

# 人参皂苷 Rg3 通过 RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3 通路改善糖尿病肾病小鼠肾小球内皮损伤机制的实验研究

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**摘要:** 目的 探究人参皂苷 Rg3 是否可通过 Ras 同源基因家族成员 A (RhoA)/RHO 关联卷曲螺旋蛋白激酶 (ROCK)/含 NLR 家族 Pyrin 域蛋白 3(NLRP3) 通路改善糖尿病肾病 (DN) 小鼠肾小球内皮损伤。方法 将 40 只小鼠随机分为 4 组: 对照组、DN 组、人参皂苷 (人参皂苷 Rg3) 组及 RhoA/ROCK 通路抑制 (FD) 组, 每组 10 只。血糖仪检测小鼠空腹血糖 (FPG); ELISA 检测尿蛋白、尿素氮 (BUN) 和血肌酐 (SCr) 水平; PAS 染色检测肾小球形态结构并评估肾小球损伤指数 (GDI); 免疫荧光染色检测肾小球血小板-内皮细胞黏附分子 (PECAM-1 或 CD31)、血管性血友病因子 (vWF)、RhoA、ROCK 及细胞焦亡相关蛋白 NLRP3 蛋白表达; Western blotting 检测肾小球中细胞间黏附分子-1 (ICAM-1)、血管细胞黏附分子-1 (VCAM-1) 与细胞焦亡相关的炎症因子白细胞介素-1 $\beta$  (IL-1 $\beta$ ) 及 IL-18 蛋白表达。结果 与对照组相比, DN 组小鼠 FPG, 尿蛋白、SCr 及 BUN 水平增加, 差异具有统计学意义 ( $t=17.59 \sim 43.81$ , 均  $P<0.05$ ); 肾小球结构明显损伤且 GDI 增加 ( $t=20.73$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), 肾小球中 CD31, RhoA, ROCK, NLRP3 表达增加, vWF 表达减少; 肾组织中 ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1 $\beta$  及 IL-18 表达增加, 差异具有统计学意义 ( $t=27.95 \sim 40.10$ , 均  $P<0.05$ )。与 DN 组相比, 人参皂苷组小鼠 FPG, 尿蛋白、BUN 及 SCr 水平减少, 差异具有统计学意义 ( $t=14.87 \sim 20.33$ , 均  $P<0.05$ ); 肾小球结构损伤改善且 GDI 减少 ( $t=19.80$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); 肾小球 CD31, RhoA, ROCK 及 NLRP3 表达减少, vWF 表达增加, FD 组小鼠肾组织 ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1 $\beta$  及 IL-18 表达减少, 差异具有统计学意义 ( $t=12.62 \sim 39.68$ , 均  $P<0.05$ )。结论 人参皂苷 Rg3 可通过下调 RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3 通路, 改善 DN 小鼠肾小球内皮损伤及细胞焦亡水平。  
**关键词:** 糖尿病肾病; 肾小球; 内皮损伤; 人参皂苷 Rg3; Ras 同源基因家族成员 A/RHO 关联卷曲螺旋蛋白激酶/含 NLR 家族 Pyrin 域蛋白 3; 细胞焦亡

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## Experimental Study on the Mechanism of Ginsenoside Rg3 Improving Glomerular Endothelial Injury in Diabetic Nephropathy Mice Through RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3 Pathway

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**Abstract: Objective** To investigate whether ginsenoside Rg3 can ameliorate glomerular endothelial injury in diabetic nephropathy (DN) mice through Ras homologous gene family member A (RhoA)/Rho-associated coiled-coil forming protein kinase, (ROCK1)/NLR family pyrin domain protein 3 (NLRP3) pathway. **Methods** Forty mice were randomly divided into 4 groups: control group, DN group, ginsenoside (ginsenoside Rg3) group and RhoA/ROCK pathway inhibition (FD) group, with 10 mice in each group. Fasting blood glucose (FBG) was measured by glucose meter. The levels of urinary protein, urea nitrogen (BUN) and serum creatinine (SCr) were detected by ELISA. PAS staining was used to detect glomerular morphology and structure and to evaluate glomerular injury index (GDI). The expression of platelet-endothelial cell adhesion molecule (PECAM-1 or CD31), von Willebrand factor (vWF), RhoA, ROCK and NLRP3 protein related to pyrodeath were detected by immunofluorescence staining. Western blotting detected the expression of intercellular adhesion molecule-1 (ICAM-1), vascular cell adhesion molecule-1 (VCAM-1), the inflammatory factor interleukin-1 $\beta$  (IL-1 $\beta$ ) and IL-18 protein in the glomerulus.

