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· 乳腺外科专题研究 ·

## HER-2低表达与零表达早期乳腺癌患者临床病理特征及预后分析

陈燕洪<sup>1,2</sup>, 何叶青<sup>1,2</sup>, 陈奇通<sup>1,2</sup>, 瞿莉梦<sup>1,2</sup>, 邓聪<sup>3</sup>, 易文君<sup>1,2</sup>, 邹琼燕<sup>1,2</sup>, 张丹华<sup>1,2</sup>, 李伦<sup>1,2</sup>, 周琴<sup>1,2</sup>, 李来<sup>3</sup>

(1.中南大学湘雅二医院 普通外科, 湖南 长沙 410011; 2.湖南省乳腺疾病临床医学研究中心, 湖南 长沙 410011; 3.湖南省湘潭县人民医院 甲乳外科, 湖南 湘潭 411100)

### 摘要

**背景与目的:** 临床上将HER-2低表达与HER-2零表达乳腺癌均被归类于HER-2阴性乳腺癌, 并认为无HER-2靶向治疗条件。然而, 近期的新型抗HER-2药物临床试验结果显示, HER-2低表达乳腺癌患者仍可从抗HER-2治疗中获益, 使HER-2低表达与HER-2零表达乳腺癌患者之间生物学特性以及治疗反应与预后方面的差异备受关注。因此, 本研究探讨HER-2低表达与HER-2零表达早期乳腺癌患者临床病理特征及预后差异, 以为临床提供更多的参考数据。

**方法:** 回顾性分析2010年1月—2020年12月间中南大学湘雅二医院乳腺外科收治并经病理确诊的1 002例HER-2阴性早期乳腺癌(M0)患者临床资料, 根据患者HER-2表达状态, 将患者分为HER-2低表达组(409例)与HER-2零表达组(593例), 比较两组患者相关临床病理指标与预后的差异。

**结果:** 与HER-2零表达组比较, HER-2低表达组浸润性导管癌比例更高(93.4%), 且病理分化等级多表现为II级(78.7%); HER-2低表达组TNM分期中处于T1的比例低于HER-2零表达组, 而T2分期的比例高于HER-2零表达组, 以上差异均有统计学意义(均 $P<0.05$ )。HER-2低表达组激素受体(HR)阳性率为87.5%, 在199例检测了雄激素受体(AR)的患者中, AR阳性率80.9%, 两项数据均高于HER-2零表达组(均 $P<0.05$ )。HER-2低表达组Ki-67表达量明显低于HER-2零表达组( $P<0.05$ )。同时, 两组间这些差异主要体现在HR阳性患者中(均 $P<0.05$ ), 而HR阴性患者中以上数据均未见明显差异(均 $P>0.05$ )。无论HR表达状况, HER-2低表达组与HER-2零表达组的总生存(OS)期和无病生存(DFS)期均无明显差异(均 $P>0.05$ )。此外, HER-2低表达患者中, AR表达状态对OS与DFS均无明显影响(均 $P>0.05$ )。

**结论:** HER-2低表达与零表达早期乳腺癌患者间的临床病理特征存在一定差异, 尽管两者的预后未见明显差异, 但HER-2低表达患者的较高的HR与AR阳性率, 以及较低的Ki-67表达水平, 提示可能与内分泌治疗的敏感度相关。

### 关键词

乳腺肿瘤; ErbB受体; 受体, 雄激素; 预后

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**作者简介:** 陈燕洪, 中南大学湘雅二医院硕士研究生, 主要从事乳腺肿瘤方面的研究(何叶青为共同第一作者)。

**通信作者:** 周琴, Email: zhouqin7089@csu.edu.cn; 李来, Email: lilai0816@163.com

## Analysis of the clinicopathologic and prognostic characteristics of early-stage breast cancer patients with HER-2 low expression and zero expression

CHEN Yanhong<sup>1,2</sup>, HE Yeqing<sup>1,2</sup>, CHEN Qitong<sup>1,2</sup>, QU Limeng<sup>1,2</sup>, DENG Cong<sup>3</sup>, YI Wenjun<sup>1,2</sup>, ZOU Qiongyan<sup>1,2</sup>, ZHANG Danhua<sup>1,2</sup>, LI Lun<sup>1,2</sup>, ZHOU Qin<sup>1,2</sup>, LI Lai<sup>3</sup>

