

# Review of the ERK5 Signaling Pathway Research

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## Abstract

Extracellular signal regulated kinase 5 (ERK5) is an important part of mitogen activated protein kinase (MAPK) system, and also is a new signal transduction pathway of MAPK signaling system, which has attracted much attention in recent years. ERK5 can be activated by many stimulating factors and plays an important role in cell survival, proliferation and differentiation. Furthermore, ERK5 is closely related to vascular development and proliferation, and other critical functions. This paper focuses on the origin, structure, property, physiological features of ERK5, and the relationship between ERK5 and tumor and non-oncologic diseases, and reviews the research direction in the future.

## Keywords

ERK5, Signaling Pathways, MAPK

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# ERK5信号通路研究现状

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## 摘要

细胞外信号调节激酶5(extracellular signal regulated kinase, ERK5)是丝裂原活化蛋白激酶(mitogen activated protein kinase, MAPK)系统中的重要组成部分,也是MAPK信号转导通路中较新的一条通路,近几年备受人们关注。它可以被各种刺激因素激活,对细胞生存、增殖和分化有着重要作用,与血管发育、增殖等功能密切相关。本文从ERK5的来历、结构、性质、特点以及与肿瘤和非肿瘤疾病的关系,并对它以后的研究方向进行综述。

## 关键词

ERK5, 信号通路, MAPK

## 1. MAPK 简介

丝裂原活化蛋白激酶(mitogen activated protein kinase, MAPK)是哺乳动物内广泛存在的一类丝/苏氨酸蛋白激酶,可以被一系列的细胞外信号或刺激所激活,是自然界生物体内普遍存在的信号转导系统之一,可将胞外的刺激信号传递至胞核内,参与细胞的增殖、分化、转化及凋亡等不同功能[1]。目前,基于序列的同源性和功能差异,已经确定有4条MAPK信号转导通路[2]:细胞外信号调节激酶1/2(extracellular signal regulated kinase, ERK1/2)、c-Jun氨基末端激酶(c-Jun amino-terminal kinase, JNK)/应急激活蛋白激酶(stress-activated protein kinase, SAPKs)、p38丝裂原活化蛋白激酶(p38 mitogen-activated protein kinase, p38MAPK)和细胞外信号调节激酶5(extracellular signal regulated kinase, ERK5)/大丝裂素活化蛋白激酶1(big MAP kinase 1, BMK1)4条途径。

## 2. ERK5 的来历

MAPK通路是细胞信号传导网络中最为重要的传导通路之一,几乎所有的生长因子及部分细胞因子的信号所诱发的细胞各种反应都离不开此通路。目前的研究表明,ERK5是MAPK系统中的重要组成部分,ERK5信号转导通路也是MAPK信号转导通路中较新的一条通路[3]。最早是在1995年Zhou等通过PCR等方法获得MEK5基因的cDNA后,以MEK5为探针采用酵母双杂交筛选的方法发现了ERK5,并发现它只能被MEK5激活而不能被MEK1和MEK2激活[4]。ERK5是一条非典型的MAPK通路, Lee等通过PCR扫描人类胎盘的cDNA文库后分离出一种新的MAPK信号通道分子,因其独特的大分子结构,被称为大MAPK通路[5][6]。

## 3. ERK5 的结构

ERK5分子量较大,为115 kD,它是由816个氨基酸构成的120 kU蛋白,长度几乎是其他MAPK家族成员的2倍,与ERK1和ERK2有50%的相似性[7]。ERK5的编码基因erk5包含2445碱基对编码6个外显子和5个内含子,通过不同的剪接方式可产生a、b、c三种亚型。其中仅ERK5a具有激酶活性,与ERK5a相比ERK5b、ERK5c的氨基端分别缺少69和139个氨基酸残基,ERK5b和ERK5c不具有激酶活性,但能阻断ERK5a与其上游激酶MEK5结合,抑制ERK5a的活化,并能抑制ERK5a-MEF2C通路的转录活性[8]。

ERK5蛋白是由蛋白激酶区和转录激活区两部分构成的,激酶区高度保守的双磷酸化位点(Thr, Tyr)位于N端,含有苏氨酸-谷氨酸-酪氨酸残基活化序列(TEY序列),TEY序列中所含的丝氨酸和苏氨酸

残基是激酶区的两个磷酸化位点，丝氨酸和苏氨酸残基被上游激酶(MEK5)双磷酸化后导致 ERK5/BMK1 蛋白的激活。N 端还有细胞质定位区(氨基酸 1~77)MEK5 结合区(氨基酸 78~139)，低聚反应区(氨基酸 140~406)可以使底物磷酸化。ERK5 独特的大梭基端部分，是转录激活区[9]。

