

综述

环状RNA翻译功能与消化系统肿瘤

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摘要: 环状RNA(circular RNA, circRNA)是一类新型单链RNA, 可通过多种机制影响各类疾病的发生发展。由于没有5'帽端和3'尾端, 过去认为circRNA不具备翻译功能。随着测序技术和蛋白组学的发展, 大量研究表明, circRNA能够通过“非帽依赖式翻译”合成蛋白, 且其产物可参与多系统肿瘤的演变。本文简述了circRNA的主要翻译机制, 包括IRES介导、m6A介导及滚环扩增, 介绍了常用的circRNA翻译功能预测工具, 阐述了circRNA编码产物与胃癌、结直肠癌、肝癌等多种消化道肿瘤的关系, 旨在为消化系统肿瘤的研究提供新思路。

关键词: 环状RNA; 消化道肿瘤; 编码蛋白; 非帽依赖式翻译

Translation role of circRNA and digestive system tumors

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Abstract: Circular RNA (circRNA) is a new single-stranded RNA, which can affect the occurrence and development of various diseases through various mechanisms. Due to the absence of 5'- and 3'-terminals, circRNA was previously considered to have no translational function. However, with the development of sequencing technology and proteomics in recent years, a large number of studies have shown that circRNA can synthesize proteins through "uncap-dependent translation", and the products can participate in the evolution of multisystem tumors. This review describes the main translation mechanisms of circRNA, including IRES, m6A and rolling circle amplification. This review presents the common tools that can predict the translation function of circRNA. The relationship between circRNA encoding products and gastric cancer, colorectal cancer, liver cancer and other digestive tract tumors was introduced. The aim is to provide new ideas for the study of digestive system tumors.

Key Words: circRNA; digestive system tumor; encoded peptide; uncap-dependent translation

1976年, Sanger等^[1]在类病毒中发现了circRNA。与线性RNA相比, circRNA具有共价闭环结构, 没有5'端的7-甲基鸟嘌呤核苷帽和3'端的多聚腺苷酸尾。基于这种特殊的结构, circRNA能够抵抗RNA外切酶和核糖核酸酶的水解作用,

具有高度稳定性和不易降解性^[2]。5'帽端和3'尾端是真核细胞翻译启动的必要元素, 因此circRNA在传统意义上属于非编码RNA, 过去认为其不具备编码能力^[3]。CircRNA在一定条件下具备编码蛋白质或多肽的能力, 且其编码产物对消化道肿瘤、

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神经系统肿瘤及女性生殖系统肿瘤等多种疾病的发生发展具有重大的意义^[4]。本文简单叙述了circRNA的起源和功能,着重论述其翻译机制及编码产物对消化道肿瘤发生发展的影响,希望为消化系统肿瘤机制的研究提供新的方向。

1 CircRNA的概述

1.1 CircRNA的起源

CircRNA主要由前体信使RNA(precursor mRNA, pre-mRNA)剪切拼接形成^[5]。根据其组成结构,主要可将其分为外显子circRNA(exonic circRNAs, EcircRNAs)、内含子circRNA(intronic circRNAs, ciRNAs)和外显子-内含子circRNA(exon-intron circRNAs, EIciRNAs)^[6]。此外,环状RNA也可来源于前体转运RNA(precursor tRNA, pre-tRNA),形成tRNA内含子circRNA(tRNA circRNAs, tricRNA)^[7]。CircRNA的环化机制主要分为套锁驱动环化、内含子配对环化、RNA结合蛋白(RNA-binding proteins, RBPs)介导环化、内含子直接环化和tRNA剪接环化^[8-11]。

