

hMLH1 基因在头颈部恶性肿瘤中的研究进展

陆晓筱^{1,2}, 葛明华^{1,2}, 凌志强²

(1. 温州医学院附属第一医院, 浙江 温州 325000;

2. 浙江省肿瘤医院 浙江省肿瘤研究所, 浙江 杭州 310022)

摘要: 作为人类 DNA 错配修复系统的重要组成部分, *hMLH1* 基因与很多恶性肿瘤的发生、发展密切相关。研究发现, *hMLH1* 基因的失活可能参与了头颈部鳞癌的早期癌变过程, 并且和癌组织分化程度、病灶数量、淋巴侵犯有关。此外, 最新的研究结果表明甲状腺恶性肿瘤中, *hMLH1* 高表达、异位表达与乳头状癌淋巴、血管侵犯以及恶性程度更高的甲状腺癌类型有关, 这与传统上认为 *hMLH1* 失活与甲状腺癌发生、淋巴转移、*BRAF* 突变高度相关的观点相悖, 提示了 *hMLH1* 基因在甲状腺恶性肿瘤中可能存在两面性。全文就近年来 *hMLH1* 基因在头颈部鳞癌和甲状腺恶性肿瘤中的研究进展进行综述。

关键词: *hMLH1* 基因; 头颈部鳞状细胞癌; 甲状腺癌

中图分类号: R739.6 文献标识码: A 文章编号: 1004-0242(2013)06-0457-04

Research Progress of *hMLH1* Gene in Head & Neck Cancer

LU Xiao-xiao^{1,2}, GE Ming-hua^{1,2}, LING Zhi-qiang²

(1. The First Affiliated Hospital of Wenzhou Medical College, Wenzhou 325000, China;

2. Zhejiang Cancer Hospital, Zhejiang Cancer Research Institute, Hangzhou 310022, China)

Abstract: As one of the most important element of DNA mismatch repair system, *hMLH1* gene correlates to the carcinogenesis and progression of variety of malignant tumors. According to the recent research results, the deregulation of *hMLH1* gene might take part in the carcinogenesis of head and neck squamous cell carcinoma, and is also correlated to the differentiation, number of lesion and lymph invasion. Traditionally, the loss of *hMLH1* gene was considered to be correlate to the carcinogenesis, lymph invasion, *BRAF* mutation of papillary thyroid carcinoma. However, the latest results show that the up-regulation or mislocalisation of *hMLH1* protein correlates to the lymph and vein invasion of papillary thyroid carcinoma and the more invasive type of thyroid cancer. These results suggest the dual character of *hMLH1* gene. This article review the research progression of *hMLH1* gene in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma and thyroid carcinoma in the recent years.

Key words: *hMLH1* gene; head and neck squamous cell carcinoma; thyroid cancer

hMLH1 基因是人类 DNA 错配修复(DNA mismatch repair system MMR)系统的重要组成部分, 位于染色体 3p21.3~23, 是第二个被克隆的错配修复基因。研究者最初是在遗传性非息肉病性大肠癌中发现 *hMLH1* 突变导致表达缺失^[1]。后续研究提示, *hMLH1*

失活造成微卫星不稳定, 致使一系列抑癌基因杂合缺失最终导致大肠癌的发生^[2]。在胃癌^[3,4]、宫颈癌^[5]、食管癌^[6]、肾细胞癌^[7]、胰腺癌^[8]中, *hMLH1* 的失活机制及其与癌症的关系已经有了较深入的研究。头颈部肿瘤是全球范围内的第八大常见肿瘤, 其中头颈部鳞癌和甲状腺恶性肿瘤最多见。本文就近年来 *hMLH1* 基因在头颈部鳞癌和甲状腺恶性肿瘤中的研究进展进行综述。

收稿日期: 2013-04-01

基金项目: 卫生部科学研究基金(WKJ2012-02-021); 浙江省医药卫生科学研究基金计划(2010KYA037, 2010KYA031); 浙江省卫生高层次创新人才培养工程基金

