

特约综述

周天华,浙江大学求是特聘教授、博士生导师,国家杰出青年科学基金获得者,国家“万人计划”入选者。周天华教授长期从事细胞分裂与运动的分子调控及其在癌症发生发展中作用的研究。近年来,主要结合癌症病人的临床特征,建立了多种癌症转移的小鼠模型,在分子、细胞、动物和病理等水平,系统探索癌细胞在转移过程中的动态变化及其分子机制,力图发现干预癌症转移的靶点和途径。

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胃癌肝转移的分子机制

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摘要 胃癌肝转移是影响胃癌病人治疗和预后的主要因素之一,胃癌肝转移的早期诊断、治疗和预后均不容乐观。目前,关于胃癌肝转移的分子调控机制知之甚少。一般认为,胃癌细胞脱离原发灶,侵入血管到达肝脏定植的过程涉及诸多分子的变化及细胞间的相互作用。该文将对胃癌肝转移过程的前沿研究进展及其诊断治疗现状作一综述,以期更全面地了解胃癌肝转移的分子调控机制,为胃癌肝转移患者提供综合性的诊治理论依据。

关键词 胃癌; 肝转移; 分子机制; 微环境

Molecular Mechanisms of Gastric Cancer with Liver Metastasis

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Abstract Liver metastasis of gastric cancer is one of the main factors that affect the treatment and prognosis of patients with gastric cancer. Early diagnosis, treatment and prognosis of liver metastasis of gastric cancer are not optimistic. However, little is known about the molecular mechanisms of liver metastasis of gastric cancer. In general, the process of stomach cancer cells, migrated from the primary tumor and colonized in the liver tissue by invading vessels, is involved in many molecular signaling and cell-cell interactions. Herein, we review the research advances in the process of liver metastasis and the status quo of diagnosis and treatment of gastric cancer patients with liver metastasis. This review will help us to get a more comprehensive understanding of the molecular regulation mechanism of liver metastasis of gastric cancer and provide a diagnosis and treatment basis.

Keywords gastric cancer; liver metastasis; molecular mechanism; microenvironment

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胃癌严重威胁着人类的健康,是全球五大癌症之一,世界卫生组织(world health organization, WHO)统计报告显示,2012年全球胃癌新发病约95.1万例,死亡约72.3万例^[1]。在东亚(特别是中国、韩国、蒙古和日本)、中欧、东欧、南美洲以及非洲大部分地区的胃癌发病率较高^[2]。中国是全世界胃癌发病率和死亡率最高的国家。全国肿瘤登记中心(National Central Cancer Registry of China, NCCRC)数据显示,2015年在中国胃癌新发病约67.9万例,死亡约49.8万例,均高居我国恶性肿瘤第二位^[3]。早期胃癌难以诊断,病人在就诊时大多处于中晚期,中晚期胃癌常常发生侵袭和转移,严重影响胃癌患者的治疗,五年生存率低于30%^[4-5]。肝脏是胃癌转移的主要靶器官,Shitara等^[6]总结了12 656例胃癌晚期患者,其中肝转移发生率高达44%,发生胃癌肝转移(gastric cancer with liver metastasis, GCLM)的患者中可实行切除手术的极为有限,治疗难度较大,胃癌肝转移患者五年生存率仅10%左右^[7]。因此,迫切需要深入了解胃癌肝转移的发生机理及转移机制,进而采取有效措施早期诊断和靶向治疗胃癌肝转移,以提高患者生存率和生活质量。

1 胃癌肝转移的生物学过程

肿瘤发生转移是癌症患者死亡的主要原因。

Weinberg等^[8]提出将肿瘤的转移分为两个阶段:第一阶段指肿瘤细胞从原发灶到远端器官的播散;第二阶段指肿瘤细胞在远端器官定植,并增殖发展成转移灶的过程。肿瘤的转移两个阶段涉及多个生物学过程,包括癌细胞侵入周围基质、渗入血管、到达远端器官、迁出血管、逃避免疫反应以及适应微环境并增殖等(图1)。胃癌的肝转移与多种癌基因激活、抑癌基因失活及转移相关基因动态变化有关,并受到生长因子、转录因子、信号转导因子及其受体等的调控。

