

信号素家族在免疫系统中作用的研究进展

Progress of the role of semaphorin family in immune system

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[摘要] 信号素(semaphorin, Sema)最初被认定为是参与神经系统发育的轴突信号因子。研究表明,信号素参与生理或病理性免疫反应的不同阶段,能够调节免疫细胞(CD4⁺ T细胞、B细胞)的活化或分化,促进DC的迁移。其中,Plexin家庭成员是信号素分子最具代表性的受体,目前已经解析了Sema-Plexin复合体的晶体结构,为后续开展肿瘤的免疫治疗提供了依据。在本文中,我们综述了信号素家族分子及其受体的结构基础,以及各个信号素分子在免疫细胞(T细胞、B细胞以及DC)功能的最新研究进展。

[关键词] 信号素;Plexin;CD4⁺ T细胞;B细胞;树突状细胞

[中图分类号] R392.1; R730.51

[文献标志码] A

[文章编号] 1007-385X(2015)04-0528-08

信号素(semaphorin, Sema)最初被确定为轴突信号分子,把轴突信号导向适当的靶标^[1]。目前已发现20余种Sema^[2],它们在一系列生理过程中发挥作用,包括神经再生^[3-8]、心脏发生^[9-10]、血管形成^[11-17]、骨的吸收和重塑^[18-26]以及免疫调节^[23, 27-31]等。Sema分子也参与人类疾病的发生、发展,包括肿瘤形成/肿瘤转移^[12, 30-38]、神经再生性疾病^[23, 39-42]、肥胖^[43, 44]、猝死^[45]和免疫功能紊乱^[42, 46-52]。Sema可以分为8类:Ⅰ类、Ⅱ类Sema(无脊椎动物);Ⅲ-Ⅶ类Sema属于膜分子相关Sema(脊椎动物);Ⅷ类属于分泌型Sema(病毒编码的)^[53]。Plexins和神经毡蛋白(neuropilins, Nrps)是主要的Sema受体^[13-14, 36, 54-56]。Plexins家族包括A、B、C、D四个亚类;Nrps包括Nrp-1和Nrp-2。大多数膜结合的Sema直接结合Plexins家族成员,而Ⅲ类Sema则需要的Nrps家族成员作为结合受体^[57]。其中,Sema3E通过Plexin D1^[35]而不是Nrps转导信号,而Sema7A在神经系统和免疫系统中通过整合素来转导信号^[23, 58]。此外,在免疫系统中CD72^[59]和TIM-2(T-cell immunoglobulin and mucin domain protein 2)^[60],分别与Sema4D和Sema4A相互作用,细胞运输和细胞间通信的协调进行对于诱导适当的免疫反应至关重要。最新研究^[61]发现,分泌型的Sema能够通过Plexins来调节胸腺细胞在分化过程中的运动以及调控DC从外周组织到二级淋巴器官的迁移。膜相关Sema分子在调节免疫稳态过程中发挥着重要作用,并参与小鼠疾病模型中疾病的发生发展^[61-63]。研究^[64-66]已经确定Sema-Plexin复合体的结构,这有助于研发针对这些分子的小分子化

合物或抗体,用于肿瘤的免疫学相关治疗。本文回顾了Sema-Plexin信号的结构基础,总结Sema在免疫系统中的最新研究成果,并讨论了免疫应答中Sema的研究前景及其在肿瘤免疫学治疗上的临床应用价值。

1 Sema-Plexin 信号通路的结构基础

Sema的结构特征是有一个位于细胞外N末端Sema结构域,后跟一个富含半胱氨酸的PSI(Plexin, semaphorin, integrin)结构域。而Plexins则是I型单层穿膜细胞表面受体,其胞外结构域由N-末端Sema结构域,后跟3个PSI域和6个IPT(Ig domain shared by Plexins and transcription factors)结构域组成,同时,Plexins拥有较大的胞内结构域,其中含有一个R-ras及M-Ras GTPase的的激活蛋白(GAP)结构域,而这两个GAP结构域中则是由Rho GTP酶结合结构域(RBD)分开^[67-68],GAP结构域N-和C-末端部分的同源区形成一个GAP域。Sema-Plexin信号通路通过调节小GTPase活性和受体胞内蛋白激酶活性,以及调节整合素介导的依附,肌动球蛋白收

