Ross et al., 2006). 統合失調症や気分障害などの精 神疾患は、神経発生・発達過程における環境的要 因(母体のウィルス感染などの物理化学的因子と 養育環境などの心理社会的因子の双方) と生得的 に持っていた脆弱性因子(遺伝的要因)が相互に 作用して発症に至ると考えられている (Bayer et al., 1999; Belmaker, 2004; Freedman, 2003; Maynard et al., 2001; McCarley et al., 1999). すなわち, 胎生 期・周産期・生後発達期において遺伝要因を含め た何らかの原因による脳発達障害により精神障 害に対する脆弱性が形成され, 思春期以降におけ る薬物摂取や社会的なストレスにより精神疾患 を発症するもので、2回打撃仮説(two-hit 仮説) と呼ばれる. したがって、神経発生・発達過程に おける多様な環境的要因は当事者にとって環境 の悪影響を受けた時点の問題に止まらず、それに よって惹起される神経発達障害が精神疾患の発 症の危険性を高め、ひいては当事者の長い人生を 左右する可能性がある.近年,社会問題になって いる幼少児に対する親の教育放棄や家庭内暴力 および教師や同級生によるいじめ,薬物乱用の低 学年化などは、精神疾患の発症に関与している神 経発生・発達過程における環境的要因として考え られている (Heim et al., 2008). 本研究では, 実験 動物の神経発生・発達過程に、環境的要因として の化学物質(免疫異常発現薬・精神異常発現薬) や慢性社会ストレスを単独もしくは複合的に負 荷し、その後に惹起される情動・認知障害につい て検討した.

B. 研究方法

1. 実験動物

実験には、3週齢の C57BL/6J 系雄性マウス (日本 エスエルシー株式会社、静岡)、4~12 週齢の ICR 系雄性マウス (日本エスエルシー株式会社) およ び野生型である C57BL/6J 系妊娠マウス (日本エ スエルシー株式会社) を使用した. 動物は実験を 開始する前少なくとも 3 日間は,室温 23±1℃,湿度 50±5%で,12 時間/12 時間の明暗サイクル (明期 9 時~21 時)の室内にて飼育し,水および餌(CE2;日本クレア株式会社,東京)は自由に摂取させた.

なお,本実験計画は名古屋大学医学部動物実験委員会で承認され,名古屋大学医学部動物実験指針および Principles of Laboratory Animal Care (National Institutes of Health Publication 85-23, 1985) に準じて行った.

2. 薬物

実験には、N-methyl-D-asparate(NMDA)受容体の非競合的拮抗薬であるフェンシクリジン塩酸塩 (phencyclidine hydrochloride; PCP) を使用した.PCP は Maddox ら(1965)の方法にしたがって名城大学薬学部 名誉教授 古川 宏先生および薬品作用学教室 鍋島俊隆教授が合成した.免疫系を活性化する Toll-like receptor 3 のリガンドである合成二本鎖 RNA アナログであるpolyriboinosinic-polyribocytidylic acid (Poly I:C, SIGMA 社、米国)を使用した.

3. 実験装置および実験手順

3.1. 慢性社会ストレス負荷マウスの行動解析

3.1.1. 慢性社会ストレス試験の実験装置

社会性行動試験には、オープンフィールド($42 \times 42 \times 30$ cm)の端に透明アクリル樹脂製のボックス(標的マウス区域: $10 \times 6.5 \times 30$ cm,直径 1 cmの数個の空気穴を有する)が設置された装置を使用した。

3.1.2. 慢性社会ストレス試験の実験手順

慢性社会ストレス負荷は Berton ら (2006) の方法 に若干の変更を加えて行った. すなわち, $4\sim12$ 週齢の ICR 系雄性マウスの中で C57BL/6J 系雄性 マウスに対して 10 分間に 1 分以上攻撃性を示す マウスを攻撃居住マウス, 1 分未満しか攻撃性を

示さないマウスを非攻撃居住マウスとして選別した. 発達段階である 3 週齢の C57BL/6J 系雄性マウスを侵入マウスとして, 1 匹ずつ攻撃居住マウスの飼育ケージに入れ, 1日 10 分間, 連続して10日間物理的に接触させた(ストレス負荷: stress群). 対照群(control 群)は、侵入マウスを非攻撃居住マウスの飼育ケージに1日 10 分間, 連続して10日間入れた. なお、侵入マウスは毎日異なる居住マウスの飼育ケージに入れた.

社会性行動試験は、第1セッションと第2セッションからなり、第1セッションでは、実験装置に設置された標的マウス区域内に標的マウスを存在させず、侵入マウスを30分間自由に探索させ、侵入マウスの探索行動を録画した。第1セッション終了後、直ちに侵入マウスを飼育ケージに戻し、1分後に第2セッションを行った。第2セッションでは、再び侵入マウスを標的マウス区域に標的マウスを存在させた装置に入れ、5分間自由に探索させ、侵入マウスの探索行動を録画した。なお、社会性行動試験での標的マウスには、侵入マウスがこれまでに一度も接触したことがないICR系雄性マウスを用い、覚醒下あるいは非覚醒下[ペントバルビタールナトリウム投与(50 mg/kg i.p.)による麻酔化]で試験を行った。

録画したデータから、各セッションでの交流区域における滞在時間および第1セッションにおける装置内の総移動距離を Etho Vision XT (Noldus Information Technology, Wageningen, Netherlands)を用いて解析した。なお、第1セッションでは測定開始してから $25\sim30$ 分の5分間を解析した。Control 群および stress 群においては、居住マウスと 10 日間接触させた 1 (第1回目)、8 (第2回目) および 15 (第3回目)日後に社会性行動試験を行った。

