



实时荧光核酸恒温扩增检测技术在乙型肝炎病毒感染者低病毒载量样本检测中的优势分析及临床验证*

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【摘要】目的 探讨实时荧光核酸恒温扩增检测技术(simultaneous amplification and testing, SAT)在乙型肝炎病毒(HBV)感染者低病毒载量样本检测中的优势及其临床应用价值。**方法** 以逆转录实时荧光定量PCR法(RT-qPCR)检测为参照,评估实时荧光核酸恒温扩增检测技术(SAT)的检测性能(包括线性范围、精密度和检出限)。两种方法检测样品均为HBV核糖核酸(RNA)国家标准品。共纳入170例慢性HBV感染者进行方法学比较,根据血清HBV DNA水平将其分为高水平组(>100 IU/mL, n=111)和低水平组(≤100 IU/mL, n=59),验证两种方法检测结果的相关性和一致性。进一步基于1006例慢性HBV感染患者数据分析HBV RNA的分布特征及其与HBV标志物的相关性。**结果** SAT与RT-qPCR法检测HBV RNA相比,线性范围更宽($10^2 \sim 10^8$ copies/mL vs. $10^3 \sim 10^8$ copies/mL),低浓度样本精密度更高(批内变异系数4.23% vs. 12.82%),检出限更低(50 copies/mL vs. 500 copies/mL)。在临床样本检测中,SAT法总体检出率高于RT-qPCR法(72.35% vs. 57.64%, $P < 0.01$),在HBV DNA低水平组中SAT法检出率亦高于RT-qPCR法(50.85% vs. 28.81%, $P = 0.007$)。大样本分析显示,在HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL的患者中,仍有40.4%可检出HBV RNA,且HBsAg ≥ 100 IU/mL者阳性率达55.5%。相关性分析显示,HBV RNA与HBsAg($r = 0.506$)及HBeAg($r = 0.454$)均呈中等强度正相关,与ALT($r = -0.098$)及AST($r = -0.082$)呈微弱负相关(P 均<0.05)。**结论** SAT法在检测低水平HBV RNA时具有更高的灵敏度与稳定性。HBV RNA可作为评估病毒转录活性的血清学标志物,在HBV DNA阴性或低水平患者的临床管理中具有应用价值。

【关键词】 乙型肝炎病毒 实时荧光核酸恒温扩增检测技术 临床试验 超低限检测 共价闭合环状DNA(cccDNA)

Analysis of the Advantages and Clinical Validation of Real-Time Fluorescence Nucleic Acid Isothermal Amplification Detection Technology in Detecting Low Viral Load Samples From HBV-Infected Patients

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[Abstract] Objective This paper examines the advantages and clinical application value of simultaneous amplification and testing (SAT) real-time fluorescent nucleic acid isothermal amplification detection technology for detecting low viral load samples in individuals infected with hepatitis B virus (HBV). **Methods** Using reverse transcription real-time fluorescence quantitative PCR (RT-qPCR) as the reference, the detection performance of real-time fluorescence nucleic acid isothermal amplification detection technology (SAT) was evaluated, including linear range, precision, and detection limit. Both methods were used to detect samples, which were the national standard substances of

