

## • 文献综述 •

## 干细胞来源的外泌体在膝骨关节炎治疗中的研究进展

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**[摘要]** 膝骨关节炎以关节软骨退变、滑膜炎症、软骨下骨重塑及疼痛为核心病理特征,现有治疗手段难以逆转其退行性进程。干细胞来源外泌体是携带 miRNA、蛋白质及生长因子等生物活性成分的纳米级囊泡,可通过介导细胞间信号传递参与膝骨关节炎干预,是当前值得关注的无细胞治疗方向。外泌体可通过抗炎、促进软骨修复及维持细胞外基质稳态等多重机制参与膝骨关节炎干预。总结不同来源干细胞外泌体的功能差异,并归纳体外细胞实验与动物模型的机制验证结果,旨在总结其在膝骨关节炎治疗中的基础研究依据与早期临床转化现状,为后续临床试验设计、疗效评价及标准化研究提供参考。当前仍存在核心成分调控网络不清晰、制备与评价标准缺失等问题,未来研究仍需围绕关键成分筛选、作用机制解析及技术标准化持续推进,以促进膝骨关节炎外泌体治疗的规范化研究与临床转化。

**[关键词]** 膝骨关节炎;干细胞来源外泌体;软骨修复;抗炎;临床转化

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## Research Progress of Stem Cell-Derived Exosomes in the Treatment of Knee Osteoarthritis

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**Abstract** Knee osteoarthritis (KOA) is a joint disorder characterized by articular cartilage degeneration, synovial inflammation, subchondral bone remodeling, and pain as its core pathological manifestations. Current therapeutic strategies remain limited in their capacity to reverse its degenerative progression. Stem cell-derived exosomes are nanoscale vesicles that carry bioactive components such as microRNAs (miRNAs), proteins, and growth factors. By mediating intercellular communication, they participate in KOA intervention and have emerged as a promising cell-free therapeutic approach. Exo-

somes may exert therapeutic effects on KOA through multiple mechanisms, including anti-inflammatory activity, promotion of cartilage repair, and maintenance of extracellular matrix homeostasis. This review summarizes the functional differences among exosomes derived from various stem cell sources and integrates mechanistic evidence from in vitro cellular experiments and animal models. Its aim is to outline the foundational research basis and current status of early clinical translation of exosome-based therapy for KOA, thereby providing a reference for future clinical trial design, efficacy evaluation, and standardization research. However, important challenges remain, including the incomplete understanding of the regulatory networks of key functional components and the lack of standardized preparation and evaluation criteria. Future studies should continue to focus on identifying critical bioactive components, elucidating underlying

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mechanisms, and standardizing technologies—to advance both rigorous, standardized research and clinical transformation of exosome—based therapy for KOA.

**Keywords:** knee osteoarthritis; stem cell-derived exosomes; cartilage repair; anti-inflammatory; clinical translation

膝骨关节炎(Knee Osteoarthritis, KOA)是一种以关节软骨退变、滑膜炎、软骨下骨重塑及慢性疼痛为主要特征的退行性关节疾病,其患病率随年龄增长显著升高,女性高于男性<sup>[1]</sup>。肥胖及高负荷运动亦为重要危险因素<sup>[2]</sup>,随着人口老龄化加速,膝骨关节炎已成为影响中老年人生活质量的重要公共卫生问题<sup>[3-4]</sup>。

膝骨关节炎的治疗策略主要包括药物、物理治疗及手术干预。非甾体抗炎药(NSAIDs)可缓解疼痛,但难以阻止软骨退变进程<sup>[5]</sup>。运动疗法等保守治疗对部分患者有效,但疗效维持时间有限<sup>[6]</sup>。晚期患者常需行关节置换术,但存在并发症及翻修风险<sup>[7]</sup>。总体而言,现有治疗以症状控制为主,缺乏针对疾病进程的干预手段。