3.1.3. 薬物投与

生理食塩水 (0.1 mL/10 g body weight/day s.c.) あるいは PCP (10 mg/kg/day s.c.) の投与は、第1回

目の社会性行動試験終了後、直ちに開始し、7 日 間連続投与した。

3.1.4. ニッスル染色

海馬における神経細胞の形態学的変化を調べるため、慢性社会ストレス負荷の翌日に灌流固定を行い、脳を摘出した。その後、20 μ m の厚さで切片を作製し、定法にしたがってニッスル染色を行った。

3.2. PolyI:C 処置マウスの行動解析

3.2.1. 薬物投与

PCP および Poly I:C は生理食塩水に溶解し、10 mL/kg の投与用量に調整した. 妊娠マウスの出産2 日後から、その新生仔マウスに生理食塩水あるいは Poly I:C 5 mg/kg を 5 日間投与した群をそれぞれ saline 群あるいは Poly I:C 群とした。Saline 群の4 週齢から PCP 10 mg/kg を 14 日間 (saline/PCP群)、あるいは Poly I:C 群の5 週齢から PCP 10 mg/kg を 7 日間 (Poly I:C/PCP群) それぞれ投与した.

3.2.2. 運動量測定試験

PCP 投与直後に側面が透明,床面が黒色つや消しで構成されたアクリルケース (45×26×40 cm) にマウスを入れ,120 分間の自発運動量を Scanet SV-10 (ブレインサイエンス・イデア社,大阪) により測定した.

3.2.3. 断崖回避試験

マウスを逆さにした 500ml ビーカービーカーの上 に置き, マウスがジャンピングするまでの時間 (jumping latency) を最大時間 5 分間とし, 測定 した.

3.2.4. 社会性行動試験

マウスを灰色のアクリル製ボックス (25×25×30 cm) の装置に馴化させるため,2 日間はマウスを1 匹ずつ装置に入れ,10 分間自由に探索させた.3 日目にマウスを異なるケージ内で飼育していた C57BL/6J マウス (6 週齢) と同時に装置中央に入

れ,その直後から 10 分間,社会性行動としてマウスが未知のC57BL/6Jマウスに対して嗅ぐ行動,追いかける行動,上に乗りかかる行動,下に潜ろうとする行動のいずれかを示している時間を測定した.

3.2.5. 新奇物体認識試験

マウスを open-field box (40×40×29 high cm) に入れ,10 分間の馴化を 3 日間行った. 馴化 3 日目の翌日に,2 種類の異なった object を box 内に離して置き,マウスを入れ,各 object に対する探索嗜好行動を 10 分間測定した (訓練試行). 訓練試行の24 時間後に,2 種類の object のうち片方の object を全く異なった新奇 object と置換し,各 object に対する探索嗜好行動を 10 分間測定した (テスト試行). それぞれの object に対する探索嗜好行動の割合を,object へのアプローチ時間より算出した.

4. 統計学的解析

得られた結果は全て平均値±標準誤差として示した.統計学的解析には,一元配置分散分析あるいは繰り返しのある二元配置分散分析を用い,各群間の比較には Bonferroni の多重比較検定を行った.また,2 群間の比較の場合には,"対応のある"あるいは"対応がない"Student のt 検定を用いた.全ての統計解析において有意水準を 5%と設定し,危険率 5%未満の場合を有意差ありと判定した.

C. 研究結果

1. 慢性社会ストレス負荷マウスの行動解析

対照群(control 群)および慢性社会ストレス負荷マウス(stress 群)における 1 日あたりの平均攻撃負荷時間を図1に示した。Control 群および stress 群の 1 日あたりの平均攻撃負荷時間はそれぞれ 1.4 ± 0.3 および 111.5 ± 3.0 秒であり、 stress 群における平均攻撃負荷時間は有意に長かった。

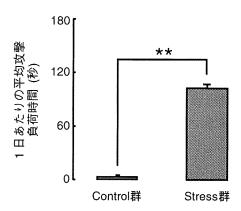


図 1. 対照マウス (control 群) および慢性社会ストレス負荷マウス (stress 群) における 1 日あたりの平均攻撃負荷時間。グラフは平均±標準誤差で示した (control 群: n=17、 stress 群: n=13)。**p<0.01 vs control 群 (対応のない t 検定)。

いずれの群においても第1セッションの交流区域 滞在時間には,有意な差は認められなかった(図 2). 図 2A に示したように, 第1回目の社会性行 動試験において、control 群の第2セッションにお ける交流区域滞在時間は、第1セッションのそれ と比較して有意に延長し,標的マウスに対して社 会性行動を示した. しかし、stress 群の第2セッ ションにおいて, 交流区域滞在時間は、標的マウ スが存在しているにもかかわらず、第1セッショ ンのそれと比較して有意に延長せず, control 群の それと比較して有意に短縮していた. 非覚醒下 (麻酔下)の標的マウスを用いた場合では、stress 群においても, 第1セッションのそれと比較して 有意に延長した(図 2B). 同様の現象は、居住マ ウスと 10 日間接触させた 8 (第 2 回目) および 15 (第3回目)日後にも認められた (データ示さ ず). また、stress 群では、標的マウス非存在下と 比較して存在下では、隅部滞在時間の有意な延長 も認められた (データ示さず).

Control 群および stress 群に精神異常発現薬である 非競合的 NMDA 受容体拮抗薬の PCP を連続投与 し、慢性社会ストレス負荷マウスの社会性行動へ の影響を検討した。第1回目の社会性行動試験終 了後、直ちに control 群および stress 群に生理食塩 水あるいは PCP(10 mg/kg/day s.c.)を 7 日間連続 投与し、最終投与の 1 日後 [居住マウスと接触させた最終日から 8(第 2 回目)日後] に社会性行動試験を行った.図 2C に示したように、第 1 セッションの交流区域滞在時間は、いずれの群においても有意な差は認められなかった.Saline/control 群における第 2 セッションの交流区域滞在時間は、第 1 セッションのそれと比較して有意に延長し、社会性行動が認められた.生理食塩水を投与した stress 群(saline/stress 群)における第 2 セッションの交流区域滞在時間は、saline/control 群のそれと比較して有意に短く、社会性行動の障害が認められた。Stress 群に PCP(10 mg/kg/day s.c.)を 7 日間連続投与したところ、PCP/stress 群における第2セッションの交流区域滞在時間は、PCP/control 群のそれに比べて有意に減少し、社会性行動の障害が増悪された。

2. 神経細胞の形態学的変化

Stress群の海馬における神経細胞は, control群のそれと比べて形態学的変化は観察されなかった(図3).

