

Synthesis and D₂-like binding affinity of 4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide derivatives as conformationally restricted 5-phenyl-pyrrole-3-carboxamide analogs[☆]

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Abstract

A series of 4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide derivatives **2a–g** were synthesized as conformationally restricted analogs of the dopamine D₂-like 5-phenylpyrrole-3-carboxamide ligands and evaluated for their affinity for the dopamine D₂-like receptors. In this series, *N*3-[(1-ethyltetrahydro-1*H*-2-pyrrolyl)methyl]-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide (**2a**) showed the highest affinity for D₂-like receptors (IC₅₀ = 160 nM). Replacement of the *N*-(1-ethyl-2-pyrrolidinyl)methyl side chain with a 2-(*N,N*-diethylamino)ethyl or a 1-benzyl-4-piperidinyl group (**2b**, **2d**) decreased affinity for the D₂-like receptor. The other compounds tested were found to be devoid of D₂-like binding affinity.   1998 Elsevier Science S.A. All rights reserved.

Keywords: D₂-like receptor binding affinity; 4,5-Dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide derivatives; Structure–activity relationships

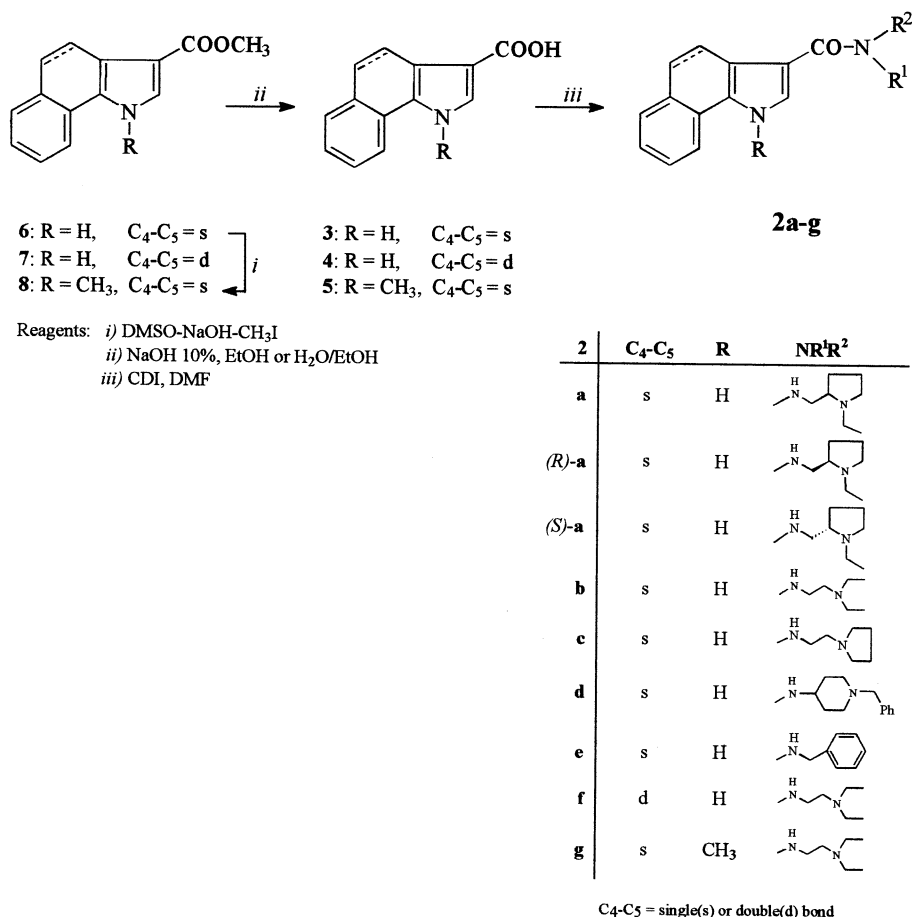
1. Introduction

Dopamine receptors can be divided into two major families: the D₁-like and D₂-like receptors based on their pharmacological profiles and coupling with the enzyme adenylate cyclase [1]. Molecular cloning techniques have shown that the D₁-like family is further divided into D₁ and D₅ receptors, both of which activate adenylate cyclase, while the D₂-like family is divided into D₂, D₃ and D₄ receptors, which either inhibit cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) production or are not coupled to adenylate cyclase [2]. Psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia, seem to be characterized by an overactivity of dopamine-secreting neurons in the ‘limbic brain’, rich in D₂-like receptors [3]. From a pharmacological point of view D₂ receptor antagonists have been shown to treat these diseases effectively;

