

stated cocaine-seeking behavior in $129 \times 1/SvJ$ mice. Together with previous studies in rats, these findings indicate at least two possibilities. First, mice may be much more sensitive than rats to differences in the subjective effects of i.v. versus i.p. cocaine during self-administration training and reinstatement testing, thus leading to a failure of i.p. cocaine primed reinstatement in mice. Second, the reinstatement procedure itself (e.g. the short duration of extinction training, and the same day for the extinction training and the following reinstatement testing in the report from Highfield et al.) may play an important role in drug-primed reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior in mice. In our pilot studies, however, an i.v. primed injection of METH (0.2 mg/kg or 0.8 mg/kg) via the catheter also failed to reinstate METH-seeking behavior (data not showed). Therefore, we further tried to develop new procedure for METH-primed reinstatement by using a combination of i.v. injection and self-injected METH under the same self-administration, extinction schedule as METH-paired cue-induced reinstatement test. Such a combination successfully increased the reinstatement of METH-seeking behavior. Some may make the following points regarding this combination-primed reinstatement procedure. First, such a combination of priming could not exactly distinguish the reinstatement induced by passive METH-priming (i.p. priming injection) from that induced by active METH-priming (self-injection of METH). Second, the METH primed reinstatement might reflect an acute extinction behavior immediately after the cessation of the 1-h METH self-injection experience. Third, such METH-primed reinstatement might just demonstrate re-self-administration behavior after 6–10 sessions of extinction training. However, any possibility mentioned above, to some extent, might reflect relapse behavior in humans [17,29,42,43,45]. In some sense, such a combination-primed reinstatement procedure may be one way to investigate specific gene functions in drug-primed relapse until a more optimal drug-primed reinstatement procedure is established in mice.

In conclusion, the present findings suggested that the cue-induced and drug-primed reinstatement of extinguished METH-seeking behavior in the new procedure was a feasible way to identify genes involved in the relapse of drug-seeking behavior in genetically modified mouse strains and the mechanism of action of drugs of abuse. The introduction of a natural nose-poking response system and an FR1/FR2 schedule of reinforcement might shorten the duration of self-administration and extinction training phase, thus ameliorating the effectiveness of the procedure to reinstate extinguished drug-seeking behavior in mice. However, a more practical way to achieve drug-primed reinstatement in mice remains to be established.

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Research report

Discriminative-stimulus effects of methamphetamine and morphine in rats are attenuated by cAMP-related compounds

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Abstract

Animal models of drug discrimination have been used to examine the subjective effects of addictive substances. The cAMP system is a crucial downstream signaling pathway implicated in the long-lasting neuroadaptations induced by addictive drugs. We examined effects of rolipram, nefiracetam, and dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists, all of which have been reported to modulate cAMP level *in vivo*, on the discriminative-stimulus effects of methamphetamine (METH) and morphine in rats. All these compounds inhibited the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH, while only rolipram and nefiracetam attenuated the discriminative-stimulus effects of morphine. In addition, neither nifedipine nor neomycin, two voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers, was found to modulate the effect of nefiracetam on METH-associated discriminative stimuli, suggesting that the inhibitory effect of nefiracetam may not involve the activation of calcium channels. These findings suggest that the cAMP signaling cascade may play a key role in the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine and may be a potential target for the development of therapeutics to counter drugs of abuse.

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1. Introduction

The characteristic subjective and reinforcing effects of addictive drugs such as methamphetamine (METH) and opiate contribute to their widespread abuse [11,29]. It is well established that the cAMP signaling cascade plays a pivotal role in the long-lasting plasticity induced by addictive drugs, thus contributing to the development of drug dependence and psychosis [6,9,16,26,33–35]. For example, it has been reported that the cAMP system is involved in psychostimulant- and morphine-induced locomotor sensitization, conditioned place preference, intravenous self-administration, even in opiate abuse in addicts [7,34,35,38].

Rolipram and nefiracetam (*N*-(2,6-dimethylphenyl)-2-(2-oxo-1-pyrrolidinyl) acetamide) are among the compounds known to modulate cAMP level. Rolipram is an inhibitor

of cAMP phosphodiesterase IV, and its administration has been demonstrated to upregulate the intracellular cAMP level [10,16,24]. Nefiracetam is a derivative of pyrrolidine, which has been reported to ameliorate the impairment of learning and memory in animal models of aging [40], Alzheimer's disease [42], and head trauma [5] through increasing intracellular cAMP levels and enhancing currents via calcium ion channels [27,28,36,39,41]. In addition, the activation of dopamine D2-like receptors, including D2, D3, and D4 receptors, has been shown to down-regulate cAMP activity by coupling with inhibitory G proteins [8,13]. Previous reports have shown that rolipram, nefiracetam, and dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists attenuated drug-induced locomotor sensitization, withdrawal symptoms, conditioned place preference, intravenous self-administration, and reinstatement of drug-seeking behavior [2,9,10,14,16,32]. Thus, it is reasonable to postulate that all these compounds may modulate the development of addictive drug-induced dependence and psychosis through their regulations on the intracellular cAMP level.

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Drug discrimination procedures in nonhuman primates and rodents have proven useful for clarifying the pharmacological mechanisms underlying the subjective effects of addictive drugs including psychostimulants and opioid ligands and for identifying potential compounds for use in therapy [3,4,11,19–21,29,31,37], since the discriminative-stimulus effects of addictive drugs in experimental animals are linked with the subjective effects of these drugs in humans [11,12,29]. Previously, we have reported that in animals, rolipram and nefiracetam attenuate the development of morphine dependence and tolerance by increasing the cAMP level in the brain [9,16]. We have further hypothesized that the cAMP signaling cascade is a determinant of the subjective effects of addictive drugs, and investigated effects of three types of cAMP-related compounds, rolipram, nefiracetam, and dopamine receptor antagonists, on the subjective effects of METH and morphine in a rat model of drug discrimination.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Drugs

The following compounds were used in this study: METH and morphine hydrochloride (Dainippon Pharmaceutical Ltd., Osaka, Japan); rolipram, L-745870 hydrochloride, and raclopride tartrate salt (Sigma Chemicals Co., St. Louis, MO); nefiracetam (Daiichi Pharmaceutical Ltd., Tokyo, Japan); flunarizine hydrochloride (RBI Research Biomedicals International, MA); and neomycin sulfate and nifedipine (ICN Biomedicals Co., OH). METH, morphine, nefiracetam, raclopride, L-745870, and neomycin were dissolved in saline immediately before use. Rolipram was dissolved in dimethyl sulphoxide (Sigma Chemicals Co.) and then diluted with saline immediately before use. Flunarizine and nifedipine were dissolved in polyethylene glycol and then diluted with saline immediately before use. METH or morphine was subcutaneously administered 10 min before the test sessions. Rolipram (i.p.), nefiracetam (p.o.), and raclopride (i.p.) were administered 30 min before the METH or morphine treatment. The dopamine D4 antagonist (L-745870) and voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers (flunarizine, neomycin, and nifedipine) were administered i.p. 40 min before the administration of METH. All drugs were administered in a volume of 1.0 ml/kg.

2.2. Animals

Thirty male Sprague–Dawley rats (Nihon SLC Co. Ltd., Shizuoka, Japan), initially 8 weeks old and weighing 260 ± 10 g, were used in this study. Body weights were gradually reduced to approximately 85% of free-feeding weights by limiting daily access to food. Water was available ad libitum. The rats were housed 3–4 per cage under controlled laboratory conditions (a 12 h reversed light/dark cycle with room lights on at 9:00 a.m., 23 ± 1 °C, 50 ± 5 % humidity). All animal care and use was in accordance with the Principles of Laboratory Animal Care (National Institutes of Health Publication 85-123, 1983) and was approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of Nagoya University School of Medicine. Animals were treated according to the Guidelines of Experimental Animal Care issued from the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan.

2.3. Drug discrimination procedures

Experiments were performed in standard two-lever operant-conditioning chambers (Neuroscience Co., Tokyo, Japan) set in ventilated and sound-attenuated cubicles. The animal model of drug discrimination used here was established as described previously [25]. Briefly, rats ($n=30$) were initially trained to press each of the two levers under a fixed ratio (FR) 1 schedule of food presentation. Once the rats acquired a stable rate of lever-presses, the

FR was increased from FR1 to FR2, FR5, FR10, and then FR20. After the rats acquired a stable rate of lever-presses under a FR20 schedule, the animals were then assigned into two groups. One group of rats ($n=14$) was trained to discriminate METH from saline. The other group ($n=16$) was trained to discriminate morphine from saline. During the period of drug discrimination training, rats were injected with METH (0.5 mg/kg, s.c.), morphine (5.0 mg/kg, s.c.), or saline (1 ml/kg, s.c.) 10 min before the start of the session. Twenty consecutive responses on one lever resulted in the delivery of a food pellet after the drug injection (under an FR20 schedule), whereas 20 consecutive responses on the other lever resulted in the delivery of food pellet after injection of saline (under an FR20 schedule). Responding on the incorrect lever reset the FR requirement for the correct one. For half the rats, the right lever was the drug-paired lever and, for the other half, the left lever was the drug-paired lever. Each session ended after 20 food pellets were delivered or after 30 min elapsed, whichever came first. The criteria for the acquisition of drug discrimination were five consecutive sessions with: (1) more than 85% correct-lever responding before the first reinforcement and (2) more than 90% correct-lever responding over the session. Discrimination training sessions were conducted 6 days per week under a double alternation schedule (i.e., DDSSDDSS, etc., D = drug; S = saline).

