

表观遗传调控在孕期应激致子代认知障碍中的研究进展



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【摘要】随着社会发展和生活压力增加,孕期应激已成为围产期女性面临的重要身心挑战。研究表明,孕期应激可能通过表观遗传调控机制影响胎儿发育编程,干扰神经发育,增加子代出现情绪障碍、行为异常及认知功能缺陷的风险,其中 DNA 甲基化、组蛋白修饰和非编码 RNA 等表观遗传修饰可能介导孕期应激对子代认知功能的长期影响。本文综述了表观遗传调控在孕期应激致子代认知障碍中的作用机制,重点分析 DNA 甲基化、组蛋白修饰及非编码 RNA 与子代认知功能缺陷的关联,为相关临床干预策略制定提供参考依据。

【关键词】孕期应激;表观遗传学;认知功能障碍;DNA 甲基化;组蛋白修饰;非编码 RNA

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Research progress on epigenetic regulation in cognitive impairment of offspring caused by stress during pregnancy

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【Abstract】 With social development and increased life pressures, prenatal stress has become a significant physical and mental challenge for women during the perinatal period. Research indicates that prenatal stress may affect fetal developmental programming through epigenetic regulatory mechanisms, thereby interfering with neurodevelopment and increasing the risk of emotional disturbances, behavioral abnormalities, and cognitive impairments in offspring. Epigenetic modifications such as DNA methylation (DNAm), histone modifications, and non-coding RNAs (ncRNAs) are likely to mediate the long-term effects of prenatal stress on offspring cognitive function. This article summarizes the mechanisms of epigenetic regulation in prenatal stress-induced cognitive impairments in offspring, with a focus on analyzing the associations of DNAm, histone modifications, and ncRNAs with cognitive deficits in offspring, aiming to provide references for the development of relevant clinical intervention strategies.

【Keywords】 Prenatal stress; Epigenetics; Cognitive impairment; DNAm; Histone modifications; ncRNAs

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孕期应激指女性在妊娠期至产后阶段,因消极事件、工作压力、疲劳等应激源,导致下丘脑-垂体-肾上腺(hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal, HPA)轴功能紊乱,引发机体内分泌、神经及免疫系统紊乱^[1]。流行病学研究表明,84%的孕产妇在围产期会受到显著的应激干扰^[2]。孕期应激导致母体稳态失衡时,其产生的病理信号会通过胎盘传递至胎儿,进而干扰胎儿发育编程,对神经发育进程产生持久性影响,导致子代出现情绪障碍、行为异常及认知功能缺陷等问题^[3-4]。表观遗传调控是指环境因素诱导基因组发生可遗传修饰的生物学过程,在孕期应激条件下,该机制可能驱动 HPA 轴相关激素基因的甲基化,并通过亲本生殖细胞的表观遗传修饰进行跨代传递,进而影响子代认知功能并造成长期神经发育障碍^[5]。然而,目前探讨孕期应激表观遗传调控在子代认知障碍中具体机制的研究较少,基于此,本文对孕期应激相关的表观遗传修饰变化及其在子代认知障碍发生中的潜在调控机制进行综述,以期为临床制定干预策略提供理论依据。

1 孕期应激相关表观遗传调控

1.1 DNA 甲基化

DNA 甲基化(DNA methylation, DNAm)作为表观遗传修饰的核心机制,其在沉默逆转录病毒元件、调控组织特异性基因表达、基因组印记及介导 X 染色体失活等生物学过程发挥重要作用^[6]。DNAm 由 DNA 甲基转移酶(DNA methyltransferase, DNMT)催化完成,并将甲基转移至胞嘧啶-磷酸-鸟嘌呤(CpG)和非 CpG 二核苷酸内的胞嘧啶环^[7]。研究发现,编码糖皮质激素受体(glucocorticoid receptor, GR)的核受体亚族 3 组 C1 成员(*NR3C1*)基因作为应激反应的关键调控因子,其甲基化主要富集于 CpG 位点^[8]。孕期应激暴露可引起胎盘 *NR3C1* 基因 DNAm 水平升高,进而引发子代发育异常等不良结局^[9]。临床研究也证实,在孕期焦虑患者脐带血 DNA 样本中,可观察到 *NR3C1* 基因启动子区 CpG 甲基化增加^[10-11]。此外,部分候选基因也参与神经内分泌信号传导、神经元发育和信号传递,改变孕期应激相关 DNAm,如脑源性神经营养因子(*BDNF*)、溶质载体家族 6 成员 4(*SLC6A4*)、FK506 结合蛋白 51(*FKBP51*)等基因^[12-13]。

