

• 基础研究 •

成纤维细胞来源半乳糖凝集素-3通过细胞外基质蓄积促进矽肺纤维化

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[摘要] 目的: 探讨成纤维细胞来源的半乳糖凝集素-3(galectin-3, LGALS3)在二氧化硅(silicon dioxide, SiO₂)诱导的小鼠肺纤维化模型肺组织中的表达及其与细胞外基质(extracellular matrix, ECM)沉积的关系, 进一步揭示LGALS3在矽肺纤维化中的作用机制。方法: 通过SiO₂暴露构建肺纤维化小鼠模型, 利用天狼星红染色和偏振光显微镜观察肺组织中胶原沉积及结构变化。通过单细胞聚类分析将细胞分为20个聚类, 并筛选出成纤维细胞在SiO₂处理56 d时表达上调的差异基因。利用Metascape进行基因本体(gene ontology, GO)富集分析, 明确与ECM结合相关的基因。在体外实验中, 采用转化生长因子-β1(transforming growth factor β1, TGF-β1)刺激人肺成纤维细胞HPF-a和小鼠肺成纤维细胞MLg, 通过Western blot和免疫荧光染色检测LGALS3的表达水平及其在ECM中的沉积情况。结果: 单细胞聚类分析发现, 成纤维细胞在SiO₂处理56 d时数量显著增加, 筛选出表达上调的前10个基因, 包括Ccl6、Lyz2、Ftl1、Spp1、Lgals3、Cxcl2、Fth1、Psap、S100a9和Ctss。GO富集分析表明, 这些基因与ECM结合密切相关, 其中Ctss、Lgals3和Spp1是核心关联基因。点图显示, Lgals3在SiO₂ 56 d组中的表达水平显著高于对照组。天狼星红染色和偏振光显微镜结果显示, SiO₂暴露组小鼠肺组织中胶原沉积显著增加, 且结构致密, 呈现典型的肺纤维化病理特征。Western blot结果显示, TGF-β1刺激后, HPF-a细胞中LGALS3的表达呈现时间依赖性变化, 12 h达到峰值($P < 0.05$)。动物模型验证表明, SiO₂暴露组小鼠肺组织中LGALS3的表达水平显著高于对照组($P < 0.001$), 且免疫荧光染色显示LGALS3与成纤维细胞标志物波形蛋白(Vimentin)的共定位信号增强($P < 0.01$)。此外, 将TGF-β1刺激的MLg细胞种植于ECM上后, LGALS3表达水平显著上升($P < 0.05$); 移除细胞后, ECM上的LGALS3表达水平仍高于对照组($P < 0.05$)。结论: 成纤维细胞来源的LGALS3在SiO₂诱导的小鼠肺纤维化模型肺组织中表达显著上调, 并参与ECM的沉积过程。LGALS3的表达水平受TGF-β1调控, 且在ECM上呈现持续性蓄积。这些发现揭示了LGALS3在肺纤维化中的重要作用, 为矽肺的病理机制研究和潜在治疗靶点提供了新的理论依据。

[关键词] 矽肺; 成纤维细胞; 细胞外基质; 半乳糖凝集素-3; 纤维化

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Fibroblast - derived galectin - 3 promotes silicosis fibrosis through extracellular matrix accumulation

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[Abstract] **Objective:** This study aimed to investigate the expression of fibroblast-derived galectin-3(LGALS3) in lung tissue of a silicon dioxide(SiO₂)-induced pulmonary fibrosis mouse model and its relationship with extracellular matrix(ECM) deposition, further elucidating the role of LGALS3 in the mechanism of silicosis fibrosis. **Methods:** A pulmonary fibrosis mouse model was established by silica exposure, and collagen deposition and structural changes in lung tissues were observed using Sirius red staining and polarized light microscopy. Then, single-cell clustering analysis was performed to classify cells into 20 clusters, and differentially expressed genes upregulated in fibroblasts after 56 days of SiO₂ treatment were identified. Gene ontology(GO) enrichment analysis using

