

β 4 PEPTIDE MEDIATED VOLTAGE-GATED SODIUM CHANNEL RESURGENT CURRENTS OF HUMAN
Nav1.5 SODIUM CHANNEL EXPRESSED IN HEK293 CELLS INCREASE AFTER EXPOSURE TO
PYRETHROID INSECTICIDES PERMETHRIN AND CYPERMETHRIN

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beautiful wife Adrienne, and my wonderful children Tripp and AJ whose patience, support and sacrifice through the duration of this Master's work has given me the courage to finish this endeavor.

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Voltage-gated sodium channels (VGSCs) are transmembrane proteins responsible for the initiation of action potentials in excitable tissues by selectively allowing sodium ions (Na^+) to flow through the cell membrane. VGSC resurgent currents occur when an open channel blocker from the $\beta 4$ subunit interacts with the α subunit, transiently blocking the movement of Na^+ across the membrane. VGSC subtype Nav1.5 channels are expressed in cardiac tissue and irregularities in their activity can lead to pathophysiological conditions like arrhythmias that can lead to death. Pyrethroid insecticides have been used widely in agriculture, vector control and households around the world for decades and since this is the case, human exposure to these products has increased dramatically. It is important to understand the effects of these insecticides on humans, including how these insecticides affect the heart. This thesis highlights the effects of pyrethroids on $\beta 4$ peptide mediated Nav1.5 VGSC resurgent currents. The aims of this thesis were to 1) determine Nav1.5 channel activity and if activity changes with exposure to the vehicle (DMSO) used to dilute pyrethroids; 2) investigate the $\beta 4$ peptide's effect on these Nav1.5 currents and if resurgent currents are produced; 3) investigate Nav1.5 channel activity when exposed to pyrethroids; and 4) investigate $\beta 4$ peptide mediated VGSC resurgent current activity after exposure to pyrethroids. Standard whole-cell electrophysiology was used to determine electrophysiological and pharmacological properties of WT Nav1.5 currents. Results from these experiments showed that 1) Nav1.5 channel activity follows established understanding of VGSC: when depolarized a rapid and transient inward current is produced followed by a rapid inactivation; 2) DMSO did not affect activation and inactivation pattern; 3) the $\beta 4$ peptide produced resurgent currents in Nav1.5; 4) pyrethroids alter electrophysiological

properties of Nav1.5 by prolonging inactivation; and 5) β 4 peptide mediated resurgent currents are larger after exposure to pyrethroids. Overall, this thesis answers important questions regarding effects of pyrethroids on the cardiac VGSC and has implications for effects on health and highlights the necessity to be mindful of how pyrethroids are used in the future.

Theodore R. Cummins, Ph. D., Chair

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List of Abbreviations

α subunit	Alpha subunit
AP	Action Potential
β subunit	Beta subunit
$\beta 4$	Beta four
CNS	Central Nervous System
CS	Chreothatosis and Seziures – Intoxication Syndrome in rodents
DI – DIV	Domains of the Voltage-gated Sodium Channel
DMEM	Dulbecco’s Modified Eagle Medium
G418	Neomycin
HEK293	Human Embryonic Kidney Cells
h_{∞}	H Infinity protocol
K^{+}	Potassium ions
M Ω	Mega Ohm
Na^{+}	Sodium ions
Nav	Voltage-gated Sodium Channel
SEM	Standard Error of the Mean
S1 – S6	Segments within Domains of the Voltage-gated Sodium Channel
T	Tremor – Intoxication Syndrome in rodents
TTX	Tetrodotoxin
TTX – S	Tetrodotoxin Sensitive
TTX – R	Tetrodotoxin Resistant
VGSC	Voltage-gated Sodium Channel
PNS	Peripheral Nervous System
WT	Wild type

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

Brief History of VGSC

Alan Hodgkin and Andrew Huxley were physiologists that conducted a series of experiments on the squid giant axon and they discovered that the transmission of action potentials along the axon of the nerve was dependent on the changes in permeability of positive ions, sodium (Na) and potassium (K), across the plasma membrane (Hodgkin and Huxley, 1952a). They also found that the membrane potential of the squid giant axon was involved in regulating sodium conductance and the kinetics of sodium current and that this was all controlled by what is now called a voltage-gated mechanism (Hodgkin and Huxley, 1952b). Years later, a selective Na current blocker, tetrodotoxin (TTX), from the liver of a puffer fish, was discovered to block Na currents in lobster giant axons (Narahashi et al., 1964). Similar findings were discovered when saxitoxin (STX) was added to a frog vagus nerve prep. Like TTX, STX, also a Na current blocker, selectively interacted with receptors on the frog vagus nerve prep to eliminate Na current (Narahashi et al. 1967; Hille, 1968). From these studies it was determined that Na current was voltage-dependent and conducted through individual channels. Tools like patch-clamp recording was invented and implemented to examine Na currents in small isolated neurons (Hamill et al., 1981; Sakmann et al., 1984) and has revolutionized the discovery and understanding of the different Na channel subtypes found in the human body. Although to date there are 9 sodium channel subtypes, this thesis will take a more in depth look at the Nav 1.5 isoform. But before we take a closer look at the Nav1.5, it is fitting to introduce the structure and function of the voltage-gated sodium channel in general.

Structure and Function of VGSC

Voltage-gated sodium channels are transmembrane proteins on many different types of tissues that participate in the influx of sodium ions and directly play a crucial role in propagating

action potentials in excitable tissues (Goldin, 2001). There are nine distinct alpha subunit genes that have been identified in mammals that encode VGSC isoforms (Nav.1.1 – Nav.1.9) which are found in different tissues (Goldin, 2002). For instance, Nav1.4 is largely expressed in skeletal muscle (Trimmer et al., 1989). Nav1.5 is mostly expressed in cardiac tissue (Rogart et al., 1989). Nav1.3, on the other hand, is predominantly expressed in immature neurons and downregulated in mature neurons (Beckh et al., 1989). Nav1.7, Nav1.8 and Nav1.9 are predominantly expressed in the peripheral nervous system (PNS). In contrast, in the mature central nervous system (CNS) neurons the predominant isoforms are Nav1.1, Nav1.2 and Nav1.6, however Nav1.1 and Nav1.6 are also expressed in the PNS (Trimmer et al., 2004). The alpha subunit is the primary functional unit of the VGSC and is a 220-260 kDa polypeptide that can associate with auxiliary proteins including the four β subunits (Nav β 1 – Nav β 4) which are 30-40 kDa polypeptides. VGSC alpha subunit consists of four transmembrane domains (DI- DIV) linked by intracellular loops wherein each domain consists of six transmembrane segments (S1 – S6; see Figure 1.) (Noda et al., 1984). Each of the S4 segments are made up of four to eight positively charged amino acids (arginine and lysine) that act as voltage sensors and these S4 segments move within the membrane, in response to membrane voltage (or potential) changes, thus, creating various gating configurations that allows sodium ions to selectively flow inward through the channel (Noda et al., 1984; Catteral et al. 2000).

