

NLR在心血管疾病中的临床应用研究进展

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收稿日期: 2026年3月23日; 录用日期: 2026年4月18日; 发布日期: 2026年4月23日

摘要

背景: 心血管疾病是全球范围内导致死亡和残疾的主要原因, 炎症在其发生发展中起着核心作用。中性粒细胞与淋巴细胞比值(NLR)作为一种易获取、经济的炎症标志物, 近年来备受关注。目的: 系统综述NLR在冠心病、心力衰竭、高血压及心房颤动等心血管疾病中的临床应用研究进展, 总结NLR对于疾病预后的评估价值, 探讨现有的局限性, 并探索未来的研究方向。结果: 现有证据表明, NLR水平升高与冠心病患者的长期死亡率、心力衰竭患者的预后恶化、高血压患者的发病风险及靶器官损害、心房颤动患者的复发及血栓事件风险增加均显著相关。在心血管-肾脏-代谢综合征危险分层等新兴领域亦展现出应用前景。然而, 目前该领域仍面临截断值不统一、人群异质性显著、因果关系不明及干预价值待验证等挑战。结论: NLR作为一种反映炎症-免疫平衡的复合指标, 在多种心血管疾病中具有可靠的预后价值。未来需着力解决阈值标准化、开展高质量前瞻性研究, 以推动其临床转化。

关键词

NLR, 冠心病, 心力衰竭, 高血压, 房颤

Research Progress on the Clinical Application of NLR in Cardiovascular Diseases

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Received: March 23, 2026; accepted: April 18, 2026; published: April 23, 2026

Abstract

Background: Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of mortality and disability

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文章引用: 贺娜, 刘增长. NLR在心血管疾病中的临床应用研究进展[J]. 临床医学进展, 2026, 16(4): 4600-4608.

DOI: 10.12677/acm.2026.1641732

globally, with inflammation playing a central role in their pathogenesis. The neutrophil-to-lymphocyte ratio (NLR), as a readily available and cost-effective inflammatory biomarker, has attracted significant attention in recent years. Objective: This systematic review summarizes the research progress on the clinical application of NLR in cardiovascular diseases such as coronary heart disease, heart failure, hypertension, and atrial fibrillation. It also evaluates its prognostic value, discusses existing limitations, and outlines future research directions. Results: Existing evidence indicates that elevated NLR levels are significantly associated with increased long-term mortality in patients with coronary heart disease, worse outcomes in patients with heart failure, higher risk of incident hypertension and target organ damage, and higher risks of recurrence and thrombotic events in patients with atrial fibrillation. NLR also shows potential applications in emerging areas such as the risk stratification of cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic syndrome. However, the field still faces challenges including lack of standardized cutoff values, significant population heterogeneity, unclear causal relationships, and the need to validate the therapeutic implications of NLR modulation. Conclusion: As a composite indicator reflecting the inflammation-immunity balance, NLR demonstrates reliable prognostic value in various cardiovascular diseases. Future efforts should focus on establishing standardized thresholds and conducting high-quality prospective studies to facilitate its clinical translation.

Keywords

Neutrophil-to-Lymphocyte Ratio, Coronary Artery Disease, Heart Failure, Hypertension, Atrial Fibrillation

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1. 引言

心血管疾病(Cardiovascular diseases, CVDs)是全球范围内致死、致残的主要原因之一,其疾病谱主要有冠心病、心力衰竭、高血压及心房颤动等。尽管介入技术、药物等治疗方面取得不断的进步,但CVDs的疾病负担依然沉重,部分患者仍面临着不良预后的风险。这表明除了传统危险因素,仍存在一些潜在原因。

近年来,炎症在心血管疾病发生发展中所起的作用已得到大量研究证实。炎症贯穿冠状动脉粥样硬化始终,既是斑块形成的慢性驱动力,也是斑块破裂的最终促发因素[1]。炎症驱动成纤维细胞持续活化与细胞外基质过度沉积,导致病理性重构,最终促进心力衰竭[2]。炎症通过先天免疫与适应性免疫的协同激活,驱动血管、肾脏及中枢神经系统的多器官功能障碍,导致血压升高与靶器官损伤[3]。炎症通过不同的巨噬细胞表型驱动心房电重构与结构重构,共同形成房颤维持的病理基质[4]。由此可见,炎症贯穿于不同心血管疾病的各个阶段。CANTOS研究首次证实,靶向特定的炎症通路可以在不依赖降脂的情况下独立降低心血管事件风险[5]。因此,寻找能够准确反映机体炎症状态,且便于临床常规监测的生物标志物,对于CVDs的风险分层和个体化治疗至关重要。

