

甲状腺乳头状癌淋巴结转移诊疗现状研究

Diagnosis and treatment of lymph node metastasis of papillary thyroid carcinoma

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引用本文:

冯娇娇, 姜雅曦, 杨仕慈, 等. 甲状腺乳头状癌淋巴结转移诊疗现状研究[J]. 国际放射医学核医学杂志, 2023, 47(2): 118-122.

DOI: 10.3760/cma.j.cn121381-202204033-00255

Feng Jiaojiao, Jiang Yaxi, Yang Shici, et al. Diagnosis and treatment of lymph node metastasis of papillary thyroid carcinoma[J].

International Journal of Radiation Medicine and Nuclear Medicine, 2023, 47(2): 118-122. DOI: 10.3760/cma.j.cn121381-202204033-00255

在线阅读 View online: <https://doi.org/10.3760/cma.j.cn121381-202204033-00255>

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甲状腺乳头状癌淋巴结转移诊疗现状研究

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【摘要】 甲状腺乳头状癌(PTC)是甲状腺癌最常见的组织病理学类型,其淋巴结转移影响患者的预后。目前 PTC 的淋巴结转移机制尚不明确,其诊断方法包括超声、细针穿刺活检、CT、MRI、SPECT/CT、PET/CT 等,但特异度及灵敏度均不高,联合使用可以提高检出率。PTC 淋巴结转移首选的治疗方式是手术。目前 PTC 淋巴结转移早期综合诊断及有效治疗是改善和提高 PTC 患者生活质量的难点。笔者就 PTC 淋巴结转移的诊疗现状及研究进展进行综述。

【关键词】 甲状腺癌, 乳头状; 危险因素; 放射性核素显像; 淋巴结转移

基金项目: 国家自然科学基金(81860313); 昆明医科大学研究生创新基金(2021S161)

DOI: 10.3760/cma.j.cn121381-202204033-00255

Diagnosis and treatment of lymph node metastasis of papillary thyroid carcinoma

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【Abstract】 Papillary thyroid carcinoma (PTC) is the most common pathological type of thyroid carcinoma. And lymph node metastasis affects the prognosis of patients. At present, the mechanism of lymph node metastasis of PTC is not clear, and its diagnostic methods include ultrasound, fine needle puncture biopsy, CT, MRI, SPECT/CT, PET/CT etc., but the specificity and sensitivity are not high, combined use can improve the detection rate. The preferred treatment for lymph node metastasis of PTC is surgery. At present, early comprehensive diagnosis and effective treatment of PTC lymph node metastasis are problems to improve and enhance the quality of life of PTC patients. This article reviews the diagnosis and treatment status, and research progress of PTC lymph node metastasis.

【Key words】 Thyroid cancer, papillary; Risk factors; Radionuclide imaging; Lymph node metastasis

Fund programs: National Natural Science Foundation of China (81860313); Innovation Fund for Graduate Students of Kunming Medical University (2021S161)

DOI: 10.3760/cma.j.cn121381-202204033-00255

近年来,全球甲状腺癌的发病率逐年升高^[1]。甲状腺乳头状癌(papillary thyroid carcinoma, PTC)起源于甲状腺滤泡上皮细胞,占 DTC 的 90% 以上,是甲状腺癌最常见的组织病理学类型^[2]。PTC 患者发生淋巴结转移较早,但其诊断无特异性肿瘤标志物,术前辅助检查可以提高淋巴结转移的检出率,但在确诊 PTC 且无淋巴结转移证据的患者中,隐匿性颈部淋巴结转移的发生率高达 51%^[3],因此早期精准诊断十分必要。PTC 患者术后易复发转移,中央区或侧颈部

淋巴结复发称为颈局部复发,占有复发的 79%,其中以淋巴结复发最常见,高达 74%^[4],且淋巴结转移缺乏有效的治疗方法。本文从 PTC 淋巴结转移的机制、诊断及治疗等方面进行阐述。

