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宫内母源性糖皮质激素编程子代肝脏发育及相关疾病易感

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摘要: 胎血基础糖皮质激素 (glucocorticoid, GC) 主要来自母体, 其水平是决定胎儿多器官发育及功能成熟的关键。然而, 孕期母体受内、外环境刺激后, 其内源性 GC 水平或胎盘 GC 屏障功能会发生改变, 进而引起宫内母源性 GC 水平异常。大量研究发现, 宫血 GC 水平过高或过低均可导致子代肝脏发育及功能异常, 导致出生后相关疾病易感, 这主要与 GC 调控的信号通路、转录因子及表观遗传修饰的改变有关。迄今, 宫内母源性 GC 水平对子代肝脏发育的影响及其编程机制尚未系统阐明。本文结合最新流行病学和实验研究, 综述了宫内时期肝脏的生理发育过程及内源性 GC 的调控作用, 重点介绍宫内母源性 GC 水平改变对子代肝脏发育及相关疾病易感性的影响, 并阐明其网络调控机制, 这对于解析肝脏生理发育与病理改变并探究相关疾病易感的宫内起源机制具有重要意义。

关键词: 糖皮质激素; 肝脏发育; 疾病易感; 宫内编程机制; 表观遗传修饰

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Intrauterine maternal glucocorticoid programs the offspring's liver development and related disease susceptibility

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Abstract: Fetal blood glucocorticoid (GC) mainly comes from the mother, and GC level is the key to fetal organ development and functional maturation. However, when prenatally exposed to adverse internal and external environments, the maternal endogenous GC level or the function of placental GC barrier will be changed, thus leading to an abnormal intrauterine GC level, which will cause abnormal development and function in offspring liver, and even predisposition to related diseases after birth. These are found mainly related to signaling pathway, transcription factors and epigenetic modifications regulated by GC. Until now, the effects of maternal GC *in utero* on offspring liver development and the programming mechanisms have yet to be systematically elucidated. Based on the latest epidemiological and experimental studies, this paper reviewed the physiological development of intrauterine liver and the regulatory mechanism of endogenous GC, focusing on the effects of intrauterine maternal GC level changes on offspring liver development and susceptibility to related diseases, and the regulatory network, which is of great significance to analyze the liver's physiological development and pathological changes and explore the intrauterine origins of the susceptibility of related diseases.

Key words: glucocorticoid; liver development; susceptibility to disease; intrauterine programming mechanism; epigenetic modification

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糖皮质激素 (glucocorticoid, GC) 是由肾上腺借助一系列类固醇激素合成酶合成的一类甾体激素, 主要受下丘脑-垂体-肾上腺 (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal, HPA) 轴调节, 在机体组织形态发育和功能成熟过程中起重要作用。在妊娠早期, 胎儿自身合成 GC 的肾上腺尚未发育成熟, 其宫内血 GC 主要来源于母体。因此, 宫内胎儿发育与母体 GC 水平息息相关, 对内、外环境的变化甚至较母体更加敏感。胚胎 (胎儿) 发育是遗传信息与外源因素互作的编程过程, 当该过程受到影响时表观遗传修饰可发生改变, 从而影响其表型^[1]。研究证实, 孕期环境对胎儿存在近、远期影响, 可致其宫内发育异常、出生后功能稳态改变及多种疾病易感, 甚至影响多代^[2], 这多与宫内母源性 GC 水平异常介导的多器官发育编程改变有关。肝脏是机体代谢的中央器官, 对维持机体生命活动十分重要。胎肝的发育及功能成熟与母源性 GC 水平密切相关。本课题组一系列的研究发现, 孕期外源物 (如咖啡因、尼古丁、乙醇和地塞米松) 暴露可导致宫内母源性 GC 水平异常, 造成胎肝发育及功能受损, 其影响甚至会延续至出生后乃至成年, 继而增加肝脏相关疾病的易感性^[3]。迄今, 宫内母源性 GC 水平对子代肝脏发育的近、远期影响及其调控机制尚未系统阐明。本文综述了宫内母源性 GC 水平与子代肝脏发育及相关疾病易感性的关系, 系统阐明了其可能的网络调控机制, 对解析肝脏发育与病理改变并探究其相关疾病易感的宫内起源机制有着重要意义。

1 肝脏发育及其调节

在宫内整个胚胎发育时期, 胎肝的结构和功能

在持续形成和建立, 直至出生时器官形成、出生后发育完善。肝脏由 20 多种细胞类型组成, 其中肝细胞是主要功能细胞, 占肝实质细胞的 80%。肝组织结构包括肝小叶、被膜和门管区三部分, 其中肝小叶是肝脏的结构和功能单位。不同时期人和啮齿动物 (如小鼠) 胚胎肝脏的形态发育如表 1 所示。概括来说, 肝脏发育经历了从肝祖细胞形成肝芽, 到细胞增殖、分化并围绕中央静脉形成肝小叶, 进而逐渐形成胎肝并具备多种生理功能, 出生后持续发育直至成熟。

