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· 专题研究 ·

阿帕替尼联合卡瑞利珠单抗治疗中晚期肝细胞癌的疗效及其对患者免疫功能、肿瘤标志物的影响

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摘要

背景与目的: 近年来靶向药物治疗迅速发展, 已成为治疗晚期肝细胞癌(HCC)的重要手段。但一线靶向药物索拉非尼治疗HCC应答率低, 靶向药物治疗HCC的临床方案仍是一个需要不断提高的难题。本研究探讨阿帕替尼联合卡瑞利珠单抗治疗中晚期HCC的临床疗效, 以及对患者免疫功能、肿瘤标志物影响。

方法: 回顾性分析2022年5月—12月湖北省中医院收治的137例中晚期不可切除的HCC患者临床资料, 其中61例单纯口服阿帕替尼治疗(靶向组), 76例在口服阿帕替尼基础上, 同时给予卡瑞利珠单抗静脉滴注(靶免组)。比较两组客观缓解率(ORR)与疾病控制率(DCR); T淋巴细胞亚群(CD3⁺、CD4⁺、CD8⁺)、甲胎蛋白(AFP)、高尔基体蛋白73(GP-73)、甲胎蛋白异质体3(AFP-L3)水平; 肝肾功能指标与不良反应情况; 随访12个月, 统计两组患者的无进展生存(PFS)情况。

结果: 治疗前, 两组患者的一般资料、肝肾功能指标、免疫与肿瘤标志物水平差异均无统计学意义(均 $P>0.05$)。治疗后, 靶免组ORR与DCR均高于靶向组(40.79% vs. 16.39%, $P=0.02$; 60.53% vs. 39.34%, $P=0.014$); 靶免组CD3⁺、CD4⁺、CD4⁺/CD8⁺高于靶向组, CD8⁺低于靶向组(均 $P<0.05$); 靶免组AFP、GP-73、AFP-L3低于靶向组(均 $P<0.05$); 靶免组总胆红素、丙氨酸氨基转移酶水平低于靶向组(均 $P<0.05$); 靶免组皮肤毛细血管增生症发生率高于靶向组(42.11% vs. 18.03%, $P<0.05$), 其余不良反应发生率两组间差异均无统计学意义(均 $P>0.05$)。两组均随访12个月, 靶免组中位PFS明显长于靶向组(10个月 vs. 6个月, $\chi^2=9.954$, $P<0.05$)。

结论: 阿帕替尼联合卡瑞利珠单抗治疗HCC可上调T淋巴细胞水平, 降低肿瘤标志物水平, 有效延长生存时间, 疗效优于单纯靶向治疗, 且安全性良好。

关键词

癌, 肝细胞; 抗肿瘤联合化疗方案; 阿帕替尼; 卡瑞利珠

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Efficacy of apatinib combined with camrelizumab in the treatment of advanced hepatocellular carcinoma and its impact on patients' immune function and tumor markers

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Abstract

Background and Aims: In recent years, targeted drug therapy has rapidly developed and become an important method for treating advanced hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). However, the response rate of first-line targeted drug sorafenib in treating HCC is low, and improving clinical protocols for targeted drug therapy in HCC remains a challenging issue. This study was performed to investigate the clinical efficacy of apatinib combined with camrelizumab in treating intermediate to advanced HCC and its impact on patients' immune function and tumor markers.

Methods: The clinical data of 137 patients with unresectable intermediate to advanced HCC admitted between May and December 2022 were retrospectively analyzed. Among them, 61 patients were treated with oral apatinib alone (targeted group), and 76 received intravenous camrelizumab in addition to oral apatinib (targeted-immune group). The objective response rate (ORR) and disease control rate (DCR) of the two groups were compared; levels of T lymphocyte subsets (CD3⁺, CD4⁺, CD8⁺), alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), Golgi protein 73 (GP-73), and AFP-L3 were measured; liver and kidney function indicators and adverse reactions were monitored. A 12-month follow-up was conducted to assess the two groups' progression-free survival (PFS).

