

• 综述 •

## TREM2在阿尔茨海默病中的研究进展

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[摘要] 阿尔茨海默病(Alzheimer's disease, AD)是最常见的神经退行性疾病。大量证据表明, 遗传因素在AD的发病机制中起重要作用。2型髓系细胞触发受体(triggering receptor expressed on myeloid cells 2, TREM2)基因是新发现的AD易感基因之一。文章搜索近年来相关高质量文献, 结合课题组前期成果, 从TREM2基因变异与AD易感风险, TREM2的结构、配体及信号传导, TREM2与AD病理进程, 靶向TREM2的AD疗法等4个方面, 对TREM2在AD中的研究现状进行了全面综述, 期望能为后续AD的遗传及发病机制研究和药物研发提供理论参考。

[关键词] TREM2; 阿尔茨海默病; 小胶质细胞;  $\beta$ -淀粉样蛋白; tau

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### Research advances of TREM2 in Alzheimer's disease

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[Abstract] Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most common type of neurodegenerative disorder. Mounting evidence suggest that genetic factors play crucial roles in the pathogenesis of AD. The triggering receptor expressed on myeloid cells 2 (TREM2) gene is a recently identified susceptibility gene for AD. Here, our previous findings and the recent high-quality studies are comprehensively reviewed regarding the association of TREM2 variants with AD risk, the structure, ligand and downstream signaling of TREM2, the involvement of TREM2 in AD progression, and targeting TREM2 for AD treatment. This review will offer further insights into the genetic and pathogenic mechanisms of AD and provide reference for the development of novel AD therapies.

[Key words] TREM2; Alzheimer's disease; microglia; amyloid- $\beta$ ; tau

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阿尔茨海默病(Alzheimer's disease, AD)是最常见的神经退行性疾病, 也是老年痴呆中最常见的类型, 其临床表现为记忆障碍、抽象思维和计算能力损害、人格和行为改变等<sup>[1-3]</sup>。该病常见的病理改变是 $\beta$ -淀粉样蛋白(amyloid- $\beta$ , A $\beta$ )在脑内的过度沉积、tau蛋白在神经元内的过度磷酸化及小胶质细胞过度激活引发的神经炎性反应<sup>[4-5]</sup>。依据起病年

龄, AD可分为早发型AD(early-onset AD, EOAD, 起病<65岁)和晚发型AD(late-onset AD, LOAD, 起病>65岁)两大类, 其中LOAD约占所有AD病例的90%以上<sup>[6]</sup>。一般认为, LOAD是一类由遗传因素决定并受环境因素影响的多基因遗传性疾病, 但具体的遗传及发病机制目前尚不明确<sup>[7]</sup>。

近年, 随着遗传学技术的迅猛发展, 研究者通过全基因组关联研究(genome-wide association studies, GWAS)和全外显子组测序研究(whole exome sequencing, WES)确定了多个LOAD风险基因<sup>[8-9]</sup>。在这些风险基因中, 超过50%与小胶质细胞和免疫功能/炎症反应密切相关, 其中以2型髓系细胞触发

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受体(triggering receptor expressed on myeloid cells 2, TREM2)基因最受关注<sup>[9]</sup>。

本文从遗传学及分子生物学等多角度入手,结合课题组前期成果,对TREM2在AD中的研究现状进行了全面综述,期望能为后续AD的遗传及发病机制研究和药物研发提供理论参考。

## 1 TREM2基因变异与AD易感风险

TREM2基因定位于人类6号染色体上与LOAD密切相关的热点区域6p21.1,全长4 680 bp,共包含5个外显子<sup>[10-11]</sup>。2012年11月,两个欧洲研究小组同时发现TREM2第2号外显子上的罕见变异p.R47H能显著增加高加索人群LOAD易感性,达3倍以上,该风险度甚至接近先前报道的LOAD最强风险因子载脂蛋白E(apolipoprotein, APOE)-4<sup>[12-13]</sup>。上述结果在不同国家的高加索人群中得到了进一步验证<sup>[10,14-15]</sup>。

在前期研究中,本课题组试图在大样本汉族人

群中验证上述结论,但在入组的研究对象中未检测到TREM2基因p.R47H变异,提示其在汉族人群中的携带频率极低<sup>[16]</sup>。随后,本课题组针对汉族人群TREM2基因进行了全外显子测序,首次发现位于第3号外显子上的p.H157Y变异与LOAD发病风险密切相关<sup>[17]</sup>。虽然在高加索人及非洲人中,TREM2基因p.H157Y变异亦能被检测到,但与LOAD发病风险之间无显著关联<sup>[18]</sup>。上述结果提示,由于遗传背景不同,不同种族及人群中TREM2变异位点的携带频率与LOAD发病风险间的关联存在较大差异。

