



低剂量放疗缓解骨关节炎*

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摘要 骨关节炎 (osteoarthritis, OA) 是一种慢性退行性关节疾病, 也是最常见的关节炎类型, 几乎涉及任何关节, 可导致患者慢性疼痛和残疾。19 世纪末期伦琴发现了 X 射线, 到 20 世纪 80 年代 Luckey 认为低水平辐射 (LDRT) 对生物可能有益, 逐步应用于一些疾病的治疗, 但目前 LDRT 的运用并未得到普及。本文介绍了 OA 的流行病学、危险因素、临床表现、治疗方法以及发病机制, 重点讨论了 LDRT 缓解 OA 的可能机制以及临床研究进展, 还探讨了 LDRT 治疗 OA 引起的不良反应 (急性反应和致癌风险)。在临床上, LDRT 本身具有非侵入性、不良反应较小等优势, 在治疗 OA 展现出疼痛缓解、运动改善等疗效, 因此 LDRT 在治疗 OA 中有广阔的应用前景。

关键词 低剂量放疗, 骨关节炎, 炎症抑制, 临床研究, 不良反应

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1 骨关节炎的一般情况

骨关节炎 (osteoarthritis, OA) 是一种慢性退行性关节疾病, 也是最常见的关节炎类型, 几乎涉及任何关节, 可导致老年人慢性疼痛和残疾^[1]。OA 的病理改变包括软骨退变、软骨下骨重塑、滑膜增生、滑膜炎、半月板损伤、异常血管生成以及韧带和肌腱不稳定^[2]。OA 进展引起的结构改变表现为关节间隙狭窄、软骨下骨硬化以及骨赘形成, 进而导致关节功能损害和慢性疼痛^[3]。图 1 总结了 OA 的一些临床特征。

1.1 流行病学

全球约有 6 亿多人受 OA 影响^[4]。60 岁以上的人口中有 9.6% 的男性和 18% 的女性患有症状性 OA^[5], 在过去的 30 年中受 OA 影响的人数增加了 48%^[6]。事实上, OA 已经成为全球老年人致残的第四大原因^[7]。在许多国家, 这种疾病的负担是巨大的。美国估计有 3 200 万人受到影响^[8]; 瑞典有 1/4 的成年人因 OA 需要就医^[9]; 中国目前超过 1.3 亿人患有 OA; 在德国, OA 是造成患者痛苦的五大疾病之一^[10]。

此外, OA 可能导致医疗保健资源的大量投

资。据估计, 在美国每例 OA 患者每年的平均直接治疗总成本在 1 442 ~ 21 335 美元之间^[11]。在加拿大、英国、法国和澳大利亚等国家, OA 造成的疾病成本约占 GDP 的 1%~2.5%^[12]。

1.2 危险因素

OA 的发病与年龄、性别、饮食、体重、运动和遗传等因素有关^[13-14]。由于体内激素水平的差异, 50~60 岁女性的发病率是男性的 3.5 倍^[5]。过重、肥胖会对关节施加额外的负荷, 导致关节炎; 特殊职业, 如运动员对某些关节进行重复或过度的创伤, 导致关节疲劳和磨损^[15-16]。此外, 有 OA 家族史的人患关节炎的风险更高, 因为遗传因素占 OA 风险的 40%~65%^[11]。

1.3 临床表现

OA 患者通常表现为关节疼痛、僵硬、肿胀、畸形、活动受限以及关节发出咯吱声等^[17-18]。此外, 运动或长时间保持一个姿势后疼痛加重, 晨起

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时出现晨僵, 关节周围软组织肿胀, 而逐渐发生的骨质增生和软骨损伤会导致关节畸形, 这些症状通常会随着疾病的恶化而加剧。

1.4 治疗

鉴于OA目前无法治愈, 临床治疗主要侧重于缓解疼痛和改善患者的生活质量。包括适度的运动^[19]、减肥、物理治疗、针灸、使用辅助设备、口服或局部使用非甾体类抗炎药^[20-21]、关节内类固

醇注射^[22-23]、软骨修复术以及关节清理术, 对于晚期患者进行全关节置换术。但长期的药物治疗存在不良反应且不能根治OA, 手术治疗存在风险, 康复期较长。新兴的策略包括注射自体或异体间充质干细胞外泌体促进软骨修复再生、使用富血小板血浆促进OA恢复、神经生长因子抑制剂、基因疗法以及靶向炎性细胞因子、基质降解酶、Wnt通路的抗骨关节炎药物(DMOADs)^[24-26]。

