

**HANDBOOK OF
CHEMICAL
NEUROANATOMY**

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RECEPTORS
IN THE CNS**

Editors:

**A. Björklund, T. Hökfelt
M.J. Kuhar**

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Edited by A. Björklund and T. Hökfelt

Volume 11:

NEUROPEPTIDE RECEPTORS IN THE CNS

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Preface

This volume is the third in this series on neurotransmitter receptors. The first two dealt with receptors for classical neurotransmitters and with receptors for other neuropeptides. This volume extends and updates the information on peptide receptors, and it complements chapters on some of the peptides themselves in earlier volumes.

The peptides, from angiotensin to vasoactive intestinal peptide, are striking in the diversity of their origins, discoveries and actions. Atrial natriuretic peptide is produced by the cardiac atria, bombesin by the frog skin, CRH by the hypothalamus, and galanin by the small intestine; they are also found in many other organs including the brain. Angiotensin has the central action of stimulating drinking behavior but also has peripheral actions on smooth muscle and kidney. CRH acts at the pituitary but has more central behavioral effects as well. Some of these peptides such as neuropeptide Y are very abundant in brain while others are not. The fact that the brain displays such variety is both staggering and challenging.

This apparent diversity multiplies when it is realized that there are entire families of closely related peptides in many cases, and that each peptide may act at a variety of receptor subtypes. For example, calcitonin and calcitonin gene-related peptide are processing variants of the same gene, and somatostatin receptors are target sites for a family of peptides.

Regarding multiple or subtypes of receptors, it seems certain that more is to come in the future. This volume is basically a compilation of 'high affinity' receptors for agonists since we are using the neuropeptides themselves as ligands. Perhaps significant numbers of low affinity receptors exist that are not easily recognized under the binding and washing conditions employed. As peptide receptors are further understood and as antagonists are developed, additional families or subtypes of receptors may be identified and mapped with resultant increases in our ideas about their functions.

Mapping receptors helps us understand the neuronal sites of action and hence the physiological effects of the peptides. It also provides us with an additional perspective by which we view the biochemical organization of the brain. It is our hope that these organized chapters help us utilize and deal with the abundant knowledge on this topic as well as to incorporate this knowledge for future advances.

Finally we acknowledge our good fortune in having an excellent group of authors, each expert in their respective areas. They have addressed the diversity of neuropeptides and their receptors and have produced excellent state-of-the-art chapters. We thank them for their patient and thorough efforts in producing this fine volume. Also, warm thanks go to our friends at Elsevier who with never failing enthusiasm and great professional competence have made this volume possible.

Lund, Stockholm and Baltimore in May 1992

ANDERS BJÖRKLUND

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Contents

I. LOCALIZATION OF ANGIOTENSIN RECEPTOR BINDING SITES IN THE RAT BRAIN – A.M. ALLEN, G. PAXINOS, K.F. SONG AND F.A.O. MENDELSON

1. Introduction	1
2. Localization of ANG receptor binding sites in rat brain	3
2.1. In vitro autoradiography	4
3. Distribution of ^{125}I -[SAR ¹ , ILE ⁸]ANG II binding in rat brain	5
3.1. Non-specific binding	5
3.2. Distribution of specific ANG receptor binding in rat brain	5
3.2.1. Circumventricular organs	6
3.2.2. Cerebral cortex	6
3.2.3. Olfactory system	10
3.2.4. Septum and hypothalamus	13
3.2.5. Amygdala and bed nucleus of the stria terminalis	14
3.2.6. Thalamus	14
3.2.7. Basal ganglia	15
3.2.8. The visual system	15
3.2.9. Hippocampus	15
3.2.10. Raphe nuclei	15
3.2.11. Central gray	15
3.2.12. Brainstem nuclei associated with cardiovascular, respiratory and other autonomic functions	16
3.2.13. The auditory system	16
3.2.14. The somatosensory system	16
3.2.15. The pre-cerebellar nuclei	16
3.2.16. Cervical spinal cord	16
4. Correlation with previous in vitro autoradiographic studies	17
4.1. Preoptic structures	17
4.2. Magnocellular neurosecretory nuclei	17
4.3. Amygdala	18
4.4. Striatum	18
4.5. Midbrain	18
4.6. Pons	18
4.7. Medulla	18
5. Subtypes of ANG receptor binding sites	20
6. Distribution of ANG immunoreactivity in rat brain	20
6.1. Correlation between the distribution of ANG-immunoreactive terminal fields and ANG receptor binding sites	20
7. Neuronal release of ANG	24
8. Distribution of ANG II-responsive neurones	24
9. Correlation between the distribution of ANG receptor binding sites and regions of ANG II action	25

