



人乳寡糖的生物活性*

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摘要 母乳被公认为新生儿最理想、最天然的营养来源, 其价值远不止于提供基础的能量与宏量营养素。其中, 人乳寡糖(HMOs)作为母乳中含量仅次于乳糖和脂肪的第三大固体成分, 凭借高度复杂的结构多样性, 在机体内发挥极其重要的生物学活性, 在婴幼儿健康成长和发育过程中起着至关重要的作用。HMOs的核心生物学活性主要有调节免疫和预防过敏、抗炎、抗氧化、促进神经发育、抗病毒和阻断病原体黏附、增殖, 以及作为血型物质等。在应用转化层面, HMOs研究正驱动跨领域创新: 基于其免疫调节和促进神经发育功能的生物学活性开发的含有HMOs的配方奶粉, 已在世界各国批准上市; 基于HMOs与肠道菌群关系研究的各种新的保健品和治疗方法, 也陆续出现, 比如双歧杆菌和HMOs的合生剂等。此外, 因其天然无害并且具有抗氧化的生物学活性特点, 在新兴的化妆品领域也备受关注。本文旨在系统梳理HMOs研究领域的关键进展, 重点围绕其复杂的组成与结构特征、多样且关键的生物学活性机制、在营养、医疗、日化等领域的巨大应用潜力与价值, 以及当前研究面临的挑战与未来方向等核心议题, 进行全面综述, 以期展现这一生命早期营养关键成分的最新科学图景。

关键词 人乳寡糖, 生物活性, 生物功能, 婴儿发育

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生命最初几个月是婴儿健康发展的重要时期, 母乳喂养作为婴儿喂养的最佳方式, 一直广受关注。母乳中含有无数生物活性成分, 如免疫球蛋白、激素、低聚糖、脂类和益生菌等^[1]。其中, 人乳寡糖(human milk oligosaccharide, HMOs)是母乳中的重要组成成分, 具有重要的生物学活性和功能, 对婴儿的发育和健康至关重要, 可以帮助婴幼儿建立更完善的生命系统。

1 人乳寡糖的基本信息

1.1 人乳寡糖的定义

HMOs, 又叫人乳低聚糖, 是仅次于乳糖和脂类的第三大固体成分^[2-4]。目前在母乳中已发现200多种HMOs^[5-7], 并且已经解析鉴定出多种HMOs结构^[8]。

1.2 人乳寡糖的结构

HMOs由5种基本单糖组成: 葡萄糖(glucose, Glc)、半乳糖(galactose, Gal)、N-乙

酰氨基葡萄糖胺(N-acetyl glucosamine, GlcNAc)、岩藻糖(fucose, Fuc)和唾液酸(N-乙酰神经氨酸, N-acetylneuraminic acid, Neu5Ac)^[9]。

目前已发现的HMOs满足以下结构特征(图1)^[10-12]: a. HMOs的还原端为乳糖(Gal β 1-4Glc); b. 乳糖胺的非还原端被3-18 Gal β 1-3GlcNAc (Type I) 或 Gal β 1-4GlcNAc (Type II) 二糖单元以 β 1-3或 β 1-6糖苷键延长, 以此组成HMOs的核心结构; c. HMOs的核心结构非还原端半乳糖能被Fuc或Neu5Ac修饰。

HMOs的多样性主要源于核心结构上的末端修

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饰, 其中Fuc能以 α 1-2、 α 1-3或 α 1-4糖苷键连接到HMOs的核心结构上, 这种寡糖被称为岩藻糖基化HMOs, 占HMOs总量的35%~50%, α 1-2岩藻糖基化的代表HMOs有2'-岩藻糖基乳糖(2'-fucosyllactose, 2'-FL)和乳-N-岩藻五糖(lacto-N-fucopentaose, LNFP) I, α 1-3/4岩藻糖基化的代表HMOs是3'-岩藻糖基乳糖(3'-FL)和LNFP II。Neu5Ac能以 α 2-3或 α 2-6糖苷键连接到HMOs的核心结构上, 这种寡糖被称为唾液酸化HMOs, 占HMOs总量的12%~14%, α 2-3唾液酸化HMOs的代表是3'-唾液酸乳糖(3'-sialyllactose, 3'-SL), α 2-6唾液酸化HMOs的代表是6'-唾液酸乳糖(6'-SL)。最后一类是中性HMOs, 不含岩藻糖或唾液酸修饰, 代表HMOs是乳糖-N-四糖(lacto-N-tetraose, LNT)和乳糖-N-新四糖(lacto-N-neotetraose, LNnT)。

