

哺乳动物嗅觉与母性识别

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摘要: 嗅觉通讯在陆生哺乳动物母性识别中具有重要作用。通过嗅觉信息,早熟性动物(有蹄类)产后早期能够迅速建立专一性的母性识别和母子联系,并具有母性识别的敏感期。在敏感期内,分娩经验、催产素及一氧化氮等神经递质的释放有助于这种识别和联系的形成。多项研究表明,晚熟性动物(如啮齿类)母性识别的形成主要基于断乳前母兽与幼仔共处获得的熟悉性,产后早期不能迅速形成专一性的母性识别和母子联系,母兽对亲生幼仔和非亲生幼仔的选择性哺育不完全取决于识别。实验方法及识别的判定标准对研究啮齿类的母性识别尤其重要。包括人类在内的灵长类母亲产后只通过嗅觉信息即可以对婴儿进行识别。在哺乳动物的母性识别中,妊娠和分娩过程会诱导嗅觉系统的高度可塑性,有利于促进母亲对幼体气味的学习,但硬连接(hard-wired)路径也可能参与母性识别。

关键词: 有蹄类; 啮齿类; 灵长类; 气味; 识别

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Olfaction-Based Maternal Recognition in Mammals

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Abstract: Olfaction communication plays a significant role in maternal recognition of terrestrial mammals. Precocial species (ungulates) rapidly and selectively recognize and form bonds with their offspring by olfactory cues during the immediate postpartum period, which may be a sensitive period for establishing maternal recognition. Parturition experience, release of oxytocin and nitric oxide contribute to underlying the selective recognition of offspring within sensitive period. Contrast with precocial species, many studies have confirmed that establishment of maternal recognition is based on the familiarity from cohabitation with pups before weaning in altricial species (e.g. rodents). They can not rapidly develop a specialized maternal recognition and bonding with pups after parturition. Recognition between own and alien pups does not necessarily ensure discriminative maternal care. Experimental technique and standard of assessing recognition are critical for studying maternal recognition in rodents. Shortly after birth, mothers of primates, including humans, are capable of forming an early maternal recognition by the scent of their newborn infants. Processes of pregnancy and parturition induce a high state of plasticity of the olfactory system, which may facilitate maternal olfactory learning in mammals. It is also possible that hard-wired perceptual processes are involved in maternal recognition.

Key words: Ungulates; Rodents; Primate; Odor; Recognition

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对大多数哺乳动物而言,嗅觉是进行社会识别和获取环境信息的主要感觉通道,通过嗅上皮、主嗅球及其中央投射形成的主嗅觉系统(the main olfactory system)和犁鼻器、附嗅球及其中央投射形成的犁鼻系统(the vomeronasal system)探测气味或信息素^[1]。在亲缘识别中,嗅觉同样具有重要作用。亲缘识别最主要的两个机制是熟悉性(familiarity)和表型匹配(phenotype matching)^[2-3],其中由熟悉性调节的亲缘识别是嗅觉学习的结果^[4-5]。作为亲缘识别的一个重要组成部分,母兽对幼体的识别即母性识别对近亲回避、种群的稳定和发展具有重要意义。由于许多哺乳动物是雌性育幼,母性识别对雌性和幼体尤其重要。它使母兽专一地哺育亲生幼仔,避免错误投资,确保了繁殖成功;同时,使幼仔获得了最大化的母性投资,提高了存活率^[6]。母性识别影响母性抚育的投入,而母性抚育的差异可能是啮齿类(rodsents)、非人灵长类甚至人类认知发育中个体差异的重要影响因素^[7]。集群、出生后幼体的活动能力以及幼体与双亲分离的时间都可能影响母性识别^[8]。这些生物学特征在早熟性动物(precocial species)、晚熟性动物(altricial species)和灵长类(primates)中有所不同,本文将就这些动物嗅觉介导的母性识别差异进行综述。

1 早熟性动物的母性识别

早熟性动物主要指有蹄类(ungulates),它们在不断的移动中觅食,新生幼体运动能力和体温调节能力较强,可以很快地站立并跟随母亲活动。由于在一个群体中亲生和非亲生幼体可能同时出生,母兽进化出了产后能够迅速、专一地与亲生幼体建立识别和联系的能力。这已在绵羊(*Ovis aries*)、山羊(*Capra hircus*)、牛(*Bos taurus*)和马(*Equus caballus*)中得到了证实。研究发现,母羊产后2~4 h内会接受任何羔羊,之后母羊则只哺育自己的后代,拒绝给其他羔羊哺乳^[9]。因此,产后2~4 h是母羊识别自己羔羊的敏感期。

