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1 **Design and synthesis of novel trinuclear palladium (II) complex containing oxime chelate**  
2 **ligand; Determining interaction mechanism with DNA groove and BSA site I**  
3 **by spectroscopic and molecular dynamics simulation approaches**

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9  
10 **ABSTRACT**

11 The novel trinuclear Pd (II) complex with aryl oxime ligand, [Pd<sub>3</sub>(C,N-(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>C(Cl)=NO)-4)<sub>6</sub>]  
12 was synthesized and structurally characterized by elemental analysis (C, H, N), IR, resonance  
13 signals in the NMR, and single crystal X-ray crystallography. The interaction ability of the  
14 complex with native calf thymus DNA (CT-DNA) was monitored as a function of the metal  
15 complex-DNA molar ratio by UV-Vis absorption spectrophotometry, fluorescence spectroscopy,  
16 circular dichroism (CD) and thermal denaturation methods. All the experimental evidence  
17 indicated this complex could strongly bind to CT-DNA via a groove mechanism. Further, the  
18 albumin interactions of complex were investigated using fluorescence quenching and  
19 synchronous fluorescence spectra. The result of fluorescence titration suggested that the  
20 fluorescence quenching of BSA by complex was a static quenching procedure. The site marker  
21 displacement experiment has suggested the location of complex binding to BSA was Sudlow's  
22 site I in the subdomain IIA. Finally, the molecular docking experiment confirmed the above  
23 results and effectively proved the binding of Pd (II) complex to BSA and DNA.

24 *Keyword: Pd complex; Oxime; CT-DNA binding; BSA binding; Crystal structure*

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## 30 Introduction

31 Nowadays, tumor resistance to drug is one of the most important problems in the cancer  
32 treatment [1,2]. Cisplatin, one of the most potent chemotherapy drugs, widely used for cancer  
33 treatment. Despite its broad clinical applications, the resistance of cancer cells to cisplatin often  
34 culminates in chemotherapeutic failure [3-6]. On the other hand, the discovery of cytotoxic  
35 properties of cisplatin provided enormous impetus for research into the use of transition metal  
36 complexes in fighting against cancer. Where platinum drugs are ineffective, the mortality from  
37 cancer is significantly higher than when they are effective. As a result, new transition metal-  
38 based compounds are being designed to overcome the platinum complex limitations. Owing to  
39 the similar coordination modes of the cation Pd (II) and Pt (II) ( $d^8$ -electron configuration) there  
40 has also been renewed interest in attempt to obtain activity for palladium (II) complexes [7-11].  
41 Palladium (II) analogues of platinum (II) complexes are about  $10^4$ - $10^5$  time more reactive. To  
42 minimize the high lability and fast hydrolysis of palladium complexes in biological  
43 environments, chelating ligands were used to synthesize the antitumor agents [12]. Furthermore,  
44 new mononuclear, dinuclear, and multinuclear palladium complexes with decreased toxicity  
45 have been developed, which are also effective in cisplatin-resistant tumors [13,14]. Among Pd  
46 (II) complexes, special attention has been paid to those with such nitrogen donor ligands as  
47 derivatives of ethylenediamine, diaminocyclohexane, ammonia, pyridine, quinoline, pyrazole,  
48 and oxime, which have shown promising antitumor characteristics in vivo and in vitro [15-16].  
49 Oxime derivatives have attracted wide interest because of their antibacterial, antifungal  
50 properties [17], and a high index of antitumor activity [18,19] via intercalation. In addition, the  
51 biological relevance of oximes appreciably favors their use as ligands for potential metal-based  
52 drugs. For instance, it was reported that oxime complexes and other species bearing the oxime

53 functional group caused biological effects such as endothelium-independent relaxation in blood  
54 vessels,[20,21] an increase in the targeting of specific nuclear bases of DNA[22], and oxidative  
55 DNA cleavage as well [23]. Since DNA is an important cellular receptor, many chemicals exert  
56 their antitumor effects to DNA there by changing the replication of DNA and inhibiting the  
57 growth of tumor cell. Additionally, studies on the interaction of transition metal complexes with  
58 DNA have been pursued in recent years [24]. In general, most components have three distinct  
59 modes of non-covalent interaction with DNA, i.e. intercalative association, DNA groove binding  
60 and electrostatic attraction [25]. On the other hand, one of the important properties of a drug is  
61 the degree of its protein binding which affects the drug effective solubility, bio distribution, and  
62 its half life in the body. Proteins are the most abundant macromolecules in cells and are crucial to  
63 maintaining normal cell functions. Among bio macromolecules, the serum albumins which have  
64 many physiological functions are the major soluble protein constituent of the circulatory system  
65 [26]. Interaction of transition metal complexes to albumins may provide useful structural  
66 information that determines the therapeutic effect of drugs. Therefore, the investigation on the  
67 binding of such molecules with BSA is of imperative and great importance in life sciences,  
68 chemistry, and clinical medicine [27,28]. In previous studies we exhibited that NC palladacyclic  
69 and Pt complexes have reasonable cytotoxic effects against some tumor cell lines and good  
70 DNA/BSA binding affinity [29-31]. In the present study we aimed to investigate anticancer  
71 properties of a new Pd (II) complex containing chelating oxime ligand and understand the  
72 structure–activity relationships (SARs) of this new chemical compound. The studies on the DNA  
73 and protein binding interaction of palladium complexes containing the oxime N,O chelating have  
74 not yet been reported. In this paper, we studied the new complex from the four aspects: (i)  
75 synthesis and characterization of the complex by means of spectroscopic and X-ray diffraction

76 studies; (ii) study of the ability of the complex to interact with DNA and investigation of its  
77 interaction mechanism using UV-Vis and fluorescence spectroscopy, thermal denaturation, and  
78 circular dichroism (CD) spectra ; (iii) monitoring of the protein binding ability by UV absorption  
79 and tryptophan fluorescence quenching experiment in the presence of the complex using BSA as  
80 a model protein; (iv) the molecular dynamics (MD) simulations performed on the structure of  
81 BSA and DNA.

## 82 **Experimental Section**

### 83 **Materials**

84 Starting materials and solvents were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich or Alfa Aesar and used  
85 without further purification. Calf thymus DNA (CT-DNA) and BSA was obtained from Sigma-  
86 Aldrich and were used as supplied. 4-chlorobenzoxime was obtained using the procedure  
87 described [32]. The DNA concentration per nucleotide was determined by absorption  
88 spectroscopy using the molar absorption coefficient ( $\epsilon = 6600 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$  at 260 nm) [33]. The  
89 stock solutions were stored at 5 °C and used over no more than 4 days. All the experiments  
90 involving interactions of the compounds with DNA were carried out in double distilled water  
91 buffer containing 5 mM Tris-HCl [tris (hydroxymethyl)-aminomethane] and 50 mM NaCl, and  
92 adjusted to pH 7.4 using NaOH. A stock solution of the Pd (II) complex was prepared by  
93 dissolving the complex in an aqueous solution of DMSO as the co-solvent, and then diluted  
94 suitably with the corresponding buffer to the required concentrations for all the experiments. The  
95 final DMSO concentration never exceeded 0.5% v/v.

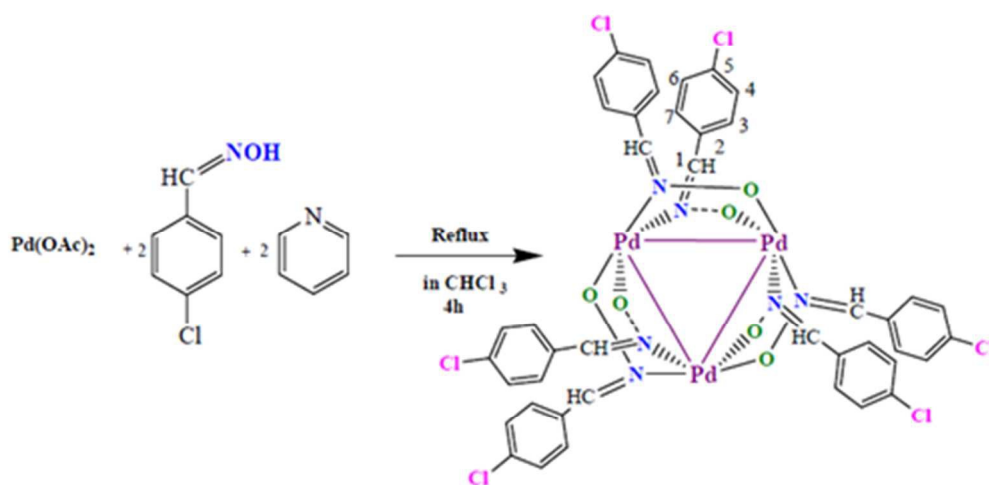
### 96 **Physical measurements**

97 The UV-Vis spectra were recorded on a Varian Cary 100 UV-Vis spectrophotometer using a 1  
98 cm path length cell. Infrared spectra were recorded on a FT-IR JASCO 680 spectrophotometer in  
99 the spectral range 4000-400  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  using the KBr pellets technique. NMR spectra were measured

100 on a Bruker spectrometer at 400.13 MHz ( $^1\text{H}$ ), 100.61 MHz  $^{13}\text{C}\{-^1\text{H}\}$ , Elemental analysis was  
101 performed on a Leco, CHNS-932 apparatus. The  $T_m$  spectra were recorded on a Varian BioCary-  
102 100 UV-Vis spectrophotometer using a 1 cm path length cell. Circular dichroism measurements  
103 were carried out on a Jasco-810 spectropolarimeter at room temperature with a rectangular  
104 quartz cell of 1 cm path. Solution was prepared by dissolving the complex in water buffer  
105 containing 5 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.4) and 50 mM NaCl concentrations.

