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Autonomic and Behavioral Thermoregulation in the Golden Hamster During Subchronic Administration of Clorgyline

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GORDON, C. J. AND W. C. DUNCAN, JR. Autonomic and behavioral thermoregulation in the golden hamster during subchronic administration of clorgyline. PHARMACOL BIOCHEM BEHAV 48(1) 119-125, 1994. - Chronic administration of clorgyline, a type-A monoamine oxidase inhibitor, leads to a decrease in peritoneal (i.e., core) temperature of golden hamsters. To better understand the mechanisms of clorgyline's thermoregulatory effects, autonomic and behavioral thermoregulatory effectors were measured in Syrian hamsters following chronic infusion of clorgyline via a minipump (2 mg/ kg/day). Metabolic rate, evaporative water loss, motor activity, and core temperature were measured after 60 min of exposure to ambient temperatures (T_a) of 5, 20, 30, and 35°C. Behavioral thermoregulatory responses were assessed by measuring selected T_a and motor activity of the same animals in a temperature gradient over the course of 23 h. Metabolic rate and motor activity were significantly elevated in clorgyline-treated hamsters exposed to a Ta of 5°C. There were no effects of clorgyline on evaporative water loss. In the temperature gradient the mean selected T_a of clorgyline-treated hamsters was nearly equal to that of the saline-treated hamsters, 30.7 and 31.2°C, respectively. On the other hand, the mode of selected Ta in the clorgyline group was 2.8°C higher than that of the saline group. Motor activity in the gradient was significantly elevated and food consumption was depressed by clorgyline treatment. Overall, these findings indicate that chronic clorgyline treatment in the golden hamster results in novel autonomic and behavioral modification; it stimulates metabolic thermogenesis during cold exposure, but appears to increase the behavioral zone of thermoneutrality. This latter effect may mean an improvement in heat tolerance, suggesting that this drug might assist in the adaptation to warm temperatures.

Temperature regulation Behavior Metabolic rate Core temperature Food consumption Motor activity Antidepressant Chronic treatment

THE antidepressant drug clorgyline [N-Methyl-N-propargyl-3-(2,4-dichlorophenoxy)-propylamine hydrochloride, MW 308.6], a monoamine oxidase inhibitor, selectively and irreversibly binds to type A monoamine oxidase (MAO), preventing the deamination of serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine (10,11). In addition to its antidepressant effects, clorgyline treatment leads to a variety of behavioral changes (5,6,9,20,23,24,27). Recently, several thermoregulatory effects of chronic clorgyline treatment have been described. One week of clorgyline treatment decreases the mean 24 h body temperature and minimal metabolic rate in the golden hamster (6,8). Chronic clorgyline treatment is also associated with reduced rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and increased non-REM sleep. These effects on sleep patterns are concomitant

with the clorgyline-induced hypothermia (8). Because numerous studies have found marked interactions between thermoregulation and sleep patterns (22,25), it is possible that clorgyline's effect on thermoregulation is related to the changes in sleep-wake pattern (6,8).

Acute and chronic dose response studies in rats indicate that both low (1 mg/kg/day) and high doses (10 mg/kg/day) of clorgyline produce complete inhibition of MAO activity (7). Clinical doses of clorgyline used in this study (2 mg/kg/day) produce marked inhibition (80%) of type A MAO during the first 2 weeks of minipump infusion (26), and central levels of serotonin and dopamine are subsequently elevated by 200% and 50%, respectively (21). Similar doses of clorgyline produce numerous clinical and behavioral effects (5,6,9,20,23,

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24,27). Because central administration of 5-HT elicits changes in body temperature of the hamster and other species (4,18), it is likely that clorgyline's effects on thermoregulation are related to altered 5-HT levels in the CNS.

