BUPROPION-INDUCED CLIMBING THROUGH D-1 AND D-2 DOPAMINE RECEPTOR ACTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

Intraperitoneal (i.p.) injection of bupropion (3.6, 4.16 mg kg⁻¹) induced dose-dependent climbing in mice. The climbing response induced by both drugs were decreased in animals pretreated either with the D-1 antagonist SCH 23390 or the D-2 antagonist sulpiride. The α-adrenoceptor blocker phenoxybenzamine decreased the climbing induced by both bupropion and amphetamine, but the β-adrenergic blocker propranolol and the antimuscarinic agent atropine had no effect. Reserpine pretreatment abolished the climbing induced by bupropion but not that of amphetamine. However, alpha-methyl-tyrosine combined with reserpine treatment reduced the amphetamine-induced climbing. It is concluded that both bupropion and amphetamine-induced climbing through release of dopamine and subsequent activation of D-1/D-2 receptors; however, the mechanisms by which dopamine is released by these drugs may differ.

Keywords: D-1 and D-2 receptors, amphetamine, bupropion, reserpine, climbing, mice

INTRODUCTION

Bupropion is a compound chemically dissimilar to tricyclic antidepressants and monoamine oxidase inhibitors. The drug is clinically used as an antidepressant drug, whose mechanism of action cannot be explained solely on the basis of alteration in presynaptic or postsynaptic receptor-mediated events in monoamine pathways. In comparison with the tricyclics, bupropion is a weaker inhibitor of noradrenaline uptake in vitro but is more potent against dopamine uptake. The central actions of bupropion differ from that of the tricyclic antidepressants or of the monoamine oxidase inhibitor class of antidepressants in that bupropion, like dexamphetamine, increases locomotor activity in rodents. There is also evidence indicating that at least some of the central actions of the drug are mediated through dopamine. Previously, we have shown that bupropion induced turning towards the lesion in rats with unilateral 6-hydroxydopamine lesion of the dopamine nigrostriatal pathway. It also has anorectic effects and produces hyperactivity, both of which may be mediated through indirect dopaminergic mechanisms. The purpose of the present work was to study the effect of bupropion in comparison with that of amphetamine on climbing behavior in mice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Animals. Male albino mice (25-30 g) were used. They were housed 10 per cage (12 × 24 × 40 cm) at an environmental temperature of 22±2°C and under 12-h dark schedule. Food and tap water were freely available except during the experiments. Each animal was used once only.
Bupropion-Induced Climbing Through Dopamine Receptors

Fig. 1. Climbing behavior induced by bupropion in presence or absence of dopamine antagonists. Mice were injected intraperitoneally (I.P.) with different doses of bupropion (0.1, 3.6, 12 mg Kg⁻¹) alone or with either SCH 23390 (0.05 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) 30 min. or sulpiride (10 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) 90 min. prior to bupropion administration. Climbing score was recorded for 60 min. after drug injection. Each point is the mean±SEM of at least 10 mice.

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.001 different from bupropion treated groups.

Climbing measurement. The climbing behavior was measured as described before (Zurindast and Shahedi-Dirin, 1990). The animals were put into glass cylinders with a wire mesh wall in a vertical position and allowed to acclimatise for 30 min before drug injection. Climbing score was described as scored by Marcais et al.² every 2 min. as follows: four paws on the floor, (0); forefeet holding the wall, (1); four paws holding the wall, (2). At each time point, the climbing score±SEM of at least 10 mice during one hour after drug administration are presented.

Drugs. The following drugs were used: bupropion hydrochloride (Wellcome), amphetamine sulphate (SK&F), SCH 23390 (R-(-)-α-chloro-2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-3-methyl-5-phenyl-1H-3-benzazepine-7-01 maleate; Schering), sulpiride (Delagrange), phenoxbenzamine (SK&F), propranolol (ICI), atropine sulphate (E. Merck), alpha-methyl-p-tyrosine (Sigma) and reserpine (Ciba-Geigy). The drugs were dissolved in distilled water, except for sulpiride and reserpine which were dissolved in 1 drop of acetic acid and then diluted with distilled water, and injected 10 ml/kg.

RESULTS

Effects of D-1 or D-2 dopamine receptor antagonists on climbing induced by bupropion in mice.

Intraperitoneal (I.P.) injection of mice with different doses of bupropion (3.6, 12 mg Kg⁻¹) dose-dependently induced a climbing response in mice. The climbing induced by different doses of bupropion was decreased in animals pretreated intraperitoneally with either the D-1 antagonist SCH 23390 (0.05 mg Kg⁻¹, 30 min.) or the D-2 antagonist sulpiride (25 mg Kg⁻¹, 90 min.) (Fig. 1). Pretreatment of animals with different doses of sulpiride (5, 15, 25, 50 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P., 90 min.) reduced the effect of bupropion (12 mg Kg⁻¹) dose-dependently (Fig. 2).

Effects of antimuscarinic, α-and β-adrenoceptor blockers on climbing induced by bupropion.

Pretreatment of animals with the α-adrenoceptor blocker phenoxbenzamine (5 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P., 60 min.) decreased the climbing response induced by different doses (3.6, 12 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) of bupropion, but pretreatment
Effects of dopamine receptor antagonists on amphetamine-induced climbing.

Administration of different doses of amphetamine (4,8,16 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) induced dose-related climbing in mice. Pretreatment of animals with either SCH 23390 (0.1 mg Kg⁻¹, S.C., 30 min) or sulpiride (25 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P., 90 min) attenuated the response produced by different amphetamine doses (4-16 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) (Fig. 5).

