

基于质谱法的食品中蛋白质定量分析研究

任 敏, 万英奇, 陈吉文

(北方工业大学电气与控制工程学院, 北京 100144)

摘要: 通过搭建管式燃烧炉-四极杆质谱仪实验平台检测食品中蛋白质含量, 称取各 1 g 5 种蛋白质含量不同的食品样品, 在高温富氧环境下利用管式燃烧炉对食品样品进行充分爆燃, 气体产物进入电子轰击(EI)离子源离子化后, 直接引入四极杆质量分析器进行检测。利用四极杆质量分析器的选择离子扫描功能, 通过扫描 NO_2^+ 离子峰强度来定量分析氮元素含量, 并绘制标准曲线, 线性相关系数(R^2)为 0.999 92, 相对标准偏差(RSD)为 2.1%~6.1%。利用氮元素含量结合氮-蛋白质转换系数 6.25 计算得到蛋白质含量。本研究为食品中蛋白质含量的定量分析提供了一种绿色、快速、准确、低成本的检测方法。

关键词: 质谱; 氮元素; 蛋白质; 定量分析

中图分类号: O657.63; TS213.2

文献标志码: A

文章编号: 1004-2997(2024)04-0552-06

doi: 10.7538/zpxb.2024.1006

Quantitative Analysis of Proteins in Food Based on Mass Spectrometry

REN Min, WAN Ying-qi, CHEN Ji-wen

(College of Electrical and Control Engineering, North China University of Technology, Beijing 100144, China)

Abstract: Protein content in food is an important indicator of the nutritional value of food, and it is also related to food safety and many other issues, therefore it is significant to accurately determine the protein content for the valuation of food nutrition and safety. The main elements in food include carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen and sulphur, of which nitrogen mainly comes from protein. The average nitrogen content in protein is 16%, so the conversion factor for “nitrogen-to-protein” is 6.25. Therefore, the protein content in food can be obtained by measuring the nitrogen content of food combined with “nitrogen-to-protein” conversion factor. The traditional methods of protein detection are Kjeldahl method, spectrophotometry, and Dumas combustion. The Kjeldahl method is time-consuming and consumes a large amount of reagents, which can cause environmental pollution. Spectrophotometry is susceptible to interference and the quantitative curve is not easy to draw. Dumas combustion is expensive in terms of consumables. In this paper, a platform of tube furnace-quadrupole mass spectrometer was set up to analyze the protein content in food. Food samples were heated at high temperatures in a tube furnace and combusted in an oxygen-rich environment. After the gas products were ionized, they were directly introduced into a quadrupole mass analyzer for detection, which eliminated the need for processes such as oxidation-reduction, adsorption-desorption

by using the selection ion scan function of the mass spectrometer. Five kinds of food samples with different protein contents were selected as research object. Each food sample was weighed at 1 g. The food samples were fully combusted in tube furnace at high temperature (1 300 °C). The gas products were infused through a drying and filtering tube to remove water and smoke, and then entered the EI ion source through a capillary for ionization. By electronic ionization, nitrogen element characteristic ions, N^+ , NO^+ , and NO_2^+ are generated. The peak intensity of the NO_2^+ ions were detected by the selection ion scan function of the quadrupole mass analyzer. A standard curve for nitrogen quantification is plotted to be $y=115.64x+1\ 896.9$ with the correlation coefficient (R^2) of 0.999 92 and the relative standard deviation (RSD) of 2.1%-6.1%. The nitrogen content can be calculated by using the peak intensity of NO_2^+ ions according to the standard curve. The experimental platform of tube furnace-mass spectrometer provides a green, rapid, accurate, and low-cost detection method for quantitative analysis of protein content in food.

