

新生儿外科专题

miR-146a-5p 表达与新生儿坏死性小肠结肠炎肠道损伤严重程度的相关研究

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[摘要] 目的·检测新生儿坏死性小肠结肠炎(necrotizing enterocolitis, NEC)肠道miR-146a-5p表达水平,并分析其与NEC患儿肠道损伤严重程度的相关性。**方法·**收集2014年1月—2018年12月于上海交通大学附属儿童医院普外科就诊的NEC和肠闭锁(intestinal atresia, IA)患儿的临床资料。根据肠道组织标本的取材部位,将NEC患儿分为NEC炎症组与NEC未受影响组,以IA患儿的肠道组织标本为对照组(即IA组)。选取5~7日龄C57BL/6J新生小鼠,根据随机数字表将其分为NEC造模组与对照组;前者行造模处理,后者不做处理。处死后,取小鼠的末端回肠组织标本。分别对各组新生小鼠和患儿的组织标本行苏木精-伊红染色,并对小鼠标本行组织病理评级。采用原位杂交检测各组新生小鼠与患儿肠道中miR-146a-5p的表达水平,并分别比较2组新生小鼠、2组患儿的表达差异。对NEC患儿肠道中miR-146a-5p表达水平与组织病理评级行相关性分析,并比较miR-146a-5p高表达(阳性细胞个数≥100个)与低表达(阳性细胞个数<100个)患儿在不同临床资料中的分布情况。**结果·**①与对照组相比,NEC造模组小鼠的末端回肠组织的病理评级较高,且miR-146a-5p表达水平亦较高($P=0.000$)。②与IA组和NEC未受影响组相比,NEC炎症组患儿肠道组织中miR-146a-5p表达水平较高(均 $P=0.000$);NEC患儿miR-146a-5p表达水平与肠道组织病理评级呈正相关($P=0.015$, $r=0.578$)。③与miR-146a-5p低表达相比,miR-146a-5p高表达患儿中肠道切除长度 ≥ 5 cm者较多($P=0.005$)。**结论·**miR-146a-5p高表达与NEC肠道损伤严重程度相关,提示miR-146a-5p参与了NEC的发生与发展过程。

[关键词] miR-146a-5p; 坏死性小肠结肠炎; 肠道损伤**[DOI]** 10.3969/j.issn.1674-8115.2021.09.003 **[中图分类号]** R722.19 **[文献标志码]** A

Study on the correlation between the expression of miR-146a-5p and the severity of intestinal injury in neonatal necrotizing enterocolitis

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[Abstract] **Objective·**To detect the expression level of miR-146a-5p in the intestinal tract of neonatal necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), and analyze its correlation with the severity of intestinal injury in children with NEC. **Methods·**The clinical data of children with NEC and intestinal atresia (IA) admitted to the Department of General Surgery of Shanghai Children's Hospital, Shanghai Jiao Tong University from January 2014 to December 2018 were collected, respectively. According to the location of intestinal tissue samples, children with NEC were divided into NEC-inflamed group and NEC-unaffected group. The intestinal tissue samples of children with IA were used as control group (i.e. IA group). Newborn C57BL/6J mice aged 5-7 days were randomly divided into NEC model group and control group. The former group was treated by modeling, while the latter was not. After the mice were killed, the terminal ileum tissue samples were taken. Hematoxylin-eosin staining was performed on the tissue samples of newborn mice and children in each group, and histopathological grade of mice was performed. The expression level of miR-146a-5p in the intestine of the newborn mice and the children in each group were detected by in situ hybridization, and the differences of expression between the two groups were compared, respectively. The correlation between the expression level of miR-146a-5p and histopathological grade in intestinal tract of children with NEC was analyzed. The distribution of children with miR-146a-5p high expression (positive cells ≥ 100) and low expression (positive cells <100) in different clinical data was compared. **Results·**① Compared with the control group, the pathological grade and the expression level of miR-146a-5p ($P=0.000$) in the terminal ileum of NEC model mice were higher. ② Compared with IA group and NEC-unaffected group, the expression level of miR-146a-5p was higher in NEC-inflamed group (both $P=0.000$). And the expression level of miR-146a-5p was positively correlated with the pathological grade of intestinal tissues in children with NEC ($P=0.015$, $r=0.578$). ③ Compared with miR-146a-5p low expression, the number of children with intestinal resection length ≥ 5 cm in miR-146a-5p high expression was more ($P=0.005$). **Conclusion·**The high expression of miR-146a-5p is related to the severity of intestinal injury in NEC, suggesting that miR-146a-5p is involved in the occurrence and development of NEC.

