

肠道菌群在脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍中的研究进展

田春平, 王青燕, 高慧, 马佳蕊, 吴佳俊, 杜嘉妮, 胡倩倩, 杨彦玲*

延安大学延安医学院, 陕西 延安 716000

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摘要: 脊髓损伤作为一种破坏性的中枢神经系统疾病, 除了会损害患者的运动、感觉能力外还会引起不同程度的认知功能障碍, 对患者的生活质量造成重大影响。近年来的研究表明肠道菌群与中枢神经系统功能之间存在密切的联系, 尤其是在脊髓损伤患者中引起认知功能异常的机制方面引起了广泛关注。因此本文将围绕脊髓损伤后肠道菌群发生改变进而影响认知功能, 从下丘脑-垂体-肾上腺轴、神经递质及免疫系统 3 个途径, 探讨肠道菌群在脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍中的研究进展。

关键词: 脊髓损伤; 肠道菌群; 认知功能障碍; 微生物-肠-脑轴

Gut microbiota in cognitive dysfunction after spinal cord injury: a review

TIAN Chunping, WANG Qingyan, GAO Hui, MA Jiarui, WU Jiajun, DU Jiani, HU Qianqian, YANG Yanling*

Yan'an Medical School of Yan'an University, Yan'an 716000, Shaanxi, China

Abstract: Spinal cord injuries, as a destructive disorder of the central nervous system, not only impair the patients' motor and sensory abilities but also lead to varying degrees of cognitive dysfunction, affecting the quality of life of the patients. In recent years, studies have found a close association between gut microbiota and central nervous system function, especially concerning the mechanism of cognitive dysfunction in the individuals with spinal cord injuries.

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*Corresponding author. E-mail: yangyanling8889@163.com

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This paper reviews the progress in the role of gut microbiota in cognitive dysfunction after spinal cord injuries via three pathways: the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, neurotransmitters, and the immune system.

Keywords: spinal cord injury; gut microbiota; cognitive dysfunction; microbiota-gut-brain axis

脊髓损伤(spinal cord injury, SCI)是一种破坏性的中枢神经系统疾病,不仅影响患者的感觉和运动能力,还损害其记忆力、执行力等认知功能^[1-4]。大量研究表明,脊髓损伤患者出现认知功能障碍的风险为正常人的13倍^[5],给患者、家庭和医务人员带来了巨大的负担^[6]。肠道菌群是存在于肠道中的一组微生物,它们在健康机体中保持动态平衡现象,然而脊髓损伤患者经常出现肠道功能障碍而导致肠道菌群失调^[7],肠道菌群的改变又会影响肠道屏障的完整性,通过微生物-肠-脑轴与中枢神经系统相连^[8],从而导致大脑活动和认知功能出现障碍^[9]。因此,脊髓损伤后出现认知功能障碍,并且肠道菌群与脊髓损伤后的认知功能之间存在密切联系^[10-11],探索脊髓损伤患者的认知功能与肠道菌群之间的联系对预防和降低认知功能受损具有重要价值。

1 肠道菌群

肠道菌群是指生活在机体胃肠道内的一组微生物群,由多种微生物如细菌、真菌、病毒和其他微生物共同组成。按其发挥的作用主要分为有益菌、有害菌和中性菌这3类。有益菌主要是厌氧菌包括乳酸杆菌(*Lactobacillus*)、双歧杆菌(*Bifidobacterium*)、放线菌(*Actinomycetes*)等,这些细菌能提高机体免疫力,促进肠道蠕动,帮助消化吸收,对机体保持健康具有有利作用;有害菌主要包括变形杆菌(*Proteus*)、拟杆菌(*Bacteroidetes*)、大肠杆菌(*Escherichia coli*)、肠球菌(*Enterococcus*)等,大量的有害菌会产生细菌毒素,对机体健康产生危害;中性菌是介

