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Scalable Production of Highly Sensitive Nanosensors Based on Graphene Functionalized with a Designed G Protein-Coupled Receptor

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Materials Science 2014

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Motivation

Nanomaterials research is attracting international attention:

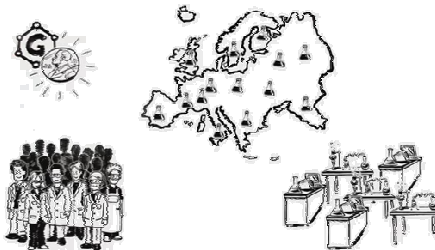
US DoD

Totals \$15M/year, graphene research is near 1% of DoD annual basic research budget

- DARPA CERA Program, \$30M
- 2 Air Force MURIs, \$15M
- 3 Navy MURIs, \$22M
- Army MURI, \$8M

US holds 40% of graphene-related patents, trailing Asia (45%)

Patent landscape is rapidly shifting towards Asia



Europe – Graphene Flagship

Initiating biggest research initiative ever to increase graphene IP stake (12%)

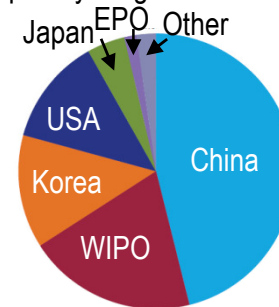
→ **€1B (\$1.38B) over 10 years**



Earliest priority filing date 2009 or earlier



Earliest priority filing date 2010 or later



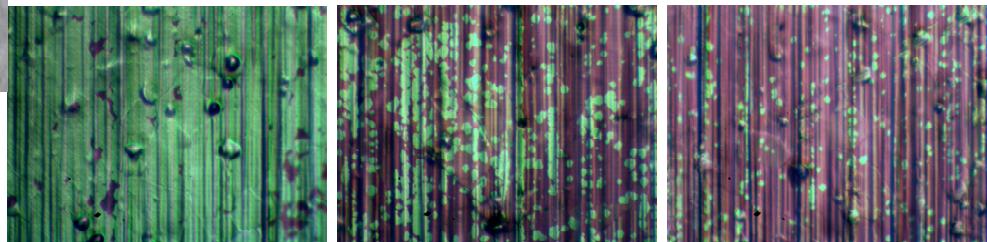
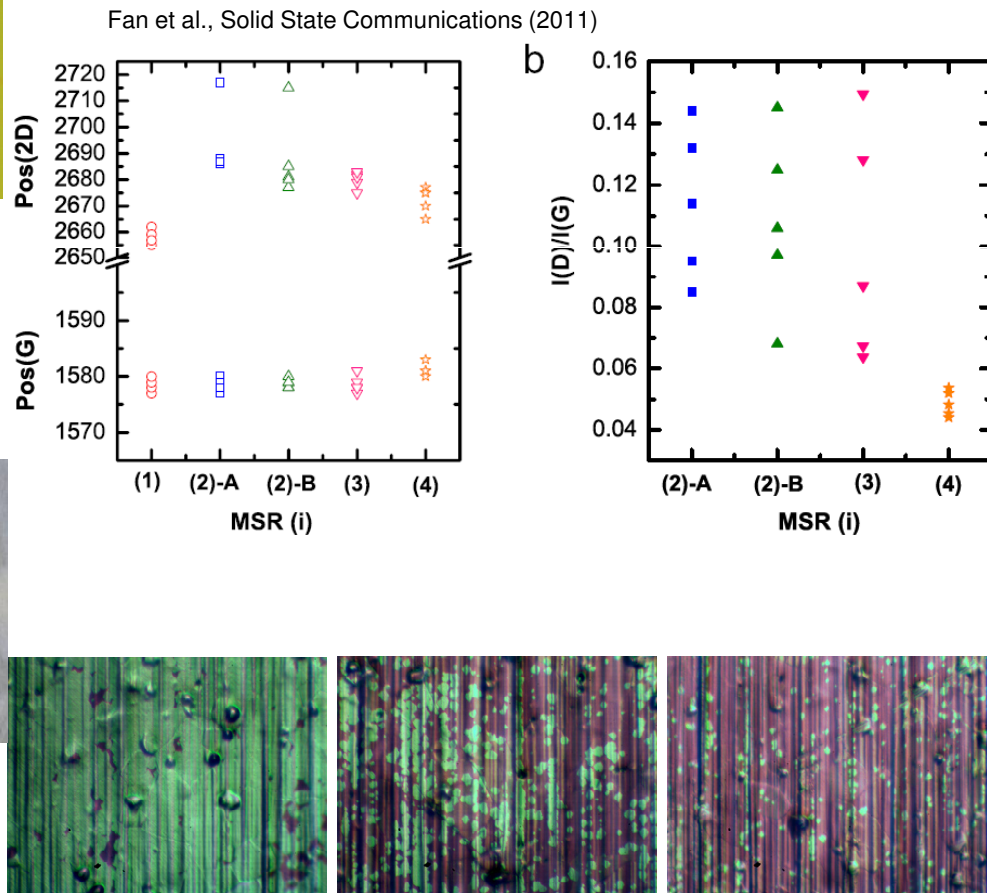
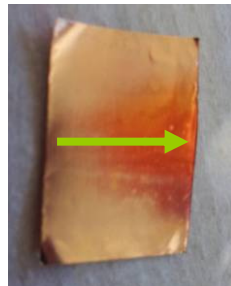
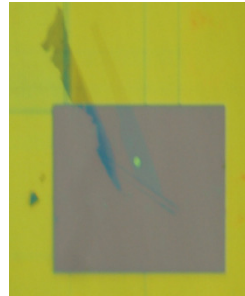
Asia
China and Korea are rapidly becoming the pacesetters in terms of graphene manufacturing, packaging and integration.