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Metascape was conducted to identify genes associated with ECM binding. *In vitro*, human lung fibroblasts (HPF-a) and mouse lung fibroblasts (MLg) were stimulated with transforming growth factor- β (TGF- β 1), and the expression levels of LGALS3 and its deposition on the ECM were detected by Western blot and immunofluorescence staining. **Results:** Single-cell clustering analysis showed a significant increase in fibroblast numbers after 56 days of SiO₂ treatment, with the top ten upregulated genes identified as Ccl6, Lyz2, Ftl1, Spp1, Lgals3, Cxcl2, Fth1, Psap, S100a9, and Ctss. GO enrichment analysis indicated that these genes were closely associated with ECM binding, with Ctss, Lgals3, and Spp1 being the core related genes. Dot plots demonstrated that the expression level of Lgals3 was significantly higher in the SiO₂ 56-day group compared to the control group. Sirius red staining and polarized light microscopy revealed significantly increased collagen deposition and dense structure in the lung tissues of the SiO₂-exposed group, exhibiting typical pathological features of pulmonary fibrosis. Western blot results showed that LGALS3 expression in HPF-a cells exhibited a time-dependent increase after TGF- β 1 stimulation, peaking at 12 hours ($P < 0.05$). Animal model validation confirmed that LGALS3 expression in lung tissues of the SiO₂-exposed group was significantly higher than in the control group ($P < 0.001$), and immunofluorescence staining revealed enhanced co-localization signals of LGALS3 with the fibroblast marker Vimentin ($P < 0.01$). Furthermore, after seeding TGF- β 1-stimulated MLg cells onto ECM, LGALS3 expression levels significantly increased ($P < 0.05$); even after cell removal, LGALS3 expression on the ECM remained higher than in the control group ($P < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** This study confirms that fibroblast-derived LGALS3 is significantly upregulated in lung tissues of a silica-induced pulmonary fibrosis mouse model and participates in ECM deposition. The expression of LGALS3 is regulated by TGF- β 1 and shows persistent accumulation on the ECM. These findings reveal the critical role of LGALS3 in pulmonary fibrosis and provide new theoretical insights into the pathological mechanisms of silicosis and potential therapeutic targets.

[Key words] silicosis; fibroblast; extracellular matrix; galectin-3; fibrosis

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矽肺是因长期暴露于结晶型二氧化硅(silicon dioxide, SiO₂)粉尘环境中所引发的职业病,其特征为持续性炎症和不可逆肺纤维化^[1]。目前临床缺乏针对性的治疗方法和明确的分子靶点。在矽肺纤维化过程中,肺成纤维细胞与细胞外基质(extracellular matrix, ECM)的相互作用是关键^[2]。成纤维细胞被炎症因子,如转化生长因子- β (transforming growth factor β , TGF- β)和血小板源性生长因子(platelet-derived growth factor, PDGF)激活后,异常增殖并分化为肌成纤维细胞,过度分泌胶原蛋白等ECM成分导致ECM沉积^[3-4]。研究表明,ECM沉积可通过机械信号(如硬度增加)或组成改变反馈激活成纤维细胞,形成恶性循环,最终导致肺泡结构破坏和功能丧失^[5-6]。靶向调控成纤维细胞与ECM的相互作用可能为矽肺治疗提供新方向。

半乳糖凝集素-3(galectin 3, LGALS3)是一种 β -半乳糖苷结合蛋白,属于凝集素家族^[7]。LGALS3被发现通过与抗凋亡分子结合以及信号转导等方式参与细胞的生存与增殖^[8]。近年来,LGALS3被发现不仅与肿瘤、心血管疾病以及炎症反应相关^[9-10],还在多种器官纤维化进程中呈现显著表达上调,特别是肝脏炎症和慢性肾病中^[11-12]。更有研究发现LGALS3通过影响内皮-间充质化(endothelial to mesenchymal transition, EndoMT)参与矽肺纤维化进

程^[13]。本研究探讨矽肺中成纤维细胞分泌的LGALS3,为矽肺纤维化治疗提供新靶点。

1 材料和方法

1.1 材料

清洁级C57BL/6雄性小鼠,体重18~22 g,由南京医科大学实验动物中心提供。所有实验动物在标准实验环境下饲养,环境温度维持在(22±2)°C,相对湿度控制在(45±5)%,采用12 h/12 h明暗循环照明。小鼠以6只/笼的密度饲养,自由摄取灭菌饮用水和标准啮齿类动物饲料。人源肺成纤维细胞系HPF-a和鼠源肺成纤维细胞系MLg由本实验室常规保存。标准石英粉尘(Sigma-Aldrich公司,德国);胎牛血清(fetal bovine serum, FBS)(Thermo Fisher Scientific公司,美国);DMEM培养基(Corning公司,美国);ECL化学发光试剂盒(上海天能公司);抗体:LGALS3(14979-1-AP)、甘油醛-3-磷酸脱氢酶(glyceraldehyde - 3 - phosphate dehydrogenase, GAPDH)(60004-1-Ig)、 β 肌动蛋白(β -actin)(66009-1-Ig)(Proteintech公司,美国),波形蛋白(Vimentin)(sc-7557, Santa Cruz Biotechnology公司,美国);TGF- β 1(南京金斯瑞生物科技股份有限公司);天狼星红染色试剂盒(Abcam公司,英国);BCA蛋白定量试剂盒、RIPA裂解液(上海碧云天生物技术有限公司)。

