

## 基于化学遗传的慢性应激导致抑郁症小鼠模型的构建

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**摘要:**【目的】建立基于化学遗传的慢性应激导致抑郁症的小鼠模型,为优化慢性应激诱发抑郁症的动物建模方法提供参考。【方法】通过化学遗传的方法,对小鼠延髓腹外侧区头端(RVLM)进行持续的刺激,模拟机体对慢性应激的响应,系统观察造模和对照组小鼠的行为学、血压及主要炎症因子的变化情况。【结果】成功建立了小鼠模型。经腹腔向小鼠给药CNO 1 h后,造模组较对照组的舒张压与平均脉压显著上升。持续给药4周后,造模组较对照组的旷场实验的水平运动总距离、中央区进入总次数、中央区滞留时间和中央区运动总距离这四项指标均显著下降;蔗糖偏好实验提示造模组存在快感缺失;转棒实验提示造模组运动协调能力显著减弱;同时,造模组心率、血压、炎症因子IFN- $\gamma$ 和抑炎因子IL-10水平等也较对照组显著上调。【结论】我们的模型在诱发抑郁症经典症状,及血压偏高、炎症因子释放紊乱等抑郁症伴随症状上均表现出较高的成功率和稳定性。这为优化慢性应激诱发抑郁症的动物建模效率和稳定性提供了有参考价值的科学依据。

**关键词:**抑郁症;慢性应激;交感神经;化学遗传;延髓腹外侧区头端

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### Establishment of Chronic Stress Inducing Depressive Disorder Mouse Model Via Chemical Genetics

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**Abstract:**【Objective】To establish a chronic stress inducing depressive disorder mouse model via chemical genetics, that helps to optimize the animal modeling method of chronic stress-induced depressive disorder.【Methods】To continuously stimulate the rostral ventrolateral medulla (RVLM) of mouse by chemical genetic method to mimic the response to chronic stress. The changes about behavior, blood pressure and major inflammatory factors of the animal models were correspondingly observed.【Results】The mouse model was established successfully. One hour after intraperitoneal administration of CNO, diastolic blood pressure and mean blood pressure were significantly increased in the model group compared with the control. After four weeks of continuous administration, the total distance of movement, the total entering bouts, the distance and duration of the central area in the model group were significantly decreased compared with the control in the open field experiment. The results of sucrose preference and rotarod experiment suggested anhedonia and weakened motor coordination ability in the model group. The heart rate, blood pressure, expressions of IFN- $\gamma$  and IL-10 in the model group were higher than those in the control.【Conclusions】Our model developed classic symptoms of depressive disorder efficiently and stably, as well as accompanying symptoms such as high blood pressure and messy release of inflammatory factors. It provides a valuable scientific basis for improving the efficiency and stability of animal modeling of chronic stress-induced depressive disorder.

**Key words:** depressive disorder; chronic stress; sympathetic nerve; chemical genetics; RVLM

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抑郁症(depressive disorder)是一种常见的精神类疾病,核心症状是情感低落(depressed mood)、兴趣减退或快感缺失(anhedonia)。此外,还可伴有精力减退、易怒、注意力障碍、食欲下降、睡眠和认知障碍能力下降等症状,严重者常反复出现消极的自杀观念和行<sup>[1]</sup>。流行病学调查显示,抑制症还与II型糖尿病、冠脉系统疾病、骨质疏松、肠易激综合征、癌症、帕金森病、痴呆、癫痫等多种常见疾病的发病密切相关<sup>[2-9]</sup>,影响着世界约16%人口的健康<sup>[10]</sup>。抑郁症严重威胁人类健康,它的病因学和影响因素的探究因而成为当前研究的热点。一般认为应激,特别是慢性应激,是诱发抑郁症的重要环境危险因子之一。据报导,慢性应激可降低前额皮层神经元的神经递质受体的敏感性,诱发神经元的活性受损<sup>[11]</sup>;过度激活中脑腹侧被盖区的多巴胺能神经元<sup>[12]</sup>;抑制海马区神经元的神经递质分泌,改变神经元的突触结构,加速神经元的萎缩<sup>[11,13]</sup>。上述中枢核团的功能和器质性病损,正是抑郁症发病的重要病理学基础。建立抑郁症的动物模型是慢性应激导致抑郁症具体机制研究的关键一环。目前最常用的造模方式是使用慢性温和不可预见性的刺激(chronic unpredicted mild stress, CUMS),模拟慢性应激<sup>[14]</sup>。这种方法造模的成功率不高,造模的效果也不甚稳定<sup>[15-16]</sup>。因为延髓腹外侧区头端(rostral ventrolateral medulla, RVL)是中枢在应激中调节外周交感神经系统的核心部位<sup>[17]</sup>,所以我们使用化学遗传技术,对小鼠RVL进行持续的刺激,模拟机体对慢性应激的反应,系统观察小鼠的行为学、血压及主要炎症因子的变化情况,为优化慢性应激诱发抑郁症的动物建模方法提供参考。现将结果介绍如下。

