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· 基础研究 ·

miR-18a-3p在肝癌中的表达及其调控ADCY1表达对肝癌细胞侵袭及增殖的影响

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摘要

背景与目的:研究表明多种microRNA (miRNA)可能在肝癌的发生发展中发挥重要作用,其作用机制仍值得进一步研究和探讨。因此,本研究从已报道的肝癌差异表达miRNA中进一步筛选关键miRNA,并验证和探讨其作用机制。

方法:从已发表的研究中筛选出肝癌组织及肝癌患者血清/血浆中与正常肝组织及正常血清/血浆中共同的差异表达miRNA;用qRT-PCR在正常肝细胞与肝癌细胞中对筛选出的目标miRNA表达情况进行验证;用过表达和抑制的方法观察目标miRNA对肝癌细胞侵袭能力(Transwell实验)与增殖能力(MTT实验)的影响,以及在30例临床标本中检测目标miRNA的表达并通过KM plotter网站分析其对肝癌患者生存的影响;通过miRDB和GEPIA数据库预测和分析目标miRNA的靶基因,并用逆转实验和双荧光素酶报告实验进一步验证。

结果:在肝癌组织(vs.正常肝组织)及肝癌患者血清/血浆(vs.正常人血清/血浆)中共同高表达的miRNA有4个(miR-18a-3p、miR-221-3p、miR-222-3p、miR-224-3p),共同低表达的miRNA有2个(miR-26a-3p、miR-125b-3p)。qRT-PCR实验证实,与正常肝细胞比较,miR-18a在肝癌细胞中高表达,miR-26a在肝癌细胞中低表达(均P<0.05)。过表达/抑制miR-18a-3p表达能促进/降低肝癌细胞的侵袭及生长能力(均P<0.05),而过表达/抑制miR-26a-3p对肝癌细胞的侵袭及生长能力影响无法确定。分析结果显示,ADCY1是miR-18a-3p的靶基因,过表达ADCY1能部分逆转miR-18a-3p对肝癌细胞的上述作用,同时,表达上调的miR-18a-3p能通过结合到ADCY1 mRNA 3'UTR抑制ADCY1的表达。

结论:miR-18a-3p可能在肝癌的发生发展中起了关键作用,其在肝癌中表达上调,并通过抑制下游靶基因ADCY1的表达增强进肝癌细胞的侵袭和增殖能力。

关键词

癌,肝细胞;微RNAs;肿瘤侵润;细胞增殖

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Expression of miR-18a-3p in liver cancer and the influence of its regulating ADCY1 expression on invasion and proliferation of liver cancer cells

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Studies have shown that a variety of microRNAs (miRNAs) may play crucial roles in the occurrence and development of liver cancer, and their action mechanisms still need to be studied and determined. Therefore, this study was conducted to further screen and validate the key miRNAs from the differentially-expressed miRNAs that have been reported in liver cancer, and then investigate their action mechanisms.

Methods: The common differentially-expressed miRNAs in liver cancer tissue and serum/plasm of liver cancer patients versus normal liver tissue and serum/plasm of healthy subjects were screened from the published studies. The expressions of goal miRNAs in normal liver cells and liver cancer cells were verified by qRT-PCR method. Using overexpression and inhibition strategies, the influences of goal miRNAs on invasion ability (Transwell invasion assay) and proliferation capacity (MTT assay) of liver cancer cells were observed, and also the expressions of goal miRNAs in 30 samples of clinical specimens were detected and their impacts on survival of liver cancer patients were analyzed through KM plotter website. The target genes of goal miRNAs were predicted and analyzed using miRDB and GEPIA databases and were further validated by reverse experiment and dual-luciferase reporter assay.

Results: There were 4 common up-regulated miRNAs (miR-18a-3p, miR-221-3p, miR-222-3p, miR-224-3p) and 2 down-regulated miRNAs (miR-26a-3p, miR-125b-3p) in liver cancer tissue (vs. normal liver tissue) and serum/plasma of liver cancer patients (vs. serum/plasma of healthy individuals). The qRT-PCR experiment confirmed that miR-18a was highly expressed and miR-26a was weakly expressed in liver cancer cells compared with normal liver cells (both $P<0.05$). Overexpression/inhibition of miR-18a expression promoted/reduced the invasion and proliferation capacities of liver cancer cells (all $P<0.05$), while overexpression/inhibition of miR-26a exerted confused influences on the invasion abilities and proliferation capacities of liver cancer cells. The results of analysis showed that ADCY1 was target gene of miR-18a-3p, overexpression of ADCY1 partially reversed the above actions of miR-18a-3p on liver cancer cells, and meanwhile, the up-regulated miR-18a-3p can inhibited the expression of ADCY1 by binding to the ADCY1 mRNA 3'UTR.

