

干扰长链编码 RNA FOXCUT 能抑制鼻咽癌细胞上皮间质转化及诱导线粒体损伤

高莉莉¹, 张 雄², 窦思雨¹, 岳小丁¹, 杨捷玲¹

¹西京学院医学院, 陕西 西安 710000; ²陕西中医药大学附属医院耳鼻喉科, 陕西 咸阳 712000

摘要:目的 探讨干扰长链编码 RNA FOXCUT 对鼻咽癌细胞上皮间质转化及线粒体功能的影响。方法 RT-PCR 检测 50 例鼻咽癌患者癌组织及癌旁组织和 NP69、CNE1、CNE2、SUNE2、HER2 和 5-8F 细胞株中 FOXCUT 表达水平; 将 shRNA FOXCUT 转染至 CNE1 细胞, 随机分组为 Control 组、shRNA-NC 组和 FOXCUT-shRNA3 组。采用 CCK8 法和克隆形成实验检测细胞增殖; 显微镜观察细胞形态; 免疫荧光检测 Vimentin+ 含量; 试剂盒检测氧化应激标记物 SOD、MDA、LDH 的水平; 流式检测线粒体膜电位的变化; Western blot 法检测 E-cad、N-cad、Vimentin、Bax、Bcl-2、caspase-3 和 c-Myc 蛋白表达水平。结果 与癌旁组织相比, 鼻咽癌组织中 FOXCUT 表达水平均升高 ($P < 0.001$)。与 NP69 细胞相比, CNE1、CNE2、SUNE2、HER2 和 5-8F 细胞 FOXCUT 表达水平均升高 ($P < 0.001$)。与 Control 组相比较, FOXCUT-shRNA3 组细胞增殖倍数及克隆形成率降低 ($P < 0.001$), 细胞形态呈短梭形、扁平型或圆形, 细胞间的连接较为紧密, 具有铺路石样特征; N-cad、Vimentin 的表达水平降低, E-cad 的表达水平升高 ($P < 0.05$), Vimentin+ 含量降低 ($P < 0.001$), MDA、LDH 的含量明显升高 ($P < 0.05$), SOD 的活性明显降低 ($P < 0.05$), 红色荧光细胞向绿色荧光细胞转变较明显, 绿色荧光细胞百分比增加, Bax/Bcl2、Cleaved cas3/cas3 表达显著上升, c-Myc 表达显著降低 ($P < 0.001$)。

结论 干扰长链非编码 RNA FOXCUT 能够抑制鼻咽癌细胞增殖, 减少上皮间质转化, 增强氧化应激、降低膜电位, 诱导 CNE1 细胞线粒体功能损伤, 促进凋亡; 干扰长链非编码 RNA FOXCUT 对 CNE1 细胞抑制效果显著, 具有靶向治疗鼻咽癌的潜力。

关键词: 鼻咽癌; CNE1 细胞; 长链非编码 RNA FOXCUT; 上皮间质转化; 氧化应激; 线粒体损伤

Interference of long noncoding RNA FOXCUT inhibits epithelial-mesenchymal transformation and induces mitochondrial injury in nasopharyngeal carcinoma cells

GAO Lili¹, ZHANG Xiong², DOU Siyu¹, YUE Xiaoding¹, YANG Jieling¹

¹School of Medicine, Xijing University, Xi'an 710000, China; ²Department of Otolaryngology, Affiliated Hospital of Shaanxi University of Chinese Medicine, Xianyang 712000, China

Abstract: Objective To investigate the effects of RNA interference of long noncoding RNA FOXCUT on epithelial mesenchymal transformation and mitochondrial function in nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC) cells. **Methods** FOXCUT expression levels were detected by RT-PCR in tumor tissues and adjacent tissues from 50 patients with NPC and in NP69, CNE1, CNE2, SUNE2, HER2 and 5-8F cell lines. CNE1 cells were transfected with a short hairpin RNA (shRNA) targeting FOXCUT or a negative control RNA construct (shRNA-NC), and the changes in cell proliferation and morphology were assessed with CCK8 assay, clone formation assay and microscopic observation. An immunofluorescence assay was used to examine the vimentin-positive cells, and the levels of SOD, MDA and LDH in the cells were detected. The changes of mitochondrial membrane potential were detected with flow cytometry, and the expression levels of E-cad, N-cad, vimentin, Bax, Bcl-2, caspase-3 and c-Myc in the cells were detected with Western blotting. **Results** The expression level of FOXCUT was significantly increased in NPC tissues as compared with the adjacent tissues ($P < 0.001$). Compared with NP69 cells, CNE1, CNE2, SUNE2, HER2 and 5-8F cells all exhibited significantly increased expressions of FOXCUT ($P < 0.001$). In CNE1 cells, transfection with FOXCUT shRNA significantly inhibited cell proliferation and clone formation ($P < 0.001$), and caused obvious changes in cell morphology. FOXCUT knockdown significantly decreased the expressions of N-cad and vimentin, increased E-cad expression and the contents of MDA and LDH ($P < 0.05$), reduced vimentin-positive cells and the activity of SOD, and caused a shift of red fluorescent cells to green fluorescent cells and an increased percentage of green fluorescent cells. FOXCUT knockdown also resulted in significantly increased expressions of Bax/Bcl2 and cleaved Cas3/Cas3 and a lowered expression of c-Myc. **Conclusions** Interference of FOXCUT can inhibit the proliferation and epithelial-mesenchymal transformation, enhance oxidative stress, induce mitochondrial function injury, and promote apoptosis in NPC cells, suggesting the potential of FOXCUT interference for targeted treatment of NPC.

