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ACS Chem. Biol., **Just Accepted Manuscript** • DOI: 10.1021/acscchembio.9b00342 • Publication Date (Web): 24 Jul 2019

Downloaded from pubs.acs.org on July 25, 2019

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Molecular determinants of the intrinsic efficacy of the antipsychotic aripiprazole.

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Abstract

Partial agonists of the dopamine D₂ receptor (D₂R) have been developed to treat the symptoms of schizophrenia without causing the side effects elicited by antagonists. The receptor-ligand interactions that determine the intrinsic efficacy of such drugs, however, are poorly understood. Aripiprazole has an extended structure comprising a phenylpiperazine primary pharmacophore and a 1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one secondary pharmacophore. We combined site-directed mutagenesis, analytical pharmacology, ligand fragments and molecular dynamics simulations to identify the D₂R-aripiprazole interactions that contribute to affinity and efficacy. We reveal that an interaction between the secondary pharmacophore of aripiprazole and a secondary binding pocket defined by residues at the extracellular portions of transmembrane segments 1, 2 and 7 determine the intrinsic efficacy of aripiprazole. Our findings reveal a hitherto unappreciated mechanism through which to fine-tune the intrinsic efficacy of D₂R agonists.

Introduction

The dopamine D₂ receptor (D₂R), a class A G protein-coupled receptor (GPCR), is the target of drugs that relieve symptoms of Parkinson's disease (agonists) and schizophrenia (partial agonists/antagonists)¹. The antipsychotics aripiprazole, brexpiprazole and cariprazine are D₂R partial agonists²⁻⁴. They are thought to act as functional antagonists in the striatum, where excessive dopamine activity is thought to cause positive symptoms, but to show agonist activity in the mesocortical pathway, where reduced dopamine activity is thought to be associated with negative symptoms and cognitive impairment. A partial agonist may also avoid the complete blockade of the nigrostriatal or tuberoinfundibular pathways, associated with extrapyramidal symptoms and elevated prolactin levels, respectively⁵. However, it remains unclear why these partial agonists display antipsychotic efficacy, while other D₂R partial agonists have failed to do so. It has been proposed that the low level of intrinsic activity elicited by aripiprazole gives sufficient functional antagonism for antipsychotic efficacy whereas other partial agonists with higher intrinsic activity, such as bifeprunox, failed in clinical development⁶. Furthermore, the intrinsic activity of aripiprazole is apparently sufficient to avoid motor-side effects and prolactinaemia.

The crystal structures of the D₂R, D₃R and D₄R - in complex with the antagonists risiperidone, eticlopride and nemonapride, respectively - reveal the location of an orthosteric binding site (OBS) comprised of residues that are conserved in the dopamine D₂-like receptors, and are consistent with earlier findings of mutagenesis and molecular modelling studies⁷⁻¹⁰. Despite the therapeutic utility of D₂R full and partial agonists, our understanding of the ligand-receptor contacts that determine degrees of intrinsic efficacy is limited. Agonist-bound Class A GPCR crystal structures reveal different patterns of agonist-receptor interactions but common structural rearrangements in the extracellular part of the transmembrane (TM) bundle near the OBS upon receptor activation^{11,12}. These are translated into larger rearrangements at the cytoplasmic side of the receptor, including translation and rotation of TM5 and TM6, and relocation of TM3 and TM7. In particular, comparisons of Class A GPCR crystal structures in active and inactive states, combined with molecular dynamics (MD) simulations, have highlighted the movement of a cluster of residues, Pro^{5.50}, Ile^{3.40} and Phe^{6.44} (termed the "PIF motif", Ballesteros and Weinstein numbering system¹³) along with Leu/Val^{5.51} and Trp^{6.48} on receptor activation. The reconfigurations of these residues couple the conformational changes in the binding pocket to those at the intracellular coupling interface¹⁴⁻¹⁶.

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5 Aripiprazole is comprised of a 4-(2,3-dichlorophenyl)piperazine primary pharmacophore (PP)
6 and a 1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one secondary pharmacophore (SP) linked by a flexible
7 butoxy linker. This extended structure is typical of ligands that are selective for dopamine D₂-
8 like receptors^{7,17}. Using the D₃R crystal structure⁷, we revealed a secondary binding pocket
9 (SBP) that extended away from the OBS towards the extracellular ends of TMs 1, 2, 3 and 7,
10 and demonstrated that the interaction between this SBP and the aryl tail moiety of
11 phenylpiperazine derivatives was not only an important determinant of subtype selectivity, but
12 could also modulate ligand efficacy through reorientation of the phenylpiperazine core within
13 the SBP^{18,19}. Surprisingly, however, little is known about the binding mode of aripiprazole at
14 the D₂R and how this might determine its agonist efficacy. To address this, we combined MD
15 simulations, mutagenesis, and analytical pharmacology to quantify agonist action in terms of
16 both efficacy (τ) and functional affinity (K_A). Together our studies reveal that the interaction
17 between the 1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one SP and the D₂R SBP is a determinant of
18 aripiprazole's intrinsic efficacy.
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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aripiprazole and dopamine show distinct sensitivities to OBS mutations

To interrogate the ligand-receptor interactions involved in agonist binding and the subsequent activation of the D₂R, we mutated residues within the OBS, the SBP and the transmission switch of the D₂R. ELISA revealed no significant difference between the cell surface expression levels of the mutant and wild-type (WT) receptors (Supplementary Figure 1). We then determined the effect of each mutation on the dissociation constant (pK_d) of [³H]spiperone and/or [³H]raclopride. A homologous competition binding assay revealed that none of the mutations had a significant effect on the pK_d of [³H]spiperone (Supplementary Table 2) with the exception of V91^{2.61}A, F360^{6.51}A, and F361^{6.52}A for which no detectable binding was observed. Of these three mutants, [³H]raclopride bound V91^{2.61}A with WT affinity but was unable to bind F360^{6.51}A and F361^{6.52}A (Supplementary Table 2).

The binding affinities (K_i) of the agonists at the D₂R were determined in competition binding experiments (Table 1). To measure the functional impact of the mutations, we used inhibition of forskolin-induced cAMP production as a measure of D₂R G $\alpha_{i/o}$ G protein signalling. Many OBS mutations, however, abrogated the binding and/or functional activity of dopamine, which prevented us from quantifying the relative effect of these mutations on aripiprazole. We, therefore, extended our studies to ropinirole, an agonist that retained activity at many OBS mutations. We designed a sensitive cAMP assay using a low (300 nM) concentration of forskolin to give a greater dynamic range with which to quantify the deleterious effects of receptor mutants. In this assay aripiprazole displayed a robust partial maximal response (80%) relative to that of dopamine. This contrasts to previous studies of aripiprazole using the same CHO cell background for which a much lower relative maximal response was observed^{2,20}. Such differences reflect different receptor expression levels and assay sensitivity. Our data were fitted with an operational model of agonism to derive a transduction coefficient (τ/K_A) of all three agonists, comprised of agonist efficacy (τ) and the functional affinity of the receptor when coupled to a specific signalling pathway (K_A)²¹. Although we could not define these two separate parameters for the full agonists dopamine and ropinirole, in the case of the partial agonist aripiprazole, we could determine separate values of affinity and efficacy ($K_A = 17$ nM, $\tau = 5$, Table 1).

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3 We first investigated the role of OBS residues (Table 1). Asp114^{3.32} forms a salt bridge
4 interaction with the positively charged nitrogen of dopaminergic ligands and the mutation
5 D114^{3.32}A ablates agonist and antagonist binding²². Val^{3.33}, Cys^{3.36} and Thr^{3.37} line the OBS in
6 the D₂R, D₃R and D₄R structures^{7,9,10}. V115^{3.33}A reduced the binding affinity of dopamine and
7 aripiprazole but not ropinirole and decreased the transduction coefficients (τ/K_A) of all ligands
8 (Table 1). In the case of aripiprazole this effect was caused by a significant 8-fold decrease in
9 efficacy (τ). C118^{3.36}A or T119^{3.37}A had little effect on binding affinity (K_i), but significantly
10 reduced the functional effect of all ligands, causing a greater than 50-fold decrease in
11 transduction coefficients (τ/K_A) or abrogating activity altogether (Table 1).
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21 The conserved TM5 serine residues have been shown to be important for agonist binding and
22 action at all DR subtypes²³⁻²⁷. In agreement with these previous studies, the binding affinity of
23 dopamine was significantly reduced at S193^{5.42}A, S194^{5.43}A and S197^{5.46}A by 120-, 4-, and 3-
24 fold, respectively (Figure 1, Table 1). The transduction coefficient of dopamine was reduced
25 at S193^{5.42}A (1600-fold) and S194^{5.43}A (11-fold), whereas S197^{5.46}A abolished its functional
26 effect entirely (Figure 1, Table 1). The binding affinity and transduction coefficient of
27 ropinirole were also significantly reduced at S193^{5.42}A by 15-fold and 930-fold, respectively.
28 S194^{5.43}A had no effect on ropinirole affinity but caused a 20-fold decrease in transduction
29 coefficient, whereas S197^{5.46}A had no effect. Interestingly, mutation of the TM5 serines did
30 not decrease the efficacy (τ) of aripiprazole (Figure 1). Rather, S193^{5.42}A caused a 3-fold
31 increase in binding affinity and a 10-fold increase in efficacy, whereas S197^{5.46}A caused a 5-
32 fold decrease in binding affinity with no effect upon the functional response (Figure 1, Table
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50 **Figure 1**

