

DOI: 10.3724/SP.J.1118.2020.19305

## 中华鳖 *Gper* 基因克隆、表达及其在精巢中的功能

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**摘要:** G 蛋白偶联雌激素受体(*Gper*)是一种膜雌激素受体, 介导雌激素的非基因组途径。为研究 G 蛋白偶联雌激素受体基因(*Gper*)在中华鳖(*Pelodiscus sinensis*)性腺分化和精巢中的作用, 本研究利用 RACE 法克隆了中华鳖 *Gper* cDNA 全长序列, 利用 qRT-PCR 分析其在不同组织及胚胎不同发育阶段的性腺中的表达模式, 并通过来曲唑(letrozole)和 *Gper* 抑制剂 G-15 处理雄鳖初步分析 *Gper* 在精巢中的作用。结果显示, 中华鳖 *Gper* cDNA 序列全长 2023 bp, 包含 705 bp 5'非编码区、241 bp 3'非编码区和 1077 bp 开放阅读框, 编码 358 个氨基酸, 其氨基酸序列上有 7 个跨膜结构域和 Asp-Arg-Tyr(DRY)三联体结构, 基因编码蛋白分子量为 41.084 kD, 等电点为 6.844。*Gper* 基因在各组织均有表达, 其中脑中表达量最高, 其次为卵巢; 不同孵化温度条件下, 性腺分化关键时期的 *Gper* 表达量变化呈相同趋势: 16 期表达量最高, 随着性腺分化过程表达量显著降低。Letrozole 处理组中 *Gper* 表达量显著降低, G-15 处理组 *Esr1* 和 *Esr2* 表达量明显升高; G-15 处理组精巢中, 精子发生与促细胞凋亡相关基因表达量显著升高。结果表明, *Gper* 可能参与中华鳖性腺分化早期过程, 并调控雄性生殖细胞增殖。

**关键词:** 中华鳖; G 蛋白偶联雌激素受体基因; 基因克隆; 性腺分化; 精子发生

中图分类号: S917

文献标志码: A

文章编号: 1005-8737-(2020)08-0868-11

雌激素是动物性别分化与性腺发育的重要调控因素, 其功能发挥可通过核雌激素受体(Estrogen receptors, Esrs)介导的基因组效应, 也可通过 G 蛋白偶联雌激素受体(G protein coupled estrogen receptor, *Gper*)介导的非基因组效应快速激活细胞内信号通路<sup>[1-4]</sup>。雌激素通过基因组途径发挥功能需较长时间, 而 *Gper* 介导非基因组途径能快速响应雌激素并激活 Mapk/Erk 通路<sup>[3]</sup>, 弥补了 Esrs 功能的不足。*Gper* 是一种膜雌激素受体, 属于膜受体 Gpcr 亚家族。该蛋白家族具有 7 个跨膜  $\alpha$  双螺旋结构域, 参与多种信号通路, 响应内外环境对机体的影响<sup>[5-6]</sup>。*Gper* 参与调控动物性腺发育<sup>[7]</sup>、免疫功能<sup>[8]</sup>、神经系统与骨骼功能<sup>[9]</sup>等多方面生理作用, 是雌激素作用的重要途径<sup>[1, 10]</sup>。

已有研究表明, *Gper* 在动物性别分化与性腺发育中有重要作用。Ge 等<sup>[11]</sup>发现在原鸡(*Gallus gallus*)原始生殖细胞中 *Gper* 表达时间早于 Esrs, 且雌激素通过 *Gper/Egfr/Akt/β-catenin* 级联反应调控早期生殖细胞增殖; Wang 等<sup>[12]</sup>在雌性仓鼠(Cricetidae)中发现干扰 *Gper* 的表达会抑制原始卵泡的形成; Pang 等<sup>[13-14]</sup>研究表明在细须石首鱼(*Micropogonias undulatus*)和斑马鱼(*Danio rerio*)卵黄发育时期, 雌激素通过激活 *Gper* 阻止卵母细胞早熟。雄性动物中, *Gper* 在生精细胞以及间质细胞、支持细胞都有表达<sup>[15]</sup>, 对小鼠精原细胞的增殖具有促进作用<sup>[16]</sup>; *Gper* 在欧洲鳗鲡(*Anguilla anguilla*)精子发生后期表达显著升高<sup>[17]</sup>; 分离斑马鱼早期和晚期生殖细胞发现, *Gper* 主要在早期

收稿日期: 2019-10-21; 修订日期: 2019-12-13.

基金项目: 国家自然科学基金项目(31702316, 31902371); 河南省重点科技攻关项目(152102110081, 172102210351, 182102110195);

河南省高等学校重点科研项目计划(15A240002, 17A240002).

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生殖细胞包括精原细胞、精母细胞中表达<sup>[15]</sup>, 说明 *Gper* 参与雄性动物生殖过程并存在物种差异, 但其相关作用机制尚不明确。

中华鳖 (*Pelodiscus sinensis*) 属爬行纲 (Reptilia)、龟鳖目 (Chelonia)、鳖科 (Trionychidae)、中华鳖属 (*Pelodiscus*)。其肉质鲜美、营养丰富, 是中国重要的淡水养殖对象之一<sup>[18]</sup>。由于雄鳖有较快的生长速度、更高的经济价值, 因此研究其性别分化及生殖有助于中华鳖新品种的培育。本研究以中华鳖为实验材料, 利用 RACE 技术克隆得到 *Gper* cDNA 全长序列, 应用 qRT-PCR 技术对 *Gper* mRNA 在不同组织及胚胎发育时期的表达进行了研究。此外, 利用腹腔注射的方式对雄鳖注射来曲唑 (Letrozole) 和 *Gper* 抑制剂 G-15, 研究 *Gper* 在精巢中的作用, 为进一步探索雌激素及其受体 *Gper* 的生理功能提供参考。

## 1 材料与方法

### 1.1 实验材料

中华鳖受精卵取自河南省固始县晨源水产养殖专业合作社, 收集当日所产受精卵后分别置于 (27±0.5) °C 和 (32±0.5) °C 恒温恒湿孵化箱中孵化。按照中华鳖胚胎发育图谱<sup>[19]</sup>收集 32 °C 孵化的胚胎, 并收集 27 °C 同一孵化时长的胚胎。分离不同发育时期胚胎的性腺; 另取体健康 2 龄雌雄中华鳖各 5 只, 取脑、卵巢、精巢、肠道、心脏、肌肉等组织, -80 °C 保存备用。使用 TaKaRa RNAiso™ Plus (TaKaRa, 大连) 提取总 RNA。利用 1% 琼脂糖凝胶电泳检测 RNA 完整度、紫外分光光度计检测 RNA 浓度。

