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WNT4、HOXA10、TWIST1基因在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症及子宫肌瘤发病机制中的作用分析

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论证。子宫肌瘤和子宫内膜异位症是育龄妇女最常见的妇科疾病。许多数据表明,存在共同因素的发病机制,这些过度增殖条件。本研究旨在比较分析*WNT4*、*HOXA10*、*TWIST1*基因在子宫肌瘤及生殖器外子宫内膜异位症发生发展中的作用。

目的是评估子宫肌瘤、生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者和对照组中多态变异rs7521902 (*WNT4*基因) 和rs4721745 (*TWIST1*基因) 的频率;确定生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者中*HOXA10*基因罕见等位变异的频率;研究这些基因在子宫肌瘤、生殖器外子宫内膜异位症及对照组子宫内膜中的表达特点。

材料与方法。采用实时聚合酶链反应方法研究*WNT4*和*TWIST1*基因在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症、子宫肌瘤和对照组中的多态性变异。对生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者和对照组妇女进行了*HOXA10*二代基因外显子的测序。采用实时反转录聚合酶链反应方法分析*WNT4*、*TWIST1*、*HOXA10*基因在实验组患者子宫内膜标本中的表达情况。

结果。子宫肌瘤、生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者和对照组中多态变异rs7521902 (*WNT4*基因) 和rs4721745 (*TWIST1*基因) 的频率无显著性差异。在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者中未检测到少量*HOXA10*等位基因。*WNT4*基因在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者子宫内膜中的表达不受月经周期分期的影响,并与子宫肌瘤患者相比,*WNT4*基因在子宫内膜中的表达减少1.9倍。生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者月经周期20–23天子宫内膜中*HOXA10*基因的表达较对照组显著降低。子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者子宫内膜中*TWIST1*基因的表达无变化。

结论。我们没有发现*WNT4*和*TWIST1*基因的多态变异和*HOXA10*基因的少量变异与子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症之间的关联。*WNT4*和*HOXA10*基因在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者的子宫内膜中表达减少,而在子宫肌瘤患者中不表达。在这两种疾病中,所研究的基因在子宫内膜表达性质的变化显著不同。

关键词: 子宫内膜异位症; 子宫肌瘤; *WNT4*; *HOXA10*; *TWIST1*; 基因多态性; 表达式。

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Role of *WNT4*, *HOXA10* and *TWIST1* genes in the pathogenesis of external genital endometriosis and uterine leiomyoma

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BACKGROUND: Uterine leiomyoma and endometriosis are the most common gynecological diseases in women of reproductive age. A number of data indicate that there are common elements in the pathogenesis of these hyperproliferative conditions. This article is devoted to comparative analysis of the role of the *WNT4*, *HOXA10* and *TWIST1* genes in the development of uterine leiomyoma and external genital endometriosis.

AIM: The aim of this study was to evaluate the frequency of polymorphic variants rs7521902 (*WNT4*) and rs4721745 (*TWIST1*) in patients with uterine leiomyoma, external genital endometriosis and in the comparison group; to determine the frequency of rare allelic variants of the *HOXA10* gene in patients with external genital endometriosis; and to study the expression of these genes in the endometrium in patients with uterine leiomyoma, EGE and in the comparison group.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The polymorphic variants of the *WNT4* and *TWIST1* genes were studied by real-time PCR in patients with external genital endometriosis, uterine leiomyoma and in the comparison group. In patients with EGE and women in the comparison group, the second exon of the *HOXA10* gene was sequenced. Real-time PCR with reverse transcription analysis of the expression of the *WNT4*, *TWIST1* and *HOXA10* genes in endometrial samples from the patients of the study groups was performed.

RESULTS: The frequencies of polymorphic variants rs7521902 (*WNT4*) and rs4721745 (*TWIST1*) in patients with uterine leiomyoma, external genital endometriosis and in the comparison group did not differ significantly. Minor alleles of the *HOXA10* gene were not identified in patients with external genital endometriosis. Expression of the *WNT4* gene in the endometrium of patients with external genital endometriosis was independent of menstrual cycle phase and was reduced by 1.9 times compared to the endometrium of women with uterine leiomyoma. Expression of the *HOXA10* gene in the endometrium of endometriosis patients on days 20–23 of the menstrual cycle was significantly reduced compared to the women in the comparison group. Expression of the *TWIST1* gene was not altered in the endometrium of patients with uterine leiomyoma and external genital endometriosis.

