

Surface Coordination of Black Phosphorus with Modified Cisplatin

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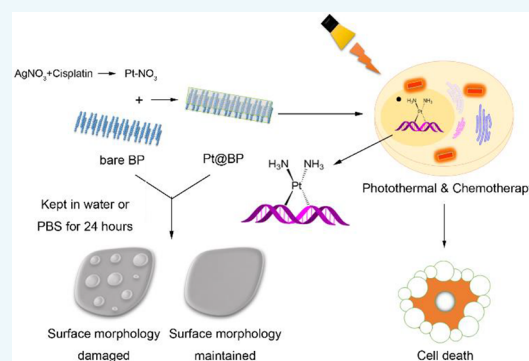
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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Black phosphorus (BP) is a two-dimensional (2D) nanomaterial with high charge-carrier mobility, a tunable direct bandgap, and a unique in-plane anisotropic structure; however, the easiness of BP oxidation into P_xO_y species in ambient conditions largely limits its applications. In this study, modified cisplatin–Pt–NO₃ [Pt(NH₃)₂(NO₃)₂] is used for surface coordination with BP nanosheets to generate Pt@BP, which maintains the surface morphology and properties of BP nanosheets for more than 24 h in ambient conditions. In addition, Pt@BP interacts with DNA both in vitro and in cell. Pt@BP shows a good cellular uptake rate and significantly increases the drug sensitivity of cisplatin-resistant cancer cell lines (A2780 and HepG2) compared with unmodified cisplatin. Our study is the first attempt to stabilize bare BP with cationic cisplatin species, and the generated Pt@BP could be used for potential synergistic photothermal/chemotherapy of cisplatin-resistant cancer.



Two-dimensional (2D) materials, such as graphene, hexagonal boron nitride (hBN), and transition metal dichalcogenide (TMD), are of increasing research interest for their large surface-area-to-volume ratio, good electrical conductivity, and easy functionalization.^{1–5} As a new member of two-dimensional materials, black phosphorus (BP) possesses anisotropic, electronic, and optical properties^{6–8} and has been widely applied in many promising fields and has many potential applications, including photocatalysis,^{9–11} semiconductors,^{12–17} rechargeable batteries,^{18,19} and sensors.^{20,21} Phosphorus (P) is one of the most vital elements for all living organisms and acts as a constituent of essential biomolecules and as a major contributor to almost all metabolic processes.²² When introduced in vivo, BP is of higher biocompatibility and is finally metabolized into nontoxic phosphates and phosphonates in the physiological environment.^{23,24} However, BP's instability in ambient conditions is the main hurdle for BP's real applications.²⁵

The commonly used methods of black phosphorus modification are effective surface functionalization, including capping layer protection,^{26–30} and surface chemical modification, including covalent and noncovalent modification,^{31–33} among others. Capping layers have been developed to encapsulate BP and enhance the stability of BP nanosheets, but oxygen and water may enter through the interfaces causing eventual breakdown.³⁴ Thus, preventing the reaction between

BP and oxygen in air and water is crucial to enhance its stability,³⁵ and a surface coordination strategy could meet this requirement by occupying the lone pair electrons on the surfaces of BP nanosheets with suitable cationic elements or groups.³⁶ Several cationic ions, including aryl diazonium,³⁷ titanium sulfonate ligand,³¹ Ag⁺,³⁶ 7,7,8,8-tetracyano-*p*-quino-di-methane (TCNQ),³⁸ and aryl iodonium salts³⁹ have been used to coordinate with the surfaces of BP nanosheets in order to enhance the nanosheets' stability. However, on the basis of our knowledge, no investigation has utilized a metal complex possessing anticancer activity to coordinate with BP. Cisplatin [Pt(NH₃)₂Cl₂] is one of the most widely used anticancer drugs in treating testicular, head, neck, non-small-cell lung, cervical, and other cancers.^{40,41} Toxicity and resistance are the two main drawbacks associated with cisplatin.^{42,43} Many reasons have been demonstrated to cause cisplatin resistances; one major reason is the decreased intracellular accumulation of the platinum.^{44,45} To address the cellular uptake issue of various cisplatin-resistant cell lines, various nanodelivery systems have been developed and effectively improved the cellular uptake efficiency of cisplatin-resistant cancer cells.^{46,47}

