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泛素连接酶E3与泛素链修饰类型特异性研究进展

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摘 要: 泛素化修饰是真核细胞内广泛存在的一种修饰形式, 受到该修饰的蛋白质分子遍及基因转录、蛋白质翻译、信号转导、细胞周期控制以及生长发育等几乎所有的生命活动过程, 对生命体正常功能的发挥具有重要作用。泛素化修饰的失调会给生命体带来一系列负面影响, 严重者将导致疾病, 甚至危及生命。泛素连接酶 E3 是泛素化修饰反应中底物特异性的直接决定者, 其机制研究不仅可揭示蛋白质质量控制和生命活动功能的奥秘, 也将为疾病关联失调蛋白的精准调控和精准医学实践提供技术支撑。现结合当前对泛素连接酶 E3 研究的最新进展, 阐述泛素连接酶 E3 发挥作用时与不同类型泛素链之间的特异性关系, 旨在为蛋白质功能调控的分子机制、药物研制和疾病诊治提供新思路。

关键词: 泛素; 泛素连接酶; 泛素链; 特异性; 赖氨酸残基; 疾病

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Progress in the specificity of ubiquitin ligase for ubiquitin chains

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Abstract: Ubiquitination is one of the most widely existed protein post-translational modification in eukaryotic cells which is involved in many biological processes including transcription, translation, signal transduction, cell cycle control, and growth and development. Disturbance of the ubiquitin system would bring a series of negative effects to the living body and, more seriously, could lead to severe diseases or even death. E3 ubiquitin ligases confer substrate specificity of ubiquitin modification by interacting with substrate proteins directly. Exploring their mechanisms would make a great contribution on understanding the regulation of protein in cells, and finally to precision medicine. Here, we systematically reviewed the most recent advances in E3 ubiquitin ligases study, and discussed the specific relationship between E3 ubiquitin ligases and different types of ubiquitin chains, aiming to provide new ideas for disease therapy and drug target selection.

Key words: ubiquitin; ubiquitin ligase; ubiquitin chain; specificity; lysine residues; disease

泛素 (ubiquitin) 于 1975 年被以色列科学家 Gideon Goldstein 发现, 是一种存在于所有真核生物组织细胞中由 76 个氨基酸组成的小分子调节蛋白, 相对

分子质量约 8.5 kDa。已知泛素化修饰 (ubiquitination) 是细胞中蛋白质最普遍的翻译后修饰, 决定了底物蛋白经由 26S 蛋白酶体的特异性降解, 或者改变细

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胞内定位、蛋白质活性、与其他蛋白的相互作用, 从而促进或抑制相应信号通路的级联反应。

泛素化修饰主要涉及泛素激活酶 E1、泛素结合酶 E2、泛素连接酶 E3、去泛素化酶 DUB 等。泛素激活酶 E1 水解 ATP 并将一个泛素分子腺苷酰化, 然后通过其活性中心的半胱氨酸残基与泛素的 C 端甘氨酸形成硫酯键, 从而活化单个游离的泛素, 此后 E1 将活化的泛素传递给泛素结合酶 E2 的半胱氨酸残基, 最后由泛素连接酶 E3 招募特异底物和 E2, 并介导泛素从 E2 转移到底物靶蛋白, 进而使靶蛋白特定赖氨酸残基的 ϵ -氨基与泛素分子 C 端的羧基形成异肽键, 使之完成泛素化修饰^[1-3]。