Keywords: nasopharyngeal carcinoma; CNE1 cells; long noncoding RNA FOXCUT; epithelial mesenchymal transformation; oxidative stress; mitochondrial injury

鼻咽癌(NPC)是源于鼻咽黏膜的恶性肿瘤, 其发病

机制与爱泼斯坦-巴尔病毒(EBV)感染、环境诱导、遗传易感性等有关^[1]。患者早期无特异性症状, 鼻塞、耳鸣、涕中带血、头痛等症状易被忽视或误诊, 约 70% 的患者错过最佳治疗时期, 确诊时已处于中晚期^[2]。鼻咽癌具有侵袭性高、转移快、预后差、并发症复杂等特点, 目前

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作者简介:高莉莉,硕士,助教,住院医师,E-mail: gaolili202102@163.com

鼻咽癌的传统治疗包括手术治疗、放疗及化疗,但由于解剖部位深、解剖结构复杂限制了手术疗效,此外,放、化疗常引起免疫降低、继发性肿瘤等的发生^[3,4]。因此,寻找延长患者无病生存期,提高预后生命质量,有效减少并发症等的治疗方法具有重要意义。

长链非编码RNA(lncRNA)是一类长度大于200个核苷酸的RNA分子,缺乏蛋白质编码能力,可以调控很多基因的表达,LncRNAs在鼻咽癌的发生发展起重要作用^[5-7]。FOXCUT其位于促肿瘤生长叉头框基因FOXC1基因启动子的上游,可与STAT3相互作用增强鼻咽癌侵袭能力^[8]。有研究显示LncRNA FOXCUT通过靶向FOXC1促进鼻咽癌细胞增殖和迁移^[9],但关于FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞作用及调控机制还未见报道。因此,本研究通过干扰长链编码RNA FOXCUT表达,研究其对鼻咽癌细胞上皮间质转化及线粒体功能的影响,以期为LncRNA FOXCUT在鼻咽癌的靶向治疗中提供实验参考。

1 材料和方法

1.1 细胞

鼻咽上皮细胞NP69细胞株及人鼻咽癌细胞CNE1、CNE2、SUNE2、HER2和5-8F细胞株(中国典型培养物保藏中心)。50例鼻咽癌及癌旁组织来源于本院(2019年10月~2020年10月),所有入选患者术前均未接受过放疗、化疗或生物治疗等干预措施,所有涉及研究的标本取材均征得患者及家属同意,并经过本院伦理委员会批准。

1.2 主要试剂

RPMI 1640培养基和Opti培养基(Cellgro);10%胎牛血清和1%青-链霉素双抗(武汉普诺赛生物科技有限公司);Trizol试剂、RIPA裂解液(上海联迈生物工程有限公司);shRNA FOXCUT载体、shRNA-NC由上海生工生物工程股份有限公司设计合成;磷酸盐缓冲液(PBS)和聚丙烯酰胺凝胶(北京六一生物科技有限公司);CCK-8试剂盒和BCA试剂盒(武汉艾迪抗生物科技有限公司);E-cad、N-cad和Vimentin相关抗体(北京百奥莱博科技有限公司);SOD、MDA和LDH试剂盒(上海江莱生物科技公司);线粒体膜电位检测试剂盒(北京雷根生物技术有限公司);Bax、Bcl-2、caspase3和c-Myc相关抗体(上海碧云天生物技术有限公司);脂质体LipofectamineTM2000转染试剂(Thermo Scientific)。

1.3 主要仪器

MR-96T酶标仪(南京贝登医疗股份有限公司);CellStream流式细胞仪(Merck);BT-50L CO₂恒温箱(上海本亭仪器有限公司);X960荧光定量PCR仪(上海力康生物医疗科技有限公司);XD倒置显微镜(香港舜

