

# 基于功能性近红外光谱技术观察缺血性脑卒中患者患侧上肢屈肘任务下的皮质激活特征

蒋金金,王璐怡\*,张玉婷,汪 杰

首都医科大学附属北京康复医院,北京 100144

\*通信作者:王璐怡,E-mail:17745723087@163.com

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**摘要** **目的** 基于功能性近红外光谱技术(fNIRS)观察缺血性脑卒中患者患侧上肢屈肘任务下的皮质激活特征。**方法** 选取2023年1月—2024年6月在首都医科大学附属北京康复医院住院的缺血性脑卒中患者80例,左侧偏瘫和右侧偏瘫各40例。根据Fugl-Meyer运动功能评定量表上肢部分(FMA-UE)评分将FMA-UE评分>43分患者分为轻度组,将FMA-UE评分≤43分的患者分为重度组,其中左侧偏瘫轻度组、重度组各20例;右侧偏瘫轻度组、重度组各20例;同时纳入20例健康受试者作为对照组。参照Brodmann大脑皮质分区将其划分为双侧背外侧前额叶皮层(DLPFC)、额极区(FPA)、初级运动皮层(M1)、辅助运动区(SMA)、前运动皮层(PMC)、躯体感觉皮层(SMC)和Broca共14个感兴趣区;采用fNIRS仪对患者患侧上肢屈肘任务下fNIRS数据进行采集,频率20 Hz,采用block设计,任务共180 s。采用氧合血红蛋白(HbO<sub>2</sub>)明确激活通道,并计算通道激活率。采用偏侧化指数(LI)评估在进行特定任务时,左右大脑半球激活优势程度。**结果** 与对照组比较,左侧偏瘫轻度组SMA&PMC所有通道激活率更高( $P<0.05$ ),左侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA&PMC所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ );与左侧偏瘫轻度组比较,左侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA&PMC所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ );与对照组比较,右侧偏瘫轻度组DLPFC右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ ),右侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA&PMC所有通道、DLPFC所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ );与右侧偏瘫轻度组比较,右侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA&PMC所有通道和左侧半球、DLPFC所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ )。与对照组比较,左侧偏瘫轻度组和左侧偏瘫重度组右侧大脑半球激活更强;与左侧偏瘫轻度组比较,左侧偏瘫重度组右侧大脑半球M1区、PMC激活更强;与左侧偏瘫重度组比较,左侧偏瘫轻度组右侧大脑半球DLPFC和SMA激活更强。与对照组比较,右侧偏瘫轻度组和右侧偏瘫重度组两侧半球DLPFC和SMA激活相对平衡;与右侧偏瘫轻度组比较,右侧偏瘫重度组左侧大脑半球M1区激活更强;与右侧偏瘫重度组比较,右侧偏瘫轻度组左侧大脑半球PMC激活更强。右侧偏瘫轻度组各脑区的LI有接近对照组的趋势。**结论** 缺血性脑卒中患者在患侧上肢屈肘任务下,重度患者的SMA&PMC、DLPFC激活率更高,轻度患者的LI更接近对照组,大脑皮质激活的差异与运动功能障碍严重程度、受损半球有关。

**关键词** 缺血性脑卒中;功能性近红外光谱技术;大脑激活;偏侧化指数;上肢屈肘任务

缺血性脑卒中是脑卒中最常见的类型,大脑组 各种功能障碍<sup>[1]</sup>。约80%的缺血性脑卒中患者出现  
缺血缺氧导致皮质和皮质下广泛损伤,从而出现 不同程度的肢体运动功能障碍,其中上肢占60%以

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上<sup>[2]</sup>。恢复缺血性脑卒中患者上肢运动功能是康复中面临的巨大挑战。可塑性理论是脑卒中患者发病后的主要机制,且最大程度的神经可塑性一般在卒中后的第一个月内发生,即脑卒中早期<sup>[3]</sup>。有研究表明脑卒中早期恢复过程中,患侧上肢运动的激活模式从干预前的双侧半球激活变为患侧半球激活<sup>[4-5]</sup>,但是脑卒中患者早期发病后肢体任务下皮质重组的模式尚不清楚,且激活程度与脑损伤程度、受损半球是否相关,均有待于进一步研究。目前临床上关注脑卒中患侧上肢肩、手运动任务较多,肘关节屈伸运动研究较少<sup>[6-7]</sup>。