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Thus, we envisioned Pt as a potentially suitable metal to coordinate with BP. Cisplatin and oxaliplatin were directly reacted with a BP nanosheet, and no coordination was detected. We think increasing the positive valence may be helpful, so the Pt(IV) complex oxidized from cisplatin by H_2O_2 was then tested. However, still no coordination was observed. We think the Pt complexes we used are generally neutral, which may not provide strong enough coordination with BP. Then, we replaced two chloride ions on cisplatin by nitrate ions to better expose the cationic Pt(II). The generated $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ [$\text{Pt}(\text{NH}_3)_2(\text{NO}_3)_2$] reacted smoothly with BP nanosheets to form Pt@BP, which could maintain the surface morphology and properties of BP nanosheets for at least 24 h in ambient conditions. Both $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ and Pt@BP could react with 5'-GMP and single strand DNAs as cisplatin does. Pt@BP showed better cell cytotoxicity for cisplatin-resistant cell lines (HepG2-R and A2780-R) and maintained the photothermal effect of BP after exposure under ambient conditions for over 24 h. This study is the first attempt to coordinate Pt(II) with a bare BP nanosheet for potential biomedicine application.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The BP nanosheets were synthesized in *N*-methyl-2-pyrrolidone (NMP) by a liquid exfoliation technique.³¹ We first used cisplatin, oxaliplatin, and Pt(IV) oxidized from cisplatin by H_2O_2 to respectively react with bare BP. No obvious changes of binding energy were detected by high-resolution X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (HR-XPS), indicating there were no coordination between cisplatin/oxaliplatin/Pt(IV) and bare BP (Figure S1). To further expose the cationic core of the Pt complex, we replaced two chloride ions of cisplatin with nitrates to further improve the electropositivity of cisplatin. $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ [$\text{Pt}(\text{NH}_3)_2(\text{NO}_3)_2$] was prepared by letting cisplatin react with 2 equiv of AgNO_3 in water for 12 h as previously reported⁴⁸ (Figure 1A).

According to the HR-XPS results in Figures S1 and S2, both cisplatin and $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ showed representative peaks of divalent platinum ions, Pt 4f 7/2 and Pt 4f 5/2, with binding energies of at 72.8 eV (cisplatin)/73.0 eV ($\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$) and 76.1 eV (cisplatin) /76.4 eV ($\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$), respectively. The results of Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR) in Figure S3 indicated that the $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ has successfully touched to the surface of bare BP, with the characteristic peaks of $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ (2920, 2852 cm^{-1}). Then, bare BP nanosheets were reacted with $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ in NMP/water at room temperature in the protection of nitrogen for 18 h to generate Pt@BP. Both Pt@BP and bare BP showed three prominent Raman peaks; the three peaks of Pt@BP were at 356.8, 433.1, and 459.8 cm^{-1} , red-shifted from the three main peaks of BP by about 7.1, 8.8, and 8.9 cm^{-1} , respectively (Figure 1B). When $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ interacted with bare BP, the oscillation of the P atoms was weakened, which reduced the Raman scattering energy and resulted in the red-shifts of these three Raman peaks of Pt@BP. HR-XPS was then utilized to analyze the detailed chemical composition and the bonding configuration of phosphorus atoms of Pt@BP and bare BP. As shown in Figure 1C, in the P 2p spectrum, the bare BP showed the characteristic P 2p 3/2 and P 2p 1/2 doublet of crystalline BP at 129.9 and 130.7 eV, respectively.⁴⁹ In addition, intense oxidized phosphorus (P_xO_y) sub-bands emerged at 134.0 eV as a result of partial oxidation. This binding energy of oxidized BP has been observed from bare BP by XPS previously.⁵⁰ In our case, the binding energy of Pt@BP was detected at 133.0 eV, which was in agreement with