宇光学科技有限公司);Allegra X-15R台式冷冻离心机(贝克曼库尔特);BSC-A2超净工作台(江苏迅迪仪器科技有限公司)。

1.4 细胞培养

将冻存的CNE1细胞用水浴锅融化后,转移至RPMI 1640培养基(含10%胎牛血清、1%青-链霉素双抗),置于37℃、5% CO₂恒温箱中孵育。使用0.25%胰蛋白酶消化细胞,进行传代培养及后续实验。

1.5 细胞转染

取对数生长期CNE1细胞,PBS重悬后调整细胞密度为1×10⁶/mL,接种于24孔板,设置3个复孔,待细胞生长至40%~60%时,分为5组;空白组(Control)、空载组(shRNA-NC)、干扰组1(FOXCUT-shRNA1)、干扰组2(FOXCUT-shRNA2)、干扰组3(FOXCUT-shRNA3);弃原培养液,采用无血清Opti培养基对细胞进行饥饿培养,2 h后,采用LipofectamineTM2000脂质体转染法进行细胞转染,当感染复数为10时,在孔内添加5 μg/mL的Polybrene,混匀培养12 h后更换细胞培养液,继续培养3 d后用嘌呤霉素筛选10 d,筛选稳定感染的细胞株。其中空白组不进行转染处理,空载组采用空转质粒转染,各干扰组分别转染不同干扰序列质粒,培养48 h后收集细胞,进行后续实验。

1.6 RT-PCR检测RNA FOXCUT的表达

取1.5转染后的各组细胞,分别加入Trizol试剂提取细胞样品中的总RNA,进行反转录获取cDNA,加入相应引物,使用荧光定量PCR仪扩增处理,用2^{△△Ct}法计算FOXCUT mRNA的相对表达水平。引物序列:FOXCUT-shRNA1的上游引物为5'-GAAUGGAGAA CUAAGACAAUUAUCT-3',下游引物为5'-AGAUAA UUGUCUUAGUUCUCCAUUCGG-3';FOXCUT-shRNA2的上游引物为5'-CAGCCUCCCUCUGUGUGU GCAGAG-3',下游引物为CUCUGCACACACAGGA GGGAGGCUGCA-3';FOXCUT-shRNA3的上游引物为5'-TCGGATCATCTATCCCTTACGA-3',下游引物为5'-CCCGGCTTCAAAAGACTCA-3';GAPDH的上游引物为5'-TCGCTCTGCTCCTGTTC-3',下游引物为5'-CGCCAATACGACCAAATCC-3'。

1.7 CCK8检测细胞增殖倍数

由方法1.6结果,选取FOXCUT-shRNA3为后续实验干扰序列,将细胞随机分为3组:Control组、shRNA-NC组和FOXCUT-shRNA3组,Control组不作转染处理,shRNA-NC组采用空转质粒转染,FOXCUT-shRNA3组转染FOXCUT-shRNA3质粒。各组细胞稀释后调整细胞密度为1×10⁶/mL接种于24孔板中,设置3个复孔,培养至24、48、72 h,加入CCK-8溶液,培养2 h后弃上层培养液,采用酶标仪测定光密度值A_{450nm}。

1.8 克隆形成实验检测细胞克隆形成率

将CNE1细胞接种至6孔板,约500细胞/孔,按方法1.7进行分组,培养10 d后弃掉培养基,乙醇固定30 min,0.5%结晶紫染色,去离子水漂洗晾干,显微镜下观察克隆形成数目,计算克隆形成率。细胞克隆形成率(%)=细胞克隆总数/接种细胞数×100%。

1.9 显微镜观察细胞形态

取Control组、shRNA-NC组、FOXCUT-shRNA3组细胞,重悬稀释至以 $5\times10^6/\text{mL}$,接种于6孔板中,2.0 mL/孔,48 h后在400倍倒置显微镜下观察各组细胞的形态并拍照,实验重复3次。

1.10 免疫荧光检测 Vimentin+含量

将各组待测细胞接种于细胞爬片上,PBS浸洗3次;多聚甲醛固定15 min后PBS浸洗。0.5%Triton X-100室温通透20 min,PBS浸洗,吸水纸吸干后玻片上滴加正常山羊血清,室温下封闭30 min,吸掉封闭液,加入一抗,孵育过夜,PBS浸洗,避光加入荧光二抗孵育1 h,PBS浸洗,滴加DAPI避光孵育5 min,用含荧光淬灭剂的封片液封片,于荧光显微镜下观察并拍照。

1.11 Western blot检测细胞EMT相关蛋白表达

取Control组、shRNA-NC组、FOXCUT-shRNA3组细胞,加入含有蛋白酶抑制剂的RIPA裂解液,于冰上静置15 min,低温离心5 min(4°C ,12 000 r/min),收集上清液,用BCA试剂盒进行蛋白质含量测定,加入适量缓冲溶液煮沸。取样后进行聚丙烯酰胺凝胶电泳,经转膜、封闭后,加入E-cad、N-cad、Vimentin相关抗体处理,再加入显色剂进行检测,应用Image 6.0软件进行灰度值分析。

