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**NEUROTRANSMITTER RECEPTOR
BINDING IN THE POSTERIOR CINGULATE
CORTEX IN SCHIZOPHRENIA AND IN THE
PHENCYCLIDINE MOUSE MODEL**

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE NMDA
HYPOFUNCTION HYPOTHESIS OF
SCHIZOPHRENIA**

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

From

SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
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By

Kelly Newell

2007

CERTIFICATION

I, Kelly Newell, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Health Sciences, University of Wollongong, is entirely my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This manuscript has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Kelly Newell

May 2007

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PUBLICATIONS

The following publications and presentations have arisen directly from the work conducted for this thesis.

Publications in Refereed Journals

Newell, K.A., Zavitsanou, K., and Huang, X.F. Short and long-term changes in NMDA receptor binding in mouse brain following chronic phencyclidine treatment. *Journal of Neural Transmission*, In Press.

Newell, K.A., Zavitsanou, K., and Huang, X.F. Opposing short and long-term effects on muscarinic M1/4 receptor binding following chronic phencyclidine treatment. *Journal of Neuroscience Research*, 85: 1358-1363, 2007.

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Publications in Conference Proceedings

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Newell, K.A., Zavitsanou, K., and Huang, X.F. NMDA and muscarinic M1/4 receptor binding density is decreased 2 weeks after, but not immediately after chronic PCP treatment. *Proceedings of the Australian Neuroscience Society, the 26th Annual Meeting*. 17: 105, Sydney 2006.

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Newell, K.A., Klose, B., Zavitsanou, K., Han, M., and Huang, X.F. Effects of clozapine and haloperidol on motor activity in the chronic PCP mouse model. 7th Biennial Australasian Schizophrenia Conference. 7:115, Sydney, 2002.

Additional Publications

The following publications have arisen from other projects I have been involved in throughout my doctoral studies.

Han, M., **Newell, K.A.**, Zavitsanou, K., Deng, C., and Huang, X.F. Effects of antipsychotic medication on muscarinic M1 receptor mRNA expression in the rat brain. *Journal of Neuroscience Research*. Submitted.

Han, M., Deng, C., Burne, T.H.J., **Newell, K.A.**, and Huang, X.F. Olanzapine-induced weight gain is related to a reduction in histamine H1 receptor mRNA expression in the rat hypothalamus. *Schizophrenia Research*. Submitted.

Deng, C., Han, M., **Newell, K.A.**, and Huang, X.F. No changes in cannabinoid CB1 receptor binding density in the superior temporal gyrus in schizophrenia. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 33(2): 308, 2007.

Han, M., Deng, C., **Newell, K.A.**, and Huang, X.F. Histamine mRNA expression is decreased in the rat hypothalamus following olanzapine treatment. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 33(2): 317, 2007.

Huang, X.F., du Bois, T., Hsu, C., Eftimovska, J., Tan, Y.Y., Zavitsanou, K., **Newell, K.A.**, and Deng, C. NMDA receptor hypofunction during early brain development: relevance to schizophrenia. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 33(2): 317, 2007.

Zavitsanou, K., Nguyen, V., **Newell, K.**, Ballantyne, P., and Huang, X.F. Increased [³H]MK801 binding in the cingulate cortex of the rat after a single injection of phencyclidine. *Proceedings of the Australian Neuroscience Society, the 26th Annual Meeting*. 17: 102, Sydney, 2006.

Han, M. Zavitsanou, K. **Newell, K.**, and Huang, X.F. Increased CB1 mRNA in the cortical areas of mice prone to diet-induced obesity. *Proceedings of the Australian Neuroscience Society, the 24th Annual Meeting*. 15:113, Melbourne 2004.

Huang, X.F., Han, M., **Newell, K.**, and Zavitsanou, K. A low level of Y1 and Y5 gene expression may contribute to the prevention of chronic high energy diet-induced obesity. *Proceedings of the Australian Neuroscience Society, the 23rd Annual Meeting*. 14:228, Adelaide 2003.