功能性近红外光谱技术(functional near-infrared spectroscopy, fNIRS)是一种非侵入性的脑功能成像技术,通过测量静息或者任务态下脑组织中氧合血红蛋白(oxyhemoglobin, HbO<sub>2</sub>)和脱氧血红蛋白(deoxyhemoglobin, HbR)变化间接评估神经元活动。因其具有安全性、便携性、抗运动伪影性、抗干扰性高以及低成本等优点,临床广泛应用于评估脑损伤疾病<sup>[8]</sup>。本研究使用fNIRS观察早期不同程度上肢运动功能障碍缺血性脑卒中患者患侧上肢屈肘任务下脑皮质激活特征,与健康受试者进行对比,探讨相关功能重组机制,为脑卒中患者的治疗提供相关依据。

## 1 临床资料

### 1.1 病例选择标准

1.1.1 纳入标准 ①符合《中国各类主要脑血管病

诊断要点2019》<sup>[9]</sup>中缺血性脑卒中诊断标准;②年龄30~80岁;③右利手;④首次且单侧发病,病程2周~1个月;⑤上肢功能受限,Brunnstrom分期>II期,坐位平衡≥2级;⑥无严重认知问题。

1.1.2 排除标准 ①上肢有非缺血性脑卒中导致的功能障碍者;②病情及生命体征不稳定者;③不能配合完成试验者。

### 1.2 健康受试者选择标准

1.2.1 纳入标准 ①年龄30~80岁;②右利手;③无神经疾病导致的功能障碍。

1.2.2 排除标准 ①头部破损、头发过密等影响信号采集者;②中途停止、干扰或不配合者。

### 1.3 一般资料

选取2023年1月—2024年6月在首都医科大学附属北京康复医院住院的缺血性脑卒中患者80例,左侧偏瘫和右侧偏瘫各40例。将Fugl-Meyer运动功能评定量表上肢部分(Fugl-Meyer Assessment-Upper Extremity, FMA-UE)评分>43分的患者分为轻度组,FMA-UE评分≤43分的患者分为重度组,其中左侧偏瘫轻度组、重度组各20例;右侧偏瘫轻度组、重度组各20例。同时纳入20例健康受试者作为对照组。各组一般资料比较,差异均无统计学意义( $P>0.05$ )。见表1。本试验方案获得首都医科大学附属北京康复医院伦理审查委员会批准(审批号:2023bkky-025)。

表1 5组一般资料比较

Table 1 Comparison of general data in five groups

组别	例数	性别		年龄/ $(\bar{x}\pm s)$ ,岁	病程/ $(\bar{x}\pm s)$ ,d	上肢Brunnstrom分期			坐位平衡分级	
		男	女			III级	IV级	V级	2级	3级
对照组	20	11	9	55.9±4.4	—	0	0	0	0	20
左侧偏瘫轻度组	20	10	10	59.3±6.7	19.7±3.9	13	4	3	15	5
左侧偏瘫重度组	20	12	8	60.6±9.1	18.8±3.5	11	6	3	14	6
右侧偏瘫轻度组	20	11	9	55.6±8.8	20.1±4.1	11	5	4	15	5
右侧偏瘫重度组	20	13	7	57.2±9.9	19.1±3.5	12	4	4	13	7

## 2 方法

### 2.1 fNIRS数据采集及处理方法

2.1.1 fNIRS数据采集 ①采用41多通道fNIRS仪(BS-3000,武汉联合科技有限公司,中国武汉)对fNIRS数据进行采集,采样频率20 Hz。该设备共41个采集通道,由16个光源和16个探头组成,光纤排布见图1。②参照国际脑电图10-20系统,依据