1.12 试剂盒检测氧化应激标记物的水平

取Control组、shRNA-NC组、FOXCUT-shRNA3组细胞,PBS重悬,将细胞浓度稀释至 $1\times10^7/\text{mL}$,裂解后离心收集上清液。按照试剂盒说明书分别采用WST-1

法、微板法、比色法检测SOD、MDA、LDH水平。

1.13 流式检测线粒体膜电位的变化

取Control组、shRNA-NC组、FOXCUT-shRNA3组细胞,PBS重悬,将细胞浓度稀释,根据线粒体膜电位检测试剂盒说明进行操作,加入JC-1荧光探针染液培养20 min,将染色液洗去后,用流式细胞仪进行检测。

1.14 Western blot检测线粒体损伤标记物蛋白的表达

具体操作方法同1.11,选用Bax、Bcl-2、caspase3、c-Myc相关抗体进行实验。

1.15 统计学方法

数据采用SPSS21.0进行数据分析,定量资料用均数±标准差表示,组间比较采用t检验, $P<0.05$ 为差异有统计学意义。

2 结果

2.1 鼻咽癌组织及不同鼻咽癌细胞系中FOXCUT表达

与瘤旁组织相比,鼻咽癌组织中FOXCUT表达水平平均升高($t=13.65, P<0.001$,图1);与NP69细胞相比,CNE1、CNE2、SUNE2、HER2和5-8F细胞FOXCUT表达水平平均升高($F=55.81, P<0.001$,图1)

2.2 不同 shRNA 序列干扰 LncRNA FOXCUT 表达的影响

与Control组相比,shRNA-NC组RNA FOXCUT表达水平差异无统计学意义,3个干扰组RNA FOXCUT表达水平降低($F=117.15, P<0.001$,图2),其中FOXCUT-shRNA3组干扰最为显著,因此选择此组为后续实验干扰组。

2.3 干扰 LncRNA FOXCUT 对鼻咽癌细胞增殖的影响

与Control组相比,shRNA-NC组细胞增殖倍数及克隆形成率差异无统计学意义,FOXCUT-shRNA3干扰组细胞增殖倍数及克隆形成率降低($F=86.26, 85.28$,均 $P<0.001$,图3)。

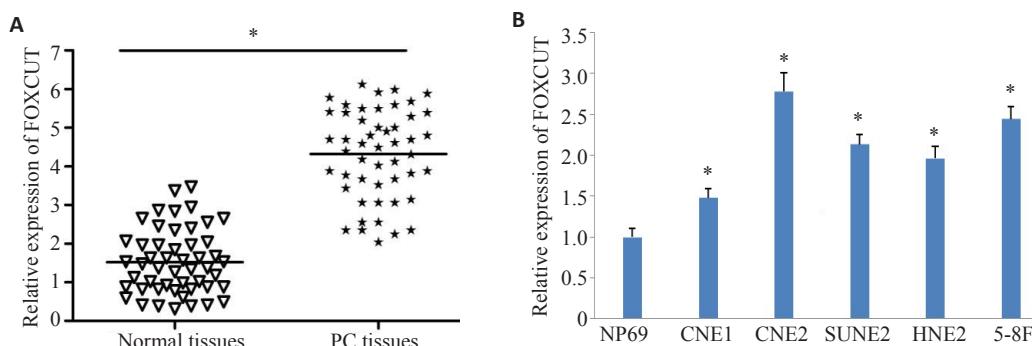


图1 鼻咽癌组织及不同鼻咽癌细胞系中FOXCUT表达

Fig.1 FOXCUT expression in nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC) tissues and different NPC cell lines. A: FOXCUT expression in NPC and adjacent tissues. B: FOXCUT expression in Np69, CNE1, CNE2, SUNE2, HER2 and 5-8F cell lines. * $P<0.001$ vs Normal tissues, NP69 cells

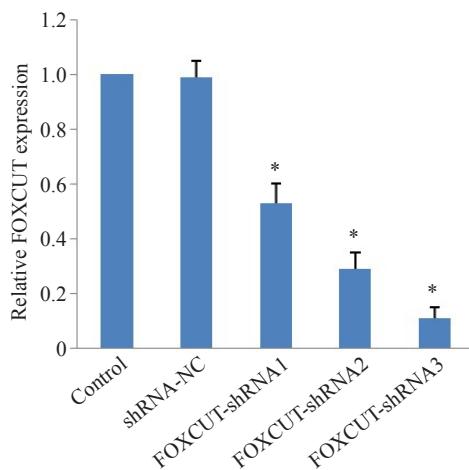


图2 不同shRNA序列干扰LncRNA FOXCUT表达的影响

Fig.2 Effects of different shRNA sequences on expression of LncRNA FOXCUT. * $P<0.001$ vs control group.

