



# EFFECT OF *N,N*-DIMETHYLTRYPTAMINE ON NEURITE OUTGROWTH IN PC12 CELL LINE: CHARACTERIZATION AND MECHANISMS

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CÁTEDRA UNESCO DE PRODUCTOS NATURALES NEUROACTIVOS,  
INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES BIOLÓGICAS CLEMENTE ESTABLE



**arché**

NÚCLEO INTERDISCIPLINARIO  
DE ESTUDIOS SOBRE PSICODÉLICOS

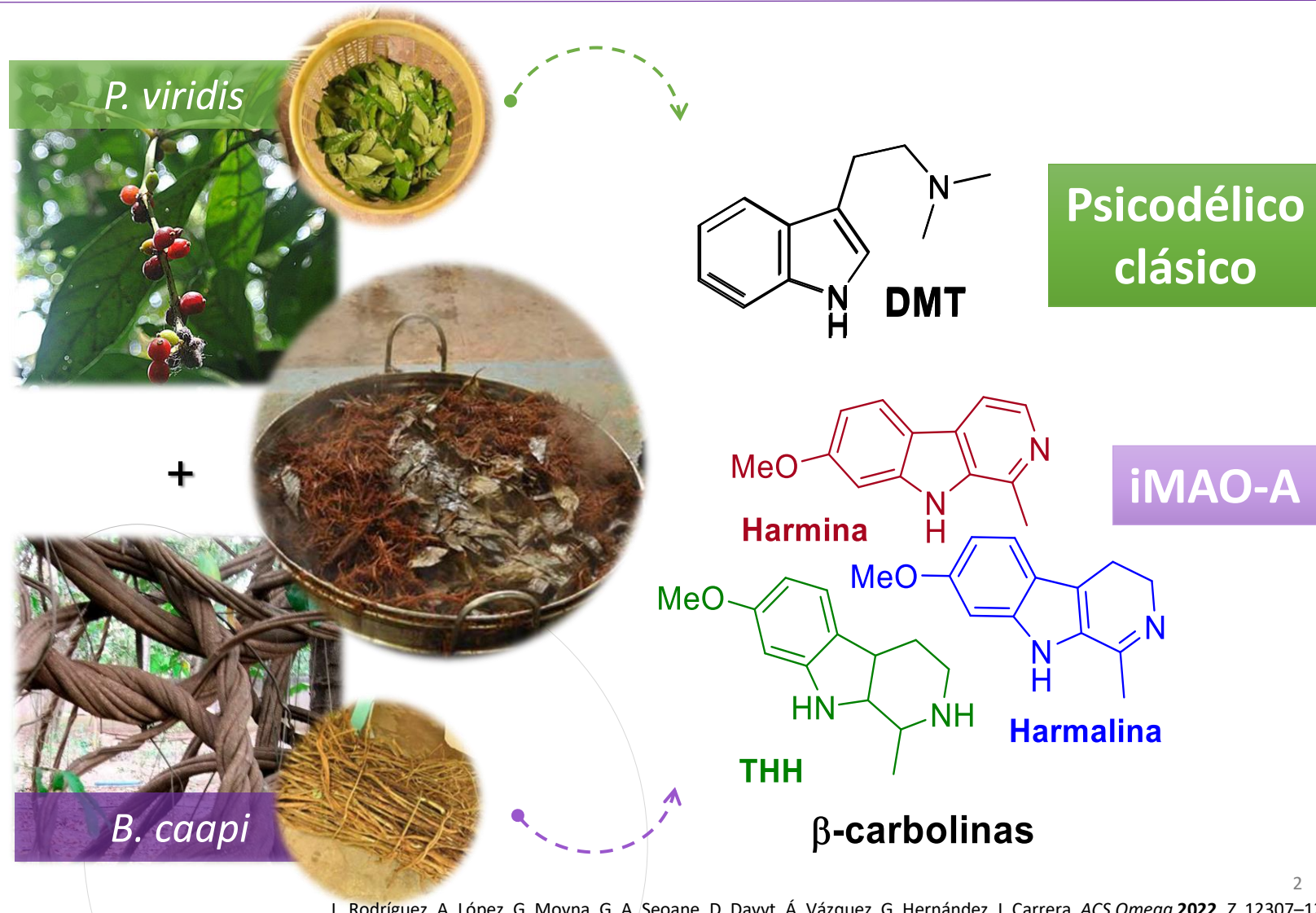
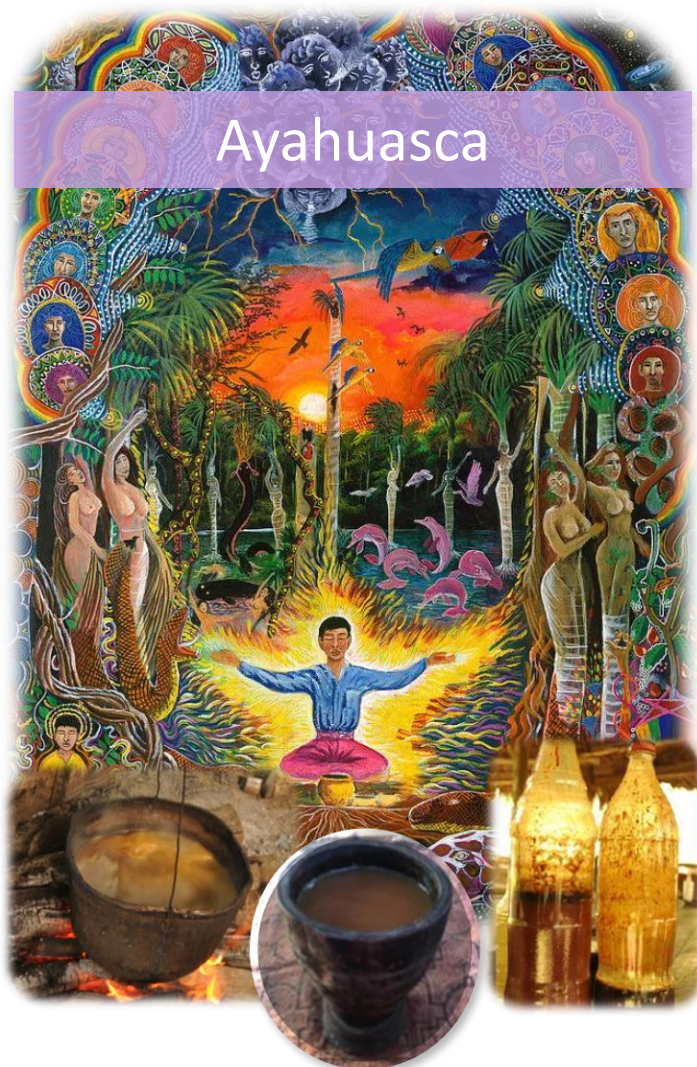


Ministerio  
**de Educación  
y Cultura**



# INTRODUCTION

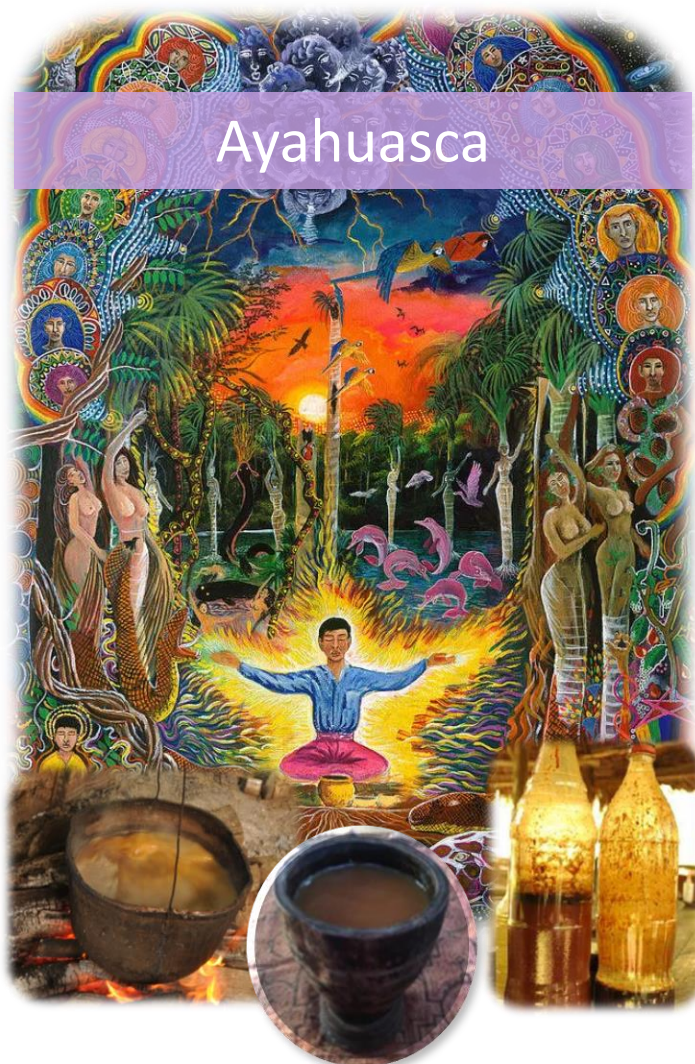
## DMT and its therapeutic potential





# INTRODUCTION

## DMT and its therapeutic potential



Ayahuasca

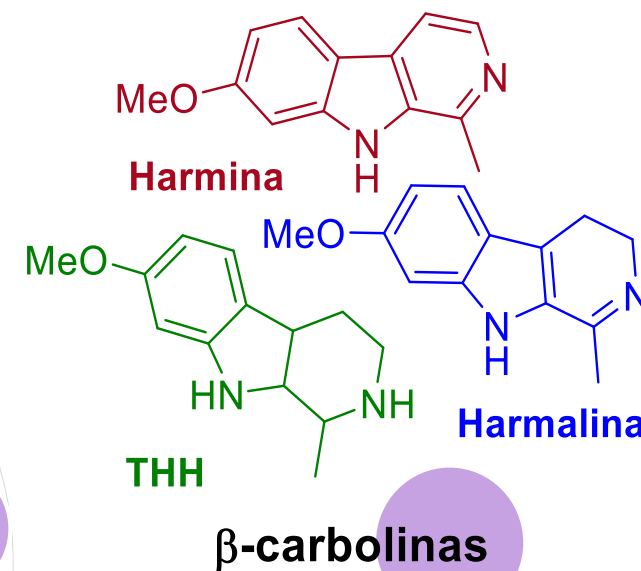
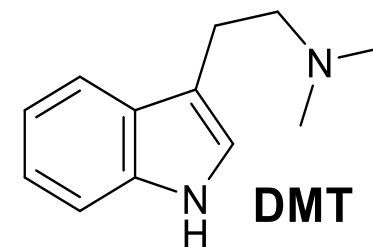
## Therapeutic potential

### Preclinical:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance use disorder
- Alzheimer's disease

### Clinical:

- Phase I trials: overall safety, PK, subjective effects, etc.





# INTRODUCTION

## DMT and its therapeutic potential

### Psychedelics Promote Structural and Functional Neural Plasticity

Calvin Ly,<sup>1</sup> Alexandra C. Greb,<sup>1</sup> Lindsay P. Cameron,<sup>2</sup> Jonathan M. Wong,<sup>2</sup> Eden V. Barragan,<sup>2</sup> Paige C. Wilson,<sup>3</sup> Kyle F. Burbach,<sup>4</sup> Sina Soltanzadeh Zarandi,<sup>1</sup> Alexander Sood,<sup>5</sup> Michael R. Paddy,<sup>3</sup> Whitney C. Duim,<sup>1</sup> Megan Y. Dennis,<sup>4,6,7</sup> A. Kimberley McAllister,<sup>5,8,9</sup> Kassandra M. Ori-McKenney,<sup>3</sup> John A. Gray,<sup>5,8</sup> and David E. Olson<sup>1,5,6,10,\*</sup>

C. Ly et al., *Cell Rep.*, vol. 23, no. 11, pp. 3170–3182, **2018**.

### Psychoplastogens: A Promising Class of Plasticity-Promoting Neurotherapeutics

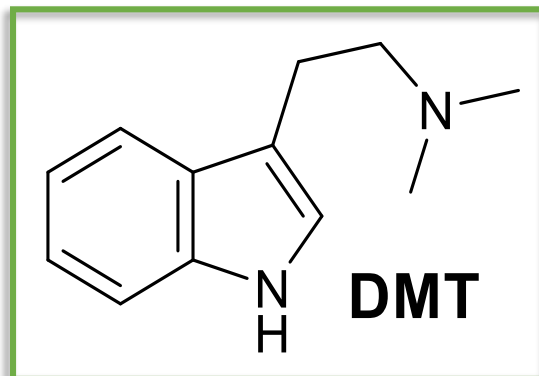
David E Olson<sup>1,2,3</sup>  D. E. Olson, *J. Exp. Neurosci.* **2018**, 12, 1–4.