1.2 CircRNA的功能

(1)微小RNA(microRNA, miRNA)海绵作用:miRNA是一种单链非编码RNA,可调控下游靶基因的表达,与疾病的发生发展有密切的联系^[12]。CircRNA含有miRNA响应元件,作为内源性竞争RNA与miRNA发生竞争性的结合,由此发挥miRNA海绵作用,抑制miRNA对靶基因的调节^[13]。(2)与RBPs相互作用:RBPs可与两侧的内含子侧翼结合,由此驱动环化,调节circRNA的反拼接。而circRNA可作为蛋白质支架改变靶蛋白的功能,从而调节下游基因的表达^[14]。CircRNA与RBPs的相互作用可调节细胞的增殖、凋亡、转移、分化等病理生理过程^[15]。(3)调节基因表达作用:circRNA可参与调控基因的剪接和转录过程。EIciRNA与U1小核糖核蛋白(small nuclear ribonucleoproteins, snRNPs)结合形成EIciRNA-U1 snRNPs复合物,该复合物可改变RNA聚合酶II(RNA polymerase II, Pol II)。而ciRNAs则可与Pol II直接结合,影响基因的转录^[10]。(4)翻译作用:1995年,Chen等^[16]发现, circRNA可以招募真核核糖体40S亚基,暗示circRNA可能具有翻译作

用。近年来不断有研究表明,某些含有核糖体介入位点(internal ribosome entry site, IRES)、N6-腺苷甲基化(N6-methyladenosine, m6A)位点和开放阅读框(open reading frame, ORF)的特定circRNA具有意想不到的编码功能。CircRNA编码蛋白参与调节基因表达、癌细胞增殖和癌细胞迁移等过程,影响胃癌、结直肠癌、肝细胞癌、乳腺癌、子宫内膜癌和胶质瘤等多种癌症的发生发展及预后^[4]。

2 CircRNA翻译机制

经典“帽依赖式翻译”是真核细胞中常见的翻译方式。具体过程为起始因子eIF4E与mRNA 5'端的7-甲基鸟嘌呤帽结构(7-methylguanosine, m7Gppp)结合形成5'帽端-eIF4E复合物,招募40S核糖体亚基,组装43S核糖体起始复合物,启动ORF翻译^[17]。但与mRNA不同, circRNA缺乏m7Gppp,因此需要特殊启动元件协助完成“非帽依赖式翻译”。具体翻译机制如图1所示,可分为三种,具体介绍如下。

2.1 IRES介导

IRES通常在细胞或病毒的mRNA中被发现,在应激等条件下,它可招募40S核糖体亚基,启动“非帽依赖式翻译”,后续发现此特殊结构也存在于circRNA中。研究表明,任何片段长度超过50 nt的circRNA都有可能包含一个类似于IRES的六聚体^[18]。Chen等^[19]通过建立circRNADb数据库预测50%的EcircRNAs含有ORF。进行RNA结构深入分析发现,在含有ORF的circRNA中约有50%含IRES。在circRNA中, IRES能够直接与包含eIF4G2、eIF4A和eIF4B的起始因子eIF3复合物结合,替代5'帽端-eIF4E复合物招募40S核糖体亚基,启动“非帽依赖式翻译”^[20]。有学者在体外合成了含有IRES结构的circRNA,经过循环后得到了相应的蛋白质产物,进一步证实了circRNA可以通过IRES驱动的“非帽依赖式翻译”编码肽或蛋白质^[21]。亦有研究表明, AU富集的序列(0~10 nt)具有与IRES类似的作用^[22]。

