

干细胞在青光眼中的研究进展

蔡兴灿¹, 路雪婧²

[摘要] 青光眼是一种可导致视力损伤甚至失明的视神经退行性疾病, 目前青光眼的治疗主要依赖药物和手术降低眼内压, 但这些方法仅能延缓病情进展, 不能逆转组织损伤。干细胞具有高度的自我更新和分化潜力, 已被用于包括青光眼在内的视网膜退行性疾病等多种疾病的组织再生。本文通过分析青光眼的治疗现状, 总结干细胞治疗青光眼的 2 种方式, 介绍不同干细胞的分类、特征及其在青光眼治疗中的应用现状和前景, 对干细胞的应用和安全性提出展望, 可为青光眼的研究提供参考。

[关键词] 干细胞; 青光眼; 细胞治疗; 再生医学

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Research Progress on Stem Cells in Glaucoma CAI Xingcan¹, LU Xuejing². 1 Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chengdu 610075, China; 2 Ineye Hospital of Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chengdu 610084, China

[Abstract] Glaucoma is a chronic neurodegenerative disease of the optic nerve that leads to vision loss and blindness. Current treatments for glaucoma mainly rely on pharmacological and surgical methods to reduce intraocular pressure, but these approaches can only slow disease progression without reversing tissue damage. Stem cells, with their high self-renewal and differentiation potential, have been applied in tissue regeneration for various diseases, including retinal degenerative conditions such as glaucoma. This review analyzes the current treatment landscape for glaucoma, summarizes two main strategies of stem cell-based therapies, and introduces the classification, characteristics, and application prospects of different types of stem cells in glaucoma treatment. Additionally, it explores the challenges and safety considerations of stem cell applications, providing a reference for future research on glaucoma.

[Keywords] stem cells; glaucoma; cell therapy; regenerative medicine

青光眼是一组以特征性视神经萎缩和视野缺损为共同特征的疾病, 病理性眼压升高是其主要危险因素之一。眼压升高会导致视神经的压迫和损伤, 进而引起视野的逐渐缩小和视力下降, 最终可能导致失明^[1]。据调查^[2]估计, 全球 40~80 岁人群的青光眼患病率约为 3.5%, 预计到 2040 年, 青光眼患者数量将增加到 1.118 亿。青光眼发病较为隐匿, 在早期许多患者常无明显症状^[3], 所以实际患病情况可能更加严重。青光眼可分为开角型青光眼和闭角型青光眼, 但不论何种类型, 其视力下降的主要机制主要是视网膜神经节细胞 (retinal ganglion cell, RGC) 的凋亡导致视网膜神经纤维层 (retinal nerve fiber layer, RNFL) 变薄及视网膜和外侧膝状体神经萎缩^[4]。如不及时治疗, 青光眼患者将会逐渐失去周边视力, 视野慢慢缺损, 最终导致失明。目前, 青光眼治疗以

药物和手术为主, 主要目的是为了降低眼内压。首选的药物治疗方案是降压类滴眼液, 但为了达到更好的治疗效果需要多种药物联合使用, 这对患者的依从性考验较大。在药物治疗效果不理想时可采取手术治疗, 包括小梁切除术、微创植入引流装置和激光治疗等, 但术后又存在手术部位瘢痕化、疗效差等缺点^[5]。不论是药物还是手术治疗, 降低眼压的方法只能延缓视觉功能障碍的进展, 无法恢复青光眼造成的 RGC 凋亡和相关组织损伤。近年来, 干细胞因其高度分化的能力在心血管、神经、消化系统疾病的应用日益广泛, 在眼科中亦有大量报道。本文对干细胞在青光眼中应用进行综述, 现报道如下。

1 干细胞的分类及特点

干细胞是一种存在于胚胎组织、胎儿组织和成人组织中的未分化细胞, 具有高度的自我更新、增殖和单向或多向分化的潜力。根据其分化潜力可分为全能干细胞、多能干细胞、专能干细胞和单能干细胞, 根据其来源又可分为胚胎干

