

HIF-1 α 及CD31促进晚期肝癌转移及侵袭的分子机制

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摘 要

缺氧是实体肿瘤微环境(TME)的重要生物学特征, 与肿瘤的侵袭转移密切相关。由于正常组织的氧供无法为肿瘤细胞提供充足的生长条件, 肿瘤细胞内部会加速新生血管的形成进一步加重缺氧。低氧诱导因子(HIF-1 α)被认为是在低氧条件下激活的关键转录调节因子, 相关研究表明HIF-1 α 在肝癌组织中呈高度表达, 促进血管生成及肿瘤的侵袭和转移, 并维持着肿瘤细胞的代谢, 是肝细胞癌发生、发展过程中重要的调控蛋白之一, 与HIF-1 α 相关的HCC治疗也取得了快速地进展。与此同时, 研究发现TME可以通过血小板内皮细胞粘附因子1 (PECAM-1/CD31)发挥作用, 推动晚期转移进展, 并在肿瘤进展的前终末阶段中起关键作用, 且HIF-1 α 与CD31表达具有相关性。本综述重点总结HIF-1 α 及CD31促进晚期肝癌(HCC)转移及侵袭的分子机制。

关键词

HIF-1 α , CD31, 肝癌, 上皮间充质转化(EMT), 血管生成拟态(VM), 转移, 侵袭

Molecular Mechanism of HIF-1 α and CD31 Promoting Metastasis and Invasion of Advanced Hepatocellular Carcinoma

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Abstract

Hypoxia is an important biological feature of solid tumor microenvironment (TME), which is closely related to tumor invasion and metastasis. As normal tissue oxygen supply cannot provide sufficient growth conditions for tumor cells, the formation of new blood vessels will be accelerated inside tumor cells to further aggravate hypoxia. HIF-1 α is considered under the condition of low oxygen activation key transcriptional regulation factor. Related studies have shown that HIF-1 α is highly expressed in liver cancer tissue, promotes angiogenesis and tumor invasion and metastasis, and maintains the tumor cell's metabolism, which is one of the important regulatory proteins in the occurrence and development of hepatocellular carcinoma. HIF-1 α -related HCC treatment has also made rapid progress. At the same time, TME was found to play a role through platelet endothelial cell adhesion factor 1 (PECAM-1/CD31), promoting the progression of late metastasis and playing a key role in the preterminal stage of tumor progression, and HIF-1 α was correlated with CD31 expression. This review focuses on the molecular mechanisms by which HIF-1 α and CD31 promote metastasis and invasion of advanced hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC).

Keywords

HIF-1 α , CD31, Hepatocellular Carcinoma, Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition (EMT), Vasculogenic Mimicry (VM), Transfer, Invasion

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1. 引言

肝细胞癌(简称肝癌, hepatocellular carcinoma, HCC)是世界上常见的恶性肿瘤之一[1], 发病率和死亡率均较高, 占全球肿瘤病死率的第4位, 严重威胁着人民的健康[2] [3]。肝脏肿瘤的治疗首选肝切除, 但是在初次确诊为肝癌患者中, 仅10%~15%有机会行手术治疗[4] [5] [6]。且大多数患者在首次确诊的时候就已经属于中晚期, 病变也已经不仅仅局限于局部, 即使是能够接受根治性治疗的患者, 其总体的疗效也不是十分理想[7] [8], 术后5年的复发率也高达60%~70% [9]。HCC与其他实体肿瘤一样, 具有快速生长的共同特点。然而, HCC细胞的生长往往超过功能血管的生长, 导致HCC区域经常出现氧气不足的情况[3] [10]。缺氧会使TME发生变化, 如激活HIF-1 α , 多项研究表明HIF-1 α 在调节肿瘤对缺氧的适应中起关键作用。HIF-1 α 可以调节肿瘤细胞微环境代谢(促进肿瘤细胞更好的适应肿瘤微环境)、促进肝癌细胞发生上皮间充质转化(EMT)以及血管生成拟态(VM)的形成。此外, 在开发涉及靶向HIF-1 α 的HCC治疗方面也取得了进展。本综述旨在总结HIF-1 α 及CD31在促进HCC的复发和转移中的机制, 进一步明确HIF-1 α 与CD31在促进肝癌复发转移过程中是否有协同作用。

