

AOP ID and Title:

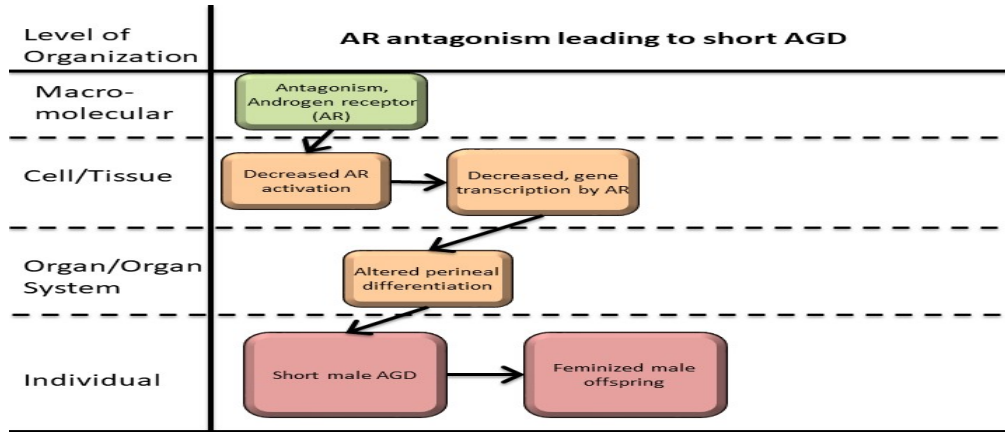
SNAPSHOT

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AOP 306: Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring

Short Title: AR antagonism leading to short AGD

Graphical Representation



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Status

Author status	OECD status	OECD project	SAAOP status
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Abstract

This AOP links Androgen receptor antagonism during fetal life with short anogenital distance (AGD) in male offspring. A short AGD around birth is a marker for feminization of male fetuses and is associated with male reproductive disorders, including reduced fertility in adulthood. Although a short AGD is not necessarily 'adverse' from a human health perspective, it is considered an 'adverse outcome' in OECD test guidelines; AGD measurements are mandatory in specific tests for developmental and reproductive toxicity in chemical risk assessment (TG 443, TG 421/422, TG 414).

The AR is a nuclear receptor involved in the transcriptional regulation of various target genes during development and adulthood across species. Its main ligand is testosterone and dihydrotestosterone (DHT). Under normal physiological conditions, testosterone produced mainly by the testicles, is converted in peripheral tissues by 5 α -reductase into DHT, which in turn binds AR and activates downstream target genes. AR signaling is necessary for normal masculinization of the developing fetus, including differentiation of the levator ani/bulbocavernosus (LABC) muscle complex in male fetuses. The LABC complex does not develop in the absence, or low levels of, androgen signaling, as in female fetuses.

The key events in this pathway is antagonism of the AR in target cells of the primitive perineal region, which leads to inactivation of the AR and failure to properly masculinize the perineum/LABC complex. In this instance, the local levels of testosterone or DHT may be normal, but prevented from binding the AR.

Summary of the AOP

Events

Molecular Initiating Events (MIE), Key Events (KE), Adverse Outcomes (AO)

Sequence	Type	Event ID	Title	Short name
	MIE	26	Antagonism, Androgen receptor (https://aopwiki.org/events/26)	Antagonism, Androgen receptor
	KE	1614	Decrease, androgen receptors (AR) activation (https://aopwiki.org/events/1614)	Decrease, AR activation
	KE	1687	decrease, transcription of genes by AR (https://aopwiki.org/events/1687)	decrease, transcription of genes by AR
	AO	1688	decrease, male anogenital distance (https://aopwiki.org/events/1688)	short male AGD