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作者单位: 1 成都中医药大学, 成都 610075

2 成都中医大银海眼科医院, 成都 610084

通讯作者: 路雪婧, E-mail: luxuejing@cdutcm.edu.cn

细胞、胎体干细胞、成体干细胞以及通过人工基因编辑而得的诱导多能干细胞(induced pluripotent stem cell, iPSC)等^[6]。这些细胞在组织内处于休眠状态,在机体受到损伤和需要修复的情况下便会增殖^[7]。目前,干细胞已经被用于各种疾病的组织再生,如神经系统疾病^[8]、心血管疾病^[9]、肌肉疾病^[10]和肝脏疾病^[11]等。随着再生医学领域的不断发展,干细胞在眼部疾病的研究和应用日益增多^[12-15]。随着利用干细胞治疗年龄相关性黄斑变性^[16-17]、Stargardt病^[18]、视网膜色素变性^[19]等视网膜神经退行性疾病研究的开展,干细胞技术为治疗青光眼的组织损伤和RGC凋亡带来了新的方向。

2 干细胞在青光眼治疗中的应用

2.1 小梁网再生

小梁网(trabecular meshwork, TM)由葡萄膜小梁、角巩膜小梁和近小管组织(juxtacanalicular tissue, JCT)3个部分组成,是房水流出的主要途径^[20]。TM细胞因具有与内皮细胞、巨噬细胞、成纤维细胞和平滑肌类似的功能,在调节房水流出阻力方面起到重要作用^[21]。青光眼的相关研究^[22-24]发现,线粒体的氧化应激是导致TM细胞衰老凋亡、RGC损伤、小梁网结构破坏、眼压升高的关键;另一项研究^[25]也表明,青光眼患者的总TM细胞数量较正常人显著减少。因此,恢复TM功能性将是降低眼压和预防青光眼视力丧失的最佳方法之一。

2.1.1 TM干细胞与TM再生 早在1982年,RAVIOLA G等^[26]在TM的前端Schwalbe线的下方发现了结构特征不同于其余TM细胞的细胞群。随后,1项对人角巩膜缘外植体器官培养物使用激光小梁成形术的研究^[27]发现,TM细胞分裂增加,且主要局限于TM的前部非滤过区域(或称为插入区域),该实验提出了干细胞存在于TM中的假设。WHIKEHART DR等^[28]和MCGOWAN SL等^[29]的研究发现,在TM和TM与角膜内皮外周之间的过渡区中存在干细胞标志物,明确证实了插入区域中小梁网干细胞(TM stem cell, TMSC)的存在。TMSC具备分化成感光神经元、角膜角质细胞和脂肪细胞的干细胞多功能性^[30-31]。而DU YQ等^[32]的研究证明,TMSC的默认谱系是分化为TM细胞,表明TMSC是与普通间充质干细胞不同的特殊干细胞群体,这些细胞不论是在房水或10%血清的培养下都可以分化为具有吞噬功能的TM细胞,并表达TM特异性标志物。XIONG SQ等^[33]将人TMSC移植到转基因肌球蛋白Y437H突变的青光眼小鼠模型中,被移植的TMSC可以分化成TM细胞,具有重塑TM组织恢复房水流出稳态的能力,有效降低了眼压和RGC的凋亡率。其中a5b1整合素在整合过程中起到了重要作用^[34]。在其分化部位的选择上,研究^[35]证实人角膜组织分化TMSC可以表现出归巢能力,且从前房回到TM区域不会引起炎症反应,在眼内可以存活至少4个月。值得一提的是,在YUN H等^[36]的实验中,TMSC会专门整合到激光损伤的TM区域再生。另外,对人眼的免疫染色研究^[37-38]表明,TMSC的数量会随着年龄的增长和罹患青光眼而显著而减少。总而言之,这