[Key words] miR-146a-5p; necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC); intestinal injury**[基金项目]** 国家自然科学基金(81871194)。**[作者简介]** 陈江龙(1989—),男,住院医师,博士;电子信箱:15821626865@163.com。**[通信作者]** 盛庆丰,电子信箱:shengqf@shchildren.com.cn。**[Funding Information]** National Natural Science Foundation of China(81871194).**[Corresponding Author]** SHENG Qing-feng, E-mail: shengqf@shchildren.com.cn.**[网络首发]** <https://kns.cnki.net/kcms/detail/31.2045.R.20210807.2321.008.html>(2021-08-09 11:27:20)。

坏死性小肠结肠炎(necrotizing enterocolitis, NEC)是发生在新生儿特别是早产儿中的一种较为常见的死亡率较高的胃肠道急症。研究^[1-3]显示,NEC在全世界活产儿中的总发病率为0.03%~0.24%,在胎龄22~28周早产儿的发病率为7%~13%,在出生体质量低于1500 g的早产儿中的发病率约为6.9%。且另有研究^[4]发现NEC患儿的死亡率极高,即平均约为40%;尽管针对新生儿的营养和支持技术不断提升,但该类患儿的死亡率仍超过30%。目前,有关NEC的发病机制尚未被明确,临床治疗手段有限,一般以禁食、胃肠减压、抗感染、营养支持等保守治疗为主;一旦发生胃肠道穿孔坏死,只能采取手术治疗,且效果并不理想。

微小RNA(microRNA, miRNA)是一类由19~25个核苷酸组成的非编码RNA。既往研究发现,多种miRNA在NEC的发生与发展中发挥了重要作用,如miRNA可参与调控NEC发病过程中的炎症通路、与NEC的预后相关、可作为NEC的早期诊断指标等^[5-7]。近年来的研究^[8-11]发现,miR-146a是一种抗炎性miRNA(包括miR-146a-5p、miR-146a-3p),可参与调控新生动物肠道固有免疫与肠道炎症。本研究通过检测NEC患儿肠道中miR-146a-5p的表达水平,分析其与肠道组织病理评级之间相关性,并比较miR-146a-5p高表达与低表达患儿在不同临床资料中的分布,为NEC肠道损伤程度提供判定指标,并为阐明NEC肠道损伤的机制提供新的研究思路。

1 对象与方法

1.1 研究对象及其资料、标本收集

选择2014年1月—2018年12月于上海交通大学附属儿童医院救治的NEC患儿和肠闭锁(intestinal atresia, IA)患儿为研究对象。收集NEC患儿的外科手术肠道组织标本17例,分别于标本的炎症缺血坏死边缘处、手术肠道切口边缘处取一小块组织,记为NEC炎症组(NEC-inflamed组)和NEC未受影响组(NEC-unaffected组),所有标本的取材均需避免完全坏死处的组织。收集IA患儿的外科手术肠道组织标本22例,设为对照组(即为IA组)。

同时,收集上述患儿的临床资料,包括性别、孕周、出生体质量、喂养方式、C反应蛋白浓度(C-reaction protein, CRP)、中性粒细胞和淋巴细胞比率(neutrophil to lymphocyte ratio, NLR)、肠道切除长度、住院天数和预后情况等。

