

# The mode of vasorelaxant action of 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1.3 (2H.4H)-dione, a novel 'intracellular calcium inhibitor'

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1 In rabbit aorta, pretreatment with 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1.3 (2H.4H)-dione (AQ,  $10^{-5}$  M and  $10^{-4}$  M) shifted the concentration-response relationship to noradrenaline (NA,  $10^{-9}$  M to  $10^{-4}$  M) in a parallel manner whereas the agent ( $10^{-4}$  M) failed to affect the response to potassium and only slightly depressed  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contractions in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium in the presence of  $\text{K}^{+}$  (40 mM).

2  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry blockers such as nifedipine and diltiazem ( $10^{-6}$  M and  $10^{-5}$  M) had very weak or no apparent effects on the response to NA but markedly attenuated or abolished the  $\text{K}^{+}$ - and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contractions.

3 Following incubation of tissues for 15 min in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with low EGTA (0.01 mM) and methoxyverapamil (D600,  $10^{-5}$  M), NA ( $3 \times 10^{-7}$  M) caused a phasic (transient) contraction and the subsequent application of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (2 mM) resulted in a tonic contraction. This NA-induced,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -dependent, D600-insensitive contraction was inhibited by AQ ( $10^{-5}$  M and  $10^{-4}$  M) in a concentration-dependent manner. This suggests that the inhibitory action of AQ may be related to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry through specific receptor activated pathways.

4 Following incubation of tissues for 30 min in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with high EGTA (2.0 mM), NA ( $10^{-5}$  M) caused a contraction of rabbit aorta which is dependent upon release of intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ , but the response was 50% to 60% less than that in a normal medium. This contraction was inhibited by AQ ( $10^{-5}$  M and  $10^{-4}$  M) and nitroglycerin ( $10^{-5}$  M) but not by nifedipine or diltiazem. The inhibitory action of combined treatment with AQ and nitroglycerin ( $10^{-5}$  M) on the response to NA was not different from that of either agent alone.

5 These results suggest that AQ may have inhibitory actions on the release of intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and also on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry through D600-insensitive, receptor-activated  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pathways in rabbit aorta.

## Introduction

In the screening process of a new vasorelaxant agent, we have found that in rabbit aorta, 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1.3 (2H.4H)-dione (AQ) inhibited the noradrenaline (NA)-induced contraction but had no apparent effect on the  $\text{K}^{+}$ -induced contraction.

It is believed that in vascular smooth muscle a  $\text{K}^{+}$ -induced contraction is primarily dependent upon  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  influx across the sarcolemma, whereas a NA-induced contraction has a significant component that is directly dependent upon the mobilization of intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (van Breemen *et al.*, 1972; Weiss, 1977).

Therefore, the present experiments were undertaken

to define whether or not the mechanism of the relaxant action of AQ on vascular smooth muscle is primarily related to inhibition of mobilization of intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ .

## Methods

Male New Zealand white rabbits weighing 1.5–2.0 kg were killed by a blow to the head. The chest was opened to remove the thoracic aorta. After excess fat and connective tissues were removed, the aortae were cut into helical strips, about 5 mm in width and 15 mm in length. The preparation was mounted vertically in

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organ baths containing 20 ml of Krebs solution of the following composition (mM): NaCl 120.3, KCl 4.8,  $\text{CaCl}_2$  1.2,  $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$  1.3,  $\text{KH}_2\text{PO}_4$  1.2,  $\text{NaHCO}_3$  24.2, and glucose 5.8 at pH 7.4. The tissue bath solution was maintained at 37°C and bubbled with a 95%  $\text{O}_2$  and 5%  $\text{CO}_2$  gas mixture. Ligatures were placed around both ends of the muscle strips, one attaching the muscle to a glass holder and the other to a transducer adjusted to give initial stretched tensions of 1.5 g. Isometric tension changes were recorded through force-displacement transducers (FT-03) connected to a six channel Grass polygraph.