- **Neuritogenesis and spinogenesis** in rat cortical cultures
- **Spinogenesis** in rat's PFC

C. Ly et al., *Cell Rep.*, vol. 23, no. 11, pp. 3170–3182, **2018**.

Regulates adult **neurogenesis** *in vitro* and *in vivo*

J. A. Morales-Garcia, et al., *Transl. Psychiatry* **2020**, 10, 331.



**Anti-AD effects** *in vivo* and *in vitro*

D. Cheng, et al., *Alzheimers. Res. Ther.* **2024**, 3, 1–16.

Modulates innate and adaptive **inflammatory responses** *in vitro*

A. Szabo, et al., *PLoS One* **2014**, 9, 1–12.

**Anti-ischemic properties** in rat brain

N. Ye, et al., *J. Med. Chem.* **2020**, 63, 15187–15217;  
Í. Szabó, et al., *Neuropharmacology* **2021**, 192, 108612.

Increases cell survival **against hypoxia** *in vitro*

A. Szabo, et al., *Front. Neurosci.* **2016**, 10, 1–11.



# INTRODUCTION

DMT and its therapeutic potential: *main pharmacological targets*

## Psychedelics Promote Structural and Functional Neural Plasticity

Calvin Ly,<sup>1</sup> Alexandra C. Greb,<sup>1</sup> Kyle F. Burbach,<sup>4</sup> Sina Soltanz,<sup>1</sup> Megan Y. Dennis,<sup>4,6,7</sup> A. Kimbrell,<sup>1</sup> and David E. Olson<sup>1,5,6,10,\*</sup>

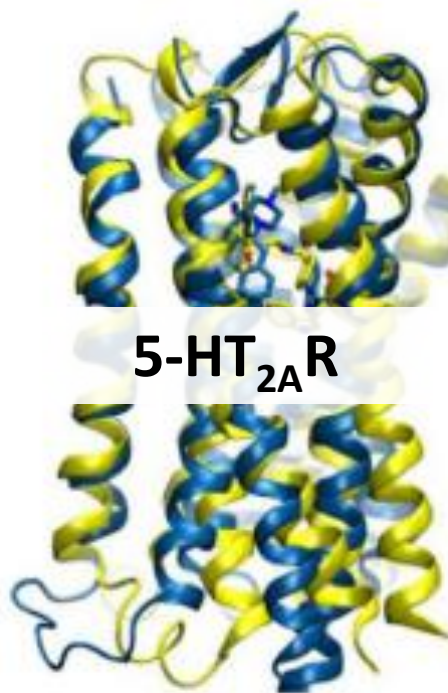
C. Ly et al., *Cell Rep.*, vol. 23, 1

## Psychoplastogenic Effects of Psychedelics Promote Structural and Functional Neural Plasticity

David E Olson<sup>1,2,3,10</sup>

- **Neurotrophic factors** in rat cortical
- **Spino-genic**

C. Ly et al., *Cell Rep.*, vol. 23, no. 11, pp. 3170–3182, **2018**.

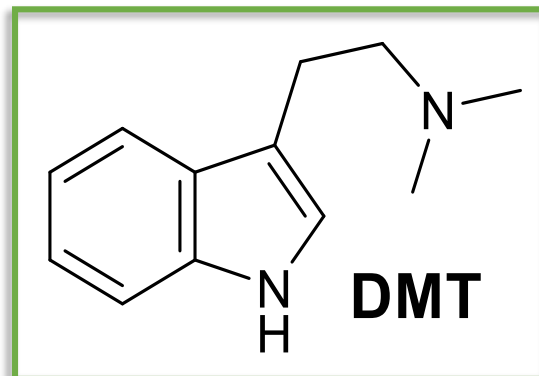


5-HT<sub>2A</sub>R

J. A. Morales-Garcia, et al., *7*  
Eden V. Barragan,<sup>2</sup> Paige C. Wilson,<sup>3</sup>  
R. Paddy,<sup>3</sup> Whitney C. Duim,<sup>1</sup>  
Jenney,<sup>3</sup> John A. Gray,<sup>5,8</sup>

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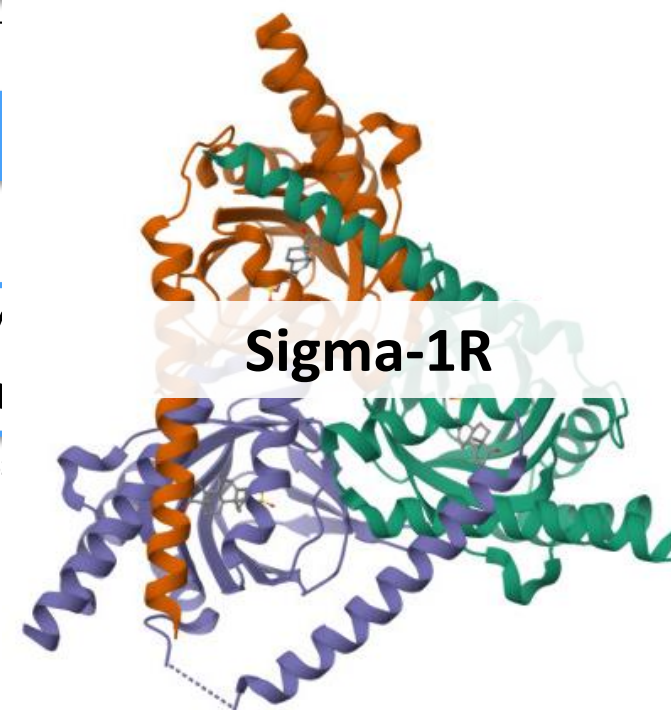
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Regulates adult **neurogenesis** *in vitro* and *in vivo*

J. A. Morales-Garcia, et al., *7*

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Sigma-1R

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5187–15217;  
192, 108612.

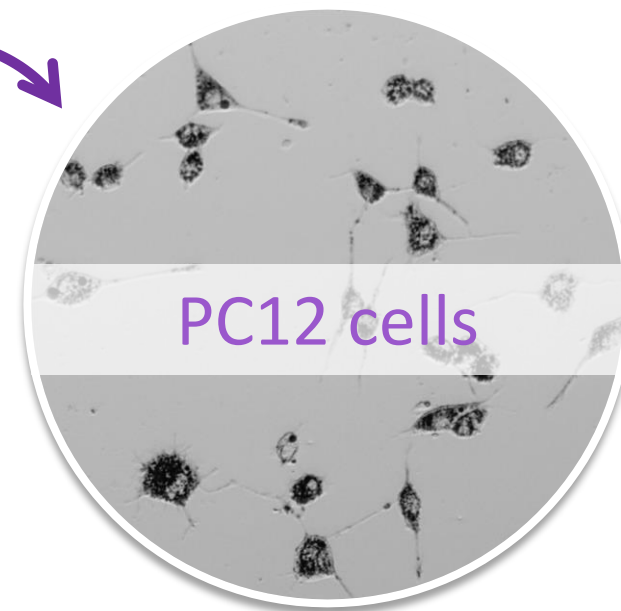
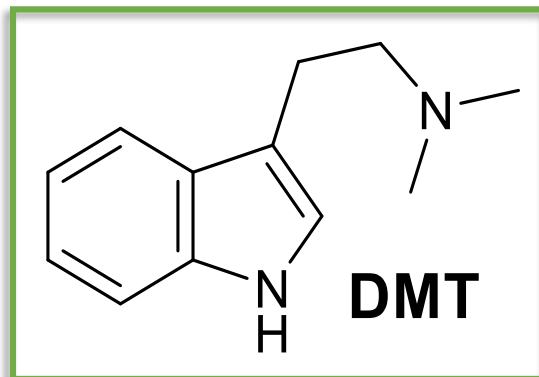
Increases cell survival **against hypoxia** *in vitro*

A. Szabo, et al., *Front. Neurosci.* **2016**, 10, 1–11.



# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

Neuritogenesis?





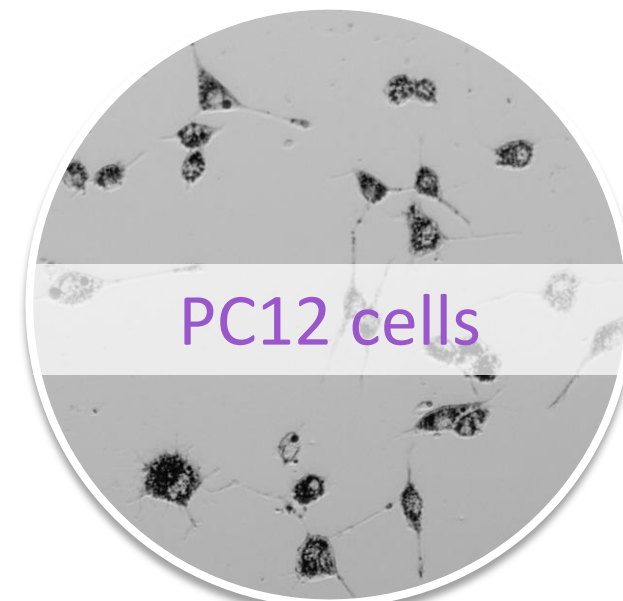
# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

Well-established catecholaminergic **cell line** obtained from a rat **pheochromocytoma**

Able to **synthesize, take up, store and release catecholamines** (mainly dopamine and epinephrine).

When stimulated with Nerve Growth Factor (**NGF**), they differentiate to **neuron-like cells** (dPC12):

- cease division
- extend neurites
- form synapse-like structures
- show electrical excitability properties



## SUITABLE MODEL TO STUDY

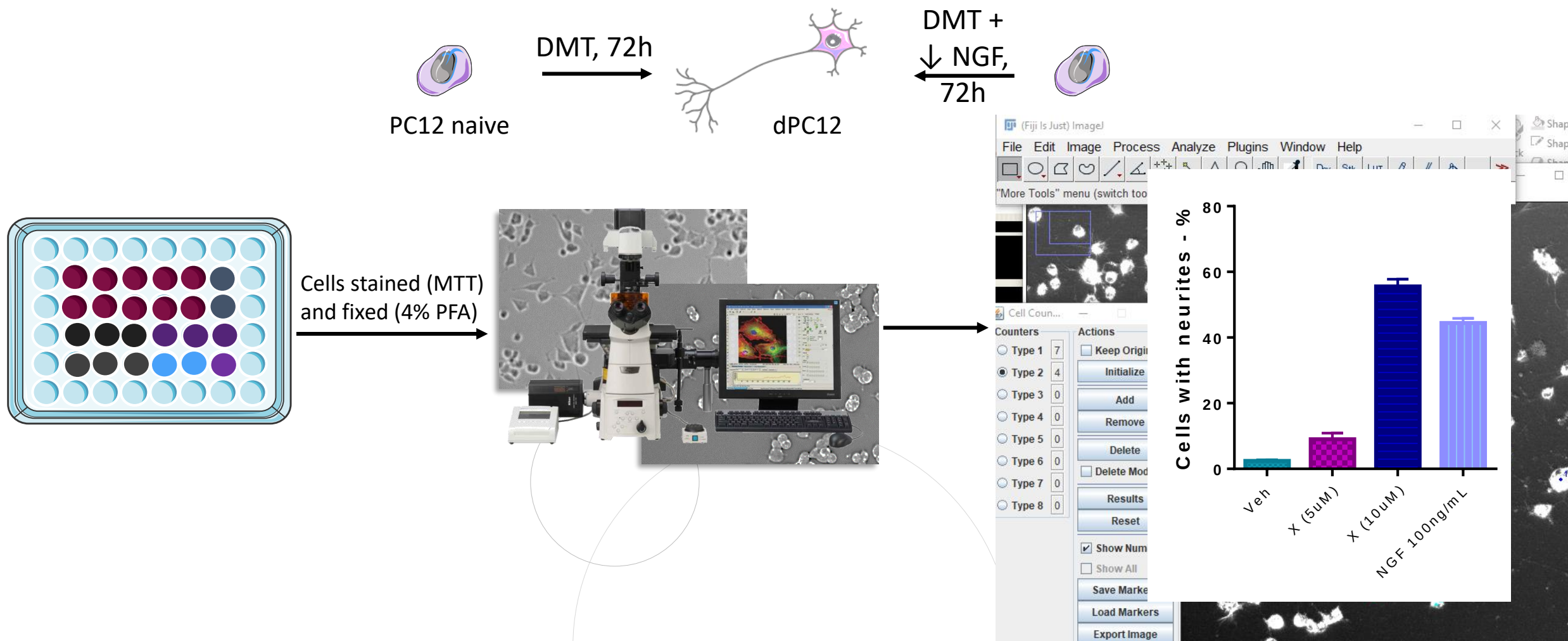
- ✓ Neuronal differentiation
- ✓ Neurite outgrowth
- ✓ Molecular mechanisms





# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

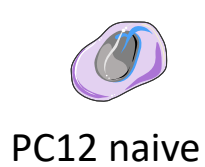






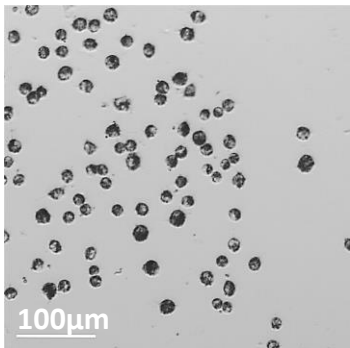
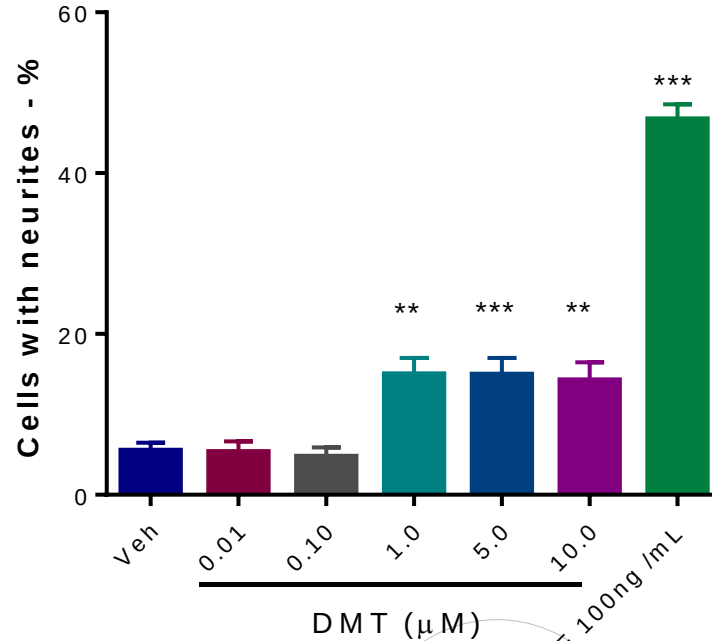
# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Characterization

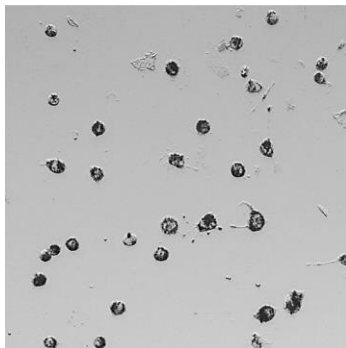


DMT, 72h

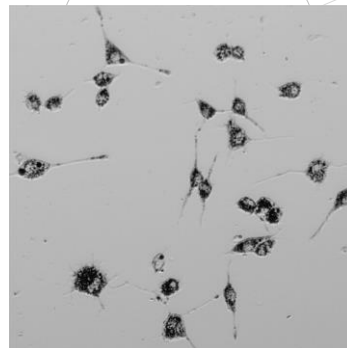
✓ DMT promotes neuritogenesis in PC12 cells



Vehicle



DMT 5μM

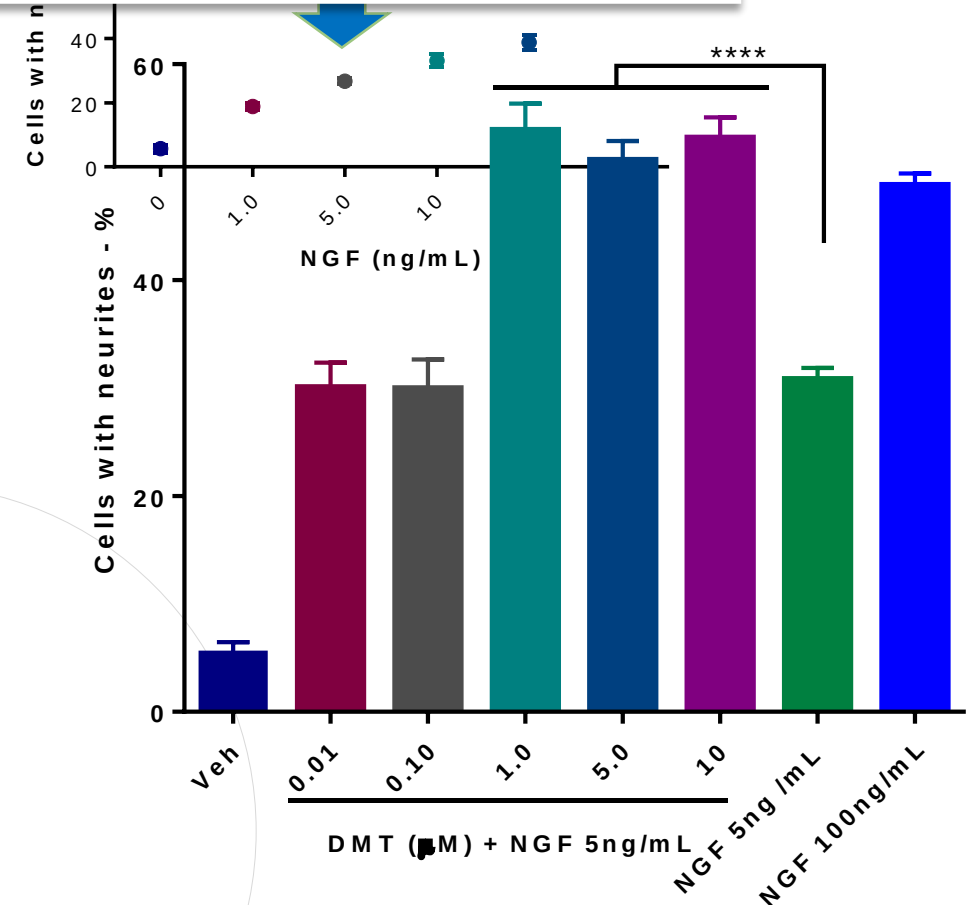


NGF 100ng/mL

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

✓ DMT shows an additive-like effect with NGF

DMT +  
↓ NGF,  
72h





# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

### Pharmacological inhibitors

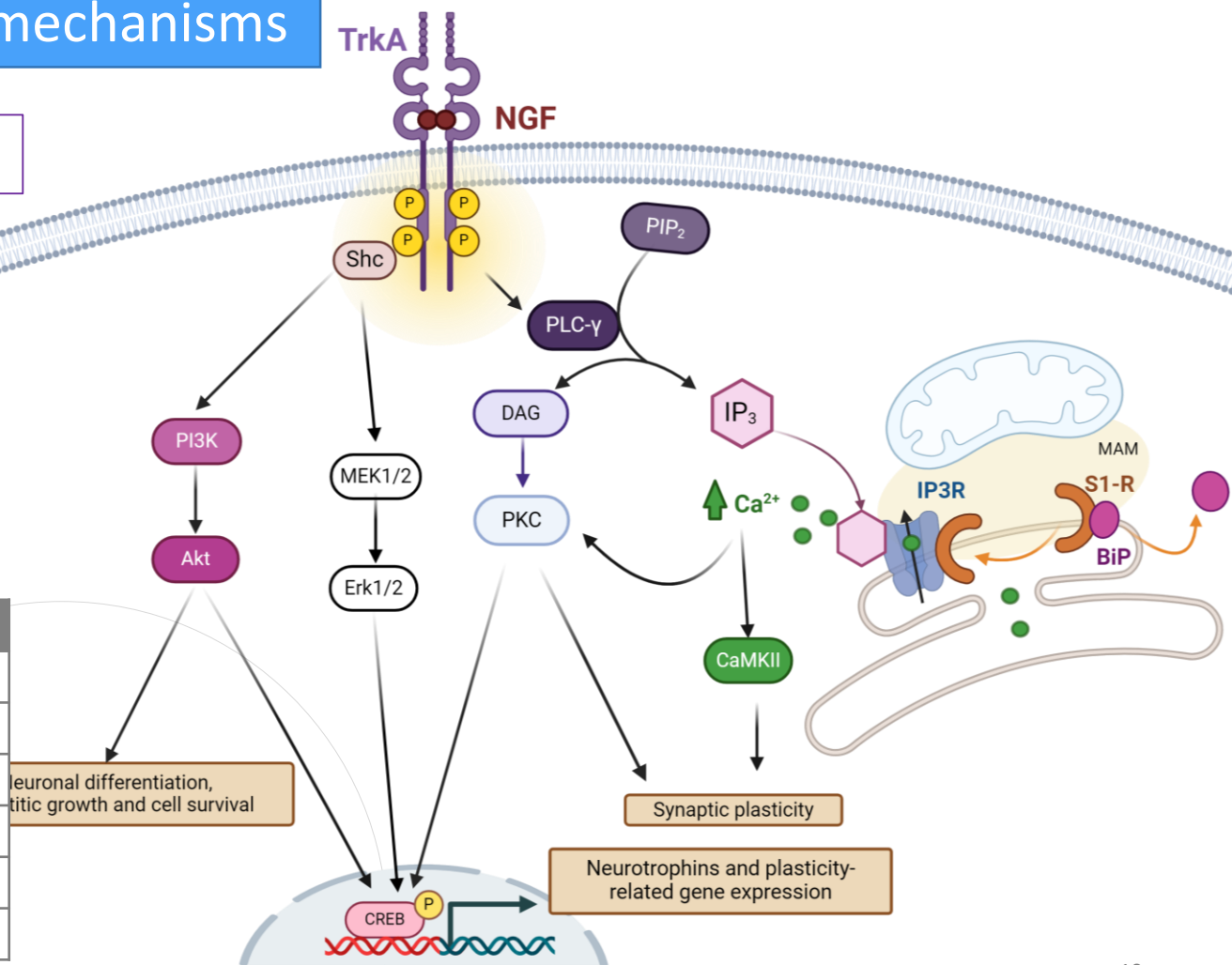
#### PC12 differentiation by NGF:

- TrkA receptor and pathways:
  - PI3K/Akt
  - MEK/Erk
  - PLCγ

#### DMT pharmacology:

- 5-HT<sub>2A</sub>R
- Sigma-1R

| Pathway/receptor     | Inhibitor (μM)    | Ref.                         |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| PLCγ                 | U73122 (1μM)      | (Gassaway et al., 2016)      |
| PI3K/Akt             | LY294002 (10μM)   | (Gassaway et al., 2016)      |
| MEK/Erk              | PD98059 (10μM)    | (Lee and Chao, 2001)         |
| Trk(A,B,C)           | GNF-5837 (1μM)    | (Albaugh et al., 2012)       |
| 5-HT <sub>2A</sub> R | Ketanserin (10μM) | (Vargas et al., 2023)        |
| S1-R                 | NE-100 (10μM)     | (Ishima and Hashimoto, 2012) |





# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

Pharmacological inhibitors

### PC12 differentiation by NGF:

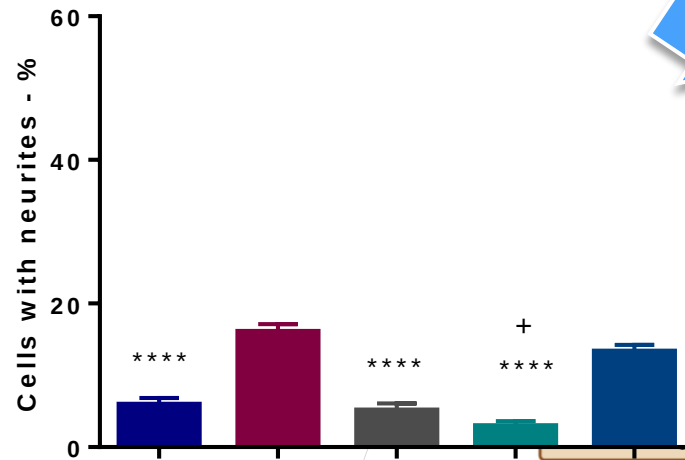
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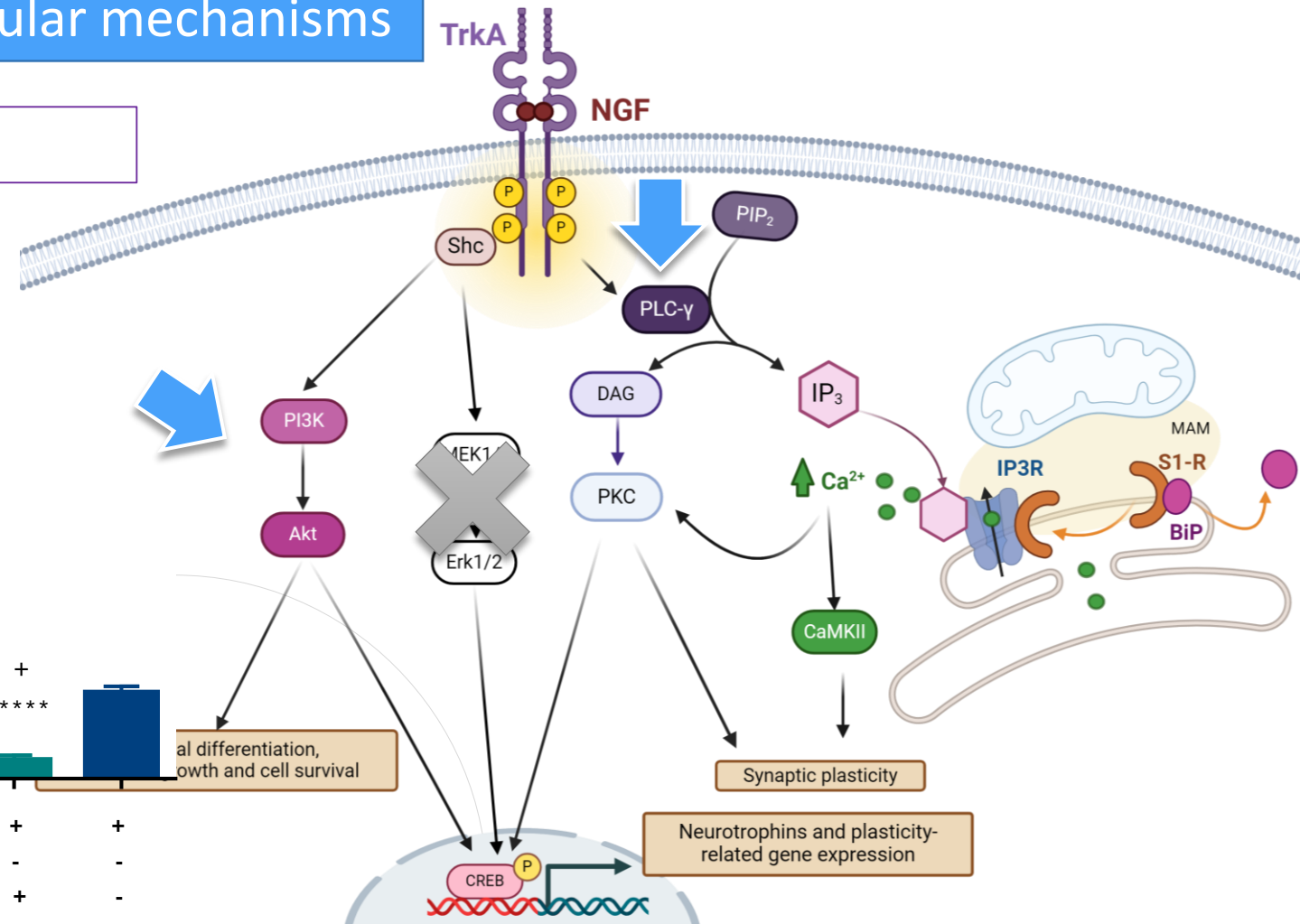


