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· 文献综述 ·

DNA 甲基化修饰在胰腺癌中的研究进展

万山, 邓丽聪, 楚杰

(四川省资阳市第一人民医院 肿瘤科, 四川 资阳 641300)

摘要

胰腺癌的发病机制、早期诊断及治疗一直是医学界关注的热点与重点。近年来多项研究表明表观遗传学对肿瘤的发生发展发挥着重要的作用, 其中DNA甲基化最常见。胰腺癌的发生发展与其相关癌基因或抑癌基因由于DNA甲基化水平变化引起的异常激活或抑制有关。DNA甲基化可能在体细胞突变前发生, 且贯穿肿瘤的全过程, 因此在肿瘤的诊断、治疗和预防中被广泛研究。笔者对DNA甲基化的概念、作用方式、在胰腺癌发生发展中所起的作用以及胰腺癌诊断和治疗上的前景作一综述, 以期对胰腺癌未来的研究提供一定的参考。

关键词

胰腺肿瘤; 后成说, 遗传; DNA甲基化; 综述

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Research progress of DNA methylation modification in pancreatic cancer

WAN Shan, DENG Licong, CHU Jie

(Department of Oncology, the First People's Hospital of Ziyang, Ziyang, Sichuan 641300, China)

Abstract

The pathogenesis, early diagnosis, and treatment of pancreatic cancer have always been a hot and important topic of concern in the medical community. In recent years, a number of studies have shown that epigenetics plays an important role in the occurrence and development of tumors, with DNA methylation being the most common form. The development of pancreatic cancer is related to the abnormal activation or inhibition of its related oncogenes or tumor suppressor genes due to changes in DNA methylation levels. DNA methylation may occur before somatic cell mutations and runs through the entire process of tumor development, and therefore, it has been widely studied in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of tumors. In this article, the authors provide an overview of the concept and mode of action of DNA methylation, its role in the initiation and progression of pancreatic cancer, and its prospects in the diagnosis and treatment of pancreatic cancer, in order to provide a reference for future research on pancreatic cancer.

Key words

Pancreatic Neoplasms; Epigenesis, Genetic; DNA Methylation; Review

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作者简介: 万山, 四川省资阳市第一人民医院主治医师, 主要从事腹部肿瘤方面的研究。

通信作者: 万山, Email: shanwan@163.com

胰腺癌是世界第七大癌症，5年生存率约9%^[1]。由于早期症状隐匿，多数发现时已是晚期，或存在远端转移，失去最佳手术时机^[2]。即便接受根治性手术，也会出现复发，5年生存率只有25%^[3]。相比于其他癌种，胰腺癌对放化疗和免疫治疗响应较低并具有更高的侵袭性，其中的分子机制尚不明确^[4-5]。近年来，表观遗传学的迅速发展从分子水平上揭示了复杂的临床现象，为癌症的研究和治疗提供诸多靶点^[6-9]。DNA甲基化是表观遗传学的重要组成部分，可以调控基因表达的时机和表达的量度，在生命活动的调控中意义重大，是目前研究最多的表观遗传修饰方式^[10]。而在胰腺癌的发生发展中，异常的DNA甲基化水平参与肿瘤生长、侵袭、化疗抵抗等过程，聚焦DNA甲基化水平能更有效预测肿瘤进程^[11]。因此，有必要对DNA甲基化与胰腺癌发病机理的关系作一综述，加深对DNA甲基化与胰腺癌发生、发展的理解，有助于指导临床转化的方向。

1 DNA甲基化的概念

DNA甲基化是在DNA甲基化转移酶（DNA methyltransferase, DNMT）的作用下将甲基选择性地添加到胞嘧啶上，最终形成5'-胞嘧啶的过程。在哺乳动物中主要发生在富含双核苷酸CpG岛的区域，是一种重要的表观遗传学标记^[12]。在这个过程中，DNA甲基化转移酶负责建立和维持甲基化的稳定，而甲基化CpG结合蛋白家族（methyl-CpG binding proteins, MeCPs）参与识别甲基化。人类DNA甲基化转移酶包括DNMT1、DNMT2、DNMT3。DNMT1又称为维持甲基化酶，使半甲基的DNA分子甲基化，从而维持甲基化、抑制转录^[13]。DNMT2仅有微弱的DNA甲基转移酶活性。DNMT3包括了两个从头转移酶DNMT3A、DNMT3B和一个调节蛋白DNMT3L。DNMT3L没有单独的催化功能，但可以提高DNMT3A和DNMT3B的催化活性。MeCPs是与甲基化CpG二核苷酸结合的一类核蛋白。在哺乳动物中常见的有5种，其中MeCP2、MBD1、MBD2、MBD4含有典型的甲基化DNA结合结构域（methylated DNA binding domain, MBD），可以结合甲基化CpG，从而抑制转录^[14-15]。Kaiso则是通过锌指基序列与甲基化CpG结合从而发挥转录

