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图像流式细胞仪在中华绒螯蟹血细胞分群及吞噬功能研究中的应用

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摘要: 为了更精确地对甲壳动物血细胞进行快速分类和功能分析, 本研究以中华绒螯蟹为例, 依据其血细胞内具有颗粒结构的特征, 与常规显微观察对比, 探讨了一种基于图像流式细胞仪的血细胞自动化分类新方法, 并测量了体质量为(10±3)g的中华绒螯蟹的血细胞对直径1 μm微球的吞噬情况。结果显示, 两种方法都可将中华绒螯蟹血细胞分为4个类群。显微镜观察分类基于胞内可见颗粒, 但由于缺乏精细的量化标准, 批次样品的人工辨识结果波动较大; 而图像流式方法以胞内全部颗粒结构为对象, 利用高精度检测模块测量, 结果更准确、客观, 而且通量高、重复性好。测量结果显示, 中华绒螯蟹血淋巴中无颗粒、小颗粒、中颗粒及大颗粒细胞占比分别为40.62%±2.65%、36.68%±6.84%、7.80%±1.16%和16.51%±5.60%, 依据测量的颗粒特征区分的4个类群界限清晰, 缺乏过渡样点, 提示各类细胞之间可能没有相互转化。进一步的活体微球吞噬实验证实, 中华绒螯蟹的4类血细胞都具有吞噬功能, 并以无颗粒细胞为主要吞噬类群; 吞噬微球的细胞比例在注射后6 h内呈钟型曲线变化, 4 h可达峰值(5.69%±0.44%), 表明中华绒螯蟹血细胞能高效清除血淋巴中的异物。研究表明, 图像流式细胞仪适合于中华绒螯蟹的血细胞分类分析和功能研究, 本研究结果为同类研究提供了重要参考, 将有助于更全面地了解甲壳动物血细胞的功能。

关键词: 中华绒螯蟹; 血细胞; 分类; 吞噬; 图像流式细胞仪

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中华绒螯蟹(*Eriocheir sinensis*)亦称河蟹, 是我国重要的淡水养殖品种, 具有极高的经济价值。随着近年来养殖规模的扩大, 养殖环境越来越堪忧, 病害也日益严重, 导致养殖的品质和产量都显著下降, 制约了该行业的进一步发展。甲壳动物虽然不具有特异性免疫系统, 但依然可以抵御各种病原及异物的入侵, 表明其自身的非特异性免疫系统的功能比较完善。非特异性免疫应答由细胞免疫和体液免疫构成, 前者包括由完整细胞执行的吞噬、包掩等功

能。而利用溶于血淋巴中的各种酶类、杀伤因子及调节因子等分子清除异物和调节细胞应答的功能则属于体液免疫^[1-5], 参与体液免疫的很多活性分子是由各类血细胞合成并分泌的, 因此, 血细胞在甲壳动物免疫系统中占有中心地位, 其系统的分类研究和功能分析也备受瞩目^[6-8]。然而, 目前在甲壳动物的血细胞分类以及吞噬细胞的种类等重要问题方面尚未形成较为一致的观点^[9-12]。

近年来出现的一种新型图像流式细胞仪与

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常规流式细胞仪相比,升级了测量系统,增添了更多测量参数,更重要的是其在收集测量数据的同时还可采集每个样点在各个通道的图像^[1],避免了回收镜检等一系列繁琐的操作,适合于尚无成熟检测方法的样品进行探索性分析。本研究尝试利用新型图像流式细胞仪开展中华绒螯蟹血细胞分类分析及功能研究,以期建立一种更具实用性的自动化分析方法。

1 材料与方法

1.1 实验对象

实验用中华绒螯蟹体质量(10±3)g,取自天津某养殖场,置于实验室循环养殖系统暂养,水温(20±1)℃,每天投喂2次,1周后选取附肢完整、体表无损伤、活动正常的个体用于实验,每组3只。实验中所用的抗凝剂参考洪宇航等^[14]的方法配制(338 mmol/L氯化钠、115 mmol/L葡萄糖、30 mmol/L柠檬酸三钠、10 mmol/L乙二胺四乙酸二钠, pH=7.0)。黄绿色荧光微球购自Thermo-Fisher,直径为1 μm。多聚甲醛购自生工生物工程(上海)股份有限公司;其他试剂均为国产,分析纯。