Conclusion: MiR-18a-3p may play a critical role in the occurrence and development of liver cancer. Its expression is up-regulated in liver cancer cells and tissues, which can promote the invasion and proliferation capacities of liver cancer cells by inhibiting the expression of downstream target gene ADCY1.

Key words

Carcinoma, Hepatocellular; MicroRNAs; Neoplasm Invasiveness; Cell Proliferation

CLC number: R735.7

肝癌是世界上第2位最常见恶性肿瘤^[1-3]。在中国,其发病率及致死率分别位于第4位及第2位^[4]。

肝癌预后差,具有高转移率和复发率,大多数患者被诊断时已处于晚期,并且5年生存率通常低

于15%^[5]。因此，进一步探讨肝癌的复发及转移机制，寻找新的治疗靶点以提高肝癌的治疗效果，是临床医生所面临的重要问题。

microRNA（miRNA）是大小为17~25个核苷酸的短RNA分子，可通过转录后调控来抑制靶基因的表达。单个miRNA可以靶向数百个mRNA，并影响通常参与功能相互作用途径的许多基因的表达。miRNA已被证明与许多疾病的发病机制有关，并且参与众多肿瘤的发生、发展、转移及耐药等过程^[6~12]。

腺苷酸环化酶1（adenylate cyclase 1，ADCY1）是ADCY超家族的成员，其位于7p12.3，包含22个外显子；蛋白质产物的分子量为130 kD。已有相关研究报道了ADCY1在结肠癌^[13]、黑色素瘤^[14]、肺癌^[15]、胰腺癌^[16~17]等肿瘤中发挥重要作用，但尚未有研究报道其与肝癌发生发展与转移的联系。

本研究通过筛选并分析相关测序数据，证实了miR-18a-3p在肝癌进展中发挥重要作用，并能通过转录后调控抑制下游ADCY1基因的表达来增加肝癌细胞的侵袭及生长能力。

1 材料与方法

1.1 材料

1.1.1 细胞株 本研究中所使用正常肝组织细胞L-02、肝癌细胞SK-HEP-1、HA22T均来自中科院上海细胞库，由本实验室保存。选取中南大学湘雅医院普通外科30例肝癌患者的癌组织及癌旁组织作为临床标本，患者入院时均签署知情同意告知书。

1.1.2 主要试剂 TRIzolTM Reagent、LipofectamineTM 3000试剂均购自Invitrogen公司（美国）；SYBR Green qPCR Mix、4×Reverse Transcription Master Mix均购自TaKaRa公司（美国）；8 μm Transwell小室、6孔盘、24孔盘均购于Corning公司（美国）；DMEM培养基购于Invitrogen公司（美国），胎牛血清购于Gibco公司（美国）。

1.2 方法

1.2.1 细胞培养 正常肝细胞L-02使用1640培养基进行培养、肝癌细胞SK-HEP-1、HA22T使用DMEM培养基进行培养（加入10%胎牛血清、1%谷氨酰胺、1%青霉素-链霉素双抗），并置于含5%CO₂的37℃细胞培养箱中进行培养。

1.2.2 Transwell侵袭实验 将基底胶按1:20比例稀释后，每个transwell小室加入100 μL，并置于37℃细胞培养箱中使其凝固。2 h后，于上室加入150 μL含100 000个细胞的无血清培养基，下室加入含血清培养基，再放入37℃细胞培养箱中培养12~24 h。取出上室，进行清洗、固定、染色、显微镜下观察、拍照等。每组实验设置3个副孔。

1.2.3 qRT-PCR实验 TRIzol试剂提取肝癌细胞总RNA，取2 μg总RNA进行逆转录。使用Bio-Rad CFX96系统进行实验，计算RNA（mRNA和miRNA）的表达。GAPDH（用于mRNA）或U6（用于miRNA）标准化数据，并通过ΔΔCt值评估相对表达。所有引物均购自Integrated DNA Technologies公司（美国）。

1.2.4 MTT增殖实验 用含10%胎牛血清的培养液配成单个细胞悬液，以每孔1 000~10 000个细胞接种到96孔板，每孔体积200 μL。培养3~5 d后，每孔MTT溶液（5 mg/mL用PBS配）20 μL继续孵育4 h，终止培养，小心吸弃孔内培养上清液，对于悬浮细胞需要离心后再吸弃孔内培养上清液。每孔加150 μL DMSO，振荡10 min，使结晶物充分溶解。选择490 nm波长，在酶联免疫监测仪上测定各孔光吸收值，记录结果，以时间为横坐标，吸光值为纵坐标绘制细胞生长曲线。