(1. Department of General Surgery, the Second Xiangya Hospital, Central South University, Changsha 410011, China; 2. Breast Disease Clinical Research Center of Hunan Province, Changsha 410011, China; 3. Department of Breast and Thyroid Surgery, the People's Hospital of Xiangtan County, Xiangtan, Hunan 411100, China)

### Abstract

**Background and Aims:** In clinical practice, both HER-2 low expression and HER-2 zero expression breast cancers are categorized as HER-2 negative breast cancer, and are considered ineligible for HER-2 targeted therapy. However, recent clinical trial results of new anti-HER-2 antibody have indicated that breast cancer patients with HER-2 low expression can still benefit from HER-2 targeted treatment. This has led to increased interest in the differences between breast cancer patients with HER-2 low expression and HER-2 zero expression in terms of the biological characteristics, treatment responses, and prognosis. Therefore, this study was performed to investigate the clinicopathologic characteristics and prognosis differences between early-stage breast cancer patients with HER-2 low expression and HER-2 zero expression, so as to provide additional data for clinical practice.

**Methods:** The clinical data of 1 002 HER-2 negative breast cancer patients with early-stage disease (M0) admitted to the Department of Breast Surgery, the Second Xiangya Hospital, Central South University, between January 2010 and December 2020 were retrospectively analyzed. Patients were categorized into the HER-2 low expression group (409 cases) and the HER-2 zero expression group (593 cases) based on their HER-2 expression status. The differences in relevant clinicopathologic variables and outcomes between the two groups were compared.

**Results:** Compared to the HER-2 zero expression group, the HER-2 low expression group had a higher proportion of invasive ductal carcinoma (93.4%), with a majority exhibiting grade II pathology (78.7%); the HER-2 low expression group had a lower proportion in the T1 stage and a higher proportion in the T2 stage according to TNM staging compared to the HER-2 zero expression group, and these differences were statistically significant (all  $P < 0.05$ ). In the HER-2 low expression group, the positivity rate of hormone receptors (HR) was 87.5%, and among the 199 cases tested for androgen receptor (AR), the AR positivity rate was 80.9%, both of which were higher than those in the HER-2 zero expression group (both  $P < 0.05$ ). Ki-67 expression was significantly lower in the HER-2 low expression group compared to the HER-2 zero expression group ( $P < 0.05$ ). These differences between the two groups were mainly observed in HR-positive patients (all  $P < 0.05$ ), while HR-negative patients showed no significant differences in all variables (all  $P > 0.05$ ). Regardless of HR expression status, there were no significant differences in overall survival (OS) and disease-free survival (DFS) between the HER-2 low expression group and the HER-2 zero expression group (all  $P > 0.05$ ). Additionally, in HER-2 low expression patients, the AR expression status had no significant impact on OS or DFS (all  $P > 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** There are certain clinicopathologic differences between HER-2 low expression and zero expression early-stage breast cancer patients. Despite the lack of significant differences in prognosis between the two groups of patients, the higher HR and AR positivity rates, along with lower Ki-67

expression level in the HER-2 low expression group, suggest a potential association with sensitivity to endocrine therapy.

**Key words** Breast Neoplasms; ErbB Receptors; Receptors, Androgen; Prognosis

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目前临床上主要将乳腺癌分为四种分子亚型：腔面 A (luminal A) 型、腔面 B (luminal B) 型、人表皮生长因子受体 2 (human epidermal growth factor receptor 2, HER-2) 过表达型和三阴性 (triple negative breast cancer, TNBC) [1]。该分型依赖于病理实验室对雌激素受体 (estrogen receptor, ER)、孕激素受体 (progesterone receptor, PR)、HER-2 和 Ki-67 表达的判读。其中 HER-2 是一种 185 kDa 跨膜酪氨酸激酶受体蛋白, 促进细胞分裂, 诱导细胞增殖、存活、血管生成、侵袭和转移等 [2]。临床上通常将 HER-2 的免疫组化检测 (immunohistochemistry, IHC) (3+) 和 IHC (2+) / 荧光原位杂交 (fluorescence in situ hybridization, FISH) HER-2 基因扩增 (+) 的定义为 HER-2 阳性, 而将 IHC (1+)、IHC (2+) / FISH (-)、IHC 0 (HER-2 零表达) 定义为 HER-2 阴性 [3-4]。

