

Androgen/AR信号通路在良性前列腺增生中的研究进展

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摘要 良性前列腺增生(benign prostatic hyperplasia, BPH)是中老年男性常见疾病, 下尿路综合征等临床症状严重影响中老年男性生活质量。雄激素和雄激素受体(androgen receptor, AR)对前列腺的发育和生长是必要的, 越来越多的研究表明, AR在BPH中发挥重要作用, 在BPH组织中AR被雄激素激活, 参与调控下游相关转录因子的表达, 从而引起前列腺细胞的异常增殖。该文综述了androgen/AR信号通路以及雄激素和AR在BPH中的功能及可能的作用机制, 介绍通路相关调节因子在调控BPH中的作用。

关键词 良性前列腺增生; 雄激素; 雄激素受体; 信号通路

Research Progress of Androgen/AR Signaling Pathway in Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia

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Abstract BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia) is a common disease in elderly male, which leads to lower urinary tract syndrome and seriously affects the quality of life in elderly male. Androgen and AR (androgen receptor) are essential for the development and growth of prostate. Studies show that AR plays an important role in BPH. AR is activated by dihydrotestosterone, which is involved in regulating the expression of downstream transcription factors, thus causing abnormal proliferation of prostate cells. This paper reviews the function of androgen/AR signaling pathway, androgen and AR in BPH and their possible mechanisms, and introduces the role of pathway related regulatory factors in BPH regulation.

Keywords benign prostatic hyperplasia; androgen; androgen receptor; signaling pathway

良性前列腺增生(benign prostatic hyperplasia, BPH)是中老年男性常见疾病, 由于前列腺腺体和间质组织增生, 导致膀胱出口梗阻, 最终引起与下尿路梗阻相关的一系列下尿路症候群^[1]。BPH发病率与年龄呈正相关, 研究显示, 60岁的男性BPH发病率大于50%, 到80岁时患病率高达83%^[2], 严重影响了中

老年男性的生活质量, 是引起老年人排尿障碍最常见的原因^[3]。BPH的主要危险因素为高龄和有功能的睾丸。肥胖、高血压、糖尿病等与BPH的发生发展也有一定的关联性^[4]。BPH常见治疗方法是手术和药物治疗, 但手术可能导致并发症, 例如出血、尿道狭窄、尿失禁等, 并且对于高龄男性来说手术可

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能带来更大的风险^[5]。药物治疗中常见的 α 受体阻滞剂起效快,但是无法减小增生的前列腺的体积,改善临床症状也不明显,此外还可能造成血管损伤和性功能障碍等副作用^[6-7]。相比之下,抑制睾酮(testosterone, T)转化为双氢睾酮(dihydrotestosterone, DHT)的5 α -还原酶抑制剂在控制BPH方面更有疗效,临床数据表明,5 α -还原酶抑制剂与 α 受体阻滞剂结合治疗BPH疗效良好^[8]。雄激素(androgen)在前列腺增生发展中起着十分重要的作用,雄激素受体(androgen receptor, AR)是介导雄激素发挥作用的重要环节,通过阻断AR激活,能够抑制BPH发展^[9]。靶向androgen/AR信号可能是BPH更为有效的治疗手段。然而, androgen/AR信号转导的详细机制,尤其是AR在BPH中的致病作用仍不清楚。

