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潜伏结核感染相关蛋白抗原的研究进展

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【摘要】 结核病是由结核分枝杆菌(Mtb)所致的以呼吸系统感染为主的慢性传染病, 潜伏结核感染(LTBI)高危者是结核病预防的关键人群, 针对LTBI的早期诊断和高危人群的预防性治疗能有效减少活动性结核病(ATB)发病率。但现有的诊断方法诊断LTBI的特异度较低, 因此建立快速、敏感、高效的LTBI诊断方法仍是目前结核病控制工作中面临的重要难题。本文就LTBI相关蛋白抗原的研究进展进行综述, 以为LTBI的诊断提供参考。

【关键词】 医院, 慢性病; 结核分枝杆菌; 潜伏结核感染; 蛋白抗原; 免疫学; 综述

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Research Progress of Latent Tuberculosis Infection Related Protein Antigens SHEN Yao, CHEN Ling

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【Abstract】 Tuberculosis is a chronic infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb), which is mainly infected in the respiratory system. People at high risk of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) are the key population for tuberculosis prevention. Early diagnosis and preventive treatment for high-risk LTBI can effectively reduce the incidence of active tuberculosis (ATB). However, the existing diagnostic methods have low specificity for detecting LTBI, and the establishment of a fast, sensitive and efficient LTBI diagnostic method has becoming an important problem in the tuberculosis control field. Searching for specific antigens with diagnostic value for LTBI has becoming a current research hotspot. This paper mainly reviewed the research progress of LTBI related protein antigens, in order to provide a reference for the diagnosis of LTBI.

【Key words】 Hospitals, chronic disease; Mycobacterium tuberculosis; Latent tuberculosis infection; Protein antigen; Immunology; Review

目前全球结核病形势日益严峻。结核病是由单一致病菌——结核分枝杆菌(Mtb)感染所致死亡人数最多的一种传染性疾病,也是全球十大疾病死因之一。潜伏结核感染(LTBI)通常是指体内存在Mtb,但无活动性结核病(ATB)表现如结核病症状、组织器官损伤及病原学依据等,而机体对Mtb刺激产生持续性免疫应答的一种状态^[1]。据WHO统计,全球约有25%的人口感染Mtb,其中多数患者处于LTBI状态,如不进行相关治疗,则有5%~10%会进展为ATB^[2],若宿主免疫力降低,则这一风险更高,如HIV阳性的LTBI者发展为ATB的可能性是HIV阴性LTBI者的30倍^[3]。对LTBI高风险人群进行准确诊断和早期干预能有效降低LTBI发生率,减少传染源^[2]。由于LTBI者体内的Mtb处于半休眠或休眠状

态,且这种状态下的Mtb基本不繁殖、数量也较少,因此临床主要根据机体对Mtb抗原的免疫反应进行诊断^[4]。目前,临床主要采用结核菌素试验(TST)、体外 γ -干扰素释放试验(IGRA)检测宿主免疫反应,但其并非是LTBI的特异性诊断方法,无法区分ATB与LTBI^[5]。因此寻找LTBI相关蛋白抗原成为目前国内外研究的热点。但目前关于LTBI诊断性抗原的研究结果差异较大,可能与研究人群、环境、遗传等因素有关。且目前针对婴幼儿、HIV阳性、使用免疫抑制剂等免疫状态异常人群LTBI的检测研究较少。Mtb可在机体免疫系统功能下降时由半休眠或休眠状态重新复苏并再次繁殖,进而进展成为ATB^[6],因此,对于上述特殊人群LTBI的检测尤为重要。本文针对具有潜在诊断价值的LTBI相关蛋白抗原的研究进展做一综述,以为LTBI的诊断提供参考。

1 LTBI的发生发展

Mtb属于胞内寄生菌,侵入人体后可被巨噬细胞吞噬,引起固有免疫反应,活化的巨噬细胞虽可在一定条件下清除Mtb^[7],但仅依赖固有免疫反应无法彻底清除Mtb,而被感染