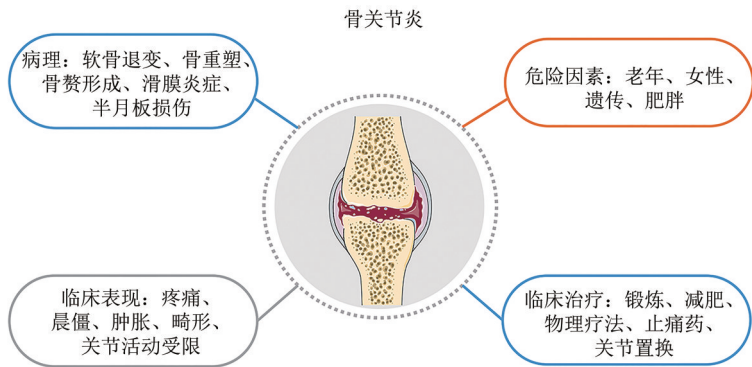


Fig. 1 Pathology, risk factors, clinical presentation and treatment of OA
图1 OA的病理、危险因素、临床表现及治疗

2 OA的发病机制

2.1 软骨损伤

关节软骨(cartilago articularis, AC)是由软骨细胞维持的黏弹性组织, 覆盖在长骨末端, 厚度在1~3 mm^[27]。AC为骨骼提供了富有弹性的关节面, 通过分散施加在关节上的机械应力来保护关节, 从而防止骨骼破坏^[28]。此外, AC提供了一个低摩擦力的承载表面, 帮助关节自由运动^[29]。AC主要由软骨细胞和细胞外基质(ECM)组成。软骨细胞通过自身的合成代谢和分解代谢调节ECM的组成^[30]。ECM中含有胶原蛋白和蛋白聚糖(aggrecan)^[31], 其中II型胶原蛋白(Col2a1)占总胶原蛋白的80%, Col2a1的原纤维为aggrecan凝胶提供高强度的拉伸能力, 很大程度上支持了关节自由活动^[32]。合成代谢与分解代谢平衡构成AC内稳态^[33]。当软骨细胞受损时基质降解酶的产生超过了软骨细胞替代受损和降解基质成分的能力, 基质金属蛋白酶13(MMP-13)和血小板反应蛋白解整合素金属肽酶5(ADAMTS5)升高进而降解Col2a1和aggrecan。稳态被破坏合成代谢和分解代谢失衡, 导致软骨细胞过度凋亡和AC破

坏^[34](图2)。

2.2 滑膜炎

滑膜是一种覆盖在关节内部的纤维结缔组织膜, 在关节的润滑和保护中起着至关重要的作用^[35]。滑膜富含神经末梢和血管, 能分泌滑液以减少摩擦和磨损。结构上, 滑膜由靠近关节腔的内层和滑膜下层组成, 内层包含巨噬细胞样滑膜细胞和成纤维细胞样滑膜细胞等细胞。此外, 滑膜下层包括成纤维细胞、脂肪细胞、巨噬细胞、肥大细胞、胶原纤维和aggrecan^[36]。

OA发生时, 滑膜的结构改变先于软骨的结构改变, 滑膜炎症伴随着OA的发生发展^[37]。关节损伤后, 软骨破裂的产物被释放到滑液中, 被滑膜细胞吞噬^[38]。随后, 滑膜细胞和滑膜巨噬细胞分泌促炎细胞因子、金属蛋白酶和蛋白水解酶。在此期间, 滑膜巨噬细胞向M1型极化, 这可能是OA治疗的靶点^[37]。新的研究发现, 滑膜炎症中成纤维细胞活化蛋白(Fap)显著升高, Fap可以在体内体外降解变性的Col2a1, 协同MMP-13降解天然Col2a1, 从而改变软骨基质降解和修复的平衡, 导致软骨损伤^[39]。软骨损伤后又进一步加剧滑膜炎症, 形成恶性循环^[11](图2)。