通讯作者: 葛明华, E-mail: gemingh@163.com

1 *hMLH1* 基因功能及其失活机制

hMLH1 蛋白是人类 DNA 错配修复(DNA mismatch repair system MMR)系统的重要组成部分。酵母实验证实 *hMLH1* 的同源物 MutL 利用分解 ATP 获得的能量协助 MutS 和 MutH 结合,并辨认错配位点。在这一过程中 MutL 加强了 MutH 的核酸内切酶活性。另有实验证明 MutL 通过影响 MutS 杂化双链 DNA 复合体来改变 MutS 的功能^[9]。Sancar 和 Hearst 则认为 MutL 其实是一个“分子桥”,它的作用在于借助 ATP 分解的能量将两个或两个以上 DNA 结合蛋白链接到一起发挥生物学功能,MutL 本身在这个复合体中并不起直接效应作用^[10]。而在人类 DNA 错配修复系统中,*hMLH1* 基因的表达产物通过联合 PMS2 协同同导 MSH2 及其他有功能的修复酶与错配基因结合,增强修复效能,但 *hMLH1* 蛋白本身并不直接参与错配修复^[11,12]。依据现有的研究结果,*hMLH1* 功能的失活机制主要有突变、启动子甲基化及杂合缺失(LOH)。其中最早被人们认识的是 *hMLH1* 突变,研究者最初在遗传性非息肉病性大肠癌中发现 *hMLH1* 基因突变导致的表达缺失^[1]。而到目前为止,相关研究最丰富的还是 *hMLH1* 启动子的甲基化。近几年,有大量研究发现该基因的甲基化与胃癌^[3,4]、肾细胞癌^[7]、宫颈癌^[5]、食管癌^[6] 的发生有关。*hMLH1* 基因的杂合缺失则与胰腺癌^[8] 的发生相关。

2 *hMLH1* 与头颈部鳞癌

2.1 *hMLH1* 与头颈鳞癌的发生

Liu 等^[13]通过免疫组化、甲基化特异性 PCR (MSP)检测了 62 例头颈鳞癌中 *hMLH1* 基因表达量和启动子甲基化情况后发现,26%(16/62)头颈鳞癌中 *hMLH1* 蛋白表达缺失,92%(12/13) 蛋白表达缺失的病例 *hMLH1* 启动子存在甲基化,77%(17/22) 有蛋白表达的病例不存在甲基化^[13]。免疫组化结果提示头颈鳞癌中 31%病例(n=78)*hMLH1* 蛋白表达减少,8 例蛋白表达缺失的病例中 7 例(88%)存在甲基化;相反,100%(7/7)蛋白强阳性病例都无 *hMLH1* 甲基化^[14]。另有一项针对 38 例头颈部鳞癌的研究显示,*hMLH1* 甲基化多见于头颈部癌早期,与癌症进展相关,且与 *hMLH1* 蛋白表达缺失相关^[15],提示

hMLH1 基因失活可能与头颈部鳞癌的发生有关。近几年,头颈鳞癌和头颈鳞癌前病变的对照研究结果进一步证实了先前的推测。Tawfik 等^[16]发现头颈部鳞癌中 *hMLH1* 低表达占 30.6%(15/49),启动子甲基化占 28.6%(14/49)。而 11 例异型增生或原位癌中均有 *hMLH1* 表达;且 *hMLH1* 启动子甲基化和蛋白低表达存在明显的相关性。在针对口腔黏膜白斑的研究中 Sengupta 等^[17]首先发现口腔黏膜白斑中存在相当比例的 *hMLH1* 甲基化。之后,Caldeira 等^[18]则在更大的样本量上(62 例口腔黏膜白斑)证实,随着组织异型增生程度的不断加重,*hMLH1* 表达呈下降趋势。

