Effects of Low Doses of Bisphenol A on the Metabolome of Perinatally Exposed CD-1 Mice

Nicolas J. Cabaton,1,2 Cécile Canlet,1,2 Perinaaz R. Wadia,3 Marie Tremblay-Franco,1,2 Roselyne Gautier,1,2 Jérôme Molina,1,2 Carlos Sonnenschein,3 Jean-Pierre Cravedi,1,2 Beverly S. Rubin,3 Ana M. Soto,3 and Daniel Zalko1,2

1 Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), UMR1331, TOXALIM (Research Centre in Food Toxicology), Toulouse, France; 2Université de Toulouse, UMR1331, Toulouse, France; 3Department of Anatomy and Cellular Biology, Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

BACKGROUND: Bisphenol A (BPA) is a well-known endocrine disruptor used to manufacture polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins. Exposure of pregnant rodents to low doses of BPA results in pleiotropic effects in their offspring.

OBJECTIVE: We used metabolomics—a method for determining metabolic changes in response to nutritional, pharmacological, or toxic stimuli—to examine metabolic shifts induced in vivo by perinatal exposure to low doses of BPA in CD-1 mice.

METHODS: Male offspring born to pregnant CD-1 mice that were exposed to vehicle or to 0.025, 0.25, or 25 µg BPA/kg body weight/day, from gestation day 8 through day 16 of lactation, were examined on postnatal day (PND) 2 or PND21. Aqueous extracts of newborns (PND2, whole animal) and of livers, brains, and serum samples from PND21 pups were submitted to 1H nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. Data were analyzed using partial least squares discriminant analysis.

RESULTS: Examination of endogenous metabolic fingerprints revealed remarkable discrimination in whole extracts of the four PND2 newborn treatment groups, strongly suggesting changes in the global metabolism. Furthermore, statistical analyses of liver, serum, and brain samples collected on PND21 successfully discriminated among treatment groups. Variations in glucose, pyruvate, some amino acids, and neurotransmitters (γ-aminobutyric acid and glutamate) were identified.

CONCLUSIONS: Low doses of BPA disrupt global metabolism, including energy metabolism and brain function, in perinatally exposed CD-1 mouse pups. Metabolomics can be used to highlight the effects of low doses of endocrine disruptors by linking perinatal exposure to changes in global metabolism.

KEY WORDS: bisphenol A, endocrine disruptor, fetal origins of adult disease, low dose, metabolomics, metabolic fingerprinting, NMR fingerprints, partial least-squares discriminant analysis (PLS-DA), perinatal exposure, toxicology. Environ Health Perspect 121:586–593 (2013). dx.doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1205588 [Online 21 February 2013]

Bisphenol A (BPA) is manufactured at a rate of > 3.1 million tons/year; thus, exposure to this compound is ubiquitous. Its possible impact on human health is reflected in recent worldwide regulatory legislation. For example, the Canadian authorities, followed by the European Union, have recently banned the use of BPA in infant feeding bottles, a landmark move to safeguard the health of infants and the general population (Asimakopoulos et al. 2012; European Commission 2011). Nevertheless, BPA is still widely used in polycarbonates, epoxy resins, paints, lacquers, and medical devices. BPA is also used as a base compound for the manufacture of flame retardants, brake fluids, and thermal papers (Fernandez et al. 2007). BPA monomers migrate out of these products and contaminate, for example, food, beverages, and intravenous infusions (Goodson et al. 2004). Although the main route of contamination is through ingestion, the transdermal route could also contribute to BPA exposure in humans when direct contact with BPA (free monomer) occurs (Zalko et al. 2011). Detectable levels of BPA were present in urine samples of > 92% of Americans tested in the 2003–2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (Calafat et al. 2008). Higher exposure levels were found in children and adolescents compared with adults. Of particular concern is the finding of high levels of BPA in premature infants being treated in neonatal intensive care units (Calafat et al. 2009). BPA has also been detected in maternal and fetal plasma, in human placenta, and in the milk of nursing mothers (Calafat et al. 2006; Sun et al. 2004). Animal studies have highlighted the estrogenic effects of BPA (vom Saal et al. 2007), although BPA is considered by some to be a weak estrogen due to its low potency compared with estradiol in reporter gene assays involving nuclear receptors (Blair et al. 2000). However, recent work has shown that BPA can be as potent as or more potent than estradiol in promoting some estrogenic activities (Alonso-Magdalena et al. 2006, 2012). BPA can also bind to membrane receptors (G protein-coupled receptor 30 and the membrane form of estrogen receptor-γ) to produce effects similar to those of estradiol (Thomas and Dong 2006; Welshons et al. 2006; Wozniak et al. 2005).

