

组蛋白3甲基转移酶MLL4的研究进展

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摘要: 混合连锁白血病因子4 (mixed lineage leukemia 4, MLL4)是组蛋白H3第4位赖氨酸(H3K4)一种特异的甲基化转移酶, 也是COMPASS/Set1-like蛋白复合物中重要成员之一。MLL4蛋白本身及其介导的H3K4甲基化修饰,均能引起染色质结构和 功能的改变,调控基因转录与表达。随着近年对MLL4蛋白研究的深入,MLL4基因、MLL4蛋白、蛋白复合物在各组织器官 的发育、肿瘤疾病等生理与病理生理过程中的作用逐渐被揭示。本文对MLL4基因、MLL4蛋白特征、生物学功能及其对疾 病的影响等方面的研究进展进行综述,以期进一步理解组蛋白甲基化转移酶对基因表达调控的影响及其非酶学依赖的功 能,为相关疾病预防和诊治提供新的思路。

关键词: MLL4; 组蛋白3赖氨酸4; 组蛋白甲基化; 组蛋白甲基化转移酶 中图分类号: R34

Research progress of histone 3 methyltransferase MLL4

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Abstract: Mixed linked leukemia 4 (MLL4) is a specific methyltransferase of histone 3 position lysine 4 (H3K4). It is also one of the important members of COMPASS/Set1-like protein complex. Both MLL4 protein itself and its mediated H3K4 methylation modification can cause changes in chromatin structure and function, thus regulating gene transcription and expression. With the studies of MLL4 protein in recent years, the roles of *MLL4* gene, MLL4 protein and protein complex in the development of tissues and organs, tumor diseases and other physiological and pathophysiological processes have been gradually revealed. In this paper, the research progress of *MLL4* gene, MLL4 protein characteristics, biological function and its effect on disease were reviewed, in order to further understand the effect of histone methyltransferase on gene expression regulation, as well as its non-enzyme dependent function. This paper may provide new ideas for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of related diseases.

Key words: MLL4; H3K4; histone methylation; histone methyltransferase

在哺乳动物中,催化组蛋白H3 赖氨酸4(H3K4) 位点的甲基化转移酶COMPASS/Set1-like蛋白复合 物有SETA、SETB以及MLL1~4六个蛋白^[1]。其中, 组蛋白甲基化酶混合连锁白血病因子4(mixed lineage leukemia4,MLL4,又称KMT2D)主要介 导H3K4单甲基化(H3K4me1)在增强子区域富集, 并发挥一定的基因调控功能^[2-4]。越来越多的研究 显示,MLL4对于细胞分化、机体组织器官发育、 代谢、先天性疾病综合征、肿瘤疾病都有重要的影 响,本文就其最新研究进展进行综述。

1 MLL4的生物学特征

1.1 MLL4基因及其编码蛋白质结构与功能

人类 MLL4 基因 (又称 ALR、KMS、MLL2、KMT2D),

Received 2018-12-25 Accepted 2019-03-06 *Corresponding author. E-mail: zhubm64@hotmail.com 位于第 12 号染色体长臂的 1 区 3 带 (12q13.12) 上, 含有 56 个外显子,编码 5 537 个氨基酸残基组成的 蛋白,分子量约 600 kDa^[5-11],是小鼠 *Kmt2d (Mll4*) 基因的同源基因。*MLL4* 基因编码的 MLL4 蛋白因 具有同源蛋白酿酒酵母 Set1 蛋白和果蝇 Trithorax related/COMPASS 蛋白共有的 SET [Su(var)3-9, Enhancer of Zeste, Trithorax] 结构域和催化组蛋白甲基化的功 能而被发现、命名 (见图 1),并被归类于组蛋白甲 基化转移酶 SET1/MLL (mixed lineage leukemia) 家 族 (又称 KMT2s 家族/COMPASS 家族)^[12-18]。

目前认为, MLL4 主要由 C 端具有催化活性的 SET 结构域、毗邻的 2 个 FY-rich N/C 端结构域 (FYRN 和 FYRC)、1 个 HMG-I 蛋白结构域 (high mobility group)、9个 Leu-X-X-Leu-Leu (LxxLL) 结构域^[18] 和 7个含有锌指结构的 PHD (plant homeotic domain) 结构域构成(图1)^[11, 18, 19]。其中,SET结构域由 150个氨基酸残基构成,编码 SET-N、SET-I、SET-C 和 post-SET 4 个模体,是 MLL4 具有催化活性的主 要区域,也是目前发现的大多数组蛋白甲基转移酶 的共有的保守催化结构域。同其他 MLL 家族蛋白 一样,该蛋白功能的发挥依赖于核心蛋白复合体 WDR5、RbBP5、ASH2L、DPY30 (酵母 Set1 同源 复合蛋白 Swd3、Swd1、Bre2、Sdc1) 以及转录因 子协同作用,催化H3K4单甲基化(H3K4me1)、二 甲基化 (H3K4me2) 和三甲基化 (H3K4me3) 以及激 活 MLL4 相关功能^[19-23]。

