Effects of $\beta_3$-Adrenergic Receptor Activation on Rat Urinary Bladder Hyperactivity Induced by Ovariectomy

F. Aura Kullmann,1 Brian J. Limberg, Debra E. Artim, Mansi Shah, Thomas R. Downs, Dan Contract, John Wos, Jan S. Rosenbaum,2 and William C. de Groat


Received April 9, 2009; accepted June 9, 2009

ABSTRACT

Voiding dysfunctions, including increased voiding frequency, urgency, or incontinence, are prevalent in the postmenopausal population. $\beta_3$-Adrenergic receptor ($\beta_3$AR) agonists, which relax bladder smooth muscle, are being developed to treat these conditions. We utilized the rat ovariectomy (OVX) model to investigate the effect of ovarian hormone depletion on bladder function and the potential for $\beta_3$AR agonists to treat bladder hyperactivity in this setting. OVX increased voiding frequency and decreased bladder capacity by ~25% in awake rats and induced irregular cystometograms in urethane-anesthetized rats. Reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction revealed three $\beta_3$AR subtypes ($\beta_1$, $\beta_2$, and $\beta_3$) in bladder tissue, and immunostaining indicated $\beta_3$AR localization in urothelium and detrusor. Receptor expression was not different in OVX and SHAM rats. The $\beta_3$AR agonist selectivity of BRL37344 ([(-)-(R,R’)]-4-[2-[(3-chlorophenyl)-2-hydroxyethyl]amino]propyl][phenoxy][acetic acid sodium hydrate), TAK-677 [3-[[2R]-(1S,R’)-(3-chlorophenyl)-2-hydroxyethyl]amino]propyl)1H-indol-7-yl)oxacyclic acid], and FK175 [acetidic, 2-[[8S]-8-[[2R]-2-[[3-chlorophenyl]-2-hydroxyethyl]amino]-6,7,8,9-tetrahydro-5H-benzo[cyclohepten]-2-yl]oxy], ethyl ester, hydrochloride] was confirmed by examining the relative potency for elevation of CAMP in CHO-K1 cells over-expressing the various $\beta$ARs. Intravenous injection of each of the $\beta_3$AR agonists (0.1–500 $\mu$g/kg) in anesthetized rats decreased voiding frequency, bladder pressure, and amplitude of bladder contractions. In bladder strips, $\beta_3$AR agonists (10$^{-12}$–10$^{-4}$ M) decreased baseline tone and reduced spontaneous contractions. BRL37344 (5 mg/kg) and TAK-677 (5 mg/kg) injected intraperitoneally in awake rats decreased voiding frequency by 40 to 70%. These effects were not altered by OVX. The results indicate that OVX-induced bladder dysfunction, including decreased bladder capacity and increased voiding frequency, is not associated with changes in $\beta_3$AR expression or the bladder inhibitory effects of $\beta_3$AR agonists. This suggests that $\beta_3$AR agonists should prove effective for the treatment of overactive bladder symptoms in the postmenopausal population.

Lower urinary tract (LUT) dysfunctions, including increased voiding frequency, urgency, incontinence and nocturia, increase in the elderly population and following meno-pause (Stewart et al., 2003). These dysfunctions could result from hormonally induced changes in bladder contractile and/or relaxing mechanisms. Bladder contractions are triggered by parasympathetic nerves, which release ACh that are mediated by $\alpha$-adrenergic receptors (Fowler et al., 2008). Although drugs that block mAChRs are presently main-
stream therapy for the treatment of overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms, considerable attention is now being focused on βAR agonists as an alternative treatment.

Three subtypes of βARs, β₁AR, β₂AR, and β₃AR, are expressed in bladder of several species, including human and rat (Yamaguchi and Chapple, 2007). β₁ARs, which are considered the predominant subtype in human bladder, are coupled to excitatory Gₛ and inhibitory Gᵢ proteins (Vrydag and Gauthier, 1999; Woods et al., 1999). Muscle relaxation is achieved via stimulation of Gₛ, which increases cAMP. Activation of large conductance Ca²⁺-activated K⁺ channels has also been implicated in the mechanism of action (Frazier et al., 2008). Stimulation of β₁ARs using selective agonists, including BRL37344, CL316243, FK175, or YM178 improved bladder function (i.e., decreased voiding frequency) in normal rats and in rats with detrusor overactivity (Fujimura et al., 1999; Woods et al., 2001; Kaidoh et al., 2002; Takasu et al., 2007; Leon et al., 2008). β₂AR agonists also relaxed rat bladder smooth muscle strips (Fujimura et al., 1999; Longhurst and Levendusky, 1999; Woods et al., 2001; Takeda et al., 2003). Relaxation of rat detrusor can be mediated by all βARs (Yamaguchi and Chapple, 2007). In tissues where β₁ARs and β₂ARs are coexpressed, the β₁/β₂ receptor heterodimer can mediate unique signals (Breit et al., 2004). Furthermore, substantial species selectivity exists for β₁AR-mediated ligand binding and signaling between rodent and human (Rozeč and Gauthier, 2006). Hence, for pharmacological studies, the selectivity of the ligand for rat β₁AR should be verified, particularly when using ligands optimized for human β₁AR.

Hormonal status and aging affect bladder structure and function, including axon degeneration (Zhu et al., 2001; Fleischmann et al., 2002) and changes in the cholinergic (Diep and Constantinou, 1999; Yoshida et al., 2007) and adrenergic innervation (Matsubara et al., 2002; Dmitrieva, 2007). Hormonal depletion after ovariectomy (OVX) is associated with increased voiding frequency in awake and anesthetized rats (Diep and Constantinou, 1999; Liang et al., 2002; Dmitrieva, 2007; Yoshida et al., 2007). Bladder strips from OVX and old rats exhibit decreased responsiveness to cholinergic stimulation (Diep and Constantinou, 1999), decreased tetrodotoxin-sensitive ACh release from nerve fibers, and increased tetrodotoxin-insensitive basal and stretch-evoked ACh release from the urothelium (Yoshida et al., 2007). Other studies demonstrated hormonal- and/or age-related alterations in G proteins, βAR density, and/or βAR responsiveness (Nishimoto et al., 1995; Derweesh et al., 2000; Frazier et al., 2006). Increased levels of Gₛ protein, which inhibits cAMP production, were suggested as an underlying mechanism for the decreased βAR-induced relaxation of the bladder in old (24 months) male Fisher 344 rats (Derweesh et al., 2000). Bladder strips from old (≥22 months) Fisher 344 (Nishimoto et al., 1995; Derweesh et al., 2000) or Wistar (Frazier et al., 2006) male rats were less relaxed by the nonselective βAR agonists isoproterenol or norepinephrine and by the selective β₁AR agonists (BRL37344 and CGP12177) than bladder strips from young rats. However, other studies found no change in isoproterenol or norepinephrine-induced relaxation of bladder strips from 10- and 30-month-old female Wistar/Rij rats (Lluel et al., 2000). In addition, bladder strips from young (2–3 months) O VX rats were slightly more relaxed by BRL37344 than strips from SHAM animals (Matsubara et al., 2002).