1.2 方法

1.2.1 肺纤维化动物模型构建

选取18~22 g的C57BL/6雄性小鼠,随机分为对照组、SiO₂暴露组,每组3只。小鼠使用1%戊巴比妥钠麻醉后固定于仰卧位,剔除颈部毛发,酒精棉球消毒手术部位,充分暴露气管,经气道滴注准备好的SiO₂悬液(50 mg/mL, 100 μL)和同体积的生理盐水,缝合伤口。8周后麻醉处死所有小鼠,获取肺部组织以待后续实验研究。所有研究均已获得东南大学动物伦理委员会审查批准(20200402024)。

1.2.2 细胞培养

HPF-α和MLg细胞培养于含10% FBS、1%青霉素-链霉素和1%谷氨酰胺的DMEM培养基中,置于37℃、5% CO₂的恒温培养箱中培养。细胞传代培养至对数生长期后用于后续实验。

1.2.3 细胞模型构建

HPF-α细胞消化离心,以1×10⁵个/孔的密度铺入24孔板,37℃、5% CO₂的恒温培养箱中培养至合适状态,分别在0、3、6、12、24、48 h时间点,在处理组内加入TGF-β1(5 ng/mL)进行刺激。

1.2.4 ECM制备及脱细胞处理

将肺组织自-80℃冰箱中拿出,缓慢解冻至恢复柔软放入包埋盒用OCT包埋,在冷冻冰切机中将包埋组织切成180~200 μm的切片。将切片放入6孔板内,倒入1% SDS溶液洗涤,1 h×3次,室温震荡过夜;第2日弃去孔板内溶液,倒入1% Triton X-100溶液洗涤,1 h×3次,室温震荡过夜;第3日弃去孔板内溶液,PBS洗涤3次,ddH₂O洗涤6次后,孔内加入1% NaCl溶液洗涤1 h,再次用PBS及ddH₂O各洗涤2次;后加入4 mL DNase(20 μg/mL)和MgCl₂(4.2 mmol/L)的混合溶液在37℃孵育1 h,再次用ddH₂O洗涤;最后在无菌环境中加入4.8%冰醋酸溶液,在37℃孵育20 min,ddH₂O洗涤3次后,4℃保存。

1.2.5 ECM细胞种植

将制备好的ECM取出置于24孔板底部,在37℃细胞培养箱内放置1 h,MLg细胞悬液(3×10⁵个/mL)小心滴在ECM上,约40 μL,放入细胞培养箱等待细胞黏附后,继续培养72 h,以待后续实验。

1.2.6 天狼星红染色

肺组织在4%多聚甲醛中固定过夜,使用蔗糖溶液梯度脱水,OCT胶固定后在冰冻切片机中切成8 μm的切片。采用天狼星红染色试剂盒说明书步骤染色,无水乙醇脱水并固定,中性树脂封片。

1.2.7 免疫荧光(immunofluorescence, IF)染色

黏附有组织或ECM切片的玻片用PBS洗涤脱去OCT胶,室温下0.3% Triton X-100覆盖组织30 min,10%正常山羊血清(normal goat serum, NGS)(NGS:0.3% Triton X-100=1:9)封闭2 h后滴加抗LGALS3(兔抗)、Vimentin(羊抗)(抗体:10% NGS=1:200)4℃过夜;次日玻片PBS洗涤3次,每次5 min,滴加488、546荧光标记二抗在室温孵育2 h,PBS再次洗涤玻片,最后用ddH₂O洗涤后晾干,DAPI封片,在激光共聚焦显微镜下完成拍摄。

1.2.8 Western blot检测

收集TGF-β1刺激不同时间的细胞,PBS冲洗干净并使用RIPA裂解获取上清液,利用BCA蛋白定量试剂盒检测蛋白浓度。取20 μg蛋白经10%十二烷基硫酸钠-聚丙烯酰胺凝胶电泳分离蛋白质组分后,转印蛋白,PVDF膜经5%脱脂奶粉封闭1 h后放入抗LGALS3、GAPDH、β-actin的一抗(1:1 000稀释)4℃过夜。次日加入1:1 000稀释的辣根过氧化物酶标记的山羊IgG二抗室温孵育120 min,ECL发光液显影。小鼠肺组织取绿豆大小,加入300 μL裂解液于1.5 mL EP管中使用研磨仪研磨至匀浆状态,离心取上清,后续同细胞蛋白检测。

