

Blue-Light -Activated Nano-TiO₂@PDA for Highly Effective and Nondestructive Tooth Whitening

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S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: The application of polydopamine (PDA)-modified titanium dioxide nanoparticles (nano-TiO₂@PDA) as a new blue-light-activated tooth whitening material was discussed for the first time. Compared with the classical clinical whitening agent (peroxide, hydrogen peroxide, and carbamide peroxide), nano-TiO₂@PDA-based treatment not only had a similar whitening effect but also showed remarkably less damage on the enamel structure. Essentially, a highly effective and nondestructive tooth whitening treatment could thus be realized accordingly. The toxicity and antibacterial properties of this material were also evaluated systematically.



KEYWORDS: nano-TiO₂, visible light, nondestructive tooth whitening, photocatalysis, reactive oxygen species

INTRODUCTION

Tooth whitening material is a widely used healthcare material. Tooth discoloration could be classified as intrinsic, extrinsic, or both according to its location and etiology.^{1,2} Extrinsic discoloration is caused by chromogens derived from habitual intake of dietary sources such as coffee, tea, chocolate, tobacco, and so on,³ whereas intrinsic discoloration typically results from systemic or local causes, such as drug-related (tetracycline) and fluorosis.⁴ The technologies of tooth whitening are roughly divided into invasive whitening and noninvasive whitening in clinical.⁵ Invasive whitening includes full-crown restoration and laminate veneer restoration. These technologies have to grind and cut enamel which cause irreversible damage to the teeth. In comparison, noninvasive whitening refers to bleaching teeth through chemical method.⁶ At present, hydrogen peroxide is the most commonly used tooth bleaching agent. Hydrogen peroxide can be used at lower levels (6–12%) and high concentration (30–40%) to bleach teeth. In our area, we often used a high concentration of hydrogen peroxide to bleach teeth in clinic.⁷ This treatment is, an apparently nondestructive whitening technology.⁸ However, in fact, the utilization of high concentration of H₂O₂ can bring on a series of problems, such as enamel demineralization,^{9,10} tooth sensitivity,¹¹ gingival irritation,¹² cytotoxicity,^{13,14} and acute pulpitis.^{15,16} The mechanism of hydrogen peroxide for tooth whitening is on the basis of releasing ROS (reactive oxygen species) to clean pigment by oxidation, which can be accelerated under blue light.^{17,18} Theoretically speaking, if we

could find a new photocatalytic biomedical material with low stimulation and low toxicity to release ROS, the purpose of real nondestructive whitening of teeth could be achieved.

In the present study, the feasibility of nano-TiO₂ composite as an alternative material of H₂O₂ to realize blue-light-activated nondestructive tooth whitening is discussed for the first time.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

1. Preparation of Nano-TiO₂@PDA. Nano-TiO₂ (0.08 g) and dopamine hydrochloride (DA) (0.01 g) were added to 50 mL of ultrapure water to form a suspension. Then, 0.1 g of hexamethylenetetramine (HMTA) was dissolved in the suspension. After 3 min of ultrasonic dispersing, the mixture was incubated at 90 °C water for 3 h. Afterward, the mixture was centrifuged at 10 000 rpm for 2 min. Then, the supernatant was removed and the rest of the concentrated particles were washed by ultrapure water and absolute ethyl alcohol 2 times each, and the rest of the concentrated particles were washed by ultrapure water another 2 times. We obtained the wet nano-TiO₂@PDA after discarding the supernatant liquid and the nano-TiO₂@PDA powder can be obtained by using vacuum freeze-drying.

2. Morphological Characterization of Nano-TiO₂@PDA. Polydopamine (PDA) was coated and modified on the surface of nano-TiO₂ particles. The morphological characterization of the structure was observed by transmission electron microscope (TEM).

