

(19) **DANMARK**

(10) **DK/EP 2985032 T3**



(12)

Oversættelse af europæisk patentskrift

Patent- og
Varemærkestyrelsen

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- (51) Int.Cl.: **A 61 K 38/10 (2006.01)** **A 61 P 25/22 (2006.01)** **A 61 P 25/24 (2006.01)**
- (45) Oversættelsen bekendtgjort den: **2019-04-15**
- (80) Dato for Den Europæiske Patentmyndigheds bekendtgørelse om meddelelse af patentet: **2019-01-02**
- (86) Europæisk ansøgning nr.: **15171991.1**
- (86) Europæisk indleveringsdag: **2010-10-05**
- (87) Den europæiske ansøgnings publiceringsdag: **2016-02-17**
- (30) Prioritet: **2009-10-05 US 248650 P**
- (62) Stamansøgningsnr: **14169137.8**
- (84) Designerede stater: **AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR**
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- (54) Benævnelse: **GLYX TIL ANVENDELSE TIL BEHANDLING AF ALZHEIMERS SYGDOM, PARKINSONS SYGDOM ELLER HUNTINGTONS SYGDOM**
- (56) Fremdragne publikationer:
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DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

[0001] The central nervous system (CNS) of mammals employs many neuroactive peptides to effect specialized signaling within the brain and spinal cord including the neuroactive peptides somatostatin, cholecystinin, VIP, Substance P, enkephalin, Neuropeptide Y (NPY), Neurotensin, TRH, CCK, and dynorphin. (see generally *The Biochemical Basis of Neuropharmacology*, Cooper, Bloom and Roth, 5th ed., Oxford University Press, New York, 1986). The careful elucidation of the complex signaling pathways, which operate in the CNS, has led to identification of specific receptors modulated by these neuroactive peptides presenting important therapeutic targets for various disorders associated with the CNS.

[0002] The N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor (NMDAR), is one such receptor that has been implicated in neurodegenerative disorders including stroke-related brain cell death, convulsive disorders, and learning and memory. NMDAR also plays a central role in modulating normal synaptic transmission, synaptic plasticity, and excitotoxicity in the central nervous system. The NMDAR is further involved in Long-term potentiation (LTP). LTP is the persistent strengthening of neuronal connections that underlie learning and memory (See Bliss and Collingridge, 1993, *Nature* 361:31-39).

[0003] Two general classes of glutamate receptors have been characterized in the central nervous system (CNS). They are the metabotropic glutamate receptors, which belong to the G-protein coupled receptor family of signaling proteins, and the ionotropic glutamate receptors (Muir and Lees, *Stroke*, 1995, 26, 503-513). The ionotropic class is further subdivided into the AMPA, kainate, and NMDA receptor subtypes by the selective ligands that activate them.

[0004] Ionotropic glutamate receptors contain a ligand-gated ion channel, which serves as a modulator of synaptic transmission. The NMDA receptor (NMDAR) is unique in that it requires both glutamate and glycine for activation and subsequent opening of the ion channel (Mothet et al., *Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci.*, 2000, 97, 4926-4931). Recent studies have demonstrated that the glycine site can serve to modulate the activity of glutamate synaptic transmission at the NMDAR. Thus, both the glutamate and glycine sites can be utilized for modulation of NMDAR activity.

[0005] The NMDAR is activated by the binding of NMDA, glutamate (Glu), and aspartate (Asp). It is competitively antagonized by D-2-amino-5-phosphonovalerate (D-AP5; D-APV), and non-competitively antagonized by phenylcyclidine (PCP), and MK-801. Most interestingly, the NMDAR is co-activated by glycine (Gly) (Kozikowski et al., 1990, *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* 33:1561-1571). The binding of glycine occurs at an allosteric regulatory site on the NMDAR complex, and this increases both the duration of channel open time, and the frequency of the opening of the NMDAR channel.

[0006] Recent human clinical studies have identified NMDAR as a novel target of high interest for treatment of depression. These studies conducted using known NMDAR antagonists CPC-101,606 and ketamine have shown significant reductions in the Hamilton Depression Rating Score in patients suffering with refractory depression. Although, the efficacy was significant, but the side effects of using these NDMAR antagonists were severe.

[0007] NMDA-modulating small molecule agonist and antagonist compounds have been developed for potential therapeutic use. However, many of these are associated with very narrow therapeutic indices and undesirable side effects including hallucinations, ataxia , irrational behavior, and significant toxicity, all of which limit their effectiveness and/or safety.

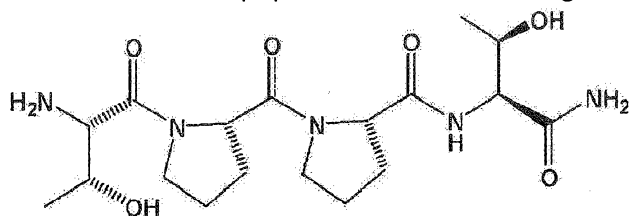
[0008] Further, 50% or more of patients with depression do not experience an adequate therapeutic response to known administered drugs. In most instances, 2 or more weeks of drug therapy are need before meaningful improvement is observed, as noted in an open-label study on pharmacological treatment of depression. (Rush et al, Am. J. Psychiatry 2006, 163: 1905). There currently is no single effective treatment for depression, anxiety, and other related diseases.

[0009] Thus, there remains a need for improved treatments of depression, anxiety and/or other related diseases with compounds that provide increased efficacy and reduced undesirable side effects.

SUMMARY

[0010] The present invention is defined in the claims.

[0011] The present invention is directed to a GLYX peptide for use in a method for treating a patient suffering from Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or Huntington's disease, wherein the GLYX peptide is GLYX-13 having the structure of Formula I:



Formula I.

[0012] Accordingly, the administration of compounds that functionally interact with the glycine site of the NMDAR for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or Huntington's disease is described.

[0013] In addition, the administration of a di-pyrrolidine peptide compound comprising the sequence Thr-Pro-Pro-Thr (SEQ ID NO: 13) exemplified by Formula I (GLYX- 13) for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or Huntington's disease in mammals including humans is described.

[0014] Also described herein is a method of acutely treating symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or Huntington's disease in a patient in need thereof, comprising administering an effective amount of GLYX-13, for example, in a single unit dose.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FIGURES

[0015]

Figure 1 shows exemplary GLYX peptides;

Figure 2 shows the results of Porsolt tests conducted in order to access antidepressant action of GLYX-13;

Figure 3 shows the results of Porsolt tests conducted in order to access antidepressant action of GLYX-13 over a range of concentrations by either intravenous or subcutaneous administration;

Figure 4 shows the results of Porsolt tests conducted in order to access antidepressant action of GLYX-13 administered to the medial prefrontal cortex;

Figure 5 shows the results of Porsolt tests conducted in order to evaluate the antidepressant action of GLYX-13 compared to a scrambled peptide;

Figure 6 shows the results of open field tests conducted in order to access anxiolytic action of GLYX-13;

Figure 7 shows the results of open field tests conducted in order to access anxiolytic action of GLYX-13 over a range of concentrations by either intravenous or subcutaneous administration;

Figure 8 shows the results of Porsolt tests and Open field tests conducted in order to determine the length of time the antidepressant and anxiolytic action of GLYX-13 persists;

Figure 9 shows qrt-PCR analysis of the NDMA Cortical mRNA Expression following Rough-and-Tumble play (RTP);

Figure 10 shows RTP behavior elicits high rates of 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations and social defeat elicits high rates of aversive 22-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations; and

Figure 11 shows effects of GLYX-13 on RTP in rats.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] Depression is a common psychological problem and refers to a mental state of low mood and aversion to activity. Various symptoms associated with depression include persistent anxious or sad feelings, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, pessimism, and/or worthlessness, low energy, restlessness, irritability, fatigue, loss of interest in pleasurable activities or hobbies, excessive sleeping, overeating, appetite loss, Insomnia, thoughts of suicide, and suicide attempts. The presence, severity, frequency, and duration of the above mentioned symptoms vary on a case to case basis.