2. HIF-1 α 促进肝癌转移及侵袭的分子机制

2.1. HIF-1 α 的结构和功能

HIF 是一种异二聚体, 由一个 O₂-不稳定的 α 亚基和一个稳定的 β 亚基(也被称为 ARNT)组成。在人类和其他脊椎动物中, 有三种不同的 HIF 基因: HIF-1、HIF-2、HIF-3。HIFs 包含一个基本的螺旋环螺旋(bHLH)结构域, 两个 Per-Arnt-Sim (PAS)结构域, 一个 PAS 相关的 COOH-末端(PAC)结构域、氧依赖降解(ODD)结构域以及位于 ODD 结构域的 NH₂ 末端反转录激活域(N-TAD)和位于 COOH 末端的 C-TAD。在正常氧张力下, HIF-1 α 蛋白被脯氨酸羟化结构域(PHDs)在 ODD 结构域的两个保守脯氨酸残基上羟化。在羟化之后, von Hippel-Lindau (VHL)肿瘤抑制因子 E3 连接酶复合物发生泛素化, 后者招募拉长素 B、拉长素 C 和 Cullin-2, 形成 E3 泛素连接酶复合物(HIF-2 α 由 E2 泛素结合酶泛素化), 最终通过 26S 蛋白酶体降解[11] [12] [13]。当在低氧条件下稳定时, HIF-1 α 不再被 PHDs 修饰并被蛋白酶体降解, 而是易位到细胞核, 与它的伴生分子 ARNT/HIF-1 β 通过 HLH 和 PAS 结构域的相互作用, 招募 CBP/p300 等共激活剂。HIF 异二聚体通过在靶基因启动子区域内与缺氧响应元件(HREs)的一致序列 G/ACGTG 结合和识别, 驱动参与缺氧应激适应的基因转录[14] [15]。

2.2. 缺氧时 HIF-1 α 调节肝癌肿瘤细胞代谢

在正常细胞中, 几乎所有 ATP 都是由线粒体氧化活性产生的, 即正常细胞将葡萄糖转化为丙酮酸, 通过三羧酸循环和氧化磷酸化再线粒体中进一步代谢, 彻底氧化用于 ATP 依赖的生化反应。而在 1920 年 Warburg 发现, 在肿瘤细胞中, 肿瘤细胞摄取葡萄糖且分泌乳酸增加, 即依赖无氧糖酵解来获取能量, 我们称之为 Warburg 效应。与大多数正常组织不同, 肿瘤细胞即使在氧气足以支持线粒体氧化磷酸化的情况下, 也倾向于将葡萄糖“发酵”成乳酸。在此过程中, HIF-1 α 积极调节一系列糖酵解基因, 促进糖酵解, 有利于肿瘤细胞适应缺氧应激。许多参与糖酵解的关键酶已被证明是肝癌细胞中 HIF1 α 的直接靶点, 包括 ALDOA、GPI、GAPDH、HK2、LDHA、PGK1、PGAM1、PFKFB4、ENO1 和 PKM2 [16] [17]。此外, 与原代肝细胞相比, HIF-1 α 可直接上调葡萄糖转运体 1 (GLUT1) [18], 并在 HCC 细胞和患者样本中高表达, GLUT1 的高表达与增殖增强、分化差以及晚期的组织学有关[19]。己糖激酶 2 (HK2)和乳酸脱氢酶 A (LDHA)会增强糖酵解从葡萄糖向丙酮酸的转换, 同时也是 HIF-1 α 的直接靶点[20] [21]。此外, HIF-1 α 是丙酮酸脱氢酶激酶 1 (PDK1)表达所必需的, 在 PDK1 表达时会抑制三羧酸循环。异位表达 PDK1 不仅可以挽救缺氧诱导的细胞凋亡, 还可以减少缺氧 ROS 的产生, 恢复 HIF-1 α 缺陷细胞中 ATP 的产生 [22]。NDUFA4L2 也受缺氧和 HIF-1 α 诱导。在 HCC 患者中, NDUFA4L2 的过表达与肿瘤微卫星的形成、肿瘤包膜缺失和总体生存率差密切相关。抑制 HIF-1 α /NDUFA4L2 可增加氧消耗和线粒体活性, 导致 ROS 积累和凋亡细胞死亡。NDUFA4L2 的耗尽抑制了肝癌移植瘤的生长和转移[23]。此外, 除了氧, 2-羟戊二酸、铁(II)和抗坏血酸也需要羟化酶对 HIF α 进行适当的羟化, 从而将 HIF-1 α 激活与代谢应激反应联系起来[24]。