3. Physicochemical Features. Nano-TiO₂@PDA was characterized by energy-dispersive spectroscopy (EDS), X-ray diffraction

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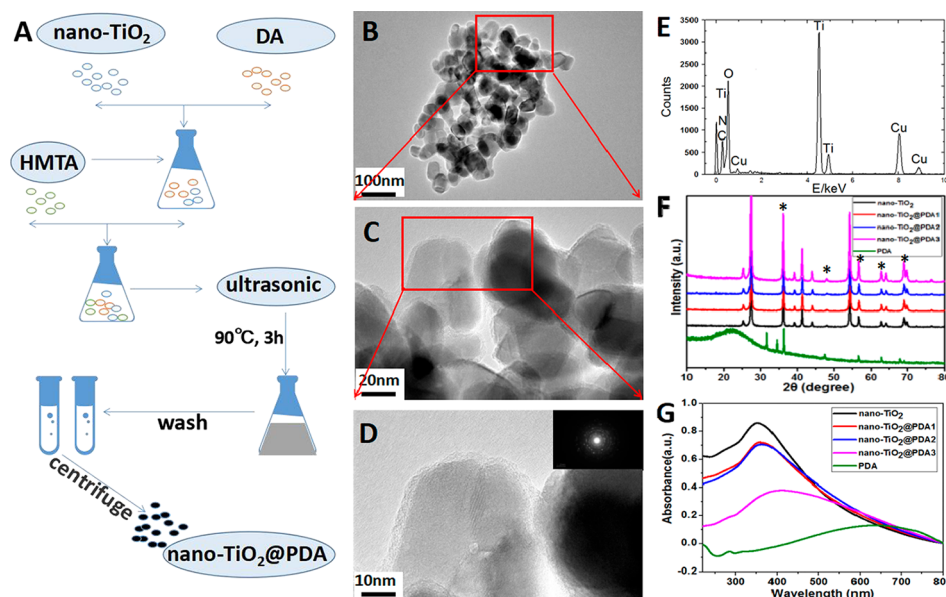


Figure 1. (A) Preparation process of nano-TiO₂@PDA. (B–D) TEM images of nano-TiO₂@PDA with different magnification. (E) EDS of nano-TiO₂@PDA. (F) XRD and (G) UV absorption spectroscopy of five different nano-TiO₂@PDA nanocomposites with increased PDA contents.

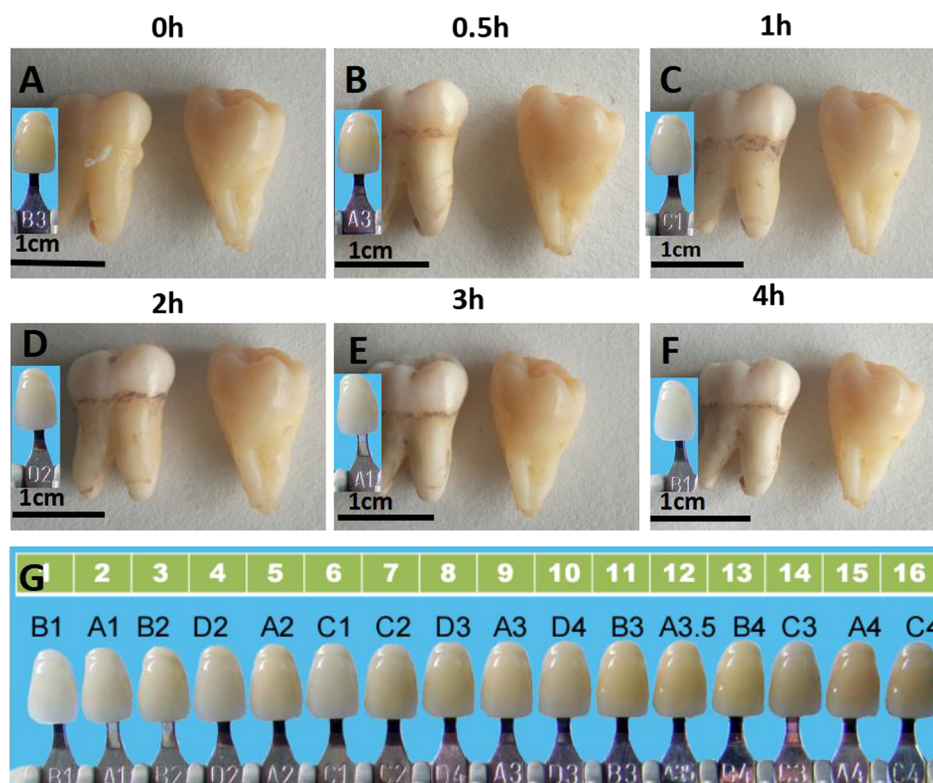


Figure 2. Left tooth was whitened by nano-TiO₂@PDA for 0.5h, 1h, 1.5h, 2h, 3h and 4h respectively. (A–F) The right tooth was used as the control. Professional Color order sorting was shown in picture G, which can be used to evaluate the effect of whitening.