## 1 材料与方 法

### 1.1 RVL脑区化学遗传小鼠的建立

SPF级雄性Dbh-cre纯合子C57/BL6小鼠,10~12周龄,体质量22~26 g,饲养在中山大学中山医学院实验动物中心。动物饲养环境温度为(23±2)℃,湿度为(50±5)%,自由摄取食物和饮水,自然昼夜节律,新到动物适应性饲养1周后进行实验。为降低个体差异对实验的影响,首先用旷场实验进行行为学评分,取得分接近的30只小鼠进行后续实验。所有动物实验遵循中山大学中山医学院动物实验

伦理委员会规定。

使用异氟烷麻醉后,将小鼠以俯卧位置于脑立体定位仪上,确定注射部位RVL的立体定向坐标,以电动磨钻穿透相应脑区表面颅骨形成直径约1.5 mm的孔洞,用微量注射泵及1 μL的Hamilton微注射器在小鼠的双侧RVL注射腺病毒载体AAV2/9-hSyn-DIO-hM3D(Gq)-mCherry(造模组)或AAV2/9-hSyn-DIO-mCherry(对照组)300 μL(Taitools,中国),匀速10 min注射完毕,注射后留针5 min。操作过程中,在小鼠身体下方放置加热垫,使小鼠体温维持在(37.0±0.5)℃。每天定时予造模小鼠经腹腔注射给药氯氮平N-氧化物(clozapine N-oxide, CNO)溶液,具体流程为每天给药1次(给药量为1mg/kg),共2周,以提高神经元的敏感性;再每天给药3次,共2周,以强化神经元的兴奋效果(图1A)。完成造模流程后,我们进行后续行为学实验。

### 1.2 小鼠的血压检测

使用BP-98A大小鼠无创血压仪(softron,日本),用尾压光电容积脉波测量法间接无创测量老鼠的血压和心率的记录。测量时,取连续测量5~8次的收缩压和心率值,求其平均值。

### 1.3 小鼠的旷场实验

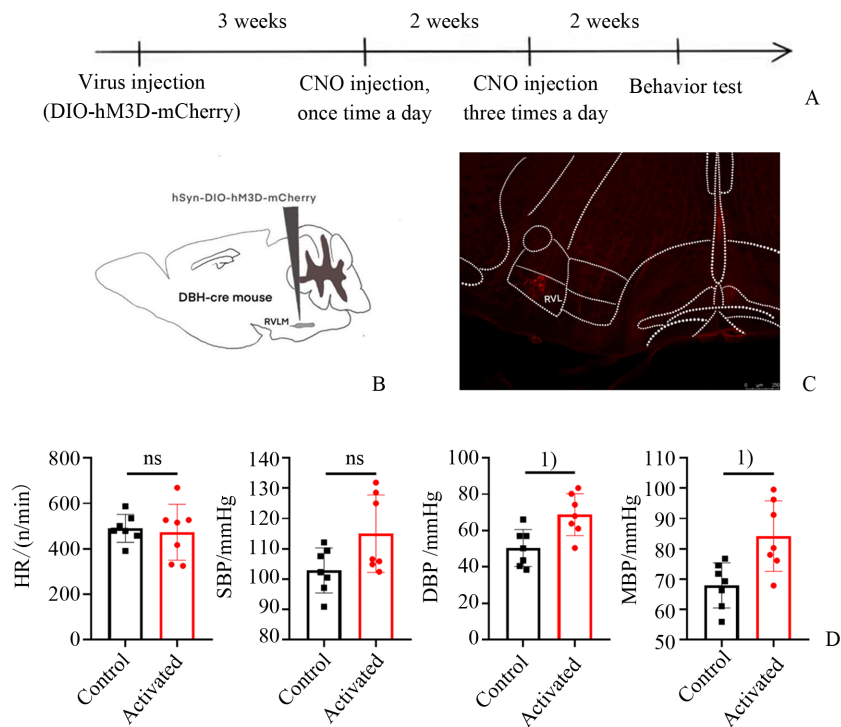
将小鼠放入由不透明材料制成的长宽高为50 cm×50 cm×50 cm,周壁、箱底为蓝色的敞箱内,旷场区域被等分为16格,其中中央4格定义为中央区,其余为外围区,实验时保证区域四角光线均匀。视频记录10 min内小鼠在旷场实验箱中的活动。每只动物只进行1次行为测定测定指标;水平运动总距离、中央区进入总次数、中央区滞留时间和中央区运动距离。

