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# 骨髓脂肪组织调控癌细胞骨转移作用机制研究进展

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**摘要:** 70%~80% 晚期乳腺癌、前列腺癌患者会发生癌细胞骨转移, 继而导致骨质疏松等溶骨性或成骨性病症。癌细胞骨转移需要经历四个阶段——定植、休眠、再活化、增殖与侵袭, 但骨转移的发生机制尚不完全清楚, 相关研究集中在癌细胞与骨微环境的相互作用机制。骨髓脂肪组织 (bone marrow adipose tissue, BMAT) 是近来的一个研究热点, 对循环癌细胞有着高吸引力。BMAT 通过旁分泌形式调控癌细胞骨转移, 促进其定植、能量代谢等病理生理进程, 并通过调控骨吸收与微血管生成间接影响休眠癌细胞的再活化与增殖, 促进骨转移“恶性循环”。乳腺癌与前列腺癌在骨转移进程前期具有相似机制, 因此该综述以乳腺癌、前列腺癌骨转移为切入点, 梳理癌细胞骨转移发生机制, 整理归纳 BMAT 对骨转移的调控机制, 旨在为癌细胞骨转移发生机制及临床治疗提供新的思路。

**关键词:** 骨髓脂肪组织; 骨转移; 骨微环境; 乳腺癌; 前列腺癌

**中图分类号:** R73-37; R737; R739.97

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## Advances in research on mechanism of bone marrow adipose tissue regulating bone metastasis

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**Abstract:** 70%-80% of patients with advanced breast cancer and prostate cancer develop bone metastasis of cancer cells, which in turn leads to osteolytic or osteogenic diseases such as osteoporosis and osteosclerosis. Bone metastasis of cancer cells requires four stages—colonization, dormancy, reactivation, and proliferation and invasion. However, the mechanism of bone metastasis is not fully understood, and related research focuses on the interaction mechanism between cancer cells and bone microenvironment. Bone marrow adipose tissue (BMAT), as a recent research hotspot, is highly attractive to circulating cancer cells. BMAT directly regulates bone metastasis of cancer cells through paracrine form, promotes its pathophysiological processes such as colonization and energy metabolism, and indirectly affects the reactivation and proliferation of dormant cancer cells by regulating bone resorption and microangiogenesis, and promotes the "vicious circle" of bone metastasis. Breast cancer and prostate cancer have similar mechanisms in the early stage of bone metastasis. Therefore, this review uses breast cancer and prostate cancer bone metastasis as the entry point, combing the mechanism of bone metastasis, and sorting out the regulation mechanism of BMAT on bone metastasis to provide new ideas for the mechanism of bone metastasis and clinical treatment.

**Key words:** bone marrow adipose tissue; bone metastasis; bone microenvironment; breast cancer; prostate cancer

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## 1 引言

Stephen Paget<sup>[1]</sup>提出的“种子-土壤”理论指出癌细胞优先转移到最适宜生存的次生长位点。骨是癌症转移的主要靶器官,为循环癌细胞生存提供了适宜生存的微环境<sup>[2]</sup>。其中约70%乳腺癌晚期患者出现乳腺癌骨转移病征,80%的前列腺癌晚期患者会发生前列腺癌骨转移<sup>[3-4]</sup>。前后两者分别是溶骨型骨转移与成骨型骨转移的代表,而乳腺癌与前列腺癌在骨转移前期阶段具有相似的生物机制。值得注意的是,骨髓脂肪细胞(bone marrow adipocytes, BMAs)的增多与这两种不同类型的骨转移均相关<sup>[5-8]</sup>。

