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Ronghua Shen, JingJing Yang, Hong Luo, Bingxiang Wang, Yuliang Jiang

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Ronghua Shen, JingJing Yang, Hong Luo, Bingxiang Wang*, Yuliang Jiang*

Jiangsu Collaborative Innovation Center of Biomedical Functional Materials and Jiangsu Key Laboratory of Biofunctional Materials, College of Chemistry and Materials Science, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, 210023, P. R. China

1,8-naphthalimide derivative (NAD) was developed for highly sensitive and selective detection of Cys and Cu^{2+} with the detection limits as 25 nM for Cys and 11 nM Cu^{2+}. In addition, the NAD probe can be further applied to cell imaging owing to its photostability and low cytotoxicity.