本研究经上海交通大学附属儿童医院伦理委员会审

批(审批号:2018RY027-E01),所有标本的获取均已取得患儿监护人的同意并签署了知情同意书。

1.2 NEC动物模型建立及组织标本获取

选取5~7日龄SPF级C57BL/6J新生小鼠24只及母鼠6只(购自上海杰思捷实验动物有限公司),动物生产许可证号:SCXK(沪)2018-0004。采用随机数字表将新生小鼠分为NEC造模组和对照组,每组12只。新生小鼠及母鼠均饲养于SPF级动物房中,使用许可证号:SCXK(沪)2018-0004。母鼠饲以颗粒饲料,自由食水,12 h照明/12 h黑暗,昼夜循环。采用人工配方奶喂养+缺氧+冷刺激的方法饲养NEC造模组新生小鼠^[12-15],具体操作如下:每4 h喂养1次人工配方奶(30%雅培动物配方奶),喂养后1 h将新生小鼠置于氮气罐中90 s行缺氧处理,而后于4 °C冰箱内10 min行冷处理;每日需操作2次,连续处理4 d。严密观察小鼠的生存状况并记录其每日的体质量,如出现NEC典型症状(严重腹胀、血便、发绀等),则断颈处死小鼠;如无上述症状,则于96 h后处死小鼠。对照组新生小鼠由母鼠喂养96 h后,断颈处死。收集2组小鼠的末端回肠组织标本。本研究经上海交通大学附属儿童医院实验动物管理及伦理委员会审批(审批号:2018040)。

1.3 组织标本的苏木精-伊红染色及病理评级

将各组新生小鼠的末端回肠组织标本及各组患儿肠道组织标本置于4%多聚甲醛中固定,而后行乙醇梯度脱水、石蜡包埋。切片厚度为4 μm。分别经苏木精、伊红染色(武汉塞维尔生物科技有限公司),中性树胶封片。于显微镜下镜检,并拍摄图片进行分析。

采用双盲法,参考Caplan等^[12]与Pisano等^[16]的评级方法,由2位病理科医师依据小鼠组织标本的苏木精-伊红染色(hematoxylin-eosin staining, H-E staining, H-E染色)结果,独立对肠道组织破坏程度进行病理评估。具体评级如下:0级为肠道无损伤,肠组织黏膜绒毛、固有层等结构清晰正常;1级为肠道轻度损伤,绒毛尖部轻微损伤或轻微黏膜下层或固有层分离,炎性细胞浸润;2级为肠道中度损伤,部分绒毛丢失或中度黏膜下层或固有层分离,或黏膜下层和肌层水肿,较多炎性细胞浸润;3级为肠道中度损伤,重度黏膜下层或固有层分离,或严重黏膜下层和肌层水肿,大量炎性细胞浸润;4级为绒毛消失,肠壁全层坏死。当组织病理评级=1级,认为可疑NEC发生;≥2级,认为新生小鼠NEC造模成功。



1.4 组织标本中 miR-146a-5p 的定位及表达

采用原位杂交的方法检测各组新生小鼠的末端回肠组织标本及各组患儿肠道组织标本中 miR-146a-5p 的定位及表达, 具体步骤参照 RNA 荧光原位杂交试剂盒(上海吉玛制药技术有限公司)的说明书。实验中所用探针序列为 5'-AACCCATGGAATTCAAGTTCTCA-3'-FAM, 浓度为 1 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, 孵育温度为 37 $^{\circ}\text{C}$, 时间为 16 h, 可较好地避免脱靶效应。随后, 于显微镜下观察, 将与 DAPI 共表达的带有绿色荧光信号的细胞记为阳性细胞; 随机选择 3 个视野, 将阳性细胞数量的平均值作为该标本的阳性细胞统计数, 其统计数即为 miR-146a-5p 表达水平。

1.5 统计学方法

采用 SPSS 22.0 软件进行数据统计分析。定量资料以

$\bar{x} \pm s$ 表示, 2 组间比较采用 *t* 检验, 多组间比较采用方差分析。定性资料以频数表示, 采用 χ^2 检验或 Fisher's 精确概率法进行分析。采用 Pearson 相关系数对 NEC 患儿肠道中 miR-146a-5p 表达水平与肠道组织病理评级进行相关性分析。 $P < 0.05$ 表示差异具有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 小鼠组织标本的 H-E 染色与病理评级

对 2 组新生小鼠的末端回肠组织标本进行 H-E 染色, 并由病理科医师针对染色结果进行组织病理评级。结果(图 1)显示, 对照组小鼠的组织病理评级均为 0 级, 而 NEC 造模组小鼠为 1~4 级不等(其中, 1 级虽为可疑 NEC 发生, 但因该级小鼠也存在肠道损伤, 因此将其归为 NEC 造模组)。

