

# 基于太赫兹超表面传感器的硝基呋喃类药物痕量检测

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**摘要** 硝基呋喃是一种广谱抗生素, 其衍生物应用广泛; 但摄入过量, 会发生溶血性贫血、急性肝坏死等疾病。传统检测方法样品用量大、检测时间长且过程复杂; 超表面传感器检测方法样品用量小且检测快速、简单方便。提出一种基于对称开口环的太赫兹超表面微结构器件, 该结构折射率灵敏度达到 196 GHz/RIU, 可应用于高灵敏度传感检测。利用该超表面传感器对两种不同质量浓度的呋喃唑酮和呋喃妥因溶液进行痕量实验检测, 结果表明, 该超表面传感器对两种药物的最低检测质量浓度达到 10 mg/dL, 有望应用于生物医学等领域样品的传感检测。

**关键词** 生物技术; 太赫兹; 超表面; 呋喃类药物; 高灵敏度传感; 痕量检测

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## 1 引言

硝基呋喃是一种广谱抗生素<sup>[1]</sup>, 其衍生物、呋喃类化合物被广泛应用于临床试验、动物饲料防腐、预防和治疗由细菌引起的胃肠道感染以及加快动物成长等<sup>[2]</sup>。但是研究证明硝基呋喃类药物及其代谢物对人体有致癌、致畸胎副作用, 如果呋喃类抗生素摄入过量, 也会发生溶血性贫血、急性肝坏死等疾病<sup>[3]</sup>。所以, 对硝基呋喃类药物进行监测是保障人类身体健康与生命安全的重要部分。目前对呋喃类抗生素的检测方法主要包括色谱法<sup>[4-5]</sup>、高效液相-紫外法、高效液相-二极管阵列检测法、液相色谱-电化学检测法、酶联免疫吸附法<sup>[6-7]</sup>、液相色谱-质谱联用<sup>[8-9]</sup>等, 但以上方法存在预处理分析时间长、处理繁琐、检测结果假阳性所占比例较高等弊端<sup>[10]</sup>。因此, 需要寻找一种快速、准确且稳定的检测方法, 对呋喃类药物的使用量进行监测。太赫兹波由于其指纹光谱特殊性被广泛用于物质的检测, 而超材料奇异的电磁特性和对表面介质的敏感性, 促进了太赫兹波段内的超材料、超表面传感器在检测领域的发展和应用。

太赫兹波介于远红外和微波之间(0.1~10 THz)<sup>[11-12]</sup>, 具有良好的穿透性、安全性以及物质识别的指纹谱等特性, 在无损检测、生命科学、传感等方面有着良好的应用前景<sup>[13-14]</sup>。然而, 在实际应用中太赫兹技术也存在相关应用器件性能差、太赫兹光谱响

应不明显的问题, 限制了其对痕量生化物质检测的应用。超表面是一种厚度小于电磁波长的人工二维周期结构<sup>[15]</sup>, 可以通过改变亚波长微结构的形状和尺寸, 对电磁波的相位、振幅、偏振、频率等特性进行调控<sup>[16-17]</sup>。Li 等<sup>[18]</sup>利用超表面结构检测低质量浓度喹诺酮类抗生素诺洛辛, 最低检测限确定为 0.01 μg/mL。Xie 等<sup>[19]</sup>利用超表面结构检测微量抗生素分子硫酸卡那霉素, 最低检测质量浓度可达 1 g/L。Hu 等<sup>[20]</sup>利用超表面谐振器检测食品添加剂苯甲酸, 检测最低质量浓度为  $2.3610 \times 10^{-5}$  g/mL。潘学文等<sup>[21]</sup>利用石墨烯超表面吸收器检测红霉素、麦迪霉素、交沙霉素等抗生素, 浓度检测限分别可低至 0.05 mol/L、0.10 mol/L、0.10 mol/L。Qin 等<sup>[22]</sup>利用超表面高灵敏度传感器检测动物源性食品中的微量抗生素残留盐酸四环素, 最低检测限小至 0.1 mg/L。Chen 等<sup>[23]</sup>利用金属光子晶体超材料检测小体积元醇溶剂, 发现在频域中, 吸收对共振峰位移的影响可以更容易、更明显地被识别。因此利用超表面在太赫兹波段的特殊响应可以实现对痕量药物的传感检测<sup>[24-25]</sup>。并且该类传感器具备无标签、安全可靠、特异性强以及灵敏度高等优异性能<sup>[26-28]</sup>。

本文仿真并设计了一款基于对称开口环的太赫兹超表面传感器, 用于对两种呋喃类药物——呋喃唑酮和呋喃妥因的痕量检测。2021 年 Lin 等<sup>[29]</sup>利用微表面加工工艺加工了由 4 个对称开口金属环组成的超表面结构, 发现当分析物的折射率从 1.0 变化到 2.0 时, 其