去除母羊的嗅球或用硫酸锌破坏嗅上皮,母羊会接受其他羔羊。但在母羊妊娠期,切除犁鼻神经则不会影响其产后的母性行为和识别,可见母羊对自己羔羊气味的识别记忆由主嗅觉系统介导^[10],而非犁鼻系统^[11]。但也有报道认为母羊通过犁鼻器可以识别产后1~2 d的羔羊,在母羊哺乳时,犁鼻器的探测最终决定对羔羊的识别^[12-13]。我们推测在母羊识别的敏感期内,主嗅觉系统诱导形成母性识别,其后犁鼻系统参与了这种记忆的再现。催产素(oxytocin, OT)和加压素(vasopressin, AVP)在动物学习和社会识别中有重要作用^[14]。无论经产还是首产的母羊分娩时OT都显著增加,但经产母羊的OT增加更多,AVP的释放在这两者没有明显的变化。将OT和AVP注射于经产和首产母羊的嗅球,OT能使二者嗅球内的γ-氨基丁酸(γ-aminobutyric acid, GABA)释放增加;在经产母羊中,OT和AVP能使乙酰胆碱(acetylcholine, Ach)和去甲肾上腺素(noradrenaline, NE)增加,在首产母羊中却无此效应或增加较少。这说明嗅球中OT的释放有利于调节GABA、Ach和NE的释放,这三种递质是嗅觉记忆中的基础物质,但在首产母羊分娩时,这些物质释放的较少^[15-16]。模仿分娩效应,用雌激素和孕激素刺激非妊娠母羊的阴道及子宫,能够诱导OT的释放,促使母羊对非亲生羔羊表现出母性行为^[17]。以上实验说明分娩时OT的释放是母羊与羔羊建立亲密母子联系的主要决定因素,阴道及子宫的刺激有助于母性行为的启动和母性识别,分娩经验增加了脑对OT作用的敏感性,能有效地易化母羊神经递质的释放,有助于促进母羊对幼体的快速识别。行为实验也表明,经产的母羊在后代识别上用的时间比首产的母羊少。去除羔羊身上的羊膜液,首产的母羊对羔羊的嗅舔和哺乳行为会减少,攻击行为会增加;但经产的母羊只减少了嗅舔行为^[18]。在母羊对自己羔羊识别的敏感期内,利用神经元型一氧化氮合酶(neural nitric oxide synthase, nNOS)抑制剂L-NARG能够阻止该嗅觉记忆的形成,向主嗅球注射一氧

化氮(nitric oxide, NO)能够反转该效应。鸟苷酸环化酶(guanylate cyclase, GC)的拮抗剂ODQ也能阻止该记忆的形成。记忆形成后再抑制nNOS,不会伤害记忆的再现。说明在母羊对羔羊的气味学习中,NO-cGMP通路对记忆的形成有重要作用,但不参与记忆的再现^[19]。

在母羊对羔羊气味识别期间,梨状皮层(piriform cortex)、嗅觉杏仁核(olfactory amygdala)、眶前皮层(orbitofrontal)和内侧前额叶皮层(frontal media cortex)的c-fos表达会增强^[20-21],说明这些脑区接受嗅球信息传入后,神经活动增强,可能发生了与记忆形成有关的神经可塑性。内侧杏仁核(medial amygdaloid nucleus)及皮质杏仁核(cortical amygdaloid nucleus)参与对羔羊气味记忆的获得,二者失活会抑制对羔羊气味的识别^[22]。梨状皮层参与对羔羊气味记忆的再现,眶前皮层和内侧前额叶皮层是巩固羔羊气味记忆的位点,内侧前额叶皮层失活会抑制母羊对陌生羔羊的攻击^[23-24]。这些实验表明母羊对羔羊气味记忆的形成,由多个中枢位点参与,它们相互联系,共同对气味信息进行编码和整合。