9.1. Cardiovascular regulation	25
9.2. Drinking	25
9.3. Neuroendocrine actions	26
9.4. Other possible actions	26
9.4.1. Somatosensory function	27
9.4.2. Viscerosensory function	27
9.4.3. Special sensation	27
9.4.4. Memory and learning	27
10. Conclusion	28
11. Abbreviations	28
12. References	32

II. LOCALIZATION OF ATRIAL NATRIURETIC PEPTIDE B AND C RECEPTORS IN RAT BRAIN – J.M. SAAVEDRA, S. ZORAD AND K. TSUTSUMI

1. Introduction	39
1.1. The atrial natriuretic peptide	39
1.2. Atrial natriuretic peptide in the brain	39
1.3. Central effects of atrial natriuretic peptide	39
1.4. Atrial natriuretic peptide receptors in brain	39
1.5. Atrial natriuretic peptide receptors are heterogeneous	40
2. Materials and methods	41
2.1. Animals	41
2.2. Preparation of brain sections	41
2.3. Atrial natriuretic peptide receptor binding	41
2.4. Quantitative autoradiography	42
2.5. Determination of ligand metabolism	42
2.6. Materials	42
3. Results	42
3.1. Determination of ligand stability during incubation procedures	42
3.2. Distribution of ANP receptors in the rat brain and pituitary	43
3.3. Localization and quantification of c-ANP receptors in the rat brain	47
4. Discussion	48
4.1. The use of quantitative autoradiography for the analysis of peptide receptors	48
4.2. Quantitative autoradiography of ANP receptors	48
4.3. Distribution of brain and pituitary ANP receptors. Comparison between different studies, and interspecies differences	49
4.4. Comparison of ANP receptor distribution and ANP localization in brain	49
4.5. Physiological correlates of brain ANP receptors	51
5. Conclusions	51
6. References	52

III. BOMBESIN/GRP RECEPTORS – T.W. MOODY, E. WADA AND J. BATTEY

1. Introduction	55
1.1. Structure of peptides	55
2. GRP and NMB receptors	57
3. In vitro autoradiography	60
4. Binding to rat brain sections	61
5. In situ hybridization	63
6. Localization of GRP receptors	64
7. Localization of NMB receptors	90
8. Receptor peptide mismatch	90
9. Summary	91
10. Acknowledgements	92
11. References	92

IV. CALCITONIN- AND CALCITONIN GENE-RELATED PEPTIDE: RECEPTOR BINDING SITES IN THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM – G. SKOFITSCH AND D.M. JACOBOWITZ

1. Introduction	97
2. Receptor autoradiography of rat brain	100
2.1. Telencephalon/rhinencephalon	115
2.2. Diencephalon	120
2.3. Mesencephalon	125
2.4. Pons	125
2.5. Cerebellum	126
2.6. Myelencephalon	126
2.7. Spinal cord	127
2.8. Pituitary	127
3. Biochemistry and physiology	128
3.1. CT/CGRP precursor types	128
3.2. CT/CGRP receptor types	128
3.3. Functional significance	130
3.4. Receptor continuity	133
4. Summary	134
5. Acknowledgements	134
6. Abbreviations and list of results	134
7. References	139

V. CORTICOTROPIN-RELEASING HORMONE RECEPTORS – E.B. DE SOUZA

1. Introduction	145
2. General characteristics	148
2.1. Kinetics and pharmacology	148

2.2.	Biochemical properties	149
2.3.	Second messengers	149
3.	Autoradiographic localization studies	150
3.1.	Methods	150
3.1.1.	Choice of radioligand	150
3.1.2.	Tissue preparation	150
3.1.3.	Receptor labeling in slide-mounted brain sections	151
3.1.4.	Autoradiography	151
3.1.5.	Data analysis	151
3.2.	Distribution in the pituitary gland	151
3.3.	Distribution in the central nervous system	154
3.3.1.	Rat CNS	154
3.3.1.1.	Olfactory system	154
3.3.1.2.	Cerebral cortex	154
3.3.1.3.	Limbic system	159
3.3.1.4.	Thalamus-hypothalamus	162
3.3.1.5.	Brainstem	163
3.3.1.6.	Cerebellum	163
3.3.1.7.	Spinal cord	164
3.3.2.	Primate brain	165
3.4.	Distribution in peripheral tissues	
3.4.1.	Spleen	166
3.4.2.	Peripheral sympathetic nervous system	167
4.	Correlation of CRH receptors with CRH-like immunoreactivity	
5.	Effects of CRH on cerebral metabolism: 2-deoxyglucose studies	168
6.	Ontogeny of CRH receptors	170
7.	Effects of aging on CRH receptors	170
8.	Role of CRH in central nervous system disorders	173
8.1.	Neuropsychiatric disorders	173
8.1.1.	Affective disorders	173
8.1.2.	Anxiety-related disorders	174
8.2.	Neurodegenerative diseases	174
8.2.1.	Alzheimer's disease	174
8.2.2.	Huntington's disease	176
9.	Summary and conclusions	177
10.	Acknowledgements	177
11.	Abbreviations	177
12.	References	179

