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# MEETING REPORT

## Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum 13th C.I.N.P. Congress

# Variability in Responses to Benzodiazepines[1]

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THE purpose of this symposium was to examine the extent and nature of variability in responses to benzodiazepines. Many of us who work with benzodiazepines are aware that some individuals show little or no response to these drugs (e.g., [2]). This problem is usually overcome by rejecting poor responders on the basis of a pilot dose [4,7], or by increasing the subject numbers and/or the dose in order to obtain overall statistical significance. Little attention has been paid to the underlying causes of individual variability. This, of course, is of interest only if a "strong" or "weak" response to a benzodiazepine is a stable characteristic of an individual; the data presented from experiments in the rat [5] demonstrate significant stability. A separate point of interest is whether a "strong" or "weak" response to benzodiazepines is a general characteristic of an individual, which will be reflected in a wide range of behavioural and physiological responses; the papers by Bond and Lader and File [1,5] provide data on this question. There is a high correlation between physiological responses to benzodiazepines in man, and between closely related behavioral measures in both man and rat, whereas the correlations in benzodiazepine effect across different classes of response are lower. Possible explanations for these behavioral differences have been sought in the different sub-types of benzodiazepine receptors [3] and in their coupling with the GABA-system [8]. The extent to which behavioral differences can be attributed to pharmacokinetic differences is examined in the rat [5] and in man [6].

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