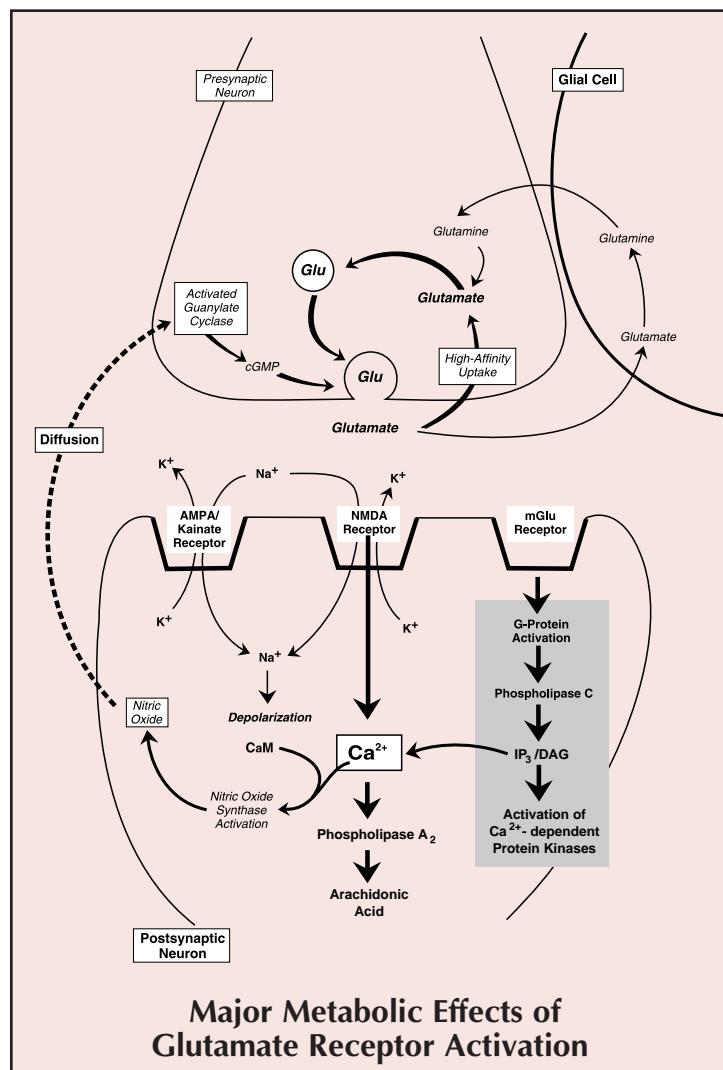


EXCITOTOXIC GLUTAMATE ANALOGS

Glutamate and related excitatory amino acids are released by about 40% of the synapses in the mammalian brain.¹⁻³ The excitatory effect of glutamate and its analogs is caused by the activation of glutamate receptors that directly gate ion channels.⁴⁻⁶ They are known as NMDA (N-methyl-D-aspartic acid), AMPA (α -amino-3-hydroxy-5-methyl-isoxazole-4-propionate), and kainate receptors. Glutamate is also known to activate a metabotropic receptor that couples a GTP-binding protein to intracellular second messengers⁷⁻⁹ and leads to the activation of phospholipase C.⁸

The release of glutamate from the presynaptic neuron is mediated by a Ca^{2+} -dependent exocytosis process.¹⁰ Glutamate is rapidly cleared from the synaptic cleft by a combination of high affinity transport system and a slow diffusion into the neighboring glial cells.¹¹ The figure on the right highlights the major effects of glutamate receptor activation and mechanisms involved in the clearance of glutamate from the synaptic cleft.

Excitotoxic effects of glutamate analogs are primarily achieved through the activation of the ionotropic receptors.^{1,12} The NMDA receptor complex is permeable to Na^+ , K^+ and Ca^{2+} in a voltage-dependent manner. AMPA and kainate receptors have also been shown to form channels for Ca^{2+} .¹³ The Ca^{2+} -mediated effects, resulting from the over-stimulation of ionotropic glutamate receptors, particularly the NMDA receptors, have been implicated in neuronal degeneration. NMDA receptors have also been implicated in long-term potentiation and neuronal plasticity.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ They also play a major role in regulating the number of nerve cells during development by contributing to cell death via their excitotoxic action.¹²



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5 g

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Cat. No. 551900-Y 1 mg

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Cat. No. 165307-Y 250 mg

Conantokin, G, Conus geographus. A non-competitive NMDA receptor antagonist that interacts with the glutamate binding site. This antagonistic activity is attributed to non-competitive inhibition of polyamine responses. Also known as "sleeper peptide." M.W. 2264.2.

Cat. No. 234550-Y 50 µg

Conantokin T, Conus tulipa. A potent NMDA receptor antagonist. Its antagonistic activity is attributed to non-competitive inhibition of polyamine responses. Also known as "sleeper peptide". M.W. 2683.8.

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