however, a long term treatment is associated with the induction of disabling side effects such as extrapyramidal syndrome (EPS) and irreversible tardive dyskinesia. The therapeutic benefit of D₂ antagonists in treating psychotic disorders has been fully accepted with the discovery of more effective antipsychotic drugs characterized by minimal induction of extrapyramidal effects (atypical antipsychotic) [3]. Therefore the synthesis of novel antipsychotic with a better pharmacological profile remains a primary goal in the research for the therapy of psychoses [3]. In a previous paper [4], we have reported on a series of substituted 5-phenylpyrrole-3-carboxamides which displayed poor affinity at dopamine D₂-like receptors, *N*3-[(1-ethyltetrahydro-1*H*-2-pyrrolyl)methyl]-5-phenyl-1*H*-3-pyrrole-carboxamide **1** being the best representative term. In search of compounds with a better in vitro pharmacological profile, we undertook structural modification of **1** by incorporating the 5-phenylpyrrole backbone into the tricyclic framework of 4,5-dihydrobenzo[*g*]indole, and varying the *N*-(1-ethyl-2-pyrrolidinyl)methyl moi-

[☆] Dedicated to Professor Antonio Maccioni.

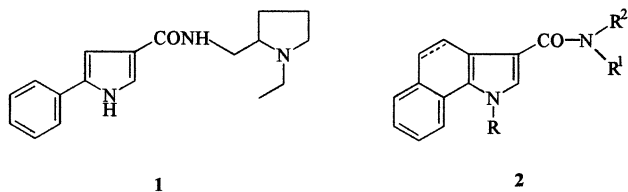
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Scheme 1.

ety with 2-(*N,N*-diethylamino)ethyl, pyrrolidinylethyl, 1-benzyl-4-piperidinyl and benzyl groups.

The synthesis of benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide derivatives **2** (see below) and their *in vitro* binding to the dopamine D₂-like receptors are reported in the present paper.



2. Chemistry

The synthesis of target compounds **2a–g** was prepared by amination of the suitable benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxylic acids **3–5** with the requisite amines in the presence of 1,1'-carbonyldiimidazole (CDI) (Scheme 1). Acids **3–5** [5] were obtained by the hydrolysis of esters **6**, **7** [5] and **8**. The enantiomers of **2a** were prepared by coupling the carboxylic acid **3** with, (*S*)- and (*R*)-2-(aminomethyl)-1-ethylpyrrolidine, respectively [6].

3. Pharmacology

3.1. Receptor binding

The target 4,5-dihydro-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide derivatives **2a–g** were examined *in vitro* for their binding affinities to dopamine D₂-like receptors. Affinities for the dopamine sites were determined via standard competitive displacement assay using D₂-like receptors isolated from caudate nucleus of male Sprague–Dawley rats with [³H]YM-09151-2 (nemonapride) as a specific ligand [7] and (–)-sulpiride as a specific displacer [8].

4. Results and discussion

The dopamine D₂-like receptor binding affinities of the carboxamides **2a–g** are listed in Table 1.

Among the compounds synthesized **2a** displayed appreciable affinity at D₂-like receptors indicating the favorable effect of the replacement of the 5-phenylpyrrole backbone of the model compound **1** with a 4,5-dihydrobenzo[*g*]indole moiety (**2a**, IC₅₀ = 160 nM versus **1**, IC₅₀ = 1.03 μM).

Table 1
D₂-like receptor binding affinity^a of compounds **2a–g**

Compound	C ₄ –C ₅	R	NR ¹ R ²	Receptor binding ^b IC ₅₀ (nM)
2a	s	H		160
(<i>R</i>)- 2a	s	H		1060
(<i>S</i>)- 2a	s	H		120
2b	s	H		400
2c	s	H		> 5000
2d	s	H		900
2e	s	H		> 5000
2f	d	H		> 5000
2g	s	CH ₃		> 5000
Raclopride				39

^a [³H]YM-09151-2 has been used as the specific ligand.

^b The IC₅₀ for binding is the average of three experiments. The S.E.M. for all values was <10%.

