



The Interaction of Dopaminergic System and GABA_B Receptor in Feed Intake Regulation of Neonatal Chicken

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Abstract

Animal studies have shown the role of gamma amino butyric acid (GABAergic) and Dopaminergic systems in controlling appetite, but their interactions in birds have not yet been investigated. In this study, 6 experiments were carried out to investigate the interactions between GABAergic and dopaminergic systems in fresh laying hens (Each experiment included 4 groups, 11 chicks per group). Chicks received intracerebroventricular (ICV) injections after 3h of starvation in the following form: In 6 experiments; Each experiment has 4 groups. Group 1 (CON): Received Saline as a control group. Group 2 (DOP): Dopamine neurotransmitters include 125 nmol L-DOPA (levo-dihydroxyphenylalanine) as a dopamine precursor. 6-OHDA, 2.5 nmol as a dopaminergic neurotoxin. SCH23390, 5nmol. AMI-193, 5nmol. NGB2904, 6.4nmol and L-741742, 6nmol. (L-DOPA, 6-OHDA, D1 receptor, D2 receptor, D3 receptor and D4 receptor antagonists), respectively (each of them in one of the experiments). Group 3 (GABA): Baclofen, 0.2µm (GABA_B agonist). Group 4 (DOP+GABA): Receive Baclofen simultaneously with any of the L-DOPA, 6-OHDA, D1, D2, D3 and D4 antagonists, respectively (each of them in one experiments). Cumulative consumption of feed (based on the percentage of body weight) was measured up to 120 minutes after the injection. According to the results, ICV injection of Baclofen alone significantly increased feed intake ($P < 0.05$). None of the dopamine receptors (L-DOPA, 6-OHDA, D1, D2, D3, D4, as well as dopamine synthesis inhibitors) did not affect feed intake ($P > 0.05$). The co-injection of the L-DOPA, 6-OHDA, D1-D4 receptor antagonists + baclofen ($P > 0.05$) showed no significant effect. The results of this study showed that dopaminergic and GABA_B receptors had no interaction in FD3 neonatal layer-type chicken.

Introduction

The physiological importance of the feed intake control system in poultry science is highlighted by the genetic selection of chickens to obtain greater production of meat and egg on the one hand, and layer hens should have lower weight compared to the meat-type chickens on the other hand (Berthoud, 2006; Berridge *et al.*, 2006). The environmental and biological factors can contribute to appetite regulation, but neurochemical mediators recognized as neurotransmitters in various parts of the central nervous system (CNS) such as the striatum,

hypothalamus, amygdala and arcuate nucleus (ARC) are robust to the regulation of feed behavior (Duke, 1986; Denbow, 1994; Denbow, 1985; Rahmani *et al.*, 2021). The arcuate nucleus (ARC) of the hypothalamus contains at least two distinct groups of neurons managing appetite and energy balance, that includes orexigenic and anorexigenic neuropeptides. The orexigenic Neuropeptide such as Neuropeptide Y (NPY) and Agouti-related protein (AgRP) and the anorexigenic Neuropeptide including Pro opiomelanocortine (Agmo *et al.*, 1996; Anderberg *et al.*, 2014). These neuropeptides from the ARC,

project to neurons (second order) in the paraventricular nucleus (PVN), ventromedial hypothalamus area (VMH), and lateral hypothalamic area (LHA) to orchestrate feed intake (Wang *et al.*, 2012). Neurochemical systems, including the gamma amino butyric acid (GABA), cholinergic, opioid, and glutamatergic systems have also been shown to regulate feeding behavior (Zendehdel & Hassanpour, 2014; Shojaei *et al.*, 2020; Motaghi *et al.*, 2021). In addition, Dopamine receptors are distributed within the substantia nigra, ventral tegmental area (VTA), nucleus accumbence, hypothalamus, and PVN which are involved in perception, excitement, and feed intake regulation. (Zendehdel *et al.*, 2019; Shahri, 2020; Zendehdel *et al.*, 2016; Zendehdel *et al.*, 2014). Dopamine (DA) has at least five types of receptors called D1, D2, D3, D4, and D5. It has been demonstrated that the effect of D1 receptor in the brain on feed intake has evolutionarily increased in broiler-type hens, while other receptors (D2-D4) may play no role in the regulation of appetite (Beaulieu & Gainetdinov, 2011). For instance, feed intake was reduced by the receptors of D1 and D2 in rats (Carew *et al.*, 2004).

