# Discovery of novel 5-HT2A receptor agonists with non-hallucinogenic potential and translational antidepressant drug-like profiles

Carrie A. Bowen, Tanweer A. Khan, Robert B. Perni, Thomas C. Robertson, Holden B. Janssens, Jonathon D.S. Holt, Patrick Kleine, Adam L. Halberstadt, Srinivas Rao, and Glenn F. Short III

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## INTRODUCTION

### TREATMENT-RESISTANT DEPRESSION

- Impacts approximately 30% of patients with major depressive disorder.[1]
- Currently, there are limited treatment options, and long-lasting (>2 weeks) treatments are not yet available.

### PSYCHEDELICS

- Chemically diverse group of 5-HT2AR agonists, such as psilocybin and LSD.
- Clinically, they show **rapid** and **lasting antidepressant efficacy** following single dose.[2,3]
- Preclinically, antidepressant mechanisms may include promotion of **neuroplasticity**[4, 5]

### CHALLENGES

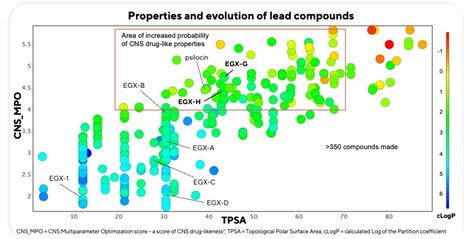
- **Hallucinatory effects** of psychedelics require administration in a controlled clinical setting and exclude certain patient populations.
- Concomitant **agonism of 5-HT2BR** by non-selective psychedelics may lead to valvulopathy risk with frequent use.[6]

## APPROACH

### GOAL

Novel non-hallucinogenic selective 5-HT2AR agonist for TRD

AI/ML-driven drug design + Medicinal chemistry (SAR)



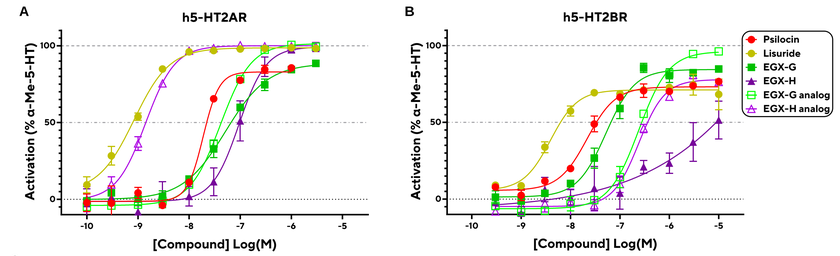

1) 5-HT2AR over 5-HT2BR agonist selectivity

2) Non-hallucinogenic potential

3) Antidepressant-like activity

## 1) 5-HT2AR OVER 5-HT2BR AGONIST SELECTIVITY

### EGX compounds exhibit improved 5-HT2AR over 5-HT2BR selectivity




*Relative Selectivity = $10^{(5HT2A\ Relative\ Agonism\ -5HT2B\ Relative\ Agonism)}$; Relative Agonism = $\left(\log\left(\frac{Test\ Compound\ Emax}{Test\ Compound\ EC50}\right)\right) - \left(\log\left(\frac{Control\ Emax}{Control\ EC50}\right)\right)$; Reference Agonist = α-Me-5-HT

In vitro screening using human 5-HT2AR and 5-HT2BR agonism IP1 accumulation HTRF assays guides structural activity relationship (SAR) understanding (A and B, respectively).

EGX-G and EGX-H are hits from distinct chemical series with promising 5-HT2AR agonist potency and/or selectivity over 5-HT2BR (C, Table 1). Ongoing SAR analyses continue to identify potent analogs with improved 5-HT2AR agonist selectivity (EGX-H Series), compared to reference hallucinogenic and non-hallucinogenic compounds (C, Table 1).

