

AOP Knowledge Base/ Wiki Tool Set

Stephen W. Edwards

Adverse Outcome Pathways: From Research to Regulation

This talk does not necessarily reflect the views of the
Environmental Protection Agency.



Outline

- Why an AOP Knowledgebase?
- Components of the AOP Knowledgebase
- AOP-Wiki
- What's next?

AOP Timeline

- 2010 AOP development
 - relatively poorly defined *ad hoc* process
- 2012 Launch of OECD AOP Development Programme
 - <http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/adverse-outcome-pathways-molecular-screening-and-toxicogenomics.htm>
- 2013 OECD Guidance on Developing and Assessing AOPs
 - <http://search.oecd.org/officialdocuments/displaydocumentpdf/?cote=env/jm/mono%282013%296&doclanguage=en>
- 2014
 - AOP Workshops
 - Part of National Society meetings: SOT, SETAC, EMGS
 - *Advancing AOPs for Integrated Toxicology and Regulatory Applications* (Somma Lombardo, Italy)
 - *Adverse Outcome Pathways: From Research to Regulation* (Bethesda, MD)
 - Development of an OECD User Handbook as a supplement to the 2013 guidance

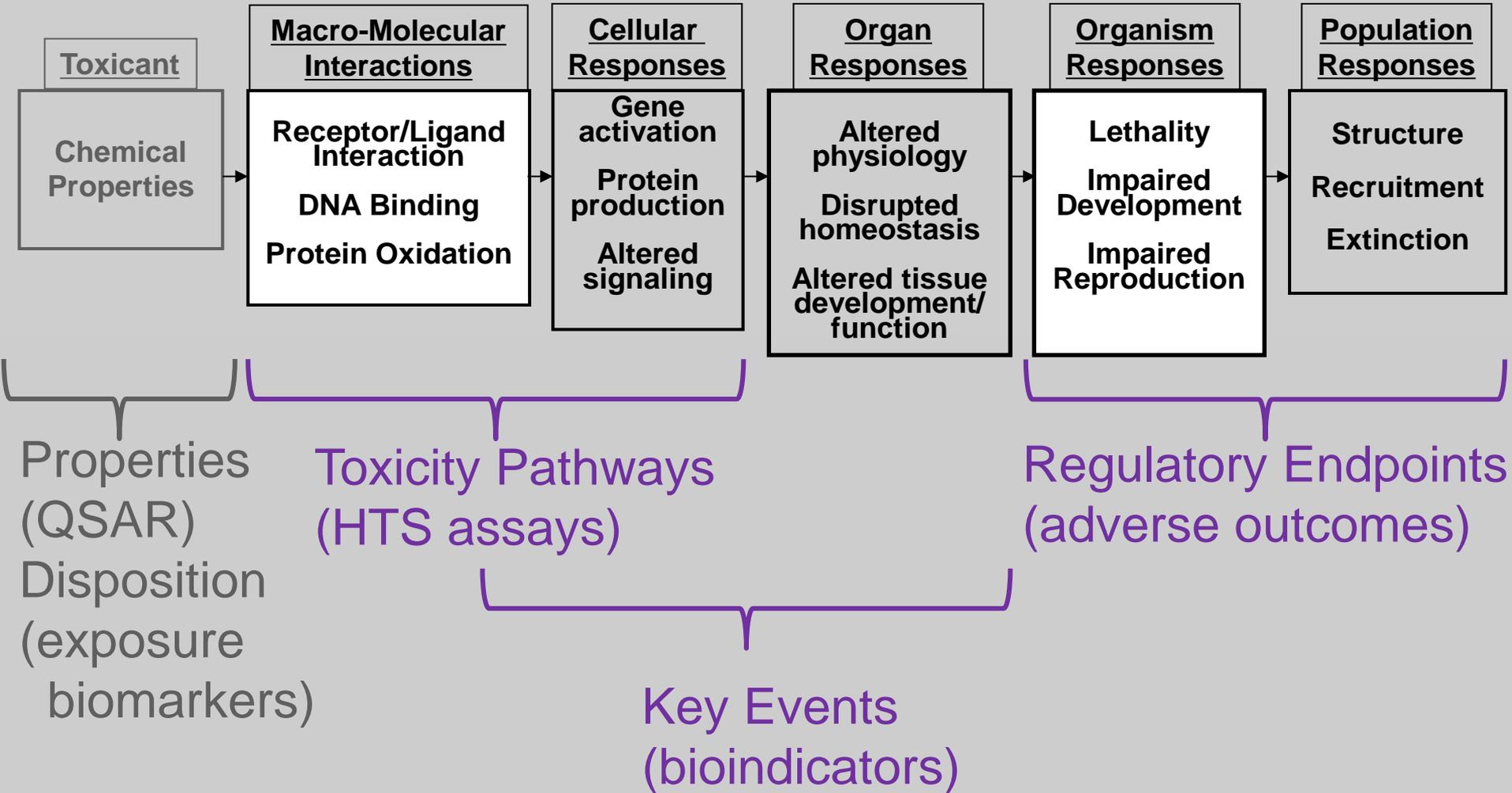
AOP-KB History

- Effectopedia (International QSAR Foundation)
 - Developed since 2006, alpha releases since 2010
- Chem MOA Wiki (WHO/IPCS) -> AOP Wiki
 - EPA – Fall 2012
- AOP-KB for OECD AOP Programme
 - Joint proposals EPA, JRC, & USACE – March 2013
 - Initial Wiki beta release – July 2013
 - Formal inclusion of OECD (Effectopedia) – Dec. 2013
 - Most recent Wiki release – June 2014



AOP Key Concepts

- Organize existing knowledge
- Systematic evaluation of evidence
- Avoid duplication of the same key event
- Always expand description to include new science
- **Provide a framework for utilizing 21st century toxicity testing**



