

奥贝胆酸治疗非酒精性脂肪肝的疗效和机制 ——胆汁酸药物的利和弊

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基金项目：国家自然科学基金面上项目(编号:81471080)

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聂 騛,教授、博士研究生导师,暨南大学附属第一医院消化科副主任、主任医师,广东省杰出青年医学人才,中国海峡两岸医药卫生交流协会消化内镜专业委员会副秘书长、常委,广东医师协会消化病分会常委,广东肝脏病学会脂肪肝专业委员会常委。本科开始在广州第一军医大学(现为南方医科大学)学习工作,在上海第二军医大学东方肝胆医院院长吴孟超院士实验室完成硕士课题,在教育部重点专科姜泊主任指导下到香港大学孔祥复院士实验室作全职科研员完成博士课题。曾经在美国加州大学伯克利分校(University of California, Berkeley)营养学系主任指导下和合作下,获全额奖学金作博士后研究3年,在美国密歇根大学(University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)作研究员。南方医科大学高层次人才引进3年后,又由清华大学人才引入编,在院长董家鸿院士领导下初创清华长庚医院2年后,由暨南大学人才引进。以第一作者或通信作者发表10多篇论著于包括 *Hepatology*、*IBD* 等国际知名的 SCI 收录期刊上,主持国家自然科学基金等多项研究。

[摘要] 非酒精性脂肪肝(NAFLD)是世界上发病率最高的肝病,但是目前无批准上市治疗NAFLD的药物。近年来,NAFLD被认为是代谢相关性脂肪肝病,其发病机制与胆汁酸代谢的改变有关。奥贝胆酸是一种半合成的胆汁酸,同时也是一种强效且具有高选择性的法尼醇X受体(FXR)激动剂和脂肪酸转运蛋白5(FATP5)的强效抑制剂。目前,与高剂量熊去氧胆酸(UDCA)和其他胆汁酸药物治疗NAFLD相比,小剂量奥贝胆酸在治疗NAFLD中具有更多的优势和探索价值。

[关键词] 非酒精性脂肪肝; 奥贝胆酸; 法尼醇X受体; 脂肪酸转运蛋白

[中图分类号] R 575.5 **[文献标识码]** A **[文章编号]** 1674-3806(2021)08-0756-06

doi:10.3969/j.issn.1674-3806.2021.08.05

Efficacy and mechanisms of obeticholic acid in treatment of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease: pros and cons of bile acid drugs in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease CHEN Li-xin, LIN Chuang-zhen, YU Bing-qing, et al. Department of Gastroenterology, the First Affiliated Hospital of Jinan University, Guangzhou 510630, China

[Abstract] Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease(NAFLD) is the most common liver disease in the world, but there are currently no approved drugs for the treatment of NAFLD. In recent years, NAFLD has been considered as metabolic associated fatty liver disease, and the pathogenesis of NAFLD is related to changes in bile acid metabolism. Obeticholic

acid is a semi-synthetic bile acid and a potent and highly selective farnesoid X receptor(FXR) agonist, as well as a potent inhibitor of fatty acid transport protein 5(FATP5). At present, compared with high-dose ursodeoxycholic acid(UDCA) and other bile acid drugs in the treatment of NAFLD, low-dose obeticholic acid has more advantages and exploration value in the treatment of NAFLD.

[Key words] Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease(NAFLD); Obeticholic acid; Farnesoid X receptor(FXR); Fatty acid transporter protein

非酒精性脂肪肝(non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, NAFLD)是世界上发病率最高的肝病,在美国NAFLD所致的肝硬化已经成为肝移植的主要病因^[1]。未来几十年内,在发展中国家的较发达地区,NAFLD可能会成为肝硬化和肝癌等终末期肝病的主要原因。在亚洲,中国的NAFLD相关患病率、发病率和年死亡率最高。最近的荟萃分析显示,中国NAFLD的全国流行率高达29.2%,如果这种大流行持续下去,预计中国将成为全球NAFLD和肝脏相关死亡人数最多的国家^[2-3]。因此,NAFLD患者的筛查与治疗至关重要。