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的巨噬细胞可释放大量抗原,其经树突细胞加工后呈递给特异性T淋巴细胞,进而引发获得性免疫应答反应,其中巨噬细胞被T淋巴细胞产生的细胞因子激活,进而发挥杀伤或清除Mtb的作用^[8];另外,Mtb可通过一系列免疫逃逸机制在巨噬细胞内长期存活^[9]。肉芽肿形成被认为是宿主针对早期LTBI免疫反应的主要特征,肉芽肿组织存在缺氧、饥饿、低pH值的微环境,可为机体对峙病原体创造一个相对封闭的环境,并诱导Mtb进入半休眠或休眠状态^[10],使Mtb处于低代谢状态,基本不繁殖,进而逃避或抵抗宿主免疫攻击,最终形成LTBI状态^[11]。但当宿主免疫力下降时,休眠的Mtb可复苏、繁殖、播散,最终导致ATB^[12-15]。综上,人体感染Mtb后有3种情况:一是宿主免疫系统彻底清除Mtb;二是Mtb快速增殖,发展为ATB;三是宿主免疫系统对Mtb的清除作用与Mtb的抗清除作用处于动态平衡,形成LTBI状态,当宿主免疫力降低或细菌毒力增加时则导致ATB^[16]。

2 LTBI的诊断方法

目前针对LTBI的诊断缺乏统一的标准,临床主要通过免疫学检测间接诊断^[4],包括基于细胞免疫的TST和IGRA,及基于体液免疫的血清学检测,其中TST使用的是多种分枝杆菌粗制抗原的混合物,包含牛分枝杆菌(BCG)、Mtb及非Mtb(NTM)的抗原,因此该方法对BCG疫苗接种和NTM感染存在交叉反应,鉴于我国普遍进行BCG疫苗接种、存在一定比例的NTM感染,导致TST检测Mtb的特异度并不高。而IGRA使用的是Mtb特有而BCG缺失的差异区域(RD)上由Rv3874基因编码的培养滤液蛋白10(CFP-10)和Rv3875基因编码的早期分泌靶向抗原6(ESAT-6),与TST相比,IGRA能够排除BCG疫苗感染,对检测Mtb的特异度较高^[17-18],但因该方法无法区分ATB与LTBI,极大限制了其诊断LTBI的临床指导意义和应用价值^[5]。除了细胞免疫学方法,基于检测抗体的血清学检测也是有望成为检测LTBI的重要方法,其具有特异度高、耗时短和易于批量检测的优势,特别适用于高结核病负担和资源有限的国家^[5]。但目前血清学检测诊断LTBI的效果并不理想,不同的研究结果差异较大^[19-21],可能与使用抗原的特异性和免疫原性有关。由于目前针对LTBI的诊断方法存在上述问题与不足,因此寻找具有更高诊断价值的生物标志物仍是LTBI诊断困境的突破点。

3 LTBI相关蛋白抗原

研究发现,结核病不同感染状态均具有特异性的抗原特征谱,通过免疫分析可以区分不同感染状态^[22-23]。一些模拟LTBI环境的低氧或饥饿模型研究发现,Mtb可通过调节基因转录或蛋白表达而适应不同的外界环境,使用体外LTBI模型与全基因组、转录组分析相结合,鉴定出在LTBI期间表达上调的基因,称为LTBI相关蛋白抗原,其编码蛋白为潜伏期相关蛋白抗原^[24-26],主要包括休眠相关蛋白抗原、复苏促进因子(Rpf)、饥饿刺激因子和毒素-抗毒素系统(TAS)。

3.1 休眠相关蛋白抗原 细菌由复制状态进入持续性非复制状态称为“休眠”,Mtb处于休眠状态时会产生潜伏感染相关基因的特异性表达,主要包括休眠调节单元(DosR)、持久性缺氧反应(EHR)基因组、LuxR转录子家族和Lsr2相关基