1.2.9 单细胞转录组测序

将小鼠肺组织制成细胞悬液,交由北京博奥晶典生物技术有限公司进行测序。原始测序数据采用Cell Ranger 4.0.0软件进行处理,包括细胞条形码识别、序列比对以及唯一分子标识符(unique molecular identifier, UMI)定量分析。后利用R v3.6.0中的Seurat分析工具包对基因表达数据进行质控筛选和标准化处理。基于已知的细胞特异性标志物,对不同细胞群体进行鉴定和分类,并最终分为20个细胞群,具体见已发表文献[14]。

1.3 统计学方法

使用GraphPad Prism 10.1.2进行数据分析及作图。2组数据比较采用*t*检验,3组及以上数据比较采用方差分析,数据以均数±标准误($\bar{x} \pm s_x$)表示,*P*<0.05为差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 LGALS3参与ECM结合

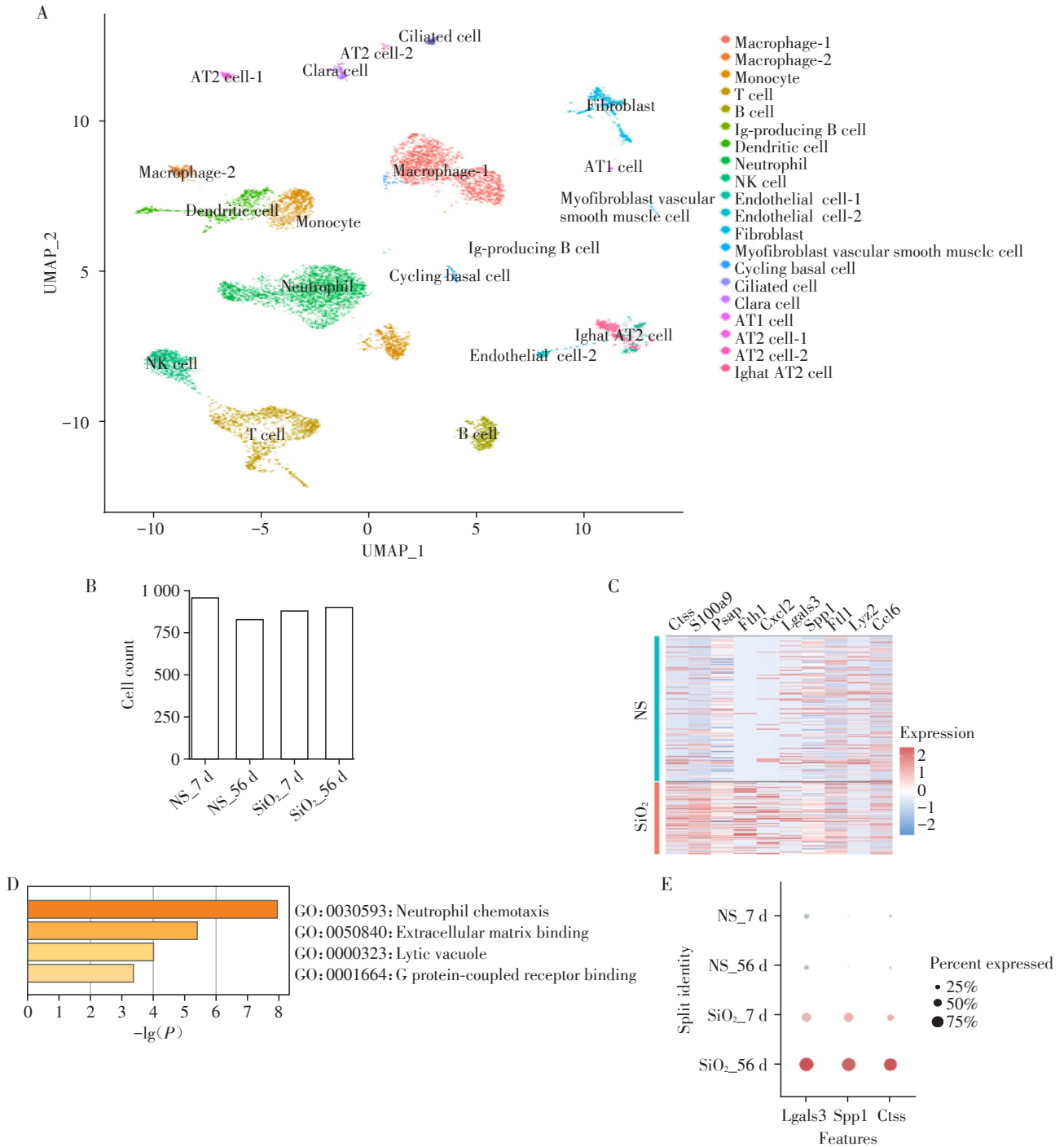
将小鼠肺组织细胞最终分为20个聚类,如图1A所示。对成纤维细胞数量在各组别中的变化进行可视化分析,发现其在SiO₂处理56 d时数量明显增加(图1B)。因此,进一步分析了成纤维细胞在生