GABA is a major inhibitory neurotransmitter and is widely distributed in the CNS of vertebrates (Sivilotti & Nistri, 1991). GABA has three types of receptors include GABA_A, GABA_B, and GABA_C. Accumulating evidence shows that energy balance and eating behavior can be regulated by the GABAergic system in a broiler (Denbow, 1991), layer (Zendehdel *et al.*, 2017; Bungo *et al.*, 2003) and turkey (Zendehdel & Hassanpour, 2014). Moreover, intracerebroventricular (ICV) injection of GABA_B agonist one of three GABA receptors that is a metabotropic receptor belongs to G-protein coupled receptors (Jonaidi *et al.*, 2012) could amplify cumulative feed intake in rat and layer-type hens but not in broilers (Zendehdel *et al.*, 2009).

Neuroanatomical studies about the dopaminergic (DAergic) and GABAergic systems have revealed a potential link between these mediators (Møller *et al.*, 2019; Lopes *et al.*, 2019). Based on published evidence, GABA_B receptors modulate the firing pattern of DA neurons in the substantia nigra (Lacey *et al.*, 1988). Furthermore, the DA firing rate has been reduced by systemic administration of GABA_B receptor agonist baclofen in VTA (Erhardt *et al.*, 2002; Nimitvilai *et al.*, 2012). Recently, Baik (2021) demonstrated that the dopaminergic control of feed intake in the hypothalamic arcuate nucleus was located in the same place vesicular GABA transporter and GABA and dopamine were released together in this area in rodents. Based on the literature, no evidence was observed regarding the interaction between GABAergic and dopaminergic systems on the intake of feed in domestic fowls. Moreover, there is a difference between the broilers and the layers

with respect to central regulatory factors of feed intake in the brain. For example, agouti-related protein could amplify the consumption of the cumulative feed in layers but not in broilers (Denbow, 1994). Likewise, the effects of GABA_B receptors on feeding behavior in layer-type birds are stronger than those in broilers (Zendehdel & Hassanpour, 2014). Accordingly, the aim of this study was to investigate the effects of the central GABA_B receptors and DAergic system on the regulation of feed intake in feed-deprived layer chicken (FD3) after ICV injection.

Materials and Methods

Animals

A total of 264 one-day-old male layer-type chickens (Hy-line) were bought from a local hatchery (Morghak co. Iran). All chickens were kept at a temperature of 30±1°C with 50±2% humidity. Birds at 2 days of age were randomly transferred to individual cages. Chickens were then allowed free access to drinking fresh water and fed a starter diet formulated to contain 21% crude protein and 2850 kcal/kg metabolizable energy. On the 5th day, three hours before the injection, the chickens were feed deprived (FD3) but allowed free access to drinking water. Animal handling and experimental procedures were performed according to the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals by the National Institutes of Health (USA) and approved by the research committee, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran (IAUSRB:2021.03.15).

Experimental drugs

L-DOPA (levo-dihydroxyphenylalanine as the precursor of dopamine), 6-OHDA (6-hydroxydopamine as dopaminergic neurotoxin), SCH23390 (D1 receptor antagonist), AMI-193 (D2 receptor antagonist), NGB2904 (D3 receptor antagonist), L-741,742 (D4 receptor antagonist), Baclofen (GABA_B receptor agonist) and Evans blue were obtained from Sigma (US company) and Tocris (UK company). Medicines were first dissolved in absolute DMSO (Dimethyl sulfoxide) and then diluted using 0.85% saline containing Evans blue at a ratio of 1:250. According to previous studies, DMSO with this ratio did not show a cytotoxic effect (Blevins *et al.*, 2002; Qi *et al.*, 2008). DMSO mixed with saline was served as a control solution for all experiments.