Key Event Relationships

Upstream Event	Relationship Type	Downstream Event	Evidence	Quantitative Understanding
Antagonism, Androgen receptor (https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2130)	adjacent	Decrease, androgen receptors (AR) activation	High	High
Decrease, androgen receptors (AR) activation (https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2128)	adjacent	decrease, transcription of genes by AR	High	Moderate
decrease, transcription of genes by AR (https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2129)	adjacent	decrease, male anogenital distance	Moderate	Low
Antagonism, Androgen receptor (https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2123)	non-adjacent	decrease, male anogenital distance	Moderate	Low

Stressors

Name	Evidence
Finasteride	High
Flutamide	High

Finasteride

Intrauterine exposure in rats can result in shorter male AGD in male offspring as reported in:

Bowman et al (2003), Toxicol Sci 74:393-406; doi: 10.1093/toxsci/kfg128

Christiansen et al (2009), Environ Health Perspect 117:1839-1846; doi: 10.1289/ehp.0900689

Schwartz et al (2019), Toxicol Sci 169:303-311; doi: 10.1093/toxsci/kfz046

Flutamide

Finasteride is a selective androgen receptor (AR) antagonist (Simard et al 1986) that has been shown to induce shorter male AGD in rats after in utero exposure (Foster & Harris 2005; Hass et al 2007; Kita et al 2016; McIntyre et al 2001; Mylchreest et al 1999; Scott et al 2007; Welsh et al 2007).

References:

Foster & Harris (2005), *Toxicol Sci* 85:1024-1032; doi: 10.1093/toxsci/kfi159

Hass et al (2007), *Environ Health Perspect* 115(suppl 1):122-128; doi: 10.1289/ehp.0360

Kita et al (2016), *Toxicology* 368-369:152-161; doi: 10.1016/j.tox.2016.08.021

McIntyre et al (2001), *Toxicol Sci* 62:236-249; doi: 10.1093/toxsci/62.2.236

Mylchreest et al (1999), *Toxicol Appl Pharmacol* 156:81-95; doi: 10.1006/taap.1999.8643

Scott et al (2007), *Endocrinology* 148:2027-2036; doi: 10.1210/en.2006-1622

Simard et al (1986), *Mol Cell Endocrinol* 44:261-270; doi: 10.1016/0303-7207(86)90132-2

Overall Assessment of the AOP

Domain of Applicability

Life Stage Applicability

Life Stage	Evidence
Pregnancy	High

Taxonomic Applicability

Term	Scientific Term	Evidence	Links
human	Homo sapiens	Moderate	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=9606)
rat	Rattus norvegicus	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10116)
mouse	Mus musculus	Moderate	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10090)

Sex Applicability

Sex	Evidence
Male	High

References

- Schwartz CL, Christiansen S, Vinggaard AM, Axelstad M, Hass U and **Svingen T** (2019), Anogenital distance as a toxicological or clinical marker for fetal androgen action and risk for reproductive disorders. *Arch Toxicol* 93: 253-272.

Appendix 1

List of MIEs in this AOP

Event: 26: Antagonism, Androgen receptor (<https://aopwiki.org/events/26>)

Short Name: Antagonism, Androgen receptor

AOPs Including This Key Event

AOP ID and Name	Event Type
Aop:306 - Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	MolecularInitiatingEvent
Aop:344 - Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to nipple retention (NR) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/344)	MolecularInitiatingEvent
Aop:345 - Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to decreased fertility in females (https://aopwiki.org/aops/345)	MolecularInitiatingEvent

Stressors

Name
Mercaptobenzole
Triticonazole
Flusilazole
Epoxiconazole
Prochloraz
Propiconazole
Tebuconazole
Flutamide
Cyproterone acetate
Vinclozolin

Biological Context

Level of Biological Organization
Molecular

Cell term

Cell term
eukaryotic cell

Evidence for Perturbation by Stressor

Overview for Molecular Initiating Event

A large number of drugs and chemicals have been shown to antagonise the AR using various AR reporter gene assays. The AR is specifically targeted in AR-sensitive cancers, for example the use of the anti-androgenic drug flutamide in treating prostate cancer (Alapi & Fischer, 2006). Flutamide has also been used in several rodent in vivo studies showing anti-androgenic effects (feminization of male offspring) evident by e.g. short anogenital distance (AGD) in males (Foster & Harris, 2005; Hass et al, 2007; Kita et al, 2016). QSAR models can predict AR antagonism for a wide range of chemicals, many of which have shown in vitro antagonistic potential (Vinggaard et al, 2008).