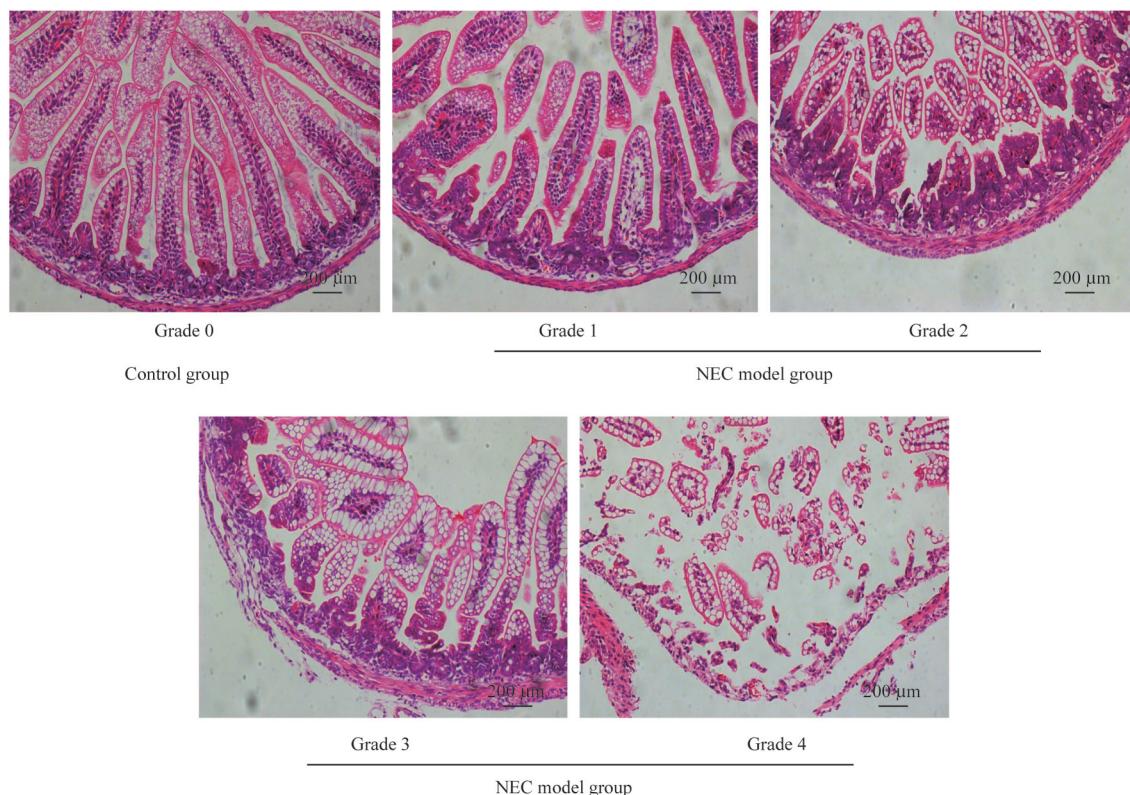


图 1 2 组小鼠末端回肠组织标本的 H-E 染色($\times 100$)及组织病理评级

Fig 1 H-E staining ($\times 100$) and histopathological grade of terminal ileum tissue samples of mice in the two groups

