

MRI纹理联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白对甲状腺乳头状癌颈部淋巴结转移的诊断价值

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【摘要】目的:分析磁共振成像(MRI) T_2 加权成像(T_2 WI)纹理联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白在甲状腺乳头状癌(PTC)颈部淋巴结转移(LNM)中的诊断价值。**方法:**选择82例PTC患者,并留取患者根治术标本进行后期免疫组化研究。根据入选患者病理诊断结果,将42例LNM阳性者分为观察组,40例LNM阴性者分为对照组。分析MRI纹理参数联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白诊断PTC伴LNM的敏感度、特异度及符合率的临床价值。**结果:**Cripto-1蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达显著强于未伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达($P<0.05$)。Cripto-1蛋白免疫组化染色阳性表达多位于肿瘤周围组织,表现为棕黄色颗粒,主要位于细胞膜上,且Cripto-1蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中染色强度显著强于未伴LNM的PTC。SOX2蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达显著强于未伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达($P<0.05$)。SOX2蛋白免疫组化染色阳性表达多位于肿瘤周围组织,表现为棕黄色颗粒,主要位于细胞核上,且SOX2蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中染色强度显著强于未伴LNM的PTC。两组 T_2 WI图像纹理分析的熵、角二阶矩以及相关间具有统计学意义($P<0.05$),而逆差矩、偏度、对比、峰度以及均值间均无统计学意义($P>0.05$)。预测PTC伴LNM的熵、角二阶矩以及相关对应AUC分别为0.884、0.783、0.718,敏感度分别为97.13%、79.42%、44.14%,特异度分别为70.00%、60.00%、90.00%。MRI纹理参数对PTC伴LNM的诊断价值稍优于Cripto-1蛋白,差异无统计学意义($P>0.05$);而MRI纹理参数联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白诊断在敏感度、特异度及符合率方面均显著优于单独诊断($P<0.05$)。**结论:**MRI纹理联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白诊断PTC伴LNM的敏感度、特异度及符合率均高于单独MRI纹理参数或Cripto-1蛋白的检查。此外,其有望为PTC患者预后及其治疗决策提供更可靠、准确的依据。

【关键词】甲状腺乳头状癌;颈部淋巴结转移;磁共振成像; T_2 WI纹理;Cripto-1蛋白;SOX2蛋白

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Diagnostic value of MRI texture analysis combined with Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression in cervical lymph node metastasis of papillary thyroid carcinoma

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Abstract: Objective To analyze the value of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) T_2 -weighted imaging (T_2 WI) texture analysis combined with Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression in diagnosing cervical lymph node metastasis (LNM) of papillary thyroid carcinoma (PTC). Methods A total of 82 patients with PTC were enrolled, and the radical operation specimens of the patients were collected for the subsequent immunohistochemical analysis. According to the results of pathological diagnosis, the patients were divided into observation group (LNM positive, $n=42$) and control group (LNM negative, $n=40$). The clinical value of MRI texture analysis combined with Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression in the diagnosis of PTC with LNM were assessed by analyzing their sensitivity, specificity and coincidence rate. Results The

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positive expression of Cripto-1 protein in PTC with LNM was significantly stronger than that in PTC without LNM ($P<0.05$). The positive expression of Cripto-1 protein immunohistochemical staining was mostly found in the surrounding tissues of the tumor, characterized by brown-yellow particles, mainly located on the cell membrane, and the staining intensity of Cripto-1 protein in PTC with LNM was significantly stronger than that in PTC without LNM. The positive expression of SOX2 protein in PTC with LNM was significantly stronger than that in PTC without LNM ($P<0.05$). The positive expression of SOX2 protein immunohistochemical staining was mostly found in the surrounding tissues of the tumor, characterized by brown-yellow particles, mainly located on the nucleus, and the staining intensity of SOX2 protein in PTC with LNM was significantly stronger than that in PTC without LNM. The results of T_2 WI image texture analysis revealed that there were significant differences between two groups in entropy, angular second moment and correlation ($P<0.05$), but not in inverse difference moment, skewness, contrast, kurtosis and mean values ($P>0.05$). The predicted AUC of entropy, angular second moment and correlation in PTC with LNM were 0.884, 0.783, 0.718, respectively; and the sensitivities were 97.13%, 79.42%, 44.14%; and the specificities were 70.00%, 60.00%, 90.00%. The diagnostic value of MRI texture analysis in PTC with LNM was slightly higher than that of Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression, but the difference was not statistically significant ($P>0.05$), while the sensitivity, specificity and coincidence rate of MRI texture analysis combined with Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression in the diagnosis of PTC with LNM were higher than those of MRI texture analysis or Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression alone ($P<0.05$). **Conclusion** The MRI texture analysis combined with Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression is superior to MRI texture analysis or Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression alone in sensitivity, specificity and coincidence rate. In addition, it is expected to provide a more reliable and accurate basis for the prognosis of PTC patients and their treatment decisions.

