



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***SYNTHESIS, CHARACTERISATION AND BIOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES OF  
NOVEL NITROGEN-SULPHUR MACROCYCLIC LIGANDS AND THEIR  
TRANSITION METAL COMPLEXES***

**CHAH CHEE KEONG**

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By

**CHAH CHEE KEONG**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**October 2017**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**October 2017**

**Chairman : Thahira Begum, PhD**  
**Faculty : Science**

Macrocycles have a great importance in macrocyclic and supramolecular chemistry. The term macrocycle is defined as a cyclic macromolecule with more than eight members. Macrocyclic Schiff bases and their transition metal complexes have various interesting biological properties such as cytotoxic, DNA binding, and antibacterial activities. In this project, the first novelty was the synthesis of five series tetradentate nitrogen-sulphur macrocyclic Schiff base derived from terephthaloyl-bis-dithiocarbamate (TDTC) using glyoxal (G), 2,5-hexanedione (H), acetyl acetone (A), 5,5-dimethyl-1,3-cyclohexanedione (D), and malondialdehyde (M). Their complexes were formed *via* reaction with various metal acetate or metal chloride salt [Ni(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II), Nb(II), Ru(III), Mo(V), and Pd(II)]. A total of 40 metal complexes were synthesised and these complexes were expected to have a general formula of  $M_2L$  or  $M_3L$ . These compounds were characterised by various physico-chemical and spectroscopic techniques. Based on the data obtained, the azomethine nitrogen atom and the thiolate sulphur atom from the Schiff base were coordinated to the metal ions. The geometry of Cu(II), Nb(II) and Pd(II) complexes was distorted square planar, but the Ni(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) and Ru(III) complexes was distorted square pyramidal. The Mo(V) complexes showed a distorted pentagonal bipyramidal. The Schiff bases and their metal complexes were evaluated for their cytotoxic activities against the invasive human bladder carcinoma cell line (EJ-28) and the minimum-invasive human bladder carcinoma cell line (RT-112). MTT assay was used in the determination of  $IC_{50}$  values. From the data obtained, the macrocyclic Schiff bases were inactive against to both the bladder cancer cell lines but the respective complexes had significantly increased cytotoxic activity. The complexes also showed higher activity against RT-112 than EJ-28. The  $IC_{50}$  for PdTGSB and RuTGSB complexes against RT-112 were strongly active with the values of 0.320 and 0.472  $\mu$ M, respectively. The second novelty in this study was the mechanism of death assays using macrocyclic compounds. The two active complexes were further studied for the

mechanism of death *via* Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) and Annexin V assays. Migration assay was also carried out on the most inactive compound, which was CuTGSB. The DNA binding interaction of the complexes with calf-thymus DNA (CT-DNA) was investigated *via* electronic absorption spectroscopy, fluorescence spectroscopy, and viscosity measurements. The binding constant,  $K_b$  for PdTGSB was  $3.79 \times 10^4 \text{ M}^{-1}$  and the binding mode was electrostatic binding. Antibacterial studies using three Gram-positive (*B. cereus*, *S. aureus*, *Methicillin-resistant S. aureus*) and four Gram-negative (*E. coli*, *K. pneumonia*, *S. typhimurium*, *S. sonnei*) bacteria were carried out. Standard disc diffusion method and determination of minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) were used in the antibacterial studies. The macrocyclic complexes were generally more active against the Gram-positive bacteria as compared to the Gram-negative bacteria. The MIC values obtained for CdTHSB and CdTASB against *B. cereus* was 2.0 mg/mL. Hence, these complexes were the candidates to be antibacterial agents.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**SINTESIS, PENCIRIAN DAN BIOLOGI AKTIVITI BAGI NITROGEN-SULFUR MAKROKITARAN LIGAN BARU DAN KOMPLEKS LOGAM PERALIHANNYA**

