SHORT REPORT

The change of behavioural methamphetamine effect after repeated MDMA administration in mice

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Submitted: 2009-04-01    Accepted: 2009-04-21

Key words: MDMA; behavioural sensitization

Introduction

Repeated administration of various drugs of abuse may result in an increased behavioural response to them. This phenomenon is described as behavioural sensitization (Robinson & Berridge 1993; Ohmori et al 2000). It is also known that an increased response to a drug may be elicited by previous repeated administration of another drug, a phenomenon known as cross-sensitization (Cadoni et al 2001). We focused our previous experiments on behavioural sensitization to methamphetamine (Met) and cannabinoids, which in the Czech Republic belong to the most frequently abused drugs. Data obtained from these experiments indicated that cannabinoids use could increase the vulnerability to methamphetamine consumption, because pre-treatment with cannabinoid CB1 receptor agonist methanandamide elicited behavioural cross-sensitization to Met stimulatory effects (Landa et al 2006). Another very popular drug of abuse is ecstasy (MDMA). Kalivas et al. (1998) reported a development of behavioural sensitization to its effects increasing motor activity in rats and Itzhak et al. (2004) in mice. Therefore, in the present study, we decided by analogy to test a possible cross-sensitization to Met with MDMA, and vice versa with Met repeated pre-treatment to MDMA effects.

Methods

For the purposes of the presented study we used our original dosage regimen. Male mice were randomly divided into 5 groups (n1 = 7, n2 = 12, n3 = 10, n4 = 7, n5 = 12) and all were given vehicle on the Day 1 of the study. There were no applications from the Days 2 to 6. For the next 7 days animals were treated repeatedly as follows: a) n1 = 10.0 ml/kg/day of vehicle, b) n2 = 15 mg/kg/day of MDMA (dissolved in distilled water), c) n3, 5 = 2.5 mg/kg/day of Met (dissolved in saline). On the Day 14 animals in 5 groups received substances according to this schema: n1 = 10.0 ml/kg of vehicle, n2, 5 = 15 mg/kg of MDMA, n3, 4 = 2.5 mg/kg of Met. There were no applications in Days 15 to 20. On the Day 21 a challenge dose of Met (2.5 mg/kg) was given to the groups n3, 4 and a challenge dose of MDMA (15 mg/kg) to the groups n2, 5. The group n1 was a control and animals were given vehicle (10 ml/kg). Locomotor activity (Distance Travelled) in the open field test was measured by Actitrack apparatus (Panlab, S.L., Spain) on the Days 1, 7, 14 and 21 (fifteen minutes after administration of Met and thirty minutes after administration of MDMA). Data were analysed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality and unpaired t-test.

Results and Conclusions

The present results confirmed that the pre-treatment with methamphetamine led in mice to the development and expression of behavioural sensitization to its stimulatory effects in the open field test (n3). Interestingly, we observed neither development nor expression of sensitization to MDMA repeated treatment (n2), however development and expression of cross-sensitization occurred following methamphetamine challenge dose after MDMA pre-treatment (n4), whereas no cross-sensitization was registered following MDMA challenge dose after methamphetamine pre-treatment (n5) – for more details see Figure 1.

No signs of behavioural sensitization after repeated MDMA treatment (group n2) in this study are in conflict with our previous studies (Landa et al 2005) and also with findings of other authors (Itzhak et al 2004). As the strain of the animals and the dosage regimens were the same as in our previous experiments, the reason for this could be a seasonal variability.
The occurrence of cross-sensitization in group n_4 (pretreatment with MDMA, methamphetamine challenge doses) was the most important finding of this study. It suggests a sensitizing influence of MDMA that could contribute in individuals experienced with MDMA to a possible increase in their inclination to methamphetamine intake. Nevertheless, the results did not show this phenomenon also reversely after MDMA challenge following methamphetamine pre-treatment.

Acknowledgement
This work was supported by the Czech Ministry of Education Project: VZ MSM0021622404

REFERENCES