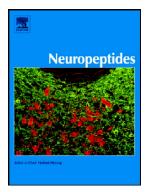
## Accepted Manuscript

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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

### Myotropic activity of allatostatins in tenebrionid beetles

Lubawy Jan<sup>1,\*</sup> j.lubawy@amu.edu.pl, Marciniak Paweł<sup>1</sup>, Kuczer Mariola<sup>2</sup>, Rosiński Grzegorz<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Animal Physiology and Development, Institute of Experimental Biology, Faculty of Biology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Umultowska 89 Str., 61-614 Poznań, Poland

<sup>2</sup>Department of Organic Chemistry, Faculty of Chemistry, Wrocław University, F. Joliot-Curie 14D Str., 50-383 Wrocław

\*Corresponding author.

#### Abstract:

Neuropeptides control the functioning of the nervous system of insects, and they are the most diverse signalling molecules in terms of structure and function. Allatostatins are pleiotropic neuropeptides that are considered potent myoinhibitors of muscle contractions in insects. We investigated the effects caused by three distinct allatostatins, Dippu-AST1 (LYDFGL-NH<sub>2</sub> from *Diploptera punctata*), Grybi-MIP1 (GWQDLNGGW-NH<sub>2</sub> from *Gryllum bimamculatus*) and Trica-ASTC (pESRYRQCYFNPISCF-OH from Tribolium castaneum) on contractile activity of the myocardium, oviduct and hindgut of two tenebrionid beetles, Tenebrio molitor and Zophobas atratus. Studies showed that all three peptides exerted myostimulatory effects on the oviduct and hindgut of the beetles, however they did not cause any effect on myocardium.. The effects of Dippu-AST1, Grybi-MIP1 and Trica-ASTC were dosedependent and tissue and species specific. The highest stimulatory effect was caused by Trica-ASTC, showing stimulation of approximately 82% at a 10<sup>-12</sup> M concentration and 76% at a 10<sup>-11</sup> M concentration for T. molitor and Z. atratus, respectively. The oviduct of T. molitor was more susceptible to allatostatins than that of Z. atratus. Dippu-AST1 showed the maximum stimulating effect at 10<sup>-11</sup> M (57%), whereas Grybi-MIP 1 at 10<sup>-10</sup> M caused a 41% stimulation. Trica-ASTC, in both species, showed a myostimulatory effect over the whole range of tested concentrations but was most potent at a  $10^{-12}$  M concentration and caused a 54% and 31.9% increase in the frequency of contractions in the oviduct of T. molitor and Z. atratus, respectively. The results suggest that allatostatins may affect the regulation of egg movement within the oviducts and movement of food in the digestive tract of beetles and do not regulate directly the activity of heart, thus being good candidate compounds in neuropeptides based pest control agents in future research.

Key words: allatostatins, neurohormones, beetles, peptides, Zophobas atratus, Tenebrio molitor

#### 1. Introduction:

Neuropeptides play a crucial role in the nervous system of insects, and they are by far the most diverse signalling molecules in terms of structure and function (De Loof, 2008; Gäde and Marco, 2006; Scherkenbeck and Zdobinsky, 2009; Taghert and Nitabach, 2012). Some of the neuro-endocrine regulation mechanisms in insects occur in similar ways as in vertebrates, and insects may be used as model organisms in comparative research (Andries et al., 1984;

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