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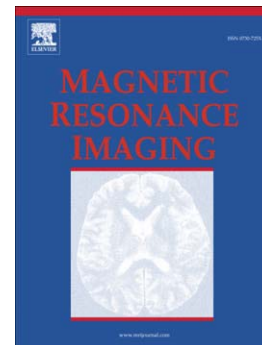
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# Effect of high dose isoflurane on cerebral blood flow in macaque monkeys

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## Abstract

The effect of high dose isoflurane on cerebral blood flow (CBF) was investigated in adult macaque monkeys receiving 1% to 2% isoflurane with the pseudo continuous arterial-spin-labeling (pCASL) MRI technique. High concentration (2%) of isoflurane resulted in significant increase in the mean CBF of the global, cortical, subcortical regions and the regional CBF in all subcortical structures and most cortical structures (such as motor cortex, anterior cingulate cortex, but not media prefrontal cortex). In addition, the changes of regional CBF in the affected regions correlated linearly with increasing isoflurane concentrations. The study demonstrates region specific CBF abnormal increase in adult macaque monkeys under high dose (2%) isoflurane and suggests the brain functionality in corresponding structures may be affected and need to be taken consideration in either human or non-human primate neuroimaging studies.

*Key Words:* Dose-dependent effect, Isoflurane, Cerebral blood flow (CBF), autoregulation, non-human primate, pseudo continuous arterial-spin-labeling (pCASL)

## Introduction

Isoflurane is an inhalational anesthetic and generally utilized in humans and animals [1, 2]. This popular anesthetic agent is found to interfere with normal physiology of subjects, causing cerebral vasodilatation[3], cerebral metabolism decrease [4, 5], functional activity reduction [6], mean arterial pressure (MAP) decline and cerebral blood flow (CBF) increase [7-10], and CBF autoregulation disruption [5, 11, 12]. In general preclinical and clinical studies, the maintenance dose (~1%) of isoflurane is normally used for sedation purpose [1, 2]. High dose isoflurane (2% or above) is usually used for rapid induction or surgery [13]. The dose-dependent influence of isoflurane on CBF, autoregulation, brain metabolites, brain functional performance, et al, are observed in various animal and human studies. It has been demonstrated abnormal CBF increase under mild or high dose isoflurane in non-human primates, and humans [5, 9-11, 14]. In addition, high isoflurane doses could abolish the coupling between CBF and cerebral metabolites and impair CBF autoregulation in primate and human [5, 11, 12].

Previous CBF measurements in human are mainly conducted with the Xenon-133 SPECT technique [5, 15-17]. Because of the limited spatial resolution of the Xenon-133 technique, the dosage effect of isoflurane on regional CBF of different brain structures is poorly understood. Due to the tight coupling between local CBF and brain neural activity, the functionality of affected brain structures can be misinterpreted due to the region-specific dose-dependence effect of isoflurane. The Arterial Spin Labeling (ASL) MRI technique is a non-invasive approach to measure CBF quantitatively by using intrinsic blood water as a freely diffusible tracer[18]. Continuous ASL (CASL) technique with separate labeling coil is an optimal setting for CBF measurements in

preclinical research scanners and has been implemented successfully in clinic scanners [19, 20]. However, the CASL technique with separate labeling coil is not accessible in most clinical scanners as it requires additional RF hardware. In contrast, the pseudo-continuous Arterial Spin Labeling (pCASL) MRI technique allows measuring CBF with a standard clinical setting without requirement of any additional hardware [21-23]. Accordingly, the pCASL technique provides a robust means to measure CBF in a normal clinical scanner. Non-human primates (NHPs) resemble most aspects of humans in brain anatomical and vascular structures and functionality and are widely used in cerebral neural system (CNS) related disorder studies [24, 25]. In the present study, the region-specific effect of high dose isoflurane on CBF of rhesus monkeys was examined with the pCASL technique on a clinical 3T scanner.

