

Mechanisms of Group I mGluR-Dependent Long-Term Depression of NMDA Receptor-Mediated Transmission at Schaffer Collateral-CA1 Synapses

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Ireland DR, Abraham WC. Mechanisms of group I mGluR-dependent long-term depression of NMDA receptor-mediated transmission at Schaffer collateral-CA1 synapses. *J Neurophysiol* 101: 1375–1385, 2009. First published December 24, 2008; doi:10.1152/jn.90643.2008. The mechanisms underlying group I metabotropic glutamate receptor (mGluR)-dependent long-term depression (LTD) of *N*-methyl-D-aspartate receptor (NMDAR)-mediated synaptic currents (EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}}) are poorly understood. Here we investigated the effects of (*R,S*)-3,5-dihydroxyphenylglycine (DHPG), a selective agonist of group I mGluRs, on the EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}} in area CA1 of acute hippocampal slices from 6- to 8-wk Sprague-Dawley rats. DHPG acutely and persistently depressed the isolated EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}} and transiently slowed its decay rate. Combined antagonism of mGluR1 and mGluR5 blocked the effects of DHPG. Strong calcium buffering with intracellular BAPTA did not reduce the acute depression or LTD, making the involvement of elevated postsynaptic calcium unlikely. The acute depression and LTD were not mediated by activation of tyrosine kinases or phosphatases, nor were they dependent on protein synthesis. However, the LTD was prevented by the intracellular actin-stabilizer jasplakinolide, raising the possibility that it was associated with a lateral movement of NMDARs. Supporting this hypothesis, when the effective spatial spread of synaptically released glutamate was increased using the glutamate transporter inhibitor TBOA, the resultant EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}} did not undergo LTD in response to DHPG. Importantly, isolation of the extrasynaptic EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}} by blockade of synaptic NMDARs with MK-801 showed that this was not due to a potentiation of the preexisting extrasynaptic component. These findings indicate that LTD of NMDAR-mediated synaptic transmission occurs via lateral movement of receptors away from the synapse.

INTRODUCTION

Ionotropic glutamate receptors such as AMPA receptors (AMPA) and *N*-methyl-D-aspartate receptors (NMDARs) form ion channels that mediate direct excitatory synaptic transmission. Metabotropic glutamate receptors (mGluRs) in contrast do not form ion channels but instead regulate, among other things, the ionotropic receptors through activation of G protein-coupled receptors. The effects of mGluR activity on synaptic transmission, particularly AMPAR-mediated, has been extensively studied in hippocampal and other neurons. Activation of group I mGluRs consistently induces long-term depression (LTD) of AMPAR responses in hippocampal neurons (Camodeca et al. 1999; Palmer et al. 1997) via mechanisms that are increasingly well understood. In contrast, NMDAR-mediated currents can be either potentiated or depressed by group I mGluR activation depending on whether the currents are elicited by exogenous NMDA application or synaptic stimulation.

Exogenous NMDA-evoked currents are typically transiently potentiated by group I mGluR activation (Benquet et al. 2002; Grishin et al. 2004; Heidinger et al. 2002; Mannaioni et al. 2001; Skeberdis et al. 2001; Snyder et al. 2001). This involves G protein-mediated activation of phospholipase C (PLC) (Skeberdis et al. 2001), release of calcium from inositol triphosphate (IP₃)-sensitive calcium stores, and activation of protein kinase C (PKC) (Benquet et al. 2002; Skeberdis et al. 2001) and src family tyrosine kinases (Benquet et al. 2002; Heidinger et al. 2002). It is not clear whether the potentiation of the NMDA current results from an increase in the open probability of the NMDAR channels (Lu et al. 1999; Xiong et al. 1998) or an increase in the number of channels available in the membrane (Lan et al. 2001). Conversely, synaptically elicited NMDAR-mediated excitatory postsynaptic currents (EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}}) undergo depression in response to group I mGluR activation (Baskys and Malenka 1991; Snyder et al. 2001; Watabe et al. 2002). The reasons for this disparity and the processes responsible for the mGluR-induced depression of the EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}} are not known.

Here we examined group I mGluR-mediated rapid depression and LTD of the synaptically evoked EPSC_{S_{NMDAR}} and determined some of the underlying mechanisms. We found that both the acute depression and LTD are initiated by activation of mGluR1 and mGluR5, but are not dependent on tyrosine kinase or phosphatase activity, an increase in intracellular calcium, or protein synthesis. Although the mechanism underlying the transient acute depression is most likely presynaptic, the LTD appears to be mediated postsynaptically by lateral movement of synaptic NMDARs via actin depolymerization.

METHODS

Hippocampal slice preparation

Hippocampi were dissected from the brains of male Sprague-Dawley rats (6–8 wk) killed following deep anesthesia with ketamine (100 mg/kg, ip). Transverse slices (400 μm) were cut using a Vibroslicer (Campden Instruments) in oxygenated ice-cold artificial cerebrospinal fluid (ACSF) with sucrose substituted for NaCl (composition in mM: 210 sucrose, 26 NaHCO₃, 20 glucose, 2.5 KCl, 1.25 NaH₂PO₄, 0.5 CaCl₂, 3 MgCl₂, 2 ascorbic acid, and 3 Na-pyruvate, pH 7.4, when gassed with 95% O₂-5% CO₂). Slices were held in interface conditions on a Millipore culture plate insert in an incubation chamber filled with oxygenated ACSF (composition in mM: 124 NaCl, 26 NaHCO₃, 20 glucose, 2.5 KCl, 1.25 NaH₂PO₄, 2.5 CaCl₂, 1.3 MgCl₂, 2 ascorbic acid, and 3 Na-pyruvate) at ~34°C for 30 min, after which they were held in the same chamber at room temperature until needed. During each experiment, a single slice was transferred to a glass coverslip glued to the bottom of a

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tissue bath and superfused (2 ml/min) with oxygenated ACSF (lacking ascorbate and pyruvate) at 32°C.

Patch-clamp electrophysiology

Standard whole cell patch-clamp techniques were used to record EPSC_{NMDAR} from the somata of visualized CA1 pyramidal neurons near the slice surface. Patch electrodes were formed from soft borosilicate glass (WPI, Sarasota) and had resistances of 2–3 MΩ when filled with a Cs-based recording solution (composition in mM: 140 Cs-methanesulfonate, 10 HEPES, 4 Na₂ATP, 0.4 NaGTP, 4 MgCl₂, Na₂ phosphocreatine, 0.2 EGTA-4 Na, and 1 QX-314, pH 7.25, when adjusted with CsOH, ~310 mOsm when adjusted with water). Access resistance (<15 MΩ) was continuously monitored throughout each experiment, and experiments in which it differed from baseline values by >20% were discarded. At least 20 min were allowed after obtaining whole cell mode for the electrode solution to equilibrate with the cytosol before recordings were commenced. With the exception of experiments involving MK-801 application, EPSC_{NMDAR} were evoked at a rate of 1 per 30 s (unless specified otherwise) by electrical stimulation of the Schaffer collaterals via a broken-off patch electrode filled with ACSF. After 10 min of baseline recording, the group I mGluR agonist (*R,S*)-3,5-dihydroxyphenylglycine (DHPG; 20 μM) was applied for 10 min via the bathing solution and washed out for 20 min. These DHPG experiments were interleaved with the experiments involving antagonists and inhibitors described throughout the results. AMPA, GABA_A, and GABA_B receptors were blocked with bath-applied CNQX (10 μM), picrotoxin (20 μM), and CGP55845 (1 μM), respectively, to reveal the EPSC_{NMDAR}. Voltage-dependent calcium currents due to L-type channels were inhibited with bath-applied nimodipine (10 μM). Single EPSC_{NMDAR} (200–400 pA) were recorded in voltage-clamp mode at a holding potential of –30 mV using an Axopatch 1D amplifier and pCLAMP 9 software (Molecular Devices, Union City, CA). They were sampled at 10 kHz and filtered at 2 kHz. Reagents were sourced from the following suppliers: Tocris (CNQX, picrotoxin, CGP55845, JNJ16259685, lav-