Perinatal BPA exposure has been reported to decrease fertility and fecundity in female CD-1 mice (Cabaton et al. 2011) and to decrease fertility in male offspring of exposed rats (Salian et al. 2011). Additional effects of perinatal BPA exposure include masculinization of behaviors and brain structures in female CD-1 mice (Richter et al. 2007; Rubin et al. 2006). Exposure to BPA through placenta and milk has been shown to increase early adipose storage and adipogenesis in a sex-specific and dose-dependent manner in rats and mice, with consequences on body weight later in life (Rubin and Soto 2009; Somm et al. 2009). BPA exposure has been linked to altered glucose homeostasis in pregnant female rodents and their male offspring (Alonso-Magdalena et al. 2010) and has been postulated to be a contributing factor in predisposing populations to the development of obesity and diabetes later in life (Heindel and vom Saal 2009; vom Saal et al. 2012).

The aim of metabolomics is to measure the “global, dynamic metabolic response of living systems to biological stimuli” (Nicholson and Lindon 2008). Metabolomics have furthered our understanding of drug toxicology while complementing more traditional approaches (Coen 2010). The integration of metabolomics and conventional toxicological studies is expected to provide valuable information for risk assessment of endocrine disruptors (EDs) such as BPA. Metabolic fingerprints based on nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy, combined with appropriate statistical methods, could detect slight changes in the metabolome of cells, tissues, or organisms exposed to EDs, opening the way to examine whether exposure to an ED results in global effects.
alterations of metabolism and whether these changes persist after cessation of exposure.

Metabolomic data are characterized by a large number of variables and by high correlations among these variables. Multivariate methods, such as principal components analysis (PCA) and partial least squares discriminant analysis (PLS-DA), which aim to solve both problems mentioned above, are thus the methods of choice for analyzing metabolomic data. PCA is used to determine the variation in the data set, regardless of the origin of the variation. PLS-DA is an alternative to PCA that allows discriminating observations according to classes defined a priori. Besides, PLS-DA is preferred to PCA for sample discrimination because the dimension reduction provided by PLS is explicitly guided by variability among groups, whereas PCA can identify only gross variability directions and is incapable of distinguishing variability that occurs among groups and within groups (Quintás et al. 2012). When more than two groups are included in the analysis, PLS-DA is more appropriate than PCA (Lindon et al. 2004).

We hypothesized that the global metabolism of mice perinatally exposed to BPA may be disrupted. The present study was designed to test this hypothesis in the outbred CD-1 mouse, a common animal model in BPA studies. Rodent strains vary in their susceptibility to low-dose BPA exposure (Richter et al. 2007). Rodent placentaion at stages of gestation is histologically close to human placentaion (Zalko et al. 2003), and the mouse and rat have been shown to be excellent models for understanding the human syndrome observed in the offspring of mothers exposed to diethylstilbestrol during pregnancy (Vandenberg et al. 2009). Previous work using CD-1 mice has shown that, following transplacential transfer, fetuses become exposed to their mother’s BPA burden and BPA metabolites (Markey et al. 2001; Wadia et al. 2007; Zalko et al. 2003). The body of literature clearly demonstrates multiple targets affected by low doses of BPA, including metabolism, especially when the exposure occurs at critical periods of development (Vandenberg et al. 2012).

In the present study, CD-1 fetuses and neonates were exposed to low doses of BPA [0.025, 0.25, or 25 μg BPA/kg body weight (bw)/day] administered to their mothers from the end of gestation day (GD) 8 through day 16 of lactation. Female offspring were examined for reproductive outcomes and found to have decreased fertility and fecundity (Cabanot et al. 2011), whereas the male offspring were examined for changes in global metabolism by assessing 1H NMR profiling and analyzing the data using multivariate statistics. Male offspring were examined on postnatal day (PND) 2 (whole body) and on PND21. For the latter group, samples included the liver (the main metabolizing organ), serum (circulating metabolites), and the brain, given the fact that recent studies have suggested that perinatal exposure to low doses of BPA could have persistent effects on brain structure, function, and behavior in rodents (Richter et al. 2007).

