



- (51) **International Patent Classification:**
A61K 49/22 (2006.01) *A61K 31/28* (2006.01)
- (21) **International Application Number:**
PCT/SG2014/000423
- (22) **International Filing Date:**
9 September 2014 (09.09.2014)
- (25) **Filing Language:** English
- (26) **Publication Language:** English
- (30) **Priority Data:**
201306889-5 12 September 2013 (12.09.2013) SG
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- (81) **Designated States** (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JP, KE, KG, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) **Designated States** (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
- Published:**
— with international search report (Art. 21(3))

(54) **Title:** PHOTOACOUSTIC IMAGING CONTRAST AGENT COMPOSITION

(57) **Abstract:** A photoacoustic imaging contrast agent composition is provided. The composition comprises a metal carbonyl cluster compound having the general formula (I) $M_3(CO)_xL_{12-x}$ wherein M at each occurrence denotes a metal selected from Group 6 to Group 11 of the Periodic Table of Elements; x is an integer from 10 to 12; and each L is independently selected from the group consisting of -H and -A-(CH₂)_n-COO⁻Y⁺, wherein A is selected from the group consisting of S, O, C and N; n is an integer from 1 to 10; and Y is any cation. Use of the photoacoustic imaging contrast agent composition in photoacoustic imaging is also provided.