### 1.4 小鼠的蔗糖偏好实验

在隔噪音、安静的房间内给予每只小鼠事先定量好的水瓶,并于24 h后称重计算液体消耗量。第1个24 h,测定动物正常饮水量;第2个24 h测试含糖饮水;第3个24 h测试含糖饮水。排除位置偏好干扰,计算动物的蔗糖水偏好百分比(糖水偏爱=糖水消耗/总液体消耗×100%)。

### 1.5 小鼠的转棒实验

转棒实验主要测定小鼠的运动协调能力。先以较低转速(10 r/min,)对所有实验小鼠进行适应性训练以消除恐惧感,每天3次,每次5 min,间隔时间10 min以上,连续3 d。第4天正式实验,将小



A: The original flowchart of our experiment; B: The original diagram of RVLM; C: mCherry-RFP was observed in the mouse RVLM, which indicated the target genes of our expression vector have expressed stably in the Dbh-positive neurons of RVLM; D: The differences in heart rate (HR,  $t=0.3226$ ,  $P=0.7526$ ), systolic blood pressure (SBP,  $t=2.177$ ,  $P=0.0502$ ), diastolic blood pressure (DBP,  $t=3.157$ ,  $P=0.0083$ ) and mean blood pressure (MBP,  $t=3.112$ ,  $P=0.0090$ ) between the model ( $n=7$ ) and control group ( $n=7$ , two-tailed student's  $t$ -test). ns:  $P>0.05$ , 1)  $P<0.01$  compared with the controls, control  $n=7$ , activated  $n=7$ , mean $\pm$ SD

图1 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠的成功建立

Fig. 1 Chemical genetic mice of RVLM were established successfully

鼠放在转棒仪上,转速从12 r/min开始,在6 min内加速到25 r/min,利用转棒仪的分析软件自动记录每只小鼠从开始到从转动棒上掉落下来的时间,即为转棒潜伏期时间。连续进行3次试验(间隔10 min),取最长时间并记录。

### 1.6 小鼠的强迫游泳实验

测定指标为不动时间,即在水面漂浮、只有维持身体平衡必备的轻微活动或是身体垂直于水面只有鼻露出水面的时间记录为不动时间。首先向4 L烧杯内注入温度为(23 $\pm$ 2) $^{\circ}$ C,深约20 cm的水,使小鼠在水中尾部不能触碰杯底。每只小鼠单独测试。每次强迫游泳实验的总时间为6 min。测试时将小鼠轻放入水中,首先让其适应游泳2 min,从第2 min开始记录后续4 min内小鼠在水中停止挣扎、呈漂浮状态的时间总和。

### 1.7 小鼠外周血主要炎症因子的检测

眼眶后静脉丛取血,常温静置30 min,1 500  $\times$  g离心10 min后取25  $\mu$ L血清,用LEGEND-

Plex Mouse Inflammation Panel 试剂盒(BioLegend, 德国),按照制造商提供的说明书,通过流式细胞仪(BECKMAN COULTER, 美国)测量炎症因子浓度。所获数据使用LEGENDplex数据分析软件(BioLegend, 德国)进行分析。

### 1.8 统计方法

实验所得数据统计结果,以均数 $\pm$ 标准差( $\bar{x} \pm s$ )表示,两组比较采用 $t$ 检验进行统计学分析。统计分析使用SPSS 16.0软件进行处理, $P<0.05$ 则认为具有统计学差异。

## 2 结果

### 2.1 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠的成功建立

立体定位注射表达载体3周后取7只小鼠进行血压和脑片检测,判断RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠是否成功建立。检测结果如图1C所示,7只小鼠的两侧RVLM脑区均特异性表达红色荧光,提示M3D

(Gq)和mCherry红色荧光蛋白在RVLM去甲肾上腺能神经元中稳定表达。经腹腔向小鼠注射CNO (Clozapine N-oxide, 给药量为1 mg/kg)溶液后1 h, 检测小鼠的血压及心律。结果显示,对照组的心率(HR)、收缩压(SBP)、舒张压(DBP)和平均脉压(MBP)分别是(489.8±61.49)次/min、(102.8±7.45) mmHg、(50.44±10.17) mmHg 和 (67.91±7.45) mmHg,造模组则为(473.0±123.40)次/min、(115±12.81) mmHg、(68.78±11.53) mmHg 和 (84.2±11.67) mmHg。其中,造模组的舒张压( $P<0.01$ )和平均脉压差( $P<0.01$ )与对照组比均显著升高,组间差异有统计学意义(图1D)。结果提示造模小鼠的RVLM去甲肾上腺能神经元成功被CNO激活。

