

食管癌 PD-1/PD-L1 抑制剂的生物标志物：进展与挑战

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【摘要】 食管癌 (EC) 是上消化道常见的侵袭性肿瘤, 约有70%的患者确诊时癌症已局部或远处转移, 预后不佳。目前针对不可切除局部晚期食管癌患者的一线疗法主要为根治性放化疗, 大部分患者在1~2年内复发, 生存率较低。免疫检查点抑制剂疗法的出现改善了这个局面, 2022年版《食管癌治疗指南》首次将免疫检测点抑制剂与化疗联合作为食管癌晚期患者的一线治疗。程序性死亡受体1 (PD-1)/程序性死亡配体1 (PD-L1) 抑制剂是目前免疫疗法在临床试验中最常见的药物, 在食管癌中都显示出比传统疗法更好的预后, 但是用于筛选PD-1/PD-L1抑制剂获益人群的生物标志物仍是难题。目前通过批准适用于PD-1/PD-L1抑制剂的生物标志物有PD-L1表达, 微卫星不稳定性以及肿瘤突变负荷, 但以上生物标志物也不能完全保证患者一定获益, 也会出现生物标志物未达到患者显著获益的情况。此外部分患者PD-1/PD-L1抑制剂治疗后会出现超进展疾病, 导致病情恶化。因此目前需要改善现有的、发现更高预测效能的生物标志物来筛选人群, 进一步提升免疫检查点抑制剂在食管癌中的获益。

【关键词】 食管癌; 免疫检查点抑制剂; 生物标志物; 超进展疾病

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【Abstract】 Esophageal cancer (EC) is a common aggressive tumor of the upper gastrointestinal tract. About 70% of patients have local or distant metastases at diagnosis, and the prognosis is poor. The current first-line therapy for patients with unresectable locally advanced EC is mainly radical chemoradiotherapy, and most patients recur within 1–2 years, with a low survival rate. The advent of immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy has improved this situation. The 2020 Edition of Treatment Guidelines for Esophageal Cancer was the first to add immune checkpoint inhibitor and chemotherapy as first-line treatment for patients with advanced EC. Programmed death 1 (PD-1)/programmed death-ligand 1 (PD-L1) inhibitors are currently the most common drugs in clinical trials for immunotherapy, and all have shown a better prognosis than conventional therapies in esophageal cancer, but the biomarkers used to screen the PD-1/PD-L1 inhibitor benefit population remain challenging. The biomarkers currently approved for PD-1/PD-L1 inhibitors include PD-L1 expression, microsatellite instability, and tumor mutational burden, but these biomarkers do not guarantee a definite benefit, and there are cases where the biomarkers do not achieve a significant benefit for patients. In addition, some patients may develop hyperprogressive disease after PD-1/PD-L1 inhibitor therapy, leading to worsening of the disease. Therefore, there is a need to improve the existing biomarkers and find higher predictive efficacy to screen the population to further enhance the benefit of immune checkpoint inhibitors in esophageal cancer.

【Key words】 Esophageal cancer; Immune checkpoint inhibitors; Biomarkers; Hyperprogressive disease

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食管癌 (esophageal cancer, EC) 的发病率在世界范围内排名第七, 总体病死率排名第六, 男性发病率及病死率约为女性的 2~3 倍^[1]。食管鳞状细胞癌 (esophageal squamous cell carcinoma, ESCC) 是 EC 的主要组织类型, 多见于亚洲国家, 中国每年新增约 346 633 例, 每年死亡人数约为 323 600, 5 年生存率仅为 20%^[2]。西方国家如美国则以食管腺癌 (esophageal adenocarcinoma, EAC) 为主, 约占 EC 的 64%。5 年生存率与鳞状细胞癌相似, 但是具有更好的中位生存时间^[3-4]。这可能是由于巴雷特食管能在癌变之前被发现, 从而预防癌症的发生^[5]。尽管如此, 大部分患者确诊时已经处于局部或远处转移阶段, 且术后复发中位时间较短, 生存率仍不容乐观。