Key words: mass spectrometry; nitrogen; protein; quantitative analysis

蛋白质是人体生长和运动所需的营养成分,是饮食中提供能量的营养物质^[1]。此外,蛋白质在人体内还具有跨细胞膜运输营养物质、发挥酶活性等作用,为了维持这些重要功能,必须通过饮食摄入足够的蛋白质^[2]。如果食物中的蛋白质含量不能满足人体需求,则会出现蛋白质分解、肌肉量减少或者生长缓慢、身体免疫力下降等症状^[3]。一些不法商贩为了经济效益,通过在食品中添加三聚氰胺冒充高蛋白营养品进而虚假宣传和销售,严重影响了消费者的身体健康^[4],扰乱了市场经济。因此,食品中蛋白质含量的检测成为衡量食品营养价值以及食品安全的重要手段^[5]。

食品是由一系列不同的营养素,如碳水化合物、脂肪、微量元素、膳食纤维等组成,检测食品中蛋白质及其氮元素的含量非常复杂^[6]。食品的结构或基质以及不同营养素之间的相互作用可能会降低蛋白质的可及性,导致蛋白质含量被低估^[7]。我国现行的国家标准^[8]有凯氏定氮法、分光光度法、杜马斯燃烧法3种检测食品中蛋白质的方法。针对蛋白质或者氮元素检测,不同方法可直接或间接地测定氮元素含量^[9]。蛋白质中含氮量在14.7%~19.5%之间,平均含氮量为16%^[10-11],由此得到氮-蛋白质转换系数为6.25。通过检测食品中氮元素含量,利用氮-蛋白质转化系数即可得到蛋白质含量^[12-13]。

对于凯氏定氮法,利用催化剂加热分解蛋白质,将蛋白质中的氮元素转化为氨气,结合硫酸生成硫酸铵,然后加碱蒸馏,使氨气蒸出,以标准

盐酸溶液滴定^[14]。但整个检测时间较长(8~10 h),操作繁琐,试剂消耗量大,会对环境造成严重污染^[15]。

对于分光光度法,在催化加热条件下分解蛋白质,产生的氨气与硫酸结合生成硫酸铵,在pH 4.8的乙酸钠-乙酸缓冲溶液中与乙酰丙酮和甲醛反应生成黄色的3,5-二乙酰-2,6-二甲基-1,4-二氢吡啶化合物。在波长400 nm下测定吸光度值,通过与标准系列比较定量,并乘以换算系数,即得蛋白质含量^[16]。但实验过程易受溶液中杂质的影响,不易绘制标准曲线。

对于杜马斯燃烧法,在900 °C燃烧室内氧气环境中燃烧已知量的样品,产生二氧化碳、水和氮气,通过一个特殊的柱子从残留的二氧化碳和水中分离氮气,再用热导检测器测量^[17-18]。但该方法的仪器耗材消耗快、检测成本高^[19]。

质谱法具有高灵敏度、高选择性和高效率的优势^[20],已广泛应用于食品^[21]、环境^[22]、生命科学^[23]等领域,但目前尚未见专用于食品中蛋白质含量检测的质谱仪。

本研究拟搭建管式燃烧炉-四极杆质谱仪实验平台检测食品中蛋白质含量,食品样品经管式燃烧炉高温加热,并在富氧环境中爆燃后,气体产物经EI源离子化,直接引入四极杆质量分析器检测。利用质谱仪的选择离子扫描功能省去样品前处理、氧化还原、吸附-解吸附等过程,结合质谱仪高灵敏度、宽动态范围等检测优势^[24],以实现食品中蛋白质含量简便、快速、准确、低成本的检测。

1 实验部分

1.1 仪器与装置

管式燃烧炉: 由赛弗热(洛阳)热工技术公司设计加工, 配有坩埚、升降台、温度控制系统和气体管路(气体进口和气体出口); 7700MS 四极杆质谱仪: 苏州安益谱公司产品, 配有 EI 离子源、数据采集软件及毛细管进样装置。

1.2 材料与标气

玉米粉、全麦粉和 3 种蛋白质含量不同的蛋白粉: 由中粮研究院提供。5 种食品样品的氮元素含量列于表 1。

表 1 5 种食品样品的氮元素含量
Table 1 Nitrogen content of five samples

序号 No.	样品 Sample	氮元素含量 Nitrogen content/%
1	玉米粉	1.0004
2	全麦粉	2.0543
3	蛋白粉1	3.521
4	蛋白粉2	11.1838
5	蛋白粉3	12.9937

高纯氩气、高纯氧气标准气体: 纯度均大于 99.999 2%, 北京氮普北分公司产品。

1.3 实验方法

在高温富氧环境下, 利用管式燃烧炉将食品样品爆燃, 将生成的产物气体经过滤处理后直接通入四极杆质谱仪中检测, 管式燃烧炉-四极杆

质谱仪示意图示于图 1。

管式燃烧炉工作条件: 电源功率 3 kW, 额定最高温度 1 400 °C, 长期工作温度 1 300 °C, 升温速率 1~15 °C/min, 燃烧反应区尺寸 100 mm, 温度稳定性 ± 1 °C。