于有益菌和有害菌之间的菌群,当有益菌和有害菌中的一方占有优势时,中性菌就会转化为优势方,从而影响机体的健康^[12]。肠道菌群在门水平上主要分为四大类:厚壁菌门(*Firmicutes*)、放线菌门(*Actinobacteria*)、拟杆菌门(*Bacteroidetes*)和变形菌门(*Proteobacteria*)^[13]。前两者属于有益菌,后两者属于有害菌。正常情况下这些菌群保持相对稳定的状态,它们共同作用维持肠道黏膜屏障的完整性及免疫系统的平衡,防止有害物质通过肠壁进入血液循环,产生过度炎症,进而维持机体的健康状态,但当肠道菌群发生紊乱时会引发各种相关性疾病,如阿尔茨海默病(Alzheimer's disease, AD)^[14]、帕金森病(Parkinson's disease, PD)^[15]和抑郁症^[16]等。

2 肠道菌群与脊髓损伤和认知功能障碍的关系

2.1 脊髓损伤与肠道菌群

研究发现,脊髓损伤后血脊髓屏障(blood spinal cord barrier, BSCB)的结构会受到破坏,导致血液组成成分渗漏^[17]从而释放大量的炎症因子到脊髓,当炎症介质通过血液循环到达胃肠道时会导致肠黏膜厚度减少^[18],破坏肠紧密连接(tight junctions, TJ)及肠道屏障的完整性^[19],进而使肠道内菌群生态失调^[20]。Kang等^[21]对脊髓损伤后肠道菌群分析发现,脊髓损伤后,在门水平上,患者肠道内含有的厚壁菌门和变形菌门的数量增多,而拟杆菌门的数量相对减少。另外,临床试验对100名脊髓损伤患者的肠道菌群进行16S rRNA基因测序的结果显示,在科水平上,

肠道菌群中的普雷沃氏菌科(*Prevotellaceae*)、梭状芽孢杆菌科(*Clostridiaceae*)和瘤胃球菌科(*Ruminococcaceae*)发生不同程度的减少,而乳酸菌科(*Lactobacillaceae*)、肠杆菌科(*Enterobacteriaceae*)和疣菌科(*Verrucomicrobiaceae*)发生不同程度的增加;在属水平上,粪杆菌属(*Faecalibacterium*)和椰球菌属(*Coprococcus*)发生不同程度的减少,而链球菌属(*Streptococcus*)、肠球菌属(*Enterococcus*)和克雷伯氏菌属(*Klebsiella*)发生不同程度的增加^[22]。其中,瘤胃球菌科可产生短链脂肪酸(short chain fatty acid, SCFA),具有抗炎作用,导致脊髓损伤后抗炎物质减少。肠球菌属可使脂多糖(lipopolysaccharides, LPS)产生增多,LPS通过激活TLR4/MyD88信号通路诱导炎症因子过表达,而在脊髓损伤中过度的炎症反应增加神经细胞的死亡,导致脊髓损伤加重^[23]。以上研究表明脊髓损伤后肠道菌群发生改变(图1),从而影响疾病的发生发展。

2.2 认知功能障碍与肠道菌群

脊髓损伤后患者常出现记忆力、思维能力、

执行力和空间感知能力减退等一系列的认知功能障碍,并且还伴随一定的肠道菌群改变。Wu等^[24]发现,脊髓损伤后小鼠体内的天冬酰胺内肽酶(asparagine endopeptidase, AEP)被激活,增强了淀粉样斑块和Tau蛋白的过度磷酸化导致小鼠出现认知功能障碍,这与AD患者的发病机制相似。对25名健康对照组和25名AD患者的粪便样本分析发现,AD受试者的微生物组丰富度较对照组发生改变,在门水平上主要表现为,AD患者的厚壁菌门和放线菌门的细菌数量减少,而变形菌门和拟杆菌门的细菌数量增加,在科水平上主要表现为,梭状芽孢杆菌科(*Clostridiaceae*)、消化链球菌科(*Peptostreptococcaceae*)、苏黎世杆菌科(*Turicibacteraceae*)的相对丰度减少,紫单胞菌科(*Porphiromonadaceae*)和理研菌科(*Rikenellaceae*)的相对丰度增加^[25]。此外,脊髓损伤后出现认知功能障碍的发病机制和PD也具有相似性,它们主要通过影响中枢神经系统中的多巴胺能神经元,导致空间记忆出现障碍^[26-27]。对65例PD患者和38例健康对照的粪便样本进