中性粒细胞与淋巴细胞比值(neutrophil-to-lymphocyte ratio, NLR)是一种整合了固有免疫(中性粒细胞)和适应性免疫(淋巴细胞)信息的复合指标。与传统的单一炎症因子相比,NLR可以综合反映机体炎症负荷与免疫调节状态[6]。越来越多的研究表明,NLR水平升高与多种心血管疾病的不良预后密切相关,包括冠心病、心力衰竭、高血压及心房颤动等[7]-[11]。

本文系统梳理 NLR 与冠心病、心力衰竭、高血压及心房颤动相关性的研究证据, 分析其临床应用价值, 并基于现有局限性展望未来研究方向。

2. NLR 的生物学基础

2.1. 中性粒细胞的作用

中性粒细胞是先天免疫细胞, 传统上认为其主要通过吞噬[12]、脱颗粒释放蛋白酶[13]、产生活性氧(ROS)[14]等机制参与到心血管疾病的炎症反应。近年研究发现, 中性粒细胞并非被动的效应细胞, 而是心血管炎症的主动调节者[15], 可以通过释放中性粒细胞胞外诱捕网(NETs)[16][17]、诱导训练免疫[18]、以及发挥促炎与促修复的双相作用[19]等方式参与到心血管疾病的发生与发展。其过度活化可进一步加剧内皮损伤、斑块不稳定及心肌纤维化等。

2.2. 淋巴细胞的作用

淋巴细胞作为适应性免疫的核心成分, 在心血管疾病中发挥双向免疫调节作用。其中, CD4⁺T 细胞亚群的功能失调尤为关键: 调节性 T 细胞(Treg)通过分泌 TGF- β 抑制炎症、维持免疫稳态, 其功能缺陷可加速动脉粥样硬化进展[20]-[23]; 而效应 T 细胞的过度活化则会导致斑块不稳定。在心肌梗死背景下, 胸腺基质淋巴细胞生成素(TSLP)可通过促进 CD4⁺T 细胞向 Treg 分化, 进而改善心脏修复[24]。此外, 骨髓来源的 naïve B 细胞被证实具有改善梗死后心功能、减小梗死面积的保护作用[25]。大规模人群研究显示, 心力衰竭患者的淋巴细胞减少主要源于 naïve CD4⁺T 细胞库的耗竭, 且该缺陷与不良预后独立相关[26]。因此, 淋巴细胞的亚群构成及其功能状态在心血管疾病的发生发展中起着重要调控作用。

2.3. NLR 的病理生理意义

NLR 是中性粒细胞与淋巴细胞的比值, 作为临床上易获取且成本效益高的炎症指标, 其水平升高反映了促炎反应增强与免疫防御减弱并存的双重病理状态, 相较于单一炎症指标, 能更全面地揭示免疫失衡的程度[27][28]。从机制层面看, NLR 与内皮功能障碍及氧化应激密切相关。活化的中性粒细胞释放髓过氧化物酶(MPO)和中性粒细胞弹性蛋白酶(NE), 可直接损伤内皮细胞并降解细胞外基质[15]; 同时, 大量产生的 ROS 通过消耗一氧化氮, 导致内皮依赖性血管舒张功能受损[29]。另一方面, 淋巴细胞(尤其是 Treg 和 CD4⁺T 细胞亚群)的减少, 可削弱机体对内皮损伤的修复能力, 并降低其对炎症的负向调控作用[30]。这种双重失衡的病理状态, 构成了 NLR 作为心血管疾病炎症评估与风险预测指标的病理生理基础。