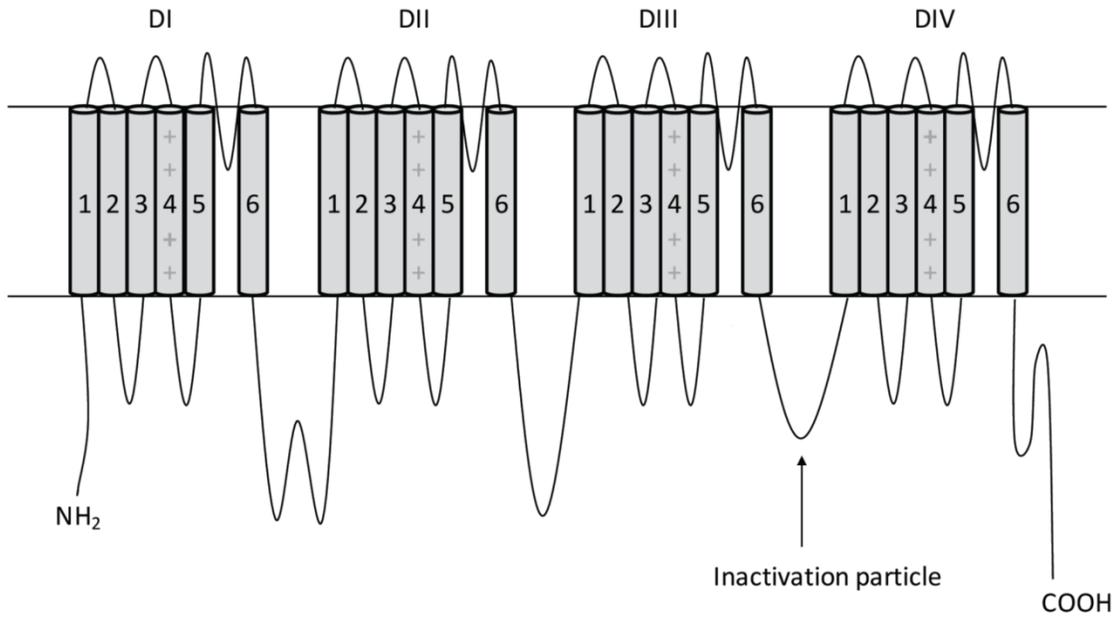


Figure 1. Linear schematic representation of the α subunit for the Nav1.5 voltage-gated sodium channel. The α subunit consists of four homologous transmembrane domains (DI—DIV). Each domain contains six transmembrane segments (S1—S6). S1-S4 serve as the voltage sensor of the channel and S5-S6 form the pore. This figure was adapted from Zifan Pei.

Simply put, VGSCs change between gating configurations that either allow sodium ions to flow through (open state) or do not allow sodium ions to flow through (inactive state and closed state) See figure 2. Closed refers to the configuration of the VGSCs at negative (or hyperpolarized) membrane potentials where the channel is available to open in the event the membrane changes to more positive (or depolarized) membrane potentials. In response to the depolarization of the membrane the VGSCs change to an open configuration and allow the selective inward movement of Na ions through the channel. Within roughly two milliseconds of opening the sodium currents are then terminated by channel inactivation. The typical mode of inactivation is fast inactivation where the cytoplasmic linker between DIII-DIV (see Figure 1), which includes the IFM (Isoleucine-Phenylalanine-Methionine) particle, also known as the inactivation particle, binds and occludes the pore which stops the inward flow of sodium ions (West et al. 1992; Moorman et al., 1990). In one experiment a triple mutation of IFM to QQQ (glutamine) in Nav1.2, a brain VGSC was shown to slow down inactivation (West et al., 1992). Along similar lines another experiment a single point mutation of F (phenylalanine) to Q in hNav1.5 also slowed down the rate of inactivation (Bennett et al., 1995). The findings of these two experiments support the hypothesis that cytoplasmic linker between DIII and DIV and the IFM particle play an integral role in the inactivation of VGSCs.

However, fast inactivation is not the only type of inactivation. Studies show that there is also a slower component of inactivation, particularly in cardiac channels (Vilin et al., 1999). Slow inactivation happens when the membrane is depolarized for a long period of time and usually takes seconds to minutes for the channel to recover. Typically, once the channel is inactivated, by either mechanism, it becomes refractory and it requires repolarization of the membrane to recover before they are available again (Armstrong et al., 1974).

Nav1.5 Sodium Channels

The Nav1.5 VGSC is the predominant VGSC found in cardiac muscle (Rogart et al., 1989) and it plays a critical role in the initiation and propagation of action potentials throughout the heart. Similar to the other types of VGSCs, Nav1.5 undergoes conformational changes between ion-conducting (open) and non-conducting (inactive and closed) in response to change in membrane potential.

Cardiotoxicity has been reported as a result of pyrethroid intoxication. There is a specific cardiac sodium channel isoform (Nav 1.5) which has important clinical significance in that its mutation are implicated in malignant cardiac arrhythmias (Spencer et al., 2001). We predict that resurgent currents caused by Cypermethrin and Permethrin intoxication also play a role in malignant cardiac arrhythmias that can lead to health complications or death.

Resurgent Currents

Resurgent sodium currents were first discovered in cerebellar Purkinje neurons (Raman, et.al., 1997). They are produced when the open-channel blocker unbinds the pore during intermediate repolarizing potentials following depolarization. After depolarizing potentials open sodium channels some fraction of the channels can go through a blocked state that is faster than and different from classic fast inactivation. As the channel repolarizes to more negative or intermediate potentials the blocker unbinds and allows the movement of sodium ions through the pore producing resurgent current, after which the channels inactivate or deactivate (Raman et al., 2001) (see Figure 2). Rapid firing is permitted here because resurgent currents allow channels to cycle between open, blocked and unblocked states which bypasses fast inactivation that is important for the refractory period following an action potential. The rate of fast inactivation is a significant determinant of resurgent sodium current generation because it is believed that the open-channel blocker competes with the intrinsic fast inactivation particle

when binding to the channel pore. Studies using toxins and disease mutations have demonstrated that slower rates of fast inactivation enhances resurgent current generation (Jarecki, et al., 2010).

The first identified endogenous open channel blocker implicated in resurgent current generation is Nav β 4. There are a few studies that demonstrate the significance of Nav β 4 for the generation of resurgent current. One study shows that Nav β 4 – null mice do not have the ability to generate resurgent sodium current in medium spiny neurons of the striatum (Miyazaki, et al., 2014). Another study showed that knockdown of Nav β 4 in dorsal root ganglion (DRG) sensory neurons decreased resurgent sodium current but when Nav β 4 is overexpressed resurgent currents are increased in the Nav1.6 isoform (Barbosa, et al., 2015). Yet, another study showed that the knockdown of Nav β 4 using small interfering RNA in cerebellar granule neurons completely wipes out resurgent sodium current, but interestingly, the resurgent current can be restored with the addition of a Nav β 4 peptide (Bant, et al., 2010). However, co-expression of the VGSC alpha subunit and Nav β 4 in HEK293 cells is not sufficient to produce resurgent sodium currents which suggests that other modulatory proteins and cellular background factors are critical. Although this is the case, the Nav β 4 peptide, made up of the membrane proximal C-terminal portion of the Nav β 4, Nav β 4₁₅₄₋₁₆₇ (KKLITFILKKTREK), acts as an open channel blocker and produces resurgent sodium current in HEK293 cells (Greico, et al., 2005).

A depolarizing drive that approaches threshold for firing additional action potentials is caused by the momentary reopening of channels after the unbinding of the open-channel blocker. Studies show that channels that undergo open-channel block recover faster and are available sooner after an action potential spike decreasing the refractory period after an action potential (Theile, et al., 2011; Tan, et al., 2014). In fact, sodium currents have been shown to flow during the refractory period between action potentials and these currents are predicted to

enhance neuronal excitability (Raman, et al., 1999). Therefore, preventing resurgent current generation by knockdown of Nav β 4 decreases spontaneous firing and repetitive firing with long depolarization stimuli (Barbosa, et al., 2015). These findings have also been demonstrated in modeling studies (Khaliq, et al., 2003).