Agonists were added to the bath 10 min after treatment with antagonists.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium was prepared by omitting  $\text{CaCl}_2$  from the solution. In the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium experiment, tissues were incubated in this medium for 15 or 60 min (washed every 5 min with  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium) before the addition of drugs. In other experiments, ethyleneglycol bis ( $\beta$ -aminoethyl ether) N,N'-tetraacetic acid (EGTA; 0.01 or 2.0 mM) was included in the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium.

The following drugs were used: 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1,3-(2H,4H)-dione (AQ, Kyoto College of Pharmacy); nifedipine (Pfizer); diltiazem (Tanabe); meth-

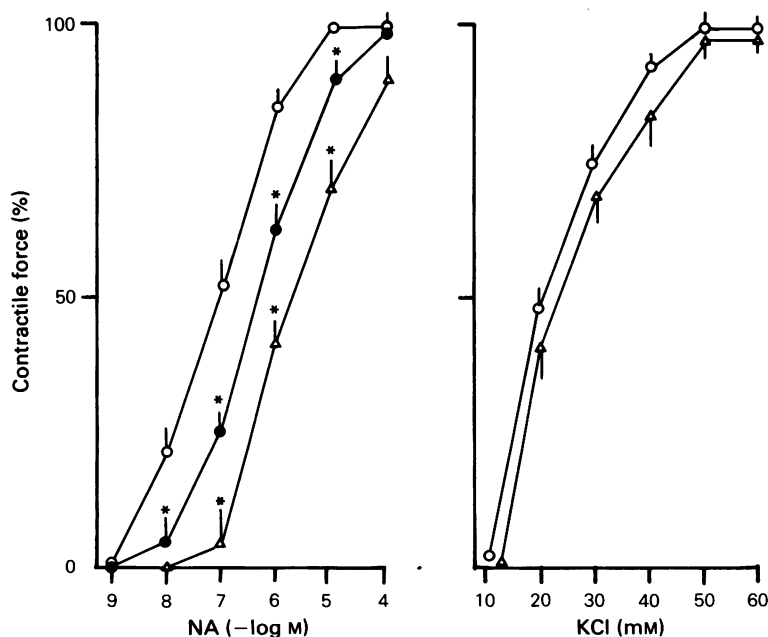
oxyverapamil (D600, AG Knoll); nitroglycerin (Parke-Davis); noradrenaline bitartrate (Sigma); 5-hydroxytryptamine creatine phosphate (5-HT, Sandoz); and histamine diphosphate (Mann). The drugs were dissolved in distilled water except for AQ and nifedipine which were dissolved in acetone and ethanol respectively and were diluted with deionized water to make final solutions. The final concentrations of acetone and ethanol in the bath did not exceed 0.1% and had no effect on muscle contraction.

The concentrations of drugs were expressed as final bath concentrations. Results are expressed or plotted as the mean  $\pm$  s.e.mean. Student's *t* test was used for statistical analysis,  $P < 0.05$  being considered as significant.