[基金项目] 江苏省临床医学科技专项资助(BL2012002)。Project supported by the Clinical Science and Technology Project Funding of Jiangsu Province (No. BL2012002)

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缩和微管的稳定性来介导不同的功能^[15, 69-71]。此外,在不同的组织中 Plexins 可以与不同的共受体相结合进而允许 Sema 发挥不同的功能。

通过晶体学研究,学者们已经解析了 Sema3A^[72-73]、Sema4D^[74-75]、Sema6A^[76] 以及 Sema7A^[77]中 Sema 和 PSI 结构域的三维结构。Sema 结构域含有七叶片的 Beta 螺旋桨结构^[75, 80],同时 Sema 分子能够通过 Sema-Sema 结构域之间的相互作用形成同二聚体。目前,已确定了 Sema 和 Plexin 相互作用的结构基础^[30],包括 Sema4D 和 Plexin B1^[74], Sema6A 和 Plexin A2^[76], Sema7A 或 A39R (病毒 Sema)和 Plexin C1^[77]。以 Sema6A 和 Plexin A2 相互作用为例,在配体结合前,Sema6A 的胞外结构域形成的面对面的同二聚体,而 Plexin A2 则在这个同型二聚体的接触面上形成一个类似头部的结构^[81]。

在静止状态下, Plexins 通过 Sema-Sema 结构域或 Sema-IPT 结构之间的相互作用形成一个自身抑制的结构。结构解析^[76]发现,Sema6A 和 Plexin A2 形成的信号复合物的结构是一种 2:2 的异源四聚体,其中,两个 Plexin A2 单体利用形成同型二聚体的接触面停靠到 Sema6A 二聚体的顶部;进而发现,在整个信号传输过程中 Sema6A 始终保持着面对面二聚体的构型,使得信号能够进行高效的传输。从中学者们发现,在 Sema 和 Plexin 相互作用的过程中, Plexin 会发生动态地构象改变,最终从自身抑制的构象中释放出来,参与信号转导。在 Sema 和 Plexin 的接触界面上, Sema6A 侧具有带正电的表面, Plexin A2 侧则是带负电荷的,这提示复合物的形成主要是通过静电相互作用, Sema 3A 也使用相同的 Plexin 识别位点来发挥生物学功能。Sema6A 和 Sema3A 之间通过使用相同的 Plexin 识别位点进而显示出类似的生物活性,这提示它们之间在结构是保守的^[76]。有研究^[53]指出,在 Nrp1 和 Plexin A1 存在时能够增加 Sema 3A 的结合能力。因此,认为 Sema3A 信号主要是通过与 Plexins 相互作用进行转导的, Nrp1 则增强了 Sema3A 与 Plexin 的结合。进一步的结构解析发现, Sema4D 和 Plexin B1、Sema7A 和 Plexin C1,它们形成的复合体结构与 Sema6A 和 Plexin A2 形成的结构相似^[66, 82]。在 Sema 结合到 Plexin 的头部结构时,其头部结构重新调整,并对齐到细胞膜上。这种构象的改变最终传输到细胞内,引起 GAP 结构域的激活或者 Rho 家族 GTP 酶的招募,最终转导信号到胞内发挥功能。

2 Sema-Plexin 信号通路在免疫细胞迁移过程中的作用

在神经系统和心血管系统中, Sema-Plexin 的信号能够通过激活 GTPase 来调控细胞骨架运动,进而调节整合素介导的细胞黏附和肌球蛋白收缩^[13, 83]。这提示 Sema 也能够通过类似的机制调节免疫细胞的迁移。最近,已有相关的研究报道了 Sema 分子参与初级和二级淋巴器官中免疫细胞的转运^[30, 84]。

