

miR-21在骨肉瘤中的作用机制及研究进展

张宝林¹ 阳庆林¹ 王铭川¹ 尚志忠¹ 柯义兵¹ 王昕^{1,2*}

(¹兰州大学第一临床医学院, 兰州 730000; ²兰州大学第一医院骨科, 兰州 730000)

摘要 骨肉瘤(osteosarcoma, OS)是起源于骨组织的高度恶性原发性肿瘤,好发于儿童和青少年。骨肉瘤的发生发展机制复杂、病死率及致残率较高,严重损害了患者的健康和生活质量。因此迫切需要深入研究及阐明骨肉瘤的发生发展机制,寻找特异度及灵敏度高的早期诊断标志物和潜在的治疗靶点。研究表明,miR-21与骨肉瘤的发生发展密切相关。因此,该文就miR-21在骨肉瘤中的作用机制及进展进行综述,主要是miR-21通过靶向相关基因、调节相关信号通路(Wnt/ β -catenin和PI3K/AKT信号通路)、受到上游信号lncRNA及circRNA的调控来影响骨肉瘤的发生发展,旨在为miR-21与骨肉瘤的相关研究提供参考及骨肉瘤的诊疗提供新策略。

关键词 骨肉瘤; miR-21; 信号通路; 靶向; lncRNA

Mechanism and Research Progress of miR-21 in Osteosarcoma

ZHANG Baolin¹, YANG Qinglin¹, WANG Mingchuan¹, SHANG Zhizhong¹, KE Yibing¹, WANG Xin^{1,2*}

(¹The First Clinical Medical College of Lanzhou University, Lanzhou 730000, China;

²Department of Orthopedics, the First Hospital of Lanzhou University, Lanzhou 730000, China)

Abstract OS (osteosarcoma) is a highly malignant primary tumor originating in bone tissue, predominating in children and adolescents. The occurrence and development mechanism of osteosarcoma is complex and the mortality rate and disability rate are high, which seriously impairs the health and quality of life of patients. Therefore, it is urgent to deeply study and elucidate the mechanism of osteosarcoma, and find early diagnostic markers and potential therapeutic targets with high specificity and sensitivity. Recent studies have shown that miR-21 is closely related to the occurrence and development of osteosarcoma. Therefore, this paper reviews the mechanism and progress of miR-21 in osteosarcoma, mainly miR-21 regulates the development of osteosarcoma by targeting related genes, regulating related signaling pathways (Wnt/ β -catenin and PI3K/AKT signaling pathways) and by targeted binding of upstream signaling lncRNA and circRNA, aiming to provide references for the research on miR-21 and osteosarcoma and new strategies for the diagnosis and treatment of osteosarcoma.

Keywords osteosarcoma; miR-21; signaling pathway; targeting; lncRNA

骨肉瘤(osteosarcoma, OS)是一种原发性骨恶性肿瘤,具有异质性广、缺乏生物标志物、局部侵袭性高和快速转移等特性,好发于儿童和青少年长肢骨干骺端,致残和致死率较高^[1]。目前,外科手术联

合化疗药物是治疗骨肉瘤的通用方案,但骨肉瘤患者的预后仍然较差^[2];此外,骨肉瘤的早期诊断较为复杂,转移和耐药令人不容乐观,诊疗仍然任重道远。因此,明确及阐明骨肉瘤的发病机制,寻找高特

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*通讯作者。Tel: 13919308767, E-mail: wangxinldyy@126.com

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*Corresponding author. Tel: +86-13919308767, E-mail: wangxinldyy@126.com