1.2.5 过表达miR-18a-3p质粒的构建 过表达miR-520F-3p采用pLV慢病毒质粒作为载体，序列（上游：CGC GTA CTG CCC TAA GTG CTC CTT CTG GGT CGA CCC AGA AGG AGC ACT TAG GGC AGT TTT TTG，下游：CGC AAA AAA CTG CCC TAA GTG CTC CTT CTG GGT CGA CCC AGA AGG AGC ACT TAG GGC ACT A）由Integrated DNA Technologies公司（美国）提供。新构建质粒经小提、酶切验证后再经大提扩增，然后经慢病毒包装、转染，形成稳定转染细胞后行下一步功能实验。

1.2.6 miR-18a-3p抑制剂质粒构建及瞬转 miR-18a-3p抑制剂质粒购买于Integrated DNA Technologies公司（美国），具体序列为rCrCrA rGrArA rGrGrA rGrCrA rCrUrU rArGrG rGrCrA rGrU。瞬转具体步骤：(1)当肝癌细胞长至60%~80%汇合度时转染，6孔板：贴壁细胞0.25~1×10⁶；(2)使用无血清DMEM培养基稀释LipofectamineTM 3000试剂，充分混匀：无血清DMEM培养基125 μL，LipofectamineTM 3000

试剂5 μL; (3) 使用无血清DMEM培养基稀释DNA, 制备DNA预混液, 充分混匀: 无血清DMEM培养基125 μL, miR抑制剂2.5 μg; (4) 在每管已稀释的Lipofectamine™ 3000试剂中加入稀释的miR抑制剂(1:1比例): 稀释的DNA125 μL, 稀释的Lipofectamine™ 3000试剂125 μL; (5) 孵育: 室温孵育10~15 min; (6) 加入DNA-脂质复合物至细胞中: 每孔miR抑制剂-脂质体复合物250 μL, miR抑制剂2 500 ng, Lipofectamine™ 3000试剂用量5 μL; (7) 分析转染细胞37 °C孵育细胞2~4 d, 然后分析转染细胞。

1.2.7 ADCY1的3'UTR野生型和突变型质粒构建
根据Targetscan网站(https://www.targetscan.org/vert_71)对ADCY1 3'UTR序列分析结果,发现ADCY1 3'UTR共9 121个碱基序列,为分析miR-18a-3p对ADCY1 3'UTR的调控功能,选取ADCY1 3'UTR前2 200个碱基序列构建野生型及突变型质粒。ADCY1的3'UTR采用psiCHECK-2质粒为载体。野生型引物序列(上游:CAG TAA TTC TAG GCG ATC GCA GGA GCC CAC GTG GGC CTCT, 下游:AGA TAT TTT ATT GCG GCC AGC CCC AGT AGC AGC GAG AGG CC);突变型引物序列(上游:CAG TAA TTC TAG GCG ATC GCA GGA GCC CAC GTG GGC CTCT, 下游:AGA TAT TTT ATT GCG)

GCC AGC CAA AGT CTC CAG TGG GTC CA)由Integrated DNA Technologies公司(美国)提供。新构建质粒经小提、酶切验证后再经大提扩增,然后经慢病毒包装、转染,形成稳定转染细胞后行下一步功能实验。

1.3 统计学处理

采用SPSS 22.0统计软件对本研究数据进行统计学分析,计量资料采用均数±标准差($\bar{x} \pm s$)表示,应用单因素方差分析和LSD-t检验比较两组间各指标水平差异, $P < 0.05$ 为差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 同时在肝癌组织及血清/血浆中都差异表达的miRNA筛选并验证

首先,从已发表^[18]的在肝癌肿瘤组织及血清/血浆中都差异表达的miRNA(与正常组织/血液样本相比)中筛选出同时在癌组织及肝癌患者血清/血浆中均差异表达的miRNA共6个(4个上调:miR-18a-3p、miR-221-3p、miR-222-3p、miR-224-3p;2个下调:miR-26a-3p、miR-125b-3p)(图1A)。然后用qRT-PCR实验证明了这些miRNA在细胞中的表达情况,结果提示,与正常肝细胞相比,miR-18a-3p在肝癌细胞中表达上调,miR-26a-3p在肝癌细胞中表达下调(图1B-C)。

