Some phylogenetic comparisons of tonic immobility with special reference to habituation and fear.

Prestrude, A. M.

AB Examines tonic immobility (TI) within the context of 2 theoretical constructs (fear and cortical inhibition) by considering the effect of repeated experience in several different animals. Results of 3 studies indicate that TI (a) did not decline with experience nor over a period of more than 1 yr in iguanas, (b) habituated over an 8-day period in White Rock hybrid chicks under 22 days of age, and (c) declined as hooded rat pups matured during the 1st 10 days of life. It is noted that since the 3 species represent an increasing order of CNS development, the findings appear to fit best within the framework of the cortical inhibition hypothesis in which immobility is considered to be the result of the inhibition of cortically mediated motor responses by increased brain stem activity.