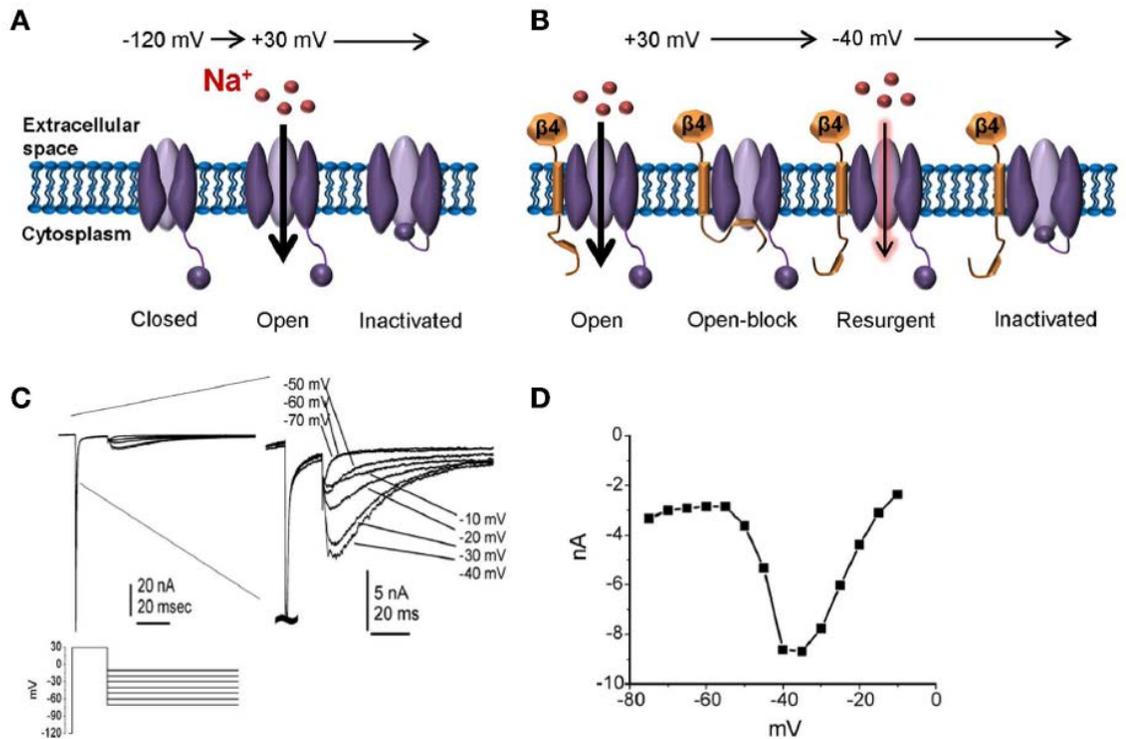


Figure 2. Resurgent sodium current. A, After a strong depolarization, sodium channels transition from the resting closed-state to open, allowing influx of sodium. Within milliseconds, the channel inactivates and remains inactivated until the membrane potential has been sufficiently hyperpolarized. This cycle of events underlies the action potential refractory period. B, Following a strong depolarization, a blocking particle (likely the C-terminal portion of the auxiliary Navβ4 subunit) can occlude the open-channel before the inactivation gate can bind, thus resulting in open-channel block. Following a hyperpolarization to an intermediate potential, the blocker is expelled resulting in an additional surge in sodium current. C, Representative resurgent sodium currents recorded from a large Nav1.8-null DRG neuron. The traces are magnified in the right panel to better see the resurgent currents. D, The voltage-dependence of the resurgent currents is shown by plotting the peak resurgent current amplitude against the repolarization pulse potential. Adapted from Theile and Cummins 2011).

Pyrethroid Insecticides

Pyrethrum is a substance extracted from the flowers of *Chrysanthemum cinerariaefolium* and *Chrysanthemum cinereum* and has been recognized for its insecticidal properties since the 1800's when they were used by Caucasian tribes and in Persia to control body lice (Casida 1980). The six active insecticidal compounds of pyrethrum are called pyrethrins and are named pyrethrin I, pyrethrin II, cinerin I, cinerin II, jasmolin I and jasmolin II. These pyrethrins are localized in the secretory ducts of the seed bearing fruit, where they are protected from photodecomposition and isolated so they are not toxic to insects that come into contact with pyrethrum flowers (Casida 1980). The process to extract these pyrethrins involves picking and drying the petals of the flowers and then grinding the petals into powder form and extracting the pyrethrins with hexane. After which, the hexane is evaporated and what is left is a dark substance containing 30% pyrethrins (Casida 1980). This substance can now be used as an insecticide with many different types of applications in different settings to knock down or control insect populations.

One of the disadvantages of the naturally occurring pyrethrum as an insecticide is that it is not stable in light and air, which limit its insecticidal effectiveness in crop protection and other insect control contexts where residual activity is paramount. The development of synthetic pyrethroids is the result of efforts to modify the structure of the natural pyrethrins in order to increase photo stability while retaining the potent and rapid insecticidal activity and relatively low acute toxicity of pyrethrum. The past several decades of research and development by the agrochemical industry, academic research laboratories and by the government have resulted in 1,000 different pyrethroid insecticides and a plethora of uses in agriculture, veterinary, medical and household pest control (Elliott 1989; Thatheyus et al. 2013). Synthetic pyrethroid development has involved structural modification and biological evaluation, so that the collection of present day commercial insecticides identified as pyrethroids are compounds that are several

steps removed from the pyrethrin structures. Most of these synthetic pyrethroids were discovered by sequentially replacing structural elements of the pyrethrins with novel structural moieties that were chosen to conserve the molecular shape and physical properties of the structure used as the template. Later, instead of using the pyrethrins as templates, subsequent stages used to develop new pyrethroids made use of the newly discovered synthetic pyrethroids with desirable insecticidal activity, stability and other properties as templates for the further design of new synthetic pyrethroids. For example the first wave of synthetic pyrethroids made use of pyrethrins as templates and one of the synthetic insecticides developed was permethrin, a Type I pyrethroid, after which, permethrin was used as a template to develop cypermethrin, a Type II pyrethroid.

Mode of Action of Pyrethroid Insecticides

The primary mode of action of pyrethroid in both insects and mammals is disruption of the VGSC function. Evidence points to the fact that pyrethroids bind to the α subunit of the VGSC. In a study that expressed Nav 1.2 α subunit in Chinese Hamster ovary cells (CHO cells) found that the presence of the α subunit was sufficient for pyrethroids to produce their characteristic effects on sodium channel function (Trainer et al., 1997). This conclusion is supported by another study that showed that pyrethroids altered the current produced by Nav 1.2 and Nav 1.8 α subunit expressed in oocytes in the absence of coexpression with β subunits (Smith et. al., 1998; Smith et. al., 2001). Interestingly, coexpression of the β 1 subunit with Nav 1.2 increased the sensitivity of this channel compared with expression of Nav 1.2 alone indicating that the β subunit modulates the affinity of pyrethroid interaction with the channel (Smith et.al, 2001). Lastly, studies show that mutations in the VGSC α subunit of insects and mammals alters the sensitivity of VGSCs to effects of pyrethroids supporting the claim that pyrethroids interact with the α subunit (Lee et. al., 2001; Wang et. al., 2001).

Pyrethroids are known to alter the normal functioning of insect VGSC which are integral in mediating the transient increase in the sodium permeability of the nerve membrane that underlies the nerve action potential (Soderlund et. al., 1989). Pyrethroids slow the activation (or opening) of VGSCs and slow the rate of inactivation (or closing) of VGSCs. In addition they shift to more hyperpolarized potentials the membrane potential at which VGSCs initially activate (or open). The result is that the sodium channels open at more hyperpolarized potentials (i.e., after smaller depolarizing changes in membrane potentials) and remain open longer, allowing more sodium ions to cross and further depolarize the membrane. Studies show that in general, type II pyrethroids delay the inactivation of VGSCs significantly longer than the type I pyrethroids (Narahashi 1996). Type I pyrethroids keep channels open long enough to cause repetitive firing of action potentials while Type II pyrethroids keep channels open for so long that the membrane potential ultimately becomes depolarized so much that it can no longer generate action potentials, which is called depolarization dependent block (Soderlund et al, 2002). It is believed that these differences in prolongation of channel openings contribute to the differences between two distinct syndromes (see below) after exposure to Type I and Type II pyrethroids respectively (Ray 2001).