AOP Wiki

Collaborative development of AOP descriptions & evidence



Effectopedia

Detailed development of structured & computational AOPs



AOP Xplorer

Visualize attribute networks to discover & explore AOPs in a broader context

Intermediate Effects

DB

Put

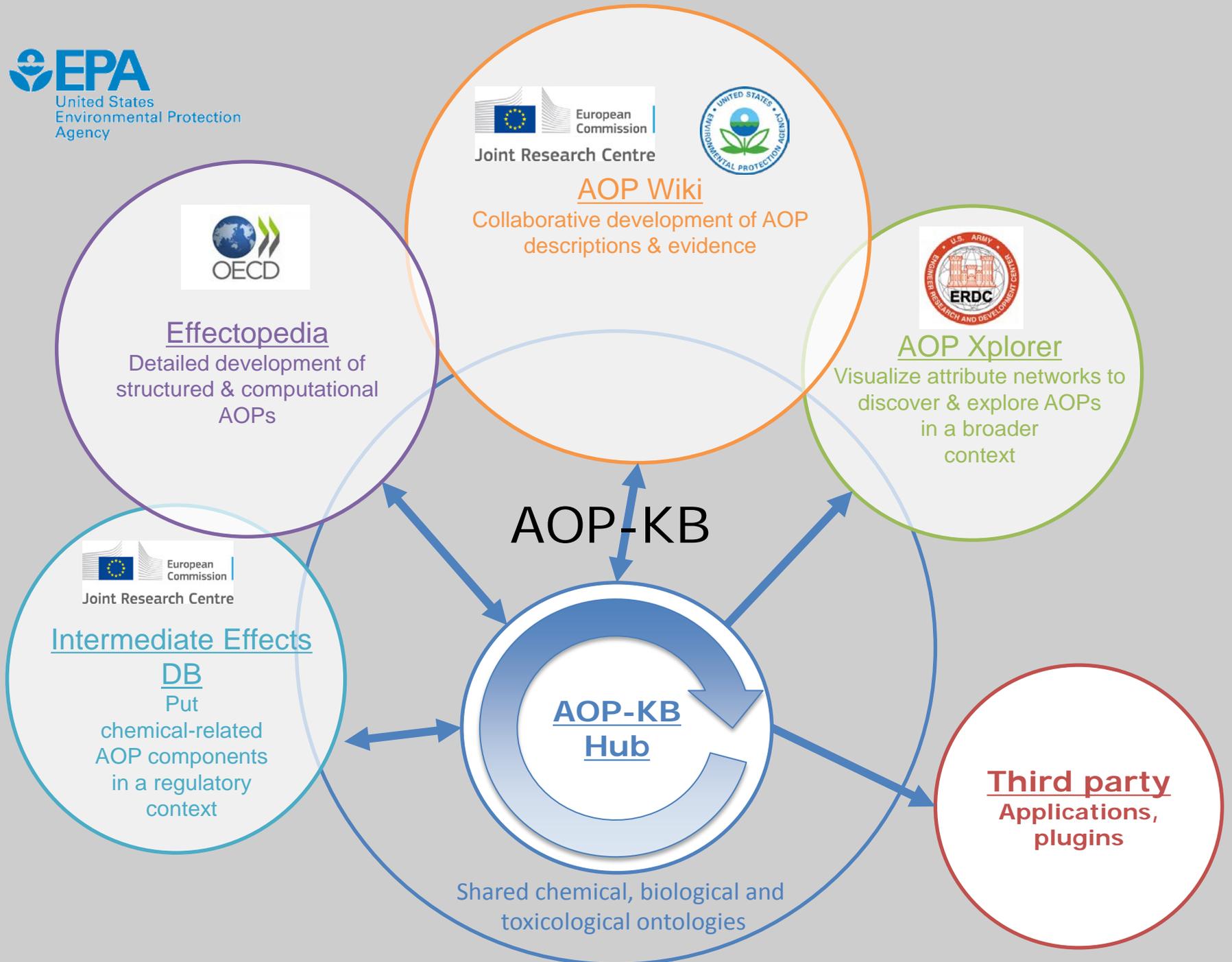
chemical-related AOP components in a regulatory context

AOP-KB

**AOP-KB
Hub**

Shared chemical, biological and toxicological ontologies

**Third party
Applications,
plugins**



Navigation

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Main Page

Contents [hide]

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- 2 Welcome to the Collaborative Adverse Outcome Pathway KnowledgeBase (AOP-KB) Wiki
 - 2.1 Partners
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- 3 Main Types of Data
- 4 How to add a new AOP
 - 4.1 Before You Start
 - 4.2 To create a new AOP
 - 4.3 To edit AOP pages
 - 4.4 To edit other pages