1.2 组蛋白修饰

在表观遗传学中,组蛋白修饰通过调控染色质结构和可及性,控制特定基因的时序与空间表达^[14]。组蛋白乙酰化和甲基化作为两种关键的表观遗传修饰类型,与孕期应激反应密切相关^[15-16]。组蛋白乙酰化通过组蛋白乙酰转移酶和组蛋白脱乙酰酶(histone deacetylases, HDACs)协同调控,修饰真核染色体中组蛋白的 N-末端赖氨酸残基,从而调节基因表达水平^[17]。组蛋白甲基化则由组蛋白甲基转移酶介导,通常发生在组蛋白 H3 的 N-末端特定赖氨酸或精氨酸残基的第 4、9 及 36 位点^[18]。研究表明,孕期应激可干扰前额叶皮质(prefrontal cortex, PFC)和海马体(hippocampus, HC)内组蛋白甲基化稳态,进而影响胎儿神经发育,此区域产生的组蛋白 3 赖氨酸 4 的三甲基化(H3K4me3)可以充当激活 GR 的启动子,进而调控应激反应通路^[19]。此外, H3K9 和 H3K36 的甲基化修饰通常与基因表达抑制相关,可能通过调节记忆相关基因转录过程,参与认知功能调控,可作为干预认知障碍的潜在表观遗传靶点^[17]。

1.3 非编码 RNA

非编码 RNA(non-coding RNA, ncRNA)占人类基因组的 98%,是一类不具备蛋白质编码功能但具有调控作用的 RNA 分子,通过与 DNA 或蛋白质相互作用来调节细胞生理学功能。ncRNA 包括微小 RNA(miRNA)、长链 ncRNA(lncRNA)以及环状 RNA(circRNA)等不同类型的,其表达或功能异常已被证实广泛参与多种疾病的发生发展^[20]。miRNA 可通过序列特异性识别并结合信使 RNA(mRNA),其在基因表达调控中更精准、快速,尤其在应激反应通路中,可直接或间接调控 HPA 轴功能,成为关联应激与神经发育结局之间的关键分子桥梁^[21-22]。在皮质醇(CORT)诱导的慢性应激大鼠模型和母婴分离模型中,大鼠 PFC 和 HC 组织 miR-218 表达水平特异性升高,说明 miR-218 是应激易感性增加的关键分子,其通过影响神经元发育和突触可塑性调控,导致神经环路功能异常^[22]。

2 表观遗传调控在孕期应激致子代认知功能中的机制研究

孕期应激影响子代认知功能机制主要与 HPA

轴应激协调反应系统失调相关。应激状态下，母体 HPA 轴亢进，引发 CORT 水平剧烈波动和 GR 过度激活^[23]。母体高水平 CORT 可经胎盘转运，直接干扰胎儿 HPA 轴正常发育，引起子代大脑发生适应性变化，造成 HC、PFC 及颞叶等高级认

知功能相关脑区发育异常，体现为学习、注意力调控和执行功能等核心认知领域障碍^[24-25]。据此本文聚焦表观遗传调控机制，系统探讨 DNAm、组蛋白修饰和 ncRNA 在孕期应激致子代认知障碍中的作用，相关机制示意图见图 1。