异性及高敏感度的早期诊断标志物和破坏疾病进展的靶点具有重要意义。

miRNA是由18~24个核苷酸组成的具有调控功能的非编码单链RNA,通过碱基互补配对的方式识别相应靶mRNA调控基因表达,在转录后水平上促进mRNA降解或抑制翻译的过程,在机体的病理生理过程中起着重要的调节作用^[3]。此外,单个miRNA可以靶向多个基因,因而在基因表达、细胞代谢、生长发育等事件的转录后调控中起关键作用^[4-5]。有研究指出,miRNA的功能障碍会干扰致癌或抑癌靶基因的表达,从而导致肿瘤的发生,其中miR-21与肿瘤如乳腺癌、结肠癌、卵巢癌、胃癌和胰腺癌等的发生发展更为密切,且其在肿瘤中呈高表达^[6-7]。miR-21位于染色体17q23.2,在哺乳动物中是高度保守的,参与了细胞分化、物质代谢、器官形成和细胞凋亡等生理或病理过程的调控,从而导致包括肿瘤在内的许多人类疾病的发生^[8-10]。在miRNA生物合成过程中,它被转录为初级miR(primary miR),随后被加工成更短的前miR(pre-miR),并产生两个有潜在活性的分子miR-5p与miR-3p^[11]; miR-21-5p的上调被发现与肿瘤的发展与预后密切相关,如CAO等^[12]研究发现,miR-21-5p在卵巢癌中的表达显著上调,同时miR-21-5p激动剂增加了卵巢癌细胞增殖标志5-乙基-2'-脱氧尿苷(Edu)的表达水平;另一项研究指出,miR-21-5p在肺腺癌患者中是过表达的并呈递增趋势,且miR-21-5p高表达组较低表达组预后更差(危险比[HR]=1.59, $P<0.05$)^[13]; miR-21显示出一种潜在的致癌功能,几乎在所有类型的癌症中靶向肿瘤抑制蛋白^[10];与大多数的编码蛋白的mRNA类似,miR-21表达受到复杂信号通路的动态调节,参与肿瘤抑制基因和细胞凋亡相关蛋白的调节,在骨肉瘤细胞的增殖、迁移、转移和凋亡中充当重要的调节角色^[14-16]。因此,研究miR-21在骨肉瘤发生发展中的机制,重点是其调控靶点和作用机制,可为骨肉瘤诊疗带来新策略。

1 miR-21在OS中的作用

越来越多的研究证实,miR-21在骨肉瘤中上调且与骨肉瘤的增殖、分化、转移及化疗敏感性相关^[17-19]。ZHAO等^[15]利用94例骨肉瘤患者的骨组织,通过实时聚合酶链式反应分析了骨肉瘤和正常骨组织中miR-21、miR-221、miR-143和miR-106a的水

平,结果发现骨肉瘤样本的miR-21、miR-221和miR-106a的表达水平显著高于邻近的正常组织($P<0.05$);另一项研究发现,miR-21和miR-221在骨肉瘤中的高表达与整体存活率降低相关^[20]。VANAS等^[18]研究发现,抑制miR-21的表达会抑制骨肉瘤衍生细胞的细胞增殖,而促进miR-21的表达会加速骨肉瘤细胞增殖,与之相反,miR-21的表达水平降低使骨肉瘤细胞对顺铂治疗更敏感。miR-21可能与骨肉瘤的预后有关^[21],WU等^[22]研究证实了过表达miR-21可以增强MG-63细胞的侵袭和迁移能力;LI等^[23]通过qRT-PCR检测化疗前后骨肉瘤组织以及健康骨骼组织中的miR-21表达情况,结果表明骨肉瘤患者中miR-21的表达水平高于对照组,而化疗后骨肉瘤患者中miR-21的表达水平显著下降,同时也发现处于晚期Enneking分期和发生肺转移的骨肉瘤患者miR-21的表达会显著上调($P<0.05$);有研究学者也证实了miR-21在骨肉瘤中的表达与Enneking分期和肺转移呈正相关,这说明miR-21在骨肉瘤分化及远处转移方面起着调控的作用^[15];YUAN等^[24]通过多元回归分析证实了miR-21上调、晚期Enneking分期、较差的肿瘤组织学反应是影响骨肉瘤患者生存率独立的危险因素。另一项研究发现,骨肉瘤患者中miR-21的表达水平显著高于正常对照组,有趣的是,有效组中化疗前后miR-21表达水平显著降低($P<0.05$),而无效组并无显著变化,miR-21的下调可能使骨肉瘤细胞对化疗药物变得更敏感^[16];ZI等^[25]在MG-63细胞系中得到了证实,miR-21的上调使骨肉瘤细胞获得了对顺铂的抗性。总之,miR-21与骨肉瘤的发生发展密切相关,且在骨肉瘤中呈高表达。

