

LINC00511 accelerates the proliferation of cardiomyocytes after myocardial ischemia/reperfusion injury by absorbing miRNA-515-5p

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Abstract. – **OBJECTIVE:** The aim of this study was to clarify the role of LINC00511 in regulating the proliferative ability of cardiomyocytes undergoing ischemia/reperfusion (I/R) injury by absorbing miRNA-515-5p.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: Adult male C57BL/6 mice were subjected to I/R injury, and I/R model was constructed *in vivo*. Primary cardiomyocytes were isolated from 1-2 days-old male mice and treated with H₂O₂ to establish the I/R model *in vitro*. The relative expression level of LINC00511 was determined after ligation of the anterior descending coronary artery (LAD) in mice or H₂O₂ induction in primary cardiomyocytes for different time points, respectively. The regulatory effect of LINC00511 on the viability of H₂O₂-treated cardiomyocytes was assessed. Subsequently, the interaction between LINC00511 and miRNA-515-5p was evaluated by Dual-Luciferase Reporter Gene Assay. Furthermore, the viability and 5-Ethynyl-2'-deoxyuridine (EdU)-positive rate influenced by LINC00511/miRNA-515-5p were examined.

RESULTS: LINC00511 was gradually downregulated with the prolongation of I/R procedures in mice or H₂O₂ treatment in primary cardiomyocytes. The overexpression of LINC00511 significantly elevated the viability and EdU-positive rate in H₂O₂-treated cardiomyocytes. LINC00511 could bind to miRNA-515-5p. Meanwhile, there was a negative correlation between the levels of LINC00511 and miRNA-515-5p. In addition, the overexpression of miRNA-515-5p reversed the promoting effect of LINC00511 on the proliferative ability of H₂O₂-treated cardiomyocytes.

CONCLUSIONS: LINC00511 accelerates the proliferation of cardiomyocytes after I/R by targeting miRNA-515-5p.

Key Words:

LINC00511, MiRNA-515-5p, Cardiomyocytes, I/R, Proliferation.

Introduction

Cardiomyocyte apoptosis is associated with the development of heart diseases¹. Heart failure (HF) is a cardiac systolic and/or diastolic dysfunction². HF is not an independent disease, but the end stage of heart disease development³. The changes in the myocardial structure and function caused by cardiomyocyte apoptosis may eventually lead to HF⁴.

Long non-coding RNAs (lncRNAs) are a type of non-coding RNAs with over 200 nucleotides in length⁵. Currently, lncRNAs have been found involved in various cellular processes, such as epigenetics and cellular behaviors⁶. Dys-regulated lncRNAs are closely related to the occurrence and progression of diseases. In addition, lncRNAs can also participate in the pathogenesis of cardiovascular diseases^{7,8}. Some studies⁹⁻¹¹ have shown that lncRNAs regulate the gene expressions by absorbing miRNAs.

LINC00511 is a 2.265-kb lncRNA that is located on chromosome 17q24.3. It is a newly identified carcinogenic lncRNA^{12,13}. Sun et al¹⁴ have demonstrated that LINC00511 is widely involved in the regulation of tumorigenesis by regulating the activity of miRNAs. In fact, acting as a competitive endogenous RNA, LINC00511 regulates the expression of VEGFA by adsorbing hsa-miR-29b-3p in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma¹⁵. LINC00511 interacts with miR-765 and regulates the progression of tongue squamous cell carcinoma by targeting LAMC2¹⁶. LINC00511 promotes the development of breast cancer by inducing the miR-185-3p/E2F1/Nanog axis¹⁷. Furthermore, LINC00511 promotes the proliferative and mi-

gratory capacities of osteosarcoma cells by absorbing miR-765¹⁸. However, the specific role of LINC00511 in regulating cardiomyocytes has not been fully elucidated. In this paper, both *in vivo* and *in vitro* I/R models were constructed. The aim of this study was to further uncover the regulatory effects of LINC00511 and miRNA-515-5p on cardiomyocytes after ischemia/reperfusion (I/R) injury.