## Methods

### *Animal preparation*

Adult female rhesus monkeys (n=4, 7-11 years old) were employed in this study. The animals were initially anesthetized with ketamine (5-10 mg/kg, IM), then orally intubated. An IV catheter was placed for delivering lactated ringers solution (3.5-10 ml/kg/hr). The anesthetized and spontaneously breathing animals were immobilized with a custom-made head holder and immobilized in the "supine" position during MRI scanning. The physiological parameters such as Et-CO<sub>2</sub>, inhaled CO<sub>2</sub>, and respiration rate were monitored with an anesthesia machine (GE Datex-ohmeda Cardiocap/5), O<sub>2</sub> saturation and heart rate with a Nonin pulse oximeter (Nonin Medical, MN, USA), the systolic blood pressure (SBP) and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) (recorded every 5 minutes) with a SurgiVet non-invasive blood pressure monitor (Smiths Medical ASD Inc, Ohio, USA), and body temperature with Digi-Sense Temperature controller (Cole-Parmer, IL, USA). Those parameters were maintained in normal ranges [9]. The animals were given three different isoflurane doses with random order:

1.0%, 1.5 % and 2.0% (or 0.8, 1.2 and 1.6 minimum alveolar concentration (MAC) (end-tidal), respectively), mixed with ambient air. Fifteen-minute or more transition time was applied during each dose change. All procedures followed the protocols approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) of Emory University in accordance with the NIH Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

### *MRI examination*

MRI was performed on a Siemens 3T Trio whole body scanner (Siemens Medical Solutions, Inc., PA, USA) with an 8-channel transceiver array knee coil (Invivo, Inc., FL, USA). Animal heads were placed in the supine position with the AC-PC line of animals kept almost perpendicular to the B<sub>0</sub> field in each scan. The single-shot, gradient-echo planar imaging (EPI) was applied for CBF measurement with the pCASL technique [21]. The MRI parameters were: TR/TE= 4000ms / 25 ms, FOV= 96 mm × 96 mm, data matrix = 64 × 64, 16 slice with slice thickness = 1.5 mm, labeling-offset = 55mm, post-labeling-delay = 0.8 s, Labeling duration= 2.0 s. 80 pairs of control and labeling images were acquired and repeated 3 times at each dosage. Corresponding T<sub>2</sub> weighted images also were acquired with the same slice positions by using fast spin-echo sequences with TR/TE= 5900ms/125ms, FOV = 96 mm × 96 mm, matrix = 128 × 128, slice thickness = 1.5mm, 16 slices, 2 averages. The CBF measurement was started at least 30 minutes later after the animal was moved into the scanner.

### *Data analysis*

The procedure for CBF calculation and data analyses was basically as same as reported previously [9]. However, the labeling efficiency coefficient was modified accordingly to adapt to the current pCASL technique [22]. Motor cortex, medial frontal cortex (mPFC), anterior cingulated cortex (ACC), caudate, thalamus,

cerebellum, global, cortical region and sub-cortical region were identified on the raw EPI images (not shown) and corresponding T2-weighted structural images by referring to a macaque monkey atlas [26] and used for Region of Interest (ROI) analysis (Fig. 1). For each animal, CBF of each ROI was normalized to its mean CBF value of the three-dose levels to reduce the inter-subject variation. Meanwhile, MAP was calculated based upon a standard formula ( $MAP = (SBP+2*DBP)/3$ ). The MAP data at each dose had at least two records and were averaged. The mean MAP readings of each animal at different isoflurane doses were normalized to reduce the inter-subject variation. Repeated ANOVA was performed to analyze the CBF differences statistically across the different doses. Spearman correlation analysis was used to study the dose-dependence effects on CBF. SPSS 20.0 was used for statistical analysis. P-values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

## Results

The dose-dependent effect of isoflurane on regional CBF is illustrated in Fig 2 and Fig 3. Mean CBF in the global, cortical and subcortical regions was increased significantly when the isoflurane concentration changed from 1% to 2% and correlated linearly ( $R^2 = \sim 0.5$ ) with applied isoflurane doses (Fig 2 and 4). Regional CBF in thalamus, cerebellum, caudate, motor cortex, and ACC was increased 55%, 86%, 79%, 62%, 52%, respectively (Fig 3), and correlated linearly ( $R^2 = 0.5 - 0.8$ ) with the isoflurane doses (1.0%, 1.5%, 2.0%) (Fig 3 and 5). The MAP (mean $\pm$ SD) at 1%, 1.5%, and 2% isoflurane was 67.0 $\pm$ 13.4 mm Hg, 52.3 $\pm$ 10.4 mm Hg, and 43.3 $\pm$ 6.8 mm Hg, respectively. Significant blood pressure decreases at 1.5% and 2% isoflurane were seen in the normalized MAP readings (Fig 6).