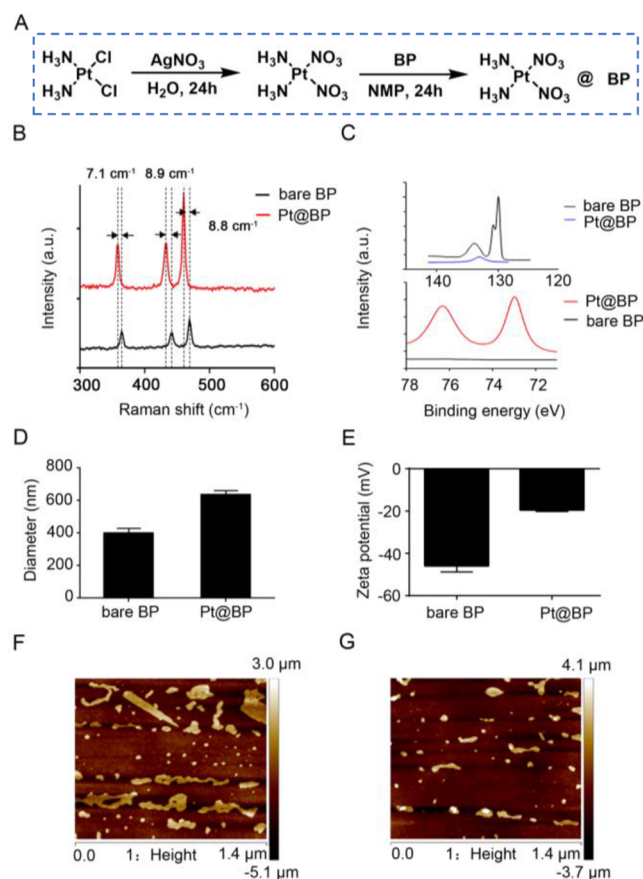


Figure 1. Fabrication and characterization of Pt@BP. (A) Preparation of Pt@BP; (B) Raman spectra of bare BP and Pt@BP tested on the mica sheets; (C) HR-XPS spectra of P 2p (up) and Pt 4f (down) tested on the Si/SiO₂ substrates; (D) hydrodynamic size analysis of bare BP and Pt@BP; (E) zeta potential of bare BP and Pt@BP. AFM images of the bare BP (F) and Pt@BP (G) tested on the Si/SiO₂ substrates.

the binding energy of metal-ion-coordinated BP.^{31,36} The distinguishable higher binding energy of Pt@BP could be caused by the coordination between the lone pair electrons of bare BP and the empty orbital of the platinum. These sub-bands were attributed to the formation of phosphorus–platinum covalent bonds. In the Pt 4f spectrum, the peaks at binding energies of 73.0 and 76.3 eV in Pt@BP were ascribed to the bivalent platinum ion, but the bare BP showed no obvious binding energy in the Pt 4f spectrum. All the XPS results indicated the successful interaction of $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ and BP nanosheets. After the successful interaction, the average size of Pt@BP was about 635.5 nm (Figure 1D), and the zeta potential of Pt@BP raised from -44.33 to -22.33 mV (Figure 1E).

As shown in Figure 1F, the atomic force microscopy (AFM) images showed Pt@BP had better dispersability and smaller size than bare BP. These results demonstrated that the $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ could interact with BP nanosheets covalently and enhance the dispersability.