Brodmann大脑皮质分区将其划分为双侧背外侧前额叶皮层(dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, DLPFC)、额极区(frontal polar area, FPA)、初级运动皮层(primary motor cortex, M1)、辅助运动区(supplementary motor area, SMA)、前运动皮层(premotor cortex, PMC)、躯体感觉皮层(somatosensory cortex, SMC)和Broca共14个感兴趣区<sup>[10]</sup>。感兴趣区与检测通道对应关系

见表2。③安静环境下受试者坐位,目视前方电脑。起始位置为上臂固定、肘关节屈曲90°,根据文字提示“屈肘1次、屈肘2次……屈肘10次”,每1次进行最大程度屈肘,再伸肘回到起始位置。本研究采用block设计,任务如下:基线30s→屈肘20s→静息20s→屈肘20s→静息20s→屈肘20s→静息20s→基线30s,共180s<sup>[11-12]</sup>。见图2。

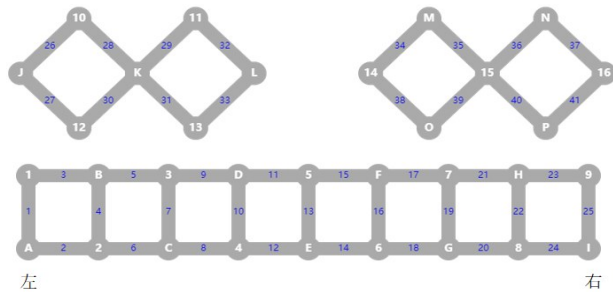


图1 光纤排布图

Figure 1 Optical fiber layout diagram

表2 大脑皮质感兴趣区与检测通道的对应关系

Table 2 Correspondence between the regions of interest in cerebral cortex and detection channels

感兴趣区	左半球通道	右半球通道
DLPFC	5,6,7,9	17,19,20,21
M1区	28,29,32	34,35,36
SMA	31,33	38,39
PMC	27,30	40,41
FPA	8,10,11,12	14,15,16,18
Broca	1,2,3,4	22,23,24,25
SMC	26	37

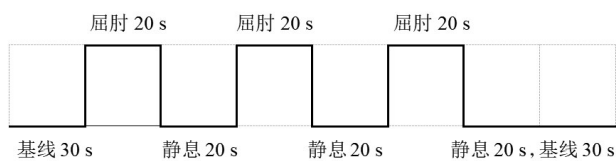


图2 肘关节任务方案

Figure 2 Elbow joint tasks

2.1.2 fNIRS数据处理 将fNIRS数据导出到MATLAB中在Homer2中进行数据处理和分析。根据修正的Beer-Lambert定律将原始的近红外光谱信号转换为血流动力学信号。去除运动伪影、无效通道后,应用0.01~0.1 Hz的带通滤波器对HbO<sub>2</sub>信号进行滤波,消除心脏搏动等生理噪音。使用广义线性模型拟合和分析血流动力学相应函数,获得提示激活程度的校正β值<sup>[10-11]</sup>。

## 2.2 观察指标

2.2.1 大脑皮质激活通道及通道激活率 HbO<sub>2</sub>是

活动依赖性局部脑血流改变最敏感的标志<sup>[13]</sup>。故本研究采用HbO<sub>2</sub>信号的β值与基线值(β=0)行t检验,明确激活通道,并计算通道激活率。

$$\text{通道激活率} = \frac{\text{激活通道数}}{\text{总通道数}} \times 100\%$$

2.2.2 大脑半球在特定任务中的激活优势程度评估 采用偏侧化指数(laterality index, LI)评估在进行特定任务时,左右大脑半球激活优势程度。一般认为LI≥0.1为左侧大脑半球激活更强,LI≤-0.1为右侧大脑半球激活更强,-0.1<LI<0.1为两侧半球平衡<sup>[14]</sup>。

$$LI = \frac{\text{左侧半球 HbO}_2 \text{变化} - \text{右侧半球 HbO}_2 \text{变化}}{\text{左侧半球 HbO}_2 \text{变化} + \text{右侧半球 HbO}_2 \text{变化}}$$