Intracerebroventricular injection procedure

Prior to the start of the study, the chickens were weighed and distributed among treatment groups based on their body weight so the mean body weight between treatment groups was as uniform as possible. To investigate the effects of GABA_B receptors and

dopaminergic system on the central control of feed intake in layer chicken, six experiments were designed, each including four treatment groups within 11 replicates per group ($n = 44$ chickens per experiment). In each experiment, chickens received ICV injection once using a microsyringe (Hamilton, Switzerland) without anesthesia according to the techniques of Davis *et al.* (1979) and Furuse *et al.* (1997). In this method, the head of the birds was held using an acrylic device while the bill holder was at a 45° position and the calvarium was held as parallel to the surface of the table as possible (Van Tienhoven & Juhasz, 1962). An orifice was made in a plate where the skull over the right lateral ventricle was directly overlaid by this plate. Finally, the microsyringe was placed in the ventricle through this hole and the needle tip penetrated 4 mm below the skin of the skull (Jonaidi & Noori, 2012). It is well documented that no injection-induced physiological stress is observed in neonatal chicks when using this method (Saito *et al.*, 2005). The volume of each ICV injection of vehicle or drug solution was 10 μ L/chick. Right away after each injection of fD3, chickens were returned to their cages and received fresh feed and water (pre-weighted). Cumulative intake of feed (gr) was recorded 30, 60, and 120 min following the injection. Consumption of feed was computed as a percentage of body weight to reduce the effect of the body weight on the volume of feed intake. At the end of the experiments, to assess the injection accuracy, the birds were sacrificed by decapitation and the placement accuracy of the injection in the lateral ventricle was verified via the presence of Evans blue followed by slicing of the frozen brain tissue. In each group, 11 chickens received an injection, but just data of the birds were utilized for analysis where the dye was found in their lateral ventricle (11 birds per group). All experiments were performed from 8:00 A.M. until 3:30 P.M.

In addition, in each experiment, we had four groups with 11 chickens in each. On day 5 of age, when the chicken was transferred to the individual cages, off feed procedure started at 8 A.M. 1st chicken was deprived of feed at 8:00 A.M, then 2nd chicken at 8:03 was deprived of feed, and so on 3rd chicken at 8.06, etc. Then in next three hours at 11 o'clock, chicken one, which was off feed for 3 hours, received the injection, and feed was provided for it. At 11.03, 2nd chicken and at 11.06 3rd chick and so on were injected and had feed. At 11:30, feed intake for chicken one was measured, 11.33 for chicken 2, and 11.36 for chicken three, etc. In each experiment, there were 44 chickens, so it was a highly complex procedure since after 60 min (at 12 o'clock), chicken 1 was on 60 min post-injection while another chick was at 30 min post-injection. Bypassing the time, it got more complicated. At 1:00 pm, the feed intake for chicken 1 finished (after 120 min), at 1.03 for 2nd

chick, 1.06 for 3rd chick, and so on. So, this timetable seems confusing, but all procedures have been done with very high seriousness. Also, each experiment was done one after another. Also, each bird was just used once in this study. Moreover, for the sake of clarity, it should be mentioned that the experiments were done on different days. Thus, the statement "All experimental procedures were done from 8:00 A.M. until 3:30 P.M" was replaced with "Each experiment was performed on chickens from 08:00 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. on the designated day for that experiment.