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hepatitis B virus ribonucleic acid (HBV RNA). A total of 170 patients with chronic HBV infection were included for methodological comparison. They were divided into a high-level group (serum HBV DNA > 100 IU/mL, $n = 111$) and a low-level group (serum HBV DNA ≤ 100 IU/mL, $n = 59$) based on serum HBV DNA levels. The correlation and consistency of the test results from the two methods were evaluated. Additionally, the distribution characteristics of HBV RNA and its correlation with HBV markers were analyzed using data from 1006 patients with chronic HBV infection. **Results** Compared with the RT-qPCR method for detecting HBV RNA, the SAT method demonstrated a wider linear range (10^2 - 10^8 copies/mL vs. 10^3 - 10^8 copies/mL), higher precision for low-concentration samples (intra-assay coefficient of variation: 4.23% vs. 12.82%), and a lower detection limit (50 copies/mL vs. 500 copies/mL). In clinical sample testing, the overall detection rate of the SAT method was higher than that of the RT-qPCR method (72.35% vs. 57.64%, $P < 0.01$), and the detection rate of the SAT method was also higher in the HBV DNA low-level group (50.85% vs. 28.81%, $P = 0.007$). Large-sample analysis showed that among patients with HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL, 40.4% still had detectable HBV RNA, and the positive rate for HBsAg ≥ 100 IU/mL was 55.5%. Correlation analysis indicated that HBV RNA was moderately positively correlated with HBsAg ($r = 0.506$) and HBeAg ($r = 0.454$), and weakly negatively correlated with ALT ($r = -0.098$) and AST ($r = -0.082$) (all $P < 0.05$). **Conclusion** The SAT method offers higher sensitivity and stability in detecting low-level HBV RNA. HBV RNA can serve as a serological marker for evaluating viral transcription activity and has clinical application value in managing patients who are HBV DNA-negative or have low HBV DNA levels.

[Key words] Hepatitis B virus Simultaneous amplification and testing Clinical trial Ultra-low limit detection Covalently closed circular DNA (cccDNA)

乙型肝炎病毒(hepatitis B virus, HBV)感染所致的疾病负担仍是全球公共卫生领域的重大挑战之一^[1-2]。第69届世界卫生大会确立了至2030年消除其公共卫生威胁的战略目标,其中针对乙型肝炎的具体防治指标为:新发感染率降低90%,相关死亡率降低65%;同时将诊断率和治疗率分别提升至90%和80%^[3]。现有的抗病毒治疗方案可有效降低慢性乙型肝炎(chronic hepatitis B, CHB)患者体内HBV载量^[4-5],但难以彻底清除肝细胞内具有转录活性的共价闭合环状DNA(covalently closed circular DNA, cccDNA),这也是许多患者停药后容易复发的原因之一^[6]。因此,定量检测cccDNA在临床上具有重要意义^[7]。当前,cccDNA的检测方法主要依赖于肝组织活检这一有创操作^[8],难应用于临床,因此亟需一种无创、简便有效的方法评估其在肝组织内的表达水平及转录活性^[9]。

既往研究表明,cccDNA作为病毒转录的关键模板^[10],在HBV复制过程中可转录产生多种不同长度的病毒mRNA,包括前基因组RNA(pregenomic RNA, pgRNA)及其他亚基因组mRNA^[11]。血清HBV RNA主要来源于cccDNA的转录产物,其组成具有明显异质性,核心成分为pgRNA及其衍生变体(如3'端截短形式和剪接变体)^[12-13]。因此,血清中的HBV RNA被视为评估肝内cccDNA水平及其转录活性的潜在无创性生物标志物^[14],可用于预测CHB患者停药后病毒学复发风险及肝细胞癌发生风险等^[15]。目前,HBV RNA的常用检测技术主要包括实时荧光核酸恒温扩增检测技术(simultaneous amplification and testing, SAT)、逆转录实时荧光定量

PCR(reverse transcription quantitative PCR, RT-qPCR)、cDNA末端快速扩增逆转录PCR和液滴式数字PCR等方法^[16-17]。当前,现阶段国际上仍缺乏统一的HBV RNA检测方法,不同检测方法的检测标准品及赋值规则存在差异,可能导致检测结果的可比性不足^[18]。为推动该检测指标的标准化,中国食品药品检定研究院研制出“HBV RNA检测试剂国家标准品”,可用于评价HBV RNA定量试剂盒的性能,提升不同检测试剂间的溯源性与标准化,以确保检测试剂的质量及不同试剂可比性,并且为试剂盒性能评估提供准确定量的标准^[19]。