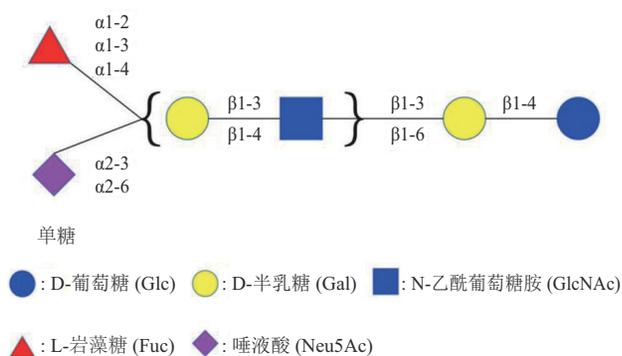


Fig.1 Structure diagrams of HMOs

图1 HMOs的结构示意图

2 人乳寡糖的生物活性

HMOs是婴儿生长发育的重要源泉。近年来HMOs的生物活性受到了越来越多的关注, 对于HMOs活性的研究逐渐增多^[7-8]。首先, HMOs具有抗病原微生物的活性, 可以抑制细菌和病毒对宿主细胞的吸附。细菌和病毒对细胞的受体多为糖复合物的糖链, HMOs的非还原端和细胞表面糖链非还原端结构极为相似, 可以作为受体与病原体或致病菌结合, 从而抑制细菌和病毒对细胞表面的黏附^[13-15]。其次, HMOs虽在胃肠道内很难被消化吸收, 但可被肠道微生物用作碳源, 进而调节肠道微生物的生长。例如, 长双歧杆菌不仅可此消化2'-FL、3'-FL和乳糖二岩藻糖基四糖

(lactodifucotetraose, LDFT)等岩藻糖基化的HMOs, 还可消化3'-SL、6'-SL等唾液酸化的HMOs, 而寡糖LNnT可单独作为婴儿双歧杆菌的碳源, 维持婴儿双歧杆菌的生长^[14, 16]。成年人肠道内缺少HMOs, 所以缺乏有益的两歧双歧杆菌^[17]。再次, 人乳酸性寡糖中的唾液酸可以做为入脑神经节苷酯唾液酸蛋白合成的前体, 从而促进人脑的发育^[10, 18]。最后, HMOs种类与人乳提供者的Lewis (Le)血型 and 分泌型密切相关。人类ABO(H)血型是按照红细胞上的血型物质不同而划分的, 在大多数人的唾液、胃液、泪液和尿液等体液中也出现了类似的血型物质, HMOs就属于此类物质。本文以近年来报道的HMOs生物活性的研究为基础, 细致总结HMOs的生物学活性, 为进一步利用HMOs的生物学活性提供重要的参考。

2.1 调节免疫和预防过敏

新生儿的免疫系统尚不成熟, 早期免疫系统的快速建立, 有助于婴儿健康的生长发育。肠道免疫系统也被称为肠道相关淋巴组织(gut-associated lymphoid tissue, GALT), 是一种次级淋巴器官, 可以识别与肠黏膜相互作用的抗原, 并参与免疫应答反应^[19]。肠道菌群可以通过“肠道菌群-器官轴”对免疫系统进行编程, 通过一系列机制影响肠道免疫系统, 从而调节全身免疫^[20]。HMOs可以通过影响肠道菌群组成调节Th1和Th2细胞的成熟和发育^[21]。用HMOs处理结肠上皮HT-29细胞后, 转录过程中的几种细胞因子(如白介素(interleukin, IL)-1 β 、IL-8和IL-17C)、趋化因子(如CXCL1、CXCL3、CXCL2、CXCL6、CCL5、CCL20和CX3CL1)和细胞表面受体(干扰素 γ 受体1等)的表达水平均有变化^[22], 而这些细胞因子、趋化因子和细胞表面受体与肠道免疫反应的发展和成熟有关^[23]。2'-FL和3'-SL通过干细胞分化、黏液层完整性和紧密连接形成等机制, 促进肠黏膜免疫成熟, 增加黏液层中抗菌组分及丁酸等菌群代谢产物, 显著提高了大鼠固有层中Th1和调节性T细胞(regulatory T cells, Treg cells)的比例、短链脂肪酸(short-chain fatty acid, SCFA)的含量以及血清中免疫球蛋白(immunoglobulin, Ig)A的含量^[24-25]。研究还发现, 2'-FL在健康仔猪中刺激平衡的细胞因子谱, 而不改变免疫细胞群, 2'-FL和婴儿双歧杆菌的联合使用可能通过调节血清细胞因子和增强对脂多糖(lipopolysaccharide, LPS)刺激的免疫反应来提供保护益处^[26]。