Pyrethroids act as contact poisons affecting the insect's nervous system by causing multiple action potentials in the nerve cells, primarily by delaying the closing of the VGSCs (Costa, 1997). Most insecticide products containing pyrethroids usually contain a synergist, such as piperonyl butoxide, which restricts an enzyme that insects use to detoxify the pyrethroid thereby making the insecticide more effective (Tomlin, 1994). Perturbation of sodium channel function by pyrethroids is stereospecific (Lund et. al., 1982). The stereoisomers that disrupt the VGSCs the most also have the most insecticidal activity (Ray, 2001). Pyrethroid exposure in

insects is predominately through the insect cuticle. Rapid absorption into the insect causes a disruption of neurotransmission causing paralysis and possibly death within seconds to minutes. Pyrethroid insecticides were introduced into common use for the control of insect pests in agricultural settings and in disease vectors over three decades ago. Their use had grown to represent 18% of the dollar value of the world insecticide market by 2002 (Pickett 2004). These Pyrethroid insecticides are not only effective in controlling agricultural pests, they are also used as a front line solution in efforts to combat malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases even with threats that there is already resistance forming in vector populations (Ranson et al. 2011). Pyrethroids are also used widely as ingredients in household insecticides and ectoparasite control products for domesticated pets. Pyrethroid use in agriculture and vector control has increased tremendously in recent years due to the reduced use of chlorinated, carbamate, and organophosphate pesticides causing an increased in human exposure to pyrethroids (Power et al., 2007). The unregulated use of these pesticides in the home environment increases the risk of exposure and potential adverse effects in the general population (Naeher et al. 2010).

Pyrethroid Intoxication in Mammals

Humans and other mammals quickly metabolize pyrethroid compounds to non-toxic substances so exposure to these compounds is usually unthreatening. However, reports of accidental exposure (occupational) and intentional poisoning (suicide attempts) due to pyrethroid insecticides are common (Chen et al., 1991).

Categorizing pyrethroid insecticides is complicated due to the existence of two distinct intoxication syndromes in mammals that are determined by different structural subgroups of the insecticide class. The first systematic description of the signs of pyrethroid intoxication in rats following either oral or intravenous dosing manifested the same syndrome which included hypersensitivity and aggression followed by tremors and convulsive twitching, coma and death

(Verchoyle et al. 1972). The observed difference between oral and intravenous dosing was the speed at which the symptoms of intoxication manifested. When the α -cyano-3-phenoxybenzyl moiety (α -cyano moiety) was added to the pyrethroid insecticide a different intoxication syndrome was identified. A landmark study reported salivation without lacrimation followed by jerking leg movements and progressive writhing convulsions, called choreoathetosis (Barnes et al. 1974).

A subsequent study described both intoxication syndromes following intravenous administration, thus establishing a taxonomy of pyrethroid intoxication in mammals that is still useful to the present (Verschoyle et al. 1980). The signs of intoxication first described for pyrethroids, hypersensitivity and aggression followed by tremors and convulsive twitching, coma and death (Verchoyle et al. 1972) was designated the T (tremor) syndrome. By contrast, the signs of intoxication produced by the pyrethroids with the α -cyano moiety, salivation without lacrimation followed by jerking leg movements and progressive writhing convulsions, called choreoathetosis (Barnes et al. 1974), was designated the CS (choreoathetosis with salivation) syndrome.

An alternative nomenclature (Type I and Type II) was proposed for groups of pyrethroids based on both their syndromes of intoxication, chemical structures, signs of poisoning in insects, and action on insect nerve preparations (Lawrence et al. 1982) (Gammon et al. 1981). Type II pyrethroid insecticides contain the α -cyano moiety (e.g. cypermethrin) whereas Type I pyrethroid insecticides are made up of compounds that are lacking the α -cyano moiety (e.g. permethrin) see figure 3. The Type I and Type II nomenclature is often used in a manner akin to the T and CS nomenclature, such that the Type I pyrethroids are generally considered to produce the T intoxication syndrome and the Type II pyrethroids are considered to produce the CS intoxication syndrome (Lawrence et al. 1982). The interchangeability between the Type I/II

nomenclature and T/CS nomenclature are useful as a general classification scheme and are generally used in the published literature. However, there are a number of pyrethroids that do not fit neatly into these schemes because there are Type I/II pyrethroids that can produce overlapping syndrome (T/CS) of intoxication. (Soderlund et al. 2002). Nonetheless, for the purposes of this thesis the reference to Type I and Type II pyrethroids represents the structural class and the pattern of intoxication syndrome of pyrethroids.

Hypothesis and Specific Aims

As a result of the evidence in literature (see above) showing that Type I and Type II pyrethroid insecticides target the VGSC and slows steady-state inactivation and that the literature showing (see above) that the $\beta 4$ peptide mimics the open channel blocker that occludes the pore and leads to resurgent currents we formed a hypothesis that *$\beta 4$ mediated resurgent currents in Nav1.5 VGSCs increase after exposure to Type I and Type II pyrethroid insecticides.*

This thesis highlights the effects of Type I and Type II pyrethroid insecticides on $\beta 4$ peptide mediated Nav1.5 VGSC resurgent currents. The aims of this thesis were to first determine wild-type Nav1.5 channel activity and whether channel activity changes with exposure to the vehicle (DMSO) used to dilute insecticides. Results from the first aim, although not recorded in this thesis, demonstrated that DMSO at 0.1% has no significant effect on the wild-type Nav1.5 channel activity. Since this was the case, we moved forward with electrophysiological experiments using 0.1% DMSO as a vehicle in which we diluted 2 μ M and 10 μ M pyrethroid insecticides before exposing cells. The second aim investigated the $\beta 4$ peptide's effect on these Nav1.5 VGSC currents and whether or not resurgent currents were produced. The results from the second aim demonstrated that in the presence of $\beta 4$ peptide the Nav1.5 VGSC produces noticeable resurgent currents. The third aim investigated Nav1.5 channel

activity when exposed to Type I and II pyrethroid insecticides (Permethrin and Cypermethrin respectively). The results from the third aim demonstrated that exposure to the insecticides effects the rate of steady-state inactivation in Nav1.5 VGSCs as it produced significant tail and persistent currents. Finally, the fourth aim investigated $\beta 4$ peptide mediated VGSC resurgent current activity after exposure to Type I and II pyrethroid insecticides. The results from the fourth aim demonstrated that $\beta 4$ mediated resurgent currents increase after exposure to the pyrethroid insecticides.

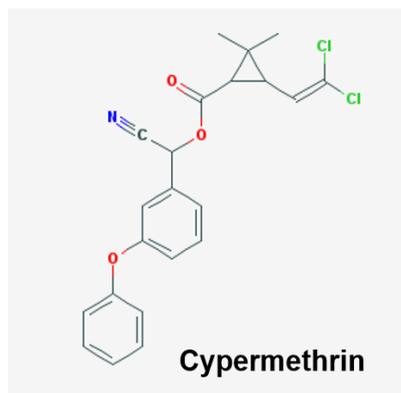
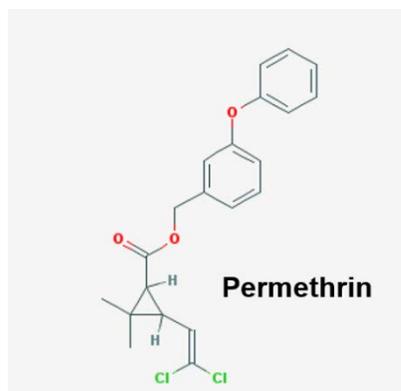


Figure 3. Chemical structure of Type I and Type II Pyrethroid Insecticides, Permethrin and Cypermethrin respectively. The two most commonly used pyrethroids in agriculture are Cypermethrin and Permethrin (Atchison et al., 2012).