## 2.3 统计学方法

采用SPSS 26.0统计软件进行数据分析。计量资料服从正态分布,数据采用( $\bar{x} \pm s$ )表示,组间比较采用独立样本t检验;计数资料以[例(%)]表示,组间比较采用χ<sup>2</sup>检验。P<0.05为差异具有统计学意义。

## 3 结果

### 3.1 各组上肢屈肘任务下大脑皮层激活通道比较

各组在患侧上肢屈肘任务下的脑区激活通道详见表3~4。

表3 3组左侧上肢屈肘任务下大脑皮层激活通道

Table 3 Activation channels of the cerebral cortex under elbow flexion task of the left upper limb in three groups

组别	激活通道
对照组(左侧)	5,7,8,15,16,19,37
左侧偏瘫轻度组	5,7,14,16,18,19,20,28,29,31,33,35,37 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,14,17,19,
左侧偏瘫重度组	21,22,23,24,26,29,31,36,37,38,39, 40,41

表4 3组右侧上肢屈肘任务下大脑皮层激活通道

Table 4 Activation channels of the cerebral cortex under elbow flexion task of the right upper limb in three groups

组别	激活通道
对照组(右侧)	5,6,7,8,14,29,31
右侧偏瘫轻度组	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,19,29 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,11,13,15,16,17,
右侧偏瘫重度组	18,19,20,21,22,23,24,26,27,28,30, 31,33,37,38,40

### 3.2 各组上肢屈肘任务下各脑区激活率比较

与对照组比较,左侧偏瘫轻度组 SMA & PMC 所有通道激活率更高( $P<0.05$ ),左侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA & PMC 所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ );与左侧偏瘫轻度组比较,左侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA & PMC 所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ )。见表5。

与对照组比较,右侧偏瘫轻度组 DLPFC 右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ ),右侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA & PMC 所有通道、DLPFC 所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ );与右侧偏瘫轻度组比较,右侧偏瘫重度组全脑通道、SMA & PMC 所有通道和左侧半球、DLPFC 所有通道和右侧半球激活率更高( $P<0.05$ )。见表6。

表5 3组左侧上肢屈肘任务下各脑区激活率比较(%)

Table 5 Comparison of activation rates in different brain regions under elbow flexion task of the left upper limb (%)

组别	全脑通道	SMA & PMC			DLPFC		
		所有通道	左侧半球	右侧半球	所有通道	左侧半球	右侧半球
对照组	17.07(7/41)	0.00(0/8)	0.00(0/4)	0.00(0/4)	37.50(3/8)	50.00(2/4)	25.00(1/4)
左侧偏瘫轻度组	31.71(13/41)	25.00(2/8) <sup>1)</sup>	50.00(2/4)	0.00(0/4)	50.00(4/8)	50.00(2/4)	50.00(2/4)
左侧偏瘫重度组	65.85(27/41) <sup>1)2)</sup>	62.50(5/8) <sup>1)2)</sup>	25.00(1/4)	100.00(4/4) <sup>1)2)</sup>	75.00(6/8)	75.00(3/4)	75.00(3/4)

注:与对照组比较,1)  $P<0.05$ ;与左侧偏瘫轻度组比较,2)  $P<0.05$ 。

Note: compared with the control group, 1)  $P<0.05$ ; compared with the mild left hemiplegia group, 2)  $P<0.05$ .