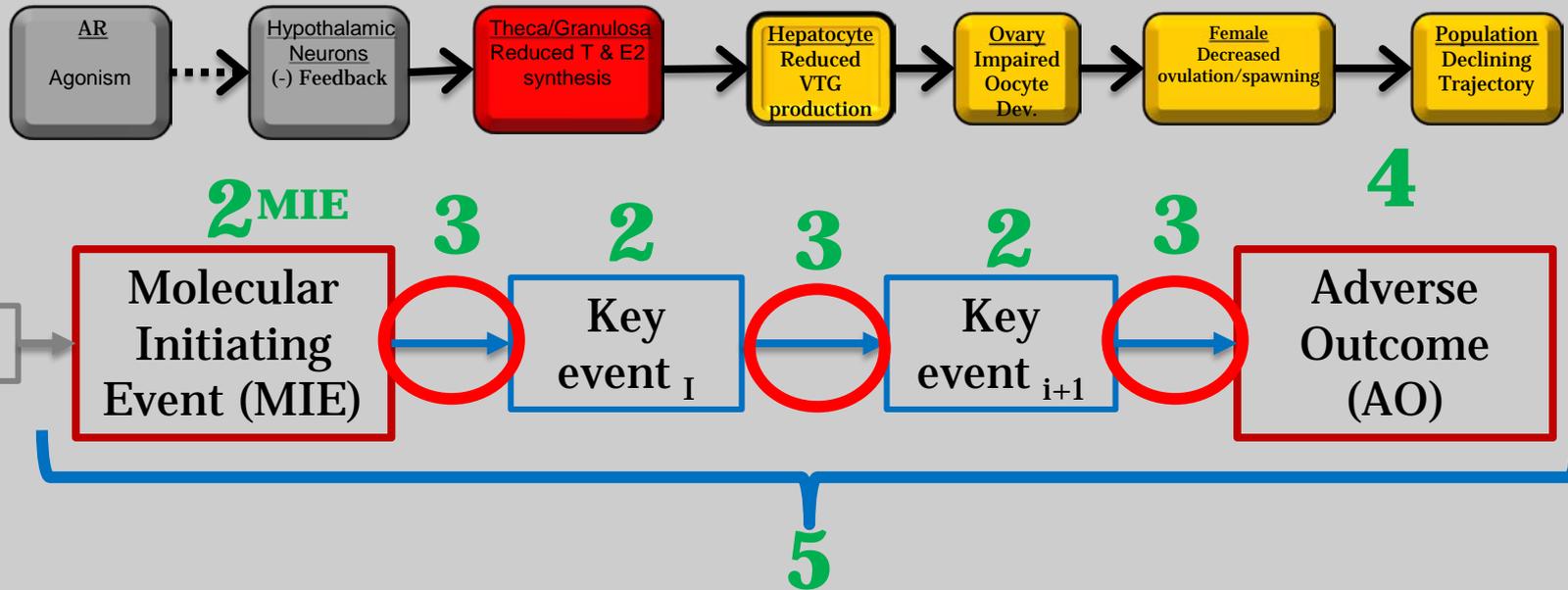
Welcome to the Collaborative Adverse Outcome Pathway KnowledgeBase (AOP-KB) Wiki [\[edit\]](#)



This wiki represents a joint effort between the European Commission – DG Joint Research Centre and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This serves as one component of a larger OECD-sponsored AOP Knowledgebase effort and represents the central repository for all AOPs developed as part of the OECD AOP Development Effort by the Extended Advisory Group on Molecular Screening and Toxicogenomics. The other major components of this knowledgebase are Effectopedia, produced by the International QSAR Foundation, and the AOP Network tool, produced by the US Army Corps of Engineers - Engineering Research and Development Center.

This wiki is based upon the Chemical Mode of Action wiki developed by the US EPA under the auspices of the [WHO International Programme on Chemical Safety \(IPCS\)](#) [Mode of Action Steering Group](#).

Structuring and Storing AOP Information



AOP Components are mapped to specific entities in the KB

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Chemical initiator | 3. KE Relationship (linkage; edge) | 5. AOP |
| 2. Key event (including MIE; node) | 4. Adverse Outcome | |

Widgets Facilitate Data Entry

Summary of the AOP

Molecular Initiating Event

Add Molecular Initiating Event to Table

Molecular Initiating Event	Support for Essentiality
Aromatase, Inhibition	

Key Events

Add Event to Table

Event	Support for Essentiality
Plasma 17beta-estradiol concentrations, Reduction	
Transcription and translation of vitellogenin in liver, Reduction	
Plasma vitellogenin concentrations, Reduction	
Vitellogenin uptake into oocytes and oocyte growth/development, Reduction	
Cumulative fecundity and spawning, Reduction	
17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction	

Adverse Outcome

Add Adverse Outcome to Table

Adverse Outcome
Population trajectory, Decrease

List of Key Events, including the MIE and AO

Add a Record

Action

Biological Process/Object

Evidence supporting essentiality

Submit

Add a Record

Action

Biological Process/Object

Submit

Wiki Matches OECD Guidance & Handbook

Section 5b – MIE, KE, and AO descriptions

AOP Page

Section 1 – Title

Section 2 – Authors

Section 3 - Status

Section 4 – Abstract

Background (Optional)

Section 5a – Summary of the AOP

MIE

KEs

AO

Linkage table

Key Event Relationships

Applicability domain(s) of the AOP

Life-stage

Taxonomic

Sex

Section 7 – Overall Assessment of the AOP

Modified Bradford Hill Considerations

Section 8 – Considerations for Potential Applications of the AOP

MIE Page

Chemical initiator(s)

- Description
- Measurement/ detection
- Taxonomic applicability
- *Evidence for chemical initiation*

KE Pages

- Description
- Measurement/ detection
- Taxonomic applicability

AO Page

- Description
- Measurement/ detection
- Taxonomic applicability
- *Regulatory relevance*

Section 6 – Scientific evidence supporting the linkages in the AOP

KER Pages

- Title
- Description
- Biological plausibility
- Empirical support
- Inconsistencies and uncertainties
- Quantitative understanding

AOP Snapshot from the AOP-Wiki

AOP Title

Androgen receptor agonism leading to reproductive dysfunction

Authors

Dan Villeneuve, U

Status

Alert: The Weig these tables.

Under develop

Abstract

This adverse outc reduced cumulati Assay. The OECD variables known t receptor binding i

Summary o

Molecular In

Molecular Initi Androgen recept

Androgen re

How this Key I

Level of Biolog

Site of action: T Responses at th facilitates dissoi Homodimerization (Claessens et al. Tindall 2007).

How it is Meas

Methods that hav established in th directly or indirec

Measurement/d testosterone or D based transcripti to screen chemi responsive protei

In fish, phenotypi tubercles, a dors; 2006, Ankley et a activation (Raut e

Evidence Sup

Common Name Fathead minnow Medaka

Taxonomic appi Therefore, this M

Key Events

Event
Gonadotropins, circulating concentrations, Reduction
Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction
Plasma 17beta-estradiol concentrations, Reduction
Transcription and translation of vitellogenin in liver, Reduction
Plasma vitellogenin concentrations, Reduction
Vitellogenin uptake into oocytes and oocyte growth/development, Reduction
Cumulative fecundity and spawning, Reduction
17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction

Gonadotropins, circulating concentr

How this Key Event works

Level of Biological Organization

Gonadotropin (luteinizing hormone [LH] and follicle-stimulating hormone) is composed of a common alpha subunit and either a beta or gamma subunit. LH and FSH are secreted by the anterior pituitary gland in response to gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) from the hypothalamus.