The testing sessions were identical to the training sessions except that 20 consecutive responses on either lever resulted in the delivery of a food pellet. Each rat was tested the compounds according to a within-subjects design. After each testing session, rats were returned to daily drug-training sessions and then performed the next testing session until the criteria were met once again. Lever selection was examined after the administration of METH (0.2 mg/kg) or morphine (3.0 mg/kg), or the co-administration of the test compounds and METH or morphine.

2.4. Statistical analysis

Data were expressed as the mean \pm SEM. The significance of differences was determined by a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), followed by Bonferroni's Multiple Comparison Test. *p*-Values of less than 0.05 were regarded as statistically significant.

3. Results

3.1. Establishment of METH and morphine-associated discrimination in rats

One group of rats ($n=14$) was able to discriminate METH from saline and acquire a stable rate of METH-appropriate lever-presses under an FR20 schedule of food presentation (the training dose of METH, 0.5 mg/kg) after 60 ± 10 training sessions (Fig. 1A and B). Similarly, a separate group of rats ($n=16$) were able to discriminate morphine from saline and acquired a stable rate of morphine-appropriate lever-presses under an FR20 schedule of food presentation (the training dose of morphine, 5.0 mg/kg) after 60 ± 10 training sessions (Fig. 1C and D). After the rats acquired the ability to discriminate the drugs from saline, the dose–response functions of METH- and morphine-induced discrimination were examined in the rats of METH and morphine-administered groups, respectively. METH-paired lever responses in the dose range of 0.2–0.5 mg/kg reached 90% while the rate of lever responses maintained stable (Fig. 2A and B). In the rats of morphine group, morphine-paired lever responses in the dose range of 2.0–5.0 mg/kg reached 90% (Fig. 2C). The rate of lever responses showed a tendency to decrease as the dose of morphine increased (Fig. 2D). Considering the selection of the drug-lever and the rate of lever-responses in rats, 0.2 mg/kg of METH and 3.0 mg/kg of morphine were chosen to examine the pharmacological effects of

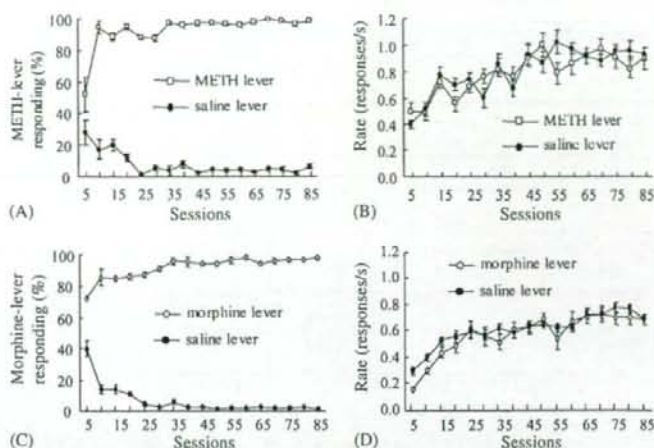


Fig. 1. Acquisition of METH and morphine-induced discrimination in rats. (A) The acquisition of METH (0.5 mg/kg, s.c.)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (B) The rate of lever responses in rats during the period of training for METH-induced discrimination. (C) The acquisition of morphine (5.0 mg/kg, s.c.)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 16$). (D) The rate of lever responses in rats during the period of training for morphine-induced discrimination. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM.

all the compounds, whereas 0.5 mg/kg of METH and 5.0 mg/kg of morphine were used during all the training sessions of drug discrimination.

3.2. Effects of rolipram on the discriminative stimuli induced by METH and morphine in rats

It has been well documented that the cAMP signaling pathway plays a crucial role in the development of drug dependence [6,9,16,26,33–35]. We have previously reported that rolipram attenuates the development of morphine dependence through cAMP system [16]. To further evidence the role of cAMP in modulating drug-induced discrimination, we

tested the effects of rolipram, a selective phosphodiesterase IV inhibitor, on METH- and morphine-associated discriminative lever responses. Rolipram at the dose of 0.05 mg/kg significantly inhibited the METH-associated discrimination (Fig. 3A, $p < 0.05$, ANOVA) but had no significant influence on the rate of lever responses in rats. However, rolipram significantly inhibited both METH-associated discrimination and the rate of lever responses at higher doses (0.1 and 0.3 mg/kg; Fig. 3A and B, $p < 0.01$, ANOVA). Similarly, rolipram (0.1 and 0.3 mg/kg) significantly attenuated the discriminative-stimulus effects of morphine in rats (Fig. 3C, $p < 0.05$ and 0.01, respectively, ANOVA), but not the rate of morphine-induced lever responses at any of the doses examined (Fig. 3D). Taken together, these findings have

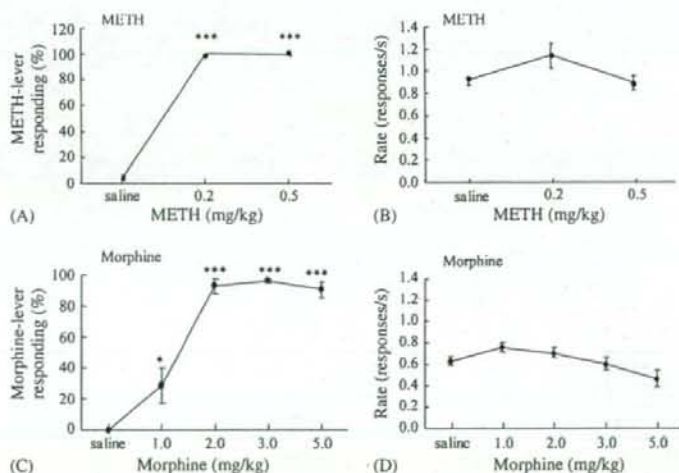


Fig. 2. Dose–response function of discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine in rats. (A) The dose–response function for METH-associated discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (B) The rate of lever responses in rats over the dose–response test sessions. (C) The dose–response function for morphine-associated discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 16$). (D) The rate of lever responses in rats over the dose–response test sessions. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM. * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$ vs. vehicle-associated lever responses (one-way ANOVA).

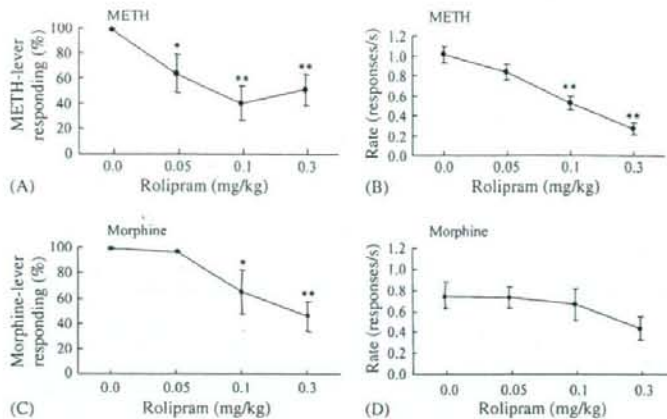


Fig. 3. Rolipram inhibits the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine in rats. (A) Effects of rolipram on METH (0.2 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (B) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. (C) Effects of rolipram on morphine (3.0 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 16$). (D) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ vs. vehicle treatment (one-way ANOVA).

clearly implicated cAMP system in the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine in rats.

3.3. Effects of nefiracetam on the discriminative stimuli induced by METH and morphine

Previously, we have reported that nefiracetam attenuates the development of morphine dependence via the cAMP system [9]. In the present study, the effects of nefiracetam (5–50 mg/kg) on METH- and morphine-induced discrimination were examined. Although at lower doses (5–20 mg/kg), nefiracetam did not affect the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH, at 50 mg/kg, it significantly suppressed the effects of METH (Fig. 4A,

$p < 0.01$, ANOVA). During the period of testing, the rate of lever responses remained stable (Fig. 4B), suggesting that the inhibitory effects of nefiracetam on METH-induced discriminative stimuli did not result from a general disruption of muscle function or motor activity. Similarly, nefiracetam attenuated the discriminative-stimulus effects of morphine at the dose of 10 mg/kg (Fig. 4C, $p < 0.01$, ANOVA). There was no significant effect of nefiracetam on the rate of morphine-induced lever responses observed during the period of testing (Fig. 4D). Together, these findings suggest that nefiracetam inhibits the discriminative-stimulus effects of both METH and morphine, which are not due to general disruption of muscle function and motor activity.