Then, we assessed the releasing percentage of $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ from the Pt@BP nanocomplex in different conditions, including 1× PBS (pH 7.4), DMEM, thermal heat in DMEM, 5× PBS (pH 7.4), 10 mM GSH in 1× PBS (pH 7.4), 1× PBS (pH 6.0), and 10 mM GSH in 1× PBS (pH 6.0) as shown in Figure S5. And we found only 14% of the $\text{Pt}-\text{NO}_3$ was released over 10 days

in 1× PBS (pH 7.4), and 10% of the Pt–NO₃ was released over 48 h in cell culture medium (DMEM), suggesting the binding between Pt–NO₃ and BP was relatively stable in normal physiological and extracellular cell culture medium. Further, only 9% of the Pt–NO₃ was released under the NIR treatment over 60 min, while conventional photothermal therapy resulted in less than 10 min, suggesting this binding was fairly stable in the photothermal condition. However, 33% of the Pt–NO₃ was released over 48 h in 5× PBS, and 45% of Pt–NO₃ was released over 48 h in 10 mM GSH, suggesting the high salt concentration and GSH have significant affects to the coordination between Pt–NO₃ and BP nanosheets. When the pH of 1× PBS solution reduced from 7.4 to 6.0, the Pt–NO₃ releasing percentage increased from 14 to 45% following the change of pH. As most cancer cells have a lower pH of about 6.0 with excessive GSH,⁵¹ which is different from normal cells, we further simulated the tumor cells' intracellular environment and found the releasing percentage increased drastically from 45 to 79% after the pH of PBS solution became 6.0 with 10 mM GSH. These results indicate that the release of Pt–NO₃ from the Pt@BP nanocomplex is a condition dependent process, which is important for the treatment of neoplasms. And this is also in accord with the cytotoxicity experiments for both normal cells and cancer cells described below.

To evaluate the role of Pt–NO₃ coordination to the photothermal performance of BP nanosheets, the solution temperature as a function of time was studied by using the 808 nm NIR laser (1.0 W cm^{−2} at power density) as the light source (Figure S4). The solution temperature of both bare BP and Pt@BP increased by 16 °C after irradiation for 20 min, suggesting there are no obvious differences between the photothermal performance before and after the Pt–NO₃ coordination.

Then, we assessed the stabilization effect of Pt–NO₃ modification (Figure 2). The samples were then divided into three groups; the first group was kept in the N₂ glovebox for 24 h (Figure S7), while the second or third group was kept at ambient conditions in water and PBS, respectively, for 24 h (Figure 2A). The surface of bare BP appeared to be smooth at

initial exposure time (0 h) both in the N₂ glovebox and air, and the surrounding Si/SiO₂ substrate was featureless in the SEM micrograph. After exposure in water and PBS for 24 h, the surface of bare BP became rough. This might be caused by the formation of water droplets on the surface of the sheets. Then, P was oxidized and hydrated into final PO₄^{3−} anions.⁴⁹ The surface morphology of BP nanosheets was damaged. These results are consistent with the previously reported morphological changes on BP sheets in air.⁵⁰ In contrast, there were no obvious surface morphology changes of Pt@BP when it was exposed both in water and PBS after 24 h. Then, the stability of BP and Pt@BP was further examined for a longer duration of time as shown in Figure 2B. After 10 days in ambient conditions, bare BP had completely lost its surface morphology, while Pt@BP showed no obvious changes. All these results provided direct evidence of Pt–NO₃'s protective effects of BP.

The Pt^{II} species is known to interact with nucleophiles and form stable adducts such as Pt–DNA covalent cross-links.^{39,40} It was documented that platinum(II) could bind to the N7 position of GMP to form stable Pt–GMP adducts, showing a downfield shift of the H8 proton (δ = 8.1 ppm) in the ¹H NMR spectrum.⁵² Pt–NO₃ and Pt@BP were then treated with an excess of guanosine monophosphate (5'-GMP, 1:2 ratio in D₂O). As shown in Figure 3A, after 5 h of reaction, new peaks of the H8 proton appeared at δ = 8.67 and 8.51 ppm for the reaction products of Pt–NO₃ and Pt@BP with 5'-GMP, respectively. These results clearly indicated that both Pt–NO₃ and Pt@BP could effectively bind to the N7 position of GMP.