(XRD), and UV–vis spectrophotometer. The PH was measured by PH meter.

4. Nano-TiO₂@PDA was Used for Tooth Whitening. The wet nano-TiO₂@PDA (494.10g/L, pH 7.72 ± 0.18) was coated on the surface of enamel evenly, the device was irradiated by blue light-emitting diode (LED). Dental professional color card was then applied to contrast the change of color after 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2, 3, and 4 h on irradiation, respectively.

5. Effect on Enamel after Tooth Whitening. We prepared two in vitro teeth and observed their enamel by scanning electron

microscope (SEM) before whitening. One tooth was whitened by nano-TiO₂@PDA under blue light for 0.5h and the other one was whitened by 30% hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) under blue light for 0.5 h. Then, after whitening, we observed their enamel by SEM.

6. Cytotoxicity Testing. Human fibroblasts were cultured to logarithmic phase and inoculated in 60 mm culture plate, the cell density was 10 000/cm², after 24 h, nano-TiO₂@PDA and 30% H₂O₂ were added, respectively. In addition, we set up a control group. All the three groups were cultured at 37 °C incubator for 1, 4, and 7 days. At each time point, we washed the cells by HBSS for 3 times and

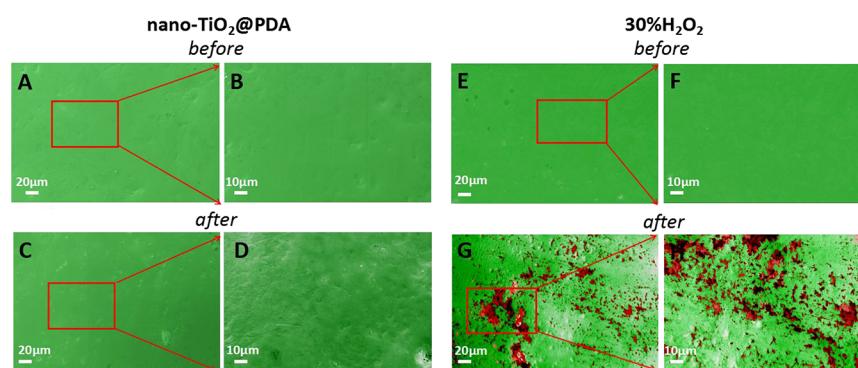


Figure 3. (A, B) SEM images of enamel before whitening. (C, D) SEM images of enamel surface after using nano-TiO₂@PDA under blue light irradiation for 0.5 h. (E, F) SEM images of enamel before whitening. (G, H) SEM images of enamel surface after using 30% H₂O₂ under blue light irradiation for 0.5 h.