Results: Before treatment, there were no statistically significant differences in general data, liver and kidney function indicators, and immune and tumor marker levels between the two groups (all $P>0.05$). After treatment, the ORR and DCR in the targeted-immune group were higher than those in the targeted group (40.79% vs. 16.39%, $P=0.02$; 60.53% vs. 39.34%, $P=0.014$). The CD3⁺, CD4⁺, and CD4⁺/CD8⁺ levels in the targeted-immune group were higher, while CD8⁺ levels were lower than those in the targeted group (all $P<0.05$). AFP, GP-73, and AFP-L3 levels in the targeted-immune group were lower than those in the targeted group (all $P<0.05$). The total bilirubin and alanine aminotransferase levels in the targeted-immune group were lower than those in the targeted group (both $P<0.05$). The incidence of skin capillary hemangiomas was higher in the targeted-immune group than in the targeted group (42.11% vs. 18.03%, $P<0.05$). In contrast, the incidence of other adverse reactions did not differ significantly between the two groups (all $P>0.05$). After 12 months of follow-up, the median PFS in the targeted-immune group was significantly longer than that in the targeted group (10 months vs. 6 months, $\chi^2=9.954$, $P<0.05$).

Conclusion: Apatinib combined with camrelizumab in treating HCC can enhance T lymphocyte levels, reduce tumor marker levels, effectively prolong survival time, and have better efficacy than targeted therapy alone, with reasonable safety.

Key words

Carcinoma, Hepatocellular; Antineoplastic Combined Chemotherapy Protocols; Apatinib; Camrelizumab

CLC number: R735.7

据国家癌症中心统计资料，肝癌是我国癌症致死的第二大病因^[1]。其中肝细胞癌（hepatocellular carcinoma, HCC）发病隐匿，确诊时往往已发展至中晚期^[2]，丧失手术机会。采用药物治疗延长生存期、改善患者生活质量成为临床实践的主要选择。近年来，靶向药物治疗迅速发展，已成为治疗晚期HCC的重要手段^[3-6]。但一线靶向药物索拉非尼治疗HCC应答率低，临床获益有限^[7]，阿帕替尼是我国自主研发的分子靶向药物，可有效延长HCC患者生存期^[8-9]。已有研究^[10-11]表明，分子靶向药物可改善肿瘤患者免疫抑制，与免疫检查点抑制剂发挥协同作用，提高抗肿瘤效果。《原发性肝癌诊疗指南（2022年版）》^[12]已将阿帕替尼联合程序性死亡受体1（programmed death receptor 1, PD-1）抑制剂卡瑞利珠单抗列入HCC的一线治疗方案，但该方案应用于临床的时间还较短，仍需更多的临床观察提供循证依据。本研究回顾性分析2022年5月—12月收治的不可切除HCC患者的治疗情况，以期为不可切除HCC的治疗方案提供参考。

1 资料与方法

1.1 一般资料

回顾性分析2022年5月—12月湖北省中医院收治的137例中晚期不可切除HCC患者资料，137例患者中，61例单纯口服阿帕替尼治疗（靶向组），76例在口服阿帕替尼基础上，同时给予卡瑞利珠单抗静脉滴注（靶免组）。纳入标准：（1）符合HCC诊断标准^[13]；（2）CT或MRI检查发现至少存在1个可测量病灶；（3）中国肝癌分期方案（China Liver Cancer Staging, CNLC）为III期；（4）肝功能Child-Pugh分级为A~B级；（5）体力活动状态评分0~1；（6）年龄18~75岁；（7）自愿参加研究，出院后接受随访。排除标准：（1）存在严重心、肾功能不全；（2）合并凝血功能障碍；（3）合并其他恶性肿瘤。两组一般资料见表1。本研究已获医院伦理委员会批准（审批号：HBZY2023-C87-02）。

1.2 方法

靶向组：口服甲磺酸阿帕替尼（江苏恒瑞公司，国药准字H20140105），0.25 g/次，1次/d。发生严重不良反应时减少剂量或停药，不良反应缓解后再恢复用药直到疾病进展或死亡。靶免组：