1.2 实验方法

血细胞样品制备 用一次性1 mL注射器吸取预冷的抗凝剂,从中华绒螯蟹的附肢基部抽取等体积血淋巴,经过4%的多聚甲醛固定后再用预冷的PBS缓冲液重悬,4℃保存备用。

血细胞类群分析 本研究所使用的荧光显微镜为Leica DM 5000型,图像流式细胞仪为Merck Millipore公司FlowSight多维全景分析仪。将上述细胞悬液经70 μm细胞筛过滤后分别进行显微镜观察和上机检测。显微镜观察采集1 000×细胞图像,根据胞内可见颗粒的大小、数量等特征进行类群区分;流式分析采集明场(BF)和侧向散射(SSC)通道的测量数据以及同步获取图像信息。每个样品收集30 000个细胞样点的数据,经IDEAS Application软件处理和分析后,分别以侧散强度(intensity)和面积(area)为横、纵坐标做散点图,依据图中细胞分布情况划分细胞类群,并与显微镜观察结果对比。

血细胞吞噬功能分析 参考Lv等^[12]的方法,使用无菌的微量注射器从中华绒螯蟹心脏

部位注射25 μL(约 7.5×10^8 个)荧光微球,并于注射后2、4、6及24 h从中华绒螯蟹步足基部抽取血淋巴,按前述方法制备检测样品进行显微观察和流式分析。显微观察通过叠加明场与荧光视场图像,判断血细胞吞噬微球情况。流式分析采集30 000个样点的BF、SSC及微球的荧光检测通道(488 nm)的测量数据及图像,利用IDEAS Application软件对比分析。

2 结果

2.1 血细胞的类群

根据胞内颗粒状况差异,显微镜观察和流式分析均可将中华绒螯蟹血细胞分为无颗粒、小颗粒、中颗粒及大颗粒细胞4个类群(图1,图2),其中无颗粒及小颗粒血细胞类群合计占比在两种方法中均超过2/3。显微观察基于胞内具有折光性的可见颗粒结构区分各类血细胞。无明显可见颗粒结构的即为无颗粒血细胞;小颗粒血细胞内多散在分布一些大小不一且较为细碎的颗粒,数量波动较大;中颗粒血细胞中一般会遍布大小较均匀的略大颗粒结构;大颗粒血细胞内多充满直径约为细胞直径1/10的大型颗粒。由于小颗粒血细胞内除了颗粒大小和分布不均之外,还存在颗粒数量范围波动较大的情况,所以有些小颗粒血细胞显微观察区分度也不够高。而流式分析依据的则是精确测量获得的每个样点侧向散射值反映出的胞内全部颗粒结构总量及分布等特征,准确度高、重复性好,因此本研究主要依据流式测量结果对中华绒螯蟹血细胞进行类群鉴别与分析,同时也将显微镜观察结果作为必要的参考和佐证。将单细胞样点的测量数据分别以侧向散射强度(intensity)和面积(area)为横、纵坐标,可将中华绒螯蟹血细胞分为R1~R4共计4个类群(图2),各个类群之间具有明显的低丰度区间,构成了清晰的设门边界。R1类群为无颗粒血细胞,分布区间位于散点图的底部,表明血细胞内没有明显的颗粒分布,同步采集的明场图像也显示胞质内呈透明状。R2类群为小颗粒血细胞,分布于散点图左上方,其侧散强度和面积较R1类群都有所增加,表明其中有散在分布的颗粒结构,但颗粒复杂度不高。明场和侧散通道的图像显示胞内存在颗粒结构。R3类群为中颗粒血细胞,其样点集中分布于散点图的右下方,侧散强度大,表

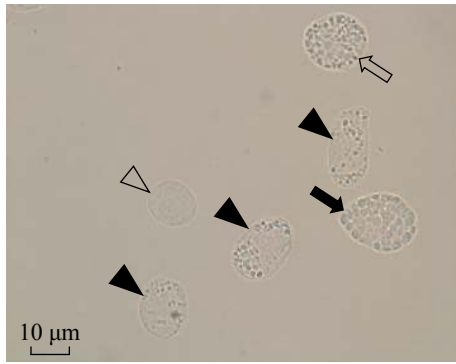


图1 显微镜观察分类中华绒螯蟹血细胞(1 000×)

△. 无颗粒细胞; ▲. 小颗粒细胞; ↗. 中颗粒细胞; ➤. 大颗粒细胞

Fig. 1 Classification of *E. sinensis* hemocytes by microscopic observation (1 000×)