Little is known regarding the effects of clorgyline on behavioral and autonomic thermoregulation. To better understand the mechanism of clorgyline's effect on autonomic thermoregulation, it would be useful to measure the thermoregulatory responses under a wide range of ambient temperatures (T_a) such that the thermoregulatory effectors are either activated or suppressed. Moreover, to understand if clorgyline has an effect on the set point for the control of body temperature, it is necessary to evaluate the effect of clorgyline on behavioral thermoregulation (12). That is, if cloryline reduces the set point, then one would predict a preference for cooler T_a s concomitant with a reduction in body temperature. On the other hand, if clorgyline reduces body temperature without affecting set point, then one would predict a preference for warmer T_a s. Hence, the purpose of this investigation is to measure autonomic and behavioral thermoregulatory responses in the golden hamster treated with chronic clorgyline.

METHOD

Animals used in this study were male golden hamsters obtained from Sasco Laboratories (Omaha, NB) at an age of 36 days. The hamsters were housed in groups of three in cages lined with wood shavings at a T_a of 22°C, 50% relative humidity, and a LD 14:10 photoperiod (lights on at 0800 h). The animals were maintained in these housing conditions for at least 11 days before being tested.

Clorgyline (Research Biochemical Inc., Natick, MA) was administered subcutaneously with an osmotic minipump (Alzet, model 2002) in a physiological saline vehicle at a dose of 2.0 mg/kg/day. Hamsters were anesthetized by inhalation of metofane. A small incision was made for SC insertion of the minipump in the interscapular region, the incision was closed with wound clips, and the hamster was returned to its original housing. Control hamsters were implanted with identical minipumps filled with 0.9% saline.

Saline- and clorgyline-treated hamsters were brought to the laboratory and evaluated for behavioral and autonomic thermoregulatory responses during the second week of drug treatment. This treatment week is associated with a 0.3°C decrease in core temperature when monitored in undisturbed hamsters using a radiotelemetry system (8).

Autonomic Responses

Autonomic responses included metabolic rate (MR), evaporative water loss (EWL), motor activity, and core temperature measured at T_as of 5, 20, 30, and 35°C as described earlier (15). The effects of the four T_a s were evaluated during the daytime (0900 to 1600 h) on 2 consecutive days. Animals were exposed to each T_a for 60 min. MR, EWL, and motor activity were sampled for 2.0 min intervals. MR was measured by indirect calorimetry by recording the change in oxygen concentration of the environmental chamber as described previously (15). EWL was determined by first measuring the dew point temperature of the effluent air from the chamber and then converting to EWL in dimensions of mg H₂O/ml consumed oxygen. Motor activity was measured using a Dopplertype system which operated with a frequency of 10 g GHz [see (15)]. Core temperature was measured at the end of the test period by inserting a thermocouple in the esophagus for ~5 s. This procedure gave a rapid measure of the hamster's core

temperature using a digital recorder [Physitemp model BAT-10; see (14)]. Six hamsters were treated with either saline or clorgyline. Because of technical difficulties, one hamster from each group was dropped from the analysis.

Behavioral Responses

Behavioral thermoregulatory responses were measured using a temperature gradient previously described in detail (16). Briefly, the gradient measured selected ambient temperature and motor activity each minute over a 23 h period while food (Agway 3000) and water were provided ad lib. After the hamster had been tested for its autonomic responses as described above, it was placed in a wire mesh runway positioned inside the temperature gradient. The gradient ranged from approximately 16 to 35°C. Food cups were positioned at the warm and cold ends of the runway. A water tube was positioned in the middle of the gradient. The testing period began at approximately 1000 h and continued for 24 h. Selected T_a and motor activity data were collected at 60 s intervals and stored for later analysis. At the end of the test period the hamster was removed from the gradient and its esophageal temperature was measured as described above. The food cups from the warm and cold ends of the gradient were weighed to the nearest 0.1 g to estimate the amount of food taken. It was not possible to account for the spillage of food from dispensers to calculate food consumption. Food spillage was generally quite minimal in the gradient. Five saline and clorgyline animals were tested in the gradient.