## Discussion and conclusion



The region specific effect of high dose isoflurane on CBF of macaque monkeys were revealed by the pseudo-CASL MRI technique. In comparison with the results of regular maintenance dosage (~1.0%), the 2% isoflurane resulted in significant increase in the mean global, cortical, and subcortical CBF, and regional CBF in some cortical structures, and all selected subcortical structures. Also, the present study demonstrates that the regions with abnormal CBF increase expands from subcortical structures (mainly affected at ~1% isoflurane doses) into more cortical structures of adult macaque brains, when isoflurane concentration is increased from the regular maintenance dose (~1%) to high dose (2% or more).

Isoflurane interferes with normal physiology of animals or humans. Previous study in the baboon has reported that isoflurane resulted in dose-related MAP decrease, cerebral metabolism depression, and biphasic CBF response (CBF decreases at low isoflurane doses (<1%) but increase in high doses (~1.4%)) [11]. Evident CBF increase was observed in thalamus and basal ganglia and pons of humans anesthetized with 1 MAC isoflurane but not in cortex [10, 14]. With high dose (2.0% or more) isoflurane, previous study in dogs has found that under 2.8% isoflurane, CBF was increased significantly in cerebrum, medulla, cerebellum, caudate and CBF autoregulation was eliminated compared to 1.4% [27]. Also, Tetrault et al demonstrated that high dose isoflurane (3%) broke down the blood-brain barrier (BBB) in the cortex and thalamus of cats while only BBB in thalamus was affected under 1% isoflurane [28]. Olsen and colleagues found that CBF was increased and cerebral metabolic rate for oxygen (CMRO<sub>2</sub>) was decreased when increasing isoflurane from 1 to 2 MAC, and CBF autoregulation was disrupted at 2 MAC in human by using Xenon-133 technique [5]. To date, the dose-dependence effect of high dose isoflurane in CBF of different brain structures is poorly understood in human or primates. In the present study, our findings in adult macaque monkeys demonstrate that high dose isoflurane (2%) results in abnormal CBF increase in the global, cortical, and subcortical, and selected ROIs in subcortex

and cortex, indicating the affected regions expanded from subcortical structures (mainly affected at ~1% isoflurane) to most cortical structures (except mPFC), in comparison with those previously reported at regular maintenance doses [9]. The results of high dose isoflurane effect in the present study are expected and in agreement with those seen in man and primate previously [5, 9, 11].

Elevated isoflurane concentration is usually accompanied with declining MAP due to systemic vasodilation effect [7, 11]. Impaired CBF autoregulation has been observed in previous human and primate studies with higher isoflurane doses (>1.0%) [5, 11, 12]. In particular, the prior baboon study demonstrated that ~1.4% isoflurane caused ~50% MAP reduction and ~16.33% CBF increase (1.4% vs baseline (0%)) and impaired CBF autoregulation [11]. In the present study, the blood pressure readings exhibited significantly decrease when isoflurane dose increased from 1 to 2% (Fig 6). In comparison with reported blood pressure readings ( $99 \pm 10.3$  mmHg, mean $\pm$ SD) of conscious adult rhesus monkeys [29], the blood pressure reduction at 1.5% and 2.0% isoflurane was about 47% and 56% respectively. In addition, the abnormal CBF increases in most ROIs were correlated linearly with the isoflurane dose changes from 1% – 2%, indicating disrupted coupling between CBF and brain metabolism as isoflurane causes CMRO<sub>2</sub> decreased or abolished at higher doses [5, 11]. Compared with the findings of previous baboon study by Van Aken et al and also the human study by Olsen et al, it could be suggested that CBF autoregulation in the affected regions of adult macaque monkeys might be impaired under 2% (1.6 MAC) isoflurane.