### 2.2 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠持续给药后的旷场实验变化

结果如图2-B、C所示,造模组的水平运动总距离( $P<0.001$ )、中央区进入总次数( $P<0.001$ )、中央区滞留时间( $P<0.001$ )和中央区域运动距离( $P<0.001$ )与对照组比均显著降低,组间差异有统计学意义。对照组的水平运动总距离、中央区进入总次数、中央区滞留时间和中央区域运动距离分别是(26199±4613) mm、(27.1±7.34) s、(71.5±25.9)次

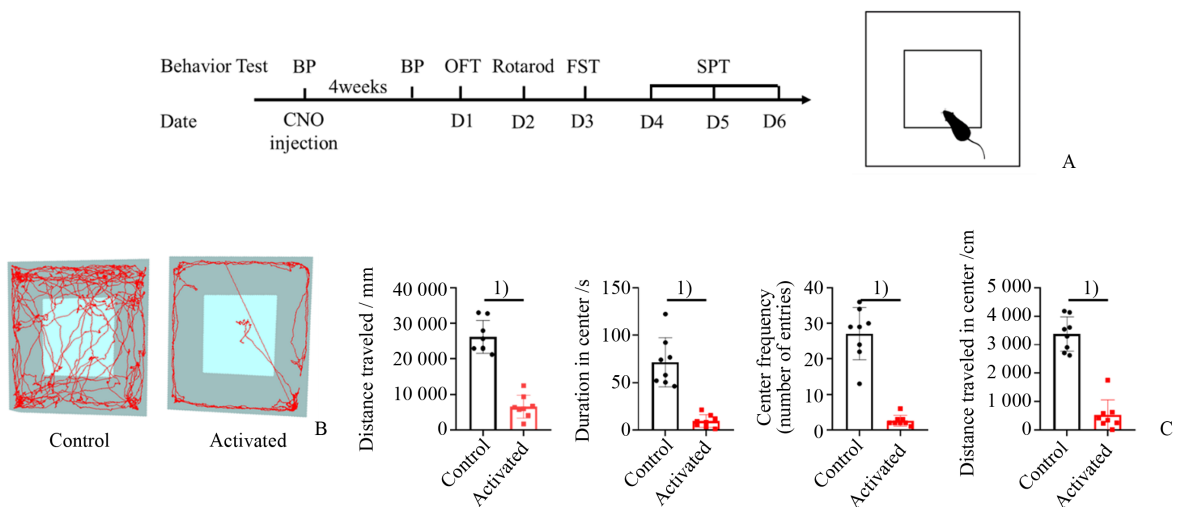
和(3376±601.8) mm,造模组则为(6561±3239) mm、(2.63±1.51) s、(9.52±6.645)次和(529±532.4) mm。结果提示,造模小鼠出现了探索和运动能力减退的抑郁症典型症状。

### 2.3 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠持续给药后的蔗糖偏好实验变化

结果如图3所示,造模组的蔗糖水偏好系数与对照组比均显著降低,组间差异有统计学意义( $P<0.001$ )。对照组的基线总液体消耗量、蔗糖水消耗量、纯水消耗量和蔗糖水偏好系数分别是(54.74±6.17) g、(54.39±1.06) g、(2.71±1.72) g和(0.95±0.035)%,造模组则为(56.16±7.07) g、(42.84±11.04) g、(7.24±1.80) g和(0.85±0.042)%。结果说明造模组小鼠出现了明显的快感缺失,这和旷场实验的结果是一致的。

### 2.4 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠持续给药后的转棒实验变化

转棒实验反映动物的运动协调能力。据报导,慢性应激诱发的抑郁症动物模型会在转棒实验中表现不佳<sup>[18]</sup>。因此,我们也进行了相关实验。结果如图4所示,对照组和造模组的转棒潜伏时间分别为(366.8±55.2) s、(70.7±49.9) s。造模组小鼠的转棒潜伏期时间明显低于对照组,组间差异有统计学

