

龋病诊断方法的研究进展

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工作提供依据和参照。

【关键词】 龋齿; 早期诊断; 光学诊断技术; 人工智能

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Research progress on diagnostic techniques of dental caries

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【Abstract】 Due to the development of novel dental materials and digital techniques, the basic and clinical researches focusing on dental caries have been accumulated recently, which also promotes the clinical validation for the early diagnosis, comprehensive prevention, and functional-aesthetic treatment with minimal invasive intervention. By searching the literature, this article reviewed the current novel techniques that can be used to detect and diagnose caries, along with their clinical application, advantages and disadvantages, so as to provide references for the clinical application.

【Key words】 Dental caries; Early diagnosis; Optical diagnosis; Artificial intelligence

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龋病的传统定义是在以细菌为主的多因素影响下发生在牙体硬组织的慢性感染性疾病,呈进行性不可逆性进展,最终导致牙体硬组织的缺损或丧失。随着龋病定义的不断更新和补充,现代观念认为,龋病是一种由口腔生物膜菌群生态变化引起的进行性非传染性疾病^[1-3]。龋病在人群中的患病率极高。国外调查研究数据显示,龋病患病率接近48%^[4]。我国第四次全国口腔健康流行病学调查结果显示,5岁、35~44岁、55~64岁年龄组患龋率分别达71.9%、89.0%、95.6%^[5]。由于龋病病程长、进展缓慢,一般在形成龋洞或出现相应症状后才被发现和诊断^[6]。目前,临床最常见、应用最广泛的龋病检测和诊断方法是视诊、探诊等常规手段,辅以根尖X线片、骀翼片的支持性影像学检查^[7-8]。但上述方法对早期龋诊断的敏感性较差,通常明确诊断时已经出现需要修复的损害^[4]。因此,有必要发展快速、高效、灵敏和安全的检测方法以获得龋病预测、早期诊断以及龋发展阶段的评估,以便及时给予干预^[9]。本文整合关于龋病检测及诊断技术的最新信息,为临床龋病的诊断应用提供参考。

2004年,国际龋病临床试验共识研讨会(international consensus workshop on caries clinical trials, ICW-CCT)发表专家共识:(1)视诊及探诊仍是龋病诊断的标准;(2)根尖X线片及骀翼片可辅助诊断;(3)应进一步探索可使用的其他方法^[7]。研究表明,X线片和骀翼片检测邻面龋和隐匿龋效果更佳^[10],但对于早期骀面龋则效果较差^[11]。其中骀翼片在诊断邻面龋损方面具有显著优势,具有更高的敏感性和特异性^[10]。虽然微型计算机断层扫描(micro computed tomography, Micro-CT)和锥形束CT也是常

用的口腔影像学检查方法,然而前者通常应用于体外研究中龋病的检测^[12],后者在临床龋病的诊断准确性方面并未表现出优于传统影像学检查的准确性^[13],且较高的成本和辐射剂量均限制了其成为常规龋病检查方法。此外,由于视诊和探诊存在专业人员检查的主观性,以及视觉分类系统诊断标准的不稳定和不一致性,导致目前众多龋病研究之间缺乏可比性^[14]。因此,近年来国内外涌现出一批基于光、热、电学原理和人工智能(artificial intelligence, AI)等诊断龋病的新技术,本文将对上述方法进行概述。

一、光学相关诊断技术

1. 光学相干断层成像(optical coherence tomography, OCT)技术:OCT是一种基于光波显示生物内部结构的成像技术^[15],使用红外光产生距表面深度达3 mm组织的实时横截面图像。在OCT中,完好的牙釉质、牙本质在波长范围内几乎透明,釉牙本质界(dentino enamel junction, DEJ)显示为深色的边界线,以此可以区分牙釉质、牙本质区域。而脱矿牙釉质和牙本质由于光散射导致信号增强,则成像为亮区,裂纹在OCT中也可以清晰成像为1条白线^[16]。作为一种兼具非侵入性和高分辨率的三维成像技术,OCT能检出传统视、探诊等难以察觉的牙釉质早期脱矿、裂纹及结构老化等^[16-19]。OCT检测牙釉质龋和牙本质龋的敏感性显著高于影像学检查,对非空洞龋病和隐匿性龋病诊断更具优越性^[20]。就特异性而言,OCT和影像学检查之间差异未见统计学意义^[21]。系统评价发现,OCT对颊面龋和邻面龋的总体诊断准确率达94.5%^[19]。

