

## · 专 论 Special comment ·

## “TACE 抵抗/失败”——需要全面认识

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**【摘要】** 经导管动脉化疗栓塞术(TACE)是公认的中期肝细胞癌(HCC)患者标准治疗方法。然而,由于 TACE 本身固有的局限性和患者显著的异质性,部分患者存在多次 TACE 术后肿瘤控制仍然不佳的情况。基于此,近年来“TACE 抵抗/失败”的概念备受关注,但有关“TACE 抵抗/失败”的定义、内涵存在诸多模糊,甚至矛盾之处。该文就“TACE 抵抗/失败”概念、内涵进行解读和分析,试图予以厘清,以更好地对其进行全面与深入的研究,从而进一步提高肝癌治疗效果。

**【关键词】** 肝细胞癌; 经导管动脉化疗栓塞术; 失败; 抵抗

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**Comprehensive understanding of the concept and connotation of “TACE - failure/refractoriness”**

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**【Abstract】** Transcatheter arterial chemoembolization (TACE) is the standard strategy for intermediate-stage [Barcelona Clinic Liver Cancer (BCLC) stage B] hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). However, previous evidence showed that due to the inherent limitations of this technique and the vast heterogeneities of the patients, leading to differences in individual response, the efficacy of TACE treatment may be controversial. In this regard, it gave rise to the concept of TACE failure/refractoriness recently. Nevertheless, the definition and intension of TACE failure/refractoriness were confusing and somewhat contradictory. In this review, we aimed to interpret and analyze the concept deeply in order to conduct a comprehensive understanding and prolong the overall survival of HCC patients. (J Intervent Radiol, 2020, 29: 743-747)

**【Key words】** hepatocellular carcinoma; transcatheter arterial chemoembolization; failure; refractoriness

20 世纪 80 年代至今,临床研究已证实经导管动脉化疗栓塞术(TACE)治疗不可切除肝细胞癌(HCC)的安全性和有效性。目前绝大多数国内外指南推荐 TACE 作为中期肝癌患者标准治疗方法<sup>[1-3]</sup>。多年临床实践证明 TACE 治疗本身存在一定局限性<sup>[4]</sup>。首先,由于大多数肝癌患者伴发肝硬化,TACE 术后肝功能损伤比较常见;其次,栓塞后缺氧导致的各种生长因子水平升高<sup>[4-6]</sup>,提高了癌细胞复发、转移的风险;最后,TACE 远期疗效还受到许多因素的影响,如肿瘤负荷、血供和肝功能等。这些问题会造成多次 TACE 效果不佳,甚至无效。因此,为确保患者可以从

重复 TACE 中不断获益,2010 年日本肝病学会(JSH)提出“TACE 失败/抵抗(TACE-failure/refractoriness)”一词及初步概念,随后韩国、欧洲学者也相继阐述不同的“TACE 失败/抵抗”概念(以下简称“抵抗”)<sup>[7-8]</sup>。2014 年,JSH-肝癌研究组(LCSGJ)修订“抵抗”内容并沿用至今<sup>[9]</sup>:①即使更换了化疗药物或重新评估供血动脉,连续 2 次及以上 TACE 治疗后 1~3 个月行 CT/MRI 检查显示,肝内靶病灶与上一次 TACE 术前相比仍有 50%以上残存活性或出现新病灶;②出现肝外转移或血管侵犯;③术后肿瘤指标持续升高(即使有短暂下降)。目前,JSH-LCSGJ 提出的“抵

抗”概念受到一些学者赞同,并且在多项临床研究中将其作为判定 TACE 失败的依据<sup>[10-11]</sup>,甚至已被相关指南提及<sup>[2,12]</sup>。然而,笔者认为有关“抵抗”的定义存在着诸多模糊及矛盾之处。近期 Kudo 等<sup>[13]</sup>报道的 TACTICS 临床试验研究结果进一步加深了笔者对“抵抗”的质疑,该作者在研究设计中引入“抵抗”作为停止 TACE 的依据,可是又反复强调:由于肿瘤肝内转移/多中心起源是 HCC 生物学特性,TACE 治疗后肝内出现新发病灶不能判定为疾病进展,且可继续 TACE 治疗。TACTICS 研究创新性地认为肝内新发病灶不算疾病进展,那么连续 2 次 TACE 后仍出现新发病灶却作为“抵抗”的评价标准是否前后矛盾呢?在没有充分的循证医学证据支持下,我们无法在肯定“抵抗”的同时又接受“肝内新发病灶不算疾病进展”这一新的认知。事实上,“抵抗”中的许多内容均与临床实际存在着差异,缺乏足够的循证医学证据,甚至连 JSH 都推荐其为“低等级(weak recommendation)”<sup>[2]</sup>。因此,非常有必要厘清“抵抗”的相关概念,对其进行更为全面且深入的研究。以下就从“抵抗”的三方面进行分析解读。