As seen in the present study, the high dose isoflurane causes widespread CBF alteration in the subcortical structures and some cortical structures in macaque monkeys, consistent with Manohar et al' results in pigs [30] with invasive blood flow measurement by radionuclide labelled microspheres. Interestingly, a prior rat study

demonstrated that the CBF in lateral cortex, posterior cortex, pons, and medulla reduced significantly (2% vs 0% isoflurane) but no significant changes were seen in other regions such as anterior cortex, basal ganglia, cerebellum, et al [31]. The discrepancy of isoflurane dosage effects on CBF between rats and monkeys mostly is due to the species difference of anesthetic effects as reported in other mammals including rats, dogs, pigs, cats, rabbits [11, 27, 32-36].

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates that CBF is increased significantly in most brain regions in macaque monkeys when isoflurane concentration is changed from general maintenance dosage (~1%) to high dose (2%). Also, the high dose isoflurane results suggest that the affected regions expand from subcortical structures into more cortical structures of adult macaque monkeys with increasing isoflurane doses. The dose-dependent effect of 2% isoflurane anesthesia on CBF is still region-specific and should be taken into consideration in related function and physiology studies of NHP models and in humans as well.

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#### Conflict of interest statement

The authors have no conflict of interest in this work.

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## Figure Captions:

- Fig 1. CBF maps of an adult macaque monkey acquired with the pseudo continuous ASL (pCASL) technique at 3T. Regions of Interest (ROIs) for data analysis are illustrated on the CBF maps (top) and corresponding T2-weighted structural images (bottom). mPFC: medial frontal cortex; ACC: anterior cingulate cortex.
- Fig 2. Dose-dependence effect of isoflurane on mean CBF in global, cortical and subcortical regions of anesthetized macaque monkeys (mean  $\pm$  SD). CBF in each region is normalized to its mean CBF value of three dose levels: 1.0%, 1.5% and 2.0% (end-tidal). \*, #:  $p < 0.05$ , compared with 1.0% and 1.5% respectively.
- Fig 3. Dose-dependence effect of isoflurane on regional CBF in different brain structures of anesthetized macaque monkeys (mean  $\pm$  SD). CBF in each ROI is normalized to its mean CBF value of three dose levels: 1%, 1.5%, 2% (end-tidal), respectively. \*and #,  $p < 0.05$ , in comparison with CBF under 1% and 1.5% isoflurane.
- Fig 4. The correlation between isoflurane dosages and mean CBF changes in: a) the global, b) cortical, and c) subcortical regions. \*:  $p < 0.05$
- Fig 5. The correlation between isoflurane dosages and regional CBF changes in selected structures. a) Cerebellum, ACC; b) mPFC, motor cortex; c) Thalamus, caudate. \*:  $p < 0.05$
- Fig.6. The normalized mean arterial pressure (MAP) of adult macaque monkeys at different isoflurane doses (mean  $\pm$  SD). \*, #:  $p < 0.05$ , in comparison with 1% and 1.5% isoflurane respectively.

