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# NLRP3炎症小体:阿尔茨海默病炎症反应核心机制及潜在靶点

时建铨 徐俊

**【摘要】** 阿尔茨海默病是导致老年人认知功能障碍最为常见的疾病,其具体发病机制迄今尚未阐明,持续过度的炎症反应在阿尔茨海默病的病理生理学机制中发挥重要作用。核苷酸结合寡聚化结构域样受体蛋白3(NLRP3)炎症小体信号转导通路是阿尔茨海默病炎症反应的关键环节,本文拟对NLRP3炎症小体的结构和激活机制、参与阿尔茨海默病炎症反应的机制以及特异性NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂进行综述。

**【关键词】** 阿尔茨海默病; 炎症; NLRP3炎症小体(非MeSH词); 综述

## NLRP3 inflammasome: the core mechanism and potential target of inflammatory response in Alzheimer's disease

SHI Jian-quan<sup>1</sup>, XU Jun<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Neurology, Nanjing First Hospital, Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing 210006, Jiangsu, China

<sup>2</sup>Department of Cognitive Neurology, Neurology Center, Beijing Tiantan Hospital, Capital Medical University; China National Clinical Research Center for Neurological Diseases, Beijing 100070, China

Corresponding author: XU Jun (Email: neurojun@126.com)

**【Abstract】** Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most common cause of cognitive impairment in the elderly. However, the pathogenesis of AD remains unclear. Persistent excessive inflammatory response plays a pivotal role in the development of AD. It has been suggested that activation of the nucleotide-binding oligomerization domain-like receptor protein 3 (NLRP3) inflammasome is important for inflammatory response in AD. This article reviews the structure and activation of NLRP3 inflammasome and the specific inhibitors of NLRP3 inflammasome.

**【Key words】** Alzheimer disease; Inflammation; NLRP3 inflammasome (not in MeSH); Review

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阿尔茨海默病(AD)是导致老年人群认知功能障碍的最常见疾病,已经成为全球重大公共健康问

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作者单位:210006 南京医科大学附属南京医院神经内科(时建铨);100070 首都医科大学附属北京天坛医院神经病学中心认知障碍科 国家神经系统疾病临床医学研究中心(徐俊)

通讯作者:徐俊,Email:neurojun@126.com

题<sup>[1]</sup>。迄今阿尔茨海默病的发病机制仍不明确,现有的二线药物均不能有效延缓或阻止疾病进展,多项药物临床试验相继折戟沉沙<sup>[2]</sup>。持续过度的炎症反应在阿尔茨海默病的病理生理学机制中发挥重要作用<sup>[3]</sup>,其中,核苷酸结合寡聚化结构域样受体蛋白3(NLRP3)炎症小体信号转导通路是关键环节,抑制NLRP3炎症小体的激活可以改善阿尔茨海默病转基因模型的行为学和病理损害<sup>[4]</sup>。本文拟就NLRP3炎症小体结构和激活机制、参与阿尔茨海默病炎症反应机制、特异性NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂以及潜在阿尔茨海默病治疗策略进行综述。

## 一、NLRP3炎症小体的分子结构、组装及激活机制

固有免疫通过模式识别受体(PRRs)识别病原相关分子模式(PAMP)和损伤相关分子模式(DAMP),以清除病原体和受损宿主细胞并修复损伤组织;模式识别受体包括Toll样受体(TLR)、核苷酸结合寡聚化结构域(NOD)样受体(NLR)、RIG-I样受体(RLR)等,激活后启动下游信号转导通路,介导免疫反应,其中某些NOD样受体激活后可以形成炎症小体,从而导致炎性反应<sup>[5]</sup>。

NLRP3炎症小体是目前研究最多的一种炎症小体,包括NLRP3、凋亡相关斑点样蛋白(ASC)和Caspase-1前体共三部分<sup>[6]</sup>,其中,NLRP3包含羧基端(C端)富含亮氨酸重复序列(LRR)结构域、中间NOD结构域以及氨基端(N端)热蛋白结构域(PYD),C端LRR结构域识别PAMP或DAMP后,中间NOD结构域即介导自身寡聚化,继而N端PYD结构域与ASC相结合,募集Caspase-1前体,激活NLRP3炎症小体,促进白细胞介素(IL)-1β和18的活化成熟<sup>[7]</sup>。