随着高通量测序技术的迅猛发展,更多与LOAD发病风险密切相关的TREM2功能性变异相继被发现,如p.R62H、p.Q33X、p.D87N等(表1),这些结果有待在不同种族及人群中进一步验证。有趣的是,不少与LOAD发病风险密切相关的TREM2变异,亦与额颞叶痴呆(frontotemporal dementia, FTD)、Nasu-Hakola病、帕金森病(Parkinson's disease, PD)等存在密切关联,提示不同的神经退行性疾病

表1 和LOAD相关的TREM2部分变异  
Table 1 Recent identified TREM2 variants related to LOAD

Variant	Nucleotide change	Amino acid mutation	Cohort & Statistical association	Pathogenicity	Reference
rs75932628(p.R47H)	g.140 G>A	p.Arg47His	European: statistically significant Han Chinese: failed to detect due to low minor allele frequency	Risk factor	[12-13, 16, 23]
rs143332484(p.R62H)	g.185 G>A	p.Arg62His	European & American: statistically significant	Risk factor	[24-25]
rs104894002(p.Q33X)	g.97 C>T	p.Glu33Thr	American: statistically significant	Possible risk factor	[26]
rs142232675(p.D87N)	g.259 G>A	p.Asp87Asn	American: statistically significant	Possible risk factor	[12, 26-27]
rs2234255(p.H157Y)	g.470 C>T	p.His157Tyr	Han Chinese: statistically significant	Possible risk factor	[17, 28]

间可能存在共同的遗传学机制<sup>[19-22]</sup>。

## 2 TREM2结构、配体及信号传导

### 2.1 TREM2结构

全长TREM2蛋白是一个由230个氨基酸构成的跨膜受体,经ENST00000373113转录本翻译而来<sup>[25, 29]</sup>。该蛋白由胞外免疫球蛋白样结构段、跨膜结构段和胞质尾部组成,主要表达于吞噬细胞亚群的细胞膜上,如外周血中的巨噬细胞、肝脏中的库普弗细胞<sup>[30-31]</sup>。在脑中,TREM2表达于小胶质细胞,且其表达水平与年龄密切相关:本课题组前期测量了不同月龄快速老化SAMP8小鼠脑内的TREM2蛋白水平,发现其表达随着年龄的增长逐渐升高<sup>[32]</sup>。无独有偶,Forabosco等<sup>[33]</sup>发现在人类的延

髓、丘脑和黑质等脑区中,TREM2的表达随年龄的增长呈逐渐上调趋势。虽然TREM2在脑中广泛表达,但其空间分布存在着一定的差异:研究表明,TREM2在脑室旁白质中表达较高,小脑表达相对较低,两者相差可达4.96倍<sup>[33]</sup>。值得一提的是,TREM2在体内亦存在其他异构体,其中研究最多的是可溶性TREM2(soluble TREM2, sTREM2)<sup>[34]</sup>。有研究表明,sTREM2由ENST00000338469转录本(相比ENST00000373113转录本,跳过了编码跨膜结构段的第4号外显子)翻译而来,以可溶性片段形式存在于脑脊液及血液中<sup>[34]</sup>。亦有研究表明,sTREM2可能由去整合素金属蛋白酶(a disintegrin and metallo-proteinase, ADAM)10/17直接切割全长TREM2蛋白第157~158位氨基酸之间的区域、释放胞外结构段

而形成<sup>[29,35]</sup>。

## 2.2 TREM2配体及信号传导

随着研究的深入,多种TREM2配体被相继发现,包括脂多糖、磷脂、DNA、Aβ和APOE等<sup>[30,36]</sup>。其中,Aβ、APOE与LOAD密切相关。TREM2可以直接与Aβ单体及聚合体结合,激活下游信号通路并调控小胶质细胞功能<sup>[30]</sup>。TREM2还可直接与非脂化形式的APOE结合,其结合能力随APOE亚型而异:人类TREM2与APOE4的亲和力最高,其次是APOE3,而同APOE2的亲和力相对较低<sup>[36-37]</sup>。