Oleh

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Makrokolekik adalah sangat penting dalam makrokitaran dan kimia supramolekul. Istilah makrokolekik ditakrifkan sebagai makromolekul kitaran dengan lebih daripada lapan ahli. Makrokitaran bes Schiff dan kompleks logam peralihannya mempunyai pelbagai ciri biologi yang menarik seperti aktiviti sitotoksik, pengikatan DNA, dan antibakteria. Dalam projek ini, kebaruan pertama ialah sintesis lima siri makrokitaran bes Schiff tetradentat nitrogen-sulfur yang diterbitkan daripada terephthaloil-bis-ditiokarbazot (TDTC) dengan menggunakan glioxal (G), 2,5-heksanadion (H), asetil aseton (A), 5,5-dimetil-1,3-sikloheksanadion (D), dan malondialdehid (M). Kompleksnya yang terbentuk adalah melalui tindak balas dengan pelbagai asetat logam atau klorida logam [Ni(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II), Nb(II), Ru(III), Mo(V), dan Pd(II)]. Sejumlah 40 kompleks logam telah disintesis dan kompleks ini dijangka mempunyai formula umum iaitu  $M_2L$  atau  $M_3L$ . Sebatian-sebatian ini telah dicirikan melalui pelbagai teknik fiziko-kimia dan spektroskopi. Berdasarkan data yang diperolehi, atom nitrogen azometin dan atom sulfur thiolat dari bes Schiff dikoordinat kepada ion logam. Geometri untuk kompleks Cu(II), Nb(II) dan Pd(II) adalah segiempat sama terherot, tetapi kompleks Ni(II), Zn(II), Cd(II) dan Ru(III) adalah piramid segiempat terherot. Kompleks Mo(V) menunjukkan bipiramid segilima terherot. Bes Schiff dan kompleks logamnya telah dinilai untuk aktiviti sitotoksiknya terhadap sel karsinoma kanser pundi kencing manusia invasif (EJ-28) dan sel karsinoma kanser pundi kencing manusia yang minimum invasif (RT-112). Ujian MTT digunakan dalam penentuan nilai  $IC_{50}$ . Daripada data yang diperolehi, makrokitaran bes Schiff tidak aktif terhadap kedua-dua sel kanser pundi kencing tetapi kompleks masing-masing telah meningkatkan aktiviti sitotoksik dengan ketara. Kompleks juga menunjukkan aktiviti yang lebih tinggi terhadap RT-112 daripada EJ-28.  $IC_{50}$  untuk kompleks PdTGSB dan RuTGSB terhadap RT-112 adalah sangat aktif dengan nilai masing-masing 0.320 dan 0.472  $\mu$ M. Kebaruan kedua dalam kajian ini adalah ujian mekanisme kematian menggunakan sebatian makrokitaran. Dua kompleks yang aktif akan diteruskan bagi kajian lanjutan untuk mekanisme kematian melalui ujian Spesies

Oksigen Reaktif (ROS) dan Annexin V. Ujian penghijrahan juga dilakukan untuk sebatian paling tidak aktif iaitu CuTGSB. Interaksi pengikatan DNA untuk kompleks dengan DNA timus anak lembu (CT-DNA) diselidik melalui spektroskopi penyerapan elektronik, spektroskopi pendarfluor, dan pengukuran kelikatan. Pemalar ikatan,  $K_b$  bagi PdTGSB adalah  $3.79 \times 10^4 \text{ M}^{-1}$  dan mod ikatan adalah ikatan elektrostatik. Kajian antibakteria menggunakan tiga Gram-positif (*B. cereus*, *S. aureus*, *Methicillin-resistant S. aureus*) dan empat Gram-negatif (*E. coli*, *K. pneumonia*, *S. typhimurium*, *S. sonnei*) bakteria juga telah dilakukan. Kaedah penyebaran cakera standard dan penentuan kepekatan penghalang minimum (MIC) digunakan dalam kajian antibakteria. Kompleks makrokitaran umumnya lebih aktif terhadap bakteria Gram-positif berbanding dengan bakteria Gram-negatif. Nilai MIC yang diperolehi untuk CdTHSB dan CdTASB terhadap *B. cereus* adalah 2.0 mg/mL. Oleh itu, kompleks tersebut adalah calon untuk menjadi agen antibakteria.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SMDTC	S-methyldithiocarbazate
SBDTC	S-benzylthiocarbazate
HOMO	Highest occupied molecular orbital energies
LUMO	Lowest unoccupied molecular orbital energies
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
mRNA	Messenger ribonucleic acid
PS	Phosphatidylserine
ROS	Reactive oxygen species
ATP	Adenosine triphosphate
NADH	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide
RPMI	Roswell Park Memorial Institute medium
FBS	Fetal bovine serum
MTT	3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide
PBS	Phosphate-buffered saline
DCFH-DA	2',7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein diacetate
DCF	2',7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein
DPBS	Dulbecco's phosphate buffered saline
PI	Propidium iodide
Tris	Tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane
MHA	Muller Hinton agar
MHB	Muller Hinton broth
TSA	Tryptic Soy agar
INT	p-iodonitrotetrazolium violet
DMSO	Dimethylsulphoxide