2.1 Sema3E

胸腺作为主要的淋巴器官,参与了 T 细胞的分化发育和选择。T 淋巴细胞迁移到胸腺后,在胸腺皮质中逐渐变成 CD4⁺ CD8⁺ 双阳性细胞(double positive; DP),然后在髓质中它们经历阳性选择和阴性选择最终分化为 CD4 或 CD8 单阳性(single positive, SP)的 T 淋巴细胞。在这个过程中,趋化因子、S1P 以及黏附分子的作用至关重要^[85]。作为和趋化因子相似的 Sema 分子,可能也参与了淋巴细胞在胸腺中的秩序迁移活动。基于这样的假设,最新研究^[30, 64]发现, Sema 3E 参与了胸腺细胞的分化发育。Sema 3E 主要表达于髓质(而不是在皮层)的胸腺上皮细胞上,而 CD4⁺ CD8⁺ 双阳性的胸腺细胞则高表达 Plexin D1。阳性选择的 CD69⁺ 的 CD4⁺ CD8⁺ 胸腺细胞依赖趋化因子受体 9(chemokine receptor 9, CCR9)通过皮质到达皮质髓质交界区, Sema 3E 与 CD69⁺ 的 CD4⁺ CD8⁺ 胸腺细胞的结合,进而阻止 CCR9 引起的胸腺细胞迁移到髓质^[46]。研究^[46, 64, 86]发现,利用过表达 Plxnd1(编码 Plexin D1)的胎肝细胞或胚胎进行细胞移植发现, CD69⁺ 的 CD4⁺ CD8⁺ 胸腺细胞大量富集在本皮质,而皮髓质交界区双阳性和单阳性胸腺细胞的分布被打破,类似的表型能够在 Sema 3E 过表达小鼠中观察到,这提示胸腺细胞在胸腺的分化发育受 Sema3E-Plexin D1 信号通路的调控,由于缺乏的 Sema 3E-Plexin D1 的信号通路引起的胸腺细胞发育异常是否会导致免疫病理改变仍有待于进一步研究。

2.2 Sema 3A

目前,研究^[30, 54]指出, Sema 3A 参与免疫细胞的迁移。Sema3A 作为神经细胞中的轴突导向因子,在经典的 Transwell 实验中其能够抑制人单核细胞和 T 细胞向趋化因子梯度的迁移^[87]。最近研究^[84]显示,淋巴内皮细胞产生的 Sema 3A 能够通过促进肌球蛋白收缩介导 DC 进入引流淋巴结。在缺乏 Plexin A1 的情况下,迁移到引流淋巴结的 DC 显著

减少。DC从皮肤微环境迁移到引流淋巴结分为3个步骤:抗原(Ag)的摄取,在趋化因子的引导下到达淋巴管,在淋巴管中迁移^[88]。过表达Plxn1的DC在抗原摄取和趋化因子应答过程中反应正常,但是在淋巴结之间的迁移受阻。含有突变Nrp1的DC(突变的是Sema3A结合位点)也呈现出迁移受损,这提示Nrp1和PlexinA1受体复合物对于DC的迁移至关重要^[89]。有研究^[90]指出,Sema3A缺失后会显著降低DC迁移到引流淋巴结,这表明Sema3A-Nrp1-PlexinA1三者之间的相互作用参与了DC的迁移。针对血管内皮细胞而言,淋巴结内皮细胞之间的交联较为疏松,DC要通过淋巴内皮需要发生较大的形态学改变,而肌球蛋白II介导的肌动蛋白收缩是DC穿越内皮所必须的^[90],而Sema3A-Nrp1-PlexinA1这一信号通路参与了调控。

DC通过调控细胞骨架运动在淋巴结之间进行迁移。在DC的迁移过程中,Sema3A在DC的迁移面持续存在,并与PlexinA1相互作用,进而诱导肌球蛋白轻链发生磷酸化,最终通过促进肌动蛋白的收缩来增强DC的运动和迁移^[44, 91]。在神经系统中,神经细胞沿着Sema组成的管道进行迁移,最终运动到合适的位置^[91]。基于以上的研究推测,血管或淋巴管内皮细胞产生的Sema能够引导白细胞通过调节其黏附活性和收缩能力,最终穿过血管壁进入到指定位置。

