EFFECT OF GLUCOSE ON STRESS INDUCED ANTINOCICEPTION 
IN NORMAL MICE

P.R.M.K. REDDY, R. SHANKAR RAMAN* AND S. RAMASWAMY**

Department of Pharmacology,
Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate 
Medical Education & Research 
Pondicherry - 605 006

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Abstract: Stress induced analgesia has been shown to utilise both non-opioidergic and opioidergic mechanisms. Earlier studies indicate that opioidergic analgesics exhibit corollary changes in blood glucose level. In this study, the changes in blood glucose level by swim induced stress and the influence of exogenous glucose administration on the stress induced antinociception were studied. Stress per se (both 30 sec and 3 min) did not modify the blood glucose level. However, exogenous administration of glucose reversed the stress induced antinociception in both non-opioid and opioid segments. Our results favour a role for glucose in stress induced analgesic activity.

Key words: swim stress non-opioid stress-induced antinociception opioid blood glucose exogenous glucose

INTRODUCTION

Antinociceptive activity can be tested either in experimental models like thermal, chemical, mechanical assay or clinically using visual analog scale. However, the mechanism involved could be identified using more than one model. One of the possible mechanisms suggested for antinociceptive activity of agonist acting through opioidergic pathways is, the associated changes in blood glucose level in the body (1, 2). A recent study with α-2 adrenergic agonist such as clonidine which also elicits antinociception, independent of opioid pathways, indicated that the changes in the blood glucose level produced by clonidine and its analgesic action can be dissociated (3). This finding corroborates the suggestion that only opioid analgesics show a relationship between changes in the blood glucose level and antinociceptive action. During stress, there is a possibility of changes in blood glucose due to energy utilisation. However, studies correlating stress induced antinociception involving (both non-opioid and opioid mechanisms) and the changes in blood glucose during stress if any, are not available to the best of our knowledge. Therefore, this study was designed primarily to identify such a correlation and subsequently to the relevance of such association to the mechanisms utilised in eliciting analgesic action.

*First Clinical year Medical student
**Corresponding Author
METHODS

Male Swiss albino mice (20–25 gm) were obtained from Central Animal House, JIPMER, Pondicherry and were housed in the departmental animal house with free access to food and water at room temperature (34–35°C).

Each animal was used once only. Forced swimming in water at room temperature (34–35°C) either for 30 sec (for non-opioid analgesic testing) or for 3 min (for opioid analgesic testing) was used as a stress (4). The animals were removed from water after the specified period of swimming, wiped with a dry cloth and a two minutes rest period was allowed between and of swimming and measurement of blood glucose and assessment of antinociceptive action (5).

Acetic acid (glacial, Sarabhai, Vadodara) induced writhing assay (6) was used to test the antinociception. It has been observed that in acetic acid induced writhing assay morphine is more effective (ED₅₀ 0.3 mg/kg against 10 mg/kg in thermal tests) with minimal nociception (7). Therefore this procedure was employed. Animals received 0.6% acetic acid (10 ml/kg) intraperitoneally and the number of writhing response was counted in the following 15 minutes period. A significant reduction in the writhing response as compared with saline (Core Parenterals, Ahmedabad) treated animals was considered as antinociceptive response.

The blood glucose was estimated in all the animals prior to exposure to stress and analgesic testing using AMES glucometer (Bayer's Diagnostic India Ltd., Vadodara). The blood was collected by the incision of the tail tip. The changes in the blood glucose were expressed as the percentage considering the initial blood glucose (estimated prior to the stress) as 100%.

In four groups of mice glucose (6 or 12 mg per mouse) was administered intraperitoneally. After 10 minutes of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretreatment (ip)</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Change in blood glucose</th>
<th>No. of writhings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>100.5 ± 4.9</td>
<td>24.4 ± 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saline</td>
<td>30 sec swim</td>
<td>94.2 ± 7.7</td>
<td>10.8 ± 2.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saline</td>
<td>3 min swim</td>
<td>100.9 ± 8.1</td>
<td>5.4 ± 0.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 mg glucose</td>
<td>30 sec swim</td>
<td>100.8 ± 8.9</td>
<td>27.0 ± 2.7†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 mg glucose</td>
<td>3 min swim</td>
<td>92.8 ± 10.2</td>
<td>19.4 ± 4.7†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 mg glucose</td>
<td>30 sec swim</td>
<td>106.4 ± 11.3</td>
<td>25.3 ± 3.1†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 mg glucose</td>
<td>3 min swim</td>
<td>109.9 ± 7.4</td>
<td>26.0 ± 2.2†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values represent Mean ± SEM; n=5
*P < 0.05 as compared with control
†P < 0.05 as compared with respective saline treatment value
glucose administration and after either 30 seconds or 3 minutes swim stress blood glucose was estimated. The influence of external glucose administration on the antinociceptive activity of the stress in these animals was tested as described earlier.

The data was subjected to statistical analysis ANOVA followed by Dunnett's "t" test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The animals subjected to 30 seconds and 3 minutes swim showed a significant antinociception when compared to control animals (Table I). The degree of antinociception was more after 3 minutes swim when compared to 30 seconds swim. However, there was no significant change in blood glucose level either after 30 sec or 3 min swim stress as compared to their initial values. Administration of glucose (6 or 12 mg) 10 min prior to swim did not significantly change the glucose level estimated before stress. However, it reversed the antinociceptive action induced by both 30 seconds and 3 minutes swim stress at both concentrations.

Drugs acting through opioid receptors are known to produce antinociception which is associated with hyperglycemia (2, 3). On the contrary, drugs eliciting antinociception utilising mechanisms other than opioid exhibited no such correlation, rather exhibiting dissociation (4).

REFERENCES

1. Tierney G, Carmody J, Jamieson D. Stress analgesia; the opioid analgesia of long swim suppresses the non-opioid analgesia; the opioid analgesia of long swim suppresses the non-opioid...


