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**UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA BAHIA  
FACULDADE DE MEDICINA  
FUNDAÇÃO OSWALDO CRUZ  
CENTRO DE PESQUISAS GONÇALO MONIZ**



FIOCRUZ

**Curso de Pós-Graduação em Patologia**

**TESE DE DOUTORADO**

**HIPERGLICEMIA INDUZIDA PELA ESTIMULAÇÃO  
FARMACOLÓGICA DO SISTEMA SEROTONINÉRGICO  
CENTRAL EM RATOS: ENVOLVIMENTO DO HORMÔNIO  
LIBERADOR DE CORTICOTROPINA (CRH) E DOS  
RECEPTORES SEROTONINÉRGICOS 5-HT<sub>3</sub> CENTRAIS.**

**FERNANDO LUÍS DE QUEIROZ CARVALHO**

Salvador - Bahia - Brasil

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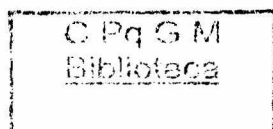
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FERNANDO LUÍS DE QUEIROZ CARVALHO

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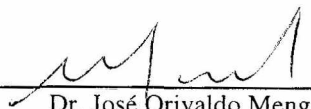
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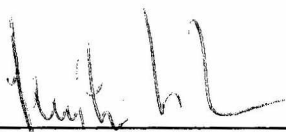
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Aos meus queridos pais, Nelson e Luzia,  
à minha esposa Josiane e ao meu irmão Cássio,  
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## LISTA DE ABREVIATURAS

2-DG	2-deoxi-glicose
3° V	Terceiro ventrículo
5-HIAA	Ácido 5-hidroxi-indol-acético
5-HT	Serotonina
8-OH-DPAT	8-Hidroxi-2-(di- <i>n</i> -propilamino)tetralina
Ach	Acetilcolina
ACTH	Hormônio adrenocorticotrófico
AD	Adrenalina
AHL	Área hipotalâmica lateral
APOM	Área pré-óptica medial
CRF $\alpha$ h	CRF- $\alpha$ -helicoidal
CRH	Hormônio liberador de corticotrofinas
DA	Dopamina
DAG	Diacilglicerol
DOI	1-(2,5-dimetoxi-4-iodofenil)2-aminopropano
GABA	Ácido gama-amino-butírico
HÁ	Histamina
HHA	Hipotálamo-hipófise-adrenal
HVM	Hipotálamo ventro-medial
ICV	Intracerebroventricular
IP <sub>3</sub>	Inositol-tri-fosfato
ISRS	inibidores seletivos da recaptção de serotonina
IV	Intravenosa
<i>m</i> -CPBG	<i>m</i> -clorofenilbiguanida
<i>m</i> -CPP	<i>m</i> -clorofenilpiperazina
NA	Noradrenalina
NPV	Núcleo para-ventricular
SNA	Sistema nervoso autônomo
SNC	Sistema nervoso central
Trp	Triptofano

## RESUMO

HIPERGLICEMIA INDUZIDA PELA ESTIMULAÇÃO FARMACOLÓGICA DO SISTEMA SEROTONINÉRGICO CENTRAL EM RATOS: ENVOLVIMENTO DO HORMÔNIO LIBERADOR DE CORTICOTROPINAS (CRH) CENTRAL E DOS RECEPTORES SEROTONINÉRGICOS 5-HT<sub>3</sub> CENTRAIS. **FERNANDO LUÍS DE QUEIROZ CARVALHO.** O controle central da glicemia é fundamental para a manutenção da homeostase metabólica do organismo. O sistema serotoninérgico central tem sido implicado nesta regulação atuando para a manutenção do equilíbrio das taxas glicêmicas corporais. Neste trabalho, estudamos o papel do sistema serotoninérgico central sobre o controle da glicemia, bem como a participação do componente CRH-érgico e dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais nestas respostas em animais em jejum não estressados. Para tanto, administramos no 3<sup>o</sup> ventrículo cerebral de ratos Wistar machos dois agonistas serotoninérgicos (fluoxetina e quipazina) realizando pré-tratamentos com o antagonista do CRH, CRF $\alpha$ H, ou com dois antagonistas seletivos dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, ondansetrona e LY-278.584 ou salina para os animais controles. Em outro grupo experimental administramos o agonista *m*-CPBG e o antagonista ondansetrona, ambos seletivos para os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, em animais em jejum ou alimentados submetidos ou não ao estresse de imobilização. As coletas seriadas de sangue (0,4 ml) foram feitas através de um cateter previamente implantado no átrio direito pela veia jugular. As amostras foram centrifugadas e, em seguida, foi feita a dosagem da glicemia. A estimulação farmacológica serotoninérgica central, pelos agonistas fluoxetina e quipazina, induziu resposta hiperglicêmica evidente, esta resposta foi inibida pelo bloqueio dos receptores do CRH e 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais e pela inibição da hiperinsulinemia contra-regulatória em animais em jejum. A estimulação isolada dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais pelo *m*-CPBG provocou hiperglicemia significativa que foi bloqueada pelo pré-tratamento com o antagonista ondansetrona em animais em jejum e alimentados não estressados. Em animais estressados não foram observadas quaisquer alterações glicêmicas em comparação aos respectivos grupos controles, após o tratamento com agonistas ou antagonistas 5-HT<sub>3</sub>. Concluimos que a estimulação serotoninérgica central provoca hiperglicemia que parece ser dependente da ativação seqüencial do componente CRH-érgico, dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais e da inibição da secreção de insulina em animais em jejum. A estimulação dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> isoladamente provoca hiperglicemia em ratos em jejum e alimentados não estressados, a qual, não parece ser gerada a partir de um tônus estimulatório endógeno, já que o bloqueio utilizando apenas o antagonista ondansetrona não provocou uma resposta hipoglicêmica significativa.

Palavras-chave glicemia, serotonina, fluoxetina, quipazina, CRH, CRF $\alpha$ H, 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, ondansetrona, LY-278.584 e insulina.



## ABSTRACT

HYPERGLYCEMIA FOLLOWING CENTRAL SEROTONINERGIC STIMULATION IN RATS: ROLES OF THE CENTRAL CORTICOTROPIN RELEASING HORMONE (CRH) SYSTEM AND 5-HT<sub>3</sub> RECEPTORS. **FERNANDO LUÍS DE QUEIROZ CARVALHO.** The present study investigates the role of the brain serotonergic system on the control of plasma glucose levels in fed and fasted rats both in stressed and non-stressed conditions. Using a pharmacological approach, the data presented demonstrate that the increase in central serotonergic transmission induced by the enhancement in endogenous synaptic serotonin release by third ventricle injections of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor fluoxetine elicits a significant hyperglycemia. A significant increase in plasma glucose levels is also obtained by the central administration of quipazine, a serotonin agonist acting on 5-HT<sub>1</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2</sub> and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors. The hyperglycemic response observed after third ventricle injections of fluoxetine or quipazine seems to be dependent on the functional integrity of the brain CRH component and requires the presence of functioning 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors. The rise in plasma glucose levels seen after fluoxetine or quipazine central administration may be consequent to a lack of a counter regulatory increase in plasma insulin levels. The present data also reveal that the specific stimulation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors by a selective pharmacological agent (*m*-CPBG) induces hyperglycemia that can be blocked by the pretreatment with two selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists (ondansetron and LY-278,584). None of those antagonists was able to modify basal plasma glucose levels when injected alone into the third ventricle, indicating a lack of any inhibitory or stimulatory tonus exerted by central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors on plasma glucose levels. The hyperglycemic response observed after restraint stress was not affected by any of the pharmacological procedures modifying central serotonergic activity used in the present paper, suggesting that during that particular stressful condition, parallel hyperglycemic stimulatory drives are sufficient to promote hyperglycemia or, alternatively, brain serotonergic pathways are already maximally activated in this circumstance.

Keywords: Glycemia, Serotonin, Fluoxetine, Quipazine, CRH, CRF $\alpha$ H, 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, Ondansetron, LY-278.584, Insulin

## 1 INTRODUÇÃO

1.1 O Sistema nervoso central e o controle dos níveis plasmáticos de glicose.

A necessidade de manter níveis de glicose constantes e que possam ser mobilizados nas diversas situações as quais o organismo possa estar exposto levou ao desenvolvimento de ações regulatórias de que visam controlar a produção e o consumo deste importante substrato energético. Devido ao fato de que nem sempre a ingestão alimentar atende ao dispêndio de energia exigido pelo corpo, processos de armazenamento de energia para utilização futura foram desenvolvidos pelas diversas espécies animais, buscando garantir a estabilidade da oferta energética. Para exercer seu papel regulador, o sistema nervoso central recebe diversos tipos de informação oriundos da periferia, destacando-se entre estes a monitorização hepática e pancreática contínua do *status* glicêmico periférico. O cérebro também controla efetores fundamentais na regulação metabólica, como a massa muscular, o tecido adiposo, o fígado, o pâncreas e o trato gastrointestinal. A estrita necessidade de funcionamento ininterrupto do cérebro como fator de manutenção da consciência e da capacidade de interação com o ambiente deve ter evolutivamente determinado o aparecimento de mecanismos redundantes de controle metabólico que, em condições normais, garantem o suprimento contínuo de glicose a este órgão (PETERS, et al., 2004). Desta forma, a homeostase da glicose, que resulta de um controle multirregulado e estreito dos mecanismos hepáticos que levam a sua produção e dos ajustes

bioquímicos que controlam a sua utilização periférica, é de suma importância para a manutenção constante de uma oferta adequada de suprimento energético para o organismo.

Desde os experimentos clássicos de Claude Bernard em 1850, nos quais se demonstrou que a punção do assoalho do quarto ventrículo cerebral provoca glicosúria, o sistema nervoso central (SNC) tem sido implicado no controle de processos metabólicos através de regulações neuroendócrinas e hormonais (NONOGAKI & IGUCHI, 1997).

O hipotálamo funciona como sítio integrador das respostas regulatórias neurais e endócrinas que visam controlar o metabolismo periféricamente (PENICAUD et al., 2002; WILLIAMS et al., 2001). Através de ações originadas nas divisões simpática e parassimpática do sistema nervoso autônomo (SNA), esta região central controla fibras que inervam diretamente o fígado e órgãos endócrinos, influenciando enzimas hepáticas, secreção de insulina e glucagon pancreáticos e liberação de catecolaminas pela glândula adrenal (SMYTHE et al., 1989; NONOGAKI, 2000). Diversos estudos têm demonstrado que regiões hipotalâmicas como o hipotálamo ventro-medial (HVM) e a área hipotalâmica lateral (AHL) são glicorregulatórias. A estimulação elétrica do HVM eleva a atividade simpática, incrementa a glicogenólise hepática e os níveis de glucagon, levando ao aumento dos níveis plasmáticos de glicose. Por outro lado, este tipo de estimulação na AHL ativa o parassimpático, aumenta a síntese de glicogênio, e reduz ligeiramente a glicemia (SHIMAZU et al., 1966; FROHMAN & BERNARDIS, 1971; SHIMAZU, 1979). Outras áreas hipotalâmicas como o núcleo paraventricular (NPV) e a área pré-óptica medial (APOM) quando estimuladas quimicamente

também induzem hiperglicemia associada ao aumento da atividade simpática (FÓSCOLO et al., 2003; DE CASTRO et al., 1997; HONMURA et al., 1992; EGAWA et al., 1990; IONESCU et al., 1989). Esses achados, juntamente com outros estudos utilizando injeções de neuropeptídios, neurotransmissores clássicos e seus agonistas no HVM e na AHL sugerem que núcleos do hipotálamo, especialmente aqueles que circundam o terceiro ventrículo (3<sup>o</sup> V), estão envolvidos na glicorregulação (BRITO et al., 1993; MIGLIORINI et al., 1989), ao menos em parte, via ativação autonômica simpática (IGUCHI et al., 1984).

Torna-se notório, portanto, que o SNC utiliza formas diversas de ação para regular o metabolismo periférico. Isso pode se dar através do aumento da atividade simpática que estimula a glicogenólise, ou por meio de ramos vagais hepáticos que promovem o aumento da gliconeogênese, ou ainda por influência direta na secreção de hormônios como insulina e glucagon, além do cortisol e das catecolaminas de origem adrenal, estas últimas capazes de gerar ações hiperglucagonêmicas (GERISH et al., 1973) e hipoinsulinêmicas (KRIS et al., 1966).

## 1.2 A neurotransmissão central e o controle glicêmico.

A participação dos diversos neurotransmissores no controle da glicemia tem sido alvo de muitos estudos. Embora existam muitas publicações sobre este tema, ainda há muito a ser investigado, principalmente no que se refere aos mecanismos pelos quais as alterações nas concentrações plasmáticas de glicose ocorrem. Dentre os neurotransmissores envolvidos nos processos glicorregulatórios podemos citar a acetilcolina (ACh), a noradrenalina (NA), a adrenalina (AD), a dopamina (DA), a histamina (HA), além dos peptídeos opiáceos e da serotonina (5-HT).

A estimulação química do SNC com agonistas colinérgicos produz marcante hiperglicemia (KORNER & RAMU, 1975; IGUCHI et al., 1986; IGUCHI et al., 1990; GOTOH et al., 2001; GURUN et al., 2002), que está associada ao aumento da secreção de adrenalina e glucagon (HOOVER et al., 1978). Por outro lado, o bloqueio colinérgico central promovido pela administração de atropina reduz a resposta hiperglicêmica hemorragia-induzida ou pela 2-deoxi-glicose (SILVEIRA et al, 2003; BRITO et al., 2001). Administrações de carbacol, um agonista colinérgico muscarínico, no 3<sup>o</sup> V, ventrículo lateral e na AHL de ratos, deflagram um potente efeito hiperglicemiante (BROWN & FISHER, 1980; KORNER & RAMU, 1979; BRITO et al., 1993), enquanto que a resposta hiperglicêmica induzida pela administração central de neostigmina, um inibidor da acetilcolinesterase, dispara mecanismos glicorregulatórios diferentes, a depender do estado alimentar. Assim, no estado de jejum, a hiperglicemia é atribuída à ativação da gliconeogênese hepática e aumento da secreção de glucagon

(IGUCHI et al., 1989), enquanto que no estado alimentado a atividade glicogenolítica estaria aumentada (IGUCHI, 1988).

Tem sido demonstrada uma relação direta entre a ativação noradrenérgica hipotalâmica central e os níveis glicêmicos de ratos expostos a estímulos diversos (GOTOH et al., 2001; RAMAKRISHNAN et al., 2003). A administração de NA no HVM ativa a glicogenólise hepática e esta resposta é independente da integridade da medula adrenal ou da hipófise, ao tempo que pode ser impedida pela administração de  $\beta$ -bloqueadores (SMYTHE et al., 1989; SMYTHE et al., 1984) apontando para a participação destes receptores neste processo.

Em ratos no estado de jejum, as respostas hiperglicêmicas parecem ser dependentes da gliconeogênese que é desencadeada após estimulação adrenérgica (IGUCHI et al., 1989). A noradrenalina estimula ainda respostas hiperinsulinêmicas e hipoglicêmicas quando injetada na AHL, sendo estas respostas inibidas pela administração sistêmica de atropina, um antagonista muscarínico, mostrando uma possível participação parassimpática periférica (STEFFENS et al., 1984). A injeção intracerebroventricular (ICV), intrahipotalâmica (SHIMAZU & ISHIKAWA, 1981; IGUCHI et al., 1985) ou intravenosa de adrenalina também eleva os níveis glicêmicos, mostrando a relevância do sistema nervoso simpático no controle da glicemia. Injeções centrais de 2-deoxi-glicose (2-DG), uma forma não metabolizável da glicose que gera citoglicopenia, causam hiperglicemia periféricamente pelo aumento da atividade simpática central (MATSUNAGA et al., 1989).

A dopamina também tem sido implicada na regulação glicêmica. A estimulação dos receptores dopaminérgicos  $D_3$  eleva os níveis glicêmicos e promove queda dos níveis de insulina (UVNÄS-MOBERG & HILLEGAART, 1996) por um mecanismo que pode ser dependente da ativação de receptores  $\alpha_2$ -adrenérgicos em células  $\beta$ -pancreáticas (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAULD, 1987). Outros achados mostram que circuitos dopaminérgicos centrais parecem modular a atividade simpática na medula adrenal levando a alterações na glicorregulação (ARNERIC et al., 1984). Por exemplo, neurônios histaminérgicos originados no hipotálamo posterior projetam-se para outras áreas hipotalâmicas e outras regiões cerebrais (PANULA et al., 1989; SCHWARTZ et al., 1991), e injeções ICV de histamina provocam hiperglicemia por ativação de receptores histaminérgicos  $H_1$  em ratos (NONOGAKI et al., 1994). É conhecido que injeções centrais de histamina elevam os níveis de catecolaminas no plasma e que a adrenalectomia bilateral diminui a resposta hiperglicêmica, sinalizando que a adrenalina secretada pela medula adrenal pode ser a maior responsável pela hiperglicemia observada (NISHIBORI et al., 1987). Peptídios opiáceos centrais estão envolvidos na regulação dos níveis glicêmicos através de efeitos diretos sobre a secreção de hormônios pancreáticos já descrita em distintas espécies de animais (GREEN et al., 1980; HERMANSEN, 1983; IPP et al., 1978). A ação hiperglicemiante das vias opiatérgicas centrais é conseqüente ao aumento da atividade simpática periférica resultante da liberação de catecolaminas (VAN LOON & APPEL, 1981), enquanto que a administração do peptídio central somatostatina bloqueia a resposta hiperglicêmica gerada pela ativação opiácea central (BROWN et al.,



1979), revelando que neurotransmissores opióides peptidérgicos cerebrais influenciam a glicemia.

### 1.3 A serotonina, seus receptores e sua participação no controle da glicemia.

Desde a sua descoberta, aproximadamente cinqüenta anos atrás, a serotonina tem sido a razão de muitos estudos. As pesquisas focaram tanto o entendimento das funções da 5-HT em tecidos periféricos (GADDUM & HAMEED, 1954) quanto o seu papel como neurotransmissor cerebral (DAHLSTRÖM & FUXE, 1964).

A 5-HT e seus receptores são encontrados nos sistemas nervoso central e periférico, trato gastrintestinal, sistema cardiovascular e sangue (HOYER et al., 2002). Os circuitos serotoninérgicos centrais situam-se na linha média mesencefálica em estruturas conhecidas como núcleos da rafe e se distribuem de forma difusa atingindo rostralmente o telencéfalo e caudalmente à medula. Estudos têm demonstrado que os núcleos da rafe podem inervar áreas cerebrais de forma independente ou deter projeções em comum em determinadas regiões centrais (VERTES & KOCSIS, 1994; VERTES et al., 1999). O núcleo dorsal da rafe contém um grande número de corpos celulares serotoninérgicos, os quais enviam projeções que alcançam diversas regiões cerebrais como a AHL, o NPV e o núcleo parabraquial, sendo que as últimas também recebem fibras oriundas do núcleo mediano da rafe (SHIMIZU et al., 1989; PETROV et al., 1992). O hipotálamo é a região central mais envolvida nos processos que visam controlar os níveis glicêmicos e a maioria dos seus núcleos recebe um grande aporte de neurônios serotoninérgicos.

Diversas ações fisiológicas e comportamentais dependem da ativação do sistema serotoninérgico em circuitos neuronais de múltiplas estruturas do SNC onde a 5-HT é requerida. Sabe-se que a regulação do ciclo sono-vigília, ingestão alimentar, ingestão hídrica, termorregulação, pressão sanguínea, percepção dolorosa, estresse e glicemia são alguns dos parâmetros fisiológicos influenciados pela 5-HT. Por outro lado, diversos estados patológicos que incluem depressão, ansiedade, fobia social, esquizofrenia, hipertensão, distúrbios alimentares como anorexia e obesidade, abuso de drogas inclusive o álcool, enxaqueca e, mais recentemente, a síndrome do cólon irritável, tem em sua etiologia, alguma participação desta amina (HOYER et al., 2002). Assim, não é difícil entender que, para um neurotransmissor de ampla distribuição central e periférica, existam múltiplos receptores com características estruturais e funcionais distintas.

A caracterização de possíveis subtipos de receptores serotoninérgicos foi iniciada utilizando instrumentos farmacológicos. Os avanços no desenvolvimento de agonistas e antagonistas, cada vez mais seletivos, associados às técnicas de biologia molecular, geraram grande impacto nestes estudos, levando inclusive à descoberta de novos subtipos que ainda não haviam sido identificados (BARNES & SHARP, 1999). Desta forma, estão caracterizados pelo menos 14 subtipos de receptores com afinidade para 5-HT divididos em 7 diferentes famílias (5-HT<sub>1</sub> a 5-HT<sub>7</sub>), nas quais são encontrados os diversos subtipos supracitados. À exceção dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> que são receptores pentaméricos que formam canais iônicos, os demais receptores estão associados a proteínas G regulatórias responsáveis pela ativação de sistemas efetores capazes de produzir segundos mensageiros intracelulares.