表6 3组右侧上肢屈肘任务下各脑区激活率比较(%)

Table 6 Comparison of activation rates in different brain regions under elbow flexion task of the right upper limb (%)

组别	全脑通道	SMA & PMC			DLPFC		
		所有通道	左侧半球	右侧半球	所有通道	左侧半球	右侧半球
对照组	17.07(7/41)	12.50(1/8)	25.00(1/4)	0.00(0/4)	37.50(3/8)	75.00(3/4)	0.00(0/4)
右侧偏瘫轻度组	26.83(11/41)	0.00(0/8)	0.00(0/4)	0.00(0/4)	50.00(4/8)	75.00(3/4)	25.00(1/4) <sup>1)</sup>
右侧偏瘫重度组	70.73(29/41) <sup>1)2)</sup>	75.00(6/8) <sup>1)2)</sup>	100.00(4/4) <sup>2)</sup>	50.00(2/4)	100.00(8/8) <sup>1)2)</sup>	100.00(4/4)	100.00(4/4) <sup>1)2)</sup>

注:与对照组比较,1)  $P<0.05$ ;与右侧偏瘫轻度组比较,2)  $P<0.05$ 。

Note: compared with the control group, 1)  $P<0.05$ ; compared with the mild right hemiplegia group, 2)  $P<0.05$ .

### 3.3 各组上肢屈肘任务下LI值

与对照组比较,左侧偏瘫轻度组和左侧偏瘫重度组右侧大脑半球激活更强;与左侧偏瘫轻度组比较,左侧偏瘫重度组右侧大脑半球 M1 区、PMC 激活更强;与左侧偏瘫重度组比较,左侧偏瘫轻度组右侧大脑半球 DLPFC 和 SMA 激活更强。见表7。

表7 3组左侧上肢屈肘任务下LI值

Table 7 Lateralization index under elbow flexion task of the left upper limb

组别	全脑	DLPFC	M1区	PMC	SMA
对照组	0.03	0.00	-0.58	-0.41	-0.84
左侧偏瘫轻度组	-0.33	-0.31	-0.61	-0.45	-0.24
左侧偏瘫重度组	-0.20	-0.12	-0.81	-1.00	-0.22

与对照组比较,右侧偏瘫轻度组和右侧偏瘫重度组两侧半球 DLPFC 和 SMA 激活相对平衡;与右侧偏瘫轻度组比较,右侧偏瘫重度组左侧大脑半球 M1 区激活更强;与右侧偏瘫重度组比较,右侧偏瘫轻度组左侧大脑半球 PMC 激活更强。右侧偏瘫轻度组各脑区的 LI 有接近对照组的趋势。见表8。

表8 3组右侧上肢屈肘任务下LI值

Table 8 Lateralization index under elbow flexion task of the right upper limb

组别	全脑	DLPFC	M1区	PMC	SMA
对照组	0.17	-0.04	0.12	0.73	0.29
右侧偏瘫轻度组	0.14	-0.04	0.26	0.59	0.09
右侧偏瘫重度组	0.13	0.00	0.33	0.27	-0.01

## 4 讨论

### 4.1 不同运动功能障碍的缺血性脑卒中患者激活通道数和激活机制不同

本研究结果显示,无论左侧偏瘫还是右侧偏瘫,上肢运动功能损伤越严重,大脑皮层激活通道越多,但是上肢轻度运动损伤患者大脑皮层激活通道数和健康受试者激活通道数比较,差异无统计学意义。有研究表明,脑卒中后轻度运动损伤患者大脑作用机制主要是半球间竞争理论,使患侧半球的兴奋性显著降低<sup>[15]</sup>。病灶周围脑区代偿性兴奋性提高及健侧运动区募集现象是脑卒中后重度运动功能恢复的关键方式,患者在患肢执行运动任务时

会出现皮质广泛性不对称性激活<sup>[16-17]</sup>。双峰平衡恢复模型指出当大脑半球的运动区皮质脊髓束的结构储备越多,神经通路功能连接越强,半球间竞争理论占主导;反之,代偿理论模型占主导<sup>[18]</sup>。