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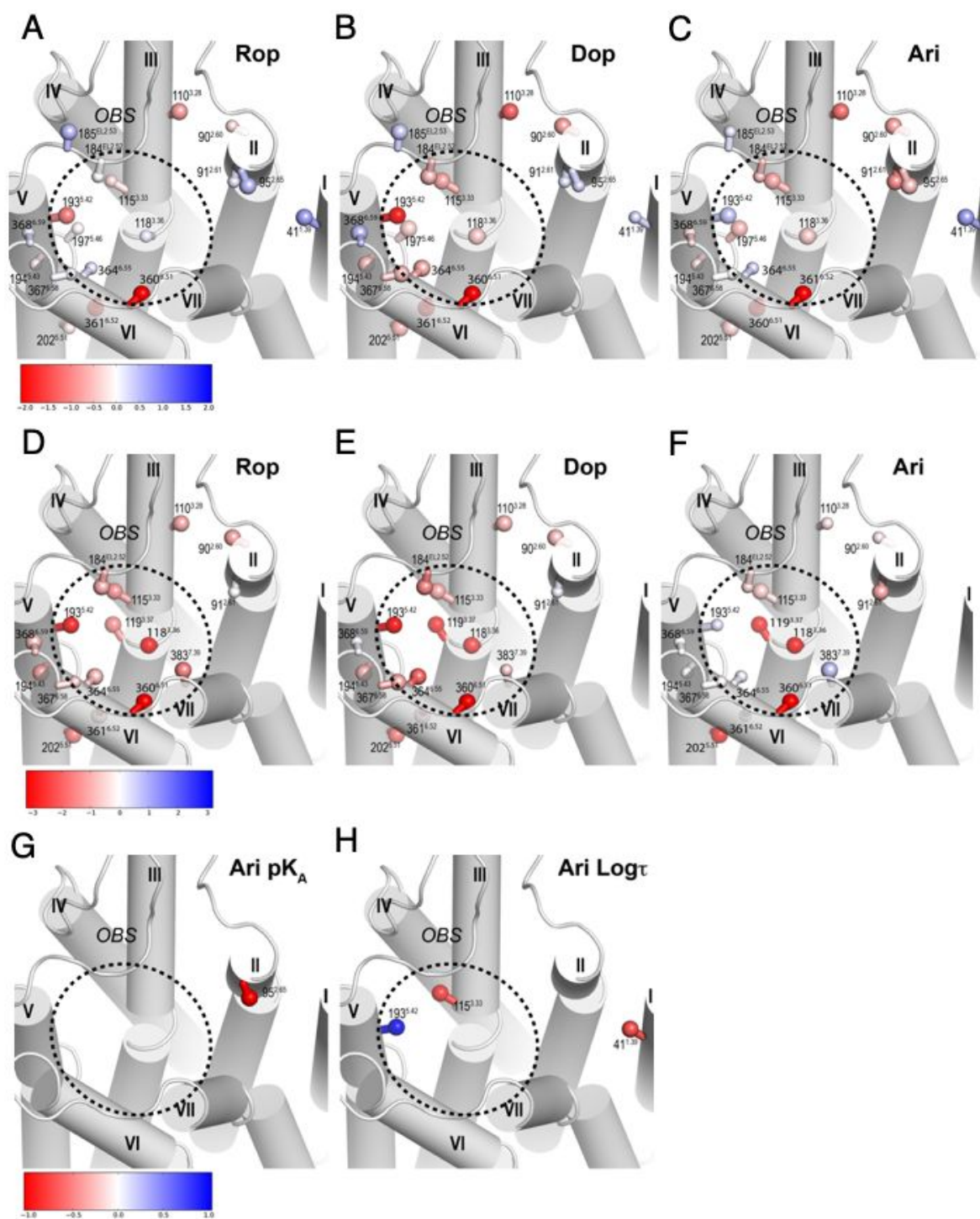


Figure 1: Mutation of residues within the OBS and SBP have distinct effects upon the affinity and efficacy of aripiprazole as compared to dopamine and ropinirole. WT and mutant D_2 Rs were stably expressed in FlpIN CHO cells. The change in affinity (pK_i) of ropinirole (A), dopamine (B) and aripiprazole (C) at each mutant was determined in

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3 competition binding experiments. The ability of increasing concentrations of each agonist to
4 activate the WT or mutant D₂Rs was determined in an assay measuring the inhibition of cAMP
5 production. These data were fit to an operational model of agonism and changes in transduction
6 coefficient (τ/K_A) were determined for ropinirole (**D**), dopamine (**E**) and aripiprazole (**F**) at
7 each mutant. Changes in functional affinity (pK_A , **G**) and efficacy (τ , **H**) were also determined
8 for aripiprazole. Mutations that cause significant increases (one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's
9 post hoc test, $P < 0.05$, blue) or decreases (red) for each parameter at the mutant receptor as
10 compared to WT are highlighted on a homology model of the D₂R.
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19 Residues within ECL2 form part of the D₂R and D₃R OBS^{7,28}. I184^{ECL2A} significantly reduced
20 the binding affinity and transduction coefficient of dopamine (4-fold and 28-fold, respectively)
21 (Table 1). None of the ECL2 mutations affected the binding affinity, functional affinity or
22 efficacy of aripiprazole (Table 1).
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27 Residues 6.51 and 6.52 interact with the substituted aromatic ring of eticlopride in the D₃R and
28 the methoxy benzamide ring of nemonapride in the D₄R^{7,9}. None of the agonists displayed
29 functional activity at F360^{6.51A}, and F361^{6.52A} caused a significant decrease in the transduction
30 coefficients of both ropinirole (9-fold) and dopamine (7-fold) (Figure 1, Table 1). Residue 6.55
31 has been shown to be important for agonist binding and efficacy at the D₂R and D₃R^{7,27,29,30}.
32 H364^{6.55A} decreased the binding affinity (4-fold) and transduction coefficient (69-fold) of
33 dopamine and the transduction coefficient (6-fold) of ropinirole but not its affinity. The
34 H364^{6.55F} mutation reduced the transduction coefficient of ropinirole (110-fold) and dopamine
35 (28-fold) indicating that the imidazole side chain of His364^{6.55} is important for the agonist
36 action of these ligands (Table 1). Residues 6.58 and 6.59 line the OBS³⁰. In the 5HT_{2B} receptor
37 these residues form hydrophobic contacts with ergotamine that are important for its biased
38 action³¹. N367^{6.58A} caused a 3-fold decrease in the binding affinity and a 10-fold decrease in
39 the transduction coefficient of dopamine only (Table 1). I368^{6.59A} decreased the transduction
40 coefficient of ropinirole by 5-fold. Notably, mutation of these TM6 residues (F361^{6.52A},
41 H364^{6.55A/F}, N367^{6.58A}, or I368^{6.59A}) did not change the affinity or efficacy of aripiprazole
42 (Figure 1, Table 1). Mutation of Thr383^{7,39}, a residue shown to contribute to aminergic receptor
43 ligand binding⁸, did not change the binding affinity of the three agonists but decreased the
44 transduction coefficient of ropinirole (29-fold) while it increased that of aripiprazole 5-fold.
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3 In summary, we identified OBS residues that contribute to the efficacy of all three agonists but
4 found mutations in ECL2 (I184^{ECL2A}), TM5 (S193^{5.42A}, S194^{5.43A} and S197^{5.46A}) and TM6
5 (F361^{6.52A}, H364^{6.55A}, N367^{6.58A}, or I368^{6.59A}) that had deleterious effects on the functional
6 effect of dopamine and ropinirole but no effect on the efficacy of aripiprazole. Differential
7 engagements of the TM5 serines (at positions 5.42, 5.43 and 5.46) and His^{6.55} by D₂R agonists
8 have been suggested to underlie differences in efficacy through the stabilisation of distinct
9 receptor conformations^{27,29}. In the case of aripiprazole, rather than deleterious effects, the
10 mutations S^{5.46A}, F^{6.52A} and H^{6.55A} caused a modest increase in efficacy. Interestingly, S^{5.42A}
11 and S^{5.46A} caused decreases in the affinity and transduction coefficient of dopamine in
12 agreement with previous studies, whereas S^{5.46A} had no effect on ropinirole. In a previous study
13 our MD simulations found that the N-1 of sumanirole, an agonist that is structurally similar to
14 ropinirole, forms a hydrogen bond with the side chain of Ser^{5.42} but no interaction with Ser^{5.46}
15 is observed³². Ropinirole might adopt a similar orientation but further simulations are required
16 to confirm this hypothesis.
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Transmission switch residues are required for agonist action at the D₂R