endustin A, LY367385, LY341495, MK-801, MPEP, nimodipine, RS-DHPG, QX-314, D-TBOA), Sigma (anisomycin, Cs-methanesulfonate, cycloheximide, Na₂ATP, NaGTP, phosphocreatine, EGTA-4Na), and Calbiochem (jasplakinolide). All other reagents were sourced from BDH. With the exception of BAPTA and jasplakinolide, which were added to the patch electrode solution, all inhibitors were bath applied. Jasplakinolide was dissolved in methanol before being added to the patch electrode solution.

Patch-clamp data analysis

Raw data were analyzed using pCLAMP 9 software. EPSC_{NMDAR} peak amplitudes were measured relative to the prestimulus baseline and expressed as percentages of the baseline average. The EPSC_{NMDAR} decay time-constant was measured by fitting a single exponential to the initial 100 ms of the decay phase. Acute changes induced by DHPG application were determined by averaging the responses obtained during the last 5 min of DHPG application, whereas the LTD was assessed by averaging the responses obtained during the last 5 min of recording, which was 20 min after DHPG washout, because by this time the LTD had largely stabilized. Differences between the datasets were analyzed with one-way ANOVA and Dunnett's post hoc tests at the *P* < 0.05 significance level. Dunnett's post hoc tests were one-sided unless otherwise specified. Data are reported as mean ± SE.

RESULTS

mGluR-induced changes in the EPSC_{NMDAR}

DHPG acutely depressed the peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} to 52 ± 3% of baseline (*n* = 18; Fig. 1, *A* and *B*). The peak amplitude recovered and stabilized at 69 ± 3% of baseline following DHPG washout (*n* = 18). The depression could persist for ≥60 min (Fig. 1*A*). Control cells not given DHPG treatment showed only a small run-down of the EPSC_{NMDAR} (92 ± 3% of baseline, *n* = 10; Fig. 1*B*). The acute depression

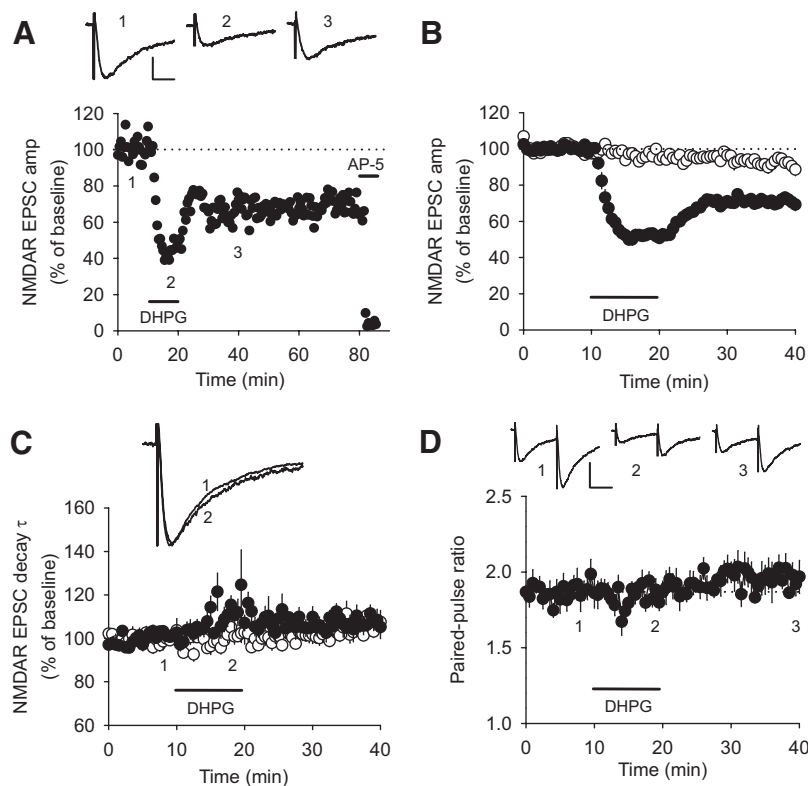


FIG. 1. (*R,S*)-3,5-dihydroxyphenylglycine (DHPG) changes the amplitude and decay time-course of the *N*-methyl-D-aspartate receptor (NMDAR)-mediated synaptic currents (EPSC_{NMDAR}). *A*: single experiment showing the acute depression and long-term depression (LTD) of the EPSC_{NMDAR} peak amplitude induced by 20 μM DHPG applied for 10 min. AP-5 (50 μM) applied at the end of the experiment completely blocked the EPSC_{NMDAR}. *Inset*: waveforms are single responses from this experiment at the times indicated. Calibration bars: 100 pA, 25 ms. Stimulus artifacts have been truncated. *B*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} (*n* = 18) in neurons exposed to DHPG (●) and control neurons (○). *C*: normalized average EPSC_{NMDAR} decay time-constant in the same neurons as *B* is transiently increased by DHPG. *Inset*: waveforms are averages of 20 responses from a single experiment taken at the times indicated. Traces have been normalized to peak amplitude. Stimulus artifacts have been truncated. *D*: average paired-pulse ratio (pulse2/pulse1) in a subset of DHPG-treated neurons is not affected by DHPG. *Inset*: waveforms show paired-pulse responses from the same experiment as in *A* taken at the times indicated. Calibration bars: 200 pA, 50 ms.

induced by DHPG was accompanied by a small increase in the EPSC_{NMDAR} decay time-constant ($112 \pm 3\%$ of baseline, from 31 ± 1 to 35 ± 2 ms, $n = 18$; Fig. 1C). Following drug washout, the decay time-constant decayed toward baseline and was no longer significantly larger than controls 20 min after DHPG washout (33 ± 2 ms). In some experiments, paired-pulse stimulation (100 ms interpulse interval) was used to detect changes in presynaptic release probability. The baseline paired-pulse ratio of the EPSC_{NMDAR} (1.89 ± 0.06 , $n = 6$; Fig. 1D) was not affected by DHPG either acutely (1.87 ± 0.04 , $n = 6$) or following drug washout (1.96 ± 0.07), suggesting a lack of change in the probability of presynaptic glutamate release.