肝脏的功能发育与结构发育密切相关。胚胎早、中期肝脏造血组织较丰富, 有大量原始血细胞^[4]; 至后期, 肝脏因其造血细胞凋亡、减少而减退并逐渐由骨髓替代造血^[5]。随着肝祖细胞逐渐分化为肝细胞, 肝脏开始建立营养物质 (如糖原、甘油三酯和胆汁酸等) 的合成、互相转化和代谢等功能^[6]。以人胚胎为例, 第 8~9 周肝细胞已有糖原合成功能, 第 9 周胆小管形成, 第 12 周开始分泌胆汁并通过胆小管行使解毒功能, 第 16~17 周脂质合成功能逐渐建立。而在小鼠胚胎中, 第 15 天时肝脏开始合成糖原和储存甘油, 第 18~20 天时糖原储存量增多、合成减少^[7]。除了造血和代谢, 胎肝可灭活多种激素, 以平衡体内激素水平。胎儿出生后, 肝脏仍是许多生理过程发生的重要枢纽, 包括营养物质合成与代谢、血容量调节、生长信号通路的内分泌控制以及外源物分解等^[8]。这提示, 在胚胎早、中期肝脏主要发挥造血功能, 后期逐渐向营养物质合成、相互转化、代谢及解毒等功能转化, 出生后继续执行维持生理稳态所必需的代谢、内分泌和外分泌功能。

表1 人和小鼠胎肝的组织结构发育

种属	胎(年)龄	组织结构发育
人	第1~2月	肝祖细胞增殖、成索
	第3~4月	出现中央静脉, 肝祖细胞围绕中央静脉排列形成肝小叶, 出现门管区、胆小管
	第5~7月	肝小叶增多, 血窦腔隙较大, 造血组织丰富
	第8~9月	肝血窦变窄, 造血组织减少, 结构已同出生后的肝脏
	足月及出生后	结构完善, 血窦内有红细胞、白细胞和肝巨噬细胞
小鼠	第8~9天	肝祖细胞形成肝芽, 肝脏区域形成
	第10~11天	肝祖细胞分化为肝细胞和胆管细胞, 血窦内有造血细胞
	第12~13天	肝细胞增多、体积增大, 出现中央静脉和巨核细胞
	第14天	出现中央静脉, 肝小叶形成
	第15~16天	出现原发性门脉区, 血细胞数减少
	第17~20天	肝细胞和胆管细胞持续分化成熟
	出生后1~2周	肝小叶和血窦持续发育完善

在肝细胞发育及功能建立过程中, GC 的作用和影响广泛且深远, 可调节肝细胞发育、造血功能和糖代谢等。多种人工合成类 GC 也可调节肝细胞功能发育: 地塞米松能增加肝细胞糖原积累^[9], 抑制逆向胆固醇转运 (reverse cholesterol transport, RCT) 功能^[10]; 倍他米松也被报道可影响肝细胞糖代谢功能^[11]。总之, 机体生理内源性 GC 在肝脏发育过程中主要参与肝细胞发育及功能成熟, 而人工合成类 GC 主要影响肝细胞的正常功能。表 2 总结了调节肝细胞发育及功能建立的局部因子和激素及其作用机制。

2 宫内时期内源性GC的来源和水平变化

GC 是机体发育成熟的一个重要分子开关, 在胎儿器官发育中起关键作用^[37]。胎儿生长发育所必

需的内源性 GC 主要来源于母体的活性类固醇。孕期多种因素可能诱发母体 GC 水平和胎盘 GC 屏障功能改变, 进而导致宫内母源性 GC 水平的变化。

2.1 宫内外源性GC的生理来源

已知内源性 GC 由肾上腺皮质束状带合成和分泌, 并受到 HPA 轴的调控。妊娠早期, 由于胎儿肾上腺尚未发育成熟, 无法靠自身合成 GC, 因此宫内 GC 主要来源于母体。在妊娠晚期, 随着胎肾上腺功能的逐渐成熟, 胎儿可通过自身肾上腺直接分泌 GC^[38]。同时, 胎儿多脏器 (如肝脏) 局部高度表达的 11 β -羟类固醇脱氢酶 1 (11 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type 1, 11 β -HSD1) 将进入体内的 GC 代谢产物还原为有活性的 GC^[39]。但是, 胎儿体内仍有 40%~50% 的 GC 来自母亲, 以满足多器官发育成熟的需求^[40]。