### 1.2 中华鳖 *Gper* 基因 cDNA 克隆

采用 PrimScript™ Reverse transcriptase (TaKaRa, 大连) 试剂盒合成中间片段 cDNA, SMART™ RACE cDNA Amplification Kit (Clontech) 反转录合成的 cDNA 则作为基因 3' 和 5' 端序列扩增模板。根据中华鳖转录组中 *Gper* (XM\_006112842.3) 序列设计正反向引物 *Gper*-F 和 *Gper*-R (表 1), 以中间片段 cDNA 为模板扩增 *Gper* cDNA 部分序列, 并克隆测序。在获得序列基础上设计 3' RACE 和 5' RACE 的特异性引物 (表 1), 进行 3' 和 5' 末端

PCR 扩增。PCR 产物进行回收纯化, 经连接、转化后筛选阳性克隆并送上海生工生物有限公司测序。

### 1.3 *Gper* 基因序列分析

序列采用 DNAStar 软件包中 SeqMan 将 *Gper* 中间片段、3' RACE 和 5' RACE 所得序列进行拼接, 获得 cDNA 全长序列。使用 ORF Finder (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/gorf.html>) 确定开放阅读框。采用 Compute pI/Mw tool (<http://www.expasy.org/tools/pi-tool.htm>) 计算蛋白等电点和分子质量; InterProScan software (<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/Tools/pfa/iprscan5/>) 查找保守结构域; SignalP 3.0 Server (<http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/SignalP/>) 查找信号肽; TMHMM 2.0 Server (<http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/TMHMM-2.0/>) 预测跨膜结构域; MEGAX 以邻接法构建系统进化树。

### 1.4 中华鳖 *Gper* 基因表达模式

提取胚胎发育不同时期性腺和成鳖不同组织总 RNA, 以总 RNA 为模板, 按照 Prime Script RT reagent Kit with gDNA Eraser (TaKaRa, 大连) 操作说明进行逆转录合成 cDNA, 并将 cDNA 稀释 10 倍作为 qRT-PCR 模板。依据获得的 *Gper* 基因全长序列设计荧光定量引物 *Gper*-RTF 和 *Gper*-RTB, 并以 *Gapdh* 为内参基因 (表 1)。Prime Script™ RT Master Mix 和进行 qRT-PCR, 反应体系 (20 μL): 2×SYBR Premix Ex Taq™ (TaKaRa, 大连) 10 μL, 上、下游引物各 0.5 μL, cDNA 模板 2 μL, ddH<sub>2</sub>O 7 μL; 反应程序: 94 °C 10 s, 60 °C 15 s, 72 °C 20 s, 40 个循环。每个样本设置 3 个重复, 依据  $2^{-\Delta\Delta C_t}$  法计算实验样本 *Gper* 相对表达量, 利用 SPSS 20.0 软件对数据进行单因素方差分析 (one-way ANOVA),  $P < 0.05$  表示具有显著性差异, 结果用平均值±标准误 ( $\bar{x} \pm SE$ ) 表示。

### 1.5 Letrozole 和 G-15 处理对成年中华鳖性腺的影响

将大小均一的雄鳖 (300~350 g) 进行腹腔注射, 一部分进行 Letrozole (索莱宝, 中国) 处理, 另一部分用于 G-15 (APEXBIO, 美国) 处理。两组处理分别设置对照组、低浓度处理组和高浓度处理组 ( $n=5$ )。将 Letrozole 和 G-15 分别溶于 DMSO (索

**表 1 所用引物序列**  
**Tab. 1 The sequences of primers used in this study**

引物 primer	序列(5'-3') sequence	编码蛋白 coded protein
中间片段克隆 partial sequence PCR		
<i>Gper</i> -F	CTATTGGCTTGAGAACATTCT	
<i>Gper</i> -R	GATGTTCCACTTAAATAATGAAGTTGC	
3'和 5'端扩增 3' and 5' RACE		
<i>Gper</i> -3'-out	CGACTACGGCGCCAGAAGGCTTCGA	
<i>Gper</i> -3'-in	CGGCATGATTATCCCCTAACTGGAC	
<i>Gper</i> -5'-out	CGAAGAGCCTCTGGCGCGTAGTCGA	
<i>Gper</i> -5'-in	ACCACTGGATTCTTCTACATCTGCG	
UPM-L	CTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGCAAGCAGTGGTATCAAC	
UPM-S	GCAGAGT	
CTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGC		
荧光定量 PCR qRT-PCR		
<i>Gper</i> -RTF	TGTTACTCATTAATTGCTCG	
<i>Gper</i> -RTTR	AGATTGTCTTCCTTCTCT	
<i>Gapdh</i> -RTF	AGAACATCATTCCAGCATCCA	
<i>Gapdh</i> -RTTR	CTTCATCACCTCTTAATGTCGTC	
<i>Esr1</i> -RTF	CTCCCTTCATCCATCACCACA	雌激素受体 α estrogen receptor α
<i>Esr1</i> -RTTR	AGCCCTCGCAAGACCAGACTC	
<i>Esr2</i> -RTF	AGACCGTTGTGGGTATCGTA	雌激素受体 β estrogen receptor β
<i>Esr2</i> -RTTR	CTGTAATGGCTTGGGG	
<i>Mad2l1</i> -RTF	ATGCGATGGACTGTATGGCTAA	有丝分裂阻滞蛋白 mitotic spindle assembly checkpoint protein
<i>Mad2l1</i> -RTTR	TCTGCTGGGTACAGGTAAA	
<i>Stra8</i> -RTF	GAGGAAAGGAGAGACAGCG	视黄酸激活蛋白 stimulated by retinoic acid gene 8 protein
<i>Stra8</i> -RTTR	CATCAAGGAAACCAGCAGC	
<i>Sycp3</i> -RTF	GTTGAAGAAGATGTGGGG	联会复合体蛋白 3 synaptonemal complex protein 3
<i>Sycp3</i> -RTTR	GTCAGGAAC TGCTGGGAAT	
<i>Cdc20</i> -RTF	AGCAGAAACGGCTCCGAAAT	细胞分裂周期蛋白 20 cell division cycle protein 20
<i>Cdc20</i> -RTTR	AGCAAAGTCACCGCTGTCCC	
<i>Dmc1</i> -RTF	ATCGACTCCATAATGGCACTCTT	DNA 减数分裂重组酶 1 DNA meiotic recombinase 1
<i>Dmc1</i> -RTTR	TCTTCCCTTCCGCAAACATAATCC	
<i>Dvl1</i> -RTF	CAGAGCAACGACCGA GGAGAT	胞浆调节散乱蛋白 1 dishevelled segment polarity protein 1
<i>Dvl1</i> -RTTR	GGTCAGCCCTGGGAATAGTG	
<i>Spata6</i> -RTF	AGAGACAGGGGACGAGAAG	精子发生蛋白 6 spermatogenesis associated 6
<i>Spata6</i> -RTTR	TAATGAGCCAGTGGAACGA	
<i>Caspase3</i> -RTF	ATGTAAGCAAATGGTGGAC	半胱天冬酶 3 apoptosis-related cysteine peptidase 3
<i>Caspase3</i> -RTTR	CAAGAGTAATAACCTGGGG	
<i>Caspase8</i> -RTF	CAGGCACCCAGGAAGAAAT	半胱天冬酶 8 apoptosis-related cysteine peptidase 8
<i>Caspase8</i> -RTTR	GCAGCAAACAAAGCAGTCG	
<i>Efnb1</i> -RTF	CCAGAGCACCTGACAACC	肝配蛋白-b1 ephrin-b1
<i>Efnb1</i> -RTTR	TACACAGCCAGCACCAAT	
<i>Rac1</i> -RTF	TGCTTTCCCTTGAGTC	C3 肉毒素底物 rac family small GTPase 1
<i>Rac1</i> -RTTR	CCCTGCGGATAGGTGATTG	
<i>Bcl-2</i> -RTF	GCGTGATGTGTGGAGAG	B 细胞淋巴瘤因子 2 B-cell lymphoma-2
<i>Bcl-2</i> -RTTR	CCAGAGCAAGACTGAGGAT	