理盐水(normal saline, NS)处理 56 d 和 SiO₂处理 56 d 时的差异基因,并筛选出在 SiO₂组中表达上调的前 10 个基因,分别是 *Ccl6*、*Lyz2*、*Fhl1*、*Spp1*、*Lgals3*、*Cxcl2*、*Fth1*、*Psap*、*S100a9* 和 *Ctss* (图 1C)。随后在 Metascope 网站对这些基因进行了基因本体(gene ontology, GO)富集分析,通路分析结果显示与 ECM

结合密切相关(图 1D),其中与之关联的基因包括 *Ctss*、*Lgals3* 和 *Spp1*。点图显示, *Lgals3* 在 SiO₂ 处理 56 d 组中的表达水平更高(图 1E)。

2.2 构建 SiO₂ 诱导的小鼠肺纤维化模型

天狼星红染色结果显示, SiO₂ 暴露组小鼠肺组织中胶原纤维在支气管及肺泡间隔周围呈现显著



A: UMAP plot illustrating cell clustering. B: Bar plot showing changes in fibroblast cell counts across different groups. C: Heatmap showing the top 10 upregulated genes in fibroblasts at 56 days. D: GO enrichment analysis of biological pathways. E: Dot plot displaying the expression of *Lgals3*, *Spp1*, and *Ctss* in fibroblasts.