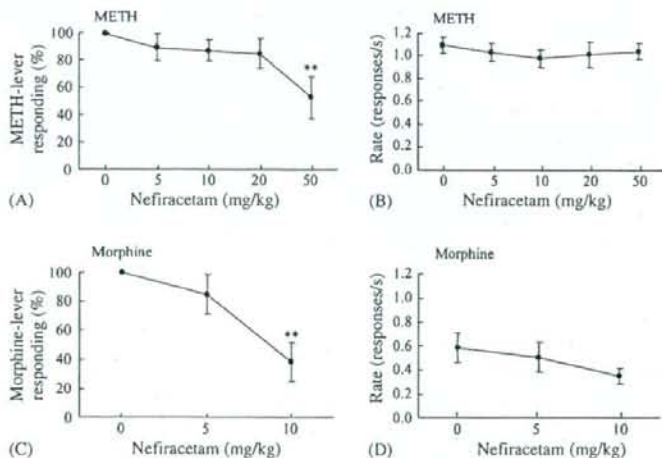


Fig. 4. Nefiracetam inhibits the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine in rats. (A) Effects of nefiracetam on METH (0.2 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (B) The METH-associated rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. (C) Effects of nefiracetam on morphine (3.0 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 16$). (D) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM. ** $p < 0.01$ vs. vehicle treatment (one-way ANOVA).

3.4. Effects of voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers alone or co-administration with nefiracetam on METH discrimination

There are two proposed intracellular mechanisms underlying nefiracetam's effects, cAMP system and calcium channel system [28,41]. To investigate how nefiracetam inhibits METH-induced discriminative stimuli, the pharmacological effects of voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers were examined in the present study. We found that the co-administration of nifedipine (0.25–1.0 mg/kg), an L-type calcium channel blocker, with nefiracetam (50 mg/kg) failed to show modulation on METH-induced lever presses, although nifedipine, administered alone, inhibited METH-induced discriminative lever responses in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 5A). The stable rate of lever responses in rats during all the test sessions indicated that the inhibitory effects of nifedipine on METH discrimination were not resulted from general disruption of muscle function and motor activity (Fig. 5B). Similarly, no modulation of the N-type calcium channel blocker neomycin (2–10 mg/kg) was observed on the regulatory effect of nefiracetam (50 mg/kg) on METH-induced discrimination in rats (Fig. 5C). In addition, neomycin when administered alone significantly attenuated METH-paired discriminative lever responses at the doses of 2 and 10 mg/kg (Fig. 5C, $p < 0.05$, ANOVA), whereas the rate of lever responses in rats maintained stable during all test sessions (Fig. 5D).

We also tested the effect of flunarizine, a non-selective voltage-sensitive calcium channel blocker. This compound, either administered alone (0.2–2.0 mg/kg) or co-administered with nefiracetam (50 mg/kg), failed to show any effect on METH-induced discrimination (Fig. 5E).

Taken together, these findings suggest that voltage-sensitive calcium channels may play no or little role in the inhibitory effects of nefiracetam on METH-induced discrimination.

3.5. Effects of dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists on METH-associated discrimination

We examined the effects of dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists on METH-induced discrimination, since dopamine D2-like receptors modulate the cAMP signaling pathway through inhibitory G proteins [8,13,34]. We found that the dopamine D2 receptor antagonist raclopride (0.3–1.0 mg/kg) significantly inhibited METH-induced discriminative lever responses (Fig. 6A, $p < 0.001$, ANOVA), and the rate of METH-induced lever responses in rats was also reduced by higher doses of raclopride (Fig. 6B, 0.6 and 1.0 mg/kg, $p < 0.05$ and 0.001, respectively, ANOVA). Raclopride at the dose of 0.3 mg/kg significantly prevented METH-induced discrimination but had no significant influence on the rate of lever responses, suggesting that this inhibitory effect of raclopride on METH-associated discrimination did not result from a disruption of motor activity. Finally, we found that L-745870, a selective dopamine D4 recep-

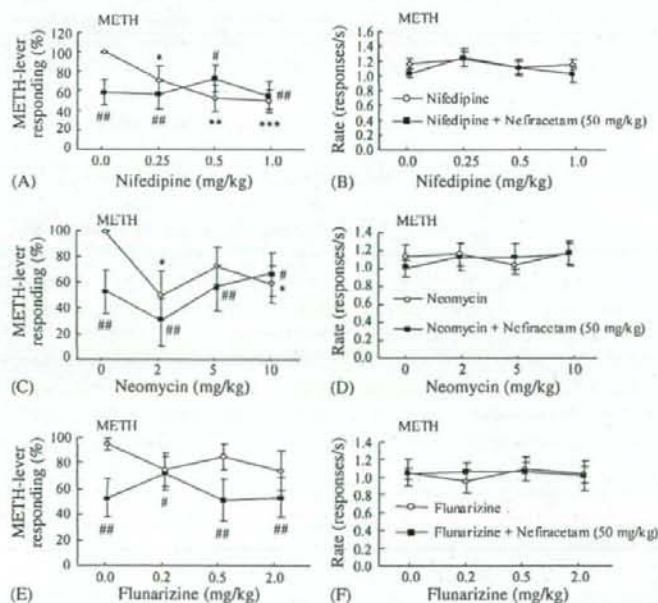


Fig. 5. Effects of voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers alone or in combination with nefiracetam on METH-induced discriminative lever responses in rats. (A) Effects of nifedipine alone or together with nefiracetam (50 mg/kg) on METH (0.2 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (B) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. (C) Effects of neomycin alone or in combination with nefiracetam (50 mg/kg) on METH (0.2 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (D) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. (E) Effects of flunarizine alone or together with nefiracetam (50 mg/kg) on METH (0.2 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (F) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ vs. treatment with the vehicle for voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers alone (one-way ANOVA); ## $p < 0.01$ vs. treatment with the vehicle for nefiracetam alone (one-way ANOVA).

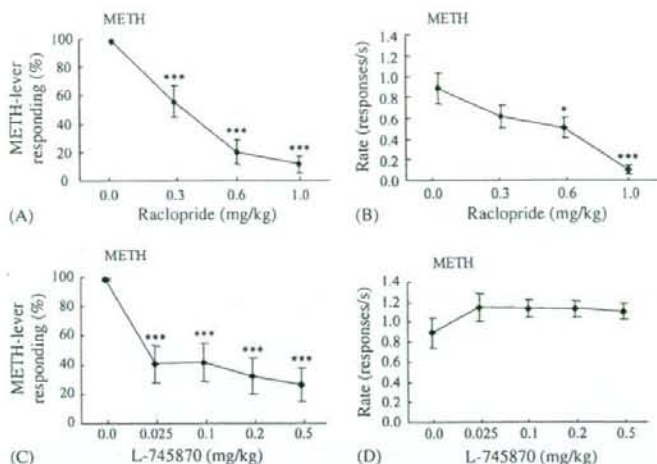


Fig. 6. Dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists inhibit the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH in rats. (A) Effects of raclopride on METH (0.2 mg/kg)-induced discrimination in rats ($n = 14$). (B) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. (C) Effects of L-745870 on METH (0.2 mg/kg)-induced discriminative lever responses in rats ($n = 14$). (D) The rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM. *** $p < 0.001$ vs. vehicle treatment (one-way ANOVA).

tor antagonist, disrupted the METH-induced discrimination at all doses examined (Fig. 6C, $p < 0.001$, ANOVA), and there was no change in the rate of lever responses in rats during the test sessions (Fig. 6D).

4. Discussion

In the present study, we tested the effects of several types of compounds including rolipram, nefiracetam, and dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists, and found that all these compounds were effective in inhibiting the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine in rats. Since all these compounds can regulate *in vivo* cAMP level, our findings suggest that cAMP signaling cascade plays a critical role in the subjective effects of addictive drugs.

cAMP signaling pathway has been implicated in the development of drug addiction [6, 9, 16, 26, 33, 34, 35]. As a selective phosphodiesterase IV inhibitor, rolipram (0.5–4.0 mg/kg, *i.p.*) has been documented to increase cAMP level or reverse a decreased cAMP level in the brain of rodents [10, 16, 24]. Accordingly, rolipram suppresses METH-induced behavioral sensitization, cocaine self-administration, and morphine-induced physical dependence via regulation of the cAMP system [10, 14, 16]. In present study, we further confirmed that rolipram attenuated discriminative-stimulus effects of both METH and morphine in rats, probably by maintaining a higher intracellular level of cAMP. Nefiracetam is another compound we have tested that might regulate cAMP system. It has been shown that nefiracetam ameliorates impairments of learning and memory by regulating cAMP activity and/or voltage-sensitive calcium channels in animal models [22, 28, 39, 41]. Moreover, single or repeated administration of nefiracetam (5–10 mg/kg, *p.o.*) has been reported to increase cAMP level or reverse a decreased cAMP level in the brain of rodents [9, 36]. Accordingly, we have previously reported that nefiracetam attenuates the development of mor-

phine dependence via the cAMP system [9]. In the present study, we found that voltage-sensitive calcium channels play no or little role in the inhibitory effects of nefiracetam on METH-induced discriminative lever responses, suggesting that cAMP system may play an important role, at least in part, in the inhibitory effects of nefiracetam on discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine. Thus, nefiracetam and rolipram may share common targets in the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine in rats by increasing the intracellular cAMP level. On the other hand, voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers themselves showed inhibitory effects on METH-induced discriminative stimuli in our study. This observation is consistent with previous reports that voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers inhibit psychostimulant-induced self-administration, conditioned place preference, and locomotor sensitization in a similar manner [17, 18, 30]. Given that co-administration of nefiracetam and the voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers did not have any antagonistic effect, the most parsimonious explanation is that there are different neurotransmission circuits or brain areas for the inhibitory effects of nefiracetam and voltage-sensitive calcium channel blockers on METH-induced discriminative stimuli in rats [1, 21, 23, 25, 37, 43].