抑制的作用^[16]。DNA去甲基化过程分为主动去甲基化和被动去甲基化。主动去甲基化是由去甲基化酶参与完成。被动去甲基化则是一个由于缺乏DNMT1而终止的过程。目前已鉴定的去甲基化酶为TETs（ten-eleven translocation proteins），其中TET1被认为是一种5mC羟化酶，由于其低表达被定义为胰腺癌中的肿瘤抑制因子^[17-18]。

CpG岛通常是非甲基化的，具有比基因组其余部分更高的CpG密度。多数启动子含有CpG岛，容易发生甲基化从而导致基因表达量下降甚至沉默^[19-20]。通常有以下几种途径：甲基化引起基因结构改变，直接阻碍转录因子与其识别位点的结合；甲基化CpG结合蛋白直接占据转录因子结合位点，使基因转录失活；直接改变染色质结构导致转录失活。随着高通量DNA甲基化分析方法的出现，更多的CpG位点得到了分析。DNA甲基化和基因转录之间的关系比之前预期的要复杂得多^[21]。最新研究^[22-23]提示，甲基化依赖的转录调控存在一种竞争性的情景，其中甲基化序列也可以吸引特异性识别甲基化结合基序的转录因子的结合，从而启动转录。

异常的DNA甲基化可以导致细胞癌变，主要是总体甲基化水平降低及局部甲基化水平升高。DNA甲基化容易导致肿瘤的原因有以下几种：DNA甲基化会降低染色体稳定性；DNA甲基化更容易导致基因突变；DNA低甲基化可导致原癌基因激活；DNA高甲基化可导致抑癌基因失活；DNA高甲基化可导致miRNA表达缺失。目前研究多数围绕在CpG岛周围启动子区域的异常甲基化，如抑癌基因GNA14启动子区的DNA高甲基化可作为肝癌的潜在生物标志物和治疗靶点^[24]。DNA甲基化在肿瘤早期阶段即可发生，并贯穿肿瘤整个病程，同时具有组织特异度、灵敏度高等特点，目前在肿瘤的诊断、治疗、预防中广泛应用。可以作为分子标志物用于结直肠癌、胃癌早期诊断和筛查，也可以用来指导用药^[25-26]。如MGMT（methylation of O⁶-methylguanine-DNA methyltransferase）是一种DNA修复蛋白，可以保护染色体免受烷化剂的多种损伤，MGMT甲基化状态与MGMT蛋白表达密切相关，因此MGMT甲基化是胶质瘤化疗疗效的影响因素，可用来预测化疗疗效及预后^[27]。

