

Neurotransmitter pattern impairment in prodromal Frontotemporal Dementia: a GENFI study

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State of the art

Detailed knowledge of neurotransmitters impairment in early stages of Frontotemporal dementia (FTD) holds the potential to identify new tailored therapeutic targets.

JuSpace toolbox allows for cross-modal correlation of MRI-based measures with nuclear imaging derived estimates covering various neurotransmitter systems.

Methodology

We applied JuSpace toolbox to the GENFI cohort, considering 84 mutation carriers with prodromal FTD (i.e., CDR® plus NACC FTLD= 0.5, 33 *C9orf72*, 34 *GRN*, and 17 *MAPT*), 98 mutation carriers with symptomatic FTD (CDR® plus NACC FTLD>0.5, 46 *C9orf72*, 34 *GRN*, and 18 *MAPT*) and 276 mutation-negative controls (HC). We tested if spatial patterns of grey matter volume alterations (as compared to HC) were correlated with specific neurotransmitter systems. Bonferroni-Holm correction for multiple comparisons was applied.

Results

As compared to HC, voxel-based brain changes in prodromal FTD due to *C9orf72* mutations were significantly associated with spatial distribution of dopamine ($p=0.02$), acetylcholine ($p=0.03$) and opioid ($p=0.02$) pathways, while in prodromal FTD due to *MAPT* mutations to serotonin ($p=0.01$), dopamine ($p=0.01$) and opioid ($p=0.01$) pathways. No significant changes were detected in prodromal FTD due to *GRN* mutations. In symptomatic FTD, widespread neurotransmitters pattern impairment was reported across all mutations.

Conclusion

This study suggests that JuSpace is a helpful tool to indirectly assess neurotransmitter deficits in FTD. This approach may provide novel insight into disease mechanisms and therapeutic approaches in different monogenic FTD subtypes.

Conflicts of interest

nothing to disclose.