Keywords: papillary thyroid carcinoma; cervical lymph node metastasis; magnetic resonance imaging; T_2 WI texture; Cripto-1 protein; SOX2 protein

前言

有文献报道甲状腺乳头状癌(PTC)患者中相当比例存在颈部淋巴结转移(LNM),是影响预后的最重要因素之一^[1]。根治性颈部清扫术可以提高患者生存率^[2],手术范围通常由临床因素和术前影像学决定。然而,临床因素表明LNM的高风险尚不清楚。尽管医疗机构多采用术前成像,如高分辨率超声、颈部计算机断层扫描等,但这些方法对PTC是否发生LNM的诊断存在主观影响因素以及特异性低等问题。目前国内外多采用超声纹理分析及影像组学预测PTC是否发生LNM。磁共振成像(MRI) T_2 加权成像(T_2 WI)纹理分析可以有效获取一些肉眼较难识别的特征参数,更好地揭示病灶内潜在的病理异质性^[3]。此外,人类Cripto-1是表皮生长因子家族的成员,与上皮间质转化(EMT)和致癌作用有关,同时Cripto-1在50%~80%的不同类型癌症中高水平表达^[4]。一种干细胞因子性别决定区Y框蛋白(SOX2)在多种恶性肿瘤中已被证实高表达,可能与肿瘤细胞的失控性生长有关^[5],关于其在PTC伴LNM中的研究尚无报道。本研究将MRI T_2 WI图像纹理分析与Cripto-1和SOX2蛋白表达两种方法进行联合,旨在评估其对PTC伴LNM的诊断价值。

1 资料与方法

1.1 一般资料

选择2018年8月至2021年2月在福建医科大学附属泉州第一医院收治的82例PTC患者,并留取患者根治术标本进行后期的免疫组化研究。纳入标准:①≤60岁者;②患者均接受过淋巴结手术或穿刺术者;③既往无甲状腺治疗或手术切除史者;④由2名以上病理科医生确诊为PTC者;⑤临床资料齐全者。排除标准:①肿瘤直径>5 mm的PTC者;②有血栓病史患者;③MRI图像模糊,很难提取纹理特征与绘制感兴趣区(ROI)者;④肝肾功能障碍较为严重者;⑤孕产期妇女。入选患者根据病理穿刺结果,将42例LNM阳性者分为观察组,将40例LNM阴性者分为对照组。其中观察组男24例,女18例;平均年龄(48.25±4.27)岁;平均体质指数(BMI)(22.20±2.22)kg/m²;吸烟史20例;饮酒史23例;肿瘤直径(3.15±0.57)mm;病灶位置:左叶20例,右叶22例。对照组男20例,女20例;平均年龄(47.69±5.12)岁;平均BMI(22.65±2.41)kg/m²;吸烟史18例;饮酒史21例;肿瘤直径(2.89±0.65)mm;病灶位置:左叶19例,右叶21例。两组患者性别、年龄、BMI、饮酒史等方面比较,差异无统计学意义($P>0.05$)。

1.2 方法

1.2.1 MRI T_2 WI图像纹理分析

1.2.1.1 图像采集 嘱患者取仰卧体位,垫高颈部,暴露甲状腺,保持平稳呼吸避免咳嗽、吞咽行为产生伪影,从外耳孔扫描至主动脉弓水平,可根据需求扩大扫描区域。采用德国西门子Avanto 1.5T超导MR扫