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32 Comparison of the active and inactive structures of rhodopsin and the adenosine A_{2A}, β₂
33 adrenergic and μ opioid receptors revealed rearrangement of a cluster of hydrophobic and
34 aromatic residues (including 3.40, 5.50, 5.51, 6.44, and 6.48) in TM3–TM5–TM6 as a common
35 feature of Class A GPCR activation^{11,12,15}. I122^{3.40} is part of the conserved P^{5.50}-I^{3.40}-F^{6.44} motif
36 that undergoes structural rearrangement on receptor activation to allow the outward movement
37 of TM6. I122^{3.40A} had no significant effect on the binding affinity of the agonists but abrogated
38 functional activity. F202^{5.51A} caused a significant reduction in the binding affinity of dopamine
39 and aripiprazole (6-fold and 3-fold respectively, Table 1). Aripiprazole displayed no agonism
40 at this mutant and ropinirole and dopamine displayed more than 100-fold lower transduction
41 coefficients (Table 1). Thus, all three D₂R agonists require conformational rearrangement of
42 transmission switch residues to exert their agonistic effect. While F202^{5.51} does not form part
43 of the OBS, the F202^{5.51A} may modulate the conformation of the OBS causing the loss of
44 affinity of dopamine and aripiprazole but not ropinirole. Interestingly, the recent D₂R crystal
45 structure obtained in complex with the antagonist risperidone included I122^{3.40A} as one of three
46 thermostabilizing mutations¹⁰. This mutation likely exerts its thermostabilizing effect by
47 preventing the isomerisation of the receptor into the active state.
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5 ***Molecular dynamic simulations reveal an extended pose of aripiprazole***
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7 To characterize and dissect the contributions of residues from the OBS and SBP to the binding
8 pose of aripiprazole, we performed a computational modelling and simulation study of D₂R
9 models in complex with aripiprazole. From the initial docking results, we chose several
10 aripiprazole poses with its quinoline moiety oriented in various directions in the extracellular
11 vestibule (EV) of D₂R (see Methods). We then collected multiple MD trajectories for each pose
12 (Supplementary Table 1) and sought to identify a convergent trend of the ligand dynamics in
13 the binding site.
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Tables

Table 1. The effect of mutations in the OBS and ECL2 of the D₂R on the affinity and functional activity of selected agonists.

Construct	Ropinirole		Dopamine		Aripiprazole			
	p <i>K</i> _i (fold Δ)	Log(τ/ <i>K</i> _A) (fold Δ)	p <i>K</i> _i (fold Δ)	Log(τ/ <i>K</i> _A) (fold Δ)	p <i>K</i> _i (fold Δ)	Log(τ/ <i>K</i> _A) (fold Δ)	p <i>K</i> _A (fold Δ)	Logτ (fold Δ)
WT	5.18 ± 0.04 (1.0)	8.29 ± 0.06 (1.0)	4.94 ± 0.03 (1.0)	8.51 ± 0.05 (1.0)	9.92 ± 0.02 (1.0)	8.45 ± 0.06 (1.0)	7.75 ± 0.14 (0.8)	0.69 ± 0.15 (8)
V115^{3,33}A	4.73 ± 0.20 (2.8)	6.78 ± 0.15* (33)	4.06 ± 0.15* (7.7)	7.32 ± 0.12* (16)	9.07 ± 0.04* (7.1)	7.70 ± 0.17* (5.6)	7.83 ± 0.20 (0.8)	-0.19 ± 0.04* (8)
C118^{3,36}A	5.43 ± 0.09 (0.6)	ND	4.40 ± 0.16* (3.5)	5.94 ± 0.09* (370)	9.36 ± 0.03* (3.6)	ND	ND	ND
T119^{3,37}A	5.37 ± 0.16 (0.7)	6.47 ± 0.08* (67)	4.84 ± 0.04 (1.3)	ND	9.68 ± 0.10 (1.7)	ND	ND	ND
I122^{3,40}A	5.11 ± 0.04 (1.2)	ND	5.21 ± 0.10 (0.5)	ND	10.11 ± 0.09 (0.6)	ND	ND	ND
L174^{ECL2}A	5.65 ± 0.13 (0.3)	8.21 ± 0.09 (1.2)	5.24 ± 0.12 (0.5)	8.22 ± 0.06 (1.9)	10.16 ± 0.07 (0.6)	8.43 ± 0.19 (1.0)	7.95 ± 0.14 (0.6)	0.48 ± 0.11 (1.6)
E181^{ECL2}A	5.52 ± 0.03 (0.5)	7.94 ± 0.19 (2.2)	5.02 ± 0.01 (0.8)	8.63 ± 0.17 (0.8)	9.88 ± 0.05 (1.1)	8.20 ± 0.22 (1.8)	8.00 ± 0.16 (0.6)	0.19 ± 0.08 (3)
I183^{ECL2}A	5.50 ± 0.02 (0.5)	8.51 ± 0.18 (0.6)	5.02 ± 0.03 (0.8)	8.75 ± 0.10 (0.6)	9.50 ± 0.08 (2.7)	8.05 ± 0.24 (2.5)	7.61 ± 0.23 (1.4)	0.44 ± 0.01 (1.8)
I184^{ECL2}A	5.18 ± 0.06 (1.0)	7.36 ± 0.16* (8.5)	4.40 ± 0.07* (3.5)	7.06 ± 0.05* (28)	9.45 ± 0.12 (3.0)	7.93 ± 0.05 (3.3)	7.65 ± 0.07 (1.3)	0.27 ± 0.09 (2.6)
A185^{ECL2}S	5.69 ± 0.03* (0.3)	8.39 ± 0.08 (0.8)	5.37 ± 0.11* (0.4)	8.61 ± 0.09 (0.8)	10.06 ± 0.13 (0.7)	8.65 ± 0.06 (0.6)	7.87 ± 0.15 (0.8)	0.79 ± 0.11 (0.8)

N186^{ECL2A}	5.01 ± 0.10 (1.5)	7.67 ± 0.07 (4.2)	4.54 ± 0.09 (2.5)	8.01 ± 0.06 (3.2)	9.60 ± 0.21 (2.1)	8.10 ± 0.20 (2.2)	7.63 ± 0.12 (1.6)	0.47 ± 0.11 (1.6)
S193^{5.42A}	4.00 ± 0.05* (15)	5.32 ± 0.12* (930)	2.86 ± 0.09* (120)	5.30 ± 0.14* (1600)	10.41 ± 0.06* (0.3)	8.82 ± 0.11 (0.4)	7.29 ± 0.16 (2.9)	1.53 ± 0.15* (0.1)
S194^{5.43A}	5.01 ± 0.11 (1.5)	6.99 ± 0.09* (20)	4.39 ± 0.08* (3.6)	7.48 ± 0.12* (11)	9.66 ± 0.17 (1.8)	8.42 ± 0.09 (1.1)	7.72 ± 0.07 (1.1)	0.71 ± 0.30 (1)
S197^{5.46A}	5.07 ± 0.04 (1.3)	8.08 ± 0.14 (1.6)	4.47 ± 0.03* (3.0)	ND	9.21 ± 0.07* (5.1)	8.58 ± 0.06 (0.7)	7.82 ± 0.10 (0.9)	0.80 ± 0.10 (0.8)
F202^{5.51A}	4.91 ± 0.07 (1.9)	6.21 ± 0.21* (120)	4.15 ± 0.04* (6.2)	6.30 ± 0.10* (160)	9.40 ± 0.10* (3.3)	ND	ND	ND
F360^{6.51A}	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
F361^{6.52A}	ND	7.36 ± 0.15* (8.6)	ND	7.65 ± 0.18* (7.2)	ND	8.03 ± 0.23 (2.6)	7.29 ± 0.18 (2.8)	0.73 ± 0.13 (0.9)
H364^{6.55A}	5.39 ± 0.05 (0.6)	7.52 ± 0.25* (5.9)	4.33 ± 0.08* (4.1)	6.67 ± 0.21* (69)	10.22 ± 0.03 (0.5)	8.58 ± 0.16 (0.7)	7.64 ± 0.24 (1.3)	0.89 ± 0.07 (0.6)
H364^{6.55F}	5.11 ± 0.09 (1.2)	6.26 ± 0.11* (110)	4.63 ± 0.05 (2.1)	7.06 ± 0.07* (28)	9.74 ± 0.05 (1.5)	8.43 ± 0.12 (1.0)	7.50 ± 0.14 (1.8)	0.93 ± 0.19 (0.6)
N367^{6.58A}	5.28 ± 0.07 (0.8)	7.71 ± 0.08 (3.8)	4.45 ± 0.06* (3.1)	7.51 ± 0.03* (10)	9.91 ± 0.04 (1.0)	8.29 ± 0.13 (1.4)	7.93 ± 0.10 (0.7)	0.20 ± 0.04 (3.0)
I368^{6.59A}	5.41 ± 0.09 (0.6)	7.58 ± 0.16* (5.2)	5.45 ± 0.11* (0.3)	8.59 ± 0.19 (0.8)	9.62 ± 0.07 (2.0)	8.49 ± 0.10 (0.9)	7.89 ± 0.14 (0.7)	0.60 ± 0.12 (1.2)
S380^{7.36A}	5.57 ± 0.01 (0.4)	8.00 ± 0.13 (2.0)	5.06 ± 0.10 (0.8)	8.68 ± 0.16 (0.7)	9.92 ± 0.10 (1.0)	8.23 ± 0.26 (1.7)	8.41 ± 0.18 (0.22)	0.87 ± 0.19 (0.66)
T383^{7.39A}	5.36 ± 0.04 (0.7)	6.83 ± 0.06* (29)	4.87 ± 0.04 (1.2)	7.91 ± 0.10 (4)	10.13 ± 0.14 (0.6)	9.09 ± 0.07 (0.2)*	7.99 ± 0.10 (0.6)	1.09 ± 0.13 (0.40)