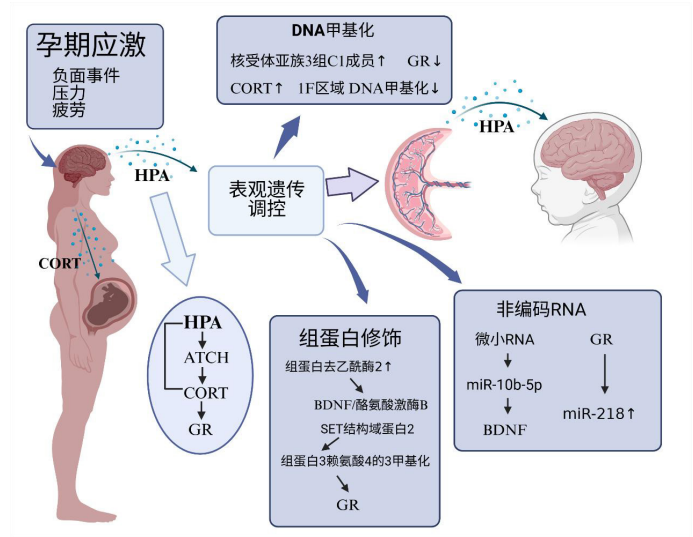


图1 孕期应激致子代认知功能的相关机制

Figure 1. Mechanisms related to cognitive function in offspring induced by stress during pregnancy

注：由BioRender软件绘制；HPA.下丘脑-垂体-肾上腺轴；ATCH.促肾上腺皮质激素；CORT.皮质醇；GR.糖皮质激素受体；BDNF.脑源性神经营养因子。

2.1 DNA甲基化

孕期应激可诱导母体 DNAm 水平改变，并通过影响胎盘表观遗传变化，造成子代神经发育异常^[1, 26]。DNAm 作为一种可动态修饰的表观遗传标记，其可逆性特征为疾病治疗与预防开辟了新的干预靶点。*NR3C1* 基因甲基化水平与孕期应激密切相关，孕期应激引发 HPA 轴功能亢进，削弱 *NR3C1* 基因编码的 GR 对负反馈回路的调节能力，并通过表观遗传调控影响 *NR3C1* mRNA 和蛋白质表达，最终经由胎盘途径对胎儿发育产生深远影响^[27]。母体 HPA 轴功能亢进时，子代也会出现 HPA 轴活性增强，并伴有 *NR3C1* 基因 DNAm 水平升高，导致 HC 区 GR 表达下调及负反馈功能减弱，最终影响子代的认知发展^[28]。Castro-Quintas 等^[29]发现，母体 CORT 水平升高将导致胎盘 *NR3C1* 启动子区 DNAm 增加，诱导胎儿神经发育障碍，增加子代不良结局风险。此外，孕期压力、焦虑或抑郁等与新生儿脐带血中 *NR3C1* 位点的高甲基化状态密切相关，如母体焦虑诱发的脐带血 *NR3C1* 甲基化升高，可通过影响下游基因表达、神经内分泌功能及认知行为发育，

造成胎儿神经发育不良结局^[30-31]。

孕期应激暴露可显著降低 *NR3C1* 基因外显子 1F 区域甲基化水平^[12]。Chalfun 等^[32]证实，孕期应激可引起胎儿 CORT 水平升高，导致外显子 1F 区域低甲基化发生，进而对子代认知功能产生负面影响。且外显子 1F 区域包含多个受 DNAm 动态调控的 CpG 位点，孕期应激暴露可通过降低 CpG 位点的甲基化水平直接参与基因表达调控^[27]。此外，产前暴露于大麻等物质也可能引起子代 DNAm 水平降低，并与儿童记忆、高阶执行功能等特定认知障碍密切相关^[33]。

2.2 组蛋白修饰

孕期应激会使母体 HPA 轴相关激素水平升高，调节组蛋白乙酰化和组蛋白甲基化等表观遗传过程，影响胎儿大脑发育^[34]。在认知功能调控中，组蛋白乙酰化作为一种重要的表观遗传修饰，可通过调节基因转录活性和基因表达，参与认知发展过程^[35]。HDACs 则主要通过改变染色质结构或抑制转录因子结合能力调节基因表达，从而影响认知相关生物学功能^[36]。组蛋白脱乙酰酶 2 (HDAC2) 属 I 类 HDACs 家族，激活后可抑制

与记忆相关的基因表达^[37]。研究表明, HDAC2 活性在调节产前和产后脑组织成熟中至关重要, 可通过降低组蛋白乙酰化来阻断认知功能^[38]。Feng 等^[39]研究发现, 孕中期母体麻醉暴露可导致子代大鼠学习和记忆能力下降, 主要原因与 HDAC2 表达上调导致的 BDNF/ 酪氨酸激酶 B 信号通路受损密切相关, 从而进一步加剧认知功能障碍。