Feeding experiments

In this study, a total of 6 experiments were designed for 5 days old chicken, each with 4 treatment groups ($n=48$ per experiment). In experiment 1, four groups of FD3 birds received a either of the following Intracerebroventricular injections(A) control solution, (B) L-DOPA (DA precursor, 125 nmol), (C) Baclofen (GABA_B receptor agonist, 0.2 μ g), and (D) L-DOPA (125 nmol) + Baclofen (0.2 μ g) spontaneously. In experiment 2, they received a dose of the ICV administration of (A) control solution, (B) 6-OHDA (as a dopaminergic neurotoxin, 2.5 nmol) (C) Baclofen (0.2 μ g), and (D) 6-OHDA (2.5 nmol) + Baclofen (0.2 μ g) spontaneously. In experiment 3, they received a dose of the ICV administration of (A) control solution, (B) SCH23390 (D1 receptor antagonist, 5 nmol) (C) Baclofen (0.2 μ g) or (D) SCH23390 (5 nmol) + Baclofen (0.2 μ g) spontaneously. In experiment 4, they received a dose of the ICV administration of (A) control solution, (B) AMI-193 (D2 receptor antagonist, 5 nmol) (C) Baclofen (0.2 μ g) and (D) AMI-193 (5 nmol) + Baclofen (0.2 μ g) spontaneously. In experiment 5, they received a dose of the ICV administration of (A) control solution, (B) NGB2904 (D3 receptor antagonist, 6.4 nmol), (C) Baclofen (0.2 μ g) and (D) NGB2904 (6.4 nmol) + Baclofen (0.2 μ g) spontaneously. In experiment 6, they received a dose of the ICV administration of (A) control solution, (B) L-741,742 (D4 receptor antagonist, 6 nmol), (C) Baclofen (0.2 μ g) and (D) L-741,742 (6 nmol) + Baclofen (0.2 μ g) spontaneously. Each experiment has done one after another. Each bird was injected once only. These doses of drugs were calculated based on previous studies (Zendehdel *et al.*, 2017; Zendehdel *et al.*, 2016; Jonaidi *et al.*, 2002; Tajalli *et al.*, 2006; Zendehdel *et al.*, 2014) and our pilot experiments (unpublished data).

Statistical analysis

The data were expressed as mean \pm SEM (standard error of the mean). a two-way repeated-measures (ANOVA) was used to assess cumulative intake of feed (as a percentage of body weight) SPSS 16.0 for Windows (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) was used for the data analysis. Tukey-Kramer test was used to

compare the means of any treatment showing the main effect by ANOVA. $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results

Figure 1. shows the effects of central GABA_B receptors and DAergic system on cumulative intake of feed in FD3 neonatal layer-type chicken. ICV injection of the

sub-effective dose of the L-DOPA (125 nmol) did not show any impact on the intake of feed ($P > 0.05$), while the effective dose of Baclofen (0.2 μ g) considerably improved the intake of feed in the treatment groups as compared with controls ($P < 0.05$). Co-injection of the L-DOPA + Baclofen did not show any impact on feed intake in FD3 neonatal layer-type chickens as compared Baclofen group ($P > 0.05$).

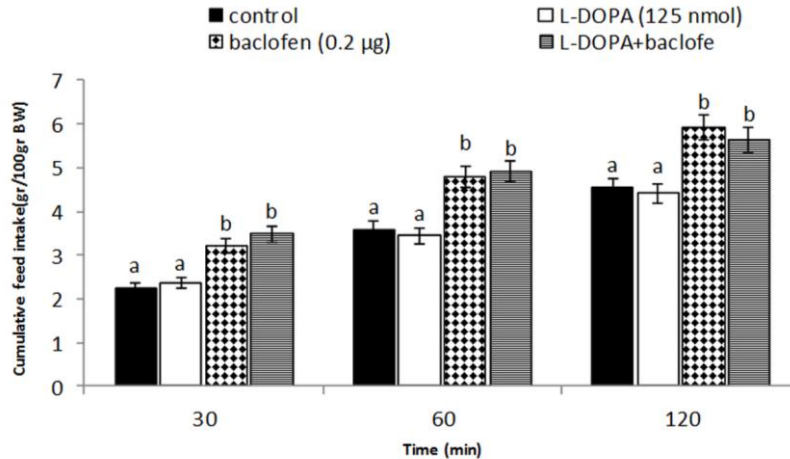


Figure 1. Impact of ICV administration of L-DOPA, Baclofen and their combination on cumulative intake of feed (g/100g BW) in neonatal layer-type chickens. LDOPA: dopamine precursor, Baclofen: GABA_B receptor agonist. The data are presented as mean \pm SEM. Different letters (a and b) represent the statistically significant differences between treatment groups ($P < 0.05$).