HER-2 基因已经成为包括乳腺癌在内的多种肿瘤临床治疗的重要靶点 [5-6]。常见抗 HER-2 药物包括大分子单抗类、酪氨酸激酶抑制剂 (tyrosine kinase inhibitor, TKI) 类以及抗体偶联药物 (antibody drug conjugates, ADC) 药物 [7]。大分子单抗药物如: 曲妥珠单抗、帕妥珠单抗, TKI 类药物, 如: 吡咯替尼、来纳替尼、拉帕替尼等, 既往已证实在 HER-2 阳性乳腺癌患者中具有治疗意义, 而在 HER-2 阴性表达患者中并没有治疗效应。但随着 DESTINY-Breast04 研究 [8] 结果逐步公布, DS-8201 在 HER-2 (1+) 以及 HER-2 (2+) / FISH (-) 的患者人群中, 也获得了不错的治疗疗效, 使得这一分子类型乳腺癌重新获得关注, 并定义为 HER-2 低表达乳腺癌。对 HER-2 低表达乳腺癌开展的临床研究均集中在晚期 (M1 期/IV 期) 乳腺癌中, 而关于中国人群 HER-2 低表达早期乳腺癌方面的研究甚少。因此, 本研究收集了经笔者中心诊治患者的临床资料, 探讨 HER-2 低表达和 HER-2 零表达乳腺癌患者的临床病理特征及预后的差异, 以期今后临床治疗探索提供依据。

## 1 资料与方法

### 1.1 研究对象

收集 2010 年 1 月—2020 年 12 月间在中南大学湘雅二医院乳腺外科同一医生组就诊, 并经病理确诊的 HER-2 阴性乳腺癌患者。根据患者 HER-2 表达状态, 分为零表达组 ( $n=593$ ) 和低表达组 ( $n=409$ )。纳入标准: 术前经全身检查 (如: 头胸腹部 CT 等) 证实无远处转移征象 (M0) 的 HER-2 阴性乳腺癌患者; 接受系统规范的手术、化疗、内分泌治疗等; 术后病理报告完整, 免疫组化包括 HER-2、ER、PR、雄激素受体 (androgen receptor, AR)、Ki-67 等。排除标准: 男性乳癌、炎性、妊娠期、哺乳期乳腺癌或其他特殊癌等; 合并有肺癌、肝癌、生殖系统等其他原发恶性肿瘤患者。本研究由中南大学湘雅二医院临床医学伦理委员会审查和批准 [ (2023) 伦申 (临研) 第 (125) 号 ], 已通过知情同意申请。

### 1.2 数据收集

收集患者的年龄、绝经状态、腋窝淋巴结转移情况、临床 TNM 分期、HER-2 表达水平、ER 表达水平、PR 表达水平、AR 表达水平、Ki-67 表达水平、组织学分级、病理分级等数据。

HER-2 判读标准根据《乳腺癌 HER-2 检测指南》 [9]; ER、PR 状态判读: 免疫组织化学检测的阳性阈值为  $\geq 1\%$  [10], 并将 ER 阳性和 (或) PR 阳性定义为激素受体 (hormone receptor-positive, HR) 阳性 [11]; Ki-67 表达水平以  $\geq 14\%$  为高表达,  $< 14\%$  为低表达 [12]; AR 状态判读: 免疫组织化学检测的阳性阈值为  $\geq 10\%$  [13]; TNM 分期方法参照美国癌症联合委员会 (American Joint Committee on Cancer, AJCC) 乳腺癌 TNM 分期第 8 版标准 [14]。

### 1.3 统计学处理

使用 R 4.0.3 (<http://www.r-project.org>) 和 Graphpad Prism 软件进行统计分析进行数据整理和统计学分析。计量资料采用均数  $\pm$  标准差 ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ ) 形式展示, 组间差异分析方法采用独立样本  $t$  检验

或秩和检验。分类变量采用  $\chi^2$  检验分析组间差异,以例数(百分比)[ $n$ (%)]描述特征。使用 Kaplan-Meier 法绘制生存曲线,Log-rank 法进行检验分析。所有  $P$  值均为双侧检验, $P < 0.05$  为差异有统计学意义。