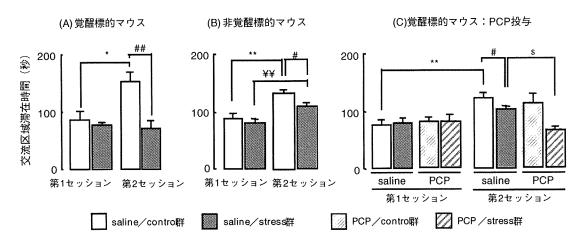


図 2. 対照マウスおよび慢性社会ストレス負荷マウスにおける社会性行動。(A) 覚醒標的マウス存在下における社会性行動(saline/control 群: n=13、saline/stress 群: n=17)。(B) 非覚醒(麻酔)標的マウス存在下における社会性行動(saline/control 群: n=14、saline/stress 群: n=14)。(C) フェンシクリジン(PCP)連続投与した対照群および慢性社会ストレス負荷マウスにおける社会性行動(saline/control 群: n=6、saline/stress 群: n=8、PCP/control 群: n=6、PCP/stress 群: n=8)。グラフは平均士標準誤差で示した。*p<0.05、**p<0.01 vs 第 1 セッションの saline/control 群 (対応のない t 検定)、*p<0.05、**p<0.05 vs 第 2 セッションの saline/stress 群 (対応のない t 校定)。*p<0.05 vs 第 2 セッションの saline/stress 群 (対応のない

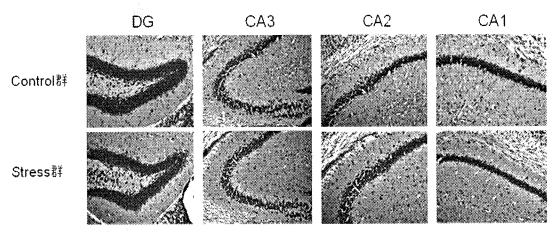


図 3. 対照マウス(control 群)および慢性社会ストレス負荷マウス(stress 群)の海馬における神経細胞の形態 学的変化(ニッスル染色)。DG:歯状回、CA3:CA3 錐体細胞、CA2:CA2 錐体細胞、CA1:CA1 錐体細胞。

3. PolyI:C 処置マウスの行動解析

2.1. 新生仔期 PolyI:C 処置マウスにおける PCP 連続投与による運動過多への影響

Saline 群に PCP(10 mg/kg)を急性投与すると、運動量が増加した(図 4A)。さらに saline 群の 4 および 5 週齢から PCP 10 mg/kg を 14 および 7 日間それぞれ投与すると、運動過多の増強(行動感作)が認められた(図 4A).新生仔期に Poly I:Cを投与しておくと(Poly I:C 群)、PCP 急性投与による運動過多の増強および PCP 連続投与による行動感作は増強された(図 4B).

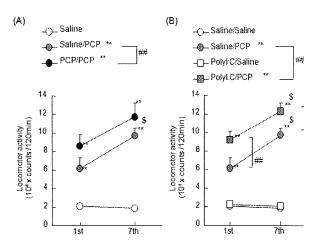


図4. 新生仔期PolyI:C処置マウスにおけるPCP連続投与による運動過多への影響。幼若期に生理食塩水(A)あるいはPolyI:C(B)を処置したマウス。*p<0.05, **p<0.01 vs saline/saline群、##p<0.01 vs saline/PCP群、*p<0.05 vs 第1回目(*11)処置群。

2.2. 新生仔期 PolyI:C 処置マウスにおける PCP 連続投与による衝動性の増加への影響

Saline群にPCP(10 mg/kg)を7日間連続投与しても衝動性の増加は認められなかったが、14日間連続投与すると衝動性の増加が認められた(図5A). Poly I:C群にPCPを7日間連続投与すると、saline群にPCPを14日間連続投与した場合と同程度の衝動性の増加が認められた(図5B).

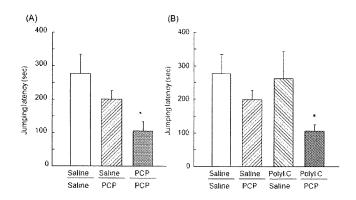


図5. 新生仔期PolyI:C処置マウスにおけるPCP連続投与による衝動性の増加への影響。幼若期に生理食塩水(A)あるいはPolyI:C(B)を処置したマウス。*p< 0.05 vs saline/saline群。

2.3. 新生仔期 PolyI:C 処置マウスにおける PCP 連続投与による社会性行動の低下への影響

Saline群にPCP(10 mg/kg)を7日間連続投与しても社会性行動の低下は認められなかったが,14日間連続投与すると社会性行動の低下が認められた(図6A). Poly I:C群にPCPを7日間連続投与すると, saline群にPCPを14日間連続投与した場合と同程度の社会性行動の低下が認められた(図6B).

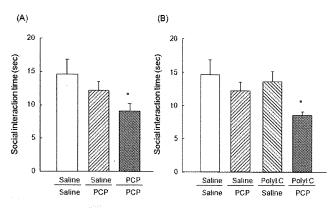


図6. 新生仔期PolyI:C処置マウスにおけるPCP連続投与による社会性行動の低下への影響。幼若期に生理食塩水(A)あるいはPolyI:C(B)を処置したマウス。*p < 0.05 vs saline/saline群。

2.4. P新生仔期 PolyI:C 処置マウスにおける PCP 連続投与による物体認知記憶の障害への影響

Saline群にPCP(10 mg/kg)を14日間連続投与すると物体認知記憶の障害が認められた(図7A). Poly

I:C群にPCPを7日間連続投与すると, saline群に PCPを14日間連続投与した場合と同程度の物体認 知記憶の障害が認められた(図7C).