**Results** Compared with the control group, the levels of FPG, urinary protein, BUN and SCr in DN group were increased, and

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the differences were statistically significant ( $t=17.59 \sim 43.81$ , all  $P<0.05$ ). The glomerular structure was significantly damaged and GDI was increased ( $t=20.73$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). The expressions of CD31, RhoA, ROCK and NLRP3 in glomeruli were increased, while the expression of vWF was decreased. The expressions of ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1 $\beta$  and IL-18 in renal tissues were increased, and the differences were statistically significant ( $t=27.95 \sim 40.10$ , all  $P<0.05$ ). Compared with the DN group, the levels of FPG, urinary protein, BUN and SCr in ginsenoside group were decreased, and the differences were statistically significant ( $t=14.87 \sim 20.33$ , all  $P<0.05$ ). The damage of glomerular structure was improved and GDI was decreased ( $t=19.80$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), the expression of CD31, RhoA, ROCK and NLRP3 in glomerular was decreased, and the expression of vWF was increased. The expressions of ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1 $\beta$  and IL-18 in renal tissues of FD group were decreased, and the differences were statistically significant ( $t=12.62 \sim 39.68$ , all  $P<0.05$ ). **Conclusion** Ginsenosides Rg3 can improve the level of glomerular endothelial injury and pyroptosis in DN mice by down-regulating RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3 pathway.

**Keywords:** diabetic nephropathy; glomerulus; endothelial injury; ginsenosides Rg3; RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3 pathway; pyroptosis

糖尿病肾病(DN)是导致终末期肾病(end stage renal disease, ESRD)的主要原因,在糖尿病患者中具有很高的发病率与死亡率<sup>[1]</sup>。肾小球内皮细胞损伤在DN的病理发展中起着重要作用<sup>[2]</sup>。高血糖可通过激活氧化应激增加肾小球内皮细胞膜通透性诱导内皮细胞凋亡,并促进细胞因子和炎症因子分泌从而加剧内皮损伤<sup>[3-4]</sup>。Ras同源基因家族成员A(Ras homologous gene family member A, RhoA)/RHO关联卷曲螺旋蛋白激酶(Rho-associated coiled-coil forming protein kinase, ROCK)通路参与DN导致的肾小球内皮功能障碍及炎症过程<sup>[5]</sup>。NLR家族NLRP3炎症体(NLR family pyrin domain protein3, NLRP3)可通过招募下游分子,释放大量IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-18等促炎因子诱发细胞焦亡及炎症<sup>[6]</sup>。RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路参与前列腺癌、败血症、糖尿病等疾病<sup>[7-8]</sup>。然而,该通路是否参与调控DN肾小球内皮细胞损伤过程,未见报道。人参皂苷Rg3是从中国传统草药人参根中提取的最有效成分之一,在抗炎方面具有突出作用<sup>[9]</sup>。研究显示,人参皂苷Rb1可通过RhoA/ROCK通路改善2型糖尿病<sup>[10]</sup>。人参皂苷Rg3可通过下调炎症改善DN引起的肾脏损伤<sup>[11]</sup>。然而,人参皂苷Rg3是否RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路改善DN小鼠肾小球内皮损伤,未见报道。本研究通过建立DN模型,探讨人参皂苷Rg3对DN小鼠肾小球内皮损伤的影响,并基于Rg3RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路探究可能分子机制,以期为临床治疗DN提供新线索。

## 1 材料与方法

**1.1 研究对象** 选择40只SPF级6~8周,180~200g C57BL/6J雄性小鼠,购自辽宁长生生物技术有限公司。动物饲养环境干燥舒适,温度(24 $\pm$ 5) $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,湿度60% $\pm$ 5%。小鼠自由进食进水。本研究经动物伦理委员会审批,实验过程符合国家和单位有关实验动物的管理和使用规定。

**1.2 试剂与仪器** 血管性血友病因子(ecombinant

von willebrand factor, vWF)抗体,血小板-内皮细胞黏附分子(platelet-endothelial cell adhesion molecule, PECAM-1或CD31)抗体,肾小球中细胞间黏附分子-1(intercellular cell adhesion molecule-1, ICAM-1)抗体,血管细胞黏附分子-1(vascular cell adhesion molecule 1, VCAM-1)抗体,白细胞介素-1 $\beta$ (interleukin-1 $\beta$ , IL-1 $\beta$ )抗体,IL-18抗体,甘油醛-3-磷酸脱氢酶(Glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase, GAPDH)抗体(美国Affinity生物技术公司);PAS染色试剂(赛默飞世尔科技公司);尿蛋白,BUN,SCr检测试剂盒(上海酶联生物科技有限公司);盐酸法舒地尔(Fasudil dihydrochloride)(美国MedChemexpress生物科技公司);人参皂苷Rg3(上海阿拉丁生化科技股份有限公司);全自动酶标仪(赛默飞世尔科技公司)。