These studies suggest that the influence of age and hormonal changes on βAR pathways in the bladder is poorly defined. Several β₁AR agonists are currently in clinical trials for the treatment of OAB (Yamaguchi and Chapple, 2007). Although these trials enroll patients of both genders, the bladders of postmenopausal women may be uniquely influenced by hormonal status. This study investigated the effects of OVX on: 1) β₁AR expression in the bladder, 2) voiding pattern in awake and anesthetized rats, 3) detrusor contractility, and 4) the effects of selective β₁AR agonists on reflex voiding and detrusor contractility. The results indicate that the OVX-induced increase in voiding frequency and decrease in bladder capacity are not associated with either an alteration in β₁AR expression or β₁AR agonist-induced suppression of bladder smooth muscle activity in vivo or in vitro, implying a preservation of β₁AR function in the postmenopausal state.

Materials and Methods

Experimental Animals. Female Sprague-Dawley rats (retired breeders, RB, 8–9 months old when received, 300–450 g; and virgins (V) 2–3 months old, 200–250 g; Harlan, Indianapolis, IN) were used in this study. Care and handling of the animals were in accordance with the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

OVX. OVX and sham (SHAM) surgeries were performed in 9- to 10-month-old RB rats anesthetized with isoflurane (2–4% in O₂). The ovaries were removed bilaterally via dorsal incisions of the skin and muscle ~1 cm lateral to the vertebral column. For sham surgeries, the ovaries were inspected and left in place. The muscle and skin were sutured using silk thread, and rats were given a single injection of antibiotic (ampicillin trihydrate, Polyflex, 100 mg/kg) and returned to their cages. The effects of OVX on the reproductive organs (uterus, fallopian tubes) were assessed during the terminal experiment in each rat. Visual inspection in the OVX animals indicated that the ovaries were missing and that the uterus and the fallopian tubes appeared atrophied, with yellow orange deposits. There was a significant difference between uterine weight of OVX rats compared with SHAM or RB rats (90.8 ± 7.5 mg, n = 11 OVX rats; 217.9 ± 14.2 mg, n = 9 SHAM rats; 195.7 ± 11.8 mg, n = 7 RB rats; p < 0.05 for OVX versus SHAM and p < 0.05 for OVX versus RB; unpaired t tests).

The bladder appearance and bladder weight were not different in OVX or SHAM rats (98.7 ± 2.2 mg, n = 10 OVX; 100.3 ± 2.5 mg, n = 10 SHAM; p > 0.05 unpaired t test). However, when normalized to the body weight, the bladder weights of OVX rats were significantly smaller than those of SHAM rats due to larger body weight in OVX rats (0.28 ± 0.005 mg/g, n = 10 OVX rats; 0.32 ± 0.01 mg/g, n = 10 SHAM rats; p < 0.05 unpaired t test). Body weights: 347.6 ± 4.6 g, n = 10 OVX rats; 309.2 ± 7.5 g, n = 10 SHAM rats, p < 0.05 unpaired t test).

Drugs, Chemistry, and Synthesis of Specific βAR Agonists. The β₁AR agonists FK175 and TAK-677 were synthesized as described below. Other drugs used in this study include the β₁AR agonist BRL37344 (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO), the β₂AR antagonist, SR59230A oxalate salt (Sigma-Aldrich), the β₃AR antagonist, atenolol [4-[2-(isopropylamino)propoxy]phenyl]aceticamide, (±)-4-[2-hydroxy-3-(1-methylpropyl)amino]propanoic acid benzeneacetamide; Sigma-Aldrich), the β₁AR antagonist CI 118551 (Sigma-Aldrich) and the nonselective βAR agonist isoproterenol hydrochloride (Sigma-Aldrich). FK175 (1) (Fig. 1A) was synthesized at Girardinus America Inc. (Cincinnati, OH), according to previously described methods (Hashimoto et al., 2003), and was stored and handled as a white solid at room temperature. TAK-677 (2) (Fig. 1B and C) was synthesized using a combination of several published methods. The racemic tryptamine moiety (R,S-3) was synthesized.
and resolved into the desired individual enantiomer (R-3), according to a previous method (Fujii et al., 2001), and was then successfully converted to the free base (4) using a method described previously (Harada et al., 2004). Ring-opening of (R)-chlorostyrene oxide with the chiral amine, followed by treatment with aqueous NaOH, provided the compound TAK-677 as described previously by the Dainippon Pharmaceuticals Co. (Osaka, Japan) (Harada et al., 2005).

**Metabolic Cages Studies.** Rats were placed weekly in metabolic cages for 2 to 4 times before ovariectomy and followed weekly or biweekly for 5 to 10 weeks after Ovx (rats were 8–9 months old before surgery, 9–10 months old at the time of surgery, and 10.5–13.5 months old when sacrificed, with two animals at 15 months of age). The light cycle was from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM; food and water were provided ad libitum. Drugs or vehicle were administered intraperitoneally just before 7:00 PM under isoflurane anesthesia. Voided urine was collected in cups attached to force displacement transducers (Grass Technologies, Warwick, RI) connected to a computer. Data were recorded for offline analysis using Windaq and analysis was performed using Excel and Origin (version 7; OriginLab Corp., Northampton, MA) and Prism 4 (GraphPad Software, Inc., San Diego, CA). The CMG parameters analyzed were: intercontraction interval (ICI; defined as the interval between two voiding episodes), amplitude of contractions (A; defined as the difference between bladder pressure at the peak of the contraction minus baseline bladder pressure), pressure threshold (Pth; defined as the bladder pressure necessary to evoke a voiding contraction), baseline bladder pressure (BP; defined as the lowest bladder pressure just before voiding), and nonvoiding contractions (NVC; defined as small amplitude, >1.5 cm H2O, bladder contractions before micturition). NVCs were quantified in the last 200 s before micturition contraction using amplitude (threshold set to 0.5 cm H2O) and area under the curve. For each parameter, at least three measurements during the control period and after drug administration were averaged. Data are reported as percentage change relative to control, which was set to 100%. The coefficient of variation of ICIs was calculated as the standard deviation divided by the mean using data from the control period.