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折射率灵敏度为 $76.5\text{ GHz/RIU}$ 。2021年Ye等<sup>[30]</sup>设计加工了一款外环方框加内环圆环的对称开口环超表面检测分析物,该传感器的灵敏度为 $156\text{ GHz/RIU}$ 。本文对所设计的太赫兹超表面器件的谐振特性以及传感性能进行仿真,其对折射率的灵敏高达 $196\text{ GHz/RIU}$ ,可应用于高灵敏度传感检测。通过实验加工验证了该超表面结构的谐振特性,并利用该器件实现了对低质量浓度梯度的呋喃唑酮和呋喃妥因溶液的痕量检测,两者检测质量浓度最低为 $10\text{ mg/dL}$ 。Ardsoongnearn等<sup>[31]</sup>创新液相色谱与离子阱质谱联用法来检测多重抗生素硝基呋喃代谢产物残留,结果显示其最低检出限范围为 $2\times 10^{-7}\sim 6\times 10^{-6}\text{ mg/dL}$ ;徐一平等<sup>[32]</sup>建立了一种检测呋喃妥因代谢物的酶联免疫方法,检测猪肉样品中的呋喃妥因代谢物,在优化条件下得到呋喃妥因检测限为 $8.5\text{ mg/dL}$ ;赵善仓等<sup>[33]</sup>建立畜产品中硝基呋喃类抗生素代谢物——呋喃妥因、呋喃唑酮残留的超高效液相色谱串联质谱检测方法,其最低检出限在 $1.0\times 10^{-5}\sim 2.0\times 10^{-3}\text{ mg/dL}$ 的线性范围内。与上文提到的传统检测方法相比,所提出的太赫兹超表面检测技术安全无损、操作简便并且测量速度快。因此,

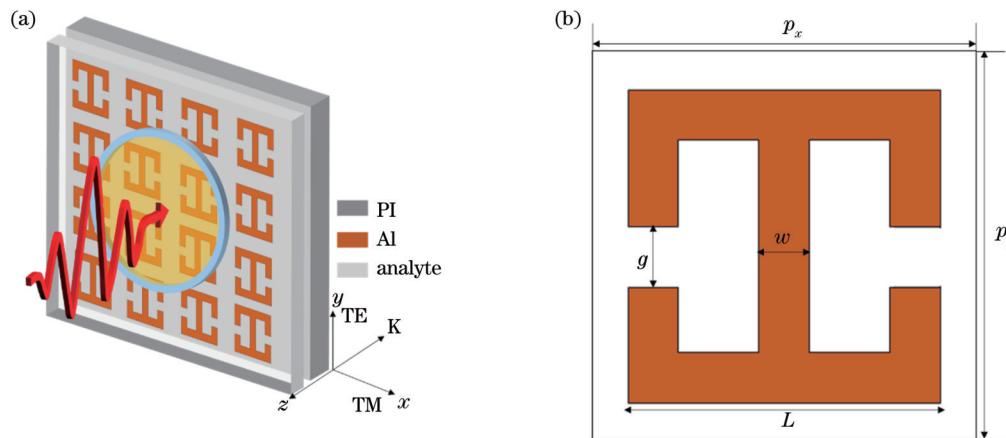


图1 基于对称开口环的超表面结构示意图。(a)三维结构示意图;(b)单元结构示意图

Fig. 1 Schematic of meta-surface structure based on symmetric split rings. (a) Schematic of 3D structure; (b) schematic of unit structure

该开口环单元结构有两个开口,这两个开口关于金属板中央背向对称。如图1的坐标系所示,入射波为横电波,沿 $z$ 轴正方向垂直入射到开口环阵列,电场分量沿 $y$ 轴方向平行于开口,磁场沿 $x$ 轴方向垂直于开口。单元结构在 $x$ 轴和 $y$ 轴的周期长度为 $p_x$ 和 $p_y$ ,基底层PI的厚度 $h_1=50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ ,金属铝的厚度 $h_2=0.2\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ ,金属环长度为 $L$ ,金属环线宽为 $w$ ,开口宽度为 $g$ ,优化后的结构参数如表1所示。

表1 传感器金属微结构单元的几何参数

Table 1 Geometrical parameters of the metal microstructure  
unit of the sensor      unit:  $\mu\text{m}$

Structural parameter	$p_x$	$p_y$	$L$	$w$	$g$
Value	85	85	75	10	12.5

太赫兹超表面检测技术在食品安全、生物医学等领域具有重要的潜在应用。

## 2 材料与方法

### 2.1 超表面结构设计及谐振特性分析

图1展示了所提出的对称开口环超表面传感器的结构示意图,单元结构有两层,其中表面金属铝(Al,电导率为 $3.56\times 10^7\text{ S/m}$ )<sup>[34]</sup>用来构建金属开口环结构,衬底聚酰亚胺(PI,相对介电常数为 $3.5+0.00945i$ )<sup>[35]</sup>材料作为单元结构阵列的基底。聚酰亚胺是一种柔性材料,它具有介电常数低、性能稳定等优点,同时对生物物质无损害。但柔性衬底由于张力容易发生卷曲效应,实验时可能会使太赫兹入射角改变,进而影响实验结果。为了避免这种情况,在加工好超材料后,会将超材料存放在特制的晶片盒中。这种晶片盒内部有吸附性,可以避免超材料在存放过程中发生卷边。另外,在每次实验前,会先测一遍裸超表面传感器的光谱,确定光谱结果一致、传感器未受损坏后再进行进一步实验。

