

食管癌组织 VEGF-C SDF-1/CXCR4 的表达及其与淋巴结转移关系的研究

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摘要 目的:研究 VEGF-C、SDF-1 及 CXCR4 在食管鳞癌中的表达,并分析其与食管癌相关临床病理因素的关系和对预后的影响。方法:通过免疫组织化学 SP 法检测 VEGF-C、SDF-1 及 CXCR4 在 95 例食管癌切除组织中的表达,并探讨其临床意义。结果:VEGF-C 及 SDF-1、CXCR4 三种因子蛋白表达均主要位于肿瘤细胞的胞质,阳性率分别为 89.5%、84.2%、69.5%,其中 CXCR4 在肿瘤细胞中未见到强阳性表达。VEGF-C 和 SDF-1 在肿瘤细胞的表达与肿瘤细胞分化程度、浸润深度、淋巴结转移和转移的个数以及病理 TNM 分期均有相关性,其中有淋巴结转移组的 VEGF-C 和 SDF-1 表达率均高于无淋巴结转移组,且差异均有统计学意义($\chi^2=6.319, P=0.012$; $\chi^2=5.821, P=0.016$)。而 CXCR4 在肿瘤细胞的表达仅与肿瘤细胞分化程度相关,且分化越高表达越强。多因素分析显示淋巴结转移、淋巴结转移数目、病理 TNM 分期及 SDF-1 蛋白表达为影响预后的独立性因素($P<0.05$)。结论:食管鳞癌组织中 VEGF-C、SDF-1 的表达与多项临床病理指标尤其是淋巴结转移程度有关,其中 SDF-1 可作为淋巴结转移及预后的免疫病理学指标,同时 VEGF-C 与 SDF-1/CXCR4 在淋巴结转移中可能有协同作用。

关键词 食管鳞癌 免疫组织化学染色 VEGF-C SDF-1 CXCR4 淋巴结转移

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Expression of VEGF-C, SDF-1, and CXCR4 in esophageal carcinoma and its relationship with lymph node metastasis

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Abstract Objective: This work aims to investigate the expressions of vascular endothelial growth factor-c (VEGF-C), stromal cell-derived factor-1 (SDF-1), and human chemokine (C-X-C motif) receptor 4 (CXCR4) in esophageal squamous cell carcinoma. In addition, their correlation with clinicopathological factors and their effect on the prognostic value are also investigated. **Methods:** The immunohistochemical expressions of VEGF-C, SDF-1, and CXCR4, the relationship among them, and the clinicopathological factors including nodal metastasis and prognostic value in the surgical specimens from 95 patients with primary esophageal squamous cell carcinoma were assayed. **Results:** VEGF-C, SDF-1, and CXCR4 proteins were mainly located in the cytoplasm of the tumor cells. The positive expression rates of VEGF-C, SDF-1, and CXCR4 were 89.5%, 84.2%, and 69.5%, respectively. The positive expressions of VEGF-C and SDF-1 were significantly correlated with the cellular differentiation degree, tumor invasion depth, nodal metastasis, number of nodal metastasis, and the tumor, node, and metastasis (TNM) stage as defined by the World Health Organization. The positive rates of VEGF-C and SDF-1 expressions were higher in patients with lymph node metastasis than in those without lymph node. Significant differences were observed between the two ($\chi^2=6.319, P=0.012$; $\chi^2=5.821, P=0.016$). However, the positive expression of the CXCR4 protein was only correlated with the cellular differentiation degree. The Kaplan-Meier survival analysis results show the tumor invasion depth, lymph node metastasis, number of the metastasized lymph nodes, pathological TNM (pTNM) stage, and the expressions of VEGF-C, SDF-1, and CXCR4. The multivariate analysis results show that the tumor invasion depth, nodal metastasis, number of metastatic lymph nodes, pTNM stage, and expression of SDF-1 were independent prognostic factors. **Conclusion:** The expressions of VEGF-C and SDF-1 proteins exhibit a correlation with the clinicopathological variables, especially the lymph node metastasis. Evaluating the SDF-1 expression is useful to determine tumor characteristics, such as nodal metastasis and prognosis, in patients with esophageal squamous cell carcinoma. Moreover, VEGF-C and SDF-1/CXCR4 proteins may have a synergistic effect on the lymph node metastasis of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma.