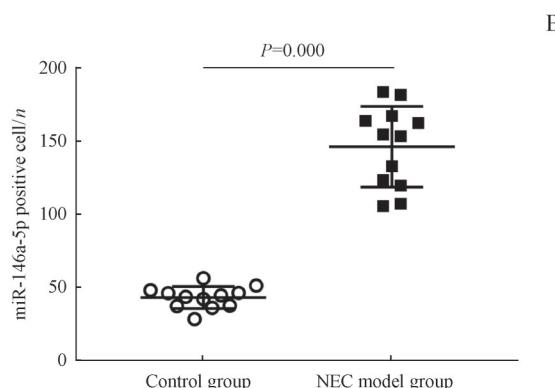
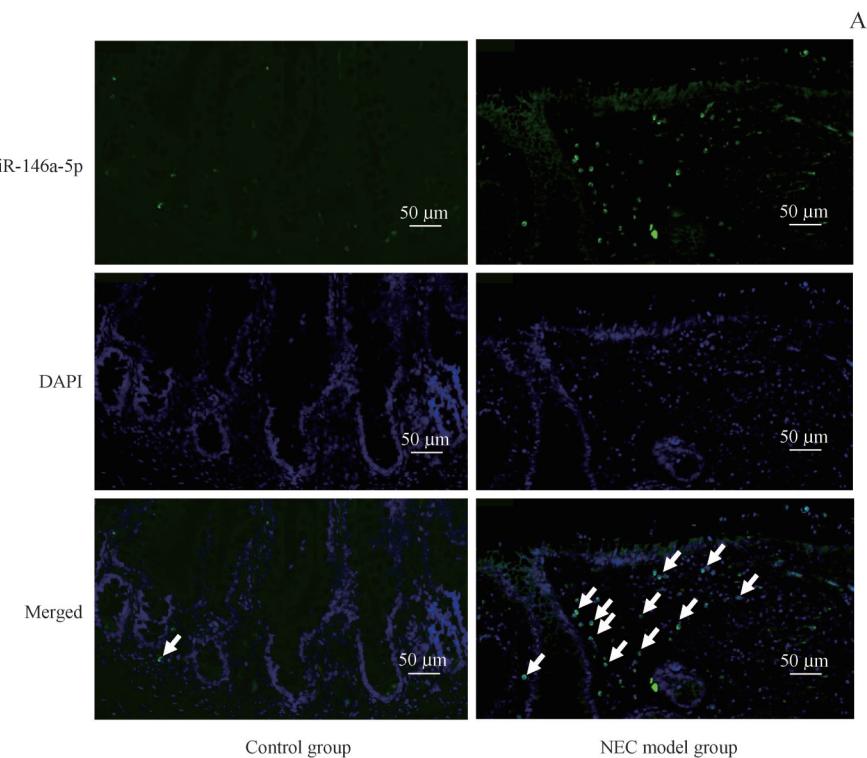
2.2 小鼠组织标本中 miR-146a-5p 的表达

采用原位杂交检测 2 组小鼠末端回肠组织标本中 miR-146a-5p 的定位与表达, 结果(图 2)显示 NEC 造模组小鼠的 miR-146a-5p 主要表达于肠道固有层, 且其在该组小鼠的表达水平高于对照组($P=0.000$)。

2.3 患儿组织标本的 H-E 染色

对 NEC 患儿和 IA 患儿的肠道组织标本行 H-E 染色, 结果(图 3)显示 NEC 炎症组患儿的肠道组织绒毛断裂或溶解、黏膜下层和肌层水肿、炎症细胞浸润及肠道全层溶解坏死等情况较 NEC 未受影响组和 IA 组更为严重。





Note: A. In situ hybridization results of miR-146a-5p ($\times 400$). Green fluorescence indicates miR-146a-5p stained by in situ hybridization, blue fluorescence indicates nucleus stained by DAPI, white arrow indicates miR-146a-5p and DAPI co-expression-positive cell. B. Statistical chart of miR-146a-5p-positive cells.

图2 原位杂交检测2组小鼠末端回肠组织标本中miR-146a-5p的表达

Fig 2 Expression of miR-146a-5p in terminal ileum tissue samples of mice in the two groups by in situ hybridization

