

前沿与综述

MicroRNA 调控昆虫免疫的研究进展^{*}

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摘要 MicroRNA (miRNA) 是一类由内源基因编码的长度约为 21 nt 的非编码单链 RNA 分子, 在各种生物学过程中具有转录后水平调控基因表达的重要作用。本文从 miRNA 调控昆虫抗菌肽的表达、调控昆虫抗病毒免疫反应、调控昆虫与共生菌的免疫反应及调控昆虫作为病原体媒介引起的免疫反应等方面, 就 miRNAs 在昆虫免疫防御方面的研究进展作一综述。

关键词 miRNA, 免疫反应, 基因调控, 昆虫

Advances in research on the role of microRNAs in the regulation of insect immunity

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Abstract MicroRNA (miRNA) are a class of endogenous genes encoding a length of about 21 nt non-coding single-stranded RNA molecules that play an important role in the regulation of gene expression at the post-transcriptional level in various biological processes. This paper summarizes progress in research on the role of miRNAs in the regulation of insect immune defense, including their role in regulating gene expression of insect antimicrobial peptides, regulation of insect antiviral immune response, regulating the immune response of insect and endosymbiotic bacteria, and regulation the insect immune response to pathogens, etc.

Key words miRNA, immune response, gene regulation, insect

MicroRNA (miRNA) 是小的、非编码 RNA 家族的一员, 是一类 17~25 nt 长的单链小分子 RNA, 这些小的 miRNA 通常靶向一个或者多个 mRNA, 通过翻译水平的抑制或降解靶标 mRNAs 而调节基因的表达 (Bartel, 2004)。miRNA 在生物体内广泛存在, 其在基因的转录后 (Post-transcriptional) 调控中起着非常重要的作用, 参与细胞增殖、分化、发育、代谢、凋亡等多种生理活动 (Legeai *et al.*, 2010)。据估计, 动物中约有 50% 以上编码蛋白的基因的表达都

受到 miRNA 的调控 (Krol *et al.*, 2010)。

昆虫是一类无脊椎动物, 没有脊椎动物所特有的获得性免疫反应能力, 但拥有高效的天然免疫反应系统。昆虫天然免疫反应系统包括细胞免疫 (Cellular innate immune response) 和体液免疫 (Humoral innate immune response), 它们互相协作共同抵御外源物的入侵, 主要包括淋巴细胞介导的吞噬作用 (Phagocytosis)、包被作用 (Encapsulation) 和结节作用 (Nodulation) 以及诱导性表达的抗菌肽 (Antimicrobial peptides),

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AMPs)、抗病毒因子(Antiviral factors)以及黑色素(Melanin)等的形成(Ashida and Brey, 1998; Strand, 2008)。昆虫免疫反应的精密调控至关重要,不论免疫防御受到限制还是免疫防御的过度反应,都将导致疾病的发生。由于miRNAs在转录后水平调控基因表达,其必然在免疫稳态维持和免疫可塑性中隐藏着重要的作用。Thirugnanasambantham等(2013)鉴定了冈比亚按蚊*Anopheles gambiae* Giles的aga-miR-2304和aga-miR-2309通过调控靶基因编码以及蛋白酶原表达,参与调节其免疫反应。研究表明,病原体感染的昆虫同样也能编码miRNAs,这些miRNAs是宿主与病原体相互作用网络的关键因子(Asgari, 2011)。

本文将从miRNA调控昆虫抗菌肽的表达、调控昆虫抗病毒免疫、调控昆虫与共生菌的免疫反应及调控作为病原体媒介的昆虫免疫反应等方面对miRNAs在昆虫免疫方面的研究进展进行综述。