原发位点肿瘤细胞经历内皮细胞-间充质转化(epithelial to mesenchymal transition, EMT)获得间充质表型<sup>[9]</sup>,表达间充质型标志N-钙黏蛋白、波形蛋白,从而获得细胞迁移能力并扩散至外周循环(淋巴/血液)。间充质表型癌细胞(种子)侵入靶器官(土壤)之前须经历内皮-间充质表型转化的反转,以获得锚固、定植于靶器官的能力<sup>[10]</sup>,这一过程被称为间充质-上皮转化(mesenchymal to epithelial transition, MET)。骨转移性肿瘤对骨微环境表达出强烈的依赖性,肿瘤细胞与骨微环境相互作用从而支持癌细胞的增殖和侵袭<sup>[11]</sup>。侵入骨内之后,癌细胞在骨内膜或稳定血管周微环境进入“休眠”状态,这一状态可持续数十年<sup>[12]</sup>。破骨细胞介导的骨吸收以及新生微血管会释放这些休眠癌细胞,休眠癌细胞再活化后进行无限增殖,并在骨内形成微转移。骨转移乳腺癌细胞产生各种细胞因子(PTHrP等)扰乱骨稳态,促进破骨细胞生成从而加剧骨吸收;而前列腺癌细胞通过促进成骨细胞生成破坏骨稳态,从而形成成骨系疾病,进一步形成恶性循环<sup>[13]</sup>。

既往研究集中在癌细胞与骨细胞的相互作用机制,近年研究发现,骨髓微环境中BMA参与调控骨转移微环境<sup>[14-15]</sup>。BMA对循环肿瘤细胞(circulating tumor cells, CTCs)有着高吸引力,已有研究证明骨髓脂肪组织(bone marrow adipose tissue, BMAT)与癌细胞相互作用<sup>[16]</sup>,但其机制尚未完全清楚。BMAT之前一度被认为主要起机械填充骨髓腔作用,近年来的研究发现, BMAT可作为内分泌器官,通过旁分泌或自分泌形式对癌细胞骨转移、骨重建、系统能量代谢等生物进程进行调控<sup>[17]</sup>。最近关于BMA调控癌细胞骨转移的作用机制成为了一个研究新点, BMAs通过对骨微环境的调控,以及对骨

转移癌细胞的直接影响,为肿瘤提供了一个适合生存的微环境。

## 2 癌细胞骨转移(图1)

### 2.1 癌细胞骨内定植

CTC向骨性迁移与造血干细胞(hematopoietic stem cells, HSCs)采取相类似的机制,癌细胞的向骨性转移由癌细胞表达的受体与骨微环境中表达的配体相互作用完成<sup>[18]</sup>。骨髓微环境中高水平表达着吸引扩散性癌细胞的相关因子,如钙离子( $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ )、NF- $\kappa$ B受体激活蛋白配体(receptor activator of NF- $\kappa$ B ligand, RANKL)、趋化因子配体12(C-X-C chemokine 12, CXCL12)、膜连蛋白II受体(annexin II receptor)等。在骨髓微环境中,成骨细胞表达CXCL12,扩散性癌细胞(diffuse tumour cell, DTC)表达的趋化因子受体4(C-X-C chemokine receptor 4, CXCR4)与CXCL12结合,加速癌细胞向骨微环境的迁移、黏附和定植<sup>[19]</sup>。破骨细胞(osteoclasts, OC)介导的骨吸收伴随着胞外 $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ 浓度的升高, $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ 吸引表达钙感受体(calcium sensing receptor, CaSR)的癌细胞向骨微环境迁移<sup>[20]</sup>。乳腺癌及前列腺癌细胞均表达NF- $\kappa$ B受体激活蛋白(RANK),体外实验结果显示癌细胞表达的RANK与骨微环境中RANKL结合,促进癌细胞向骨性转移与定植,而骨保护素(osteoprotegerin, OPG)可以抑制RANK-RANKL的结合从而抑制骨转移进程<sup>[21]</sup>。值得注意的是, $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ /CaSR与RANKL/RANK也是参与癌细胞骨转移“恶性循环”的主要信号标志<sup>[22]</sup>。此外,成骨细胞(osteoblasts, OB)表达的膜联蛋白II与癌细胞表达的膜联蛋白II受体结合,促进癌细胞的向骨性转移<sup>[23]</sup>。癌细胞表达的整合蛋白 $\alpha_v\beta_3$ 、 $\alpha_v\beta_5$ 与成骨细胞谱系细胞表达的骨钙素、骨涎蛋白、玻连蛋白结合,促进癌细胞黏附、锚固和生长<sup>[24]</sup>。研究表明,癌细胞表达的E-钙黏蛋白结合成骨细胞表达的N-钙黏蛋白在癌细胞的骨内定植中也起到了重要的作用<sup>[25]</sup>。