The reaction of cisplatin and DNA would cause the interstrand and intrastrand cross-linking of DNA.³⁹ We first detected whether Pt–NO₃ and Pt@BP could bind to DNA in vitro and cause the cross-links of DNA. AFM has been used for Pt–DNA interaction, and cisplatin could lead to an obvious cross-link and aggregation of DNA. In our experiments, we detected that Pt–NO₃ and Pt@BP could bind to DNA and cause the ssDNA cross-links (Figure 3B–D). The sequence of the used ssDNA is shown in Table S1.

These results are in good agreement with the previously reported cross-linking and aggregation of DNA treated by cisplatin observed in the AFM images.⁵³ We also tested whether Pt–NO₃ and Pt@BP could competitively bind to DNA in vitro. Acridine Orange (AO), a standard DNA intercalator, exhibits strong emission at about 525 nm (λ excitation = 490 nm) in aqueous solutions when it randomly binds with the outside phosphate groups of dsDNAs.⁵² In a binding competition assay, the emission intensity of AO gradually decreased with an increased amount of Pt–NO₃ or Pt@BP, suggesting the formation of Pt–DNA adducts (Figure 3E,F) (sequence of used dsDNA shown in Table S2). All assays supported that both Pt–NO₃ and Pt@BP could interact with DNA and cause DNA cross-links in vitro.

The levels of bioavailable Pt(II) of cisplatin-, Pt–NO₃-, and Pt@BP-treated cells were then analyzed by ICP-MS. Four cell lines, cisplatin-resistant HepG2-R and A2780-R cells and cisplatin-sensitive HepG2-N and A2780-N cells, were treated with 15 ppm of cisplatin, Pt–NO₃, and Pt@BP at 37 °C for 12 h. The total DNA of treated cells was then purified for subsequent ICP-MS analysis. Our data showed that (Figures 3G,H and S8) Pt–NO₃-treated cells had the highest level of DNA-bound Pt, followed by 808 nm laser-treated Pt@BP and then Pt@BP, while cisplatin-treated cells contained the minimum amount of DNA-bound Pt, suggesting the lowest

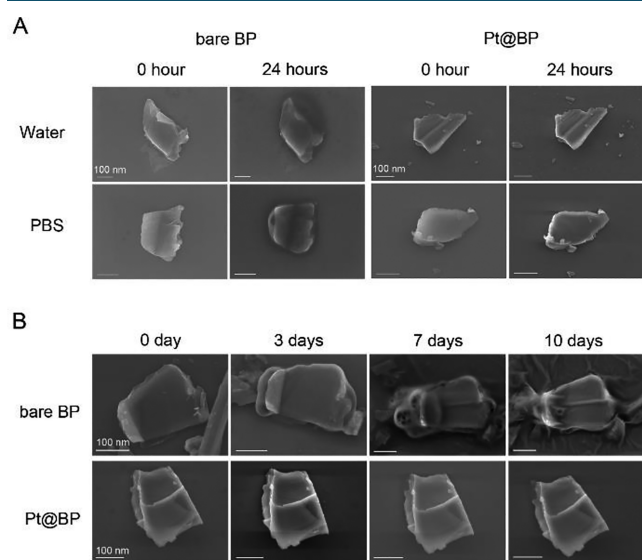


Figure 2. SEM images of bare BP and Pt@BP exposed in water and PBS for (A) 0 and 24 h or for (B) 0, 3, 7, and 10 days.

