

综述

MR功能成像及影像组学评估宫颈癌淋巴结转移的研究进展*

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【摘要】腹主动脉旁及盆腔淋巴结转移是影响宫颈癌患者预后的重要因素,在治疗方案的选择中起关键作用。常规磁共振成像(MRI)是依靠淋巴结形态来检测淋巴结转移,但这种方法具有一定的局限性。近年来MR功能成像技术快速发展,可以从分子和细胞水平来更准确的检测淋巴结转移。影像组学作为影像领域的研究热点,目前已广泛应用于宫颈癌诊断、分期以及预后等方面。本文现就MR功能成像及影像组学评估宫颈癌淋巴结转移的研究进展情况进行综述。

【关键词】宫颈癌;淋巴结;磁共振成像;影像组学

【中图分类号】R322.2+5; R445.2

【文献标识码】A

【基金项目】江苏省333高层次人才科研项目(BRA2020193)

DOI:10.3969/j.issn.1672-5131.2024.02.055

Advances in MR Functional Imaging and Radiomics for the Assessment of Lymph Node Metastasis in Cervical Cancer*

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ABSTRACT

Para-aortic and pelvic lymph node metastases are key factors affecting the prognosis of patients with cervical cancer and play a critical role in the choice of treatment options. Conventional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) relies on lymph node morphology to detect lymph node metastases, but this method has limitations. Recently, MR functional imaging techniques have been rapidly developed to detect lymph node metastases more accurately at the molecular and cellular levels. As a hot topic in the field of imaging in recent years, radiomics has been widely used in the diagnosis, staging and prognosis of cervical cancer. This article reviews the progress of MR functional imaging and radiomics for the assessment of lymph node metastasis in cervical cancer.

Keywords: Cervical Cancer; Lymph Node; Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Radiomics

宫颈癌目前作为全球女性第四大常见癌症,近年来备受人们的关注^[1]。2018年国际妇产科联合会(FIGO)对宫颈癌临床分期进行了修订,将淋巴结转移以及肿瘤直径大小纳入分期系统,充分肯定了影像学检查的重要性^[2]。宫颈癌患者预后因素诸多,其重要因素之一是腹主动脉旁及盆腔淋巴结转移。患者的生存率会随着淋巴结转移而降低,治疗应以辅助放化疗为主^[3-4]。而对于早期未生育的宫颈癌患者来说,未发生淋巴结转移及宫旁浸润的情况下,可以采取保留生育的手术治疗方式^[5]。所以,应用影像学技术对宫颈癌患者淋巴结进行评估,对于选择正确治疗方案和进行预后预测是至关重要的。

1 常规MRI对淋巴结转移的评估价值

磁共振成像技术(MRI)具有无辐射,软组织成像质量高的优点,可以清晰的显示肿瘤大小和浸润程度。在对宫颈癌进行分期、评价患者治疗情况、监测肿瘤复发方面明显优于CT、超声等其他影像技术^[6]。常规MRI诊断淋巴结有无转移依靠其信号及形态特征。良性淋巴结一般呈长T1稍长T2信号,增强扫描均匀强化。而转移性淋巴结多呈稍长T1长T2信号,增强扫描环形强化,中心坏死部分不强化。此外,良性淋巴结呈椭圆形,转移性淋巴结由于肿瘤细胞浸润,短长轴比值会增大,呈现分叶状或毛刺状^[7-8]。MRI诊断Ia-Ib期宫颈癌患者淋巴结转移的敏感性、特异性和诊断符合率分别为75.00%、72.92%和77.50%,比同期PET-CT成像诊断性能好,且差异有统计学意义($P<0.05$)^[9]。Liu等人进行了一项Meta分析,结果显示MRI检测腹主动脉旁及盆腔淋巴结转移的敏感性以及特异性分别为54%和94%^[10]。常规MRI判断淋巴结受累情况主要依靠淋巴结大小标准来判定,若淋巴结短轴直径大于10mm,则可认为淋巴结发生转移。但这种评估方法的敏感度很低,这是因为小的淋巴结转移可能漏诊^[11-12]。据多项研究报道,常规MRI检测宫颈癌淋巴结转移的综合敏感性为43%-59%,特异性为73%-90%^[13]。因此,仅凭淋巴结的形态特征不能准确全面的去评估转移情况。