Materials and Methods

Cell Isolation and Culture

Primary cardiomyocytes were isolated from male C57BL/6 mice with 1-2 days old. Briefly, mouse heart tissues were cut into small pieces and digested with trypsin at 37°C. After digestion termination and rapid centrifugation, the cardiomyocytes were cultured in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium (DMEM; Hyclone, South Logan, UT, USA) containing 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS; Hyclone, South Logan, UT, USA), 1% penicillin, streptomycin. Primary cardiomyocytes were treated with H₂O₂ for different time points.

I/R Procedures in Mice

Male C57BL/6 mice with 8-week-old were provided by Tianjin Medical University Experimental Animal Center. All animal procedures were conducted in accordance with the protocols approved by the Tianjin Medical University Animal Care Committee. The mice were anesthetized, and a longitudinal incision was cut to expose the chest. Ligation of anterior descending coronary artery (LAD) was performed using a snare. The coronary artery was blocked by tightening the snare and secured with a hemostat. Subsequently, the ligation was loosened to allow reperfusion. Meanwhile, the mice in the sham group received the same procedures, except for ligation loosening.

Construction of Overexpression Vectors and Transfection

The plasmid complementary deoxyribonucleic acid 3.0 (pcDNA3.0)-LINC00511 vector was constructed based on amplification with specific primers. Subsequently, the complementary deoxyribonucleic acids (cDNAs) of LINC00511 was cloned into mammalian expression vector pcDNA3.0 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, USA). Cardiomyocytes were cultured until 60% of confluence.

Cell transfection was performed according to the instructions of Lipofectamine 2000 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, USA). 6 h later, complete medium was replaced. The transfected cells for 24-48 h were harvested for the following *in vitro* experiments.

RNA Extraction and Quantitative Real Time-Polymerase Chain Reaction (qRT-PCR)

The total RNA in cells was extracted using TRIzol reagent (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, USA). The concentration of RNA was detected by an ultraviolet spectrophotometer (Hitachi, Tokyo, Japan). Subsequently, the extracted RNA was reversely transcribed into cDNA, followed by PCR using the SYBR Green method (TaKaRa, Otsu, Shiga, Japan). Specific procedures were as follow: 94°C for 5 min, and 40 cycles at 94°C for 30 s, 55°C for 30 s, and 72°C for 90 s. The relative expression of miRNAs was calculated using the 2^{-ΔΔCT} method. U6 was used as an internal reference. The primer sequences used in this study were as follows: LINC00511, F: 5'-CGGCTTAACTA-ACTGTTACTC-3', R: 5'-CAGTACCGATGT-CAGACACGGA-3'; miRNA-515-5p, F: 5'-GAG-CGTAGTAACCATACTCGACATCG-3', R: 5'-ACCTTGCATGTCTGAAGTAG-3'; miR-126-5p, F: 5'-GAGAACGCGCATATGCCACA-3', R: 5'-CGGTTGCAGAATAGACGACTTCT-3'; miR-15b-3p: F: 5'-CAGTGACTGACACTGAC-GAAC-3', R: 5'-GCTGCAACGATAGCTTC-CACCGA-3'; miR-483-3p: F: 5'-CG-CATTGTCTTATACACAGCTTACAAC-3', R: 5'-GTCATACCAATGACGCTGGTGA-3'; U6: F: 5'-GCTTCGGCAGCACATATACTAAAAT-3', R: 5'-CGCTTCAGAATTTGCGTGCAT-3'.

Dual-Luciferase Reporter Gene Assay

Cardiomyocytes were co-transfected with LINC00511-MT/LINC00511-WT and miRNA-515-5p mimics/NC, respectively. 48 h after transfection, the cells were lysed. Finally, the relative Luciferase activity was determined by the Dual-Luciferase Reporter Gene Assay (Promega, Madison, WI, USA).

Cell Counting Kit-8 (CCK-8) Assay

The cardiomyocytes were first seeded into 96-well plates at a density of 5×10³ cells per well and cultured overnight. Absorbance (A) at 450 nm was recorded at appointed time points using the CCK-8 kit (Dojindo Laboratories, Kumamoto, Japan).