Circulating concentrations of gonadotropins in humans are measured by immunoassays (e.g., ELISA) (Gouroum et al. 1998; Amans et al. 2000). Kahl et al. (2006) reported that the levels of gonadotropin subunit (beta subunit [beta]) tend to fluctuate in parallel in the plasma of fish (Kahl et al. 2010). Consequently, the volume relative to the sensitivity of the available assay is a key factor in the interpretation of gonadotropin expression (e.g., active, follicular).

Evidence Supporting Taxonomic Applic

Common Name Scientific Name Evidence

A functional hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis is a key feature of vertebrates and is essential for reproductive success. The functional applicability of this key event is limited to vertebrates.

References

- Nomis DO. 2007. Vertebrate Endocrinology. In: Encyclopedia of Fish Biology and Ecology. Ed. H. H. Huggard DL. 1996. Testosterone endocrinology 119(3): 339-344.
- Trudeau VL, Spanswick D, Fraser EJ, Larinif fish. Biochemistry and Cell Biology 78: 241-250.
- Trudeau VL. 1997. Neuroendocrine regulation of the reproductive axis in fish. In: Fish Physiology, Vol. 15. Ed. W. S. Hoar, D. J. Randall, J. R. Brett. Academic Press: San Diego, CA. 1-44.
- Oakley AE, Clifton DK, Steiner RA. 2009. Ki-67 expression in the developing testis of the fathead minnow (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) in response to androgen receptor agonists. Environmental Health Perspectives 117(12): 1791-1797.
- Cheng GF, Yuen CW, Ge W. 2007. Evidence of gonadal steroids. The Journal of Endocrinology 193(2): 199-207.
- Gouroum M, Chyb J, Breton B. 1999. Immunological development of specific radioimmunoassays for the measurement of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) in fish. In: Fish Endocrinology. Ed. M. Iigo, M. Ikuo, K. Kitamura, S. Yamamoto. Elsevier: Amsterdam, 120(2): 190-207.
- Kahl O, Pontet A, Nunez Rodriguez J, Calas A. 2011. 68-73.
- Prat F, Sumpter JP, Tyler CR. 1996. Validated reproductive cycle in male and female rainbow trout (Salmo gairdneri Richardson). Environmental Health Perspectives 104(12): 1437-1443.
- Sower SA, Freamat M, Kavanagh SJ. 2009. New insights from lampreys. General and Comparative Endocrinology 163(3-4): 309-317.

Scientific evidence supporting the linkages in the AOP

Step	Event
1	Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction
2	Gonadotropins, circulating concentrations, Reduction
3	17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction
4	Plasma 17beta-estradiol concentrations, Reduction
5	Transcription and translation of vitellogenin in liver, Reduction
6	Vitellogenin uptake into oocytes and oocyte growth/development, Reduction
7	Cumulative fecundity and spawning, Reduction
8	Androgen receptor, agonism
9	Plasma vitellogenin concentrations, Reduction

Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction i Reduction

How Does This Key Event Relationship Work

Biological Plausibility

Theca cell-derived androgens (e.g., testosterone, androstenedione) are precursors of estradiol and estrone in the ovarian granulosa cells. Consequently, reduced synthesis by the ovarian granulosa cells (Payne and Hales 2004; Miller 1988; Nakajima et al. 2007). Ex vivo E2 and T production were significantly reduced.

Empirical Support for Linkage

Include consideration of temporal concordance here

- Ex vivo T production by ovary tissue collected from female fathead minnows exposed to androgen receptor agonists (Eckman et al. 2011). Reductions in ex vivo T production preceded significant reductions in cumulative fecundity and spawning.
- Ketococazole is a fungicide thought to inhibit CYP11A and CYP17 (both involved in steroidogenesis) (Villeneuve et al. 2007). Ex vivo E2 and T production were significantly reduced.

Quantitative Understanding of the Linkage

Is it known how much change in the first event is needed to impact the second? Is extrapolation approaches that help describe those relationships? At present we have no quantitative data on the relationship between androgen receptor agonism and ex vivo E2 production (as an indirect support the development of such a relationship). Additionally, there are a number of adaptations that can be used to support a quantitative understanding of this linkage (Breen et al. 2008).

Uncertainties or Inconsistencies

Evidence Supporting Taxonomic Applicability

Common Name Scientific Name Evidence Links

References

- Payne AH, Hales DB. 2004. Overview of steroidogenic enzymes in the pathway of androgen biosynthesis in the ovary. In: Androgen Biosynthesis. Ed. M. Iigo, M. Ikuo, K. Kitamura, S. Yamamoto. Elsevier: Amsterdam, 120(2): 190-207.
- Miller WL. 1988. Molecular biology of steroid hormone synthesis. Endocrine Reviews 9(3): 151-170.
- Nakajima Y, Yoshikuni M, Yamashita M, Sakai N, Tanaka M. 1993. Molecular cloning and characterization of the cDNA for the 17beta-hydroxysteroid oxidoreductase from the fathead minnow (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha). Biochemistry and Biophysics Research Communications 193(1): 3-14.
- Eckman DR, Villeneuve DL, Teng Q, Ralston-Hooper KJ, Martinovic-Weigelt D. 2011. Exposure and effects assessment of the model androgen 17beta-trenbolone in rainbow trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss) using a multi-tiered approach. Environmental Health Perspectives 119(12): 1791-1797.
- Villeneuve DL, Ankley GT, Malyanen EA, Blake LS, Greene KJ, Hignley EB, et al. 2007. Assays for identifying endocrine-active chemicals. Ecotoxicol Environ Saf 68(1): 1-11.

