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基于冠状动脉 CT 造影的生物机械应力在斑块评估及不良心血管事件预测中的应用

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摘要:冠状动脉长期暴露于危险因素会引起粥样硬化,进而导致斑块形成与进展。通过早期识别高危斑块特征将有助于预防斑块破裂或糜烂,从而避免急性心血管事件的发生。而生物机械应力(biomechanical stress)在动脉粥样硬化斑块进展及破裂中发挥重要的作用。近些年,已经可以通过无创冠脉CT血管造影(coronary computed tomography angiography, CCTA)利用计算流体力学(computational fluid dynamic, CFD)进行建模,从而得到相应的生物机械应力参数,尤其是壁面剪切应力(wall shear stress, WSS)将有助于更好地构建临床模型从而预测斑块进展及主要不良心血管事件(major adverse cardiac events, MACE)。本文重点介绍生物机械应力以及CCTA所计算得出的WSS在动脉粥样硬化中的作用,并讨论有关CCTA生物机械应力与冠心病相关的研究。

关键词:冠状动脉粥样硬化斑块;生物机械应力;CT血管影像;主要不良心血管事件;计算流体力学;壁面剪切应力

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Application of Biomechanical Stress from Coronary Computed Tomography Angiography in Coronary Plaque Assessment and Prediction of Adverse Cardiovascular Events

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Abstract: Long-term exposure to risk factors will lead to coronary atherosclerosis, which will lead to the formation and progression of coronary plaque. Early identification of high-risk plaque characteristics will help prevent plaque rupture or erosion, thus avoiding the occurrence of acute cardiovascular events. Biomechanical stress plays an important role in progression and rupture of atherosclerotic plaques. In recent years, non-invasive coronary computed tomography angiography (CCTA) computational fluid dynamics (CFD) modeling has made it possible to acquire the corresponding biomechanical stress parameters. These coronary biomechanical stress parameters, especially wall shear stress (WSS), will aid in the development of a more accurate clinical model for predicting plaque progression and major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE). In this review, the biomechanical stress and the role of WSS from CCTA in atherosclerosis were introduced, and the researches on the relationship between biomechanical stress from CCTA and coronary artery diseases were discussed.

Key words: coronary atherosclerotic plaque; biomechanical stress; CT angiography; major adverse cardiovascular event (MACE); computational fluid dynamics (CFD); wall shear stress (WSS)

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心血管疾病目前是世界上患病率及致死率最高的疾病,尤其是由冠状动脉粥样硬化引起的冠状动脉疾病(coronary artery disease, CAD),并且当前我国CAD患病人数高达1 139万^[1]。动脉持续暴露于一系列致病因素会引起内皮功能的障碍从而导致动脉粥样硬化斑块形成和进展^[2]。局部血流动力学在斑块形成及进展中起到十分重要的作用,这些生物机械应力主要包括内皮剪切应力(endothelial shear stress, ESS)、斑块结构应力(plaque structure stress, PSS)和轴向斑块应力(axial plaque stress, APS)等^[3]。目前已有大量证据支持生物机械应力作用于管壁产生生物效应,从而引起血管重构及斑块进展^[4]。因此,将生物机械应力应用于临床中,将有助于识别高危斑块及预测CAD的发生发展。

目前血管内超声(intravascular ultrasound, IVUS)和光学相干断层扫描(optical coherence tomography, OCT)等血管内成像技术可以检测斑块形态结构以识别高危斑块,但因其有创性且费用较高,从而影响了临床的广泛应用。而冠脉CT血管造影(coronary computed tomography angiography, CCTA)作为无创影像检查,通过计算流体力学(computational fluid dynamic, CFD)方法,能够研究影响单个斑块的血流动力学和病理生理特征,从而准确识别和评估高危斑块^[5-6]。因此,通过CCTA的生物机械应力参数,可作为新的高危斑块识别工具对患者进行更加个体化的风险评估。本文综述了在冠脉粥样硬化斑块进展与破裂中生物机械应力的作用,重点关注基于CCTA的生物机械应力的相关进展,总结CCTA的生物学参数对于高危斑块识别及主要不良心血管事件(major adverse cardiac events, MACE)预测的意义。