NLRP3炎症小体可以通过识别外来危险信号(如细菌、病毒等病原体)和内在危险信号[如ATP、尿酸盐、β-淀粉样蛋白(Aβ)、氧化修饰低密度脂蛋白(ox-LDL)等],导致自身激活<sup>[8]</sup>。迄今NLRP3炎症小体的激活机制尚不明确,公认的激活模型包括3种,即溶酶体破坏模型、半通道模型和活性氧(ROS)模型<sup>[8]</sup>。溶酶体破坏模型通过包括Aβ等在内的晶体或颗粒物质导致溶酶体破坏,释放组织蛋白酶,从而激活NLRP3炎症小体;半通道模型通过细胞外ATP等激活细胞表面P2X7受体,开放钾离子通道使钾离子外流,从而激活NLRP3炎症小体;活性氧模型作用于硫氧还蛋白相互作用蛋白(TXNIP),从而激活NLRP3炎症小体<sup>[8]</sup>。虽然,NLRP3激动剂可以通过不同模型激活NLRP3炎症小体,但是目前尚未发现可以同时通过3种模型激活NLRP3炎症小体的激动剂<sup>[9]</sup>。NLRP3炎症小体激活后,活化的Caspase-1切割GSDMD并释放N端结构域,引起细胞膜穿孔,从而诱导细胞焦亡并诱发强烈的炎性反应<sup>[10]</sup>。

## 二、NLRP3炎症小体是阿尔茨海默病炎性反应的核心机制

持续过度的炎性反应在阿尔茨海默病的病理生理学机制中发挥重要作用<sup>[11]</sup>。一方面,脑小胶质

细胞是清除Aβ的重要途径;另一方面,炎性反应是小胶质细胞损伤神经元的关键媒介;与此同时,脑组织炎性微环境改变还可调节小胶质细胞清除Aβ的能力<sup>[3]</sup>。因此,由小胶质细胞介导的炎性反应机制一直是阿尔茨海默病研究的焦点。既往研究显示,NLRP3炎症小体主要表达于外周免疫细胞。Gustin等<sup>[12]</sup>发现,脑组织小胶质细胞表达NLRP3、ASC和Caspase-1,而星形胶质细胞则不表达,表明脑组织NLRP3炎症小体的激活主要发生于小胶质细胞。

临床研究和动物实验结果均显示,Aβ可刺激小胶质细胞产生IL-1β<sup>[13]</sup>,小胶质细胞经纤维状Aβ刺激后可分泌更多IL-1β<sup>[14]</sup>;阿尔茨海默病患者脑组织、脑脊液、外周血IL-1β表达水平平均显著升高<sup>[15-17]</sup>;经Aβ处理的阿尔茨海默病转基因模型小鼠脑组织和神经元均表达高水平的Caspase-1和IL-1β<sup>[18-19]</sup>,尤其是Aβ斑块周围小胶质细胞表达的IL-1β水平更高<sup>[20-21]</sup>;IL-1β可诱导阿尔茨海默病模型大鼠皮质神经元发生Tau蛋白磷酸化等特征性病理改变<sup>[22]</sup>;阿尔茨海默病转基因小鼠海马表达IL-1β,可加重中枢神经系统慢性炎性反应<sup>[23]</sup>。上述研究结果表明,IL-1β在阿尔茨海默病的病理生理学机制中发挥重要作用。

IL-1β是NLRP3炎症小体激活后的主要效应因子。Halle等<sup>[24]</sup>的研究显示,Aβ可以促进小胶质细胞溶酶体破坏和组织蛋白酶B释放,激活NLRP3炎症小体,一方面导致小胶质细胞分泌IL-1β,进而诱导炎性反应;另一方面分泌的IL-1β通过下游信号转导通路持续过度激活小胶质细胞,表明NLRP3炎症小体激活是Aβ诱导小胶质细胞炎性反应的关键环节。我们课题组的前期研究提示,某些因素(如大气细颗粒物PM2.5暴露)可以加剧阿尔茨海默病细胞模型NLRP3炎症小体激活、炎性反应和介导的神经元损伤<sup>[25]</sup>。动物实验表明,青蒿素可通过抑制NLRP3炎症小体激活而减轻APPswe/PS-1dE9转基因小鼠脑组织Aβ的沉积<sup>[26]</sup>。Heneka等<sup>[27]</sup>发现,NLRP3或Caspase-1基因敲除可调节阿尔茨海默病转基因小鼠的小胶质细胞表型,增强其吞噬能力,改善Aβ沉积和行为学异常。进一步研究显示,Aβ可以诱导皮质神经元焦亡,Caspase-1短发夹RNA(shRNA)则具有减轻阿尔茨海默病转基因小鼠脑组织神经元焦亡并改善其行为学异常的作用<sup>[28]</sup>。Dempsey等<sup>[29]</sup>发现,NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂可减轻