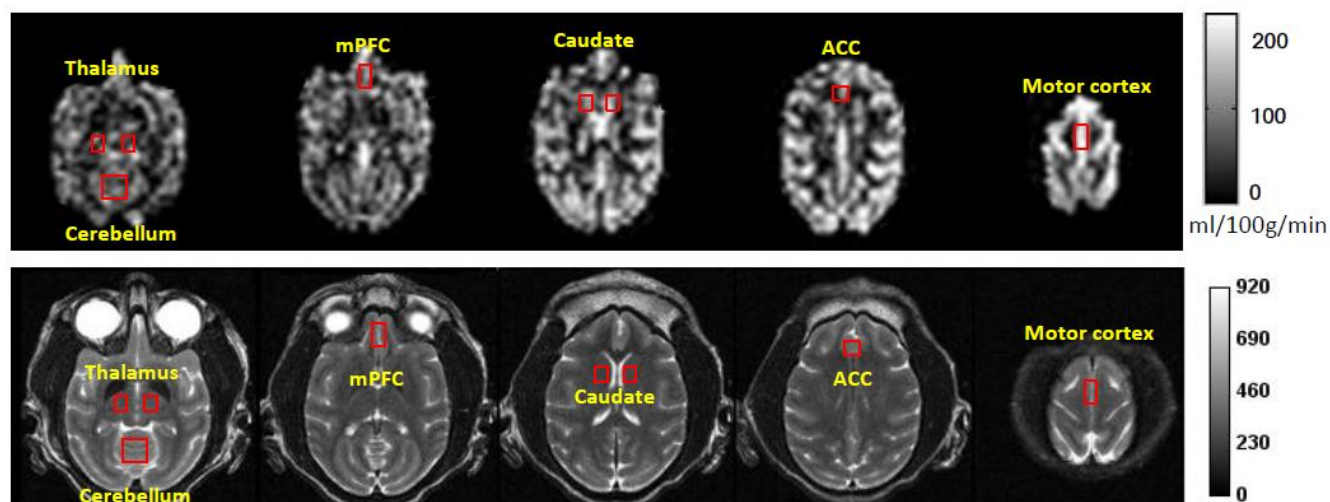


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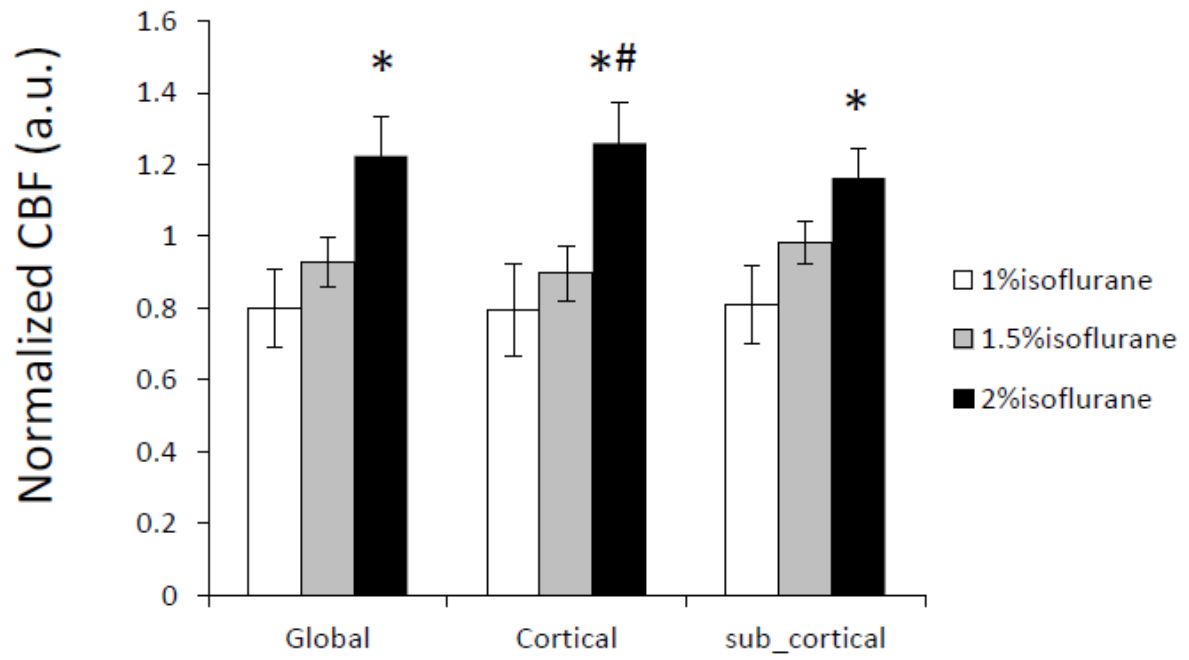


Fig. 2.