5-Ethynyl-2'-Deoxyuridine (EdU) Assay

The cardiomyocytes were first seeded into 96-well plates, with 300 cells per well. ECs were labeled with 50 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ EdU at 37°C for 2 h. After fixation with 4% paraformaldehyde for 30 min, the cells were incubated with Phosphate-Buffered Saline (PBS) containing 0.5% Triton-100 for 20 min. Then, the cells were washed with PBS containing 3% bovine serum albumin (BSA), followed by incubation with 100 μL of dyeing solution for 1h in the dark. Subsequently, the cells were counter-stained with 100 μL of 4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI; 5 $\mu\text{g/mL}$; Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) for 30 min. Finally, the EdU-positive cells, DAPI-labeled nucleus, and merged images were captured under a microscope (magnification 100 \times).

Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) 18.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) was used for all statistical analyses. GraphPad Prism (Version X; La Jolla, CA, USA) was applied for image editing. The experimental data were expressed as mean \pm standard deviation. The intergroup differences were analyzed by the *t*-test. $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results

LINC00511 Was Downregulated After I/R Injury

I/R injury in mice was successfully established by performing LAD. With the prolongation of ischemia, the relative level of LINC00511 was gradually down-regulated (Figure 1A). Meanwhile, the primary cardiomyocytes were isolated from newborn

mice and subjected to H_2O_2 treatment for 0, 6, 12, and 24 h, respectively. The results demonstrated that LINC00511 was down-regulated in a time-dependent manner following I/R injury *in vitro* (Figure 1B).

Overexpression of LINC00511 Protected H_2O_2 -Induced Proliferative Inhibition in Cardiomyocytes

LINC00511 level was significantly reduced in the H_2O_2 -treated cardiomyocytes. The transfection of pcDNA-LINC00511 remarkably up-regulated the expression of LINC00511 in cardiomyocytes following I/R injury. This suggested an effective transfection efficacy (Figure 2A). CCK-8 assay revealed that the viability of H_2O_2 -treated cardiomyocytes was remarkably reduced. However, it was markedly elevated after the overexpression of LINC00511 (Figure 2B). EdU assay obtained similar results. The transfection of pcDNA-LINC00511 markedly increased the EdU-positive rate in cardiomyocytes treated with H_2O_2 (Figure 2C). All these findings suggested that LINC00511 protected the inhibitory effect of H_2O_2 on the proliferative ability of cardiomyocytes.

LINC00511 Could Bind to miRNA-515-5p

Through online prediction, several miRNAs have been screened out to bind to LINC00511, including miRNA-515-5p, miR-126-5p, miR-15b-3p, and miR-483-3p. In mice received 120-min of I/R injury, only the expression level of miRNA-515-5p was remarkably up-regulated (Figure 3A). Identically, miRNA-515-5p was the only miRNA significantly up-regulated after 24h of H_2O_2 treatment in cardiomyocytes (Figure 3B). To further clarify the biological function of miRNA-515-

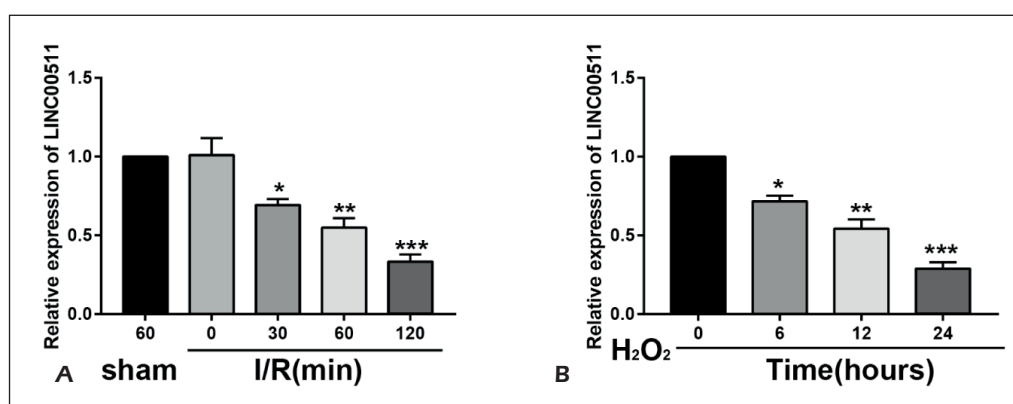


Figure 1. LINC00511 was downregulated following I/R injury. **A**, Relative level of LINC00511 in mice undergoing sham operations for 60 min, and I/R injury for 0, 30, 60, and 120 min. **B**, Relative level of LINC00511 in primary cardiomyocytes treated with H_2O_2 for 0, 6, 12, and 24 h, respectively.