## 1.3 方法

**1.3.1 实验分组及DN动物模型的建立:**取40只6~8周C57BL/6雄性小鼠随机分为对照组、DN组、人参皂苷组及RhoA/ROCK通路抑制(fasudil dihydrochloride, FD)组,每组10只。DN组、人参皂苷组及FD组小鼠高脂高糖喂养连续4周,尿蛋白超过30mg/24h即模型成功,人参皂苷组小鼠在高脂高糖时灌胃给予人参皂苷(40mg/kg)连续4周,FD组小鼠在高脂高糖喂养时灌胃给予FD(30mg/kg)连续4周,对照组喂养普通饲料且每天灌胃等体积生理盐水。

**1.3.2 小鼠处死及标本采集:**用无菌管收集小鼠尿液1000r/min离心20min,保存上清。小鼠末次药后1h,眼球取血,室温放置2h,1000r/min离心15min,取上清分装,-80 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 保存,用于ELISA试剂盒分析。取小鼠双侧肾脏,去除肾包膜、肾上腺等多余组织,在预冷的生理盐水中清洗残留血液。部分肾组织用4g/dl的中性甲醛溶液室温浸泡24h固定,用于制备石蜡切片,其余肾组织在液氮中速冻后,-80 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 保存,用于Western blot分析。

1.3.3 小鼠 FPG 水平检测：取各组小鼠尾静脉血，使用小鼠动态血糖检测仪检测各组小鼠 FPG 水平，具体操作按照仪器说明书进行。

1.3.4 PAS 染色检测肾小球形态结构：将肾组织石蜡切片依次放入二甲苯 I 20min，二甲苯 II 20min，无水乙醇 I 10min，无水乙醇 II 10min，95g/dl 酒精 5min，90g/dl 酒精 5min，80g/dl 酒精 5min，70g/dl 酒精 5min，蒸馏水洗后将切片浸入高碘酸溶液 10min，流水冲洗 5min，浸入 Schiff 试剂 10min，流水冲洗 5min，浸入苏木素染液 1min，流水冲洗后，依次放入上行梯度酒精及二甲苯中各 5min 脱水透明，滴加中性树胶封片，最后显微镜下观察分析肾小球损伤指数 (glomerular damage index, GDI)。

1.3.5 免疫荧光染色检测肾小球 CD31, vWF, RhoA, ROCK 及 NLRP3 蛋白水平：将制备完成的各组小鼠肾组织切片 64℃ 烘烤 10min，依次浸入二甲苯与下行梯度酒精中脱水脱蜡，高温高压抗原修复 5min，待组织切片自然冷却后用蒸馏水清洗，滴加过氧化物酶阻断剂孵育 10min，血清封闭 30min，滴加 vWF, CD31, RhoA, ROCK 及 NLRP3 一抗 37℃ 孵育 2h，清洗后滴加荧光二抗避光孵育 1h，滴加 DAPI 染细胞核 5min，滴加防荧光淬灭剂封片，避光镜下观察并分析。

1.3.6 ELISA 检测小鼠尿蛋白、尿素氮及血肌酐水平：按照尿蛋白、BUN, SCr 检测试剂盒说明书进行操作，将所得的数据参考说明书进行统计分析。

1.3.7 Western blotting 检测肾组织 ICAM-1, VCAM-

1, IL-1β 及 IL-18 蛋白水平：收集大鼠肾组织，提取肾组织中的总蛋白，将各组蛋白浓度使用 BCA 检测试剂盒，配置合适的体系，高温将蛋白变性处理，置于 -20℃ 备用。提前配置合适浓度的凝胶块，向凝胶孔道中加入相同体积的样品进行电泳，电泳条件为：120v 30min，80v 1h。预先配置转膜液进行预冷，将电泳结束的凝胶与 PVDF 膜按照一定顺序置于转膜夹中进行转膜，转膜条件为 80v 1h，转膜后浸入快速封闭液中封闭，PBST (磷酸盐缓冲溶液 +Tween 20) 清洗 10min/3 次，分别孵育 ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1β, IL-18 及 GAPDH 抗体，PBST 清洗 10min/3 次，室温孵育对应的二抗，PBST 清洗 10min/3 次，使用发光液进行曝光，最后使用 ImageJ 软件分析。

