# 新規の統合失調症治療薬の開発

プロジェクト 責任

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### プロジェクト概要

統合失調症は、人口の約1%(国内罹患者:約88万人)に発症する多因子疾患である。既 存薬はモノアミン神経伝達物質の調節に関わる作用機序を有するもののみであり、限定的 な治療効果や有害作用の発現が課題である。神経ペプチド受容体VIPR2(別名VPAC2受容 体)は非臨床・臨床研究から統合失調症の有望な創薬標的として考えられ、我々は独自の 疾患モデルマウスを開発し、さらに統合失調症様症状の発症を予防するVPAC2受容体選択 的アンタゴニストペプチドを同定してきた。

本研究では、複数の薬理学的・遺伝学的マウスモデルを用いて、VPAC2受容体阻害に基 づく統合失調症治療の確度を示し、新しい創薬を推進する。VPAC2受容体を標的とする中枢 神経系創薬開発の実現は、既存薬とは異なる新しい作用機序による有効性の拡大(治療抵 抗性患者に対する治療、残存する認知機能障害に対する治療等)や有害作用の減弱(オフ ターゲット効果の減少等)につながると期待される。

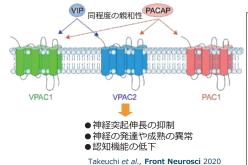
(※開発責任者は、VPAC2受容体の発現制御あるいは機能変容を有する独自のin vitro、in vivoモデルを有しており、病態分子機序解明や化合物評価等に利用可能である。)

- VPAC2受容体の内因性リガンドは神経ペプチド✓ VIPR2遺伝子(VPAC2受容体)の重複 VIPとPACAPである
- PACAPの受容体にはPAC1、VPAC1、VPAC2の 3種類が存在し、いずれも**クラスBに属する7回膜**/ 本変異を有すると90%以上の確率で 貫通型のGタンパク質共役受容体(GPCR)である 統合失調症に罹患している

が統合失調症の発症と高いオッズ比 (14.1)で関連する

Vacic et al., Nature 2013 Sullivan et al., Nat Rev Genet 2012 Marshall et al., Nat Genet 2017 ほか

VIP:血管作動性腸管ペプチド PACAP:脳下垂体アデニル酸シクラーゼ活性化ポリペプチド



VPAC2受容体の過活性化が、神経発達の 異常と認知機能障害を引き起こすことを発見

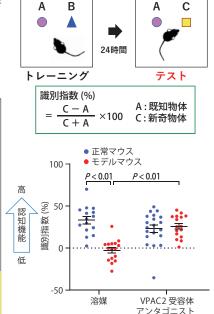
### 統合失調症

- 幻覚や妄想などの陽性症状、意欲の低下 などの陰性症状、そして認知機能障害を 呈する精神疾患
- 日本では主要な精神疾患の中で、3番目 に患者数が多い
- 既存の治療薬に対して治療抵抗性を示 す患者が約3割存在する

#### 問題点:

発症や治療・寛解機構の詳細は未だ不明で あり、治療抵抗性症例等に対する有効な治 療薬開発も進んでいないのが現状

選択的VPAC2受容体アンタゴニストを開発 し、アンメットメディカルニーズをみたす革新的 創薬を実現する



対象疾患:統合失調症(本邦88万人,世界2000万人)

Ago et al., Front Neurosci 2021 Sakamoto et al., Front Pharmacol 2021

特許情報:基本特許出願済

技術の特徴:中分子創薬, 二環状構造ペプチド, in vivoマウスモデルでの初期有効性の確認済

市場性、開発における課題:中枢移行性の向上,安全性の確認・効果の範囲予測など 希望する企業連携の内容:共同研究,ライセンスアウトもしくは医師主導治験への移行など

# **Drugs** ~Brain and Psychiatry~

# Development of a novel therapeutic drug for schizophrenia

Principal Investigator Graduate School of Biomedical and Health Sciences, Hiroshima University