近年来,干细胞来源外泌体(Mesenchymal Stem Cell-Derived Exosomes, MSC-Exos)作为一种无细胞治疗策略受到关注,围绕其治疗膝骨关节炎的基础研究与转化探索持续推进,已有综述分别从病理机制关联和临床转化路径等角度总结了相关研究进展<sup>[8-9]</sup>。

在此基础上,本研究以膝骨关节炎的全关节病理特征为切入点,综述干细胞来源外泌体在关节微环境调控中的作用,比较不同来源外泌体的组成与效应,并结合体内外研究和临床进展,讨论制备标准化、质量控制、剂量设计及转化路径等关键问题,以期为其在膝骨关节炎治疗中的早期临床试验设计、疗效评价指标选择及转化研究提供参考。

## 1 膝骨关节炎的病理特征和临床治疗瓶颈

### 1.1 膝骨关节炎的核心病理

膝骨关节炎是一种涉及关节软骨、滑膜及软骨下骨等多组织结构的退行性疾病<sup>[10-12]</sup>,其发生发展受慢性低度炎症、细胞衰老、代谢异常及表观遗传调控等多因素共同驱动<sup>[13-14]</sup>。上述机制相互作用,最终导致软骨基质降解、细胞功能障碍及关节稳态失衡<sup>[15-16]</sup>。由此可见,膝骨关节炎并非单一通路异常所致,而是全关节微环境持续失衡的结果,这也为多靶点干预提供了理论依据。

### 1.2 现有治疗手段的局限性与逆转瓶颈

目前,膝骨关节炎的治疗仍以症状控制为主。非甾体抗炎药、关节腔注射及生物制剂虽可在一定程度上缓解疼痛或炎症,但对结构性进展干预有限<sup>[17-19]</sup>;对于终末期患者,全膝关节置换术虽可改善功能,但仍存

在围手术期并发症及远期翻修风险<sup>[20-21]</sup>。总体而言,现有治疗方法难以恢复滑膜-软骨-软骨下骨结构的整体稳态,也缺乏针对疾病进程的干预策略。

## 2 干细胞外泌体的结构组成与作用机制

### 2.1 外泌体的结构与组成

外泌体是由多泡体(Multivesicular Bodies, MVBs)与细胞膜融合后释放的纳米级囊泡,直径多为30~150 nm<sup>[22]</sup>,其外层为脂质双分子膜,可在细胞间递送 miRNA、mRNA、lncRNA、蛋白质及脂质等多种生物活性分子<sup>[23-25]</sup>。外泌体常富集 CD9、CD63、CD81 及热休克蛋白等标志分子<sup>[26-27]</sup>。不同来源干细胞外泌体在分子货物组成和生物学效应上存在差异,且受细胞来源、培养条件及分离纯化工艺影响<sup>[28-30]</sup>。

### 2.2 干细胞外泌体的作用机制

干细胞来源外泌体可通过多途径参与膝骨关节炎关节微环境调控,主要表现为抑制炎症反应、促进软骨细胞增殖与基质合成、减少细胞凋亡及维持细胞外基质代谢平衡<sup>[31-34]</sup>。已有研究发现,外泌体可减少炎症细胞浸润,下调 TNF- $\alpha$ 、IL-1 $\beta$  等炎症相关因子,并通过 JAK/STAT、NLRP3 等通路调节关节局部炎症反应<sup>[32,35-36]</sup>;同时,其还可促进软骨细胞表型稳定,上调 COL2A1、SOX9 等基质合成相关分子表达,下调 MMP-13、ADAMTS5 等降解相关分子,并与 Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin、PI3K-Akt 等信号通路调控有关<sup>[33,37-39]</sup>。总体来看,干细胞外泌体具有多分子、多通路协同作用的特点,可同时作用于软骨、滑膜及软骨下骨相关细胞,为后续机制研究和治疗应用提供了基础。