*APP/PS-1*转基因小鼠小胶质细胞焦亡,增强小胶质细胞清除A $\beta$ 的能力。由此可见,NLRP3炎症小体是阿尔茨海默病炎症反应的核心机制。

### 三、NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂

NLRP3炎症小体是阿尔茨海默病药物研发的新靶点<sup>[4]</sup>,目前临床常用抗IL-1 $\beta$ 抗体和重组IL-1 $\beta$ 受体阻断剂治疗NLRP3炎症小体相关疾病,例如Canakinumab、Anakinra等。此外,某些小分子化合物也具有抑制NLRP3炎症小体激活的功效,如 $\beta$ -羟丁酸<sup>[30]</sup>、Bay 11-7082<sup>[31]</sup>等,但这些抑制剂均缺乏特异性,有可能引起免疫抑制效应<sup>[32]</sup>。因此,特异性NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂方是最佳选择。迄今已经证实的特异性NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂主要包括MCC950、CY-09、OLT1177、Tranilast以及Oridonin共5种。

1. MCC950 2015年,Coll等<sup>[33]</sup>首次报告一种新型特异性NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂——MCC950。MCC950特异性抑制巨噬细胞NLRP3炎症小体激活的机制是:抑制NLRP3诱导的ASC寡聚化,同时对AIM2、NLRC4和NLRP1无明显抑制作用。进一步的在体实验显示,MCC950可以显著减少IL-1 $\beta$ 和IL-18的生成,减轻实验性自身免疫性脑脊髓炎(EAE)模型小鼠的疾病严重程度<sup>[33]</sup>。Dempsey等<sup>[29]</sup>发现,MCC950可以减轻*APP/PS-1*转基因小鼠脑组织A $\beta$ 之聚集,改善其行为学异常。

2. CY-09 2017年,Jiang等<sup>[34]</sup>发现,CY-09可以直接与NLRP3中间NOD结构域相结合,抑制NLRP3-ATP酶活性,进而抑制NLRP3炎症小体的组装和激活,但对NLRC4、NLRP1、NOD2和RIG-I则无明显抑制作用,表明CY-09可以特异性抑制NLRP3炎症小体的激活。进一步的在体实验,CY-09对Cryopyrin相关周期性综合征和2型糖尿病动物模型均显示出极佳的疗效<sup>[34]</sup>。

3. OLT1177 是一种治疗关节炎的药物,目前正在治疗急性痛风性关节炎的Ⅱ期临床试验。Marchetti等<sup>[35]</sup>发现,OLT1177可以减少关节炎动物模型外周血中性粒细胞浸润,减轻关节肿胀,抑制IL-1 $\beta$ 分泌。进一步的体外实验提示,OLT1177具有抑制NLRP3炎症小体激活的作用,而对AIM2和NLRC4无明显抑制作用<sup>[36]</sup>。在体试验结果提示,OLT1177可降低Cryopyrin相关周期性综合征患者外周血单核细胞Caspase-1活性和抑制IL-1 $\beta$ 生成,其抑制NLRP3炎症小体的主要机制是直接结合

NLRP3、抑制ATP酶活性<sup>[36]</sup>。

4. Tranilast 是一种抗过敏药,安全性极佳,大多数患者可耐受每日高达600mg的剂量<sup>[37]</sup>。Tranilast还具有抗炎症反应作用,可抑制肥大细胞IgE诱导的组胺分泌,但其分子机制尚未明确<sup>[37]</sup>。Huang等<sup>[38]</sup>认为,Tranilast为一特异性NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂,通过直接与NLRP3中间NOD结构域相结合,抑制ASC寡聚化。进一步的在体实验亦显示,Tranilast对NLRP3炎症小体相关疾病具有预防和治疗作用<sup>[38]</sup>。