H3K4me3 作为 GR 启动子的激活因子, 常富集于基因启动子区, 通过招募染色质重塑复合物和转录因子促进基因转录^[19]。编码 H3K4 甲基化修饰酶的基因突变, 与人类认知功能障碍密切相关^[40]。研究发现, 孕期环境暴露会引起 H3K4me3 甲基化失调, 干扰子代神经系统, 造成子代神经元发育异常和记忆缺陷等^[41]。此外, H3K36me3 在孕期应激致子代认知功能影响中也占据重要地位, 其通过参与基因表达沉默过程调控神经发育^[17]。SET 结构域蛋白 2 (SETD2) 是催化 H3K36me3 形成的核心酶, 特异性敲除小鼠大脑新皮层中 SETD2 可降低 H3K36me3 水平, 导致小鼠运动学习和空间记忆等多种认知功能缺陷^[42]。

2.3 非编码 RNA

大脑通过动态适应环境变化维持认知与行为功能, 而长期适应过程涉及基因表达改变及神经回路重塑^[43]。近年来, ncRNA 作为神经精神疾病的关键生物标志物受到广泛关注, 尤其是特定 miRNA 组合在预测认知衰退严重程度中的应用^[44]。作为 ncRNA 家族中特征最显著的成员, miRNA 在孕期应激暴露背景下可通过调节子代神经发生、突触发育及神经元可塑性发挥重要作用。Beverdors 等^[45]研究发现, 应激会影响母体血清素能途径中的 miRNA 水平, 其浓度升高与子代孤独症核心症状及认知能力受损相关, 并可能通过增强杏仁核恐惧记忆回路参与疾病发生。此外, 孕期应激介导的 miR-218 水平上升可通过干扰胎儿表观遗传编程, 影响子代神经元发育与突触可塑性, 进而损害 PFC 中与记忆相关的认知功能和社交能力^[22, 46]。研究表明, 在慢性应激状态下, miR-218-5p 是大鼠 PFC 中被显著诱导表达的 miRNA 之一, 其表达水平升高可能与 *SLIT3* 基因启动子区 GR 激活有关^[47]。

miRNA 除直接调控神经发生外, 还可通过调节神经干细胞的增殖和自我更新间接参与该过程, 且常伴随其启动子区表观遗传模式的改

变。Ke 等^[48]在产前应激小鼠模型中发现, HC 中 miRNA 水平升高可导致 miR-10b-5p 表达异常, 通过影响 BDNF 的表达水平, 诱导 HC 神经发生障碍, 造成子代成年后的认知缺陷。此外, 高水平的孕期应激与 miR-150-5p 表达下调相关。研究发现, 敲除大鼠体内 miR-150-5p 可显著增加其焦虑样行为, 并且 miR-150-5p 的靶基因包括突触囊泡蛋白 2 和脑酸性可溶性蛋白 1 等多种与大脑功能密切相关的基因, 这些基因异常表达均可能干扰胎儿正常神经发育^[49]。

3 结语

本文通过探究表观遗传调控在孕期应激中的潜在作用, 揭示了子代认知功能障碍与表观遗传修饰之间的复杂关联。表观遗传机制通过调控基因启动子区的激活与沉默, 以维持不同细胞的分化。孕期应激暴露通过 HPA 轴, 诱导母体 DNAm、组蛋白修饰及 ncRNA 异常变化, 干扰胎儿表观遗传编程, 导致子代出现认知障碍。因此, 子代认知功能障碍的临床干预需突破单一生物标志物的局限, 可通过整合孕期应激的多元干预策略 (包括药理学调控、营养干预及行为干预等), 以改善 HPA 轴相关激素水平、纠正 *NR3C1* 基因甲基化异常、调节 HDACs 活性及 miRNA 表达失衡, 实现母体表观遗传变化的精准调控, 这一综合策略有望为预防和治疗子代认知缺陷提供新思路。但当前针对孕期应激、HPA 轴反应性改变及表观遗传调控与子代认知功能关联的研究仍存不足, 未来需开展更深入的机制探索, 以推动临床靶向治疗的发展, 提升社会对孕期应激危害的认知水平, 减轻子代认知障碍的负面影响。

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