

孟德尔随机化分析膝骨关节炎疼痛 与肌力的因果关联

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摘要:目的 通过临床试验观察膝骨关节炎(knee osteoarthritis, KOA)患者的膝关节屈伸肌力下降情况,并运用全基因组关联性分析(genome-wide association studies, GWAS)膝骨关节炎与大腿肌肉体积之间的因果关系,分析膝骨关节炎患者大腿肌力下降的特征及潜在影响因素。方法 选取2023年1月至2024年12月上海中冶医院骨科确诊膝骨关节炎女性患者52例,50~80岁,分为双膝关节疼痛组($n=19$)和单膝关节疼痛组($n=33$),并招募健康成年人作为健康对照组($n=65$)。采用方差分析比较各组间膝关节屈伸肌的最大峰值力矩。采用逆方差加权法、MR-Egger法和加权中位数法进行双向双样本孟德尔随机化分析膝骨关节炎、疼痛与大腿前后侧肌肉体积之间的相关性。结果 双膝关节疼痛组的伸膝和屈膝峰值力矩与健康对照组相比差异有统计学意义($P<0.05$);单膝关节疼痛组的健侧和患侧峰值力矩与健康对照组相比差异有统计学意义($P<0.001$);单膝关节疼痛组的健侧与患侧之间差异无统计学意义($P>0.05$)。膝骨关节炎和疼痛与大腿前侧肌肉体积间无相关性(膝骨关节炎: $P=0.16$;疼痛: $P=0.08$),而与大腿后侧肌肉体积呈负相关性(膝骨关节炎: $P=0.01$;疼痛: $P<0.05$),大腿前侧肌肉体积和 thigh 后侧肌肉体积与膝骨关节炎和疼痛均无负相关性。结论 有疼痛症状的膝骨关节炎患者屈伸肌群最大峰值力矩显著下降,大腿后侧肌肉体积减少可能是屈肌群肌力下降的原因之一,而伸肌群的肌力下降与大腿前侧肌肉体积无关,表明有疼痛症状的膝骨关节炎患者屈伸肌力下降的影响因素不同。

关键词:膝骨关节炎;等速肌力;疼痛;肌肉体积;孟德尔随机化

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Mendelian randomization analysis of the causal association between pain and muscle strength in knee osteoarthritis

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Abstract: Objective To investigate the decline in knee flexor and extensor muscle strength in patients with knee osteoarthritis (KOA) through clinical trials and to explore the causal relationship between KOA and thigh muscle volume

using genome-wide association studies (GWAS), as well as to analyse the characteristics and potential factors influencing the decrease in thigh muscle strength in KOA patients. **Methods** Female patients aged 50 to 80 years diagnosed with KOA who visited the orthopaedic clinic of Shanghai Zhongye Hospital from January 2023 to December 2024 were selected and divided into a bilateral knee pain group ($n=19$) and a unilateral knee pain group ($n=33$). Healthy adults were recruited as a healthy control group ($n=65$). Analysis of variance was used to compare the maximum peak torque of the knee flexor and extensor muscles among 3 groups. Bidirectional two-sample Mendelian randomization analysis was performed using inverse variance weighting, MR-Egger, and weighted median methods to examine the association between knee osteoarthritis, pain, and muscle volume in the anterior and posterior thigh. **Results** The maximum torque for knee extension and flexion in the bilateral knee pain group was significantly different from that of the healthy control group ($P<0.05$); peak torque on the unaffected and affected sides in the unilateral knee pain group was significantly different from that of the healthy control group ($P<0.001$); the difference between the unaffected and affected sides in the unilateral knee pain group was not statistically significant ($P>0.05$). There was no correlation between knee osteoarthritis and pain and volume of the anterior thigh muscles (KOA: $P=0.16$; pain: $P=0.08$), while there was a negative correlation with the volume of the posterior thigh muscles (KOA: $P=0.01$; pain: $P<0.05$). There was no negative correlation between the volume of the anterior thigh muscles and the volume of the posterior thigh muscles with KOA and pain. **Conclusion** Patients with KOA and pain symptoms exhibit a significant decrease in the maximum torque of the flexor muscle group. A reduction in posterior thigh muscle volume may be one of the causes of decreased flexor muscle strength, while a decrease in extensor muscle strength is not related to anterior thigh muscle volume, indicating that factors influencing decreased flexor and extensor muscle strength differ in patients with KOA and pain symptoms.