表2 调节肝脏发育及功能的局部因子和激素及其作用

肝脏发育及功能	局部因子和激素	作用	参考文献
肝细胞发育	HGF、PG、生长素释放肽	促进肝细胞DNA合成、防止细胞凋亡	[12-14]
	TGF、WNT	促进肝干细胞的迁移、增殖和生存	[15]
	GC、Mtch2	参与早期肝脏发育	[16-17]
	IGF1、IGF2BP1	促进肝细胞增殖和肝脏生长	[18-19]
	E2	参与妊娠晚期雌二醇诱导的肝细胞增殖	[20]
造血功能	ATF5	促进胎肝红细胞增殖	[21]
	E-选择素、GC	促进胎肝造血系统成熟	[22-23]
	ESAM	促进EC和HSC造血功能形成	[24]
糖代谢功能	GC、IGF1	参与调控胎肝糖脂代谢	[25-26]
	FoxO1、PGC1 α	诱导糖异生基因表达	[27-28]
	Nrf2	促进糖代谢和抗氧化	[29]
脂代谢功能	PPARs	促进肝脏脂质代谢	[30]
	SREBP1c	调控脂肪酸合成	[31]
	ApoA-V	调节甘油三酯水平	[32]
	SREBP1a	胆固醇合成激活剂	[31]
胆固醇和胆汁酸代谢	SREBP2	调节胆固醇合成	[31]
	ApoA-I	促进胆固醇水平升高	[33]
	ACSL1	维持肝脏胆固醇稳态	[34]
	Cyp27a1、Cyp7a1	将胆固醇分解代谢为胆汁酸	[35-36]

HGF: 促肝细胞生长素 (hepatocyte growth factor); PG: 前列腺素 (prostaglandin); TGF: 转化生长因子 (transforming growth factor); WNT: Wnt 信号通路 (wingless/integrated); GC: 糖皮质激素 (glucocorticoid); Mtch2: 线粒体载体同源蛋白 2 (mitochondrial carrier 2); IGF1: 胰岛素样生长因子 1 (insulin-like growth factor 1); IGF2BP1: 胰岛素样生长因子 2 信使核糖核酸结合蛋白 1 (insulin-like growth factor 2 mRNA binding protein 1); E2: 雌激素 (estrogen); ATF5: 转录激活因子 5 (activating transcription factor 5); ESAM: 内皮细胞选择性黏附分子 (endothelial cell-selective adhesion molecule); FoxO1: 叉头框蛋白 O1 (forkhead box O1); PGC1 α : PPAR γ 共激活因子-1 α (peroxisome proliferators-activated receptor γ coactivator 1 α); Nrf2: 核因子 E2 相关因子 2 (nuclear factor-erythroid 2-related factor 2); PPARs: 过氧化物酶体增殖物激活受体 (peroxisome proliferator-activated receptors); SREBP1c/1a/2: 固醇调节元件结合蛋白 (sterol regulatory element binding protein)-1c/1a/2; ApoA-V/I: 载脂蛋白 (apolipoprotein A)-V/I; ACSL1: 长链脂酰 CoA 合成酶 1 (acyl-CoA synthetase 1); Cyp27a1: 细胞色素 P450 家族成员 27A1 (cytochrome P450 family 27 subfamily A member 1); Cyp7a1: 细胞色素 P450 家族成员 7A1 (cytochrome P450 family 7 subfamily A member 1)

大多数哺乳动物孕期母、胎血 GC 水平会随孕周逐渐增加。临床和动物研究提示, 孕晚期母体血清游离 GC 水平较孕前升高了 2~4 倍^[41-42]。在大部分妊娠期间, 母体与胎儿的循环 GC 水平约有 5~10 倍的浓度差^[40, 43]。由于过量的 GC 不利于胎儿发育, 大多数母体 GC 在向胎儿传递的过程中仍会被胎盘阻断^[44]。胎盘是胎儿与母体之间物质交换的重要器官。胎儿体内 GC 水平主要受到母血 GC 水平和胎盘 GC 屏障调控, 其中胎盘 GC 屏障包括 11 β -HSD2 和 P-糖蛋白(P-glycoprotein, P-gp)。11 β -HSD2 是一种能在胎盘表达的 GC 灭活酶, 可直接代谢灭活母体活性皮质醇(啮齿类动物为皮质酮)^[45], 对阻止胎儿过暴露于母源性 GC 具有重要意义。P-gp 是 ABC 转运蛋白家族成员之一, 在胎盘母体面滋养细胞中高表达, 其主要作用是利用 ATP 将进入胎盘的多种内、外源性物质泵回母体循环, 有效保护胎儿免受外源物侵害^[46]。与 11 β -HSD2 的不同之处在于, P-gp 作为一种保护机体的重要调节因子, 其外排作用范围更广。近年来研究证实, P-gp 还介导了 GC 从胎盘泵回母体, 参与 GC 屏障的构成^[47]。如图 1 所示, 11 β -HSD2 和 P-gp 组成了胎盘 GC 屏障系统, 共同调控宫内外源性 GC 水平, 从而保护胎儿免受过高或过低 GC 的不利影响。