2.3 SemaIV-VII

相对于上述的可溶性分泌型III类Sema,SemaIV-VII属于穿膜蛋白,也参与了免疫细胞的迁移。重组的可溶性Sema4D能够抑制自发的或趋化因子MCP-1介导的人单核细胞迁移^[54, 87, 92];也有报道称Sema7A参与了人单核细胞的迁移过程^[93]。此外,病毒Sema39R(Plexin-C1的配体)能够通过调控肌动蛋白细胞骨架重排来抑制整合素介导的DC黏附和趋化因子CCL3介导的细胞迁移^[94]。

3 Sema在免疫细胞之间相互作用中的功能

细胞与细胞之间的相互作用是发挥免疫应答必不可少的,Sema家族以接触依赖的或不依赖的方式调控免疫细胞的功能,进而参与各种生理或病理条件下的免疫应答。

3.1 Sema4D

Sema4D(即CD100)是第一个被发现具有免疫调节功能的Sema分子^[95-97]。在免疫系统中所有的T细胞、活化的B细胞以及成熟的DC均表达Sema4D。Sema4D能够促进活化的B细胞产生抗体以

及增强抗原特异性的T细胞反应^[30, 62, 95, 98]。研究^[54, 62, 72]发现,CD72(胞内区含有两个ITIM基序)和PlexinB家族(B1,B2和B3)都是Sema4D的受体^[32],进而介导信号转导。在对Sema4D缺陷小鼠的研究中发现,该小鼠抗体的产生减弱,同时由于T细胞活化减弱,进而能够抵抗实验性自身免疫性脑脊髓炎(experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis,EAE)的发病^[99]。在人肥大细胞的研究中发现,Sema4D能够减弱酪氨酸激酶KIT介导的细胞增殖和趋化因子配体CCL2的产生。因此,Sema4D-CD72信号通路可能发挥着负向调节KIT介导的肥大细胞反应^[100]。此外,信号活化能够引起Sema4D蛋白的水解剪切,使其能够从细胞表面释放出来且具有生物活性^[101]。进一步研究^[102]发现,在过表达Sema4D剪切体的转基因小鼠中,抗原特异性T细胞的数量增加。此外,在系统性红斑狼疮小鼠模型的血清中检测到大量可溶性的Sema4D^[101],在系统性硬化症患者血清中也得到类似的结果^[67]。可溶性的Sema4D能够影响神经元和胶质细胞的凋亡^[103]。上述研究表明,可溶性的Sema蛋白参与了生理或病理情况下的免疫反应。

3.2 Sema4A

Sema4A在DC中组成性表达而在Th1细胞中是诱导表达。Sema4A参与抗原特异性T细胞的启动和辅助性T细胞的分化^[30-31, 104]。研究^[104]发现,Sema4A缺陷的小鼠对热处理的痤疮丙酸杆菌(Th1细胞诱导细菌)产生的Th1型免疫应答的能力减弱;但是,Sema4A缺陷小鼠针对诱导Th2细胞应答的肠道线虫的反应则变得更强。进一步研究发现,Sema4A缺陷小鼠可以延缓由Th17细胞介导的EAE,同时,使用抗Sema4A的抗体也能够阻止EAE的发病。研究^[111]认为,TIM-2是Sema4A的功能性受体,在Th2细胞极化的过程中TIM-2的表达上调,因此,作者认为Th1细胞通过TIM-2来负向调控Th2细胞的功能。但是,在对Sema4A缺陷小鼠和TIM-2缺陷小鼠的表型差异研究^[50]中发现,Sema4A或TIM-2可能存在其他的结合配体。并且,Plexin-B家族成员和PlexinD1也能够结合Sema4A。

3.3 Sema4B

Sema4B的胞内段含有一个PDZ结合基序,主要表达于T细胞和B细胞上,其能够通过T细胞与嗜碱性粒细胞的相互作用来负向调控嗜碱性粒细胞的功能^[64]。嗜碱性粒细胞能够介导CD4⁺T细胞向Th2细胞分化和体液免疫记忆反应,并在蠕虫感染时分泌IL-4^[106],同时也能够发挥抗原提呈细胞

