

EPCs/TLRs 在新生血管性年龄相关性黄斑变性中的研究进展

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摘要

新生血管性年龄相关性黄斑变性(ARMD)是指各种原因诱导的脉络膜新生血管形成(CNV),导致黄斑出血、液体积聚和纤维化,在视野中央形成一个巨大的、黑色的暗点,导致90%以上的患者严重中心视力丧失。内皮祖细胞(EPCs)是一组异质性的细胞,在新生血管形成中发挥着重要作用,在病理性刺激下EPCs被动员到周围循环中,定向迁移到无血管区域,并促进受损区域的血管恢复和再内皮化。Toll样受体(TLRs)是一种模式识别受体和I型跨膜蛋白,主要表达于单核细胞、树突状细胞等免疫细胞,识别病原微生物的表面,将信号传递给细胞,参与机体的先天免疫和获得性免疫。有研究表明绝大多数TLRs参与了新生血管的发展且EPCs能够表达TLRs。因此探究EPCs/TLRs对于ARMD的作用机制有助于我们对疾病的理解,可能为今后的靶向治疗提供新思路。

关键词:Toll样受体(TLRs);内皮祖细胞(EPCs);新生血管性年龄相关性黄斑变性;SDF-1/CXCR4

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Advances in endothelial progenitor cells/toll like receptors in neovascular age-related macular degeneration

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Abstract

• Neovascular age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) is a condition where various causes induce the formation of choroidal neovascularization (CNV) in the macula, leading to macular hemorrhage, accumulation of fluid, and development of fibrosis, resulting in a large, dark spot in the center of the visual field, causing severe central vision loss in over 90% of patients. Endothelial progenitor cells (EPCs) are a heterogeneous group of cells that play a crucial role in neovascularization. Under pathological stimulation, EPCs are mobilized into the systemic circulation, migrate toward the avascular zone, and promote the restoration of blood vessels and endothelialization in the damaged area. Toll-like receptors (TLRs) are pattern recognition receptors and type I transmembrane proteins that are mainly expressed in monocytes, dendritic cells, and other immune cells, recognizing the surface of pathogens and transmitting signals to cells, participating in the innate immune response and adaptive immune response. Studies have shown that most TLRs are involved in the development of neovascularization, and EPCs can express TLRs. Therefore, exploring the role of EPCs/TLRs in the pathogenesis of ARMD can help us understand the disease and may provide new insights for targeted therapy in the future.

• **KEYWORDS:** toll-like receptors (TLRs); endothelial progenitor cells (EPCs); neovascular age-related macular degeneration; SDF-1/CXCR4

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0 引言

Toll样受体(TLRs)是一个模式识别受体家族,在先天性和获得性免疫系统之间起着关键的作用,人类体内已确认有11种TLRs,它们能控制编码血管内皮生长因子(VEGF)和炎性细胞因子的基因表达,从而影响血管内皮细胞的增殖和新生血管的形成^[1]。内皮祖细胞(EPCs)由两个不同的亚群组成:早期EPCs和晚期EPCs。早期EPCs也被称为“循环血管生成细胞”或“集落形成单位内皮细胞”,增殖能力很低,但能大量产生多种生长因子和细胞因子,可以与成熟的内皮细胞黏附,并通过旁分泌机制促进血管网络的形成和修复受损的内皮细胞^[2-3]。晚期EPCs又称“内皮生长细胞”或“内皮细胞集落形成细胞”,它们可以通过整合入新生血管并进一步分化为成熟的内皮细胞,直接促进血管生成^[4]。许多实验表明,EPCs能够表达TLRs,TLRs在EPCs中具有生物活性和血管生成潜力^[5]。EPCs表达CXCR4,通过SDF-1/CXCR4轴调节新生血管形成,促使EPCs向新生血管生成场所募集^[6]。以上研究证实EPCs/TLRs促进新生血管生成,提示EPCs/TLRs在年龄相关性黄斑变性(ARMD)形成中可能发挥着促进作用。