△. non-granular hemocyte; ▲. small-granular hemocyte; ↗. intermediate-granular hemocyte; ➤. large-granular hemocyte

明其中具有较为复杂的颗粒结构, 明场通道图像可以佐证其中具有高折光性结构, 侧散通道图像显示胞内颗粒信号明显。R4类群为大颗粒血细胞, 集中分布于散点图的右上方区域, 表明胞内具有大量复杂颗粒, 明场及侧散通道图像显示胞内充满高折光性结构。R1~R4各类群血细胞占血细胞总量的比例分别为40.62%±2.65%、36.68%±6.84%、7.80%±1.16%、16.51%±5.60%。

2.2 血细胞的吞噬功能

吞噬功能的显微观察分析 注射后2 h显微观察显示, 4类血细胞都可吞噬微球, 但以无颗粒血细胞为主要吞噬类群。注射后4~6 h区间血细胞吞噬的微球数量维持在高位, 可见许多细胞内部含有更多的微球, 其中无颗粒血细胞的吞噬能力显著高于其他几类血细胞, 少数无颗粒血细胞内部聚集了大量微球, 占比甚至超过血细胞体积的4/5, 以至于将细胞核挤到细胞边缘(图3)。

吞噬功能的图像流式分析 利用IDEAS Application软件分析测量的数据和同步采集的图像, 作图分析并分别计算各个时间点吞噬微球的血细胞占全部血细胞的比例以及含有不同数量微球的血细胞占全部吞噬血细胞的比例, 其中吞噬微球的数量区间与荧光强度范围对应关系可通过图像辅助识别确定(图4)。吞噬微球的血细胞数量呈现钟型曲线变化趋势, 在注射2 h后迅速上升, 并于4 h达到最大, 占比为5.69%±

0.44%, 此后经过短时间的快速下降后降幅逐渐趋缓(图5)。吞噬不同数量微球的血细胞占比也呈现类似的变化趋势。注射后早期(2 h)吞噬1个微球的血细胞上升较快并达到峰值, 随后逐步下降, 但在各个采样点都保持较大比例。吞噬2个微球的血细胞比例变化趋势与吞噬单微球的基本一致, 但整体波动幅度较小。吞噬3个及以上微球的血细胞数量在测量时间范围内呈现快速升高、逐步积累以及缓慢下降的特点。总体而言4~6 h区间为吞噬高峰期, 与显微观察结果一致。

3 讨论

血细胞在甲壳动物免疫防御过程中发挥着中心作用, 既参与细胞免疫, 又参与体液免疫^[1, 4-5]。当外来病原或异物入侵时, 血细胞通过吞噬、包裹、结节等作用将其直接杀死或清除, 同时释放免疫因子如酚氧化酶原级联系统、溶菌酶、抗菌肽等参与体液免疫^[15]。利用甲壳动物细胞表面分子标志进行分类的技术目前尚不完善, 其他基于显微或亚显微的分析方法可将甲壳动物血细胞分为3~4类, 但都未形成较为一致的量化分类标准。Dall^[16]依据细胞形态差异将滑背新对虾(*Metapenaeus mastersii*)的血细胞分为3类, 但忽视了部分未经固定的血细胞存在自然变形的问题^[17]。Gupta等^[18]和Kumar等^[19]根据血细胞的大小、核质比等形态学特征将束腹蟹(*Paratelphusa masoniana*)和锯缘青蟹(*Scylla serrata*)血细胞分为透明血细胞、半颗粒血细胞及颗粒血细胞3类。陆宏达等^[20-21]、洪宇航等^[14]和周凯等^[22]进一步综合了胞内颗粒的折光性、形成方式以及嗜酸、碱性等特征, 将中华绒螯蟹和锯缘青蟹的血细胞分为无颗粒血细胞(洪宇航等^[14]命名为透明细胞)、小颗粒血细胞、中间型(颗粒)血细胞以及大颗粒血细胞4类。徐海圣等^[17]认为Martin等^[23]以显微镜直接观察血细胞中是否有颗粒以及颗粒本身的大小为分类依据的方法较客观, 也更具实用性。本研究仅对中华绒螯蟹血细胞做固定处理, 然后分别用显微镜和图像流式细胞仪分析其血细胞类群。结果表明, 两种方法都可分辨出4个类群的血细胞。显微观察可以辨识出不同血细胞内具有大小不同、数量不等的颗粒结构, 胞内颗粒多的细胞占比较小, 与流式测量接近。但由于小颗粒血细胞内的颗粒大小、数量和分