(APC)的功能^[107]。对Sema4B缺陷小鼠的研究^[64]发现,其IgE的抗体浓度大幅度升高,但淋巴细胞和DC的功能正常;Sema4B能够抑制产生IL-4,T细胞上的Sema4B能够抑制嗜碱性粒细胞介导的Th2分化倾斜,小鼠中Sema4B缺陷能够增强嗜碱性粒细胞介导的记忆IgE的产生。因此,Sema4B能够负向调节嗜碱性粒细胞介导的Th2分化倾斜以及体液免疫记忆反应。但是,Sema4B的受体目前还没有确定。Sema4B能够抑制ITAM活化引起的ERK磷酸化^[108],推测Sema4B是通过含有ITIM基序的分子来调节嗜碱性粒细胞的功能。

3.4 Sema6D

在免疫系统中,Sema6D主要表达在T细胞、B细胞和NK细胞上,而其受体Plexin A1则特异性表达在DC上^[30, 109],重组的Sema6D通过Plexin A1结合并激活DC继而促进IL-12的表达。在对Plxna1缺陷小鼠的研究^[108]中发现,Plexin A1的缺失能够减少抗原特异性T细胞的产生,进而抵抗EAE的发生。在DC和破骨细胞中,Plexin A1能够与TREM-2、DAPI2形成受体复合物,通过DAPI2的ITAM基序传导Sema6D信号^[109]。DAPI2缺陷或Plxna1缺陷小鼠均会发生破骨细胞综合症但对EAE则耐受^[110]。研究^[111-112]发现,人的DAPI2或TREM-2发生遗传突变时会导致骨脆弱综合征即Nasu-Hakola病,生理情况下Plexin A1与TREM-2、DAPI2形成复合物,这种相互作用跟这些疾病相关。在浆样DC(pDC)中Plexin A1能够和DAPI2、pDC-TREM相结合,而TLR信号的转导能够增加其表达。Sema6D和TLR同时活化能够通过磷酸化PI3K和Erk1/2信号通路增强干扰素的产生。在免疫系统中,CD4⁺T细胞在TCR信号刺激4 d后能够表达Sema6D。用重组Sema6D或抗Sema6D单克隆抗体抑制Sema6D及其配体交联后,能够引起CD4⁺T细胞的活化,这是由于减弱了中性氨基酸转运蛋白LAT磷酸化活化^[113-114]。这表明CD4⁺T上的Sema6D参与了内源性T细胞信号调控。但研究Sema6D缺陷小鼠并没有发现T细胞启动缺陷^[115]。因此,需要进一步的研究确定Sema6D作为受体是否参与了生理情况下的免疫应答反应。

3.5 Sema7A

Sema7A(即CD108)是通过GPI锚定的膜蛋白。在免疫系统中,CD4⁺T细胞的活化能够诱导Sema7A的表达^[30, 54, 61]。Sema7A的Sema结构域中包含一个RGD基序(arginine-glycine-aspartate, RGD),该基序是一个非常保守的整合素结合位点,Sema7A

通过Beta1整合素传导信号^[116]。重组Sema7A也能够通过Beta1整合素刺激单核细胞/巨噬细胞,进而增加促炎因子IL-6和TNF- α 的产生。

Sema7A也参与病理性免疫应答。Sema7A缺陷小鼠能够耐受炎症反应,包括半抗原引起的接触性超敏反应(contact hypersensitivity, CHS)和EAE。Sema7A在T细胞和巨噬细胞作用面上发生积累,进而促进DTH和CHS过程中的免疫应答^[49, 117]。进一步研究^[52]表明,Sema7A在由转化生长因子(TGF- β)和博来霉素引起的肺纤维化中发挥重要作用。TGF- β 能够诱导Sema7A及其受体的表达,剔除Sema7A基因的TGF- β 1转基因小鼠更倾向于发生肺间质纤维化。使用该小鼠构建由博来霉素诱导产生的肺纤维化小鼠模型,发现其肺实质及肺泡的纤维化明显消失,同时减少了肺泡重构。进一步研究^[118]发现,由TGF- β 诱导产生的纤维化可以通过使用抗 β 1整合素的抗体得到改善,这表明Sema7A通过 β 1整合素来加剧肺纤维化。