A classe de receptores 5-HT<sub>1</sub> compreende cinco subtipos de receptores (5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>1B</sub>, 5-HT<sub>1D</sub>, 5-HT<sub>1E</sub> e 5-HT<sub>1F</sub>) acoplados preferencialmente, mas não exclusivamente a proteína G inibitória. Pouco se conhece sobre os possíveis papéis fisiológicos dos subtipos 5-HT<sub>1E</sub> e 5-HT<sub>1F</sub>, porém os demais componentes desta classe têm seus papéis bastante delineados tendo sido demonstradas funções dos mesmos em diversos tecidos de espécies diferentes. O subtipo 5-HT<sub>1C</sub> foi reclassificado para 5-HT<sub>2C</sub> devido a sua semelhança estrutural, operacional e transducional com os receptores da classe 5-HT<sub>2</sub> (HOYER et al., 1994). A família dos receptores 5-HT<sub>2</sub> possui três subtipos conhecidos 5-HT<sub>2A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2B</sub> e 5-HT<sub>2C</sub> que aparecem associados à proteína G<sub>q</sub>, portanto promovem suas ações a partir da formação de segundos mensageiros como o diacilglicerol (DAG) e o inositol-tri-fosfato (IP<sub>3</sub>). Em meio às ações mais conhecidas destes receptores está descrita a participação do subtipo 5-HT<sub>2B</sub> na contratilidade da musculatura lisa do intestino delgado em humanos (BORMAN & BURLEIGH, 1995), bem como sua modulação na contração de fundo gástrico em ratos (COX & COHEN, 1996). Os receptores 5-HT<sub>3A</sub> formam um canal iônico e são encontrados em neurônios centrais e periféricos. Apresentam permeabilidade seletiva para íons Na<sup>+</sup>, Ca<sup>++</sup> (influxo) e K<sup>+</sup> (efluxo), promovendo rápida despolarização celular. A mais recente classificação de receptores serotoninérgicos aponta para o aumento desta família com a caracterização das isoformas 5-HT<sub>3B</sub> e 5-HT<sub>3C</sub> (HOYER et al., 2002). Os principais efeitos conhecidos envolvem os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> em ações serotoninérgicas no aparelho cardiovascular e no trato gastrintestinal, onde regulam tanto a motilidade quanto a secreção (DE PONTI & TONINI, 2001). Os receptores 5-HT<sub>4</sub>, 5-HT<sub>6</sub> e 5-HT<sub>7</sub> atuam pelo aumento do 2º mensageiro

intracelular AMPc, acoplado-se à proteína G estimulatória. A sua classificação como receptores distintos se baseia no fato de que apresentam menos que 35% de seqüências idênticas entre si. O subtipo 5-HT<sub>4</sub> tem sido implicado na contração e secreção intestinal e como mediador de respostas taquicárdicas no átrio direito e efeitos inotrópicos positivos no átrio esquerdo de cobaias. Assim, a utilização de ligantes seletivos para os receptores 5-HT<sub>4</sub>, tem sido postulada no tratamento de arritmias cardíacas (KAUMANN & SANDERS, 1994; RAHME et al., 1999), doenças neuro-degenerativas (WONG et al., 1996) e incontinência urinária (BOYD & ROHAN, 1994). A expressão de RNAm para receptores 5-HT<sub>6</sub> revela sua presença em diversas áreas centrais como o estriado, a amígdala, o núcleo acumbente e o hipocampo. De forma inversa, não existem registros destes subtipos em órgãos periféricos. Estudos indicam que os receptores 5-HT<sub>6</sub> podem participar do controle das funções colinérgicas centrais, fato que os coloca como possíveis alvos para o tratamento de distúrbios cognitivos associados a disfunções centrais do sistema colinérgico como acontece na doença de Alzheimer (HOYER et al., 2002). Pouco se sabe sobre os possíveis papéis fisiológicos dos receptores 5-HT<sub>7</sub>. Sua alta afinidade por drogas consideradas agonistas dos receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> tem sido descrita e tem ajudado a delimitar a sua localização central (TO et al., 1995). Além disso, sua localização hipotalâmica em ratos parece ser pós-sináptica e seria regulada pelos níveis endógenos do próprio neurotransmissor (CLEMETT et al., 1999). A distribuição deste subtipo de receptor serotoninérgico em regiões tálamo-corticais e no sistema límbico sugere ainda um possível papel na fisiopatologia de distúrbios afetivos. Fechando esta classificação, estão os receptores 5-HT<sub>5</sub> que têm sido menos estudados. Este subtipo é encontrado em

roedores e no homem (ERLANDER et al., 1993; SCHANEN et al., 1996) e a sua isoforma 5-HT<sub>5A</sub> está acoplada negativamente a adenilato ciclase, sendo predominantemente expressa em astrócitos. Seus supostos papéis fisiológicos estão relacionados a adaptações comportamentais em situações de estresse (BRANCHEK & ZGOMBICK, 1997). Deste modo torna-se claro que, apesar de todo o conhecimento existente sobre os papéis fisiológicos dos receptores serotoninérgicos, ainda existem grandes vales a ser explorados. Isto torna pertinente o aparecimento de novas investigações que busquem elucidar não só as ações, mas os mecanismos pelos quais elas ocorrem, a partir da ativação do sistema serotoninérgico.

A participação serotoninérgica no controle da glicemia tem sido estudada, porém, dada a importância desta relação, os dados encontrados após uma extensa revisão da literatura podem ser considerados escassos, principalmente no que se refere às ações centrais da 5-HT neste processo. Em parte, podemos atribuir esta ocorrência ao fato de que a homeostase glicêmica é objeto de estudo dos metabologistas, enquanto que os aspectos centrais da 5-HT são abordados pelos neurocientistas, sendo mais raros os pesquisadores que estudam a interface entre as duas especialidades. De fato, são conhecidas ações serotoninérgicas centrais e periféricas relacionadas ao controle dos níveis plasmáticos de glicose (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAULD, 1987; SUGIMOTO et al., 1996).

Receptores serotoninérgicos localizados em tecidos periféricos influenciam a glicemia. A administração intravenosa (IV) do agonista dos receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 8-Hidroxi-di-n-(propilamino)tetralina (8-OH-DPAT), em doses baixas, provoca hiperglicemia de maneira dose-dependente, a qual é acompanhada de diminuição

dos níveis de insulina (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAULD, 1987) e de hiperglucagonemia em ratos (SUGIMOTO et al., 2001). A estimulação dos receptores 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> com agonistas seletivos também promove hiperglicemia (CHAOULOFF et al., 1990). Injeções IV de d-fenfluramina, um inibidor da recaptação/liberador de serotonina, elevam os níveis glicêmicos em uma resposta que parece ser dependente da liberação de catecolaminas (BAUDRIE & CHAOULOFF, 1992; CHAOULOFF et al., 1991). Esta resposta hiperglicêmica é bloqueada pela adrenalectomia bilateral em ratos, sugerindo que a adrenalina medular adrenal seja a responsável pela hiperglicemia gerada a partir da ativação de neurônios serotoninérgicos (CHAOULOFF et al., 1991). Outros trabalhos utilizando inibidores seletivos da recaptação de serotonina (ISRS), administrados agudamente por vias periféricas, mostraram que estes fármacos foram capazes de produzir aumentos significativos nos níveis plasmáticos de glicose em ratos e no homem (YAMADA et al., 1999; GOMEZ et al., 2001; SUGIMOTO et al., 1999; OSWALD et al., 2003). Existem ainda relatos da participação de receptores serotoninérgicos periféricos em respostas hiperglicêmicas induzidas por agonistas serotoninérgicos não seletivos, como 5-carboxamidotriptamina e 5-metoxitriptamina. O pré-tratamento com antagonistas seletivos para subtipos de receptores de 5-HT levou os autores a sugerir participações significativas dos receptores 5-HT<sub>7</sub> e 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> respectivamente (YAMADA et al., 1998; YAMADA et al., 1997). É ainda conhecido o papel dos receptores 5-HT<sub>2B/2C</sub> nas respostas hiperglicêmica e hiperglucagonêmica obtidas após estimulação periférica com o agonista *m*-clorofenilpiperazina (*m*-CPP) (SUGIMOTO et al., 1996; YAMADA & SUGIMOTO, 2000).



As ações exercidas centralmente pela 5-HT sobre a glicemia necessitam de mais estudos que tentem elucidar qual a real participação das vias serotoninérgicas centrais, quais os receptores envolvidos e ainda quais os mecanismos que levam a tais respostas que visam controlar os níveis de glicose no sangue. Trabalhos utilizando estimulação elétrica ou farmacológica foram realizados e os dados obtidos revelaram que os núcleos mediano e dorsal da rafe, quando estimulados elétrica ou quimicamente, promoveram elevações nos níveis glicêmicos, resposta esta que foi significativamente atenuada pela adrenalectomia e pela administração de 5,7-di-hidroxitriptamina (5,7-DHT), um agente neurotóxico serotoninérgico (LIN & SHIAN, 1991). A estimulação farmacológica central dos receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> e 5-HT<sub>2B/2C</sub> induz respostas hiperglicemiantes (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAULD, 1987; CHAOULOFF et al., 1991; DURKAN et al., 1991). É postulado que estas respostas sejam dependentes de uma interferência na liberação de insulina que seria influenciada pelos receptores  $\alpha_2$ -adrenérgicos, os quais são mediadores das alterações metabólicas geradas pelo agonista 8-OH-DPAT. Este agonista foi ainda capaz de elevar a glicemia em ratos após administração no NPV (KORTE et al., 1991). Outra evidência da participação serotoninérgica central no controle glicêmico é a resposta hiperglicêmica obtida após a administração periférica de *p*-cloroanfetamina, um agente indutor da liberação de 5-HT (YAMADA et al., 1998). A resposta hiperglicêmica dependente da estimulação serotoninérgica central pela *p*-cloroanfetamina foi potentemente bloqueada pela administração de agentes depletors de 5-HT como a *p*-clorofenilalanina (FULLER, 1992), revelando a necessidade de aumento na

atividade do sistema serotoninérgico central para se chegar a tal resultado. Os receptores 5-HT<sub>2</sub> centrais estão ainda implicados em um possível mecanismo inibitório sobre a secreção de insulina (CHAOULOFF et al., 1990), fato que pode explicar a hiperglicemia obtida após estimulação dos mesmos.

De fato, existe uma relação importante entre o sistema serotoninérgico e os hormônios pancreáticos, especificamente insulina e glucagon, que pode ser importante para o entendimento do papel da 5-HT na regulação da glicemia. A existência de um subsistema serotoninérgico no trato gastrointestinal responsável pela integração de complexas respostas fisiológicas inclui o controle de um eixo entero-pancreático. A presença de fibras serotoninérgicas no pâncreas tem sido descrita (KIRCHGESSNER & GERSHON, 1990; DING et al., 1991), inclusive demonstrando que a 5-HT está presente, tanto em células alfa quanto em células beta pancreáticas. É válido ressaltar que a participação da 5-HT no controle da função endócrina pancreática já é um fenômeno bem estabelecido (NAKAJIMA et al., 1988; CETIN, 1992). A literatura mostra ainda que a serotonina inibe a secreção de insulina (FELDMAN & LBOVITZ, 1970; LERNMARK, 1971; PONTIROLI et al., 1978) e que fármacos que aumentam a liberação de 5-HT como a fenfluramina estimulam a secreção de glucagon em pâncreas perfundidos de ratos (BARSEGHIAN et al., 1983). Injeções intraperitoniais de serotonina também são capazes de aumentar os níveis plasmáticos de glucagon em uma resposta que não é bloqueada pela adrenomedulectomia (JACOBY & BRYCE, 1978), reforçando uma possível ação serotoninérgica diretamente no pâncreas. Em estudo recente foi aventada uma participação serotoninérgica central nos mecanismos de controle da liberação de hormônios no pâncreas. Estas ações

seriam inibitórias para a liberação de insulina e estimulatórias para a secreção de glucagon (NANDI et al., 2002).

#### 1.4 Serotonina, CRH e estresse: Envolvimento no controle glicêmico.

Numerosos estudos têm demonstrado relações entre os sistemas serotoninérgico, simpático e o eixo hipotálamo-hipófise-adrenal (HHA) (CHROUSOS & GOLD, 1992; FULLER, 1996). Na década de sessenta trabalhos mostraram que eventos estressantes alteraram a síntese e/ou o *turnover* de 5-HT no cérebro, independentemente do tipo de estresse gerado (psicosocial, físico ou metabólico). Nos anos setenta trabalhos indicaram que o sistema nervoso simpático e o eixo HHA são mediadores de alterações importantes no sistema serotoninérgico central (CHAOULOFF, 1993) e que também podem ser influenciados pela 5-HT.

Dados anatômicos, bioquímicos e fisiológicos, já descritos, dão suporte à influência exercida pela 5-HT central no eixo HHA (KORDON et al., 1980; TUOMISTO & MÄNNISTÖ, 1985; WEINER & GANONG, 1978). As ações da 5-HT podem ocorrer ao nível hipotalâmico ou hipofisário, e existem relatos de modulação serotoninérgica sobre os níveis do hormônio liberador de corticotrofina (CRH), hormônio adrenocórticotrófico (ACTH) e corticosterona (LEWIS & SHERMAN, 1984; CALOGERO et al., 1989). O CRH é um peptídeo que regula processos fisiológicos e comportamentais relacionados com estresse físico e psicológico (ECKART et al., 1999). Fibras CRH-érgicas centrais alcançam os núcleos medianos da rafe e neurônios serotoninérgicos que contém CRH, revelando que, anatomicamente, existe uma ligação funcional entre circuitos CRH e serotoninérgicos (CHAOULOFF, 1993). De fato, ocorre modulação do CRH sobre o sistema serotoninérgico e vice-versa (PRICE et al., 1998) e este achado

tem relevância clínica, principalmente em doenças psiquiátricas nas quais CRH e 5-HT estão implicados.

Possíveis ações fisiológicas produzidas pela interação entre o sistema serotoninérgico e o CRH têm sido investigadas. Sabe-se que o CRH liberado pelo NPV hipotalâmico, pode mediar efeitos de agonistas dos receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> e 5-HT<sub>2</sub> sobre a liberação de catecolaminas. A aplicação *in vitro* de baixas concentrações de 8-OH-DPAT ou de 1-(2,5-dimetoxi-4-iodofenil)2-aminopropano (DOI), agonistas 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> e 5-HT<sub>2</sub> respectivamente, eleva a secreção de CRH em hipotálamo isolado de ratos (CALOGERO et al., 1989), ao tempo que a administração central do próprio CRH promove estimulação medular adrenal aumentando os níveis de catecolaminas e a pressão arterial (DUNN & BERRIDGE, 1990; FISHER, 1989). É bem conhecido que a ativação de neurônios CRH promove elevação dos níveis glicêmicos, provavelmente pelo aumento da atividade simpática (BROWN et al., 1982; GUNION et al., 1998). Por outro lado, o bloqueio dos receptores centrais para CRH reduz significativamente as elevações da adrenalina circulante e a hiperglicemia observada após o estresse (BROWN et al., 1985). Assim, é proposto que o sistema serotoninérgico central exerce um efeito excitatório sobre o eixo HHA e influencia a biossíntese e liberação de catecolaminas e glicocorticóides adrenais (AXELROD & REISINE, 1984) que podem alterar a glicemia.

O estresse agudo provoca aumento do metabolismo da 5-HT em várias regiões cerebrais e uma revisão da literatura sobre a relação entre a 5-HT e fatores estressantes, revela que este neurotransmissor é um importante componente da rede neuronal que visa a adaptação ao estresse (CHAOULOFF et

al., 1999). A exposição a um agente estressante leva o organismo a desenvolver uma resposta comportamental e neuroendócrina. Esta resposta tem como objetivo ajustar o metabolismo e o sistema cardiovascular, entre outros, para a nova situação que ora se apresenta, sendo que estes ajustes são dependentes da ativação do simpático e do eixo HHA. É bastante evidente a presença de terminais e/ou receptores serotoninérgicos em regiões conhecidamente relacionadas a respostas ao estresse como o hipotálamo, hipocampo, estriado e áreas de córtex (CHAOULOFF, 1993; GRAEFF, 1993), ao tempo que corpos celulares nos núcleos da rafe recebem densas aferências oriundas de locais centrais diversos, que incluem as regiões supracitadas (JACOBS & AZMITIA, 1992). Assim, vias serotoninérgicas estão sempre recebendo informações durante as situações estressantes, explicando a grande ativação da proteína *fos* observada nos núcleos da rafe após diferentes tipos de estresse (CULLINAN et al., 1995). Ressalta-se ainda que estudos utilizando voltametria e microdiálise mostraram aumentos significativos dos níveis hipotalâmicos de 5-HT e do seu metabólito, o ácido 5-hidroxi-indol-acético (5-HIAA), em ratos submetidos ao estresse de imobilização (SHIMIZU et al., 1989; SHIMIZU et al., 1992).

O estresse gera uma resposta hiperglicêmica dependente da liberação de adrenalina pela medula adrenal e da ativação do eixo HHA. Desde que a 5-HT e seus receptores apresentam-se como moduladores destes sistemas, é importante notar que não existem estudos mostrando como a serotonina influencia a glicemia durante o estresse. Assim, observando que a estimulação de receptores serotoninérgicos como o 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, por agonistas seletivos, promove hiperglicemia e aumento dos níveis de adrenalina (CHAOULOFF et al., 1990) e corticosterona

(LORENS & VAN DE KAR, 1987; MATHESON et al., 1989) em animais não estressados, entende-se que é pertinente estudar a participação serotoninérgica na hiperglicemia induzida pelo estresse.



### 1.5 O parâmetro alimentar e a glicemia: Implicações sobre as vias serotoninérgicas.

Os primeiros estudos que mostram uma relação funcional entre a serotonina e o controle da ingestão alimentar foram desenvolvidos há aproximadamente trinta anos. Os dados obtidos revelaram que o aumento dos níveis de 5-HT no SNC promove um dramático efeito sobre o apetite e o comportamento alimentar. O aumento na atividade serotoninérgica, através de mecanismos que podem elevar a síntese ou bloquear a degradação do neurotransmissor, ou ainda estimular diretamente seus receptores, leva a uma forte resposta hipofágica (JESPERSON & SCHELL-KRUGER, 1973).

Três importantes regiões hipotalâmicas estão implicadas no controle da ingestão alimentar e do metabolismo energético: O NPV, o HVM e a AHL. A ativação de neurônios glicosensitivos nestes núcleos promove alterações funcionais no pâncreas, glândula adrenal e fígado, atuando através das divisões do SNA. Estas eferências autonômicas são importantes para o controle do metabolismo intermediário, incluindo a regulação das concentrações plasmáticas de glicose (NANDI et al., 2002). Desta forma, é possível acreditar na existência de ações sinérgicas entre o mecanismo central que controla o apetite e aquele que regula a glicemia.

A ingestão alimentar fornece às células glicose, ácidos graxos livres e aminoácidos capazes de suprir a demanda metabólica e este processo é controlado pelo hipotálamo (LUITEN et al., 1987). O envolvimento do sistema serotoninérgico no controle da fome e da saciedade é um fenômeno bem

estabelecido. A infusão de 5-HT no NPV provoca hipofagia (SHOR-POSNER et al., 1986), mostrando que a ingestão alimentar parece aumentar a liberação hipotalâmica deste neurotransmissor. Subtipos de receptores serotoninérgicos como 5-HT<sub>1B</sub> e 5-HT<sub>2C</sub> também são mencionados na literatura como mediadores de respostas hipofágicas mediante estimulação farmacológica (CURZON, 1990).

Levando em consideração que os níveis glicêmicos flutuam de acordo com o estado metabólico do organismo, é possível afirmar que a homeostase metabólica depende da relação entre a ingestão alimentar e a glicemia. O estado alimentado promove ações através da AHL e do HVM sobre a secreção de hormônios pancreáticos como a insulina e o glucagon (DE JONG et al., 1977; STEFFENS, 1981) e, portanto influencia o comportamento alimentar e os níveis glicêmicos. É válido ressaltar que estas regiões do hipotálamo são densamente inervadas por circuitos serotoninérgicos. Assim, o entendimento das relações ora mencionadas se faz necessário, desde que utilizamos neste trabalho animais alimentados ou submetidos ao jejum. Como mencionado anteriormente, o estado alimentar pode levar ao desencadeamento de processos distintos de controle dos níveis de glicose plasmáticos. Dessa forma, a hiperglicemia pode ser resultante de gliconeogênese em animais em jejum e da glicogenólise em animais alimentados, como demonstrado para as vias colinérgicas que, quando estimuladas com neostigmina, induzem o aumento dos níveis glicêmicos que podem ser bloqueados significativamente pelo pré-tratamento com um inibidor da gliconeogênese periférica (IGUCHI et al., 1989).

Portanto, a proposta do presente trabalho foi avaliar a participação do sistema serotoninérgico central na regulação glicêmica, utilizando inicialmente o

inibidor seletivo da recaptação de serotonina, fluoxetina, que inibe a recaptação serotoninérgica aumentando os níveis deste neurotransmissor na fenda sináptica e, por conseguinte a estimulação serotoninérgica. Em seguida, administramos a quipazina, um agente serotoninérgico capaz de estimular subtipos diferentes de receptores da 5-HT promovendo ações agonistas diretas. Buscamos ainda avaliar se as respostas hiperglicêmicas geradas pela estimulação serotoninérgica central seriam dependentes da integridade funcional do sistema CRH central e dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, sistemas estes que foram estudados seletivamente ao final deste trabalho.

## 2 OBJETIVOS

### 2.1 OBJETIVO GERAL:

Estudar a participação das vias serotoninérgicas centrais no controle da glicemia em ratos em jejum ou alimentados, submetidos ou não ao estresse de imobilização.

### 2.2 OBJETIVOS ESPECÍFICOS:

O primeiro momento deste estudo nos levou a buscar uma possível participação do sistema serotoninérgico central na regulação glicêmica, utilizando uma abordagem farmacológica que fosse a mais abrangente possível. Para esta avaliação procuramos:

1. Estudar o efeito da estimulação farmacológica serotoninérgica central pelo inibidor seletivo da recaptção de serotonina (fluoxetina) sobre a glicemia em ratos.

A partir dos resultados encontrados, resolvemos averiguar se a estimulação serotoninérgica central promovida pela administração de um agonista serotoninérgico, capaz de atingir alguns subtipos de receptores de 5-HT, levaria ao mesmo perfil de resposta encontrada após uma ampla ativação serotoninérgica central. Desta forma decidimos:

2. Averiguar o efeito da estimulação farmacológica serotoninérgica central pelo agonista não específico (quipazina) sobre a glicemia em ratos.

Ao final desta etapa do trabalho, passamos a tentar identificar as possíveis vias ou mecanismos que levavam às respostas encontradas. Nesse momento resolvemos:

3. Estudar o efeito do bloqueio farmacológico do fator de liberação da corticotrofina (CRF) central sobre a resposta hiperglicêmica induzida pela estimulação serotoninérgica central em ratos.
4. Investigar a participação dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais na hiperglicemia induzida pela estimulação das vias serotoninérgicas centrais em ratos.

Em seguida, levantamos uma questão adicional: as ações do CRH e dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais ocorrem como consequência da estimulação serotoninérgica central ou são geradas por mecanismos isolados? Desta forma, decidimos:

5. Avaliar o efeito da administração de antagonistas seletivos do CRH e dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais sobre a glicemia de ratos.