OCT的另一优势在于无辐射暴露的风险,可应用于婴儿和孕妇的龋病诊断。但OCT对髓腔成像不明显,龋损与牙髓边界不清晰,因此对表现牙髓症状的患牙诊断无明显必要^[18]。由于成像原理的局限,OCT一般不适用于检查有金属等不透光修复体的患牙。然而,体外研究提示OCT也可以区分可透光的修复材料周围及其下方界面的间隙及继发龋,且邻牙成像清晰,还能实时监测病变进展和治疗效果^[22]。

OCT设备一直在不断更新。例如扫频OCT(swept source OCT, SS-OCT)采用的光源波长较长,具有很高的瞬时相干性,因此成像范围和性能更强,能将邻面或咬合隐匿区的空洞龋呈现明显的边界,有助于明确龋或外伤牙裂纹穿透的深度^[19]。使

用金纳米颗粒(AuNP)或银纳米颗粒(AgNP)作为光补偿剂或造影剂时,可改善图像对比度,呈现具明确边缘的图像,增强OCT对早期咬合龋的成像,提高对非空洞型龋病的诊断敏感性^[23]。交叉偏振光学相干断层扫描(cross-polarization OCT, CP-OCT)相较其他技术,其优势是能够无损获取体内微观结构的高分辨图像,范围和深度均可测量,甚至能够呈现龋坏区域由于再矿化而发生的微观结构变化,因此可用于龋病病变深度和内部结构的测量,包括病变表面区域的厚度^[24]。

总体来说,OCT可以作为一种辅助技术支持常规口腔检查,以明确疑似病例的诊断^[21]。但其受限于2~3 mm的最大扫描深度,目前仅适用于早期检测和临床干预的有效性评估。提高穿透深度将是改进OCT的研究方向之一^[17]。

2. 激光荧光法(laser fluorescence, LF):LF检测的基本原理是使用一定波长的激光照射牙体,使龋损组织部位表现出特定颜色的荧光。该荧光与致龋菌代谢产生的卟啉有关,因此可以作为龋损存在的标识^[25]。LF诊断技术主要包括激光激发荧光法(laser-induced fluorescence, LIF)、荧光辅助去龋法(fluorescence-aided caries excavation, FACE)和定量光导荧光技术(quantitative light-induced fluorescence, QLF)。

DIAGNOdent(DD)是一种常见的LIF便携式早期龋诊断仪。其工作尖可以发射波长为655 nm的近红外光,照射牙面并被牙体组织吸收后,激发并捕捉早期龋细菌代谢产物中含有卟啉的高频自发荧光信息^[26]。根据其分数数值大小(0~99)确定牙脱矿程度及龋损深度,对于咬合面龋:0~12视为健康组织、13~24为脱矿质牙釉质、≥25可能涉及牙本质;对于邻面龋:0~7视为健康组织、8~15为脱矿质牙釉质、≥16可能涉及牙本质,为临床确认去龋止点和监测进展提供了可能^[26]。研究表明,视诊联合DD检测龋病的敏感性为0.64、特异性为0.94,优于视诊、颊翼片及DD的单独检测^[27-28]。不同研究对于DD去龋止点的读数判断存在分歧,假阳性率会因着色、裂隙、结石或有机碎屑的存在而提高,导致过度预备^[29]。而且,DD测量龋病深度的准确性较低,对龋病的定性功能更可靠^[27-28]。

FACE技术的主要设备有Facelight去龋显像笔等,将细菌中的卟啉显示为红色荧光,健康牙体组织显示绿色荧光,为明确龋损范围提供直观依据。

临床操作时使用球钻或手工器械逐层去除红色龋坏组织^[30]。Lai等^[31]的体外研究表明,FACE技术较常规手工去除更保守微创。Koç-Vural等^[32]认为两种方法无显著差异。Lennon等^[33]则发现FACE在去除感染牙本质方面更有效。上述研究差异可能由于非口内环境、样本量及评测标准的不统一所导致。