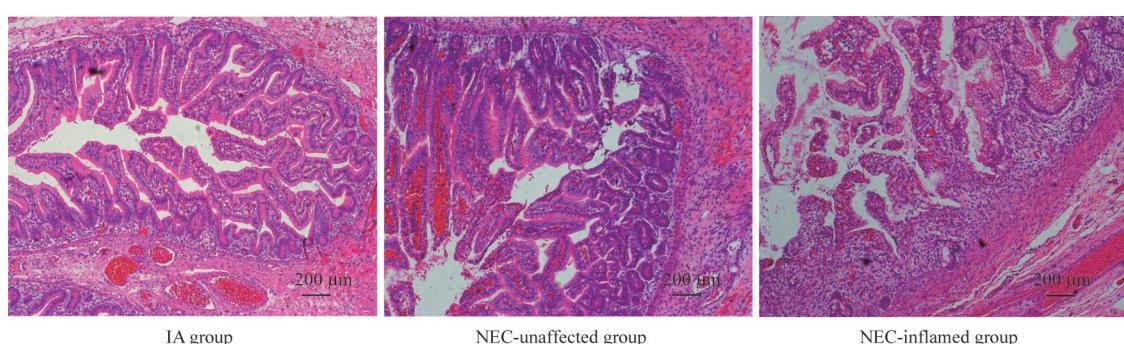


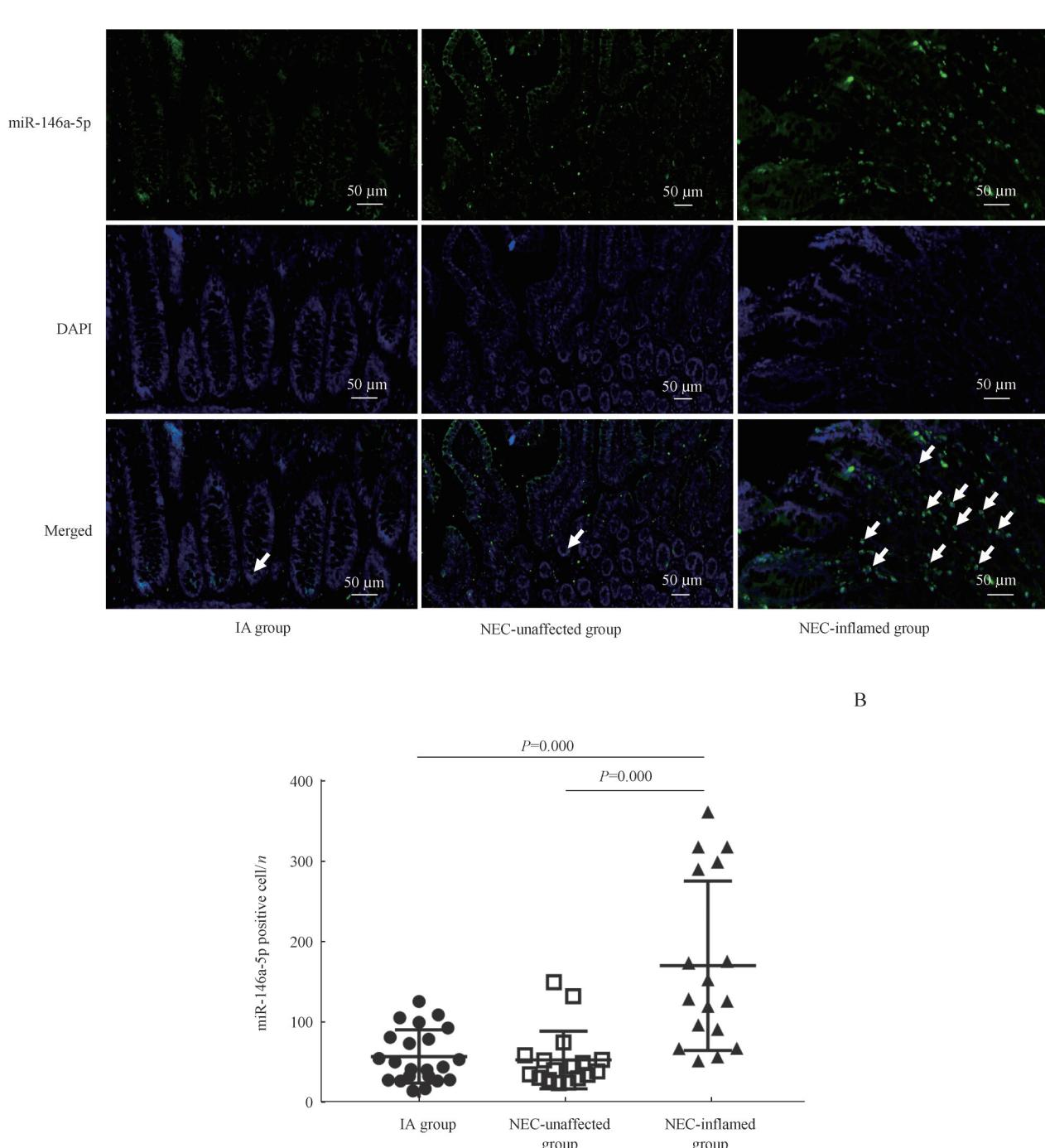
图3 3组患儿肠道组织标本的H-E染色($\times 100$)