CONCLUSIONS: We did not identify associations of the studied polymorphic variants of the *WNT4* and *TWIST1* genes and minor variants of the *HOXA10* gene with uterine leiomyoma and external genital endometriosis. The expression of the *WNT4* and *HOXA10* genes is reduced in the endometrium in patients with external genital endometriosis, but not in women with uterine leiomyoma. Changes in expression patterns of the studied genes in the endometrium differ significantly in these two diseases.

Keywords: endometriosis; uterine leiomyoma; *WNT4*; *HOXA10*; *TWIST1*; gene polymorphism; expression.

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Анализ роли генов *WNT4*, *HOXA10* и *TWIST1* в патогенезе наружного генитального эндометриоза и миомы матки

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Обоснование. Миома матки и эндометриоз — наиболее распространенные гинекологические заболевания у женщин репродуктивного возраста. Ряд данных свидетельствует о наличии общих элементов в патогенезе этих гиперпролиферативных состояний. Работа посвящена сравнительному анализу роли генов *WNT4*, *HOXA10* и *TWIST1* в развитии миомы матки и наружного генитального эндометриоза.

Цель — оценить частоту полиморфных вариантов rs7521902 (ген *WNT4*) и rs4721745 (ген *TWIST1*) у пациенток с миомой матки, наружным генитальным эндометриозом и в группе сравнения; определить частоту редких аллельных вариантов гена *HOXA10* у пациенток с наружным генитальным эндометриозом; изучить особенности экспрессии данных генов в эндометрии у пациенток с миомой матки, наружным генитальным эндометриозом и в группе сравнения.

Материалы и методы. У пациенток с наружным генитальным эндометриозом, миомой матки и в группе сравнения методом полимеразной цепной реакции в реальном времени были исследованы полиморфные варианты генов *WNT4* и *TWIST1*. У пациенток с наружным генитальным эндометриозом и женщин группы сравнения было проведено секвенирование экзона 2 гена *HOXA10*. Методом полимеразной цепной реакции в реальном времени с обратной транскрипцией проанализирована экспрессия генов *WNT4*, *TWIST1* и *HOXA10* в образцах эндометрия пациенток исследуемых групп.

Результаты. Частота полиморфных вариантов rs7521902 (ген *WNT4*) и rs4721745 (ген *TWIST1*) у пациенток с миомой матки, наружным генитальным эндометриозом и в группе сравнения достоверно не отличалась. Минорные аллели *HOXA10* не были выявлены у больных наружным генитальным эндометриозом. Экспрессия гена *WNT4* в эндометрии пациенток с наружным генитальным эндометриозом не зависит от фазы менструального цикла и снижена в 1,9 раза по сравнению с эндометрием женщин с миомой матки. Экспрессия гена *HOXA10* в эндометрии пациенток с наружным генитальным эндометриозом на 20–23-й день менструального цикла достоверно снижена по сравнению с женщинами группы сравнения. Экспрессия гена *TWIST1* не изменена в эндометрии пациенток с миомой матки и наружным генитальным эндометриозом.

Заключение. Мы не выявили ассоциации исследованных полиморфных вариантов генов *WNT4* и *TWIST1* и минорных вариантов гена *HOXA10* с миомой матки и наружным генитальным эндометриозом. Экспрессия генов *WNT4* и *HOXA10* снижена в эндометрии у пациенток с наружным генитальным эндометриозом, но не у женщин с миомой матки. Изменения в характере экспрессии в эндометрии изученных генов достоверно отличаются при этих двух заболеваниях.

Ключевые слова: эндометриоз; миома матки; *WNT4*; *HOXA10*; *TWIST1*; полиморфизм генов; экспрессия.

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论证

生殖器外子宫内膜异位症 (EGE) 和子宫肌瘤 (MU) 被认为是育龄妇女最常见的增生性疾病。生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤是引起盆腔疼痛的主要原因；子宫内膜异位症的典型并发症是不孕症，子宫肌瘤患者的生育力往往降低。这两个过程的特点是高频率的复发和家庭倾向于疾病的发展；许多研究者认为子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症的发病机制和病因可能是共同的[1-3]。通过GWAS方法进行的研究，包括在荟萃分析期间，显示了WNT4、HOXA10和其他一些基因的多态性变异与发展这些过度增殖过程的风险存在关联[4, 5]。