mp	Melting point
TDTC	Terephthaloyl-bis-dithiocarbazate
TGSB	4,11,20,27-tetrathio-3,12,19,28-tetrathia-5,6,9,10,21,22,25,26-octaazatricyclo[28.2.2.2 <sup>14,17</sup> ]hexatriaconta-1(33),6,8,14(36),15,17(35),22,24,30(34),31-decaene-2,13,18,29-tetraone
THSB	7,10,25,28-Tetramethyl-4,13,22,31-tetrathio-3,14,21,32-tetrathia-5,6,11,12,23,24,29,30-octaaza-tricyclo[32.2.2.2 <sup>16,19</sup> ]tetraconta-1(37),6,10,16(40),17,19(39),24,28,34(38),35-decaene-2,15,20,33-tetraone
TDSB	S-(5,5-dimethyl-1,3-cyclohexanedione)terephthaloyl-bis-dithiocarbazate
TASB	7,9,24,26-Tetramethyl-4,12,21,29-tetrathio-3,13,20,30-tetrathia-5,6,10,11,22,23,27,28-octaaza-tricyclo[30.2.2.2 <sup>15,18</sup> ]octatriaconta-1(35),6,9,15(38),16,18(37),23,26,32(36),33-decaene-2,14,19,31-tetraone
TMSB	4,12,21,29-Tetrathio-3,13,20,30-tetrathia-5,6,10,11,22,23,27,28-octaaza-tricyclo[30.2.2.2 <sup>15,18</sup> ]octatriaconta-1(35),6,9,15(38),16,18(37),23,26,32(36),33-decaene-2,14,19,31-tetraone
L	Ligand
FT-IR	Fourier Transform Infrared
NMR	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance
TMS	Tetramethylsilane
ppm	Parts per million
MS	Mass spectrometry
ICP-OES	Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectrometry
UV-Vis	Ultraviolet-Visible
EJ-28	Invasive human bladder carcinoma cell line
RT-112	Minimally-invasive human bladder carcinoma cell line
IC <sub>50</sub>	Inhibition concentration at 50%



ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
OD	Optical density
BD tube	BD polystyrene round-bottom tube
CT-DNA	Calf thymus- deoxyribonucleic acid
$K_b$	Binding constant
MRSA	Methicillin resistant <i>staphylococcus aureus</i>
B.C.	<i>Bacillus cereus</i>
S.A.	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>
E.C.	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
K.P.	<i>Klebsiella pneumonia</i>
S.T.	<i>Salmonella typhimurium</i>
S.S.	<i>Shigella sonnei</i>
cfu	Colony forming units
MIC	Minimum inhibitory concentration
D	Decomposed
M	Metal
Ar.	Aromatic
m/z	Mass/charge ratio
B.M.	Bohr magneton
$\mu_{eff}$	Magnetic moment
LMCT	Ligand to metal charge transfer
MCF-7	Human breast cancer cell lines
DCFH	2', 7'- dichlorodihydrofluorescein
RFU	Relative fluorescence unit
FITC	Fluorescein isothiocyanate

