

# 骨关节炎软骨下骨研究进展

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**摘要** 骨关节炎是最常见的关节疾病,其病理以关节软骨退变、软骨下骨硬化与骨赘形成为特点。目前骨关节炎的始发病理尚不明确,既往许多研究聚焦于关节软骨并认为软骨下骨的改变继发于关节软骨的退变;然而近年报道关节软骨下骨低骨密度,尤其是膝骨关节炎的软骨下骨,软骨下骨呈高转换,以及骨吸收抑制剂治疗骨关节炎有效,都提示软骨下骨在骨关节炎的病理机制中具有重要地位。本文就骨关节炎软骨下骨的研究进展做一综述。

**关键词** 骨关节炎; 软骨; 综述文献

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**Subchondral bone in osteoarthritis: a review** PANG Jian, CAO Yue-long, SHI Yin-yu. Medical Center of Shi Trauma, Shuguang Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Shanghai 201203, China

**ABSTRACT** Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most prevalent of joint diseases, and its pathology is characterized by the degeneration of cartilage, sclerosis of subchondral bone, and osteophyte formation. Localization of the early lesions of OA has not been clarified, but many researchers have focused on cartilage and have considered that changes in subchondral bone occur subsequently to the degeneration of cartilage. However, a low bone mineral density, particularly in the knee joint with OA, high bone turnover, and efficacy of bone resorption inhibitors for OA have recently been reported, suggesting that subchondral bone plays an important role in the pathogenesis of OA. This review aims to make a conclusion about advancement in research of subchondral bone in osteoarthritis.

**KEYWORDS** Osteoarthritis; Cartilage; Review literature

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骨关节炎可累及可动关节的全部组织,其中又以软骨、软骨下骨与滑膜的病理改变显著。到目前为止,仍未见明确有效的改善病情药物<sup>[1]</sup>和理想中安全的消炎止痛药面世。随着越来越多新证据的出现,提示软骨下骨也与骨关节炎的疾病进展紧密关联<sup>[2]</sup>。在软骨之外,将软骨下骨也列为骨关节炎治疗的靶标被认为是合理的选择<sup>[3]</sup>。

## 1 骨关节炎软骨下骨重建失衡

软骨下骨是关节的重要组成部分,位于关节软骨下方,包括皮质终板及其下方的骨小梁结构,软骨下骨的主要功能为吸收应力、缓冲震荡和维持关节形状。通常软骨下骨的弹性模量较关节软骨低,在缓冲震荡中起主要的衬垫作用,可避免关节软骨承受过度应力而致损伤。软骨下骨的作用如同公路的路基,譬如过软的路基会导致路面塌陷,刚度过高的路基将无法起到缓冲的作用,而变形的路基必然会导致路面形变。在骨关节炎患者,典型的影像学表现为骨端膨大畸形与密度增高,

研究发现相对正常人关节软骨下骨骨量可增加 10%~15%<sup>[4]</sup>。从 Radin 等<sup>[5]</sup>研究者首次提出软骨下骨的改变是骨关节炎发病启动因素的假说,及至今日,虽然软骨下骨病变作为骨关节炎启动因素的论断尚乏足够依据,但软骨下骨改变是骨关节炎病变的重要方面,而且软骨下骨结构与生物力学性能的改变可以促使软骨退变已经成为共识<sup>[2,6-8]</sup>。

既往认为,骨关节炎骨端发生骨质硬化,包含软骨下骨密度增高、骨量增加。而 Grynaps 等<sup>[9]</sup>及其他研究团队<sup>[4,10]</sup>的研究揭示骨关节炎软骨下骨的密度并非像人们通常所认为总是增加的,在与正常人群比较时,矿化程度没有增加反而降低。Bettica 等<sup>[11]</sup>及其他研究团队<sup>[12-13]</sup>分别在基于患者与动物模型的研究发现,在骨关节炎早期皮质终板和其下的骨小梁变薄,显示有过量骨吸收;在晚期皮质终板硬化但其下的松质骨丢失严重,骨小梁进一步变薄并失去弹性。Huebner 等<sup>[14]</sup>以及 Mansell 等<sup>[6,15]</sup>的研究发现软骨下骨呈现异常高转换状态,甚至这种软骨下骨的高转换可以是正常情况下的 20 倍<sup>[7]</sup>。Bellido 等<sup>[16]</sup>的研究团队基于兔的 OA 合并 OP 模型开展研究,认为软骨下骨发生显微结构改变且与活跃的骨重建相关,并且促进了软骨的退变。上述研究提示在骨关节炎发生初始软骨下骨骨吸收活跃,发生骨质疏松,骨密度下降。由于关节负荷没有减轻,为了维持力学性能,代偿性地引起骨形成活跃。然而软骨下骨异常的高转换引起的新生骨组织矿化不全,故表现为骨量增加而单位体积骨密度下降。因此,在骨关节炎软骨下骨改变是以高转换为背景的骨重建(骨吸收/骨形成)