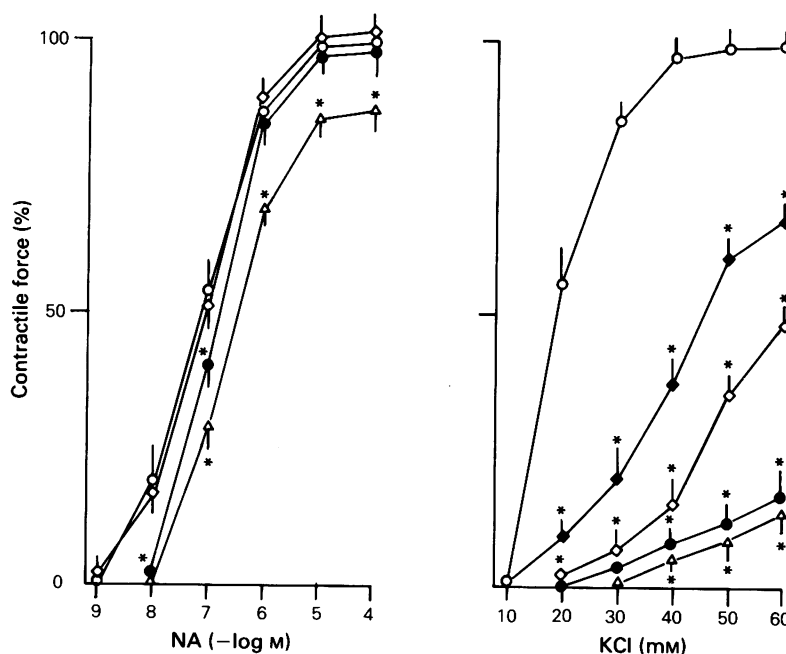
## Results

### *Contractile responses to noradrenaline and potassium*

Pretreatment with AQ at  $10^{-6}$  M and  $10^{-5}$  M inhibited the contractile response to NA ( $10^{-9}$  M– $10^{-4}$  M) in a concentration-dependent fashion and shifted the con-



**Figure 1** The effect of 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1,3-(2H,4H)-dione (AQ) on the contractile responses to noradrenaline (NA) and KCl in rabbit aortic strips. Tissues were pretreated with AQ for 10 min and then agonists were added to the bath. The maximum contractions induced by NA ( $10^{-5}$  M) and KCl (60 mM) in the untreated control preparation are  $3.7 \pm 0.6$  g and  $3.8 \pm 0.5$  g, respectively and expressed as 100% of contractile force. NA (○); NA + AQ at  $10^{-5}$  M (●), and  $10^{-4}$  M (△). Each value is the mean of 7 experiments with s.e.mean shown by vertical lines. \*Significantly different from control ( $P < 0.05$ ).



**Figure 2** The effects of nifedipine (NF) and diltiazem (DZ) on the contractile responses to noradrenaline (NA) and KCl in rabbit aortic strips. Tissues were pretreated with 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1,3 (2H,4H)-dione (AQ) for 10 min and then the agonists were added to the bath. The maximum contractions induced by NA ( $10^{-5}$  M) and KCl (60 mM) in the untreated control preparation were  $3.8 \pm 0.6$  g and  $3.5 \pm 0.7$  g respectively and expressed as 100% of contractile force. Agonists (NA or KCl) alone (○), agonist + NF at  $10^{-6}$  M (●) and  $10^{-5}$  M (△), agonist + DZ at  $10^{-6}$  M (◆) and  $10^{-5}$  M (◇). Each value is the mean of 7 experiments with s.e.mean shown by vertical lines. \*Significantly different from control ( $P < 0.05$ ).

trol concentration-response curve for NA to the right in a parallel manner (Figure 1). Nifedipine at  $10^{-5}$  M produced moderate inhibition of the response to NA at all concentrations, but at  $10^{-6}$  M, it reduced only the responses to NA at low concentrations ( $10^{-8}$  M and  $10^{-7}$  M) (Figure 2). On the other hand, diltiazem at  $10^{-5}$  M had no significant inhibitory effect on the response to NA.

Even at  $10^{-4}$  M, AQ failed to inhibit the contractile response to potassium (10 mM–60 mM) (Figure 1). However, both nifedipine ( $10^{-6}$  M and  $10^{-5}$  M) and diltiazem ( $10^{-6}$  M and  $10^{-5}$  M) markedly inhibited or nearly abolished the response to potassium, respectively (Figure 2).