1 雄激素在BPH中的作用

雄激素在男性的一生中都起到非常重要的生理作用。睾丸分泌的雄激素主要是T,还有少量的DHT。机体内DHT主要由T在外周的靶组织中经5 α -还原酶转化而来,T和DHT通过与雄激素受体结合,诱导性分化、维持生殖功能、参与代谢及免疫应激等反应、影响合成代谢并对垂体促性腺激素有反馈调节作用^[10]。雄激素主要以扩散形式进入靶组织和其他组织。前列腺在青春期开始增大直至成年保持一定体积,在中老年期继续增大^[11]。然而,老年期的前列腺的增大仅影响过渡区而不影响整个腺体,但随着年龄增加,老年男性BPH的进展过程中,循环血液中T水平下降^[12]。用不同水平雄激素处理人前列腺上皮细胞并观察其增殖,发现低水平的T和DHT处理的细胞增殖率更高^[13]。DHT结合AR的亲合力比T高2~10倍,DHT主要以旁分泌方式起作用,正常前列腺组织中DHT:T比值约为8,明显高于中老年男性循环DHT:T比值0.1^[14],表明循环T水平并不能充分反映前列腺内的DHT水平。流行病学的研究数据也未显示出高循环血液T水平和BPH的相关性,这可能是由于腺体上可结合的有效AR达到饱和以及循环T通过转化为其代谢物(包括DHT以及雌二醇等)发挥作用^[15-16]。在前列腺中,DHT与AR形成二聚体,与雄激素反应元件(androgen responsive element, ARE)结合,从而诱导各种靶基因的转录表达,产生影响前列腺细胞生长的蛋白,如前列腺特异抗原(prostate specific antigen, PSA)和调节蛋白等^[17]。

2 AR在BPH中的作用

2.1 AR的结构与功能

AR是类固醇和核受体转录因子家族的成员,雄激素通过与AR结合而影响多种组织和细胞类型中的基因表达。雄激素受体基因由8个外显子组成,其编码的雄激素受体是一种核蛋白,由918个氨基酸组成。AR基因含有8个外显子,其中外显子1最大,编码受体的N-端(N-terminal domain, NTD),而N-端的残基最不保守,其包含1个激活功能AF-1区。结构分析表明,NTD与AR的转录激活有关,可以在存在或不存在C-端结合域的情况下促进AR转录^[18]。外显子2和3编码AR的DNA结合结构域(DNA binding domain, DBD),该结构域高度保守,由68个氨基酸组成,能折叠成2个锌指结构,可识别雄激素响应元件,进行DNA结合和转录激活,也可进行二聚化。外显子4至8编码受体的铰链区和C-端配体结合结构域(ligand-binding domain, LBD),该区域起着形成二聚体和结合配体的作用。LBD包含雄激素结合位点和对于AR共激活所必需的AF-2区。AR蛋白有两种同工型,AR-A和AR-B,可能有多个剪接变体^[19]。由全长AR mRNA转录物的可变剪接产生的AR变体,主要是通过截断、去除和改变C-端来实现的^[20]。在没有LBD情况下,AR剪切变体可以通过变体之间同二聚化或与全长AR异二聚化促进AR靶基因的激活^[21]。AR基因的外显子1中含有数个DNA重复序列区域,主要有谷氨酸CAG重复序列和谷氨酰胺GGC重复序列,CAG重复序列长度与AR的转录调节活性存在负相关性^[22]。研究发现,CAG序列异常与前列腺癌(prostate cancer, PCa)发生和复发有一定相关性,当CAG重复序列小于21时,可能会增加BPH的发生风险,而AR基因中多态性(GGC)重复序列会增加PCa的发生风险^[13,23]。

2.2 AR调节BPH的可能机制

2.2.1 AR直接影响前列腺细胞的增殖作用 与邻近的正常腺体组织相比,BPH组织中AR表达更高。在从BPH组织分离的基质细胞中,雄激素可诱导纤维母细胞生长因子-10(fibroblast growth factor-10, FGF-10)的表达。小鼠前列腺是从胚胎时期的泌尿生殖窦中发育而来的。VEZINA等^[24]通过泌尿生殖窦体外培养发现,此发育过程中FGF-10诱导前列腺“芽”在鼠泌尿生殖窦中生成,并且FGF-10可以增加上皮细胞前列腺芽的数量从而刺激前列腺上皮细胞