2.3. 缺氧时 HIF-1 α 促进 EMT 过程来促进肝癌转移复发

晚期肝癌及肝癌术后复发的主要原因是肿瘤的侵袭和转移, 许多上皮细胞失去了细胞极性, 失去与基底膜连接的能力而转化具有侵袭转移能力的间质细胞, 此过程我们称为上皮间充质转化(EMT)。EMT 的主要特征有: 细胞黏附分子(如 E-钙黏蛋白)表达的减少、细胞角蛋白细胞骨架转化为波形蛋白(Vimentin)为主的细胞骨架及形态上具有间充质细胞的特征等。HIF-1 α 被认为是调控上皮间充质转化(EMT)的关键因子。研究表明在肝癌中, HIF-1 α 能激活 Snail, Twist1 等多种转录因子的表达从而促进 EMT。Snail 能

作用于上皮细胞标志物 E-cadherin 启动子中 E-box 元件,促使 E-cadherin 降表达,促进 EMT 的发生; Twist 形成复合物作用于 E-cadherin 诱导发生 EMT [25]。此外,其他蛋白分子或信号通路也会通过 HIF-1 α 来促进肝癌的 EMT。

TGF- β 信号通路是肝癌中最重要的信号通路之一,与多种癌症中的免疫抑制、肿瘤血管生成、肿瘤细胞迁移、增殖、分化、发育、凋亡和侵袭等生物活性有关。相关研究表明 TGF- β 与 HIF-1 α 之间存在着正相关,Tabatabai 等认为在缺氧条件下,肝细胞中的 HIF-1 α 能够促进 TGF- β 信号转导。在某些细胞中,缺氧激活 HIF-1 α 需要 TGF- β 信号,而 TGF- β 能够独立于缺氧激活 HIF-1 α [26] [27] [28]。而 Bryan L 等认为[26],在肝细胞中,HIF-1 α 的激活并不需要 TGF- β ,而且在介导低氧所诱导的 EMT 时,TGF- β 又是 HIF-1 α 的下游信号通路。TGF- β 通路是 smad 介导的,SMAD 复合物与 Snail、E 盒结合锌指蛋白(ZEB)等转录因子结合特定 DNA 区域,从而调节 EMT 相关基因的表达,促进肝癌的 EMT。

Notch 是另一种可被缺氧诱导的 EMT 信号通路。Sahlgren 等研究表明,在缺氧 HIF-1 α /Notch/EMT 轴上,Notch 主要通过两种协同方式调节 Snail。首先,N1ICD 可以被招募到 Snail 启动子中,与 HIF-1 α 相互作用,直接上调 Snail。Notch 调节 Snail 的另一种方式是通过调节 LOX 来间接调节:HIF-1 α 可以结合 LOX 启动子,增加 LOX 蛋白的产生,从而增加 Snail。此外,Notch 还可以和 TGF- β /SMAD 通路相互作用,从而激活 EMT [29]。