描仪,序列与参数如下:轴位T₁WI(TR 520 ms, TE 14 ms)、T₂WI(TR 3 500 ms, TE 95 ms)、扫描抑脂与冠状面的T₂WI(TR 3 000 ms, TE 85 ms),层厚3 mm,层间距1 mm,FOV 14 cm×14 cm,矩阵320×256,NEX 4。采用经肘前静脉注射0.1 mmol/kg Gd-DTPA剂。在横断面和冠状面采用层厚3 mm的T₁WI增强扫描。以“.Dicom”格式保存数据于光盘中。

1.2.1.2 图像选择 在PACS工作站上,调整所有测试图像的窗宽、窗位,且保持一致,随后导出。由2名经验丰富的MRI医生,根据扫描保存的图片共同核实施灶位置与区域,选取病灶的最大层面,导入Image J 1.51软件。

1.2.1.3 提取T₂WI纹理参数 采用Image J软件沿病灶边缘勾画轴位T₂WI病灶ROI,设置直方图及GLCM参数像素间距d=1,与轴夹角θ=0°,提取T₂WI的8个纹理参数(熵、角二阶矩、相关、均值、对比、偏度、峰态、逆差矩),每个病灶测量3次取平均值。

1.2.2 Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白的免疫组织化学染色 采用ElivisionTM plus法进行免疫组织化学染色。

1.3 观察指标

(1)LNM。基于美国国立综合癌症网络指南及既往研究^[6],由2位经验丰富的MRI医生共同阅片,符合以下条件之一者为LNM:①横断面示淋巴结短径≥1 cm;②淋巴结结外侵犯、相互融合以及边缘不规则强化;③淋巴结中央坏死或呈环形强化改变。(2)

Cripto-1阳性表达于细胞膜或细胞质上,综合染色强度及阳性细胞比例判定其表达水平,以≥10%为阳性表达^[7]。SOX2阳性表达于胞浆中,综合染色强度及阳性细胞比例判定其表达水平,以≥25%为阳性表达。

1.4 统计学方法

采用SPSS19.0软件对数据进行统计分析,MRI T₂WI图像纹理参数特征用均数±标准差表示,行t检验;阳性表达率、敏感度、特异度及符合率用n(%)表示,行χ²检验,P<0.05为差异有统计学意义

2 结 果

2.1 Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白免疫组化染色结果

Cripto-1蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达显著强于未伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达(P<0.05,表1)。Cripto-1蛋白免疫组化染色阳性表达多位于肿瘤周围组织,表现为棕黄色颗粒,主要位于细胞膜上,且Cripto-1蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中染色强度显著强于未伴LNM的PTC(图1a与1b)。SOX2蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达显著强于未伴LNM的PTC中的阳性表达(P<0.05,表1)。SOX2蛋白免疫组化染色阳性表达多位于肿瘤周围组织,表现为棕黄色颗粒,主要位于胞浆上,且SOX2蛋白在伴LNM的PTC中染色强度显著强于未伴LNM的PTC(图1c与1d)。

表1 Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白免疫组化染色结果[例(%)]

Table 1 Immunohistochemical staining results of Cripto-1 and SOX2 proteins [cases(%)]

| 组别 | n | Cripto-1蛋白 | | SOX2 | |
|------------|----|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 阴性 | 阳性 | 阴性 | 阳性 |
| 观察组 | 42 | 4(9.53) | 38(90.47) | 8(9.53) | 34(80.47) |
| 对照组 | 40 | 17(42.40) | 23(57.60) | 19(47.50) | 21(52.50) |
| χ^2 值 | | 11.694 | | 7.509 | |
| P值 | | 0.001 | | 0.006 | |

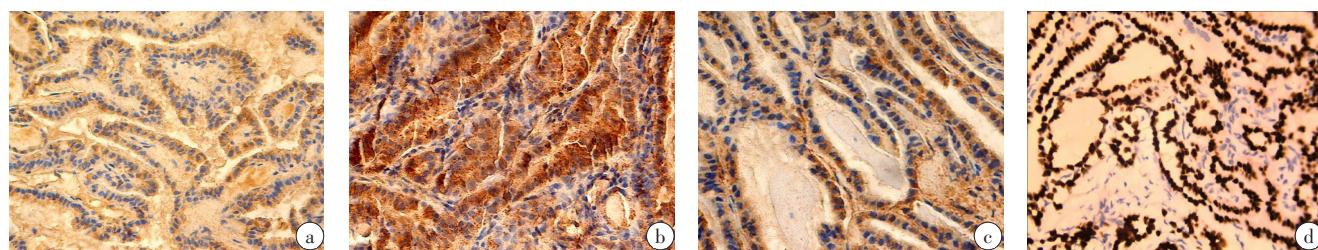


图1 Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白免疫组化染色结果(×400)