胃癌易发生肝转移,与肝脏的生物学特点密不可分。肝脏是人体最大的腺器,受肝门静脉和肝动脉双重血液供应,其中,肝门静脉占80%,肝动脉占20%,消化道器官的血液均经肝门静脉回流,肝脏具有丰富的血流量。肝毛细血管是多孔的血窦状结构,具有很强的通透性,且肝窦导管缺乏皮下基底膜,与脑、肺和骨等其他器官相比,肿瘤细胞更加容易在肝脏发生外渗^[9],所以肝脏是消化道肿瘤转移最主要的器官。胃癌、结直肠癌及胰腺癌等均会通过血管转移和淋巴回流等途径首先转移到肝脏^[10]。肝脏丰富的血管系统为肿瘤细胞的生长提供了充足的营养物质。除了血液循环系统的作用,胃癌细胞也容易与肝窦内皮细胞(hepatic sinusoidal endothelial cells, HSEC)黏附。肝毛细血管可使大量的肿瘤细

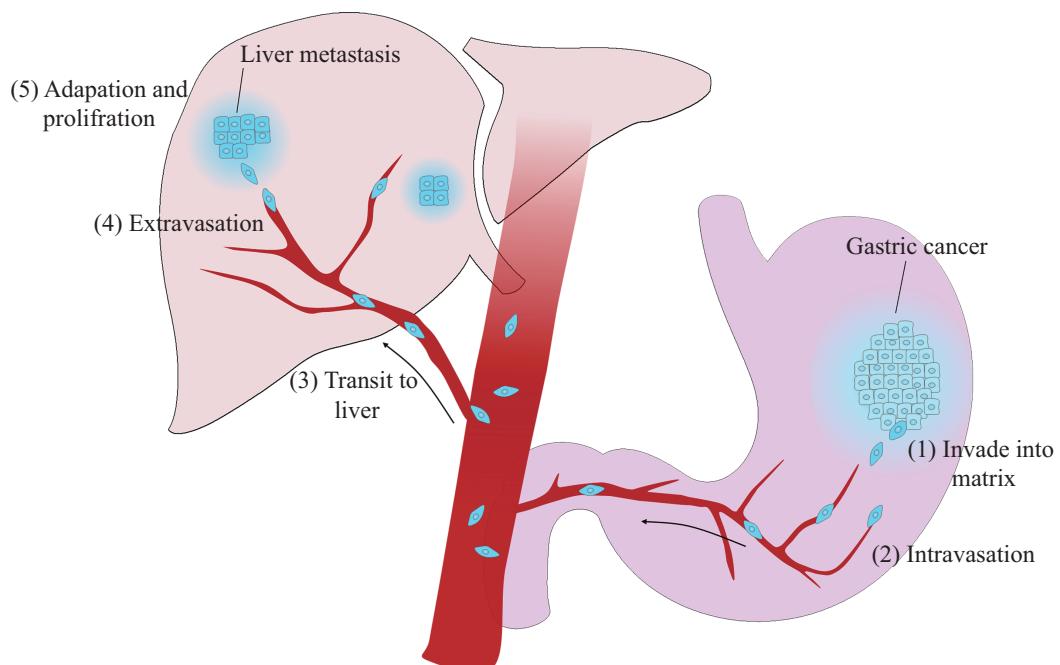


图1 胃癌肝转移的生物学过程
Fig.1 Liver metastasis from gastric cancer

胞阻滞, 肿瘤细胞与血管内皮细胞相互作用后, 分泌细胞因子使血管内皮细胞收缩, 促进肿瘤细胞侵出血管, 以利于肿瘤细胞定植到肝实质组织中, 进一步会引发炎症反应、血管生成等过程。肝脏特殊的解剖结构对胃癌肝转移生物学过程有重要影响, 了解其过程对研究其分子机制有重要意义。

2 胃癌肝转移的调控机制

胃癌的肝转移过程涉及许多因子的变化, 深入了解胃癌肝转移过程中的分子事件及其调控机制, 可对胃癌肝转移的早期诊断及综合治疗提供新思路。

2.1 血管生成

胃癌肝转移主要是通过血管转移, 肿瘤细胞除了浸润到机体已有血管外, 胃癌肿瘤组织中的新血管生成也对转移具有重要作用, 且肝转移灶的血管生成也是胃癌是否能形成大转移灶的必要条件。目前, 人们对胃癌肝转移的血管生成过程及其分子调控机理仍知之甚少。

