SUPPORTING INFORMATION

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

1. Materials

N, N-Diisopropylethylamine (DIPEA) was purchased from Fluorochem (Derbyshire, UK). Sodium cyanoborohydride (NaBH3CN) was obtained from Aladdin (Shanghai, China). Glacial acetic acid, sodium dithionite ($Na_2S_2O_4$), L-methionine (Met), L-leucine (Leu), L-tryptophan (Trp), L-alanyl-L-alanine (Ala-ala), 2-(7-aza-1H-benzotriazole-1-yl)-1,1,3,3-tetramethyluroniumhexafluorophosphate (HATU), phenylethylamine, p-anisidine, L-proline (Pro), acetanilide and isobutylamine were obtained from J&K (Shanghai, China). Methanol and acetonitrile were purchased from Merck (Dermstadt, Germany). Isopropanol was obtained from Tedia (Fairfield, OH). Water was purified by Milli-Q system (Millipore, Milford, MA). 4-Nitroaniline, 4 dimethylaminobenzoic acid, cyclohexylamine, heptylamine, N-acetyl-L-glutamic acid, 4 nitrophenol, 2-phenylphenol and N-hydroxysuccinimide (NHS) were purchased from Alfa Aesar (Tianjin, China). Formaldehyde-d₂ solution (25%), hexadecyltrimethyl ammonium bromide (CTAB), formic acid (FA), tetraethoxysilane (TEOS), 4-aminobenzoic acid, aminopropyltriethoxysilane (APTES), glycine (Gly), 4-aminobutyric acid (GABA), 3-ethyl-5 methylphenol, 1-phenylethanolamine, oleamide, and dansyl chloride were obtained from Sigma (St. Louis, MO). d_6 -Dansyl chloride was purchased from International Laboratory USA (South San Francisco, CA, USA). Propylamine and 2-phenylacetamide were obtained from TCI (Tokyo, Japan). Guaiacol was purchased from Acros (Morris Plains, NJ, USA), and N-methyltyramine was from chromadex (Irvine, CA, USA). Other chemical reagents were all analytical grade. The amino acids mixture are each 500 ng/mL Met, Gly, Leu, Trp, Ala-ala; the aliphatic amines mixture are each 500 ng/mL isobutylamine, propylamine, cyclohexylamine, and heptylamine; the aromatic amines mixture are each 5 ug/mL N-methyltyramine, dopamine, p-anisidine, Nmethylanthranilic acid and 1-phenylethanolamine; the amides mixture are each 5 μg/mL oleamide, 2-phenylacetamide, N-acetyl-L-glutamic acid, and acetanilide; the phenolic hydroxyl standards are each 5 μg/mL guaiacol, 4-nitrophenol, 3-ethyl-5-methylphenol and 2-phenylphenol;The mixed amino standards are composed by 1 μg/mL Ala-ala, Met, GABA, Leu, Trp, isobutylamine, propylamine, cyclohexylamine, heptylamine, N-methyltyramine, dopamine, Pro, p-anisidine, Nmethylanthranilic acid and tyramine.

2. Synthesis and purification of cleavable azobenzene linker

The synthetic scheme was shown as Figure S1, 2.76 g 4-nitroaniline was dissolved in 600 mL CH₃OH: H₂O (2:1, v/v) in ice bath, then added newly prepared HNO₂ under stirring which was synthesized with NaNO₂ (1.38g) and 3.5 mL HCl (37%) in 20 mL H₂O at 0 $^{\circ}$ C. After one hour, the product was transferred into 400 mL 4-dimethylaminobenzoic acid (3.3 g) methanol solution directly in ice bath. The reaction was last for over night in stirring. [1] The precipitated product was filtered and washed with water for several times, then dried in vacuum at 60 °C and purified with SiO₂ column chromatography with ethyl acetate and cyclohexane as eluent to obtain 4-(dimethylamino)-3-((4-nitrophenyl)diazenyl)benzoic acid (donated as NO₂-azobenzene-COOH). ¹H NMR spectrum of NO₂-azobenzene-COOH in DMSO-d₆ is δ 12.59 (s, 1H, COOH), 8.4 (d, 2H, J=9.2Hz, ArH), 8.25 (d, 1H, J=2, ArH), 8.02 (d, 2H, J=8.8 Hz, ArH), 7.87 (dd, 1H, J=2, 9.2 Hz, ArH), 7.12 (d, 1H, J=9.2 Hz, ArH), 3.29 (s, 6H, NCH3).

 D_4 -4-Dimethylaminobenzoic acid was prepared with the previous method ^[2] (Figure S1c) and D_4 -NO₂-azobenzene-COOH was synthesized with the above-mentioned procedure. The H_4/D_4 tagged $NO₂$ -azobenzene-COOH were mixed at the same molar ratio and dissolved in 90 mL ethanol. Their nitro groups were reduced into amino groups with two equivalent Na₂S at refluxing temperature at 90 °C for 3 hour to produce H_4/D_4 tagged 3-((4-aminophenyl)diazenyl)-4-(dimethylamino)benzoic acid (donated as NH2-azobenzene-COOH) [3] (Figure S1d).

