

炎性标志物在乳腺癌新辅助化疗中的应用研究进展

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摘要:新辅助化疗(neoadjuvant chemotherapy,NAC)作为乳腺癌治疗方法之一,因具有可使肿瘤降期,增加不可手术患者的手术机会、提高保乳率、评估药效等优势,目前被越来越多地应用于局部晚期乳腺癌患者,但是由于肿瘤的异质性,NAC并不能使所有患者获益,且存在一定的疾病进展率。因此,有必要寻找能够反映NAC疗效的生物标志物以帮助临床医生早期掌握患者对NAC的敏感程度,及早将化疗反应不敏感的患者识别出来,针对这部分患者及时调整或更换治疗方案。但现有的评估手段均有其局限性,外周血炎性标志物的提出可以推动具有更好预测价值的生物标志物的出现。全文就外周血炎性标志物在乳腺癌新辅助化疗中的应用研究进展作一综述,旨在为乳腺癌的综合诊疗提供更全面的参考。

关键词:乳腺癌;新辅助化疗;炎性标志物;病理完全缓解;预后

中图分类号:R737.9 **文献标识码:**A **文章编号:**1004-0242(2022)09-0745-08

doi:10.11735/j.issn.1004-0242.2022.09.A011

Research Progress in Application of Inflammatory Markers in Neoadjuvant Chemotherapy for Breast Cancer

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Abstract: Neoadjuvant chemotherapy(NAC), as one of the therapeutic modalities, has been widely used in patients with locally advanced breast cancer. NAC has advantages of downstaging the tumor, increasing the chance of surgery for inoperable patients, improving the breast conserving rate, and evaluating the efficacy of drug therapy. However, due to the heterogeneity of tumors, NAC does not benefit all patients and there is a certain disease progression rate. Therefore, it is necessary to find effective biomarkers for predicting the efficacy of NAC, which will help clinicians to adjust or replace treatment plans in time. This article reviews the research progress of the application of peripheral blood inflammatory markers in NAC of breast cancer, to provide reference for the comprehensive diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.

Key words: breast cancer; neoadjuvant chemotherapy; inflammatory marker; pathological complete response; prognosis

乳腺癌新辅助化疗(neoadjuvant chemotherapy, NAC)是指对于未发现远处转移的初治乳腺癌患者,在进行手术治疗或手术加放疗的局部治疗前进行的全身系统性化疗^[1]。NAC因具有使肿瘤降期增加不可手术患者的手术机会、提高保乳率、评估药效等优势,目前被越来越多地应用于局部晚期乳腺癌患者^[2]。乳腺癌患者在NAC中获得病理完全缓解(pathological

complete response,pCR)被认为是最佳治疗终点^[3]。但是由于肿瘤的异质性,NAC并不能使所有患者获益,据报道,NAC后总体pCR率仅为25%,且存在一定的疾病进展率^[4]。对于NAC过程中出现疾病进展的患者而言,无效的化疗不仅会延误其他有效治疗手段的实施,还会带来不同程度的生理及心理副作用^[5]。故早期准确地评估或预测患者对NAC的反应对于指导后续治疗、实现个体化治疗至关重要。临床上一般基于MRI、B超、病理结果对患者的NAC

收稿日期:2022-02-10;修回日期:2022-04-11

基金项目:国家自然科学基金(81760480,81360392,81960479)

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疗效进行评估,但上述方法均有各自的局限性^[6]。大多数研究认为在预测 NAC 疗效方面,MRI 具有较高的准确性^[7-8],但 MRI 检查时间长,检查费用高,且需要特殊的乳腺线圈,进而限制了其在临床上的应用范围。B 超便携、成本低、无辐射,但对于钙化灶显示不佳,也无法评估 NAC 后病灶纤维化的情况,且操作者依赖性高,准确性低^[9]。而病理评估虽然是反应 NAC 疗效的金标准,但由于其需要手术后的乳腺肿瘤标本,故不适合动态监测 NAC 的疗效^[6]。因此,寻找能够准确评估和预测 NAC 疗效及预后的生物标志物仍然是一个巨大的挑战。