胃癌组织中微血管的密度与肿瘤大小、TNM(tumor node metastasis)分期、分化程度、浸润深度及淋巴结转移显著相关, 并会导致胃癌患者较差的预后^[11]。超过20多种的细胞因子和蛋白酶参与血管生成过程, 血管内皮生长因子(vascular endothelial growth factor, VEGF)、白介素-8(interleukin-8, IL-8)、血小板来源的内皮细胞生长因子(platelet derived-endothelial cell growth factor, PD-ECGF)、血管生成素(angiopoietin)、环氧合酶-2(cyclooxygenase-2, COX-2)、YB-1(Y-box binding protein-1)等因子在胃癌中促进肿瘤的血管生成过程已有较多报道^[12-17]。VEGF阳性胃癌患者肿瘤中微血管的密度显著高于VEGF阴性肿瘤, 且VEGF阳性胃癌患者肝转移率明显更高^[18-19]。胃癌细胞分泌的VEGF可作用于血管内皮细胞, 通过IL-1 α 等炎症因子刺激血管内皮细胞的增殖和血管生成过程, 促进胃癌肝转移^[20]。YB-1在胃癌肝转移过程中具有重要作用, 参与了肿瘤转移必需的血管生成过程。在正常血管内皮细胞中, YB-1几乎没有表达, 但在参与胃癌血管生成的肿瘤细胞及内皮细胞中表达显著升高^[17]。研究发现, 与没有肝转移胃癌患者相比, YB-1明显高表达于发生了肝转移的胃癌患者肿瘤组织中, Logistic回归分析也表明, YB-1是胃癌肝转移的独立预后因子^[21]。

2.2 存活信号

肿瘤细胞从原发灶脱落后, 需要更强的存活机制来帮助它逃避免疫反应、抵抗凋亡信号。特别是在肝脏中, 自然杀伤细胞(natural killer cell, NK细胞)表达肿瘤坏死相关凋亡诱导配体(the tumor necrosis factor-related apoptosis-inducing ligand, TRAIL), 保护正常肝脏细胞, 具有抗肿瘤活性。然而, 许多肿瘤细胞并不表达TRAIL相关受体, 研究发现, 胃癌组织中TRAIL及其受体的表达均比癌旁组织更低^[22], 外源表达TRAIL可使胃癌细胞发生凋亡, 抑制胃癌转移^[23]。

人表皮生长因子受体2(human epidermal growth factor receptor 2, HER2)已在许多肿瘤中被证实能够调节细胞增殖、侵袭和凋亡, 促进肿瘤的形成和转移^[24]。在胃癌中, 肝转移相对于非肝转移患者HER2的表达显著升高, 且高表达会导致较差的临床预后^[25-26]。在胃癌细胞中过表达HER2会促进胃癌细胞发生肝转移, 进一步研究发现, HER2的过表达会诱导磷脂酰肌醇-3-激酶(phosphatidylinositol-3-kinase, PI3K)的磷酸化, 激活蛋白激酶B(protein kinase B, PKB, 也称AKT)信号通路, 抑制肿瘤细胞凋亡^[27]。HER2在胃癌肝转移过程中是非常重要的促进因子, 针对HER2的靶向药物已广泛应用在肿瘤治疗中, 在胃癌中曲妥珠单抗(Trastuzumab)可以显著改善HER2阳性胃癌肝转移患者的预后生存率^[26]。

CD82也被称为KAI1(Kang Ai 1), 最初在前列腺癌中被鉴定为肿瘤抑制因子^[28]。研究已经发现, KAI1的表达下降在多种癌症中与肿瘤转移相关, KAI1是新近发现的肿瘤转移抑制基因。研究发现, 肿瘤细胞表面的KAI1可直接与血管内皮细胞表面的趋化因子受体(duffy antigen chemokine receptor, DARC)相互作用, 上调p21和衰老相关基因TBX2的表达, 而抑制细胞增殖和诱导衰老^[29]。在胃癌中, 有研究人员通过免疫组化发现, 肝转移灶中的KAI1蛋白水平显著低于原发灶^[30]; 胃癌组织芯片结果也显示, KAI1的表达与胃癌肝转移呈负相关^[31]。胃癌细胞到达肝转移灶以后, 会有一系列信号通路调节其存活或者凋亡, 研究肝转移过程中胃癌细胞的存活机制将有利于我们深刻理解胃癌肝转移。