1 NAFLD 的诊断与发病机制

NAFLD是一种排他性诊断的疾病,而在实际临床工作中,许多患者常伴有2型糖尿病、肥胖、高血压、高脂血症等代谢异常,因此,NAFLD的概念给临床诊断工作带来一定的麻烦。2020年,国内外部分专家和学者认为NAFLD是代谢综合征的肝脏表现,建议将NAFLD改名为代谢相关性脂肪肝病(metabolic associated fatty liver disease,MAFLD),并建立了新的基于临床表现、检验、检查和病理结果的诊断标准,对NAFLD的诊断具有相当的实际意义^[4]。然而遗憾的是,在治疗NAFLD方面,目前美国和欧盟尚无批准上市的药物^[5],一线的治疗方法只有早期改善生活方式及减肥^[6-7],患者难以长期坚持。美国肝病协会最近推荐分别用吡格列酮和维生素E作为经活检证实的非酒精性脂肪性肝炎(non-alcoholic steatohepatitis,NASH)患者的治疗药物,但其长期疗效和安全性仍有待确定^[7]。结合目前中国成人体质量指数越来越高的大趋势^[8],治疗NAFLD有效药物的研发迫在眉睫。目前,NAFLD的发病机制仍不明确。但有研究发现NAFLD的代谢异常与胆汁酸代谢的改变有关^[9-10],近20多年来的研究发现,胆汁酸不仅作为促进脂肪吸收的乳化剂,还与机体的多种代谢调节关系密切^[11-12]。胆汁酸通过激活核受体或膜受体,如法尼醇X受体(farnesoid X receptor,FXR)、维生素D受体、孕烷X受体、武田G蛋白偶联受体5(Takeda G protein-coupled receptor 5,TGR5)、α5β1整合素和鞘氨醇-1-磷酸受体2,调节胆汁酸代谢、脂肪

代谢、糖代谢、能量代谢及免疫细胞的功能等^[12-13]。目前研究认为,胆汁酸治疗NAFLD是通过激活FXR,作用于下游信号通路小异二聚体伴侣(small heterodimer partner,SHP)、甾醇调节元件结合蛋白1c(sterol regulatory element binding protein 1c,SREBP-1c)及成纤维细胞生长因子15(fibroblast growth factor 15,FGF-15)/成纤维细胞生长因子-19(fibroblast growth factor 19,FGF-19)影响肝脏脂肪的合成^[11]。其中值得关注的是,FXR的高效激动剂奥贝胆酸(6-乙基-鹅去氧胆酸),其已证明在NASH、原发性胆汁性胆管炎(primary biliary cholangitis,PBC)和糖尿病治疗中具有较好前景^[14],目前已被美国食品药品监督管理局(Food and Drug Administration,FDA)批准用于二线治疗PBC,奥贝胆酸治疗NAFLD的Ⅲ期临床试验也正在进行中,有望成为首个被FDA批准用于NAFLD的药物^[15-17]。此外,有研究发现胆汁酸通过调节肝脏特异性脂肪酸转运蛋白5(fatty acid transport protein 5,FATP5)来影响肝脏的脂质代谢^[18],从而影响MAFLD的发生发展。相关的动物实验和临床研究也为FATP5改善NAFLD提供了相当的证据^[19-22]。因此,FATP5也有望成为药物设计的靶点。

2 FXR

FXR是核受体超级家族中的一员,N端有高度保守的DNA结合区域,羧基末端有配体结合区域^[23]。1999年,发现胆汁酸是FXR的天然配体,因此,FXR又被命名为胆汁酸受体。FXR有4个亚型,分别是FXRa1-FXRa4,并且这4个亚型表现出明显的发育和组织特异性表达模式。在人类,FXRa1/2主要在肝脏和肾上腺表达,而FXRa3/4主要在结肠、十二指肠、肾脏表达^[24]。FXR有多种激活剂,天然胆汁酸主要有胆酸(cholic acid,CA)、鹅脱氧胆酸(chenodeoxycholic acid,CDCA);半合成的胆汁酸主要是奥贝胆酸;合成的非类固醇类的主要是GW4046和WAY-362450^[25]。胆汁酸通过激活FXR,将配体信号转化为基因表达的变化,在调节脂代谢、糖代谢方面发挥重要作用^[13]。动物实验表明,激活FXR可降低血浆葡萄糖、游离脂肪酸、甘油三酯和总胆固醇^[26]。而FXR敲除小鼠的血浆高密度脂蛋白胆固

