

从肿瘤异质性视角看局部进展期食管鳞癌围手术期治疗策略的优化

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【摘要】 近年来,多学科综合治疗的突破不断涌现,为重新审视当前局部进展期食管鳞癌围手术期治疗模式提供了新机遇。鉴于涉及食管癌分期谱广泛,临床中难以实现异病同治。针对原发肿瘤负荷(T分期较重)的局部治疗抑或转移性淋巴结负荷(N分期较重)的全身治疗,应予以辩证性个体化处理。鉴于当前缺乏实用性强的预测标志物,根据不同肿瘤负荷表型(T/N负荷相对关系),导向性选择不同疗法具有未来临床价值。尽管围手术期应用免疫治疗面临诸多潜在挑战,但这也将有助于促进未来围手术期治疗策略的优化。

【关键词】 食管肿瘤; 围手术期; 免疫治疗; 肿瘤异质性

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Optimization of perioperative treatment strategies for locally advanced esophageal squamous cell carcinoma from the perspective of tumor heterogeneity

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【Abstract】 Recent advances in multimodality treatment offer excellent opportunities to rethink the paradigm of perioperative management for locally advanced esophageal squamous cell carcinoma. One treatment clearly doesn't fit all in terms of a broad disease spectrum. Individualized treatment of local control of bulky primary tumor burden (advanced T stage) or systemic control of nodal metastatic tumor burden (advanced N stage) is essential. Given that clinically applicable predictive biomarkers are still awaited, therapy selection guided by diverse phenotypes of tumor burden (T vs. N) is promising. Potential challenges regarding the use of immunotherapy may also boost this novel strategy in the future.

【Key words】 Esophageal neoplasms; Perioperative; Immunotherapy; Tumor heterogeneity

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作为每年新增病例数约占全球一半的食管鳞癌大国,中国食管外科的总体疗效不仅关乎于我国

广大人民群众的健康安全,也影响着世界范围内食管癌的总体疗效^[1-2]。目前食管鳞癌的临床治疗始

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终难以逾越“高毒低效”的瓶颈问题,预后往往不甚乐观。究其原因之一,可能与食管癌肿瘤本身异质性特征有关。如果对不同病理组织类型肿瘤(如鳞癌和腺癌)实施“异病同治”策略,往往呈现迥异的疗效结局。针对此,近年现代临床肿瘤学一直在标准化与个体化两个维度上探索尝试、碰撞调和,但与乳腺癌、结直肠癌、肺癌等领域相比,食管鳞癌在分子分型和靶向治疗方面的发展仍相对滞后^[3-5]。

近年来,随着以程序性死亡受体 1(programmed death-1, PD-1)抗体为代表的免疫检查点抑制剂问世,免疫联合治疗已在晚期食管癌中表现出明确的疗效优势,呈现出冲破桎梏的势头^[6-14]。学界对优化局部进展期食管鳞癌围手术期治疗策略的探索热情也再次燃起,以围手术期免疫联合治疗策略为代表的单中心或多中心前瞻性临床研究在国内开展得如火如荼。为此,我们牵头发起形成了首个食管癌围手术期免疫治疗专家共识以辅助医患共同决策^[15]。

目前,局部进展期食管鳞癌的标准治疗模式仍是术前新辅助同步放化疗联合根治性手术,但近期也有学者对其提出了挑战^[16-20]。在新的形势下,我们需要从肿瘤异质性角度,重新审视局部进展期食管鳞癌的个体化治疗。本文就此领域的新进展进行评述,旨在探索新模式进而改善术后长期生存。

一、当前局部进展期食管鳞癌围手术期治疗策略的争议

目前,关于局部进展期食管鳞癌的围手术期治疗策略,主要包括新辅助同步放化疗和新辅助单纯化疗。与单纯手术治疗相比,新辅助同步放化疗和新辅助单纯化疗联合手术治疗,均可显著改善食管鳞癌患者术后长期总生存(OS)^[21]。从肿瘤学短期和长期疗效方面考量,两者可谓各有千秋。然而,如何选择适宜的获益人群,始终困扰临床医生。

1. 新辅助同步放化疗策略:以荷兰 CROSS 研究为代表,食管鳞癌术后的病理完全缓解(pathologic complete response, pCR)率达 49%,全组患者(包括鳞癌及腺癌)的术后全病因死亡风险降低了 40%(HR=0.60, 95%CI: 0.46~0.80), 10 年 OS 增加了 13%^[22-24]。无独有偶,我国 NEOCRTEC5010 研究同样证明,食管鳞癌经术前新辅助同步放化疗后 pCR 率为 43.2%,全病因死亡风险降低了 26%(HR=0.74, 95%CI: 0.57~0.97), 5 年 OS 提升 10%^[25-26]。尽管如此,术后肿瘤复发转移模式分析却暴露了其不足之