### 2.2 癌细胞休眠

癌细胞骨转移是一个效率低下的生物过程,只有极少数量CTC侵入骨内并导致骨转移相关疾病<sup>[26]</sup>,这与侵入骨微环境的癌细胞进入“休眠”状态有关。癌细胞休眠主要由成骨谱系细胞介导,而休眠癌细胞的再活化则主要由破骨细胞介导。休眠状态可以持续数年,休眠使DTC规避免疫系统以及化疗等临床治疗,使癌细胞适应骨微环境<sup>[12]</sup>。当

肿瘤细胞处于静默、稳定的微环境时会进入长期休眠，如骨内膜表面或是稳定的血管周微环境；而活跃的骨微环境则使休眠癌细胞再活化并促进其增殖、侵袭，如骨吸收位点或新生血管周微环境<sup>[27]</sup>。乳腺癌异种移植实验表明 DTC 优先集落于 E-选择蛋白 (E-selectin) 表达水平较高的微血管周，E-选择蛋白拮抗剂则抑制乳腺癌细胞向血管周迁移；此外，抑制 CXCR4/CXCL12 导致癌细胞脱离休眠状态并进入骨内微循环<sup>[28]</sup>，提示其具有促癌细胞休眠作用。这些现象同样发生在前列腺癌骨转移，前列腺癌细胞表达的膜联蛋白 II 受体与成骨细胞表达的膜联蛋白 II 结合后诱导生长停滞特异性蛋白 6 (growth arrest specific protein 6, GAS6) 受体 Axl、Sky 以及 Mer 的表达，成骨细胞表达的 GAS6 抑制骨内前列腺癌细胞的生长增殖并使其对化疗引起的癌细胞凋亡产生拮抗性；Axl 在低氧骨转移微环境中表达，高水平表达的 Axl 与 GAS6 结合诱导前列腺癌细胞休眠<sup>[29]</sup>。而在血管周微环境中，内皮细胞分泌的血小板反应蛋白-1 (thrombospondin-1, TSP-1) 抑制肿瘤新生血管生成，维持癌细胞的休眠状态<sup>[30]</sup>。此外，骨基质细胞分泌的骨形态发生蛋白-7 (bone morphogenetic protein-7, BMP-7) 以及转化生长因子- $\beta$ 2 (transforming growth factor- $\beta$ 2, TGF- $\beta$ 2) 也可促进癌细胞休眠<sup>[31-32]</sup>。