在靶向组基础上，同时给予卡瑞利珠单抗（苏州盛迪亚公司，批号：2019S00365）静脉滴注，200 mg/次，1次/3周。

表1 两组患者一般资料比较

Table 1 Comparison of the general data between the two groups of patients

项目	靶向组 (n=61)	靶免组 (n=76)	χ^2/t	P
性别[n(%)]				
男	38(62.30)	51(67.11)	0.344	0.558
女	23(37.70)	25(32.89)		
年龄(岁, $\bar{x} \pm s$)	57.92±6.22	56.27±6.65	1.485	0.140
乙型肝炎病毒阳性[n(%)]	56(91.80)	69(90.79)	0.044	0.835
肝硬化[n(%)]	43(70.49)	56(73.68)	0.172	0.678
肿瘤长径[cm, n(%)]				
≥5	47(77.05)	60(78.95)	0.071	0.789
<5	14(22.95)	16(21.05)		
多发肿瘤[n(%)]	8(13.11)	13(17.11)	0.415	0.519
CNLC分期[n(%)]				
IIIa	52(85.25)	63(82.89)	0.139	0.710
IIIb	9(14.75)	13(17.11)		
肝功能Child-Pugh分级[n(%)]				
A级	29(47.54)	31(40.79)	0.627	0.429
B级	32(52.46)	45(59.21)		
体力活动状态评分[n(%)]				
0	35(57.38)	40(52.63)	0.308	0.579
1	26(42.62)	36(47.37)		
门脉癌栓[n(%)]	32(52.46)	44(57.89)	0.405	0.525
门静脉高压[n(%)]	23(37.70)	29(38.16)	0.003	0.957
腹水[n(%)]	25(40.98)	33(43.42)	0.082	0.774
既往治疗[n(%)]				
手术	11(18.03)	15(19.74)	0.064	0.800
索拉非尼	39(63.93)	45(59.21)	0.318	0.573
射频消融	18(29.51)	21(27.63)	0.059	0.809
TACE	43(70.49)	52(68.42)	0.068	0.794

1.3 评价标准

1.3.1 临床疗效 常规CT或MRI检查观察靶病灶，按mRECIST标准^[14]评估疗效。（1）完全缓解（complete response, CR）：靶病灶无动脉期增强；（2）部分缓解（partial response, PR）：靶病灶直径缩小≥30%；（3）疾病稳定（stable disease, SD）：靶病灶直径缩小<30%，或增大<20%；（4）疾病进展（progressive disease, PD）：靶病灶直径增大≥20%，或发生新发病灶；（5）客观缓解率（objective response rate, ORR）=(1)(2)项之和/总例数×100%；（6）疾病控制率（disease control rate, DCR）=(1)(2)(3)项之和/总例数×100%。

1.3.2 免疫与肿瘤标志物指标 于治疗前及治疗3个月采集空腹静脉血,采用CytoFLEX流式细胞仪检测T淋巴细胞亚群(CD3⁺、CD4⁺、CD8⁺)水平;使用ELISA法检测血清中甲胎蛋白(α -fetoprotein, AFP)、高尔基体蛋白73(Golgi glycoprotein 73, GP-73)及甲胎蛋白异质体L3(α -fetoprotein-L3, AFP-L3)水平。

1.3.3 预后评价 随访截止时间2023年12月,每个月复查1次,比较两组无进展生存期(progression-free survival, PFS)。PFS指治疗开始至肿瘤进展或死亡。

1.3.4 安全性评价 检测肝肾功能指标,记录腹泻、食欲减退、肝功能异常、蛋白尿、皮肤毛细血管增生症及手足综合征等不良反应。

1.4 统计学处理

使用SPSS 19.0软件进行统计分析。采用Kolmogorov-Smirnov检验判断计量资料的分布形态,符合正态分布采用均数 \pm 标准差($\bar{x} \pm s$)进行描述,计量资料采用t检验;计数资料采用 χ^2 检验。生存曲线采用Kaplan-Meier法分析。 $P < 0.05$ 为差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 临床疗效评价

靶免组各项疗效指标均优于靶向组;靶免组的ORR与DCR均明显高于靶向组(40.79% vs. 16.39%, $P=0.002$; 60.53% vs. 39.34%, $P=0.014$) (表2)。

表2 两组临床疗效比较[n (%)]

Table 2 Comparison of clinical efficacy between the two groups [n (%)]