## 1 连续 2 次及以上 TACE 后影像学上肿瘤反应不佳

“抵抗”认为,即使更换了化疗药物或重新评估供血动脉,连续 2 次及以上 TACE 治疗后 1~3 个月行 CT/MRI 检查显示肝内靶病灶与上一次 TACE 术前相比仍有 50% 以上残存活性或出现新病灶,即判定为治疗失败。这一论述对临床有一定的指导意义,但是概念阐述仍不够清晰,甚至存在诸多争议。笔者将其分解成以下四方面进行详细论述。

### 1.1 更换化疗药物

目前临床上常用的几类化疗药物对 HCC 疗效并无显著差异<sup>[14]</sup>,指南也未推荐哪种为一线化疗药物<sup>[2,12]</sup>,因此适时更换化疗药物似乎是合理的。单中心回顾性研究表明,接受常规 TACE 治疗的肝癌患者改用铂类化合物作为表柔比星耐药(疗效不佳)后的二线治疗,其 3 个月肿瘤客观反应率(objective response rate, ORR)为 11.8%<sup>[15]</sup>。另一应用载药微球治疗 HCC 回顾性报道中也证实顺铂对表柔比星抵抗患者的疗效<sup>[16]</sup>。然而由于以上研究缺乏对照组,且证据等级较低,无法有力证明更换化疗药物的有效性。事实上在 TACE 治疗中,化疗药物对肿瘤的杀伤作用有限。首先是因为 HCC 对化疗药物不敏感或容易耐药<sup>[17]</sup>,加之肿瘤内组织间液渗透压较肿瘤血管内压高,栓塞后缺氧导致肿瘤化疗抵抗能力

变强;其次,化疗药物需严格依照肿瘤周期给药且有规定疗程,而目前临床上多以“按需 TACE”(on-demand TACE)方案为主<sup>[18]</sup>;最后,因为化疗药具有亲水性,当混有化疗药物的碘油乳剂注射至肿瘤血管后会快速进入体循环,所以常规 TACE 认为的肿瘤内部存在高浓度化疗药,值得进一步探索证实。目前 meta 分析及随机对照试验(RCT)研究均未表明额外化疗药物会增加栓塞疗效<sup>[14,19]</sup>。数十年来肝癌栓塞技术不断发展,也说明 TACE 治疗的研究重点不单在药物应用<sup>[18,20]</sup>。

### 1.2 重新评估供血动脉

典型肝癌一般是富血供肿瘤,依据其大小和位置可由多支肝内动脉供血,甚至局部由肝外动脉供血,当主要供血动脉栓塞后其隐藏的侧支可开放,使得部分肿瘤存活<sup>[20]</sup>。因此,为使肿瘤完全栓塞,建议“每次 TACE 术前重新评估供血动脉”是非常合理的。

### 1.3 肝内残存靶病灶活性连续 2 次超过 50%

有研究表明初始 TACE 靶肿瘤未完全坏死的患者接受第 2 次 TACE 后,仍有 40% 以上患者有明显疗效<sup>[21]</sup>,且首次 TACE 后病灶即明显坏死的患者与需要 2 次栓塞才达到病灶明显坏死的患者生存期无明显差异,因此“评价 TACE 对靶肿瘤的疗效应至少在治疗 2 次以后”<sup>[18]</sup>的建议,是比较合理的。无效的重复 TACE 不仅增加肝脏损伤,还可能造成机体免疫力进一步下降及肿瘤组织表型改变(如肝胆管细胞表型),从而引起肿瘤恶性度增加<sup>[22]</sup>。TACE 术后肝内残存靶病灶测量,对于手术疗效评估及后续治疗方案制定是至关重要的,无论是改良实体肿瘤疗效评价标准(mRECIST)、肝癌疗效评价标准(RECIST)还是欧洲肝病研究学会(EASL)标准,均十分明确靶病灶单/双径测量及靶病灶个数。但 JSH 和“抵抗”均未明确推荐 TACE 术后评价标准,使实际操作陷入困境——如何精确测量“残存 50% 活性区域”以避免过度判断“抵抗”?另外,HCC 具有极高的异质性<sup>[23]</sup>,不仅不同的结节存在极高的异质性,同一肿瘤结节不同部位也存在极高的异质性,这导致不同结节或同一结节不同部位对 TACE 会产生不同反应。因此在评判“抵抗”与否时,是否也可能存在“一刀切”的武断?