本研究拟采用HBV RNA检测试剂国家标准品,以逆转录实时荧光定量PCR法(RT-qPCR)为参照,评估实时荧光核酸恒温扩增检测技术(SAT)检测乙型肝炎病毒核糖核酸(HBV RNA)的性能,特别是其在低病毒载量样本检测中的优势。通过170例临床样本验证其检测结果的相关性和一致性,并基于1006例大样本数据进一步分析HBV RNA的临床分布特征,以期为HBV RNA检测方法的标准化和临床应用提供实验依据。

1 资料与方法

1.1 对象

本研究共纳入170例慢性HBV感染者进行方法学比较,根据血清HBV DNA水平将其分为高水平组(> 100 IU/mL, $n = 111$)和低水平组(≤ 100 IU/mL, $n = 59$)。为进一步分析HBV RNA的临床分布特征,另纳入1006例慢性HBV感染者进行扩展研究。所有病例均为2023年12月-2024年

10月福建医科大学附属第一医院收治的患者。研究方案已获得福建医科大学附属第一医院伦理委员会的审核批准,批准号:闽医大一伦理医研(2023)546。受试者均在知情同意基础上纳入研究,研究过程遵循《赫尔辛基宣言》制定的伦理准则。

病例入选参考《慢性乙型肝炎防治指南(2022年版)》^[20]:所有患者均符合慢性HBV感染的定义,即HBsAg和/或HBV DNA阳性持续至少6个月,且均为初治患者(入组前未接受过任何抗病毒治疗)。排除标准包括:合并甲型、丙型、丁型或戊型肝炎病毒等其他嗜肝病毒感染,合并人类免疫缺陷病毒感染,合并自身免疫性肝病、酒精性肝病、药物性肝损伤等其他病因肝病,合并恶性肿瘤(包括肝细胞癌),合并严重心、脑、肾等重要脏器功能障碍,以及妊娠或哺乳期女性。

1.2 标本存放

收集的血清样本分装后放置于 $-80\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 冰箱,冻融不超过3次。

1.3 主要试剂与仪器

全自动医用PCR分析仪及全自动核酸提取仪购自西安天隆科技有限公司;全自动核酸分析仪及HBV RNA测定试剂盒(SAT法)购自上海仁度生物科技有限公司;HBV DNA定量检测试剂盒(PCR-荧光探针法)包括普通HBV DNA(定量下限 100 IU/mL)与高敏HBV DNA(定量下限 20 IU/mL)两种规格均购自湖南圣湘生物科技有限公司;Applied Biosystems 7500 实时荧光定量PCR仪购自美国Thermo Fisher Scientific公司;HBV RNA定量测定试剂盒(PCR-荧光探针法)购自北京热景生物技术股份有限公司;HBV RNA检测试剂国家标准品购自中国食品药品检定研究院;Abbott Architect-i2000全自动免疫分析仪购自美国Abbott公司。

1.4 SAT

采用全自动核酸分析系统(AutoSAT)进行血清HBV RNA测定。取 $400\text{ }\mu\text{L}$ 血清样本与病毒核酸提取液混合, $60\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 孵育 10 min ;冷却至室温后进行杂交捕获;磁性吸附后弃去废液;使用洗涤液清洗磁性颗粒两次;扩增检测体系包括含RNA靶标的磁性颗粒、扩增检测液及酶液,于 $42\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 反应 40 min ,实时采集荧光信号并分析。该试剂盒线性范围为 $10^2\sim 10^8\text{ copies/mL}$,检测下限为 50 copies/mL ,定量下限为 100 copies/mL 。

1.5 RT-qPCR

使用全自动核酸提取仪(磁珠法)从 $200\text{ }\mu\text{L}$ 血清中提取HBV RNA,经DNase消化及RNA酶抑制剂处理后,通过PCR进行反转录与扩增检测。反应程序包括: $95\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 1 min ;