2.2 m6A介导

m6A是真核生物中最常见的RNA内部修饰方式,能调节组织发育、DNA损伤、肿瘤发生发展等多种病理生理过程^[23]。部分circRNA并不具备天

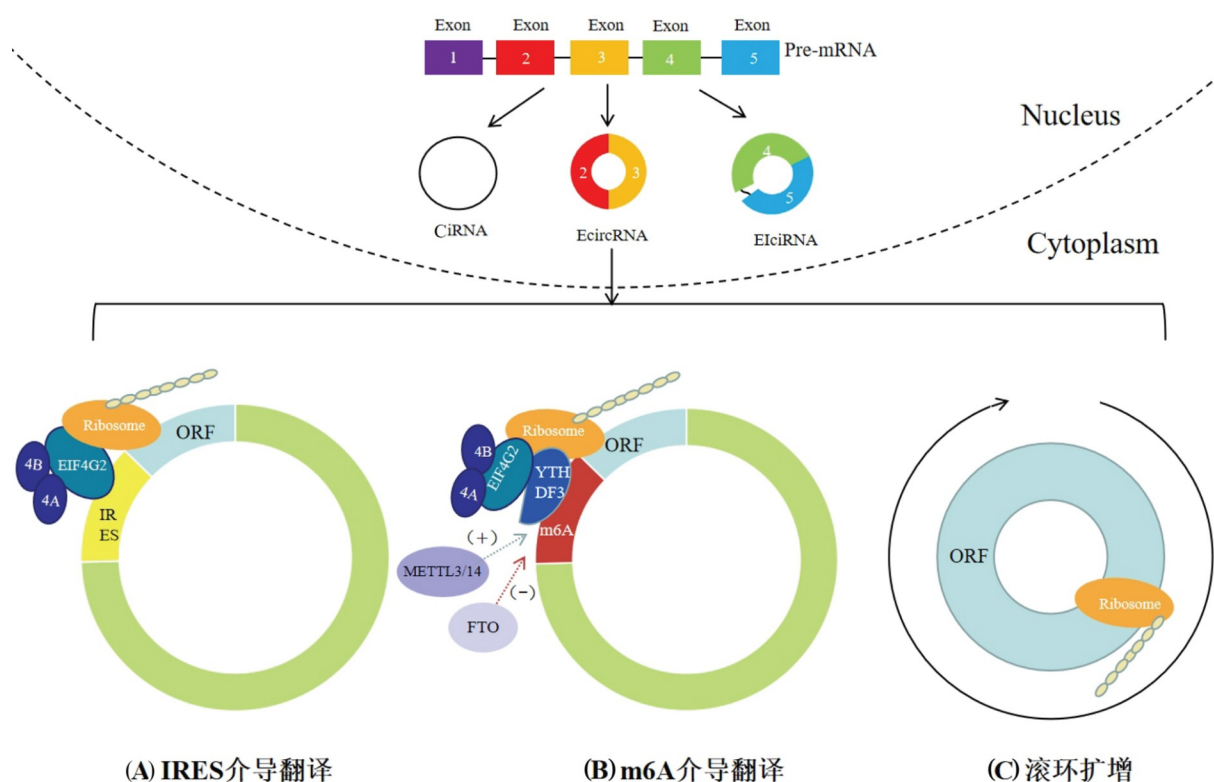


图1 CircRNA翻译机制

然IRES, 但单个m6A位点足以起到类似IRES的介导翻译作用。绿色荧光蛋白(green fluorescent protein, GFP)是一种具有荧光发射波长的蛋白质, 可被用于标记基因、可视化启动子的活动、研究蛋白质间的相互作用等。Yang等^[24]在人类基因组中分别插入了内源性IRES和阴性对照序列, 以GFP作为标记产物, 对比验证IRES介导的翻译作用。有趣的是, 阴性对照组同样生成了GFP。后续发现, 对照组初始密码子周围经m6A修饰的RRACH基序起到了关键作用, 当RRACH基序关键位点发生突变时GFP消失。这提示m6A与IRES一样能够介导“非帽依赖式翻译”。研究表明, 约13%的circRNA携带m6A位点, 且倾向于出现在较大外显子的上游和中部区域。在circRNA中, m6A阅读蛋白YTHDF3识别m6A, 并将起始因子eIF3复合物招募到富含m6A的序列上, 由此启动翻译^[25,26]。m6A介导的翻译受到多种因素调控: 如腺苷甲基转移酶3/14(methyltransferase 3/14, METTL3/14)可促进m6A启动的翻译过程。而作为一种去甲基化酶, 脂肪量和肥胖相关蛋白(fat mass and obesity associated proteins, FTO)对m6A过程则