PC12 naive

DMT, 72h  
+ inhibitor



|                |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| DMT 5 μM       | - | + | + | + | + |
| U73122 1 μM    | - | - | + | - | - |
| LY294002 10 μM | - | - | - | + | - |
| PD98059 10 μM  | - | - | - | - | + |







# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

Pharmacological inhibitors

PC12 differentiation by NGF:

- TrkA receptor and pathways:

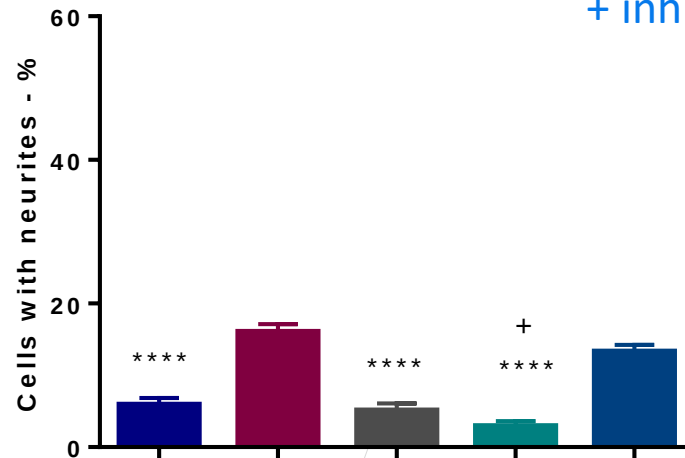
- PI3K/Akt
- MEK/Erk
- PLCγ



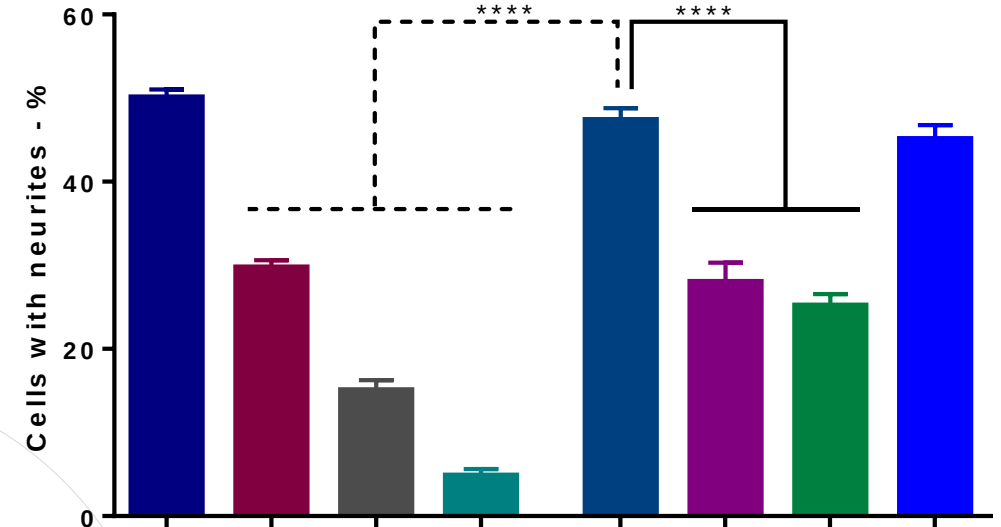
DMT, 72h  
+ inhibitor



DMT +  
↓ NGF,  
72h  
+ inhibitor



DMT 5 μM  
U73122 1 μM  
LY294002 10 μM  
PD98059 10 μM



NGF 100ng/mL  
NGF 5ng/mL  
DMT 5 μM  
U73122 1 μM  
LY294002 10 μM  
PD98059 10 μM

✓ Neuritogenesis by DMT depends on PI3K/Akt and PLCγ pathways

|   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|----|
| - | - | - | -  |
| + | + | + | +  |
| + | + | + | +  |
| - | + | - | -  |
| - | - | + | -  |
| - | - | - | ±2 |



# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

### Pharmacological inhibitors

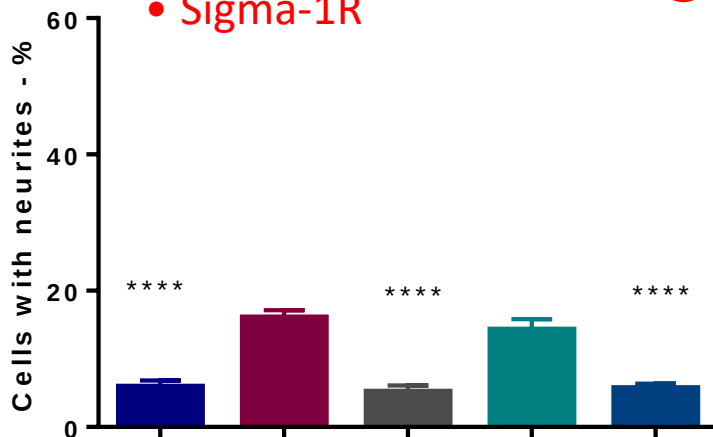
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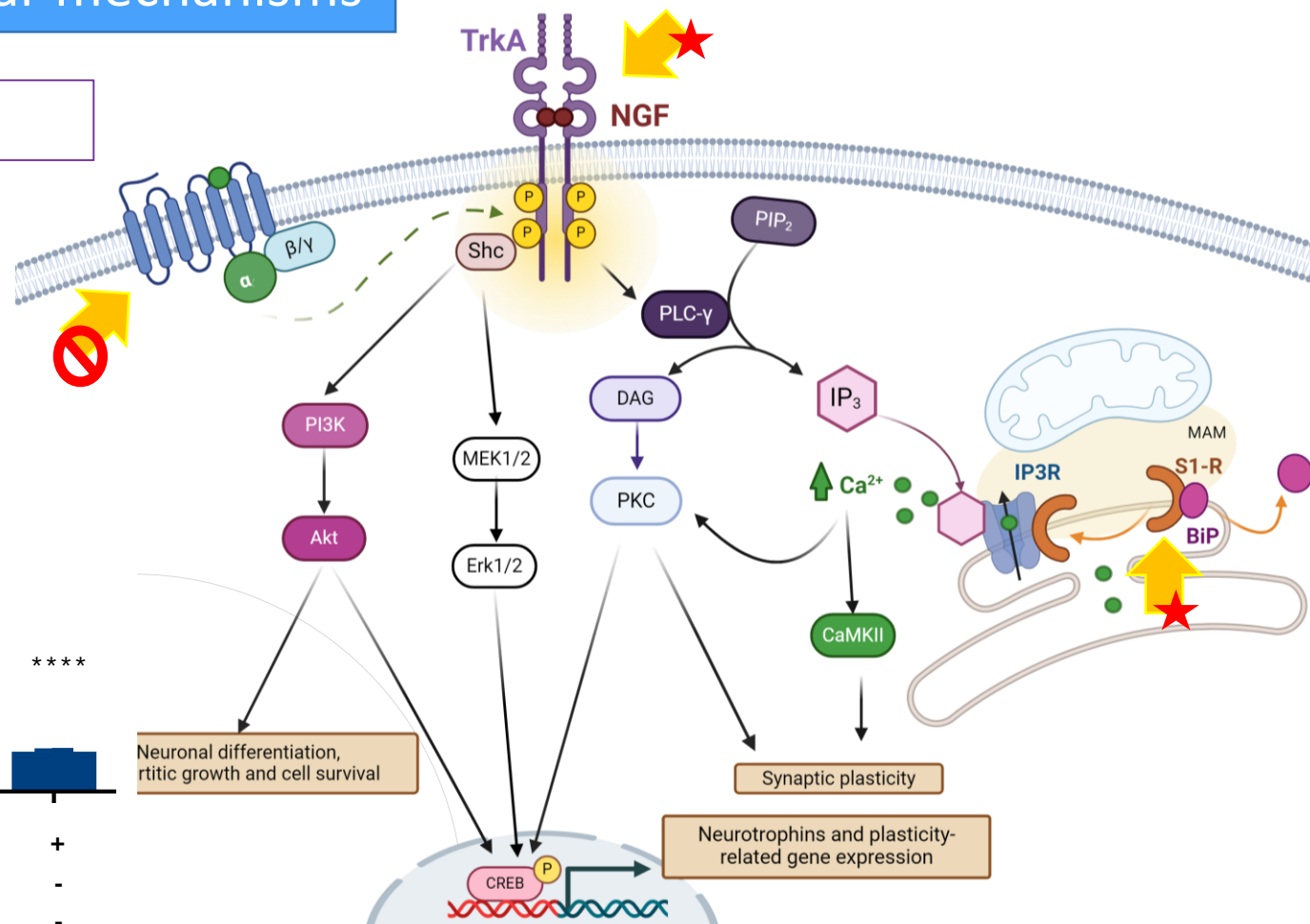
- PI3K/Akt
- MEK/Erk
- PLCγ

#### DMT pharmacology:

- 5-HT<sub>2A</sub>R
- Sigma-1R



|                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| DMT 5 μM         | - | + | + | + | + |
| GNF-5867 1 μM    | - | - | + | - | - |
| Ketanserin 10 μM | - | - | - | + | - |
| NE-100 10 μM     | - | - | - | - | + |





# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

### Pharmacological inhibitors

#### PC12 differentiation by NGF:

- TrkA receptor and pathways:

- PI3K/Akt
- MEK/Erk
- PLCγ

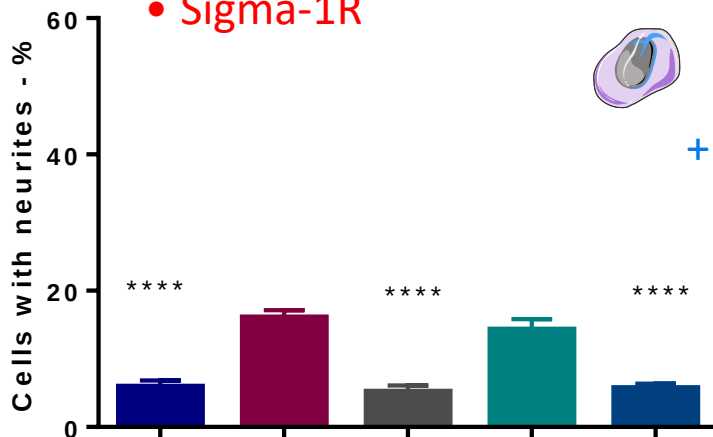
#### DMT pharmacology:

- 5-HT<sub>2A</sub>R
- Sigma-1R

- ✓ Trks are fundamental for PC12 differentiation
- ✓ S1-R is required for DMT-mediated neuritogenesis
- ✓ S1-R might play a secondary role when NGF is present