TREM2和配体结合后,可激活下游适配蛋白DAP12或DAP10进行信号传导<sup>[30]</sup>。DAP12也被称为TYROBP,其上的胞质免疫受体酪氨酸激活基序ITAM可被SRC家族激酶磷酸化,并通过SH2募集脾酪氨酸蛋白激酶SYK<sup>[38-40]</sup>。经SYK磷酸化后的L型氨基酸转运体LAT1可募集各种信号转导介质和衔接子,激活下游信号通路<sup>[41-44]</sup>。SYK还可激活PI3K-AKT途径,导致mTORC1的激活,从而抑制细胞自噬,维持细胞增殖<sup>[38]</sup>。而DAP10的跨膜区与DAP12具有一定相似性,但末端是酪氨酸-异亮氨酸-天冬酰胺-甲硫氨酸,它有助于PI3K活化时所需的p85募集,促进PIP2向PIP3转化(图1)<sup>[42]</sup>。这些信号通路的激活可以产生广泛的生物学效应,影响小胶质细胞增殖、吞噬及炎症反应调控,从而参与AD

的病理进程<sup>[41-42,45]</sup>。

## 3 TREM2与AD病理进程

小胶质细胞是中枢神经系统内的常驻吞噬细胞<sup>[46]</sup>,根据吞噬细胞分类方法,激活后的小胶质细胞可分为M1促炎表型和M2吞噬表型<sup>[47]</sup>。M1表型的小胶质细胞能够释放炎症因子及趋化因子,诱导炎症和神经毒性<sup>[42]</sup>;相反,M2表型的小胶质细胞具有较强的吞噬能力,参与病变组织的清理和修复,同时抑制炎症反应<sup>[42,47]</sup>。在AD患者脑中,小胶质细胞可被Aβ、炎症因子等激活,发挥双刃剑的作用<sup>[47]</sup>。病程早期,M2型小胶质细胞能识别并吞噬Aβ,同时聚集在Aβ斑块周围形成物理屏障,限制其生长、扩散并降低炎性损伤<sup>[48]</sup>。此外,M2型小胶质细胞还可通过吞噬死亡神经元及异常突触而发挥神经保护作用<sup>[47]</sup>。然而,随着病程进展,M1型小胶质细胞逐渐占据优势。其增强的促炎特性会导致神经元炎性损伤,而减弱的吞噬功能会进一步导致Aβ斑块生长扩散,加剧病程进展<sup>[47,49]</sup>。

### 3.1 TREM2与Aβ病理

脑内Aβ沉积及淀粉样斑块形成是AD的核心病理改变<sup>[50]</sup>。本课题组研究表明,在经典Aβ模型APP/PS1小鼠脑中,Aβ斑块周围的TREM2高表达,与Aβ水平呈显著正相关<sup>[51]</sup>。此外,过表达TREM2可减

