



胞泌复合体在植物中的功能研究进展

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摘要 囊泡运输是真核生物的一种重要的细胞学活动, 广泛参与多种生物学过程。该过程主要包括囊泡形成、转运、拴系及与目的膜融合4个环节。目前已知9种多蛋白亚基拴系复合体参与不同途径的胞内转运过程, 其中, 胞泌复合体(exocyst complex)介导了运输囊泡与质膜的拴系过程。对胞泌复合体调控机制的认识主要源于酵母(*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*)和动物细胞的研究。近年来, 植物胞泌复合体的研究也取得了较大进展, 初步结果显示复合体在功能方面具有一些植物特异的调控特点, 广泛参与植物生长发育和逆境响应。该文主要综述胞泌复合体在植物中的研究进展, 旨在为植物胞泌复合体功能研究提供参考。

关键词 囊泡运输, 多蛋白亚基拴系复合体, 胞泌复合体

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囊泡运输是所有真核生物中都存在的一种非常重要的细胞学过程, 负责细胞内膜系统之间及内膜系统与细胞膜之间的物质交流。囊泡运输过程主要包括4个环节: (1) 供体膜出芽形成运输囊泡; (2) 运输囊泡沿细胞骨架转运到靶膜附近; (3) 运输囊泡拴系到靶膜上; (4) SNARE (soluble N-ethyl-maleimide-sensitive fusion protein attachment protein receptor)复合体介导运输囊泡与靶膜发生融合(Bonifacino and Glick, 2004; Cai et al., 2007)。其中, 拴系过程介导运输囊泡与靶膜在空间上的最初接触, 在时空上调控下游膜融合事件的发生, 是调控极性囊泡运输的关键环节。研究表明, 一些蛋白复合体参与囊泡运输的拴系过程, 被称为拴系子(tethers)。拴系子包括两大类: 一类是卷曲螺线蛋白(coiled-coil proteins), 通常以二聚体形式存在, 被称为拴系蛋白; 另一类是多亚基的蛋白复合体(multisubunit tethering complexes, MTCs), 即拴系复合体。目前, 在真核生物中鉴定了9种拴系复合体, 分别是TRAPP I、TRAPP II、TRAPP III、COG、HOPS、CORVET、Dsl1、GARP和胞泌复合体(exocyst)。严格意义上讲, 拴系子需要同时与源于供体膜的囊泡和靶膜上的蛋白及膜脂互

作, 介导两膜在物理空间上的直接接触。目前, 除了少数MTCs和卷曲螺线拴系蛋白外, 对于多数拴系子仍然缺乏直接的实验证据支持(Brunet and Sacher, 2014)。因此, 有学者建议将至今还未明确拴系功能的复合体称为拴系因子(tethering factors)。与SNARE蛋白相比, MTCs的一个特点是其在细胞内具有时空特异性, 即不同MTCs作用于囊泡运输过程中不同目的膜。例如, Dsl1位于内质网, COG在高尔基体, GARP作用于早期内体的返回途径, HOPS和CORVET分别在晚期内体到溶酶体以及内体之间的囊泡运输中发挥作用, TRAPP I/II/III存在于多种不同的囊泡运输途径, 胞泌复合体介导高尔基后囊泡向质膜的拴系过程(Yu and Hughson, 2010)。

胞泌复合体是介导胞吐(exocytosis)的拴系子, 了解其调控机理有助于理解细胞分泌、细胞分裂及细胞极性建立等基本生物学问题。对植物胞泌复合体的研究始于21世纪初(Elias et al., 2003), 研究显示植物胞泌复合体广泛参与植物生长发育和逆境响应。本文阐述真核细胞胞泌复合体的相关研究结果, 讨论胞泌复合体在植物中作用的特点和研究进展, 旨在为该领域研究提供参考。