VI. ¹²⁵I-GALANIN BINDING SITES IN THE RAT CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM – TOR MELANDER, C. KÖHLER, S. NILSSON, G. FISONE, T. BARTFAI AND T. HÖKFELT

1.	Introduction	187
1.1.	Biochemical characteristics of GAL binding sites	187
1.2.	Biological effects of GAL	188
2.	Materials and methods	189
2.1.	Radioligand	189

2.2. Autoradiography	189
3. Distribution of ¹²⁵ I-GAL binding sites	190
3.1. Telencephalon	190
3.1.1. Hippocampal formation	190
3.2. Diencephalon	209
3.2.1. Thalamus	209
3.2.2. Hypothalamus	209
3.3. Mesencephalon	210
3.4. Rhombencephalon	210
3.5. Spinal cord	211
4. Correlation to immunocytochemical results	211
5. Summary	212
6. Acknowledgements	212
7. Abbreviations	212
8. References	215

VII. GONADOTROPIN-RELEASING HORMONE RECEPTORS IN RAT BRAIN – L. JENNES AND P.M. CONN

1. Introduction	223
1.1. Function of GnRH	223
1.2. Structure of GnRH and its analogs	224
2. Methods	224
2.1. Iodination of GnRH analogs	224
2.2. 'In vitro' autoradiography	225
2.3. 'In vivo' autoradiography	225
2.4. Radioreceptor assay	225
2.5. Photoaffinity labeling	226
3. Distribution of GnRH binding sites in the central nervous system	226
3.1. 'In vitro' autoradiography	226
3.2. Development of GnRH binding sites	227
3.3. 'In vivo' autoradiography	227
4. Characterization of GnRH binding sites in the hippocampus	233
4.1. 'In vitro' autoradiography	233
4.2. Radioreceptor assay	233
4.3. Photoaffinity labeling	235
4.4. Comparison of hippocampal and pituitary GnRH binding sites	235
5. Effects of GnRH in the hippocampus	237
5.1. Electrophysiology	237
5.2. <i>Fos</i> expression	238
5.3. Effects of gonadal steroids on hippocampal GnRH binding sites	239
6. Discussion	239
7. Acknowledgement	240
8. Abbreviations	240
9. References	243

VIII. BRAIN NEUROPEPTIDE Y RECEPTORS: DISTRIBUTION AND POSSIBLE RELEVANCE TO FUNCTION – R. QUIRION AND J.-C. MARTEL

1. Introduction	247
2. Discovery of NPY	247
3. Distribution of brain NPY-like immunoreactivity	248
3.1. NPY projection pathways	250
3.2. Co-localization with other transmitters	251
4. Biological effects of NPY in the CNS	252
5. Brain NPY receptors	254
5.1. Methods	254
5.2. Ligand selectivity profile	257
5.3. Autoradiographic distribution	257
5.3.1. Rhinencephalon	257
5.3.2. Telencephalon	269
5.3.3. Diencephalon	270
5.3.4. Mesencephalon	271
5.3.5. Metencephalon	272
5.3.6. Myelencephalon	272
6. Brain NPY receptors in other species	273
7. Brain NPY receptor subtypes	273
8. Conclusion	276
9. Acknowledgements	276
10. Abbreviations	276
11. References	279

IX. VASOPRESSIN AND OXYTOCIN RECEPTORS IN THE RAT BRAIN – E. TRIBOLLET

1. Introduction	289
2. Procedures for localizing AVP and OT receptors	290
2.1. Radiolabeled ligands	290
2.2. Labeling of AVP receptors	290
2.3. Labeling of OT receptors	292
3. Distribution of AVP and OT receptors	293
3.1. Distribution of AVP receptors	294
3.1.1. Olfactory system	294
3.1.2. Limbic system	294
3.1.3. Hypothalamus	294
3.1.4. Thalamus	304
3.1.5. Brainstem and spinal cord	304
3.1.6. Choroid plexus and circumventricular organs	304
3.2. Distribution of OT receptors	304
3.2.1. Olfactory system	304
3.2.2. Basal ganglia	304
3.2.3. Limbic system	305
3.2.4. Thalamus	305