1 TLRs 信号激活促进新生血管形成

TLRs是一种带有亮氨酸重复序列(LRR)的胞外区的1型完整膜糖蛋白,它可以识别损伤相关分子模式(PAMPs),触发先天免疫系统的激活^[7]。TLRs在免疫反应中起基础作用,常见于B细胞、巨噬细胞以及内皮细胞(ECs)和成纤维细胞等非免疫细胞的表面^[8]。这些受体具有固有识别和与不同微生物产物相互作用的能力,如脂多糖(LPS)和热休克蛋白60和70,导致促进与炎症状态相关的细胞内信号级联^[9]。在TLRs中,TLR-4是由革兰氏阴性细菌脂多糖激活的最重要和最实用的TLRs家族之一^[10]。LPS通过5个脂质链附着在MD2蛋白(也称为淋巴细胞抗原96)上,而LPS连接到TLR-4的疏水区域。细菌LPS与TLR-4残基通过磷酸盐基团紧密连接^[11]。可溶性血浆蛋白如LBP和CD14的存在促进了LPS富含亮氨酸区域与脂多糖结合蛋白(LBP)和CD14的连接,随后被递送至TLR-4-MD2复合物^[12]。在TLR-MD2-LPS复合体形成后,在TIR结构域、Toll-IL-1R结构域适配器蛋白(TIRP)和髓系分化因子88(MYD88)的作用下促进活化B细胞核因子- κ 轻链增强子(NF- κ B)的早期激活^[13]。然后,TLR-MD2-LPS复合体被内化到细胞内,保留在内小体中,并在含有TIR结构域的适配器诱导的协作下触发干扰素- β 及其相关接头分子信号通路,这些变化启动了NF- κ B和干扰素调节因子3(IRF3)的晚期激活,从而释放炎性细胞因子,促进新生血管形成^[5]。

2 EPCs 促进新生血管形成

EPCs大多是单能干细胞,具有自我更新性、克隆性和分化能力等特点,此外,EPCs它们可以吸收乙酰化低密度脂蛋白(acLDL),与荆豆凝集素1(UEA-1)结合,并通过旁分泌或自分泌机制参与到新生血管中^[14]。EPCs是非常罕见的细胞群体,很少见于外周^[15],公认的EPCs表面标志物是CD34⁺、CD133⁺、VEGF受体2(VEGFR2)^[16]。

“新生血管”被认为是成人所有类型血管形成的体现^[17]。如今大多数组织工程研究和现代疾病干预都是基于新生血管的增强或抑制,例如,在组织工程移植中,需要放大血管生成,而在肿瘤、ARMD中,抑制新生血管被认为是一种重要的治疗应用。

2.1 EPCs 的分泌作用

2.1.1 EPCs 的旁分泌 EPCs具有分泌多种细胞因子、生长因子、脂质和细胞外基质的能力,为循环中的常驻EPCs和其他细胞(内皮细胞、心肌细胞、间充质干细胞、神经干细胞等)提供营养支持和抗凋亡^[18-19]。EPCs的旁分泌可分为三种类型:(1)通过分泌VEGF、基质细胞衍生因子(SDF-1)、血小板衍生生长因子(PDGF)、G-CSF和CD163等细胞因子、生长因子和趋化因子来促进血管生成和ECs的增殖和迁移^[20-23];(2)在正常生理和病理条件下,通过分泌细胞外小泡(EVs)参与细胞间通讯,包括凋亡体、微泡(MVs)和外泌体^[24];(3)通过纳米管连接到ECs,通过纳米管进行信息交流^[25]。近年来,关于EPCs分泌的EVs(EPC-EVs)的研究越来越多,特别是关于外泌体在促进内皮恢复方面的作用,这可能是EPCs分泌的主要途径^[24]。