## 3 不同来源外泌体的生物学差异与治疗证据

### 3.1 不同来源外泌体的功能差异

干细胞外泌体的生物学效应在一定程度上取决于其细胞来源,不同组织来源的间充质干细胞在转录谱及分泌谱方面存在差异,导致外泌体在 miRNA 构成、蛋白表达及免疫调节能力方面表现出特异性,从而影响其在膝骨关节炎治疗中的作用模式。

骨髓来源间充质干细胞(MSC)外泌体(BMSC-Exos)是研究最早且证据较为充分的一类,相关研究表明其可通过调控 lncRNA MEG-3 及多种 miRNA 参与软骨细胞保护和基质代谢调节<sup>[40]</sup>。脂肪来源间充质干细胞外泌体(ADSC-Exos)富集抗炎相关 miRNA,可通过 SIRT1/NF- $\kappa$ B 信号轴减轻炎症反应并改善软骨微环境<sup>[41]</sup>。脐带来源间充质干细胞外泌

体具有较低免疫原性,在动物模型及早期临床研究中显示出疼痛缓解及结构改善趋势<sup>[42]</sup>。

此外,滑膜来源间充质干细胞外泌体在关节局部微环境中可能具有较高组织亲和性,其抗炎效应与STAT6/PPAR- $\gamma$  通路激活相关<sup>[43]</sup>。骨髓来源外泌体则在骨重塑与破骨细胞调控方面表现出一定特征<sup>[44-45]</sup>。总体来看,不同来源外泌体在分子货物与调控路径上存在差异,但其核心治疗方向仍集中于炎症调节、基质代谢平衡及细胞表型稳定。综合不同来源干细胞外泌体的研究,可见其差异并非仅体现在标志物表达或 miRNA 谱层面,更反映在功能侧重的不同。例如,骨髓来源外泌体在促进软骨基质修复方面证据最为充分,脂肪来源外泌体在抗炎与抗衰老方面显示出一定优势,而脐带及胎盘来源外泌体则因免疫原性较低,在临床转化层面具有潜在优势。来源差异提示外泌体治疗可能并非“单一通用策略”,而更接近于基于病理分型的个体化选择。

### 3.2 体内外治疗证据整合

体内外研究一致显示,干细胞来源外泌体可改善炎症条件下软骨细胞表型,促进SOX9、COL2A1等基质相关基因表达,并抑制MMP-13、ADAMTS5等降解分子<sup>[45]</sup>。在动物模型中,关节内注射外泌体可改善软骨结构,并减轻疼痛相关表现,同时降低关节局部炎症因子水平。示踪研究显示,外泌体可在损伤区域富集,并被软骨细胞等关节局部细胞摄取<sup>[46]</sup>。

### 3.3 线粒体稳态与能量代谢调控

线粒体功能障碍与氧化应激是膝骨关节炎软骨退变的重要驱动因素。研究表明干细胞来源外泌体可在一定程度上改善软骨细胞线粒体功能。骨髓间充质干细胞来源囊泡可向软骨细胞递送功能性线粒体或相关调控因子,减轻炎症与减少凋亡,并与PGC-1 $\alpha$ 介导的线粒体生物发生增强有关<sup>[47]</sup>。

除线粒体功能改善外,促进受损线粒体清除同样具有保护意义。ADSC-Exos可通过上调PINK1/Parkin通路促进线粒体自噬,恢复线粒体膜电位并降低活性氧水平,在体内模型中亦可减轻软骨基质降解与炎症反应<sup>[48]</sup>。上述研究提示,干细胞来源外泌体可通过维持线粒体稳态和调节能量代谢参与膝骨关节炎干预。

### 3.4 免疫调节与巨噬细胞极化

滑膜巨噬细胞表型失衡是膝骨关节炎炎症微环境的重要特征,调控其极化状态可能是缓解局部炎症的重要途径<sup>[49-51]</sup>。研究表明干细胞来源外泌体可参与巨噬细胞表型调节,烟酰胺单核苷酸(NMN)预处理间充质干细胞外泌体可通过GAS6-MERTK-PI3K/Akt信号轴增强抗炎效应并改善软骨表型<sup>[52]</sup>;ADSC-Exos