It has been reported that the ventral tegmental area and nucleus accumbens are key brain areas involved in discriminative-stimulus effects of both METH and morphine, although the periaqueductal gray and parabrachial nucleus are also related to discriminative-stimulus effects of morphine in rats [15, 25]. Dopaminergic transmission has been shown to play a key role in discriminative-stimulus effects of psychostimulants and opioids [21, 29, 31, 37]. Once activated, dopamine D2-like receptors couple with inhibitory G-proteins and reduce cAMP activity [8, 13, 33, 34]. Thus, we examined effects of both dopamine D2 and D4 receptor antagonists on discriminative-stimulus effects of METH. In our study, both dopamine D2 (raclopride) and D4 (L-745870) receptor

antagonists attenuated the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH in rats. These results are consistent with reports that dopaminergic transmission is involved in the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH [21,37]. Interestingly, the selective dopamine D4 receptor antagonist L-745870 showed strong antagonizing effects on METH-induced discrimination but had no influence on the rate of lever responses in rats, whereas the selective dopamine D2 receptor antagonist raclopride affected both METH-induced discriminative stimuli and the rate of lever responses in rats at higher doses. These results might suggest that, compared with dopamine D2 receptor, dopamine D4 receptor represents a better potential target in the treatment of the subjective effects of addictive drugs. The inhibitory effects of dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists may also support our hypothesis that the cAMP system plays an important role in the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH in rats.

In conclusion, we found that rolipram, nefiracetam, and dopamine D2-like receptor antagonists attenuated the discriminative-stimulus effects of METH and morphine in rats, suggesting an important role of the cAMP system in regulating drug-induced discriminative stimuli. Therefore, the cAMP signaling cascade may represent a potential target in the treatment of drug addiction.

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Research report

Transient drug-primed but persistent cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished methamphetamine-seeking behavior in mice

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Abstract

It is essential to develop animal models to study the role of genetic factors in the relapse of drug-seeking behavior in genetically engineered mutant mice. This paper reports a typical model of drug-primed and cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished methamphetamine (METH)-seeking behavior in mice. C57BL/6J mice were trained to self-administer METH (0.1 mg/kg/infusion) by poking their nose into an active hole under a fixed ratio schedule in daily 3-h sessions. After acquiring stable METH self-administration behavior, the mice were subjected to extinction training in the absence of both METH and METH-associated cues. Once the active nose-poking responses were extinguished, drug-primed and cue-induced reinstatement were investigated according to a within-subjects design. A priming injection of METH reliably reinstated the extinguished drug-seeking behavior in the absence of both METH and METH-associated cues. Interestingly, the drug-primed METH-seeking behavior disappeared within 2 months after withdrawal from METH, while cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished METH-seeking behavior lasted for at least 5 months after the withdrawal. A correlation study revealed that drug-primed, but not cue-induced, reinstatement behavior was positively correlated with the total amount of METH taken by individuals during METH self-administration. In conclusion, our findings suggest that the present reinstatement procedure for mouse model of relapse is useful and reliable, and different neural mechanisms may be involved in drug-primed and cue-induced METH-seeking behavior.

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Keywords: Drug-primed reinstatement; Cue-induced reinstatement; Intravenous self-administration; Methamphetamine; Mice

1. Introduction

Epidemiological reports suggest that genetic factors contribute to 30–60% of the variability in drug dependence/addiction and alcoholism including vulnerability to relapse of taking drugs of abuse [15,16,21,23,32,33,35]. In 1991, a mouse model of i.v. self-administration was reported [4], and since then several specific genes/proteins have been identified as neural substrates of addiction, which are involved in the acquisition and maintenance of drug dependence, including the dopamine D2 receptor [3,7,11], the serotonin 1B receptor [26], an acetyl-

choline receptor containing beta 2 [22], the mu-opioid receptor [24], metabotropic glutamate receptor 5 [5], cannabinoid receptor 1 [8,29], the Kir3 potassium channel subunit [20], and the homer 2 [30]. In contrast, no direct evidence has been obtained of genetic factors involved in susceptibility to relapse. Since most genetically modified model animal strains are inbred mice, there is an impetus to develop reinstatement procedures in mice. More recently, efforts have been made to establish a mouse model of relapse [12,14,37]. Unfortunately, in mice, neither a widely acceptable drug-primed reinstatement procedure nor information on the characterization of reinstatement behavior is available. Importantly, failure of drug-primed reinstatement behavior in mice may cast doubt on the validity of previously published data on drugs of abuse from other mouse models.

Over the past several years, abuse of methamphetamine (METH) has spread world-wide, resulting in serious health

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and social issues. A major clinical concern in the treatment of METH addiction is relapse even after long-term abstinence [2,6,13,34,35]. In the present study, we developed a typical animal model of METH-primed reinstatement behavior and found that C57BL/6J mice showed a short-term drug-primed, but a long-lasting cue-induced, reinstatement of extinguished METH-seeking behavior.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Subjects and drugs

Male C57BL/6J mice (SLC, Tokyo, Japan) were 8 weeks old and weighed 25–30 g at the beginning of the experiments. All mice were kept in a regulated environment ($23 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$; $50 \pm 0.5\%$ humidity) with a reversed 12-h light/dark cycle (lights on at 9:00 a.m.). After the surgery to implant catheter into jugular vein, mice were housed singly until the end of all the experiments. Water and food were available *ad libitum* throughout the experiments. Animal care and use was in accordance with the Principles of Laboratory Animal Care (National Institutes of Health Publication 85-123, 1983) and was approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of Nagoya University School of Medicine. Animals were treated according to the Guidelines of Experimental Animal Care issued from the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan.

METH hydrochloride (Dainippon Pharmaceutical Ltd., Osaka, Japan) was dissolved in sterile saline and self-administered at the dose of 0.1 mg/kg/infusion over 5 s (infusion volume, 2.1 μl). The unit dose for METH self-administration is based on our previous report [37].

2.2. Apparatus for METH self-administration

METH self-administration, extinction and subsequent tests for reinstatement of METH-seeking behavior were conducted in standard mouse operant conditioning chambers (ENV-307A, Med Associates, Georgia, VT) located within ventilated sound attenuation cubicles as described previously [37]. Briefly, the operant conditioning chambers were equipped with nose-poke sensors (ENV-313M, Med Associates) in two holes located on one side of the chamber 1.0 cm above the floor, cue- and hole-lamps located, respectively, above and in each hole, and a red house light located on the top of the chamber opposite the holes. During the self-administration, one hole was defined as active, and the other as inactive. For all the mice, the active hole was counterbalanced across sides. Nose-poking responses in the active hole resulted in activation of the infusion pump (PHM-100, Med Associates) and inactivation of the cue-lamp and hole-lamp for 5 s followed by a 5-s timeout period. Responses in the active hole during the timeout period and in the inactive hole had no programmed consequences but were recorded by the software MED-PC for Windows (Med Associates). The components of the infusion line were connected to each other from the injector to the exit port of the mouse's catheter by joint FEP tubing (inner diameter, 0.25 mm; outer diameter, 0.55 mm; Eicom Co., Ltd., Japan), which was encased in steel spring leashes (Instech, Plymouth Meeting, PA). Swivels were suspended above the operant conditioning chamber. One pump/syringe set was used for each self-administration chamber located inside of a cubicle. The infusion pump/syringe set was outside of the chambers but inside of the cubicles.