2.2 *hMLH1* 与头颈鳞癌的进展

Smigiel 等^[19]最先于 2004 年报道,*hMLH1* 的失活与启动子甲基化以及杂合缺失有关,并且,它的失活与喉鳞癌较低的分化有关。此后,更多的免疫组化研究结果均认为 *hMLH1* 的过表达与高分化相关,而低表达、无表达则与低分化相关^[20,21]。除了与肿瘤分化程度相关外,*hMLH1* 的缺失还与头颈部鳞癌的原发灶数量、疾病进展、淋巴侵犯相关。例如:口腔鳞癌中 *hMLH1* 有 50%的甲基化率(14/28),其中多发癌病例的甲基化率为 100%,明显高于单发病例的 31.5%^[22];Gonzalez-Ramirez 等^[15]报道 38 例头颈鳞癌的免疫组化和 MSP 结果显示,*hMLH1* 甲基化多见于头颈部癌早期,且与癌症进展相关,与 *hMLH1* 蛋白表达缺失相关^[15]。在舌鳞癌中 *hMLH1* 的低表达还与肿瘤淋巴侵犯有关^[23]。

2.3 *hMLH1* 与头颈鳞癌预后

Zuo 等^[24]以 MSP、RT-PCR、免疫组化技术分别检测了 120 例头颈部鳞癌中 *hMLH1* 基因的启动子甲基化、mRNA 表达、蛋白表达情况,并分析了该基因表达和临床病理特征间的相关性,结果提示 *hMLH1* 基因的甲基化与 mRNA 表达、蛋白表达显著相关,并且 *hMLH1* 的低表达提示较差的预后。2010 年,Ghosh 等^[25]针对 84 例头颈鳞癌的研究也得到了类似的结果。

2.4 *hMLH1* 与微卫星不稳定

hMLH1 基因与微卫星不稳定(microsatellite instability, MSI)间相互作用的研究主要集中在结直肠癌。目前较公认的观点是:各种原因造成的 *hMLH1* 缺失导致微卫星不稳定,进一步致使一系列抑癌基

因杂合缺失,最终发生大肠癌或其他类型的恶性肿瘤^[2]。在头颈鳞癌中,有报道 MSI 发生率达 41%,*hMLH1* 甲基化比率达 47%,MSI 病例中的 *hMLH1* 甲基化比率较微卫星稳定 (microsatellite stable, MSS) 病例明显升高^[26];口腔癌中 *hMLH1* 基因失活(突变或甲基化)、口腔黏膜白斑中 *hMLH1* 甲基化也与 MSI 相关^[17,27];亦有报道:喉鳞癌中 MSI 与 MMR 系统失活存在相关性,但由于 MMR 系统检测采用的是免疫组化,且 MMR 系统成员表达与不表达的细胞经常同时出现在同一张切片上,因此该相关性有待其他技术平台进一步验证^[28]。

3 *hMLH1* 基因与甲状腺癌

3.1 *hMLH1* 基因在甲状腺癌中的异常表达及其双面性

Guan 等^[29]曾报道:38 例甲状腺癌(papillary thyroid carcinoma, PTC)中 *hMLH1* 基因甲基化比率为 21%,且与淋巴结转移存在相关性,淋巴结转移组的甲基化阳性率为 63%(5/8),高于非转移组的 10%(3/30)。而在另一项研究中,免疫组化结果显示甲状腺恶性肿瘤中 *hMLH1* 的表达率明显高于甲状腺良性病变,其中结节性增生 *hMLH1* 表达率为 33.4%(16/51),滤泡性腺瘤为 50%(16/32),滤泡癌为 80.8%(21/26),乳头状癌为 48.1%(13/27)^[30]。Giaginis 等^[31]通过免疫组化检测,发现 PTC 中 *hMLH1* 基因表达率(40%,16/40)明显高于增生性结节(13%,4/30),而低于恶性程度更高的滤泡癌(86%,6/7)、髓样癌(80%,4/5)和未分化癌(100%,2/2)。同时还发现增生性结节的 *hMLH1* 均表达在细胞核内,而 PTC 则表达在核周和细胞质中,其他类型的甲状腺恶性肿瘤则在核内,胞质内都有表达;而且 *hMLH1* 的表达和淋巴侵犯、血管侵犯相关。由此我们推断,*hMLH1* 基因在甲状腺恶性肿瘤中存在双面性:即在早期,在各种环境因素的影响下 *hMLH1* 基因受各种表观调控因素影响而失活,诱发肿瘤;到了癌症进展期,*hMLH1* 在胞质及核膜上的异位表达可能促进了肿瘤生长和播散。