过敏性疾病在现代社会非常普遍,有统计表示,在一些发达国家,受过敏影响的个体比例可能已经超过30%,并且还在不断上升^[27-28]。过敏发展的微生物群假说认为,在生命早期微生物群会对婴儿不成熟的免疫系统进行编程,如果早期肠道菌群生态失调,那么这将会提高婴儿以后的过敏发生率^[29]。有研究表明,过敏性疾病儿童的肠道菌群多样性降低,双歧杆菌属、乳酸杆菌属和拟杆菌属丰度低^[30-32]。HMOs还可以促进肠道菌群短双歧杆菌的增殖,而短双歧杆菌是肠道菌群中最有效地激活抗过敏机制的菌种^[33],可以显著抑制呼吸道对乙酰胆碱的反应性,并减少急性皮肤过敏反应,降低外周血中过敏特异性抗体IgE和IgG的分泌水平^[34-35],抑制IL-4和IL-5等促过敏因子的产生^[36]。此外,2'-FL和乳脂球膜(milk fat globule membrane, MFGM)可以显著降低过敏评分和脾脏指数,显著降低血清中的总IgE、特异性IgE、组胺和小鼠肥大细胞蛋白酶1(murine mast cell protease-1, mMCP-1)水平,对婴幼儿牛奶过敏可能有一定的作用^[37]。

2.2 抗炎

HMOs具有抗炎作用,能够减轻炎症反应。Park等^[38]研究发现,3'-SL减轻了骨关节炎(osteoarthritis, OA)患者的疼痛,改善了日常生活质量,提示3'-SL可能是治疗膝关节OA的有效方法,且无严重副作用。

HMOs在婴幼儿坏死性肠炎(neonatal necrotizing enterocolitis, NEC)的研究较为深入。坏死性小肠结肠炎是一种炎症介导的肠道疾病,是妊娠32周前出生的早产儿死亡和严重发病的主要原因^[39]。HMOs预防婴儿结肠炎的潜在机制尚不完全清楚,但是国内外已经有一些研究者在这方面进行了探索。研究发现,HMOs能够有益地改变儿童炎症性肠病患者的粪便微生物群落,特别是在体外培养条件下,HMOs增强了抗炎菌群的丰度,并表现出总SCFA水平增多现象^[40]。Park等^[41]研究发现,2'-FL与低聚半乳糖(galactooligosaccharides, GOS)的组合在体外实验中能够减少LPS诱导的炎症,具体表现为降低促炎标志物的水平。在小鼠体内则表现出缓解症状,改善肠道通透性,并增强肠道结构,促进肠道健康的重要指标——SCFA的产生。此外,研究还发现,HMOs可以介导Toll样受体(Toll-like receptor, TLR)4对放射性肠损伤发挥保护作用^[42]。HMOs可降低

NEC的发病率作用已经得到证实^[43-45]。例如,2012年Jantscher-Krenn等^[46]在新生大鼠实验模型中发现,二唾液酸乳糖-N-四糖(disialyllacto-N-tetraose, DSLNT)作为一种非岩藻糖基化的双唾液酸化的HMOs,可以显著减少幼鼠NEC的发生率,并降低NEC相关的死亡率。还有研究团队发现,早产人群母乳中DSLNT浓度较低,这与早产婴儿NEC发病风险较高具有显著相关性,因此推断DSLNT可能具有帮助婴儿预防结肠炎发病的作用^[47-48]。

2.3 抗病原体黏附增殖

多种病毒和细菌必须附着于肠道上皮细胞表面才能进行增殖,进而侵入机体的体液循环,导致婴儿疾病。病原体主要通过黏附于细胞表面的聚糖,即糖萼,来实现这一过程(图2)。HMOs的结构与某些细胞表面聚糖相似,因此能够非特异性地与病原体结合,从而阻断病原体与上皮细胞的结合^[49],这些未能在肠道细胞表面黏附定植的病原体,可以在不引发疾病的情况下被排出体外。HMOs还可以改变病原体和共生细菌附着的细胞表面聚糖的表达形式,某些HMOs还具有糖基修饰功能。HMOs通过调节肠道菌群的pH值,抑制病原体的黏附和增殖。研究发现,结肠腺癌细胞在受到HMOs中的3'-SL刺激后,其细胞表面聚糖分布会发生变化,这表明特定的HMOs可能改变上皮细胞表面的聚糖含量和某些病原体的受体部位^[2]。2'-FL被发现可以将空肠弯曲菌的侵袭指数降低80%,同时抑制肠道细胞黏膜中的促炎信号释放,并减少婴儿腹泻次数^[50-51]。Liu等^[24]发现,添加2'-FL和3'-SL可提高断奶小鼠对肠聚集性大肠杆菌的抵抗力。在体内试验过程中还发现,一些HMOs能够显著降低痢疾变形虫与肠壁的结合,具有一定抵抗寄生原生动物的黏附的作用^[52]。