2 晚熟性动物的母性识别

晚熟性动物主要指大多数啮齿类、犬科动物(canids)和猫科动物(felids)。这些动物大多具有较固定的巢穴,产仔较多,新生幼仔的感觉和运动能力非常有限,常聚集于巢中^[25]。人们对晚熟性动物的母性识别有两种看法,一种认为晚熟性动物的幼仔,在依赖母亲期间只要呆在巢中或巢区附近,母亲随时可以找到它们,没有母性识别的必要^[26]。如拜氏黄鼠(*Spermophilus beldingi*)的幼仔只要呆在巢中,幼仔和母鼠之间没有识别。交叉抚育发现,雌性拜氏黄鼠也会衔回和抚育25日龄前的非亲生幼仔,但对25日龄后的幼仔表现出攻击行为。与此相应的是,幼仔在22日龄后才能够辨别母鼠和陌生雌鼠,这一时间也正好是幼仔随母鼠离巢与其他家庭单元交流的时间^[27]。但更多的实验证实了另一种看法,即母鼠产后与幼

仔共处一段时间后,能够形成母性识别。如小鼠产后3d内可以辨别亲生和非亲生幼仔。将同品系、同龄的不同窝小鼠幼仔,置于双亲前,两性均花费较长的时间嗅闻和嗅舔非亲生幼仔^[28]。哺乳期内雌、雄布氏田鼠(*Lasiopodomys brandti*)的育幼行为、探究行为和杀婴行为,也表明它们具有辨别亲生幼仔的能力^[29]。群居的草原田鼠(*Microtus ochrogaster*)不能辨别1~4日龄的亲生和非亲生幼仔,但可以辨别断乳后(22~24日龄)的亲生和非亲生幼仔^[30]。动物对某种气味的偏好与其嗅觉记忆相匹配^[31],如非洲刺毛鼠(*Acomys cahirinus*)产后2d不能分辨亲生和非亲生幼仔,但产后8d则偏好亲生幼仔,即使此时它们仍然接受和哺育新生的非亲生幼仔^[32]。这些实验结果说明,不同种属的啮齿类动物,母性识别形成的时间不同。虽然由于遗传原因,母子之间具有相似的气味特征,但幼仔气味会随着日龄的增加而拥有自身特征。因此,母鼠对幼仔气味有一个学习记忆的过程。

为什么许多母兽在能够识别亲生和非亲生幼仔的情况下还会抚育非亲生幼仔^[33-35]?动机假说认为,母兽产后的一段时间内收养非亲生幼仔不是因为它们不能辨别,而是因为它们有很强的与幼仔交往的母性动机^[33]。因此,母兽对非亲生幼仔的抚育或攻击不完全取决于是否能够识别,不能简单地用识别与否来解释,也与母性动机有关,母性动机有可能掩盖母性识别。这种母性动机可能与母鼠的妊娠、分娩及哺乳等内部生理状态及非亲生幼仔的发育有关^[35]。熟悉性、亲缘关系、母兽激素水平、母性经验、幼仔性别、日龄和大小等因素都会影响雌性的母性行为^[17, 35-39]。因此,对亲生和非亲生幼仔的辨别能力对于选择性抚育不是必须的。在探讨母性识别时,要区分母性抚育和母性识别的不同,衔回行为、弓背蹲伏行为或其他形式的母性抚育行为虽然在一定程度能够反映母性识别,但它不能准确反映母兽的实际意图^[6]。例如,以衔回行为作为识别指标,研究哺乳期雌性八齿鼠(*Octodon degus*)的母性识别时,发现

雌鼠不能辨别亲生和非亲生幼仔^[40],但用习惯化-去习惯化方法进行研究却发现,雌鼠能够辨别不同亲缘关系的幼仔^[6]。因此,实验方法及识别判定标准的不同,得出的结果可能不同甚至相反。这是对晚熟性动物母性识别看法不同的一个重要原因。