1 miRNA 调控昆虫抗菌肽的表达

对黑腹果蝇*Drosophila melanogaster* Meigen的研究发现,AMPs主要通过由真菌和大部分革兰氏阳性菌激活的Toll及由革兰氏阴性菌激活的Imd信号转导途径而产生(Hoffmann, 2003)。这两种途径通过激活不同转录因子调控不同抗菌肽基因的表达,Toll信号途径中抗菌肽如Drosomycin的表达由NF- κ B转录因子Dorsal和Dif调控,而Imd中则是由NF- κ B转录因子Rel诱导抗菌肽如Diptericin的转录表达(Lemaitre and Hoffmann, 2007; Aggarwal and Silverman, 2008; Feldhaar and Gross, 2008; Jiang et al., 2010)。对病原体的感染作出免疫应答,释放出AMPs一系列过程主要发生在果蝇的脂肪体中,脂肪体分泌的AMPs进入到血淋巴,从而系统有效地对果蝇起到保护作用(Minakhina and Steward, 2006; Wang and Ligoxygakis, 2006; Ferrandon et al., 2007; Valanne et al., 2011),这2条通路在信号传递过程中相互协作,并不排

斥(Lemaitre et al., 1996, 1997; Gottar et al., 2006; Tanji et al., 2007)。此外,另一个信号通路JAK/STAT同样也可调控AMPs相关基因的转录(Zeidler, 2000)。这些信号通路在转录后水平受miRNAs的调控在很多研究中已经得以证实。如Robins等(2005)利用miRNAs结构预测其靶基因时,预测出miR-310的靶基因具有免疫防御功能,作用于Imd信号通路。

Let-7与miR-125是家蚕*Bombyx mori* Linnaeus和果蝇中普遍存在的保守miRNAs,参与各种生命活动,它们的表达水平由20-羟基脱皮酮(20-HE)正调控(Sempere et al., 2003; Liu et al., 2007)。20-HE能促进刻克罗普斯蚕蛾*Hyalophora cecropia* Linnaeus和果蝇抗菌肽的表达,经证实在果蝇S2细胞系中,20-HE通过调控Let-7与miR-125对抗菌肽Diptericin的翻译而参与天然免疫反应(Roxström-Lindquist et al., 2005; Garbuzov and Tatar, 2010)。Fullaondo和Lee(2011)在173个黑腹果蝇dme-miRNAs中发现73个immune-miRNAs,它们的靶基因分别调控Toll、Imd、JNK、JAK/STAT通路以及黑色素形成等,但这些miRNAs在昆虫免疫中发挥的确切作用还需进一步实验验证。表1是已鉴定出的与免疫过程调控相关的7个miRNAs。

Choi和Hyun(2012)研究发现果蝇miR-8负调控抗菌肽Drosomycin及Diptericin的表达,缺失miR-8使得AMPs的转录水平显著增加,研究者预测miR-8靶基因为转录产物GNBP3(Gram-negative binding protein 3),其功能主要是真菌感染时诱导Toll途径。miR-8另一靶基因PvF是JNK通路的调节器,同样也调控AMPs的表达。研究人员进一步通过实验数据表明miR-8的功能主要是在脂肪体中维持AMPs合成的动态平衡。Freitak等(2012)对赤拟谷盗*Tribolium castaneum* Herbst研究发现,当受到嗜虫假单胞菌*Pseudomonas entomophila* Pen感染时,miRNAs表达谱发生改变;当注射可诱导AMPs表达的肽聚糖时,同样引起59个miRNAs的表达差异,其中21个表达上调。有趣的是,雌

表 1 黑腹果蝇中参与昆虫免疫通路调控的相关 miRNAs (引自 Fullaondo and Lee, 2011)
Table 1 *Drosophila melanogaster* miRNAs potentially involved in regulating immune pathways in insects (from Fullaondo and Lee, 2011)

miRNAs	表达组织 Tissue expression	潜在靶基因 Potential target gene (s)
miR-1003	幼虫中枢神经系统、唾液腺、中肠、脂肪体 Larval CNS, salivary gland, midgut, fat body	PGRP-LC, FADD
miR-1016	脂肪体、尾肠 Fat body, hindgut	cact, Pvf3
miR-12	精巢、幼虫脂肪体 Testis, larval fat body	tub
miR-283	精巢、幼虫脂肪体 Testis, larval fat body	PGRP-LC, imd
miR-304	精巢、幼虫脂肪体 Testis, larval fat body	spz, Pvf3
miR-31b	幼虫脂肪体 Larval fat body	PGRP-LC, ird5, Rudra
miR-33	幼虫脂肪体、唾液腺 Larval fat body, salivary gland	PGRP-LE, PGRP-SD, FADD, key