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1 胞泌复合体是介导高尔基后囊泡运输的拴系子

对胞泌复合体的研究始于酵母细胞, 该复合体最早发现于温度敏感型的酿酒酵母(*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*)突变体中(TerBush and Novick, 1995; TerBush et al., 1996)。胞泌复合体由SEC3、SEC5、SEC6、SEC8、SEC10、SEC15、EXO70和EXO84八个蛋白亚基组成, 后期研究表明该复合体广泛存在于真核生物中(Martin-Urdiroz et al., 2016)。酿酒酵母增殖时, 通过胞吐将子细胞形成相关材料运输到出芽部位, 复合体中的任何一个亚基突变都会导致分泌囊泡在出芽区域细胞质内积累, 而Myo2 (V型肌动蛋白)突变导致囊泡在母细胞的细胞质中累积, 说明复合体作用于囊泡运输的下游(Hsu et al., 2004; Munson and Novick, 2006; Zhang et al., 2008; Songer and Munson, 2009)。活细胞观察显示复合体的8个亚基聚集在胞吐活跃部位: 出芽初期位于出芽部位, 随后分布于正在生长的子细胞, 最后募集于母细胞与子细胞的连接部位(Zhang et al., 2005)。复合体作为拴系子的直接证据来源于酵母异源表达实验, 当酵母SEC3亚基于线粒体膜异位表达时, 可观察到复合体其它亚基和囊泡在线粒体膜募集(Luo et al., 2014)。该过程中SEC3蛋白CorEx基序发挥关键作用(Mei and Guo, 2018)。这一作用特点表明胞泌复合体具有拴系子的功能。

随后, 胞泌复合体在哺乳动物大脑组织中被分离鉴定(Ting et al., 1995; Hsu et al., 1996)。与酵母中的情况类似, 哺乳动物的8个亚基共沉淀于1个743 kDa的复合体(始称SEC6/SEC8, 后改为胞泌复合体)中。细胞学研究表明复合体定位于胞吐活跃的靶膜上(Grindstaff et al., 1998; Vega and Hsu, 2001; Tsuboi et al., 2005; Xiong et al., 2012), 说明胞泌复合体的功能在酵母和动物细胞中保守。除了胞吐过程, 胞泌复合体还参与多种细胞学过程, 如细胞极性建立、初级纤毛发生、胞质分裂、病原体入侵、肿瘤发生和转移(Heider and Munson, 2012; Martin-Urdiroz et al., 2016)。

目前, 植物中编码胞泌复合体的8个亚基的同源基因已被鉴定(Elias et al., 2003)。遗传学、生物化学和细胞学证据显示, 植物胞泌复合体也是以异源八聚体的形式参与胞吐相关的细胞学过程(Hála et al.,

2008; Zarsky et al., 2009)。但是, 目前尚未获得植物胞泌复合体作为拴系子的直接证据。

2 胞泌复合体的作用机制

对胞泌复合体调控机制的认识主要源于酵母和动物细胞。在酵母及动物细胞中, 对于胞泌复合体在靶膜的募集机制还存在分歧。一般认为, SEC3和EXO70不依赖于微丝骨架, 两者能够通过PI2及小GTPase定位到胞吐位置的质膜上(Pleskot et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2018), 其它6个亚基(SEC5、SEC6、SEC8、SEC10、SEC15和EXO84)形成亚复合体(subcomplex), 在小GTPase (SEC4)参与下募集于分泌囊泡, 并依赖微丝骨架运送到胞吐位点, 在其它蛋白作用下, 与膜上的SEC3和EXO70组装成完整的复合体, 从而将囊泡拴系到质膜上(Finger et al., 1998; Boyd et al., 2004) (图1A)。对酵母的研究显示, SEC3与线粒体蛋白(Tom20p)融合蛋白于线粒体异源表达时, 能够介导胞泌复合体其它亚基在线粒体中的募集, 进而导致原本运输到质膜的囊泡向线粒体转运(Luo et al., 2014), 说明SEC3蛋白在复合体组装和囊泡拴系过程中发挥关键作用。

鉴于目前尚未在细胞中分离得到上述亚复合体, 部分研究者认为8个亚基会在胞质中组装成一个完整的、稳定的复合体结构发挥作用。最近, Mei等(2018)利用冷冻电子显微技术对酵母胞泌复合体结构进行了分析, 获得了中等分辨率的完整复合体空间结构。结构信息暗示完整的复合体以分级的方式完成组装。通过复合体蛋白CorEx基序反平行配对, SEC3-SEC5、SEC6-SEC8、SEC10-SEC15和EXO70-EXO84首先形成4个异源二聚体; 然后前两个异源二聚体互相交织组装成1个四螺旋束, 称为亚复合体I, 包括SEC3、SEC5、SEC6和SEC8; SEC10、SEC15、EXO70和EXO84以类似的方式组装成亚复合体II; 最后亚复合体I与II相互作用组装成完整的胞泌复合体(Mei et al., 2018) (图1B)。