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异常,结果就是软骨下骨密度、骨结构发生改变,如图 1<sup>[17]</sup>所示。

**2 骨关节炎软骨下骨重建调控的细胞与分子基础**

骨重建过程的正常是保持骨骼几何形态、结构特征和组分稳定的重要机制,也是骨组织适应骨量改变与力学环境改变的重要机能。骨组织持续不断地重复着陈旧骨清除及新骨形成的骨重建过程,骨重建过程无论在细胞学还是组织学水平都被认为是骨吸收与骨形成过程的偶联,一旦骨吸收/骨形成偶联发生失衡,即可导致骨量与骨结构的变化。在细胞水平,破骨细胞与成骨细胞是骨重建的主要功能细胞。破骨细胞主导完成骨吸收而成骨细胞主导骨形成的过程,两者又可通过多种信号途径影响对方的聚集、分化以及功能活性。

在分子水平,多条骨重建调控途径获得证据被认为参与了骨关节炎软骨下骨重建的调控。在调控骨吸收方面,OPG/RANKL/RANK 系统是近年来发现的在破骨细胞分化过程中的一个重要信号传导通路。成骨细胞及骨髓基质细胞表达 RANKL,与破骨细胞前体细胞或破骨细胞表面上的 RANK 结合后,促进破骨细胞的分化及骨吸收活性。成骨细胞及骨髓基质细胞分泌表达 OPG 与 RANKL 竞争性结合,阻止 RANKL 与 RANK 之间的结合。因此,OPG 干扰 RANKL 与 RANK 结合的程度决定了骨吸收的速度。OPG/RANKL/RANK 被认为可能是所有骨性疾病最为相关的治疗靶点<sup>[18]</sup>。新近研究显示,OPG/RANKL/RANK 系统参与调控骨关节炎患者软骨下骨重建过程,而且人类骨关节炎软骨下骨的异常骨重建与 OPG/RANKL 的表达率密切相关<sup>[19]</sup>,在骨关节炎早期 OPG/RANKL 降低,而在晚期 OPG/RANKL 升高。基于大鼠的动物实验显示,伴随着关节软骨退变,软骨下骨也显著丢失,在这一过程中软骨下骨的破骨细胞数量与表面积都显著增加,而 M-CSF,VEGF,RUNX 以及 RANKL/OPG 的 mRNA 及蛋白表达都显著增加,而 OPG 的表达却降低了<sup>[20]</sup>。这些实验证据都支持 OPG/RANKL/RANK 系统参与调控骨关节炎软骨下骨的异常骨吸收暨重建过程。已经确认 Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin 途径(经典 Wnt 途径)、骨形态发生蛋白(BMP)途径参与调控骨形成过程<sup>[21]</sup>。抑制 Wnt 信号通路可使成骨细胞分化进程受阻,而诱导 Wnt 家族高表达则可以使得成骨细胞特异性基因表达增加,促进骨形成。BMP 是促进骨形成和诱导成骨细胞分化最重要

的细胞外信号分子之一,通过激活 Smads 信号传导和调节成骨基因转录而发挥其成骨作用。应用基因芯片与定量 PCR 技术,Hopwood 等<sup>[22]</sup>研究者观察骨关节炎患者软骨下骨的相关基因表达,发现软骨下骨中 Wnt 信号系统与 BMP 信号系统相关基因(Wnt5b,Pten,Runx2,BMP5,Smad3,Smad4)与正常对照组比较呈现差异表达,提示 Wnt 与 BMP 信号系统也参与了骨关节炎软骨下骨重建异常过程的调控。