HIF-2 α 能够诱导 EMT 的另一个关键通路是 PI3k/Akt,该通路激活后会同时激活 NF- κ B/TWIST,下调 E-cadherin,进而诱导 EMT。缺氧也可以直接刺激肝癌细胞的 EMT,HIF-1/2 可以结合 TWIST1 基因的 HRE,促进其表达,从而导致 EMT。缺氧条件下,Wnt 通路可以通过 GSK-3 β 介导的 Wnt/ β -catenin 通路使 β -catenin 上调从而促进 EMT [30]。研究显示,Wnt/ β -catenin 通路可以增强 HIF-1 α 转录,促进肝癌细胞的 EMT [31]。此外,miRNAs 也通过 HIF-1 α 来影响肿瘤的转移和复发,缺氧时,miR-204 的表达下调,刺激血管扩张的磷蛋白(VASP)表达上调,促进肝癌的肝内转移。miR-199a-5p/miR-592、miR-3662、miR-338-3p、miR-93 和 miR-122 通过下调 HIF-1 α 的表达来调节 Warburg 效应和肝癌进展[32]-[37]。Chang 等发现 miR130b 可能通过 PTEN/p-AKT/HIF-1 α 信号通路促进 EMT [38]。除 miRNAs 外,长链非编码 RNA (lncRNAs)也能以 HIF-1 α 为中介影响肝癌细胞的增殖、侵袭和迁移,从而影响肝癌的 EMT。如: lncRNA UBE2CP3 通过激活 ERK1/2/HIF-1 α /VEGFA 信号增强肝癌细胞 VEGF 分泌,促进血管生成[39]。

2.4. 缺氧时 HIF-1 α 促进 VM 过程来促进肝癌转移复发

血管生成拟态(vasculogenic mimicry, VM)的概念是由 Maniatis 等在 1999 年提出。很多恶性肿瘤(如肝癌)经过无血管的缓慢生长期后(体积小于 2 mm 时期),为维持自身的生长和代谢,会释放多种血管生成因子,引起血管内皮细胞形态改变,基底膜及周围的细胞外基质降解,内皮细胞迁移、增殖,血管形成、改建,形成以内皮细胞围成的管道样结构。最近,EMT 被认为是导致 VM 的一种机制[40] [41]。EMT 的分子转变是间充质成分如波形蛋白和 N-钙粘蛋白的上调,同时上皮细胞粘附分子 E-钙粘蛋白表达的降低 [42]。多项研究表明,HIF-1 α 活性具有促进作用,HIF-1 α 在调节肿瘤对缺氧适应 VM 形成中起关键作用 [13] [43] [44] [45]。

当有氧生命形式缺乏氧气和气体交换时,呼吸组织迅速酸化,因为二氧化碳积累形成羧酸,当癌细胞依赖糖酵解和 Warburg 效应时,细胞内就会产生乳酸[46]。胞内的酸性环境对癌细胞来说是具有杀伤作用的,因此肿瘤细胞为保持胞内 pH 值在 7.2 至 7.5 之间,就会通过质子泵(称为 pH 调节剂)如单羧酸转运蛋白、HCO₃⁻转运蛋白和碳酸酐酶将细胞外酸碱度驱动至 5.6~6.8,以促进细胞在这些细胞毒性条件下的存活[47]。高酸性细胞外微环境与恶性细胞有关,因为这些代谢变化沿着氧梯度形成 pH 梯度(随着氧水平的降低,pH 值降低)。伴随着这种 pH 梯度,癌基因激活,肿瘤抑制活性随着 HIF-1 α 和 HIF-2 α 的激

活而丧失,因为肿瘤细胞代谢方式向厌氧细胞转变,导致细胞外酸中毒增加,进一步加剧了这些影响[47]。这些效应主要是通过 HIF-1 α 来驱动的, HIF-1 α 可增强许多葡萄糖转运蛋白的基因表达,如葡萄糖转运蛋白 1 (GLUT-1)、葡萄糖转运蛋白 3 (GLUT-3)和许多糖酵解酶,以跟上无氧代谢的需求,因为无氧代谢需要分解比有氧呼吸多约 18~19 倍的葡萄糖分子[48] [49]。