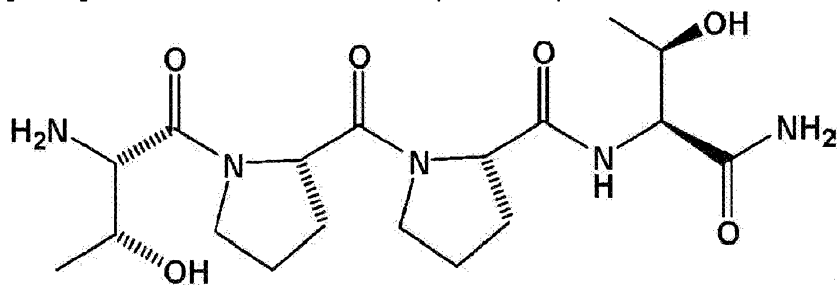
[0017] The most common depression conditions include Major Depressive Disorder and Dysthymic Disorder. Other depression conditions develop under unique circumstances. Such depression conditions include but are not limited to Psychotic depression, Postpartum depression, Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), mood disorder, depressions caused by chronic medical conditions such as cancer or chronic pain, chemotherapy, chronic stress, post traumatic stress disorders, and Bipolar disorder (or manic depressive disorder).

[0018] Refractory depression occurs in patients suffering from depression who are resistant to standard pharmacological treatments, including tricyclic antidepressants, MAOIs, SSRIs, and double and triple uptake inhibitors and/or anxiolytic drugs, as well non-pharmacological treatments such as psychotherapy, electroconvulsive therapy, vagus nerve stimulation and/or transcranial magnetic stimulation. A treatment resistant-patient may be identified as one who fails to experience alleviation of one or more symptoms of depression (e.g., persistent anxious or sad feelings, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, pessimism) despite undergoing one or more standard pharmacological or non-pharmacological treatment. A treatment-resistant patient is one who fails to experience alleviation of one or more symptoms of depression despite undergoing treatment with two different antidepressant drugs. A treatment-resistant patient also is one who fails to experience alleviation of one or more symptoms of depression despite undergoing treatment with four different antidepressant drugs. A treatment-resistant patient may also be identified as one who is unwilling or unable to tolerate the side effects of one or more standard pharmacological or non-pharmacological treatment.

GLYX Peptides

[0019] As used herein, the term "GLYX peptide" refers to a peptide having NMDAR glycine-site partial agonist/antagonist activity. GLYX peptides may be obtained by well-known recombinant or synthetic methods such as those described in US Patents 5,763,393 and 4,086,196 herein incorporated by reference. Exemplary peptides are illustrated in Figure 1. In some embodiments, GLYX refers to a tetrapeptide having the amino acid sequence Thr-Pro-Pro-Thr (SEQ ID NO: 13), or L-threonyl-L-prolyl-L-prolyl-L-threonine amide.

[0020] GLYX-13 refers to the compound depicted as:



Formula I.

[0021] Also contemplated are polymorphs, hydrates, solvates, free bases, suitable salt forms of GLYX 13 such as, but not limited to, the acetate salt. The peptide may be cyclized or non-cyclized form as further described in US 5,763,393. Glycine-site partial agonist of the NMDAR are disclosed in US 5,763,393, US 6,107,271, and Wood et al., NeuroReport, 19, 1059-1061, 2008.

Methods

[0022] GLYX-13 may act predominantly at NR2B-containing NMDARs, and may not display the classic side effects of known NMDAR modulators such as CPC-101,606 and ketamine. For example, in vitro studies show that GLYX-13 can markedly elevate long-term potentiation (LTP) while simultaneously reducing long-term depression (LTD) in rat hippocampal organotypic cultures.

[0023] Additionally, GLYX-13 may have better Blood-Brain Barrier (BBB) penetration as compared to many of the earlier glycine site ligands (Leeson & Iversen, J. Med. Chem. 37:4053-4067, 1994) and may cross the BBB readily. In some embodiments, GLYX-13 or a composition comprising GLYX-13 may provide better i.v. in vivo potency and/or brain level concentration, relative to plasma levels.

[0024] Additionally, GLYX-13 may have a wide therapeutic index compared to other glycine site antagonists such as L-701,324, or other glycine site antagonists having narrow therapeutic indexes, which result in a very narrow range of dose between therapeutic effects and ataxia. For example, L-701,324 had anticonvulsant effects at doses that produced ataxia (Bristow, et al, JPET 279:492-501, 1996). Similarly, a series of Merz compounds had anticonvulsant effects at doses that produced ataxia (Parsons, et al., JPET283:1264-1275, 1997).

[0025] GLYX-13 may provide a high therapeutic index. For example, GLYX-13 may be therapeutically effective for depression and/or anxiety with an i.v. dose range of about 1 to about 10 mg/kg. In some embodiments, no ataxia occurs, at for example a dose of at 500 mg/kg, i.v.

[0026] A GLYX peptide or peptides may be used, alone or in combination with one or more

other antidepressant treatments, such as, tricyclic antidepressants, MAO-I's, SSRI's, and double and triple uptake inhibitors and/or anxiolytic drugs for manufacturing a medicament for treating depression, anxiety, and/or other related diseases including provide relief from depression, anxiety and preventing recurrence of depression and anxiety. Exemplary drugs that may be used in combination with a GLYX peptide include Anafranil, Adapin, Aventyl, Elavil, Norpramin, Pamelor, Pertofrane, Sinequan, Surmontil, Tofranil, Vivactil, Parnate, Nardil, Marplan, Celexa, Lexapro, Luvox, Paxil, Prozac, Zoloft, Wellbutrin, Effexor, Remeron, Cymbalta, Desyrel (trazodone), and Ludiomill.

[0027] Also described herein are methods of treating depression that include administering GLYX peptides in combination with (e.g. simultaneously or sequentially) other non-pharmacological treatments such as psychotherapy, electroconvulsive therapy, vagus nerve stimulation and/or transcranial magnetic stimulation.

[0028] A variety of depression conditions are expected to be treated without affecting behavior or motor coordination, and without inducing or promoting seizure activity. Exemplary depression conditions that are expected to be treated include, but are not limited to, major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, psychotic depression, postpartum depression, premenstrual syndrome, premenstrual dysphoric disorder, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), anxiety, mood disorder, depressions caused by chronic medical conditions such as cancer or chronic pain, chemotherapy, chronic stress, post traumatic stress disorders, and bipolar disorder (or manic depressive disorder). In addition, patients suffering from any form of depression often experience anxiety. Various symptoms associated with anxiety include fear, panic, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, fatigue, nausea, and headaches among others. It is expected that the methods of the present condition can be used to treat anxiety or any of the symptoms thereof.

[0029] A variety of neurological conditions are expected to be treated according to the methods of the invention. The conditions include Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and Huntington's disease.

[0030] Also described herein are methods of treating depression in treatment resistant patients or treating refractory depression, e.g., patients suffering from a depression disorder that does not, and/or has not, responded to adequate courses of at least one, or at least two, other antidepressant compounds or therapeutics. For example, described herein is a method of treating depression in a treatment resistant patient, comprising a) optionally identifying the patient as treatment resistant and b) administering an effective dose of GLYX-13 to said patient.

