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基于生物传感的痕量炸药检测方法研究进展

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摘要: 2,4,6-三硝基甲苯(TNT)是军事活动中最重要的武器能源体,其不仅具有强大的毁伤作用,同时还具有化学毒性,即使是痕量的TNT,也会对自然环境、人类健康造成严重威胁。因此,发展具有高灵敏、高准确性、快响应的痕量炸药检测技术,对保护生态环境、维护人类健康具有深远研究意义。在众多痕量检测技术中,生物传感技术具有选择性好,合成简单,响应快,灵敏度高,优势明显,具有良好的应用前景。本文综述了近年来生物传感技术在痕量炸药检测中的研究进展,重点讨论了抗体免疫、肽、适配体、酶以及多参量加载5大类生物传感器的优势以及局限性。其中基于适配体制备的传感器对炸药分子具有良好的亲和力以及特异性,检出限相较于其他几类传感器低1000倍,且稳定性良好,易于改造修饰,结构拓展能力强。今后研究的重点为基于适配体等生物受体元件构筑的高通量痕量炸药传感系统,结合神经网络算法,机器学习技术,构筑具有多重检测以及仿生遥感性能的痕量炸药生物传感技术。

关键词: 炸药检测;生物传感;多参量加载;特异性;高灵敏

中图分类号: TJ55; Q81

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0 引言

炸药是战争和恐怖袭击中常见的能量源,其强大的毁伤能力将造成惨重的人员伤亡及财产损失^[1-2]。此外,硝基芳香族炸药具有很强的化学毒性,长期接触会引发癌症、细胞变异、白内障、皮肤刺激等健康问题^[3-4]。其中,危险性和毒害性极高的2,4,6-三硝基甲苯(TNT)即使在微痕量状态下,也容易通过皮肤进入人体^[5-6],引起贫血和肝功能异常,已被美国环境保护署(EPA)列为潜在致癌及重点防控对象^[7-8]。同时,不同于普通的污染物检测,炸药属于特殊危化品,其检测场景更加复杂,除了灵敏准确的获知炸药信息,还要求快速的现场检测,才能为恐怖事件及时预警,为国家领土保驾护航,也为污染地的定性和环境修复提供适当的反馈^[9]。

痕量炸药检测的关键是利用分析物和传感元件间的化学键合、物理吸附或分子反应等相互作用,将生物信号转变为可通过仪器读取的光、电、磁等信号。目前,炸药传感元件主要有:有机小分子元件^[10],聚合物元件^[11]以及生物酶、抗原抗体、DNA适配体元件^[12]。有机小分子元件的成本低,易于纯化、重复性好、结构修饰性强^[13],如苾基传感器^[14],葱基传感器^[15],咪唑传感器^[16],荧葱基传感器^[17],三苯胺基传感器^[18]等。但其大多是以分析物与荧光团一一对应的方式淬灭,无官能团特征信号响应,因此准确性较低,容易误判^[19]。聚合物传感元件多用于爆炸性气体检测^[20],灵敏度高,适用于低挥发性的炸药;常用的聚合物包括聚乙炔^[21],聚苯胺^[22],聚合卟啉^[23],聚硅烷^[24]等。其基础原理在于通过冷凝捕获爆炸性气体并积聚在传感元件中,当达到阈值时,产生特异性响应,发出报警信号。虽然聚合物传感器在炸药检测中表现出色,但仅限于硝基芳烃类炸药的检测,且制备周期较长。利用生物或仿生识别成分(如抗体^[25]、肽^[12]、适配体^[26]、酶^[27]、多参量加载电子类似物^[28]等)制备的生物传感器具有选择性良好、合成简单、响应速度快、灵敏度高^[29];且高度特异的生物识别成分有利于减轻复杂基

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底中样品的交叉反应,提高检测的准确性。因此,生物传感器在炸药检测中表现出一定的应用潜力,有望通过器件化开发出智能化传感设备,在现场炸药检测中发挥灵敏、快速、痕量检测能力。据此,本文基于生物传感痕量炸药检测的研究,重点综述了抗体免疫、肽、适配体、酶以及多参量加载5大类生物传感器的优势以及局限性,归纳了今后生物炸药传感研究的重点方向,为更好的开展高灵敏、快响应、准确的炸药现场检测提供技术支持。