病毒感染严重威胁人类健康,人类与病毒的抗争已经持续很久了,虽然各研究团队已经开发了许多有效的疫苗,例如针对流感或轮状病毒的疫苗等。但开发新的有效疫苗也要时刻面对病毒进化产生的新抗原变体。病毒感染不仅预防困难,在治疗方面也存在药物少的窘境,同时药物长期治疗中容易出现耐药性和其他不良反应等问题^[53-54]。母乳中的HMOs具有很高的抗病毒潜力。有报道称,HMOs可以帮助婴儿建立对几种病毒病原体的保护机制^[13, 55]。HMOs可以通过多种机制发挥抗病毒作用。首先如前所述,HMOs可以通过影响肠道菌

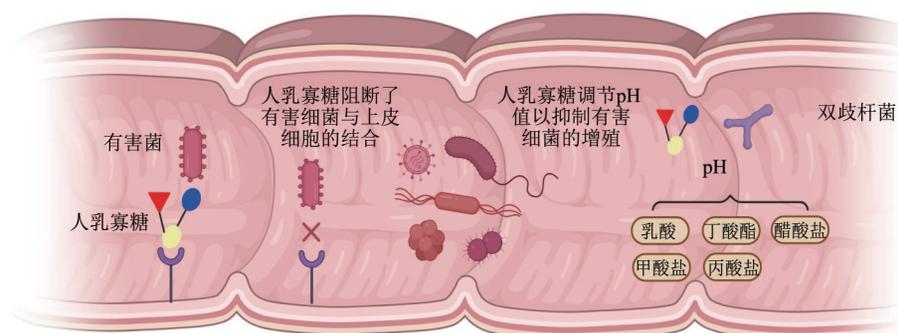


Fig. 2 Schematic diagram of the mechanism of HMOs against the adhesion and proliferation of pernicious bacteria

图2 人乳寡糖抗有害细菌黏附增殖机制示意图

群促进免疫系统的成熟, 以保护宿主免受病毒感染; 其次HMOs还可以影响微生物群的多样性和浓度, 并刺激共生的有益细菌的生长, 帮助婴儿建立健康肠道菌群, 从而提高机体对病毒感染的抵抗力。除此之外, 可溶性岩藻糖基化和唾液酸化HMOs可被岩藻糖和唾液酸化依赖细菌和病毒的凝集素受体或宿主上皮细胞表面的凝集素受体识别和结合, 从而阻断病毒凝集素受体识别宿主细胞表面存在的糖质, 阻止其黏附和定植^[56]。最近还有一些关于HMOs可以减少人类免疫缺陷病毒1型(human immunodeficiency virus type 1, HIV-1)母婴传播现象的报道^[57-58], 可能为人类免疫缺陷病毒(human immunodeficiency virus, HIV)的治疗提供新的理论支持。

2.4 促进神经系统发育

在婴儿神经发育的早期阶段, 建立神经结构和突触连接非常重要, 这些结构和连接对大脑的生物化学过程具有持久的影响, 一直延续到成年, 婴儿时的快速神经生长期是大脑细胞迁移、轴突生长、突触可塑性和轴突束化等关键过程的重要时期。

研究表明, HMOs中3'-SL和6'-SL可以通过影响肠道菌群改善肠脑轴的功能, 并间接影响新生儿的神经发育^[59]。HMOs也是婴儿体内唾液酸的重要来源, 唾液酸是神经细胞中神经节苷脂和糖蛋白的重要组成, 是婴幼儿发育和认知所必需的关键营养^[60-61]。Zhu等^[62]在小鼠海马组织中鉴定并定位了9个与记忆和认知相关的差异表达基因, 并发现3'-SL干预显著增加小鼠海马组织唾液酸代谢, 而促进学习相关基因表达后, 神经细胞黏附分子、谷氨酸受体和成纤维细胞生长因子受体相关基因的表达明显增加。再者, 提高多唾液化神经细胞黏附分