Both mGluR1 and mGluR5 can mediate the depression by DHPG

We used specific antagonists of mGluR1 and mGluR5, as well as a broad-spectrum mGluR antagonist, to determine which subtypes of group I mGluRs are responsible for the depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} by DHPG. Application of the mGluR5-specific noncompetitive antagonist MPEP ($10 \mu\text{M}$) for ≥ 20 min before DHPG application significantly reduced the acute depression caused by DHPG ($66 \pm 3\%$, $n = 5$, $P = 0.034$), but caused no significant reduction of the ensuing LTD

($76 \pm 3\%$, $n = 5$, $P = 0.455$; Fig. 2, A and E). Similarly, application of the mGluR1-specific antagonists LY367385 ($100 \mu\text{M}$) or JNJ16259685 ($1 \mu\text{M}$) significantly reduced the acute depression ($69 \pm 8\%$, $n = 7$, $P = 0.003$) without significantly reducing the LTD ($76 \pm 3\%$, $n = 7$, $P = 0.330$; Fig. 2, B and E). However, when mGluR5 and mGluR1 were simultaneously blocked using the subtype-specific antagonists together (MPEP + LY367385 or MPEP + $10\text{--}100 \mu\text{M}$ JNJ16259685), both the acute depression ($84 \pm 3\%$, $n = 15$) and the LTD ($82 \pm 2\%$, $n = 15$) were significantly reduced ($P < 0.001$, $P = 0.002$; Fig. 2, C and E). Similar results were obtained with the broad-spectrum mGluR antagonist LY341495 ($100 \mu\text{M}$); acute depression, $89 \pm 2\%$, $n = 9$, $P < 0.001$; LTD, $82 \pm 3\%$, $n = 9$, $P = 0.010$; Fig. 2, D and E). However, given that blocking both mGluR1 and mGluR5 would be expected to completely prevent the actions of DHPG, it was surprising that the acute depression in MPEP + mGluR1 antagonist was still significantly greater than in control experiments ($P = 0.025$) and that the LTD approached being significantly greater than in control experiments (MPEP + mGluR1 antagonist vs. control, $P = 0.054$; LY341495 vs. control, $P = 0.091$). These observations could potentially be explained if tonic inhibition of mGluRs by itself induced a gradual depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR}, independently of DHPG. We tested this idea by repeating the experiments that used LY341495, but without

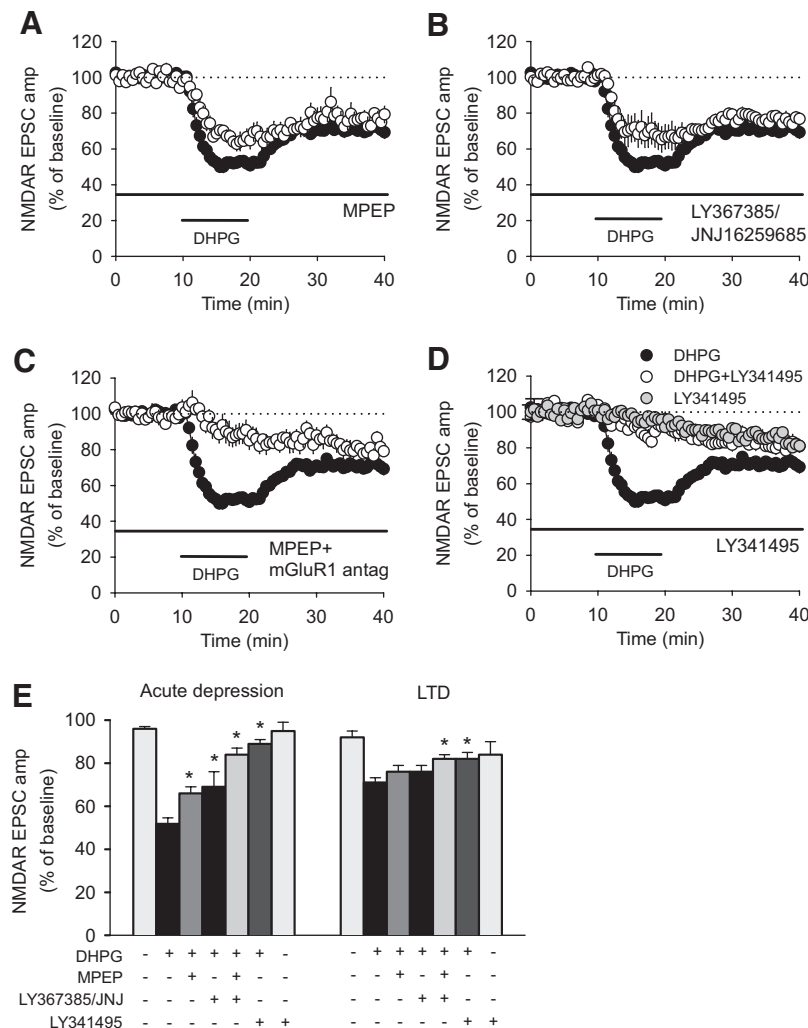


FIG. 2. Metabotropic glutamate receptor (mGluR)1 and mGluR5 participate in the DHPG-induced changes. A–C: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to DHPG in the presence (○) or absence (●) of (A) mGluR5 antagonist MPEP ($10 \mu\text{M}$), (B) mGluR1 antagonists LY367385 ($100 \mu\text{M}$) or JNJ16259685 ($1 \mu\text{M}$), (C) MPEP + LY367385 or MPEP + JNJ16259685. D: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to either DHPG, the broad-spectrum mGluR antagonist LY341495 ($100 \mu\text{M}$) + DHPG, or LY341495 without DHPG. E: summary of the effects of DHPG on the EPSC_{NMDAR} peak amplitude in the presence of mGluR antagonists. Each bar represents the normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} during the DHPG-induced acute depression and LTD. ±, presence or absence of DHPG and antagonists; *, significant difference from the depression in neurons treated with DHPG alone. The columns corresponding to LY341495 alone represent the depression observed in neurons exposed to LY341495 in the absence of DHPG. Neither the acute depression nor LTD was significantly different to the corresponding values in LY341495 + DHPG.

application of DHPG. Indeed, chronic application of LY341495 resulted in a gradually increasing response depression (acute depression, $95 \pm 4\%$; chronic depression, $84 \pm 6\%$, $n = 5$; Fig. 2, *D* and *E*), which was not significantly different from the depression generated by DHPG in the presence of LY341495 (Fig. 2, *D* and *E*). Thus mGluR inhibition by itself leads to a slowly developing depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR}, but nonetheless it fully prevents any further depression induced by DHPG.

It is apparent from Fig. 2*D* that the prolonged administration of group I mGluR antagonists by itself leads to a faster response depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} than under normal control conditions. To avoid this faster run-down over time, we repeated some of the above experiments but with only transient antagonist application that was terminated at the same time as the DHPG application. Using this protocol, both the acute depression and the LTD were completely blocked relative to untreated controls by either MPEP + mGluR1 antagonist (acute depression, $87 \pm 3\%$, $n = 7$, $P = 0.208$; LTD, $90 \pm 5\%$, $n = 7$, $P = 0.836$; Fig. 3, *A* and *C*) or LY341495 treatments (acute depression, $91 \pm 4\%$, $n = 6$, $P = 0.541$; LTD, $89 \pm 3\%$, $n = 6$, $P = 0.710$; Fig. 3, *B* and *C*).