3.2 *hMLH1* 基因与 *BRAF* 突变

BRAF V600E 突变与 PTC 间的密切相关性早已被大量研究证实。近年来有学者开始探讨 *BRAF* V600E 与 *hMLH1* 基因之间的关系,并取得了一些

进展。目前已经证实该突变在 PTC 和大肠癌中与 *hMLH1* 基因甲基化有关^[29,32-36],这种相关性也同时存在于子宫内膜癌中^[37]。进一步的研究发现,*BRAF* V600E 突变仅在散发型大肠癌中与 *hMLH1* 甲基化相关,而在林奇综合征中,与 *hMLH1* 的突变无关^[36,38]。由此,我们推测在 PTC 中,是由于 *BRAF* V600E 突变,导致 MAPK 通路持续激活,并进一步导致了 *hMLH1* 基因的甲基化。

4 结 语

hMLH1 基因经由表观调控机制,特别是启动子甲基化,影响后低表达甚至不表达,造成基因组微卫星不稳定进一步导致大量抑癌基因失活、原癌基因突变活化,最终诱发肿瘤,这一过程已经被学者们在包括头颈部鳞癌在内的诸多恶性肿瘤中证实。基于上述结果,以及大量研究发现 *hMLH1* 的失活常见于头颈部黏膜癌前病变和早期癌,且和组织分化程度相关,故该基因对于头颈部鳞癌的预防及早期诊断作用较大,值得进一步深入研究。而在甲状腺恶性肿瘤中,传统观点认为 *hMLH1* 基因甲基化失活和甲状腺癌发生、淋巴转移、*BRAF* 突变高度相关,而最新的研究表明该基因的过表达、异位表达与较晚期甲状腺乳头状癌及其他恶性程度更高的甲状腺癌分型有关,值得学者们进一步深入研究。

参考文献:

- [1] Bronner CE, Baker SM, Morrison PT, et al. Mutation in the DNA mismatch repair gene homologue *hMLH1* is associated with hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer [J]. Nature, 1994, 368(6468): 258-261.
- [2] Park SK, Park DI, Park SH, et al. Microsatellite instability in young patients with sporadic colorectal adenomas [J]. Hepatogastroenterology, 2011, 58(110-111): 1531-1537.
- [3] Arai T, Kasahara I, Sawabe M, et al. Role of methylation of the *hMLH1* gene promoter in the development of gastric and colorectal carcinoma in the elderly [J]. Geriatr Gerontol Int, 2010, 10 (Suppl 1): s207-s212.
- [4] Tamura G. Alterations of tumor suppressor and tumor-related genes in the development and progression of gastric cancer [J]. World J Gastroenterol, 2006, 12(2): 192-198.
- [5] Spathis A, Aga E, Alepaki M, et al. Promoter methylation of p16(INK4A), *hMLH1*, and MGMT in liquid-based cervical cytology samples compared with clinicopathological findings and HPV presence [J]. Infect Dis Obstet Gynecol, 2011, 2011: 927861.
- [6] Ling ZQ, Li P, Ge MH, et al. Aberrant methylation of different DNA repair genes demonstrates distinct prognostic value for esophageal cancer [J]. Dig Dis Sci, 2011, 56(10):