[0031] Described herein are methods of acutely treating symptoms of depression in a patient in need thereof, comprising administering an effective amount of GLYX-13, for example, in a single unit dose. Such methods may relieve the patient of at least one symptom of depression about 2 weeks or less, 1 week or less, 1 day or less, 1 hour or less (e.g. 15 minutes or less, half an hour or less, after said administration. For example, described herein is a method

comprising administering an effective amount of GLYX-13 to a patient suffering from depression, wherein said patient is substantially relieved of at least one symptom of depression substantially earlier after the first administration of GLYX-13, as compared to the same patient administered a non-GLYX-13 antidepressant compound.

[0032] Symptoms of depression, and relief of same, may be ascertained by a physician or psychologist, e.g. by a mental state examination. Symptoms include thoughts of hopelessness, self-harm or suicide and/or an absence of positive thoughts or plans.

Dosages

[0033] The dosage of any compositions of the present invention will vary depending on the symptoms, age and body weight of the patient, the nature and severity of the disorder to be treated or prevented, the route of administration, and the form of the subject composition. Any of the subject formulations may be administered in a single dose or in divided doses. Dosages for the compositions of the present invention may be readily determined by techniques known to those of skill in the art or as taught herein.

[0034] A therapeutically effective amount of GLYX peptide required for use in therapy varies with the form of the condition being treated, the length of treatment time desired, the age and the condition of the patient, and is ultimately determined by the attending physician. In general, however, doses employed for adult human treatment typically are in the range of about 0.01 mg/kg to about 1000 mg/kg per day. The dose may be about .1 mg/kg to about 100 mg/kg per day. The desired dose may be conveniently administered in a single dose, or as multiple doses administered at appropriate intervals, for example as two, three, four or more sub-doses per day.

[0035] An effective dose or amount, and any possible effects on the timing of administration of the formulation, may need to be identified for any particular composition of the present invention. This may be accomplished by routine experiment as described herein, using one or more groups of animals (preferably at least 5 animals per group), or in human trials if appropriate. The effectiveness of any subject composition and method of treatment or prevention may be assessed by administering the composition and assessing the effect of the administration by measuring one or more applicable indices, and comparing the post-treatment values of these indices to the values of the same indices prior to treatment.

[0036] The precise time of administration and amount of any particular subject composition that will yield the most effective treatment in a given patient will depend upon the activity, pharmacokinetics, and bioavailability of a subject composition, physiological condition of the patient (including age, sex, disease type and stage, general physical condition, responsiveness to a given dosage and type of medication), route of administration, and the like. The guidelines presented herein may be used to optimize the treatment, e.g., determining the optimum time and/or amount of administration, which will require no more than routine experimentation

consisting of monitoring the subject and adjusting the dosage and/or timing.

[0037] While the subject is being treated, the health of the patient may be monitored by measuring one or more of the relevant indices at predetermined times during the treatment period. Treatment, including composition, amounts, times of administration and formulation, may be optimized according to the results of such monitoring. The patient may be periodically reevaluated to determine the extent of improvement by measuring the same parameters. Adjustments to the amount(s) of subject composition administered and possibly to the time of administration may be made based on these reevaluations.

[0038] Treatment may be initiated with smaller dosages which are less than the optimum dose of the compound. Thereafter, the dosage may be increased by small increments until the optimum therapeutic effect is attained.

[0039] The use of the subject compositions may reduce the required dosage for any individual agent contained in the compositions because the onset and duration of effect of the different agents may be complimentary.

[0040] Toxicity and therapeutic efficacy of subject compositions may be determined by standard pharmaceutical procedures in cell cultures or experimental animals, e.g., for determining the LD₅₀ and the ED₅₀.

[0041] The data obtained from the cell culture assays and animal studies may be used in formulating a range of dosage for use in humans. The dosage of any subject composition lies preferably within a range of circulating concentrations that include the ED₅₀ with little or no toxicity. The dosage may vary within this range depending upon the dosage form employed and the route of administration utilized. For compositions of the present invention, the therapeutically effective dose may be estimated initially from cell culture assays.

Formulations

[0042] The GLYX peptides of the present invention may be administered by various means, depending on their intended use, as is well known in the art. For example, if compositions of the present invention are to be administered orally, they may be formulated as tablets, capsules, granules, powders or syrups. Alternatively, formulations of the present invention may be administered parenterally as injections (intravenous, intramuscular or subcutaneous), drop infusion preparations, or suppositories. For application by the ophthalmic mucous membrane route, compositions of the present invention may be formulated as eyedrops or eye ointments. These formulations may be prepared by conventional means, and, if desired, the compositions may be mixed with any conventional additive, such as an excipient, a binder, a disintegrating agent, a lubricant, a corrigent, a solubilizing agent, a suspension aid, an emulsifying agent or a coating agent.

[0043] DNA encoding the GLYX peptides, incorporated into an expression vector, can also be administered, using any of the known administration methods, to express of the GLYX peptides in vivo.

[0044] In formulations of the subject invention, wetting agents, emulsifiers and lubricants, such as sodium lauryl sulfate and magnesium stearate, as well as coloring agents, release agents, coating agents, sweetening, flavoring and perfuming agents, preservatives and antioxidants may be present in the formulated agents.

[0045] Subject compositions may be suitable for oral, topical (including buccal and sublingual), rectal, vaginal, aerosol and/or parenteral administration. The formulations may conveniently be presented in unit dosage form and may be prepared by any methods well known in the art of pharmacy. The amount of composition that may be combined with a carrier material to produce a single dose vary depending upon the subject being treated, and the particular mode of administration.

[0046] Methods of preparing these formulations include the step of bringing into association compositions of the present invention with the carrier and, optionally, one or more accessory ingredients. In general, the formulations are prepared by uniformly and intimately bringing into association agents with liquid carriers, or finely divided solid carriers, or both, and then, if necessary, shaping the product.

[0047] Formulations suitable for oral administration may be in the form of capsules, cachets, pills, tablets, lozenges (using a flavored basis, usually sucrose and acacia or tragacanth), powders, granules, or as a solution or a suspension in an aqueous or non-aqueous liquid, or as an oil-in-water or water-in-oil liquid emulsion, or as an elixir or syrup, or as pastilles (using an inert base, such as gelatin and glycerin, or sucrose and acacia), each containing a predetermined amount of a subject composition thereof as an active ingredient. Compositions of the present invention may also be administered as a bolus, electuary, or paste.

[0048] In solid dosage forms for oral administration (capsules, tablets, pills, dragees, powders, granules and the like), the subject composition is mixed with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, such as sodium citrate or dicalcium phosphate, and/or any of the following: (1) fillers or extenders, such as starches, lactose, sucrose, glucose, mannitol, and/or silicic acid; (2) binders, such as, for example, carboxymethylcellulose, alginates, gelatin, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, sucrose and/or acacia; (3) humectants, such as glycerol; (4) disintegrating agents, such as agar-agar, calcium carbonate, potato or tapioca starch, alginic acid, certain silicates, and sodium carbonate; (5) solution retarding agents, such as paraffin; (6) absorption accelerators, such as quaternary ammonium compounds; (7) wetting agents, such as, for example, acetyl alcohol and glycerol monostearate; (8) absorbents, such as kaolin and bentonite clay; (9) lubricants, such a talc, calcium stearate, magnesium stearate, solid polyethylene glycols, sodium lauryl sulfate, and mixtures thereof; and (10) coloring agents. In the case of capsules, tablets and pills, the compositions may also comprise buffering agents. Solid compositions of a similar type may also be employed as fillers in soft and hard-filled

gelatin capsules using such excipients as lactose or milk sugars, as well as high molecular weight polyethylene glycols and the like.

