

多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍磁共振成像研究进展

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【摘要】 多发性硬化是临床常见的中枢神经系统脱髓鞘疾病,可伴发认知功能障碍,其发生机制迄今尚未阐明。越来越多 MRI 新技术的广泛应用,为从神经影像学角度阐述多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍的发生机制提供重要依据。本文对近年关于多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍的 MRI 研究进展进行概述。

【关键词】 多发性硬化; 认知障碍; 磁共振成像; 综述

Research progress of MRI for cognitive impairment in multiple sclerosis

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【Abstract】 Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a common inflammatory demyelinating disease that affects the central nervous system (CNS). It may be accompanied by cognitive impairment, however, the mechanism for cognitive impairment in multiple sclerosis is still unknown. More and more MRI techniques are used to improve the understanding on pathogenetic mechanism of cognitive impairment in multiple sclerosis. This paper summarizes MRI measures currently available to explain the possible mechanism for cognitive impairment of multiple sclerosis.

【Key words】 Multiple sclerosis; Cognition disorders; Magnetic resonance imaging; Review

多发性硬化(MS)是一种以中枢神经系统炎性脱髓鞘改变为主的疾病,临床症状复杂多样,除常见的运动、感觉、视力、语言、平衡和括约肌功能障碍外,认知功能障碍亦不鲜见。有文献报道,高达 43%~70% 的多发性硬化患者伴认知功能障碍^[1]。认知功能障碍严重影响患者生活质量,亦给家庭和社会带来沉重负担。相比运动和感觉障碍而言,认知功能障碍发病隐匿且呈渐进性进展,不易觉察,加之临床缺乏统一且操作性良好的认知功能评价工具,多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍常被忽视。多发性硬化的主要病理改变是白质脱髓鞘,近年研究显示,除白质病变外,灰质受累也是多发性硬化的常见病理改变^[2-3],且白质脱髓鞘、皮质萎缩和深部灰质病灶(如丘脑、基底神经核等)均可能参与认知障碍的发生与发展,但各病变部位所占比例和作用机制尚存较大争议。认知功能障碍的发生机制迄今尚不明确,多认为是多种复杂因素相互作用的

结果。主要表现为信息处理速度、记忆力、执行功能和视觉空间能力等多个认知域损害^[4]。此外,个体差异也是其重要特征,认知功能障碍程度相似的多发性硬化患者,颅内病灶部位、数目甚至临床分型可明显不同;同样,颅内病灶部位、数目和临床分型相似的患者,认知功能障碍程度亦可明显不同。近年,随着磁共振波谱成像(MRS)、fMRI、扩散加权成像(DWI)和双反转恢复(DIR)等影像学技术的广泛应用,MRI 成为观察和诊断多发性硬化病情进展的重要手段。本文重点阐述 MRI 各相关序列呈现的神经解剖结构病变及其与认知功能障碍之间的关系,以及不同病变部位可能造成的不同认知功能障碍,进一步阐明认知障碍的发生机制,以期为该病的早期诊断、针对性治疗和可能预后提供相应的理论依据。

一、脑白质病变

1. 脑白质病变与认知功能障碍 多项研究显示,脑白质病灶与整体认知功能及其所包含的言语功能、空间记忆、工作记忆、执行功能、信息处理速度等多个认知域中的一项或多项功能密切相关,即病灶数目多或体积大的患者认知功能较差^[2-3],由于

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白质病灶主要累及纤维束,故提示白质纤维束在认知功能障碍的发生与发展中发挥重要作用。据此观点,临床提出“脑功能失连接假说”。Rossi 等^[5]研究显示,多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍患者与认知功能保留患者脑白质病变部位相似,前者病灶体积更大且累及胼胝体的概率是后者的 2 倍。也有研究显示,脑白质病灶体积与认知功能并无关联性^[6]。上述研究结果不一致的原因可能是由于纳入对象的基线资料、神经心理学测验量表、认知功能障碍判断标准或统计分析方法不同,故提示在诊断多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍时仅检测脑白质病灶是不充分的。