Basic research publications by China outnumber US 3:2

Motivation

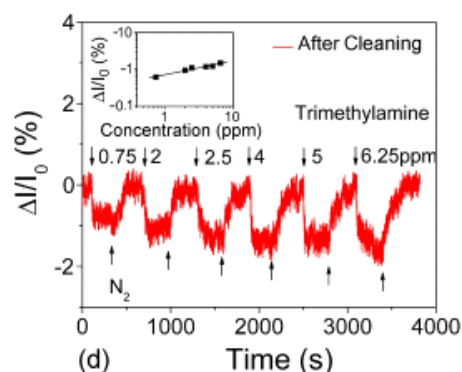
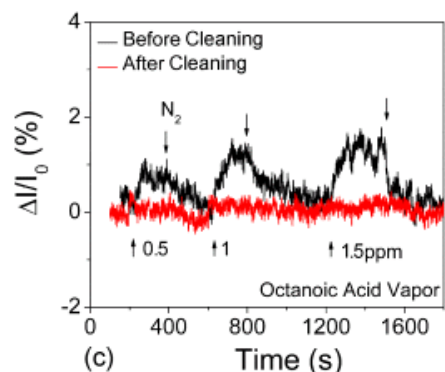
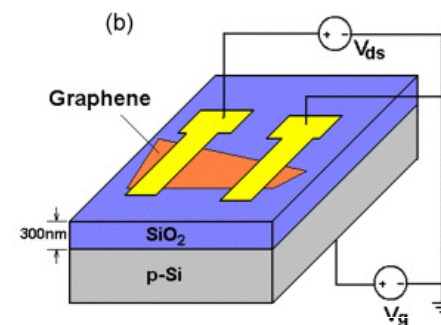
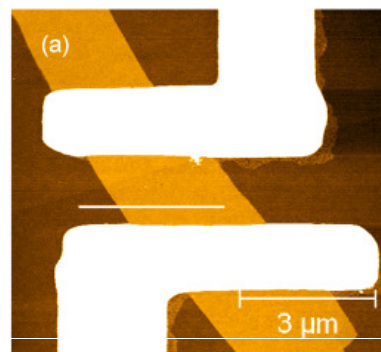
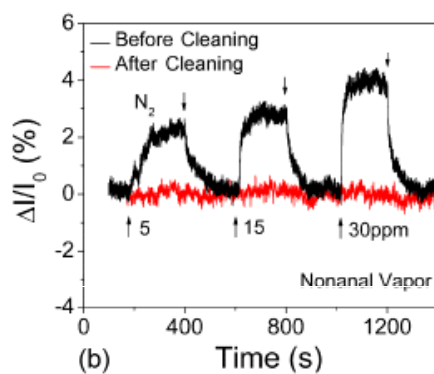
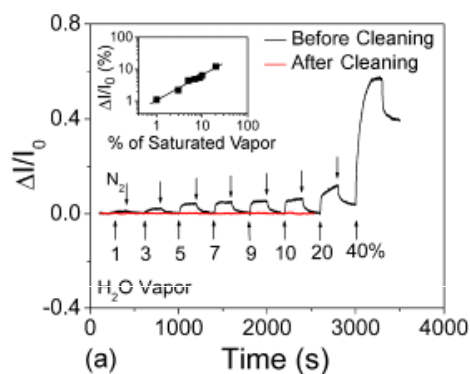
Are we maximizing our return on investment?

- **Devices fall short of theoretical performance limits** because of contamination issues
- There exists variation across a single sample and batch to batch variation
- Reproducibility and reliability are necessary for viable manufacturing process



Motivation

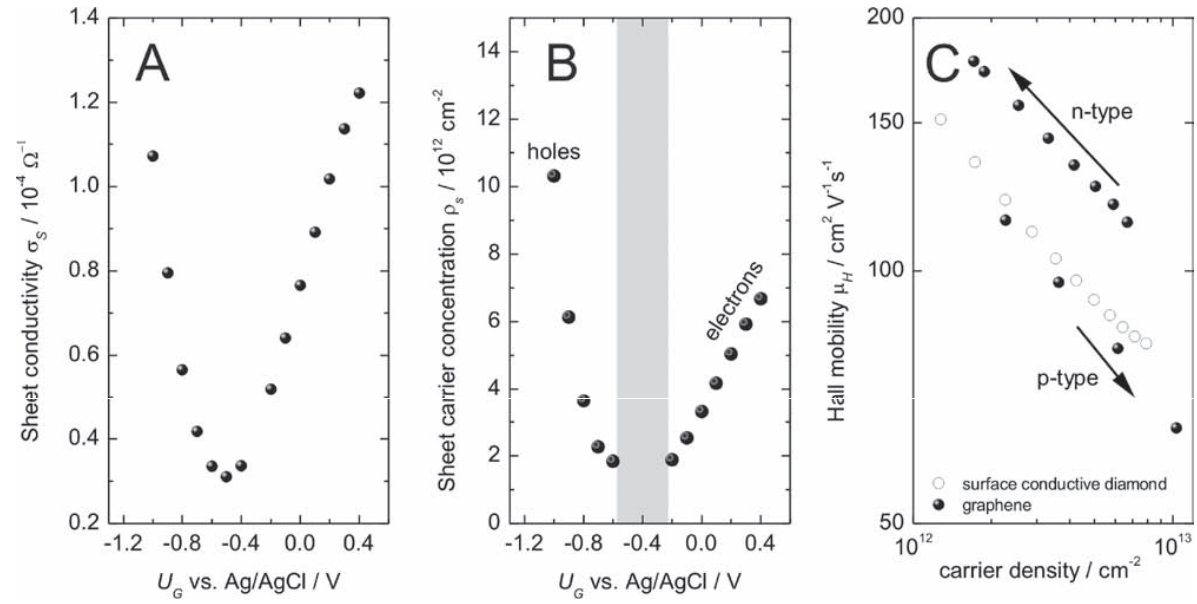
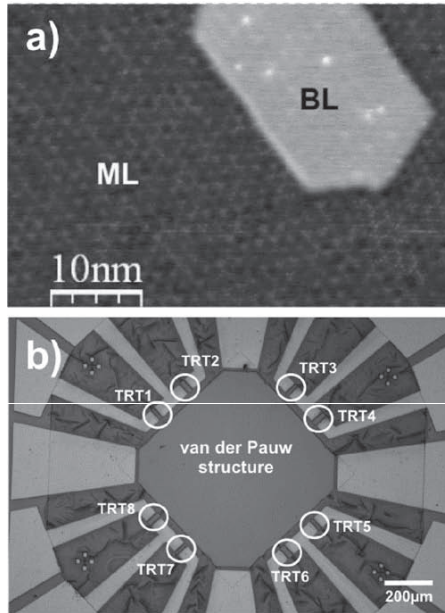
Variability can have a dramatic impact on device properties



Dan et al., Nano Letters (2009)

- As an example, graphene devices used in chemical sensing applications demonstrate a **false response from resist residue**
- Clean devices do not sense well, and intentionally functionalized devices function more reliably