增殖。在从AR基因敲除小鼠分离的原代培养的基质成纤维细胞中, AR基因的敲除会抑制前列腺的发育^[25]。因此, 基质AR可能在促进上皮细胞生长中发挥积极作用, 并且在基质细胞中靶向AR信号, 可抑制BPH中的细胞生长。从AR基因敲除小鼠中提取前列腺基质成纤维细胞, 与BPH-1细胞共培养可以减少BPH-1细胞的生长, 同时降低各种生长因子, 包括胰岛素样生长因子-1(insulin-like growth factor-1, IGF-1)、FGF-10、血管内皮生长因子- β (vascular endothelial growth factor- β , VEGF- β)和胎盘生长因子等的表达, 这表明, 基质AR可能通过生长因子调节来影响上皮细胞的增殖^[26](图1)。

2.2.2 AR调节上皮-间质转化影响BPH 上皮-间质转化(epithelial-mesenchymal transition, EMT)是上皮细胞持续进展以获得间质细胞的运动特征, 其特征是包括E-钙黏蛋白在内的上皮标志物的减少, 以及N-钙黏蛋白在内的间充质标志物的增加。在上皮细胞中, AR通过调节EMT, 影响BPH发展^[27]。PALOMA等^[28]发现, BPH基质是通过EMT的过程从上皮衍生而来的, 在EMT过程中, 前列腺上皮细胞失去稳定性, 变成更具迁移性的成纤维细胞样细胞, 并伴随上皮标志物(如细胞角蛋白、E-钙黏蛋白、桥粒蛋白和纽带蛋白)表达的丧失。研究发现, BPH-1细胞系中转化生长因子- β 1(transforming growth factor- β 1, TGF- β 1)也明显诱导了EMT标志物, 如E盒结合锌指蛋白1(zinc finger E-box-binding protein 1, ZEB1)、E盒结合锌指蛋白2(zinc finger E-box-binding protein 2, ZEB2)和

Snail家族转录因子2(snail family transcriptional repressor 2, Snail2)等的蛋白和mRNA水平的表达, Snail2/Slug是TGF- β 诱导EMT过程中的重要转录因子^[29]。TGF- β 通过转导蛋白Smad家族成员3(Smad family member 3, Smad3)直接激活Snail和Slug转录因子, 抑制E-钙黏蛋白表达, 表明TGF- β /Smad信号传导可能在诱导前列腺基质细胞增殖和上皮细胞生长以及EMT的过程中起重要作用^[28,30]。LU等^[31]发现, 在小鼠前列腺上皮细胞(mPrE)与巨噬细胞(RAW264.7)共培养后, 两种EMT标志物N-钙黏蛋白和Snail的蛋白质水平增加, 添加外源AR可以显著增加共培养物中巨噬细胞迁移, 从而增强EMT以促进BPH的发展(图1)。

2.2.3 AR通过募集巨噬细胞增强基质细胞增殖 研究表明, 炎症是BPH发生和发展的潜在致病因素。在共培养系统中, 小鼠前列腺基质细胞(mPrSC)可以招募更多浸润巨噬细胞从而提高基质细胞的增殖能力; 同时, 细胞趋化因子配体3(C-C motif chemokine ligand 3, CCL3)的表达显著增加, 在该系统中添加抗CCL3抗体可以显著减少巨噬细胞向基质的迁移, 因此, mPrSC细胞可以分泌CCL3作为AR下游靶标以影响巨噬细胞募集, 靶向AR CCL3信号, 中断巨噬细胞浸润, 进而抑制基质细胞增殖, 阻止BPH发展^[26]。LU等^[31]还进行了人前列腺上皮细胞系(BPH-1)与人单核细胞系(THP-1)共培养, 发现BPH-1细胞的球形增长和EMT的趋势显著增加, 在共培养系统中添加AR可以显著增强THP-1的迁移能力。这一结果和在小