2. 表观正常脑白质的微观病变与认知功能障碍

扩散张量成像(DTI)可以发现常规 MRI 显示的表观正常脑白质(NAWM)的微观结构改变,在认知功能障碍的发生与发展中起一定作用,进一步支持“脑功能失连接假说”。有学者采用 DTI 研究多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍,结果显示,胼胝体及其他连接前额叶皮质的表观正常脑白质与信息处理速度、注意力、工作记忆等有关^[7-8]。值得注意的是,表观正常脑白质与 T₂WI 显示的白质病灶分布区域仅部分重叠,表明除白质病灶外,表观正常脑白质本身也是导致认知功能障碍的重要机制^[7-8]。

二、灰质病变

1. 皮质病变与认知功能障碍 近年来,随着 DIR 序列和高场强 MRI 的应用,皮质病灶阳性检出率升高,颠覆了既往多发性硬化多无皮质受累的观点。有研究显示,T₂WI 显示认知功能障碍和认知功能保留的多发性硬化患者皮质病灶脱髓鞘方式相似,但 DIR 序列显示前者皮质病灶体积更大,而全皮质体积较小;进一步行 Logistic 回归分析显示,皮质体积($OR = 0.444, 95\% CI: 0.072 \sim 0.212; P < 0.001$)和皮质病灶体积($OR = 0.597, 95\% CI: 0.003 \sim 0.010; P < 0.001$)均为认知功能障碍的独立危险因素^[3,9]。Harrison 等^[10]采用高场强(7.0 T)MRI 研究皮质病变与认知功能障碍之间的关系,结果显示,皮质病灶数目和体积与认知功能障碍有关。而 Papadopoulou 等^[3]则报告了相反的结果,他们采用 DIR 序列检测 91 例临床孤立综合征(CIS)和多发性硬化患者的颅内病灶体积,认为信息处理速度下降的预测因素是白质病灶体积,而非皮质病灶体积。尽管 DIR 序列使皮质病灶阳性检出率升高,但是由于其并非常规检测项目,尚缺乏统一的判定标准,对多发性硬化

最常见、最具特征性的软脑膜下病灶敏感性较低,因此 DIR 序列的临床应用受到限制^[11]。

2. 皮质萎缩与认知功能障碍 有研究显示,与长 T₂信号的白质病灶体积相比,脑容积与包括认知功能障碍在内的临床残疾状况相关性更高^[12]。脑萎缩程度以脑实质分数(BPF)表示,计算公式为:脑实质分数 = 脑实质容积 / 整个颅腔容积。研究显示,多发性硬化患者脑实质分数低于正常对照者,且与病程和扩展残疾状态量表(EDSS)评分相关、而与复发率和病灶部位无明显关联性^[13]。另一项研究显示,随着时间的推移,认知功能下降的多发性硬化患者脑萎缩程度较认知功能稳定或改善者更严重^[14]。上述研究结果提示,脑实质分数可以作为评价神经变性或不可逆性神经功能缺损以及认知功能障碍的指标。脑萎缩程度尤其是皮质萎缩程度与认知功能障碍相关。有研究报道 41 例病程长达 10 年的多发性硬化患者,认知功能障碍组患者较认知功能保留组皮质容积更小^[15]。此外,特定部位皮质萎缩还可以引起特定的认知功能障碍,例如,右侧额叶皮质萎缩与工作记忆和视觉记忆下降有关,左侧额叶皮质萎缩与言语记忆下降有关^[16]。研究显示,复发-缓解型多发性硬化(RRMS)和继发进展型多发性硬化(SPMS)患者双侧海马体积均小于正常对照者,其中前者脑萎缩局限于海马 CA1 区,而后者脑萎缩范围则更广泛^[17]。Koenig 等^[18]认为,多发性硬化患者海马体积较正常对照者减小 6% ~ 7%,且海马体积减小与记忆力减退和信息处理速度下降有关。