起到抑制作用^[27]。

2.3 滚环扩增

滚环扩增(rolling circle amplification, RCA)是一种简单有效的等温酶促过程。该过程可以使用无限重复的圆形模板生成核酸^[28]。由于特殊的环状结构, 在某些具有翻译功能的circRNA中, 核苷酸数目并不是3的整倍数, 不含框内终止密码子, 形成无限的ORF^[20]。He等^[29]在2015年设计了一种具有无限ORF且不含任何其他翻译启动所需元件的circRNA, 结果发现, 该circRNA能够通过RCA在真核生物中完成翻译。由于ORF是无限的, 似乎circRNA滚环扩增可以永不中断, 但在天然的circRNA中并非如此。Liu等^[30]发现, 在含有无限ORF和起始密码子ATG的情况下, circEGFR通过滚环扩增合成rtEGFR多结构蛋白复合物。但这一过程可由“程序化-1核糖体框架转移”介导的框外终止密码子终止。

3 CircRNA翻译功能的预测

随着高通量测序技术和核糖体分析技术的发展, 许多适用于circRNA翻译功能预测的工具应运

而生, 这有助于精确识别circRNA的编码能力, 促进circRNA翻译功能及其衍生蛋白的相关研究。本文列举了几种常用的预测工具。

3.1 CircCode

CircCode的运行基于Python3程序。它在核糖体测序(ribosome sequence, Ribo-Seq)数据库中进行筛选, 去除核糖体测序读段, 保留无法比对的读段; 然后将目标circRNA以连接点为中心提取若干序列, 组装虚拟基因组, 并与此前保留的读段进行对比。选择跨连接点的读段作为读取连接映射区域(read-mapped region on a junction, RMRJ)。然后通过机器学习工具BASiNET对RMRJ进行识别, 判断其是否能够进行翻译。而FragGeneScan则被用来进一步预测circRNA的ORF和编码产物^[31]。

3.2 CircPro

CircPro是一种自动化的高通量数据分析工具, 它在转录组测序(RNA sequence, RNA-Seq)数据中使用CIRI2检测目标circRNA序列, 并在Ribo-Seq数据库中进行比对。若该序列无法与线性RNA的读段匹配, 且出现在目标circRNA的反向剪接位点上, 则判断该目标circRNA具有蛋白质编码潜力^[32]。

3.3 TransCirc

TransCirc的功能通过整合各种直接和间接证据实现。相关证据包括核糖体与circRNA的结合位点、circRNA翻译起始位点、circRNA的IRES、circRNA上的m6A修饰位点、circRNA特定长度的ORF等。TransCirc可作为预测人类circRNA翻译能力和潜在编码蛋白的重要工具, 并有望拓展到其他物种^[33]。

3.4 CircRNADb

CircRNADb是一个较为全面的人类circRNA数据库, 包含了circRNA的详细信息, 如基因组信息、外显子剪接、基因组序列、IRES、ORF等。值得一提的是, 它还能够提供质谱分析的circRNA蛋白表达证据, 标注数据库中每个circRNA的编码潜能^[34]。