莱宝, 中国), -20 ℃保存, 注射前用生理盐水进行稀释, DMSO : 生理盐水=1 : 19。Letrozole 实验组低浓度注射剂量为 5 mg/kg, 高浓度为 10 mg/kg。G-15 实验组低浓度注射剂量为 0.5 mg/kg, 高浓度为 1 mg/kg。对照组注射相同体积的溶剂。实验同时进行, 中华鳖每周注射一次, 共注射 4 次。处理结束后分别取中华鳖睾丸, -80 ℃保存。按照 1.4 方法提取总 RNA, 反转录合成 cDNA 进行 qRT-PCR。相关基因引物根据 NCBI 数据库中华鳖基因组序列设计(表 1)。

## 2 结果与分析

### 2.1 *Gper* 基因全长 cDNA 序列特征和系统进化分析

克隆片段经测序和拼接, 结果显示 *Gper* cDNA 序列全长 2023 bp (GeneBank 登录号: MK111424), 包括 705 bp 的 5'-UTR, 1077 bp 的开放阅读框和 241 bp 的 3'-UTR, 共编码 358 个氨基酸残基, 相对分子质量为 41.084 kD, 等电点为 6.844。SignalP 分析未发现有信号肽。THMHMM 分析氨基酸序列发现 *Gper* 氨基酸序列含 7 个跨膜区(图 1), 多重氨基酸比对结果显示在第三跨膜区后存在视紫红质亚家族(A 类)中保守的 DRY (Asp-Arg-Tyr)结构(图 2)。

利用 MEGAX 构建系统进化树, *Gper* 进化树可分为两支, 其中鱼类聚为一支, 鸟类、爬行类、哺乳类和两栖类动物聚为一支。中华鳖 *Gper* 与龟类亲缘关系最近, 其次是鸟类、爬行类, 这与中华鳖进化地位相一致(图 3)。

### 2.2 *Gper* 在不同组织和不同胚胎发育阶段性腺中的表达

以 *Gapdh* 为内参基因, qRT-PCR 结果显示, *Gper* mRNA 在中华鳖各组织都有表达, 其在脑的相对表达量最高, 显著高于其他组织( $P<0.05$ ), 其次是卵巢和脾脏。在精巢、胃、肝脏、肠、心脏、肌肉的表达量较低(图 4A)。检测不同孵化温度下性腺中 *Gper* 在性腺分化时期表达情况, 结果显示, *Gper* mRNA 在两种不同孵化温度下表达呈现相似的变化趋势: 在 16 期(性腺分化早期)的表达量最高, 随着性腺分化的进程, 表达量降低。

27 ℃孵化条件下 *Gper* 表达量在 19 期显著下降( $P<0.05$ ), 32 ℃孵化条件下 *Gper* 表达量在 17 期显著降低( $P<0.05$ )。27 ℃孵化温度条件下 *Gper* 的表达量比 32 ℃时高, 并在 17 期和 18 期显著高于 32 ℃时的 *Gper* 表达量( $P<0.05$ )(图 4B)。

### 2.3 Letrozole 及 G-15 处理对中华鳖精巢中雌激素受体基因表达影响

对雄鳖腹腔注射 Letrozole 和 G-15 后, 检测 *Esrs* 和 *Gper* 表达量变化情况。结果显示, Letrozole 处理组中 *Gper* 表达量显著降低, 低浓度处理组中表达量最低; *Esr1* 表达量在低浓度处理组中显著升高在高浓度处理组中显著下降; *Esr2* 表达变化情况与 *Esr1* 基因相反(图 5A)。G-15 处理组中, 高浓度处理组 *Gper* 表达量显著升高( $P<0.05$ ); *Esr1* 在高浓度处理组表达量显著升高, 低浓度处理组显著下降至对照组相同表达水平; *Esr2* 在低浓度组显著下降, 高浓度组显著上升(图 5B)。

### 2.4 G-15 处理对中华鳖精巢中精子发生与细胞凋亡基因的影响

检测注射 G-15 后对精巢中精子发生及细胞凋亡相关基因表达的影响, 结果显示, G-15 处理能够显著促进精巢中精子发生相关基因的表达: *Spata6*、*Dmc1*、*Cdc20*、*Dvl1*、*Mad2l1*、*Stra8* 表达量显著升高( $P<0.05$ ), *Sycp3* 表达量有上升趋势( $P>0.05$ , 图 6A)。促凋亡细胞 *Caspase3*、*Caspase8* 表达量显著升高( $P<0.05$ )、抗凋亡基因 *Efnb1* 表达量明显降低、*Rac1* 表达量在 0.5 mg/kg 组显著降低, 在 1 mg/kg 显著升高、*Bcl-2* 没有明显变化( $P>0.05$ , 图 6B)。