中富集的miR-451a可靶向巨噬细胞移动抑制因子(MIF),抑制M1标志物表达并促进M2极化<sup>[53]</sup>;BMSC-Exos中的miR-23a-3p可通过干扰素调节因子1(IRF1)调控早期炎症反应<sup>[54]</sup>,说明外泌体可通过调节巨噬细胞极化参与关节炎症微环境重塑。

### 3.5 临床研究进展

目前,干细胞来源外泌体用于膝骨关节炎的临床研究总体仍处于早期探索阶段,相关已注册早期临床试验概况见表1<sup>[55]</sup>。本文汇总的4项研究均为I期或早期I期试验,研究目的主要集中于安全性、耐受性、剂量探索及初步可行性评估,尚无已完成的II/III期随机对照试验结果可供纳入分析。因此,现阶段临床证据主要回答“能否给药、短期是否安全、可采用何种终点进行评估”等问题,尚不足以对其临床有效性、结构改善幅度及优势人群作出明确判断。

从试验设计看,现有研究具有若干共同特征。其一,给药方式以关节腔注射为主,提示局部递送仍是当前最主要的临床转化路径。其二,主要终点多设为不良事件发生率、剂量限制性毒性等安全性指标,而VAS评分、WOMAC评分、OMERACT-OARSI应答率及MRI相关结构指标多作为次要终点或探索性终点纳入。其三,部分研究仍处于招募中或尚未招募阶段,且尚无结果公开,提示该领域临床开发仍停留在概念验证前期。目前关于外泌体治疗膝骨关节炎的临床证据等级总体较低,其价值主要在于为后续II期研究提供剂量设定、终点组合、随访周期及安全性监测框架的参考,而非直接支持临床常规应用。

现有注册研究的终点设置仍具有一定启示意义。部分试验已开始尝试将疼痛缓解、功能改善与结构变化纳入同一评估框架,例如联合应用VAS评分、WOMAC评分、OMERACT-OARSI应答标准以及MRI软骨厚度、骨髓水肿、负重位X线片关节间隙等指标,这提示外泌体治疗膝骨关节炎的临床评价正由单一症状终点向“症状-功能-结构”多维结局拓展。但在缺乏对照组、样本量有限且长期随访数据不足的前提下,现阶段这些指标更多承担探索性筛选作用,其临床意义仍需在后续高质量研究中进一步验证。

## 4 干细胞来源外泌体在膝骨关节炎治疗中的优势与挑战

### 4.1 潜在优势

相较于细胞移植,外泌体作为无细胞制剂具有一定安全性优势,其免疫原性较低,不具备自我复制能力,理论上不存在异常分化风险<sup>[56]</sup>。此外,外泌体可递送miRNA、蛋白质等多种生物活性分子,参与炎症调控与基质代谢平衡<sup>[57-58]</sup>。在制备与储存方面,外泌体具有规模化生产和质量标准化的潜力,但其批次一