## 2 结果

### 2.1 HER-2 低表达与 HER-2 零表达患者一般资料及病理特征

与 HER-2 零表达组比较,HER-2 低表达组浸润性导管癌比例更高,达 93.4% (382 例),且病理分

化等级多表现为 II 级,占 78.7% (322 例)。HER-2 低表达组处于 T1 的比例为 35.0% (143 例),低于零表达组,而 T2 分期的比例达 57.2% (234 例),高于零表达患者。HR 表达方面,HER-2 低表达组的 ER 阳性率为 87.5% (358 例),检测了 AR 的患者共计 199 例,其中阳性的占 80.9% (161 例),以上数据均明显高于 HER-2 零表达组(均  $P < 0.05$ ),Ki-67 指数方面,当以 14% 作为阈值区分高低表达时,两组间未见差异( $P > 0.05$ ),但在 HER-2 低表达组 Ki-67 表达量明显低于 HER-2 零表达组( $P < 0.05$ )。两组在发病年龄、月经状态、肿瘤患侧方面均差异无统计学意义(均  $P > 0.05$ )(表 1)。

表 1 HER-2 低表达与零表达患者的临床病理特征比较

Table 1 Comparison of clinicopathologic characteristics between patients with HER-2 low expression and HER-2 zero expression

资料	HER-2 零表达 ( $n=593$ )	HER-2 低表达 ( $n=409$ )	$P$	资料	HER-2 零表达 ( $n=593$ )	HER-2 低表达 ( $n=409$ )	$P$	
年龄(岁, $\bar{x} \pm s$ )	49.81 $\pm$ 11.45	49.56 $\pm$ 9.94	0.717	N 分期[ $n$ (%)]				
年龄分组[岁, $n$ (%)]				N0	306(51.6)	202(49.4)		
≤50	320(54.0)	222(54.3)	0.949	N1	132(22.3)	102(24.9)		
>50	273(46.0)	187(45.7)		N2	60(10.1)	58(14.2)	0.065	
月经状态[ $n$ (%)]				N3	50(8.4)	29(7.1)		
已绝经	261(44.0)	175(42.8)	Nx	45(7.6)	18(4.4)			
未绝经	332(56.0)	234(57.2)	0.749	ER 状态[ $n$ (%)]				
患侧[ $n$ (%)]				阴性	167(28.2)	51(12.5)	<0.001	
左侧	304(51.3)	207(50.6)		阳性	426(71.8)	358(87.5)		
右侧	283(47.7)	196(47.9)	0.802	PR 状态[ $n$ (%)]				
双侧	6(1.0)	6(1.5)			阴性	155(26.1)	71(17.4)	<0.001
病理类型[ $n$ (%)]					阳性	428(73.9)	338(82.6)	
浸润性导管癌	503(84.8)	382(93.4)	<0.001	AR 状态[ $n$ (%)] <sup>1)</sup>				
浸润性小叶癌	22(3.7)	16(3.9)			阴性	98(33.4)	38(19.1)	0.002
导管内癌伴浸润	23(3.9)	3(0.7)			阳性	195(66.6)	161(80.9)	
其他病理类型	45(7.6)	8(2.0)			Ki-67 水平[ $n$ (%)]			
病理分化等级[ $n$ (%)]				高表达	446(75.2)	299(73.1)		
I	29(4.9)	18(4.4)	<0.001	低表达	132(22.3)	107(26.2)	0.227	
II	371(62.6)	322(78.7)			未明确	15(2.5)		3(0.7)
III	119(20.1)	54(13.2)			Ki-67 表达量(% , $\bar{x} \pm s$ )	35.99 $\pm$ 26.25		29.35 $\pm$ 21.29
未明确	74(12.5)	15(3.7)						
T 分期[ $n$ (%)]								
T1	259(43.7)	143(35.0)	<0.001					
T2	270(45.5)	234(57.2)						
T3~T4	31(5.2)	23(5.6)						
Tx	33(5.6)	9(2.2)						

注:1) 两组部分患者行 AR 检测

Note: 1) Some patients in both groups undergoing AR testing

## 2.2 不同HR状态HER-2低表达与HER-2零表达患者生物学特征

822例HR阳性患者中,HER-2低表达组病理分级II级的占80.2%(291例),HER-2低表达组AR阳性率为86.9%(152例),明显高于HER-2零表达组(均 $P<0.05$ );Ki-67指数方面,当以14%作为阈值区分高低表达时,两组间未见明显差异( $P>0.05$ ),但在HER-2低表达组Ki-67表达量明显低于HER-2零表达组( $P<0.05$ )(表2)。HR阴性患者中,HER-2低表达组与HER-2零表达组之间各项病理特征的差异均无统计学意义(均 $P>0.05$ )(表3)。

表2 HR阳性患者中HER-2低表达组与HER-2零表达组临床病理特征比较

Table 2 Comparison of clinicopathologic characteristics between HER-2 low expression group and HER-2 zero expression group among HR-positive patients

