

• 综述 •

垂体 ACTH 瘤病理评估研究进展

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[摘要] 分泌促肾上腺皮质激素(adrenocorticotrophic hormone, ACTH)的垂体腺瘤(垂体 ACTH 瘤)因过度分泌 ACTH 刺激双侧肾上腺皮质增生而引起高皮质醇血症, 也称作库欣病(Cushing's disease, CD), 是内源性高皮质醇血症最常见的原因。垂体 ACTH 瘤可导致电解质紊乱, 糖、脂代谢紊乱等一系列严重的临床症候群, 累及全身多个脏器及系统。经蝶窦神经内镜手术是垂体 ACTH 瘤的一线治疗方法, 可以得到较高的缓解率, 但术后复发和持续状态仍然是垂体 ACTH 瘤治疗的一个未解决的问题。垂体 ACTH 瘤病理评估在确定病变性质、预测其预后及药物治疗选择方面均有重要的价值。文章就垂体 ACTH 瘤病理评估的相关进展进行综述, 包括新的免疫组化标志物和镜下特殊表现。

[关键词] 垂体 ACTH 瘤; 库欣病; 病理; 免疫组化; 标志物

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Advances in pathological evaluation of ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas

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[Abstract] Pituitary adenomas secreting adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), known as ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas, cause hypercortisolism by overproducing ACTH and stimulating bilateral adrenal cortical hyperplasia, a condition also known as Cushing's disease (CD), which is the most common cause of endogenous hypercortisolism. ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas lead to a series of severe clinical syndromes, including electrolyte disturbances and disorders of glucose and lipid metabolism, affecting multiple organs and systems throughout the body. Transsphenoidal neuroendoscopic surgery is the first-line treatment for ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas, with a high remission rate, but postoperative recurrence and persistent disease remain unsolved in the treatment of ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas. The pathological evaluation of ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas has important value in determining the nature of the lesions, predicting the prognosis, and selecting the drug therapy. This article reviews the advances in the pathologic evaluation of ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas, including new immunohistochemical markers and microscopic special features.

[Key words] ACTH-secreting pituitary adenomas; Cushing's disease; pathology; immunohistochemistry; marker

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库欣病(Cushing's disease, CD)是一种由分泌促肾上腺皮质激素(adrenocorticotrophic hormone, ACTH)的垂体腺瘤(垂体 ACTH 瘤)引起的罕见疾病, 占内源性高皮质醇血症病例的 70%^[1]。最近的一项包括 13 项研究在内的系统回顾和荟萃分析显示, 虽然 CD 的患病率约为 2.2/10 万人^[2], 但危害严

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重。不仅因其并发症和合并症较多^[3], 相关病死率显著增加^[4], 还因部分 CD 具有较高复发率和一定的侵袭性, 不易根治。经蝶窦神经内镜手术是 CD 的一线治疗方法^[5], 但复发和持续性未缓解病例仍然是增加 CD 患者病死率的重要风险^[6], 术后病理标志物对于评估垂体 ACTH 瘤的生物学特征, 预测疾病转归和药物反应从而指导疾病精准分层管理有重要价值^[7]。最新 WHO 垂体肿瘤分类指南建议术后应常规行免疫组化, 根据激素、转录因子和其他生

物标志物的表达决定的细胞谱系进行垂体肿瘤的分类,然而尚未形成较为统一的规范。临床医生对不同病理指标的应用价值的认识也不够深入和确切,本文将CD病理诊断公认的重要指标进行梳理,并将新近发现的有潜在价值的新指标在确定病变性质、预测预后及药物反应方面的应用进行综述。

