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TERRA介导的端粒维持*

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摘要 真核细胞线状染色体末端特殊结构被称为端粒,而端粒维持对于生命体来说具有十分重要的意义,其维持机制也十分复杂.端粒酶可以通过其具有的特殊逆转录酶特性,利用自身的RNA模板(TERC)以及具有催化功能的蛋白质亚基(TERT)延长端粒,维持其长度.本文着重综述端粒TERRA(telomeric repeat-containing RNA)对端粒维持的影响及其作用机制.首先介绍端粒维持与细胞存活老化之间的关系;其次,阐述TERRA的结构及其转录特性,TERRA依赖的DNA:RNA杂合体和R-loop形成和结构特点,TERRA结合蛋白及其作用;进而讨论依赖于TERRA的端粒维护分子机制以及在生命过程中的意义.

关键词 TERRA, RNA: DNA杂合体, R-loop, TERRA结合蛋白, 端粒维持
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真核细胞线状染色体末端有个特殊结构,被称为端粒^[1].端粒主要由端粒DNA和一类由端粒表达且已知功能仅限于端粒的特殊蛋白质即端粒结合蛋白(Shelterin)组成^[2].端粒DNA序列是染色体末端保守的串联重复序列,包括近端的双链和远端的单链区域,端粒的DNA序列富含G/C.在脊椎动物中,染色体末端的端粒DNA均有相同富含G的双链串联重复DNA序列(TTAGGG),而且均以3'末端突出的富含G单链DNA结束^[3].不同物种端粒的长度也不尽相同^[4+0],其中最长的端粒在大鼠和一些品系的小鼠肌肉中延伸到150kb,人类端粒通常在10~15kb之间^[11-12].端粒DNA与端粒结合蛋白形成复合体,为染色体末端提供保护,以维持基因组的完整性^[8].

人的端粒结合蛋白(Shelterin)由6种核心蛋 白质组成:端粒重复序列结合因子1(telomericrepeat binding factor 1, TRF1)、端粒重复序列结合 因子2(telomeric-repeat binding factor 2, TRF2)、 TRF1相互作用核蛋白2(TRF1-interacting nuclear protein 2, TIN2)、阻滞活化蛋白1(repressor activator protein 1, Rap1)、POT1和TIN2组织蛋白 (the POT1 and TIN2 organizing protein, TPP1)以 及端粒保护蛋白1(protection of telomeres 1, POT1)^[13]. Shelterin 复合体中TRF1、TRF2直接识 别单链和双链DNA中的TTAGGG 端粒重复序列 (图1).POT1和TPP1作为异源二聚体共同与端粒 突出的3'端单链发生相互作用,TIN2可以将POT1/ TPP1异源二聚体连接到TRF1和TRF2上,稳定 TRF1和TRF2与端粒的相互作用^[14].Rap1与TRF2 相互作用,可以增加TRF2与端粒DNA结合的特 异性还可以调节在染色体末端的定位^[15-16].TRF1、 TRF2与TIN2、Rap1、TPP1、POT1相互联系,作 为一个整体来保护端粒末端.

端粒3'末端突出的单链折叠进入端粒的双螺旋 结构中形成"T-环"结构(图1),从而形成帽子结 构阻止染色体末端DNA损伤.Shelterin复合体维持 "T-环"结构的稳定性还可以调节染色体末端端粒 酶的活性.端粒的特殊结构决定了其特殊功能:端 粒保护真核细胞线状染色体末端免受DNA损伤反 应、降解和由于异常重组而影响的异染色质结 构^[6, 17-18],端粒功能的缺失会影响细胞或生物体的

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生命进程^[19].染色体末端的不完全复制会导致端 粒的缩短,最终导致端粒功能障碍和不可逆转的细 胞周期停滞,也被称为复制性衰老^[20].所以,端 粒维持对于生命延续具有重要的意义,研究端粒维 持机制的重要性也就不言而喻了.