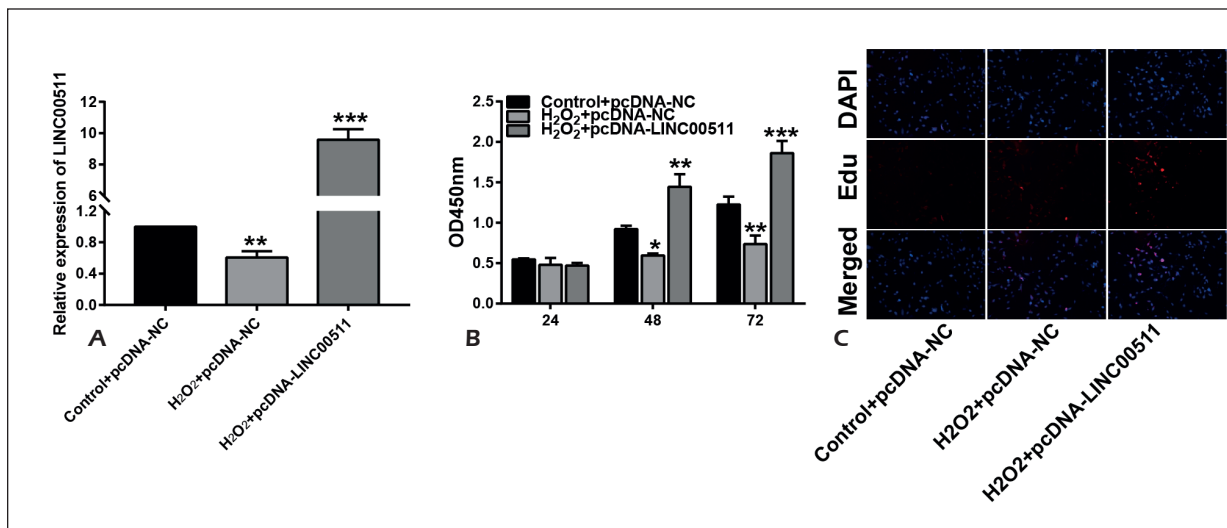


Figure 2. Overexpression of LINC00511 protected H₂O₂-induced proliferative inhibition in cardiomyocytes. **A**, Relative level of LINC00511 in primary cardiomyocytes transfected with control + pcDNA-NC, H₂O₂ + pcDNA-NC or H₂O₂ + pcDNA-LINC00511. **B**, CCK-8 assay showed the viability of primary cardiomyocytes transfected with control + pcDNA-NC, H₂O₂ + pcDNA-NC or H₂O₂ + pcDNA-LINC00511. **C**, DAPI-labeled, EdU-labeled and merged images of primary cardiomyocytes transfected with control + pcDNA-NC, H₂O₂ + pcDNA-NC or H₂O₂ + pcDNA-LINC00511 (magnification × 100).

5p, we constructed miRNA-515-5p inhibitor and miRNA-515-5p mimics (Figure 3C). Meanwhile, the wild-type and mutant-type LINC00511 vectors were constructed for Dual-Luciferase Reporter Gene Assay (Figure 3D). The results indicated that the relative Luciferase activity markedly decreased after the co-transfection of LINC00511-WT and miRNA-515-5p mimics, verifying the binding relationship between LINC00511 and miRNA-515-5p (Figure 3E). The transfection of miRNA-515-5p inhibitor significantly upregulated LINC00511 level. However, the opposite trend was obtained after transfection of miRNA-515-5p mimics (Figure 3F). Wild-type and mutant miR-515-5p were further constructed for luciferase reporter gene experiment (Figure 3G), and the results again confirmed that LINC00511 regulated miR-515-5p (Figure 3H). In cardiomyocytes, the transfection of LINC00511 overexpressed plasmid significantly reduced the level of miR-515-5p (Figure 3I). In summary: LINC00511 specifically regulates the expression of miR-515-5p.