Bladder strips were prepared as described previously (Birder et al., 2007). The bladder was removed from isoflurane-anaesthetized rats, placed in warm aerated Krebs’ solution (118 mM NaCl, 4.7 mM KCl, 1.9 mM CaCl2, 1.2 mM MgSO4, 24.9 mM NaHCO3, 1.2 mM KH2PO4, 11.7 mM dextrose, pH 7.4, when aerated with 95% O2, 5% CO2), and cut into three or four longitudinal strips (1.5 × 8–10 mm), including urothelium. Strips were tied at each end and mounted in a vertical double-jacketed organ bath (15-ml volume) in aerated Krebs’ solution at 37°C. After mounting, the strips were washed several times every 5 to 10 min and allowed to equilibrate for more than 2 h before drug testing. An initial force of 10 mN (1 g) was set as baseline tension, and contractions were measured with a force displacement transducer (Grass, Astromed, RI). Drugs from concentrated stock solutions were directly added to the organ bath every 12 to 15 min. BRL37344 was dissolved in distilled water at 10−2 M and diluted in Krebs’ solution to 10−12 to 10−4 M, FK175 and TAK-677 were dissolved in DMSO at 10−2 and 5×10−2 M, respectively, and diluted in Krebs’ solution to 10−12 to 10−4 M. Vehicles, including saline and DMSO (final concentrations of DMSO were from 1 to 10%), had no significant effects on bladder strip activity (Fig. 10). Data were recorded and analyzed using Windaq and Excel. The parameters analyzed were baseline tone and amplitude of the spontane-ous contractions. For determining the effect of a drug on these parameters, a 3-min window was selected at the time when the effect of a drug was maximal or at −3 to 4 min after drug application. In this window, four to eight measurements of baseline pressure and amplitude of contractions were averaged and taken as one data point. The threshold for the amplitude of spontaneous activity was set to 0.05 g. Results are reported relative to the values before drug application, which were set to 100%.
qPCR. Whole bladders were collected from 10 OVX rats and 10 SHAM rats, sacrificed 6 weeks after surgery. RNA from each tissue was generated using TRIzol reagent followed by mRNA Catcher PLUS Kit (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA). cDNA from each corresponding sample was then generated using 0.5 µg of mRNA and SuperScript III RT (Invitrogen). Approximately 100-ng input cDNA was used for qPCR using custom-made primer sets for βAR, β2AR, and β3AR (Invitrogen) and the Certified LUX primer set for 18S rRNA FAM (Invitrogen) using Platinum Quantitative PCR SuperMix-UDG (Invitrogen). The sequences of the primers used in this study were: βAR accession number NM_012701: forward primer, NM_012701.1_185FL, cggcGTATGCGCCACTTCTCGTG[I][M]G, and reverse primer, NM_012701.1_198FL/218RU. ATTCACGACACGT- TGGCCCAT; β2AR accession number NM_012492: forward primer, NM_012492.2_398FL, cgggtAAGTTCGAGCGATCAAAAC[I][M]G, and reverse primer, NM_012492.2_398FL/418RU, AGATGAGCA CACGCCAAGGAG; β3AR accession number NM_013108: forward primer, NM_013108.1_646FL, cgtaacCACCACCTCCTCGGTTA [FAM]G, and reverse primer, NM_013108.1_646FL/679RuA, AC- GATCATACACCGACTGTC.

For data analysis, average threshold cycle (Ct) values for all sample sets were calculated, and standard deviation was determined. All primer sets performed at 90% efficiency or greater had an R² value of 0.99 or greater and showed a single peak in the dissociation curve. Relative expression levels of all three genes in each tissue were compared to that of the housekeeping gene 18S using the ΔΔCt calculation according to eq. 1 to 3:

ΔΔCt = CtGene X - CtHousekeeping Gene

Average ΔΔCt = Average of ΔΔCts from all ten rats

Relative Expression = 2 - (Avg. ΔΔCt)

Results

Titration experiments were conducted to establish concentrations that would result in minimal background and maximal detection of signal. From the serial dilutions of 20, 10, 5, and 2.5 mM isoproterenol, the next day after transient transfection of CHOK1-r2AR, cells were plated into 24-well plates and cultured at 37°C, 5% CO₂. Cells were stained for 30 to 60 min at 37°C in serum-free Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium/F-12, 0.2% BSA, pretreated at 37°C for 30 min in 500 µM 3-isobutyl-1-methylxanthine in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium/F-12 (no phenol red), 0.2% BSA, and 25 mM HEPES, and then stimulated with ligands in the same buffer for 30 min at 37°C. Reactions were stopped, and cAMP was measured using the GE Healthcare Biotrack kit (GE Healthcare Bio-Sciences Corp.).

Immunohistochemistry. Whole bladders were collected from three OVX rats and three SHAM rats (sacrificed 6 weeks after surgery), immediately fixed in formalin (10% neutral buffered formalin; VWR, West Chester, PA), and sent for staining (LifeSpan BioSciences, Seattle, WA). Tissue was embedded in paraffin and sectioned at 4 µm. Because of recently demonstrated lack of specificity of commercially available antisera against the βAR (Pradicheneep et al., 2009), we chose to confirm that our antibodies recognized the antigen of interest using a heterologous expression system and to verify that a similar staining pattern was obtained in tissue using multiple antibodies generated against distinct epitopes on the βAR (Michel et al., 2009). The antibodies used were CH-AB15688 (chicken antibody AB15688; Millipore, Billerica, MA) and LS-A4198 (rabbit polyclonal antibody LS-A4198; MBL International, Woburn, MA). The CH-AB15688 antibody was generated against a synthetic peptide in the carboxyl terminus of the mouse βAR, whereas the LS-A4198 antibody maps to the NH₂ terminus (amino acids 1–20) of the human βAR. Both antibodies were tested for reactivity and specificity against each of the βARs when overexpressed in CHOK1 cells (Fig. 4; Supplemental Fig. 1; discussed under Results). Titration experiments were conducted to establish concentrations that would result in minimal background and maximal detection of signal. From the serial dilutions of 20, 10, 5, and 2.5 µg/ml, the concentration of 5 µg/ml was selected for the study. After deparaffinization with three changes of xylene (3 min each) and rehydration in a descending ethanol series (100% × 3, 95% × 3, 80% × 3, and distilled H₂O for 5 min each), the samples were subjected to antigen retrieval via exposure to sodium citrate (0.01 M, pH 6.0) at boiling point for 20 min. Samples were allowed to stand at