**Table 1. 5-HT2AR & 5-HT2BR Agonism Readouts of EGX, Psilocin & Reference Non-hallucinogenic Compounds**

| Human Target (Readout) | EGX-G | EGX-H | Psilocin | Lisuride | 2-Br-LSD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5-HT2A** (Gq-IP1); EC50 (nM) [Emax] | 51.3 [89%] | **92.8 [100%]** | 18.2 [83%] | 0.83 [99%]* | *0.81 [60%]*[8 †] |
| **5-HT2B** (Gq-IP1); EC50 (nM) [Emax] | 51.9 [84%] | **2,522 [51%]** | 21.6 [73%] | 3.91 [71%]* | *>10,000*[8 †] |

*Aequorin Ca++ Mobilization Agonist Readouts 5-HT2A: EC50 = 378nM, Emax = 77%; 5-HT2B: EC50 >10uM; †Gq dissociation BRET assay.

Further agonist profiling at 5-HT receptor subtypes revealed **distinct pharmacological profiles,** compared to reference hallucinogenic and non-hallucinogenic compounds (Table 2).

**Table 2. Other 5-HT Receptor^ Agonism Readouts of EGX, Psilocin & Reference Non-hallucinogenic Compounds**

| Human Target (Readout) | EGX-G | EGX-H | Psilocin | Lisuride | 2-Br-LSD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5-HT2A** (Arrestin); EC50 (nM) [Emax] | **119** [35%] | **172 [84%]** | 27.8 [41%] | *15.3 [44%]*[10] | *0.73 [38%]*[8] |
| **5-HT2C** (Gq-Ca++); EC50 (nM) [Emax] | 5.56 [93%] | **112** [82%] | 11.9 [105%] | *7.76 [75%]*[9 *] | *3.85 [46%]*[8 †] |
| **5-HT1A** (Gi-cAMP); EC50 (nM) [Emax] | **369 [74%]** | **17,150 [105%]** | 2,053 [40%] | *1.26 [98%]*[9 *] | *11.3 [73%]*[8 ‡] |
| **5-HT1B** (Gi-cAMP); EC50 (nM) [Emax] | <5 [100%] | **>100,000** | <5 [100%] | *26.3 [85%]*[9 *] | *5.28 [84%]*[8 ‡] |

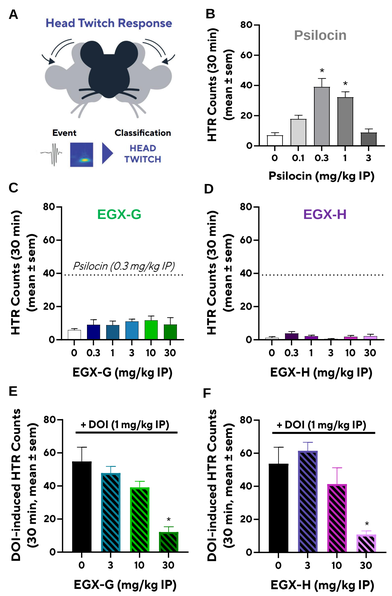
^Targets of potential relevance to antidepressant-like effects and/or expression of HTR; *[35S]GTPγS assay; †Gq dissociation BRET assay; ‡GoM dissociation BRET assay.

## 2) NON-HALLUCINOGENIC POTENTIAL

### EGX-G and EGX-H do not induce Head Twitch Response (HTR) and attenuate DOI-induced HTR

HTR is a behavioral proxy for human hallucinogenic potency (A). To investigate hallucinogenic potential, male C57BL/6 mice, each implanted with a cranium-attached magnet, were administered EGX compounds, placed individually in a glass cylinder surrounded by a magnetometer, and the HTR was measured for 30 min.

Psilocin, a known hallucinogen, significantly induced HTR (B). Neither EGX-G (C) nor EGX-H (D) up to 30 mg/kg induced HTR, suggesting a lack of hallucinogenic potential. Moreover, compound pretreatment (60 min) reduced HTR induced by a known hallucinogen, DOI, in a dose-dependent manner (E, F). These data are indicative of 5-HT2A receptor interactions *in vivo*.




## Conclusions

EGX-G and EGX-H are promising starting points for discovery of novel non-hallucinogenic 5-HT2AR agonist antidepressants that may exhibit durable efficacy and potential for flexible dosing options in a broad patient population.