#### 4.2 缺血性脑卒中患者DLPFC的激活与认知有关

本研究发现,右侧偏瘫患者患侧上肢屈肘任务下,功能障碍越严重,双侧以及健侧DLPFC激活通道数越多。前额叶皮层中DLPFC有明显激活,这可能是由于运动任务需要认知、准备和计划阶段,DLPFC的过度激活意味着功能补偿,DLPFC的兴奋性与认知密切相关<sup>[19]</sup>。先前研究表明,当脑卒中患者在患侧执行运动任务时,整个大脑广泛激活,尤其是DLPFC<sup>[20]</sup>。有研究表明,亚急性期右侧偏瘫患者患侧执行抓握放松任务,双侧前额叶区激活,治疗前健侧半球激活通道数大于患侧半球<sup>[21]</sup>。这表明患者需要更多的认知控制才能管理复杂的运动任务。缺血性脑卒中会影响大脑的结构和功能恢复,导致在复杂的认知和运动控制任务中对大脑网络的依赖增加,健侧半球代偿性激活促进大脑功能重组,健侧半球间脑区的连接加强更准确反映运动功能<sup>[22-23]</sup>。

#### 4.3 不同运动功能障碍的缺血性脑卒中患者SMA & PMC 激活率不同

本研究发现,左侧偏瘫患者患侧上肢屈肘任务下,上肢运动功能障碍越重,SMA & PMC所有通道和右侧半球的激活率越高,说明脑卒中患者SMA & PMC的兴奋性可能与患肢功能损伤程度密切相关,过度激活不利于运动上肢运动功能恢复。脑卒中后运动功能恢复的纵向fNIRS研究结果显示,运动功能恢复与SMA和PMC激活程度相关<sup>[24-26]</sup>。本研究还发现,右侧偏瘫患者患侧上肢屈肘任务下,右侧偏瘫重度组SMA & PMC所有通道激活率明显高于右侧偏瘫轻度组 and 对照组;右侧偏瘫重度组左侧半球SMA & PMC激活率高于右侧偏瘫轻度组。提示优势半球损伤和非优势半球损伤后,功能恢复及双侧运动皮层激活重组过程存在差异,左侧偏瘫重度组和右侧偏瘫重度组在急性期及亚急性期对侧运动皮层区有更广泛的激活,说明上肢功能损伤越严重,需要更多的SMA & PMC激活来协调整个屈肘动作的完成。WARD等<sup>[27]</sup>研究发现,随着运动功能的恢复,患侧运动区SMA & PMC的激活减少。另有研究表明,轻中度上肢运动损伤的脑卒中患者和健康受试者在执行上肢运动任务时双侧半球SMA &

PMC的皮质激活水平差异无统计学意义,考虑可能与上肢运动障碍的程度有关<sup>[28]</sup>。本研究进一步证实此观点,说明激活差异可能与脑卒中后的严重程度、受损半球是否是优势半球有关。

#### 4.4 不同运动功能障碍的缺血性脑卒中患者各脑区的LI不同

LI评估大脑皮层激活的偏侧程度,识别脑功能活动与肢体活动的关系,提示脑卒中后肢体功能障碍预后情况<sup>[4,29]</sup>。本研究发现,偏瘫患者同侧大脑半球激活程度更强,轻度组和重度组各个脑区的LI均不同,说明缺血性脑卒中后,两侧大脑皮层激活程度与损伤半球有关。有研究表明,中、重度脑卒中患者运动功能恢复后,LI降低且更接近健康受试者<sup>[30]</sup>。本研究中,右侧偏瘫轻度组各脑区的LI更接近对照组,左侧偏瘫轻度组的M1区、PMC和SMA的LI比左侧偏瘫重度组更接近对照组,但DLPFC的LI没有这个规律。有研究表明,右侧半球损伤患者比左侧半球损伤患者认知功能损伤更严重<sup>[31]</sup>,故右半球损伤后,DLPFC广泛激活。

综上所述,早期不同程度上肢运动功能障碍的缺血性脑卒中患者,大脑皮层各区激活特征不同,且大脑发生功能重组的差异与脑卒中后的严重程度、受损半球有关。同时本研究存在一定的局限性:如没有观察缺血性脑卒中患者健侧肢体运动任务下脑区激活特征;仅选择右利手的缺血性脑卒中患者及健康受试者;样本量小等。有待于扩大样本量进一步研究。