Por fim, resolvemos estudar se a resposta encontrada após o bloqueio dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> estava relacionada à existência de um tônus endógeno ou se a sua ocorrência era devida à estimulação farmacológica central. Levando-se em consideração a importância destes receptores como alvo de diversos agentes farmacológicos e a inexistência de dados que os relacionassem com a glicemia, buscamos:

6. Caracterizar o papel dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais no controle glicêmico em animais em jejum ou alimentados, submetidos ou não ao estresse de imobilização.

### 3 JUSTIFICATIVAS

A ampliação dos estudos sobre a relação entre o sistema nervoso central e a homeostase glicêmica tem alta relevância científica. Novas descobertas neste sentido podem promover mudanças significativas no entendimento de parâmetros fisiológicos, ainda alvo de estudos. O conhecimento adquirido dos meios pelos quais o organismo mantém o equilíbrio entre a produção e o consumo de glicose, ou ainda sobre as situações que levam ao descontrole dos níveis glicêmicos, é de grande utilidade em áreas aplicadas como a clínica médica, a metabologia e a diabetologia.

O sistema serotoninérgico tem sido amplamente investigado, visto que a serotonina participa de muitos fenômenos neurovegetativos e comportamentais e a literatura aponta a sua participação no controle da glicemia. Porém os dados conhecidos são escassos e merecem maior aprofundamento.

O estado alimentar é capaz de alterar os níveis de serotonina centralmente, o que leva à necessidade de um entendimento maior das influências do sistema serotoninérgico central sobre a glicemia. A situação alimentar é capaz de gerar mudanças hormonais importantes que visam a regulação da glicemia em situações de escassez de alimento ou no estado pós-prandial.

Situações do cotidiano que geram estresse alteram parâmetros metabólicos como a glicemia e, embora sejam tão importantes, são poucos os estudos que procuram esclarecer até que ponto o estresse influencia a glicemia e, ainda, quais os neurotransmissores que estariam envolvidos neste processo. Desde que a

serotonina pode influenciar mecanismos fisiológicos que regulam as repostas ao estresse, torna-se muito importante esta investigação.

Fármacos consumidos ilegalmente que incluem a cocaína e MDMA (*ecstasy*), provocam seus efeitos através de ações sobre a neurotransmissão central, incluindo as vias serotoninérgicas como um de seus alvos preferenciais. A partir do amplo entendimento destas relações poderá ser possível aumentar o que se sabe sobre a dependência química, física e psíquica, adquirida pelos usuários, e possíveis soluções para este grave problema.

Não podemos deixar de mencionar a importância da utilização de agentes farmacológicos que atuam no sistema serotoninérgico central. Sua utilização em terapêutica é cada vez maior, tanto na clínica médica quanto na psiquiatria.

## 4. ARTIGOS

4.1 Hyperglycemia induced by acute central fluoxetine administration: role of the central CRH system and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors.

4.2 Hyperglycemia induced by pharmacological activation of central serotonergic pathways depends on the functional integrity of brain CRH system and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors.

4.3 Central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor stimulation by *m*-CPBG increases blood glucose in rats



# Hyperglycemia induced by acute central fluoxetine administration: role of the central CRH system and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors

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## Abstract

Brain serotonin and CRH systems participate in the control of blood glucose levels. We have previously demonstrated that the pharmacological stimulation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors, the target for several therapeutic agents used as antiemetics in the course of chemotherapy, induces hyperglycemia. The aim of the present study was to investigate the participation of the brain CRH component and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in basal blood glucose levels as well as in the hyperglycemia induced by third ventricle injections of fluoxetine, a serotonin reuptake inhibitor with a broad range of clinical use. In this study, we used fasted adult Wistar male rats (220 ± 20 g) whose third ventricles were cannulated 7 days prior to the experiments. Acute third ventricle injections of fluoxetine caused a significant increase in plasma glucose levels throughout the experiment. Pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a selective CRH antagonist, significantly blunted fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia. Also, pretreatment with two distinct selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists (LY-278,584 and ondansetron) significantly impaired the rise in plasma glucose levels observed in fluoxetine-treated animals pretreated with isotonic saline solution. None of these antagonists was able to modify blood glucose levels when injected alone into the third ventricle. Animals receiving third ventricle injections of fluoxetine, in spite of being hyperglycemic, presented plasma insulin levels similar to those displayed by normoglycemic, saline-treated controls. It is suggested that the acute increase in brain serotonergic activity caused by third ventricle injections of fluoxetine induces a hyperglycemic response that requires the functional integrity of the brain CRH system and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors. Also, it is proposed that the absence of a compensatory increase in plasma insulin levels may contribute to the generation of a hyperglycemic response after central fluoxetine administration.

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**Keywords:** Serotonin; CRH; 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors; LY-278,584; Ondansetron; Insulin; Hyperglycemia; Fluoxetine;  $\alpha$ -Helical CRH

## 1. Introduction

The brain serotonin circuitries, a diffuse neurochemical system related to the control of several behavioral and visceral actions leading to homeostatic adjustments (Barnes and Sharp, 1999), participate in the regulation of plasma glucose levels (Nonogaki and Iguchi, 1997).

A hyperglycemic response is observed after electrical stimulation of both dorsal and median raphe nuclei, an

effect also obtained when these sites are chemically stimulated by kainic acid or glutamate. Conversely, the destruction of serotonergic fibers by specific neurotoxic agents impairs hyperglycemia after electrical stimulation of raphe nuclei (Lin and Shian, 1991). The increase in brain serotonergic transmission after peripheral administration of 5-hydroxytryptophan, enhances blood glucose in rats (Wong and Tyce, 1978), and the same response is obtained after the administration of *d*-fenfluramine, a serotonin uptake inhibitor/releaser (Baudrie and Chaouloff, 1992; Chaouloff et al., 1992).

Blood glucose increases after central administration of selective 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> and 5-HT<sub>2C</sub> receptor agonists, and the mechanism explaining this effect seems to be dependent on peripheral adrenaline release (Baudrie and Chaouloff,

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1992; Sugimoto et al., 1996). Central administration of 8-OH-DPAT, a selective 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> agonist, induces hyperglycemia (Chaouloff and Jeanrenaud, 1987; Chaouloff et al., 1990). Furthermore, we have recently shown that pharmacological activation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors by the selective agonist m-CPBG elicits a significant increase in blood glucose in rats (Carvalho et al., 2002).

Many behavioral and visceral responses are partially regulated by brain circuitries that use corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH) as a neuromodulator (Eckart et al., 1999). A reciprocal interaction between central systems using serotonin and CRH seems to exist. Indeed, in the central nervous system, CRH modulates the serotonin system, whose activity appears to be influenced by central CRH (Chaouloff, 1993; Price et al., 1998). Intracerebroventricular administration of CRH induces an increase in blood glucose that depends on the activation of the sympathetic nervous system, leading to an enhancement of epinephrine and norepinephrine secretion (Brown et al., 1982).

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors provoke an acute enhancement of central serotonin neurotransmission. Acute fluoxetine administration induces an increase in blood glucose levels in mice, and fluvoxamine elicits a significant hyperglycemic response in man (Oswald et al., 2003; Yamada et al., 1999; Sugimoto et al., 1999). Central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors are the target of several agents used as antiemetics in the course of chemotherapy and their participation in anxiolytic, antipsychotic and cognitive-enhancing events has been demonstrated by several pharmacological protocols (Maura et al., 1992).

Taking the above information into consideration, in the present study, we decided to investigate the participation of the central CRH system and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in the hyperglycemic response induced by the acute central administration of fluoxetine in fasted rats.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. Animals

Wistar male rats (220 ± 20 g) kept under controlled light (lights on from 7 AM to 7 PM) and temperature (22–24 °C) conditions were used in the present study. In the days immediately prior to the experimental sessions, they had free access to tap water and laboratory chow (Nuvital Nutrientes Ltda, Curitiba, Brazil). The experimental protocols were conducted according to the regulations established by the National Institutes of Health (USA). The number of animals used in each experimental set varied from 6 to 14.

Five days before the experimental sessions the third ventricle was cannulated under pentobarbital anesthesia (50 mg/kg i.p.). This was carried out by implanting a 22-gauge stainless steel cannula (15 mm in length) using a

stereotaxic apparatus (David Kopf Instruments, Tujunga, CA). The following coordinates were used: anteroposterior = 0.5 mm behind bregma; lateral = 0.0 mm; vertical 8.5 mm below the skull. The cannulas were cemented to the skull bone with dental acrylic and a 28-gauge obturator was provided to avoid obstruction. To confirm whether the tip of the cannula was in the proper place, the animals were sacrificed by CO<sub>2</sub> inhalation and a third ventricle injection of Blue Evans dye was applied. Only data from animals whose cannulas were strictly inside the third ventricle were analyzed.

The day before the experimental sessions, a silastic jugular catheter was placed into the right atria according to the procedures described elsewhere (Harms and Ojeda, 1974). The catheter was filled with heparinized saline (25 IU/ml) and led subcutaneously to the neck, where it was exteriorized and sealed. The catheter was flushed with heparinized saline on the day of the experiment. An extension of polyethylene tubing allowed blood collection without disturbing the animals.

### 2.2. Drugs and microinjections

The following drugs were used: fluoxetine, a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor, and LY-278,584 (1-methyl-N-[8-methyl-8-azabicyclo(3.2.1)-oct-3-yl]-1H-indazole-3-carboxamide), a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist (Abi-Dargham et al., 1993) were purchased from Sigma Co. St. Louis, MO, USA. Ondansetron, another selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist (Gaster and King, 1997), was donated by GlaxoWellcome Research and Development Ltd., UK. The CRH competitive antagonist  $\alpha$ -helical CRH<sub>9-41</sub> (Rivier et al., 1984; Eckart et al., 1999) was acquired from Peninsula Laboratories. All drugs injected into the third ventricle were dissolved in isotonic saline solution. Third ventricle injections were given using a Hamilton microsyringe connected to a 30-gauge injector through a polyethylene tube. A total volume of 2  $\mu$ l was slowly injected (60–90 s). The doses and regimens used for each compound were determined in pilot experiments.

### 2.3. Experimental design

First, we studied the effect of third ventricle injections of fluoxetine on blood glucose levels of fasted animals. These animals had no access to food for the 18 h prior to of the experiments (food access ceased at 6 PM on the day preceding the experimental session) and the experiments always began at 12 PM. Fluoxetine was injected into the third ventricle, at various doses, immediately after the collection of a blood sample (pre-drug sample).

To investigate whether the hyperglycemic effect induced by central injections of fluoxetine was dependent on the activation of central CRH components, different groups of fasted rats received third ventricle injections of  $\alpha$ -helical

CRH, a selective CRH antagonist, at various doses, 10 min before the central administration of fluoxetine.

To study the participation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors on fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia, different groups of fasted rats received third ventricle injections of two distinct 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists (LY-278,584 and ondansetron) at several doses, 15 min before the central administration of fluoxetine.

To investigate whether the participation of the central CRH and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor components in fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia was physiological, different groups of animals received third ventricle injections of each one of the antagonists used (ondansetron, LY-278,584 and  $\alpha$ -helical CRH) alone in the highest dose employed in the previous experimental sets.

To study the role insulin in fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia, different groups of animals received third ventricle injections of fluoxetine in the highest dose used in the first experimental set and had their insulin plasma levels determined.

Blood samples were collected in a volume of 0.4 ml. To avoid hypovolemia, an equal amount of isotonic saline solution was intravenously injected after each sampling. A pre-drug blood sample (baseline values) was collected immediately before central injections and considered as time 0'. All groups included in the present study had blood samples collected at 5, 30, 60, 90 and 120 min after the administration of fluoxetine.

After centrifugation, plasma samples were stored at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  until plasma glucose concentrations were determined using the glucose oxidase method with commercial kits (Glucox 500) purchased from DOLES (Goiania, Brazil). Plasma insulin levels were determined by radioimmunoassay using kits acquired from Linco Research (St. Charles, MO, USA).

### 2.3.1. Statistical analysis

To determine the effect of the drugs or saline on blood glucose, the blood glucose concentrations obtained at the various times after treatment were subtracted from the blood glucose concentration measured immediately before each particular treatment. The delta values resulting from the different treatments were analyzed by a computer software program (SigmaStat for Windows, Jandel Scientific, San Rafael, CA), which performs one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparison of each treatment across time-points, followed by the post hoc Student–Newman–Keuls test. The groups were considered significantly different when  $p < 0.05$ . The data are presented as means  $\pm$  SEM.

## 3. Results

Fig. 1 shows the effect of third ventricle injections of fluoxetine, at different doses, on blood glucose levels in

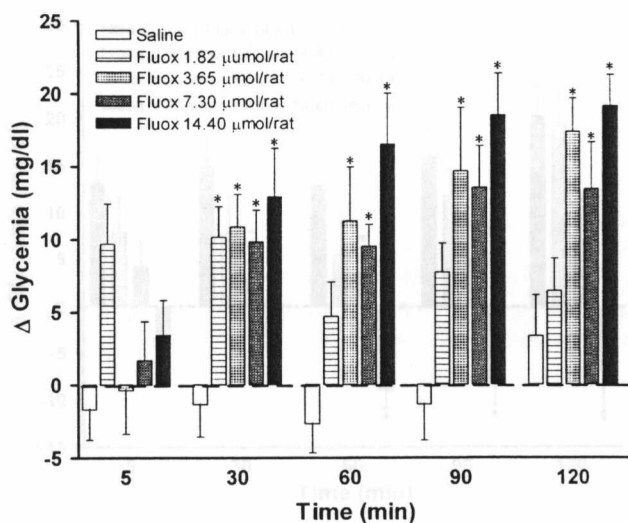


Fig. 1. Effect of third ventricle injections of fluoxetine at different doses, or saline on plasma glucose levels in fasted Wistar male rats. Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above were saline:  $92.7 \pm 4.0$ ,  $n = 6$ ; fluoxetine 1.82  $\mu\text{mol}$ :  $119.3 \pm 3.6$ ,  $n = 7$ ; fluoxetine 3.65  $\mu\text{mol}$ :  $90.3 \pm 4.0$ ,  $n = 8$ ; fluoxetine 7.30  $\mu\text{mol}$ :  $84.0 \pm 2.9$ ,  $n = 12$ ; fluoxetine 14.40  $\mu\text{mol}$ :  $72.3 \pm 3.2$ . Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. ANOVA results for each time period were  $F(4,40) = 2.02$ ,  $p = 0.1094$  at 5 min;  $F(4,40) = 3.23$ ,  $p = 0.0217$  at 30 min;  $F(4,40) = 5.18$ ,  $p = 0.0018$  at 60 min;  $F(4,40) = 4.95$ ,  $p = 0.0025$  at 90 min;  $F(4,40) = 5.45$ ,  $p = 0.0014$  at 120 min. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between fluoxetine-treated and saline-treated controls (post-test Student–Newman–Keuls).

fasted rats. At the lowest dose employed (1.82  $\mu\text{mol}$ ) fluoxetine injection was able to increase blood glucose levels only after 30 min. At every other dose used (3.65, 7.30 and 14.40  $\mu\text{mol}$ ) fluoxetine administration was able to induce significant hyperglycemic effects, beginning after 30 min and lasting until the end of the experiment. Control animals received third ventricle injections of isotonic saline solution under the same conditions and in the same amount used when fluoxetine was administered.

Fig. 2 shows the effect of the pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a CRH antagonist, on the hyperglycemic response induced by the central administration of fluoxetine (14.40  $\mu\text{mol}$ ). At the lowest dose used (0.06 nmol),  $\alpha$ -helical CRH was unable to modify fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia. However, at the intermediate dose used (0.24 nmol), pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH significantly reduced hyperglycemia induced by central fluoxetine administration. This inhibitory effect began 60 min after fluoxetine injections and lasted until the end of the experiment. At the highest dose employed (1.20 nmol),  $\alpha$ -helical CRH pretreatment yielded a significant decrease in fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemic response, beginning 30 min after fluoxetine administration and lasting for the entire duration of the experiment.

Fig. 3 illustrates the effect of the pretreatment with LY-278,584, a 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist, on the hyperglycemic response induced by the central adminis-



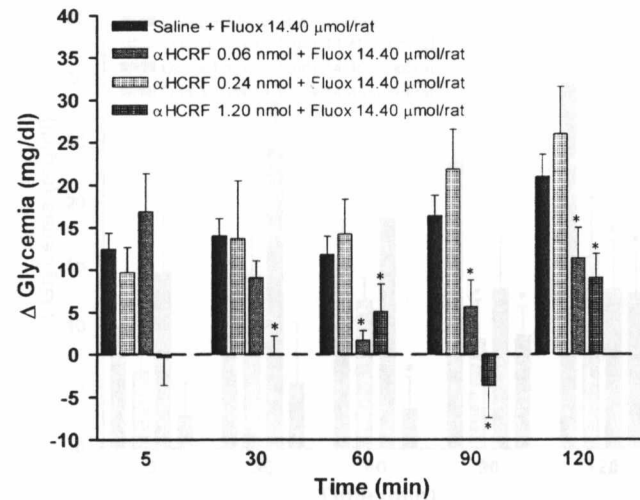


Fig. 2. Effect of central pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH at different doses, or saline, on the hyperglycemic response elicited by third ventricle injections of fluoxetine at the dose of 14.40  $\mu$ mol. Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above were saline + fluoxetine:  $101.4 \pm 2.44$ ,  $n = 15$ ;  $\alpha$ -helical CRH (0.06 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $93.1 \pm 2.9$ ,  $n = 7$ ;  $\alpha$ -helical CRH (0.24 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $89.4 \pm 3.11$ ,  $n = 7$ ;  $\alpha$ -helical CRH (1.20 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $114.8 \pm 1.2$ ,  $n = 9$ . Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. ANOVA results for each time period were  $F(3, 37) = 5.14$ ,  $p = 0.004$  at 5 min;  $F(3, 37) = 4.08$ ,  $p = 0.01$  at 30 min;  $F(3, 37) = 4.71$ ,  $p = 0.007$  at 60 min;  $F(3, 37) = 10.7$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  at 90 min;  $F(3, 37) = 4.60$ ,  $p = 0.008$  at 120 min. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) difference between animals receiving fluoxetine pretreated with saline (controls) and animals receiving fluoxetine pretreated with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH at different doses (post-test Student–Newman–Keuls).

tration of fluoxetine (14.4  $\mu$ mol). The lowest dose (15.0 nmol) was unable to modify fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia. At the intermediate dose employed (30.0 nmol), the central pretreatment with LY-278,584 significantly reduced the increase in blood glucose levels observed after fluoxetine third ventricle injections. In this case, blood glucose levels remained significantly lower in the period comprised between 30 and 120 min after fluoxetine administration, as compared to the group of animals receiving third ventricle injections of fluoxetine but pretreated with isotonic saline solution (controls). Pretreatment with LY-278,584, at the highest dose used (60.0 nmol) caused a significant impairment of fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia for the whole duration of the experiment, as compared to saline-pretreated controls.

Fig. 4 shows the effect of pretreatment with ondansetron, another 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist, on the hyperglycemic response elicited by fluoxetine (14.4  $\mu$ mol). At the lowest used (20.0 nmol) ondansetron pretreatment was able to induce a significant impairment in the hyperglycemic response induced by fluoxetine administration at 90 and 120 min. At the highest dose employed (80.0 nmol), ondansetron promoted a significant reduction in fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemic response in

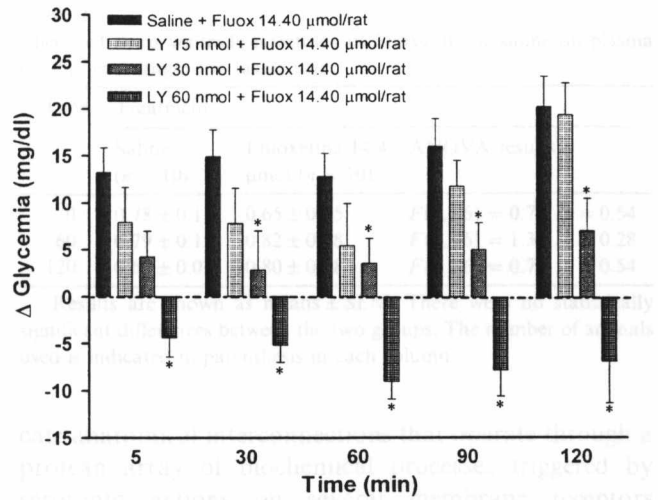


Fig. 3. Effect of central pretreatment with LY-278,584 at different doses, or saline, on the hyperglycemic response elicited by third ventricle injections of fluoxetine at the dose of 14.40  $\mu$ mol. Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above were saline + fluoxetine:  $101.4 \pm 2.44$ ,  $n = 15$ ; LY-278,584 (15.0 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $103.4 \pm 2.8$ ,  $n = 10$ ; LY-278,584 (30.0 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $104.2 \pm 3.8$ ,  $n = 9$ ; LY-278,584 (60.0 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $116.1 \pm 4.8$ ,  $n = 10$ ; LY-278,584 (60.0 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $120.7 \pm 2.8$ ,  $n = 9$ . Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. ANOVA results for each time period were  $F(3, 34) = 5.57$ ,  $p = 0.0005$  at 5 min;  $F(3, 34) = 7.08$ ,  $p = 0.0008$  at 30 min;  $F(3, 34) = 10.5$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  at 60 min;  $F(3, 34) = 13.6$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  at 90 min;  $F(3, 34) = 12.1$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  at 120 min. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) difference between animals receiving fluoxetine pretreated with saline (controls) and animals receiving fluoxetine pretreated with LY-278,584 at different doses (post-test Student–Newman–Keuls).

the period between 60 and 120 min after third ventricle injections of fluoxetine. Animals receiving third ventricle injections of fluoxetine but pretreated with ondansetron were compared to animals receiving fluoxetine but pretreated with isotonic saline-solution.

Table 1 shows that plasma glucose levels were not affected by third ventricle injections of the CRH antagonist  $\alpha$ -helical CRH (1.20 nmol) or the 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor blockers, ondansetron (80 nmol) and LY-278,584 (60 nmol), when any of these compounds was administered alone as compared to saline-treated controls.

Table 2 shows that plasma insulin levels in fasted animals receiving third ventricle injections of fluoxetine (14.40  $\mu$ mol) are not different from those of saline-treated controls, despite a significant increase in plasma glucose concentration, as demonstrated in Fig. 1.