1 PTC 淋巴结转移的机制

淋巴结转移是肿瘤的转移方式之一,在 PTC 中较为常见。淋巴管的生成和重塑在肿瘤细胞淋巴结转移和扩散的

过程中起关键作用^[5-6]。淋巴管由从外周组织到血液循环的单向内皮内衬导管组成, 运输组织液和免疫细胞至淋巴组织。肿瘤可诱导其周围或内部淋巴管内皮的细胞增殖、血管密度的增加和血管扩张, 促进淋巴管的生成^[7], 可转移的肿瘤细胞经内皮细胞之间的缝隙或诱导内皮细胞形成的孔隙进入肿瘤引流淋巴管, 从而被动引流至前哨淋巴结, 进一步扩散至远端淋巴结、血液循环和远处器官^[8-9]。

血管内皮生长因子(vascular endothelial growth factor, VEGF)家族及血管内皮生长因子受体(vascular endothelial growth factor receptor, VEGFR)在淋巴管生成过程中发挥关键作用。VEGF-C是最有效的直接作用于淋巴管的生成因子之一, 其与淋巴管内皮细胞中的 VEGFR-3 结合, 诱导淋巴管内皮细胞增殖和血管扩张, 并促进淋巴结转移^[8,10]。PTC 患者的血清 VEGF-C 水平与淋巴结转移显著相关, 因此血清 VEGF-C 水平可能是预测 PTC 患者颈侧淋巴结转移的生物标志物^[11]。VEGF-D 几乎只在淋巴管内皮中表达, 其通过 VEGFR-2 和 VEGFR-3 诱导血管和淋巴管的生成, VEGF-D 的表达和淋巴管密度的增加在 PTC 患者的淋巴结转移中发挥重要作用^[12]。此外, 细胞外基质(ECM)可能参与 PTC 淋巴结转移的生物学过程。细胞外基质(ECM)参与构成肿瘤生长的微环境, 其由纤维蛋白、蛋白多糖和基质细胞相关蛋白组成, 可以调节组织细胞的生长、存活、迁移、入侵和分化, 促进肿瘤的进展和转移。Bumber 等^[13]对 PTC 患者的 159 个组织病理学样本进行回顾性研究发现, 与无转移组相比, 颈部淋巴结转移患者的基质金属蛋白酶 1(MMP-1)高表达。

2 PTC 淋巴结转移的模式

人体甲状腺周围包绕着丰富的淋巴管, 其主要来源于甲状腺滤泡, 但其内部淋巴的引流途径尚不明确。人体颈部存在丰富的淋巴结, 甲状腺周围的淋巴结与颈部淋巴管相连, 这可能是 PTC 易发生颈部淋巴结转移的原因之一。淋巴结转移主要发生在颈深淋巴结, 目前学者认同的 PTC 主要的淋巴结转移模式以原发灶同侧多见, 多由中央区向侧颈区沿淋巴引流路径逐站转移^[14], 但是约 1.6%~21.8% 的患者也可出现无中央区淋巴结转移的侧颈淋巴结转移, 即跳跃式转移^[15-16]。PTC 的淋巴结转移以多区转移为主, 单区转移较少见, VI 区淋巴结转移最常见, 其次常见的转移部位是颈 III、IV、II、V 区, I 区淋巴结转移较罕见^[14,17]。

3 PTC 淋巴结转移的危险因素

PTC 淋巴结转移的危险因素较多。男性、≤45 岁、肿瘤长径>1.0 cm、甲状腺外浸润、微钙化是中央区淋巴结转移(CLN)的独立危险因素, 中央区淋巴结转移(CLN)

是侧方淋巴结转移(LLNM)的独立危险因素^[16]。女性、肿瘤长径≤1.0 cm 是跳跃式转移的独立危险因素^[18]。上述研究结果中的性别可能因临床资料的选择产生偏倚, 但肿瘤长径是淋巴结转移的重要危险因素。