1 端粒维持和细胞存活与老化

如前所述,端粒通过与 Shelterin 蛋白形成端 粒-蛋白质复合物而免受核酸酶的降解^[10],还可以 阻止染色体之间发生融合^[21].其中, Shelterin成分 TRF2特异性地阻止端粒激活 ATM 激酶信号级联而 保护端粒免受非同源末端连接途径引起的末端融 合^[22].正常细胞随着细胞分裂的进行端粒长度会 逐渐变短,当细胞经过多次分裂后,端粒的长度缩 短到临界值,端粒的功能就会异常.染色体末端由 于丧失了端粒的保护会发生染色体之间的融合,细 胞进入断裂-融合-桥循环 (breakage-fusion-bridge), 导致细胞死亡.端粒还可以保护真核细胞线性染色 体的末端不受异常重组的影响^[23],在染色体末端 复制时端粒可以抵御基因丢失或染色体结构不稳 定^[24],端粒具有促进亚端粒异染色质形成的作用, 并与细胞寿命的控制有着密切的联系, 甚至可以 起到决定细胞寿命的重要作用,故而被称为"生 命的时钟".所以,端粒的维持对于生命过程有着 重要的意义.

端粒的维持受许多因素的影响^[25],包括调节 端粒复制的机制^[26-27]、端粒酶的招募与激活^[28-29].

端粒酶是一种逆转录酶,对于端粒的维持以及防止 端粒丢失具有重要作用^[30].端粒酶由RNA组分和 端粒酶催化亚基等组成,如果改变端粒酶的RNA 序列则会导致端粒发生功能上的改变,进而诱导细 胞衰老和死亡^[31].端粒酶可以识别染色体的末端, 利用端粒3'端的单链作为引物,以自身携带的 RNA为模板合成端粒重复序列从而延伸端粒的长 度.例如,在裂殖酵母中端粒酶保守的催化亚基是 Trt1、TER1以及Est1、LSM蛋白等辅助因子^[32]和 类镧蛋白 LARP7/POF8^[33-35] 被用于添加简并的端 粒重复序列.Ccq1因子通过Tpz1和POT1将端粒酶 招募并与端粒的3'端突出部分结合,以支持端粒维 持[36-37].端粒酶活性有组织和细胞特异性,如在哺 乳动物体细胞中,端粒催化亚单位 TERT 的转录沉 默导致端粒酶不具有活性^[38].因此,体细胞只能 进行有限次数的细胞分裂,在端粒长度极短的状态 下导致细胞周期停滞、衰老以及凋亡.大约85%癌 细胞中,通过重新激活 TERT 转录导致端粒酶活性 增强[39-40].然而,15%的癌细胞启动端粒延长替代 (alterative lengthening of telomere, ALT) 机制, ALT 机制是通过同源定向修复(homology directed repair, HDR) 途径来进行端粒维持^[41]. 在缺乏端 粒酶修复因子Ccq1的裂殖酵母中,端粒随着传代 次数地增加而逐渐缩短,最终导致细胞生长危机. 然而,依旧会有"幸存者",可利用端粒重组来维 持自身端粒长度[36]. 有趣的是, 在端粒完全丢失 的状态下,裂殖酵母还可以通过环化自身的三条染 色体来存活^[42],这些"环形"酵母染色体的形成 可能是因为单链退火所致^[43].在端粒同源重组和 异染色质建立等端粒长度维持中,还有一种RNA 分子,即TERRA在发挥不可替代的作用.

2 TERRA结构和其转录特性

TERRA (telomeric repeat-containing RNA) 是 由 亚 端 粒 和 端 粒 衍 生 序 列 所 转 录 , 含 有 (UUAGGG)_n 重 复 序 列 的 长 非 编 码 RNA^[44], TERRA 的长度从 100 nt 到 9 000 nt 不等^[22]. 近年来 发 现 , 所 有 检 测 的 真 核 生 物 细 胞 都 有 TERRA^[22, 4446],它是人、小鼠胚胎干细胞、芽殖 酵母、裂殖酵母以及植物等细胞^[46] 端粒重复转录 的产物.