Triticonazole

Using hAR-EcoScreen Assay, triticonazole showed a LOEC for antagonisms of 0.2 uM and an IC50 of 0.3 (±0.01) uM (Draskau et al, 2019)

Flusilazole

Using hAR-EcoScreen Assay, flusilazole showed a LOEC for antagonisms of 0.8 μ M and an IC50 of 2.8 (\pm 0.1) μ M (Draskau et al, 2019).►

Epoxiconazole

Using transiently AR-transfected CHO cells, epoxiconazole showed a LOEC of 1.6 μ M and an IC50 of 10 μ M (Kjærstad et al, 2010)

Prochloraz

Using transiently AR-transfected CHO cells, prochloraz showed a LOEC of 6.3 μ M and an IC50 of 13 μ M (Kjærstad et al, 2010)

Propiconazole

Using transiently AR-transfected CHO cells, propiconazole showed a LOEC of 12.5 μ M and an IC50 of 18 μ M (Kjærstad et al, 2010)

Tebuconazole

Using transiently AR-transfected CHO cells, tebuconazole showed a LOEC of 3.1 μ M and an IC50 of 8.1 μ M (Kjærstad et al, 2010)

Flutamide

Using the AR-CALUX reporter assay in antagonism mode, flutamide showed an IC50 of 1.3 μ M (Sonneveld et al, 2005).

Cyproterone acetate

Using the AR-CALUX reporter assay in antagonism mode, cyproterone acetate showed an IC50 of 7.1 nM (Sonneveld et al, 2005).

Vinclozolin

Using the AR-CALUX reporter assay in antagonism mode, vinclozolin showed an IC50 of 1.0 μ M (Sonneveld et al, 2005).

Domain of Applicability**Taxonomic Applicability**

Term	Scientific Term	Evidence	Links
human	Homo sapiens	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=9606)
mouse	Mus musculus	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10090)
rat	Rattus norvegicus	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10116)
human and other cells in culture	human and other cells in culture	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=0)

Life Stage Applicability

Life Stage	Evidence
Foetal	High
Embryo	Moderate

Life Stage	Evidence
During development and at adulthood	High

Sex Applicability

Sex	Evidence
Mixed	High

Both the DNA-binding and ligand-binding domains of the AR are highly evolutionary conserved, whereas the transactivation domain show more divergence which may affect AR-mediated gene regulation across species (Davey & Grossmann, 2016). Despite certain inter-species differences, AR function mediated through gene expression is highly conserved, with mutations studies from both humans and rodents showing strong correlation for AR-dependent development and function (Walters et al, 2010).

This KE is applicable for both sexes, across developmental stages into adulthood, in numerous cells and tissues and across taxa

Key Event DescriptionThe androgen receptor (AR) and its function

Development of the male reproductive system and secondary male characteristics is dependent on androgens (foremost testosterone (T) and dihydrotestosterone (DHT)). T and the more biologically active DHT act by binding to the AR (MacLean et al, 1993; MacLeod et al, 2010; Schwartz et al, 2019), with human AR mutations and mouse knock-out models having established its pivotal role in masculinization and spermatogenesis (Walters et al, 2010). The AR is a ligand-activated transcription factor belonging to the steroid hormone nuclear receptor family (Davey & Grossmann, 2016). The AR has three domains; the N-terminal domain, the DNA-binding domain and the ligand-binding domain, with the latter being most evolutionary conserved. Apart from the essential role AR plays for male reproductive development and function (Walters et al, 2010), the AR is also expressed in many other tissues and organs such as bone, muscles, ovaries and the immune system (Rana et al, 2014).