Key words: Knee osteoarthritis; Isokinetic muscle strength; Pain; Muscle volume; Mendelian randomization

膝关节是骨关节炎最常见的部位,是导致慢性疼痛和残疾的主要原因。女性的骨关节炎患病率和发病率明显高于男性^[1]。膝骨关节炎是一种以膝关节疼痛、僵硬、活动受限和肌力下降为特征的慢性退行性疾病^[2]。研究表明,疼痛可降低膝骨关节炎患者的自我效能感,诱发悲观情绪,加速功能状态恶化并严重影响生活质量^[3-5]。膝骨关节炎病因较多,与年龄、肥胖和遗传因素均有关系,但目前膝骨关节炎的发病机制和病因尚不明确^[6]。

疼痛引发的关节源性肌肉抑制会导致关节周围肌群力量减弱^[7]。研究发现,伴有疼痛的膝骨关节炎患者常出现大腿肌力下降,可能是疾病进展的表现,也可能反向加剧疼痛^[8]。现有研究多集中于股四头肌和腓绳肌^[9],但相关结果存在一定争议。Conroy等^[10]指出,无明显疼痛的膝骨关节炎患者的股四头肌体积未见显著降低,但整体肌肉质量较差,且肌间脂肪沉积增加;而Sattler等^[11]发现膝关节疼痛患者膝伸肌力量明显下降,屈肌力量及腓绳肌、内收肌等后侧肌群的横截面积与无痛患者无显著差异。这些差异可能源于测量方法的差异以及混杂因素控制偏倚有关^[10-12]。

大腿作为驱动膝关节运动的核心区域,由大腿前侧肌群与后侧肌群协同组成^[13]。研究显示,这些

肌群的功能状态与膝骨关节炎的发生及其功能障碍密切相关^[14]。女性患者由于激素水平、肌肉结构和力量分布的特点,可能表现出更显著的肌力减退及肌肉体积变化^[1,15]。

本研究结合临床肌力评估与全基因组关联性分析(genome-wide association studies, GWAS)数据,探讨膝骨关节炎及膝关节疼痛对大腿前后侧肌肉体积的影响,旨在揭示膝骨关节炎患者肌力减退的特征及潜在机制,为临床治疗提供理论依据。

1 资料与方法

1.1 临床资料

1.1.1 研究对象

选取2023年1月至2024年12月上海中冶医院骨科确诊膝骨关节炎女性患者52例,50~80岁,平均67岁,分为双膝关节疼痛组($n=19$)和单膝关节疼痛组($n=33$),并匹配相似年龄的健康女性为健康对照组($n=65$)。纳入标准:①所有受试者根据美国风湿病学会的临床标准诊断为膝骨关节炎,至少满足症状性膝骨关节炎6项标准中的3项,即年龄 >50 岁、僵硬时间 <30 min、捻发音、骨压痛、骨肿大和无明显温热;②自我报告膝关节存在轻度疼痛,视觉模拟量表(visual analogue scale, VAS)评分

为1~3分;排除标准:①下肢关节置换;②显著的心血管、神经或精神疾病;③全身炎症和自身免疫性疾病等。所有研究对象均签署书面知情同意书。本研究治疗方案已通过上海中冶医院医学伦理委员会批准(批号:ZYLS202203)。

1.1.2 暴露数据

膝骨关节炎总样本403 124(无男性和女性的具体描述)(opengwas id: ebi-a-GCST007090);膝关节疼痛样本量461 857例(opengwas id: ukb-b-16254),参与者通过一份触摸屏问卷被询问“*In the last month have you experienced any of the following that interfered with your usual activities?*”(ID 6159),答案包括头、面、肩颈、背痛、胃和腹痛、髌、膝、全身痛、都不痛或者不想回答。参与者可以多选,但选择“全身痛”的不可以选择其他身体部位,最终筛选出膝关节疼痛的调查个体。数据均来源于 <https://gwas.mrcieu.ac.uk/datasets/>。

大腿前侧肌肉体积样本量32 978例(opengwas id: GCST90267349)、大腿后侧肌肉体积样本量33 022例(opengwas id: GCST90267353)(<https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/>)^[16]。大腿肌肉体积通过1.5 T Siemens MAGNETOM Aera 扫描仪,应用身体双回波 Dixon Vibe 协议进行扫描后测得,计算不含脂肪的肌肉体积,前侧肌肉包括股四头肌、缝匠肌和阔筋膜张肌,后侧肌肉包括臀肌、髂肌、内收肌和腓绳肌。