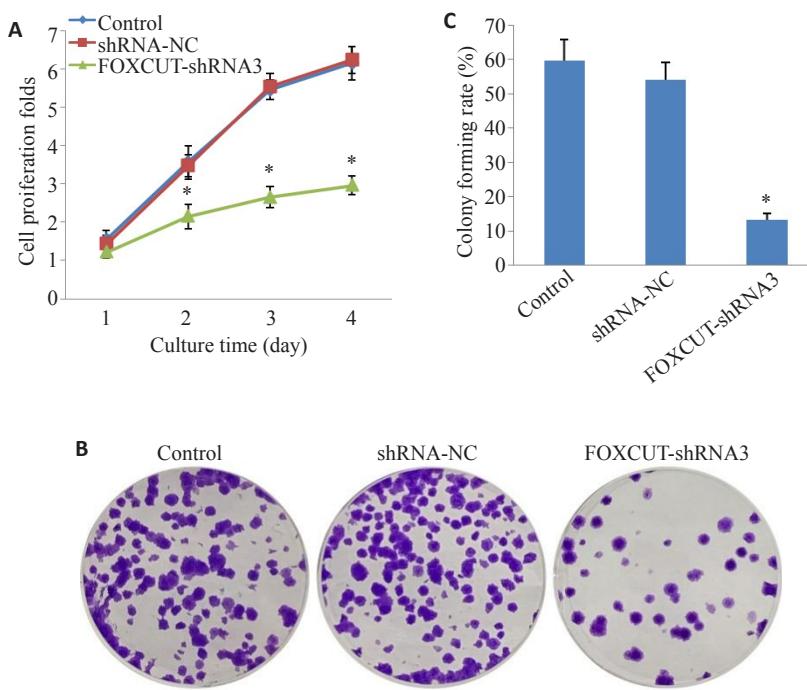


图3 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞增殖的影响

Fig.3 Effect of FOXCUT interference on proliferation of NPC cells. A: CCK8 assay for detecting cell proliferation. B: Clone formation assay for assessing clone formation (Original magnification: $\times 200$). C: Histogram of cell clone formation rate.
* $P<0.001$ vs control group.

差异无统计学意义,FOXCUT-shRNA3干扰组Vimentin+含量降低($F=124.8,P<0.001$,图6)。

2.7 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞氧化应激标记物的影响

与Control组相比,shRNA-NC组SOD、MDA、LDH的水平差异无统计学意义,FOXCUT-shRNA3干扰组MDA、LDH的含量明显升高,SOD的活性明显降

2.4 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞形态的影响

Control组细胞形态呈长梭形,细胞间连接少、间隙大,shRNA-NC组细胞形态与Control组相似;FOXCUT-shRNA3干扰组细胞形态呈短梭形、扁平型或圆形,细胞间的连接较为紧密,具有铺路石样特征(图4)。

2.5 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞EMT相关蛋白表达的影响

与Control组相比,shRNA-NC组E-cad、N-cad、Vimentin的表达水平差异无统计学意义,FOXCUT-shRNA3干扰组N-cad、Vimentin的表达水平降低,E-cad的表达水平升高(E-cad: $F=22.50,P=0.002$;N-cad: $F=43.66,P<0.001$;Vimentin: $F=8.42,P=0.018$,图5)。

2.6 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞Vimentin+含量的影响

与Control组相比,shRNA-NC组Vimentin+含量

低(SOD: $F=20.58,P=0.002$;MDA: $F=25.26,P=0.001$;LDH: $F=10.39,P=0.011$;图7)。

2.8 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞线粒体膜电位的影响

与Control组相比,shRNA-NC组线粒体膜电位变化及氧化应激标记物水平差异无统计学意义($P>0.05$),FOXCUT-shRNA3干扰组红色荧光细胞向绿色荧光细