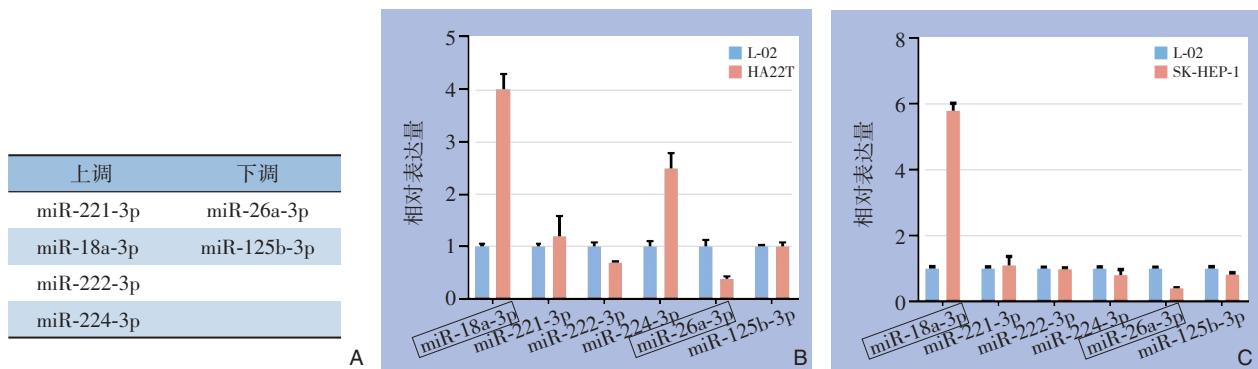


图1 差异表达miRNA筛选及验证 A: 从已发表文章中筛选出肝癌中差异表达的6个miRNA; B: 6个miRNA在正常肝细胞L-02及肝癌细胞HA22T中的表达情况; C: 6个miRNA在正常肝细胞L-02及肝癌细胞SK-HEP-1中的表达情况

Figure 1 Screening and validation of the differentially-expressed miRNAs A: Six miRNAs screened out from the published studies; B: Expression of 6 miRNAs in normal hepatic L-02 cells and liver cancer HA22T cells; C: Expression of 6 miRNAs in normal hepatic L-02 cells and liver cancer SK-HEP-1 cells

2.2 miR-18a-3p与miR-26a-3p对肝癌细胞的侵袭及增殖能力的影响

过表达miR-18a-3p/miR-18a-3p抑制剂能明显促

进/抑制肝癌细胞的侵袭及增殖能力(均 $P < 0.05$)(图2A-D),而过表达miR-26a-3p/miR-26a-3p抑制剂无法得到一致性结果(图2E-H)。