Towards Large Scale Device Manufacturing

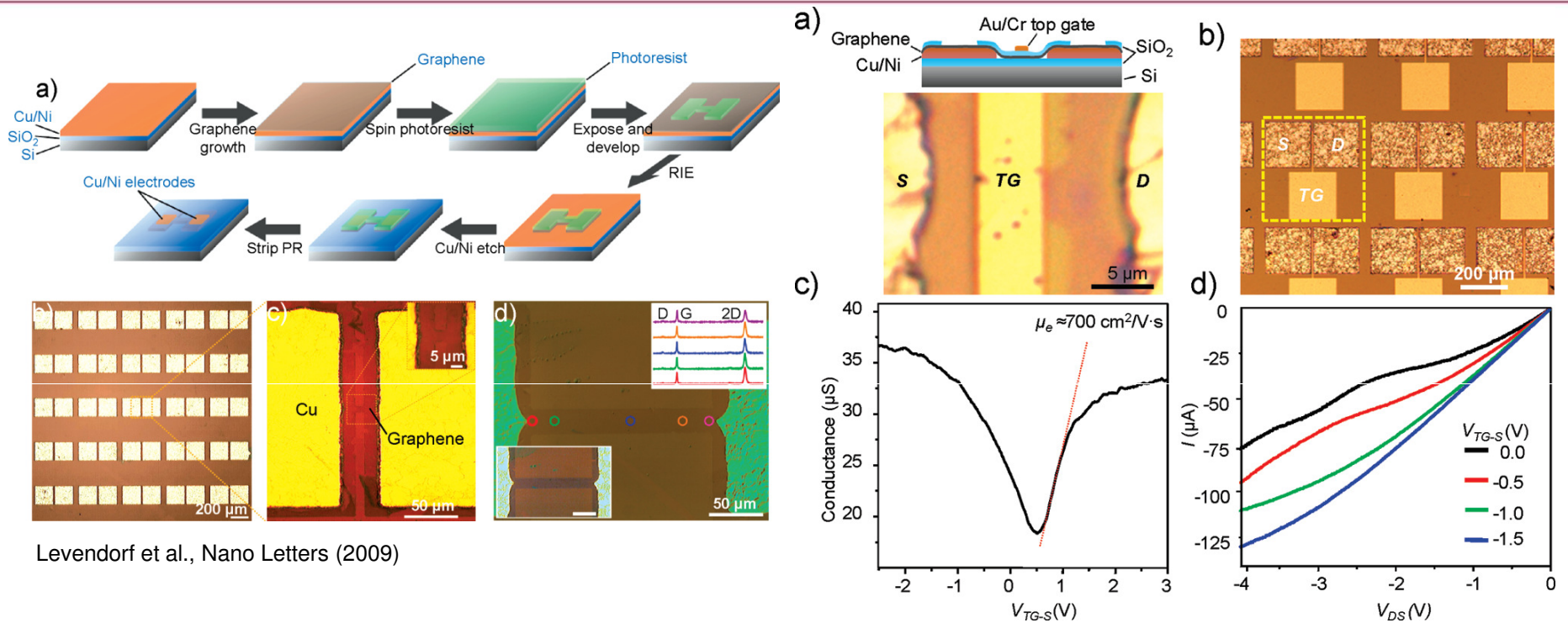


Dankerl et al., Advanced Functional Materials (2010)

Epitaxial graphene, solution gated, mobility $\sim 100\text{-}200 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$

- Only a handful of examples exist in the literature reporting large scale (hundreds or greater) arrays of graphene electronic devices.
- Success in maintaining the native graphene quality is limited.

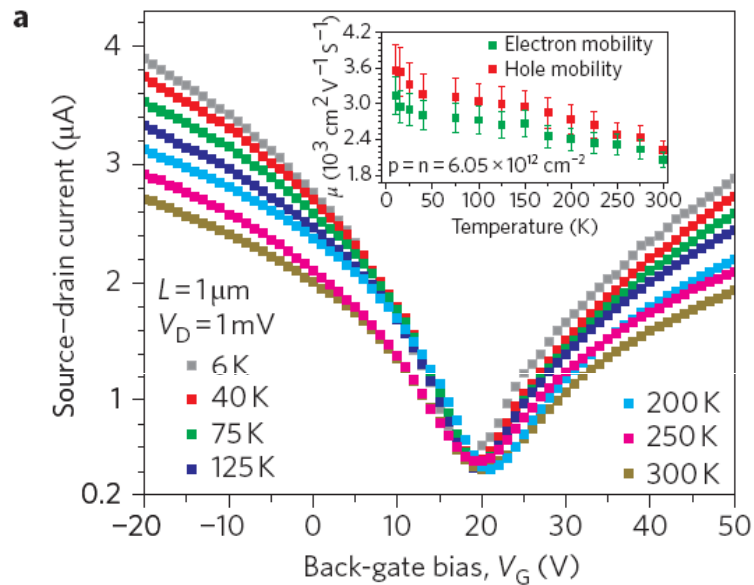
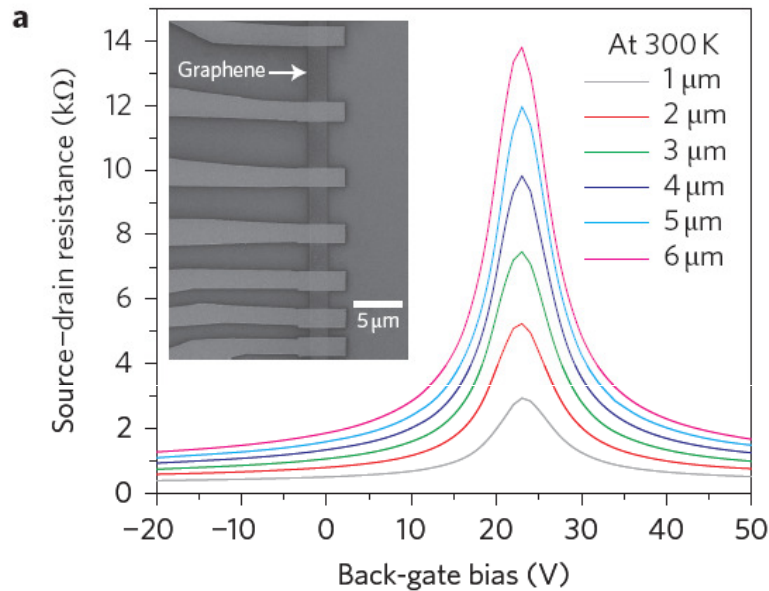
Towards Large Scale Device Manufacturing



CVD graphene, back gated, mobility $\sim 700 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$

- Only a handful of examples exist in the literature reporting large scale (hundreds or greater) arrays of graphene electronic devices.
- Success in maintaining the native graphene quality is limited.

Towards Large Scale Device Manufacturing



Xia et al., Nature Nanotechnology (2011)

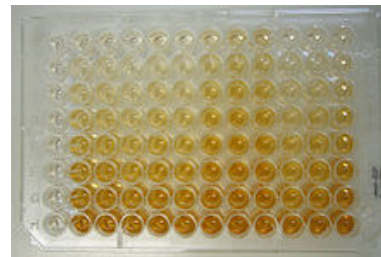
Exfoliated graphene, back gated, mobility $\sim 2000 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$

- Only a handful of examples exist in the literature reporting large scale (hundreds or greater) arrays of graphene electronic devices.
- Success in maintaining the native graphene quality is limited.