2.3 基质金属蛋白酶

胃癌细胞分泌多种基质金属蛋白酶(matrix metalloproteinases, MMPs), 降解多种细胞外基质

(extracellular matrix, ECM)。MMP降解ECM的过程与肿瘤的转移有重要关系。研究发现, MT1-MMP、MT2-MMP、MMP-7、MMP-9、MMP-21等在胃癌组织中的表达显著升高, 并会导致较差的预后^[32-35]。MT1-MMP、MMP-7、MMP-9等已被证实可促进胃癌细胞上皮-间质转化(epithelial-mesenchymal transition, EMT), 是EMT过程重要标志物^[32,36-37]。更有研究发现, MMP-1在胃癌患者外周血中的表达升高, 并与肝转移显著相关^[38-39]; 小鼠尾静脉注射胃癌细胞的实验发现, MMP-9的表达被冠蛋白3(Coronin 3)抑制后, 肝转移灶数量显著减少^[40]; MMP-2与MMP-9被GRIM-19(gene associated with retinoid-IFN-induced mortality-19)抑制后, 胃癌肝转移的发生也下降^[41]。以上结果说明, MMPs在胃癌侵袭转移过程中, 尤其是肝转移过程中, 作为一类效应分子发挥着重要作用。

2.4 细胞黏附分子

细胞黏附分子(cell adhesion molecule, CAM)是介导细胞与细胞间或细胞与基质间相互接触的一类分子, 肿瘤细胞某些CAM表达的减少, 会减弱细胞间的连接, 使肿瘤细胞脱落, 这是肿瘤浸润和转移的第一步。E-cadherin表达下降是EMT最主要特征之一, 促进多种癌症的转移^[42]。同样, 在胃癌肝转移灶中E-cadherin的表达也较原发灶低, E-cadherin表达降低与胃癌的侵袭程度和低分化显著相关, 高表达E-cadherin可抑制胃癌细胞的侵袭^[43-44]。CD44v6(CD44 variant 6)是黏附分子家族重要成员之一, 介导细胞黏附, 促进结直肠癌、肝癌、胰腺癌等肿瘤细胞的侵袭和转移^[45-47]。CD44v6的表达与胃癌患者肝转移和淋巴结转移显著相关^[48-49]。在胃癌中, CD44v6的表达与MMP-7的表达具有正相关, 两者均可以作为胃癌转移的独立预测因子, 可能成为胃癌的诊断和治疗的分子靶点^[50-51]。骨桥蛋白(osteopontin, OPN)是一类具有黏附及分泌作用的糖基化磷酸化蛋白质分子, OPN不仅在胃癌组织中表达升高, 在患者血浆中OPN的表达水平也升高, 并与胃癌的分化程度、侵袭深度相关, 高表达OPN会导致患者较差的预后^[52]。OPN与肝细胞整合素αv(integrin αv)及CD44v6等相应受体相互作用, 促进肿瘤细胞在肝脏的定植^[53]。

黏附分子不仅介导细胞黏附作用, 还能调节各信号通路。例如, 整合素(integrin)在整合素链接激

酶(integrin-linked kinase, ILK)的作用下, 激活细胞外调节蛋白激酶1/2(extracellular regulated protein kinase 1/2, ERK1/2)/NF-κB(nuclear factor-κB)信号通路, 促进胃癌细胞的生长^[54]; OPN与CD44v6结合后, 激活酪氨酸激酶Src信号, 促进ECM成分降解, 使胃癌细胞可以抵抗凋亡, 促进胃癌的发展和转移^[55]。这些研究提示, 黏附分子介导的信号通路在胃癌肝转移过程中扮演着重要角色。