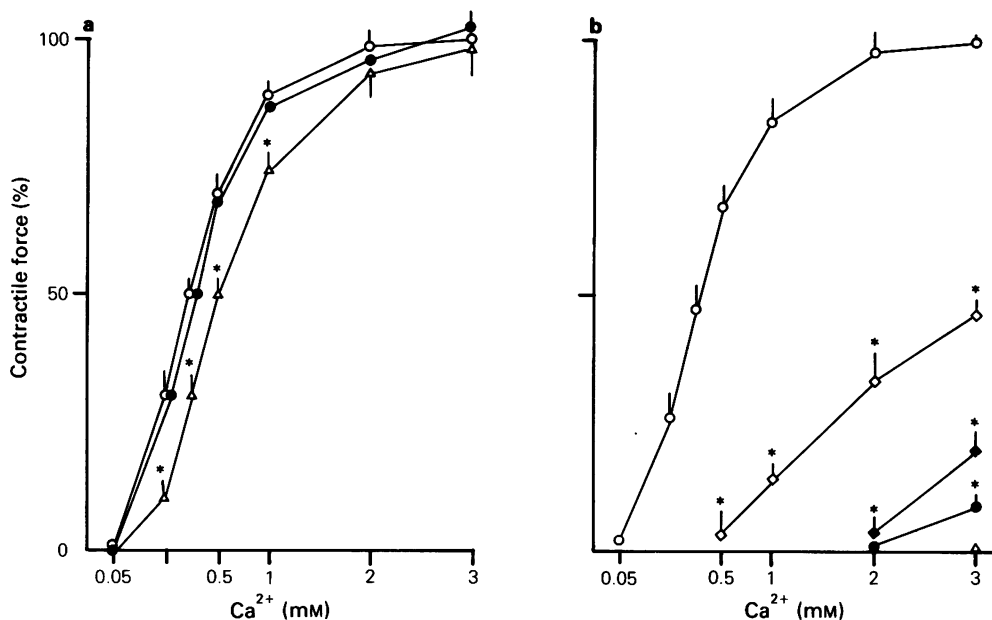
#### *$\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contraction of $\text{K}^{+}$ -depolarized tissue in a $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium*

Following incubation for 60 min in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium containing potassium (40 mM), the addition of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (0.05 mM–3.0 mM) caused a concentration-dependent contraction (Figure 3). AQ at  $10^{-4}$  M but not  $10^{-5}$  M slightly inhibited the contractile response

to low concentrations of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (0.05 mM–1 mM) (Figure 3). On the other hand, nifedipine ( $10^{-6}$  M– $10^{-5}$  M) and diltiazem ( $10^{-6}$  M– $10^{-5}$  M) markedly inhibited or nearly abolished the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contractions, respectively (Figure 3).

#### *Noradrenaline-induced contraction in a $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium plus high EGTA*

Incubation of tissues for 30 min in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with EGTA (2 mM) has usually been used to characterize agonist-induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release in vascular smooth muscle (van Breemen *et al.*, 1972; Weiss, 1977; Karaki *et al.*, 1979; Ishida *et al.*, 1980; Shibata *et al.*, 1984). The response to a high concentration of NA ( $10^{-5}$  M) in this medium was decreased to approximately 57% of the control response in a normal Ringer medium (Figure 4). Under similar experimental conditions, AQ at  $10^{-5}$  M and  $10^{-4}$  M further decreased the residual contractile response to NA in a concentration-dependent manner, whereas nifedipine ( $10^{-5}$  M) and diltiazem ( $10^{-4}$  M) did not (Figure 4). The effect of combining AQ ( $10^{-4}$  M) with nifedipine ( $10^{-5}$  M) or



**Figure 3** The effects of 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1.3 (2H.4H)-dione (AQ), nifedipine (NF) and diltiazem (DZ) on the response of rabbit aorta to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with potassium (40 mM). Tissues were incubated in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium for 60 min and then  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (0.05 mM–3.0 mM) was cumulatively added to the bath. Each value is the mean of 5 experiments with s.e. mean shown by vertical lines. The maximum contraction induced by  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (3 mM,  $3.1 \pm 0.5$  g) was expressed as 100% of the contractile force.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  + DZ at  $10^{-6}$  M (◇) and  $10^{-5}$  M (◆). (a)  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  alone (○),  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  + AQ at  $10^{-5}$  M (●) and  $10^{-4}$  M (Δ); (b)  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  + NF at  $10^{-6}$  M (●) and  $10^{-5}$  M (Δ). \*Significantly different from control ( $P < 0.05$ ).

diltiazem ( $10^{-4}$  M) on the residual response to NA was not different from that of AQ alone (Figure 4). Nitroglycerin ( $10^{-5}$  M) also decreased the residual NA-induced contraction to a level similar to that in the presence of AQ. The inhibitory effect of combined treatment with AQ and nitroglycerin was not different from that of treatment with either agent alone (Figure 4).