Keywords: esophageal squamous cell carcinoma, immunohistochemical staining, vascular endothelial growth factor-c, stromal derived factor-1, CXCR4 protein, lymph node metastasis

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VEGF-C是特异性促进淋巴管生成的因子,主要参与肿瘤的淋巴管生成和区域淋巴结转移。间质细胞衍生因子1(Stromal cell derived factor 1, SDF-1)与其受体(高度保守的G蛋白耦联七次跨膜受体, CXCR4)相互作用构成SDF-1/CXCR4生物学轴,在胚胎发育,干细胞迁移及免疫反应中发挥着重要作用。新近研究热点多集中于该生物因子与肿瘤生长转移的作用及可能的作用机制,并且在多种恶性肿瘤的研究中得到初步证实。本研究旨在检测VEGF-C, SDF-1/CXCR4在食管癌组织中的表达及其与食管癌临床病理因素的相关性和对预后的影响,为食管癌的治疗提供新的思路和理论依据。

1 材料与方法

1.1 材料

1.1.1 临床资料 2005年2月至2005年12月在本院接受手术的食管癌石蜡标本95例,病理均为鳞癌,术前均未进行任何治疗。年龄39~76岁,平均59.36岁;T₁+T₂期26例, T₃+T₄期69例;无淋巴结转移者63例,有淋巴结转移者32例。另收集2009年10月9例行食管癌切除的新鲜肿瘤组织,-80°冰箱冻存备用。该9例患者全部为鳞癌,年龄44~75岁,平均58.57岁;T₂期患者2例, T₃期患者7例;有淋巴结转移患者5例,无淋巴结转移患者4例。所有病例均无远处转移。

1.1.2 主要仪器 低温高速离心机(SCR20B型)由日本HITACHI公司制造;双色红外荧光扫描系统由Odyssey生产;脱水机Citadel2000、包埋机Histocentres及切片机AS-325均由英国姗顿公司制造。

1.1.3 主要试剂 蛋白提取试剂盒及BCA蛋白定量试剂盒由上海捷瑞公司生产;鼠抗人VEGF-C蛋白单克隆抗体由北京中杉金桥生物技术有限公司提供;兔抗人SDF-1蛋白多克隆抗体及兔抗人CXCR4蛋白多克隆抗体由武汉博士德工程有限公司提供。

1.2 方法

1.2.1 免疫组织化学采用SP法染色技术 实验具体流程如下:常规切片、脱蜡、水化3%的过氧化氢液阻断内源性过氧化物酶活性、正常山羊血清工作液封闭非特异性抗原、加第一抗体(VEGF-C 1:50; SDF-1 1:33; CXCR4 1:40),孵育后加二抗, DAB显色,苏木

精复染、脱水、透明、封片、镜检。

1.2.2 免疫印迹(Western blot)法检测9例组织中VEGF-C、SDF-1、CXCR4蛋白的表达 按蛋白提取试剂盒说明书提取总蛋白,BCA法定量。SDS-PAGE电泳分离样品蛋白质、转膜、封闭、加入一抗(按抗体说明书建议稀释比例)、洗膜后加二抗,Odyssey双色红外荧光扫描系统进行检测及灰度分析。

1.2.3 结果判定标准 1)VEGF-C以胞浆呈现棕黄色为阳性细胞,计算5个高倍镜视野中阳性细胞所占的比例,以定位明确、染色明显,平均20%以上细胞染色的组织切片视为表达阳性。2)SDF-1和CXCR4的表达:SDF-1表达主要定位于细胞质和(或)胞膜,呈棕黄色细颗粒状,分别根据着色强度及面积分为4个等级。阴性:不着色(-);阳性:浅着色(1+),中等着色(2+),强着色(3+);CXCR4表达主要定位于肿瘤细胞胞质和(或)胞核,根据染色强度及着色面积综合判断,分为4个等级,同SDF-1。

1.3 统计学方法

采用SPSS 13.0统计软件包进行统计分析, χ^2 检验进行各指标与淋巴结转移率之间的比较,Mann-whitney检验和Kruskal-wallis检验进行各指标间的比较。生存分析采用Kaplan-Meier法,Log-rank检验进行组间比较,多因素预后分析用Cox模型。 $P<0.05$ 为差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 随访