3. 脑深部灰质核团病变与认知功能障碍 医学影像学研究显示,多发性硬化患者存在脑深部灰质核团病变和萎缩,深部灰质甚至在疾病早期阶段即参与认知功能障碍的发生^[19]。目前,较多见诸文献报道的是丘脑和基底神经核。(1)丘脑:丘脑作为皮质下中枢和中继站,参与意识、认知、情感等高级皮质功能与运动感觉的整合以及睡眠-觉醒周期的调节等。研究显示,丘脑体积较小的多发性硬化患者信息处理速度、言语流畅性、言语学习能力、视空间能力和执行功能均较差^[19]。丘脑萎缩程度与第三脑室宽度显著相关,因此,目前的研究多以第三脑室宽度替代丘脑体积。其中一项研究显示,多发性硬化患者第三脑室宽度较正常对照者增加,且与认知功能呈负相关^[20],提示第三脑室宽度是评价记忆力和信息处理速度的良好指标。(2)基底神经核:

T₂WI 显示基底神经核低信号(即铁离子沉积)是多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍的强有力预测因素^[21]。与正常对照者相比,多发性硬化患者双侧尾状核比例(同一平面双侧尾状核之间最小距离与脑横径的比值)明显增加^[22],提示基底神经核萎缩是信息处理速度下降的强有力预测因素。

4. 皮质重组及脑的可塑性 fMRI 的应用可从皮质地图、神经网络层面研究认知功能相关皮质重组和脑的可塑性。一项关于任务态 fMRI 的研究显示,与正常对照者相比,多发性硬化患者任务相关脑区和额外脑区的功能连接增强,且这种功能连接增强更广泛地表现在脑皮质回路中^[23]。对早期多发性硬化患者进行为期 1 年的随访,结果显示,右侧前额叶背外侧皮质(DLPFC)功能连接增强与工作记忆和信息处理速度改善有关^[24],提示相关神经网络连接增强可以部分抵消脑结构破坏导致的认知功能下降,此为脑对于结构破坏的一种适应性改变即皮质重组。然而,额外的神经网络不能无限制增加,随着认知任务难度的增加,额外神经环路易出现失代偿,从而出现认知功能下降^[25]。晚近一项对复发-缓解型多发性硬化患者进行的为期 20 个月的随访研究显示,左侧颞顶叶神经网络连接增强与信息处理速度下降有关^[26]。此时神经网络连接增强被认为是“低效”的表现,即执行认知任务时需付出额外努力才能达到正常水平,称为认知失调理论^[27]。由于认知功能障碍患者执行任务的质量不同,即试验条件不同,因此给任务态 fMRI 结果判定带来困难,此时,静息态 fMRI 可有效替代任务态 fMRI。一项关于静息态 fMRI 的研究显示,认知功能障碍的多发性硬化患者脑前部尤其是额叶神经网络连接减少^[28]。有文献报道,认知功能较好的多发性硬化患者存在数个增强的与注意力相关的神经网络连接^[29],支持静息态神经网络连接存在适应性改变假说。静息态神经网络连接适应性增强多出现在复发-缓解型多发性硬化早期,甚至在临床孤立综合征时即已存在,随着病情进展,神经网络连接因颅内病灶数目的逐渐增多而减弱^[30]。

5. 认知储备能力 认知储备能力是大脑对于某些引起认知功能下降的疾病维持其最优化状态而不出现临床症状的能力。尽管认知储备能力较好的多发性硬化患者颅内病灶数目较认知储备能力较差者更多或体积更大,亦可能表现出同等程度的认知功能障碍。认知功能障碍与病程无明显关联

