

· 公共卫生与预防医学研究 ·

新型冠状病毒无症状感染特征研究

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[摘要] 目的:客观、科学地描述无症状感染者在新型冠状病毒(severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, SARS-CoV-2)感染谱中的流行病学特征。方法:检索PubMed、中国知网以及万方数据库中公开发表的文章,限定搜索词,检索时间截至2022年3月,并对纳入的研究使用R version 4.1.3软件进行综合分析。结果:共纳入53项研究,SARS-CoV-2无症状感染构成为28.47%(95%CI:22.05%~35.90%)。亚组分析表明,不同年龄和毒株类型中SARS-CoV-2无症状感染构成比在组间差异有统计学意义;而在不同地区(大洲)、职业、特殊人群、国家发展水平、研究设计类型、样本量、检测方法均未见统计学意义。大部分研究表明无症状感染者的病毒载量与有症状患者相似。结论:SARS-CoV-2无症状感染构成比是28.47%;18~64岁年龄段无症状感染构成比较其他年龄段更高;Omicron变异株无症状感染构成比较Delta及其他毒株更高。

[关键词] 新型冠状病毒;无症状感染者;Delta毒株;Omicron毒株

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2019年底,中国武汉暴发了由新型冠状病毒(severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, SARS-CoV-2)引起的急性呼吸道感染疫情,WHO报告显示,截至2022年3月25日,全球累计确诊病例476 374 234例,死亡病例6 108 976例^[1]。WHO宣布新冠大流行至今,病毒不断变异,WHO关注的SARS-CoV-2变体已经出现Alpha、Beta、Gamma、Delta、Omicron,其中Delta、Omicron这两种毒株在2021—2022年是全球主导流行株^[2]。SARS-CoV-2感染者中存在一定比例的无症状感染者。无症状感染者由于隐匿性强,所导致的传播难以预防,是疫情防控的一个巨大挑战。针对SARS-CoV-2无症状感染者的研究较少,且现有报道的SARS-CoV-2无症状感染构成比差异较大,不同毒株无症状感染构成比呈现明显差异。本文对无症状感染构成比的特征及其影响因素进行综合分析,为疫情防控提供科学依据。

1 材料和方法

1.1 材料

使用PubMed、中国知网以及万方数据库,检索

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关键词:“COVID-19”、“SARS-CoV-2”、“无症状感染”,检索时间截至2022年3月发表的相关文献。

1.2 方法

1.2.1 SARS-CoV-2感染者的定义

具备以下病原学或血清学条件之一:①SARS-CoV-2核酸检测阳性;②未接种SARS-CoV-2疫苗者SARS-CoV-2特异性IgG抗体和IgM抗体均为阳性^[3]。

1.2.2 无症状感染者的定义

根据《新型冠状病毒肺炎防控方案(第八版)》,无症状感染者指SARS-CoV-2病原学检测呈阳性,无相关临床表现,如发热、干咳、乏力、咽痛、嗅/味觉减退、腹泻等可自我感知或可临床识别的症状与体征,且CT影像学无新冠肺炎影像学特征者^[3]。

无症状感染者可分为两种情形:一是感染者核酸检测阳性,经过14 d潜伏期的观察,均无任何可自我感知或可临床识别的症状与体征,始终为无症状感染状态;二是感染者核酸检测阳性,采样时无任何可自我感知或可临床识别的症状与体征,但随后出现某种临床表现,即处于潜伏期的“无症状感染”状态。目前发现无症状感染者主要有4种途径:一是密切接触者的医学观察;二是聚集性疫情的调查;三是传染源的追踪;四是部分有境内外SARS-CoV-2感染病例持续传播地区的旅行史或居住史人

员的检测^[4]。

1.3 统计学方法

提取纳入文献的研究时间、研究设计类型、研究人群、检测方法、样本量大小、确诊病例数、无症状感染构成比、性别、年龄、疫苗接种情况以及毒株类型等数据。使用Excel 2016进行数据整理,采用R version 4.1.3进行综合分析,计算不同亚组中无症状感染构成比及其95%CI。所有统计检验均为双侧检验, $P < 0.05$ 表示差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 纳入研究基本特征