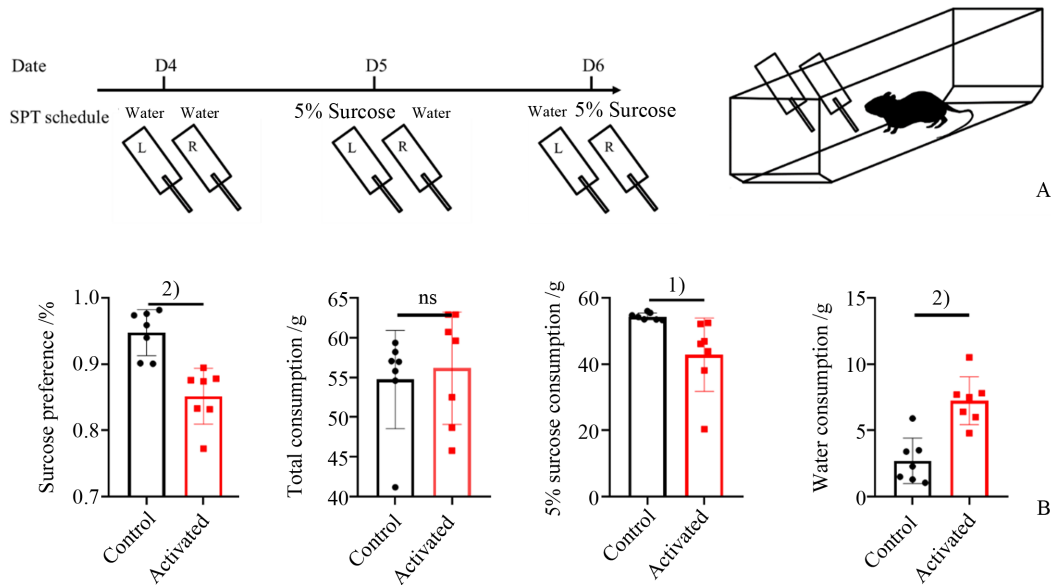


A: The original flowchart of our behavior experiments; B: The original typical trajectory of model and control mouse in our open field experiment; C: The differences in total distance ( $t=9.855, P=1.119 \times 10^{-7}$ ), time in central area ( $t=6.549, P=0.000\ 013$ ), entering times into central area ( $t=9.251, P=2.427\ 6 \times 10^{-7}$ ) and moving distance in central area ( $t=9.291, P=4.195\ 8 \times 10^{-7}$ ) between the model ( $n=8$ ) and control group ( $n=8$ , two-tailed student's  $t$ -test). 1)  $P<0.001$  compared with the controls, control  $n=8$ , activated  $n=8$ , mean±SD. BP: blood pressure; CNO: clozapine N-oxide; OFT: open field test; FST: force swimming test; SPT: sucrose preference test

图2 造模小鼠的旷场实验的行为学变化

Fig. 2 Behavioral changes of model mice in open field experiment

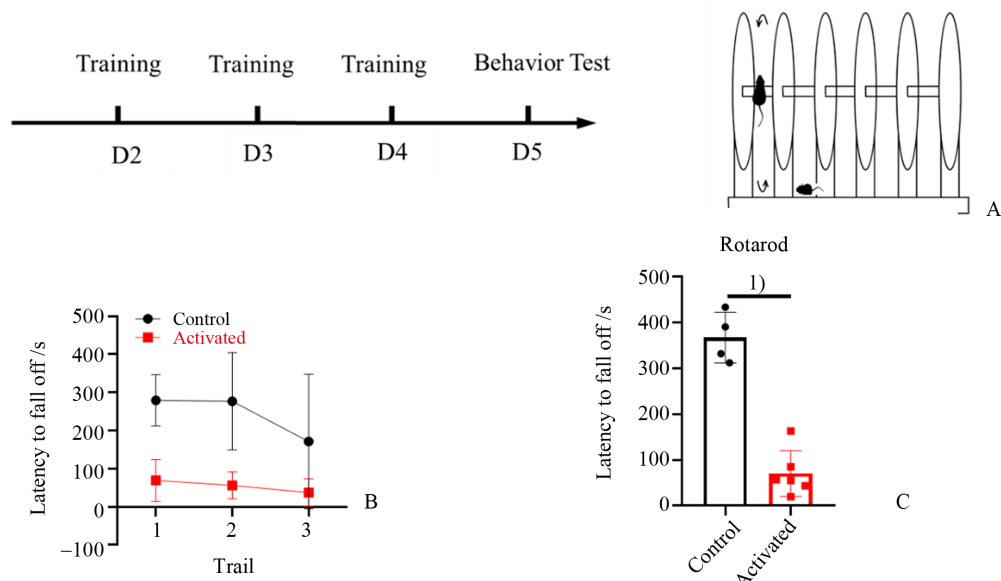
意义( $P < 0.001$ )。这提示造模小鼠除了出现抑郁  
症2大典型症状外,还出现了运动协调能力的  
减退。



A: The original flowchart of sucrose preference experiment; B: The differences in sucrose preference percentage ( $t=4.663, P=0.0005$ ), total liquid consumption ( $t=0.4, P=0.6962$ ), sucrose consumption ( $t=2.754, P=0.0175$ ) and pure water consumption ( $t=4.828, P=0.0004$ ) between the model ( $n=7$ ) and control group ( $n=7$ , two-tailed student's  $t$ -test). ns:  $P > 0.05$ , 1)  $P < 0.05$ , 2)  $P < 0.001$  compared with the controls, control  $n=7$ , activated  $n=7$ , mean±SD.