超表面传感器结构的分析和设计基于全矢量有限元方法的仿真软件CST Studio Suite,仿真建模中,在 $z_{\max}$ 方向上设置入射端口, $z_{\min}$ 方向上设置接收端口, $x$ 轴和 $y$ 方向上的边界条件设置为周期性单元晶格, $z$ 轴方向上的边界条件设置为开放。

### 2.2 超表面传感器谐振机理与等效模型

该超表面传感器未覆盖分析物时的仿真透射曲线如图2所示。在 $0.937\text{ THz}$ 处能观测到一个透射峰。

为探究基于对称开口环结构超表面传感器的谐振机理,对该结构在 $0.937\text{ THz}$ 处的电场分布和表面电流分布进行了仿真分析。其电场分布如图3(a)所示,电场主要集中在对称开口谐振器的两个开口处。图3(b)显示了在谐振频率 $f=0.937\text{ THz}$ 处对称开口环的感应电流分布,电流主要分布在对称开口谐振器的金

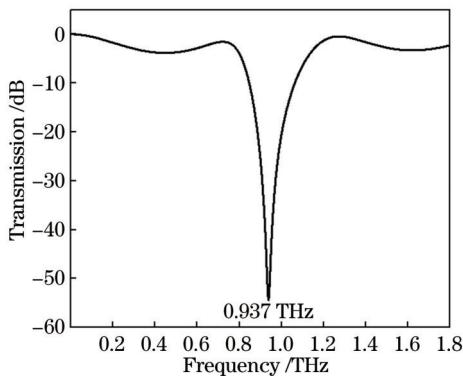


图2 基于对称开口环的超表面结构模拟透射光谱  
Fig. 2 Simulated transmission spectra of meta-surface structures based on symmetric split rings

属环上,且在结构表面形成了环形电流,产生了典型的LC谐振,其等效电路图如图4所示。

根据等效电路理论,该对称开口环结构产生了等效电流回路,由于太赫兹频率接近微波,其构成材料铝为金属,因此两个开口处可等效成电容 $C_1$ 和 $C_2$ ,金属环可等效成电感 $L_1$ 和 $L_2$ 。中间的金属条起到并连的作用,电路可通过中间的金属条形成左右两个环流,图4中间的导线是一根并联的导线,用来实现更好的传感效果。将待测物滴加在超表面传感器表面时,结构的有效电容在金属层和顶部分析物之间产生,本文把它定义为 $C_{\text{sensor}}$ , $C_{\text{sensor}}$ 的值将随表面分析物的折射率 $n$ 和厚度 $h_3$ 的变化而改变。此时传感器的等效电路模型可以简化为图5所示的电路模型,其中 $L_e$ 为 $L_1$ 和 $L_2$ 的等效总电感, $C_e$ 为 $C_1$ 和 $C_2$ 的等效总电容。

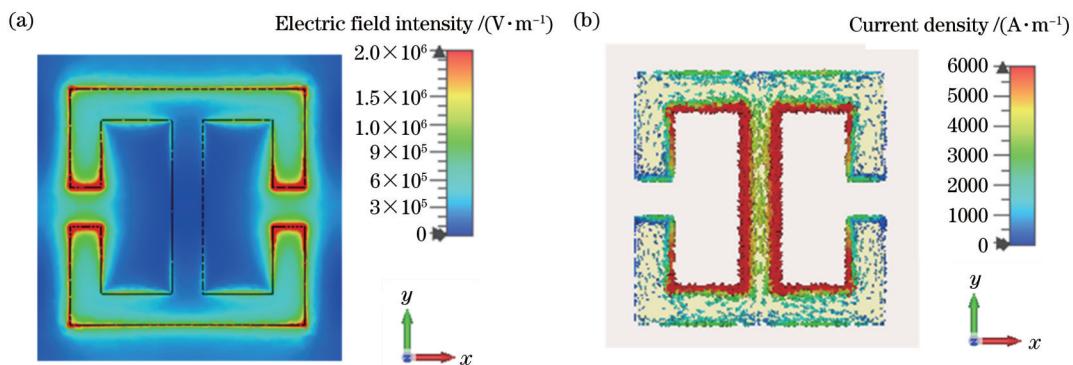


图3 基于对称开口环超表面的场分布。(a)0.937 THz处的电场分布图;(b)0.937 THz处的表面电流分布  
Fig. 3 Field distribution based on a symmetric split-ring meta-surface. (a) Electric field distribution at 0.937 THz; (b) surface current distribution at 0.937 THz