[0049] A tablet may be made by compression or molding, optionally with one or more accessory ingredients. Compressed tablets may be prepared using binder (for example, gelatin or hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose), lubricant, inert diluent, preservative, disintegrant (for example, sodium starch glycolate or cross-linked sodium carboxymethyl cellulose), surface-active or dispersing agent. Molded tablets may be made by molding in a suitable machine a mixture of the subject composition moistened with an inert liquid diluent. Tablets, and other solid dosage forms, such as dragees, capsules, pills and granules, may optionally be scored or prepared with coatings and shells, such as enteric coatings and other coatings well known in the pharmaceutical-formulating art.

[0050] Liquid dosage forms for oral administration include pharmaceutically acceptable emulsions, microemulsions, solutions, suspensions, syrups and elixirs. In addition to the subject composition, the liquid dosage forms may contain inert diluents commonly used in the art, such as, for example, water or other solvents, solubilizing agents and emulsifiers, such as ethyl alcohol, isopropyl alcohol, ethyl carbonate, ethyl acetate, benzyl alcohol, benzyl benzoate, propylene glycol, 1,3-butylene glycol, oils (in particular, cottonseed, groundnut, corn, germ, olive, castor and sesame oils), glycerol, tetrahydrofuryl alcohol, polyethylene glycols and fatty acid esters of sorbitan, cyclodextrins and mixtures thereof.

[0051] Suspensions, in addition to the subject composition, may contain suspending agents as, for example, ethoxylated isostearyl alcohols, polyoxyethylene sorbitol and sorbitan esters, microcrystalline cellulose, aluminum metahydroxide, bentonite, agar-agar and tragacanth, and mixtures thereof.

[0052] Formulations for rectal or vaginal administration may be presented as a suppository, which may be prepared by mixing a subject composition with one or more suitable non-irritating excipients or carriers comprising, for example, cocoa butter, polyethylene glycol, a suppository wax or a salicylate, and which is solid at room temperature, but liquid at body temperature and, therefore, will melt in the body cavity and release the active agent. Formulations which are suitable for vaginal administration also include pessaries, tampons, creams, gels, pastes, foams or spray formulations containing such carriers as are known in the art to be appropriate.

[0053] Dosage forms for transdermal administration of a subject composition includes powders, sprays, ointments, pastes, creams, lotions, gels, solutions, and patches.

[0054] For topical ocular administration compositions of this invention may take the form of solutions, gels, ointments, suspensions or solid inserts, formulated so that a unit dosage comprises a therapeutically effective amount of the active component or some multiple thereof in the case of a combination therapy.

[0055] Pharmaceutical compositions of this invention suitable for parenteral administration comprise a subject composition in combination with one or more pharmaceutically-acceptable sterile isotonic aqueous or non-aqueous solutions, dispersions, suspensions or emulsions, or sterile powders which may be reconstituted into sterile injectable solutions or dispersions just prior to use, which may contain antioxidants, buffers, bacteriostats, solutes which render the formulation isotonic with the blood of the intended recipient or suspending or thickening agents.

[0056] Examples of suitable aqueous and non-aqueous carriers which may be employed in the pharmaceutical compositions of the invention include water, ethanol, polyols (such as glycerol, propylene glycol, polyethylene glycol, and the like), and suitable mixtures thereof, vegetable oils, such as olive oil, and injectable organic esters, such as ethyl oleate and cyclodextrins. Proper fluidity may be maintained, for example, by the use of coating materials, such as lecithin, by the maintenance of the required particle size in the case of dispersions, and by the use of surfactants.

[0057] The present disclosure has multiple aspects, illustrated by the following nonlimiting examples.

EXAMPLES

Antidepressant Action of GLYX-13 in Rats

Example 1

Methods

[0058] For the evaluation of the antidepressant actions of GLYX-13, the effect of GLYX-13 in the Porsolt test of depression was examined in rats. Porsolt testing is the most commonly used test for assessment of depression in animal model. Porsolt testing, also known as Forced Swim Test, is based on a behavioral trait that is sensitive to changes in affective state. During this test, the animal is placed in a tank (18 cm diameter x 45 cm height) filled to 30 cm with 22-23°C water. After placing the animal in the tank, the amount of time for which the rat is immobile when it stops struggling is measured. Porsolt test is based on the fact that antidepressants increase the latency to immobility and decrease the time for which the rat is immobile. In most of the cases, this occurs at antidepressant doses that do not increase locomotor activity on their own. The interpretation of the Porsolt test is that the antidepressants reinstate active coping mechanisms and decrease the passive immobility evoked by stress.

[0059] In order to evaluate the effectiveness of GLYX-13 as antidepressant, three month old FBNF1 rats were separated into two groups of 9 animals. The first group of rats was intravenously injected with 10 mg/kg GLYX-13 and the second group of animals was intravenously injected with PBS vehicle (1 ml/kg) in a blind manner via chronic subdural femoral vein access ports. Both groups of animals were injected 10 to 15 minutes before the start of testing.

[0060] For Porsolt testing, animals were given a 15 minute pre-test habituation in the tank to induce learned helplessness on day one. Following this, on the subsequent day, the animals were injected with GLYX-13 or vehicle 10-15 minutes before being placed into the tank for a 5 minute test session. After placing the animals in the tank, the amount of time for which each animal is immobile when it stops struggling (Mean Immobility Time) was measured. Decrease in Mean Immobility Time is a measure of the effectiveness of the antidepressant.

Results

[0061] As shown in Figure 2, Mean Immobility Time of the group of animals pretreated with IV injections of PBS Vehicle (1 ml/kg) was higher compared to the Mean Immobility Time of the group of rats pretreated with IV injections of GLYX-13 (10 mg/kg) (Fig. 1). GLYX-13 produced an antidepressive-like effect in the Porsolt test with a $56.4 \pm 4.6\%$ (Mean $\pm$ SEM) reduction in floating compared to PBS vehicle ($P < .0001$). Therefore, the data from the Porsolt test predicts effectiveness of GLYX-13 as antidepressant.

Example 2

Methods

[0062] A second experiment was performed in the same manner as Example 1, except that 2-3 month Sprague-Dawley rats were used, and treated with either intravenous (1, 3, 10, 32 mg / kg), subcutaneous (1,3, 10, 32, 56, 100 mg / kg) injections of GLYX-13 or saline vehicle (1 mg / ml) 15 (i.v.) or 20 (s.c.) min before the start of the final 5 min test session. Ketamine (10 mg / kg i.p.) was given 60 min before the start of testing (Garcia et al., (2008) Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry, 32, 140-144). Subcutaneous administration of 10 mg/kg ketamine followed by testing after 20 min post dosing produced severe dissociative side effects, as shown in Figure 3.

Results

[0063] Mean Immobility Time of the group of rats pretreated with IV injections or subcutaneous

administration of PBS Vehicle was higher compared to the Mean Immobility Time of the group of rats pretreated with IV injections of GLYX-13 (Fig. 3; 0: 127.7 ± 20.4 ; 2: 84.9 ± 15.0 ; 3: 66.14 ± 27.53 ; 10: 60.6 ± 14.7 ; 32: 87.19 ± 17.85). GLYX-13 administered intravenously produced an antidepressive-like effect in the Porsolt test at all concentrations, with a $50 \pm 10\%$ (Mean $\pm$ SEM) maximum reduction in floating compared to saline vehicle ($P < .01$). GLYX-13 administered subcutaneously produced an antidepressive-like effect in the Porsolt test at all concentrations, with a $43 \pm 7\%$ (Mean $\pm$ SEM) maximum reduction in floating compared to saline vehicle ($P < .01$) (0: 142.4 ± 15.6 ; 1: 135.5 ± 22.0 ; 3: 100.2 ± 15.7 ; 10: 76.9 ± 9.7 ; 32: $84.7.19 \pm 11.6$) Decrease in Mean Immobility Time is a measure of the effectiveness of the antidepressant; thus GLYX-13 functions as an antidepressant when administered intravenously or subcutaneously.