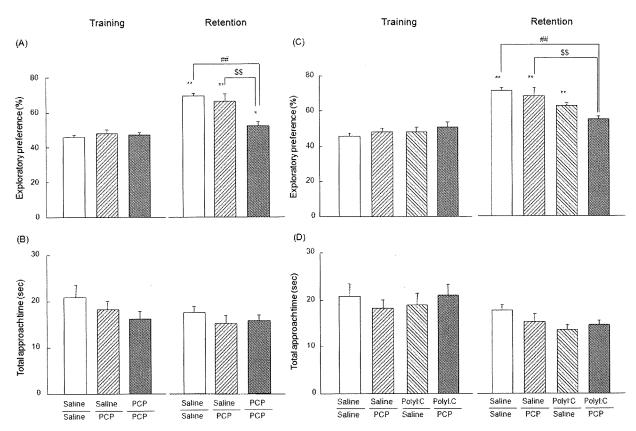


図7. 新生仔期PolyI:C処置マウスにおけるPCP連続投与による物体認知記憶の障害への影響。幼若期に生理食塩水(A, B) あるいはPolyI:C(C, D) を処置したマウス。Exploratory preference (A, C)。Total exploration time (B, D)。*p<0.05, **p<0.01 vs 訓練試行、##p<0.01, #p<0.05 vs saline/saline群、\$\$p<0.01, vs saline/PCP群。

D. 考察

社会ストレス負荷モデル動物は,種内闘争を利用し,被験動物に繰り返し攻撃を受けさせ作製される。本モデル動物では攻撃を受けた後に不安・抑うつ様症状の発現(Avgustinovich et al., 2005)や社会性行動の障害(Berton et al., 2006)など,様々な精神行動障害が認められる(Buwalda et al., 2005)。本研究において神経発生・発達過程にある離乳後の幼若期のマウスに慢性社会ストレスを負荷し,成熟期に達した時に精神行動障害が認められるかどうか,社会性行動試験を用いて検討した。その結果,stress 群において社会性行動が

障害されており、最終ストレス負荷 15 日後においても認められた.これらの結果は、Berton ら(2006)が報告している最終ストレス負荷 28 日後まで社会性行動が障害されることと一致していた.しかし、標的マウスに麻酔薬を処置(非覚醒下)して社会性行動を検討したところ、stress群は標的マウスに対して社会性行動を示した.以前に我々は、過去に接触したことがある標的マウスを用いた場合の control 群および stress 群における社会性行動を検討したところ、control 群および stress 群は、標的マウスに対して社会性行動を示さなかった.これらの結果を考え合わせると、被

験マウスは標的マウスと過去に接触したことがあるかどうか、標的マウスがどのような状態にあるのかを認識できるものと推察される.以上の結果から、stress 群に認められる社会性行動の障害は、神経発生・発達過程のマウスに慢性社会ストレスを負荷したことによる神経発生・発達過程において高次精神機能が異常となり、持続的に社会性行動が障害されたものと示唆される.また、社会性行動の障害には覚醒下の標的マウスが必要であるものと思われる.しかし、慢性社会ストレス負荷マウスの海馬における神経細胞の形態学的変化は観察されなかったことから、今後は、神経新生について検討していく予定である.

一方,1970年代に米国において乱用されていた PCP は、薬物依存者に精神症状 (PCP 精神病) を 惹起すること(Javitt and Zukin, 1991)から,統合 失調症には NMDA 受容体機能の低下が関係して いるという「グルタミン酸低下仮説 (NMDA 受容 体機能低下仮説)」が提唱されている. PCP 連続 投与は、休薬後も陽性症状に類似した行動変化と して自発運動量の増加(Nagai et al., 2003),陰性 症状の指標となる行動変化として社会性行動試 験における社会性行動の低下 (Qiao et al., 2001) および強制水泳試験における無動状態の増強 (Murai et al., 2007) を示す. また, 認知障害の指 標となる行動変化として, 水探索試験における潜 在学習障害 (Mouri et al., 2007) および新奇物体認 識試験における物体認知障害(Nagai et al., 2009) が知られている. そこで, 成熟期以降に control 群および stress 群に PCP を連続投与し、神経発 生・発達過程における慢性社会ストレス負荷マウ スの社会性行動への影響を検討した. PCP/stress 群では、saline/stress 群に比べて社会性行動の障 害が増悪していた. これらの結果から, stress 群 に認められる社会性行動の障害には、グルタミン 酸作動性神経系が関与している可能性が示唆さ れるが、さらに詳細に検討する必要がある.

統合失調症患者では海馬の体積減少、側脳室の拡 大が認められること, 死後脳においてグリオーシ スが認められないこと, さらにほとんどが思春期 以降に発症することから, 統合失調症の病態およ び脳内の構造変化は発達過程や成熟時期を規定 する因子の異常が関与すると考えられており (Ashe et al., 2001), この神経発達障害仮説に基づ いたモデル動物の作製がなされている. 統合失調 症の発症には、胎生中期のインフルエンザ流行な どの初期要因が疫学的に関連していることが報 告されている (Brown, 2006). 合成二本鎖 RNA ア ナログである Poly I:C を妊娠マウスに投与すると, 母胎の免疫系が賦活化されこの母体から生まれ たマウスは,成熟期以降,覚せい剤誘発運動量の 増加(Ozawa et al., 2006), プレパルス・インヒビ ション (PPI) 試験での情報処理障害 (Ozawa et al., 2006), レイテント・インヒビション試験での注 意力障害 (Zuckerman et al., 2003), モリス水迷路 試験での作業記憶障害 (Meyer et al., 2005), 新奇 物体認識試験における認知障害 (Ozawa et al., 2006) など統合失調症に類似した行動異常を示す. また、ヒトの妊娠中期に当たるマウスの出生2日 後から5日間にPoly I:Cを投与すると、新奇物体 認識試験における認知障害,PPI 試験での情報処 理障害や社会性行動の低下が認められる (Ibi et al., 2009). そこで本研究では、two-hit 仮説に基づき 新生仔期の PolyI:C 投与が若年期の PCP 連続投与 による精神障害の発症脆弱性を高めるかどうか について検討を行った. PCP 連続投与による運動 量増加/行動感作, 衝動性の増加, 社会性行動の低 下および物体認知記憶の障害は PCP 投与期間に 依存して認められた. 一方,新生仔期 PolyI:C 処 置は若年期の PCP 連続投与によるこれら行動変 化を増強した. 本研究の結果から発達期における 免疫異常も成体期まで遷延する影響を与えるこ とが示唆された.