人和酿酒酵母的 TERRA 5'端具有 7-甲基鸟苷 (7meG)帽子结构^[47],而人和裂殖酵母 TERRA携 带 PolyA 尾巴,这一结构特点有助于 TERRA 的稳 定性^[48-49](图 2).携带 PolyA的 TERRA 刺激端粒 酶阳性细胞中的端粒酶重新募集^[50],而不携带 Poly(A)的 TERRA 参与端粒酶功能不足的细胞 中端粒招募^[50].大约 7%的人 TERRA 携带 PolyA 尾,而几乎全部芽殖酵母的 TERRA(yTERRA) 携带 PolyA,平均长度为 380 个核苷酸^[45].大约 25%的人 TERRA转录受富含 CpG 二核苷酸的特定 转录起始位点(TSS)调控^[22].同样,芽殖酵母细 胞染色体臂 1L的亚端粒区域有离散的 TSS^[51].研 究发现,TERRA 在不同的细胞系中相对表达水平 并不是恒定的^[52],而且端粒 TSS 定位不同导致所 产生的 TERRA 分子长度也不同(图 2).例如,在 裂殖酵母中大多数 TERRA 分子长度为 500 nt,而 在哺乳动物细胞中 TERRA 的长度可达几千个核苷 酸不等^[22,44,5354].TERRA 的转录调控依赖于端粒 长度^[55],如芽殖酵母 TERRA 的转录水平与端粒长 度呈负相关^[56],端粒越短转录水平越高,TERRA 分子越短.



Fig. 2Transcription and processing of TERRA (summarized and adapted from [47, 53])图2TERRA的转录和加工(根据参考文献 [47, 53] 总结修改)

有趣的是,在人和小鼠含有端粒酶活性的细胞 中,TERRA表达量随细胞周期而变化^[48].TERRA 在G2/M过渡期开始积累, M/G1过渡期进一步积 累^[48, 57],并在G1期达到峰值^[57],而在G1/S过渡 期开始降低,在S/G2过渡期降低至最低^[58-59](图 3). Shelterin 复合体的 POT1 蛋白抑制复制蛋白 A (replication protein A, RPA) 与端粒 ssDNA 的结 合^[60]. 然而, RPA 在复制过程中会取代端粒 ssDNA上的POT1^[55] 而保护单链DNA. hnRNPA1 蛋白可以同时与端粒 ssDNA 和 TERRA 结合,并且 可以从端粒的 ssDNA 上去除 RPA, 但不能去除 POT1. 在细胞周期G1/S期,丰富的TERRA可以将 hnRNPA1蛋白占据使其不能取代端粒 ssDNA 上的 RPA蛋白(图3, G1/S). 值得一提的是, TERRA 在S期定位于端粒^[61].当细胞周期通过S期进入 G2 期时, TERRA 水平降低将 hnRNPA1 释放, hnRNPA1 取代端粒 ssDNA 上的 RPA (图 3, S/ G2).当细胞周期从G2期进入有丝分裂M期时, TERRA开始积累,在M/G1期TERRA水平进一步 提升,到G1期达到峰值.细胞周期的G2期到M期 处于中间过渡状态,在此过程中 TERRA 将会重新 开始积累(图3,G2/M).随后的细胞周期当中, TERRA占据hnRNPA1,而hnRNPA1不断离开 ssDNA从而使POT1逐渐积累到端粒(图3,M/G1),并在G1期取代端粒ssDNA上的 hnRNPA1^[55].

在人癌细胞中,RNA Pol II 识别并作用于端粒 下游的DNA 甲基化敏感启动子,并以含有端粒链 的 CCCTAA 重 复 序 列 为 模 板 , 转 录 TERRA^[22,48,62].TERRA 的转录在很大程度上依赖 于 RNA Pol II, RNA Pol II 也可以识别亚端粒区域 并向端粒的 3'端进行延伸^[46].在人、芽殖酵母和裂 殖酵母细胞中,TERRA分子主要定位在细胞核内, 其大约一半与端粒共定位^[44,54]而另一半游离在细 胞核内^[63].有趣的是,非 PolyA 尾的 TERRA 优先 与端粒结合且不与端粒分离,而大多有 PolyA 的 TERRA 主要游离在核质,也会短暂地与端粒结 合^[48,55,63].TERRA 的一个亚组分定位于端粒蛋 白^[48],TERRA 作为支架,可以加强端粒上蛋白质 招募和酶活性,从而促进端粒酶^[47,6465]对染色体 末端的复制和端粒的维持.