质谱仪工作条件: EI 离子源, 电子能量 70 eV, 选择母离子 m/z 14(N^+)、30(NO^+)和 46(NO_2^+), 扫描方式为选择离子扫描。

为保证样品充分爆燃, 并考虑到管式燃烧炉升温速率性能及安全等因素, 设定管式燃烧炉的燃烧温度为 1 300 °C。同时, 为防止空气中氮气对检测结果的干扰, 在管式燃烧炉升温过程中用高纯氩气进行持续吹扫, 排空炉内空气, 利用质谱仪检测 Ar^+ 、 O_2^+ 、 N_2^+ 等。将称重后的食品样品放入坩埚中, 利用升降台将坩埚送入管式燃烧炉内, 迅速将高纯氧气(工作压力 0.02 MPa)通入管式燃烧炉内, 在高温和高纯氧的环境下食品样品快速爆燃, 为保证样品能够充分燃烧, 整个燃烧过程持续约 1 min。将生成的气体产物经干燥过滤管(内部填充活性炭、变色硅胶、石英棉)过滤后收集于 2 L 铝箔气体采样袋, 毛细管一端从采样袋进气口顶端的硅胶密封垫片直接穿过, 另一端通入 EI 源, 利用气袋和质谱仪的气压差实现气体进样, 全部气体产物进入 EI 源后, 采用选择离子扫描模式扫描 2 min, 待离子峰信号稳定后, 选取 NO_2^+ 离子峰强度进行分析。

考虑到食品样品量少会导致 NO_2^+ 离子检

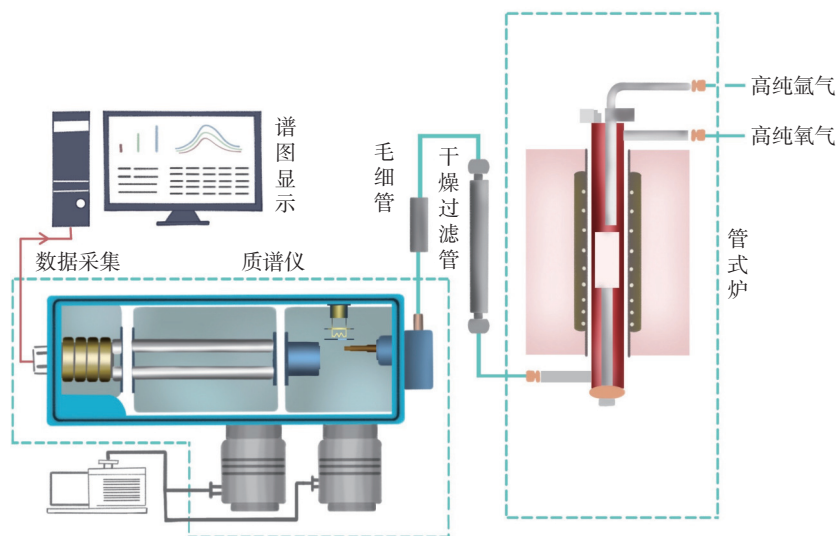


图 1 管式燃烧炉-四极杆质谱仪示意图

Fig. 1 Schematic diagram of tube furnace-quadrupole mass spectrometer platform

测信号强度过低,样品量过多会造成燃烧不充分,以玉米粉为例进行样品量优化。分别称取0.1、0.5、1.0、1.5、2.0、2.5、3.0 g玉米粉,在管式燃烧炉内高温富氧环境下爆燃后,将产物气体通入四极杆质谱仪,检测 NO_2^+ 离子峰强度,结果示于图2。可以看出,当玉米粉质量为0.1和0.5 g时, NO_2^+ 离子峰强度较弱;从1.0 g玉米粉开始,随着样品量增加,信号强度上升缓慢,表明食品样品可能存在燃烧不充分。因此,选择食品样品的燃烧质量为1 g。