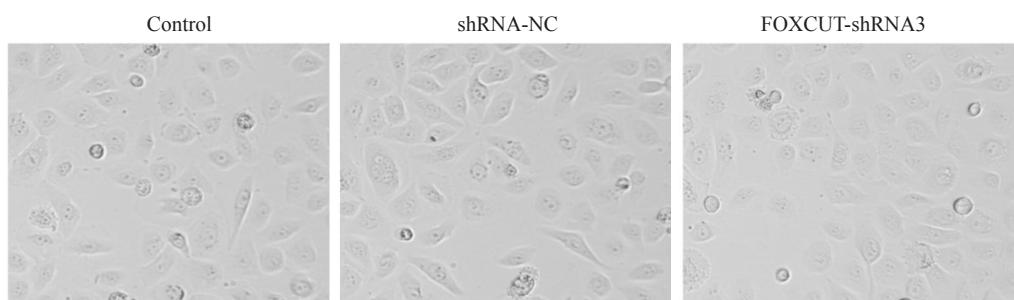


图4 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞形态的影响

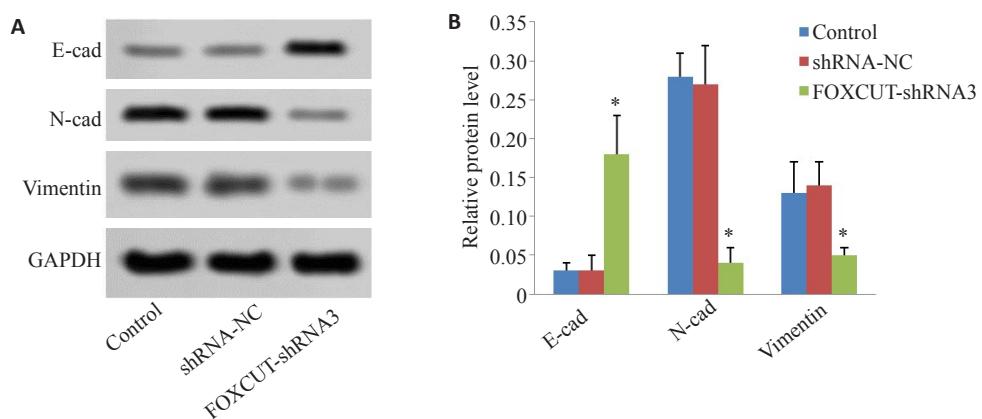
Fig.4 Effect of FOXCUT interference on morphology of NPC cells ($\times 400$).

图5 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞EMT相关蛋白表达的影响

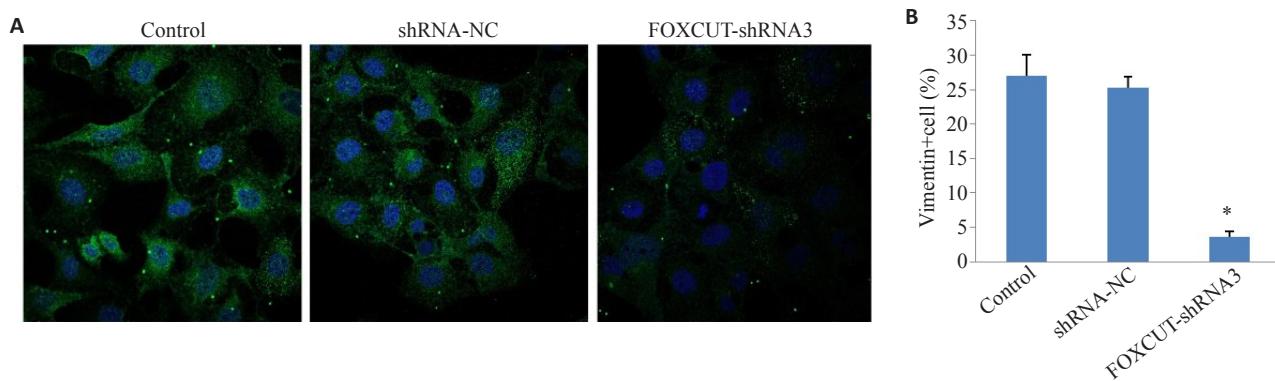
Fig.5 Effect of FOXCUT interference on expressions of EMT-related proteins in NPC cells. A: Western blotting for detecting expression levels of E-cad, N-cad and vimentin. B: Histogram of expression levels of E-cad, N-cad and vimentin. * $P<0.05$ vs control group.

图6 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞Vimentin+含量的影响

Fig.6 Effect of FOXCUT interference on percentage of vimentin-positive cells in NPC cells. A: Vimentin-positive cells detected by immunofluorescence assay ($\times 200$). B: Histogram of percentage of vimentin-positive cells. * $P<0.001$ vs control group.

胞转变较明显,绿色荧光细胞百分比增加($t=3.44, P=0.026$,图8)。

2.9 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞线粒体损伤相关蛋白表达的影响

与Control组相比,shRNA-NC组线粒体膜损伤相

关蛋白表达水平差异无统计学意义,FOXCUT-shRNA3干扰组Bax/Bcl-2,Cleaved cas3/cas3表达上升,c-Myc表达降低(Bax/Bcl-2: $F=566.95, P<0.001$;Cleaved cas3/cas3: $F=38.21, P<0.001$;c-Myc: $F=73.98, P<0.001$,图9)。