因四大类基因,这些基因的表达产物称为休眠相关蛋白抗原。ALBRETHSEN等^[26]通过构建低氧、高一氧化氮模型模拟肉芽肿微环境,利用基因芯片技术发现了48个在休眠状态下表达明显上调的基因,命名为DosR,而Mtb应对肉芽肿微环境压力的第一反应是由DosR完成,DosR是Mtb由复制状态过渡到休眠状态的关键调控子,可增加Mtb的适应性^[27-29]。但缺氧期间DosR基因的表达是短暂的,大多数DosR基因在表达上调24h后恢复到基线水平。调控DosR基因后,Mtb通过EHR调控相关调节因子和酶促反应使其能够长期处于休眠状态,这种EHR约由230个基因参与,其表达独立于DosR基因介导的初始缺氧反应^[25]。LuxR转录子家族基因是一类在革兰阴性菌群体感应LuxR/LuxI环路中起重要调控作用的蛋白。FANG等^[30]在体外低氧模型中发现,敲除LuxR转录子家族成员Rv0195可降低细胞存活率和Mtb从休眠状态中快速恢复的能力,证实了Rv0195与细菌致病性相关,具有休眠调节功能。Lsr2相关基因是一类组蛋白样DNA结合蛋白,具有抑制基因表达的作用^[31-32],还可参与Mtb休眠状态的建立。BARTEK等^[33]证明了Lsr2相关基因是Mtb适应氧含量变化所必需的转录调节因子,其可使Mtb不断地适应微环境中的氧含量变化,特别是维持Mtb在低含氧量的肉芽肿中长期存活,是造成宿主持续感染的重要因素。研究表明,休眠相关蛋白抗原具有诊断LTBI的潜在价值,目前应用前景较高的主要有HspX(Rv2031c)、Rv1733c、NarK2(Rv1737c)、PfkB(Rv2029c)、Hrp1(Rv2626c)、Rv2628、NrdZ(Rv0570)、Rv1813c、Rv1996、Rv2004c、Rv2028c和DevR(Rv3133c)^[28, 34-40]。休眠相关蛋白抗原具有较高免疫原性,且数量较多,未来可用于LTBI的诊断及ATB新型疫苗的研究。

3.2 Rpf 休眠菌复苏是LTBI进展为ATB的关键环节,Rpf在其中起到了重要作用^[36, 39]。1998年MUKAMOLOVA等^[41]首次从藤黄微球菌的培养液中分离出1个大小约16KD的蛋白质,其可促进高G⁺C含量的革兰阳性菌(如藤黄微球菌、BCG和Mtb)的复苏和生长,被命名为Rpf。Mtb可编码5种具有与Rpf相似特征和特性的蛋白,如RpfA(Rv0867c)、RpfB(Rv1009)、RpfC(Rv1884c)、RpfD(Rv2389c)和RpfE(Rv2450c)。Rpf含有溶菌酶结构域,有利于休眠菌细胞壁的溶解、重构,释放胞内小分子物质来参与细菌复苏,对包括Mtb在内的休眠放线菌复苏具有关键作用^[42-43]。体外研究表明,在Mtb基因组中敲除单个Rpf基因,并不能完全抑制休眠菌复苏^[44],这可能是由于Mtb Rpf基因的表达动力学以不同程度重叠的独特形式出现。另有研究表明,RpfA与RpfD在LTBI人群中表现出了良好的免疫原性,且可特异性诱导CD₄⁺、CD₈⁺T淋巴细胞增殖,提高细胞因子表达能力^[36, 45]。SERRA-VIDAL等^[46]研究也发现,RpfD刺激潜伏感染组产生的 γ -干扰素(IFN- γ)水平高于ATB组,提示RpfD抗原有助于鉴别LTBI与ATB。可见Rpf在LTBI进展为ATB的过程中发挥了重要的调节作用,故其具有潜在的基础研究与临床应用价值。