1.2 方法

1.2.1 等速肌力测试

使用VAS评估膝部疼痛的强度,范围从0(无疼痛)到10(最严重的可想象疼痛)。使用等速肌力测试系统测量膝关节伸肌和屈肌等速峰值扭矩。肌肉力量以牛顿米为单位的同心峰值扭矩进行测量,获得的值标准化为质量并表示为 $N \cdot m/kg \times 100$ 。测试时要求受试者坐位,参与者坐在测力椅上,并用腰部和胸带保持 90° 坐姿,进行等速测量。行5次最大热身收缩后,测试伸膝肌与屈膝肌在 $50^\circ/s$ 角速度的峰值扭矩。每组5次,共3组,每组之间休息30 s。膝关节活动度一般设置为 $0 \sim 90^\circ$ 。

1.2.2 工具变量的选择

遗传工具变量必须满足3个核心假设:①遗传变异与暴露因素之间存在较强的关联性假设($P < 1 \times$

10^{-6});②遗传变异与影响暴露和结局的混杂因素独立($LD r^2 < 0.001$);③遗传变异只能通过暴露对结局发生作用,而不能通过其他途径。计算每个单核苷酸多态性(single nucleotide polymorphism, SNP)的 F 统计量,以及由每个工具变量(instrumental variable, IV)解释的暴露方差的 r^2 , F 统计量 < 10 的 IV 被认为是弱工具变量,将从孟德尔随机化分析中去除。

1.3 统计学处理

采用SPSS 26.0 统计学软件。所有数据正态性通过 D'Agostino & Pearson 检验进行评估,符合正态分布以 $\bar{x} \pm s$ 表示。膝关节肌力采用等速测试测得的峰力矩作为主要评估指标。组间差异分析,若满足方差齐性,采用单因素方差分析,并在事后比较中应用 Bonferroni 校正;若不满足方差齐性,采用 Welch's 方差分析,结合 Games-Howell 方法进行事后两两比较。

孟德尔随机化分析采用逆方差加权法评估膝骨关节炎、疼痛和大腿肌肉体积之间的双向因果关系,并使用 MR-Egger 进行多效性检验来稳定结果。采用 Cochran's Q 检验结果是否存在异质性,使用随机效应模型减少结果偏倚。MR-Egger 和加权中位数方法作为对逆方差加权法方法的补充。采用 R4.4.3 软件 TwoSampleMR 软件包进行分析。检验水准 $\alpha = 0.05$ 。

2 结果

2.1 KOA 患者膝关节屈伸肌群最大峰力矩

双膝关节疼痛组、单膝关节疼痛组和健康对照组的基线数据见表1。双膝关节疼痛组、单膝关节疼痛组和健康对照组的膝关节伸膝峰力矩差异有统计学意义($F = 45.32, P < 0.05$),屈膝峰力矩差异有统计学意义($F = 26.58, P < 0.05$)。

双膝关节疼痛组、单膝关节疼痛组患侧和健侧分别与健康对照组伸膝峰力矩差异有统计学意义($P < 0.05$),单膝关节疼痛组健侧与患侧间差异无统计学意义($P = 0.15$)。双膝关节疼痛组、单膝关节疼痛组患侧和健侧分别与健康对照组差异有统计学意义($P < 0.05$),单侧关节疼痛组健侧与患侧间屈膝峰力矩差异无统计学意义($P = 0.50$)。

表1 受试者基线特征与膝关节屈伸肌峰力矩比较
Table 1 Participant baseline characteristics and comparison of knee flexor and extensor peak torque

项目	双膝关节 疼痛组($n=19$)	单膝关节疼痛组($n=33$)		健康对照组 ($n=65$)	F	P
		健侧($n=33$)	患侧($n=33$)			
年龄	70.05±5.92	68.08±6.08	66.01±7.58	3.06	0.05	
身高/cm	157.74±4.98	156.81±5.70	157.52±4.64	0.32	0.72	
体质量/kg	61.12±6.83	61.94±8.89	57.84±7.49	4.11	0.02	
体质量指数	24.58±2.62	25.11±2.63	23.33±3.05	5.37	0.01	
伸膝峰值力矩/(N·m/kg×100)	26.55±7.83	27.24±9.75	32.32±10.58	45.32	<0.001	
屈膝峰值力矩/(N·m/kg×100)	18.73±5.57	20.37±6.83	22.87±8.68	26.58	<0.001	