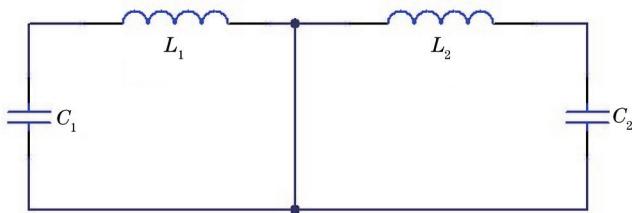


图4 超表面单元结构的等效电路模型  
Fig. 4 Equivalent circuit model of meta-surface cell structure

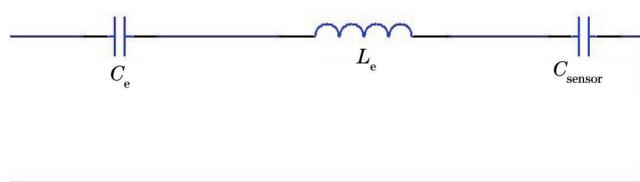


图5 覆盖待测物的超表面传感器的等效电路模型  
Fig. 5 Equivalent circuit model of the meta-surface sensor covering the object to be measured

此时传感器的谐振频率表示为

$$f = \frac{1}{2\pi\sqrt{L_e(C_e + C_{\text{sensor}})}}. \quad (1)$$

当传感器表面滴加分析物后,传感器周围介质的折射率变大,其介电常数也增大。此时,传感器的总电容增大,导致其谐振频率变小,在实验中表现为吸收光谱出现红移。

### 2.3 对称开口环超表面传感性能分析

为了研究该对称开口环的单元结构参数对其透射响应的影响,改变超表面结构的相关参数,观察其谐振响应的变化规律。保持其他结构参数值不变,固定分析物折射率 $n$ ,研究其透射响应随分析物厚度的变化情况。设定待测分析物厚度的变化范围为5~40 μm,对应的透射响应曲线如图6(a)所示,谐振频率随厚度 $h_3$ 的增大产生不均匀红移。其频移量与厚度的关系曲线如图6(b)所示,当分析物的厚度 $h_3$ 从0增加到5 μm时,其频移量及对应关系曲线的斜率较大,传感灵敏度较高。当以10 μm为步长, $h_3$ 从10 μm增加到30 μm时,频移量及对应关系曲线的斜率逐渐减小。当分析物的厚度超过30 μm,取40 μm时谐振峰的频移量不再随分析物厚度的增加发生明显移动,表明传感器对厚度的灵敏性已趋于饱和。上述现象可以理解为:当超表面结构上分析物的厚度在较小范围内增加时,由于超表面结构本身的谐振场强较大,且

与分析物的距离较短,分析物厚度的变化,会改变超表面周围的介电环境以及场分布,从而影响整个超表面系统的等效电容值,表现为频移量的变化。当分析物的厚度超过饱和厚度后,超表面结构产生的谐振场

强本身已被削弱,且距离超表面越远,其场强越小。因此,厚度进一步增加,对谐振场强的影响很小,表现为频移量不再变化。因此,该结构对分析物传感的饱和厚度为30 μm。

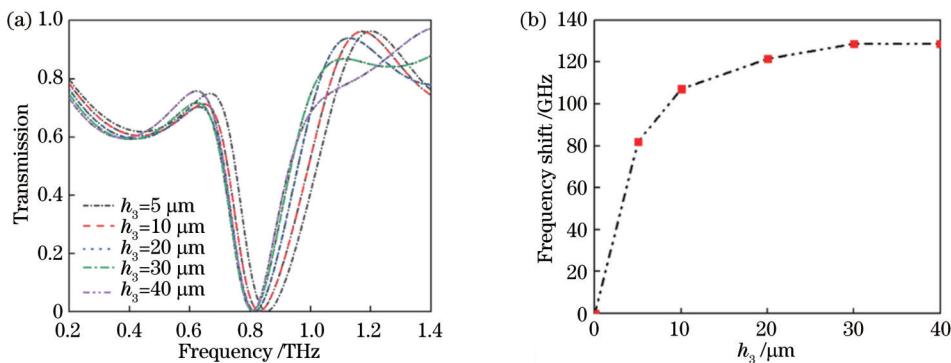


图6 超表面随分析物厚度\$h\_3\$变化的透射曲线及\$h\_3\$与频移的关系。(a)不同\$h\_3\$下的透射曲线;(b)\$h\_3\$与频移的关系

Fig. 6 Transmission spectra of meta-surface with the change of analyte thickness \$h\_3\$ and the relationship between \$h\_3\$ and frequency shift. (a) Transmission spectra under different \$h\_3\$; (b) relationship between \$h\_3\$ and frequency shift

固定分析物的厚度\$h\_3=30\text{ }\mu\text{m}\$,设定折射率\$n\$的取值范围为1.0~1.8,以\$n=0.2\$为步长,对其进行参数扫描。其透射曲线如图7(a)所示,谐振频率随\$n\$的增加产生均匀红移。根据LC谐振等效电路理论,传感器本身有一个固定电容,当在传感器表面滴加待测物溶液时,开口谐振环的开口附近的介电环境发生变化,改变了超表面周围的场分布,使得整个等效电路的等效电容发生变化,由式(1)可知,其谐振频率发生变化。频移随