2.3. Catheter implantation

Twenty naïve C57BL/6J mice were anesthetized with pentobarbital sodium (50 mg/kg, i.p.). Indwelling catheters were constructed of micro-silicone tubing (inner diameter, 0.50 mm; outer diameter, 0.7 mm; IMG, Imamura Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) and polyethylene tubing (inner diameter, 0.50 mm; outer diameter, 0.8 mm). Incisions were made on the skin of the head and ventral neck, and the right jugular vein was externalized. The end of the catheter was inserted into the jugular vein via a small incision and was secured to the vein and surrounding tissue with silk sutures. The exit port of the catheter passed subcutaneously to the top of the skull where it was attached to a modified 24-gauge cannula, which was secured to the mouse's skull with quick self-curing acrylic resin (Shofu

Inc., Osaka, Japan). To extend catheter patency, the catheters were flushed immediately after surgery, and in the morning and evening of the following days, with 0.03 ml of an antibiotic solution of cefmetazole sodium (20.0 mg/ml; Sankyo Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) dissolved in heparinized saline (70 Unit/ml; Leo Pharmaceutical Products, Ltd., Tokyo, Japan). Patency was usually confirmed once a week prior to operant behavior tests by intravenous injection of pentobarbital sodium solution (6.0 mg/ml, 0.15 ml/mouse). If the mice could not be knocked down within 5 s, the corresponding data were excluded from the statistical analysis.

2.4. Acquisition of METH self-administration

After recovering from the surgery to implant the catheter, the mice ($n = 18$) were subjected to daily 3-h sessions of METH self-administration under a fixed ratio (FR) schedule of reinforcement. During the self-administration, nose-poking responses in the active hole resulted in an infusion of METH at the dose of 0.1 mg/kg/infusion over 5 s (infusion volume, 2.1 μl) followed by a 5-s timeout period. Responses in the active hole during the timeout period and in the inactive hole had no programmed consequences but were recorded. Once the mice could make a minimum of 60% nose-poking responses in the active hole and received no less than 10 infusions of METH over 2 consecutive sessions (on day 6 in the present study), METH reinforcement schedule was changed to FR2. Then, the mice gradually acquired stable METH self-administration behavior (deviations of less than 15% of the mean of active responses in three consecutive training sessions). Eight mice were excluded from the statistical analysis of all the METH self-administration, extinction, and the first drug-primed and cue-induced reinstatement data, but three more mice were excluded from the statistical analysis of the second tests for METH-primed and cue-induced reinstatement behavior, because of a failure of catheter patency or their death from infection.

2.5. Extinction

According to a within-subjects design, the mice ($n = 10$) were then subjected to extinction training before the tests for reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior as follows: 10–20 daily 3-h sessions of extinction training before the first test for METH-primed reinstatement (1st Primed-reinstatement (R1P)); 6–10 daily 3-h sessions of extinction training before the first test for cue-induced reinstatement (1st Cue-R1P), the second tests for METH-primed and cue-induced reinstatement 2 months after (2nd Primed-R1P or 2nd Cue-R1P), and the third test for cue-induced reinstatement 5 months after (3rd Cue-R1P) withdrawal from METH self-administration. The extinction criterion was as follows: less than 15 active responses or 25% of active responses in the stable phase of self-administration in two consecutive sessions. Throughout the extinction session, the house light was on. The METH-associated cues (cue- and hole-lamps, and the pump noise for an infusion of METH) were unavailable. Nose-poking responses in a previously active hole were counted as active. Nose-poking responses in a previously inactive hole were counted as inactive.

2.6. METH-primed reinstatement

Once the extinction criterion was met, the mice ($n = 10$) were firstly subjected to a daily 3-h session of operant test 30 min after an injection (i.p.) of saline as a control for the METH-primed reinstatement. From the next day, the mice were consecutively subjected to the first test for METH-primed reinstatement (1st Primed-R1P) 30 min after the i.p. injection with ascending doses of METH (0.2, 0.4, 1.0, or 2.0 mg/kg; each dose for one daily 3-h session, without extinction training across the sessions). To investigate the duration of drug-primed reinstatement of extinguished METH-seeking behavior, the mice ($n = 7$) were subjected to extinction training 2 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration. Once the extinction criterion was met, the second test (2nd Primed-R1P) for METH-primed reinstatement was conducted as described above. The tests for METH-primed reinstatement were conducted under the same conditions as in the extinction sessions in which nose-poking responses into a previously active hole resulted in neither infusion of METH nor METH-associated cues. Nose-poking responses in a previously active hole were counted as active. Nose-poking responses in a previously inactive hole were counted as inactive.

2.7. Cue-induced reinstatement

Immediately after the tests for METH-primed reinstatement (1st or 2nd Primed-RLP) or 5 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration, the same group of mice was subjected to the extinction training once again. Once the extinction criterion was met, the mice were subjected to the tests for cue-induced reinstatement (1st, 2nd or 3rd Cue-RLP). The tests for cue-induced reinstatement were conducted under the same conditions as the METH self-administration under the FR2 schedule, except that there was no infusion of METH after nose-poking responses in a previously active hole throughout the testing session. Nose-poking responses in a previously active hole were counted as active. Nose-poking responses in a previously inactive hole were counted as inactive.

2.8. Data analysis

All data were expressed as mean \pm S.E.M. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures was performed to analyze the difference of active and inactive nose-poking responses during the METH self-administration, extinction, and tests for METH-primed or cue-induced reinstatement behavior, followed *post hoc* by the Bonferroni/Dunn test. A one-way ANOVA with repeated measures was performed to analyze the change in active nose-poking responses during extinction training and tests for METH-primed and cue-induced reinstatement behavior, followed *post hoc* by the Bonferroni/Dunn test. The correlation between the total amount of METH intake, active nose-poking responses in the first session of extinction, and active nose-poking responses in METH-primed and cue-induced reinstatement was analyzed by a Simple regression. In all cases, a significant difference was set at $P < 0.05$.

3. Results

3.1. Acquisition and retention of METH self-administration

As shown in Fig. 1, naïve C57BL/6J mice could not discriminate active (with an infusion of METH) nose-poking responses from inactive (without an infusion of METH) ones at the early phase of METH self-administration under an FR1 schedule of reinforcement (sessions 1–5). In session 6, the mice showed a tendency to discriminate active from inactive nose-poking

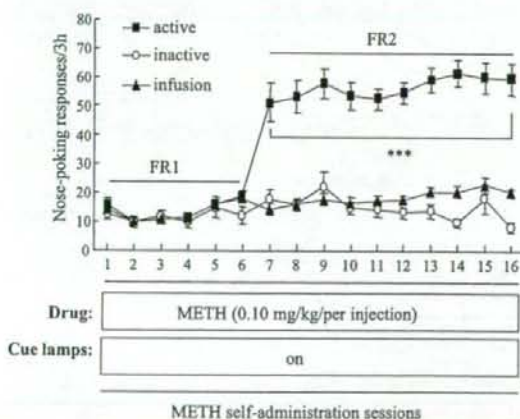


Fig. 1. Nose-poking responses and the number of METH infusions during METH self-administration. METH (0.1 mg/kg/infusion) self-administration was under an FR1 schedule during sessions 1–6 and under an FR2 schedule during sessions 7–16. Data are presented as mean \pm S.E.M. *** $P < 0.001$ active vs. inactive nose-poking responses.

responses under the FR1 schedule. Therefore, an FR2 schedule of METH reinforcement was introduced. Thereafter, the mice gradually exhibited stable active nose-poking responses for METH self-administration (with a within-subjects variability of less than 15% in daily active nose-poking responses for at least three consecutive days), suggesting that the mice acquired stable METH self-administration behavior after 10 daily 3-h sessions of METH self-administration under the FR2 schedule (Fig. 1, two-way ANOVA with repeated measures, $F_{(1,288)} = 352.4$, $P < 0.001$). The mean number of active nose-poking responses for METH reinforcement during the stable phase of self-administration was 60.0 ± 5.5 in a daily 3-h session. The average total amount of METH taken in was 24.9 ± 1.8 mg/kg during 16 daily 3-h sessions of self-administration. During the conversion of the FR1 into the FR2 schedule, there was no significant change in the number of METH infusions (day 6–16 in Fig. 1, a repeated one-way ANOVA, $F_{(10,99)} = 1.7$, $P > 0.05$).