Chapter Two: Materials and Methods

Preparation of Stably Transfected Cell Lines

Experiments investigating the effects of pyrethroid pesticides on β_4 mediated resurgent currents in Nav1.5 channels were done using stably transfected cell lines. To make the stable cell line, Human embryonic kidney cells (HEK293 cells; American Type Culture Collection; Manassas, VA, U.S.A.) were used. They were incubated under typical tissue culture conditions (5% CO₂; 37 °C) in complete Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium (DMEM; Invitrogen, Grand Island, NY, U.S.A.) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS; Cellgro, Herndon, VA, U.S.A) and 1% penicillin/streptomycin (Invitrogen Grand Island, NY, U.S.A.). The calcium phosphate precipitation method was used to perform transfections of Nav1.5 cDNA. The calcium phosphate precipitation method is as follows: solution 1 (40 μ l 2X HEPES buffer) was added dropwise to solution 2 (4 μ g of channel cDNA at 1 μ g/ μ l concentration and 5 μ l of 2M CaCl₂; use sterile water to bring volume to 40 μ l) and was gently mixed using a pipette. The calcium phosphate-DNA mixture was incubated at room temperature for 30 minutes after which, it was added to HEK293 cells incubated in serum-free DMEM for one hour on a 100x20 mm culture petri dish. Following incubation for 12-24 hours at 37 °C, the cells were washed with fresh complete DMEM medium. The Nav1.5 cDNA was subcloned into the pcDNA 3.1 (+) vector using the HindIII XbaI restriction enzymes. This vector contains the neomycin (G418) resistant gene for the purpose of using G418 treatment to select for HEK cells stably expressing Nav1.5. After 48 hours of incubation in complete DMEM medium (10% FBS, 1% pen/strep) the antibiotic (G418, Geneticin; Cellgro, Herndon, VA) was added to the media to select for neomycin-resistant HEK293 cells. After 2-4 weeks in G418, HEK293 cell colonies resistant to G418 were isolated and allowed to grow on 12 mm glass coverslips (Microscope Cover Glass; Fisherbrand, Pittsburg, PA, U.S.A) coated in Laminin. Isolated cells from these colonies were tested for Nav1.5 channel

expression using whole-cell patch-clamp recording techniques. Colonies containing cells producing more than 1 nA of Nav1.5 current were used for subsequent experiments

Chemicals

Stock solutions of Permethrin (Sigma-Aldrich International, St. Louis, MO, U.S.A.) and Cypermethrin (Sigma-Aldrich International, St. Louis, Mo, U.S.A.) prepared in 0.1% Dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO, Sigma Aldrich International, St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.) were aliquoted and stored at room temperature. For experiments, the insecticides were diluted in extracellular bathing solution to achieve a final concentration of 0.02 – 10 μ M in a final volume of 400 μ l in a micro centrifuge tube which was transferred, all 400 μ l by pipette, to the reservoir containing the cover slip with the stably transfected Nav1.5 HEK293 cells. After 10 minutes whole cell patch-clamp experiments were conducted.

The β 4 peptide consisting of part of the C-terminal tail (KKLITFILKKTREK-OH) of the full-length β 4 subunit was added to the intracellular pipette solution to induce Nav1.5 resurgent currents in stably transfected HEK293 cells. For this, stock solution of β 4 peptide (Biopeptide Co., San Diego, CA) in water, (stored in -20°C) was diluted in the intracellular pipette solution to achieve a final concentration of 200 μ M in a final volume of 500 μ l. This β 4 peptide solution was used to back fill the recording pipette.

Solutions

1. Extracellular Bathing Solution

The standard extracellular bathing solution was used during all voltage clamp whole-cell electrophysiology experiments. The extracellular bathing solution containing (in mM): 140 NaCl, 1 MgCl₂, 3 KCl, 1 CaCl₂ and 10 HEPES, pH 7.3 (adjusted with NaOH), Osmolarity (280-300 mOsm, adjusted with NaCl) was measured using a Wescor VAPRO Vapor Pressure Osmometer 5520 (Logan, Ut, U.S.A). In experiments involving the pyrethroid pesticides effects on Nav1.5 kinetics

and $\beta 4$ mediated resurgent currents, the pesticides were diluted to a final concentration of 0.02 – 10 μ M in extracellular bathing solution in a micro centrifuge tube, final volume of 400 μ l before being transferred by pipette to the reservoir containing the cover slip with the stably transfected Nav1.5 HEK 293 cells.

2. Intracellular Pipette Solution

The Intracellular pipette solution was used in all voltage clamp whole-cell electrophysiology experiments. The intracellular pipette solution containing (in mM): 140 CsF, 10NaCl, 1.1 EGTA and 10 HEPES, pH 7.3 (adjusted with CsOH), osmolarity 280-300 (adjusted with CsCl) was measured using a Wescor VAPRO Vapor Pressure Osmometer 5520 (Logan, Ut, U.S.A). The $\beta 4$ peptide was diluted in pipette solution before being back-filled into the pipette.

Whole Cell Patch-Clamp Recordings

Whole cell patch-clamp recordings were conducted at room temperature (~ 21 degrees Celsius) using a HEKA patch clamp EPC 10 amplifier. A Windows-based Pentium IV computer using the Pulse program (v 8.78, HEKA Elektronik, Lambrecht/Pfalz, Germany) was used to acquire data. Fire-polished glass pipettes (measured at ~ 1 micron) were fashioned from 100 μ l Calibrated Pipets (Drummond Scientific Company, Broomall, PA, U.S.A) using a Sutter P-1000 Flaming/Brown Micropipette Puller (Novato, CA, U.S.A) and fire-polished using a Micro Forge MF-830 (Narishige, Japan). To hold coverslips containing stably transfected HEK293 cells during whole cell patch-clamp recordings, lids from 35 mm cell culture petri dishes (Corning Inc., Corning, NY, U.S.A) were filled with elastomer from 184 Silicone Elastomer Kit (Sylgard[®], World precision Instruments Inc., Sarasota, FL, U.S.A.), mixed with a curing agent (included in kit), and allowed to solidify. Once solidified, a scalpel was used to cut around a single 12mm coverslip into the silicone to create a reservoir that could hold a coverslip and 400 μ l of extracellular solution.

The recording dish containing stably transfected HEK293 cells was mounted on an inverted Nikon microscope. The microscope was placed on a TMC vibration isolation table (63-500 Series, Technical Manufacturing Company, Peabody, MA, U.S.A.) to reduce all negative effects of vibration on the experiments. All whole cell patch-clamp electrophysiological experiments were conducted without the use of a Faraday cage. Instead, multiple wires were used to ground every metal surface that had the potential to serve as an antenna for unwanted electrical noise. These wires converged and connect at a single point on the isolation table; and from that point a single wire was connected to the ground input of the HEKA EPC 10 amplifier. Isolated, single cells on the cover slip were selected for whole cell patch-clamp electrophysiology. Each whole cell patch-clamp electrophysiological recording was collected using a new fire-polished pipette, back-filled with appropriate intracellular pipette solution. Once filled with the appropriate intracellular pipette solution, and once the pipette was submerged in the extracellular bathing solution in the dish, the recording electrode had an approximate resistance of 1.0 - 1.5 M Ω . The offset potential of the EPC 10 amplifier was zeroed with the electrode almost touching the cell of interest. A silver chloride coated silver wire served as a reference electrode with one end connected to the ground input of the amplifier head stage and the silver chloride coated end placed into the reservoir containing the coverslip with the stably transfected HEK 293 cells and extracellular bathing solution. The liquid junction potential for all solutions was not corrected for during these experiments and data analysis. Once a cell membrane-glass pipette interaction was formed, creating over 1G Ω resistance, suction was applied to establish the whole-cell recording configuration. All voltage protocols were started five minutes after entering the whole cell configuration, which allowed time for diffusion of the β 4 peptide when experiments called for it. Series resistance errors were

compensated to be under 5mV using resistance compensation and passive leak currents were cancelled by P/-5 subtraction.

For all experiments, recordings were made in the presence of extracellular solution containing drug or vehicle control. Vehicle control was 0.1% DMSO final concentration in extracellular solution without the pyrethroid pesticide. Each coverslip was recorded from for up to one and half hours before discarding.

Data Analysis

All voltage-clamp electrophysiological recording experimental data were analyzed using the Pulsefit (v 8.65, HEKA Electronic, Germany), Prizm Graph-pad (7.03) and Microsoft Excel software programs. Normalized conductance – voltage relationships (G-V) were derived using the function: $G_{Na} = I_{Max} / (V_m - E_{Na})$. G_{Na} is conductance of sodium channel, I_{Max} is the peak current density in response to the test pulse, V_m stands for the test pulse potential, and E_{Na} is the measured sodium channel reversal potential. Slope factors of activation and steady-state inactivation curves were calculated using the general Boltzman function: $I/I_{max} = (1/1 + e^{(V - V_{0.5})/k})$ where I is measured current, I_{max} is maximum current, V is command voltage, $V_{0.5}$ is voltage at which the normalized current value is 0.5, and k is slope factor describing the steepness of the relationship. Goodness of fit was set at $R^2 > 0.90$ for all fits. Results are presented as mean \pm S.E.M., and error bars in the figures represent SEs. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all experiments.