### 1.4 肝内连续 2 次出现新发病灶

不可否认,B 期肝癌患者 TACE 术后出现新病灶很常见,因此很多学者认为 TACE 引起的肿瘤细胞缺氧及细胞毒作用,会在短期内引起酪氨酸激

酶受体及细胞生长因子水平升高,这提高了肿瘤扩散风险<sup>[5-6]</sup>。众所周知,肝癌多中心起源和肝内高转移率、高复发率是肝癌独有的生物学特征<sup>[13,24]</sup>。HCC 肝内转移是早期且很普遍的。据统计,接受外科切除或肝移植的早期肝癌患者 1 年内复发率分别达到 40% 和 10%<sup>[25-26]</sup>。Okusaka 等<sup>[27]</sup>研究 149 例小肝癌(<3 cm,单发病灶)患者术后病理标本,发现 19% 患者肿瘤结节边缘均伴随 1~5 mm 肿瘤卫星灶。这些小卫星灶难以靠影像检查发现,且不能被定义为肝癌结节<sup>[1]</sup>。另一项对 425 例肝癌患者术后病理标本(平均直径 50 mm)研究发现,51.3% 肿瘤结节存在微血管侵犯,中低分化病灶占近 90%<sup>[28]</sup>。肿瘤高负荷、癌细胞分化差、癌周围转移灶、肿瘤结节包膜缺失均为肝癌早期复发的独立危险因素<sup>[25-26,29]</sup>。中期肝癌患者本身并存以上高危因素,因此肝内高复发率和高转移率是必然的。此外,“按需 TACE”治疗肝内新发病灶并未降低手术安全性和有效性。Kim 等<sup>[8]</sup>回顾性分析 264 例接受“按需 TACE”治疗的肝癌患者肝内肿瘤进展情况,随访期内将肝内出现新发肿瘤或靶肿瘤总直径增大 20% 定义为疾病进展(progressive disease,PD),出现肝外转移定义为阶段进展(stage progression,SP);患者随访期间 TACE 治疗平均 3 次(1~13 次),PD(-)SP(-)患者、PD(+)SP(-)患者生存期分别为 36.6 个月、35.8 个月,没有明显差异,因此认为重复 TACE 可有效地控制肝内新发病灶。在 BRISK-TA<sup>[30]</sup>和 ORIENTAL<sup>[31]</sup>两项多中心随机对照研究中,对照组和试验组均未将肝内新发病灶作为停止 TACE 的依据,且对照组(仅按需 TACE)仍显示出对肿瘤良好的控制性。根据以上论述,新发肿瘤不应判断为 TACE 无效。

最后还需指出的是,该概念整体完全忽视了对肿瘤的纵向评价。TACE 自问世以来扮演的均是局部治疗且多为姑息治疗的角色,若多次 TACE 后有效减轻了肿瘤负荷、降低了肿瘤分期,却因为个别肝癌结节栓塞效果不佳,或因为在未治疗区域出现新发病灶而断定 TACE 对整个肝脏的治疗失败,显然是不合理的<sup>[7]</sup>。近期肝癌降期(downstage)治疗理念受到越来越多学者重视,TACE 也被认为是降期治疗的重要方式之一<sup>[32]</sup>。

