

Acta endocrinologica

Supplementum 184

ADVANCE ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

20. Symposion Deutsche Gesellschaft für Endokrinologie
Tübingen
February 27-March 2, 1974

PERIODICA · COPENHAGEN 1974

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ACTH BIOASSAY WITH ISOLATED RAT ADRENAL CELLS:
ACTH ACTIVITY OF THE PORCINE LIPOTROPIC PEPTIDE B*

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The recently developed ACTH bioassay using isolated adrenal cells (1) represents a progress as to sensitivity and assay capacity. ACTH contaminations have to be estimated in lipotropin preparations during the search for a separate lipotropic pituitary hormone.

Methods: Rat adrenal cells were isolated as described (1). After 0.1 ml of standards or unknowns were added to 0.9 ml cell suspension ($8-15 \times 10^4$ cells/ml), the mixture was incubated for 2 hours at 37° C, followed by fluorometric determination of corticosterone. The assay sensitivity depends on careful preparation of the cells with the aim of little cell debris and a low basal corticosterone level. The addition of Trasylol® to the ACTH standards enhanced sensitivity, enabling us to measure 1—2 pg ACTH per vial. Reproducibility was good in contrast to other bioassays. — The preparation of the lipotropic fractions tested has been published (2).

Results: Despite adequate sensitivity of the assay, almost no ACTH activity was found in the serum of normal controls, probably due to the presence of ACTH binding factors (3). In addition the recovery of exogenous ACTH (both of synthetic 1—23 or 1—39 and of homologous porcine 1—39 peptide) was only 20—50%. Further, the high endogenous ACTH activity estimated in Nelson's syndrome by this method was up to 10 times lower than measured in the *Lipscomb-Nelson* assay. — In contrast to the findings with serum, complete recovery of exogenous ACTH from a medium containing pituitary extracts was observed. The ACTH content of the different lipotropic porcine pituitary fractions depended on the degree of purification: in raw extracts (fraction G) we found 0.1—0.4% ACTH, calculated on a weight basis. In the most purified and lipolytically most active fraction (peptide B) we found only ACTH activities of approximately 10 pg per 100 µg fraction. This demonstrates that ACTH cannot be the lipolytic principle of peptide B.

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* Supported by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft SFB 51