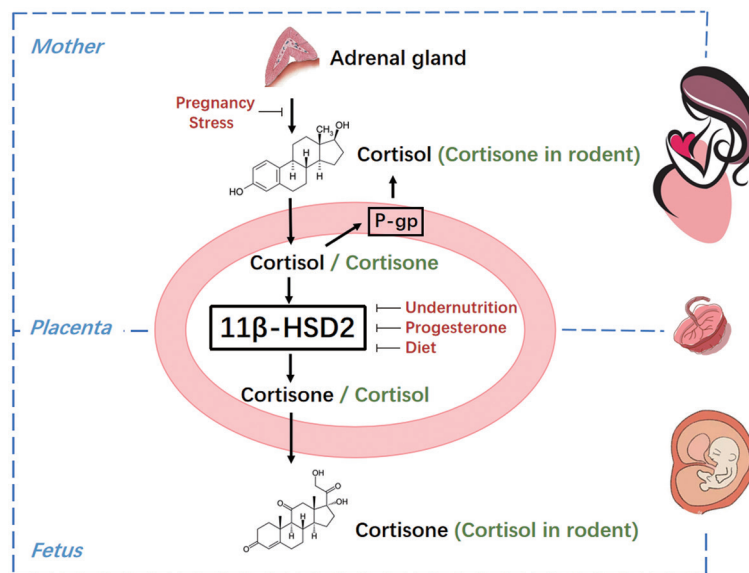
2.2 孕期不良环境下宫内外源性GC水平的改变

研究发现, 孕期多种因素可影响母体肾上腺分泌 GC 和胎盘 GC 屏障功能, 主要分为母体健康因素和外源环境因素。例如, 母体 GC 代谢可能受到

炎症环境变化的影响^[48]。应激可激活母鼠 HPA 轴, 导致血促肾上腺皮质激素和终产物 GC 水平显著升高^[49]。大鼠孕期营养限制或过剩均使母体 GC 生成增多, 以应对不利的营养环境, 从而导致胎儿 GC 过暴露^[50-51]。外源性噪音也可致母鼠和胎鼠血 GC 水平增加^[52]。此外, 本课题组及国内外研究均发现, 胎盘 GC 屏障功能受损可引起宫内外源性 GC 过暴露。例如孕期外源物(如尼古丁、咖啡因、镉等)暴露、特殊饮食、感染和应激可通过下调胎盘 11 β -HSD2 表达使得宫内外源性 GC 水平升高^[53-57]; 妊娠期暴露于多种不良环境(如大麻、脂多糖、烟草、酒精以及母体营养不良)可使胎盘 P-gp 表达下调, P-gp 依赖的外排作用被抑制^[58-60], 从而导致胎盘 GC 屏障作用减弱。此外, 人工合成类 GC 也可作为孕期不良环境因素影响宫内外源性 GC 水平。例如孕期地塞米松暴露(prenatal dexamethasone exposure, PDE)下, 一方面地塞米松的直接作用可抑制胎儿肾上腺甾体合成功能, 降低宫内外源性 GC 水平^[61]; 另一方面, 宫内稳态改变的间接作用也可导致内源性 GC 水平降低(待发表资料)。

3 母源性GC对子代肝脏发育和功能的调控作用及影响

肝脏作为机体最主要的内分泌和代谢器官, 其发育和功能稳态受到母体 GC 水平、胎盘 GC 屏障、胎循环 GC 水平和组织器官局部 GC 代谢的调控。Mericq 等^[62]研究发现, 正常新生儿的脐血清皮质