Example 3

Methods

[0064] To determine whether GLYX-13 acts in an area of the brain that is clinically relevant for depression, GLYX-13 was administered to either the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC), which is associated with mood and depression, or to the motor cortex (Fig. 4). Mean time spent immobile in the Porsolt test was determined for groups of 10 three-month old male Fisher Brown Norway F1 (FBNF1) rats pretreated with a single injection of GLYX-13 (1, 10 μg / side) or a single saline vehicle injection (0.5 μl / 1 min) bilaterally into the medial prefrontal cortex or motor cortex (dorsal control) in animals with surgically implanted chronic indwelling cannulae aimed at the MPFC. Microinjections were made 1 week after surgery, and Porsolt testing was conducted 20 min post injection. Animals received a single 15 min training swim session one day before dosing.

Results

[0065] As shown in Fig. 4, GLYX-13 injected into the MPFC produced an antidepressive-like effect in the Porsolt test with a $50 \pm 5\%$ (Mean $\pm$ SEM) reduction in floating compared to a saline control or to GLYX-13 injected into motor cortex (dorsal control). (Figure 4 0: 115.2 ± 10.89 ; 0.1: 108.77 ± 12.34 ; 1: 53.46 ± 10.65 ; 10: 62.54 ± 8.7 ; Dorsal Control Vehicle: 119.3 ± 10.6 ; GLYX-13 113.7 ± 13.1 ; Mean $\pm$ SEM) These results indicate that the antidepressant effect of GLYX-13 may be mediated through the MPFC, an area of the brain associated with mood and depression.

Example 4

Methods

[0066] To determine whether the antidepressant effect of GLYX-13 was specific to the sequence of the GLXY-13 peptide, mean time (sec) spent floating in the Porsolt test was determined in groups of 12 three-month old Sprague Dawley rats administered with GLYX-13 (TPPT-NH₂; 3 mg / kg, i.v. tail vein), a scrambled peptide (PTPT-NH₃; 3 mg / kg i.v. tail vein), or 0.9% saline vehicle (1 ml / kg, i.v. tail vein). Administration occurred 60 min before the 5 min. testing session. Animals received a 15 min. training swim session one day before dosing.

Results

[0067] Animals administered GLYX-13 showed a reduction in mean floating time of $70 \pm 5\%$ (Mean $\pm$ SEM) compared to animals receiving a saline injection or a scrambled peptide (Fig. 5). Therefore, the antidepressant effect is specific to GLYX-13 and does not represent an artifact of administering a peptide generally.

Discussion

[0068] The data depicted in Figures 2-5 show that GLYX-13 displays significant antidepressant-like properties in rats over a range of doses and routes of administration. In contrast to selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), GLYX-13's onset of action was within minutes of a single dose. These results together with the recent clinical trials of known NMDAR molecules, and the fact that GLYX-13 has an outstanding therapeutic index, especially compared to other modulators of NMDA function, make GLYX-13 an attractive candidate for the treatment of depression.

[0069] These results show that NMDAR glycine-site partial agonists may be excellent therapeutic candidates for the treatment of depression.

Anxiolytic Action of GLYX-13

Example 5

[0070] The purpose of this study was to evaluate action of GLYX-13 on anxiety. In order to gauge the effect of GLYX-13 in rats, the open field test of anxiety was conducted. The open field test is a widely used neophobic test of anxiety (see, Treit D, Fundytus M. Thigmotaxis as a test for anxiolytic activity in rats. *Pharmacol Biochem Behav* 1989;31:959-62.).

[0071] The open field area used for the open field test generally consists of an empty and bright square (or rectangular) arena, surrounded by walls. For the current study, an open field of 45 cm X 35 cm X 20 cm high was used. The rat was placed in the center of the arena and its behavior recorded over a predefined period of time (usually between 2 to 15 min). The open field test is based on the natural tendency of the rats to avoid open spaces. The open field test is based on the conflict between the innate anxiety that rats have of the central area of the open space versus their desire to explore new environments. When rats are in an anxious state, they have a natural tendency to stay near the walls. This natural tendency of the rats to stay close to the walls is called thigmotaxis. In this context, anxiety-related behavior is measured by the degree to which the rat avoids the center of the open field test. Determining the propensity of the rat to avoid the open field can be determined by measuring the number of center crosses made by the rats over a predefined interval of time, or by determining the amount of time the rat stays in the center of the field.

[0072] In order to evaluate the effectiveness of GLYX-13 as an anxiolytic, two groups of three month old FBNF1 rats were used. The first group was composed of 13 rats and the second group was composed of 11 rats. The first group of rats was intravenously injected with 10 mg/kg GLYX-13 and the second group of rats was intravenously injected with PBS vehicle (1 ml/kg) in a blind manner via chronic subdural femoral vein access ports. Both groups of rats were injected 10 to 15 minutes before the start of testing. After GLYX-13 injections, both groups of rats were tested in the open field.

[0073] For the open field test, rats were habituated to the open field for 2 minutes each day for three consecutive days before the final 2 minute test session in which GLYX-13 or vehicle was administered. Open field activity was recorded by a video camera mounted above the open field area, and number of center crosses in the open field was measured.

Results

[0074] Anxiolytic-like drug effects were measured by increased center crosses in the open field by the rats pretreated with IV injections of GLYX-13 (Fig. 6). GLYX-13 (10 mg/kg i.v.) produced an anxiolytic-like effect in the open field test with a $172.6 \pm 34.3\%$ (Mean $\pm$ SEM) increase in center crosses compared to vehicle ($P < .005$).

Example 6

[0075] A second experiment was performed in the same manner as Example 3, except that groups of 8-10 two- to three-month old male Sprague-Dawley rats pretreated with either intravenous (1, 3, 10, 32 mg / kg), subcutaneous (1, 3, 10, 32, 56, 100 mg / kg) injections of GLYX-13, ketamine (10 mg/kg i.p.) or saline vehicle (1 mg / ml) 15 min (i.v.), 20 (s.c.) or 60 (i.p.) min before the start of the 5 min test session. Each data point represents a group of 8-10

rats. The average (mean) amount of time animals spent in the center of the field was measured.

Results

[0076] Anxiolytic-like drug effects were measured by increased center crosses in the open field by the rats pretreated with IV or subcutaneous injections of GLYX-13 (Fig. 7). Intravenous GLYX-13 administration produced an anxiolytic-like effect in the open field test with a 42 ± 5 % (Mean $\pm$ SEM) increase in the amount of time spent in the center of the field compared to vehicle ($P < .05$). Subcutaneous GLYX-13 administration produced an anxiolytic-like effect in the open field test with a 36 ± 5 % (Mean $\pm$ SEM) increase in the amount of time spent in the center of the field compared to vehicle ($P < .05$).

Discussion

[0077] The data reported here show that GLYX-13 displays significant anxiolytic-like properties in rats over a range of doses and routes of administration. The results with GLYX-13 show that NMDAR glycine-site partial agonists may be excellent therapeutic candidates for the treatment of anxiety.

Evaluating Persistence of Action of the Anti-depressive and Anxiolytic effects of GLYX-13

Example 7

Methods

[0078] To evaluate whether the anti-depressive and anxiolytic effects of GLYX-13 would persist beyond a few hours, rats were tested in the Porsolt test and the Open Field test, described above. Groups of 10-11 three-month old Sprague-Dawley rats were pretreated with GLYX-13 (3 mg / kg i.v.), ketamine (10 mg / kg i.v.) or saline vehicle injection (1 mg / ml i.v. tail vein) 96 hrs before the start of testing. Animals received a single 15 min. training swim session one day before dosing. Animals were tested 96 hrs post dosing in the Porsolt test without any testing during the intervening period. Open field testing was conducted without pre-habitation 1 day after Porsolt testing (i.e. 120 hrs post dosing). Mean ($\pm$ SEM) time (sec.) spent floating in the Porsolt test, time spent in the center compartment (sec.), and line crosses in the open field test were determined.

