

# 抑郁症的影像遗传学研究： 探索基因与环境的交互作用\*

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**摘要** 抑郁症具有中等的遗传度。通过影像遗传学方法探讨抑郁相关基因的多态性对神经活动的影响, 发现编码五羟色胺、促肾上腺素释放激素受体、多巴胺等神经递质或受体的基因多态性会影响杏仁核、前扣带等情绪加工脑区的功能或结构, 且多数基因与压力生活经历发生交互作用。表明基因与环境的交互作用在抑郁症发病机理中扮演重要角色。未来的研究应拓展遗传和神经影像分析方法, 重视环境因素的测量, 通过整合遗传、神经影像及环境变量构建抑郁病理模型。

**关键词** 抑郁症 影像遗传学 中间表型 基因环境交互

## 1 引言

抑郁症是最为常见的精神疾病之一, 在人群中的终生患病率可达 8%~12% (Demyttenaere, Gatz, Gardner, & Pedersen, 2013)。作为一类反复发作的疾病, 抑郁症不仅长期严重影响患者的生活质量, 更给其家庭乃至整个社会带来沉重负担。双生子研究表明, 抑郁症具有中等的遗传性, 其遗传度约为 38% (Kendler, Gate, Gardner, & Pedersen, 2006)。研究抑郁症的遗传基础不仅可以加深我们对抑郁症病理机制的理解, 更在临床上具有巨大的应用潜力。

当前抑郁症的遗传研究面临着许多问题。首先, 遗传效应并不总能在行为水平上观察得到; 其次, 人的行为同样受到环境的塑造; 最后, 精神疾病在诊断上的异质性使得我们很难找到与症状直接相关的基因 (Hyman, 2007)。针对上述难题, 研究者引入了“中间表型” (intermediate phenotype) 的概念。中间表型指的是与遗传和临床症状相关的神经生物学或神经心理学上的稳定特质 (Meyer-Lindenberg & Weinberger, 2006)。鉴于基因通过影响神经系统的结构与功能间接地影响行为, 这些受到基因调控的神经结构或功能就可以称为中间表型 (Bigos & Weinberger, 2010)。与疾病表型相比, 中间表型具有更直接的遗传基础, 因而在遗传关联分析中具有更高的灵敏度 (Bogdan, Nikolova, & Pizzagalli,

2013)。越来越多的研究借助神经影像技术, 以神经结构和功能作为中间表型探测遗传的影响, 影像遗传学方法应运而生。

本文首先总结抑郁症影像遗传研究中基因对情绪相关神经结构和功能的影响及其与环境的交互作用, 然后讨论当前研究的不足及未来发展方向。

## 2 影像遗传学方法

影像遗传学是将遗传与神经影像相结合的一种新的研究范式, 旨在通过神经影像指标考察遗传变异对大脑结构、功能的影响。常用的影像方法包括功能磁共振成像 (functional magnetic resonance imaging, fMRI)、脑电图 (electroencephalogram, EEG)、正电子发射型计算机断层显像 (positron emission computed tomography, PET) 等。遗传变量的选择多为与神经活动相关的候选基因。

在神经层面上, 抑郁症病人在涉及情绪加工的多个脑区的结构和功能上出现了异常, 包括杏仁核、前扣带, 内侧前额叶, 背外侧前额叶, 以及海马、丘脑等皮质下区域 (Drevets, Price, & Furey, 2008; Price & Drevets, 2012)。在分子遗传水平上, 五羟色胺、多巴胺、糖皮质激素等神经递质很有可能在抑郁症病理机制中起着重要作用。行为关联分析发现, 许多和上述神经递质代谢有关的基因与抑郁症

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之间存在关联。在中间表型的研究取向下，研究者试图通过影像遗传方法探究上述基因与中间表型的关联，使研究关注点由遗传和疾病表型的关系转移到遗传和中间表型的关系。其逻辑可以简要表述为：如果在行为水平上已发现某个基因型与某种精神疾病的发病有关，那么这种关联性很可能在中间表型的水平上得以表现。

影像遗传学方法为深入理解精神疾病的病理机制提供了一个全新视角 (Hyde, Bogdan, & Hariri, 2011)。首先，遗传和中间表型（大脑）的关联研究可以为解释基因如何影响行为提供合理机制。第二，当我们研究的基因位点具有明确功能时，该位点可以为解释大脑功能个体差异提供分子遗传基础。第三，研究神经和遗传变量允许我们更好地结合动物模型的研究（如单细胞记录、基因敲除、光遗传等）。第四，通过关注相对更客观的中间表型，使研究更少受到疾病分类异质性和自我报告偏差的影响。