3. NLR 在主要心血管疾病中的研究证据

3.1. 冠状动脉粥样硬化性心脏病

冠状动脉粥样硬化性心脏病(以下简称冠心病)的核心病理基础是动脉粥样硬化, 而炎症反应贯穿于脂质沉积、斑块形成、进展直至破裂的整个过程[2]。

3.1.1. 急性冠脉综合征

NLR 水平与急性冠脉综合征(ACS)患者的心肌损伤程度呈正相关。Pruc 等人纳入 90 项研究的 Meta 分析显示, ACS 患者 NLR 显著高于稳定型心绞痛患者(5.45 ± 4.28 vs. 2.46 ± 2.15), 其中 ST 段抬高型心肌梗死(STEMI)高于非 ST 段抬高型心肌梗死(NSTEMI), 心肌梗死高于不稳定型心绞痛[31]。这一梯度差异提示, NLR 水平可反映心肌损伤程度及炎症反应强度, 作为疾病严重度的辅助评估指标具有一定临床价值。

在预后评估方面, Pruc 等人的 Meta 分析显示, 死亡患者入院 NLR 显著高于存活者(5.56 ± 3.93 vs.

3.67 ± 2.72), 发生主要心血管不良事件(MACE)者 NLR 亦显著高于无事件者(6.29 ± 4.89 vs. 3.82 ± 4.12) [31]。提示入院 NLR 有助于早期识别高危患者。Adamstein 等人的汇总分析进一步证实, NLR 每升高 1 个标准差, MACE 风险增加 1.12 倍[28], 提示 NLR 对远期预后具有独立预测价值。在短期预后方面, Arslan 等人对 500 例 ACS 患者的研究显示, 入院 NLR ≥ 3 者 30 天 MACE 风险增加 1.85 倍[32]; 在长期预后方面, Ting 等人发现, 入院 NLR 与 STEMI 患者 1 年死亡率独立相关, 高 NLR 患者 1 年死亡风险增加 2.18 倍[33]。

3.1.2. 介入治疗术后

NLR 对冠心病患者经皮冠状动脉介入治疗(PCI)术后的远期预后及并发症风险同样具有预测价值。Siahaan 等人纳入 15 项研究共 3889 例患者的 Meta 分析显示, 高 NLR 与支架内再狭窄风险显著相关。在分组分析中, 高 NLR 组患者再狭窄风险是低 NLR 组的 1.61 倍; 在连续变量分析中, NLR 每增加 1 个单位, 再狭窄风险增加 30% [34]。Ramos 等人的综述指出, 高 NLR 与更高的 SYNTAX 评分 II 及易损斑块成分相关, 提示 NLR 可反映冠脉病变的复杂性与易损性[35], 这可能部分解释 NLR 与支架内再狭窄及不良预后的相关性。Oliva 等人纳入 7287 例接受 PCI 的冠心病患者显示, 与 NLR 最低四分位组相比, 最高四分位组(NLR > 5.0)患者 1 年 MACE 风险增加 1.52 倍, 全因死亡风险增加 1.71 倍[36]。进一步分析表明, 高 NLR 相关的缺血风险在 ACS 患者中更为显著, 提示在高炎症负荷人群中, NLR 的预测价值突出, 或可作为抗炎治疗的筛选指标。

3.2. 心力衰竭

心力衰竭是多种心血管疾病的终末阶段, 其发生发展涉及神经内分泌激活、心室重构等多种机制, 其中炎症信号驱动的心脏成纤维细胞持续活化是核心事件, 其介导的病理性纤维化在疾病进程中发挥着关键作用[2]。

NLR 与心力衰竭患者预后相关。Vakhshoori 等人对 36 项研究共 18,231 例心衰患者的 Meta 分析显示, NLR 每增加 1 个单位, 死亡风险增加 1.12 倍; 与最低三分位组相比, 最高三分位组(NLR > 5.08)死亡风险增加 2.49 倍[37], 提示 NLR 可作为心力衰竭患者危险分层的有效指标。Ang 等人纳入 15,995 例心力衰竭患者的 Meta 分析显示, 高 NLR 组(>6.0)院内和远期死亡风险分别增加 1.54 倍和 1.61 倍[38], 进一步证实 NLR 对早期和远期预后均有预测价值。

在急性心衰患者中, NLR 对短期及中期死亡率具有独立预测价值。Curran 等人分析了 BIostat-CHF 等三项 RCT 中 5216 例急性心衰患者的数据, 研究结果显示, NLR 每增加 1 个对数单位, 30 天全因死亡风险增加 1.58 倍, 180 天全因死亡风险增加 1.32 倍, 且其预测价值独立于 NT-proBNP [39], 提示 NLR 在急性心衰场景中可作为传统标志物的补充指标。