图3 造模小鼠的蔗糖偏好实验的行为学变化

Fig. 3 Behavioral changes of model mice in sucrose preference experiment



A: The original flowchart of rotarod experiment; B: The latency to fall off the rotarod of three trials per test was recorded; C: The differences in the longest latent period to fall off the rotarod ( $t=8.832, P=0.000021$ ) between the model ( $n=6$ ) and control group ( $n=4$ , two-tailed student's  $t$ -test). 1)  $P < 0.001$  compared with the controls, control  $n=4$ , activated  $n=6$ , mean±SD.

图4 造模小鼠的转棒实验的行为学变化

Fig. 4 Behavioral changes of model mice in rotarod experiment

2.5 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠持续给药后的强迫游泳实验变化

强迫游泳实验中小鼠静止状态持续的时间越长,提示小鼠的抑郁症程度越严重<sup>[19]</sup>。如图5所示,对照组和造模组的静止状态持续时间分别为(173.2±64.8) s、(185.2±35.6) s,造模组的静止时间较对照组的绝对差值在(12.0±26.4) s。结果显示造模组的静止时间较对照组稍有增多,但差异并不显著,组间差异没有统计学意义。

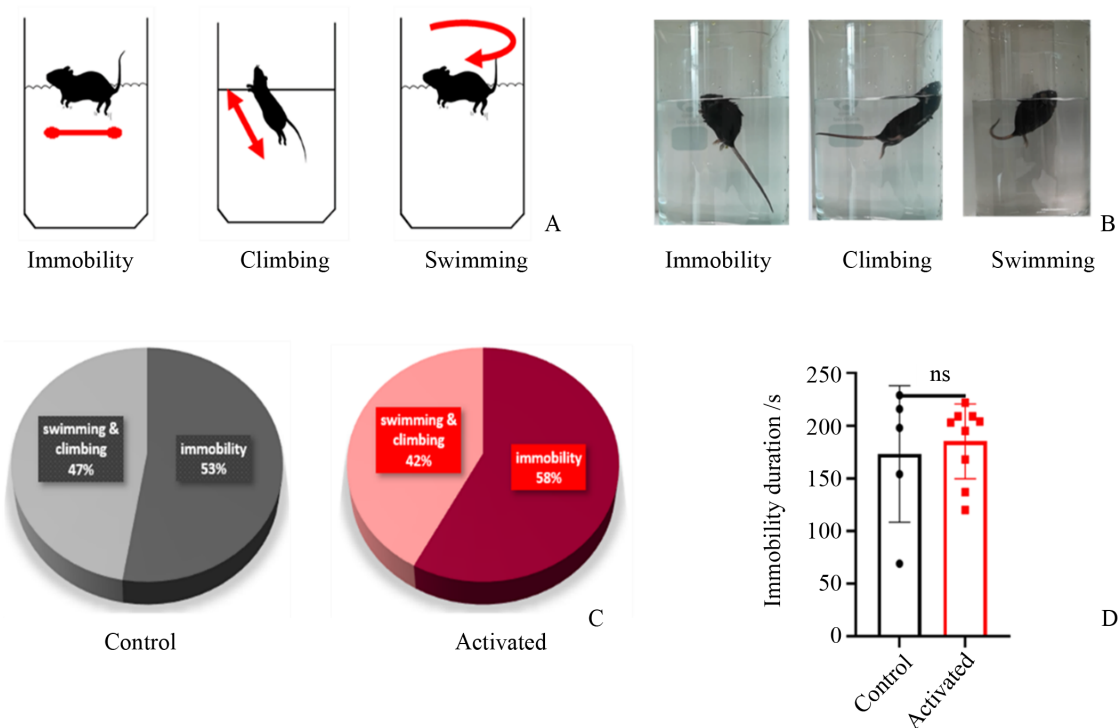
2.6 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠持续给药后的血压变化

慢性应激诱发的抑郁症会伴有血压偏高<sup>[20]</sup>。完成造模流程后,我们观察造模小鼠的心率和血压情况,结果如图6A所示,对照组的心率(HR)、收缩压(SBP)、舒张压(DBP)和平均脉压差(MBP)分别是(470.2±55.82)次/min、(104.4±8.168) mmHg、(54.15±1.485) mmHg和(72.03±1.73) mmHg,造模组则为(604.1±37.33)次/min、(114.2±8.241)

mmHg、(62.05±6.10) mmHg和(79.91±6.00) mmHg。其中,造模组的心率( $P<0.01$ )、收缩压( $P<0.05$ )、舒张压( $P<0.05$ )和平均脉压差( $P<0.05$ )与对照组比均显著升高,组间差异有统计学意义。

