

Drug- and Disease-Induced Regulation of Voltage-Dependent Calcium Channels

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I. Introduction

THE regulation of the number and function of receptors for hormones and neurotransmitters during cell development and growth by homologous and heterologous drug action and in disease states is a well-described phenomenon (35, 44). In homologous regulation a ligand regulates its own receptor, and in heterologous regulation the receptor is regulated by a ligand or process acting at a discrete receptor system. It has become increasingly evident that ion channels, such as the voltage-dependent calcium channel (VDCC),[†] are also subject to regulatory influences. These influences may be of a physiological, pathological, or pharmacological nature.

Three distinct types of VDCC (T, L, and N) have been described based on their electrophysiological properties and sensitivity to various pharmacological substances (124). Agents that interact selectively with L-type VDCCs consist of a group of compounds known as the organic calcium channel ligands. Drugs in this class include the 1,4-dihydropyridines (1,4-DHPs), phenylalkylamines, and the benzothiazepines of which nifedipine, verapamil, and diltiazem, respectively, may be regarded as prototypes. Both activator and antagonist ligands exist in the 1,4-DHP class; however, only the antagonists have been exploited clinically to treat hypertension and other cardiovascular disorders.

Membrane potential constitutes the primary signal to which VDCCs respond, activating and inactivating ac-

ording to potential range and duration. However, these potential-dependent channels are also modulated in their activities by a variety of receptor-initiated events (42, 43, 65, 101, 113). These modulatory events include direct activation by intracellular messengers (cyclic adenosine 5'-monophosphate, cyclic guanosine 5'-monophosphate, inositol-1,4,5-trisphosphate), by protein kinase-mediated channel phosphorylation mediated by intracellular messengers, and by direct association with G proteins. The modulation of cardiac L-type calcium channels via phosphorylation through the cyclic adenosine 5'-monophosphate-dependent protein kinase A represents a relatively well-established example (11, 13, 55). However, it is clear that other signals may also be involved in the modulation of such calcium channels including 1,2-diaclyglycerol and inositol-1,4,5-trisphosphate (79, 91) and that the modulation may be both positive and negative. Direct G protein control of ion channels has assumed considerable recent significance. Calcium channels appear to be likely candidates, together with potassium channels, for such direct control (10, 49). Thus, the α -subunit of the G_s protein appears to directly gate cardiac L channels in addition to its indirect control through the cyclic adenosine 5'-monophosphate cascade. Other classes of calcium channels, including the N channel, although less well investigated, are likely to be regulated also through such G protein interactions (66). This review will not focus on the details of these modulatory pathways because they are reviewed elsewhere. However, the regulation of calcium channel numbers and function by chronic drug and hormone action and during disease states may ultimately depend upon the impact of these modulatory pathways as they serve to control channel function.

Little is yet known about the mechanisms of drug- or

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[†]Abbreviations: VDCC, voltage-dependent calcium channel; 1,4-DHP, 1,4-dihydropyridine.

disease-induced calcium channel regulation. However, several possibilities exist that parallel those described for other receptor systems. These drug-binding sites on the calcium channel may serve to regulate channel number and function in homologous and heterologous fashion, in a manner similar to that used by hormones and neurotransmitters. An alternative mechanism for calcium channel regulation may involve a role for calcium itself. Inactivation of calcium channels is dependent on both intracellular calcium and membrane potential (21, 54), and high-affinity-binding sites for calcium are thought to exist on calcium channels (1, 70, 124). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that, during myogenesis in cultured skeletal muscle cells, the appearance of high-affinity calcium channel-binding sites was prevented by a reduction of intracellular calcium (76).

It is probable that ion channels and cell surface receptors are regulated in similar fashion. Both groups are membrane proteins and as such their biogenesis involves protein synthesis and glycosylation in the endoplasmic reticulum, subsequent processing in the Golgi apparatus, storage in carrier vesicles, and membrane insertion (125). However, despite such common processing, there may be significant differences in mechanisms of regulation because hormone- or neurotransmitter-defined receptors have a corresponding physiological substrate, whereas an endogenous ligand for the 1,4-DHP-sensitive calcium channel remains to be identified (53, 122).

Considerable information concerning receptor turnover has been derived from studies of receptors for growth factors, polypeptide hormones, and serum proteins such as low-density lipoproteins (35, 107). These studies have been essential to our current understanding of the mechanisms involved in receptor regulation including the process of receptor-mediated endocytosis. This process has been described in some detail (35, 44, 72, 83). Initially, cell surface receptors bind ligands (e.g., hormones and low-density lipoproteins). These ligand-receptor complexes migrate into clathrin-coated pits which are internalized to form an endosome. Once inside the cell, the contents of the endosome become acidified, causing the ligand to dissociate from its receptor. The ligand is then transferred to and degraded in lysosomes while the receptor is recycled to the cell surface. Variations on this theme exist dependent upon the particular ligand-receptor complex, e.g., some receptors are internalized in the absence of ligand and there is not an absolute requirement for coated pits (35). However, it is clear that this general mechanism provides for changes in plasmalemmal receptor number which ultimately are a result of alterations in rates of receptor metabolism, i.e., synthesis, membrane insertion, internalization, recycling, and degradation (44, 72).

Receptor regulation can occur following either short- or long-term exposure to a ligand (45). Changes in receptor metabolism usually result from prolonged or persistent receptor stimulation. However, different mechanisms are responsible for receptor regulation which occurs

within a short time. These mechanisms include modifications in coupling factors, membrane potential, the membrane lipid environment, receptor distribution, and phosphorylation state (45, 64). Thus, the mechanisms involved in receptor regulation are varied and dependent on the ligand, the receptor, and the extent and duration of receptor occupancy.