共纳入53项研究,亚组分类包括地区、年龄、职业、特殊人群、发展水平、研究设计类型、样本量、检测方法以及毒株类型。地区分组主要包括亚洲、欧洲、北美洲、非洲和南美洲这5大洲。亚洲的文献来自中国^[5-11]、韩国^[12-1]、日本^[16-18]、印度^[19-20]、越南^[21]、马来西亚^[22]、以色列^[23]、土耳其^[24]和沙特阿拉伯^[25]这9个国家;欧洲的文献来自英国^[26]、意大利^[27-29]、西班牙^[30-32]、德国^[33-34]、芬兰^[35]和挪威^[36]这6个国家;北美洲的文献主要来自美国^[37-47]和加拿大^[48];南美洲的文献来自哥伦比亚^[49];非洲的文献主要来自南非^[50-51]。毒株分组中,主要包括Omicron毒株^[13,15,20,27]、Delta毒株^[14,29,37,43]和其他毒株(指Alpha和Beta)^[11,52-54]。

2.2 亚组分析

综合分析结果显示,SARS-CoV-2感染者中合并无症状感染构成比为28.47%(95%CI:22.05%~35.9%)(表1)。不同年龄($P=0.030$)和毒株类型($P=0.007$)中SARS-CoV-2无症状感染构成比组间差异有统计学意义($P < 0.05$);而在不同地区(大洲)、职业、特殊人群、国家发展水平、研究设计类型、样本量、检测方法均未见统计学意义($P > 0.05$,表1)。

2.3 无症状感染者的病毒载量

有关无症状感染者的病毒载量研究报道差异较大。研究表明,SARS-CoV-2感染者中无症状感染者检测到的病毒载量与有症状患者的病毒载量相似^[55-56]。在韩国一家社区治疗中心分离的303例SARS-CoV-2感染者的队列研究中,无症状和有症状感染者的CT值没有差异,无症状感染者的病毒分子脱落时间延长^[15]。韩国一项前瞻性队列研究对指定社区隔离的无症状和轻症感染者,用细胞培养法检测唾液标本中SARS-CoV-2的基因组RNA,发现SARS-CoV-2无症状感染者的病毒载量与有症状感染者相似,但随着传染性的丧失,病毒载量迅速下

降^[57]。Kim等^[58]研究发现,潜伏期患者在症状出现前病毒载量较高,一些始终无症状感染者初始检测到的病毒可能是活病毒,新冠肺炎患者在没有症状时可能已经具有传染性,对于完全没有症状的病例,14 d的隔离可能就足够了。然而一些研究表明,无症状感染者的RNA拷贝数低于有症状感染者^[59]。希腊一项研究对比有症状或无症状的SARS-CoV-2感染者上呼吸道病毒载量,发现有症状感染者比无症状感染者更容易检测到较高的上呼吸道病毒载量^[60]。同样,在韩国的一项研究中,有症状的儿童鼻咽拭子样本中的病毒载量高于无症状的儿童^[61]。然而,Maltezou等^[62]对203例儿科病例的研究发现在无症状和有症状的儿童中,SARS-CoV-2病毒载量相似。

有关SARS-CoV-2感染者中无症状感染者的病毒载量大小存在争议,大部分研究表明无症状感染者的病毒载量与有症状患者相似,然而也有研究表明无症状感染者的病毒载量低于有症状患者。这些研究中由于缺乏无症状感染者的数量、影响和实际流行情况,研究结果代表性较差,因此深化无症状感染者的临床病程、病毒动力学、潜伏期等问题的研究,有助于为决策者提出科学合理的建议,控制潜在暴发,具有重要的公共卫生意义。