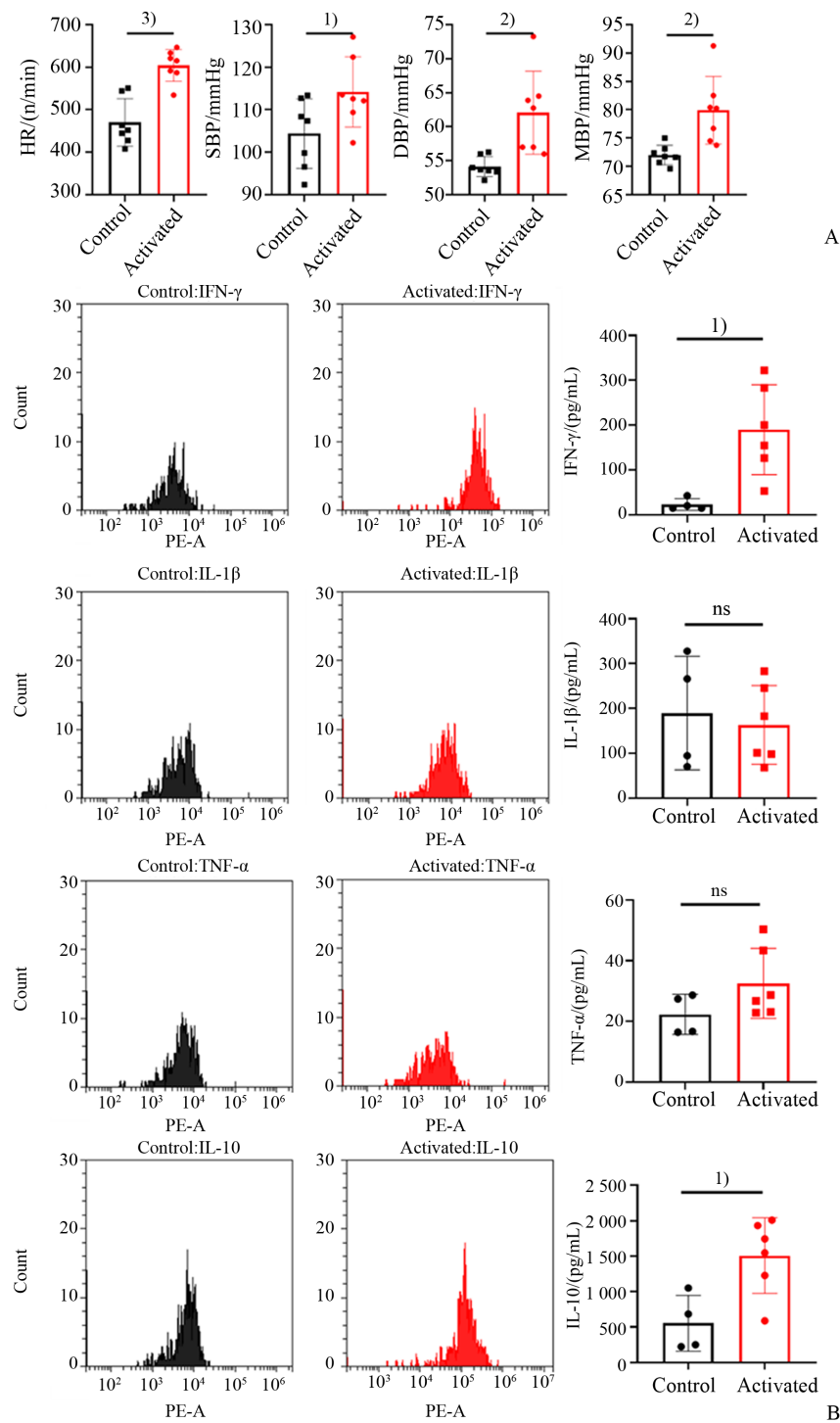
2.7 RVLM脑区化学遗传小鼠持续给药后的外周血主要炎症因子变化

慢性应激诱发的抑郁症还会伴有炎症因子的释放紊乱<sup>[19-21]</sup>。因此我们检测了机体外周血主要的炎症因子水平,这包括IFN- $\gamma$ 、TNF- $\alpha$ 、IL1- $\beta$ 和IL-10。结果显示,对照组的这4种炎症因子的浓度分别为(23.4±13.1) pg/mL、(22.3±6.6) pg/mL、(189.8±126.8) pg/mL、(552.3±393.6) pg/mL,造模组则分别为(190.0±100.2) pg/mL、(32.6±11.5) pg/mL、(163.3±87.8) pg/mL、(1508.2±531.6) pg/mL。造模组外周血的IFN- $\gamma$ ( $P<0.05$ )和IL-10( $P<0.05$ )浓度均比对照组显著升高,组间差异有统计学意义(图6B)。



A: General setup and behaviors of mice during the forced swim experiment (the original diagram); B: The original typical behaviors of mice during our experiment; C: The difference in percentage of immobility between the model and control group; D: The difference in immobility duration ( $t=0.4552$ ,  $P=0.6571$ ) between the model ( $n=9$ ) and control group ( $n=5$ , two-tailed student's  $t$ -test). ns:  $P>0.05$ , control  $n=5$ , activated  $n=9$ , mean±SD.