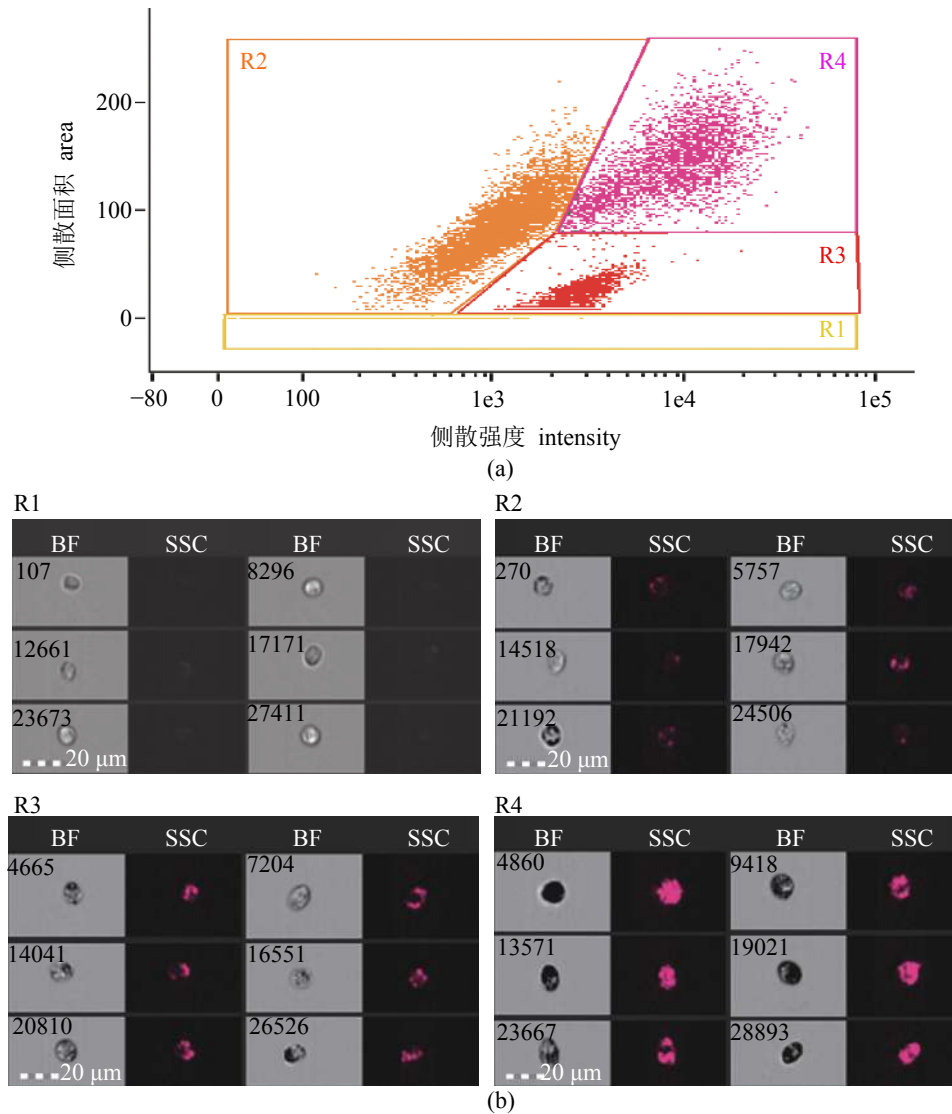


图 2 中华绒螯蟹血细胞的图像流式分类分析

(a) 血细胞分群散点图, (b) 4个类群血细胞分别对应的明场与侧向散射通道的图像; BF. 明场通道图像, SSC. 侧向色散通道图像, R1. 无颗粒血细胞类群, R2. 小颗粒血细胞类群, R3. 中颗粒血细胞类群, R4. 大颗粒血细胞类群

Fig. 2 Classification of hemocyte of *E. sinensis* by imaging flow cytometry

(a) the scatter diagram of 4 populations, (b) images from bright field channels and side scatter channels of 4 populations separately; BF. images from bright field channel, SSC. images from side scatter channel, R1. non-granular hemocyte population, R2. small-granular hemocyte population, R3. intermediate-granular hemocyte population, R4. large-granular hemocyte population