1 冠状动脉内的生物机械应力

血流对管壁的作用力主要有剪切应力、轴向应力、静水压力,而法向静水压力作用于管壁产生径向应力和周向应力。其中,剪切应力、周向应力及轴向应力构成了血管管壁主要的生物机械应力分布(见图1)。轴向应力是暴露于周期性血流和心脏运动的血管的纵向拉伸力^[7]。正常动脉周向应力均匀分布在血管壁周围,一般为10~20 kPa。剪切

应力即壁面剪切应力(wall shear stress, WSS)或ESS是血液流经血管壁的切向摩擦力。正常动脉维持生理水平的WSS范围为1~2 Pa^[8-10]。

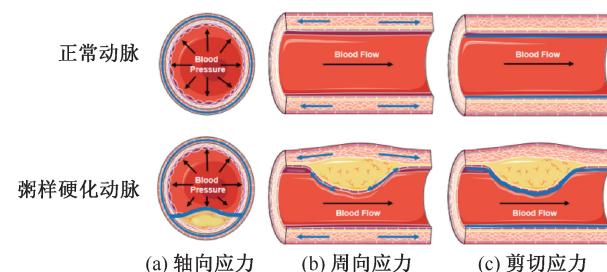


图1 正常和粥样硬化动脉中主要生物机械应力示意图

Fig. 1 Schematic diagram for biomechanical stress in normal and atherosclerotic arteries (a) Axial stress, (b) Circumferential stress, (c) Shear stress

注:蓝色线条与箭头表示应力分布与方向

斑块形成时,管腔的应力分布随血流动力学的改变发生变化。PSS是粥样硬化斑块内的应力,主要取决于动脉血压对斑块成分和结构差异的影响^[4]。当PSS超过斑块强度时,斑块便会破裂。APS则是抵抗血管长度变化的内应力,这种变化是由于作用于狭窄病变上的血流动力学的轴向分量引起的。整个病变的外部血流动力学不平衡,影响斑块内部的轴向应力,上游和下游之间的APS差异是斑块内部轴向应力发展的标志。这种由于血流障碍在病变处产生压力梯度(pressure gradient, PG),可能导致斑块破裂^[11]。

WSS诱导内皮细胞机械传导并控制近壁物质运输过程,从而影响冠脉粥样硬化^[12-13]。持续低WSS环境促进局部脂质积累、炎症、氧化应激、基质分解^[14-15]。这通常发生在弯曲动脉的内弯、分叉口、分叉侧壁、手术吻合处以及腔内阻塞的上游或下游^[16-18]。斑块形成时,其区域组成成分的不同导致斑块下游区域的WSS显著降低^[19]。斑块进展及血管负性重构主要发生在低WSS区域^[20]。而晚期斑块的整体WSS升高,导致斑块易损性增加,从而导致MACE事件风险增加^[21]。FAME II试验的一项事后分析发现,病变近端较高的WSS可预测急性心肌梗死^[22]。近期一项Meta分析发现,冠脉中的高WSS与斑块易损性恶化和更严重的动脉壁重构有关^[23]。

2 CFD 及基于 CCTA 的 WSS 在冠状动脉粥样硬化中的作用

冠脉中所存在的生物机械应力可以通过使用 CFD 对其进行建模所得到^[24]。将人体内的动脉在影像学上进行三维动脉模型重建,通过指定条件对血管和血流的性质进行简化假设,应用 Navier-Stokes 方程以及有限元分析(finite element analysis, FEA)推算得到生物机械应力参数的具体数值。而流固耦合分析(fluid-structure interaction, FSI)可以弥补流体力学和机械动力学之间的计算鸿沟,从而

更精确地得出生物机械应力的数值^[25-26]。WSS 在血管中分布的数值高低受到血流性质及管腔形态结构的影响。已有研究利用冠脉造影、IVUS 或 OCT 等侵入性检查测得冠脉的 WSS 数值分布^[27-29]。早期研究证明了利用 CCTA 模型对冠脉 WSS 进行非侵入性评估的可行性^[30-32]。Hetterich 等^[33]研究发现,粥样硬化冠脉的平均 WSS 为 (1.66 ± 0.84) Pa。然而,WSS 的绝对分布在血管之间存在很大差异。目前,根据已有的利用 CCTA 模型所得出的各种冠脉血管的 WSS 数值参差不齐,所得到的 WSS 高低阈值也存在很大差异(见表 1)。