- In vitro, they are potent 5-HT2AR agonists with pharmacological profiles distinct from reference hallucinogenic and non-hallucinogenic compounds. EGX-H exhibits 5-HT2AR over 5-HT2BR agonist selectivity with potential for improved cardiac safety.
- In vivo, they demonstrate attenuation of DOI-induced HTR without inducing HTR on their own, indicating in vivo 5-HT2AR interactions and non-hallucinogenic potential. Both compounds show translational antidepressant-like activity.

## Future Directions

- Enhanced in vitro profiling to improve SAR understanding related to hallucinogenic potential and efficacy (e.g., receptor downstream signaling, neuroplasticity assays).
- Continued optimization of novel, potent and selective 5-HT2AR agonist lead molecules (e.g., increase oral bioavailability).

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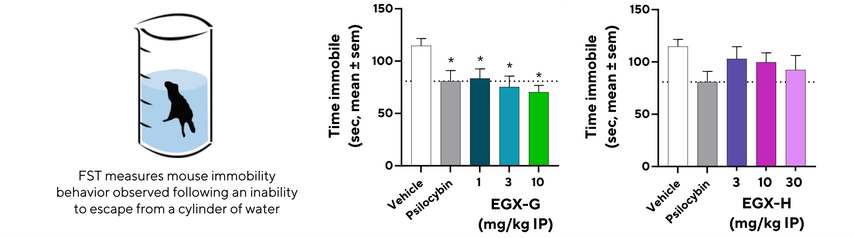
## 3) ANTIDEPRESSANT-LIKE ACTIVITY *IN VIVO*

### EGX-G attenuates immobility in the mouse Forced Swim Test

Antidepressant-like properties of EGX compounds were measured in the Forced Swim Test (A). Male C57BL/6 mice were injected with test compounds and 24h later placed individually in a cylinder of water, where immobility was analyzed for 4 min.

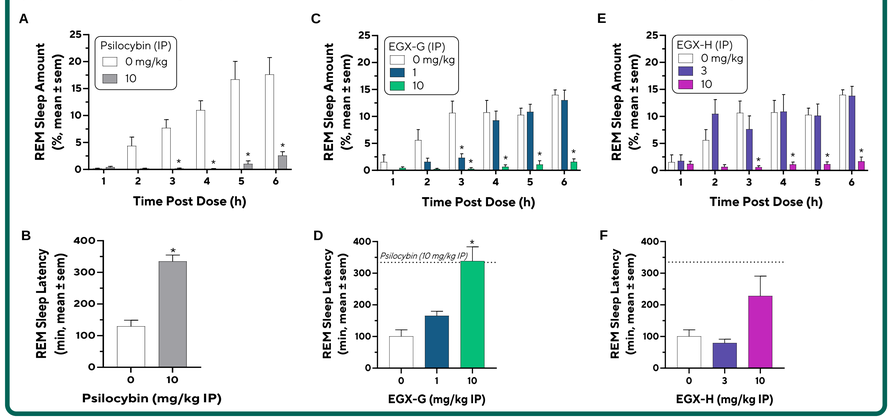
EGX-G significantly reduced immobility at all doses tested (B), similar to psilocybin (5 mg/kg, B, C), indicative of antidepressant-like effects. In contrast, EGX-H (up to 30 mg/kg) did not significantly reduce immobility 24h after dosing (C).




### EGX-G and EGX-H show antidepressant-like effects in Wistar Kyoto rats

Translational antidepressant potential was tested in male Wistar Kyoto rats, which exhibit depression-like phenotypes, including increased rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. REM sleep was measured by EEG and EMG electrodes for 6 hours following administration of compounds.

EGX-G and EGX-H (10 mg/kg) suppressed REM sleep by significantly reducing REM sleep amount (C, E), mimicking the effects of psilocybin (A). Additionally, EGX-G significantly increased REM sleep latency (D), similar to psilocybin (B). EGX-H showed a trend toward increased REM sleep latency (F, p=0.1).

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