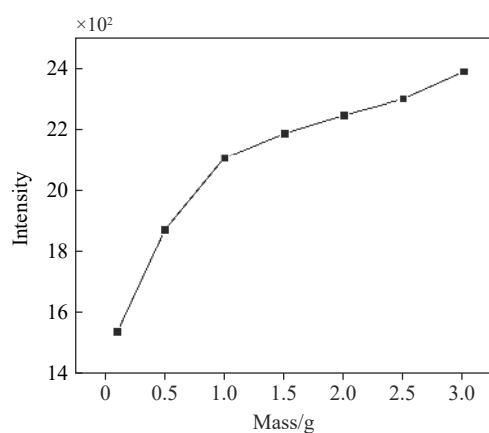


图2 玉米粉质量与 NO_2^+ 离子峰强度的关系

Fig. 2 Relationship between mass of cornflour and peak intensity of NO_2^+ ions

利用EI源将产物气体电离后,使用四极杆质量分析器检测。由于蛋白质主要由氨基酸组成,包含C、H、O、N等元素,食品中的氮元素主要来源于蛋白质,因此测量食品中氮元素含量后,利用“氮-蛋白质”转换系数即可得到蛋白质含量。由于样品在惰性气体和富氧环境下爆燃会生成二氧化碳和二氧化氮,所以在EI源电离作用下会产生大量的 Ar^+ 、 O_2^+ 、 CO_2^+ 离子,为避免其他离子对 NO_2^+ 离子的干扰,采用选择离子扫描模式。

2 结果与讨论

2.1 标准曲线建立

利用四极杆质谱仪的选择离子扫描功能,分别扫描每种食品样品爆燃后产物气体进入质谱仪中产生的 NO_2^+ 离子峰强度,并定量分析样品中氮元素含量。以表1中5种食品样品的氮元素含量为横坐标, NO_2^+ 离子峰强度为纵坐标,绘制定

量标准曲线,示于图3。线性方程为 $y=115.64x+1896.9$,线性相关系数(R^2)为0.99992。利用管式燃烧炉-四极杆质谱仪平台检测未知食品的 NO_2^+ 离子峰强度,代入标准曲线,计算得到食品中氮元素含量,结合氮-蛋白质转换系数得到蛋白质含量。

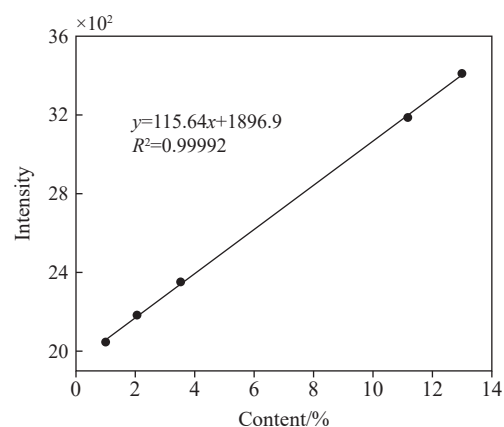


图3 氮元素含量与 NO_2^+ 离子峰强度的关系

Fig. 3 Relationship between nitrogen content and peak intensity of NO_2^+ ions

2.2 检出限

在1.3节条件,不放入样品的情况下燃烧,收集10次气体,并进行质谱检测,将得到的 NO_2^+ 质谱峰高作为空白,并以此计算空白标准偏差,按式(1)计算检出限:

$$D_L = \frac{3s_B}{C} \quad (1)$$

式中, D_L 表示检出限; s_B 表示连续10次测量的空白标准偏差; C 表示拟合标准曲线的斜率。通过测量分析得到, s_B 约为22, C 约为115.64;计算得到,氮元素检出限为0.57%,即1 g食品样品中氮元素检出限为5.7 mg。

2.3 准确度

为了验证质谱法的准确性和管式燃烧炉-四极杆质谱仪实验平台的稳定性,按照1.3节方法分别称取1 g 5种食品样品,燃烧10次后进行质谱检测,计算相对标准偏差(RSD, $n=10$)为2.1%~6.1%。表明该平台检测食品中蛋白质含量准确可靠、精密度高,能够满足检测需求。

3 结论

本研究建立了管式燃烧炉-四极杆质谱仪实验平台检测食品中蛋白质含量,该平台可以满足

食品中蛋白质含量的定量需求,为蛋白质含量的检测提供了更加快捷、绿色、准确、低成本的方法。但由于EI源电离产生的碎片离子过多,会对检测结果造成一定的干扰,未来,本课题组将探索一种软电离方式——新型空心电极辉光放电离子源,以减少碎片离子干扰,提高检测精度。