滑膜炎症与OA患者疼痛的严重程度密切相关^[40]。炎症导致滑膜组织肿胀和充血,增加关节腔内压力,滑液分泌量增加,同时释放出一些炎性介质,如白介素、前列腺素和肿瘤坏死因子等,这些物质激活和致敏传入神经纤维和伤害感受器,导

致关节周围的神经传递异常和过度敏感,从而导致关节在正常范围内的活动引起疼痛^[40-41]。此外,炎症干扰滑膜组织的修复过程,从而影响关节正常功能的恢复。长期的滑膜炎症还可能导致滑膜纤维化和硬化,从而使骨关节炎的治疗更加困难。

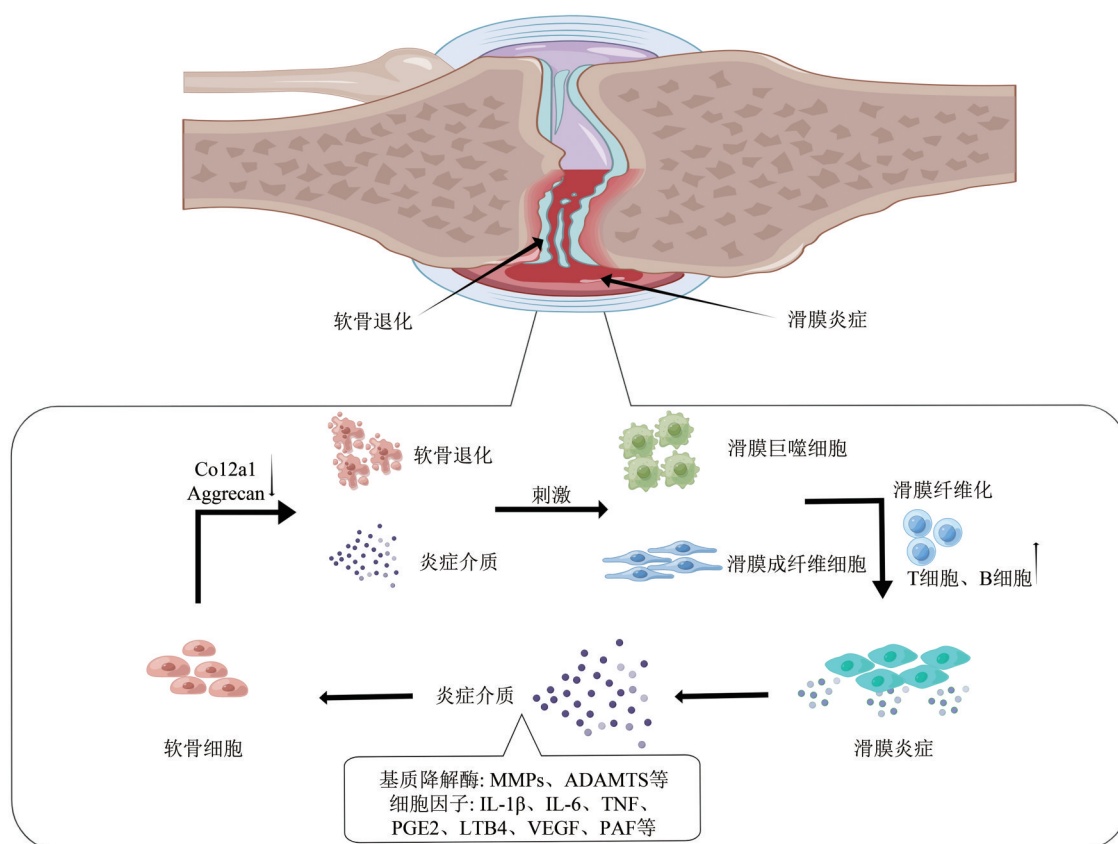


Fig. 2 The mechanism of OA occurrence

图2 OA的发生机制

受损软骨的破裂产物被滑膜细胞吞噬,滑膜细胞和滑膜巨噬细胞分泌促炎细胞因子、金属蛋白酶和水解酶,导致软骨基质降解和软骨细胞损伤,加剧滑膜炎症,形成恶性循环(本图使用Figdraw绘制)。MMPs: 基质金属蛋白酶(matrix metalloproteinases); ADAMTS: 血小板反应蛋白解整合素金属肽酶(recombinant a disintegrin and metalloproteinase with thrombospondin); IL-1 β : 白介素-1 β (interleukin-1 β); IL-6: 白介素-6(interleukin-6); TNF: 肿瘤坏死因子(tumor necrosis factor); PGE2: 前列腺素E2(prostaglandin E2); LTB4: 白三烯B4(leukotriene B4); VEGF: 血管内皮生长因子(vascular endothelial growth factor); PAF: 血小板激活因子(platelet activating factor); Co12a1: II型胶原蛋白(collagen type 2); Aggrecan: 蛋白聚糖。