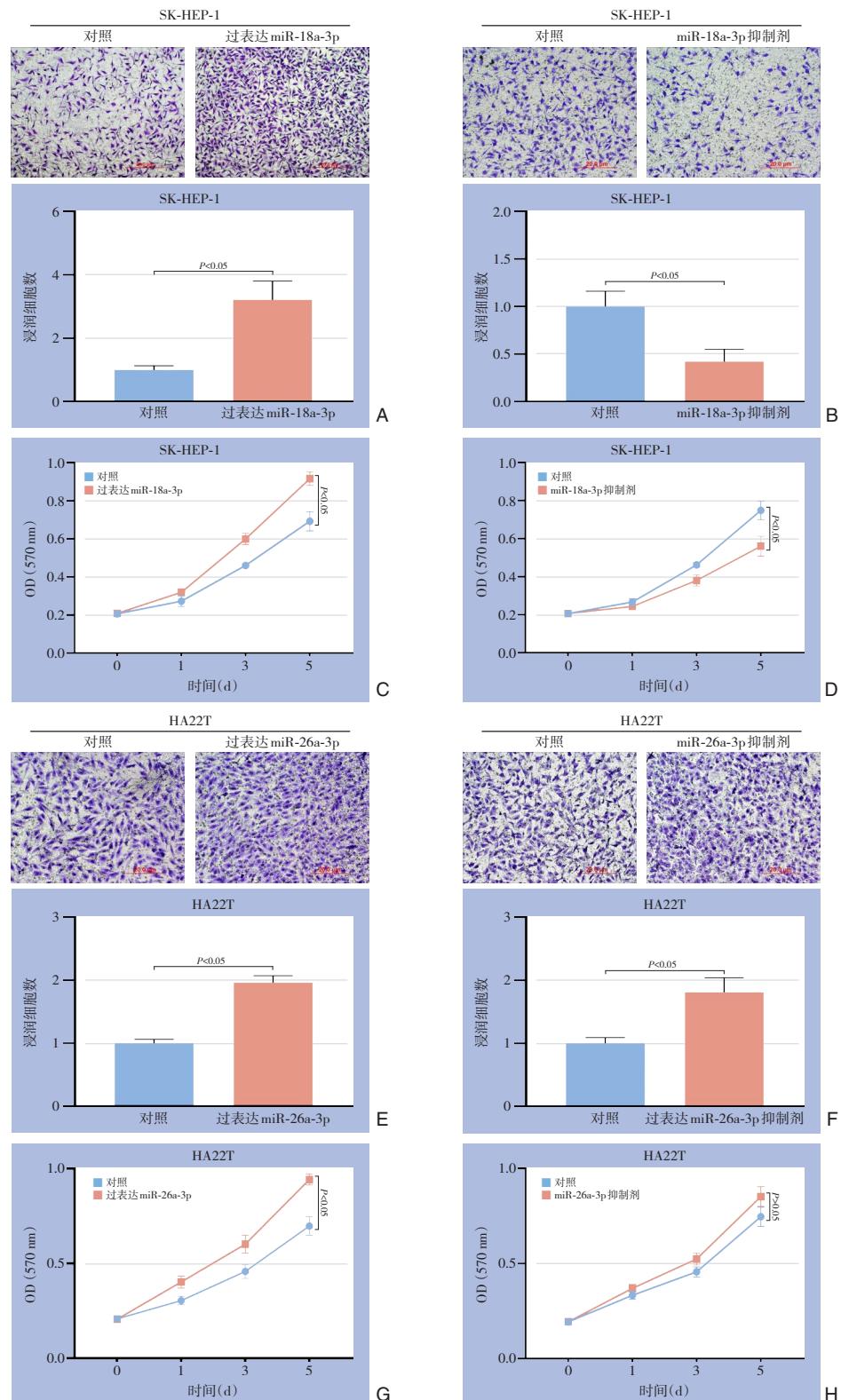


图2 miR-18a-3p、miR-26a-3p对肝癌细胞侵袭及增殖能力的影响 A-B: 过表达miR-18a-3p/抑制miR-18a-3p后肝癌细胞侵袭能力的变化；C-D: 过表达miR-18a-3p/抑制miR-18a-3p后肝癌细胞增殖能力的变化；E-F: 过表达miR-26a-3p/miR-26a-3p抑制剂后肝癌细胞侵袭能力的变化；G-H: 过表达miR-26a-3p/miR-26a-3p抑制剂后肝癌细胞增殖能力的变化

Figure 2 Influences of miR-18a-3p and miR-26a-3p on invasion and proliferation abilities of liver cancer cells A-B: Changes in invasion ability of liver cancer cells after overexpression miR-18a-3p/miR-18a-3p inhibitor; C-D: Changes in proliferation ability of liver cancer cells after overexpression miR-18a-3p/miR-18a-3p inhibitor; E-F: Changes in invasion ability of liver cancer cells after miR-26a-3p overexpression/miR-26a-3p inhibitor; G-H: Changes in proliferation ability of liver cancer cells after miR-26a-3p overexpression/miR-26a-3p inhibitor

2.3 临床组织样本检验 miR-18a-3p 的表达及 miR-18a 的表达与肝癌的生存关系

在30例肝癌患者的癌和癌旁组织标本中检验了miR-18a-3p的表达情况,结果显示肝癌组织中miR-18a-3p的表达明显高于癌旁组织($P<0.01$)

(图3A)。同时,通过KM plotter网站(<http://kmplot.com>)分析了miR-18a的表达与肝癌的生存关系,结果表明,miR-18a表达越高,肝癌患者的生存预后越差($P=0.0019$)(图3B)。

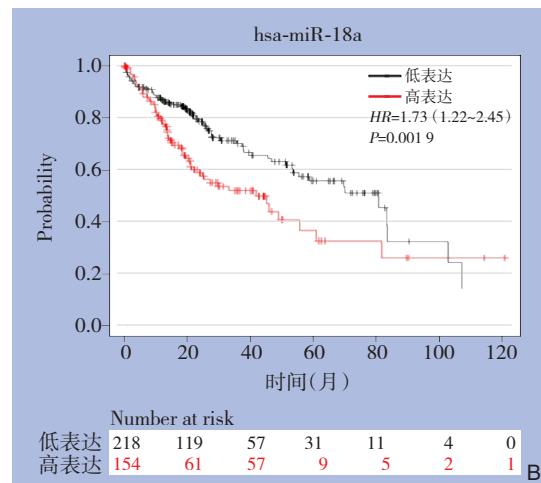
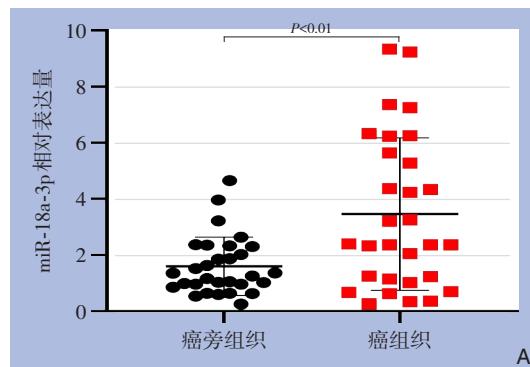