### 2.3 休眠癌细胞再活化

微血管的新生改变了骨转移灶的物理环境，从而使癌细胞脱离休眠状态，同时为癌细胞移除促休眠信号 (TSP-1) 并分泌 TGF $\beta$ 1 以及骨膜蛋白，继而激活休眠癌细胞<sup>[32]</sup>。体外共培养实验显示新生血管内皮尖细胞高度表达骨膜素以及 TGF $\beta$ 1，用重组 TGF $\beta$ 1 和骨膜蛋白处理新生血管共培养物导致癌细胞增殖的显著上调<sup>[33]</sup>。静默于骨内膜表面的癌细胞通过破骨细胞介导的骨吸收脱离休眠状态，进一步增殖并形成骨内微转移，活化的癌细胞分泌促骨吸收因子促进骨吸收，继而形成一种“恶性循环”。骨吸收过程中  $Ca^{2+}$  浓度升高也是激活休眠癌细胞的原因之一<sup>[34]</sup>，骨基质降解产生 TGF- $\beta$ 、IGF-1 以及 BMP 蛋白家族成员等生长因子，这些生长因子与癌细胞表面的受体结合激活 Smad 和 MAPK 信号传导<sup>[35]</sup>， $Ca^{2+}$  与 CaSR 结合并激活钙泵，最终导致癌细胞生长增殖，加快骨转移癌进程并加速微转移的形成<sup>[33]</sup>。乳腺癌细胞再活化后分泌甲状旁腺相关蛋白 (parathyroid hormone-related proteins, PTHrP)、白细胞介素 11 (interleukin, IL-11)、基质金属蛋白酶 (matrix metalloproteinase, MMP) 等促骨吸收因子，这些细胞因子刺激成骨细胞分泌大量 RANKL，通过 RANK-RANKL 轴促进破骨细胞形成与活化，从而加速骨吸收，释放休眠癌细胞。同时，成骨细胞