炎症在肿瘤的发生、发展和预后中扮演着重要角色。1863 年,研究者发现肿瘤组织中的淋巴细胞浸润现象,首次提出炎症与肿瘤有关^[10]。Hanahan 等^[11]总结出正常细胞转化为癌细胞的多阶段发展过程中可获得维持增殖、逃避生长抑制因子、抵抗细胞死亡、无限复制、诱导血管生成及侵袭转移的能力,而炎症是促使癌细胞获得上述能力的重要因素之一。随后数十年的相关研究发现,免疫炎症细胞不仅可以参与构成一个有利于肿瘤生长的肿瘤微环境(tumor microenvironment, TME),促进肿瘤的生长、进展,还可以杀伤肿瘤细胞^[12]。由于炎症与肿瘤相关性的潜在部分分子机制被逐渐阐明,一些外周血炎症指标,如中性粒细胞-淋巴细胞比值(neutrophil-to-lymphocyte ratio, NLR)、血小板-淋巴细胞比值(platelet-to-lymphocyte ratio, PLR)等指标被证实与头颈部肿瘤^[13]、结直肠癌^[14]等多种恶性肿瘤的化疗反应及预后有关。与其他肿瘤一样,炎症微环境在乳腺癌的化疗反应及预后中也起着至关重要的作用^[15-16]。因此,研究肿瘤背景下的炎症标志物可能会为预测乳腺癌 NAC 疗效及预后提供线索。

1 炎症与恶性肿瘤的关系

1.1 肿瘤相关中性粒细胞(tumor-associated neutrophils, TANs)

越来越多的研究表明,中性粒细胞是肿瘤免疫反应的一部分,最初,人们认为中性粒细胞具有抗肿瘤细胞增殖的作用,然而,几年后便有研究报道了相反的结果,中性粒细胞在肿瘤发展中具有促癌作用。炎症通过破坏组织在肿瘤发生中扮演着重要角色,

中性粒细胞在这一过程中起着至关重要的作用,其主要通过诱导 DNA 损伤、促进血管生成、免疫抑制几种机制促进肿瘤的发生、发展。此后,中性粒细胞在肿瘤中的双重作用被大量报道。

正常生理情况下,中性粒细胞从骨髓至外周循环的运输主要依赖于趋化因子受体 2(CXC chemokine receptor 2, CXCR2) 和趋化因子受体 4(CXC chemokine receptor 4, CXCR4)的调节^[17],其中, CXCR2 在 CXCL2 和粒细胞集落刺激因子(granulocyte colony-stimulating factor, G-CSF)的共同协调下,介导中性粒细胞不断释放到外周循环。CXCR4 则发挥着与 CXCR2 相拮抗的作用,负责中性粒细胞的归巢,不利于 TANs 的生成。而在乳腺癌的 TME 中,尤其是三阴性乳腺癌,高度表达的 IL-17 可上调 CXCR2 配体的表达,促使中性粒细胞实现对肿瘤的迁移与浸润^[18-19],被招募至肿瘤部位的中性粒细胞,形成 TANs,具有表型和功能的高度可塑性,可分为抗癌型“N1”表型和促癌型“N2”表型,其中, TME 可能通过重新编程中性粒细胞,以实现两者之间的转换^[20]。TME 是一个高度异质的环境,除肿瘤细胞本身外,免疫细胞和基质细胞及其产生和释放的许多分子也参与组成。

综上所述, TME 和中性粒细胞之间存在相互作用,中性粒细胞可分泌塑造免疫相互作用的因子刺激 TME 的形成,同时, TME 衍生的许多因子参与协调中性粒细胞的释放、募集及功能极化。TANs 在肿瘤进展的不同阶段表现出不同的功能,在 TME 的影响下会逐渐从发挥抗癌作用转变为促癌作用。另外,乳腺癌细胞的恶性程度与肿瘤细胞对中性粒细胞的募集能力存在关联,相较于侵袭性高的三阴性乳腺癌,激素受体阳性(HR+)乳腺癌具有较少的 TANs。

1.2 肿瘤浸润淋巴细胞(tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte, TIL)

TME 释放的趋化因子可招募外周血淋巴细胞至肿瘤部位,通过靶向肿瘤抗原和膜配体来消除癌细胞^[21]。外周血淋巴细胞计数相对减少时,可能意味着 TIL 计数减少。TIL 已经被证明与三阴性乳腺癌患者 NAC 后更高的 pCR 率及更好的预后有关^[22-23]。此外,在 HER2 阳性乳腺癌中也观察到了相同的趋势^[24-25]。Denkert 等^[26]的研究则提示 TIL 可以用于预测所有类型乳腺癌患者对 NAC 的反应。但 TIL 因为需要病理标本而较难获得,且穿刺的标本量少,其评

估并不能代表 TIL 的评估;另外,TIL 数量评估中存在一定程度的固有误差,因此难以在临床上推广^[27]。总的来说,目前的研究表明具有高水平 TIL 的乳腺癌患者显示出更高的 pCR 率及更好的预后,但临床上难以准确获得 TIL 的计数。而较易获得的外周血淋巴细胞数量与 TIL 存在相关性,或许可用于替代 TIL 评估 NAC 的疗效。