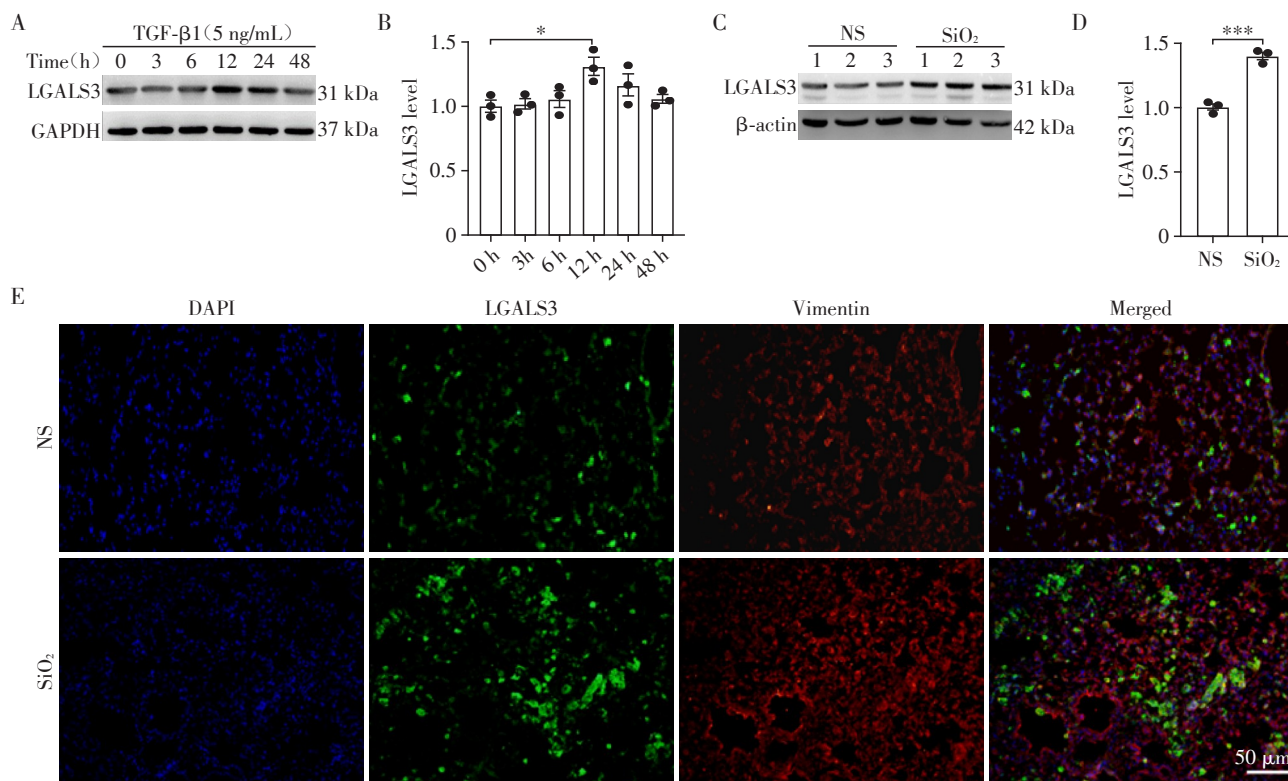
图 1 成纤维细胞来源的 LGALS3 参与 ECM 结合

Figure 1 Fibroblast-derived LGALS3 participated in ECM binding

沉积,表现为鲜红色细网状分布模式(图2A)。偏振光显微镜观察进一步证实, SiO₂暴露组肺泡壁区域 I 型胶原显著增多增厚,呈现特征性的亮红色及明黄色双折射现象,而 NS 组仅在血管壁周围观察到少量 I 型胶原分布(图2B)。组织染色结合偏振光分析结果表明, SiO₂暴露导致小鼠肺组织胶原成分发生显著改变,表现为胶原结构重构及比例失调,呈现典型的肺纤维化病理特征。上述实验结果证实 SiO₂诱导的小鼠肺纤维化模型成功建立。

2.3 LGALS3在肺纤维化小鼠模型和TGF-β1刺激的成纤维细胞中表达水平上升

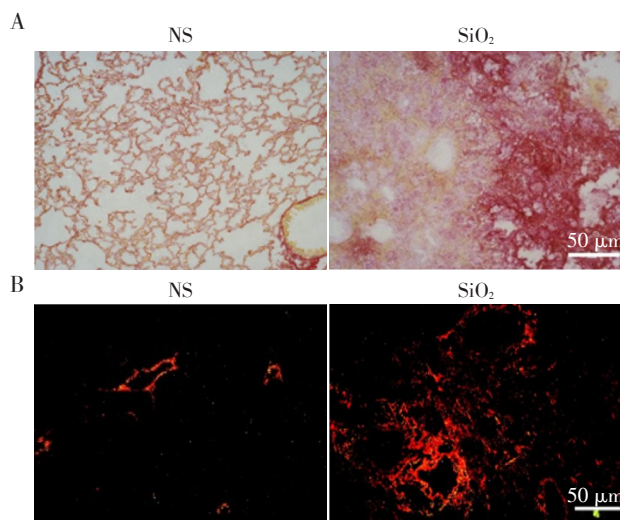
离体实验采用TGF-β1(5 ng/mL)处理人肺成纤维细胞 HPF-a,通过 Western blot 分析发现 LGALS3 的表达呈现时间依赖性变化。与对照组(0 h)相比, LGALS3 蛋白表达水平在 12 h 达到峰值,随后 24 h、48 h 逐渐降低(图3A、B)。动物模型显示: SiO₂暴露组小鼠肺组织中 LGALS3 的表达水平显著高于 NS 组(图3C、D),且免疫荧光显示, LGALS3 与成纤维细胞标志物 Vimentin 的共定位信号增强,表明 LGALS3 在活化的成纤维细胞中表达上调(图3E)。



A, B: Western blot(A) and quantitative analysis(B) of LGALS3 expression in HPF-a cells stimulated with TGF-β1. * $P < 0.05$ ($n=3$). C, D: Western blot(C) and quantitative analysis(D) of LGALS3 expression in lung tissues from the NS group and SiO₂ group. *** $P < 0.001$ ($n=3$). E: Immunofluorescence staining showing the expression of LGALS3 and its co-localization with fibroblasts in lung tissues from the NS group and SiO₂ group(scale bar=50 μm).

图3 TGF-β处理成纤维细胞及肺纤维化小鼠模型中的LGALS3的表达

Figure 3 Expression of LGALS3 in fibroblast cells treated with TGF-β and pulmonary fibrosis mouse model



A: Sirius red staining of lung tissue sections(scale bar=50 μm). B: Polarized light microscopy images of Sirius red-stained lung tissue sections(scale bar=50 μm).