### 3 基因 - 脑 - 抑郁的关联研究

#### 3.1 五羟色胺通路相关基因

早在 1996 年，已有研究指出五羟色胺转运体基因 (*SLC6A4*) 启动子多态性区域 (5-HTTLPR) 影响抑郁焦虑相关的人格特质 (Lesch et al., 1996)，之后有研究重复了该结果 (Canli & Lesch, 2007)。Karg 等 (2011) 的元分析表明，5-HTTLPR 调节了压力事件和抑郁发病之间的关系，表现为短型等位基因 (S 型) 携带者压力敏感性增加，更容易发展为抑郁症。在影像遗传研究方面，Hariri 等 (2002) 发现，与长型等位基因 (L 型) 携带者相比，5-HTTLPR 短型等位基因携带者在对负性情绪刺激的反应中杏仁核激活增强。随后又有研究发现 5-HTTLPR 基因 S 型不仅对杏仁核的体积及其在静息状态下的活动产生影响，还影响了杏仁核与前扣带之间的功能连接强度 (Heinz et al., 2004; Volman et al., 2013)。5-HTTLPR 还影响海马体积的大小。在一项青少年追踪研究中，研究者发现 5-HTTLPR 基因型可以预测被试左侧海马体积大小和抑郁发病风险，表现为 S 等位基因携带者左侧海马体积更小，同时在追踪期间抑郁发病的几率增加 (Little et al., 2014)。5-HTTLPR 基因型也影响一些认知功能（注意、执行功能和记忆）及与之相关的脑区活动，其中 S 型携带者的表现与抑郁症病人相似。Beever 等 (2010) 发现 5-HTTLPR 基因 S 等位基因型携带者的外侧前

额叶体积与情绪注意任务的表现呈负相关。Holmes 等 (2010) 发现 5-HTTLPR 基因 S 等位基因型携带者在行为监控能力 (Flanker 任务) 下降，并且前扣带功能活动异常。

除了 5-HTTLPR，其他与五羟色胺代谢相关的基因同样参与调控情绪加工过程的神经结构与功能。例如，*HTR1A* 基因控制着 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> 受体的表达，*HTR1A* 基因 C (-1009) G 位点中 G 等位基因携带者在负性面孔刺激下杏仁核活动水平降低 (Fakra et al., 2009)。*MAOA* 基因编码的单胺氧化酶参与五羟色胺的降解。*MAOA* 基因型影响静息状态下默认网络和执行控制相关脑区的活动 (Clemens et al., 2014)。*TPH2* 基因所编码的色氨酸羟化酶会参与五羟色胺的合成，其 rs4570625 位点多态性会影响杏仁核与海马体积 (Inoue et al., 2010)。

上述发现表明杏仁核与前扣带在静息状态及刺激诱发活动中的神经活动水平在一定程度上受到五羟色胺相关基因的调控。那么，环境因素在基因影响抑郁情绪相关神经活动的过程中起到什么作用？Caspi 等 (2003) 发现 5-HTTLPR 基因型和压力生活事件之间的交互作用影响了抑郁发病风险，表现为 S 型基因携带者的压力生活经历和抑郁发病之间存在正相关，而在纯合 L 型被试身上二者并无显著关系。该结果在后续研究中得到了重复 (Caspi, Hariri, Holmes, Uher, & Moffitt, 2010)。近年来，影像遗传研究也支持了 5-HTTLPR 基因和环境的交互作用与抑郁易感性的关联性。Alexander 等 (2012) 发现，同样是 5-HTTLPR 基因 S 等位基因型携带者，与未经历过重大压力生活事件的携带者相比，经历过更多压力生活事件的携带者在看到恐惧面孔时杏仁核的激活更强，杏仁核 - 下丘脑之间的功能连接也增强，而下丘脑正是压力情境下调控应激激素分泌的关键脑区。Rabl 等 (2014) 考察了 *COMT*，*BDNF*，5-HTTLPR 三个基因及负性生活经历对海马体积的影响，发现每个基因与负性生活经历之间的交互作用均显著影响海马体积的大小，其中经历过更多的负性生活事件的 5-HTTLPR 基因 S 型携带者的海马体积更小。以上研究表明，对于 5-HTTLPR 基因 S 等位基因型携带者而言，压力生活事件可能会诱发神经和内分泌的过度反应，并且影响海马体积的大小。