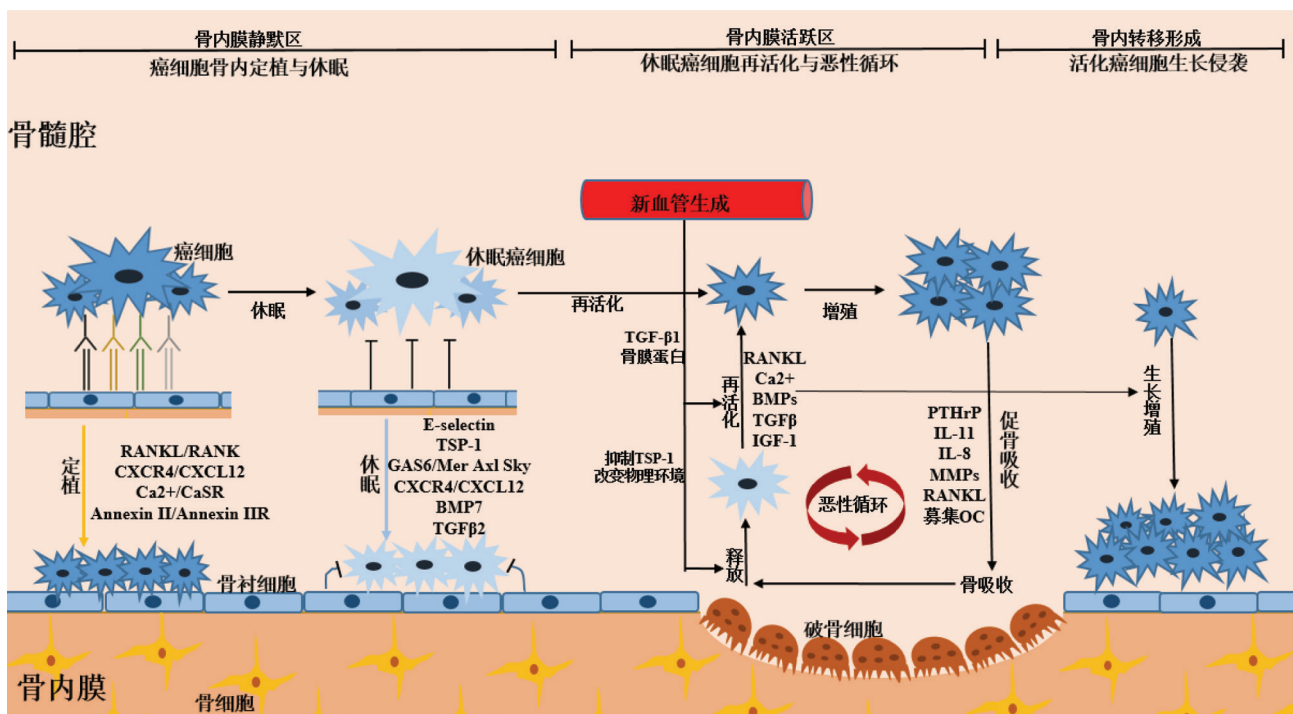


图1 癌细胞骨转移机制示意图



RANKL 的上调也促进 CTC 向骨性转移的发生<sup>[36]</sup>。研究表明, 被激活的乳腺癌细胞表达血管细胞黏附分子-1 (vascular cell adhesion molecules-1, VCAM-1) 与  $\alpha 4\beta 1$  结合导致破骨细胞前体细胞募集, 从而促进休眠癌细胞激活, 在这一过程中, PTHrP 增强整合素  $\alpha 4\beta 1$  的转录活性从而加速激活休眠癌细胞<sup>[37]</sup>。

### 3 骨髓脂肪组织对骨转移癌微环境的调控 (图2)

#### 3.1 骨髓脂肪组织

骨髓脂肪细胞在人类出生后随着整个生命周期不断增多, 以向心形式从四肢骨末梢开始, 使骨髓形态从红骨髓转变成黄骨髓<sup>[38-39]</sup>。BMAT 与白色脂肪组织 (white adipose tissue, WAT) 和棕色脂肪组织 (brown adipose tissue, BAT) 之间既有着相似的生物学特征, 也存在着差异<sup>[40-43]</sup>。最近关于 BMAT 调控癌细胞骨转移成为了一个研究热点。癌症患者的放疗、化疗以及绝经、年龄增长等生理病理因素会导致 BMA 加速增多, 而 BMA 的增多加剧骨吸收进程, 从而促进癌细胞骨转移“恶性循环”, 提示 BMAT 通过影响骨稳态调控癌细胞骨转移进程<sup>[44-47]</sup>。研究表明, BMAT 有助于转移性癌细胞规避化疗、放疗<sup>[7]</sup>。此外, BMAT 分泌大量的生物活性物质, 如白细胞介素-1 $\beta$  (interleukin 1 $\beta$ , IL-1 $\beta$ )、

IL-6、瘦素、脂联素、VCAM-1、肿瘤坏死因子- $\alpha$  (tumor necrosis factor- $\alpha$ , TNF- $\alpha$ ) 和血管内皮生长因子 (vascular endothelial growth factor, VEGF) 等细胞因子, 这些细胞因子影响癌细胞的向骨性转移, 并调控骨内癌细胞生长、增殖以及侵袭等生理病理进程<sup>[48]</sup>。

#### 3.2 BMAT与癌细胞定植

研究表明, 乳腺癌细胞与前列腺癌细胞优先向富含 BMA 位点转移<sup>[49-50]</sup>。Templeton 等<sup>[50]</sup> 使用全膝关节置换术分离出的股骨头骨组织片段与乳腺癌细胞共培养, 通过免疫荧光技术发现乳腺癌细胞优先集落于 BMA 密集位点, 这一过程与瘦素、IL-1 $\beta$  水平的升高呈显著正相关, 提示 BMAT 通过其分泌的脂肪因子或细胞因子吸引癌细胞的迁移与定植。瘦素还可能刺激破骨细胞介导的骨吸收, 从而加速骨转移癌进程<sup>[51]</sup>, 但瘦素在骨重建中的角色有待于进一步研究。BMAT 是循环脂联素的主要来源, 然而大量实验证明脂联素具有抑制癌细胞增殖与诱导癌细胞凋亡的能力<sup>[52]</sup>, 提示 BMAT 可能还具有抗癌作用, 但其具体机理有待探究。Takeshita 等<sup>[53]</sup> 研究发现, BMSC 的成脂分化过程中伴随着 RANKL 表达水平上调, 提示 BMAT 通过 RANK-RANKL 轴诱导 CTC 骨内定植。此外, 细胞培养实验显示 BMAs 条件培养基上清含有大量 CXCL12<sup>[54]</sup>, 提示 BMAT 通过 CXCR4/CXCL12 轴诱导癌细胞的骨内定植。