图2 矽肺小鼠模型建立

Figure 2 Establishment of a silicosis mouse model

这一发现与 Western blot 结果相互印证。

2.4 成纤维细胞来源的 LGALS3 在 ECM 沉积

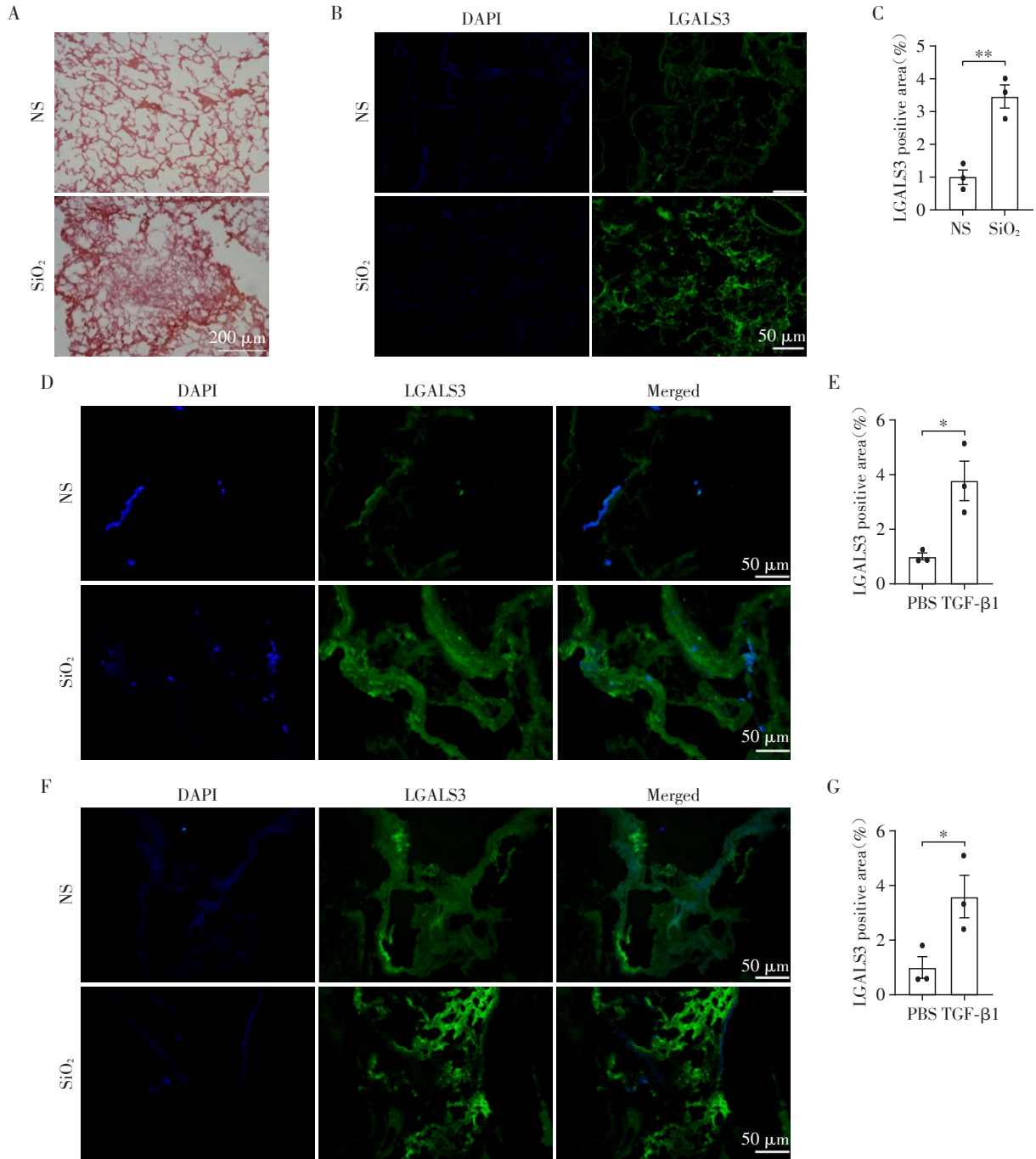
天狼星红染色结果显示, SiO₂暴露组小鼠

ECM中胶原沉积增多且结构致密(图4A)。组织免疫荧光染色显示,与NS组相比,SiO₂暴露组ECM中LGALS3的蓄积显著增加(图4B,C)。将TGF-β1刺激的小鼠肺成纤维细胞MLg种植于对照组小鼠肺组织提取的ECM上后,LGALS3表达

水平上升(图4D、E);移除种植的细胞后,实验组ECM上的LGALS3表达水平仍高于对照组(图4F、G)。

3 讨论

矽肺作为进行性纤维化性间质性肺疾病(pro-



A: Sirius red staining of the extracellular matrix (ECM) in the NS group and SiO₂ group (scale bar=200 μm). B, C: Immunofluorescence staining (B) and quantitative analysis (C) showing the expression of LGALS3 on the ECM in the NS group and SiO₂ group (scale bar=50 μm), **P* < 0.01 (*n*=3). D, E: Immunofluorescence staining (D) and quantitative analysis (E) showing the expression of LGALS3 on the ECM seeded with MLg cells treated with PBS or TGF-β1 (scale bar=50 μm), **P* < 0.05 (*n*=3). F, G: Immunofluorescence (F) and quantitative analysis (G) staining showing the expression of LGALS3 on the ECM after removal of MLg cells treated with PBS or TGF-β1 (scale bar=50 μm), **P* < 0.05 (*n*=3).