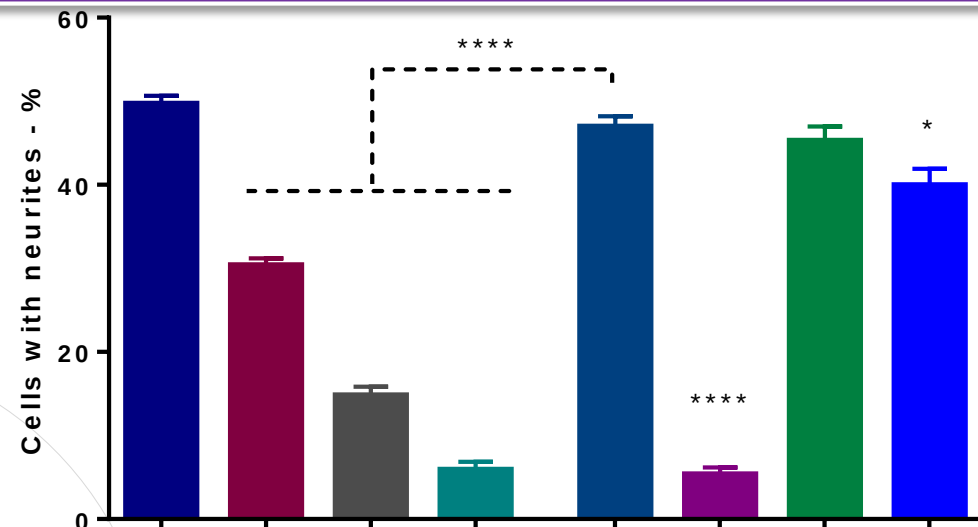
DMT, 72h  
+ inhibitor



|                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| DMT 5 μM         | - | + | + | + | + |
| GNF-5867 1 μM    | - | - | + | - | - |
| Ketanserin 10 μM | - | - | - | + | - |
| NE-100 10 μM     | - | - | - | - | + |



DMT +  
↓ NGF,  
72h  
+ inhibitor



|                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NGF 100ng/mL      | + | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| NGF 5ng/mL        | - | + | - | - | + | + | + |
| DMT 5 μM          | - | - | + | - | + | + | + |
| GNF 5837 1 μM     | - | - | - | - | - | + | - |
| Ketasnserin 10 μM | - | - | - | - | - | - | + |
| NE-100 10 μM      | - | - | - | - | - | - | + |

# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

DMT:

- Trk \*\*\*\*
- S1R \*\*\*\*

DMT + NGF:

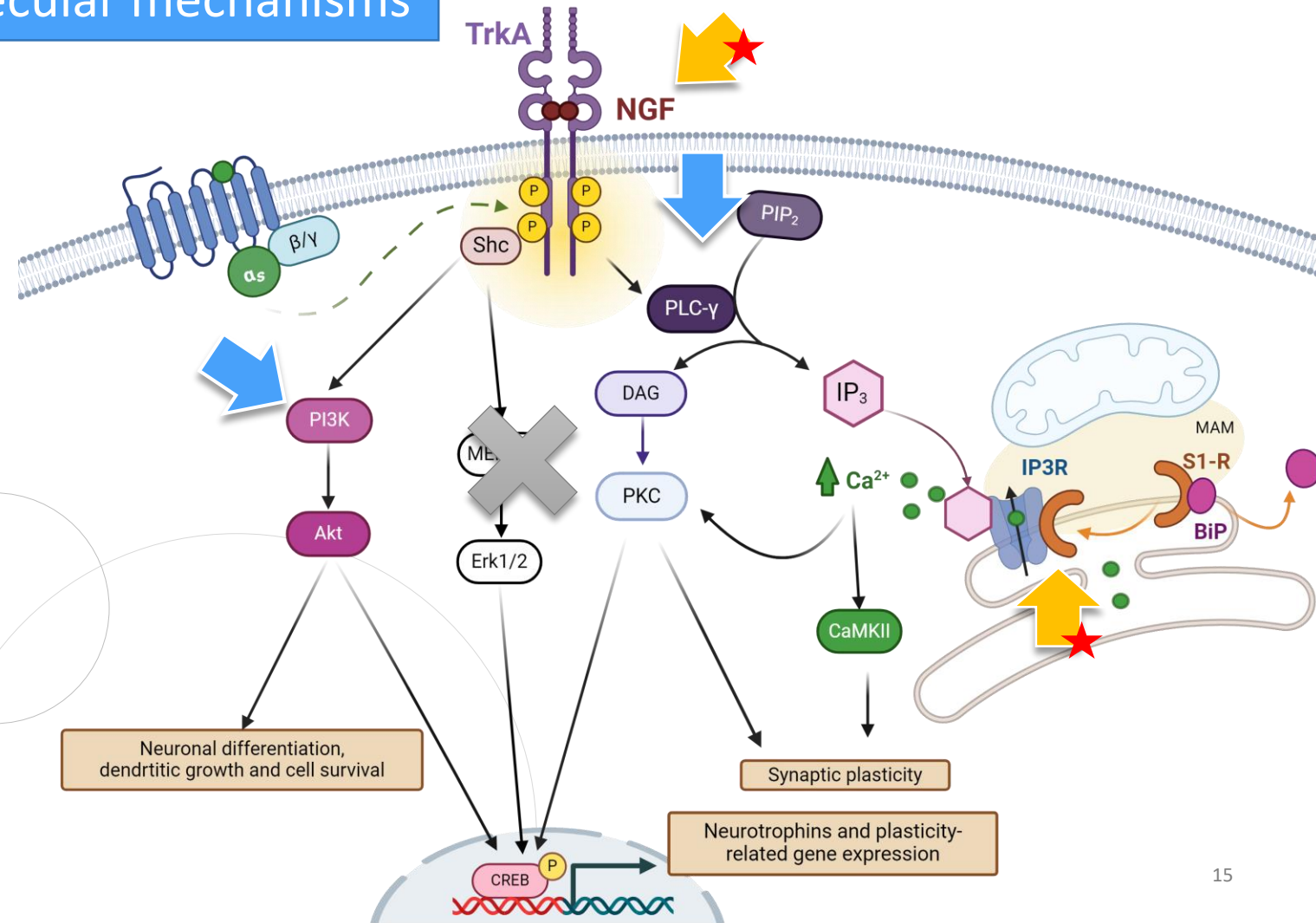
- Trk \*\*\*\*
- S1R \*

Different molecular mechanisms

➤ DMT directly activates TrkA?



➤ DMT indirectly activates Trk(A)?

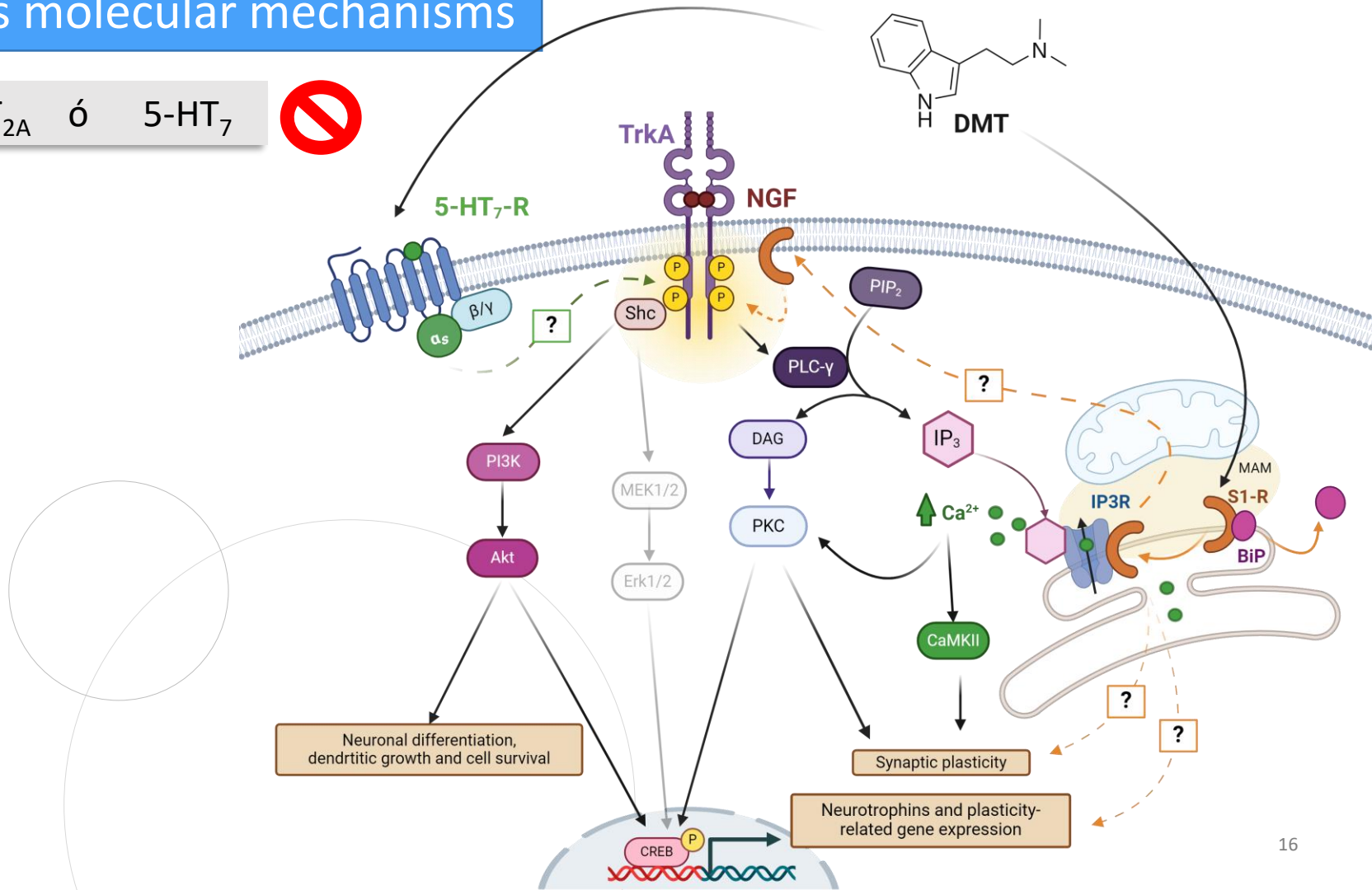
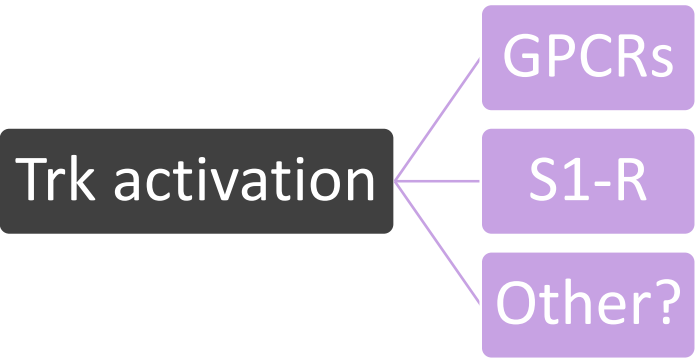




# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

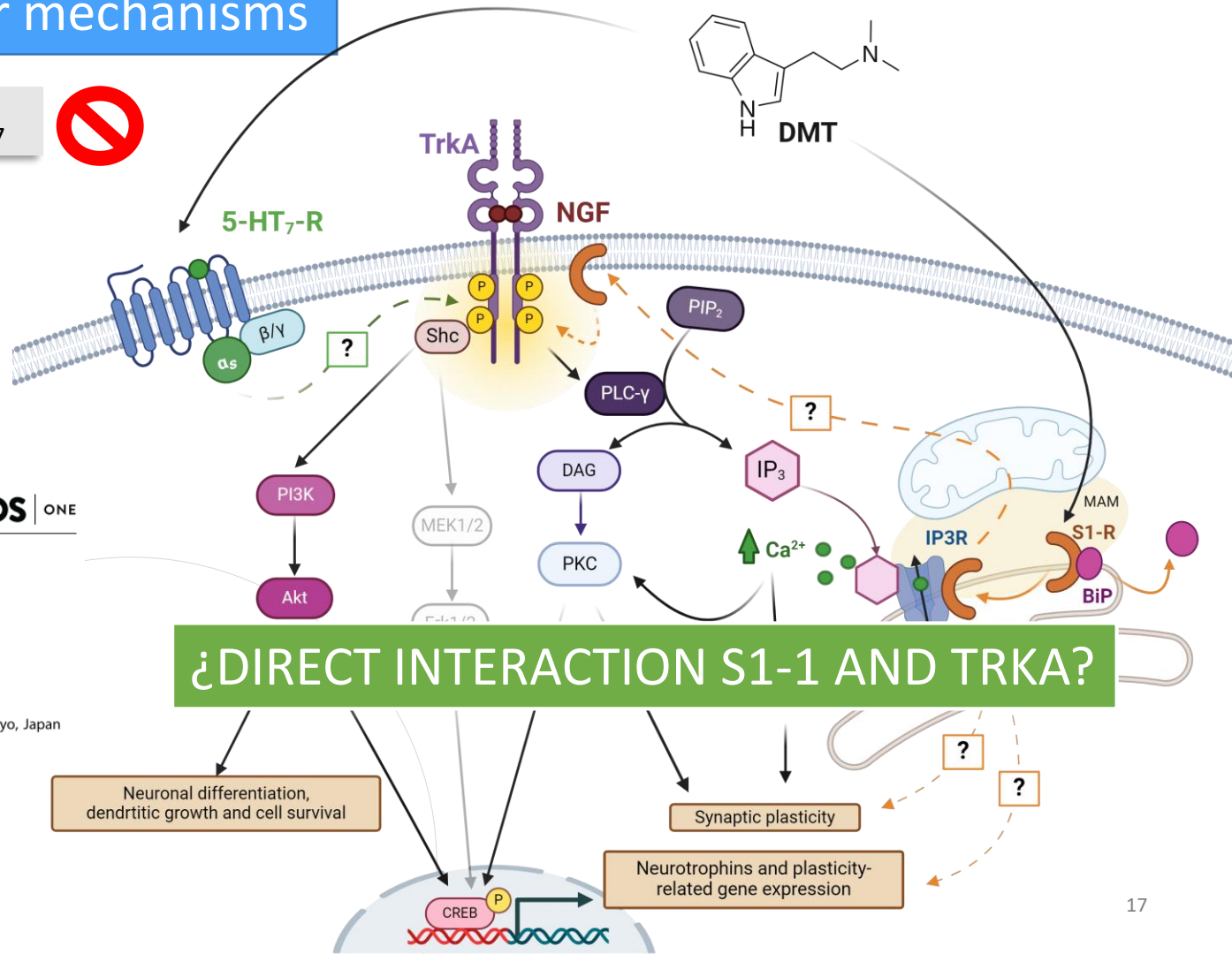
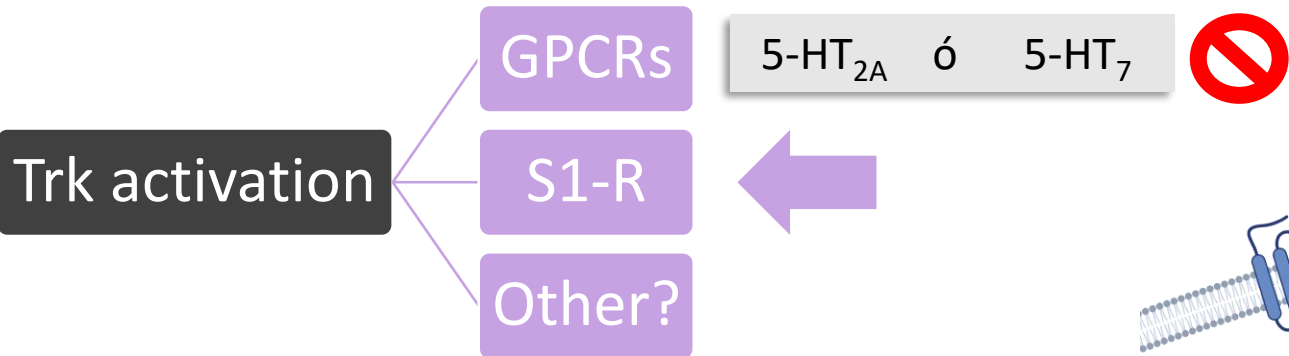
• Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms



# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms



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PLOS ONE

## Sigma-1 Receptor Enhances Neurite Elongation of Cerebellar Granule Neurons via TrkB Signaling

Yuriko Kimura<sup>1,2</sup>, Yuki Fujita<sup>1,2</sup>, Kumi Shibata<sup>1</sup>, Megumi Mori<sup>1</sup>, Toshihide Yamashita<sup>1,2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Molecular Neuroscience, Graduate School of Medicine, Osaka University, Suita, Osaka, Japan, <sup>2</sup> JST, CREST, 5, Sanbancho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan

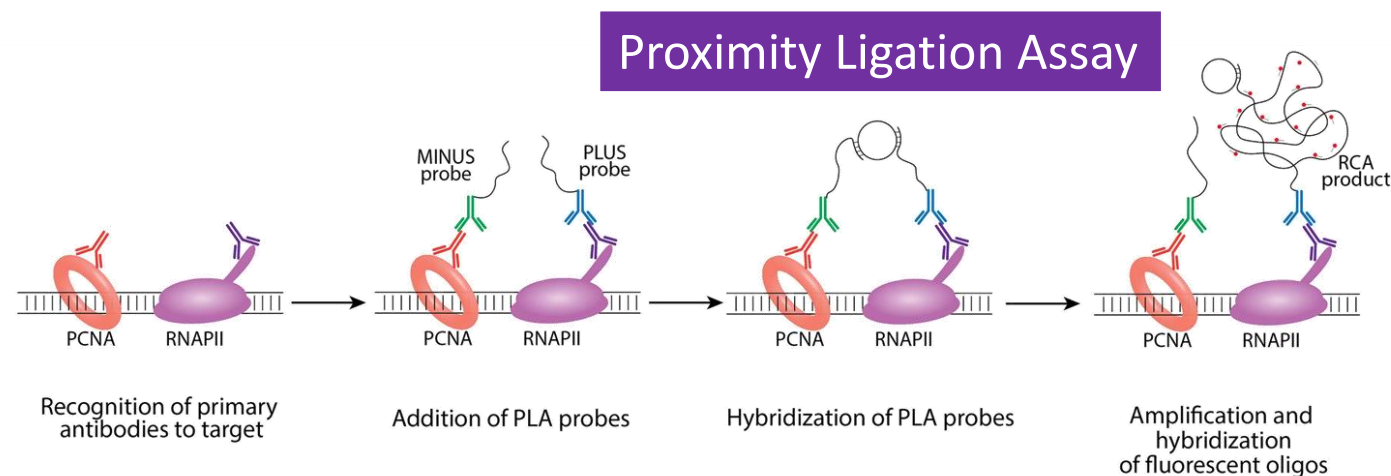
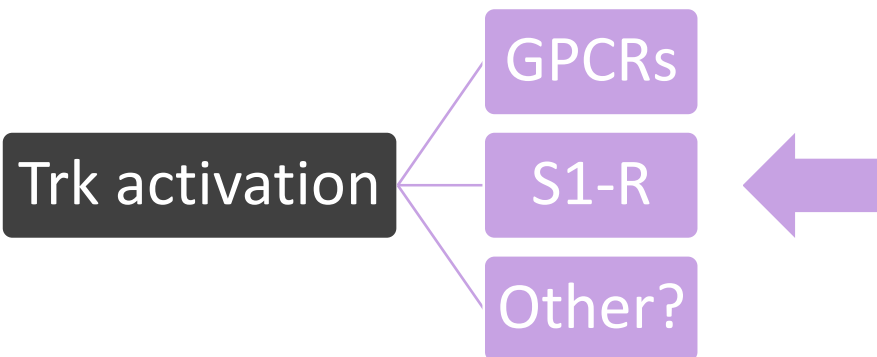
Y. Kimura, Y. Fujita, K. Shibata, M. Mori, T. Yamashita, *PLoS One* **2013**, *8*, 75760.



# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms



PLOS ONE

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Y. Kimura, Y. Fujita, K. Shibata, M. Mori, T. Yamashita, *PLoS One* **2013**, *8*, 75760.

¿DIRECT INTERACTION S1-1 AND TRKA?



# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

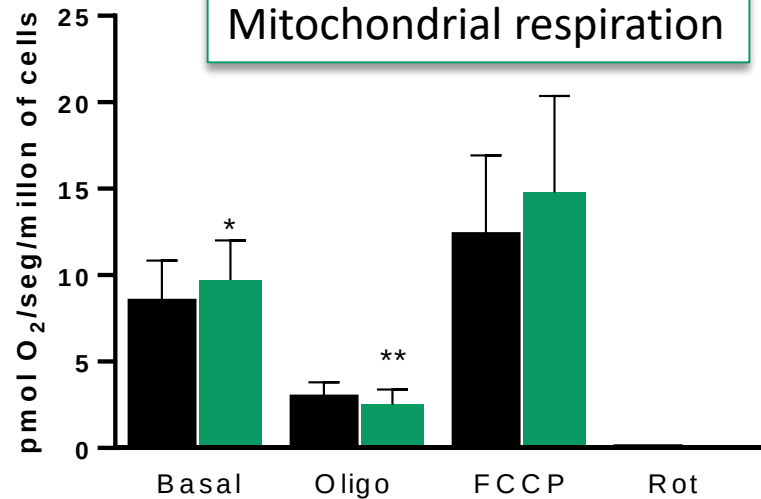
Trk activation

GPCRs

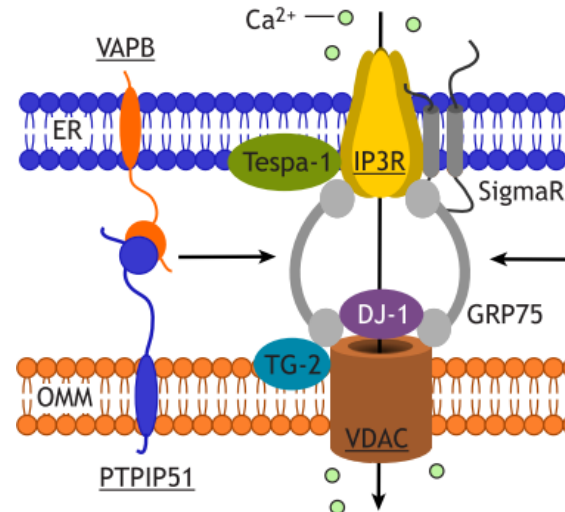
S1-R

Other?

Mitochondrial respiration



■ Veh  
■ DMT 5uM



Lic. Camila Narbondo

Differentiation by nerve growth factor (NGF) involves mechanisms of crosstalk between energy homeostasis and mitochondrial remodeling

Francesca Martorana<sup>1,2</sup>, Daniela Gaglio<sup>2,3</sup>, Maria Rosaria Bianco<sup>4</sup>, Federica Aprea<sup>1,2</sup>, Assunta Virtuoso<sup>4</sup>, Marcella Bonanomi<sup>2</sup>, Lilia Alberghina<sup>1,2,5</sup>, Michele Papa<sup>2,4</sup> and Anna Maria Colangelo<sup>1,2,5</sup>

F. Martorana, et al., *Cell Death Dis.* **2018**, 9, DOI 10.1038/s41419-018-0429-9.





# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

Trk activation

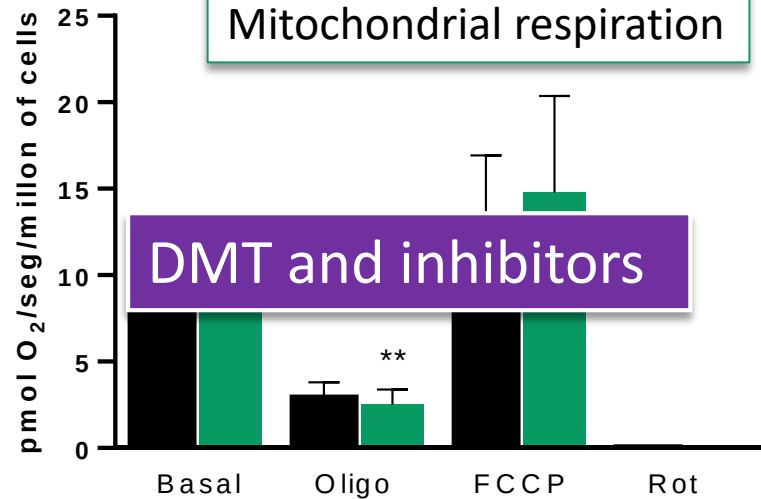
GPCRs

S1-R

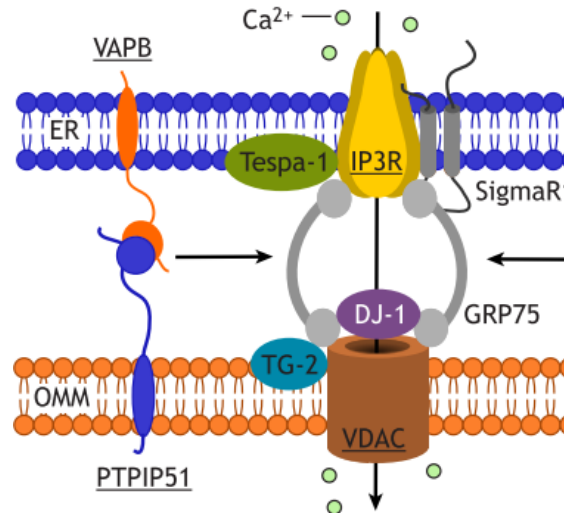
Other?