2.2 孟德尔随机化分析结果

2.2.1 膝骨关节炎与大腿肌肉体积的因果关系

孟德尔随机化结果显示(图1),膝骨关节炎与大腿前侧肌肉体积无显著相关性($P=0.16$),膝骨关节炎与大腿后侧肌肉体积呈显著相关性($\beta=-0.12$, $P=0.01$)。共32个与膝骨关节炎相关的SNP纳入分析。

Cochran's Q 检验显示,膝骨关节炎与大腿前侧肌肉体积与大腿后侧肌肉体积有异质性($Q=70.42$,

$P<0.05$; $Q=78.60$, $P<0.05$)。水平多效性测试结果显示,膝骨关节炎的大腿前侧肌肉体积与大腿后侧肌肉体积无水平多效性(截断值= -0.01 , $P=0.64$; 截断值= -0.01 , $P=0.46$)。Leave-one-out 测试表明结果稳定可靠。

反向孟德尔随机化分析结果显示,大腿前侧肌肉体积($P=0.63$)和 大腿后侧肌肉体积($P=0.50$)与膝骨关节炎之间无显著相关性。

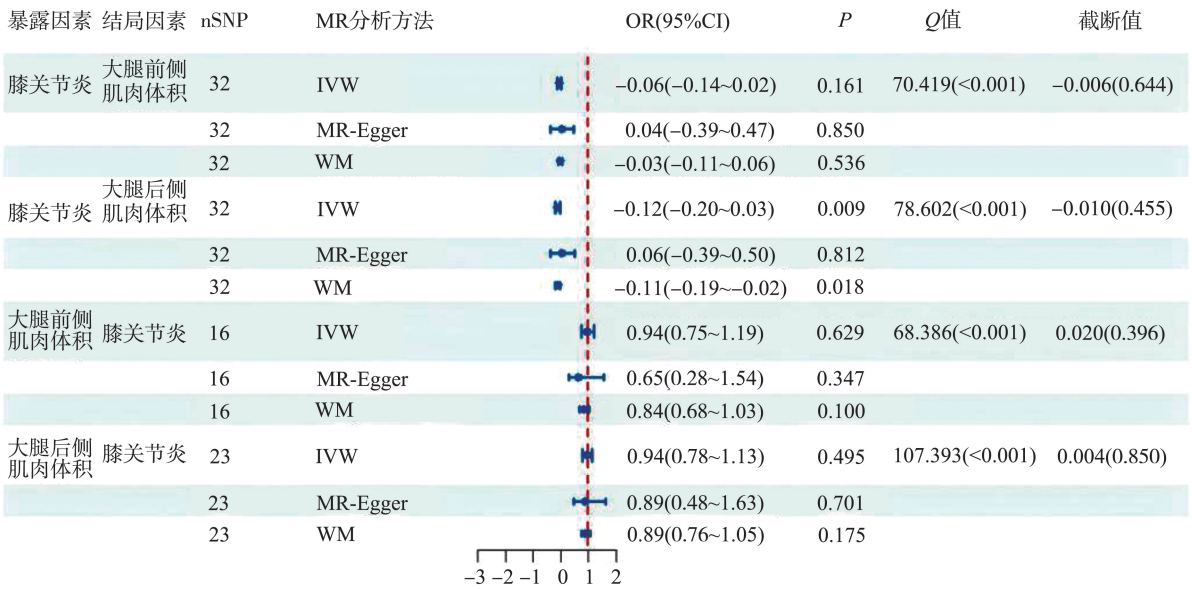


图1 膝骨关节炎与大腿肌肉体积之间的双向孟德尔随机化分析

Figure 1 Bidirectional Mendelian randomization results between knee osteoarthritis and thigh muscle volumes

2.2.2 膝关节疼痛与大腿肌肉体积的因果关系

孟德尔随机化分析结果显示(图2),膝关节疼痛与大腿后侧肌肉体积呈显著相关性($\beta=-1.08$, $P<0.05$),膝关节疼痛与大腿前侧肌肉体积无显著相关性($P=0.08$)。共42个与膝关节疼痛相关的SNP纳入分析。