Cortisol: 皮质醇; Cortisone: 皮质酮; 11 β -HSD2: 11 β -羟基类固醇脱氢酶2; P-gp: P-糖蛋白

图1 宫内GC的主要来源和胎盘GC屏障的转运作用

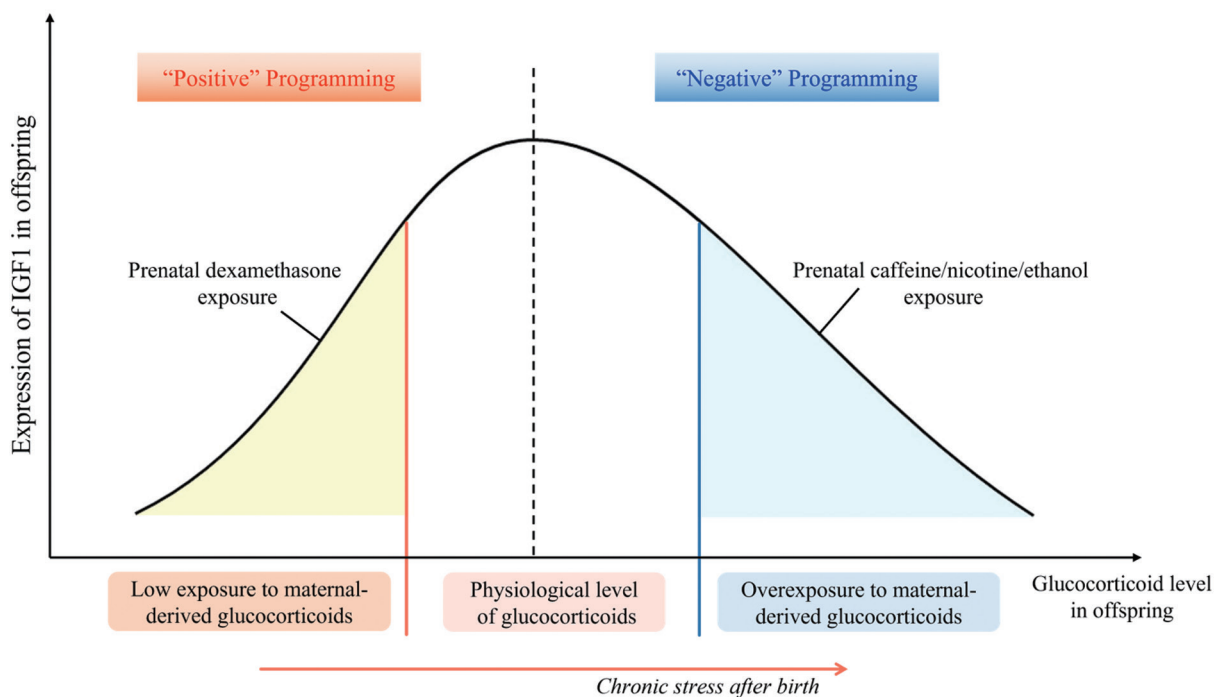
醇浓度的波动范围为 121~395 nmol/L, 而 IUGR (胎儿生长受限) 新生儿为 221~801 nmol/L。研究表明, 宫内母源性 GC 低暴露时, 子代 GC 和胰岛素样生长因子 1 (insulin-like growth factor 1, IGF1) 水平呈同向变化 (GC-IGF1 轴“正向”编程); 而当宫内母源性 GC 过暴露时, 子代 GC 和 IGF1 水平呈反向变化 (GC-IGF1 轴“逆向”编程)(图 2)^[63]。宫内时期不同浓度 GC 对子代肝脏重要基因的表达均有编程作用, 但其宫内编程效应和表观遗传修饰形式不尽相同, 对肝脏发育和功能成熟的影响也存在差异^[63]。即在生理浓度范围内皮质醇促进胎儿发育或引起代偿性生理调节, 然而在孕期多种不良环境下, 脐血皮质醇浓度超出生理浓度范围 (如咖啡因、尼古丁、乙醇暴露), 或低于生理浓度范围 (如地塞米松暴露), 机体为适应不利宫内环境对自身发育轨迹的冲击, 往往会做出有利于整体发育的代偿性改变, 只允许重要/关键器官 (如肝脏) 的生长, 同时限制其他组织 (如骨骼) 的生长发育和功能成熟^[63]。

3.1 生理和低浓度GC对子代肝脏发育和功能成熟的作用

宫内时期胎儿的基础 GC 主要来源于母体, 母体正常的 GC 调控和稳定的 GC 水平对子代肝脏的

发育和功能建立有促进作用。研究显示, 内源性 GC 可调节肝脏葡萄糖产生和脂质代谢, 降低果糖诱导脂质异常而发生的胰岛素抵抗^[64]。Schaeff^[65]检测了新生牛犊肝脏 GC 水平与脂代谢相关关键酶、细胞因子 (如瘦素、IGF1) mRNA 表达的相关性, 证实新生儿肝脏糖、脂代谢功能的成熟与局部 GC 水平有关。有报道称, GC 可通过影响基因转录和 DNA 甲基化修饰, 进而加速胎肝血红素成熟^[23]。由此可见, 母源性生理 GC 对胎肝发育至关重要。