指标	HER-2零表达 (n=459)	HER-2低表达 (n=363)	P
病理类型[n(%)]			
浸润性导管癌	380(82.8)	337(92.8)	<0.001
浸润性小叶癌	22(4.8)	15(4.1)	
导管内癌伴浸润	20(4.4)	3(0.8)	
其他病理类型	37(8.1)	8(2.2)	
病理分化等级[n(%)]			
I	26(5.7)	17(4.7)	<0.001
II	310(67.5)	291(80.2)	
III	60(13.1)	41(11.3)	
未明确	63(13.7)	14(3.9)	
AR状态[n(%)] <sup>1)</sup>			
阴性	50(21.7)	23(13.1)	0.027
阳性	180(78.3)	152(86.9)	
Ki-67水平[n(%)]			
高表达	318(69.3)	258(71.1)	0.99
低表达	128(27.9)	104(28.6)	
未明确	13(2.8)	1(0.3)	
Ki-67表达量(% $\bar{x}\pm s$ )	29.78 $\pm$ 23.27	26.17 $\pm$ 18.43	0.013

注:1)两组部分患者行AR检测

Note: 1) Some patients in both groups undergoing AR testing

表3 HR阴性患者中HER-2低表达组与HER-2零表达组临床病理特征比较

Table 3 Comparison of clinicopathologic characteristics between HER-2 low expression group and HER-2 zero expression group among HR-negative patients

指标	HER-2零表达 (n=134)	HER-2低表达 (n=46)	P
病理类型[n(%)]			
浸润性导管癌	123(91.8)	45(97.8)	0.078
浸润性小叶癌	0(0.0)	1(2.2)	
导管内癌伴浸润	3(2.2)	0(0.0)	
其他病理类型	8(6.0)	0(0.0)	
病理分化等级[n(%)]			
I	3(2.2)	1(2.2)	0.66
II	61(45.5)	31(67.4)	
III	59(44)	13(28.3)	
未明确	11(8.2)	1(2.2)	
AR状态[n(%)] <sup>1)</sup>			
阴性	48(35.8)	15(32.6)	0.354
阳性	15(11.2)	9(19.6)	
Ki-67水平[n(%)]			
高表达	128(95.5)	41(89.1)	0.369
低表达	4(3.0)	3(6.5)	
未明确	2(1.5)	2(4.3)	
Ki-67表达量(% $\bar{x}\pm s$ )	57.27 $\pm$ 24.78	54.46 $\pm$ 5.52	0.511

注:1)两组部分患者行AR检测

Note: 1) Some patients in both groups undergoing AR testing

## 2.3 预后分析

在全组患者、HR阳性患者、HR阴性患者中,HER-2低表达组与HER-2零表达组的总生存(OS)期和无病生存(DFS)期均未见明显差异(均 $P>0.05$ )(图1-2)。由于HER-2低表达患者中AR阳性率较高,因此进一步分析AR表达对HER-2低表达患者预后的影响,结果显示,不同AR表达状态的HER-2低表达患者的OS及DFS均未见明显差异(均 $P>0.05$ )(图3)。