1 泛素连接酶E3的结构和分布

人类基因组大约编码超过 600 种泛素连接酶 E3。目前, 根据 E3 的结构和功能特点可将其分为 4 类^[4-5]。(1) 含 HECT (homologous to E6-AP carboxyl terminus) 结构域的 E3s, 这是当前所知的唯一一类可以和泛素形成硫酯键中间体的泛素连接酶, 可直接催化靶蛋白的泛素化。这类泛素连接酶主要有 N-lobe 和 C-lobe 这两个关键的功能结构域, 其中 N-lobe 与受体蛋白结合, 而 C-lobe 则负责接收 E2 携带的供体泛素分子并通过自身的活性半胱氨酸残基与之形成硫酯键, 随后由 C-lobe 130° 旋转将供体泛素分子转移到受体蛋白上完成修饰过程, HECT 类 E3s 还可通过介导 E1-E2-E3 步骤的重复来完成底物蛋白的多聚泛素化修饰^[6-7]。(2) RING (really interesting new gene) 类 E3s 包含环指结构域 (ring finger domain), 其成员除少数为单分子 (如 MDM2、c-Cbl) 外, 均为多个分子的复合物, 如 APC/C、SCF 复合物, 包含相似的 E2 结合结构域 RING 和各自特异的底物识别复合体, 通过介导 E1-E2 步骤的重复来完成底物蛋白的多聚泛素化修饰^[8]。(3) U-box 类 E3s 在蛋白质的 C 端包含一个从酵母菌到人类都保守的 70 个左右的氨基酸形成的疏水性核心, 代替了 RING 类 E3s 中由半胱氨酸和组氨酸以及两个锌离子构成的金属离子螯合残基构成的环指结构域。该结构域是决定 E3 连接酶活性的主要结构域, 它的有义突变将使该蛋白质的 E3 连接酶活性丧失^[9]。(4) PHD (plant homeodomain finger) 类 E3s 也是一种与环指结构域类似的泛素连接酶, 目前已报道的存在于人体内的并不多。典型的 PHD-finger 由一段 Cys-4-His-Cys-3 共有序列与两个锌离子螯合形成交叉支撑的拓扑结构, 是一种

广泛存在于各类蛋白质中的锌指结合模体^[10-11]。

2 泛素链修饰类型

蛋白质所受到的泛素化修饰根据泛素化链的长度可分为单泛素化、多泛素化和多聚泛素化等 3 类。其中单泛素化修饰是指单个泛素分子修饰底物蛋白质上的赖氨酸残基, 多泛素化修饰是指多个泛素分子修饰底物蛋白质上的多个赖氨酸残基, 而多聚泛素化修饰是指底物蛋白质的特定赖氨酸残基受到多个泛素单体组成的泛素链修饰。由于泛素分子自身携带有 7 个赖氨酸残基 (K6、K11、K27、K29、K33、K48、K63), 使得已经共价修饰到底物蛋白质赖氨酸残基上的泛素分子仍然能被其他游离的泛素分子修饰, 从而形成泛素链。而泛素分子本身 N 端甲硫氨酸 (M1) 的自由氨基也可被其他游离的泛素分子串联修饰, 进一步增加了泛素链的多样性和复杂性。在各种不同的泛素链修饰类型中, 多数由 K48、K11 介导的多聚泛素化修饰蛋白最终进入蛋白酶体发生降解, K63 介导的泛素化修饰蛋白则主要参与激酶激活和溶酶体降解通路, M1 介导的泛素化修饰蛋白主要参与调节 NF- κ B 通路, 而 K6 介导的泛素化修饰蛋白则主要与 UV 诱导的 DNA 损伤修复相关^[12]。已有一些研究表明, 泛素连接酶 E3 对底物泛素链的修饰类型具有特异的决定作用。