1.4 统计学分析 采用 SPSS 23.0 软件进行统计分析，GraphPad 9.0 软件进行绘图。计量数据以均数 ± 标准差 ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ ) 表示，多组间比较采用 One-way ANOVA 检验，进一步两两比较采用 LSD-*t* 检验。*P* < 0.05 为差异具有统计学意义。

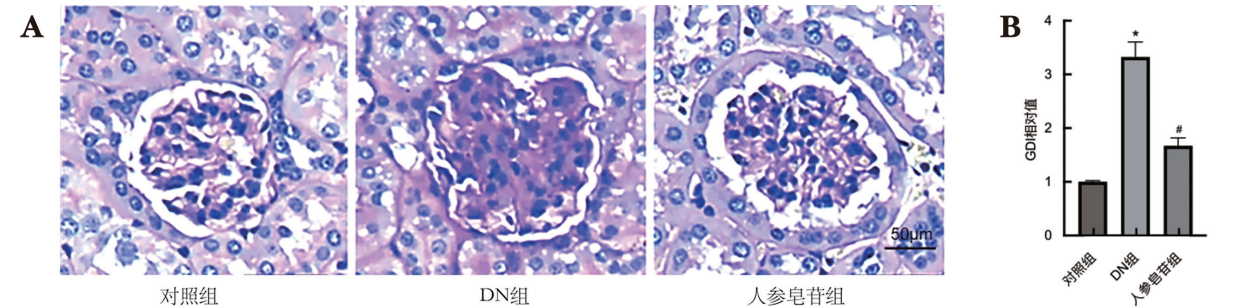
2 结果

2.1 人参皂苷对 DN 小鼠 FPG, 尿蛋白、BUN 及 SCr 水平的影响 见表 1。与对照组相比，DN 组小鼠 FPG, 尿蛋白、BUN 及 SCr 水平增加，差异具有统计学意义 (*t* = 23.9, 43.81, 22.19, 17.59, 均 *P* < 0.05)；与 DN 组相比，人参皂苷组小鼠 FPG, 尿蛋白、BUN 及 SCr 水平减少，差异具有统计学意义 (*t* = 20.06, 20.12, 20.33, 14.87, 均 *P* < 0.05)。

| 表 1          | 各组小鼠 FPG, BUN, 尿蛋白及 SCr 水平 ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ ) |               |              |          |          |
|--------------|--|---------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| 项 目          | 对照组  | DN 组          | 人参皂苷组        | <i>F</i> | <i>P</i> |
| FPG(mmol/L)  | 4.83 ± 0.35                                    | 19.77 ± 1.64  | 12.67 ± 1.09 | 125.6    | <0.001   |
| 尿蛋白 (μg/24h) | 12.63 ± 0.25                                   | 167.00 ± 6.60 | 84.61 ± 7.28 | 649.2    | <0.001   |
| SCr(μmol/L)  | 6.88 ± 0.38                                    | 21.08 ± 1.65  | 14.40 ± 0.89 | 135.4    | <0.001   |
| BUN(mmol/L)  | 6.28 ± 1.07                                    | 22.79 ± 2.25  | 14.23 ± 1.66 | 68.71    | <0.001   |

2.2 人参皂苷对 DN 小鼠肾小球结构及 GDI 的影响 见图 1。与对照组相比，DN 组小鼠肾小球结构明显损伤且 GDI 增加 (*t* = 20.73, *P* < 0.05)；与