### Materials and Methods

**Chemicals.** Dimethylsulfoxide [DMSO; Chemical Abstracts Service Registry Number (CASRN) 67-68-5], bisphenol A (4,4’-dihydroxydiphenyldimethylmethane; CAS 80-05-7, product #239658, lot #03105ES; purity ≥ 99%), and butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) were purchased from Sigma Chemical Company (St. Louis, MO, USA). Stock purity of BPA was confirmed as described previously (Cabanat et al. 2011). We purchased acetonitrile from Scharlab SL (Sentimenat, Spain), and deuterium oxide (D2O) and sodium 3-trimethylsilyl-2,2,3,3-tetadeuteriopropionate (TMSp) from Eurisotop (Saint-Aubin, France).

**Animals.** Twelve-week-old female CD-1 mice and proven breeder male mice (Charles River Laboratories, Wilmington, MA, USA) were maintained in temperature- and light-controlled (14 hr/10 hr light/dark cycle) conditions at the Human Nutrition and Research Center animal facility (Tufts University), a facility approved by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care. All experimental procedures were approved by the Tufts University–Tufts Medical Center Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. The animals were treated humanely and with regard for alleviation of suffering. Water (glass bottles) and food (Harlan Teklad 2018; Harlan Laboratories Inc., Indianapolis, IN, USA) were supplied ad libitum. Water (glass bottles) and food (Harlan Teklad 2018; Harlan Laboratories Inc., Indianapolis, IN, USA) were supplied ad libitum. All procedures for sample preparation for 1H NMR spectroscopy. Trunk blood was collected into serum tubes (Sarstedt, Newton, NC, USA). Blood samples were centrifuged for 5 min at 10,000 × g and 20°C. Serum was collected into microtubes and stored at −20°C. For analysis, serum samples (100 μL) were diluted with 600 μL D2O and centrifuged at 5,000 × g for 10 min before they were placed in 5-mm NMR tubes.

Blood, liver, brain, and whole-pup samples, extraction procedures were derived from Folch et al. (1951) and from the method described by Waters et al. (2002). Samples of tissue (100 mg liver, whole brain, and whole pup) were homogenized using a Polytron PT2100 homogenizer (Kinematica, Lucerne, Switzerland) in acetonitrile/H2O (50/50, vol/vol) containing 0.1% BHT in an ice-water bath. Homogenates were centrifuged at 5,000 × g for 10 min at 4°C, and the supernatants were removed and lyophilized. The lyophilisates were reconstituted in 600 μL D2O containing 0.25 mM TMSp (as a chemical shift reference at 0 ppm). The reconstituted solutions were transferred to NMR tubes.

1H NMR analyses. All 1H NMR spectra were obtained on a Bruker DRX-600-Avance NMR spectrometer (Bruker, Wissenburg, France) operating at 600.13 MHz for 1H resonance frequency using an inverse detection 5 mm H13C15N cryoprobe attached to a cryostage (the preamplifier cooling unit). The 1H NMR spectra were acquired at 300K using the Carr-Purcell-Meiboom-Gill (CPMG) spin-echo pulse sequence with presaturation, with a total spin-echo delay (2πη) of 100 msec to attenuate broad signals from proteins and lipoproteins. A total of 128 transients...
were collected into 32,000 data points using a spectral width of 12 ppm, a relaxation delay of 2.5 sec, and an acquisition time of 2.28 sec. Prior to Fourier transformation, we applied an exponential line-broadening function of 0.3 Hz to the free induction decay.

To confirm the chemical structure of metabolites of interest, we performed two dimensional (2D) 1H-1H COSY (correlation spectroscopy) and 2D 1H-13C-HSQC (heteronuclear single quantum coherence spectroscopy) NMR experiments on selected samples.