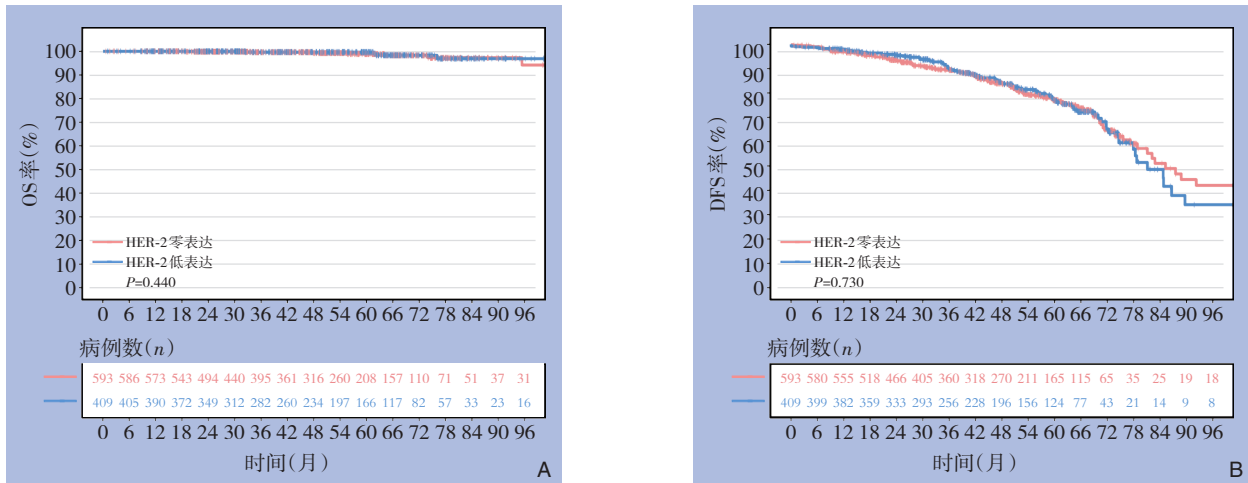


图 1 全组中不同HER-2表达状态患者生存曲线 A: OS曲线; B: DFS曲线

Figures 1 Survival curves of patients with different HER-2 expression profiles in the entire group A: OS curves; B: DFS curves

