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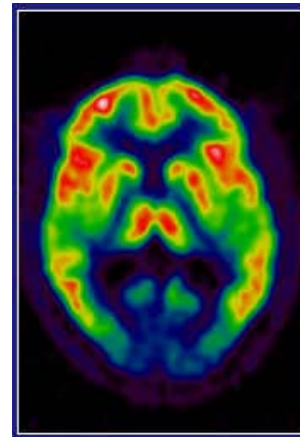
Hammersmith Imanet

...working together on PET studies

Positron emission tomography (PET) is a 3-D imaging technique that can be used to study the distribution, receptor occupancy and pharmacodynamic effects of a radiolabelled ligand (agonist or antagonist) in man. The main uses of PET for drug development are:

- selecting a lead candidate;
- predicting the dose and interval;
- proof-of-principle; and
- predicting disease.

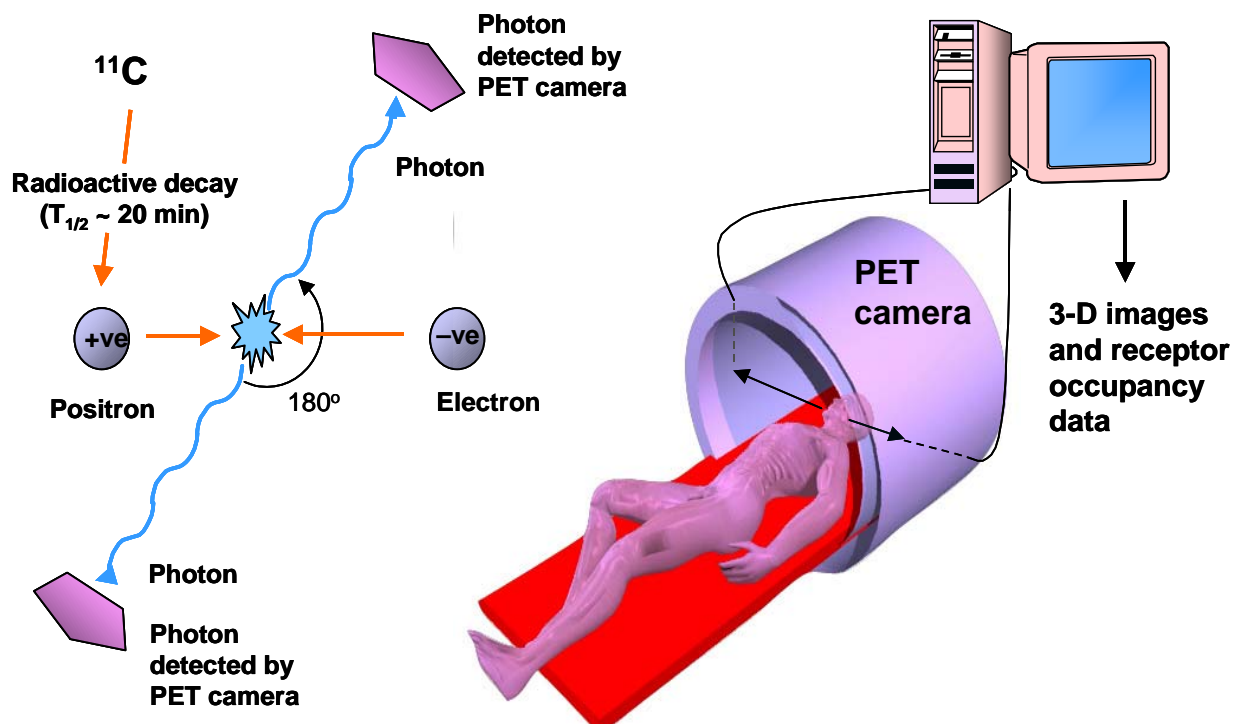
PET uses radionuclides – such as ^{11}C and ^{18}F – that emit positrons and have very short half-lives. On emission, a positron collides with an electron in an atom in the surrounding tissues after travelling only a few tenths of a millimetre. The positron and electron destroy each other, giving off two photons at 180° to the collision.



Hammersmith Imanet, which is part of GE Healthcare and the Medical Research Council, uses a cyclotron to label the ligand, which is then given to a subject lying in a PET scanner. The photons escape from the body and are detected by the scanner, giving a dynamic, 3-D image that reflects quantitatively the distribution of the radionuclide in the body over time.