Abstract

Schizophrenia is a severe psychiatric disorder with no clear cause. Recent evidence suggests that N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor hypofunction may underlie the pathogenesis of schizophrenia. The posterior cingulate cortex (PCC) has been shown to be the most susceptible brain region to damage caused by NMDA hypofunction in rodents. This suggests that the PCC may play an important role in schizophrenia pathology. However, studies examining neurotransmitter balance in the PCC in schizophrenia have until now been neglected. Furthermore, the long-term consequences of NMDA hypofunction on neurotransmitter balance in animal models have not been studied. The aims of this study were to investigate neurotransmitter receptor binding profiles in the PCC in schizophrenia, while also examining the effects of chronic phencyclidine (PCP; an NMDA antagonist) treatment on neurotransmitter receptor binding in mouse brain in the long-term following treatment. To achieve these aims, the study was divided into two parts.

In experimental part A, PCC sections from 10 schizophrenia and 11 control subjects matched for age, gender and post-mortem interval were obtained from the Tissue Resource Center, Sydney. Using quantitative autoradiography, the density of several neurotransmitter receptors was examined. The results demonstrated specific alterations in neurotransmitter receptors in the PCC in schizophrenia. Specifically, increased NMDA, gamma-aminobutyric acid A (GABA_A) and cannabinoid 1 (CB1) receptor density was found in this region, along with reduced muscarinic 1/4 (M1/4) and serotonin 2A (5-hydroxy-tryptamine, 5HT_{2A}) receptor density. No changes were found in α -amino-3-hydroxy-5-methyl-4-isoxazole propionic acid (AMPA), kainate or M2/4 receptor density in the PCC in schizophrenia subjects compared to controls. These

results have shown for the first time that there are specific neurotransmitter imbalances in this region, and it is possible that these changes stem from NMDA hypofunction.

In experimental part B, mice were treated chronically (14 days) with PCP. Using quantitative autoradiography the density of several receptors was examined in the short (1hr and 24hr) and long-term (14 days) following chronic PCP treatment. In addition, clozapine and haloperidol were tested for their ability to prevent the PCP-induced alterations in neurotransmitter receptor density. The results showed opposing effects of PCP treatment on neurotransmitter receptor density in the short compared to the long-term. While there were limited increases in NMDA receptor density in the short-term, there were widespread reductions in NMDA receptor density in the long-term following chronic PCP treatment. Muscarinic M1/4 receptor binding, which was increased in the short-term, showed reductions in the long-term in the limbic system, caudate-putamen and cortex, but not in the thalamus in which no change was found. Clozapine and haloperidol treatments were both unable to prevent the PCP-induced long-term changes in receptor density.

In conclusion, this study has provided new information regarding neurotransmitter alterations in the PCC in schizophrenia and in mouse brain in the long-term following chronic PCP treatment. These findings may assist not only in understanding the pathology of schizophrenia, but also for designing new pharmacological treatments for this disease.

Table of Contents

	Page
CERTIFICATION	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
PUBLICATIONS	5
ABSTRACT	9
TABLE OF CONTENTS	11
LIST OF FIGURES	16
LIST OF TABLES	18
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	20
CHAPTER 1: SCHIZOPHRENIA - A REVIEW	21
1.1 What is Schizophrenia?	21
1.2 What is the Cause of Schizophrenia?	21
1.3 Schizophrenia Hypotheses	22
1.4 NMDA hypofunction hypothesis of schizophrenia	23
1.5 Rodent NMDA receptor hypofunction model	27
1.6 Why Research Schizophrenia?	30
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	32
2.1 General Introduction	32
2.2 The Posterior Cingulate Cortex.....	33
2.2.1 Relevance to Schizophrenia	34
2.3 Glutamate	36
2.3.1 Schizophrenia.....	38
2.3.2 NMDA receptor hypofunction	40
2.4 GABA	42
2.4.1 Schizophrenia.....	43
2.4.2 NMDA receptor hypofunction	45
2.5 Acetylcholine	47
2.5.1 Schizophrenia.....	49
2.5.2 NMDA receptor hypofunction	50
2.6 Serotonin	51
2.6.1 Schizophrenia.....	52
2.6.2 NMDA receptor hypofunction	56
2.7 Cannabinoid	57
2.7.1 Schizophrenia.....	59
2.7.2 NMDA receptor hypofunction	60
2.8 Summary	61
2.9 Aims of the Study	62
2.10 Significance of the study	62
2.11 Hypotheses	63