E. 結論

本研究において,精神疾患の発症に関与する 発達期の環境的要因が高次精神機能へ与える 影響について検討した.今後,さらに詳細な 形態学的,免疫組織化学的および神経化学的 な解析を行い,環境的要因による脳機能の変 化に関与する脆弱性因子を探索・同定し,精 神疾患の発症機序や病態生理の解明および病 態生理に基づいた治療法や予防法の開発につ なげたい.

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F. 健康危険情報

なし

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- H 知的財産権の出願・登録状況
- 1. 特許取得

なし

2. 実用新案登録

なし

3.その他

なし

Evaluation of cognitive and emotional behaviors in offspring of C57BL/6J mice after pre-/peri-natal exposure of nicotine on six different time-windows

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Abstract

Tobacco smoking during pregnancy has significant adverse impact on the overall mental quality of offspring. As an aid to smoking cessation during pregnancy, various nicotine replacement treatments are being alternatively applied. However, the effects of nicotine exposure at the prenatal stage on the cognitive and emotional behaviors in offspring are not well understood due to the lack of systematic investigations. The current study has therefore aimed to initially evaluate cognitive and emotional behaviors in mice offspring which experienced pre-/peri-natal nicotine exposure (PNE) in different time-windows. Pregnant C57BL/6J mice were exposed to nicotine via sweetened (2% sucrose) drinking water during 6 different time windows including gestational day1 to day 13 (GD1-GD13), GD14-P0, G1-P0 GD14-postnatal day 7 (P7), GD1-P7, and P0-P7. During P28-P56 days, both male and female offspring were given a battery of behavioral tests in following order: light/dark box test, novelty-suppressed feeding test, marble burying behavior test, sociality test, social novelty preference test, social avoidance tube test, one-trial delayed alternation in T-maze test, object-based attention test, Y-maze test, novel object recognition test, elevated plus maze test, and prepulse inhibition test. PNE during all time-windows induced different types of attention deficits in offspring. PNE during GD1-P7, GD1-P0, GD14-P0, and GD14-P7 induced anxiety related behaviors in offspring. During GD14-P0, PNE exerted the strongest effects on the observed behaviors in offspring. Neither prenatal anti-oxidant treatment nor postnatal cross-fostering ameliorated the behavioral abnormalities induced by PNE during GD14-P0. Results indicated that PNE at any time windows of pregnancy impairs, irreversibly, emotional and cognitive behaviors in offspring. These findings urge further considerations for nicotine exposure during any periods of pregnancy.

1. Introduction

The harmful effects of tobacco on prenatal development of human brain are becoming an increasingly important public health issue, due to the resultant cognitive and emotional abnormalities that disturb the whole life of offspring and add to the burden of society. Clinical investigations report that offspring of women who smoke during pregnancy suffer from neurobehavioral impairments, such as persistent anxiety, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities, and cognitive dysfunction. The main component of tobacco is nicotine which can be transferred through the placenta and interacts with functional nicotinic acetylcholine receptors (nAChRs) in the fetus. Nicotine, among the myriad inhaled ingredients in tobacco smoke, is thought as the main disruptor of the development of fetal brain. Reports from animal models indicate that prenatal exposure to nicotine (PNE) compromises development of critical neural pathways in the developing brain and leads to the neurobehavioral and functional impairments which are noted in the offspring of women who smoke during pregnancy.

The vulnerability of the developing brain to the disruption of nicotine is due to its binding and abnormal regulating the function of nAChRs. The nAChRs act as critical differentiation signal transducers during nervous system development and regulate critical aspects of brain maturation during the prenatal, early postnatal, and adolescent periods. During these developmental windows, nAChRs regulates differentiation and synaptogenesis in the neural structures by transient up-regulation or by changing its subunit composition. The dynamic roles of nAChRs in neurodevelopment are consistently driven by acetylcholine, the endogenous neurotransmitter. Nicotine exposure during certain time-windows of neurodevelopment either exaggerates, via receptor sensitization, or disrupts, via receptor desensitization, the regulatory role of nAChRs and affects the normal functions of the developing structures of the brain. Further, through nAChRs, nicotine disrupts the timing and intensity of critical neurotransmitter signals that emerging as necessary to ensure the proper development of numerous neural circuits and pathways. Accordingly, pharmacological studies selected various time-windows of gestation of mice or rats or monkeys to examine the effects of nicotine exposure on the neurochemistry or on the cognitive and emotional behavior of offspring. Rats and mice that experienced PNE show behavioral abnormalities including increased anxiety, persistent neurochemical alterations in specific neural pathways, and altered patterns of neural cell survival and synaptogenesis. These findings firmly deepen our knowledge about the adverse effects of PNE. Nevertheless, to be able to provide pharmacological targets for therapeutic interventions, we are urged to conduct systematic studies with consistent time-window, identical route, and fixed dose of nicotine to relate PNE-induced neurochemical changes in the brain of offspring to the consequential abnormalities in behavior. Therefore, in this study with a focus on behavior, we have examined the effects of PNE during six different time-windows on the emotional and cognitive abnormalities in mice offspring to select the most vulnerable time-window for the neurochemical study. We have also then tried to answer whether maternal nicotine withdrawal or nicotine-induced fetal cerebral oxidative stress is involved in these abnormal behaviors induced by PNE in offspring.