Because the radionuclides have such short half lives, the cyclotron and PET scanner must be close to one another, and the subject must be given the radioligand soon after it has been made.

Positron emission tomography

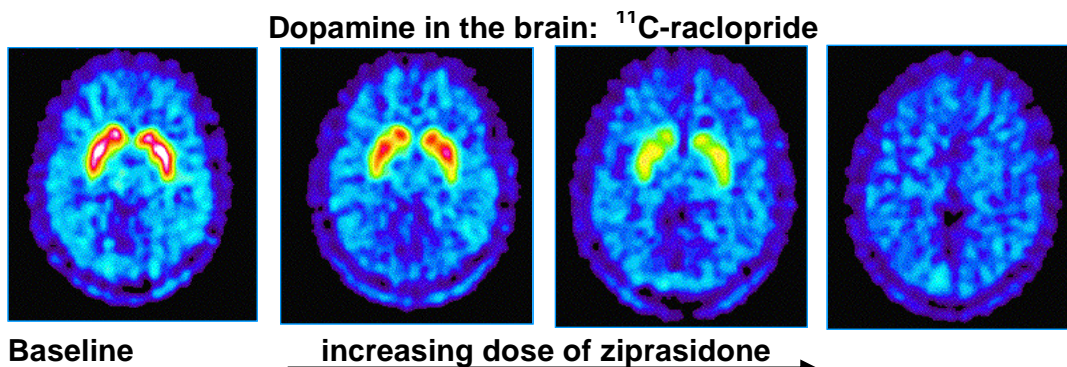
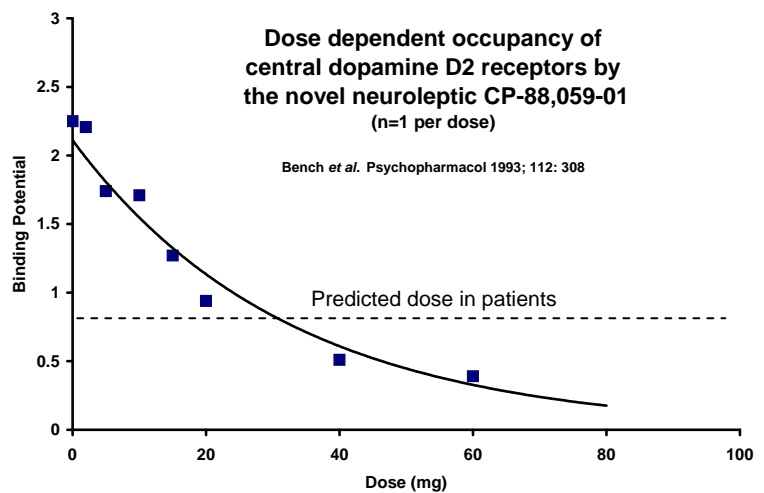


Only specialised centres have the resources to do PET studies. HMR and Imanet have worked together since 1993 to provide a PET service to the pharmaceutical industry.

HMR recruits the subjects, does the clinical work and runs the study. Imanet prepares the radioligand, does the PET scans, and analyses and interprets the results. Together, we have done over 25 studies in healthy subjects or patients, to assess new drugs acting at targets such as dopamine D₂, adenosine A_{2A}, benzodiazepine, MAO, neurotrophin and NK₁ receptors. We have studied drugs to treat conditions such as schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and depression.

Case study

Using PET, and ¹¹C-raclopride as the ligand, HMR and Imanet studied two groups of healthy subjects (only eight per group) to predict the dose¹ and dose-interval² of a new neuroleptic, CP-88,059-01 (ziprasidone), for trials in patients. Ziprasidone has since been marketed (Geodon[®]; Pfizer) at the doses (20–40 mg) and dose-interval (twice daily) that we predicted.



References

1. Bench C, Lammertsma A, Dolan R, Grasby P, Warrington S, Gunn K, Cuddigan M, Turton D, Osman S, Frackowiak R. Dose-dependent occupancy of central dopamine D₂ receptors by the novel neuroleptic CP-88,059-01: study using PET and ¹¹C-raclopride. *Psychopharmacology* 1993; 112: 308–314.
2. Bench C, Lammertsma A, Grasby P, Dolan R, Warrington S, Boyce M, Gunn K, Brannick L, Frackowiak R. The time course of occupancy of striatal dopamine D₂ receptors by the neuroleptic ziprasidone (CP-88,059-01) determined by PET. *Psychopharmacology* 1996; 124: 141–147.

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