Overall Assessment of the AOP

Overall Assessment of the AOP

Biological Plausibility

- The biochemistry of steroidogenesis and the predominant pathway of androgen synthesis in the ovary is well understood.
- Similarly, the role of E2 as the major regulator of hepatic vitellogenin synthesis in the plasma and reduced uptake into oocytes is well established.
- The direct connection between reduced VTG uptake and impaired VTG uptake limits oocyte growth and failure to ovulate from the surrounding follicles. In at least one experimental study, vitellogenin uptake was observed (R. Johnson, personal communication). Cumulative fecundity are best supported by the correlation of vitellogenin uptake (Miller et al. 2007).
- At present, negative feedback is the most biologically plausible exposure of fathead minnow ovary tissue to 17beta-trenbolone that produce significant responses in vivo (i.e., at no other known reports of 17beta-trenbolone directly inhibiting vitellogenin synthesis caused a concentration-dependent increase in concurrent with increased transcription of CYP19 (aromatase) activity, negative feedback is currently the most likely exact mechanisms through which an exogenous, non-aromatizable androgen receptor agonist could affect the reproductive system.

Concordance of dose-response relationships: The dependence of androgen receptor agonism on the reduction of testosterone synthesis and subsequent reduction of E2 synthesis. However, to date, no data are available on the relationship between androgen receptor agonism and E2 synthesis.

- Exposure of female fathead minnows to the AR agonist 17beta-trenbolone at concentrations over a range from 0.005 to 0.5 µg/L. The concentration-dependent differences in the feedback loop were evident, although the concentration-dependent differences in the feedback loop were not statistically significant.
- Jensen et al. (2006) also demonstrated concentration-dependent differences in the feedback loop.
- In a time-course experiment in which female fathead minnow showed concentration-dependent reductions that were correlated with reduced cumulative fecundity, plasma VTG and VTG mRNA expression, and increased oocyte atresia was concurrent with reduced cumulative fecundity.
- Exposure of female medaka to spironolactone caused correlative reductions in cumulative fecundity and spawning, but hormone concentrations were not measured. Spironolactone is a diuretic that acts as an androgen receptor antagonist.

Temporal concordance among the key events and adverse outcome: The temporal concordance between the key events and the adverse outcome is not well established, in large part due to the lack of quantitative data on the relationship between androgen receptor agonism and ex vivo E2 production (as an indirect support the development of such a relationship). Additionally, there are a number of adaptations that can be used to support a quantitative understanding of this linkage (Breen et al. 2008).

Consistency: We are aware of no cases where the pattern of key event variability in the cumulative fecundity endpoint and potential comitant endpoints (e.g., E2 production) are inconsistent with the pattern of key event variability in the cumulative fecundity endpoint and potential comitant endpoints (e.g., E2 production) are consistent with the pattern of key event variability in the cumulative fecundity endpoint and potential comitant endpoints (e.g., E2 production).

- In general, there is a consistent body of evidence linking androgen receptor agonism and cumulative fecundity in female fish. For example, the relationship between androgen receptor agonism and cumulative fecundity in female fish has been established in over a dozen independent experiments (Eckman 2006; Brockmeier et al. 2013). However, relatively few exposures (Lalone et al. 2013), we are not aware of the profile of response.

Uncertainties, inconsistencies, and data gaps: There are two areas to the specific mechanism(s) through which AR agonism elicits major gap relative to establishing that exposure to an AR agonist is a major uncertainty in this AOP relates to whether there is a direct relationship between androgen receptor agonism and E2 production. Plausible biological connections have been hypothesized.

Weight of Evidence Summary

Step	Event	Description	Triggers	Weight of Evidence
2	Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction	Directly Leads to	17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction	Strong
3	Gonadotropins, circulating concentrations, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction	Strong
4	17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Plasma 17beta-estradiol concentrations, Reduction	Strong
5	Plasma 17beta-estradiol concentrations, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Transcription and translation of vitellogenin in liver, Reduction	Strong
6	Transcription and translation of vitellogenin in liver, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Plasma vitellogenin concentrations, Reduction	Strong
8	Vitellogenin uptake into oocytes and oocyte growth/development, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Cumulative fecundity and spawning, Reduction	Moderate
9	Cumulative fecundity and spawning, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Population trajectory, Decrease	Moderate
10	Androgen receptor, agonism	Directly Leads to	Gonadotropins, circulating concentrations, Reduction	Weak
11	Plasma vitellogenin concentrations, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Vitellogenin uptake into oocytes and oocyte growth/development, Reduction	Moderate

Essentiality of the Key Events

Molecular Initiating Event; Support for Essentiality

Androgen receptor, agonism

Key Event	Support for Essentiality
Gonadotropins, circulating concentrations, Reduction	
Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction	
Plasma 17beta-estradiol concentrations, Reduction	
Transcription and translation of vitellogenin in liver, Reduction	
Plasma vitellogenin concentrations, Reduction	
Vitellogenin uptake into oocytes and oocyte growth/development, Reduction	
Cumulative fecundity and spawning, Reduction	
17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction	

- In general, few studies have directly addressed the essentiality of the proposed sequence of key events.
- Eckman et al. 2011 provide evidence that in fathead minnow, cessation of trenbolone exposure resulted in recovery of plasma E2 and VTG concentrations which were depressed by continuous exposure to 17beta-trenbolone. This provides some support for the essentiality of these two key events.
- Essentiality of the proposed negative feedback key event is supported by experimental work that evaluated the ability of AR agonists to reduce T or E2 production in vitro. In vitro exposure of fathead minnow ovary tissue to 17beta-trenbolone or spironolactone does not cause reductions in T or E2 synthesis at concentrations comparable to those that produce significant responses in vivo (i.e., at non-cytotoxic concentrations; D.L. Villeneuve, unpublished data; C.A. Lalone unpublished data), nor are there any known reports of 17beta-trenbolone directly inhibiting steroid biosynthesis. When tested in an in vitro steroidogenesis assay using H295R adrenal carcinoma cells, trenbolone caused a concentration-dependent increase in estradiol production, as opposed to any reductions in steroid hormone concentrations, an effect that was concurrent with increased transcription of CYP19 (aromatase) in the cell line (Gracia et al. 2007).