图3 组织标本验证miR-18a-3p的表达及miR-18a的表达与肝癌患者的生存关系 A: 30对临床标本中miR-18a-3p的表达情况; B: KM plotter网站分析miR-18a的表达与肝癌的生存关系

Figure 3 Validation of miR-18a-3p expression in tissue samples and relationship between miR-18a expression and survival of liver cancer patients A: The miR-18a-3p expressions in 30 paired clinical specimens; B: Analysis of the relationship between miR-18a expression and survival of liver cancer patients using KM plotter website

2.4 miR-18a-3p靶基因分析及逆转实验验证

为了进一步研究miR-18a调控肝癌进展的具体机制,通过miRDB网站(<http://mirdb.org/>)预测能被miR-18a-3p靶向调控的下游基因,并选取其中得分>95分的基因(SNX8、FNDC5、EFNA1、ZBBX、ADCY1、PDP1)(图4A)。然后,通过GEPIA数据库分析以上6个基因在肝癌组织及癌旁组织中的表达情况,结果显示SNX8在肝癌组织中表达升高,ADCY1在肝癌组织中表达明显降低(图4B)。由于通常miRNA能够通过转录后调控来抑制下游基因的表达,因此推测miR-18a-3p可能通过调控ADCY1的表达来调节肝癌细胞的侵袭及增殖能力。逆转实验结果显示,过表达ADCY1能部分逆

转miR-18a-3p对肝癌的调控作用(图4C-D)。

2.5 miR-18a-3p与ADCY1 mRNA的关系分析

为研究miR-18a-3p调控ADCY1的机制,预测ADCY1 mRNA 3'UTR前2200 bp区域能与miR-18a-3p结合的靶点,并构建相应的野生型和突变型质粒(图5A)。双荧光素酶报告实验结果表明,过表达miR-18a-3p/miR-18a-3p抑制剂能降低/增加转染野生型ADCY1 3'UTR肝癌细胞的荧光素酶活性,而对转染突变型质粒的细胞无明显影响。由此表明miR-18a-3p能通过直接结合到ADCY1 mRNA 3'UTR区域转录后调控ADCY1的表达(图5B)。