Motivation: Better Diagnostics

- Clinical immunoassays have **limitations**:
 - 1) Costly
 - 2) Significant processing time
 - 3) Specific for a particular analyte

- Environmental Monitoring sensors are **inflexible**
 - One sensor, one analyte
- Best sensor available is not technologically matched



PSA ELISA kit



Chemical Detection Platform: NanoCarbon Transistors

Goal: Develop a modular chemical detection platform adaptable to any vapor or liquid target with high sensitivity and selectivity

NanoCarbon Platform:

Transistor devices based on carbon nanotubes and graphene can be fabricated into large arrays and then functionalized with biochemical agents for tailored detection of molecules of interest.

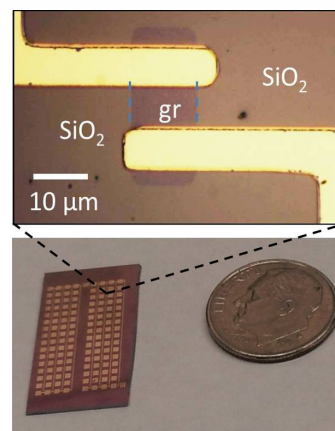
Scalable: 100 sensors on a dime

Modular: Generic chemistry can be easily modified to detect any molecule

Low cost: Materials cost <\$0.10 per sensor

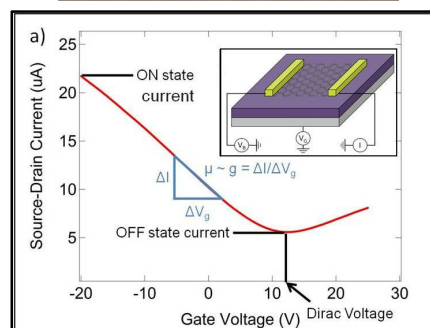
Rapid detection: Minutes

Robust to possible interfering compounds



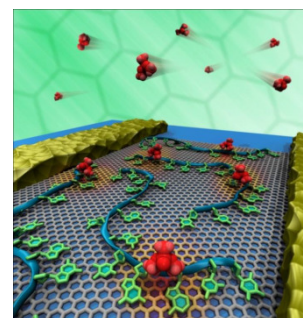
Sensor Fabrication:

High yield process (>98%) for making large arrays of transistors at a small size scale [1]



Sensor Operation:

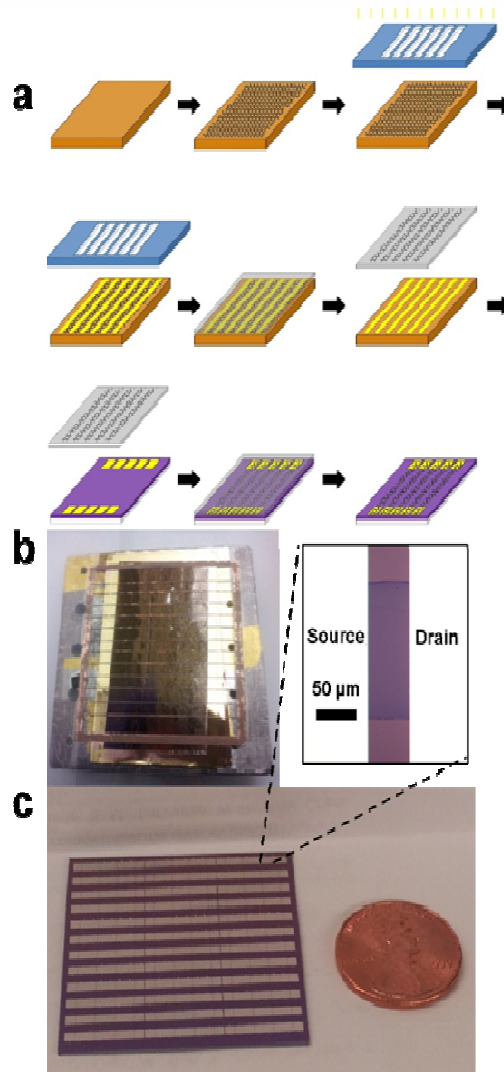
Electrical characterization of the devices produces several parameters for chemical detection, hence a multidimensional feature vector [2]



Sensor Functionalization:

Transistors are chemically modified to detect molecules of interest [3]

Device Fabrication



Graphene field effect transistor (GFET) fabrication process:

- Graphene patterned by conventional lithography is contaminated by resist residue
- Need a method to **pattern graphene during transfer**
- Gold is evaporated onto the graphene using a shadow mask
- Gold/Cu foil covered in PMMA
- PMMA removed by bubble transfer technique
- Uncovered graphene is removed preferentially
- Graphene strips are transferred to Pd electrodes
- **Yield is >99%**