## 3 讨论

*Gper* 属于 Gpcr 蛋白家族, 其具有相似的蛋白结构: 7 个跨膜结构域以及 A 类亚家族特有的 DRY 三联体结构<sup>[20]</sup>。DRY 结构在维持蛋白结构稳定、受体活化、配体结合以及信号传导中具有重要作用, 暗示了 *Gper* 功能的保守性<sup>[21]</sup>。本研究采用 RACE 技术从中华鳖脑中克隆了 *Gper* cDNA 序列全长, 其中开放阅读框长 1077 bp, 编码 1 个由 358 个氨基酸组成的蛋白质, 其蛋白具有上述结构特征; 邻接法构建系统发育树发现其亲缘关

1 acatggggcagtaagatctgcattgtcaaacaatgacagtcattatggatgt  
 61 ttaacagaatatgttttatggatttttactaagtgtcaacaggtggcattc  
 121 aatgagcatggcatcacctaataacattaaagttctggatgtatagctgaaatt  
 181 aacatatccactaacatgttatctgaatataaccaggcttatggtggtggaaagaaaat  
 241 cagatctgaacaaatgactatggatggacacacgggaaattaaagatccaaggatattcag  
 301 caattgttaaaaggaatgaatggaccaataatcttccacttccaatttcaagaagaaaa  
 361 catttgtgaagaaacattgttatctgaattcaactatcattacgttcagaaaggccccac  
 421 atgattgggtattaaatttctcacttaccttgcatacttgcataatccaaataggaaatt  
 481 aatttatttctgtactgataaatttccacttgcattctaaagcttaatttggctcc  
 541 attccatttccaaacagttaaacatttatacacaacaaaaccctatttccaaatcct  
 601 taaaattcttgcgaaacctttggaaatcaacaatttaccatttggctgaaaagtc  
 661 aacgcgtaaatattgtatcttcgagcagataccttaacc**ATGGAATCTTACACAG**  
 1 M E S Y T  
 721 GAGCATTATTGCCATTATTGTAAACAGCACATCTTGAACGAAATGGATCATATTAT  
 6 G A L L P F I C N S T S F E R N G S Y L  
 781 GTAATGAAAGCATGCCCTAGCTTGCTGATGAATCAGAAGAACACCAACAATACATTA  
 26 C N E S M P S S L A D E S E E H Q Q Y I  
 841 TTGGCCTTTCTTATCATGCCCTTACACTATTTCTTCCCTATTGGCTTGTAGGAA  
 46 I G L F L S C L Y T I F L F P I G F V G  
 901 ACATTCTGATTTAGTTGTAAACACAAGTTCTGTGAAAAGATGACTATCCCTGACCTGT  
 66 N I L I L V V N T S F R E K M T I P D L  
 961 ACTTCATAATCTTGCAGTAGCTGATCTGATTTAGTTGCTGACTCCCTATTGAGGTTT  
 86 Y F I N L A V A D L I L V A D S L I E V  
 1021 TTAATCTGATGAAAAGTACTATGATATCACTATTATTTGTAATTCCATGTCTGTTC  
 106 F N L D E K Y Y D I T I I C T S M S L F  
 1081 TTCAGATCAACATGTATAGCAGCATTTCCTTGACATGGATGAGTTGACAGATATA  
 126 L Q I N M Y S S I F F L T W M S F D R Y  
 1141 TAGCACTTGCAAAAGTAATGAGGTCCAACATATTGCACTATGCAACATGCTAGATTAA  
 146 I A L A K V M R S N I F R T M Q H A R L  
 1201 GCTGTGGCCTCATATGGATGGCATCTATCTCTGCAACACTAGTGCCATTACAGCTGTAC  
 166 S C G L I W M A S I S A T L V P F T A V  
 1261 ATTTGCAGCACACTGGAGAGATCTACTTTGTTCGCAGATGTAGAAGAAATCCAGTGGT  
 186 H L Q H T G E I Y F C F A D V E E I Q W  
 1321 TAGAAATAACTTGGGGTTATAATCCCTTGTAAATCATGCCCTTGTACTCATTAA  
 206 L E I T L G F I I P F V I I G L C Y S L  
 1381 TTGCTCGAGTTCTTGTAAACAGCACACAAACACAGGAGTCTCGACTACGGCGCCAGAAGG  
 226 I A R V L V T A H K H R S L R L R R Q K  
 1441 CTCTCGAATGATATTGTAGTTGCTCTGGTTTTATCTGCTGGCTACCTGAAAATG  
 246 A L R M I F V V V L V F F I C W L P E N  
 1501 TCTTCATTAGTGTTCAGCTTCAAGAGAAAGGAAAGACAATCTCTCAGGCAACCCAT  
 266 V F I S V Q L L Q E K G K T I S S G N P  
 1561 CTTTCGGCATGATTATCCCCTAAGTGGACATATTGTAACCTAGCAGCCTTTCTAACAA  
 286 S F R H D Y P L T G H I V N L A A F S N  
 1621 GCTGTTGAACCCCTCTGATTACAGTTCTAGGTGAAACTTTAGACACAAATTACGAT  
 306 S C L N P L I Y S F L G E T F R H K L R  
 1681 TGTATGTTGAACAAAAAAACTAAATGTCAACATTCAATCGTTTGTCTGCTGCCCTAA  
 326 L Y V E Q K T K M S T F N R F C H A A L  
 1741 AGTCAGTTATTCTGACAGTAATGAGCAATCAGAAGTT**TAA**tttagtagtgcataaaaa  
 346 K S V I P D S N E Q S E V \*  
 1801 aacaactgaaaattgcacaaatataactataatgcttgcataacagtaaaatataatg  
 1861 tatatacaatgccttgctgagtattgaaggttattctctaaatattttatgacaagat  
 1921 ttcaatgggaaacaatacatttagtttagattgtatttaattatcaacagactaattaa  
 1981 aagctgactaataaggaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa 2023

图 1 中华鳖 *Gper* 基因 cDNA 全长及氨基酸序列分析

小写字母表示 3' 和 5' 非编码区，大写字母表示编码区，加粗部分表示 ORF 区起始密码子(ATG)和终止密码子(TAA)，  
黑色下划线表示跨膜区，灰色阴影部分表示 DRY 结构。

Fig. 1 Sequence analysis of full-length cDNA and amino acids of *Gper* in *Pelodiscus sinensis*

The lowercase indicates 3' UTR and 5' UTR, and the coding sequence is presented in capital letters.

