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## 转录因子在上皮间质转化中分子机制研究进展

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**[摘要]** 上皮细胞-间充质转化(epithelia-mesenchymal transition, EMT), 是指上皮细胞通过特定程序转化为具有间质表型细胞的生物学过程, 目前研究证实这种表型的转化与转录因子密不可分。与其他转录因子相比, 转录因子SNAIL、TWIST、ZEB为促进EMT过程的主要转录因子, 本文总结国内外与EMT相关研究并对转录因子及其在EMT过程中的分子机制加以综述。

**[关键词]** 肿瘤; 上皮-间质转化; 转录因子; 文献综述

## Recent progress of research on molecular mechanism of transcription factors in epithelial mesenchymal transition

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**Abstract** The transdifferentiation of epithelial cells into motile mesenchymal cells was known as epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT). This switch in cell behavior has been illustrated to be mediated and closely related by some key transcription factors, including SNAIL, zinc-finger E-box-binding (ZEB) and basic helix-loop-helix transcription factors (TWIST). This article reviewed the research of recent progress of transcription factors the related mechanism of EMT.

**Keywords** cancer; epithelial-mesenchymal transition; transcription factors; review

上皮细胞-间充质转化(epithelia-mesenchymal transition, EMT), 是指上皮细胞通过特定程序转化为具有间质表型细胞的生物学过程。其在胚胎发育、慢性炎症、组织重建、癌症转移和多种纤维化疾病中发挥着重要作用。转录因子(transcription factor)是指能够结合于某基因上游特异核苷酸序列的蛋白质, 而这些蛋白质能够调控

相应基因的转录。转录因子有不同的功能区域, 如DNA结合结构域与效应结构域, 转录因子的作用包括: 1)调控RNA聚合酶; 2)与基因上游的启动子区域结合来促进或者抑制DNA上的遗传信息向RNA转录的过程; 3)与其它转录因子形成转录因子复合体来影响基因的转录。

EMT过程中表型相关蛋白的增减改变往往

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归结于基因表达水平的改变, 在这个层面上讲, EMT通常涉及转录、转录后调节、翻译等水平, 因此任何影响有关EMT基因转录及翻译的因素均与细胞表型改变显著相关。在这些影响因素中转录因子SNAIL、TWIST、ZEB起重要作用, 并且参与多种信号传导通路针对于核内染色质转录水平的调控, 即通过影响DNA转录来调节相关蛋白的表达。自其发现以来, 大量研究证实了在EMT中SNAIL、TWIST、ZEB的主导作用。本文将对转录因子在EMT过程中分子生物学机制的研究进展做一简要综述。

## 1 转录因子 SNAIL 与 EMT

在正常组织生长发育及组织纤维化和肿瘤细胞转移过程中转录因子SNAIL1与SNAIL2(又称slug)促进细胞产生EMT, 其作用是通过结合DNA的E盒(E-box)特定区域来抑制编码上皮蛋白标志基因的表达式<sup>[1-2]</sup>, SNAIL1可通过阻断E-cadherin基因上游E-box来抑制其表达, 进一步研究发现SNAIL与由甲基转移增强子zeste同源物2(EZH2)、G9a、SUV39H1、组蛋白脱乙酰酶1, 2和/或3及赖氨酸-特异性脱甲基酶-1(LSD1)等组成的多梳抑制复合物2(PRC2)相互作用<sup>[3-4]</sup>, 共同以甲基化和(或)乙酰化方式调节H3-Lys-4(H3K4)、H3K9、H3K27<sup>[3-5]</sup>等组蛋白修饰, 而甲基化和(或)乙酰化的组蛋白可以显著影响基因的表达, 进而调节细胞EMT的过程, 在这个过程中转录因子SNAIL不仅可以抑制上皮表型蛋白基因的表达, 而且能促进编码间质表型蛋白基因的表达。在EMT过程中多条信号传导通路相互影响, 共同作用于EMT的发生及进展, TGF- $\beta$ 、WNT、Notch和生长因子等通路通过RTKs, 激活并上调SNAIL1含量进而促进细胞产生EMT<sup>[1]</sup>。

另外多种信号传导通路引起的SNAIL转录后修饰也控制着其在细胞内的位置及降解<sup>[1]</sup>, 而SNAIL的位置及其含量与EMT的过程有相当大的关联性, 在这其中比较重要的是糖原合成酶激酶-3 $\beta$ (GSK3 $\beta$ ), 它可通过介导SNAIL磷酸化, 导致SNAIL从细胞核内游出, 最终通过泛素介导作用使带有磷酸化标签的SNAIL降解。从而影响细胞内SNAIL对EMT过程的影响, 在此基础上多种信号传导途径通过针对GSK3 $\beta$ 发挥作用, WNT通路抑制GSK3 $\beta$ 介导的SNAIL磷酸化<sup>[6]</sup>, Notch与NF- $\kappa$ B信号传导通路扰乱GSK3 $\beta$ 和SNAIL1相互作用, 增加SNAIL的稳定性继而促进EMT<sup>[7-8]</sup>; 小C-末端结构