In experiment 2 (figure 2), ICV administration of the sub-effective dose of the 6-OHDA (2.5 nmol) did not have a substantial effect on feeding behavior ($P > 0.05$) while hyperphagia was observed by the injection of the Baclofen (0.2 μ g) compared to

controls ($P < 0.05$). Co-administration of the 6-OHDA + Baclofen considerably enhanced GABA_B receptors agonist-induced feed intake in FD3 neonatal layer-type chicken ($P < 0.05$) as compared with controls.

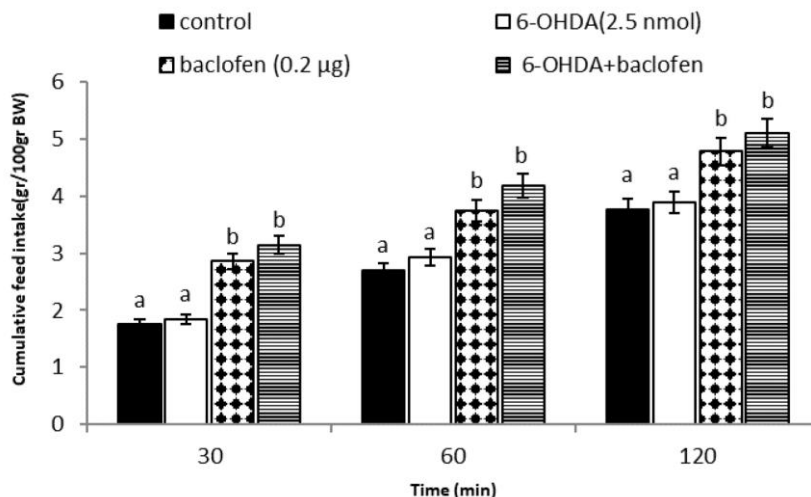


Figure 2. Impact of ICV administration of 6-OHDA, Baclofen and their combination on cumulative intake of feed (g/100g BW) in neonatal layer-type birds. 6-OHDA: a dopaminergic neurotoxin, Baclofen: GABA_B receptor agonist. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM. Different letters (a-b) denote the statistically significant differences between treatment groups ($P < 0.05$).

The results obtained from experiment 3 (figure 3) demonstrated that no substantial effect was found by ICV administration of the sub-effective dose of the SCH23390 (5 nmol) compared to controls ($P > 0.05$). ICV administration of the Baclofen (0.2 μ g) enhanced

feed intake in FD3 neonatal layer-type chickens as compared with controls ($P < 0.05$). Also, co-injection of the SCH23390 + Baclofen dramatically induced hyperphagia in FD3 neonatal layer-type chickens as compared with controls ($P < 0.05$).