$60\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 30 min (反转录); $95\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 1 min ; $95\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 15 s , $60\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 30 s ,共45个循环(扩增); $25\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ 10 s 。实时采集荧光信号并分析。该试剂盒线性范围为 $10^3\sim 10^8\text{ copies/mL}$,检测下限为 300 copies/mL ,定量下限为 500 copies/mL 。

1.6 性能评价

参照中国合格评定国家认可委员会及美国临床和实验室标准协会发布的《分子诊断检验程序性能验证指南(2019版)》《临床化学定量检验程序性能验证指南(2019版)》及EP15-A3文件要求,对上述方法的线性范围、精密度与检出限进行验证^[21-23]。线性范围验证采用HBV RNA国家标准品,以阴性血清按说明书线性范围进行梯度稀释,取3次重复检测浓度的均值进行线性回归分析。精密度验证选用高、低两个浓度的HBV RNA混合血清样本,连续检测5日,每日每浓度5个复孔,分别统计批间和批内变异系数(coefficient of variation, CV)。检出限验证采用试剂说明书标示的检出限浓度,进行20次重复检测以验证其检出性能。

1.7 HBV标志物测定

采用Abbott Architect-i2000全自动免疫分析仪定量检测乙型肝炎e抗原(hepatitis B e antigen, HBeAg)及乙型肝炎表面抗原(hepatitis B surface antigen, HBsAg)浓度;采用Applied Biosystems 7500实时荧光定量PCR仪对HBV DNA进行定量检测;罗氏Cobas 8000全自动生化分析仪检测丙氨酸氨基转移酶(alanine aminotransferase, ALT)与天门冬氨酸氨基转移酶(aspartate aminotransferase, AST);采用Tecan高效全自动酶免分析仪检测HBV外膜大蛋白(large HBV surface protein, LHB)。

1.8 统计学方法

采用GraphPad Prism 9.0及SPSS 26.0软件进行数据统计分析与图形绘制。HBV RNA、HBV DNA、HBsAg、HBeAg及LHB定量结果经对数转换后进行相关性分析,ALT和AST保持原值。方法学性能评价中,线性范围采用线性回归分析,计算回归方程及决定系数 R^2 ;精密度以批内和批间CV评估;检出限以20次重复检测的阳性检出率验证。临床样本分析中,两种方法检出率比较采用McNemar配对卡方检验;两种方法检测HBV RNA的一致性评价(包括配对t检验、Pearson相关分析、Bland-Altman法及一致性相关系数CCC)定义为主要研究终点;HBV RNA与其他指标的相关性采用Pearson相关分析,并报告相关系数 r 及其95%置信区间;不同临床特征分组的HBV RNA阳性率采用描述性统计分析。 $P<0.05$ 为差异有统计学意义。HBV RNA与其他指标的相关性分析及临床分布特征分析均为探索性研究内容。

2 结果

2.1 两种方法的性能评价

2.1.1 线性范围

SAT方法检测HBV RNA的线性范围为 $10^2 \sim 10^8$ copies/mL, 其线性公式为 $y = 1.17x - 0.7065$ ($R^2 = 0.9993$, $P < 0.01$) (图1A), 而RT-qPCR的线性范围为 $10^3 \sim 10^8$ copies/mL, 其线性公式为 $y = 1.133x - 1.814$ ($R^2 = 0.9954$, $P < 0.01$) (图1B)。

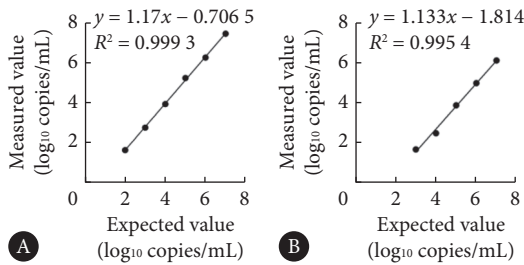


图1 两种方法检测HBV RNA的线性范围性能评价

Fig 1 Evaluation of the linear range performance of two methods for HBV RNA detection

HBV: hepatitis B virus; SAT: simultaneous amplification testing; RT-qPCR: reverse transcription quantitative polymerase chain reaction. A, Standard curve of SAT for detecting 10^2 - 10^8 copies/mL of the HBV RNA national reference standard. B, Standard curve of RT-qPCR for detecting 10^3 - 10^8 copies/mL of the HBV RNA national reference standard.