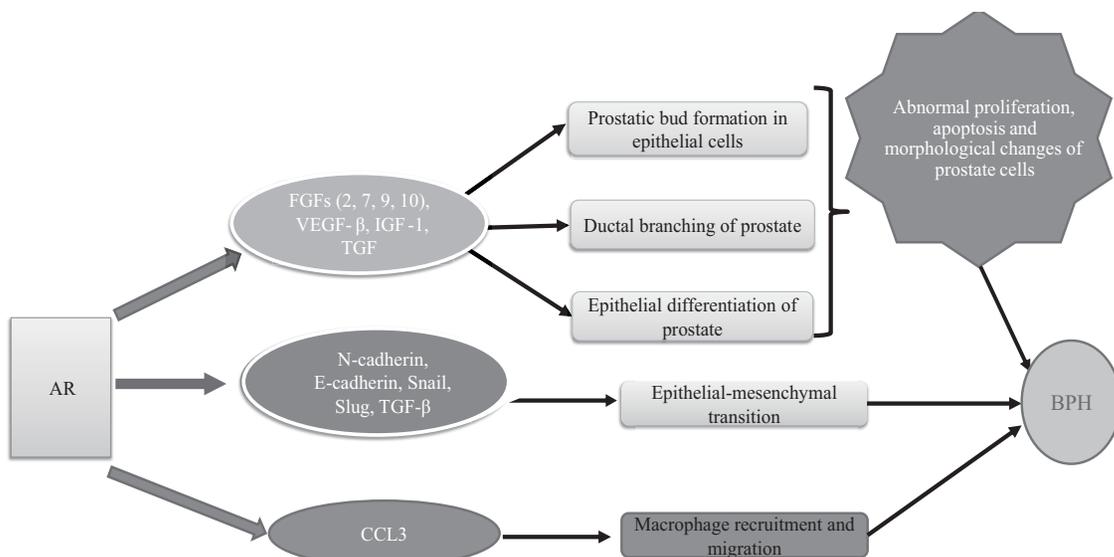


图1 AR调控BPH的可能机制

Fig.1 Possible mechanism of AR regulating BPH

鼠前列腺上皮细胞系(mPrE)与巨噬细胞(RAW264.7)共培养模型中的表现一致(图1)。

3 AR信号通路与BPH的关系

AR作用途径主要有配体依赖型和非配体依赖型两种(图2)。在配体依赖型反式激活期间, AR直接与T或其活性代谢物DHT结合。与热休克蛋白(heat shock proteins, HSP)解离后, AR发生构象变化, 并且通过N-和C-端相互作用形成同源二聚体, 被MAPK(mitogen-activated protein kinase)磷酸化, 转移至细胞核内的形成核定位信号。在具有共调节蛋白的细胞核中, AR与包含ARE区域的基因相互作用, 反式激活对靶细胞的增殖和分化相关的基因, 包括PSA、前列腺酸性磷酸酶(prostatic acid phosphatase, PAP)和细胞周期依赖性蛋白激酶p21WAF1/CIP1等, 最终导致细胞增殖分化, 促进前列腺的生长^[32]。

在非配体依赖途径中, 旁分泌作用和信号传导对于BPH以及PCa发生至关重要。许多细胞外生长因子、细胞因子、G蛋白偶联受体(G protein-coupled receptor, GPCR)和多种激酶等都与AR雄激素非依赖性功能有关。许多旁分泌调节的生长因子如胰岛素样生长因子(insulin like growth factor, IGF)、表皮生长因子(epidermal augmentum factor, EGF)和成纤维细胞生长因子(fibroblast growth factor, FGF)也

通过旁分泌途径来激活IL-6R/JAK1/STAT3以及IL-6R/MAPK2/p38信号通路进而激活下游AR, 引起相关靶基因的转录和表达^[33]; 有研究表明, IGF-1或胰岛素可以通过激活PI3K-AKT信号通路促进前列腺上皮细胞的增殖, IGF-I及其受体的mRNA激活PI3K-AKT信号通路进而激活AR及下游靶基因, 从而引起前列腺细胞增殖^[34-35], 这可能是由于AKT信号诱导FOXO1(forkhead box O1)磷酸化并将其从细胞核中转移至细胞质, 从而减弱核内FOXO1对配体激活AR的抑制作用^[36]。此外, 雄激素对第二信使级联的快速刺激可能通过调节AR或其他转录因子的转录活性而激活细胞增殖信号。雄激素可通过调控性激素结合球蛋白(sex hormone-binding globulin, SHBG)与其受体结合物进而激活环磷酸腺苷(cyclic adenosine monophosphate, cAMP)和蛋白激酶A(cAMP dependent protein kinase, PKA)。雄激素还激活G蛋白偶联受体通过非电压门控Ca²⁺通道的激活来刺激细胞内Ca²⁺浓度升高进而激活信号转导级联反应, 包括PKA、MAPK、蛋白激酶C(protein kinase C, PKC), 最终调节AR和其他转录因子的活性^[37]。