The bold part represents the start codon (ATG) and the stop codon (TAA) in the ORF region;  
transmembrane regions are underlined by dotted line and the DRY structure is shaded in gray.

智人 <i>Homo sapiens</i>	MDVTQSQARGVGEIEMYPCGIAOEAAPNLTSPELNLSPLLGALANGTGELEHOOVIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	83
小鼠 <i>Mus musculus</i>	MDATTTPAQTVGEPYLPPWAPSNSTPDLALNLCLALRDEAPGNTGDLSEHOQVIIIFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	83
斑胸草雀 <i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	MEYYSASVSPPLCNSTIEENLSSICNESSSLADKS-EHQQVVIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	71
绿头鸭 <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	MEYYSASVSPPLCNSTIEENLSSICNESSSLADKS-EHQQVVIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	71
湾鳄 <i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	MEYYSASLSDTCNSTIEENLSSICNESSSLADKS-EHQQVVIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	71
中华鳖 <i>Pelodiscus sinensis</i>	MEHTAASSTCNSTIEKPNGSICNESSSLADKSDEHEEQVVIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	72
西部锦龟 <i>Chrysemys picta</i>	MEYTYAALPTCNSTIEERNGSYICNESSSLADKSDEHEEQVVIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	72
眼镜王蛇 <i>Ophiophagus hannah</i>	MISADLFGTTAHLGNLVPKSRTFYFAENHTEYAGLASEATCNGTIEELNSICNEIRALDLDADS-EHQQVVIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	101
热带爪蟾 <i>Xenopus tropicalis</i>	MEQITNTVIOYVNGTIEQFQNFNDNIDVKESTDTY---EFYIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	70
斑马鱼 <i>Danio rerio</i>	MEQITNTVIOYVNGTIEQFQNFNDNIDVKESTDTY---EFYIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	68
尼罗罗非鱼 <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	MEQITNTVIOYVNGTIEQFQNFNDNIDVKESTDTY---EFYIIGLFLSCLYTIFLFPIGFVNGLILVV	68
智人 <i>Homo sapiens</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFERYDIACTFFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAMRCGSIFRTKHJHARLSCGLIWMAS	185
小鼠 <i>Mus musculus</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAAADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEQYYDIAVFLITWMSFDRLYALAMRCGSIFRTKHJHARLSCGLIWMAS	173
原鸡 <i>Gallus gallus</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFERYDIACTFFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	173
斑胸草雀 <i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	173
绿头鸭 <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	173
湾鳄 <i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	174
中华鳖 <i>Pelodiscus sinensis</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	174
西部锦龟 <i>Chrysemys picta</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	174
眼镜王蛇 <i>Ophiophagus hannah</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	203
热带爪蟾 <i>Xenopus tropicalis</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	172
斑马鱼 <i>Danio rerio</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDITIICFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	170
尼罗罗非鱼 <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	NISPREKMTIPDLYFINLAVADLILVADSLIEEVFNIEFLNDEKYDIAVCTFMSLFLQINMYSSEFLTWMSFDRLYALAKVMVRSNJFRTMOHARLSCGLIWMAS	170
智人 <i>Homo sapiens</i>	VSATLVPPTAVHLOHTIDACFCFADREVOWLWVTLGCVSLLVRLVRAHSRGRFLRROKALRMIAVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	287
小鼠 <i>Mus musculus</i>	VSATLVPPTAVHLOHTIDEECFCAFDRREVOWLWVTLGCVSLLVRLVRAHSRGRFLRROKALRMIAVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	287
原鸡 <i>Gallus gallus</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
斑胸草雀 <i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
绿头鸭 <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
湾鳄 <i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
中华鳖 <i>Pelodiscus sinensis</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
西部锦龟 <i>Chrysemys picta</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
眼镜王蛇 <i>Ophiophagus hannah</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
热带爪蟾 <i>Xenopus tropicalis</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
斑马鱼 <i>Danio rerio</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
尼罗罗非鱼 <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	ISAPSVLVPPTAVHLOHTGEVHFCFPADREVIOWLITEITLGFIIIEPVVIIIGLCYSLVTRVLIAKAHHKRSRLRROKALRMIVFVVLVFFICWLLENVFISVHLLQRT	275
智人 <i>Homo sapiens</i>	QPGAAPCKQSFRRHAPLTHGIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKNTIPALNRFCHALRAVIFDSQEVRFSSAV	375
小鼠 <i>Mus musculus</i>	QPGDAPCKQSFRRHAPLTHGIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKNTIPALNRFCHALRAVIFDSQEVRFSSAV	375
原鸡 <i>Gallus gallus</i>	SIPASSSSPSFRHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	357
斑胸草雀 <i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	SIPASSSSPSFRHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	357
绿头鸭 <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	SIPASSSSPSFRHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	357
湾鳄 <i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	SIPASSSSPSFRHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	357
中华鳖 <i>Pelodiscus sinensis</i>	SIPASSSSPSFRHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	358
西部锦龟 <i>Chrysemys picta</i>	GKT1SSSGNQPSFRHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	358
眼镜王蛇 <i>Ophiophagus hannah</i>	DPESSRG-RSFRRHNYPPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTNVSMNLCCHATLKSVISDSIPOSEV-----	386
热带爪蟾 <i>Xenopus tropicalis</i>	DPECSYN-HFCSRHNYPPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPLISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	361
斑马鱼 <i>Danio rerio</i>	DPESKRTDTIILWHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPIIISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	353
尼罗罗非鱼 <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	DPEQSRTATIILWHDYPLTGHIVNLAAFNSNCNLNPIIISFLGETFRDKLRLYIEQKTKMSHLBRCQAALTSVIDPDSNEQSEV-----	354