组别	CR	PR	SD	PD	ORR	DCR
靶向组(n=61)	0(0.00)	10(16.39)	14(22.95)	37(60.66)	10(16.39)	24(39.34)
靶免组(n=76)	5(6.58)	26(34.21)	15(19.74)	30(39.47)	31(40.79)	46(60.53)
χ^2	—	—	—	—	9.604	6.076
P	—	—	—	—	0.002	0.014

2.2 免疫与肿瘤标志物指标

治疗前两组的各项免疫指标差异均无统计学意义(均 $P > 0.05$);治疗后靶免组CD3⁺、CD4⁺、CD4⁺/CD8⁺水平明显高于靶向组,CD8⁺水平明显低

于靶向组(均 $P < 0.05$) (表3)。治疗前两组的各项肿瘤标志物水平差异均无统计学意义(均 $P > 0.05$);治疗后靶免组AFP、GP-73、AFP-L3水平均明显低于靶向组(均 $P < 0.05$) (表4)。

表3 两组免疫指标比较($\bar{x} \pm s$)

Table 3 Comparison of immune indicators between the two groups ($\bar{x} \pm s$)

组别	CD3 ⁺ (%)		CD4 ⁺ (%)		CD8 ⁺ (%)		CD4 ⁺ /CD8 ⁺	
	治疗前	治疗后	治疗前	治疗后	治疗前	治疗后	治疗前	治疗后
靶向组(n=61)	53.51 \pm 4.24	57.07 \pm 4.22	31.69 \pm 3.56	37.96 \pm 4.24	28.35 \pm 3.22	24.62 \pm 3.56	1.32 \pm 0.42	1.59 \pm 0.24
靶免组(n=76)	53.06 \pm 4.74	60.93 \pm 5.06	32.14 \pm 4.13	40.74 \pm 4.92	27.90 \pm 3.63	20.98 \pm 3.14	1.21 \pm 0.28	1.88 \pm 0.31
t	0.579	4.772	0.673	3.493	0.758	6.353	1.832	6.002
P	0.564	<0.001	0.502	<0.001	0.450	<0.001	0.069	<0.001

表4 两组肿瘤标志物水平比较($\bar{x} \pm s$)

Table 4 Comparison of tumor marker levels between the two groups ($\bar{x} \pm s$)

组别	AFP(μ g/L)		GP-73(μ g/L)		AFP-L3(mg/L)	
	治疗前	治疗后	治疗前	治疗后	治疗前	治疗后
靶向组(n=61)	83.59 \pm 5.29	56.97 \pm 6.24	90.58 \pm 5.22	62.95 \pm 6.42	152.92 \pm 31.82	123.18 \pm 34.36
靶免组(n=76)	84.11 \pm 5.02	15.79 \pm 4.22	91.42 \pm 6.53	47.94 \pm 6.59	156.94 \pm 29.52	79.83 \pm 26.57
t	0.588	45.932	0.817	13.402	0.765	8.328
P	0.557	<0.001	0.416	<0.001	0.446	<0.001

2.3 肝肾功能与不良反应情况

治疗前两组的肝肾功能指标包括总胆红素(TBIL)、白蛋白(ALB)、丙氨酸氨基转移酶(ALT)、天门冬氨酸氨基转移酶(AST)、肌酐(Cr)、尿酸(UA), 差异均无统计学意义(均 $P>0.05$);

治疗后靶免组TBIL、ALT低于靶向组(均 $P<0.05$) (表5)。不良反应方面, 靶免组皮肤毛细血管增生症发生率高于靶向组($P<0.05$), 其余不良反应发生率两组间差异无统计学意义(均 $P>0.05$) (表6)。

表5 两组肝肾功能指标比较($\bar{x} \pm s$)

Table 5 Comparison of liver and kidney function indicators between the two groups ($\bar{x} \pm s$)