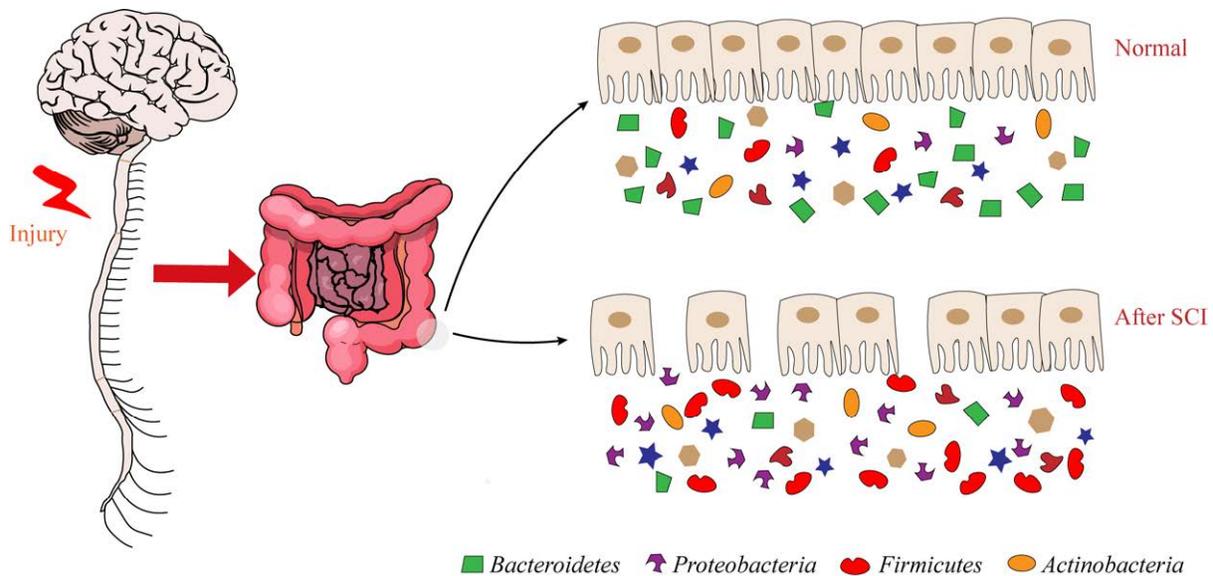


图1 正常肠道菌群及脊髓损伤后的肠道菌群 SCI: 脊髓损伤

Figure 1 Gut microbiota of the normal and after spinal cord injury. SCI: Spinal cord injury.

行分析发现,在门水平上,厚壁菌门的数量减少,变形菌门和拟杆菌门的数量增加,在科水平上,梭状芽孢杆菌科(*Clostridiaceae*)、普雷沃氏菌科(*Prevotellaceae*)和肠球菌科(*Enterococcaceae*)的数量减少,双歧杆菌科(*Bifidobacteriaceae*)和肠杆菌科(*Enterobacteriaceae*)的数量增加^[28]。同样地,严重的抑郁症患者体内多巴胺功能失调也会出现认知功能障碍,16S rRNA 基因测序显示,有认知功能障碍的抑郁症患者在门水平上其厚壁菌门的相对丰度降低,拟杆菌门、变形菌门和放线菌门的相对丰度升高,在科水平上,梭状芽孢杆菌科(*Clostridiaceae*)、消化链球菌科(*Peptostreptococcaceae*)的相对丰度降低,颤螺旋菌科(*Oscillospiraceae*)的相对丰度增加^[16]。一项孟德尔随机化研究分析发现梭状芽孢杆菌科(*Clostridiaceae*)的降低会加重认知功能障碍^[29],并且脊髓损伤患者体内的梭状芽孢杆菌科(*Clostridiaceae*)^[22]与 AD、PD 及严重抑郁症患者一样都表现出降低的趋势。由此可见,脊髓损伤后肠道菌群发生变化,并且肠道菌群变化与认知功能障碍之间存在紧密联系。

以上论述表明,脊髓损伤和认知功能障碍患者均与肠道菌群失调有密切联系,但目前针对脊髓损伤后肠道菌群对认知功能障碍影响的作用机制研究相对较少。因此,深入探讨肠道菌群与脊髓损伤后出现认知功能障碍之间的关系对病情的发展及后续治疗有重要意义。