The type of ligand, agonist or antagonist, may dictate how a receptor system will be regulated. Generally, chronic administration of agonist or antagonist receptor ligands results in decreases (down-regulation) and increases (up-regulation), respectively, in ligand-binding densities (44, 83). Additionally, receptor regulation can be homologous or heterologous (44). These interrelationships of time of exposure, ligand nature, and mechanism(s) of desensitization are well illustrated with the β -adrenoceptor system. Both homologous and heterologous desensitization occur (38, 111, 112). During homologous desensitization, receptors move from the plasma membrane and are sequestered into the cytosolic fraction. Receptor phosphorylation mediated by the β -adrenergic receptor kinase is involved in this process: the phosphorylation of the agonist-occupied receptor results in uncoupling from G proteins and cytosolic sequestration (6). In heterologous desensitization, functional uncoupling of the receptors occurs mediated by several protein kinases in the absence of physical translocation of the receptor.

Many diseases, regardless of their origin (genetic, autoimmune, drug induced, or hormonally derived) are the result of alterations of receptor level or function. Thus, familial hypercholesterolemia is caused by defects in low-density lipoprotein-receptor expression, including the production of few or nonfunctional low-density lipoprotein receptors or receptors that fail to internalize (35). Myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune disorder, is due to the presence of antibodies specific for the nicotinic acetylcholine receptor of skeletal muscle (22). A decrease in myocardial β -adrenergic receptor number has been implicated in the pathophysiology of congestive heart failure (63, 102). Conversely, in hyperthyroidism, the number of cardiac β -adrenergic receptors is increased; additionally, changes in cardiac VDCCs have also been observed (39, 58). Receptor changes occur also as a result of chronic administration of drugs. Prolonged treatment with the β -adrenergic blocking agent propranolol can lead to an increase in β -receptor number in various tissues, which may contribute to the development of withdrawal symptoms if discontinuation of drug therapy is abrupt (63). However, β -adrenoceptor up-regulation is not an automatic consequence of antagonist exposure and in some systems β -adrenoceptor number decreases (48); this down-regulation may contribute to the pharmacological activity of these agents, but the underlying mechanism of action remains to be defined. Some antidepressant agents, including desipramine and desmethylimipramine, also produce a decrease in the number of β -adrenoceptors, and this is likely related to their mechanism of action (26, 30, 130). Thus, membrane receptor

or channel regulation has important therapeutic and pathological consequences.

Despite uncertainties about the mechanisms of calcium channel regulation, ample documentation exists of changes in channel number, ligand affinity, and/or function. The availability of radioligands, including the 1,4-DHP class of antagonists and activators, with high specificity for the VDCC, has made possible the study of expression of these channels during development, in various pathological states, and during chronic drug treatment. From these studies, calcium channels have been reported to be altered in diseases such as cardiomyopathy (126), myocardial ischemia (73, 77), and hypertension (12, 52), as well as during chronic drug administration with agents including reserpine (87), ethanol (20), and lead (98). The various factors that may alter the properties and turnover of VDCCs will be the focus of this review.

II. Channel Regulation by Drugs and Hormones

A. Homologous Regulation

The organic calcium channel antagonists are rapidly emerging as the most important group of compounds for the treatment of cardiovascular disorders. Furthermore, recent evidence suggests that these compounds have therapeutic value in other pathological states such as those involving smooth muscle hyperexcitability. Because the therapeutic application of these drugs is widespread, any long-term effects become important in terms of the potential development of tolerance, dependence, and withdrawal phenomena associated with their use. Several studies of the chronic administration of calcium channel ligands in vivo and in vitro have been reported (tables 1 to 6). In mice treated for 28 days with oral nifedipine and verapamil, there was a 40% reduction in 1,4-DHP-binding sites in membranes prepared from cer-

TABLE 1
Regulation of Ca^{2+} channels: homologous regulation*

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects			Reference
			K_D	B_{max}	Other	
28 d oral nifedipine, verapamil, and diltiazem	Mouse	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC	↓(40%) in nifedipine- and verapamil-treated mice; no change with diltiazem treatment	$^{45}Ca^{2+}$ uptake was decreased in the same brain areas of those mice treated with nifedipine or verapamil	82
20 d intravenous nifedipine	Rat	Nitrendipine/ heart and brain	NC	Brain, ↓(23%) Heart, ↓(49%)	[^{125}I]Iodocyanopindolol binding decreased; B_{max} decreased, 65% in brain, 62% in heart	33
14 d oral nifedipine	Rat	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	NC	[3H]Dihydroalprenolol binding unchanged	81
7-21 d nitrendipine	Rat—Spontaneously hypertensive (SHRSP) Salt-sensitive (S/Jr)	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	S/Jr, ↑(55%) SHRSP, ↑(33%)	High salt also increased B_{max}	31
5 d nifedipine and (S) Bay K 8644		PN200-110/ PC12 cells	NC	Nifedipine, ↑(29%) (S) Bay K 8644, ↓(24%)		118
4 wk verapamil	DOCA/NaCl/ Rat	/Heart			Verapamil-treated rats had a lower systolic blood pressure, a greater sensitivity to norepinephrine, and a similar sensitivity to isoproterenol compared to controls	120
5 wk nitrendipine	Human	/Vascular smooth muscle			Antihypertensive effect of nitrendipine was associated with reductions in pressor responses to norepinephrine but not to angiotensin II	114

* Abbreviations: NC, no change; SHRSP, spontaneously hypertensive stroke-prone rats.