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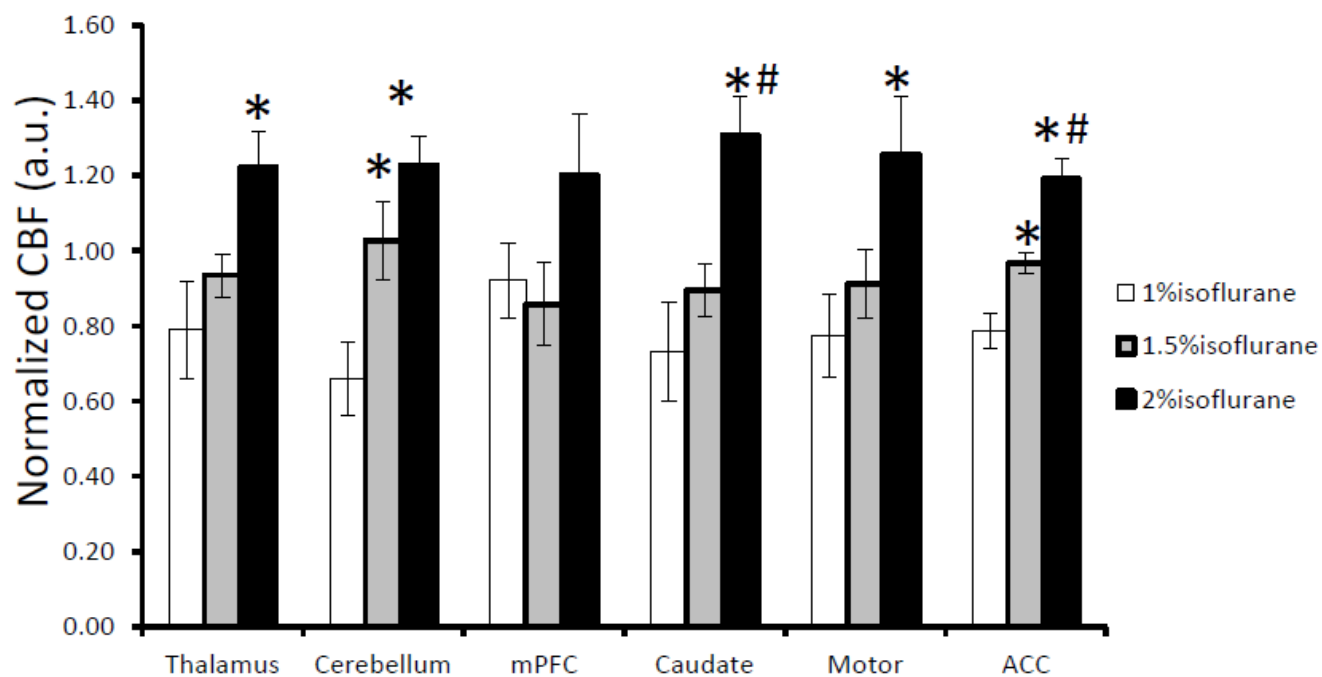


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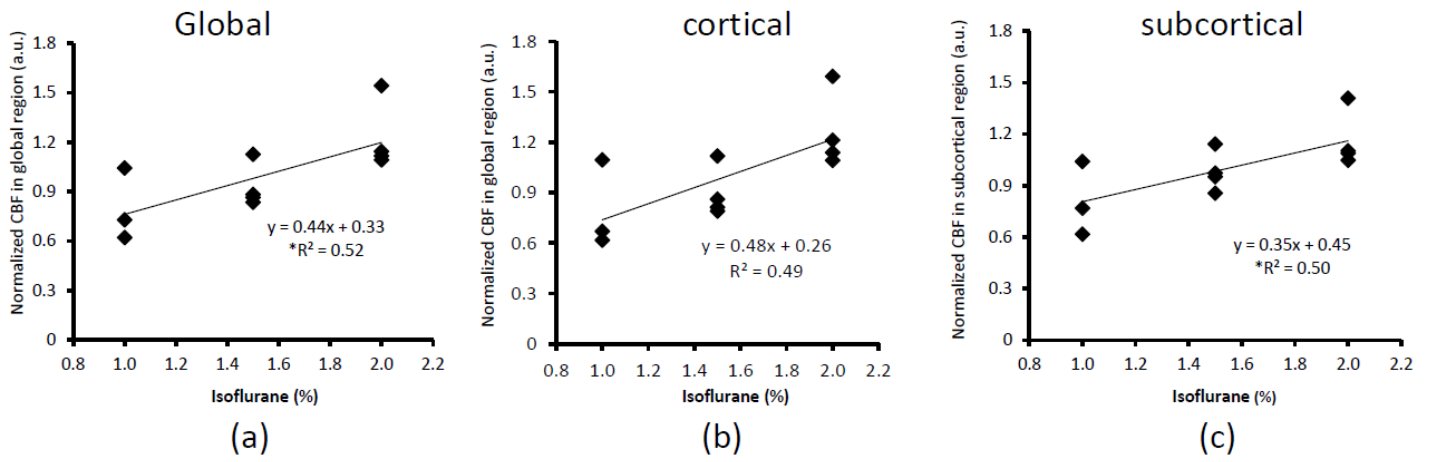