然而, 胎儿母源性 GC 水平低下可能导致胎肝发育不良和功能损伤。临床数据和体内、外实验均显示, PDE 所致母源性 GC 低暴露可使雄性子代大鼠肝脏 IGF1 信号通路被抑制、发育不良、成年后胰岛素抵抗和代谢综合征^[61]。值得注意的是, 人工合成类 (外源性) 的 GC (如地塞米松) 可通过胎盘屏障进入胎血, 但胎血中内源性 GC 与外源性 GC 的作用存在重要区别, 主要表现在: 内源性 GC 参与胎儿发育, 其水平高低决定胎儿发育和成熟状态^[62]; 而外源性 GC 则影响机体发育, 严重时可能造成胎儿发育不良或功能损伤^[66]。既往研究发现, 阿奇霉素或地塞米松 (直接作用) 可导致肝脏功能异常, 如非酒精性脂肪肝病 (non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, NAFLD)、高胆固醇血症 (hypercholesterolemia,



IGF1: 胰岛素样生长因子1; glucocorticoids (GC): 糖皮质激素; dexamethasone: 地塞米松; caffeine: 咖啡因; nicotine: 尼古丁; ethanol: 乙醇

图2 宫内母源性GC暴露异常诱导子代GC-IGF1轴的“正向”和“逆向”编程^[63]

HL) 等^[66-67], 与宫内低 GC (间接作用) 共同影响胎肝的发育和成熟。

3.2 高浓度GC对子代肝脏发育和功能成熟的影响

生理浓度的 GC 对胎肝正常发育至关重要, 但宫内母源性 GC 水平过高也会限制子代肝脏发育及糖脂代谢功能的建立, 这种影响甚至会持续至成年后。本课题组研究表明, 孕期外源物暴露的子代出生前、后血糖水平升高, 且肝脏糖异生相关基因 (如 FoxO1、G6Pase) 表达增强, 这可能与孕期母体 GC 水平升高有关^[68-69]。孕期蛋白限制可致新生仔猪肝脏 G6Pase 表达水平升高, 糖异生增加^[70]。这些肝脏糖代谢相关酶活性的变化在出生后持续存在, 且肝脏对胰岛素的反应性也发生改变, 使胰岛素对肝脏糖异生的抑制作用减弱^[71]。孕期摄食限制的子代大鼠宫内母源性 GC 水平升高, 肝脏超微结构改变和脂质蓄积^[72], 出生后肝脏脂代谢功能基因 (如 SREBP2、HMGCR) 表达及血总胆固醇水平升高^[73]。而高脂饮食也可致胎鼠母源性 GC 过暴露, 肝脏脂代谢异常及甘油三酯积聚^[74]。此外, 在孕期多种外源物 (如乙醇、咖啡因和尼古丁) 暴露的大鼠模型中, 均观察到子代宫内母源性 GC 水平升高及

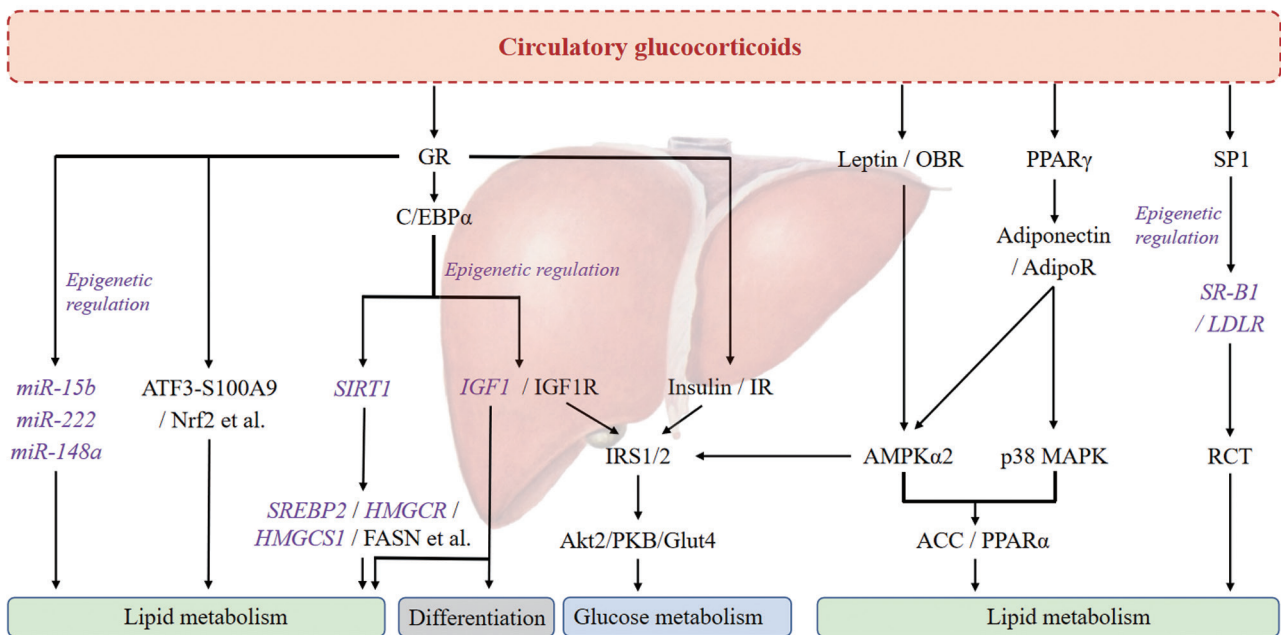
HL 易感^[3, 26, 75-76]。例如, 孕期咖啡因暴露 (prenatal caffeine exposure, PCE) 使胎血 GC 水平升高, 肝脏胆固醇合成酶 HMGCR、脂蛋白受体 SR-BI 和 LDLR、载脂蛋白 apoB 和胆固醇羟化酶 Cyp7a1 表达异常, 成年后发生 HL^[75]。孕期尼古丁暴露 (prenatal nicotine exposure, PNE) 可引起雄性子代大鼠肝脏 RCT 在出生前、后持续下降, 成年后 HL 易感, 这均与宫内母源性 GC 过暴露有关^[76]。