3 低剂量放射治疗

3.1 低剂量放射治疗抑制炎症反应

放射治疗(radiation therapy, RT)多应用于癌症的治疗,高剂量放疗诱导促炎细胞因子的产生,促进照射组织中的炎症反应,低剂量放射治疗(low dose radiation therapy, LDRT)调节炎症反应,产生抗炎作用^[42-43]。LDRT多年来已在若干国

家用于治疗急慢性炎症性疾病和疼痛性退行性疾病^[44-45]。

巨噬细胞经照射后,诱导型一氧化氮合酶(iNOS)的表达降低,活性氧(ROS)的释放和超氧化物的产生受抑制。LDRT通过抑制iNOS从而降低一氧化氮(NO)的浓度,ROS和NO浓度的降低有助于LDRT的局部治疗效果,减轻放疗对正常组织细胞的损伤^[46-47]。此外,LDRT还通过巨噬

细胞极化调节炎症级联反应。最近的研究表明, LDRT驱动巨噬细胞向M2抗炎表型分化, 并诱导抗炎细胞因子微环境的产生^[47-48]。此外, LDRT可以抑制白细胞中促炎细胞因子的产生, 减少其募集和黏附, 下调细胞黏附分子如选择素、细胞间黏附分子(ICAM)和血管内皮细胞黏附分子(VCAM)的表达水平。因此, LDRT调节内皮细胞, 增加抗炎细胞因子, 减缓炎症反应^[49-50]。另一项研究表明, 低剂量X射线照射(0.3~0.7 Gy)可刺激内皮细胞产生大量TGF- β 1, 使内皮细胞对外周血单个核细胞(PBMC)的黏附下调, 有助于LDRT的抗炎作用^[51]。

3.2 LDRT缓解OA疼痛的临床研究

AC退行性变是OA的典型特征, 但不是引起关节疼痛的原因, 因为AC是一种非神经血管组织。然而, 软骨下骨、骨膜、韧带和关节囊神经支配丰富, 含有神经末梢^[52]。疼痛的机制目前尚不清晰, 可能是由伤害感受器刺激和疼痛传递神经元的共同作用, 通过外周和中枢神经系统以复杂的方式调节。TNF- α 、IL-1 β 等炎症细胞因子可以刺激神经末梢, 增加疼痛的感觉和程度。神经生长因子(nerve growth factor, NGF)、脑源性神经营养因子(brain-derived neurotrophic factor, BDNF)等神经生长因子可以调节神经元的功能, 神经元活动异常引起疼痛。神经致敏是OA患者疼痛的主要特征, 疼痛刺激可以导致中枢神经系统中的放电阈值降低, 从而引起痛觉敏化和疼痛记忆^[53]。免疫和神经系统之间的相互作用被认为是慢性疼痛的主要病理机制。

目前, 临床治疗骨关节炎疼痛的方式包括运动疗法、理疗、非甾体类抗炎药和关节内注射等, 但并不能提供令人满意的止疼效果, 且长期服用药物具有潜在风险。LDRT是一种有效的替代疗法, 在关节疾病中具有缓解疼痛的作用。研究表明, LDRT可以显著缓解疼痛水平, 疼痛减轻持续长达6个月, 甚至长达1年^[54]。但也有报道称, LDRT对OA无显著疗效, 在手部骨关节炎患者中, 经低剂量放射治疗6个月后, 有28%的患者对治疗有反应, 假手术组中有31%的患者对治疗有反应。治疗12个月时, 两组对治疗产生反应的患者概率分别为31%和27%。目前LDRT在德国被广泛应用于良性疾病的治疗中, 良性疾病占每年接受治疗的患者的1/3以上, 超过10 000例OA患者接受LDRT, 以缓解疼痛改善关节活动能力^[55]。德国放