些实验提示使用自体干细胞移植治疗青光眼概念的可行性,有希望成为一种新的替代治疗选择。但是在用于人眼移植之前,应明确其恢复和保持TM稳态的具体机制,确定移植的细胞数量和浓度,以及如何进一步优化诱导TM细胞的实验条件^[39]。

2.1.2 其余类型的干细胞与TM再生 间充质干细胞(mesenchymal stem cell, MSC)与iPSC也可以分化成TM细胞。MSC是成体多能干细胞,几乎存在于所有器官和组织中,如骨髓、胰腺、脂肪、脐带血等,可以根据特定生物医学应用的要求分化成各种细胞谱系^[40],在诸多神经系统疾病的临床研究^[41]中已经证实了其保护和促进组织再生的价值。相关研究^[42]发现,眼前节的发育与MSC关系密切,TM的结构似乎来源于MSC的分化表达。作为首项报告骨髓细胞亚群对眼前节组织具有再生潜力的研究,MANUGUERRA-GAGNE等^[43]表明,MSC可以诱导TM再生并可重新激活睫状体色素上皮中的局部神经祖细胞,开辟了慢性眼病的靶向细胞治疗新途径。ROUBEIX C等^[44]烧灼大鼠眼的3条巩膜外静脉制作高眼压模型,将MSC注射到前房后发现其可显著降低眼压,且在体外MSC培养基中通过激活抗凋亡途径促进原代人TM细胞存活。在CHANG YF等^[45]的研究中发现,人骨髓来源的MSC可以通过抗凋亡和自噬来挽救已经氧化损伤的人TM细胞,说明其具有促进TM功能存活和维持的潜力。还有研究^[46]量化了成人来源的MSC向TM细胞分化的方法,为相应的治疗方式提供了基础。

2006年,YAMANAKA S等^[47]通过过表达参与胚胎干细胞(embryonic stem cell, ESC)多能性维持的4种转录因子,成功将小鼠成纤维细胞重编程为多能状态,并将其命名为iPSC,通过人工诱导可将其分化为各种类型的体细胞,用于青光眼中以恢复TM结构。ABU-HASSAN DW等^[48]将iPSC诱导分化TM细胞,发现其不仅在形态上与TM细胞类似,且这种TM样iPSC具备恢复眼压的功能。DING QJ等^[49]将小鼠iPSC与人TM细胞共培养21 d后实现定向诱导,这种iPSC-TM细胞与TM细胞除在形态上极其相似之外,也可以表达TM细胞的标志物。在该团队^[50]后续的研究中,将iPSC-TM移植到4个月的Y437H型青光眼小鼠中,证明其可以阻止眼压持续升高,并保持功能至少9周。而在该团队进一步的灌注人眼实验^[51]中,iPSC-TM注射到人眼前段后刺激了眼内源性TM细胞的增殖,表明TM的功能再生的可能。

2.2 视神经再生

RGC作为视网膜中唯一的传入神经元,其凋亡的机制非常复杂,起始因素可能与谷氨酸毒性、氧化应激损伤、淀粉样蛋白的异常积累有关^[52]。此外,星形胶质细胞、小胶质细胞的退变以及视网膜炎症反应也是青光眼RGC变性的致病机制。在临床中,尽管目前可以有效控制眼压,但视神经的损伤仍然不可避免。自然界中,一些动物拥有视网膜再生能力,成年新生细胞可以通过视网膜色素上皮分化再生为视神经细胞^[53]。因此,干细胞移植为人类带来了RGC再生与恢复视力的希望。