最新研究表明, 哺乳动物细胞的胞泌复合体是高度动态的, 其组装方式为先形成2个四聚体亚复合物SC1 (SEC3、SEC5、SEC6和SEC8)和SC2 (SEC10、SEC15、EXO70和EXO84), 然后在胞质中组装成完整的八聚体, 并与囊泡结合共同到达质膜(Ahmed et al., 2018)。有意思的是, 每个亚复合体可单独组装并

与囊泡相关联,但是两者不能单独促进囊泡融合(Ahmed et al., 2018)。研究发现,约65%的SC1和SC2可以组装成完整的八蛋白复合体,约25%的SC1作为独立的亚复合体存在,仅10%的亚基游离,暗示哺乳动物细胞中的胞泌复合体处于游离亚基、亚复合体、八聚蛋白复合体的动态平衡中(Ahmed et al., 2018)。SC1和SC2是否具有独立于复合体的功能值得探讨。

越来越多的实验证据表明,胞泌复合体的功能受到Ras-GTP蛋白家族成员的调控,并与SNARE蛋白发生关联,调控下游的膜融合事件(Heider and Munson, 2012)。质膜上的SEC3可以与小GTPase Cdc42和Rho1互作,参与胞泌复合体在靶膜的组装(Guo et al., 2001; Zhang et al., 2001)。EXO70也可与Cdc42和Rho3互作,介导分泌囊泡与质膜的融合(Adamo et al., 1999; Wu et al., 2010)。SEC3和EXO70

之间的功能关系尚不明确。SEC15通过与分泌囊泡相关的Rab GTPase (SEC4)相互作用被招募到分泌囊泡(Wu et al., 2005),同时在囊泡与质膜融合后促进马达蛋白的释放(Donovan and Bretscher, 2015)。酵母双杂交实验结果显示,在哺乳动物细胞中SEC5可以与Ras家族成员RalA-GTP相互作用,抑制RalA-GTP的活性并影响胞泌复合体的组装,说明RalA通过SEC5调控复合体的形成(Moskalenko et al., 2002) (图1A)。

拴系和膜融合事件在时序上前后紧密相连,胞泌复合体和SNARE复合体之间存在功能关联,二者协同作用可保证在时空上实现胞吐的精确控制。生化和遗传证据证明,胞泌复合体能够直接帮助SNARE复合体组装并参与膜融合事件的发生(Hong and Lev, 2014)。体外实验表明,胞泌复合体亚基可与3种SNARE蛋白、SNARE复合体及其调控蛋白SEC1结