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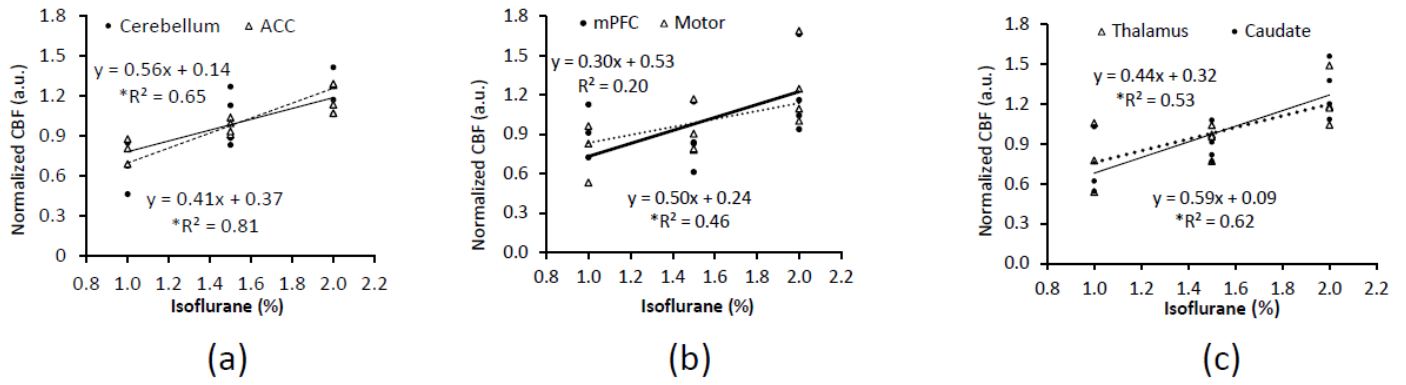


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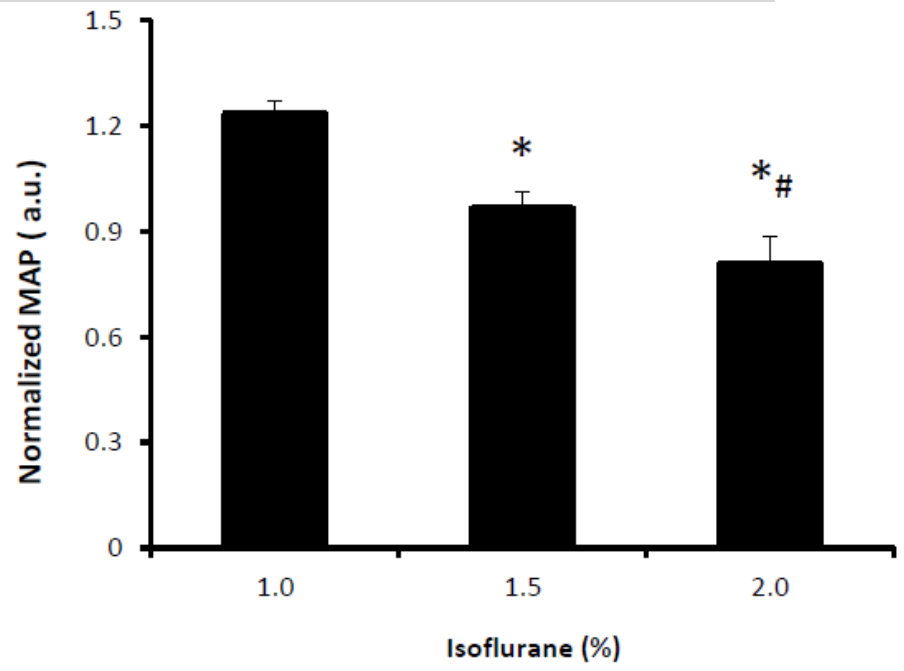


Fig. 6.

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