用硫酸锌破坏非洲刺毛鼠的嗅上皮可以消除母鼠对非亲生幼仔的攻击^[27],说明主嗅觉系统在其母性识别中的重要作用。大多数动物肛殖区的气味与信息素相关,主要由犁鼻器探测^[13],幼仔出生后前三周,虽然母鼠嗅舔其肛殖区与刺激幼仔排尿和排便有关^[41],但这种嗅舔也有利于对幼仔的识别。由于晚熟性动物产后不能迅速形成特异性的母性识别和母子联系,不是研究母性识别神经化学机制的理想模型,因此,对其母性识别神经机制的研究较少。虽然OT和AVP在啮齿类母性识别的研究中未见报道,但二者作为动物社会识别的神经内分泌基础^[14,42],可能在母性识别中具有重要作用。在小鼠妊娠后期,视上核nNOS mRNA表达减少,内源性NO下降,导致产后视上核更多地释放OT^[43]。OT的释放与调节雌鼠分娩和分娩后的母性行为有关,但也可能有助于产后对幼仔的识别;NO主要抑制OT的分泌,但也可能加强OT对嗅觉记忆的获得和巩固作用^[44]。研究发现,经产雌性大鼠的非空间和空间记忆能力显著高于首产的雌性,其嗅球内的多巴胺(dopamine,DA)及其代谢物DOPAC,NE及其代谢物MHPG,5-羟色胺(serotonin,5-HT)及其代谢物5-HIAA,其浓度也高于首产雌鼠,而且经产雌鼠海马CA1区和侧隔(lateral septum)的脑源性神经营养因子(brain-derived neurotrophic factor,BDNF)水平也较高,这些物质变化可能有助于母鼠记忆水平的提高^[45]。虽然育幼经验能够增加雌鼠的衔回行为和超声识别^[37],但分娩经验是否有助于雌鼠对幼仔的气味识别还不能确定。

3 灵长类的母性识别

灵长类婴儿出生后,虽然运动能力有限,但

母亲能够带着他自由行动,母性识别的形成时间从产后几小时到产后几周不等。对粗尾丛猴(*Galago crassicaudatus*)和婴猴(*G. senegalensis*)的研究发现,产后雌性不能识别4日龄的幼猴,但通过嗅觉和视觉可以识别7日龄的幼猴^[46]。食蟹猴(*Macaca fascicularis*)需要2个月才能形成对自己幼猴的选择性^[47]。而且,非人灵长类与人类一样,虽识别并且偏爱自己的孩子,但也会抚育其他母亲的孩子^[33]。产后6d,人类母亲能够通过婴儿穿过的贴身衣服识别自己孩子的气味^[48]。具有高水平皮质醇的母亲产后2d即能够识别自己孩子的气味,更易被孩子的气味吸引,因此推测下丘脑-垂体-肾上腺轴的活动可能有助于母性识别^[49]。产后早期的熟悉性,如母亲与婴儿接触的时间长短会影响这种识别^[25]。灵长类因视力、生态位、社会组织和脑相对大小的改变,使嗅觉通讯的重要性下降,并导致了犁鼻系统的缺失[原猴类(prosimian)及新世界猴除外]和主嗅觉系统结构的简化^[50],其社会识别主要依赖于视觉和听觉。但是,嗅觉不发达的非人灵长类和人类母亲能够在产后很短的时间内识别婴儿的气味,说明嗅觉识别是哺乳动物亲缘识别中一个保守而重要的途径。

4 结语

早熟性动物(有蹄类)、晚熟性动物(主要是啮齿类)和灵长类的母性识别能力及识别程度的不同与所处环境和自然选择的压力有关,并与母兽的生殖投资和收益相适应。有蹄类存在母性识别的敏感期,早期的嗅觉识别对其母子联系的发育尤其重要。在敏感期内,分娩经验,OT及NO等神经递质的释放有助于这种识别和联系的快速形成。啮齿类产后不能迅速形成专一性的母性识别和母子联系,母性识别或辨别主要基于母兽与幼仔断乳前共处获得的熟悉性^[6,36,51]。母兽对亲生和非亲生幼仔的识别对选择性哺育不是必须的。选择合适的识别指标和实验方法,有助于对其母性识别的神经机制进行深入研究。灵长类母亲对婴儿气味进行

识别时,早期熟悉性也非常重要,它是调节母性识别最普遍的机制^[52-53]。妊娠和分娩过程会诱导母兽嗅觉系统的高度可塑性,有利于促进对幼体的气味学习^[25,54],但母性识别也可能独立于环境因素的诱导,通过硬连接(hard-wired)的感知路径进行识别(预设定机制,predisposed mechanisms)^[55]。在母性识别中,早期熟悉性调节的识别更多地与嗅觉学习记忆的神经可塑性有关。表型匹配、亲缘关系或主要组织相容性复合体(major histocompatibility complex,MHC)调节的识别可能与预设定机制有关。对有蹄类、啮齿类和灵长类母性识别的研究,将有助于认识人类母性识别和母子联系的神经化学机制,并有助于提高我们对正常或非正常母性行为及婴儿发育的认识。

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