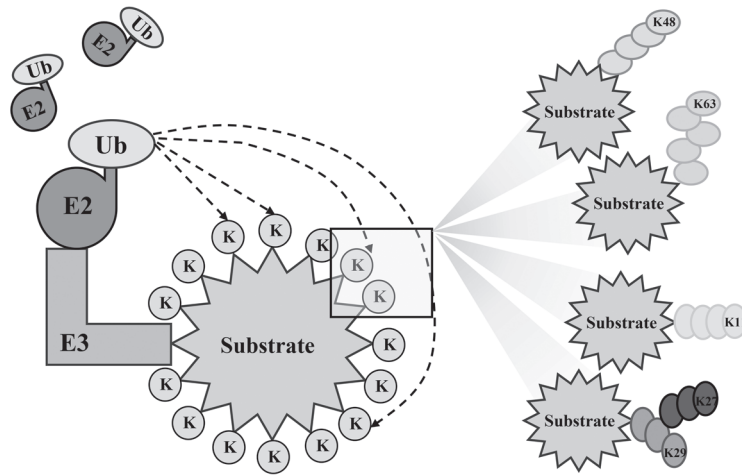
3 泛素连接酶E3与泛素链类型特异性

底物蛋白的泛素化修饰过程中, 同一底物的不同位点受到的泛素化修饰不尽相同, 即使是同一位点, 也可能由于修饰类型的不同而展现不同的功能。由于泛素连接酶 E3 直接与底物发生相互作用, 因而它对底物蛋白上泛素链类型的特异性具有不可忽视的贡献 (图 1)。

3.1 泛素连接酶E3与K6类型泛素链的特异性

被 K6 泛素链修饰的多数蛋白均属于 DNA 相关结合蛋白, 如 PCNA、CENPs 等。这些蛋白主要受到泛素连接酶 BRCA1/BARD1 这一同源二聚体的调控, 通过特异性介导 Lys6 连接的多聚泛素链的形成, 协调 DNA 损伤修复和复制后修复等多种细胞信号途径, 维持基因组稳定性, 在控制细胞周期中起核心作用^[13-16]。

帕金森病 (Parkinson's disease, PD) 相关蛋白 PARK2 也是泛素连接酶, 具有显著地合成 K6 泛素链的倾向, 通过其 Cys 催化残基和 UBL 结构域内的 S65 特异合成 K6 泛素链^[17]。同时, PARK2 能通过自身



E2: 泛素结合酶; E3: 泛素连接酶; Ub: 泛素分子; Substrate: 底物; K: 底物赖氨酸残基

图1 泛素连接酶E3与泛素链特异性

K6 泛素化来完成激活, 并协同帕金森病相关线粒体激酶 PINK1 通过自噬途径除去损伤的线粒体^[18]。

泛素连接酶 RING1b^[19]、MGRN1、CHIP 和细菌的泛素连接酶 NleL^[14] 也能特异参与 K6 泛素链的合成。其中 MGRN1 主要通过对其正确聚合, 确保纺锤体定位准确^[20]; 而 CHIP 则主要参与 Hsp70 和 Hsp90 的 K6 多聚泛素化修饰^[21]。

3.2 泛素连接酶E3与K11类型泛素链的特异性

K11 类型泛素链主要参与蛋白酶体降解通路, APC/C (anaphase-promoting complex) 类泛素连接酶通过简并降解序列, 即 D-box 和 KEN-box, 特异介导同质的 K11 泛素链的合成^[22]。而 Meyer 和 Rape^[23] 发现, APC/C 类泛素连接酶还能够特异有效合成分支的 K11 泛素链, 从而增强蛋白酶体对底物的识别, 进而促进有丝分裂早期细胞周期调节蛋白的降解。

在 K11 泛素链参与的其他功能方面, Mukherjee 和 Chakrabarti^[24] 发现泛素连接酶 MGRN1 能够参与 GP78 的 K11 泛素链修饰, 从而下调线粒体自噬。Wu 和 Leng^[25] 发现泛素连接酶 MDM2 可通过对 p57 的 K11 泛素化修饰, 来抑制 p57 依赖的细胞凋亡和细胞周期停滞。Michel 等^[26] 发现 HECT 类泛素连接酶 AREL1 特异参与自泛素化反应中 K11 链的合成。泛素连接酶 RNF26 可将 K11 链特异修饰到 MITA 的 K150 位点, 从而阻止该位点被 K48 链修饰, 并阻断病毒感染后炎症因子诱导的 MITA 降解^[27]。泛素连接酶 Cul1-Slimb^[28]、cIAP^[29] 以及野