AR antagonism as Key Event

The main function of the AR is to activate gene transcription in cells. Canonical signaling occurs by ligands (androgens) binding to AR in the cytoplasm which results in translocation to the cell nucleus, receptor dimerization and binding to specific regulatory DNA sequences (Heemers & Tindall, 2007). The gene targets regulated by AR activation depends on cell/tissue type and what stage of development activation occur, and is, for instance, dependent on available co-factors. Apart from the canonical signaling pathway, AR can also function through non-genomic modalities, for instance rapid change in cell function by ion transport changes (Heinlein & Chang, 2002). However, with regard to this specific KE the canonical signaling pathway is what is referred to.

How it is Measured or Detected

AR antagonism can be measured in vitro by transient or stable transactivation assays to evaluate nuclear receptor activation. There is already a validated assay for AR (ant)agonism adopted by the OECD, Test No. 458: *Stably Transfected Human Androgen Receptor Transcriptional Activation Assay for Detection of Androgenic Agonist and Antagonist Activity of Chemicals* (OECD, 2016). The stably transfected AR-EcoScreen™ cell line should be used for the assay and is freely available for the Japanese Collection of Research Bioresources (JCRB) Cell Bank under reference number JCRB1328.

Other assays include the AR-CALUX reporter gene assay that is derived from human U2-OS cells stably transfected with the human AR and an AR responsive reporter gene (van der Burg et al, 2010).

References

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- Foster PM, Harris MW (2005) Changes in androgen-mediated reproductive development in male rat offspring following exposure to a single oral dose of flutamide at different gestational ages. *Toxicol Sci* **85**: 1024-1032
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- Schwartz CL, Christiansen S, Vinggaard AM, Axelstad M, Hass U, Svingen T (2019) Anogenital distance as a toxicological or clinical marker for fetal androgen action and risk for reproductive disorders. *Arch Toxicol* **93**: 253-272
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- Vinggaard AM, Niemelä J, Wedebye EB, Jensen GE (2008) Screening of 397 chemicals and development of a quantitative structure-activity relationship model for androgen receptor antagonism. *Chem Res Toxicol* **21**: 813-823
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List of Key Events in the AOP

Event: 1614: Decrease, androgen receptors (AR) activation (<https://aopwiki.org/events/1614>)

Short Name: Decrease, AR activation

AOPs Including This Key Event

AOP ID and Name	Event Type
Aop:288 - Inhibition of 17 α -hydrolase/C 10,20-lyase (Cyp17A1) activity leads to birth reproductive defects (cryptorchidism) in male (mammals) (https://aopwiki.org/aops/288)	KeyEvent
Aop:305 - 5 α -reductase inhibition leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/305)	KeyEvent
Aop:306 - Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	KeyEvent
Aop:307 - Decreased testosterone synthesis leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/307)	KeyEvent
Aop:344 - Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to nipple retention (NR) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/344)	KeyEvent

Biological Context

Level of Biological Organization
Cellular

Key Event Description

Androgen receptor activation is regulated by the binding of androgens. AR activity can be decreased by either a lack of steroidal ligands (testosterone, DHT) or the presence of antagonist compounds. ¹²

How it is Measured or Detected

Significance of AR signaling in fetal development can be studied through a conditional deletion of the androgen receptor using a Cre/loxP approach. The recommended animal model for reproductive study is the mouse.³

Also, epidemiological case-studies following mouse or humans expressing a complete androgen insensitivity allow to directly assess the effects of a lack of AR activation on the development.⁴

Enzyme immunoassay (ELISA) kits for in vitro quantitative measurement of AR activity are available. Androgen receptors activity can be measured using bioassay such as the (Anti-)Androgen Receptor CALUX reporter gene assay.⁵