Data reduction and multivariate statistical analyses. All NMR spectra were phased and baseline corrected, then data was reduced using AMIX (version 3.8; Bruker Analytik, Rheinstetten, Germany) to integrate 0.01 ppm–wide regions corresponding to the δ 10.0–0.5 ppm region. The δ 5.1–4.5 ppm region, which includes water resonance, was excluded. A total of 791–861 NMR buckets were included in the data matrices. To account for differences in sample amount, each integrated region was normalized to the total spectral area. Multivariate analyses were used to study the effect of the treatment (DMSO or 0.025 μg, 0.25 μg, or 25 μg BPA/kg bw/day) on the metabolome. We first performed PCA to reveal intrinsic treatment-related clusters and detect eventual outliers. PLS-DA was then used to model the relationship between group and spectral data. PLS-DA is similar to PCA but uses discriminant variables that correlate to class membership. Before analysis, we used orthogonal signal correction filtering (Wold et al. 1998) to remove variation not linked to the treatment (physiological, experimental, or instrumental variation). Filtered data were mean centered and scaled (unit variance or Pareto scaling). For the figures, we used Hotelling’s T² statistics to construct 95% confidence ellipses. The R²Y parameter represents the explained variance. Seven-fold cross-validation was used to determine the number of latent variables to include in the PLS-DA model and to estimate the predictive ability (Q² parameter) of the adjusted model. In addition, the robustness and validity of the PLS-DA results were calculated using a permutation test (200 permutations). Discriminant variables were determined using VIP (variable importance in the projection), an appropriate quantitative statistical parameter ranking the descriptors according to their ability to discriminate different doses. We used this global measure of the influence of each variable on the PLS components to derive a subset of the most important metabolites for the separation of experimental groups. We then used the Kruskal–Wallis test to determine which metabolites were significantly different between the groups. SIMCA-P software (V12; Umetrics AB, Umeå, Sweden) was used to perform the multivariate analyses.

Results

We observed no statistical differences in the weight of PND2 pups (whole body) or PND21 livers or brains. PCA results for the NMR spectral data sets [aqueous extracts of PND2 pups (whole body) and serum, liver, and brain from PND21 male mice] are available in Supplemental Material, Figures S1–S4 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1205588).

The PCA score plots allowed a primary separation between groups. We then used a supervised PLS-DA model to further investigate the differences between groups.

**PND2 pups (whole body).** For the four experimental groups, the analysis generated a PLS-DA model with three latent components, characterized by a faithful representation of the data (R²Y = 71.5%) and, more important, by a good cumulative predictive capacity (Q² = 0.557) (Figure 1A). The score plot of the PLS-DA showed a clear separation between the control group and the BPA groups; 83 variables had a VIP value > 1.0 (arbitrary threshold), and the median of 71 buckets was statistically different by the Kruskal–Wallis test. These differences corresponded to 20 metabolites, according to 2D NMR spectra identification. Endogenous metabolite variations induced by BPA exposure (25 μg) in PND2 pups (whole body samples) showed increases in lactate, glucose, choline, creatine, and glycine compared with control samples. Conversely, we observed decreases in valine, leucine, isoleucine, and lysine (Table 1). In addition, taken separately and using a pairwise comparison, all groups could be successfully discriminated, including the 0.025 μg BPA and 0.25 μg BPA groups (Table 2; Figure 1B). The latter analysis generated a PLS-DA model with three latent components, characterized by a very faithful representation of the data (R²Y = 98.0%), with >90% variability explained along axis 1, and by a very good cumulative predictive capacity (Q² = 0.731). This analysis identified 13 metabolites that contributed to the difference in metabolic profiles between 0.025 μg BPA and 0.25 μg BPA groups by VIP (>1) and Kruskal–Wallis test (Table 1).

**PND21 serum.** The score plot of the PLS-DA using the entire data set (all groups taken together) showed a clear separation between the 25 μg BPA group and all other groups along the first latent component, and between the 0.25 μg BPA and 0.025 μg BPA groups (Figure 2A). This analysis generated a PLS-DA model with two latent components, with R²Y = 55.3% and Q² = 0.450. Thirteen metabolites were identified as discriminant parameters in the metabolic profiles. Further pairwise comparisons between control and 0.025 μg BPA samples and between control and 0.25 μg BPA samples demonstrated a clear discrimination between the corresponding groups, and 14 and 11 metabolites, respectively, were identified as discriminant biomarkers (Figure 2B,C). BPA exposure (25 μg) induced a decrease in lipids [low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and very-low-density lipoprotein...
BPA disrupts metabolome in perinatally exposed mice

Discussion

Developmental exposure to BPA affects the reproductive system and fertility, alters brain development and behavior, disrupts glucose homeostasis, and may contribute to the development of obesity and metabolic syndrome (Alonso-Magdalena et al. 2010; Cabaton et al. 2011; Richter et al. 2007; Ryan et al. 2010). In the present study, we examined whether a novel approach based on metabolomics profiling could detect subtle changes in the metabolome following BPA exposure at low to very low doses, and whether metabolic profiling could reveal differences that persist beyond the end of the exposure period. The BPA doses used in this study correspond to 1/2,000 to 1/2,000,000 of the no observed adverse effect level (NOAEL) for BPA (European Food Safety Authority 2006; U.S. Food and Drug Administration 2008), and the time of BPA exposure coincided with critical periods of development (GD8 to PND16).