MLL4 蛋白除了具有催化活性的 SET 保守结构 域以外,其他结构域如 PHD 等在基因转录与表达 过程中也起着至关重要的作用^[19,24]。PHD 结构域 也是 MLL4 蛋白中的一段保守域。研究发现,PHD₄₆ 能够结合未甲基化或非对称二甲基化的组蛋白 H4 第 3 个位点精氨酸 (H4R3me0, H4R3me2a),并激活 MLL4 甲基化酶的活性和 MLL4 介导的细胞分化过 程^[24]。近来有报道,在歌舞伎综合征中,*MLL4* 基 因突变会导致 PHD₅ 折叠结构的改变,进而降低 MLL4 在组蛋白的结合以及功能活性^[24]。

FYRN 和 FYRC 模体序列位于 MLL4 蛋白 C 端, 靠近 SET 结构域,富含苯丙氨酸和酪氨酸,分别由 50 和 100 个氨基酸残基组成^[25]。该结构域存在于 多种染色质结合相关的蛋白中,如生长抑制蛋白 TBRG1 (transforming growth factor beta regulator 1)、 转化生长因子 β1 (transforming growth factor β1, TGF-β1) 以及 MLL 家族的其他成员蛋白结构中^[25, 26]。目前 虽然发现 FYRN 和 FYRC 结构域参与 MLL4 调控 基因及细胞分化的过程,但它们的具体功能仍未完 全明确。但在 MLL1 蛋白中,FYRN/FYRC 结构域 能够使被水解切断的 MLL 蛋白形成异二聚体,从 而加强 MLL 蛋白的稳定性^[25]。

除上述结构外,在 MLL4 蛋白 N 端的两个 PHD 结构域和 C 端的 SET 结构域之间,还有 1 个 HMG-I 蛋白结构域和多个能相互作用的核受体 LXXLLs 基序,这些结构多见于转录因子和共效应 因子的结构蛋白中^[18],表明 MLL4 蛋白在基因转 录和表达的调控过程中发挥重要作用。

1.2 MLL4及其蛋白复合物的功能

H3K4 甲基化转移酶 MLL4 和 MLL3 蛋白属于 果蝇同源甲基化酶 Trr (Trithorax-related)的分支。 MLL4 和 MLL3 既有功能上的共通性,也有各自功 能特异性。例如:MLL3/MLL4 主要催化增强子区 域 H3K4me1/2 的表达 (图 2),激活增强子对细胞 特异性基因的调控,调控细胞分化^[4]。这两种蛋白 的突变均会导致各种肿瘤疾病的发生,但两者突变 的位点以及突变后结合的功能蛋白各有所异,如组 蛋白甲基化酶 MLL3 (即 KMT2C)通过调控雌激素 受体 ERa 增强子区域的 H3K4me1 和 H3K27ac 的表 达,激活 ERa 的活性和乳腺癌细胞的增殖;与此相 一致的是,在 ERa 阳性乳腺癌的患者中,发现 MLL3 基因突变^[27]。而 MLL4 蛋白通过 PI3K 信号通路调 控雌激素受体依赖的转录来影响乳腺癌的发生、 发展^[28]。

近年来研究显示, MLL4蛋白与 PTIP、PA1、 RbBP5、WDR5、ASH2L、DPY30、NCOA6、UTX 和 MLL3 蛋白构成一个蛋白质复合物^[11](图 2)。其 中, PTIP 与 PA1 作为 MLL3 和 MLL4 蛋白亚基, 在不依赖 MLL3 和 MLL4 蛋白酶活性的情况下,可 以独立调控免疫球蛋白 Igh 类别转换的转录过程, 影响 B 细胞的免疫应答^[29]。此外,在 TGF-β/Smads 信号转导通路中, PTIP、PA1 与蛋白 SMAD2-4 结 合并相互作用,能下调 SERPINE1 和 PMEPA1 基因 的表达,调控细胞的分化^[30]。蛋白 RbBP5、WDR5、 ASH2L和DPY30共同组成的复合蛋白又称为 WRAD蛋白,具有催化H3甲基化的作用^[31]。此外, WRAD 参与细胞周期的调控,影响 S 期和 M 期的 转变^[31]。其中, RbBP5 蛋白具有联系 ASH2L、WDR5 和 SET 蛋白之间相互作用的功能^[20]。在 MLL 蛋白 家族中,WDR5具有维持蛋白稳定性,促进MLL



图 1. 人KMT2家族蛋白结构

Fig. 1. Structure of human KMT2 family proteins. The enzymatic SET domains are shown in blue. The picture was modified from reference ^[11] with permission. PHD: plant homeotic domain; HMG-I: high mobility group I; FYRC/FYRN: FY-rich C/N-terminal; Bromo: bromodomain; RRM: RNA recognition motif; CXXC: nonmethylated-CpG DNA binding domain.