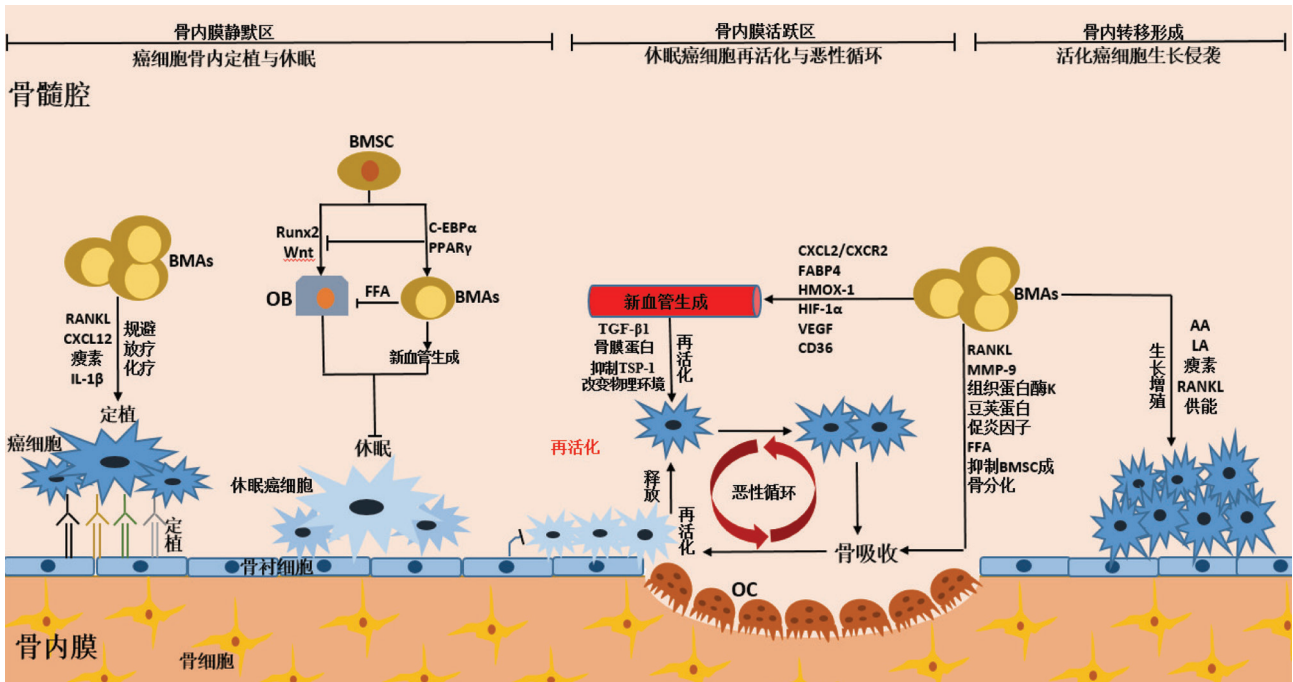


图2 骨髓脂肪细胞调控癌细胞骨转移示意图

### 3.3 BMAT调控休眠癌细胞再活化途径

#### 3.3.1 肿瘤新血管生成

新血管生成是骨内实体肿瘤形成的重要环节,骨转移癌细胞对血红素加氧酶-1(HMOX-1)、低氧诱导因子(HIF-1 $\alpha$ )以及VEGF的高水平表达促进骨转移肿瘤血管生成<sup>[55]</sup>。伴随着癌症进程BMA增多,导致其分泌的VEGF、VCAM-1等促血管生成因子增多<sup>[56]</sup>,这也是BMAT吸引癌细胞的原因之一。与BMA直接接触可上调癌细胞脂肪酸结合蛋白-4(fatty acid binding protein-4, FABP4)、IL-1 $\beta$ 、HMOX-1、HIF-1 $\alpha$ 、VEGF表达水平,从而加速新血管生成以形成实体肿瘤。BMA分泌大量趋化因子,在骨转移癌细胞的定植、再活化以及生长中具有重要作用。与前列腺癌细胞共培养实验显示CXCL2水平显著增高,在骨髓微环境中CXCL2是一些免疫细胞的趋化剂,如巨噬细胞、中性粒细胞等,CXCL2与这些免疫细胞表达的受体CXCR2结合,从而刺激新血管生成,抑制肿瘤免疫应答同时促进癌细胞化疗抗性<sup>[57-58]</sup>。FABP4依赖于过氧化物酶体增殖物激活受体 $\gamma$ (PPAR $\gamma$ )信号在骨内前列腺癌细胞过度表达,已有研究证明,FABP4作为VEGF/VEGFR2轴的靶点与恶性肿瘤新血管生成有着密切关系<sup>[59]</sup>。此外,BMA与前列腺癌细胞的共培养研究显示癌细胞过度表达CD36,而CD36调控骨转移微环境的炎症发生以及新血管生成<sup>[60]</sup>。上述研究结果提示,BMA可能通过影响肿瘤新血管生成调控骨转移癌进展。