图2 中华鳖与其他物种 Gper 氨基酸序列多重比对

使用 ClustalX 进行多重序列比对, 黑色方框表示 DRY 三联体结构。绿头鸭(XP\_012955573.1), 西部锦龟(XP\_005289205.2), 湾鳄(XP\_019397607.1), 斑马鱼(NP\_001122195.1), 原鸡(XP\_004945187.2), 智人(NP\_001035055.1), 小鼠(NP\_084047.2), 眼镜王蛇(ETE58208.1), 尼罗罗非鱼(XP\_005468845.1), 中华鳖(XP\_006112904.1), 斑胸草雀(XP\_030141062.1), 热带爪蟾 (NP\_001107725.1)。

Fig. 2 Alignment of Gper in *Pelodiscus sinensis* with those of other vertebrates

The program ClustalX is used to align the *Gper* sequences. The DRY structure is boxed. *Anas platyrhynchos* (XP\_012955573.1), *Chrysemys picta bellii* (XP\_005289205.2), *Crocodylus porosus* (XP\_019397607.1), *Danio rerio* (NP\_001122195.1), *Gallus gallus* (XP\_004945187.2), *Homo sapiens* (NP\_001035055.1), *Mus musculus* (NP\_084047.2), *Ophiophagus hannah* (ETE58208.1), *Oreochromis niloticus* (XP\_005468845.1), *Pelodiscus sinensis* (XP\_006112904.1), *Taeniopygia guttata* (XP\_030141062.1), *Xenopus tropicalis* (NP\_001107725.1).

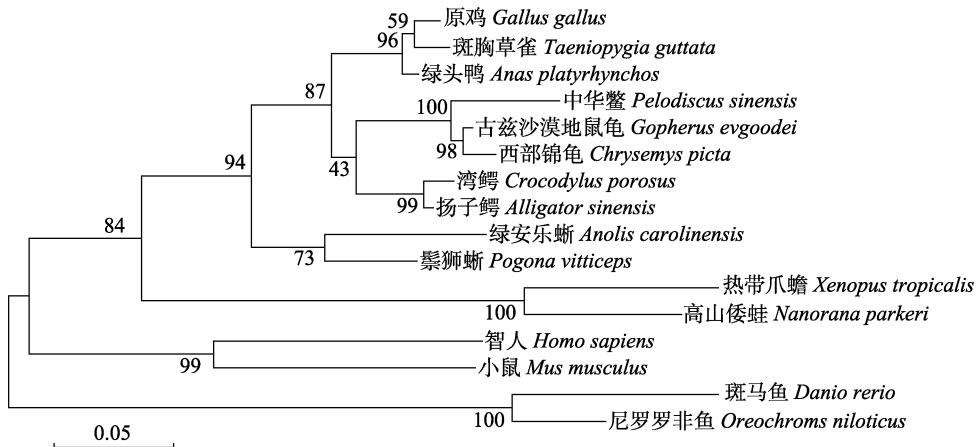


图3 Gper 系统进化树

扬子鳄(XP\_006030771.1), 绿安乐蜥(XP\_003225875.1), 古兹沙漠地鼠龟(XP\_030435025.1), 高山倭蛙(XP\_018425675.1), 髯狮蜥(XP\_020659978.1)。

Fig. 3 Phylogenetic tree of Gper from vertebrates

*Alligator sinensis* (XP\_006030771.1), *Anolis carolinensis* (XP\_003225875.1), *Gopherus evgoodei* (XP\_030435025.1), *Nanorana parkeri* (XP\_018425675.1), *Pogona vitticeps* (XP\_020659978.1)。

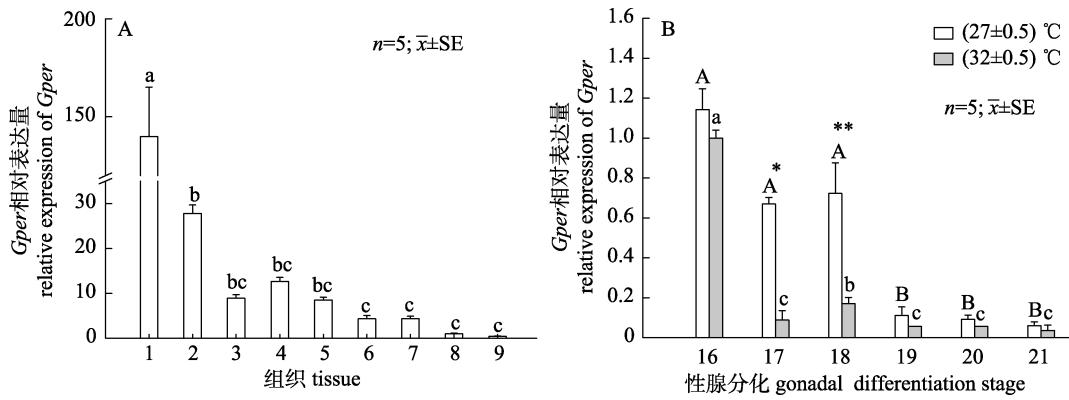


图 4 *Gper* 在成年中华鳖不同组织及胚胎性腺分化不同时期性腺中的表达

A. *Gper* 在成年中华鳖不同组织表达分布; 1: 脑; 2: 卵巢; 3: 精巢; 4: 脾; 5: 胃; 6: 肝; 7: 肠; 8: 心; 9: 肌肉. B. *Gper* 在中华鳖胚胎性腺分化时期性腺中的表达; 16: 16 期; 17: 17 期; 18: 18 期; 19: 19 期; 20: 20 期; 21: 21 期. \*和不同字母代表显著性差异( $P<0.05$ ).

Fig. 4 The relative expression of *Gper* mRNA in different tissues and at different stages of gonadal in *Pelodiscus sinensis*.

A. Tissues expression of adult *Gper* in *Pelodiscus sinensis*; 1: brain; 2: ovary; 3: testis; 4: spleen; 5: stomach; 6: liver; 7: intestines; 8: heart; 9: muscle. B. The relative expression of *Gper* mRNA in different stages of gonadal. 16: stage 16; 17: stage 17; 18: stage 18; 19: stage 19; 20: stage 20; 21: stage 21. Different letters and \* indicate significant differences ( $P<0.05$ ).