4 CircRNA的编码产物与消化道肿瘤

4.1 胃癌

Jiang等^[35]结合数据库预测和质粒转染后LC-

MS/MS检测, 发现circMAPK1可通过IRES介导编码一种含109个氨基酸的MAPK1-109aa蛋白质。Western blot检测40对胃癌(gastric cancer, GC)组织和正常胃上皮细胞中的MAPK1-109aa水平, 发现癌组织中MAPK1-109aa水平低于正常组织。Kaplan-Meier生存分析显示, MAPK1-109aa高表达的GC患者总生存期明显长于MAPK1-109aa低表达的GC患者。进一步免疫沉淀实验发现, MAPK1-109aa能与丝裂原活化蛋白激酶1(mitogen activated protein kinase 1, MAPK1)竞争结合丝裂原活化蛋白激酶1(mitogen-activated protein kinase 1, MEK1), 通过抑制MAPK1信号通路发挥抑癌作用。Peng等^[36]在GC组织中检测到了由circAXIN1编码的AXIN1-295aa功能蛋白。AXIN1-295aa能与APC发生竞争性结合, 促进 β -catenin的释放和核转运, 激活Wnt通路, 诱导Wnt相关基因的表达, 促进细胞增殖和迁移。Zhang等^[37]发现, circDIDO1具有IRES、ORF和m6A修饰位点, 能够编码含有529个氨基酸的DIDO1-529aa蛋白, 且DIDO1-529aa可作用于DNA损伤修复蛋白PARP1的1~372 aa和525~1 014 aa结构域, 促进PARP1蛋白的泛素化和降解, 由此抑制GC细胞增殖、迁移、侵袭, 促进GC细胞凋亡。由circ-E-Cad编码的C-E-Cad蛋白含有254个氨基酸, 在GC中高表达, 促进肿瘤发生和侵袭性。且TGF- β /Smad通路可以通过影响PI3K/AKT信号通路, 增加C-E-Cad的表达水平, 从而调节GC细胞株的增殖、迁移和上皮-间质转化(epithelial-mesenchymal transformation, EMT)^[38]。CircPGD除了能够靶向miR-16-5p/ABL2轴促进GC细胞增殖和转移外, 还可以编码PGD-219aa蛋白。PGD-219aa通过SMAD2/3和YAP信号通路促进GC细胞的生长和迁移, 抑制GC细胞凋亡^[39]。CircGSPT1的ORF由IRES驱动, 编码GSPT1-238aa。GSPT1-238aa在体外抑制GC细胞的增殖、迁移和侵袭, 并通过PI3K/AKT/mTOR信号通路调节GC细胞的自噬^[40]。

4.2 结直肠癌

Liang等^[41]发现, circPLCE1能够抑制结直肠癌(colorectal cancer, CRC)细胞的增殖和迁移。但影响CRC发生发展的并非circPLCE1本身, 而是由其编码的一种411个氨基酸的新型蛋白circPLCE1-

411。CircPLCE1-411在CRC组织中下调,其表达水平与肿瘤的临床分期和T分期呈负相关。进一步质谱分析发现, circPLCE1-411对CRC的抑制作用与核糖体蛋白S3(ribosomal protein S3, RPS3)密切相关。RPS3是核转录因子- κ B(nuclear transcription factor- κ B, NF- κ B)通路的重要调节因子,能够与具有调控泛素化降解作用的热休克蛋白90 α (heat shock protein 90 α , HSP90 α)结合形成HSP90 α /RPS3复合物。CircPLCE1411通过与HSP90 α /RPS3复合物相互作用,完成对NF- κ B信号通路的调控,抑制CRC的进展。CircFNDC3B在IRS的介导下编码circFNDC3B-218aa。转染circFNDC3B过表达的质粒或circFNDC3B-218aa过表达的质粒可抑制CRC细胞的增殖能力。但如若转染无法翻译circFNDC3B-218aa的circFNDC3B突变型质粒, CRC细胞功能并不会受到影响。这说明只有当circFNDC3B-218aa过表达时, CRC细胞的增殖能力才会受到抑制。CircFNDC3B-218aa通过抑制Snail-FBP1信号轴,促进糖酵解和氧化磷酸化的代谢进程,进而抑制CRC细胞的EMT^[42]。CircPPP1R12A编码的小分子肽PPP1R12A-C通过影响Hippo-YAP通路促进CRC的发生和转移^[43]。CircATG4B可增强CRC对奥沙利铂的耐药作用,这归因于其编码的一种新型蛋白质circATG4B-222aa。CircATG4B-222aa与跨膜p24运输蛋白10(transmembrane p24 trafficking protein 10, TMED10)相互作用,阻碍TMED10介导的囊泡蛋白运输,由此诱导耐药^[44]。由circMAPK14编码的circMAPK14-175aa与MAPK14竞争性结合MEK6,减少MAPK14的核易位,阻碍MAPK14的磷酸化,抑制CRC的进展和转移^[45]。Zhang等^[46]在12对CRC组织及癌旁组织中检测circ_0006401编码蛋白circ_0006401-198aa,发现circ_0006401-198aa在CRC组织中的表达高于癌旁组织,且与淋巴转移密切相关。COL6A3是CRC中重要的肿瘤启动子,而circ_0006401-198aa则能缓解肿瘤启动子COL6A3的衰变,增强COL6A3 mRNA的稳定性,由此促进CRC的增殖和转移。