表 1 CCTA 计算的 WSS/ESS、阈值及相关因素的相关研究

Tab. 1 Researches on WSS/ESS, thresholds and related factors from CCTA

文献	N	血液假设	CFD 方法	WSS/ESS	WSS 阈值	冠状动脉
		Newtonian fluid	Navier-Stokes equations, FIDAP software	最小、最大流入量 WSS 0.01~1.63 Pa		LAD、LCX、RCA
[30]	5	non-Newtonian fluid	Navier-Stokes equations, FLUENT 6 software	有、无侧支 WSS (2.54 ± 2.37) 、 (4.37 ± 3.89) Pa	低 ≤ 0.4 Pa, 中等 $0.4 \sim 1.5$ Pa, 正常 $1.5 \sim 10$ Pa, 高 ≥ 10 Pa, 非常高 ≥ 15 Pa	RCA
[46]	17	non-Newtonian fluid	Fluent, Fluent Inc Products	代偿性、过度、不充分正性重构 WSS 4.5~7.5、2.8~4.4、7.0~10.0 Pa, 负性重构 WSS 8.4~12.0 Pa	—	LAD、LCX、RCA
[47]	22	Newtonian fluid	Navier-Stokes equations, Fluent 12.0.16 software	所有血管 ESS (1.66 ± 0.84) Pa, 近端血管段 ESS (1.70 ± 1.51) Pa, 远端血管段 ESS (1.62 ± 0.53) Pa	最低 (0.73 ± 0.30) Pa 中低 (1.44 ± 0.71) Pa 中高 (2.13 ± 1.03) Pa 最高 (3.80 ± 2.70) Pa	LAD、LCX、RCA
[33]	7	Newtonian fluid	Navier-Stokes equations, Fluent 12.0.16 software	非狭窄节段中, WSS (1.37 ± 0.7) Pa WSS 的 3 分位数为低 $(0.5 \sim 14.6$ Pa)、中 $(14.6 \sim 25.9$ Pa) 和高 $(25.9 \sim 89.1$ Pa)	低 (8.92 ± 3.61) Pa 中 (18.89 ± 3.10) Pa 高 (40.87 ± 13.27) Pa	LAD、LCX、RCA
[48]	80	Newtonian fluid	CFD Works	所有、高危、稳定斑 WSS (2.5 ± 2.4) 、 (2.5 ± 2.4) 、 (1.6 ± 1.2) Pa	—	LAD
[49]	100	Newtonian fluid	Navier-Stokes equations	非罪犯病变 WSS (14.55 ± 8.76) Pa, 罪犯病变 WSS (22.18 ± 11.32) Pa	—	LAD、LCX、RCA
[50]	43	Newtonian fluid	Simvascular, Navier-Stokes equations	血管节段时间平均 ESS 中位数 5.01 $[2.58 \sim 9.01]$ Pa	低 < 1 Pa 中 $1 \sim 2.5$ Pa 高 ≥ 2.5 Pa	LAD、LCX、RCA
[51]	72	Newtonian fluid	SMARTool software	最小管腔面积处 ESS (8.6 ± 20) Pa, 近、远端 ESS (3.4 ± 5.6) 、 (2.9 ± 5.2) Pa	—	LAD、LCX、RCA
[44]	53	—	Navier-Stokes equations, SimVascular svFSI solver	心肌桥、近端 LAD 节段心动周期 WSS (1.60 ± 0.71) 、 (0.61 ± 0.29) Pa	—	LAD、LCX、RCA
[53]	10	Newtonian fluid	—			LAD

注:N 为研究所纳入的患者例数;LAD、LCX、RCA 分别为前降支、回旋支、右冠状动脉。

这些差异主要取决于CFD模型构建的假定条件。目前多数研究假设血管是坚硬、静止且无滑动的^[34]。实际上血管具有自然弹性，并且由于心脏运动，冠脉并非刚性且静态。现已有研究在使用FEA和FSI方法探索动脉顺应性、血管弯曲和心脏收缩的影响^[35-38]。同时大多数研究都将血液视为牛顿流体，但实际上基于牛顿流体假设的模型可能低估了血液黏度并且高估了WSS的测量^[39]。目前认为，对于平均或总体WSS而言，可采用牛顿流体模型，但对于严重狭窄区域，非牛顿流体模型会提高WSS测量的准确性^[40-42]。目前也有研究在探索更贴近现实的模型以提高WSS测量的准确性^[53]。