子(neural cell adhesion molecules, NCAM)水平可促进突触生长和可塑性。据报道, 岩藻糖和2'-FL被认为具有促进大脑发育的潜力, 2'-FL的摄入可以对啮齿类动物的认知领域产生影响, 并改善它们的学习和记忆能力^[63]。研究发现, HMOs唾液酰化乳糖-N-四糖b(sialyllacto-N-tetraose b, LSTb)显著促进了斑马鱼运动神经元的发育和功能, 这一过程可能通过上调*Slit2*和*Slit3*基因实现^[64]。HMOs也被证明可以影响肠道微生物群的组成, 促进神经递质的产生, 这对大脑发育至关重要, 其中2'-FL通过培养产生必需SCFA的有益肠道细菌来支持认知发展^[65]。Sato等^[66]还发现, 母乳中LSTb和2'-FL水平与婴儿头围Z评分(Δ head circumference Z-score, Δ H CZ)呈正相关, 2'-FL水平、3'-SL和DSLNT水平(分泌型参与者)与神经发育评分呈正相关。还有研究者探索了HMOs对神经细胞的直接作用, 通过T84肠道上皮细胞和SH-SY5Y神经细胞建立了一个体外共培养系统, 并使用钙离子载体A23187破坏上皮屏障, 发现神经细胞具有保护上皮屏障的作用^[67]。2'-FL和3'-FL在神经细胞存在的情况下, 没有额外的保护作用, 而在无神经细胞的情况下, 2'-FL和3'-FL可以替代神经细胞的保护作用, 这种替代功能在神经细胞功能受损的情况下(如炎症性肠病(inflammatory bowel disease, IBD))可能发挥一定作用^[67]。

2.5 作为血型物质与细胞表面受体

HMOs种类与人乳提供者的Le血型和分泌型(Se)密切相关, Le血型系统隶属于人类红细胞血型系统的重要分支, 其抗原多样性主要体现在Le^a、Le^s、Le^b及Le^y等抗原表位。此类抗原的分子基础由特定糖链结构决定, 其生物合成依赖于特定糖基

转移酶的催化作用——这些酶通过向糖链添加特异性糖基残基，最终形成多样化的Le抗原表位，并稳定表达于细胞表面糖缀合物（包括糖蛋白与糖脂）中^[68]。人类ABO（H）血型是基于红细胞表面的糖蛋白和糖脂上的寡糖链结构来划分的，这些寡糖链上附着的特定糖基（如半乳糖、N-乙酰半乳糖胺、岩藻糖等）决定了血型抗原的性质，分泌型是指个体是否能够将ABO和Le血型抗原分泌到体液（如唾液、汗液、胃液和母乳等）中，分泌型由基因决定，主要与编码 α 1-2-岩藻糖基转移酶（fucosyltransferase 2, *FUT2*）基因的表达有关。人群中一共包括分泌这四种类型HMOs的个体： Se^+/Le^+ 、 Se^-/Le^+ 、 Se^+/Le^- 和 Se^-/Le^- ^[3]。HMOs也可能是一种血型物质，通过MALDI-MS技术研究发现，LNFP II和LNFP III中分别含有 Le^a 和 Le^x 表位， Le^a 和 Le^x 的区分在于非还原末端的连接方式（ Le^a 为Fuc α 1-4/Gal β 1-3， Le^x 为Fuc α 1-3/Gal β 1-4），血型H抗原的结构为Fuc α 1-2Gal β 1-，在LNFP I中也得到了鉴定^[69]。这说明某些HMOs可能带有特定的血型抗原，这些抗原可能影响HMOs的生物学功能^[70]，例如，带有H抗原的HMOs可以结合某些病原体，从而保护婴儿免受感染。 Le^x 抗原出现在胚胎发育、细胞分化和肿瘤发生的特定阶段^[71]，球链上的H抗原以糖脂或糖蛋白的形式在各种癌细胞表面高度表达^[72]， Le^x/Le^a 以及相关的唾液酸化和硫酸化寡糖序列作为选择素配体的重要作用已得到充分认可^[73-74]。

2.6 其他

随着研究的不断深入，还发现了HMOs具有其他的生理功能。首先，HMOs是一种寡糖，具有较强的抗氧化能力，可高效地去除身体中的自由基及毒素。自由基是身体代谢过程中产生的一种高活性、具破坏性的物质，会对组织和细胞造成损伤，进而引发疾病和加速机体老化，所以HMOs具有一定的抗氧化和抗衰老作用^[75-76]。之后研究还发现，HMOs可以通过抑制氧化应激反应减轻大鼠放射性结肠损伤^[77]。HMOs具有改善运动后肌肉疲劳的作用。Park等^[78]发现，6'-SL可以降低雄性小鼠运动后血乳酸水平并改善血糖水平的影响，这可能有助于维持运动过程中的能量供应，对缓解运动疲劳也有积极意义。增加慢肌肌球蛋白重链表达和上调氧化磷酸化蛋白复合体表达，增加了肌肉细胞的能量产生，有效地利用氧气进行有氧代谢，从而减少无氧代谢产生的乳酸，进一步缓解肌肉疲劳。除

