

APOE genotype and sex dependent effects of 17-alpha-estradiol on AD pathology

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Research Abstract

? DESCRIPTION (provided by applicant): Alzheimer's disease (AD) is characterized at post-mortem examination by high densities of β -amyloid (A β)-containing plaques and extensive neurogliosis in cortical brain regions, with severe loss of neurons, including the pyramidal

neurons in the CA sub-regions of the hippocampus and noradrenergic neurons in the locus coeruleus (LC). AD is the most common cause of elderly dementia and women have a higher incidence of AD than men. The gradual loss of sex steroid hormones may contribute to age associated cognitive decline. A neuroprotective role of estrogens in murine models has been established. Specifically, 17 β -estradiol has been shown to stimulate enhanced synaptic plasticity, neurite growth, hippocampal neurogenesis and long-term potentiation. However, its effects on peripheral targets in humans limit the usefulness of β -E2 as a potential therapy. Negative outcomes from the large Women's Health Initiative Memory Study (WHIMS), a clinical study using β -E2 highlight the dire need to analyze non-feminizing estrogens. Recently, we discovered that 17 α -estradiol (α -E2), an isomer of 17 β -estradiol, appear to mitigate the severity of neuron loss, amyloid burden, and neuroglial proliferation in adult dtg APP/PS1 mice. To begin to address this hypothesis in-vivo, we propose to identify mechanisms for the neuroprotective effects of α -E2 in APOE knock in (APOE3 and APOE4) and 5x FAD mice. Using equal numbers of both male and female mice, we will deliver α -E2 over sixty days via subcutaneous pellets. Sacrifice and brain removal will follow to identify if neuroprotective effects of α -E2 are mediated in a sex and/or apoE genotype dependent manner. Endpoints for these studies will be computerized stereology to quantify neuron loss in CA1 and LC, amyloid burden and neuroglial proliferation in the hippocampal formation; and enzyme-linked immunoassays to quantify levels of A β peptides and pro-inflammatory cytokines in hippocampal molecular layers. Taken together, these experiments will provide perhaps the most direct in-vivo assessment of cellular sites for α -E2's neuroprotective effects in APOE knock-in (APOE3 and APOE4) and 5x FAD mice. Results will assess whether α -E2 deserves further study as a potential strategy for the therapeutic management of AD in middle-aged and elderly men and women.

Further information available at:

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