### 106 **Synthesis of Pd (II) complex**

107 Preparation of  $[\text{Pd}_3(\text{C},\text{N}-(\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{C}(\text{Cl})=\text{NO})-4)_6]$ : 4-Chlorobenzoxime (309 mg, 2mmol) and  
108 pyridine (0.17 ml, 2 mmol) were added to a solution of palladium acetate (224 mg, 1 mmol) in  
109  $\text{CHCl}_3$  (15 ml). The resulting orange-red solution was refluxed for 4 h (Scheme 1). Following  
110 addition of water (10 ml), the product was extracted with chloroform ( $3 \times 15$  ml) and then  
111 filtered through a plug of  $\text{MgSO}_4$ . The filtrate was concentrated to ca. 2 mL and to this  
112 concentrated solution, n-hexane (15 mL) was added to precipitate a yellow solid, which was  
113 collected and air-dried. bright yellow crystals of complex were obtained from  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ,n-hexane.  
114 Yield: 85%. Anal. Calc. for  $\text{C}_{42}\text{H}_{30}\text{Cl}_6\text{N}_6\text{O}_6\text{Pd}_3$  : C 40.3; H 2.7; N 6.7%. Found. C 42.99; H 2.35;  
115 N 6.7%. IR (KBr pellet,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ):  $\nu(\text{C}=\text{N}) = 1626$ ,  $\nu(\text{OH}) = 3303$ ,  $\nu(\text{N}-\text{O}) = 1012$ ,  $\nu(\text{C}-\text{H}_{\text{aromatic}}) =$   
116  $3067$ .  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta = 7.24(\text{s}, 1\text{H}, \text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{Cl})$ ,  $7.26(\text{s}, 1\text{H}, \text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{Cl})$ ,  $7.851-$   
117  $7.854$  (d, 2H,  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{Cl}$ ),  $7.87(\text{s}, 1\text{H}, \text{CH})$ .  $^{13}\text{C}\{-^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (100.61 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $124.6$   
118 (s,  $\text{C}_2$ ),  $128.6(\text{s}, \text{C}_3, \text{C}_7)$ ,  $129$  (s,  $\text{C}_4, \text{C}_6$ ),  $136.3(\text{s}, \text{C}_5)$ ,  $150.5(\text{s}, \text{C}_1)$ .



119

120 **Scheme 1.** Synthesis of the trinuclear palladium complex.

121

### 122 Single-crystal structure determination

123 X-ray diffraction experiment was done at 120 K with the use of Agilent Gemini single crystal  
 124 diffractometer (Cu K $\alpha$  radiation). The structure was solved using Super flip software [34] and  
 125 further refined with Jana2006 [35]. MCE software [36] was used for Fourier maps visualization.  
 126 The structure was refined by full matrix least squares on F squared value. The atoms of  
 127 palladium complex were refined anisotropically, the positions of hydrogen atoms were kept in  
 128 expected geometry with  $U_{iso}$  set to 1.2 of  $U_{eq}$  of the parent atom. The atoms O<sub>1</sub>, O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> were  
 129 refined isotropically and they represented disordered solvent. The centers of these atoms do not  
 130 represent actual atomic positions. For further details on data collection and structure refinement  
 131 see table 1.

132 **Molecular docking .** The molecular docking was performed by Autodock 4.2 package using the  
 133 Lamarckian genetic algorithm (LGA) method [37]. Molegro Virtual Docker (MVD) [38] and  
 134 UCSF Chimera [39] packages were used to produce molecular images and animations. The

135 schematic two-dimensional representations of the docking results were performed using  
136 LIGPLOT+ [40].

137 **Molecular dynamics (MD) simulations on BSA and DNA.** The molecular dynamics (MD)  
138 simulation was performed on the structure of BSA and DNA in a water box. The crystal structure  
139 of BSA was obtained from the protein data bank (PDB ID: 4F5S) at a resolution of 2.47 Å. Also,  
140 the DNA sequence d(CGCGAATTCGCG)<sub>2</sub> was taken from the protein data bank (PDB ID:  
141 1BNA) at a resolution of 1.90 Å. The MD simulations were carried out using the GROMACS  
142 4.5.1 package [41]. The topology parameters of BSA and DNA were created by the GROMOS96  
143 43a1 [41] and Amber99 force field [42], respectively. The interaction parameters were computed  
144 using intermolecular (non-bonded) potential represented as a sum of Lennard–Jones (LJ) force  
145 and pairwise Coulomb interaction and the long-range electrostatic force determined by the  
146 Particle-Mesh Ewald (PME) method [43,44]. The velocity Verlet algorithm was used for the  
147 numerical integrations [45], and the initial atomic velocities were generated with a Maxwellian  
148 distribution at the given absolute temperature [46,47]. The BSA and DNA systems were  
149 subjected to a cubic box ( $8.17 \times 8.17 \times 8.17 \text{ nm}^3$ ) and ( $7.54 \times 7.54 \times 7.54 \text{ nm}^3$ ), respectively.  
150 The water molecules were added using a simple charge (SPC216) model [48] and the solvated  
151 systems were neutralized by adding sixteen and twenty-two Na<sup>+</sup> ions in the simulation,  
152 respectively. Initially, the energy minimization was performed before implementing the position  
153 restraint procedure. Then, the full system was subjected to 6000 ps MD at constant pressure (1  
154 bar) and constant temperature (310 K) using the Berendsen thermostat [49].

155 The MD simulations were carried out on the open SUSE 11.3 Linux on an Intel Core 2 Quad  
156 Q6600 2.4 GHz and 4 GB of RAM. The stability of two systems and the structural geometries  
157 were tested by means of the root-mean-square deviations (RMSDs). The root-mean square



158 deviations (RMSDs) between the backbone atoms of the trajectory frames of BSA and DNA  
159 with the corresponding atoms of the X-ray structure was calculated for each ps of MD  
160 simulation. The average RMSDs value of BSA and DNA backbone was calculated to be 8.33 and  
161 5.21 nm, respectively. The equilibrated conformation of the BSA and DNA were used for  
162 docking.

## 163 **Results and discussion**

164

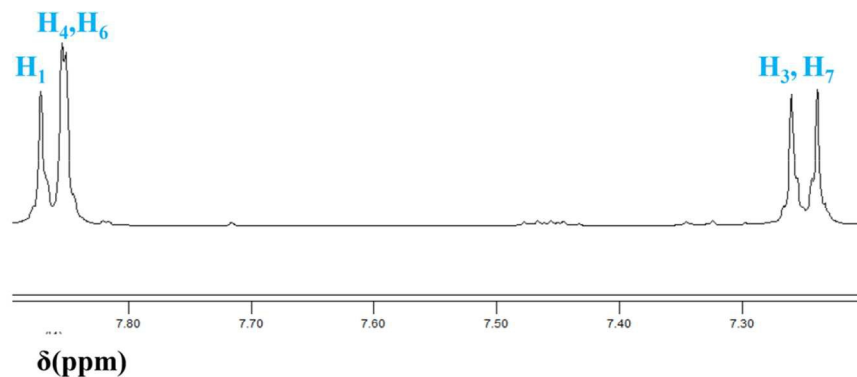
### 165 **Synthesis and spectroscopic characterization**

166 The palladium aryl oxime complex  $[\text{Pd}_3(\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{C}(\text{Cl})=\text{NO})_4]_6$  is obtained in one step by  
167 reaction of  $[\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2]$  with 4-Chlorobenzoxime and pyridine in  $\text{CHCl}_3$  under reflux for 4 h  
168 (Scheme1). This yellow Compound, stable at room temperature, is soluble in such chlorinated  
169 solvents as  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ,  $\text{CHCl}_3$ , and aprotic solvent like DMSO (dimethylsulfoxide). The compound  
170 was characterized by bands in the IR spectra, elemental analysis (C, H, N), resonance signals in  
171 the NMR, and single crystal X-ray crystallography.