布都不均匀, 其与中颗粒及无颗粒血细胞之间的区分度欠佳, 导致批次分析结果波动较大。因此, 在实际操作中通过显微观察进行精确分群的难度较大。

流式细胞术作为快速、高通量分析单细胞各种特征的利器, 已在一定程度上取代了显微镜观察等人工方法, 应用于医学检测领域^[24], 并逐步推广至水生动物血相的研究中^[25]。常规流式细胞仪一般可将甲壳动物血细胞分为3个类群^[26]。冼建安等^[27-30]利用流式细胞术将多种甲壳动物的

血细胞划分为透明血细胞、小颗粒血细胞及大颗粒血细胞3个类群。Thayappan等^[31]将鼠蟬蟹 (*Emerita emerita*) 的血细胞划分为透明血细胞、半颗粒血细胞及颗粒血细胞3类。FlowSight多维全景流式细胞仪属于新型图像流式细胞仪的一种, 增加了测量参数, 提高了测量精度, 改进了管路设计, 并创新性地加入了各个测量通道的图像采集功能, 便于一次测量、多次分析, 避免了回收细胞再检测等繁琐的操作。本研究将图像流式细胞仪引入甲壳动物血细胞分析,

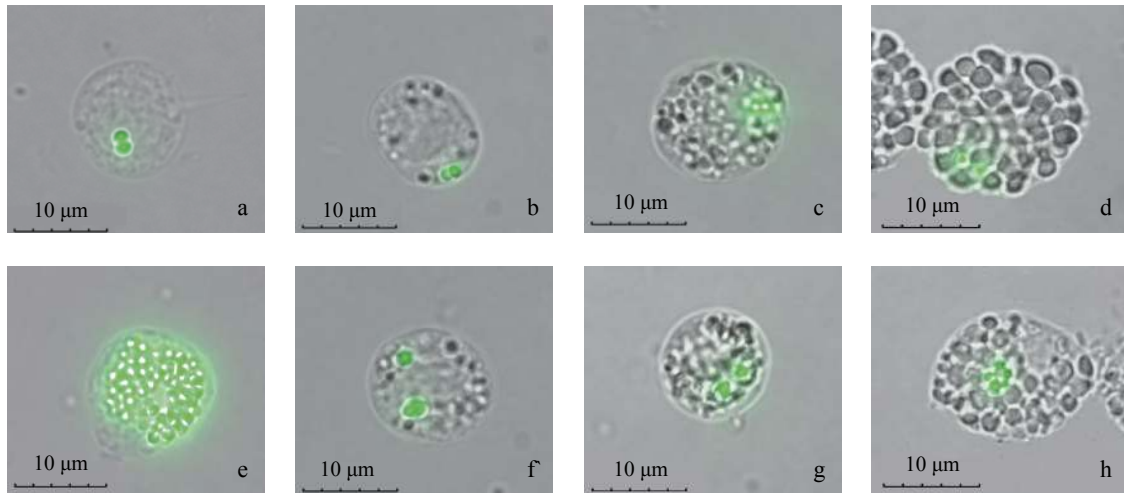


图 3 吞噬荧光微球的中华绒螯蟹血细胞(1 000×)

a~d.注射 2 h 后 4 类血细胞的吞噬情况; e~h.注射 4 h 后 4 类细胞的吞噬情况; a, e.无颗粒血细胞, b, f.小颗粒血细胞, c, g.中颗粒血细胞, d, h.大颗粒血细胞

Fig. 3 *E. sinensis* blood cells containing fluorescent microspheres (1 000 ×)

a-d. 4 kinds of blood cells contained fluorescent microspheres at 2 h after injection; e-f. 4 kinds of blood cells contained fluorescent microspheres at 4 h after injection. a, e. non-granular hemocyte; b, f. small-granular hemocyte; c, g. intermediate-granular hemocyte; d, h. large-granular hemocyte