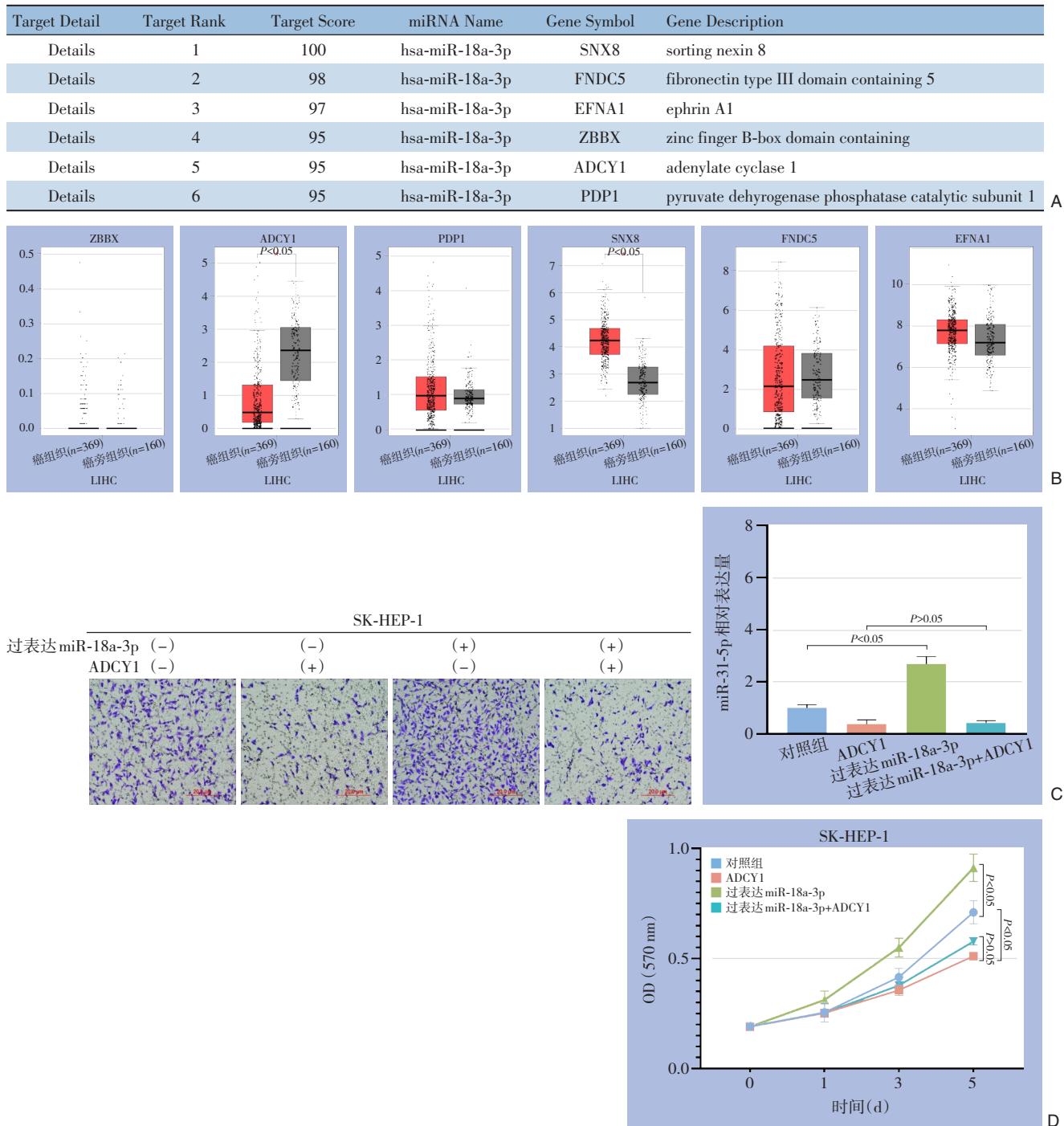


图4 miR-18a-3p与ADCY1的关系分析 A: miRDB网站预测能被miR-18a-3p靶向调控的6个下游基因; B: GEPIA数据库分析以上6个基因在肝癌组织及癌旁组织中的表达情况; C-D: 同时过表达miR-18a-3p及ADCY1后检测肝癌细胞的侵袭及增殖能力

Figure 4 Analysis of relationship between miR-18a-3p and ADCY1 A: The 6 downstream genes potentially regulated by miR-18a-3p predicted by miRDB website; B: Analysis the expressions of the 6 genes in liver cancer and adjacent tissues using GEPIA database; C-D: Invasion and proliferation abilities of liver cancer cells after co-overexpression of miR-18a-3p and ADCY1

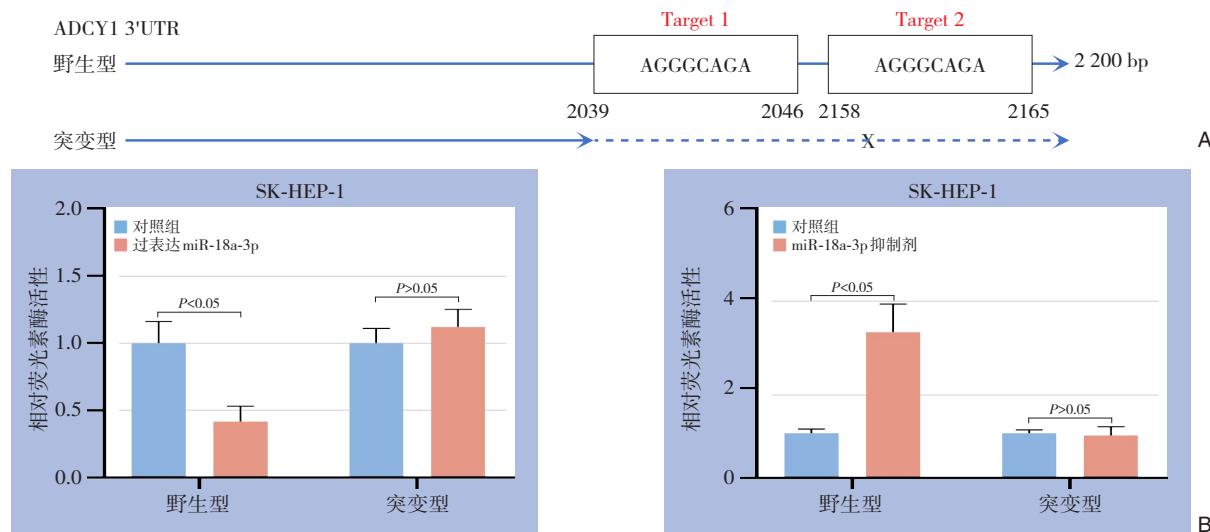


图5 双荧光素酶报告实验 A: miR-18a-3p与ADCY1结合位点的模式图及野生型、突变型质粒构建原理; B: 转染野生型或突变型质粒后肝癌细胞的荧光素酶活性

Figure 5 Dual-luciferase reporter assay A: Pattern of the binding site between miR-18a-3p and *ADCY1*, and construction principle of the wild-type and mutant-type plasmids; B: Luciferase activities of the liver cancer cells after transfection with wild-type and mutant-type plasmids