***Ca<sup>2+</sup>-induced contraction in the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-free medium containing low EGTA, noradrenaline and methoxyverapamil***

Following incubation of tissues for 15 min in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with low EGTA (0.01 mM) and D600 ( $10^{-5}$  M) added to inhibit any potential-dependent  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry (Hester, 1975), the addition of NA ( $3 \times 10^{-7}$  M) results in a phasic (transient) contraction (Figure 5). Although the maximum phasic contractile response in this  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free, low EGTA medium to NA was slightly different from the NA-induced contraction in a normal medium, the difference was not significant. Also, this NA-induced phasic contraction could not be elicited more than once without re-

exposure to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ . Following the phasic contraction induced by NA in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium plus EGTA and D600, subsequent addition of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (2 mM) resulted in a sustained contraction which was not significantly different in magnitude from the NA-induced contraction in normal or  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free plus low EGTA medium. This method has been used previously in rabbit aorta to separate vasodilator effects on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release from any effects on NA-mediated,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  dependent but D600-insensitive  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry (Hester, 1985). In the presence of AQ ( $10^{-5}$  M and  $10^{-4}$  M) this  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  dependent, D600-insensitive contraction was inhibited in a concentration-dependent manner (Figure 5).

## Discussion

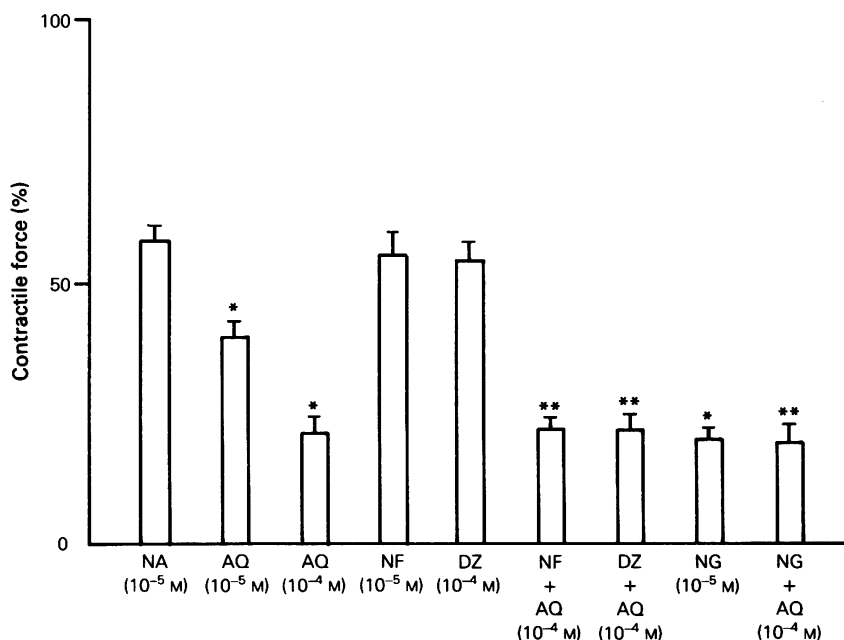
The present experiments have demonstrated in rabbit aorta, that AQ, a new 2-aminoisoquinoline derivative, readily inhibited contractile responses to NA without affecting responses to added potassium or  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  ( $\text{K}^{+}$ -depolarized preparation in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium). On the other hand,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry blockers such as nifedipine and diltiazem nearly abolished the  $\text{K}^{+}$ - and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contraction with little or no apparent effect on

the response to NA. These results illustrate that the vascular effects of AQ are obviously different from the action of the conventional organic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry blockers.