1.3 血小板(platelet, PLT)

19 世纪 60 年代,法国医生描述了在肿瘤早期,局部肿瘤即可在远处诱导血栓形成,血栓形成是肿瘤的突出特征之一^[28]。血小板和肿瘤之间可相互作用,这种作用有利于肿瘤的发生、转移。癌细胞可直接活化血小板^[29]或通过释放血小板激活介质二磷酸腺苷(adenosine diphosphate, ADP)^[30]、高迁移率族蛋白 B1(high mobility group box 1 protein, HMGB1)^[31]或表达导致凝血酶生成的各类组织因子等间接诱导血小板活化。而活化的血小板反过来通过多种机制促进肿瘤的进展。血小板分泌许多生长因子,如血小板源生长因子(platelet derived growth factor, PDGF)^[32]、转化生长因子- β (transforming growth factor- β , TGF- β)^[33]等刺激乳腺癌细胞的增殖、侵袭、转移。此外,血小板拥有最丰富的血管生成调节剂,可释放血管内皮生长因子(vascular endothelial growth factor, VEGF)增强肿瘤血管的生成,从而放大肿瘤在体内的生长^[34]。血小板作为免疫抑制剂,可以黏附在癌细胞上形成保护伞,帮助癌细胞逃脱免疫监视和剪切诱导的损伤^[35]。活化的血小板还可以分泌 CXCL5/7 趋化因子将中性粒细胞募集至肿瘤停滞部位,共同建立一个促肿瘤转移的微环境^[36]。另外,血小板计数与肿瘤化疗耐药性也存在相关性,诱导血小板计数减少可以增加肿瘤对化疗的敏感性,而增加血小板计数可增加肿瘤对化疗药物的耐受性^[37]。在前列腺癌小鼠模型中,抑制血小板膜糖蛋白 VI(glycoprotein VI, GPIIb/IIIa)的功能也可以增加阿霉素和紫杉醇联合化疗药物在肿瘤内的浓度^[38]。另外,研究发现血小板增多症与肿瘤患者的不良预后相关^[39]。总之,血小板作为炎症细胞发挥着重要作用,其激活是乳腺癌发生、转移、耐药的关键。

1.4 肿瘤相关巨噬细胞

肿瘤相关巨噬细胞(tumor-associated macrophage, TAM)是 TME 中最丰富的免疫细胞,被认为是炎症的驱动因素,在连接慢性炎症介质反应与肿瘤发生、

发展之间起着重要的桥梁作用,通过介导血管生成、建立免疫抑制微环境参与肿瘤细胞的增殖、侵袭、转移过程^[40]。TAM 在肿瘤免疫微环境中可极化为 M1 促炎型和 M2 抗炎型^[41]。巨噬细胞在干扰素 γ (IFN γ)和脂多糖(lipopolysaccharide, LPS)的介导下,向 M1 表型转化,进而提高抗原提呈及产生 IL-12、IFN γ 、TNF α 、一氧化氮、活性氧等促炎因子的能力,限制肿瘤生长。相反,在 IL-4、IL-13、IL-10、TGF- β 等的刺激下,巨噬细胞可向 M2 型分化,产生抗炎因子,促进肿瘤的发展。此外,TAM 与化疗疗效也息息相关, Litviakov 等^[42]通过 68 例接受 NAC 的乳腺癌患者,探索了患者对蒽环类化疗药物的反应性与 M2 型 TAM 的关系,结果发现 NAC 反应较差与过表达 M2 型 TAM 有关。相关研究还表明,TAM 可抑制阿霉素、依托泊苷、紫杉醇等常用化疗药物诱导的乳腺癌细胞中有丝分裂停滞的持续时间,帮助受损肿瘤组织进行修复,进而诱导化疗耐受^[43]。

TAM 主要是由癌组织释放的因子从外周募集而来,越来越多的证据表明,趋化因子 2 及其受体(CCL2/CCR2)轴对于动员外周单核细胞至关重要。其中,肿瘤细胞和其他基质细胞分泌的 CCL2 与循环单核细胞上表达的趋化因子受体 CCR2 结合发挥招募单核细胞的作用^[44-45]。其次,缺氧也是吸引 TAM 的关键之一,缺氧通过癌细胞和多种肿瘤相关基质细胞诱导表达高水平的单核细胞募集关键因子,如 CCL2、CCL5、CXCL12、CSF-1 和 VEGF^[46]。此外,一项研究发现化疗引发乳腺癌细胞释放的细胞外囊泡(extracellular vesicle, EV)诱导肺内皮中的 NF- κ B 依赖性趋化因子 2 上调以增强单核细胞募集来促进肺转移^[47]。随后, Wills 等^[48]的研究也证实了 NAC 诱导肿瘤细胞衍生的小细胞外囊泡(small extracellular vesicle, sEV)在乳腺癌肺转移中具有重要意义。已有研究表明,TAM 主要是从外周募集而来,对环境表现出高度的适应性,其通常与肿瘤来源的 IL-4、IL-10 和 IL-13 等免疫抑制细胞因子引起的 M2 样极化状态相关,参与肿瘤发生、发展的各个阶段。