3 讨 论

全世界每年有超过850 000例诊断为肝癌的患者^[19], 肝癌目前是全球癌症相关死亡的第二大原因, 并且这一数字还在逐年上升^[20]。在所有原发性肝癌中, 肝细胞癌(HCC)是原发性肝癌最常见的类型, 约占所有病例的90%^[19, 21-22]。肝癌的预后差, 具有高转移率和复发率, 且5年生存率低。肝癌治疗领域的特点是多学科参与、多种治疗方法共存, 常见治疗方法包括肝切除术、肝移植术、消融治疗、TACE、放射治疗、系统抗肿瘤治疗等多种手段, 不同分期的肝癌患者选择合理的治疗方法可以使疗效最大化^[23]。目前肝癌的研究致力于寻找肝癌新的治疗靶点, 开发治疗新策略, 这对于那些手术治疗效果欠佳或相关抗肿瘤药物治疗效果不好的患者尤为重要。本研究探讨了肝癌进展的新的分子信号通路, 对肝癌新治疗靶点的开发、增加肝癌治疗效果、促进肝癌患者预后提供了理论支撑。

非编码RNA已经被证实在多种疾病发生、发展、转移及耐药过程中发挥重要作用^[24], miRNA正是其中一种起重要作用的非编码RNA。miRNA的定义基于它们在Dicer的作用下生成, Dicer是一种核糖核酸酶, 可将发夹结构的前体(称为pre-miRNA)加工成成熟的miRNA^[25]。miRNA通过识别

目标mRNA的3'UTR中的互补目标位点, 在转录后抑制基因表达。miRNA已经被证实可以参与多种生物学进程, 包括肿瘤的发生、发展及转移。Wei等^[26]报道miR-223可以抑制FOXO1的表达, 并可作为乳腺癌的潜在的肿瘤标志物。Liu等^[27]研究表明来源于巨噬细胞的miR-92a-2-5p能够通过外泌体转运到肝癌细胞并促进肝癌进展。Chen等^[28]报道miR-206可以通过靶向调节ZEB2的表达来影响肾透明细胞癌细胞的生长。以上研究都表明miRNA在肿瘤的生物学行为中发挥重要作用, 并可作为多种肿瘤的生物标记物。本研究通过收集肝癌相关miRNA的统计数据, 并通过相关实验证实了miR-18a-3p在肝癌细胞及组织中表达上调, 并能促进肝癌细胞的生长及迁移能力还能通过调控下游基因ADCY1的表达来影响肝癌细胞的侵袭及增殖能力, 从理论水平进一步证实了miRNA在肝癌中发挥重要作用, 并为寻找肝癌诊治的新靶标提供了实验基础。

ADCY1是ADCY超家族的成员, 它位于7p12.3, 包含22个外显子; 其蛋白质产物的分子量为130 kD。ADCY1主要表达于脑、睾丸、甲状腺、肝脏、前列腺、子宫内膜、心脏等组织器官。已有相关研究报道了ADCY1在许多疾病中发挥重要作用。研究^[29]表明ADCY1与黑色素瘤患者的总生存期显著相关, 并在黑色素瘤的转移中起重要作用。

用。此外，有研究^[30]报道 ADCY1 在非小细胞肺癌中高表达，并与其患者的预后相关。Ma 等^[31]报道了 ADCY1 在胶质母细胞瘤中高甲基化并与恶性胶质瘤患者的生存时间相关。目前尚未有研究报道 ADCY1 在肝癌中的作用机制。本研究通过 miR-18a-3p 预测了 ADCY1 可能是其作用的靶基因，并通过相关数据库证实了 ADCY1 在肝癌组织中表达明显下调，相关功能实验证实 ADCY1 能抑制肝癌的生长及侵袭能力，逆转实验表明过表达 ADCY1 能够部分逆转过表达 miR-18a-3p 对肝癌生长及侵袭能力的影响，进一步证实 miR-18a-3p 可以通过 ADCY1 发挥调节作用，双荧光素酶实验也验证了 miR-18a-3p 通过结合到 ADCY1 mRNA 3'UTR，转录后调控 ADCY1 而抑制 ADCY1 的表达。由此，本研究从多方面证实了 ADCY1 可以在 miR-18a-3p 的调节下影响肝癌的进展，进一步表明 ADCY1 可以作为肝癌诊治的潜在标志物。

miR-18a-3p 在肝癌组织及细胞中高表达，并可通过转录后调控抑制下游 ADCY1 基因的表达，以此促进肝癌细胞的侵袭及增殖能力。本研究结果可为寻找肝癌治疗的新靶点提供实验基础。

利益冲突：所有作者均声明不存在利益冲突。

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