4 PTC 淋巴结转移的辅助诊断

4.1 肿瘤标志物

PTC 淋巴结转移无特异性肿瘤标志物, 虽然甲状腺球蛋白(thyroglobulin, Tg)水平是监测 PTC 复发的重要指标, 但是 Tg 水平对淋巴结转移并不敏感。转录组学、蛋白组学等高通量测序技术的发展推动了肿瘤研究的发展, 通过病理组织、血清、外泌体等筛选出的差异基因和差异蛋白可能是 PTC 淋巴结转移新的生物标志物。蛋白组学研究结果表明, 伴淋巴结转移与不伴淋巴结转移的 PTC 患者干扰素刺激基因 15(ISG15)的差异明显, 敲除干扰素刺激基因 15(ISG15)可抑制肿瘤的侵袭性, 其可能是预测 PTC 淋巴结转移的肿瘤标志物^[19]。Zhan 等^[20]对淋巴结转移程度不同的肿瘤组织进行蛋白质谱分析, 结果显示, 两者之间的差异表达蛋白较多, 其中层黏连蛋白亚基 $\gamma 2$ (LAMC2)和肌球蛋白 1G(MYO1G)被认为是预测 PTC 转移和预测预后的潜在标志物。目前高通量测序分析得出的差异蛋白仍需进一步通过临床验证诊断效能, 以实现临床转化。

4.2 影像学检查

超声是术前诊断 PTC 及淋巴结转移首选的影像学检查方法^[21]。其中淋巴结纵横比失常、淋巴结门消失、钙化、囊性改变、高回声、超声造影表现为不均匀高增强等超声特征提示淋巴结转移的可能^[22]。超声对侧颈转移淋巴结的诊断灵敏度和特异度分别为 93.8% 和 80.0%, 但诊断中央区淋巴结转移的灵敏度和特异度分别为 30.0% 和 86.8%^[23]。超声引导下细针穿刺活检(FNA)是术前初步诊断甲状腺疾病常用的检查方法, 细针穿刺活检(FNA)结合 Tg 洗脱液联合诊断淋巴结转移的灵敏度和特异度分别为 96.8% 和 93.2%^[24]。超声是诊断淋巴结转移的重要方法, 但其存在以下问题: 检查准确性易受到设备、操作人员的经验和技能的影响, 颈部淋巴结常与周围重要的组织结构比邻, <10.0 mm 的颈部淋巴结穿刺困难。

评估中央区、颈侧和整个颈部淋巴结转移时, CT 的灵敏度较高, 超声的特异度较高^[21,25]。与超声相比, 超声联合 CT 诊断 PTC 淋巴结转移的特异度无差异, 但灵敏度高于超声(69% 对 51%)^[25], CT 可作为诊断 PTC 淋巴结转移的辅助方法。近年来, 双能 CT 扫描图像的标准化碘浓度(NIC)和能谱曲线斜率组合诊断 PTC 淋巴结转移的灵敏度为 90.8%、特异度为 80.5%, 可作为诊断颈部淋巴结转移的辅助手段^[26]。

MRI对甲状腺癌患者颈部淋巴结转移的诊断有较高的特异度,但灵敏度较差。与超声相比,MRI在评估纵隔或气管旁、咽旁和咽后区域广泛或肿大的颈部淋巴结病变方面更有优势^[27]。近年来,学者基于MRI扫描序列的解剖和功能图像进行放射组学分析,并建立疾病诊断模型,模型经临床样本验证具有一定的诊断效能并有望建立有诊断价值的无创成像生物标志物,用于识别和预测PTC患者的淋巴结转移风险,并有助于临床制定个体化的治疗策略^[28-29]。

SPECT/CT在甲状腺疾病的诊疗中发挥重要作用。甲状腺肿瘤组织及其转移灶保留了部分钠碘转运体的功能,具有摄取¹³¹I及同族元素^{99m}Tc的能力。¹³¹I全身扫描(whole body scan, ¹³¹I-WBS)有助于发现残留的甲状腺、转移淋巴结及其他隐匿性转移。Xu等^[30]研究发现,与诊断性¹³¹I-WBS相比,^{99m}Tc-Galacto-RGD2诊断DTC淋巴结转移灶的灵敏度更高。同时,更多放射性核素标记的肿瘤分子靶向探针有望用于淋巴结转移的研究。

¹⁸F-FDG PET/CT为可用于肿瘤的诊断、分期和治疗的功能成像。¹⁸F-FDG PET/CT诊断甲状腺癌患者颈部淋巴结转移的特异度高达94%,但灵敏度仅为30%^[31]。Zheng等^[32]的研究结果表明,⁶⁸Ga-1,4,7-三氮杂环壬烷-1,4,7-三乙酸(精氨酸-甘氨酸-天冬氨酸)₂(⁶⁸Ga-NOTA-PRGD₂) PET/CT在肿瘤淋巴结转移评估中的特异度高于¹⁸F-FDG PET/CT,但其对PTC淋巴结转移灶的诊断效能仍有待研究。与SPECT/CT相比,PET/CT费用昂贵,不用于常规检查,但对于Tg水平升高、超声阴性或可疑、¹³¹I-WBS阴性的DTC患者,¹⁸F-FDG PET/CT有助于寻找转移灶。