Effects of antimuscarinic or adrenoceptor blockers on amphetamine-induced climbing.

Pretreatment of animals with phenoxybenzamine (5 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) but not with propranolol (10 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) 60 min prior to bupropion causes a decrease in climbing scores induced by the drug. Atropine (10 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P., 30 min) pretreatment did not alter the amphetamine response (4,16 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) effect (Table 1).

Effect of reserpine pretreatment on climbing induced by amphetamine or bupropion.

Pretreatment of animals with reserpine (5 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.,
Bupropion-Induced Climbing Through Dopamine Receptors

**Fig. 5.** Effects of dopamine antagonists on climbing induced by amphetamine in mice. Animals were injected with different doses of amphetamine (4,8,16 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) in combination with saline (● 10 ml Kg⁻¹, I.P.), SCH 23390 (■ 0.1 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) or sulpiride (▲ 25 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.) before amphetamine administration. Each point is the mean±SEM of climbing score/60 min. (n=10).

*p < 0.001, **p < 0.001 different from saline controls.

18h) decreased the climbing induced by bupropion (Table II), while the same pretreatment did not alter the response to amphetamine (16 mg Kg⁻¹, I.P.). However in these reserpinized animals employment of alpha-methyl-p-tyrosine (250 mg Kg⁻¹, 1 h) prior to amphetamine reduced the climbing produced by the drug.

**DISCUSSION**

Dose-related climbing was produced by administration of bupropion to mice. It has been shown that activation of D-1 and D-2 receptors by dopaminergic agonists produces cage climbing in mice.⁹

Previously, it has been indicated that bupropion caused anorexia and locomotion⁷ and induced ipsiversive turning in rats with a unilateral 6-hydroxydopamine lesion of the dopamine nigrostriatal pathway⁶ through a dopaminergic mechanism. The present data demonstrates that pretreatment with either a D-1 antagonist SCH 23390⁷ or a D-2 antagonist sulpiride¹² reduces the climbing produced by bupropion. These data indicate that climbing induced by bupropion may be mediated through D-1 and D-2 receptor activation. Pretreatment of animals with reserpine, a depletor of catecholamines, inhibits the climbing induced by bupropion.

It has already been shown that bupropion is a more potent uptake inhibitor of [³H] dopamine than [³H] norepinephrine or [³H] serotonin in nerve endings.⁵ These results may therefore suggest the involvement of an indirect dopaminergic mechanism in the bupropion-induced climbing. In the present experiments, it was shown that amphetamine too produces climbing in mice. Amphetamine has been suggested to elicit its effects on locomotion and stereotyped behavior via endogenous catecholamines.⁸ The climbing induced by the drug was decreased in animals pretreated with SCH23390 or sulpiride. Pretreatment of animals with reserpine, however, did not alter the climbing response.

Pretreatment of animals with reserpine plus alpha-methyl-p-tyrosine, an inhibitor of synthesis of catecholamines, completely inhibited amphetamine-induced climbing. Therefore it seems likely that bupropion and amphetamine induce their climbing response through different indirect dopaminergic actions.

It has been hypothesized that indirectly-acting dopamine receptor agonists could be divided into reserpine-sensitive and alpha-methyl tyrosine-sensitive classes.

**Table II. The effect of reserpine treatment on climbing induced by amphetamine or bupropion in mice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Dose (mg Kg⁻¹)</th>
<th>Climbing score/60 min. (mean±SEM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>saline+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.6±0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amphetamine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.5±4.1†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amphetamine+</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36.5±5.0†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reserpine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32.0±5.1†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amphetamine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.5±6.2†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reserpine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36.5±5.0†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reserpine</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33.5±6.2†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+AMPT</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1.0±0.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+amphetamine</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31.8±4.5†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bupropion</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.0±0.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+bupropion</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.0±0.0*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mice were administered intraperitoneally saline, amphetamine and bupropion alone, bupropion in combination with reserpine *18h* and amphetamine in combination with either reserpine (18h) or reserpine (18h) plus alpha-methyl-p-tyrosine (AMPT, 1 h) before the drug injection. Climbing score was recorded for 60 min. after drug injection. *p < 0.001 different from saline-treated control group.

*p < 0.001 different from amphetamine or bupropion respective control groups.
Dextroamphetamine-like drugs release a small rapidly turning-over pool of catecholamines and their action is blocked by alpha-methyl-p-tyrosine, but not reserpine. On the other hand, the non-amphetamine drugs such as methylphenidate enhance the release of catecholamines, and their action is not inhibited by alpha-methyl-tyrosine but is blocked by reserpine. Therefore, propion may fall into the methylphenidate class. Pretreatment of animals with the antimuscarinic drug atropine or beta-adrenoceptor blocker propranolol did not alter the climbing induced by propion and amphetamine. Therefore, the cholinergic or beta-adrenoceptor mechanisms are not involved in the climbing response induced by propion and amphetamine. When animals were pretreated with the beta-adrenoceptor blocker phenoxybenzamine, both propion- and amphetamine-induced climbing were decreased.

Phenoxybenzamine, a mixed beta-adrenoceptor blocker has been reported to inhibit dopamine-stimulated adenylate cyclase and also to differentially influence dopamine-induced locomotor and stereotyped behaviors. Therefore although this might partly explain the results obtained, but because of its broad pharmacology, other mechanisms cannot be excluded. It may therefore be concluded that both propion and amphetamine induce climbing in mice through the indirect activation of D-1/D-2 receptors.

REFERENCES