

临床参数结合CT放射组学特征预测儿童神经母细胞瘤长期疗效的研究进展

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摘要

神经母细胞瘤(Neuroblastoma, NB)是儿童最常见的实体性恶性肿瘤之一, 预后存在较明显的个体间差异。治疗前, 准确预测NB患儿的长期疗效对制定个体化的治疗方案至关重要, 既往文献对影响NB疗效的各种因素均做了较深入研究。然而, 鉴于恶性肿瘤生物学特征的复杂性, 独立地研究个别和少数几个特征难以充分反映NB的危险性和治疗的效果。近年, 放射组学作为新兴的影像分析技术受到普遍重视, 该技术通过提取医学影像中的大量定量特征, 为肿瘤的诊断、治疗和预后提供了新的思路。本文就近5年文献对NB的预后评估及放射组学在NB诊断的应用研究进展予以综述。

关键词

神经母细胞瘤, 放射组学, 增强CT, 预后

Research Advances in Predicting Long-Term Efficacy of Pediatric Neuroblastoma Using Clinical Parameters Combined with CT Radiomics Features

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Abstract

Neuroblastoma (NB) is one of the most common solid malignancies in children, and its prognosis varies considerably among individual patients. Therefore, accurately predicting the long-term outcomes of NB children before treatment implementation is crucial for formulating individualized therapeutic regimens. The literature has conducted in-depth research on various factors influencing NB treatment efficacy. However, given the complexity of the biological characteristics of malignant tumors, studying individual or a few features in isolation is insufficient to fully reflect the risk profile of NB and the effectiveness of treatment. In recent years, radiomics, as an emerging medical image analysis technique, has provided new insights into tumor diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis by extracting large numbers of quantitative features from medical images. This article provides a review of research progress over the past five years concerning prognostic assessment in NB and the application of radiomics in NB diagnosis.

Keywords

Neuroblastoma, Radiomics, Enhanced CT, Prognosis

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1. 引言

神经母细胞瘤(Neuroblastoma, NB)是儿童时期最常见的颅外实体肿瘤，占全部儿童肿瘤的 6%~10% 及儿童恶性肿瘤死亡病例的 10%~15% [1]，被俗称为“儿童癌症之王”，属于恶性程度高、预后差的恶性肿瘤。因此，准确识别 NB 患儿的生物学特性及评估治疗预后至关重要，直接关系到个体化治疗方案的制定与实施，以提升其生存率。

近年研究表明，NB 的微环境临床特征及分子标志可在一定程度上预测患儿预后，为临床治疗方案的选择提供了有力依据[2]。随着治疗进步，低危 NB 患儿的预后已显著改善，但高危 NB 患儿的预后仍不乐观，其死亡率仍高达 50% 左右[3]。

放射组学作为新兴领域，它通过深度学习从影像图像中提取大量定量特征，如肿瘤体积、边缘特征、纹理特征等，用以预测肿瘤分类和预后等。已有研究显示，某些放射组学特征与 NB 的临床预后存在关联[4]。本文拟综述近 5 年来 NB 预后评估和放射组学在 NB 诊断中应用的研究进展。

2. NB 的临床特点

2.1. 流行病学

NB 是好发于幼儿的恶性肿瘤，我国 0~14 岁儿童中，其发病率约为每百万人口 8.8 例，而在 15~19 岁青少年中则降至每百万人口 0.8 例[5]。NB 起源于神经嵴细胞，该细胞参与肾上腺髓质和交感神经系统的发育，其原发部位沿神经嵴发育迁移路径分布，可见于交感神经链任何部位[6]，包括颈部、胸部、腹部、肾上腺及盆腔交感神经节。罕见情况下，可发生于睾丸旁，甚或缺乏明确原发灶[7]。NB 的确切病因尚未完全阐明，研究提示遗传和环境因素可能是主要诱因。基因突变可导致神经母细胞异常失控增殖，某些环境暴露也可能增加风险。常见的相关基因突变涉及 TRK、ALK、NMYC 和 MYCN 等[8]-[11]。

2.2. NB 的诊断

目前，NB 的病理诊断已较为成熟。然而，由于肿瘤存在个体差异且肿瘤细胞基因组持续演变，现有的诊断评估体系缺乏统一标准，临床实践仍在不断修订和完善。NB 诊断仍以组织病理学检查为基础，需结合实验室检查、影像学检查及患者临床表现等进行综合评估[12]。目前国内通用的临床诊断标准如下：① 病理组织活检确诊为 NB；② 骨髓涂片或穿刺发现 NB 细胞；③ 24 h 尿香草扁桃酸定量检测显著升高；④ 影像学检查显示主要好发部位存在肿瘤，并呈现包绕、钙化等典型特征[13]。符合标准①即可确诊；若无明确病理结果，则需满足其余项中至少两项。

2.3. NB 的异质性

近年研究证实，NB 在组织学与临床行为方面均具有高度异质性[14] [15]。这种异质性是治疗失败和肿瘤复发的重要因素，赋予肿瘤适应性，导致其临床行为多样且复杂，极大增加了诊疗难度[16]。迄今，尚无单一生物标志物可精准预测 NB 预后。因此，临床诊疗通常需结合儿茶酚胺代谢物检测、影像学检查、细胞表面标志物分析、染色体及肿瘤 DNA 遗传学分析等多种技术，以提高诊断和风险评估准确性[17]。