#### 4. Discussion

In the present study we have demonstrated that third ventricle injections of fluoxetine, a serotonin reuptake inhibitor, produce a significant increase in plasma glucose levels. The experiments performed here also

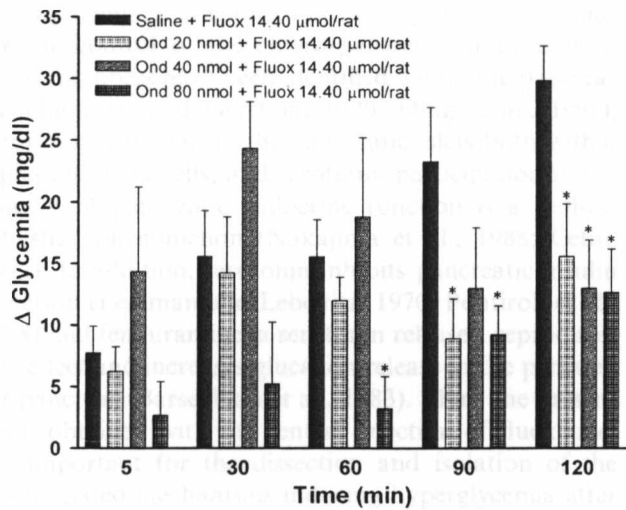


Fig. 4. Effect of central pretreatment with ondansetron at different doses, or saline, on the hyperglycemic response elicited by third ventricle injections of fluoxetine at the dose of 14.40 µmol. Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above were saline + fluoxetine:  $106.7 \pm 7.7$ ,  $n = 7$ ; ondansetron (20.0 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $118.2 \pm 4.6$ ,  $n = 9$ ; ondansetron (40.0 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $113.7 \pm 4.4$ ,  $n = 6$ ; ondansetron (80.0 nmol) + fluoxetine:  $112.0 \pm 2.9$ ,  $n = 9$ . Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. ANOVA results for each time period were  $F(3, 27) = 1.84$ ,  $p = 0.16$  at 5 min;  $F(3, 27) = 2.81$ ,  $p = 0.06$  at 30 min;  $F(3, 27) = 4.04$ ,  $p = 0.02$  at 60 min;  $F(3, 27) = 3.41$ ,  $p = 0.31$  at 90;  $F(3, 27) = 4.32$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , at 120 min. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) difference between animals receiving fluoxetine pretreated with saline (controls) and animals receiving fluoxetine pretreated with ondansetron at different doses (post-test Student–Newman–Keuls).

indicate that fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia seems to depend on the functional integrity of the brain CRH system and central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors, since pretreatment with both a CRH antagonist ( $\alpha$ -helical CRH) and two distinct selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor blockers (LY-278,584 and ondansetron) significantly blunts the increase in blood glucose levels observed after the central administration of fluoxetine. It is also shown that, in spite of producing hyperglycemia, third ventricle injections of fluoxetine do not modify plasma insulin levels.

Brain serotonergic pathways configure a vast neuronal network of mesencephalic origin exhibiting intri-

Table 2

Effects of third ventricle injections of fluoxetine or saline on plasma insulin levels (ng/dl) in fasted rats

Time	Treatment		ANOVA results
	Saline ( $n = 10$ )	Fluoxetina 14.4 $\mu$ mol ( $n = 10$ )	
0	$0.78 \pm 0.13$	$0.65 \pm 0.05$	$F(2, 26) = 0.73$ , $p = 0.54$
60	$0.79 \pm 0.15$	$0.82 \pm 0.18$	$F(2, 26) = 1.34$ , $p = 0.28$
120	$0.62 \pm 0.07$	$0.80 \pm 0.08$	$F(2, 26) = 0.73$ , $p = 0.54$

Results are shown as means  $\pm$  SEM. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups. The number of animals used is indicated in parenthesis in each column.

cate anatomical interconnections that operate through a protean array of biochemical processes triggered by serotonin actions on several membrane receptors (Barnes and Sharp, 1999; Hoyer et al., 2002). The central serotonergic system is involved in the regulation of a large number of physiological processes including food and water intake, blood pressure control, neuroendocrine events, sleep/arousal cycling and thermoregulation.

It seems that brain serotonin also participates in the control of blood glucose levels. Indeed, pharmacological stimulation of central 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> and 5-HT<sub>2B/2C</sub> receptors seems to elicit a hyperglycemic response in rats (Chaouloff and Jeanrenaud, 1987; Durcan et al., 1991; Sugimoto et al., 1996; Yamada et al., 1998). We have recently demonstrated that third ventricle injections of m-CBPBG, a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor agonist, induce a significant increase in blood glucose levels in fasted rats (Carvalho et al., 2002). Also, *p*-chloroamphetamine, an agent that increases serotonin release by serotonergic neurons, promotes hyperglycemia (Yamada et al., 1998).

A literature review shows that fluoxetine administered by a peripheral route induces a significant increase in blood glucose in mice (Yamada et al., 1999). More recently it has been demonstrated that the acute administration of fluvoxamine, another SSRI, elicits a significant increase in blood glucose levels in diabetic patients (Oswald et al., 2003). However, a huge serotonergic system is located in the gastrointestinal tract,

Table 1  
Effects of third ventricle injections of ondansetron, LY-278,584,  $\alpha$ -helical CRH or saline on plasma glucose levels in fasted rats

Time	Treatment				ANOVA results
	Saline (9)	Alfa-HCRF 1.20 nmol (13)	Ondansetron 80 nmol (8)	LY-278,584 60 nmol (10)	
5	$4.22 \pm 2.61$	$4.69 \pm 1.59$	$1.00 \pm 4.58$	$4.00 \pm 1.98$	$F(3, 36) = 0.37$ , $p = 0.77$
30	$1.44 \pm 1.97$	$0.54 \pm 2.63$	$6.00 \pm 3.85$	$2.00 \pm 2.09$	$F(3, 36) = 0.73$ , $p = 0.54$
60	$-0.89 \pm 1.86$	$3.23 \pm 2.60$	$0.50 \pm 3.33$	$-3.60 \pm 2.42$	$F(3, 36) = 1.34$ , $p = 0.28$
90	$-5.11 \pm 1.59$	$3.46 \pm 1.97$	$-0.50 \pm 3.89$	$0.40 \pm 2.76$	$F(3, 36) = 2.04$ , $p = 0.13$
120	$1.33 \pm 2.46$	$6.23 \pm 3.20$	$7.50 \pm 3.89$	$6.80 \pm 2.60$	$F(3, 36) = 0.73$ , $p = 0.54$

Results are shown as means  $\pm$  SEM. There were no statistically significant differences among the groups. The number of animals used is indicated in parenthesis in each column.

playing complex integrative physiological roles, including the control of the entero-pancreatic axis. Indeed, serotonin fibers have been identified within the pancreas (Kirchgessner and Gershon, 1990; Ding et al., 1991), serotonin is present in the pancreatic islets both within alpha and beta cells, and serotonin participation in the control of pancreatic endocrine function is a well-established phenomenon (Nakajima et al., 1988; Cetin, 1992). In addition, serotonin inhibits pancreatic insulin secretion (Feldman and Lebovitz, 1970; Pontiroli et al., 1978) and fenfluramine, a serotonin releaser, reproduces this effect and increases glucagon release in the perfused rat pancreas (Barseghian et al., 1983). Thus, the present data, obtained with the central injection of fluoxetine, are important for the dissection and isolation of the brain-related mechanisms inducing hyperglycemia after acute fluoxetine administration.

Acute administration of SSRIs such as fluoxetine induces a prompt rise in serotonin availability in the synaptic clefts, immediately increasing serotonergic transmission. When these agents are administered chronically the excess of synaptic serotonin may stimulate autoceptors located in serotonin neurons, leading to a reduction in serotonergic activity. This explains the huge differences observed in several visceral and behavioral responses after acute and chronic serotonin administration. Therapeutical effects of fluoxetine are observed only after chronic treatment and the neurochemical events that mediate such effects remain controversial (Mongeau et al., 1997). In humans, acute effects of fluoxetine administration include restlessness, nervousness, agitation and anxiety, a cluster of symptoms that is collectively known as jitteriness (Amsterdam et al., 1994) and also, hyperglycemia (Oswald et al., 2003). Thus, the fact that the chronic use of fluoxetine and other serotonin reuptake inhibitors may induce hypoglycemia in humans (Deeg and Lipkin, 1996; Pollack et al., 2001) reflects an effect produced by a rather different neurochemical condition, as compared to the neurochemical events triggered by fluoxetine when acutely administered through an intracerebroventricular route.

Here, we have used central administration of fluoxetine as a pharmacological procedure that acutely increases brain serotonergic transmission (Raap and Van de Kar, 1999) without eliciting actions on the peripheral endocrine system involved in blood glucose regulation. Conditions that increase brain serotonin release, such as acute fenfluramine administration, are associated with an enhancement in c-Fos expression in CRH neurons in the hypothalamus (Javed et al., 1999). Thus, it is rational to suggest that an acute increase in brain CRH activity may be part of the mechanisms leading to fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia. This prompted us to investigate the possible role of brain CRH in the hyperglycemic response observed here.

It is well documented that the activation of central CRH neurons produces an increase in sympathetic activity that leads to an enhancement in blood glucose and free fatty acids (Brown et al., 1982; Lenz et al., 1987; Gunion et al., 1988). On the other hand, the blockade of CRH receptors significantly decreases stress-induced elevations in blood epinephrine and glucose levels (Brown et al., 1985).

In the present study, the previous administration of  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a CRH competitive antagonist that displaces endogenous CRH binding, significantly decreased the hyperglycemic response observed after central fluoxetine administration. A dense and complex anatomo-functional interplay links the central serotonergic and CRH systems. Indeed, the hypothalamic paraventricular nuclei, bilateral structures regulating CRH release, are innervated by serotonergic fibers (Hanley and Van de Kar, 2003) and CRH released from the paraventricular nuclei seems to mediate the increase in ACTH after pharmacological activation of brain 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors (Pan and Gilbert, 1992). Furthermore, the hypothalamo-pituitary-adrenocortical axis is stimulated by pharmacological activation of the amygdaloid complex (Feldman et al., 1998). Also, CRH neurons within the paraventricular nuclei increase c-Fos expression after central administration of numerous serotonin agonists (Bovetto et al., 1996). Conversely, the serotonin-induced increase in metabolic rate is attenuated by CRH antagonists (Bovetto et al., 1996) and CRH seems to mediate the serotonin-induced increase in  $\beta$ -endorphin secretion (Bagdy et al., 1990). Other groups have also established the participation of brain CRH in the effects of serotonin reuptake inhibitors. Indeed, the effects of fluvoxamine on the body weight of rats are mediated by CRH (Wieczorek et al., 2001). Therefore, the data presented here demonstrating that the blockade of central CRH function by  $\alpha$ -helical CRH significantly blunts fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemic response merely reveal another functional link between brain CRH and serotonergic systems.

We have previously demonstrated that the central pharmacological activation of 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors leads to a significant increase in blood glucose in fasted rats (Carvalho et al., 2002). This prompted us to investigate here a possible participation of that class of serotonergic receptors in fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia. The central administration of either of the two different 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists employed in the present study generated a significant impairment in the rise in blood glucose elicited by fluoxetine. Thus, it is valid to suggest that acute third ventricle injections of fluoxetine lead to a hyperglycemic response by a mechanism that requires the functional integrity of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors.

Pretreatment with LY-278,584 generates a more efficacious blockade of fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia.

as compared to the blockade obtained in the group of animals pretreated with ondansetron. Ionic gates known as 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors are composed of at least three subunits (5-HT<sub>3A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>3B</sub> and 5-HT<sub>3C</sub>) and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors bearing distinct subunit combinations may exhibit different activation patterns and pharmacological profiles (Hapfelmeier et al., 2003). Different recruitment of some subunits for the formation of heteromeric 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in vivo may generate a significant heterogeneity of responses after receptor activation or blockade (Fletcher and Barnes, 1998). It is therefore possible that ondansetron and LY-278,584 act preferentially on 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors composed of a particular combination of subunits, explaining the different level of efficacy in the blockade of fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia shown here.

Both the CRH and the 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists were able to block fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia, but were unable to modify plasma glucose levels when injected alone into the third ventricle. This clearly indicates that fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia physiologically requires the activation of both central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> and CRH receptors.

Third ventricle injections of fluoxetine induce a significant increase in blood glucose levels. In fluoxetine-treated animals, however, plasma insulin levels are not significantly different from those presented by saline-treated normoglycemic controls. This seems to indicate that the acute central serotonergic stimulation evoked by central administration of fluoxetine, blunts the increment in plasma insulin levels that is normally required to compensate the hyperglycemic state generated by this procedure. This is in agreement with data in the literature showing that stimulation of brain serotonin circuitries decreases insulinemia and that this effect is mediated by the central CRH system (Wieczorek et al., 2001; Nandi et al., 2002). Furthermore, pharmacological activation of central 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors elicits a reduction in plasma insulin levels associated with hyperglycemia (Chaouloff and Jeanrenaud, 1987). The data shown here, clearly demonstrate that a central CRH component is essential in the generation of fluoxetine-induced hyperglycemia. Therefore, it is rational to suggest that a CRH-dependent enhancement in sympathetic activity may explain the absence of the counterregulatory increase in plasma insulin displayed by fluoxetine-treated animals, since an increase in sympathetic activity may impair insulin secretion and promote insulin resistance (Steffens et al., 1991; Landsberg, 1993).

In summary, the data shown in the present study seem to indicate that acute stimulation of central serotonin pathways by third ventricle injections of fluoxetine yields a hyperglycemic response that requires the functional integrity of the brain CRH system and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors. Also, it is proposed that the lack of a compensatory increase in plasma insulin levels may con-

tribute to the generation of a hyperglycemic response after central fluoxetine administration.

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**HYPERGLYCEMIA INDUCED BY PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVATION OF  
CENTRAL SEROTONERGIC PATHWAYS DEPENDS ON THE FUNCTIONAL  
INTEGRITY OF BRAIN CRH SYSTEM AND 5-HT<sub>3</sub> RECEPTORS**

Running title: brain serotonin and glucose homeostasis

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## ABSTRACT

In the present study we investigated the effect of the activation of central serotonergic pathways achieved through third ventricle injections of quipazine, a serotonergic agonist, on plasma glucose levels of fasted and fed adult Wistar male rats, whose third ventricles were cannulated 7 days before the experiments. Central quipazine administration induced a significant increase in plasma glucose levels in fasted animals, but was unable to modify plasma glucose concentrations in fed rats. Pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a CRH antagonist, significantly attenuated quipazine-induced hyperglycemia. Pretreatment with two different 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists, LY-278,584 and ondansetron, was also able to produce a significant reduction in the hyperglycemic response evoked by the central administration of quipazine. None of the antagonists used was capable of modifying plasma glucose concentrations when injected alone into the third ventricle. Quipazine-treated, hyperglycemic animals showed no increase in plasma insulin levels. It is concluded that acute pharmacological serotonergic stimulation by quipazine produces hyperglycemia by mechanisms that require the functional integrity of both CRH and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors and that an impairment in insulin secretion and/or activity may explain hyperglycemia induced by third ventricle injections of quipazine.

**KEY WORDS:** blood glucose – serotonin – quipazine – CRH antagonist – insulin - ondansetron - LY-278,584.

## **Introduction**

In mammals, brain serotonin pathways, a widespread neurochemical system that originates in several midline nuclei located within the mesencephalic raphe, participate in the regulation of various behavioral and visceral responses such as food and water intake, blood pressure, neuroendocrine events, sleep/arousal cycling and thermoregulation, and seem to affect plasma glucose regulation (1). In addition, electrical stimulation of either dorsal or median raphe nuclei elicits hyperglycemia, a response also obtained by chemical stimulation of those nuclei by kainic acid or glutamate. Conversely, the use of 5,7-dihydroxytryptamine, a neurotoxic agent that destroys serotonergic fibers, blocks the hyperglycemic effect elicited by the electrical stimulation of raphe nuclei (2). The hyperglycemic effect of *d*-fenfluramine, an indirect serotonin agonist, seems to be mediated by central 5-HT<sub>2</sub> receptors in rats (3). Also, the increase in central serotonergic transmission induced by the peripheral administration of 5-hydroxytryptophan, the first precursor in serotonin synthesis, is able to enhance blood glucose in rats (4). Central serotonergic effects on blood glucose regulation seem to depend on the type of receptor involved. Indeed, pharmacological stimulation of brain 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors by the selective agonist 8-OH-DPAT induces hyperglycemia (5, 6). Also, the central administration of selective 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> and 5-HT<sub>2C</sub> receptor agonists enhances blood glucose by a mechanism that seems to be dependent on peripheral adrenaline release (7, 8). We have recently shown that pharmacological activation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors by the selective agonist m-CPBG provokes a significant increase in blood glucose (9).

CRH is a brain peptide that regulates many physiological and behavioral responses related to physical and psychological stressors (10). Brain CRH and

serotonergic circuitries are anatomically linked since CRH fibers reach the median raphe and serotonergic neurons innervate CRH-containing neurons in the hypothalamus (11). Furthermore, a reciprocal functional interaction between these two systems seems to exist. Indeed, CRH modulates the serotonin system, whose activity seems to be influenced by central CRH (12). CRH induces a hyperglycemic response that is secondary to the enhanced peripheral secretion of both epinephrine and norepinephrine (13), a condition that leads to an increase in hepatic glucose output (14).

Considering the above information, in the present study we decided to investigate the participation of brain CRH systems and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in the hyperglycemic response elicited by quipazine-induced central pharmacological serotonergic stimulation in fasted rats.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Animals**

We used adult Wistar male rats weighing 200-250 g kept under controlled light (lights on from 07:00 A.M. to 07:00 P.M.) and temperature (22-24 °C) conditions. In the days before the experimental sessions, they had free access to tap water and laboratory chow (Nuvital Nutrientes Ltda, Curitiba, Brazil). The experimental protocols were conducted according to the guidelines of the National Institutes of Health (USA).

### **Surgical procedures**

The third ventricle was cannulated under pentobarbital anesthesia (50 mg/kg i.p.) five days prior to the experimental sessions. A 22-gauge, stainless steel cannula (15 mm in length) was stereotaxically implanted according to the

following coordinates: anteroposterior = 0.5 mm behind bregma; lateral = 0.0 mm; vertical 8.5 mm below the skull. The cannulas were cemented to the skull bone with dental acrylic and provided with an obturator (28-gauge) in order to avoid obstruction.

The day before the experimental sessions, a silastic jugular catheter was placed into the right atria according to the procedures previously described by Harms and Ojeda (15). The catheter was filled with heparinized saline (25 IU/ml) and led subcutaneously to the neck, where it was exteriorized and sealed. On the day of the experiment, the catheter was flushed with heparinized saline. An extension of polyethylene tubing allowed blood collection without disturbing the animals.

After sacrificing the animals by CO<sub>2</sub> inhalation, a third ventricle injection of Blue Evans dye was performed in order to confirm whether the tip of the cannula was correctly positioned. Only the data from animals whose cannulas were located strictly within the third ventricle were considered.

### **Drugs and injections**

The following drugs were used: quipazine, a serotonin agonist, and LY-278,584 (1-methyl-N-[8-methyl-8-azabicyclo(3.2.1)-oct-3-yl]-1H-indazole-3-carboxamide), a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist (16, 17) were purchased from Sigma Co. St. Louis, MO, USA. Ondansetron, another selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist, was kindly donated by GlaxoWellcome Research and Development Limited, UK (18). The CRH antagonist  $\alpha$ -helical CRH<sub>9-41</sub> (10) was acquired from Peninsula Laboratories. All drugs injected into the third ventricle were dissolved in isotonic saline solution.

Third ventricle injections were performed using a Hamilton microsyringe connected to a 30-gauge injector through polyethylene tubing. A total volume of 2  $\mu$ l was slowly injected (60 - 90 s).

### **Experimental design**

Firstly, we studied the effects of third ventricle injections of quipazine in various doses in distinct groups of fasted and fed rats. In the groups of fasted rats the animals had no access to food for the 18 hours before the onset of the experiments (food access ceased at 18:00 h the day before the experimental session) and the experiments always began at 12:00 h. In the groups of fed animals, the animals were initially fasted for 14 hours (from 18:00 to 08:00 h). After this period, they had free access to standard laboratory chow for three hours (from 08:00 to 11:00 h) and the experimental sessions also began at 12:00 h. This procedure helps minimize individual variations in food intake immediately before the experimental sessions in the group of fed animals. In both groups quipazine was injected into the third ventricle immediately after the collection of a blood sample (pre-drug sample).

To investigate whether the hyperglycemic effect induced by central injections of quipazine was dependent on the activation of central CRH components, different groups of fasted rats received third ventricle injections of  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a selective CRH antagonist, at various doses 10 minutes before the central administration of quipazine.

To study the participation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors on quipazine-induced hyperglycemia, different groups of fasted rats received third ventricle injections of two distinct 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists (LY-278,584 and ondansetron) at various doses 15 minutes before the central administration of quipazine.

To evaluate whether the hyperglycemic effect of quipazine was due to an alteration in insulin secretion, a separate group of animals received third ventricle injections of quipazine at the highest dose used in the first experimental set and their plasma insulin concentration was measured.

To investigate whether the role of central CHR and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor components was physiological, separate groups of animals received third ventricle injections of each one of the tested antagonists (ondansetron, LY-278,584 and  $\alpha$ -helical CRH) alone at the highest doses used in the previous experimental set.

Blood samples were collected in a volume of 0.4 ml. To avoid hypovolemia, an equal amount of isotonic saline solution was intravenously injected after each sampling. A pre-drug blood sample (baseline values) was collected immediately before central injections and considered as time 0'. All groups of rats studied had blood samples collected at 5, 30, 60, 90 and 120 minutes after the administration of quipazine.

After centrifugation, plasma samples were stored at -20° C until glucose measurement by the glucose oxidase method, using commercial kits (Glucos 500) purchased from DOLES (Goiania, Brazil). Plasma insulin levels were measured by radioimmunoassay using kits acquired from Linco Research (St. Charles, MO, USA).

