

PubMed **Format:** AbstractPharmacogenetics. 1995 Jun;5(3):121-41.

Dopamine D2 receptor gene variants: association and linkage studies in impulsive-addictive-compulsive behaviour.

Blum K¹, Sheridan PJ, Wood RC, Braverman ER, Chen TJ, Comings DE.

Author information

Abstract

Drug and alcohol seeking behaviour has become a great global problem affecting millions of inhabitants with a cost to society in the billions. Dopaminergic reward pathways have frequently been implicated in the etiology of addictive behaviour. While other neurotransmitters have also been implicated, to date the only molecular genetic defect which has been found to associate with alcoholism, drug dependency, obesity, smoking, pathological gambling, attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Tourette syndrome, as well as other related compulsive behaviours, are the variants of the dopamine D2 receptor gene (DRD2). In this review of the available data on the subject, we report a number of independent meta-analyses that confirm an association of DRD2 polymorphisms and impulsive-addictive-compulsive behaviour (IACB), which we have termed "Reward Deficiency Syndrome". While we agree that Meta-analyses of all exant studies support an association of variants of DRD2 and IACB, correct negative findings with alcoholism may be due to differences in assessing controls and inclusion/exclusion criteria for selection of diseased probands.

PMID: 7550364

[Indexed for MEDLINE]

**Publication types, MeSH terms, Substance, Grant support**

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