#### 3.3.2 骨吸收与“恶性循环”

BMAT通过促进骨吸收加速释放休眠癌细胞,脱离休眠状态的乳腺癌细胞反作用于破骨细胞介导的骨吸收,形成恶性循环(溶骨型)<sup>[61]</sup>;而前列腺癌细胞则作用于成骨细胞介导的骨形成,从而形成恶性循环(成骨型)<sup>[62]</sup>。在骨髓微环境中,BMSCs向BMAs的分化与向OB的分化呈负相关,促进BMSC成骨分化的信号同时也抑制BMSC成脂分化(Wnt、Notch等);促进MSC成脂分化的信号同时也抑制MSC成骨分化(PPAR $\gamma$ 等),如胞内TLE3蛋白累积可增强PPAR $\gamma$ 活性,并协同PPAR $\gamma$ 抑制 $\beta$ 连环蛋白及Runx2<sup>[63-64]</sup>。2017年,研究发现,MSC成脂分化过程中分泌一种半胱氨酸蛋白酶——豆蔻蛋白,豆蔻蛋白可抑制成骨细胞分化,同时通过自分泌或旁分泌的方式促进MSC向脂肪细胞分化,形成一种正反馈循环<sup>[65]</sup>。

Montalvany-Antonucci等<sup>[66]</sup>的研究显示,BMA

增多导致小鼠骨密度下降并伴随多种炎症基因上调,BMAs共培养实验显示BMA促进OC生成并抑制OB生成,提示BMA通过旁分泌方式刺激OC生成并抑制OB,从而扰乱骨稳态。Herroon等<sup>[8]</sup>发现BMA上调OC内MMP-9、组织蛋白酶-K等破骨细胞特异性基因的表达,促进骨吸收。还有研究表明,BMAs分泌RANKL,通过RANKL-RANK信号级联促进破骨细胞生成,加剧骨吸收<sup>[67]</sup>。随着BMAT的增多,游离脂肪酸(free fatty acid, FFA)增多也是加剧骨吸收介导休眠癌细胞再活化的原因之一,如花生四烯酸(arachidonic acid, AA)上调PPAR $\gamma$ ,促进BMA生成并抑制OB分化,上调RANKL水平,从而促进破骨细胞生成,加剧骨吸收<sup>[68]</sup>。体外共培养研究显示,BMAs与OBs共培养会抑制OB的成熟、分化和功能,并伴随着游离脂肪酸浓度增高;而BMAs与OCs的共培养实验中,饱和脂肪酸促进NF- $\kappa$ B活化从而激活ERK通路,促进破骨细胞分化<sup>[69]</sup>。一系列研究表明骨髓脂肪通过游离脂肪酸促进OC生成抑制OB,促进骨吸收,加剧骨转移癌恶性循环进程。