4 AR信号通路相关调节因子

4.1 炎症因子

IL-6和IL-8与AR的雄激素非依赖性功能有关。

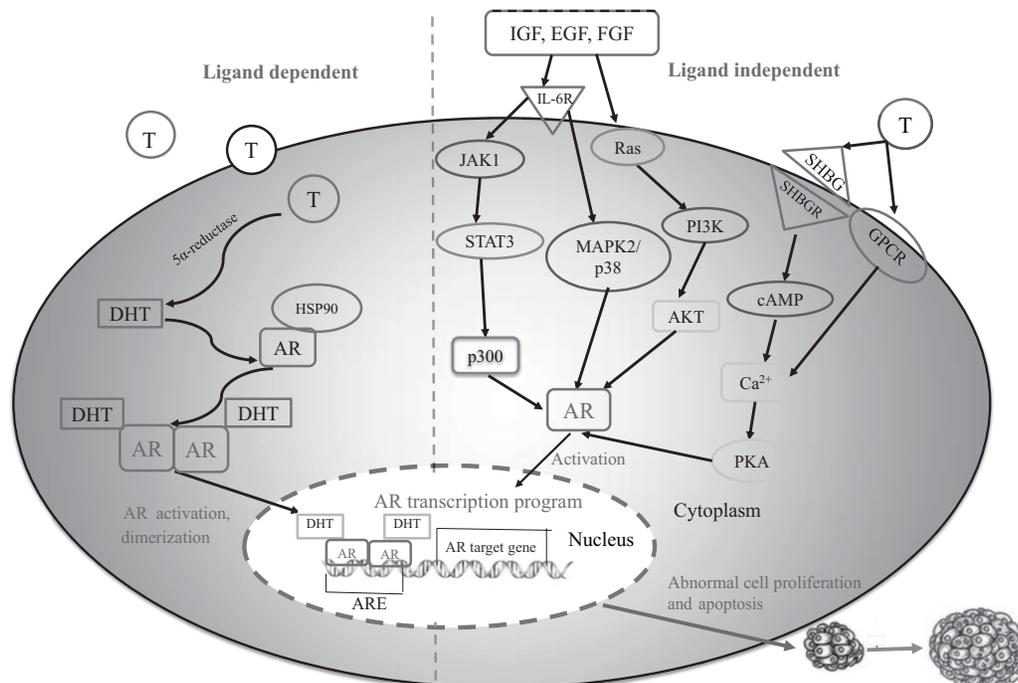


图2 Androgen/AR信号转导中AR的活化形式(根据参考文献[33]修改)

Fig.2 Activation form of AR in the androgen/AR signaling pathway (modified with reference [33])

IL-6在多种细胞(如白细胞、成骨细胞等)和器官(如前列腺等)中表达。人成骨细胞衍生的IL-6通过调节AR刺激前列腺癌细胞的生长^[38]。IL-6及其受体表达增强可以通过p300/CBP(p300/cyclic AMP response element-binding protein)或STAT3活化AR^[23]。IL-6还可以通过抑制组蛋白乙酰转移酶乙酰化来调节AR共激活因子p300,影响AR的转录活性^[39]。IL-8在MAPK信号通路中调节细胞增殖、凋亡和分化。IL-8还可以激活磷酸化STAT3信号,上调碱性成纤维细胞生长因子(basic fibroblast growth factor, bFGF)和B淋巴细胞瘤-2(B-cell lymphoma-2, Bcl-2)的表达从而促进下游增殖基因转录,提高细胞的抗凋亡能力进而促进BPH发展^[40-41]。