处。CROSS 研究和 NEOCRTEC5010 研究均显示,新辅助同步放化疗组术后最常见治疗失败模式为远隔转移(CROSS 研究:血行转移率为 28.6%,术后 10 年因食管癌导致的累计死亡风险为 47%^[24,27]; NEOCRTEC5010 研究:血行转移率为 14.7%,5 年累计总体复发转移率达 32.2%,其中远隔转移率为 24.3%^[26,28])。上述结果提示,新辅助同步放化疗模式存在全身控制强度不足、远隔转移风险较高的弊端,改进疗法应侧重于全身治疗而非局部治疗。

2. 新辅助单纯化疗策略:以日本 JCOG1109/NEXT 研究为代表,术前新辅助同步放化疗组术后 pCR 率显著更优[CF-RT(放疗+顺铂+氟尿嘧啶)比 DCF(多西他赛+顺铂+氟尿嘧啶)比 CF(顺铂+氟尿嘧啶):38.5%比 19.8%比 2.1%],但新辅助同步放化疗(CF-RT 方案)与新辅助化疗(CF 方案)术后 3 年 OS 差异却无统计学意义(68.3%比 62.6%;HR=0.84, 95%CI: 0.63~1.12),而三药联合新辅助化疗(DCF 方案)术后 3 年 OS 显著优于两药联合方案(CF 方案)(72.1%比 62.6%;HR=0.68, 95%CI: 0.50~0.92)^[19]。我国 CMISG1701 研究对比了新辅助同步放化疗与新辅助化疗治疗可切除的局部晚期食管鳞癌(UICC 第 8 版 TNM cT3~4aN0~1M0 期)的长期预后差异,刚刚公布的意向性分析结果显示,尽管新辅助同步放化疗组术后 pCR 率显著优于新辅助化疗治疗组(27.7%比 2.9%),但是两组患者术后 3 年的 OS[64.1%(95%CI: 56.4%~72.9%)比 54.9%(95%CI: 47.0%~64.2%);HR=0.82, 95%CI: 0.58~1.18]、无进展生存率(progression-free survival, PFS)(HR=0.83, 95%CI: 0.59~1.16)及无复发生存率(relapse-free survival, RFS)(HR=1.07, 95%CI: 0.71~1.60)差异均无统计意义^[20]。

上述结果提示,在改善局部进展期食管癌术后长期预后方面,改良的围手术期化疗方案并不逊于新辅助同步放化疗方案。尽管不同新辅助治疗模式均可获得名义上的 pCR,但是其对术后长期生存获益的转化效率存在异质性。鉴于上述患者群体对相同新辅助治疗模式的临床反应不同,仅凭借经验采用“一刀切”的围手术期治疗策略业已不符合临床需求。如何针对不同治疗模式选择获益人群,值得进一步探究。

二、局部进展期食管鳞癌的临床表型异质性及潜在机制

关于食管癌的临床表型异质性问题,描述最为详

细并且对临床诊疗实践影响最为深远的,当属TNM分期系统。根据第8版UICC/AJCC分期系统,局部进展期食管鳞癌涵盖的分期谱贯穿pT2N0M0G2~3期至pT4N+M0Gany期^[29]。其中,既包括相对早期原发肿瘤(pT1a~1b期)业已出现隐匿性淋巴结转移(pN+期)的“高侵袭型”,又包括原发肿瘤较大负荷(pT3~pT4a期)却未发生淋巴结转移(pN0期)的“惰性型”。在基于生存预后进行划分的第8版UICC/AJCC分期系统中,pT3~4aN0M0期仅被划分为IIA~IIIB期,而pT1a~1bN1M0期则已被划为II B期,更甚者将pTanyN3期同pT4bNany期同归为IVA期^[29]。对于长期生存变异跨度如此显著的患者群体,仅依靠单一治疗模式,很难获得令人满意的结果。然而,目前临床尚无公认的、针对临床表型的个体化治疗管理模式。

现今关于恶性肿瘤进化模型学说众多。根据时空进展异质性表型不同,可分为线性进化、分支进化、宏观进化和中心进化^[30]。根据原发肿瘤生物学行为表型不同,可分为表面生长型和体积增长型两种分型^[31]。上述分型均针对恶性肿瘤细胞克隆异质性表型进行分类,试图区分不同肿瘤亚型以实现个体化治疗。然而,当前上述分型离应用于临床尚存在距离。

根据原发肿瘤(T)与转移淋巴结(N)之间肿瘤负荷相对关系(默认均为M0期),笔者粗略将局部进展期食管癌分为:(1)原发肿瘤负荷较重(cT3~4a期),而转移淋巴结负荷较轻(cN0~1期),即“大T小N型”;(2)原发肿瘤负荷较轻(cT1~2期),但转移淋巴结负荷较重(cN2~3期),即“小T大N型”。前者的肿瘤生物学行为特征相对“惰性”,应积极加强临床局部治疗,例如术前新辅助同步放化疗序贯手术;后者的肿瘤生物学行为特征则更趋向全身性疾病,需要增加全身系统性药物治疗强度,例如多药多程联合新辅助化疗±免疫治疗序贯手术治疗。笔者针对上述不同分型,对目前已完成或在研的临床研究进行了相应划分。