参考文献:

- [1] HUANG L, ZHAO J, CHEN Q, ZHANG Y. Nondestructive measurement of total volatile basic nitrogen (TVB-N) in pork meat by integrating near infrared spectroscopy, computer vision and electronic nose techniques[J]. *Food Chemistry*, 2014, 145: 228-236.
- [2] REINMUTH-SELZLE K, TCHIPOLOV T, BACKES A T, TSCHEUSCHNER G, TANG K, ZIEGLER K, LUCAS K, PÖSCHL U, FRÖHLICH-NOWOISKY J, WELLER M G. Determination of the protein content of complex samples by aromatic amino acid analysis, liquid chromatography-UV absorbance, and colorimetry[J]. *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*, 2022, 414(15): 4 457-4 470.
- [3] MÆHRE H K, DALHEIM L, EDVENSEN G K, ELVEVOLL E O, JENSEN I J. Protein determination-method matters[J]. *Foods*, 2018, 7(1): 5.
- [4] 王竞楠. 2020年江苏省某区县“五毛食品”的蛋白质、脂肪含量检测结果分析[J]. *食品安全导刊*, 2021(9): 96-97.
WANG Jingnan. Analysis of protein and fat content of “Wumao Food” in a county of Jiangsu Province in 2020[J]. *China Food Safety Magazine*, 2021(9): 96-97(in Chinese).
- [5] 林佳曼, 纪佼佼, 武丽娜, 孔然, 向平, 孙其然. 实时直接分析-高分辨质谱法快速筛查食品中8种非法添加染料[J]. *质谱学报*, 2023, 44(5): 696-705.
LIN Jiaman, JI Jiaojiao, WU Lina, KONG Ran, XIANG Ping, SUN Qiran. Rapid screening of 8 dyes illegally added in food by direct analysis in real time-high resolution mass spectrometry[J]. *Journal of Chinese Mass Spectrometry Society*, 2023, 44(5): 696-705(in Chinese).
- [6] TOLDRÁ F, MORA L. Proteins and bioactive peptides in high protein content foods[J]. *Foods*, 2021, 10(6): 1 186.
- [7] BANOVIC M, ARVOLA A, PENNANEN K, DUTA D E, BRÜCKNER-GÜHMANN M, LÄHTEENMÄKI L, GRUNERT K G. Foods with increased protein content: a qualitative study on European consumer preferences and perceptions[J]. *Appetite*, 2018, 125: 233-243.
- [8] 王金灿. GB 5009.5-2016《食品安全国家标准 食品中蛋白质的测定》之5.1凯氏定氮法具体操作疑难解析[J]. *食品安全导刊*, 2018(30): 54-55.
WANG Jincan. Analysis of the specific operation difficulties of Kjeldahl nitrogen determination method in GB 5009.5-2016 “Determination of protein in National Food Safety Standards” [J]. *China Food Safety Magazine*, 2018(30): 54-55(in Chinese).
- [9] 孙蓉, 吴文标. 食品中蛋白质检测技术研究进展[J]. *食品科学*, 2012, 33(23): 393-398.
SUN Rong, WU Wenbiao. Research progress of protein detection technology in foods[J]. *Food Science*, 2012, 33(23): 393-398(in Chinese).
- [10] MARIOTTI F, TOMÉ D, MIRAND P P. Converting nitrogen into protein-beyond 6.25 and Jones’ factors[J]. *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, 2008, 48(2): 177-184.
- [11] NERY J, GASCO L, DABBOU S, SCHIAVONE A. Protein composition and digestibility of black soldier fly larvae in broiler chickens revisited according to the recent nitrogen-protein conversion ratio[J]. *Journal of Insects as Food and Feed*, 2018, 4(3): 171-177.
- [12] SAXTON R, McDOUGAL O M. Whey protein powder analysis by mid-infrared spectroscopy[J]. *Foods*, 2021, 10(5): 1 033.
- [13] GOSUKONDA V, SINGH H, GOSUKONDA R. Comparative analysis of nitrogen-to-protein conversion factors for determining net protein content in six superfoods[J]. *Journal of Microbiology, Biotechnology and Food Sciences*, 2020, 9(4): 856-860.
- [14] RIZVIN B, ALEEM S, KHAN M R, ASHRAF S, BUSQUETS R. Quantitative estimation of protein in sprouts of *Vigna radiate* (mung beans), *Lens culinaris* (lentils), and *Cicer arietinum* (chickpeas) by Kjeldahl and lowry methods[J]. *Molecules*, 2022, 27(3): 814.
- [15] SINGH P, SINGH R K, SONG Q Q, LI H B, YANG L T, LI Y R. Methods for estimation of nitrogen components in plants and microorganisms[J]. *Methods in Molecular Biology*, 2020, 2 057: 103-112.
- [16] 冯旭东, 安卫东, 丁毅, 于爱民, 刘静, 高德江, 王智宏, 于永. 蛋白质快速检测仪测定乳及乳制品中蛋白质[J]. *分析化学*, 2011, 39(10): 1 496-1 500.
FENG Xudong, AN Weidong, DING Yi, YU Aimin, LIU Jing, GAO Dejiang, WANG Zhihong, YU Yong. Fast determination of protein in milk and dairy products using protein fast analyzer[J]. *Chinese Journal of Analytical*