### **Statistical analysis**

To determine the effect of the drugs or saline on blood glucose, the blood glucose concentrations obtained at the various times after treatment were subtracted from the blood glucose concentration measured immediately before each particular treatment. The delta values resulting from the different forms of treatments were analyzed by a computer software program (SigmaStat for Windows, Jandel Scientific, San Rafael, CA), which performs one way analysis of variance for

comparison of each mode of treatment across time-points followed by the post hoc Student-Newman-Keuls. The groups were considered significantly different when  $p < 0.05$ . The data are presented as mean  $\pm$  SEM.

## RESULTS

Figure 1 shows that third ventricle injections of quipazine promoted a statistically significant increase in plasma glucose levels in fasted rats, as compared to saline-treated controls. At the lowest dose used (0.22 nmol), the central administration of quipazine increased plasma glucose concentration only after 120 minutes. Sixty minutes after the third ventricle injections of quipazine at the other doses used (0.45 and 0.90 nmol), there was a significant hyperglycemic response that remained throughout the experiment.

Figure 2 shows that fed rats do not display any significant modification in plasma glucose levels after receiving third ventricle injections of quipazine when compared to saline-treated controls.

Figure 3 depicts the effect of central pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a CRH antagonist, at various doses, on the hyperglycemic response generated by third ventricle injections of quipazine (0.90 nmol) in fasted rats. At the lowest dose used (0.06 nmol),  $\alpha$ -helical CRH was unable to modify quipazine-induced increase in plasma glucose levels. At the other doses used (0.13 and 0.26 nmol), the previous injection of  $\alpha$ -helical CRH significantly blunted the hyperglycemic response induced by third ventricle injections of quipazine.

Figure 4 shows the effect of central pretreatment with LY-278,584, a 5-HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist, at several doses, in fasted rats, on the hyperglycemic response provoked by third ventricle injections of quipazine (0.90 nmol). At the lowest dose used (15.0



nmol), third ventricle injections of LY-278,584 were ineffective. Pretreatment with LY-278,584 at the other doses (30.0 and 60.0 nmol) significantly reduced the increase in plasma glucose levels observed 90 minutes after the third ventricle injections of quipazine.

Figure 5 illustrates the effect of central pretreatment with ondansetron, a 5-HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist, at several doses, on quipazine-induced hyperglycemia in fasted rats. At the lowest dose used (20.0 nmol), ondansetron was unable to alter the enhancement in plasma glucose levels induced by the central administration of quipazine. Pretreatment with ondansetron at the other doses used (40.0 and 80.0 nmol) provoked a significant reduction in the hyperglycemic response generated by third ventricle injections of quipazine.

Neither the central administration of either one of the selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists (ondansetron or LY-278,584) nor of the CRH antagonist ( $\alpha$ -helical CRH) was able to modify plasma glucose concentration in fasted rats, as compared to saline-treated controls (Table 1).

Table 2 shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the plasma insulin levels of fasted animals receiving third ventricle injections of quipazine and those of saline-treated controls, despite a significant increase in plasma glucose concentration, as shown in Figure 1.

## **DISCUSSION**

The data presented here clearly demonstrate that quipazine, a non selective serotonin agonist, induces a significant increase in plasma glucose levels in fasted animals, which begins 60 minutes after its injection into the third ventricle. Conversely, third ventricle injections of quipazine at the same doses used in fasted

animals are unable to produce any significant increase in plasma glucose concentrations in fed animals. These data also show that the quipazine-induced hyperglycemic response in fasted rats depends on the functional integrity of the brain CRH system since pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a CRH antagonist, is able to revert the increase in plasma glucose levels observed after third ventricle injections of quipazine. In addition, our results also demonstrate that activation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors is a necessary step in the central mechanisms that trigger hyperglycemia after the central administration of quipazine in fasted animals, since the pharmacological blockade of those serotonergic receptors by two different antagonists, LY-278,584 and ondansetron, impairs quipazine-induced, hyperglycemic response. The central administration of either one of the antagonists used here alone (ondansetron, LY-278,584 or  $\alpha$ -helical CRH), at doses that significantly inhibited the hyperglycemic effect of quipazine, was unable to modify plasma glucose levels. Furthermore, we demonstrated here that, despite their hyperglycemic state, fasted animals receiving third ventricle injections of quipazine showed no increase in plasma insulin levels as compared to saline-treated controls.

Pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, a CRH antagonist, was able to impair the hyperglycemic response induced by the central administration of quipazine. Central CRH and serotonergic systems are interwoven and exhibit an intricate anatomo-functional interplay. Indeed, serotonin fibers innervate the paraventricular hypothalamic nucleus, a critical brain site regulating CRH release (19), and enhancement of plasma ACTH levels induced by pharmacological activation of central 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors is mediated by the release of CRH from the paraventricular nucleus (20). Also, activation of 5-HT<sub>2</sub> receptors in the amygdaloid complex enhances the hypothalamus-pituitary-axis (21).

Furthermore, several serotonin agonists increase c-Fos expression in CRH-containing paraventricular neurons (22), an important brain site regulating the reciprocal fine-tuning interactions linking feeding and metabolism. In addition, some central serotonin actions are mediated through CRH. In fact, the pharmacological blockade of CRH function by  $\alpha$ -helical CRH attenuates the serotonin-induced increase in metabolic rate (22) and  $\beta$ -endorphin secretion induced by 5-HT<sub>2</sub> receptor activation is also CRH-mediated (23). Therefore, our results showing that the blockade of central CRH function by  $\alpha$ -helical CRH reduces the hyperglycemic response induced by pharmacological activation of the serotonergic system just reveal another functional link between the central CRH and serotonergic systems. Based on the above information, we suggest that brain CRH activation is a necessary step in the generation of quipazine-induced hyperglycemic response.

Activation of the brain CRH system produces an increase in blood glucose and free fatty acids that depends on an enhancement in sympathetic activity (13, 24, 25) and the pharmacological blockade of CRH receptors by  $\alpha$ -helical CRH significantly decreases stress-induced elevations in blood glucose levels (26). Our results therefore indicate that at least one of the mechanisms by which central serotonin stimulation leads to hyperglycemia is a CRH-mediated increase in sympathetic tone.

In the present study, central serotonergic stimulation by quipazine induced hyperglycemia in fasted, but not in fed rats. Fasting activates an ascending noradrenergic projection that stimulates CRH release (27), food deprivation rapidly increases c-Fos expression in CRH neurons in several brain regions including the paraventricular nucleus (28), and feeding reduces CSF CRH

contents (29). As a result, fasted animals may present a greater CRH-induced hyperglycemic drive after central serotonergic activation by quipazine. The lack of this higher endogenous CRH-related hyperglycemic drive may explain the absence of a quipazine-induced hyperglycemic response in fed animals.

Quipazine is a serotonergic agonist that stimulates 5-HT<sub>1</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2</sub> and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors. We have previously demonstrated that central pharmacological activation of 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors by the selective agonist *m*-CPBG increases plasma glucose levels (9). In the present paper, we show that quipazine-induced hyperglycemia is, at least in part, due to the activation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors since pretreatment with two different selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> antagonists, LY-278,584 and ondansetron, was able to reduce quipazine enhancement of plasma glucose levels.

When administered alone, neither the CRH antagonist ( $\alpha$ -helical CRH) nor the 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor blockers (ondansetron and LY-278,584) were able to modify plasma glucose levels in fasted rats. This suggests that quipazine-induced hyperglycemia requires the activation of both CRH and 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor components as subsequent steps, and that these components do not work as parallel stimulatory drives.

Animals receiving central injections of quipazine presented a significant hyperglycemic response and their insulin levels did not rise as expected. This indicates that central stimulation of serotonergic pathways by quipazine may impair the increase in plasma insulin levels necessary to counterbalance the hyperglycemic state generated by central serotonergic stimulation. This is in agreement with some data in the literature showing that stimulation of central serotonergic pathways reduces plasma insulin level and that this effect is mediated by the central CRH

system (30, 31). Moreover, central stimulation of 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors induces a reduction in plasma insulin levels with concomitant hyperglycemia (5). We have demonstrated here that a central CRH component is essential for the development of a quipazine-induced hyperglycemic response. Thus, a CRH-dependent increase in sympathetic activity may explain the lack of counterregulatory insulin enhancement observed in quipazine-treated hyperglycemic animals since increased activity of the sympathetic nervous system may be a critical factor leading to impaired insulin secretion and insulin resistance (32, 33). Nevertheless, we cannot exclude that the variability in insulin plasma levels may mask regulatory effects resulting from glucose elevations of the magnitude reported in the present paper.

The brain CRH system is closely related to the genesis of several psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and depression, and pharmacological strategies for brain CRH that would lead to new psychoactive therapeutic agents are goals to be achieved in the near future (34). Brain serotonin systems and the subset of 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors are the targets of several legal and illegal pharmacological agents of routine use or abuse. Thus, the data produced here elucidating operational mechanisms of a rather important metabolic effect, the activation of brain serotonin pathways, is of both physiological and clinical significance.

In summary, our results show that acute pharmacological stimulation of central serotonin pathways by third ventricle injections of quipazine generates a hyperglycemic response that requires the functional integrity of both central CRH and serotonergic systems, and that quipazine-induced hyperglycemia seems to be a consequence of the lack of a hyperinsulinemic response necessary for preventing hyperglycemia.

## LEGEND – FIGURE 1

Effect of third ventricle injections of quipazine, at different doses, or saline on plasma glucose levels in fasted Wistar male rats. Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference between quipazine-treated and saline-treated controls ( $p < 0.05$ ). Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above: saline:  $99.1 \pm 5.1$   $n = 9$ ; quipazine 0.22 nmol:  $100.9 \pm 2.9$   $n = 13$ ; quipazine 0.45 nmol:  $95.5 \pm 2.5$   $n = 11$ ; quipazine 0.90 nmol:  $107.0 \pm 5.4$   $n = 12$ .

## LEGEND – FIGURE 2

Effect of third ventricle injections of quipazine, at different doses, or saline on plasma glucose levels in fed Wistar male rats. Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. There were no statistically significant differences between quipazine-treated and saline-treated controls. Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above: saline:  $138.2 \pm 3.9$   $n = 9$ ; quipazine 0.22 nmol:  $125.8 \pm 1.9$   $n = 13$ ; quipazine 0.45 nmol:  $130.1 \pm 3.6$   $n = 14$ ; quipazine 0.90 nmol:  $116.1 \pm 3.2$   $n = 11$ .

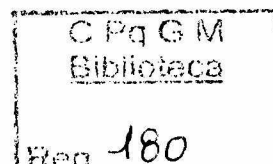
### LEGEND – FIGURE 3

Effect of central pretreatment with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH, at different doses, or saline, on the hyperglycemic response elicited by third ventricle injections of quipazine at the dose of 0.90 nmol. Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference between animals receiving quipazine pretreated with saline (controls) and animals receiving quipazine pretreated with  $\alpha$ -helical CRH ( $p < 0.05$ ). Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above: saline + quipazine:  $104.0 \pm 12.5$   $n = 9$ ;  $\alpha$ -helical CRH (0.06 nmol) + quipazine:  $94.8 \pm 2.6$   $n = 13$ ;  $\alpha$ -helical CRH (0.13 nmol) + quipazine:  $105.2 \pm 2.5$   $n = 13$ ;  $\alpha$ -helical CRH (0.26 nmol) + quipazine:  $116.4 \pm 4.4$   $n = 14$ .



#### LEGEND – FIGURE 4

Effect of central pretreatment with LY-278,584, at different doses, or saline, on the hyperglycemic response elicited by third ventricle injections of quipazine at the dose of 0.90 nmol. Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference between animals receiving quipazine pretreated with saline (controls) and animals receiving quipazine pretreated with LY-278,584 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above: saline + quipazine:  $104.0 \pm 12.5$   $n = 9$ ; LY-278,584 (15.0 nmol) + quipazine:  $92.0 \pm 4.3$   $n = 7$ ; LY-278,584 (30.0 nmol) + quipazine:  $115.4 \pm 2.7$   $n = 13$ ; LY-278,584 (60.0 nmol) + quipazine:  $104.8 \pm 8.2$   $n = 12$ .



## LEGEND – FIGURE 5

Effect of central pretreatment with ondansetron, at different doses, or saline on the hyperglycemic response elicited by third ventricle injections of quipazine at the dose of 0.90 nmol. Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference between animals receiving quipazine pretreated with saline (controls) and animals receiving quipazine pretreated with ondansetron ( $p < 0.05$ ). Preinjection plasma glucose concentrations (mg/dl) and the number of animals in each of the groups shown in the graph above: saline + quipazine:  $104.0 \pm 12.5$   $n = 9$ ; ondansetron (20.0 nmol) + quipazine:  $115.0 \pm 5.8$   $n = 7$ ; ondansetron (40.0 nmol) + quipazine:  $113.6 \pm 4.7$   $n = 13$ ; ondansetron (80.0 nmol) + quipazine:  $98.7 \pm 2.7$   $n = 12$ .

Figure 1

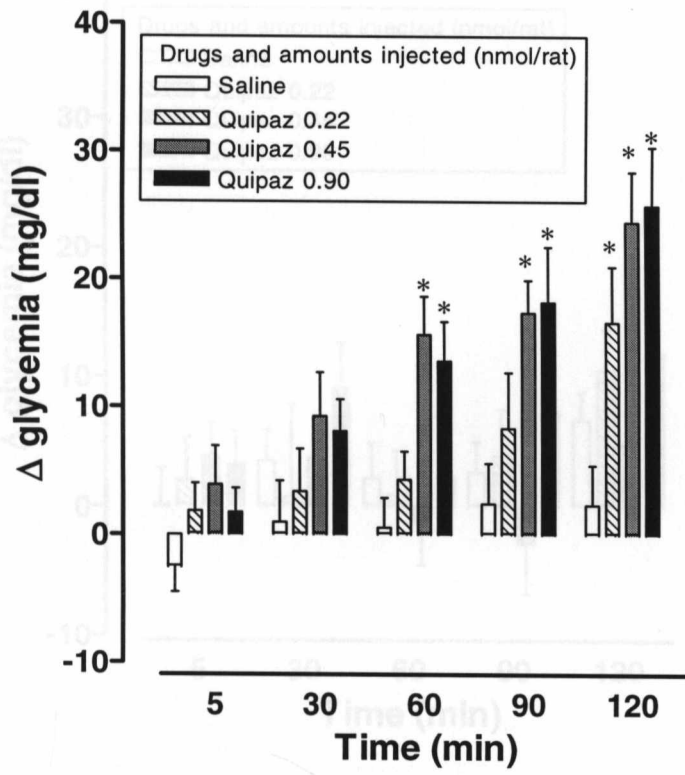


Figure 2

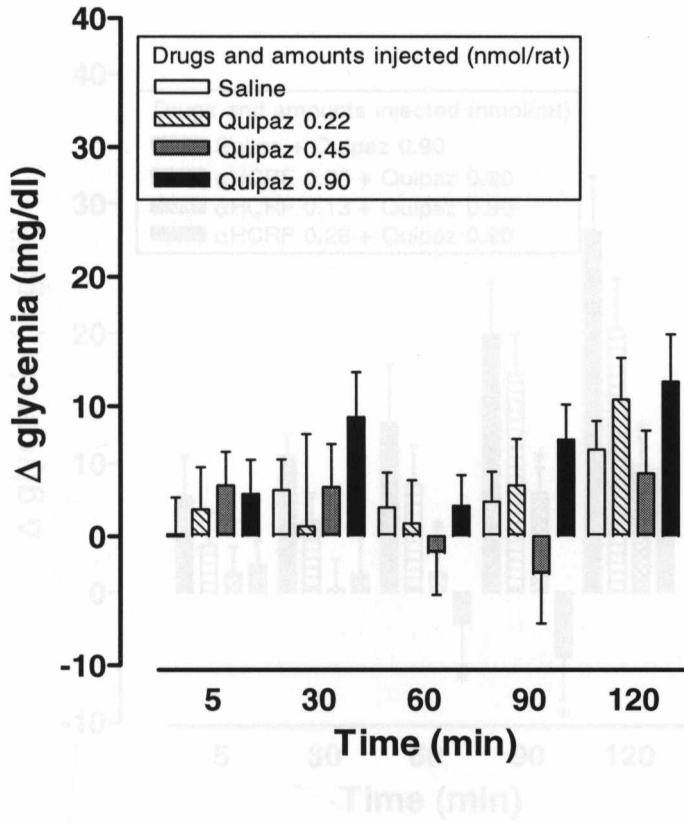


Figure 3

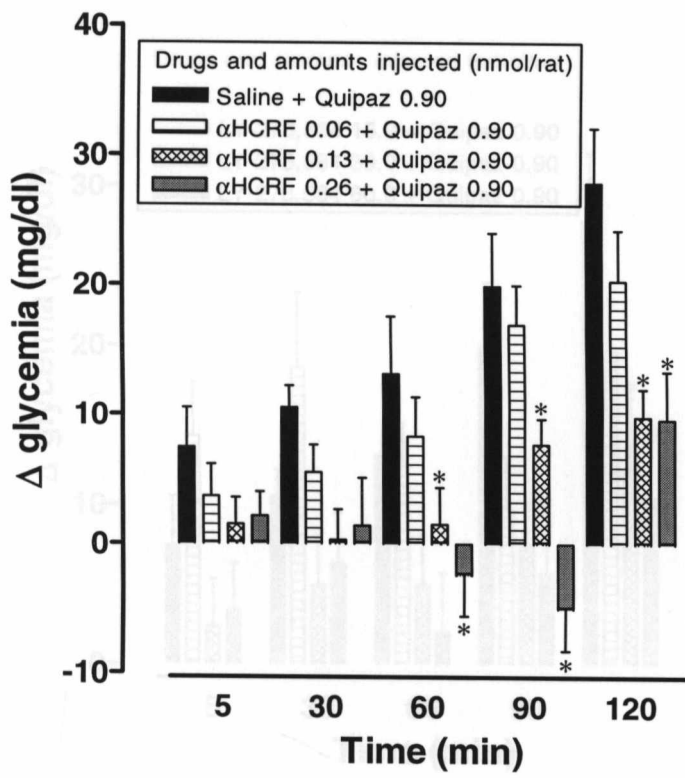


Figure 4

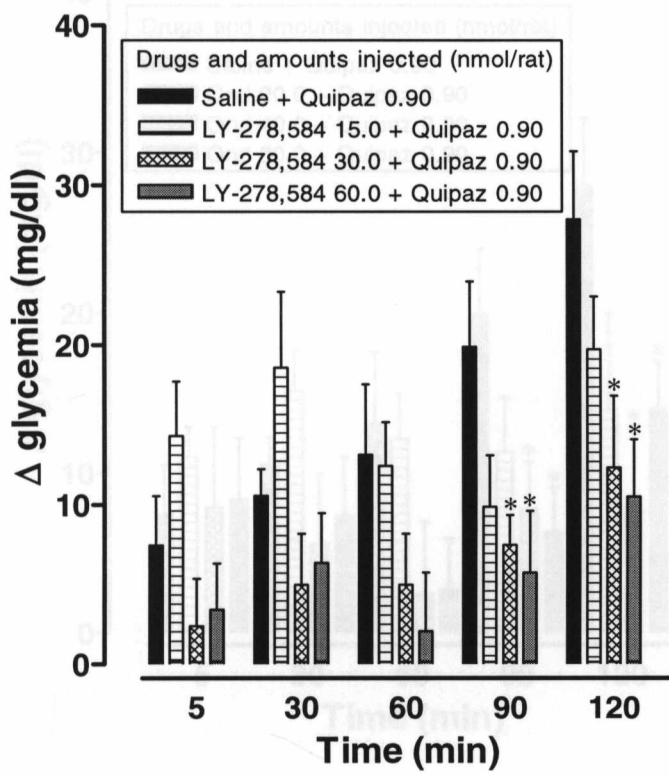


Figure 5

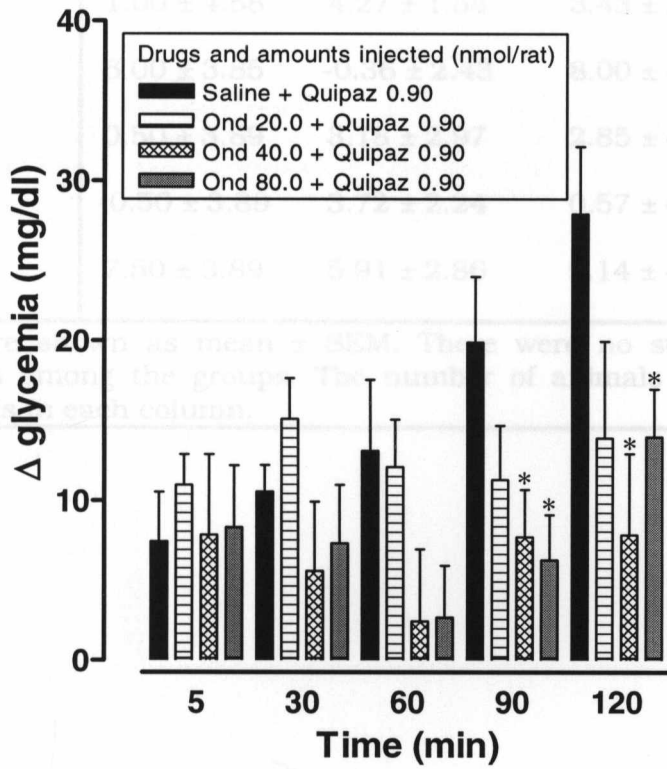


TABLE 1

Effects of third ventricle injections of ondansetron, LY-278,584,  $\alpha$ -helical CRH or saline on plasma glucose levels in fasted rats

Treatment Time	Saline (8)	Alfa-HCRF 0.26 nmol (11)	Ondansetron 80 nmol (7)	LY278584 60 nmol (9)
5	1.00 $\pm$ 4.58	4.27 $\pm$ 1.54	3.43 $\pm$ 3.08	4.44 $\pm$ 2.15
30	6.00 $\pm$ 3.85	-0.36 $\pm$ 2.43	8.00 $\pm$ 4.28	1.33 $\pm$ 2.21
60	0.50 $\pm$ 3.89	3.18 $\pm$ 2.97	2.85 $\pm$ 4.07	-2.67 $\pm$ 2.49
90	-0.50 $\pm$ 3.89	3.72 $\pm$ 2.24	0.57 $\pm$ 4.81	-0.44 $\pm$ 2.94
120	7.50 $\pm$ 3.89	5.91 $\pm$ 2.86	9.14 $\pm$ 4.07	5.78 $\pm$ 2.68

Results are shown as mean  $\pm$  SEM. There were no statistically significant differences among the groups. The number of animals used is indicated in parenthesis in each column.