2.1.2 精密度

精密度评估过程中, 分析计算得到SAT方法检测高浓度HBV RNA批内、批间CV分别为1.70%、7.15%, 检测低浓度HBV RNA的批内、批间CV分别为4.23%、10.75%; RT-qPCR方法检测高浓度HBV RNA批内、批间CV分别为1.33%、1.98%, 低浓度批内、批间CV分别为12.82%、18.43%。见表1。

2.1.3 检出限

在检出限验证方面, SAT方法在50 copies/mL浓度下进行20次重复检测均检出, 与说明书标示一致; 而RT-qPCR

表1 两种方法检测HBV RNA的精密度的

Table 1 The precision of two methods for detecting HBV RNA

Method	Concentration level	Measured value ($\bar{x} \pm s$)	Intra-assay CV/%	Inter-assay CV/%
SAT	High	8.72 ± 0.43	1.70	7.15
	Low	2.98 ± 0.32	4.23	10.75
RT-qPCR	High	6.71 ± 0.13	1.33	1.98
	Low	2.93 ± 0.54	12.82	18.43

CV: coefficient of variation.

方法在500 copies/mL水平可全部检出, 但在300 copies/mL浓度下20次检测中仅检出9次, 未达到其说明书标示的检出限性能。

2.2 两种方法检测HBV RNA的相关性与一致性

在170例慢性HBV感染者中, SAT法HBV RNA整体检出率高于RT-qPCR法 ($P < 0.01$)。分层分析显示, 在HBV DNA > 100 IU/mL组 ($P = 0.002$) 及 ≤ 100 IU/mL组 ($P = 0.007$) 中, SAT法检出率均高于RT-qPCR法 (表2)。

表2 SAT与RT-qPCR法检测不同HBV DNA水平患者血清HBV RNA的检出率

Table 2 Detection rates of serum HBV RNA by SAT and RT-qPCR in patients with different HBV DNA levels

Group	SAT/case (%)	RT-qPCR/case (%)	P
HBV DNA > 100 IU/mL (n = 111)	93 (83.78)	81 (72.97)	0.002
HBV DNA ≤ 100 IU/mL (n = 59)	30 (50.85)	17 (28.81)	0.007
Total (n = 170)	123 (72.35)	98 (57.64)	< 0.01

HBV: hepatitis B virus; SAT: simultaneous amplification testing; RT-qPCR: reverse transcription quantitative polymerase chain reaction. P values were calculated using McNemar's test for paired comparisons.

两种方法检测HBV RNA的定量值呈正相关 [$r = 0.9065$, 95%置信区间(confidence interval, CI): 0.8754 ~ 0.9301], Bland-Altman分析显示平均偏倚为-0.02个单位(单位为 \log_{10} copies/mL) (图2A), CCC为0.90; 配对t检验结果显示, 两种方法的定量检测值差异无统计学意义 ($t = 0.2287$,