2.1.2 EPCs 分泌的细胞因子 EPCs通过分泌血管活性物质如基质蛋白、生长因子和趋化因子来促进血管生成和维持血管稳态,在血管修复中发挥重要作用。已证实EPCs分泌VEGF、SDF-1、IGF、PDGF、骨形态发生蛋白-4、细胞因子样蛋白-1、角质形成细胞生长因子等促进血管生成^[19,26]。可见EPCs分泌的众多细胞因子中VEGF最为突出。众所周知,VEGF在血管生成中起着关键作用,VEGF可诱导ECs增殖、迁移和释放eNOS^[27-28]。最近的研究还表明,EPCs分泌的SDF-1可以促进MSCs和ECs的动员、迁移和归巢,促进骨形成^[19]。此外,EPCs产生血管扩张剂和血管收缩剂,包括一氧化氮、内皮素1(ET1)、组织纤溶酶原激活物(T-PA)和纤溶酶原激活物抑制物1(PAI1)、前列腺素I2(PGI2)^[29]。在各种刺激下,EPCs释放大量的NO维持正常的血管功能^[18],并通过分泌IL-1 β 、IL-6、肿瘤坏死因子- α 和TLR-4来减轻炎症^[30]。除了这些因子外,EPCs还分泌促血管生成因子,如趋化因子CXCL12/16、IGF1和IL-10^[31]。IL-1 β 、IL-6、肿瘤坏死因子- α 和TLR-4通常被视作促炎因子,而来源于EPCs分泌的它们却减轻了炎症,这或许与EPCs的生物活性和外泌体及TLRs相关配体的多样性有关。

2.1.3 外泌体在 EPCs 的作用 外泌体具有介导细胞间信号转导的能力,是直径约为30-200 μ m的EVs^[32]。体外几乎所有类型的细胞都分泌外泌体^[33]。EPCs的旁分泌作用主要是由EVs介导的,而外泌体是EVs的主要成分。EPC-EXOs是EPCs旁分泌物质的关键成分,在氧化应激条件下,EPC-EXOs可促进ECs的增殖、迁移和管状形成,促进血管生成^[34-36]。一些研究表明,与纳米颗粒外膜结合的外泌体携带EPCs的蛋白质、mRNA和miRNA,并与靶器官ECs交换其成分,影响ECs的生理行为,这是一种重要的细胞间交流机制^[35,37]。在多种疾病中,EPC-EXOs可以转移到ECs,增加ECs中血管生成相关分子的表达,

如 eNOS、HIF-1 α 、VEGF-A、VEGFR2 和血管紧张素-1 (Ang-1)^[38],从而增强内皮功能,诱导血管生成和器官再生^[39]。除了交换物质外,有研究表明 EPC-EXOs 可以通过降低炎症因子的水平,包括 IL-6、TNF- γ -干扰素而发挥抗炎作用^[40]。综上,EPCs 在参与新生血管方面发挥着重要作用。

3 EPCs 中 TLRs 信号激活促进新生血管形成

血管内皮细胞激活和功能障碍与炎症和心血管疾病有关^[41],EPCs 在新生血管和再内皮化中起基础作用^[42],因此,血液循环中 EPCs 的存在有利于促进血管生成,同时表现出促炎状态和供给机体需求。研究表明,EPCs 具有表达不同 TLRs 轴基因转录的潜能,如 TLRs (TLR-1 至 TLR-6、TLR-8、TLR-9) 和 TLR-4 共受体 CD14^[43]。细菌来源的 LPS 可以加速和促进 EPCs 的生存和迁移^[44],TLRs 对于 EPCs 的作用得益于 LPS 激活 TLRs 产生的效应。例如:LPS 与 EPCs TLR-4 结合并诱导 NF- κ B、ERK42/44 和 P38 的磷酸化,在促炎条件下,LPS 诱导炎症因子 α 、INF- β 、IL-8 和 IL-6 的表达,导致 EPCs 增殖和分化^[45]。有研究表明,LPS 以剂量依赖的方式调节 EPCs 的存活,促进 EPCs 向 ECs 分化,增强 EPCs 血管分泌活性和外泌体分泌,触发 NF- κ B、TRIF、ERK1/2 和 p-ERK1/2 的激活,在 TLRs 信号通路中具有关键作用^[46]。感染性休克后,循环 EPCs 数量和血清基质细胞衍生因子 1 (SDF-1 α) 和基质金属蛋白酶 14 (MMP14) 水平增加,以加速从骨髓向靶部位释放 EPCs^[47]。除了 TLRs 对 EPCs 活性的潜在作用外,据报道,在败血症休克和细菌感染期间,EPCs 能够通过 IL-1 β 、IL-6 和 TNF- α 等旁分泌因子和 TLR-4 减少炎症反应^[48]。由此可见,TLR-4 在 EPCs 中的信号通路是促进炎症反应期间激活、迁移和归巢到缺血组织的重要原因之一。总之,EPCs 中表达的 TLRs 能起到促进新生血管形成的作用。ARMD 常见的体征就是脉络膜新生血管 (CNV),常常继发渗漏,严重影响视力,那在 ARMD 形成的过程中,以上因素发挥怎样的生物效应呢?