TABLE 2

Effects of quipazine or saline third ventricle injections on plasma insulin levels in fasted rats		
Treatment	Time (min)	Plasma Insulin levels (ng/ml)
Saline	0	0.78 ± 0.13
	60	0.79 ± 0.15
	120	0.62 ± 0.07
Quipazine (0.90 nmol)	0	0.78 ± 0.15
	60	0.82 ± 0.19
	120	0.73 ± 0.12

Results are shown as mean ± SEM. Quipazine or saline were injected ICV. Saline  $n = 10$  Quipazine  $n = 9$ . There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups.

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## Central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> Receptor Stimulation by m-CPBG Increases Blood Glucose in Rats

### Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate the role of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors on the control of blood glucose in stressed and non-stressed rats in both fasted and fed states. Adult Wistar male rats had each their third ventricle cannulated 7 days before the experiments. Injections of m-CPBG, a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor agonist, induced a significant increase in blood glucose in non-stressed rats in both fasted and in fed states. The same procedure was unable to modify stress-induced hyperglycemia. The hyperglycemic effect of m-CPBG central administration was blocked by pretreatment with ondansetron, a specific 5-HT<sub>3</sub> re-

ceptor antagonist, indicating that the effects here obtained with m-CPBG were a result of its interaction with 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors. Third ventricle injections of ondansetron alone were not able to modify blood glucose in non-stressed animals and did not change the hyperglycemic responses observed after immobilization stress. We conclude that pharmacological activation of the central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor induces a hyperglycemic effect in non-stressed animals.

### Key words

Serotonin · Stress · Blood Glucose · Hyperglycemia · 5-HT<sub>3</sub> Receptor

### Introduction

Serotonin participation in the control of glucose homeostasis is a rather under-explored matter. Both central and peripheral serotonin may exert regulatory roles in glycemia control. The processes related to serotonin control of blood glucose levels and the roles played by each serotonin receptor in this homeostatic mechanism are still obscure.

Serotonin receptors located in peripheral tissues seem to exert some control on glycemic levels. Thus, peripheral administration of the selective 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> agonist 8-OH-DPAT induces a significant transient hyperglycemic response that seems to be consequent to a reduction in blood insulin levels [1]. Hyperglycemia is also observed after peripheral 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> receptor stimulation by specific agonists [2].

The increase in central serotonergic transmission induced by 5-hydroxytryptophan administration enhances blood glucose [3]. Pharmacological activation of central 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> and 5-HT<sub>2B/2C</sub> receptors seems to induce a significant hyperglycemic response [1,4–8], and hyperglycemia observed after the administration of serotonin-releasing drugs such as p-chloroamphetamine may be mediated by central 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> and 5-HT<sub>2B/2C</sub> receptors [8]. Also, adrenal catecholamine release leading to hyperglycemia seems to depend on the activation of central 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptors located in the paraventricular nucleus [9,10], and central stimulation of 5-HT<sub>2</sub> receptors by the selective agonist DOI increases blood glucose levels [2]. As far as we are aware, there is little knowledge about the roles played by central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in the regulation of blood glucose levels.

Activation of central serotonin circuitries is a necessary step during stress, leading to direct stimulation of both sympathetic ac-

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tivity and the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis [11], and it is well-known that stress evokes a hyperglycemic response [12].

In the present work, we investigated the roles of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in the control of blood glucose in fasted and fed rats submitted or not to immobilization stress using a pharmacological protocol.

## Materials and Methods

### Animals

Adult Wistar male rats weighing 200 ± 30 g kept under controlled light (lights on from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) and temperature (22–24 °C) conditions were used in the experiments. The animals had free access to water and laboratory chow (Nuvital Nutrientes Ltd., Curitiba, Brazil) in the days before the experiments. They were handled daily in order to minimize stress during the experimental sessions. The experimental protocols were conducted according to the rules suggested by the National Institutes of Health (USA).

### Surgical procedures

Seven days before the experimental sessions, the third ventricle was cannulated under pentobarbital anesthesia (40 mg/kg i.p.). A 22-gauge stainless steel cannula (15 mm in length) was stereotaxically implanted according to the following coordinates: anteroposterior = 0.5 mm behind bregma; lateral = on the sagittal line; vertical = 8.5 mm below the skull. The cannulas were cemented to the skull bone with dental acrylic adhesive and provided with an obstructor (28-gauge). The animals were fixed to the stereotaxic apparatus (David Kopf Instruments, Tujunga, CA) with the head inclined 2 mm upward. After surgery, the animals were housed in individual cages. They had free access to tap water and food.

After sacrifice by ether inhalation, a third-ventricle injection of Blue Evans dye was performed to confirm whether the tip of the cannula was correctly positioned. We took only data from animals whose cannulas were exactly in the third ventricle into consideration.

The day before the experimental sessions, a silastic jugular catheter was placed into the right atria according to procedures described elsewhere [13]. The catheter was led subcutaneously to the neck, exteriorized and sealed. Thirty minutes before the experiments, the jugular catheters were rinsed with a saline solution containing 1% heparin (5000 UI/ml).

### Immobilization stress

Immobilization stress was achieved by placing the animals in plastic tubes especially designed to restrain the animals without causing any apparent signs of pain.

### Drugs and microinjections

The following drugs were used: m-chlorophenylbiguanide hydrochloride (1-(3-chlorophenyl) biguanide; m-CPBG, MW 248.11), a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> agonist [14], was purchased from Tocris Cookson, Inc., Ballwin, MO. Ondansetron (MW 293.37), a specific 5-HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist, was kindly donated by GlaxoWellcome Research and Development Limited, UK [15]. All drugs were dis-

solved in saline solution. Third ventricle injections were achieved using a Hamilton microsyringe connected to a Mizzy-Slide-Pak needle through polyethylene tubing (PE 10). A total volume of 2 µl was slowly injected (60–90 s).

### Experimental design

Seven days after the third ventricle cannulation, the animals were submitted to the experimental sessions. To study the roles of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors on blood glucose regulation, four distinct groups of freely moving rats (fasted non-stressed, fasted stressed, fed non-stressed and fed stressed) received third-ventricle injections of the selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> agonist m-CPBG in different doses, and these were compared to control groups receiving third-ventricle injections of isotonic saline solution. In the groups used to study central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor participation in the control of blood glucose in fasted rats, the animals were fasted for the 18 hours before the onset of the experiments (food access was restricted at 6:00 p.m. the day before the experimental session) and the experiments always began at midday. To investigate the role of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in blood glucose regulation in fed animals, the animals were fasted for 14 hours (from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.). After this period, they had free access to standard laboratory chow for three hours (from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m.) and the experimental sessions also began at midday. This procedure serves to minimize variations in food intake among individuals immediately before the experimental sessions.

In the groups used to study the role of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors on blood glucose regulation in stressed animals, third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG or saline (controls) were made 30 min before the beginning of stress. To determine the pharmacological specificity of m-CPBG's effects obtained in non-stressed rats, the animals were pretreated with third-ventricle injections of ondansetron, a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist, or saline (controls) 15 minutes before receiving m-CPBG by the same route. The possible participation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors in the control of blood glucose during stress was further evaluated in fasted and fed animals by third ventricle administration of ondansetron or saline 15 minutes before the onset of stress.

Blood samples were collected in a volume of 0.4 ml. An equal volume of saline was intravenously injected in order to avoid hypovolemia. A pre-drug blood sample (baseline values) was collected immediately before central injections and considered as time 0'. The groups of stressed rats receiving m-CPBG had subsequent blood samples collected at 5, 15, 30, 60, 90 and 120 minutes after the onset of stress. The groups of non-stressed rats receiving m-CPBG had blood samples collected at 5, 15, 30, 60, 90 and 120 minutes after the administration of the drug.

Blood samples were centrifuged and plasma stored at –20 °C until glucose determination by the glucose oxidase method using commercial kits (Glucox 500) purchased from DOLES (Goiania, Brazil).

### Statistical analysis

To determine the effect of the drugs or saline, the blood glucose concentrations obtained at the various time points after treatment were subtracted from the blood glucose concentration measured immediately before each particular treatment. The

delta values resulting from the different treatments were analysed using the software package SigmaStat for Windows, Jandel Scientific, San Rafael, CA, which performs one-way analysis of variance for comparison of each treatment across time-points followed by the *post hoc* Student-Newman-Keuls test. The groups were considered significantly different at  $p < 0.05$ . Results are presented as the mean  $\pm$  SEM.

## Results

Fig. 1 (panel A) shows the effect of third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG in different doses (2.5, 10.0 and 40 nmol/rat) or saline on blood glucose of fasted non-stressed rats. As observed, pharmacological stimulation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors by m-CPBG in all doses applied generated a significant increase in blood glucose compared to saline-treated controls. As seen in panel B, third-ventricle injections of ondansetron (40 nmol/rat) 15 minutes before central administration of m-CPBG (40 nmol/rat) blocked the hyperglycemic effect of the 5-HT<sub>3</sub> agonist in fasted non-stressed animals. The difference between the group pretreated with ondansetron (ondansetron+m-CPBG) and the group receiving m-CPBG alone was statistically significant at times 30, 60 and 120 minutes. Panel C shows that third-ventricle injections of ondansetron are unable to modify basal glycemic levels in fasted non-stressed animals.

Fig. 2 (panel A) shows the effects of third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG or saline on blood glucose in fasted animals submitted to immobilization stress. Comparing saline-treated control groups that were submitted and those that were not submitted to stress, a significant increase in blood glucose could be observed in stressed animals, as expected. Third ventricle injections of m-CPBG in two different doses (40 and 160 nmol/rat) were unable to modify stress-induced hyperglycemia. Fig. 2 (panel B) shows the effects of third-ventricle injections of ondansetron in different doses or saline to fasted rats under immobili-

zation stress. In all doses employed (40 and 160 nmol/rat), ondansetron did not change the hyperglycemic response to stress.

Fig. 3 (panel A) shows the effect of third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG in different doses (2.5, 10, 40 and 80 nmol/rat) or saline on blood glucose of fed non-stressed rats. In the lowest dose employed (2.5 nmol/rat), m-CPBG administration did not induce a hyperglycemic effect until 120 minutes after administration. The intermediate dose of 40 nmol/rat m-CPBG induced a hyperglycemic response starting 90 min after administration. In the highest dose used, m-CPBG was able to elicit blood glucose enhancement that began 30 minutes after its injection and lasted until the end of the experimental session. As seen in Fig. 3 (panel B), third-ventricle injections of ondansetron (40 nmol/rat) 15 minutes before central administration of m-CPBG (80 nmol/rat) blocked the hyperglycemic effect of the 5-HT<sub>3</sub> agonist in fed, non-stressed animals. The difference between the group pretreated with ondansetron (ondansetron+m-CPBG) and the group receiving m-CPBG alone was statistically significant from 30 minutes until the end of the experiment. Fig. 3 (panel C) shows that third-ventricle injections of ondansetron do not modify blood glucose levels in fed, non-stressed rats.

Fig. 4 (panel A) shows the effects of third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG or saline on blood glucose of fed animals submitted to immobilization stress. Comparing saline-treated control groups that were submitted and those that were not submitted to stress, a significant increase in blood glucose could be observed in stressed animals, as expected. Third ventricle injections of m-CPBG in two different doses (80 and 160 nmol/rat) were unable to modify the hyperglycemic response that follows immobilization stress. Fig. 4 (panel B) shows the effects of third-ventricle injections of ondansetron in different doses or saline to fed rats submitted to immobilization stress. Ondansetron did not change the hyperglycemic response to stress in any dose applied (80 or 160 nmol/rat).

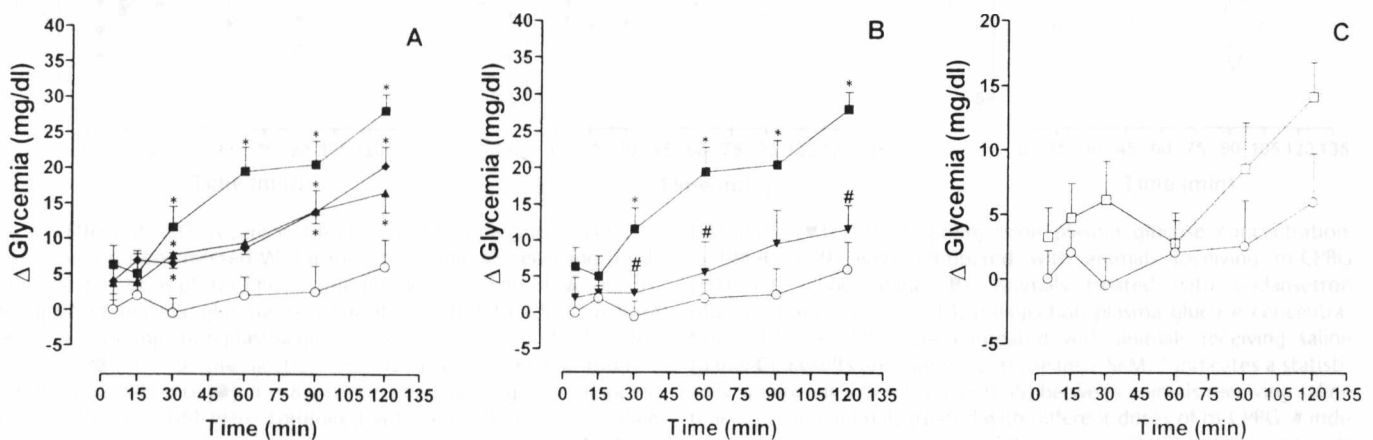
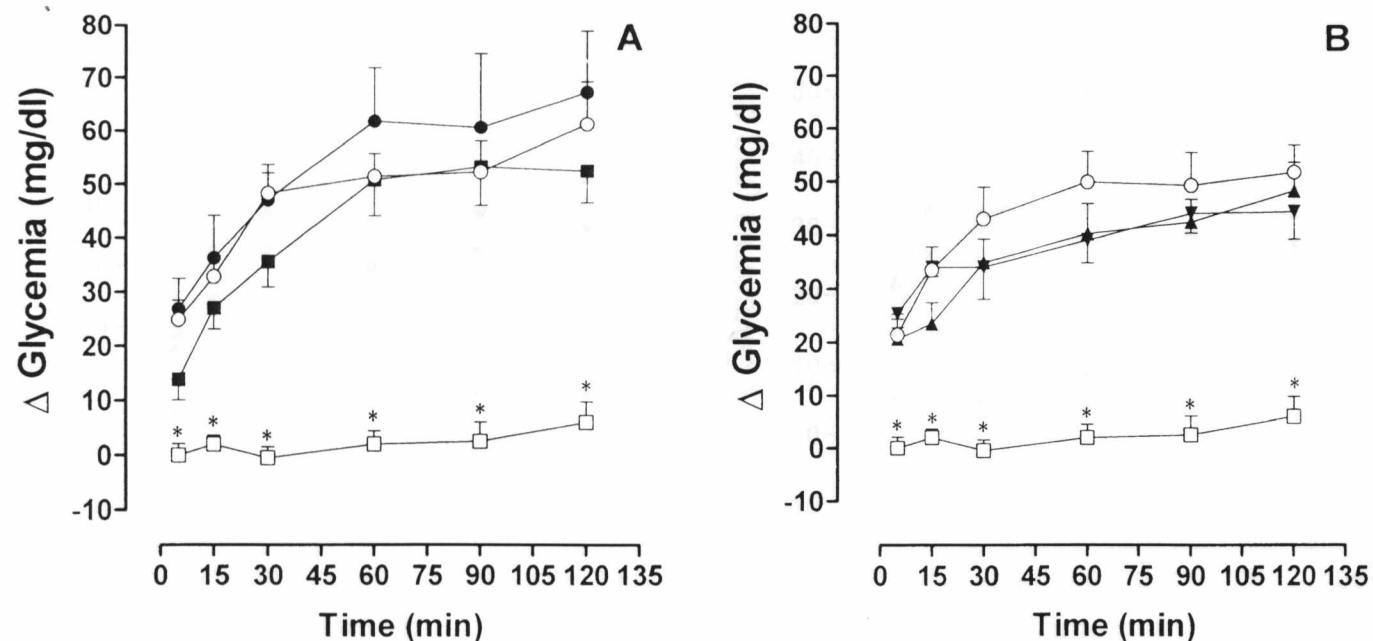


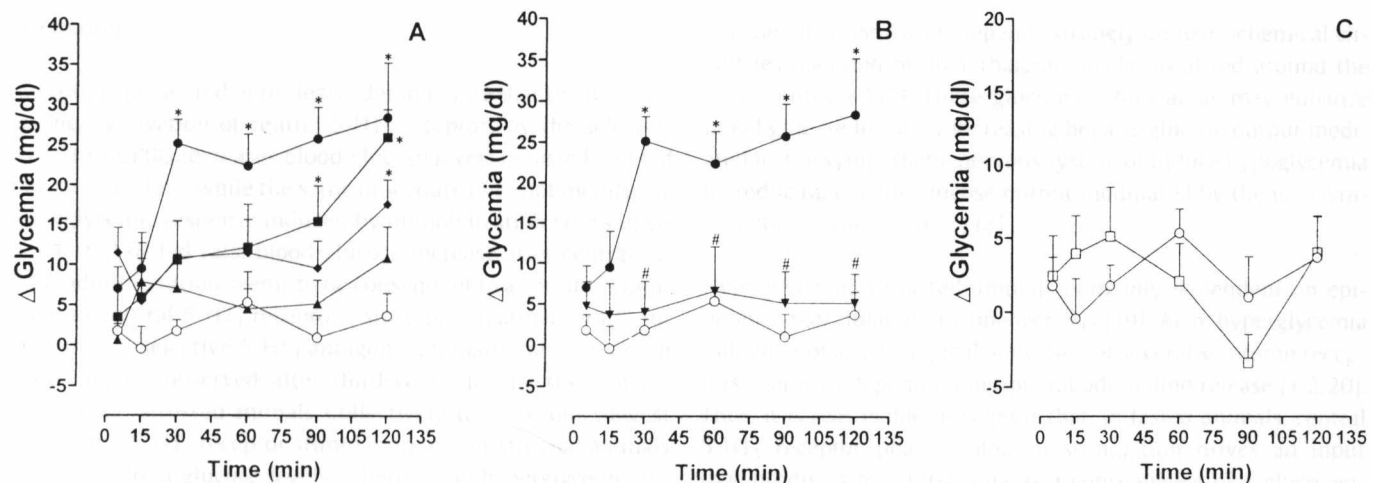
Fig. 1 Effect of 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor stimulation on plasma glucose concentration in fasted non-stressed Wistar male rats. Animals receiving third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG in different doses (2.5 nmol [▲],  $n = 13$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $73.2 \pm 2.58$ ; 10 nmol [◆],  $n = 13$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $83.2 \pm 1.64$ ; 40 nmol [■],  $n = 7$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $97.3 \pm 4.0$ ) were compared with animals receiving saline (○),  $n = 8$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $85.6 \pm 3.14$  (panel A). Animals receiving ondansetron (40 nmol) plus m-CPBG (40 nmol), (▼,  $n = 8$ , preinjection plasma glucose con-

centration =  $124.0 \pm 5.07$ ) were compared with animals receiving m-CPBG (40 nmol) alone (panel B). Animals treated with ondansetron (40 nmol) alone (□,  $n = 10$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $112.3 \pm 3.16$ ) were compared with animals receiving saline (panel C). Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. \* indicates a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between animals receiving saline (controls) and animals treated with different doses of m-CPBG. # indicates a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between animals receiving ondansetron plus m-CPBG with rats receiving m-CPBG alone.



**Fig. 2** Effect of third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG or ondansetron on plasma glucose concentration in fasted stressed Wistar male rats. Stressed animals receiving different doses of m-CPBG (40 nmol [■], n = 13, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $87.6 \pm 3.19$ ; 160 nmol [●], n = 9; preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $86.7 \pm 2.27$ ; panel A) or ondansetron (40 nmol [▲], n = 9, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $130.1 \pm 2.15$ ; 160 nmol [▼], n = 8, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $129.5 \pm 2.46$ ,

panel B) were compared to saline-treated controls (○, n = 14, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $86.0 \pm 2.09$ ). All groups of stressed animals were compared with saline-treated non-stressed controls (□, n = 8, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $85.6 \pm 3.14$ ). Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. \* indicates a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between saline-treated non-stressed rats and all other groups.



**Fig. 3** Effect of 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor stimulation on plasma glucose concentration in fed non-stressed Wistar male rats. Animals receiving third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG in different doses (2.5 nmol [▲], n = 6, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $103.2 \pm 4.55$ ; 10 nmol [◆], n = 7, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $111.4 \pm 2.87$ ; 40 nmol [■], n = 9, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $100.4 \pm 3.62$ ; 80 nmol [●], n = 8, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $96.3 \pm 4.65$ ) were compared with animals receiving saline (○, n = 6, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $108.4 \pm 3.43$ ; panel A). Animals receiving ondansetron ([40 nmol]) plus m-CPBG

[80 nmol] [▼], n = 11, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $144.4 \pm 4.09$ ) were compared with animals receiving m-CPBG (80 nmol) alone (panel B). Animals treated with ondansetron (40 nmol) alone (□, n = 13, preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $120.0 \pm 2.69$ ) were compared with animals receiving saline (panel C). Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. \* indicates a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between animals receiving saline (controls) and animals treated with different doses of m-CPBG. # indicates a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between animals receiving ondansetron plus m-CPBG with rats receiving m-CPBG alone.