油菜黄单胞菌的泛素连接酶 XopL^[30] 等, 也能够特异介导 K11 泛素链的合成。

3.3 泛素连接酶E3与K27类型泛素链的特异性

K27 泛素链在线粒体活动中扮演重要角色。线粒体损伤导致线粒体去极化, 使得与线粒体自噬相关的 RBR E3 连接酶 Parkin (PARK2) 易位和活化, 将 Lys27 连接的泛素链组合在电压依赖性阴离子选择性通道蛋白 1 (VDAC1) 等几种线粒体蛋白上。K27 泛素链修饰的 VDAC1 被自噬适配器 p62 识别, 从而通过触发线粒体自噬将受损的线粒体清除^[31]。

K27 泛素链修饰蛋白在外源微生物病原体触发的免疫反应中也具有重要作用。泛素连接酶 TRIM62 能够特异地将 K27 多聚泛素链连接到 CARD9 蛋白上, 激活其活性。缺失 TRIM62 会导致小鼠对真菌感染的易感性增高^[32]。在病毒天然免疫中具有核心作用的 MITA 蛋白可在泛素连接酶 AMFR 的作用下被 K27 泛素链特异性修饰, 并进一步激活下游信号分子^[33-34]。泛素连接酶 TRIM23 能特异地将 K27 泛素链连接到 NEMO 上, 从而介导病毒诱导的 IRF3 和 NF- κ B 通路的激活^[35]。此外, 泛素连接酶 HACE1^[36]、RNF168^[37] 和 c-IAP1^[38] 等也能特异参与 K27 泛素链的合成, 行使特定的生物学功能。

3.4 泛素连接酶E3与K29类型泛素链的特异性

K29 泛素链在细胞中主要以混合或分支泛素链的形式存在, 可以参与蛋白酶体降解等在内的多种细胞功能通路^[31]。在哺乳动物细胞中, K29 泛素链

主要存在于静息细胞,而在酵母中,其主要参与泛素融合降解通路(Ub-fusion-degradation pathway),介导蛋白的周转循环。泛素连接酶 UFD4 可特异参与该通路中 K29 的合成^[39]。已报道的几种 HECT 类泛素连接酶,如 ITCH、UBR5、UBE3C、KIAA10 (hul5) 等^[40-41] 均可参与 K29 的特异合成^[42]。

Fei 等^[43-44] 发现泛素连接酶 Smurf1 通过特异的 K29 连接的泛素链修饰 Axin, 但 K29 泛素链修饰的 Axin 并不使其降解,而是破坏其与 Wnt 共受体 LRP5/6 的相互作用,随后减弱 Wnt 刺激的 LRP6 磷酸化,并抑制 Wnt/ β -连环蛋白信号转导。

K29 泛素链与溶酶体降解通路也有密切联系^[45-46],其中泛素连接酶 ITCH (AIP4) 主要参与该进程中 DTX、非激活受体等相关蛋白的 K29 泛素化修饰,并使之进入溶酶体降解。

3.5 泛素连接酶E3与K33类型泛素链的特异性

目前报道的主要参与 K33 泛素链合成的泛素连接酶有 CBL-B、ITCH、RNF41 和 KLHL20。其中 CBL-B 和 ITCH 主要参与 T 细胞抗原受体 (TCR) ζ 链 K33 泛素链修饰。TCR 的 ζ 链受到 K33 类型的泛素化修饰后,其磷酸化水平下降,从而抑制活化激酶 ZAP70 (70 kDa 的 ζ 链相关蛋白) 与该受体结合,进而通过非降解机制抑制 TCR 信号转导。缺乏这两种泛素连接酶的小鼠会表现出 T 细胞过度激活,并产生自身免疫性疾病^[47]。而 RNF41 通过对 ZAP70 的 K33 类型泛素化修饰促使其去磷酸化,进而终止 CD8⁺ T 细胞中的早期 TCR 信号转导^[48]。

Cul3-KLHL20 泛素连接酶则通过对 Cmn7 的 K33 泛素链修饰,促进局部肌动蛋白聚集在反面高尔基体 (TGN),进而达到调节 TGN 中蛋白质顺行转运的目的^[49]。