Mitochondrial respiration

DMT and inhibitors



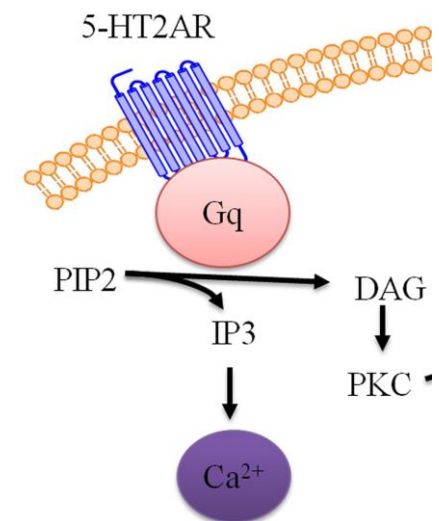
■ Veh  
■ DMT 5uM



Lic. Camila Narbondo

[Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub>

- Fura-2 in PC12 with DMT and inhibitors





# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on neurite outgrowth

- Towards an understanding of its molecular mechanisms

Trk activation

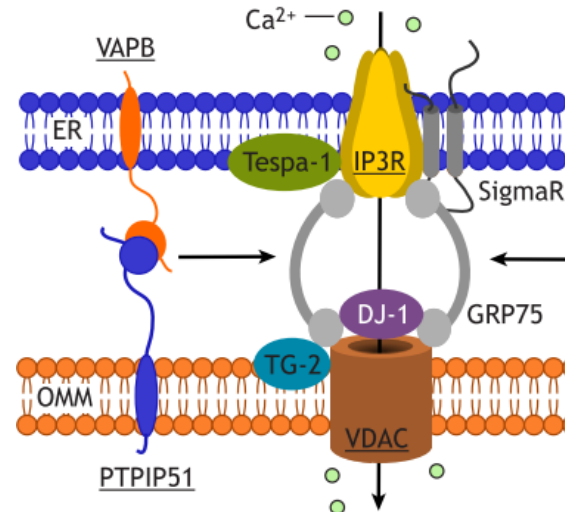
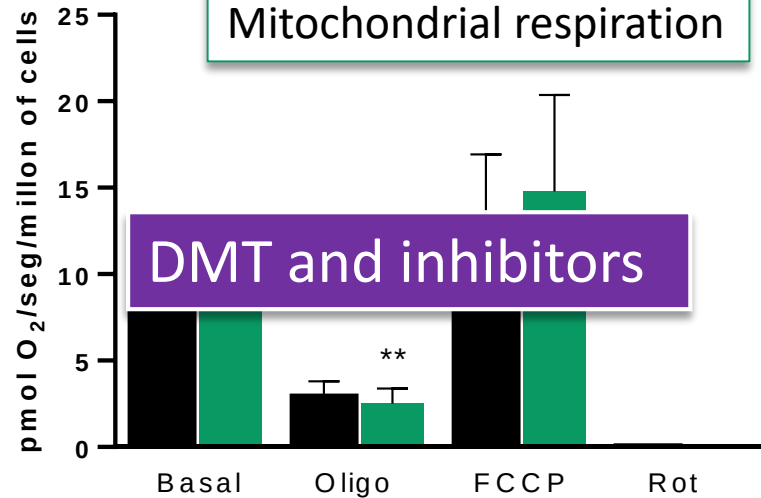
GPCRs

S1-R

Other?

Mitochondrial respiration

DMT and inhibitors

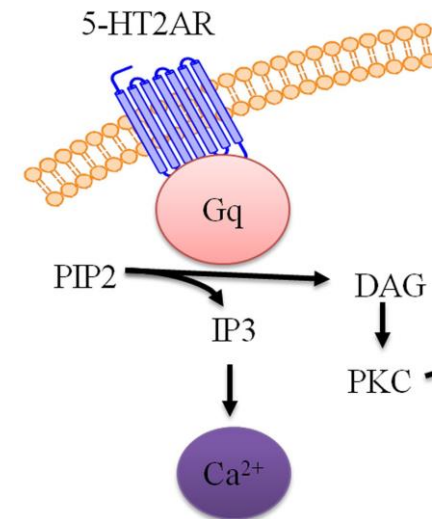


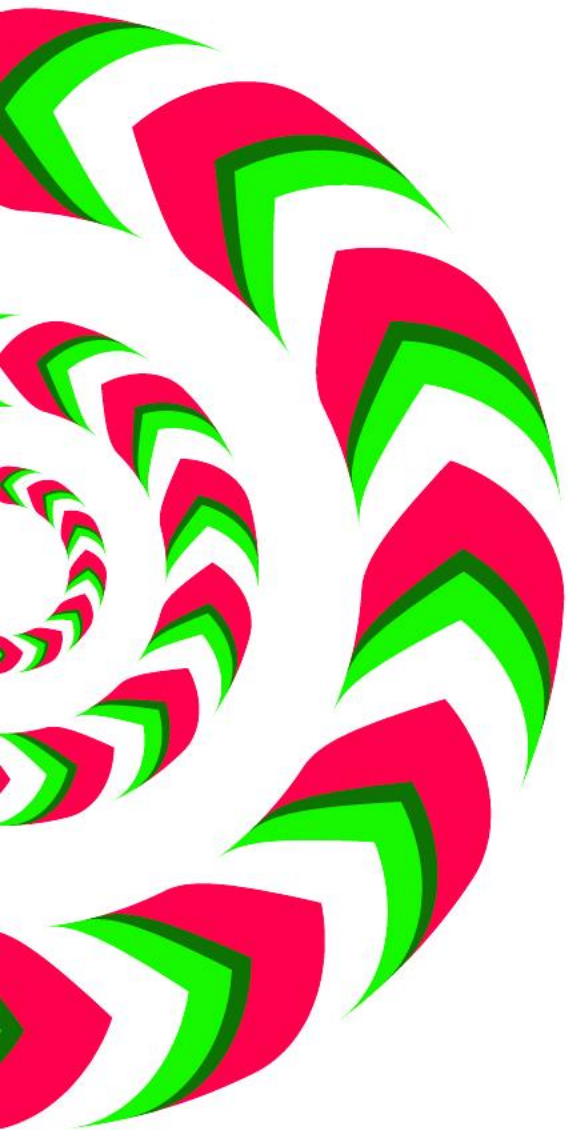
[Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub>

- Fura-2 in PC12 with DMT and inhibitors

GAP-43 – immunocytochemistry, WB.

- Increases expression upon NGF stimulation
- Ca<sup>2+</sup> modulated**
- Modulates neurite outgrowth in PC12
- Modulates synaptic plasticity





# THANK YOU



mpazos@iibce.edu.uy



<https://arche.ei.udelar.edu.uy/>





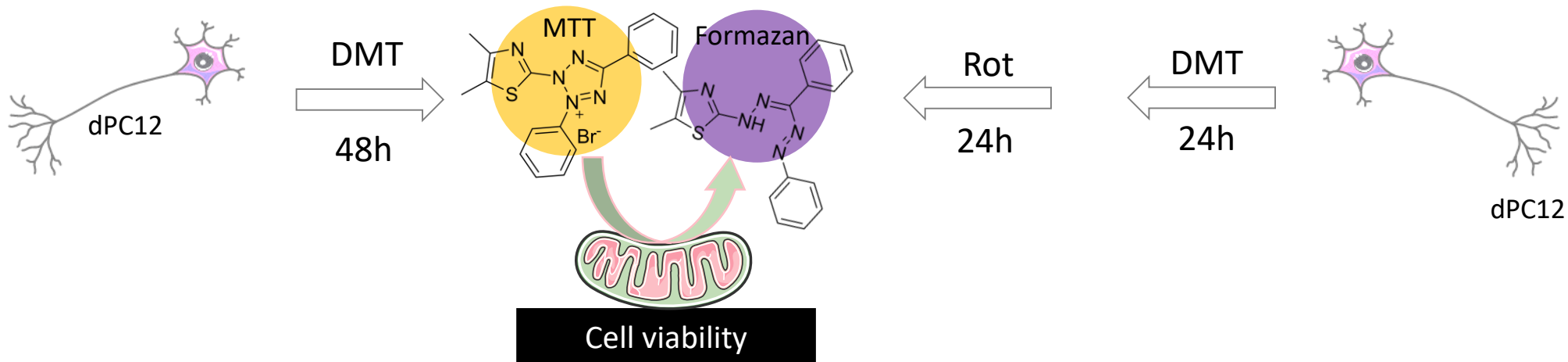


# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

## Effect of DMT on cell viability and protection

Cell viability

Neuroprotection



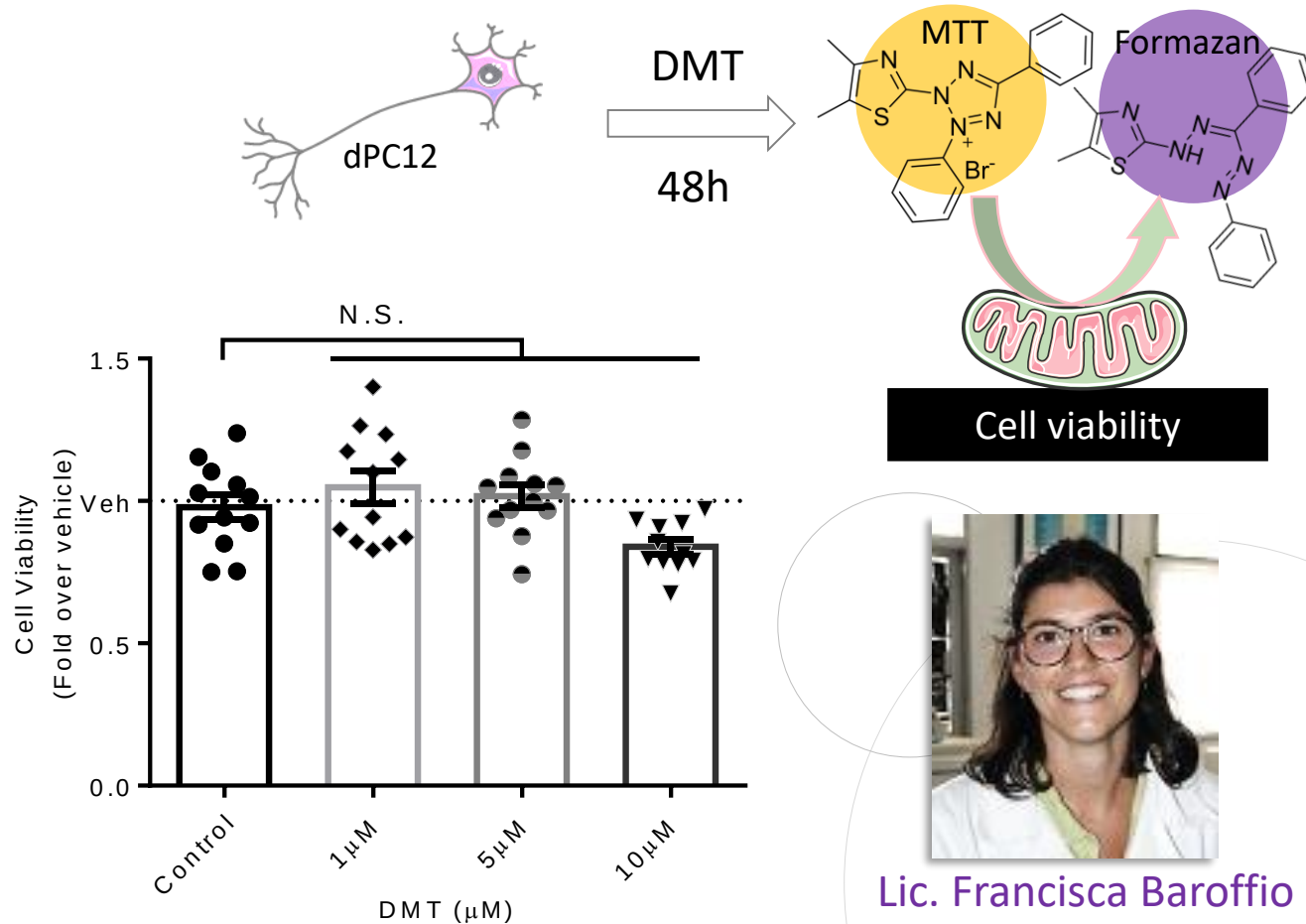




# DMT IN PC12 CELL LINE

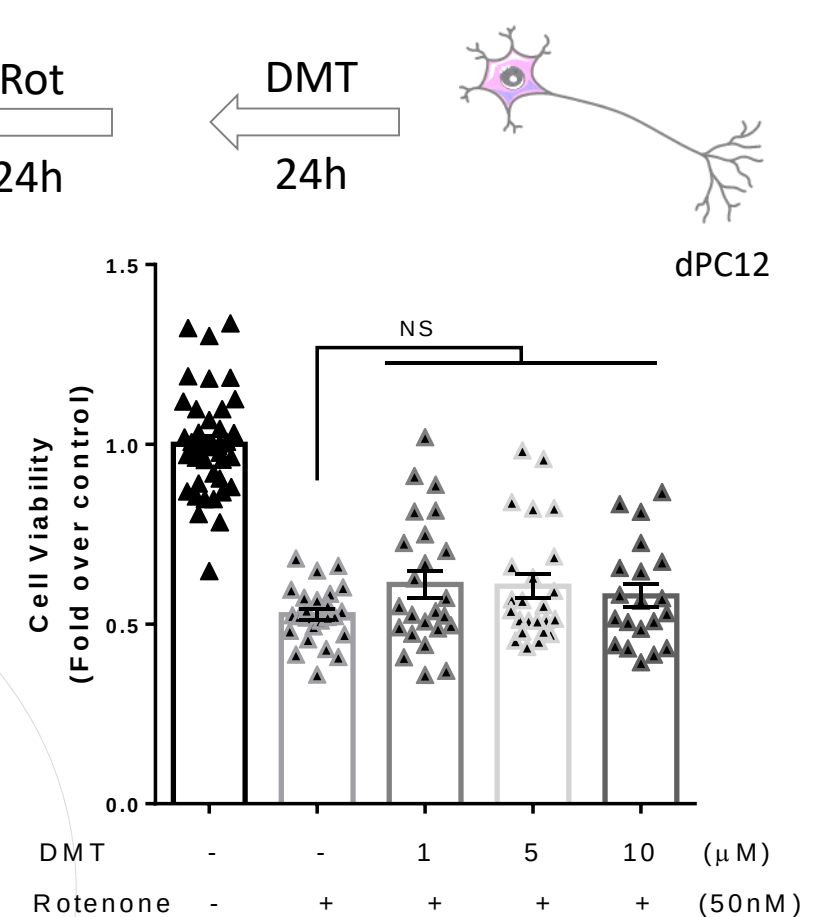
## Effect of DMT on cell viability and protection