Fig 3 H-E staining of intestinal tissue samples in the three groups ($\times 100$)

2.4 患儿组织标本中miR-146a-5p的表达

采用原位杂交检测NEC患儿和IA患儿的肠道组织标本中miR-146a-5p的定位与表达,结果(图4)显示所有

患儿的miR-146a-5p均主要表达于固有层中,且其在NEC炎症组的表达水平高于NEC未受影响组和IA组(均 $P=0.000$)。



Note: A. In situ hybridization results of miR-146a-5p ($\times 400$). Green fluorescence indicates miR-146a-5p stained by in situ hybridization, blue fluorescence indicates nucleus stained by DAPI, white arrow indicates miR-146a-5p and DAPI co-expression-positive cell. B. Statistical chart of miR-146a-5p-positive cells.

图4 原位杂交检测3组患儿肠道组织标本中miR-146a-5p的表达

Fig 4 Expression of miR-146a-5p in intestinal tissue samples of children in the three groups by in situ hybridization

2.5 NEC患儿miR-146a-5p表达与肠道组织病理评级及临床资料之间相关性

采用Pearson相关系数对NEC患儿标本中miR-146a-5p表达水平与组织病理评级进行相关性分析,结果(图5)

显示二者呈正相关($P=0.015$, $r=0.578$)。根据NEC患儿肠道组织标本中miR-146a-5p的表达水平,将其分为高表达(阳性细胞数 ≥ 100 个)与低表达(阳性细胞数 < 100 个),并就其二者在不同临床资料中分布进行比较,结果



(表1) 显示 miR-146a-5p 高表达患儿中肠道切除长度 ≥ 5 cm 的人数较 miR-146a-5p 低表达患儿更多 ($P=0.005$)。

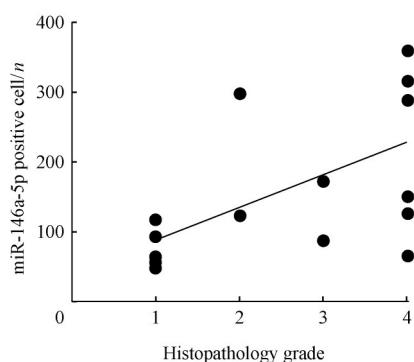


图5 NEC患儿肠道组织标本中miR-146a-5p表达水平与组织病理评级的相关性分析

Fig 5 Correlation analysis between expression of miR-146a-5p and histopathological grade in intestinal tissues samples of children with NEC

表1 NEC患儿肠道组织标本中miR-146a-5p高表达与低表达在不同临床资料中的分布比较

Tab 1 Comparison of high and low expression of miR-146a-5p in intestinal tissues samples of NEC children in different clinical data

Item	miR-146a-5p positive cells		<i>P</i> value
	<100	≥ 100	
Gender/n			0.395
Male	5	7	
Female	1	4	
Birth weight/n			0.339
<1 500 g	3	3	
≥ 1 500 g	3	8	
Gestational week/n			0.728
<32 weeks	5	9	
≥ 32 weeks	1	2	
Feeding method/n			0.353
Simple breast milk	1	0	
Artificial or mixed feeding	5	11	
Intestinal resection length/n			0.005
<5 cm	5	1	
≥ 5 cm	1	10	
NLR/n			0.555
<2	5	8	
≥ 2	1	3	
CRP/n			0.339
<10 mg·L $^{-1}$	3	3	
≥ 10 mg·L $^{-1}$	3	8	
Hospitalized time/n			0.373
<80 d	4	5	
≥ 80 d	2	6	
Prognosis/n			0.596
Death	1	1	
Recurred or get better	5	10	