2 抑癌基因甲基化异常与胰腺癌

在癌症中,抑癌基因启动子 CpG 岛的异常高甲基化往往会导致其基因沉默和功能丧失,可能

和肿瘤的侵袭、迁移、放化疗抵抗等生物学行为相关。胰腺癌中出现异常甲基化的抑癌基因参与着细胞凋亡、细胞周期、增殖等重要的生命过程(图1)。

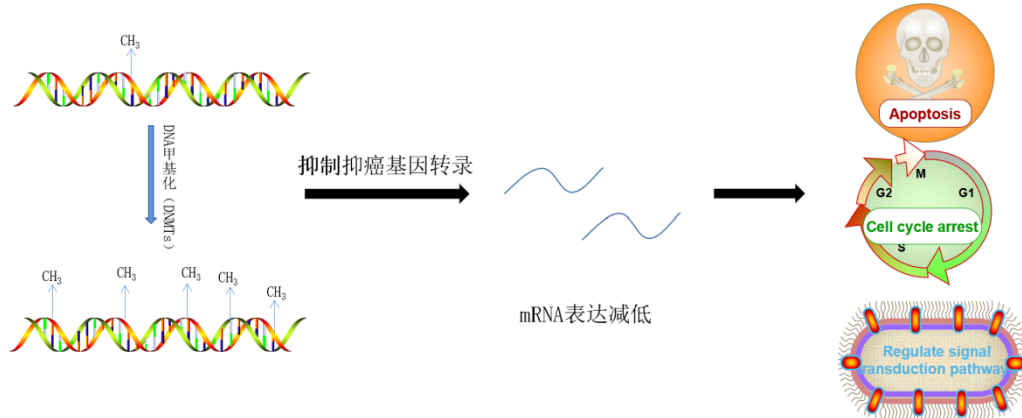


图1 抑癌基因高甲基化促进胰腺癌发生发展

Figure 1 Promoting effect of hypermethylation of tumor suppressor genes on the development of pancreatic cancer

在胰腺癌中,高甲基化导致的抑癌基因沉默可以逃避细胞凋亡。含WW域的氧化还原酶(WW domain-containing oxidasereductase, WWOX)位于人类染色体16q23.3-24.1,是一个跨越常见脆性位点FRA16D的染色体区域。在肺癌、食管癌的表达经常表现为高度甲基化^[28]。Kuroki等^[29]发现,WWOX在多个胰腺癌细胞株中检测为低表达,且在多个胰腺癌细胞株中检测到WWOX的启动子超甲基化。去甲基化剂5-AZAC处理显著提高了胰腺癌细胞中WWOX的表达,提高WWOX的表达则进一步诱导了细胞凋亡。

高甲基化导致的抑癌基因沉默同样可以引起细胞周期的失控。细胞周期蛋白(cyclin)和细胞周期蛋白依赖激酶(cyclin-dependent kinase, CDK)形成的cyclin/CDK复合物是调节细胞周期中的关键分子。P16又称为多肿瘤抑制1(multipletumor suppressor 1, MTS1),位于人染色体9p21,负责编码的蛋白是细胞周期依赖性激酶4(CDK4)的抑制剂,可以通过抑制激酶活性来阻断细胞由G₁期向S期过渡,从而调控着细胞周期的进程,控制细胞增殖。很多文献报道了抑癌基因P16在胰腺癌中存在高度甲基化。Ueki等^[30]对45例胰腺癌和14例正常胰腺中的多个基因CpG岛的异常DNA甲基化进行了研究,检测到P16在内的多个基因均存

在异常的启动子甲基化。Peng等^[31]发现在胰腺癌中P16甲基化的程度明显高于正常组织。Hanaoka等^[32]在仓鼠胰腺癌模型中同样发现P16基因高甲基化,且表达下降。

甲基化异常的基因可以通过不同的信号转导通路来影响肿瘤的进程。RASSF1A(the Ras association domain family 1 isoform A)位于人染色体3p21.3,在多种癌症中被发现存在高甲基化,如肺癌、肝癌、肾癌中发现RASSF1A基因因其启动子区域的高甲基化而沉默^[33]。Shimizu等^[34]在多株胰腺癌细胞系和仓鼠胰腺癌模型中发现RASSF1A基因高甲基化。Dammann等^[35]发现RASSF1A高甲基化在64%原发性胰腺癌中出现,RASSF1A要通过调控Ras蛋白相关的信号转导通路,阻断cyclin D1、cyclin D3累积来发挥抑癌作用。Boons等^[9]对胰腺神经内分泌瘤进行了全基因组DNA甲基化分析,发现了26 759个差异甲基化的CpG和79个差异甲基化区域差异,DNA甲基化富集的通路主要有MAPK信号通路、血小板相关通路等。Gregório等^[36]分析了胰腺癌组织和非肿瘤胰腺组织中的全基因组DNA甲基化谱,发现差异甲基化基因存在于钙信号通路中,与胰腺癌发生的关键通路相关,聚类分析发现在钙信号通路中观察到的一些甲基化改变似乎发生在癌变过程的早期。