1 免疫组化标志物

1.1 T-pit

垂体转录因子在决定垂体腺瘤的细胞分化和激素合成中起着重要作用,因此可作为诊断标志物。根据转录因子的不同,垂体腺瘤可以分为3个细胞谱系:表达T-pit的ACTH细胞谱系,表达Pit-1的GH、PRL和TSH细胞谱系,和表达SF-1的促性腺激素细胞谱系^[8-9]。T-pit参与激活阿片黑素促皮质激素原(POMC),从而产生ACTH。因此,所有的ACTH腺瘤必须是T-pit阳性的。大约1/4的免疫组化ACTH阴性的腺瘤可呈T-pit阳性,同时POMC mRNA表达升高,此类腺瘤可进展而临床呈现为CD,随访需要关注相关激素变化。该类腺瘤以女性为主,更常表现为大腺瘤和明显的海绵窦侵犯^[10],随着T-pit免疫组化的应用,无功能垂体腺瘤(non-functioning pituitary adenoma, NFPA)中静默性促肾上腺皮质激素细胞腺瘤(silent corticotroph adenoma, SCA)的检出率大大提高^[11]。研究表明,激素阴性的NFPA加上T-pit免疫组化后,有接近1/3可因T-pit阳性诊断为SCA。SCA具有高增殖性、侵袭性、进展性和频繁复发性,是高风险肿瘤之一。可见,T-pit的常规检测可及时识别SCA并进行必要的治疗而改善患者预后^[12]。

1.2 Ki-67和p53

2013年法国提出的五层预后临床病理建议按照3项增殖标志物(有丝分裂计数、Ki-67指数、p53)对垂体腺瘤的增殖性进行评价。有增殖性是指以下3项中至少符合2项:①有丝分裂计数>2/10 HPF;②Ki-67指数≥3%;③p53阳性。同时具有侵袭性(组织学和/或放射影像学上有海绵窦或蝶窦被侵袭的表现)和增殖性的肿瘤被归类为2b级肿瘤。2b级肿瘤疑似恶性肿瘤的概率为7%~9%。多项研究表明,2b级肿瘤的复发、进展的风险明显高于1a级肿瘤^[13]。

上述指标在恶性肿瘤中关注度比较高,其和垂体腺瘤侵袭性之间的关系尚不明确。近期研究,与野生型的ACTH瘤队列相比,p53突变型与更具侵袭

性的肿瘤行为相关的特征显著相关,例如肿瘤切除不完全、癌旁浸润更频繁、Knosp分级更高、Ki-67指数更高。既往认为p53突变在侵袭性垂体肿瘤(aggressive pituitary tumor, APT)和垂体癌(pituitary carcinoma, PC)中很罕见,但新近研究显示APT和PC中p53突变率可能被低估,其和CD预后的关系值得进一步关注^[14-16]。

1.3 生长抑素受体(somatostatin receptor, SSTR)

垂体ACTH瘤表达的SSTR主要是亚型5(SSTR5),其次是亚型2(SSTR2)和亚型1(SSTR1)。腺瘤中SSTR的表达为其提供了潜在的治疗靶点^[17]。常见的治疗药物有奥曲肽、帕瑞肽^[18],后者靶向多个SSTR,可更有效地抑制ACTH的释放。几乎所有的ACTH瘤都在mRNA水平表达SSTR5 RNA,但当使用单克隆抗体检测时,只有20%~42%的人对该标志物有免疫反应性。已有研究表明,垂体ACTH瘤中SSTR5阳性更倾向于表现为非沉默型的、低分级的,提示预后较好^[19]。SSTR5在微腺瘤中的表达水平比在大腺瘤中高。然而,迄今为止,SSTR多种亚型作为垂体ACTH瘤转归的预测价值尚未在大队列中得到正式的评估,需要更大样本的研究^[20]。

1.4 多巴胺D2受体(dopamine D2 receptor, DRD2)

DRD2在正常的垂体中表达。免疫组化显示约3/4的ACTH瘤表达DRD2,体外实验用溴隐亭或卡麦角林可导致所有表达该受体的肿瘤细胞中ACTH分泌被显著抑制。约40%的CD患者在3~6个月的卡麦角林治疗后的皮质醇水平完全恢复正常。通过加大治疗剂量、延长治疗时间,治疗有效率仍可进一步升高^[21]。因而,垂体ACTH瘤免疫组化纳入DRD2评估可指导术后未完全缓解的CD进一步的药物选择。