3 讨论

有证据表明,无症状感染者是SARS-CoV-2的潜在传染源^[63],在公共环境中,无症状感染的传播起着重要作用。因此,为了评估SARS-CoV-2感染确诊人群中无症状感染构成比,本研究共纳入53项研究进行综合分析。结果显示,SARS-CoV-2无症状感染构成比为28.47%(95%CI:22.05%~35.9%)。年龄亚组分析显示,0~17岁和18~64岁的无症状感染构成比高于≥65岁人群。研究发现,无症状感染者年龄明显低于普通型和重型SARS-CoV-2感染者^[64]。随着年龄的增长,出现新冠肺炎临床症状的风险增加,年龄每增加1岁,出现症状的风险增加1.08倍^[65]。免疫功能正常的青年和儿童在感染SARS-CoV-2后更易成为无症状感染者^[7,66]。

不同毒株类型无症状感染构成比差异较大,Omicron毒株无症状感染构成比(48.53%)最高,其次是Delta毒株(25.09%),其他毒株的无症状感染构成比(21.05%)最低。自2020年10月以来,新冠变异株以Delta毒株为主,2021年11月29日在南非首次发现Omicron毒株^[2],并迅速取代Delta成为主要流行株。Omicron无症状感染构成比很高的原因可

表1 SARS-CoV-2无症状感染构成比亚组分析

亚组	研究数	构成比(95%CI)	异质性(I ² 值)	P值	组间差异检验P值
所有研究	53	0.284 7(0.220 5~0.359 0)	99.5%	0	—
地区	47	0.282 3(0.212 9~0.363 7)	99.5%	0	0.145
亚洲	20	0.203 2(0.125 4~0.312 1)	99.7%	0	
欧洲	12	0.290 2(0.160 5~0.466 6)	94.3%	<0.01	
北美洲	12	0.387 7(0.272 2~0.517 4)	96.7%	<0.01	
非洲	2	0.566 9(0.141 3~0.912 3)	99.8%	<0.01	
南美洲	1	0.275 3(0.259 0~0.292 2)	—	—	
年龄	37	0.328 0(0.253 9~0.411 8)	99.6%	0	0.030
0~17岁	6	0.260 7(0.148 0~0.417 3)	97.4%	<0.01	
18~64岁	24	0.401 8(0.306 9~0.504 7)	99.7%	0	
≥65岁	7	0.180 5(0.091 3~0.325 6)	98.9%	<0.01	
职业	15	0.295 2(0.211 9~0.394 8)	98.0%	<0.01	0.919
医务人员	9	0.294 9(0.174 8~0.452 2)	94.9%	<0.01	
学生	3	0.265 1(0.135 2~0.454 3)	91.0%	<0.01	
海军	2	0.326 4(0.203 8~0.478 3)	97.2%	<0.01	
教师	1	0.357 1(0.157 0~0.623 7)	—	—	
特殊人群	16	0.393 7(0.287 2~0.511 3)	99.4%	0	0.112
儿童	4	0.334 3(0.170 6~0.550 8)	95.8%	<0.01	
老年人	5	0.268 1(0.172 0~0.392 4)	87.2%	<0.01	
孕妇	11	0.482 8(0.322 9~0.646 3)	99.5%	0	
发展水平	49	0.291 6(0.222 4~0.372 1)	99.5%	0	0.554
发达国家	33	0.312 5(0.241 9~0.393 0)	95.7%	<0.01	
发展中国家	16	0.258 5(0.134 9~0.437 9)	99.8%	0	
研究设计类型	31	0.225 3(0.167 2~0.296 4)	97.6%	<0.01	0.344
横断面研究	18	0.253 4(0.177 4~0.348 2)	95.3%	<0.01	
随访研究	13	0.191 5(0.116 1~0.299 4)	98.5%	<0.01	
样本量	47	0.286 6(0.217 2~0.367 7)	99.5%	0	0.802
≤100例	6	0.259 4(0.142 2~0.425 4)	73.9%	<0.01	
100~1 000例	15	0.264 7(0.193 3~0.351 0)	92.2%	<0.01	
>1 000例	26	0.310 3(0.201 5~0.445 2)	99.7%	0	
检测方法	41	0.274 7(0.203 9~0.359 0)	99.1%	0	0.058
RT-PCR	36	0.249 4(0.182 6~0.330 8)	99.0%	0	
PCR+血清学	5	0.505 1(0.255 8~0.751 9)	97.2%	<0.01	
毒株类型	13	0.285 3(0.212 4~0.371 6)	76.7%	<0.01	0.007
Delta	4	0.250 9(0.222 2~0.282 0)	0	0.65	
Omicron	4	0.485 3(0.327 0~0.646 6)	81.5%	<0.01	
其他毒株	5	0.210 5(0.138 2~0.307 3)	65.5%	0.02	