TABLE 2
Regulation of Ca²⁺ channels: heterologous regulation*

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects			Reference	
			K _D	B _{max}	Other		
β-Adrenergic receptors							
10 d ISO	Rat	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	NC		33	
Chronic administration receptor antagonists and/or nifedipine	Human	Iodohydroxybenzylpindolol/heart	β-Adrenergic antagonists Nifedipine Propranolol and nifedipine		K _D NC ↑(27%) ↑(59%)	B _{max} ↑(46%) ↑(52%) ↑(65%)	40
6 wk verapamil	Rat	Dihydroalprenolol/ heart	NC	NC	Cardiac stores of NE decreased 77%		78
1 wk verapamil	Human	Iodocyanopindolol/ lymphocyte			Increase in ISO-stimulated adenylate cyclase activity, a decrease in the IC ₅₀ for ISO inhibition of iodocyanopindolol binding, and a decrease in plasma NE levels		23
Chronic administration of ISO and alprenolol	Chick	Nitrendipine/ skeletal muscle	ISO ↑(300%) Alprenolol ↓(72%)	ISO ↑(200%) Alprenolol ↓(62%)	Short-term treatment with ISO and other agents which elevate cyclic AMP enhanced ⁴⁵ Ca ²⁺ influx		109
24 h ISO	Chick	PN 200-110/ skeletal muscle	NC	NC			84
α-Adrenergic receptor							
6 d phenylephrine	Rat	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	↓(32%)	³ H]prazosin, B _{max} ↓(39%) ³ H]dihydroalprenolol, B _{max} ↓(31%)		32
Muscarinic receptors							
23 d atropine and 14 d diisopropyl phosphorofluoridate	Rat	Nimodipine/ brain	NC	NC			33
Morphine-tolerant animals	Mouse	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC	↑(60%)			88
3 d morphine	Rat	Nimodipine/ brain	NC	↑(20%)	Ca ²⁺ channel antagonists reduced naloxone-precipitated withdrawal in morphine-tolerant mice and rats		90
Morphine-dependent animals	Rat	/Brain			Verapamil and nimodipine reduced the behavioral expression of the morphine abstinence syndrome		9
Prolactin							
4 d nimodipine, Bay K 8644, verapamil, and diltiazem		GH3 cells			Verapamil, diltiazem, and nimodipine decreased prolactin synthesis; Bay K 8644 increased prolactin synthesis		41
Dopamine receptors							
18 d nimodipine and flunarizine	Rat	Spiroperidol/ brain	Nimodipine Flunarizine		K _D (↑88%) (↑159%)	B _{max} (↑61%) (↑114%)	36
Nicotinic acetylcholine receptors							
48 h D600, nisoldipine, and Bay K 8644	Chick	α-Bungarotoxin/skeletal muscle	D600 (0.5 μM), Nisoldipine, (23 nM)	K _D NC NC	Bay K 8644 had no effect on binding	B _{max} ↑(50%) ↑(50%)	119

* Abbreviations: NC, no change; ISO, isoproterenol; NE, norepinephrine.

TABLE 3
Regulation of Ca^{2+} channels: hormonal regulation*

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects			Reference
			K_D	B_{max}	Other	
21 d insulin (10 μ g)	Human	PN200-110/ muscle	NC	\uparrow (250%)		17
Thyroid						
5 d thyroxine; hyper- thyroid state	Rat	Nitrendipine and iodo- cyanopin- dolol/heart and vascu- lar smooth muscle	NC	Nitrendipine \downarrow (42%) \uparrow (26%)	Iodocyanopindolol \uparrow (36%) \downarrow (23%)	39
30 d Propylthiouracil; hypothyroid state						
2 d triiodothyronine (10 nM)	Chick	PN200-110/ heart	NC	\uparrow (67%)		58
Estrogen						
4 d estrogen	Rat	Nitrendipine/ uterine smooth muscle	NC	\uparrow (96%)	Increased $^{45}Ca^{2+}$ influx	3
Chronic estrogen or estrogen and proges- terone	Rat	Nitrendipine and Bay K 8644/uter- ine smooth muscle	NC	B_{max} for Bay K 8644 binding was lower in progesterone- dominated rats than in estrogen dominated		104
4 d estrogen, proges- terone, or estrogen plus progesterone treatment	Rat	Nitrendipine/ uterine smooth muscle	\downarrow (38%) \downarrow (42%)	Estrogen NC Estrogen + progester- one NC		50

* Abbreviation: NC, no change.

ebraal cortex, caudate nucleus, and hippocampus (82). Additionally, there was a corresponding decrease of calcium uptake in these same brain areas. Chronic treatment of rats with intravenous nifedipine for 20 days resulted in a decrease in 1,4-DHP binding in both heart and brain (33). However, rats treated with lower doses of nifedipine for a shorter time (14 days) failed to show any changes in nifedipine binding to ventricular membranes, suggesting that dose and duration of treatment are important factors (81). In contrast to these reports, up-regulation of 1,4-DHP sites following a 21-day combined high-salt and nitrendipine treatment was reported in cardiac membranes from stroke-prone spontaneously hypertensive rats (SHRs) and salt-sensitive Dahl rats (31). A recent report showed up- and down-regulation of 1,4-DHP-binding sites following chronic administration of calcium channel antagonist and activator, respectively, in PC12 cells (118). These latter observations differ from those obtained *in vivo* and may be due in part to the lack of compensatory mechanisms (e.g., rebound sympathetic activity) that operate only *in vivo*.

B. Heterologous Regulation by Calcium Channel Drugs

Changes associated with chronic treatment with calcium channel ligand are not limited to those on VDCCs but may overlap with other receptor systems in heterologous fashion. Studies have demonstrated that chronic treatment with calcium antagonist can alter β -adre-

noceptors. Chronic administration of nifedipine, with or without β -receptor antagonists, to patients with heart disease prior to cardiac bypass surgery, resulted in increased β -adrenergic receptor numbers in atrial tissue (40). Conversely, in rats treated chronically with nifedipine, decreased β -adrenergic receptor numbers were observed in the heart and brain (33). There was no change in β -adrenoceptor density in rats given verapamil for 6 weeks (78). However, there was a reduction in cardiac norepinephrine levels. The differences between these results may represent the differences between human and animal models. It is clear, however, that more studies are needed to examine the relationship between long-term calcium antagonist treatment and β -adrenoceptor expression.

Prolactin synthesis was reduced following chronic treatment with the calcium channel antagonist nimodipine and enhanced by the agonist Bay K 8644 in a pituitary cell line (41). Furthermore, there were corresponding changes in prolactin messenger ribonucleic acid levels with each treatment. Thus, it was concluded that calcium channel ligands, acting at VDCCs, regulate prolactin synthesis by an effect on prolactin messenger ribonucleic acid.