2. Methods

2. 1. Animals and drug treatment

Male and female C57BL/6J mice (Japan SLC Inc., Shizuoka, Japan) were used. Mice were mated in the laboratory or were delivered on prenatal day 13 (P13). The animals were housed in plastic cages and were kept in a regulated environment (25-1°C, 50-5% humidity), with a 12-h light/dark cycle (lights on at 08:00 AM, off at 8:00 PM). Food (CE2; Clea Japan Inc., Tokyo, Japan) and tap water were available ad libitum. Dams were prenatally exposed to 2% sucrose sweetened water or 2% sucrose solution plus 0.2mg/ml nicotine during the time frames that are indicated in Figure 1. Since Average daily intake of water is 5ml, Vitamin C is solved in the drinking water (2% sucrose solution plus 0.02mg/ml nicotine) at 0.2 mg/ml concentration. All experiments were performed in accordance with the Guidelines for Animal Experiments of Meijo University Graduate School of Pharmacy. The procedures involving animals and their care conformed to Guidelines for Proper Conduct of Animal Experiments (Science Council of Japan, 2006).

2. 2. Behavioral investigations

To avoid stress-interference, the behavioral investigations were conducted from less stressful task to more stressful task as the following order: light and dark box test,

novelty-suppressed feeding test, marble burying behavior test, sociability test, social novelty preference test, social avoidance tube test, T-maze spatial attention test, object-based attention test, Y-maze test, novel object recognition test, elevated plus maze test, and pre-pulse inhibition test.

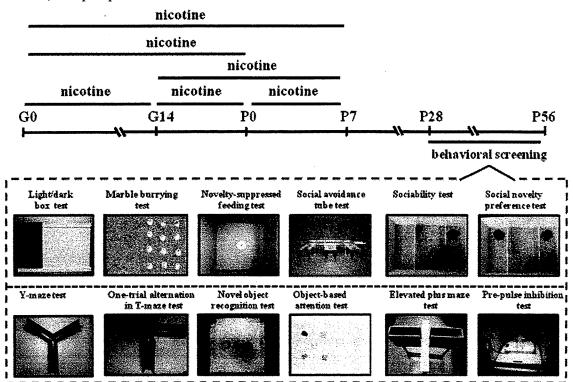


Figure 1. Experimental schedule

Light and Dark box

Anxiety in mice was tested in the light and dark box. At the beginning of the test, each mouse was placed in an apparatus consisting of two opaque Plexiglas boxes of the dark (15cm long, 27cm broad, 30cm high) and the light (30cm long, 27cm broad, 30cm high). Light box was illuminated by a 100 W desk lamp through a transparent Plexiglas cover. Animals cross from one compartment into the other through a small opening between them. Each mouse was placed in the illuminated compartment and observed for 5 min after the first entry into the dark compartment. A mouse whose four paws were in the other box was considered to have changed compartments. The time spent in the dark box and the number of transitions between the light and dark boxes was analyzed as behavioral variables.

Marble-burying behavior test

One day prior to the testing, mice were housed in clear plastic cages ($26 \times 21 \times 15$ cm) with a tick layer (3cm) of sawdust. On the testing day, 12 glass marbles (1.5 cm in diameter) were evenly spaced on flattened sawdust on the one half of the cage in the presence of the mouse. During the test, clear plexiglas covers were placed over the cage without blocking airing. The marble burying activity was measured in dim light. The results of marble burying behavior were expressed as the number of marbles buried at least two-thirds deep in this paradigm within 15 min.

Novelty-suppressed feeding test

Mice were weighed and food was removed from their cage. Twenty four hour after

the removal of food, mice were transferred to the testing room, allowed to habituate for at least 30 min. The testing apparatus consisted of an opaque Plexiglas enclosure ($40 \times 40 \times 40$ cm). The floor was covered with 2 cm of sawdust bedding. A small piece of mouse chow was placed in the center of the arena on a piece of white circular filter paper (diameter: 9 cm). At the start of the experiment, each mouse was placed in the corner of the testing area, and the time to the first feeding event was recorded. Immediately after the mouse began to eat, the subject was removed and placed alone for 5 min in its original home cage with a pre-weighed piece of lab chow. At the end of the 5-min period, the amount of food consumed was determined.

Sociability and social novelty preference tests

The social testing apparatus is a rectangular, three-chambered opaque plexiglas boxes (each box is 20cm long, 40.5cm wide, 22cm high). Dividing walls were made from clear plexiglas, with small circular openings (3.5cm in diameter) allowing access into each chamber. The chambers of the social apparatus were cleaned and fresh paper chip bedding was added between trials. The test mouse was first placed in the middle chamber and allowed to explore for five minutes. The doorways into the two side chambers were obstructed by plastic boxes during this habituation phase. After the habituation period, an unfamiliar C57BL/6J with the same sex (stranger 1) and had no prior contact with the subject mice, was placed in one of the side boxes. The mouse serving as stranger had previously been habituated to placement in the small cage. The location of stranger 1 in the left versus right side chamber was systematically alternated between trials. The stranger mouse was enclosed in a small, round wire cage, which allowed nose contact between the bars, but prevented fighting. The cage was 10 cm in height, with a bottom diameter of 10.5 cm and bars spaced 1cm apart. A weighted cup was placed on the top of the cage to prevent climbing by the test mice. Both doors to the side chambers were then unblocked and the subject was allowed to explore the entire social test box for a 10-minute session. The time spent in each box and the numbers of entries into each box were recorded, by a human observer seated five feet from the apparatus, to measure the sociability. An entry was defined as all four paws in one box. At the end of the first 10 minutes, each mouse was tested in a second 10-minute session to measure social preference for a new stranger. A second, unfamiliar mouse was placed in the box that had been empty during the first 10-minute session. This second stranger was also enclosed in an identical small wire cage. The test mouse had a choice between the first, already-explored unfamiliar mouse (stranger 1), and the novel unfamiliar mouse (stranger 2). As described above, the time spent in each box and the numbers of entries into each box were recorded to measure the preference for social novelty.