3.2. Nose-poking responses during extinction

As shown in Fig. 2, during the period of extinction training before the first test for METH-primed reinstatement (1st Primed-RLP), the mice exhibited many more active nose-poking responses (124.2 ± 16.2) than those (52.2 ± 12.5) in the stable phase of METH self-administration at the beginning of extinction training (Ext 1–6, two-way ANOVA with repeated measures, $F_{(1,108)} = 17.2$, $P < 0.001$) in the absence of METH. This phenomenon once again suggests that the mice have developed reliable METH self-administration behavior after 16 daily 3-h sessions of self-administration training. The subsequent daily 3-h sessions of extinction training resulted in a decrease in active nose-poking responses. During the late phase of extinction training (LExt 1–3), the mice met the extinc-

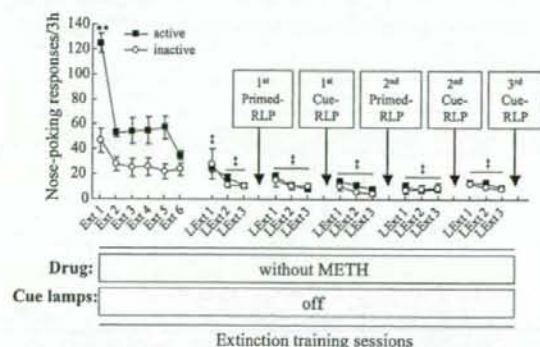


Fig. 2. Active and inactive nose-poking responses during extinction. Prior to the first test for drug-primed reinstatement (1st Primed-RLP), the data were from the first 6 daily 3-h sessions (Ext 1–6) and the last 3 daily 3-h sessions (LExt 1–3) during 10–20 daily 3-h sessions of extinction training. Thereafter, the data were from the last 3 daily 3-h sessions (LExt 1–3) during 6–10 daily 3-h sessions of extinction training. Data are presented as mean \pm S.E.M. ** $P < 0.01$ active vs. inactive nose-poking responses. † $P < 0.01$ vs. active nose-poking responses in the first session of extinction. RLP: reinstatement; Ext: extinction; LExt: the last session of extinction.

tion criterion (less than 15 active responses or 25% of active responses in the stable phase of self-administration in two consecutive sessions). The average number of active nose-poking responses (11.1 ± 2.2) was significantly small as compared with that (124.2 ± 16.2) in the first session of extinction (Fig. 2, a repeated one-way ANOVA, $F_{(15,117)} = 35.9$, $P < 0.001$). Accordingly, the mice made active (previously associated with METH self-administration) and inactive (previously without METH self-administration) nose-poking responses in a random manner, suggesting that the purposely made active nose-poking responses acquired during METH self-administration had been extinguished after 10–20 daily 3-h sessions of extinction.

During the period of extinction training before the first test for cue-induced reinstatement (1st Cue-RLP) and the second test for METH-primed or cue-induced reinstatement (2nd Primed-RLP and 2nd Cue-RLP), the mice did not exhibit more active nose-poking responses than in the first session of extinction (Ext 1). After 6–10 daily 3-h sessions of extinction training, the mice met the extinction criteria. During the late phase of extinction training (Fig. 2, LExt 1–3, a repeated one-way ANOVA, $F_{(15,117)} = 35.9$, $P < 0.001$), the mice made active and inactive nose-poking responses in a random manner, suggesting that the purposely made active nose-poking responses had been extinguished after 6–10 daily 3-h sessions of extinction.

3.3. Transient METH-primed reinstatement

As shown in Fig. 3A, during the first test (1st Primed-RLP) for METH-primed reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior, the priming injection with saline or the lower doses of METH (0.2 and 0.4 mg/kg, i.p.) failed to reinstate drug-seeking behavior in mice. In contrast, the priming injection with 1.0 mg/kg of METH (i.p.) reliably provoked reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior (a repeated one-way ANOVA, $F_{(4,45)} = 2.73$, $P < 0.001$). The priming injection with 2.0 mg/kg of METH (i.p.) did not evoke extinguished active nose-poking responses. During the 1st test for METH-primed reinstatement behavior, there was significant difference between active and inactive nose-poking responses (Fig. 3A and B, two-

way ANOVA with repeated measures, $F_{(1,90)} = 4.1$, $P < 0.05$), suggesting that the priming effects of METH on previously extinguished active nose-poking responses are specific. Two months after withdrawal from METH self-administration (2nd Primed-RLP), however, the same group of mice failed to show a reinstatement of extinguished METH-seeking behavior at any of the doses of METH examined (Fig. 3A, 0.2–2.0 mg/kg, i.p.). These results suggest that the METH-primed reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior in mice was transient. In addition, as shown in Fig. 3B, there was no significant difference in inactive nose-poking responses between saline and METH priming at any dose examined during the 1st and 2nd tests for METH-primed reinstatement behavior.

3.4. Persistent cue-induced reinstatement

As shown in Fig. 4, during the first test (1st Cue-RLP) for cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior, the mice displayed many more active nose-poking responses after being exposed to METH-associated cues (a repeated one-way ANOVA, $F_{(5,42)} = 34.10$, $P < 0.001$). In contrast, there was no change in inactive nose-poking responses after the exposure to METH-associated cues. To investigate the duration of cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior, the same group of mice was subjected to second (2nd Cue-RLP) and third (3rd Cue-RLP) tests for cue-induced reinstatement 2 and 5 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration, respectively. A typical METH-associated cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished active nose-poking responses remained 5 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration (a repeated one-way ANOVA, $F_{(5,42)} = 34.10$, $P < 0.05$), although the cue-induced reinstatement was attenuated after repeated extinction training (a repeated one-way ANOVA, $F_{(5,42)} = 34.10$, $P < 0.05$). During all the tests for cue-induced reinstatement (1st, 2nd or 3rd Cue-RLP), there was no significant change in inactive nose-poking responses after the exposure to METH-associated cues. These results suggest that the mice exhibited a long-lasting (at least 5 months) cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior.

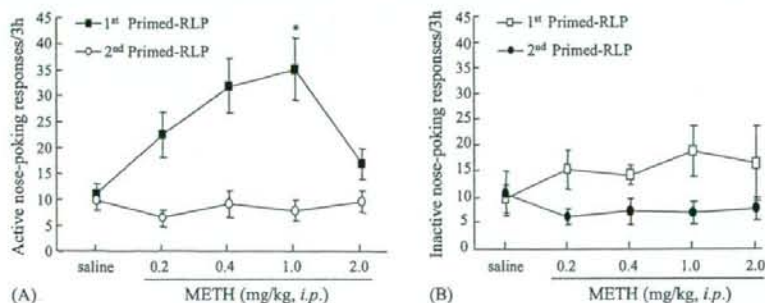


Fig. 3. Active (A) and inactive (B) nose-poking responses during METH-primed reinstatement. The first test for METH-primed reinstatement (1st Primed-RLP) was performed immediately after withdrawal from METH self-administration. The second test for METH-primed reinstatement (2nd Primed-RLP) was performed 2 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration. Data are presented as mean \pm S.E.M. * $P < 0.05$ vs. active nose-poking responses after the priming injection (i.p.) with saline in the first test for METH-primed reinstatement.

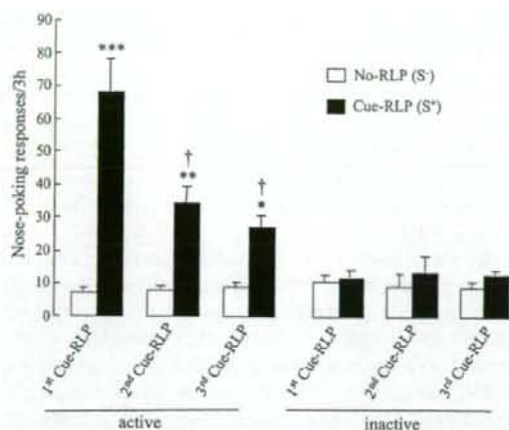


Fig. 4. Nose-poking responses during METH-associated cue-induced reinstatement. The first (1st Cue-RLP), second (2nd Cue-RLP), and third (3rd Cue-RLP) tests for METH-associated cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished METH-seeking behavior were performed immediately, 2 months, and 5 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration. Data are presented as mean \pm S.E.M. * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$ vs. active nose-poking responses during an additional session of extinction (No-RLP (S^-)) group in the same test for cue-induced reinstatement. † $P < 0.05$ vs. active nose-poking responses in the first test for cue-induced reinstatement (1st Cue-RLP). RLP: reinstatement.

3.5. METH-primed, but not cue-induced, reinstatement behavior is correlated to the total amount of METH intake during self-administration

A correlation study revealed that the number of active nose-poking responses during the first test (1st Primed-RLP) for METH-primed reinstatement (at 1.0 mg/kg of METH, i.p.) was positively correlated with the total amount of METH taken by individual mouse during self-administration training (Fig. 5A, $R = 0.73$, $P < 0.05$), probably suggesting that METH self-administration and METH-primed reinstatement share some common neural pathways. There was no correlation between the total amount of METH taken by individuals during self-administration and the number of active nose-poking responses during the first test for cue-induced reinstatement (Fig. 5B, 1st Cue-RLP), or the first session of extinction (Fig. 5C, 1st Ext). Also, there was no correlation in the number of active nose-poking responses between the first test (1st Primed-RLP) for METH-primed reinstatement and the first test (1st Cue-RLP) for cue-induced reinstatement (Fig. 5D), probably suggesting that METH-primed and METH-associated cue-induced reinstatement involve different neural pathways.