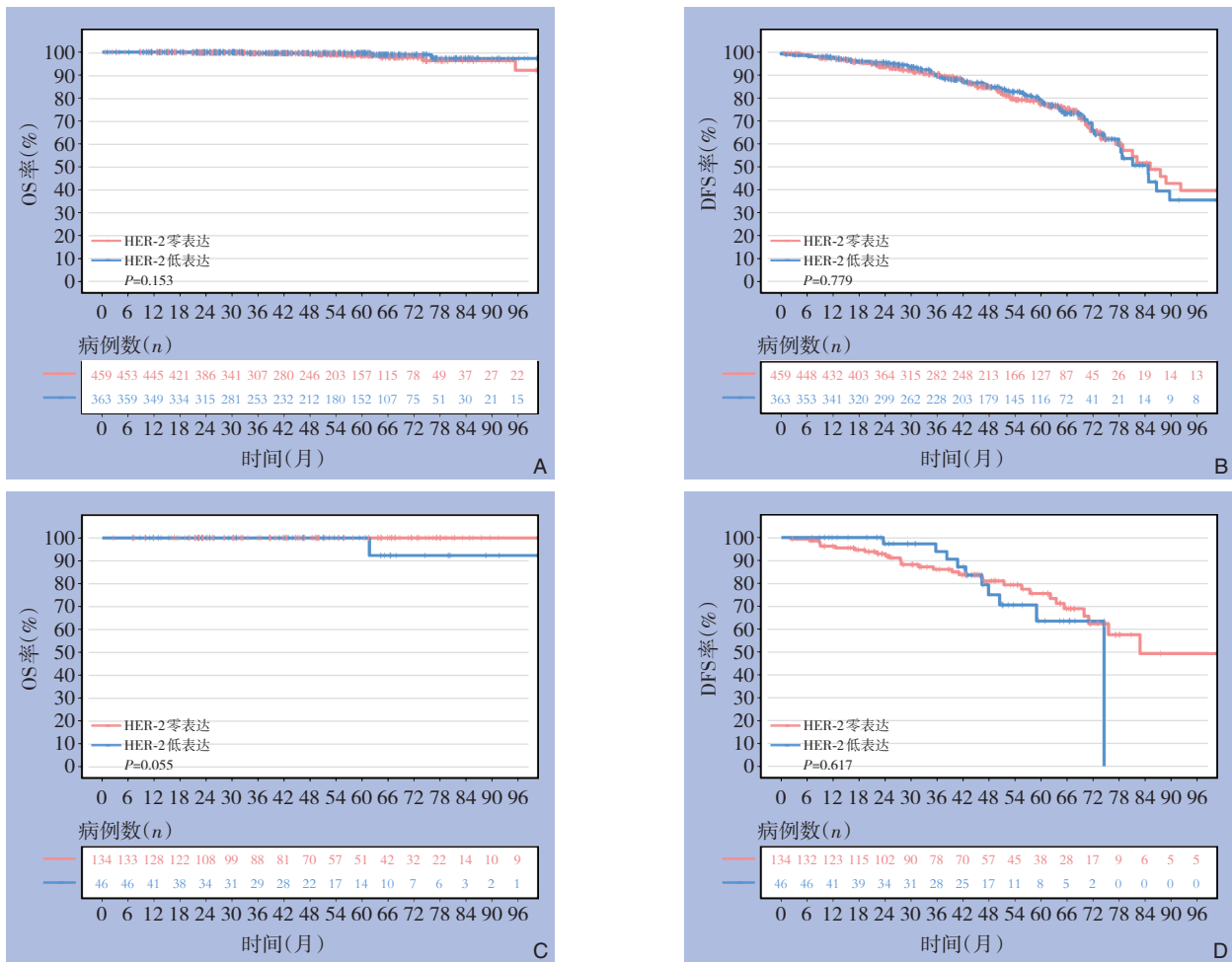


图 2 HR阳性与阴性患者中不同HER-2表达状态患者生存曲线 A-B: HR阳性患者中不同HER-2表达状态患者的OS与DFS曲线; C-D: HR阴性患者中不同HER-2表达状态患者的OS与DFS曲线

Figures 2 Survival curves of patients with different HER-2 expression profiles in HR-positive or HR-negative patients A-B: OS and DFS curves of patients with different HER-2 expression profiles in HR-positive patients; C-D: OS and DFS curves of patients with different HER-2 expression statuses in HR-negative patients

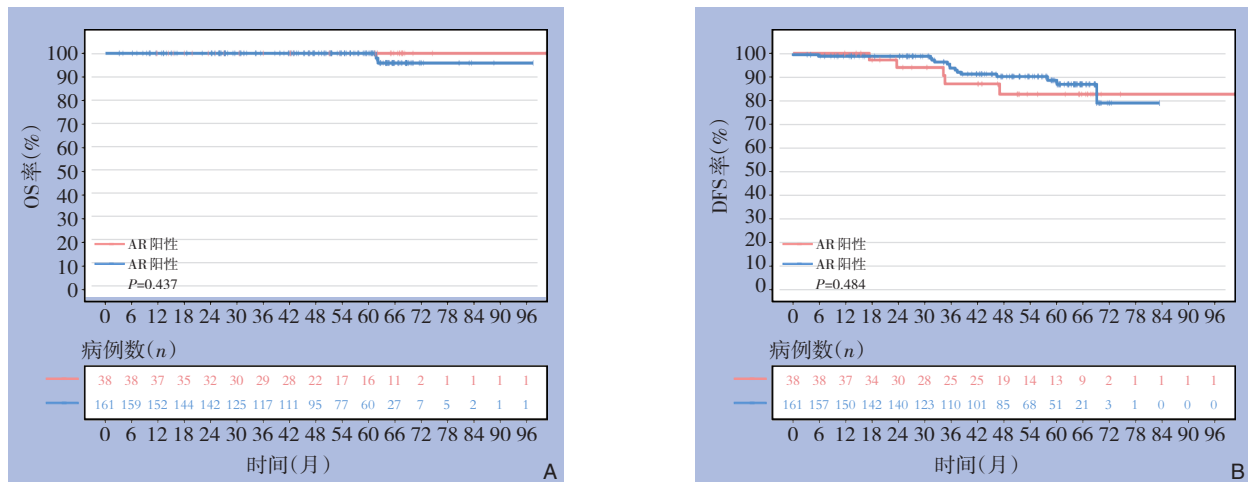


图3 HER-2低表达患者中AR阳性与阴性组患者生存曲线 A: OS曲线; B: DFS曲线

Figures 3 Survival curves of AR-positive and AR-negative patients in the HER-2 low expression group A: OS curves; B: DFS curves

### 3 讨论

乳腺癌是世界范围内女性癌症相关死亡的主要原因之一<sup>[15]</sup>，目前治疗手段丰富，并强调精准化、个体化治疗<sup>[16]</sup>，常需通过识别肿瘤DNA中具有功能的基因改变，并筛选出最有效的治疗策略，针对不同患者独有的肿瘤基因谱提供相应的治疗方案。HER-2基因是乳腺癌极为关键的治疗靶点之一，既往其表达情况常为“二元化”分类，HER-2低表达乳腺癌是否可以作为一种独立的新亚型一直颇受争议，其临床病理特征以及预后与其他类型乳腺癌有何区别，对治疗该人群有重要临床意义。