3 脊髓损伤后肠道菌群通过不同途径影响认知功能障碍的发生发展

脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍的发生严重影响患者的社交能力和生活质量,阻碍其康复过程,并对疾病的发展和预后产生负面影响。近年来,

越来越多的研究表明,脊髓损伤后肠道菌群失调,并且肠道菌群失调与认知功能有密切联系^[30-31]。

然而,目前对脊髓损伤后肠道菌群对认知功能障碍影响的作用机制尚不明确,随着现代科研技术的不断进步,我们逐渐认识到,肠道菌群主要通过下丘脑-垂体-肾上腺(hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal, HPA)轴、神经递质和免疫系统这3种途径影响认知功能的发生和发展(图2)。

3.1 下丘脑-垂体-肾上腺(HPA)轴

HPA轴是神经内分泌系统的一个重要调节轴,其传递信号途径为下丘脑产生促肾上腺皮质激素释放激素(corticotropin releasing hormone, CRH),促使垂体产生促肾上腺皮质激素(adrenocorticotrophic hormone, ACTH),进而刺激肾上腺皮质产生皮质醇(cortisol, CORT)等应激激素^[32],CORT通过与海马体、杏仁核和前额叶皮层等区域的糖皮质激素受体(glucocorticoid receptor, GR)结合来影响神经元的功能进而影响认知^[33]。然而脊髓损伤会导致下丘脑和脊髓之间的神经连接中断,研究发现,脊髓损伤后肾上腺功能受损,肾上腺产生的CORT增加,HPA轴上游激素ACTH因产生负反馈调节而减少,从而导致HPA轴的变化^[34]。此外,肠道菌群在HPA轴稳态中发挥重要作用^[35]。Kuijer等^[31]研究发现,较高浓度的乳酸菌可以降低血清中ACTH及CORT的水平进而影响HPA轴;Mudd等^[36]对24头雄性仔猪的16S rRNA基因测序显示,较高浓度的瘤胃球菌降低了CORT的浓度,从而影响HPA轴的变化。此外,研究发现,脊髓损伤后乳酸菌和瘤胃球菌的浓度也发生增高的现象^[22]。因此,脊髓损伤后出现的较高浓度的乳酸菌和瘤胃球菌可能通过影响HPA轴导致CORT水平降低进而导致认知功能障碍的发生。