1 生物或仿生识别元件

1.1 抗体

抗体是由浆细胞分泌、被免疫系统用来识别和中和病毒等外来物质的大型Y形蛋白质,主要分为单克隆抗体、多克隆抗体以及重组抗体^[30-31]。抗体对抗原的高度特异性使其可以区分几个分子团差异的待测物,因此对分析物的检测具有较高的准确性^[32-33]。抗

原抗体中的免疫测定分为2种类型:非竞争性和竞争性。其中,炸药作为小分子与抗体的结合位点有限,常通过竞争性免疫方式进行检测^[34]。虽然抗体有着高度特异性的结合位点,但其大多是通过活体分离或者体外培养制备获得,不易于长期稳定保存和大量生产,且制备过程昂贵耗时,成本较高。

一些硝基炸药在热裂解过程中会产生不同的反应性离子,如 NO_3^- 、 NO_2^+ 和 NO_2^- ,这些离子会与 Griess 试剂反应生成具有高度荧光性质的产物或彩色偶氮复合物。基于此原理,Chaudhary 等^[35]实现了对太安(PETN)、黑索今(RDX)和三硝基甲苯(TNT)的识别和检测,检测限分别低至 3.76×10^{-6} M、 1.22×10^{-5} M、 1.3×10^{-5} M(图 1a);除此之外,硝基炸药在光诱导下可产生 NO_2^- ,与探针分子 2,3-二氨基萘快速反应后降低其荧光强度,形成高荧光产物 2,3-萘并三唑(图 1b)^[36]。相较于热诱导裂解的传感策略,光诱导提高了传感器的灵敏度,检测限低至 5×10^{-9} M,可作为一种低成本快速响应的定量检测试剂盒用于炸药的现场分析。

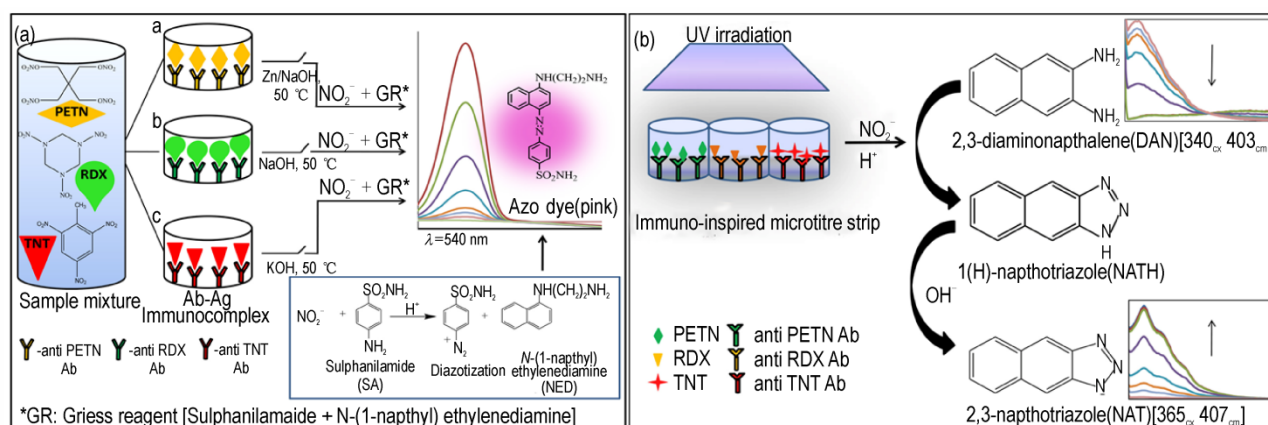


图 1 基于抗体生物传感元件的炸药检测机制^[35-36](经许可转载自参考文献[35-36])

Fig.1 Mechanism for explosive detection based on antibody-based biosensing elements^[35-36](reproduced with permission from Ref. [35-36])