表 1 干细胞来源外泌体治疗膝骨关节炎的已注册早期临床试验概况

| 囊泡类型                     | 来源                     | 给药方式                                                 | 注册描述中的预期作用/设计依据                                                                | 主要终点                                             | 次要终点                                                                                                                                       | 临床阶段    | 研究状态  | 研究结果 | NCT 编号   |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|------|----------|
| 小细胞外囊泡 (MSC 来源外泌体, sEVs) | 异体间充质基质细胞 (GMP 条件下制备)  | 关节腔注射                                                | 预期具有抗炎及软骨保护作用(注册信息中未具体说明机制)                                                    | 治疗后 12 个月内不良事件发生率                                | 注射相关疼痛发生率 (VAS 评分, 1 周); 滑膜炎发生率(膝关节积液分级, 1 周); 52 周 VAS 评分变化; 52 周 WOMAC 功能评分变化; 52 周 OMERACT-OARSI 应答率                                    | I 期临床试验 | 状态未明确 | 尚未公布 | 05060107 |
| MSC 来源外泌体 (Exosome)      | 间充质干细胞(MSC, 来源类型未说明)   | 未说明(注册信息仅提及第 90 天重复第 2 次注射, 提示可能为局部注射/关节腔注射, 但未明确)   | 抗炎; 抑制骨关节炎相关炎症因子; 下调 MMP 与 ADAMTS 相关基质降解; 通过携带 ncRNAs/蛋白等生物活性分子调控关节腔细胞行为(注册描述) | WOMAC 评分(1、3、6 个月评估); 膝关节功能; 第 90 天进行第 2 次注射后随访) | 未报告                                                                                                                                        | 未标注     | 招募中   | 尚未公布 | 06466850 |
| PEP±EU-FLEX-XA (透明质酸)    | 产品来源未说明 (Rion Inc. 开发) | 单次关节腔注射(低剂量 1 瓶 PEP 或高剂量 2 瓶 PEP, 可联合或不联合 EUFLEX-XA) | 预期通过改善软骨结构及缓解炎症发挥治疗作用(具体机制未在注册中说明)                                             | 90 d 内剂量限制性毒性(DLTs)发生率; 365 d 内长期安全性(DLTs 发生率)   | 影像学改善(MRI 软骨厚度、骨髓水肿; 负重位 X 线片关节间隙变化); 疼痛 VAS 评分; 改良 WOMAC 评分; OARSI-OMERACT 应答率                                                            | I 期     | 尚未招募  | 尚未公布 | 06463132 |
| UC-MSC 来源小细胞外囊泡(sEVs)    | 异体脐带间充质干细胞(GMP 条件下制备)  | 关节腔注射(剂量递增, 开放标签)                                    | 预期通过抗炎、缓解滑膜炎及促进软骨保护作用发挥治疗作用(注册信息未具体阐明分子机制)                                     | 12 个月内不良事件发生率                                    | 注射相关疼痛 (VAS 评分 0~100 mm, 1~2 周); 滑膜炎发生率(膝关节积液分级, 1~2 周); VAS 评分变化(每 2 个月评估, 12 个月); WOMAC 功能评分变化(每 2 个月评估, 12 个月); OMERACT-OARSI 应答率(52 周) | 早期 I 期  | 招募中   | 尚未公布 | 06431152 |

注: 本表纳入研究均为 I 期或早期 I 期注册临床试验, 研究重点以安全性、耐受性、剂量探索及初步可行性评估为主, 尚无已完成的 II / III 期临床试验结果公开发表, 故本表主要用于展示当前临床开发路径、给药方式、终点设置及安全性关注重点, 不用于疗效定论。

致性仍依赖于来源细胞、培养体系及分离纯化流程的严格控制<sup>[59-60]</sup>。

4.2 关键挑战

当前外泌体临床转化仍面临分离纯化方法不统

一、质量控制标准缺乏共识等问题。不同分离技术在纯度、产量、污染成分去除效率及生物活性保持方面存在差异,导致不同研究之间产品特征不一致、结果可比性有限。与此同时,外泌体的粒径分布、表面标志物表达、载荷分子组成及效价测定尚未建立统一标准,也使其放行检测和跨研究比较面临困难。

此外,外泌体组成受细胞来源、供体状态、培养条件、预处理方式及储存运输环节影响显著,不同批次之间可能出现粒子浓度、活性成分谱及功能效应的波动,从而影响疗效稳定性与安全性可预测性。尤其在规模化生产背景下,来源细胞异质性、培养体系调整及纯化流程变化均可能放大批次间差异,进而导致同类产品在不同受试者中的临床反应不一致。

剂量-疗程参数尚未形成共识,给药频次、给药间隔及给药途径亦需系统评估。由于外泌体在关节腔内的滞留时间、局部分布及生物利用度尚缺乏统一认识,现阶段尚难确定单次注射、多次注射或联合透明质酸等策略何者更具优势。不同剂量水平可能带来不同的生物学效应窗口,而过低剂量可能不足以产生持续作用,过高剂量则可能增加局部刺激或非靶向调控风险。