Quantitative Considerations

Step	Event	Description	Triggers	Quantitative Understanding
2	Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction	Directly Leads to	17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction	
3	Gonadotropins, circulating concentrations, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Testosterone synthesis by ovarian theca cells, Reduction	
4	17beta-estradiol synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells, Reduction	Directly Leads to	Plasma 17beta-estradiol concentrations, Reduction	

AOP-Wiki Status

- 41 AOPs as of September 1, 2014
 - 8* with documented evaluation of evidence
 - 4 with descriptions of all/most components
 - 22* with components defined
 - 8 stubs
- New code & template release September 2014
 - Will be consistent with updated AOP Handbook
- Public access starting September 25, 2014

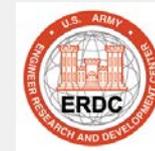
AOP Wiki

Collaborative development of AOP descriptions & evidence



Effectopedia

Detailed development of structured & computational AOPs



AOP Xplorer

Visualize attribute networks to discover & explore AOPs in a broader context

Intermediate Effects

DB

Put

chemical-related AOP components in a regulatory context

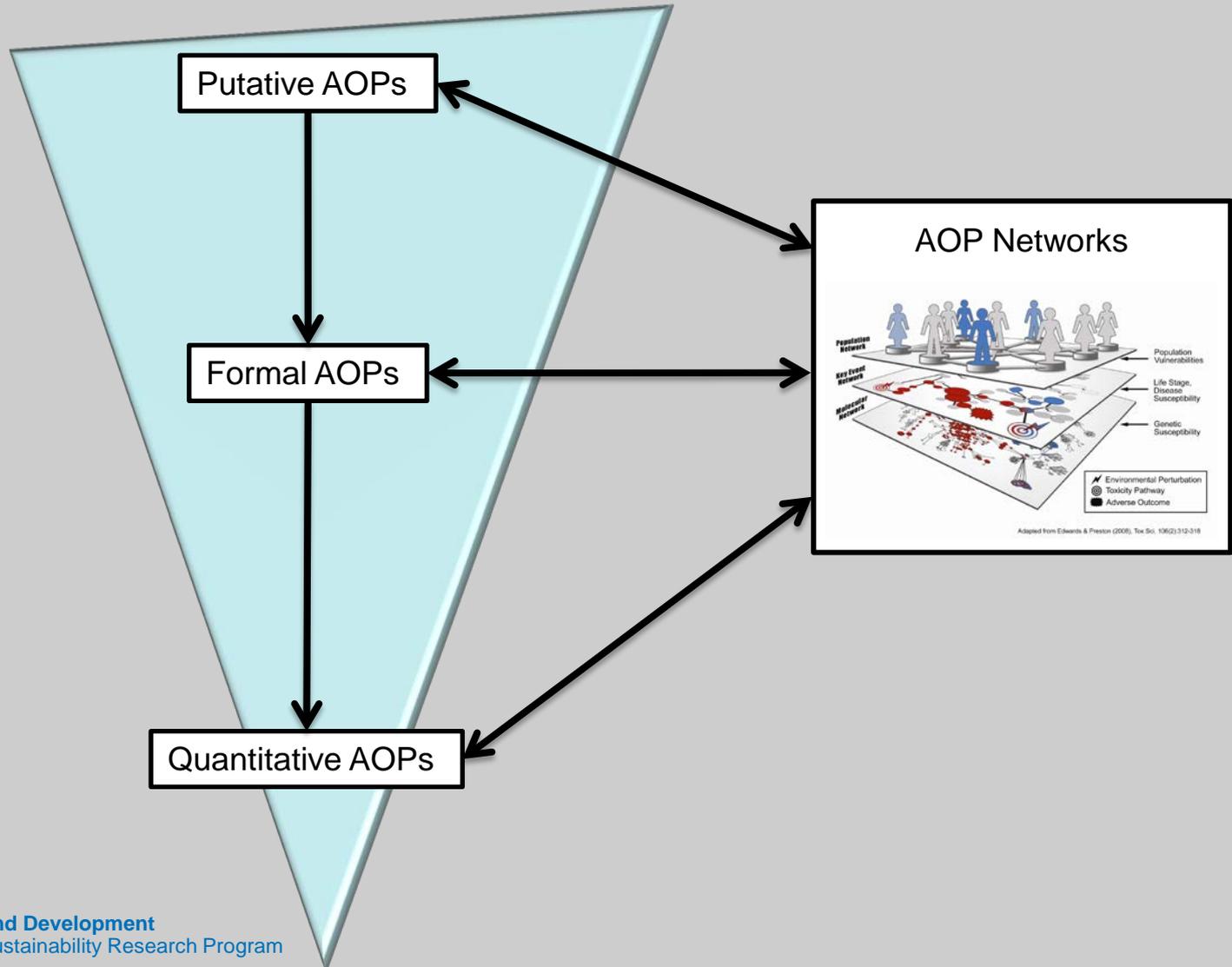
AOP-KB

**AOP-KB
Hub**

Shared chemical, biological and toxicological ontologies

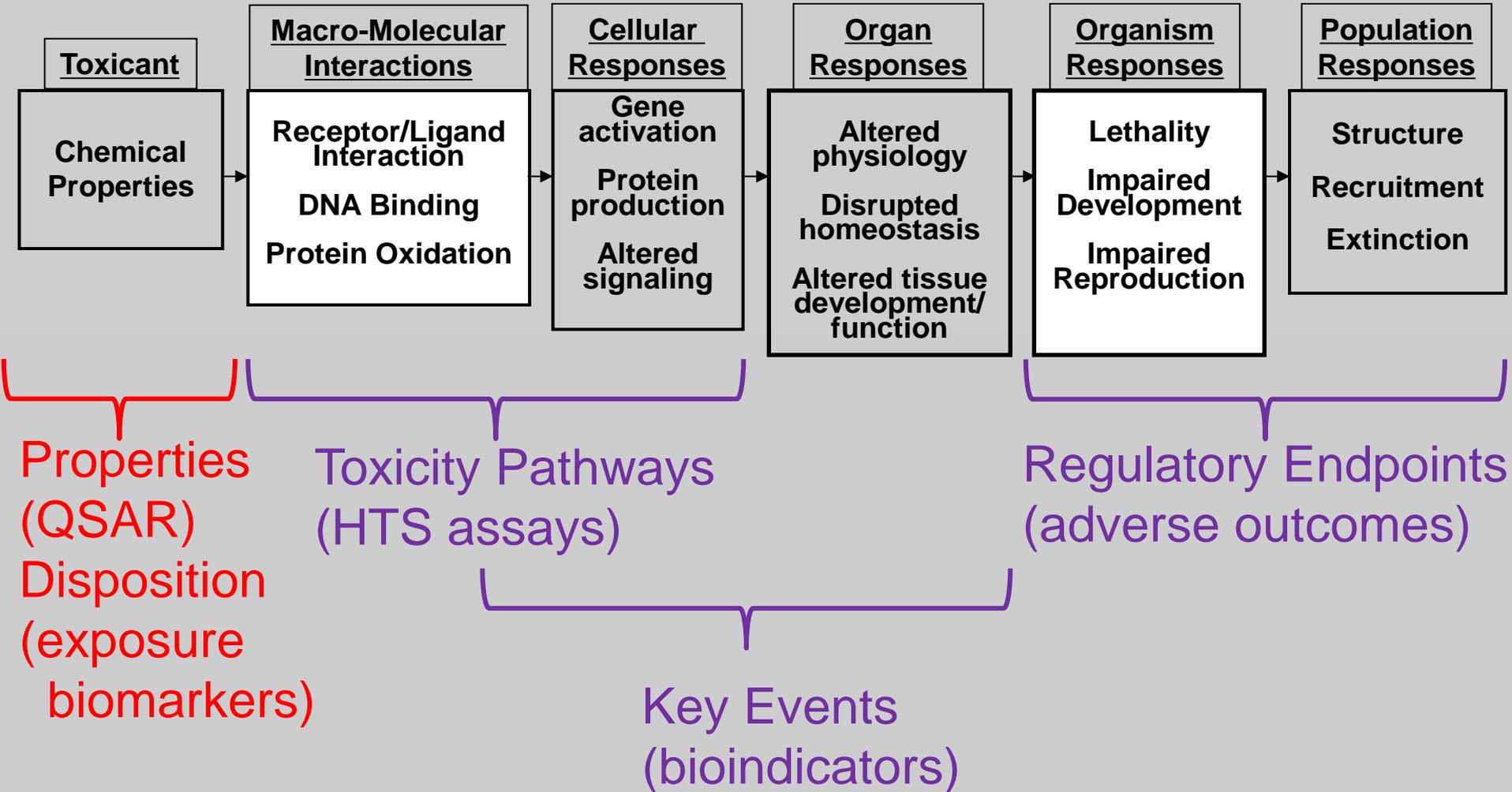
**Third party
Applications,
plugins**

AOP Discovery & Development





Using AOPs for Informed Decisions



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- Tanwir Habib



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- Joop DeKnecht

- Collaborative Partners

- OECD External Advisory Group on Molecular Screening & Toxicogenomics
- IPCS/WHO Mode of Action Steering Committee

- Any interest in hiring a very talented scientist currently completing postdoctoral work in my group, please contact
 - Shannon Bell, Bell.Shannon@epa.gov
- Anyone interested in a postdoctoral position in my group, please contact me (Edwards.Stephen@epa.gov) or see the following ad
 - <http://orise.orau.gov/epa/applicants/description.aspx?JobId=14771>
 - Google search: orise epa aop stephen edwards

Research Opportunity Description

**Bioinformatics Approaches to Grouping Chemicals Using
High-Throughput Screening Data
Research Participation Program
Office of Research and Development
National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Research Triangle Park, NC**



AOP Wiki

Collaborative development of AOP descriptions & evidence

- Qualitative, **text-based descriptions** of an AOP in a structured environment