折射率\$n\$变化的关系曲线如图7(b)所示,可以看出频移与折射率表现出良好的线性关系,当\$n\$由1增加到1.8时,其总频率偏移量为160 GHz,相应的折射率灵敏度为196 GHz/RIU。值得注意的是,生物样品的折射率区间比较小,通常为1.3~1.4<sup>[36]</sup>。当\$n\$以0.02为步长从1.3增加到1.4时,可以观察到谐振频率发生明显移动,其偏移量为20 GHz,传感灵敏度较高。因此,该超表面结构可以用作高灵敏度的生物传感器。

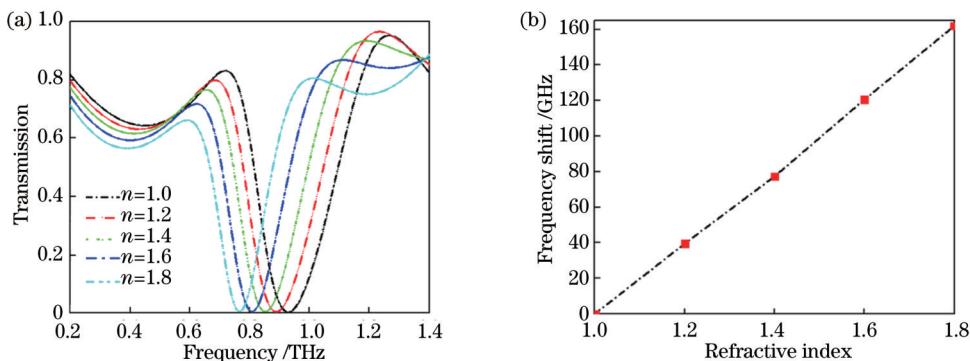


图7 超表面随折射率\$n\$变化的透射曲线及\$n\$与频移的关系。(a)不同折射率下的透射曲线;(b)\$n\$与频移的关系

Fig. 7 Transmission spectra of the meta-surface as a function of refractive index \$n\$ and the relationship between \$n\$ and frequency shift. (a) Transmission spectra under different refractive indices; (b) relationship between \$n\$ and frequency shift

## 2.4 实验试剂配置及测试方法

呋喃唑酮和呋喃妥因药品均购于百灵威(中国)科技有限公司(J&K Scientific),其纯度均≥98%。其中,呋喃唑酮呈黄色粉末状,呋喃妥因呈黄色结晶性粉末,两种药品均不溶于水,在丙酮中微溶,在乙醇中极微溶解,但是可在二甲基甲酰胺中溶解。分别制备呋喃唑酮和呋喃妥因标准溶液10 mg/mL:用微型电子台秤BSA12S(精度为0.1 mg)分别准确称取一定质量的呋喃唑酮和呋喃妥因粉末置于烧杯中,在二甲基甲酰胺

中溶解,摇匀。用二甲基甲酰胺溶液稀释10 mg/mL的标准溶液,分别配制了3种质量浓度梯度的呋喃唑酮溶液和2种质量浓度梯度的呋喃妥因溶液。

实验测试采用美国Zomega公司生产的Z2测量系统,该系统采用中心波长为800 nm、脉冲宽度为100 fs的钛蓝宝石锁模脉冲激光器。为避免空气中的水对太赫兹波的吸收,在实验前,连续通入干燥氮气,使湿度降低到0左右,温度保持在(25±0.1)℃。在测量过程中,由于环境湿度、温度波动,光谱吸收强度会受部分

影响,因此大多数研究工作都是通过分析共振频移的变化来评估传感器的性能,而不分析透射率的变化。测量前,为了定量分析待测物,通过移液枪在超表面结构上滴加60 μL不同质量浓度的分析物,加热至50 °C静置使其干燥。测量时,太赫兹脉冲垂直入射到覆盖有呋喃类药物的超表面上进行光谱采集。测量完成后,为了防止交叉污染,用丙酮溶液彻底清洗超表面结构,并用去离子水冲洗干净并干燥。然后,在下一次测量之前,对干燥的超表面结构进行测量,以确保对超表面结构的清洗对其光学性质没有影响。为了提高信噪比,对每个样品采集3个测量值,取平均值作为最后的实验数据。