Factors that affect fetal growth are also associated with the postnatal growth rate and with adult body weight in humans as well as in laboratory animals (Barker 2004; Coe et al. 2008). The classical tools of toxicology are not designed to detect the effects of an early exposure to low doses of endocrine disruptors. Recent developments in metabolomics allow us to further explore global changes in biological systems. NMR spectroscopy is broadly used in research to characterize metabolite structure. NMR spectroscopy fingerprinting, combined with multivariate statistical analysis,

Table 1. Endogenous metabolite variations induced by BPA exposure (25 μg) in PND2 pups and in serum, liver, and brain of PND21 mice compared with controls.

| Metabolites       | 1H NMR chemical shifts δ (ppm) | PND2 Whole body | PND2 Serum | PND2 Liver | PND2 Brain |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Lipids            | 0.86 (m); 0.90 (m); 1.26 (m); 1.30 (m) | –               | –          | –          | –          |
| Lactate           | 1.33 (d); 4.11 (q)               | +               | –          | –          | –          |
| Glucose           | 3.54 (m); 3.66 (m); 3.70 (m); 3.74 (m); 3.78 (m); 3.82 (m); 3.86 (m); 3.90 (m) | +              | +          | –          | –          |
| Taurine           | 3.26 (t); 3.42 (t)               | +               | +          | –          | –          |
| Cholines          | 3.20 (s); 3.22 (s); 3.23 (s)     | +               | +          | –          | –          |
| Creatine          | 3.03 (s); 3.93 (s)               | +               | –          | –          | –          |
| Glutamate         | 2.08 (m); 2.34 (m)               | –               | –          | +          | –          |
| Glutamine         | 2.14 (m); 2.46 (m)               | –               | –          | +          | –          |
| Glycine           | 3.55 (s)                        | +               | +          | –          | –          |
| Valine, leucine, isoleucine | 0.94 (d); 0.96 (d); 1.00 (d); 1.01 (d); 1.05 (d) | –           | –          | –          | –          |
| Lysine            | 1.72 (m); 2.98 (m)               | –               | –          | +          | –          |
| Glutathione       | 2.17 (m); 2.56 (m); 2.94 (m)     | –               | –          | +          | –          |
| Glycogen          | 5.42 (m)                        | –               | –          | –          | –          |
| Aspartic acid     | 2.65 (dd); 2.80 (dd)             | +               | –          | +          | +          |
| GABA              | 1.90 (q); 2.27 (t); 3.01 (t)     | –               | –          | +          | +          |

Abbreviations: +, significantly increased concentration; −, significantly decreased concentration; GABA, y-aminobutyric acid. Chemical shifts (ppm) are relative to TMS (1H, δ). Multiplicity of signals is indicated in parentheses: d, doublet; dd, doublet of doublet; m, multiplet; q, quadruplet; s, singlet; t, triplet. *Low-density lipoprotein and very-low-density lipoprotein. #Phosphatidylcholine and glycerophosphocholine.

Table 2. Pairwise model parameter comparison of PND2 whole body and PND21 liver, brain, and serum between treatment groups.