172 The IR spectra of the complex showed typical bands at 3303, 3067 and 1012  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  assigned to  $\nu$   
173 (OH),  $\nu$  (C-H aromatic) and  $\nu$  (N-O), respectively. The oxime complex shift in  $\nu$  (N-O) of the free  
174 ligand (960  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  region) to higher wave number,  $\nu$  (C=N) stretch at 1626  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  was shifted to  
175 lower wave numbers (as compared to the free ligand) due to N-coordination of the oxime [50].

176 The NMR spectrum of complex was in good agreement with the proposed structure. In the  $^1\text{H}$   
177 NMR spectra (see Scheme 1 for labeling) exhibit signals in the range 7.24 (ppm) and 7.26 (ppm)  
178 due to the  $\text{H}_3$  and  $\text{H}_7$  protons of the oxime ligand. The aromatic protons are diastereotopic  
179 resulting in formation of two separated signals (Fig1). Moreover, the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra somewhat  
180 similar patterns for the  $\text{H}_4$ – $\text{H}_6$  aromatic protons of oximering, Where as  $\text{H}_1$  is significantly  
181 shifted to high frequencies in the range 7.87 (ppm) due to the anisotropic deshielded from the

182 oxime ring or C=N group. The  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectrum reveals the resonance for the CNO  
 183 carbon atom of the oxime group at  $\delta = 150.3$  ppm. As expected, four resonances are observed of  
 184 the trinuclear complex, ipso-carbon atom (C2  $\delta = 124.6$  ppm), (C3,C7  $\delta = 128.6$  ppm), (C4,C6  $\delta$   
 185  $= 129$  ppm), (C5  $\delta = 136.3$  ppm) of the heterocyclic ligands.



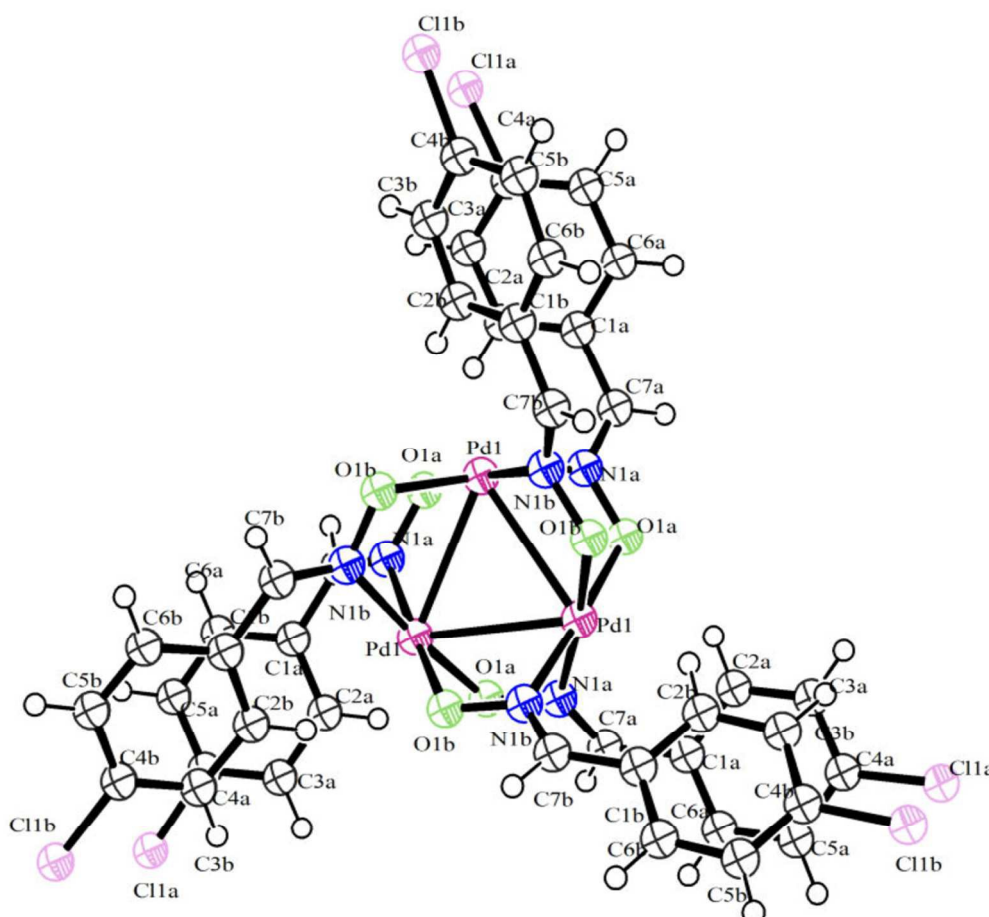
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187 **Fig. 1.** The protons of the trinuclear palladium complex in the  $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectra.

### 188 **Molecular structure of the complex**

189 The investigated complex was characterized in the solid phase by a single crystal X-ray  
 190 diffraction study. Yellow single crystals were obtained at room temperature by slow diffusion of  
 191 n-hexane into dichloromethane or chloroform solution of the complex. Molecule of the  
 192 compound is displayed in (Fig.2) with ADP ellipsoids at 50% probability level. Relevant  
 193 crystallographic data and structure refinement details are listed in Table 1. Selected bond lengths  
 194 and angles are listed in Table 2. The palladium oxime complex forms trimeric units featuring  
 195 three six-membered rings (Pd–N–O–Pd–O–N) which consist of alternating palladium and oxime  
 196 functional groups. C–H $\cdots\pi$  interactions play major role in complex packing, since no classical  
 197 hydrogen bonds are present in the structure. The stacking of complex molecules creates cavities

198 in the structure which occupied by heavily disordered solvent molecules. The tri-nuclear  
199 complex is held by Pd–N, Pd–O, N–O as well as Pd–Pd bonds. The Pd–N bond lengths are  
200 2.008(11) and 2.026 (12) Å, Pd–O bond lengths are 2.023 (10) and 2.027 (10) Å, N–O bond  
201 lengths are 1.338(1) and 1.341 (1) Å and Pd–Pd bond length is 2.894 (2) Å. The values are  
202 comparable to those observed in related complexes such as  $[\text{Pd}_3(\text{ON}=\text{CPr}^i\text{Ph})_6]$  (av. Pd– N =  
203 2.016 Å, Pd–O =2.025 Å, N–O =1.339 Å), which also features bridging oxime groups [51].



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208 **Fig. 2.** ORTEP diagram for Pd complex with ellipsoids drawn at the 50% probability level.

209 **Table 1.** Crystallographic data and structure refinement details for Pd complex

Compound	Complex
Empirical formula	C <sub>42</sub> H <sub>30</sub> Cl <sub>6</sub> N <sub>6</sub> O <sub>6</sub> Pd <sub>3</sub> · 5(O)
Formula weight	1326.7
Crystal system	Trigonal
Space group	R-3
<i>a</i> / Å	18.766 (3)
<i>c</i> / Å	24.688 (2)
<i>V</i> / Å <sup>3</sup>	7529.4 (15)
<i>T</i> / K	120
<i>Z</i>	6
$\rho_{\text{calc}}$ / g cm <sup>-3</sup>	1.756
$\mu$ / mm <sup>-1</sup>	12.05
Crystal dimensions / mm	0.13 x 0.11 x 0.05
Reflections collected	15119
Independent reflections (Rint)	2963 (0.098)
GOF	1.37
R1, wR2 [ <i>I</i> >3 $\sigma$ ( <i>I</i> )]	0.073, 0.165
R1, wR2 (all data)	0.127, 0.196
Res. el. dens. (e Å <sup>-3</sup> )	1.31, -0.42
CCDC number	1058050

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215 **Table 2.** Selected bond lengths (Å), and angles (°) for Pd complex.

