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超声造影定量参数与甲状腺乳头状癌组织中微血管密度、颈部淋巴结转移的关系

李秀芹

(河南省中医药研究院附属医院影像科, 郑州 450000)

[摘要] 目的: 探究超声造影(contrast-enhanced ultrasound, CEUS)定量参数与甲状腺乳头状癌(papillary thyroid carcinoma, PTC)组织中微血管密度(microvessel density, MVD)、颈部淋巴结转移的关系。方法: 抽取2016年9月至2019年1月河南省中医药研究院附属医院手术病理确诊的75例PTC患者, 根据颈部淋巴结病理结果分为转移组(24例)、未转移组(51例)。术前均行CEUS检查, 获得PTC结节内及周围正常甲状腺组织相关血流灌注参数, 取PTC结节、正常组织病理标本经免疫组织化学染色获取MVD, 并进行统计学分析。结果: PTC结节达峰时间(time peak, TP)、平均渡越时间(mean transit time, MTT)显著高于周围正常组织, 峰值强度(peak intensity, PI)及曲线下面积(area under the curve, AUC)显著低于周围正常组织($P < 0.05$), 且MVD显著低于周围正常组织($P < 0.05$)。Spearman秩相关性分析显示PTC结节的造影参数TP, MTT与MVD无明显相关性($P > 0.05$), 而PI, AUC与MVD明显正相关($P < 0.05$)。与未转移组相比, 转移组PI, AUC, MVD显著增高($P < 0.05$), TP, MTT未见明显差异($P > 0.05$)。PI, AUC预测颈部淋巴结转移的受试者工作特征(receiver operating characteristic, ROC)的AUC分别为0.864, 0.877, 确定临界值后PI和AUC预测颈部淋巴结转移的敏感度均 $\geq 75.0\%$, 特异度均为88.2%。多因素logistic回归分析显示病灶数目、肿瘤大小、PI和AUC为预测颈部淋巴结转移的独立危险因素($P < 0.05$)。结论: CEUS血流灌注参数PI、AUC与PTC组织中MVD显著相关, 并对颈部淋巴结转移有一定预测价值, 可作为PTC术前评估的无创性方法。

[关键词] 超声造影; 血流灌注参数; 甲状腺乳头状癌; 微血管密度; 淋巴结转移

Relationship between quantitative parameters of contrast-enhanced ultrasound and microvessel density, cervical lymph nodes metastasis in papillary thyroid carcinoma tissues

LI Xiuqin

(Imaging Department, Affiliated Hospital of Henan Academy of Chinese Medicine, Zhengzhou 450000, China)

Abstract **Objective:** To investigate the relationship between quantitative parameters of contrast-enhanced ultrasound (CEUS) and microvessel density (MVD), cervical lymph node metastasis in papillary thyroid carcinoma (PTC)

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通信作者 (Corresponding author): 李秀芹, Email: rmour9047@163.com

tissues. **Methods:** Seventy-five PTC patients confirmed by surgical pathology in Affiliated Hospital of Henan Academy of Chinese Medicine during the period from September 2016 to January 2019 were enrolled. According to pathological results of cervical lymph nodes, they were divided into a metastasis group (24 cases) and a non-metastasis group (51 cases). CEUS was performed on them before operation. The related blood flow perfusion parameters of PTC nodules and surrounding normal thyroid tissues were obtained. PTC nodules and normal histopathological specimens were collected to obtain MVD by immunohistochemical staining. And statistical analysis was performed. **Results:** The time peak (TP) and mean transit time (MTT) of PTC nodules were significantly higher than those of surrounding normal tissues, while peak intensity (PI) and area under the curve (AUC) were significantly lower than those of surrounding normal tissues ($P < 0.05$). And MVD was significantly lower than that of surrounding normal tissues ($P < 0.05$). Spearman rank correlation analysis showed CEUS parameter of PTC nodules such as TP and MTT were not significantly correlated with MVD ($P > 0.05$), while PI and AUC were significantly positively correlated with MVD ($P < 0.05$). Compared with the non-metastasis group, PI and AUC were significantly increased in the metastasis group ($P < 0.05$). There was no significant difference in TP or MTT ($P > 0.05$), while MVD was significantly increased ($P < 0.05$). The receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve AUC of PI and AUC for predicting cervical lymph node metastasis were 0.864 and 0.877, respectively. After determining critical value, the sensitivities of PI and AUC for predicting cervical lymph node metastasis were all not less than 75.0%, and the specificities were all 88.2%. Multivariate logistic regression analysis showed that the number of lesions, tumor size, PI and AUC were independent risk factors for predicting cervical lymph node metastasis ($P < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** The CEUS blood flow perfusion parameters PI and AUC are significantly correlated with MVD in PTC tissues, which are of certain predictive value for cervical lymph node metastasis. They can be used as a noninvasive method for preoperative PTC evaluation.

