

PW01-46 - **DO SELECTIVE SEROTONIN RE-UPTAKE INHIBITORS MODULATE EXPERIMENTAL PANIC ELICITED BY CHOLECYSTOKININ-TETRAPEPTIDE IN HEALTHY MAN?**

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**Introduction:** Selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRI), such as escitalopram, are currently the pharmacological treatment of choice for patients suffering from panic disorder.

**Objective:** Serotonergic modulation of experimental panic in healthy human volunteers by such medication, however, has not been investigated as yet.

**Aim:** We intended to study the effects of chronic treatment with the SSRI escitalopram on the panic response to a cholecystokinin-tetrapeptide (CCK-4) challenge.

**Methods:** In a double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized, within subject cross-over design thirty healthy young men, 15 each with the long/long or short/short genotype for the serotonin transporter linked polymorphic region (5-HTTLPR), were pre-treated with 10 mg/d of escitalopram for 6 weeks and then challenged with 50 µg of the panicogen CCK-4. Primary outcome measure was the increase of Acute Panic Inventory ratings by CCK-4.

**Results:** A significant treatment by genotype effect on the increases of Acute Panic Inventory ratings emerged. CCK-4 panic was significantly more pronounced in the short/short genotype subjects under escitalopram versus placebo pre-treatment. Contrary to our expectation, no inhibitory effect of escitalopram upon panic symptoms elicited by CCK-4 could be demonstrated in healthy men.

**Conclusions:** Our findings do not support the usefulness of this panic model for proof-of-concept studies in volunteer translational research, at least concerning serotonergic agents.

(Supported by a grant from Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), Ke 595/7-1)