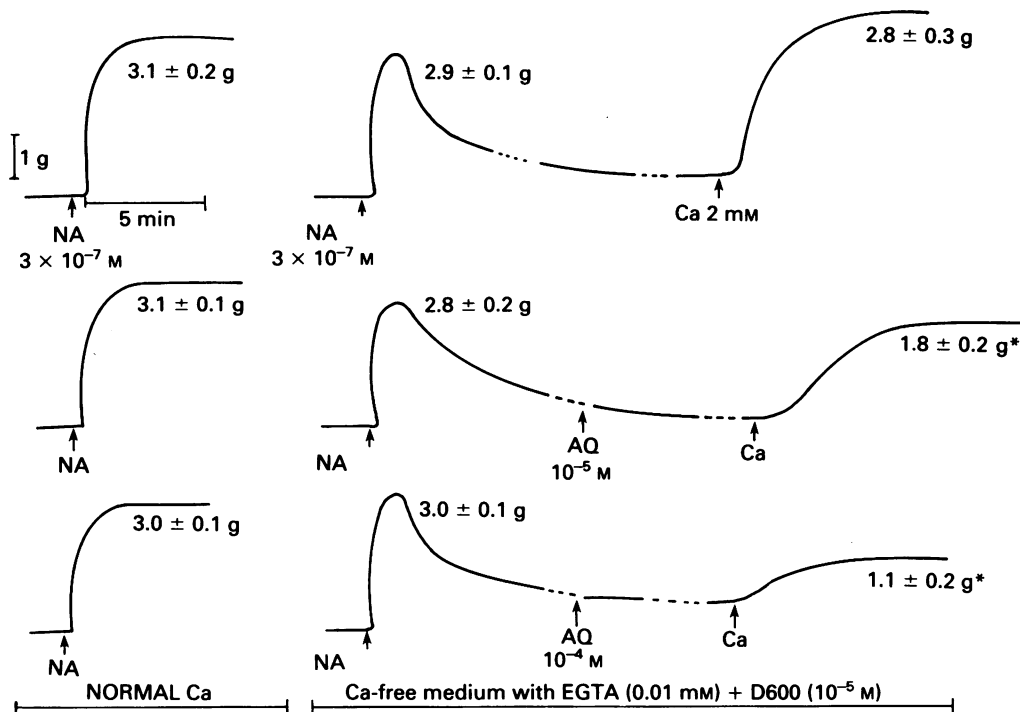
It has been suggested that in vascular smooth muscle both  $\text{K}^{+}$ - and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contractions are primarily related to an increase in  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  influx from the extracellular space as a result of membrane depolarization (for review see Weiss, 1977). Conversely, the NA-induced contraction in vascular smooth muscle is partially attributed to the facilitation of release of sequestered cellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (van Breemen *et al.*, 1972). Furthermore, exogenous NA can cause contraction of certain large conduit vessels without any apparent membrane depolarization (Droogmans *et al.*, 1977; Holman & Surprenant, 1979) and it therefore appears that the response to NA can occur independent of major effects on membrane potential. Actually, the current study reaffirms that in rabbit aorta, the NA-induced contraction is much more resistant to the inhibitory action of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry blockers than to  $\text{K}^{+}$ -

and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contractions as shown by our previous experiments (Ishida *et al.*, 1980; Ozaki *et al.*, 1981; Furuta *et al.*, 1983; Takagi *et al.*, 1983; Shibata *et al.*, 1984). Karaki *et al.* (1984) suggested that in rabbit aorta there seem to be two  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channels, one of which is activated by high  $\text{K}^{+}$  and inhibited by  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry blocker, while the other is activated by NA and not affected by the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry blockers.

In the present study, NA elicited a phasic contraction in  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium containing D600 and low EGTA (0.01 mM: Figure 5) which is similar to, but less depressed in magnitude, than the phasic response to NA noted in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium containing high EGTA (2 mM). These NA-induced contractions are transient and cannot be elicited more than once without re-exposure of tissues to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ . The greater depression of the phasic contraction in the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with high EGTA is probably primarily related to the 200 fold increase in the concentration of EGTA and secondarily, to the 2 fold increase in the duration of exposure. The rate and extent of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$



**Figure 4** The effects of single treatments with 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1,3 (2H,4H)-dione (AQ,  $10^{-5}$  M and  $10^{-4}$  M), nifedipine (NF,  $10^{-5}$  M), diltiazem (DZ,  $10^{-4}$  M) and nitroglycerin (NG,  $10^{-5}$  M) and the combined treatments with two agents (AQ and NF, AQ and DZ, AQ and NF) on the response to NA in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with EGTA (2 mM). Tissues were incubated in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with EGTA for 30 min and then noradrenaline (NA,  $10^{-5}$  M) was added to the bath. The test agents were added to the bath 10 min before the application of NA ( $10^{-5}$  M). Each value is the mean of 5 experiments with s.e.mean shown by vertical lines. The contraction induced by NA ( $10^{-5}$  M,  $3.7 \pm 0.4$  g) in a normal Ringer medium was expressed as 100% of the contractile force. \*Significantly different from the response to NA; \*\*significantly different from the response to NA in the tissue treated with NF or DZ.