相较于其他传感器,生物传感器因其特异性而具有更高的准确度,但这也限制了其只对特定分析物进行响应。当同时检测多个待测物时,就需要携带不同的生物受体元件,这有悖于简单便携的基本理念。因此,在保证准确性的前提下,提高抗体等生物传感器多重检测的能力极具挑战性。Climent 等^[37]开发了一种基于抗体-抗原相互作用的通用检测系统,能够同时检测炸药三过氧化三丙酮(TATP)、TNT以及PETN。该检测方式主要依赖于抗体与炸药间的高度亲和力,使其从介孔杂化材料表面移开,从而释放出大量的指示剂分子。使用荧光阅读器或智能手机可在5 min内读

出低至 10^{-9} M的爆炸物,具有较广的适用性。

利用生物传感器进行多重检测可以极大提高分析通量,增加单次测定中获得的信息量。但目前多重检测的目标物集中于蛋白质、DNA、病毒等生物体系,对于炸药等有害物质的研究较少,未来可进一步拓展至该领域。此外,随着微流控和纳米技术的发展,快速检测、高灵敏、小型化便携式的传感器件将成为多重检测生物传感器的主流。

1.2 肽

肽是一种根据抗体结合位点而设计的氨基酸短链,具有更加稳定的结构,且更易于长期储存和在恶劣

条件下使用。此外,氨基酸多样化的化学特性表明肽更适合作为目标分子的受体^[38-39],但目前已确定的肽结构有限,难以实现更新的应用。

高特异性的生物传感器常常设计有荧光或电化学特性的信报单元,将生物信号转变为可分析的光/电信号,实现对分析物的检测。Li等^[40]制备了一个由肽、二硫苏糖醇和 6-巯基己醇组成的三元传感器。由于三元组装层提供了一个富含羟基的亲水环境和高度紧凑的表面层,减少了肽的非共价结合以及 TNT 在电极表面的非特异性吸附,所以该传感器的检测限(0.15 pM)相较于普通二元组分(0.15 nM)降低了三

个数量级。Madhu等^[41]设计合成了一种二肽双亲化合物,分别在 C 端和 N 端与苝进行共轭反应,通过双组份分子组装成一维纳米纤维并进一步缠绕形成三维网络结构,形成荧光凝胶传感器,如图 2 所示。基态下,缺电子的硝基化合物通过供体-受体相互作用,与富电子的苝结合。在光激发下激发态电子进入受体的低位 LUMO,引起非辐射衰变而导致荧光猝灭,从而实现痕量 TNB(13.4×10^{-6} M)和 TNT(17.8×10^{-6} M)的检测。该组进一步将二肽双亲化合物应用于薄膜传感器,显著降低了 TNB(5×10^{-9} M)和 TNT(1×10^{-7} M)的检测限。

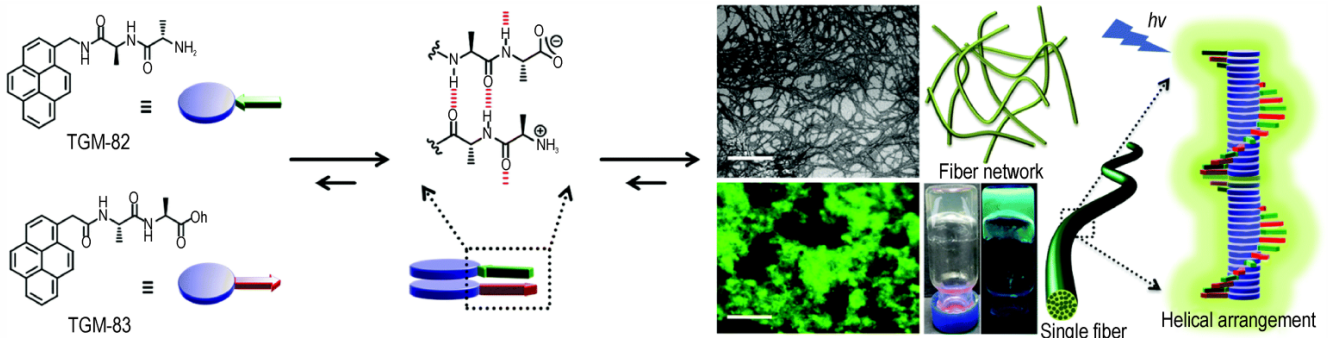


图 2 基于肽生物传感元件的炸药检测原理^[41]