 Fig. 3 Changes and regulation of TERRA content in the cell cycle (summarized and adapted from [48, 55, 66-67])

 图3 细胞周期中TERRA的含量变化及调控(根据参考文献 [48, 55, 66-67] 总结修改)

3 依赖TERRA的RNA: DNA杂合体及Rloop

因为TERRA有富含G的独特(UUAGGG)_n序列,使得TERRA很容易与富含C的端粒ssDNA链形成RNA:DNA杂合体,这会使TTAGGG重复序列发生移位而形成一种三链结构,被称为R-loop^[68-72](图4,6).具端粒酶活性且端粒长度正常的细胞并不采用TERRA介导的R-loop来促进端粒延长^[73],而缺少端粒酶活性的细胞会用TERRA介导的R-loop来引导并促进依赖HDR(homologydirected repair)的端粒延长^[53].端粒R-loop在使用HDR作为唯一手段的酵母细胞、人ALT癌细胞以及免疫缺陷、着丝粒不稳定和面部畸形综合征(immunodeficiency, centromeric instability and facial anomalies, ICF)细胞^[74]的端粒维持中起着

重要的作用[75].在缺少端粒酶活性的细胞中,端 粒的缩短导致 TERRA 转录增加,由于 TERRA 介 导的R-loop结构使正在运行的复制叉滞留,细胞内 对染色体进行修复并重新启动停滞状态下的复制 叉,从而完全激活HDR途径,以逃避端粒缩短引 起的细胞周期阻滞和细胞死亡^[76]. ICF综合症是一 种罕见的常染色体隐性遗传病,由DNA 甲基转移 酶 DNMT3b (DNA methyltransferase 3b, DNMT3b) 基因突变引起,可以导致机体内发生自发的基因组 不稳定和免疫缺陷^[77]. ICF细胞端粒短,具有高水 平的 TERRA 表达,其端粒不稳定性高^[78-80],因为 TERRA介导的RNA: DNA杂交体及其R-loop结构 的形成会阻碍端粒DNA复制和延长^[27].另一方面, R-loop 还会导致端粒序列丢失从而导致端粒缩 短^[81],因为在端粒复制的中断不可修复,会使端 粒变得非常短或功能失调而导致细胞停止分裂,进

入细胞衰老态,即可存活但不分裂的细胞状态[81].

在TERRA介导的RNA:DNA杂交体及其R-loop形成过程中还有一些蛋白质的参与^[82-83]. SUV39H、HP1和LSD1蛋白通过与TERRA的相互作用,在端粒形成R-loop结构^[61].RNaseH是端粒R-loop的拮抗剂,可以特异性降解RNA:DNA杂合体的RNA链^[71]而拆解R-loop结构(图4).裂殖酵母细胞耗尽RNaseH1会积累RNA:DNA杂合 体,结果导致更多的端粒重组.相反,过表达 RNaseH会使裂殖酵母细胞端粒重组减少,并损害 ALT细胞的端粒^[68,71,84].在ICF细胞中,异位表达 RNaseH1会降解RNA:DNA杂合体的RNA链,结 果显著减少染色体末端DNA损伤.显然,端粒Rloop的积累增强ICF细胞端粒不稳定性,反之 亦然.



 Fig. 4
 TERRA mediated R-loop formation and clearance (summarized and adapted from [61, 85-86])

 图4
 TERRA 介导的R-loop的形成和清除(根据参考文献 [61, 85-86])

TERRA相互作用蛋白的招募可能参与RNA:DNA杂合引导的R-loop的形成,促进同源重组.RNA:DNA杂合体可以通过RNaseH介导的 TERRA降解来分解.