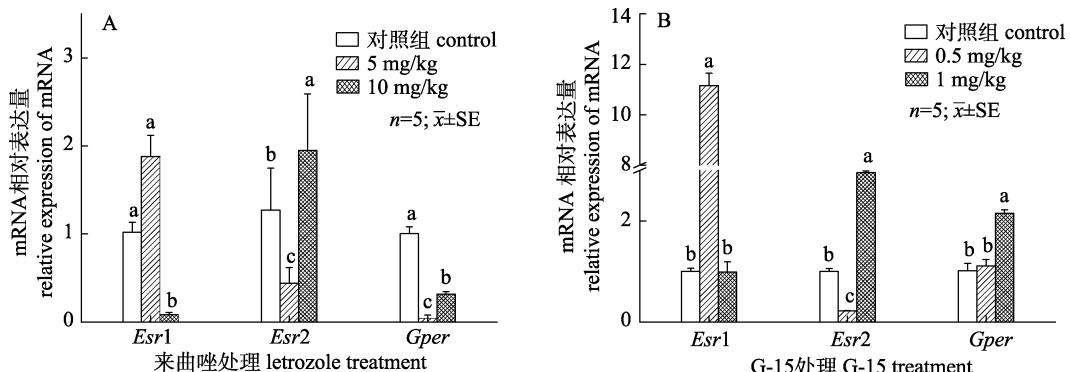


图 5 注射 Letrozole 及 G-15 后对中华鳖精巢中雌激素受体表达的影响

A. 来曲唑处理后对雌激素受体的表达影响; B. G-15 处理后对雌激素受体的表达影响; 不同字母代表显著性差异( $P<0.05$ ).

Fig. 5 Effects of Letrozole or G-15 injection on estrogen receptor expression levels in testis of *Pelodiscus sinensis*

A. The relative expression of estrogen receptor after injected Letrozole; B. The relative expression of estrogen receptor after injected G-15. Different letters indicate significant differences ( $P<0.05$ ).

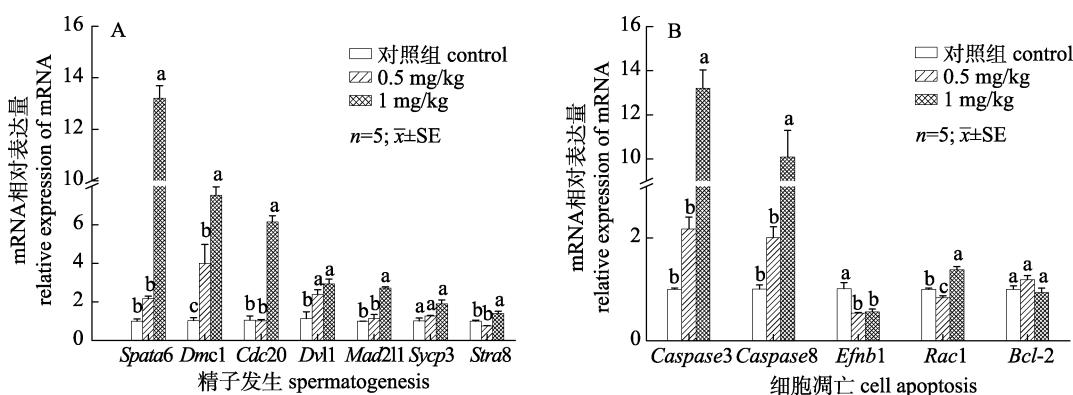


图 6 注射 G-15 后对中华鳖精子发生及细胞凋亡基因表达的影响

A. 精子发生基因表达量变化; B. 细胞凋亡基因表达量变化; 不同字母代表显著性差异( $P<0.05$ ).

Fig. 6 Effects of G-15 injection on spermatogenesis and cell apoptosis genes expression levels in testis of *Pelodiscus sinensis*

A. The relative expression of spermatogenesis genes after injected G-15; B. The relative expression of cell apoptosis genes after injected G-15. Different letters indicate significant differences ( $P<0.05$ ).

系与龟类最近,其次是鸟类和爬行类(图3),与中华鳖 *MyD88*<sup>[22]</sup>、*Tf*<sup>[23]</sup>等基因研究结果相似,符合物种的一般进化规律。以上结果表明克隆得到的cDNA序列为中华鳖 *Gper* 基因。

*Gper*作为雌激素受体在机体各组织中广泛表达。小鼠与斑马鱼中, *Gper* 主要表达在脑与性腺中,其不仅参与中枢神经的发育与修复,还参与调控生殖细胞增殖和成熟<sup>[14, 24]</sup>。本研究中 *Gper* 的组织差异表达分析表明中华鳖 *Gper* 在脑中表达量最高,其次为性腺,卵巢的表达量是精巢的3倍(图4A),与其他物种中研究结果类似,暗示了 *Gper* 在中华鳖脑及性腺发育的重要地位。分析 *Gper* 在性腺分化不同时期的表达模式发现,27 ℃ 和 32 ℃ 两个不同孵化条件下, *Gper* 的表达模式相似:在性腺分化初期表达量最高,性腺分化中后期表达量显著下降(图4B)。芳香化酶是雄激素转化为雌激素的限速酶,是性别分化的关键因素<sup>[25]</sup>。包海声等<sup>[26]</sup>研究发现中华鳖芳香化酶基因(*Cyp19a1*)在性腺分化阶段开始大量表达。原鸡中, *Cyp19a1* 在性腺分化阶段表达量升高,同时 *Gper* 表达量降低<sup>[16]</sup>。这一结果与中华鳖 *Cyp19a1*、*Gper* 性腺分化表达模式一致。在原鸡性腺分化前, *Esrs* 不表达, *Gper* 表达显著高于性别分化阶段,雌激素通过 *Gper* 刺激原始生殖细胞增殖<sup>[11]</sup>。因此 *Gper* 可能通过原始生殖细胞增殖途径参与中华鳖早期性腺分化过程。此外,32 ℃时 *Gper* 表达显著降低的时间早于 27 ℃,这可能由于在同一孵化时长下,32 ℃孵化条件下中华鳖胚胎发育速度比 27 ℃条件下快<sup>[27]</sup>,因此 *Gper* 表达量变化更快。

雌激素通过 *Esrs* 和 *Gper* 参与调控动物精巢发育,本实验采用腹腔注射 Letrozole 和 G-15 研究 *Gper* 在精巢中的功能。Letrozole 可抑制芳香化酶活性,降低个体中雌激素水平<sup>[25]</sup>。Letrozole 处理后,中华鳖睾丸 *Gper* 表达量显著降低( $P<0.05$ ), *Esrs* 在不同剂量处理组中表现出相反的变化趋势。G-15 处理后, *Gper* 表达量上升,可能是由于抑制 *Gper* 蛋白活性后机体产生应激反应<sup>[28]</sup>。*Esrs* 不仅介导雌激素通过基因组途径发挥功能,也可以介导非基因组通路的功能<sup>[29]</sup>,与 *Gper* 存在功能重叠<sup>[30]</sup>。体外与活体实验中, G-15 抑制