The acute and transient increase in the decay time-constant of the EPSC_{NMDAR} was not significantly reduced by any treatment save LY341495, when washed out with DHPG ($100 \pm 4\%$, $n = 6$, $P = 0.041$). Because of the small size and considerable variability of the effect of DHPG on the decay time-constant, the underlying mechanisms were not studied further.

Depression is not Ca^{2+} dependent

One well-documented outcome of group I mGluR activation is production of IP₃ via activation of PLC, and subsequent release of calcium from IP₃-sensitive calcium stores. Therefore we used a high intracellular concentration (30 mM) of the fast calcium buffer BAPTA in the internal patch solution to suppress mGluR-induced rises in internal calcium. Similar or lower concentrations of BAPTA completely prevent measur-

able mGluR-induced rises in intracellular calcium (Hirono et al. 1998; Nakamura et al. 2000; Rae and Irving 2004). Neither the acute depression ($54 \pm 7\%$, $n = 9$) nor the LTD ($63 \pm 3\%$, $n = 9$) was inhibited by BAPTA, indicating that they are unlikely to be mediated by an mGluR-triggered increase in postsynaptic calcium (Fig. 4, *A* and *E*).

Depression is independent of tyrosine kinase or phosphatase activity

Both NMDARs and the effects of group I mGluR activation are strongly regulated by protein tyrosine kinase (PTK) and phosphatase (PTP) activity (Coussens et al. 2000; Huang and Hsu 2006; Ireland et al. 2004; Kumar and Foster 2007; Moulton et al. 2002, 2006; Salter and Kalia 2004). The PTK inhibitor lavendustin A was used to assess whether PTK activity is required for the mGluR-dependent depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR}. Lavendustin A ($10 \mu\text{M}$), applied for ≥ 20 min before DHPG application, did not reduce either the acute depression ($54 \pm 7\%$, $n = 6$) or LTD ($72 \pm 5\%$, $n = 6$; Fig. 4, *B* and *E*). These data suggest that the DHPG-induced depression is not dependent on PTK activity. However, it is possible that the depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} relies on PTP activity, as shown for DHPG-induced depression of the EPSC_{AMPA} (Moulton et al. 2002, 2006). We therefore used the PTP inhibitor orthovanadate (1 mM) to block PTPs before and during DHPG application. Since orthovanadate by itself depressed the EPSC_{NMDAR} (to $44 \pm 2\%$ of baseline, $n = 3$), we allowed sufficient time for the EPSC_{NMDAR} to stabilize before applying DHPG, at which point a new baseline average was calculated. In the presence of orthovanadate, neither the acute depression ($46 \pm 4\%$, $n = 6$) nor the LTD ($73 \pm 2\%$, $n = 6$) induced by DHPG was reduced (Fig. 4, *C* and *E*), showing that PTP activity is also not required for the mGluR-induced depression.

Protein synthesis is not necessary for depression

Both DHPG-induced LTD of AMPAR responses and the DHPG-induced internalization of AMPAR and NMDAR in hip-

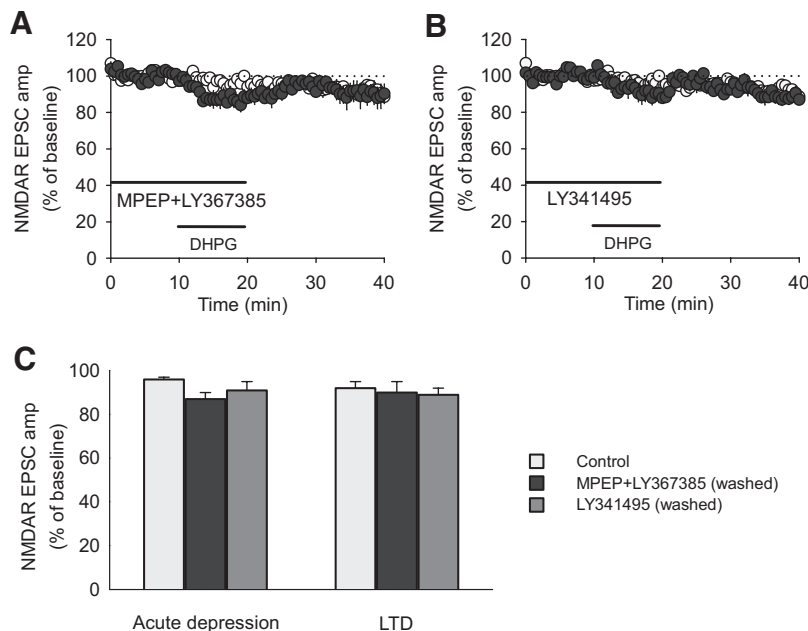


FIG. 3. Depression is completely blocked by inhibition of mGluR1 and mGluR5. *A* and *B*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to DHPG in the presence of (●) either (A) MPEP + LY367385 or (B) LY341495, compared with untreated control neurons (○). In these experiments, the antagonists were washed out at the same time as DHPG. *C*: summary of the effects of DHPG on the EPSC_{NMDAR} peak amplitude in the presence of mGluR antagonists. Each bar represents the normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} during the DHPG-induced acute depression and LTD. Under these conditions, blocking mGluR1 and mGluR5, or all mGluRs, prevented the DHPG-induced depression relative to untreated controls.