DN 组相比，人参皂苷组小鼠肾小球结构损伤改善且 GDI 减少 (*t* = 19.80, *P* < 0.05)。



A.PAS 染色检测肾小球病理结构；B. 肾小球损伤指数相对值；\* 与对照组比较，*P* < 0.05；# 与 DN 组比较，*P* < 0.05。

图 1 各组小鼠肾小球损伤情况



2.3 人参皂苷对DN小鼠肾小球内皮损伤因子CD31, vWF表达水平的影响 见图2。与对照组相比, DN组小鼠肾小球中CD31表达增加, vWF

表达减少; 与DN组相比, 人参皂苷组小鼠肾小球CD31表达减少, vWF表达增加。

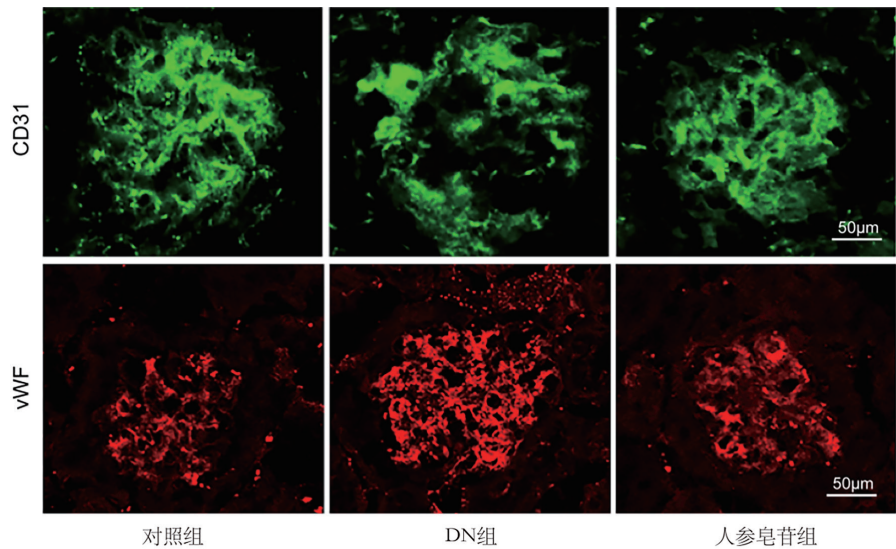
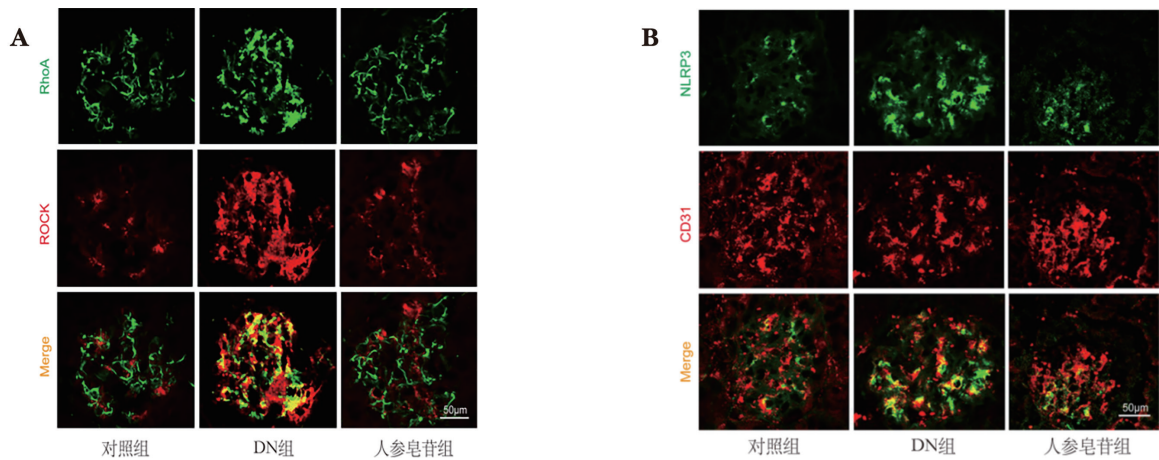


图2 各组小鼠肾小球CD31, vWF表达水平

2.4 人参皂苷对DN小鼠肾组织RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路蛋白表达的影响 见图3。RhoA与ROCK共定位染色显示, 与对照组相比, DN组小鼠肾小球中RhoA与ROCK表达增加; 与DN组相比, 人参皂苷组小鼠肾小球RhoA与ROCK表达

减少。NLRP3与CD31共定位染色显示, 与对照组相比, DN组小鼠肾小球中NLRP3表达增加, PECAM-1表达减少; 与DN组相比, 人参皂苷组小鼠肾小球NLRP3表达减少, CD31表达增加。



A. 免疫荧光染色检测肾小球中RhoA, ROCK表达水平; B. 免疫荧光染色检测肾小球中NLRP3, CD31表达水平。

图3 各组小鼠肾小球RhoA, ROCK, NLRP3及CD31表达水平

2.5 抑制RhoA/ROCK通路对DN小鼠肾组织ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1β及IL-18表达水平的影响 见表2。与对照组相比, DN组小鼠肾组织ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1β及IL-18表达增加, 差异具有统计