Dopamine D₂-like affinity was also affected by changes in the carboxamide basic side chain: the replacement of the *N*-(1-ethyl-2-pyrrolidinyl)methyl group of **2a** by a 2-(*N,N*-diethylamino)ethyl or 1-benzyl-4-piperidinyl chain resulted in an attenuation of D₂-like receptor binding (**2a** versus **2b** and **2d**) while the other compounds (**2c** and **2e**) lacked significant affinity.

Unexpectedly, oxidation or methylation of the tricyclic framework of **2b** led to compounds **2f** and **2g** devoid of D₂-like affinity suggesting that the 4,5-dihydrobenzo[*g*]indole nucleus is crucial for drug–receptor interaction. Finally, the most active compound **2a** was synthesized in the optically pure forms (*S*)-**2a** and (*R*)-**2a**, to examine the effects of stereochemistry on D₂-like binding affinity. The greater binding affinity for D₂-like receptors was found to reside in the (*S*)-isomer (IC₅₀ 120 versus 1060 nM).

Aiming to improve the D₂ binding affinity of **2a**, further work is in progress involving structural modifications of the benzo[*g*]indole system.

5. Chemical experimental

Unless otherwise noted, all materials were obtained from commercial suppliers and used without purification.

All reactions involving air- or moisture-sensitive compounds were performed under an argon ‘S’ atmosphere. Flash chromatography was performed using Merck Silica gel 60 (230–400 mesh ASTM).

Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed with Polygram[®] SIL N-HR-/HV₂₅₄ precoated plastic sheet (0.2 mm). ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectra were determined in CDCl₃ with superconducting FT NMR using a XL-200 Varian apparatus at 200 MHz.

Chemical shifts are expressed in δ (ppm) downfield from internal TMS and coupling constants in Hz. Significant ¹H NMR data are reported in the following order: multiplicity (s, singlet; d, doublet; t, triplet; q, quartet; m, multiplet), number of protons, and coupling constants in Hz. Infrared (IR) spectra were recorded as thin films or Nujol mulls on NaCl plates with a Perkin–Elmer 781 IR spectrophotometer and are expressed in ν (cm^{−1}). UV–Vis spectra were recorded as ethanolic solution with a Perkin–Elmer Lambda 5 spectrophotometer and are the absorption wavelength expressed in nm followed by (log ϵ). Optical rotation (α) of the pure enantiomers was measured using a Perkin–Elmer 241 optical activity polarimeter. Melting points were determined on a Thomas Hoover capillary melting point apparatus and are uncorrected.

Elemental analyses were performed at Laboratorio di Microanalisi, Dipartimento di Scienze Farmaceutiche Padova (Italy), and are within $\pm 0.4\%$ of the calculated values (see Table 2). For the binding studies [³H]YM-09151-2 was purchased from NEN–DuPont (Boston, MA, USA).

5.1. Methyl 1-methyl-4,5-dihydro-1H-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxylate (**8**)

A suspension of powder KOH (8.80 mmol) in 5 ml of dry dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) was stirred at room temperature for 5–10 min and then added to methyl 4,5-dihydro-1H-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxylate (**6**) [5] and the solution was stirred again for 45 min. To the reaction mixture was added 4.4 mmol of methyl iodide at 0–5°C which was then stirred for 45 min at room temperature. The mixture was diluted with water and the solid formed was filtered, washed with water, and air-dried to give the title compound **8**.

86.8% Yield; *R*_f 0.70 (AcOEt/light petroleum, 2:8); m.p. 98–100°C (EtOH); IR 1710 (CO); UV 218.0 (3.95), 224 (3.94), 2.38 (3.75), 263 sh (3.73), 303.9 (4.26); ¹H NMR 2.64 (t, 3H, *J* = 6.10, CH₂), 2.85 (t, 3H, *J* = 6.10, CH₂), 3.82 (s, 3H, CH₃), 4.18 (s, 3H, CH₃), 6.85 (s, 1H, C₂H), 7.14–7.65 (m, 4H, Ar-H).