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3 Binding affinity values were obtained in competition binding experiments using the radioligand [³H]spiperone. Values of functional affinity,
4 efficacy and transduction ratios were determined in an assay measuring inhibition of forskolin-induced intracellular cAMP production. Values are
5 expressed as mean ± S.D. from three (binding) or four (cAMP) separate experiments. ND = no specific binding or agonist activity could be
6 determined. *P < 0.05, significantly different from the wild-type receptor determined by a one-way ANOVA, Dunnett post-hoc test.
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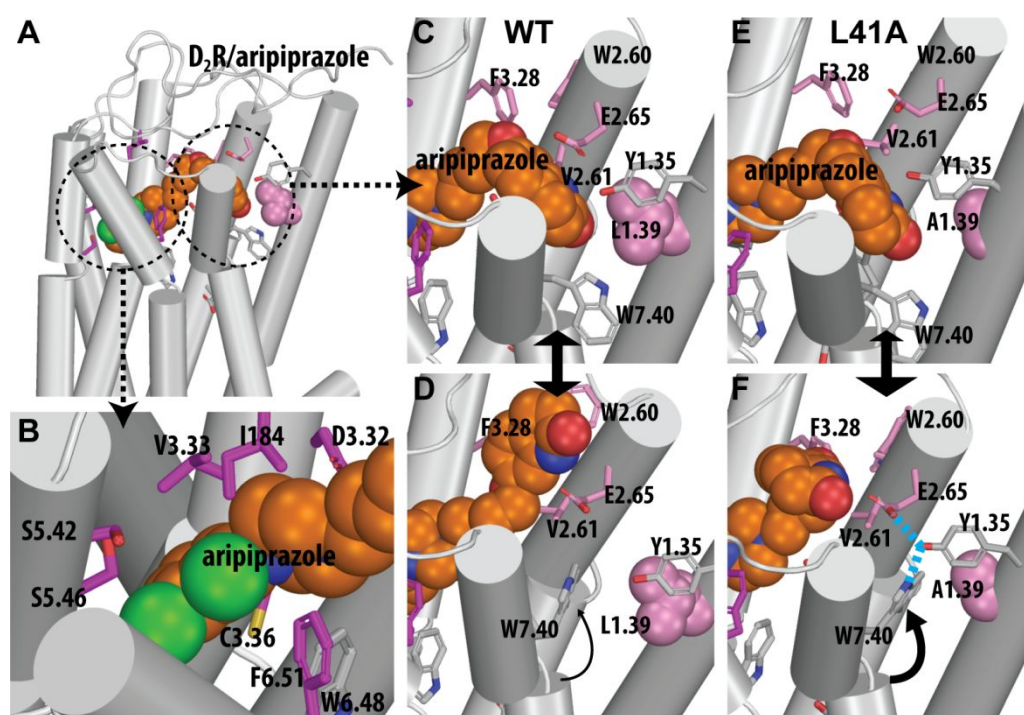


Figure 2: Molecular modeling and ligand docking experiments reveal that aripiprazole adopts an extended orthosteric pose at the D₂R. **A)** Molecular modeling and docking experiments using a homology model of the D₂R followed by MD simulations reveal that aripiprazole adopts an extended orthosteric pose within the D₂R and interacts with residues within the OBS and SBP. **B)** Within the OBS, the 2,3-diCl-phenylpiperazine PP of aripiprazole adopts a pose parallel to the membrane oriented towards TM5. Within the SBP, the 1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one “tail” moiety and the flexible butoxy linker adopt two distinct poses dependent upon the orientation of Trp384^{7.40}. **C)** When this residue faces lipids the quinalinone ring occupies a cavity within the SBP contacting residues from TM1, 2 & 7. **D)** When Trp384^{7.40} rotates inward the quinalinone ring can no longer occupy the SBP but instead tilts towards TM3 and ECL2. **E & F)** The L41^{1.39}A mutation increases the propensity for Trp384^{7.40} to rotate inwards, allowing Trp384^{7.40}, Tyr37^{1.35} and Glu95^{2.65} to interact.

Similar to the partial agonists with a 2,3-diCl-phenylpiperazine PP that we have characterized previously in D₃R models¹⁸, the PP of aripiprazole adopts a pose that is relatively parallel to the membrane, and in close vicinity to Ser193^{5.42} but does not form an H-bond with Ser193^{5.42}. In all our simulations, Ser197^{5.46} forms a H-bond to the backbone carbonyl of Ser193^{5.42}. Thus,

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3 the S193^{5.42}A mutation may lead to an optimized hydrophobic-interaction, and slightly improve
4 the affinity, whereas Ser197^{5.46}A mutation disrupts the local conformation of TM5 and results
5 in slightly decreased affinity. In such a pose, both rings of 2,3-diCl-phenylpiperazine are tightly
6 packed with Phe360^{6.51}, and it is expected that the F360^{6.51}A mutation would destabilize the
7 observed orientation of the phenylpiperazine. Thus, this pose of the PP within the D₂R OBS is
8 in agreement with our mutagenesis results.
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15 For the SP and the flexible butoxy linker, however, we found that our simulations from
16 different starting poses and multiple trajectories converged to two distinct poses in the EV,
17 depending on the orientation of the highly conserved Trp384^{7.40}. When Trp384^{7.40} faces lipid
18 as in the D₃R structure, the quinoline ring occupies a cavity at the interface between TM1, TM2
19 and TM7, and is in contact with Leu41^{1.39}, Val91^{2.61}, and Trp384^{7.40} (Figure 2C). In contrast,
20 when the indole ring of Trp384^{7.40} rotates inward between the sidechains of Val91^{2.61} and
21 Leu41^{1.39}, the quinoline ring can no longer extend into this cavity but rather tilts toward ECL2
22 and TM3, forming a weak interaction with Glu95^{2.65} (Figure 2D). Such an inward orientation
23 of Trp384^{7.40} is observed in most of the crystal structures of aminergic receptors³³. While the
24 Trp384^{7.40} of the D₃R faces lipid, that of the D₂R-structure is in an intermediate position and in
25 our simulations, we observed that this residue can adopt both the inward and outward
26 orientation^{7,10}.
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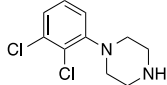
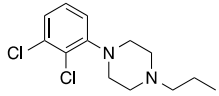
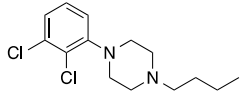
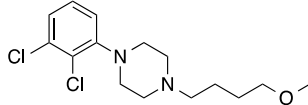
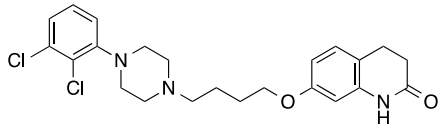
38 ***The SP of aripiprazole confers an increase in efficacy***

39 To explore how the interaction of the SP of aripiprazole with the D₂R SBP might influence
40 affinity and efficacy, we characterized a series of progressively extended fragments of
41 aripiprazole incorporating either the PP or the SP. The introduction of the alkyl or alkoxy
42 spacers (compounds **2-4**) to the PP 2,3-dichlorophenylpiperazine fragment (DCPP, **1**) conferred
43 32 to 115-fold increases in binding affinity (Figure 3, Table 2). Incorporation of the 1,2,3,4-
44 tetrahydroquinolin-2-one (THQ) moiety of aripiprazole enhanced the binding affinity by a
45 further 22-fold compared to the methoxybutyl substituted derivative (**4**). Fragments containing
46 the SP were only able to displace the radioligand upon inclusion of an ionisable nitrogen atom
47 within its structure (Supplementary Table 3). In functional studies, this time using a BRET
48 biosensor to measure cAMP levels, the incorporation of alkyl or alkoxy spacers conferred up
49 to 17-fold increase in functional affinity as compared to DCPP, although a further increase in
50 functional affinity was not observed with the incorporation of the THQ moiety. The DCPP
51 fragment of aripiprazole displayed weak intrinsic efficacy, in agreement with previously
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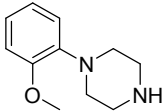
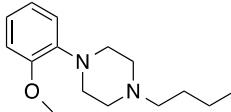
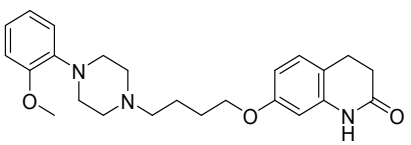
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3 published data¹⁸, an effect conferred through interaction of the PP with the OBS as shown by
4 our MD simulations. The incorporation of a propyl linker (**2**) caused a 2-fold decrease in
5 efficacy, whereas the butyl linker (**3**) and butoxy linker (**4**) derivatives displayed a similar level
6 of efficacy as DCPD (Figure 3, Table 2). Strikingly, the incorporation of the THQ moiety (to
7 generate aripiprazole) caused a 10-fold increase in efficacy.
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13 In our previous study we observed that the DCPD core of R22 could be replaced with a 2-
14 methoxyphenylpiperazine (2MeOPP) core with little change in efficacy or affinity at the D₂R¹⁸.
15 We hypothesized that addition of the 7-butoxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one substituent of
16 aripiprazole to the 2MeOPP core (**11**) would cause an increase in both affinity and efficacy (τ).
17 The addition of an N-butyl substitution conferred a 32-fold increase in affinity, whereas the
18 addition of the 7-butoxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one substitution (**13**) conferred a 2600-
19 fold higher affinity than the 2MeOPP core to yield an extended ligand with the same affinity
20 as aripiprazole (Figure 2, Table 2). Importantly, we observed that the addition of the 7-butoxy-
21 1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one substituent caused a 26-fold and 10-fold increase in efficacy
22 (τ) as compared to the 2MeOPP (**11**) and the N-butyl substituent (**12**) respectively (Figure 3,
23 Table 2). Thus, the linking of the 7-butoxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one SP to the
24 2MeOPP PP to generate a novel partial agonist results in both increases in efficacy and affinity.
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Table 2. Binding affinities and functional action of phenylpiperazine fragments and extended compounds at the D₂R.

