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Commentary

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Advances in Bio-Orthogonal Chemistry for Non-Invasive Animal Imaging

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DESCRIPTION

Disulfide Bio-orthogonal chemistry has emerged as an exciting tool for studying biological processes *in vivo*. By enabling the specific and rapid labeling of biomolecules in living systems without interfering with native biochemical processes, bio-orthogonal reactions have opened new possibilities for *in vivo* animal imaging. Bio-orthogonal chemistry involves reactions between mutually reactive chemical groups that do not cross-react with the functional groups typically found in biological systems. Common bio-orthogonal reactions include the Staudinger ligation, Copper-Catalyzed Azide- Alkyne Cycloaddition (CuAAC), Strain-Promoted Azide-Alkyne Cycloaddition (SPAAC), and tetrazine ligation.

The bio-orthogonal approach allows imaging probes to be introduced into biomolecules in a living system in a "tag-and-modify" or "pretargeting" manner. In the tag-and-modify approach, a bio-orthogonal group is incorporated into the biomolecule of interest, after which a probe carrying the complementary bio-orthogonal group is administered. The probe reacts with the biomolecule in a bio-orthogonal manner, enabling its detection. In the pretargeting approach, a probe conjugated with a bio-orthogonal group is administered first, followed by a labeled counterpart, which again undergoes a bio-orthogonal reaction with the probe for detection. The application of bio-orthogonal chemistry in *in vivo* animal imaging has several advantages. Bio-orthogonal reactions can be performed under physiological conditions and are typically rapid and highly specific, resulting in low background and high contrast images. They are also versatile, as different probes (e.g., fluorescent dyes) can be used, depending on the imaging modality. Bio-orthogonal chemistry has been employed in the study of cell metabolism and tracking of cellular populations. By incorporating bio-orthogonal groups into metabolic precursors, such as sugars or amino acids, it's possible to track the metabolic activity of cells *in vivo*.

Bio-orthogonal chemistry has also been used in the development of targeted imaging agents. For instance, antibodies conjugated with a bio-orthogonal group can be used to target specific biomarkers on tumor cells. After administration and accumulation at the tumor site, a labeled probe carrying the complementary bio-orthogonal group can be administered. The subsequent bio-orthogonal reaction allows the specific imaging of the tumor. Moreover, bio-orthogonal reactions can be used to activate imaging probes *in situ*. This strategy has been used to develop activatable probes for enzyme activity. The probe is initially non-fluorescent but becomes fluorescent upon reaction with a bio-orthogonal group that is introduced by the enzymatic transformation of a substrate. The kinetics of bio-orthogonal reactions may need to be improved for certain applications, and the bio-distribution, clearance, and potential toxicity of bio-orthogonal probes need to be carefully evaluated. Moreover, the efficiency of incorporating bio-orthogonal groups into biomolecules in living systems may need to be enhanced.

Bio-orthogonal chemistry can be used to label specific proteins in living organisms, allowing researchers to study their localization, interaction with other proteins, and functions in real time. Bio-orthogonal chemistry can be used to design prodrugs that are activated only in the presence of a specific trigger, such as a tumor-specific enzyme. This could enhance the selectivity and efficacy of cancer treatments. While the applications of bio-orthogonal chemistry in *in vivo* imaging are favourable, it's important to remember that each application comes with its own set of challenges. Despite these challenges, the field of bio-orthogonal chemistry continues to provide innovative solutions to address these issues and expand its scope of applications.

In conclusion, bio-orthogonal chemistry offers a tool for *in vivo* animal imaging. By enabling the specific, rapid, and non-invasive labeling of biomolecules, bio-orthogonal reactions show significant potential for elucidatingbiological processes in real-time, providing new insights into disease mechanisms, and facilitating the development ofdiagnostic and therapeutic strategies.