Table 2
Elemental analysis

Compound	Required (%)			Empirical formula	Found (%)		
	C	H	N		C	H	N
2a	74.27	7.79	12.99	C ₂₀ H ₂₅ N ₃ O	74.38	7.95	12.83
2b	73.28	8.09	13.49	C ₁₉ H ₂₅ N ₃ O	73.09	8.22	13.57
2c	73.76	7.49	13.58	C ₁₉ H ₂₃ N ₃ O	73.88	7.24	13.51
2d	77.89	7.06	10.90	C ₂₅ H ₂₇ N ₃ O	77.95	7.28	10.99
2e	79.44	6.00	9.26	C ₂₀ H ₁₈ N ₂ O	79.62	6.25	9.33
2f	73.76	7.49	13.58	C ₁₉ H ₂₃ N ₃ O	73.89	7.55	13.76
2g	73.81	8.36	12.91	C ₂₀ H ₂₇ N ₃ O	73.69	8.20	12.87
4	73.92	4.29	6.63	C ₁₃ H ₉ NO ₂	73.79	4.18	6.58
5	73.99	5.77	6.16	C ₁₄ H ₁₃ NO ₂	73.82	5.72	6.36
8	74.67	6.27	5.80	C ₁₅ H ₁₅ NO ₂	74.74	6.18	5.85

5.2. General ester hydrolysis procedure for the preparation of compounds **4** and **5**

A mixture of appropriate ester (**7** or **8**) (2.48 mmol) in 26 ml of 10% hydroalcoholic (1:2 for **7** and 1:1 for **8**) NaOH was refluxed for 12 h and then poured into cold water. The resulting solution was acidified with conc. HCl and the resulting precipitate was collected, washed with water, and air-dried to give pure title acid (**4** and **5**) which was used without further purification in the next step.

5.2.1. 1*H*-Benzo[g]indole-3-carboxylic acid (**4**)

60.4% Yield; *R_f* 0.43 (CHCl₃/MeOH 7:3); m.p. 196–198°C; IR 3500 (NH), 1770 (CO); UV 195.5 (4.19), 206.0 (4.14), 231.5 (4.20), 255.7 (4.23), 278.0 (4.17), 290.0 (4.08), 304.0 (3.63), 318.0 (3.80), 333.8 (3.81); ¹H NMR 7.22 (d, 1H, *J* = 1.98, C₂H), 7.40–7.70 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 8.40 (ABq, 2H, C₄H and C₅H), 12.61 (br s, NH exch. with D₂O).

5.2.2. 1-Methyl-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[g]indole-3-carboxylic acid (**5**)

84.2% Yield; *R_f* 0.47 (CHCl₃/MeOH 9:1); m.p. 260–261°C; IR 1650 (CO); UV 199.8 (4.25), 218.6 (4.27), 287.7 (4.23), ¹H NMR 2.64 (t, 2H, *J* = 5.8, CH₂), 2.87 (t, 2H, *J* = 5.8, CH₂), 4.19 (s, 3H, CH₃), 7.01 (s, 1H, C₂H), 7.18–7.70 (m, 4H, Ar-H).

5.3. General acid amination procedure for the preparation of compounds **2a–g**

To a stirred solution of appropriate acid (**3–5**) (1.17 mmol) in 5.3 ml of DMF was added 1,1'-carbonyldiimidazole (1.3 mmol). After stirring the reaction mixture for 3 h, requisite amine (3.4 mmol) was added and stirring continued for 1 h. The reaction mixture was poured into water to give a crude solid which was filtered off or an oil which was extracted with CH₂Cl₂.

The organic layer was washed (H₂O), dried (Na₂SO₄) and evaporated to yield a crude brown oil. Crude product was purified by flash-chromatography (**2d**, **2g**) or by crystallization (**2a**, **2b**, **2c**, **2e**, **2f**) to give pure title compounds.

5.3.1. *N*3-[(1-Ethyltetrahydro-1*H*-2-pyrrolyl)methyl]-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[g]indole-3-carboxamide (**2a**)

33% Yield; *R_f* 0.40 (CHCl₃/MeOH, 8:2); m.p. 160–163°C (Et₂O); IR 3400, 3260, 3200 (NH), 1660 (CO); UV 205.8 (4.38), 232.1 (4.11), 276.1 (4.06), 325.1 (4.48), 336.1 (4.40); ¹H NMR 1.13 (t, 3H, *J* = 7.4, CH₃), 1.55–1.96 (m, 2H, CH₂), 2.10–2.29 (m, 2H, CH₂), 2.59–3.00 (m, 6H, 3CH₂), 3.10–3.40 (m, 2H, CH₂), 3.62–3.80 (m, 1H, CH), 6.43 (d, 1H, *J* = 2.0, C₂H), 6.60 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D₂O), 7.10–7.52 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 10.36 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D₂O).