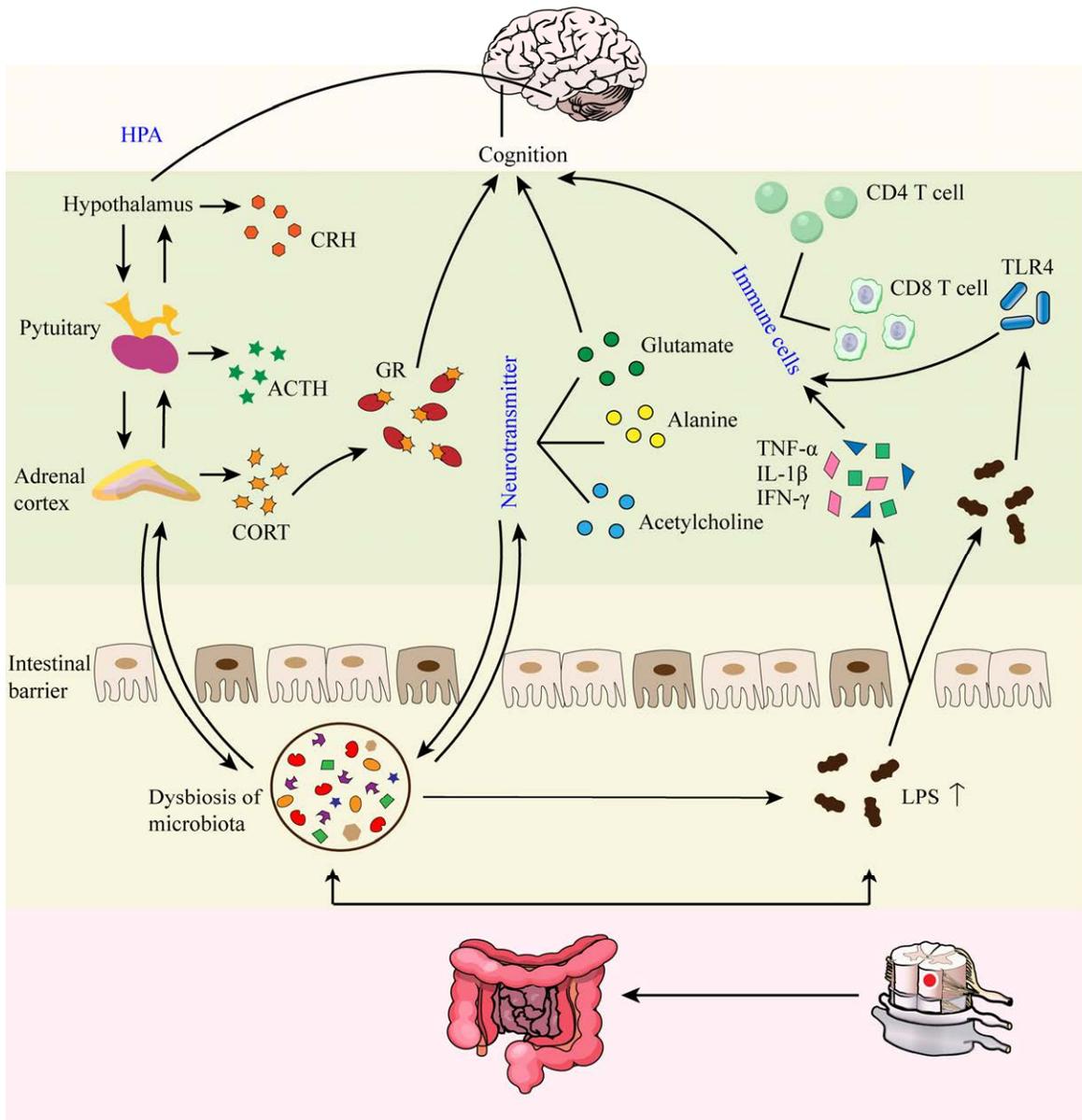


图 2 肠道菌群影响认知功能发生发展的途径 LPS: 脂多糖; CRH: 促肾上腺皮质激素释放激素; ACTH: 促肾上腺皮质激素; CORT: 皮质醇; GR: 糖皮质激素受体; TLR4: Toll 样受体 4

Figure 2 The pathways through which gut microbiota affects the occurrence and development of cognitive function. LPS: Lipopolysaccharides; CRH: Corticotropin releasing hormone; ACTH: Adrenocorticotropic hormone; CORT: Cortisol; GR: Glucocorticoid receptor; TLR4: Toll-like receptor 4.

3.2 神经递质

神经递质是一种在神经元之间传递信息的化学物质，通过神经元之间的突触传递信息，从而使神经系统能够协调和调控各种生理和行

为功能。肠道菌群可以释放谷氨酸、丙氨酸和乙酰胆碱等多种神经递质，这些神经递质在大脑中起着关键的调节作用，参与了情绪、注意力、学习和记忆等认知功能的调控^[37-39]。

3.2.1 谷氨酸

谷氨酸是兴奋性神经元中主要的神经递质之一,在突触传递中扮演着重要角色,通过促进兴奋性神经传递,谷氨酸可以增强神经元之间的通信,从而有助于提高认知功能^[40],而谷氨酸浓度过高时可使钙离子进入突触后神经元,引发兴奋性毒性,导致神经元的破坏进而导致认知功能障碍^[41]。因此,谷氨酸浓度过高和过低都会导致认知功能障碍。研究发现,脊髓损伤后谷氨酸浓度增加可产生神经毒性^[42],导致神经元损害和细胞死亡,出现认知功能障碍。此外,一项宏基因组关联研究显示,拟杆菌的相对丰度在肥胖个体中显著降低,与血清谷氨酸浓度呈负相关^[43],表明拟杆菌的相对丰度降低伴有谷氨酸浓度水平升高,产生兴奋性毒性导致认知功能障碍,并且拟杆菌在脊髓损伤后其水平也呈现出下降趋势^[21]。此外,一项研究发现15%的乳酸菌可以产生谷氨酸^[44],而脊髓损伤后乳酸菌含量降低^[22],可见脊髓损伤后谷氨酸浓度也会出现降低的现象,而谷氨酸水平降低同样会出现认知功能障碍^[40]。综上所述可知,脊髓损伤后出现的拟杆菌和乳酸菌水平的降低,可能通过影响谷氨酸的正常功能导致认知功能障碍的发生。