3.1 新生血管性 ARMD ARMD 是一种与年龄有关的眼部疾病,会导致出血、液体积聚和黄斑纤维化^[49]。世界上大多数国家预期寿命的增加和人口老龄化是导致全球 ARMD 患病率稳步上升的原因^[50]。ARMD 大致可分为非新生血管性 (干性) 和新生血管性 (湿性)。新生血管性 ARMD 的特点为 CNV 形成,新生血管的血管壁发育不完全,容易破裂从而导致液体和血液的渗漏,在视野中心形成一个大盲点,导致严重的中心视力丧失。血管生成是一个复杂的过程,它调节许多生理功能,包括伤口愈合和组织发育,以及生殖^[51],同时它也有助于促进病理过程,如动脉粥样硬化和炎症性疾病^[52],以及新生血管性 ARMD^[53]。VEGF 和血小板衍生生长因子-BB (PDGF-BB) 等血管生成因子参与新生血管性 ARMD^[54]。因此,抑制血管生成是治疗 ARMD 的关键策略。目前,抗 VEGF 药物是治疗新生血管性 ARMD 的唯一有效方法;这种治疗针对 VEGFR^[55]。抗 VEGF/VEGFR2 治疗可有效抑制激光诱导的小鼠 CNV,并下调其表达水平^[56]。然而,尽管抗 VEGF 药物在临床试验中取得了积极的结果,但存在药物

作用持续时间短,治疗负担高,长期玻璃体内注射抗 VEGF 效果并不理想等问题^[57]。因此,抗 VEGF 治疗虽然抑制了新生血管生成,但血管发生仍待解决,积极寻找影响血管发生的因素对于 ARMD 的治疗尤为重要。

3.2 TLRs 参与 ARMD 发生 ARMD 进展缓慢,其特征是光感受器及其支持细胞视网膜色素上皮 (RPE) 的丧失^[58]。RPE 细胞表达 TLR4 (作为 LPS 检测的辅助受体)。LPS 刺激 TLR4 可诱导 IL-8、IL-6、TNF α 和 IL-1 β 的表达和分泌,以及环氧合酶 (COX)-2 和诱导型一氧化氮合酶 (iNOS) 的表达,降低原代 RPE 细胞的细胞活力和吞噬活性,干扰 RPE 细胞的屏障功能^[59-60]。TLR3 激活的 RPE 细胞通过降低 COX-2 和 iNOS 的表达来抑制单核细胞的促炎激活,同时还干扰小胶质细胞的促炎活性,包括蛋白质的表达和分泌。TLR3 刺激的 RPE 细胞在小胶质细胞中显示出 iNOS 表达的抑制作用^[61]。据称,在视网膜变性的遗传模型中,TLR3 被从退化的光感受器释放的 RNA 激活^[62],这种反应也可能发生在 ARMD 中的神经变性期间。另外,羧基乙基吡咯 (CEP) 是在 ARMD 的视网膜中发现的一种氧化应激修饰,是一种 TLR1/TLR2 配体,它在 ARMD 中可激活 TLR2。据报道,CEP 作为 ECs 上的 TLR2 配体,以 VEGF 依赖的方式诱导血管生成^[63]。TLRs 可以调节自噬,并且与 TLR2 上调的 NF- κ B 依赖性促炎基因的表达及其诱导 ECs 血管生成的能力平行,有证据表明 TLR2 活化增加特别可能在某些情况下阻断自噬^[64]。这种 TLR2 介导选择性效应对 ARMD 的发病机制具有两面性,因为异常的血管生成会导致 CNV 形成和 ARMD 的发病。由此可见,RPE 细胞中 TLRs 的激活,尤其是 TLR2、TLR3 和 TLR4 诱导了深刻的促炎反应,参与了 ARMD 的发生。