在不同射血分数亚型中, NLR 的预测价值均得到证实。Sawczak 等人的一项前瞻性研究显示, 在 140 例无急性失代偿的射血分数降低型心力衰竭(HFrEF)患者中, NLR 是患者 1 年全因死亡的独立预测因素 (HR 1.326, 95%CI 1.121~1.569) [8], 提示即使在病情稳定的 HFrEF 患者中, NLR 仍可作为不良预后的辅助评估指标。Kammerlander 等人开展了一项纳入 479 例射血分数保留型心力衰竭(HFpEF)患者的前瞻性研究, 结果发现, 在中位随访 43 个月期间, NLR 高于中位数(3.2)与全因死亡或心衰住院复合终点风险独立相关(HR 1.81, 95%CI 1.22~2.69) [40], 表明炎症负荷在射血分数保留型心衰的预后评估中同样具有重要价值。

心衰通过神经内分泌激活和骨髓髓系偏移, 驱动中性粒细胞显著扩增[41]。活化的中性粒细胞经 NETosis 释放 NETs, 直接激活心脏成纤维细胞, 促进心肌纤维化与心室重构[41]。同时, 心衰患者 Treg 数量减少、功能受损。一方面, 对促炎性 T 细胞(如 Th17)的抑制作用被减弱, 炎症反应持续放大; 另一

方面, NETs 可激活 T 细胞, 加剧免疫紊乱, 而 Th17 分泌的 IL-17 亦可促进 NETosis, 形成双向正反馈 [42]。高 NLR 正是炎症与免疫失衡状态, 与心衰不良预后密切相关。

3.3. 高血压

在高血压的病理生理过程中, 炎症贯穿始终, 通过激活补体与炎症小体、诱导循环免疫细胞尤其是髓系细胞表型改变, 参与血压升高机制, 并在靶器官损害中发挥核心作用 [43]。

在发病风险层面, 一篇纳入 10 项研究共 78,194 例患者的 Meta 分析显示, NLR 是高血压发生的独立预测因子(OR 1.11, 95%CI 1.05~1.17), 且基线 NLR 水平升高与高血压患者远期全因死亡及心血管死亡风险显著相关, 死亡风险分别是原来的 2.02 倍和 2.10 倍 [9], 提示临床中对 NLR 升高的个体应加强血压监测与综合干预。

在临床亚型识别方面, Sarejloo 等人的 Meta 分析显示, 高血压患者 NLR 水平显著高于血压正常人群(加权均数差 0.40, 95%CI 0.22~0.57), 且非杓型血压模式患者 NLR 显著高于杓型患者(加权均数差 0.58, 95%CI 0.19~0.97) [44]。Drugescu 等人对合并稳定型冠心病的高血压患者的研究进一步证实了上述关联 [45]。这些结果提示, NLR 可作为识别高危血压节律表型的辅助指标。

在靶器官损害层面, 一项纳入 2145 例高血压患者的 Meta 分析显示, NLR 升高与高血压患者左心室肥厚的发生风险显著相关(标准化均数差 0.68, 95%CI 0.12~1.25), 且这种关联在离心性左心室肥厚患者中更为显著(标准化均数差 1.22, 95%CI 0.08~2.36) [46]。这一结果提示, 炎症机制可能在离心性心室重构过程中发挥更关键的作用, 而 NLR 可作为识别这一高危亚型的辅助指标。

在特定高血压人群的应用中, Chen 等人对 618 例 H 型高血压患者的回顾性研究显示, NLR 与肾损害之间存在显著相关性, NLR 每增加 1 个单位, 肾损伤风险增加 51% [47]。提示 NLR 是预测 H 型高血压患者肾损害的独立危险因素。

3.4. 心房颤动

心房颤动的发生与维持涉及心房电重构和结构重构, 而炎症反应在其病理生理过程中发挥关键作用 [47]。

在房颤发病风险层面, Luo 等人利用 UK Biobank 数据库对 334,674 例基线无房颤受试者进行的前瞻性队列研究显示, 中位随访 10.4 年期间, NLR 水平升高与新发房颤风险显著相关(HR 1.18, 95%CI 1.13~1.24) [10]。提示 NLR 在房颤一级预防中具有一定应用价值。