4 结 语

如上所述,Sema分子及其受体在免疫系统中具有不同的生物学活性,参与天然免疫应答、淋巴细胞分化发育、获得性免疫应答、白细胞转运以及效应/记忆T细胞免疫反应。Sema-Plexin信号通路通过调节细胞骨架动力学来调控细胞的运动和形态。Sema-Plexin信号通路能够调控中性粒细胞的转运,以及通过分泌型的Sema来调节DC进入淋巴结。然而,目前还没有明确Sema是否参与淋巴细胞或中性粒细胞从血液向组织中的迁移。值得关注的是,这些白细胞自身是否能够通过迁移的过程中分泌Sema,进而促进血管内皮细胞的收缩以及其自身的黏附。

膜相关的Sema分子参与细胞-细胞之间相互作用,进而有助于维持免疫稳态。但是还是存在很多问题有待于进一步解决,比如对于细胞-细胞接触界面发生了什么情况以及Sema如何结合相应的受体目前还不清楚;Sema与受体的结合是否会影响免疫突触形成的动力学;Sema介导的免疫应答过程中有哪些信号分子参与?进一步研究Sema在免疫乃至其他领域的功能,阐述在体内状态下对细胞行为的影响以及研究Sema的时空动力学有助于更深入地了解疾病的发生发展,为探索治疗疾病的新方法开拓新的途径。

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- [收稿日期] 2015 - 01 - 15 [修回日期] 2015 - 07 - 10
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· 科技动态 ·

甲基化转移酶 EZH2 通过甲基化踝蛋白调控白细胞的黏附和迁移

在免疫反应中,白细胞经过系列的表型改变快速向外周和淋巴组织浸润。招募循环系统中的中性粒细胞和 DC 细胞前体至炎症部位取决于整合素分子的相互识别与结合,和这些细胞沿血管内皮细胞的滚动。迁移的动态过程需要大量的胞质和穿膜蛋白分子的协同作用,并且这些蛋白分子的功能通常被蛋白翻译后修饰精确调控。

踝蛋白(Talin)在调控细胞迁移中发挥重要作用,该蛋白可以直接将整合素连接到细胞骨架的肌动蛋白上。踝蛋白可以被钙蛋白酶水解剪切,继而发生泛素化和精氨酰化,从而发生功能上的改变。踝蛋白头端的泛素化降解有助于白细胞黏着斑的解离,该过程可以被细胞周期蛋白依赖性激酶5(cyclin-dependent kinase, CDK5)介导的磷酸化拮抗;踝蛋白的精氨酰化对于细胞间的黏附是必须的。所以踝蛋白的翻译后修饰的改变可能影响其功能,继而影响白细胞迁移。

在2015年3月发表在*Nat Immunol*上的一篇文章中,作者阐述了组蛋白甲基化转移酶EZH2(enhancer of zeste homolog 2)可以被鸟苷酸转换因子Vav1招募,与踝蛋白共同形成胞质复合物,继而甲基化踝蛋白。甲基化的踝蛋白更易于被钙蛋白酶水解,并且其结合细胞骨架肌动蛋白的能力降低,从而有助于细胞黏着斑的解离。在脑脊髓炎(experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis, EAE)模型中,EZH2缺陷的DC出现黏着斑解离异常,从而被限制在血管内皮细胞而不能迁移至炎症部位。同样地,在耳炎症模型中,EZH2缺陷的中性粒细胞也出现黏着斑解离异常,不能迁移至炎症部位。该文揭示了组蛋白甲基化转移酶EZH2在胞质中调节黏附动力学、影响白细胞游走、免疫反应和潜在的致病过程。

组蛋白甲基化转移酶EZH2不仅在细胞核内发挥重要作用,在细胞核外也能够通过对底物蛋白的甲基化影响生物过程和疾病发生。该研究拓展了对EZH2介导的甲基化修饰在细胞质中新作用的认识。

[李霞 摘译, 张迁 审阅. Gunawan M, Venkatesan N, Loh JT, et al. *Nat Immunol*, 2015, 16(5): 505-516.]