<i>Atoms</i>	<i>Bond lengths</i>
Pd1—N1b	2.008(11)
Pd1—N1a	2.026(12)
Pd1—O1b	2.027(10)
Pd1—O1a	2.023(10)
Pd1—Pd1 <sup>i</sup>	2.894(2)
O1a—N1a <sup>ii</sup>	1.338(18)
O1b—N1b <sup>ii</sup>	1.342(17)
	<i>Bond angles</i>
N1a—Pd1—O1b	174.3(4)
N1b—Pd1—O1a	175.8(4)
N1b—Pd1—O1b	90.7(4)
O1a—Pd1—N1a	93.1(4)
O1a—Pd1—O1b	91.3(4)
N1b—Pd1—N1a	84.8(4)

216 Symmetry code: (i)-y, x-y, z (ii) -x+y, -x, z

217

218

## 219 DNA-binding mode and affinity

220 **Electronic absorption titration.** Monitoring the changes in absorption spectra of the test  
 221 transition metal complexes upon the incremental addition of DNA is one of the most widely  
 222 used methods to determine overall binding constants. Thus, in order to provide evidence for the  
 223 possibility of binding of each complex to CT-DNA, spectroscopic titration of a solution of the  
 224 Pd complex with CT-DNA was performed [52]. DNA provides three distinct binding sites for  
 225 transition metal complexes (groove binding, electrostatic binding to phosphate group and  
 226 intercalation) [53–55]. In general, hypochromism and hyperchromism are known to cause

227 spectral changes typical of metal complexes associated with DNA helices. The binding of an  
228 intercalative molecule to DNA is accompanied by hypochromism and a significant red-shift  
229 (bathochromism) is characteristic of strong  $\pi$ - $\pi$  stacking interaction between the aromatic  
230 chromophore of the ligand of a metal complexes and DNA base pairs [56]. On the other hand,  
231 groove binding results only in a small shift in the absorption spectra [57,58]. As shown in  
232 (Fig.3), the potential CT-DNA binding ability of complex was studied by UV spectroscopy by  
233 following the intensity changes of the intraligand  $\pi$ - $\pi^*$  transition band at 252, 305 nm. In details,  
234 the absorption band ( $\lambda_{\text{max}}=252$ ) in the presence of increasing concentrations of CT-DNA, a  
235 significant hypochromic (H% = 14.21) and only in a small shift in wavelength. the observation is  
236 ascribed to groove binding [59].

237 In order to further investigate the intensity of the interaction between the complex and CT-DNA,  
238 the intrinsic binding constant,  $K_b$  were calculated according to equation (1)[60].

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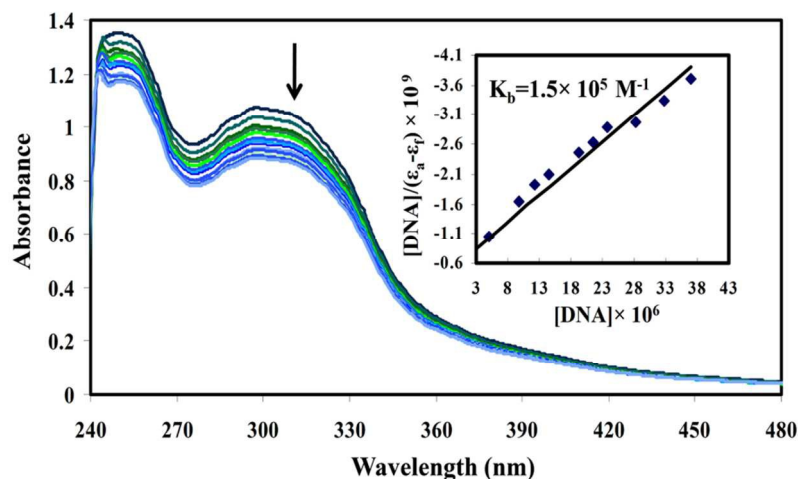
$$240 \quad \frac{[\text{DNA}]}{(\varepsilon_a - \varepsilon_f)} = \frac{[\text{DNA}]}{(\varepsilon_b - \varepsilon_f)} + \frac{1}{K_b (\varepsilon_b - \varepsilon_f)} \quad (1)$$

241 The absorption coefficients  $\varepsilon_a$ ,  $\varepsilon_f$ , and  $\varepsilon_b$  correspond to  $A_{\text{obs}}/[\text{DNA}]$ , the extinction coefficient for  
242 the free complex and the extinction coefficient for the complex in the fully bound form,  
243 respectively. In particular,  $\varepsilon_f$  was determined by a calibration curve of the isolated Pd (II)  
244 complex in an aqueous solution, following Beer's law. The slope and the intercept of the linear  
245 fit of the plot of  $[\text{DNA}]/[\varepsilon_a - \varepsilon_f]$  versus  $[\text{DNA}]$  give  $1/[\varepsilon_a - \varepsilon_f]$  and  $1/K_b[\varepsilon_b - \varepsilon_f]$ (Fig. 3, inset). The  
246 intrinsic binding constant  $K_b(1.5 \times 10^5 \text{M}^{-1})$  can be obtained from the ratio of the slope to the  
247 intercept [60].

248 From the values of the binding constant ( $K_b$ ), free energy ( $\Delta G$ ) of the compound-DNA complex  
249 was calculated using the equation (2):

250 
$$\Delta G = -RT \ln K_b \quad (2)$$

251 Binding constants are measure of the compound–DNA complex stability while the free energy  
 252 indicates the spontaneity/non-spontaneity of compound–DNA binding. Free energy of Pd  
 253 complex was evaluated as negative values ( $-6.58 \text{ kJ.mol}^{-1}$ ) showing the spontaneity of  
 254 compound–DNA interaction.

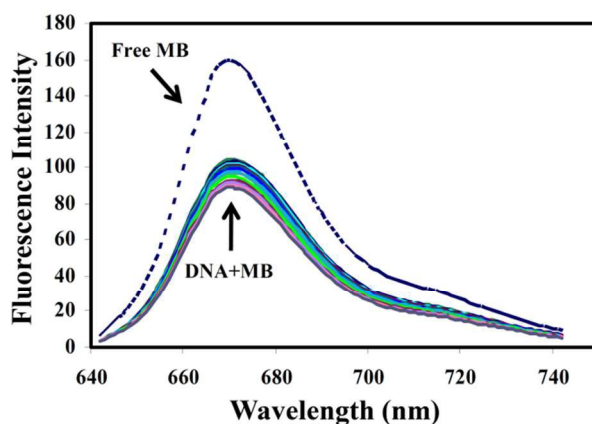


255 **Fig. 3.** Electronic spectra of complex in buffer solution (5 mM Tris–HCl/50 mM NaCl at pH 7.4)  
 256 upon addition of CT-DNA.  $C(\text{comlex}) = 2.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ,  $C(\text{DNA}) = 0- 3.7 \times 10^{-5} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ . Arrow  
 257 shows the absorption intensities decrease upon increasing DNA concentration. Inset: Plots of  
 258  $[DNA]/[\epsilon_a - \epsilon_f]$  vs.  $[DNA]$  for the titration of complex with DNA.  
 259

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261 **Fluorescence studies Competitive interaction of complex with MB-ds-DNA.** To check  
 262 whether the binding of Pd (II) complex with DNA is of the groove or the intercalative nature, we  
 263 performed a comparative binding study with Methylene blue. Methylene blue (MB), a  
 264 phenothiazinium dye is known to bind with nucleic acids. The planar heterocyclic dye is  
 265 expected to stabilize its binding to DNA through favorable stacking interactions with its adjacent  
 266 base pairs [61]. The enormous quenching in the emission intensity of the MB in DNA

267 environment can be rationalized by considering the intercalative binding of MB with the DNA  
268 [62], and it is expected because of its strong stacking interaction (intercalation) between the  
269 adjacent DNA base pairs [63,64]. We have monitored the emission spectra of DNA bound MB in  
270 the presence of varying concentrations of the complex (Fig.4). The experiment revealed that  
271 addition of the complex to the DNA bound MB does not cause releasing MB molecules, while  
272 the emission intensity decreases steadily. This implies that the two probes, the complex and the  
273 MB, bind with DNA independently and binding of one probe does not affect the binding of the  
274 other. Fig. 4 clearly reveals the decrease in the fluorescence intensity of the probe molecule  
275 (MB) ( $[DNA]/[MB]=10$ ) by adding the Pd(II) complex( $[complex]/[DNA]=2.5$ ). Thus, the  
276 experiments confirmed that interaction between DNA and Pd (II) complex is the groove  
277 interaction.