2 miR-21调控OS的作用机制

miRNA主要通过与其相关基因片段特异性结合,从而抑制基因的转录及表达,对细胞周期、蛋白表达及个体发育等起着至关重要的作用^[4-5]。作为miRNA的一员,miR-21在骨肉瘤的发展过程中通过以下三个方面调控骨肉瘤细胞增殖、侵袭、凋亡等:(1) miR-21可以靶向相关基因调控骨肉瘤的发生发展;(2) miR-21调节相关信号通路(Wnt/ β -catenin和PI3K/AKT信号通路)的激活或抑制,进而影响骨肉瘤的进展;(3) miR-21受到上游信号lncRNA与circRNA的调控,从而影响骨肉瘤的病理生理。有关miR-21调控OS的作用机制详见图1。

2.1 miR-21通过靶向相关基因来调控OS

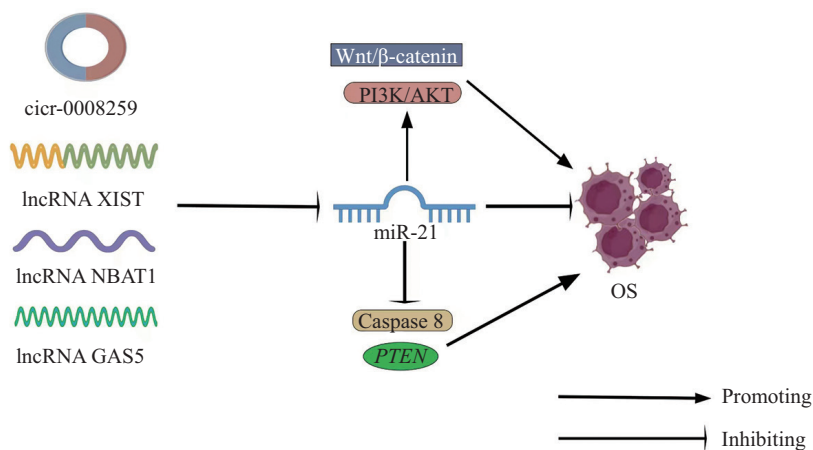
Caspase 8属于半胱氨酸蛋白酶家族(caspase),是细胞凋亡、焦亡和坏死的重要调节因子^[26]。诸多研究表明, caspase 8在肿瘤的发生发展过程中起着重要作用^[27],同时miR-21具有抑制细胞凋亡并加速肿瘤进展的作用^[17-19]。为了研究miR-21与caspase 8是如何调控骨肉瘤的, XU等^[28]通过多个数据库来预测miR-21的目标基因,结果发现, caspase 8可能是miR-21的目标基因;通过双荧光素酶报告基因实验来验证caspase 8与miR-21的关系,结果表明caspase 8是miR-21的直接靶标,而且miR-21过表达显著抑制了caspase 8的表达,增加了骨肉瘤细胞存活率,同时抑制了骨肉瘤细胞凋亡,而抑制miR-21的表达则显著上调了caspase 8的表达;此外, caspase 8沉默显著抑制骨肉瘤细胞凋亡,而抑制miR-21的表达则可以逆转这种抑制^[28]。这表明, miR-21通过靶向caspase 8来调控骨肉瘤的发生发展。

磷酸酶及张力蛋白同源物基因(phosphatase and tensin homolog gene, *PTEN*)是miR-21的重要功能性靶点,在人类多种肿瘤如肺癌、食管癌和肺鳞癌等^[29]的发生发展中发挥重要作用。ZHENG等^[30]为了研究*PTEN*与miR-21在骨肉瘤发生发展中的作用机制,通过生物信息学预测了*PTEN*为miR-21的潜在靶点,然后进行双荧光素酶报告实验来验证*PTEN*与miR-21之间的关系,结果表明*PTEN*为miR-21的直接靶

点;此外, miR-21的过表达显著降低了*PTEN* mRNA和蛋白质水平,促进了骨肉瘤细胞的增殖和侵袭,同时抑制了骨肉瘤细胞凋亡,而下调miR-21的表达显著增加了*PTEN* mRNA和蛋白质水平,这表明miR-21通过靶向*PTEN*来调控骨肉瘤的发生发展。