| Groups compared | n | PLS components | R²Y (%) | Q² (cumulative) |
|-----------------|---|----------------|---------|-----------------|
| Control/0.025 μg BPA | 38 | 2 | 99.3 | 0.979 |
| Control/0.25 μg BPA | 34 | 2 | 99.4 | 0.970 |
| Control/25 μg BPA | 31 | 1 | 99.5 | 0.989 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/0.25 μg BPA | 31 | 3 | 98.0 | 0.731 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 29 | 1 | 98.3 | 0.943 |
| 0.25 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 25 | 2 | 99.9 | 0.969 |
| Control/0.025 μg BPA | 21 | 1 | 89.7 | 0.822 |
| Control/0.25 μg BPA | 24 | 1 | 99.5 | 0.980 |
| Control/25 μg BPA | 24 | 2 | 99.5 | 0.990 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/0.25 μg BPA | 23 | 3 | 99.5 | 0.896 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 24 | 3 | 99.4 | 0.950 |
| 0.25 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 26 | 2 | 99.8 | 0.929 |
| Control/0.025 μg BPA | 22 | 2 | 99.0 | 0.955 |
| Control/0.25 μg BPA | 22 | 2 | 99.0 | 0.963 |
| Control/25 μg BPA | 21 | 1 | 90.0 | 0.664 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/0.25 μg BPA | 23 | 3 | 98.5 | 0.932 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 25 | 3 | 99.5 | 0.941 |
| 0.25 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 26 | 4 | 99.4 | 0.895 |
| Control/0.025 μg BPA | 23 | 3 | 99.6 | 0.826 |
| Control/0.25 μg BPA | 25 | 4 | 98.9 | 0.932 |
| Control/25 μg BPA | 23 | 3 | 99.8 | 0.991 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/0.25 μg BPA | 26 | 3 | 96.3 | 0.891 |
| 0.025 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 23 | 2 | 99.0 | 0.937 |
| 0.25 μg BPA/25 μg BPA | 26 | 3 | 99.3 | 0.973 |
provides a powerful tool to detect metabolic changes induced by very low doses of EDs, allowing discrimination between several experimental groups on the basis of over- or underexpression of endogenous molecules. In the present study, we used $^1$H-NMR followed by PCA and PLS-DA analyses. PCA was used to detect potential outliers. PCA usually allows only a first-step discrimination between groups. When there are more than two groups, PLS-DA is more appropriate (Lindon et al. 2004). We performed PLS-DA—now routinely used in the field of metabolomics—to explore NMR fingerprints linked with perinatal exposure to BPA. Linear combinations of NMR buckets were constructed and then used to visualize differences (or similarities) between groups.

One primary objective of our study was to identify exposure biomarkers that would correlate with the metabolic changes triggered by perinatal exposure to BPA, thus providing a proof of concept that $^1$H-NMR, completed by robust statistical analysis, is a powerful tool that would discriminate between exposed versus nonexposed animals.

PLS-DA is a classification method widely used in metabolomics to discriminate between treatment groups and to identify biomarkers responsible for this discrimination (Gavaghan et al. 2002; Martin et al. 2009). Our models were cross-validated, and their robustness was assessed with permutation tests. A robust model is associated with a $Q^2$ value $> 0.40$ (McCombie et al. 2009). This was the case for all our models. The parameters of the PLS-DA models were estimated based on data sets comprising 49 (PDN21) to 63 (PND2) individuals. Because a large number of variables had to be processed, cross-validation was necessary to avoid overfitting. Results of permutation tests demonstrated that our analyses were robust and not obtained by chance. Discriminating variables were identified using the VIP and Kruskal–Wallis test, providing variables that explain the discrimination between groups. The next step was to connect some discriminant metabolites with possible mechanisms of action and to suggest some exposure biomarkers.

We were able to identify groups of pups that were perinatally exposed to low doses of BPA (0.025 μg/kg bw/day) with robust statistical models ($Q^2 > 0.4$), even at a very early age (PND2). Among the discriminating variables, glucose was affected by perinatal exposure to BPA. Alonso-Magdalena et al. (2010) have also shown that BPA exposure to mice during pregnancy disrupts glucose homeostasis in 6-month-old male offspring. It makes sense that the shift observed for glucose would in turn be involved in the disruption of pyruvate biosynthesis through glycolysis. Pyruvate supplies energy to living cells through the Krebs cycle (aerobic respiration) and, alternatively, fermenters to produce lactate (anaerobic respiration); pyruvate was also increased in PND2 pups. In this case, lactate could still be utilized by neurons, as already demonstrated in mice, rats, and humans (Wyss et al. 2011; Zilberter et al. 2010). At PND2, two other variables (increased levels of creatine and glycine) contributed to the discrimination between the control and 25 μg BPA groups, respectively. Creatine, a product of amino acid degradation (including glycine), is a major metabolite found mainly in muscle and brain, and it appears

![Figure 2](image-url)