Fig.2 Mechanism for explosive detection based on peptide biosensing elements^[41]

1.3 适配体

核酸适配体是一种单链寡核苷酸分子,能以高度特异性与靶目标结合^[42]。SELEX(指数富集的配体系统进化)技术是筛选核酸适配体常见的手段,将随机收集的单链 DNA/RNA 序列暴露于目标分子上,通过精确和特定的匹配形成共轭物,并经分离、测序、扩增和纯化得到与靶目标高度亲和的适配体,以供进一步使用^[43-44]。

目前,适配体作为抗体的替代品,以类似的方式用于各种小分子诊断。Kong等^[45]合成了含有 N-(4-氨基丁基)-N-乙基异鲁米诺(ABEI)和 Co^{2+} 的高化学发光磁珠(MBs),如图 3a 所示。ABEI 和 Co^{2+} 通过羧基和静电作用嫁接到 MBs 表面,与 H_2O_2 反应时能发出强烈的化学发光(CL),而适配体的加入会阻挡 Co^{2+} 催化位点使得 CL 强度下降。TNT 存在的情况下,适配体与 TNT 紧密结合并从 MBs 的表面脱离,暴露 Co^{2+} 位点而恢复 CL 信号。基于该检测方法,检测限可以低至 $17 \text{ pg} \cdot \text{mL}^{-1}$ 。Roushani等^[46]将 AgNPs 修饰的玻璃碳电极(GCE)用作基底并固定适配体,通过测量核黄素(RF)峰值电流的变化来实现对 TNT 的检测,检测限低至 3.3×10^{-17} M,且具有高度特异性。

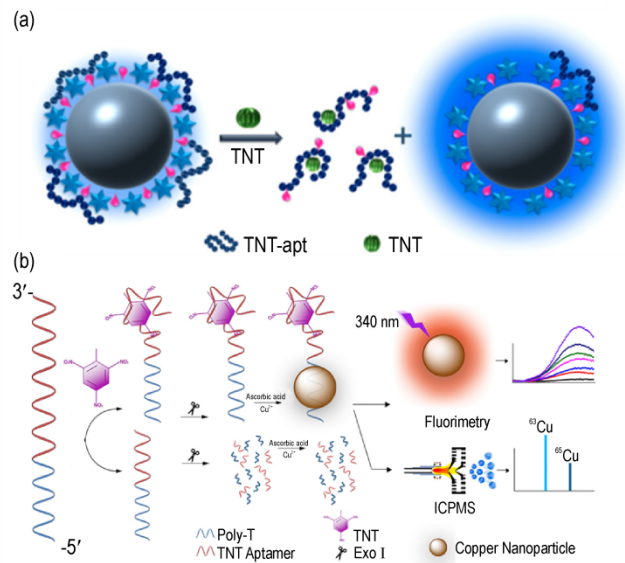


图 3 基于适配体生物传感元件的炸药检测机理^[45-47]

Fig.3 Explosive detection mechanism based on aptamer biosensing elements^[45-47]

Hu等^[47]利用 CuNPs 的质谱和荧光响应,对 TNT 进行质谱定量及荧光定性检测。TNT 存在时,适配体和聚胸腺嘧结合成的单链 DNA 能模板化形成 CuNPs,结合荧光和质谱技术可实现现场定性以及实验室定量分析,

如图 3b 所示。该方法能够检测 PPT 水平的 TNT, 荧光和质谱的检测限分别为 7.5×10^{-14} M、 1.4×10^{-15} M。

1.4 酶

酶作为一类具有催化特性的核酸, 可协同辅助因子裂解特定的底物。它一般通过体外选择来识别分析物, 不需要使用动物或细胞试管培育^[48]。与前面描述的生物传感器类似, 酶对底物的高度特异性识别已被广泛用于炸药检测^[49]。虽然酶的特异性较抗体等生物元件略显不足, 但其催化特性适用范围更广, 可用于分析其它方法无法检测的炸药。