三、CROSS后时代下局部进展期食管鳞癌围手术期治疗策略优化及展望

术前新辅助同步放化疗的CROSS研究结果问世迄今已逾10年,CROSS模式作为里程碑,彻底改变了局部进展期食管鳞癌多学科综合治疗的临床实践模式^[22]。然而历史经验教育我们,每一种特定治疗模式都有边界递减效应。术后10年的长期随

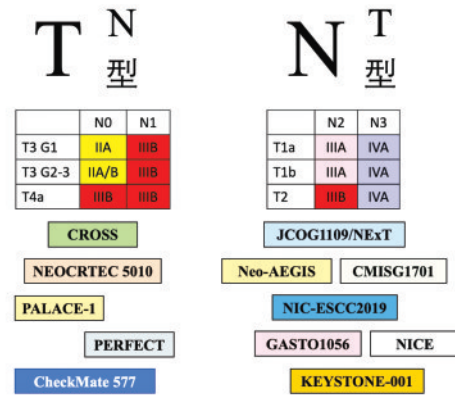


图1 根据局部进展期食管鳞癌的“TN”分型推荐多学科综合治疗模式示意图(康晓征绘)

访结果显示,CROSS模式的长期治愈率仅为38%,而单纯手术的长期治愈率也接近25%,与之相比,CROSS模式的优势并不明显^[24]。随着CROSS模式被广泛应用于真实世界中诸多迥异表型特征的食管癌患者群体,其为单位患者获得的肿瘤学效益也逐渐递减。这恰恰说明,临床试验为了达到设计要求,设立了严格的纳入排除标准,这与真实医疗环境存在较大偏差。如果根据临床试验的结果,将某种干预措施推广到广泛的患者群体中,会导致很多不符合纳入标准的患者接受该干预措施,这也是真实世界中疗效未必能与临床试验的较好效果相当的原因。这也提示,我们目前对食管癌围手术期异质性问题的重视程度还远远不够。

既往法国FFCD9901研究的经验显示,早期食管鳞癌(I或II期)并未从新辅助同步放化疗(放疗剂量45 Gy+PF方案化疗同步)策略中生存获益,但却导致围手术期病死率显著升高(11.1%比3.4%)^[32]。这提示,术前放疗对于早期食管鳞癌的临床价值不大,高质量的外科治疗即可实现根治。与此同时,由于食管管腔梗阻导致无法行超声内镜检查评估,导致仅凭胸部CT或MRI常难以鉴别cT3~4a期与cT4b期。鉴于目前临床T分期方法的局限性,为避免误判而导致非R₀切除甚至探查手术发生,针对“大T小N型”食管鳞癌添加新辅助放疗有利于降期缩瘤,进而提高R₀切除率。

我国PALACE-1研究是在CROSS模式基础上,尝试添加免疫治疗(帕博利珠单抗)的临床探索。尽管获得了破纪录的术后pCR率(55.6%),然而其围手术期安全性问题仍需要扩大样本量以明确,且目前尚缺乏长期生存随访的结果支持^[33]。国际

CheckMate 577 研究则是从消除术后残留病灶的角度入手,通过辅助免疫治疗(纳武利尤单抗)将 CROSS 模式提升了术后未获得 pCR 患者的无疾病生存率(HR=0.69),这也为我们提供了新思路^[34]。

笔者认为,在现今日益丰硕的晚期食管鳞癌新型治疗模式的引领下,重新认识局部进展期食管鳞癌患者群体,重视肿瘤生物学特征的异质性,对患者亚群进行精细划分,选择个体化围手术期治疗策略,是从根本上规避边界递减效应的重要途径。更深入地贯彻围手术期综合治疗理念,离不开现代肿瘤生物学研究技术向临床转化。以 CALGB 80803 研究为例,凭借新辅助化疗前后 PET-CT 评估 SUVmax 值的变化范围作为肿瘤生物学标志物,对临床无反应者进行识别,进而增加针对此类高风险患者的治疗强度^[35]。该尝试打破了过去数十年来所依赖的经验性围手术期治疗策略。此外,循环肿瘤 DNA 捕获技术在局部进展期肿瘤围手术期的应用,亦可助力临床早期发现微残留病灶,进而及时予以治疗^[36-40]。

探索食管癌的异质性,以“同”辨明规律,以“异”启发思考,最终目的并不止于分门别类,而是要将它们整合到新的诊疗理念和诊疗方案的发展中。曾几何时,局部进展期食管鳞癌的围手术期治疗也被如何排兵布阵的问题困扰。唯有敬畏食管癌疾病本身,在先进科技的“仙人指路”下,充分发挥各个棋子的特色优势,才能实现“帅士无损,所向无敌”。

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