Table 1

Binding data for βAR agonists in CHOK1 cells transfected with rat and human β AR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ligand</th>
<th>Rat βAR Log IC₅₀ ± S.E.M.</th>
<th>Kᵢ</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Human βAR Log IC₅₀ ± S.E.M.</th>
<th>Kᵢ</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isoproterenol</td>
<td>-4.15 ± 0.506</td>
<td>7.09 × 10⁻⁴⁶</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-5.34 ± 0.302</td>
<td>4.58 × 10⁻⁶</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRL37344</td>
<td>-5.60 ± 0.281</td>
<td>2.51 × 10⁻⁶</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-6.16 ± 0.211</td>
<td>6.95 × 10⁻⁷</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAK-677</td>
<td>-6.09 ± 0.273</td>
<td>8.17 × 10⁻⁷</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-6.89 ± 0.449</td>
<td>1.30 × 10⁻⁷</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK175</td>
<td>-4.97 ± 0.350</td>
<td>1.07 × 10⁻⁵</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-6.35 ± 0.215</td>
<td>4.46 × 10⁻⁷</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n, number of experiments.
room temperature for 20 min before washing in Tris-buffered saline with Tween 20 for 1 min and protein blocking for 20 min in Tris-buffered saline with Tween 20 (Dako North America, Inc., Carpinteria, CA). The principal detection system consisted of a Vector anti-chicken secondary antibody (BA-9010; Vector Laboratories, Burlingame, CA) when the CH-AB15688 antibody was used or a Vector anti-rabbit secondary antibody (BA-1000; Vector Laboratories) when the LS-A4198 antibody was used. This was followed by a Vector ABC-AP kit (AK-5000; Vector Laboratories) with a Vector Red substrate kit (SK-5100; Vector Laboratories), which produced a fuchsia-colored deposit. Tissues were also stained with positive control antibodies (for the adhesion molecule CD31 and for the intermediate filament protein vimentin) to ensure that tissue antigens were preserved and accessible for immunohistochemical analysis. Only tissues that were positive for CD31 and vimentin staining were selected for the remainder of the study. The negative control consisted of performing the entire immunohistochemistry procedure on adjacent sections in the absence of primary antibody. Slides were imaged by LifeSpan BioSciences with a DVC 1310C digital camera coupled to a Nikon microscope and stored as tiff files using Photoshop (Adobe Systems Inc., San Jose, CA).

Statistics. Statistical significance was analyzed using paired, unpaired t test or ANOVA followed by Tukey-Kramer Multiple Comparisons Test when appropriate. Values of $p < 0.05$ were considered significant. Throughout the text, values are expressed as mean ± S.E.M. and $*, p < 0.05$, $**, p < 0.01$, and $***, p < 0.001$.

Results

Receptor Binding Studies. The affinity of the $\beta_3$AR agonists BRL37344, FK175, and TAK-677 was tested in binding studies performed in CHOK1 cells transfected with rat or human $\beta_3$ARs (Table 1). At the human receptor, all three of the $\beta_3$AR-selective ligands exhibited comparable affinity. In contrast, at the rat receptor, TAK-677 exhibited the highest affinity while FK175 exhibited a substantially lower relative affinity than the other two ligands. Furthermore, all three compounds were less potent at the rat versus the human receptor (Table 1).

cAMP Studies. The potency and selectivity of the $\beta_3$AR agonists BRL37344, FK175, and TAK-677 for different $\beta$AR subtypes were tested using the cAMP assay in CHOK1 cells transfected with the rat and human $\beta_3$AR, $\beta_2$AR, and $\beta_1$ARs, respectively (Table 2). These ligands stimulated the rat and human $\beta_3$ARs, with a similar potency series, i.e., TAK-677 > BRL37344 > FK175. In the rat, BRL37344 had efficacy at the $\beta_3$AR that was comparable to that of isoproterenol, whereas TAK-677 was a superagonist at the $\beta_3$AR relative to isoproterenol, producing $>100\%$ efficacy in eight of nine experiments (Table 2). At the human $\beta_3$AR, BRL37344 was only a partial agonist relative to isoproterenol, whereas TAK-677 maintained full agonist efficacy (Table 2). Both agonists were inactive at the rat $\beta_2$AR and exhibited $\sim10$-fold greater selectivity for the $\beta_3$AR versus $\beta_3$AR where they exhibited comparable efficacy to isoproterenol (Table 2; Fig. 2). Although all three ligands also exhibit selectivity for the human $\beta_3$AR versus the other $\beta$AR subtypes, there seems to be some residual ability to stimulate the human $\beta_3$AR, in contrast to what is observed in the rat (Table 2). Although TAK-677 is a partial agonist at the human $\beta_3$AR (relative to isoproterenol), it seems to be a full agonist at the rat $\beta_3$AR, albeit with similar relative selectivity for the $\beta_3$AR receptor in both species (Table 2). Despite the differences between the activities at the human and rat $\beta_3$AR subtypes, the data indicate that these ligands have at least 10 times greater selectivity for the $\beta_3$AR versus the $\beta_1$AR at the rat receptor in these assays in CHOK1 cells overexpressing $\beta$ARs.

Expression of $\beta$ARs in Whole Bladder Tissue in OVX and SHAM Rats. To determine which $\beta$ARs are expressed in the rat bladder tissue and whether OVX alters their expression, we first investigated the mRNA levels of $\beta$ARs. qPCR indicated the expression of all $\beta$ARs in whole-bladder tissue from both SHAM and OVX rats (Fig. 3). Because the primer pairs do not lie at exactly the same position on the standard curve, no conclusions can be drawn about the relative abundance of the $\beta_3$AR versus the $\beta_2$AR versus the $\beta_1$AR mRNA expression. The average value of mRNA levels for $\beta_3$ARs and $\beta_2$ARs had a decreased trend in OVX rats ($p > 0.05$).