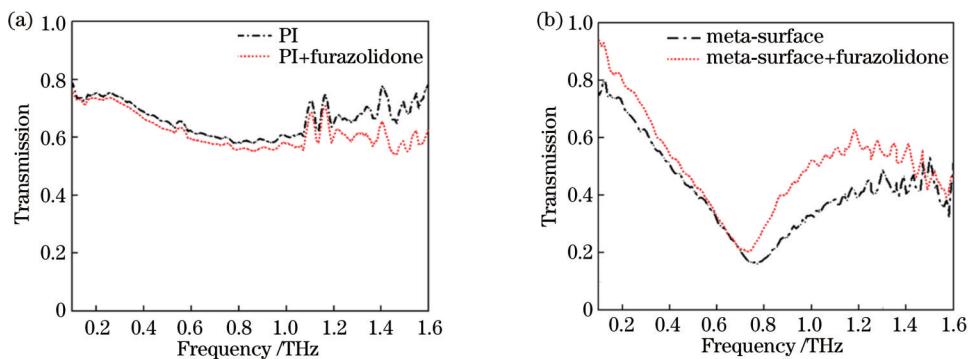


图8 滴加100 mg/dL呋喃唑酮的PI与超表面透射曲线。(a) PI与PI+呋喃唑酮;(b)超表面与超表面+呋喃唑酮  
Fig. 8 PI and meta-surface transmission spectra of 100 mg/dL furazolidone added dropwise. (a) PI and PI+furazolidone; (b) meta-surface and meta-surface+furazolidone

当在超表面结构上滴加不同质量浓度的待测分析物时,其透射曲线的谐振峰会出现不同程度的移动。本文首先制备了3种不同质量浓度梯度的呋喃唑酮溶液样品,低质量浓度梯度取值为1 mg/dL、4 mg/dL、7 mg/dL 和 10 mg/dL,中质量浓度梯度取值为30 mg/dL、50 mg/dL、70 mg/dL 和 100 mg/dL,高质量浓度梯度取值为200 mg/dL、250 mg/dL、500 mg/dL 和 1000 mg/dL。

首先测量了滴加质量浓度范围为100~

### 3 实验结果与讨论

为了证明超表面结构对呋喃类药物检测能力的增强效果,在超表面结构和PI基底上使用移液枪分别滴加60 μL质量浓度为100 mg/dL的呋喃类药物溶液,这里以呋喃唑酮为例,相应的太赫兹透射光谱响应如图8所示。可以看到:在PI基底滴加呋喃唑酮溶液前后,透射光谱没有明显变化[图8(a)];在超表面结构滴加呋喃唑酮溶液后,透射峰的位置出现了明显红移,透射峰所在的频率移动了36 GHz[图8(b)]。实验结果说明超表面结构可以有效增强呋喃唑酮与太赫兹波的相互作用,且灵敏度较高。

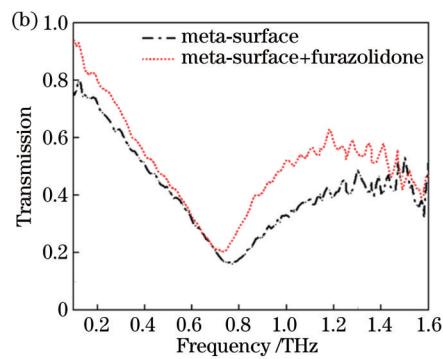


图9 滴加两种质量浓度梯度呋喃唑酮溶液的透射曲线。(a) 100~1000 mg/dL的呋喃唑酮溶液;(b) 10~100 mg/dL的呋喃唑酮溶液  
Fig. 9 Transmission spectra for the dropwise addition of two mass concentration gradients of furazolidone solution.  
(a) 100~1000 mg/dL furazolidone solution; (b) 10~100 mg/dL furazolidone solution

此外,还对质量浓度范围为1~10 mg/dL的呋喃唑酮溶液进行了太赫兹透射光谱检测,如图10所示,其透射曲线的频率和峰强变化均未展现出良好的规律性,不同质量浓度的透射曲线几乎难以分辨。图11展示了太赫兹透射谱频移量与呋喃唑酮溶液质量浓度的关系曲线,其对10~1000 mg/dL质量浓度范围的呋喃唑酮溶液的传感展现出良好的规律性。因此,该超表面结构传感性能良好,能够实现对呋喃唑酮溶液的痕量检测,且最低检测质量浓度为10 mg/dL。

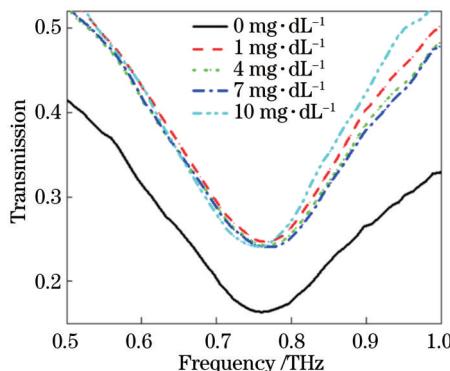


图10 滴加1~10 mg/dL质量浓度呋喃唑酮溶液的透射曲线  
Fig. 10 Transmission spectra of furazolidone solution in the mass concentration of 1-10 mg/dL added dropwise

对呋喃妥因溶液进行了传感检测,制备了2种不同质量浓度梯度的样品,低质量浓度梯度取值为10 mg/dL、30 mg/dL、50 mg/dL和70 mg/dL,高质量浓度梯度取值为100 mg/dL、250 mg/dL、500 mg/dL和1000 mg/dL。