5.3.2. *N*3-[2-(Diethylamino)ethyl]-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[g]indole-3-carboxamide (**2b**)

34.4% Yield; *R_f* 0.40 (CHCl₃/MeOH 8:2); m.p. 166–167°C (DMF–H₂O); IR 3360, 3230 (NH), 1640 (CO); UV 217.8 (3.90), 236.2 (3.39), 260.4 (3.78), 306.1 (4.48), 318.5 (4.46); ¹H NMR 1.01 (t, 6H, *J* = 7.2, 2CH₃), 2.40–2.70 (m, 8H, 4 × CH₂), 2.82 (t, 2H, *J* = 8.0, CH₂), 3.32 (t, 2H, *J* = 8.0, CH₂), 6.66 (s, 1H, C₂H), 7.09–7.79 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.88 (t, 1H, NH exch. with D₂O), 11.69 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D₂O).

5.3.3. *N*3-(2-Tetrahydro-1*H*-pyrrolylethyl)-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[g]indole-3-carboxamide (**2c**)

25.5% Yield; *R_f* 0.37 (CHCl₃/MeOH, 8:2); m.p. 75–77°C (DMF–H₂O); IR 3430 (NH), 1640 (CO); UV 214.7 (3.86), 232.0 (3.81), 248.2 sh (3.56), 280.0 sh (3.59), 318.3 (3.89); ¹H NMR 1.75–1.95 (m, 4H, 2CH₂), 2.48–2.80 (m, 8H, 4CH₂), 2.92 (t, 2H, *J* = 8.0, CH₂), 3.58 (t, 2H, *J* = 8.0, CH₂), 6.52 (s, 1H, C₂H), 6.85 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D₂O), 7.10–7.52 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 10.10 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D₂O).

5.3.4. *N*3-(1-Benzyl-4-piperidyl)-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide (**2d**)

39% Yield; R_f 0.38 ($\text{CHCl}_3/\text{MeOH}$, 9:1); m.p. 98–99°C; IR 3250 (NH), 1640 (CO); UV 212.0 (4.64), 228.5 (4.52), 248.0 (4.34), 274.6 (4.54), 312.0 (4.45), 322.0 (4.52), 332.0 (4.49), 336.0 (4.55); ^1H NMR 1.52–1.68 (m, 2H, CH_2), 1.80–1.95 (m, 2H, CH_2), 2.02–2.20 (m, 2H, CH_2), 2.54–2.94 (m, 9H, 4 CH_2 and CH), 6.68 (s, 1H, C_2H), 7.12–7.68 (m, 9H, Ar-H), 7.90 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D_2O), 11.49 (br s, 1H, NH, exch. with D_2O).

5.3.5. *N*3-Benzyl-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide (**2e**)

40% Yield; R_f 0.35 (AcOEt/light petroleum, 4:6); m.p. 168–170°C (DMF– H_2O); IR 3260 (NH), 1630 (CO); UV 206.0 (4.41), 226.0 sh (4.10), 250.0 sh (3.68), 276.1 (3.80), 322.3 (4.45), 322.5 (4.48), 335.2 (4.44); ^1H NMR 2.69 (t, 2H, $J = 5.6$, CH_2), 2.91 (t, 2H, $J = 5.6$, CH_2), 4.67 (d, 2H, $J = 5.72$, CH_2), 6.26 (t, 1H, $J = 5.72$, NH exch. with D_2O), 6.44 (d, 1H, $J = 2.14$, C_2H), 6.99–7.60 (m, 9H, Ar-H), 10.73 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D_2O).