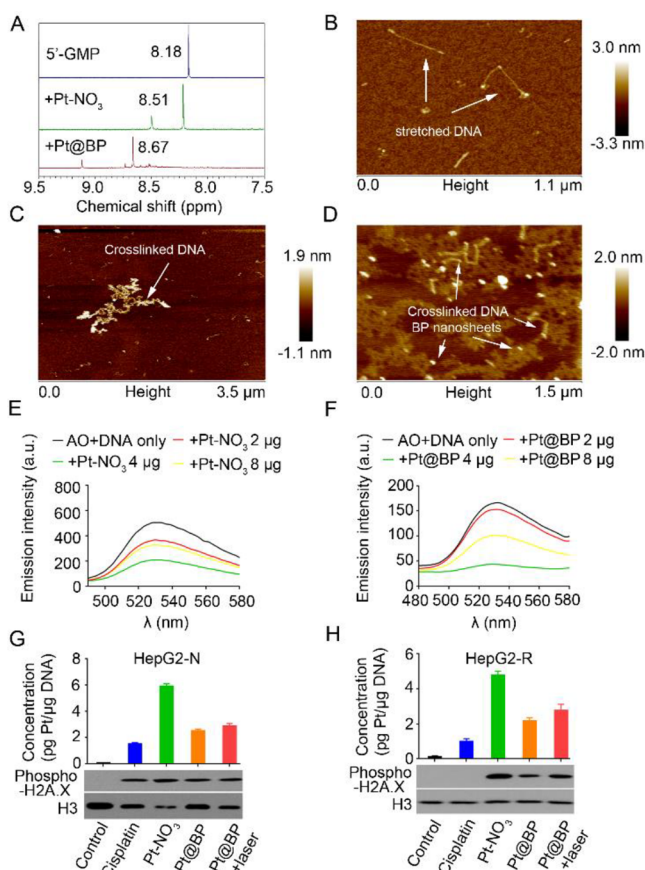


Figure 3. Pt-NO₃ and Pt@BP could react with DNA in vitro and in vivo. (A) ¹H NMR spectra of 5'-GMP only (up), Pt-NO₃ (middle), and Pt@BP (bottom) in the presence of 5'-GMP recorded in D₂O; AFM images of (B) stretched ssDNA, (C) ssDNA in the presence of Pt-NO₃, and (D) Pt@BP for 1 h of incubation, respectively; emission spectra of AO in the presence of dsDNA and (E) Pt-NO₃ or (F) Pt@BP under different doses. Pt-NO₃/Pt@BP, DNA (120 μM), and AO (20 μM) were incubated in 5% DMSO/ddH₂O medium to confirm the reaction of Pt-NO₃/Pt@BP and DNA. DNA-bound Pt in (G) HepG2-N and (H) HepG2-R cell lines was treated with cisplatin, Pt-NO₃, and Pt@BP nanoparticles (10 ppm) for 12 h and the corresponding phosphorylated H2A.X level in cells.

cellular uptake level of cisplatin. These results suggested that Pt-NO₃ and Pt@BP have better cellular uptake and bioavailability than unmodified cisplatin in both cisplatin-sensitive cell lines and cisplatin-resistant cell lines.

Phosphorylation of H2A.X is a sensitive marker of cisplatin induced DNA damage.⁵⁴ The phosphorylation levels of H2A.X in HepG2-R and HepG2-N (Figure 3G,H), A2780-R and A2780-N cell lines (Figure S8) treated with cisplatin, Pt-NO₃, and Pt@BP (10 ppm) for 12 h were analyzed, and the expression level of phosphorylated H2A.X was significantly higher in Pt@BP-treated cisplatin-resistant cell lines than that in cisplatin-treated cells, which was consistent with the level of Pt-DNA adduct formation detected by ICP-MS. These results demonstrated that Pt@BP could induce a higher level of DNA damage compared with that induced by the same concentration of cisplatin, and these results were in accordance with the previously reported DNA damage induced phosphorylation of H2A.X.⁵⁴