Compound	p <i>K</i> _i ± SEM [³ H]spiperone			p <i>K</i> _i ± SEM [³ H]raclopride		cAMP (BRET Biosensor)	
	WT	L41 ^{1.39} A (fold)	E95 ^{2.65} A (fold)	WT	V91 ^{2.61} A (fold)	p <i>K</i> _A	Logτ
1 	6.24 ± 0.04 [#]	6.80 ± 0.16 (0.3)	6.29 ± 0.16 (0.9)	7.45 ± 0.31	7.59 ± 0.17 (0.7)	6.49 ± 0.18	0.12 ± 0.06 [#]
2 	7.74 ± 0.07 [#]	-	-	-	-	7.50 ± 0.28	-0.30 ± 0.07 [#]
3 	8.30 ± 0.10 [#]	-	-	-	-	7.20 ± 0.24	-0.04 ± 0.06 [#]
4 	7.70 ± 0.09 [#]	-	-	-	-	7.72 ± 0.19	0.00 ± 0.05 [#]
Aripiprazole 	9.11 ± 0.12	-	-	-	-	7.41 ± 0.30	1.02 ± 0.24
11	5.64 ± 0.07 [*]	6.23 ± 0.15 [*] (0.4)	6.12 ± 0.13 [*] (0.3)	6.49 ± 0.19	6.43 ± 0.24 (1.1)	6.51 ± 0.42 [*]	-0.42 ± 0.11 [*]

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12	$7.03 \pm 0.05^*$	-	-	-	-	$7.31 \pm 0.20^*$	$-0.03 \pm 0.05^*$
							
13	9.11 ± 0.08	$10.4 \pm 0.09^*$ (0.1)	9.34 ± 0.16 (0.6)	10.3 ± 0.22	$8.41 \pm 0.26^*$ (77)	8.56 ± 0.26	1.00 ± 0.22
							

Binding affinity (K_i) determined by competition binding experiments using radiolabelled antagonist [^3H]spiperone or [^3H]raclopride at WT or mutant SNAP- $\text{D}_{2\text{S}}\text{R}$. Functional affinity (K_A) and efficacy (τ) determined in an assay measuring inhibition of forskolin-stimulated cAMP production. Values are expressed as mean \pm S.D. from three separate experiments. *Values significantly different compared to WT as determined by one-way ANOVA (Dunnett's post hoc test, $p < 0.05$). #Values significantly different from aripiprazole as determined by one-way ANOVA (Dunnett's post-hoc test) ($p < 0.05$).

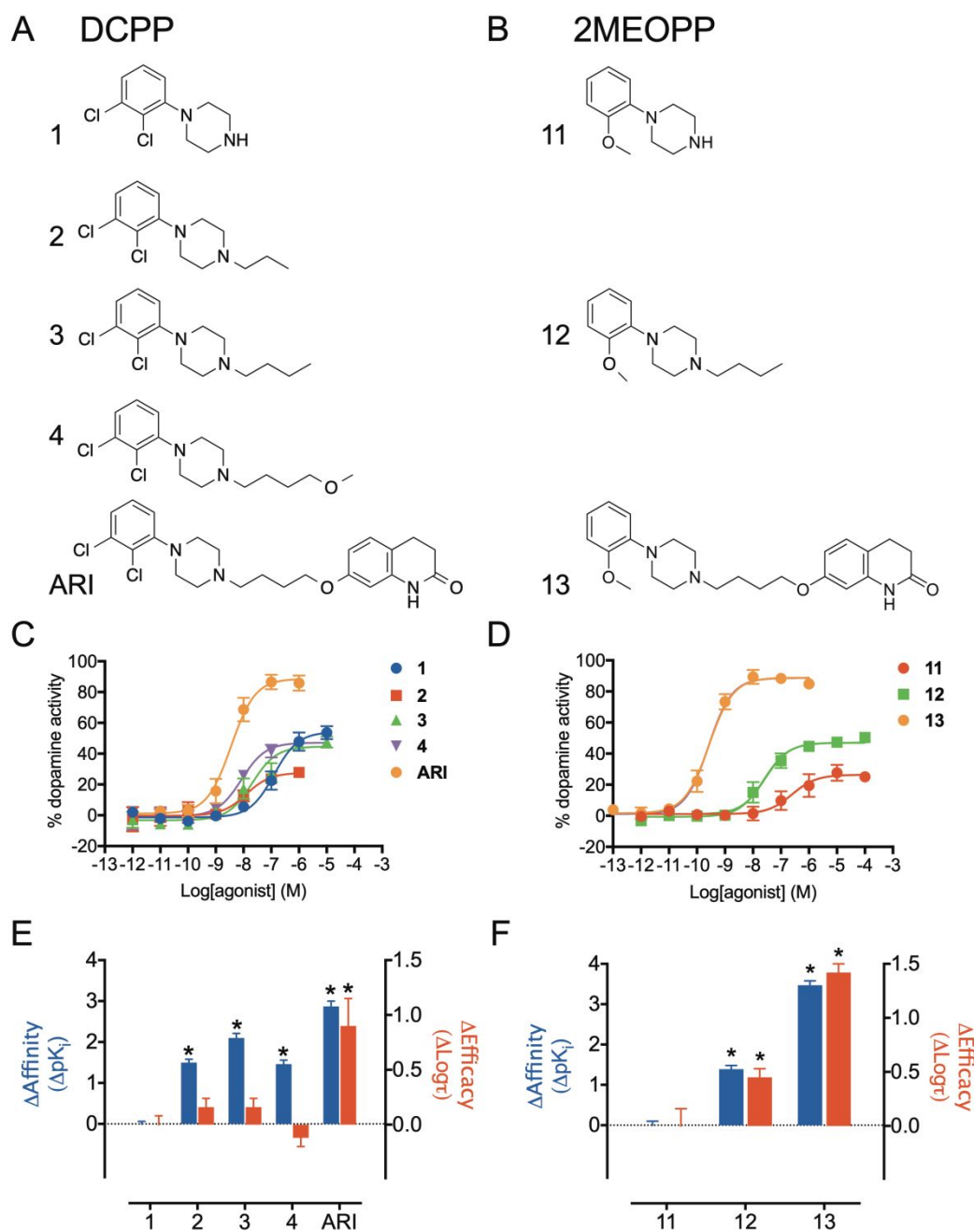


Figure 3: The 7-butoxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-2-one substitution of a phenylpiperazine core confers an increase in efficacy and affinity.

Two series of substituted phenylpiperazine fragments and extended compounds were synthesized, one that incorporates the 2,3-dichlorophenylpiperazine (A, DCPP) core that includes aripiprazole, and one that incorporates the 2-methoxyphenylpiperazine core (2MeOPP, B). The ability of increasing concentrations of each compound in the DCPP series (C, E) or the 2MeOPP series (D, F) to activate the WT D_{2S} Rs was determined through an assay measuring the inhibition of forskolin-stimulated cAMP production using a BRET biosensor.

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3 These data were fit to an operational model of agonism (E, F) and changes in functional affinity
4 or efficacy were determined as compared to the phenylpiperazine core of each series.
5 *significant change in parameter as compared to that of the core of each series (one-way
6 ANOVA with Dunnett's post hoc test, $P < 0.05$).
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10 11 ***Interaction with SBP residues determines the efficacy of aripiprazole***