5.3.6. *N*3-[2-(Diethylamino)ethyl]-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide (**2f**)

81.7% Yield; R_f 0.43 ($\text{CHCl}_3/\text{MeOH}$, 8:2); m.p. 131–133°C (DMF– H_2O); IR 3360, 3240 (NH) 1650 (CO); UV 195.0 (4.34), 224.0 (4.14), 232.3 (4.19), 254.0 (4.34), 280.0 (4.17), 292.2 (4.12), 316.5 (3.84), 332.4 (3.90); ^1H NMR 1.07 (t, 6H, $J = 7.1$, 2 CH_3), 2.60 (q, 4H, $J = 7.1$, 2 CH_2), 2.71 (t, 2H, $J = 6.0$, CH_2), 3.63 (q, 2H, $J = 6.0$, CH_2), 7.02 (d, 1H, $J = 1.2$, C_2H), 7.22 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D_2O), 7.40–7.68 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 8.20 (ABq, 2H, C_4H and C_5H), 11.14 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D_2O).

5.3.7. *N*3-[2-(Diethylamino)ethyl]-1-methyl-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide (**2g**)

35.7% Yield; R_f 0.62 ($\text{CHCl}_3/\text{MeOH}$, 8:2); yellow oil; IR 3300 (NH), 1670 (CO); UV 221.0 (3.92), 233.1 sh (3.37), 262.2 (3.78), 300.3 (4.44), 313.5 (4.41); ^1H NMR 0.98 (t, 6H, $J = 7.2$, 2 CH_3), 2.40–2.62 (m, 8H, 4 CH_2), 3.30–3.46 (m, 2H, CH_2), 4.08 (s, 3H, CH_3), 6.41 (s, 1H, C_2H), 6.82 (br s, 1H, NH exch. with D_2O), 7.03–7.50 (m, 4H, Ar-H).

5.4. General procedure for the enantiomers of *N*3-[(1-ethyltetrahydro-1*H*-2-pyrrolyl)methyl]-4,5-dihydro-1*H*-benzo[*g*]indole-3-carboxamide (**2a**)

To a stirred solution of the carboxylic acid **3** (1.17 mmol) in 5.3 ml of DMF was added 1,1'-carbonyldiimidazole (1.3 mmol). After stirring the reaction mixture for 3 h, (*S*)- or (*R*)-(aminomethyl)-1-ethylpyrrolidine [**6**] was added and stirring continued for 1 h. The

reaction mixture was poured into water to give a crude solid. The resulting solid was recrystallized from AcOEt/ Et_2O to give (*S*)- or (*R*)-**2a**. Physical data for (*S*)- or (*R*)-**2a** are as follows:

Compound	Yield 33%; m.p. 168–170°C;
(<i>R</i>)- 2a :	$[\alpha]_D^{23} = +58$ ($c = 1.0$ CH_3OH)
Compound	Yield 35%; m.p. 166–168°C;
(<i>S</i>)- 2a :	$[\alpha]_D^{23} = -55$ ($c = 1.0$ CH_3OH)

6. Pharmacological experimental

6.1. *In vitro* pharmacology

6.1.1. Membrane preparation

Membranes for D_2 -like receptor binding assays were prepared from caudate nucleus of Sprague–Dawley rats. Tissue was homogenized in 200 volumes of ice-cold 50 mM Tris–HCl buffer pH 7.7 (buffer A) and centrifuged at $50\,000 \times g$ at 4°C for 25 min. The pellet was resuspended in 50 mmol Tris–HCl buffer pH 7.7 containing 120 mM NaCl, 5 mM KCl, 2 mM CaCl_2 , 1 mM EDTA and 5.7 mmol ascorbic acid (buffer B).

6.1.2. Binding assay

$[\text{H}^3]\text{YM-09151-2}$ (nemonapride) was used as a specific ligand for D_2 -like receptor [7] and (–)-sulpiride as a specific displacer [8].

$[\text{H}^3]\text{YM-09151-2}$ binding was determined in a final volume of 1000 μl , consisting of 400 μl tissue homogenate, 100 μl 0.4 nM $[\text{H}^3]\text{YM-09151-2}$, 100 μl drugs (dissolved in dimethylsulfoxide and serial dilutions made up in buffer) or incubation buffer (total and non specific samples). The incubation (at 25°C, in the dark) was started by the addition of tissue homogenate and was terminated 60 min later by rapid filtration through glass-fiber filter strips (whatman GF/B) with a filtration manifold (Model M-24, Brandel). The filters were rinsed three times with 4 ml of ice-cold Tris buffer B.

Protein concentration was assayed by the method of Lowry et al. [9] with bovine serum as standard. IC_{50} values were determined from displacement curves with the Medusa program.

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