图 2. MLL4蛋白以及复合物对染色质的修饰功能

Fig. 2. Modification of the chromatin by the MLL4 protein and the complex. The MLL4/MLL3/COMPASS epigenetic axis governs promoter and enhancer function in normal cells. PA1, PTIP associated 1; PTIP, PAX transactivation-domain interacting protein; MLL4: mixed lineage leukemia 4; MLL3: mixed lineage leukemia 3; LSD1: lysine-specific demethylase 1; CBP: CREB-binding protein; UTX: lysine demethylase 6A (also known as KDM6A); WDR5: WD repeat-containing protein 5; NCOA6: nuclear receptor coactivator 6; ASH2L: absent, small, homeotics 2-like; RbBP5: Retinoblastoma-binding protein 5; Dpy-30: Dumpy-30.

家族蛋白对 H3K4 甲基化的修饰作用^[32]。同时, WDR5 对染色质重塑、维持胚胎干细胞活性,调控 干细胞自我更新以及对长链非编码 RNA 介导基因 的转录等方面都发挥重要作用^[33,34]。MLL4 蛋白复 合物中的 UTX 蛋白可以去除启动子区域 H3K27 二 甲基化和三甲基化修饰 (图 2),进而调控基因转录、 表达,决定细胞的分化^[35]。实际上,H3K4 甲基化 转移酶活性反过来亦具有稳定 MLL4 蛋白酶的作 用^[36]。

2 MLL4正常生理功能

2.1 MLL4参与细胞分化和组织发育

Lee 等研究发现,全身敲除小鼠 kmt2d 基因后, 胚胎在第9天左右发生死亡^[4]。其中,MLL4 基因 敲除的幼鼠棕色脂肪含量和肌组织量明显减少^[4]。 MLL4 通过催化 H3K4 甲基化 (主要为 H3K4me1/2), 招募 H3K27 乙酰化 (H3K27ac) 转移酶 CBP/p300, 能激活增强子功能 (图2),调控棕色脂肪相关基因 的转录,最终影响棕色脂肪细胞的分化^[37]。此外, MLL4 的缺失及其 H3K4 甲基化修饰的减少会影响 正常 B 细胞分化过程,如增加稳定状态的过渡型 B 细胞数量,促进生发中心的形成和 CD40 激活的 B 细胞增殖等^[38]。Dorighi等^[39]研究显示,MLL4 和 MLL3 蛋白的作用不依赖 H3K4 单甲基化修饰,这 两种蛋白自身具有促进 RNA 合成和转录的功能。 综上可知,MLL4 对细胞分化和组织发育影响重大。

2.2 MLL4参与代谢过程

Kim 等^[40] 通过比较 DN2-TG 转基因小鼠与 DN2/m 小鼠的表型改变和肝脏X受体(liver X receptors, LXRs) 的功能变化,发现 ASC-2 (activating signal cointegrator 2) 蛋白复合物 (又称 ASCOM 蛋白复合 物)在肝脏脂质代谢过程中具有重要的作用。 MLL4 与 MLL3 蛋白是 ASC-2 蛋白复合物中的组成 部分^[41]。随后,Kim等^[42]发现在高脂饮食小鼠模 型中,营养过剩导致小鼠肝脏 ABL1 激酶、过氧化 物酶体增殖物激活受体 γ2 (peroxisome proliferator activated receptor y2, PPARy2) 表达水平上调, 促进 PPARγ2 与 MLL4 蛋白复合物的结合,从而激活肝 性脂肪变性基因的表达。Koutsioumpa 等^[43] 研究显 示,MLL4 表达降低导致下游的糖酵解增加和脂质 谱改变,进而影响胰腺癌细胞的形成和增殖。此 外,MLL4 基因突变引起的歌舞伎综合征患者表现 出青春期延长、甲状腺功能减退、肥胖、生长激素 缺乏等一系列内分泌功能失调症状^[44]。由此可见, MLL4 在代谢过程中扮演重要角色。Cao 等研究显 示,MLL4蛋白及其介导的H3K4的甲基化修饰, 与H3K4去甲基化酶LSD1、其他转录后修饰、转 录因子等在机体内有协同作用^[45](图 2)。当 MLL4 蛋白以及蛋白复合物发生变化,机体内稳态失衡会 引发一系列疾病的发生。