3.6 泛素连接酶E3与K48类型泛素链的特异性

K48 泛素链作为细胞中丰度最高的一类泛素链,其主要作用是作为蛋白酶体降解信号,引导蛋白质的降解,消除细胞信号,其失调与许多蛋白质的命运直接相关。

TRIM 家族 (tripartite motif family of proteins) 的多数成员主要参与天然免疫和炎症反应,也参与 K48 链的合成 (表 1)。

与天然免疫和 DNA 损伤修复等功能相关的 RNF (RING finger protein) 家族也有一些成员参与了 K48 泛素链的特异性合成 (表 2)。

从不同类型的泛素连接酶来看,目前报道的具有 K48 泛素链特异性合成功能的 HECT 类泛素连接酶有 UBE3A^[68]、UBE3C^[69]、HUWE1^[70]、SMURF1^[71]、SMURF2^[72]、WWP1^[73] 和 WWP2^[74] 等,RING-finger 类泛素连接酶有 CDC34^[75]、MDM2^[76]、STUB1^[77]、PIRH2^[78]、DIAP1^[79]、UBR2^[80]、LNX1^[81] 和 β -TrCP^[82] 等,以及一个 PHD-finger 类的泛素连接酶 DPF2^[83]。

还有一些微生物的泛素连接酶,如志贺菌的 IpaH1.4 和 IpaH2.5^[84] 以及鼠门伤寒菌的 SspH2^[85] 等能够与高等动物的蛋白相互作用,并介导其底物特异地进行 K48 泛素链修饰,从而影响宿主细胞的免疫反应。其他一些具有部分泛素连接酶活性的蛋白,如 FoxO1^[86] 和 PPAR α ^[87] 等,在某些特定通路中也能够特异地合成 K48 多聚泛素链。

3.7 泛素连接酶E3与K63类型泛素链的特异性

K63 泛素链在哺乳动物细胞中主要调节 DNA 损伤修复、蛋白质运输、激酶激活、染色体形态变化和 NF- κ B 通路调节等非蛋白质降解信号途径^[88]。而在酵母中除上述这些功能外,还与蛋白酶体降解通路有关联:由泛素连接酶 RSP5 介导的 Sic1^{PY} 和

表1 TRIM家族泛素连接酶与K48泛素链的特异性

TRIM家族泛素连接酶	作用对象	作用	参考文献
TRIM6	IKK ϵ	激活IKK ϵ , 促进下游STAT1的磷酸化, 从而激活IFN- I 介导的抗病毒反应	[50]
TRIM21	DDX41	通过介导DDX41的蛋白酶体降解来负调控细胞对胞内双链DNA的天然免疫反应	[51]
TRIM25	ZAP	增强ZAP翻译抑制活性	[52]
TRIM26	IRF3	通过介导IRF3的蛋白酶体降解来负调控IFN- β 的生成和抗病毒反应	[53]
TRIM27	TBK1	通过介导TBK1的蛋白酶体降解来负调控抗病毒天然免疫反应	[54]
TRIM30 α	MITA (STING)	通过介导MITA的蛋白酶体降解来负反馈调控机体对DNA病毒的天然免疫反应	[55]
TRIM31	NLRP3	通过蛋白酶体降解通路, 反馈抑制NLRP3的表达水平	[52]
	TAB2/3	通过介导TAB2/3的蛋白酶体降解来负调控TNF- α 和IL-1 β 引发的NF- κ B通路激活	[56]
TRIM38	NAP1	通过介导NAP1的蛋白酶体降解来负调控TLR 和RIG- I 介导的IFN- β 生成	[57]
	TRAF6	通过介导巨噬细胞内TRAF6的蛋白酶体降解来负调控TLR介导的免疫反应	[58]