子宫内膜灶状发生的假说主要有逆行月经、体腔化生理论和胚胎残体理论[6]。这些理论都没有被证实，子宫内膜组织异位生长的确切原因仍然未知。根据现代观念，基因突变在子宫肌瘤的发展中起着最重要的作用，主要是MED12基因的体细胞突变，在50-70%的子宫肌瘤中检测到[7]。然而，导致无突变肌瘤出现的原因，以及多发性和复发性肌瘤的发展，仍是未知的。

近年来，大多数研究者已经认识到干细胞在子宫内膜异位症灶形成中的主导作用[8, 9]；主要讨论的是这些干细胞的起源（子宫内膜、骨髓、组织干细胞）和异位生长和分化的直接原因。一些研究者也指出子宫肌瘤的淋巴结中存在干细胞[10]。因此，从理论上讲，这两种疾病都可以认为是干细胞异常分化的结果，导致子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤中子宫内膜样组织异位灶（包含肌肉、神经和结缔组织成分）的形成，主要由包含软骨细胞和神经组织成分的肌细胞和成纤维细胞组成的（包括平滑肌瘤）。

本研究的目的是研究一些多态和次要变异的频率，并比较分析WNT4、HOXA10和TWIST1基因在子宫内膜中的表达。该基因参与了女性生殖系统的形成和子宫内膜的正常功能，也有助于生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者、子宫肌瘤患者和对照组女性干细胞特性的维持。

材料与方法

接受研究的患者组

子宫内膜异位症患者组包括61例患者，年龄为25-40岁（平均年龄为32.5±7.5岁），根据美国生育学会 (r-AFS, 1996) 分类为I-IV度生殖器外子宫内膜异位症。排除标准为子宫肌瘤和多囊卵巢综合征。所有患者的诊断都是通过The Research Institute of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductology named after D.O. Ott的腹腔

镜诊断确定的，并通过组织学检查结果证实。该病早发（25岁前），和/或一级亲属中出现子宫内膜异位症，和/或复发，和/或该病的常见形式是在研究WNT4、HOXA10和TWIST1基因的多态变异时，纳入“常见/复发/家族性生殖器外子宫内膜异位症”组的附加标准。

子宫肌瘤患者组包括99例在The Research Institute of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductology named after D.O. Ott接受治疗（肌瘤切除术、子宫切除术）的女性，平均年龄为38.2±6.8岁。所有患者均经组织学检查确诊为子宫肌瘤。排除标准为存在子宫内膜异位症和/或多囊卵巢综合征。为了估计等位基因的群体频率，使用了数据库“1000 genomes”的信息 (<https://www.internationalgenome.org>)。研究人员对两个对照组的女性进行了检查。第一组为24例孕前训练健康女性（平均年龄为26.8±3岁）。第一对照组所有患者均行盆腔器官超声检查、血液生化检查（含糖曲线、血脂图）；在周期的第一阶段，测定促卵泡激素、促黄体激素、催乳素和雌二醇的水平，在第二阶段测定孕酮。第二对照组为“无子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤”患者19例（平均年龄为31.4±4.2岁），包括抱怨盆腔疼痛和/或特发性不孕症行腹腔镜诊断的女性。经标准检查后，为患者开具了诊断性腹腔镜检查，但盆腔器官翻修时拒绝诊断为子宫内膜异位症。

为了分析WNT4、HOXA10和TWIST1基因的多态变异，我们检测了来下面患者组外周血淋巴细胞的DNA样本：晚期/复发性/家族性子宫内膜异位症患者（共43例）；单、多发子宫肌瘤患者 [共96例女性，其中55例单、多发（3个以上）子宫肌瘤患者，41例多发（3个以上）子宫肌瘤患者]，对照组的女性（42名女性）一总共182例。

通过实时聚合酶链反应 (RT-RV-PCR) 研究WNT4、HOXA10和TWIST1基因在The Research Institute of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductology named after D.O. Ott手术过程（腹腔镜诊断、子宫肌瘤切除术）中获得的子宫内膜样本中的表达。所有患者均行腹腔镜和宫腔镜检查。对15例子宫肌瘤患者的子宫内膜标本、17例生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者、6例第二对照组患者进行了检查。按月经周期天数 (dmc) 计算的患者分布见表1。

该研究已获The Research Institute of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductology named after D.O. Ott的伦理委员会批准（2020年10月23日第104号议定书）。所有患者签署了知情同意书，同意组织检查和处理个人数据，包括病史数据。