**Figure 5** The effect of 2-aminoisoquinoline, 1,3 (2H,4H)-dione (AQ) on the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced contraction in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free media containing low EGTA, noradrenaline (NA) and methoxyverapamil (D600). Tissues were incubated for 15 min in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium with low EGTA (0.01 mM) and D600 ( $10^{-5}$  M) before application of NA ( $3 \times 10^{-7}$  M). The amplitudes of maximum contractions induced by NA and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  under different experimental conditions are indicated as g tension (mean  $\pm$  s.e.mean,  $n = 5$ ) in the figure.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (2 mM) was added to the bath 10 min after the addition of NA. \*Significantly different from control experiment without AQ pretreatment, and are representative inhibitory effects of AQ on the response to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium containing low EGTA, NA and D600.

depletion in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium containing  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  chelators is directly related to the concentration and time of exposure to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free solutions plus chelator (Wheeler & Weiss, 1979), as well as to the number of rinses with these solutions. However, both results support the concept that the NA-induced contraction of aortic strips is at least initially mediated through the mobilization of intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ .

In addition, the subsequent addition of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  to a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free plus low EGTA medium after the NA-induced phasic contraction results in a sustained contraction even in the presence of a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry blocker (Hester, 1985). D600 was included to eliminate the complicating influence of any potential-dependent  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry (Karaki *et al.*, 1979; 1974; Hester, 1985) and the concentration of EGTA was lowered to allow this  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  dependent response to be maximal (Hester, unpublished observations). Thus, since release has already occurred, the resulting response to added  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  presumably reflects NA-induced, D600-insensitive tension resulting from a specific receptor-

activated  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry pathway. This  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry pathway is probably not involved in refilling the emptied stores as a consequence of the initial NA-induced release. Karaki *et al.* (1979) have demonstrated in rabbit aorta that refilling of releaseable  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  stores does not occur in the continued presence of NA as is the case in this experimental protocol. This NA-induced,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -dependent, D600-insensitive contraction was inhibited in a concentration-dependent manner by AQ. Therefore, since this  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -dependent tonic contraction seems to result from an inward translocation of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and AQ was added subsequent to NA-induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release and prior to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  addition, but still in the presence of NA, the inhibitory action of AQ may partially be related to blockade of this D600-insensitive  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry pathway activated by specific receptor stimulation. The exact step or mechanism whereby AQ interrupts the coupling of receptor activation to this  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry pathway cannot, however, be delineated with the current study.

Moreover, it has recently been reported that agents

which possibly interfere with the mobilization of intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ , such as nitroglycerin, nitroprusside, nicorandil and MDI (2-substituted methylenedioxyindenes) inhibited the NA-induced contraction observed in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium (Rahwan *et al.*, 1977; Hester *et al.*, 1979; Ozaki *et al.*, 1981; Heaslip & Rahwan, 1984; Weishaar *et al.*, 1983; Shibata *et al.*, 1984; Hester, 1985). The present results also demonstrate that AQ, like nitroglycerin, resulted in further inhibition of NA-induced contraction in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium containing a high concentration of EGTA (2 mM), whereas nifedipine and diltiazem failed to affect similar NA responses. Thus, the inhibitory action of AQ is in part associated with the interference

of release of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  from a cellular store. Also, combined treatment with AQ and nitroglycerin did not cause any further suppression of the NA-induced contraction in a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free medium as that with either agent alone, suggesting a similar site of action for both agents. The present experiments suggest that in rabbit aorta, AQ may have inhibitory actions on release of cellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ , as well as  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry through a specific receptor-activated, D600-insensitive pathway.

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