域的磷酸酶1(SCP1, 也称为CTDSP1)拮抗GSK3 $\beta$ 引起的磷酸化, 使SNAIL1细胞核内聚集; 进而诱导EMT产生<sup>[9]</sup>。

除GSK3 $\beta$ 以外, Du等研究<sup>[10]</sup>发现PKD1可介导SNAIL1磷酸化, 使其游走出细胞核最终抑制EMT, 但是Yang等研究<sup>[11]</sup>发现PAK1与large tumour suppressor 2 (LATS2)介导SNAIL磷酸化使其核保留增加反而增强了SNAIL促进EMT的作用<sup>[11-12]</sup>。由P53诱导产生的mouse double minute (MDM2)与SNAIL相互作用促进SNAIL2的降解, 可以减弱肿瘤细胞由EMT引起的侵袭行为<sup>[9]</sup>, 由此可见关于转录因子SNAIL的调节并不是单一的, 而是多元化共同调节的结果。

## 2 同型二聚体和异源二聚体碱性螺旋-环-螺旋 (bHLH) 结构的转录因子与 EMT

具有同型二聚体和异源二聚体碱性螺旋-环-螺旋(bHLH)结构的转录因子在调节细胞分化与维持细胞稳定中起着重要作用, 在这些转录因子中E12和E47、TWIST1和TWIST2及ID蛋白在bHLH结构转录因子影响EMT中起关键性作用<sup>[1,13]</sup>, 与SNAIL相同, 上调TWIST可减少上皮基因的表达, 促进间质基因的表达<sup>[2]</sup>, 在癌症细胞中, 多项研究发现TWIST可单独引起E-cadherin表达减少及N-cadherin表达增加<sup>[2,14-15]</sup>, 同时TWIST可募集SET8, 并介导组蛋白H4K20去甲基化, 从而抑制E-cadherin表达, 促进N-cadherin表达<sup>[15]</sup>, 在头颈部肿瘤细胞中, TWIST1激活B淋巴细胞中的多梳抑制复合物1(PC1)中的一个组成部分——Mo-MLV插入区域同系物1(BMI1)——的表达, 并随后与BMI1再作用于E-BOX序列来下调细胞周期抑制因子p16(也称为INK4A; 由CDKN2A编码)与E-cadherin蛋白的表达。在这个过程中PRC2参与了E-cadherin相关编码基因组蛋白H3K27与CDKN2A启动子的修饰<sup>[14]</sup>。

在肿瘤及生长发育等中多种信号传导通路可以激活TWIST<sup>[1-2]</sup>, 最值得注意的, 缺氧诱导因子1 $\alpha$ (HIF1 $\alpha$ )在缺氧条件下通过直接结合在TWIST近端启动子的缺氧反应元件(HRE)调控上调TWIST的表达, 进而促进EMT及肿瘤细胞的转移, TWIST的活动在很大程度上取决于它的二聚体组成, TWIST1和TWIST2形成同源二聚体或异源二聚体, 再与E12或E47相互作用共同调节与E-box结合, 操纵转录的调控。与SNAIL一样, TWIST1的稳定性同样由磷酸化调节; Hong等<sup>[16]</sup>在乳腺癌研究中发现, 由酪氨酸激酶受体和Ras信号转导途

径诱发的MAPK(丝裂原活化蛋白激酶)可介导的TWIST1磷酸化,使其免受泛素介导的降解,增加其活性。不仅如此MAPK通路引起的磷酸化在一定程度上加速甚至直接导致了EMT过程<sup>[17]</sup>。

### 3 转录因子 ZEB 与 EMT

ZEB包含ZEB1和ZEB2, 他们与DNA区域的E-box区域相结合进而抑制或促进DNA的转录<sup>[1-2]</sup>。ZEB往往与一个C端结合蛋白(C-terminal-binding protein CTBP)共同介导上皮标志性蛋白基因转录抑制, 不仅如此也有研究发现在一些癌症细胞中, ZEB可以独立于CTBP, 并与染色质重塑蛋白BRG1相互作用来抑制E-cadherin的表达<sup>[18]</sup>, ZEB1不仅只有转录抑制作用, Postigo等研究<sup>[19]</sup>发现, ZEB也可以和共活化因子p300/CBP-associated factor (PCAF也被称作KAT2B)相互作用, 使其发生转录阻遏到转录激活作用的转变, 另外赖氨酸特异性脱甲基酶1(LSD1)可能与其相作用, 在EMT过程中使组蛋白去甲基化, 进而影响EMT<sup>[20]</sup>, 与SNAIL、TWIST类似; ZEB结合E-box在EMT过程中也扮演着转录促进间质标志物基因表达、抑制表面链接蛋白表达及影响细胞极性基因的表达等多重作用<sup>[1-2]</sup>。