随访至2010年1月31日,全组中位随访期35.50个月(4.13~55.67个月)。中途失访11例,随访率89.47%。生存时间按手术日期至死亡日期计算,失访按死亡计算。

2.2 VEGF-C在食管癌的表达与临床病理指标及淋巴结转移的关系

食管癌细胞中VEGF-C蛋白主要定位于细胞质和(或)细胞膜,极少在细胞核内表达。多呈棕黄色颗粒弥漫于胞质中。95例标本中85例VEGF-C蛋白阳性表达,占89.5%。其中弱阳性、中等阳性及强阳性表达分别为15例、39例和31例。VEGF-C蛋白表达与多个因素均有相关性($P<0.05$,表1)。

表1 VEGF-C、SDF-1、CXCR4蛋白表达与临床病理指标相关性

Table 1 Correlation of VEGF-C, SDF-1, and CXCR4 protein expression with clinicopathological parameters

Clinicopathological index	n	VEGF-C			SDF-1			CXCR4			
		Positive	χ^2	P	Positive	χ^2	P	Positive	χ^2	P	
Gender	Male	68	61	0.386	0.535	59	1.174	0.279	46	0.376	0.540
	Female	27	23			21			20		

表1 VEGF-C、SDF-1、CXCR4蛋白表达与临床病理指标相关性(续表1)

Table 1 Correlation of VEGF-C, SDF-1, and CXCR4 protein expression with clinicopathological parameters (Continued table 1)

Clinicopathological index		n	VEGF-C			SDF-1			CXCR4		
			Positive	χ^2	P	Positive	χ^2	P	Positive	χ^2	P
Age (years)	≤60	47	41	0.128	0.720	39	0.106	0.745	31	0.542	0.461
	>60	48	43			41			35		
Sites	Superior	14	13	2.435	0.296	12	1.378	0.502	9	5.182	0.075
	Middle	49	45			43			39		
	Inferior	32	26			25			18		
Tumor length (cm)	≤5	50	43	0.604	0.437	39	3.062	0.080	36	0.318	0.573
	>5	45	41			41			30		
Differentiation degree	Well, undifferentiated	51	42	3.960	0.047	37	11.262	0.001	43	11.434	0.001
	Poorly-differentiated	44	42			43			23		
T Stage	T ₁ +T ₂	26	19	8.232	0.004	18	6.041	0.014	16	1.063	0.303
	T ₃ +T ₄	69	65			62			50		
Nodal metastasis	No	63	52	6.319	0.012	49	5.821	0.016	41	1.703	0.192
	Yes	32	32			31			25		
Number of nodal metastasis	0	63	52	6.319	0.042	49	6.028	0.049	41	1.750	0.417
	1	17	17			16			13		
	≥2	15	15			15			12		
TNM Stage	I + II	62	51	6.622	0.010	48	6.191	0.013	42	0.252	0.615
	III + IV	33	33			32			24		

2.3 SDF-1在食管癌的表达与临床病理指标及淋巴结转移的关系

食管癌细胞中SDF-1蛋白主要在细胞质和(或)细胞膜表达,极少在细胞核内表达,呈棕褐色颗粒状。在所检测的95例食管癌标本中,80例SDF-1蛋白阳性表达,占84.2%。其中弱阳性、中等阳性及强阳性表达分别为10例、27例和43例。SDF-1蛋白表达也与多种因素均有相关性($P<0.05$,表1)。

2.4 CXCR4在食管癌组织中的表达与临床病理指标及淋巴结转移的关系

食管癌细胞中CXCR4蛋白主要在细胞质和(或)细胞核表达,经免疫组织化学染色后呈浅棕色颗粒状。在所检测的95例食管癌术后标本中,66例

CXCR4蛋白阳性表达,占69.5%。其中弱阳性和中等阳性表达分别为49例和17例,无强阳性表达者。CXCR4蛋白表达仅与肿瘤细胞分化程度呈正相关($\chi^2=11.434, P=0.001$)。但在有无淋巴结转移组中差异未见统计学意义($\chi^2=1.703, P=0.192$,表1)。

