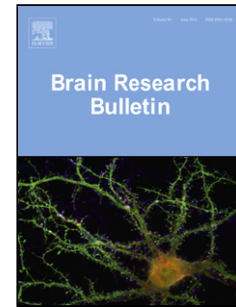


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Authors: Kouhei Nishitomi, Koji Yano, Mika Kobayashi, Kohei Jino, Takuya Kano, Naotaka Horiguchi, Shunji Shinohara, Minoru Hasegawa



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Systemic administration of guanfacine improves food-motivated impulsive choice behavior primarily via direct stimulation of postsynaptic α_{2A} -adrenergic receptors in rats

Kouhei Nishitomi^{ae*}, Koji Yano^{ae}, Mika Kobayashi^b, Kohei Jino^a, Takuya Kano^a, Naotaka Horiguchi^a, Shunji Shinohara^a, Minoru Hasegawa^a

^aPain & Neuroscience, Drug Discovery & Disease Research Laboratory, Shionogi Co. Ltd, Toyonaka, Osaka, Japan

^bDrug Efficacy Evaluation Services 3, Drug Efficacy Evaluation and Research Technology Service, Shionogi Techno Advance Research Co. Ltd, Toyonaka, Osaka, Japan

^eThese authors made equal contributions to the study

*Corresponding Author:

Kouhei Nishitomi

Pain & Neuroscience, Drug Discovery & Disease Research Laboratory, Shionogi & Co. Ltd., 3-1-1, Futaba-cho, Toyonaka-shi Osaka, 561-0825, Japan

Tel.: 81-6-6331-6593; E-mail: kouhei.nishitomi@shionogi.co.jp

Highlights

- Guanfacine improved food-motivated impulsive choices in the delay discounting task.
- Stimulation of the α_{2A} -adrenergic receptor was involved in the effect of guanfacine.
- A selective noradrenergic neurotoxin did not affect the effect of guanfacine.

Abstract

Impulsive choice behavior, which can be assessed using the delay discounting task, is a characteristic of various psychiatric disorders, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Guanfacine is a selective α_{2A} -adrenergic receptor agonist that is clinically effective in treating ADHD. However, there is no clear evidence that systemic guanfacine administration reduces impulsive choice behavior in the delay discounting task in rats.

In the present study, we examined the effect of systemic guanfacine administration on food-motivated impulsive choice behavior in rats and the neuronal mechanism underlying this effect. Repeated administration of either guanfacine, methylphenidate, or atomoxetine significantly enhanced impulse control, increasing the number of times the rats chose a large but delayed reward in a dose-dependent manner. The effect of guanfacine was significantly blocked by pretreatment with an α_{2A} -adrenergic receptor antagonist. Furthermore, the effect of guanfacine remained unaffected in rats pretreated with a selective noradrenergic neurotoxin, consistent with a post-synaptic action. In contrast, the effect of atomoxetine on

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