Device Fabrication

GRAPHENE TRANSFER

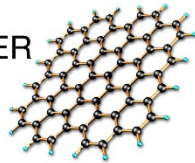


Figure .1



Figure .2



Figure .3



Figure .4

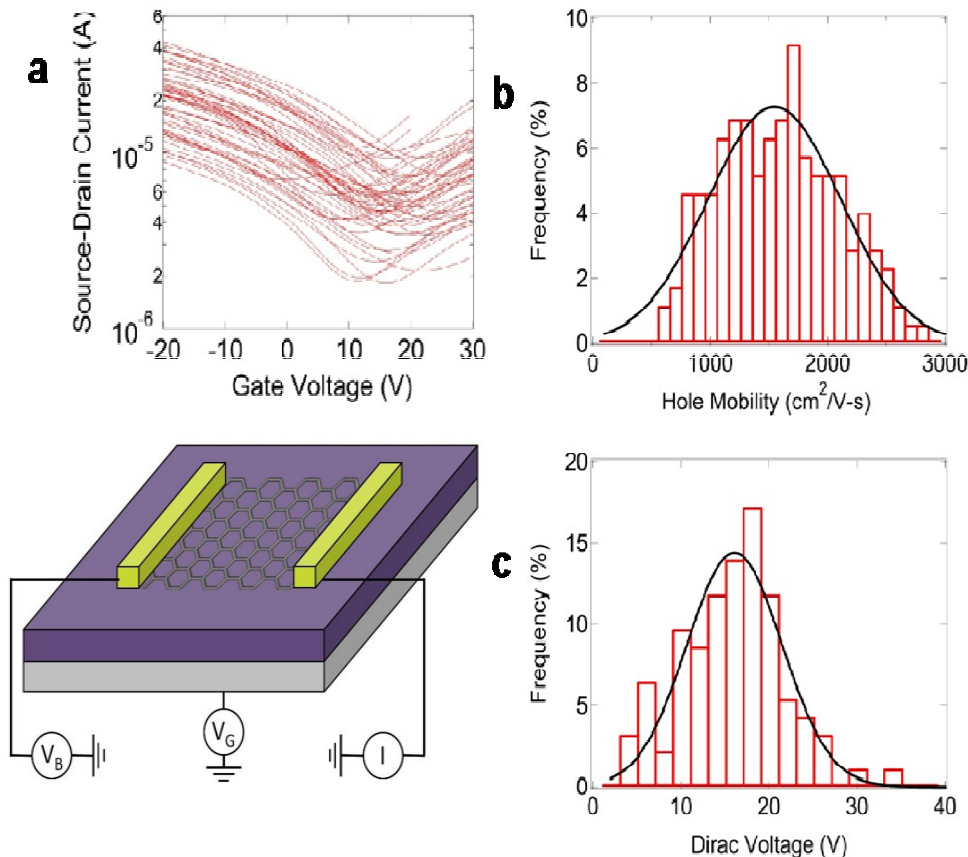


Figure .5

Bubble transfer:

- Cu/Graphene/PMMA stack is lowered into a solution of NaOH
- There is a potential difference maintained between the copper foil and the solution
- Electrochemically drives the formation of hydrogen and oxygen bubbles at the electrodes
- **Bubbles gently lift graphene/PMMA from the copper**

Electrical Characterization of Transistor Array



Performance characteristics of GFETs:

a) Representative set of 50 highly uniform I - V_g curves along with graphene FET schematic