2.2 miR-21调控OS的主要信号通路

Wnt信号通路是一条复杂且高度保守的信号通路,包括经典通路Wnt/ β -catenin通路、非经典通路Wnt/PCP通路和Wnt/ Ca^{2+} 通路^[31],在人类诸多恶性肿瘤的发生发展过程中起着至关重要作用^[31-32]。Wnt/ β -catenin信号通路是研究较为广泛和深入的通路, β -catenin是Wnt/ β -catenin信号通路中的胞内信号转发器,当Wnt蛋白与细胞膜上的相关受体相结合后, β -catenin蛋白从细胞质稳定地转移到细胞核,从而激活相关靶基因的表达,进而调控细胞的生物学行为^[33]。Wnt/ β -catenin信号通路在骨肉瘤的细胞增殖与化学抗性中充当重要角色^[33-34],同时miR-21的过表达又可以促进骨肉瘤细胞的增殖和迁移,因此探讨miR-21通过Wnt信号通路调控骨肉瘤的发生发展具有十分重要的意义^[17-19]。肿瘤细胞的糖代谢异常,又称Warburg效应,是肿瘤细胞不同于正常细胞的重大特征之一^[35]。WU等^[36]通过miR-21-5p模拟物和抑制剂分别使miR-21-5p在MG-63细胞中的表达增加和减少,结果发现抑制miR-21-5p的表达可显著抑制MG-63细胞增殖和侵袭,并促进其凋亡,同时抑



miR-21分别靶向抑制caspase 8和*PTEN*因子,促进OS细胞增殖和侵袭,抑制OS细胞凋亡;miR-21分别通过Wnt/ β -catenin和PI3K/AKT途径促进OS发生发展;相关lncRNA(lncRNA XIST、lncRNA NBAT1、lncRNA GAS5)和cicrRNA(cicr-0008259)靶向miR-21抑制OS恶性生物学行为。

miR-21 targets caspase 8 and *PTEN* factors, respectively, to promote OS cell proliferation, invasion and inhibit OS cell apoptosis; miR-21 promotes OS initiation and development through the Wnt/ β -catenin and PI3K/AKT pathways, respectively; relevant lncRNA (lncRNA XIST, lncRNA NBAT1, lncRNA GAS5) and cicrRNA (cicr-0008259) target miR-21 to inhibit malignant biological behavior of OS.

图1 miR-21调控OS的作用机制流程图

Fig.1 Mechanism of miR-21 regulating OS

制MG-63细胞中的Warburg效应,其表现为葡萄糖摄取、乳酸产生和ATP水平的降低以及Warburg效应相关蛋白(GLUT1、LDHA、HK2和PKM2)的下调,而miR-21-5p的过表达则相反;此外,miR-21-5p的低表达显著抑制 β -catenin的表达,而miR-21-5p模拟物则促进 β -catenin的表达。这表明,抑制miR-21-5p的表达可以抑制Wnt/ β -catenin信号通路的转导来调控骨肉瘤的发生发展。另一项研究表明,miR-21低表达可以抑制Wnt/ β -catenin信号通路的转导来抑制骨肉瘤的发生发展^[37]。

PI3K/AKT信号通路是由酶联受体介导的重要细胞信号通路,与细胞增殖、迁移、细胞周期、遗传变异、自噬和细胞凋亡密切相关,对肿瘤细胞的调控尤为重要^[38-39]。AKT是PI3K的关键下游因子,可磷酸化多种底物。活化的p-AKT可促进下游蛋白促凋亡因子BAX的磷酸化,上调抗凋亡因子Bcl-2的表达,从而抑制细胞凋亡并调控细胞的生物学行为^[40]。PI3K/AKT信号通路在骨肉瘤中的调控作用不可替代^[40-41];LÜ等^[42]研究发现,miR-21在人类骨肉瘤细胞系MG-63中的表达显著增高,过表达miR-21可促进骨肉瘤细胞增殖和侵袭,抑制骨肉瘤细胞凋亡,而下调miR-21的表达水平则导致了相反的结果;miR-21的上调显著增加了PI3K/AKT信号通路主要成分(p-AKT)的表达水平,而沉默miR-21则显著降低了p-AKT的表达水平,这表明miR-21可以通过激活PI3K/AKT通路调控骨肉瘤的发生发展。霍诺基酚(honokiol, HNK)是一种从木兰树中提取的双酚化合物,在多种癌症中发挥重要的抗肿瘤功能。YANG等^[39]研究发现,经HNK处理后骨肉瘤细胞中miR-21的表达显著下调,HNK以剂量依赖的方式降低了骨肉瘤细胞中的miR-21水平,同时显著抑制了骨肉瘤细胞的增殖和侵袭,明显促进了骨肉瘤细胞凋亡,而miR-21模拟物逆转了HNK对骨肉瘤细胞的抑制作用;使用Western blot印迹分析来确定PI3K/AKT信号通路主要成分(p-AKT、p-mTOR和p-p70S6K)的表达水平,发现经HNK处理后骨肉瘤细胞中AKT、mTOR和p70S6K的表达水平明显下调,这表明HNK可以抑制miR-21的表达来抑制PI3K/AKT信号通路的激活,从而抑制骨肉瘤的发生发展;另一项研究表明,来源于骨髓间充质干细胞的外泌体miR-21-5p也可通过调节PI3K/AKT信号通路来调控骨肉瘤细胞增殖和侵袭^[43]。