2 DWI对淋巴结转移的评估价值

扩散加权成像(DWI)近年来作为一种新的诊断技术已广泛应用于检测宫颈癌患者淋巴结转移的情况。这是一种利用水分子在生物组织中做微观运动的非侵入性成像方法。当宫颈受到肿瘤组织侵犯时,宫颈正常的细胞结构、密度以及单位时间内水分子的扩散的能力会发生改变^[14]。表观扩散系数(ADC)值是水扩散率的定量测量。如果水分在梯度场排列的敏感方向上更加自由地扩散,则会观察到DWI信号强度较低,ADC值较高。如果快速扩散水分子的信号被缓慢扩散的水分子衰减,则会观察到DWI信号强度较高,ADC值较低^[15]。相比含有丰富纤维组织的正常宫颈间质,宫颈癌的细胞组织结构更加致密。转移性淋巴结会受到癌细胞浸润,正常的淋巴组织会被这些恶性肿瘤组织所取代,细胞外间隙的水分子扩散运动会受到限制。因此,转移性淋巴结在DWI图像上表现为高信号,在ADC图像上表现为低信号^[16-17]。Choi等人研究发现在检测淋巴结是否转移时淋巴结ADC_{min}值比淋巴结的形态特征(长轴直径、短轴直径、短长轴直径比)更加敏感,且ADC_{min}值诊断性能高于ADC_{mean}值。DWI作为传统MRI成像的额外采集方式,提高了MRI诊断宫颈癌患者淋巴结转移的性能^[18]。Zhang等人研究发现,当淋巴结短轴直径>10mm时,ADC_{mean}值可区别转移性淋巴结。当淋巴结短轴直径<10mm时,ADC_{min}值的诊断价值更高。其原因可能是转移性淋巴结相对较小,不能产生足够的结构变化来影响ADC_{mean}值。ADC_{mean}和ADC_{min}可以用来区分肿大的转移性淋巴结,ADC_{min}可用于

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区分正常大小的转移性淋巴结^[19]。Shen^[20]等人进行了一项meta分析,结果显示DWI在评估淋巴结转移的敏感性以及特异性分别为86%和84%,这表明DWI序列在鉴别良性淋巴结和转移性淋巴结方面是有效的。ADC值受组织扩散率、个体体温、组织压力灌注率及磁场环境影响。目前,由于不同中心和不同MRI扫描仪的ADC值不同,研究结果会存在差异。因此,制定一个标准化ADC值对于评估淋巴结转移至关重要。

3 IVIM-DWI 对淋巴结转移的评估价值

肿瘤组织中既存在水分子的单纯扩散运动,也存在血液微循环中水分子的自由运动,这会导致定量分析ADC值时出现偏差。体素内不相干运动成像技术(IVIM)作为单指数DWI模型的进一步拓展,通过联合应用低b值(<200s/mm²)与高b值(>200s/mm²)来反映水分子在肿瘤组织及血液微循环中扩散情况。这种成像技术提高了反映肿瘤生长、代谢、细胞密度及微循环等生物学特征的能力,从而更准确高效的测量病变区的ADC值^[21-22]。双指数IVIM模型使用以下函数进行分析: $S(b)/S(0) = [(1-f) \exp(-bD)] + [f \exp(-bD^*)]$, S(b)以及S(0)分别代表扩散梯度b值为b和0时的平均信号强度。D值反映的是水分子在组织中的扩散情况,D*值反映的是血流通过微毛细血管的速度,f值反映血流量情况^[23]。IVIM成像无需使用任何造影剂就可用于评估肿瘤组织内的扩散和灌注情况的微观特征,且已广泛应用于宫颈癌诊断、病理分级、分期以及评价治疗疗效中。Wu^[24]等人在宫颈癌患者中发现,转移性淋巴结相比于非转移性淋巴结,具有高D值和低f值特点,转移性淋巴结D值高的原因可能是较大的淋巴结中心会出现坏死,细胞密度会降低,更有利于水分子的运动。而Xu^[25]等人发现宫颈癌患者的转移性淋巴结具有低D值和低f值的特点,转移性淋巴结D值低的原因可能与核浆比例增高,细胞体积增大,细胞外空间扩散受限有关。关于转移性淋巴结D值上的差异,有研究认为可能与细胞增殖速率以及细胞核与细胞质的比率不同有关^[26]。f值低的机制尚无定论,但有研究表明f值与正常血管生成有直接关系,f值高低与血管舒张,渗透性和血流量大小有关^[27]。Zhang^[28]等人研究发现宫颈癌患者发生淋巴结转移时,其肿瘤原发灶的f值增高,原因可能是肿瘤新生血管丰富,细胞增殖分裂比较快,肿瘤的侵犯周围组织的能力较强,恶性程度较高,所以更容易发生淋巴结转移。IVIM预测宫颈癌淋巴结转移的研究较少,未来还需要进行大量多中心的研究,来确定IVIM是否可以用于更好的预测宫颈癌患者淋巴结转移,为患者制定更好的治疗方案。