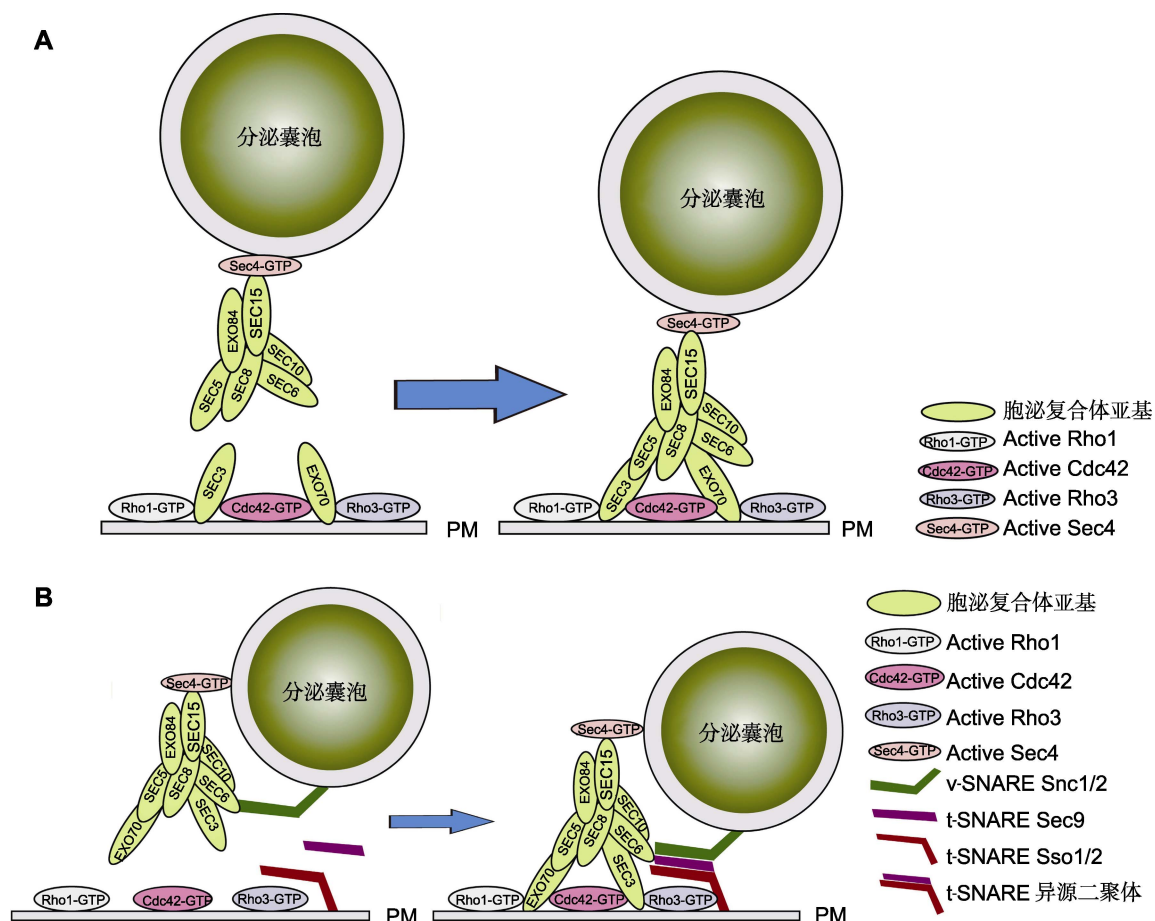


图1 酵母胞泌复合体的工作模型

Figure 1 Working models of yeast exocyst complex

合。酵母SEC3的N端结构域与t-SNARE Sso1/2结合并促进其与t-SNARE SEC9形成二聚体(Yue et al., 2017)。SEC9与v-SNARE Snc1/2的互作有利于稳定囊泡与胞泌复合体的结合(Shen et al., 2013)。另有研究表明, SEC6与t-SNARE (Sec9)互作促进SNARE复合体的组装、纠正错配的SNARE复合体以及激活膜融合发生(Dubuke et al., 2015)。虽然目前尚不明确胞泌复合体与SNARE复合体的作用细节, 但基于现有的证据推测胞泌复合体首先与囊泡上的Rab GTPase、肌球蛋白(myosin)及v-SNARE互作, 启动胞泌复合体构象的改变, 暴露其与质膜和t-SNARE蛋白的作用位点, 从而驱动SNARE复合体的组装, 进而介导囊泡膜与靶膜的融合(图1B)。

3 植物胞泌复合体的功能

细胞和生化证据表明, 植物细胞中的胞泌复合体也是由八蛋白亚基组成异源八聚体(Hála et al., 2008)。与酵母和动物不同, 植物胞泌复合体由多基因编码。例如, 拟南芥(*Arabidopsis thaliana*)基因组包含36个胞泌复合体编码基因(表1)。有趣的是, EXO70亚基的同源基因在陆生植物中存在显著扩增现象: 拟南芥SEC6和SEC8只有1个拷贝, SEC3、SEC5、SEC10和SEC15有2个拷贝, EXO84有3个拷贝, 而EXO70有23个拷贝。相比于酵母及已测序的动物基因组中EXO70的单拷贝(Elias et al., 2003; Chong et al., 2010), 这种多拷贝现象是陆生高等植物所特有的。例如, 小立碗藓(*Physcomitrella patens*)中EXO70有13个成员, 高粱(*Sorghum bicolor*)中有31个成员, 水稻(*Oryza sativa*)中更是多达41个成员。目前, 对植物EXO70多拷贝现象的生物学意义还不清楚。与动物相比, 植物具有多样化的细胞壁及复杂的液泡结构, 内膜系统的组织也与动物细胞有所不同, 表明其演化出了一些植物特有的调控机制。植物中存在多种胞泌复合体是满足其适应环境的需要。