1.5 CABLES1和细胞周期蛋白依赖性激酶抑制剂1B(cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 1B, CDKN1B)

CD的一个显著特征是垂体ACTH细胞对糖皮质激素的负反馈调节迟钝甚至消失。此反馈中一个关键的细胞周期负调节因子CABLES1^[22-23]在ACTH细胞中可被糖皮质激素激活,从而稳定细胞周期的调节因子(CDKN1A、CDK5R1和TP63)防止其被降解,还可与抑癌基因(TP53、TP73)相互作用,触发细胞凋亡,进而维持细胞周期的稳定。CABLES1基因失活可促进细胞增殖以及肿瘤形成^[24]。研究显示在大约一半的垂体ACTH瘤中存在CABLES1免疫反应性的缺失^[25]。

CDKN1B免疫染色在所有类型的垂体腺瘤中都显著减少,特别是在垂体ACTH瘤和垂体癌中常表达缺失^[26],这也与Ki-67高表达相关。进一步研究发现,低表达很可能不是由于基因的突变或缺失,而是因蛋白翻译后改变引发,如在CD中细胞周期蛋白E上调导致CDKN1B磷酸化增加,这使该蛋白失活降解。

CABLES1与CDKN1B的低表达呈强正相关,可能是因为CABLES1功能受损导致的CDKN1B降解增加。目前要确定CABLES1和CDKN1B免疫染色作为CD标志物的价值还需要更多的临床数据^[27],在部分年轻发病的CD患者中报道了CABLES1的种系变异可能与垂体ACTH瘤相关,它也可作为多发性内分泌肿瘤综合征(MEN)4型的重要标志物^[28]。

1.6 Smad3

Smad3是R-Smad超家族的成员,是TGF- β 信号通路的主要细胞内介质,主要传递肿瘤抑制信号,调节细胞增殖和凋亡,其缺失可导致体内外多种肿瘤的发生。Smad3以及其活化形式pSmad3在垂体ACTH瘤中的表达均低于正常垂体。Smad3可能通过减少ACTH-PA细胞中的pSmad3信号通路来抑制细胞增殖,其表达降低后则此抑制作用减弱。垂体ACTH瘤细胞中Smad3过表达导致POMC表达降低。然而,Smad3对ACTH分泌的影响并不完全一致,说明Smad3对ACTH分泌的抑制可能是通过POMC介导的,但也可能受到另一种信号通路的调控^[29],此标志物是否适合作为垂体ACTH瘤的病理评估标志物,尚需考量。

1.7 MAMLD1

MAMLD1基因位于X染色体,主要在性腺中表达^[30]。既往关于MAMLD1的研究主要围绕促性腺激素垂体腺瘤^[31],在垂体ACTH瘤中的研究很少。在一项小型探索性队列中发现MAMLD1在垂体ACTH瘤细胞中表达,但在正常垂体细胞中不表达,所以MAMLD1免疫组化染色可能帮助诊断CD,有助于更好地描述不同激素分泌型的垂体肿瘤。但是其与垂体ACTH瘤侵袭性和复发性的关系尚需要更多临床数据去探讨。此外,靶向抑制MAMLD1可能是抑制垂体ACTH瘤生长的潜在有效靶向策略,值得关注^[32]。

1.8 ASCL1

ASCL1基因属于激活型bHLH转录因子家族的一员,早期在人垂体干细胞中特异性表达,可与MASH1基因、MASH3基因和神经源性分化因子

(neurogenic differentiation factor, NeuroD)一起影响垂体祖细胞的分化,并参与ACTH细胞的谱系发育^[33-34]。ASCL1过表达可增加AtT-20细胞的增殖,并促进POMC和ACTH的产生。相反,ASCL1敲低导致POMC表达和ACTH分泌降低。一项对68例CD患者垂体瘤ASCL1免疫组化染色评分显示,ASCL1过表达与血浆ACTH高水平 and 肿瘤体积正相关。ASCL1可能与POMC启动子上的结合位点结合,促进POMC转录,很可能是POMC的功能性转录因子^[35],促进CD患者ACTH的过度分泌和肿瘤发生。仍需要进一步研究以探索其下游途径和潜在机制^[36]。基于以上事实,ASCL1在垂体ACTH瘤侵袭性及复发预测上极有可能有重要的价值。