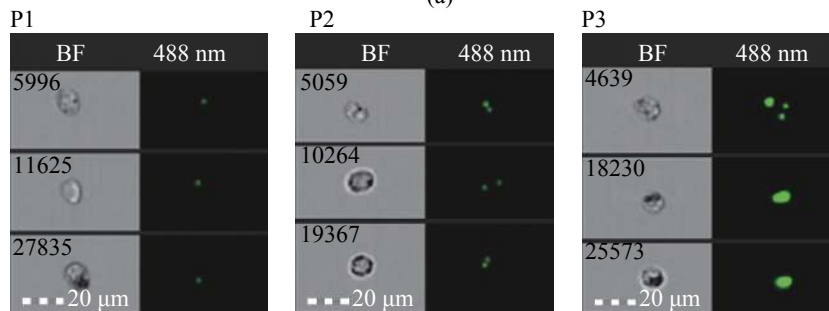
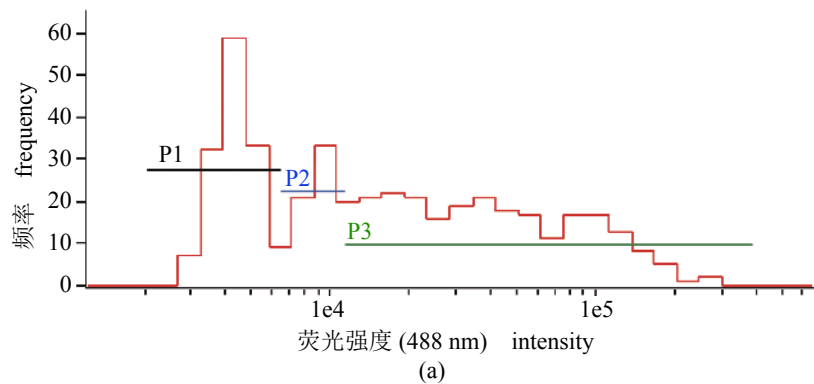


图 4 胞内荧光微球数量与荧光强度的对应关系

(a). 荧光微球数量与荧光强度对应关系图, (b). 图像流式细胞仪采集的含有微球的细胞图像; P1 是吞噬 1 个微球的荧光强度分布, P2 是吞噬 2 个微球的荧光强度分布, P3 是吞噬 ≥3 个微球的荧光强度分布; 图(b)中左侧数字表示细胞通过检测器的顺序

Fig. 4 Correlation of the number and fluorescent intensity of engulfed microspheres

(a). histogram of the relationship between the number and fluorescent intensity of engulfed microspheres, (b) images of the phagocytic cells and engulfed fluorescent microspheres; P1. fluorescent intensity range of cells contained 1 engulfed microsphere, P2 fluorescent intensity range of cells contained 2 engulfed microspheres, P3. fluorescent intensity range of cells contained 3 or more engulfed microspheres; the numbers in (b) at the left shows the order in which cells pass the detector

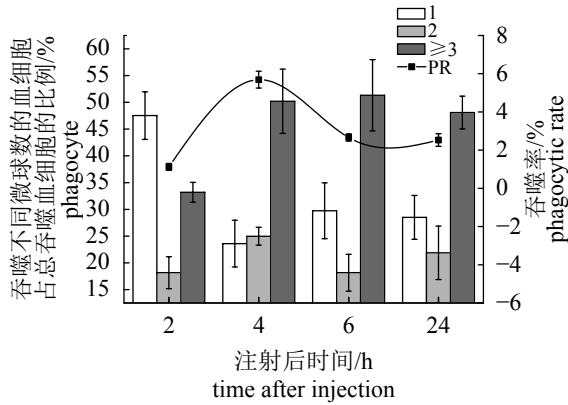


图5 中华绒螯蟹血细胞吞噬功能的统计分析

PR. 吞噬率, 表示吞噬微球的血细胞占全部血细胞的比例; 1、2及 ≥ 3 分别表示吞噬不同数量微球的血细胞占全部吞噬微球血细胞的比例

Fig. 5 Statistical analysis on phagocytosis of *E. sinensis* blood cells

PR. phagocytic ratio, the ratio of blood cells contained engulfed microsphere to all blood cells; 1, 2, ≥ 3 represent the ratios of blood cells contained different number of engulfed microsphere to all the cells contained engulfed microsphere separately