目前, 对于植物胞泌复合体主要集中于遗传学研究, 细胞学研究尚处于起始阶段。已有的研究结果显示, 不同的胞泌复合体参与不同的生物学过程(表2)。在拟南芥中, 胞泌复合体成员SEC3A、SEC6、SEC8、SEC15B和EXO70A1亚基与EXO84B共定位于细胞板, EXO84B突变导致胞质分裂缺陷, 细胞质中有大量囊泡累积, 表明植物胞泌复合体介导的囊泡运输参与细胞板的形成(Fendrych et al., 2010)。玉米(*Zea mays*) SEC3同源物RTH1突变导致根毛变短, 显示RTH1参与根毛极性生长(Wen et al., 2005)。拟南芥SEC3A突变使花粉不能向后代传递, 表明SEC3A的功能对花粉萌发和花粉管生长非常重要(Bloch et al., 2016)。SEC5、SEC6、SEC8和SEC15A突变后同样显示出花粉萌发和花粉管生长缺陷(Hála et al., 2008)。拟南芥和水稻EXO70A1的功能与导管细胞次生壁发育有关(Li et al., 2013; Tu et al., 2015)。另据报道, 拟南芥EXO70A1突变植株生长素的运输和分布发生改变, 导致顶端优势丧失、根生长迟缓和侧根发生推迟等表型, 表明胞泌复合体可能参与PIN1和PIN2的再循环和极性定位(Drdová et al., 2013)。最近有报道显示, EXO70A1参与下胚轴-根转化区(root-hypocotyl junction)的分化, 暗培养的exo70a1幼苗在靠近转化区的下胚轴表皮细胞形成类似根毛的结构, 推测这一表型与生长素信号紊乱有关(Drdová et al., 2019)。EXO70C1在成熟花粉中高效表达, 其突变后会导致花粉管生长迟缓, 花粉的传递效率下降(Li et al., 2010)。EXO70H4在表皮毛细胞壁加厚和胼胝质沉积过程中不可或缺(Kulich et al., 2015)。大麦(*Hordeum vulgare*)基因沉默实验表明, EXO70F类似蛋白参与大麦抵抗真菌浸染的防御反应(Ostertag et al., 2013)。研究发现EXO70I参与丛枝菌根共生过程(Zhang et al., 2015)。BPH6蛋白可以与EXO70E1互作, 调控水稻细胞壁完整性, 抵御褐飞虱取食(Guo et al., 2018)。这些生物学过程都与胞吐关系密切, 暗示植物胞泌复合体广泛参与与胞吐有关

表1 3种模式生物基因组中编码胞泌复合体亚基的基因数目

Table 1 Numbers of genes encoding exocyst subunits in 3 model organisms

模式生物	SEC3	SEC5	SEC6	SEC8	SEC10	SEC15	EXO70	EXO84
酿酒酵母	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
小鼠	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
拟南芥	2	2	1	1	2	2	23	3

的生物学过程,但其具体作用机制尚需阐明。植物胞泌复合体参与囊泡拴系过程的直接证据还不充分。

对植物胞泌复合体EXO70家族的研究一直备受关注。据报道,在烟草(*Nicotiana tabacum*)花粉管生长过程中,EXO70家族的不同成员在时空上呈现不同的定位模式(Sekereš et al., 2017),这暗示EXO70家族成员在同一细胞中参与不同的细胞学过程。EXO70A1是首个被研究的成员,该蛋白在不同细胞类型中定位于不同的结构,在拟南芥根部内皮层细胞中,EXO70A1短暂定位于径向和横向壁下的质膜上,标识凯氏带形成的位置(Kalmbach et al., 2017);在木质部导管细胞,EXO70A1稳定聚集于膜下未明结构,与次生壁加厚位置相关(未发表资料);而在下胚轴细胞,EXO70A1短暂滞留于质膜,参与初生壁的形成(未发表资料)。以上结果说明,EXO70A1在不同细胞中发挥不同功能。不同EXO70蛋白在同一细胞是否参与相同的生物学过程?同一EXO70蛋白是否通过