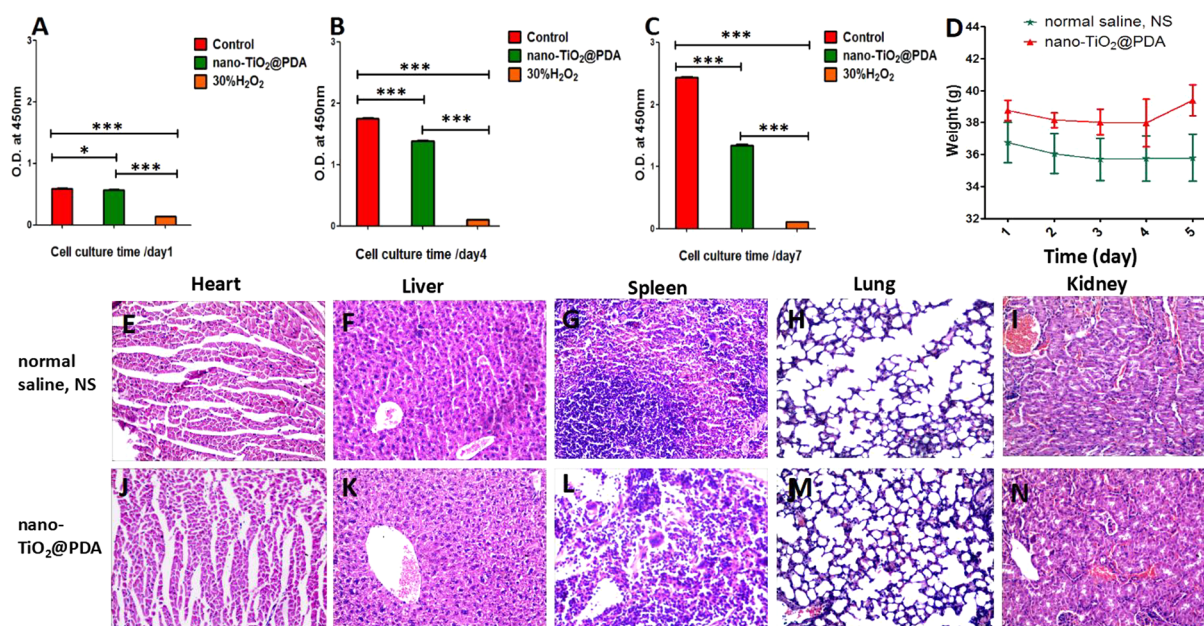


Figure 4. (A–C) Proliferation of human fibroblasts after coculture with nano-TiO₂@PDA or 30% H₂O₂ for 1, 4, and 7 days, respectively. (D) Weight change curve of mice on intragastric administration for 5 days. HE staining results of livers, kidneys, lungs, spleens, and hearts from the mice with (E–I) 5 successive days of feeding with nano-TiO₂@PDA or (J–N) normal saline as the control group.

configured 10% CCK8 culture medium, then, we added 1 mL of CCK8 into each hole and incubated them at 37 °C for 1 h. Next, we used the microplate reader to measure the absorbance at 450 nm, each sample was parallel test for three times.

7. Histopathologic. We prepared 8 male mice (about 30 g each) and divided them into test group and control group for 4 mice in each group. After 5 days acclimation, 8 mice were ethically treated during the procedure. The suspensions contained nano-TiO₂@PDA (333.33 mg/kg/day) were immediately exposed to the test group through oral gavage, the control group followed the same process by using normal saline (NS). Five days after administration, the mice were sacrificed and dissected for histopathological examination. A small piece of liver, kidney, lung, spleen and heart were fixed by 4% paraformaldehyde. The sections were stained with hematoxylin–eosin. And then, we observed their histopathological characters by optical microscope.

8. Antibacterial Susceptibility. We selected 4 teeth and washed them. These teeth were disinfected by autoclaving and then cocultured with bacteria. One was brushed with only toothbrush for 3 min, the other three were brushed with nano-TiO₂@PDA, nano-TiO₂@PDA under blue light, and an on-sell antibacterial toothpaste for 3 min, respectively. After that, all the four teeth were washed by 5 mL of phosphate buffer solution (PBS, pH7.4) for two times, we observed the residual bacteria on the surface of these teeth by SEM.

Afterward, we continued to cultivate these teeth for 2h after brushing and used plate colony-counting methods to evaluate its antibacterial property. Finally, we calculated and recorded their inhibition rate. The experiments were repeated for at least three times.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, pure nano-TiO₂ is a kind of wide band gap semiconductor material with low availability rate under visible light.¹⁹ To realize visible blue-light-activated properties, we modified the surface of nano-TiO₂ with PDA.²⁰ The corresponding preparation scheme was shown as Figure 1A. The subsequent TEM images demonstrated that the as prepared nano-TiO₂@PDA had core–shell structure. The average particle size of nano-TiO₂ was about 40 nm and the thickness of organics on the surface of nano-TiO₂ was about 2 nm (Figure 1B–D). To verify that the film on the nano-TiO₂ surface was PDA, we used different ratios between DA and nano-TiO₂ to prepare different composites, and the results demonstrated that with increasing DA, the thickness on the surface of the nano-TiO₂ also increased (Figure S2). EDS (X-ray energy-dispersive spectroscopy) and XRD (X-ray Dif-

