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Brief report

Possible association between serotonin transporter gene polymorphism and violent suicidal behavior in mood disorders

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Abstract

Background: Genes involved in the serotonin system are major candidates in association studies of suicidal behavior. In this caseâ€“control study we investigated whether the serotonin transporter (5-HTT) gene encoding the protein responsible for the reuptake of serotonin from the synapse after its release from serotonergic neurons is a susceptibility factor for suicidal behavior.

Methods: A functional polymorphism of the 5-HTT gene (a 44â€“base pair insertion/deletion in the 5-HTT â€“linked polymorphic region [5-HTTLPR]) was studied in a population of 237 consecutive patients with affective disorder (unipolar or bipolar) and 187 control subjects. Ninety-nine patients had attempted suicide at least once, of whom

26 made a violent attempt.

Results: No association was found between the "œs" allele of the 5-HTTLPR and suicide attempt; however, there was a significant difference in allele distributions between patients who had made violent suicide attempts and control subjects.

Conclusions: A genetic variant of the 5-HTT gene may predispose individuals to violent suicidal behavior. The precise phenotype associated with the 5-HTT gene is unclear, and therefore further studies are required to replicate these findings.



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Keywords

Serotonin transporter gene; affective disorder; suicidal behavior; candidate symptoms

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