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• 综述与讲座 •

血管源性脑白质高信号与血管性认知障碍

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[摘要] 血管源性脑白质高信号为脑小血管病的影像学特征之一,表现为白质区(脑室周围或皮层下)大小各异的信号异常灶,在老年人群中尤为常见,且随年龄增加而加重。广泛的脑白质高信号会引起认知功能障碍,与记忆功能、注意力和执行功能等认知域的相关性更强。本文综述了血管源性脑白质高信号的定义、病理学特征、影像学表现及与认知障碍的关系,以供临床诊疗参考。

[关键词] 血管源性脑白质高信号; 认知障碍

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血管源性脑白质高信号(WMH)在老年人群中的神经影像学检查中常见,是认知障碍乃至痴呆的重要危险因素之一。本文对血管源性 WMH 的定义、流行病学、病理学特征、影像学特点及与认知障碍的关系进行综述,以供临床参考。

一、血管源性脑白质高信号的定义与流行病学

血管源性 WMH 为脑小血管病(CSVD)的影像学

特征之一。根据 STRIVE 标准^[1],CSVD 的神经影像学标志物包括新发皮层下小梗死、推测为血管起源的腔隙、推测为血管起源的白质高信号、血管周围间隙和脑微出血^[2]。WMH 是白质脱髓鞘的影像学表现,可由多种病因引起。而血管源性 WMH 特别指由血管疾病引起的白质病变,不包括神经免疫、神经感染、代谢或中毒导致的白质损伤,如多发性硬化症、急性播散性脑脊髓炎、白质营养不良或韦尼克氏脑病等。血管源性 WMH 在磁共振成像(MRI)上白质区可见高信号区域,在计算机断层扫描(CT)上在白质区可见低密度区域。

血管源性 WMH 在老年人群中很常见。WMH 的发

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生率在 55 岁前很低,在一项中位年龄为 57 岁的社区人群调查中仅为 5.3%^[3],但在 61 岁之后随年龄增长而急剧上升,在 61~70 岁人群中为 63.8%,在 71~80 岁人群中为 83%,而在 81 岁以上人群中可高达 95%^[4,5]。有研究根据不同脑区部位对 WMH 进行分类,发现深层和皮层下 WMH 的患病率为 20%~67%,脑室周围 WMH 的患病率为 15%~94%^[6-7]。

二、血管源性脑白质高信号的病理学特征

血管源性 WMH 的发病机制目前尚不明确,可能涉及多种因素,如血脑屏障渗漏、慢性低灌注、淀粉样蛋白清除障碍、轴突损伤或铁沉积等。Zhang 等^[8]在 77 例 CSVD 患者和 39 例健康对照者中研究了血脑屏障渗漏、WMH 体积和认知功能之间的关系,结果发现 CSVD 患者的血脑屏障渗漏体积越大,渗漏速率越低,则 WMH 体积越大,而在对照组中则没有观察到这种现象。Osborn 等^[9]检测了 148 例平均年龄(72±6)岁老年人的脑脊液 β -淀粉样蛋白₄₂($A\beta_{42}$)、高磷酸化 tau 蛋白、总 tau 蛋白和神经原纤维素(NFL)。发现 $A\beta_{42}$ ($\beta = -0.001, P = 0.007$)和 NFL($\beta = 0.0003, P = 0.010$)浓度与 WMH 体积相关。Scott 等^[10]建立了一种线性混合效应模型评估了认知正常的老年人群基线脑脊液 $A\beta_{42}$ 、高血压、年龄及其相互作用,结果显示,随着时间推移,淀粉样蛋白负荷增高与 WMH 负荷增加相关,且高血压患者表现出淀粉样蛋白负荷和 WMH 负荷之间更强的相关性。Hernand 等^[11]调查了平均年龄为 72.7 岁的 676 例社区人群的认知功能和多模态头颅 MRI,发现铁沉积总体积与一般认知功能呈显著负相关(标准化 $\beta = -0.17, P < 0.01$),与 WMH 体积呈显著正相关(标准化 $\beta = 0.13, P = 0.03$)。

三、血管源性脑白质高信号的影像学进展

根据 2016 年美国心脏协会(AHA)及美国卒中协会(ASA)共同发表的声明^[12],血管源性 WMH 的影像学表现为白质区(脑室周围或皮层下)大小各异信号异常灶,如 T2-FLAIR 上高信号或 CT 上低密度影,与脑脊液不同。皮质下灰质或脑干的病变不包括在其中。因此 T1、T2 及 T2-FLAIR 序列最常被用于对 WMH 进行分析。目前存在多种自动或半自动计算 WMH 体积的工具或算法。早在 2001 年, Bokde 等^[13]基于解剖标志应用模板对脑白质高信号进行自动分割,在 10 例受试者头颅 MRI 应用中与人工相比存在 1.4%~5.2% 的相对误差。随着人工智能等计算机技术的发展,已经有多种基于体素的计算机分析方案^[14-16]。Ribaldi 等^[17]比较了多种自动化 WMH 分割算