Results

[0079] Results of the Porsolt test showed that animals administered GLYX-13 showed an $82\% \pm 2$ (mean $\pm$ SEM) reduction in mean floating time compared to animals administered a saline control (Fig. 8, left panel). Results of the open field testing show that animals administered GLYX-13 showed an $125\% \pm 5$ (mean $\pm$ SEM) increase in mean center time compared to animals administered a saline control (Fig. 8, middle panel). Center time is a measure of anxiolysis. Line crossings are a measure of locomotor activity, and can be used as a control.

Discussion

[0080] These results show that the antidepressant effects of a single administration of GLYX-13 last up to 4 days, and that the anxiolytic effects persist up to 5 days. Thus, while the effects of GLYX-13 can be seen within minutes, the effect of a single administration also persists for at least several days.

Understanding the Molecular Underpinning of Rough-And-Tumble Play (RTP) Induced Positive Affect and Evaluation of Hedonic Effect of GLYX-13

Example 8

Understanding the molecular underpinning of RTP

[0081] In order to understand the molecular underpinning of RTP, four RTP sessions of 30 minutes each were conducted with rats. Control rats used for this study received identical handling as the RTP testing groups except that they were tested in isolation. Following these RTP sessions, frontal cortex and parietal cortex gene expression changes in rats were measured by microarray. These gene expression changes were examined 6 hours after the final of four 30 minutes RTP sessions.

[0082] RTP increased expression of the NMDA family of genes (specifically: NMDA NR1, NR2AD subunits). The upregulation of NMDAR subunits was corroborated by qrt-PCR and the results have been presented in the Figure 9.

Evaluation of Hedonic effect of GLYX-13

[0083] To evaluate the hedonic effect of GLYX-13 in this study, the 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations model of positive affect was examined in rats (see, Burgdorf, J., Panksepp, J., Brudzynski, S.M., Kroes, R.A. & Moskal, J.R. (2008). The effect of selective breeding for differential rates of 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations on emotional behavior in rats. *Devel. Psychobiology*, 51, 34-46.).

[0084] According to 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations model of positive affect, RTP behavior in rats has been shown to be rewarding and to elicit high rates of 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations which in turn have been shown to reflect positive affective states (Fig 10).

[0085] As a part of the study, two groups of three month old FBNF1 rats were used. The first group was composed of 13 rats and the second group was composed of 11 rats. The first group of rats was intravenously injected with 10mg/kg GLYX-13 and the second group of rats was intravenously injected with PBS vehicle (1 ml/kg) in a blind manner via chronic subdural femoral vein access ports. Both groups of rats were injected 10 to 15 minutes before the start of test.

[0086] For hedonic ultrasonic vocalizations (USVs), animals received 2 minutes of heterospecific RTP habituation before the final 2 minutes test session.

Results

[0087] Direct injection of GLYX-13 dose (10 mg/kg i.v.) increased hedonic RTP induced 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations. GLYX-13 increased rates of play-induced positive affective 50-kHz USVs by $178.5 \pm 48.3\%$ (Mean $\pm$ SEM) compared to vehicle ($P < .01$) (Fig 11).

Discussion

[0088] These results suggest that the NMDA receptor may play a functional role in RTP-induced positive affective states. GLYX-13 may be a useful therapeutic to increase resilience to depression and anxiety.

[0089] While specific embodiments of the subject disclosure have been discussed, the above specification is illustrative and not restrictive. Many variations of the disclosure will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon review of this specification. The full scope of the disclosure should be determined by reference to the claims and the specification.

Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers expressing quantities of ingredients, reaction conditions, parameters, descriptive features and so forth used in the specification and claims are to be understood as being modified in all instances by the term "about." Accordingly, unless indicated to the contrary, the numerical parameters set forth in this specification and attached claims are approximations that may vary depending upon the desired properties sought to be

obtained by the present invention.

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REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

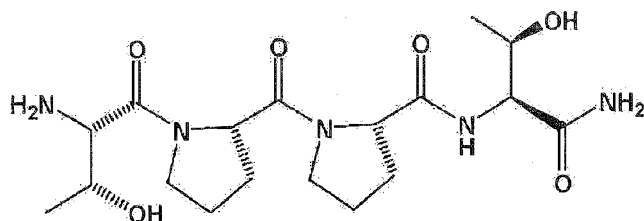
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- **BURGDORF, J.PANKSEPP, J.BRUDZYNSKI, S.M.KROES, R.A.MOSKAL, J.R.**The effect of selective breeding for differential rates of 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations on emotional behavior in ratsDevel. Psychobiology, 2008, vol. 51, 34-46 [0083]

Patentkrav

- 1.** GLYX-peptid til anvendelse i en fremgangsmåde til behandling af en patient, der lider af Alzheimers sygdom, Parkinsons sygdom eller Huntingtons sygdom,
- 5 hvor GLYX-peptidet er GLYX-13 med strukturen ifølge formel I:



Formel I.

- 2.** GLYX-peptid til anvendelse ifølge krav 1, hvor fremgangsmåden er til
- 10 behandling af Alzheimers sygdom, Parkinsons sygdom eller Huntingtons sygdom hos pattedyr inkluderende mennesker.

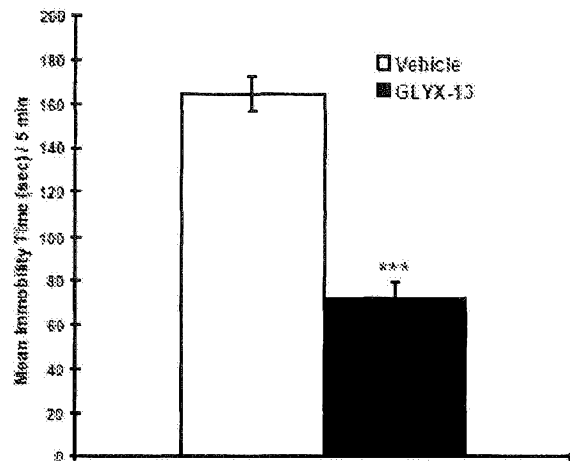
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TABLE 1

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NT-4: SEQ ID NO:4.	Val—Tyr—Tyr—Ser—Gln—Gln—His—Tyr—Ser—Thr—Pro—Pro— Thr
NT-5: SEQ ID NO:5.	Glu—Asp—Leu—Ala—Val—Tyr—Tyr—Ser—Gln—Gln—His—Tyr— Ser—Thr—Pro—Pro—Thr
NT-6: SEQ ID NO:6.	Ser—Val—Gln—Ala—Glu—Leu—Asp—Leu—Ala—Val—Tyr—Tyr— Ser—Gln—Gln—His—Tyr—Ser—Thr—Pro—Pro—Thr
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FIGURE 1

**GLYX-13 is antidepressant in the
Rat Porsolt Swim Test**



Mean ($\pm$ SEM) time spent immobile in the Porsolt swim test using 3 month old rats pretreated With IV injections of 10.0 mg/kg of GLYX-13 (n=9) or PBS Vehicle (n=9) 10-15 min before the start of testing. *** $P < .001$, between subjects t-test.