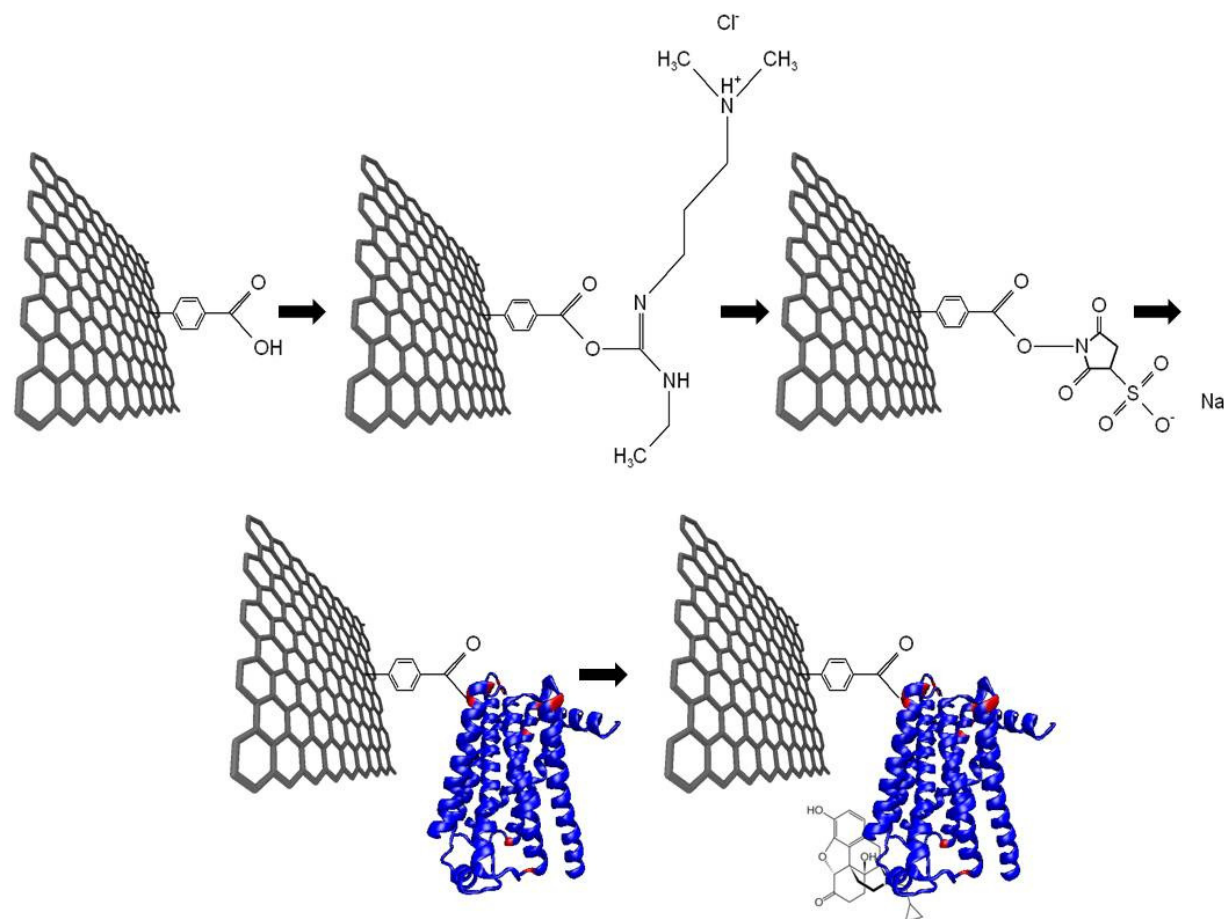
b) Histogram of GFET mobility

- Average at $1500 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$

c) Histogram of GFET Dirac Voltage

- Average at 15 V

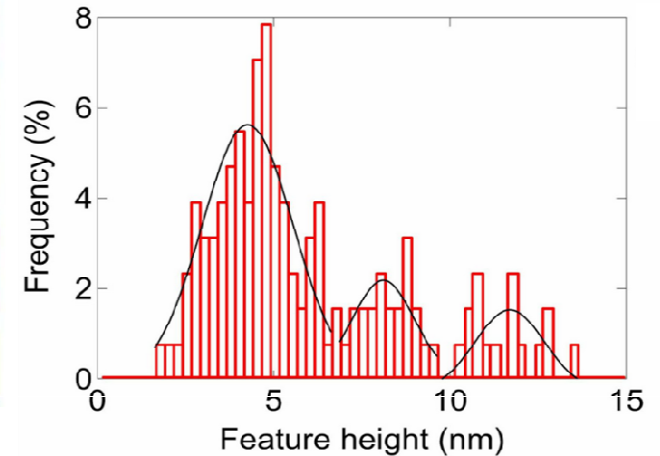
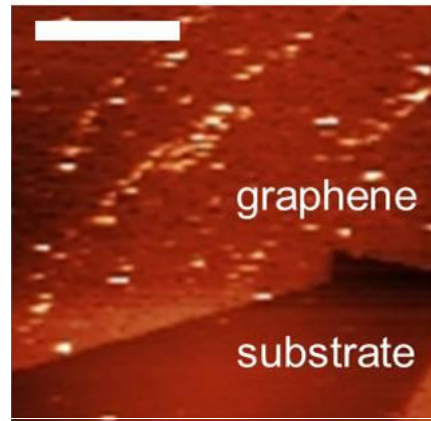
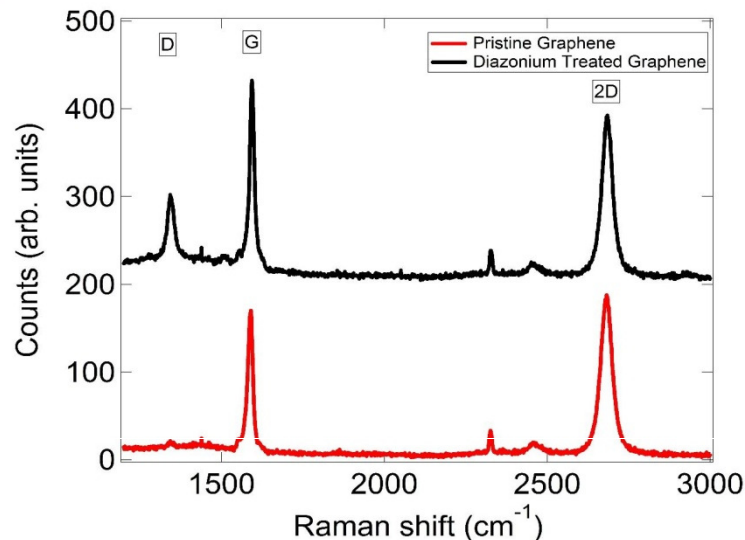
Chemical Detection Platform: Opioid Functionalization



Tailored chemical detection of opioids:

- Diazonium-based approach to chemical functionalization
- Activation and stabilization with EDC/sNHS
- Mu opioid receptor (GPCR) displaces sNHS at lysine residues
- Mu receptor binds target naltrexone

Chemical Detection Platform: Opioid Functionalization



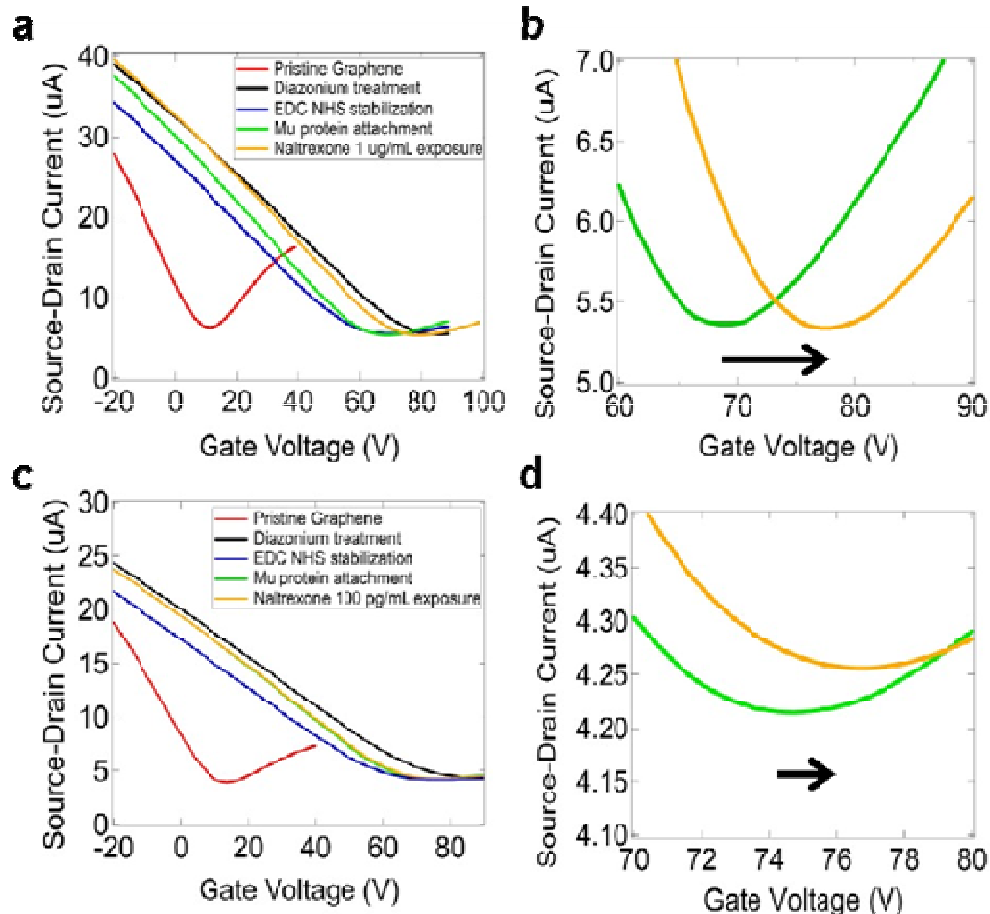
Characterization by Raman spectroscopy and Atomic Force Microscopy:

- Raman spectra show strongly enhanced D-band (near 1360 cm^{-1}) after diazonium treatment
- Indicates the **formation of sp^3 hybridized carbon-carbon bonds** on the graphene surface.

AFM image of mu receptors decorating the graphene surface

Histogram of the heights of proteins indicates that the 46 kDa mu receptor **monomer is ~4 nm tall on the surface**, with dimers and trimers of 8 nm and 12 nm respectively.