2 外周血炎症标志物在乳腺癌 NAC 中的应用

2.1 NLR

NLR 升高可作为全身炎症及 TME 的指标^[49-50]。

研究已经证实,NLR 升高是乳腺癌患者预后不良的因素。但很少有研究关注 NLR 对于乳腺癌新辅助化疗疗效的预测。Bae 等^[51]探讨了 NAC 前的基线 NLR 在乳腺癌 NAC 反应中的作用,NLR 可以预测接受 NAC 的 HER2 阴性乳腺癌患者的治疗反应。此外,Cullinane 等^[52]观察到较低的 NLR 与较高的 pCR 率相关,建议将 NLR 作为乳腺癌患者 pCR 的预测因子,极大地提高了 NLR 作为乳腺癌患者 NAC 疗效预测因子的可行性。然而,Tokumaru 等^[53]以中性粒细胞[定义为 CD66b(CEACAM8)的基因表达水平]与淋巴细胞[定义为 CD8(CD8A)的基因表达水平]的比值即肿瘤内遗传性 NLR,分析了来自 GSE21094、GSE22358、GSE25088、GSE32646、GSE26035 等 5 个具有不同方案的独立队列的 2 994 例患者,观察到该值升高有利于三阴性乳腺癌患者获得更好的生存,但肿瘤内遗传性 NLR 与乳腺癌 NAC 后的 pCR 无关。目前的大多数研究发现,低 NLR 与较高的 pCR 率和较好的预后相关,也有少数研究发现,高 NLR 与更好的生存相关,但与 pCR 无关。NLR 是否可用于预测 NAC 疗效目前尚未得到相一致的结论,但其是一种易于获得的预后标志物,将其添加到 NAC 疗效的预测模型中,值得进一步研究。

2.2 PLR

晚期肿瘤患者往往伴有血小板的增多,高 PLR 通常与乳腺癌患者不良预后有关^[54]。PLR<133.25 与三阴性乳腺癌患者 NAC 后更高的 pCR 率/小残留疾病率有关^[27]。Cuellar-Lopez 等^[55]在接受 NAC 的所有类型乳腺癌患者中也发现了类似的结果。一项研究还发现在 Luminal B 型(HER2 阴性)乳腺癌患者中,NAC 前 PLR 作为 pCR 的预测因子优于 NLR^[56]。Graziano 等^[57]认为低 NLR (≤ 2.42) 和低 PLR (≤ 104.47) 的组合与乳腺癌患者 NAC 后较高的 pCR 率相关。Asano 等^[58]认为 PLR 和化疗敏感性相关的机制如下:血小板含有大量的生长因子,其计数是肿瘤活动的指标。低血小板计数提示低活性肿瘤。化疗促进骨髓抑制并降低血小板计数。此外,化疗通过激活免疫反应来增加淋巴细胞计数以降低 PLR 并增强抗肿瘤作用。以上研究说明,PLR 是较好的 NAC 疗效预测因子,其与 NLR 联合或许能更好地反映乳腺癌 NAC 的疗效及预后,但其真正成为乳腺癌 NAC 疗效及预后的预测因子有待更多的前瞻性研

究来证实。

2.3 淋巴细胞与单核细胞的比值 (lymphocyte-to-monocyte ratio, LMR)

有研究回顾性分析了哈尔滨医科大学肿瘤医院 192 例接受 NAC 后进行手术的乳腺癌患者。结果显示,NCT 前外周血 LMR 升高与更长的无病生存期 (disease-free survival, DFS) 和总生存期 (overall survival, OS) 相关,同时,高 LMR 组更容易获得 pCR^[59]。Goto 等^[60]的研究也发现了类似的结果,并确定 LMR 6.0 为预测预后的最佳临界值,但 LMR 和 pCR 之间没有发现显著相关性。然而,在另一项研究中, Ji 等^[61]发现 LMR 不仅可以被视为腔内乳腺癌患者的独立预后因素,高水平的 LMR 还可以增强腔内乳腺癌患者对 5-氟尿嘧啶的敏感性。低 LMR 与乳腺癌患者更差的预后显著相关已经在大多数研究中被证实,但其与乳腺癌 NAC 疗效的关系尚存在争议。