4 GC对肝细胞发育编程的网络调控

器官的发育和功能成熟受到多种信号通路的调节, 而在转录水平调控基因表达是发育源性最主要的调控机制, 其中包含表观遗传学调控。研究发现, 宫内内源性 GC 编程肝细胞发育及功能建立 (如糖脂代谢) 同样由关键的信号通路调控和转录因子驱动, 并伴随表观遗传修饰的改变^[75-77], 构成如图 3 所示的网络调控机制。

4.1 信号通路调控

信号通路是细胞内外相互作用并调控基因表达和细胞行为的一系列分子级联反应。在胎循环中, IGF1 主要来自胎肝, 对人和动物的生长、发育和



GR: 糖皮质激素受体; C/EBPα: 增强子结合蛋白α; Nrf2: 核因子E2相关因子2; ATF3: 激活转录因子3; S100A9: S100钙结合蛋白A9; SIRT1: 沉默调节蛋白1; SREBP2: 胆固醇调节元件结合蛋白; HMGCR: 3-甲基戊二酰辅酶; HMGCS1: 3-羟基-3-甲基戊二酰辅酶A合酶1; FASN: 脂肪酸合成酶; IGF1 (R): 胰岛素样生长因子1 (受体); IR: 胰岛素抵抗; IRS1/2: 胰岛素受体底物1/2; Akt2: 丝氨酸/苏氨酸激酶; PKB: 蛋白激酶B; Glut4: 葡萄糖转运蛋白4; OBR: 瘦蛋白受体; AMPKα2: 腺苷酸活化蛋白激酶α2; ACC: 乙酰辅酶A羧化酶; PPARα/γ: 过氧化物增殖激活受体α/γ; Adiponectin (R): 脂联素(受体); SP1: 转录因子SP1; SR-B1: 清道夫受体B类1型; LDLR: 低密度脂蛋白受体; RCT: 逆向胆固醇转运

图3 宫内内源性GC编程胎肝发育及功能的网络调控机制

代谢具有重要调节作用,其表达和分泌可以通过GC调控^[78]。多种组织器官内的IGF1表达均受到血GC水平的双向调控,如高GC水平下IGF1表达将受到抑制^[78-79]。PCE所致的宫内母源性GC过暴露可通过改变子代出生后的“神经内分泌代谢编程”影响多脏器的IGF1信号通路及功能发育,引起NAFLD和HL易感^[68]。孕期乙醇和尼古丁暴露所致的胎血GC水平升高,使胎肝通过“两种编程”方式诱导子代成年后的HL易感,其中“第二种编程”通过GC-IGF1轴促进胆固醇合成和输出^[76]。此外,PCE所致的宫内高血GC还可激活糖皮质激素受体(glucocorticoid receptor, GR)-CCAAT/增强子结合蛋白 α (CCAAT/enhancer binding protein α , C/EBP α)-沉默调节蛋白1 (silent information regulator 1, SIRT1)通路,促进胎肝脂质合成^[80]。PCE下高GC还可通过脂联素和瘦素信号通路改变胎儿肝脏的糖脂代谢^[81]。综上,宫内母源性GC可通过多条信号通路影响胎肝功能发育。