2.5 预后生存及其影响因素

全组平均生存期36.46个月,中位生存期35.50个月,1、2、3年生存率分别为90.53%、68.42%和47.44%。单因素分析及多因素分析结果见表2,3。

2.6 Western blot分析结果

9例食管癌组织中蛋白的表达量无淋巴结转移者和有淋巴结转移者Western-blot统计结果见表4。

表2 95例食管癌患者单因素分析结果

Table 2 Results of the univariate analysis for 95 esophageal cancer patients

Indexs	n	MST (month)	Survival rate (%)			χ^2	P	
			1-year	2-year	3-year			
Gender	Male	68	35.84	94.12	72.06	49.06	0.95	0.330 9
	Female	27	30.12	81.48	59.26	44.44		
Age (years)	≤60	47	35.84	93.62	70.21	48.36	0	0.978 6
	>60	48	34.13	87.50	66.67	47.10		
Sites	Superior	14	28.93	100.00	57.14	42.86	1.50	0.471 5
	Middle	49	35.50	85.71	65.31	47.60		
	Inferior	32	36.67	93.75	78.13	56.25		

表2 95例食管癌患者单因素分析结果(续表2)

Table 2 Results of the univariate analysis for 95 esophageal cancer patients (Continued table 2)

Indexs		n	MST (month)	Survival rate (%)			χ^2	P
				1-year	2-year	3-year		
Tumor length (cm)	≤5	65	35.50	90.77	70.77	45.68	0.01	0.934 7
	>5	30	34.13	90.00	63.33	50.00		
Differentiation degree	Well, un-differentiated	51	36.67	94.12	70.59	52.24	1.77	0.183 9
	Poorly-differentiated	44	29.16	86.36	65.91	41.99		
Stump invasion	No	87	35.84	89.66	68.97	48.51	0.82	0.365 5
	Yes	8	27.56	87.50	62.50	37.50		
T-stage	T ₁ +T ₂	26	—	100.00	80.72	65.38	3.92	0.047 6
	T ₃ +T ₄	69	34.33	86.96	63.77	40.87		
TNM-stage	I + II	62	—	95.16	74.19	62.56	14.96	0.000 1
	III + IV	33	28.98	81.82	57.58	23.57		
Nodal metastasis	No	63	49.44	93.65	73.02	60.64	9.25	0.002 3
	Yes	32	28.93	84.38	59.38	24.31		
Number of nodal metastasis	0	63	49.44	93.65	73.02	60.64	9.41	0.009 0
	1	17	28.93	82.35	58.82	29.41		
	≥2	15	29.67	80.00	46.67	20.00		
VEGF-C expression	Negative	11	—	100.00	90.91	81.82	4.20	0.040 4
	Postive	84	34.33	89.29	65.48	43.07		
SDF-1 expression	Negative	15	—	100.00	93.33	84.85	8.59	0.003 4
	Postive	80	30.12	88.75	63.75	40.55		
CXCR4 expression	Negative	29	50.45	93.10	89.66	66.53	4.79	0.028 6
	Postive	66	29.67	89.39	59.09	39.16		

表3 Cox 回归模型多因素分析

Table 3 Results of the Multivariate Cox regression model analysis

Indexs	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Exp (B)	95%CI	
						Lower	Upper
Lymph node metastasis	0.593	0.273	4.724	0.030	1.809	0.870	1.703
Number of nodal metastasis	0.335	0.161	4.338	0.037	1.398	0.806	2.250
TNM-stage	0.999	0.269	13.800	0	2.715	0.903	1.630
SDF-1 expression	1.398	0.603	5.302	0.021	2.012	0.595	3.760

表4 Western blot 检测有无淋巴结转移在食管癌组织中蛋白表达的结果

Table 4 Results of the Western blot assay for the three kinds of protein

Indexs	Lymph node metastasis		t	P
	Yes	No		
VEGF-C	1.227 ± 0.443	0.536 ± 0.192	3.317	0.048
SDF-1	0.762 ± 0.128	0.294 ± 0.131	2.949	0.034
CXCR4	1.593 ± 0.299	1.396 ± 0.351	1.092	0.298