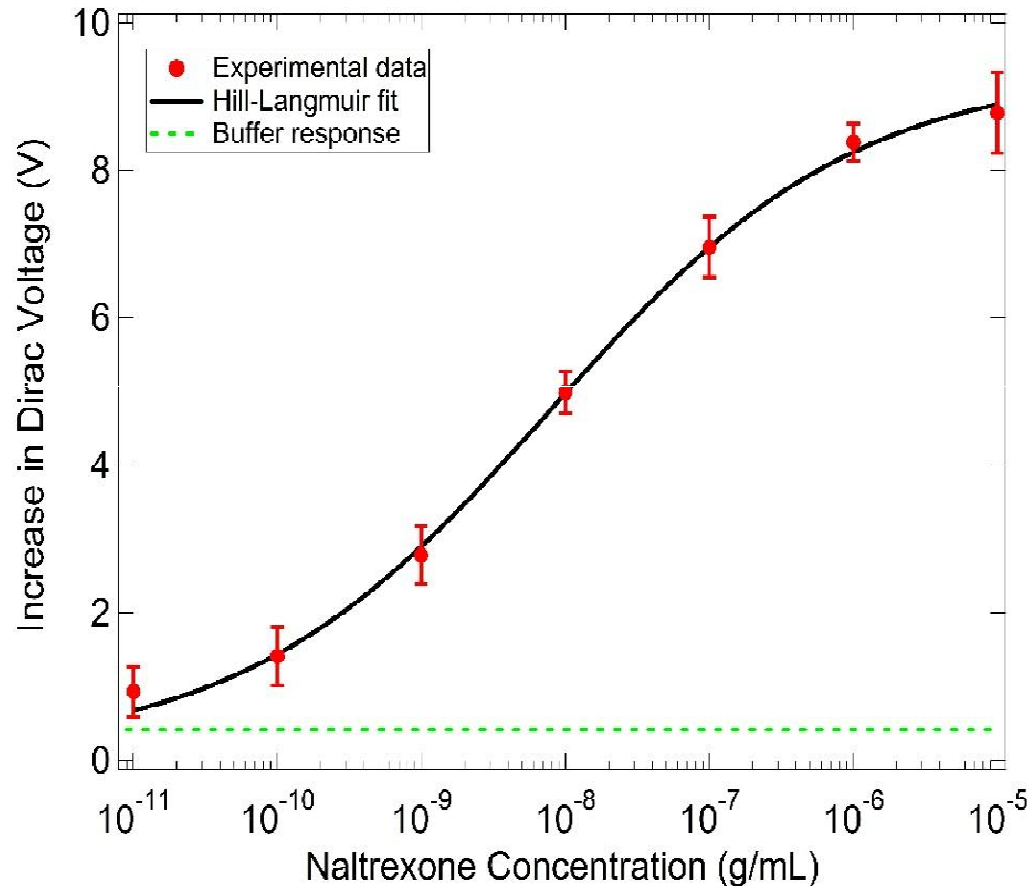
Chemical Detection Platform: Opioid Functionalization



Current-gate voltage ($I-V_G$) characteristic measurements:

- $I-V_G$ plots after successive functionalization steps at 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ naltrexone
- Naltrexone in buffer leads to an **increase in the Dirac voltage** of 8.5 V (green curve to orange curve).
- $I-V_G$ plots after successive functionalization steps at 100 pg/mL naltrexone
- Naltrexone in buffer leads to an increase in the Dirac voltage of 1.8 V (green curve to orange curve).

Chemical Detection Platform: Opioid Functionalization



$$f(C) = A \frac{C^n}{K_d^n + C^n} + Z$$

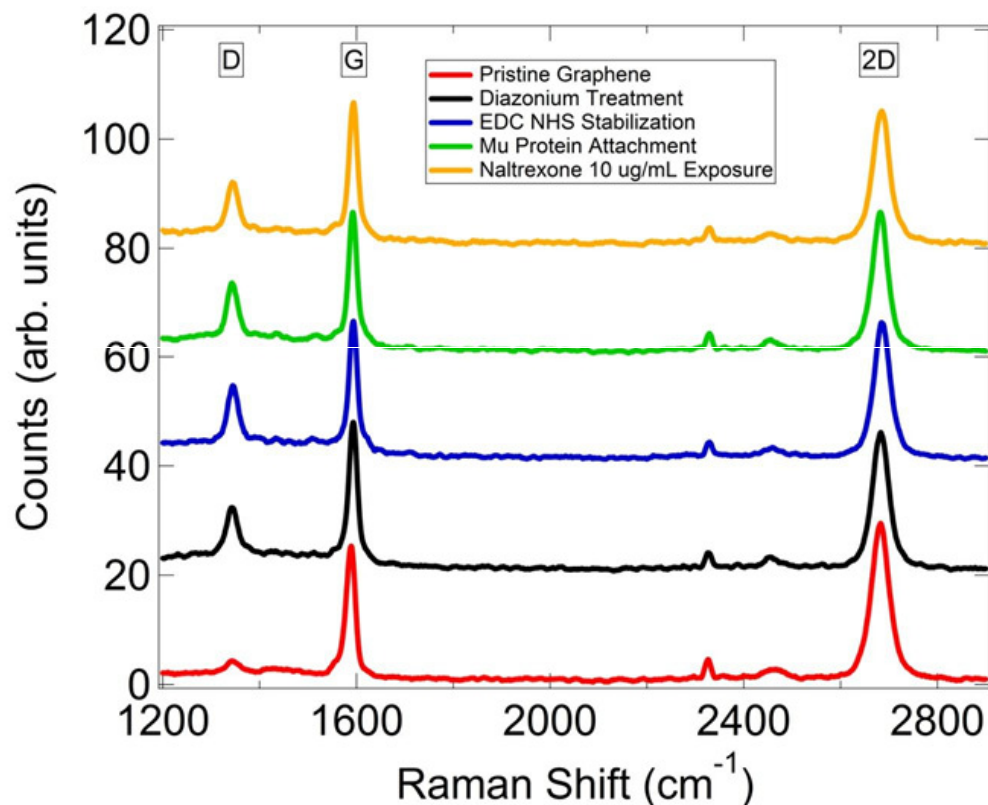
Sensor response (increase in Dirac voltage) shows **discernable signal from the bare buffer response at 10 pg/mL naltrexone.**

The data are well explained by a modified Hill-Langmuir equation (black curve).

Chemical Detection Platform: Opioid Functionalization

Sample	Analyte	Average Dirac Voltage Shift (V)
MUR-GFET	Buffer with no Naltrexone	0.04 ± 0.38
MUR-GFET	Flumazenil at 10 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	-0.23 ± 0.43
MUR omitted	Naltrexone at 10 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	-0.25 ± 0.35
anti-HER2 scfv-GFET	Naltrexone at 10 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	-0.31 ± 0.48
MUR-GFET	Naltrexone at 10 $\mu\text{g/mL}$	8.78 ± 0.55