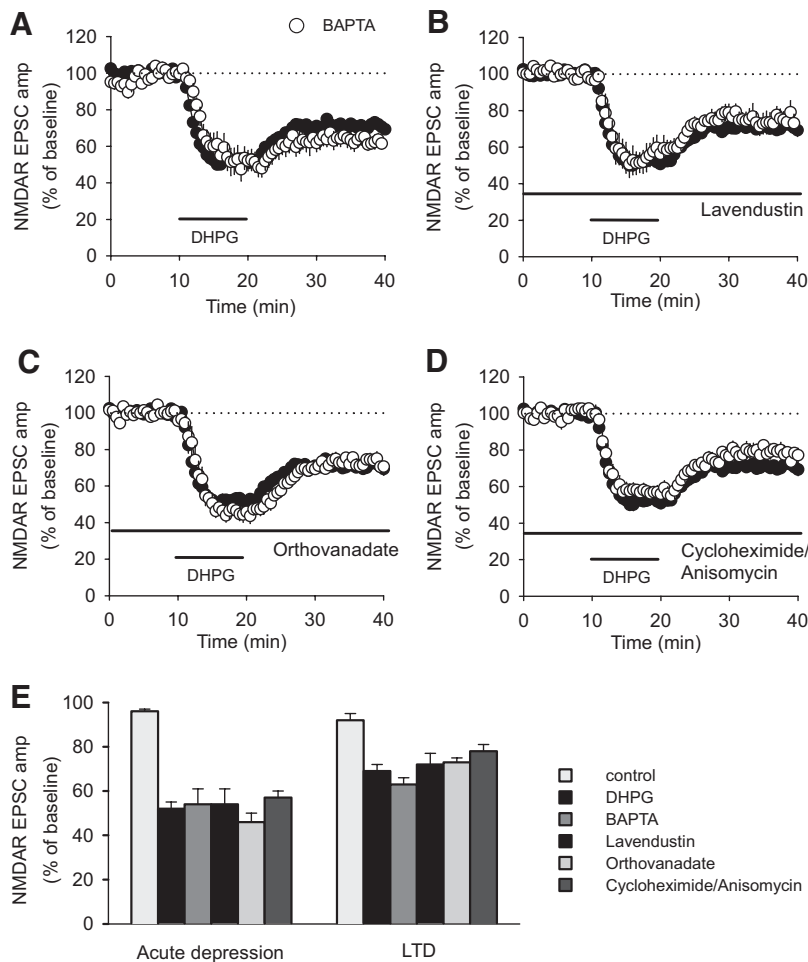


FIG. 4. Depression is not dependent on postsynaptic calcium, tyrosine kinases, tyrosine phosphatases, or protein synthesis. *A–D*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to DHPG in the presence (○) or absence (●) of (*A*) the fast calcium buffer BAPTA (30 mM, intracellular), (*B*) the protein tyrosine kinase (PTK) inhibitor lavendustin A (10 μM), (*C*) the protein tyrosine phosphatase (PTP) inhibitor orthovanadate (1 mM), or (*D*) protein synthesis inhibitors cycloheximide (60 μM) or anisomycin (25 μM). *E*: summary of the effects of DHPG on the EPSC_{NMDAR} amplitude in the presence of signaling inhibitors. Each bar represents the normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} during the DHPG-induced acute depression and LTD.

pocampal neurons are dependent on protein synthesis under some conditions (Huber et al. 2000, 2001; Kumar and Foster 2007; Nosyreva and Huber 2005; Snyder et al. 2001). Therefore we predicted that the mGluR-induced LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR} would also be protein synthesis dependent. To test this, either cycloheximide (60 μM, $n = 4$) or anisomycin (25 μM, $n = 4$) was used to block protein synthesis for ≥ 30 min before DHPG application. These concentrations of protein synthesis inhibitors were used successfully in the preceding LTD studies. However, under our conditions, neither the rapid depression ($57 \pm 3\%$, $n = 8$) nor LTD ($78 \pm 3\%$, $n = 8$) was reduced by the protein synthesis inhibitors (Fig. 4, *D* and *E*).

LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR} is dependent on actin depolymerization

Both mGluR-dependent LTD of the EPSC_{AMPA} and non-mGluR-dependent LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR} can be prevented by inhibiting depolymerization of the actin cytoskeleton (Morishita et al. 2005; Xiao et al. 2001). Therefore we predicted that mGluR-dependent depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} would also require actin depolymerization. In confirmation of this hypothesis, adding the actin stabilizing agent jasplakinolide (2 μM) to the patch pipette solution reduced both the DHPG-induced acute depression ($65 \pm 3\%$, $n = 10$, $P < 0.001$) and LTD ($85 \pm 3\%$, $n = 10$; $P = 0.022$) compared with interleaved experiments performed with DHPG alone (rapid depression,

$42 \pm 5\%$, $n = 6$; LTD, $73 \pm 5\%$, $n = 6$; Fig. 5). Because jasplakinolide did not seem to completely block LTD, we considered the possibility that, as for the mGluR antagonists, this was confounded by a slow run-down of the EPSC_{NMDAR} caused by chronic application of the drug or its solvent methanol. Thus we compared these data to a control group in which jasplakinolide (with methanol solvent) was applied without DHPG and found that, whereas the DHPG-induced acute depression in the presence of jasplakinolide was still significantly greater ($P < 0.001$) than in these controls (control, $95 \pm 2\%$, $n = 5$), the LTD was completely eliminated (control, $85 \pm 3\%$, $n = 5$, $P = 0.590$ vs. jasplakinolide + DHPG; Fig. 5).

DHPG does not induce LTD when glutamate transport is inhibited

Since actin depolymerization can lead to dispersal of synaptic NMDARs (Allison et al. 1998; Sattler et al. 2000), we investigated whether the DHPG-induced depression could be due to lateral movement of synaptic NMDARs out of the synapse. First, we used the glutamate uptake inhibitor TBOA to increase the access of synaptically released glutamate to extrasynaptic areas of membrane, predicting that there would be no depression of the net synaptic current if glutamate had access to both the static synaptic receptors and those that had moved to nearby extrasynaptic locations. TBOA (20 μM) was applied for >20 min before DHPG to allow the EPSC_{NMDAR} to

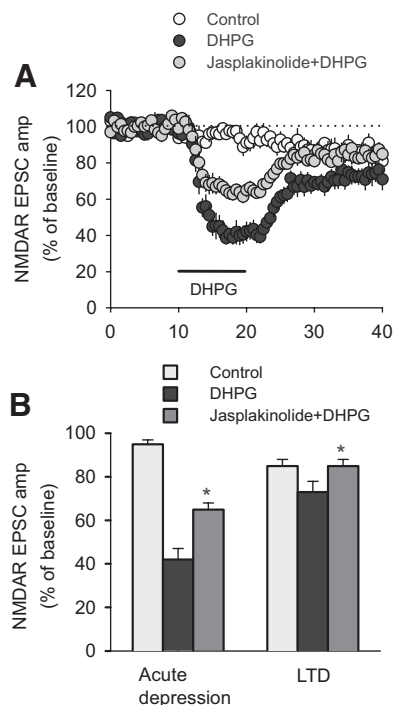


FIG. 5. LTD is dependent on actin depolymerization. *A*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to DHPG in the presence (○) or absence (●) of the actin-stabilizing agent jaspalakinolide (2 μM, intracellular) compared with neurons exposed to jaspalakinolide alone. *B*: summary of the effects of DHPG on the EPSC_{NMDAR} amplitude in the presence or absence of jaspalakinolide. Each bar represents the normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} during the DHPG-induced acute depression and LTD. *Significant difference between DHPG + jaspalakinolide vs. DHPG alone. Note that all experiments for this dataset involved the solvent methanol (0.4%) in the patch pipette.

stabilize (peak amplitude $157 \pm 9\%$ of baseline; Fig. 6*A*). When DHPG was applied, the acute depression of the net EPSC_{NMDAR} ($39 \pm 4\%$, $n = 7$) was in fact greater than the equivalent acute depression of the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} ($P = 0.014$, 2-sided Dunnett's test; Fig. 6*B*). Critically, however, the LTD of the net EPSC_{NMDAR} in the presence of TBOA ($89 \pm 5\%$, $n = 7$) was completely blocked ($P = 0.001$, 2-sided Dunnett's test relative to the LTD of the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR}) and was not significantly different to the gradual response run-down seen in untreated synaptic controls ($P = 0.954$, 2-sided Dunnett's test; Fig. 6, *B* and *F*). Given the different temporal profiles of the net EPSC_{NMDAR} in TBOA compared with the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR}, we also measured the effects of DHPG on net EPSC_{NMDAR} transferred charge and found that the acute depression ($29 \pm 4\%$, $n = 5$) and LTD ($90 \pm 6\%$, $n = 5$) were consistent with the effects of DHPG on peak amplitude. Overall, these data support the hypothesis that increasing the spread of synaptically released glutamate prevents LTD by permitting activation of NMDARs that have moved extrasynaptically.