4 TERRA介导的端粒重组

在无端粒酶活性的人和酵母细胞中,端粒Rloop结构可以引发HDR^[25],即对双链断裂DNA损 伤的同源重组修复(图5).TERRA介导的RNA: DNA杂合体在端粒形成 R-loop, R-loop 阻碍复制 叉前行,导致复制压力而引起双链断裂^[87],进而, 端粒R-loop介导姐妹染色单体或同源端粒之间发 生同源重组,完成HDR.的确,TERRA通过端粒 R-loop 的形成来维持 ALT 细胞的端粒^[68, 75], TERRA 表达量的下调使端粒 R-loop 水平下降,同 时端粒重组水平也发生了降低,而TERRA的上调 促进了端粒重组^[68, 75].端粒 R-loop 积累和其引导 的HDR发生在短端粒上,而长端粒不容易发生端 粒R-loop积累和HDR^[68].例如,在酵母细胞衰老 前^[73]其端粒会变得非常短,在端粒变短或不受保 护的状态下^[88],细胞TERRA的水平会特异性上 调,结果导致HDR发生而延长端粒^[89].除此之外, TERRA介导的R-loop, 通过促进端粒HDR来减缓 无端粒酶活性细胞的衰老过程[55].总结起来,缺 乏端粒酶活性使端粒变短,端粒变短后会诱导 TERRA 的表达, TERRA 高表达导致 R-loop 形成, 而R-loop会介导HDR发生,最终维护端粒的长度 (图5).这个过程受RNaseH的调节作用, RNaseH 过表达降低端粒TERRA水平并分解R-loop结构而 阻止HDR的发生(图5).例如:在人ALT细胞和 酵母细胞中,过表达RNaseH阻止HDR途径的发生 而保护端粒.当RNaseH被抑制时,端粒R-loop积 累,提升端粒HDR发生,也起到保护端粒的作 用^[88].研究还发现,酵母Rad52蛋白可以指导端粒 HDR来延长端粒,从而避免细胞衰老^[90].

5 SFPQ 和NONO 蛋白抑制RNA: DNA杂 合体和R-loop的形成

NONO (non-POU domain-containing octamerbinding protein) 和 SFPQ (splicing factor proline and glutamine rich) 属于 DBHS (drosophila behavior/human splicing)家族蛋白,由高度保守的 串联N端RNA识别基序 (RNA recognition motifs, RRMs)、 nonA/paraspeckle 结构域 (nonA/ paraspeckle domain, NOPS)和C端螺旋线圈组 成.NONO和SFPQ功能依赖于两种蛋白质的同源 或异源二聚体的形成^[91].

最新研究发现,NONO和SFPQ蛋白质与 TERRA相互作用而抑制癌细胞RNA:DNA杂合体 的形成和其后续HDR^[92],从而协同确保端粒完整 性^[58,93].值得注意的是,NONO和SFPQ拮抗端粒 RNA:DNA杂合体及其下游效应,NONO抑制端



Fig. 5TERRA dependent HDR pathway (summarized and adapted from [75, 84, 88, 90])图5依赖于TERRA的HDR途径(根据参考文献 [75, 84, 88, 90]总结修改)

粒脆性而 SFPQ 强力阻碍端粒同源重组.同时失活 NONO 和 SFPQ 显著提升端粒重组的发生继而加速 端粒变短^[91-92,94].总之,作为 TERRA 结合蛋白, NONO 和 SFPQ 在端粒维持中起着重要作用. NONO 和 SFPQ 通过与 TERRA 的相互作用阻止 RNA:DNA 杂合体和其引发的端粒 R-loop 结构的 形成,清除DNA复制障碍,抑制端粒重组,确保端粒的稳定性和端粒长度^[71,91,9495].当NONO和SFPQ失活或缺失会允许自由的TERRA与端粒DNA形成RNA:DNA杂合体以及R-loop,后者导致复制压力和端粒重组,破坏端粒稳态和长度^[92](图6).



Fig. 6Models of NONO and SFPQ controlling telomere homeostasis (summarized and adapted from [91-92, 94])图6NONO和SFPQ控制端粒稳态的作用模型(根据参考文献 [91-92, 94] 总结修改)

6 SUV39H、HP1和LSD1调节TERRA水平

SUV39H (suppressor of variegation 3(9) homologue)、HP1 (heterochromatin protein 1) 和 LSD1 (lysine specific demethylase1) 蛋白也是 TERRA 的相互作用蛋白^[61],这些相互作用使 TERRA 能够调节端粒上异染色质的形成, 侵入端 粒 dsDNA 并形成端粒 RNA: DNA 杂合体^[96]. SUV39H的两个异构体 SUV39H1和 SUV39H2、 HP1蛋白和H3K9me3组成一个蛋白质网络^[97-98]. TERRA与SUV39H1和HP1的相互作用使TERRA 与H3K9me3修饰的核小体相互作用^[86].在人细胞 中,H3K9me3的密度与端粒TERRA的表达水平呈 负相关,即H3K9me3的密度高则TERRA表达低, 反之亦然. TERRA 通过 SUV39H1 蛋白在端粒的作 用使H3K9me3修饰增加,从而关闭自己的表达. TERRA还可以诱导H3K9me3依赖的染色质沉 默^[57]而影响一系列基因的表达.