Data Analysis

The autonomic parameters were analyzed for statistical significance using a two-way repeated measures ANOVA which tested for significant effects of treatment and T_a (GB-STAT, Bethesda, MD). Significant interactions between treatment and T_a were then evaluated with a Tukey's protected *t*-test to evaluate significant effects of treatment at a given T_a .

Analysis of the behavioral data was conducted using parametric and nonparametric techniques. The selected T_a and the time-normalized motor activity data (i.e., meters h⁻¹) were averaged into hourly means. These data were then analyzed for statistical significance using a two-way ANOVA with repeated measures that tested for effects of drug treatment and hours in the gradient. In addition, frequency histograms of the 60 s selected T_a data collected over the 23 h period were constructed to determine the distribution of selected Ta for each hamster. The frequency distributions were compared using nonparametric procedures. The mode of each distribution as well as the percentage of time that the hamsters spent either below a T_a of 28°C or above 32°C [i.e., the approximate lower and upper critical T_a s, respectively; see (13)] were calculated and tested for significance using a two-tailed Mann-Whitney test. Mean selected T_a over the entire test period, total motor activity (i.e., distance moved during the entire test period), core temperature after removal from the gradient, and food taken from the warm and cold ends of the gradient were also analyzed using a Student's t-test.

RESULTS

Autonomic Responses

Clorgyline treatment and ambient temperature produced numerous effects on the autonomic parameters (Fig. 1). There were significant main effects of clorgyline treatment, F =

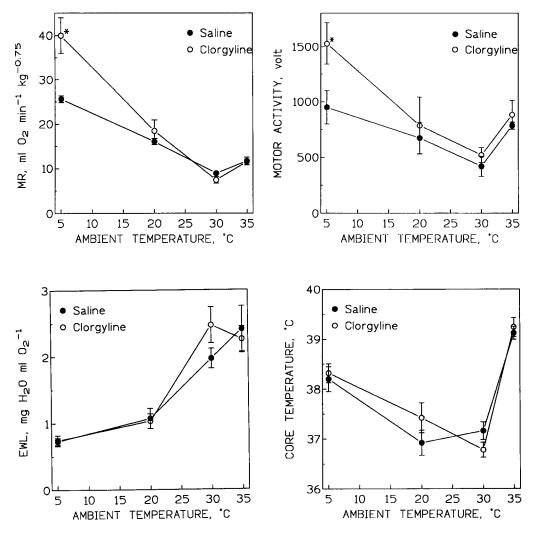


FIG. 1. Effect of 7 to 8 day infusion of saline or clorgyline on metabolic rate (MR), evaporative water loss (EWL), core temperature, and motor activity of golden hamster maintained for 60 min at ambient temperatures of 5 to 35°C. n = 5 per group. Asterisks indicate significant difference between treated and control groups.

11.9, p = 0.008, T_a , F = 71.6, p < 0.0001, as well as significant interactions between T_a and drug treatment, F = 7.9, p < 0.007, on metabolic rate. For both clorgyline-treated and saline-treated animals, minimal and maximal metabolic rates were observed at T_a s of 30 and 5°C, respectively. The metabolic rate of the clorgyline-treated group was 56% greater than that of the saline group when tested at a T_a of 5°C. Otherwise, metabolic rate at the warmer T_a s was the same between the two treatment groups. There was a marginally significant effect of clorgyline on motor activity, F = 4.5, p = 0.06, but a marked effect of T_a on this parameter, F =9.3, p = 0.0003 (Fig. 1). Tukey's t-test indicated a significant elevation in motor activity in the clorgyline group at a T_a of 5°C (p < 0.05). Core temperature and EWL were significantly affected by T_a , F = 49, p < 0.0001; F = 47, p <0.0001, respectively, but not by clorgyline treatment.

Regression analysis of the motor activity and metabolic rate data indicated a best-fitting relationship using a hyperbolic function (Y = 1/(mX + b)) (Fig. 2). For both salineand clorgyline-treated hamsters, metabolic rate appears to in-

crease only when motor activity increases above a critical level. It is interesting to note that the intercept of the polynomial equations for both treatment groups is equal to approximately 10.5 ml $O_2/(\min kg^{0.75})$, which is close the minimal (i.e., basal) metabolic rate.