此外,抑癌基因高甲基化也可以促进胰腺癌的发生和发展。*KLOTHO*是一种抗衰老跨膜蛋白,可以作为激素来发挥作用。研究表明*KLOTHO*在多种恶性肿瘤中是一种肿瘤抑制因子。Arbel Rubinstein等^[37]通过生物信息学分析证明了*KLOTHO*在胰腺肿瘤中具有独特的高甲基化模式,在体内实验中抑制*KLOTHO*的表达会导致胰腺癌的发生以及小鼠存活减少。*LIM*/同源框蛋白(*LIM homeobox 6*, *LHX6*)是一种转录因子,在细胞发育过程中,特别是在中枢神经系统中,起着决定细胞命运的关键作用。*LHX6*在胶质瘤、乳腺癌、肺癌等肿瘤中表现为高甲基化,是潜在的抑癌基因。有学者^[38]通过 MeTA (methyl-CpG targeted transcriptional

activation)方法发现在多个胰腺癌细胞株中,*LHX6*表达下调,*LHX6*的启动子区存在肿瘤特异性高甲基化。在胰腺癌细胞株中抑制*LHX6*的表达后可以增加其增殖能力。

3 原癌基因甲基化异常与胰腺癌

尽管胰腺癌中关于DNA甲基化的研究多数围绕着抑癌基因的高甲基化,但关键癌基因的去甲基化也影响着胰腺癌的进程。多项研究表明,特定CpG位点的低甲基化会导致基因激活,从而促进胰腺癌的发生发展(图2)。

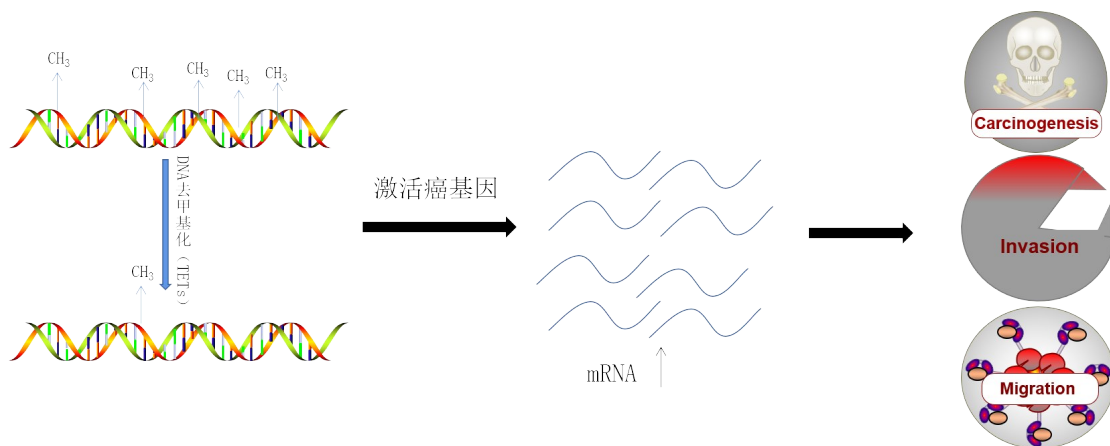


图2 癌基因高甲基化抑制胰腺癌发生发展

Figure 2 Inhibitory effect of hypermethylation of oncogene on the development of pancreatic cancer

CDH1 (cadherin1) 基因位于人染色体16q22,编码跨膜糖蛋白中的E-钙粘蛋白,在细胞中的参与调控细胞粘附、迁移和上皮细胞增殖。有研究显示与胰腺癌旁组织相比,在胰腺癌细胞中*CDH1*的表达明显上调,*CDH1*启动子区甲基化水平在正常胰腺细胞HPC-Y5为91.18%,而在胰腺癌细胞PANC-1与CFPAC-1中表现为低甲基化,水平分别为0%和34.71%,差异显著。胰腺癌中的*CDH1*启动子甲基化水平较正常组织明显降低。利用CRISPR/dCas9技术对特定位点进行表观遗传修饰,成功靶向了*CDH1*启动子区来增加其甲基化水平。qPCR检测发现胰腺癌细胞中*CDH1*的水平明显下降,体内实验和体外实验证实*CDH1*启动子甲基化水平的升高可有效抑制细胞增殖、侵袭、迁移、体内成瘤等恶性表型^[39]。

