

**The relationship between initial context  
memory completeness, updating, and  
systems consolidation in hippocampus  
and cortex**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

under the supervision of **Prof. Bryce Vissel**  
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## **Certificate of original authorship**

I, Weitian Sun declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy, in the school of life sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

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## **Statement of the thesis format**

This thesis is written as a conventional thesis.

## List of Figures

### Chapter 2

Fig 1. Normal context (context A)	31
Fig 2. CFC accessories	32
Fig 3. Schematic of fosCretdT system	37

### Chapter 3

Fig 1. CFC paradigm validation	43
Fig 2. Validation for the basic set-up	45
Fig 3. Anisomycin effect on synaptic consolidation	47

### Chapter 4

Fig1. Coordinates and placement validation	55
Fig 2. Inhibition of the DG and the dHPC for the 30s and the 720s PSI memories	57
Fig 3. HPC placement verification	58
Fig 4. Engram neurons labelling in the DG	61
Fig 5. Memory tests with PFC inhibition	62
Fig 6. PFC placement verification	63

### Chapter 5

Table 1. The single component manipulation experiments	70
Table 2. Context B and C designs	71
Table 3. Summary of context validation experiments	71
Fig 1. Different context designs and validation	72
Fig 2. Verification of updating poorly formed memories	74
Fig 3. Hippocampal inhibition on updated memories	75
Fig 4. HPC placement verification	76

# Table of Contents

<b>Certificate of original authorship .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Statement of the thesis format .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Memory and Memory consolidation.....	3
1.1.1 Memory formation .....	3
1.1.2 LTP and protein synthesis in memory formation .....	5
1.2 Memory consolidation .....	6
1.2.1 Synaptic consolidation .....	7
1.2.2 Systems consolidation.....	10
1.2.3 Reconsolidation.....	13
1.2.4 Identifying the engram neurons .....	14
1.3 Context fear conditioning .....	15
1.3.1 Classical conditioning and the fundamental learning mechanism .....	16
1.3.2 Context fear conditioning .....	16
1.3.3 Behavioural readouts of CFC.....	18
1.3.4 Anatomical structures involved in memory encoding and consolidation...	19
1.3.5 Timing effect of CFC.....	23
1.4 The present study .....	26
<b>Chapter 2: Methods .....</b>	<b>31</b>
2.1 Subjects .....	31
2.2 Drug preparation .....	31
2.2.1 Anisomycin .....	31
2.2.2 4-Hydroxytamoxifen (4-OHT).....	31
2.2.3 Paraformaldehyde (PFA) and sucrose solution preparation .....	32
2.2.4 0.1M phosphate buffer preparation.....	32
2.2.5 Anti-freeze solution preparation .....	32
2.3 Experimental Procedures .....	33
2.3.1 Context fear conditioning system .....	33
2.3.2 Context fear conditioning (CFC) and memory tests.....	34

2.3.3 HPC and PFC cannula implantation .....	35
2.3.4 HPC coordinates validation .....	36
2.3.5 Cannula placement validation.....	37
2.3.6 Drug infusion through cannula .....	37
2.3.7 Engram neurons labelling .....	38
2.3.8 Perfusion and brain fixation procedure.....	40
2.3.9 Counterstaining and slides preparation.....	40
2.3.10 IHC staining and slides preparation.....	41
2.4 Image taking and data processing .....	42
2.4.1 Cell counting.....	42
2.4.2 Data analysis and statistics.....	42
<b>Chapter 3: Whether PSI affects synaptic consolidation.....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	43
3.2 Results.....	44
3.2.1 CFC validation .....	44
3.2.2 PSI effects on synaptic consolidation rate .....	48
3.3 Discussion .....	50
<b>Chapter 4: Whether PSI affects systems consolidation.....</b>	<b>56</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	56
4.2 Results.....	57
4.2.1 Placement and HPC coordinates validation .....	57
4.2.2 PSI effects on systems consolidation rate.....	58
4.2.3 Is the 30s PSI memory encoded in the HPC? .....	62
4.2.4 Is the 30s PSI memory encoded in the PFC? .....	64
4.3 Discussion .....	66
<b>Chapter 5: Whether memory updating affects the original memory trace and its following consolidation .....</b>	<b>70</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	70
5.2 Results.....	71
5.2.1 Context B design experiments .....	71
5.2.2 Validation of the memory updating paradigm .....	76
5.2.3 The 30s PSI memory did not change its form after updating .....	77
5.3 Discussion.....	79
<b>Chapter 6: Discussion .....</b>	<b>86</b>
6.1 Results summary.....	86
6.2 The context fear conditioning system is different from the previous work in our lab.....	87

6.3 Only one anisomycin sensitive time window during synaptic consolidation ....	88
6.4 Systems consolidation window used in this study .....	90
6.5 Inhibiting the HPC was unable to interrupt the 30s PSI memory but able to interrupt the 720s PSI one.....	91
6.6 The updated 30s PSI memory was still resistant to HPC inhibition .....	95
6.7 Limitations in techniques .....	96
6.7.1 Single shock generates low freezing in memory tests .....	96
6.7.2 Unable to measure the protein synthesis level in mice .....	97
6.8 The novel finding of this study .....	97
6.9 Future direction .....	99
6.9.1 Identifying the reason why contextual memory can be dissociated from the conditioning .....	100
6.9.2 Exploring memory consolidation in future .....	101
6.9.3 How memory updating affects the original trace.....	102
6.9.4 How the updated memory is different from a well-formed memory.....	103
6.10 Conclusion .....	104
<b>References.....</b>	<b>105</b>



## **Abstract**

We are forming memories every day. The fate of those memories varies depending on many causes, such as the importance of the memory, the time spent informing that memory, or the emotional state. Therefore, some memories are reliable and long-lasting, but others are inaccurate or short-lived. However, it is largely unknown whether those memories undergo the same development or not. A newly formed memory will undergo a process called memory consolidation, by which a labile memory is fixed and converted into a stabilized memory. Previous studies showed that the memories formed with different learning durations varied in accuracy and neural activity. Therefore, in this study, I further investigated whether those memories undergo the same consolidation process.

To address that question, I used context fear conditioning in mice to investigate how learning durations affect memory consolidation. Different learning durations were achieved by controlling the different amount of time that mice spend in the conditioning context prior to shock, i.e. different PSIs (placement shock interval, PSI). This study focused on the two stages of memory consolidation, synaptic and systems consolidation. Firstly, by disrupting protein synthesis, an indispensable process in synaptic consolidation, I found that the short and long PSI memories underwent synaptic consolidation at the same rate. Secondly, I found HPC inhibition significantly impaired the long PSI memory at recent time points but not the short one, suggesting the long PSI memory was contextual and HPC dependent, but the short PSI one might not be. This result showed that the short and the long PSI memories are significantly different in the HPC dependent consolidation. Thirdly, I investigated whether improving a short

PSI memory by updating affects its following consolidation. I found that an improved short PSI memory was still resistant to HPC inhibition. This result can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, the original memory was not encoded in the HPC, so the improved memory was not HPC dependent either. Secondly, the original memory was encoded in the HPC and resistant to the HPC inhibition. In this case, memory updating did not render it susceptible to inhibition, and presumably, the following consolidation was not affected. However, the two interpretations cannot be delineated in this study.