性赤拟谷盗对外来刺激作出的免疫反应比雄性的强烈，它们产生更多应急物诱导的 miRNAs。

2 miRNA 调控昆虫抗病毒免疫反应

病毒是目前发现的唯一能编码 miRNAs 的微生物，第一个病毒 miRNA 是由 Pfeffer 等 (2004) 研究 γ 疱疹病毒 (γ -herpesvirus) 亚科 Epstein-Barr 病毒 (EBV) 时报道的。紧接着研究者便发现 200 多种病毒编码的 miRNAs，这些 miRNAs 来源于不同的病毒，除了占多数的疱疹病毒外，还包括多瘤病毒属 (*Polyomaviruses*)、腺病毒属 (*Adenoviruses*) 以及主要侵染夜蛾科的囊泡病毒属 (*Ascoviruses*) 和主要侵染鳞翅目昆虫的 *Nudivirus* 等 (Skalsky and Cullen, 2010; Jehle, 2010; Bigot et al., 2011)。Skalsky 等 (2010) 研究表明，病毒 miRNAs 通过调控病毒自身及宿主 mRNA，建立有助于病毒完成生命周期的宿主环境，被调控的这些 mRNA 绝大多数编码的因素与潜伏期和感染期的转换及免疫激活有关。Backes 等 (2012) 发现痘病毒编码的 Ploy(A) 聚合酶不仅指导病毒转录，也可通过调控宿主 miRNA 如 miR-11、miR-34 及 miR-184 的表达导

致宿主 mRNA 的 3' 端多聚腺苷酸化进而使得宿主 mRNA 降解。此外，病毒还能模仿宿主 miRNAs 或影响其表达来控制现有的调控途径，宿主 miRNAs 也反过来直接影响病毒复制，有些哺乳动物 miRNAs 的靶基因就是 RNA 病毒的基因组 (Delić et al., 2011)。

表 2 罗列了几种已知靶基因和功能的昆虫病毒 miRNAs。Singh 等 (2010, 2012) 还发现 bmnpy-miR-1 可抑制宿主家蚕 bmo-miR-8 的表达，从而使得病毒 miRNA 潜在靶基因 *ie-1* 转录水平的增量高达 3 倍，导致病毒复制大幅度增加。由此可知，BmNPV 可抑制宿主细胞内 miRNA 介导的抗病毒防御。Wu 等 (2013) 通过实验证明了 BmNPV 侵染的家蚕中肠中 58 个 miRNAs 表达差异显著。

Mehrabadi 等 (2013) 在研究 AcMNPV 侵染草地贪夜蛾 *Spodoptera frugiperda* Smith 中发现，病毒侵染后 24 h 后其绝大多数 miRNA 表达下调，少数表达上调，另外还鉴定出 13 个草地贪夜蛾的新 miRNAs，其中 3 个在病毒侵染后表达上调。研究发现，果蝇抗病毒免疫的重要成分 Ars2 蛋白在 miRNA 介导沉默、稳定 pri-miRNA

表 2 已知靶基因和功能的昆虫病毒 miRNAs
Table 2 Insect virus-encoded miRNAs with known target genes and functions.