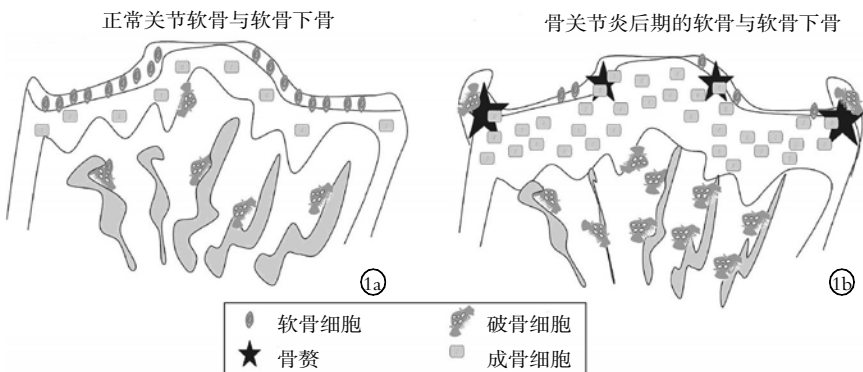
**3 软骨下骨学说的启示与临床研究**

基于以上的认识,提示我们作用于骨重建(骨吸收/骨形成)过程的药物也许可以作为骨关节炎防治的候选药物。在更深入的研究中,通过雌性食蟹猴的骨关节炎切卵模型中发现,随着软骨下骨骨吸收的增加可以促使关节软骨发生退变<sup>[23]</sup>。而基于大鼠前交叉韧带切断的膝骨关节炎模型的研究显示,给予骨吸收抑制剂可使关节软骨 Mankin score 降低 50%<sup>[24]</sup>,可以延缓软骨退变。基于双侧膝关节半月板切除/切卵大鼠动物模型的研究显示<sup>[25]</sup>,经双侧半月板切除/切卵的干预使软骨下骨转换明显增加,同时软骨厚度明显减少,钙化软骨增加及血清 CTX-II 水平上升;而予以口服鲑鱼降钙素干预使软骨下骨的退变程度减轻,也使软骨厚度减少与血清 CTX-II 上升的幅度相对轻微。此外,钙剂、双磷酸盐干预治疗骨关节炎的实验研究也屡见报道<sup>[19,24,26-27]</sup>,一系列的传统用于骨质疏松药物用于骨关节炎治疗的动物实验的开展,表明这些药物在体内实验中可以改善骨关节炎的病情,只是尚不能证明其作用机制是间接还是直接的效应于软骨;其中双磷酸盐<sup>[28]</sup>,降钙素<sup>[29]</sup>,雌激素受体调节剂<sup>[30]</sup>等药物防治骨关节炎的临床研究也已见诸报道。在国内,中药对骨关节炎软骨下骨作用的观察已经开展。如黄杰文等<sup>[31]</sup>观察补肾中药对大鼠膝骨关节炎动物模型的影响,发现补肾中药在早期可以抑制骨形成,减轻软骨下骨硬化,减少骨陷窝的形成,降低软骨降解的程度。李钊等<sup>[32]</sup>观察补肾通络方对骨关节炎大鼠软骨下骨重建的影响,研究显示补肾通络方可能通过抑制破骨细胞活性,增加成骨细胞活性,促进骨形成,调控骨重塑,减少软骨下骨硬化,从而提高软骨下骨的生物力学性能,进而保护关节软骨。

综上所述,软骨下骨在骨关节炎发病机制中的地位,已成为当前研究的热点,而通过调节软骨下骨骨重建治疗骨关节炎,可能是目前骨关节炎药物治疗最具希望的突破点。

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**图 1** 骨关节炎发生后软骨及软骨下骨区域改变示意图 **1a**. 正常胫骨平台 **1b**. 骨关节炎的胫骨平台,显示软骨丢失、软骨下骨高骨转换、骨质硬化、骨小梁稀疏及骨赘形成  
**Fig.1** Schematic illustration of the alterations in the subchondral area. Left panel **1a**. Normal tibial plateau. Right panel **1b**. Osteoarthritic tibial plateau, showing loss of cartilage, increased bone turnover, sclerosis of the subchondral plate, thinning of the trabeculae, and forming of osteophytes

- bone plate from the femoral head of patients with osteoarthritis or osteoporosis[J]. *Ann Rheum Dis*, 1997, 56(4):247-254.
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