同时，尽管 NB 治疗手段近年取得显著发展，手术、靶向药物、干细胞治疗及化疗等多种方法的合理应用与联合使用极大地改善了疗效，部分发达地区中低危患儿的五年生存率已接近 100% [18] [19]。需注意的是，NB 患儿预后呈极端不确定性：部分患儿仅需少量干预，肿瘤即可自发消退，而另一些患者即使接受多模式强效治疗，结局仍可能不佳[20]。此外，由于极高的异质性，发生转移 NB 通常侵袭性更强，患者五年生存率显著低于无转移者[21] [22]。组织学指标、神经母细胞分化程度和有丝分裂 - 核分裂指数(MKI)对 N 预后有一定提示价值，但建立其与异质性导致的临床结果间的明确关联仍具挑战[23]。

3. 临床指标和实验室指标对 NB 预后的评估

3.1. NB 的临床分期与分型

当前，NB 的预后预测主要依据临床分期、诊断年龄和病理组织学。最常用的分类系统包括 Shimada 分型、国际神经母细胞瘤分期系统(International Neuroblastoma Staging System, INSS)和国际神经母细胞瘤风险组分期系统(International Neuroblastoma Risk Group Staging System, INRGSS) [24] [25]。为更全面评估个体差异，国际儿童肿瘤协作组(Children's Oncology Group, COG)制定了治疗前风险分层系统，该系统综合临床和分子特征，例如年龄组(<18 个月与≥18 个月)、INRGSS 分期(L1/L2/M/MS)、组织学分类、肿瘤分化程度、DNA 倍性、11q 染色体状态和 MYCN 扩增状态(非扩增与扩增)，将患者划分为极低、低、中和高风险四组[26]。此分类能直观展示患儿状况等级，对设计治疗策略及评估风险至关重要。然而，现有分期标准被认为存在不足：同一风险组内肿瘤异质性可能导致标准化治疗面临治疗不足或过度治疗风险。此外，部分最初诊断为低风险的患者可能复发，且复发肿瘤常更具侵袭性和难治性[27]。因此，探寻更多有效的预后相关因素对于优化风险分层及治疗方案制定至关重要。

3.2. 与 NB 预后相关的其他危险因素

除临床分期外，更多的危险因素近年被发现与预后相关[28]。例如，部分实验室参数(如高水平的铁蛋白、神经元特异性烯醇化酶(NSE)、乳酸脱氢酶(LDH)、尿儿茶酚胺代谢产物)、分子病理特征(如 MYCN 癌基因扩增、1p36 染色体缺失)以及骨/骨髓受累状态，均可用于评估治疗反应及预后[29]-[33]。与传统临床指标相似，这些检测信息共同构成了 NB 预后评估的重要环节，有助于临床医生更准确地判定风险等级，进而制定合理治疗方案。然而，即使有精密的风险评估系统支持，因 NB 的高度异质性，对高危患儿

的精准分层与预后判断仍面临巨大挑战[34] [35]。现有预后评估系统仍存缺陷，临床实践中依此治疗导致治疗过度或不足的情况并不少见。例如，MYCN 过度表达是预后不良的标志，但仅见于 40%~50% 的高危患儿[36]。许多高危患儿并不存在 MYCN 高表达，表明现有标志物尚不能完全满足诊疗需求，亟需更多评估手段以精准分层风险，指导合理治疗，从而提升患者生存率并减少治疗副作用。

4. 放射组学在 NB 预后评估中的应用

4.1. 放射组学用于儿科疾病研究的意义

发展无创或微创检查技术是临床的重要方向。放射组学(radiomics)作为一种非侵入性技术，在肿瘤诊断与预后评估中具有独特优势，多项研究已证实其对恶性肿瘤患者预后的预测价值[37]。

放射组学利用先进的计算分析技术，将医学图像转化为定量特征，通过高通量数据分析获取与疾病诊疗相关的数字化影像信息[38] [39]。其目标在于提升决策支持和预测的可靠性，同时兼具成本低、无创的优势[40]。这些创新方法为改善风险分层和预后评估提供了新角度，有望为 NB 提供更个性化、更有效的治疗策略。目前，部分研究已证实放射组学应用于 NB 研究的巨大潜力。

4.2. 18F-FDG PET/CT 放射组学在 NB 中的应用

正电子发射体层摄影术(positron emission tomography, PET)利用正电子核素示踪剂显像，可提供生理与代谢过程信息。临床最常用的示踪剂 18 氟 - 脱氧葡萄糖(18F-fluorodeoxyglucose, 18F-FDG)能显示肿瘤代谢活性，有助于 NB 的病理改变检测及转移灶判断。