ERK5 有一个唯一的 COOH 端和 12 区循环。ERK5 在 MAPK 家族中的独特性就在于它的 C 端尾巴，这个独特的 C 末端包含有 400 个氨基酸的扩展，所以也被称作 BMK1，这有别于 MAPK 家族的其他成员。Buschbeckl 等[10]逐渐删除 C 端区域后发现 ERK5 激酶活性大大降低，而 ERK5 激酶活性是依赖于其上游 MAPK 级联的，这就表明 C 端尾巴可能有自主抑制作用，他们还发现 ERK5 通过磷酸化 C 端尾巴，有自动激活 C 端尾巴活性的能力。ERK5 几乎在所有细胞株中都有表达，并且在细胞核和细胞质中都有定位，而这种定位也取决于它的 C 端区域。

#### 4. ERK5 信号通路性质及特点

ERK5 可以被各种刺激因素激活，包括一些有丝分裂原和一些细胞应激(例如氧化作用和渗透压震荡)等[4]，还能够被某些生长因子激活，如：表皮生长因子、神经生长因子和纤维生长因子等[11]。它正常位于胞浆，当激活后转位至胞核，才可以调节转录因子活性，产生调控细胞生长、发育、分裂及细胞间功能的同步性等多种生理功能[12]。ERK5 的直接酶作用底物是转录因子肌细胞增强因子(myocyte enhancing factor-2C MEF2C)，它的蛋白与 ERK5 的 C 端结合，被 ERK5 磷酸化后可以增强其转录的活性[13]。

ERK5 是一类高度保守的苏氨酸/酪氨酸蛋白激酶中的一个重要的一级激酶，ERK5 信号通路是 ERK 通路中的重要组成部分。通过 ERK5 通路的磷酸化级联反应，多种刺激因素激活 MAPKKK(MEKK3 或 MEKK2)，再激活 MAPKK(MKK5)，最后激活 ERK5，进而调节特定基因的表达[14]。ERK5 还可以磷酸化其上游激活因子 MEK5 而对自身的磷酸化过程进行反馈调节[15]。

MEK5 属于 MAPKK 家族的成员，免疫共沉淀法显示，MEK5 是 ERK5 唯一且特异性上游激酶，它对于 ERK5 激酶具有高度特异性，即使在 MEK5 过表达的情况下也不激活 MAPK 家族的其他成员[16]。MEK5 有两种不同的亚型：MEK5 $\alpha$  和 MEK5 $\beta$ ，两者是同分异构体。MEK5 $\alpha$  主要分布在有丝分裂活跃的组织当中，而 MEK5 $\beta$  则主要分布在终末分化的组织当中。研究发现，MEK5 $\alpha$  对 ERK5 激酶活性的调节作用是至关重要的，MEK5 $\alpha$  通过与 ERK5 分子的结合来诱导磷酸化反应的发生，而 MEK5 $\beta$  则通过阻断 MEK5 $\alpha$  和 ERK5 的连接而对 ERK5 信号转导通路起着负性调节作用[17]。

Cude[18]等检测 ERK5 在不同细胞周期中的水平，研究结果表明：ERK5 在细胞周期 G2-M 期激活，并且这种激活对于 G2-M 之间的转化具有十分重要的意义，发现阻断 ERK5 会下调细胞周期蛋白 D1 和细胞周期蛋白 E 的表达，导致细胞周期停滞于 G1 期和生长抑制[19]。

#### 5. ERK5 与疾病的关系

由于 ERK5 有以上独特的结构、性质及特点，所以它在疾病中发挥着重要的作用，特别是在疾病的发病机制及治疗方面的作用尤为明显。ERK5 在生理学上它能使细胞生存、增殖、变异，在病理学上具有致癌作用，同时可以诱导心肌细胞肥大、动脉硬化[20]。

##### 5.1. ERK5 和肿瘤的关系

ERK5 同其他的 MAPK 信号转导通路一样，对细胞生存、增殖和分化起着极其重要的作用[6]；Kato 等[21]研究发现，ERK5 可以促进细胞生存，抑制凋亡；ERK5 与血管发育、增殖等功能密切相关[22]；ERK5 信号通路是血管分化发育必需的，ERK5 对保护内皮细胞功能和维持血管的完整性起关键性作用[6]。ERK5 信号通路可引起细胞正常增殖周期紊乱，导致细胞过度增殖，从而导致肿瘤的发生。而且其不仅在肿瘤新生血管中发挥关键作用，也参与了调节肿瘤细胞的侵袭和迁移[23]。