在预后评估方面, Peng 等人纳入 59,256 例房颤患者的 Meta 分析显示, NLR 升高与房颤复发、全因死亡、卒中及左心房血栓风险显著相关, 风险分别增加 0.39 倍、0.87 倍、0.56 倍和 0.87 倍; NLR > 3 时对复发的预测价值更为显著 [48]。提示 NLR 可作为房颤患者风险分层的简便指标, 为个体化管理提供参考。

在术后房颤(Postoperative Atrial Fibrillation, POAF)层面, Awad 等人纳入 18 项研究共 8802 例心脏外科手术患者的 Meta 分析显示, 发生 POAF 的患者术前及术后 NLR 均显著升高(均值差分别为 0.64 和 1.20) [49]。提示围术期 NLR 监测有助于高危患者识别。Staicu 等人对 70 例心脏外科手术患者的前瞻性队列研究进一步证实, 术后 24 小时 NLR 对 POAF 具有中等预测价值(AUC 0.66) [50]。提示术后 NLR 可作为临床辅助指标, 用于筛选需延长心电监护时间的患者。

在房颤消融术后复发层面, Zhang 等人对 418 例高血压合并阵发性房颤患者的回顾性队列研究显示, NLR 是导管消融术后复发的独立危险因素(HR 1.30), 当 NLR \geq 2.37 时复发风险显著增加, 与血压未控制联合时风险最高(HR = 3.92) [51]; 段洁莹等人对 883 例房颤合并心力衰竭患者的回顾性队列研究同样显示, NLR 是射频消融术后复发的独立危险因素(OR = 1.634), 预测术后复发的 AUC 为 0.715 [52]。上述结

果提示, 对于合并高血压或心力衰竭的房颤患者, 术前 $NLR \geq 2.37$ 或合并血压未控制者, 术后随访时应更重视症状询问和心电图复查。

3.5. 其他

心血管 - 肾脏 - 代谢(CKM)综合征是指心血管、肾脏及代谢系统(如糖尿病、肥胖)之间相互影响所导致的多器官损伤状态, 可逐步进展至心肾功能失代偿[53]。多项大规模队列研究显示, NLR 与 CKM 综合征患者的全因死亡及心血管死亡风险独立相关, 其预测效能优于传统炎症指标[54] [55]。 NLR 升高可能反映了中性粒细胞介导的固有免疫激活与淋巴细胞减少所代表的免疫调节失衡, 这种失衡可通过促进内皮损伤、氧化应激及组织纤维化, 加速动脉粥样硬化、肾功能下降及胰岛素抵抗, 从而推动 CKM 综合征进展[6]。

4. 现存问题与未来展望

尽管 NLR 在心血管疾病风险预测及预后评估中展现出一定潜力, 但目前该领域仍面临若干关键挑战。第一, 截断值缺乏统一标准。现有研究中 NLR 的截断值设定存在较大异质性, 部分研究仅基于四分位数或中位数进行分组, 限制了其临床标准化应用。未来可开展大规模多中心前瞻性队列研究, 针对不同疾病及特定人群建立分层标准化的阈值体系。第二, 研究人群存在显著异质性。 NLR 基线水平受年龄、种族及合并症等多重因素影响, 单一阈值难以普适于所有人群。未来研究应探索亚组特异性截断值, 并在不同种族、年龄层及合并症人群中开展外部验证。第三, 缺乏前瞻性随机对照试验证据。目前尚无 RCT 明确回答“降低 NLR 能否改善心血管预后”这一核心问题。未来应设计严谨的 RCT, 评估抗炎治疗在不同 NLR 分层人群中的疗效差异。第四, NLR 与心血管疾病之间的因果关联尚待阐明。目前证据主要源自观察性研究, 难以排除反向因果及混杂因素的干扰。未来需结合孟德尔随机化研究探讨其因果关系, 并通过纵向研究设计明确 NLR 动态变化与疾病进展的时序关系。

5. 结论

NLR 作为反映机体炎症 - 免疫平衡的复合指标, 与冠心病、心力衰竭、高血压、心房颤动等多种心血管疾病的预后相关。其检测简便、成本低廉且可动态监测, 为其临床应用提供了现实基础。然而, 要实现从研究向临床转化, 仍需着力解决阈值标准化、人群异质性等关键问题。未来, NLR 或可成为连接炎症机制研究与临床实践的有效工具, 为心血管疾病的风险分层与管理提供参考依据。

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