5 PTC淋巴结转移的治疗

甲状腺切除手术和彻底、合理的颈部淋巴结清扫是目前公认的治疗DTC的首选和最佳方法^[33],PTC术后出现淋巴结转移的患者首选手术治疗,其次考虑放射性碘治疗(radioactive iodine, RAI)以及其他微创的非手术治疗方式,外照射放疗不在首次术后的甲状腺癌患者中常规使用^[34]。尽管再次手术是提高大多数复发患者长期生存率的治疗方法,但由于术后组织纤维化和瘢痕形成,导致正常的组织平面变形,因此颈部再次手术并发症的发生率比第一次手术高^[35]。

目前,RAI是甲状腺癌术后重要的治疗手段,其对大多数¹³¹I-WBS阳性的淋巴结转移患者有效^[36]。Wu等^[37]对纳入的仅有淋巴结转移的118例PTC患者给予3次RAI(3.7~16.7 GBq)后,治疗总有效率为80.5%(95/118)。He等^[38]研究发现RAI疗效受远处转移、淋巴结大小、Tg水平、甲状腺消融情况等多种因素影响。此外,使用RAI治疗淋巴结转移患者时需考虑累及剂量产生的不良反应。

经皮消融可用于肿瘤治疗,其主要包括经皮乙醇消融(percutaneous ethanol injection, PEI)、经皮微波消融(microwave ablation, MWA)、激光消融(LA)和射频消融(RFA)。PEI属于化学消融,其在超声引导下将化学物质注射到肿瘤部位诱导肿瘤组织坏死。MWA、激光消融(LA)、射频消融(RFA)属于热消融,通过升高肿瘤组织局部温度杀死肿瘤细胞。经皮消融有局部麻醉、微创、并发症发生率低、可重复治疗等优点,近年来逐渐应用于甲状腺结节和甲状腺恶性肿瘤的治疗。对于不能接受进一步手术或RAI的伴有颈部淋巴结转移的PTC患者,经皮消融术是一种治疗方法^[39]。研究发现,PEI、MWA、激光消融(LA)治疗PTC患者颈部淋巴结转移的有效率分别为58.5%~87.5%、100%、86.9%^[40-44],但上述研究中纳入的病例数较少,结论缺乏长期随访的临床数据的支撑,而且针对PTC转移淋巴结的PEI注射剂量、热消融的最佳能量、反应时间等尚未确定。因此经皮消融术仍有待深入研究。

靶向治疗是一种使用药物或其他物质对特定肿瘤细胞进行识别和攻击的治疗方法,其对正常细胞的伤害通常比化疗小。目前,美国食品药品监督管理局(FDA)批准用于甲状腺癌治疗的靶向药物主要包括酪氨酸激酶抑制剂和蛋白激酶抑制剂,它们通过阻断肿瘤生长所需的信号和蛋白抑制肿瘤生长,延缓疾病进展。虽然靶向治疗在晚期碘难治性甲状腺癌患者中的研究取得了显著进展,但目前缺少PTC淋巴结转移靶向治疗疗效的相关临床数据,且靶向治疗的不良反应明显,在临床用药过程中,应综合考虑患者的病情、获益及靶向药物的不良反应。

6 小结与展望

PTC的临床症状不明显,淋巴结转移的发生率高且与局部复发和不良预后相关。除结构影像学及分子影像学检查外,转录组学、蛋白组学、影像组学技术是提高甲状腺癌淋巴结转移诊断的准确率并探索其机制的新方法。随着研究的深入,新的诊断手段和治疗靶点的出现将使患者受益。

利益冲突 所有作者声明无利益冲突

作者贡献声明 冯娇娇负责综述的撰写;姜雅曦、杨仕慈负责文献的查阅与分析;朱高红负责综述的审阅

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(收稿日期: 2022-04-25)