射肿瘤学会(DEGRO)发布了对于LDRT治疗OA的建议, 包括髋关节和膝关节的剂量建议为0.5~1 Gy/关节, 总剂量为3~6 Gy, 给予2~3次/周治疗。表1汇总了近期LDRT治疗OA的临床数据。

3.3 LDRT缓解OA的机制研究

目前, 许多临床前研究都集中在LDRT的炎症调节作用上, LDRT可以在刺激免疫细胞释放正常细胞因子等活性分子的同时, 降低炎症介质的表达和升高抗炎细胞因子, 从而缓解疼痛和炎症, 这一点在体内体外实验中都得到了验证。

在K/BxN小鼠模型(一种关节炎小鼠模型)上进行的一项研究显示, 局部单剂量0.5 Gy会改变骨髓中的免疫细胞亚群, 这包括从炎性CD8⁺T细胞向CD4⁺T细胞的转变, 以及树突状细胞(DC)的显著减少。血清细胞因子也发生改变, 抗炎细胞因子IL-4显著升高, 促炎细胞因子IL-17A显著降低^[56]。hTNF- α tg小鼠经过LDRT后关节炎症状减轻, 炎症和侵蚀面积显著减少, 破骨细胞和中性粒细胞减少, 促炎性细胞因子IL-6减少^[57]。此外, 低于1 Gy的辐射剂量使巨噬细胞极化为抗炎M2表型, 而较高剂量则有利于促炎M1表型^[48, 58]。如前所述, OA的病理症状之一是滑膜中巨噬细胞的浸润, 以及巨噬细胞M1的极化。因此, LDRT缓解OA的机制有可能是辐照使滑膜中浸润的巨噬细胞向M2的转化。

新的一项研究表明, LDRT可以通过调节线粒体的生长分化因子15(GDF15)发挥抗炎作用, 从而缓解OA进展^[59]。同时也发现, 0.25~1 Gy的辐照剂量降低了促炎因子MMP-13和ADAMTS5的表达, 并增加了IL-1 β 诱导的炎性软骨细胞中Col2a1的表达^[59]。此外, 0.5 Gy和1 Gy剂量分别照射OA大鼠模型后, OARSI评分显著降低。同样, 本课题组使用X射线低剂量照射IL-1 β 诱导的大鼠炎症软骨细胞发现, 1 Gy以内的剂量可以促进Col2a1和aggrecan的表达, 降低MMP-13和ADAMTS5的表达。我们在动物实验中也发现, LDRT有缓解OA的作用, 0.5 Gy $\times$ 5次照射OA大鼠模型后, 滑膜中CCL2、IL-1 β 及IFN- β 1等炎症因子降低, 脊髓中CCL2、CXCL1、IL-1 β 和IFN- β 1等炎症因子减少, 软骨的损伤程度也得到缓解。此外还观察到, 在热板测痛实验中, OA大鼠模型在0.5 Gy $\times$ 5次照射后, 运动能力得到改善, 爪子收缩阈值升高(未发表资料)。