研究表明，基于 18F-FDG PET/CT 的放射组学可预测肿瘤复发风险[41] [42]。例如，一项纳入 84 例高危 NB 患者的研究，结合临床参数与放射组学特征构建预测模型，该模型显示出对复发的良好预测高能力及高区分度[43]。该类模型高效简便，有望成为指导高危 NB 患者健康管理的临床决策支持工具。需注意的是，PET/CT 成本较高，且对微小病灶的检测存在局限[44]，其广泛推广仍需时日。

4.3. MRI 放射组学在 NB 中的应用

相较于其它影像技术，MRI 具有优异的软组织分辨率和无辐射优势，在儿童实体瘤诊断中的应用日益普遍。然而，目前多数 NB 放射组学研究集中于 CT 和 PET/CT 图像，针对 MRI 的研究报道较少。

Wang H 等人[45]研究发现，T2WI 放射组学特征结合初诊年龄，可为 NB 与神经节神经母细胞瘤/神经节细胞瘤的鉴别提供定量方法。MRI 在评估肿瘤范围、邻近器官侵犯及转移灶(尤其肝脏和骨髓转移)方面具有优势，且无辐射风险，已成为 NB 评估的首选成像方式[46]。其局限性在于检查时间较长、噪音较大，对低龄患儿的应用存在一定挑战。

4.4. CT 放射组学在 NB 中的应用

CT 是 NB 诊疗中最常用的影像学手段，可评估原发肿瘤、局部侵袭及转移灶，并为手术设计提供依据[47]。增强 CT 不仅能早期发现病变，还能明确肿瘤位置、大小、血供及与周围结构的关系，为穿刺和手术提供关键信息，在 NB 诊疗中价值显著[28] [29]。

病理学家在准确区分 NB 的病理分型时经常面临挑战，Wang H 等人[48]在他们的研究中利用 297 名患者的 CT 增强影像进行放射组学分析并构建模型，研究发现在训练组中，CT 增强放射组学模型的曲线下面积(AUC)达到了 0.851，在测试组中，放射组学模型的 AUC 达到了 0.816。Zhao L [49]等人的研究同样表明，CT 放射组学分类器预测 NB 病理亚型的总体准确率达 80.8%，体现出 CT 的放射组学分析显示出在区分 NB 病理分型方面的良好诊断能力。

MYCN 扩增在对 NB 患者的高危亚组进行分类方面发挥着关键作用, Wang H 等人[50]的研究中纳入 78 名患者, 将放射组学特征与临床因素相结合建立模型以预测儿科 NB 患者 MYCN 基因的扩增, 与单独的临床模型相比, 基于放射组学特征和两个临床因素的临床放射组学列线图显示出更好的预测性能(训练队列的 AUC: 0.95 vs. 0.82, 测试队列的 AUC: 0.91 vs. 0.70)。此外, 基于增强 CT 的放射组学显示出识别高危 NB 的能力, 并可能为识别高危病例提供补充图像生物标志物[51]。

在另一项双中心研究中, Zhang Y 等[52]纳入 289 例患儿, 利用 17 个增强 CT 放射组学特征构建模型。其列线图在训练(AUC = 0.87)、测试(AUC = 0.83)及外部验证(AUC = 0.84)队列中的 AUC 值均高于其他对比模型。

Liu G [4]等人结合机器学习模型提取放射组学特征, 可更有效地挖掘与预后相关的信息, 突显 CT 放射组学在 NB 预后评估中的潜力。鉴于 CT 的普遍性和成像优势, 其放射组学研究对 NB 至关重要。

综上可见, 放射组学具有极其卓越的活力, 相较于传统的检测方法, CT 放射组学可以对整个肿瘤进行分析, 不仅仅局限于活检取样的局部区域, 而是提供更全面的肿瘤特征信息, 并且通过计算机算法提取和分析影像特征, 减少了人为主观因素的影响, 提高了评估的客观性和可重复性, 还可以同时分析肿瘤的形态、密度、纹理等多个维度的特征, 提供更丰富的预后相关信息以建立预测模型, 为每个患者提供个体化的预后评估。值得注意的是, 应用放射组学虽然可以发现影像特征与预后的相关性, 然而其背后的生物学机制往往不清楚, 如何将放射组学结果与临床、病理、分子等其他预后因素有效整合, 仍需进一步研究, 在样本量有限的情况下, 模型可能存在过拟合风险, 影响其在新数据上的泛化能力, 此外一些复杂的机器学习算法可能难以解释, 这将影响临床医生对结果的理解和接受。

5. 讨论与展望

NB 的治疗和预后评估是当前研究热点。单一临床参数或传统影像学检查均难以全面表征肿瘤, 现有预后预测方法仍存在局限。放射组学的引入为 NB 的预后研究提供了极具潜力的新途径, 展现出广阔的应用前景。目前, 基于 CT、MRI 及 PET/CT 的放射组学研究已在 NB 领域取得显著成果。然而, 作为影像分析工具, 放射组学也面临应用范围的局限。需通过更多研究克服当前挑战(如特征标准化、模型可解释性及多中心验证), 以提升其临床实用价值。未来, 整合放射组学与临床、病理、生化和基因学, 例如影像基因组学, 有望更全面揭示 NB 发生发展规律, 从而提升预后判断准确性, 并优化个体化诊疗策略。

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