$\epsilon_a$	Extinction coefficient observed
$\epsilon_f$	Extinction coefficient of free complex
$\epsilon_b$	Extinction coefficient of complex that fully bound to CT-DNA
$I_0$	Fluorescence intensities of complex in the absence of DNA
$I$	Fluorescence intensities of complex in the presence of DNA
$k_{sv}$	Stern-Volmer constant
$\eta$	Viscosity value
$t$	Observed flow time of DNA-containing complex solution
$t_0$	Flow time of CT-DNA alone
LPS	Lipopolysaccharide

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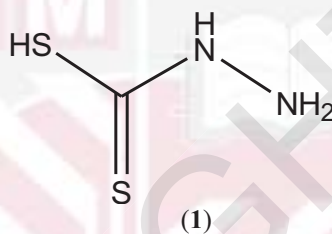


## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

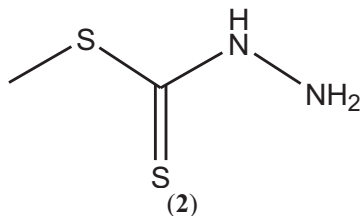
#### 1.1 Dithiocarbazate

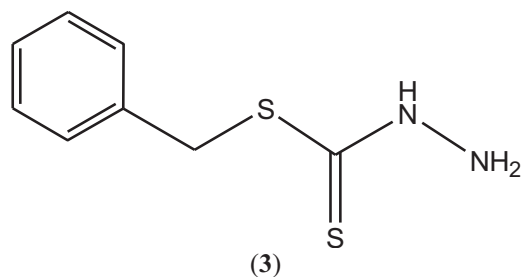
Dithiocarbazate,  $\text{NH}_2\text{NHCS}_2^-$  (**1**) and its substituted derivatives, especially ligands with nitrogen and sulphur as donor atoms have been of great interest to researchers over the past few decades. There have also been studies on Schiff bases prepared through condensation of dithiocarbazate with various aldehydes and ketones that yielded bidentate, tridentate or multidentate chelating agents (Tarafder *et al.*, 2000).



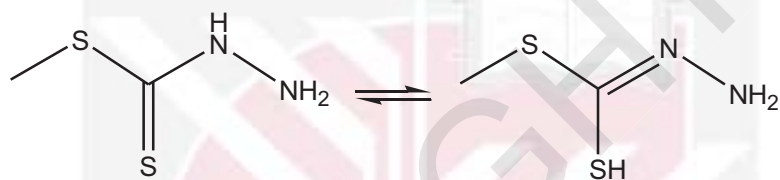
Dithiocarbazates are very promising compounds from the view point of coordination chemistry because of their ability for complexation (Singh *et al.*, 2009). The general examples of dithiocarbazates used are hydrazine or ethyldiamine,  $\text{NH}(\text{H})\text{NHCS}(\text{S})\text{CH}(\text{H})\text{R}$  (R = methyl/benzyl/2,3 or 4-methylbenzyl groups), and  $\text{NH}(\text{H})(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{NH}(\text{H})$  (n = 2 or 3) that act as primary amines.

S-methyldithiocarbazate, SMDTC (**2**) and S-benzylthiocarbazate, SBDTC (**3**) are examples of substituted derivatives of dithiocarbazate. SBDTC has four potential donor atoms of which two are sterically available for coordination with metal ions (Ali *et al.*, 2006). Thus, in principle, both nitrogen-sulphur and sulphur-sulphur chelated structures are possible.





Dithiocarbamate and its derivatives are known to undergo thione-thiol tautomerism when in solution (Figure 1). They are predominantly in the thione form (NH-C=S) when in the solid state. In solution, dithiocarbamate will convert to the thiol form (N=C-SH) and when in the presence of metal ions, this allows bonding *via* the deprotonation process from the -SH group (Ali *et al.*, 2005).