3 讨论

研究^[17-20]显示，早产、低出生体质量、配方奶喂养、感染与红细胞输注等是NEC发生的主要危险因素。Bazacliu等^[21]发现，NEC患儿存在着较多的短期及长期并发症，如颅内出血、短肠综合征、神经发育损害、全身发育不良或迟缓等。临幊上，NEC以全身性系统性的瀑布炎性反应和广泛的肠道坏死穿孔为特征，可累及肠道出现大量的炎性细胞浸润，黏膜下水肿出血，绒毛结构破坏，严重者将出现肠道全层坏死穿孔^[22]。NEC肠道损伤包括2个方面：一是肠道组织结构的完整性，即肠道破坏程度，反映了炎症对肠道绒毛等屏障的破坏情况；本研究中我们采用基于H-E染色的组织病理评级进行评估。二是肠道损伤范围，即肠道穿孔坏死的长度；本研究中我们采用肠道切除长度加以分析。

既往研究^[23]发现，miR-146a在葡聚糖硫酸钠(dextran sulfate sodium, DSS)诱导的炎性肠病中参与肠道免疫与肠道屏障功能的调节；该方法诱导动物模型的原理及肠道的病理状态与本研究NEC造模极为相似。Chassin等^[8]发现，在新生小鼠肠道中miR-146a可介导保护性的内源性免疫耐受反应。本课题组的前期研究^[24]发现，miR-146a-5p可通过抑制巨噬细胞核苷酸结合寡聚化结构域样受体蛋白3[nucleotide-binding oligomerization domain (NOD)-like receptors family, pyrin domain containing 3, NLRP3]炎症小体的激活来抑制NEC肠道炎症反应，从而发挥NEC肠道的保护作用。He等^[25]亦发现，miR-146a可以保护肠道以避免发生缺血再灌注损伤。因此，上述研究均提示miR-146a具有肠道保护作用。

本研究发现，作为抗炎性miRNA，miR-146a-5p在肠道中的表达水平与肠道组织结构完整性(组织病理评级)和损伤范围(肠道切除长度)相关。抗炎性因素与损伤程度一同升高表明，可能是机体试图通过上调miR-146a-5p的表达来抑制肠道炎症，但炎症已超出miR-146a-5p的调控范围；亦或是miR-146a-5p主要表达于M1型巨噬细胞，参与炎症瀑布反应，因此炎症反应越重则miR-146a-5p的表达越高。有研究^[8, 10, 26]发现，miR-146a可通过靶向肿瘤坏死因子受体相关因子6(tumor necrosis factor receptor-associated factor 6, TRAF6)与白细胞介素-1受体相关激酶1(interleukin-1 receptor associated kinase 1, IRAK1)调控Toll样受体4(Toll-like receptor 4, TLR4)信号通路的激活状态，而TLR4、TRAF6、IRAK1均为核因子κB(nuclear factor kappa-B, NF-κB)信号通路的上游节点，且该通路可调控白介素-6(interleukin-6, IL-6)、



肿瘤坏死因子- α (tumor necrosis factor- α , TNF- α)、IL-10、IL-1 β 等众多炎症因子, 因此 miR-146a 间接参与了调控炎症因子的表达。鉴于 miR-146a-5p 对巨噬细胞和炎症通路的复杂调控作用, 本研究认为其在 NEC 肠道炎症中的调控同样是较为复杂的。

miR-146a-5p 高表达与组织病理评级的相关性提示, NEC 患儿出现 miR-146a-5p 高表达与肠道损伤严重程度相关, 因此 miR-146a-5p 高表达的患儿需进行更积极的抗炎治疗和更频繁的影像学、实验室检查, 以观测病情进展。然而在临幊上, 对患者的早期诊断常依赖于对血、尿、粪等较易获取的标本中的 miR-146a-5p 进行检测, 而非肠道组织。在本研究中, 我们未采集 NEC 患儿的外周血,

而新生小鼠的外周血量非常有限, 不足以进行 miR-146a-5p 检测。因此, 在后续研究中或可通过其他方法(如提高 miRNA 在外周血中的检测灵敏度)检测外周血中 miR-146a-5p 的表达, 以期作为 NEC 早期诊断或提示病情严重程度的指标之一。

本研究尚存在一些不足之处: ①样本量较小。②采用的 NEC 患儿肠道组织标本存放时间较长, 且取材时间间隔亦较长, 使得 miRNA 降解程度不一, 进而导致 miRNA 检测可能存在误差。

综上所述, miR-146a-5p 的高表达与肠道组织结构破坏程度和损伤范围相关, 提示 miR-146a-5p 参与了 NEC 的发生与发展, 但具体的分子机制仍有待进一步探索。

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