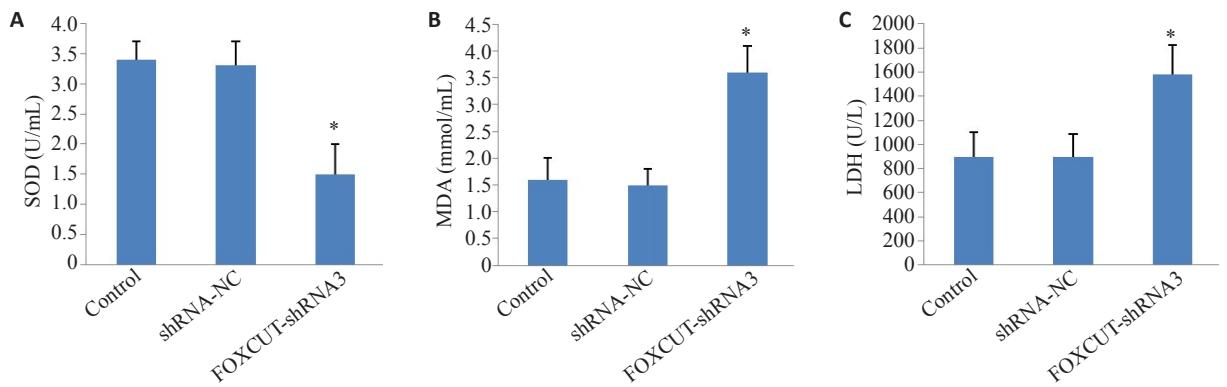


图7 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞氧化应激标记物的影响

Fig.7 Effect of FOXCUT interference on oxidative stress markers in NPC cells. A: SOD level. B: MDA level. C: LDH. *P<0.05 vs control group.

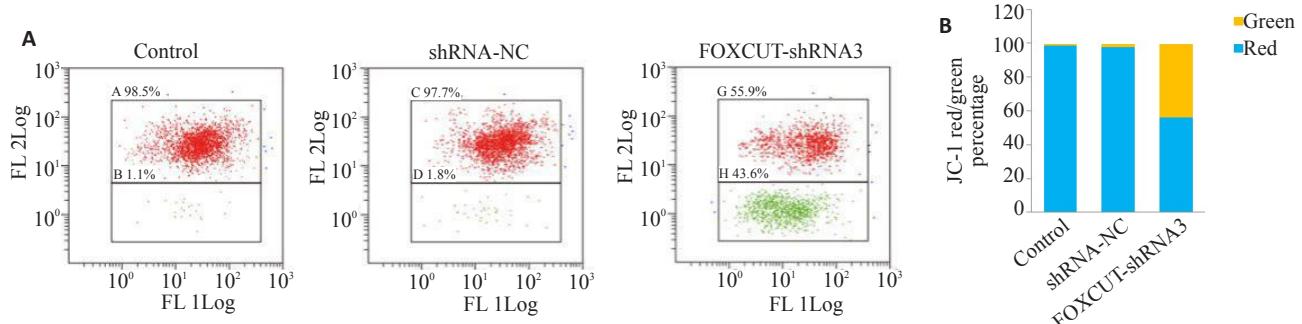


图8 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞线粒体膜电位的影响

Fig.8 Effect of FOXCUT interference on mitochondrial membrane potential of NPC cells. A: Flow cytometric analysis of mitochondrial membrane potential. B: Histogram of mitochondrial membrane potential. *P<0.05 vs control group.

3 讨论

长链非编码RNA在肿瘤的发生、发展、早期诊断、治疗抵抗和预后等方面具有重要作用^[10-12],其中lncRNA FOXCUT不仅是前列腺癌早期诊断的生物标志物^[13];还能通过激活FOXC1/PI3K/AKT途径促进大肠癌的增殖和侵袭^[14];以及促进食管鳞状细胞癌的进展并预测不良预后^[15],表明lncRNA FOXCUT是癌症潜在的诊断标志物、治疗靶点和预后监测分子。近年来lncRNA、EMT与肿瘤的相互作用关系已得到广泛研究^[16,17]。lncRNA可通过调控肿瘤细胞的增殖影响肿瘤的发生发展^[18]。通过E-cad、N-cad和Vimentin等变化评估EMT的激活状态^[19,20]。研究发现沉默lncRNA FOXCUT基因可能通过靶向FOXC1调控下游EMT相关基因的表达,从而在肿瘤细胞增殖及迁移过程中发挥重要作用^[21]。RNA干扰FOXCUT可抑制乳腺癌MCF-7细胞的增殖活性^[22]。本研究结果显示,干扰FOXCUT-shRNA后细胞增殖率减少;细胞形态呈短梭形、扁平型或圆形,细胞间的连接较为紧密;N-cad、Vimentin的表达水平降低,E-cad的表达水平升高。这提示干扰FOXCUT-shRNA能够抑制