**Figure 1: An example of thione-thiol tautomerism**

Dithiocarbamate and its derivatives have obtained considerable attention and have been important over the past few decades because of their biological activity (Tarafder *et al.*, 2002). They have unique structural features and potential pharmacological applications. In addition, these compounds have a wide variety of bonding and stereochemistry. Hence, many types of complexes with different geometries and properties can be formed *via* a relatively easy preparative method involving fewer steps and chemicals, hence with lower costs.

## 1.2 Macrocyclic Schiff Bases

Dithiocarbazates react with carbonyl compounds (either aldehydes or ketones) to synthesise Schiff bases *via* a condensation reaction. Schiff bases are compounds that contain a carbon-nitrogen double bond and are a diverse class of ligands that contain oxygen, nitrogen as well as sulphur as their main donor atoms for chelation on complexation. They are important in the pharmaceutical and medicinal field (Tiwari *et al.*, 2011) and have applications as antibacterial (Azarkish and Sedaghat, 2012), antifungal (Abou-Hussein and Linert, 2012), and antitumor agents (Labisbal *et al.*, 2000), with good reactivity against microbes and cancer cells. Schiff bases have also been reported to find use as fluourometric analytical reagents in spectroscopy, in chromatography, as specific metal-ion membrane sensors (Kedy *et al.*, 2015), and in catalysis (Mieczynska *et al.*, 2015).

Many Schiff bases have been designed to mimic the function of natural carriers in transporting specific metal ions and molecules, and in understanding the catalytic activity of metalloenzymes and proteins (Sengottuvelan *et al.*, 2007). The successful application of ligands and their complexes in enzyme mimicking studies, redox catalysts and as potent antibacterial agents, as well as in other uses as radiopharmaceuticals, MRI reagents and fluorescent probes have attracted the attention of many researchers (Sreedaran *et al.*, 2008).

Macrocyclic Schiff bases are synthesised by reacting dithiocarbazates with dicarbonyl compounds. The term macrocycle is defined as a cyclic macromolecule or a cyclic compound with nine or more members (Constable, 1999). In coordination chemistry, the functionally substituted Schiff bases bearing additional donor groups represent the most important class of heteropolydentate ligands capable of forming mono-, bi-, and polynuclear complexes with transition and non-transition metals.

Macrocycles have been of great importance in macrocyclic and supramolecular chemistry (Borisova *et al.*, 2007). Interest in exploring the synthesis of metal ion complexes with macrocyclic ligands has been continuously increasing owing to the recognition of the role played by these structures in metalloproteins. The macrocycle ring enables a molecule to achieve a degree of structural pre-organization, such that key functional groups can interact across extended binding sites in proteins without a major entropic loss on binding (Driggers *et al.*, 2008).

For macrocycles, the hole size represents an additional parameter which may influence greatly the ability to discriminate among the different charged or neutral species to be recognized while for the macrocyclic systems, interesting properties may arise from their higher flexibility (Vigato and Tamburini, 2004). Hence, different donor atoms, the number and size of the chelating rings formed, and the geometries determine the selective binding of the charged metal ions. The progressive enlargement of the coordinating moiety due to the presence of two or more metal ions allowed further understanding of the physico-chemical and biological properties in similar coordinating moieties.

There is increasing interest in the potential applications of macrocyclic Schiff bases and their metal complexes. This is because of their mixed soft-hard donor character (Abou-Hussein and Linert, 2012) where, in this work, the nitrogen is the hard donor while sulphur is the soft donor. According to Ali and Livingstone (1974), the permanent dipole moment and coordinating ability toward metal ions normally decreases in the order of  $H_2O > ROH > R_2O$ . But, this order is reverse for sulphur donors ( $H_2S < RSH < R_2S$ ).