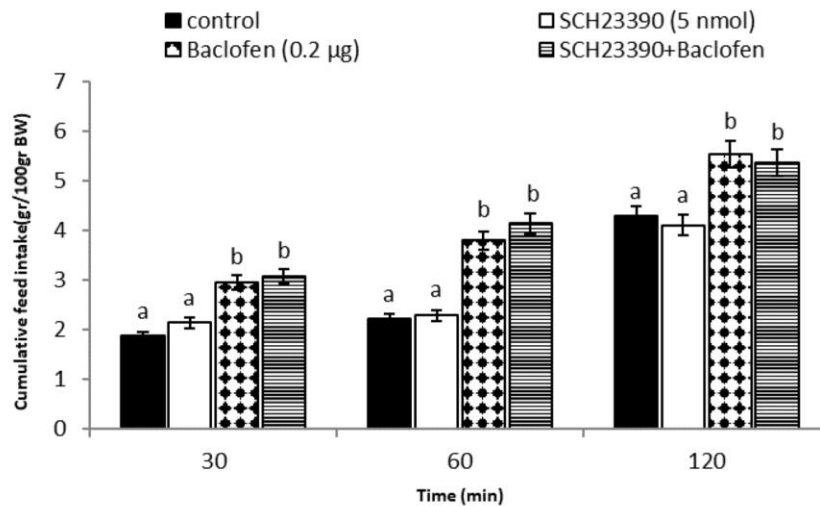


Figure 3. Impact of ICV administration of SCH23390, Baclofen and their combination on cumulative intake of feed (g/100g BW) in neonatal layer type birds. SCH23390: D1 receptor antagonist, Baclofen: GABA_B receptor agonist. The data are presented as mean \pm SEM. Different letters (a-b) represent the statistically significant differences between treatment groups ($P < 0.05$)

In experiment 4 (figure 4), ICV injection of a sub-effective dose of the AMI-193 (5 nmol) did not show any impact on feeding behavior ($P > 0.05$), while Baclofen (0.2 μ g) dramatically enhanced intake of

feed as compared with controls ($P < 0.05$). Co-injection of the AMI-193 + Baclofen did not show any impact on feed intake in FD3 neonatal layer-type chickens compared to the Baclofen group ($P > 0.05$).

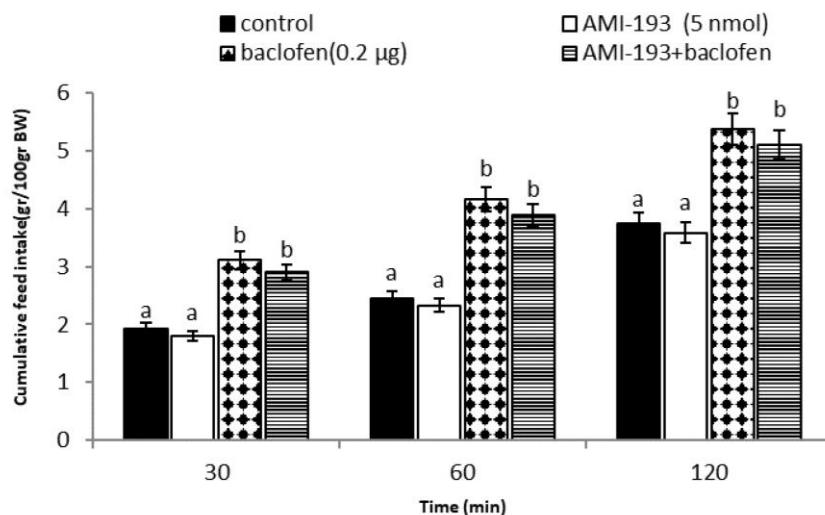


Figure 4. Effect of ICV administration of AMI-193, Baclofen and their combination on cumulative intake of feed (g/100g BW) in neonatal layer-type birds. AMI-193: D2 receptor antagonist, Baclofen: GABA_B receptor agonist. The data are presented as mean \pm SEM. Different letters (a and b) denote the statistically significant differences between treatment groups ($P < 0.05$).

As shown in Figure 5, ICV administration of NGB2904 (6.4 nmol) did not show any impact on

the consumption of feed compared to controls ($P > 0.05$), while hyperphagia was found by ICV

administration of the Baclofen (0.2 µg) ($P < 0.05$). Co-administration of the NGB2904 + Baclofen did not have any impact on the cumulative intake of

feed induced by Baclofen in FD3 neonatal layer-type birds ($P > 0.05$).