醇(high-density lipoprotein-cholesterol, HDL-C)、非高密度脂蛋白胆固醇、甘油三酯升高,肠道胆固醇吸收增加^[27]。在胰岛素抵抗的小鼠模型中,激活 FXR 被证明可以提高胰岛素敏感性^[28]。除了这些直接作用外,FXR 还可以通过增加 FGF-19 分泌到小肠中来间接调节碳水化合物和脂质代谢以及胰岛素敏感性^[29]。奥贝胆酸是一种半合成的胆汁酸,是一种强效且具有高选择性的 FXR 激动剂^[14]。一些研究表明,奥贝胆酸可以改善胰岛素抵抗,降低遗传或饮食诱导的啮齿动物肥胖模型中肝脏的甘油三酯含量^[30-36]。其中,奥贝胆酸改善肝脏甘油三酯的积累被认为是通过激活 FXR,下调脂肪生成的相关基因的表达^[37]。奥贝胆酸的Ⅱ期临床研究结果显示,奥贝胆酸组(25 mg/d)110 例患者中有 50 例患者(45%)在第 72 周可以改善 NAFLD 的组织学特征。治疗过程中主要发生的不良事件是瘙痒^[38]。目前奥贝胆酸的Ⅲ期临床研究正在进行中,其中期分析结果显示,25 mg/d 的奥贝胆酸可以显著改善肝纤维化^[39]。这是一个值得让人期待的药物。但是,在研究过程中,激活 FXR 也带来了一定的副作用,比如,小剂量和较高剂量奥贝胆酸的副作用包括了瘙痒^[38];肝脏低密度脂蛋白(low-density lipoprotein, LDL)受体表达下调,导致血液中低密度脂蛋白胆固醇(low-density lipoprotein-cholesterol, LDL-C)增高;同时下调载脂蛋白 A1(apolipoprotein A1, ApoA1),上调清道夫受体 B1 和胆固醇酯转移蛋白的表达,导致血液中 HDL-C 下降^[13],使得 FXR 激活对血脂的改变不利于心血管健康。而且,剂量越高,副作用越大^[40]。另外,较高剂量奥贝胆酸导致晚期肝病患者和肝硬化患者出现肝功能恶化,FDA 于 2018 年初发出“黑框警告”^[41]。目前有报道称奥贝胆酸导致鼠类模型急性肝损伤的机制可能是通过 FXR 通路产生^[42],这些副作用被认为是全 FXR 激动剂的药理给药导致的^[43]。由于核受体参与多种内分泌功能,FXR 的调节容易引起 FXR 配体将信号改变转化为基因表达的改变,从而引起参与胆汁酸、葡萄糖和脂质代谢的多种基因改变所致的副作用。奥贝胆酸的临床试验已经表明,广泛的 FXR 激活破坏了胆固醇的稳态,FXR 的激活通过 SHP/FGF19 的上调和胆固醇 7α-羟化酶(cholesterol 7α-hydroxylase, CYP7A1)的下调阻止了胆固醇向 BAs 的代谢转化^[44]。由于该途径是胆固醇代谢的主要途径,其长期的药理阻断可能会产生严重后果。靶向激活肝细胞的 FXR 受体,而不激活促炎细胞的 FXR 受体,可能是安全利用 FXR 作为药物

靶点的最佳途径。其次,可以联合使用 FXR 拮抗剂保护促炎细胞的 FXR 受体,因为这样可以减少相关的副作用。所以,为了探索这些新策略,在分子水平上更深入地探索 FXR 的靶向激活是必要的。目前,小剂量奥贝胆酸不完全激活 FXR 是可行的临床方案,显著减少了副作用的发生^[40]。