病毒 Virus	miRNA	靶标 Targets	功能 Function
囊泡病毒 (HvAV-3e) Ascoviruses (HvAV-3e)	HvAV-miR-1	病毒 DNA 聚合酶 I Virus DNA polymeraseI	调控病毒复制 Regulates viral replication (Hussain <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
EB 病毒 (EBV) Epstein Barr virus (EBV)	miR-BART2	DNA 聚合酶 BALF5 DNA polymerase BALF5	抑制病毒复制 Inhibits viral replication (Barth <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
单纯疱疹病毒 (HSV-1) Herpes simplex virus (HSV-1)	miR-H2-3p miR-H6	病毒立早基因 <i>ICP0</i> 和 <i>ICP4</i> Virus immediate-early gene (IEG) <i>ICP0</i> and <i>ICP4</i>	抑制病毒复制 Inhibits viral replication (Umbach <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
棉铃虫裸杆状病毒 (HzNV-1) <i>Heliothis zea</i> nudivirus 1 (HzNV-1)	hv-miR-246 hv-miR-2959	病毒立早基因 <i>hhil</i> Virus immediate-early gene (IEG) <i>hhil</i>	控制潜伏期 Controls latency (Chao <i>et al.</i> , 1992, 1998; Wu <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
杆状病毒 (BmNPV) Baculovirus (BmNPV)	Bmnpv-miR-1	宿主 GTP 结合核蛋白 Ran Host GTP-binding nuclear protein Ran	阻止宿主 miRNA 生物合成 Blocks host miRNA biogenesis (Singh <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
苜蓿银纹夜蛾核型多角体病毒 (AcMNPV) <i>Autographa californica</i> multiple nuclear polyhedrosis virus (AcMNPV)	AcMNPV-miR-1	GP37 等病毒蛋白相关基因 Viral protein-associate gene, GP 37 etc. (Vialard <i>et al.</i> , 1990 ; Wang <i>et al.</i> , 2010)	调控病毒形态发生 Regulates viral morphogenesis (Zhu <i>et al.</i> , 2013)

中发挥着重要作用。Ars2 与 Dcr-2 相互作用 , 调节其体外活性 , 并能参与 si-RNA 介导的抗病毒防御(Laubinger *et al.* , 2008 ;Gruber *et al.* , 2009 ; Sabin *et al.* , 2009) , 与 miRNAs 的生物合成途径中 Drosha、Dicer-1 及 Ago1 等相关的其他组分 , 在果蝇抗病毒免疫反应中是否也产生类似的影响还待进一步研究。

由此可知 , miRNAs 调控昆虫抗病毒免疫的主要机理是 , 通过病毒自身 miRNAs 调控宿主体内抗病毒机制或调控自身基因表达 , 从而达到调控病毒复制的效果。另一方面 , 宿主 miRNAs 同样也可调控病毒的复制 , 如 Hussain 和 Asgari (2010) 在 HvAV-3e 侵染谷实夜蛾 *Helicoverpa zea* Boddie 脂肪体细胞的研究中 , 发现谷实夜蛾 Hz-miR-24 负调控编码 DNA 依赖性 RNA 聚合酶家族的 HvAV-3e 的转录物 DdRP 和 DdRPβ , 从而对病毒复制起到一定的调控作用。

3 miRNA 调控昆虫与共生菌的免疫反应

沃尔巴克氏体 *Wolbachia* 是一类广泛存在于昆虫生殖组织细胞内的立克次氏体细菌 , 该菌可诱导胞质不亲和 (Cytoplasmic incompatibility , CI) 孤雌生殖 (Parthenogenesis inducing , PI) 雌性化、杀雄、增强雌性繁殖力等生殖现象 (Dobson *et al.* , 2004 ;Tram *et al.* , 2006 ;Werren *et al.* , 2008) , 自然界中大约 65% 的昆虫物种受其感染 (Hilgenboecker *et al.* , 2008) 。研究表明 , 沃尔巴克氏体的某些菌系能抑制丝虫、线虫的增殖 , 减少各种病毒侵染 , 从而起到保护宿主的作用 (Teixeira *et al.* , 2008 ; Kambris *et al.* , 2009 ; Glaser and Meola , 2010) 。例如沃尔巴克氏体 wMel 侵染的埃及伊蚊 *Aedes aegypti* 体内大量免疫基因的表达会上调 , 这些免疫基因有些能调控