2.5 其他分子作用

DC-SIGNR(dendritic cell-specific ICAM-3-grabbing non-integrin 2)是C型凝集素家族成员之一。研究发现, 在胃癌病人的血液中DC-SIGNR蛋白含量升高, 降低DC-SIGNR的表达可以在体外抑制胃癌细胞的增殖、迁移侵袭, 在体内抑制胃癌细胞肝转移。DC-SIGNR表达下调会抑制长链非编码RNA HNRNPKP2(heterogeneous nuclear ribonucleoprotein K pseudogene 2)的表达, HNRNPKP2的下调会降低趋化细胞因子受体4(chemotaxis cytokine receptor 4, CXCR4)的表达, 从而抑制胃癌肝转移^[56]。CXCR4在胃癌中的表达也与肝转移、淋巴结转移显著相关^[57]。当CXCR4与其配体CXCL12[chemokine (C-X-C motif) ligand 12]结合后, 激活AKT/mTOR (mammalian target of rapamycin)、ERK1/2以及JAK(janus tyrosine kinase)/STAT(signal transducers and activators of transcription)信号通路, 促进胃癌细胞的存活和迁移侵袭^[58]。

黑色素瘤抗原A(melanoma-associated antigen-A, MAGE-A)在人正常组织中很少表达, 但以不同亚型在各癌症中高表达, 具有严格的肿瘤特异性, 对癌症的特异性治疗具有特殊意义^[59]。MAGE-A10被报道在胃癌肝转移患者中高表达, 且会导致较差的临床预后^[60], 而结直肠癌肝转移中不表达MAGE-A10, 说明MAGE-A10可能是胃癌肝转移的特异分子, 可为胃癌肝转移的特异性诊断以及靶向治疗提供新思路。

另外, twist、Yes相关蛋白(yes associated protein, YAP)、大肿瘤抑制因子1(large tumor suppressor 1, LATS1)、α-平滑肌肌动蛋白(α-smooth muscle actin, α-SMA)、IV型胶原(collagen type IV)、肌营养不良蛋白聚糖(dystroglycan, DG)、MicroRNA-27b等分子也被报道和胃癌肝转移相关^[61-66]。深入研究胃癌肝转移相关分子, 了解其调控机制, 对胃癌肝转移患者

的诊断和治疗具有重要意义。

3 胃癌细胞与肝微环境的相互作用

肿瘤细胞与微环境的相互作用在转移过程中具有十分重要的作用, 特定的宿主微环境促进肿瘤细胞在器官的定植、迁出血管及存活增殖。肿瘤转移与微环境的关系是目前的研究热点。肝特殊的微环境在胃癌肝转移过程中尤为重要。肝组织的主要细胞类型包括HSEC、肝细胞(hepatocyte)、Kupffer细胞以及肝星型细胞(hepatic stellate cell, HSC)等, 这些细胞受到肿瘤分泌因子的调控, 在肝微环境引发炎症反应, 帮助免疫逃逸, 促进血管新生及增强通透性等。一系列细胞及分子综合作用促进胃癌肝转移(图2)。

肿瘤细胞分泌的外泌体(exosome)作为转移细胞的先行者, 能携带多种信号分子, 促使转移前微环境形成。胃癌细胞分泌包含EGFR(epidermal growth factor receptor)的外泌体, 可在肿瘤细胞到

达肝脏之前, 作用于肝细胞, 抑制肝细胞miR-26a/b(MicroRNA-26a/b)的表达, 上调肝细胞生长因子(hepatocyte growth factor, HGF), 促进胃癌肝转移的微环境形成, 在肝微环境中上调的HGF可以促进胃癌细胞中原癌基因c-Met(tyrosine-protein kinase Met)的表达和活化, 增强胃癌细胞转移能力, 促进肝转移灶的形成^[67]。外泌体在肿瘤诊治中具有极大潜力, 靶向外泌体对肿瘤进行液态活检已有应用, 已有基于外泌体的肿瘤诊断产品在美国上市^[68]。胃癌来源的外泌体是调控肝转移的重要机制, 对其深入研究, 将推进对胃癌肝转移患者的早期诊断、靶向治疗及预后分析。