Resurgent Current Analysis

Cells were assayed with a step protocol that initially depolarized the membrane to +30mV for 20ms from the holding potential, followed by repolarizing voltage steps from +15mV to -85 for 100ms in -5mV increments to test for resurgent currents; cells were then returned to their holding potential. Resurgent current amplitudes were measured from the leak-subtracted

baseline to the peak after 3.0ms into the repolarizing pulse to avoid contamination from tail currents. Relative resurgent currents were calculated by dividing peak resurgent current by the peak transient current and expressed as a percentage of the peak transient current. The peak transient current was determined as the peak from the h_{∞} protocol. Student's t test was used to examine the statistical significance of relative resurgent current amplitude between groups.

Chapter Three: Results

Whole-cell voltage-clamp recordings were obtained from HEK293 cells stably expressing hNav1.5 channels (Nav1.5 cells). There was no observed significant change in the voltage-dependence of activation when Nav1.5 cells were exposed to Type I and Type II pyrethroid insecticides compared to control (see Figure 4). However, Type I and Type II pyrethroid insecticides did shift steady-state inactivation of Nav1.5 cells (see Figure 5). Cypermethrin shifted inactivation by ~ 5 mV in the negative direction and Permethrin shifted Nav1.5 inactivation by ~ 5 mV in the positive direction. However both insecticides resulted in incomplete inactivation as evidenced by the increased fraction available at voltages between -50mV and -10mV.

We also examined the rate of inactivation during depolarizations to 0 mV. In Nav1.5 cells we observed two components for the time course of fast-inactivation; a fast component and a slow component. Measuring the Tau time constants we found that Permethrin and Cypermethrin significantly increased the Tau for the slow inactivation component (see Figure 6). Cypermethrin had a much greater effect on the slow time constant but Permethrin also significantly slowed the fast time constant compared to control cells.

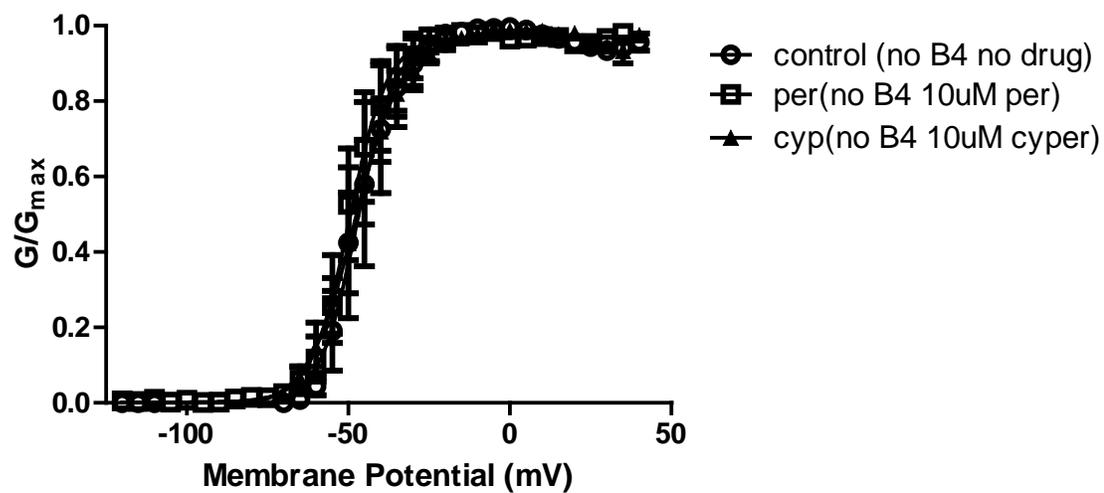


Figure 4. Effects of Permethrin and Cypermethrin on activation of sodium channel Nav 1.5.

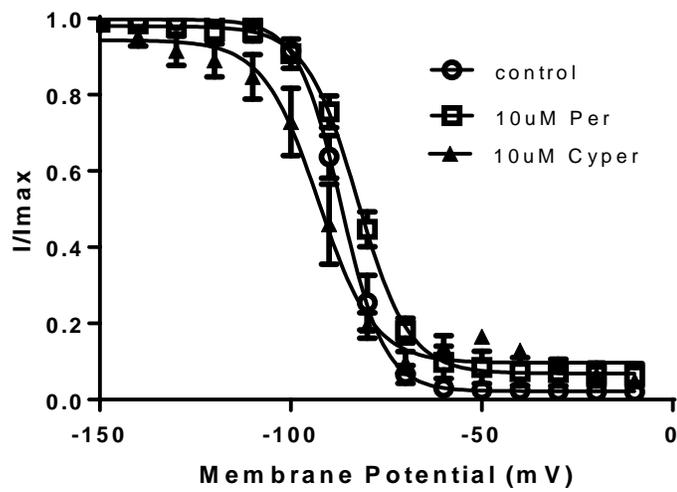


Figure 5. Effects of Permethrin and Cypermethrin on steady-state inactivation of sodium channel Nav1.5.

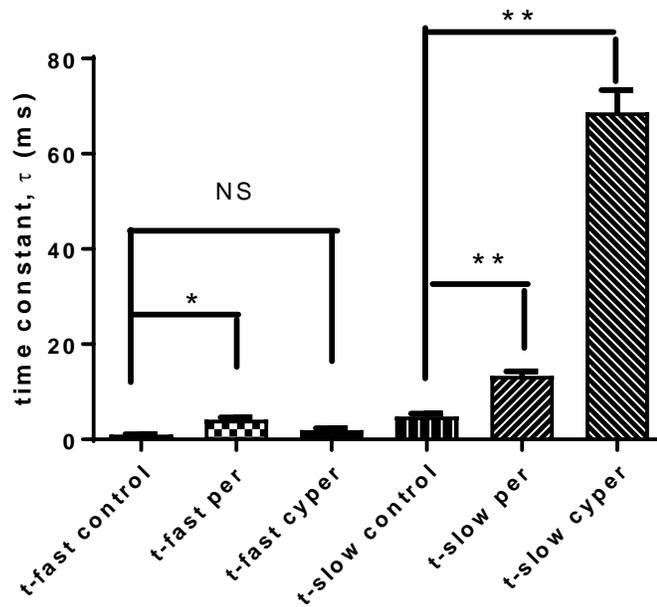


Figure 6. Effect of Permethrin and Cypermethrin on time constants of Nav1.5 inactivation.

Time constants were obtained by fitting double exponential functions. Student t-test was used to determine significance. NS, not significant; *, p-value < 0.05; **, p-value < 0.01.

We next examined sodium currents during repolarizing steps following a strong depolarization. A strong depolarization (20 ms at +30 mV) from the holding potential is followed by repolarizing voltage steps ranging from +15 mV to -85 mV for 100 ms in -5 mV increments. This protocol can be used to examine resurgent sodium currents in the presence of the $\beta 4$ peptide. In the absence of the $\beta 4$ peptide the control panel shows a complete inactivation with no evidence of tail currents or persistent currents during the repolarizing voltage potentials (see Figure 7). However, after exposure to Permethrin and Cypermethrin we see significant production of tail currents and persistent current during the repolarizing voltage potentials. In the presence of the $\beta 4$ peptide the control panel shows $\beta 4$ mediated resurgent current during the repolarizing potentials. After exposure to Permethrin and Cypermethrin we see larger resurgent currents during the repolarizing potentials compared to control. We also see that Cypermethrin produces larger and slower resurgent current compared to the resurgent current that Permethrin produces. It appears that Permethrin and Cypermethrin have a synergistic effect and combined with the $\beta 4$ peptide they increase the size of the resurgent currents. It is important to note the repolarization induced currents differ in the absence and presence of the $\beta 4$ peptide. In the absence of the $\beta 4$ peptide, the insecticides increase persistent currents during the depolarization which leads to instantaneous classic "tail currents" during the repolarizing pulses. Because inactivation is virtually complete under control conditions, no tail currents are observed in the absence of insecticides (see Figure 7 control). By contrast in the presence of the $\beta 4$ peptide resurgent currents with a delayed onset compared to tail currents are observed (see Figure 8). The resurgent currents are significantly larger than the tail currents (note the different scales in Figure 9). Cypermethrin induced resurgent currents are both larger and slower than control and Permethrin induced tail currents.