Eighteen-day administration of the calcium antagonists nimodipine and flunarizine to rats significantly increased the number of dopamine-receptor sites in rat striatum (36). Evidence that alterations in the expression

TABLE 4
Regulation of Ca²⁺ channels: neuronal lesions*

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects				Reference
			K _D		B _{max}		
6-Hydroxydopamine							
6-hydroxydopamine induced lesions	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC		↑(14–23%) in hippocampus only		7
6-hydroxydopamine induced lesion	Rat	Nitrendipine or DHA/ heart	Nitrendipine NC	DHA NC	Nitrendipine ↑(31%)	DHA ↑(28%)	117
6-hydroxydopamine induced lesions	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC		NC		105
6-hydroxydopamine	Chick	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC		↑(35%)		92
Reserpine							
3 d reserpine	Chick	Nitrendipine/ skeletal muscle	↓(78%)		↓(36%)		109
5 d reserpine	Rat	Nitrendipine/ smooth muscle	NC		↑(169%)		[³ H]prazosin, K _D ↓(53%) B _{max} ↑(79%)
Chronic reserpine administered once every 5 d for 25 d	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC		NC		105
4 d reserpine	Rat	Nimodipine/ heart	NC		↓(22%)		Increased β-adrenergic receptor density in ventricle and brain
Kainic acid							
Kainic acid-induced lesions	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC		NC		7
Kainic acid-induced lesions	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC		↓(76%)		105
Kainic acid-induced lesions	Rat	Nimodipine/ brain	NC		↓(43%)		Dopamine receptor density (58%)
Colchicine							
Colchicine-induced lesions	Rat	PN200-110/ brain			Gyrus dentatus (molecular layer)	↓(90%)	14
					Hippocampus: s. oriens,	↓(55%)	
					s. lucidum	↓(54%)	
Denervation	Rat and chick	Nitrendipine/ skeletal muscle	NC		Rat skeletal muscle 11 d postdenervation	↑(200%)	108
					Chick skeletal muscle 15 d postdenervation	↑200%	

* Abbreviations: NC, no change; DHA, dihydroalprenolol.

of nicotinic acetylcholine receptors are controlled by intracellular calcium concentrations was shown in a study in which chronic treatment of cultured chick myotubes with calcium antagonist, which will inhibit cellular calcium entry through VDCCs, resulted in an increase in α-bungarotoxin-binding sites (119). Interestingly, chronic treatment with a calcium channel agonist, Bay K 8644, did not alter α-bungarotoxin binding.

Other studies suggest that chronic administration of calcium antagonist influences other receptors in a heterologous fashion as indicated by reactivity changes. Thus, chronic treatment of deoxycorticosterone/NaCl rats (a hypertensive rat model) with verapamil resulted in a lower systolic blood pressure and an increased α-adrenergic responsiveness in aortic contractility; however, the decreased β-adrenergic responsiveness which is

TABLE 5
Regulation of Ca^{2+} channels: chronic treatments*

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects			Reference	
			K_D	B_{max}	Other		
Lead							
Lead	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC	↑(48%)		99	
Lead	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC NC NC	Cortex Striatum Hippocampus	↑(25%) ↑(54%) NC	98	
Alcohol							
7 d ethanol	Rat	Nimodipine/ brain	NC	↑(50%)		20	
4 d ethanol (150 mM)		PN 200-110/ PC12 cells	NC	↑(41%)	Net $^{45}Ca^{2+}$ uptake and sensitivity to in vitro ethanol were increased posttreatment	116	
40 min ethanol	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC NC NC	Cortex Hippocampus Striatum	↑(36%) ↑(33%) ↑(52%)	B_{max} returns to nor- mal 4 h posttreat- ment; the K_D is decreased 8 h posttreatment but returns to control levels at 36 h	97
6 d ethanol (200 mM)		Nitrendipine/ PC12 cells	NC		↑(92%)	Increased $^{45}Ca^{2+}$ up- take	75
25 d ethanol	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC		↑(52%)	Increased B_{max} was observed in the absence of Ca^{2+}	69
NaCl							
21 d NaCl	Rat SHR/ SP; R/ JR; S/JR	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC		Brain ↑(46%) Heart ↑(65%)	Salt loading in- creased blood pressure in SHR/ SP and S/JR	31
14 d NaCl	Rat	Nitrendipine/ treatment glomeru- losa cell membranes	NC		B_{max} was higher in rats on a NaCl-re- stricted diet	Nitrendipine binding in vascular and uterine smooth muscle was un- changed	106
Potassium							
Chronic depolariza- tion with high K^+ (4 d)		Nitrendipine/ PC12 cells	NC		↓(45%)		15
Chronic depolariza- tion with high K^+ (3 d)		Nitrendipine/ PC12 cells	NC		↓(50%)	Decreased Ca^{2+} in- flux	16
Ca^{2+}							
Calcium	Chick	PN 200-110/ skeletal muscle				Calcium is necessary during myogenesis for the expression of dihydropyridine receptors	76
ECS							
25-30 d ECS	Cat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC NC ↓(33%)	Cortex Hippocampus Cerebellum	↑(45%) NC NC		8
10 d once/d	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC NC	Cortex Hippocampus	↑(19%) ↓(11%)		8
Cholesterol							
1-3 d mevino- lin	Chick	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC		NC	Activation of Ca^{2+} channels by high K^+ , isoproterenol, or Bay K 8644 was absent in mevino-	93

TABLE 5—Continued

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects			Reference
			K_D	B_{max}	Other	
Cholesterol	Human	/Erythrocyte			lin-treated cells compared to control cells; Ca^{2+} channel-binding density did not change, but the channels had become nonfunctional	68
					There was a direct correlation between $^{45}Ca^{2+}$ influx and the cholesterol content of the membrane; cholesterol-rich membranes enhanced Ca^{2+} influx through the channel, whereas cholesterol depletion reduced influx	

* Abbreviations: NC, no change; ECS, electroconvulsive shock.

normally observed was prevented (120). Evidence for a direct interaction of verapamil with β -adrenergic receptors was observed in a study in which verapamil was administered to humans for 1 week. The results showed an increase in isoproterenol-stimulated adenylate cyclase activity, a decrease in the IC_{50} for isoproterenol inhibition of iodocyanopindolol binding, and a decrease in plasma norepinephrine levels in lymphocytes extracted from these subjects (23). In another study the effect of long-term nitrendipine treatment on systemic pressor responses to norepinephrine and angiotensin II was documented in humans. It was found that pressor responses to norepinephrine, but not to angiotensin II, were reduced in those subjects receiving nitrendipine (114). However, it is unknown whether this decrease in the pressor effect of norepinephrine is due to alterations in adrenergic receptors.