表1 检查子宫内膜样本, 按月经周期天数分布

组类型	第7–12dmc	第14–17dmc	第18–23dmc
子宫肌瘤的患者	15	—	—
第二对照组	—	—	6
生殖器外子宫内膜异位症的患者	5	7	5

注: dmc—月经周期。

研究方法

采用标准苯酚-氯仿法分离外周血白细胞DNA。采用实时荧光定量PCR检测多态性位点rs7521902 (*WNT4*基因) 和rs4721745 (*TWIST1*基因)。使用相应的TaqMan®SNPSNP Genotyping Assays和引物以及ThermoFisher(美国)生产的TaqMan Universal MasterMix II反应混合物。每个样本进行两次重复分析。对*HOXA10*二代基因外显子进行了测序, 因为, 根据其他作者[11]的研究结果, 在子宫内膜异位症患者中, 突变和轻微变异最常在这个外显子中检测到。利用之前描述的寡核苷酸获得了*HOXA10*二代基因显子序列的PCR产物[11]。使用ABI 3130Genetic Analyzer上的BigDye Terminator Cycle Sequencing Kit v 3.1试剂盒进行Sanger测序(所有AppliedBiosystems, 美国)

采用RT–RV–PCR检测子宫内膜*WNT4*、*HOXA10*、*TWIST1*基因的表达。腹腔镜和宫腔镜检查中获得的子宫内膜材料立即放入保存RNA–later中(ThermoFisher)。使用PureLink RNA Mini Kit扬声器(ThermoFisher Scientific, 美国)和制造商的协议进行RNA分离。

根据制造商的说明, 使用高容量逆转录试剂盒(Thermo Fisher Scientific, 美国)进行RNA逆转录。Real-time PCR在Real-Time PCR System 7500 (Applied Biosystems, 美国) ThermoFisher — TaqMan Gene Expression Assays设备上进行:

表2 多态性变异rs7521902和rs4721745的等位基因频率和基因型

基因, 多态性	组类型	次要等位基因的频率	基因型频率
<i>WNT4</i> (rs7521902)			
子宫内膜异位	A = 0.24	CC/CA/AA	25/12/4
单发性子宫肌瘤	A = 0.31	CC/CG/GG	22/25/3
复发性子宫肌瘤	A = 0.3	CC/CG/GG	21/14/5
第一对照组	A = 0.25	CC/CG/GG	14/8/2
第二对照组	A = 0.53	CC/CG/GG	4/10/5
1000 Genomes, 欧洲人	A = 0.21	CC/CG/GG	—
<i>TWIST1</i> (rs4721745)			
子宫内膜异位	G = 0.15	CC/CG/GG	30/10/1
单发性子宫肌瘤	G = 0.11	CC/CG/GG	21/6/0
复发性子宫肌瘤	G = 0.19	CC/CG/GG	23/9/2
第一对照组	G = 0.14	CC/CG/GG	17/6/1
第二对照组	G = 0.26	CC/CG/GG	13/6/0
1000 Genomes, 欧洲人	G = 0.126	CC/CG/GG	—

hs01573505_m1为*WNT4*基因, Hs00361186_m1为*TWIST1*基因, Hs00172012_m1为*HOXA10*基因。为了进行内部控制, 使用了之前验证过的*MRPL19*基因集(Hs00608519_m1)。

使用Expression Suite Software version 1.1 (ThermoFisher), 采用2–ΔΔCt法(Livak法)计算阈值周期(Ct)和相对表达水平。使用GraphPad Prism 6.0软件包对结果进行统计处理。采用Mann–Whitney U检验评估两定量标准间差异的统计学意义。当p≤0.05时, 认为指标之间的差异显著。采用GraphPad Prism 6软件包进行群体遗传学研究时使用的标准方法对基因型频率分析数据进行统计处理, 采用Pearson标准χ²对任意共轭表进行分析。p<0.05为差异有统计学意义。

结果

用real-time PCR对两个多态变异进行基因分型: 推测为遗传形式的生殖器外子宫内膜异位症的妇女, 单个和多个子宫肌瘤和对照组的rs7521902 [*WNT4*基因, chr1:22164231 (GRCh38.p12), 远端启动子A>C置换]和rs4721745 [*TWIST1*基因, chr7:19113889 (GRCh38.p12)取代C>G在3‘非编码区]。结果见表2、3。

