呤,胞嘧啶甲基化形成的 5-甲基胞嘧啶等。因此,本文的研究结果为今后人类 DNA 分子甲基化的准确检测提供了参考。

但从目前的结果上若要提高检测精度,可以考虑从提高品质因数(Q)入手,因为品质因数受支撑结构能量损失的影响很大,所以需要设计更加复杂的谐振结构,如 Workie 等^[32]设计的一种蝶形圆边共振板结构的谐振器,其拓扑结构能有效地改变共振板的位移场,可以最大限度地增强电场,有效降低能量损失,提高 Q 值,从而提高芯片的检测精度。

而对于混合物测试所产生的误差是因为本文的研究中对于混合物的规律分析是通过测试频移量,由于频移量在该实验中只和样品的折射率有关,所以与目标物质折射率相近甚至相同的物质会产生极大的干扰。因此,若要提升检测精度,可以通过特异性提取目标物质或排除其他物质干扰的方式。比如, Lin 等^[33]通过抗体特征性捕捉目标物质,成功地使用了一种抗癌胚抗原(CEA)修饰的 THz 超材料生物传感器来检测 CEA 的浓度。此外,还可以使用光学清洗剂对样本进行清洗来去除一些干扰物质,从而提升太赫兹检测的准确性。比如, Musina 等^[34]的研究中通过使用光学清洗剂来消除生物样本中的水分,大幅减少了水分产生的强烈太赫兹吸收,从而提升了光谱的信噪比。

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Quantitative Detection of Biological Mixtures Based on Terahertz Metamaterial Chip

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Abstract

Objective Guanine is one of the four bases of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). It pairs with cytosine in the double helix structure of DNA to maintain the stability of life activities. However, guanine methylation can affect the normal operation of DNA. When guanine is methylated, it immediately depurinates and forms apurinic sites, causing DNA alkylation damage and increasing cytotoxicity. One of the byproducts of guanine methylation, 7-methylguanine (7-MG), is commonly used as a biomarker to assess alkylation damage. However, traditional medical methods, such as gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) used to detect 7-MG, are time-consuming, cumbersome, and costly. Therefore, medical research needs a new accurate and swift method to detect guanine methylation. Furthermore, THz fingerprint spectral characteristics enable it to effectively identify biomolecules. However, the detection limit of the traditional tablet pressing method is at milligram level, which cannot meet the application requirements of low concentration detection (microgram and less) in the biomedical field. Some researchers have proposed combining terahertz spectroscopy and metamaterial biosensors; however, these metamaterial biosensors are limited to the detection of a pure substance and cannot realize qualitative identification of substances and mixed quantitative analysis. The chip designed in this study was tested on binary and multicomponent mixtures to check if it could predict the concentration of 7-MG in mixture samples. Finally, the 7-MG content of the mixture was determined using the standard internal method and the variation function of a pure 7-MG product. The minimum detection limit is 6.30 μg , which is 500 times lower than 2.95 mg by the traditional tablet pressing method. Furthermore, when 7-methylguanine and other substances are mixed together, they exhibit different frequency shift changes on the chip, allowing high sensitivity qualitative differentiation and quantitative detection from the mixture. This study provides important reference value for the subsequent rapid detection of 7-MG content in human cell DNA, and the detection and treatment of diseases.

Methods In this paper, 7-methylguanine is considered as an example to design a metamaterial chip based on the

capacitance and inductance effect to enhance THz detection sensitivity. First, the frequency shift response of 7-methylguanine and guanine was measured through terahertz time-domain spectroscopy. The chip used in this study was then tested on binary mixtures and multicomponent mixtures to check if it could predict the concentration of 7-MG in mixture samples. Finally, the 7-MG content of the mixture was determined using the standard internal method and the variation function of a pure 7-MG product.

Results and Discussions In this paper, the relation between chip frequency shift and the amount of 7-methylguanine (Fig. 4) is obtained by conducting experiments. When the amount of sample increases, i.e. When the concentration increases, the characteristic peak starts moving to a lower frequency (red shift). The nonlinear equation $f(x) = a \exp(bx) + c \exp(dx)$ is obtained through function fitting, where $f(x)$ is the frequency shift and x is the effective mass of the sample. The corresponding coefficients are: $a = 0.04336$, $b = 0.002242$, $c = -0.04559$, $d = -0.05696$, and the goodness of fit of determination coefficient $R^2 = 0.9915$ can be obtained. The same test is performed on guanine (Fig. 5), the corresponding coefficient of guanine was $a = 0.06861$, $b = 0.002499$, $c = -0.06831$, $d = -0.02969$, and the goodness of fit of determination coefficient $R^2 = 0.9895$ was obtained. These results show that for known samples, the content can be detected using the corresponding frequency shift relation; for unknown samples, the curve of unknown samples can be deduced by testing samples of different concentrations and fitting the frequency shift curve and comparing with the existing curve parameters to achieve qualitative analysis of the unknown sample. From the test of the binary mixture, the frequency shift of the mixture is found to be the superposition of the frequency shifts of individual substances in each group (Fig. 6). Then, the same conclusion was made by the testing the multicomponent mixture (Fig. 7). This shows that the frequency shift effect of each component in the mixture can be separately calculated, and the frequency shift amount follows the frequency shift rule of pure product. Simultaneously, by comparing the actual value and the calculated result of the mixture frequency shift, clearly, the total frequency shift of each substance is almost the superposition of the single-frequency shift of each substance, with an accuracy $>85\%$.

Conclusions This paper provides a new method for nondestructive, rapid, and accurate detection of molecular methylation. Considering 7-MG and G as examples, a terahertz metamaterial chip is designed based on capacitive and inductive effect. The detection limit of the chip can reach $6.30 \mu\text{g}$, which is about 500 times smaller than that of 2.95 mg measured using the traditional pressing method. Here, the metamaterial chip is covered with different concentrations of 7-MG and G. The specific change in absorption peak frequency shift allows for qualitative and quantitative analysis of 7-MG and G. Furthermore, the mixture test confirms that the frequency shift of the mixture is a superposition of the frequency shift of a single substance. Then, using the standard internal method and the variation function of a pure 7-MG product, the content of 7-MG in the mixture can be calculated. This method can also be used to identify other molecular methylation products, such as 6-methylguanine, which is formed through guanine methylation, and 5-methylcytosine, which is formed through cytosine methylation. Hence, the findings of this study can be used in the future to accurately detect human DNA methylation.

Key words terahertz technology; metamaterial chips; quantitative detection of mixtures; 7-methylguanine

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