此之外，研究还发现，补充2'-FL可以减少高脂饮食诱导的肥胖和葡萄糖耐受不良症的发生率，这一效应与肠道黏液层的多重调控密切相关，具体表现为黏液生成量、组分构成、分泌型和跨膜黏蛋白的基因表达谱，以及糖基转移酶活性与黏液分泌相关基因的协同改变^[79]。

2.7 小结

综上所述，HMOs通过促进有益菌的增殖、抑制有害菌的生长和改善肠道屏障功能等方式，在婴幼儿机体内发挥了调节免疫和预防过敏、抗炎、抗病毒和病原体黏附和增殖以及促进神经发育和作为血型物质等多种生理作用，促进婴幼儿的肠道健康和生长发育进程（图3）。

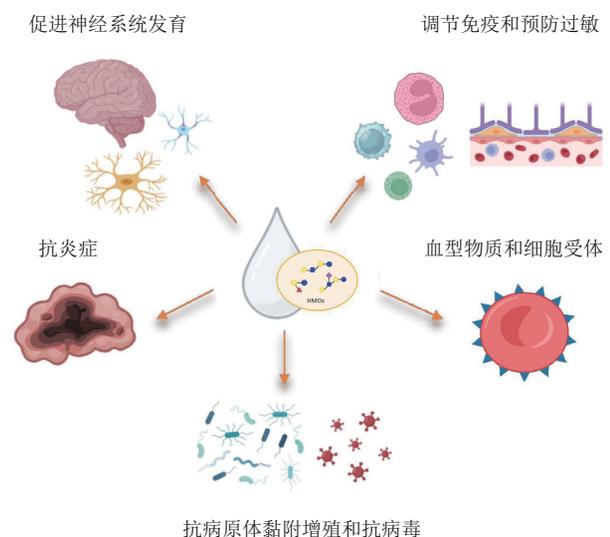


Fig. 3 Diagram of human milk oligosaccharide bioactivities

图3 人乳寡糖生物活性的作用图

3 人乳寡糖生物活性的应用

3.1 婴幼儿配方奶及食品添加剂

系统解析HMOs在婴幼儿肠道微生态中的生物活性机制及其功能效应，可以为开发与母乳更为接近的配方奶粉和食品提供科学依据。基于HMOs调节免疫和预防过敏、抗炎和促进婴幼儿神经发育的生物活性，在配方奶粉中添加特定HMOs，能够有效促进婴儿肠道菌群的平衡发展，优化其微生物组成，提升配方奶粉的营养品质^[80]。研究表明，添加2'-FL和LNnT的配方奶粉，其喂养婴儿的肠道微生物群与3个月大母乳喂养婴儿的相似度显著提

高, 双歧杆菌属数量增加, 而潜在致病菌如大肠杆菌和链球菌科数量减少, 婴儿体内几种重要代谢产物(如丙酸盐、丁酸盐和乳酸盐)的粪便浓度与母乳喂养的婴儿更为相似^[81]。这表明, 合理添加HMOs能模拟母乳对婴儿肠道菌群的调控作用, 降低对抗生素的依赖, 减少婴儿患病风险^[82]。在一项仔猪实验中, 发现2'-FL和Bi-26™的联合使用可能提供与母乳中生物活性成分相关的保护益处, 这些成分在婴儿配方奶粉中通常缺乏^[26]。

澳大利亚新西兰食品标准局(Food Standards Australia New Zealand, FSANZ)于2019年7月22日批准在婴儿配方食品和其他相关产品中使用微生物发酵生产的2'-FL或者与LNnT混合使用的建议, 并设定以下规定: 如果仅添加2'-FL, 其含量限值为不超过96 mg/100 kJ; 如果同时添加2'-FL和LNnT, LNnT的含量限值为不超过24 mg/100 kJ, 并且2'-FL和LNnT的总含量限值为不超过96 mg/100 kJ。截止到2021年11月8日, FSANZ发布了一份批准报告, 允许将通过基因工程改良的大肠杆菌菌株发酵生产的2'-FL用于婴儿配方食品、较大婴儿配方食品和幼儿配方补充食品, 但其最大添加量不得超过2.4 g/L^[83]。美国食品和药品监督管理局(food and drug administration, FDA)允许企业通过一般认为安全(generally recognized as safe, GRAS)自我认证快速上市含HMOs的产品, 且应用范围更广(包括普通食品)。2023年1月中国国家卫生健康委员会(National Health Commission, NHC)正式批准2'-FL和LNnT作为食品添加剂, 允许用于婴幼儿配方奶粉(0~12月龄)和儿童调制乳粉(13~36月龄), 以纯品计算时, 2'-FL的允许添加量应介于0.7~2.4g/L之间, 而LNnT的添加量则限定为0.2~0.6 g/L^[84]。2024年Walsh等^[85]的一项研究强调了在营养产品中仔细选择HMOs组合的重要性(特别是在婴儿奶粉配方中), 以有效地模仿母乳的相关益处。

