

**THE CHOLINERGIC ANTI-INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE IN
THE HIV CONTEXT**

By

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Biology in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY

In

Biology

University of Puerto Rico

Rio Piedras Campus

May 2, 2014

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNS	central nervous system
$\alpha 7$ -nAChR or $\alpha 7$	alpha7 nicotinic acetylcholine receptor
ACh	acetylcholine
NMJ	neuromuscular junction
ChAT	choline acetyltransferase
CAP	cholinergic anti-inflammatory pathway
[Ca(M)]	mechano-sensitive Ca^{2+} channel
[C(V)]	voltage-activated calcium channel
[Na(V)]	voltage-activated sodium channel
PNS	peripheral nervous system
LCP	lipidic cubic phase
α -BuTX	alpha bungarotoxin
RIC-3	resistance to inhibitors of cholinesterase 3
ER	endoplasmic reticulum
NMDARs	N-methyl-D-aspartate receptors
Ca^{2+}	calcium
PNS	peripheral nervous system
AChE	acetylcholinesterase
qRT-PCR	quantitative real time polymerase chain reaction

KO	knockout
Kin	knock in
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
LPS	lipopolysaccharide
TNF- α	tumor necrosis factor alpha
IL-1 β	interleukin-1 beta
IL-6	interleukin-6
HMGB-1	high-mobility group box protein 1
IL-10	interleukin-10
TGF- β	transforming growth factor beta
TLR2	Toll Like Receptor 2
NTS	nucleus of the solitary tract
PCP	<i>Pneumocystis carinii</i> pneumonia
KS	Kaposi's sarcoma
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
HTLV	human T-lymphotropic virus
LAV	lymphadenopathy-associated virus
TAR element	Trans-activation response element
DC-SIGN	Dendritic Cell-Specific Intercellular adhesion molecule-3-Grabbing Non-integrin
TNF- β	tumor necrosis factor beta

MIP-1 α	macrophage inflammatory protein 1 alpha
Bcl-2	B-cell lymphoma 2
RRE	Rev response element
snRNA	small nuclear RNA
dUTP	deoxyuracil
dUTPase	deoxyuracil phosphatase
NF- κ B	nuclear factor kappa beta
IL-1	interleukin 1
SP-1	specific protein 1
Lef	lymphoid enhancing factor
Ets	E-twenty six
NF-AT	nuclear factor of activated T cells
AP-1	activator protein 1
ORF	open reading frame
bp	base pair
MHC-1	major histocompatibility complex I
APOBEC3G	apolipoprotein B mRNA-editing, enzyme-catalytic, polypeptide-like 3G
IFN- α	interferon alpha
IFN- γ	interferon gamma
IP-10	inducible protein 10
IL-15	interleukin 15

ELISA	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
TGF- β 1	transforming growth factor beta 1
CXCR2	chemokine (C-X-C motif) receptor 2
HCl	hydrochloric acid
NaOH	sodium hydroxide
PNU-120596	1-(5-chloro-2,4-dimethoxy-phenyl)-3-(5-methyl-isoxazol-3-yl)-urea
CCK	cholecystokinin
CNI-1493	semapimod
SIV	simian immunodeficiency virus
DEPC	diethyl pyrocarbonate
GMF	geometric mean fluorescence
GRO- α	growth-related oncogene α
cART	combination antiretroviral therapy

THE CHOLINERGIC ANTI-INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE IN THE HIV CONTEXT

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THESIS OUTLINE

Recent studies demonstrate that the central nervous system (CNS) and immune system interact with each other through a vagus nerve-dependent mechanism that involves afferent stimulation from peripheral inflammatory cytokines and the efferent release of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine (ACh). This circuit is called ‘the cholinergic anti-inflammatory pathway’ (CAP) because ACh binds to the $\alpha 7$ nicotinic acetylcholine receptor ($\alpha 7$ -nAChR) in macrophages and inhibits the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines without altering the release of anti-inflammatory cytokines (1). The main objective of this thesis is to study the cholinergic anti-inflammatory response in the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) scenario to better understand how the HIV affects the CAP and whether this understanding can help to comprehend and treat the chronic inflammation that affects HIV+ individuals.

In humans, during the early phase of HIV infection (acute), a dysregulation of cytokines and chemokines occurs causing an increase that correlates with plasma viremia (2). During this phase, pro-inflammatory waves occur prior to anti-inflammatory factors detection in HIV-infected donors, negatively affecting homeostasis. In fact, the long term consequences of this sustained dysregulation of pro- and anti-inflammatory mediators lead to chronic inflammation that lasts until death. Moreover, the inflammatory processes in these patients point toward HIV infection (3–8) and viral proteins, including gp120, (9) as causatives. For successful HIV infection, gp120 needs to bind CD4 and recruit CXCR4 or CCR5. Interestingly, gp120 has proven to bind to nAChRs-expressing cells from muscle and neuronal lineage (10) which could explain the infection of muscle and neuronal cells that are CD4 deficient (11,12). The lack of knowledge about the inflammatory role of the $\alpha 7$ -nAChR in immune cells either recovered from

HIV+ individuals or *in vitro* cells exposed to viral proteins lead us to examine the cholinergic anti-inflammatory response in the HIV context.