尽管可切除性 EC 的预后随着新辅助治疗的出现有所改善, 针对晚期 EC 患者仍然缺乏有效的治疗手段。近年来火热的免疫检查点抑制剂 (immune checkpoint inhibitors, ICIs) 治疗为这些晚期患者带来了希望, ICIs 在临床试验中无论是作为一线还是二线以上的治疗手段, 都展现出比传统疗法更好的预后。2022 年版《食管癌诊疗指南》认为 ICIs 已经达到一线治疗晚期 EC 的标准, 将卡瑞利珠单抗、纳武利尤单抗及帕博利单抗纳入了晚期 EC 的一线治疗, 且 ICIs 是化疗失败后首选的二线治疗。但由于缺乏精准的预测生物标志物, 无法保证在筛选患者时具有较高的敏感性及特异性, 不能准确预测 ICIs 的疗效以及预后。

目前临床上已经批准的生物标志物包括程序性死亡配体 1 (programmed death-ligand 1, PD-L1) 表达、微卫星不稳定性 (microsatellite instability, MSI) 以及肿瘤突变负荷 (tumor mutation burden, TMB), 它们都可以用于广泛实体瘤的程序性死亡受体 1 (programmed death 1, PD-1) /PD-L1 阻断治疗, 但是在不同癌症类型之间临床获益存在较大差异。KEYNOTE-180、KEYNOTE-181 及 KEYNOTE-590 的试验数据证明 PD-L1 联合阳性评分 (combined positive score, CPS) ≥ 10 可以作为预测 ESCC 免疫治疗的标志物。KEYNOTE-061 中发现 MSI-H 及 TMB ≥ 10 muts/Mb 在 EC 中也具有不错的预测效能。但是上述生物标志物都存在一定的缺陷, 不能完全筛选出获益者或评估获益大小。此外, 7%~29% 的恶性肿瘤患者在 ICIs 治疗后会出现

超进展疾病 (hyperprogressive disease, HPD)^[6], 导致肿瘤加速生长。EC 中报道案例较少, 但是一旦发生 HPD, 患者预后较差。因此, 寻找能准确预测 ICIs 治疗反应的生物标志物是迫切需求。本综述旨在总结目前 PD-1/PD-L1 抑制剂使用的生物标志物的优势与不足, 并寻找新的、具有潜力的生物标志物。

一、PD-L1 表达

PD-L1 表达是目前 PD-1/PD-L1 阻断治疗应用最广泛的生物标志物。美国食品药品监督管理局 (Food and Drug Administration, FDA) 已批准派姆单抗用于治疗 PD-L1 CPS ≥ 10 的复发性、局部晚期或转移性 ESCC 患者^[7]。目前评估 PD-L1 表达主要有 CPS 和肿瘤比例评分 (tumor proportion score, TPS) 两种体系。CPS 通过任何膜强度的肿瘤细胞、淋巴细胞以及巨噬细胞的数量除以存活的肿瘤细胞数量计算得出。KEYNOTE-061 中发现派姆单抗组患者的无进展生存期及客观缓解率随着 CPS 的不断提高而逐渐改善^[8]。PD-1/PD-L1 抑制剂联合化疗进一步改善了晚期 EC 患者治疗的窘境。KEYNOTE-590 中报道派姆单抗联合化疗延长了患者的生存期; 在 CPS ≥ 10 亚组分析中, 派姆单抗联合化疗组相比化疗组中获得更大获益, 同时相对 CPS < 10 亚组能获得 3.4 个月的生存改善^[9]。TPS 指的是任何膜强度的 PD-L1 染色的活肿瘤细胞的百分比。ESCOR (二线治疗) 中使用了 TPS 评价 PD-L1 表达, 卡瑞利珠单抗组具有 PD-L1 阳性表达的患者都获得了临床益处, 且 TPS $\geq 10\%$ 的患者相比低表达组获得了最长的生存期^[10]。TPS 作为评价指标是有效的, 但是可能不适用于 EC。无论是作为一线还是二线治疗, TPS $\geq 1\%$ 的患者比 TPS $< 1\%$ 的食管鳞癌患者可能受益更大, 但是 TPS 程度与疗效在统计学上并没有显著关系^[10-11]。NCT02625623 中更是发现阿维单抗组 TPS $\geq 1\%$ 患者与 TPS $< 1\%$ 患者的中位无进展生存期无显著差异, 甚至化疗组 TPS $\geq 1\%$ 患者具有更好预后^[12]。除此之外还可以使用免疫比例评分 (immune proportion score, IPS) 作为评价指标来预测 ICIs 疗效, 目前主要用于尿路上皮癌^[13-14]。

