ASHBi SEMINAR

Visualizing and manipulating nonhuman primate brain circuits and functions

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Abstract

Non-human primates, especially macaque and marmoset monkeys are excellent models for elucidating highly organized brain function and behavior. However, the application of optogenetics or chemogenetics to monkeys is still limited, preventing a network-level understanding of the higher brain functions. We have been working on the application of a chemogenetic technology Designer Receptors Exclusively Activated by Designer Drugs (DREADDs) to non-human primates. DREADDs afford a means of reversibly and remotely controlling the activity of a neuronal population expressing designer receptors through delivery of their agonist. Combined with PET and MR imaging, DREADDs are now a powerful and attractive tool for non-human primate research to visualize and manipulate specific brain circuits and monitor induced network activity changes. I will summarize the current status and prospects of chemogenetic technology that links primate brain circuits and behavior and opens up possibilities for developing therapeutic applications.

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