根据反映胞内颗粒结构总量的侧向散射强度和面积的差异可将中华绒螯蟹的血细胞清晰地分为大颗粒、中颗粒、小颗粒以及无颗粒血细胞4个类群。其中无颗粒血细胞占比最大, 约为 $40.62\% \pm 2.65\%$, 中颗粒血细胞数最少, 约为 $7.80\% \pm 1.16\%$ 。虽然分群结果与陆宏达等^[20-21]、洪宇航等^[14]的研究相似, 均为4个类群, 但各类血细胞的组成比例却存在明显的差异。陆宏达等^[20]的研究显示中华绒螯蟹的大颗粒血细胞占比为 $49.8\% \pm 7.5\%$, 无颗粒血细胞仅占 $0.2\% \pm 0.2\%$; 而在洪宇航等^[14]的研究中, 含量最多的是小颗粒血细胞 $33.54\% \pm 0.98\%$, 含量最少的中间型颗粒血细胞占比为 $15.31\% \pm 2.01\%$ 。出现这些差异的原因可能是因为研究者按照样品处理后在显微镜或电镜下可辨识的颗粒结构区分各类血细胞^[14, 20-21], 而本研究则依据图像流式细胞仪测量的侧向色散数据所反映的胞内颗粒状况差异对血细胞类群加以区分。另外, 不同来源、不同生长时期的同种动物之间的各项测量参数本身也会存在一定范围的差异。多项同类研究也指出, 在甲壳类动物中, 不同类型血细胞数的变化(differential haemocyte counts, DHC)与发育、增殖和环境压力等诸多因素有关, 这也在一定程度上反映了这些生物的免疫反应状态^[32-33]。

吞噬作用是甲壳动物最为重要的细胞免疫功能之一^[34], 当外源物质侵入机体时, 吞噬细胞能够有效地识别, 并将其吞入胞内消除^[35]。血细胞不仅能吞噬入侵机体的病原微生物, 对一些人造异物(例如微球)也有吞噬作用。微球不仅可以模拟病原等异物而且不容易被细胞消化, 所以常用于细胞吞噬功能的研究^[36]。执行吞噬功能的血细胞常因甲壳动物种类不同而存在差异^[37-38]。Sung等^[9]发现透明细胞是罗氏沼虾(*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*)的主要吞噬细胞类群; Sung等^[10]和Matozzo等^[11]也证明斑节对虾(*Penaeus monodon*)和艾氏滨蟹(*Carcinus aestuarii*)的血细胞中只有透明细胞具有吞噬能力。与此对应的观点认为美洲螯龙虾(*Homarus americanus*)、断沟龙虾(*Panulirus interruptus*)和大斜吻蟹(*Loxorhynchus grandis*)血淋巴中的半颗粒细胞和大颗粒细胞都能参与吞噬作用, 其中半颗粒细胞的吞噬能力较强^[2]。也有研究发现, 各种血细胞均有吞噬功能, 例如格鲁西东欧螯虾(*Astacus leptodactylus*)的3类血细胞均具备吞噬能力, 但半颗粒血细胞占吞噬细胞的比例最大^[39]; Zhou等^[26]利用流式细胞法分析拟穴青蟹(*Scylla paramamosain*)血细胞的体外吞噬作用, 发现与透明细胞相比, 颗粒血细胞和半颗粒血细胞具有更显著的吞噬能力。Söderhäll等^[40]则提出了大部分甲壳动物小颗粒细胞脱颗粒后才可展现出吞噬活性的观点。Lv等^[12]对中华绒螯蟹血细胞吞噬能力的研究表明, 除了透明细胞具有吞噬能力外, 颗粒血细胞也表现出较弱的吞噬能力, 与本研究结果接近。本研究通过显微镜观察发现, 无颗粒血细胞是主要的吞噬细胞, 其他3种颗粒血细胞也表现出一定的吞噬能力。图像流式细胞分析也显示无颗粒血细胞是主要的吞噬类群, 其吞噬能力普遍较强。但胞内的微球会导致侧向散射测量值增高, 干扰了吞噬功能的流式分类分析, 因此, 本研究仅从吞噬微球的数量比例方面做了趋势探讨。前6 h, 吞噬微球的血细胞比例呈现钟型曲线的变化趋势, 随后缓慢下降, 表明中华绒螯蟹自身的天然免疫系统反应很快, 能迅速吞噬大量异物。由于微球组分属于难分解物质, 而含有微球的血细胞比例在达到峰值后快速下降, 表明其可能已经在特定部位被过滤和聚集而离开循环系统。van de Braak等^[41]研究证实, 淋巴样器官是甲壳动物吞噬细胞进行凝集的场所。另

