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Role of autophagy in the progression of osteoarthritis: The autophagy inhibitor, 3-methyladenine, aggravates the severity of experimental osteoarthritis

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1. For this purpose, a cellular model of OA was generated by stimulating SW1353 cells with interleukin (IL)-1 β and a rabbit model of OA was also established by an intra-articular injection of collagenase, followed by treatment with the autophagy specifc inhibitor, 3-methyladenine (3-MA).

2. Cell viability was analyzed by MTS assay, and the mRNA expression levels of matrix metalloproteinases (MMP)-13 and tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinase (TIMP)-1 were determined by RT-qPCR. Cartilage degeneration was examined under a light microscope, and autophagosome and chondrocyte degeneration was observed by transmission electron microscopy.



1. The death of chondrocytes is a hallmark of cartilage degeneration in OA; however, the mechanisms responsible for chondrocyte death in OA-affected cartilage remain largely unknown. Autophagy plays a crucial role in maintaining cellular metabolism and homeostasis. However, excessive autophagy may lead to cell death. Autophagy is regulated by a series of autophagy-related genes (ATGs), such as Beclin-1 and light chain 3 (LC3). The expression levels of these genes are commonly used to monitor autophagic activity and flux.

2 A variety of cytokines, growth factors and enzymes, such as interleukin (IL)-1β and collagenase are involved in articular cartilage degeneration.
 Collagenase is upregulated in OA-affected cartilage and animal models of OA have been successfully established by an intra-articular injection of collagenase.

1、Cell viability.



Figure 1. Comparison of the cell viability in interleukin (IL)-1β-stimulated SW1353 cells between the control and 3-methyladenine (3-MA)-treated cells. *P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001. N.S., not signifcant.



Figure 2. (A) Comparison of the mRNA expression level of matrix metalloproteinase (MMP)-13 in interleukin (IL)-1β-stimulated SW1353 cells between the control and 3-methyladenine (3-MA)-treated cells.
(B) Comparison of the mRNA expression level of tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinase (TIMP)-1. *P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001. N.S., not significant.

3、Expression of Beclin-1 and LC3B in IL-1 β -stimulated SW1353 cells.



4. Histological evaluation.



5、Transmission electron microscopy.



6. Expression of Beclin-1 and LC3B in cartilage from rabbit with OA.





 $1 \ IL-1\beta$ stimulates the expression of collagenase in chondrocytes and is often applied to produce cellular OA models for *in vitro* studies, and a number of of studies have shown that SW1353 cells can take the place of human chondrocytes for research .

2、Recent studies have demonstrated that autophagy is involved in certain bone and cartilage diseases, such as cervical disc degeneration, cartilage degeneration of the temporomandibular joint, degradation of Meckel's cartilage and OA. However, the results regarding changes in autophagy and the specifc role of autophagy in the progression of OA are sometimes contradictory.

3, Autophagy was frst enhanced and then weakened in IL-1 β -stimulated SW1353 cells and in rabbits with collagenase-induced OA degenerative cartilage. 3-MA aggravated the severity of experimental OA via the inhibition of autophagy, suggesting that the regulation of autophagy may be a potential therapeutic strategy for the treatment of OA.