Chapter 1 provides a general review on central and peripheral nAChRs. In addition, the available knowledge about CAP and the cholinergic anti-inflammatory reflex will be explained. Lastly, a review of inflammatory processes in HIV+ will be offered. **Chapter 2**, studies the *in vitro* effects of gp120 over $\alpha 7$ -nAChR expression and discusses $\alpha 7$ -nAChR studies in HIV-1 infected individuals. Moreover, it discusses inflammation assays to define the inflammatory phenotype of macrophages exposed to gp120. **Chapter 3**, examines the electrophysiological properties of $\alpha 7$ -nAChR in human macrophages. **Chapter 4**, presents the $\alpha 7$ -nAChR upregulation consequences regarding calcium mobilization and apoptosis. **Chapter 5**, addresses general conclusions. Finally, **Chapter 6** presents and discusses a number of future perspectives for the current thesis.

The effort contained in this thesis is dedicated to my family

who supported me each step of the way.

To my parents for their support and encouragement and

because they taught me to be a hard worker.

To my wife and sons for providing me enough time and

space to do what I love: SCIENCE.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank the many people who made this thesis possible. It was a great journey nuanced with obstacles and victories. First of all, I want to underscore my gratitude to my mentor, Dr. José Lasalde-Dominicci. I still remember the day he interviewed me, with his enthusiasm he infected me and encouraged me to uncover new things that ultimately generate new knowledge. More than a mentor, he became my friend and I appreciate his constant encouragement and effort to turn me into a scientist.

I would like to thank Dr. Carlos (Carlitos) Baez for his great effort to explain things clearly and simply. Throughout my articles and thesis-writing period he provided me with valuable ideas; I really appreciate it. Moreover, during our philosophical sessions, he taught me to select the appropriate and to discard unnecessary experiments. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Orestes Quesada for his commitment to scientific training, for his determination to help students at all levels and for his friendship. In addition, I also want to thank the many people who significantly contributed to my scientific career during my formative years in science. Specially, I want to thank Dr. Roberto Pérez who guided me during my undergraduate studies and discovered my inclinations toward science. Furthermore, my appreciation to Prof. Israel Quiñones, Prof. Jose Rodríguez, Ms. Vanessa Gonzalez, Mr. Armando Herrera, Mr. José Arce, Dr. Sondra Vega, Dr. Alberto Puente, Prof. Arlyn Perez, Dr. Arnaldo Bravo and Dr. Karen Woolcock for believing in me, and constantly challenging and encouraging me. Special thanks to Dr. Fernando Renaud for providing me with the opportunity to become part of his lab, Dr. Valerie Wojna for providing the HIV positive cohort employed in this thesis and Dr. Loyda Melendez for her constant support. Lastly, I want to show my respect and gratitude to Dr. Tomas Morales-Cardona and Elba Delgado for their trust and unfailing support during difficult times.

I am indebted to many graduate and undergraduate student colleagues for providing a stimulating and fun environment in which to learn and grow. I am especially grateful to Dr. José (Cheito) Pérez, Melvin Suárez, Edwin Quiñones, Jessica Medina, Coral Capó, Luis Padilla, Onelys Carrasquillo (my first undergraduate student), Rosedelma Diaz, Gary Grajales, Gabriel Grajales, Frances Delgado, Rosiris León, Wilfredo García, Carlos Luciano, Dr. Leomar Ballester, Bismark Madera, Dr. David Otero, and Dr. Ida Pantoja (the best friend ever). Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my friends in Abbvie and Amgen: Benjamin Torres, Irelisvet Santiago, Edgardo Robles, Almarys Valentin (Pikin) and Myrna Ortiz.

I wish to thank the Biology Graduate Program personnel especially Aidamarie Pérez and Nicolle Peña, the Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP) and Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) programs for accepting me as an extended family member. Special mention is required for Millie Viera, a dedicated woman and an example of effort, commitment and professionalism. You are the soul of the Julio García Díaz Building. Also, I am in debt with Dr. Ada Haiman for the deep proofreading of this thesis and my thesis comitee for their trust my work ethic.

Lastly, and most importantly, I wish to thank my parents, Juan Delgado and Rosa Vélez for their efforts to offer me high quality education. They raised me, supported me, taught me, and loved me. Also, I want to thank my brother Juan Delgado, I love you. Moreover, I want to dedicate my efforts to my lovely wife, Waleska López and my children, Kevin Manuel and Jacob Manuel. To them I dedicate this thesis.

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Manuel Delgado Velez was born in Santurce, PR on July 15, 1978. His parents are Juan Delgado Peraza and Rosa Vélez Seguinot. Manuel was raised in Florida, PR and attended elementary school at Colegio Nuestra Señora del Rosario in Ciales. His high school was Colegio Nuestra Señora del Rosario in Vega Baja. After graduation he was accepted into the Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Arecibo Campus where his interest in science was cultivated and he entered the Biology Program. In 2003 he graduated Magna Cum Laude obtaining a bachelor's degree in biology, with a major in biomedical science. During his undergraduate days he identified scientific research as a potential way to fulfill his intellectual needs. Later, he worked at Abbott Biotechnology Ltd. (now Abbvie) in Barceloneta in the Microbial Environmental Control group (quality control lab) and later became a regular Abbott employee in the protein purification department. After two years in industry, he decided to move on to graduate school. During his first semester of graduate school, Dr. Fernando Renaud recruited him as research assistant, later he became a full graduate student. During his first year, he was awarded the Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP) fellowship. After Dr. Renaud's retirement he was accepted into Dr. José Lasalde's lab to start his doctoral thesis project. After two years of graduate school Manuel received the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) fellowship. Manuel has been involved in several projects that include statin and alcohol studies in murine models of slow-channel congenital myasthenic syndrome (SCCMS) and studies on the effects of HIV-gp120 over the expression of $\alpha 7$ -nAChR in immune cells, as well as the evaluation of this protein in HIV-infected subjects. Indeed, the latter is explained exhaustively in this thesis.