Keywords contrast-enhanced ultrasound; blood flow perfusion parameter; papillary thyroid carcinoma; microvessel density; lymph node metastasis

甲状腺乳头状癌(papillary thyroid carcinoma, PTC)是一种最常见的甲状腺癌类型(占比超过80%),预后较好,但淋巴结转移风险高,尤其是颈中央区淋巴结转移率为20%~90%^[1-2]。既往研究^[3]表明:由于缺乏血液供应,PTC组织往往生长缓慢,而新生血管是其生长及转移的必要因素。新生血管常通过肿瘤病理微血管密度(microvessel density, MVD)体现。虽然已明确MVD与PTC的浸润、颈部淋巴结转移密切相关,但MVD测定较复杂,需手术取得病灶组织后采用免疫组织化学技术处理,有创且对临床指导有一定滞后性^[4]。常规超声是PTC最常用的筛查手段,但其对颈部淋巴结转移的检出率低。超声造影成像(contrast-enhanced ultrasound, CEUS)可客观、真实地显示病灶的微血管血流灌注状态,为无创评价病变微血管形成情况提供了新的方向^[5]。为进一步明确CEUS技术对PTC组织MVD及颈部淋巴结转移的评估价值,本研究以标准化CEUS及定量分析方法,探究相关定量参数与MVD及颈部淋巴结转移的关系。

1 对象与方法

1.1 对象

选取2016年9月至2019年1月河南省中医药研究院附属医院手术病理确诊的75例PTC患者的临床诊治资料,其中男29例,女46例,年龄22~82(49.77±10.14)岁;共检出81枚结节,直径5.4~39.8(15.03±3.29)mm,位于甲状腺左叶、右叶、峡部分别有31,36,14枚。纳入标准:年龄≥20岁;常规超声发现甲状腺实性或以实性为主的囊实性结节(最大径>5mm);行甲状腺切除+颈部淋巴结清扫术,手术资料详实,术后病理证实为PTC;术前行常规超声与CEUS检查,图像质量好。排除标准:病理证实为其他病理类型的甲状腺癌者;合并有其他影响MVD的疾病者,如其他部位的良/恶性肿瘤、肾病、糖尿病、类风湿性关节炎及银屑病等;合并基础代谢性疾病及自身免疫性疾病者;临床资料欠缺者。本研究获得河南省中医药研究院附属医院医学伦理委员会批准。