Table 1 Clinical data of OA mitigation by LDRT

表1 LDRT缓解OA的临床数据

作者 (发表时间, 国家)	照射部位	单次剂量 (次数, 总剂量)	患者人数 (年龄)	缓解率	随访期	评估方法	副作用
Mücke等 (2010, 德国) ^[60]	膝关节	0.25~3 Gy (一, 3~12 Gy)	5 069 (—)	3个月, 60% 1年, 40%	3~12个月	问卷	无
Keller等 (2013, 德国) ^[61]	膝关节	0.5~1.5 Gy (一, 0.5~10 Gy)	1 037 (23~93)	79.30%	2个月	患者主观知觉	—
Kaltenborn等 (2016, 德国) ^[62]	拇腕掌关节	1 Gy (6, 6 Gy)	84 (38~88)	3个月, 60% 1年, 70%	3~12个月	患者主观知觉	—
Micke等 (2017, 德国) ^[63]	多关节	0.5/1 Gy (6/12, 6 Gy)	166 (≥70)	49.60%	29个月	VAS	无
Micke等 (2018, 德国) ^[64]	多关节	0.5/1 Gy (6/12, 6 Gy)	703 (63.2(28~96))	58.40%	60个月	VAS	无
Koc等 (2019, 荷兰) ^[65]	髌、膝关节	1 Gy (6, 6 Gy)	12 (58~89)	6周, 50%	6~52周	NRS	无
Juniku等 (2019, 德国) ^[66]	手、髌和 膝关节	0.5 Gy (6/10, 3/5 Gy)	155 (64.7 (35~80))	40%	38个月	VAS	—
Hautmann等 (2019, 德国) ^[67]	多关节	0.5/1 Gy (6, 3/6 Gy)	140 (38~88)	6个月, 57.6% 2年, 47.0%	6~12周 6~24个月	NRS	无
Hautmann等 (2019, 德国) ^[68]	脚踝和 跗骨关节	0.5/1 Gy (5/6, 3、5/6 Gy)	49 (37~83)	65%~70%	6~12周/6~24个月	NRS	无
Hautmann等 (2020, 德国) ^[69]	多关节	0.5/1 Gy (6, 3/6 Gy)	159 (21~91)	65%	6~12周/6~24个月	NRS	无
Donaubauer等 (2020, 德国) ^[70]	手指	0.5/1 Gy (6, 3/6 Gy)	483 (—)	70%	3~6个月	患者主观知觉	—
Rogers等 (2020, 瑞士) ^[71]	手指	0.5 Gy (8, 4 Gy)	59 (62.4±9.0)	1年, 56%	2~12个月	VAS	无
Rühle等 (2021, 德国) ^[72]	多关节	0.5/1 Gy (6, 3/6 Gy)	970 (≥65)	65.6%	8周	NRS	—
Weissmann等 (2021, 德国) ^[56]	足和踝	0.5/1 Gy (6, 3/6 Gy)	196 (65.9±14.5)	75%	3~6个月	患者主观知觉	无
Álvarez等 (2022, 西班牙) ^[73]	手	0.5/1 Gy (6, 3/6 Gy)	100 (45~79)	94%	3~12个月	VAS	—
Minten等 (2018, 荷兰) ^[74]	手	1 Gy (6, 6 Gy)	56 (≥50)	29%	3个月	OMERACT -OARSI	皮肤发红
Mahler等 (2019, 荷兰) ^[75]	膝关节	1 Gy (6, 6 Gy)	27 (≥50)	1个月, 37% 2个月, 33% 3个月, 44%	1~3个月	OMERACT -OARSI	疲劳 (6例)
Niewald等 (2022, 德国) ^[76]	手、膝关节	0.05/0.5 Gy (6, 0.3/3 Gy)	133 (>40)	42%	3个月	VAS	—

VAS: 视觉模拟量表; NRS: 疼痛数字评定量表; OMERACT-OARSI: 国际风湿病-骨关节炎研究学会评分。表1中列举了18项研究数据, 其中3项随机对照试验 (randomized controlled trial, RCT) 结果表明, LDRT组与安慰剂组无差异, 但这3项RCT被质疑存在纳入患者数量有限、随访时间短以及患者质量问题。而所有数据中LDRT均有缓解OA疼痛的作用。一项纳入5 069人的研究, 疼痛缓解率在3个月时达到60%^[60], 另一项1 037例患者的研究, 疼痛缓解率在2个月时达到79.3%^[61]。对于剂量和分次, 单次0.5/1 Gy、照射6次、总剂量3/6 Gy使用最多且疗效最佳, 这种疗法也是DEGRO所推荐的。当然, 这仍然需要更多的临床试验以及更多的RCT提供更加充分的证据。

4 LDRT的不良反应: 急性反应与致癌风险

LDRT最大限度地减少了对周围健康组织的损伤, 使患者能够耐受更频繁和更长时间的放疗。此外, 与常规放疗相比, LDRT的不良反应较少, 如治疗期间关节处皮肤发红、干燥或瘙痒, 对周围软组织如肌肉、肌腱和韧带的影响最小。另一方面, 厌食、恶心、呕吐和脱发等不良反应明显减少, 从而提高了患者的生活质量。由于照射剂量极低, LDRT一般很少引起严重的急性放射反应。即使发生反应, 症状也较轻, 不需要进一步干预治疗^[64, 77-78]。