Komarova 等^[50]将大肠杆菌硝基还原酶用作生物传感器的识别元件, 利用其对硝基芳烃化合物的高度特异实现分析物的检测, 如图 4a 所示。结果表明, 该传感器对非芳香族硝化甘油、HMX 和 RDX 没有响应,

具有良好的特异性; 但检测限还有待降低 (TNT 和四硝基甲苯为 5×10^{-8} M; 1,3-二硝基苯为 5×10^{-7} M)。

除了利用酶的特异性对待测物进行识别, 还可以通过其催化特性实现污染物的降解从而修复环境。Karthikeyan 等^[51]使用 2,4-二硝基苯甲醚 (DNAN) 水解酶作为比色生物标识物, 检测 DNAN 并将其降解为 2,4-二硝基苯酚 (DNP), 如图 4b 所示。通过高效液相色谱和纸基微流控装置分别可以检测低至 $100 \mu\text{M}$ 以及 $15 \mu\text{M}$ 的 DNAN。

Oluwasesan 等^[52]利用 Fe、 CeO_2 和 AuNPs 组成一种新型的混合纳米酶, 利用适配体的选择性来催化检测 DNP 并生成比色反应, 如图 4c 所示。该生物传感器对 DNP 的检测限为 $2.4 \mu\text{M}$, 可以根据吸光度与 DNP 浓度的线性关系实现定量分析。

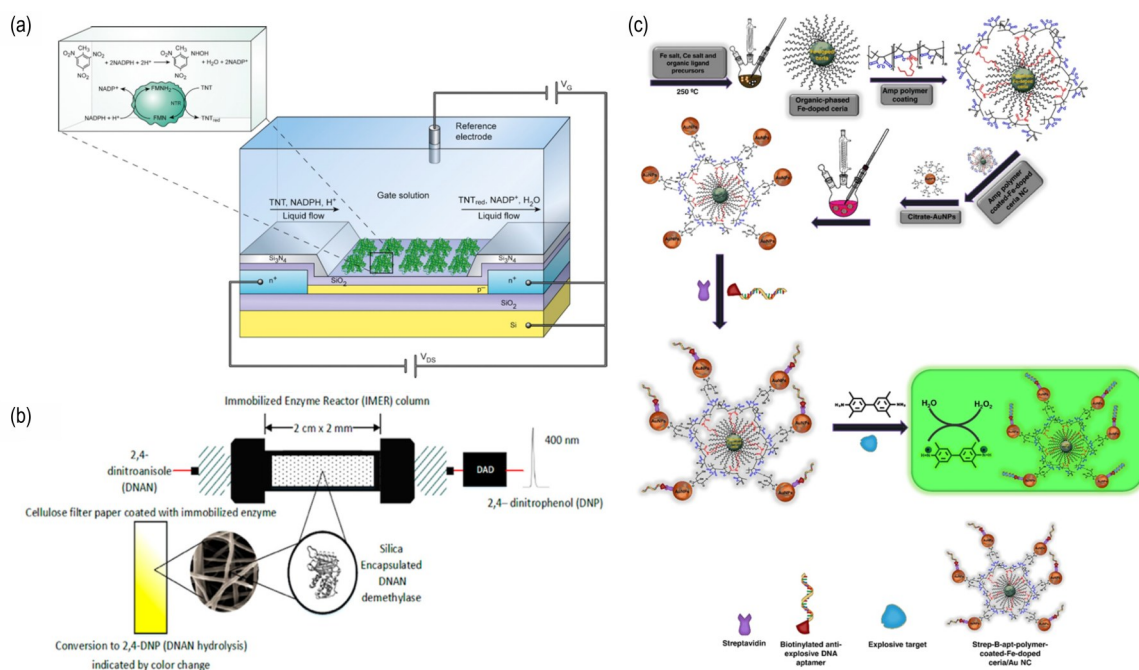


图 4 基于酶生物传感元件的炸药检测机制^[50-52] (经许可转载自参考文献[50-52])