LINC00511 Influenced Cardiomyocyte Proliferation by Targeting MiRNA-515-5p

Thereafter, we speculated whether miRNA-515-5p was involved in LINC00511-mediated proliferation of cardiomyocytes following I/R injury. Firstly, the results found that LINC00511 level in cardiomyocytes overexpressing LINC00511 was remarkably down-regulated by the co-transfection

of miRNA-515-5p mimics (Figure 4A). Interestingly, pcDNA-LINC00511 transfection markedly increased the number of EdU-positive cells in cardiomyocytes treated with H₂O₂. However, this could be further reversed by the overexpression of miRNA-515-5p (Figure 4B). To sum up, LINC00511 accelerated cardiomyocyte proliferation after H₂O₂ treatment by negatively regulating miRNA-515-5p level (Figure 4B).

Discussion

Currently, HF poses a huge threat to human health¹⁹. It has been identified that cardiomyocyte apoptosis leads to the occurrence and progression of myocardial infarction and HF²⁰. Therefore, it is of great significance to clarify the molecular mechanism of the cardiomyocyte apoptosis²¹. HF is a syndrome in which the cardiac output is reduced due to primary cardiac damage. Under pathological circumstances, cardiac output is insufficient to the metabolic needs of tissues⁴. Reduction in cardiomyocyte number and systolic or diastolic overload eventually lead to HF²². Meanwhile, the decreased blood output of the heart cannot satisfy the metabolic needs of the body^{23,24}. Previous experimental trails^{25,26} have demonstrated that LAD procedures and H₂O₂ treatment can mimic *in vivo* and *in vitro* I/R injury in cardiomyocytes, respectively.

MiRNAs are a class of endogenous regulatory non-coding RNAs found in eukaryotes²⁷. Mature