ATRX (α-thalassemia mental retardation Xlinked protein)通过在着丝粒周围和端粒重复处, 沉积组蛋白H3变异体H3.3来建立转录沉默异染色 质^[99].有研究表明,ATRX是TERRA转录的抑制 因子,对TERRA起着负面调节作用^[52].ATRX介 导的H3.3沉积可以促进H3K9me3在端粒的进一步 积累^[85,100-101].HP1与ATRX蛋白质的LXVXL基 序^[102]发生相互作用,HP1的Chromo结构域和 ATRX的ADD结构域都与含有H3K9me3修饰的核 小体特异性结合.TERRA诱导的H3K9me3和HP1 的初始积累使ATRX在端粒发挥作用,从而阻止 TERRA与端粒结合.

组蛋白去甲基化酶LSD1在体内和体外^[85]都 直接与TERRA发生相互作用.ATRX对H3K9me3 的识别受到H3K4me3的抑制,混合谱系白血病 (mixed lineage leukemia,MLL)甲基转移酶催化 H3K4me3修饰,进而促进TERRA的转录,并抑制 ATRX对H3K9me3的识别^[103].LSD1与TERRA结 合之后可以阻止H3K4me3修饰的发生,从而促进 ATRX与H3K9me3修饰的核小体结合.

在复制过程中,部分丧失这种沉默机制的细胞 会在S期引发TERRA的重新转录和R-loop的形成, 从而导致组蛋白修饰可以潜在地抵消H3K9me3依 赖的沉默,包括组蛋白H3的Ser10、Thr11和Ser31 以及H3.3变异体^[98,103]的磷酸化.特别地,Ser10 磷酸化的H3阻碍HP1结合的活性染色质状态,其 积累与R环的存在相一致.因此,可能有利于促进 RNA:DNA杂合体^[104]形成的染色质环境.

7 依赖于TERRA的端粒维持

TERRA对于端粒的作用机制依赖于端粒长度. 当端粒具有正常长度时: a. TERRA 与端粒的相互 作用启动H3K9me3-SUV39H-HP1转录沉默网络, 结果 TERRA 抑制自我表达^[86] 而避免 R-loop 引起 的 dsDNA 断裂; b. NONO 和 SFPQ 蛋白与 TERRA 的相互作用可防止RNA:DNA杂合体和R-loop的 形成, 而阻止端粒 HDR, 确保端粒稳态; c. RNaseH 通过降解 RNA: DNA 杂合分子中 RNA 链来防止RNA:DNA杂合体和R-loop的形成,也 保护端粒的稳态; d. 具有较长3'端单链的端粒, 通 过长3'端单链折叠并将其自身组成不同的拓扑结构 来保护端粒.这种折叠并与其他染色体结构域进行 相互作用的能力称为长距离端粒位置效应 (telomere position effect over long distances, TPEOLD)^[105],可以最大限度地降低 TERRA 表达 和R-loop的形成,从而起到防止复制压力的作用. TERRA是否通过建立抑制性折叠结构来负向调节 自身作用^[106-107],还有待深入研究.

当端粒缩短时, TERRA 表达水平^[62]提升, 可 能是由于短端粒不能发生正常的折叠并发挥端粒位 置效应 (telomere position effect, TPE) 所致.此 外, DNA 损伤和 TRF2 的丢失也诱导 TERRA 的上 调,显然TERRA表达提升是维持端粒所需要.的 确,无端粒酶活性细胞中,R-loop介导的复制应激 反应会激活端粒HDR途径而维持端粒长度.相反, 在具端粒酶活性细胞中, TERRA 水平低, 说明 TERRA介导的端粒HDR是个备用维持端粒的细胞 过程. 例如,在无端粒酶活性的ALT细胞和酵母细 胞中, TERRA 介导的 RNA: DNA 杂合体形成的 R-loop结构可以促进HDR的发生进而维持端粒、 减缓细胞衰老.此外,ALT细胞内TERRA水平可 能受端粒与 APB 小体 (ALT-associated PML bodies, APBs) 中的早幼粒白血病 (promyelocytic leukemia, PML)蛋白复合物的影响. APBs 中 TRF2密度的降低有助于提高TERRA水平,因为它 将缓解之前描述的依赖TRF2的TERRA沉默.