在有关转录因子ZEB表达及调节研究中, Dave等<sup>[21]</sup>发现SNAIL可以从多个层面导致ZEB表达增加; 一方面可以通过减少miRNA200的表达,

从而增加编码ZEB1的mRNA的稳定性, 另一方面可直接抑制ZEB1泛素化降解; 最后可通过ETS1与TWIST直接作用于编码ZEB1基因的转录, 致使ZEB1表达增加。此外TGF-β、WNT、生长因子等激活的RAS-MAPK信号通路也都可以促进ZEB的表达<sup>[2]</sup>。一般来说ZEB的表达也可受microRNAs的抑制性调节, 翻译后由PRC2介导的ZEB2的sumo化阻碍其与CTBP相互作用, 并且影响其亚细胞器定位, 从而衰减ZEB2引起的上皮标志性蛋白E-cadherin基因抑制作用<sup>[22]</sup>。

### 4 其他转录因子

除了上述相关EMT经典转录因子外, 近期发现多种其他转录因子, 在调节、阻碍、诱导EMT过程中都扮演着不同角色<sup>[23-27]</sup>(表1), GATA家族的多种Forkhead box(FOX)转录因子, 它们通过调节编码上皮细胞连接、细胞极性复合物的基因来调节EMT, SRY box (SOX)转录因子与SNAIL1或SNAIL2协同促进EMT及肿瘤细胞的侵袭<sup>[28]</sup>。FOX家族(Forkhead box)、GATA4/6、KLF8、ZNF703(在小鼠中被称作Zeppo1)、PRX1等均被证实可能与EMT密切相关。这些新发现的转录因子是否与经典的转录因子相互作用或者独立作用现在还未有明确定论, 其相应功能、作用方式等还有待于进一步研究<sup>[29]</sup>。

表 1 转录因子在 EMT 的作用及通路

Table 1 Mechanism of transcription factor in EMT and signal transduction pathway

转录因子	在 EMT 过程中下调	在 EMT 过程中上调	相关通路
FOXC2	E-cadherin	Fibronectin, vimentin, N-cadherin and α SMA	TGF β -SMAD3
FOXO3A	E-cadherin	SNAIL1SNAIL1	AKT
FOXA1	E-cadherin	Fibronectin, vimentin and SNAIL1SNAIL1	TGF β . HGF and AKT
FOXA2	E-cadherin and ZO1	Fibronectin, vimentin, N-cadherin, SNAIL1SNAIL1 and SNAIL2SNAIL2	TGF β . HGF and AKT
GATA4,GATA6	E-cadherin.Crumbs and claudins	N-cadherin and MMP1	Unknown
HMGA2	E-cadherin	SNAIL1SNAIL1, SNAIL2SNAIL2 and TWIST	TGF β -SMAD3
SOX9	Unknown	SNAIL2SNAIL2	BMPs and PKA
KLF8	E-cadherin	MMP9	Unknown
ZNF703	E-cadherin	Vimentin, N-cadherin, SNAIL1SNAIL1	RHO-GTPase
PRX1	E-cadherin	Vimentin and laminin	BMP2 and TGF β

## 5 转录因子之间的相互作用

各转录因子不仅可以独立影响EMT, 而且EMT转录因子之间也存在着相互作用, 从而调节EMT过程。Hugo等<sup>[30]</sup>对乳腺癌细胞系PMC42研究发现, 这些诱导因子存在一种分层次的诱导模式即SNAIL1和SNAIL2初步诱导, 并且导致ZEB家族成员、TCF3、TCF4、TWIST、Goosecoid与FOXC2的激活。Taube等<sup>[31]</sup>在研究乳腺癌上皮细胞的各种转录因子表达中发现, 增加Goosecoid、SNAIL、TWIST及TGF- $\beta$ 1(EMT诱导因素)中任意一个表达, 就可以普遍上调ZEB1, ZEB2和FOXC2的细胞内含量, 并且还发现SNAIL1或TWIST诱导上调SNAIL2和FOXC2并不依赖TGF- $\beta$ 信号传导途径, Casas等研究<sup>[32]</sup>发现TWIST1诱导的发生的EMT中SNAIL2的增加必不可少, SNAIL2的缺失可以阻断TWIST1抑制E-cadherin的能力。

## 6 结语

转录因子, 特别是SNAIL、TWIST、ZEB在EMT及间质-上皮转化(epithelial-mesenchymal transition, MET)过程中扮演着重要的角色, 其分子机制方面的研究虽有进展, 但目前仍待完善, 随着对EMT-MET相关转录因子认识的不断深化, 相信不久的将来, 针对转录因子的靶向治疗必定会成为肿瘤治疗的新方向。

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