12 Our results show that the interaction of the SP with the SBP contributes to the affinity and,
13 more surprisingly, the efficacy of aripiprazole. We used mutagenesis to explore the SBP
14 residues that contribute to this interaction. In agreement with the interaction of the SP with
15 SBP residues, the binding affinity of aripiprazole was significantly reduced by SBP mutations
16 W90^{2.60}A (5-fold), V91^{2.61}A (8-fold) and E95^{2.65}A (3-fold, Table 3). V91^{2.61}A caused a 11-fold
17 reduction in the transduction coefficient of aripiprazole, whereas E95^{2.65}A resulted in a 11-fold
18 reduction of its functional affinity (K_A , Figure 1, Table 3). While V91^{2.61}A and E95^{2.65}A had
19 no effect on the two smaller agonists, W90^{2.60}A reduced the transduction coefficients of
20 ropinirole (14-fold) and dopamine (6-fold), and the binding affinity of dopamine (6-fold). The
21 mutations E95^{2.65}A, V91^{2.61}A and L41^{1.39}A did not change the affinity of the DCPD fragment
22 (Table 2). F110^{3.28}A significantly reduced the binding affinity of all three agonists, and the
23 transduction coefficients of dopamine and ropinirole but not aripiprazole (Table 3). The
24 mutation L41^{1.39}A increased the binding affinity of ropinirole and aripiprazole (5-fold) but had
25 no significant effect on the binding affinity of dopamine (Figure 1, Table 3). Strikingly, this
26 mutation caused a 5-fold decrease in the efficacy (τ) of aripiprazole whereas the transduction
27 coefficients of the smaller agonists were not significantly changed (Table 3). Val91^{2.61} and
28 Phe110^{3.28} are in close contact with the butoxy linker of aripiprazole in both of the SP poses
29 obtained with our MD simulations (Figure 2) and these interactions can be correlated to the
30 negative impact of V91^{2.61}A or F110^{3.28}A on aripiprazole affinity. We extended our MD
31 simulations to compare the pose of aripiprazole at the WT and L41^{1.39}A mutant. The L41^{1.39}A
32 mutation is associated with a higher propensity for inward rotation of Trp384^{7.40} (Figure 2E &
33 F, Supplementary Figure 1), which affects the orientation of Glu95^{2.65} and Tyr37^{1.35}.
34 Interestingly, Trp384^{7.40}, Tyr37^{1.35}, and Glu95^{2.65} form an interaction network only in the
35 mutant simulations (Figure 2F, Supplementary Figure 1). Thus, our simulations indicate that
36 the orientation of the SP towards ECL2 and TM3 is favoured in the L41^{1.39}A mutant.
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3 In order to make comparisons with the functional data obtained with the various fragments of
4 aripiprazole (Table 2) we used a BRET biosensor to measure the inhibition of cAMP. In this
5 assay, dopamine and aripiprazole displayed significant 4-fold and 5-fold decreases in
6 transduction coefficients at the L41^{1.39}A mutant, respectively (Figure 4, Supplementary Table
7 4). The latter effect was caused by a 5-fold decrease in aripiprazole efficacy (τ , Figure 4J),
8 similar to changes observed in the Alphascreen cAMP assay. Of note, the efficacy of
9 aripiprazole at this mutant was equivalent to that of the DCPD fragment at the WT receptor
10 suggesting that the efficacy gain conferred by the SP of aripiprazole requires Leu41^{1.39}. To
11 determine whether the decreased transduction coefficient of dopamine at L41^{1.39}A was caused
12 by a decrease in functional affinity or efficacy, we treated cells with increasing concentrations
13 of phenoxybenzamine to alkylate cell surface D₂Rs prior to stimulation with agonist. We
14 applied the operational model of agonism to these data to determine the functional affinity and
15 efficacy of dopamine and ropinirole (Figure 4, Supplementary Table 4). The mutation L41^{1.39}A
16 caused a 10-fold decrease in dopamine functional affinity (K_A) but no change in efficacy (τ)
17 (Figure 4H & K, Supplementary Table 4). The functional affinity and efficacy of ropinirole
18 was unaffected by this mutation (Figure 4I & L, Supplementary Table 4).
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Table 3. The effect of mutations in the SBP of the D₂R on the binding affinities and functional activity of selected agonists.

Construct	Ropinirole		Dopamine		Aripiprazole			
	p <i>K</i> _i (fold Δ)	Log(τ/ <i>K</i> _A) (fold Δ)	p <i>K</i> _i (fold Δ)	Log(τ/ <i>K</i> _A) (fold Δ)	p <i>K</i> _i (fold Δ)	Log(τ/ <i>K</i> _A) (fold Δ)	p <i>K</i> _A (fold Δ)	Logτ (fold Δ)
WT	5.18 ± 0.04		4.94 ± 0.03		9.92 ± 0.02			
WT[#]	5.83 ± 0.12	8.29 ± 0.06	5.78 ± 0.13	8.51 ± 0.05	9.86 ± 0.11	8.45 ± 0.06	7.75 ± 0.14	0.69 ± 0.15
L41^{1.39}A	5.85 ± 0.10* (0.2)	8.09 ± 0.16 (1.6)	5.29 ± 0.02 (0.5)	7.89 ± 0.27 (4.2)	10.61 ± 0.04* (0.2)	8.12 ± 0.16 (2.1)	8.07 ± 0.16 (0.5)	0.03 ± 0.07* (4.6)
W90^{2.60}A	4.90 ± 0.14 (1.9)	7.14 ± 0.18* (14)	4.17 ± 0.05* (5.9)	7.71 ± 0.20* (6.4)	9.18 ± 0.08* (5.5)	8.13 ± 0.16 (2.1)	7.74 ± 0.10 (1.0)	0.37 ± 0.08 (2.0)
V91^{2.61}A[#]	6.03 ± 0.02 (0.6)	8.32 ± 0.12 (1.0)	6.03 ± 0.08 (0.6)	8.69 ± 0.20 (0.7)	8.96 ± 0.04* (8.1)	7.41 ± 0.26* (11)	7.29 ± 0.36 (2.8)	0.12 ± 0.22 (3.7)
E95^{2.65}A	5.68 ± 0.08* (0.3)	8.16 ± 0.11 (1.4)	5.24 ± 0.06 (0.5)	8.22 ± 0.11 (2.0)	9.41 ± 0.06* (3.2)	7.87 ± 0.15 (3.8)	6.71 ± 0.21* (11)	1.16 ± 0.24 (0.3)
F110^{3.28}A	4.37 ± 0.15* (6.5)	7.19 ± 0.13* (13)	3.57 ± 0.08* (24)	7.58 ± 0.19* (8.6)	8.68 ± 0.06* (17)	8.08 ± 0.11 (2.3)	7.30 ± 0.16 (2.8)	0.78 ± 0.10 (0.8)

Binding affinity values were obtained in competition binding experiments using the radioligand [³H]spiperone unless otherwise stated. Values of functional affinity, efficacy and transduction ratios were determined in an assay measuring inhibition of forskolin-induced intracellular cAMP production. [#]Binding affinity values are obtained in competition binding experiments using the radioligand [³H]raclopride. Values are expressed as mean ± S.D. from three (binding) or four (cAMP) separate experiments. ND = no specific binding or agonist activity could be determined.

*P<0.05, significantly different from the wild-type receptor determined by a one-way ANOVA, Dunnett post-hoc test.

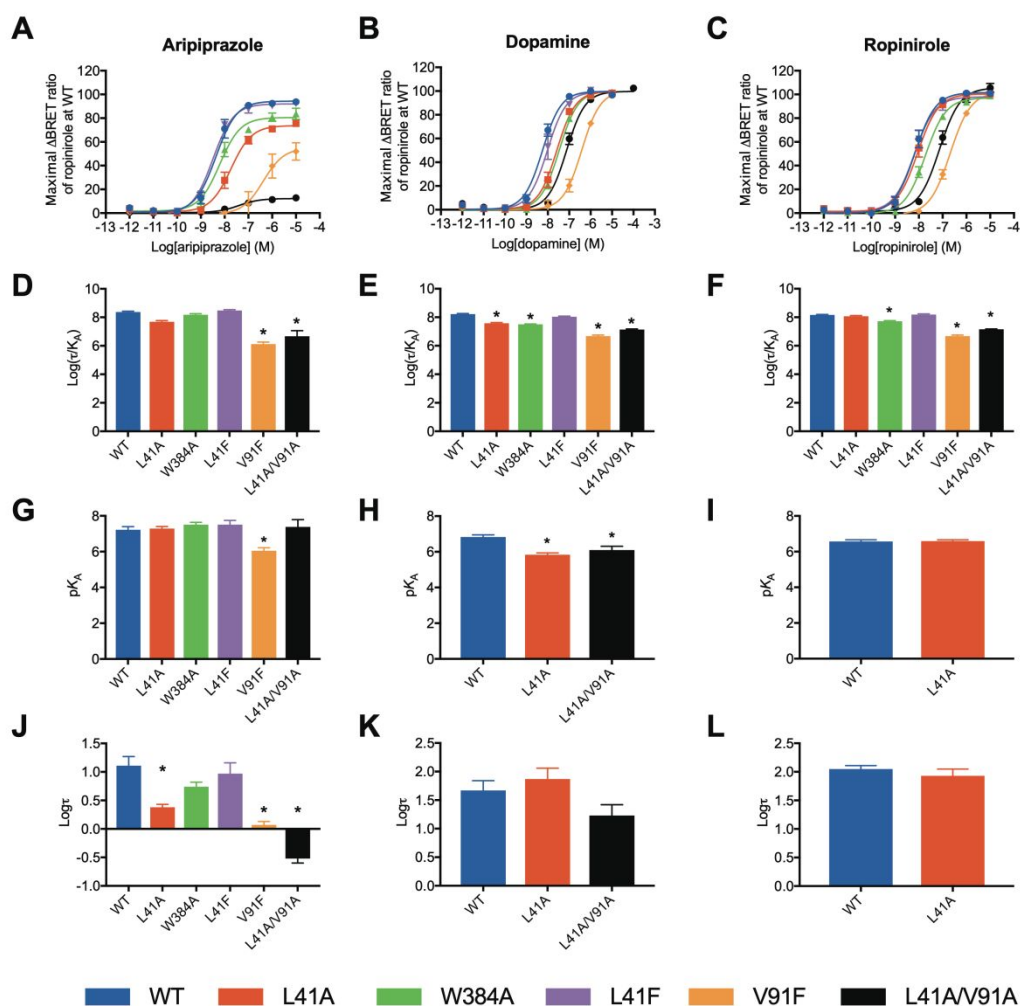


Figure 4: Mutation of SBP residues decrease the efficacy of aripiprazole but not dopamine

The ability of increasing concentrations of aripiprazole (A), dopamine (B) or ropinirole (C) to activate the WT or mutant (L41^{1.39}A, W384^{7.40}A, L41F, V91F and L41^{1.39}A/V91^{2.61}A) SNAP-tagged D_{2S}Rs SNAP-tagged D_{2S}Rs was determined in a BRET assay measuring the inhibition of forskolin-stimulated cAMP production. These data were fit to an operational model of agonism and estimates in transduction coefficient (D-F), and the functional affinity (G-I) and efficacy (J-L) at the WT and mutant receptors. *significant changes in parameter for each agonist relative to WT (one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's post-hoc test, P < 0.05).