3.2 临床医学与保健应用

基于HMOs抗病原体黏附增殖、抗炎和预防和治疗多种疾病的生物活性, 其在临床医院和保健领域也有许多应用。通过研究HMOs与婴儿肠道菌群的关系, 医生和保健专业人员可以更好地了解肠道菌群的发育和功能, 从而提供更加个体化和针对性的健康管理建议, 这有助于预防和管理肠道相关问题, 如腹泻、过敏、炎症性肠病等。研究发现, 含有2'-FL与GOS组合的产品在Caco-2和THP-1细胞

的共培养模型中显示出胃肠保护和抗炎特性, 这表明2'-FL与GOS的组合可以促进肠道健康并减少炎症^[41]。

母乳银行是收集、保存和提供母乳给需要的婴儿的机构。通过研究HMOs与婴儿肠道菌群的关系, 可以更好地了解母乳的营养成分和作用机制, 指导母乳银行的运营和母乳的合理利用。

HMOs对免疫系统的调节作用被广泛研究, 通过深入了解HMOs与肠道菌群、免疫系统之间的相互作用, 可以开发新的免疫调节方法和策略, 用于预防^[86]和治疗免疫相关疾病。HMOs具有调节肠道菌群组成结构的功能, 可以促进有益菌的生长, 从而预防肠道感染和炎症性疾病的发生。基于对HMOs与肠道菌群关系的深入了解, 可以研发新的保健品和治疗方法, 比如双歧杆菌和HMOs的合生剂等, 帮助婴幼儿预防疾病^[87-88]。

3.3 化妆品领域

基于HMOs的抗氧化和抗炎的生物活性, HMOs在化妆品领域的应用也逐渐受到关注。HMOs能够有效清除自由基, 减少皮肤氧化应激反应, 从而延缓皮肤衰老。此外, 由于与其他化学物质相比, 2'-FL的细胞毒性相对较低, 一些研究探索了2'-FL的这一相关作用。研究发现, 2'-FL降低了黑色素细胞和人体皮肤等效三维体外模型中的黑色素水平, 进一步的机制研究发现, 2'-FL可能是一种新的天然黑色素降解剂^[89]。总之, HMOs在美白和抗衰老类型的化妆品领域应用中具有很高的潜能。

3.4 小结

综上所述, HMOs是一种极具价值的生物活性物质, 它的研究对于改进配方奶粉和食品添加剂、优化临床医学改良保健品和化妆品都具有重要的实际应用价值。这方面的研究可以为制定个体化的营养策略和健康管理方案提供科学依据。

4 问题与展望

HMOs的生物活性研究与应用是目前研究的一大热点, 尤其是HMOs在促进婴幼儿肠道健康与生长发育方面的研究, 并且由此涌现出一批致力于实际应用与转化的产业, 如婴幼儿配方奶与食品添加剂的研发。随着分析技术和生产水平的进步, HMOs生物活性的研究与应用取得重要突破, 特别是在HMOs对于婴幼儿肠道菌群的建立与肠道疾病的防治方面, HMOs已经成为重要的婴幼儿食品添

加剂和疾病防治靶标分子。本文结合近些年发表的文献(包括免疫和抗过敏作用、抗炎症、预防病原体黏附、抗病毒作用、促进神经发育和血型物质等方面)进行了详细论述。但HMOs领域的研究仍有许多关键问题需要解决,如HMOs生物学功能的深度挖掘^[90]、HMOs定量标准的统一^[91]、HMOs的工业化生产等方面急需实现技术突破。另外,虽然分析技术取得了长足的进步,由于糖链分子的无模板合成机制以及糖链分子的复杂分支结构,对于HMOs的结构分析与鉴定还存在诸多难题,制约了HMOs生物活性的研究。随着质谱技术的进步,尤其是多级质谱技术的引入,HMOs糖链可以逐级碎裂为细小的分支结构,并发展配套的结构鉴定软件程序,相信这一问题能得到较大程度的解决。随着HMOs和婴儿肠道健康相互作用机制的深入研究,HMOs对婴幼儿健康影响认识的进一步加深,HMOs作为婴幼儿重要的营养物质,在营养发育与临床治疗方面,已经越来越受到乳品和营养工业的重视。建立HMOs的结构与功能数据库,加大基础科研和产品开发力度,将对中国婴幼儿的健康成长产生积极影响。