Figure 1 Immunohistochemical staining results of Cripto-1 and SOX2 proteins (×400)

a:Cripto-1蛋白在PTC未伴LNM的表达;b:Cripto-1蛋白在PTC伴LNM的表达;c:SOX2蛋白在PTC未伴LNM的表达;d:SOX2蛋白在PTC伴LNM的表达

2.2 MRI T₂WI图像纹理参数特征及诊断效能

两组T₂WI图像纹理分析(图2)的熵、角二阶矩以及相关间具有统计学意义($P<0.05$,表2),而逆差矩、偏度、对比、峰度以及均值间均无统计学意义

($P>0.05$,表2)。同时预测PTC伴LNM的熵、角二阶矩以及相关对应AUC分别为0.884、0.783、0.718,敏感度分别为97.13%、79.42%、44.14%,特异度分别为70.00%、60.00%、90.00%。

表2 两组患者MRI T₂WI图像纹理参数比较($\bar{x} \pm s$)

Table 2 Comparison of texture parameters in MRI T₂WI images between two groups of patients (Mean±SD)

| 组别 | n | 熵 | 角二阶矩($\times 10^{-2}$) | 相关($\times 10^{-2}$) | 均值 | 峰度 | 对比 | 偏度 | 逆差矩 |
|------------|----|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 观察组 | 42 | 6.67±0.65 | 0.31±0.09 | 0.36±0.12 | 60.43±22.76 | -0.11±0.14 | 37.72±18.48 | -0.15±0.06 | 0.24±0.08 |
| 对照组 | 40 | 5.52±0.51 | 0.52±0.12 | 0.73±0.21 | 53.75±20.84 | -0.18±0.18 | 30.53±14.55 | -0.16±0.04 | 0.22±0.09 |
| χ^2 值 | | 8.883 | 8.993 | 9.855 | 1.384 | 1.971 | 1.951 | 0.883 | 1.064 |
| P值 | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.170 | 0.051 | 0.055 | 0.379 | 0.290 |

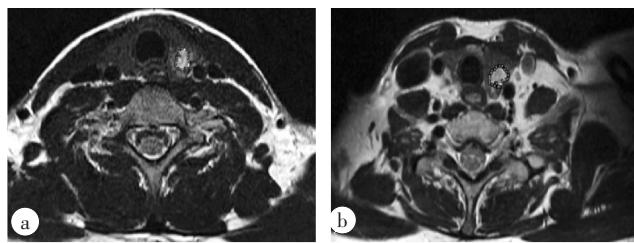


图2 MRI T₂WI图像纹理参数特征

Figure 2 Texture characteristics of MRI T₂WI images

a:女,38岁,MRI图像结果显示左侧PTC不伴LNM;b:女,45岁,MRI图像结果显示左侧PTC伴有中央区LNM

2.3 MRI纹理参数联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白对PTC伴LNM的诊断价值

MRI纹理参数对PTC伴LNM的诊断价值稍优于Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白,差异无统计学意义($P>0.05$,表3);而MRI纹理参数联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白诊断在敏感度、特异度及符合率均显著优于单独诊断($P<0.05$,表3)。

表3 MRI纹理参数联合Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白对PTC伴LNM的诊断价值[例(%)]

Table 3 Diagnostic value of MRI texture analysis combined with Cripto-1 and SOX2 protein expression in PTC with LNM [cases(%)]

| 组别 | 敏感度 | 特异度 | 符合率 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| MRI纹理参数 | 35(83.33) | 33(82.50) | 68(82.93) |
| Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白 | 30(71.42) | 28(70.00) | 58(70.73) |
| 二者联合 | 39(92.95)* | 37(92.50)* | 76(92.68)* |
| χ^2 值 | 6.718 | 6.790 | 13.506 |
| P值 | 0.034 | 0.033 | 0.001 |