An alternative explanation is that the lack of LTD in TBOA is caused by a potentiation of preexisting extrasynaptic NMDAR currents that offsets the depression of the synaptic current. We tested this possibility by using the irreversible use-dependent NMDAR antagonist MK-801 and TBOA to isolate an EPSC_{NMDAR} mediated by extrasynaptic receptors. MK-801 (50 μM) was applied for 10 min, during which time the

stimulation was increased to 1/5 s to increase the rate of blockade (Fig. 6*C*). After the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} was blocked, stimulation was stopped and the MK-801 was washed from the slice for 20 min. Following MK-801 washout, the stimulation was resumed at 1/30 s. At this point, the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} remained fully blocked ($3 \pm 3\%$ of pre-MK-801, $n = 4$; Fig. 6*C*). TBOA (20 μM) was applied for >20 min to reveal an EPSC_{NMDAR} mediated by extrasynaptic NMDARs (Fig. 6*C*). When DHPG was applied, the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} underwent both an acute depression ($27 \pm 4\%$, $n = 4$) and LTD ($64 \pm 7\%$, $n = 4$; Fig. 6, *D* and *F*). The acute depression was significantly greater than that of the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} ($P < 0.001$, 2-sided Dunnett's test), whereas the LTD was not significantly different ($P = 0.745$, 2-sided Dunnett's test). These results demonstrate that the failure of DHPG to induce LTD of the combined synaptic/extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} evoked in the presence of TBOA (Fig. 6*B*) cannot be due to a potentiation of preexisting extrasynaptic NMDARs that offsets depression of the synaptic NMDARs. Note that, in this experiment, any synaptic NMDARs that move extrasynaptically in response to DHPG will already be irreversibly blocked by MK-801 and so will not contribute to the observed extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR}.

Although a previous study has indicated that the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} remains completely blocked for ≥ 20 min following MK-801 washout from the slice (Harris and Pettit 2007), other data suggest that extrasynaptic NMDARs have a basal mobility that allows them to move into the synapse immediately following blockade of synaptic NMDARs with MK-801 (Tovar and Westbrook 2002; Zhao et al. 2008). Our data show that this does not occur within the duration of the 20-min MK-801 washout period (Fig. 6*C*), but the length of our total experimental protocol means that either basal mobility of extrasynaptic NMDARs or recovery of synaptic NMDARs from MK-801 block later in the experiment could potentially confound our results. We tested for this in three experiments by briefly washing out TBOA at the end of the DHPG washout period (Fig. 6*E*) but found that the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} still remained blocked by MK-801 at the end of the experiment.

DISCUSSION

Effect of mGluR activation on the EPSC_{NMDAR}

Previous studies that used exogenous NMDA to activate NMDARs have observed a transient potentiation by mGluR activation of the whole cell NMDA-evoked current (Benquet et al. 2002; Grishin et al. 2004; Heidinger et al. 2002; Mannaioni et al. 2001; Skeberdis et al. 2001; Snyder et al. 2001). In contrast, those studies using synaptic activation of NMDARs have shown depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} (Baskys and Malenka 1991; Snyder et al. 2001; Watabe et al. 2002). Possible explanations for this disparity are either that the depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} is a presynaptic phenomenon (Watabe et al. 2002) or that the potentiation observed in the former studies was mediated by extrasynaptic NMDARs that were activated by applied NMDA but not by synaptic stimulation. In this study, we were particularly interested in the effects of mGluR activation on synaptic NMDAR currents. In agreement with previous studies, we found that activation of group I mGluRs with DHPG causes both an acute depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} that quickly recovers following agonist washout and an LTD. We also found that mGluR activation