Besides, the strength of bonding to a metal ion is  $RO^- > RS^-$  and  $R_2O > R_2S$ . If  $\pi$  bonding occurs, the order is reversed to  $RO^- < RS^-$  and  $R_2O < R_2S$ . Furthermore, sulphur donor atoms bind more strongly to (b) class metals (4d transition metals) compared with oxygen donor atoms. The low-spin  $d^8$  ions such as palladium ions and

$d^9$  ions copper ions have high stability constants when sulphur donor atoms are involved in complexation. Hence, they form strong  $\sigma$ -bonds with soft ligands (sulphur as donor atoms) and also  $d_{\pi} - d_{\pi}$  bonds by donating a pair of electrons to the ligand. The properties of sulphur ligands also apply to sulphur-nitrogen chelating ligands (Ali and Livingstone, 1974).

### 1.3 Transition Metal Complexes

A metal complex is a single central atom or ion that is connected to surrounding atoms or molecules through bonding. A ligand is an atom, ion, or molecule that has at least one pair of lone pair electrons to donate to a central metal to form a complex. So, ligands are capable of functioning as the electron pair donor in a coordinate covalent bond (bonding between ligands and central metal) formed with the metal atom or ion. In this study, the macrocyclic Schiff bases act as the ligands.

Normally, complexes require overall neutrality. If the directly-bonded ligands, i.e. the inner-sphere ligands, do not balance the overall charge on the central atom, it requires ionic interactions with outer-sphere ligands or another set of ions. The inner-sphere ligands arrange themselves in certain geometry to produce geometric structures for the complexes. A polydentate ligand can be attached to the metal atom by bonds from two or more donor atoms (Jolly, 1996). Examples of donor atoms in the ligand are oxygen, nitrogen as well as sulphur. So, when two atoms possessing lone pair electrons are present in a molecule, it may bond *via* both of these atoms, and is termed as a bidentate ligand.

Currently, there are many research reports on the preparation of metal complexes with different geometries and properties. Dithioligands are very promising compounds from the view point of coordination chemistry due to their ability to complex with metal ions easily and also that small changes in the backbone of the structure of these ligands can lead to wide variations in biological activity (Tarafder *et al.*, 2000). The ability to chelate to metal ions, steric effects of the structure, electronic effects and lipophilicity are the four major properties for the effectiveness of the synthesised drug. In addition, the shape, structure or the geometry of a certain molecule are also important factors in drug activity (Gringauz, 1997).

Metal complexes have been found to be more active against several bacterial species than the parent Schiff base especially macrocyclic metal complexes (Mohamed *et al.*, 2009). This was due to the more stable structure of the metal complexes as compared to the unstable parent Schiff base. Normally, metal complexes will have a higher melting point as compared to the Schiff base. Some Schiff bases decompose when heat is applied (Kalia *et al.*, 2011). In this project, three 3d metals were used which were nickel, copper and zinc and five 4d metals were chosen which were niobium, molybdenum, ruthenium, palladium and cadmium.

#### 1.4 Cytotoxicity of Some Sulphur –Nitrogen Ligands and Their Metal Complexes

The biological activity of a chemical species can be explained by experimental and computational methods. There are a lot of theoretical studies about the determination of chemical activity (Sayin and Karakas, 2013). Generally, quantum chemical descriptors are used to determine the ranking of biological activities. The examples of these parameters include the highest occupied molecular orbital energies (HOMO), the lowest unoccupied molecular orbital energies (LUMO), the energy gap between LUMO and HOMO, hardness or softness of the molecules or atoms and the global electronegativity.

The biological activities closely depend on the separation of the LUMO and HOMO in a molecule. The binding ability of an inhibitor to the appropriate molecule will increase with the increase of the HOMO and decrease of the LUMO of complex ions. This is due to the ability of electrons to transfer to the acceptor molecule and the strong electron accepting ability of the molecules (Alexander and Moccari, 1993). The smaller the energy gap between HOMO and LUMO, the more active the molecule is in the term of biological properties (Zhang *et al.*, 2012). This is because the electrons are easily excited from the lower energy orbital to higher energy orbital. Besides that, soft complexes (complexes in which sulphur atoms act as donor atoms) have a small energy gap between the molecular orbital and can interact easily with biological molecules. Hence, the biological activity is increased with the increase of softness of the complexes.