首先测量了滴加质量浓度范围为100~

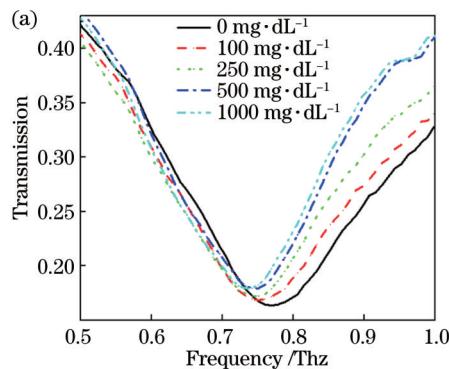


图12 滴加两种质量浓度梯度呋喃妥因溶液的透射曲线。(a) 100~1000 mg/dL的呋喃妥因溶液;(b) 10~70 mg/dL的呋喃妥因溶液  
Fig. 12 Transmission spectra for the dropwise addition of two concentration gradients of furantoin solution. (a) 100~1000 mg/dL furantoin solution; (b) 10~70 mg/dL furantoin solution

## 4 结 论

主要研究了基于对称开口环的太赫兹超表面传感器的谐振特性、传感性能,理论仿真表明其折射率灵敏度达到196 GHz/RIU,可应用于高灵敏度传感检测。利用该超表面结构对两种不同质量浓度的呋喃类药物

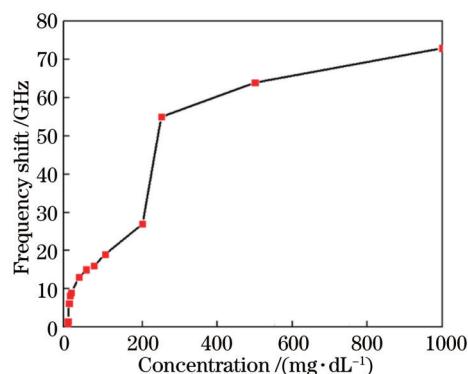
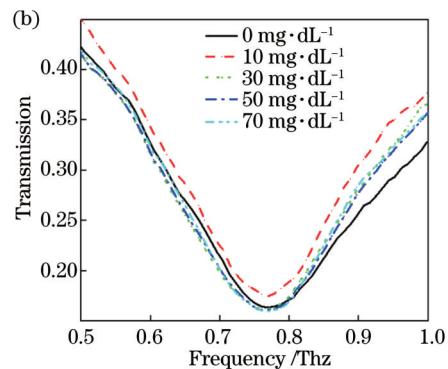


图11 频移量随呋喃唑酮质量浓度的变化关系  
Fig. 11 Relationship between frequency shift and furazolidone mass concentration

1000 mg/dL的呋喃妥因溶液的太赫兹超表面透射光谱,如图12(a)所示。结果表明,当质量浓度在100~1000 mg/dL范围时,太赫兹透射曲线的谐振频率会随着超表面上附着的呋喃妥因溶液质量浓度的增大出现明显的红移,且透射峰强度逐渐减小。本文认为主要是呋喃妥因的质量浓度增加,对太赫兹波的吸收增强,导致其谐振峰上移。随后,在超表面上分别滴加质量浓度范围为10~70 mg/dL的4种质量浓度呋喃妥因溶液,其太赫兹透射光谱如图12(b)所示。可以得出,当呋喃妥因溶液在10~70 mg/dL的质量浓度范围内逐渐增加时,其谐振频率逐渐向低频移动,其频移量不够明显。从图13的关系曲线可以看出,在10~70 mg/dL的低质量浓度区域,质量浓度与频移依然保持一定的规律性。因此,该超表面结构可以检测出呋喃妥因溶液的最低质量浓度为10 mg/dL。



(呋喃唑酮和呋喃妥因)进行检测,结果表明该传感器对两种药物的最低检测质量浓度为10 mg/dL。这种传感方法主要基于待测分析物介电特性的不同来实现,因此该超表面结构可以应用到其他抗生素或者生化样品的检测,为未来高灵敏度传感器的研发提供良好的理论和实验支撑。

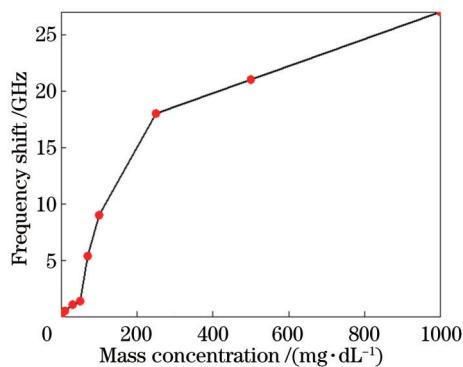


图13 频移量随呋喃妥因质量浓度的变化关系

Fig. 13 Relationship between frequency shift and furantoin mass concentration

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## Trace Detection of Nitrofuran Drugs Based on Terahertz Meta-Surface Sensor