外, 体质量10 g左右的幼蟹的血细胞在注射后最大吞噬率达 $5.69\% \pm 0.44\%$, 明显高于Lv等^[12]对体质量100 g左右成蟹($1.17\% \pm 0.28\%$)的测量结果。Oliver等^[42]比较了6种节肢动物血细胞的吞噬功能, 认为体型越大的物种血细胞的吞噬率反而越低。本研究进一步提示, 同一物种不同发育阶段血细胞吞噬率也存在差异, 这些可能是因为体质量大的动物, 血细胞总量也会增加, 因此, 对同样数量的异物仅需激活较少比例的血细胞即可完成吞噬任务。

本研究建立了基于图像流式细胞仪的自动化测量方法, 可清晰地将中华绒螯蟹血细胞分为4个类群, 类群之间界限清晰, 缺乏过度样点, 提示4类血细胞之间可能没有通过脱颗粒等途径相互转化的过程; 其吞噬功能研究表明, 中华绒螯蟹的天然免疫系统功能强大, 能够快速清除入侵的异物。上述结果可为同类研究提供新的参考, 有助于进一步了解甲壳动物血细胞在免疫应答中的作用机制。

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Application of imaging flow cytometry in studies of the classification and phagocytic function of *Eriocheir sinensis* blood cell

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Abstract: In order to make more accurate classification of crustacean blood cells and understand their phagocytic function more clearly, an imaging flow cytometry-based automatic method for *Eriocheir sinensis* blood cell classification was established, and this new method was further compared with microscopic observation for evaluating their abilities in classifying blood cells through characteristic differences of cytoplasmic granular

structure in cells. On this basis, 7.5×10^8 of Thermo Fisher carboxylate-modified yellow-green fluorescent microspheres with 1 μm diameter were injected through the heart of *E. sinensis* of (10 \pm 3) g weight; proportions of cells containing engulfed microspheres in hemolymph were measured by imaging flow cytometry at 2, 4, 6 and 24 h after injection to analyze the phagocytic efficiency and foreign-body-removing ability of blood cells. The results showed that both microscopic observation and imaging flow cytometry-based classification methods could distinguish 4 blood cell populations from hemolymph of *E. sinensis*, but the population proportions from both methods were different. The possible reasons might be that populations in microscopic observing classification were divided based on the observable granular structures in each cell, but populations got from imaging flow cytometry method were distinguished by all measurable granular structures in each cell. However, due to lack of quantified specific classification standard, the identification results from microscopic observing were fluctuant and what's more, this work was also time-consuming and laborious compared with automatic methods. On the contrary, imaging flow cytometry measured all detectable intracellular particulate matters. With updated detection module, redesigned flowing system, and, what's more, innovative integration of photographic function for each detecting channel, imaging flow cytometry could offer a high-throughput detection, and the data were more objective and reliable than those of manual distinguishing and counting. According to the flow cytometry analyzing, non-granular hemocyte, small-granular hemocyte, intermediate-granular hemocyte, large-granular hemocyte accounted for 40.62% \pm 2.65 %, 36.68% \pm 6.84 %, 7.80% \pm 1.16 % and 16.51% \pm 5.60 % separately of total blood cells from *E. sinensis*. Lack of transition dots between populations means there are no cell type transformations among 4 cell populations. Phagocytic function of *E. sinensis* blood cells was analyzed by both of above methods. According to microscopic observing results, all 4 kinds of blood cells could engulf fluorescent microspheres. The less the number of granules in the blood cells, the stronger the phagocytic capability of the blood cells. So, the non-granular hemocytes were the main phagocytic population. From the results of imaging flow cytometry method, proportion of blood cells containing microsphere went up in 2 hours after injection, and quickly reached a peak of 5.69% \pm 0.44% at 4 hours, then followed by a rapid decline during 4–6 hours after injection, which means that *E. sinensis* blood cells were effective in removing foreign matter from the hemolymph. As it is known that fluorescent microspheres are difficult to be degraded by enzymes in cells, the declining proportion of cells containing microspheres is likely to be caused by such mechanisms as agglutination and immobilization of cycling cells, which help cells leave the *E. sinensis*'s circulatory system. Imaging flow cytometry is suitable for the classification researches and functional studies of *E. sinensis* blood cells, it would be more effective when combined with microscopic observation. The blood cells of *E. sinensis* have strong phagocytic ability. Probably through cell agglutination, *E. sinensis* could quickly remove invaded foreign matter, which, usually, is difficult to be degraded. These results provide new and important references for related researches, and will facilitate to understand the functions of blood cells in crustaceans more clearly.

Key words: *Eriocheir sinensis*; blood cell; classification; phagocyte; imaging flow cytometry

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