3.2.2 丙氨酸

丙氨酸是一种天然多功能氨基酸,除参与蛋白质的合成外还参与神经递质的合成。对100名老年人的调查研究发现,补充 β -丙氨酸后可以改善老年人的认知功能^[45],说明丙氨酸与认知功能之间有密切联系。瘤胃宏基因组学分析显示,瘤胃微生物代谢产物主要是氨基酸、羧酸和脂肪酸,普雷沃氏菌与瘤胃微生物代谢产物呈正相关,主要影响丙氨酸的含量,所以普雷沃氏菌含量减少丙氨酸含量也减少^[46],此外,研

究发现,部分肠杆菌和克雷伯氏菌可产生D-丙氨酸^[47],所以,肠道菌群变化可影响丙氨酸含量变化。肠道菌群16S rRNA基因测序结果显示,在脊髓损伤患者肠道内出现普雷沃氏菌含量减少^[22],肠杆菌和克雷伯氏菌含量增加的现象^[48]。因此,脊髓损伤后出现的普雷沃氏菌、肠杆菌和克雷伯氏菌的改变可能通过影响丙氨酸含量变化进而影响认知功能。

3.2.3 乙酰胆碱

乙酰胆碱是胆碱能神经元分泌的神经递质,在调节中枢神经系统的神经发生、神经元分化、突触可塑性和神经保护方面起着至关重要的作用。海马体是富含烟碱乙酰胆碱受体的大脑区域^[49],研究发现,损害海马CA3区胆碱能受体,可出现认知障碍^[50]。Sun等^[51]研究发现,在AD小鼠前额叶中给予M1胆碱能受体激动剂,可改善小鼠在物体识别实验和水迷宫实验中的表现,有效提高了动物的认知能力,脊髓损伤后因乙酰胆碱浓度下降也会出现认知功能障碍^[52],因此,乙酰胆碱和认知功能之间存在密切联系。16S rRNA基因测序发现,梭状芽孢杆菌相对丰度的减少及链球菌相对丰度的增加都可导致重症肌无力(myasthenia gravis, MG)患者体内乙酰胆碱正常功能失调^[53],说明肠道菌失调能导致乙酰胆碱正常功能受损。此外,脊髓损伤患者也出现梭状芽孢杆菌相对丰度减少链球菌增多的趋势。因此,脊髓损伤后出现的梭状芽孢杆菌相对丰度的减少及链球菌增多的现象可能通过影响乙酰胆碱的正常功能导致认知功能障碍的发生。

综上所述可知,脊髓损伤后肠道微生物失去平衡,导致肠道微生物代谢产物发生变化,可能通过影响谷氨酸、丙氨酸及乙酰胆碱等神经递质的释放进而影响认知功能障碍的发生。

3.3 免疫系统

免疫系统是人体防御疾病的生理系统, 可以通过免疫应答的方式识别并抵抗病原微生物(如细菌、病毒、真菌和寄生虫)来维护身体的健康^[54]。白细胞主要分为吞噬细胞(包括巨噬细胞和中性粒细胞)和淋巴细胞(包括T细胞和B细胞)两种类型, 是免疫系统的重要组成部分。脊髓损伤急性期单核巨噬细胞会释放许多炎症因子, 如肿瘤坏死因子- α (tumor necrosis factor, TNF- α)、白细胞介素-1 β (interleukin-1 β , IL-1 β)和干扰素- γ (interferon- γ , IFN- γ)等, 当炎症因子活跃并发挥其吞噬功能时, 可能会导致轴突的损伤甚至死亡, 从而干扰和破坏神经信号的正常传递^[55]。研究表明, 过高浓度的 IL-1 β 会损害海马长期增强(long-term potentiation, LTP)^[56], 通过抑制谷氨酸释放^[57]并减少海马突触体中的钙离子内流^[58]导致海马记忆障碍^[59]。因此, 免疫系统和认知功能密切相关。Yu等^[60]发现克雷伯氏菌增加伴有LPS增多, LPS进入血液循环并与toll样受体4 (toll-like receptor 4, TLR4)结合通过激活TLR4/MyD88/NF- κ B信号通路激活免疫系统, 引发炎症反应^[61-62]; 在免疫检查点抑制剂治疗中发现, 含有较低浓度的粪杆菌和胃瘤球菌的患者其外周CD4 T细胞和CD8 T细胞数量减少, 所以, 肠道菌群失调和免疫系统之间也有密切联系。此外, 脊髓损伤后患者肠道内克雷伯氏菌出现增加的趋势, 其产生的LPS也增多^[63], 而粪杆菌和胃瘤球菌也出现降低的趋势。因此, 脊髓损伤后克雷伯氏菌相对丰度的增加, 以及粪杆菌和胃瘤球菌相对丰度的减少可能通过免疫系统导致认知功能障碍的发生。