C. Heterologous Regulation

L-type VDCCs may be regulated following the chronic administration of agents other than calcium channel ligands. It is known that a number of neurotransmitters and hormones alter calcium channel function by activation of protein kinases via second-messenger pathways involving either cyclic adenosine 5'-monophosphate or diacylglycerol (94). Accordingly, coregulation with other receptor systems known to affect these pathways might be anticipated. For example, in primary cultures of chick myotubes treated for 37 hours with isoproterenol (10 μM), there was an increase in the K_D and B_{max} values for nitrendipine binding (109). Chronic administration of alprenolol in vivo exhibited the opposing effects of re-

ductions in both K_D and B_{max} values for nitrendipine binding (109). In contrast to these findings, 10-day isoproterenol treatment in rats did not alter 1,4-DHP binding in heart membranes (33). Similarly, 24-h isoproterenol treatment of cultured chick myotubes did not change the binding constants for the 1,4-DHP, PN200-110 (84). The effects of long-term occupancy of other receptor systems including α -adrenergic, muscarinic, and opioid, on calcium channel expression have also been examined. Six-day administration of the α -adrenergic agonist phenylephrine to rats resulted in a decrease in the number of cardiac nitrendipine receptors (32). This change was accompanied by decreases in α_1 and β -adrenergic receptor densities (32). However, chronic treatment with the muscarinic antagonist, atropine, or with diisopropylphosphorofluoridate, an inhibitor of acetylcholinesterase, which increase and decrease, respectively, quinuclidinyl benzilate binding to muscarinic receptors, did not change binding of the 1,4-DHP, nimodipine, in brain (33).

There is evidence that analgesics such as morphine inhibit calcium channel function (37). Prolonged morphine administration has been shown to increase the number of 1,4-DHP-binding sites in a time- and dose-dependent fashion in discrete brain areas (88, 90). This effect was reversible when the drug was removed. In contrast, Pillai and Ross (85) demonstrated a decrease in nimodipine binding in the cortex and cerebellum subsequent to morphine treatment. It was also observed that calcium antagonists reduce naloxone-precipitated withdrawal signs in mice and rats (9, 90). Thus, changes in VDCCs following chronic morphine administration may

TABLE 6
Regulation Ca²⁺ channels: disease states*

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects				Reference
			K _D		B _{max}	Other	
Hypertension	Rat, SHR (24 wk old)	Nitrendipine/ heart	↑(55%)		↑(43%)		12
Hypertension	Rat, SHR (16 wk old)	Nitrendipine/ heart			↑(45%)	[³ H]Prazosin, B _{max} ↓(42%)	110
Hypertension	Rat, SHR (10 wk old)	Nitrendipine/ heart and brain	NC NC	Heart Brain	NC ↑(57%)		52
Hypertension	Rat, SHR (4, 6, 10, 15 wk old)	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC NC NC	Striatum Thalamus Hippocampus	↑(21- 40%) ↑(28- 40%) ↑(21- 34%)		51
Hypertension	Rat	Nitrendipine/ brain (brain- stem)	NC		↓(56%)	Nitrendipine binding in left ventricular tissue and cerebral cortex was un- changed	62
Hypertension	Rat (WKY) (SHR)	/Vascular smooth muscle cells				Ca ²⁺ current in vas- cular muscle cells from SHR had a proportionally greater L current (62% of total) than T current when compared with WKY rats	103
Ischemia	Rat 60 min hy- poxia	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	High-affinity site	↓(74%)		77
			↓(67%)	Low-affinity site	↓(52%)		
Ischemia (hy- poxic and reoxygenated heart)	Guinea pig 30 min hy- poxia	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC		↓(73%)		73
Ischemia	Rat	Verapamil/ heart	↓(54%)	High-affinity site	↓(83%)		19
			↓(54%)	Low-affinity site	↓(72%)		
Ischemia	Gerbil	Nitrendipine/ brain	↓(62%)	Unilateral li- gation NC	Left frontal cortex Right frontal cortex	↓(63%) ↓(52%)	56
			↓(48%)	Bilateral liga- tion ↑(64%)	Whole frontal cortex	↓(26%)	
Ischemia	Rat	PN200-110/ brain (hip- pocampus)			↑(62%)		71
Cardiomyopathy	Hamster (30, 60, and 90 d old)	Nitrendipine desme- thoxyvera- pamil/ heart, brain, skel- etal and smooth muscle	NC ↑(89%) ↑(200%) ↓(23%) NC NC NC	Brain, nitrendipine D888-high-affinity site low-affinity site Heart, nitrendipine D888-high affinity site Skeletal muscle, nitrendipine Smooth muscle, nitrendipine	↑(60%) ↑(163%) ↑(124%) ↑(90%) ↑(100%) ↑(53%) ↑(93%)	Increased ⁴⁵ Ca ²⁺ up- take in brain syn- aptosomes	126