3.3 饥饿刺激因子 饥饿刺激因子是由细菌适应饥饿条件而表达上调的一组编码基因。BETTS等^[47]通过基因组微阵列

和蛋白质组学分析,观察休眠状态的 Mtb 在饥饿状态下基因及蛋白质表达情况,筛选出与 LTBI 相关的特异性蛋白抗原,并将其命名为饥饿刺激因子。饥饿刺激因子对抑制细菌在休眠状态的转录过程、能量代谢、脂质合成和细胞分裂有一定作用。饥饿刺激因子是与 LTBI 相关的特异性蛋白抗原,其中 Rv2653c、Rv2654c、Rv2659c 和 Rv2660c 均表现出较好抗原性,且更易被 LTBI 人群识别,具有潜在的诊断价值^[48-50]。李邦印等^[49]研究发现, Rv2659c 和 Rv2660c 在 LTBI 中较 ATB 能使宿主产生更高水平的细胞因子,并且使分泌 IFN- γ /肿瘤坏死因子 α (TNF- α)/白介素 (IL)-2 的多功能 CD₄⁺ T 淋巴细胞分数增加。综上,饥饿刺激因子有较好的抗原性,可用于 LTBI 诊断标志物的研究及临床应用。

3.4 TAS TAS 通常由 2 个基因的操纵子组成,其中一个具有毒性效应,可促使细胞进入休眠状态,另一个则是抗毒素,可抵消毒性效应以允许细胞生长^[51]。TAS 可以抑制细菌在生长表型和非生长表型(休眠状态)之间的转换。Mtb 在应激条件下能够降解抗毒素,释放毒素干扰或改变细菌 DNA 复制、三磷酸腺苷(ATP)和细胞壁合成,促进细菌快速适应环境变化,进而发挥毒素-抗毒素活性,使其进入休眠状态^[52-53]。生物信息学分析显示, Mtb 基因组中 TAS 至少有 88 个,包括同源的 62 个基因对(47 个 VapC 家族、9 个 MazEF 家族、3 个 relE 家族、2 个 ParD 家族和 1 个 HigB 家族)以及另外 26 个新型 TAS,其中已发现 VapC-MT (Rv0596c-Rv0595c)、VapBC-MT3 (Rv0301-Rv0300)、MazF-MT6 与 RNA 结合后可启动毒性,从而抑制蛋白质合成,导致细菌生长停滞,进入 LTBI^[54-56],因此,推测 TAS 对 LTBI 具有潜在的诊断价值,但目前关于 TAS 免疫原性的报道较少,有待进一步研究。

4 单个蛋白抗原在 LTBI 检测中的应用

4.1 PfkB 6-磷酸果糖激酶 PfkB 属于 DosR 家族成员之一,对维持休眠状态 Mtb 的长期生存有重要作用^[57]。有研究表明, PfkB 能诱导较强的 T 淋巴细胞介导免疫反应^[58]。近年多项研究已证实,不同人群的 LTBI 对 PfkB 的免疫反应均强于 ATB,提示了 PfkB 在免疫学诊断 LTBI 中的重要性^[28, 34-35, 59-61]。ARROYO 等^[36]比较 DosR (NarK2, PfkB 和 Rv2628)、RpfA、RpfD、重组融合蛋白 ESAT-6-CFP10 (E6-C10) 和结核菌素 (PPD) 抗原刺激潜伏感染组和 ATB 组的外周血单核淋巴细胞,检测细胞上清液 IFN- γ 水平,发现 PfkB 是区分潜伏感染组和 ATB 组的最优单一抗原,其特异度和灵敏度分别为 76.2%、90.0%,诊断潜伏感染和 ATB 的准确率分别为 78.3%、88.9%。一项针对中国人群的研究显示, PfkB 抗原鉴别潜伏感染和 ATB 的灵敏度和特异度分别为 84.3%、80.0%^[35],推测 PfkB 抗原有望成为鉴别 LTBI 和 ATB 的诊断标志物。