时间	TBIL($\mu\text{mol/L}$)	ALB(g/L)	ALT(U/L)	AST(U/L)	Cr($\mu\text{mol/L}$)	UA($\mu\text{mol/L}$)
治疗前						
靶向组(n=61)	21.85 \pm 5.22	36.27 \pm 6.22	42.86 \pm 7.27	58.72 \pm 8.27	57.72 \pm 11.28	289.73 \pm 25.82
靶免组(n=76)	22.52 \pm 6.82	36.79 \pm 5.92	41.04 \pm 8.35	56.26 \pm 9.83	56.08 \pm 12.46	285.65 \pm 32.68
<i>t</i>	0.633	0.461	1.342	1.561	0.798	0.796
<i>P</i>	0.528	0.645	0.182	0.121	0.426	0.428
治疗后						
靶向组(n=61)	18.74 \pm 7.29	35.82 \pm 6.28	36.27 \pm 9.82	51.37 \pm 7.84	52.84 \pm 6.25	273.27 \pm 35.22
靶免组(n=76)	15.26 \pm 6.02	34.07 \pm 6.94	27.56 \pm 7.96	50.84 \pm 6.39	51.62 \pm 7.12	266.74 \pm 29.73
<i>t</i>	3.060	1.530	5.735	0.436	1.052	1.578
<i>P</i>	0.003	0.128	<0.001	0.664	0.295	0.117

表6 两组不良反应比较[n (%)]

Table 6 Comparison of adverse reactions between the two groups [n (%)]

组别	腹泻	食欲减退	ALT升高	蛋白尿	皮肤毛细血管增生症	手足综合征
靶向组(n=61)	5(8.20)	11(18.03)	10(16.39)	2(3.28)	11(18.03)	3(4.92)
靶免组(n=76)	7(9.21)	16(21.05)	8(10.53)	3(3.95)	32(42.11)	2(2.63)
χ^2	0.044	0.195	1.021	0.063	9.106	0.063
<i>P</i>	0.835	0.659	0.312	0.802	0.003	0.802

2.4 预后情况

两组均随访12~19个月, 无失访病例, 随访期中位数16个月。靶向组的中位PFS为6个月, 靶免组中位PFS为10个月; 靶免组PFS长于靶向组($\chi^2=9.954$, $P<0.05$) (图1)。

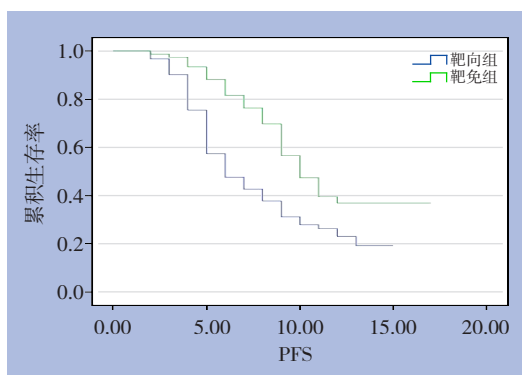


图1 两组患者的PFS曲线

Figure 1 PFS curves of the two groups of patients

3 讨论

手术是HCC患者首选治疗方案, 但大部分患者确诊时缺乏手术指征, 必须选择消融、介入及放化疗等非手术治疗方案。肝动脉灌注化疗栓塞术(transarterial chemoembolization, TACE)具有微创、安全性高等显著优势, 但中晚期HCC患者肝功能已严重受损, 肿瘤体积较大, 部分已出现肝外转移, 接受TACE治疗后仍可能由于病灶残留等原因出现复发, 远期疗效仍不理想^[15-16]。由于病情严重、丧失治愈可能性, 采用药物治疗延长生存期、改善患者生活质量成为临床实践的主要选择。

索拉非尼是治疗HCC的一线药物, 可延长生存期, 但其治疗应答率仍低, 且可能出现耐药性, 临床获益有限^[7]。IMbrave150^[17]、ORIENT-32研究^[18]提出靶向治疗联合免疫治疗的方案(贝伐珠单抗联合阿替利珠单抗或信迪利单抗)作为缺乏手术指征的晚期HCC患者的一线治疗, 可有效延长患

者PFS与总生存期。上述研究成果促使临床工作者更加重视联合用药方案的探索,其中阿帕替尼联合卡瑞利珠的用药方案(即“双艾”方案)受到研究者的重点关注。此两种药物均是我国研发的抗肿瘤药物,国内II期临床试验^[19](RESCUE)表明,该联合用药方案治疗晚期HCC具有显著疗效,且具有良好的安全性。另一项全球III期试验^[20]证实,“双艾”方案可使晚期HCC患者获益,且安全性可控。