Clorgyline also had a significant effect on body weight. Saline animals weighed 145.4 g at surgery and 151.0 g at first testing; clorgyline animals weighed 144.6 g at the time of surgery and 134.3 g at first testing. The loss in body weight of the clorgyline group was significant when compared to the presurgical weights (paired t-test, t = 2.77, p < 0.039).

Behavioral Responses

The selected T_a responses recorded each minute reveal dynamic behavioral patterns of the hamsters when placed in the temperature gradient for 1 day (Fig. 3). In these examples, both saline- and clorgyline-treated hamsters preferred warm over cold ends of the gradient, and this preference shifted with time of day. During the first 2 hours in the gradient

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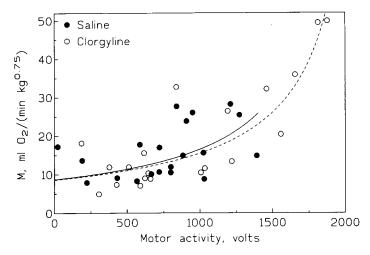
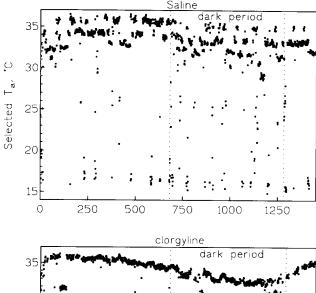


FIG. 2. Correlation between motor activity and metabolic rate in saline and clorgyline hamsters exposed to ambient temperatures of 5, 20, 30, and 35°C. Data were fit with a hyperbolic relationship: saline group, Y = 1/(-5.45E - 05*X + 0.115), $r^2 = 0.3$; clorgyline group, Y = 1/(-5.22E - 05*X + 0.116), $r^2 = 0.77$).



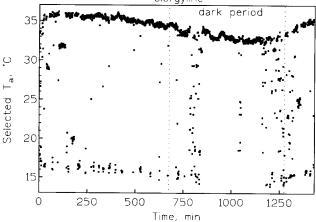


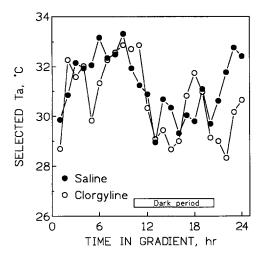
FIG. 3. Examples of the selected $T_{\rm a}$ response recorded each minute in a saline- and clorgyline-treated hamster placed in the temperature gradient.

hamsters selected warm $T_{\rm a}{\rm s}$ of $\sim 32^{\rm o}{\rm C}$. At the onset of the dark cycle, the hamsters exhibited a decrease in selected $T_{\rm a}$ that was concomitant with an increase in motor activity. Compared to the saline-treated hamsters, the clorgyline-treated hamster preferred a narrower band of warm $T_{\rm a}{\rm s}$ as evidenced by the dense clustering of selected $T_{\rm a}{\rm s}$ (Fig. 3). Increased motor activity at dusk and dawn in the clorgyline-treated hamsters is evident by the vertical bands of points at the beginning and end of the dark period.

Repeated measures ANOVA of the 60 min averages of these data indicated that selected T_a was significantly affected by hour in the gradient (F=3.7, p<0.0001) but unaffected by clorgyline treatment (F=1.0, p=0.33; Fig. 4). Motor activity in the gradient was significantly affected by both clorgyline treatment (F=6.9, p=0.029) and hour (F=4.5, p<0.0001). Motor activity of the clorgyline group showed two distinct peaks, one at the beginning and one at the end of the dark period. Motor activity of the saline group displayed a single peak at the onset of the dark period. Total motor activity reflected the time-average data presented in Fig. 4 (120.6 \pm 5.7 meters for the saline group and 229.6 \pm 30 meters for the clorgyline group; p<0.05).