同一种细胞学机制参与不同生物学过程?均值得深入探讨。

一般认为胞泌复合体在经典囊泡运输途径(conventional secretory pathway)中发挥作用。但也有证据显示,复合体亚基在经典分泌途径之外的细胞学过程中行使功能(Kulich et al., 2013; Ding et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2017)。姜里文研究组利用拟南芥和烟草BY-2细胞表达(X)FP标记的EXO70蛋白同源物,并结合免疫电镜观察,发现了一个称之为EXPO(exocyst positive organelles)的结构(Wang et al., 2010)。他们利用荧光蛋白标记的EXO70E2对EXPO进行鉴定,发现EXPO定位于细胞质、细胞膜和胞外基质,与高尔基体、反式高尔基体网络、早期内体、多泡体和晚期内体的标记物不能共定位,说明该结构未参与经典囊泡运输途径(Wang et al., 2010)。目前,对于EXPO的功能还不清楚,进一步的遗传学研究将有助于明确这一结构的生物学意义。

表2 植物胞泌复合体参与的生物学过程

Table 2 Biological processes involved in plant exocyst complex

生物学过程	参与蛋白	突变体表型	参考文献
顶端生长	ZmSEC3	SEC3同源物RTH1突变导致根毛变短	Wen et al., 2005
	AtSEC3A	突变后花粉萌发和花粉管生长存在缺陷	Bloch et al., 2016
	AtSEC5	突变后花粉萌发和花粉管生长存在缺陷	Hála et al., 2008
	AtSEC6	突变后花粉萌发和花粉管生长存在缺陷	Hála et al., 2008
	AtSEC8	突变后花粉萌发和花粉管生长存在缺陷	Hála et al., 2008
	AtSEC15A	突变后花粉萌发和花粉管生长存在缺陷	Hála et al., 2008
	AtEXO70C1	突变后花粉管生长迟缓,花粉传递效率下降	Li et al., 2010
生长素转运蛋白再循环	AtEXO70A1	突变后生长素的运输和分布发生改变,如丧失顶端优势、根生长迟缓及侧根发生推迟	Drdová et al., 2013
纤维素合酶复合体向质膜的运输	AtSEC5	SEC5A/SEC5B双突变导致幼苗致死	Zhu et al., 2018
干性柱头水分分泌和花粉水合过程	BoEXO70A1	突变后自交不亲和	Samuel et al., 2009
豆科植物的共生及生长发育	GmEXO70J	EXO70J基因沉默后,加速叶片衰老及根瘤数减少	Wang et al., 2016
植物防御反应	OsSEC3A	突变后增强植物防御反应,如水杨酸水平升高,增强对真菌病原体的抗性	Ma et al., 2018
小立碗藓的生长发育过程	PpEXO70.3d	PpEXO70.3d缺失导致原丝体中细胞伸长及分化缺陷	Rawat et al., 2017
胞质分裂	AtSEC6	突变后胚胎发育异常,存在多核细胞	Wu et al., 2013
	AtEXO84B	突变后细胞闭合不全,存在多核现象,细胞内累积大量囊泡	Fendrych et al., 2010
细胞壁形成	AtEXO70A1	突变导致根毛和柱头毛变短	Synek et al., 2006
	AtEXO70H4	突变后检测不到次生细胞壁的形成	Kulich et al., 2015
细胞自噬	AtEXO70B1	突变后液泡中内化的自噬体减少,突变植株出现异位过敏反应	Kulich et al., 2013

4 植物胞泌复合体的调控机制

既然拴系与膜融合事件是一个紧密相连的过程, 二者一定会存在互作关系。已有研究显示, 细胞板形成过程中, 拟南芥SEC6与KEULE直接互作, KEULE属于SM (Sec1/Munc18)家族成员, 参与SNARE复合体调控, 表明植物胞泌复合体通过SM蛋白参与胞质分裂过程中细胞板的形成(Wu et al., 2013)。对酵母的研究表明, SEC9作为SNAP-25 (SNAP-25是SNARE核心复合体的组成部分)的酵母同源物, 与SEC6互作在衔接拴系和膜融合事件中发挥重要作用(鲍永美等, 2005; Sivaram et al., 2005)。但是在植物细胞中复合体与SNARE蛋白的直接互作关系尚未确定。