EXPERIMENTAL PART A: EXAMINATION OF THE NEUROTRANSMITTER RECEPTOR BINDING PROFILES IN THE POSTERIOR CINGULATE CORTEX IN SCHIZOPHRENIA 64

CHAPTER 3: DIFFERENTIAL ALTERATIONS IN IONOTROPIC GLUTAMATE RECEPTOR BINDING IN THE POSTERIOR CINGULATE CORTEX IN SCHIZOPHRENIA. 65

3.1 Introduction	65
3.2 Materials and methods	66
3.2.1 Post-mortem brain tissue.....	66
3.2.2 Autoradiography	68
3.2.3 Quantitative analysis of autoradiograms.....	69
3.2.4 Statistical analysis	70
3.3 Results.....	70
3.3.1 Laminar distribution of [³ H]MK-801, [³ H]AMPA and [³ H]kainate binding in the PCC	70
3.3.2 Schizophrenia related effects on [³ H]MK-801, [³ H]AMPA, and [³ H]kainate binding in the PCC	72
3.3.3 Possible effects of continuous and non-continuous confounding variables.....	74
3.4 Discussion	74
3.4.1 Ionotropic glutamate receptor binding in the PCC in schizophrenia.....	75
3.4.2 Possible effects of medication and suicide on the receptor binding in the PCC.....	77
3.5 Conclusion	77

CHAPTER 4: ALTERATIONS OF MUSCARINIC AND GABA RECEPTOR BINDING IN THE POSTERIOR CINGULATE CORTEX IN SCHIZOPHRENIA..... 79

4.1 Introduction	79
4.2 Materials and methods	80
4.2.1 Post-mortem brain tissue.....	80
4.2.2 Autoradiography	80
4.2.3 Quantitative and statistical analyses of autoradiograms	81
4.3 Results.....	82
4.3.1 Laminar distribution of [³ H]pirenzepine, [³ H]AF-DX 384 and [³ H]muscimol binding in the PCC	82
4.3.2 Schizophrenia related effects on [³ H]pirenzepine, [³ H]AF-DX 384 and [³ H]muscimol binding in the PCC	83
4.3.3 Possible effects of continuous and non-continuous confounding variables.....	86
4.4 Discussion	86
4.4.1 M1/4, M2/4 and GABA _A receptor binding in the PCC in schizophrenia.....	87
4.4.2 Possible effects of medication and suicide on the receptor binding in the PCC.....	90
4.5 Conclusion	92

CHAPTER 5: ALTERATIONS IN SEROTONIN AND CANNABINOID RECEPTOR BINDING IN THE POSTERIOR CINGULATE CORTEX IN SCHIZOPHRENIA..... 93

5.1 Introduction.....	93
5.2 Materials and Methods.....	94
5.2.1 Post-mortem human brain tissue.....	94
5.2.2 Autoradiography	94

5.2.4 Quantitative Analysis of Autoradiograms.....	95
5.2.5 Statistical Analysis.....	95
5.3 Results.....	96
5.3.1 Laminar distribution of [³ H]spiperone, [³ H]SR141716A and [³ H]CP-55940 binding in the PCC.....	96
5.3.2 Schizophrenia related effects on [³ H]spiperone, [³ H]SR141716A and [³ H]CP-55940 binding in the PCC.....	98
5.3.3 Possible effects of confounding variables.....	99
5.4 Discussion.....	100
5.4.1 5HT _{2A} receptor binding in the PCC in schizophrenia.....	101
5.4.2 CB1 receptor binding in the PCC in schizophrenia.....	104
5.5 Conclusion.....	107