肝脏是机体固有免疫应答的主要器官, 具有重要的免疫监视作用。肿瘤细胞到达肝脏后, 使HSEC及Kupffer细胞释放一氧化氮(NO)和干扰素- γ (interferon- γ , IFN- γ)及肿瘤坏死因子- α (tumor necrosis factor- α , TNF- α)^[69], 胃癌细胞受到IFN- γ 的刺激后使自然杀伤细胞(NK)的FasL(Fas ligand)表达上

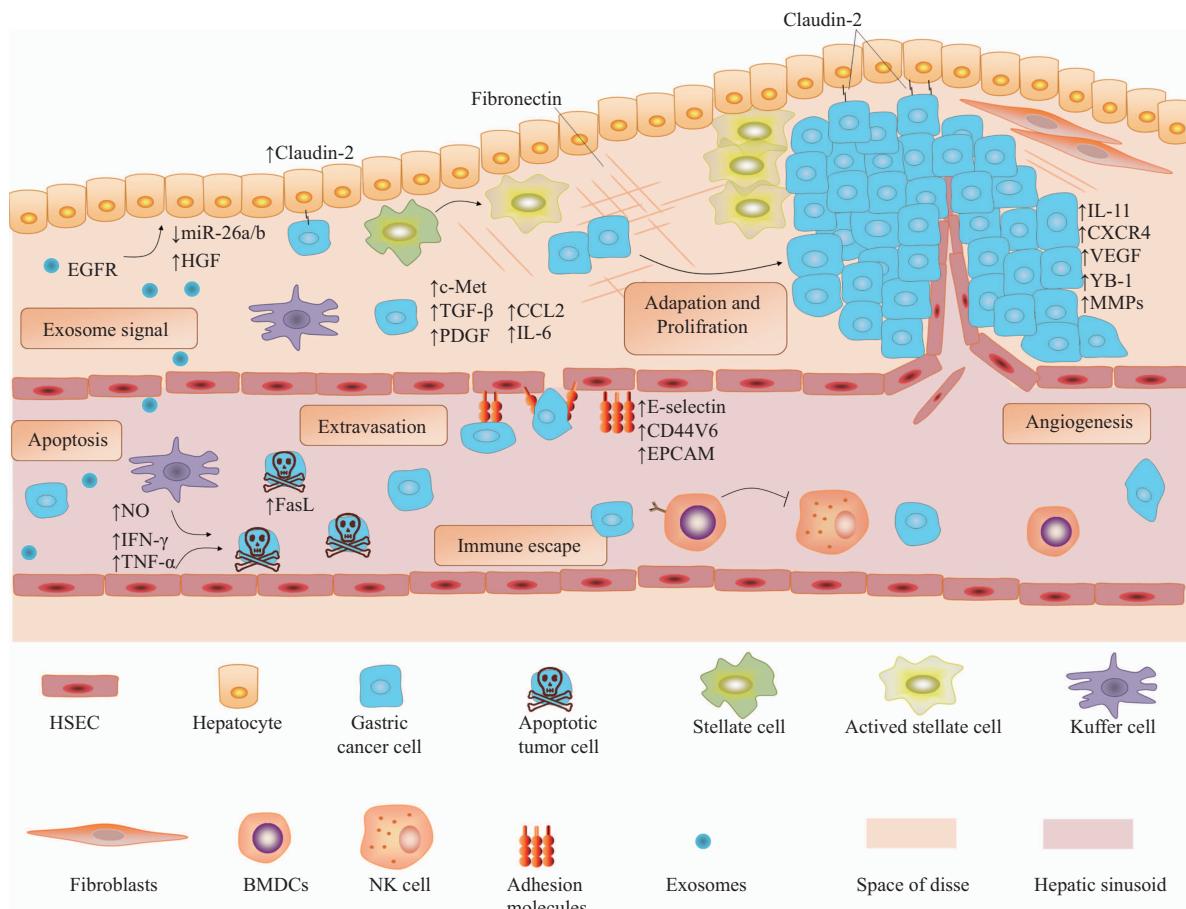


图2 胃癌肝转移微环境

Fig.2 Microenvironment of liver metastasis of gastric cancer

调, 最终可使95%左右的肿瘤细胞凋亡^[70-71]。IFN- γ 1可以显著抑制胃癌的发生、发展以及迁移侵袭^[72]。然而, 可以抵抗凋亡或逃避免疫反应的胃癌细胞能在肝脏中存活下来, 最终形成肝转移灶。胃癌细胞分泌转化生长因子- β (transforming growth factor- β , TGF- β)可以在肝脏中抑制NK细胞毒性, 帮助肿瘤细胞免疫逃逸^[73]。肿瘤细胞分泌的CCL2(C-C motif chemokine ligand 2)和IL-6等趋化因子以及激活态HSC分泌的纤维连接蛋白(fibronectin)可以招募骨髓来源细胞(bone marrow-derived cells, BMDCs), 发挥其免疫抑制的功能, 促进肿瘤细胞在肝脏器官的免疫逃逸及血管生成^[74-75]。这些免疫反应在胃癌肝转移过程中至关重要, 直接决定胃癌细胞能否在肝脏中存活。

胃癌细胞与HSEC的黏附作用增强, 能显著地促进胃癌肝转移。HSEC受到TNF- α 、IL-1及IL-18等炎症因子刺激后, 细胞表面黏附分子的表达将增加, 如E-选择素(E-selectin)、血管细胞黏附分子1(vascular cell adhesion molecule-1, VCAM-1)、细胞间黏附分子-1(intercellular adhesion molecule-1, ICAM-1)及癌胚抗原(carcino-embryonic antigen, CEA)等, 促进肿瘤细胞与内皮细胞的黏附^[76]。肿瘤细胞与肝细胞的黏附对肿瘤细胞在肝脏中的定植也十分重要, 乳腺癌细胞通过细胞紧密连接蛋白-2(Claudin-2)与肝细胞黏附, 促进肿瘤细胞在肝实质中的定植, Claudin-2还可以诱导c-Met的表达, 促进肝转移进程^[77]。胃癌在肝微环境的特异性黏附是其转移过程中不可或缺的步骤, 然而, 其分子机制目前还知之甚少, 垂待研究。