278

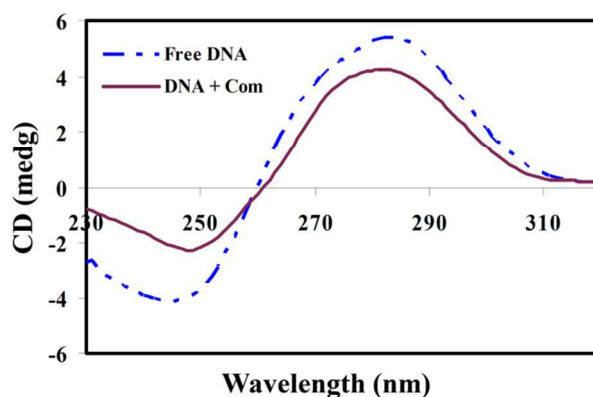
279 **Fig. 4.** The emission spectra of the DNA–MB system, in the presence of complex,  $C(DNA) =$   
280  $5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ,  $C(\text{complex}) = 0-1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ,  $C(MB) = 5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ . The arrow shows the  
281 emission intensity changes upon increasing complex concentration.

282

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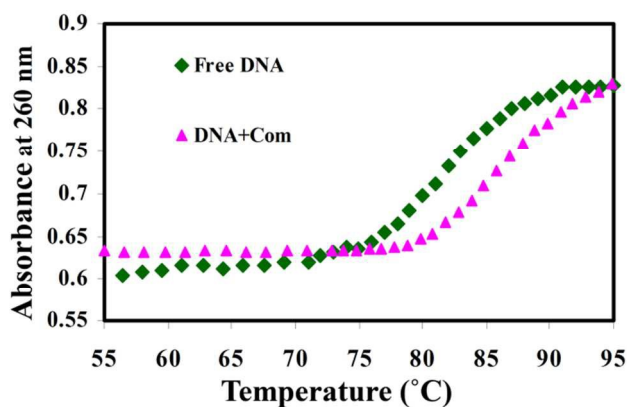


284 **Circular dichroism spectra.** Circular dichroism spectra of DNA-type substances give  
285 information on the diagnosing changes in DNA morphology by their interaction with transition  
286 metal complexes as well as destabilization of the DNA helix [65].CT- DNA is the B-form DNA,  
287 CD spectrum of B form DNA consists of a positive band at 275 nm due to base-stacking and a  
288 negative band at 245 nm due to helicity [66]. The secondary structure of DNA is known to be  
289 perturbed by the intercalation of small molecules and thus increases intensities of the both bands  
290 stabilizing the right-handed B conformation of CT-DNA, whereas simple groove binding and  
291 electrostatic interaction show less or no perturbation on the base stacking and helicity bands. The  
292 CD spectra of DNA were monitored in the presence of the complex as shown in (Fig. 5).Gradual  
293 addition of the complex to DNA causes decrease of the CD spectra intensity in the positive band  
294 as well as in the negative band. Thus, the experiments confirm that the DNA binding of the  
295 complex induces certain conformational changes, such as the conversion from a more B-like to a  
296 more Z-like structure within the DNA molecule [67]. These changes are indicative of the groove  
297 binding mode [68,69].



298  
299 **Fig. 5.** CD of CT-DNA ( $1 \times 10^{-4} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ) in the absence and the presence of Pd (II) complex  
300 ( $5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ) in 5 mM Tris-HCl with 50 Mm NaCl (pH=7.4)  
301

302 **Melting of DNA helix on interaction with the Pd complex.** Denaturation of double-stranded  
303 DNA (ds-DNA) is a very important phenomenon involving biological, chemical and physical  
304 consequences [70,71]. Upon increasing the temperature, hydrogen bonds between the double-  
305 helical structure of DNA base pairs start to cleave resulting in a random coil. The melting  
306 temperature ( $T_m$ ) is strongly related to the stability of the double-helical structure. So the  
307 transition temperature of double strands to single strands can be determined by monitoring the  
308 absorbance of the DNA bases at 260 nm as a function of temperature [72]. Generally, a  $\Delta T_m$  of a  
309 few degrees Celsius is considered to be evidence of an interaction involving groove binding  
310 and/or electrostatic binding to the phosphate groups [73, 74], while an increase of over  $10^\circ\text{C}$  is  
311 attributed to an intercalation binding mode, due to the stabilization of the DNA double helix  
312 [75]. The melting curves of CT-DNA in the absence and presence of the complex are presented  
313 in (Fig 5). Here,  $T_m$  of CT-DNA was found to be  $81.62^\circ\text{C}$  in buffer while after addition of the Pd  
314 (II) complex, the  $T_m$  of the DNA increased to  $84.23^\circ\text{C}$ . This increase corresponds to that  
315 observed for groove binding [59].



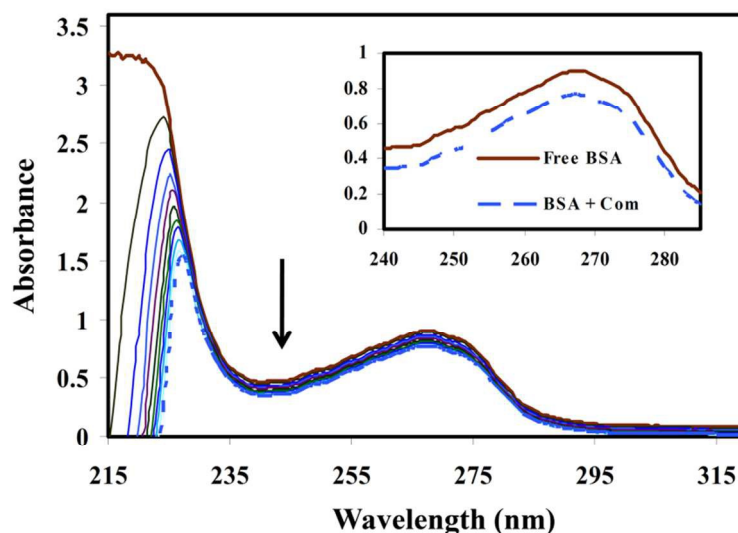
316  
317 **Fig. 6.** Plots of the changes of absorbance at 260 nm of CT-DNA ( $7.5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ) on heating in  
318 the absence and the presence of the complex ( $37.5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ) in 5 mM Tris-HCl with 50 mM  
319 NaCl.

320

321 **Protein binding experiments**

322 **UV absorption spectra of BSA in the presence of the complex.** UV-Vis absorption spectra  
 323 experiment is performed to identify the real mechanism of this quenching procedure [76]. (Fig.7)  
 324 shows the UV absorption spectra of BSA in the presence of different concentrations of the  
 325 complex. The absorbance spectrum of BSA shows two characteristic bands. One is located in the  
 326 range of 220–240 nm, which is the skeleton absorption peak ( $\alpha$ -helix structure), and the other is  
 327 at 278 nm, which is the absorption band of the aromatic amino acids (Trp, Tyr, and Phe). (Fig.7)  
 328 indicates that upon adding the complex, the BSA skeleton absorption intensity in the range of  
 329 220–240 nm decreases and red shifts appear due to the perturbation of the secondary structure of  
 330 the protein [77-78] and subtle change the maximum absorption at 278 nm, which indicated a  
 331 perturbation of  $\alpha$ -helix induced by a specific interaction between Pd complex and BSA [79-80].

332



333

334

335 **Fig. 7.** UV absorption spectra of  $C(\text{BSA}) = 2 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$  in the absence and presence of  
 336 complex.  $C(\text{complex}) = 0, 5.94 \times 10^{-7}, 1.17 \times 10^{-6}, 1.74 \times 10^{-6}, 2.30 \times 10^{-6}, 2.85 \times 10^{-6}, 3.39 \times 10^{-6}, 3.92 \times 10^{-6},$   
 337  $4.44 \times 10^{-6}, 5.45 \times 10^{-6}, 6.42 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$  in 5 mM Tris-HCl with 50 mM NaCl.