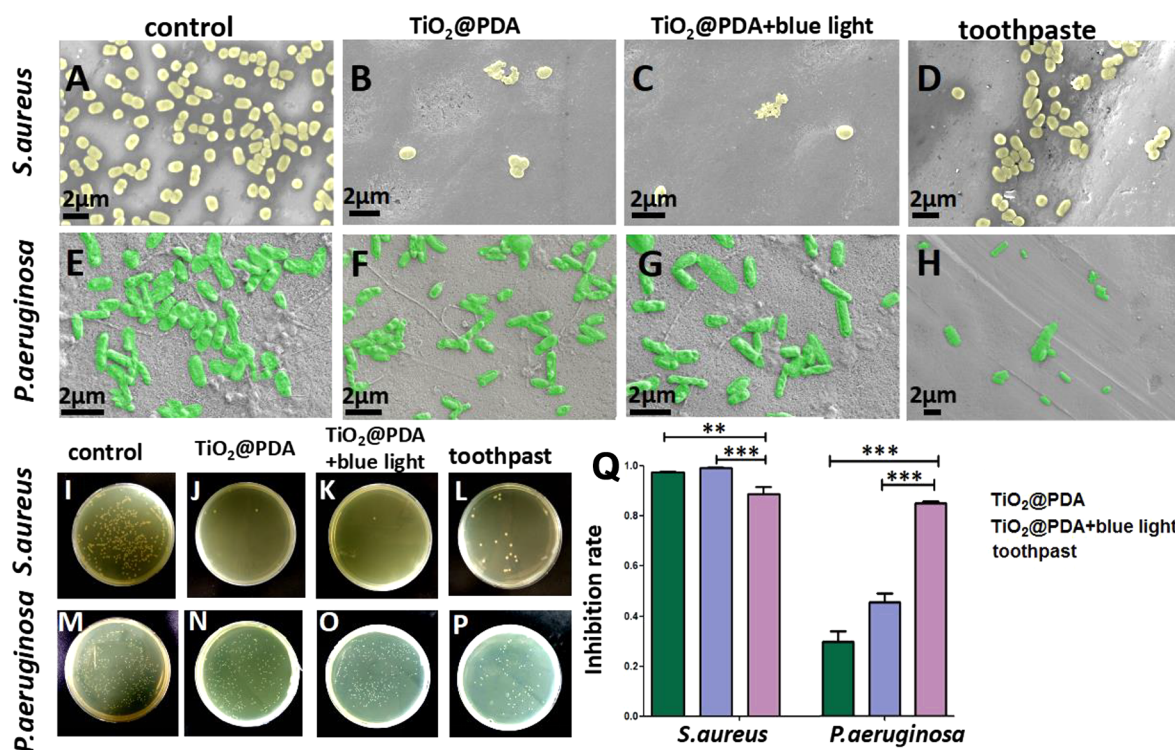


Figure 5. (A–H) SEM observation of the residual bacteria on the surface of teeth with different treatment. (I–P) Relative results from plate counting methods, (Q) and the corresponding quantitative inhibition rates.

fraction) diagrams (amplified, Figure S4) also proved that PDA was successfully coated on the surface of nano- TiO_2 (Figure 1E, F). Nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA1$, nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA2$ and nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA3$ were the composites with multiplied amount of DA, ultraviolet absorption spectra showed that the increasing of PDA can let the adsorption spectra shift to visible light area (Figure 1G). This phenomenon suggested that the composite can be inspired by visible light, which provided a reliable basis for its subsequent studies on blue-light-activated tooth whitening.

The prepared nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ particles (wet, 494.10g/L, pH 7.72 \pm 0.18) were coated on the surface of enamel evenly (Figure S1E, F). A blue-light-emitting diode (LED) was then used to irradiate this tooth (Figure S1G). Dental professional color card was then applied to contrast the change of color after 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2, 3, and 4 h on irradiation respectively (Figure 2A–F, left). For the ease of comparison, we set up a control tooth (Figure 2A–F, right) during the entire process. According to the dental professional color card (Figure 2G), we found that after 0.5 h of whitening, the levels of the tooth color were improved from A3 to B3. After 4 h of treatment, a ten-level whitening change could be achieved, which was similar to the effect of H_2O_2 -based whitening agents in clinic (Figure S5).²¹ Therefore, nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ has an ideal effect as a tooth-whitening agent.