肝星型细胞(HSC)对肝转移也具有非常重要的作用, 肿瘤来源的TGF- β 和血小板衍生因子(platelet-derived growth factor, PDGF)可以促进肝星型细胞活化及分化成肌成纤维细胞, 同时, 激活的肝星型细胞通过多种机制促进肝转移灶的形成, 如抑制免疫反应、促进血管生成、降解ECM成份以及促进肿瘤细胞增殖和转移^[78]。TGF- β 还会刺激间质成纤维细胞产生IL-11, IL-11可以激活肿瘤细胞中的STAT-3(signal transducers and activators of transcription-3)信号通路, 提高其在肝脏中的存活能力^[79]。

胃癌肝转移微环境中多种细胞及因子的相互作用, 对胃癌肝转移具有至关重要的促进作用, 然而仍有许多分子机制尚不明确, 在临床诊治中的应用

更是微乎其微。亟需更加广泛和系统深入地研究胃癌肝转移微环境, 这将有利于进一步阐明胃癌肝转移的分子机理。

4 胃癌肝转移的诊断和治疗

尽管人们对胃癌肝转移的机制已有一定研究, 但目前对其诊断和治疗仍是一大难题, 肝转移仍是胃癌患者死亡的主要原因。主要是由于早期诊断缺乏有效的标志物, 而当发现肝转移时, 标志着患者已是胃癌晚期, 更缺少有效的治疗方案, 严重威胁患者健康。

目前, 临幊上对胃癌肝转移的诊断主要采用物理成像手段, 如B超、内镜、CT(computed tomography)及磁共振成像(magnetic resonance imaging, MRI)等。PET-CT(positron emission tomography-computed tomography)扫描成像对脏器肿瘤及转移灶有很好的诊断效果, 对胃癌肝转移的诊断准确率可达89%以上^[80]。但这些方法也仅能检测较大肝转移灶, 对患者早期的诊断有很大的局限性。已有一些肿瘤分子标志物应用于临幊早期检测和辅助诊断, 如癌胚抗原CEA、CA199(cancer antigen 199)、CA125、AFP(α -fetoprotein)等, 但特异性仍较差^[81]。目前还没有分子标志物能特异地检测胃癌肝转移, 报道称CD44v6、OPN、YB-1、MAGE-A10等分子可能作为胃癌肝转移潜在标志物^[21,50,52,60], 但仍待进一步验证。探索胃癌肝转移的特异标志物, 为患者提供精准早期诊断及评价患者预后具有重要意义。