1.2 仪器与方法

所用仪器为Philips iU Elite彩色多普勒超声诊断仪, L₅~L₁₂线阵探头, 频率5~12 MHz, 配有脉冲反向谐波造影功能及定量分析QLAB软件。造影剂选用意大利博莱科公司生产的SonoVue, 使用前取5.0 mL生理盐水注入造影剂中, 充分振荡摇匀至冻干粉充分分散后呈乳白色微泡混悬液备用。患者取平卧位, 头部后仰, 确保颈前区充分暴露。先行常规超声检查, 明确结节位置、数目、大小、形态、钙化、血流分布等基本信息。然后选择目标结节, 尽可能选取能够显示更多周边正常甲状腺组织的清晰切面作为造影切面, 然后将超声诊断仪转换至造影模式, 嘱患者平静呼吸, 以双幅模式同时显示二维图与造影图; 接下来抽取2.0 mL配制好的造影剂混悬液经肘前浅静脉团注, 并即刻推注5.0 mL生理盐水冲管, 与此同时按下计时键与动态存储键, 每例患者均连续观察结节灌注至少60 s, 至病变区造影剂完全廓清, 有多枚结节需行CEUS时每次检查间隔时间至少15 min, 并确保预设置参数一致。

1.3 图像分析

通过仪器自带的定量分析软件分析存储的动态图像, 设置感兴趣区(region of interest, ROI), 勾画时注意避开器官、结节内粗大血管、钙化灶及囊性部分, ROI的边界应全部位于病灶内缘内, 要求勾画结节边缘正常对照组织区域ROI时尽量确保与结节ROI为类似深度。获得PTC结节内及周围正常甲状腺组织的时间-强度曲线(time intensity curve, TIC)以及相关血流灌注参数, 包括达峰时间(timeto peak, TP)、平均渡越时间(mean transit time, MTT)、峰值强度(peak intensity, PI)及TIC曲线下面积(area under curve, AUC), 其中AUC为强度随时间变化的积分值, 均以3次测量的均值为最终结果。所有操作由2名资深超声医师共同完成, 取得一致结果。

1.4 术后病理分析

根据颈部淋巴结病理结果将本组患者分为转移组(24例, 包括中央区13例和颈侧区11例)、未转移组(51例)。术后标本常规予以甲醛固定、石蜡包埋、连续切片处理, 并以CD34单克隆抗体进行免疫组织化学染色, 参考文献[6]检测、计算出MVD, 即200倍镜下获得被CD34染成棕色或棕黄色的血管数计数, 然后以5个高倍镜视野(HP)微血管均数作为对应患者最终MVD值。

1.5 统计学处理

采用SPSS 20.0统计软件进行数据分析。CEUS相关参数等计量资料以均数±标准差($\bar{x} \pm s$)表示, PTC与结节周围正常组织、转移组与未转移组对比行独立 t 检验; 采用Spearman秩相关检验评价各造影参数与MVD的关系; 绘制受试者工作特征(receiver operating characteristic, ROC)曲线分析造影参数与颈部淋巴结转移的关系, 并进一步采用多因素logistic回归分析。 $P < 0.05$ 为差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 PTC与结节周围正常组织造影参数及MVD比较

PTC结节的TP, MTT显著高于周围正常组织, PI, AUC显著低于周围正常组织, 且MVD显著低于周围正常组织(均 $P < 0.05$, 表1)。

2.2 造影参数与MVD的相关性

Spearman秩相关分析显示: PTC结节的造影参数TP, MTT与MVD无明显相关性($P > 0.05$), PI, AUC与MVD呈正相关($r = 0.457, 0.336; P < 0.05$)。

2.3 转移组与未转移组造影参数及MVD比较

转移组PI, AUC及MVD显著高于未转移组($P < 0.05$), TP和MTT差异未见统计学意义($P > 0.05$, 表2)。

表1 PTC与结节周围正常组织造影参数及MVD比较($n=81, \bar{x} \pm s$)

Table 1 Comparison on contrast parameters and MVD between PTC and normal tissues around nodules ($n=81, \bar{x} \pm s$)

取样位置	TP/s	MTT/s	PI/%	AUC/(dB·s)	MVD/(条·HP ⁻¹)
PTC结节	43.62 ± 10.73	61.15 ± 14.53	14.54 ± 3.29	970.04 ± 198.20	87.55 ± 17.21
结节周围正常组织	37.69 ± 8.36	55.34 ± 12.28	22.59 ± 5.17	1795.23 ± 504.01	125.12 ± 27.17
t	3.924	2.749	11.823	13.713	10.513
P	<0.001	0.007	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