Nonparametric analysis of the selected $T_{\rm a}$ data demonstrated significant effects of clorgyline treatment. The frequency distribution of selected $T_{\rm a}$ was markedly altered by clorgyline treatment (Fig. 5). The mode of selected $T_{\rm a}$ in the saline group was nearly equal to the mean, whereas in the clorgyline group the mode was 2.8°C greater than the mean $T_{\rm a}$ (Table 2). The Mann-Whitney U-test indicated that clorgyline produced an upward shift in the mode of $T_{\rm a}$ relative to saline (p=0.008). This shift in distribution is clearly seen in the selected $T_{\rm a}$ frequency plot (Fig. 5). Nonparametric analysis of these data indicate that clorgyline caused a significant increase in the percentage of time spent at $T_{\rm a}$ s below and above the normal thermoneutral zone (Table 3).

While housed in the temperature gradient, total food taken by the clorgyline group was only 39% of that taken by the saline group (Table 1). Moreover, the saline animals took 6.45 times as much food from the warm end as from the cold end of the gradient, whereas this ratio was only 0.9 in the clorgy-



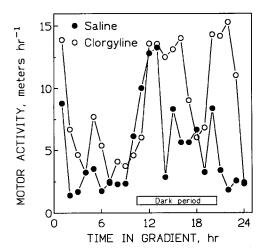


FIG. 4. Time course of 60 min averages of selected T_a and motor activity of golden hamsters treated with saline or clorgyline. n = 5 for each group.

line group. Core temperature after removal from the temperature gradient was not significantly different between the two groups (37.6 \pm 0.25°C for the saline group and 37.1 \pm 0.12°C for the clorgyline group).

DISCUSSION

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first attempt to characterize the changes in behavioral and autonomic thermo-

TABLE 1
TOTAL FOOD TAKEN FROM THE WARM AND COLD END OF TEMPERATURE GRADIENT*

| Treatment | Food Taken from Dispenser, g | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | Total | Cold | Warm | |
| Saline Clorgyline | 21.6 ± 2.8 8.4 ± 0.7^{a} | 2.9 ± 1.0 4.5 ± 1.3 | 18.7 ± 2.6 3.9 ± 1.4† | |

^{*}Calculation of food taken from dispensers did not take into account the spillage of food.

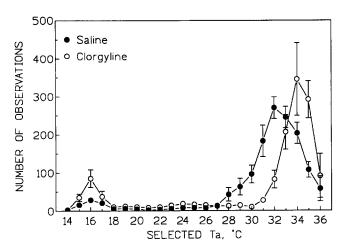


FIG. 5. Average frequency distribution of selected T_a data observed at 60 s intervals from hamsters treated with saline or clorgyline and placed in the temperature gradient for 23 h. Data plotted as mean \pm SE. (N = 5 per treatment group).

regulatory responses of a rodent subjected to chronic clorgy-line treatment. A major change in autonomic thermoregulation occurred during exposure of clorgyline animals to a relatively cold T_a of 5°C. Clorgyline treatment resulted in a marked elevation in metabolic rate at this T_a but had no effect at warmer T_a s of 20, 30, and 35°C. Clorgyline had no effect on EWL of hamsters exposed to a T_a of 35°C. A T_a of 35°C is likely to pose a mild heat stress to hamsters because they normally select T_a s of 32–33°C during the daytime [see Fig. 4 and (17)]. In view of the increase in mode of selected T_a in the clorgyline-treated hamsters, it will be of future interest to study the sensitivity of hamsters to severe heat stress following clorgyline treatment.

On the other hand, behavioral thermoregulatory responses appeared to be affected in several ways by clorgyline. Although the mean selected $T_{\rm a}$ was unaffected, it was clear that clorgyline-treated hamsters in the gradient had an altered distribution in selected $T_{\rm a}$. There was an upward shift in the mode of selected $T_{\rm a}$, suggesting an elevation in the zone of

TABLE 2

INDIVIDUAL MODE AND MEAN SELECTED T.