学意义( $t=27.95, 37.99, 28.39, 40.10$ , 均 $P<0.05$ ); 与DN组相比, FD组小鼠肾组织ICAM-1, VCAM-1, IL-1β及IL-18表达减少, 差异具有统计学意义( $t=12.62, 20.55, 18.92, 39.68$ , 均 $P<0.05$ )。

表2 各组小鼠ICAM1, VCAM1, IL-1β及IL-8表达水平( $\bar{x}\pm s$ )

| 项目     | 对照组       | DN组       | FD组       | <i>F</i> | <i>P</i> |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| ICAM-1 | 1.00±0.00 | 3.94±0.24 | 2.15±0.30 | 134.9    | <0.001   |
| VCAM-1 | 1.00±0.00 | 3.61±0.16 | 1.74±0.15 | 335.3    | <0.001   |
| IL-1β  | 1.00±0.00 | 4.51±0.28 | 2.35±0.22 | 231.5    | <0.001   |
| IL-18  | 1.00±0.00 | 5.60±0.24 | 2.52±0.11 | 699.2    | <0.001   |

### 3 讨论

DN是糖尿病最常见的并发症之一,由于其复杂的病理机制,到目前为止,还没有开发出有效的治疗药物。近年来研究发现,炎症反应、凋亡、细胞焦亡、自噬、氧化应激及内质网应激等参与DN过程<sup>[12]</sup>。肾小球内皮细胞的损伤在DN的发生和发展中至关重要。研究显示,GPR56通过增强肾小球内皮损伤和功能障碍可促进DN进展<sup>[13]</sup>。我们研究结果显示,DN小鼠的肾功能指标尿蛋白、BUN及SCr明显增加,肾小球结构损伤,肾小球内皮损伤因子CD31与vWF表达异常,这与既往研究保持一致,提示模型建立成功<sup>[14]</sup>。RhoA/ROCK信号通路在DN的发展中起着重要作用<sup>[15]</sup>。SHU等<sup>[5]</sup>研究显示,抑制RAGE/RhoA/ROCK通路可改善内皮功能障碍和炎症,从而延缓DN的进展。RAO等<sup>[16]</sup>研究显示,RhoA/ROCK参与DN小鼠肾小球内皮细胞中黏附分子表达和炎症细胞浸润过程。NLRP3炎症体介导的细胞焦亡参与DN过程<sup>[17-18]</sup>。与细胞焦亡相关的炎症因子参与DN过程<sup>[19]</sup>。CHEN等<sup>[20]</sup>研究表明,下调AMPK/NLRP3通路可预防糖尿病肾小球内皮损伤。目前,关于RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路是否参与DN肾小球内皮损伤过程,未见报道。ICAM-1,VCAM-1是与内皮功能损伤相关的黏附因子<sup>[21]</sup>。我们研究显示,DN小鼠肾组织中RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路被激活,肾组织中黏附因子及炎症因子含量增加。这提示我们RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路介导的细胞焦亡参与DN小鼠肾损伤过程,然而具体作用机制需要继续探究。

越来越多的研究显示,中医学作为DN治疗的初级或替代疗法对临床具有益处,识别中药的生物活性化合物并探究保护作用的分子机制至关重要<sup>[22]</sup>。人参皂苷Rg3提取自人参根中,具有抗炎作用<sup>[9]</sup>。ZHOU等<sup>[11]</sup>研究表明,人参皂苷Rg3可通过下调炎症改善DN引起的肾脏损伤。SUI等<sup>[23]</sup>研究表明,人参皂苷Rg3可下调DN中的炎症和纤维化的生物标志物。然而,关于人参皂苷Rg3是否可通过调控RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路参与DN肾小球内皮细胞损伤过程,尚未阐明。我们研究显示,人参皂苷Rg3可改善DN小鼠肾功能指标与内皮损伤因子CD31与vWF,缓解肾小球结构损伤,并下调RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3通路介导的细胞焦亡,降低肾组织中黏附因子及炎症因子含量。

综上所述,人参皂苷Rg3可通过下调RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3介导的细胞焦亡通路,改善DN小鼠肾小球内皮损伤。将为人参皂苷Rg3在DN的预防与治疗提供新的理论依据及实验基础。然而,本研究只是探究了RhoA/ROCK/NLRP3的变化,而缺乏其他分子通路的验证,对于人参皂苷Rg3对DN的干预机制还需要更多更详细的研究进行验证。此外,

本研究仅仅针对人参皂苷Rg3这样一种单体化合物,缺少进一步的联合用药的研究,仍待进一步的探索。

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