Fig.4 Mechanism for explosive detection based on enzymatic biosensing elements^[50-52] (reproduced with permission from Ref. [50-52])

2 多参量加载

由于大多数炸药受体的选择性不强, 可以通过多参量加载的阵列形式来创建类似于人工触觉系统的响应模式, 进而发展为电子类似物。电子类似物实现物质识别的机制与生物触觉信号传导的工作原理类似^[53]。如图 5 所示, 电子类似物主要由非特异性受体传感器阵列与模式识别系统组成, 当外界环境存在目标物时, 将会刺激特定类型的受体元件并将生物信号转变成不同的分析信号^[54]。虽然电子类似物解决了

传统检测存在的生物疲劳、工作时间短、寿命有限等缺陷, 但其也具有交叉反应、干扰和环境变化引起的信号不稳定等问题。

如图 6a~6c 所示, Zhao 等^[55]基于手持式扫描仪和交叉反应阵列构建的比色电子鼻对硝基芳烃、芳香醛、芳烃、烷基醇、胺、酸等 30 种分析物进行气相检测。该阵列由 40 个比色响应传感器组成, 包括 pH 传感器、金属染料、可溶性变色染料以及其它显色传感器, 准确度高达 99.5%。如图 6d 所示, Zhao 等^[56]开发了一种动态多通道比色传感器阵列, 可以高效区分 DNT、PA、

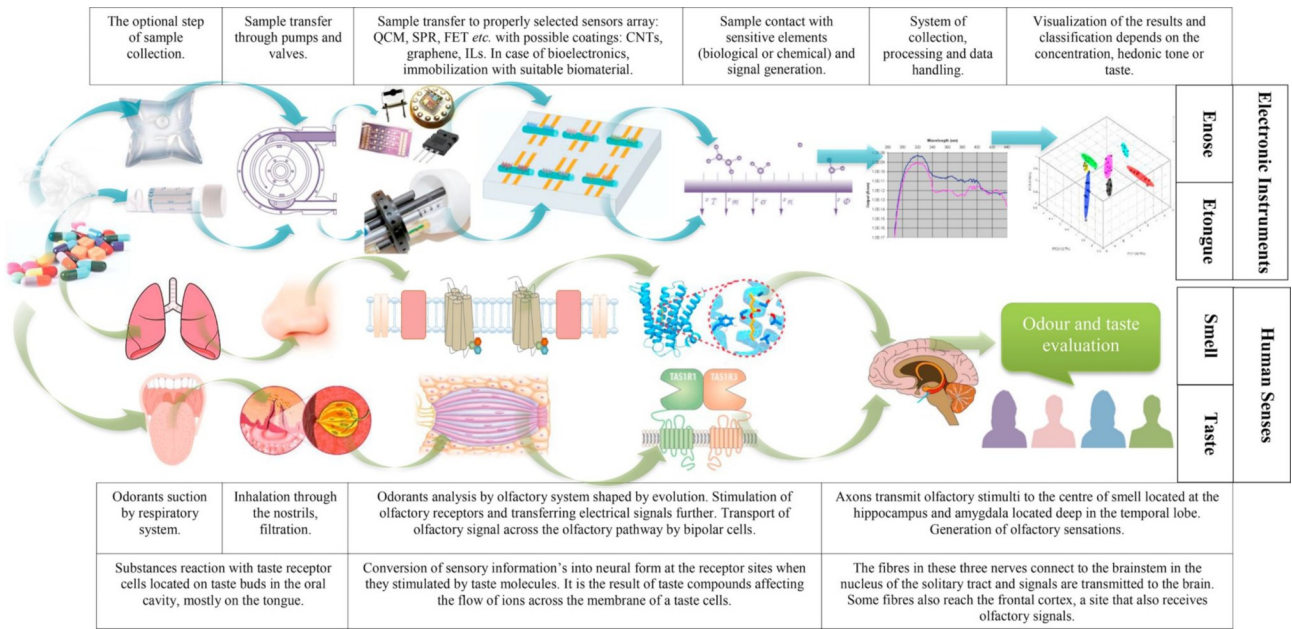


图5 电子类似物与生物嗅觉系统工作原理的比较^[54] (经许可转载自参考文献[54])