Then, we further tested the cytotoxicity of Pt-NO₃ and Pt@BP. When compared with cisplatin, Pt@BP had lower

cytotoxicity for normal cell lines (293T and Chang liver cell lines), although it showed higher cytotoxicity toward cancer cell lines including HeLa, A172, and T47D cells as shown in Figure S9. We further examined the cytotoxicity of Pt, Pt-NO₃, and Pt@BP on cisplatin-sensitive cell lines (HepG2-N and A2780-N) and cisplatin-resistant cell lines (HepG2-R and A2780-R) and found that Pt-NO₃ and Pt@BP have remarkably higher cytotoxicity toward these four cell lines, especially to the cisplatin-resistant HepG2-R (Figure 4B) and A2780-R (Figure S10) cell lines when compared with cisplatin. It is worth noting that Pt-NO₃ showed serious toxicity for all cell lines; thus, it could not be utilized in vivo separately unless combined with other materials, which could effectually reduce the toxicity of Pt-NO₃. In summary, the coordination of Pt-NO₃ to BP nanosheets could effectively reduce the cytotoxicity of Pt-NO₃ and cisplatin for normal cells and significantly increase the cytotoxicity for cisplatin-resistant cell lines.

BP is a highly efficient photosensitizer that can convert NIR light into heat and inhibit the rapid growth of cancer cells. Because of its unique characteristics, BP has been widely used in photodynamic treatment (PDT) and photothermal treatment (PTT).⁵⁵ Thus, we further explored the photothermal effect of Pt@BP on HepG2-R (Figure 4C,D) and A2780-R (Figure S11) cell lines. After treatment with a 808 nm near-infrared laser for 10 min, 20 ppm of Pt@BP showed a higher cell inhibition rate for HepG2-R and A2780-R cells compared with bare BP or Pt@BP without NIR treatment. After bare BP and Pt@BP were exposed in humid conditions for 24 h, the cell inhibition rate of bare BP was significantly decreased; however, the cell inhibition rate of NIR-treated Pt@BP had no remarkable changes when compared with freshly prepared Pt@BP. Combining all the experimental evidence, we concluded that Pt-NO₃ functionalization could increase the stability and maintain the PTT properties of bare BP nanosheets under ambient conditions for at least 24 h.

To further investigate the death of cancer cells caused by Pt@BP, a cell apoptosis assay was further performed on HepG2-N/R (Figures 4E,F and S12) and A2780-N/R cell lines (Figure S13). We found that 15 ppm of cisplatin could significantly induce the apoptosis of HepG2-N cells (Figure 4E) and A2780-N cell lines (Figure S13A,B), while it had few apoptosis-promoting effects on HepG2-R (Figure 4F) or A2780-R (Figure S13C,D) cell lines. However, the same concentration of Pt@BP could prominently promote apoptosis of A2780-R and HepG2-R cell lines. When combined with 808 nm light treatment, Pt@BP could cause a remarkable increase of the apoptosis rate in HepG2-R cells and A2780-R cells. In conclusion, Pt@BP could effectively induce the apoptosis of cisplatin-resistant cell lines (HepG2-R and A2780-R), which might be a good strategy for the treatment of cisplatin-resistant tumors.

CONCLUSION

In summary, for the first time, we used the derivative of cisplatin (Pt-NO₃) to modify BP nanosheets, which could stabilize BP nanosheets and show significantly higher anticancer efficacy for cisplatin-resistant cell lines. After Pt-NO₃ modification, BP showed increased surface zeta potential, more suitable sizes, better dispersability, and higher stability in ambient conditions for long duration (10 days). Both Pt-NO₃ and Pt@BP could react with DNA in vitro and cause the intra/interstrand cross-link of DNA as previously reported. In addition, the Pt-NO₃ and Pt@BP showed significantly