3 讨论

肿瘤微环境内各种细胞因子的相互作用,在肿瘤浸润转移过程中发挥了重要作用,其中趋化因子成为近几年关注的热点。SDF-1 多表达于心、肝、脑、骨骼肌和淋巴样组织的血管内皮细胞、间质成纤维细胞和成骨细胞^[1-2]。其与配体 CXCR4 结合可能参

与造血、干细胞运动、血管形成等一系列生理病理过程。肿瘤细胞高表达 SDF-1 及其在肿瘤转移中的作用已在多种肿瘤中得到证实^[3]。临床资料表明,多数已发生淋巴转移的肿瘤高表达 VEGF-C^[4]。本研究结果显示 VEGF-C 和 SDF-1 在肿瘤细胞的表达与肿瘤细胞分化程度、浸润深度、淋巴结转移和转移的个数以及 TNM 分期均有相关性,其中有淋巴结转移组 VEGF-C 及 SDF-1 的表达率分别高于无淋巴结转移组,相比差异有统计学意义。而 CXCR4 在肿瘤细胞的表达仅与肿瘤细胞分化程度相关,且分化越高表达越强,这与 VEGF-C 和 SDF-1 分化越低表达越强的结果正相反。Sasaki 等^[5]研究 SDF-1、CXCR4 在食管癌组织中的表达发现 CXCR4 的表达与临床病理因素均不相关,而 SDF-1 则与淋巴结转移及分期明显相

关,与本研究结果类似。CXCR4在肿瘤转移中的作用备受争议,因为其表达水平与在正常组织中的表达水平相当,并且该蛋白的表达与淋巴结转移和预后均未见明显的相关性^[6-7],这与本研究所得到的结果基本相同。此结果提示SDF-1较其受体(CXCR4)在食管癌淋巴结转移方面有明显的优势。多数研究显示VEGF-C通过增加淋巴管密度与微血管密度而与淋巴结转移密切相关, Sugiura等^[8]研究了VEGF-C、VEGF-D蛋白表达与口腔鳞癌的淋巴结转移的关系,结果表明VEGF-C蛋白表达及淋巴管密度与淋巴结转移密切相关。Baek等^[9]在VEGF-C蛋白表达与喉癌的研究显示VEGF-C蛋白表达强弱及淋巴管密度大小可以预测淋巴结转移和局部复发。以上结论与本文对VEGF-C在食管癌中的表达的研究结果一致,均提示其与淋巴结转移的密切关系。

预后分析结果显示,除淋巴结转移状态及TNM分期等传统预后因素外,VEGF-C及SDF-1、CXCR4三种因子蛋白表达对生存率也有明显影响。多因素分析显示SDF-1成为预后的独立性影响因素。但是也有研究认为SDF-1表达与肿瘤预后无关,而是其受体CXCR4提示预后^[10]。Kaifi等^[11]对136例食管癌病例进行研究,也认为食管癌CXCR4表达者预后较非表达者差。而最近采用RT-PCR法对乳腺癌的研究发现SDF-1高表达可增加细胞的侵袭和迁移,且与淋巴结转移相关,与生存时间呈负相关^[12]。有研究结果显示SDF-1及其特异性受体CXCR4结合后可激活肿瘤细胞内多种信号通路,在多种肿瘤的侵袭、发展、转移过程中发挥重要作用^[13]。由于SDF-1和VEGF-C均可通过PI3K/Akt和MEK/ERK途径激活下游信号分子,表明在SDF-1信号通路和VEGF-C信号通路之间可能存在着相互联系^[14-15]。黄俊辉等^[16]认为乳腺癌中存在VEGF-CXCR4-SDF-1信息通路。在人胃癌中VEGF-C可能通过某种机制调节CXCR4的产生或表达,形成VEGF-C-NRP-1-CXCR4信号通路,并且胃癌细胞也可能通过该途径上调CXCR4的表达,促进肿瘤细胞向特定器官转移^[17]。

综上所述,VEGF-C和SDF-1在食管癌淋巴结转移中扮演了重要的作用,其中SDF-1表达的高低可能更好地提示预后。近年来许多动物模型实验证实,阻断SDF-1/CXCR4相互作用可抑制血管淋巴管生成,发挥抗肿瘤效应并抑制肿瘤细胞的转移^[18-19],可能会成为食管癌分子靶向治疗的方法。

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