TABLE 6—Continued

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects			
			K _D	B _{max}	Other	Reference
Cardiomyopathy	Hamster (4–6 mo old)	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	↑(50%)		27
Cardiomyopathy	Hamster (4 mo old)	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	↑(50%)		28
Hypertrophy	Rat	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC		Hypertrophied left ventricle contained an increased number of total Ca ²⁺ channels compared to controls	74
Cardiomyopathy	Rat				Cardiac Ca ²⁺ current is increased in myocytes from rats with myocardial hypertrophy	57
Cardiomyopathy	Hamster	PN200-110/ heart	NC	NC		4
Dystrophic cardiac muscle	Hamster (50–60 d old)	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	NC		46
Cardiomyopathy	Hamster	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	NC		47
Cardiomyopathy	Human	Nitrendipine/ heart	NC	↑(162%)		29
Cardiomyopathy	Human	PN200-110/ heart	Undetermined	↑(33%)	[³ H]Saxitoxin and [¹²⁵ I]cyanopindolol binding were unchanged	128
HOCM or MVD	Human	Nimodipine, PN200-110, dihydroalprenolol/heart			Binding site density for nimodipine correlated significantly with the density of β-adrenoceptors in HOCM patients but not in those with mitral valve disease; B _{max} for nimodipine binding was > in HOCM patients than in patients with MVD	25
Muscular dystrophy	Human	Nitrendipine/ skeletal muscle	NC	NC		18
Muscular dysgenesis	Mouse	/Skeletal muscle			Myotubes prepared from embryos of mice with muscular dysgenesis lacked contractile activity and had action potentials not followed by after-hyperpolarizations	100

TABLE 6—Continued

Treatment or condition	Species	Radioligand/ tissue	Effects			
			K _D	B _{max}	Other	Reference
Muscular dysgenesis	Mouse	PN200-110/ skeletal muscle and heart	NC		Decrease in diaphragm, limbs, and tongue skeletal muscle; no change in cardiac muscle	86
Muscular dysgenesis	Mouse	/Skeletal muscle			Mice with muscular dysgenesis have skeletal muscle which lacks a slow Ca ²⁺ current	5
Muscular dysgenesis	Mouse	/Skeletal muscle			Absence of the α -1 subunit of the 1,4-DHP receptor in dysgenic muscle	60
Lambert-Eaton syndrome Lambert-Eaton syndrome	Bovine	/Adrenal chromaffin cells			IgG antibodies from patients with Lambert-Eaton syndrome reduced VDCC by 40%; Ca ²⁺ channel activation and elementary channel activity were not altered	59
Parkinson's disease Parkinson's disease	Human	Nitrendipine/ brain	NC NC NC	Caudate nucleus Putamen Substantia nigra	\downarrow (49%) \downarrow (44%) \downarrow (55%)	80

* Abbreviations: NC, no change; HOCM, hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy; MVD, mitral valve disease.

play a role in the development of tolerance and physical dependence to opioid analgesics.

D. Hormonal Regulation

VDCCs are subject also to hormonal regulation. For instance, 21-day treatment with insulin resulted in an increase in the density of 1,4-DHP-binding sites in cultured human muscle (17). Thyroid status also influences the expression of VDCCs. Chronic treatment of cultured chick ventricular cells with thyroid hormone is reported to produce an increase in calcium channel density which correlated with an increase in 1,4-DHP-sensitive calcium uptake (58). The number of β -adrenergic receptors was also elevated, a finding that has been previously documented in a number of systems (129). In contrast, heart membranes from rats made hyperthyroid by 5-day treatment with thyroxine showed a decrease in the number of VDCCs which was also associated with an increase in β -adrenoceptor density (39). In this same study hypothyroid animals showed the opposite effect, an increase in VDCCs and a decrease in β -adrenoceptors. The binding of nitrendipine has been reported to be identical in uterine smooth muscle from estrogen- or progesterone-

dominated rats (104). However, in other studies a decrease in the K_D value for nitrendipine binding in uterine membranes from rats treated with estrogen alone or estrogen plus progesterone was reported (50). An increase in calcium channel density with an insignificant change in the K_D value for nitrendipine binding was observed in uterine smooth muscle of rats treated chronically with estrogen (3). Additional studies of the influence of estrogen on calcium channel expression and function in uterine smooth muscle are clearly needed.

III. Channel Regulation by Lesions, Chronic Treatments, and Disease

A. Neuronal Lesions

It has been suggested that calcium may have an important role in neuronal outgrowth (2, 67). Electrophysiological evidence has shown that functional VDCCs are more abundant in growth cones than in neuritic processes (2). Other studies have demonstrated that an optimum level of intracellular calcium must be achieved to support neuronal growth because both reduced or excessive intracellular calcium will inhibit growth (67). Agents

such as 6-hydroxydopamine, colchicine, and kainic acid which induce neuronal lesions have been shown to modulate 1,4-DHP-binding sites. Thus, 6-hydroxydopamine increased the number of nitrendipine-binding sites in rat hippocampus but not in cerebral cortex, striatum, cerebellum, or brainstem (7). This effect was not observed with kainic acid or with reserpine (an amine-depleting agent). Similarly, increased numbers of nitrendipine-binding sites were demonstrated in rat heart following 6-hydroxydopamine treatment (117). This increase in 1,4-DHP number was accompanied by a 28% increase in β -adrenoceptors. In another study, no change was observed in nitrendipine binding following 6-hydroxydopamine or reserpine treatment; however, kainic acid treatment resulted in a dramatic loss of nitrendipine-binding sites in the caudate nucleus (105). Likewise, following intrastriatal injection of kainic acid to rats, there was a reduction in both 1,4-DHP and dopamine receptors in rat striatum (115). Evidence for coregulation of 1,4-DHP receptors and other receptor systems has been demonstrated following chronic reserpine treatment in rats. Thus, in rat smooth muscle there were increases in 1,4-DHP-binding sites and α_1 -adrenergic receptors following administration of reserpine for 5 days (87). In contrast, Ramkumar and El-Fakahany (89) demonstrated a decrease in 1,4-DHP-receptor sites and an increase in β -adrenergic receptor density in rat ventricles following 4 days of treatment with reserpine. The density of 1,4-DHP-binding sites was reduced significantly following the destruction of hippocampal granule cells by colchicine, suggesting that this brain region contains a high density of L-type VDCCs (14). In skeletal muscle, an increase in nitrendipine-binding sites was observed subsequent to surgical denervation (108). Chronic reserpine administration produced a decrease in both K_D and B_{max} values for nitrendipine binding in the same tissue (109). Conversely, reserpine was shown to have no effect on nitrendipine binding in chick heart, whereas 6-hydroxydopamine treatment resulted in a 35% increase in 1,4-DHP-binding sites (92). These results suggest that innervation is important for the normal maintenance of VDCCs.