法(包括分割工具算法、生长算法和预测算法),并与人工分割进行对比,其体积差中值(ml)分别为 -0.22[四分位间距(IQR) = 0.50]、-0.12(IQR = 0.57)、-0.09(IQR = 0.53),空间精度(Dice 系数)分别为 0.29(IQR = 0.31)、0.33(IQR = 0.26)和 0.41(IQR = 0.23)。

随着影像学技术的发展,除了使用传统 MRI 外,弥散磁共振成像可进一步显示 WMH 的白质微结构完整性损害,如弥散张量成像(DTI)、神经突起方向离散度与密度成像(NODDI)、扩散峰度成像(DKI)等。Jiaerken 等^[18]应用 DTI 观察 WMH 的微观结构的动态变化,在对 40 例受试者长达 2 年的随访中发现,扩大的 WMH 的 FA 值高于恒定的 WMH。Fu 等^[19]应用 NODDI 研究轻度认知障碍(MCI)和阿尔茨海默病(AD)患者白质的显微结构改变,发现与对照组相比, MCI 组和 AD 组的 NDI、ODI 值显著降低,Viso 值显著升高,并提出 NODDI 对 AD 的诊断优于 DTI。Wang 等^[20]应用高角分辨率扩散成像(HARDI)比较了 26 例可能的 AD 患者和 16 例正常对照老年人的脑白质连接特征,发现 AD 组的全局效率和局部效率均显著降低,但聚类系数和平均最短路径长度均有所增加,且 AD 患者的多个局部皮层和皮层下区域,如颞叶、海马和丘脑的连接较弱。Konieczny 等^[21]通过对 54 例散发 SVD 患者进行磁共振检查,比较了多种弥散磁共振模型的指标对 WMH 的微观结构改变和认知功能的相关性,发现 DKI 和 NODDI 的影像学指标与认知障碍(执行功能)有更好的相关性,DTI 和 DKI 指标在检测短期疾病进展方面表现最佳。DTI 和 DKI 指标的重复性更好,而 NODDI 模型的指标的重复性不佳。

四、血管源性脑白质高信号与血管性认知障碍

血管源性 WMH 与血管性认知障碍(VCI)的相关性已被多项研究证实。Hu 等^[22]的 Meta 分析纳入 36 项前瞻性研究共 19 040 例受试者,发现 WMH 患者认知障碍和全因痴呆的风险增加了 14%。WMH 还使 AD 发生风险增加了 25%、血管性痴呆风险增加了 73%。同时,血管源性 WMH 对特定认知域的影响更大,如记忆、注意力、执行功能等。Kynast 等^[23]调查了 849 例 21~79 岁的社区人群,发现与健康对照组相比,轻中度 WMH 患者的整体认知功能下降,而重度 WMH 患者表现出社会认知、注意力和记忆力显著下降。一项纳入了 12 项 AD 横断面研究和 10 项 MCI 研究(9 项横断面研究,1 项纵向研究)的 Meta 分析结果显示,WMH 体积与整体认知的相关性在 MCI[相关系数(r) = -0.25, 95% CI -0.36~-0.14]中显著强于 AD(r = -0.11, 95% CI -0.14~-0.08), $P < 0.05$);在 AD 和 MCI 两组

中,注意力、执行功能($r = -0.26, 95\% CI -0.36 \sim -0.15$)和处理速度($r = -0.21, 95\% CI -0.35 \sim -0.12$)最为显著^[24]。

位于不同脑区的 WMH 分布与相应的认知域下降存在关联。一项通过智能算法分割不同脑区 WMH 的研究发现,放射冠、内囊前肢、扣带回与执行功能相关,放射冠、内囊前肢、丘脑辐射与注意力相关^[25]。Zeng 等^[26]对 321 例社区人群行 MRI 检查,并对认知功能进行多维度评估,发现 WMH 的严重程度与工作和情景记忆的表现具有显著负相关性,小脑上脚和左丘脑后辐射的低各向异性(FA 值)主要与情景记忆有关,小脑中脚与工作记忆有关。一项调查了 561 例 45~75 岁人群的研究发现,记忆和执行功能与整体 WMH 负荷显著相关。在脑区分区上,较低的执行表现主要与额叶区较高的深度 WMH 负荷有关,与枕叶区、顶叶区和颞叶区也具有较低程度的负相关。较差的情景记忆表现与额叶和枕叶深区较高的 WMH 负担相关^[27]。Lampe 等^[28]认为,WMH 病变部位影响患者的认知和行为:位于额脑室附近的额叶 WMH 主要影响执行功能,侧脑室后角附近的顶叶-颞叶 WMH 影响记忆功能,而位于深部白质的 WMH 影响运动速度。