# **Professor Yukio AGO**

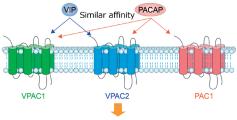
# **Project Outline**

Worldwide, more than 20 million people suffer from schizophrenia, but effective and definitive new therapeutic drugs/treatments have not been established. Existing drugs to schizophrenia are efficient for positive symptoms mainly but have severe neurological and metabolic side effects. They possess common mechanism of action (MOA), blocking to neurotransmitter receptors such as dopamine, serotonin, and adrenaline receptors.

The VPAC2 receptor might be an attractive drug target for the treatment of schizophrenia because both preclinical and clinical studies have demonstrated a strong link between high expression/overactivation of the VPAC2 receptor and schizophrenia. Despite these backgrounds, the proof-of-concept of VPAC2 inhibitors has not been examined clinically. A reason might be that the VPAC2 receptor belongs to class-B GPCRs, and the discovery of small-molecule drugs against class-B GPCRs is generally difficult.

We now found a bicyclic peptide KS-133, which shows VPAC2 receptor antagonist activity in vivo and suppresses cognitive decline in a mouse model of schizophrenia. KS-133 has a different MOA from current therapeutic drugs and exhibits high selectivity for the VPAC2 receptor and potent inhibitory activity against a single-target molecule. It will be an innovative new drug that can provide safe and effective treatment for patients who show resistance to current treatments or have difficulty in continuing treatment due to side effects or adverse effects.

- Pituitary adenylate cyclase-activating polypeptide (PACAP) and the closely related neuropeptide vasoactive intestinal peptide (VIP), exhibit widespread expression in the central and peripheral nervous systems.
- Their receptors (VIPR1, VIPR2, and PAC1) are expressed in the brain but are also present in a multitude of peripheral target organs. Like PAC1 and VIPR1, VIPR2 (also known as VPAC2 receptor) is a 7transmembrane G-protein-coupled receptor (GPCR).



We have found that activation of VIPR2 during early development caused...  $% \label{eq:control_eq} % \label{eq:control_eq}$ 

- Decrease in neurite outgrowthAbnormalities in neuronal development
- Cognitive dysfunction in adulthood

Takeuchi *et al.*, **Front Neurosci** 2020 Ago *et al.*, **Front Neurosci** 2021 Sakamoto *et al.*, **Front Pharmacol** 2021

- Microduplications at 7q36.3, which contains VIPR2, have been strongly associated with schizophrenia with odds-ratios of 14.1.
- Individuals with this mutation have a 90% or higher probability of developing schizophrenia.

Vacic et al., Nature 2011 Sullivan et al., Nat Rev Genet 2012 Marshall et al., Nat Genet 2017 etc.

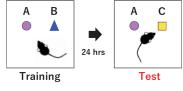
## **Schizophrenia**

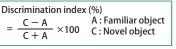
- Psychiatric disorder with positive symptoms such as hallucinations and delusions, negative symptoms such as decreased motivation, and cognitive impairment.
- Approximately 30% of patients show treatment resistance to existing therapeutic drugs.

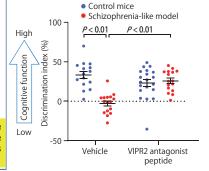
### Critical issues:

Details of the onset, treatment, and remission mechanism of schizophrenia are still unknown, and the current situation is that the development of effective therapeutic agents for treatment-resistant schizophrenia has not progressed.

We are going to develop a selective VPAC2 receptor antagonist and realize innovative drug discovery that meets unmet medical needs.







Targeted disease: Schizophrenia (approx. 20 million people worldwide)

Patent information: Application submitted

Characteristics of the technology: mid-size molecular drug, a bicyclic peptide

We are seeking for: Collaboration, license-out, and/or support for transfer to investigator-initiated clinical trial(s)