图5 造模小鼠的强迫游泳实验的行为学变化  
Fig. 5 Behavioral changes of model mice in forced swimming experiment



A: The differences in heart rate (HR,  $t=5.275$ ,  $P=0.000$  2), systolic blood pressure (SBP,  $t=2.232$ ,  $P=0.045$  5), diastolic blood pressure (DBP,  $t=3.332$ ,  $P=0.006$  0) and mean blood pressure (MBP,  $t=3.358$ ,  $P=0.005$  7) between the model ( $n=7$ ) and control group ( $n=7$ , two-tailed student's  $t$ -test); B: The differences in IFN- $\gamma$  ( $t=3.242$ ,  $P=0.011$  9), IL1- $\beta$  ( $t=0.394$  4,  $P=0.703$  6), TNF- $\alpha$  ( $t=1.585$ ,  $P=0.151$  6) and IL-10 ( $t=3.057$ ,  $P=0.015$  7) detected by flow cytometry between the model ( $n=6$ ) and control group ( $n=4$ , two-tailed student's  $t$ -test). ns:  $P>0.05$ , 1)  $P<0.05$ , 2)  $P<0.01$ , 3)  $P<0.001$  compared with the controls, control  $n=4$ , activated  $n=6$ , mean $\pm$ SD.

图6 小鼠模型血压和外周血炎症因子的变化

Fig. 6 The changes of blood pressure and inflammatory factors between the model and control group

### 3 讨论

慢性温和不可预见性的刺激(CUMS)法迄今已广泛使用近30年<sup>[14]</sup>。能较好的诱发动动物产生消极情绪、快感缺失等抑郁症的经典表现。有报导指出CUMS法造模的成功率并不高,只有约30%<sup>[15-16, 22]</sup>,因此,我们需要优化造模方法,以求提高抑郁症动物建模的效率和稳定性。

我们建立了基于化学遗传的慢性应激导致抑郁症的小鼠模型,行为学实验发现绝大部分造模小鼠均表现出探索和运动能力减退、快感缺失等抑郁症经典表现,且较对照组的差异非常明显。旷场实验综合反映了抑郁症对动物探索和运动能力的影响<sup>[23]</sup>,造模组小鼠较对照组在水平运动总距离、中央区进入总次数、中央区滞留时间和中央区域运动距离这四项指标均显著下降( $P<0.001$ ),转棒实验反映了抑郁症对动物运动协调能力的影响<sup>[21]</sup>,蔗糖偏好实验反映了抑郁症对动物快感缺失程度的影响<sup>[20, 24]</sup>。后2个实验的核心指标——转棒潜伏时间( $P<0.001$ )和蔗糖水偏好系数( $P<0.001$ )均呈现与旷场实验一致的结果。据调查,蔗糖偏好或旷场实验结果在CUMS法造模动物中较为稳定<sup>[14-16]</sup>,依然有至少25%的实验室报告说这2个实验的重复性不佳<sup>[14-16]</sup>。我们造模的成功率和稳定性在这2个实验均有较好的表现,较CUMS法可能有一定的优

势。在强迫游泳实验中,虽然造模组的绝对静止时间稍多于对照组,但差异并不显著。这可能是因为我们的造模时间还不够长所致。据报导,强迫游泳实验的结果在CUMS法造模动物中表现也极不稳定<sup>[14-16]</sup>。

慢性应激诱发的抑郁症往往伴有血压偏高,外周血IFN- $\gamma$ 、TNF- $\alpha$ 、IL1- $\beta$ 等炎症因子增加,IL-10等抑炎因子减少等症状<sup>[19-21]</sup>。提示CUMS法造模动物的炎症因子和血压调节因子,如一氧化氮(NO)、血清素(serotonin)等合成发生紊乱的研究多有报导<sup>[25-29]</sup>。因此,我们在完成造模流程后也观察了造模小鼠的血压及炎症因子的改变情况。结果显示,造模组的心率( $P<0.01$ )和血压( $P<0.05$ )均较对照组显著上调;炎症因子方面,造模组的IFN- $\gamma$ ( $P<0.01$ )和抑炎因子IL-10( $P<0.05$ )水平较对照组显著上调。上述结果提示,我们的方法与CUMS法一样,可以诱发血压偏高和炎症因子释放紊乱等抑郁症的常见伴随症状。

综上所述,我们建立了基于化学遗传的慢性应激导致抑郁症小鼠模型,该模型在诱发抑郁症经典症状,及血压偏高、炎症因子释放紊乱等抑郁症伴随症状上均表现出较高的成功率和稳定性。相关研究为优化慢性应激诱发抑郁症的动物模型建模方法,提高建模效率和稳定性提供了有参考价值的科学依据。

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