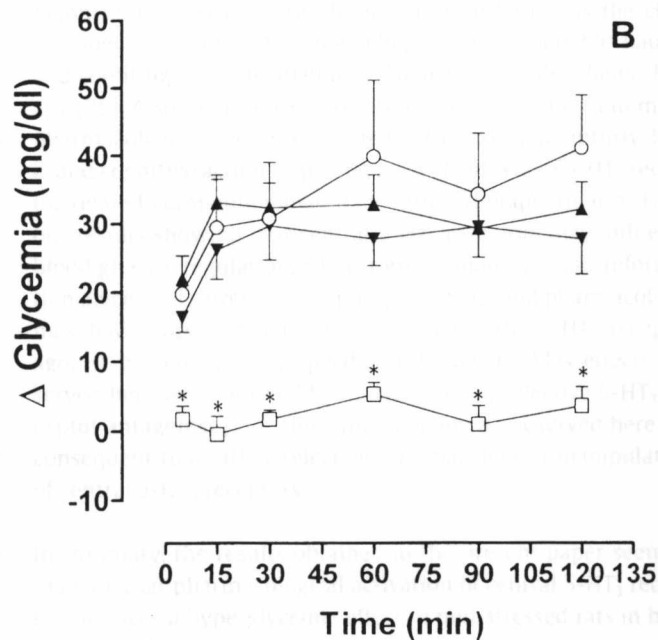
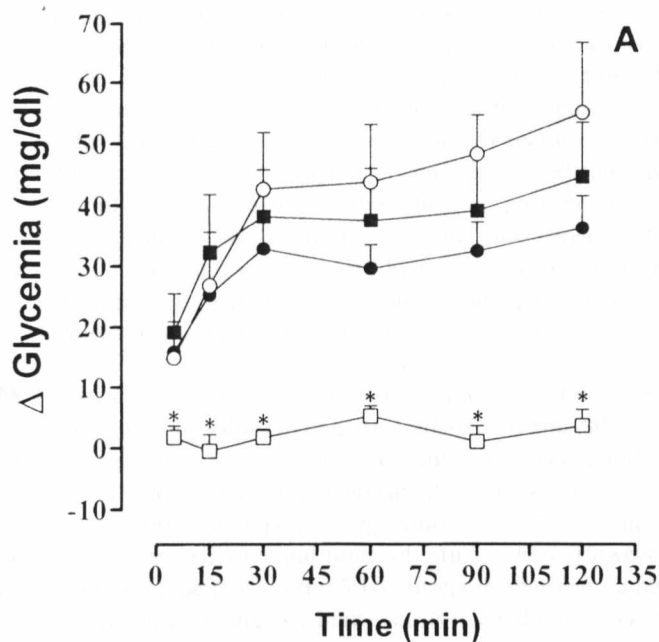


Fig. 4 Effect of third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG or ondansetron on plasma glucose concentration in fed stressed Wistar male rats. Stressed animals receiving different doses of m-CPBG (80 nmol [■],  $n = 10$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $107.6 \pm 3.95$ ; 160 nmol [●],  $n = 13$ ; preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $127.6 \pm 4.78$ ; panel A) or ondansetron (80 nmol [▲],  $n = 12$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $129.5 \pm 2.46$ ; 160 nmol [▼],  $n = 10$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $144 \pm 5.24$ ;

panel B) were compared to saline-treated controls (○,  $n = 14$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $119.8 \pm 2.91$ ). All groups of stressed animals were compared with saline-treated non-stressed controls (□,  $n = 6$ , preinjection plasma glucose concentration =  $108.4 \pm 3.43$ ). Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEM. \* indicates a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between saline-treated non-stressed rats and all other groups.

## Discussion

The results presented here clearly demonstrate that the pharmacological activation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors by the selective agonist m-CPBG increases blood glucose levels in fasted and fed non-stressed rats, while the same procedure does not modify the hyperglycemic response induced by immobilization stress in either fasted or fed rats. Blood glucose increase after central m-CPBG administration seems to be consequent to a specific stimulation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors, since pre-treatment with ondansetron, a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist, impairs the increase in blood glucose observed after third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG in non-stressed animals. Collectively, these results suggest that central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor stimulation in non-stressed animals augments blood glucose levels, whereas the hyperglycemic response observed after immobilization stress does not seem to be influenced by central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors.

Besides the well-recognized effect of brain serotonin on the control of food intake, several studies indicate a central serotonergic participation in the control of blood glucose homeostasis. However, we have no clear picture of how central serotonin pathways are integrated with the various gluoregulatory mechanisms so far. It is known that central 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> and 5-HT<sub>2B/2C</sub> receptor stimulation by selective pharmacological agents increases blood glucose in rats [1,4–7], and that selective serotonin reuptake blockers such as fluoxetine enhance blood glucose by reducing plasma insulin levels [16].

Also, *p*-chloroamphetamine, a serotonin-releasing drug, elicits hyperglycemia by activating central serotonin receptors [6].

Central gluoregulation depends strongly on neurochemical circuitries operated by hypothalamic nuclei localized around the third ventricle [17]. These gluoregulatory areas may enhance blood glucose levels by increasing hepatic glucose output mediated by the sympathetic nervous system or induce hypoglycemia by reducing hepatic glucose output modulated by the parasympathetic nervous system [18].

Hyperglycemia in fasted animals is mainly dependent on epinephrine-stimulated gluconeogenesis [19]. Also, hyperglycemia following pharmacological activation of several serotonin receptors seems to depend on peripheral adrenaline release [1,2,20]. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that, in fasted animals, central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor pharmacological stimulation drives an input that produces hyperglycemia as a consequence of a gluconeogenesis-dependent increase in hepatic glucose output mediated by the sympathetic nervous system. On the other hand, in fed animals, the central nervous system may generate hyperglycemia through a glycogenolytic-dependent mechanism triggered by hormonal agents, such as epinephrine and glucagon, or by neural components involving direct sympathetic innervation of the liver parenchyma [19]. It is conceivable that hyperglycemia observed after central administration of a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> agonist is consequent to peripheral glycogenolysis.

The hyperglycemic effect of third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG in non-stressed animals seems to be easier to obtain in fasted than in fed animals. Indeed, when we compare the doses of m-CPBG used in the present work, it is easy to observe that the compound is able to generate a more pronounced effect in fasted animals. The smallest dose of m-CPBG applied (2.5 nmol/rat) was



totally ineffective in fed rats, but promoted a significant increase in blood glucose after 120 minutes in fasted animals. Furthermore, in fasted animals, third-ventricle injections of m-CPBG at a dose of 40 nmol/rat were able to enhance blood glucose significantly from 30 minutes until the end of the experiment, a pattern of response that is obtained in fed animals only when we used a dose of m-CPBG two times higher. Thus, it is possible that central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors efficacy in triggering the gluconeogenic-dependent mechanisms leading to the hyperglycemic response in fasted animals is greater than their ability to set up the glycogenolytic mechanisms enhancing blood glucose in fed rats.

Third ventricle injections of ondansetron alone did not modify basal glycemic values in non-stressed animals and did not affect stress-induced hyperglycemic responses in either fasted or fed state. These results seem to indicate that central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors do not exert an endogenous regulatory role on blood glucose, at least in the experimental protocols studied here. However, we cannot exclude that central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors may exert a physiological control of glucose homeostasis in conditions such as hypoglycemia, or during other stressful situations. In any case, the study of the effects consequent to central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor pharmacological stimulation possesses great relevance, since the variety of therapeutic procedures with 5-HT<sub>3</sub> agonists and antagonists currently employed may promote important side effects by disturbing normal glucose homeostasis.

Distinct from all other serotonin receptors, the 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor subtype is a voltage-gated channel that induces depolarizing effects through the modification of cellular ionic fluxes [21,22], and thereby allows modulatory actions on the release of a myriad of neurotransmitters. It is impossible to discern the exact nature of the central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> modulatory actions on neurotransmitters involved with the generation of the hyperglycemic responses observed with the experimental protocol employed here, in either fasted or fed animals. However, the hyperglycemic effects seen here do not seem to rely on central cholinergic activation, a well-known mechanism leading to hyperglycemia [23], since 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors attenuate cholinergic transmission [24,25].

Sympathoadrenal hyperglycemic responses are induced by several acute stressful stimuli. Central catecholaminergic, histaminergic and serotonergic pathways are involved with the regulation of sympathetic activity, but the precise neurochemical nature of the hypothalamic mechanisms controlling sympathoadrenal activation still has to be established. However, it is well-known that the pattern of neurotransmitters controlling sympathetic activity during stress depends on the nature of the stressful stimulus [26].

Serotonergic systems are sensitive to many stressful stimuli. Indeed, serotonin is an important component of the central network operating adaptation to stress [27], and central serotonin pathways participate in stress-induced activation of sympathetic responses [28]. However, in the experiments performed here, 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor activation or blockade were not able to modify the hyperglycemic response to immobilization stress. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the central neurochemical mechanism(s) that enhance blood glucose during immobilization stress are unrelated to central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors. The use of 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor an-

tagonists that easily cross the blood-brain barrier is the chief therapeutic resource for controlling the non-coercible nausea and vomiting generally manifested in patients under chemotherapy [29]. Also, central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors may be involved in many pharmacological events associated with anxiolytic, antipsychotic and cognitive actions, opening a new field where 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor-related compounds may have future therapeutic use. Thus, our results showing that central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors may influence blood glucose regulation, apart from augmenting basic information on central serotonin receptor physiology and pharmacology, may have important clinical implications. The 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor agonist m-CPBG is very specific [14], and m-CPBG effects observed here were blocked by ondansetron, a selective 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist [15]. Thus, the phenomena observed here are consequent to a rather selective pharmacological manipulation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors.

In summary, the results obtained in the present paper seem to indicate that pharmacological activation of central 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors induces a hyperglycemic effect in non-stressed rats in both fasted and fed states.

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## 5 DISCUSSÃO

Os resultados aqui apresentados mostram que a estimulação farmacológica do sistema serotoninérgico central, promovida pela utilização de um inibidor seletivo da recaptação de serotonina (fluoxetina) e/ou de um agonista serotoninérgico direto não específico (quipazina), provoca hiperglicemia em animais em jejum não estressados. Nossos experimentos mostraram ainda que a hiperglicemia gerada após a estimulação serotoninérgica central parece ser dependente da ativação do sistema CRH-érgico e da integridade funcional dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais, desde que o pré-tratamento com o antagonista do CRH, CRF- $\alpha$ -helicoidal, e com dois antagonistas seletivos para os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, ondansetrona e LY-278.584, bloqueou a resposta hiperglicêmica observada após a administração central dos agonistas serotoninérgicos. É válido ressaltar que a administração isolada destes antagonistas, nas doses que promoveram o bloqueio das ações hiperglicemiantes da fluoxetina e da quipazina, foi incapaz de alterar a glicemia em ratos em jejum, quando comparados ao respectivo grupo controle, mostrando que as respostas aqui encontradas parecem apresentar um padrão de ativação seqüencial e não a atividade de sistemas hiperglicemiantes atuando de forma paralela. Em seguida, administramos fluoxetina e quipazina, nas doses que foram mais eficazes em promover hiperglicemia, e observamos que a resposta hiperglicêmica, induzida pela estimulação serotoninérgica central, pode ser dependente do bloqueio da liberação de insulina, cujos níveis plasmáticos, no curso desta hiperglicemia, não foram compatíveis com uma esperada resposta contrarregulatória.

A partir dos dados mencionados, e levando em consideração a importância clínica dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, estudamos de forma mais ampla a participação destes receptores no controle da glicemia. A administração intracerebroventricular de *m*-clorofenilbiguanida (*m*-CPBG), um agonista seletivo dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, provocou resposta hiperglicêmica significativa em animais em jejum ou alimentados não estressados. Esta resposta parece ser especificamente devida à estimulação destes receptores, desde que o pré-tratamento com o antagonista seletivo ondansetrona, foi capaz de impedir o aumento dos níveis glicêmicos observados após a administração do *m*-CPBG. Foi possível ainda observar que a administração de *m*-CPBG não foi capaz de alterar a hiperglicemia induzida pelo estresse de imobilização.

Investigações anteriores têm revelado propriedades funcionais dos diversos subtipos de receptores serotoninérgicos, as quais estão associadas a respostas fisiológicas importantes como a modulação da atividade neuronal e alterações do comportamento (BARNES & SHARP, 1999). Desta forma, o desenvolvimento de fármacos que atuam neste sistema e em seus receptores tem levado a grandes progressos no que tange à aplicação clínica. Dentre as drogas serotoninérgicas mais utilizadas terapeuticamente estão os ISRS, os quais são empregados no tratamento de doenças neuropsiquiátricas como a depressão, mas que também são eficazes em tratar distúrbios relacionados à disfunção serotoninérgica como bulimia, obesidade e ejaculação precoce, entre outros (HAENSEL et al., 1998; BARR et al., 1994). Neste trabalho, estamos averiguando a participação do sistema serotoninérgico central no controle da glicemia em ratos e, como observado, os resultados obtidos a partir da estimulação serotoninérgica central



pela administração ICV de fluoxetina revelaram que este ISRS provocou o aumento dos níveis glicêmicos em animais em jejum.

A participação da 5-HT central no controle da glicemia tem sido demonstrada através de estudos que promoveram a estimulação de subtipos de receptores serotoninérgicos (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAUD, 1987; CHAOULOFF et al., 1990). Existem, ainda, estudos demonstrando hiperglicemia após a estimulação do sistema serotoninérgico central pela utilização de ISRS ou provocada por fármacos que aumentam a liberação de 5-HT, nos quais os autores aplicaram protocolos utilizando vias periféricas para administração das drogas. De fato, trabalhos anteriores revelaram que a injeção intravenosa de *d*-fenfluramina induziu aumentos glicêmicos associados a elevações dos níveis plasmáticos de adrenalina (CHAOULOFF et al., 1991). Agentes que aumentam a liberação de 5-HT como a *p*-cloroanfetamina, também são capazes de elevar a glicemia após administração parenteral (YAMADA et al., 1998). Da mesma forma, vários ISRS, como fluoxetina, fluvoxamina e zimelidina, já foram mencionados na literatura como drogas que provocam hiperglicemia após administração intraperitoneal (YAMADA et al., 1999; SUGIMOTO et al., 1999).

Neste estudo, promovemos estimulação aguda do sistema serotoninérgico central, através da administração de fluoxetina, e obtivemos hiperglicemia em animais em jejum. É conhecido que a serotonina está difusamente distribuída no organismo e que possui um importante subsistema localizado no trato gastrointestinal com papéis fisiológicos definidos, incluindo um possível controle sobre o eixo entero-pancreático (KIRCHGESSNER & GERSHON, 1990). É importante lembrar que a 5-HT está presente no pâncreas tanto nas células

secretoras de insulina quanto naquelas que liberam glucagon (NAKAJIMA et al., 1988; CETIN, 1992) e, que fibras serotoninérgicas inervam este órgão endócrino de maneira significativa (KIRCHGESSNER & GERSHON, 1990; DING et al., 1991), sendo bem conhecida a participação serotoninérgica na regulação das funções endócrinas pancreáticas (NAKAJIMA et al., 1988; CETIN, 1992). A administração periférica de agentes serotoninérgicos que atravessam a barreira hemato-encefálica configura-se num tipo de abordagem experimental que não permite distinguir qual dos sistemas serotoninérgicos (central ou periférico) está envolvido nas respostas glucorregulatórias. O nosso desenho experimental, no qual a administração dos agentes farmacológicos que atuam sobre a serotonina foi feita intracerebroventricularmente, permite isolar os possíveis componentes periféricos e identificar qual a participação efetiva desta amina no cérebro sobre o controle da glicemia.

A fluoxetina é utilizada de forma ampla no tratamento de doenças neuropsiquiátricas, distúrbios de comportamento alimentar, obesidade e enxaqueca, porém sua eficácia terapêutica é observada após o uso crônico, sendo que os mecanismos neuroquímicos que levam a estes efeitos ainda são alvo de controvérsia (MONGEAU et al., 1997). Por outro lado, estudos têm demonstrado que a administração aguda de fluoxetina pode provocar efeitos completamente diferentes daqueles observados após a utilização crônica (LINO-DE-OLIVEIRA et al., 2001). São relatados como efeitos agudos ansiedade, agitação e nervosismo (AMSTERDAM et al., 1994) todos eles inversos aos encontrados com o uso crônico deste fármaco. Estudos anteriores utilizando ISRS mostraram resultados conflitantes, revelando que o uso crônico de fluoxetina pode provocar hipoglicemia

(DEEG & LIPKIN, 1996; POLLACK et al., 2001), enquanto que a administração aguda de fluvoxamina eleva significativamente os níveis glicêmicos (OSWALD et al. 2003). Desta forma, acreditamos que a hiperglicemia encontrada após a administração ICV aguda de agonistas serotoninérgicos seja resultante de alguma condição neuroquímica diferente daquela que ocorre durante a utilização crônica.

Neste trabalho, estamos tentando elucidar exclusivamente a atuação da serotonina em nível central. Para tanto, administramos no 3<sup>o</sup> V fluoxetina, buscando atingir este sistema de forma ampla e, em seguida, desenvolvemos experimentos onde injetamos, pela mesma via, um agonista serotoninérgico não seletivo, quipazina, com ações estimulatórias sobre os receptores 5-HT<sub>1</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2</sub> e 5-HT<sub>3</sub> (BLIER & DE MONTIGNY, 1983; PEROUTKA, 1990), ou seja, passamos a investigar de forma mais restritiva a participação de receptores serotoninérgicos centrais na regulação glicêmica. Como já mencionado, os estudos que tratam da relação entre a serotonina central e a regulação da glicemia são escassos e não formam um panorama claro dos mecanismos que possam estar sob influência da serotonina e de seus receptores quando o organismo busca regular os níveis plasmáticos de glicose. Os subtipos 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2B/C</sub> são classicamente ativados pela quipazina e seus efeitos glicorregulatórios são amplamente conhecidos (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAUD, 1987; CHAOULOFF et al., 1991). Por isto, é válido admitir que os efeitos hiperglicemiantes da quipazina, aqui observados, possam ser devidos à estimulação destes receptores centrais. De fato, uma série de estudos têm tentado elucidar os papéis dos diversos subtipos de receptores serotoninérgicos utilizando o pré-tratamento com agonistas e antagonistas seletivos para avaliar respostas produzidas pela administração de quipazina. Um

destes estudos mostra que a redução na expressão da proteína *fos* no núcleo supraquiasmático de ratos, induzida pela quipazina, parece ser dependente dos receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> (MOYER et al., 1997).

A resposta hiperglicêmica encontrada em animais em jejum após estimulação central, tanto com a fluoxetina quanto com a quipazina, foi bloqueada significativamente pelo CRF $\alpha$ h, um antagonista do CRH central. É conhecida a relação entre a 5-HT e o CRH que inclui co-localização de receptores em áreas cerebrais e modulações do sistema CRH sobre o sistema serotoninérgico e vice-versa (PRICE et al., 1998; HANLEY & VAN DE KAR, 2003). Estudos têm demonstrado que o CRH pode atuar como um neurotransmissor cerebral capaz de interagir com outros sistemas de neurotransmissão para coordenar componentes autonômicos e comportamentais de respostas endógenas, como a resposta ao estresse (DUNN & BERRIDGE, 1990; OWENS & NEMEROFF, 1991; VALENTINO et al., 1993). Por outro lado, sua localização anatômica em sítios centrais que participam do controle do eixo HHA e que ativam significativamente a divisão simpática, leva a produção de respostas endócrinas e metabólicas (BROWN et al., 1982) que têm como objetivo a manutenção da homeostase nas mais diversas situações a que o organismo possa estar exposto. É válido ressaltar que já foi descrita a capacidade do CRH de aumentar a glicemia, possivelmente pela elevação dos níveis periféricos de adrenalina, resposta esta que é inibida pela administração de CRF $\alpha$ h (BROWN et al., 1985). Núcleos hipotalâmicos, como o NPV, recebem densa inervação serotoninérgica, além de ser este um núcleo extremamente importante para a regulação da secreção de CRH (HANLEY & VAN

DE KAR, 2003). Sabe-se que a liberação de ACTH pela adenohipófise é CRH-dependente e, desta forma, é possível sugerir que este processo também sofra interferência da 5-HT, desde que a estimulação farmacológica dos receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> pós-sinápticos eleva os níveis de ACTH via liberação de CRH pelo NPV (PAN & GILBERT, 1992). Outro dado reforça a hipótese de ações seqüenciais geradas a partir da ativação dos sistemas serotoninérgico e CRH-érgico centrais. A administração central de 5-HT ou periférica de *d*-fenfluramina provoca um efeito termogênico em ratos, o qual é inibido pelo bloqueio dos receptores do CRH centrais (LE FEUVRE et al., 1991). Assim, é possível dizer que a estimulação serotoninérgica pode elevar a atividade CRH-érgica gerando a resposta final encontrada.