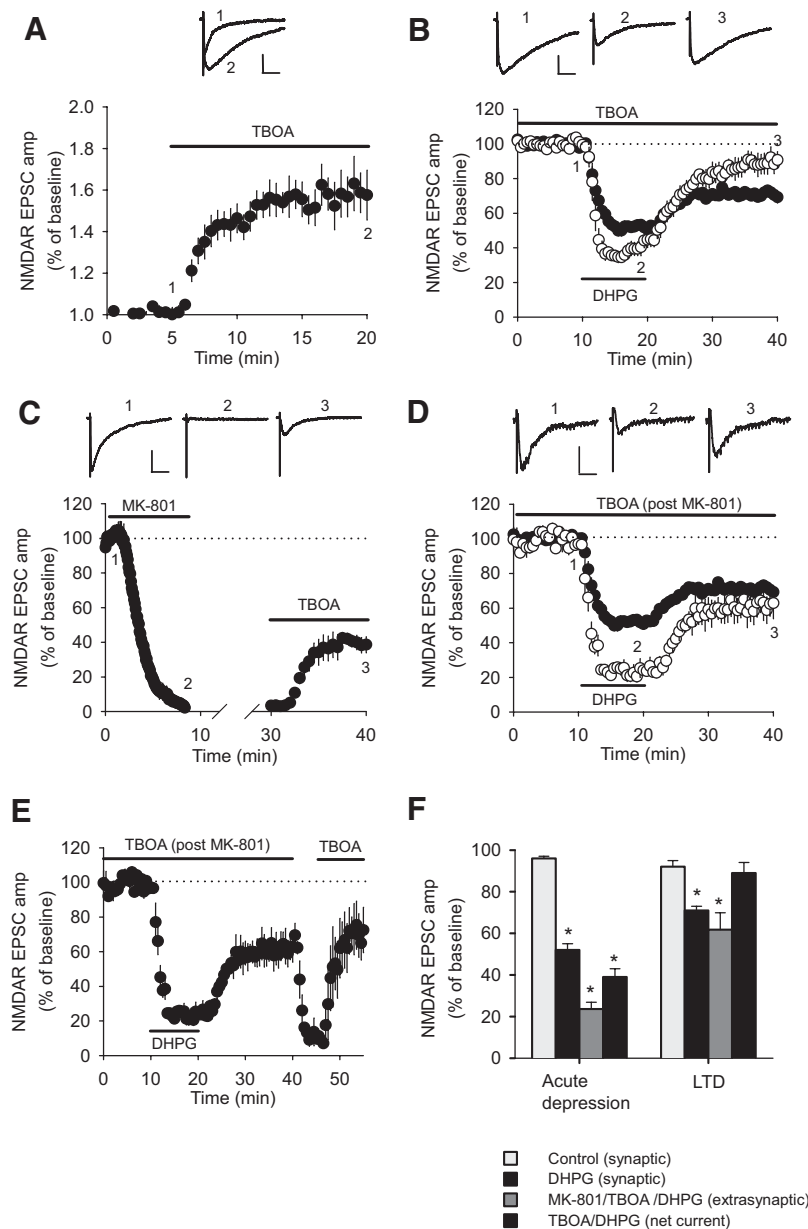


FIG. 6. Lateral movement of synaptic NMDAR underlies the mGluR-mediated LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR}. *A*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to TBOA (20 μ M). *Inset*: waveforms are single responses recorded at the times indicated. Calibration bars: 200 pA, 100 ms. *B*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to DHPG in the presence (\circ) or absence (\bullet) of TBOA. *Inset*: waveforms are single responses recorded at the times indicated from the same neuron as *A*. Calibration bars: 200 pA, 100 ms. *C*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} showing the effects of progressive block of synaptic NMDAR by MK-801 (50 μ M), washout of MK-801 from the slice, and application of TBOA. *Inset*: waveforms are single responses recorded at the times indicated. Calibration bars: 200 pA, 100 ms. *D*: normalized average peak amplitude of the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} in neurons exposed to DHPG (\circ) compared with the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} (from different neurons) (\bullet). TBOA application followed irreversible block of synaptic NMDAR by MK-801 and subsequent MK-801 washout as shown in *C*. *Inset*: waveforms are single responses recorded at the times indicated from the same neuron as *C*. Calibration bars: 50 pA, 100 ms. Note that these responses have been scaled vertically to match the amplitude of responses in *A–C*. *E*: normalized average peak amplitude of the EPSC_{NMDAR} showing the effects of TBOA removal and reapplication on neurons previously exposed to MK-801. These data confirm that blockade of synaptic NMDAR by MK-801 is effectively irreversible within the time frame of our experiments. *F*: summary of the effects of DHPG on the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR}, the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} in the presence of TBOA following MK-801 application and washout, and the net EPSC_{NMDAR} in the presence of TBOA. Each bar represents the normalized average EPSC_{NMDAR} amplitude during the DHPG-induced acute depression and LTD. *Significant difference from the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} in untreated control neurons.

transiently slows the decay rate of the EPSC_{NMDAR} during the acute depression phase, a finding not previously reported. This latter effect, however, was too small and variable to warrant further studies of its underlying mechanisms.

Although the precise roles of mGluR subtypes in the DHPG-induced depression of AMPAR-mediated responses is controversial, both mGluR1 and mGluR5 have been found to contribute in a number of studies (Faas et al. 2002; Hou and Klann 2004; Huang and Hsu 2006; Kumar and Foster 2007; Mannaioni et al. 2001; Volk et al. 2006). Our data show that both mGluR1 and mGluR5 can individually mediate the DHPG-induced depression of NMDAR-mediated synaptic responses and that a block of both receptor subtypes is required to completely suppress the LTD.

Presynaptic locus of acute depression

Downstream of mGluR activation, either presynaptic or postsynaptic mechanisms could in theory account for the acute

depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR}. Superficially, the lack of change in PPF during DHPG application would argue against a presynaptic mechanism for the acute depression, but a number of factors strongly counter this. First, several studies support the idea that a presynaptic change in glutamate release is not necessarily accompanied by a change in PPF (Barnes-Davies and Forsythe 1995; Hanse and Gustafsson 2001; Manabe et al. 1993; Watabe et al. 2002). Such a scenario could occur if, rather than a change in the average release probability, a proportion of synapses became presynaptically silent during DHPG application (Manabe et al. 1993), or there were other changes in release mechanisms not sensitive to paired-pulse stimulation. Second, postsynaptically applied jaspakinolide at most only partly inhibited the acute depression while eliminating the LTD and, depending on the amount of temporal overlap between the acute depression and LTD, may not have affected the acute depression at all (Fig. 4A). Third, because it seems relatively certain that the acute depression of the AMPAR-mediated exci-

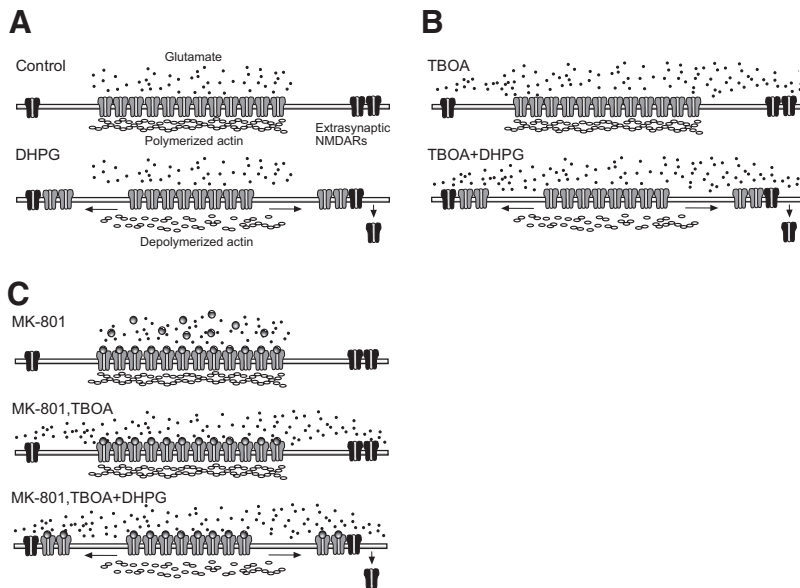


FIG. 7. Proposed mechanism of mGluR-dependent LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR}. *A*: under control conditions, synaptically released glutamate activates only synaptic NMDARs. LTD of the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} after washout of DHPG (mGluRs not shown) is due to actin depolymerization-dependent lateral movement of synaptic NMDARs into the extrasynaptic membrane and away from the released glutamate. *B*: inhibition of glutamate uptake with TBOA allows glutamate to access both synaptic and extrasynaptic receptors. This prevents the induction of significant LTD of the mixed EPSC_{NMDAR} by DHPG. *C*: MK-801 (circles) applied during synaptic stimulation irreversibly blocks synaptic NMDARs. Following washout of MK-801 from the bath, TBOA application permits glutamate to activate only preexisting extrasynaptic NMDARs. The LTD of the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} that is present after DHPG washout is likely due to endocytosis of preexisting extrasynaptic NMDARs (Snyder et al. 2001). Although preexisting synaptic receptors are now also present extrasynaptically, they remain blocked by MK-801 and thus are electrophysiologically silent.

tatory postsynaptic current (EPSC_{AMPA}) is due to an inhibition of glutamate release (Baskys and Malenka 1991; Faas et al. 2002; Nosyreva and Huber 2005; Rouach and Nicoll 2003; Watabe et al. 2002), it is extremely difficult to envisage how a presynaptic depression of the EPSC_{AMPA} could occur without an accompanying depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR}. A transient depression of glutamate release would also partly account for the disparity between the effects of mGluR activation on NMDA-evoked versus synaptically evoked currents since a presynaptic depression would only be present in experiments testing synaptically evoked currents. Therefore we believe that the explanation most consistent with both our data and what is known about the mGluR-induced depression of the EPSC_{AMPA} is that the acute depression is caused by a transient reduction in presynaptic glutamate release.

Interestingly, the acute depression of the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} was much larger than that of the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR}. This is also consistent with a presynaptic locus for the acute depression, given previous evidence suggesting that multiple hippocampal synapses can cooperate in “pooling” their glutamate to achieve a sufficient concentration to activate extrasynaptic NMDARs (Arnth-Jensen et al. 2002; Scimemi et al. 2004). Therefore an ~50% reduction in the number of synapses that release glutamate during the acute depression, while only reducing the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} by ~50%, might be expected to reduce the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} to a greater extent through reduction of glutamate levels to below that needed to activate many of the extrasynaptic NMDARs.