本研究结果显示,靶免组ORR(40.79%)、DCR(60.53%)均高于靶向组(16.39%、39.34%);两组均随访12个月,靶免组PFS(10个月)长于靶向组(6个月),与已往研究^[19-20]一致,证实联合方案可延缓HCC病情进展,有效延长生存期。这是由于阿帕替尼作为高效的小分子酪氨酸激酶抑制剂,可特异性阻断信号转导通路,抑制肿瘤新生血管形成,从而防止肿瘤复发^[21-23]。卡瑞利珠可竞争性阻断PD-1与其配体相结合,刺激T细胞的活化、增殖,改善机体免疫系统的抗肿瘤效应,提高对肿瘤细胞的识别、清除能力,抑制肿瘤细胞的免疫逃逸,从而抑制肿瘤复发^[24]。“双艾”方案联合治疗的协同作用表现在:(1)双重打击:两种药物作用于肿瘤生长的不同环节:抑制血管生成来限制肿瘤生长,以及增强免疫反应来清除肿瘤细胞。这种双重打击能够更有效地抑制肿瘤的生长和扩散。(2)增强免疫反应:阿帕替尼通过抑制血管生成,可以减少肿瘤微环境中的免疫抑制因素,使免疫系统更容易识别和攻击肿瘤细胞。而卡瑞利珠的加入能够进一步增强免疫系统的抗肿瘤免疫反应,形成良性循环。(3)减量增效:联合用药可降低单一药物的使用剂量和周期,从而减少药物的副作用和不良反应。这种减量增效的策略在提高疗效的同时,也保证了治疗的安全性。

在药物试验阶段,国内II期临床试验与全球III期试验仅采用ORR、PFS、总生存期作为试验终点评估指标^[19-20],本研究在此基础上,同时观察了联合用药方案对患者T淋巴亚群、肿瘤标志物的影响。本研究中治疗后靶免组CD3⁺、CD4⁺、CD4⁺/CD8⁺高于靶向组,CD8⁺低于靶向组,提示联合用药可上调T淋巴细胞水平,可改善肿瘤微环境中的免疫抑制,改善免疫抑制,这对于免疫系统识别和清除HCC细胞具有积极意义^[25],有利于提高抗肿瘤效果,持续抑制肿瘤的发展^[26]。这进一步验证了

阿帕替尼联合卡瑞利珠治疗HCC的作用机理。

本研究结果显示,治疗后靶免组AFP、GP-73、AFP-L3低于靶向组,提示联合用药可降低HCC患者肿瘤标志物水平。AFP是一种重要的糖蛋白,与机体生长发育密切相关,是评估肝癌的重要指标^[27]。AFP-L3作为AFP的异质体,主要由HCC细胞产生,诊断HCC的特异性超过95%^[28]。GP73存在于高尔基体中,在HCC肿瘤组织中异常高表达^[29]。本研究中靶免组上述指标改善更明显,提示联合用药方案可有效清除HCC细胞,推测是联合用药改善免疫抑制,且阻断PD-1相关信号通路,影响PD-1抑制剂检查点的表达,唤醒肿瘤患者耗竭的T淋巴细胞,分泌肿瘤抑制因子清除HCC细胞^[30]。

本研究结果显示,治疗后靶免组TBIL、ALT低于靶向组;靶免组皮肤毛细血管增生症发生率(42.11%)高于靶向组(18.03%)。皮肤毛细血管增生症是一种免疫性炎症反应,与免疫系统过度激活有关,在接受PD-1抑制剂治疗的患者中较为常见。本研究中虽然发生皮肤毛细血管增生症的患者较多,但均症状轻微且自然消退,未影响正常治疗。这证实联合用药方案安全性良好,副作用基本可控与可耐受。

综上,阿帕替尼联合卡瑞利珠可提高中晚期HCC患者免疫功能、降低肿瘤标志物水平、延长生存期,治疗安全性良好。本研究是回顾性分析,样本量较小,随访时间较短,肿瘤标志物下降与联合用药的因果关系可能受各种潜在的混淆因素的影响,研究结果可能存在一定程度选择性偏倚。未来将收集更多病例,增加更多临床病理指标,开展多中心多期随访,对本研究结论进行进一步验证。

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