A administração aguda de fluoxetina provoca um aumento significativo na transmissão serotoninérgica (RAAP & VAN DE KAR, 1999) e é conhecido que a administração de *d*-fenfluramina tem a propriedade de elevar os níveis de 5-HT provocando o aumento na expressão da proteína *fos* em neurônios CRH no hipotálamo (JAVED et al., 1999). Sabe-se ainda que neurônios serotoninérgicos inervam de forma significativa o NPV (HANLEY & VAN DE KAR, 2003), que é o principal sítio hipotalâmico secretor de CRH. Ao utilizarmos o antagonista CRF $\alpha$ h no pré-tratamento de animais que receberam fluoxetina, encontramos que o bloqueio dos receptores do CRH inibiu a hiperglicemia obtida após a estimulação farmacológica do sistema serotoninérgico central com este ISRS. Como mencionado anteriormente, existe uma forte relação entre os sistemas serotoninérgico e CRH centrais, e são clássicas as respostas hiperglicemiantes

CRH-dependentes. Desta forma, o aumento dos níveis de 5-HT, promovido pela fluoxetina, parece provocar elevação da secreção de CRH, um hormônio capaz de elevar a glicemia através do aumento da atividade simpática periférica (BROWN et al., 1985). Portanto, estamos sugerindo que um dos mecanismos pelos quais a serotonina provoca hiperglicemia seja o aumento dos níveis periféricos de catecolaminas, principalmente a adrenalina, a qual exerce influências hepáticas e pancreáticas diretas, podendo modular ações hiperglicemiantes como o aumento da gliconeogênese e da secreção de glucagon, além de inibir a liberação de insulina. Podem ainda ser encontrados na literatura dados que ampliam a interrelação entre os sistemas serotoninérgico e CRH-érgico. Dentre os resultados destes estudos podemos citar que a liberação de CRH no NPV parece ser mediada pelos receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> (PAN & GILBERT, 1992), que o aumento no metabolismo intermediário promovido pela 5-HT é bloqueado pelo uso de antagonistas do CRH (BOVETTO et al., 1996) e que após a utilização de outros ISRS, como a fluvoxamina, é possível observar alterações no peso corporal de ratos mediadas pelo CRH (WIECZORECK et al., 2001). Com todas estas evidências de ações conjuntas entre os sistemas serotoninérgico e CRH-érgico centrais é possível dizer que o bloqueio da hiperglicemia induzida pela fluoxetina obtido a partir do pré-tratamento feito com o antagonista CRF $\alpha$ h revela mais uma ligação funcional entre estes sistemas. A administração de quipazina eleva a atividade do sistema CRH-érgico central envolvido no aumento da secreção de corticosterona adrenal (HEMRICK-LUECKE & FULLER, 1996). É válido supor que o componente CRH-érgico central envolvido na estimulação simpática também

seja ativado pelo aumento da atividade serotoninérgica induzida pela injeção central de quipazina. Isto nos permite sugerir que o efeito hiperglicemiante da quipazina, administrada centralmente, possa ser dependente de um efeito simpatoestimulatório. É pertinente observar que a capacidade do sistema CRH central de promover elevações da glicemia e dos níveis de ácidos graxos livres através de um mecanismo dependente da atividade do simpático já foi relatada (BROWN et al., 1982; NIJSEN et al., 2000), enquanto que o bloqueio farmacológico dos receptores CRHR1 e CRHR2 pelo CRF $\alpha$ h reduziu de forma significativa a hiperglicemia induzida pelo estresse (BROWN et al., 1985). Desta maneira, são múltiplas as ações serotoninérgicas que dependem da liberação de CRH, mostrando que deve existir um elo funcional entre estes dois sistemas. Portanto, podemos incluir a participação do CRH na hiperglicemia induzida pela estimulação do sistema serotoninérgico central no rol destas ações. Além do mais, a administração de vários agonistas da 5-HT promove elevação da expressão da proteína *fos* em neurônios CRH no NPV (BOVETTO et al., 1996) um núcleo hipotalâmico que possui grande importância glicorregulatória.

Prosseguimos a investigação buscando avaliar a participação dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais na hiperglicemia induzida pela fluoxetina e/ou quipazina. O pré-tratamento com antagonistas seletivos dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais, LY-278.584 e ondansetrona, em animais que receberam fluoxetina levou a uma redução significativa da hiperglicemia encontrada quando os animais foram tratados com fluoxetina, mas recebendo como pré-tratamento solução salina isotônica. Estudos anteriores já haviam demonstrado que a fluoxetina

administrada parenteralmente promove hiperglicemia (YAMADA et al., 1999; JACOBY & BRYCE, 1979). É conhecida a capacidade dos ISRS de aumentar a transmissão serotoninérgica, a qual promove respostas endógenas que parecem ser mediadas, ao menos em parte, pelos receptores 5-HT<sub>2</sub>. Estudos relatam que a fluoxetina e a quipazina são capazes de atenuar a hiperfagia, a depressão e a algesia induzidas pela progesterona em ratas, mediante ativação deste subtipo de receptor serotoninérgico (KAUR & KULKARNI, 2002). Nos dados aqui obtidos, é possível acreditar que a hiperglicemia resultante da estimulação farmacológica do sistema serotoninérgico central possa ser dependente da ativação de receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais, já que o bloqueio destes receptores, realizado com dois diferentes antagonistas seletivos, inibiu a resposta hiperglicêmica induzida pela fluoxetina e pela quipazina.

Os principais efeitos endócrinos e metabólicos da ativação do CRH central expressos na periferia são resultantes do aumento da atividade do eixo hipotálamo-hipófise-adrenal (levando à elevação da corticosteronemia) ou da atividade simpática (com a conseqüente liberação de adrenalina).

Dados de outros autores mostram que a ativação do eixo hipotálamo-hipófise-adrenal não parece depender da estimulação de receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais (FULLER, 1996).

Em nosso trabalho, observamos que o pré-tratamento com dois antagonistas 5-HT<sub>3</sub> seletivos foi capaz de bloquear a hiperglicemia induzida pela administração central de quipazina. Assim, considerando resultados de trabalhos anteriores mostrando que os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais não são capazes de levar a uma ativação do eixo hipotálamo-hipófise-adrenal que propiciasse aumento da



liberação de corticosterona, torna-se aceitável que a estimulação farmacológica dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais possa aumentar a liberação de CRH, gerando hiperglicemia simpato-dependente. Esta resposta seria devida à liberação de adrenalina periférica e pode estar associada à secreção de corticosterona, até porque este é um mecanismo utilizado para elevar a glicemia em situações consideradas crônicas e na resposta tardia de adaptação ao estresse.

Em estudo recente, pesquisadores demonstraram modulação do sistema CRH sobre o sistema serotoninérgico alterando o ritmo de defecação em ratos, uma resposta mediada pelos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> (MIYATA et al., 1998). Isto reforça a teoria de que a resposta hiperglicêmica induzida pela estimulação serotoninérgica central seja dependente da atividade do sistema CRH-érgico e da modulação promovida pelos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais.

Outro ponto que nos chamou a atenção é que o grau de inibição promovido pelos antagonistas seletivos dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> parece diferir de acordo com o agonista serotoninérgico utilizado. De fato o LY-278.584 foi capaz de gerar um bloqueio aparentemente mais efetivo da hiperglicemia induzida pela fluoxetina em relação àquele produzido pela ondansetrona. Esta resposta pode ser explicada com base na capacidade dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> de apresentar isoformas diferentes (5-HT<sub>3A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>3B</sub> e 5-HT<sub>3C</sub>) que são caracterizadas pelo arranjo feito entre as subunidades protéicas que formam o canal iônico. A depender da isoforma apresentada, podem ocorrer respostas distintas não só na presença do neurotransmissor, mas também quando agentes farmacológicos estiverem atuando nestes receptores (HAPFELMEIER et al., 2003). Portanto, é possível que os antagonistas aqui utilizados atuem preferencialmente sobre uma determinada

combinação de subunidades, explicando desta forma os diferentes níveis de eficácia encontrados quando se bloqueou a hiperglicemia induzida pela fluoxetina.

Apesar das respostas hiperglicêmicas geradas tanto pela fluoxetina quanto pela quipazina terem sido bastante evidentes, não observamos alterações significativas nos níveis plasmáticos de insulina dos animais que receberam estes agonistas, em relação aos animais controles. Isto aponta para uma possível supressão da liberação de insulina e, portanto, é plausível que a estimulação aguda do sistema serotoninérgico central promovida pela administração de fluoxetina ou quipazina seja capaz de impedir a hiperinsulinemia contrarregulatória esperada. São conhecidos estudos que mostram que elevações dos níveis de serotonina imprimem queda na secreção de insulina em uma resposta que seria mediada pelo CRH (NANDI et al., 2002; WIECZORECK et al., 2001). Em alguns estudos utilizando rotas periféricas, a administração de fluoxetina promoveu hiperglicemia, sem hiperinsulinemia subsequente (YAMADA et al., 1999; FULLER, 1996; JACOBY & BRYCE, 1979). Assim, é possível que a hiperglicemia resultante da administração dos agonistas serotoninérgicos, utilizados neste estudo, seja resultado de uma ação simpatoinibitória sobre a secreção de insulina mediada por receptores  $\alpha_2$ -adrenérgicos. De fato, são encontrados na literatura trabalhos que sugerem esta relação; por exemplo, a estimulação de receptores 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> centrais promove queda dos níveis de insulina e conseqüente hiperglicemia (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAUD, 1987). Se observarmos estudos que utilizaram protocolos de investigação periférica, podemos citar que a administração de 5-HT ou de agonistas de subtipos de receptores serotoninérgicos diminui os níveis de insulina

(FELDMAN & LEBOVITZ, 1970; SUGIMOTO et al., 1992) e aumenta os níveis de glucagon (YAMADA & SUGIMOTO, 2000) tendo, portanto, uma ação final que é hiperglicemiante. Estes dados são reforçados por achados anteriores que revelaram que a injeção de NA no NPV provoca hiperglicemia acompanhada de inibição da hiperinsulinemia reflexa em ratos (IONESCU et al., 1989). É importante notar que justamente este núcleo é altamente influenciado pela 5-HT e participa ativamente da regulação glicêmica.

Portanto, nossos resultados permitem sugerir que o aumento na liberação de CRH é uma ação central essencial para que a atividade simpática periférica seja aumentada levando à inibição da liberação de insulina e, conseqüentemente, aumentando os níveis de glicose plasmáticos (Figura 1), como demonstrado em diversos estudos nos quais a estimulação de receptores serotoninérgicos gerou hiperglicemia exatamente através deste mecanismo (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAUD, 1987; CHAOULOFF et al., 1991; SUGIMOTO et al., 1992).

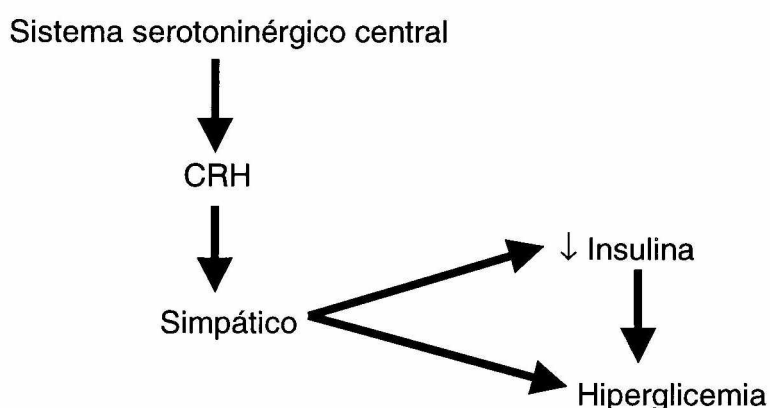


Figura 1 – Representação esquemática de uma possível via simpatoinibitória resultante da estimulação serotoninérgica e CRH-érgica central em animais não estressados.

Os resultados acima discutidos nos levaram a estudar os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais isoladamente, pois entre outros fatores, precisávamos avaliar se a participação deste subtipo serotoninérgico era fisiológica. Sabe-se que a serotonina é um neurotransmissor envolvido em uma série de eventos neurovegetativos e comportamentais. Diversos estudos têm demonstrado a sua influência em processos relacionados ao controle da ingestão alimentar (BLUNDELL & LATHAN, 1979; BLUNDELL, 1977), gênese de doenças neuropsiquiátricas (HOLANDER et al., 1992; LIEBERMAN et al., 1998) e, ainda, como modulador da resposta adaptativa ao estresse (SHIMIZU et al., 1989; CHAOULOFF, 1993; CHAOULOFF et al., 1999) e do controle glicêmico (NONOGAKI & IGUCHI, 1997). A estimulação elétrica ou química dos núcleos da rafe provoca hiperglicemia (LIN & SHIAN, 1991). Da mesma forma, a estimulação farmacológica de determinados subtipos de receptores serotoninérgicos como 5-HT<sub>1A</sub>, 5-HT<sub>2B/C</sub>, eleva a glicemia por inibição dos níveis de insulina e pelo aumento da atividade simpática periférica (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAULD, 1987; CHAOULOFF et al., 1990). Em estudos anteriores, a participação dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> periféricos no controle da glicemia foi testada, chegando-se a conclusão de que estes receptores não participam desta regulação (SUGIMOTO et al., 1996). Nossos resultados, porém, revelam que a estimulação central dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> pelo agonista seletivo, *m*-CPBG, é capaz de alterar o perfil glicêmico elevando os níveis plasmáticos de glicose. O sistema que regula a glicemia centralmente depende da ativação de circuitos neurais existentes em núcleos hipotalâmicos que estão localizados em torno do 3<sup>o</sup> V (NONOGAKI & IGUCHI, 1997). Por outro lado, é aceito que áreas hipotalâmicas glicorregulatórias

exercem seu papel hiperglicemiante através de ações estimulatórias diretas sobre o fígado, mediadas pelo sistema nervoso simpático, ou promovam hipoglicemia reduzindo o débito hepático de glicose por meio de ações parassimpáticas (SHIMAZU et al., 1966). Assim, podemos sugerir que a presença de receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> em áreas hipotalâmicas circunventriculares, principalmente naquelas consideradas responsáveis pelo controle da glicemia, é parte importante desta regulação.

A resposta hiperglicêmica encontrada após a estimulação dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais foi completamente bloqueada pelo pré-tratamento com o antagonista 5-HT<sub>3</sub> seletivo, ondansetrona. Esta informação nos levou a estudar um possível papel endógeno destes receptores sobre o controle glicêmico para tanto, administramos isoladamente a ondansetrona no 3<sup>o</sup> ventrículo. Os resultados encontrados demonstraram que este antagonista não foi capaz de promover alterações significativas nos níveis plasmáticos de glicose, em comparação àqueles encontrados nos animais controles. Desta forma, levando em consideração o protocolo aqui utilizado, acreditamos que inexistente um tônus fisiológico inibitório 5-HT<sub>3</sub> dependente. Isto não diminui a importância dos dados observados, desde que os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> têm sido cada vez mais utilizados como alvos farmacológicos e, portanto diversas patologias vêm sendo tratadas com agentes que atuam nestes receptores, o que pode maximizar efeitos colaterais indesejáveis.

As alterações observadas na glicemia após a estimulação farmacológica dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais ocorreram independentemente do estado alimentar, porém, em animais em jejum, a hiperglicemia podia ser

observada a partir do tempo 30 min., mesmo na menor das doses utilizadas. Por outro lado, em animais alimentados, o mesmo padrão de resposta só foi encontrado após a utilização de uma dose duas vezes maior que aquela considerada mais eficaz para animais em jejum. Estudos anteriores sugerem que em animais no estado de jejum o aumento dos níveis de glicose se dá via ativação da gliconeogênese hepática por um mecanismo dependente da liberação de adrenalina pela glândula adrenal (IGUCHI et al., 1989). Outros dados também demonstraram que a adrenalina de origem periférica participa de forma relevante da hiperglicemia induzida pela estimulação de receptores serotoninérgicos (CHAOULOFF & JEANRENAUD, 1987; CHAOULOFF et al., 1990). Já em animais alimentados, o processo responsável pela hiperglicemia seria a glicogenólise que parece ser mediada não só pela liberação de adrenalina, mas também pelo aumento dos níveis de glucagon ou, ainda, pela atividade de circuitos neuronais simpáticos que inervam diretamente o fígado (IGUCHI et al., 1989). Estes dados nos levam a acreditar que a hiperglicemia induzida pela estimulação dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais ativa o eixo simpático que, por sua vez, promove aumento da atividade gliconeogênica ou glicogenolítica, a depender do estado alimentar.

Observamos ainda, que os receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais não parecem participar da hiperglicemia induzida pelo estresse de imobilização. O estresse gera modificações significativas na regulação neuroendócrina (CHAN et al., 1993), além de provocar respostas periféricas capazes de promover alterações adaptativas que incluem mudanças metabólicas importantes (CHROUSOS & GOLD, 1992). De fato, é conhecida a participação da 5-HT e de seus receptores

na modulação da resposta ao estresse (CHAOULOFF, 1993). Sua participação na ativação de mecanismos endógenos que visam a produção de uma resposta que adapte o organismo a uma situação estressante vão desde um envolvimento na regulação do eixo hipotálamo-hipófise-adrenal até uma ação direta na liberação de CRH em núcleos hipotalâmicos (FULLER, 1996; HANLEY & VAN DE KAR, 2003). A hiperglicemia induzida pelo estresse é uma resposta clássica e, sendo assim, com base no protocolo aqui utilizado, podemos sugerir pelo menos duas possibilidades: ou os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais não exercem influência sobre a resposta hiperglicêmica gerada pelo estresse de imobilização ou a sua participação é completamente mascarada pela ativação de outros fatores centrais ou periféricos que, por si só, são capazes de gerar o efeito hiperglicemiante aqui observado (Figura 2).

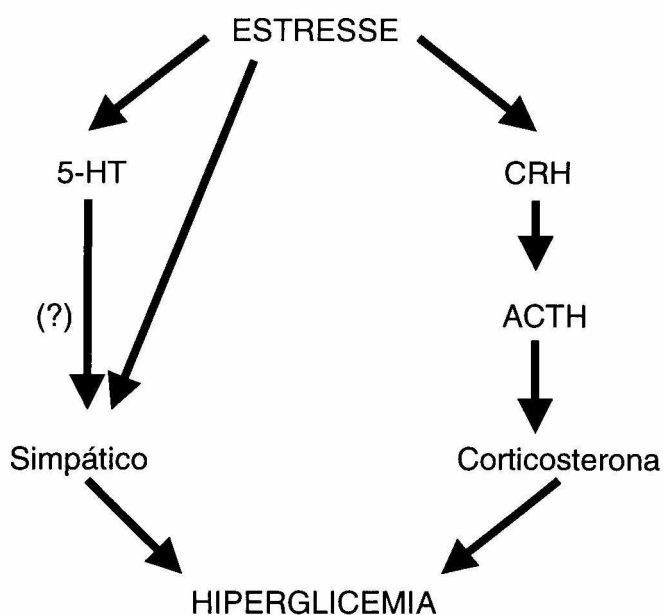
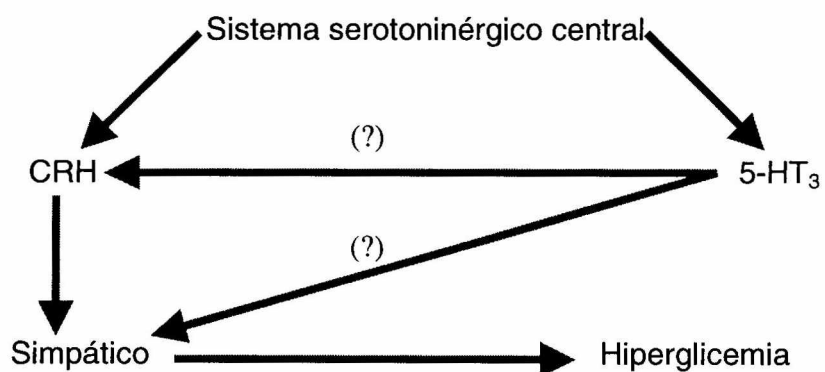


Figura 2 – Ativação simpática e do eixo hipotálamo-hipófise-adrenal na resposta hiperglicêmica ao estresse: Possível papel serotoninérgico.

Os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> têm sido implicados em uma série de doenças de importância clínica indiscutível a exemplo da síndrome do cólon irritável (HUMPHREY et al., 1999) e doenças que afetam o SNC (JONES & PIPER, 1994). Em tempo, é válido ressaltar, que é cada vez mais freqüente a utilização de fármacos que detêm seletividade para estes receptores no tratamento destas patologias (WALTON, 2000; YE et al., 2001), fato que deve levar em consideração toda e qualquer possibilidade de surgimento de efeitos adversos que possam ser dependentes da atividade dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, incluindo possíveis distúrbios glicêmicos.

Por estas razões aqui apresentadas, acreditamos que são relevantes os resultados alcançados por este trabalho no qual relacionamos o sistema serotoninérgico central com o controle glicêmico. Esta variável metabólica por nós estudada possui grande importância no sentido de auxiliar de forma significativa na manutenção da homeostase glicêmica. Este estudo amplia o conhecimento sobre a participação das vias serotoninérgicas e subtipos de seus receptores na regulação da glicemia, neste caso o subtipo 5-HT<sub>3</sub>, e também revela que a participação deste sistema depende da integridade funcional do componente CRH-érgico central, revelando ainda que existem conexões complexas envolvendo a 5-HT, os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> e o CRH central, como pode ser observado na figura 3. Acreditamos, portanto, que conseguimos atingir os objetivos previstos no desenvolvimento deste estudo.





**Figura 3** – Representação esquemática das possíveis conexões entre os sistemas serotoninérgico, CRH-érgico e receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais sobre o controle da glicemia em ratos não estressados.

## 6 CONCLUSÕES

Neste estudo buscamos investigar a participação dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais no controle da glicemia basal em ratos em jejum ou alimentados submetidos ou não ao estresse de imobilização. Averiguamos o papel das vias serotoninérgicas centrais na regulação glicêmica em animais não estressados alimentados ou em jejum e examinamos a existência de uma relação funcional entre o sistema serotoninérgico, o CRH e os receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais nas respostas encontradas.

Desta forma, este trabalho nos levou às seguintes conclusões:

1. A estimulação farmacológica das vias serotoninérgicas centrais pela administração de quipazina ou fluoxetina eleva os níveis glicêmicos significativamente em animais em jejum.
2. A hiperglicemia induzida pela estimulação farmacológica do sistema serotoninérgico central parece ser dependente do aumento da secreção do hormônio hipotalâmico CRH em animais em jejum.
3. A hiperglicemia resultante da estimulação farmacológica do sistema serotoninérgico central parece também depender da ativação de receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais.
4. Não parece existir um tônus glicorregulatório endógeno dependente de receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais.
5. Não parece existir um tônus glicorregulatório endógeno dependente do CRH central.

6. A resposta hiperglicêmica encontrada após a estimulação farmacológica central do sistema serotoninérgico parece ser dependente da ativação, de forma seqüencial, do sistema CRH-érgico e dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais.
7. A estimulação serotoninérgica central parece provocar hiperglicemia pela inibição da hiperinsulinemia contrarregulatória esperada.
8. A estimulação farmacológica isolada dos receptores serotoninérgicos 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais provoca hiperglicemia significativa em ratos em jejum ou alimentados não estressados.
9. A resposta hiperglicêmica induzida pelo estresse não parece depender da atividade dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais.

Os resultados por nós obtidos e aqui apresentados destacam a participação do sistema serotoninérgico central na regulação da glicemia. Este controle é dependente da integridade funcional do sistema CRH-érgico e dos receptores 5-HT<sub>3</sub> centrais, sendo mais evidente em animais em jejum não estressados. Desta forma, estes dados originais revelam uma relação complexa entre sistemas cerebrais distintos que participam de forma conjunta da gênese de processos fisiológicos da maior importância.

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