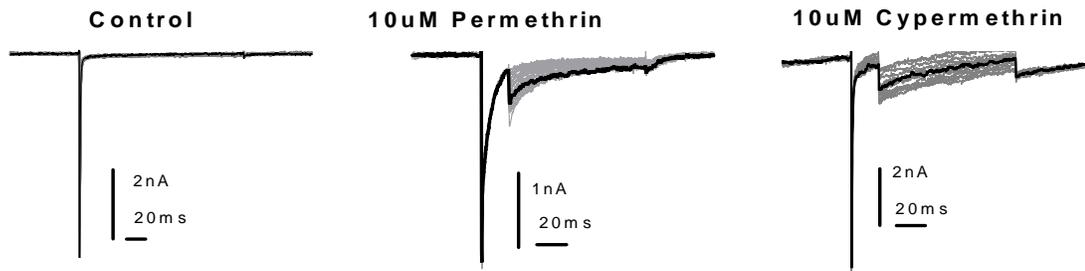


Figure 7. Representative trace of effects of Permethrin and Cypermethrin on Nav1.5 currents elicited by repolarizations. Both Permethrin and Cypermethrin increase, what appears to be persistent and tail current in Nav1.5 VGSCs.

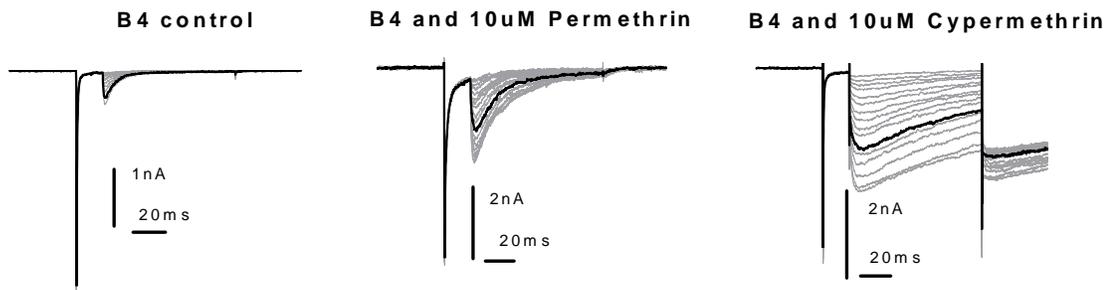


Figure 8. Representative traces illustrating the effects of Permethrin and Cypermethrin on $\beta 4$ mediated resurgent currents. These traces show that the Type I and Type II pyrethroid insecticides act synergistically with the $\beta 4$ peptide to increase resurgent currents in Nav1.5 after exposure of cells to Permethrin and Cypermethrin.

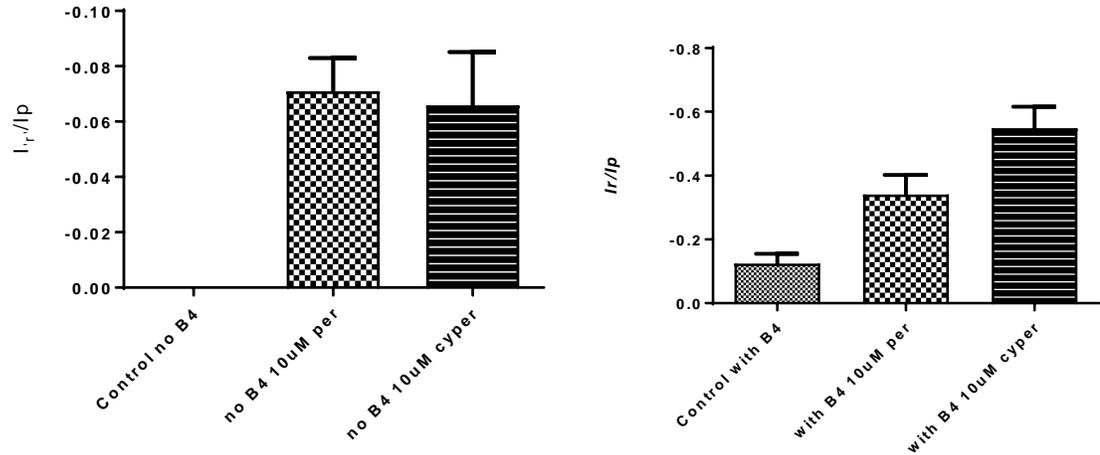


Figure 9. Repolarization induced current measurement in Nav1.5 cells before and after exposure to Permethrin and Cypermethrin. Permethrin and Cypermethrin produce significant repolarization-induced currents in Nav1.5 without $\beta 4$ compared to the control. After Nav1.5 cells are exposed to Permethrin and Cypermethrin $\beta 4$ mediated resurgent increase.

Chapter Four: Discussion

Results for this thesis demonstrate that 1) Nav1.5 channel activity does not change with exposure to the vehicle (DMSO) used to dilute Type I and Type II pyrethroids, data is not shown in the thesis; 2) the $\beta 4$ peptide induces resurgent currents in Nav1.5; 3) Type I and Type II pyrethroids alters electrophysiological properties of Nav1.5 channel activity by slowing down steady-state inactivation; and 4) $\beta 4$ peptide mediated VGSC resurgent current activity increases after exposure to Type I and II pyrethroid insecticides.

As mentioned above Permethrin is a Type I pyrethroid insecticide and Cypermethrin is a Type II pyrethroid insecticide. The major difference between Type I and Type II pyrethroids is that the Type II insecticide has an added α cyano moiety (see Figure 3). This added α cyano moiety changes Intoxication syndromes. Intoxication syndromes are different because the Type I and Type II pyrethroids keep channels open and keep them from inactivating but studies show that Type II pyrethroids keep sodium channels open longer than Type I pyrethroids (see above). We see this demonstrated in how much the B4 peptide mediated resurgent current exposed to the Cypermethrin is slowed down compared to control and the Permethrin panel (see Figure 8). Since this is the case, Cypermethrin would lead to more pronounced cardiac toxicity because the longer amount of time it keeps the channel open which will cause increased arrhythmias which can lead to death. As a result of these difference in the Type I and Type II pyrethroid insecticides and the different intoxication symptoms that are exhibited in mammals we could predict that these two pyrethroid insecticides would produce differences in cardiac toxicity.

Future direction for this project should include increasing the sample size of all of the conditions (i.e. control, Permethrin with or without $\beta 4$, and Cypermethrin with or without $\beta 4$) so that statistical significance can be determined more convincingly. Also, since it appears that there is a synergistic relationship between the pesticides and the $\beta 4$ peptide in the production

of resurgent current it would be interesting to see the effects of both Permethrin and Cypermethrin with or without $\beta 4$ protein on myocyte sodium channel activity. This will help determine the relationship, whether additive, synergistic or antagonistic, between the Type I and Type II pesticides and how the two of these affect the $\beta 4$ peptide mediated resurgent current in native myocytes.

Testing the Type I and Type II pesticides with or without $\beta 4$ peptide in myocytes from $\beta 4$ peptide knockout mice would be an informative step forward. All experiments in this thesis were conducted in Nav1.5 stably transfected HEK293 cells. One of the main limitations in using heterologous expression systems is that they are an artificial system and since this is the case any physiological significance would have to be extrapolated from the data. It is more suitable to determine physiological significance in the primary tissues where Nav1.5 channels are localized, such as the myocytes. In myocytes we can first test to see if there are any endogenous $\beta 4$ subunits using immunohistochemistry techniques. If $\beta 4$ subunit is present we can test if it produces resurgent current using the resurgent current protocol. If it does produce resurgent currents we can see if the size of the resurgent currents are influenced by pesticide exposure. We can use selective knock-out $\beta 4$ in myocytes and examine if toxicity of pyrethroid insecticides is reduced.