在本研究中，HER-2低表达乳腺癌患者在纳入病例中达40.8%（409例），其中HER-2低表达患者的HR阳性率显著高于零表达患者。Denkert等<sup>[17]</sup>的研究结果提示HER-2低表达和零表达乳腺癌有明显的临床特征差异，前者也更多表现为HR阳性，且HR的表达与HER-2表达呈正相关。同时在HER-2阳性患者中，达60%的患者表现为三阳性乳腺癌。这或许提示HER-2信号通路与激素受体通路之间存在某种相互干扰机制<sup>[18]</sup>。此外，Denkert等<sup>[17]</sup>也对该人群新辅助治疗疗效进行了探索，结果发现HER-2低表达患者新辅助的病理完全缓解率（pathological complete response, pCR）更低。在HR阳性亚组中，HER-2低表达的pCR率（ypT0/isypN0或ypT0ypN0）显著低于HER-2零表达的肿瘤患者（17.5% vs. 23.6%， $P=0.024$ ），HR阴性亚组中两者间无差异（50.1% vs. 48.0%， $P=0.21$ ），这可能

与HER-2低表达乳腺癌患者Ki-67较低、HR阳性率较高有关，对新辅助治疗敏感度不高。

在预后方面，本研究结果提示，HER-2低表达乳腺癌患者，无论其HR的表达情况，均与HER-2零表达患者无明显差异。该结果可能与样本资料局限于单中心，以及回顾性研究存在的选择偏倚、回忆偏倚等有关。既往对HER-2低表达乳腺癌的预后研究颇多，但结论并不一致，其中有一部分认为HER-2低表达乳腺癌患者的预后更差<sup>[19]</sup>，Zhang等<sup>[20]</sup>在一项纳入523例患者的回顾性分析中指出，HER-2低表达乳腺癌的新辅助疗效不佳，但远期生存预后更优。《美国医学会杂志》肿瘤学分册在线发表芝加哥大学的该国大样本研究报告<sup>[21]</sup>，调查了HER-2低表达乳腺癌预后情况。该研究总计纳入1 136 016例患者，其中约有740 000例低表达乳腺癌患者，结果表明HER-2低表达与HER-2零表达乳腺癌相比，短期疗效和长期结局相似，HER-2低表达相关生物学特性内在差异并未决定其预后，这与本研究结论相似。

此外，本研究同时发现低表达人群中AR阳性率较高。AR是一种类固醇激素受体，在多种组织中表达<sup>[22]</sup>。在不同的乳腺癌模型中，AR、ER及其配体之间的相互作用因雄激素可能转化为雌激素而变得复杂<sup>[23]</sup>。表达ER和AR的肿瘤患者比ER阳性、AR阴性患者常表现出更好的预后<sup>[24-25]</sup>。一种解释是AR和ER可能在雌激素反应元件（estrogen response element, ERE）水平上的竞争，这会导致ER依赖性基因转录受损<sup>[26]</sup>。因此，AR与ERE的结

合降低了雌激素增殖作用并发挥了抗增殖作用<sup>[27]</sup>。这种机制可以解释 AR 在标准激素疗法耐药中的潜在作用<sup>[24]</sup>。干预 AR 通路已被认为是乳腺癌中可能的治疗策略<sup>[28-30]</sup>。一项研究<sup>[31]</sup>中, 纳入总计 424 例 HR 阴性乳腺癌患者, 并使用抗 AR 类药物治疗后, 6 个月临床获益率为 19% (95% CI=7~39), 中位无进展生存时间为 12 周 (95% CI=11~22), 提示拮抗该受体可使部分患者获益。在本研究中虽未发现 AR 表达是否能影响到生存预后, 但在 HER-2 低表达人群中 AR 阳性率可高达 80.9%, 提示了本人群对 AR 治疗的巨大潜力, 或许能为将来探索新的内分泌联合治疗方案提供临床数据支持。

综上所述, HER-2 低表达早期乳腺癌患者的 ER、PR、AR 的阳性率均高于 HER-2 零表达患者, 提示可能与内分泌治疗的敏感度相关, 有相关研究表明, HER-2 过表达可间接导致内分泌治疗耐药, 可通过抗 HER-2 联合内分泌辅助治疗 HR 阳性的 HER-2 低表达患者, 这具有一定的临床意义。此外两者之间的生存预后未见明显差异, 可能与样本量较小且局限于单中心有关, 同时回忆性偏倚存在于随访过程中, 接下来可进一步开展前瞻性研究进行论证。

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作者贡献声明: 陈燕洪、何叶青负责研究设计、实施、数据分析、文章撰写; 陈奇通、瞿莉梦负责数据处理、统计分析、文章审阅; 邓聪负责数据采集; 易文君负责论文写作指导、文章修改; 邹琼燕、张丹华、李伦负责研究指导; 周琴、李来负责研究及论文写作指导、支持性贡献。

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