4. Discussion

In the present study, we established, for the first time, a typical mouse model of drug-primed reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior. Furthermore, there was a significant

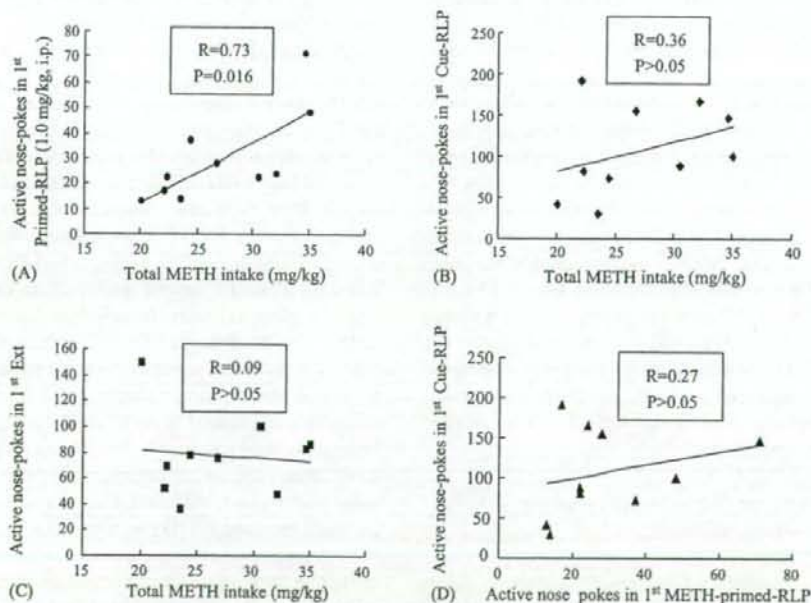


Fig. 5. Correlation between total METH intake during self-administration and the number of active nose-poking responses in the first test for METH-primed reinstatement (1st Primed-RLP) (A), the first test for METH-associated cue-induced reinstatement (1st Cue-RLP) (B), and the first session of extinction (1st Ext) (C), and the relationship in active nose-poking responses between METH-primed reinstatement (1st Primed-RLP) and METH-associated cue-induced reinstatement (1st Cue-RLP) (D). Data are presented as mean \pm S.E.M. RLP: reinstatement; Ext: extinction.

difference in the duration between METH-primed and cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior in mice. Our observations indicated that mice display a transient drug-primed, but a long-lasting cue-induced, reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior, suggesting that different neural pathways are involved in drug-primed and cue-induced reinstatements.

4.1. METH self-administration and extinction

Consistent with previous reports [4,9,17,25,27], our study indicated that C57BL/6J mice are an inbred strain susceptible to drug self-administration. Without nose-poking training with reinforcement using food pellets, naïve C57BL/6J mice could acquire stable METH self-administration behavior under the FR schedule of reinforcement within 16 daily 3-h sessions in the present study (Fig. 1).

Immediately after the end of METH self-administration, the mice exhibited many more active nose-poking responses for METH during the first session of extinction, consistent with our previous report [37]. This phenomenon strongly suggests that the mice developed reliable METH self-administration behavior during 16 daily 3-h sessions of self-administration training. Interestingly, there is no correlation between the active nose-poking responses for METH during the first session of extinction and total METH intake during METH self-administration (Fig. 5C). The sessions required to reach the extinction criterion were not correlated to the total amount of METH taken in during METH self-administration (data not shown). Following prolonged withdrawal from METH self-administration, the mice showed a decrease in the number of active nose-pokes for METH in the absence of both METH and METH-associated cues (cue- and hole-lamps, and the pump noise for an infusion of METH), suggesting that the propensity for relapse to drug-seeking behavior is reduced by the extinction training [31]. Previous reports have shown that the mice are considerably resistant to extinction training (18.3 ± 2.7 days) to reach a criterion of less than 25 active responses in a 2-h test session [12,14]. In the present study, the mice met a stricter extinction criterion (less than 15 active responses or 25% of active responses in the stable phase of self-administration in two consecutive sessions) after 10–20 daily 3-h sessions of extinction training. This difference may result from different procedural factors between previous reports and the present study (e.g. in the present study, both METH and METH-associated cues were absent during the extinction training), although we could not exclude the possibility that the mechanisms at work may differ between cocaine- and METH-conditioning effects.

4.2. Drug-primed and cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior

With a “between-sessions” reinstatement procedure, Fuchs et al. [12] has demonstrated that C57BL/6 mice fail to exhibit a reinstatement of cocaine-seeking behavior after a priming injection with a wide range of doses of cocaine (0, 1, 2.5, 5, 10, 20, and 40 mg/kg, i.p.) according to a between-subjects

design. With a “between-within sessions” reinstatement procedure, Highfield et al. [14] has reported that 129X1/SvJ mice show modest drug-primed reinstatement behavior after a priming injection with cocaine at a dose of 6.0 mg/kg (i.v.), although lower doses of cocaine (1.5 and 3.0 mg/kg, i.v.) also fail to reinstate cocaine-seeking behavior. Similar to these two reports, we previously demonstrated that C57BL/6J mice failed to show a reinstatement of METH-seeking behavior after a priming injection with METH at doses of 0.5 and 1.0 mg/kg (i.p.) (37). In the present study, however, we have successfully demonstrated that a priming injection with METH at a dose of 1.0 mg/kg (i.p.) reliably reinstates drug-seeking behavior in mice, by modifying the experimental procedure as follows: First, besides the absence of cue- and hole-lamps previously associated with an infusion of METH, pump noise (for an infusion of METH during METH self-administration) was avoided during daily 3-h sessions of extinction training by turning the infusion pump off. Thus, the absence of all the response-contingent cues reduced the number of extinction training sessions (days) needed to achieve the extinction criterion. Given that METH-primed reinstatement is transient as observed in the present study, the decreased number of extinction training sessions to achieve the criterion may be critical to detect the METH-primed reinstatement behavior in mice. Second, a stricter extinction criterion was introduced (“less than 15 active responses or 25% of active responses in a stable phase of self-administration in two consecutive sessions” in the present study versus “less than 25 active responses or 30% of active responses in stable self-administration on two consecutive days” in the previous study). Thus, a more strict criterion for extinction training may be useful for the subsequent METH-primed reinstatement. Lastly, a possible delay in drug-primed reinstatement behavior in mice could be detected by consecutively testing for reinstatement behavior according to a within-subjects design. Together with previous studies in rats [10,18], these findings suggest that the reinstatement procedure itself may be important to detect the drug-primed reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior in mice.

Interestingly, METH-primed reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior disappeared within 2 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration. In contrast, cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior lasted for at least 5 months after withdrawal from METH self-administration. It seems unlikely that the consecutive five tests (saline plus four doses of METH) lead to transient METH-primed reinstatement. First, the same mice were subsequently subjected to extinction training, METH-primed reinstatement test, and cue-induced reinstatement test in the present study. Second, as shown in Fig. 2, the cue-induced reinstatement tests were subsequent to the corresponding METH-primed reinstatement tests. Third, different from cue-induced reinstatement, the mice received METH injection (i.p.) prior to each test for METH-primed reinstatement behavior. In addition, there was no extinction training session across all the tests for METH-primed reinstatement. In addition, there was a decrease in drug-seeking behavior induced by METH-associated cues with prolonged withdrawal and repeated sessions of extinction training. This observation seems inconsistent with previous reports that cue-

induced reinstatement often shows evidence for incubation of drug-craving behavior following a delay of several weeks in rats [19]. This discrepancy may be because the cue-induced reinstatement behavior in the present study was examined after repeated cycles of extinction training (a with-subjects design), since repeated training of extinction decreases the propensity for a relapse of extinguished drug-seeking behavior [31]. The positive correlation between METH self-administration and drug-primed reinstatement behavior in mice suggests that there are some common neural mechanisms underlying drug self-administration and drug-primed reinstatement. For example, it has been shown that dopamine transmission and the cortico-limbic system in the brain play an important role in drug self-administration and drug-primed reinstatement of drug-seeking behavior [28,36,38]. In contrast, different neural mechanisms may be attributable to drug-primed and cue-induced reinstatement since there is no correlation between cue-induced reinstatement and METH-primed reinstatement or self-administration. This observation is also consistent with previous report [10]. Although the number of samples analyzed in Fig. 5 are relatively small, we argue that the correlation analysis shown in Fig. 5 is reliable, since the mice analyzed in Fig. 5 underwent a long period of conditioning, including self-administration, extinction, and reinstatement of drug-seeking behavior [1].

In conclusion, the present drug-primed reinstatement procedure and distinct characterizations of drug-primed and cue-induced reinstatement of extinguished drug-seeking behavior in mice may provide a new platform with which to identify specific genes involved in relapse of drug-seeking behavior by using genetically modified strains of mice. However, the modifications made in the present study to improve the effectiveness of the drug-primed reinstatement procedure have to be tested further by extending the present approach to other addictive drugs such as cocaine or other inbred strains such as 129X1/SvJ mice.