#### 3.2 HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis) 轴相关基因

HPA 轴是人在适应环境压力过程中起关键作用的通路,由下丘脑、前垂体和肾上腺构成,各组织之间通过激素分泌调节人的应激反应。抑郁症病人中约 80% 都表现出了 HPA 轴的功能异常 (Mazure, 1998)。由遗传多态性造成的 HPA 轴功能差异在抑郁相关基因与环境的交互作用中扮演重要角色 (Kudielka, Hellhammer, & Wüst, 2009)。HPA 轴功能异常也被认为是导致抑郁症病人海马萎缩的主要原因之一 (Frodl & O'Keane, 2013)。促肾上腺素释放激素 (Corticotrophin-Releasing Hormone, CRH) 是激活 HPA 轴功能的主要激素,人在经历压力时会分泌 CRH。有研究发现其受体基因 *CRHR1* 的多态性会造成 HPA 轴功能的改变,影响人在压力情境下的行为 (Bogdan, Santesso, Fagerness, Perlis, & Pizzagalli, 2011)。Pagliaccio 等 (2015) 发现 HPA 轴相关的四个基因 (*CRHR1*, *NR3C2*, *NR3C1*, *FKBP5*) 中 10 个 SNP 位点信息与性别、身体发育状况发生交互作用预测了负性情绪加工中杏仁核与海马的反应水平。Schatzberg 等 (2014) 在抑郁症患者身上发现,与 HPA 轴功能相关的糖皮质激素受体基因 *NR3C1* 的基因型会影响血液皮质醇的浓度,而 *CRHR1* 基因型与抑郁的严重程度有关。

### 3.3 多巴胺相关基因

快感缺失 (anhedonia) 是抑郁症的核心症状之一,临床上几乎有一半的病人出现该症状 (Pelizza & Ferrari, 2009)。快感缺失具有遗传上的基础,基因的多态性所导致的奖赏加工缺陷是抑郁发生的一个易感因子之一 (Bogdan, Perlis, Fagerness, & Pizzagalli, 2010)。抑郁患者在涉及奖赏加工的内侧前额叶、眶额皮层、腹侧纹状体灰质体积减少 (Drevets et al., 2008),而且在奖赏加工过程中腹侧纹状体、伏隔核、尾状核激活减弱 (Pizzagalli et al., 2009)。Antypa 等 (2013) 综述了涉及多巴胺代谢的儿茶酚氧位甲基转移酶基因 *COMT* 与抑郁症的相关研究,发现 *COMT* 基因 Val158Met 多态性影响抑郁病人服用抗抑郁药物的效果、负性情绪加工中杏仁核的活动水平,以及奖赏加工中腹侧纹状体的激活程度。Camara 等 (2010) 等发现多巴胺受体基因 *DRD4* 多态性影响了赌博任务中前脑岛和扣带的激活水平。

### 3.4 其他基因

编码脑源性神经营养因子 (brain derived neurotrophic factor, BDNF) 基因 Val66Met 多态性会影响 BDNF 的分泌,进而影响神经可塑性。Frodl

等 (2007) 发现该基因与海马体积有关, Met 型携带者的海马体积与 Val 型相比更小,然而有研究者认为该结果可能是由于测量方法和小样本产生的偏差 (Harrisberger et al., 2014)。另外, Kaufman 等 (2006) 研究表明, *BDNF*、5-HTTLPR 与负性生活事件经历之间的交互作用可以预测儿童期抑郁的发生,该结果在之后的研究中得到了重复 (Comasco et al., 2013)。抑郁症病人 Y 神经肽 (neuropeptide Y, NPY) 的表达有所减少 (Domschke et al., 2010)。Opmeer 等 (2013) 发现, *NPY* 基因中 rs16147 的基因型与童年虐待经历之间的交互作用影响了健康人和抑郁病人在执行面孔表情任务中杏仁核及后扣带的活动水平。