After the above-mentioned nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ treatment, the integrity of enamel was then evaluated by SEM. As a result, it was intriguingly to discover that no significant enamel damage (Figure 3A–D) was found on the surface of tooth. In comparison, after treated with 30% H_2O_2 , the surface of tooth enamel showed obvious demineralization and presented honeycomb structure (Figure 3E–H). The use of nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ activated with blue light thus was more appropriate for real nondestructive tooth whitening.

To confirm the biological safety of nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$, we chose human fibroblasts (oral mucosa is mainly fibroblast) to detect its cytotoxicity by CCK8.²² Compared to 30% H_2O_2 , the cell proliferative ability of group nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ was close to control group after 1 day coculture with nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$. After 4 and 7 days coculture with human fibroblasts, nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ showed a certain degree of cytotoxicity, but far less than 30% H_2O_2 (Figure 4A–C). In practical usage, we could achieve satisfactory whitening effect by using nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ for less than 4 h. In addition, we carried out a simple animal experiment to evaluate the toxic effect of nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ on important organs and tissues of mice.^{23–25} The results suggested that the weight of these mice did not have obvious decreasing in nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ group (Figure 4D). The mental state of these mice were also normal, and no vomiting appeared. The staining results demonstrated that the hearts, spleens, lungs, spleens and kidneys of these mice after nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ treatment were all normal (Figure 4E–N). From the pathological analysis, nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ did not show obvious tissue toxicity. Actually, only tiny amount of the tooth whitening material will enter the stomach through mouth during the practical usage. According to the above results, the safety of nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ is much more reliable than 30% H_2O_2 .

Further, we evaluated antibacterial properties of nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$. The teeth were cocultured with bacterial medium before being treated by nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ or nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ under blue light. An on-sale antibacterial toothpaste was also used as a comparison. Afterward, we observed the residual bacteria on the surface of these teeth. SEM images showed that nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$ exhibited an excellent antibacterial activity against Gram-positive bacteria (G+)-*Staphylococcus aureus* (*S.a*), even better than the on-sell antibacterial toothpaste. However, the antibacterial activity of pure nano- $\text{TiO}_2@PDA$

against Gram-negative bacteria (G⁻)-*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (*P.a*) was not so obvious (Figure SA–H). Afterward, we used plate colony-counting methods to quantitatively evaluate its antibacterial properties. Similar conclusion was drawn (Figure SI–Q). To further confirm this result, we repeated this experiment with another Gram-negative bacteria (G⁻)—*Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), and got the same result as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (Figure S6A–E). Referring to some related literatures, the surface modification of nano-TiO₂ can decrease its antibacterial activity on Gram-negative bacteria.²⁶ The results also suggested that the antibacterial effect was much better under blue light, which was similar to the results in literatures.^{27,28} Through SEM observation, some cracked bacteria (Figure S6F–H) were found on the surface of the teeth treated with nano-TiO₂@PDA under blue light. Collectively, nano-TiO₂@PDA has certain antibacterial activity on the surface of teeth, and the antibacterial activity will be increased when irradiated by blue light.

CONCLUSION

Tooth whitening material is actually one of the most frequently used biomedical materials. Effective and nondestructive tooth whitening is a long-term aim for most dental related researchers. In the present study, PDA membrane was modified on the surface of nano-TiO₂ particles. Under visible blue light, the as-prepared nano-TiO₂@PDA composite could energize electrons to release reactive oxygen species (ROS), which provided us a reliable basis for its application in the field of tooth whitening. Further experiments showed that blue light activated nano-TiO₂@PDA not only had ideal whitening effect, but, more importantly, exhibited no obvious damage on enamel surface, which made it possible for the essentially high effective and nondestructive tooth whitening. According to the subsequent investigation, this nanocomposite also had good biocompatibility and certain antibacterial function. The present study not only discovered a potential global used oral biomaterial, but also demonstrated a new mild but efficient manner to generate ROS for biomedical purpose. The ongoing research will be focused on two topics: the long-term biosafety of nano-TiO₂@PDA; and the extension of its usage to other biomedical areas, such as precise wound surface sterilization.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acsbiomaterials.8b00548.

Supporting Experimental Section and Figures S1–S12
(PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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