在概念层面上,肿瘤缺氧似乎只与极其巨大、快速生长的进程有关。然而,情况并非如此,因为 Li 等人在显微镜下观察到亚毫米尺寸的肿瘤是极度缺氧的,而继续使用显微镜来观察时,1~4 mm 的肿瘤却未见明显的缺氧[50]。从这些数据和他们随后的研究来看,这意味着当肿瘤从无血管到直径几百微米时,它们就开始出现缺氧了[51],并且在肿瘤血管生成的初始阶段之前,肿瘤缺氧是非常明显的,一旦这些肿瘤缺氧,这些肿瘤血管生成效应就会增强[52]。参与缺氧的三种最重要的缺氧信号因子是 HIF-1 α 、HIF-2 α 以及信号转导子和转录因子 3 (STAT3)的激活。STAT3 在缺氧期间在肿瘤中上调[53],驱动肿瘤的侵袭性。在常氧条件下, HIF-1 α 迅速降解,而在缺氧过程中, STAT3 阻断 HIF-1 α 降解,同时促进 HIF-1 α 蛋白合成,导致 HIF-1 α 信号传导整体增强[54]。由于缺氧或过度表达 p-STAT3 的癌症的相互作用, HIF-1 α 反式激活包含缺氧反应元件(例如 MMP-2)的基因,驱动血管拟态[55]。MMP-2 还通过 p-STAT3/HIF-1 α /MMP-2 血管拟态通路增强肿瘤的侵袭和转移[56]。

目前对于 HIF-1 α 诱导 HCC 发生 VM 的完整信号通路尚未阐明,且各分子信号之间互相影响。Zhang 等发现缺氧条件下,缺氧可增强肝癌细胞中 RhoA/ROCK 和 Rac1/PAK 的表达,进一步调节 HIF-1 α 的表达。最终, RhoA/ROCK 和 Rac1/PAK 通过 HIF-1 α 的稳定和 p-波形蛋白(Ser72 和 56)激活的上皮间质转化诱导血管生成[57]。缺氧情况下, HIF-1 α 可通过与缺氧反应元件直接结合的方式来调节 VEGF-A、VEGFR1、EPHA2、Twist、Nodal、骨桥蛋白和 COX-2 等基因的表达,或通过激活调节基因转录或中介蛋白来间接调节 VE-cadherin、TF 和 PEDF 表达[58]。缺氧也可以调节 notch 反应基因的表达;具体来说,缺氧稳定了 NICD 蛋白,该蛋白与 HIF-1 α 相互作用,并激活 Notch 启动子基因,包括 Nodal [59] [60]。HIF-1 α 和 Notch 信号通路之间的这种非典型的相互干扰被认为促进了未分化的细胞状态,进一步阐明了 VM 下肿瘤细胞可塑性的可能病因。Li 等发现肿瘤细胞经 EMT 抑制剂处理后,其 VM 的形成明显减弱,说明 EMT 调控 VM 的形成[61]。Wang 等发现肝癌细胞经 COC12 处理后模拟的缺氧下, HIF-1 α 可以诱导 LOXL2 水平升高;进而导致上皮钙粘蛋白的抑制和波形蛋白的激活,以及随后促进 EMT 和 VM 过程的发生,这两者最终导致 HCC 肿瘤的进展[44]。

3. CD31 促进肝癌转移复发的分子机制

3.1. CD31 的结构和功能

血小板内皮细胞粘附分子-1 (PECAM-1/CD31)是一种跨膜糖蛋白,相对分子量为 130 kda,属于免疫球蛋白超家族。PECAM-1 的胞外区域包括 6 个免疫球蛋白亚基组成的 6 个同源区域,每个同源区域由单独的外显子编码,每个亚基分别包含 94、103、90、93、91 和 81 个氨基酸残基。胞外区 CD31 直接参与细胞间的相互作用。CD31 一旦与内皮细胞接触,通过其细胞外带正电荷的氨基酸,可定位于内皮细胞的细胞连接点[62]。CD31 胞内区域包含两个一致序列,分别构成两个免疫受体酪氨酸基抑制基序(ITIM)。ITIM 可以特异性结合 SHP-2, SHP-2 是一种广泛表达的细胞质酪氨酸磷酸酶,具有两个 src-同源 2 (SH2) 结构域。这两个酪氨酸分别是 Y663 和 Y686,磷酸化后的 Y663 和 Y686 可以与 SHP-2 结合,从而具有多种生理作用。CD31 胞内区域包含 12 个 Ser 残基、4 个 Thr 残基和 5 个 Tyr 残基,均为磷酸化位点。到目前为止,只报道了 Ser 和 Tyr 的磷酸化[63]。CD31 同源结合和非同源结合可以相互转化。细胞表面表达的 PECAM-1 以同源结合为主,非同源结合为辅。