References

- ¹ Davey R.A and Grossmann M. (2016) Androgen Receptor Structure, Function and Biology: From Bench to Bedside. Clinical Biochemist Reviews, 37(1): 3-15. PCM4810760
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- ³ Kaftanovskaya E.M., Huang Z., Barbara A.M., De Gendt K., Verhoeven G., Ivan P. Gorlov, and AgoulNIK A.I. (2012) Cryptorchidism in Mice with an Androgen Receptor Ablation in Gubernaculum Testis. Molecular Endocrinology, 26(4): 598-607. <https://doi.org/10.1210/me.2011-1283> (<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://doi.org/10.1210/me.2011-1283&sa=D&ust=1554891396628000>)
- ⁴ Hutson J.M. (1985) A biphasic model for the hormonal control of testicular descent. Lancet, 24;2(8452): 419-21 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(85\)92739-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(85)92739-4) ([https://www.google.com/url?q=http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(85\)92739-4&sa=D&ust=1554891396629000](https://www.google.com/url?q=http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(85)92739-4&sa=D&ust=1554891396629000))
- ⁵ van der Burg B., Winter R., Man HY., Vangenechten C., Berckmans P., Weimer M., Witters M. and van der Linden S. (2010) Optimization and prevalidation of the in vitro AR CALUX method to test androgenic and antiandrogenic activity of compounds. Reproductive Toxicology, 30(1):18-24 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.reprotox.2010.04.012> (<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://doi.org/10.1016/j.reprotox.2010.04.012&sa=D&ust=1554891396630000>)

Event: 1687: decrease, transcription of genes by AR (<https://aopwiki.org/events/1687>)

Short Name: decrease, transcription of genes by AR

AOPs Including This Key Event

AOP ID and Name	Event Type
Aop:305 - 5 α -reductase inhibition leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/305)	KeyEvent
Aop:306 - Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	KeyEvent

Biological Context

Level of Biological Organization
Cellular

List of Adverse Outcomes in this AOP

Event: 1688: decrease, male anogenital distance (<https://aopwiki.org/events/1688>)

Short Name: short male AGD

Key Event Component

Process	Object	Action
androgen receptor signaling pathway	Musculature of male perineum	disrupted

AOPs Including This Key Event

AOP306

AOP ID and Name	Event Type
Aop:305 - 5 α -reductase inhibition leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/305)	AdverseOutcome
Aop:306 - Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	AdverseOutcome
Aop:307 - Decreased testosterone synthesis leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/307)	AdverseOutcome

Stressors

Name
Butylparaben
p,p'-DDE
Bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate
Dexamethasone
Fenitrothion
Finasteride
Flutamide
Ketoconazole
Linuron
Prochloraz
Procymidone
Triticonazole
Vinclozolin
di-n-hexyl phthalate
Dicyclohexyl phthalate
butyl benzyl phthalate
monobenzyl phthalate
di-n-heptyl phthalate

Biological Context

Level of Biological Organization
Tissue

Organ term

Organ term
perineum

Evidence for Perturbation by Stressor

Butylparaben

Butylparaben has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 500 and 1000 mg/kg bw/day (Boberg et al, 2016; Zhang et al, 2014). A separate study using 600 mg/kg bw/day did not see an effect on male AGD (Boberg et al, 2008).

p,p'-DDE

p,p,DDE has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 100-200 mg/kg bw/day (Loeffler & Peterson, 1999; Wolf et al, 1999).

Bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate

DEHP has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 300-1500 mg/kg bw/day (Christiansen et al, 2010; Gray et al, 2000; Howdeshell et al, 2007; Jarfelt et al, 2005; Kita et al, 2016; Li et al, 2013; Lin et al, 2009; Moore et al, 2001; Nardelli et al, 2017; Saillenfait et al, 2009; Wolf et al, 1999).

Dexamethasone

Dexamethasone has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 0.1 mg/kg bw/day (Van den Driesche et al, 2012).