目前对于胃癌肝转移的治疗方案缺乏明确的标准, 治愈性手术切除胃原位瘤及肝转移灶, 是目前治愈胃癌肝转移的唯一方法。但根治性切除术具有很大的局限性, 需要考虑肝切除适应证等非治愈性因素, 仅有极少数患者能进行根治性切除, 多数患者只能采用姑息治疗手段。虽然系统化疗、消融治疗和介入治疗等姑息治疗方法能适当改善患者生活质量, 如Chen等^[82]研究了114例同时性胃癌肝转移患者, 在接受DCF(docetaxel, cisplatin and 5-fluorouracil)或SP(S-1 and cisplatin)治疗方案后总体生存期得到适当改善, 化疗后平均生存期为22.3个月, 但其治疗效果仍十分有限。

更加精准的靶向治疗对今后治疗胃癌肝转移具有重要价值。c-Met/HGF信号通路在许多肿瘤的发生、发展中具有重要作用。在临床I试验中发现,

靶向c-Met的药物MetMAB能有效治疗胃癌及其肝转移^[83]。TNF也在多种癌症中被应用为靶向治疗因子,一项研究将胃癌细胞特异性结合肽pd20与TNF融合,得到的pd20-TNF融合蛋白能抵抗肝转移灶的形成,为开发胃癌肝转移靶向治疗药物提供了有效依据^[84]。

近年来,以PD-1(programmed cell death protein 1)、CAR-T(chimeric antigen receptor-T cell therapy)等为代表的肿瘤免疫治疗飞速发展,取得了一系列成果。一种新型PD-1免疫疗法Opdivo在不可切除性晚期胃癌及转移复发性胃癌患者临床III期试验中发现,Opdivo治疗组的12个月平均生存率为26.2%,安慰剂组为10.9%^[85],说明免疫治疗具有较好的临床效果。免疫治疗是目前最具潜力治愈恶性肿瘤的方法,发展前景广阔。

5 结语与展望

综上所述,胃癌的肝转移是个多环节、多步骤的复杂病理过程,涉及诸多分子及细胞的共同参与。肿瘤细胞一方面调控自身分子的变化,使其向肝转移方向发展;另一方面与其他细胞相互作用,形成特殊的肝转移微环境,促进胃癌肝转移。目前,胃癌肝转移的过程仍有许多分子机制亟待研究。虽然胃癌容易转移到肝脏主要是由于肝肠循环的作用,但许多研究表明,肿瘤细胞并不是倾向于转移到最近器官,不同肿瘤具有器官转移的特异性^[10]。胃癌特异性肝转移的细胞内在决定因素目前仍不清楚,找到胃癌肝转移重要的特异基因是未来研究重点之一。针对这些特异分子开发出靶向治疗药物,具有重要的临床应用价值。

胃癌肝转移的每个过程都离不开与微环境的相互作用,肿瘤微环境对转移过程具有重要的促进作用。对转移微环境的研究已逐渐成为肿瘤领域主要研究方向,但对胃癌肝转移微环境的研究仍在初步阶段,需要大量的深入研究,以让人们对胃癌肝转移有更加清楚的认识。近年来,靶向肿瘤微环境的肿瘤治疗策略得到了飞速发展,靶向肿瘤胞外基质、内皮细胞或免疫细胞等的药物被越来越多地开发利用。但在胃癌中,特别是肝转移中,仍然缺乏有效的靶向治疗药物。由于很多肝转移胃癌患者已经无法进行手术治疗,因此精准的靶向治疗及新兴的免疫治疗将是今后治疗胃癌肝转移的主要方式。

随着科学的研究的不断发展,人们将会对胃癌肝转移机理有更深的认识。深入研究胃癌肝转移机制,将为患者早期诊断和靶向治疗提供新的理论基础,发展出新的综合性个性化治疗模式,以改善患者预后现状,提高生活质量。

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