*Gper* 活性会导致小鼠 *Esr1* 与 *Esr2* 表达增加<sup>[31]</sup>。本实验中, *Esr1* 和 *Esr2* 表达量分别在 0.5 mg/kg 处理组和 1 mg/kg 处理组中显著上升( $P<0.05$ ),可能是由于机体通过提高 *Esrs* 的表达弥补 *Gper* 功能的缺失。

在此前的研究表明,在睾丸体细胞及各级生精细胞都检测到 *Gper* 表达<sup>[15]</sup>,通过体外培养细胞系的方法发现 *Gper* 可能参与调控小鼠睾丸支持细胞、粗线期精母细胞及圆形精子的增殖与凋亡过程<sup>[32-34]</sup>。原鸡中研究结果显示, *Gper* 可能通过 Egfr/Akt/ $\beta$ -catenin 信号通路调控原始生殖细胞的增殖与凋亡<sup>[11]</sup>,以上结果表明 *Gper* 可能通过参与细胞增殖与凋亡调控精子发生过程。本研究中通过检测 G-15 处理组中精子发生及细胞凋亡相关基因表达水平的变化研究 *Gper* 在雄鳖生殖过程中的作用。*Spata6*、*Dmc1*、*Cdc20*、*Dvl1*、*Mad2l1*、*Stra8* 等是调控精子发生的关键基因<sup>[35-37]</sup>,*Caspase3* 和 *Caspase8* 参与调节精子发生过程中的细胞凋亡途径<sup>[38]</sup>。G-15 处理后,精子发生关键基因表达量明显升高;同时, *Caspase3*、*Caspase8* 表达量显著上升( $P<0.05$ , 图 6)。基因转录水平结果表明抑制 *Gper* 功能后,对精子发生过程的关键基因及细胞凋亡基因的表达造成一定影响,暗示了 *Gper* 可能参与雄鳖精子发生,但其具体影响机制还需深入研究。

总之,本研究克隆得到中华鳖 *Gper* cDNA 全长序列,其编码的蛋白具有 Gpcr 家族典型的 7 个跨膜结构域和 DRY 三联体结构,在进化上与龟鳖类最近。*Gper* 在脑与性腺中表达量最高,在性腺分化的关键时期表达量逐渐下降,并且可能参与调控雄鳖精子发生与细胞凋亡过程,为进一步探索 *Gper* 在中华鳖性别分化及精子发生中的功能奠定研究基础。

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## Molecular cloning and initial function analysis of *Gper* in male *Pelodiscus sinensis*

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**Abstract:** Estrogens play a crucial role in the normal function of postnatal ovaries and testes in vertebrates. Estrogens have been reported to induce *in vitro* proliferation of spermatogonium stem cells and spermatogonia in both birds and mammals. Previous studies have showed that estrogens bind either to classical intracellular estrogen receptors (Esr1 and Esr2) or to a membrane estrogen receptor such as G protein-coupled estrogen receptor (*Gper*) and can therefore trigger both genomic or non-genomic signaling pathways. In comparison with the genomic pathway, non-genomic signaling occurs rapidly (within seconds to minutes) and involves the production of secondary messengers, the activation of protein kinases, and the modulation of ion-channels. *Gper* is a 7-transmembrane protein that belongs to the G protein-coupled receptor (Gpcr) superfamily, the members of which participate in various endocrine and metabolic processes. *Gper* is widely found in vertebrates such as mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish and is involved in many signaling pathways regulating cell and nervous system repair and other important physiological functions. *Gper* is very important in germ cell proliferation, in females in particular. *Gper* has been proven to be involved in ovarian development. *Gper* is also expressed in germ cells in males, but little information on the role of *Gper* in gonadal reproduction is available. The Chinese soft-shelled turtle (*Pelodiscus sinensis*) is a member of the Reptilia family of Chelonia Trionychidae and is an economically important aquaculture species in China. To improve the economic benefits of *P. sinensis*, it is important to study the characteristics and the mechanism of gonadal differentiation and reproduction of this species. However, limited studies on the reproduction of the turtle exist. The aims of this study were to identify the sequence information and function of *Gper* in the male turtle. The full-length *P. sinensis* *Gper* cDNA sequence was cloned using rapid amplification of cDNA ends technology. Quantitative real-time PCR (qRT-PCR) was used to analyze the expression level of *Gper* mRNA in different tissues and different developmental stages of the gonad. Finally, the role of *Gper* in testes of *P. sinensis* was analyzed by injecting letrozole and G-15 to inhibit aromatizing enzyme and *Gper* activity. The results showed that the full-length cDNA sequence of *Gper* was 2023 bp long, including 705 bp at the 5'-UTR, 241 bp at the 3'-UTR, and a 1077 bp open reading frame (ORF) encoding a peptide of 358 amino acids. One exon of the ORF was the same as other reptiles. The putative peptide contained 7-transmembrane domains and an Asp-Arg-Tyr (DRY) structure, and *Gper* therefore belongs to the Rhodopsin subfamily. Multiple sequence comparisons of vertebrate *Gper* proteins indicated that *Gper* has the highest similarity with the corresponding protein in Chelonia while it has the lowest similarity with the corresponding protein in fish. Quantitative real-time PCR detected *Gper* mRNA in nine tissues of *P. sinensis*, and the maximum level was detected in the brain, followed by the ovary. Moreover, under different incubation temperatures, *Gper* expression in the critical stage of gonadal differentiation showed the same trend: the highest *Gper* expression level was found in stage 16 of embryonic development, and significantly decreased with gonadal differentiation. After injection of letrozole and G-15, the expression of *Gper* was significantly decreased in the letrozole treatment group, but the expression of *Esr1* and *Esr2* were significantly increased. After inhibiting *Gper* protein activity, the expression of *Esr1* and *Esr2* obviously increased. More than that, the expression of genes related to spermatogenesis and apoptosis significantly increased after G-15 treatment. From the above, the role of *Gper* in the testes of *P. sinensis* is likely to be involved in early gonadal differentiation and regulates the proliferation of male germ cells. This study provides new insights into the role of *Gper* in the gonads of *P. sinensis*.

**Key words:** *Pelodiscus sinensis*; *Gper*; gene cloning; gonadal differentiation; spermatogenesis

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