B. Chronic Treatments

Chronic treatment of animals or cells with ethanol or lead results in increases in 1,4-DHP-binding sites. Initial studies showed that lead treatment in vivo induced a 48% increase in the B_{max} for nitrendipine binding in rat striatum (99). Further studies demonstrated that this effect occurred only in certain brain regions, i.e., in cortex and striatum but not hippocampus (98). Ethanol, an agent known to inhibit calcium influx following acute treatment, has been shown to increase brain 1,4-DHP-binding sites in vitro and in vivo when administered chronically (20, 69, 75, 97, 116). It has been suggested

that this effect may be responsible for the development of physical dependence to ethanol (20, 75).

NaCl restriction in rats resulted in a higher B_{max} for nitrendipine binding in adrenal glomerulosa cells but not in vascular or uterine smooth muscle (106). In another study, salt loading increased the number of cardiac and brain 1,4-DHP receptors in SHR (31). Furthermore, the increase in receptor number was enhanced when nitrendipine was added to the high-salt regimen.

VDCCs are likely regulated by changes in intracellular calcium concentrations. Chronic depolarization of PC12 cells with elevated potassium induced a reduction in nitrendipine-binding sites with a corresponding decrease in calcium influx (15, 16). This effect has also been observed in a primary culture of chick neural retina cells (24). This regulation might be due to changes in intracellular calcium because VDCCs serve as a pathway for calcium entry into cells. However, it was demonstrated that the initial elevation of intracellular calcium following depolarization returns to normal with prolonged depolarization of PC12 cells (16). Thus, factors other than persistent elevation of intracellular calcium may be responsible for the observed down-regulation of 1,4-DHP-binding sites with chronic depolarization.

The effects of electroconvulsive shock on neuronal 1,4-DHP-binding sites were examined in two animal models (8). In cats given daily electroconvulsive shock for 25–30 days, there was an increase in the B_{max} value for nitrendipine binding in the cortex, a decrease in the value for K_D nitrendipine in the cerebellum with no changes observed in either receptor numbers or affinities in the hippocampus. Increased and decreased nitrendipine-binding site density was observed in the cortex and hippocampus, respectively, of rats subjected to chronic electroconvulsive shock treatment. The significance of these changes is not well understood. However, it was suggested that the alteration in nitrendipine binding in cat cerebellum may play a role in the development of tolerance to electroconvulsive shock, which is observed in cats.

Several studies have documented changes in calcium channel activity as a consequence of alterations in cellular or membrane cholesterol. Chronic treatment of cultured avian cardiac cells with mevinoлин, an agent that depresses de novo cholesterol synthesis by inhibiting the enzyme 3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl coenzyme A reductase, resulted in the uncoupling of excitation from contraction in these cells (93). This treatment decreased calcium current, but there were no corresponding reductions of 1,4-DHP-binding sites. In another study, calcium influx in human erythrocytes correlated with the cholesterol content of the membrane (68). Thus, in membranes with elevated cholesterol levels there was an enhancement of calcium influx and in those depleted of cholesterol there was a decreased influx. The relationship of these changes to the arterial structure and reactivity

changes in atherosclerosis has been reviewed elsewhere (123).

C. Disease States

The observation that changes in 1,4-DHP-binding sites occur in hypertensive rats has led some workers to suggest that alterations in VDCCs might reflect functional changes in these animals and play a role in the etiology of hypertension. Increases in the K_D and B_{max} values for [3H]nitrendipine binding were observed in heart membranes from 24-week-old SHR but not in 9-week-old SHR relative to normotensive controls (12). Similarly, Sharma et al. (110) found an increase in cardiac nitrendipine sites in older (16-week) SHRs; however, no changes were reported in 1,4-DHP binding in heart membranes from 10-week-old SHRs (51, 52). In the latter studies, an increase of binding site numbers was observed in brain membranes. In contrast to these findings in the brain, a selective decrease in the B_{max} for nitrendipine binding in membranes from brainstem, but not cerebral cortex or heart, was observed in deoxycorticosterone/NaCl hypertensive rats (62). Further studies are clearly necessary to document the relevance of any such changes to hypertension. However, Rusch and Hermsmeyer (103) have shown in venous muscle cells from 1- to 3-day-old rats that, although total cell calcium current was not different between normotensive controls and SHRs, the proportion of current carried by L channels was greater (62%) in SHRs than in normotensive control rats (42%).

There is evidence that chronic ischemia influences the binding of calcium channel antagonists. Thus, high- and low-affinity-binding sites for nitrendipine were detected in rat myocardial sarcolemmal fragments. Following 60 min of ischemia by occlusion of coronary flow, a reduction in the B_{max} of both high- and low-affinity sites was observed (77). A decrease in the value for the low-affinity, but not the high-affinity, site was also shown. However, the significance of the low-affinity-binding sites for 1,4-DHPs is not known (53). Additionally, ischemia has been found to reduce the K_D and B_{max} values of rat cardiac [3H]verapamil-binding sites (19). In cardiac membranes from guinea pig hearts made hypoxic and then reoxygenated, there was a significant decrease in [3H]nitrendipine-binding sites (73). Interestingly, in hearts that were made only hypoxic and not reoxygenated, there was no change in [3H]nitrendipine binding compared to controls. Cerebral ischemia has also been shown to modulate 1,4-DHP binding in the brain. For example, in gerbils, either unilateral or bilateral carotid occlusion resulted in changes in [3H]nitrendipine binding to cerebral membranes (56). Bilateral occlusion decreased both K_D and B_{max} values. Unilateral occlusion resulted in decreased site density in right frontal cortex and increased affinity and decreased number in left frontal cortex. However, changes in channel number and affinity in unilaterally occluded animals were greater in the contralateral hem-

isphere than in the ischemic hemisphere. This suggests that factors other than ischemia may contribute to the changes associated with this treatment. In contrast, it was demonstrated that 60-min occlusion of the right carotid resulted in a significant increase in K_D and B_{max} values for [3H]PN200-110 binding in rat hippocampus from the right hemisphere but not the left hemisphere (71). This effect appeared to be region selective because no changes were observed in the cortex or striatum.