4.3 肝癌

细胞凋亡诱导因子(apoptosis inducing factor, AIF)可从线粒体释放到细胞质和细胞核中,促进

DNA裂解,在调节细胞凋亡功能中起关键作用。在肝细胞癌(hepatocellular carcinoma, HCC)中, m6A介导circMAP3K4编码circMAP3K4-455aa蛋白,该蛋白质能与线粒体中的AIF的N端结合,阻碍AIF向细胞核内转移,抑制顺铂诱导的细胞凋亡^[47]。Song等^[48]发现了由circZKSCAN1编码的circZKSaa,它可促进mTOR蛋白泛素化,提高HCC细胞对索拉非尼的敏感性,并通过PI3K/AKT/mTOR通路抑制HCC细胞株的增殖。通过ROC分析在29对患者中研究circZKSaa的诊断价值,发现其在HCC中的诊断特异性为100%。Circ-ARGHGAP35通过m6A的介导翻译生成ARGHGAP35-1289aa蛋白,其在细胞核内与TFII-I蛋白相互作用,显著上调下游癌基因FOS的表达水平,发挥致癌作用^[49]。糖原合成酶激酶3 β (glycogen synthase kinase 3 β , GSK3 β)是一种丝氨酸蛋白激酶,可以磷酸化 β -catenin,触发 β -catenin的降解。Circ β -catenin编码的 β -catenin-370aa可与GSK3 β 竞争性结合 β -catenin,拮抗GSK3 β 诱导的 β -catenin降解过程,激活Wnt/ β -catenin通路,促进HCC细胞生长^[50]。IL-6抑制RNA解旋酶DHX9,介导circRNA cGGBNP2编码合成cGGBNP2-184aa蛋白。该蛋白质能与STAT3基因发生相互作用,增强STAT3基因Tyr705位点的磷酸化,随后激活靶基因的转录,促进肝内胆管癌细胞在体内外的生长和转移^[51]。

4.4 胰腺导管腺癌

Jiang等^[52]通过RT-qPCR检测circ-SHPRH在58例胰腺导管腺癌(pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, PDAC)组织和配对正常组织中的表达情况。与正常组织相比,PDAC中的circ-SHPRH的表达水平显著降低。Fisher精确检验显示, circ-SHPRH的表达与肿瘤分期和分化程度负相关。单因素Cox回归分析表明, circ-SHPRH是良好的预后预测因子, circ-SHPRH高表达的患者具有更高的5年总生存率。根据目前的研究, circ-SHPRH除了能够作为miRNA海绵,还能够通过编码SHPRH-146aa蛋白发挥作用。故推测circ-SHPRH对于PDAC的调控作用可能涉及SHPRH-146aa。但目前关于SHPRH-146aa和PDAC的研究暂处于空白,相关实验有待完善^[53]。