#### 3.4 BMAT调控癌细胞增殖

Nieman等<sup>[59]</sup>将大网膜脂肪细胞与卵巢癌细胞共培养,结果显示脂肪细胞脂质被运输至卵巢癌细胞,诱导脂肪细胞脂解与癌细胞 $\beta$ 氧化的发生,促进卵巢癌细胞生长,提示脂肪细胞是癌细胞生物活动的能量来源。FABP4在脂质转运中起到了重要作用,该研究还指出FABP4的缺失抑制了卵巢癌向大网膜的转移。基于对原发肿瘤周脂肪细胞的研究,人们开始关注BMA对骨转移癌细胞的作用。Herroon等<sup>[8]</sup>将小鼠BMA与前列腺癌细胞共培养得到的结果与Nieman等<sup>[59]</sup>的研究结果类似,该研究结果显示,骨髓脂肪细胞依赖于FABP4向癌细胞转运脂质,观察到癌细胞中脂滴的大量累积,并通过CCL-2/COX-2轴加剧骨转移肿瘤微环境的炎症进程,提示BMA是骨转移癌能量来源,并通过调控骨转移灶炎症微环境为骨转移癌提供良好生存环境。此外,Hoda等<sup>[70]</sup>将重组瘦素与晚期前列腺癌细胞共培养,结果显示瘦素剂量依赖性地通过激活MAPK刺激前列腺癌细胞生长增殖。最近研究发现,n-6多不饱和脂肪酸除了介导骨吸收调控休眠癌细胞的活化之外,还具有促进骨转移癌细胞增殖侵袭作用。AA(20:4n-6)与亚油酸(linoleic acid, LA)(18:2n-6)促进前列腺癌细胞的增殖与骨内侵袭,AA激活癌细胞PI3/Akt及NF- $\kappa$ B信号途径,诱导

COX-2、IL-1 $\beta$ 、IL-6 以及 TNF- $\alpha$  等基因表达<sup>[71]</sup>, COX-2 表达水平的增高促进前列腺素 E2(PGE2) 合成, PGE2 可诱导前列腺癌细胞增殖并使其产生化疗抗性<sup>[72]</sup>, 这可能是 n-6 多不饱和脂肪酸促进骨肉瘤细胞增殖的部分机制。

#### 4 小结与展望

综上所述, 骨髓脂肪组织通过对骨转移微环境的调控促进骨转移癌进程, 主要体现在以下几方面:

①骨髓脂肪组织上调骨微环境中瘦素、RANKL、CXCL12 等表达, 并通过促进骨吸收上调骨微环境 Ca<sup>2+</sup> 浓度, 与转移癌细胞受体相互作用从而促进癌细胞骨内定植。此外, 脂肪因子瘦素显著诱导癌细胞定植, 但是其作用机制尚不清楚, 有待于进一步探究。②骨髓脂肪组织以旁分泌方式分泌 HMOX-1、VEGF 等促血管生成因子, 促进新血管生成, 加速休眠癌细胞的释放与再活化。③骨髓脂肪组织抑制成骨细胞生成, 并通过上调 MMP-9、RANKL 等促骨吸收因子, 加剧破骨细胞介导的骨吸收, 从而释放休眠癌细胞, 加剧恶性循环。④骨髓脂肪组织为癌细胞生长增殖提供能源物质, 并通过花生四烯酸等多不饱和脂肪酸以及瘦素促进活化癌细胞的增殖, 使其在骨内发生微转移。目前临床上多用蒂诺塞麦、双膦酸盐、组织蛋白酶 K 抑制剂等药物通过抑制骨吸收介导的恶性循环来抑制骨转移进程。靶向骨髓脂肪组织的治疗方式可能会有效抑制癌细胞骨转移、防治骨质疏松等骨转移相关骨疾病, 需进一步探究。

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