但以上评价体系都是通过免疫组织化学后病理学家进行评估, 这就导致不同染色平台具有不同的结果, 不同抗体对细胞染色强度不同。蓝印

计划比较了不同抗体对非小细胞肺癌组织染色的结果,发现SP142对肿瘤细胞和免疫细胞PD-L1表达的灵敏度较低,但22C-3、28-8和SP-263染色具有一致性^[15]。此外,上消化道肿瘤的免疫微环境PD-L1表达不同于其他上皮性肿瘤,其PD-L1主要表达在肿瘤相关免疫细胞上,而肿瘤细胞PD-L1表达较少^[16-17]。这也从侧面验证CPS似乎是EC中更适合评估PD-L1的指标。此外PD-L1表达相关的液体活检也能预测预后,外泌体PD-L1和soluble PD-L1同样具有免疫抑制性,且与患者较差的预后相关^[18]。在抗PD-1治疗黑色素瘤发现当外泌体PD-L1降低时,患者具有较好反应,反之则肿瘤进展^[19]。

二、错配修复缺陷/微卫星不稳定性

错配修复缺陷(deficient Mismatch repair, dMMR)指细胞无法修复在分裂过程中发生的错误,一般会导致遗传不稳定。dMMR相关基因包括MutS和MutL基因家族,其中MLH1、MLH2、MSH6和PSM2通常用于评估MMR,上述中的一个基因发生突变即可认为dMMR;具有MSI-H的患者都具有dMMR,但是dMMR患者不一定患有MSI-H。MSI-H也是FDA批准的第一个用于派姆单抗治疗广泛晚期实体瘤的标志物^[20]。EC患者MSI-H的发生率为4%~7.3%^[21]。MSI-H患者在基于KEYNOTE-059、KEYNOTE-061和KEYNOTE-062的3项试验中均未达到中位生存期,MSI-H患者在KEYNOTE-061中使用派姆单抗治疗的客观缓解率为46.7%,而化疗患者的仅为16.7%^[22]。以上结果都支持MSI-H作为EC一个合适的生物标志物。最近Imamura等^[23]提出胃食管交界处癌患者的MSI-L状态也是一种独特的免疫原性表型,MSI-L患者与TP53-ATNG突变截然相关,但是这种情况不会出现在MSI-H和MSS中,而且MSI-L的缺失突变负担更高。已有研究证明TP53突变与接受免疫治疗的患者预后较差有关^[24-25]。这可能提示进行TP53突变或MSI-L是免疫治疗的排除标准。

三、肿瘤突变负荷

TMB定义为肿瘤基因组编码区域内体细胞突变数量,而高突变数量意味着新抗原的产生,因此能通过促进抗原呈递过程提高ICIs疗效,是应用较广泛的生物标志物^[26]。基于KEYNOTE-158的结果,FDA已经批准派姆单抗治疗TMB ≥ 10 muts/Mb的实体瘤患者^[27],是继MSI-H第二个用于广泛实体