4.2 Rv2028c Rv2028c 属于休眠调节单元,编码一种假想蛋白,而假想蛋白是一类目前功能未知但又真实存在的蛋白。赵慧敏等^[62]招募了三组不同 Mtb 感染状态的人群: LTBI 组、ATB 组和健康人群组,用酶联免疫吸附试验 (ELISA) 检测 Rv2028c 和 6-kDa 早期分泌抗原靶标 (ESAT-6) 特异性 IFN- γ 水平,结果显示, LTBI 组中 Rv2028c 特异性 IFN- γ 水平最高, ROC 曲线下面积高达 0.938 8,因此推测 Rv2028c

具有作为 LTBI 免疫学诊断候选抗原的潜力。

4.3 HspX α -晶状体蛋白 HspX 属于 DosR 蛋白之一,对维持 Mtb 在宿主体内的持续感染具有重要作用^[63]。BAUMANN 等^[64]研究发现, HspX 具有较强的 B 细胞免疫原性,这种免疫反应在 ATB 患者中较弱,而在疑似 LTBI 人群中检测到 HspX 抗体滴度却很高^[65-66]。ZHANG 等^[67]认为, Mtb 的分泌蛋白 Ag85B、HspX 和 ESAT6 可作为鉴别 ATB 和 LTBI 的优势初步筛选抗原,并用 ELISA 检测了针对这 3 种分泌蛋白的免疫球蛋白 (Ig) G 血清抗体,结果表明诊断 LTBI 的最佳抗原组合是 HspX/ESAT6,其特异度和灵敏度分别为 75.0%、76.7%。CASTRO-GARZA 等^[68]研究表明,与 ATB 患者相比, LTBI 患者具有更高的抗 HspX IgM 水平 ($P=0.003$); 并且参考 RABAHI 等^[69]的分类标准将受试人群分为健康组、ATB 组、既往 LTBI 组以及新近 LTBI 组 (1 年内 PPD 试验转阳性),研究发现,新近 LTBI 组与其他组间 HspX 特异性 IgG 和 IgM 水平有明显差异,基于 OD₄₉₂ 值的 ROC 曲线分析结果显示其灵敏度和特异度均为 100.0%,其中用于识别新近 LTBI 患者的 IgG 截断值为 1.7, IgM 截断值为 1.2。以上结果支持了将 HspX 作为诊断 LTBI 的血清标志物这一观点。

4.4 Rv2004c Rv2004c 是休眠状态的 Mtb 适应缺氧环境相关的蛋白之一,具有 T 淋巴细胞和 B 淋巴细胞表位,有望成为结核病诊断和疫苗研发的候选物^[70]。在结核病高负担国家印度, DODDAM 等^[71]研究发现, LTBI 组的 Rv2004c 特异性 IgG 抗体滴度明显高于健康对照组和 ATB 组 ($P < 0.000 1$),健康人群组、LTBI 组和 ATB 组的中位数抗体滴度分别为 0.3、0.9 和 0.6,推测与 ATB 和健康人群相比, Rv2004c 在 LTBI 中可引起更为强烈的体液免疫反应,提示 Rv2004c 可作为血清标志物诊断 LTBI。

5 联合蛋白抗原在 LTBI 诊断中的应用

不同人群以及不同个体间存在遗传背景和免疫水平的差异,另外 Mtb 蛋白抗原在 LTBI 的不同阶段表达量、宿主和病原等因素使得采用任何单一蛋白抗原作为 LTBI 的诊断标志物均会产生 30%~40% 的假阳性率^[72],因此,为了增加诊断 LTBI 的特异度,减少不同人群或个人免疫差异的影响,采用多个蛋白抗原联合诊断 LTBI 以弥补单个蛋白抗原诊断 LTBI 的不足,是更有应用前景的方案。

