Cy5 is a fluorescent dye that belongs to the Cyanine family of synthetic polymethine dyes. Cy5 is reactive, water-soluble, and has an absorbance maximum of 649 nm and an emission maximum of 670 nm. It is available as both a phosphoramidite and an NHS ester, and is used to fluorescently label oligonucleotides at either the 5'- or 3'-end, or internally. Cy5 plays a particularly important role in real-time PCR applications, being used as a reporter moiety in TaqMan probes (1), Scorpion primers (2) and Molecular Beacons (3). For such probes, Cy5 is most commonly paired with the dark quencher BHQ-3, as the two have excellent spectral overlap.

Cy5 can also be used to label DNA oligos for use as hybridization probes in other applications, such as Fluorescent In-Situ Hybridization (FISH). In 2010, Stoeckler and co-workers (4) reported that Cy5 double-labeling of FISH probes (at both ends) that were specific to ribosomal RNA targets in microorganisms at least doubles FISH signal intensity without affecting specificity. This “Double Labeling of Oligonucleotide Probes for Fluorescence In Situ Hybridization (DOPE-FISH)” strategy may provide an effective solution to the problem of low signal intensity, which is commonly observed when using corresponding singly-labeled FISH probes for microbe identification. As an added benefit, Cy5-doubly labeled probes were shown to increase the in situ accessibility of rRNA targets sites in microbes, which allows for greater probe design flexibility.

References