8 展 望

自发现 TERRA 以来,短短十多年已经对 TERRA 的结构、功能、表达调控以及作用机制等

方面有了较深入的了解.然而,端粒维持是非常重 要而复杂的生物学过程,仍有许多问题尚未解决. 如:为什么TERRA的表达和细胞周期协调进行? 其调控机制是什么?如何感知细胞周期进程?在原 核细胞研究中发现,复制起始蛋白 DnaA 通过其具 活性的 DnaA-ATP 式/无活性的 DnaA-ADP 式的转 换^[108-109]来调控DNA复制起始,而且DnaA作为转 录因子调节核苷酸代谢和氨基酸代谢[110],进而调 控细胞周期进程;我们还发现DnaA也调节SOS基 因表达而协同 DNA 修复与细胞周期^[111];有趣的 是,我们意外发现DnaA与多种RNA分子相互作用 (作者未发表结果),其功能和作用机制尚不清楚, 我们正在探讨. 真核细胞中, hnRNPA1蛋白与 TERRA RNA 相互作用,而且其相互作用是动态变 化的,随细胞周期进程而改变(图3).同样, NONO和SFPQ蛋白通过与TERRA相互作用,防 止R-loop的形成,进而实现端粒维持,反之,形成 R-loop 而促进端粒HDR并维护端粒.显然,NONO 和SFPQ与TERRA相互作用在端粒DNA修复与细 胞周期的协调中发挥作用是因为NONO和SFPQ的 缺失会引起TERRA介导的R-loop的形成,后者阻 止端粒复制和细胞周期进程.无论原核还是真核细 胞皆有 RNaseH 蛋白,其基本功能是降解 DNA: RNA杂合分子中的RNA链,由此清理复制过程中 的RNA引物,防止R-loop的形成.RNaseH的这些 功能在进化上是保守的.那么, RNaseH如何与 NONO和SFPO协调抑制RNA:DNA杂合体的形 成?可以认为NONO和SFPQ能够防止DNA: RNA 杂合体的形成, 而 RNaseH 拆解已经形成的 DNA: RNA杂合体, 二者对端粒维持来说是双保 险.近日在线发表的一篇论文发现,重组酶RAD51 体外与TERRA相互作用并促进R-loop的形成,说 明RAD51直接参与TERRA通过链的侵入来与端粒 的相互结合,而且RAD51与其相互作用蛋白 BRCA2会提升TERRA与端粒的相互作用和R-loop 的形成,从而导致端粒的不稳定,有趣的是, RNaseH1和TRF1拮抗这个过程[112].该发现说明 TERRA 在端粒维持中的作用是精细调控的,可能 还有更多未知因子参与这个过程,但可以肯定的是 RNaseH在此发挥重要作用.

一般认为胚胎干细胞和肿瘤细胞具有无限分裂的能力因为具有高活性的端粒酶,能够确保端粒的 长度和稳态.然而,我们连续传代培养肿瘤细胞发现,肿瘤细胞传代培养近100次后出现细胞凋亡现 象,我们认为端粒稳态出现了问题.那么,TERRA 在此过程中发挥什么样的作用呢?随着分子生物学 技术手段的革新,如单细胞测序技术和结构生物学 的常规化、单分子生物学的发展,有望揭示 TERRA在端粒维持中更详尽的作用和其分子机制.

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TERRA-mediated Telomere Maintenance^{*}

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Abstract Telomeres are the special structures at the ends of linear chromosomes in eukaryotic cells. Telomere length maintenance is very important for living organisms and its maintenance mechanism is a complex. Telomerase can maintain telomere length by using its own RNA template (TERC) and catalytic protein subunits (TERT) through special reverse transcriptase properties. This paper reviewed the effect of TERRA (telomeric repeat-containing RNA) on telomeric length maintenance and mechanism. First, the associations of telomere length maintenance with cell survival and aging were introduced. Second, the structure and transcription control of TERRA, TERRA-mediated RNA:DNA hybrids and formation of R-loop, the TERRA binding proteins and their functions were described. Further, the molecular mechanisms and roles of TERRA-depended telomere maintenance in life processes were discussed.

Key words TERRA, DNA:RNA hybrids, R-loop, TERRA-binding proteins, telomere maintenance **DOI:** 10.16476/j.pibb.2020.0313

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