2.4 造影参数与颈部淋巴结转移的关系

根据2.3结果，绘制PTC结节造影定量参数预测颈部淋巴结转移的ROC曲线，其中PI的AUC为0.864(95% CI: 0.759~0.970)，AUC的AUC分别为0.877(95% CI: 0.783~0.970)；以约登指数最大值确定PI，AUC临界值分别为16.145%，1100.155 dB·s，此时PI预测颈部淋巴结转移的敏感

度为79.2%，特异度为88.2%，AUC预测颈部淋巴结转移的敏感度为75.0%，特异度为88.2%(图2)。将性别、年龄、肿瘤大小、病灶数目、包膜侵犯情况、钙化情况及造影参数PI，AUC等因素代入logistic回归方程行多因素分析，结果显示病灶数目、肿瘤大小、PI及AUC为预测颈部淋巴结转移的独立危险因素($P < 0.05$ ，表3)。

表2 转移组与未转移组造影参数及MVD比较($\bar{x} \pm s$)

Table 2 Comparison on contrast parameters and MVD between the metastasis group and the non-metastasis group ($\bar{x} \pm s$)

组别	n	TP/s	MTT/s	PI/%	AUC/(dB·s)	MVD/(条·HP ⁻¹)
转移组	24	43.21 ± 9.20	64.45 ± 16.05	17.06 ± 3.62	1126.87 ± 232.42	144.20 ± 25.43
未转移组	51	42.33 ± 9.72	62.44 ± 15.31	13.22 ± 2.19	885.90 ± 179.47	106.43 ± 19.90
t		0.592	0.816	8.168	7.386	10.527
P		0.555	0.416	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

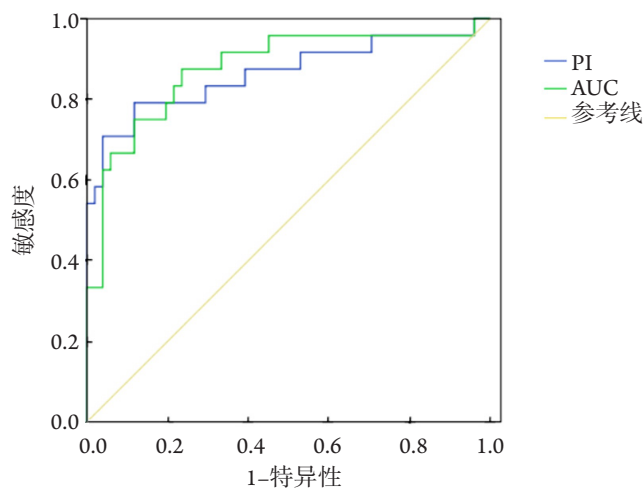


图2 PI和AUC判断颈部淋巴结转移的ROC曲线

Figure 2 ROC curve of PI and AUC determining cervical lymph node metastasis

表3 颈部淋巴结转移的多因素logistic回归分析

Table 3 Multivariate logistic regression analysis on cervical lymph node metastasis

组别	回归系数	标准误	Wald χ^2	P	OR	95% CI
性别	0.986	0.522	3.588	0.059	1.645	0.966~7.436
年龄	0.807	0.369	1.558	0.212	0.635	0.157~0.661
肿瘤大小	1.494	0.395	14.527	0.000	4.471	2.071~9.486
病灶数目	0.615	0.257	5.664	0.017	1.855	1.114~3.054
包膜侵犯	0.773	0.396	0.595	0.454	1.340	0.232~0.851
钙化	0.212	0.807	0.192	0.664	0.756	0.148~3.411
PI	1.205	0.434	7.659	0.006	3.339	1.421~7.883
AUC	2.001	0.405	5.176	0.019	2.063	1.335~4.251