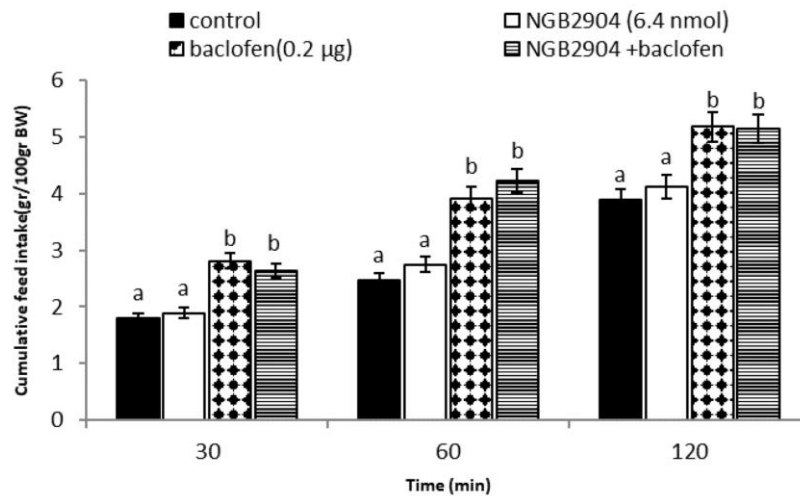


Figure 5. Impact of ICV administration of NGB2904, Baclofen and their combination on cumulative intake of feed (g/100g BW) in neonatal layer-type chickens. NGB2904: D3 receptor antagonist, Baclofen: GABA_B receptor agonist. The data are presented as mean \pm SEM. Different letters (a and b) show the statistically significant differences between treatment groups ($P < 0.05$).

In experiment 6, ICV administration of a sub-effective dose of the L-741,742 (6 nmol) did not have any impact on feed consumption compared to controls ($P > 0.05$). No significant effect on feed

intake was found by a combination of the L-741,742 +Baclofen (0.2 µg) in FD3 neonatal layer-type chickens as compared with controls ($P > 0.05$) (figure 6).

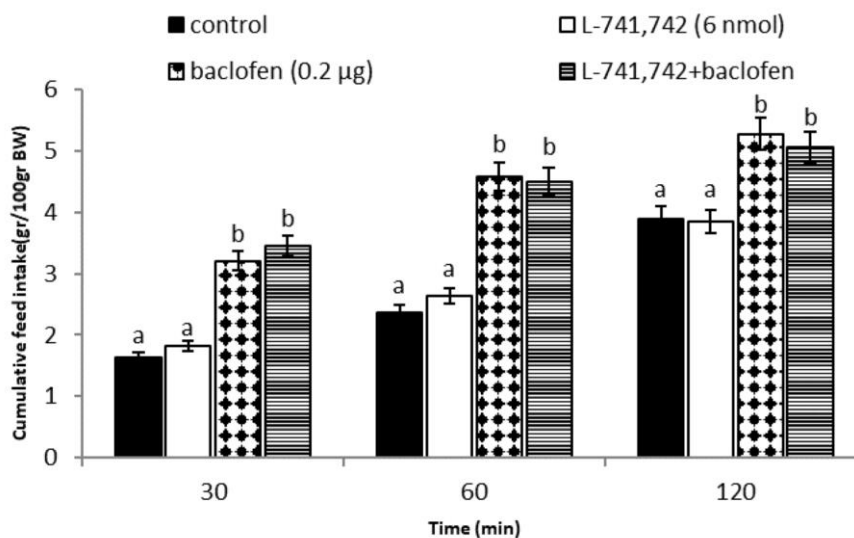


Figure 6. Impact of ICV administration of L-741,742, Baclofen and their combination on cumulative intake of feed (g/100g BW) in neonatal layer-type chickens. L-741,742: D4 receptor antagonist, Baclofen: GABA_B receptor agonist. The data are presented as mean \pm SEM. Various letters (a and b) represent the statistically significant differences between treatment groups ($P < 0.05$).

Discussion

This study was designed to investigate the probable effects of GABA_B receptors and DAergic systems on feedintake regulation in neonatal layer-type chickens.