*MET*负责编码肝细胞生长因子的酪氨酸激酶

受体,在肺癌、乳腺癌、结直肠癌等多种癌症中是不良预后的指标,可以促进肿瘤的增殖、侵袭、转移等。*ITGA2*基因编码胶原跨膜受体(*ITGA2/ITGB1*)的 α 亚基,参与细胞粘附和迁移。Nones等^[40]将胰腺癌组织与正常胰腺组织中存在差异甲基化的基因进行了分析,发现*MET*与*ITGA2*在胰腺癌组织中表现为低甲基化,其高基因表达与胰腺癌的不良预后相关,可以通过SLIT-ROBO信号的核心效应分子CDC42来发挥调控作用。

*S100A4*是16个S100钙结合蛋白家族的一员,可以促进肿瘤的生长和转移。*S100A4*基因CpG位点的低甲基化与结直肠癌和淋巴瘤细胞系中高表达有关。有学者^[41]发现胰腺癌组织和胰腺癌细胞系中*S100A4*同样存在高表达,与*S100A4*第一个内含子的低甲基化有关,有助于胰腺癌的早期诊断。

4 临床价值及展望

早诊断有利于改善胰腺癌患者的预后,然而常规的肿瘤标志物CA19-9特异性并不强。有研究显示胰腺癌患者外周血中循环肿瘤DNA高于正常人群,携带的肿瘤特有的基因突变及DNA甲基化改变,为胰腺癌的早期诊断和治疗提供了新的方向。Brancaccio等^[42]发现胰腺癌患者的血清中存在CUX2或REG1A启动子异常甲基化。Singh等^[43]发现胰腺癌患者血清中SPARC、UCHL1、NPTX2、PENK的甲基化水平平均高于健康对照组。然而血清中这些基因甲基化的改变并非仅存在于胰腺癌中,在肺癌、结肠癌等也存在同样的改变^[44]。因此,仍需要更多研究来寻找胰腺癌特异的基因甲基化改变,对于指导胰腺癌的诊治以及改善其预后具有重大意义。

胰腺分泌的胰液,由于含有各部分脱落的细胞,其携带的DNA特点可在区分胰腺良恶性肿瘤中发挥作用,也可以用于恶性肿瘤的早期诊断^[45]。Nishizawa等^[46]发现胰液或胰腺组织中CDO1启动子DNA甲基化在胰腺癌中极具特异性,且随着肿瘤的进展而累积。随着内镜的普遍应用,经内镜逆行性胰胆管造影术(endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography, ERCP)获取胰液已较为微创和准确,对于早癌的筛查,胰液中游离DNA甲基化的检测不失为一种可靠的手段,但需要更多的临床试验进一步验证。

通过去甲基化来恢复抑癌基因或DNA修复基因的活性,是DNA甲基化用于治疗肿瘤的主要方式。例如抑制DNMT1的表达可使胰腺肿瘤干细胞失去干性抑制肿瘤进展^[47]。目前已有的药物为5-氮杂胞苷和5-氮杂-2'-脱氧胞苷,作为DNMT抑制剂被FDA批准用于治疗髓性恶性肿瘤。他们可以在低浓度下发挥去甲基化的活性^[48-49]。DNMT抑制剂在体外可以抑制胰腺癌细胞系的生长、增加放射敏感度和免疫敏感度^[50]。但是这些药物尚不能对特定的抑癌基因进行治疗,且存在诱发肿瘤转移的风险。寻找特异度强、不良反应小的去甲基药成为未来发展的方向。表观遗传药物和靶向治疗相结合可能是治疗胰腺癌的一种有前途的方法,已有多项临床研究正在进行。然而,联合治疗的机制和具体方案尚不清楚。中药常有低毒、

安全、长期用药经验的特点,较为容易过渡到临床。中药提取物如姜黄素、大黄素、雷公藤内脂醇等,有研究^[51-53]证实可以发挥去甲基化的作用,但仍需要更多的证据来用于临床。

DNA甲基化作为表观遗传学的主要作用方式之一,和组蛋白修饰、非编码RNA等互相作用,以复杂的方式作用于生命活动中。随着DNA甲基化在胰腺癌中的研究不断进展,定会在胰腺癌早期诊断、治疗、预后等临床问题中发挥着巨大的作用。

利益冲突:所有作者均声明不存在利益冲突。

作者贡献声明:万山、邓丽聪和楚杰构思和设计本研究;万山起草了手稿;所有作者都对这项工作进行了修改和审查,并最终批准了提交的稿件。

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