在我们的常见/复发/家族性生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者中, 我们没有发现*HOXA10*二代基因外显

表3 WNT4基因多态性变异rs7521902的基因型比较的p值

rs7521902	EGE	单发性子宫肌瘤	复发性子宫肌瘤	第一对照组	第二对照组
EGE	1	$p = 0.132$	$p = 0.741$	$p = 0.937$	$p = 0.014^*$
单发性子宫肌瘤	-	1	$p = 0.280$	$p = 0.402$	$p = 0.033^*$
复发性子宫肌瘤	-	-	1	$p = 0.843$	$p = 0.066$
第一对照组	-	-	-	1	$p = 0.038^*$
第二对照组	-	-	-	-	1

注: EGE—生殖器外子宫内膜异位症; MU—子宫肌瘤。

表4 HOXA10基因多态性rs34957925和rs560654095在外阴子宫内膜异位症组和对照组中的频率

多形性	子宫内膜异位 (n = 41)	第一对照组 (n = 24)	第二对照组 (n = 19)	p
rs34957925	3	7.3 %	2	8 %
rs560654095	5	12 %	2	8 %

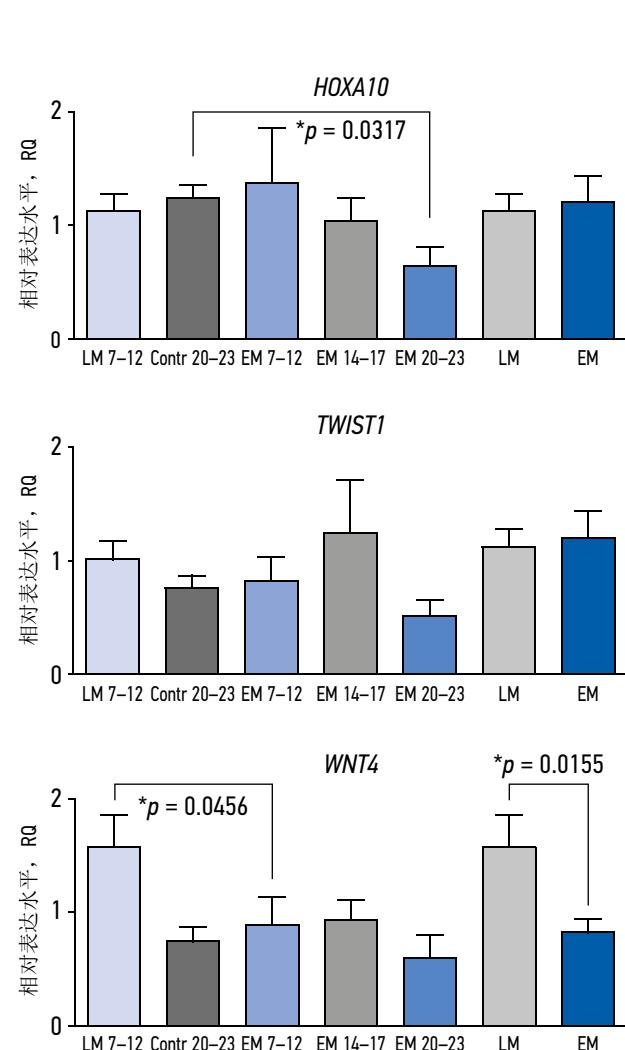


图 HOXA10、TWIST1、WNT4基因在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者、子宫肌瘤患者及第二组对照组月经周期天数子宫内膜中的表达: LM—子宫肌瘤; EM—生殖器外子宫内膜异位症; contr—第二对照组; 数字对应于月经周期的天数

子的微小变异。在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者、子宫肌瘤患者和对照组中, 鉴别出的多态性变异rs34957925和rs560654095的频率无差异(表4)。

比较研究的基因在子宫内膜中的表达显示如下结果。在我们的样本中, TWIST1基因的表达在任何研究组中都没有显著差异, 在子宫内膜异位症患者中也没有随周期的阶段而改变。我们发现子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者子宫内膜中WNT4基因的表达水平在一般组和考虑月经周期天数的情况下存在显著差异(见图)。在子宫肌瘤组中, WNT4基因的表达平均比生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者高1.9倍($p=0.0155$)。当比较第7-12 dmc获得的样本时, 这些差异也具有显著性($p=0.0456$)。WNT4在子宫内膜异位症患者中的表达在第7-12和第14-17 dmc无差异。我们观察到该基因的表达有降低约2倍的趋势, 20-23 dmc, 但这些差异没有统计学意义。对照组与生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者20-23 dmc子宫内膜WNT4表达水平无差异。