FIGURE 2

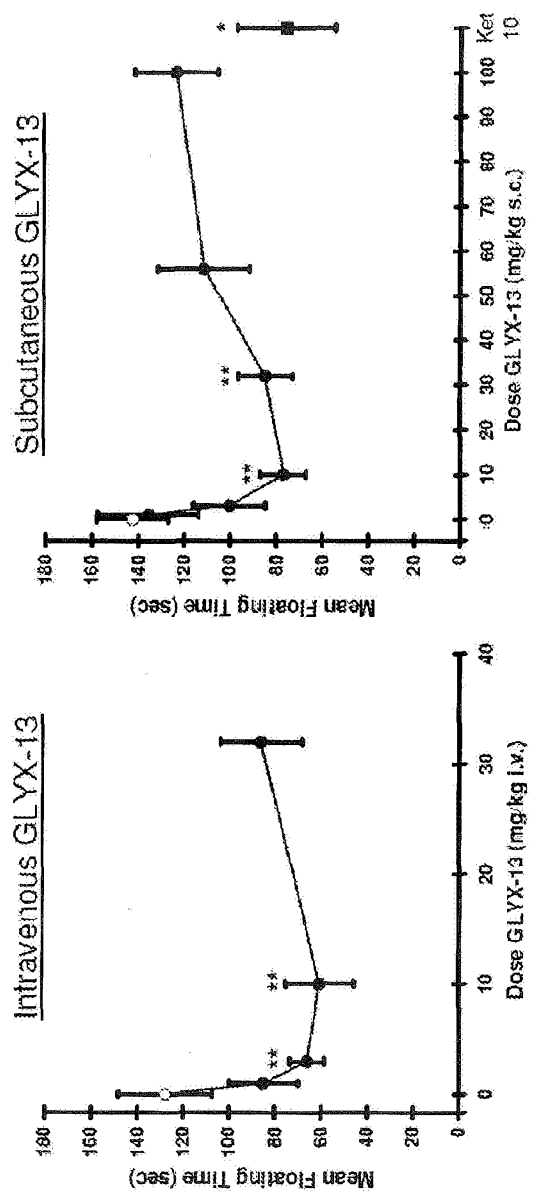


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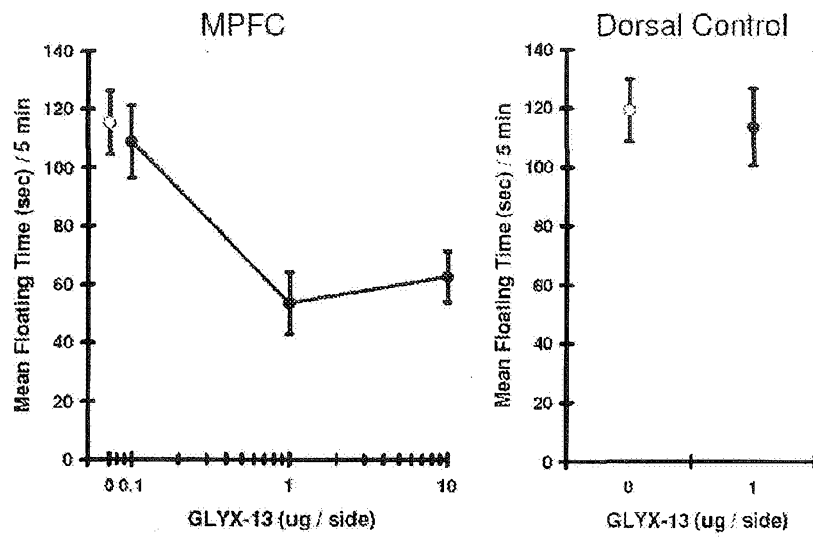


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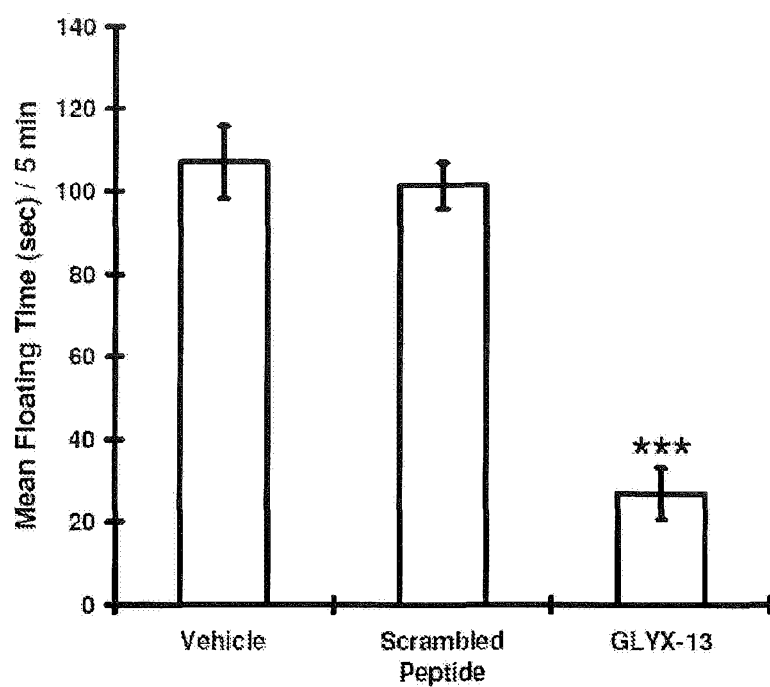
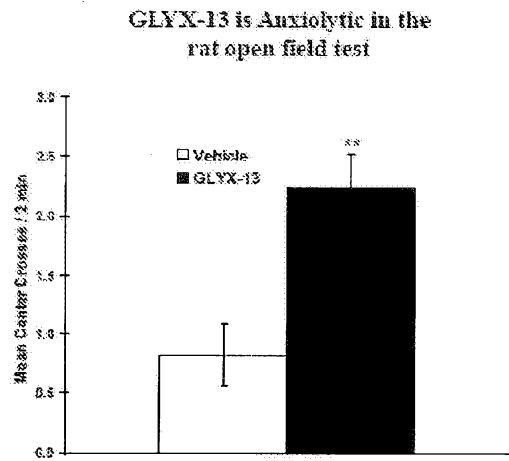


FIGURE 5



Mean ($\pm$ SEM) crosses in the center compartment of the open field during play testing in 3 months old rats pretreated with IV injections of 10.0 mg/kg of GLYX-13 (n=13) or PBS Vehicle (n=11) 10-15 min before the start of testing. *** $P < .01$ between subjects t-test.