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Research report

Involvement of glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor in inhibitory effects of a hydrophobic dipeptide Leu-Ile on morphine-induced sensitization and rewarding effects

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Abstract

There are few efficacious medications for drug dependence at present. We have previously demonstrated that Leu-Ile, which induces the expression of not only tumor necrosis factor- α (TNF- α) but also glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF), inhibits methamphetamine (METH) and morphine (MOR)-induced sensitization and rewarding effects by regulating extracellular dopamine levels via the induction of TNF- α expression, and indicated the potential of Leu-Ile as a novel therapeutic agent for METH and MOR-induced dependence. In the present study, we investigated the involvement of GDNF in inhibitory effects of Leu-Ile on MOR-induced sensitization and rewarding effects. Repeated treatment with MOR for 9 days, which results in an enhancement of the locomotor-stimulating effects (sensitization) of MOR, increased GDNF levels in the nucleus accumbens compared with those in saline-treated mice. Repeated pre-treatment with Leu-Ile for 9 days potentiated the MOR-induced increase in GDNF levels. MOR at a low dose (3 mg/kg) produced place preference in GDNF heterozygous knockout (GDNF- $(+/-)$) mice, but not in littermate GDNF- $(+/+)$ mice. No inhibitory effect of Leu-Ile on MOR-induced place preference was observed in GDNF- $(+/-)$ mice. These results suggest that GDNF is involved in the inhibitory effects of Leu-Ile on MOR-induced sensitization and rewarding effects.

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Keywords: Morphine (MOR); Glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF); Sensitization; Rewarding effects; Leu-Ile; Mice

1. Introduction

Drugs of abuse are able to elicit compulsive drug-seeking behaviors upon repeated administration, which ultimately leads to the phenomenon of addiction. Evidence indicates that the susceptibility to develop addiction is influenced by sources of reinforcement, variable neuroadaptive mechanisms, and neuro-

chemical changes that together lead to altered homeostasis of the brain reward system [7].

Neurotrophic factors and cytokines, which are known to influence synaptic transmission and neuronal morphology [1,2,12], may be involved in alterations of the morphology of dendrites and dendritic spines in the nucleus accumbens (NAc) and prefrontal cortex after repeated injections of psychostimulants [18,19]. Glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF) inhibits the cocaine-induced upregulation of tyrosine hydroxylase (TH) activity in the ventral tegmental area (VTA) and blocks behavioral responses to cocaine [10]. GDNF would be a candidate for therapeutic agents against drug dependence. However, there are serious obstacles to its therapeutic application: it is difficult to deliver GDNF from the periphery to the brain, since it is a macromolecule that cannot penetrate the blood–brain barrier

Abbreviations: CPP, conditioned place preference; DA, dopamine; EIA, enzyme immunoassay; GDNF, glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor; METH, methamphetamine; MOR, morphine; NAc, nucleus accumbens; TNF- α , tumor necrosis factor- α ; TH, tyrosine hydroxylase; VTA, ventral tegmental area

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[8], and is easily broken down by proteases in the blood stream. Therefore, GDNF cannot be used directly as a therapeutic tool for drug dependence. We hypothesized that a low-molecular-weight compound which induces production of GDNF in the brain could be a novel therapeutic agent for drug dependence.

Recently, we have demonstrated that Leu-Ile, which induces the expression of tumor necrosis factor- α (TNF- α) and GDNF, inhibits methamphetamine (METH)-induced sensitization and rewarding effects by negating the METH-induced inhibition of dopamine (DA) uptake as well as attenuating the METH-induced increase in extracellular DA levels in the NAc via the induction of TNF- α and GDNF expression [15]. Moreover, we have demonstrated that Leu-Ile inhibits MOR-induced sensitization and rewarding effects by regulating extracellular DA levels via the induction of TNF- α expression [14].

In the present study, to extend our findings, we examined the involvement of GDNF in addition to TNF- α in inhibitory effects of Leu-Ile on MOR-induced sensitization and rewarding effects.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Reagents

GDNF as a standard for the enzyme immunoassay (EIA) was donated by Amgen (CA, USA). Leu-Ile was purchased from Kokusan Chemical Co., Ltd. (Tokyo, Japan). All other materials used were of reagent grade.

2.2. Animals

Animals were housed in plastic cages and kept in a temperature-, humidity-, and light-controlled room ($23 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$; $50 \pm 5\%$ humidity; 12:12 h light/dark cycle starting at 8:00 a.m.) and had free access to food and water, except during behavioral experiments. All animals' care and use were in accordance with the National Institutes of Health Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of Nagoya University School of Medicine. Animals were treated according to the Guidelines of Experimental Animal Care issued from the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan.

The wild-type C57BL/6J mice were obtained from Slc Japan (Hamamatsu, Japan).

Male C57BL/6J-GDNF heterozygous knockout (GDNF- $+/-$) mice, 8–12 weeks of age, were used in the experiments. GDNF- $+/-$ were generated as described previously [17]. GDNF- $-/-$ homozygous knockout mice die shortly after birth (postnatal 7 days), but GDNF- $+/-$ mice are viable. GDNF levels in the frontal cortex, NAc, caudate putamen, and hippocampus of GDNF- $+/-$ mice are 54.8, 65.4, 59.0, and 66.8%, respectively, of those in littermate GDNF- $+/+$ mice [15]. Littermate GDNF- $+/+$ mice were used as controls in the behavioral experiments.

2.3. Locomotor activity

Locomotor activity was measured using an infrared detector (Neuroscience Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) in a plastic box (32 cm \times 22 cm \times 15 cm high) [11,14]. Mice were administered Leu-Ile (1.5 and 15 $\mu\text{mol/kg}$, i.p.) or vehicle, and habituated for 1 h in the box. Mice were administered MOR (10 mg/kg, s.c.) or saline 1 h after the Leu-Ile administration, and the locomotor activity was measured for 2 h immediately after the MOR or saline administration [14]. Leu-Ile and MOR were injected once a day for 9 days.

2.4. Enzyme immunoassay

GDNF levels were measured using an EIA with a minor modification [13]. Mice were administered Leu-Ile (1.5 and 15 $\mu\text{mol/kg}$, i.p.) once a day 1 h before

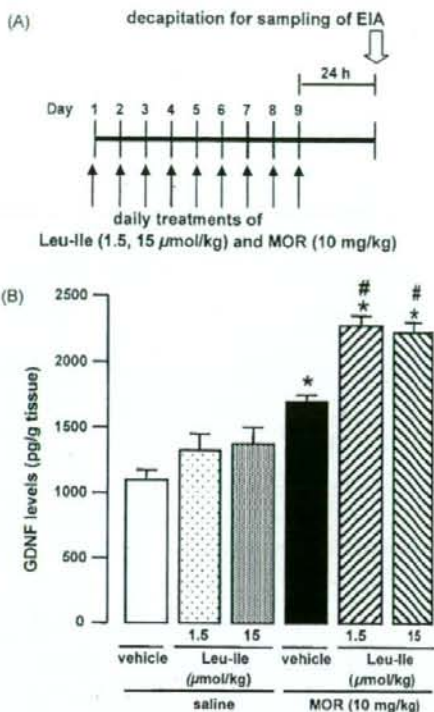


Fig. 1. Effect of Leu-Ile on morphine (MOR)-induced increase in glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF) levels. (A) Experimental schedule for measurement of GDNF levels using the enzyme immunoassay (EIA) method. Mice were treated with Leu-Ile (1.5 and 15 $\mu\text{mol/kg}$, i.p.) or vehicle 1 h before MOR (10 mg/kg, s.c.) or saline once a day for 9 days and decapitated 24 h after the last MOR or saline administration. (B) Change of GDNF levels in the nucleus accumbens after the administration of Leu-Ile and/or MOR. Values are mean \pm S.E. ($n=6-8$). * $p<0.05$ vs. vehicle/saline-treated mice. # $p<0.05$ vs. vehicle/MOR-treated mice.

MOR (10 mg/kg, s.c.) treatment for 9 days and decapitated 24 h after the last administration of MOR (Fig. 1A). Homogenate buffer (0.1 M Tris-HCl [pH 7.4] containing 1 M NaCl, 2% bovine serum albumin, 2 mM EDTA, and 0.2% Na_3N) was added to brain tissue at a ratio of 1 g wet weight per 19 ml of buffer, pulse-sonicated for 100 s, and centrifuged at $100,000 \times g$ for 30 min. The supernatant was collected and used for the EIA.

2.5. Conditioned place preference

The apparatus used for the place conditioning task consisted of two compartments: a transparent Plexiglas box and a black Plexiglas box (both 15 cm \times 15 cm \times 15 cm high). To enable mice to distinguish easily the two compartments, the floors of the transparent and black boxes were covered with white plastic mesh and black frosting Plexiglas, respectively. Each box could be divided by a sliding door (10 cm \times 15 cm high). The place conditioning paradigm was performed by using a previously established procedure [14,16]. The experimental schedule for the conditioned place preference (CPP) task is shown in Fig. 2A. In the pre-conditioning test, the sliding door was opened, and the mouse was allowed to move freely between both boxes for 15 min once a day for 3 days. On the third day of the pre-conditioning test, we measured the time that the mouse spent in the black and transparent boxes by using a Scanet SV-20 LD (Melquest Co., Ltd., Toyama, Japan). The box in which the mouse spent the most time was referred to as the "preferred side", and the other box as the "non-preferred side". Conditioning was performed during six successive days.