## 2 出现血管侵犯或肝外转移

肝癌伴血管侵犯以门静脉侵犯最为常见,发生率为 10%~60%,自然病程仅 2~6 个月<sup>[33-34]</sup>。目前

对于伴血管侵犯的肝癌患者,不同指南推荐的治疗方法存在一定差异,多数指南推荐靶向药物作为一线治疗手段,然而临床实践证明,单纯应用靶向药物的疗效并不理想<sup>[35]</sup>。BRIDGE 全球肝癌调查发现,很多临床医师选择 TACE 而非应用靶向药物作为晚期患者初始治疗手段,以求尽快减轻肿瘤负荷<sup>[36]</sup>。无论是前瞻性非随机对照研究还是 meta 分析结果均表明,TACE 治疗相比于保守治疗,患者生存期明显延长,且亚组分析表明 TACE 治疗在门静脉分支癌栓和主干癌栓中均有显著效果<sup>[37-39]</sup>。多项回顾性研究证明 TACE 联合索拉非尼治疗门静脉癌栓会使患者生存期显著延长(11~18 个月)<sup>[40-41]</sup>。目前对于门静脉癌栓有了更多治疗方式选择<sup>[33]</sup>,特别是放射性粒子(<sup>125</sup>I)治疗具有非常良好的效果。但需要强调的是,这些患者整体疗效的提高是建立在联合 TACE 尽快控制肝内病灶的基础上。另外,对于癌栓累及肝静脉和腔静脉患者,TACE 也显示出良好效果<sup>[42]</sup>。

肝癌全身转移并不意味着失去肝内局部治疗机会,因为大多数肝癌患者是死于肝内病灶进展或肝衰竭,鲜有肿瘤转移导致其他脏器衰竭的报道。因此,对肝内原发病灶的控制极其重要<sup>[43]</sup>。虽然各项指南均将出现肝外转移定义为晚期肝癌,但实际上肝癌细胞全身播散可能是早期的。一项纳入 47 例接受肝移植患者的临床研究中,移植前后均可在外周血中检测到肿瘤细胞且伴有较高异质性<sup>[44]</sup>。Choi 等<sup>[45]</sup>回顾性分析 355 例伴肝外转移和门静脉侵犯患者,分别行 TACE 联合索拉非尼、单纯索拉非尼治疗,结果提示联合组、单纯治疗组中位疾病进展时间(time to progression,TTP)分别为 2.7 个月、2.1 个月( $P=0.011$ ),总生存期(overall survival,OS)分别为 8.9 个月、5.9 个月( $P=0.009$ );亚组分析表明联合治疗在肝功能 Child-Pugh A 级、伴肝外转移及门静脉侵犯患者中均有显著疗效。另一项回顾性研究中,对伴肝外转移患者分别行 TACE、索拉非尼治疗,中位 OS 分别为 8.2 个月、4.6 个月( $P<0.001$ ),TACE 组明显获益<sup>[46]</sup>。目前关于 TACE 治疗晚期肝癌伴肝外转移患者的报道多为回顾性研究,未来还需 RCT 研究进一步证实 TACE 在部分晚期肝癌患者中的有效性和安全性。

## 3 术后肿瘤指标持续升高(即使有短暂下降)

甲胎蛋白(AFP)是当前肝癌诊断和疗效监测常用的重要指标。TACE 术后该指标升高一般提示肝



内肿瘤进展甚至扩散,是影响患者生存期的独立危险因素<sup>[47]</sup>。但是肝内疾病进展并不是 TACE 禁忌证,且肿瘤指标变化也不能完全取代影像学检查准确评估肿瘤反应<sup>[1]</sup>。单个肿瘤指标变化与肿瘤形态学变化的关系也不完全相符,甚至相悖<sup>[48]</sup>。另外,由于肝癌结节具有极高的异质性,表达的肿瘤指标水平不同,因此需要联合其他标志物如血清甲胎蛋白异质体(AFP-L3)、维生素 K 缺乏或拮抗诱导蛋白(protein induced by vitamin K absence or antagonist, PIVKA II)共同评估疗效。对于术后肿瘤指标持续升高且发现有肝外转移患者,尤其是年轻且肿瘤负荷不大患者,仍有从 TACE 中继续获益的可能<sup>[49]</sup>。

综上所述,JSH-LCSGJ 提出的“抵抗”概念存在一定局限性。“抵抗”的提出是为了在发挥 TACE 治疗优势的同时,尽可能减少因反复或无效 TACE 造成的肝功能损伤、机体免疫力下降等并发症,从而提高患者疗效,改善长期预后。如何准确定义“抵抗”和完善其内涵,仍需更加全面和深入的研究,唯此才能最大限度地发挥 TACE 优势,进一步提高肝癌治疗效果。

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