长期安全性仍是当前临床转化中的关键薄弱环节,且其风险并不限于一般意义上的不良事件监测。首先,尽管外泌体整体免疫原性较低,但反复关节腔注射后是否会诱发滑膜局部免疫反应、炎症放大或迟发性组织刺激,目前仍缺乏充分证据。其次,外泌体携带的 miRNA、lncRNA、蛋白质及脂质分子具有多靶点调控特征,其作用对象并不限于软骨细胞,也可能影响滑膜成纤维细胞、软骨下骨相关细胞及局部免疫细胞,从而产生预期外的非靶向调控效应,如异常骨重塑、滑膜纤维化倾向或局部炎症网络重编程。最后,在规模化制备条件下,若批次间载荷成分和效价波动未得到严格控制,亦可能造成疗效与安全性的同步波动。

从现有临床研究设计看,研究者已开始采用不良事件发生率、剂量限制性毒性、注射相关疼痛及滑膜炎发生率等指标对短期至中期安全性进行监测,部分研究亦设置了 365 d 的长期安全性观察终点。然而这些探索仍以早期研究为主,样本量有限,且主要关注临床可见不良事件,对局部免疫微环境变化、分子层面非靶向效应及产品批次相关波动的系统评估仍明显不足。未来研究需将安全性评价从“是否出现不良事件”进一步拓展为“是否存在可累积的局部炎症反应、异常组织重塑及批次相关效应波动”,并结合滑液/血液标志物、影像学随访及产品放行指标进行综合判断。

## 5 未来方向

### 5.1 工程化与递送策略优化

外泌体工程化为提高治疗特异性和局部递送效率

提供了新的思路。通过改造内容物,可使外泌体富集特定 miRNA 或功能蛋白,从而增强其对软骨退变相关通路的调控能力<sup>[61]</sup>。此外,优化表面修饰或与缓释材料结合,可增强其在病变组织中的富集、稳定性和局部滞留时间,从而提高治疗效率并降低非靶向分布带来的潜在风险<sup>[62]</sup>。然而相关策略在生物安全性、生产一致性及规模化制备方面仍需进一步验证。

### 5.2 临床转化与评价体系完善

未来研究需通过多中心、随机对照试验系统评估外泌体治疗膝骨关节炎的安全性与结构性结局。鉴于膝骨关节炎的症状、结构改变与炎症活动并不同步,单一终点难以全面反映治疗效果,后续研究应建立“症状-功能-结构-生物学反应”四维综合评价框架。

在症状与功能评价方面,VAS 评分适用于动态观察疼痛变化,但主观性较强;WOMAC 评分可较全面反映疼痛、僵硬及功能受限,是较成熟的患者报告结局工具;OMERACT-OARSI 应答标准有助于进行总体疗效判定,但对结构变化不敏感。

在结构评价方面,MRI 可较早识别软骨厚度、骨髓水肿、滑膜炎及关节积液等改变,适合作为潜在结构修饰效应的重要观察工具,但成本较高,且短期内影像变化未必与疼痛改善一致。相比之下,负重位 X 线片更适合长期随访和总体结构趋势判断,但对早期病变敏感性不足。

在生物学反应评价方面,滑液或外周血中的炎症因子、软骨基质代谢相关分子及骨重塑标志物,可作为解释外泌体生物活性的重要补充证据,但目前相关指标在采样时间窗、检测平台及临床阈值方面尚缺乏统一标准。

因此,较可行的研究设计是以 VAS 评分和 WOMAC 评分作为核心临床指标,以 OMERACT-OARSI 作为应答判定工具,以 MRI 软骨厚度、骨髓水肿和滑膜炎评分作为结构终点,并联合炎症/基质代谢标志物进行机制性验证。后续还应关注影像学改善是否与疼痛、功能及炎症指标变化一致,以明确外泌体治疗的主要作用特点。

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