3.2.5. Hypothalamus	305
3.2.6. Brainstem and spinal cord	305
4. Pharmacological characterization of brain AVP binding sites as V ₁ type receptors	306
5. AVP and OT receptors during development	306
6. Effects of gonadal steroids on AVP and OT receptor number	312
7. Concluding remarks	314
8. Acknowledgements	315
9. Abbreviations	315
10. References	316

X. SOMATOSTATIN RECEPTORS – S. KRANTIC, R. QUIRION AND G. UHL

1. Introduction	321
2. Somatostatin binding sites in rat brain	323
2.1. Methodologic considerations	323
2.2. Biochemical studies	323
2.3. Autoradiographic studies	324
3. Heterogeneity of somatostatin binding sites in rat brain	329
4. Somatostatin receptors in human brain	333
5. Match between somatostatinergic neurons and receptors in rat CNS	335
6. Functional relevance	338
7. Conclusions	340
8. Abbreviations	340
9. References	342

XI. VASOACTIVE INTESTINAL PEPTIDE (VIP) RECEPTORS – P.J. MAGISTRETTI, J.-L. MARTIN, P.R. HOF AND J.M. PALACIOS

1. Introduction	347
2. Preparation and characterization of [¹²⁵ I-Monoiodo Tyr ¹⁰ , MetO ¹⁷]-vasoactive intestinal peptide	347
3. Autoradiographic procedure	350
3.1. Stability of M-[¹²⁵ I]VIP in the incubation medium	351
4. Pharmacological characteristics of M-[¹²⁵ I]VIP binding sites in rat brain sections	352
4.1. Kinetic analysis	352
4.2. Pharmacological specificity of M-[¹²⁵ I]VIP binding	353
5. Distribution of VIP binding sites	353
5.1. Rodent brain (rat, mouse and guinea pig)	354
5.2. Other species	363
5.2.1. Teleostean brain	364
5.2.2. Anuran brain	366
5.2.3. Reptilian brain	367
5.2.4. Avian brain	368
5.2.5. Cat brain	371

5.2.6. Primate brain	371
6. Comments and discussion	373
6.1. Phylogeny	373
6.2. Matching with VIP immunoreactivity	375
6.3. Functional aspects	386
7. Acknowledgements	389
8. Abbreviations	389
9. References	397
 SUBJECT INDEX	 397

Localization of angiotensin receptor binding sites in the rat brain

A.M. ALLEN, G. PAXINOS, K.F. SONG AND F.A.O. MENDELSON

1. INTRODUCTION

Angiotensin (Ang) is a circulating hormone with potent actions on vascular smooth muscle, renal function and the adrenal gland (see Peach 1977). Ang also has central actions including stimulation of drinking behaviour, regulation of the central control of the autonomic nervous system, and stimulation of the release of both anterior and posterior pituitary hormones (see Phillips 1987). Overall these actions relate to the maintenance of fluid and electrolyte homeostasis and cardiovascular function. However, some more diverse actions, including effects on learning and memory (Koller et al. 1975; Baranowska et al. 1983), have been observed following manipulation of the central renin-angiotensin system.

Initially the central actions of Ang were thought to be mediated solely by circulating Ang II acting at the circumventricular organs. These specialized brain regions are accessible to circulating Ang because they have a deficient blood-brain barrier (Simpson 1980; McKinley et al. 1990). Several of the circumventricular organs, including the subfornical organ, vascular organ of the lamina terminalis (OVLT), median eminence and area postrema, are rich in Ang receptor binding sites (Van Houten et al. 1980; Mendelson et al. 1984), and electrophysiological studies show that neurons in the subfornical organ are excited by Ang II administered intravenously (Ishibashi et al. 1985; Ferguson and Renaud 1986).

The discovery that all components of the renin-angiotensin system occur in brain (Yang and Neff 1972; Hirose et al. 1978; Lewicki et al. 1978; Ganten et al. 1983) led to the proposal of an endogenous brain renin-angiotensin system. Supporting this, Ang-like immunoreactive neurons, Ang receptor binding sites and Ang responsive neurons have been demonstrated at sites within the blood-brain barrier (see Lind 1987). In addition, microinjection of Ang II into several restricted regions behind the blood-brain produces pressor, dipsogenic, cardiovascular and neuroendocrine actions (see Phillips 1987).

The concept of an endogenous brain angiotensin system was not readily accepted. The isolation of Ang II from brain proved difficult, presumably due to the rapid degradation of this peptide (Harding et al. 1986; Abhold and Harding 1987) and its low concentration. However, several groups have isolated material from brain which behaves like synthetic Ang II in radioimmunoassay and radioreceptor assay (Ganten et al. 1983; Simon-