QLF的工作原理是检测牙釉质自发荧光与脱矿区域荧光损失的差值,该荧光与牙釉质的矿物含量相关。QLF可用于早期牙釉质脱矿检测、量化和监测的辅助诊断,兼具无破坏性、可定量、易操作和可长期监测等特点^[34]。当存在病变时,光散射增加可使病变显示为暗点。这种损失可进行定位和量化,定量诊断早期龋或明确脱矿程度。当荧光降低超过5%被认为是病损组织^[35]。一项系统评价表明,QLF在体外对光滑牙面的早期龋量化较可靠,准确率达91%、敏感性达83%,但临床检测准确率仅63%^[10]。此外,QLF还可作为牙本质损伤的非侵入性测量方法,为确定去龋程度提供依据^[36],还能评估根面龋氯己定氟漆防治的有效性^[34,37]。

一项系统评价认为,传统诊断方法和荧光法对于实验室检测早期龋具有同等准确性^[25]。常用基于自发荧光原理的龋检测设备还包括MidWest、VistaProof和SoproLife等,但不同设备性能差异较大,尚没有证据表明红色、蓝色或绿色荧光设备等在精确度上存在差异^[29]。各种设备均可定量表现龋损范围,但诊断结果的准确性也备受争议,在临床实践和研究均需谨慎对待^[26,38]。虽然对发现隐匿的邻面早期龋损有一定意义,但还不能作为检测龋损的金标准^[10]。临床上还应结合主、客观检查和医师的临床经验做出准确判断。

3. 光纤透照法(fiber optic transillumination imaging, FOTI): FOTI是基于光散射现象增加正常牙釉质和患龋牙釉质之间对比度的一种检测方法^[39]。牙釉质由致密的羟基磷灰石晶体组成,形成几乎透明的结构。牙本质在牙釉质下呈橙棕色,病损组织呈灰色阴影,形成精细结构图像,直接显示龋损范围,便于医师与患者沟通^[40]。FOTI可作为检测邻面龋的工具,其应用能减少X线检查,对于儿童及孕妇的安全性更高,尤其适合识别早期牙釉质脱矿^[41-42]。然而,FOTI在邻面龋病诊断中有效性和灵敏度均较低,分别为79%和69%。FOTI也无法替代X线辅助诊断龋病^[39]。此外,虽然FOTI可定量获得牙齿硬度

以诊断龋病进展程度^[43],但其标准透照方向、波长因素及准确性等尚待进一步研究。同时,由于仪器纤维探头较大、操作不便,受患者舒适度及性价比等因素限制,其临床应用仍未普及^[44-45]。

二、热成像技术

热成像技术(thermal imaging)通过测量热辐射,观察损伤外层矿化表面区域的温度变化,可用于评估根面龋表面的结构和活性^[46]。其中,近红外热成像技术可通过6~10 μm波长的热成像和1450~1750 nm的短波红外成像,检测病变脱水矿化期间的热辐射,以评估体内病变的活性^[47]。金丝雀检测系统(canary system, CS)基于该原理测量光热辐射和调制发光(photothermal radiometry and modulated luminescence, PTR-Lum)检测光、热变化,将牙齿晶体结构的状态转化为数值,数值越小表明牙体组织越健康。相较基于荧光法的DD,由于CS的PTR-Lum信号反映的是牙齿表面结构以下的信息,不会因封闭剂或牙面白斑出现假阳性结果,因此可帮助检出龋损组织或封闭剂下的牙齿状态^[48]。目前CS相关临床研究较少,其选取的参考诊断数值不同可能导致实验结果准确性较低。

三、电导率检测法

电导率检测法(electrical conductivity monitor, ECM)是一种通过电导率评估牙齿矿化程度的龋病检测方法。完整的牙釉质由于矿物含量高,是良好的电绝缘体,而龋损区的脱矿可造成孔隙的产生,孔隙被唾液中的水分子和离子填满,形成可传导电流的传导路径使电导增加^[49-50]。例如,CarieScan PRO龋病检测仪器可通过显示正常牙体和龋组织的电传导差异,分析龋病的存在和严重程度^[51]。临床研究认为,CarieScan PRO相比视诊和X线显影在检测牙釉质和牙本质龋方面具有更高的敏感性和准确性,分别为97.4%和88.6%;X线显影的敏感性和准确性较低,为63.2%和79.6%;视诊的敏感性和准确性最低,仅为42.1%和64.8%^[52]。一项系统评价发现,应用电导率检测法的不同设备类型的准确性没有显著差异,但支持使用电导装置检测和诊断龋齿的证据很少。而Huysmans等^[53]体外研究指出,CarieScan PRO检测结果可重复性较差,推测由于探针与牙齿表面的接触程度不一致导致。Surme等^[54]发现,CarieScan PRO在体外较DD对乳牙和恒牙的隐匿性龋、颊面龋的检测准确性更差,不建议使用此方法。