基于CCTA计算的冠脉WSS主要与以下因素相关：①血流动力；②狭窄程度；③斑块存在与否；④分叉部位；⑤弯曲部位；⑥病变长度；⑦病变尺

表2 CCTA计算的WSS/ESS与斑块的相关性及其在MACE预测中的作用的相关研究

Tab. 2 Relevant studies on correlation of WSS/ESS from CCTA with plaque and its role in MACE prediction

文献	N	CT血管造影类型	与斑块的相关性和/或预测MACE
[30]	5	16排CT	血管狭窄及斑块附近WSS较高，并且与狭窄程度相关
[47]	22	128层CT	过度正性重构的区域具有更低ESS
[33]	7	双源CT	ESS低或高区域的斑块发生率明显更高。ESS低水平区域具有相对较多的纤维脂肪组织
[48]	80	64或更高排CT	狭窄程度加入WSS显著改善了高危斑块的预测
[49]	100	64或更高排CT	调整最小管腔直径后，高WSS组出现正性重构和低衰减斑块的可能性更大
[50]	43	320排CT	高危斑块比稳定斑块具有更高的WSS平均值和最大值。平均WSS和坏死脂质含量是高危斑块存在的独立决定因素
[51]	72	—	高WSS(≥ 15.47 Pa)患者发生ACS的风险明显更高
[44]	53	64或更高排CT	功能显著性病变的ESS较高。将ESS添加到狭窄严重程度中，可以改善对功能性显著病变的预测
[53]	10	—	斑块负荷最大的部位与WSS低的区域一致，并且通常位于冠脉分叉附近。在IVUS位置测量的WSS与斑块面积之间存在弱相关性

动脉粥样硬化斑块分布和WSS模式密切关联。在低WSS和高WSS地区的斑块患病率最高，而纤维脂肪组织主要存在于低WSS的区域^[33]。高危斑块比稳定斑块具有更高的WSS平均值和最大值^[50]。暴露于高WSS区域具有易损斑块的比例更高，同时在管腔狭窄的基础上利用WSS能更有效地鉴别易损斑块^[48]。进一步研究表明，除狭窄严重程度和易损斑块特征外，WSS还可以为检测缺血病变提供附加价值^[49]。然而对于WSS的最优截断值，仍然存在一定的争议。在有创影像评估中，有学者利用IVUS得到低和高WSS截断值分别为<1.0 Pa和>1.7 Pa^[55]。Stone等^[56]研究得出类似数值，发

寸。同一棵冠脉树中的WSS在具有和不具有分叉处差异十分明显，这种差异还受到血管变窄和弯曲的影响。通常WSS在分叉及弯曲的内部较低^[43]，而在功能显著性病变处较高^[44]。并且同一血管内的连续狭窄与单一狭窄具有不同的WSS分布，连续狭窄的下游狭窄处的WSS更低^[45]。

3 CCTA计算的生物机械应力对于斑块及MACE预测的作用

3.1 WSS

通过对于整个冠脉树的计算，CCTA可以一次性获得所有冠脉的WSS，从而大大减少了检查所需的时间。目前已有大量的研究表明，WSS在斑块形成、进展及破裂中起到十分重要的作用（见表2），CCTA的WSS参数可以作为斑块进展或MACE的风险预测工具^[54]。

现WSS<1.3 Pa与MACE密切相关。而在CCTA评估中，目前研究所得到的WSS却远大于上述范围。Han等^[49]研究发现，高WSS(40.87 Pa)与不良斑块特征相关。而Lee等^[51]研究则指出，WSS预测罪犯病变的最优截断值为 ≥ 15.47 Pa，其敏感度为64.9%，特异度为61.3%，这在Yang等^[57]研究中也得到了验证。Eslami等^[52]则研究发现，CCTA相比IVUS/OCT模型的确会高估WSS，但二者具有高度相关性。虽然目前尚未得出统一明确的WSS数值的规定，但WSS对于斑块进展及MACE预测的价值值得肯定。WSS作为新兴的生物学参数，可与其他CCTA的参数或其他影像学相结合，预测斑块进展、