3 讨论

由于可显示直径 $<40\ \mu\text{m}$ 的微小血管, 实时显示ROI区域微循环血流灌注过程及评估病变血流动力学特征, CEUS技术现已成为判断病灶微血管的重要无创检查方法^[7]。随着CEUS技术在甲状腺疾病中的应用快速普及, 其在PTC结节术前评估中的作用日益突出, 且明显优于常规超声, 如李诗骞等^[8]的近期报道显示不同CEUS增强模式的PTC患者颈部淋巴结转移均以结节中央区居多, 但对等增强或高增强为主的结节, 这一点可作为预测PTC患者颈部淋巴结转移的重要依据。殷延华等^[9]的研究认为CEUS显示低增强或不均匀低增强为PTC的典型表现, TIC参数中, PI, AUC对于提高PTC微小病灶的临床诊断有突出作用。造影剂SonoVue微泡大小与红细胞极为类似, 对于PTC而言, CEUS技术主要通过显示SonoVue微泡的运动及分布, 产生造影现象, 继而通过TIC获取肿瘤组织内血流灌注信息, 从而可分析病灶微血管形态与分布^[10]。

本研究中PTC结节TP, MTT显著高于周围正常组织, PI及AUC显著低于周围正常组织, 可能原因在于结节中心区组织血管分布稀少, 即MVD低于周围正常组织, 单位时间内通过的造影剂容量与速度均更低。事实上, 通过免疫组织化学技术测定及光镜下观察, 本研究发现PTC结节内微血管分布不均匀, 可见纤维间质水肿、纤维硬化区血管较少, 即MVD显著低于周围正常组织, 此病理结果与CEUS结果相符。因此, Spearman秩相关分析显示PTC结节的造影参数PI, AUC与MVD明显正相关, 与张红丽等^[11]、程红等^[12]的分析结果类似, 前者相关分析结果显示TIC参数TP与MVD呈线性正相关(应用CD31, CD34单克隆抗体检查 r 分别为0.837, 0.838, 均 $P<0.001$); 后者相关分析结果显示PTC结节周围正常组织、结节中心的PI, AUC均与对应区域组织MVD呈明显正相关, 并认为PTC结节内血管分布特点可能一定程度上体现恶性病灶的生物学特性, 使其更有利于向周围组织侵犯、蔓延, 继而发生淋巴结转移。

既往荟萃研究^[13]表明: 颈部淋巴结转移是PTC术后复发、远处转移的独立危险因素, 可引起不良预后。本研究进一步分析TIC参数与患者颈部淋巴结转移转移的相关性, 发现与未转移组相比, 转移组PI, AUC显著高, MVD亦显著高, 可能原因在于淋巴结增殖、生长、侵袭、转移主要依赖于微血管生成, 转移组新生血管数量明显多

于未转移组, 既为肿瘤生长提供了物质基础, 还为颈部淋巴结的侵袭转移提供了通道, 故转移组结节血流灌注容量、强度更高^[14]。施燕芸等^[15]的研究显示PTC颈部淋巴结转移组结节边缘区PI, AUC分别为 (8.39 ± 2.19) dB, (220.69 ± 83.56) dB·s, 明显较未转移组的 (6.52 ± 2.32) dB, (168.29 ± 52.95) dB·s高, 与本文结果具有一致性, 均表明TIC参数PI, AUC可评价颈部淋巴结转移情况。此外, 本研究绘制ROC进一步分析PI, AUC预测颈部淋巴结转移价值, 发现二者曲线下面积分别为0.864, 0.877, 确定临界值后PI, AUC预测颈部淋巴结转移的敏感度均 $\geq 75.0\%$, 特异度均为88.2%, 证实其对颈部淋巴结转移有一定预测价值。

综上, CEUS血流灌注参数PI, AUC与PTC组织中MVD及颈部淋巴结转移密切相关, 可作为PTC术前评估的无创性方法。但本研究样本量较少, 且入选病例个体血液循环差异及肿瘤的发展进程可能对CEUS定量参数结果产生一定影响, 故相关结论仍需扩大样本量深入研究。

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