Cytotoxicity of some sulphur –nitrogen ligands and their metal complexes is based on four main criteria. Firstly, the complex should be reasonably labile. Zinc and cadmium complexes are the most labile with  $d^{10}$  configurations (Shriver and Atkins, 1999). Secondly, the metal chelate should have reasonably high thermodynamic stability. The metals used on complexation should be (b) class metals (4d metals), in particular palladium and platinum due to its similarity to cisplatin, a common anticancer drug used in cancer treatment. Complexes or ligands with sulphur acting as donor atoms are the most likely to be effective drugs. This is because they allow for lipid solubility of the stable metal complexes (Ali and Livingstone, 1974).

#### 1.5 Mechanism of Death Studies on Synthetic Complexes

Obstruction of the clinical bladder cancer management is due to the high rates of recurrence and various series of muscle invasive. The bladder cancer is range from low risk non-invasive to muscle-invasive tumors. More than 70% of the bladder cancer's patients will recurrence within five years after the treatments. Currently, various clinically reliable drugs for the treatment of bladder cancer are discover to overcome the resistance mechanisms involved in the treatments such as chemotherapy.



The chemotherapy drugs used to treat bladder cancer are cisplatin, gemcitabine, methotrexate, vinblastine, doxorubicin, and mitomycin C. Survival rate can be increased with combination chemotherapy. Currently, the combination of gemcitabine and cisplatin with lower toxicity has been used in the treatment of bladder cancer. Mitomycin C also been used in the treatment. Treatment using mitomycin C resulted in decreased recurrence rates (Maase *et al.*, 2000; Tolley *et al.*, 1996).

Apoptosis is usually the expected mechanism of death of the synthesised anti-cancer compounds or drugs. Apoptosis is a mechanism or process of programmed cell death without damaging normal cells that occurs in multicellular organisms (Green *et al.*, 2011). When apoptosis occurs, it will cause a change in cell morphology that leads to the blebbing process, cell shrinkage, nuclear fragmentation, chromosomal DNA fragmentation, and chromatin condensation (Cohen *et al.*, 1992; Martin and Green, 1995). The apoptosis process in cancer cells is triggered by body signals. The cell begins to shrink and the proteins in the body are activated to break down cellular components. Subsequently, enzymes will start to fragment down the nucleus and the cell starts blebbing which causes the cell to break into several smaller pieces. The macrophages recognise the cell parts and then will remove them from the body. Many different signals and pathways lead to apoptosis, but there is only one mechanism that actually causes the death of a cell. It undergoes organised degradation of cellular organelles by activated proteolytic caspases after a cell receives stimulus. In addition to the destruction of cellular organelles, mRNA is rapidly and globally degraded by a mechanism that is not yet fully characterised (Thomas *et al.*, 2015). mRNA decay is triggered very early in apoptosis. There are various biochemical techniques for the analysis of cell death caused by apoptosis such as phosphatidylserine exposure, reactive oxygen species generation, caspase activation, and DNA fragmentation.

Annexin V binding assay is one of the techniques used to study apoptosis in terms of phosphatidylserine (PS) exposure. PS exposure during apoptosis reviews bidirectional trafficking between plasma membrane and cytoplasm in organisms (Fadok *et al.*, 1992). In addition, PS exposure on the external leaflet of the plasma membrane is widely observed during the apoptosis process and forms the basis for the Annexin V binding assay to detect apoptotic cell death (Lee *et al.*, 2013). The activation of a calcium-mediated and phospholipid scramblase trafficking of lysosomes to the cell surface are currently two main potential mechanisms to explain PS exposure. A two-step model has been proposed, in which the first step is the internalisation of the plasma membrane to form cytoplasmic vesicles occurs as cells shrink during apoptosis. This is followed by  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  dependent trafficking of some of these vesicles back to the cell surface, leading to PS externalisation (Mirnikjoo *et al.*, 2009).