**Figure 2.** Two-dimensional PLS-DA score plot of integrated $^1$H NMR spectra of PND21 serum. (A) PLS-DA results for all four treatment groups [control, $n = 11$; 0.025 μg BPA, $n = 12$; 0.25 μg BPA, $n = 14$; and 25 μg BPA, $n = 12$ (two components: $R^2_Y = 55.3%$ and $Q^2 = 0.450$). (B) PLS-DA results for control and 0.025 μg BPA (three components: $R^2_Y = 99.6%$ and $Q^2 = 0.826$) (C) PLS-DA results for control and 0.25 μg BPA (four components: $R^2_Y = 98.9%$ and $Q^2 = 0.932$).
to be affected by prenatal exposure to BPA. An increase in creatine levels might lead to an increase in ATP production and, consequently, to increased energy metabolism. Glycine, a key precursor of porphyrins involved in heme production, is an inhibitory neurotransmitter in the central nervous system, especially in the spinal cord and brainstem, as well as in the retina. An increase in glycine may disrupt the global energy metabolism as well as brain and neurologic functions. Conversely, a decrease in essential amino acids, namely valine, leucine, and isoleucine, could reflect a disruption in their degradation pathways, which would be consistent with previous observations in GD18 rat fetuses exposed to butyl benzylphthalate (Sumner et al. 2009). Finally, we found that BPA exposure increased concentrations of choline in PND2 mice, which may affect membrane integrity and could favor a decrease in acetylcholine production in the brain.

In PND21 tissues, we were able to distinguish all BPA exposure groups from controls. As observed in PND2 mice, glucose in serum and liver was affected by perinatal BPA exposure. Similarly, cholines were also decreased, reflecting a potential disruption in membrane integrity. In PND21 serum samples, a decrease in lipids (VLDL and HDL) and an increase in taurine (involved in the conjugation of bile acids) suggest that lipid metabolism may also be affected by BPA exposure. Taurine is a key amino

Figure 4. Two-dimensional PLS-DA score plot of integrated $^1$H NMR spectra of PND21 brain extracts from control ($n = 11$), 0.025 µg BPA ($n = 11$), 0.25 µg BPA ($n = 13$), and 25 µg BPA ($n = 14$) groups (first and second latent variable of three components: $R^2_Y = 78.9$% and $Q^2 = 0.564$).

Figure 3. Two-dimensional PLS-DA score plot of integrated $^1$H NMR spectra of PND21 liver extracts. (A) PLS-DA results for all four treatment groups [control ($n = 11$), 0.025 µg BPA ($n = 11$), 0.25 µg BPA ($n = 13$), and 25 µg BPA ($n = 14$) (first and second latent variable of three components: $R^2_Y = 48.3$% and $Q^2 = 0.421$)]. (B) PLS-DA results for control and 0.025 µg BPA (one component: $R^2_Y = 99.7$% and $Q^2 = 0.822$); red and green lines indicate ± 3 SD and ± 2 SD, respectively. (C) PLS-DA results for 0.025 µg BPA and 0.25 µg BPA (three components: $R^2_Y = 99.5$% and $Q^2 = 0.896$). (D) PLS-DA results for 0.025 µg BPA and 25 µg BPA (three components: $R^2_Y = 99.4$% and $Q^2 = 0.950$).
acid for cardiovascular function and for the development and function of skeletal muscle. Taurine, also a major constituent of bile, was decreased in liver (and serum) in PND21 mice, reflecting a possible disruption in the digestive process. In liver extracts, an increase in glutathione in animals exposed to 25 μg BPA suggested a possible modulation of this detoxification pathway and also a hyper-production of pyruvate, a key metabolite involved in the Krebs cycle, glycolysis, and glycogenesis. These changes may affect energy metabolism pathways.

Regarding PND21 brain extracts, recent studies have highlighted alterations in brain development following perinatal exposure to BPA (Itoh et al. 2012; Kunz et al. 2011). In the present study, 2 neurotransmitters (GABA and glutamate) were significantly decreased in all BPA-exposed animals compared with controls. Glutamate, the major excitatory transmitter in the brain, is the precursor for the synthesis of GABA, the major inhibitory transmitter in the adult brain. It is important to note that prior to their neurotransmission roles during adulthood, both glutamate and GABA are thought to influence processes of neural development, including proliferation, migration, differentiation, and survival (Lujan et al. 2005). Decreased levels of these neurotransmitters during postnatal development could be expected to exert lasting effects on the brain. In the present study, glutamine (the precursor of glutamate) was increased in the brain, whereas glutamate levels decreased, suggesting a conversion problem and possibly disruption and/or damage in brain function. Aspartate, produced from oxaloacetate (by transamination), is another neurotransmitter in the brain, is the precursor for glutamate, and 4-nonylphenol. Toxicol Lett 210:141–154.

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