- 2992–3004.
- [7] Stoeck C, Burger M, Stoeck R, et al. Mismatch repair proteins hMLH1 and hMSH2 are differently expressed in the three main subtypes of sporadic renal cell carcinoma [J]. *Pathobiology*, 2012, 79(3): 162–168.
- [8] Wang L, Tsutsumi S, Kawaguchi T, et al. Whole-exome sequencing of human pancreatic cancers and characterization of genomic instability caused by MLH1 haploinsufficiency and complete deficiency [J]. *Genome Res*, 2012, 22(2): 208–219.
- [9] Grilley M, Welsh KM, Su SS, et al. Isolation and characterization of the *Escherichia coli* mutL gene product [J]. *J Biol Chem*, 1989, 264(2): 1000–1004.
- [10] Sancar A, Hearst JE. Molecular matchmakers [J]. *Science*, 1993, 259(5100): 1415–1420.
- [11] Kolodner RD. Mismatch repair: mechanisms and relationship to cancer susceptibility [J]. *Trends Biochem Sci*, 1995, 20(10): 397–401.
- [12] Modrich P. Mechanisms and biological effects of mismatch repair [J]. *Annu Rev Genet*, 1991, 25: 229–253.
- [13] Liu K, Huang H, Mukunyadzi P, et al. Promoter hypermethylation: an important epigenetic mechanism for hMLH1 gene inactivation in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma [J]. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg*, 2002, 126(5): 548–553.
- [14] Liu K, Zuo C, Luo QK, et al. Promoter hypermethylation and inactivation of hMLH1, a DNA mismatch repair gene, in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma [J]. *Diagn Mol Pathol*, 2003, 12(1): 50–56.
- [15] Gonzalez-Ramirez I, Ramirez-Amador V, Irigoyen-Camacho ME, et al. hMLH1 promoter methylation is an early event in oral cancer [J]. *Oral Oncol*, 2011, 47(1): 22–26.
- [16] Tawfik HM, El-Maqsoud NM, Hak BH, et al. Head and neck squamous cell carcinoma: mismatch repair immunohistochemistry and promoter hypermethylation of hMLH1 gene [J]. *Am J Otolaryngol*, 2011, 32(6): 528–536.
- [17] Sengupta S, Chakrabarti S, Roy A, et al. Inactivation of human mutL homolog 1 and mutS homolog 2 genes in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma tumors and leukoplakia samples by promoter hypermethylation and its relation with microsatellite instability phenotype [J]. *Cancer*, 2007, 109(4): 703–712.
- [18] Caldeira PC, Aguiar MC, Mesquita RA, et al. Oral leukoplakias with different degrees of dysplasia: comparative study of hMLH1, p53, and AgNOR [J]. *J Oral Pathol Med*, 2011, 40(4): 305–311.
- [19] Smigiel R, Stembalska-Kozłowska A, Mirghomizadeh F, et al. Correlation among loss of heterozygosity, promoter methylation and protein expression of MLH1 in larynx cancer [J]. *Oncol Rep*, 2004, 11(3): 707–710.
- [20] Sasiadek MM, Smigiel R, Stembalska A, et al. Cyclin D1 and MLH1 levels in laryngeal cancer are linked to chromosomal imbalance [J]. *Anticancer Res*, 2006, 26(6B): 4597–4601.
- [21] Fernandes AM, Ramos-Jorge ML, Cardoso SV, et al. Immunoeexpression of hMSH2 and hMLH1 in oral squamous cell carcinoma and its relationship to histological grades of malignancy [J]. *J Oral Pathol Med*, 2008, 37(9): 543–548.
- [22] Czerninski R, Krichevsky S, Ashhab Y, et al. Promoter hypermethylation of mismatch repair genes, hMLH1 and hMSH2 in oral squamous cell carcinoma [J]. *Oral Dis*, 2009, 15(3): 206–213.
- [23] Theoharis S, Klijanienko J, Giaginis C, et al. Expression of DNA repair proteins, MSH2, MLH1 and MGMT in mobile tongue squamous cell carcinoma: associations with clinicopathological parameters and patients' survival [J]. *J Oral Pathol Med*, 2011, 40(3): 218–226.