我们发现子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者子宫内膜中NOHA10基因的表达水平无显著差异。在子宫内膜异位症患者的子宫内膜中, 该基因的表达在月周期第7-12天到第14-17天和第20-23天的转变过程中逐渐减少; 在子宫内膜异位症的分泌期, 每月周期20-23天, 该基因在子宫内膜异位症患者中的表达明显低于对照组第二组($p=0.0317$)。

讨论

研究WNT4、TWIST1和HOXA10 3个基因在子宫内膜中的多态性变异频率和表达情况。WNT4(Wnt信号级联配体之一)和HOXA10(同源盒蛋白A10, 转录因子)

是胚胎发生和出生后女性生殖系统正常发育所必需的关键因子[12,13], 其也对于正常子宫内膜蜕膜化和胚胎着床也是必要的[14,15]。许多在不同种族进行的研究, 以及GWAS数据的元分析, 已经证明1p36位点, 更具体地说, *WNT4*基因的rs7521902多态变异是与发生生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤的可能性相关的最重要的SNP之一[5, 16–18]。GWAS发现与子宫内膜异位症发展相关的另一个位点是7p13–p15, 该位点包含*HOXA10*基因[19]。*HOX*家族基因高度保守, *HOXA10*基因不含频繁SNP。然而, 根据一些作者的说法, 在子宫内膜异位症患者中, 在某些情况下, 有可能识别出这种基因的罕见等位变异, 而这些变异在对照组中没有出现。这些变异大多数定位在*HOXA10*二代基因外显子[11, 19]。我们对子宫内膜异位症患者和对照组患者的*HOXA10*二代基因外显子进行了测序, 以寻找该基因的罕见变异。

在异位子宫内膜的子宫内膜异位症中, 许多研究人员发现*TWIST1*基因的表达增加。该蛋白作为上皮间充质转化(源自英语)和增加的细胞迁移活性的标志[20]。经历上皮间充质转化的细胞可以获得干细胞特性, 而间充质状态显然是恢复多能性的条件[21]。因此, *TWIST1*的表达可作为人类子宫内膜中某些细胞干性的潜在标志[22], 其根据关于干细胞在子宫内膜异位症发病机制中的作用的现代观点, 可能在疾病的发展中起着重要的作用。上皮间充质转化也可能影响子宫内膜样异位的着床和侵袭性生长过程[20]。在靶器官(例如腹膜)中, 一些细胞可能失去它们的上皮属性, 因此, 在没有上皮间充质障碍的情况下, 腹腔内的子宫内膜细胞(或干细胞)黏附和侵袭腹膜间质, 并促进子宫内膜样病灶的形成[23]。肌瘤结节中*TWIST1*基因的表达也明显高于肌层[24]。我们选择了*TWIST1*基因的多态位点rs4721745进行分析, 因为大量研究表明该多态位点与子宫内膜癌的发病风险相关, 这表明了该多态变异的功能意义[25]。

研究发现, 大多数比较组之间的等位基因频率和基因型的研究多态性位点没有统计学差异。然而, 多态位点rs7521902(*WNT4*基因)轻微变异的频率在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症、子宫肌瘤和对照组中没有显著差异, 而在第二对照组中, 次要等位基因的频率高出2倍, 以A/A和A/C基因型为主。这些差异具有统计学意义(见表3)。显然, *WNT4*基因的这种多态变异(A在chr1:22164231位置(GRCh38.p12))与子宫内膜异位症的风险无关, 但可能与不孕症和/或盆腔疼痛综合征的发展有关, 尽管不能从本样本中排除这种差异是该研究的人为因素。

在患有常见/复发/家族性生殖器外子宫内膜异位症的患者中, 我们没有发现*HOXA10*二代基因外显子中以前没有描述过的微小变异, 而多态性变异rs34957925和rs560654095的频率与对照组无差异。因此, 根据我们的研究结果, 所分析样本的变异体rs7521902(*WNT4*基因)和rs4721745(*TWIST1*基因)与生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤的发生无关, 而在我们的样本中, *HOXA10*二代基因外显子的微小等位变异与严重、早期和遗传性子宫内膜异位症的发展无关。