Fenitrothion

Fenitrothion has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 25 mg/kg bw/day (Turner et al, 2002).

Finasteride

Finasteride has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 100 mg/kg bw/day (Bowman et al, 2003).

Flutamide

Flutamide has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to doses between 16-100 mg/kg bw/day (Foster & Harris, 2005; Hass et al, 2007; Kita et al, 2016; McIntyre et al, 2001; Mylchreest et al, 1999; Scott et al, 2007; Welsh et al, 2007).

Ketoconazole

Ketoconazole has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 50 mg/kg bw/day in one study (Taxvig et al, 2008), but no effect in another study using same dose (Wolf et al, 1999).

Linuron

Linuron has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 50-100 mg/kg bw/day (Hotchkiss et al, 2004; McIntyre et al, 2002; Wolf et al, 1999).

Prochloraz

Prochloraz has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 150-250 mg/kg bw/day (Laier et al, 2006; Noriega et al, 2005).

Procymidone

Procymidone has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to doses between 50-150 mg/kg bw/day (Hass et al, 2012; Hass et al, 2007; Wolf et al, 1999).

Triticonazole

Triticonazole has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 150 and 450 mg/kg bw/day (Draskau et al, 2019).

Vinclozolin

Vinclozolin has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to doses between 50-200 mg/kg bw/day (Christiansen et al, 2009; Gray et al, 1994; Hass et al, 2007; Matsuura et al, 2005; Ostby et al, 1999; Schneider et al, 2011; Wolf et al, 2004).

di-n-hexyl phthalate

DnHP has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 500-750 mg/kg bw/day (Saillenfait et al, 2009a; Saillenfait et al, 2009b).

Dicyclohexyl phthalate

DCHP has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 350-750 mg/kg bw/day (Aydoğan Ahbab & Barlas, 2015; Hoshino et al, 2005; Saillenfait et al, 2009a).

butyl benzyl phthalate

BBP has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 500-1000 mg/kg bw/day (Ema & Miyawaki, 2002; Gray et al, 2000; Hotchkiss et al, 2004; Nagao et al, 2000; Tyl et al, 2004).

monobenzyl phthalate

MBeP has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 375 mg/kg bw/day (Ema et al, 2003).

di-n-heptyl phthalate

DHPP has been shown to cause decreased male AGD in rats following intrauterine exposure to 1000 mg/kg bw/day (Saillenfait et al, 2011).

Domain of Applicability

Taxonomic Applicability

Term	Scientific Term	Evidence	Links
human	Homo sapiens	Moderate	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=9606)
rat	Rattus norvegicus	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10116)
mouse	Mus musculus	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10090)

Life Stage Applicability

Life Stage	Evidence
Foetal	High

Sex Applicability

Sex	Evidence
Male	High

A short AGD in male offspring is a marker of insufficient androgen action during critical fetal developmental stages (Schwartz et al, 2019; Welsh et al, 2008). A short AGD is thus a sign of undervirilization, which is also associated with a series of male reproductive disorders, including genital malformations and infertility in humans (Juul et al, 2014; Skakkebaek et al, 2001).

There are numerous human epidemiological studies showing associations with intrauterine exposure to anti-androgenic chemicals and short AGD in newborn boys alongside other reproductive disorders (Schwartz et al, 2019). This underscores the human relevance of this AO. However, in reproductive toxicity studies and chemical risk assessment, rodents (rats and mice) are what is tested on. The list of chemicals inducing short male AGD in male rat offspring is extensive, as evidenced by the 'stressor' list and reviewed by (Schwartz et al, 2019).