5.1 PfkB、HspX、Acp、Rv2627c、DevR 和 Rv3716c 6 种蛋白抗原组合 有研究表明, Mtb 蛋白抗原与 LTBI 和 ATB 均相关,因此基于 Mtb 蛋白抗原的免疫色谱方法诊断 LTBI 的灵敏度欠佳^[73]。有研究者进一步从 DosR 家族中选择 PfkB、HspX、Acp (Rv2032)、Rv2627c、DevR (Rv3133c) 和 Rv3716c 用作诊断蛋白抗原,将受试者分为 LTBI 组、ATB 组、健康人群组和非 ATB 组,检测其血清中特异性抗体,结果显示,该联合蛋白抗原诊断 LTBI 患者的灵敏度为 75.0%,特异度为 88.1%,其阳性预测值与阴性预测值分别为 77.4% 和 86.7%^[74],提示这 6 种蛋白抗原组合可提高现有 LTBI 试纸的诊断效能。

5.2 Apa、HspX、PE_PGERS26、Rv0494、PhoY1、GpE、SecA2 和 PPE3 8 种蛋白抗原组合 贺仁忠等^[75]利用商品化的 MtbprofTM 结核分枝杆菌蛋白芯片 (广州博融生物科技有

限公司生产)与健康人群组、LTBI组和ATB组临床血清标本杂交,筛选组间IgG/IgM抗体差异响应蛋白,用差异较大的100个Mtb蛋白定制蛋白芯片,通过大样本临床血清标本检测进一步筛选出LTBI新型诊断候选标志物8个,包括Apa(Rv1860)、HspX(Rv2031c)、PE_PGRS26(Rv1441c)、Rv0494、PhoY1(Rv3301c)、GrpE(Rv0351)、SecA2(Rv1821)和PPE3(Rv0280),采用204份临床血清标本进行临床验证,结果显示,该组合诊断LTBI的灵敏度及特异度分别为83.10%和90.90%,ROC曲线下面积为0.941,显示其具体较高的LTBI诊断价值。由于LTBI人群个体差异较大,多个抗原的组合可提高LTBI诊断的灵敏度及特异度。

5.3 Rv0569、Rv1996、Rv2030、HspX、Hrp1、Rv2628、Rv3129、Rv3131和DevR 9种蛋白抗原组合 SHI等^[76]将Mtb休眠状态下表达量最高的25个DosR蛋白抗原^[77]定制成膜阵列,检测健康对照组、LTBI组以及ATB组的抗体水平,通过线性判别分析鉴定出一组包含9种DosR蛋白抗原的最优组合,这9种蛋白抗原分别为Rv0569、Rv1996、Rv2030、HspX(Rv2031c)、Hrp1(Rv2626c)、Rv2628、Rv3129、Rv3131和DevR(Rv3133c),进一步用独立临床血清样本(健康对照组14例、ATB组10例、LTBI组10例)评估上述9种蛋白抗原组合预测ATB和LTBI的准确性,测试结果显示,其预测ATB和LTBI的灵敏度分别为100%(10/10)和90%(9/10),特异度均为100%(14/14),整体检测正确率为97.1%,证实该蛋白抗原组合对于区分Mtb感染的不同状态有较高的灵敏度和特异度。

6 小结

全球结核病形势日益严峻,LTBI者是结核病的主要人群,因此早期诊断LTBI并对高危人群进行预防性治疗对结核病的防控具有重要意义。LTBI相关蛋白抗原主要包括休眠相关蛋白抗原、Rpf、饥饿刺激因子、TAS等,这些LTBI相关蛋白抗原在未来结核病新型疫苗与LTBI诊断试剂的研发中具有较好的应用前景。

作者贡献:沈瑶进行文章的构思与设计、文献/资料的收集与整理,撰写论文;陈玲进行文章的可行性分析,进行论文及英文的修订,负责文章的质量控制及审校,并对文章整体负责、监督管理。

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