值得注意的是, 尽管GWAS方法大量证实了1p36和7p13p15位点以及*WNT4*和*HOXA10*基因与生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤的发展之间的关联, 但这种关联尚未在许多研究中得到证实。因此, 在最近发表的一篇文章中, 意大利作者没有发现生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和*WNT4*基因等位变异之间的联系[26], 并在亚洲进行的研究证实了*HOXA10*基因SNP与这种病理发展的相关性[11]。可能发生生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤的概率与所研究的SNP之间只有微弱的联系, 而这些SNP只有通过分析非常大的样本才能检测出来。

比较研究基因在子宫内膜中的表达情况, 得到以下结果。*WNT4*基因的表达, 至少在子宫内膜异位症患者中, 不依赖于月经周期的阶段, 在子宫内膜异位症患者和对照组中没有差异。在子宫肌瘤患者中, 表达平均比生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者组高1.9倍($p=0.0155$), 当比较在月经周期相同阶段采集的样本时, 这些差异也很显著。我们获得的数据主要对应于其他作者的信息。因此, Bui等人[27]和Tu1ak等人[28]发现健康女性月经周期增殖期和分泌期子宫内膜的表达水平没有变化。中国作者[29]曾报道该基因在子宫内膜异位症患者子宫内膜表达水平下降约2倍。与对照组相比, 子宫肌瘤患者子宫内膜中*WNT4*的表达是否随着月经周期的不同而发生变化, 我们的样本并不能给出明确的结论, 这个问题仍然有待解决。

*HOXA10*基因编码一种保守的转录因子, 该因子在包括子宫在内的副肾管衍生物的形成中发挥重要作用, 也是公认的子宫内膜接受度的标志之一[13]。Taylor等人发现, 在健康女性中, *HOXA10*基因在子宫内膜中均有表达, 在基质和上皮细胞中均有表达, 而其表达水平在分泌期中期主要在子宫内膜腺体细胞中增加(与植入窗口大致相符)。子宫内膜异位症患者的子宫内膜中没有这种表达的增加[30, 31]。这一结果在其他研究者的工作中得到了证实[32]。根据我们的数据, 在子宫内膜异位症中,

在月经周期7–12天到14–17天，然后到20–23天的过渡期间，子宫内膜中HOXA10的表达有明显的下降趋势，尽管这些差异是不可靠的。比较对照组与生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者月周期20–23天时，我们发现外阴部子宫内膜异位症女性该基因的表达下降了约2倍($p=0.0317$)，具有统计学意义。

在一些子宫肌瘤患者中，HOXA10基因的表达也可能减少。因此，Rakova等人[33]认为，在粘膜下肌瘤患者中，即使在周期的增殖阶段，与健康女性相比，HOXA10基因的表达也减少。我们发现子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者月经周期第7–12天子宫内膜中NOHA10基因的表达水平无显著差异。在我们的样本中，我们不可能研究这个基因的表达水平和它的动态取决于对照组的女性月经周期的阶段，因此，改变子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者中HOXA10的表达仍是一个悬而未决的问题。

最后，上面讨论TWIST1基因的表达，据称其在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤的发病机制中的作用，在我们的样本中，在任何一组研究中都没有显著差异，而且在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者中也没有变化，这取决于周期的阶段。

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该基因在子宫内膜中的表达研究较少；多项研究表明，TWIST1在异位子宫内膜中的表达水平高于真位子宫内膜[22, 34, 35]。Li等也报道了部分生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者的子宫内膜中TWIST1的表达较无此病理的患者略有升高，导致两组间存在显著差异[35]。在我们的样本中，我们发现了子宫内膜中TWIST1表达增加的样本，但这一特征仅适用于一小部分患有生殖器外子宫内膜异位症的女性，不能成为这种病理的普遍标志。

因此，我们没有发现所研究的WNT4和TWIST基因的多态变异和HOXA10基因的少量变异与子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症之间的关联。WNT4和HOXA10基因在生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者的子宫内膜中表达减少，而在子宫肌瘤患者中不表达。同时，生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者月经周期子宫内膜中HOXA10基因表达的调控可能被破坏，导致其在植入窗口期没有上升。子宫肌瘤和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症患者的子宫内膜表达性质的变化有显著差异，至少在这些疾病的非共病患者中是如此。研究WNT4和HOXA10基因在健康女性和生殖器外子宫内膜异位症和子宫肌瘤患者中的表达特性，有助于了解伴随这种病理的不孕症的机制。

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