- [24] Zuo C, Zhang H, Spencer HJ, et al. Increased microsatellite instability and epigenetic inactivation of the hMLH1 gene in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma [J]. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg*, 2009, 141(4): 484–490.
- [25] Ghosh A, Ghosh S, Maiti GP, et al. Frequent alterations of the candidate genes hMLH1, ITGA9 and RBP3 in early dysplastic lesions of head and neck: clinical and prognostic significance [J]. *Cancer Sci*, 2010, 101(6): 1511–1520.
- [26] Demokan S, Suoglu Y, Demir D, et al. Microsatellite instability and methylation of the DNA mismatch repair genes in head and neck cancer [J]. *Ann Oncol*, 2006, 17(6): 995–999.
- [27] Shin KH, Park KH, Hong HJ, et al. Prevalence of microsatellite instability, inactivation of mismatch repair genes, p53 mutation, and human papillomavirus infection in Korean oral cancer patients [J]. *Int J Oncol*, 2002, 21(2): 297–302.
- [28] Zhigang H, Demin H, Han G, et al. Significance and mechanism of microsatellite instability in laryngeal squamous cell carcinoma [J]. *J Otolaryngol*, 2007, 36(3): 168–174.
- [29] Guan H, Ji M, Hou P, et al. Hypermethylation of the DNA mismatch repair gene hMLH1 and its association with lymph node metastasis and T1799A BRAF mutation in patients with papillary thyroid cancer [J]. *Cancer*, 2008, 113(2): 247–255.
- [30] Ruschenburg I, Vollheim B, Stachura J, et al. Analysis of DNA mismatch repair gene expression and mutations in thyroid tumours [J]. *Anticancer Res*, 2006, 26(3A): 2107–2112.
- [31] Giaginis C, Michailidi C, Stolkis V, et al. Expression of DNA repair proteins MSH2, MLH1 and MGMT in human benign and malignant thyroid lesions: an immunohistochemical study [J]. *Med Sci Monit*, 2011, 17(3): BR81–90.
- [32] Maeda T, Suzuki K, Togashi K, et al. Sessile serrated adenoma shares similar genetic and epigenetic features with microsatellite unstable colon cancer in a location-dependent manner [J]. *Exp Ther Med*, 2011, 2(4): 695–700.
- [33] Stefanius K, Ylitalo L, Tuomisto A, et al. Frequent mutations of KRAS in addition to BRAF in colorectal serrated adenocarcinoma [J]. *Histopathology*, 2011, 58(5): 679–692.
- [34] Brim H, Mokarram P, Naghibalhossaini F, et al. Impact of BRAF, MLH1 on the incidence of microsatellite instability high colorectal cancer in populations based study [J]. *Mol Cancer*, 2008, 7: 68.
- [35] Derks S, Postma C, Carvalho B, et al. Integrated analysis of chromosomal, microsatellite and epigenetic instability in colorectal cancer identifies specific associations between promoter methylation of pivotal tumour suppressor and DNA repair genes and specific chromosomal alterations [J]. *Carcinogenesis*, 2008, 29(2): 434–439.
- [36] Imai K, Yamamoto H. Carcinogenesis and microsatellite instability: the interrelationship between genetics and epigenetics [J]. *Carcinogenesis*, 2008, 29(4): 673–680.
- [37] Feng YZ, Shiozawa T, Miyamoto T, et al. BRAF mutation in endometrial carcinoma and hyperplasia: correlation with KRAS and p53 mutations and mismatch repair protein expression [J]. *Clin Cancer Res*, 2005, 11(17): 6133–6138.
- [38] Deng G, Bell I, Crawley S, et al. BRAF mutation is frequently present in sporadic colorectal cancer with methylated hMLH1, but not in hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer [J]. *Clin Cancer Res*, 2004, 10(1 Pt 1): 191–195.