按蚊 *Anopheles* 体内疟原虫的发育 (Kambris et al., 2009, 2010; Moreira et al., 2009)。当埃及伊蚊被沃尔巴克氏体 wMelPop-CLA 侵染时, 可控制其种群数, 从而抑制登革病毒 (Dengue virus)、孔肯雅病毒 (Chikungunya virus) 及鸟类疟原虫 (Avian plasmodium) 等在其体内的复制, 达到控制病毒传播的效果 (Mcmeniman, 2009; Moreira et al., 2009; Bian et al., 2010)。然而沃尔巴克氏体与宿主间相互作用的分子机制尚且不明。另外, 宿主可能介导沃尔巴克氏体生殖调控、缩短其寿命, 保护自身不受 RNA 病毒侵染等, 但知之甚少 (Min and Benzer, 1997; Mcgraw et al., 2002)。

埃及伊蚊受到沃尔巴克氏体 wMelPop 侵染后, 产生 35 个差异化的 miRNAs 表达谱, 还诱导产生新的埃及伊蚊 miRNA 即 miR-2940, 该 miRNA 增强了一种金属蛋白靶基因 metalloprotease m41 ftsh mRNA 转录水平或参与到其稳定性中, 可有效地维持这种内共生关系, 且在沃尔巴克氏体感染的蚊子和来源于埃及伊蚊的 Aag2 细胞系中表达显著上调。miR-2940 负调控 AaDnmt2 基因, 该基因是埃及伊蚊唯一的 DNA (5-胞嘧啶) 甲基转移酶基因, 当 AaDnmt2 过表达时, 会抑制沃尔巴克氏体的复制, 但登革病毒的复制显著增加 (Hussain et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2013)。而昆虫体内其他共生菌如细菌和酵母的 miRNAs 的研究甚少。

4 miRNA 调控昆虫作为病原体媒介引起的免疫反应

虫媒病毒 (Arbovirus) 是通过媒介节肢动物叮咬敏感的脊椎动物而传播疾病的一类病毒, 其中蚊子就是主要的媒介之一。除了通过 Toll、IMD 和 JAK/STAT 途径研究昆虫的免疫反应, 还可以用 RNA 干扰 (RNAi) 来研究蚊子对虫媒病毒的免疫反应, 如 siRNAs (Donald et al., 2012)。

miRNAs 的生物合成中, 细胞核内的 pri-miRNA 在 RNaseIII Drosha 的作用下进行加工 (Bartel, 2009)。然而研究表明 RNA 病毒

miRNAs 的生物合成还存在另一种途径, 当宿主细胞或 DNA 病毒的 pre-miRNA 插入到细胞质中的 RNA 病毒的基因组中, 且产生的 miRNAs 对其复制不会产生影响时, RNA 病毒也可产生成熟的 miRNAs (Rouha et al., 2010; Shapiro et al., 2010; Langlois et al., 2012)。Shapiro 等 (2012) 研究发现, 幼仓鼠肾细胞 (Baby hamster kidney, BHK) 当感染虫媒病毒辛德毕斯病毒 (Sindbis virus, SINV) 时, Drosha 会重新定位至细胞质中, 并不影响内源性 miRNAs, 这就促进了病毒基因组中潜在的茎环 (Stem-loop) 结构加工。同样地在病毒侵染的昆虫的细胞质中, Drosha 可能也会重新定位。

西尼罗病毒 (West Nile virus, WNV) 是一类虫媒病毒。Skalsky 等 (2010) 以 WNV 感染白纹伊蚊 *Aedes albopictus* Skuse 和致倦库蚊 *Culex quinquefasciatus* Say 为研究对象发现, 表达量下调的 miR-989 和上调的 miR-92, 表明它们发挥介导病毒感染作用, 但其靶基因仍属未知。WNV 编码的第一个 miRNA KUN-miR-1 的靶基因是宿主细胞多功能转录因子 GATA4, 当蚊子细胞感染 WNV 后, 产生 KUN-miR-1 沉默 Dicer-1 降低宿主 miRNAs 表达水平, 使得 GATA4 积累量增加, 导致病毒复制显著加强 (Park et al., 2006; Hussain et al., 2012)。沃尔巴克氏体 wMelPop 侵染的埃及伊蚊 Aag2 细胞中, 沃尔巴克氏体诱导 GATA4 调控 WNV 的复制机制, 使得 WNV 病毒的复制显著下降, 且病毒传播与扩散速率也相对降低 (Hussain et al., 2013)。