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### Abstract

**Objective** Nitrofuran is a typical broad-spectrum antibiotic. Its derivatives and nitrofuran compounds are widely used in clinical practice and veterinary medicine and can be employed to preserve animal feed, prevent and treat gastrointestinal infections caused by bacteria, and accelerate animal growth. However, studies have proven that nitrofuran and its metabolites have carcinogenic and teratogenic side effects on humans and that diseases such as hemolytic anemia and acute liver necrosis can also occur if excess nitrofuran antibiotics are consumed. This has gradually caused concern. Therefore, high-sensitivity monitoring of nitrofuran is important for safeguarding human health and life safety. Traditional methods such as chromatography, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), and liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LC-MS) have the disadvantages of a long pre-treatment and analysis period, cumbersome processing, massive sample usage, and a high false-positive rate of test results. Therefore, it is necessary to find a rapid, accurate, and stable assay for monitoring the use of nitrofuran drugs. As biological samples are often present in a diluted state, sensitive detection of biomolecules without any binding site markers or aids remains challenging. Metamaterials have unique optical properties and exhibit unique characteristics, such as local electric field enhancement, which can be tuned by the geometric design of metamaterials. The electric field enhancement in metamaterials can improve the interaction between the sample and terahertz (THz) waves. Thus, the use of THz metamaterials as a sensing platform can overcome the low sensitivity of biological samples in the THz range and enable biomolecular detection in a label-free manner. We hope that the use of metamaterials will enable the non-destructive and rapid detection of nitrofuran drugs.

**Methods** THz waves are parts of electromagnetic waves between far infrared and microwave, which have good safety and fingerprinting properties for substance identification without damaging effects on substances. The basic principle of THz time-domain spectroscopy is to use femtosecond pulses to generate and detect time-resolved THz electric fields and to obtain spectral information of the measured item through the Fourier transform. Since the vibration and rotation energy levels of macromolecules are mostly in the THz region, and macromolecules, especially biological and chemical

macromolecules, are groups of substances with physical properties, the structure and physical properties of substances can thus be analyzed and identified through characteristic THz frequencies. Meta-surfaces are two-dimensional artificial sub-wavelength periodic structures that can better respond to electromagnetic waves compared to natural materials. The electromagnetic waves are modulated by the change in the shape and size of the structure. A change in the refractive index of a sample attached to the surface of a meta-surface sensor can alter the local field of the meta-surface, which is reflected by the change in the resonance peak of the spectrum. In this paper, a symmetrical open-ring meta-surface structure is designed, which has two layers. The open-ring surface structure is constructed from metallic aluminum (Al), and the substrate structure is constructed from polyimide (PI). PI is a flexible material that has the advantages of a small dielectric constant and stable properties and is non-damaging to biological materials. Simulations of the meta-surface are based on the simulation software CST Studio Suite with a full-vector finite element method (FEM). The structure has a refractive index sensitivity of 196 GHz/RIU and can be applied for high-sensitivity sensing detection. Experiments are performed with different mass concentration gradients of furazolidone and furantoin solutions. 60  $\mu\text{L}$  of different mass concentrations of analytes are added dropwise to the meta-surface structure by a pipette, and then it is heated to 50 °C and left to dry. THz pulses are incident vertically on the furan-covered meta-surface for spectral acquisition.

**Results and Discussions** The meta-surface structure designed in this paper is simple and has a low processing cost, and its detection is more intuitive and faster and requires fewer samples than conventional methods. The refractive index sensitivity of 196 GHz/RIU is achieved when the refractive index  $n$  varies from 1.0 to 1.8, which allows the structure to be used as a high-sensitivity refractive index sensor (Fig. 7). To demonstrate the enhanced detection capability of the meta-surface structure for nitrofuran drugs, we measure THz spectra before and after the dropwise addition of the furazolidone solution to the polyimide substrate. No significant change in the transmission spectrum is observed. In contrast, the meta-surface structure shows a significant red shift in the position of the transmission peak after the dropwise addition of the furazolidone solution (Fig. 8). In the measurement of the THz transmission spectra of furazolidone and furantoin in the mass concentration range of 10–1000 mg/dL, there is a regular red shift at the resonant frequency of the sensor with the increasing concentration and a significant frequency shift. The experimental results indicate that the meta-surface structure can effectively enhance the interaction between furazolidone and THz waves with high sensitivity. The results of several experiments demonstrate that the limited detection mass concentration of 10 mg/dL for both furazolidone and furantoin is achieved (Figs. 10 and 13). This meta-surface is expected to be used for highly sensitive sensing detection.

**Conclusions** In this paper, the resonance characteristics and sensing performance of a THz meta-surface sensor based on a symmetrical open ring are investigated. Theoretical simulations show that its refractive index sensitivity reaches 196 GHz/RIU and can be applied to high-sensitivity sensing detection. The results indicate that the sensor can detect two nitrofuran drugs (furazolidone and furantoin) at a minimum mass concentration of 10 mg/dL. This sensing method is mainly based on the difference in dielectric properties of the analytes to be measured, and thus, the meta-surface structure can be applied to the detection of other antibiotics or biochemical samples. This provides a good theoretical and experimental basis for the future development of high-sensitivity sensors.

**Key words** biotechnology; terahertz; meta-surface; nitrofuran drugs; high-sensitivity sensing; trace detection