*表示二者联合单独与MRI纹理参数或Cripto-1与SOX2蛋白方法比较, $P<0.05$

甲状腺癌的85%,LNM在30%~80%的PTC患者中可见^[1]。然而,尽管其病程缓慢,但仍占甲状腺癌死亡人数的50%以上^[8]。美国国家癌症数据库报告美国PTC患者总体10年生存率为99%,尽管生存率极高,但PTC与整个LNM的高比率(30%至90%的患者)相关^[9]。局部LNM通常是PTC向甲状腺远处转移的第一步。大多数病例遵循相对良性的临床过程,这可能会导致医生和患者忽视长期随访的重要性。既往研究表明67.9%的经典PTC病例存在LNM,而PTC患者超过10年的生存率不受LNM的影响^[11]。然而,缺乏关于PTC患者初始甲状腺切除术和淋巴结清扫后复发的信息,并且在初始淋巴结清扫后可能发生局部复发或远处转移,手术、长期放射性碘治疗和外部放疗用于治疗PTC患者的复发^[12]。

术前准确评估LNM情况,可帮助医生选择合理手术方案。PTC患者往往较早发生局部LNM,手术是首选治疗方法。LNM对临床分期及术后复发率和病死率的评估都具有重要意义,是降低局部复发率和避免再次手术的关键,手术范围以及疾病预后主要取决于是否存在局部LNM^[13]。另外,淋巴结清扫势必会增加手术并发症的发生率。MRI影像学检查因其多平面、多参数与高分辨率等特征,已成为PTC术前评估LNM的重要方法,但由于早期LNM形态结构变化不显著,尤其MRI影像对小淋巴结炎性增生和微转移的敏感性与特异性较低^[14]。研究表明PTC伴LNM的纹理分布更复杂且不规则(熵值越大),肿瘤的异质性也更显著,纹理细致程度更低(角二阶矩值越大提示图像越均一、异质性越小)^[16]。钟熹等^[17]研究表明T₂WI纹理分析能很大程度上预测舌癌患者颈部LNM,熵对预测双侧颈部LNM也有同样的价值。本研究结果表明MRI图像纹理分析诊断的敏感度和特异度优于传统影像医师评价,与钟熹等研究一致。张衡等^[18]研究显示影像医师诊断颈部LNM的敏感

3 讨论

PTC是最常见的甲状腺恶性肿瘤,约占缺碘地区

度为 64.7%，特异度为 60.0%，提示 MRI T_2 WI 图像纹理分析预测 PTC 伴 LNM 有一定临床意义。但是本研究勾画的 ROI 存在人为的测量误差和选择性偏倚，以及与 3D 纹理分析相比，本研究的 T_2 WI 纹理分析不能观察肿瘤的全貌而难免存在一些不足。因此，有必要寻求辅助表征方法进一步提高预测结果的可靠性与准确性。

在脊椎动物的早期发育过程中，Cripto-1 作为 Nodal 的共同受体起作用。Nodal 是一种转化生长因子 β 家族成员，对于中胚层和内胚层的形成以及前后轴和左右轴的建立至关重要。虽然 Cripto-1 在正常成人组织中表达很低，但是 Cripto-1 在几种不同的人类肿瘤中高表达，调节癌细胞的增殖、迁移、EMT 转化和刺激肿瘤血管生成^[19]。EMT 是一个多步骤过程，在此过程中上皮细胞依次失去其上皮特征并获得间充质表型特征的运动性和侵袭性^[20]。细胞表面粘附连接蛋白对维持上皮细胞表型和保持顶端-基底极性都是必不可少的。在干细胞标志物中，SOX2 是 SRY 相关的高迁移率群盒家族成员，在干细胞生物学、器官发育和细胞分化的调节中起着至关重要的作用。最近的研究表明 SOX2 在多种恶性肿瘤中过度表达，但在 PTC 伴 LNM 中研究 SOX2 表达的报道尚少^[21]。考虑到 SOX2 在多能性和去分化中的作用，我们认为其参与 PTC 向 PTC 伴 LNM 的转变。综上所述，MRI 纹理参数联合 Cripto-1 与 SOX2 蛋白诊断 PTC 伴 LNM 在敏感度、特异度及符合率方面均显著优于单独诊断 ($P < 0.05$)，提示两者联合诊断价值更高。

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