图4 小鼠ECM上LGALS3蓄积情况

Figure 4 Accumulation of LGALS3 on the ECM in mice

gressive fibrosing interstitial lung disease, PF-ILD)的一种,由于肺内留存的大量结晶型SiO₂导致持续性炎症、组织损伤,这种进行性病变最终导致肺实质广泛纤维化,进而引起肺功能进行性减退,严重影响患者生存质量,甚至可导致死亡。SiO₂致病机制研究发现,成纤维细胞在纤维化进程中发挥直接作用,肺泡部位的反复损伤使肺泡上皮基底膜完整性缺失,活化的成纤维细胞通过这些孔隙迁移到肺泡内,产生大量ECM^[15]。胶原纤维的异常沉积和结构改变是肺纤维化的核心病理特征之一,而ECM的过度沉积和重构是纤维化进程中的重要环节^[16-17]。本研究通过天狼星红染色观察,证实了SiO₂暴露导致小鼠肺组织中胶原沉积显著增加,结构重构。SiO₂暴露组小鼠ECM中LGALS3的蓄积明显,提示LGALS3可能在ECM沉积和重构中发挥重要作用。进一步研究表明,LGALS3表达水平受TGF-β1调控,且在ECM上呈现持续性蓄积,这为LGALS3在纤维化中的作用提供了证据。

在肺纤维化的病理进程中,除成纤维细胞活化外,免疫细胞特别是巨噬细胞的参与同样至关重要。巨噬细胞在纤维化过程中可分泌多种细胞因子(如TGF-β1等),以此来调控成纤维细胞的活化及ECM的沉积^[18-20]。大量研究表明,巨噬细胞与成纤维细胞之间的相互作用在纤维化进程中起关键作用。巨噬细胞分泌的TGF-β1会促进成纤维细胞向肌成纤维细胞转化,进而导致胶原蛋白的过度分泌^[21-22]。且巨噬细胞还可调节基质金属蛋白酶(matrix metalloproteinase, MMP)及其抑制剂(tissue inhibitor of matrix metalloproteinases, TIMP)的表达水平,从而影响ECM的降解与重构^[23]。本研究证实LGALS3在SiO₂诱导的小鼠肺纤维化模型肺组织中的表达显著上调,且与ECM沉积密切相关,推测LGALS3可能通过调控巨噬细胞与成纤维细胞的相互作用参与肺纤维化的病理过程。未来研究可以进一步探讨LGALS3在巨噬细胞与成纤维细胞互作中的具体机制。

ECM不仅是肺组织的结构支撑,还通过细胞-基质相互作用调控细胞的增殖、迁移和分化^[24]。ECM的异常沉积和重构会导致肺组织结构破坏和功能丧失^[25-26]。结果显示将TGF-β1刺激的MLg细胞种植于ECM上后,LGALS3表达水平显著上升;移除细胞后,ECM上的LGALS3表达水平仍高于对照组。这表明LGALS3在ECM上的蓄积具有持续性。LGALS3可能通过改变ECM的刚度和组成,促进成

纤维细胞的活化和ECM的进一步沉积,从而形成正反馈环路,加剧纤维化进程。

本研究揭示了成纤维细胞来源的LGALS3在矽肺纤维化中的重要作用。LGALS3通过ECM蓄积参与肺纤维化的病理过程,其表达受TGF-β1调控,并与成纤维细胞活化相关。其在ECM上的持续性蓄积可能在纤维化进程中发挥关键作用。这些发现为理解肺纤维化的分子机制提供了新视角,并为开发针对矽肺的治疗策略提供了新靶点。未来研究可以进一步探讨LGALS3在巨噬细胞与成纤维细胞互作中的具体机制,以及其在其他纤维化疾病中的潜在作用。

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所有作者声明无利益冲突。

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任言晖和徐可颖负责实验实施及数据分析;任言晖负责撰写初稿;张伟和巢杰负责论文修改与审阅;巢杰负责实验构思与设计。

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REN Yanhui and XU Keying conducted the experiment and analyzed the data; REN Yanhui wrote the first draft; ZHANG Wei and CHAO Jie reviewed and revised the paper; CHAO Jie designed the experiment.

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