The protein expression of $\beta_3$AR was studied using immunohistochemistry. Recent publications have shown that G protein-coupled receptor antibodies lack specificity (Michel et al., 2009; Pradidarcheep et al., 2009). To ensure that the staining we observed is specific for the $\beta_3$ARs, we used two different antibodies generated against distinct epitopes in the $\beta_3$AR: CH-AB15688 and LS-A4198 (see Materials and Methods). The specificity of the CH-AB15688 antibody for the rat $\beta_3$AR was tested in CHOK1 cells overexpressing the individual rat $\beta$ARs (Fig. 4). The specificity of the LS-A4198 antibody for the human $\beta_3$AR was similarly validated in the heterologous cell system (Supplemental Fig. 1). The validation data indicated that the anti-$\beta_3$AR antibodies used in this study did not cross-react with either the $\beta_2$AR or the $\beta_1$AR and specifically recognized the rat or human $\beta_3$AR protein, respectively. The LS-A4198 antibody did not recognize the rat $\beta_3$AR when overexpressed in CHOK1 cells, despite exhibiting a staining pattern in bladder (Fig. 5; Supplemental Fig. 2) and other tissues (e.g., adipose tissue; data not shown) similar to that obtained with the anti-rat antibody CH-AB15688. The inability of this antibody to recognize the rat receptor in the heterologous system may be an artifact of receptor overexpression, which perhaps obscures the amino-terminal epitope, especially because the $\beta_3$AR has been demonstrated to form homodimers in a heterologous system (Breit et al., 2004). In addition, it is thought that the $\beta_3$AR is expressed endogenously at much lower levels in native tissues than in engineered cell lines. This evidence is based on radioligand binding assays, which use a high concentration of nonselective radiotracers, thus making it much more difficult to detect the $\beta_3$AR levels in native tissues versus the heterologous cell systems (Vrydag and Michel, 2007). Comparison of the staining patterns of the two antibodies in Fig. 5 and Supplemental Fig. 2 illustrates a similar staining pattern throughout the bladder regions, further indicating that the observed staining is specific for the $\beta_3$AR.

Figure 5 demonstrates that the receptors are present in the urothelium and smooth muscle in all regions of the rat bladder. Qualitatively, the expression appeared uniform in the urothelium in all bladder regions. Within the detrusor, expression occasionally appeared somewhat higher in the trigone versus the other bladder regions (Fig. 5, compare D with F; Supplemental Fig. 2, compare A with C and D with F), but this did not appear to be dependent on hormonal status. It is important to note that no qualitative differences were seen between the OVX and SHAM rats, suggesting that $\beta_3$AR levels and their tissue distribution in the bladder are preserved upon ovarian hormone depletion.
cAMP measurements illustrating the potency and efficacy of βAR agonists at different rat and human βARs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ligand</th>
<th>Rat βAR</th>
<th>Human βAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Log EC₅₀ ± S.E.M.</td>
<td>EC₅₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRL37344</td>
<td>β₁AR</td>
<td>−7.39 ± 0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β₂AR</td>
<td>−6.17 ± 0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β₃AR</td>
<td>−8.67 ± 0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAK-677</td>
<td>β₁AR</td>
<td>−7.83 ± 0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β₂AR</td>
<td>−6.33 ± 0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK175</td>
<td>β₁AR</td>
<td>−6.19 ± 0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = number of experiments; NR1, no response in two of three experiments; NR2, no response in three of three experiments; NR3, no response in two of two experiments; NR4, no response in one of four experiments; NR5, no response in one of three experiments; N6, one experiment; N.A., not assessed.

Fig. 2. β₁AR agonists increase cAMP in CHOK1 cells. BRL37344 (5 mg/kg i.p.) significantly decreased voiding frequency compared to vehicle treatment; Fig. 6, black and gray lines, respectively. TAK-677 (5 mg/kg i.p.) significantly decreased voiding frequency compared to vehicle treatment; Fig. 6, black and gray lines, respectively, which are relative to baseline (vehicle-treated, 185 RNA). Relative voiding frequency (vehicle), relative to baseline, was monitored in metabolic cages. During 24-h measurement with the vehicle, rats were equally responsive to both BRL37344 and TAK-677 (ANOVA, p > 0.05).
Effects of OVX and $\beta_3$AR Agonists on Voiding Function in Vivo in Anesthetized Rats during Cystometric Studies. CMG in urethane-anesthetized rats revealed that OVX affected filling and voiding parameters (Fig. 7). OVX rats had significantly greater variability of ICIs than SHAM rats (coefficient of variation of ICIs in OVX versus ICIs in SHAMs were 0.44 ± 0.06 versus 0.26 ± 0.04, unpaired t test, $p < 0.05$). The ICIs of OVX rats were also significantly shorter than the ICIs of SHAM rats but not significantly different from the ICIs of young (2 months) virgin rats (Fig. 7C; Table 3). The ICIs of SHAM and RB rats were also significantly different from the ICIs of virgin rats (Fig. 7C; Table 3). Other CMG parameters, A, BP, and PTh, were not different between SHAM, OVX, RB, or virgin rats (Table 3). NVCs (amplitude range 0.5–9 cm H$_2$O) that appeared during bladder filling before the micturition contraction were observed in most OVX rats (11 of 13) and in proportion of the SHAM rats (4 of 11) (Fig. 7B and quantification in Fig. 9, F and G).

Dose-response curves of $\beta_3$AR agonists, BRL37344, FK175, and TAK-677, or vehicles (saline and DMSO) injected intravenously were constructed in RB rats (Fig. 8). The vehicles did not significantly alter CMG parameters (Fig. 8, B and D). $\beta_3$AR agonists increased ICI and decreased A and BP in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 8, A, C, E, and F). The effect on PTh was variable. In some animals, the drugs increased PTh prominently (Fig. 8A, open arrows); however, because of considerable variability, the effects did not reach statistical significance, except in the cases indicated in Fig. 8. The agonist-induced effects on CMG parameters occurred rapidly (i.e., in the first voiding immediately after drug delivery) and were long-lasting (more than 4 h; Fig. 8A). At 100 $\mu$g/kg, no significant differences on A, ICI, and BP were detected among the three agonists; whereas only BRL37344 increased PTh significantly (ANOVA followed by Tukey-Kramer Multiple Comparisons Test, $p < 0.05$). For TAK-677, the effect on PTh at 250 $\mu$g/kg was not different from the effect of 500 $\mu$g/kg (Fig. 8F), suggesting that these doses produced a maximal
effect and that TAK-677 was more potent than the other two β3AR agonists. The effects of a range of doses of TAK-677 were also examined in SHAM and OVX rats. In both groups, TAK-677 increased ICI and decreased A and BP in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 9). TAK-677 increased PTh in a dose-dependent manner in SHAM rats, paralleling the increase in ICI, whereas in OVX rats the effect of the drug was less prominent but still dose-dependent (Fig. 9, C and E). There were no significant differences in the effects of TAK-677 between SHAM and OVX rats for any of the parameters analyzed. β3AR agonists also reduced the NVCs (Fig. 9, F and G). TAK-677 (500 μg/kg) reduced NVCs by ~50% in OVX rats (amplitude reduced by 45.5 ± 26.9% and area reduced by 56.7 ± 18.6%) and by ~75% in SHAM rats (amplitude reduced by 70.4 ± 18.8% and area reduced by 70.9 ± 21.5%) (Fig. 9, F and G).