1.9 ATRX

转录调控因子ATRX蛋白是一种解螺旋酶,维持DNA复制时染色体的稳定性。ATRX蛋白表达缺失在垂体癌中的发生率高于侵袭性垂体瘤,在垂体ACTH瘤中也高于其他谱系亚型,表明ATRX蛋白表达缺失和垂体病变侵袭性间的密切关联。对于大腺瘤引起CD或临床沉默型垂体ACTH瘤,ATRX免疫组化有助于识别其高度侵袭性及潜在转移性,具有一定的临床应用价值^[37]。

2 镜下特殊表现

2.1 颗粒形态

根据电镜观察到的分泌颗粒的分布密度,分泌ACTH的垂体腺瘤可分为密集颗粒型(densely granulated, DG)和稀疏颗粒型(sparsely granulated, SG)。大多数肿瘤为DG,PAS染色为强阳性,同样ACTH免疫染色通常为强和弥漫性。相比之下,SG的促肾上腺皮质瘤的分泌颗粒更少更小,因而ACTH免疫染色也弱或不均匀。DG肿瘤的一个显著特征是存在核周细胞角蛋白纤维束;高尔基复合体和粗糙的内质网是中等发育的。相比之下,SG肿瘤细胞由进化不良的细胞质细胞器组成,细胞核周围缺乏细胞角蛋白纤维。我们强调病理诊断描述垂体ACTH瘤的颗粒形态的重要性,因为SG表型更具侵袭性,通常伴随更高的Knosp's分级、更大的肿瘤大小和更高的Ki-67增殖指数^[38-39]。经证实,在生长激素腺瘤中,SG还与对生长抑素类似物治疗的反应较差和预后较差有关^[40-41]。因此,该指标应该作为垂体瘤病理诊断的常规指标,便于协助判断肿瘤的侵袭性和预后。

2.2 Crooke改变及Crooke肿瘤

长期暴露在高水平糖皮质激素中会导致垂体中正常的垂体ACTH细胞发生Crooke透明改变(Crooke's hyaline change, CC), 表现为环状角蛋白丝累积而ACTH颗粒向核周和膜下区域移动。具有这种特征性外观的非肿瘤性ACTH细胞被称为Crooke细胞。在镜下可见Crooke细胞中嗜碱性颗粒、PAS阳性和ACTH阳性颗粒在细胞外围或紧邻细胞核, 而细胞质中则充满一圈淡透明物质, 该物质对CAM2.1、AE3/AE18或CK20角蛋白染色有强反应性^[42]。持续糖皮质激素过量的患者, 无论其病因如何, 无论是CD还是外源性糖皮质激素使用、肾上腺皮质肿瘤或异位ACTH综合征, 其垂体都可有这种改变。

当50%肿瘤细胞存在Crooke改变时可诊断为Crooke肿瘤(Crooke's cell adenoma, CCA)^[43]。在CD患者中, CCA多见于大腺瘤, 女性多见, 临床侵袭性明显^[44-45]。对于CCA患者, 建议术后进行密切的临床、生化和影像学监测随访。

综上所述, 越来越多的研究提示多种免疫组化的标志物和镜下特殊表现显示与垂体ACTH瘤的侵袭性和复发性相关, 部分指标还对预测垂体ACTH瘤对不同药物的治疗反应有重要价值, 因而, 在垂体ACTH瘤病理评估中综合纳入以上指标, 对于判定疾病的预后和指导药物具有参考价值。目前免疫组化指标T-pit、Ki-67、p53、SSTR、DRD2及颗粒形态及Crooke改变的镜下表现已开始应用于临床, 但仍未引起足够重视。而免疫组化指标CABLES1、CDKN1B、Smad3、MAML1、ASCL1、ATRX在垂体ACTH瘤中的评估仍处于研究阶段, 需要进一步临床研究。结合临床队列随访观察, 在此基础上形成基于病理评估的、更全面高效的、纳入多个参数的预测模型。对于指导预后和用药具有重要的临床应用价值和前景。

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