338

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342 **Tryptophan quenching experiment.** Fluorescence spectroscopy is an important method to  
343 probe the structure and dynamics of bio macromolecules. Fluorescence quenching refers to the  
344 decrease found in the fluorescence intensity due to the environmental alteration around the  
345 fluorophore, which can reveal the nature of binding reaction [81]. Generally, the fluorescence of  
346 protein is caused by three intrinsic characteristics of the protein, namely tryptophan, tyrosine,  
347 and phenyl alanine residues. Actually, the intrinsic fluorescence of many proteins is mainly  
348 contributed by tryptophan alone. The emission intensity depends on the degree of exposure of  
349 the two tryptophan side chains [82], 134 and 212, to polar solvent. It is evident from (Fig. 8) that  
350 fluorescence emission intensities of BSA at 345 nm show remarkable decreasing trend with  
351 increasing concentration of the complex. This suggests a change in the conformation of BSA  
352 [83]. The fluorescence intensity data were then analysed according to Stern-Volmer relation  
353 equation (3) to get a better insight into the type of quenching:

$$354 \quad F_0/F = 1 + K_{sv} [Q] = 1 + K_q \tau_0 [Q] \quad (3)$$

355 where  $F$  and  $F_0$  are the fluorescence intensity of BSA with and without quencher (complex),  
356 respectively.  $K_q$ ,  $K_{sv}$ ,  $\tau_0$  and  $[Q]$  are the quenching rate constant of the biomolecule, the  
357 dynamic quenching constant, the average lifetime of the biomolecule without quencher and the  
358 concentration of quencher, respectively. Obviously, since the fluorescence life time of  
359 biopolymer is  $10^{-8}$  s. In the present work, the value of  $K_q$  was observed to be  $5.16 \times 10^{13}$  Lmol<sup>-1</sup>  
360 s<sup>-1</sup> at 298K can be calculated using the following equation:

$$361 \quad K_q = K_{sv} / \tau_0$$

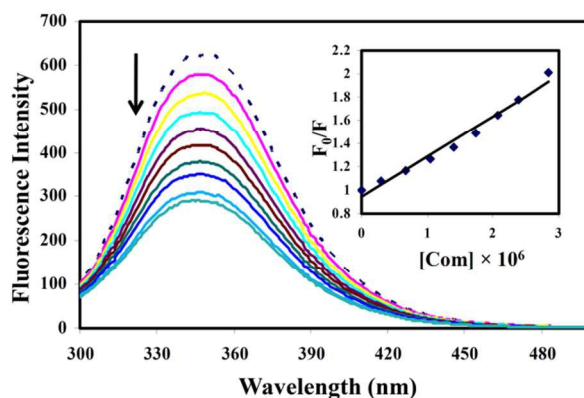
362 However, the maximum scatter collision quenching constant,  $K_q$  of various quenchers with the  
363 biopolymer is  $2 \times 10^{10}$  Lmol<sup>-1</sup> s<sup>-1</sup> [84]. Thus, the rate constant calculated by protein quenching

364 procedure is greater than  $K_q$  of the scatter procedure. This indicates that a static quenching  
 365 mechanism is operative [85,86].

366 Therefore, the fluorescence quenching of BSA by complex should be analyzed using the  
 367 modified Stern–Volmer equation equation (4). [87]:

$$368 \quad \frac{F_0}{\Delta F} = \frac{1}{f_a K_a} \frac{1}{[Q]} + \frac{1}{f_a} \quad (4)$$

369 where  $K_a$  is the association constant for the accessible fluorophores,  $f_a$  is the fraction of  
 370 accessible fluorescence,  $\Delta F$  is the difference in fluorescence intensity between the absence and  
 371 presence of quencher at concentration  $[Q]$ , The dependence of  $F_0/\Delta F$  on the reciprocal value of  
 372 the quencher concentration  $[Q]^{-1}$  is linear, with slope equal to the value of  $(f_a K_a)^{-1}$ . A quantitative  
 373 estimate of the extent of binding ( $K_a$ ), is determined from the intercept to slope ratio of the  
 374 modified Stern–Volmer equation. The  $K_a$  value for BSA–Com system is computed as  $1.89 \times 10^5 \text{ L}$   
 375  $\text{mol}^{-1}$ .



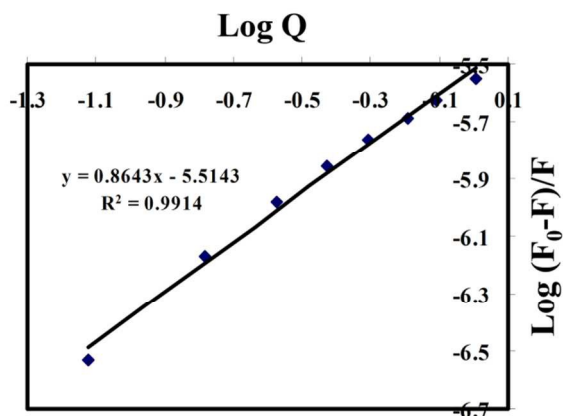
376  
 377 **Fig. 8.** Emission spectra of BSA upon the titration of complex.  $C(\text{BSA}) = 2 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ,  
 378  $C(\text{complex}) = 0, 2.95 \times 10^{-7}, 6.76 \times 10^{-7}, 1.04 \times 10^{-6}, 1.39 \times 10^{-6}, 1.73 \times 10^{-6}, 2.06 \times 10^{-6}, 2.37 \times 10^{-6}, 2.83 \times 10^{-6}$   
 379  $\text{mol L}^{-1}$ . Arrow shows the change upon the increasing complex concentration. Inset: Plots of  $F_0/F$   
 380 vs. (complex) for the titration of the complex to BSA.

381

382 **Determination of binding number and binding site on BSA.** When complexes bind  
 383 independently to a set of equivalent sites on a macromolecule, the binding constant ( $K_{bin}$ ) and the  
 384 number of binding sites ( $n$ ) can be obtained from fluorescence intensity data [88]:

$$385 \quad \text{Log} \frac{(F_0 - F)}{F} = \text{Log} K_{bin} + n \text{Log} [Q] \quad (5)$$

386 where  $F_0$  and  $F$  have the same meaning as in equation (3),  $n$  is the average binding number for  
 387 one complex and  $K_{bin}$  is the binding constant. The double logarithmic plot of  $\log[F_0-F/F]$  vs.  
 388  $\log[com]$  is shown in (Fig. 9). For the system complex and BSA, the obtained values of  $K_{bin}$  and  
 389  $n$  at 298K were  $3.26 \times 10^5 \text{ L mol}^{-1}$  and 0.864, respectively. Moreover, the linear correlation  
 390 coefficient was calculated to be 0.9914, which indicated that the assumptions underlying the  
 391 derivation of equation (5) were satisfied. The value of  $n$  close to 1 indicated that there was single  
 392 class of binding site for complex on BSA. The binding free energy for the complex to BSA was  
 393 found to be  $-7.56 \text{ kJ.mol}^{-1}$ .

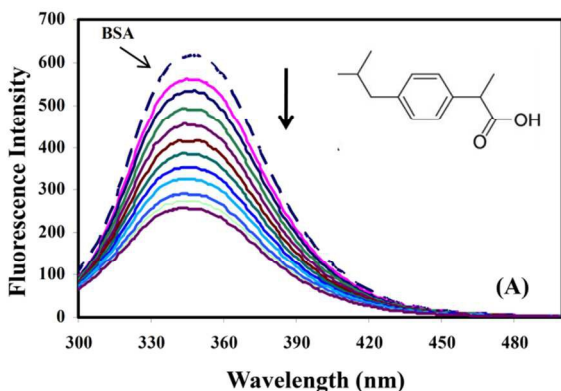


394  
 395 **Fig. 9.** Scatchard plots of  $\log [(F_0-F)/F]$  vs  $\log [Q]$  for determination of the complex-BSA  
 396 binding constant and the number of binding sites on BSA for complex.

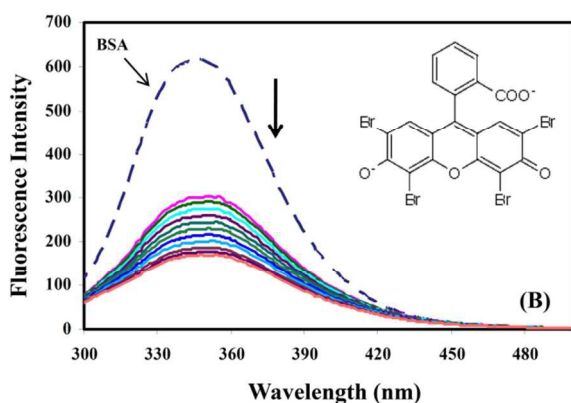
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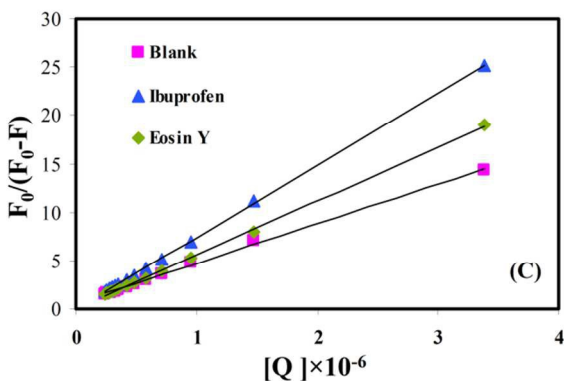
399 **Site marker-competitive binding experiments.** The drug competition for binding sites on  
400 serum albumin can also affect the free and bound forms of the complex. Therefore, it is  
401 important to identify the binding site of the complex in BSA. Crystal structure of BSA shows  
402 that BSA is a heart-shaped helical monomer composed of three homologous domains named I,  
403 II, III, and each domain includes two sub-domains A and B to form a cylinder. The principal  
404 regions of complex-binding sites on albumin are located in the hydrophobic cavities in sub-  
405 domains IIA and IIIA with similar chemical properties, called Sudlow's sites I and II,  
406 respectively [89,90]. In order to identify the complex-binding site on BSA, site marker  
407 competitive experiments are carried out, using markers which specifically bind to a known site  
408 or region on BSA. From X-ray crystallography studies, Eosin Y has been demonstrated to bind  
409 to the sub-domain IIA while ibuprofen is considered as sub-domain IIIA binder [91-92].  
410 Information about the complex-binding site can be gained by monitoring the changes in the  
411 fluorescence of the complex bound albumin that brought about by site I (Eosin Y) and site II  
412 (ibuprofen) markers. Then information on the binding site that complex binds to can be obtained  
413 by monitoring the changes of the fluorescence of BSA after binding complex, in the presence of  
414 Eosin Y and ibuprofen. As shown in (Fig. 10A and B), with the addition of site marker (Eosin Y  
415 or ibuprofen) into BSA, the fluorescence intensity is lower than that of without site marker. To  
416 facilitate the comparison of the influence of Eosin Y and ibuprofen on the binding of complex to  
417 BSA, the binding constant in the presence of site markers was analyzed using the equation (3)  
418 (Fig. 10C and Table 3). The binding constant is surprisingly variable in the presence of Eosin Y,  
419 while a smaller influence in the presence of ibuprofen (somewhat lower than with isolated BSA).  
420 The result indicates that the binding site of complex is mainly located within site I of BSA.