2.3 miR-21受上游lncRNA调控

长链非编码RNA(lncRNA)是一种由超过200个核苷酸组成的不具有蛋白质编码能力的RNA分子,通过与相应mRNA、DNA、蛋白质和miRNA相互作用参与细胞内生物学包括转录、翻译、细胞凋亡、细胞周期等的发生过程与肿瘤的发生密切相关^[44]。lncRNA通过靶向下游的miRNAs参与病理生理过程的调节,发挥竞争性内源性RNA(competing endogenous RNA, ceRNA)的作用,从而调控骨肉瘤细胞的增殖与分化^[4,45-46]。

lncRNA GAS5是人类多种癌症发病机制中的肿瘤抑制剂,通常在人类癌症中低表达^[47]。LIU等^[48]研究发现,GAS5在人类骨肉瘤组织和细胞系中的表达下调,促进了细胞增殖和转移,而GAS5的过度表达可以显著抑制骨肉瘤细胞的生长和转移。WANG等^[49]为了研究lncRNA GAS5与miR-21是如何调控骨肉瘤的发生发展的,通过qRT-PCR检测骨肉瘤患者中lncRNA GAS5与miR-21的水平,结果发现lncRNA GAS5在骨肉瘤组织中呈低表达,而miR-21在骨肉瘤组织中呈高表达;用si-GAS5有效下调GAS5的表达后,发现miR-21是骨肉瘤细胞中上调最多的miRNA,然后使用抗miR-21s下调miR-21的表达,观察到miR-21的下调逆转了GAS5在骨肉瘤中的效应;此外,与没有转移的骨肉瘤患者相比,肺转移患者的miR-21水平显著升高,这表明下调的lncRNA GAS5通过上调miR-21的表达来调控骨肉瘤的发生发展。lncRNA NBAT1是一种新发现的功能性lncRNA,在一些癌症中起着肿瘤抑制作用^[50]。为了研究lncRNA NBAT1与miR-21如何调控骨肉瘤的发生发展的,YANG等^[51]检测60例骨肉瘤患者的肿瘤组织和相邻正常组织中NBAT1与miR-21的表达水平,与相邻的正常组织相比,NBAT1在骨肉瘤组织中的表达水平显著下降,而miR-21在骨肉瘤组织中的表达水平显著上调,皮尔逊相关分析进一步证实,NBAT1与miR-21之间呈负相关关系,而且NBAT1在骨肉瘤组织中的表达与临床阶段和远处转移显著相关($P<0.05$);此外,NBAT1过度表达抑制了骨肉瘤细胞的增殖,而沉默NBAT1显著促进了骨肉瘤细胞的生长、迁移和入侵;抑制miR-21的表达逆转了NBAT1对骨肉瘤的效应^[51],这表明NBAT1通过抑制miR-21的表达来抑制骨肉瘤的发生发展。lncRNA XIST在人类多种肿瘤如肝细胞癌、胃癌和人类鼻咽癌等^[52]的发生发

展过程中发挥重要作用,也可以作为一种抗癌的潜在靶点^[52-53]。ZHANG等^[54]研究发现, lncRNA XIST在骨肉瘤组织和细胞中明显下调,并与骨肉瘤患者的复发和总体存活率短有关,而XIST的过表达显著抑制了骨肉瘤细胞的增殖和转移;同时qRT-PCR检测结果表明,XIST和miR-21-5p的表达呈负相关关系,且可以分别影响彼此的表达;此外,miR-21-5p直接通过XIST序列中的miRNA结合位点与XIST相互作用,这表明XIST通过与miR-21-5p竞争性结合来抑制骨肉瘤的发生发展。