FIGURE 6

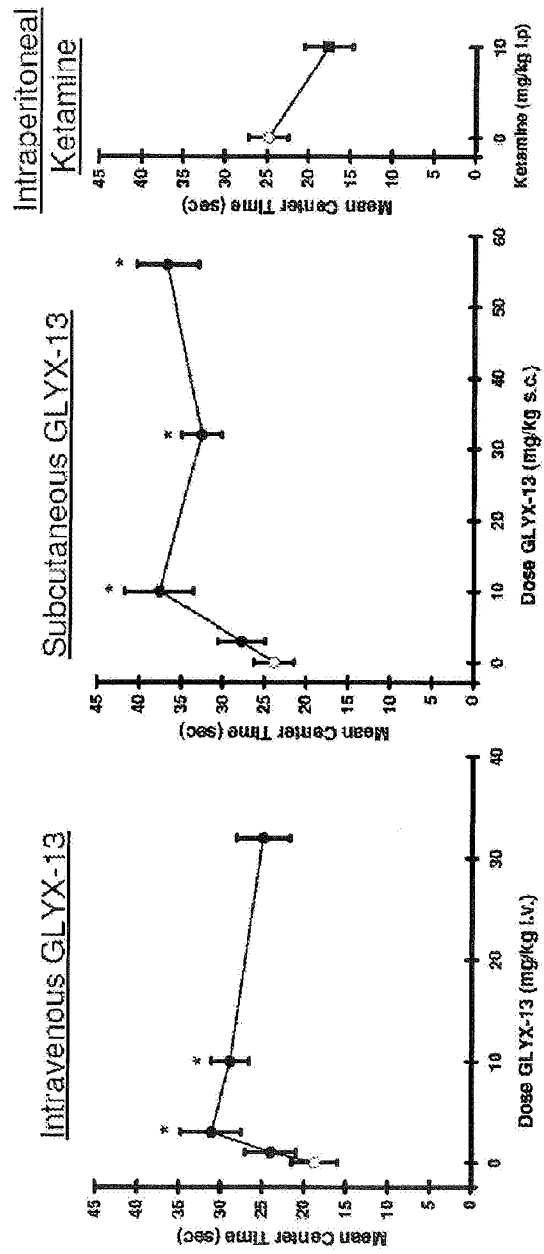


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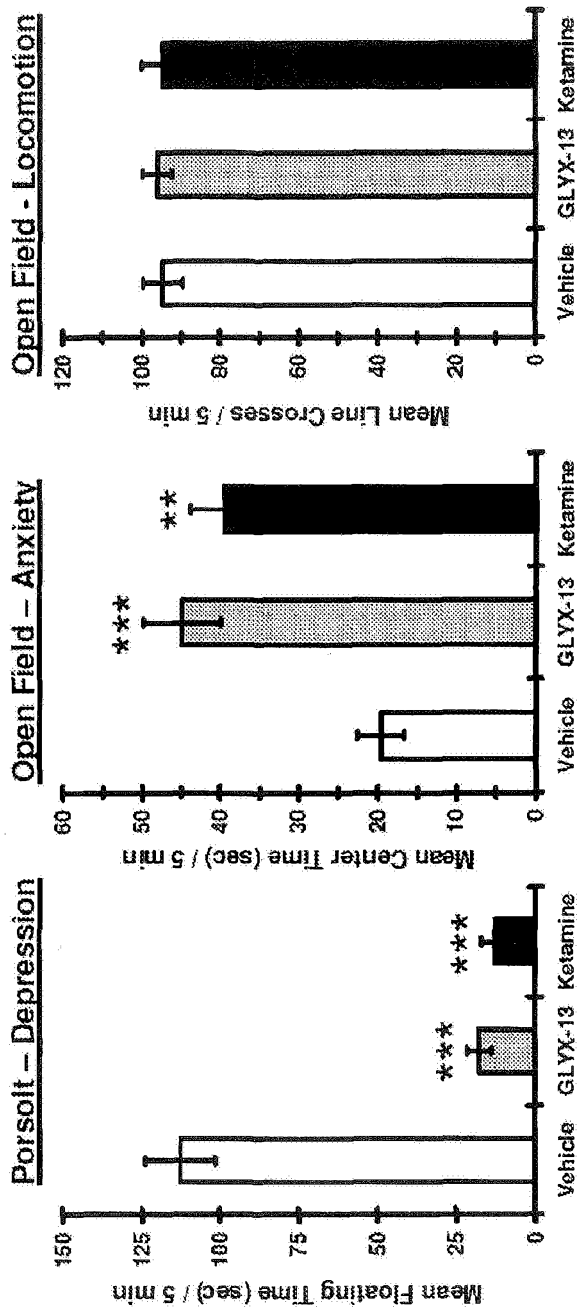
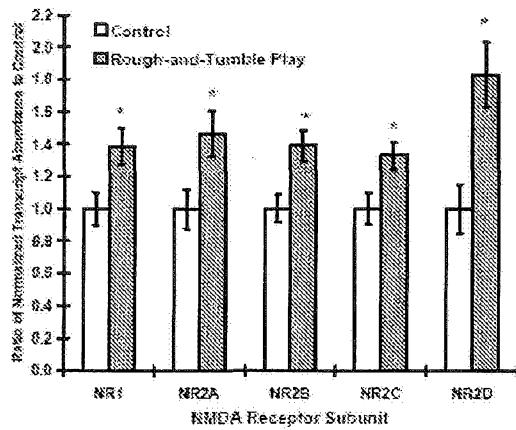


FIGURE 8

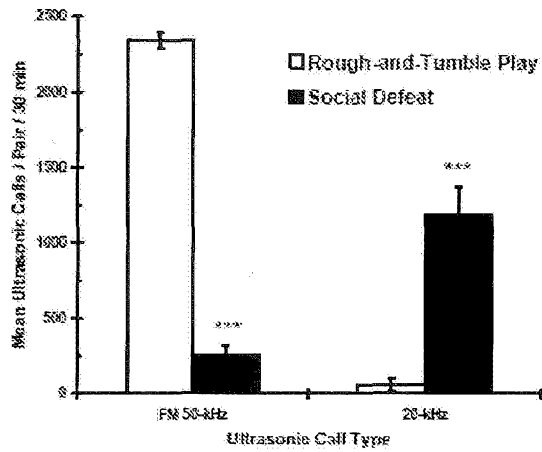
qRT-PCR analysis of the NMDAR Cortical mRNA
Expression Following Rough-and-Tumble Play



Mean $\pm$ SEM ratio of NMDAR subunits mRNA levels (μ g transcript / cDNA) normalized to control levels 6 hours after a 30 min of rough-and-tumble play or 30 min alone in a novel cage (control). Gene expression for the NMDAR mRNA increased following play in the Frontal and Posterior Cortex relative to controls. The mean $\pm$ SEM control values (μ g transcript / μ g cDNA) were: NR1 $3.6 \pm 0.4 \times 10^{-4}$, NR2A $1.6 \pm 0.2 \times 10^{-3}$, NR2B $1.8 \pm 0.1 \times 10^{-4}$, NR2C $7.2 \pm 0.7 \times 10^{-6}$, NR2D $3.4 \pm 0.3 \times 10^{-6}$. * $P < 0.05$ play vs control.

FIGURE 9

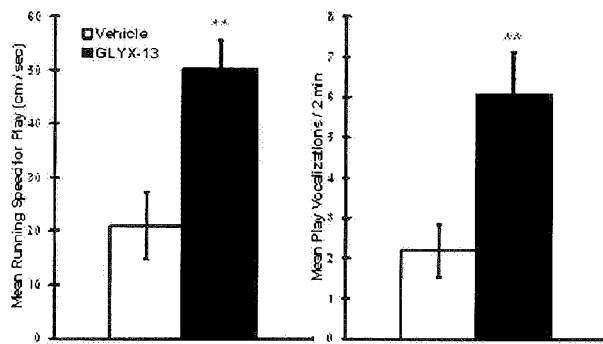
**Rough-and-Tumble Play Behavior Maximally
Elicits Hedonic FM 50-kHz USVs and Social
Defeat Maximally Elicits Aversive 22-kHz USVs**



Mean ($\pm$ SEM) of frequency modulated 50-kHz and 20-kHz USVs during 30 min of rough-and-tumble play ($n = 23$ pairs) at 1 month of age as compared to 30 min of social defeat ($n=18$ pairs) at 3 months of age. *** $P < .001$ between Ss t-test, 1 tailed.

FIGURE 10

The NMDA partial Agonist GLYX-13 increases RTP induced hedonic 50-kHz USVs and Reward



Mean ($\pm$ SEM) rates of play vocalizations in anticipation of play (right) and the rewarding value of play as indexed by running speed for play (left) during play testing in 3 month old rats pretreated with IV injections of 10.0 mg/kg of GLYX-13 (n=13) or PBS Vehicle (n=11) 10-15 min before the start of testing. ** $P < .01$, between subjects t-test.

FIGURE 11