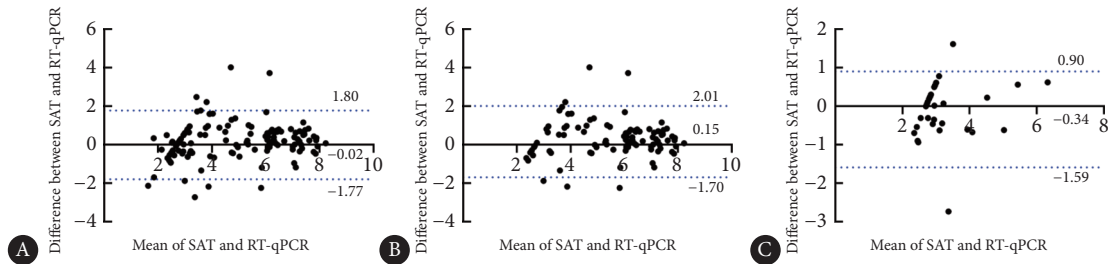


图2 两种方法检测HBV RNA的一致性比较

Fig 2 Agreement comparison of HBV RNA detection between the two methods

HBV: hepatitis B virus, SAT: simultaneous amplification testing; RT-qPCR: reverse transcription quantitative polymerase chain reaction. Bland-Altman plots of HBV RNA measured by the two methods in all 170 samples (A), HBV DNA-positive samples (B), and HBV DNA-negative samples (C). The solid lines represent the mean difference, and the dashed lines represent the 95% limits of agreement.

$P=0.819$)。进一步按HBV DNA水平分层分析,在HBV DNA > 100 IU/mL组中,两种方法的相关性为 $r=0.8919$ (95%CI: 0.8461 ~ 0.9246),绝对偏倚为0.15个单位(图2B),CCC为0.74,配对 t 检验差异无统计学意义($t=1.689$, $P=0.094$)。在HBV DNA ≤ 100 IU/mL组中,两种方法的相关性为 $r=0.7527$ (95%CI: 0.6152 ~ 0.8458),绝对偏倚为-0.34个单位(图2C),CCC为0.67,配对 t 检验结果显示差异有统计学意义($t=4.125$, $P<0.001$)。以上结果提示,SAT法在低病毒载量样本的检测中具有更高的灵敏度。

2.3 两种方法检测的HBV RNA与HBV标志物的相关性

SAT法检测170例样本的HBV RNA与HBV DNA呈高度正相关($r=0.7897$, 95%CI: 0.7254 ~ 0.8403),与HBsAg ($r=0.6416$, 95%CI: 0.5404 ~ 0.7245)及HBeAg ($r=0.5278$, 95%CI: 0.4099 ~ 0.6284)呈中等强度正相关。RT-qPCR法检测的HBV RNA亦呈现类似的相关性:与HBV DNA呈高度正相关($r=0.7612$, 95%CI: 0.6897 ~ 0.8180),与HBsAg($r=0.6099$, 95%CI: 0.5058 ~ 0.6965)及HBeAg($r=0.5669$, 95%CI: 0.4552 ~ 0.6610)呈中等强度正相关。

2.4 基于SAT技术的HBV RNA临床分布特征

为明确SAT法检测HBV RNA的临床应用价值,本研究分析了慢性HBV感染者中HBsAg水平与病毒复制及转录活性的关系。在1006例研究对象中,4例患者HBsAg检测结果缺失(因原始检测资料缺失),相关分层分析基于有效样本1002例进行。当HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL(931例)时,仍有66.8%的患者(622例)HBsAg水平 ≥ 100 IU/mL,仅32.9%的患者(306例)HBsAg水平较低(< 100 IU/mL)。相比之下,HBV DNA ≥ 2000 IU/mL的高复制组中(15例)高HBsAg比例为60.0%(9例),提示HBsAg水平在低DNA载量阶段并未同步下降。按HBV RNA水平分层分析发现,HBV RNA高水平组(HBV RNA ≥ 2000 copies/mL)中(196例),高HBsAg水平患者占比高达91.8%(180例);即使在HBV RNA低水平组($50 \leq$ HBV RNA < 2000 copies/mL)中(220例),该比例亦维持在91.8%(202例),而在HBV RNA < 50 copies/mL组中(590例),高低HBsAg水平的患者比例相近[49.8%(294例) vs. 49.7%(293例)]。