性,即可部分用认知储备能力来解释。认知储备假说认为,遗传因素(包括脑最长发育时间、脑容积等)和环境因素(包括受教育程度、职业、知识积累、健康、业余活动等)均可影响认知功能。研究显示,高智力水平有助于延缓多发性硬化等疾病负荷对认知功能的负面影响^[31]。Sumowski 等^[32]的研究显示,脑发育时间长的多发性硬化患者注意力和执行功能更强,值得注意的是,早年丰富的生活经历可以延缓认知功能下降,且不依赖脑发育时间和受教育程度。另一项研究显示,受教育程度较低的多发性硬化患者各项认知功能评价量表评分均低于正常对照者,受教育程度较高者仅信息处理速度和注意力水平低于正常对照者^[33]。有学者对认知水平与第三脑室宽度之间的关系进行研究,结果显示,脑萎缩程度与受教育程度相关^[20]。也有学者得出类似结果,脑萎缩程度和信息处理速度可能受智力水平的影响^[34]。目前,关于认知储备能力的纵向研究较少,一项纳入 90 例多发性硬化患者的为期 5 年的随访研究结果显示,将受教育程度作为认知储备能力的预测因素,随着时间的推移,受教育程度超过 14 年的患者信息处理速度无变化,而受教育程度不足 9 年的患者信息处理速度明显下降^[35]。晚近一项为期 4.50 年的随访研究显示,脑最长发育时间可以延缓认知效率降低,高智力水平可以延缓认知效率和记忆力减退^[36]。难度较高的学习任务可以使认知相关功能网络更高效地参与其中,这可能是受教育程度较高的患者认知功能保留的作用机制。也有研究认为,脑血流量增加有助于提高认知储备能力,而受教育程度可增加脑血流量,从而为神经元活动提供必须的血氧和能量,同时降低神经元对神经毒素的敏感性^[37-38]。然而一项为期 1.60 年的随访研究得出不一致的结果,高智力水平并非认知功能的保护因素^[39],考虑可能是与较短的随访时间内患者认知功能下降和脑组织破坏程度相关性不明显有关。

综上所述,越来越多的研究从分子、细胞、病理、皮质地图、神经网络等层面分析多发性硬化伴认知功能障碍,这些研究结果让我们看到了希望,对于早期鉴别诊断有认知功能障碍风险的多发性硬化具有重要意义,为尽早开始非药物治疗和认知功能重建提供理论依据。尽管如此,仍有许多值得探讨的问题:对认知功能障碍起决定作用的是白质、灰质还是二者兼有,灰白质病变之间的相互作

用,各神经网络对认知功能障碍的独立作用及相互作用,认知储备能力达到何种程度可延缓认知功能下降,神经功能重组协调与失调假说的动态演变等,尚待大样本联合病理学、医学影像学的长期动态观察,从而更全面地阐明认知功能相关病理生理学机制,为药物治疗和行为干预提供理论依据。

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Systems Biology of Alzheimer's Disease published

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Alzheimer's disease (AD) and many other neurodegenerative disorders are multifactorial in nature, involving a combination of genomic, epigenomic, network dynamic and environmental factors. A proper investigation requires new integrative Systems Biology approaches, at both the experimental and computational level. The interplay of disease mechanisms and homeostatic networks will underlie the time of onset and rate of progression of the disease.

This book addresses such an integrated approach to AD. It aims to present Systems Biology, including both experimental and computational approaches, as a new strategy for the study of AD and other multifactorial diseases, with the hope that the results will translate into more effective diagnosis and treatment, as well as improved public health policies.

Written for the highly successful *Methods in Molecular Biology* series, practical and cutting-edge *Systems Biology of Alzheimer's Disease* is intended for post-graduate students, post-doctoral researchers and experts in different fields with an interest in comprehensive Systems Biology strategies applicable to AD and other complex multifactorial diseases (including other neurodegenerative diseases and cancers). This book aims to complement other excellent volumes and monographs on AD that cover fundamental, physiological or medical aspects of the disease.

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