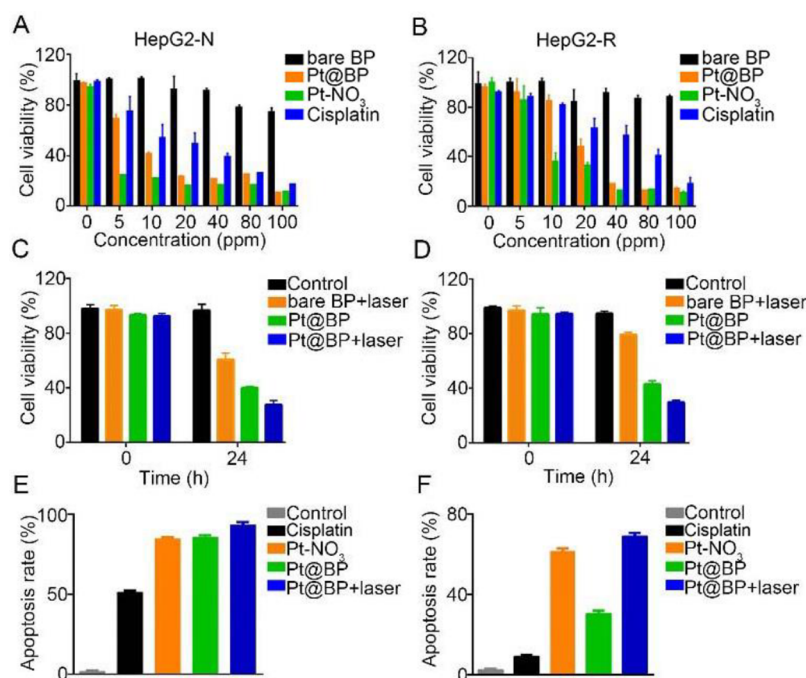


Figure 4. Cell viability assay and cell apoptosis assay of Pt@BP and Pt@BP+laser. The effects of different concentrations of bare BP, Pt@BP, Pt-NO₃, and cisplatin on the growth of (A) HepG2-N and (B) HepG2-R cell lines; PTT effects of 20 ppm of bare BP and Pt@BP for HepG2-R cell lines after exposure in ambient conditions for (C) 0 and (D) 24 h. Pt@BP, Pt-NO₃, and Pt@BP+laser efficiently induce the apoptosis in (E) HepG2-N cells and (F) HepG2-R cells. Cells were stained with Annexin V/PI, and the number of apoptotic cells was measured by flow cytometry. Then, apoptotic cells were counted in the lower right (Q2) and upper right (Q3) for HepG2-N cell lines (Figure S12A,B) and HepG2-R cell lines (Figure S12C,D). The apoptotic cells of each analysis were calculated and normalized to blank. Error bars represent the standard error of mean from three independent experiments.

increased cytotoxicity and apoptotic-promoting capability to the cisplatin-resistant cell lines when compared with cisplatin. Although Pt-NO₃ could also remarkably induce apoptosis in A2780-R and HepG2-R cells, it shows obvious toxicity for all cell lines we used in this study. In addition, after being exposed for 24 h under ambient conditions, NIR-treated Pt@BP could maintain the inhibition rate for HepG2-R and A2780-R cells, while the inhibition rate of bare BP significantly decreased, indicating that the coordination of BP with Pt-NO₃ could maintain the stability and PTT performance of BP nanosheets. In conclusion, we developed a novel strategy for BP modification by the derivative of cisplatin (Pt-NO₃), which could maintain the stabilization and optical properties of BP and assist in cisplatin's cellular accumulation. Pt@BP showed better stability in the medium without noticeable aggregation, conditional dependent release of Pt(II) species, and good synergistic photothermal/chemotherapy. These experimental observations indicated that it may be considered for further in vivo applications.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

● Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.bioconjchem.9b00128.

Additional details on materials and methods. Figures showing HR-XPS spectra, SEM images, cell viability, Western blot, and apoptosis experimental results. Tables showing ssDNA and dsDNA sequences (PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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