4.2 转录因子调控

在细胞信号通路调控网络中,通常有转录因子参与并调控靶基因表达。GR是一种配体激活转录因子,其DNA结合区域可识别GC应答元件(GREs),促进靶基因的激活或抑制^[82]。GC主要通过GR调节多种复杂信号转导途径从而发挥作用^[77]。GR敲除小鼠相关研究提示,肝脏GR参与调节糖、脂代谢关键基因表达^[83-84]。肝脏特异性敲除C/EBP α 可破坏肥胖小鼠的肝脏糖异生和脂质平衡^[85]。本课题组最新研究发现,生理浓度的GC通过GR招募C/EBP α 并与IGF1启动子区GRE结合,直接促进IGF1转录表达及肝细胞分化(待发表资料)。研究证实,孕期接触镉和咖啡因可诱导高水平GC,从而改变胎肝中GR的表达^[86-87]。其中,PCE诱导的胎鼠GC过暴露可引起肝脏功能和发育障碍,这可能与胎肝中GR-C/EBP α 信号上调密切相关^[86]。此外,宫内母源性高GC可通过激活肝脏GR-C/EBP α 信号通路增强SREBP1c及FASN表达,导致成年后NAFLD易感^[80]。核因子E2相关因子2(nuclear factor erythroid 2-related factor 2, Nrf2)是调控肝细胞氧化应激反应的重要转录因子^[88]。Kratschmar等^[89]发现,母源性GC以及11 β -HSD1催化再生的GC可抑制Nrf2介导的抗氧化反应。GC还可通过抑制细胞中激活转录因子3(ATF3)/S100钙结合蛋白A9(S100A9)信号转导诱导肝脂肪变性^[90]。研究发现,核转录因子E47是GR调节肝葡萄糖和脂质代谢所

必需的,而E47的缺失可抑制GC诱导的高血糖症和肝脂肪变性发展^[91]。综上提示,宫内母源性GC可通过调控多种转录因子表达从而影响胎肝生理发育。

4.3 表观遗传修饰调控

疾病相关基因表达往往伴随多种表观遗传学调控,主要包括DNA甲基化、组蛋白修饰及非编码RNA等。Khulan等^[23]对产前GC暴露的大鼠胎肝进行了转录分析,发现肝血红素浓度降低与血红素合成、利用和降解途径相关基因的DNA甲基化改变有关。产前GC过暴露可能通过降低瘦素表达和上调甲基化修饰,从而诱导大鼠肝脏脂肪变性^[92]。组蛋白最常见的修饰形式是组蛋白甲基化和乙酰化。PCE诱导的宫内高GC激活了胎肝C/EBP α 信号转导并下调SIRT1表达,从而增加肝脏胆固醇合成基因(如SREBP2、HMGCR、HMGCS1)的组蛋白乙酰化(包括H3K14ac和H3K27ac)水平及表达,并持续到成年期导致HL的发生^[75]。孕期尼古丁暴露可通过GC降低雄性子代肝脏SR-B1和LDLR的组蛋白乙酰化(包括P300和H3K27ac)水平和表达,抑制RCT,导致子代成年后出现HL^[76]。此外,高GC可能通过调控肝脏IGF1组蛋白P2位点甲基化水平及表达,从而导致IUGR发生^[93]。除了DNA甲基化和组蛋白修饰,疾病发生相关基因的表达通常还会受到非编码RNA的调控。动物和细胞实验证实,肝脏高GC可显著下调miR-15b和miR-122表达,且PDE引起的miR-122低表达可通过YY1/ACE2-MAS1导致子代肝脏脂质合成增加及NAFLD易感^[94]。PDE还会增强胎肝GR转位入核和DGCR8/miR-148a的表达,从而降低LDLR表达,导致肝RCT功能受损及成年后HL易感^[10]。

5 总结和展望

“健康和疾病的发育起源(developmental origins of health and disease, DOHaD)”学说强调了孕期环境对子代甚至多代的影响。宫内母源性GC水平是决定胎儿多器官组织(包括肝脏)发育及功能成熟的关键。本文基于国内外最新研究进展,总结了宫内母源性GC的生理来源及病理变化特征,阐明了其对子代肝脏宫内发育和出生后相关疾病易感的影响及其网络调控机制。孕期外源因素可影响母体内源性GC水平或胎盘GC屏障功能,进而改变宫内GC水平和胎儿发育环境的稳态。在生理状态下,GC可促进胎肝的发育和功能成熟,但GC水平过

低或过高则会在多种转录因子的调控和表观遗传机制的参与下, 限制肝脏发育甚至引起相关疾病易感。

随着人们对优生优育的认识不断加深, 加强“母源性 GC 编程子代肝脏多疾病易感”的研究, 有助于进一步揭示母源性 GC 在子代肝脏从宫内至出生后整个发育阶段中的重要作用。更重要的是, 从宫内发育起源角度系统阐明子代肝脏生理过程与病理变化, 对探究孕期不良环境下肝脏发育源性疾病的宫内编程机制, 预警孕期不良生活习惯下子代肝脏发育源性相关疾病易感, 均具有指导意义。在未来的研究中, 随着胎源性疾病宫内编程机制研究的不断深入, 可针对机体发育可塑性的“窗口时期”, 对 GC 以及肝脏发育相关通路中的关键靶标进行早期干预, 从而维持机体早期发育稳态, 这将对生命健康产生长远的影响。

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