421



422



423

424

425 **Fig. 10.** Influence of selected site markers on the fluorescence of complex bound to BSA  
 426 ( $T=298\text{K}$ ,  $\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 285 \text{ nm}$ ). (A)  $C(\text{BSA}) = C(\text{Eosin Y}) = 2 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ; (B)  $C(\text{BSA}) =$   
 427  $C(\text{Ibuprofen}) = 2 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ ;  $C(\text{complex})$   $0, 2.95 \times 10^{-7}, 6.76 \times 10^{-7}, 1.04 \times 10^{-6}, 1.39 \times 10^{-6}, 1.73 \times 10^{-6},$   
 428  $2.06 \times 10^{-6}, 2.37 \times 10^{-6}, 2.83 \times 10^{-6} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ . (C) Modified Stern-Volmer plots for the complex-BSA



429 system in the absence and presence of site markers ( $T = 298$  K, pH 7.4). The inserts correspond to  
 430 the molecular structures of site markers.

431

432 **Table 3.** Estimated binding constants for site marker competitive experiments of Pd complex-BSA system

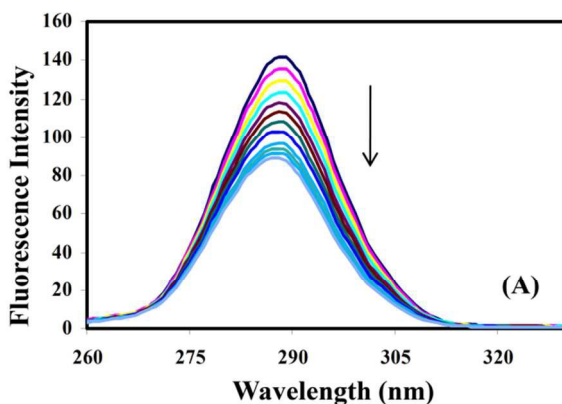
Site marker	$K_{sv}$ ( $L mol^{-1}$ )	$K_a$ ( $L mol^{-1}$ )	$R^a$
Blank	$5.16 \times 10^5$	$1.89 \times 10^5$	0.9981
ibuprofen	$3.03 \times 10^5$	$2.37 \times 10^4$	0.9998
Eosin Y	$2.22 \times 10^5$	$1.91 \times 10^4$	0.9995

433  $R^a$  is the correlation coefficient.

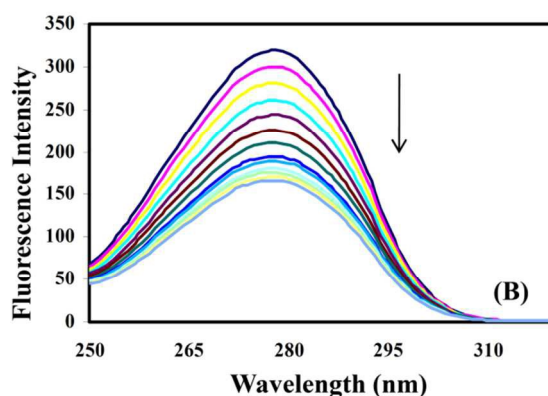
434 **The effect of complex on BSA conformation.** The synchronous fluorescence spectra are  
 435 frequently used to characterize the interaction between fluorescence probe and proteins because  
 436 it can give information about the molecular microenvironment in the vicinity of the  
 437 chromophores molecules [93]. The synchronous fluorescence spectra offer the characteristics of  
 438 tyrosine residues and the tryptophan residue of BSA when the wavelength interval ( $\Delta\lambda$ ) is 15 nm  
 439 and 60nm, respectively ( $\Delta\lambda = \lambda_{emission} - \lambda_{excitation}$ ). (Fig. 11A and B) shows the effect of the complex  
 440 on the fluorescence emission for tyrosine and tryptophan in BSA structure. The fluorescence  
 441 intensities of both tyrosine and tryptophan decrease and the emission wavelength exhibits a slight  
 442 red shift, which indicates that tyrosine and tryptophan residues are placed in a more hydrophobic  
 443 environment and their micro-environment is rearranged [94], thus resulting in the conformational  
 444 changes of BSA, thus resulting in the conformational changes of BSA.

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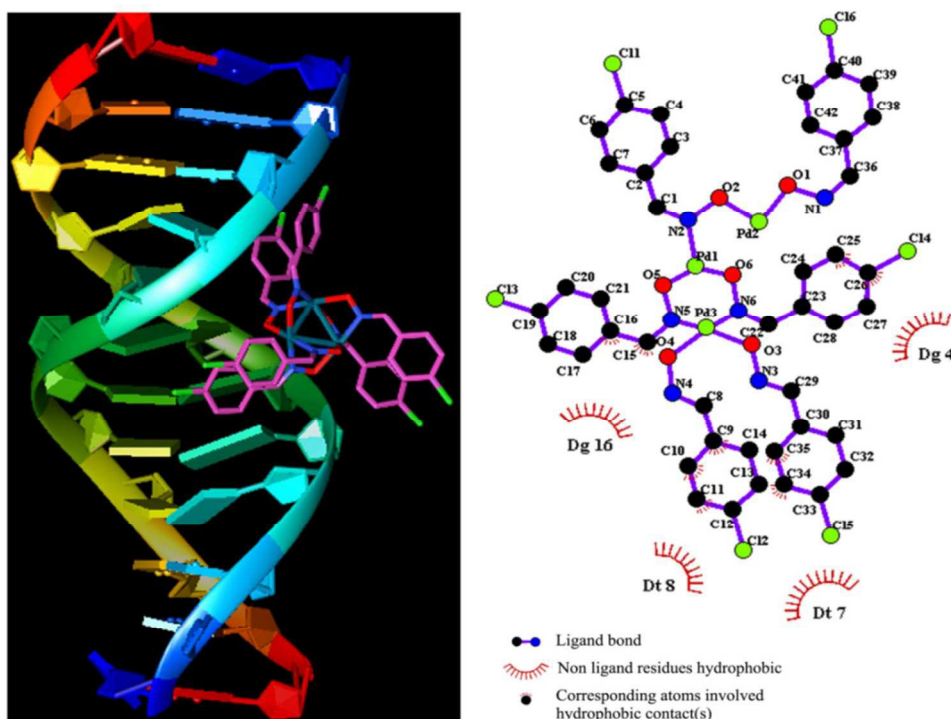
450 **Fig.11.** Synchronous fluorescence spectra of BSA in the presence of different concentrations of  
 451 complex ( $\lambda = 15$  nm (A) and  $\lambda = 60$  nm (B)) at 298 K and pH 7.4.  $C(\text{BSA}) = 2 \times 10^{-6}$  mol L<sup>-1</sup>;  
 452  $C(\text{complex}) = 0, 2.95 \times 10^{-7}, 6.76 \times 10^{-7}, 1.04 \times 10^{-6}, 1.39 \times 10^{-6}, 1.73 \times 10^{-6}, 2.06 \times 10^{-6}, 2.37 \times 10^{-6}, 2.83 \times 10^{-6},$   
 453  $3.05 \times 10^{-6}, 3.26 \times 10^{-6}, 3.47 \times 10^{-6}, 3.67 \times 10^{-6}$  mol L<sup>-1</sup>.