CD31 以往被认为是血管内皮细胞的标志物。近年来研究者发现某些肿瘤细胞上也有 CD31 的表达[64] [65] [66] [67], 促进晚期肿瘤的侵袭和迁移。如 Tang 等人发现[68], CD31 广泛表达在小鼠黑色素瘤细胞, 小鼠 Lewis 肺癌细胞, 大鼠癌肉瘤细胞以及人类的某些肿瘤细胞系中[11]; 在人肝癌 SK-HEP-1 细胞系中, DNA 和 RNA 水平都有 CD31 的表达[68], 在乳腺癌细胞中, CD31 和 CD44 的共表达与侵入性表型相关, 此外, CD31 的表达可以使形态及功能未分化的乳腺癌 MDA-MB-231 [64] [65]细胞出现攻击性行为。在非霍奇金淋巴瘤中, CD31 表达在小淋巴细胞瘤及大淋巴细胞瘤中。在白血病细胞系中, 在体外终末髓样分化模型中报道了 CD31 的上调[66]。同样的, 研究者发现在一例胆囊腺癌病例中, 也可以检测到 CD31 的表达[69]。因此, CD31 也可能是未来抗癌药物开发的一个有吸引力的靶点[70] [71] [72]。

3.2. CD31 促进晚期肝癌转移及侵袭的分子机制

Horace [6]等发现晚期肿瘤中, CD31 主要是通过调节肿瘤微环境(TME)中内皮细胞的黏附及促进肿瘤细胞增殖, 而不是通过刺激肿瘤血管生成来促进肿瘤的侵袭及转移的。CD31 表达在肿瘤细胞上时, 晚期 TME 中的信号作用于胞外结构域后, 向胞内传导, 激活胞内的多条信号通路来介导抗肿瘤细胞凋亡作用, 如[1] CD31/SHP-2、CD31/stats 3&5 等。Valsamma [73]等证实 CD31 通过同性相互作用介导肿瘤和内皮细胞之间的相互干扰, 参与从肿瘤到内皮细胞信号的接收/整合, 并转化为介质的释放, 如 TIMP-1, 以受体介导的方式进一步刺激肿瘤细胞增殖。在肝癌细胞中, Zhang 等人[74]通过相关实验证实, CD31 在 MHCC97H, HCC-LM3 系上有所表达, 同时证实了 CD31 通过上调整合素 $\beta 1$ 或 $\beta 3$ 进而激活 FAK-Akt 通路诱导 EMT。此外, 在 Giuseppe 等人[75]的相关研究中, 发现多形性胶质母细胞瘤(GBM)中, CD31 和 HIF-1 α 的表达水平呈正相关。由于 CD31 在促进晚期肿瘤侵袭及转移的分子机制未明确, 且肝癌是富血供肿瘤, 抗血管及联合治疗晚期肝癌疗效欠佳, 因此进一步研究 CD31 与肝癌肿瘤细胞的分子机制对降低肿瘤细胞耐药, 提高患者生存率有较高的临床研究价值。

4. 结论和未来展望

HIF-1 α 是 HCC 适应低氧环境的重要调节因子, 通过多个靶基因来调节肿瘤微环境的代谢, 来影响肝癌细胞的增殖、生长、转移、侵袭及血管生成的过程。大量的研究已被证实使用 HIF-1 α 作为治疗靶点的可行性, 但这些药物仅使中晚期 HCC 患者的中位总生存期延长时间有限, 总体有效率也较低。对于目前抗血管生成治疗的效果是否源于脱靶效应、是否受到肿瘤微环境以及肿瘤细胞本身的变化等方面的影响还存在许多争议。且 CD31 对晚期肿瘤的影响也越来越受研究者的关注, 虽 CD31 在 HCC 中的机制尚未明确, 依然需要进行大量、深入的研究, 如早期应用 HIF-1 α 抑制剂联合晚期抗 CD31 药物治疗比单用其中一种效果要好, 同时 HIF-1 α 是一种转录因子, 在肿瘤微环境中是否可以调控 CD31 的表达也可以进行深入研究。

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