So, we used a sub-effective dose of dopamine to achieve the real effect of GABA_B receptors on dopamine receptors in little layer birds. Obtained data in experiments revealed that ICV injection of

Baclofen (GABA_B receptors agonists) solely increased, while the sub-effective dose of dopaminergic receptors was ineffective in cumulative feed intake in FD3 neonatal chicks. It has been shown that GABA_B receptors are neuronal regulators of feed intake in rats (Chen *et al.*, 2015), turkeys (Denbow, 1991), sheep and pigs (Denbow *et al.*, 1983). However, it is also clear that significant functional differences are observed between the meat-type and layer-type chickens in terms of the regulation of feed intake (Alizadeh *et al.*, 2015). For example, ICV administration of Baclofen did not show any impact on the intake of feed in broilers (Jonaidi *et al.*, 2002; Tajalli *et al.*, 2006; Zendehtdel *et al.*, 2009). It is proposed that GABA receptors act in several mechanisms in a feeding system. In fact, it may inhibit the ventromedial hypothalamus (VMH) as satiety center. GABA may act through loss of inhibition caused by feeding centers of the brain using the inhibitory GABAergic projection from the medial accumbens to the lateral hypothalamic area (LHA). Finally, direct excitatory effect of GABA can have an orexigenic impact on some areas of the brain like the hypothalamus (Jonaidi *et al.*, 2002; Zendehtdel *et al.*, 2017). There are interesting evidence suggesting that D1 receptor stimulation may promote satiety in rats (Terry *et al.*, 1995). D1 receptors are considered anorexigenic factors, while D3 and D4 receptors did not affect broiler cockerels (Zendehtdel & Hassanpour, 2014; Emadi *et al.*, 2021) and central administration of DA showed no effect on Leghorn and Turkey chicks (Denbow *et al.*, 1983). However, the results of this study showed that ICV injection of DA receptors (D1, D2, D3, D4, L-DOPA, and 6-OHDA) in a dose-dependent manner did not modify feed intake in FD3 neonatal layer-type chicks (Figures 1, 2). Nevertheless, DA modulates the release of lots of neurotransmitters in appetite control in various regions of the central nervous system. A previous study examined an available interaction between D1 dopaminergic and GABA_A receptors regarding the feed intake regulation of neonatal layers (Hashemzadeh *et al.*, 2018). It has been identified, that cannabinoids may alter DA transmission via long-term mediated synaptic depression of

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GABAergic neurons in the ventral tegmental area, substantia nigra, basal ganglia, and Striatum projection (Fernández-Ruiz *et al.*, 2010). However, the GABA agonist, muscimol, led to dopamine-dependent increases in locomotion, aggression, and the intake of feed in the VTA (Scheel-Krüger *et al.*, 1980). GABAergic generation of intense appetitive eating behavior was the independence of modulatory dopamine signals within the nucleus accumbens of rats (Richard *et al.*, 2013). In agreement with our study, Bungo *et al.* (2010) reported that ICV injection of dopaminergic receptors had no effect on feed intake in layer-type chicken, but suggesting that dopamine might have interaction with other neurotransmitters in the central regulation of appetite in layer-type birds (Bungo *et al.*, 2010). The results of the present study indicated that GABA_B induced hyperphagia, but there was no modulation by the DAergic system in layer-type chicks.

However, humoral and neural pathways of highly integrated regulatory mechanisms exist for the regulation of appetite involving complex interplay between peripheral tissues and the central nervous system. Within the CNS, the hypothalamus and neurotransmitters can contribute to both appetite regulation and energy balance (Richards *et al.*, 2010). This study examined the effects of the interaction of the dopaminergic system and GABA_B receptors on the regulation of feed intake in layer-type chickens. A better understanding of the neural circuits related to monitoring feed intake and energy balance and how their expression can be regulated by both nutritional and hormonal stimuli can provide new insights into current layer breeding and management practices. However, further investigation is required to elucidate the underlying cellular and molecular signaling pathways in the interconnection between GABAergic and DAergic systems on feeding behavior in neonatal layer chicks.

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