3 MLL4基因及其编码蛋白质在疾病中的作用

3.1 MLL4基因及其编码蛋白质缺陷导致先天性疾病

歌舞伎综合征是一种以特殊容貌、全身发育迟 滞、智力障碍、心血管疾病和骨骼肌发育异常等多 种先天性异常为特征的疾病^[44]。患该疾病的儿童 *MLL4*和*KDM6A*基因发生突变,且患儿先天性心 脏发育异常与*MLL4*基因突变密切相关^[46]。敲除斑 马鱼的人源同源基因*MLL4*和*KDM6A*后,机体表 现为颅面部、脑部和心脏的发育异常^[44, 47, 48]。在神 经发育疾病中,*MLL1*和*MLL4*基因的缺失以及 H3K4甲基化修饰水平降低会导致儿童发育阶段的 智力低下、孤独症、获得性障碍等一系列脑神经发育异常疾病^[49]。在心脏发育方面,敲除小鼠心脏前体细胞、心肌细胞中的*MLL4*后,小鼠胚胎期心脏发育出现异常;与此同时,增强子和启动子区域H3K4单甲基化和二甲基化水平明显减少,与心脏发育相关的离子转运基因、缺氧/复氧和细胞周期相关基因的表达也显著下调^[50]。虽然目前仍不能将*MLL4*基因变异、MLL4蛋白以及H3K4me1作为临床心脏发育异常等疾病的诊断标记物,但以上研究结果表明MLL4能够调控心脏发育过程相关基因的表达,在早期发育以及先天性疾病发生、发展中发挥重要作用。

3.2 MLL4基因及其编码蛋白质与肿瘤相关

近年来癌症的发病机制研究显示,MLL4基因 及其编码蛋白质在肿瘤发生、发展中扮演重要角 色^[51]。在人弥漫性大B细胞淋巴瘤和滤泡性淋巴 瘤患者中发现 MLL4 基因突变率达到 30%~90%, 在肺鳞状细胞癌患者中 MLL4 突变率为 20% [10]。此 外,研究显示,在结直肠癌、B 细胞淋巴瘤、膀胱 上皮癌、妇科中的癌肉瘤、非小细胞肺癌等肿瘤疾 病中都存在不同程度的 MLL4 突变 [10]。而 MLL4 蛋 白对癌症的影响,与其介导的H3K4甲基化修饰以 及增强子和启动子功能的激活有密切联系。MLL4 与H3K4甲基化修饰能招募蛋白复合物在增强子区 域结合且相互作用,最终影响染色质构象和基因的 表达^[51, 52]。如 MLL4-GPS2 融合蛋白相互作用能使 染色质产生易位,从而导致儿童未分化梭形细胞肉 瘤的发生^[53]。MLL4 与转录因子 P63 在增强子区域 结合,能够调控上皮基底膜的粘附、增殖相关的靶 基因,进而影响上皮的分层^[54]。Augert等^[55]在小 细胞肺癌患者和小细胞肺癌细胞系中均检测到 MLL4 基因突变和 H3K4 甲基化表达水平的下调。 Rahnamoun 等^[56]还发现,突变体 p53 通过招募 MLL4 介导H3K4mel在增强子区域的修饰,促使癌基因 激活。总之, MLL4 基因以及编码的蛋白质与肿瘤 疾病联系密切,围绕其进行进一步研究,将有利于 加深对肿瘤疾病发病机理的认识,为寻找新的治疗 手段提供新的思路。

4 总结与展望

甲基化转移酶 MLL4 通过对 H3K4 不同程度的 甲基化修饰,以及与其他组蛋白修饰(去甲基化、 乙酰化、磷酸化、泛素化等)的协同作用^[57],改 变染色质的结构,调控基因的转录与表达,参与 早期胚胎组织器官的形成以及抑制癌基因表达等 过程^[3,48,58-60],与肿瘤(胰腺癌^[18,61]、恶性胶质瘤^[23]、 乳腺癌^[62]、结直肠癌^[56]、急性骨髓性白血病等^[18,38,63] 和先天性心脏病^[64]等疾病的发生尤为密切。

同时,MLL4的功能活性并非完全通过H3K4 的修饰作用,其本身也调控染色质结构与功能的改 变^[39,65]。那么在不同的细胞环境,不同的细胞周期, MLL4是如何启动对H3K4甲基化的修饰作用的, MLL4蛋白功能的发挥与H3K4甲基化功能有何异 同,具体MLL4是如何实现基因的转录调控,引起 基因的改变,介导上下游的信号转导通路的,目前 还未完全清楚。相信随着研究的不断深入,MLL4 的作用及其机制将进一步明确,可以更好地为临床 应用和药物开发提供潜在靶点和新思路。

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