In some control rats (9 of 29 RB; 3 of 11 SHAM) and OVX rats (1 of 13), high doses of β3AR agonists (>100 μg/kg for BRL37344 and for TAK-677 and >250 μg/kg for FK175) increased baseline pressure and decreased ICI. When the bladder was expressed manually, residual urine was observed, indicating impaired voiding. For these rats, data were included in the summary only for the concentrations before voiding impairment occurred. The decreasing numbers of animals with increasing doses of agonists in bar graphs in Figs. 8 and 9 reflect this adjustment. The effect of high doses of β3AR agonists to impair micturition was not explored in further detail.

**Fig. 6. Ovariectomy and β3-Adrenergic Receptors in Bladder**

Ovariectomy and β3AR agonists alter the voiding pattern of awake rats in metabolic cages. A, summary of voiding frequency, volume per void, and total voided volume during 24 h, the 12-h day and 12-h night periods, for n = 12 rats tested before OVX (white bars) and after OVX (black bars). Asterisks indicate statistically significant changes (paired t test). B, similar data as in A from n = 7 SHAM rats. C, example of the effects of vehicle (33% DMSO in saline; top trace) and TAK-677 (5 mg/kg; bottom trace) on the voiding pattern of an OVX rat. Double-sided arrow indicates the time at which the treatment was performed (5–15 min before 7:00 PM; noise transients are due to transducer movement when the rat was removed and returned to the cage for treatment). Arrows at 7:00 PM and 11:00 PM indicate the time interval after treatment used for data analysis. D, summary of the effect of BRL37344 (5 mg/kg) and TAK-677 (5 mg/kg) on voiding frequency in RB, SHAM, and OVX rats. Data are summarized for the 4-h interval after 7:00 PM. Numbers inside columns indicate the number of rats in each group. Asterisks indicate statistical significance comparing the effect of the drug with the effect of vehicle using unpaired t test.

effect and that TAK-677 was more potent than the other two β3AR agonists.

The effects of a range of doses of TAK-677 were also examined in SHAM and OVX rats. In both groups, TAK-677 increased ICI and decreased A and BP in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 9). TAK-677 increased PTh in a dose-dependent manner in SHAM rats, paralleling the increase in ICI, whereas in OVX rats the effect of the drug was less prominent but still dose-dependent (Fig. 9, C and E). There were no significant differences in the effects of TAK-677 between SHAM and OVX rats for any of the parameters analyzed. β3AR agonists also reduced the NVCs (Fig. 9, F and G). TAK-677 (500 μg/kg) reduced NVCs by ~50% in OVX rats (amplitude reduced by 45.5 ± 26.9% and area reduced by 56.7 ± 18.6%) and by ~75% in SHAM rats (amplitude reduced by 70.4 ± 18.8% and area reduced by 70.9 ± 21.5%) (Fig. 9, F and G).

In some control rats (9 of 29 RB; 3 of 11 SHAM) and OVX rats (1 of 13), high doses of β3AR agonists (>100 μg/kg for BRL37344 and for TAK-677 and >250 μg/kg for FK175) increased baseline pressure and decreased ICI. When the bladder was expressed manually, residual urine was observed, indicating impaired voiding. For these rats, data were included in the summary only for the concentrations before voiding impairment occurred. The decreasing numbers of animals with increasing doses of agonists in bar graphs in Figs. 8 and 9 reflect this adjustment. The effect of high doses of β3AR agonists to impair micturition was not explored in further detail.

**Effects of OVX and β3-Adrenergic Activation in Bladder Strips in Vitro.** To determine whether the observed effects of β3AR agonists are due to the activation of β3ARs in the smooth muscle and/or central nervous system, we performed experiments in bladder strips. β3AR agonists BRL37344, FK175, and TAK-677 decreased baseline tone and amplitude of spontaneous contractions in bladder strips from RB rats,
with potency series TAK-677 > BRL37344 > FK175 (Fig. 10). The effects were long-lasting (more than 30 min), repeatable, and concentration-dependent (Fig. 10, A–E). The threshold concentration was 10^{-6} M for BRL37344 and TAK-677 and 10^{-5} M for FK175. The effects of TAK-677 were not affected by the presence of the β3AR antagonist, atenolol (100 μM; n = 14 strips), or by the presence of the β3AR antagonist ICI 118551 (1 μM; n = 11 strips) (Fig. 11, C and D). The β3AR antagonist SR59230A (10–100 μM) partially reversed the effects of the agonists on baseline tone and completely reversed the effects of the agonists on the amplitude of the spontaneous contractions. However, it also increased spontaneous activity when administered in the absence of an agonist (Figs. 10Bii and 11, A and B). Application of isopropenol (100 μM), a nonspecific βAR agonist, in the presence of a maximal concentration of β3AR agonists (100 μM BRL37344 or 100 μM TAK-677) further decreased baseline tone and amplitude of the contractions (Fig. 10, C–E), indicating that, in addition to β3AR, there are other βARs that contribute to smooth muscle relaxation.

Ovariectomy had no effect on the amplitude of spontaneous muscle contractions (amplitude: 0.41 ± 0.08 g in OVX strips and 0.42 ± 0.06 g in SHAM strips; unpaired t test p > 0.05; n = 22 strips each). Similar to the results in strips from RB rats, TAK-677 and BRL37344 decreased baseline tone and amplitude of spontaneous contractions in OVX and SHAM rats. The drug effects were similar in the two groups (Fig. 12). In general, in strips from all groups, TAK-677 was more potent than BRL37344, especially in suppressing the amplitude of spontaneous contractions (Figs. 10, C and E, and 12).

**Discussion**

Using the rat ovariectomy model, we demonstrated that hormonal changes increase voiding frequency and decrease bladder capacity in conscious and anesthetized rats without altering the inhibitory effects of β3AR agonists on voiding or on the activity of bladder smooth muscle strips. We further showed that the expression and cellular localization of β3AR protein is maintained throughout the bladder after ovariectomy. These results indicate that, although some functions of the LUT are sensitive to hormonal changes induced by ovariectomy, β3AR-mediated inhibition of the bladder is resistant to these changes.

Estrogen receptors are expressed throughout the LUT, as well as in bladder sensory neurons and in many central nervous system pathways involved in bladder function (Pelletier, 2000; Bennett et al., 2003). Thus, multiple targets and mechanisms may be affected by hormonal changes. In awake middle-aged rats (10–13 months old) in metabolic cages, we detected an ~25% increase in voiding frequency and a decrease in bladder capacity following OVX (Fig. 6), similar to previous reports (Liang et al., 2002; Yoshida et al., 2007). The effects were significant only during night time when the rats are active, suggesting that if similar changes occur in humans, hormonal depletion would not cause nocturia.