瘤治疗的免疫治疗标志物。但TMB ≥ 10 muts/Mb在EC中的频率并不高,仅为9.8%^[28]。目前多项食管癌试验中研究了TMB与PD-1/PD-L1抑制剂之间的关系;一项派姆单抗治疗EC的单臂研究中,TMB ≥ 10 mut/Mb患者显示更长的生存期改善趋势,但是与无进展生存期并无相关性^[29]。虽然KEYNOTE-158中未发现MSI状态影响TMB预测效能。但Greally等^[30]报道TMB能预测ICIs疗效可能是因为患者的MSI状态驱动,在控制MSI状态后,多因素分析发现TMB与预后并无相关性。KEYNOTE-061也发现了类似的结果,但是将TMB作为连续变量,而不是二分类变量时,即使去除MSI影响,TMB与预后仍然显著相关^[31]。上述TMB检测都属于组织TMB。近来发现血液TMB也可成为预测标志物,两者之间具有显著相关性,且联合PD-L1表达可以筛选出受益最高的非小细胞肺癌患者^[32-33]。但目前EC中暂无相关报道,需进一步探索。

四、肿瘤浸润性淋巴细胞

肿瘤浸润性淋巴细胞(tumor infiltrating lymphocytes, TILs)包括了肿瘤内浸润的T细胞以及B细胞,是ICIs一种可靠的预测标志物。因为它们在接受ICIs治疗后会发生改变,而T细胞更是被影响的主要角色。在NCT03222440中发现PD-1⁺CD4⁺T细胞、PD-1⁺CD8⁺T细胞、PD-L1⁺CD4⁺T细胞与接受放疗联合卡瑞利珠单抗的局部晚期ESCC患者的预后相关^[34]。调节性T细胞具有免疫抑制性,但是也能增强CTLA-4抑制剂的活性^[35],在黑色素瘤中检测应答者的转录组学发现效应记忆T细胞在应答者中更加丰富^[36]。虽然PD-1/PD-L1抑制剂主要针对肿瘤内T细胞的激活。但是肿瘤相关B细胞的作用也不能忽视^[37],肿瘤内浸润性浆细胞也能预测PD-L1抑制剂的疗效^[38],EC中暂无相关研究。但EAC中的肿瘤相关B细胞参与抗肿瘤反应,且在PD-L1表达或HLA-1类分子表达缺失的免疫原性偏低的肿瘤微环境中,肿瘤相关B细胞浸润减少^[39],由于TILs亚群的复杂性,对TILs进行量化可以让其预测效能进一步提升。随着高通量测序发展,已经允许研究者对肿瘤内免疫细胞浸润程度进行量化来评估肿瘤微环境的免疫状态,根据免疫浸润评分进行癌症分型,从而辅助ICIs治疗,且发现从ICIs获益最大的

患者具有更高的T淋巴细胞、浆细胞等免疫细胞浸润,与其他亚型预后具有显著差异^[40-41]。因此,使用免疫浸润评分或许比单独一种或几种淋巴细胞亚群更加实用。

五、肠道微生物组

肠道微生物组也是近来比较火热的生物标志物,除了会影响局部消化道黏膜的免疫状态,它还能通过免疫细胞调节全身的免疫系统^[42],EC作为上消化道肿瘤更可能受到肠道微生物组影响。Lv等比较了EAC与巴雷特食管之间肠道菌群的差异,发现EAC中肠道菌群的生物多样性降低,而且出现乳酸杆菌的聚集^[43],ESCC中发现乳酸杆菌的丰度与肿瘤分期呈负相关,而梭杆菌则与肿瘤分期呈正相关^[44]。肠道菌群能够影响ICIs的疗效,黑色素瘤中发现肠道微生物组不同的丰度以及种属会影响CTLA-4抑制剂的疗效^[45]。此外肠道菌群还能够改善对PD-1抑制剂出现的耐药性,将对ICIs有反应患者的粪移植到小鼠体内能够改善PD-1阻断的抗肿瘤作用,而无反应患者的粪移植则无效,通过宏基因组学检测发现是通过募集CD4⁺T淋巴细胞释放白介素12解除了耐药性^[46]。EC中暂时还没有肠道微生物组与ICIs疗效的证据报道,有待进一步探索。