Fig.5 Comparison of mechanism for electronic analogues and biological olfactory systems^[54] (reproduced with permission from Ref. [54])

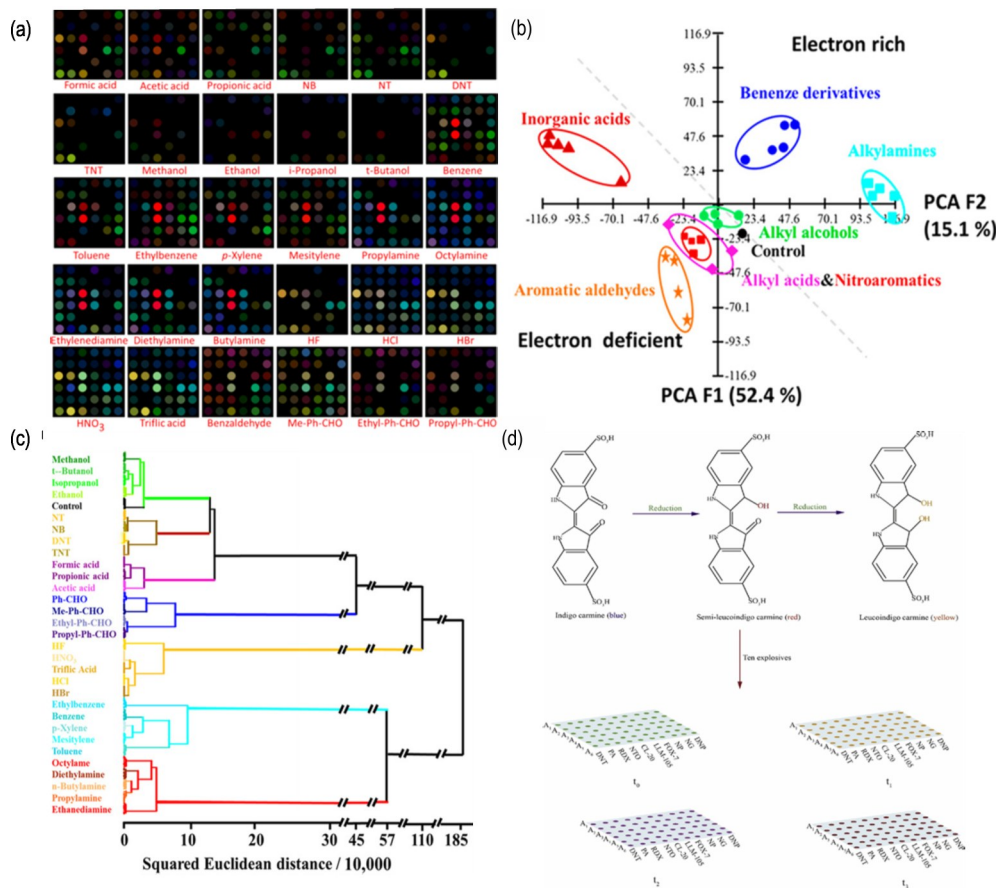


图6 多参量加载生物传感元件的炸药检测机理^[55-56] (经许可转载自参考文献[55-56])

Fig.6 Explosive detection mechanism for multiparametric loaded biosensing elements^[55-56] (reproduced with permission from Ref. [55-56])

RDX、NTO、CL-20等10种炸药。该传感器能通过化学反应和超分子间相互作用对一系列炸药做出反应,根据不同时间的吸光度,对每种炸药创建分析指纹来进行区分和识别。目前基于多参量加载阵列进行爆炸物检测的研究除了电子鼻之外,还有少数文献报道了利用电子舌进行硝基芳烃等炸药的检测。Tao等^[57]利用聚氨酯支持的可溶性共轭聚合物纳米颗粒阵列构建了电子舌传感器,通过荧光猝灭快速区分水溶液中的硝基芳烃。电子舌对 10^{-4} M下的硝基芳烃表现出高度灵敏,快速响应且准确率达到100%,表明该荧光电子舌有望快速识别废水中的硝基芳烃以供现场检测。