Under urethane anesthesia during CMGs, OVX rats exhibited NVCs during bladder filling (Figs. 7 and 9), resembling detrusor overactivity in spinal cord-injured rats (Cheng and de Groat, 2004), and had shorter ICIs, suggestive of reduced bladder capacity. NVCs are usually encountered in only a small percentage of control rats but can be unmasked or enhanced by intravesical administration of a mAChR agonist, which acts on targets close to the luminal surface of the bladder (Kullmann et al., 2008). This raises the possibility that OVX might facilitate bladder activity by enhancing cholinergic excitatory sensory mechanisms in urothelium or in suburothelial afferent nerves. This idea receives some indirect support from the finding that tetrodotoxin-insensitive basal- and stretch-evoked ACh release from the urothelium is increased in bladder strips from OVX rats (Yoshida et al., 2007).

It is less likely that changes in efferent nerves are responsible for the facilitatory effects of OVX, because other studies demonstrated that bladder strips from OVX rats exhibit decreased responsiveness to muscarinic receptor stimulation (Diep and Constantinou, 1999) or to electrical field stimulation of intramural nerves. The latter effect has been attributed to a decrease in ACh release from nerve fibers (Yoshida et al., 2007). Axonal degeneration in the detrusor, including disrupted axolemma, depleted synaptic vesicles, and disrupted neuronal mitochondria, as well as an ~25% reduction in the smooth muscle mass at 4 months after OVX in aged (13–14 months) female Fisher rats may account for the reduction in efferent nerve-evoked responses (Zhu et al., 2001; Fleischmann et al., 2002). Taken together, the results suggest that the facilitatory effect of OVX is less likely due to enhancement of the excitatory efferent neurotransmission or increase in bladder smooth muscle excitability but may be related to changes in either peripheral sensory mechanisms (urothelium or afferent nerves) or central neural pathways controlling bladder reflexes.

OVX could also alter β-adrenergic inhibitory mechanisms.
in the bladder (Matsubara et al., 2002). mRNA of all three types of βARs is expressed in the rat bladder (Fig. 3), as reported in previous studies in several species, including rats and humans (Yamaguchi and Chapple, 2007). However, OVX did not change mRNA levels of any of the βARs in bladder tissue (Fig. 3), nor did it change β3AR protein expression (Fig. 5).

To investigate whether OVX induces changes in β3AR function, we evaluated the effects of three β3AR agonists, BRL37344, FK175, and TAK-677, which were well characterized for receptor selectivity, affinity, and efficacy in binding and cAMP generation in CHOK1 cells overexpressing rat and human βARs (Fig. 2; Tables 1 and 2). Although the affinity of these ligands was higher at the human than at the rat β3AR (Table 1), these ligands stimulated the rat and human β3ARs with a similar potency series, i.e., TAK-677 > BRL37344 > FK175 (Table 2). Comparison of the cAMP data (Table 2) with binding data (Table 1) at rat and human β3ARs indicates that all three ligands stimulated the receptor at considerably lower concentrations than would be predicted by the binding affinity, suggesting that β3AR is activated at low fractional receptor occupancy. On the other hand, the concentrations of β3AR agonists necessary to elicit a significant relaxing effect in bladder strips was at least an order of magnitude higher (10^{-6} M; Figs. 10–12). This discrepancy could be related to different methods and/or tissues used for testing the agonists (i.e., CHOK1 cells solely overexpressing β3ARs versus bladder strips containing multiple...

**TABLE 3**

Urodynamic parameters of OVX, SHAM, RB, and virgin (V) rats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OVX (n = 13) (10–15 mo)</th>
<th>SHAM (n = 11) (10–15 mo)</th>
<th>RB (n = 20) (9–13 mo)</th>
<th>V (n = 14) (2–3 mo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICI (s)</td>
<td>646.07 ± 62.60 *</td>
<td>946.53 ± 125.84 *</td>
<td>778.92 ± 59.13 *</td>
<td>473.91 ± 62.69 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (cm H2O)</td>
<td>25.31 ± 1.19</td>
<td>24.10 ± 1.00</td>
<td>28.82 ± 2.10</td>
<td>26.90 ± 0.84 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTh (cm H2O)</td>
<td>5.85 ± 0.55</td>
<td>6.89 ± 0.81</td>
<td>5.02 ± 0.27</td>
<td>4.87 ± 0.50 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP (cm H2O)</td>
<td>4.39 ± 0.51</td>
<td>3.02 ± 0.29</td>
<td>3.91 ± 0.22</td>
<td>3.63 ± 0.29 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p = 0.0458; unpaired t test comparing ICI of OVX with ICI of SHAM rats.

^ p = 0.06 when comparing ICI of OVX with ICIs of virgins rats.

^ p < 0.05 unpaired t test when comparing ICI measurements in SHAM rats with virgins rats (p = 0.0025) or RB rats with virgins rats (p = 0.0015).

---

**Fig. 8.** β3AR agonists alter the voiding pattern of urethane-anesthetized RB rats. A, examples of the effect of TAK-677 in a RB rat. Small black arrows indicate the time when a dose (actual dose, not cumulative dose) of drug was delivered intravenously. Open arrow indicates increases in PTh, which occurred randomly in most rats. Diamond shape arrows indicate the actual time of the recordings to illustrate the long-lasting effect of the drug. Gray shadow indicates a break in the recordings. B, summary of the effects of saline injected intravenously, the vehicle for BRL37344 on CMG parameters. C, summary of the effects of BRL37344 on CMG parameters. D, summary of the effects of DMSO injected intravenously, the vehicle for FK175 and TAK-677 on CMG parameters. E, summary of the effects of FK175 on CMG parameters. F, summary of the effects of TAK-677 on CMG parameters. Numbers on the bar graphs indicate the number of rats tested with a specific dose of the agonist. Percentage of control refers to percentage change of a parameter after drug application relative to the period before drug application. Each rat served as its own internal control. Asterisks indicate statistical significance comparing the effect of a certain concentration of the drug with control using ANOVA followed by Tukey post hoc test. # indicates statistically significant differences between drug and vehicle, tested using unpaired t test.
Alternatively, cAMP production may not be the only mechanism underlying β_{3}AR agonist-induced inhibition of the bladder (Breit et al., 2004; Frazier et al., 2008). However, in bladder strips, the effects of TAK-677 were not significantly different in the presence of either β_{1}AR or β_{2}AR antagonists (Fig. 11, C and D), suggesting that the ligands are behaving as selective β_{3}AR agonists in rat bladder.