### 3.5 基因与环境的交互作用

通过结合环境因素的测量,影像遗传方法可以在多个水平上深化我们对抑郁症病理机制的理解,即探索什么基因在什么环境条件下通过调控哪些神经环路的结构或功能影响了抑郁症的发病。抑郁症患者中约有 80% 经历过早期压力生活事件 (Mazure, 1998),与五羟色胺、多巴胺、HPA 轴、BDNF 及 NPY 等功能代谢相关的基因多态性影响了情绪加工相关的多个脑区的结构和功能,并且其中大部分基因都与压力环境因素发生交互作用。结合抑郁症的认知神经模型 (Disner et al., 2011),这些研究结果与抑郁症病理机制的关系可总结如下:(一) 五羟色胺通路相关基因 (5-HTTLPR, *HTR1A*, *MAOA*, *TPH2* 等) 可能通过调节五羟色胺代谢水平影响了杏仁核、前扣带、背侧前扣带和背外侧前额叶的功能,进一步影响了负性事件下的情绪体验、情绪调节和执行控制功能;(二) HPA 轴相关基因 (*CRHR1*, *NR3C2*, *NR3C1*, *FKBP5* 等) 可能通过调节 HPA 轴的功能影响了杏仁核及海马的结构和功能、压力敏感性和负性经验的记忆;(三) 多巴胺相关基因 (*COMT*, *DRD2*, *DRD4* 等) 可能通过调节多巴胺的代谢影响腹侧纹状体、伏隔核、眶额皮层等脑区的结构和功能,影响了快感体验和动机水平。由于基因之间还存在着复杂的交互作用,实际情况远比上述推测复杂。

## 4 研究展望

虽然越来越多的研究发现了抑郁相关基因-脑-行为之间的关联性,其效应却比研究者预期的要弱得多。我们对抑郁症基因-脑-行为关系的理解仍

比较匮乏，不仅是由于疾病本身过于复杂，也和当前研究在遗传、神经、环境等变量的选择和控制在上的不足有关。

#### 4.1 遗传变量的选择

抑郁症的多数遗传研究多采用候选基因法，在研究对象的选择上具有局限性。而且，多数研究忽略了基因与基因之间的相互作用。基因组中另外一种常见的变异方式拷贝数变异（copy number variants, CNV）研究较少。近些年兴起的全基因组关联分析（genome-wide associate study, GWAS）无需先验假设，以数据驱动的方式直接探索疾病与全基因组 SNP 的关联性，是对候选基因研究的有力补充（Ripke et al., 2012）。GWAS 需要很大的样本量才能获得足够的统计效力。多站点合作是 GWAS 的趋势，通过样本合并或元分析的形式可获得单站点分析无法企及的统计效力。另外，精神疾病 GWAS 的一个新方向已经诞生，即以神经影像表型代替疾病表型研究脑与基因的关系（Medland et al., 2014）。

#### 4.2 神经影像方法的拓展

GABA 和谷氨酸盐等神经递质在皮层神经激发-抑制平衡（excitation-inhibition balance, EIB）中发挥重要作用（Northoff et al., 2011），其相关基因的研究还较少。抑郁症病人 EIB 出现了异常（Croarkin, Levinson, & Daskalakis, 2011），针对 GABA 相关基因（例如 *GAD1*）、谷氨酸盐相关基因（例如 *NMDA*、*AMPA* 等）的研究将有助于揭示其遗传基础。为了更直接地探讨以上物质在遗传、代谢上与抑郁症静息态异常神经活动之间的关系，未来的研究应当多考虑结合能够测量生化代谢活动的影像方法，比如 PET 和磁共振波谱成像（magnetic resonance spectroscopy, MRS）。在影像数据分析方法上，当前多数研究分析的是特定脑区的激活水平或这些脑区之间的功能连接。考察脑区之间相互关系的方法除了简单地计算功能连接之外，还有独立成分分析，动态因果连接、基于图论的脑网络等，未来的研究应该积极拓展影像数据的分析方法。

#### 4.3 环境变量的测量

未来的研究中环境变量应当成为数据采集的一个重要组成部分。当前，环境变量的采集多是采取自我报告的形式，测量的信度难以保证（Bogdan et al., 2013）。解决方案是尽量将自我报告转变为可观察的测量；同一种环境变量可采用多种测量方法，然后进行潜变量分析；最严格的方式是将环境变量