心肌缺血以及MACE等。Kalykakis等^[44]研究发现,CCTA所计算得到的WSS与管腔狭窄程度相结合,可提高PET心肌灌注成像异常结果的预测能力。目前也有研究将IVUS或OCT与CCTA进行3D融合来分析冠脉内的WSS分布^[58],但是这种融合建模的准确性及必要性仍然需要进一步评估。

3.2 APS

除了WSS,APS在动脉粥样硬化斑块形成、进展及破裂中也起到十分重要的作用。Choi等^[59]研究发现,APS与病变严重程度的关系取决于病变位置。随着病变严重程度的增加,上游APS呈线性增加,而下游APS呈凹形。由于下游APS压力降低,严重狭窄下游破裂的风险可能较低。Lee等^[51]研究发现,与非罪犯病变相比,罪犯病变具有显著更高的APS。而Yang等^[57]研究发现,APS的应用显著提高了对高危斑块和 $\text{FFR}_{\text{CT}} \leq 0.80$ 的罪犯病变的预测能力。

3.3 其他

目前通过CCTA所得到的生物机械应力参数在斑块进展及MACE预测中的作用的研究仍然只涉及WSS、APS、PG等。然而通过有创影像学的研究,PSS也与斑块进展及易损性有关,PSS和WSS的相互作用可能控制斑块大小和组成的重要变化^[27]。实际上,单独应用WSS或APS在预测斑块破裂及远期事件时的效能都不高。Lee等^[51]研究发现,通过CCTA模型将 FFR_{CT} 、 $\Delta\text{FFR}_{\text{CT}}$ 、WSS和APS联合作为不良血流动力学特征,在不良斑块特征的基础上预测ACS罪犯病变的能力大大提升。Yang等^[57]研究发现,在区分引起ACS的罪犯病变和非罪犯病变时,WSS、PG、APS和 $\Delta\text{FFR}_{\text{CT}}$ 等局部血流动力学参数均显著提高了对高危斑块和 $\text{FFR}_{\text{CT}} \leq 0.80$ 的罪犯病变的预测能力。总之,通过将不同生物机械应力参数与斑块定性、定量及血流动力学参数相结合,将有助于构建更有效的预测模型。

4 局限性与未来展望

通过对冠脉内的血流动力学及生物机械应力的研究有助于对冠脉粥样硬化、斑块形成与进展以及ACS等急性不良心血管事件的理解。但仍然需要进行大量的前瞻性、大样本量、远期预后以及治疗效益的相关研究,并且需要评估具体的临床效

益、时间成本及临床实用性。目前,对于CCTA计算生物机械应力在心血管领域仍然具有一定的局限性:①对于冠脉的生物机械应力与动脉粥样硬化之间的基础关系仍然需进一步研究;②需确认有创影像的WSS金标准并且验证CCTA的WSS;③计算建模相对困难并且耗时较长,并且需要对于计算建模的增量效用与费用进行权衡;④需通过更精确的CFD方法,尽可能地模拟贴近现实情况下血管及血液性质。

生物机械应力除了在冠脉内的应用外,在例如颈动脉^[73]、冠脉移植血管^[74]等其他血管中也具有重要价值。因此,未来也可探索其他血管内的生物机械应力是否与不良心血管事件风险相关,并且可将其整合进一步构建新的预测模型。还需进行大量临床研究以确定将生物机械应力与医学影像相结合是否可以提高识别疾病快速进展或突发心脏事件风险较高的患者的能力,同时也需要确定生物机械应力的具体数值从而预测急性冠脉事件或慢性冠脉疾病的发展。通过逐渐优化的CCTA斑块评估和生物机械应力对患有CAD或具有CAD风险的人群进行广泛筛查和评估,从而对其进行药物或介入的个体化治疗选择,这对于所有患有CAD或具有潜在不良心血管事件风险的人群及整个社会都能带来巨大的获益。

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