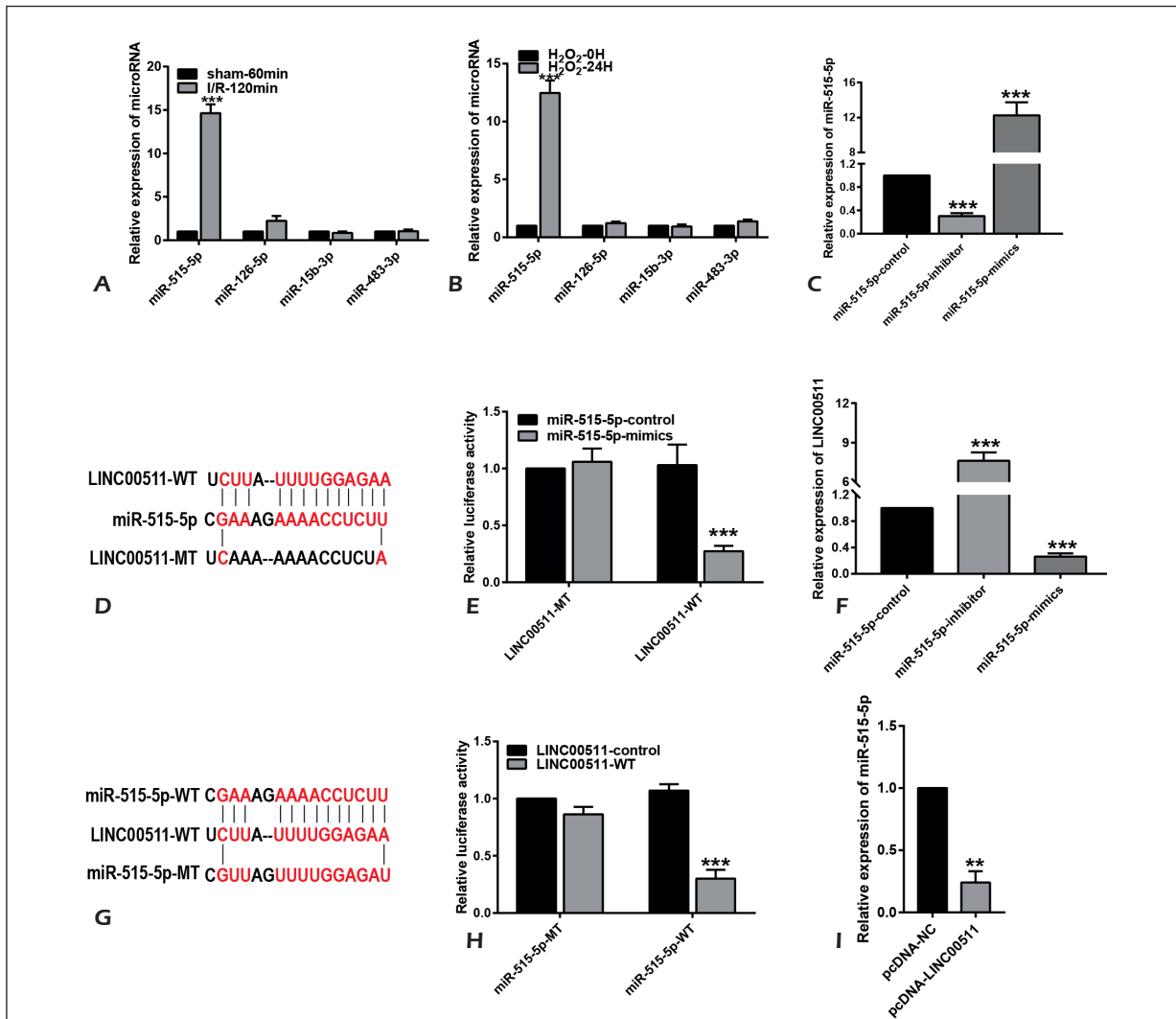


Figure 3. LINC00511 bound to miR-515-5p. **A**, Relative levels of miR-515-5p, miR-126-5p, miR-15b-3p, and miR-483-3p in mice undergoing 60-min of sham operation or 120-min of I/R injury. **B**, Relative levels of miR-515-5p, miR-126-5p, miR-15b-3p, and miR-483-3p in primary cardiomyocytes undergoing 0 or 24-h H₂O₂ treatment. **C**, Transfection efficacies of miR-515-5p inhibitor and miR-515-5p mimics, respectively. **D**, Potential binding sequences between LINC00511 and miR-515-5p. **E**, Dual-luciferase reporter gene assay showed the luciferase activity in cardiomyocytes co-transfected with LINC00511-MT/LINC00511-WT and miR-515-5p mimics/NC. **F**, Relative level of LINC00511 in primary cardiomyocytes transfected with NC, miR-515-5p inhibitor or miR-515-5p mimics. **G**, Wild-type and mutant miR-515-5p were further constructed for luciferase reporter gene experiment. **H**, Luciferase reporter assay confirmed that LINC00511 targeted miR-515-5p. **I**, Overexpression of LINC00511 significantly decreased miR-515-5p in cardiomyocytes.

miRNAs are produced by the processing of primary transcripts through a series of nucleases. Based on the degree of complementary base pairing, miRNAs can guide the degradation of target mRNAs or inhibit their translation^{28,29}. Current studies^{30,31} have indicated that miRNAs participate in a variety of regulatory pathways, including development, viral defense, hematopoietic processes, organ formation, cell proliferation, and apoptosis, etc.

MiRNAs are closely related to tumor biology, serving as oncogenes or tumor suppressor

genes³²⁻³⁴. Liu et al³⁵ have discovered the involvement of miRNAs in cardiomyocyte apoptosis. Of note, miRNA-15b disrupts hypoxia/reperfusion-induced cardiomyocyte apoptosis by down-regulating Bcl-2 and MAPK. The downregulation of miR-200c protects the cardiomyocytes from hypoxia-induced apoptosis by targeting GATA-4³⁶. The inhibition of miR-363 protects cardiomyocytes from hypoxia-induced apoptosis through the Notch pathway³⁷. Meanwhile, miRNA-122 regulates caspase-8

