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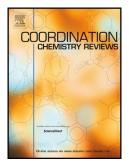
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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

#### Harnessing the power of fungal siderophores for the imaging and treatment of human diseases

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#### Highlights

- New antifungal agents and diagnostic methodologies are urgently required, as the incidence of drug-resistant invasive mycoses is a serious medical problem.
- Fungi are metabolically similar to mammalian cells; thus, pathogen-specific targets are limited. One fundamental difference lies in the iron acquisition system via low molecular weight organic chelators – siderophores, often essential for fungal virulence and pathogenicity.
- Natural siderophores exhibit broad-spectrum activity and can be recognized by various types
  of microorganisms. However, biomimetic analogues overcome these limitations and offer sites
  for incorporation of additional functionalities, including fluorescent probes, surface adhesive
  moieties and drug molecules, to be used for the preparation of imaging and/or therapeutic
  conjugates smuggled into microbial species by siderophore recognition and 'Trojan Horse'
  strategy.

#### Abstract

Innovative strategies are needed to address the current lack of clinically available antifungal drugs and for diagnostic techniques. 'Repurposing' of antifungal drugs, similar to techniques currently being utilised with 'older' antibacterial drugs in order to combat widespread resistance in the face of a dearth of new drugs, could prove beneficial. Although as yet very limited for fungi, a siderophore-based 'Trojan Horse' strategy, in the form of siderophore–antibiotic conjugates, siderophore-fluorescent probe conjugates, or Ga(III)–siderophore complexes, reveals potential clinical relevance and provides a strategy for targeting fungal infections through drug delivery, imaging, and in diagnostics. The application of siderophores against pathogenic fungi is evolving but is still far from its full potential and further studies are needed to demonstrate their advantages and limitations.

One of the biggest obstacles in developing fungus-specific diagnostics and side-effects-free therapeutics is that apart from the fungal cell wall, fungi are metabolically similar to mammalian cells;

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