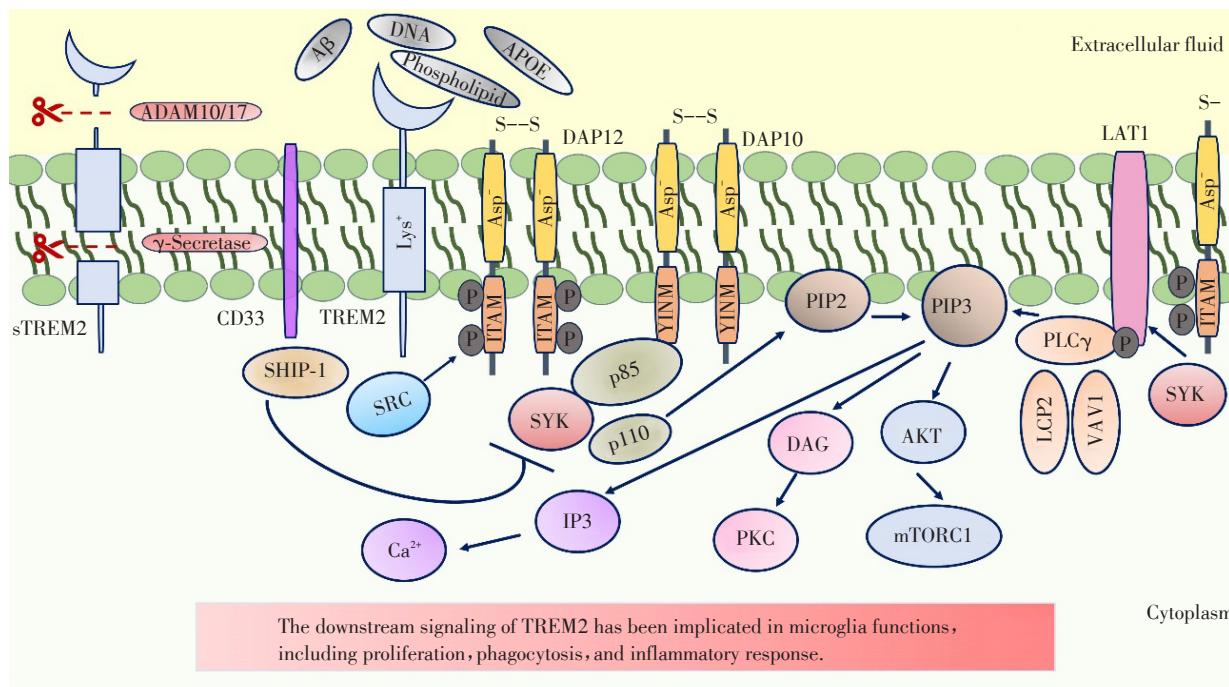


图1 TREM2的分子结构、配体和部分信号传导途径

Figure 1 The structure, ligand and the downstream signaling of TREM2

少脑皮层和海马区域的 A $\beta$ 沉积<sup>[51]</sup>。另外两个课题组在 A $\beta$ 模型 5xFAD 小鼠脑中进一步证实了上述结论<sup>[52-53]</sup>。反之,Wang 等<sup>[54]</sup>在 5xFAD 小鼠脑中敲低 TREM2,发现 A $\beta$ 水平上升及淀粉样斑块体积增加。值得注意的是,TREM2对 A $\beta$ 引起的病理改变的改善仅存在于病程早期,而非病程末期,这可能与病程中小胶质细胞功能逐渐失调有关<sup>[55]</sup>。上述 TREM2 对 A $\beta$ 引起的病理改变的调控作用,推测其潜在机制如下:一方面,TREM2 可促进小胶质细胞从 M1 促炎表型向 M2 吞噬表型转化,上调小胶质细胞表面 A $\beta$ 相关吞噬受体的表达,如 LRP1、CD36、AGE 等,促进小胶质细胞对 A $\beta$ 的吞噬和降解<sup>[56-57]</sup>;另一方面,小胶质细胞表面的 TREM2 作为 A $\beta$ 的受体,可直接锚定 A $\beta$ ,进而完成吞噬及细胞内降解过程<sup>[58]</sup>。

### 3.2 TREM2 与 tau 病理

过磷酸化 tau 蛋白在神经元胞内沉积是 AD 的另一大病理特征<sup>[59]</sup>。本课题组研究表明,在 tau 病理模型 P301S 小鼠中,敲低 TREM2 可显著上调 tau 激酶活性并加重由 tau 引起的病理改变的严重程度<sup>[60]</sup>;反之,过表达 TREM2 可减轻 tau 蛋白过磷酸化程度并延缓认知功能障碍<sup>[61]</sup>。上述 TREM2 对 tau 引起的病理改变的保护效应先后被多个课题组在其他 tau 病理小鼠模型以及 A $\beta$ 病理小鼠模型中进一步证实<sup>[62-63]</sup>。值得一提的是,有研究提示,TREM2 的完全缺失可使 tau 病理小鼠脑中过磷酸化 tau 蛋白水平降低<sup>[64]</sup>,该结果可能是由于动物模型间的差异,以及针对 TREM2 干预的时机和程度不同所致。上述 TREM2 对 tau 病理的调控作用,推测其潜在的机制如下:一方面,小胶质细胞介导的炎症反应是 tau 引起的病理改变恶化的始动因素之一<sup>[59]</sup>,而 TREM2 可促进小胶质细胞从 M1 促炎表型向 M2 吞噬表型转化,通过减轻炎症反应以延缓 tau 引起的病理改变<sup>[57,65]</sup>。另一方面,脑内 A $\beta$ 沉积是 tau 引起的病理改变的上游和始发事件<sup>[56]</sup>,如前文所述,TREM2 可促进小胶质细胞对 A $\beta$ 的清除和降解,从而间接抑制下游 tau 病理改变的形成。此外,新近研究表明,TREM2 还可通过调控小胶质细胞外泌体的形成与释放,抑制 tau 引起的病理改变在脑内的分布和播散<sup>[66]</sup>。

### 3.3 sTREM2 与 AD

新近研究表明,sTREM2 在 AD 病理进程中亦扮演着重要角色。一方面,sTREM2 作为一段具有重要生物学功能的短肽,可促进 AD 模型小鼠脑内淀粉样斑块周围小胶质细胞的增殖和迁移,减少淀粉