另一个值得考虑的问题是LDRT的致癌风险。牛津大学儿童癌症调查(OSCC)的研究表明, 胎儿在子宫内暴露于低剂量的辐射会增加儿童患癌症的风险, 特别是产前子宫内暴露于0.01~0.03 Gy的X射线。然而, 由于可能存在的回忆和选择偏倚以及混杂因素, 这些研究一直存在一定的争议^[79-80]。儿童期/青少年期接受累积剂量为100 mSv的辐射, 急性髓性白血病和急性淋巴细胞白血病的风险显著升高^[81]。年轻女性在多次接受平均累积剂量为0.8 Gy的胸部X射线照射后, 患乳腺癌的风险也会增加^[82]。另一项研究中, 158例女性患者肩部接受LDRT后, 照射平均年龄57.1岁, 平均随访21.3年, 有7例患乳腺癌, 但这并不能确认LDRT会诱发乳腺癌^[83]。早前瑞典的一项研究调查了运动系统良性疾病接受X射线治疗的患者患血液系统恶性肿瘤的风险。强直性脊柱炎患者接受LDRT治疗, 在骨髓平均吸收剂量为0.2 Gy时, 血液系统恶性肿瘤的发生率增加。而肩部以及其他外周关节患者接受LDRT治疗, 骨髓平均吸收剂量低于0.11 Gy时, 没有增加血液系统恶性肿瘤的发生率^[84-85]。多项研究表明, 当接受治疗的患者年龄超过40岁时, 良性疾病放疗的致癌风险降低^[83]。仔细评估LDRT的潜在致癌作用是很重要的, 要考虑到特定年龄组和所涉及的靶组织。

目前, 还不能确定LDRT是否能够增加癌症的风险, 需要从基础研究和临床两个方面进行更深入的研究, 以取得明确的结论。由于OA发生在关节部位, 远离代谢旺盛的组织 and 重要器官, 因此LDRT治疗OA引发恶性肿瘤的风险在理论上较低, 但是仍然需要在今后的临床实践中寻找进一步减少照射剂量和分次的最佳方案, 降低肿瘤发生风险。

5 关于LDRT治疗OA的展望

现有的研究表明, LDRT对于OA的治疗效果是积极的, 可以缓解患者的疼痛、减轻炎症和改善生活质量, 安全性较高, 并未出现严重的不良反应和并发症。然而, 目前在OA的治疗中, LDRT并没有引起临床医生的关注, 仅有少部分国家使用LDRT治疗OA。我们需要重新审视LDRT在治疗OA上的作用, 积极推广LDRT让更多的医生使用LDRT治疗OA, 更多的OA患者接受LDRT。这些需要更多的大规模、随机对照试验来确定最佳的治疗方案, 以及进一步探讨LDRT的治疗机制和持续治疗的长期影响。另外, 值得注意的是, LDRT对于OA只能起到减少疼痛、缓解疾病进展的作用, 如果要达到治愈的目的, 应该从以下两个方面着手: a. 继续寻找LDRT抑制炎症的最佳剂量和分次; b. LDRT与其他治疗手段, 如外泌体、核酸类制剂(如miRNA)等相结合, 一方面通过LDRT达到缓解OA疼痛的作用, 另一方面使用外泌体促进软骨细胞再生。

另外, 值得注意的是, 治疗OA的射线通常为加速器产生的X射线, 目前还有一类医用的射线——质子和重离子束用于肿瘤治疗, 由于质子和重离子, 尤其是重离子在射程末端形成能量大量释放的Bragg峰, 可以在人体的局部区域产生高剂量区, 而在射线途径的正常组织中剂量较低, 可以达到杀伤肿瘤的同时最大限度保护正常组织这一目的, 是目前最先进的放疗方法^[86]。将质子重离子用于良性疾病包括OA的治疗, 相比于传统的X射线, 有以下优势: a. 由于Bragg峰的存在, 相比于X射线, 离子束对正常组织伤害更小, 进一步降低肿瘤发生的风险; b. 与X射线相比, 重离子束具有更强的生物学效应, 治疗所需的剂量可能更小, 并减少LDRT的分次, 减轻病人的痛苦和经济负担。本课题组在前期研究中发现, 0.1 Gy的碳离子照射就能够促进软骨细胞中Col2a1和aggrecan的表达, 降低基质金属蛋白酶3(MMP-3)和ADAMTS5的表达。因此, 重离子在OA的治疗中有着广阔的前景。

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Low-dose Radiation Therapy for Osteoarthritis*