ERK5 表达在许多肿瘤细胞中。在乳腺癌中, ERK5 激活后能诱导正常乳腺上皮细胞及乳腺癌细胞增值, 有 20% 的乳腺癌患者过表达 ERK5, 在早期复发乳腺癌组织中 ERK5 表达增加[24], Antoon 等[25] 研究 39 例乳腺临床肿瘤样本发现有 30 例中 ERK5 被激活, 占 76.9%。ERK5 通过调节有丝分裂促进肝癌细胞的增值[26]。Sticht 等人通过免疫组化的方法研究口腔鳞癌的石蜡切片, ERK5 的表达率为 27.4% (76/277); 在头颈部鳞癌中, T1/2 期 ERK5 的表达率 20.3% (27/133), T3/4 期 ERK5 的表达率 34% (49/144), NO 期 ERK5 的表达率 19.3% (22/144), N1-3 期 ERK5 的表达率 33.1% (54/163), I-III 期 ERK5 的表达率 17.9% (19/106), IV 期 ERK5 的表达率 33.3% (57/171), 所以, ERK5 的高表达和肿瘤的分期及淋巴结转移有关[27]。在头颈部鳞癌中, ERK5 作为 EGFR 介导的下游底物, 有可能会成为一个新的目标靶点, ERK5 抑制剂阻止 EGFR 诱导肿瘤细胞的扩散, 对增加西妥昔单抗的抗肿瘤作用也许是有效的[27]。在 ERK5 与前列腺癌的研究中: ①ERK5 表达在前列腺癌中; ②ERK5 超表达提高前列腺的致癌作用; ③ERK5 蛋白表达在前列腺切除的前列腺癌病人中; ④ERK5 核染色可作为前列腺癌的一个独立预后标志[28]; ERK5 功能被损害后可以抑制前列腺癌细胞的侵袭, 减少 ERK5 的表达量可以抑制前列腺癌细胞的侵袭能力[29]。Ramos 等研究发现恶性间皮瘤与 ERK5 信号通路有关[30]。ERK5 信号通路可以介导非霍奇金淋巴瘤表达某些特异性基因[31]。在严重骨髓侵犯白血病中, ERK5 信号通路抑制剂 BIX02189 能诱导白血病肿瘤细胞凋亡不影响健康捐赠者的 T 淋巴细胞[32]。

ERK5 信号通路在肿瘤侵袭和转移过程中起传递和放大信号的作用。Sticht 等[27]、Castro 等[33]、Zen 等[26]、Ramsay 等[29]的研究都表明 ERK5 信号通路在口腔鳞癌、乳腺癌、肝癌、前列腺癌侵袭和转移过程中起传递和放大信号的作用。还有研究表明, ERK5 通过促进血管的形成和血管内环境的稳定对维持肿瘤的生长起重要作用[34]。

## 5.2. ERK5 和其它非肿瘤疾病的关系

ERK5 信号通路不仅和许多肿瘤有密切的关系, 在许多非肿瘤疾病中发挥同样发挥着重要的作用。在心脏疾病中, ERK5 和心脏肥厚重塑及心肌细胞的生存有关, 它通过调节下游因子 MEF2 的活动在调解心脏肥厚的重塑[35]; Lee 等研究发现 HB-EGF 通过 EGFR-ERK5-MEF2A-COX-2 信号通路途径诱导心脏肥大[20]。在糖尿病内皮功能紊乱和动脉粥样硬化中, p90 核糖体 S6 蛋白激酶(p90 ribosomal S6 kinase, p90RSK)/ERK5 复合物可以作为介入治疗的一个新的靶点[36]; 在糖尿病视网膜病变中, ERK5 的抑制作用可以调节葡萄糖诱导纤维连接蛋白的产生, 从而成为一种糖尿病视网膜病变的辅助治疗措施[37]; ERK5 在肾小囊脏层细胞表达, 并可作为糖尿病肾病的一个潜在治疗靶点[38]。在慢性肾小球性肾炎实验模型中, 激活 ERK5 可以提高细胞生存能力和细胞外基质的积聚[39]。MEK5/ERK5/MEF2 通路可介导丙肝病毒进入肝细胞, ERK5 通路激活生长因子和其他细胞外信号诱导这一过程的实现[40]。Li 等研究表明特定条件下的流体剪切力可激活 ERK5 信号通路, 这一通路的激活对于成骨细胞骨架结构与功能的维持以及促进成骨细胞的增殖都起到至关重要的作用[41], 而且和骨关节炎软骨损伤发病机制密切相关[42]。

## 6. 展望

ERK5 信号通路是细胞内一个非常重要的信号通路, 在个体生长发育以及肿瘤的发生发展中起着重要的桥梁作用, 它对于很多疾病(特别是肿瘤)的发病机制、治疗及预防有很大的作用, 特别是肿瘤靶向治疗, 新药开发具有很大的意义。MEK5-ERK5 信号通路在原发性和转移性肿瘤中有重要作用, 如何合理阻断 ERK5 信号通路或抑制 MEK5/ERK5 复合物的形成可能为肿瘤的治疗提供新的思路。由于它是一条较晚发现的信号通路, 目前对于它的研究甚少, 进一步探讨 ERK5 通路在各种疾病的发生、发展过程中的变化规律, 对于揭示疾病的发生发展机制, 从而采取合理的信号传导阻断方法治疗疾病具有重要价值, 这也是以后的研究重点。



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