DETERMINED BY ANALYSIS OF
SELECTED T. RESPONSES AT 60 s INTERVALS*

| Hamster No. | Treatment | Mode T _a , °C | Mean T _a , °C |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Saline | 31 | 30.4 |
| 2 | Saline | 33 | 32.0 |
| 3 | Saline | 31 | 30.5 |
| 4 | Saline | 32 | 31.2 |
| 5 | Saline | 32 | 31.4 |
| 1 | Clorgyline | 34 | 31.6 |
| 2 | Clorgyline | 34 | 31.8 |
| 3 | Clorgyline | 35 | 29.0 |
| 4 | Clorgyline | 35 | 31.0 |
| 5 | Clorgyline | 35 | 30.0 |

^{*}Mann-Whitney tests showed significant increase in mode of selected T_a in clorgyline group (p < 0.0008).

tp < 0.05 when compared to saline group.

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| TABLE 3 | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|----|----------|------------------|----------|--|--|
| MANN-WHITNEY | RESULTS | OF | SELECTED | $T_{\mathbf{a}}$ | RESPONSE | | |

| Treatment | No. | Percent Time < 28°C | Rank | Percent Time > 32°C | Rank |
|------------|-----|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|
| Saline | 2 | 9.8 | 4 | 65,4 | 6 |
| Saline | 5 | 9.1 | 3 | 45.7 | 4 |
| Saline | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 26.8 | 1 |
| Saline | 4 | 8.7 | 2 | 42.7 | 3 |
| Saline | 3 | 11.4 | 5 | 37.6 | 2 |
| | | $mean = \overline{9.5}$ | | $mean = \overline{43.6}$ | |
| Clorgyline | 4 | 19.7 | 8 | 69.6 | 8 |
| Clorgyline | 2 | 12.8 | 6 | 78.2 | 10 |
| Clorgyline | 3 | 33.2 | 10 | 54.8 | 5 |
| Clorgyline | 5 | 26.7 | 9 | 69.3 | 7 |
| Clorgyline | 1 | 12.8 | 7 | 69.7 | 9 |
| | | $mean = \overline{21.0}$ | | $mean = \overline{68.3}$ | |
| | | | | | |

Percent time hamsters spent below T_a of 28°C and above 32°C has been calculated and ranked. *Ranks show that compared to saline treatment the clorgyline hamsters spent a greater percentage of time at T_a s less than 28°C (p = 0.008) and greater than 32°C (p < 0.05).

thermoneutrality. However, there was also a tendency for clorgyline-treated hamsters to prefer colder T_a 's (Table 3). Clorgyline-treated hamsters were also more active than saline-treated hamsters in the gradient.

The effects of clorgyline on behavioral thermoregulation were complex. On the one hand, selected $T_{\rm a}$ s were lower during the night than during the day in both the saline and clorgyline treatment groups, a response that has been reported for both rat and golden hamster (2,17). Furthermore, the 24 h mean selected $T_{\rm a}$ was not statistically different between the two groups, possibly because of the more pronounced bimodal distribution of selected $T_{\rm a}$ s in the clorgyline animals. On the other hand, there was a marked elevation in the mode of selected $T_{\rm a}$ for the clorgyline group. Analysis of this frequency distribution indicated that relative to the saline-treated hamsters, clorgyline treatment led to a significant increase in the percentage of time spent above 32°C, as well as below 28°C, the upper and lower limits of the hamster's thermoneutral zone (13).