肿瘤细胞增殖及上皮间质转化,缓解鼻咽癌的发展。

与正常细胞相比,由于高代谢率和线粒体功能障碍,癌细胞的ROS水平增加,导致癌细胞比正常细胞更快地达到其氧化应激阈值,致使癌细胞凋亡^[23,24]。细胞凋亡是一种受基因调控的细胞主动死亡过程,诱导肿瘤细胞凋亡是癌症治疗的新途径^[25]。线粒体是凋亡的重要调控中心,当接收到凋亡信号时,抑凋亡蛋白Bcl-2和促凋亡蛋白Bax相互作用,促进膜电位的耗散,增加膜的通透性,线粒体表面形成孔道,使促凋亡因子和细胞色素C释放入细胞质,Caspase级联反应启动,激活caspase3等相关表达,从而通过线粒体途径促进细胞凋亡^[26,27]。c-Myc是最常见的致癌基因之一,可调控包括细胞生长周期、核糖体生物合成和代谢在内的生理过程,其蛋白表达增加与多种原发性癌症相关^[28]。研究指出线粒体膜电位丧失能诱导癌细胞凋亡,发挥抗肿瘤作用^[29]。FOXCUT靶向MMP-2、MMP-9诱导黑色素瘤细胞凋亡^[30]。本研究结果显示干扰FOXCUT-shRNA后细胞MDA、LDH的含量明显升高,SOD的活性明显降低;红色荧光细胞向绿色荧光细胞转变较明显,绿色荧

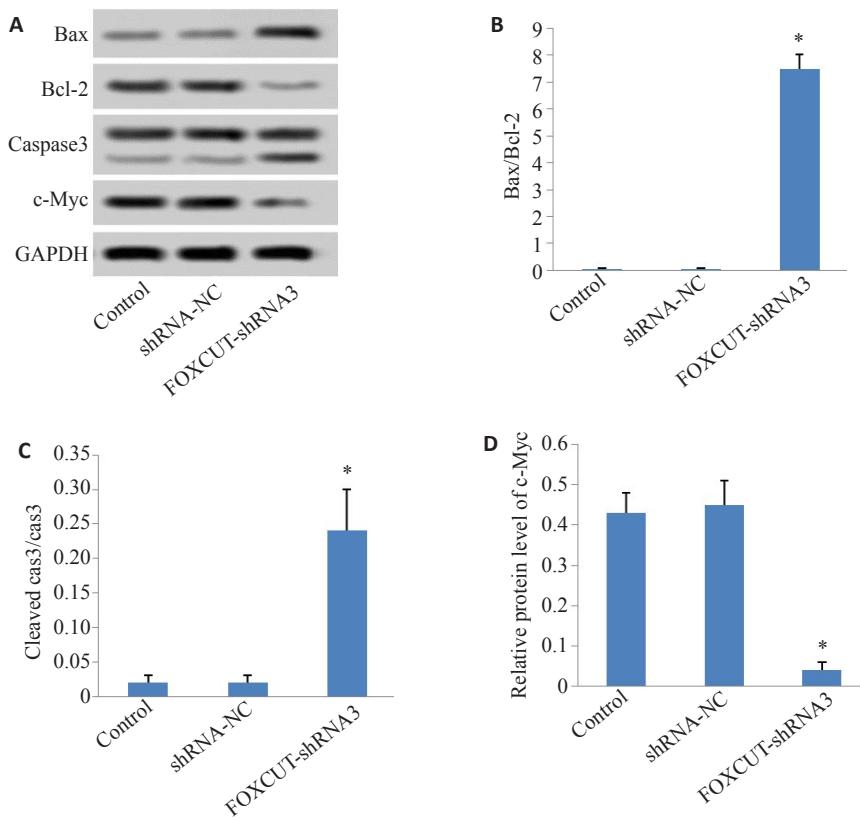


图9 干扰LncRNA FOXCUT对鼻咽癌细胞线粒体损伤相关蛋白表达的影响
Fig.9 Effect of FOXCUT interference on expressions of mitochondrial damage-related proteins in NPC cells. A: Expression levels of Bax, Bcl-2, caspase-3 and c-Myc detected by Western blotting. B-D: Histogram of the protein expressions. * $P<0.05$ vs control group.

光细胞百分比增加,线粒体膜电位下降;Bax/Bcl2、Cleaved cas3/cas3表达显著上升,c-Myc表达显著降低。这提示,干扰FOXCUT-shRNA能够增强鼻咽癌细胞氧化应激反应,降低膜电位,诱导线粒体功能损伤,促进凋亡。

综上所述,干扰长链非编码RNA FOXCUT能够抑制鼻咽癌细胞增殖,减少上皮间质转化,增强氧化应激,降低膜电位,诱导CNE1细胞线粒体功能损伤,促进凋亡;干扰长链非编码RNA FOXCUT对CNE1细胞抑制效果显著,具有靶向治疗鼻咽癌的潜力。

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