表2 RNF家族泛素连接酶与K48泛素链的特异性

RNF家族泛素连接酶	作用对象	作用	参考文献
RNF2	AMBRA1	通过介导AMBRA1的蛋白酶体降解来下调饥饿诱导的细胞自噬反应	[59]
RNF5	VISA	受到病毒感染刺激而特异性降解线粒体中的VISA蛋白	[60]
RNF8	JMJD2A、JMJD2B	受DNA损伤刺激而产生的调控反应	[61]
RNF55	IGF-IR	受高浓度IGF- I 刺激后, RNF55结合IGF- I 并将其泛素化	[62]
RNF125	RIG- I、MDA5、MAVS	通过介导靶蛋白的蛋白酶体降解来抑制细胞的抗病毒天然免疫	[63]
RNF126	EGFR	通过介导靶蛋白的降解, 影响泛素依赖的蛋白质分选并下调膜蛋白受体表达水平	[64]
RNF155	TBK1	通过介导TBK1的蛋白酶体降解来激活INF-1	[65]
RNF168	FOXM1	应答抗癌药物表柔比星对肺癌细胞的DNA损伤	[66]
RNF178	IL1RAP	通过介导IL1RAP的蛋白酶体降解来负调控IL-1 β 介导的信号通路	[67]

Mga2-p120的K63链泛素化修饰, 能促使二者转位入26S蛋白酶体发生降解^[89]。

Parkin蛋白(PRAK2)作为泛素连接酶, 能特异介导线粒体内的一系列蛋白底物的K63链泛素化, 从而影响线粒体相关功能^[90-91], 其失调与遗传性帕金森病相关。

TRAF (tumor necrosis factor receptor-associated factor) 家族主要参与NF- κ B和MAPK信号通路的调节, 其中一些成员具有特异介导底物发生K63链泛素化修饰的功能, 如TRAF6不仅能够特异作用于CRTC2, 抑制肝内糖异生^[92]; 也可介导TAK1的K63泛素链修饰, 从而影响IKK的激活^[93]; 还能介导自身发生K63泛素链修饰, 实现自激活^[94]。TRAF3可以通过介导ASC (apoptosis-associated specklike protein) 发生K63泛素链修饰, 影响RNA病毒诱导的免疫反应^[95]。

Pellinos泛素连接酶家族因主要参与Pelle蛋白的K63泛素链修饰而被发现, 其成员Pellino-1、Pellino-2和Pellino-3可通过对底物蛋白的泛素化修饰来调节包括IL-1受体、Toll样受体、NOD样受体以及T细胞和B细胞受体等在内的多个信号通路关键蛋白^[96-97]。

TRIM家族的一些成员, 如TRIM13^[98]、TRIM23^[99]、TRIM25^[100]和TRIM32^[101]等也特异地参与K63链泛素化, 从而达到调节内质网应激、抗病毒免疫反应等目的。

RNF家族的一些成员通过特异介导底物的K63泛素链修饰, 参与多样的非蛋白质降解功能, 如RNF8^[102]和RNF168^[103]调节DNA损伤修复, RNF153^[104]参与干细胞潜能维持, RNF152^[105]激活mTORC1, 而RNF185^[106]调节细胞自噬等功能。

除了这些结构相似的家族蛋白成员外, 一些HECT类泛素连接酶, 如HECW2^[107]、HECTD3^[108]和NEDD4-1^[109]等, 也能特异参与K63泛素链的修饰, 调节非蛋白质降解功能。

3.8 泛素连接酶E3与M1类型泛素链的特异性

LUBAC (linear ubiquitin chain assembly complex) 是哺乳动物细胞中特异合成M1类型泛素链的复合物。该复合物由HOIL-1L (RBCK1) 和SHARPIN等两个附属亚基以及一个催化亚基HOIP (RNF31) 组成^[84]。当细胞受到IL-1刺激后, 该复合物能特异地在小鼠胚胎成纤维细胞中合成M1多聚泛素链^[110]。

Greenfeld等^[111]发现, EB病毒编码的癌蛋白LMP1也能够特异地将M1多聚泛素链连接到TRAF1或TRAF1结合蛋白上, 调节NF- κ B信号通路。

3 讨论

不同类型的泛素化修饰在生命体中参与的进程和发挥的作用不尽相同, 互相交叉形成了复杂的调控网络。而这些复杂的调控网络又与不同泛素连接酶E3的功能发挥息息相关(表3)。