EXPERIMENTAL PART B: CONSEQUENCES OF NMDA RECEPTOR HYPOFUNCTION ON NEUROTRANSMITTER BALANCE IN A MOUSE MODEL..... 109

CHAPTER 6: VERIFYING THE EFFECTS OF PHENCYCLIDINE, CLOZAPINE AND HALOPERIDOL ON LOCOMOTOR ACTIVITY IN MICE..... 110

6.1 Introduction.....	110
6.2 Materials and Methods.....	111
6.2.1 Animals.....	111
6.2.2 Drug Treatment.....	112
6.2.3 Locomotor testing.....	112
6.2.4 Statistical Analysis.....	113
6.3 Results.....	114
6.3.1 The effects of chronic PCP, clozapine, and haloperidol treatment on locomotor activity measured in the post-injection phase.....	114
6.3.2 The effects of chronic PCP, clozapine, and haloperidol treatment on locomotor activity measured in the pre-injection phase.....	116
6.4 Discussion.....	118
6.4.2 Locomotor activity during the post-injection phase.....	119
6.4.3 Locomotor activity during the pre-injection phase.....	120
6.5 Conclusion.....	121

CHAPTER 7: DIFFERENTIAL SHORT AND LONG TERM CHANGES IN NMDA RECEPTOR BINDING IN MOUSE BRAIN FOLLOWING CHRONIC PHENCYCLIDINE TREATMENT..... 123

7.1 Introduction.....	123
7.2 Materials and Methods.....	124
7.2.1 Animals and Drug Treatment.....	124
7.2.4 Receptor autoradiography.....	125
7.2.5 Quantification and statistical analysis.....	126
7.3 Results.....	126
7.3.2 The short-term effects on [³ H]MK-801 binding following chronic PCP treatment.....	127
7.3.3 The long-term effects on [³ H]MK-801 binding following chronic PCP treatment.....	129
7.4 Discussion.....	130
7.4.1 Distribution of NMDA receptor binding in control animals.....	130

7.4.2 Short-term effects on NMDA receptor binding following chronic PCP treatment.....	131
7.4.3 Long-term effects on NMDA receptor binding following chronic PCP treatment.....	133
7.5 Conclusion	135

CHAPTER 8: OPPOSING SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON M1/4 MUSCARINIC RECEPTOR BINDING IN MOUSE BRAIN FOLLOWING CHRONIC PHENCYCLIDINE TREATMENT..... 137

8.1 Introduction.....	137
8.2 Materials and Methods.....	138
8.2.1 Animals and Drug treatment.....	138
8.2.2 Receptor autoradiography, quantification and statistical analysis.....	138
8.3 Results.....	138
8.3.1 The short-term effects on [³ H]pirenzepine binding following chronic PCP treatment.....	139
8.3.3 The long-term effects on [³ H]pirenzepine binding following chronic PCP treatment.....	140
8.4 Discussion.....	141
8.4.1 Distribution of M1/4 receptor binding in control animals.....	142
8.4.2 M1/4 receptor binding in the short-term following chronic PCP treatment ..	142
8.4.3 M1/4 receptor binding in the long-term following chronic PCP treatment ...	143
8.5 Conclusion	145

CHAPTER 9: CAN THE PHENCYCLIDINE-INDUCED NEUROTRANSMITTER ALTERATIONS BE REVERSED OR PREVENTED BY ANTIPSYCHOTIC DRUG TREATMENT? 146