综上所述, 脊髓损伤后肠道菌群失调可能通过上述3种信号途径中的一条或者多条途径影响大脑认知功能的发生发展, 而且这些途径之间可能存在相互联系。

4 基于肠道菌群干预脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍的发生

目前针对脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍发生的治疗方法主要有药物治疗、康复治疗及心理治疗。药物治疗除了会产生耐药性及过敏反应外, 长期服药对肝脏、肾脏也会产生一定的损害, 而且长期康复治疗除了会加重患者经济负担可能还会带来情绪上的压力, 同时心理治疗会涉及个人隐私和敏感信息, 存在隐私泄露的风险。因此, 亟须寻找新的治疗方案来缓解脊髓损伤后的认知功能障碍。如上所述, 脊髓损伤后肠道菌群失调通过不同途径引起认知功能障碍的发生, 因此, 我们可以通过改善和调节肠道菌群的方法来防治脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍的发生, 即肠道微生态治疗, 如益生菌和益生元的补充、粪菌移植(fecal microbiota transplantation, FMT)和饮食调节等。

益生菌可以有效地管理肠道环境, 调节肠道微生态平衡、维持机体良好的生理状态影响认知功能的发生发展, 是一种安全可靠的治疗方式。益生菌可以通过改变HPA轴的活性影响皮质醇的释放改善认知功能^[64], 补充益生菌后肠道细菌产生的短链脂肪酸(short chain fatty acid, SCFA)通过增加组蛋白乙酰化来增强LTP并调节记忆的形成^[65]。含有乳酸菌和双歧杆菌的益生菌可以增强Treg细胞的活性, 增加神经活性代谢物和神经递质的分泌, 从而改善中枢神经系统疾病^[66]。此外, FMT是一种将健康捐献者粪便中的微生物移植到受体肠道内, 重塑肠道菌群来恢复肠道微生物稳态的新方法。研究发现, 从健康老鼠的粪便中分离出的菌群移植到脊髓损伤小鼠肠道内, 可以改善脊髓损伤小鼠的运动恢复, 并促进神经元存活和轴突再生^[19]。膳食酚类化合物, 如水果、蔬菜、谷物、

咖啡和茶可缓解脊髓损伤带来的氧化应激及炎症反应^[67],并且红酒中发现的白藜芦醇也是一种多酚,可以通过重塑肠道菌群和增加丁酸盐含量促进脊髓损伤的神经功能恢复^[68]。综上可知,肠道微生态治疗对脊髓损伤及认知功能均起到保护作用。

5 总结及展望

脊髓损伤后可以引起不同程度的认知功能障碍。本文论述了肠道菌群的改变可以影响认知功能,虽然目前肠道菌群对认知功能的影响已被初步了解,但这一领域仍然面临着许多挑战和未知,如肠道菌群是一个复杂的微生物群,了解每一种微生物对认知功能的影响以及它们之间的相互作用是非常复杂的;其次,我们需要更深入地了解肠道菌群和中枢神经系统之间的确切关系,以及失调是如何发生和传递的;再次,不同个体的肠道菌群组成差异很大,可能导致脊髓损伤后对认知功能的影响也存在差异,临床研究需要更多样化和大规模的样本,以验证肠道菌群与脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍之间的关系,并为临床治疗提供更可靠的证据。因此,在未来的研究中,我们可以期待通过深入的分子生物学、神经科学和微生物学研究,揭示肠道菌群在脊髓损伤后认知功能障碍中的确切作用机制,发现新的治疗策略,为脊髓损伤患者的康复提供新的思路和治疗方法。

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