454

455

456 **Molecular docking of the Pd (II) complex with DNA sequence d(CGCGAATTCGCG)<sub>2</sub>.** In  
 457 order to obtain the binding site, the blind docking was performed on the DNA duplex with  
 458 sequence d(CGCGAATTCGCG)<sub>2</sub>. The grid map was set to  $30 \times 26 \times 30$  Å<sup>3</sup> along the x, y, and z  
 459 axes with 1.0 Å grid spacing. The conformations were ranked based on the lowest free binding  
 460 energy. The results of docking model revealed that the Pd complex fitted into the DNA major

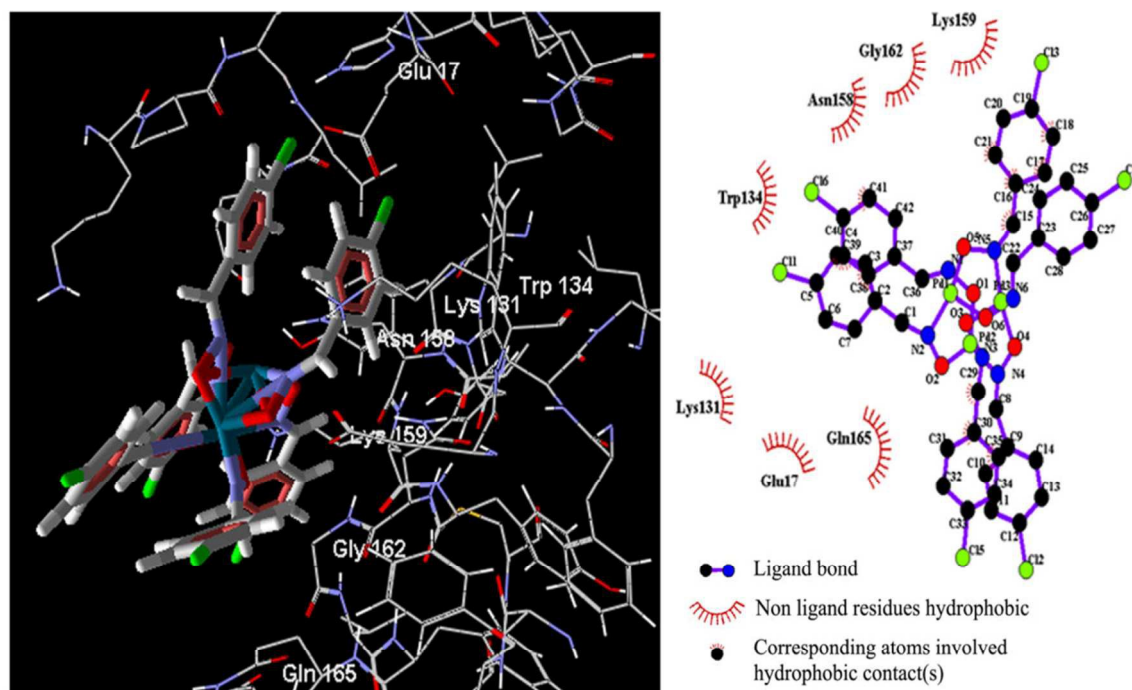
461 groove (Fig. 12). There are four of hydrophobic interactions between the complex atoms and  
 462 bases of DNA. (i) between C25, C26 and DG4, (ii) between C9, C10, C11, C35 and DT7, (iii)  
 463 between C34 and DT8, (iv) between C15, C16 and DG16. The binding free energy was found to  
 464 be  $-6.98 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$ , which corresponded to  $K_{\text{binding}} = 1.30 \times 10^5 \text{ M}^{-1}$ . The binding free energy  
 465 indicates a high binding affinity between DNA and the Pd complex.



466  
 467 **Fig.12.**(A) Molecular docking of the Pd complex with the major groove side of DNA by UCSF  
 468 chimera, (B) two-dimensional interactions generated by LIGPLOT+.

469  
 470  
 471 **Molecular docking of the Pd (II) complex with BSA.** In the docking of Pd (II) complex with  
 472 BSA, a grid map  $52 \times 30 \times 32 \text{ \AA}^3$  was created with a grid-point spacing of  $1.0 \text{ \AA}$ . The  
 473 conformations were ranked based on the lowest binding free energy. The molecular docking

474 study of BSA showed that the Pd (II) complex preferred the binding pocket of domain I. As  
 475 shown in (Fig. 13), there are seven hydrophobic interactions between the complex atoms and the  
 476 amino acids of binding site: (i) between C29, C30, C34 and Gln165, (ii) between C15, C16, C17,  
 477 C21 and Gly162, (iii) between C15 and Asn158, (iv) between C41 and Trp134, (v) between C39  
 478 and Glu17, (vi) between C38 and Lys131, (vii) between C17, C18 and Lys159. The binding free  
 479 energy for the complex to BSA was found to be  $-5.96 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$ . Also, the docking study shows  
 480 that the distance between the Trp134 residue and the complex is  $2.5 \text{ \AA}$ ; this finding provides a  
 481 good agreement with the fluorescence quenching of BSA emission in the presence of the Pd  
 482 complex.



483

484 **Fig.13.** (A) The Pd complex was docked in the binding pocket of BSA using MVD, (B) two-  
 485 dimensional interactions generated by LIGPLOT+.

486

**487 Conclusion**

488 Chelate palladium compounds are inorganic agents that have good clinical effects in treatment of  
489 various types of cancer as cytotoxic agent, because of chelating ligands to minimize the high  
490 lability and fast hydrolysis of palladium complexes in biological environments. In this work, we  
491 have synthesized a novel trinuclear palladium (II) complex containing oxime chelate ligand. The  
492 structure of the complex was characterized by X-ray crystallography and other methods. The  
493 binding interaction of a biologically relevant new Pd complex with calf thymus DNA, bioactivity  
494 investigation by UV-Vis and fluorescence spectroscopy, and other spectroscopic measurements  
495 unambiguously suggested the groove binding of the probe with the DNA. Molecular docking  
496 simulation corroborated the experimental results. The reactivity towards BSA revealed that the  
497 quenching of BSA fluorescence by the Pd complex was of the static type. The site marker  
498 displacement experiments suggested the location of the complex binding to BSA was the Sudlow  
499 's site I in the subdomain IIA. Finally, the molecular docking experiment supported the above  
500 results and effectively proved the binding of Pd (II) complex to BSA and DNA. New therapeutic  
501 approaches are rapidly emerging, and further research may help in designing more specific  
502 chelate palladium compounds that would spare the normal tissues, have less adverse effects and  
503 improve patient's quality of life. Further studies on the trinuclear palladium complex in vivo and  
504 in vitro anticancer activities are currently in progress in our research group.

505

506

507

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510 of Biochemistry and Biophysics University of Tehran are gratefully acknowledged.  
511 Crystallography was supported from Czech Science Foundation project No. 14-03276S.

**512 Appendix A. Supplementary material**

513 CCDC 1058050 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for complex. These data  
514 can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Center via  
515 [www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data\\_request/cif](http://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif).

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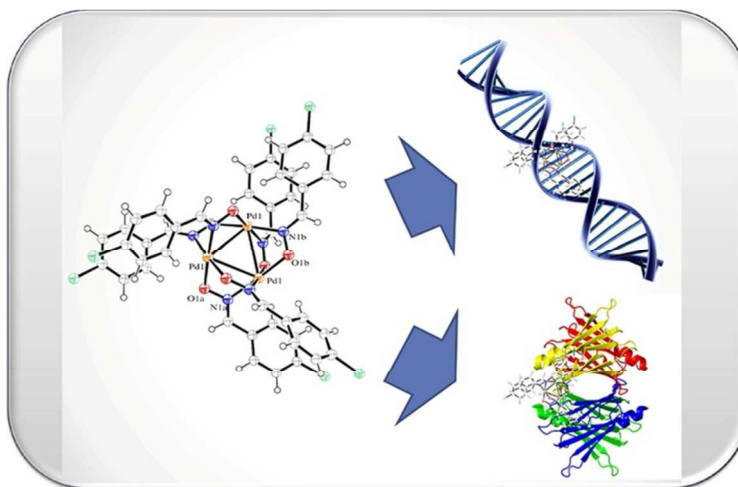
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The trinuclear palladium (II) complex containing oxime ligand, showed significant interaction with both CT-DNA and BSA. The molecular docking indicates high binding affinity between DNA and BSA with Pd complex.