3 长链脂肪酸转运蛋白

MAFLD 的最大特点就是肝细胞有过量的脂质富集和蓄积,这主要是由于肝脏对于脂肪的吸收与利用不平衡所导致的。近年来研究显示,游离长链脂肪酸(long chain fatty acids, LCFAs)跨过细胞膜进入细胞是需要脂肪酸转运蛋白(fatty acid transporter protein, FATP)介导的主动转运过程。目前认为,细胞膜上的脂肪酸转运体主要有脂肪酸移位酶(CD36/fatty acid translocase, CD36/FAT)、质膜脂肪酸结合蛋白(plasma membrane fatty acid-binding protein, FABPpm)及 FATP^[45]。FATP 家族包含 6 个成员,其编码为 FATP1-6^[46]。FATP 是必不可少的膜蛋白,具有跨膜结构域^[47-48]。所有 FATP 成员的特征是存在一个高度保守的 311 个氨基酸的序列(称为 FATP 序列)以及一个位于 C 末端的一磷酸腺苷(adenosine monophosphate, AMP)结合域(292-303),该区域负责 LCFAs 的结合和吸收^[49-51]。FATP 家族各成员的表达具有一定的组织特异性。FATP1 在骨骼肌、心脏、白色脂肪组织及棕色脂肪组织高表达;FATP2 主要在肝脏及肾脏表达;FATP3 在小鼠肾上腺、睾丸、卵巢及肺表达;FATP4 主要在小肠、皮肤表达;而 FATP6 则主要在心脏表达;FATP5 仅在肝脏高表达^[46]。FATP5 主要是在肝脏调节胆汁酸合成和 LCFAs 转运中发挥组织特异性作用,并减少脂质蓄积,它的分子机制是通过胆汁酸辅酶 A(bile acid-coenzyme A, BA-CoA)酶促活性缀合胆汁酸。胆汁酸以 FATP5 依赖性方式抑制 LCFAs 的摄取,并降低肝脏中的甘油三酯水平,维持肝脏中的脂质稳态^[44]。但抑制 CD36 没有改善肝脏内脂肪蓄积的作用^[52],表明 FATP5 在 MAFLD 中比其他转运蛋白在脂肪酸转运功能上具有更重要的作用。有报道脂肪摄取因子如 CD36、FATP2 和 FATP5 在脂肪摄取过多或肥胖时起作用,但在血液脂肪酸正常时不起作用,这说明 FATP5 在高脂饮食或肥胖患者中,对肝脏的脂肪酸摄取过程起重要作用,对脂肪肝的发展和(或)加重有促进作用。此外,研究还发现 NAFLD 中肝脏 FATP5 表达的降低与 NASH 进展为肝硬化过程中的肝脏脂肪丢失有关^[53]。体内和体外实验还发现 FATP5 作为肿瘤抑制因子在肝细胞