3.3 EPCs 参与 ARMD 的发生 EPCs 来源于骨髓的内皮干细胞,参与生理和病理性血管生成。EPCs 被招募来响应血管生成,并调节几种细胞功能,如增殖和迁移^[65]。EPCs 以其表面标记 CD34⁺ 和 CD133⁺ 以及 VEGFR2 为特征,在新血管形成过程中发挥重要作用^[66]。重要的是,VEGF 通过 VEGFR2/c-src/FAK 信号通路^[67] 以及转录因子 NF- κ B^[68] 和 AP-1^[69] 刺激 EPCs 的血管生成,包括 EPCs 的存活、运动和管状形成^[70-71];这种 EPCs 的动员使新生血管性 ARMD 的发展成为可能。SDF-1-CXCR4 参与 EPCs 的动员和募集^[72],ARMD 的常见体征是 CNV,有研究表明趋化因子受体蛋白 4 (CXCR4) 能向细胞内传导信号,激活下游分子,促进 CNV 血管生成^[73];CXCR4 高表达可激活骨髓来源的 EPCs 中 PI3K-AKT 信号通路,诱导 EPCs 向 ECs 的分化,促进 CNV 发生^[74]。以上研究皆高度提示 EPCs 参与 ARMD 的发生。

3.4 EPCs 中的 TLRs 激活参与 ARMD 的发生 TLRs、EPCs 在炎症和免疫反应中发挥重要作用,而炎症和免疫反应与新生血管密切相关。EPCs 表达多种 TLRs,EPCs 中 TLRs 信号的激活增强了血管生成的潜力^[46]。EPCs 被招募至新的血管生成中是一个复杂的过程,SDF-1 发挥着关键作用,除 SDF-1 显然还有其它影响因素。高迁移率族蛋白-1 (HMGB1),也被证明是一种强大的细胞因子,

促进 EPCs 的动员并导致新生血管形成^[75]。HMGB1 通过激活晚期糖基化终产物受体 (RAGE), 在体外和体内促进 EPCs 的迁移^[75-76]。此外, HMGB1 还能激活 TLR4, 并且 HMGB1-TLR4 通过促进巨噬细胞活化和促血管生成细胞因子的产生, 促进角膜病理性新生血管形成^[77]。有研究表明 HMGB1 和 TLR4 过表达, 并促进生理性和病理性新生血管的进展, 其中 EPCs 发挥着重要作用^[76]。如前所述, EPCs 表达的 TLRs 受到激活, 会激发多种信号通路, 产生众多的促炎因子和血管生成因子, 促进了 EPCs 向病灶趋化, 从而参与新生血管形成。有研究证明 SDF-1 参与了 HMGB1-TLR4 诱导的 EPCs 募集^[6]。以上研究皆提示, EPCs 中的 TLRs 激活参与了 ARMD。

4 总结与展望

综上所述, EPCs/TLRs 能调控血管生成和炎症细胞因子表达。EPCs 能分泌 IL-1 β 、IL-6、肿瘤坏死因子- α 和 TLR-4、VEGF、SDF-1、血小板衍生生长因子 (PDGF) 等促炎因子。但在一定有效刺激下, EPCs 释放大量的 NO、IL-1 β 、IL-6、肿瘤坏死因子- α 和 TLR4 又能减轻炎症反应, 这令人费解。或许是因为 EPCs 和 TLRs 相互作用的结果, 或许与 TLRs 配体的多样性, 激活不同信号通路有关。骨髓来源的 EPCs 中发现, 将 CNV 与全身系统相联系, 在 ARMD 等新生血管性眼部疾病中, 抗 VEGF 手段显然无法取得根本性的治疗效果。EPCs/TLRs 的相互作用是维持机体稳态重要因素, 然而对于这方面研究甚少, 导致无法更加全面地理解其发挥的具体作用机制。然而, 基于现有的研究足以证明 TLRs/EPCs 对于新生血管性疾病的发生发展起着重要的促进作用。但是, 人体免疫机制复杂, 各种细胞因子相互作用, 单一的抑制/促进某些因素对于疾病治疗仍然欠佳。因此对于基因、免疫机制、机体生理“平衡”的探讨更有利于疾病防治, 未来对于这方面的研究充满挑战和复杂性, 任重而道远。

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