- Chemistry, 2011, 39(10): 1 496-1 500(in Chinese).
- [17] 霍丽娜. 杜马斯燃烧法和凯氏定氮法测定奶粉和粮食中氮及蛋白质含量研究分析[J]. 福建分析测试, 2021, 30(6): 38-42.
- HUO Li'na. Research and analysis of the Dumas combustion method and Kjeldahl method to determine nitrogen and protein content in milk powder and grain[J]. Fujian Analysis & Testing, 2021, 30(6): 38-42(in Chinese).
- [18] 欧雄波. 杜马斯燃烧法测定肥料中总氮含量的测量不确定度评定[J]. 生物化工, 2022, 8(3): 93-96.
- OU Xiongbo. Evaluation of uncertainty in measurement of total nitrogen content in fertilizer by Dumas combustion method[J]. Biological Chemical Engineering, 2022, 8(3): 93-96(in Chinese).
- [19] HAYES M. Measuring protein content in food: an overview of methods[J]. Foods, 2020, 9(10): 1 340.
- [20] YU Z, LIU C, NIU H, WU M, GAO W, ZHOU Z, HUANG Z, LI X. Real time analysis of trace volatile organic compounds in ambient air: a comparison between membrane inlet single photon ionization mass spectrometry and proton transfer reaction mass spectrometry[J]. Analytical Methods, 2020, 12(35): 4 343-4 350.
- [21] 祖文川, 汪雨, 李冰宁, 任敏, 刘聪, 武彦文, 陈舜琮. ICP-MS 相关联用技术在食品元素形态分析中的应用及进展[J]. 质谱学报, 2013, 34(4): 247-256.
- ZU Wenchuan, WANG Yu, LI Bingning, REN Min, LIU Cong, WU Yanwen, CHEN Shuncong. The application and development of elemental speciation analysis in foods by ICP-MS related hyphenated technique[J]. Journal of Chinese Mass Spectrometry Society, 2013, 34(4): 247-256(in Chinese).
- [22] GUMBI B P, MOODLEY B, BIRUNGI G, NDUNGU P G. Target, suspect and non-target screening of silylated derivatives of polar compounds based on single ion monitoring GC-MS[J]. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2019, 16(20): 4 022.
- [23] DUFAYET L, ALCARAZ E, DOROL J, REY-SALMON C, ALVAREZ J C. Attempt of scopolamine-facilitated robbery: an original case of poisoning by inhalation confirmed by LC-MS/MS and review of the literature[J]. *Forensic Toxicology*, 2020, 38(1): 264-268.
- [24] MACIEL G P S, MACHADO M E, Da CUNHA M E, LAZZARI E, Da SILVA J M, JACQUES R A, KRAUSE L C, BARROS J A S, CARAMÃO E B. Quantification of nitrogen compounds in diesel fuel samples by comprehensive two-dimensional gas chromatography coupled with quadrupole mass spectrometry[J]. Journal of Separation Science, 2015, 38(23): 4 071-4 077.
- (收稿日期: 2024-01-12; 修回日期: 2024-02-08)