酵母细胞中活化的SEC4募集于分泌囊泡膜, 并通过与SEC15互作将胞泌复合体的其它成员招募到分泌囊泡。在植物细胞中, 胞泌复合体与小GTPases直接互作的证据尚未见报道, 但研究人员发现拟南芥SEC3A与植物小G蛋白ROP GTPases之间可能通过中间蛋白ICR1发生互作(Lavy et al., 2007), 说明植物胞泌复合体可能通过植物特异的机制受到小GTPases的调控。植物ROP2 (Rho-type GTPase 2)及其下游的RIC7 (ROP-interactive Cdc42- and Rac-interactive binding motif-containing protein 7)负调控拟南芥光诱导的气孔开放。酵母双杂交实验结果表明, RIC7与EXO70B1相互作用, *exo70b1*和*ric7*/*exo70b1*的敲除突变体可延缓光诱导下的气孔开放, 表明ROP2和RIC7通过抑制EXO70B1的功能来阻止气孔过度开放, 暗示EXO70B1介导的囊泡运输参与气孔开放的调控(Hong et al., 2016)。进一步明确植物胞泌复合体和小GTPases的互作关系对深入理解复合体功能至关重要。

对植物胞泌复合体各亚基之间互作关系的了解, 有助于揭示其组装机制和调控特点。目前, 通过酵母双杂交、免疫共沉淀及BiFC等手段已明确拟南芥胞泌复合体成员间的互作关系(Hála et al., 2008; Pečenková et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2013) (图2)。利用遗传学研究已对部分蛋白之间的互作进行了功能验证, 其中, SEC8和EXO70A1共同参与种子外壁中的果胶沉积(Kulich et al., 2010); EXO70B1与SEC5A和EXO84B复合物参与自噬途径(Kulich et al., 2013); EXO70B2和EXO70H1共同参与病原体的响应, 其中

EXO70B2与形成抗病相关的细胞壁附着物有关(Pečenková et al., 2011)。以上结果表明, 植物胞泌复合体亚基在活体中以复合体的形式发挥作用。

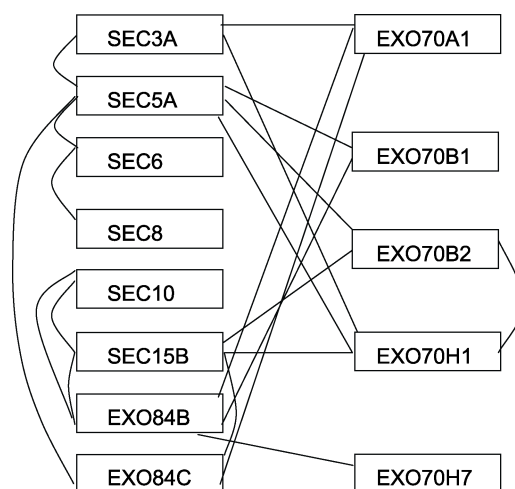


图2 植物中胞泌复合体各亚基的互作关系

Figure 2 Interactions among different exocyst complex subunits in plants

5 结语

已有证据显示, 植物胞泌复合体广泛参与与胞吐有关的生物学过程, 但其是否作为拴系子参与这些过程目前尚无直接实验证据。此外, 复合体通过何种机制与SNARE发生“对话”也是今后的研究重点。最后, 高等植物存在多个EXO70同源基因, 其生物学意义是什么? 是否部分EXO70成员在进化中发生了异化参与胞吐之外的生物学过程? 综上, 目前在分子水平上对植物胞泌复合体的功能还知之甚少, 未来研究工作需要充分结合生物化学、遗传学和细胞学等手段, 确定胞泌复合体在不同生物学过程中的作用特点, 鉴定其体内互作蛋白, 这对阐明植物胞泌复合体功能的分子机制至关重要。

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Research Advances in the Functions of Exocyst Complex in Plants

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Abstract Vesicle trafficking is the biological process involving in budding, translocation, tethering and membrane fusion in all eukaryotic cells. Nine multisubunit tethering complexes (MTCs) are known to play roles in the intracellular transport, and the exocyst complex facilitates the tethering between transport vesicles and the plasma membrane (PM). The regulatory mechanism of the exocyst complex had been extensively studied in yeast and animals, whereas rapid research progress on plant exocyst has been made in recent years. Recent findings show that the plant exocyst complex has unique regulatory characteristics and is widely involved in plant growth, development and stress responses. Here we summarize research progress on the plant exocyst complex to provide a reference for future study of exocyst function in plants.

Key words vesicle trafficking, multisubunit tethering complexes, exocyst complex

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