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## Cortical Activation Characteristics in Patients with Ischemic Stroke during Affected Upper Limb Elbow Flexion: An fNIRS Study

JIANG Jinjin, WANG Luyi\*, ZHANG Yuting, WANG Jie

Rehabilitation Center, Beijing Rehabilitation Hospital Affiliated to Capital Medical University, Beijing 100144, China

\*Correspondence: WANG Luyi, E-mail: 17745723087@163.com

**ABSTRACT Objective** To observe the cortical activation characteristics in patients with ischemic stroke during the elbow flexion task of the affected upper limb based on functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS). **Methods** A total of 80 inpatients with ischemic stroke admitted to Beijing Rehabilitation Hospital Affiliated to Capital Medical University from January 2023 to June 2024 were enrolled, including 40 cases with left hemiplegia and 40 cases with right hemiplegia. According to Fugl-Meyer Assessment-Upper Extremity (FMA-UE), patients with FMA-UE score >43 were assigned to the mild group, and those with FMA-UE score ≤43 were assigned to the severe group. Among them, there were 20 cases in both the mild and severe subgroups of left hemiplegia, as well as 20 cases in both the mild and severe subgroups of right hemiplegia. Meanwhile, 20 healthy subjects were included as the control group. Referring to the Brodmann cortical areas, 14 regions of interest (ROIs) were defined bilaterally, including the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), frontal polar area (FPA), primary motor cortex (M1), supplementary motor area (SMA), premotor cortex (PMC), somatosensory cortex (SMC), and Broca's area. The fNIRS data of patients during the elbow flexion task of the affected upper limb were collected using an fNIRS device with a sampling frequency of 20 Hz and a block design, and the total task duration was set at 180 s. Oxyhemoglobin (HbO<sub>2</sub>) was used to identify the activated channels, and the activation rate was calculated. The laterality index (LI) was adopted to evaluate the dominance of activation between the left and right cerebral hemispheres during the specific task. **Results** Compared with the control group, the mild left hemiplegia group had higher activation rates in all SMA & PMC channels ( $P<0.05$ ), while the severe left hemiplegia group showed elevated activation rates in global brain channels, all SMA & PMC channels and the right hemisphere channels ( $P<0.05$ ); the severe left hemiplegia group also presented higher activation in global brain channels, all SMA & PMC channels and the right hemisphere channels than the mild left hemiplegia group ( $P<0.05$ ). The mild right hemiplegia group exhibited higher activation in the right hemisphere channels of DLPFC ( $P<0.05$ ) compared with the control group, whereas the severe right hemiplegia group had higher activation in global brain channels, all SMA & PMC channels, all DLPFC channels and the right hemisphere channels ( $P<0.05$ ); the severe right hemiplegia group also showed higher activation in global brain channels, all SMA & PMC channels, the left hemisphere channels, all DLPFC channels and the right hemisphere channels than the mild right hemiplegia group ( $P<0.05$ ). Both mild and severe left hemiplegia groups had stronger right hemisphere activation than the control group; the severe left hemiplegia group presented stronger M1 and PMC activation in the right hemisphere than the mild left hemiplegia group, while the latter had stronger DLPFC and SMA activation in the right hemisphere than the former. Both mild and severe right hemiplegia groups showed relatively balanced bilateral DLPFC and SMA activation compared to the control group; the severe right hemiplegia group had stronger left M1 activation than the mild right hemiplegia group, while the mild hemiplegia group exhibited stronger left PMC activation than the severe right hemiplegia group. The LI of each brain region in the right mild hemiplegia group tended to approximate that of the control group. **Conclusion** When patients with ischemic stroke performing the elbow flexion task with the affected upper limb, severe patients have higher activation rates in SMA & PMC and DLPFC, while mild patients have LI values closer to those of healthy controls. The differences in cerebral cortical activation are associated with the severity of motor dysfunction and the damaged hemisphere.

**KEY WORDS** ischemic stroke; functional near-infrared spectroscopy; cerebral activation; laterality index; upper limb elbow flexion

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