作为操纵变量纳入实验设计中。当前抑郁症遗传环境交互研究多以“素质—压力模型”（Diathesis-Stress Model）作为理论基础，认为携带风险基因型的个体在面临压力环境时更容易发生精神障碍，研究中多以压力生活事件作为环境指标。近些年来，新的理论模型“差别易感性模型”（Differential Susceptibility Model）则认为，遗传赋予个体的是对环境敏感性的差异，携带敏感基因型的个体对消极或积极的环境条件同样敏感（Ellis et al., 2011）。因此，未来研究应同样重视积极环境因素的测量，考察“差别易感性模型”理论框架下抑郁症遗传与环境交互作用的表现形式，探讨其在抑郁症治疗干预中潜在的应用价值。

#### 4.4 大数据整合构建预测模型

要全面理解抑郁症的病理机制，我们必须综合考虑个体在基因、脑、环境因素上的差异。已有研究指出 5-HTTLPR 基因型对童年期和成年期的抑郁发展的作用不同（Priess-Groben & Hyde, 2013），表明基因的效应可能会随着年龄的发展而变化，提示我们要从发展的角度看待抑郁、遗传及环境之间的关系。在 Whelan 等（2014）开展的一项大样本追踪研究中，研究者以基因、神经影像、人格、环境、经历等多种维度的数据构建影响青少年酒精滥用的风险模型，对追踪期间被试的酒精滥用情况做出了很好地预测。该研究代表了大数据背景下多维度数据融合的发展方向。将来的抑郁症研究可通过将遗传、神经影像、环境数据整合起来，采取追踪研究的方法，更深入地探索抑郁症发展过程中基因-环境-脑-行为之间相互作用和因果联系。

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# Imaging Genetics of Major Depression Disorder: Exploring Gene-Environment Interactions

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**Abstract** Major Depression Disorder (MDD) is a complex mental disorder characterized by various symptoms including motor, cognitive, and affective abnormalities. It is one of the world's leading causes of disability, lifetime prevalence estimates vary from 8% to 12%. MDD is moderately heritable, identification of genes that underlie susceptibility to MDD will be a major advance in our understanding of its pathophysiological mechanisms, and lead to improved prevention and the development of new and more effective therapies. Although hundreds of behavioral and pharmacogenetic association studies have been performed, clinical association studies still suffer from a lack of replication. Effects of single genes suspected to be linked to MDD have proven to be much smaller than originally expected and their pathogenetic influence is further complicated by gene-gene interactions, gene-environment interactions and disease heterogeneity. In order to address these issues, many have advocated for the use of the intermediate phenotype approach. Intermediate phenotypes describe neurobiological or neuropsychological traits that are linked to both genetic heritability and clinical disorder, they are presumably not only more specific, quantifiable, and reliable than diagnostic phenotypes, but also more proximal to gene function. Neural intermediate phenotypes measured by modern neuroimaging techniques are thought to more directly index the underlying neurobiology of complex phenotypes and hence have the intrinsic potential to bridge the gap between genes and psychiatric diagnostic phenotypes. The rapidly growing field of imaging genetics utilizes neuroimaging as tools to detect the subtle neural impact of genetic variants. More and more researchers are using the imaging genetic approach to investigate how depression-related genetic polymorphisms influence neural activities. Recent research shows that variants of genes are involved in the serotonergic function (i.e. 5-HTTLPR, HTR1A, MAOA, TPH2) associated with alterations of emotion-related neural activity or structure in the amygdala, anterior cingulate cortex, hippocampus, hypothalamus and functional connectivity between them. These regions are thought to be core regions in the pathophysiology of MDD. Other variants of genes that control such biochemicals as dopamine, CRH, BDNF, NPY, FKBP5 impact the function of brain regions that underlie the reward processing and stress responses. Research also found that most of these genes interact with life stressors, suggesting that gene-environment interactions played an important role in the pathogenesis of MDD. Future studies should focus on the following aspects: (1) To address the complex nature of the human genome, researchers should move beyond candidate gene studies, using genome-wide approach to overcome the selection bias. (2) At the neural level, future imaging genetics studies in MDD may combine biochemical measures (e.g., PET and MRS) with fMRI and genetic measures, and integrate structural and functional imaging data. (3) Researchers should attach great importance to the measurement of environmental factors, use observational measures and multiple well-validated measures to make the measurements more reliable. Moreover, future researchers may want to investigate the G×E interaction in the framework of the "differential susceptibility model". (4) To further understand the causes and development of MDD, future studies should integrate neuroimaging, genetic, personality and social environmental factors, using the longitudinal study paradigm to construct a comprehensive model of MDD.

**Key words** major depressive disorder, imaging genetics, intermediate phenotype, gene-environment interaction