目前,地雷和简易爆炸装置的探测大多是通过操作人员现场搜寻,这种搜寻方式对现场作业人员的生命存在非常大的安全危险,加之探测非金属地雷的能力有限且极易出现假阳性识别,故而需要发展新检测方法准确安全地进行地雷探测。Belkin等^[58]基于仿生遥感的细菌传感器进行远距离地雷探测,通过大肠杆菌作为报告菌株,能够在微摩尔水平上检测气相TNT及2,4-二硝基甲苯(DNT)。现场数据表明,工程生物传感器在地雷防区探测中极具应用潜力,结合无人机等远程设备可进行远距离大面积的扫描检测。

3 结论和展望

本文综述了近年来基于生物传感痕量炸药检测的最新进展,重点讨论了抗体免疫、肽、适配体、酶以及多参量加载的炸药生物传感技术,生物传感具有较其他传感技术更好的特异性及准确性,使得其在炸药检测领域极具应用潜力:

(1)交通枢纽和边境管控要求传感器具有高灵敏、高选择性、快响应以及便携性。基于适配体等生物受体制成的传感器在满足上述要求的同时,与表面增强拉曼、质谱、荧光等技术联用,优势互补,弥补了传统检测方式中生物疲劳、工作时间有限的缺陷,可广泛应用于国土安全等领域。

(2)环境监测通常需要高灵敏度和高选择性的传感器来保证检测的准确性,对检测速度要求不高。而适配体等生物识别元件的高特异性可以减少复杂基底(如土壤、液体)中样品交叉反应的问题,从而提高检测的准确性。

尽管生物传感器表现出一定的优势,但在其技术开发方面仍需要进一步的改进,例如:

(1)多重检测生物传感器。生物传感器具有高度

特异性的同时也限制了它只对特定的目标物响应,在同时检测多种分析物时,就需要携带和使用相应的生物受体元件,这有悖于简单便携的基本理念。因此,在保留便携性的同时结合高通量分析以实现多种待测物同时检测是该领域的研究重点之一。

(2)仿生遥感生物传感器。针对于某些特定的应用场所,例如战场或雷区的炸药检测,最重要的是能够在较远的距离进行安全探测。基于适配体等生物受体构筑高通量的痕量炸药传感系统,并结合神经网络算法,机器学习等人工智能技术制备出具有仿生遥感性能的生物传感器,为解决炸药产生的威胁提供技术支持。

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Advances in Biosensors-based Trace Explosives Detection

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Abstract: Explosive TNT is the most important weapon energy source in military activities. It not only has a powerful damaging effect, but also has chemical toxicity. Even a trace amount of TNT will pose a serious threat to the natural environment and human health. Therefore, the development of trace explosive detection technology with high sensitivity, high accuracy and fast response has far-reaching research significance for protecting the ecological environment and maintaining human health. Among many trace detection technologies, biosensing technology has the advantages of good selectivity, simple synthesis, fast response and high sensitivity, and has good application prospects. This paper reviews the research progress of biosensor technology in the detection of trace explosives in recent years, focusing on the advantages and limitations of five types of biosensors: antibody immunity, peptides, aptamers, enzymes and multi-parameter loading. Among them, the sensor prepared based on aptamer has good affinity and specificity for explosive molecules, the detection limit is 1000 times lower than other types of sensors, and has good stability, easy modification and modification, and strong structural expansion ability. Future research will focus on the construction of high-throughput trace explosives sensing systems based on bioreceptor components such as aptamers, combined with neural network algorithms and machine learning to construct biosensors with multiple detection and bionic remote sensing properties.

Key words: explosives detection; biosensors; multi-parameter loading; specificity; high sensitivity

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