2.4 miR-21受上游circRNA调控

circRNA是一类特殊的非编码RNA分子,呈封闭环状结构,不受RNA外切酶影响,表达稳定且不易降解^[55]。circRNA通常表现出细胞特异性和组织特异性,主要通过隔离miRNA或蛋白质、调节转录和干扰剪接,甚至翻译产生多肽来参与调控基因表达,在生理病理过程中发挥至关重要的作用^[56-57]。

许多circRNA在骨肉瘤组织中异常表达,影响着骨肉瘤的发生发展,如circ-ITCH和circ-0003998分别通过和与之相对应的miRNA结合来调控骨肉瘤的发生发展^[58]。GUAN等^[59]通过circRNA微阵列来识别骨肉瘤中差异表达的circRNA,发现circ-0008259沉默较为显著,然后通过qRT-PCR检测50个骨肉瘤患者组织中的circ-0008259表达,与相邻组织和正常的成骨细胞相比,circ-0008259在骨肉瘤组织中显著下调;通过CCK-8实验检测骨肉瘤细胞增殖能力、Transwell检测骨肉瘤细胞迁移和侵袭能力以及流式细胞术检测骨肉瘤细胞凋亡水平和周期分布,结果显示circ-0008259的过表达显著抑制了骨肉瘤细胞的恶性生物学行为,促进了细胞凋亡,而circ-0008259沉默的效果正好相反;然后通过多个数据库来预测circ-0008259的潜在靶标,结果发现miR-21-5p可能是circ-0008259的潜在靶标,同时双荧光素酶报告基因实验表明,miR-21-5p是circ-0008259的直接靶标;此外,miR-21-5p模拟物逆转了circ-0008259过度表达后骨肉瘤的生物学行为。这表明过表达的circ-0008259通过靶向miR-21-5p来抑制骨肉瘤的恶性生物学行为。

目前,circRNA作为一种特殊的RNA,已经引起国内外研究人员的密切关注。然而关于circRNA在骨肉瘤中的作用机制的研究仍然相对缺乏,特别是相关circRNA靶向miR-21调控骨肉瘤的生物学行

为,需要进一步深入研究。不断明确相关circRNA与miR-21调控骨肉瘤的作用机制,可能为骨肉瘤的预防和诊治提供新策略。

3 总结与展望

综上所述,miR-21在骨肉瘤的发生发展过程中起着至关重要的作用,下调miR-21的表达水平可以抑制骨肉瘤细胞的增殖和侵袭,促进骨肉瘤细胞凋亡;此外,miR-21的表达与骨肉瘤的分期、化疗敏感性和预后密切相关。目前研究表明,miR-21主要通过靶向caspase 8和PTEN基因、调节相关信号通路(Wnt/ β -catenin和PI3K/AKT信号通路)以及受到上游信号lncRNA和circRNA的调控来影响骨肉瘤的发生与进展。然而miR-21在骨肉瘤中的作用机制还未被准确阐明,miR-21通过调节相关非编码RNA、信号通路及目的基因来调控骨肉瘤的进展机制仍需要大量实验来验证,有待进一步深入研究。

目前骨肉瘤患者的5年生存率仍然较低,主要是因为骨肉瘤易复发、早期转移、对化疗药物不敏感和手术切除不全等^[60]。因此,迫切需要特异性及灵敏度高的诊断生物标志物和有效性高的治疗靶点。目前研究显示,miR-21与骨肉瘤的发生发展关系密切,因此,miR-21有望成为OS的重要诊断标志物,且具有OS靶向药物研究的潜力。鉴于目前miRNA与骨肉瘤相关性的研究相对缺乏,因此需要更多的研究来阐明miR-21在骨肉瘤中的作用机制,这或可为骨肉瘤的早期诊断和有效性治疗提供参考。总之,miR-21在骨肉瘤发生发展过程中起着重要的调控作用,或可为骨肉瘤的诊断、治疗和预后带来新分子靶点和新疗法,改善患者生活质量。

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