进一步分析1006例研究对象不同临床特征分组下的HBV RNA检出情况(表3),发现在HBV DNA ≥ 2000 IU/mL的患者中,HBV RNA阳性率为80.0%(12/15);在 $20 \leq$ HBV DNA < 2000 IU/mL组中降至46.7%(28/60);而在HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL的患者中,仍有40.4%(376/931)样本HBV RNA阳性。HBsAg水平同样对HBV RNA的检出具有重要影响:HBsAg ≥ 100 IU/mL者HBV RNA阳性率达

56.5%(382/676),而HBsAg < 100 IU/mL者下降至10.1%(33/326)。此外,HBeAg阳性患者HBV RNA阳性率高于阴性者(80.6% vs. 30.3%)。值得注意的是,在HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL的患者中,若HBsAg ≥ 100 IU/mL,仍有55.5%(345/622)样本HBV RNA可检出;而HBsAg < 100 IU/mL者阳性率仅10.1%(31/306)。综上,HBV RNA在传统DNA指标阴性的患者中仍具有较高检出率,其存在与HBsAg水平及HBeAg状态密切相关,提示HBV RNA可作为反映低复制状态下病毒转录活性的敏感补充指标。

表 3 不同临床特征慢性HBV感染患者的血清HBV RNA检出情况

Table 3 Serum HBV RNA positivity according to clinical characteristics in patients with chronic HBV infection

Variable	Subgroup	<i>n</i>	HBV RNA positive/case (%)
HBV DNA level	≥ 2000 IU/mL	15	12 (80.0)
	20-2000 IU/mL	60	28 (46.7)
	< 20 IU/mL	931	376 (40.4)
HBsAg level	≥ 100 IU/mL	676	382 (56.5)
	< 100 IU/mL	326	33 (10.1)
HBeAg status	Positive	211	170 (80.6)
	Negative	772	234 (30.3)
Special subgroups	HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL and HBsAg < 100 IU/mL	306	31 (10.1)
	HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL and HBsAg ≥ 100 IU/mL	622	345 (55.5)

2.5 HBV RNA与其他病毒学及生化指标的相关性分析

1006例研究对象的相关性分析结果显示(表4),HBV RNA与HBsAg($r=0.506$, $P<0.001$)、HBeAg($r=0.454$, $P<0.001$)及LHB($r=0.503$, $P<0.001$)均呈中等强度正相关,提示HBV RNA水平与病毒转录活性及表面抗原表达密切相关。相比之下,HBV RNA与HBV DNA呈弱相关($r=0.098$, $P=0.002$),显示两者虽同属病毒复制相关指

表 4 HBV RNA与其他病毒学及生化指标的相关性分析

Table 4 Correlation between serum HBV RNA and other virological and biochemical parameters

Parameter	<i>n</i>	Correlation coefficient (<i>r</i>)	95% CI	<i>P</i>
HBV DNA	1006	0.098	0.035 to 0.161	0.002
HBsAg	933	0.506	0.455 to 0.553	< 0.001
HBeAg	983	0.454	0.401 to 0.504	< 0.001
LHB	700	0.503	0.444 to 0.558	< 0.001
ALT	997	-0.098	-0.161 to -0.035	0.001
AST	997	-0.082	-0.145 to -0.018	0.009

HBV: hepatitis B virus; HBsAg: hepatitis B surface antigen; HBeAg: hepatitis B e antigen; LHB: large HBV surface protein; ALT: alanine aminotransferase; AST: aspartate aminotransferase. Except for ALT and AST, serum HBV RNA and other virological markers (HBV DNA, HBsAg, HBeAg, and LHB) were log₁₀-transformed before correlation analysis.