疟原虫 (Plasmodium) 也是媒介生物性疾病 (Vector-borne disease) 的病原体, 可以破坏宿主的免疫反应。当媒介蚊子和脊椎动物宿主受疟原虫感染时, 它们细胞内基于 miRNAs 调控的 mRNAs 显示出差异性表达 (Xu et al., 2005; Foth et al., 2011)。研究者分析经疟原虫感染的冈比亚按蚊的中肠 miRNAs 的表达谱发现, miR-34、miR-1174 和 miR-1175 表达量下降 50% 以上, miR-989 则升高了近 4 倍。在其他器官或组织中, miR-989 表达量则下降了 60%。当通过 RNAi 敲

除 miRNA 生物合成中两个关键性基因 Dicer-1 和 Ago1 后 , 会增加疟原虫的数量 , 且对按蚊的易感性增加 , 然而疟原虫在免疫系统中所发挥的确切作用未做实验证 (Winter et al. , 2007) 。 Mead 等 (2012) 研究表明 , 当受疟原虫感染后 , 冈比亚按蚊中肠的 Dicer-1 、 Dicer-2 和 Drosophila 蛋白含量显著性上升。

5 miRNA 调控昆虫免疫的其他方面

钙/钙调素依赖的蛋白激酶 II (CaMKII) 是一种非常保守的蛋白质 , 在免疫反应中它可以招募免疫突触并在调节细胞成熟和树突状细胞的功能方面起着重要作用 (Ishiguro et al. , 2006) 。 Ashraf 等 (2006) 在果蝇中通过 RNA 介导沉默复合物 (RNA-induced silencing complex , RISC) 途径调控记忆相关的突触蛋白合成的研究中发现 , CaMKII 在调控树突状细胞的成熟和功能方面发挥着重要作用 , 突触 CaMKII 在 Dicer 发生突变的果蝇中表达量急剧增加 , 这些发生突变的 Dicer 对内源性 miRNAs (Endogenous miRNAs) 的产生存在一定的缺陷。基于这一研究 , Liu 等 (2010) 发现在小鼠中 , miR-148a 、 miR-148b 和 miR-152 这 3 个 miRNAs 负调控 CaMKII α , 从而削弱免疫反应和抗原呈递。因此 , 昆虫中与免疫反应相关的 CaMKII 转录产物是否也受 miRNAs 的调控也将成为有意义的研究。

6 小结与展望

miRNAs 及其在调控各种生物过程的功能的发现 , 对于研究基因转录后调控具有重要意义 , 对昆虫 miRNAs 的研究使我们对昆虫基因表达调控网络的理解提高到一个更新的复杂的层次。尽管昆虫 miRNAs 在生物学功能方面的研究已取得很大进展 , 但在昆虫免疫防御的研究还有所欠缺 , 尤其是农业害虫蝗虫、蚜虫等 miRNAs 的研究还面临很大的挑战。利用 miRNAs 调控昆虫免疫防御机制 , 可以有效预防有益昆虫家蚕、蜜蜂等的疾病 , 也可以防治有害昆虫对农作物的侵害 , 更可以控制虫媒病毒的传播。

下一代测序技术即高通量测序技术的推广 , 大大降低了 miRNAs 深度测序的成本 , 使得高通量测序技术发现昆虫 miRNAs 逐渐成为在分子水平上研究昆虫免疫防御机制的主流 , 与生物信息学的结合使得这一研究更加广泛、快速。随着 miRNA 研究技术的发展和完善 , 必将会揭开更多 miRNA 的调控过程 , 更好地为科学的研究和经济社会发展服务。

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