Social avoidance tube test

The tube is 30 cm long \times 3.5 cm diameter, built with clear Plexiglas material. The tube is divided in to 3 areas, namely, two entry areas at the left and right ends of the tube and one neutral area between the entries. Each individual tube section is 13 cm long and the gates at the end of each section prevent the high speed reaching of one mouse to other. The test starts with two mice of the same gender placed at opposite ends of the tube. Both mice begin to explore in a forward direction. At this stage the gates in the proximity of the neutral area located in the middle of the tube are removed, allowing the two mice to approach each other. For each trial we identified an approacher (scores one point) and a shunner (scores zero point). The shunner generally escapes the tube when the approacher moves forward. In some cases neither mouse was approacher

and shunner, and both mice were considered equivalent (no scores).

Elevated plus-maze test

The elevated plus-maze consisted of two open (25×8×0.5 cm) and two closed arms (25×8×20 cm) emanating from a common central platform (8×8 cm) to form a plus shape. The entire apparatus was elevated to a height of 50 cm above floor level. Testing commenced by placing a mouse on the central platform of the maze facing an open arm, and standard 5-min test duration was employed. Conventional parameters consisted of the numbers of open and closed arm entries and the time spent the open arms.

Y-maze test

The Y-maze apparatus consisted of black-painted plywood. Each arm of the Y-maze was 50 cm long, 12 cm high and 4 cm wide and positioned at an equal angle. Each mouse was placed at the cross points of arms and allowed to move freely through the maze for an 8-min session. The sequence of arm entries was recorded manually. Spontaneous alternation behavior was defined as the entry into all three arms on consecutive choices in overlapping triplet sets. The percent spontaneous alternation behavior was calculated as the ratio of actual to possible alternations (defined as the total number of arm entries-2) ×100.

One-trial delayed alternation in T-maze test

The T-maze apparatus consisted of black-painted plywood. Each arm of the T-maze was 50 cm long, 12 cm high and 4 cm wide and positioned at a right angle. All three entrances to the arms from the center are blocked 3cm above the floor, so that the mouse in the center can not see any surrounding objects which are placed outside of the maze, and rely their immediate spatial memory (if attention is good) to determine which arm is not visited, or which arm to enter. Each mouse was placed at the starting arm and allowed to move freely into the next arm after 30 of habituation. The first arm that the mouse has entered was blocked 30 seconds to prevent the mouse from coming out of that arm. After unblocking the second arm, if the mouse visits an unvisited arm, one score is given; if mouse revisits a visited arm, zero score is given. The sequence of arm entries was recorded manually, and the percent correct alternation behavior was calculated by chi-square test.

Novel object recognition task

A plastic chamber (35× 35× 35 cm) was used in low light condition during the light phase of the light/dark cycle. The general procedure consisted of three different phases: a habituation phase, an acquisition phase, and a retention phase. On the 1st day (habituation phase), mice were individually subjected to a single familiarization session of 10 min, during which they were introduced in the empty arena, in order to become familiar with the apparatus. On the 2nd day (acquisition phase) animals were subjected to a single 10-min session, during which floor-fixed two objects (A and B) were placed in a symmetric position from the centre of the arena, 15 cm from each and 8 cm from the nearest wall. The two objects, made of the same wooden material with the similar color and smell, were different in shape but identical in size. Mice were allowed to explore the objects in the open field. A preference index for each mouse was expressed as a ratio of the amount of time spent exploring object A (TA ×100)/ (TA + TB), where TA and TB are the time spent on exploring object A and object B, respectively. On the 3rd day (retention phase), mice were allowed to explore the open field in the presence of two objects: the familiar object A and a novel object C in different shapes but in similar color and size (A and C). A recognition index, calculated for each mouse, was

expressed as the ratio (TC $\times 100$)/ (TA + TC), where TA and TC are the time spent during retention phase on object A and object C, respectively. The time spent exploring the object (nose pointing toward the object at a distance ≤ 1 cm) was recorded by hand.

Object-based attention test

The apparatus is a rectangular, two-chambered opaque plexiglas boxes including exploring chamber (40cm long, 40 cm wide, 22cm high) and test chamber (each box is 40cm long, 20 wide, 22cm high). Dividing walls were made from opaque plexiglas with sliding openings which allowing access from exploring chamber into test chamber. The chambers of the social apparatus were cleaned and were bedded with sawdust beddings. The general procedure consisted of three different phases: a habituation phase, an acquisition phase, and a retention phase. On the 1st phase (habituation phase), mice were individually subjected to a single familiarization session of 10 min, during which they were exposed to both empty chambers, in order to become familiar with the surroundings. On the 2nd phase (acquisition phase) animals were subjected to a single 3-min session, during which floor-fixed five objects (A, B, C, D, and E) were placed in a symmetric position from the centre of the arena, 15 cm from each and 8 cm from the nearest wall. All objects, made of the same wooden material with the similar color and smell, were different in shape but roughly identical in size. Mice were allowed to explore the objects in the open field. Time spent on exploring the two objects (e.g., A and C) was randomly recorded. A preference index for each mouse was expressed as a ratio of the amount of time spent exploring object A (TA ×100)/ (TA + TC), where TA and TC are the time spent on exploring object C and object C, respectively. On the 3rd phase (retention phase) which immediately follow the 2nd phase, an object from exploring chamber (e.g., object A) was placed in test chamber. Then, mice were immediately allowed to enter the test chamber and explore two objects: the familiar object A and a novel object G in different shapes but in similar color and size (A and G). A recognition index, calculated for each mouse, was expressed as the ratio (TG ×100)/ (TA + TG), where TA and TG are the time spent during retention phase on object A and object C, respectively.