2.4 全身免疫炎症指数 (systemic immune-inflammation index, SII)

Hu 等^[62]在 2014 年开发了一种由血小板(P) $\times$ 中性粒细胞(N)/淋巴细胞(L)计算得到的全新的 SII 指标,且探讨了其在肝细胞癌中的预后价值,结果显示高水平 SII 是肝癌患者预后不良的强大预测指标。目前 SII 已经被证明与晚期肺腺癌^[63]、泌尿系肿瘤^[64]、胃癌^[65]等多种肿瘤的预后有关。近年来,SII 在乳腺癌中的应用研究也逐渐增多。在接受 NAC 的乳腺癌患者中,低 SII 患者获得更长的 DFS 和 OS^[66]。另外,有研究显示 SII 预测 NAC 后乳腺癌患者预后的价值优于 NLR 和 PLR^[67]。目前 SII 在乳腺癌 NAC 中的应用以其对乳腺癌患者预后的预测为主,该值升高与较差的预后有关,其对 pCR 的预测数据极少。与 NLR、PLR、LMR 相比,由 3 种类型血细胞计数计算得到的 SII 可能可以更好地反映宿主炎症和免疫状态的平衡,其有望成为预测乳腺癌患者预后的可靠指标,指导治疗决策。

2.5 全身炎症反应指数 (systemic inflammation response index, SIRI)

SIRI 是 2016 年新开发的一项基于外周血中性粒细胞、单核细胞、淋巴细胞 3 种血细胞计数的全面、综合性指标^[68]。有研究报道把接受 NAC 的乳腺癌患者通过 SIRI 的最优临界值进行分层后,与低 SIRI ($< 0.85 \times 10^9/L$) 组相比,高 SIRI ($\geq 0.85 \times 10^9/L$) 组

的3年、5年、10年DFS和OS更差,提示SIRI是接受NAC的乳腺癌患者的有用预后指标,有希望成为决定乳腺癌治疗决策的生物标志物^[69]。Dong等^[70]的研究证明了NAC后pCR率与SIRI显著相关,而且多因素分析指出,乳腺癌患者SIRI是pCR的独立预后因素,SIRI<0.72×10⁹/L组的患者获得pCR的机会比SIRI≥0.72×10⁹/L组的患者高出近5倍,SIRI的ROC曲线下面积大于NLR的面积,SIRI比NLR更具优势,对临床实践可能具有更大的潜在价值。NAC前低SIRI的乳腺癌患者pCR率更高,预后更好,存活时间更长,这提示SIRI可作为预测乳腺癌患者NAC疗效及预后的潜在指标,但是其在乳腺癌中的研究毕竟不多,可靠性有待更大样本量的进一步研究。

3 乳腺癌 NAC 外周血炎性标志物的获取

外周血细胞计数是动态变化的,且易受化疗药物影响,因此外周血取样的时间是外周血炎性标志物成功预测乳腺癌NAC反应及预后的关键之一。目前报道的取样时间点有NAC开始前1周^[71]、2周^[72]等。高思铭^[73]评估了NAC期间NLR的动态变化趋势及其与pCR的关系,其血液学标本选取方法为每2周期收集1次,具体时间为下一周期化疗开始前1周内。另外,各个外周血炎性标志物的临界值(cut-off值)也还处于探索阶段。除PLR的cut-off值推荐为150外^[55,74-75],其余外周血炎性标志物均通过ROC曲线分析以确定其阈值^[57,61-62]。外周血取样时间尚无统一标准,总的来说,选取的血细胞计数是开始NAC前最近一次的外周血样本,均小于1个月。

4 小 结

外周血检查是接受NAC治疗的乳腺癌患者的常规检查,具有创伤小、取材容易、方便重复测量等优点。尽管NLR、PLR、LMR、SII、SIRI在乳腺癌NAC疗效预测方面的作用仍然不确定,但大多数研究已经证明上述指标与乳腺癌患者的OS和DFS密切相关。因此,炎症和免疫指标对乳腺癌患者预后及

NAC反应具有重要的预测价值。已有的研究结果为寻找能够准确评估和预测NAC疗效及预后的生物标志物提供了新的途径,此外,在NAC反应中研究这些炎症指标对探索NAC的耐药机制和新的可操作治疗靶点至关重要。然而,当前的研究大多局限于单中心的回顾性研究,且存在一定的争议,在广泛使用炎症指标作为预测性临床指标之前,其可靠性仍需要足够规模的前瞻性研究加以验证。

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