Literature shows that these pesticides function by slowing down the inactivation of sodium channels. It would be fitting to see how these pesticides combined with the effects of the endogenous $\beta 4$ or $\beta 4$ peptide affect neuronal resurgent currents. Due to the pyrethroid insecticide intoxication symptoms it would be important to determine if the effects of pesticides and $\beta 4$ peptide on neuronal channels are similar to those observed with Nav1.5. Resurgent currents in neurons could lead to altered excitability including potentially to ataxia and seizures.

In conclusion, this thesis addressed key questions about how Type I and Type II pesticides affect $\beta 4$ mediated resurgent currents in Nav1.5 cells. The results of this thesis have provided important insights into how the Type I and Type II pesticides modulate the Nav1.5 channel kinetics and how resurgent currents are modulated after exposure to the pesticides.

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61. Want SY, Barile M, Wang GK. *A phenylalanine residue at segment D3-S6 in Nav1.4 voltage-gated Na⁺ channels is critical for pyrethroid action.* Mol Pharmacol., 2001. 60:620-628.
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Curriculum Vitae

James O. Jackson, II

Education

- Master of Science in Pharmacology – August 2018
Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Master of Divinity (*Cum Laude*) – May 2012
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling (*Cum Laude*) – May 2012
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Clinical Pastoral Education, Level I & II – May 2013
Indiana University Health Downtown, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Bachelor of Science, Agronomy – May 2000
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina
- Bachelor of Science, Biological Science – December 1999
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina

Publications

- 1) Xiao Y, Jackson JO 2nd, Liang S, Cummins TR. Common molecular determinants of tarantula huwentoxin-IV inhibition of Na⁺ channel voltage sensors in domains II and IV. *J Biol Chem.* 2011 Jun 9; 286(31):27301-10.
- 2) Jarecki BW, Piekarz AD, Jackson JO 2nd, Cummins TR. Human voltage-gated sodium channel mutations that cause inherited neuronal and muscle channelopathies increase resurgent sodium currents. *J Clin Invest.* 2010 Jan; 120(1):369-78.
- 3) Xiao Y, Blumenthal K, Jackson JO 2nd, Liang S, Cummins TR. The tarantula toxins Pro TX-II and Huwentoxin-IV differentially interact with human Nav 1.7 voltage sensors to inhibit channel activation and inactivation. *Mol Pharmacol.* 2010 Dec; 78(6):1124-34.
- 4) Jarecki BW, Sheets PL, Xiao Y, Jackson JO 2nd, Cummins TR. Alternative splicing of Na(V)1.7 exon 5 increases the impact of the painful PEPD mutant channel I1461T. *Channels.* 2009 Jul-Aug; 3(4):259-67.
- 5) Jarecki BW, Sheets PL, Jackson JO 2nd, Cummins TR. Paroxysmal extreme pain disorder mutations within the D3/S4-S5 linker of Nav1.7 cause moderate destabilization of fast inactivation. *J Physiol.* 2008 Sep 1;586(Pt 17):4137-53.
- 6) Veronesi MC, Yard M, Jackson J, Lahiri DK, Kubek MJ. An analog of thyrotropin-releasing hormone (TRH) is neuroprotective against glutamate-induced toxicity in fetal rat hippocampal neurons invitro. *Brain Res.* 2007 jan 12;1128(1):79-85.

7) Sheets PL, Jackson JO 2nd, Waxman SG, Dib-Hajj SD, Cummins TR. A Nav1.7 channel mutation associated with hereditary erythromelalgia contributes to neuronal hyperexcitability and displays reduced Lidocaine sensitivity. J Physiol. 2007 Jun 15;581(Pt 3):1019-31.

Skills

- Molecular biology, biochemistry, and cell biology techniques such as PCR, Gel Electrophoresis, Western Blots, Site directed mutagenesis, Immunocytochemistry, Flow Cytometry, Transfection protocols, Cell culture, Tissue culture, Good Laboratory Practice, DNA/RNA isolation, Microscopy, Fluorescent Microscopy, Patch clamp techniques, Whole cell electrophysiology, Protein extraction, Protein assays, Cryostat sectioning, Small animal handling, Dissections, Survival surgeries
- Public speaking, Grief counseling, Conflict management, Mediation, Crisis management, Marriage and family counseling, Mental health counseling, Community outreach, Teaching, Training, Mentoring, Coaching, Chaplaincy, Event planning

Professional Laboratory Experience

Operations Director

IU School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana

Neurosciences Research Building, Stark Neurosciences Research Institute

2014 – Present

- Manage the day-to-day operations of the Neuroscience Research Building (i.e., maintenance, training, inventory, ordering)
- Maintain research regulatory paper work (IBC protocols and IACUC protocols) and ensure that all NB labs meet all biosafety, government, and institutional requirements and that all personnel are in compliance
- Conduct monthly meetings with Lab Managers for training updates and user compliance

Core Lab Manager

IU School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana

Neurosciences Research Building, Stark Neurosciences Research Institute

2009 – Present

- Oversee the day-to-day operations of the Core Lab facility; product inventory, purchasing; coordinating facility activities; scheduling lab space and equipment for ongoing projects; liaison for inter/intra departmental/institutional cooperation and collaborations, maintain and repair equipment, schedule preventative maintenance, and negotiate service contracts
- Maintain research regulatory paper work (IBC protocols and IACUC protocols) and ensure that the Core Lab facilities meet all biosafety, governmental, and institutional safety requirements and that all personnel are in compliance
- Discuss experimental needs, technical issues and new equipment acquisitions with Director, Principle Investigators, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and lab technicians and implement solutions
- Conduct monthly meetings with lower level technicians, lab managers, graduate students, and post-doctoral students for training updates and Core Lab user compliance

Lab Manager (Theodore Cummins Lab)

IU School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana

Stark Neurosciences Research Institute

2004 – 2014

- Manage the day-to-day operations of the lab which include chemical and product inventory, ordering, training, supervising lab personnel, and monitoring progress of projects
- Maintain research regulatory paper work (IBC protocols and IACUC protocols) and ensure that the lab meets all biosafety, government, and institutional requirements and that all personnel are in compliance
- Animal handling, tissue dissections and surgeries

Research Associate Scientist

Roche Diagnostic, Fishers, Indiana

2003 – 2004

- Perform basic and specialized testing of research and preclinical hematology analysis
- Process samples and prepares blood samples for testing developing Glucose monitoring technology
- Independently operate, calibrate, maintain, and troubleshoot routine and specialized analytical instruments and equipment

Research Technician I

IU School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana

Herman B. Wells Center for Pediatric Research, Indianapolis, Indiana

2001 – 2003

- Plan and conduct experiments related to DNA repair proteins as therapeutic cancer treatment
- Stay up to date with scientific literature, and methods that are pertinent to my project
- Animal handling, dissections and surgeries
- Train undergraduate work-studies, graduate students and post docs on research techniques, research protocols and methods

Field Biologist – Seeds & Traits R&D

Dow AgroSciences, Zionsville, Indiana

2000 – 2001

- Coordinate and perform functions related to Greenhouse management and corn breeding including, planting, gene checking, pollinating, seed packaging, plot maintenance, tissue sampling, note taking, harvesting and data entry
- Conduct high throughput nucleic acid extraction using fully automated and semi-automated protocols
- Utilize, monitor and maintain liquid handling robots, and vision-imaging systems

Lab Assistant

N.C. State University, Raleigh, North Carolina

USDA/ARS Plant Science Research Unit

1997 – 2000

- Assist Principle Investigator in conducting air pollution research in corn and soybean plants

- Coordinate and perform functions related to Greenhouse management: planting, gene checking, pollinating, watering, fertilizing, seed packaging, plot maintenance, tissue sampling, note taking, harvesting and data entry

Lab Assistant

N.C. State University, Raleigh, North Carolina

Department of Zoology

1996 – 1997

- Assist Principle Investigator in conducting animal behavior research in salamanders and fish
- Cryostat Sectioning; thin – section fixing and staining
- Animal handling, dissections and surgeries

Military Service

United States Army Reserves, 310th ESC, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, 1st Lieutenant, Chaplain Section, March 2009 – December 2013

United States Army Reserves, 310th ESC, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, 2nd Lieutenant, Chaplain Section, August 2007 – March 2009