9.1 Introduction.....	146
9.2 Materials and Methods.....	147
9.2.1 Animals and Drug Treatment.....	147
9.2.2 Receptor autoradiography, quantification and statistical analysis.....	148
9.3 Results.....	149
9.3.1 The effects of 14-day clozapine and haloperidol treatment on [³ H]MK-801 binding	149
9.3.2 The effects of 14-day clozapine and haloperidol treatment on [³ H]pirenzepine binding	152
9.3.3 [³ H]MK-801 binding in the brains of mice treated for 14 days with PCP followed by 1 day of antipsychotic drug treatment.....	154
9.3.4 [³ H]Pirenzepine binding in the brains of mice treated for 14 days with PCP followed by 1 day of antipsychotic drug treatment.....	155
9.3.5 [³ H]MK-801 binding in the brains of mice treated for 14 days with PCP followed by 14 days of antipsychotic drug treatment.....	158
9.3.6 [³ H]Pirenzepine binding in the brains of mice treated for 14 days with PCP followed by 14 days of antipsychotic drug treatment.....	160
9.4 Discussion.....	162
9.4.1 The effects of chronic antipsychotic drug treatment on NMDA receptor binding in mouse brain.....	162
9.4.2 The effects of chronic antipsychotic drug treatment on M1/4 receptor binding in mouse brain.....	166

9.4.3 The effects of acute and chronic antipsychotic drug treatment on NMDA receptor binding in PCP-treated mouse brain	168
9.4.4 The effects of acute and chronic antipsychotic drug treatment on M1/4 receptor binding in PCP-treated mouse brain	169
9.5 Conclusion	171
CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	172
10.1 Overall Conclusion	172
10.2 Recommendations for Further Research	174
REFERENCES	176

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1.1	Schematic of the NMDA receptor.....24
1.2	Model of NMDA hypofunction in the PCC and its associated psychosis circuit.....30
2.1	The cingulate gyrus showing anterior and posterior divisions.....33
3.1	Digital autoradiograms obtained with the Beta-Imager showing [³ H]MK-801, [³ H]AMPA, and [³ H]kainate binding in the posterior cingulate cortex of one schizophrenia and one control case.....72
3.2	Scatterplots of [³ H]MK-801 (A), [³ H]AMPA (B), and [³ H]kainate (C) receptor binding in the posterior cingulate cortex of control and schizophrenia cases....73
4.1	Digital autoradiograms obtained with the Beta-Imager showing [³ H]pirenzepine [³ H]AF-DX 384 binding, and [³ H]muscimol binding in the posterior cingulate cortex of one control and one schizophrenia case.....83
4.2	(A) Histogram of [³ H]pirenzepine binding in layers I-II and III-VI of the posterior cingulate cortex of schizophrenia (non-suicides) and control groups. (B) Histogram of [³ H]muscimol binding in layers I-IV and V-VI of the posterior cingulate cortex of schizophrenia and control groups.....85
4.3	Scatterplot showing significant correlations between GABA _A receptor binding (layers I-IV) and M1/4 receptor binding (layers III-VI) in the posterior cingulate cortex.....85
5.1	Digital autoradiograms obtained with the Beta-Imager showing [³ H]spiperone, [³ H]SR141716A binding, and [³ H]CP-55940 binding in the posterior cingulate cortex of one control and one schizophrenia case.....97
5.2	Histogram of [³ H]spiperone binding in layers II-V of the posterior cingulate cortex of schizophrenia and control groups.....98
5.3	(A) Histogram of [³ H]SR141716A binding across all layers of the posterior cingulate cortex of schizophrenia and control groups. (B) Histogram of [³ H]CP-55940 binding in layers I-II of the posterior cingulate cortex of schizophrenia and control groups.....99
6.1	Diagram of the locomotor box.....113
6.2	Locomotor activity of saline and PCP treated mice, as measured in the post-injection phase on days 1, 2, 8, and 14.....115
6.3	Locomotor activity of saline, clozapine, and haloperidol treated mice, measured in the post-injection phase on days 1, 2, 8, and 14.....115