5 展望

CircRNA参与肿瘤的增殖、凋亡、转移、耐

表1 CircRNA编码蛋白与消化道肿瘤

CircRNA	蛋白质/肽	肿瘤类型	机制或通路	作用	表达情况	参考文献
CircMAPK1	MAPK1-109aa	胃癌	抑制MAPK1通路	增殖(-), 侵袭(-)	下调	[35]
CircAXIN1	AXIN1-295aa	胃癌	激活Wnt/ β -catenin通路	增殖(+), 迁移(+)	上调	[36]
CircDIDO1	DIDO1-529aa	胃癌	促进PARP1蛋白泛素化和降解	增殖(-), 迁移(-), 侵袭下调(-), 凋亡(+)		[37]
Circ-E-Cad	C-E-Cad	胃癌	激活PI3K/AKT通路	增殖(+), 迁移(+), EMT(+) 上调		[38]
CircPGD	PGD-219aa	胃癌	激活SMAD2/3和YAP通路	增殖(+), 迁移(+), 凋亡(-) 上调		[39]
CircGSPT1	GSPT1-238aa	胃癌	抑制PI3K/AKT/mTOR通路	增殖(-), 迁移(-), 侵袭下调(-), 自噬(+)		[40]
CircPLCE1	CircPLCE1-411	结直肠癌	促进RPS3降解, 抑制NF- κ B通路	增殖(-), 迁移(-)	下调	[41]
CircFNDC3B	CircFNDC3B-218aa	结直肠癌	抑制Snail-FBP1通路	增殖(-), EMT(-)	下调	[42]
CircPPP1R12A	PPP1R12A-C	结直肠癌	激活Hippop-YAP通路	发生(+), 转移(+)	上调	[43]
CircATG4B	CircATG4B-222aa	结直肠癌	与TMED10竞争性结合ATG4B	奥沙利铂耐药(+)	上调	[44]
CircMAPK14	CircMAPK14-175aa	结直肠癌	抑制MAPK通路	进展(-), 迁移(-)	下调	[45]
Circ_0006401	Circ_0006401-198aa	结直肠癌	增强COL6A3 mRNA的稳定性	增殖(+), 迁移(+)	上调	[46]
CircMAP3K4	CircMAP3K4-455aa	肝癌	与线粒体中的AIF的N端结合, 减少AIF的降解	顺铂耐药(+)	上调	[47]
CircZKSCAN1	CircZKSaa	肝癌	抑制PI3K/AKT/mTOR	增殖(-), 索拉非尼敏感性下调(+)		[48]
Circ-ARGHGAP35	ARGHGAP35-1289aa	肝癌	与TFII-I相互作用上调FOS mRNA水平	迁移(+), 侵袭(+)	上调	[49]
Circ β -catenin	β -catenin-370aa	肝癌	激活Wnt/ β -catenin通路	生长(+)	上调	[50]
CGGNBP2	CGGNBP2-184aa	肝癌	激活IL-6/STAT3通路	生长(+), 转移(+)	上调	[51]

+: 促进; -: 抑制

药等多种病理过程, 可作为新型诊断标志物和治疗靶点。过去对circRNA的研究主要集中于其作为miRNA分子海绵调控基因表达的作用, 但近年来circRNA的翻译功能引起了广泛关注。众多学者证实了circRNA编码产物对消化道肿瘤发生发展的影响(表1), 并对其成为新一代诊断及靶向治疗标志物寄予厚望。但关于circRNA的翻译功能仍需进一步探索: (1)目前对circRNA“非帽依赖式翻译”的诠释还不够完善, circRNA可能还存在其他翻译机制; (2) circRNA编码产物的稳定性差, 半衰期短, 某些产物的丰度较低, 极大限制了其在临床上的应用, 亟需更敏感的检测方法; (3) circRNA翻译过程的相关影响因素有待进一步探究。总之, 随着对circRNA翻译机制相关研究的不断深入, circRNA编码产物将为探究消化道肿瘤发生发展的机制开辟一条新道路。

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