

Chronic administration of clozapine alleviates reversal-learning impairment in isolation-reared rats

Nanxin Li^a, Xihong Wu^a and Liang Li^{a,b}

Isolation rearing has been used for inducing schizophrenia-like symptoms in rats. Human schizophrenics have deficits in prefrontal-dysfunction-related cognitive/behavioral flexibility. Rats with lesions of the medial prefrontal cortex perform poorly in reversal learning. It is uncertain whether isolation rearing, however, causes reversal-learning impairment in adult rats. Using the rotating T maze, this study examined the effect of chronic administration of clozapine on visual discrimination learning and reversal learning in isolation-reared and socially reared adult rats. The results show that isolation-reared rats without clozapine injection performed significantly worse than socially reared rats in reversal learning but not in acquisition learning. Chronic injection of clozapine (5 or 10 mg/kg) in isolation-reared rats significantly improved reversal learning but had no effects on acquisition learning. Further data analyses show that in both the inhibition phase and the new-strategy-acquisition phase of reversal learning, isolation-reared rats needed significantly more correct-response trials to reach the criterion than socially reared rats, and clozapine

significantly reduced the isolation-induced impairment of reversal learning only in the new-strategy-acquisition phase. In socially reared rats, clozapine had a dose-related interfering effect on reversal learning but not acquisition learning. This study supports the use of isolation rearing as a model for investigating the neurodevelopmental hypothesis of schizophrenia. *Behavioural Pharmacology* 18:135–145 © 2007 Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

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Keywords: animal model, clozapine, isolation rearing, rat, reversal learning, schizophrenia, T maze

^aDepartment of Psychology, Speech and Hearing Research Center, Peking University, Beijing, China and ^bCentre for Research on Biological Communication Systems, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto at Mississauga, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Correspondence to Professor Liang Li, PhD, Department of Psychology, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China
E-mail: liangli@pku.edu.cn; liangli@utm.utoronto.ca

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Methods

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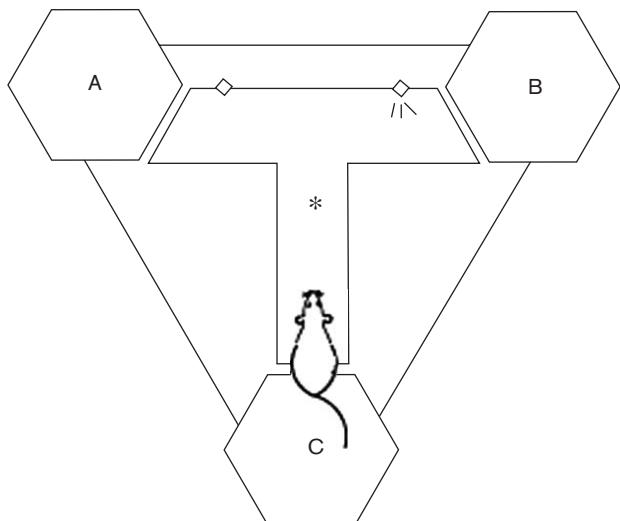
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Rotating T maze

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s 13.5 t ts L st T st
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Fig. 1



Overhead schematic view of the rotating T maze used for visual discrimination tests. The maze has (1) three hexagonal boxes (box A, box B, and box C), and (2) a T tunnel. In this figure, box C represents the start box, and the entrance of the T tunnel is connected to box C. A light spot is on the right side of the front wall of the T tunnel. The position of the axis of the T tunnel is indicated by the asterisk.

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Visual discrimination learning and reversal learning

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Cloacine administration

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Original is al discrimination learning (acquisition learning)

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 t st \bar{t} , s \bar{t} ts, t s \bar{t} s
 s t t \bar{t} s, $F(2,21) = 8.71$,
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Discussion

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Acknowledgements

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