Treatment of awake control and OVX rats with BRL37344 (5 mg/kg) or TAK-677 (5 mg/kg) produced significant and similar reductions in voiding frequency (by ~40–70%) (Fig. 6). In CMG studies, in anesthetized rats, all β_{3}AR agonists (1–500 µg/kg) significantly reduced NVCs, baseline pressure, voiding frequency, and amplitude of voiding contractions, with no major differences between OVX and SHAM rats (Figs. 8 and 9). The lack of effect of OVX on β_{3}AR inhibition in vivo was confirmed in in vitro experiments in bladder strips where β_{3}AR agonists had similar effects in tissues from OVX and SHAM rats (Fig. 12).

The effect of β_{3}AR agonists on voiding could be attributable in part to a direct action on the smooth muscle, as indicated by the decrease in baseline bladder pressure during CMGs
Fig. 11. β₃AR but not β₁AR and β₂AR antagonists affect the β₃AR agonist-induced responses in bladder strips. A and B, the β₃AR antagonist SR59230A (100 μM) partially reverses the effects of TAK-677, BRL37344, and FK175 (at 100 μM each) on the baseline tone (A) and completely reverses the effects of these β₃AR agonists on the amplitude of spontaneous contractions (B). The drug alone also increases the amplitude of contractions. * indicates statistically significant differences between the agonist and the antagonist. # indicates statistically significant differences between the control and agonist. Numbers on bars indicate the number of strips tested for each β₃AR agonist. C and D, TAK-677 effects on baseline tone (C) and on the amplitude of contractions (D) were not significantly different (ANOVA; p > 0.05 at all TAK-677 concentrations) in the absence (black bar, same data as in Fig. 10C; n = 27 strips) and in the presence of the β₁AR antagonist atenolol (100 μM, white hatched bars; n = 14 strips) or the β₂AR antagonist ICI 118551 (1 μM, gray bars; n = 11 strips). The effects of 10⁻⁷ to 10⁻⁴ M TAK-677 were significantly different from control in all conditions (ANOVA followed by Tukey-Kramer post hoc test).

Fig. 12. Ovariectomy does not change the effects of β₃AR agonists TAK-677 and BRL37344 in bladder strips. A, summary of the effects of TAK-677 on baseline tone in OVX (white bars; n = 25 strips) and in SHAM (black bars; n = 25 strips) rats. B, summary of the effects of TAK-677 on amplitude of spontaneous contractions in OVX (white bars; n = 25 strips) and in SHAM (black bars; n = 25 strips) rats. No statistically significant differences were seen between SHAM and OVX for any of the concentrations tested. C and D, comparisons between the effects of TAK-677 (black bars; n = 25 strips) and the effects of BRL37344 (gray bars; n = 10 strips) on baseline tone (C) and on amplitude of spontaneous contractions (D) in OVX rats. For all panels, * indicate statistically significant changes from control tested using ANOVA followed by Tukey-Kramer post hoc test. # indicates statistically significant changes between the effect of TAK-677 and the effect of BRL37344 tested with unpaired t test.
(Figs. 8 and 9) and by the decrease in baseline tone and spontaneous contractions in bladder strips (Figs. 10–12). In addition, effects on other components of the bladder (i.e., interstitial cells of Cajal or urothelial cells known to modulate the smooth muscle spontaneous contractions) (Hawthorn et al., 2000) are also possible. In bladder strips, isoproterenol had an additional relaxing effect in the presence of high concentrations of TAK-677 (Fig. 10), and reverse transcription-PCR data show the presence of other β3AR subtypes (Fig. 3); thus, we cannot rule out the possibility that other β3ARs may contribute to β3AR-mediated bladder relaxation. The inhibitory effects of β3AR agonists on bladder strips were reversed by a β3AR antagonist, SR59230A, indicating that the effects of these agonists were mediated by activation of β3ARs. It is unexpected that SR59230A alone increased the amplitude of contractions (Figs. 11, A and B), raising the possibility that β3ARs are tonically active, possibly due to the spontaneous release of norepinephrine from adrenergic nerves. β3AR agonists could also indirectly affect bladder muscle and influence reflex voiding by acting on urothelium or afferent nerves. β3ARs are highly expressed in the urothelium (Fig. 5), and activation of urothelial β3ARs releases NO (Birder et al., 2002), which in turn can alter afferent nerve excitability (Yoshimura et al., 2001). Furthermore, urothelium can interact with bladder muscle via the release of inhibitory transmitters (Hawthorn et al., 2000). Further studies are required to determine the precise sites and mechanisms of action of β3AR agonists in the bladder.

β3AR agonists have been effective in reducing voiding not only in normal rats (Woods et al., 2001; Takasu et al., 2007; Leon et al., 2008) but also in various rat models of detrusor overactivity. CL316243 (0.1–100 µg/kg), FK175 (1–10 mg/kg), and YM178 (0.03–3 mg/kg) increased ICI, decreased bladder pressure, and/or decreased detrusor overactivity in CMG studies in spontaneously hypertensive rats (Leon et al., 2008), in rats with bladder outlet obstruction (Woods et al., 2001), and in rats with neurogenic detrusor overactivity following ibotenic acid brain lesions (Fujimura et al., 1999) and cerebral infarction (Kaidoh et al., 2002). Our study adds OVX-induced changes in the beta 3-adrenergic receptors to this list by demonstrating that OVX-induced changes in the beta 3-adrenergic receptors in the bladder can be ameliorated by selective 3AR agonists, suggesting that the dose of these compounds should be cautiously chosen to avoid effects leading to voiding impairment. Currently, β3AR agonists are under development for the treatment of symptoms of OAB. The recent successful clinical trials with YM178 (Phase II) show that β3AR agonists improve bladder function in patients with OAB without the major side effects usually reported when using antimuscarinics (Chapple et al., 2008).

In summary, our results indicate that O VX facilitates voluntary and reflex voiding. These effects are not accompanied by a change in β3AR receptor expression in the bladder or a decrease in β3AR-mediated inhibition of bladder activity. From a clinical perspective, these results suggest that the hormonal changes that occur in the postmenopausal female population should neither decrease the efficacy nor alter the potency of β3AR agonists in the treatment of OAB symptoms.

Acknowledgments
We thank members of W. C. de Groat laboratory and Dr. Karl-Erik Andersson for valuable discussions. We also thank the staff of LifeSpan BioSciences for excellent technical assistance with the IHC samples.

References


References


References


Address correspondence to: Dr. F. Aura Kullmann, Department of Pharmacology and Chemical Biology, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, E1340 Biomedical Science Tower, Pittsburgh, PA 15261. E-mail: akullmann@urogenix.com