Chemical Detection Platform: Raman Readout

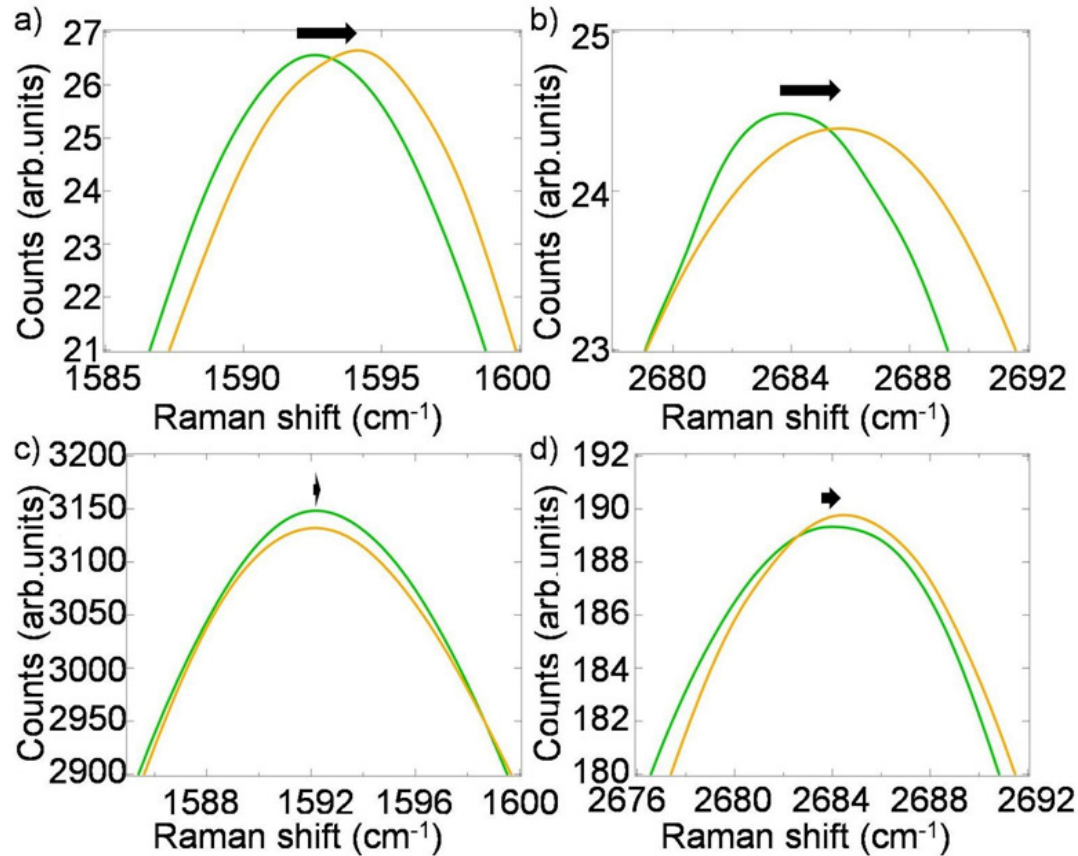


Raman spectra during functionalization steps:

- 1) D/G ratio increased after diazonium treatment and 2D/G ratio decreased from 1.5 to 0.95
- 2) Little change between diazonium treatment and mu protein attachment

Upon exposure to Naltrexone, there were **significant shifts in the G-peak and 2D peak positions** which were concentration dependent

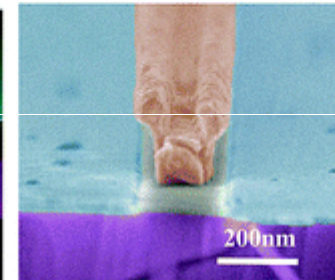
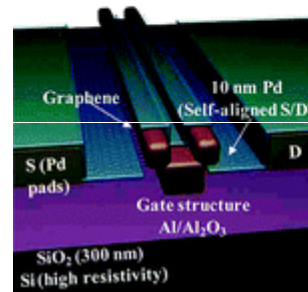
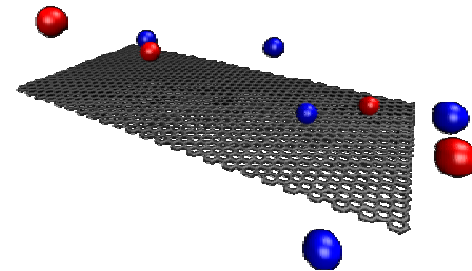
Chemical Detection Platform: Raman Readout



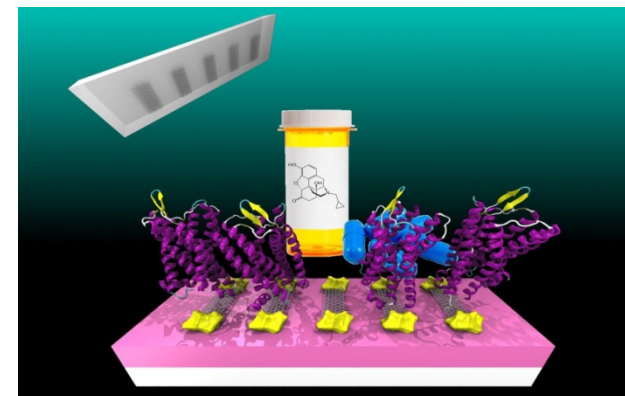
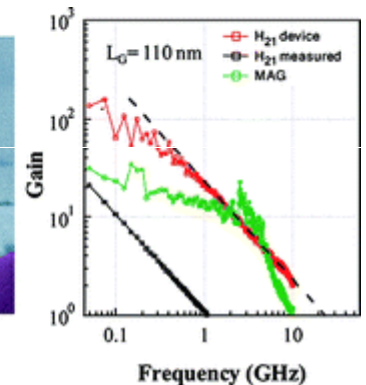
- a) **Mu-functionalized device showing Raman G peak shift** of $\sim 1.5 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ before (green) and after (orange) Naltrexone exposure at $10 \mu\text{g/mL}$.
- b) **2D peak position shift of $\sim 2 \text{ cm}^{-1}$** for same device
- c) For device exposed to pure buffer, G peak does not appreciably shift
- d) 2D peak position is only slightly affected by buffer exposure, shifting only 0.5 cm^{-1} for this device.

Conclusions

- Many publications cite contamination as an issue in production of lithographically defined graphene devices
- Performance of complex device architectures suffer
- Better understanding of the contamination mechanism and alternative fabrication procedures are needed to have graphene devices realize their ultimate potential.



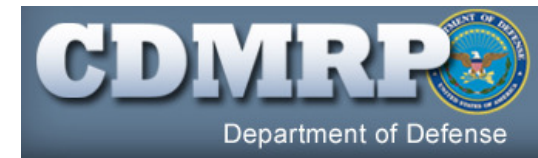
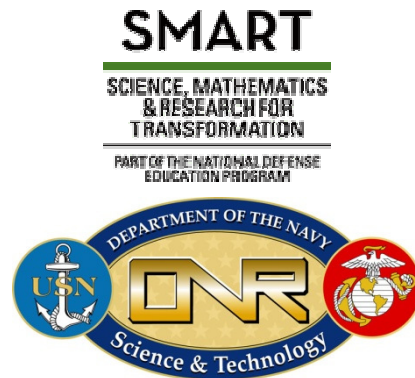
Badmaev et al., ACS Nano (2012)





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