3. Synthesis of mSiO2@azobenzene-COOH nanoprobes.

0.3 g CTAB was dissolved in 150 mL H2O, then 1.05 mL 2 M NaOH was added to adjust pH after the temperature of reaction solution was elevated to 60 ℃. 1.5 mL TEOS was added into reaction solution under stirring, and the reaction was last for 2 hours at 60 ℃. The products were centrifuged (14000 rpm, 10 min) and washed with ethanol for several times, subsequently dispersed into 0.5 mg/mL NH₄NO₃/ethanol solution to remove CTAB at 70 °C for 3 hours under stirring. The products were washed with methanol for several times and dried under vacuum (60 $°C$) to get mSiO₂ nanoparticles. 1 g mSiO₂ nanoparticles were dispersed into 600 mL isopropanol, then 10 mL APTES was added and the reaction was last for overnight at room temperature under argon protection and stirring. The products were centrifuged (14000 rpm, 10 min) and washed with methanol for several times, and then dispersed into 300 mL acetic acid/methanol (1:125, v/v), 10 mL 25% glutaraldehyde was added after the temperature was elevated to 40 ℃. The reaction was last for overnight at 40 ℃ under stirring. The obtained products obtained were centrifuged (14000 rpm, 10 min) and washed with 30 mL acetic acid/methanol (1:125, v/v) for two times and then redispersed into 300 mL acetic acid/methanol (1:125, v/v). 50 mL 1:1 molar ratio H_4/D_4 -NH₂-azobenzene-COOH (0.05 mmoL each) and 500 mg NaBH₃CN were added at 40 ℃ under stirring. The reaction was last for overnight. The products were washed with methanol, ethanol, water and acetonitrile for several times to get $mSiO₂(a)$ azobenzene-COOH nanoprobes.

4. Characterization.

Nitrogen sorption measurements (Quadrasorbsi, USA), fourier transform infrared spectra (Equinox 55, Bruker, Germany), zeta-potential (Zetasizer Nano, Malvern, United Kingdom), transmission electron microscopy (JEM-2000EX, JEOL, Japan), and 1 H nuclear magnetic resonance (400MHz, Bruker, Switzerland) were used for the characterization of the synthetic materials.

5. Optimization of the extraction and cleavage conditions

Eight mg mSiO₂@azobenzene-COOH nanoprobes were activated with each 200 µL of a certain concentration of HATU, DIPEA and NHS, and the activating time was optimized from 2 min to 120 min. After activated, the nanoprobes were centrifuged (18920 g for 3 min) and washed with 1 mL 80% ACN for three times and 1 mL ACN for two times. One mL phenylethylamine solution (100 μg/mL) was subsequently added for extracting. The coupling time of nanoprobes with phenylethylamine was optimized from 2 min to 240 min. Nanoprobes were then collected with centrifuge and the residual phenethylamine in supernatant was detected with MS. The coupling nanoprobes were then washed with 80% ACN for three times and dispersed into 300 μL ACN,

after dispersed by ultrasound for 1 min, an equal volume of various concentrations of $Na₂S₂O₄$ (from 0.01 M to 0.5 M) was used to cleave the azo bond. The resulting solution was extracted three times with 300 μL ethyl acetate. The extracts were combined, lyophilized and reconstituted with 40 μL 80% ACN before MS analysis.

6. Treatment of mixed standards, blank and serum

Forty mg mSiO₂@azobenzene-COOH nanoprobes were activated with each 200 μL of 10 mM HATU, DIPEA, NHS for 2 min, the nanoprobes were collected by centrifuge, and then washed with 80% ACN (three times) and ACN (two times). 100 μL of the amino acids, aliphatic amines, aromatic amines, amides mixture or phenolic hydroxyl standards were diluted to 1 mL with ACN and added subsequently into the activated nanoprobes. After dispersed by ultrasound for 1 min and shaken for 5 min, the nanoprobes were separated, washed and cleaved with $0.2 M Na₂S₂O₄$ as the above mentioned. 1 ml ACN (as the blank) was also treated by $mSiO₂(Qazobenzene-COOH)$ nanoprobes with the same process. For comparison, 100 μL of the mixed amino and phenolic hydroxyl standards were derivatized with dansyl chloride as the literature reported.[4]

20 μL thawed serum was filtered with centrifugal filter (3000 Da cutoff, Millipore, USA) to remove proteins and most peptides, and the residue was washed three times with 200 μL H2O. The filtrate was transferred to phospholipid removal 96-well plate (Phenomenex, USA) directly to remove matrix effects. The filtrate was lyophilized and reconstituted with 1 mL ACN and then treated with mSiO₂@azobenzene-COOH nanoprobes or reconstituted with 20 μ L H₂O and derivatized with dansyl chloride/ d_6 -dansyl chloride (equimolar ratio).