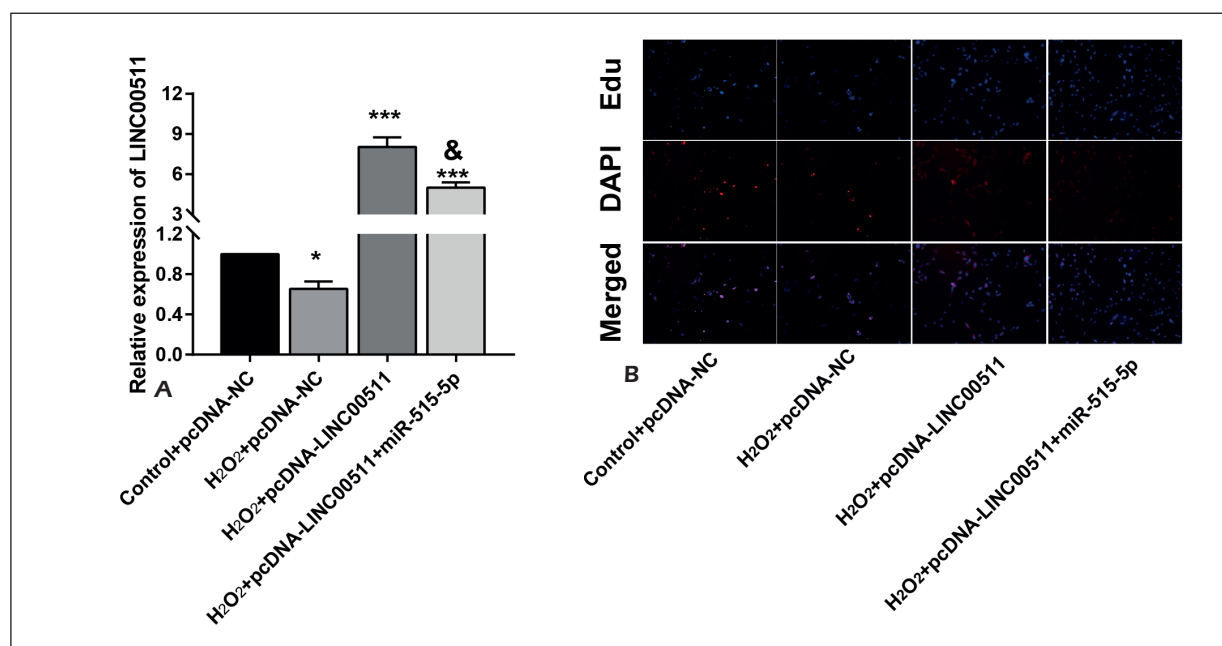


Figure 4. LINC00511 accelerated cardiomyocyte proliferation by targeting miR-515-5p. **A**, Relative level of LINC00511 in primary cardiomyocytes transfected with control + pcDNA-NC, H_2O_2 + pcDNA-NC, H_2O_2 + pcDNA-LINC00511 or H_2O_2 + pcDNA-LINC00511 + miR-515-5p mimics. **B**, DAPI-labeled, EdU-labeled and merged images of primary cardiomyocytes transfected with control + pcDNA-NC, H_2O_2 + pcDNA-NC, H_2O_2 + pcDNA-LINC00511 or H_2O_2 + pcDNA-LINC00511 + miR-515-5p mimics (magnification $\times 100$).

and promotes the apoptosis of cardiomyocytes in mouse³⁸. Cardiomyocyte apoptosis has also been observed associated with the development of HF. During the pathological progression of HF, miRNAs are important regulators of cardiomyocyte apoptosis^{39,40}.

In this paper, miRNA-515-5p was found significantly up-regulated following I/R injury. MiRNA-515-5p acted as the direct target of LINC00511 and was negatively correlated with LINC00511. Therefore, it was speculated that LINC00511 might absorb miRNA-515-5p to exert its promoting effect on cardiomyocyte proliferation. Our rescue experiments demonstrated that the overexpression of miRNA-515-5p reversed the promoting effect of LINC00511 on the proliferative rate of H_2O_2 -treated cardiomyocytes.

Conclusions

This study demonstrated that LINC00511 regulated the proliferative ability of cardiomyocytes following I/R by targeting miRNA-515-5p.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declared that they have no conflict of interests.

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