总体来说,光学诊断技术除了过渡到数字图像采集和展示外,技术层面变化不大,该方法对检测邻面和殆面的脱矿比较准确,且病变越深,检测越准确。但操作者间差异限制了临床准确性和可重复性,AI的应用或可帮助突破这一局限。

四、人工智能辅助诊断技术

传统龋病筛查和诊断多依赖于操作者的经验,临床医生之间可能存在很大差异^[55]。随着患者数据的大量增加,AI在辅助改进龋病诊断方面表现出了巨大的潜力^[56]。AI是指能够模仿人类认知技能的任何机器或技术,其应用于龋病诊断领域的目标是开发能够通过数据学习的机器,以辅助口腔医生进行诊断、临床决策和评估治疗预后等^[57]。

目前,AI辅助诊断龋病主要是联合光学诊断技术,分析根尖片、近红外光透照^[58]和殆翼片^[59]的图像数据库,较直接光学诊断结果灵敏度提高,而特异性减低^[59-61],有助于检测龋病早期病变^[62]。还可用于龋病的多阶段检测以判断龋损的严重程度^[63-65]。其中,深度卷积神经网络(convolutional neural network algorithm, CNN)得到广泛运用,可以从抽象的滤波器层中提取出许多特征,利于处理大而复杂的口腔图像^[57]。基于深度学习的CNN模型通过预先训练的架构预处理,并在数据集内进行深度学习,建立计算机辅助龋病诊断系统^[66],诊断准确率约为83.6%~97.1%^[67-68]。一项研究评估了GoogleNet Inception CNN算法在根尖片中检测不同牙位龋病的效率,对前磨牙组、磨牙组及前磨牙和磨牙模型组的诊断准确率分别为89.0%、88.0%及82.0%^[66]。与传统视诊相比,AI诊断灵敏度高而特异度低,对釉质龋尤其是浅龋诊断准确性高^[69]。基于口腔影像片深度学习的CNN算法还具备准确诊断不同类型龋的能力,如已形成龋洞的病变、窝沟龋和邻面龋^[70]。AI技术的应用还可以提高便捷性,例如一项研究探讨了YOLOv3算法在手机拍摄的普通照片中检测龋齿的准确率,发现使用图像增强技术后其检测准确率显著提高,接近100%^[71]。

虽有学者认为AI的深度学习模型兼具诊断准确性和一致性,可以减少牙医的工作量,是临床实践的有力工具^[72]。但部分学者考虑由于各研究使用的神经网络算法和结果指标有差异,不同研究可比性较差,龋病诊断结果准确性复杂^[61]。高标注成本也是深度学习架构应用于临床的瓶颈之一。未来需设计从未标记数据中学习的AI算法,减少标注

成本的花费,提高医学图像分析的效率^[73]。此外,基于二维影像模式的AI系统对龋病诊断是否可靠存在争议,利用三维影像模式或许更准确,但由于射线剂量、手工调试和费用等问题,不适合作为主要诊断方法^[56]。

五、结论

发展便捷、无创、可供不同年龄段采用且特异性高的龋病诊断技术既能减轻患者的经济负担,又能促使医生更好地根据患牙生物学表现指导治疗。上述各类龋病诊断新方法的临床推广还有待进一步综合评估,可作为传统诊断方式的补充。未来应加强龋病的基础与临床研究,加快龋病诊断新技术、新材料和新器械的临床验证,为龋病的早期诊断、综合预防,以及诊疗效果的监督与预测提供有力手段,以推动龋病临床诊治水平的整体提升。

利益冲突 所有作者均声明不存在利益冲突

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