As described above, Leu41^{1.39} directly affects the rotation of Trp384^{7.40} (Figure 2). To explore the interaction between Trp384^{7.40} and Leu41^{1.39}, either Trp384^{7.40} or both residues were mutated to alanine. The action of all agonists was compromised at the double mutant because

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3 of its low cell surface expression (Supplementary Figure 3). W384^{7.40}A caused significant
4 decreases in dopamine (5-fold) and ropinirole (3-fold) transduction coefficients but had no
5 effect on aripiprazole (Figure 4, Supplementary Table 4). This is consistent with our proposal
6 that the aripiprazole pose shown in Figure 2C may be more relevant to its intrinsic efficacy, as
7 the mutation of W384^{7.40}A is unlikely to have a negative impact on this pose when Trp384
8 faces lipids. In addition, the preference of the aripiprazole pose in the L41^{1.39}A mutant, which
9 is coordinated with the inward rotation of Trp384 (Figure 2F), supports the idea that the impact
10 of this remote TM1 mutation may be partially mediated by Trp384^{7.40}.

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12 We explored the effect of adding bulk and aromaticity to the SBP by mutating both V91^{2.61} and
13 L41^{1.39} to phenylalanine. L41^{1.39}F had no effect. V91^{2.61}F caused 35-fold, 30-fold and 170-fold
14 decreases in the transduction coefficients of dopamine, ropinirole and aripiprazole respectively
15 (Figure 4F, Supplementary Table 4). This mutation caused both a decrease in the functional
16 affinity (14-fold) and efficacy (11-fold) of aripiprazole. Leu41^{1.39} and Val91^{2.61} directly interact
17 (Figure 2C). The double (L41^{1.39}A/V91^{2.61}A) mutant caused a 10-fold decrease in the
18 transduction coefficient of dopamine and ropinirole but a much greater 49-fold decrease for
19 aripiprazole, driven by a 42-fold decrease in efficacy (τ , Figure 4I, Supplementary Table 4). In
20 contrast this double mutation decreased the functional affinity (K_A , Figure 4H, Supplementary
21 Table 4) of dopamine by 5-fold and had no significant effect on dopamine efficacy.

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23 Together these data indicate that the direct interaction of the SP of aripiprazole with the D₂R
24 SBP contributes to its intrinsic efficacy. The addition of the SP to the phenylpiperazine PP
25 conferred a significant increase in efficacy, and mutations within the SBP modulated the
26 activity of aripiprazole. The mutation of Leu41^{1.39}, a SBP residue distal to the OBS,
27 significantly decreased the efficacy of aripiprazole in all signalling pathways but increased its
28 binding affinity. Furthermore, the increase in efficacy conferred by the addition of the SP to
29 the SBP was lost at the L41^{1.39}A mutant. Thus, the efficacy increase gained through the
30 interaction of the SP with the SBP appears to be dependent on Leu41^{1.39}. Our MD simulations
31 predicted two distinct orientations of the SP, one in which the SP occupies the SBP (contacting
32 Leu41^{1.39}, Val91^{2.61} and Glu95^{2.65}) and one in which the SP extends towards TM3. Our
33 simulations show that L41^{1.39}A promotes the latter orientation (Figure 2). The mutation of
34 V91^{2.61} and E95^{2.65} also caused significant losses of aripiprazole's affinity and functional effect,
35 consistent with the loss of SBP interactions. We propose that the interaction of the SP with the
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3 SBP promotes higher intrinsic efficacy whereas the orientation of the SP towards TM3 appears
4 to be associated with lower efficacy but higher binding affinity. The combination of V91^{2.61}A
5 with L41^{1.39}A, which we postulate would further promote the orientation of the SP towards
6 TM3 over the SBP pose, caused an even greater (44-fold) loss of efficacy. In our recent studies
7 of extended 2,3-diCl-phenylpiperazine derivatives we found that the structures of both the SP
8 and the linker can modulate ligand efficacy. We proposed a mechanism whereby the interaction
9 of the linker and SP with the SBP modulated the conformation of the PP in the OBS, leading
10 to changes in ligand efficacy¹⁸. The relationship between distinct binding orientations of a
11 single ligand at a receptor and efficacy has been explored in studies of extended bitopic ligands
12 that bind the muscarinic M₂ acetylcholine receptor³⁴. In this study it is proposed that such
13 ligands can bind the receptor in two distinct orientations, one that occupies the OBS and one
14 purely allosteric mode that does not³⁴. The relative propensity of such ligands to occupy the
15 receptor in an orthosteric versus an allosteric orientation determined intrinsic efficacy. In this
16 present study we find no evidence that aripiprazole can bind the D₂R in a purely allosteric
17 mode. Rather we propose that the PP of aripiprazole occupies the OBS in a rather stable pose
18 in both orientations of the ligand and that the direct interaction of the SP of aripiprazole with
19 the SBP confers an increase in efficacy. We have also shown that the interaction of the SP of
20 a D₂R negative allosteric modulator with a similar SBP was required for allosteric
21 pharmacology, whereas the PP of this ligand acted as a competitive antagonist³⁵. Together with
22 the present study this illustrates that the interaction of SP of extended ligands with the SBP of
23 the D₂R can confer changes in pharmacology relative to that resulted from binding of the
24 primary pharmacophore of each ligand in the orthosteric binding site.
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43 Mutation of SBP residues also influenced the binding and functional affinity of small
44 orthosteric agonists not expected to interact with the SBP. The effects of these mutants upon
45 aripiprazole compared to their effects on the smaller agonists were, however, distinct. In the
46 case of SBP mutations that affected the action of all three agonists (V91^{2.61}F,
47 L41^{1.39}A/V91^{2.61}A), the effect on aripiprazole was much greater. It should be noted, however,
48 while L41^{1.39}A or the double mutation L41^{1.39}A/V91^{2.61}A did not affect the efficacy of
49 dopamine or ropinirole, they caused a decrease in the functional affinity of dopamine.
50 Functional affinity presumably reflects the affinity of dopamine for the receptor when coupled
51 to signalling effectors³⁶. In contrast, the binding affinity of dopamine, which was unchanged
52 relative to WT, reflects the affinity of dopamine for the uncoupled state of the receptor.
53 Dopamine cannot make direct contacts with this SBP residue when bound in the OBS. Thus,
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3 this mutation appears to modulate the affinity with which dopamine binds to a coupled receptor
4 state but does not affect the efficiency with which it stimulates receptor mediated G protein
5 activation. Further, the indirect effect of this mutation upon dopamine's functional affinity is
6 distinct from the effect upon aripiprazole efficacy that we propose is caused by modulation of
7 the interaction between the SP and the SBP. Nonetheless, our data indicate that residues within
8 the SBP can influence the binding of even small agonists to the OBS. This effect is dependent
9 upon the structure of the orthosteric agonist as the L41^{1.39}A mutation had no effect on
10 ropinirole. This is difficult to reconcile with a global effect of this mutation, such as the
11 impairment of transition to an active receptor state, as one would envisage that all agonists
12 would be affected in a similar manner. Dopamine and ropinirole were shown to display distinct
13 sensitivities to the mutation of OBS residues, for example the S197^{5.46}A mutation ablated
14 dopamine's functional activity but had no effect on ropinirole. Thus, they are likely to have
15 distinct interaction patterns with the OBS. The mutation of L41^{1.39} may modulate the
16 conformation of the OBS in a manner that affects the functional affinity of some but not all
17 agonists and is dependent upon their structure and the residues they engage to exert their effect.
18 Consistent with the idea of changes in the conformation of the SBP modulating the binding of
19 agonists to the OBS, we have previously shown that a SP fragment of an extended D₂R ligand
20 acted as a negative allosteric modulator and that its binding was sensitive to SBP³⁷. Moreover,
21 allosteric modulators of the muscarinic receptor interact with residues that align to those
22 forming the D₂R SBP^{38,39}. A SBP defined by extracellular TMs 1, 2 and 7 residues, has also
23 been implicated in the agonist binding and/or activation of the chemokine CCR5, nicotinic acid
24 (GPR109A) and angiotensin 1 receptors⁴⁰⁻⁴². Thus, the SBP defined in this study is likely to be
25 important for modulation of agonist action in other GPCRs.
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The biased agonism of aripiprazole is unchanged at OBS or SBP mutants

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46 Previously, we have shown that aripiprazole displays biased agonism towards inhibition of
47 cAMP over phosphorylation of ERK1/2^{43,44}. In our pERK1/2 assay, aripiprazole displayed a
48 maximal response of 29% of ropinirole at the WT D₂R, corresponding to a value of efficacy
49 (τ) of 0.39, 12-fold lower than that observed in the cAMP assay (Figure 5, Supplementary
50 Table 5). We quantified the biased agonism of dopamine and aripiprazole between inhibition
51 of cAMP production and ERK1/2 phosphorylation using ropinirole as the reference agonist²¹.
52 Consistent with our previous results aripiprazole was biased towards the inhibition of cAMP
53 production over ERK1/2 phosphorylation whereas dopamine was not (Supplementary Table
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6)⁴³. None of the OBS or SBP mutations caused a significant change in this bias. Note, however, that the window in which to detect the deleterious effects of a mutation is smaller in the pERK1/2 assay because of the lower efficacy (τ) of aripiprazole at the WT D₂R as compared to that obtained in the cAMP assay. Accordingly, we were unable to quantify a change in bias for the mutations that abrogated aripiprazole action in the pERK1/2 assay but that also had a deleterious effect in the cAMP assay (for example L41^{1.39}A and V91^{2.61}A). While previous studies have shown that aripiprazole does not display bias between cAMP and β arrestin recruitment^{43,45}, we were curious to see whether L41^{1.39}A might change this. In a β -arrestin translocation assay that measures the movement of a β -arrestin-2-Venus to the cell surface, aripiprazole acted as a partial agonist at the WT D₂R (E_{\max} = 86% of maximal response of ropinirole, Figure 5, Supplementary Table 7). Aripiprazole displayed a significant 6-fold decrease in efficacy (τ) at the L41^{1.39}A mutant as compared to the WT. No bias between cAMP and β -arrestin-2 translocation was observed for dopamine or aripiprazole relative to ropinirole at the WT or L41^{1.39}A D₂R (Figure 5, Supplementary Table 7).