In the reactive oxygen species (ROS) generation, the significance of ROS as aggravating or primary factors in numerous pathologies is widely recognized. The mitochondrion is considered the major intracellular source of ROS (Orrenius *et al.*, 2007). Generally, there are several harmful effects of reactive oxygen species on the cell such as deletions and mutations (Murphy, 2009), mitochondrial dysfunction, damage of DNA, and lipid peroxidation. Hydrogen peroxide,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  being a chief messenger molecule is involved in physiological signaling cascades regulating various

cellular and organ functions (Stone and Yang, 2006). The origin of ROS species produced in mitochondria is thought to be superoxide (Andreyev *et al.*, 2005). Superoxide,  $O_2^{\cdot-}$  does not easily permeate cell and mitochondrial membranes because of the presence of the negative charge. The rate of ROS production is measured by identifying major sites of ROS production and comparing the rates of ROS production in mitochondria isolated from normal and diseased tissue (cancerous tissue). The most recent and reliable method to measure low levels of  $H_2O_2$  *in vitro* is horseradish peroxidase which can trap emission of  $H_2O_2$  with high selectivity and affinity. Amplex Red Ultra (a derivative of 10-acetyl-3,7-dihydroxyphenoxazine) acts as a sensitive fluorescent probe for  $H_2O_2$  (Zhou *et al.*, 1997). The rate of  $O_2^{\cdot-}$  production is lower and the production sites are uncertain when mitochondria actively generates adenosine triphosphate, ATP. This suggests that *in vivo* conditions leading to RET or an accumulation of NADH will favour  $O_2^{\cdot-}$  production.

This chapter presents an overview of basic explanations for the key terms in this thesis. Five different macrocyclic Schiff bases and 40 different macrocyclic metal complexes were synthesised and their biological activities including the anticancer, DNA binding interaction, and antibacterial properties were studied. Macrocyclic complexes that are biologically relevant and may have potential to be used as anticancer or antibacterial agents due to the various properties observed were fully synthesised and characterised. To further study the behavior of a compound against the cancerous cells, mechanism of death studies were conducted to study the apoptosis process. The overall structure, coordination, geometry, lipophilicity and planarity were the important aspects resulting in their selection for a more detailed study of the biological activities.

## 1.6 Problem Statements

Synthetic drugs such as macrocyclic Schiff bases and their metal complexes are important due to their interesting biological properties such as anticancer and antibacterial. Hence, macrocyclic Schiff bases derived from dithiocarbamate were synthesised *via* a [2+2] type condensation reaction. There are many types of cancers based on the cell in which the cancer originates. From the literature, insufficient study was found on macrocyclic compounds tested against various cancer cell lines especially bladder cancer. Bladder cancer is considered to be the fourth most common type of cancer in men. Cisplatin-based drugs are still used as the frontline chemotherapy drug in the treatment of bladder cancer. However, the side effects of cisplatin can be very severe. Therefore, the cytotoxic activity of macrocyclic compounds was determined against bladder cancer. Besides, no mechanism of death studies were performed to investigate the apoptosis process for the macrocyclic compounds especially nitrogen-sulphur macrocyclic complexes. Hence, these studies were conducted to predict the macrocyclic complexes as potential pharmaceutical drugs.

## 1.7 Objectives

This study was conducted in the synthesis and characterisation of novel dithiocarbazate, macrocyclic Schiff bases and macrocyclic complexes. Besides, this study hypothesised that the macrocyclic compounds were able to have various biological activities. Therefore, this study was focused at the determination of cytotoxic and antibacterial studies. The specific objectives of this study include:

- ▶ To synthesise novel macrocyclic Schiff bases derived from dithiocarbazate and their transition metal complexes [M = Ni(II), Cu(II), Zn(II), Cd(II), Nb(II), Mo(V), Ru(III) and Pd(II)].
- ▶ To characterise the macrocyclic Schiff bases and transition metal complexes *via* various physico-chemical techniques (elemental analysis, magnetic susceptibility, and molar conductivity) and spectroscopic techniques.
- ▶ To determine the cytotoxic, antibacterial, and DNA binding properties of the Schiff bases and their complexes.
- ▶ To investigate the mechanism of death of the active compounds *via* Annexin V binding and ROS assays.

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