Cochran's Q 检验显示,膝骨关节炎的疼痛与大腿前侧肌肉体积和 大腿后侧肌肉体积有异质性($Q=62.80$, $P<0.05$; $Q=58.38$, $P=0.04$)。水平多

效性测试结果显示,膝骨关节炎的疼痛与大腿前侧肌肉体积与 大腿后侧肌肉体积无水平多效性(截断值<0.01, $P=0.52$; 截断值=0.01, $P=0.10$)。Leave-one-out 分析结果稳定,无单个SNP主导效应。

反向MR分析结果显示,大腿前侧肌肉体积($P=0.71$)与 大腿后侧肌肉体积($P=0.58$)对膝关节疼痛均无显著相关性。

统计功效结果显示,KOA作暴露时的统计功效为97.7%,膝关节疼痛作为暴露变量时统计功效为

100%,孟德尔随机化分析具有稳健性。

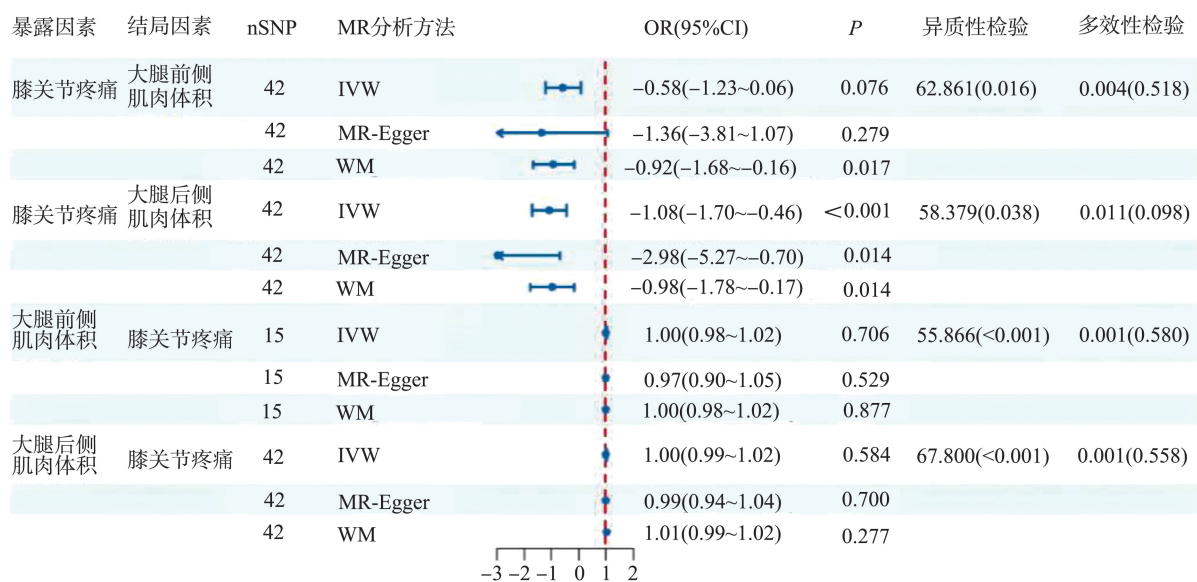


图2 膝关节疼痛与大腿前后侧肌肉体积之间的双向孟德尔随机化分析

Figure 2 Bidirectional Mendelian randomization analysis between knee pain and thigh muscle volumes

3 讨论

膝骨关节炎是一种以膝关节疼痛、功能受限和肌力减退为特征的慢性退行性疾病。研究表明,疼痛可显著降低患者的生活质量,并加速疾病进展^[17]。近年来,肌肉萎缩和力量减退被认为是膝骨关节炎的重要病理特征之一,但其具体机制尚不明确^[18]。本研究通过临床研究发现,伴疼痛的膝骨关节炎患者的伸膝和屈膝峰力矩显著低于健康人群,提示疼痛患者存在广泛的肌力减退。进一步的孟德尔随机化分析表明,膝骨关节炎和疼痛与大腿后侧肌肉体积存在负相关因果关系,而与前侧肌肉体积未见显著关联。这一结果显示膝骨关节炎患者的后侧肌群功能受限可能与其病理特征密切相关,但前侧肌群的变化机制可能受其他因素影响。