7. Method validation

To investigate the linearity of the method, 1 mL mixed standards including Leu-d₃, Trp-d₅, Met-d³ from 1ng/mL to 1000 ng/mL were respectively extracted with the nanoprobes. 980 μL of 200 ng/mL Leu-d₃, Trp-d₅, Met-d₃ standards were added into 20 μ L serum or H₂O to verify the recovery and precision. After mixed for 1min and centrifuged at 18920g for 10 min, the solution or the supernatant was extracted with $mSiO₂(Qazobenzene-COOH)$ nanoprobes. The mixed amino standards (1 μg/mL) were diluted 2-100000 fold and then derivatized with dansyl chloride and mSiO₂ $@$ azobenzene-COOH nanoprobes respectively to study the LOD (S/N=3).

8. LC/MS analysis

To optimize the extraction and cleavage conditions, Agilent 1200 UHPLC equipped with 6510 Q-TOF mass spectrometer was used. An isocratic separation was performed on a C_8 column $(2.1\times100 \text{ mm}, 1.7 \text{ }\mu\text{m}, \text{Waters}, \text{Ireland})$ with ACN and 0.1% FA water $(2.3, v/v)$ as mobile phases at 0.3 mL/min for 3 min. The injection volume was 1 μL and the column temperature was set at 40 °C. The MS detection was at positive mode and the ions of m/z 122.0964 and 284.1757 were used to monitor phenylethylamine and its derivatized product respectively. Other MS parameters were the same as the previous work.[5]

For mixed standards, blank and serum sample analysis, Acquity UPLC (waters, USA) liquid system coupled with LTQ-Orbitrap XL (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Rockford, IL, USA) was used. All of the samples were separated on a C_8 column (2.1×100 mm, 1.7 µm, Waters, Ireland). The injection volume was 10 μ L and the column temperature was set at 40 °C. The mobile phases were water containing 0.1% FA and ACN at flow rate of 0.3 mL/min. A relatively fast gradient separation was applied to the mixed standard analysis. The initial gradient (2% ACN) was increased linearly to 80% ACN in 6 min, followed with column washing for 3 min at 80% ACN, then was returned to the initial gradient and rebalanced for 6 min. The blank and serum samples were separated with a slow gradient to reduce peaks overlap. The initial gradient (2% ACN) was increased linearly to 98% ACN in 25 min, then kept for 3 min and returned to the initial for reequilibrium for 3 min. The MS parameters were as follows: source voltage at 4.5 kV, capillary voltage at 32 V, and capillary temperature at 325 °C. The mass scan range was from 100 to 800 in positive mode and the resolution was set at 30,000.

9. Data Processing.

The peaks from blank and serum samples were picked with Sieve X86 software (Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA). The retention time period 1-5 min, 5-10 min, 10-15 min, 15-20 min and 20- 28min were processed separately. The maximum frames number was 5,000. Those ions from m/z 185-800 with a frame time width of 0.5 min, m/z width of 15 ppm, and ion intensity more than 3000 were picked out. The obtained peak table with retention time and m/z value information was processed by in-house developed software for picking those ion pairs with m/z difference of 4.0252 ± 0.001 and drift of the retention time shorter than 15 s between H₄ and D₄ tagged derivatization products. Unknown compounds were identified through Metlin (http://metlin.scripps.edu/index.php) and HMDB (http://www.hmdb.ca) databases. 21 amino metabolite standards were derivatized individually with $mSiO₂(Qa$ _{zo} benzene-COOH nanoprobes for verification.

References

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Figure S1. Synthetic approach of azobenzoic acid linkers (a-d); the total ion chromatogram of $NO₂$ -azobenzene-COOH and its m/z spectrum (e-f); the total ion chromatogram of $D₄$ -NO₂azobenzene-COOH and its m/z spectrum $(g-h)$; the extracted ion chromatograms of NO₂azobenzene-COOH and D_4 -NO₂-azobenzene-COOH mixture (i); extracted ion chromatograms of NH₂-azobenzene-COOH and D₄-NH₂-azobenzene-COOH mixture (j); m/z spectrum of NH₂azobenzene-COOH (k) and D4-NH2-azobenzene-COOH (l).

Figure S2. FT-IR spectroscopy of mSiO₂-NH₂ (a) and mSiO₂@azobenzene-COOH (b) nanoparticles

Figure S3. Optimization of activating time

Figure S4. Optimization of the concentration of activator

Figure S5. Optimization of the coupling time

Figure S6. Optimization of $Na_2S_2O_4$ concentration

Figure S7. Extracted ion chromatograms of amino metabolites H₄-tagged (i) and D₄-tagged (ii) derivatization products

Table S1. LOD and MS sensitivity enhanced folds of the mixed amino standards before and after

mSiO2@azobenzene-COOH nanoprobes and dansyl chloride derivatization

Table S2. Linearity, recovery and precision of deuterated amino acids with

$mSiO2(Qazobenzene-COOH derivation.$	
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Table S3 Derivatization products of amino metabolites defined from 20 μL serum with mSiO2@azobenzene-COOH probes

Annotation: * Validated with standards

^a Detected as $[M+Na]$ ⁺

^b Detected with dansyl chloride derivatization method