- Focus is on documenting the weight of **evidence** in support of the AOP
- **Synchronized** with the **OECD** guidance and **handbook** documents
- Online only access to encourage **crowd-sourcing** of AOP development
- Interfaces with the **AOP Xplorer** to provide AOP information in a **network** context


Effectopedia
Detailed development of structured & computational AOPs



AOP Xplorer
Attribute networks to discover & explore AOPs in a broader context


European Commission
Joint Research Centre
Intermediate Effects DB
Put chemical-related AOP components in a regulatory context

AOP-KB Hub

Third party
Applications,
plugins

System
Size

Shared chemical, biological and toxicological ontologies

Effectopedia

Detailed development of structured & computational AOPs

- Visual interface for design and collaborative editing of AOP and chemical case studies
- AOP structure guidance is embedded in the system
- Ability to store and process quantitative information, including formal description of test methods, algorithms and models along with their applicability domains and verification methods
- Provides offline editing capabilities and robust capabilities for managing data access
- Embeds the concept of AOP networks directly in the system
- Provides capabilities for sharing, discussing, and reviewing AOPs



OECD

Third party
Applications,
plugins

Intermediate Effects DB

Put chemical-related AOP components in a regulatory context

- **IUCLID** repository for AOP information
- Based on **OECD Harmonized Templates** (OHTs)
- Will profit from new OHT for "**Intermediate Effects**"
- Manages observations and conclusions concerning the nature and extent to which a **chemical** triggers an Intermediate Effect
- Links chemical information to AOPs
- Rich source of **quantitative data** for Effectopedia



AOP Xplorer
Visualize attribute networks to discover & explore AOPs in a broader context

Third party Applications, plugins



Effectopedia

Detailed development of structured & computational AOPs



Intermediate Effects DB

Put chemical-related AOP components in a regulatory context



AOP Wik

Collaborative development of AOP descriptions



AOP Xplorer

Visualize attribute networks to discover & explore AOPs in a broader context

- Allows user to **explore AOPs** in a **network context** based on shared key events
- Provides additional **bioinformatics analysis tools** for annotating key events and traversing the network
- Incorporates **putative AOP** information and facilitates **AOP discovery**