泛素连接酶E3对不同泛素链类型的选择性与其参与的信号通路、调节的底物、自身的结构以及泛素分子的结构都有关系。相同结构的泛素连接酶对泛素链的选择具有相似性; 不同结构的泛素连接酶在参与同一信号通路或交叉信号通路时, 对泛素链的选择也具有相似性; 有的泛素连接酶, 如LUBAC等, 可能只形成一种泛素链, 具有极强的特异性; 有的泛素连接酶, 如Parkin等, 在调控一组相关蛋白群时会利用不同类型的泛素链实现不同的调节功能; 有的泛素连接酶, 如RSP5, 通常特异地介导底物的K63泛素链修饰, 但在细胞受到热

表3 泛素连接酶E3与不同泛素链修饰特异性

泛素链类型	相关功能	代表E3
K6	主要与DNA损伤修复相关	BRCA1/BARD1
K11	主要参与蛋白酶体降解	APC/C类泛素连接酶
K27	线粒体自噬、病原生物免疫	PARK2、TRIM62
K29	主要参与泛素融合降解通路	UFD4
K33	细胞免疫	CBL-B、ITCH
K48	主要参与蛋白酶体降解	TRIM家族、RNF家族
K63	参与DNA损伤修复、激酶激活等通路, 主要参与非蛋白酶体降解途径	RNF8、TRAF6
M1	激酶激活	LUBAC

刺激后, 会改变其对特异 K63 泛素链的选择性, 倾向于介导胞内错误折叠蛋白的 K48 泛素链修饰, 并促进被修饰蛋白的降解清除^[112]。有时一些蛋白可以同时接受两种不同的泛素连接酶对其进行相同的泛素链修饰, 如 HIF 蛋白既可以受到 TRAF6 的 K63 泛素链修饰^[113], 也可接受 STUB1 的 K63 泛素链修饰^[114]。

由于泛素连接酶所具有的底物特异性, 它们在人体各类信号通路中也扮演着重要的角色。已有不少研究发现泛素连接酶既可以作为抑癌蛋白, 也可以作为癌蛋白, 因而与人体各类恶性肿瘤和炎症的发展密切相关^[2,5,115-117], 如泛素连接酶 KPC 参与 G₀-G₁ 期 p27 蛋白在胞质内的泛素化, 而 SKP2 参与 S 期和 G₂ 期 p27 在细胞核内泛素化, 从而导致 p27 特异降解, 影响细胞增殖; 泛素连接酶 FBW7 则特异性地介导 cyclin E、MYC、JUN、Notch 1 及 Notch 4 等多个癌蛋白的降解, 并在多数癌症中发生突变。类似的参与疾病关键蛋白调控的泛素连接酶还有很多, 相应以其为靶标的调节剂也在体外实验或动物实验中展现了良好的逆转效果。

当前对泛素连接酶及其调控底物泛素化修饰类型的研究策略主要是通过基因工程技术构建突变体(过表达、敲除、位点突变)结合生物学功能验证(Western Blot、体外反应)来解析泛素连接酶与底物上泛素链修饰类型的对应关系, 而受商业化泛素链抗体的限制, 目前只能实现对 K63、K48 和 K11 类型泛素链的检测。随着蛋白质组学的新兴发展, 利用质谱 SRM 技术^[118]对泛素链类型进行监测弥补了普通抗体检测缺陷, 并能够达到对各类泛素链的精确定量, 进一步加深了人们对泛素连接酶作用特异性机制的认识^[119]。而由于非典型泛素链(K6、K27、K29、K33)在生物体内含量较低, 检测相对困难, 且混合泛素链和分支泛素链质谱难以分辨,

仍需其他技术填补空白。此外, 泛素连接酶与靶蛋白及其泛素链之间可能存在“一对多”的调节方式, 这为精准医疗中单一底物蛋白的精准调控带来困难, 亟需大规模高通量技术的应用。泛素连接酶与不同泛素链类型之间特异性选择的结构基础也有待挖掘。

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