Prepulse inhibition Test

A standard startle chamber applicable to mice (San Diego Instruments, San Diego, CA) was used. The startle chamber consisted of a Plexiglas tube for mice (105 mm, 38mm, 50mm), placed in a sound-attenuated text box, in which animals were individually placed. The tube was mounted on a plastic frame under which a piezoelectric accelerometer was mounted, which recorded and transduced the motion of the tube. Animals were randomly divided into non-stimulated and PPI groups, and subjected to the behavioral test only once. Mice were placed into the chamber in the PPI test cage, and then habituated to the experimental environment for 10 min with 65 dB of background white noise. Non-stimulated control mice were used without being subjected to PPI trials. The PPI test has three continuous sessions: (1) five startle trials. (2) 10 startle trials, 10 no-stimulus trials, and 40 PPI trials, and (3) five startle trials. The intertrial interval was between 10 and 20 s, and the total duration of three sessions was 17 min. The startle trial consisted of a single 120 dB white noise burst lasting 40 ms. The PPI trials consisted of a prepulse (20 ms burst of white noise with intensities of 69, 73, and 77 dB) followed, 100 ms later, by the startle stimulus (120 dB, 40 ms white noise). Each of the four prepulse trials (69, 73, and 77dB) was presented 10 times. During the no-stimulus trial, no stimulus was presented but the movement of the animal

was scored. Sixty different trials were presented pseudo-randomly, ensuring that each trial was presented 10 times and that no two consecutive trials were identical. The resulting movement of the animal in the startle chamber was measured during 100 ms after startle stimulus onset (sampling frequency 1 kHz), rectified, amplified, and fed into a computer, which calculated the maximal response over the 100-ms period. Basal startle amplitude was determined as the mean amplitude of the 10-startle trials. PPI was calculated according to the formula: 100-[1-(PPx/P120)]%, in which PPx was the mean of the 10 PPI trials and P120 was the basal startle amplitude.

3. Data analysis.

Values are reported as the mean \pm SEM. Statistical significance in T-test or $\chi 2$ test analysis was considered as p < 0.05, and denoted by (*) in the figures and by (+) in the tables.

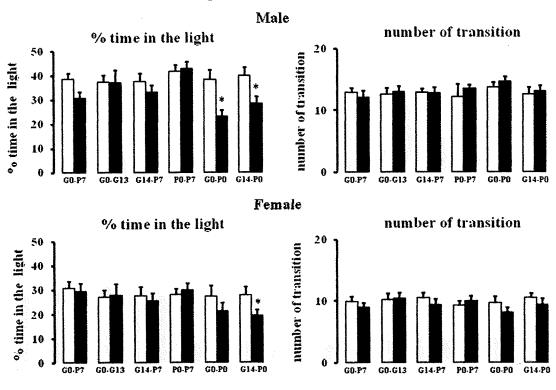
4. Results

PNE-induced emotional abnormalities are dependent on time-windows of exposure

To avoid stress-interference in the behavioral battery, emotional behaviors except elevated plus maze test were examined before the cognitive tests in an order of low-to-high stress level. In the light-dark box test, male offspring with PNE spent more time in the dark compartment during all examined time-windows than the counterparts in control group. Female of offspring both in control and in PNE groups, except those with PNE in G0-P0 and G14-P0 time-windows, spent almost same amount of time in the dark compartment. Both male and female offspring with PNE in G14-P0 time-windows spent significantly more time in the dark compartment than the counterparts in control group. There were no significant differences between the number of transition of mice with PNE in any time-windows and those in control groups. In novelty-suppressed feeding test, the latency to initiate feeding is longer in male offspring with PNE during all examined time-windows than male counterparts in control group. No differences were found between the latency to initiate feeding in female offspring of both control and PNE groups in all time-windows except G0-P0 and G14-P0. Weight loss after fasting or amount of food eaten after the test was not different across treatment groups (data not shown). In marble burying test, male offspring with PNE buried more marbles during all examined time-windows than male counterparts in control group. No differences were found between the number of buried marbles by female offspring in both control and PNE groups in all time-windows except G0-P0 and G14-P0. In social avoidance tube test, a mouse responds to a direct exposure to a stranger in the narrow tube. Male offspring with PNE mice avoided to interact with unknown same gender partner from control group, showed social avoidance behavior by turning the head and escape from the tube. All female mice with PNE interacted with the partners in control groups without escaping or aggressive behavior. In the habituation session of sociability test, mice in all groups visited each chamber with equal number of entries and equal amount of time, thereby demonstrating a lack of side preference. In the first 10 minutes of sociability test session, both male and female offspring with PNE as well as offspring of control mice demonstrated a significant preference for spending time in the chamber containing stranger 1 verses time spent exploring the empty chamber. Ten minutes after exposure to stranger 1, a social novelty test was conducted for the second 10 minutes. When the choice was given between the first stranger mouse and a second stranger mouse, the control strains to exhibit a

preference for interacting with the new mouse (stranger 2), as opposed to the now familiar mouse (stranger 1), male offspring with PNE displayed a decreased preference for the unfamiliar mouse over the familiar mouse. Furthermore, all male offspring with PNE exhibited an increased preference for the middle/neutral chamber compared to the control counterparts. Only female offspring with PNE during G0-P0 and G14-P0 demonstrated a less preference for social novelty compared with those in control group. The number of each chamber entries during the 10 min sociability or social novelty assessments were not found differ significantly between groups for male and female (data not shown). In the elevated plus maze test, all male mice with PNE in all time-windows and only female mice with PNE in G0-P0 and G14-P0 spent significantly more time exploring the closed arms and had more entries into the closed arms than did counterparts in control groups.

Light and dark box test



Novelty-suppressed feeding test