癌(hepatocellular carcinoma, HCC)中的作用,包括脂质代谢紊乱和氧化还原稳态之间的机制起到相互联系作用^[54]。FATP5 在哺乳动物细胞中的过表达增加了肝脏对LCFAs 的摄取。相反,在 FATP5 基因敲除小鼠中,FATP5 的缺失使得 LCFAs 的吸收显著降低,小鼠表现出较低水平的肝甘油三酯,这表明肝细胞能够有效地摄取 LCFAs,从而实现肝脂质稳态,很大程度上依赖于FATP5^[19,20]。此外,敲除FATP5 基因的动物模型(喂养高脂肪饲料)的葡萄糖稳态显著改善,而MAFLD与2型糖尿病和胰岛素抵抗也是息息相关^[55]。因此,FATP5 有望成为药物设计的潜在靶点^[18]。目前我们已知的FATP5 抑制分子很少,但有一些次级胆汁酸如熊去氧胆酸(ursodeoxycholic acid, UDCA)和脱氧胆酸(deoxycholic acid, DCA)可以作用于FATP5,从而抑制甘油三酯的富集^[18]。UDCA 已经被批准用于PBC的一线治疗,并被应用于NASH 患者的临床研究。其中一项为期18个月、随机、双盲、安慰剂对照的多中心试验中,根据改良Brunt 评分和非酒精性脂肪性肝病活动性评分(NAFLD Activity Score, NAS)对185例NASH患者进行了肝组织学评价,结果显示,与安慰剂相比,高剂量的UDCA[23~28 mg/(kg·d)]显著改善了NASH患者的小叶炎症,但无法改善整体肝脏组织学,对丙氨酸转氨酶(alanine aminotransferase, ALT)、天冬氨酸转氨酶(aspartate aminotransferase, AST)也没有显著改善^[21]。然而,与该结果相反的是,在另一项对126例接受UDCA[28~35 mg/(kg·d)]治疗的NASH 和ALT升高的患者进行12个月的研究中,UDCA 显著改善了治疗组ALT、AST水平。并且,与接受安慰剂的患者相比,治疗组患者的血清纤维化标志物、血清葡萄糖、糖化血红蛋白和血清胰岛素水平以及稳态模型评估评分均显著降低^[22]。其中,ALT是评估肝脏坏死性炎症改善的有效指标^[56]。根据上述研究结论可以推测出高剂量UDCA 可能会改善肝脏坏死性炎症。另外,MAFLD 是以代谢异常为特征的疾病,与2型糖尿病关系密切,在该研究中治疗组血清葡萄糖、糖化血红蛋白和血清胰岛素水平的显著降低无疑为进一步探索高剂量UDCA 的有益代谢作用提供了依据。值得一提的是,在两项高剂量UDCA 研究中,腹泻和腹部不适是治疗组的主要不良反应,但都没有出现死亡、肝硬化并发症(包括进展为肝功能衰竭)或HCC。虽然目前UDCA 在NASH 中的疗效数据有限且相互矛盾,但是在不同的研究中,患者数量、治疗时间、药物剂量、是否设置对照组都对实验结果造成影响。

除此之外,有些NASH 可能为不均匀分布的组织学损害的局灶病变^[57-58],这也可能导致肝脏活检结果的偏差。总的来说,UDCA 在更大规模的NASH 患者中深入研究是值得肯定的。

4 总结与展望

MAFLD 的发病机制复杂,其中包括肝细胞摄取过多的LCFAs^[59-60]。FATP5 只在肝脏中表达,而且在体内和体外实验都证实了FATP5 在转运LCFAs 中的重要作用,并和胆汁酸的代谢密切相关^[18,61]。由此猜想,胆汁酸是连接FXR 和FATP5 的一个调节剂,虽然FXR 和FATP5 介导的肝肠相互作用调节胆汁酸水平的机制尚未完全阐明,但是现有的证据已经为其提供了一定的理论基础。UDCA 和奥贝胆酸目前已经分别被批准用于PBC 的一线治疗和二线治疗,并被应用于NASH 患者的临床研究中。UDCA 主要通过抑制FATP5 改善NAFLD,其作用机制与FXR 激活无关,因为UDCA 对FXR 没有亲和力^[62]。奥贝胆酸目前被认为是一种选择性FXR 激动剂,而我们未发表的数据显示,奥贝胆酸也是FATP5 的强效抑制剂,目前很少有化合物作为FXR 的激动剂^[63]、FATP5 的拮抗剂^[18],也很少有内源性胆汁酸分别作为FXR 和FATP5 的激动剂和拮抗剂发挥双重作用的报道^[18,64]。因此,探索奥贝胆酸在治疗NAFLD 过程中,明确FXR 和FATP5 之间的功能和分子机制是非常有必要的。展望未来,小剂量奥贝胆酸可能通过不完全激活FXR 和抑制FATP5 发挥治疗MAFLD 的作用,有望被FDA 批准用于MAFLD 的治疗。除此之外,探索各种新型合成胆汁酸抑制FATP5 与MAFLD 之间的联系也可能为MAFLD 的治疗带来新的突破口。

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- [收稿日期 2021–08–06] [本文编辑 吕文娟 余军]

本文引用格式

陈立新,林创珍,郁冰清,等.奥贝胆酸治疗非酒精性脂肪肝的疗效和机制——胆汁酸药物的利和弊[J].中国临床新医学,2021,14(8):756–761.