样斑块负荷,改善 AD 模型小鼠的学习和记忆能力,从而在 AD 病理进程中起保护作用<sup>[29,67-68]</sup>。另一方面,sTREM2 可在脑脊液中被检测到,展现出一定的生物标记价值<sup>[69]</sup>。有研究表明,AD 患者脑脊液中 sTREM2 的升高往往早于认知功能下降,其升高程度与脑脊液中过磷酸化 tau 蛋白水平呈显著正相关<sup>[69-71]</sup>。但亦有研究表明,AD 患者脑脊液中 sTREM2 水平较健康人群显著下降,这提示在 AD 病程中,脑脊液 sTREM2 水平可能呈双向变化趋势<sup>[72]</sup>。有学者发现,脑脊液 sTREM2 水平可反映脑内小胶质细胞的激活状态,因而在伴随小胶质细胞激活的其他神经退行性疾病或脱髓鞘疾病,如 PD、FTD、多发性硬化等患者的脑脊液中,均能检测到 sTREM2 的水平随病程进展而逐渐升高<sup>[73-75]</sup>。

### 4 TREM2 变异影响 AD 发病风险的可能机制

随着结构生物学的发展,TREM2 变异影响 LOAD 发病风险的生物学机制逐渐被揭示。LOAD 的重要风险变异 p.R47H 可使 TREM2 肽链的第 47 位氨基酸由精氨酸变为组氨酸,因此破坏了 TREM2 胞外互补决定区 CDR2 的结构及稳定性,导致 TREM2 与配体结合能力的丧失,影响 TREM2 下游信号转导<sup>[76-77]</sup>。上述改变可对小胶质细胞的迁移、吞噬等重要功能造成影响,从而增加 LOAD 发病风险<sup>[42,78]</sup>。而与汉族人 LOAD 风险密切相关的 p.H157Y 变异使 TREM2 肽链的第 157 位氨基酸由组氨酸变为酪氨酸。该置换导致 TREM2 肽链第 157~158 位氨基酸之间的区域更易被 ADAM10/17 酶解,可使细胞表面全长 TREM2 减少和 sTREM2 的释放增多<sup>[58,79]</sup>。本课题组研究发现,TREM2 p.H157Y 变异能够抑制小胶质细胞对 A $\beta$ 的吞噬并促进小胶质细胞向 M1 促炎表型极化,从而促进 LOAD 的发生发展<sup>[80]</sup>,该效应可能与小胶质细胞表面全长 TREM2 减少有关。但 Qiao 等<sup>[81]</sup>研究表明 TREM2 p.H157Y 变异在 AD 病理进程中具有一定的保护作用,该保护效应可能与 sTREM2 的释放增多有关。未来仍需更多研究以明确 TREM2 p.H157Y 变异影响 LOAD 发病风险的生物学机制。

### 5 靶向 TREM2 的 AD 疗法

鉴于 TREM2 在 AD 病理进程中所起的重要作用,诸多研发机构正以 TREM2 为靶点紧锣密鼓地开发 AD 治疗药物。相关药物可分为 TREM2 激活抗体及 TREM2 小分子激动剂两大类。Alecto 和 AbbVie 公司联合研发的 AL002 是一种人源化单克隆抗体,

能够结合 TREM2 并激活下游信号通路, 调控小胶质细胞吞噬及增殖功能<sup>[82-83]</sup>。I 期临床试验表明其具有良好的安全性及耐受性。而针对脑脊液中可溶性集落刺激因子1受体和 sTREM2 两种生物标志物的持续追踪初步提示了 AL002 的有效性<sup>[84]</sup>。目前进行的 II 期临床试验将进一步验证其治疗 AD 患者的疗效及安全性。VG-3927 是由 Vigil 公司研发的用于治疗 AD 的小分子 TREM2 激动剂。该药能够透过血-脑屏障, 高效激活 TREM2 下游信号通路, 调控小胶质细胞激活状态及功能。目前进行的 I 期临床试验正在验证其治疗 AD 患者的安全性及耐受性<sup>[85]</sup>。

## 6 总结与展望

近年来, TREM2 在 AD 中所扮演的重要角色得到了医学界的广泛关注。在遗传学方面, 未来亟需大样本 WES 或 GWAS 进一步发掘与 AD 发病密切相关的 TREM2 变异位点; 而已发现的 TREM2 相关变异有待在不同种族及人群中进一步验证。在发病机制方面, TREM2 和 sTREM2 参与 AD 发病的生物学机制以及 TREM2 变异影响 AD 发病风险的分子机制尚待更多的基础研究进一步探明。在治疗方面, 期待更多靶向 TREM2 的抗体及小分子药物在未来投入研发并获批临床使用, 从而为 AD 患者的治疗带来新的选择。

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