能与Omicron致病性弱有关。研究表明,与目前已经发现的除Omicron以外的变异株相比,Omicron的致病性最低^[67]。在疫情传播中,代间距和基本再生数(R_0)是重要评价指标。代间距越短表明该传染病的传播速度越快,疾病越容易在人群中传播; R_0 则表示在发病初期,无保护措施下一个患者在患病期内平均传染的人数, R_0 越大表明该病毒传染性越强。研究表明,其他毒株的代间距为6.5 d^[68], R_0 为

1.5^[69-71];Delta的代间距为4 d^[72], R_0 为6^[73];Omicron的代间距为3 d^[74], R_0 为10^[73]。随着SARS-CoV-2的不断进化,变异株的传播力越来越强,虽然Omicron的传播力最强,但其致病力最弱。由于Omicron变异株的S蛋白发生超过32个突变,增强了与血管紧张素转换酶2的结合能力和/或膜融合能力,同时S蛋白上特异的氨基酸突变(如E484A)增强了病毒免疫逃逸能力^[75],这些变化大大增强了Omicron的传

染力。因此 Omicron 的高比例无症状感染,对当前的感染控制策略提出了重大挑战。

亚组分析结果中,发达地区和发达国家的无症状感染构成比偏高,可能与发达地区和国家的医疗资源有关。以病毒检测为例,2020年5月20日,高收入国家(世行标准)的检测率达到平均每千人30.3例,而中低收入国家分别为每千人1.7例和每千人1.2例^[76]。经济发达地区医疗资源更好,检测力度大,无症状感染易被检出。职业和特殊人群亚组中,职业和特殊人群的文献较少,其中教师和学生感染 SARS-CoV-2 的数据来源于学校聚集性疫情,且教师的年龄 $[M(P_{25}, P_{75}): 24.0(23.0, 30.0)]$ 偏年轻化^[9],孕妇的无症状感染构成比偏高的具体原因尚不明确。文献数据少,职业和特殊人群的无症状感染构成比代表性较差,亟待进一步深入研究。研究设计类型和样本量可能影响无症状感染构成比大小。横断面研究可能将症状前感染归类到无症状感染者中,其研究结果无法区别真正的无症状感染者,导致无症状感染构成比很高;而扩大样本量,增加筛查人数,研究结果则更稳定、代表性更好。目前,核酸检测是 SARS-CoV-2 早期检测的“金标准”^[77],血清学检测则是 SARS-CoV-2 中晚期检测的重要手段。核酸检测在感染后2周内检出率可达100%,但随着时间的推移检出率逐渐下降^[78]。IgG 则产生较晚(约发病后14 d)持续时间较长,其阳性提示病情进入中后期或既往感染^[77]。鼻咽拭子检测,由于受工作人员采样质量、病毒载量等因素影响,易导致核酸检测假阴性及漏检。因此将核酸检测和血清学检测结合,可提高检出率。

本研究通过综合分析,确定了 SARS-CoV-2 无症状感染构成比为28.47%,亚组分析表明,18~64岁年龄段较其他年龄段无症状感染更高;Omicron 病毒株较 Delta 及其他毒株无症状感染构成比更高。同时本研究存在一定的局限性。首先,研究之间的异质性很高,这可能与不同的研究地点、周期和人群等因素有关。其次,有的亚组分类数据较少,代表性较差;职业特征和特殊人群对无症状感染构成比的影响有待进一步研究。最后,缺少有关基础疾病患者(如高血压、糖尿病等)无症状感染的的数据,随着疫情的发展,无症状感染者构成比越来越大,合并基础疾病对无症状感染比例是否有影响有待研究。明确 SARS-CoV-2 无症状感染构成比的大小,有助于制定减少无症状感染传播的策略。

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