### Cell viability



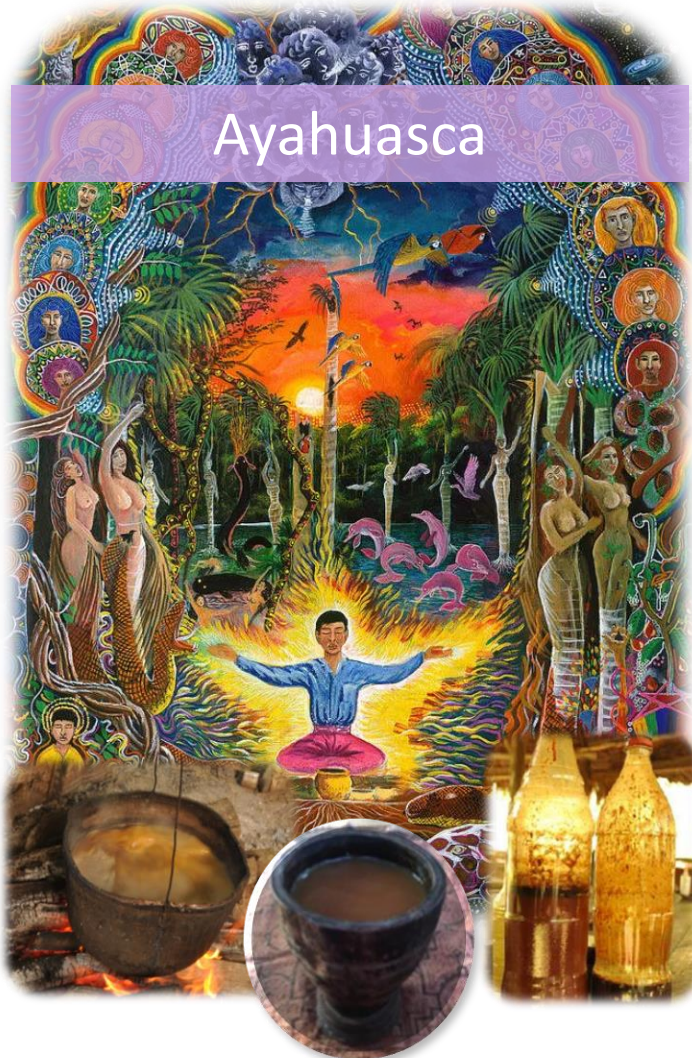
Lic. Francisca Baroffio

### Neuroprotection



# INTRODUCTION

## Ayahuasca, DMT and their therapeutic potential



Ayahuasca

### Therapeutic potential

#### Ayahuasca or $\beta$ -carbolines:

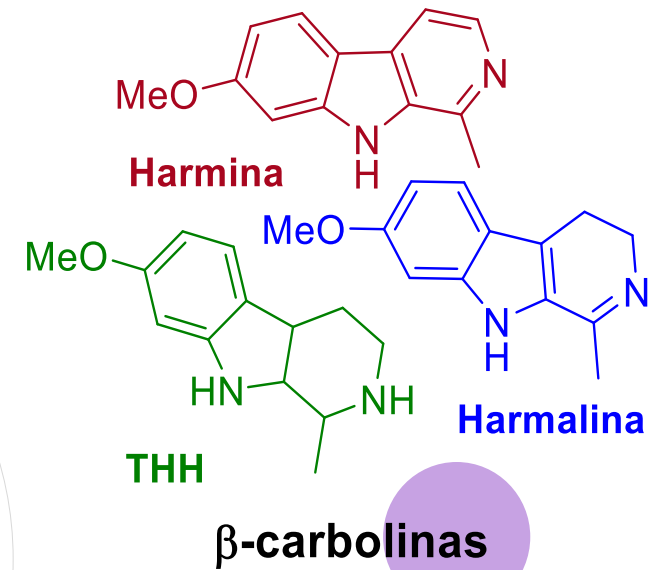
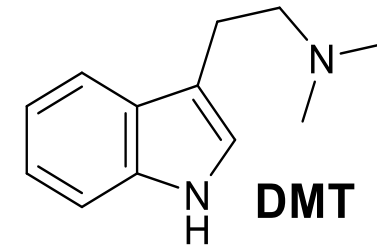
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance use disorder
- PTSD
- Parkinson's disease
- Alzheimer's disease

Color code:

Pre-clinical

Observational

Clinical trials





# INTRODUCTION

## Main mediators of DMT biological activities

**DMT modulates innate and adaptive inflammatory responses *in vitro* (moDC):**

- ↓ pro-inflammatory cytokines IL-1b, IL-6, TNFa and the chemokine IL-8
- ↑ anti-inflammatory cytokine IL-10
- ↓ differentiation of T-cells to Th1 and Th17 inflammatory effectors

A. Szabo, et al., *PLoS One* **2014**, 9, 1–12.

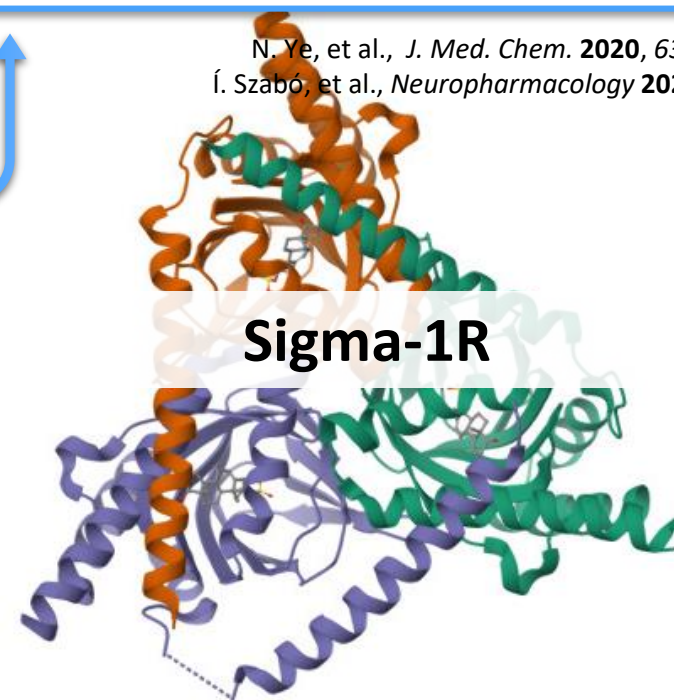
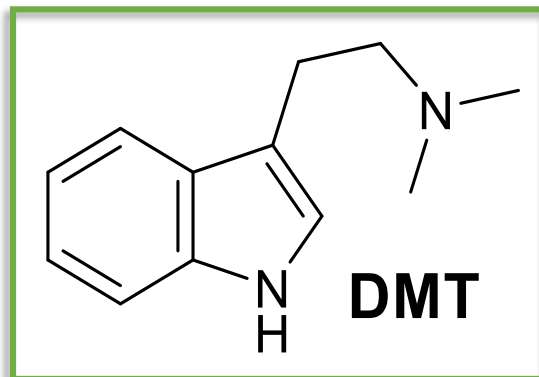
**Increases cell survival against hypoxia (0.5% O<sub>2</sub>) *in vitro*** (cultured human cortical neurons derived from iPSCs, monocyte-derived macrophages, moMACs, and dendritic cells, moDCs).

A. Szabo, et al., *Front. Neurosci.* **2016**, 10, 1–11.

**Anti-ischemic properties in rat brain:**

↓ infarct size, ↑ recovery, ↓ neurodegeneration

N. Ye, et al., *J. Med. Chem.* **2020**, 63, 15187–15217;  
Í. Szabó, et al., *Neuropharmacology* **2021**, 192, 108612.





# INTRODUCTION

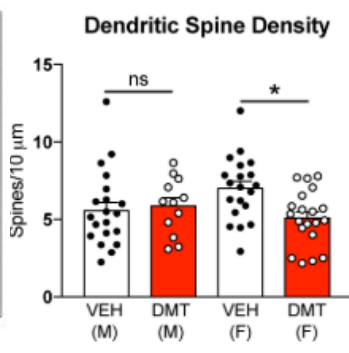
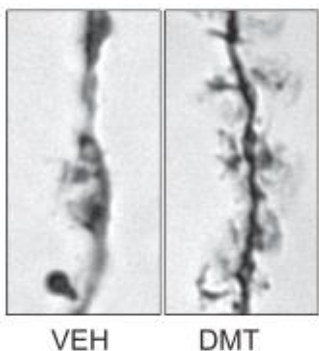
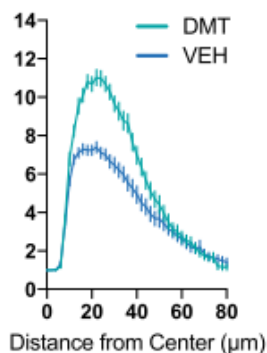
## DMT, neuroprotection and neuroplasticity

### Psychedelics Promote Structural and Functional Neural Plasticity

Calvin Ly,<sup>1</sup> Alexandra C. Greb,<sup>1</sup> Lindsay P. Cameron,<sup>2</sup> Jonathan M. Wong,<sup>2</sup> Eden V. Barragan,<sup>2</sup> Paige C. Wilson,<sup>3</sup> Kyle F. Burbach,<sup>4</sup> Sina Soltanzadeh Zarandi,<sup>1</sup> Alexander Sood,<sup>5</sup> Michael R. Paddy,<sup>3</sup> Whitney C. Duim,<sup>1</sup> Megan Y. Dennis,<sup>4,6,7</sup> A. Kimberley McAllister,<sup>5,8,9</sup> Kassandra M. Ori-McKenney,<sup>3</sup> John A. Gray,<sup>5,8</sup> and David E. Olson<sup>1,5,6,10,\*</sup>

C. Ly et al., *Cell Rep.*, vol. 23, no. 11, pp. 3170–3182, 2018.

- Neuritogenesis and spinogenesis in rat cortical cultures
- Spinogenesis in rat rat's PFC



### Chronic, Intermittent Microdoses of the Psychedelic *N,N*-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) Produce Positive Effects on Mood and Anxiety in Rodents

Lindsay P. Cameron,<sup>†</sup> Charlie J. Benson,<sup>‡</sup> Brian C. DeFelice,<sup>§</sup> Oliver Fiehn,<sup>§,||</sup> and David E. Olson<sup>\*,‡,⊥,¶,||</sup>

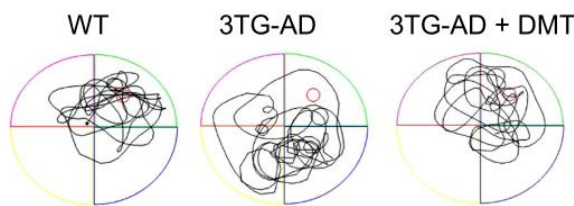
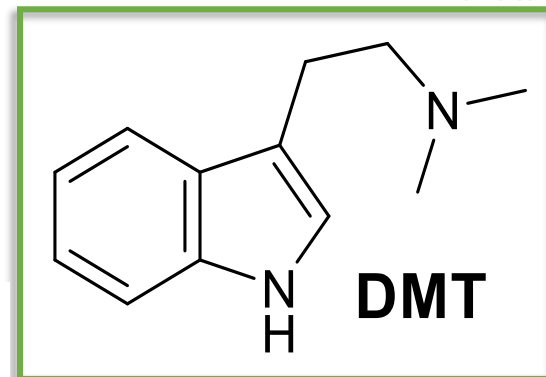
### Psychoplastogens: A Promising Class of Plasticity-Promoting Neurotherapeutics

David E Olson<sup>1,2,3</sup>

D. E. Olson, *J. Exp. Neurosci.* vol 12, pp. 1-4, 2018,

Marina Sanz-SanCristobal<sup>1,2</sup>, Jordi Riba<sup>6</sup> and Ana Perez-Castillo<sup>1,2,4</sup>

*Transl. Psychiatry* 2020, 10, 331.



Cheng et al. *Alzheimer's Research & Therapy* (2024) 16:95  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13195-024-01462-3>

Alzheimer's  
Research & Therapy

#### RESEARCH

#### Open Access

**N, N-Dimethyltryptamine, a natural hallucinogen, ameliorates Alzheimer's disease by restoring neuronal Sigma-1 receptor-mediated endoplasmic reticulum-mitochondria crosstalk**

Dan Cheng<sup>1,2</sup>, Zhuo-Gui Lei<sup>3</sup>, Kin Chu<sup>4</sup>, Oi Jin Honey Lam<sup>5</sup>, Chun Yuan Chiang<sup>6</sup> and Zhang-Jin Zhang<sup>1,2\*</sup>