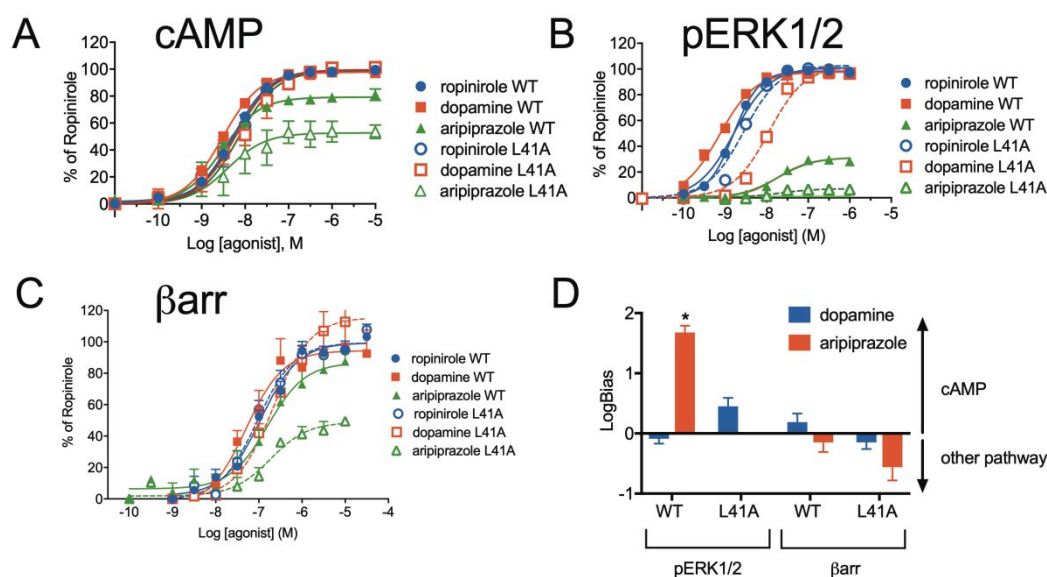


Figure 5:

The mutation L41^{1.39}A decreases the intrinsic efficacy of aripiprazole at multiple signalling pathways.

The ability of increasing concentrations of each agonist to activate the WT or L41^{1.39}A D₂SRs was determined through an AlphascreenTM assay measuring the inhibition of forskolin-stimulated cAMP production (A), ERK1/2 phosphorylation (B) and β arrestin translocation (C). D) These data were fit to an operational model of agonism, and bias factors between each pathway were determined for dopamine and aripiprazole relative to ropinirole. *significant bias

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3 towards one pathway (two-tailed, un-paired Students t-test, $P < 0.05$).
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Conclusions

The weak intrinsic efficacy of D₂R partial agonists such as aripiprazole is thought to determine both their antipsychotic effect and low propensity to cause extrapyramidal side effects and hyperprolactinaemia as compared to typical antipsychotics. Our results reveal the molecular interactions important for this intrinsic efficacy. Aripiprazole's structure is typical of many D₂-like DR subtype-selective ligands, namely a substituted piperazine PP and a lipophilic SP^{7,17}. Previous studies have revealed that the addition of a SP to a piperazine PP can confer gains in affinity and subtype-selectivity through interaction with a SBP defined by the extracellular ends of TMs1, 2 and 7^{7-10,18,33,46,47}. In this study we find that the interaction of the quinalinone SP of aripiprazole with the SBP is a key determinant of the intrinsic efficacy of this drug. Addition of aripiprazole's SP to the 2,3-diCl-phenylpiperazine PP or a distinct 2-methoxyphenylpiperazine PP fragment conferred gains in both affinity and efficacy. These data, combined with our previous study that found that the interaction of an SP with a distinct indole structure with the SBP caused a decrease in intrinsic efficacy¹⁸, provides a means to design D₂R partial agonists with desired intrinsic efficacy.

Methods

Materials

Aripiprazole, was synthesized in house as previously described and shown to be >98% pure⁴³. Ropinirole was purchased from BetaPharma Co.Ltd (Wujiang, China) and >98% pure as described by the supplier. All novel compounds were synthesized as described in the supplementary methods. The pcDNA3L-His-CAMYEL was purchased from ATCC. Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM), hygromycin B, and FlpIn CHO cells were purchased from Invitrogen (Carlsbad, CA). Fetal bovine serum (FBS) was purchased from ThermoTrace (Melbourne, VIC, Australia). [³H]Spiperone, [³H]Raclopride, AlphaScreen reagents, Ultima gold scintillation cocktail, 384-well optiplates, and 384-well proxiplates were purchased from PerkinElmer (Boston, MA). All of the other reagents were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (Castle Hill, NSW, Australia).

Molecular Biology and Generation of Cell Lines

Molecular biology and generation of cell lines were performed as described previously⁴³. Full details are given in the supplementary methods. cDNA in pcDNA3.1+ encoding the short isoform of the wild-type human dopamine D2 receptor with an N-terminal SNAP tag was obtained from Cisbio (Bagnols-sur-Ce`ze, France).

ELISA and Cell signalling assays:

The ELISA protocol, ERK1/2 Phosphorylation Assay, cAMP AlphascreenTM Assay and Bioluminescence Resonance Energy Transfer (BRET) assays measuring intracellular cAMP and β -arrestin-2 recruitment to the plasma membrane assay were performed as described previously^{43,48}. Full details are given in the supplementary methods.

Membrane Preparation and radioligand binding assays.

Radioligand binding assays were performed as described previously⁴³. Full details are given in the supplementary methods.

Data analysis

The results were analysed using Prism 6.0 (GraphPad Software Inc., San Diego, CA). full details of data analysis are given in the supplementary methods. All affinity (pK_i , pK_D or pK_A), potency (pEC_{50}), and transduction ratio ($\log(\tau/K_A)$) parameters were estimated as logarithms.

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3 Where fold-changes were calculated using the corresponding antilog values. We have
4 previously demonstrated that the distribution of the antilog parameters does not conform to a
5 normal (Gaussian) distribution whereas the logarithm is approximately Gaussian. Thus, since
6 the application of t tests and analyses of variance assume Gaussian distribution, estimating the
7 parameters as logarithms allows valid statistical comparison. All results are expressed as the
8 mean \pm S.D. We performed a Brown-Forsythe test (Graphpad prism 6) to assure ourselves of
9 equal variance when such parameters are compared.
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17 **MD simulations**

18 Full details of the protocol are provided in supplementary methods.
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22 **Supporting Information**

23 Supplementary Methods including chemical synthesis, Supplementary Figures 1-3,
24 Supplementary Tables 1-7, Supplementary References. This material is available free of
25 charge *via* the internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.
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31 **Acknowledgements**

32 This research was supported by Project Grant 1049564 of the National Health and Medical
33 Research Council (NHMRC) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse–Intramural Research
34 Program, Z1A DA000606-03 (L.S.)
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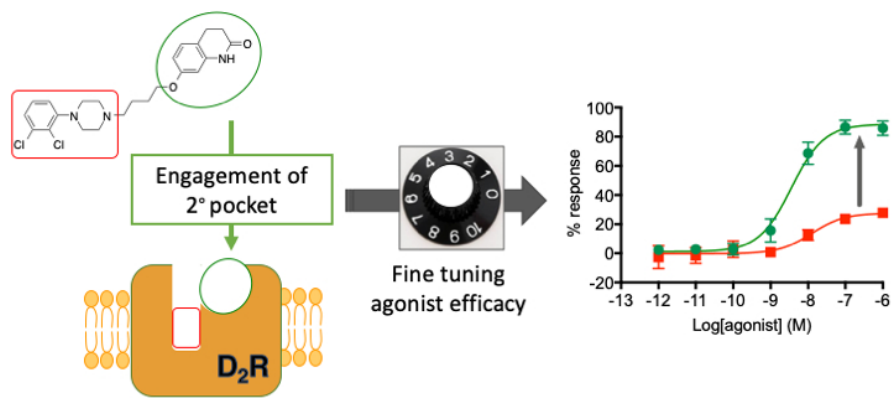
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25 TOC graphic

26 336x189mm (61 x 61 DPI)