4.2 生长因子

IGF、FGF、TGF和VEGF与前列腺内类固醇激素环境之间相互依赖。FGF可以通过诱导前列腺中成纤维细胞有丝分裂来促进腺体增生。胰岛素和IGF-1能激活AR,促进前列腺增生,而胰岛素样生长因子结合蛋白3(insulin like growth factor binding protein 3, IGFBP3)能抑制前列腺的生长^[42]。5 α -还原酶抑制剂通过降低前列腺基质细胞中的IGF-1水平,抑制上皮细胞的增殖,并且通过促进上皮细胞自噬来减小前列腺体积^[43]。TGF- β 1和VEGF都可以通过促进细胞增殖、诱导血管生成等,促进BPH的发生发展^[44]。这些调节因子相互作用可以改变细胞增殖和凋亡之间的平衡,诱导异常的AR信号,促进前列腺上皮细胞增殖,从而导致BPH的发展。

4.3 转录因子

一些转录因子可调控AR靶基因的表达,进而对BPH产生影响。在成年小鼠腔上皮中,叉头蛋白A1(forkhead box A1, FOXA1)的缺失会导致前列腺前部基底细胞扩张和进行性增生^[45]。GRABOWSKA等^[46]证明,核因子IB(nuclear factor I/B, NFIB)的丢失与患者的BPH严重程度有关,这可能与NFIB结合位点与AR和FOXA1结合位点有显著重叠相关,并且在小鼠模型中,NFIB的丢失会诱导前列腺增生。SRY-box转录因子2(SRY-box transcription factor 2, Sox2)在BPH和PCa组织中均表达,在PCa中通过shRNA沉默Sox2会降低细胞增殖和侵袭能力^[47]。活化转录因子3(activating transcription factor 3, ATF3)是转录因子ATF/CREB(cAMP responsive element binding protein)家族的成员。ATF3通过结合AR的转录域抑制AR反

式激活。据报道,ATF3的缺失导致前列腺细胞异常增殖以及AR靶基因的转录异常^[48]。JUN(jun proto-oncogene)蛋白家族是一类重要的转录因子,可以调节AR基因的转录,c-JUN通过介导雄激素受体二聚化和与DNA结合来刺激AR反式激活。WANG等^[35]也发现,小鼠成纤维细胞中c-JUN和AR阳性的表达对上皮细胞具有促进增殖作用。

4.4 其他调节因子

5-羟色胺(5-hydroxytryptamine, 5-HT)由神经内分泌前列腺细胞分泌,在BPH组织中被下调。研究表明,下尿路综合征(lower urinary tract syndrome, LUTS)和前列腺增生与血浆5-HT浓度降低有关^[49]。还有研究发现,5-HT通过下调AR抑制前列腺分支形态发生、前列腺细胞生存和增殖能力来阻止BPH的进展^[50]。钙/钙调素依赖性蛋白激酶 β (Ca/calmodulin-dependent protein kinase kinase β , CaMKK β)也可以影响AR信号通路,有报道称,CaMKK β 的过表达抑制AR的基因表达,而CaMKK β 的敲除增强AR信号传导和细胞增殖反应^[51]。

5 小结与展望

前列腺增生发病机制目前还不明确。根据美国泌尿外科协会(American Urological Association, AUA)指南,目前良性前列腺增生广泛使用的治疗药物为 α 受体阻滞剂和5 α -还原酶抑制剂(在指南中为I级证据推荐)。目前,AR抑制剂对于临床上激素难治的晚期PCa有较好的疗效,可减缓PCa的进展。但AR与前列腺增生的关系同样密不可分,AR抑制剂对治疗BPH也具有潜在的价值。本文综述了雄激素及其受体功能及在BPH中发挥的重要作用,介绍了androgen/AR信号通路在BPH中的可能机制,以便研究者通过对该信号通路的研究,可以靶向多处靶点及相关调节因子来纠正异常的信号通路,为临床治疗BPH提供新思路。

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