4 DCE-MRI 对淋巴结转移的评估价值

动态对比增强MRI(DCE-MRI)是一种无创检测肿瘤血流动力学特征的功能成像技术,采用静脉注入对比剂后对所选取的感兴趣区部位进行动态多期扫描,来评估肿瘤组织内血管的生理特性。根据药代动力学模型分析出来的K^{trans}、K_{ep}、V_e等定量参数,反映肿瘤组织血流运动特点以及微循环灌注等情况^[29]。参数K^{trans}是等离子体空间到间隙空间的体积传递常数,由等离子体流量和渗透率-表面积乘积决定,它表示造影剂从血浆流入血管间隙的速率,在血流丰富、血管通透性能力强的组织中,K^{trans}值会增高。K_{ep}被称为间质-血浆速率常数,反映的是造影剂从肿瘤间质反向运输回血管间隙的能力,K_{ep}值高表明血管通透能力强。V_e值反映造影剂在细胞外间隙所占的比例^[30]。φvrebφ^[31]等人以CK-160宫颈癌和V-27黑色素瘤移植瘤为肿瘤模型行DCE-MRI检查评估宿主小鼠的淋巴结转移情况,研究发现肿瘤淋巴结转移的高发生率与低K^{trans}和低K_{ep}有关。Ellingsen^[32]等人将人源性宫颈癌移植进入小鼠体内行DCE-MRI检查,发现K^{trans}值与肿瘤内缺氧细胞的数量有关,低K^{trans}值表明肿瘤供血不足,而有研究表明肿瘤内供血不足是淋巴结转移的主要原因^[33]。Kim^[34]等人研究发现在FIGO I B期和II A期宫颈癌的患者中与非转移性淋巴结相比,转移性淋巴结的K^{trans}值比非转移性淋巴结K^{trans}值低,且差异有统计学意义(P<0.05),其原因可能是转移性淋巴结的微循环灌注减少。这表明K^{trans}值在宫颈癌术前有无盆腔淋巴结转移的判断中有重要意义。张^[35]等人研究发

现FIGOIB-II A期宫颈癌患者中,发生淋巴结转移的患者肿瘤原发灶K^{trans}值高于非转移性淋巴结,且联合MRI上肿瘤最大径,可以在术前更好地预测盆腔转移性淋巴结。Xu^[36]等人研究发现K^{trans}值和V_e值在区分宫颈癌转移性和非转移性淋巴结的准确率分别为91.4%和92.4%。目前已有研究证明DCE-MRI可以预测直肠癌、乳腺癌和头颈部等疾病的淋巴结转移^[37-39],这些研究表明,在评估盆腔淋巴结转移中,DCE-MRI可能发挥作用,未来仍需进一步研究。

5 影像组学对淋巴结转移的评估价值

影像组学是指从超声、CT、MRI等医学图像中提取大量纹理特征,通过研究纹理特征和生物肿瘤特征之间的关系,来评估癌症患者病理分期、分型、淋巴结状态以及治疗效果等^[40]。影像组学流程包括五个阶段:第一步图像采集与重建:采用超声、CT、MRI等各种成像方法获取大量高质量、标准化的医学影像数据。第二步图像分割:对肿瘤感兴趣区(ROI)进行勾画,采用手动、半自动、全自动三种分割方法。第三步特征提取:包括形状特征、一阶直方图特征、二阶纹理特征。第四步特征降维:由于提取的特征数量比较多,需要通过一些降维方法消除高度相关的特征,防止模型过度拟合。第五步模型构建:通过机器学习的方法构建模型,运用ROC曲线来评估模型的诊断性能^[41]。Becker等人将影像组学应用于MRI来评估宫颈癌淋巴结的状态,研究发现原发肿瘤较高的偏度和峰度特征与淋巴结转移相关^[42]。Schob^[43]等人研究发现在转移性淋巴结阳性中ADC百分位数(10、25、50、75、90)、ADC_{min}、ADC_{mean}、ADC_{median}、ADC_{mode}值均小于非转移性淋巴结,且差异有统计学意义(P<0.05)。Wu^[44]等人将病理证实为宫颈鳞癌的56名患者行多参数MRI扫描,发现ADC直方图得到的偏度特征对淋巴结转移的鉴别能力最好,在训练队列与验证队列中AUC分别为0.803和0.757。Xiao^[45]等人评估了233宫颈癌患者淋巴结转移情况,将患者分为训练队列及验证队列,通过联合放射组学特征模型与MRI报告上淋巴结状态以及FIGO分期,开发出影像组学列线图,该模型可以更好的预测早期宫颈癌患者淋巴结转移情况。Dong^[46]等人选择了5个影像组学特征和2个病理学特征建立了预测宫颈癌淋巴结转移深度学习模型,结果显示AUC为0.7372,准确率为89.20%。这些研究表明影像组学在预测宫颈癌淋巴结转移方面具有重大意义,可以作为预测宫颈癌术前淋巴结转移的无创性生物标志物,为宫颈癌患者选择合适的治疗方案提供帮助。

6 总结和展望

随着功能磁共振成像及影像组学的不断发展,可以从分子和细胞水平提高检测淋巴结转移的准确性,其所衍生的定量参数及纹理特征在预测宫颈癌淋巴结状态方面提供了有价值的信息。但这些技术还处于初级阶段,如DWI序列扫描不规范,缺少统一的b值,这会导致研究结果有所差异。IVIM及DCE-MRI作为一种新的功能成像方法在宫颈癌中的应用较少,未来还需要进行大样本、多中心研究来评估这些新技术在宫颈癌淋巴结转移中的应用,同时还需要制定标准化成像方案来提高磁共振研究的可比性。

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(收稿日期: 2023-02-18)
(校对编辑: 韩敏求)