血管源性 WMH 与认知功能障碍相关的原因尚不清楚。一种可能是 WMH 促进皮质萎缩,进而影响认知。Rizvi 等^[29]研究了 519 例老年人大脑皮质厚度在 WMH 和认知之间的作用,发现整体皮质厚度和内侧颞叶厚度介导了 WMH 体积与整体认知和记忆功能的相关性。Mayer 等^[30]测量了 930 例 45~74 岁社区人群(中位年龄 64 岁)的 T1 加权图像上的皮质厚度和 FLAIR 图像上的 WMH 分割,发现 WMH 与皮质厚度的减少有关($P = 0.009$),且这种关联仅在脑室周围 WMH 中发现($P = 0.001$)。

五、VCI 的干预

与大多数其他认知障碍类似,血管源性 WMH 导致 VCI 的全面管理强调对患者和照料者的教育、咨询和支持以及家庭安全教育和护理。对于非药物干预,2016 年的一项随机对照试验(RCT)研究表明,每周 3 次有氧运动对轻度 VCI 患者的认知功能有好处,与常规护理加教育组相比,有氧运动训练组的认知评估成绩有显著改善,尽管在长期随访中这种好处有所减少^[31]。地中海饮食预防研究(PREDIMED)^[32]纳入 447 例健康志愿者进行营养干预试验,证明了在老年人群中,补充橄榄油或坚果的地中海饮食与改善认知功能有关。芬兰的 FINGER 研究^[33]调查了多领域干预(饮食、锻炼、认知训练、血管风险监测)对认知功能

的影响,经过 2 年随访发现,干预组认知功能评分高于对照组,论证多领域干预可以改善或维持普通人群中高危老年人的认知功能。

2016 AHA/ASA 声明^[12]建议对于年龄范围内 WMH 过高的患者(包括开始融合或融合 WMH 的患者)建议评估常见的血管危险因素,包括高血压、糖尿病、高脂血症、吸烟和运动。在 PROGRESS 试验^[34]中,积极降压组的卒中复发率和痴呆的风险分别减低了 34% 和 45%。但也有研究表明降低血压对认知功能并无影响,Pearce 等^[35]的研究发现近期发生腔隙性脑卒中的年轻患者,短期双抗血小板治疗或降低血压对其认知功能没有影响。Blum 等^[36]调查了 65 岁以上的 CSVD 患者,发现是否降低收缩压至 130mmHg 以下对认知功能的影响无差异,但在 WMH 负担较高的人群中,较低的收缩压目标对血管结局更有利。一项纳入 178 例老年糖尿病患者的横断面研究发现,糖化白蛋白/糖化血红蛋白比值升高与 WMH 体积独立相关,可导致老年糖尿病患者认知功能和生活自理能力下降^[37]。

乙酰胆碱酯酶抑制剂被认为通过增加突触间隙乙酰胆碱的可用性来改善 AD 患者的认知功能。然而在临床试验中,乙酰胆碱酯酶抑制剂对 VCI 的效果并不一致。一项纳入 7 项研究的 Meta 分析结果显示,乙酰胆碱酯酶抑制剂维持了卒中后认知障碍和血管性痴呆患者改善认知功能的稳定模式,且不增加不良反应风险^[38]。此外,乙酰胆碱酯酶抑制剂对血管性痴呆患者的整体功能没有明显的好处。一项多中心 RCT 研究发现,与安慰剂组相比,多奈哌齐对认知功能有显著改善,但整体功能没有改善^[39]。因此,乙酰胆碱酯酶抑制剂尚未被美国食品和药品监督管理局(FDA)批准用于治疗 VCI。其他药物如西洛他唑^[40]、爱维治^[41]、尼莫地平^[42]和美金刚^[43]的益处尚不清楚。

综上所述,血管源性 WMH 是老年人群中常见的影像学表现,也是导致认知障碍的重要原因之一。目前对 VCI 尚无疗效明确的药物治疗,因此对其的早期识别尤为重要。

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