六、超进展疾病生物标志物

PD-1/PD-L1抑制剂虽然改善了局部晚期EC的预后,但其中有少部分患者会出现HPD,肿瘤往往加速进展而导致患者预后极差。HPD暂时没有统一定义,但主要由肿瘤生长率和肿瘤生长动力学变化决定^[6,47]。EC中PD-1/PD-L1抑制剂疗法中也出现了HPD相关病例报道^[6,48-49]。通过比较转移性胃肠道癌症HPD患者与非HPD患者的基线血清蛋白表达,发现HPD患者MCP-1明显降低,而CD152明显升高^[50]。Sun等^[6]使用NGS测序发现PI3K/AKT信号通路与ESCC免疫治疗后HPD相关,CTR20170307中发现一名HPD患者具有EGFR kinase domain duplication^[48]。PI3K/AKT/EGFR轴对SCC的癌症进展及治疗耐药已有研究^[51-52],这或许提示PI3K/AKT/EGFR轴是导致HPD的潜在机制,需要在EC的免疫治疗前进行相关检测。

七、结论与展望

虽然部分标志物已经进入临床应用,但是仍存在或多或少的缺陷。但不可否认的是以CPS \geq 10

为指标筛选免疫疗法是个很好的选择,但是多项实验中已经证明无论PD-L1状态,ICIs疗效都优于传统辅助治疗。因此可以考虑降低PD-L1(CPS或TPS)截止值来筛选免疫治疗获益人群。从基因组学层面检测PD-L1也具有不错的前景,Huang等^[53]分析了244 584个患者的PD-L1拷贝数量变化,在多数癌症中它与免疫组织化学结果存在高度相关性,但在食管癌与尿路上皮癌等都有部分亚组显示两者无关。这可能与尿路上皮癌与食管癌具有相似肿瘤免疫微环境的PD-L1表达相关,都是更多表达在癌巢外淋巴细胞里而非肿瘤细胞^[14]。因此基于尿路上皮癌在PD-L1 IPS在尿路上皮癌的研究数据,提示未来食管癌免疫治疗可以更多关注PD-L1 IPS。TMB被认为是不平等的,一些中位TMB并不高的癌症中,对免疫治疗仍有不错的反应。因为TMB存在质量高低,质量高的突变更容易被免疫系统识别。此外EC中TMB-H患者使用ICIs治疗后联合放疗可能会降低ICIs疗效,Park等^[54]发现同步放疗后局部晚期SCC患者的TMB显著降低,且PD-L1等免疫检查点蛋白并没有变化趋势。而AC患者在新辅助治疗后各种免疫检查点蛋白都有一定上调^[55],与传统认知的放疗具有免疫原性诱导性不相符^[56]。

目前EC免疫治疗不断发展,各项大型临床数据陆续发表,新辅助免疫治疗也成为了研究热点,NICE研究以及PALACE研究结果都显示联合免疫检查点抑制剂具有更好的疗效,但是PD-L1表达或TMB与疗效并无相关性,无法利用已有的生物标志物筛选获益人群^[57-58]。在NADIM中通过比较病理完全缓解及未达到缓解患者的基因富集分析结果,发现M1巨噬细胞的比例具有显著差异。此外液体活检也极具潜力^[59],CHECKMATE-816中发现循环肿瘤DNA的清除率与主要病理缓解显著相关^[60]。笔者认为之后ICIs进一步发展应该从以下角度出发:①规范已使用标志物检测流程,筛选出更加合适的预测标志物,建立免疫标志物评分体系。②治疗方案的选择,包括时间点的选择,目前新辅助免疫治疗成为了主流趋势,但手术后是否需要维持免疫治疗暂无共识;还有联合治疗药物的选择,由于放疗对于免疫治疗疗效增加并不明显,因此放疗方案药物及剂量的选择仍需进一步探索,以及新出现的双特异性抗体的长

期效果还需要时间来验证。③随着未来不同靶点的抑制剂的批准,个体精准化治疗也成为尤为关键的一点,多组学的不断发展将允许我们针对不同患者个体的免疫微环境景观进行靶向药物的选择,从解除免疫抑制、激活共刺激分子以及提高肿瘤免疫原性等方向自由组合,这种高度个性化治疗将是肿瘤免疫治疗迈入新时代的标志。

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