有研究发现,健康人群中股四头肌体积主要影响等长伸膝力量,而腘绳肌体积则与各速度屈膝力量密切相关^[19]。已有研究指出,膝骨关节炎患者的股四头肌激活受限^[20-22]。本研究结果发现,膝骨关节炎患者的腘绳肌体积受疾病和疼痛影响而减小,而股四头肌体积虽未显示因果性减少,但其伸膝力量仍显著下降。这一结果提示膝骨关节炎患者的肌力减退机制复杂,不仅受到疾病本身的影响,还与肌肉自身的特性有关。本研究临床观察结果显示,腘绳肌的神经激活能力相对保留,这一现象可能解释了腘绳肌在体积减少情况下,其肌力下降并未呈现

与股四头肌相同的衰弱速度。这种前后侧肌群受累模式的差异,强调了膝骨关节炎中肌力受损机制的多样性和结构-功能之间的非线性关系。因此,本研究在结构(体积)与功能(肌力)之间建立起因果与生理响应的联系,明确腘绳肌在膝骨关节炎进展中的特异性作用。

既往康复多聚焦于股四头肌强化^[23]。然而,本研究结果发现,腘绳肌体积减少和屈膝力量下降是膝骨关节炎膝关节功能恶化的关键环节。Lopes等^[24]指出,膝骨关节炎患者腘绳肌等长收缩力下降与其肌肉体积减少相关。本研究结果显示,大腿后侧肌群(尤其是腘绳肌)在膝骨关节炎中的重要性,并在孟德尔随机化层面提供了支持性因果证据。本研究揭示了膝骨关节炎患者中结构-功能关联性的复杂关系,为康复干预提供了新的靶点。未来临床强化训练应不仅关注股四头肌,还需系统评估并干预腘绳肌功能。

膝骨关节炎与肌肉质量及肌力之间的关联是近年来研究的重点。Zhang等^[25]指出,低握力、慢步速和附肢瘦体质量是膝骨关节炎的危险因素,但这些指标通常具有较强的群体表征性,未能充分解释局部功能损伤的具体机制。本研究采用与膝关节局部功能更直接相关的大腿肌群表型,进一步揭示了肌肉质量下降作为膝骨关节炎前驱因素的重要性,并强调了特定肌群的局部功能损伤与其病理过程之间的联系。Jin等^[26]研究显示,肌肉质量和肌力下降会促使膝骨关节炎的发生与发展。然而,本研究

发现,并非所有大腿肌群在膝骨关节炎中均表现出一致的病理变化。孟德尔随机化分析结果表明,股四头肌未呈现显著体积下降,而腘绳肌体积变化则具有明确的因果联系。这一发现提示,肌肉功能下降不仅与结构改变相关,还需要结合神经因素进行综合评估。Kumar 等^[27]研究发现,膝骨关节炎患者的股四头肌横截面积没有显著差异,但肌间脂肪沉积增加。本研究在因果分析中未发现其体积改变,与上述结论一致,表明股四头肌力量下降并不完全源于体积丢失,而可能更多归因于肌肉质量和激活能力的降低。此外,膝骨关节炎患者的神经肌肉功能改变也值得关注。研究显示,患者下肢肌群的表面肌电信号发生显著变化,包括肌肉激活幅度、共同激活、激活顺序、持续时间和激活比等多方面的异常^[28-29],这些变化反映了膝骨关节炎患者的神经肌肉功能失调。Serrão 等^[30]研究显示,膝骨关节炎患者纤维比例和直径的变化,指出膝关节伸肌扭矩下降与肌肉横截面积无关,而是与肌肉质量和激活不足有关。结合本研究的临床观察,这种力量变化背后的机制可能涉及复杂的结构-神经交互过程。

本研究尚存在一定局限。本研究通过临床观察与孟德尔随机化分析揭示了膝骨关节炎肌力障碍的机制。肌力受多种非结构性因素影响,包括 BMI、维生素 D 水平及心理状态等,未来研究应引入更多混杂因素的控制。此外,未对性别、年龄及体育活动等变量进行深入分层分析,需在更大样本及纵向设计中进一步验证结论。

综上所述,膝骨关节炎患者肌力障碍的形成机制具有结构与神经双重特征,腘绳肌体积减少具有明确因果性,股四头肌则主要表现为神经激活受限。两者受累机制的差异提示临床应平衡重视屈肌与伸肌群,在康复策略中结合结构强化与神经功能训练,从而更有针对性地改善膝关节功能,延缓膝骨关节炎进展。

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