A number of studies have demonstrated that calcium channels are increased in hypertrophied cardiac muscle (27, 28, 61, 74, 126). [3H]1,4-DHP and [3H]-desmethoxy-verapamil-binding sites were increased in heart and brain of Syrian cardiomyopathic hamsters (Bio 14.6) which serve as a model for human hypertrophy (126, 127). Additionally, there were increases in nitrendipine binding in skeletal and smooth muscle. A corresponding increase of $^{45}Ca^{2+}$ uptake into brain synaptosomes was also observed, but this may represent Ca^{2+} influx through 1,4-DHP-insensitive Ca^{2+} channels (95). In another model, cardiac hypertrophy was induced by aortic stenosis. In these rats the number of 1,4-DHP-binding sites per left ventricle was increased either 5 days or 3 weeks postsurgery (74). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that calcium current is increased in myocytes from hypertrophied rat heart (57). Some reports indicate that calcium channels are unaltered in cardiac tissue from cardiomyopathic hamsters (4, 46, 47). No significant changes in 1,4-DHP binding were found in cardiac tissue from 35- to 41-day-old myopathic hamsters (TO 53:58 strain) relative to control hearts (4). In addition, the number of [3H]nitrendipine-binding sites in cardiac muscle membranes from 60-day-old dystrophic Syrian hamsters (CHF 146) and Bio 14.6 were not significantly different from genetically matched controls (CHF 148 and F1B) (46, 47). A resolution of the discrepant conclusions from these several reports is awaited. It is likely that strain differences contribute; additionally, differences in the ages at which measurements were made and the use of membrane preparations versus homogenates are also likely important determinants. Most significantly, however, recent reports have shown increases in 1,4-DHP-binding sites in tissue from hypertrophied human heart (29, 128). In another investigation involving human tissue evidence for receptor coregulation was demonstrated. In this study the number of 1,4-DHP-binding sites correlated significantly with the density of β -adrenoceptors in patients with hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy (25). Additionally, the B_{max} value for 1,4-DHP binding was higher in patients with hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy than in patients with mitral valve disease.

Embryonic dysgenic mice represent another model of a muscular disorder. This abnormality is due to a recessive, lethal gene and is characterized by the absence of normal skeletal muscle development (34, 100). It has been shown that myotubes prepared from embryos of

mice with this mutation lack contractile activity and have action potentials not followed by after-hyperpolarization as observed in normal skeletal muscle (100). Also, the fast and slow calcium current is significantly diminished in dysgenic skeletal muscle. Ultrastructural abnormalities as well as dramatic decreases in 1,4-DHP-binding sites were observed in skeletal muscle of dysgenic mice but not in cardiac muscle (86). This is in agreement with electrophysiological data demonstrating that the slow calcium current in mutant mice is abolished in skeletal muscle cells but not in cardiac cells (5). The implication that this disease is due to a mutation of the calcium channel was challenged in a study that demonstrated that coculture of dysgenic myotubes with normal spinal cord neurons restores calcium channel activity, contraction, and normal muscle ultrastructure (96). These results suggested that normal nerve cells supply a factor that is lacking in the mutant muscle cells. However, it has now been shown that microinjection of an expression plasmid carrying complementary deoxyribonucleic acid encoding the 1,4-DHP receptor for rabbit skeletal muscle into dysgenic skeletal muscle cells restored both excitation-contraction coupling and 1,4-DHP-sensitive calcium current (121). These latter results indicate that the structural gene for the skeletal muscle 1,4-DHP receptor is altered in muscular dysgenesis and that the 1,4-DHP receptor is both a voltage sensor and channel component. The observation that a 1,4-DHP-receptor defect is responsible for this disease is consistent with a recent finding that the α_1 -nonglycosylated subunit of the 1,4-DHP receptor is absent in dysgenic mice (60). Thus, it was suggested that the presence of this subunit is necessary for excitation-contraction coupling.

Other diseases suggested to be associated with changes in calcium channel function or expression include Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome and Parkinson's disease. Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome is a neuromuscular autoimmune disorder characterized by impaired evoked release of acetylcholine from the motor nerve terminal (59). It has been shown that immunoglobulin G antibodies from patients with Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome reduce VDCCs by 40% (59). This modification of calcium channel function may underlie the alteration in transmitter release observed in this syndrome. A decrease in [3 H]nitrendipine-binding sites was demonstrated in various brain areas of patients with Parkinson's disease (80). The B_{max} for nitrendipine binding was reduced in the caudate nucleus, substantia nigra, and putamen with no change in the affinity. It was suggested that this loss of 1,4-DHP-binding sites may be a consequence of the degeneration of nigral dopamine neurons which is characteristic of this disease.

IV. Conclusions

Substantial documentation of alterations in L-type VDCCs exists in the literature. The concept of channel regulation has important therapeutic and pathophysio-

logical implications, because chronic drug exposure that induces changes in VDCCs may lead to the development of tolerance and dependence, and observations that VDCCs are dysfunctional or present in abnormal numbers may underlie the etiology of certain disease states. This knowledge is invaluable and will help lead to the development of new drugs and drug therapy regimens designed to circumvent potential therapeutic problems and provide an alternate approach to obviate and treat disease that is directed at the channel or receptor system involved.

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