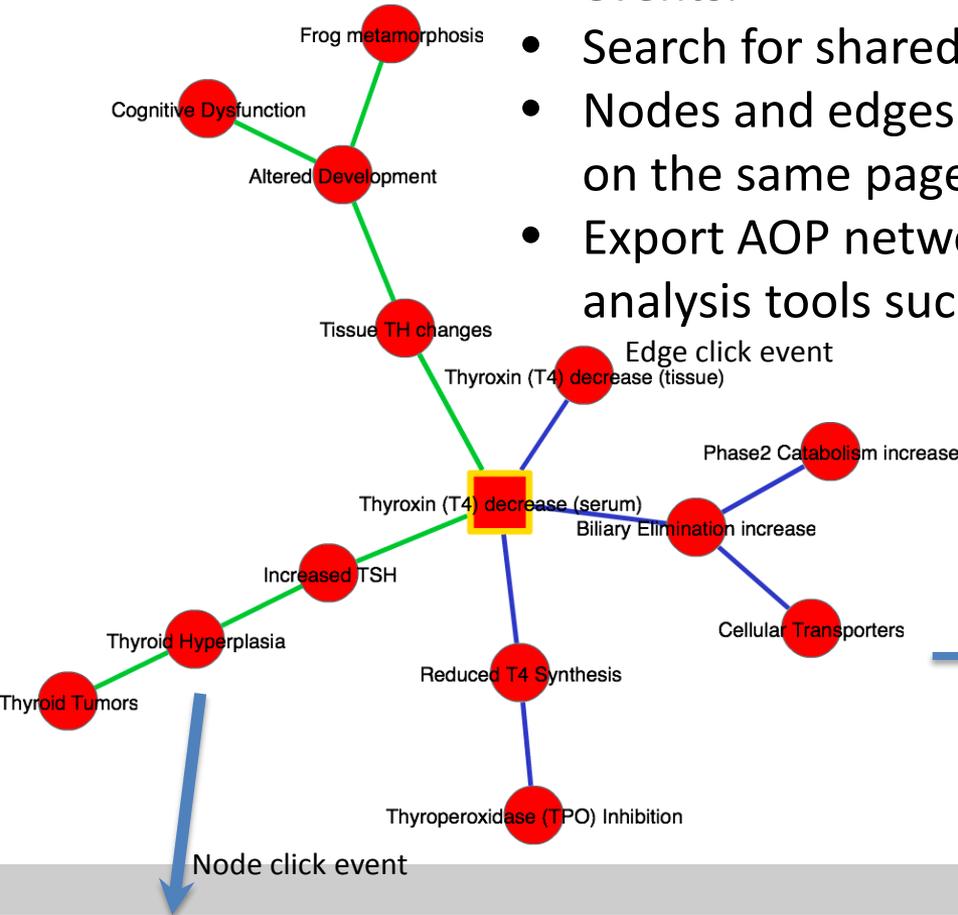


Third party Applications, plugins

Shared chemical, biological and toxicological ontologies

AOP Xplorer

- Explore AOPs in a network context based on the shared key events.
- Search for shared key events between AOPs or chemicals.
- Nodes and edges are clickable, that displays their attributes on the same page.
- Export AOP network into feature rich visualization and analysis tools such as Cytoscape.




Evidence

NCBI Resources How To

PubMed

U.S. National Library of Medicine
National Institutes of Health

Advanced

Display Settings Abstract Send to

Environ. Health Perspect. 2013 Sep;121(9):1002-10. doi: 10.1289/ehp.1306638. Epub 2013 Jun 12.

Current perspectives on the use of alternative species in human health and ecological hazard assessments.

Perkins EJ¹, Ankley GT, Crofton KM, Garcia-Reveron N, Lalone CA, Johnson MS, Tietge JE, Villeneuve DL.

Author information

BACKGROUND: Traditional animal toxicity tests can be time and resource intensive, thereby limiting the number of chemicals that can be comprehensively tested for potential hazards to humans and/or to the environment.

OBJECTIVE: We compared several types of data to demonstrate how alternative models can be used to inform both human and ecological risk assessment.

METHODS: We reviewed and compared data derived from high throughput in vitro assays to fish reproductive tests for seven chemicals. We investigated whether human-focused assays can be predictive of chemical hazards in the environment. We examined how conserved pathways enable the use of nonmammalian models, such as fathead minnow, zebrafish, and *Xenopus laevis*, to understand modes of action and to screen for chemical risks to humans.

RESULTS: We examined how dose-dependent responses of zebrafish embryos exposed to flusilazole can be extrapolated, using pathway point of departure data and reverse toxicokinetics, to obtain human oral dose hazard values that are similar to published mammalian chronic toxicity values for the chemical. We also examined how development/safety data for human health can be used to help assess potential risks of pharmaceuticals to nontarget species in the environment. Discussion: Using several examples, we demonstrate that pathway-based analysis of chemical effects provides new opportunities to use alternative models (nonmammalian species, in vitro tests) to support decision making while reducing animal use and associated costs.

CONCLUSIONS: These analyses and examples demonstrate how alternative models can be used to reduce cost and animal use while being protective of both human and ecological health.

Title	Level of Organization	Description	Chemical	Upstream Cause	Downstream Effect	Species	Lifestages	Sex	Evidence	Genes
Thyroxin (T4) decrease (serum)	Tissue	Large body of literature demonstrating that chemicals can reduce serum T4 in animals as well as some evidence in humans (for review, see Cooper et al., 1983).		Reduced T4 Synthesis; Biliary Elimination increase; Thyroxin (T4) decrease (tissue)	Increased TSH; Tissue TH changes	rat; frog	Adult	Unknown		Cooper, D.S., Kieffer, Maloof, F., and Ridgw pharmacology in the r Endocrinology 113:92



Collective development of
AOP descriptions & evidence

AOP-KB Hub

- Central hub for all **shared information** among the AOP-KB components
- Operates via web services for maximum **flexibility** in implementation of the other modules and to provide access for third party tools
- Based on **established** chemical, biological and toxicological **ontologies** unified by a specifically-designed AOP ontology



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