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The Biological Activity of Human Milk Oligosaccharides*

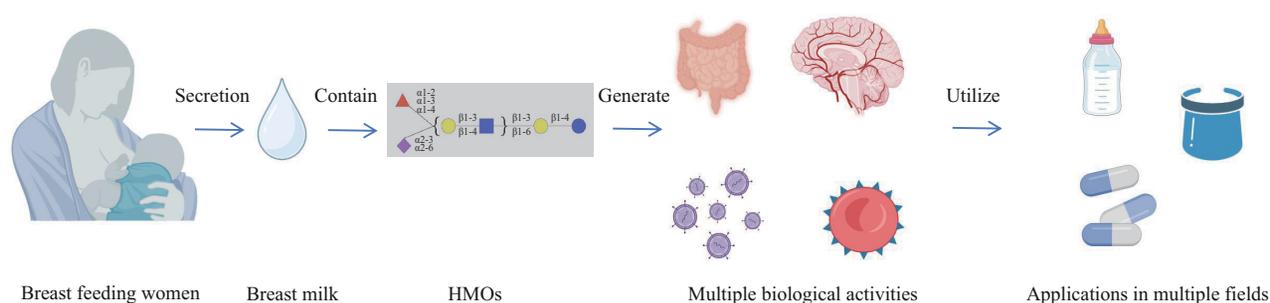
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Graphical abstract



Abstract Human milk is universally recognized as the optimal and most natural source of nutrition for newborns, offering benefits that extend far beyond basic energy and macronutrient provision. Among its complex constituents, human milk oligosaccharides (HMOs) represent the third most abundant solid component, surpassed only by lactose and lipids. HMOs are distinguished by their exceptionally high structural diversity—over 200 distinct structures have been identified to date. This structural complexity underlies the extensive biological functions HMOs perform within the infant’s body. HMOs play a pivotal role in promoting healthy growth, development, and overall well-being in infants and young children, functioning as indispensable bioactive molecules. Their key physiological activities include: immunomodulation and allergy prevention by promoting immune tolerance and reducing the risk of allergic diseases; potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects that protect vulnerable infant tissues; support for brain development and cognitive enhancement through multiple mechanisms; anti-pathogenic properties, acting as soluble receptor analogs or “decoy” molecules to competitively block viral, bacterial, and other pathogen adhesion, thereby preventing colonization and infection in the gastrointestinal tract; and functioning as blood group substances. At the translational and application level, HMO research is actively driving cross-disciplinary innovation. Building on a deep understanding of their immunological and neurodevelopmental benefits, certain structurally defined HMOs have been successfully

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incorporated into infant formula. These HMO-supplemented formulas have received regulatory approval and are now commercially available worldwide, providing a nutritional alternative that more closely resembles human milk for infants who are not exclusively breastfed. This represents a significant step toward narrowing the compositional gap between formula and breast milk. Simultaneously, research into the symbiotic relationship between HMOs and the gut microbiota—particularly their role as selective prebiotic substrates promoting the growth of beneficial bacteria—has catalyzed the development of novel functional foods, dietary supplements, and microbiome-targeted therapies. These include advanced synbiotic formulations that combine specific probiotic strains with HMOs to synergistically optimize gut health and function. Furthermore, the intrinsic qualities of HMOs—including their natural origin, safety profile, biocompatibility, and proven antioxidant properties—have attracted growing interest in the emerging field of high-performance cosmetics. They are increasingly being explored as innovative functional ingredients in skincare products aimed at reducing oxidative stress and supporting skin health. This review aims to systematically synthesize recent advancements in HMO research, offering a comprehensive analysis centered on their complex composition and structural diversity; the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying their diverse biological functions; their translational potential across sectors such as nutrition, medicine, and consumer care (including cosmetics); and the major challenges that persist in the field. It critically examines both foundational discoveries and recent breakthroughs. By integrating these interconnected themes, the review provides a holistic and up-to-date perspective on the scientific landscape of HMOs, highlighting their essential role in early-life nutrition and their expanding relevance across health and wellness applications. It also outlines promising directions for future research, with the goal of advancing evidence-based innovation in infant health and beyond.

Key words human milk oligosaccharides, bioactivities, biological functions, infant development

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