Postsynaptic locus of LTD

In contrast to the acute depression, there is a lack of consensus as to the locus of the mGluR-induced LTD of the EPSC_{AMPA} in CA1. This is likely due in part to developmental regulation (Nosyreva and Huber 2005) and to the possibility of presynaptic changes initiated by postsynaptic mGluRs (Watabe et al. 2002). Taken together, our observations that PPF of the EPSC_{NMDAR} was not changed by DHPG and that the LTD was completely blocked by postsynaptic jasplakinolide mean that, although we could not completely rule out a

presynaptic mechanism, a postsynaptic process seemed more likely to account for the LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR} in our young adult animals. Therefore we hypothesized that one potential mechanism was the group I mGluR-triggered rise in postsynaptic calcium that is mediated by IP₃-sensitive calcium stores (Nakamura et al. 1999, 2000, 2002; Rae and Irving 2004), possibly amplified by store-operated calcium channels in the plasma membrane (Mellentin et al. 2006) and acting synergistically with voltage-dependent calcium channels (Nakamura et al. 2000) and NMDARs (Nakamura et al. 2002; Rae et al. 2000). Ryanodine receptor-operated calcium stores have also been shown to mediate mGluR actions in hippocampal neurons (Mellentin et al. 2006; Wu et al. 2008). However, the fact that a high concentration of intracellular BAPTA did not block the LTD makes it unlikely that the underlying processes involve an elevation of intracellular calcium, although it is possible that NMDARs located very close to sources of calcium may be exposed to calcium microdomains that are insensitive to BAPTA.

Alternative mechanisms considered were tyrosine phosphorylation and dephosphorylation, which exert a powerful and multilayered influence on NMDAR function. For example, NMDAR activity and trafficking are regulated by both src family PTKs (Kohr and Seeburg 1996; Yu and Salter 1999) and STEP (striatal enriched tyrosine phosphatase) (Braithwaite et al. 2006; Pelkey et al. 2002; Snyder et al. 2005). Src PTKs are in turn regulated by tyrosine dephosphorylation by PTP α (Le et al. 2006; Lei et al. 2002). In this study, neither PTK nor PTP activity was required for the LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR}. This means that the mGluR LTD is not the same process as the tyrosine kinase-dependent LTD of NMDAR responses that we have previously described (Coussens et al. 2000). Our results also contrast with other mGluR-induced processes such as the depression of the slow afterhyperpolarization (Ireland et al. 2004) and LTD of the EPSC_{AMPA} (Huang and Hsu 2006; Kumar and Foster 2007; Moulton et al. 2006) that rely on PTP activity.

Because postsynaptically applied jasplakinolide completely blocked the LTD, it seems that actin depolymerization is a critical step in the DHPG-triggered pathway. One

way in which the actin cytoskeleton could influence the EPSC_{NMDAR} is via alterations in the biophysical properties of NMDARs, such as single-channel conductance and open probability. In cultured hippocampal neurons, rundown of whole cell NMDAR currents as a consequence of reduced channel open probability (Rosenmund and Westbrook 1993b) is dependent on actin depolymerization (Rosenmund and Westbrook 1993a) and can be prevented by stabilizing actin with jasplakinolide (Li et al. 2002). However, it seems unlikely that the same mechanism is at work here given that the NMDAR current rundown is calcium dependent and inhibited by intracellular BAPTA (Rosenmund and Westbrook 1993b), whereas we showed that the mGluR-induced LTD is resistant to BAPTA. A different mechanism involving actin depolymerization that could underlie the LTD of the EPSC_{NMDAR} is a physical movement of NMDARs away from the postsynapse. This could occur via direct endocytosis because there is evidence that mGluR-dependent LTD of the EPSC_{AMPA} may be a result of AMPAR endocytosis (Moult et al. 2006; Snyder et al. 2001; Xiao et al. 2001) requiring actin depolymerization (Xiao et al. 2001). Further internalization of NMDARs in response to group I mGluR activation has been shown in cultured hippocampal neurons (Snyder et al. 2001). However, several factors point away from direct endocytosis of synaptic NMDARs during our experiments. First, synaptic NMDARs seem to be immune to endocytosis compared with extrasynaptic NMDARs (Li et al. 2002; Roche et al. 2001). Second, the group I mGluR-induced endocytosis of NMDARs requires protein synthesis (Snyder et al. 2001), and our results showed that the depression of the EPSC_{NMDAR} is not protein synthesis dependent. Third, the NMDAR-dependent LTD of the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} in hippocampal slices involves actin depolymerization but not endocytosis (Morishita et al. 2005).

Since synaptic NMDARs are capable of lateral travel (Fong et al. 2002; Tovar and Westbrook 2002; Zhao et al. 2008) under conditions of actin depolymerization (Allison et al. 1998; Sattler et al. 2000), any mGluR-induced movement of synaptic NMDARs would be predicted to be a lateral one into the extrasynaptic membrane. We directly addressed this hypothesis by inhibiting glutamate uptake, thus allowing synaptically released glutamate to spread outside the synapse and activate both synaptic and extrasynaptic NMDARs. Consistent with our prediction, DHPG did not induce LTD of the resultant combined synaptic/extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR}. Alternatively, this result could be explained if mGluR activation simultaneously upregulated the biophysical properties of existing extrasynaptic NMDARs or increased the number of these receptors (via exocytosis or decreased endocytosis), while at the same time inhibiting synaptic NMDAR function. Such differential regulation would be consistent with the opposing roles frequently attributed to synaptic and extrasynaptic NMDARs (Hardingham and Bading 2003; Hardingham et al. 2002; Ivanov et al. 2006; Massey et al. 2004; Papadia et al. 2005). This explanation could also resolve the disparity between the effects of mGluR activation on synaptically evoked and NMDA-evoked NMDAR responses because NMDA-evoked currents are generated by both synaptic and extrasynaptic NMDARs, in contrast to specifically synaptic currents evoked by single pulse afferent stimulation. However, our finding that the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR}, isolated by block-

ade of synaptic NMDARs with MK-801, was strongly depressed rather than potentiated by DHPG rules this out. Therefore the explanation most consistent with our data is that the mGluR-induced LTD of the synaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} results from actin depolymerization-dependent movement of NMDARs away from the synapse.

Superficially it may appear difficult to reconcile the LTD of the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} with the lack of LTD of the net EPSC_{NMDAR} in TBOA. However, since we estimate that, under our conditions of partial glutamate transporter blockade, the extrasynaptic EPSC_{NMDAR} makes a relatively small contribution to the net EPSC_{NMDAR} (~15–30%), the LTD of the extrasynaptic component would not be expected to have a significant impact on the net EPSC_{NMDAR}. Furthermore, we speculate that movement of a significant fraction of the larger synaptic NMDAR complement to the extrasynaptic region may lead to an accumulation of extrasynaptic receptors, despite any endocytosis of the smaller preexisting complement that may occur. Thus it is possible that mGluR-mediated potentiation of NMDA-evoked responses is caused by preferential activation by exogenous NMDA of the extrasynaptic pool of NMDARs, which has been enhanced by lateral movement of receptors from synaptic sites. Whether the translocated NMDARs and/or existing extrasynaptic NMDARs are subsequently endocytosed is not known, but previous data (Snyder et al. 2001), as well as our own finding of a depression of the isolated extrasynaptic NMDAR current by DHPG, suggest that this is likely to occur.

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GRANTS

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