This unusual thermoregulatory behavior could be related to clorgyline's effects on body temperature, metabolic rate, and motor activity. The increase in the mode of the selected T_a coupled with an increase in motor activity in the temperature gradient is, indeed, a novel response. Normally, rodents in a temperature gradient display a reduced selected Ta concomitant with increased motor activity at night (17). In view of the increased motor activity, we would have expected an overall reduction in selected T_a of the clorgyline group. Thus, the increase in mode of the selected T_a may be unrelated to the hamster's motor activity. The fact that chronic clorgyline treatment lowers peritoneal and brain temperature should also be considered in evaluation of the behavioral response. Based on the inverse relationship between body temperature and selected T_a over a 24 h period (2,17), a reduction in body temperature would lead one to expect an increase in the selected T_a if thermal sensory processes are operating normally. Thus, it is possible that an increased mode of selected T_a is a mechanism of cold defense in the clorgyline-treated hamster. Finally, one should not preclude the possibility that an altered distribution in selected T_a is an indication of dysfunction of the central neural processing of thermal information. An impairment in

heat sensitivity would conceivably lead to an increase in the mode of the selected $T_{\rm a}$. A recent study has found that chronic clorgyline treatment identical to that of the present study leads to a doubling of hypothalamic serotonin levels in the hamster (21). Such marked neurochemical changes in the CNS could lead to altered behavioral thermoregulatory patterns.

Using an esophageal temperature probe, we were unable to statistically confirm the hypothermic effect of clorgyline that was previously observed in hamsters. Using noninvasive radiotelemetry techniques, it was observed that clorgyline treatment led to a 0.4°C decrease in core temperature of the Syrian hamster (8). Because handling stress and insertion of probe can cause transient elevations in core temperature (1), it is likely that the procedures used in this study (i.e., esophageal temperature and metabolic measurements in this study were made after a 60 min test period in the environmental chamber) caused enough stress to obviate the effect of clorgyline on body temperature, a thermoregulatory pattern that is amenable to detection in undisturbed animals using radiotelemetry. Alternatively, it has been observed during radiotelemetry studies that at some phases during the light there were no differences in core temperature of clorgyline-vs. saline-treated hamsters (8).

It is not clear why clorgyline treatment resulted in an elevation in metabolic rate in the cold. There are two possible explanations for this elevation. First, as shown by the regression analyses of motor activity and metabolic rate, increased activity is associated with higher metabolic rates (Fig. 2). In view of the higher motor activity of the clorgyline hamsters tested at 5°C, it could be concluded that the higher metabolic rates in this group was a reflection of their increased motor activity. A second possibility is that clorgyline increased the development of brown adipose tissue (BAT) thermogenesis. Preliminary data suggests that chronic clorgyline treatment (e.g., <2 weeks) initially enhances BAT development in the hamster, but continued treatment (e.g., >4 weeks) leads to BAT atrophy (Duncan and Gordon, unpublished observations). If BAT hypertrophy occurs, then one would expect an increased metabolic rate during cold exposure, as occurs in rodents acclimated to cold T_a s (19). Further, one would also expect an increase in basal metabolism measured at thermoneutrality, but this was not observed in the present study (Fig. 1). With regard to BAT atrophy, it is interesting to note that minimal metabolic rate (i.e., metabolic rate during inactivity) measured over a 24 h period at a T_a of 22°C was reduced in hamsters treated with clorgyline for 1 month (6), which was a longer treatment course that could have resulted in diminished BAT thermogenesis and metabolic rate. The fact that the clorgyline effect on metabolic rate was seen only during cold exposure could represent an unusual aspect of this drug that deserves further study.

To summarize, we found that chronic infusion of clorgyline in the hamster produced behavioral and autonomic thermoregulatory changes. Clorgyline caused a significant elevation in metabolic rate in hamsters exposed to a cold T_a of 5°C, a response that may be related to clorgyline's effect on motor activity and/or BAT thermogenesis. Behavioral thermoregulation appears to be affected by clorgyline treatment. The clorgyline-treated animals were more active in the temperature gradient, spent more time outside of the normal zone of thermoneutrality, and had a significantly higher mode of their selected $T_{\rm a}$. This behavioral response indicates an upward shift in the zone of thermoneutrality and perhaps an improvement in the ability to adapt to warm $T_{\rm a}$ s during clorgyline treatment. The fact that clorgyline treatment enhanced coldinduced thermogenesis and increased preference for warm $T_{\rm a}$ s may improve our understanding of the drug's thermoregulatory properties.

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