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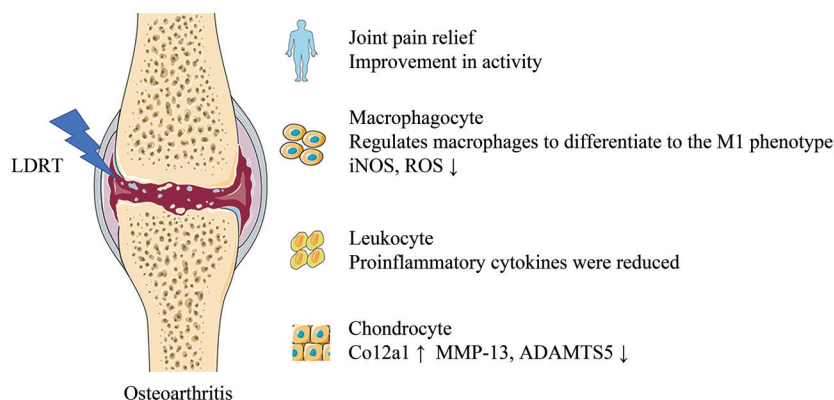
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Graphical abstract



Abstract Osteoarthritis (OA) is a chronic degenerative joint disease and the most common type of arthritis. It involves almost any joint and can lead to chronic pain and disability. In the late 19th century, Roentgen discovered X-rays, and then began to use radiotherapy to treat tumors. In the 1980s, Luckey thought that low-level radiation (LDRT) might be beneficial to biology, and it was gradually applied to the treatment of some diseases. This paper introduces the epidemiology, risk factors, clinical manifestations and treatment methods of OA, points out that the cartilage injury and the important effect of synovial inflammation in the pathogenesis of OA, namely when the homeostasis of articular cartilage are destroyed, synthetic metabolism and catabolism imbalances, cartilage cells damaged their breakdown products consumed by synovial cells. Synovial cells and synovial macrophages secrete proinflammatory cytokines, metalloproteinases and proteolytic enzymes, leading to cartilage matrix degradation and chondrocyte damage, which aggravates synovial inflammation and cartilage damage, forming a vicious cycle. The possible mechanism and clinical research progress of LDRT in alleviating OA are discussed. LDRT can

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regulate inflammatory response, inhibit the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines, and promote the production of anti-inflammatory cytokines, thereby achieving anti-inflammatory effect. Studies have shown that after irradiation, the expression of inducible nitric oxide synthase (iNOS) was decreased, the release of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and the production of superoxide were inhibited, the anti-inflammatory phenotype of macrophages was differentiated from M1 to M2, the inflammatory CD8⁺ T cells were transformed into CD4⁺ T cells, and the number of dendritic cells (DC) was significantly reduced. LDRT inhibit the production of proinflammatory factors in leukocytes, reduce their recruitment and adhesion, and down-regulate the expression levels of cell adhesion molecules such as selectin, intercellular adhesion molecule (ICAM) and vascular endothelial cell adhesion molecule (VCAM). LDRT can regulate endothelial cells, stimulate endothelial cells to produce a large amount of TGF- β 1, reduce the adhesion of endothelial cells to peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC), and contribute to the anti-inflammatory effect of LDRT. It also exerted anti-inflammatory effects by regulating mitochondrial growth differentiation factor 15 (GDF15). After low-level radiation, the MMP-13 (matrix metalloproteinases-13) and the ADAMTS5 (recombinant a disintegrin and metalloproteinase with thrombospondin-5) decreased, the Col2a1 (collagen type 2) increased in chondrocytes. In the existing clinical studies, most patients can achieve relief of joint pain and recovery of joint mobility after irradiation, and the patients have good feedback on the efficacy. The adverse reactions (acute reactions and carcinogenic risks) caused by LDRT in the treatment of OA are also discussed. During the treatment of OA, a few patients have symptoms such as redness, dryness or itching at the joint skin, and the symptoms are mild and do not require further treatment. Patients are thus able to tolerate more frequent and longer doses of radiotherapy. In general, LDRT itself has the advantages of non-invasive, less adverse reactions, and shows the effect of pain relief and movement improvement in the treatment of OA. Therefore, LDRT has a broad application prospect in the treatment of OA.

Key words low-dose radiotherapy, osteoarthritis, inflammation suppression, clinical study, adverse reaction

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