5. Oridonin 是冬凌草属的主要生物活性成分,广泛用于治疗炎症性疾病,具有抗肿瘤、抗炎症反应和促凋亡作用<sup>[39-41]</sup>。He等<sup>[42]</sup>发现,Oridonin可以特异性抑制NLRP3炎症小体激活,且不影响AIM2和NLRC4的激活。Oridonin通过共价键与NLRP3中间NOD结构域的半胱氨酸279(Cys279)相结合,以阻止NEK7与NLRP3相互作用、抑制NLRP3炎症小体的激活。进一步的在体试验,Oridonin对腹膜炎、痛风性关节炎和2型糖尿病患者等均具有显著疗效<sup>[42]</sup>。

### 四、靶向NLRP3炎症小体的潜在阿尔茨海默病治疗策略

尽管目前尚无NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂用于治疗阿尔茨海默病的临床研究,但有研究提示NLRP3炎症小体可能是阿尔茨海默病的治疗新靶点。大量临床研究与动物实验结果提示多种药物具有NLRP3炎症小体抑制作用:紫檀芪主要通过抑制NLRP3/Caspase-1信号转导通路,从而减轻A $\beta_{42}$ 诱导的小胶质细胞系炎症反应<sup>[43]</sup>;青蒿素通过抑制核因子- $\kappa$ B(NF- $\kappa$ B)和NLRP3炎症小体激活,减轻*APPswe/PS-1dE9*转基因小鼠A $\beta$ 在脑组织中的沉积和神经炎症<sup>[26]</sup>;丁苯酞通过抑制NLRP3炎症小体激活,改善*APPswe/PS-1dE9*转基因小鼠的脑组织病理损害<sup>[44]</sup>;NLRP3炎症小体抑制剂可以减轻*APP/PS-1*转基因小鼠脑小胶质细胞焦亡,增强小胶质细胞清除A $\beta$ 的能力<sup>[29]</sup>;于脑组织注射MCC950可以抑制外源性Tau蛋白的病理改变<sup>[45]</sup>。

### 五、展望

近年来,关于NLRP3炎症小体的研究颇受关注,证实其在阿尔茨海默病的发生发展过程中发挥重要作用,针对阿尔茨海默病模型的研究提示,抑制NLRP3炎症小体的激活可以减轻炎症反应、病理改变和行为学异常,因此,NLRP3炎症小体是药物

研发的新靶点。然而,NLRP3炎性小体的激活/抑制机制及其调控脑小胶质细胞功能状态和阿尔茨海默病病理生理学过程的机制仍待进一步研究,这些对于阿尔茨海默病发病机制的研究具有重要意义,将为探索新的治疗方法提供更多依据和靶点。特异性NLRP3炎性小体抑制剂在阿尔茨海默病患者中的有效性和安全性尚待临床试验的验证。

利益冲突 无

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## · 小词典 ·

## 中英文对照名词词汇(三)

- 扩散加权成像 diffusion-weighted imaging(DWI)  
 扩散张量成像 diffusion tensor imaging(DTI)  
 类风湿关节炎 rheumatoid arthritis(RA)  
 粒细胞-巨噬细胞集落刺激因子 granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor(GM-CSF)  
 硫氧还蛋白相互作用蛋白 thioredoxin interacting protein(TXNIP)  
 慢性阻塞性肺病 chronic obstructive pulmonary disease(COPD)  
 酶联免疫吸附试验 enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay(ELISA)  
 美国电生理诊断医学协会 American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine (AAEM)  
 美国风湿病学会 American College of Rheumatology(ACR)

- 美国国立卫生研究院 National Institutes of Health(NIH)  
 美国食品与药品管理局 Food and Drug Administration(FDA)  
 美国重症肌无力基金会 Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America(MGFA)  
 免疫介导的坏死性肌病 immune-mediated necrotizing myopathy(IMNM)  
 面-臂肌张力障碍发作 faciobrachial dystonic seizures(FBDS)  
 模式识别受体 pattern recognition receptors(PPRs)  
 膜攻击复合物 membrane attack complex(MAC)  
 脑默认网络 default mode network(DMN)  
 逆转录-聚合酶链反应 reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction(RT-PCR)