Key Event Description

The anogenital distance (AGD) refers to the distance between anus and the external genitalia. In rodents and humans, the male AGD is

approximately twice the length as the female AGD (Salazar-Martinez et al, 2004; Schwartz et al, 2019). This sexual dimorphism is a consequence of sex hormone-dependent development of secondary sexual characteristics (Schwartz et al, 2019). In males, it is believed that androgens (primarily DHT) activate AR-positive cells in non-myotonic cells in the fetal perineum region to initiate differentiation of the perineal *levator ani* and *bulbocavernosus* (LABC) muscle complex (Ipulan et al, 2014). This AR-dependent process occurs within a critical window of development, around gestational days 15-18 in rats (MacLeod et al, 2010). In females, the absence of DHT prevents this masculinization effect from occurring.

The involvement of androgens in masculinization of the male fetus, including the perineum, has been known for a very long time (Jost, 1953), and AGD has historically been used to, for instance, sex newborn kittens. It is now well established that the AGD in newborns is a proxy readout for the intrauterine sex hormone milieu the fetus was developing. Too low androgen levels in XY fetuses makes the male AGD shorter, whereas excess (ectopic) androgen levels in XX fetuses makes the female AGD longer, in humans and rodents (Schwartz et al, 2019).

How it is Measured or Detected

The AGD is a morphometric measurement carried out by trained technicians (rodents) or medical staff (humans).

In rodent studies AGD is assessed as the distance between the genital papilla and the anus, and measured using a stereomicroscope with a micrometer eyepiece. The AGD index (AGDi) is often calculated by dividing AGD by the cube root of the body weight. It is important in statistical analysis to use litter as the statistical unit. This is done when more than one pup from each litter is examined. Statistical analyses is adjusted using litter as an independent, random and nested factor. AGD are analysed using body weight as covariate as recommended in Guidance Document 151 (OECD, 2013).

Regulatory Significance of the AO

In regulatory toxicology, the AGD is mandatory inclusions in OECD test guidelines used to test for developmental and reproductive toxicity of chemicals. Guidelines include 'TG 443 extended one-generation study', 'TG 421/422 reproductive toxicity screening studies' and 'TG 414 developmental toxicity study'.

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Appendix 2

List of Key Event Relationships in the AOP

List of Adjacent Key Event Relationships

Relationship: 2130: Antagonism, Androgen receptor leads to Decrease, AR activation
(<https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2130>)

AOPs Referencing Relationship

AOP Name	Adjacency	Weight of Evidence	Quantitative Understanding
Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	adjacent	High	High
Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to nipple retention (NR) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/344)	adjacent	High	

Relationship: 2128: Decrease, AR activation leads to decrease, transcription of genes by AR
(<https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2128>)

AOPs Referencing Relationship

AOP306

AOP Name	Adjacency	Weight of Evidence	Quantitative Understanding
5α-reductase inhibition leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/305)	adjacent	Moderate	Low
Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	adjacent	High	Moderate

Evidence Supporting Applicability of this Relationship

Taxonomic Applicability

Term	Scientific Term	Evidence	Links
human	Homo sapiens	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=9606)
mouse	Mus musculus	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10090)
human and other cells in culture	human and other cells in culture	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=0)
rat	Rattus norvegicus	High	NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Taxonomy/Browser/wwwtax.cgi?mode=Info&id=10116)

Life Stage Applicability

Life Stage	Evidence
During development and at adulthood	High

Sex Applicability

Sex	Evidence
Male	High
Female	High

Relationship: 2129: decrease, transcription of genes by AR leads to short male AGD
(<https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2129>)

AOPs Referencing Relationship

AOP Name	Adjacency	Weight of Evidence	Quantitative Understanding
5α-reductase inhibition leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/305)	adjacent	Moderate	Low
Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	adjacent	Moderate	Low

List of Non Adjacent Key Event Relationships

Relationship: 2123: Antagonism, Androgen receptor leads to short male AGD (<https://aopwiki.org/relationships/2123>)

AOPs Referencing Relationship

AOP Name	Adjacency	Weight of Evidence	Quantitative Understanding
Androgen receptor (AR) antagonism leading to short anogenital distance (AGD) in male (mammalian) offspring (https://aopwiki.org/aops/306)	non-adjacent	Moderate	Low