2.2.1 ESC ESC 来源于发育过程中囊胚的内部细胞团,可以在体外无限增殖,并且可以分化成所有具有 3 个胚层的细胞^[54]。目前,从 ESC 中分化 RGC 主要有 2 种方法:第 1 种是在体外培养下,通过过表达配对框基因 6 (paired box gene 6, PAX6),直接诱导 ESC 获得 RGC;第 2 种方法是首先在体外使 ESC 分化成视网膜祖细胞 (retinal progenitor cell, RPC),然后再将其分化为 RGC^[55]。JAGATHA B 等^[56]的实验首次证明了 ESC 具有分化为 RGC 的潜力,发现使用碱性成纤维细胞生长因子-2 (fibroblast growth factor-2, FGF-2) 诱导的 ESC 在体外分化时会产生 RGC 样细胞,这些细胞能够整合到宿主视网膜中并表达特征标记物。HAMBRIGHT D 等^[57]在体外将人 ESC 分化成 RPC,其可从健康小鼠视网膜前膜大量移植和整合到视网膜的 RGC 层和内核层中。此外,SLUCH VM 等^[58]设计了 1 种名为 DIDNF+D (dorsomorphin+IDE2+nicotinamide+forskolin+DAPT) 的方案,可以提高干细胞来源的 RGC 的分化效率。

2.2.2 MSC MSC 具有分泌脑源性神经营养因子和纤毛神经营养因子等的的能力,可以促进神经细胞的存活和生长^[59]。JIANG YF 等^[60]将 MSC 静脉注射至视网膜损伤模型小鼠体内,发现其具有显著抑制视网膜细胞凋亡,减少视网膜炎症反应和限制损伤的扩散的能力。这可能与增加抗炎细胞因子表达,降低促炎细胞因子有达有关^[61]。此外,还有证据^[62]表明,即使在玻璃体内注射 iPSC 衍生的 MSC,也可以将功能线粒体转移到小鼠 RGC 中。与其余干细胞不同的是,MSC 的治疗作用部分归因于旁分泌机制,而不是将细胞植入处理过的组织或组织替代物中起效^[63]。YU F 等^[64]将源自人脐带的 MSC 释放的外泌体注入慢性高血压症大鼠的玻璃体腔中,发现其抑制了含半胱氨酸的天冬氨酸蛋白水解酶 (cysteiny aspartate specific proteinase-3, Caspase-3) 蛋白表达,能显著缓解视网膜损伤并阻止 RGC 降低。

2.2.3 iPSC 由于 iPSC 具有 ESC 的多分化潜能,又可通过自体移植避免伦理问题,所以关于 iPSC 的研究和应用越来越受到重视。目前,已经可以将 iPSC 分化为 RGC 样细胞。国内有团队^[65-66]通过过表达 RGC 分化调控因子,成功使小鼠 iPSC 分化为 RGC 样细胞。该团队随后将 RGC 特异性基因过表达,成功使人 iPSC 诱导分化为 RGC。而移植 iPSC 衍生的 RGC 的一个重要挑战是让这些细胞整合到神经节细胞层中,并与视网膜和大脑建立传入、传出联系。已有研究^[67-68]成功将 iPSC 分化出具有功能性轴突的 RGC,并且表达出神经元标记物和产生动作电位。这可能是因为 iPSC 衍生的 RGC 会表达一组引导因子,用于引导视网膜内、视交叉处以及中心靶标的轴突连接^[69]。

3 小结

再生医学中以干细胞为核心的医疗手段预示着人体因疾病损伤的各种器官组织可以得到替代、修复甚至再生。在眼科学中,TM 干细胞移植、干细胞再生视神经的细胞疗法为青光眼的治疗提供了新的可能。与传统药物相比,干细胞治

疗有着持续时间更长、可针对特定疾病定制治疗效果等优点^[70]。然而,干细胞移植目前仍有许多困难和挑战需要克服。例如,用干细胞分化的效率和纯度仍然很低、安全性尚不容乐观等^[71]。免疫排斥和伦理学问题也是一个长期的难题^[72],虽然使用 iPSC 转化 RGC 可以避免相关伦理难题,但如果重编程因子在 iPSC 中仍保持活性会增加肿瘤形成的潜在风险^[73]。因此,本研究建议在未来的研究中,应加强干细胞分化和移植的效率和安全性评估,探索更多的干细胞来源和类型,并制定更完善的法律法规和伦理准则,以保障再生医学在眼科领域的健康发展。

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