标,但反映的生物学过程并不完全一致。此外,HBV RNA与ALT($r = -0.098, P = 0.001$)及AST($r = -0.082, P = 0.009$)呈微弱负相关,提示HBV RNA水平与肝细胞损伤程度相关性较低。总体结果表明,HBV RNA更能反映病毒的持续转录状态,而非炎症活动水平,尤其在HBV DNA阴性或低复制阶段,HBV RNA仍可作为反映病毒活动度的可靠补充指标。

3 讨论

肝细胞内cccDNA的持续存在是HBV感染难以根治的关键,但其检测依赖肝穿刺,临床应用受限^[24-26]。血清HBV RNA作为cccDNA转录活性的可靠替代标志物^[27-28],其检测方法的标准化是推动临床应用的前提^[29]。本研究通过比较SAT与RT-qPCR两种方法的性能与临床适用性,为HBV RNA的精准检测提供了依据。

本研究采用HBV RNA检测试剂国家标准品对现阶段常用的SAT、RT-qPCR两种检测方法进行性能评估。结果显示,SAT具有较广的检测范围,低浓度样本检出能力更强,在50 copies/mL即可100%检出,而RT-qPCR在300 copies/mL水平仅部分检出。两种方法的精密度均较好,表明其检测结果可靠稳定。

在临床应用中,SAT法的HBV RNA总体检出率(72.35%)高于RT-qPCR法(57.64%),这一优势在HBV DNA ≤ 100 IU/mL的患者中尤为突出(50.85% vs. 28.81%)。尽管两种方法整体相关性良好($r = 0.9065$),但在低水平病毒载量组中两种方法的定量值差异有统计学意义,提示SAT更适用于评估病毒低复制状态下的残余转录活性。研究报道,靶向HBV基因组不同区域检测的血清HBV RNA检测结果可能存在差异^[30],可能是两种方法所用引物或探针靶点的不同,以及RNA提取过程中富集程度的差异所致。此外,部分样本(尤其是RT-qPCR法)未能检出HBV RNA,这可能与RNA的快速降解或DNA消化过程中的RNA丢失有关,从而影响定量结果的准确性。两种方法检测所得HBV RNA与HBV DNA、HBsAg、HBeAg均呈正相关,这与既往研究结果一致^[31]。

基于1 006例患者的分布特征分析,本研究发现在HBV DNA < 20 IU/mL的患者中,仍有40.4%的样本HBV RNA可被检出,且高HBsAg水平(≥ 100 IU/mL)者HBV RNA阳性率达55.5%,高于低HBsAg者(10.1%)。同时,HBeAg阳性患者的HBV RNA检出率亦高于阴性者(80.6% vs. 30.3%)。这些结果表明,HBV RNA在HBV DNA检测阴性阶段仍能反映病毒转录活性,与HBsAg和HBeAg水平均呈正相关。结合本研究结果可推测,HBV

RNA的持续检出提示cccDNA仍存在一定的转录活性,即使病毒复制受到抑制,仍存在低水平的病毒转录。相关性分析进一步支持HBV RNA作为病毒持续活动指标的价值。HBV RNA与HBsAg、HBeAg及LHB呈中等强度正相关(r 值均 > 0.45),提示HBV RNA水平与cccDNA的转录输出密切相关;而与HBV DNA呈弱相关($r = 0.098$),显示二者虽同属病毒复制标志,但反映的生物学环节不同。此外,HBV RNA与ALT、AST呈微弱负相关,说明HBV RNA水平不直接反映肝细胞炎症损伤程度,而更多体现病毒的潜在转录状态。

尽管本研究对两种HBV RNA检测方法进行了性能评估,但仍存在以下局限性:第一,方法学比对的样本量相对较小,且未纳入更多检测方法进行比较。第二,HBV RNA与各临床指标的相关性分析及临床分布特征分析均为探索性研究内容,未对多重检验进行校正,所得P值仅作为描述性指标,相关结果应视为产生临床假设的依据。后续研究需进一步扩大样本量、增加对比方法种类并开展多检测体系的并行分析,同时进行多重检验校正,以全面评估方法的检测效能与临床应用潜力。

总之,SAT法在检测低水平HBV RNA方面优于RT-qPCR,能更灵敏地反映病毒转录活性。HBV RNA是评估HBV感染者,尤其是DNA阴性患者病毒学状态的可靠补充指标,具有重要的临床推广应用价值。

* * *

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