6.4	Locomotor activity of saline and PCP treated mice, measured in the pre-injection phase on days 2, 8, and 14.....	117
6.5	Locomotor activity of saline, clozapine, and haloperidol treated mice, measured in the pre-injection phase on days 2, 8, and 14.....	117
7.1	Representative autoradiographs of coronal mouse brain sections which illustrate total and non-specific [³ H]MK-801 binding.....	127
7.2	The Short-term effects on [³ H]MK801 binding in mouse brain following chronic PCP treatment.....	128
7.3	The long-term effects on [³ H]MK801 binding in mouse brain following chronic PCP treatment.....	130
8.1	Representative autoradiographs of coronal mouse brain sections which illustrate total and non-specific [³ H]pirenzepine binding.....	139
8.2	The short-term effects on [³ H]pirenzepine binding in mouse brain following chronic days of PCP treatment.....	140
8.3	The long-term effects on [³ H]pirenzepine binding in mouse brain following chronic days of PCP treatment.....	141

List of Tables

Table		Page
Table 1.1	Parallels between the behavioural effects of PCP in rodents and schizophrenia symptoms.....	28
Table 2.1	A comparison of the anterior cingulate cortex and posterior cingulate cortex.....	34
Table 2.2	The effects of antipsychotic drug treatment on glutamate receptor binding in rodent brain.....	39
Table 2.3	The effects of NMDA antagonist treatment on glutamate receptor binding in rodent brain.....	41
Table 2.4	The effects antipsychotic drug treatment on the GABAergic system in rodent brain.....	45
Table 2.5	Summary of 5-HT ₂ receptor binding in schizophrenia.....	54
Table 2.6	The effects of antipsychotic drug treatment on the serotonin system in rodent brain.....	56
Table 3.1	Demographic data, characteristics and medication status of schizophrenia subjects and controls.....	67
Table 3.2	Schizophrenia and control subjects used for [³ H]MK-801, [³ H]AMPA, and [³ H]kainate receptor binding.....	68
Table 4.1	Schizophrenia and control subjects used for [³ H]pirenzepine, [³ H]AF-DX 384, and [³ H]muscimol receptor binding.....	80
Table 5.1	Schizophrenia and control subjects used for [³ H]spiperone, [³ H]SR141716A, and [³ H]CP55940 receptor binding.....	94
Table 9.1	[³ H]MK-801 binding densities in brains of mice treated with saline, clozapine or haloperidol for 14 days.....	151
Table 9.2	[³ H]Pirenzepine binding densities in brains of mice treated with saline, clozapine or haloperidol for 14 days.....	153
Table 9.3	[³ H]MK-801 binding densities in brains of mice treated with saline, PCP, clozapine and/or haloperidol for 14 days.....	155
Table 9.4	[³ H]Pirenzepine binding densities in brains of mice treated with saline, PCP, clozapine and/or haloperidol for 14 days.....	157
Table 9.5	[³ H]MK-801 binding densities in the brains of mice treated for 28 days with saline, PCP, clozapine, and/or haloperidol.....	159

Table 9.6 [³H]Pirenzepine binding densities in the brains of mice treated for 28 days with saline, PCP, clozapine, and/or haloperidol..... 161

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations used throughout this thesis are defined below.

Abbreviations	Definition
5-HT	5-hydroxy-tryptamine
Acb	Nucleus accumbens
ACC	Anterior cingulate cortex
AMPA	α -amino-3-hydroxy-5-methyl-4-isoxazole propionic acid
APD	Antipsychotic drug
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
CNS	Central nervous system
CPu	Caudate-putamen
D-AP5	D-2-amino-5-phosphopentanoate
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
EDTA	Ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid
GABA	Gamma-aminobutyric acid
GAD	Glutamic acid decarboxylase
GAT 1	GABA transporter 1
HEPES	N-(2-Hydroxyethyl) piperazine-N'-2-ethane sulfonic acid
LSD	Lysergic acid diethylamide
LV	Lateroventral
MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NMDA	N-methyl-D-aspartate
PCC	Posterior cingulate cortex
PCP	Phencyclidine
PET	Positron emission tomography
RSC	Retrosplenial cortex
Δ^9 -THC	Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol