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Behavioral and Neurobiological Outcomes Following Genetic and  
Environmental Insults to the Developing Brain

By

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DISSERTATION

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## Abstract

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) are a broad group of conditions characterized by abnormal development of the nervous system that includes intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorders. NDDs are pervasive, lifelong, and increasing in prevalence, yet neither targeted pharmacological nor precision medicine therapies are currently available. This unmet need is in large part due to the complex and relatively unknown etiology of many NDDs. Multiple genetic loci, in combination with exposure to environmental risk factors during critical periods of development, contribute to both NDD susceptibility and symptom severity. In an effort to improve our understanding of NDD etiology, as well as help develop effective treatments, we used Sprague Dawley rats to examine the effects of two environmental risk factors and one causal genetic mutation on behaviors and neurobiological outcomes relevant to NDDs. While the mouse has predominated in recent decades as the species of choice for modeling NDDs, we sought to take advantage of the broader and more nuanced social communication repertoire of the rat. Therefore, we measured effects on a variety of behavioral domains including motor and cognition and gave particular focus to social and communication behaviors. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the study of social communication in rodent models of NDDs and provides detailed rationales behind many of the assays utilized in subsequent chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 investigate environmental factors that have been associated with increased risk for NDDs: air pollution and pesticides, respectively. Our findings support the hypothesis that developmental exposure to heavily trafficked roadways, or to the commonly used pesticide chlorpyrifos, increases NDD risk. Then, Chapters 4 and 5 characterize a novel genetic rat model of the NDD Angelman Syndrome, which is caused by dysfunction of the gene *UBE3A* (ubiquitin protein ligase E3A). We discovered that

the *Ube3a* deletion rat model of Angelman Syndrome recapitulated many of the core behavioral and neurobiological phenotypes of the disorder, including elevated expression of positive affect signals, and thereby utilized the rat model in Chapter 6 to test the efficacy of a candidate therapeutic, insulin-like growth factor 2. Although treatment with insulin-like growth factor 2 failed to rescue the model's deficits, the outcome measures used were robust and reproducible, indicating that the *Ube3a* deletion rat offers a strong preclinical model of Angelman Syndrome. Finally, Chapter 7 investigates a leading-edge "gene therapy-like" antisense oligonucleotide treatment in the rat model of Angelman Syndrome. Multiple clinical trials are currently evaluating antisense oligonucleotide therapies in humans with Angelman Syndrome and, while they have demonstrated remarkable efficacy, serious adverse reactions have been observed. By identifying an antisense oligonucleotide with molecular efficacy in the rat and delivering it via the brain, the cisterna magna, and lumbar puncture, we established a paradigm through which to elucidate the pathophysiology underlying the adverse clinical reactions. Taken together, this research advances our understanding of the complex etiology of NDDs, represents significant progress in modeling NDDs preclinically, and provides insights with direct implications to the ongoing pursuit of pharmacological treatments targeted to NDDs.

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## Chapter 1

Introduction: Measuring Social Communication in Rodent Models of Neurodevelopmental Disorders

A version of this chapter has been accepted for publication: Elizabeth L. Berg and Jill L. Silverman (in press). *Encyclopedia of Behavioural Neuroscience, Second Edition*.

## **Abstract**

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) are a group of complex conditions that affect the development of the nervous system and lead to abnormal behavior. NDDs include autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and intellectual disability. These disorders are characterized by abnormal social behavior and deficits in communication. A number of ethologically relevant tests that probe various forms of social communication have been developed for mice and rats. Mice are utilized due to the optimization of technically savvy genetic manipulations for the species. Rats are utilized for their sophisticated social behavioral repertoire. When test outcomes are interpreted in consideration of species differences and sensorimotor functioning, they can provide valuable information about NDD etiology, either genetic, environmental or both, and/or therapeutic efficacy.

## **Introduction**

Mice and rats are the most commonly used laboratory animals in the study of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs), a class of complex conditions that includes autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, intellectual disability, and communication disorders among others. In addition to advances in creating state of the art genetic models, both mice and rats are highly social and display a varied repertoire of behaviors that make them well suited for modeling a range of developmental delays, including learning and memory impairments, aberrant social behavior, and communication deficits that are characteristic of NDDs. The ability to closely study symptoms analogous to the human NDD phenotype in animals provides researchers the opportunity to experimentally gather information regarding NDD etiology and test potential interventions or therapeutics.

When analyzed appropriately, the behavior of an experimental mouse or rat study can help inform the nature of a social communication abnormality. This, in turn, can provide evidence that a given genotype or experimental group has strong face validity to (i.e., closely resembles) the human phenotype and could therefore be a suitable system in which to test a proposed therapy. The same assays used to detect a social communication deficit can then be performed in animals after receiving a treatment in order to test whether the deficit is normalized or improved by the intervention.

Communication deficits in NDDs vary widely and depend on the intellectual ability of the individual. Deficits can manifest as delays in the use or comprehension of language, stereotyped or absent speech, odd prosody or intonation, excessive use or interpretation of language literally, tendency to speak in monologues rather than interactively, and difficulties with language pragmatics such as those involved in initiating and maintaining appropriate and meaningful conversations (Lord et al., 2020; Tager-Flusberg et al., 2013). Appropriately modeling these types of social communication deficits in non-human species, such as mice and rats, is critically dependent on a comprehensive understanding of that which constitutes meaningful (i.e., ethologically relevant) communication in each model species.

It is beyond the scope of the present chapter to describe all of the intricacies of rodent behavior or all of the various models of NDD. Rather, this chapter seeks to provide the information necessary for understanding the rationales behind the most common tests of communication used in the behavioral phenotyping of rodent models of NDD. The focus will therefore be on the two most prevalent model species, namely mice and rats, and their three major categories of social communication: olfactory, vocal, and tactile. This chapter will outline the communication tests most utilized in mouse and rat models of NDD, point out important methodological considerations,

and highlight a few emerging approaches. In this way, the information provided herein can be considered alongside studies of specific NDD models to help to reveal the value, nuances, and limitations of the various tactics.

## **Why Mice and Rats**

For most of the last century, rats have dominated as the animal model of choice in behavioral neuroscience, preferred for their size, behavioral repertoire, and physiological similarity to humans (Ellenbroek and Youn, 2016). When the manipulation of the mouse genome became possible in the 1990s however, gene-edited and transgenic mice were pushed to the forefront of the field. The ability to target a gene of choice allowed researchers to investigate the contribution of specific genes to NDD etiology, probe the biological mechanisms underlying NDD-relevant behaviors, and evaluate potential therapies. Expedient discoveries were then generated to introduce cell-type specific, region specific, and temporal specific gene expression, all with the abilities of turning genes on and off.

Compared to mice, rats have an extra pair of chromosomes, making their genome approximately 6% larger than that of the mouse. It was not until the following decade that the generation of gene-edited and transgenic rats finally became achievable (Geurts et al., 2009), thanks to advances in gene-editing technologies (e.g., CRISPR-Cas9, zinc-finger nucleases) coupled with the 2004 publication of the rat genome (Gibbs et al., 2004; Shao et al., 2014). This has been a tremendous advancement for the field of NDD animal models and opened up new possible avenues of study into complexities of social behavior (e.g., play, cooperative behavior) that are not as easily evaluated in mice (Berg et al., 2020, 2018; Hamilton et al., 2014; Harony-Nicolas et al., 2017; Till et al., 2015; Wöhr and Schwarting, 2012).

Rats, in fact, display more nuanced and complex social behavior than mice (see next section), making them even more well-suited for modeling the communication deficits of NDD. Due to the lag in genetic technologies, along with the elevated cost and space associated with the maintenance of rat colonies, genetic rat models are still a relatively recent development and the field is still moving toward taking greatest advantage of the newly available tool. Both species therefore offer unique advantages to researchers aiming to model NDDs.

### **Studying Communication in Mice and Rats**

While the field of animal behavior is not without its own debate as to what exactly constitutes animal communication, behavioral neuroscientists tend to utilize the transfer of information definition initially put forth by Shannon and Weaver (1998). By this characterization, communication involves the bi-directional transfer of information from a sender and a receiver (Shannon and Weaver, 1998). Evidence of communication can therefore be readily obtained by observing an animal send a signal that leads to an overt change in the behavior of a receiver animal. By documenting the nature of that behavioral change, researchers can work to elucidate the purpose of the signal and draw parallels to the various forms of human communication (Aubin, 2010; Portfors and Perkel, 2014). This type of investigation in mice and rats provides the foundation from which deficits in communication can be assayed.

Animal communication can be classified into four major categories based on sensory modalities used to send and receive social signals: visual, chemical, auditory, and tactile. The relative importance of each of these types varies by species. Unlike humans, mice and rats do not rely heavily on visual signals to communicate, but rather, primarily use chemical and acoustic signaling by way of olfactory pheromones and vocalizations, respectively, along with tactile

communication. While mice and rats differ in exactly how they use these types of signals (to be discussed more in a following section), the major social communication assays traditionally applied to mouse models are also feasible in rats.

### **Common Methodology**

All of the presently described communication assays, which target shared features of mouse and rat communication systems, can and have been performed in both species. Sometimes, but not always, methodological adjustments are necessary to accommodate differences in the species. Even when carried out following identical protocols, however, the tests are not necessarily functionally equivalent, and results should be interpreted in a species-specific manner. This cannot be understated: rats are not large mice.

Most of the routinely used communication assays target a certain type of communication (e.g., olfactory) and will be herein categorized accordingly. That being said, mice and rats integrate information across sensory modalities when possible and often use multiple modes of communication concurrently. The categories used presently to group behavioral assays seek to provide a conceptual framework, rather than imply an ability to test for a pure deficit in a single communication type.

In fact, the detection of a communication deficit relies on data from tests of both communication and sensorimotor capabilities. This is because a sensorimotor deficit is a potential confound and can affect behavior such that it may appear that social communication is impaired. For instance, an inability to smell could lead an animal to ignore scent marks from a conspecific. Without information about the animal's olfactory deficit, the animal's behavior could be misinterpreted as evidence of reduced interest in conspecifics. Researchers must therefore collect

enough relevant information to be able to distinguish between an animal's motivation to communicate and its ability to do so by carrying out the appropriate assessments of sensory perception prior to interpreting social behavior data.

It is also recommended to conduct multiple assays with complementary readouts as to avoid basing conclusions on the outcome of a single test (Sukoff Rizzo and Silverman, 2016). In this way, the unique advantages of each assay (**Table 1**) can be exploited in order to garner a more wholistic view of the model's social communication phenotype. It is also recommended to evaluate whether impaired cognitive functioning may be contributing to altered behavior in social contexts. As mentioned previously, communication phenotypes in humans are highly dependent on the intellectual abilities of the individual. In rats, for instance, juveniles must learn how to appropriately engage in species-typical rough and tumble play through interactions with others over development (Panksepp, 1981). An impaired ability to learn could therefore contribute to reduced levels of play behavior, which could appear as a reduced interest in social engagement. Additional test- and species-specific considerations will be emphasized in the appropriate sections below.

## **Visual Communication**

Mice and rats are nocturnal and have relatively poor vision (Prusky et al., 2000). Some strains that do not have eye pigmentation experience a high degree of light scattering and have severe visual impairment or even blindness, including the FVBN/J and C3H mice and Wistar and Sprague-Dawley rat strains that are common to laboratories (Hanson, 2004). While mice and rats are capable of detecting colors, if they have any visual abilities at all, they only have two types of cone receptors and are thus believed to perceive colors similarly to humans who have red-green

colorblindness. Unlike humans, mice and rats have cones in their retina that are ultraviolet-sensitive and are therefore potentially capable of detecting ultraviolet light. Their color saturation is quite faint, however, so they rely more on brightness cues than on colors.

With poor visual acuity, mouse and rat behavior is not as strongly driven by visual communication compared to other sensory modalities, making assays of visual communication not highly relevant to the study of social communication. That said, they do sometimes use visual signals such as fluffing up their hair and flicking their tail during territory defense (Horn, 1998) and tensing their facial muscles in a grimace-like fashion when in pain (Langford et al., 2010; Sotocinal et al., 2011). Importantly, since urine reflects ultraviolet light, mice and rats may be capable of seeing urine marks in their environment in addition to being able to smell them (Desjardins et al., 1973). This is, of course, conditional on their overall ability to see and would not be possible for blind animals. The idea of visual communication beyond signals of pain or tasting of bitter flavor may be overinterpreted in these species which are not highly reliant on sight.

### **Olfactory Communication**

Mice and rats primarily rely on olfactory signals for social communication and habitually deposit urine throughout their environment in order to mark their territory. The urine of mice and rats have characteristic odors and contain hundreds, potentially thousands, of compounds. At least some of these urinary compounds are detectable, some are sex-specific (Achiraman and Archunan, 2002), and some have been identified as pheromones (Leinders-Zufall et al., 2004; Novotny et al., 1985; Vandenbergh et al., 1976).

Pheromones are excreted compounds that act as chemical messengers and play critical roles in the social communication systems of many animals, including mice and rats. They help to

convey identifying information about the donor animal, such as sex, strain, rank, and reproductive status. Therefore, in addition to their use in marking territory, pheromones are important for mating, maternal aggression, kin recognition, and avoidance of inbreeding, among others.

Urine is just one route by which pheromones are released. Mice and rats of both sexes also emit pheromones via specialized glands in the anogenital region called preputial glands. Therefore, urinary scent marks left in the environment and an animal's anogenital region itself elicit high levels of interest and investigation from conspecifics (Arakawa et al., 2008).

Animals receive pheromone signals through the main olfactory epithelium in the nose (Keller et al., 2009), but they are mainly detected with a part of the accessory olfactory system called the vomeronasal organ (VNO) (Spehr et al., 2006; Vaccarezza et al., 1981). Social signals and non-social chemicals, such as food odors, activate different neurological pathways. Upon the binding of a social chemical to a receptor in the VNO, a signal is sent from the VNO to the accessory bulb, which projects to the amygdala and bed nucleus of the stria terminalis (BNST), and then to the anterior hypothalamus (He et al., 2008; Leinders-Zufall et al., 2000; Pérez-Gómez et al., 2014). Upon the binding of a non-social chemical to a receptor in the main olfactory epithelium, a signal is sent to the main olfactory bulb, which connects to the olfactory cortex.

Therefore, depending on the types and relative quantities of chemical signals being detected, VNO and main olfactory epithelium activation will lead to an appropriate behavioral response. The pattern of sensory neuron activation caused by pheromones from a conspecific (e.g., hypothalamic and amygdala activation) will be unique from that caused by chemicals from a predator or odors from a food item (e.g., cortical activation), thereby being processed by distinct neural circuits, and resulting in different downstream behavioral effects (Papes et al., 2010; Rodriguez, 2003). Pheromone detection, for instance, has been shown to lead to hypothalamic

neuroendocrine signaling that promotes behaviors involved in mating or aggressive behaviors (Brennan and Kendrick, 2006; Halpern and Martínez-Marcos, 2003).

### **Testing Olfactory Communication**

*Urinary pheromones.* An animal's propensity to send urinary pheromone signals can be quantified by counting the number of scent marks, or urinary deposits, that it makes in an enclosed arena. It can also be quantified by counting the number of countermarks it makes near urine previously deposited by a conspecific (Wöhr et al., 2011). An animal's inclination to receive pheromone signals can be assessed through its investigation of urine deposits, quantified by counting the number and duration of sniffing bouts it performs (Silverman et al., 2010; Wöhr and Scattoni, 2013).

*Olfactory habituation/dishabituation.* When presented with novel odors, mice and rats reliably approach, investigate, and then quickly habituate to its novelty (Yang and Crawley, 2009). Repeatedly presenting an animal to the same odor therefore results in the animal spending less and less time sniffing the odor. Introduction of a new odor, however, leads to dishabituation in which the animal once again displays a high level of interest and investigation. Deviations from this pattern can indicate that an animal's sense of smell is impaired, so this test is very commonly used to probe for olfactory deficits in laboratory animals.

This type of procedure can be carried out using both social (e.g., urine) and non-social (e.g., vanilla extract) scents in order to assess an animal's level of interest in each type of odor as well as their ability to discriminate between the two (Silverman et al., 2010). Interest in a particular scent is quantified by the amount of time that the animal spends sniffing that scent. Social odors typically elicit significantly more interest compared to non-social odors (Yang and Crawley, 2009)

so a lack of this preference, in the presence of an ability to discriminate between odors, can provide evidence for disrupted olfactory communication.

*Social transmission of food preference.* Mice and rats can become familiar with a new food odor by sniffing the breath, face, and whiskers of a cagemate who has just consumed a novel food item (Wrenn, 2004; Wrenn et al., 2003). When given a choice, this familiarity helps to reduce the animal's neophobia toward that food item and leads the subject to eat more of that food compared to a completely new one. The development of this novel food preference depends on the receiver animal's ability and motivation to gather meaningful information (e.g., worth remembering) from the interaction with their cagemate. Therefore, a lack of social transmission of food preference (i.e., equal consumption of both food options) may serve as an indication of an altered communication system (Silverman et al., 2010). The results of this test should be interpreted alongside information on the animal's learning and memory abilities.

### **Auditory Communication**

The detection and emission of ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) is another central mode of communication for mice and rats. USV, in the frequency range of approximately 20 to 90 kilohertz (kHz), are emitted by male and female mice and rats in different contexts across the lifespan, making it possible to test various types of auditory communication at a range of developmental timepoints (Brudzynski, 2009; Takahashi, 1992; Thomas and Barfield, 1985).

As newborns, mouse and rat pups emit USV when separated from their nest and mother, called the dam (Ehret, 2005). Like humans, mice and rats are altricial, meaning that they are born in an undeveloped state and require significant caretaking. Since they are dependent on their mother for food and thermoregulation, it is critical to pup survival that they not be isolated for an

extended period of time. By vocalizing when separated, they can be easily located by their mother and subsequently carried back to the nest. Upon hearing pup USV, dams promptly respond by orienting towards the source of the sound, approaching it, and showing search behaviors (Branchi et al., 2001). This search-and-retrieval behavior elicited in dams by pup USV, clear demonstration of bi-directional social communication, is a highly motivated behavior and has been well-characterized, as has the typical developmental profile of pup calling.

Typically, the emission of USV by pups gradually increases over the first week of life and then steadily declines over the second week, with the highest rates of calling usually observed between postnatal day 7 and 10. By the time that mice are 14 days old, and rats are 17 days old, they are highly mobile, their eyes are open, they have gained the ability to hear, and they usually do not call if isolated.

As juveniles and adults, mice and rats emit USV while interacting with conspecifics, both of the same sex and of the opposite sex. When opposite sex conspecifics interact, only the males emit USV and they are therefore thought to serve as courtship calls (Sugimoto et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2008; Warburton et al., 1989; White et al., 1998; Whitney, 1973). When given the opportunity to interact with a sexually receptive female, males reliably approach and investigate the female, and sniff her anogenital region while simultaneously emitting USV (Maggio et al., 1983; Whitney and Nyby, 1979). Females do indeed show a preference for these calls over other sounds (Hammerschmidt et al., 2009; Shepard and Liu, 2011) and for vocal males over devocalized males (Pomerantz et al., 1983).

The phenomena of USV emission in the three aforementioned contexts (namely, pup USV, same-sex USV, and male-to-female USV) have been well established in both mice and rats. Extensive research has led to the consensus that mice do not hear or learn vocalizations from their

parents as birds do, but rather that call production is inherent (Hammerschmidt et al., 2012b; Portfors and Perkel, 2014). Although they are emitted by both species, USV do not play equivalent roles within the social communication systems of both species. This is due in large part to rats engaging in a broader range of more complex social behaviors than mice, particularly during same-sex interactions.

### **Rats Are Not Big Mice!**

The communication systems of mice and rats share a high degree of similarity, but an estimated 12-24 million years of separate evolution has contributed to a number of important differences between the species (Gibbs et al., 2004). While both mice and rats are territorial and establish dominance hierarchies, rats are generally less aggressive than mice and establish hierarchies with less physical injury. Rats often groom each other, huddle while sleeping, and, unlike mice, frequently engage in play by chasing, pouncing, pinning, and wrestling in a manner similar to cats and dogs (Gordon et al., 2002; Panksepp, 1981). The variety of behaviors exhibited and their frequencies (i.e., the “social interaction signal”) are therefore significantly greater in interactions between rats compared to mice.

In this type of fast-paced rough and tumble play, rats use USV to both facilitate the initiation of the interaction and maintain the level of play over time (Himmler et al., 2014). They may even use them in structuring play bouts, determining whose turn it is to do something, and keeping the interaction from escalating into aggression (Burke et al., 2018, 2017). If rats are devocalized and lose the ability to call to their playmate (Kisko et al., 2015), or are deafened and lose the ability to hear their playmate, they have significantly reduced levels of play (Siviy and Panksepp, 1987).

In an added level of complexity, the calls that rats use to elicit play are part of a category of high frequency pro-social calls, which are distinct from isolation-induced pup USV and from a category of low frequency alarm calls. Just like humans, rats are capable of modulating the pitch of their vocalizations, which translates into calls of different frequencies.

In affiliative or other situations of positive affect, including play and sugar consumption (Browning et al., 2011), rats often emit USV with a peak frequency around 50 kHz. The role of these high frequency USV as social contact calls is supported by the observations that rats will vocalize if they detect the odor of a conspecific (Brudzynski and Pniak, 2002) and spend more time with highly vocal conspecifics compared to those who are not as vocal (Panksepp et al., 2002; Panksepp and Burgdorf, 2003). The mesolimbic dopaminergic system, including nucleus accumbens, ventral tegmental area, and ventral striatum, have been identified as important for the production of 50-kHz calls (**Table 2**; Brudzynski, 2015; Burgdorf et al., 2007, 2001; Thompson et al., 2006).

Receiver rats who hear these USV will quickly approach and investigate the source of the sound (Browning et al., 2011; Portfors, 2007; Seffer et al., 2014; Willadsen et al., 2014; Wöhr and Schwarting, 2009, 2007). The reception of 50-kHz USV is associated with the release of dopamine in the nucleus accumbens and inhibition of activity in the amygdala (Parsana et al., 2012; Sadananda et al., 2008; Willuhn et al., 2014). The opioid system has also been implicated in the social approach behavior that occurs in response to hearing 50-kHz USV (Wöhr and Schwarting, 2009).

Alternatively, in situations of negative affect such as in the presence of a predator (Blanchard et al., 1991), while experiencing pain, or during aggressive encounters, rats often emit lower frequency USV with a peak around 22 kHz (Brudzynski, 2005). These are distinct from the

calls emitted by isolated pups, which typically fall around 40 kHz. Receiver rats who hear 22-kHz calls typically freeze, hide, or attempt to escape (Portfors, 2007), demonstrating the significance of these USV as alarm calls. The mesolimbic cholinergic system has shown to be important for the production of these calls, with the basal forebrain and lateral septum playing key roles (**Table 3**; Brudzynski, 2015).

Therefore, not only do rats show a more varied social behavioral repertoire than mice, they also exhibit a richer acoustic communication system (Ellenbroek and Youn, 2016; Siviý and Panksepp, 2011). Depending on the nature of their environment, rats differentially emit vocalizations (Schwartz et al., 2007; Simola and Brudzynski, 2018; Wöhr et al., 2008) that elicit distinct behavioral and neurological responses in receiver conspecifics. This phenomenon, to date, has only been observed in rats and not congenic inbred mouse lines.

While there is increasingly mounting evidence to support rats' use of distinct frequency ranges to communicate distinct types of information, it is not yet clear whether other call features are also used to send unique signals by rats or by mice. A number of research groups have suggested the categorization of mouse and rat USV based on such acoustic features as call frequency, frequency modulation, duration, amplitude, and bout structure (Brudzynski et al., 1999; Heckman et al., 2016; Holy and Guo, 2005; Scattoni et al., 2011; Wright et al., 2010). The number of proposed call subtypes, however, varies widely and there is currently no consensus regarding the existence, number, or meaning of distinct subtypes (Hammerschmidt et al., 2012a; Kas et al., 2014; Scattoni et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the quantification of USV remains a useful proxy for human communication and is consistently carried out in rodent models of NDDs.

### **Testing Auditory Communication**

*Pups in isolation.* Since NDD symptoms onset early in life, collecting behavioral measures during the early developmental period is crucial (Bale et al., 2010; Branchi and Ricceri, 2002) and USV emitted by rodent pups is a useful tool for identifying early vocal communication deficits (Wöhr and Scattoni, 2013). Mouse and rat pup communication can be reliably assayed at multiple ages across the first two weeks of life or at a single timepoint during this period. When a single timepoint is used, it is usually when pups are around one week old, which is when pup call numbers are anticipated to be at their peak and therefore offer the greatest potential to reveal a deficit (Elwood and Keeling, 1982; Roy et al., 2012; Sungur et al., 2016).

To elicit pup USV in the laboratory, each pup is individually removed from the nest and placed into a container within a sound-attenuating chamber, as in **Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6** (Hofer et al., 2001; Scattoni et al., 2018). A microphone capable of detecting ultrasonic sounds hangs above the container and records the USV emitted during the session for later analysis. After the call collection session, which typically lasts a few minutes, the pup is retrieved by the experimenter and returned to the nest.

An experimental paradigm involving multiple isolation sessions has also been used to assay attachment in mouse and rat pups (Scattoni et al., 2018; Shair et al., 2015). In a phenomenon called maternal potentiation, isolated pups emit even higher numbers of USV if reunited with their mother for a few minutes before being isolated again (Hofer, 1996). Vocalization rates during the second isolation session can be three to four times that of the initial session, making it possible to quantify the modulation of calling rates as a function of external stimuli (Hofer et al., 2001; Shair et al., 1997).

Any deviation from the normative rise-and-fall developmental profile of isolation-induced USV, day-specific calling rate, or expected potentiation effect can be considered a hallmark of

altered communication (Chadman et al., 2008; Laviola et al., 2006; Moles et al., 2004; Shu et al., 2005). Additionally, call characteristics such as call duration, peak frequency, amplitude, and temporal clustering can also be compared (Ey et al., 2013; Mosienko et al., 2015; Schmeisser et al., 2012; Wöhr, 2014).

It is good practice to measure both the pup's body temperature and body weight before returning the pup to the nest (Hofer et al., 2001). Body temperature is a potentially confounding variable since vocalization rates tend to increase as body temperature deviates from the temperature of the nest (Ehret, 2005). Body weight is used to check the overall health status of the pup, which may affect its ability to produce USV. Altered USV emission that is discovered in conjunction with delayed growth, which may affect a pup's physical ability to produce calls, would not provide strong evidence for a communication deficit per se. Rather, it would suggest an overall atypical developmental trajectory (Scattoni et al., 2018).

Additionally, it should be determined whether olfactory deficits may be contributing to abnormal vocalization rates. For pups, it is common to use the homing test in which a pup is given the choice between bedding from its home nest that contains familiar scents and new, clean bedding. With intact olfactory abilities, pups will recognize and prefer the familiar odors and can therefore be expected to spend more time on or near the bedding from their own nest than the fresh bedding (Chadman et al., 2008; Ey et al., 2012).

*Same-sex vocalizations.* To elicit vocalizations between laboratory mice or rats of the same sex, a subject animal is given time to interact with a sex-matched conspecific partner in a designated, neutral setting (i.e., neither animal's home cage) while an ultrasonic microphone records the interaction. A brief period of isolation before the test is often used to promote USV emission, as mice and rats will emit much higher numbers of calls following social isolation.

There is currently no practical method for determining which calls were emitted by which individual when calls are collected from multiple interacting animals. One option is to surgically devocalize all partner animals and leave the subject intact, but this is likely to alter the nature of the subsequent behaviors and the associated vocalizations since mice and rats depend on reciprocal vocalization to mediate their interactions. Therefore, subjects are typically paired with an animal of the same genotype or treatment group (Ey et al., 2013; Kisko et al., 2020; Scattoni et al., 2011; Schmeisser et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2008). This allows for the group identity of the callers to be known without the need for surgical devocalization.

An alternative technique for collecting same-sex vocalizations while circumventing the issue of identity is to provide the subject with a social cue rather than another conspecific. The social stimulus could be a social odor (i.e., urine) (Scattoni et al., 2018), a social context (i.e., a previously played-in arena) (Knutson et al., 1998; Willey and Spear, 2012), or a pre-recorded USV. The subject can also be paired with a human partner for heterospecific play, as in **Chapter 5** (Cloutier et al., 2018; LaFollette et al., 2018; Panksepp and Burgdorf, 2000; Schwarting, 2018a, 2018b; Wöhr et al., 2009). With this approach, the experimenter can deliver a standardized sequence of physical manipulations, controlling for the level of play across subjects (Berg et al., 2019; Mällo et al., 2007).

Another commonly used paradigm in the study of same-sex USV is the resident-intruder test in which an aggressive encounter is used to elicit vocalizations. This assay is carried out by introducing a novel intruder animal into the home cage of a resident subject. Due to the territoriality of mice and rats, the resident animal will reliably attack the intruder. In mice, the resident animal can be expected to make most of the calls, likely using them to signal territory ownership, and the intruder animal is not expected to emit USV (Gourbal et al., 2004;

Hammerschmidt et al., 2012a; Maggio et al., 1983). In rats, the intruder who gets attacked produces the majority of the USV, which likely serve as alarm calls or signals of negative affect (Burgdorf et al., 2008). Therefore, the identity of the caller within this paradigm in both species can be determined with reasonable confidence.

For mice, it has been suggested that same-sex vocalization tests are more ethologically relevant in females than males. This is because of the structure of the mouse social system in which a single highly territorial male lives with multiple females. Therefore, although not typically the case in modern laboratories but true on an evolutionary timescale, females live in close proximity to each other whereas males rarely come into contact with other males. In this view, in order to assay male USV in the most ethologically relevant fashion, vocalizations should be measured when prompted by the presence of a female (Kas et al., 2014).

*Male-to-female vocalizations.* Recording male USV in the presence of a female conspecific, often called female-induced USV, is one of the most well-represented assays of adult vocal communication in NDD rodent model research. This test is especially prevalent in studies of autism spectrum disorder, in which emphasis has been placed on the behavioral phenotypes of male rodents due to the significantly biased sex ratio of the disorder in humans (Ey et al., 2012; Wöhr et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2012).

To elicit these USV in a laboratory setting, a subject male is given time to interact with a sexually receptive female (i.e., in estrus) while an ultrasonic microphone records the interaction. Alternatively, the male can be presented with the odor or urine of a female (Byatt and Nyby, 1986; Hoffmann et al., 2009; Rouillet et al., 2011; Whitney and Nyby, 1979). Maximal USV emission, however, is best achieved by allowing the male to have direct physical contact with the female (Wang et al., 2008).

In contrast to assays of same-sex vocalizations, the male subject does not need pretest isolation in order to vocalize at a high rate. Additionally, there is much greater certitude that the calls collected during male-female interaction sessions are subject initiated since males produce them for courtship (Hammerschmidt et al., 2009; Pomerantz et al., 1983) and the lack of female USV in this test is well-established (Sugimoto et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2008; White et al., 1998; Whitney, 1973). This also presents a limitation, as this test can only be performed in males and does not allow for female subjects.

A crucial component of this test is the sexual receptivity of the female, which can greatly influence the behavior of the male subject (Scattoni et al., 2011; Won et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2012). If male subjects, who may be sexually experienced or naïve, are allowed to interact with females in different phases of the estrus cycle, the high variability of the males' behavior can result in a high proportion of subjects not vocalizing (Scattoni et al., 2018). Therefore, in order to achieve maximal USV production and avoid obscuring results, males should be recorded while interacting with a female who has been confirmed to be in estrus.

As with pup USV, juvenile and adult USV collection should be carried out in conjunction with a test of olfaction. Commonly used tests involve observing an animal dig for buried food, which requires that they rely solely on olfactory cues to detect and locate it. Alternatively, the previously described method of habituating then dishabituating them to various scents and social odors presented on cotton swabs can be used (Silverman et al., 2010; Yang and Crawley, 2009). If there is reason to suspect an impaired ability to physically produce calls, this should also be evaluated and eliminated as a potentially confounding variable.

## **Tactile Communication**

One of the primary ways by which mice and rats gather information about their environment is through their whiskers, or “vibrissae” (Diamond and Arabzadeh, 2013; Welker, 1964). Whiskers are in fact specialized sensory organs that can transduce information regarding an animal’s immediate surroundings and allow them to navigate without the need acute vision (Hartmann, 2011; Mitchinson et al., 2007; Welker, 1964). For mice and rats who are most active at night and typically dwell in tunnels, whiskers play a key role in sensing their environment and collecting information about the features of any nearby bodies or objects.

By quickly sweeping their whiskers back and forth in an active process called whisking, mice and rats have the ability to distinguish subtle differences in the location of a surface (Petersen and Diamond, 2000) as well as its distance (O’Connor et al., 2010), size (Brecht et al., 1997), form, and texture (Carvell and Simons, 1995; Prigg et al., 2002). They can also monitor how the air or water around them is moving, both the direction and strength of the movements. Whiskers are therefore used for estimating hole size (Krupa et al., 2001), crossing gaps (Hutson and Masterton, 1986), swimming (Richter, 1957), and capturing prey (Anjum et al., 2006; Gregoire and Smith, 1975; Karli, 2018), but are also important for nursing (Sullivan et al., 2003), acts of aggression (Ahl, 1986), and social interaction (Lenschow and Brecht, 2015), including play (Waddell et al., 2016).

Tactile information from the whiskers, in combination with that from other body parts, is used to detect the presence and motion of those nearby and to mediate the nature of any subsequent interaction that takes place. When mice or rats interact with conspecifics, they engage in behaviors such as sniffing, following, chasing, pouncing, mounting, pinning, pushing by, crawling, wrestling, and grooming each other (Berg et al., 2018; Bolivar et al., 2007; McFarlane et al., 2008; Panksepp, 1981; Silverman et al., 2010; Terranova and Laviola, 2005). In these types of direct

physical contacts, the animal initiating contact uses tactile information to determine the location and motion of the target animal, and then incorporates tactile feedback in order to gauge the pressure of their contact and to sense the response of the receiver animal. The initiator sends tactile signals to the receiver animal, who senses the activity of the other animal and can incorporate the tactile information into their assessment of the actor's intent (i.e., the degree of affiliation or aggression). Therefore, in any situation involving multiple mice or rats physically interacting, tactile communication is bound to occur.

### **Testing Tactile Communication**

*Reciprocal social interactions.* While tests of reciprocal social interactions between freely moving mice or rats do not solely evaluate tactile communication or even one type of communication, these types of tests are routinely carried out in studies of NDD rodent models (as in **Chapters 2 and 5**) and involve a high degree of physical contact between animals. Since other types of communication are used to mediate physical interactions, tests of olfactory, motor, and auditory abilities should be independently assessed.

To get a detailed examination of the varied and nuanced interactions that take place between freely moving animals, pairs or groups of mice or rats are placed together in an enclosed arena. Due to the speed and complexity of these interactions, these behaviors are typically scored by a highly trained investigator using event-recording software, although videotracking systems are also available (Ahern et al., 2009; Kazdoba et al., 2016; Pobbe et al., 2010; Reppucci et al., 2018; Silverman et al., 2010). Social behaviors scored may include sniffing another animal's face, body, or anogenital region; following, chasing, grooming, pouncing on, pinning down, pushing under, crawling over, pushing past, mounting, and biting another animal. In rats, rough and tumble

play, which encompasses a number of these behaviors, is another metric of social interaction. Other, non-social behaviors scored may include exploring the arena, digging, eating, and self-grooming.

The animals may be socially isolated for a brief period before the interaction session in order to encourage contact and boost the number of behaviors displayed (Berg et al., 2018; Ku et al., 2016; Panksepp, 1981; Panksepp and Beatty, 1980; Varlinskaya et al., 1999). The stronger “social signal” that results from a higher number of and extended durations of quantifiable behaviors facilitates detecting a deficit or reduction in social interactions. This can be particularly useful when studying females, who are typically outperformed by males in the level of non-motivated play that they exhibit (Meaney and Stewart, 1981; Pellis et al., 1997; Poole and Fish, 1976). Interestingly, the quality of the play and specific patterns of interactions also often differ between the sexes (Argue and McCarthy, 2015; Pellis et al., 1997).

Both the frequency, duration, and relative timing of the aforementioned behaviors are used to assess an animal’s propensity to engage in social interactions and the manner in which they do so. Subject animals may be provided with one or more conspecifics with which to interact, who may be of the same or opposite sex, may be familiar or novel, and may be of the same or different genotype or experimental group. Pairing subjects with an untreated control conspecific will likely yield very different results than pairing the subject with another treated subject, so the nature of the experimental design used will depend on the goals of the particular experiment and should always be described in detail (Argue and McCarthy, 2015; Kas et al., 2014; Silverman et al., 2010; Thor and Holloway, 1984).

Regardless of the partner’s other characteristics, it should be as close in size and weight to the subject as possible. Large disparities in weight can bias the dominance-submission dynamic,

creating noisy or otherwise affected results. It is also good practice to score the behaviors of all of the animals involved in the interaction, not just the subject, since the subject's behavior will be affected by that of the other animal(s) (e.g., if and how they initiate behaviors, if and how they reciprocate behaviors).

Tests of sensorimotor abilities should accompany the test of reciprocal social interactions. As examples, an olfactory deficiency may underlie a reduction in sniffing of a conspecific, a motor deficit may underlie a reduction in chasing, and/or an impairment of balance may underlie a reduction in pouncing behavior. Additionally, the examination of vocalizations emitted either during the interaction test or an independent assay can help to reveal if and how altered USV emission is contributing to aberrant reciprocal interactions.

## **Emerging Approaches**

### **Quantifying Responses to Vocalizations**

The three most commonly used assays of auditory communication (namely, pup USV, same-sex USV, and male-to-female USV) all target expressive vocal communication. Given the perceptual abnormalities in humans with NDD, receptive communication and the perception of auditory signals are also of great relevance to the human phenotype (O'Connor, 2012). Therefore, although not currently widely used in rodent models of NDDs, assays quantifying the behavioral responses to conspecific vocalizations have been developed (Seffer et al., 2014; Wöhr et al., 2016) and studied in three genetic rat models of NDDs (Berg et al., 2020, 2018; Kisko et al., 2018; Wöhr et al., 2020).

The experimental approach employed to this end is called ultrasonic vocalization playback and involves the use of an ultrasonic speaker to present a subject animal with a pre-recorded

conspecific vocalization. Both the subject's movement in relation to the speaker (e.g., approach or avoidance; as in **Chapters 3, 4, and 6**) and the USV that they emit in response to the playback can be quantified (as in **Chapter 5**).

Importantly, in order to draw inferences regarding the subject's vocal signal perception based on their response to the playback, the subject's ultrasonic hearing abilities must be confirmed as intact. Additionally, when animals are presented with an acoustic stimulus, such as the call of a conspecific, their subsequent behavior should be compared against their reaction to another type of acoustic stimulus, such as white noise that is time- and amplitude-matched. The order of the two stimuli should be counterbalanced to control for any order effect and, in this way, the effect of a novel sound can be parsed out from the effect of a socially relevant signal (Wöhr et al., 2016).

USV playback experiments have been especially useful in elucidating the various functions of rodent USV, particularly male-to-female courtship calls, which are the most common type of USV used in mouse playback experiments (Chabout et al., 2017; Hammerschmidt et al., 2009). When presented with male USV, adult female mice show a sustained interest in the sound source (Hammerschmidt et al., 2009) but males presented with female USV do not demonstrate such a reliable or robust level of interest (Snoeren and Agmo, 2013; Wöhr et al., 2011). Vocalizations from any of the previously discussed social contexts can be used in the USV playback paradigm: pup isolation calls can be used to study the search-and-retrieval behavior of females (Cohen-Salmon et al., 1985; Crawley, 2007; Noirot, 1972; Smotherman et al., 1974) and same-sex or male-female social contact calls can be used to study the behavioral response of a juvenile or adult subject.

An essential prerequisite to the playback paradigm is that the subject animal must have intact hearing abilities. One likely factor that has contributed to these paradigms not yet being

widely used for studying rodent models of NDDs (Kas et al., 2014) is the rapid hearing loss that commonly afflicts laboratory mice which are inbred. The degree to which hearing degrades is strain-dependent, with some strains of mice experiencing hearing loss as early as three months of age, including the common C57BL/6J (“B6”) strain (Erway et al., 1996; Henry and Chole, 1980; Johnson et al., 1997; Zheng et al., 1999). With this caveat in mind, USV playback assays should continue to be carried out, especially in rat models, as they can provide valuable insights into the receptive communication deficits underlying NDDs. When used in the phenotyping of rat models, calls of low or high frequency can be presented in order to gain a more nuanced assessment of affect-specific auditory perception.

### **Measuring Call Quantity and Quality**

Following USV collection from any social context, investigators may score the number of vocalizations that a subject emitted as well as other acoustic properties about the calls, such as call frequency, frequency modulation, duration, amplitude, and bout structure. As mentioned prior, calls can then be categorized into discrete subtypes based on their various properties. Apart from the delineation between 22 and 50-kHz rat USV, which is based on the sole property of call frequency, there is currently no consensus regarding how to draw distinctions between call subtypes (Kazdoba et al., 2016).

Unlike low and high frequency rat calls, there has yet to be convincing evidence for functional differences between proposed subtypes. The number of subtypes therefore varies widely across research groups, ranging from three (Hammerschmidt et al., 2012a) to four (Kisko et al., 2018) to fifteen (Mahrt et al., 2013). Due in part to the lack of consensus regarding number and significance of possible subtypes, as well as the effortful and time-consuming process required if

carried out manually, call classification into subtypes is not routinely carried out in rodent models of NDDs. The exception to this is the frequency analysis of rat USV, which is typically performed via an automated or semi-automated process.

Categorizing calls into subtypes, however, is not a prerequisite for detecting abnormal call structure in a given context (Brudzynski et al., 1999; Wöhr and Schwarting, 2008). The acoustic features of USV can be quantified and compared without the need for defining subtypes or assigning significance to them. In addition to the quantification of frequency, which can provide insight into a rat's perception of its environment and accompanying affective experience, there is also evidence that mouse call characteristics differ across contexts (Barron and Gilbertson, 2005; Branchi et al., 1998; Brudzynski et al., 1999; Chabout et al., 2012). In fact, calls with different sets of features appear to elicit different neural responses within the auditory midbrain of the mouse (Mayko et al., 2012).

Thanks to various efforts over the last decade to develop more advanced, automatic systems for the detection and characterization of USV, multiple software programs for this purpose are now available (e.g., WAAVES (Reno et al., 2013); XBAT (Barker et al., 2014); VoICE (Burkett et al., 2015); DeepSqueak (Coffey et al., 2019); Mouse Syllable Classification Calculator, (Grimsley et al., 2012)) (Branchi et al., 2001; Lai et al., 2014; Scattoni et al., 2008; Wöhr, 2014). These computerized tools have significantly facilitated the speed at which USV can be counted and call features can be extracted, but there are a number of methodological caveats which must be considered.

As with any automatic program, its ability to accurately carry out the desired function must be verified and several iterations of calibration may be needed (Scattoni et al., 2008; Wöhr and Schwarting, 2013). Care must be taken to ensure that bedding noise is not misidentified as USV

and that call fragmentation does not artificially inflate call counts (Brudzynski, 2009). Even programs that involve machine learning (e.g., DeepSqueak), and are therefore capable of learning to avoid these pitfalls, must be appropriately trained and subsequently validated.

As USV analysis software continues to improve, get more reliable, user-friendly, and thereby make detailed acoustic analyses faster and easier, investigators should embrace the technology. There is much to be gained from collecting information on acoustic parameters above and beyond the metric of call quantity. By accumulating detailed information on the acoustic properties of calls and on the context in which they were emitted, the field can move toward a more comprehensive understanding of exactly how mice and rats use USV to exchange information. Additionally, carefully conducted playback experiments using calls of different acoustic characteristics can help to elucidate if and how proposed subtypes are meaningful to mice and rats.

## **Conclusions**

Communication deficits or abnormalities in mouse and rat models of neurodevelopmental disorders can be measured in a wide array of social contexts. The three most commonly used types of communication assays examine the subject's use of olfactory, auditory, and tactile communication. Urine deposition and investigation are used to probe expressive and receptive olfactory communication. Since communication via pheromones is of primary importance to the sensory experience and thus behavior of mice and rats, it is crucial to include an assessment of olfactory abilities in conjunction with other behavioral phenotyping.

Additionally, auditory communication can be assessed across the lifespan, beginning from the neonatal period and extending throughout adulthood. Since different motivations underlie the

emission of vocalizations at various life stages (e.g., eliciting maternal care vs. courtship) and contexts (e.g., rat play vs. pain), the vocalization profile from each type of context contributes unique information regarding the communication phenotypes of the model under study. While not quite analogous to human language, mouse and rat vocalizations do have complexities and future studies of receptive auditory communication (potentially utilizing the playback of vocalizations) can help shed light on how exactly each species utilizes vocal signals to transfer information.

Finally, when evaluating an animal's propensity to communicate via tactile signals, it is of great importance to consider the reciprocal nature of the physical interactions and the ways in which the partner(s)' behavior may influence that of the subject. Sound interpretations of social communication data are only possible after confirming that the relevant sensorimotor systems are not significantly impaired, and the species-specific value of the communication is considered. Assays of olfaction, ultrasonic communication, and social interaction are and will continue to be central in the study of rodent models of NDDs and provide critical outcome measures in the pursuit of effective therapeutics.

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**Table 1.** Advantages of common rodent social communication assays.

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<i>Assay</i>	<i>Advantages</i>
Urinary pheromone deposition/investigation	Expressive and receptive olfactory communication.
Olfactory habituation/dishabituation (OHDH)	Olfactory abilities of neutral and social odors.
Social transmission of food preference	Expressive and receptive olfactory communication.
Isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV)	Early life functional readout. Provides information on quality of maternal behavior.
Same-sex USV	USV can be linked to physical activity at time of emission. Can be carried out with partner animal or social cue.
Male-to-female USV	USV can be linked to physical activity at time of emission. Can be carried out with partner female or social cue.
Reciprocal social interactions	Expressive and receptive tactile communication.
USV playback	Expressive and receptive auditory communication.

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**Table 2.** Key brain regions associated with the emission and reception of 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations in rats.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>References</i>
Ventral tegmental area (VTA)	50-kHz calling is induced by activation of the VTA via electrical stimulation	Burgdorf et al., 2007
	50-kHz calling is induced by agonism of $\mu$ -opiate receptors in the VTA using DAMGO	Burgdorf et al., 2007
	50-kHz calling is reduced by inactivation of the VTA via lesioning	Burgdorf et al., 2007
Nucleus accumbens (NAcc)	50-kHz calling is induced by agonism of dopamine receptors in the NAcc using amphetamine <sup>1-3</sup> and quinpirole <sup>4</sup>	<sup>1</sup> Burgdorf et al., 2001; <sup>2</sup> Thompson et al., 2006; <sup>3</sup> Brudzynski et al., 2011; <sup>4</sup> Brudzynski, 2012
	50-kHz calling is induced by agonism of acetylcholine receptors in the NAcc using carbachol	Fendt et al., 2006
	50-kHz calling is associated with dopamine release in the NAcc	Scardocho et al., 2015
	50-kHz calling is reduced by antagonism of dopamine receptors in the NAcc using haloperidol <sup>1-2</sup> , raclopride <sup>2,4-6</sup> , SKF-83566 <sup>2</sup> , flupenthixol <sup>3</sup> , U-99194A <sup>5</sup> , and SCH23390 <sup>6</sup>	<sup>1</sup> Wintink & Brudzynski, 2001; <sup>2</sup> Thompson et al., 2006; <sup>3</sup> Burgdorf et al., 2007; <sup>4</sup> Brudzynski et al., 2011; <sup>5</sup> Brudzynski, 2012; <sup>6</sup> Hori et al., 2013
	Reception of 50-kHz calls is associated with the release of dopamine in the NAcc	Wöhr et al., 2013; Willuhn et al., 2014
Frontal cortex	50-kHz calling is induced by agonism of NMDA receptors in the frontal cortex using GLYX-13	Burgdorf et al., 2011
	Reception of 50-kHz calls is associated with frontal cortex activation measured via immediate early gene expression	Sadananda et al., 2008

**Table 3.** Key brain regions associated with the emission and reception of 22-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations in rats.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>References</i>
Laterodorsal tegmental nucleus (LDT)	22-kHz calling is induced by activation of cholinergic neurons in the LDT using L-glutamate	Brudzynski & Barnabi, 1996; Bihari et al., 2003
	22-kHz calling is associated with LDT activation measured via immediate early gene expression	Brudzynski et al., 2011
Anterior hypothalamic-preoptic area (AHPA)	22-kHz calling is induced by agonism of acetylcholine receptors in the AHPA using carbachol	Brudzynski & Bihari, 1990; Brudzynski et al., 1991; Brudzynski, 1994; Fu & Brudzynski, 1994
	22-kHz calling is induced by activation of cholinergic neurons in the AHPA using L-glutamate	Fu & Brudzynski, 1994
	22-kHz calling is reduced by antagonism of acetylcholine receptors in the AHPA using atropine <sup>1,2</sup> and scopolamine <sup>3</sup>	<sup>1</sup> Brudzynski & Bihari, 1990; <sup>2</sup> Brudzynski, 1994; <sup>3</sup> Brudzynski & Barnabi, 1996
Lateral septum	22-kHz calling is induced by agonism of acetylcholine receptors in the lateral septum using carbachol	Bihari et al., 2003
	22-kHz calling is reduced by antagonism of acetylcholine receptors in the lateral septum using scopolamine	Bihari et al., 2003
Amygdala	22-kHz calling is reduced by inactivation of the amygdala via lesioning	Choi & Brown, 2003
	Reception of 22-kHz calls is associated with amygdala activation measured via elevated immediate early gene expression <sup>1</sup> and single-unit responses <sup>2</sup>	<sup>1</sup> Sadananda et al., 2008; <sup>2</sup> Parsana et al., 2012

## Chapter 2

Developmental Exposure to Near Roadway Pollution Produces Behavioral Phenotypes Relevant to Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Juvenile Rats

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## **Abstract**

Epidemiological studies consistently implicate traffic-related air pollution (TRAP) and/or proximity to heavily trafficked roads as risk factors for developmental delays and neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs); however, there are limited preclinical data demonstrating a causal relationship. To test the effects of TRAP, pregnant rat dams were transported to a vivarium adjacent to a major freeway tunnel system in northern California where they were exposed to TRAP drawn directly from the face of the tunnel or filtered air (FA). Offspring remained housed under the exposure condition into which they were born and were tested in a variety of behavioral assays between postnatal day 4 and 50. To assess the effects of near roadway exposure, offspring of dams housed in a standard research vivarium were tested at the laboratory. An additional group of dams was transported halfway to the facility and then back to the laboratory to control for the effect of potential transport stress. Near roadway exposure delayed growth and development of psychomotor reflexes and elicited abnormal activity in open field locomotion. Near roadway exposure also reduced isolation-induced 40-kHz pup ultrasonic vocalizations, with the TRAP group having the lowest number of call emissions. TRAP affected some components of social communication, evidenced by reduced neonatal pup ultrasonic calling and altered juvenile reciprocal social interactions. These findings confirm that living in close proximity to highly trafficked roadways during early life alters neurodevelopment.

## **Introduction**

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) result from abnormal brain development and include a wide range of conditions, such as intellectual disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Symptoms present in early childhood and

persist throughout life, significantly affecting social, cognitive, and behavioral functioning. ASD and ADHD, which affect ~1 and 5% of children respectively, are among the most common and well-studied NDDs<sup>1</sup>. The disorders often co-occur with 30–50% of ASD patients presenting symptoms of ADHD, and their prevalence is on the rise<sup>2</sup>. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ASD is currently estimated to affect about 1 in 59 children, which represents a dramatic increase from their previously reported 1 in 68 estimate<sup>3,4</sup>. These increased prevalence rates highlight the crucial need to develop a better understanding of the etiology of these neurological disorders since these conditions already incur immense societal and economic costs.

While there is compelling evidence that susceptibility to NDDs, as well as symptom severity and treatment outcomes, are influenced by the interaction of genetic and environmental risk factors, the underlying mechanisms remain to be elucidated<sup>4–7</sup>. Environmental factors also contribute to these conditions—although researchers disagree on the relative contributions of genes and environment. Furthermore, studies suggest that more than 50% of new ASD cases are due to factors other than diagnostic drift<sup>7–12</sup>.

Identifying and understanding the environmental risk factors contributing to the rising prevalence rates is crucial and important since they can be modified and/or avoided, unlike genetic risk factors, which are, for the most part, not currently modifiable risk variables. Mounting epidemiological data using independent samples, models, and methods from a variety of geographical locations have implicated exposure to traffic-related air pollution (TRAP) as one of these factors. Human exposure to TRAP and/or proximity to roadways, especially during the late gestational period and/or early life, has been significantly associated with an NDD diagnosis<sup>13–33</sup>. These studies of humans, however, fall short of establishing a causal relationship between TRAP

exposure and NDD development, due to an array of confounding factors and a lack of data quantifying individual exposures to complex environmental mixtures. Animal models, therefore, offer a unique benefit and can be used to fill this knowledge gap and directly test the hypothesis that exposure to TRAP impairs behaviors related to NDDs (e.g., developmental delays, social interaction, learning and memory). While there has been some concentrated research in preclinical models, many of the commonly employed exposure methods are limited in their translational relevance to the human condition due to reasons such as repeated anesthesia and failure to recapitulate the complexity and/or relative concentrations of traffic-related emissions in the real world<sup>34–39</sup>.

In order to fully understand the behavioral consequences of near roadway exposures during early life, we leveraged an innovative real-time rodent exposure facility to expose developing rats. Since composition, dose, duration, intensity, mixtures, and timing of air pollution exposures can influence biological outcomes<sup>40–42</sup>, we designed our study to be translationally relevant by representing human TRAP exposure and combined realworld composition of pollutants and dosing in an animal model. The detailed components of the exposure can be found in our Supplementary Information and are reported in comprehensive detail in Bein et al. (under review)<sup>43</sup>. In brief, air from a traffic tunnel in northern California was diverted to a nearby exposure facility housing a large rat colony, with half the colony receiving polluted tunnel air and half the colony receiving filtered air. Using rats, which possess a larger and more sophisticated repertoire of social behaviors compared to mice, allowed for an extensive and nuanced examination of NDD-relevant outcomes. After delivering real-world polluted air to pregnant rats and their offspring, we sought to determine whether the gestational and early life near roadway exposure affected physical growth, neonatal

reflexes, communication, social interaction, and/or learning and memory, using a battery of validated behavioral assays.

Numerous epidemiological studies have associated near roadway exposure to a range of diseases, but it is difficult in such studies to disentangle confounders, such as socioeconomic status, smoking, and diet. The Childhood Autism Risks from Genetics and Environment (CHARGE) study examined the link between autism and living near freeways using a distribution of distances: closest 10% (<309 m), next 15% (309–647 m), the next 25% (647–1419 m), and farthest from freeways (>1419 m)<sup>28,44</sup>. In each trimester of pregnancy, living closest (<309 m) to the freeway was associated with autism, with the odds ratio reaching the highest significance during the third trimester, informing the timing of our exposure period. In order to generate toxicological data that complements the epidemiological data, the exposure facility that we employed in this study was designed to model near roadway exposures of air pollution, noise, and vibration, the same stressors experienced by people living in this environment. Epidemiological studies differ on the distance from the roadway that is “safe”, as this distance is partially determined by how much the air pollution from vehicles dilutes and how much the noise and vibration dissipates before the near roadway population is exposed. We drew air from the eastern face of the tunnel, not from inside the tunnel itself, so that the air pollution was somewhat diluted already, we insulated the building to reduce noise, and we installed vibration isolators on the feet of the exposure chambers to reduce vibration. The goal of these measures was to expose the rodents to conditions that well model human exposures.

Our investigation led to the discovery that gestational and early life exposure to TRAP affects some components of social communication. Importantly, we also discovered that both roadside-reared groups, TRAP and filtered air (FA), with exposure to the same noise and

vibrational stress, had significantly delayed growth and development of psychomotor reflexes, displayed altered social interactions, and exhibited abnormal motor activity. Histological outcomes from these exposures are described in our companion manuscript<sup>45</sup>. Further, we found no evidence for an effect, due to stress or otherwise, of the pregnant dams' transport to the roadside facility on offspring behavior. This is the first report of functional outcomes of this exposure model, and the first report that illustrates behavioral deficits resulting from near roadway exposure alone.

## **Methods**

**Subjects.** All animals were housed in a temperature-controlled vivarium maintained on a 12:12 light–dark cycle. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) of the University of California Davis (UC Davis) and were conducted in accordance with the National Institutes of Health Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. To identify rats, pups were labeled with paw tattoos on postnatal day (PND) 2 using non-toxic animal tattoo ink (Ketchum Manufacturing Inc., Brockville, ON, Canada). Ink was delivered into the center of the paw with a 23-gauge hypodermic needle tip. Rats were also tail marked with non-toxic permanent marker at weaning to allow for additional identification. The tattoo and tail marks for each subject were coded to allow investigators to carry out testing and scoring blind to treatment group.

*Order of behavioral testing and description of cohorts.* Male and female Sprague-Dawley rat breeders (PND 80–90) were paired for two weeks before females were singly housed at approximately gestational day (GD) 14. A group of dams was transported to the roadside exposure facility adjacent to a major freeway tunnel system in the Bay Area of Northern California. Dams were randomly assigned to one of two exposure conditions within the same facility: traffic-related

air pollution (TRAP) or filtered air (FA). Two male and two female offspring from each of 20 dams were tested as follows: (1) developmental milestones at PND 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12, (2) pup USV at PND 5, (3) reciprocal social interaction at PND 32–34, (4) open-field behavior at PND 39–41, (5) novel object recognition at PND 40–42, and (6) fear conditioning at PND 44–48.

A second group of dams remained housed at a UC Davis vivarium, constituting the laboratory control group. Two male and two female offspring from each of seven litters were tested as follows: (1) developmental milestones at PND 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12, (2) pup USV at PND 5, (3) reciprocal social interaction at PND 34–36, and (5) open field behavior at PND 42–43.

At a later timepoint, a third group of dams was employed as a control for the approximately 1.5-h vehicular transport required to move the prior groups of dams to the roadside exposure facility. Two weeks after being paired with a male breeder, all dams were singly housed and half of the group was driven halfway to the roadside tunnel site (~45 min drive) and then back to UC Davis. The other half of the group of dams remained unmoved at the UC Davis vivarium, constituting the control group for the transported group. All of the dams and their offspring remained housed at the UC Davis vivarium for the duration of the study. Two male and two female offspring from each of 11 dams were tested as follows: (1) developmental milestones at PND 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12, (2) pup USV at PND 5, and (3) open field behavior at PND 38–41.

All offspring remained in the location and exposure condition into which they were born. Behavioral testing was conducted in testing rooms adjacent to each vivarium. Two male and two female offspring from each litter were tested. To minimize carry-over effects from repeated testing, assays were performed in order from least to most stressful and at least 48 h elapsed between tests.

At separate timepoints, two additional cohorts of male and female Sprague-Dawley rats were used to collect laboratory control data for the learning and memory paradigms. These data

were collected at the UC Davis vivarium prior to the testing equipment being relocated to the roadside exposure facility. Both groups remained housed at the UC Davis vivarium for the duration of the study, were well-handled prior to testing, and were offspring of Sprague-Dawley breeders who remained housed at the UC Davis vivarium. One cohort of rats was sampled from five litters and tested in the novel object recognition test at PND 45–53 and a second cohort was sampled from seven litters and tested in the fear conditioning assay at PND 42–44.

**Roadside exposure facility.** Data from the CHARGE study found residential proximity to freeways to be a risk factor for NDDs when maternal residence was <309 m from a major roadway<sup>28,44</sup>. In order to generate toxicological data that complements the epidemiological data, the exposure facility that we employed in this study was designed to model near roadway exposures of air pollution, noise, and vibration, the same stressors experienced by people living in this environment. We drew air from the eastern face of the tunnel, not from within the tunnel itself, so that the air pollution was somewhat diluted already. Additionally, we installed vibration isolators on the feet of the exposure chambers to reduce vibration and insulated the building to reduce noise below the IACUC-mandated maximal tolerated limit of 85 decibels. Such measures were unnecessary for the UC Davis vivarium and adjacent laboratory testing rooms, which have ambient noise levels of only 64 and 43–47 decibels, respectively.

The dual housing and exposure facility, located adjacent to a major freeway tunnel system in the Bay Area of northern California, was composed of three rooms: one containing equipment for adjusting air temperature and flow, and measuring air pollutant concentrations; a second room for the two exposure chambers; and a third room for behavior testing. Each exposure chamber was 12.8 ft l × 3 ft w × 7.8 ft h and capable of accommodating 108 cages with filter tops removed. In

order to minimize noise stress, all pumps and blowers were housed outside the facility and plumbed through walls. The room containing the exposure chambers and the behavioral testing suite were also additionally insulated to block noise.

Air supplied to the TRAP-exposed animals was drawn directly from the face of the tunnel. Flexible ducting carried air from the exit of the tunnel's two eastbound bores to the exposure facility where rats were exposed to the tunnel air. Air supplied to the filtered air group was drawn from the outside of the exposure facility, where pollutant concentrations were expected to be much lower than at the tunnel face. This air was subjected to several emissions control technologies coupled together in series prior to being plumbed to the exposure chamber. These included (a) a pre-filter for removing large debris and coarse particulate matter (PM), (b) inline activated carbon filters for removing gas-phase volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, (c) barium oxide-based catalytic converters for removing NO<sub>x</sub> and (d) ultrahigh efficiency Teflon-bound glass microfiber filters for removing fine and ultrafine PM. Flow rate control and temperature conditioning were also included in compliance with IACUC specifications. Pressure within each exposure chamber was monitored constantly and blowers were programmed to maintain a small negative pressure in each chamber, with the TRAP chamber drawing in air from the tunnel and the filtered air chamber drawing in air from the outside via the filtration system.

**Behavioral testing.** Two males and two females from each litter were randomly selected as behavioral test subjects and were tested on all behavioral assays with the exception of 16 animals who were only tested as pups and not as juveniles. This was to carefully control for the effect of the litter, previously described as being the most influential factor in developmental toxicological exposure studies<sup>46,47</sup>. Rats at the roadside exposure facility were removed from the home exposure

chambers for testing and then immediately returned to the chamber following the completion of each test. For behavioral tests involving bedding, the same type of bedding as present in home cages was used.

*Developmental milestones.* Pup developmental milestones were assessed at PND 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12 similarly to methods described previously<sup>48-50</sup>. Body length (cm; nose to tail base) and body weight (grams) were measured. Rooting reflex was measured as a turn of the head to whisker stimulation. Forelimb grasping was measured as grasping of a bar being moved upward along both front paws.

*Isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations.* During the first 2 weeks of life, rodent pups will emit ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) upon separation from their mothers and littermates<sup>51-53</sup>. On PND 5, isolation-induced USVs were collected from each pup for three min. A pup was randomly selected from the nest, placed in a small, open top container with bedding, and emitted USV were collected using Avisoft-RECORDER (Avisoft Bioacoustics, Glienicke, Germany) as described previously<sup>48,54</sup>. The container was cleaned with 70% ethanol and new clean bedding was added between each animal. USV were displayed as spectrograms and counted by a trained observer blinded to group using Avisoft-SASLab Pro (Avisoft Bioacoustics, Glienicke, Germany).

*Juvenile reciprocal social interaction.* Each rat was paired with an unfamiliar strain-, age-, and sex-matched stimulus rat and allowed to freely interact for 10 min in a clean, empty test arena (41.3 cm l × 41.3 cm w × 29 cm h) containing bedding. Behaviors were video recorded through the arena's transparent front wall and later scored by a trained observer blinded to group as described previously<sup>54</sup>. Both subject and stimulus animals were isolated for 30 min prior to the test session. Subject and stimulus animals were always from different litters and stimuli rats used at the roadside facility were housed in filtered air. All behaviors scored were those of the subject

animal. Behaviors scored for duration were: (1) exploring, (2) following or chasing, (3) social sniffing, (4) anogenital sniffing, and (6) self-grooming. The testing room was illuminated to ~30 lux.

*Open field exploration.* In order to control for the potentially confounding effects of hypo- or hyperactivity on the other behavioral assays, exploratory activity in a novel open arena was evaluated over a 30 min session. Rats were placed in the center of the arena at the start of the testing session. Using methods similar to those previously described<sup>48,54</sup>, total distance traveled and time spent in the center of the arena were measured using one of two comparable automated systems: an opaque matte black arena (54.1 cm l × 54.1 cm w × 34.3 cm h) equipped with video tracking software (EthoVision XT 12; Noldus Information Technology, Wageningen, Netherlands) or the fully automated Digiscan Animal Activity Monitors with Integra software (Omnitech Electronics, Columbus, OH, USA). The testing room was illuminated to ~30 lux.

*Novel object recognition.* Novel object recognition was assayed using methods similar to those described previously<sup>49,55</sup>. Using an opaque matte black box (54.1 cm l × 54.1 cm w × 34.3 cm h), each animal was habituated to the empty arena for 30 min on the day prior to the test. On the day of the test, each subject was again habituated to the arena for 30 min before two identical objects were placed gently in the arena with the animal. After a 10 min familiarization session, the animal was isolated in a clean holding cage with bedding for 60 min. During this time, the arena and the objects were cleaned with 70% ethanol and one clean familiar object and one clean novel object were placed in the original positions of the two identical objects during familiarization. Both the identity and location of the novel object within the arena were counterbalanced to address potential inherent object preferences or side biases. Our protocol has been published as standard by the Intellectual and Developmental Disability's Behavior Cores<sup>56</sup>. Upon being returned to the

arena for the recognition test, the subject was allowed 5 min to interact with the familiar and novel objects. Time spent sniffing each object during each phase of testing was automatically measured via video tracking software (EthoVision XT 10 and 12; Noldus Information Technology, Wageningen, Netherlands). Objects used were orange plastic cones (8.5 cm l × 8.5 cm w × 9.5 cm h) and glass bell jars (7.5 cm d × 10.3 cm h). The testing room was illuminated to ~30 lux.

*Contextual and cued fear conditioning.* Contextual and cued fear conditioning was carried out using an automated fear conditioning chamber (Med Associates, Inc., Fairfax, VT, USA) similar to methods described previously<sup>49,57</sup>. During training on day one, rats were exposed to a series of three noise-shock (CS-US) pairings in a testing chamber with specific visual, odor, and tactile cues. The training environment was brightly lit (~100 lux), contained a metal wire floor, and included 0.3 mL of vanilla odor cue (1:100 dilution of McCormick Vanilla Extract). White noise (80 dB) was played for 30 s and a foot shock (0.7 mA) occurred during the final two sec of the noise cue. A two min period for exploration preceded the first noise-shock pairing and elapsed between each noise-shock pairing. A 30 s exploration period followed the final noise-shock pairing and the entire training session was eight min in duration. On day two of testing, the subject was placed back inside the training environment for five min. The chamber contained identical contextual cues as the training session, but no white noise or foot shock occurred. On day three of testing, the subject was placed back inside the training environment for 6 min, but the chamber context was altered. The overhead lighting was turned off and the chamber contained a novel smooth plastic floor, novel black angled walls, and a novel lemon scent (1:100 dilution of McCormick Lemon Extract). An initial three min exploration period was followed by a three min presentation of the white noise conditioned stimulus. Time spent freezing during each test phase was automatically measured by the VideoFreeze software (version 2.7; Med Associates).

**Statistical analysis.** Particulate matter concentrations were compared using paired t-test since measurements occurred on the same days in both groups. Vocalizations were analyzed via unpaired (Student's) t-test for two groups or via one-way ANOVA with Tukey's multiple comparisons *post hoc* test for three groups. Developmental metrics and open field parameters were analyzed via two-way repeated measures ANOVA with exposure as the between-group factor and time as the within-group factor. Significant ANOVAs were followed by Tukey's *post hoc* testing. Log-Rank (Mantel-Cox) test was used to compare the percentage of animals achieving developmental milestones. Social interaction parameters were compared with one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey's *post hoc* testing. Comparisons between sniff times of objects were made within each exposure group via paired t-test and comparisons between freezing times were compared within test day with repeated measures ANOVA (for training and cued freezing) or unpaired (Student's) t-test (for contextual freezing). Group sizes were chosen based on past experience and power analyses<sup>58</sup>, and data were analyzed with GraphPad Prism. Behavioral data passed distribution normality tests, were collected using continuous variables, and thus were analyzed via parametric tests. Variances were similar between groups and data points within two standard deviations from the mean were included in analyses. All significance levels were set at  $p < 0.05$  and all *t*-tests were two-tailed. Multiple comparisons were corrected for via *post hoc* testing via Tukey's multiple comparisons test. Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  standard error of the mean.

## Results

**Reproductive success.** Two of three groups of pregnant female rats were transported to the roadside exposure facility at approximately gestational day (GD) 14, while the third group

remained in the laboratory at UC Davis. Dams of the roadside cohort were randomly assigned to be housed in either the TRAP or filtered air (FA) exposure chamber. In the laboratory control setting, 10 of 11 dams gave birth. One litter was cannibalized and did not survive to PND 2. We assayed a final litter count of 9. In the FA-exposed group at the roadside facility, 17 of 18 dams gave birth. One litter was cannibalized and did not survive to PND 2, so we assayed a final litter count of 16. In the TRAP-exposed group at the roadside facility, 10 of 10 dams gave birth. The average number of days between arrival at the roadside vivarium and birth was 10 days for both exposure groups, and there was no effect of group on litter size nor male to female ratio (**Supplementary Table S1**). **Figure 1a** illustrates our experimental design described in the methods.

**Particulate concentrations in TRAP and FA exposures.** Twenty-four-hour  $PM_{2.5}$  and total suspended particulate mass concentrations measured immediately upstream of the FA and TRAP exposure chambers at the roadside tunnel facility for the study duration are described with extensive detail in **Fig. S1** and Bein et al. (under review)<sup>43</sup>. A unique and defining characteristic of our design is that it captured significant diurnal and day-to-day variations in exposure concentrations that cannot be readily recreated in the laboratory. These variations were easily seen in the size distribution of particle number concentrations (**Fig. S1**) and described comprehensively in Bein et al. (under review)<sup>43</sup>. **Figure 1b, c** illustrate the clearly increased  $PM_{2.5}$  and  $PM_{10}$ , respectively, in the tunnel-sampled air (TRAP) compared to filtered air (FA), thereby validating our exposure system (**Fig. 1b**  $t_{(1, 18)} = 4.562, p < 0.001$  and **Fig. 1c**  $t_{(1, 18)} = 4.923, p < 0.001$ ).

**Reduced isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV).** Isolation-induced USV were collected for 3 min as social communication signals in rat pups on PND 5, as previously described<sup>48,54</sup>. In male offspring, a significant effect of exposure on USV was discovered (**Fig. 2a**  $F_{(2, 50)} = 4.287, p < 0.02$ ). TRAP-exposed pups emitted the fewest USV calls ( $p = 0.014$  versus laboratory controls) and, interestingly, the FA-exposed group also trended to emit lower calls compared to the laboratory control group ( $p = 0.154$ ). Raw values show the phenomenon that TRAP had the lowest number of calls: non-significant but noteworthy effects on USV by exposure group using mean  $\pm$  SD showed that in male laboratory controls USV were  $412 \pm 132.8$ , FA USV were  $327 \pm 99.90$ , and TRAP USV were  $280 \pm 145.3$ . Given that TRAP-exposed did not differ from FA-exposed by Tukey's multiple comparisons *post hoc* analysis ( $p = 0.475$ ), we cannot conclude that the air quality alone caused the lower numbers of USV. Although, the SD of the raw values allows us to see the high variability in call numbers by group.

A similar pattern was illustrated in the female offspring (**Fig. 2b**  $F_{(2, 52)} = 3.069, p = 0.055$ ) albeit statistical significance in the overall ANOVA was not  $<0.05$ . Nonsignificant but noteworthy effects on USV by exposure group using mean  $\pm$  SD showed that in female laboratory controls USV were  $407 \pm 154.60$ , FA USV were  $331 \pm 155.7$ , and TRAP USV were  $275 \pm 162.20$ . However, as the overall ANOVA was not under  $p = 0.05$ , we did not run *post hoc* analyses. Given the effect of the roadside exposure (TRAP and FA) in males and trend in females, we were unable to extract a sound statistical finding on calls that resulted from our intermittent, intensity varying, mixture of real-world pollution in the TRAP group. Trends, raw values, and high SD allow us to see the high variability in call numbers by group.

Body weight and temperature were also collected since body temperature is known to alter pup USV emission<sup>51,59-62</sup>. Weights and temperature did not differ by roadside air exposure (weight

TRAP versus FA  $t_{(1, 38)} = 0.753$ , *ns* and temperature TRAP versus FA  $t_{(1, 38)} = 1.375$ , *ns*). On PND 5, males of both roadside exposed groups weighed less than laboratory controls (TRAP versus lab  $t_{(1, 31)} = 2.603$ ,  $p < 0.02$ ; FA versus lab  $t_{(1, 31)} = 2.388$ ,  $p < 0.03$ ).

### **Delayed growth and milestone achievement of both TRAP and FA-exposed pups.**

**Figure 3a–h** shows delayed early physical development and neurological reflexes in TRAP- and FA-exposed offspring compared to laboratory controls. All male and female subjects gained weight and grew in length over time (males **Fig. 3a** length  $F_{(5, 255)} = 390.8$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ; **Fig. 3b** weight  $F_{(5, 255)} = 1186$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and females **Fig. 3e** length  $F_{(5, 270)} = 322.1$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ; **Fig. 3f** weight  $F_{(5, 255)} = 1092$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Significant effects of exposure on body length and weight were discovered in both sexes (males **Fig. 3a** length  $F_{(2, 51)} = 12.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; **Fig. 3b** weight  $F_{(2, 51)} = 10.04$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and females **Fig. 3e** length  $F_{(2, 54)} = 13.05$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; **Fig. 3f** weight  $F_{(2, 54)} = 6.312$ ,  $p < 0.004$ ). TRAP-exposed (males  $p < 0.001$  and females  $p < 0.006$ ) and FA-exposed (males  $p < 0.001$  and females  $p < 0.02$ ) offspring differed from laboratory controls in both length and weight. Interestingly, no differences were observed between TRAP- and FA-exposure for length (males *ns* and females *ns*) or weight (males *ns* and females *ns*). The rooting and grasping reflexes were delayed in both the TRAP- and FA-exposed offspring compared to laboratory controls in both males (TRAP **Fig. 3c** rooting Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 8.35$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ; FA **Fig. 3c** rooting Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 7.18$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; TRAP **Fig. 3d** grasping Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 11.05$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; FA **Fig. 3d** grasping Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 14.30$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and females (TRAP **Fig. 3g** rooting Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 13.98$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; FA **Fig. 3g** rooting Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 13.98$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; TRAP **Fig. 3h** grasping Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 5.92$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; FA **Fig. 3h** grasping Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 18.63$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Additional developmental milestones are shown in **Supplementary Table S2**.

**Juvenile reciprocal dyad social interactions (social play).** Male and female subject exploration did not differ between exposure groups and neither exposure group differed from laboratory controls (males **Fig. 4a**  $F_{(2, 42)} = 2.065$ , *ns* and females **Fig. 4f**  $F_{(2, 44)} = 0.2467$ , *ns*). This key information suggests that any differences in social behavior are not confounded by motor abilities, or hypo-, or hyper-exploration of the arena. Levels of this parameter were comparable and consistent with earlier findings using Sprague-Dawley rats at this age<sup>63-68</sup> and with our transported laboratory-tested control group (**Fig. S2**).

Social deficits, by an unusually high amount of time on the play parameter of following/chasing, were observed in both sexes (males **Fig. 4b**  $F_{(2, 42)} = 11.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and females **Fig. 4f**  $F_{(2, 44)} = 5.944$ ,  $p < 0.006$ ). Specifically, TRAP-exposed males spent more time following/chasing compared to FA-exposed males ( $p < 0.05$ ) and laboratory controls ( $p < 0.001$ ). FA-exposed males also trended to spend more time following/chasing compared to laboratory controls ( $p = 0.06$ ). TRAP-exposed females exhibited a strong trend to spend more time following/chasing compared to FA-exposed females ( $p = 0.10$ ) and TRAP-exposed females spent more time following/chasing compared to laboratory controls ( $p < 0.004$ ). FA-exposed females did not differ on time spent following/chasing compared to laboratory controls ( $p = 0.356$ ).

In females, exposure had a significant effect on time engaged in the key interaction metric of social sniffing, which includes nose-to-nose sniffing, neck and body sniffing, and other bouts of contact sniffing with the partner stimulus rat (females **Fig. 4g**  $F_{(2, 44)} = 3.264$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The TRAP and FA-exposed groups did not differ from one another ( $p = 0.650$ ). Interestingly, FA-exposed ( $p = 0.040$ ) females spent less time engaged in social sniffing compared to laboratory controls but the TRAP-exposed female group did not differ from laboratory controls (*ns*). In

contrast, only a trending difference between groups was observed in the key metric of social sniffing in males (males **Fig. 4c**  $F_{(2, 42)} = 2.622, p = 0.085$ ). Nose-to-anogenital sniffing time, when initiated by the subject rat, was significantly affected in both sexes (males **Fig. 4d**  $F_{(2, 42)} = 3.492, p = 0.040$  and females **Fig. 4i**  $F_{(2, 44)} = 5.944, p < 0.006$ ). TRAP and FA-exposed groups did not differ from one another (*ns*). Although neither the FA-exposed males ( $p = 0.079$ ) nor the TRAP exposed males ( $p = 0.056$ ) significantly differed compared to laboratory controls in anogenital sniffing upon *post hoc* analyses, trending differences were discovered. Whereas this parameter did not differ in the transport control group (**Fig. S2**) suggesting the cause was the roadside gestation.

Time spent engaged in self-grooming differed between exposure groups in males (**Fig. 4e**  $F_{(2, 42)} = 6.870, p < 0.004$ ) but not females (**Fig. 4j**  $F_{(2, 44)} = 0.6994, ns$ ). Tukey's multiple comparisons *post hoc* analysis revealed that both the TRAP ( $p = 0.049$ ) and FA-exposed ( $p = 0.002$ ) male groups exhibited higher self-grooming scores compared to laboratory controls. Social interaction metrics that did not differ between the transported group and laboratory control offspring are illustrated in **Fig. S2** and additional play metrics that did not differ between groups are summarized in **Supplementary Table S3**.

**Normal exploratory locomotor behavior in an open field arena.** Motor abilities were tested in an open field assay, assessing cm of distance traveled using beam breaks and time spent in the center of the arena. FA- and TRAP-exposed juvenile male rats, as well as a cohort of male laboratory controls, exhibited no group differences in total activity (**Fig. 5a**  $F_{(2, 42)} = 3.042, ns$ ). As expected, all groups decreased activity over time (**Fig. 5a**  $F_{(4, 151)} = 220.2, p < 0.0001$ ). No treatment group differences were detected in center time measures in males (**Fig. 5b**  $F_{(2, 42)} = 1.367, ns$ ). Group effects were observed in FA- and TRAP-exposed juvenile female rats, as well as a

cohort of female laboratory controls, in total activity (**Fig. 5c**  $F_{(2, 44)} = 4.690, p < 0.02$ ). There was not a significant difference in performance between TRAP- and FA-exposed rats, except at a single timepoint (20–25 min:  $p = 0.019$ ). TRAP did not differ from the laboratory controls (*ns*) at any timepoint, while the FA-exposed group and lab controls differed at four timepoints upon *post hoc* analyses in females (5–10 min:  $p = 0.009$ ; 10–15 min:  $p = 0.011$ ; 15–20 min:  $p = 0.049$ ; 20–25 min:  $p = 0.009$ ). Group differences were detected in center time measures in females (**Fig. 5d**  $F_{(2, 44)} = 10.39, p < 0.001$ ). As expected, all groups decreased center time across the 30-min testing session (**Fig. 5a**  $F_{(3, 140)} = 8.70, p < 0.0001$ ). TRAP-exposed females exhibited lower time in the center compared to FA-exposed rats ( $p = 0.007$ ). Both TRAP (0–5 min:  $p = 0.001$ ; 10–15 min:  $p = 0.007$ ) and FA-exposed (0–5 min:  $p = 0.030$ ) females groups differed by lower center times compared to the laboratory controls upon *post hoc* analyses.

#### **Intact object recognition and Pavlovian conditioning learning and memory behavior.**

Manual and automated scoring indicated both male TRAP- and FA-exposure groups spent more time investigating the novel object versus the familiar object, thereby exhibiting typical novel object preference (**Fig. 6a** TRAP-exposed,  $t_{(1, 15)} = 3.269, p < 0.006$  and FA-exposed,  $t_{(1, 15)} = 3.081, p < 0.008$ ). Times spent exploring the objects during the familiarization component were similar for both groups using mean  $\pm$  SEM in that FA-exposed sniffing investigation times were  $135.5 \pm 15.2$  s, and TRAP-exposed sniffing investigation times were  $110.3 \pm 12.1$  s. Similarly, both female exposure groups spent more time investigating the novel object versus the familiar object, exhibiting typical novel object preference (**Fig. 6c** TRAP-exposed,  $t_{(1, 12)} = 4.316, p < 0.001$  and FA-exposed,  $t_{(1, 12)} = 3.720, p < 0.003$ ). Thus, roadway exposure did not adversely affect object learning or short-term memory recall. This negative finding was not the result of a lack of

participation or object investigation as times spent exploring the objects during the familiar exposure component, in females, were similar for both groups using mean  $\pm$  SEM in that FA-exposed sniffing investigation times were  $138.6 \pm 6.8$  s, and TRAP exposed sniffing investigation times were  $117.0 \pm 9.4$  s. Object sniff times observed 60 min following familiarization with one object type in laboratory control subjects (males **Fig. S3a**  $t_{(1, 15)} = 3.997$ ,  $p = 0.001$  and females **Fig. S3b**  $t_{(1, 14)} = 2.788$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ) illustrated typical novel object preference in groups run in our rat behavioral core when given the opportunity to investigate a novel and a familiar object.

Learning and memory were further evaluated using two measures of Pavlovian fear conditioning with a 24-h contextual component and a 48-h auditory cued fear conditioning. Significant main effects of time (males **Fig. 6b**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 61.06$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  and females **Fig. 6d**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 31.27$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) but not exposure group (males **Fig. 6b**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 0.0213$ , *ns* and females **Fig. 6d**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 0.3597$ , *ns*) or interaction (males **Fig. 6b**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 0.0061$ , *ns* and females **Fig. 6d**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 0.3785$ , *ns*) indicated that high levels of freezing were observed in both groups subsequent to the conditioned stimulus (CS)—unconditioned stimulus (UCS) pairings on the training day. Elevated post-training freezing in both exposure groups with no group difference in training freeze scores in males or females indicates no confounds and no deficits in the learning of the associations between the context stimuli and auditory cues. No difference in freezing scores was observed 24 h following CS-UCS training between TRAP and FA-exposed subjects freezing scores in males (**Fig. 6b**  $t_{(1, 30)} = 1.510$ , *ns*) or females (**Fig. 6d**  $t_{(1, 30)} = 0.8535$ , *ns*) when placed in the context chamber from conditioning training with identical stimulus cues. Levels of freezing, between the pre- and post-cue presentation 48 h after training, revealed significant main effects of cue presentation (males **Fig. 6b**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 112.1$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  and females **Fig. 6d**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 47.86$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) but not exposure group (males **Fig. 6b**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 0.0006$ , *ns* and females **Fig. 6d**  $F_{(1, 30)} =$

0.0484, *ns*) or interaction (males **Fig. 6b**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 0.0370$ , *ns* and females **Fig. 6d**  $F_{(1, 30)} = 0.0694$ , *ns*). Therefore, no group difference was found in freezing in response to the auditory cue between TRAP- and FA-exposed subjects when placed in the novel chamber with unique contextual cues (olfactory, visual, and textural). Freezing scores in laboratory control subjects observed 24 h following CS-UCS training compared to pre-training scores (males **Fig. S4a**  $t_{(1, 25)} = 5.722$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  and females **Fig. S4b**  $t_{(1, 22)} = 4.486$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) illustrated typical fear responses in groups run in our rat behavioral core when placed in the context chamber from conditioning training with identical stimulus cues.

**Transport stress does not cause the observed behavioral phenotypes.** The effect of potential stress on the pregnant dam during the transport to the roadside exposure facility was ruled out as a causal mechanism for these physical and behavioral changes. **Figure 7a–d** show no delay in early physical development and neurological reflexes. This figure combines sexes as no sex difference was observed throughout the developmental outcomes (**Fig. 2**). In transported and control offspring, all male and female subjects gained weight and grew in length over time (**Fig. 7a** length  $F_{(5, 173)} = 846.2$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; **Fig. 7b** weight  $F_{(5, 255)} = 1186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). There was a trend but no statistically significant effect of transport on body length (**Fig. 7a**  $F_{(1, 42)} = 3.278$ ,  $p = 0.077$ ) or body weight (**Fig. 7b**  $F_{(1, 42)} = 1.764$ , *ns*). Neurological reflexes, including the rooting and grasping reflexes, were normal in transported and control offspring (**Fig. 7c** rooting Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 0.1716$ , *ns*; **Fig. 7d** grasping Log-rank  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 00.00$ , *ns*). **Figure 7e** shows that there were no differences in PND 5 pup USV emissions across the transported and control offspring (**Fig. 7e**  $t_{(1, 38)} = 0.4814$ , *ns*). No differences in total activity (**Fig. 7f**  $F_{(1, 42)} = 0.0049$ , *ns*) or time spent in the center of the open field arena (**Fig. 7g**  $F_{(1, 42)} = 0.4879$ , *ns*) were observed between the transported offspring

compared to control group. Overall, no effect of transport alone was observed on offspring development. Pups born to dams that experienced a transport at approximately GD 14 exhibited no physical or behavioral abnormalities (**Fig. 7**) and exhibited no differences in social investigative events such as exploring, social sniffing, anogenital sniffing, following/chasing, or the repetitive behavior of self-grooming (**Fig. S2**). Pups born to dams that experienced a transport at approximately GD 14 also exhibited no differences in social play point events such as pouncing, pinning, and pushing under or crawling over (**Table S3**).

## **Discussion**

Our goal was to corroborate human studies that have linked increased risk of NDDs to near roadway TRAP exposures. To do this, we developed an innovative exposure model that quantifies and delivers TRAP collected from a traffic tunnel to rats during both in utero and post-natal development. This design avoided limitations of single exposure paradigms, including requiring anesthesia and difficulties mimicking real-world mixtures of TRAP, while simultaneously leveraging earlier literature to yield consensus. Both roadside exposure groups had significantly delayed growth and development of psychomotor reflexes, displayed altered social interactions, and exhibited abnormal activity in an open field compared to lab controls. This is the first report that used carefully controlled subgroups to illustrate that developmental exposure to realistic near roadway exposures caused subtle but significant changes in developmental endpoints and functional outcomes (i.e., behavior). This confirms the theory suggested by epidemiological studies that in addition to TRAP, noise, vibration, and proximity to highways may be additional risk factors for NDDs in combination with genetic susceptibility or independently<sup>19,20,28,69-73</sup>. Our work presented herein is also a novel, important addition because, to our knowledge, this is the

first nonclinical study that did not use high levels of particulate matter (PM), concentrated ambient ultrafine particles (CAPS), and/or diesel exhaust and discovered subtle but reportable behavioral outcomes. These findings support the need for further research delineating causal link(s) between exposure to TRAP and behavioral outcomes relevant to NDDs and adding to our understanding of the risks posed by air pollution to the developing nervous system.

Recently, a few well recognized laboratories have used reductionist experimental designs to investigate the effects of diesel exhaust<sup>69,70,74,75</sup> and particulate matter (sizeable and ultrafine)<sup>38,76-81</sup>, the components most implicated in mediating the neurotoxic effects of TRAP. We extended this published research with our innovative real-world exposure to a dynamic, complex mixture of components, noise, and vibration. Polluted tunnel air was delivered to subjects in the nearby exposure facility while control animals received thoroughly filtered air from a tunnel-adjacent area. Because behavioral outcomes vary by sex, time of year, vendor, and numerous additional variables, we ran, in parallel, a laboratory control group<sup>58,82</sup>.

An important finding was that we observed no significant difference in litter size between TRAP, FA, and laboratory groups, which eliminated litter size as a potential explanatory variable for effects of near roadway exposure on pup growth and development. Yet, both roadside groups had significantly delayed growth and development of psychomotor reflexes, altered social interactions, and abnormal activity in an open field compared to laboratory controls. A potential explanation was that transport stress confounded our observations.

However, we showed a complete absence of behavioral phenotypes resulting from the transport alone, strongly suggesting that adverse functional outcomes observed in the TRAP and FA groups were attributable to near roadway exposures. In both sexes of FA- and TRAPexposed

groups, we observed reduced isolation-induced 40-kHz pup ultrasonic vocalizations. Other atypical behaviors included juvenile social play behavior by the critical investigative parameter of anogenital sniffing and social play behavior of following/chasing. These data have direct translational implications as epidemiological studies directed at investigating ASD and NDDs have reported high levels of physical and developmental effects on health associated with the proximity of residence to heavily trafficked roads, using unique data sets from differing regional areas<sup>21-24,28,75,83</sup>. Follow-up studies will need to delineate the effects of noise and vibration during pregnancy from those of TRAP on offspring development and behavior. These findings add to our understanding of the risks posed to the developing nervous system by living in close proximity to roadways and support the need for further research delineating causal link(s) between exposure to TRAP and behavioral outcomes relevant to NDDs. We observed a strong trend toward reduced overall social sniffing in the TRAP- and FA-exposed groups. Social sniffing is a key investigative behavior that initiates numerous types of juvenile social play events such as following/chasing, pinning, pouncing, and rough and tumble play. The TRAP- and FA-exposed juveniles exhibited these deficits without confounding motor deficits. In addition, we observed a trend to elevated self-grooming in males, a well-reported, standardized restricted, repetitive behavior in rodents<sup>84</sup>. Less social sniffing in dyadic interactions and elevated self-grooming are likely indicators of stress in both exposure groups.

In addition, others observed elevated self-grooming, repetitive behavior in mice. Similar findings of reduced reciprocal interactions following diesel exhaust exposure from prenatal embryonic day 0 to postnatal day 21 were recently reported in male mice<sup>70</sup>. Chang et al. also reported their diesel exhaust exposure caused increased repeated entries in the T-maze test of spontaneous alternation, a learning and memory assay with the embedded ability to capture

restricted behavior. We observed high levels of repetitive motor behavior in the TRAP-exposed group, using a low-order motor stereotypy measure of grooming. Spontaneous alternation in T or Y maze, which may be mimicking higher order restricted, repetitive behaviors, are easily observable in mice<sup>85-88</sup>.

Surprisingly, we did not observe deficits on our two standard assays of learning and memory, contextual and cued fear conditioning and novel object recognition, due to TRAP exposure. We hypothesized this behavioral domain to have a robust phenotype given earlier literature. Early postnatal life exposure to concentrated ambient ultrafine particles (CAPS) increased preference for immediate reward, a more complex type of cognition that assesses impulsivity using a fixed-ratio waiting-for-reward paradigm, in mice<sup>80,89</sup>. The discounting of delayed rewards in preclinical models is considered to be analogous to impulsivity and delay of gratification in humans and is relevant to ADHD. Follow-up investigations revealed that early postnatal exposures to CAPS caused sexually dimorphic impairments in fixed interval performance on an operant training task, with greater sensitivity in males, while adult exposures caused deficits in females, indicating dysfunctional learning and reduced behavioral flexibility in CAPS-exposed mice. CAPS exposure also impaired short-term memory on the novel object recognition memory task in both sexes<sup>38,80</sup>. Collectively, these observations indicate dysfunctional learning and reduced behavioral flexibility in CAPS-exposed mice. The different results observed in the CAPS study versus our study may be due to (a) our tasks being limited to fear conditioning and novel object recognition because of limitations on the type of equipment that could be housed at the exposure facility, (b) that there is >20 million years of evolution that separate mouse and rat and there is likely species differences<sup>90,91</sup>, and/or (c) the variable intensities and concentrations of the exposures. Another limitation of our learning and memory data was that the laboratory control

data were collected from cohorts other than those under study herein, thereby precluding direct comparisons of performance scores. We were, however, able to make observational assessments with the knowledge that the cohorts were all Sprague-Dawley rats of similar ages tested by the same experimenter using the same equipment following the standard experimental protocol and the laboratory controls were within our standard validation scores. In future studies, we plan on employing operant touchscreen testing, as performed by our laboratories in mice and rats<sup>48,92,93</sup>, which will allow for more direct comparisons of impulsivity via five choice serial reaction and continuous performance assays<sup>94-98</sup>. Other groups exposed rats in a highly trafficked location in Portugal to non-filtered air (NFA) during gestation and early life and found a significant decrease in object discrimination when compared to the group exposed to filtered air (FA), suggesting that the exposure to TRAP during the combined pre- and post-natal periods impaired short-term discriminative memory. Animals exposed during only pre- or post-natal period did not show impairment on this assay<sup>99</sup>, similar to our findings. Another group found that ambient concentrated PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure resulted in robust impairments in adult mice tested in the Barnes Maze, a hippocampal dependent spatial learning task. The PM<sub>2.5</sub>exposed mice made more errors during training and took longer to reach the target during training trials and the memory retention test, indicating that chronic exposure to airborne fine particulate matter impaired hippocampal related learning and memory<sup>100</sup>.

Multiple groups have reported strong associations between prenatal exposure to TRAP and developmental delays and/or NDDs. Since epidemiology studies are associative, rigorous experiments that test preclinical models in highly controlled environments are warranted. This is particularly pertinent for studies of TRAP, since for decades research has focused on the detrimental effects of tobacco and asthma/allergy-related illnesses. In conclusion, we developed

and functionally validated an innovative preclinical model that recapitulated human studies that have linked developmental exposure to TRAP, or proximity to TRAP, and increased risk of NDDs. This confirmation of TRAP as an environmental risk factor for NDDs provides a rationale for controlling and minimizing exposures during critical periods of neurodevelopment thereby reducing the incidence of NDDs and/or decreasing the severity of symptoms. This study sets the stage for future mechanistic investigations to determine the mechanisms by which this risk factor interacts with NDD genes of susceptibility. It will also inform our understanding of the molecular pathophysiology of NDDs, which will be useful for identifying developmental windows of vulnerability and possible novel intervention and/or therapeutic strategies.

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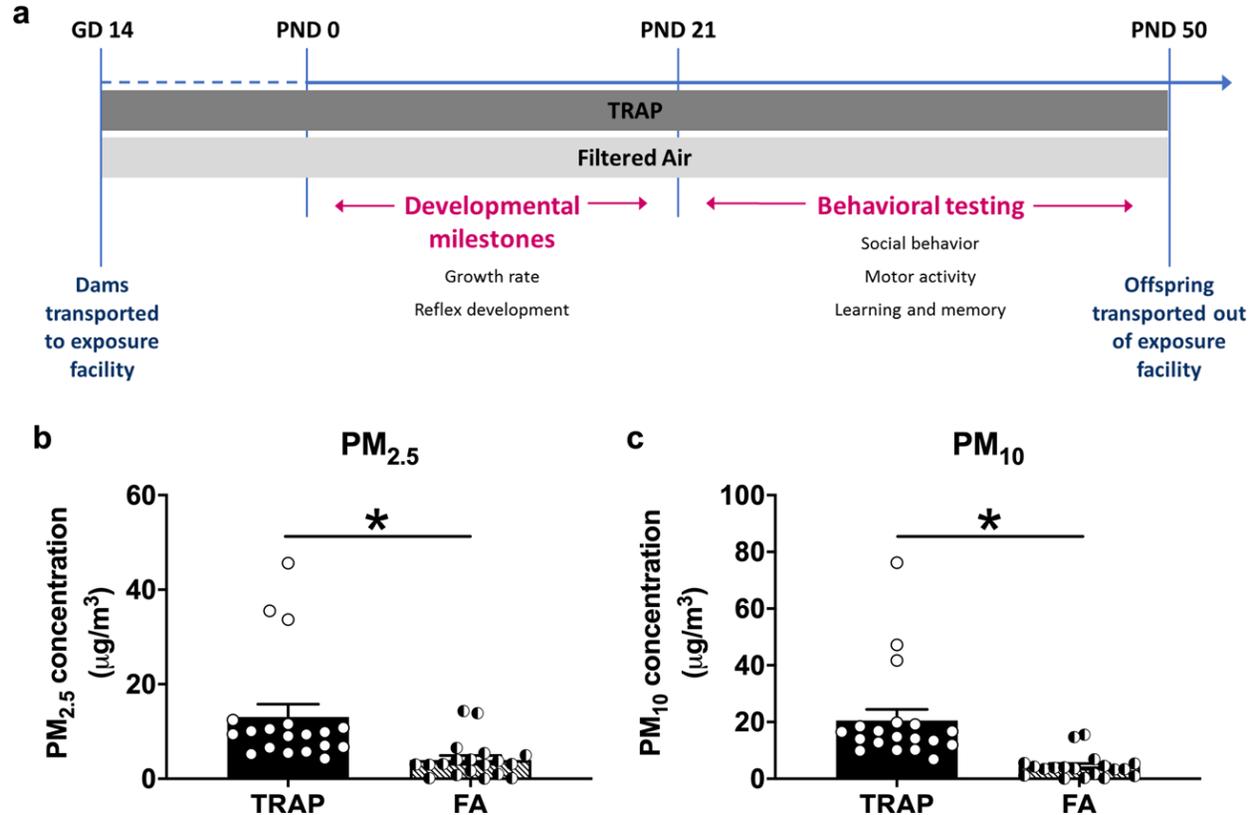
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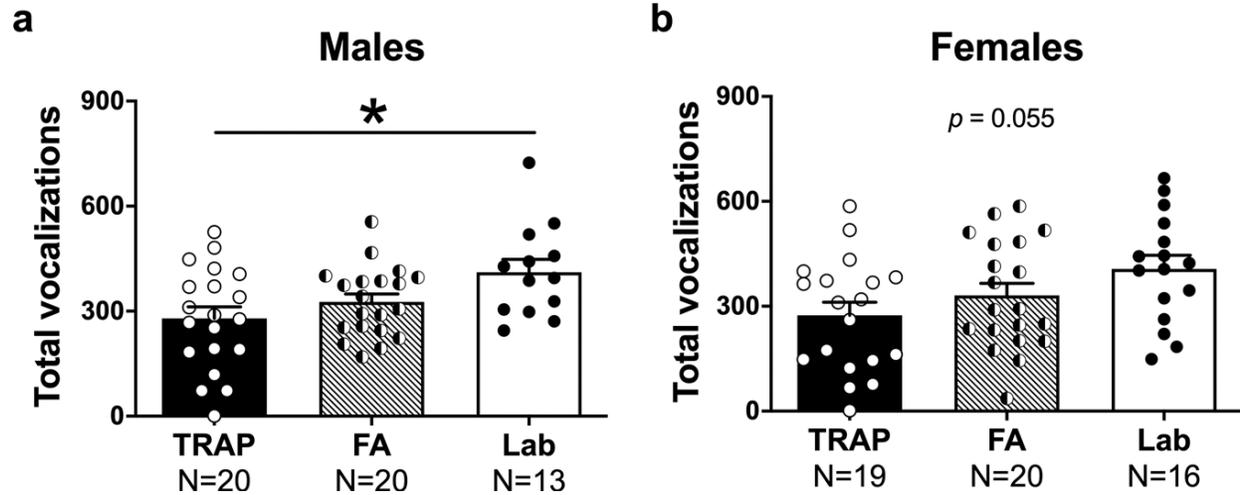
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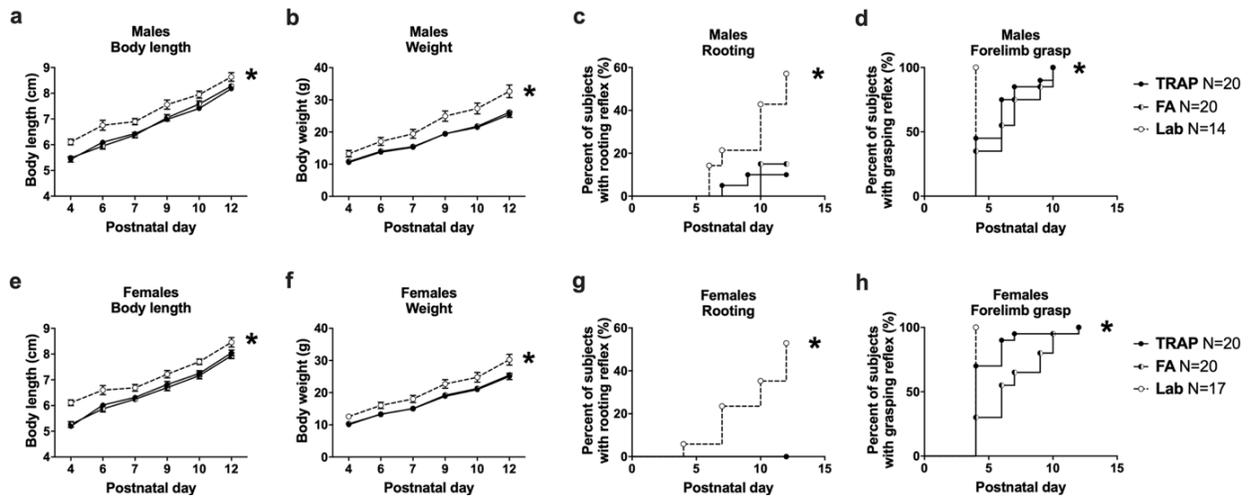
## Figures



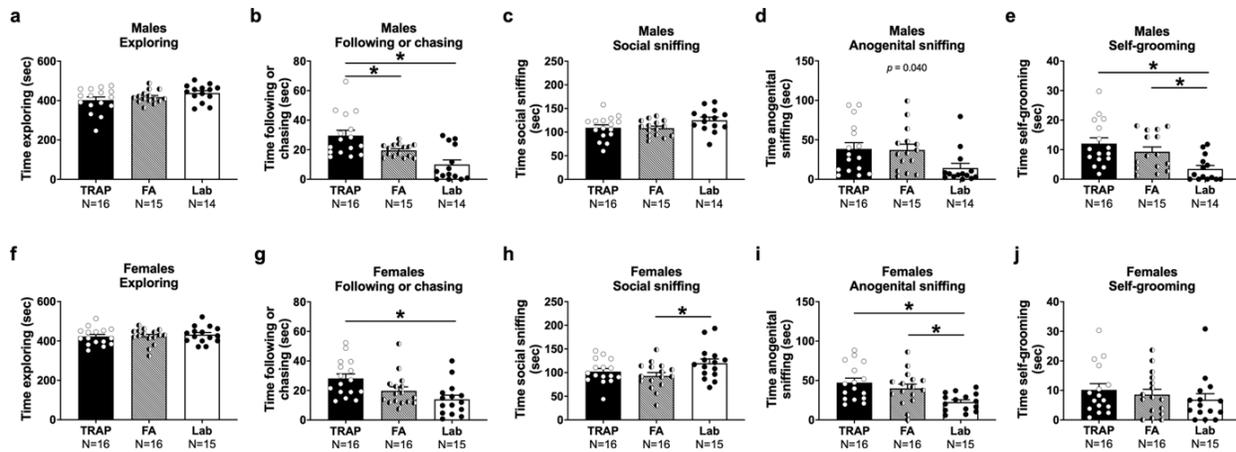
**Fig. 1 Timeline and quantification of roadside TRAP exposure.** **a** Pregnant female rats were transported to the roadside exposure facility at approximately gestational day (GD) 14 and were randomly assigned to be housed in either the TRAP or filtered air (FA) exposure chambers. Offspring, remained in the exposure condition into which they were born, were tested on a variety of developmental milestone assays between four days after birth (postnatal day (PND) 4) and weaning at PND 21 and then a battery of standardized behavioral assays between PND 21 and 50. **b, c** Particulate matter (PM) concentrations of the TRAP air and FA were quantified on 19 days. Both **b** PM<sub>2.5</sub> and **c** PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations of the TRAP air were significantly higher than those of the FA. \* $p < 0.05$ , paired  $t$ -test.



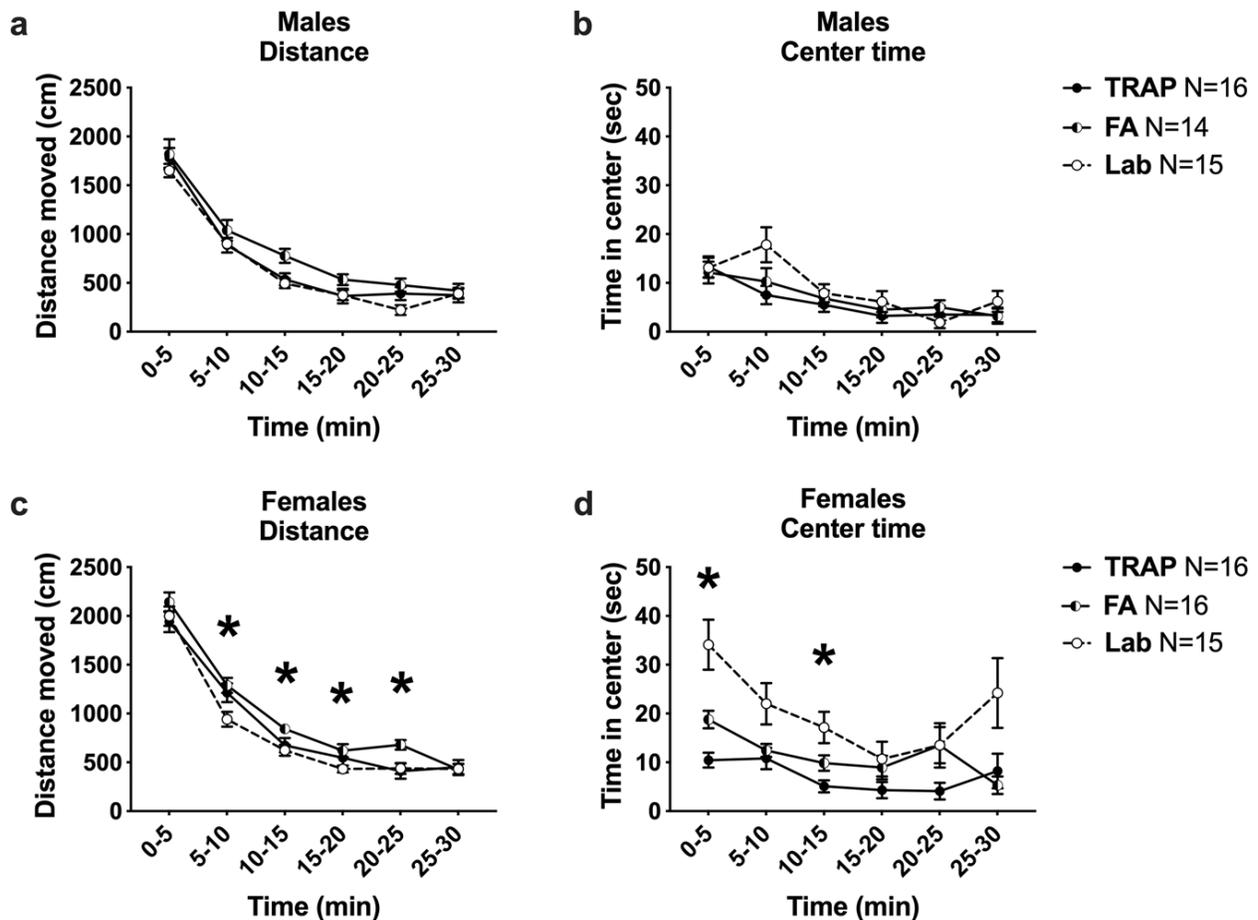
**Fig. 2 Reduced isolation-induced ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) of TRAP-exposed pups at PND 5. a** Male pups exposed to TRAP emitted significantly fewer USV during the three min isolation compared to lab controls. **b** Exposure did not affect USV emission in females, although the trend indicated reduced numbers of calls in the TRAP group compared to lab controls. \* $p < 0.05$ , one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey's multiple comparisons test.



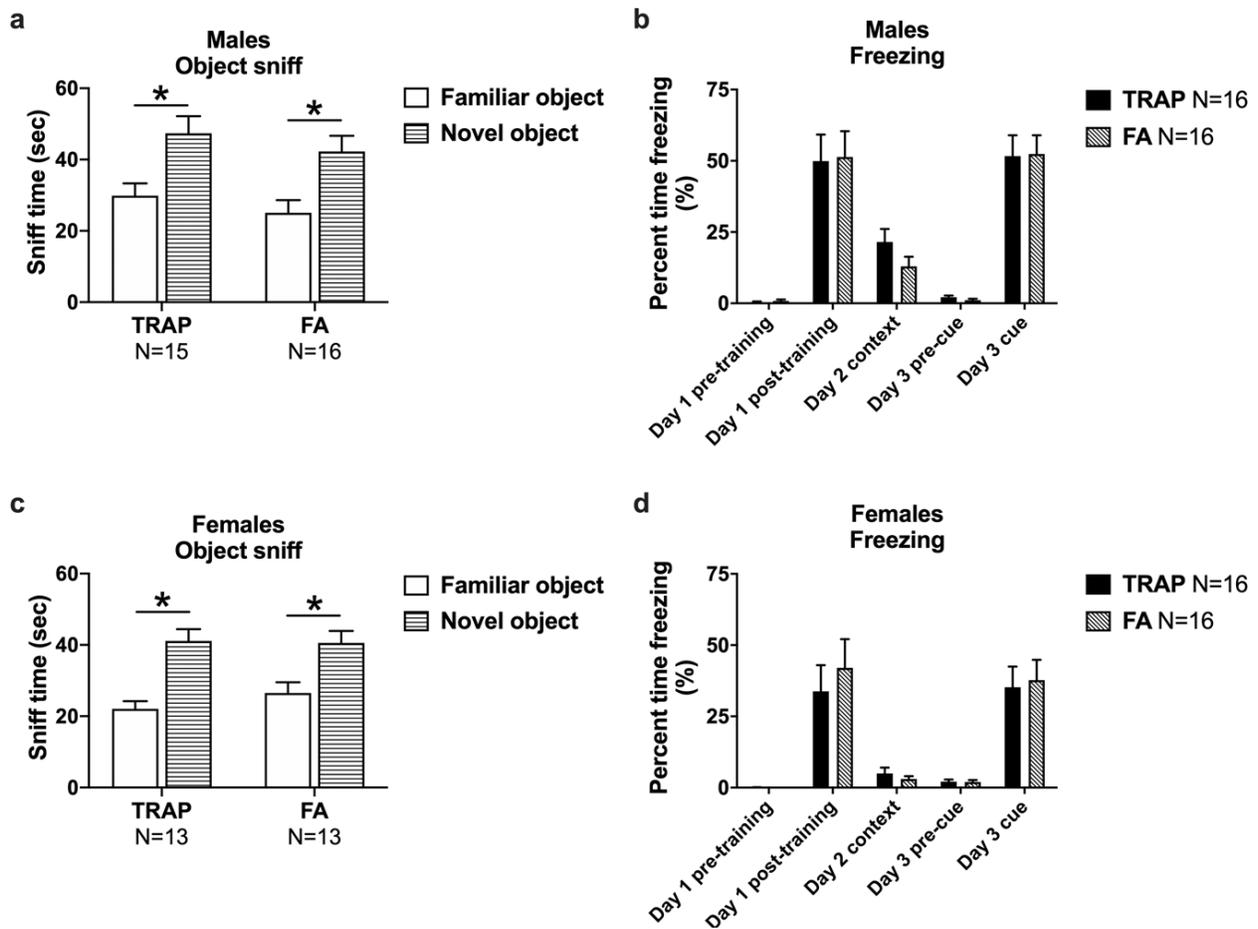
**Fig. 3 Delayed growth and milestone achievement of roadside TRAP- and FA-exposed pups.** **a** Male pups exposed to TRAP or FA had significantly reduced body length and **b** body weight throughout early development compared to lab controls. Males of both roadside groups exhibited a significant delay in the development of **c** rooting and **d** forelimb grasping reflexes. **e** Female pups exposed to TRAP or FA also had reduced body length and **f** body weight and developed **g** rooting and **h** forelimb grasping reflexes later than lab controls. **a, b, e, f**  $*p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA followed by Tukey's multiple comparisons test. **c, d, g, h**  $*p < 0.05$ , Log-Rank (Mantel-Cox) test.



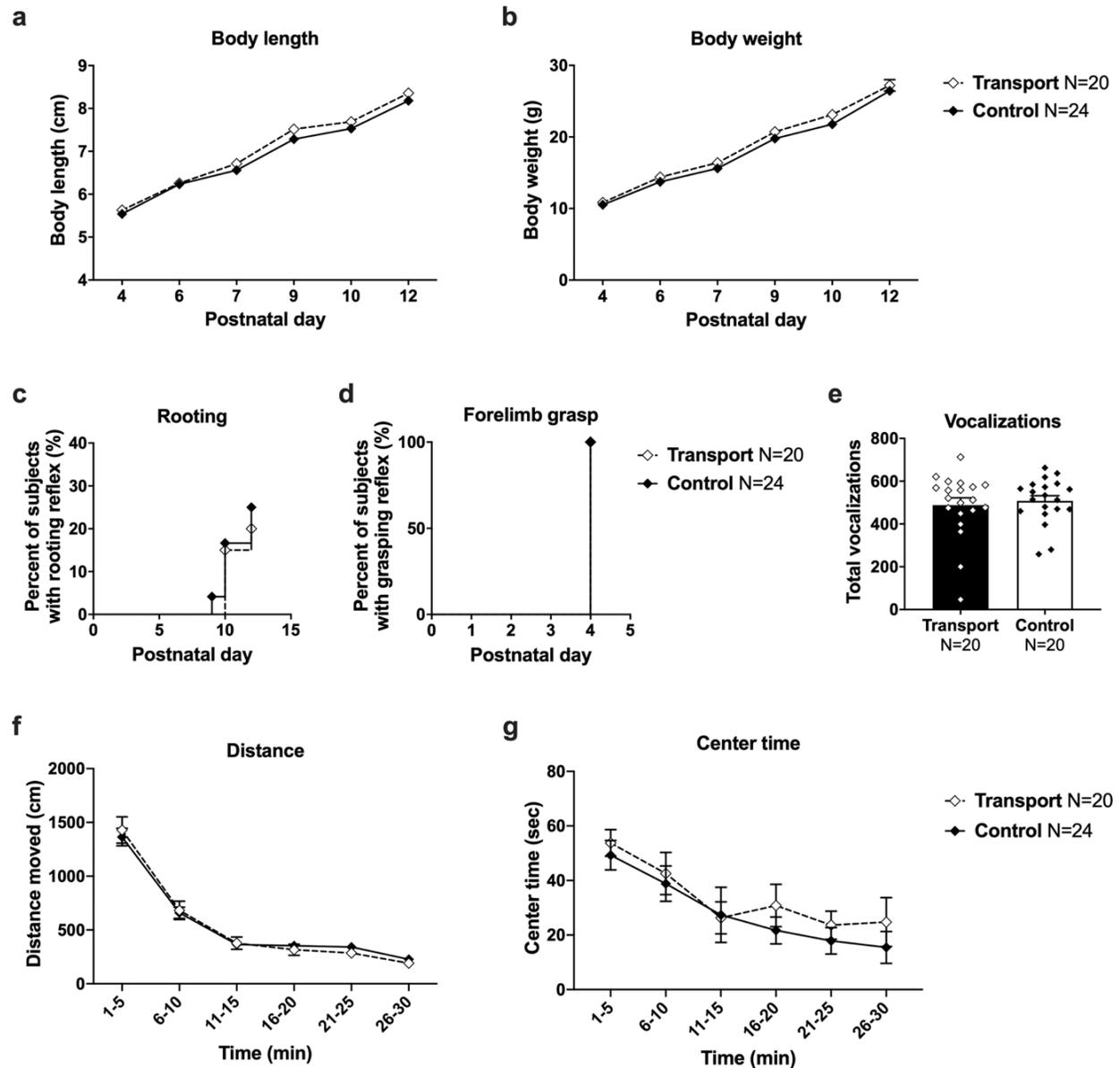
**Fig. 4** Roadside TRAP- and FA-exposed rats differed from lab controls during juvenile reciprocal social interactions on several key parameters. **a** Roadside exposures did not affect levels of exploration during the social interaction assay for males, however **b** TRAP-exposed males spent significantly more time following or chasing the stimulus animal than did FA-exposed or lab controls. **c** Roadside-reared males showed typical levels of social sniffing but **d** there was a significant effect of group on anogenital sniffing, with *post hoc* trends suggesting that both roadside exposure groups spent more time anogenital sniffing compared to lab controls. **e** Both TRAP- and FA-exposed males spent more time self-grooming than lab controls. **f** Females of all groups exhibited comparable levels of exploration, but **g** TRAP-exposed females spent more time following or chasing than lab controls. **h** FA-exposed females spent significantly less time social sniffing relative to lab controls and **i** both roadside groups had elevated levels of anogenital sniffing. **j** Females of all groups displayed similar levels of self-grooming. \* $p < 0.05$ , one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey's multiple comparisons test.



**Fig. 5 Atypical exploratory activity in a novel open field in rats exposed to roadside TRAP and FA.** **a** Roadside exposures did not affect males' gross locomotion or **b** time spent in the center during a 30-min exploration of a novel arena. **c** In females, there was a significant effect of group on distance moved, with trends suggesting that FA-exposed females covered more distance during the assay compared to lab controls. **d** TRAP-exposed females spent less time in the center than did FA-exposed females, and both TRAP- and FA-exposed females displayed significantly reduced center time relative to lab controls. \* $p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA followed by Tukey's multiple comparisons test.



**Fig. 6 Learning and memory in roadside exposed rats.** **a** Males exposed to TRAP or FA displayed intact novel object recognition as evidenced by spending significantly more time sniffing the novel object than the familiar object. **b** Exposure to TRAP did not affect contextual or cued fear memory in males and both TRAP and FA groups displayed high levels freezing day 1 post-training and to the cue presentation on day 3. **c** Both groups of roadside exposed females spent significantly more time investigating the novel object compared to the familiar object and **d** no group differences were observed in percent time freezing during the test of contextual and cued memory. **a, c**  $*p < 0.05$ , paired  $t$ -test, familiar vs. novel. **b, d**  $*p < 0.05$ , Day 1, 3: repeated measures ANOVA; Day 2: Student's  $t$ -test, TRAP vs. FA.



**Fig. 7 No effect of gestational transport alone on offspring development and behavior.** Pups born to dams that experienced a transport event at approximately GD 14 exhibited no physical or behavioral abnormalities. **a** Body length and **b** body weight were typical throughout early life, as was the timing of the development of **c** rooting and **d** forelimb grasping reflexes. **e** Gestational transport did not affect the number of isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations at PND 5 and **f** juveniles exhibited similar exploratory activity in a novel open field as indicated by total distance moved and **g** time spent in the center. **a, b, f, g**  $*p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA. **c, d**  $*p < 0.05$ , Log-Rank (Mantel-Cox) test. **e**  $*p < 0.05$ , Student's *t*-test.

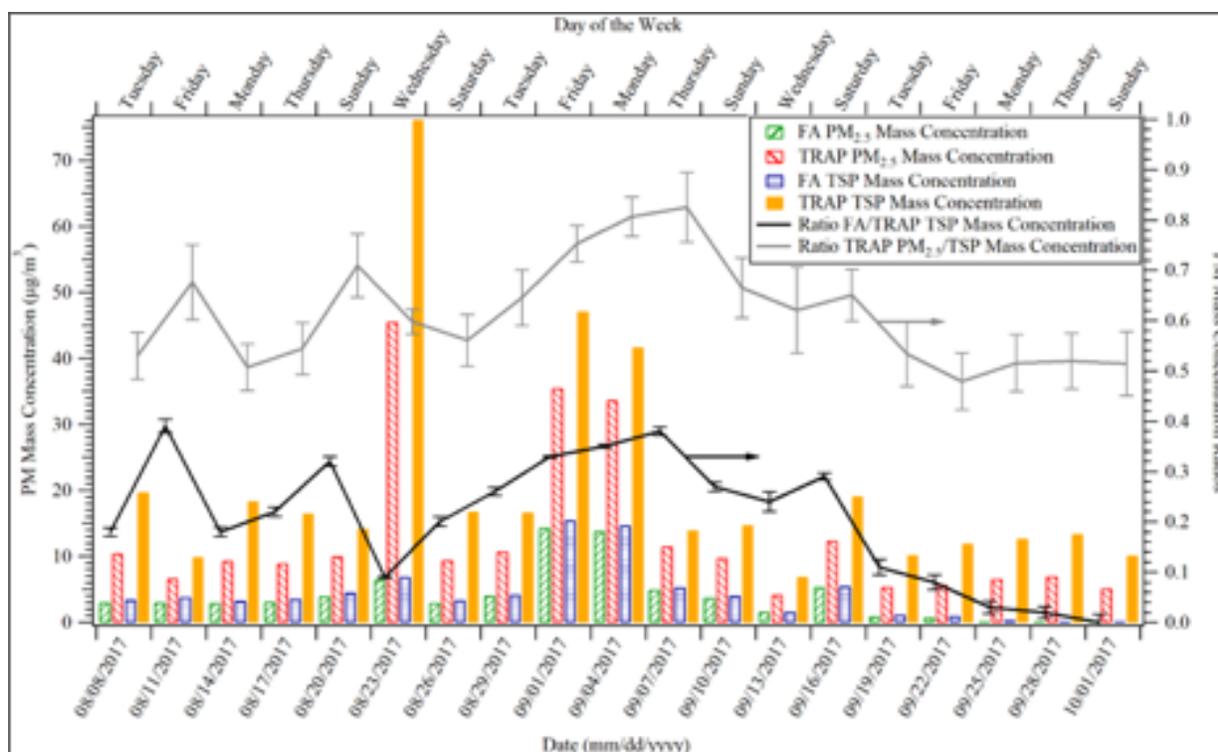
## Supplementary Information

**Table S1.** Comparison of litter size and offspring sex.

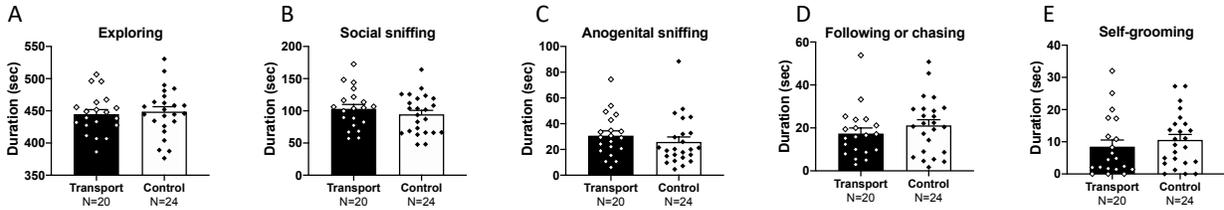
Parameter	TRAP Mean $\pm$ SEM (N=10)	FA Mean $\pm$ SEM (N=16)	Lab Mean $\pm$ SEM (N=9)	Statistical Summary			
				<b>Litter Size: One-way ANOVA</b>			
Litter size	12 $\pm$ 1	12 $\pm$ 1	9 $\pm$ 1	<b><i>F</i>(2, 32)</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>Sig?</b>	
				2.242	0.123	No	
Males	6 $\pm$ 1	6 $\pm$ 1	6 $\pm$ 1	<b>Offspring Sex: Two-way ANOVA</b>			
				<b>Factor</b>	<b><i>F</i>(1, 48)</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>Sig?</b>
Females	6 $\pm$ 1	6 $\pm$ 1	3 $\pm$ 1	Group	0.1100	0.742	No
				Sex	0.1100	0.742	No
				Interaction	0.2474	0.621	No

**Table S2.** Analysis summary of additional developmental milestones.

Males							
Milestone	Repeated measures ANOVA				Tukey's multiple comparisons test for effect of group		
	Factor	<i>F</i> (df)	<i>p</i>	Sig?	Comparison	Adjusted <i>p</i>	Sig?
Tail length (cm)	Time	$F(2.692, 137.3) = 1092$	<0.0001	Yes	TRAP vs. FA	0.480	No
	Group	$F(2, 51) = 6.329$	0.004	Yes	FA vs. Lab	0.032	Yes
	Int	$F(10, 255) = 3.116$	<0.001	Yes	TRAP vs. Lab	0.281	No
Righting reflex (sec)	Time	$F(2.573, 131.2) = 25.92$	<0.0001	Yes			
	Group	$F(2, 51) = 0.9020$	0.412	No			
	Int	$F(10, 255) = 1.508$	0.137	No			
Circle traverse (sec)	Time	$F(4.241, 216.3) = 46.95$	<0.0001	Yes			
	Group	$F(2, 51) = 1.173$	0.318	No			
	Int	$F(10, 255) = 0.4856$	0.899	No			
Negative geotaxis (sec)	Time	$F(3.852, 196.4) = 25.63$	<0.0001	Yes	TRAP vs. FA	0.999	No
	Group	$F(2, 51) = 0.0977$	0.907	No	FA vs. Lab	0.918	No
	Int	$F(10, 255) = 2.125$	0.023	Yes	TRAP vs. Lab	0.901	No
Cliff avoidance (sec)	Time	$F(4.196, 214) = 35.99$	<0.0001	Yes	TRAP vs. FA	0.400	No
	Group	$F(2, 51) = 6.422$	0.003	Yes	FA vs. Lab	<0.001	Yes
	Int	$F(10, 255) = 2.456$	0.008	Yes	TRAP vs. Lab	0.034	Yes
	<b>TRAP % achieved</b>	<b>FA % achieved</b>	<b>Lab % achieved</b>	<b>Chi square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>Sig?</b>
Bar hold (day)	35.0	35.0	35.71	0.1516	2	0.927	No
Females							
Milestone	Repeated measures ANOVA				Tukey's multiple comparisons test for effect of group		
	Factor	<i>F</i> (df)	<i>p</i>	Sig?	Comparison	Adjusted <i>p</i>	Sig?
Tail length (cm)	Time	$F(4.597, 248.2) = 1815$	<0.0001	Yes	TRAP vs. FA	0.448	No
	Group	$F(2, 54) = 9.871$	<0.001	Yes	FA vs. Lab	0.005	Yes
	Int	$F(10, 270) = 5.179$	<0.0001	Yes	TRAP vs. Lab	0.111	No
Righting reflex (sec)	Time	$F(2.849, 153.8) = 12.16$	<0.0001	Yes			
	Group	$F(2, 54) = 0.6852$	0.508	No			
	Int	$F(10, 270) = 1.421$	0.171	No			
Circle traverse (sec)	Time	$F(3.956, 213.6) = 58.43$	<0.0001	Yes			
	Group	$F(2, 54) = 0.6107$	0.547	No			
	Int	$F(10, 270) = 1.656$	0.091	No			
Negative geotaxis (sec)	Time	$F(4.287, 231.5) = 26.01$	<0.0001	Yes			
	Group	$F(2, 54) = 0.0486$	0.953	No			
	Int	$F(10, 270) = 1.811$	0.059	No			
Cliff avoidance (sec)	Time	$F(3.866, 208.8) = 49.91$	<0.0001	Yes	TRAP vs. FA	0.172	No
	Group	$F(2, 54) = 7.517$	0.001	Yes	FA vs. Lab	0.001	Yes
	Int	$F(10, 270) = 3.708$	<0.001	Yes	TRAP vs. Lab	0.225	No
	<b>TRAP % achieved</b>	<b>FA % achieved</b>	<b>Lab % achieved</b>	<b>Chi square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>Sig?</b>
Bar hold (day)	40.0	30.0	41.18	0.8043	2	0.669	No



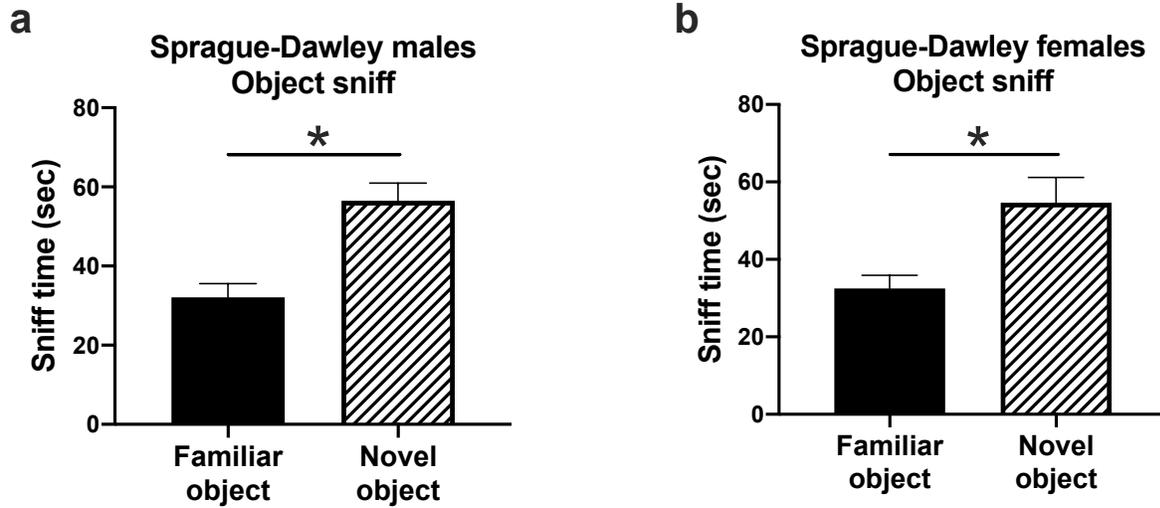
**Figure S1. Bars/left axis: temporal trends in 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> and Total Suspended Particulate (TSP) mass concentrations measured immediately upstream of the Filtered Air (FA) and Traffic-Related Air Pollution (TRAP) exposure chambers at the Facility for Roadway Air Pollution Exposure for the study duration. Lines/markers/right axis: temporal trends in the ratio of FA to TRAP TSP mass concentrations (black line) and ratio of TRAP PM<sub>2.5</sub> to TSP (gray line).** Filter-based PM samplers (1) owned and maintained by the Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) were deployed in this study to collect 24-hour continuous PM samples every third day for the study duration. PM mass concentrations were determined from gravimetric analysis of the collected filter samples according to the handling, storage, measurement and QA/QC protocols of the IMPROVE Particle Monitoring Network (2). Random errors associated with gravimetric analysis of the filter samples are estimated to be  $\pm 3$  mg per measurement, which equates to  $\pm 0.1$  mg/m<sup>3</sup> for the concentration calculations. Propagation of these uncertainties in the calculation of mass concentration ratios are included in the lines of the plot.



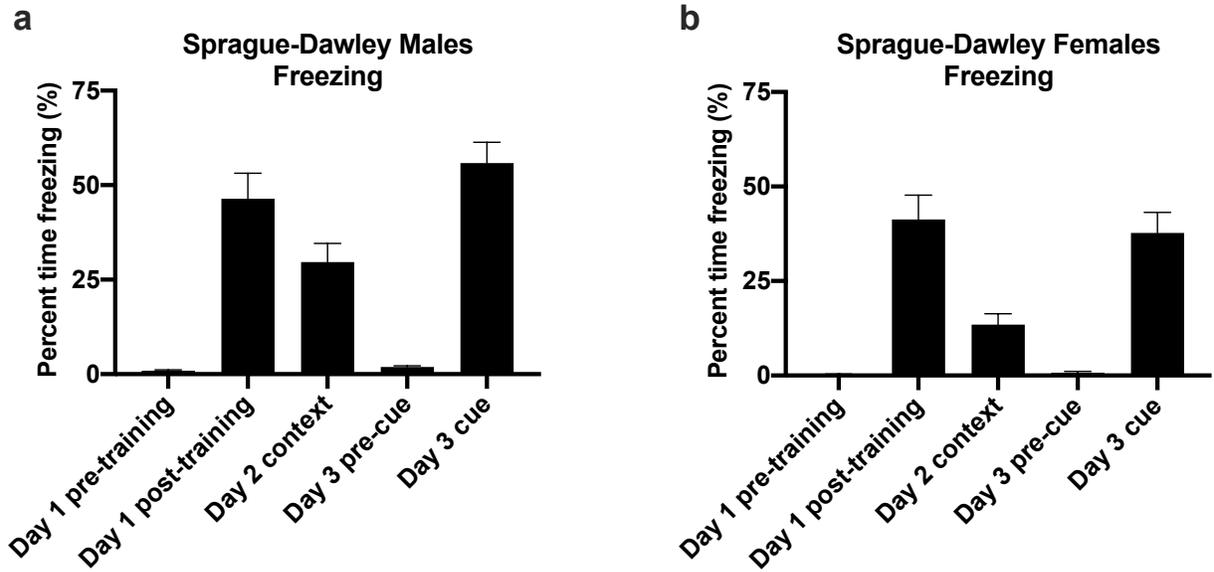
**Fig. S2. Exposure to transportation at ~GD14 did not alter juvenile reciprocal social interactions on several key parameters.** The transportation did not account for the findings observed in the roadside exposure groups in social play including A) levels of exploration during the social interaction assay, B) time social sniffing all body parts, C) time spent anogenital sniffing, and D) time spent following or chasing the stimulus animals. E) There was no effect of the transport on offspring measured by the time spent self-grooming compared to lab controls from dams that did not undergo the transport event.

**Table S3.** Analysis summary of reciprocal social interaction parameters following transport stress.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Transport Mean <math>\pm</math> SEM (N=20)</b>	<b>Control Mean <math>\pm</math> SEM (N=24)</b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b>df</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>Significant?</b>
Pounce (#)	1.90 $\pm$ 0.64	1.63 $\pm$ 0.48	0.3509	42	0.727	No
Pin (#)	0.25 $\pm$ 0.12	0.67 $\pm$ 0.21	1.654	42	0.106	No
Push under or crawl over (#)	6.10 $\pm$ 0.76	4.88 $\pm$ 0.75	1.147	42	0.258	No



**Fig. S3. Performance of laboratory-reared Sprague-Dawley rats in the test of novel object recognition.** Following the same testing protocol employed at the tunnel-adjacent exposure facility, Sprague-Dawley rat A) males (N=16) and B) females (N=15) reared and tested under UC Davis laboratory conditions spent significantly more time sniffing the novel object compared to the familiar object. \* $p < 0.05$ , paired  $t$ -test.



**Fig. S4. Performance by laboratory-reared Sprague-Dawley rats within the contextual and cued fear conditioning paradigm.** Following the same testing protocol employed at the tunnel-adjacent exposure facility, A) male Sprague-Dawley rats (N=26) reared and tested under UC Davis laboratory conditions exhibited little to no freezing pre-training and pre-cue, spent approximately 50% of the time freezing post-training and during the cue in a novel context, and 30% time freezing in the training context. B) Female Sprague-Dawley rats (N=23) reared and tested in a UC Davis laboratory exhibited little to no freezing pre-training and pre-cue, spent approximately 40% of the time freezing post-training and during the cue in a novel context, and 15% time freezing in the training context.

### Chapter 3

#### Translational Outcomes Relevant to Neurodevelopmental Disorders Following Early Life Exposure of Rats to Chlorpyrifos

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## **Abstract**

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs), including intellectual disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD), are pervasive, lifelong disorders for which pharmacological interventions are not readily available. Substantial increases in the prevalence of NDDs over a relatively short period may not be attributed solely to genetic factors and/or improved diagnostic criteria. There is now a consensus that multiple genetic loci combined with environmental risk factors during critical periods of neurodevelopment influence NDD susceptibility and symptom severity. Organophosphorus (OP) pesticides have been identified as potential environmental risk factors. Epidemiological studies suggest that children exposed prenatally to the OP pesticide chlorpyrifos (CPF) have significant mental and motor delays and strong positive associations for the development of a clinical diagnosis of intellectual delay or disability, ADHD, or ASD. We tested the hypothesis that developmental CPF exposure impairs behavior relevant to NDD phenotypes (i.e., deficits in social communication and repetitive, restricted behavior). Male and female rat pups were exposed to CPF at 0.1, 0.3, or 1.0 mg/kg (s.c.) from postnatal days 1-4. These CPF doses did not significantly inhibit acetylcholinesterase activity in the blood or brain but significantly impaired pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) in both sexes. Social communication in juveniles via positive affiliative 50-kHz USV playback was absent in females exposed to CPF at 0.3 mg/kg and 1.0 mg/kg. In contrast, this CPF exposure paradigm had no significant effect on gross locomotor abilities or contextual and cued fear memory. Ex vivo magnetic resonance imaging largely found no differences between the CPF-exposed rats and the corresponding vehicle controls using strict false discovery correction; however, there were interesting trends in females in the 0.3 mg/kg dose group. This work generated and characterized a rat model of developmental CPF exposure that exhibits adverse

behavioral phenotypes resulting from perinatal exposures at levels that did not significantly inhibit acetylcholinesterase activity in the brain or blood. These data suggest that current regulations regarding safe levels of CPF need to be reconsidered.

## **Background**

The wide use of insecticides has raised a significant concern due to possible health effects associated with exposure to these compounds [1–5]. Insecticides are used globally to control crop pests in agriculture, to reduce household pests, to reduce insect damage to lawns and golf courses, and as mosquito control agents [6–8]. Among the most widely used insecticides are the organophosphorus pesticides (OPs), which include chlorpyrifos, parathion, and diazinon [9, 10]. Prenatal exposure to OPs has been associated with abnormal psychomotor ability, deficits in working memory and intelligence quotient, and disrupted behaviors in children [8, 11–18]. Experimental studies have also demonstrated an association between prenatal exposure to OPs and abnormal developmental reflexes [19].

The most extensively studied OP pesticide to date with respect to neurodevelopmental insults has been chlorpyrifos (CPF). Eaton and colleagues published a comprehensive review that examined the large body of toxicological data and epidemiological information describing effects of CPF in humans, with an emphasis on its controversial adverse effects on neurodevelopment [7]. Subsequently, the UC Davis Childhood Autism Risks from Genetics and Environment (CHARGE) study [8, 18] reported significant associations between prenatal OP exposures and mental and motor delays and an increased risk of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Studies of a separate cohort of children in New York City provided corroborating behavioral data and brain structural neuroimaging of children prenatally exposed to CPF, illustrating enlargement of various cortical

regions and effects on underlying white matter [20]. A recent meta-analysis of the epidemiological data concluded that there is a positive association between CPF and neurodevelopmental disorders, which warranted further investigation of CPF developmental neurotoxicity [21].

Rodents exposed to relatively high, but subtoxic, doses of CPF during early life exhibit delayed development of psychomotor reflexes [22, 23], sexual-social behaviors [24, 25], and impaired cognitive performance [26–29] later in life. But whether developmental exposure to CPF at levels that do not significantly inhibit acetylcholinesterase (AChE) causes phenotypes of relevance to neurodevelopmental disorders remains unclear. The goal of this study was to generate and use a rat model of developmental exposure to CPF to study the effect of environmentally relevant levels of CPF on a range of behaviors in young animals, including social communication, Pavlovian learning and memory, anatomical phenotypes determined by magnetic resonance imaging, and sexually dimorphic effects on these outcomes. The exposure paradigm used in this study was based on the finding from the CHARGE study which showed that pesticides had the most significant effect on health outcomes when exposure occurred during the third trimester [8, 18].

Characterizing the developmental neurotoxicity of environmentally relevant CPF exposures is required for assessing the risk that CPF poses to the developing brain, and for developing policies to protect the developing brain from this risk. In 2017, the federal EPA administrator denied a widespread petition to ban CPF, which is currently being appealed and battled in litigation. Additionally, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation announced in early 2019 that it will cancel the registration that currently allows chlorpyrifos to be sold in California. Thus, we aimed to use our preclinical model system to further clarify links between CPF exposure and adverse neurodevelopmental outcomes. This knowledge of CPF developmental

neurotoxicity is crucial for implementing protective policies and mechanisms for estimating whether low dose exposures, via food and water consumption, pose real threats to human health.

## **Methods**

**Materials.** Chlorpyrifos (CPF; o,o-diethyl [o-3,5,6-trichloro-2-pyridinol] phosphorothionate; 99.5% purity) was purchased from Chem Service (West Chester, PA, USA) and used within 6 months of purchase with interim storage as recommended by the manufacturer. Solutions were made weekly in NEOBEE® M-5 oil vehicle (Spectrum Chemical, Gardena, CA, USA) at their final concentrations and stored in a polypropylene container in the dark at room temperature.

**Subjects.** Male and female Sprague-Dawley rats were purchased from Envigo (Indianapolis, Indiana) to generate cohorts for testing. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) at the University of California Davis and were conducted in accordance with the National Institutes of Health Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. All animals were housed in a temperature-controlled vivarium maintained on a 12:12 light-dark cycle. OP pesticides were not applied in the vivarium before or during the study. To identify individual subjects, pups were labeled on the back via permanent marker on postnatal day 1, which was reapplied daily. As fur developed, animals were identified via tail marks, which were coded to allow investigators to run and score behaviors blind to the experimental group.

*Cohorts.* One cohort of rats, which consisted of 58 rat pups from 9 litters, was tested for early life communication. Rat pups were exposed daily to CPF (1.0 or 3.0 mg/kg) or vehicle (Neobee Coconut Oil; Spectrum Chemical MFG Corp) via s.c. injection (2 mL/kg) with a 30 gauge Hamilton syringe on postnatal day (PND) 1-4. On PND 8, pups underwent isolation-induced ultrasonic vocalization (USV) collection. These data, summarized in **Supplementary Fig. S1**, were the basis for the decision to test doses lower than 1.0 mg/ kg in a second cohort. A second cohort of rats, which consisted of 2 males and 2 females from each of 25 litters, was analyzed for early life and juvenile behavioral effects as well as juvenile neuroanatomical effects of CPF exposure. Rat pups were exposed daily to CPF at 0.1, 0.3, or 1.0 mg/kg or to an equal volume of vehicle (Neobee Coconut Oil; Spectrum Chemical MFG Corp) via s.c. injection (2 mL/kg) with a 30 gauge Hamilton syringe on PND 1-4. Litters were reduced to 8 pups (4 m and 4 f when possible) on PND 4, at which time, the culled littermates of the behavioral subjects were analyzed for acetylcholinesterase (AChE) activity in brain and blood at 1 h postinjection. The behavioral battery consisted of pup ultrasonic vocalizations and developmental milestones on PND 8, 12, and 16, locomotion in an open field, response to USV playback, and cued and contextual fear conditioning. After behavioral testing, brains were harvested and fixed for MRI analysis.

**Behavioral assays.** *Isolation-induced pup 40-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations.* During the first few weeks of life, rodent pups emit ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) when separated from their mother and litter [30–32]. On PND 8, 12, and 16 pups were individually removed from the nest in a random order and placed into an open-top plastic isolation container containing corncob bedding. USV were collected for 3 min with an ultrasonic microphone (Avisoft Bioacoustics, Glienicke,

Germany) using methods outlined previously [33, 34]. Immediately following USV collection, body temperature and body weight were measured.

*Open field locomotion.* Sedation or hyperactivity may have confounding effects on assays of sociability. Therefore, on PND 19, exploratory activity in a novel open field was automatically measured for 30 min as described previously [33, 34].

*USV playback.* Behavioral responses to playback of 50-kHz ultrasonic vocalizations were measured on PND 24-27 as previously described [34]. Briefly, rats were placed individually on an 8-arm elevated radial maze and presented with pro-social 50-kHz USV and a time- and amplitude-matched white noise acoustic stimulus control using an ultrasonic speaker (Avisoft Bioacoustics, Glienicke, Germany). Social exploratory and approach behavior in response to the USV were assessed, as was the behavioral response to the white noise stimulus.

*Cued and contextual fear conditioning.* Learning and memory were assessed on PND 30-33 using a previously described 3-day cued and contextual fear conditioning assay [35]. On day one, rats were trained to associate a foot shock with a specific environmental context as well as with a white noise auditory cue using automated chambers (Med Associates, Inc., St. Albans, Vermont). Approximately 24 h later, rats were re-exposed to the same context without the auditory cue and time spent freezing was quantified to assess contextual fear memory. Approximately 48 h following the initial training, rats were re-exposed to the auditory cue in a novel environmental context and time spent freezing was quantified to assess cued fear memory.

**Ex vivo neuroimaging via magnetic resonance imaging.** On PND 35-36, brains were flushed via transcardial perfusion (flow rate of 2 mL/min) with 50 mL phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) containing 10 U/mL heparin and 2 mM ProHance (a gadolinium-based contrast agent;

Bracco Diagnostics Inc.), fixed with 50 mL 4% paraformaldehyde (PFA) in PBS containing 2 mM ProHance, and collected for neuroimaging following previously published protocols [36]. Following perfusion, brains were incubated in the 4% PFA solution for 24 h at 4 °C then transferred to a storage PBS solution containing 0.02% sodium azide. Brains were incubated in the storage solution at 4 °C for at least 1 month prior to scanning. Images were acquired and analyzed following a protocol previously described [33, 37]. Multiple comparisons were controlled for using the false discovery rate (FDR) with the significance level for the FDR-adjusted p value (q) set at  $q < 0.05$  [38].

**AChE activity assay.** One hour following the final CPF dosing on PND 4, pups were euthanized by decapitation and blood was collected by cardiac puncture into tubes containing EDTA as an anti-coagulant (Becton-Dickinson, Franklin Lakes, NJ). Blood was diluted 1:25 with phosphate buffer with 0.03% Triton X-100 (Fisher Scientific, Pittsburg, PA), vortexed, and snap frozen for later analysis. Brains were collected and snap frozen for later analysis. For the AChE activity assay, brain tissue was thawed on ice, homogenized in phosphate buffer with 1% Triton X-100, and AChE activity quantified using the standard Ellman Assay [39] with 5,5'-dithio-bis-2-nitrobenzoic acid (DTMB) and acetylthiocholine iodide (ASChI) as the substrates (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO). Tetraisopropyl pyrophosphoramidate (Sigma) was included to inhibit pseudocholinesterase. Blood AChE activity was normalized to hemoglobin levels, which were determined using a StanBio Laboratory Stat-Site M hemoglobin meter and test strips (Boerne, TX, USA). Brain AChE activity was normalized to protein concentration as determined using the BCA assay kit (Pierce, Rockford, IL).

**Statistical analyses.** Developmental vocalizations, temperature, weight, and open field metrics were analyzed via repeated measures ANOVA with dose as the between-group factor and time as the within-group factor. Following detection of a significant main effect and/or time by dose interaction, *post hoc* testing was carried out using Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons test. Paired t tests (one per dose group) were used to compare time spent on the proximal and distal arms during the USV playback paradigm and locomotion during the playback test was compared using repeated measures or one-way ANOVA. Comparisons between freezing times were carried out for each test phase with one-way ANOVA. Acetylcholinesterase activity was analyzed using one-way ANOVA. Data were analyzed via GraphPad Prism. All significance levels were set at  $p < 0.05$  and all  $t$  tests were two tailed. Multiple comparisons were corrected for via *post hoc* testing using Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons test.

## Results

### **Developmental CPF exposure reduced isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations.**

Pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) of infant rats measure an early communicative behavior between pups and mother. Isolation-induced USV were collected for 3 min as social communication signals in rat pups, as previously described [33]. CPF-exposed pups emitted significantly fewer USV across early development (**Fig. 1a** (males)  $F_{(2, 90)} = 286.5, p < 0.001$ ; **Fig. 1b** (females)  $F_{(2, 90)} = 267.7, p < 0.001$ ). As pups grow, they learn to temperature regulate, open their eyes, and are less reliant on maternal care, which is why USV decrease in number over developmental days. There was a significant main effect of experimental group on USV emission ( $F_{\text{males } (3, 45)} = 3.048, p < 0.05$ ). Holm-Sidak *post hoc* analysis corrected for multiple comparisons highlighted significant differences on PND 12, when fewer USV were emitted in the 1.0 mg/kg

CPF-exposed male pups, and on PND 16 in all CPF dose groups compared to vehicle. CPF-exposed female pups also emitted significantly fewer USV ( $F_{(3, 37)} = 2.949, p < 0.05$ ). Holm-Sidak *post hoc* analysis highlighted strong trending differences on PND 8, as fewer USV were emitted in the 0.3 mg/kg CPF-exposed female pups ( $p = 0.061$ ), and significant differences at PND 12 and 16 in the 0.3 mg/kg CPF-exposed female pups compared to vehicle.

Body weight and temperature were also collected to assure the reduced USV were not the result of being physically smaller as body weight is known to alter pup USV emission [30, 31]. Body temperature did not differ between CPF exposure groups and vehicle (**Fig. 1c** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.5381, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 1d** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.67, p > 0.05$ ). Weight did not differ between CPF exposure groups and vehicle (**Fig. 1e** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.2745, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 1f** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.5234, p > 0.05$ ), indicating typical growth and ability to thrive. In addition to being important control metrics for the pup USV assay, the observation that overall growth and health was not impacted by CPF exposure confirms the lack of systemic toxicity that has been reported with higher CPF doses using a functional observation battery [40, 41].

Analysis of typical early neurological reflexes did not reveal any significant differences between CPF-exposed pups and vehicle controls (**Supplementary Fig. S2**). Specifically, there were no significant differences between exposure groups in latencies to navigate upright in negative geotaxis and circle traverse, simple metrics for motoric, postural, and proprioceptive processes that underlie the ability of infant rodents to navigate on an inclined plane or to the outer rim from the center of circle (**Fig. S2A** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.4776, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. S2B** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 1.098, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. S2C** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 1.224, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. S2D** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 1.1319, p > 0.05$ ).

### **Normal locomotion and exploratory activity following developmental CPF exposure.**

Normal motor function following early life exposure to low doses of CPF was confirmed by lack of an effect of CPF on motor abilities in the open field exploratory locomotion task across a 30-min session. No CPF effect was observed in activity metrics of horizontal activity (**Fig. 2a** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.2303, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 2b** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.3341, p > 0.05$ ), vertical activity (**Fig. 2c** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.2278, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 2d** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.2562, p > 0.05$ ), or time spent in the center of the arena (**Fig. 2e** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.7749, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 2f** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 2.150, p > 0.05$ ).

**Reduced social exploration to affiliative 50-kHz ultrasonic calls (USV) in female CPF-exposed juveniles.** Social exploratory behavior displayed by the male (**Fig. 3c**  $t_{(1, 13)} = 3.576, p < 0.005$ ) and female vehicle control groups (**Fig. 3d**  $t_{(1, 13)} = 3.509, p < 0.005$ ) was directed toward playback of pro-social 50-kHz USV, as reflected in the parameter of time spent on the arms proximal to the sound source emitting 50-kHz USV as compared to the distal arms of the radial maze. All groups of male juvenile rats (vehicle and each dose of CPF) spent significantly longer on the arms proximal to the speaker emitting the 50-kHz USV upon playback (**Fig. 3c** (0.1 dose)  $t_{(1, 13)} = 2.738, p < 0.02$ ; **Fig. 3c** (0.3 dose)  $t_{(1, 13)} = 4.587, p < 0.001$ ; **Fig. 3c** (1.0 dose)  $t_{(1, 13)} = 4.502, p < 0.001$ ). In contrast, the 0.3 mg/kg and 1.0 mg/kg CPF-exposed females rats did not spend significantly more time on the proximal arms (**Fig. 3d** (0.1 dose)  $t_{(1, 13)} = 3.001, p < 0.005$ ; **Fig. 3d** (0.3 dose)  $t_{(1, 13)} = 1.373, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 3d** (1.0 dose)  $t_{(1, 13)} = 0.7127, p > 0.05$ ).

All groups demonstrated a similar locomotor response to the 50-kHz USV, characterized by elevated movement during the USV as compared to baseline (**Fig. 3e** (males, time)  $F_{(1, 46)} = 100.5, p < 0.0001$ ; **Fig. 3e** (males, group)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.337, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 3e** (males, time x group)

$F_{(3, 46)} = 0.533, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 3f** (females, time)  $F_{(1, 46)} = 45.90, p < 0.0001$ ; **Fig. 3f** (females, group)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.379, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 3f** (females, time x group)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.682, p > 0.05$ ). Distance traveled in response to the white noise control stimulus did not differ between exposure groups, and all groups exhibited comparable levels of locomotion before (**Fig. 3g** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.707, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 3h** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.448, p > 0.05$ ) and during the noise stimulus (**Fig. 3g** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 1.094, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 3h** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 1.596, p > 0.05$ ). These findings rule out the possibility of a confounding hearing deficit in the CPF-exposed groups.

**CPF-exposed rats demonstrated intact contextual and cued fear memory.** Learning and memory was evaluated using two measures of Pavlovian fear conditioning with a 24 h contextual component and a 48 h tone cued fear conditioning. High levels of freezing were observed subsequent to the conditioned stimulus (CS)—unconditioned stimulus (UCS) pairings on the training day, in both exposed groups (**Fig. 4a** (males) no group difference in post-training freeze scores,  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.3342, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 4b** (females) no group difference in post-training freeze scores,  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.2033, p > 0.05$ ), indicating no confounds and no deficits in the learning of the associations between the context stimuli and tone cues. No exposure group difference in freezing was observed 24 h following CSUCS training (**Fig. 4c** (males)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.02571, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 4d** (females)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.2045, p > 0.05$ ) when placed in the context chamber from conditioning training with identical stimulus cues. Levels of freezing, pre- and postcue presentation 48 h after training, showed no effect of exposure (**Fig. 4e** (males, pre-cue)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.1365, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 4e** (males, cue)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.6103, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 4f** (females, pre-cue)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.3858, p > 0.05$ ; **Fig. 4f** (females, cue)  $F_{(3, 46)} = 0.2999, p > 0.05$ ).

### **Neuroanatomical pathology at PND 35 following developmental CPF exposure.**

Overall, the total brain volumes were not observed to be different between groups ( $1683 \pm 101$  mm<sup>3</sup> for vehicle,  $1649 \pm 51$  mm<sup>3</sup> for a CPF dosage of 0.1 mg/kg,  $1675 \pm 123$  mm<sup>3</sup> for 0.3 mg/kg, and  $1662 \pm 68$  mm<sup>3</sup> for 1.0 mg/kg). A difference in total brain volume between vehicle and CPF exposure at 0.3 mg/kg of  $-2.27\%$  observed in the females was a mere one hundredth from significance ( $p = 0.06$ ,  $q = 0.22$ ). There were no significant findings for any CPF exposure group nor for any sex when correcting for multiple comparisons. There was a trend toward a decrease in the hippocampal region ( $-3.29\%$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ,  $q = 0.22$ ), which appeared to be localized to Ammon's Horn ( $-3.52\%$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ,  $q = 0.22$ ). Additional trends toward a loss in volume were found in the fiber tracts ( $-2.61\%$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ,  $q = 0.22$ ), with the strongest trends found in the fimbria ( $-3.63\%$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ,  $q = 0.22$ ) and the cortical spinal tract ( $-5.11\%$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ,  $q = 0.22$ ). Voxelwise comparisons also revealed no significant differences, but again interesting trends were seen in the female rats exposed to CPF at 0.3 mg/kg (**Fig. 5**). Interestingly, at the 0.3 mg/kg dosage, opposite effects are seen in males versus females with males showing positive effect size differences and females showing negative effect size differences (**Fig. 5**).

**Normal brain and blood AChE activity following CPF exposure.** None of the three doses of CPF significantly altered the enzymatic activity of AChE in the brain (**Fig. 6a**  $F_{(3,35)} = 0.1252$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) or in the blood (**Fig. 6b**  $F_{(3,34)} = 0.2137$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

### **Discussion**

There is an extensive literature describing the developmental neurotoxicity of the OP pesticide chlorpyrifos (CPF). Epidemiological studies [8, 11–17], which provide compelling links

between early life exposure to OPs and abnormal early cognitive development, may offer insights into the rising prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs). Epidemiological studies suggest that prenatal exposure to CPF, particularly during the second or third trimester, is associated with significant mental and motor delays and with a clinical diagnosis of NDD, including ADHD and ASD [8, 16, 18, 20, 42]. To date, there have been fewer reports in preclinical mouse and rat models testing the hypothesis that developmental CPF exposure impairs behaviors relevant to the broad NDD phenotype. Herein, we report the initial behavioral and anatomical characterization of a rat model of developmental CPF exposure at doses that do not significantly inhibit acetylcholinesterase (AChE) activity. The most significant effect, reduced ultrasonic vocalization emission in pups, was observed in both sexes. We also discovered reduced social communication via a 50-kHz USV playback assay, a USV call and behavioral response task that can only be performed/observed in rats, which supports our hypothesis because aberrant social communication aligns with the clinical profiles of many NDDs. Structural imaging illustrated a large number of changes in brain volume and a variety of neuroanatomical phenotypes. Collectively, this study identified unique NDD-relevant functional and anatomical phenotypes as preclinical outcomes in response to developmental CPF exposures that had no effects on AChE activity.

This is the first report of reduced ultrasonic vocalizations in rat pups following developmental CPF exposure. Ultrasonic vocalizations in pups are crucial signals that elicit maternal care, without which pups would not be able to thermoregulate or suckle [43]. Reduced USV communication has been discovered in many genetic rat models of NDD, including those with mutations in synaptic genes, such as *Shank3*, cellular housekeeping genes such as ubiquitin ligase *Ube3a* that causes Angelman syndrome, and the calcium channel gene *Cacna1c* [33, 34, 44],

as well as numerous genetic mouse models of NDD, including 16p11.2 deletion syndrome [45], the Ca(V)1.2 L-type calcium channel gene that causes Timothy Syndrome [46], synaptic genes such as neuroligins [47], and high confidence ASD candidate genes, such as Tbx1 [48]. Reduced USV communication has also been reported in models of environmentally induced NDD phenotypes, including maternal immune activation [49], prenatal exposure to valproic acid [50, 51], and developmental exposure to traffic-related air pollution [35].

While we exposed rats to CPF during the first days of postnatal life, our findings are consistent with earlier literature showing that exposure to CPF during the gestational period resulted in altered behavioral and physical development in rodent pups in a sex-dependent manner. Venerosi and colleagues reported delayed somatic growth, reduced ultrasonic vocalizations, and increased latency to emit calls in male and female CD-1 mouse pups prenatally exposed to CPF [52], corroborating clinical reports in epidemiological studies [53]. Among mice exposed to the subtoxic doses of 1 and 3 mg/kg/d CPF on PND 1-4 and PND 11-14, hyperactivity was observed only in those exposed to 3 mg/kg/d CPF on PND 11-14 [24], which is consistent with our observation that the lower CPF doses tested in this study caused neither hypoactivity nor hyperactivity in rats in the open field task. However, in contrast to our findings, in the CD-1 strain mouse studies, the PND 1-4 exposure reduced brain cholinesterase activity by 25%. Studies of rats injected with 1 mg/kg/d CPF on PND 1-4 have also reported significantly reduced AChE activity in the brain ranging from 20 to 60% depending on sex and the interval between the last injection of CPF and the collection of tissue for analyses [22, 54]. The key differences between our study and the two earlier rat studies was the vehicle used for CPF dosing: we used a coconut oil preparation whereas the previously published rat studies, and the mouse study, used DMSO. Pharmacokinetic studies in adult rats have shown that subcutaneous administration of CPF in corn

oil resulted in faster absorption and metabolism of CPF compared to a subcutaneous administration of CPF in DMSO [55]. Whether this is the reason why we did not see a significant inhibition of AChE whereas other studies have despite using the same doses over the same developmental ages in the same rat strain has yet to be determined.

Exposure to CPF at 1 mg/kg during early postnatal life elicited deficits in reflex righting and geotaxis behavior in female rat pups [22]. This was also observed recently in Harlan-derived B6 mice exposed to 2.5 mg/kg of CPF on gestational days 12-15 [23]. Exposure to CPF at 1.5 mg/kg in early postnatal life reduced body weight in male Sprague-Dawley rats [28]. In contrast, we observed no effect of the CPF doses on the neonatal reflexes of negative geotaxis and circle traverse.

We discovered impaired juvenile behavioral responses to the playback of 50-kHz USV, a positive affiliative social contact call associated with play and social interactions. Reductions in playback social approach have been observed in other genetic rat models of NDD such as *Shank3*, *Ube3a*, and *Cacna1c* [33, 34, 44]. Juvenile social approach during playback is a bidirectional social communication behavior commonly studied in rats rather than mice as most reports that use choice playback in mice use sexual mating calls to elicit behavior [56, 57] and because inbred or congenic B6J mice cannot hear in the frequency range of ultrasonic vocalizations [58, 59]. We observed that female rats exposed to CPF at 0.3 or 1.0 mg/kg have a deficit in the key social approach behavior following a playful 50-kHz USV. This effect is not a consequence of deficits in psychomotor activation, motor abilities, or hearing. This conclusion is based on no evidence of motor impairments in the open field, pre-training or pre-cue activity in fear conditioning, and the total distance traversed following presentation of 50kHz USV, a key control metric for the social playback assay. These observations suggest the arousal-evoking component of the playback is

intact but that the deficit is specific to the social approach parameter of the assay. This could be due to multiple reasons including the CPF-exposed rats not being able to localize the sound source, the CPF-exposed rats having less dopaminergic-mediated motivation for social reward, and/or the CPF-exposed rats not being able to understand the communicative function of the pro-social 50-kHz USV. Differentiating between the various possible explanations will require future experiments beyond the scope of this initial generation of the rat model [60–62].

Our observations of the effects of developmental CPF exposure are novel because they are among the first reports of NDD-relevant phenotypes in a socially sophisticated rodent species, the rat. Our findings extend earlier literature of unusual social behavior elicited by developmental CPF exposure in mouse models with a wide variety of doses and exposure windows. Mouse research showed that neonatal CPF exposure (3 mg/kg) increased sexual social soliciting behaviors, specifically aggressive behaviors in mice exposed to a subtoxic dose of CPF during a different early life period (PND 11-14) [24]. Adult male mice exposed to CPF prenatally (6 mg/kg) or postnatally (3 mg/kg) exhibited increased aggressive behaviors during a social dyadic interaction test [25]. The increase in aggressive behaviors in male mice at an age when affiliative behaviors should be prevalent suggests a deviation from the species-typical pattern of social behavior [63]. Moreover, gestational and neonatal exposure to CPF resulted in impaired nest building and maternal aggression in lactating female mice, indicating impaired maternal behavior [64, 65]. Mounting evidence suggests that CPF could disrupt the endocrine system and adversely affect social behavior in a sexually dimorphic manner, as extensively reviewed elsewhere [66]. A recent study reported reductions in social preference ratio in Harlan-derived B6 mice of both sexes exposed to 2.5 mg/kg or 5.0 mg/kg of CPF on gestational days 12-15 [67]. Our findings contrast with a report of increased social play in juvenile rats using CPF doses of less than 1.0 mg/kg [68];

however, the dosing in our study was across PND 1-4 while that exposure paradigm started at PND 10 and lasted for 7 days, emphasizing the critical effect of timing in behavioral toxicology. Detailed examination of reciprocal social play interactions is planned for subsequent studies.

This is also the first report to utilize *ex vivo* MRI to examine broad effects of developmental CPF exposure. Neuroanatomically, the CPF dosages had no significant effects on the mesoscopic brain structure of the rats. There were interesting trends at the 0.3 mg/kg dose, in particular, the divergent direction of the structural findings in males (increased volume) and females (volumetric reductions). Typically, in neuroimaging studies of genetic mouse models, significant differences in relative regional volumes are usually found in about 65% of cases [69]. These types of studies are powered at 80% which should typically find regional differences in the mouse at 3-5%, which is consistent with some of the differences at 0.3 mg/kg dose. Powered at this level, our studies tend to be more sensitive to widespread changes rather than focal ones, which could explain our observation of “trends” in this work. Additionally, it is possible that there is increased variability in the rat versus mouse due to the substantially more variable genetic background than in the mouse, but this remains to be tested for CPF exposures specifically and is only beginning to be compared in genetic rat models of NDDs. It should also be noted that the findings here do not indicate that there are no structural differences due to CPF, only that no significant changes are detectable at the mesoscopic resolution of the MRI. Going forward, we will perform more regionally targeted neuroanatomy using the strongest trending areas observed in this study.

We did not observe effects of developmental CPF exposure on motor activity. While others have observed changes, those effects were found at higher dose exposures and/or in mice. For example, pre- and postnatal CPF exposure (6 or 3 mg/kg, respectively) markedly increased locomotor activity in adult male mice tested in the open field [25]. These results corroborated the

finding of decreased habituation rate in rats exposed to 1.0 mg/kg CPF during the later postnatal period [29]. However, habituation rate on a radial maze is not the same metric as assessing locomotion in a novel arena. Exposure to CPF at 1 mg/kg during early postnatal life reduced locomotor activity and rearing in adolescent Sprague Dawley male rats [22]. However, rats postnatally exposed to diazinon (0.5 and 2 mg/kg), another OP pesticide, exhibited normal locomotor activity and a normal habituation pattern in a 1 h figure-8 locomotor activity test [70]. Taken together, there is a lack of consistency and corroboration suggesting that locomotor activity is not a sensitive, reproducible, and rigorous endpoint for low level OP exposures in preclinical rodent models. Adverse effects on performance are often observed in a single laboratory, and follow-up literature is unable to reproduce or delineate cognitive impairments from motoric dysfunction [71, 72]. Future directions intended to comprehensively assess motor behavior with a specific behavioral battery that includes gait, balance, coordination, velocity, temporal and spatial dynamic metrics over rudimentary activity, and/or habituation will lead to improved translational value. This will allow for direct comparisons to humans using devices such as pressure sensitive mats, electromyographic recordings, and wrist or ankle monitors that measure activity/balance.

We also did not observe any deficits in cued and contextual fear conditioning, a classic yet simplistic assay of learning and memory. Earlier studies found that juvenile rats exposed to doses of CPF (0.3 or 7.0 mg/kg) early in life (PND 7, 11, and 15) exhibited spatial learning deficits in the Morris water maze [27]. A second cohort of juvenile rats exposed to CPF (0.3 and 7.0 mg/kg) at a later age (PND 22 and 26) exhibited similar impairments [27]. Neonatal CPF exposure (5 mg/kg) on PND 1-4, but not on PND 5-11, impaired radial-arm maze choice accuracy during the initial phase of training when the test situation is novel or cholinergic inputs are required [29]. As these assays measure substantially different components of learning and memory, we are cautious

to state there is a contrast between our findings and that of these earlier reports. As most literature points to a significant effect of CPF on learning and memory, we attribute differences between previous results and our lack of this finding in fear conditioning to the lack of task sensitivity as well as varying doses and timing of exposures. Future directions intend to comprehensively assess the adverse effects of developmental exposure to CPF on learning and memory with improved translational value by using computerized touchscreen technology, which will hopefully unify the current literature, as each earlier report measured a different parameter or form of learning and memory.

A key question is the relevance of the doses used in this study to human exposures. The estimated average daily combined intake of chlorpyrifos and chlorpyrifosmethyl for infants ranges from 0.003  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$  [73] to 0.018  $\text{ug}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$  [7]. While these levels are many orders of magnitude lower than the doses administered to postnatal rats in this study, it is critical to remember that the human data reflect estimated average daily exposures and do not take into account exposures during periods of active pesticide exposure in the home, school, or nearby agricultural fields. A more relevant comparison is CPF levels in human cord blood at birth, which range from 3.7  $\text{pg}/\text{g}$  [16] to > 6.17  $\text{pg}/\text{g}$  [74]. The peak level of CPF in the blood of PND 5 rats dosed with CPF at 1  $\text{mg}/\text{kg}$  in DMSO (s.c.) was approximately 9  $\text{ng}/\text{ml}$  [75]. While these data imply that our dosing paradigm likely resulted in CPF levels in the postnatal rats that are 2-3 orders of magnitude higher than are detected in human neonates, direct comparison of these levels to determine relevance is complicated by the observation that rat blood contains high levels of circulating carboxyesterases, which metabolically inactivate organophosphorus (OP) insecticides, such as CPF, whereas humans have low levels of these enzymes [74]. Thus, the percentage of any CPF dose that reaches the brain is likely to be significantly lower in rats than in humans.

Biological mechanisms of OP toxicity are complex. The canonical mechanism of OP neurotoxicity is inhibition of AChE, which hydrolyzes acetylcholine. More importantly, and most relevant to the present work, it is widely posited that developmental OP neurotoxicity involves mechanisms other than or in addition to AChE inhibition, as recently reviewed [76, 77]. The robust behavioral findings reported in these animals exposed to CPF at doses that have no significant effect on blood or brain AChE clearly support non-cholinergic mechanisms as contributing to effects that are translationally relevant for NDDs. Further biochemical assays using this exposure paradigm must be evaluated in future follow-up studies.

## **Conclusions**

Collectively, our results indicate that early life exposure to the OP pesticide CPF leads to behavioral and some possible neuroanatomical differences in rats that are highly relevant to NDDs. Interestingly, the effects of CPF we observed were strong, observed at multiple timepoints of development, in both sexes, and at doses that did not inhibit AChE activity. By developing and utilizing a novel rat model of developmental CPF exposure, which leverages the sophisticated vocal communication system of rats, we characterized the effect of environmentally relevant CPF exposures on a range of behaviors and were able to detect impaired social communication in pups and juveniles. Critically, these effects occurred in the absence of AChE inhibition, which is the endpoint used to regulate OP exposures to protect human health.

The public health implications of these results are significant, as pesticides continue to be widely used resulting in widespread human exposures. With the laws regarding pesticide application currently under debate, this work provides timely and much needed experimental evidence to inform future policy decisions.

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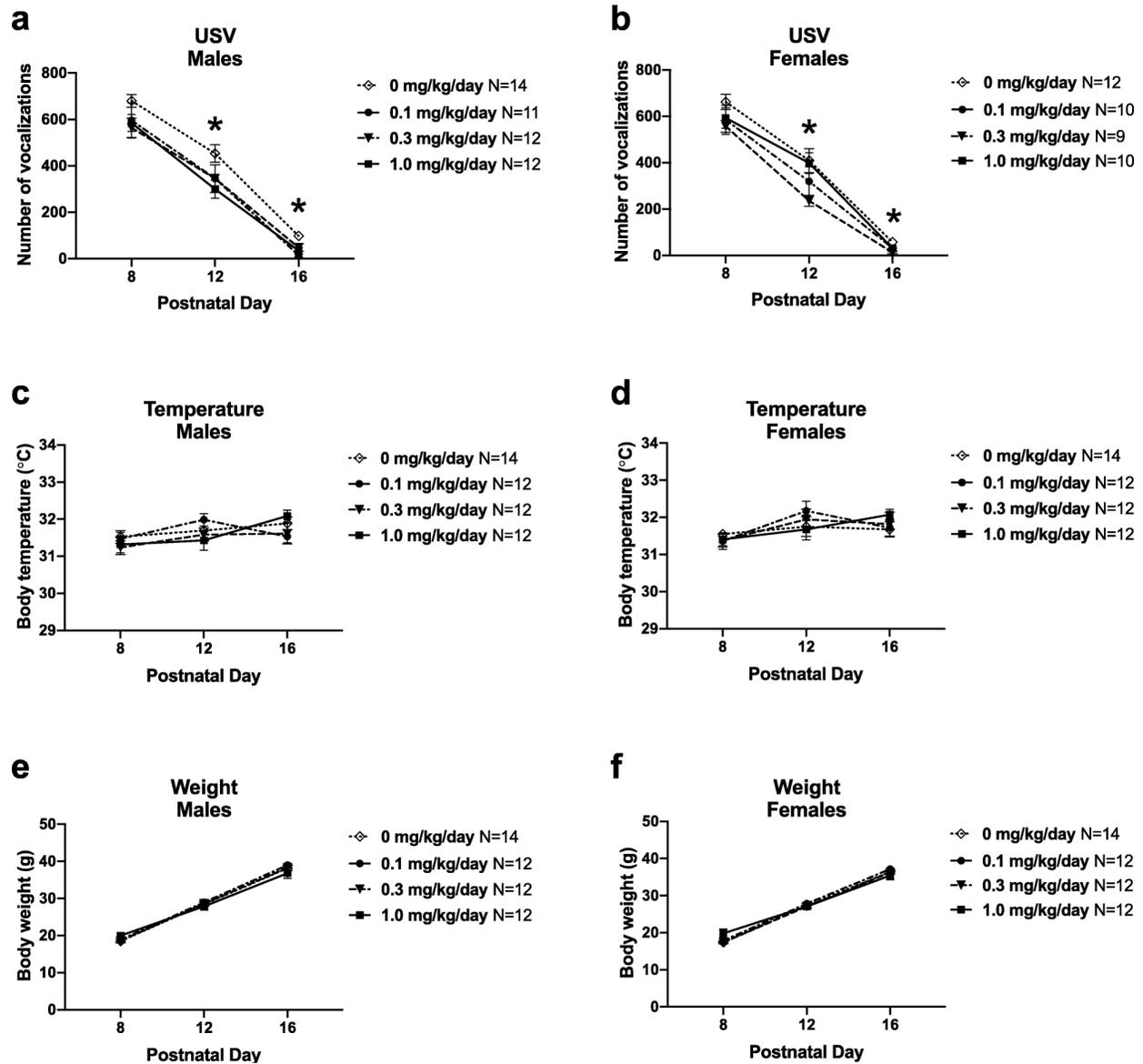
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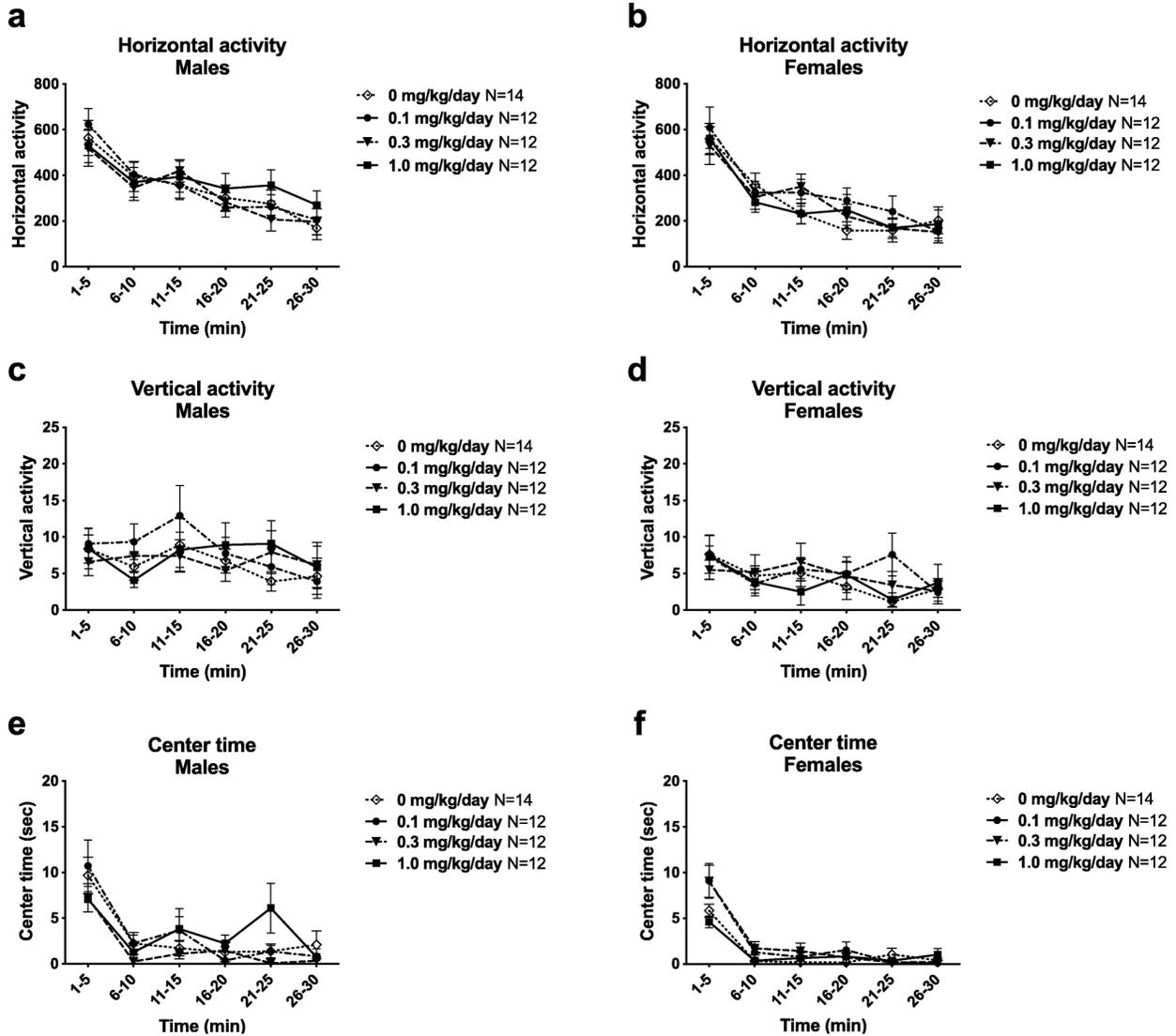
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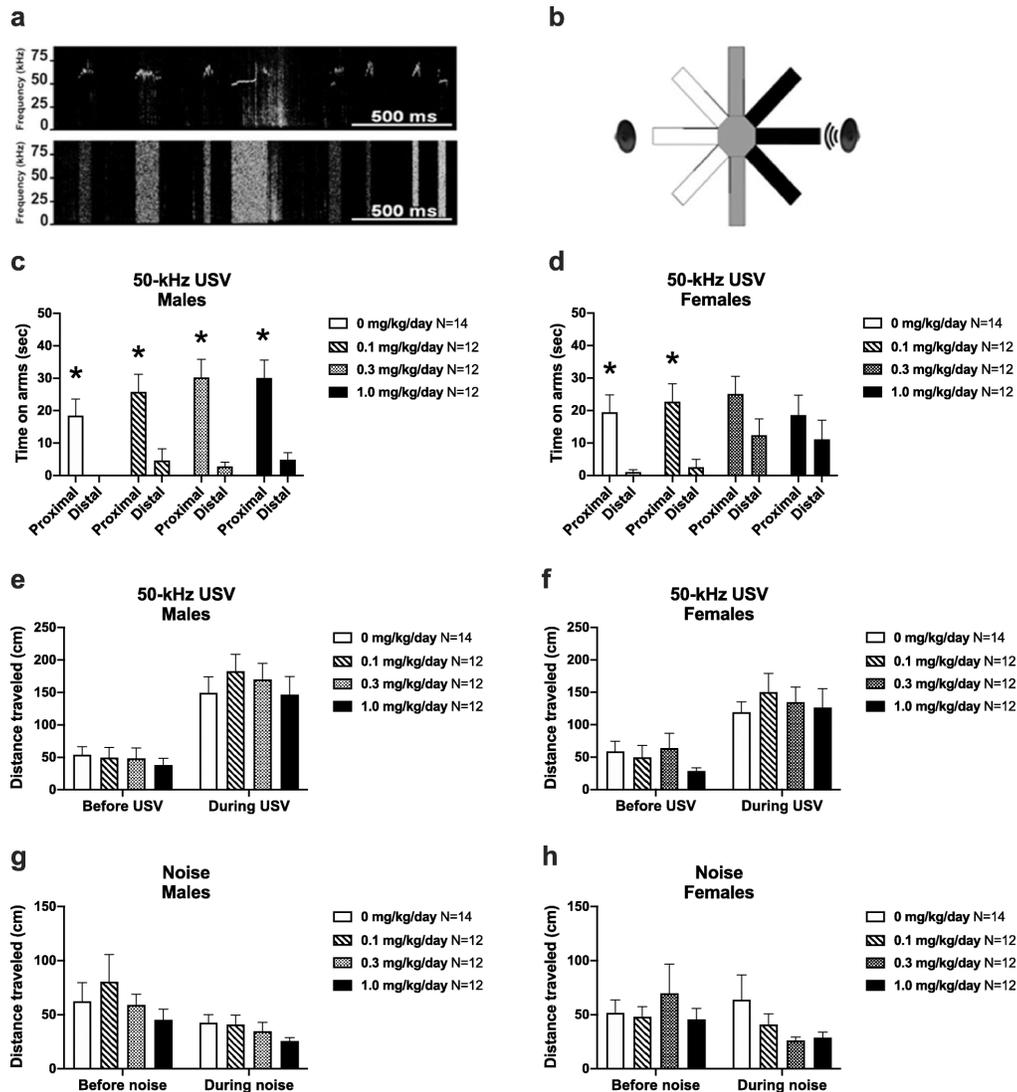
## Figures



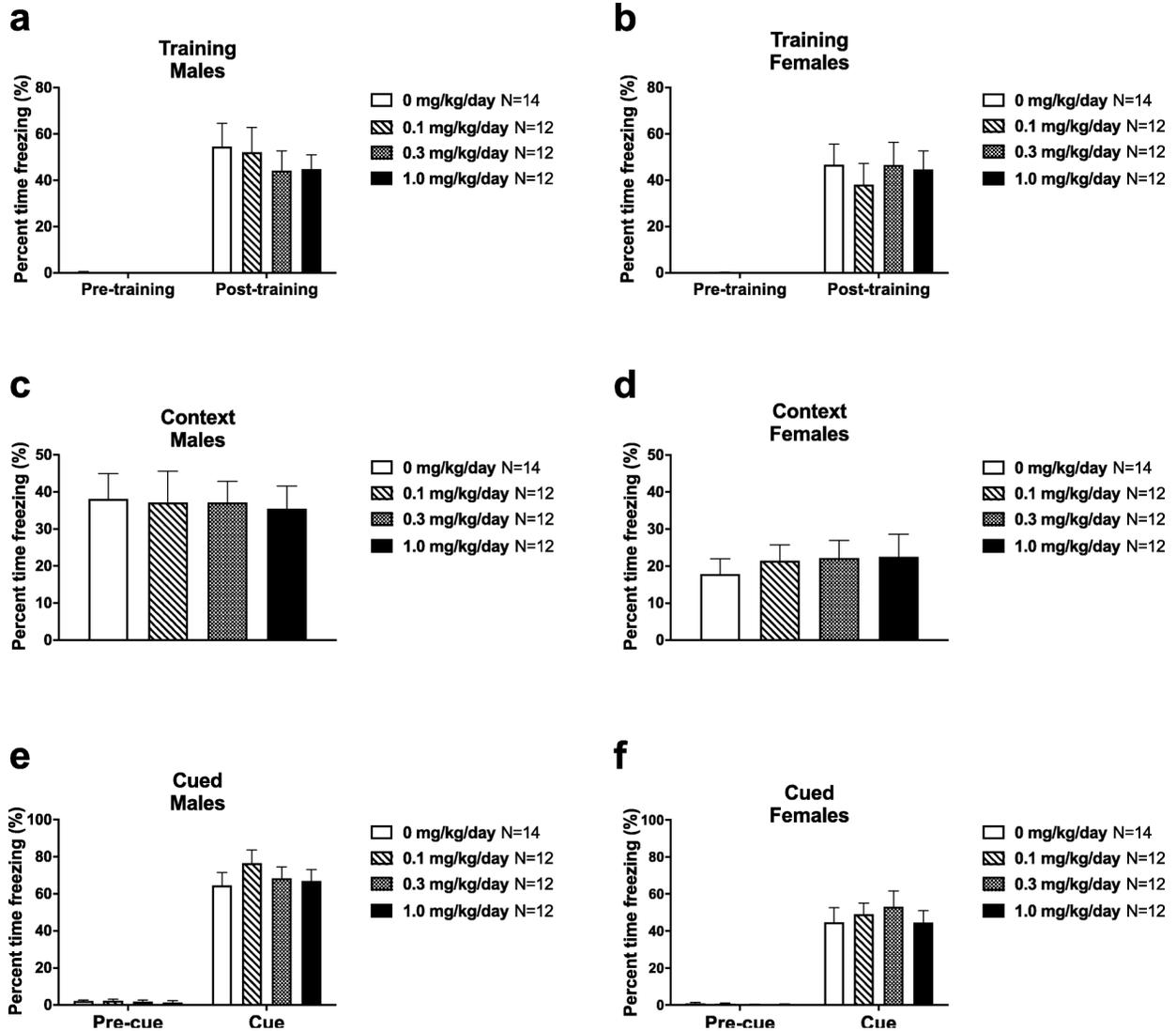
**Fig. 1** Early life CPF exposure reduces USV emission in male and female rat pups in a dose- and time-dependent manner. **a** Male pups exposed to 1.0 mg/kg/day CPF emitted fewer USV compared to vehicle controls on PND 12. By PND 16, all three male CPF exposure groups had significantly lower USV emission than controls. **b** In females, exposure to 0.3 mg/kg/day CPF led to reduced pup USV emission on PND 12 and 16. **c, d** Body temperature and **e, f** body weight immediately following USV collection were similar across exposure groups, eliminating these two variables as potential confounds on call quantity. Data are mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. \* $p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA, Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons test *post hoc*.



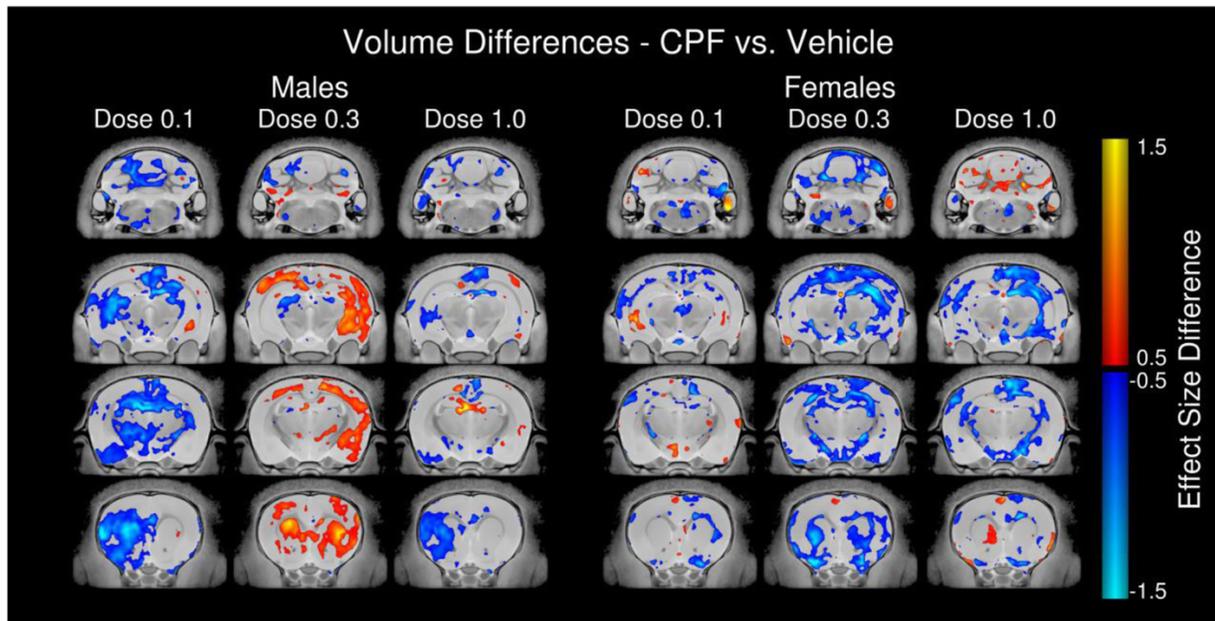
**Fig. 2** Early life exposure to CPF did not affect gross locomotor abilities. Both male and female rats of all exposure groups exhibited normal levels of (a, b) horizontal activity, (c, d) vertical activity, and (e, f) center time on PND 19. Data are mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.



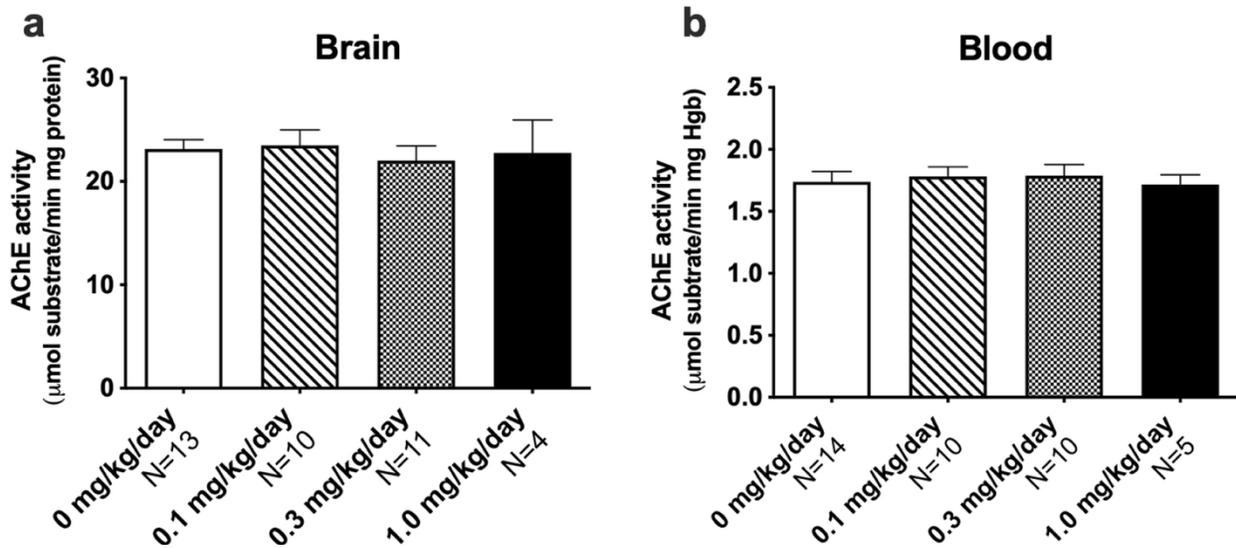
**Fig. 3** Lack of social approach to pro-social 50-kHz USV in female CPF-exposed rats. **a** Exemplary spectrograms showing 2 s of the pro-social 50-kHz USV (upper panel) and time- and amplitude-matched white noise (lower panel) stimuli used in the playback assay. **b** Illustration of the radial maze used, with arms proximal to the active ultrasonic speaker shown in black, arms distal shown in white, and neutral arms shown in gray. **c** During the minute of USV playback, males of all exposure groups spent significantly more time on the arms proximal to the speaker compared to the distal arms. **d** In females, only the vehicle and 0.1 mg/kg/day CPF groups showed a significant preference for the proximal arms. Female rats exposed to 0.3 mg/kg/day or 1.0 mg/kg/day did not spend significantly more time on the proximal arms compared to the distal arms. Regardless of exposure, (e) all males and (f) females displayed similar patterns of locomotion in response to playback of 50-kHz USV. **g** All males and (h) females exhibited comparable levels of movement during the minute before and the minute of white noise. Data are mean + S.E.M. **c, d:** \* $p < 0.05$ , paired  $t$  test, proximal vs. distal.



**Fig. 4** Intact contextual and cued fear memory in rat pups exposed to CPF during early life. (a) Male and (b) female rats of all exposure groups exhibited typical levels of freezing following foot-shock training, (c, d) in the same context 24 h later, and (e, f) upon hearing the auditory cue in a new context 48 h after training. Data are mean + S.E.M.

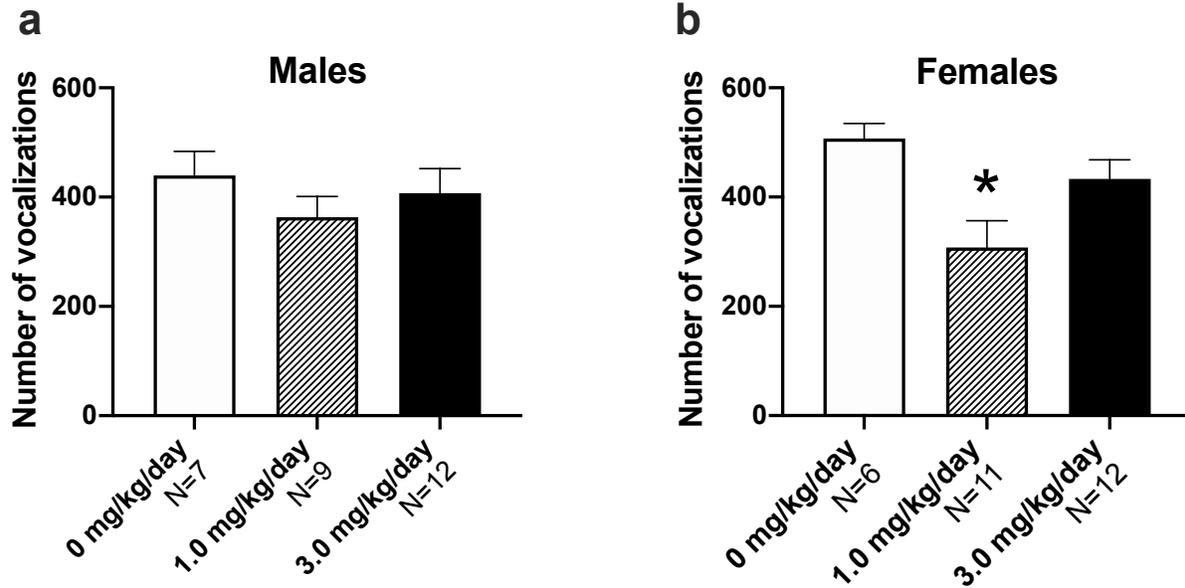


**Fig. 5** Neuroanatomical pathology at PND 35 in rats exposed to CPF during early life. **a** Representative coronal slice series for males and females highlighting effect size differences in absolute brain volume ( $\text{mm}^3$ ) between vehicle and 0.1 mg/kg/day, 0.3 mg/kg/day, and 1.0 mg/kg/day CPF exposure groups. Red-to-yellow coloration indicates areas that trended larger in CPF-exposed groups compared to vehicle and dark-to-light blue coloration indicates areas that were smaller in CPF-exposed groups compared to vehicle.

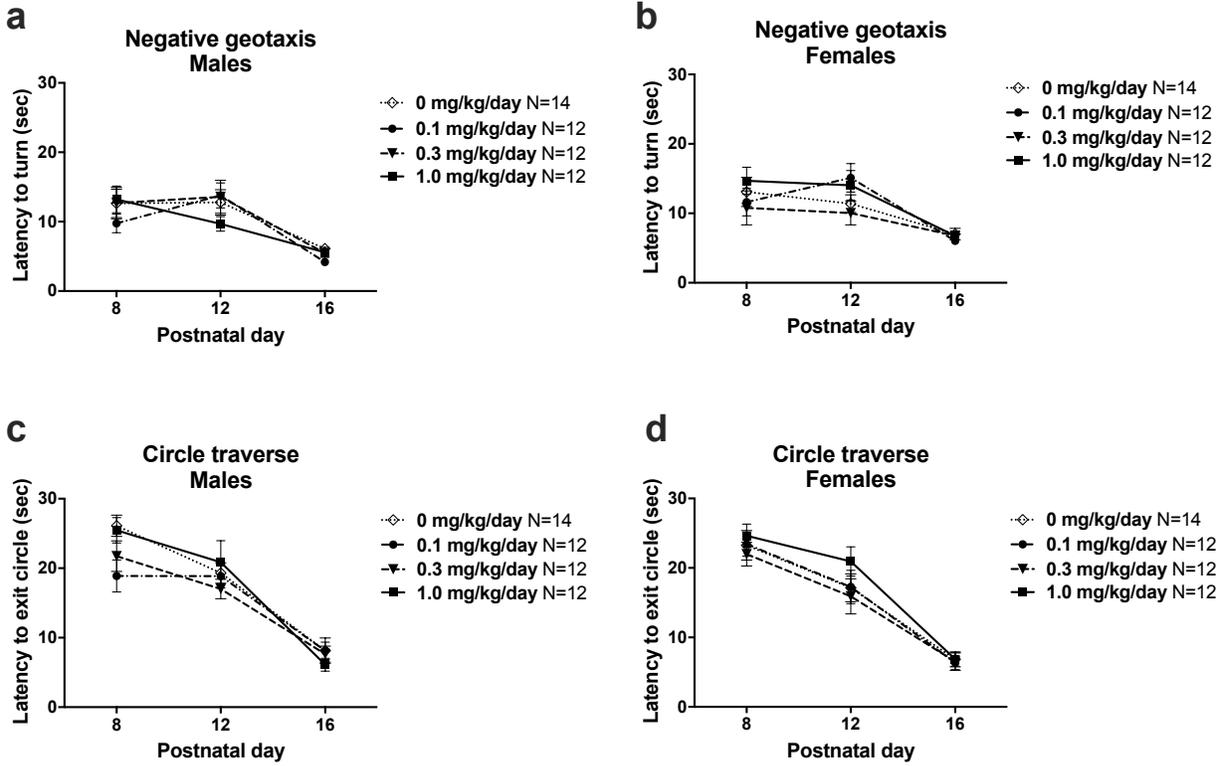


**Fig. 6** Developmental CPF exposure did not significantly inhibit acetylcholinesterase (AChE). **a** Regardless of exposure group, all pups exposed to CPF on PND 1-4 showed normal AChE activity in the (a) brain and (b) blood at 1 h following the final dose on PND 4. Data include males and females and are mean + S.E.M.

Supplementary Information



**Supplementary Fig S1. Reduced USV emission in rat pups exposed to CPF during early life.** **a** Male pups exposed to CPF emitted normal numbers of USV on PND 8 compared to vehicle controls while **b** exposure to 1.0 mg/kg/day CPF in females resulted in reduced USV emission relative to controls. Data are mean + S.E.M. \* $p < 0.05$ , one-way ANOVA, Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons *post hoc*.



**Supplementary Fig S2. No effect of early life CPF exposure on developmental milestone achievement. a,b** Performance on the negative geotaxis and **c,d** circle traverse tasks did not differ between exposure groups for males or females, respectively. Data are mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.

## Chapter 4

Translational Outcomes in a Full Gene Deletion of *Ubiquitin Protein Ligase E3A* Rat Model of Angelman Syndrome

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## Abstract

Angelman syndrome (AS) is a rare neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by developmental delay, impaired communication, motor deficits and ataxia, intellectual disabilities, microcephaly, and seizures. The genetic cause of AS is the loss of expression of *UBE3A* (ubiquitin protein ligase E6-AP) in the brain, typically due to a deletion of the maternal 15q11-q13 region. Previous studies have been performed using a mouse model with a deletion of a single exon of *Ube3a*. Since three splice variants of *Ube3a* exist, this has led to a lack of consistent reports and the theory that perhaps not all mouse studies were assessing the effects of an absence of all functional *UBE3A*. Herein, we report the generation and functional characterization of a novel model of Angelman syndrome by deleting the entire *Ube3a* gene in the rat. We validated that this resulted in the first comprehensive gene deletion rodent model. Ultrasonic vocalizations from newborn *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* were reduced in the maternal inherited deletion group with no observable change in the *Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>* paternal transmission cohort. We also discovered *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* exhibited delayed reflex development, motor deficits in rearing and fine motor skills, aberrant social communication, and impaired touchscreen learning and memory in young adults. These behavioral deficits were large in effect size and easily apparent in the larger rodent species. Low social communication was detected using a playback task that is unique to rats. Structural imaging illustrated decreased brain volume in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* and a variety of intriguing neuroanatomical phenotypes while *Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>* did not exhibit altered neuroanatomy. Our report identifies, for the first time, unique AS relevant functional phenotypes and anatomical markers as preclinical outcomes to test various strategies for gene and molecular therapies in AS.

## Introduction

Angelman syndrome (AS) is a rare neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by developmental delay, impaired communication skills, ataxia, motor and balance deficits, poor attention, intellectual disabilities, microcephaly, and seizures<sup>1,2,3</sup>. AS is caused by loss-of-expression or loss-of-function of the maternally inherited allele of the Ubiquitin protein ligase E3A (*UBE3A* E6-AP), which typically arises through a de novo deletion in the maternal 15q11-q13 region<sup>4,5,6</sup>. Owing to genomic imprinting, the paternal allele is silenced in neurons of the central nervous system (CNS). Angelman syndrome is thus caused by loss of *UBE3A* in neurons of the CNS<sup>7</sup>.

The Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics (FAST) funded the generation of a genetic rat model of AS via a 90-kb deletion on chromosome 1, which includes the entire *Ube3a* gene. This has opened new possible avenues of research into the neurobiological and behavioral effects of loss of all isoforms of *UBE3A* and, crucially, the development of novel therapeutics in the near future, including gene replacement therapies. This unique rat model of AS also provides opportunities to investigate complex AS relevant behaviors that have been difficult to capture with high signal sensitivity, rigor, and reproducibility in mice, such as behaviors across developmental time points, juvenile acoustic social communication, and cognitive dysfunction.

Well-validated tools for behavioral and functional outcomes for neurodevelopmental disorders have been well standardized<sup>8</sup>, but sophisticated social communication, translationally relevant learning and memory, and other AS-symptom domains are less developed in mice<sup>9</sup>. One prominent example is the less complex acoustic communication system in the mouse. Rats emit uniquely detectable ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) that serve as situation-dependent evolved signals and that accomplish important communicative functions as alarm or social contact calls<sup>10,11,12</sup>. Another advantage of a rat model is the ability to utilize advanced cognitive tests for

measuring learning and memory. Examining cognitive functions in an evolutionarily advanced species<sup>13,14</sup> through the use of behavioral tests highly relevant to clinical diagnostic assays may improve translational predictability.

The present experiments aimed to take advantage of the first generated rat model of a complete *Ube3a* deletion and define behavioral and anatomical phenotypes by utilizing our comprehensive battery of standardized and innovative outcome measures to identify functional outcomes relevant to AS. Using sophisticated and nuanced behavioral readouts of isolation-induced USV, juvenile social communication via USV playback, computerized touchscreen learning and memory, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), we evaluated various aspects of social communication, cognition, and behavior during development in the AS rat model.

## Results

**Model generation.** The *Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> rat line (background Sprague-Dawley) was originally designed by the Segal laboratory using the CRISPR-Cas9 system, generated by Transposagen (**Fig. S1**). Two genomic RNAs (gRNAs) were designed to target the 5'-end of the *Ube3a* gene (upstream of the *Ube3a* coding sequence) and two gRNAs target sequences downstream of *Ube3a*. gRNA pairs were used on each end of the deletion to maximize the probability of a complete deletion of the 90-kb region encompassing the *Ube3a* gene. 5' CRISPR-1 Target site GGCCCTGCAGAGATGCAATC, 5'CRISPR-2 Target site GGAGCCCTCCGCCGGCA, 3'CRISPR-1 Target site TACCCTTCCCAGGCCCC, and 3'CRISPR-2 Target site GCATTTCTAGTACATCATCC. In addition, a bridging DNA fragment was constructed with 600-bp homology to the sequence upstream and homology to 1-kb downstream of the deletion. The Rnor\_6.0 genome build coordinates of homology arms are 116587209–116587779 and

116678173–116679214, respectively. CRISPR/gRNA complexes were co-injected with the “bridging construct” into fertilized Sprague-Dawley rat embryos and inserted into a surrogate. Founders were screened for deletion of the entire 90-kb region and germline transmission was confirmed using genotyping primers (Ube3aDel-F: 5'-ACCTAGCCCAAAGCCATCTC-3' and Ube3aDel-R: GGGAACAGCAAAAGACATGG-3'). Junction of deletion of the entire Ube3a gene (~90 kb) was confirmed by Sanger sequencing (**Fig. S1**). Deletion was further validated by Western blotting (**Fig. S2**). For transparency, we do have knowledge via foundation collaboration and conference presentations that another laboratory has access to these novel AS rats and is working on adult characterization and long-term potentiation (personal communication).

**Reduced isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) and delayed neonatal reflex development in *Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> pups.** Pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) of infant rats and mice measure an early communicative behavior between pups and mother. Isolation-induced USV were collected for 3 min as social communication signals in rat pups on postnatal day (PND) 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18, as previously described<sup>15</sup>. *Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> pups emitted significantly fewer USV across early development compared to wildtype *Ube3a*<sup>m+/p+</sup> littermate controls (**Fig. 1a**  $F_{(1,67)} = 10.80, p < 0.002$ ). Holm-Sidak corrected posthoc analysis for multiple comparisons highlights PND 10 and PND 12 as reduced in the *Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> compared to *Ube3a*<sup>m+/p+</sup> littermates (PND 10:  $p = 0.0023$ ; PND 12:  $p = 0.022$ ) with a trend on PND 14 ( $p = 0.091$ ). *Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> pups also emitted significantly fewer USV on PND 8 in the Baylor laboratory compared to wildtype *Ube3a*<sup>m+/p+</sup> littermate controls, independently reproducing our results (**Fig. S3**  $t_{(1,23)} = 2.991, p < 0.007$ ). Body weight and temperature were also collected to assure that the reduced USV were not the result of being physically smaller as body weight is known to alter pup USV

emission<sup>16,17</sup>. Weight did not differ between genotypes (**Fig. 1b**  $F_{(1, 67)} = 0.154, p > 0.05$ ) indicating typical growth and ability to thrive. As expected, pups with paternal inheritance of the deletion ( $Ube3a^{m+/p-}$ ) did not have reductions in USV emissions (**Fig. 1c**  $F_{(1, 58)} = 3.555, p > 0.05$ ) or body weight across early development (**Fig. 1d**  $F_{(1, 58)} = 0.140, p > 0.05$ ), compared to wildtype  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  littermate controls. Body temperature did not differ between genotypes ( $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  versus  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$ :  $F_{(1, 67)} = 3.859, p > 0.05$  and  $Ube3a^{m+/p-}$  versus  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$ :  $F_{(1, 58)} = 0.038, p > 0.05$ ). **Supplementary Tables S1 and S2** show mostly typical early physical development and neurological reflexes in various parameters in  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  versus  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  littermates. Interestingly, longer latencies to navigate upright in negative geotaxis, a simple metric for motoric, postural, and proprioceptive processes that underlie the ability of infant rodents to navigate on an inclined plane, was robustly delayed in the  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  versus  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  (**Fig. 1e**  $F_{(1, 88)} = 37.22, p < 0.0001$ ). Longer latencies were observed for 6 of the 8 days tested (Bonferroni-corrected  $p < 0.05$ ): PND 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 18. Yet, similar latencies to flip over 180 degrees from supine to prone in the test of righting reflex were observed (**Fig. 1f**  $F_{(1, 71)} = 0.651, p = 0.422$ ).

**Reduced vertical activity, poor rotarod performance, and long latencies to remove adhesive illustrate poor gross and fine motor abilities in  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats.** Motor abilities were tested in an open field assay, assessing cm<sup>2</sup> of horizontal and vertical movements using beam breaks and time spent in the center of the arena. At PND 19,  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  juvenile rats exhibited normal horizontal activity (**Fig. 2a**  $F_{(1, 71)} = 0.1866, p > 0.05$ ) yet significantly reduced vertical activity (**Fig. 2b**  $F_{(1, 71)} = 18.55, p < 0.0001$ ) compared to wildtype  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  littermate controls for every 5-min time bin across the 30-min task. No genotype differences were detected in center

time measures at either the early or later developmental time points (**Fig. 2c** PND 19  $F_{(1, 71)} = 0.1866, p > 0.05$  and **Fig. 2f** PND 40  $F_{(1, 71)} = 1.397, p > 0.05$ ). Young-adult (PND 40)  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats exhibited normal horizontal activity (**Fig. 2d**  $F_{(1, 71)} = 1.266, p > 0.05$ ) yet significantly reduced vertical activity (**Fig. 2e**  $F_{(1, 71)} = 5.882, p < 0.02$ ) compared to wildtype  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  littermate controls. In the adhesive removal task,  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats were significantly slower to initiate removal of the sticker (**Fig. 2g**  $t = 2.986, df = 16, p < 0.009$ ), and trended slower to complete adhesive removal (**Fig. 2h**  $t = 2.032, df = 16, p = 0.059$ ), suggesting fine motor skill deficits of the fore paws; the  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats were  $48.63 \pm 23.93$  sec slower to finish removing the adhesive.  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats had normal rotarod performance on the first 2 days of testing but were significantly faster to fall off the rotarod on the third day compared to wildtypes (**Fig. 2i** time  $\times$  genotype interaction:  $F_{(2, 96)} = 7.339, p = 0.001$ ; day 3 Holm-Sidak  $p = 0.0197$ ), highlighting a motor learning deficit.

**Reduced exploration of pro-social 50-kHz USV in  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  juvenile rats.** Distance traveled in response to the white noise control stimulus did not differ between groups and both genotypes exhibited behavioral inhibition (i.e., a reduction in motion following the noise control) (**Fig. 3a** genotype  $F_{(1, 68)} = 2.548, p > 0.05$ ). As shown by our laboratory and others previously<sup>15,18,19,20,21,22</sup>, a striking increase in social exploratory behavior (i.e., distance traveled) was observed in response to playback of pro-social 50-kHz USV. Distance traveled increased in response to playback of 50-kHz USV (i.e., higher during playback compared to the minute prior) in  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  and  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats (**Fig. 3b** paired  $t$ -test  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$ :  $t_{(1, 38)} = 5.271, p < 0.0001$  and paired  $t$ -test  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$ :  $t_{(1, 14)} = 4.94, p < 0.0001$ , respectively), as expected. Interestingly, however, the magnitude of the distance increase in the  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  juvenile rats was significantly

lower than in the wildtype *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* littermates (**Fig. 3b** genotype  $F_{(1, 68)} = 4.908, p < 0.04$ , Bonferroni correction  $p < 0.05$ , for minutes 1 and 2 post call play).

Social exploratory behavior displayed by *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* rats was clearly directed towards playback of pro-social 50-kHz USV, as reflected in the more sensitive parameter of time spent on the arms proximal to the sound source emitting 50-kHz USV. *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* rats spent significantly longer on the arms proximal to the speaker emitting the 50-kHz USV upon playback and for minutes afterwards (**Fig. 3c**  $F_{(1, 60)} = 7.471, p < 0.01$ , Bonferroni-corrected  $p < 0.05$  for minutes 1, 2, and 5). In contrast, the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats failed to show a sustained preference and only spent significantly more time on the proximal arms during the minute of the USV playback (**Fig. 3d**  $F_{(1, 60)} = 3.380, p > 0.05$ ). **Fig. 3e, f** show representative heat maps of the distance and direction traveled in response to the 50-kHz stimuli by *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* and *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* respectively. These figures illustrate the striking increase in directed social exploratory behavior quantified in **Fig. 3c** and the lower, atypical pattern of social exploration quantified in **Fig. 3d**.

***Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* but not *Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>* illustrate neuroanatomical pathology at PND 21.** Total brain volumes were not observed to be different between groups, but there was a trend found in the difference between the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* and *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* littermates ( $-3.5\%$  in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>*,  $p = 0.06, q = 0.10$ ). Structural differences were further examined on a regional and voxelwise level. In the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats, several regional differences were observed voxelwise in both absolute and relative volume at a false discovery rate (FDR) of  $q < 0.15$  (**Fig. 4**). Regionally, when the 98 different regions were examined, there were no differences found in absolute volume for the full group, males, or females. However, there were several trends in the combined group. The majority of the 98 different regions were decreased in size in comparison to their wildtype

counterparts by  $-3$  to  $-5\%$ . This led to trends in several different areas of interest. For example, the primary motor cortex appears to be smaller in the  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats ( $-3.6\%$ ,  $p = 0.046$ ,  $q = 0.10$ ), however, this effect is not observed upon controlling for multiple comparisons. Similar findings were seen in the cerebellum, with the cerebellar lobules decreased in size by  $-3.8$  to  $-4.6\%$  and  $p$ -values ranging from  $0.03$  to  $0.05$ ; however, again these trends were not considered significant based on FDR thresholds (**Supplementary Table S3**). Dividing the groups into different sexes revealed that the females seemed to be driving these volume differences; however, no sex by genotype interaction was found to be statistically significant. In contrast to these results, when examined on a regional or voxelwise basis, no differences were present between  $Ube3a^{m+/p-}$  rats and their  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  littermates, highlighting a distinct phenotype based on parental allele inheritance, as expected given the genetic paternal imprinting of  $Ube3a$ .

***Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> rats exhibit deficits in touchscreen discrimination learning and memory.**

Given a limited number of testing chambers, for feasibility our initial touchscreen experiments were selectively performed in males.  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  required significantly more training days to learn to discriminate two images displayed on the touchscreen. Representative task images are shown in **Fig. 5a**. Analysis of survival curves (i.e., percentage of rats that reached the 80% accuracy criterion on each training day) indicated that  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  wildtype control male rats took about 10–15 sessions to reach criterion while  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats took about 20–40 sessions (**Fig. 5b** Log-rank (Mantel-Cox) test: Chi square = 15.70,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Analysis of additional parameters indicated that  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats illustrate robust learning and memory impairments.  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats took more sessions (**Fig. 5c**  $t_{(1, 12)} = 5.281$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), required more trials (**Fig. 5d**  $t_{(1, 12)} = 4.055$ ,  $p < 0.002$ ), required a greater number of incorrect responses (**Fig. 5e**  $t_{(1, 12)} = 4.055$ ,  $p < 0.002$ ),

$t_{(1,12)} = 4.003, p < 0.002$ ), and needed more correction trials (**Fig. 5f**  $t_{(1,12)} = 4.255, p < 0.002$ ) to reach the learning criterion. Motivational control parameters such as numbers of trials completed per session did not differ between genotypes, also showing no motor impairments (**Fig. 5g**  $t_{(1,12)} = 0.018, p > 0.05$ ). Panel h is the latency or time it takes for the rat to collect its pellet after responding correctly. *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats took approximately twice as long as wildtypes to collect rewards (**Fig. 5h**  $t_{(1,12)} = 6.918, p < 0.0001$ ). Learning and memory as assessed in the novel object recognition test was not affected (Fig. S4). Both *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* and *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* rats spent significantly more time investigating the novel object than the familiar object as determined by automated tracking (**Fig. S3a** *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>*  $t = 4.428, df = 80, p < 0.001$ ; *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>*  $t = 5.162, df = 60, p < 0.001$ ) and hand-scoring (**Fig. S3b** *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>*  $t_{(1,80)} = 5.005, p < 0.001$ ; *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>*  $t_{(1,60)} = 4.832, p < 0.001$ ).

## Discussion

Genetically engineered rat models are becoming a widely feasible investigative approach for preclinical research that retains a high degree of genetic conservation relative to humans for targeted therapeutic development while providing enhanced behavioral capabilities relative to mice. In addition to the species advantages, this is the first model to be null for the entire *Ube3a* gene. Since the gene that is causal in AS is known to be *UBE3A*, several innovative gene correction strategies are being pursued for AS and *UBE3A/UBE3A* replacement. In order to measure whether therapeutic methods have efficacy, clear and robust functional phenotypes are required. The results presented here address this unmet need in AS research by providing a novel rat model system with a complete gene deletion and quantifying behavioral and anatomical characteristics that can be used to test the efficacy of therapeutics.

Gene targeted therapeutic approaches, including antisense oligonucleotides<sup>23</sup>, viral vector delivery<sup>24</sup>, and artificial transcription factors (ATFs)<sup>25,26</sup>, are being tested for application to AS. Other innovative methodologies that are currently being pursued include gene-modifying CRISPR-dCas9 and cross correction of UBE3A by hematopoietic stem cells<sup>27</sup>. In addition to UBE3A targeted therapies, numerous dietary and traditional pharmaceutical treatments have shown alleviation of one or more symptom domains found in the mouse model, including but not limited to ketone esters<sup>28</sup>, dietary methylation, ErbB inhibitors<sup>29</sup>, and topoisomerase inhibitor drugs<sup>30</sup>. Behavioral rescues have been reported utilizing the original exon-2 deletion mouse from Jiang and Beaudet backcrossed onto the C57BL6/J<sup>23,31,32</sup> and maintained by the Jackson Laboratory, or a genetic-based tamoxifen-induced conditional hypomorphic line on a 129-based mixed background backcrossed to a sub-strain of C57BL6 in the Elgersma group<sup>33,34,35</sup>. Reports of rescue have relied heavily on outcomes of the rotarod, marble-burying, elevated plus and zero maze tasks of conflict anxiety, and contextual fear conditioning. These tasks are well standardized, but may lack translational predictive value and may underlie some of the large gap between basic scientific research and translation to therapeutics, given the lack of compound approval for the AS community to date.

Our results illustrate a robust phenotype and impairment in developmental ultrasonic vocalizations (USV), a clear social communication readout in models of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD). Some Angelman syndrome mouse models have demonstrated USV dysregulation. One study reported increased USV emission. The reported results were highly dependent on the mouse's inbred background strain, and conclusions varied across publications<sup>36,37</sup>. Our results, which highlight reduced USV emission, were reproduced by two independent laboratories (UC Davis MIND and Baylor College of Medicine) and align with the

AS clinical profile of reduced communication. Moreover, given the outbred nature of the rat over the mouse, phenotypes are likely more generalizable by inherent natural genetic variation, which is proving to be a successful approach in neurodegenerative disorder research<sup>38</sup>. Signal to noise ratio and assay sensitivity have plagued bench-to-bedside drug development efforts across neurodevelopmental and neurodegenerative disorders, an issue that may be alleviated by this novel rodent species approach.

We discovered impairments in juvenile behavioral responses to the playback of 50-kHz USV, a positive affiliative social contact call associated with play and social interactions, in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats. Social exploratory and approach behaviors, typically evoked by the social contact calls, were weak in rats with the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* deletion. They did not exhibit as highly elevated distance traveled nor extended durations of the behavioral response compared to that of wildtype littermate controls. Wildtype rats spent significantly longer on the arms proximal to the speaker upon initial playback of the 50-kHz USV (i.e., hearing it) and for minutes after the 50-kHz USV stopped being played (i.e., after hearing it), suggesting that they kept searching for the conspecific even after 50-kHz USV emission ended. In contrast to the wildtype, *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* subjects failed to show a strong, sustained response to hearing the cue and only spent significantly more time on the proximal arms during the time period the audio cue was “on”. This was an unusual display of social behavior as there should be (1) a clear behavioral preference for the proximal versus distal arms and (2) sustained attempts to locate the source of the emission, as previously reported across genetic models and groups<sup>12,15,18,20,39</sup>. The behavioral alterations displayed by *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats in response to pro-social 50-kHz USV were clear and substantially more prominent than the social communication deficits seen in other recently developed rat models relevant to autism, including *Shank3*<sup>15</sup> and *Cacna1c*<sup>18,19</sup>. While individuals

with AS are typically thought of as being highly social, and/or uninhibited socially, with excessive smiling being a hallmark behavioral feature in AS, aberrant social behavior is considered a core phenotypic trait. Thus, the absence of typical social approach to the acoustic call is an interesting, discovered abnormality. Of additional potential will be the in-depth investigation of whether the social communication deficit shall be attributed to a lack of understanding of the 50-kHz USV call (i.e., resulting from cognitive circuit disruption) or a requirement for longer bouts of stimulation than tested on this initial series of experiments (i.e., resulting from impairments in motivation circuits). Other testable hypotheses include impaired sustained attention. Future directions will be focused on the detailed nuance of this social behavior and deciphering the response calls during the playback assay. These functional findings of reduced USV and response to USV are critical to the AS community in positioning for an FDA approved clinical trial with a communication outcome, now that two preclinical developmental time points, postnatal life and juveniles, illustrate preclinical deficient USV. This lower signal in communication will open new opportunities to test therapeutics as most individuals with AS do not ever develop speech or more than a few vocalizations<sup>40,41,42</sup>.

Movement disorders affect nearly every individual with AS<sup>40,41,43,44</sup>. The most common motor problems include spasticity, ataxia of gait (observed in the majority of ambulatory individuals), tremor, and muscle weakness<sup>45</sup>. We observed motor deficits in vertical rearing at two different time points across development, however gross overall motor ability to navigate an open field was unaltered. Low counts in vertical rearing may indicate hindlimb weaknesses. We also observed motor coordination dysfunction in young subjects on the rotarod. Motor deficits have been key in the study of mouse models of AS, as dysfunction on the rotarod and fewer rearing movements have been one of the most consistently reported motor behavioral phenotypes when

using the C57BL6/J<sup>46,47,48</sup> but not in the 129/SvEv background strain AS mice. Observation of these motor deficits in the genetically heterogenous rat model extends the theory that preclinical data can generalize to genetically diverse clinical populations<sup>49</sup>. A secondary advantage of this unique motor phenotype in rat models is the added value of a larger species. While *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats show motor phenotypes that support its use for future pharmacological/gene therapy rescue studies, these hindlimb coordination motor deficits do not confound other behavioral measures such as social communication and learning and memory. Motor confounds have plagued the interpretation of complex behaviors for numerous neurodevelopmental disorder mouse models, such as those of Phelan-McDermid and Timothy syndromes<sup>50,51,52</sup>, yet by using a larger species, motor deficits can be delineated and detected without affecting other measures.

Our imaging data highlighted a wide variety of volumetric abnormalities. The majority of regions decreased in size from 3 to 5%. Several differences were seen at  $q < 0.10$ , including, but not limited to, the cortex, several white matter structures, and the cerebellum. This does highlight the expected microcephaly although merely by a trend. Our full group showed 3.5% reduction but only was  $p = 0.06$ ,  $q = 0.10$ , leading to our conclusion of no differences in total brain volume at PND 21. This could be the result of the juvenile age at image acquisition as clinically microcephaly develops over the first 3 years of life in AS individuals and is not 100% penetrant<sup>43,53</sup>. Fiber tracts throughout the brain show an insignificant loss in size in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats (-3.2% in the corpus callosum, -4.0% in the fimbria, and -4.3% in the arbor vita of the cerebellum). However, when the total brain volume is accounted for, there is a slight increase in the volume of the fiber tracts, particularly in the fimbria, fornix, and cerebral peduncle. Interestingly, the effect on the white matter at postnatal day 21 appeared minimal in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats, in contrast to what has been shown in adult exon-2 deletion mice<sup>54</sup>. While the overall cortical losses seem to be consistent

between our work and the earlier mouse study, Judson et al. report volume losses of 11–13% in several white matter regions throughout the brain of *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* mice, whereas we discovered modest 2–5% differences here for the same white matter tracts. While the white matter findings were not as drastic as those shown in the previous work with mice, it will be interesting to examine the rats using diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) to see if that technique is more sensitive to the white matter differences seen with the mouse model. In comparison to other rodent mouse models related to intellectual disability and autism, the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* seems to closely resemble the Magel2 mouse<sup>55,56</sup>, which also displayed a 3.4% decrease in total brain volume and similar volume differences in structures throughout the brain ranging from –4 to 5%, including the parietotemporal lobe, the amygdala, and the dentate gyrus of the hippocampus. All of these regions had similar differences on the order of –3 to 5% in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rat but did not reach significance at current thresholds. This is likely due to the increased variability for regions in the outbred rat versus a congenic wildtype C57Bl/6J mouse. In an average region in a wildtype C57Bl/6J mouse one standard deviation for a combined sex group of 20 mice is ~6%, but in the wildtype rat here it is ~8.4%. A recent clustering analysis by Ellegood et al. examined 26 different mouse models related to autism and clustered them into three different groups<sup>57</sup>. Group 2 in that study was characterized by smaller cortical and white matter structures throughout the brain consistent with what has been shown here in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rat model. Other models in Group 2 were the 15q11-13 duplication<sup>58</sup>, Itgb3<sup>59</sup>, Slc6a4 Ala56 KI<sup>60</sup>, and the humanized Androgen Receptor mouse<sup>61</sup>.

Learning and memory impairments have been observed in some but not all studies of *Ube3a* mutant mouse models depending on the background strain and age at time of testing<sup>46,47</sup>. The preponderance of these findings used standard assessments such as the electrophysiological correlate of learning and memory, long-term potentiation, and behavioral assays, including Morris

water maze and contextual fear conditioning<sup>29,62,63,64,65,66,67</sup>. Cognitive dysfunction was also postulated by enhanced operant extinction<sup>68</sup> and touchscreen visual discrimination in the exon-2 deletion mouse model<sup>67</sup>, albeit this exon-2 line has prominent motor deficits that complicate delineation of cognitive versus motor. Moreover, frequently, learning and memory deficits in the mouse model were not observed or reproduced. We expanded and improved the translational value by using computerized-based touchscreen technology and illustrating robust deficits in visual discrimination of two novel equi-luminescent stimuli in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats. The discrimination deficit in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats has translational value via the touchscreen methodology, which is utilized by clinicians using Cogmed™ or the NIH Toolbox® computerized-based testing batteries for many domains of learning and memory and executive function in several genetic NDD<sup>69,70,71</sup>, and will allow for testing of cognitive enhancing agents, as well as the cognitive domain by gene therapies. Our data make an interesting observation in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rat beyond the obvious learning deficit: we also saw longer timings to collect food rewards upon correct responses, which has been suggested as evidence of impaired motivational circuitry. While one metric of impaired motivation may be a fluke, this elevated latency to collect reward was supported by the lack of social approach in the playback assay. Combined, these data make a stronger statement about reduced motivation in the AS rat model. Of course, this is our first characterization and we will have to perform more assays specific to the motivational domain in order to more definitively make this conclusion. We have also been trying differing flavors of pellet rewards (chocolate, banana, sucrose) to gather more data on motivational components of the behavioral deficits, as motivation is clearly not a problem in the AS clinical population for neither learning nor social assessments.

The pipeline of translation from preclinical studies to clinical trial is highly unique and varies greatly depending on the type of therapy (pharmaceutical, biological, genetic therapy) and prior research performed. For example, some traditional medicines may be re-purposed when safety data is already published and known, however, for precision medicine genetic therapies, more work on the safety and tolerability end is required. In our experience, to date, the first steps are to show functional efficacy of the compound in a preclinical model and to illustrate a lack of toxicity and sufficient safety in a secondary species. Then, our ability to manufacture said novel therapeutic at levels of human doses, generated in a good manufacturing process facility, needs to be demonstrated. This, combined with therapeutic profile, pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and therapeutic kinetics would be put together for an innovative drug discovery (IND) application for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for clinical trial approval. Currently for AS, preclinical testing is ongoing for viral vectors, antisense oligonucleotides, artificial transcription factors, and stem cell delivered viral vectors and proteins, as well as simpler therapeutics from pharmaceutical companies. Each has a unique pathway to clinical trial.

Going forward, for successful translation to clinical trials, targeted treatments need to improve functional behavioral outcomes relevant to Angelman syndrome to improve the likelihood of translational success and receive FDA approval to conduct a clinical trial. Our report describes, for the first time, a novel model for Angelman syndrome that exhibits translationally relevant functional behavioral and anatomical outcomes resulting from a full deletion of *Ube3a*. The data presented are therefore highly relevant and important for the advancement of testing genetic and pharmacological therapeutics for Angelman syndrome.

## **Methods**

**Subjects.** All animals were housed in a temperature-controlled vivarium maintained on a 12:12 light–dark cycle. All procedures were conducted in compliance with the NIH Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of UC Davis. *Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>* males were bred with wildtype (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>*) Sprague-Dawley females purchased from Envigo (East Millstone, New Jersey, USA) in a conventional rat vivarium at UC Davis. The resulting female paternally inherited rats (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>*) and male wildtype (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>*) rats were paired for breeding to generate maternally inherited mutants (*Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>*) and wildtype (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>*) offspring for behavioral and anatomical testing. Male paternally inherited mutant (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>*) and female wildtype (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>*) rats were also paired for breeding to generate paternally inherited rats (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>*) and wildtype (*Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>*) for colony maintenance and control testing. To identify rats, pups were labeled via paw tattoo on postnatal day (PND) 2 with non-toxic animal tattoo ink (Ketchum Manufacturing Inc., Brockville, ON, Canada). A 23-gauge needle was used to subcutaneously insert the ink into the center of the paw. Rats were additionally identified at weaning via tail-marks made with permanent marker. Tattoos and tail-marks were coded to allow investigators to run and score behaviors blind to genotype. At PND 2, tissue samples were collected for genotyping via a small tail snip. Genotyping was performed with REDExtract-N-Amp (Sigma Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) using primers Rube1123 TAGTGCTGAGGCACTGGTTCAGAGC, Rube1606r TGCAAGGGGTAGCTTACTCATAGC, Ub3aDelSpfcf6 ACCTAGCCCAAAGCCATCTC, and Ub3aDelR2 GGGAACAGCAAAGACATGG.

**Western blots.** Rats were cervically dislocated and discrete brain structures were rapidly removed using a 4 × 4 mm matrix. Protein was extracted using RIPA buffer + 1% protease

inhibitor. Extracted protein was quantitated using BCA assay (ThermoFisher, Waltham, MA). Forty micrograms of protein was denatured with 5x loading dye (National Diagnostics) for 5 min at 95 °C and separated on a 10% Bis-Tris Gel (BioRad, Hercules, CA). Overnight transfer was performed at 30 V to polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) membranes (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA). PVDF membranes were blocked for 45 min with Tris-buffered saline with Tween (TBST) (1x TBS + 0.1% Tween-20) with 5% seablock. Following blocking, PVDF membranes were incubated with ms-UBE3a (1:1000, Sigma 8655) and rb-beta Tubulin (1:2000) in 5% seablock TBST for 2 h at room temperature (RT). Following incubation, membranes were washed with TBST 3x for 5 min. PVDF were then incubated with Donkey anti-mouse LICOR 680 (1:2000) and donkey anti-rabbit LICOR 800 (1:2000) in 5% seablock TBST for 2 h at RT. Following incubation, gels were washed 2x with TBST before being stored in 1x TBS. PVDF membranes were imaged on a LICOR Odyssey. Densitometry analysis were performed using ImageJ (NIH, Bethesda, MD).

**Cohort 1 behavioral assays.** *Pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV).* On PND 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18, isolation-induced USV were collected for 3 min as previously described<sup>15</sup>. Each pup, randomly selected from the nest, was placed in a small container with clean bedding and calls were recorded within a sound-attenuating chamber using an ultrasonic microphone and Avisoft-RECORDER software (Avisoft Bioacoustics, Glienicke, Germany). Immediately following, body temperature and weight were measured. Call spectrograms were displayed using Avisoft-SASLab Pro and counted manually by a trained investigator blind to genotype. Pup calls were also collected at Baylor College of Medicine on PND 8 for 2 min over the 3 min protocol used at the UC Davis facility. Calls were recorded within a sound-attenuating chamber using an ultrasonic microphone and Noldus Ultravox XT 3.2 (Noldus, Wageningen, The Netherlands).

*Developmental milestones.* In a separate group of animals, on PND 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18, developmental milestones were assessed as described previously<sup>1</sup>. Body weight, body length, tail length, and head width were measured with a scale and sliding ruler. Righting reflex was tested by placing each pup on its back and measuring the time taken to flip over onto all four paws. The average of two trials was recorded. Circle traverse was tested by placing each pup in the center of a circle (12.5 cm *d*) and measuring the time taken to fully exit the circle. Cliff avoidance was tested by placing each pup near the edge of a table, with its nose just beyond the edge, and measuring the time taken to make a 90 degree turn away from the cliff, thereby becoming parallel with the table edge. Each pup was allotted 30 sec to complete each task and failure to complete a task was recorded as the maximum score of 30 sec. The first day in which rooting reflex, forelimb grasping, and bar hold were demonstrated was recorded. Rooting reflex was measured as a turn of the head to whisker stimulation. Forelimb grasping was measured as grasping of a bar being moved upward along both front paws. Bar hold was measured as a pup's ability to hold onto a bar with their front paws and support their body weight for at least ten seconds. Day of eye opening was also recorded.

*Open field locomotion.* At PND 19 and again at PND 39–44, exploratory activity in a novel open arena was evaluated as described previously<sup>15,72</sup>. Each animal was placed in an Accuscan Animal Activity Monitor (Omnitech Electronics, Columbus, OH, USA), which automatically measured beam breaks for cm<sup>2</sup> of movement via horizontal activity, vertical activity, time in center, and total distance moved over a 30-min session.

*Novel object recognition.* At PND 45–53, novel object recognition was assessed using methods similar to those described previously<sup>51,73,74</sup>. Rats were given 30 min to freely explore an empty arena (54.1 cm *l* × 54.1 cm *w* × 34.3 cm *h*) on 2 consecutive days. After the second

exploration session, two identical objects were placed in the arena with the subject and the rat was allowed 10 min to investigate and become familiar with the objects. Following a 60-min isolation, the rat was placed back in the arena (clean) with one familiar and one novel object (both clean) and allowed 5 min to investigate.

*Touchscreen pairwise discrimination.* Starting at PND 65–72, pairwise visual discrimination was tested in an automated Bussey-Saksida touchscreen system (Lafayette Instrument, Lafayette, IN, USA) using a procedure modified for rats from those described previously in mice<sup>50,75,76,77</sup>. Rats were food restricted to 85% of their free-feeding weight. An efficient pre-training procedure based on previously published work was utilized. The pre-training consisted of five stages to train rats to touch the screen, collect the reward, and initiate trials. Stage 1 consisted of a 20-min habituation to the chamber and the sucrose pellet reinforcer with no light or images on the screen. All following sessions lasted 30 min. During Stage 2, three sucrose pellets were dispensed upon the screen being touched, and one pellet was dispensed if the screen was not touched. Stage 2 lasted 5 days, until rats completed an average of 30 trials in the 30 min session. During Stage 3, one sucrose pellet was dispensed upon the screen being touched, and no pellets were dispensed if the screen was not touched. Stage 3 lasted 2 days, until rats completed an average of 30 trials during the 30 min session. During Stage 4, rats were required to initiate each trial by entering and exiting the food magazine. One sucrose pellet was dispensed upon the screen being touched, and no pellets were dispensed if the screen was not touched. Stage 4 lasted 1 day, until rats completed an average of 30 trials in the 30 min session. During Stage 5, a random image from a set of 40 images was presented in one of the windows until the screen was touched. One pellet was dispensed if the image was touched, while touching the blank side was discouraged by no reward and by a 5-sec timeout during which an overhead light was turned on. Stage 5 lasted 3

days, until every rat completed at least 30 trials with an average accuracy of at least 80% over two consecutive sessions. Images used in Stages 4 and 5 were not used in the subsequent pairwise visual discrimination task and successful completion of all five stages of pre-training was required for participation in the discrimination task. Rats were trained to discriminate between two novel images (spider and plane) displayed in two side-by-side windows in a pseudo-randomized order. Each 30 min session consisted of an unlimited number of trials separated by a 20-sec intertrial interval. The image designated as correct was counterbalanced across rats within each genotype. Touching the correct image was rewarded with a sucrose pellet while touching the incorrect image was discouraged with no pellet and a 5-sec timeout with the light on. Incorrect responses were immediately followed by correction trials in which the images were presented in the identical manner to the previous trial until the rat selected the correct image. Successful acquisition was defined as achieving at least 80% correct responses over two consecutive sessions with a minimum of 30 trials completed during each 30 min session.

**Cohort 2 behavioral assays.** *Developmental milestones.* On PND 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18, developmental milestones were assessed as described previously<sup>73</sup>. Negative geotaxis was tested by placing each pup on an angled screen (45 degrees) facing downwards and measuring the time taken to make a complete 180 degree turn up the screen. The maximum time allowed was 30 sec.

*Playback of pro-social 50-kHz USV.* On PND 26–33, behavioral response to playback of pro-social 50-kHz USV was used to identify if  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  would exhibit similar social exploratory behaviors as  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  in response to social contact calls. The procedure was performed as previously described<sup>15</sup>. All rats were handled for 2 days prior to testing in a

standardized manner (5 min per rat per day). Social exploratory and approach behavior in response to playback of pro-social 50-kHz USV was assessed on an elevated radial eight-arm maze (48.0 cm above floor; arms: 40.0 cm *l* x 10.0 cm *w*) surrounded by a black curtain under indirect dim white light (8 lux) according to a modified protocol previously established<sup>12,15,19</sup>. Acoustic stimuli were presented through Ultra-SoundGate 116 Player (Avisoft Bioacoustics) connected to an ultrasonic loudspeaker (ScanSpeak, Avisoft Bioacoustics) placed 20 cm away from the end of one arm. An additional, but inactive loudspeaker was arranged symmetrically at the opposite arm as a visual control. Two acoustic stimuli were used: (1) pro-social 50-kHz USV and (2) White Noise; the latter serving as a time- and amplitude-matched acoustic stimulus control<sup>20</sup>. Pro-social 50-kHz USV used for playback were recorded from a naive male rat during exploration of a cage containing scents from a recently separated cage mate. The 50-kHz USV stimulus consisted of 221 natural 50-kHz USV (total calling time: 15.3 sec), composed of a sequence of 3.5 sec, which was repeated for 1 min, that is, 17 times, to assure the presentation of a high number of frequency-modulated calls within a relatively short period of time. After an initial 15-min habituation period, each rat was exposed to 1-min playback presentations of 50-kHz USV and White Noise, separated by a 10-min inter-stimulus interval. Stimulus order was counterbalanced to account for possible sequence effects. The session ended after an additional 10-min post-stimulus phase (total test duration: 37-min period). Behavior was monitored by a video camera mounted 1.7 m centrally above the arena and analyzed using EthoVision XT 10 (Noldus, Wageningen, The Netherlands). Distance traveled served as a measure for locomotor activity. Time spent on arms proximal and distal to the active ultrasonic loudspeaker served as measures for stimulus-directed locomotor activity<sup>20</sup>.

*Accelerating rotarod.* To corroborate and reproduce the Nash laboratory report, at PND 43–45, motor coordination, balance, and motor learning were tested with an accelerating rotarod (Ugo Basile, Gemonio, Italy) as described previously<sup>2,3</sup>. Rats were placed on a rotating cylinder that slowly accelerated from 5 to 40 revolutions per min over 5 min. Rats were given three trials per day with a 45–60-min intertrial rest interval and tested for 3 consecutive days for a total of nine trials. Performance was scored as latency to fall off the cylinder with a maximum latency of 5 min.

*Adhesive removal.* At PND 52, a task of adhesive removal was used to assess sensory and fine motor ability using a previously described mouse protocol modified for rats<sup>78</sup>. Rats individually habituated to an observation arena for 10 min and then a small round adhesive sticker (0.64 cm *d*; Avery Products Corporation, Strongsville, OH) was placed on the forehead. The latency to initiate removal of the sticker and the total elapsed time until complete removal of the sticker were recorded.

**Magnetic resonance imaging.** A multi-channel 7.0 Tesla MRI scanner (Agilent Inc., Palo Alto, CA) was used to image the rat brains within their skulls. Seven brains were scanned in one session, using an array of millipede coils and a T2 weighted 3D Fast Spin Echo Sequence (FSE) with an echo train length of 12 and a cylindrical sampling of k-space to reduce acquisition time<sup>79</sup>. Other sequence parameters included: TR of 350 ms, echo spacing of 10.5 ms, with the center of k-space acquired in successive averages on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> echo, FOV of  $3.6 \times 3.6 \times 4.0$  and a matrix size of  $456 \times 456 \times 504$ , yielding an image resolution of 79  $\mu\text{m}$  isotropic. Total imaging time for this protocol is ~3 h and 20 min.

To visualize and compare any changes in the rat brains, the images are linearly (6 followed by 12 parameters) and non-linearly registered together. Registrations were performed with a combination of mni\_autoreg tools and ANTS (advanced normalization tools)<sup>80,81</sup>. All scans are then resampled with the appropriate transform and averaged to create a population atlas representing the average anatomy of the study sample. The result of the registration was to deform all images into alignment with each other in an unbiased fashion. For the volume measurements, this allowed us to analyze the deformations needed to take each individual rat brain's<sup>82</sup> anatomy into this final atlas space, the goal being to model how the deformation fields relate to genotype. The Jacobian determinants of the deformation fields were then calculated as measures of volume at each voxel. Significant volume changes could then be calculated by warping a pre-existing rat MRI atlas onto the population atlas. An open-source classified atlas for the Fischer-344 rat brain has been created and maintained by the Near Lab at the Douglas Institute in Montreal, QC (<https://www.nearlab.xyz/fischer344atlas>). This segmented atlas allowed us to assess the volume of 98 different segmented structures<sup>83</sup>, encompassing the cortex, large white matter structures (i.e., corpus callosum), ventricles, cerebellum, brain stem and olfactory bulbs in all brains. Further, these measurements could be examined on a voxelwise basis to localize the differences found within regions or across the brain. Multiple comparisons in this study were controlled for using the false discovery rate<sup>84</sup>. We reported combined sex results in the main text.

**Statistical analysis.** Developmental assays were analyzed with two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with genotype as the between-group factor and time as the within-group factor. Touchscreen parameters (sessions to reach criterion, trials to criterion, errors to criterion, and correction trials to criterion) were analyzed with unpaired (Student's) *t*-test. Log-rank (Mantel-

Cox) test was used to analyze the percentage of animals that reached criteria in the survival/completion analysis for the touchscreen test. Open field parameters (horizontal activity, vertical activity, and center time) were analyzed with two-way repeated measures ANOVA, with genotype as the between-group factor and time as the within-group factor. Comparisons between time sniffing the novel object were compared within each genotype, as previously described<sup>73,85</sup>. Data were analyzed with Graphpad Prism. All significance levels were set at  $p < 0.05$  and all  $t$ -tests were two-tailed. Groups sizes were chosen based on past experience and power analyses<sup>86</sup>. Significant ANOVAs were followed by Bonferroni-Dunn or Holm-Sidak posthoc testing. Behavioral data passed distribution normality tests, were collected using continuous variables, and thus were analyzed via parametric analysis in all assays. For all behavioral analyses, variances were similar between groups and data points within 2 standard deviations of the mean were included in analysis. For the MRI analysis, separate linear models were measured for both absolute and relative regional and voxelwise volumes. Additionally, a final linear model was used to determine if there were any sex by genotype interactions. In all cases, multiple comparisons were controlled for using the false discovery rate<sup>84</sup>. Anatomical results reported combined both sexes.

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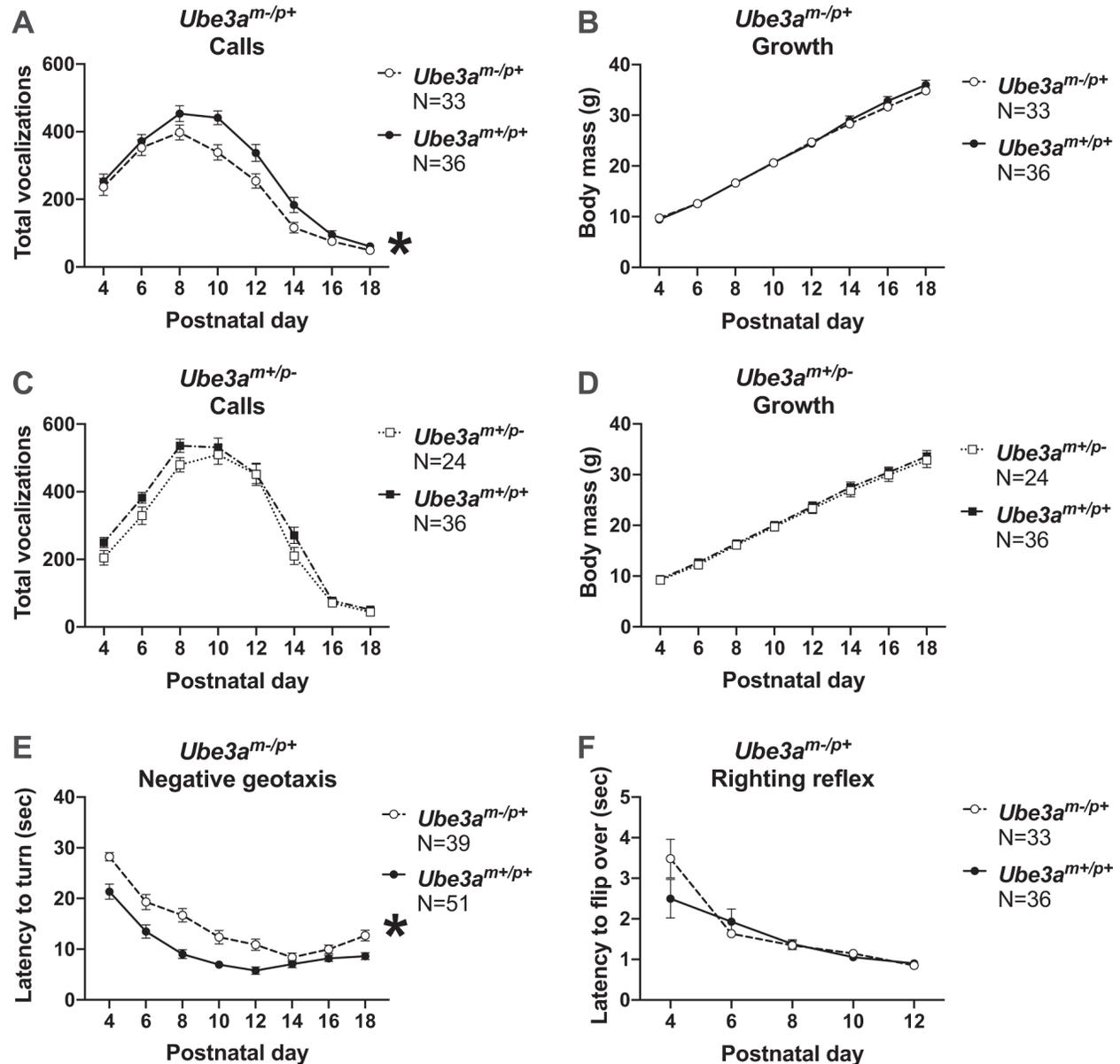
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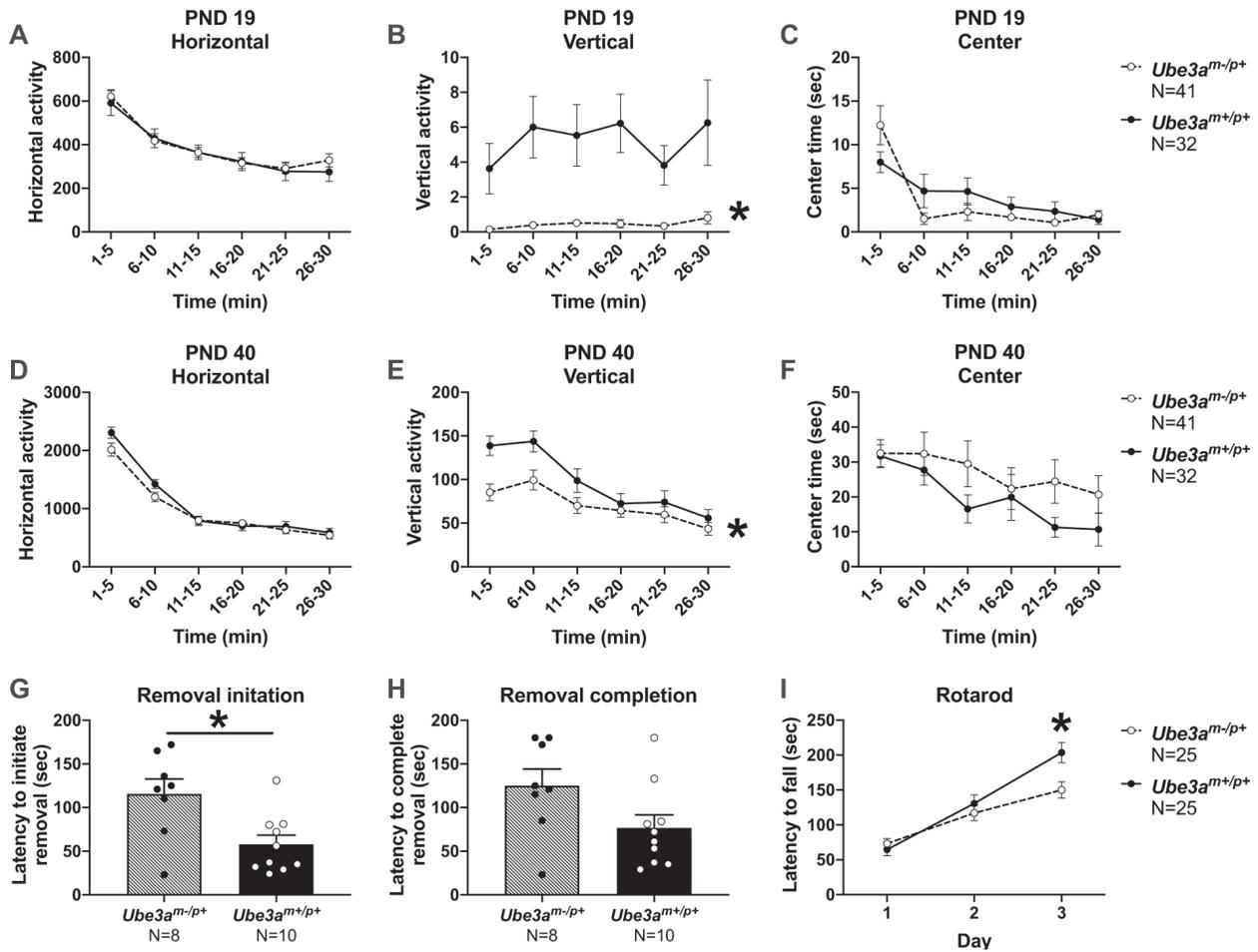
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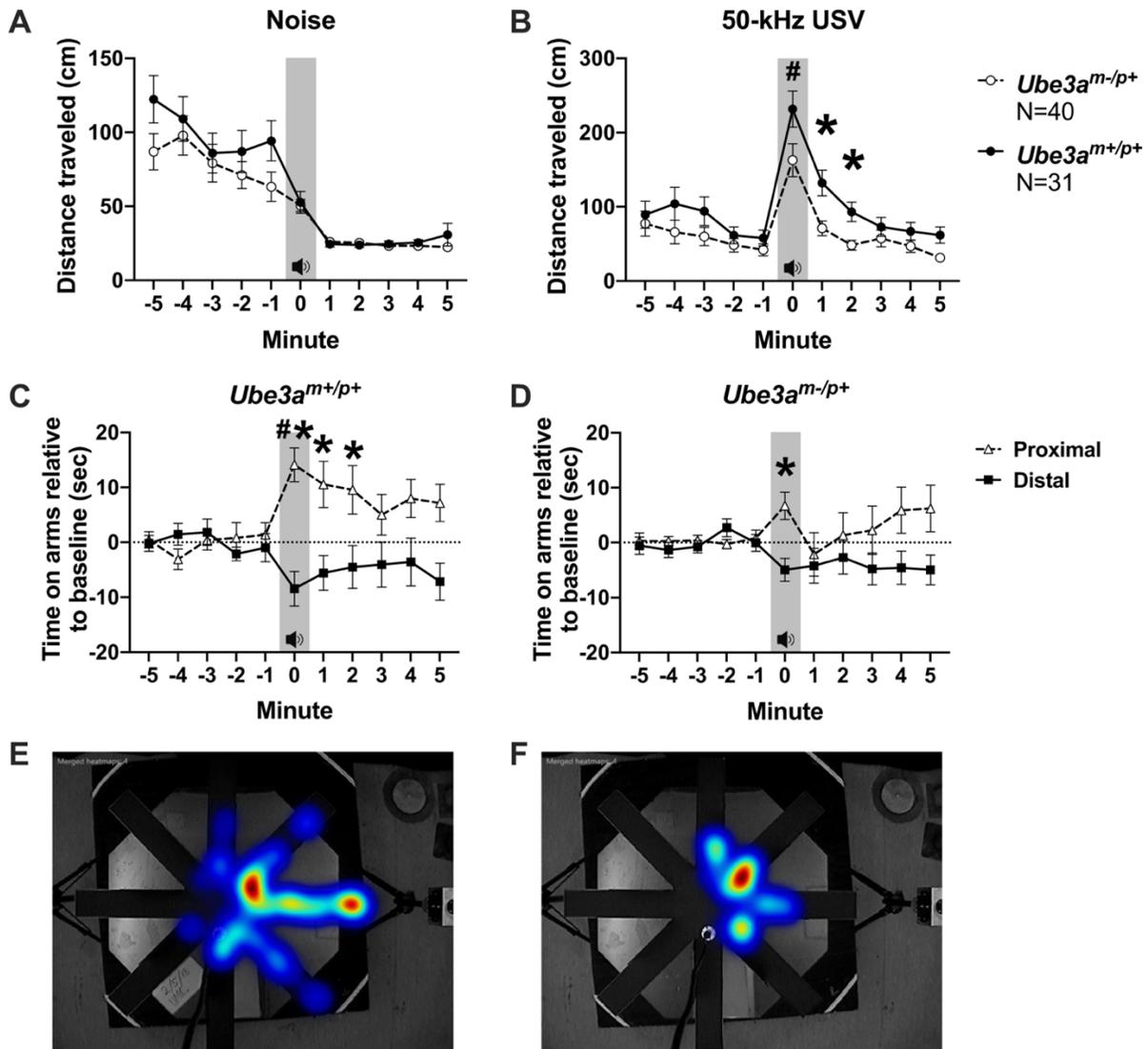
## Figures



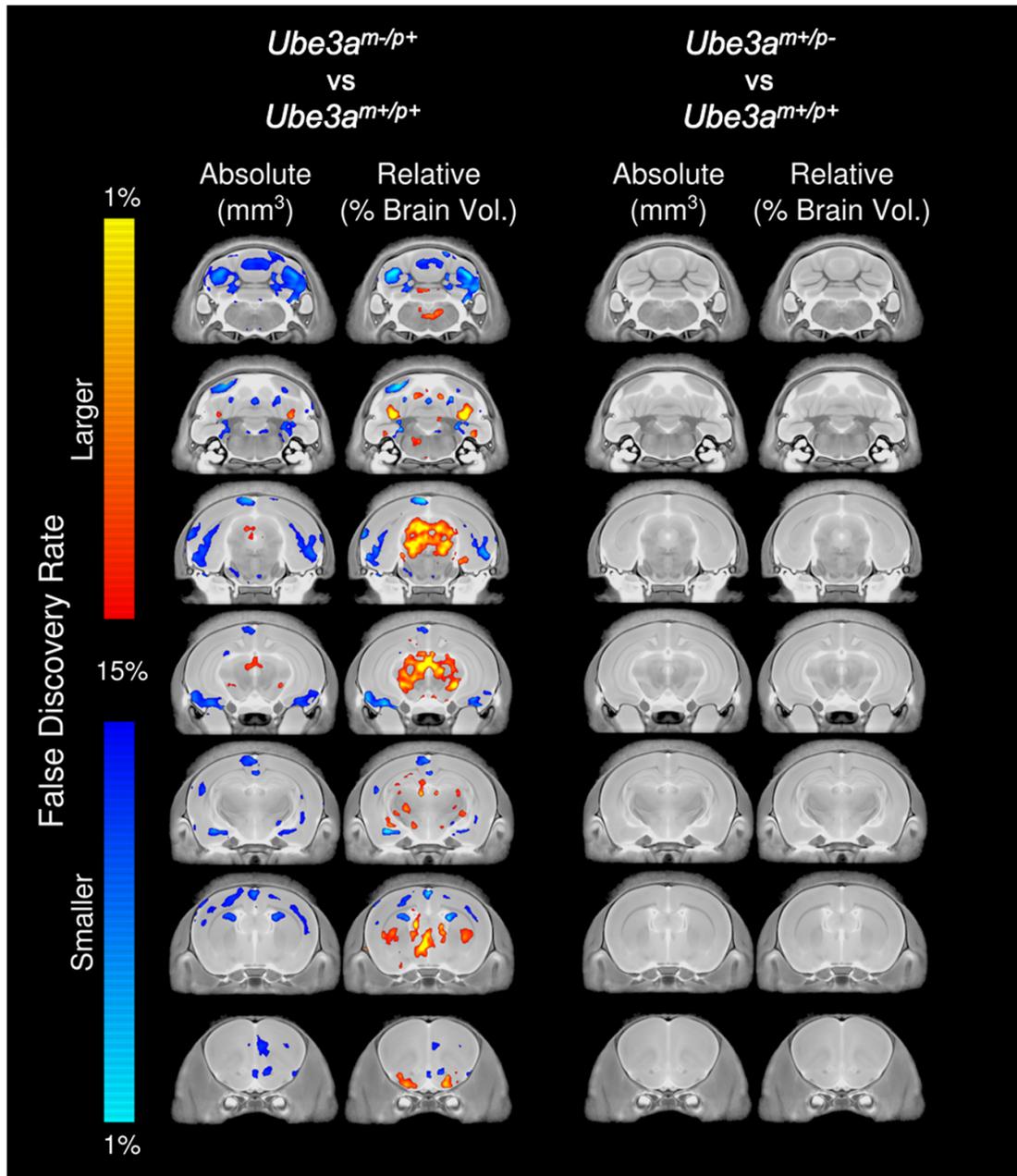
**Fig. 1 Reduced isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations and delayed neonatal reflex development in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* pups.** **a** *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* pups emitted significantly fewer USV across early development compared to wildtypes, and **b** demonstrated normal weight gain. **c** *Ube3a<sup>m+/p-</sup>* pups emitted normal numbers of USV across early development, and **d** also demonstrated normal weight gain. **e** Compared to wildtype littermates, *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* pups were significantly slower in the negative geotaxis test but **f** had normal latencies to flip over in the test of righting reflex. All analyses include males and females. Mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. is depicted. **a–f**: \* $p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA, main effect of genotype.



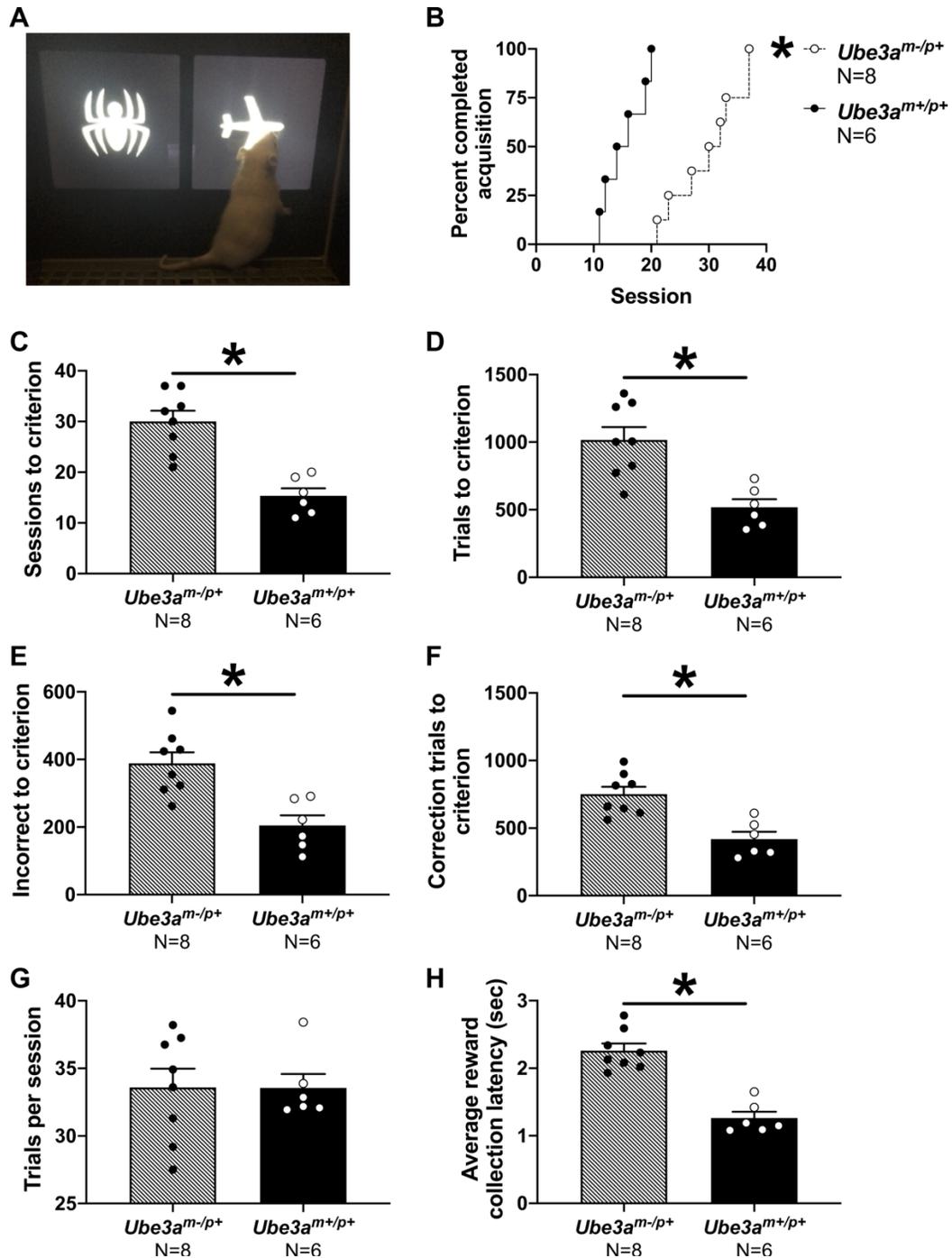
**Fig. 2 Reduced vertical activity and motor learning deficit in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats.** **a** At PND 19, *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* juvenile rats exhibited normal horizontal activity but **b** had significantly reduced vertical activity compared to wildtypes. **c** Center time did not differ between groups. **d** At PND 40, *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats again exhibited normal horizontal activity, **e** significantly lower vertical activity, and **f** normal center time. Note: the difference in axis labels shows how much more active PND 40 rats are over PND 19. **g** In the adhesive removal task, *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats had significantly higher latencies to initiate removal of the adhesive. **h** Latency to completely remove the adhesive did not differ between groups but trended longer ( $p = 0.059$ ) in the *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats, suggesting fine motor skill deficits of the fore paws. **i** *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats had significantly lower latencies to fall of the rotarod on day 3 compared to wildtypes. Analyses include both males and females. Mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. is depicted. **a–f**:  $*p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA, main effect of genotype. **g–h**:  $*p < 0.05$ , Student's *t*-test. **i**:  $*p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA, Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons test.



**Fig. 3 Atypical social communication in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* juveniles using 50-kHz pro-social ultrasonic vocalizations.** **a** Distance traveled in response to the white noise control stimulus (gray zone) did not differ between groups: both exhibited behavioral inhibition (i.e., a reduction in motion following the noise control). **b** Distance traveled increased in response to playback of 50-kHz USV (gray zone) in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* and *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* rats. Interestingly, the duration of the response was shorter in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* compared to that of wildtypes. **c** In the radial maze used, time spent in the arms proximal to the active ultrasonic speaker versus time spent in the distal arms indicate social interest, preference and social engagement. *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* rats spent significantly longer time on the arms proximal to the speaker emitting the 50-kHz USV upon playback and for several minutes afterwards showing a strong, sustained social response. **d** *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* subjects failed to show a strong, sustained response to hearing the USV and only spent significantly more time on the proximal arms during the initial time period the audio cue was “on” (gray zone). **e, f** Representative heat maps of the distance and direction traveled in response to the 50-kHz USV. Analyses include both males and females. Mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. is depicted. \* $p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA, Bonferroni multiple comparisons test. # $p < 0.05$ , paired  $t$ -test, min -1 versus min 0.



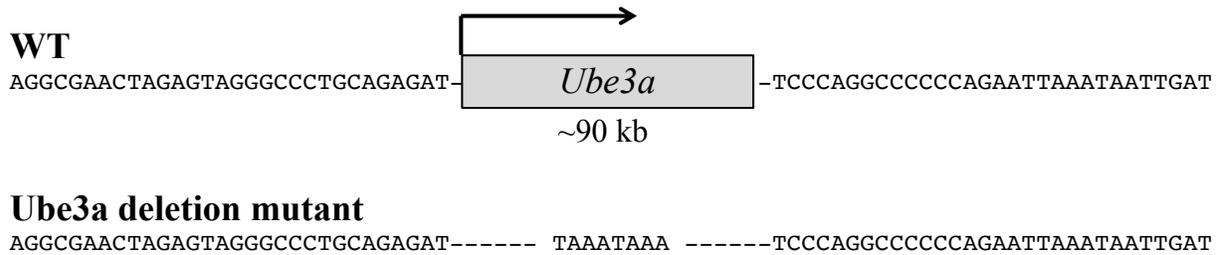
**Fig. 4 Neuroanatomical pathology in  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats at PND 21.** Representative coronal slice series highlighting regional brain differences in absolute ( $\text{mm}^3$ ) and relative (%) brain volume between  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  and  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  (left) and between  $Ube3a^{m+/p-}$  and  $Ube3a^{m+/p+}$  (right). Regions with decreased volume in  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  include the cerebral cortex, cerebellum, and amygdala. Regions with increased volume in  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  include the periaqueductal gray, thalamus, and hypothalamus.  $Ube3a^{m+/p-}$  did not exhibit altered neuroanatomy compared to wildtype. Analyses include both males and females.



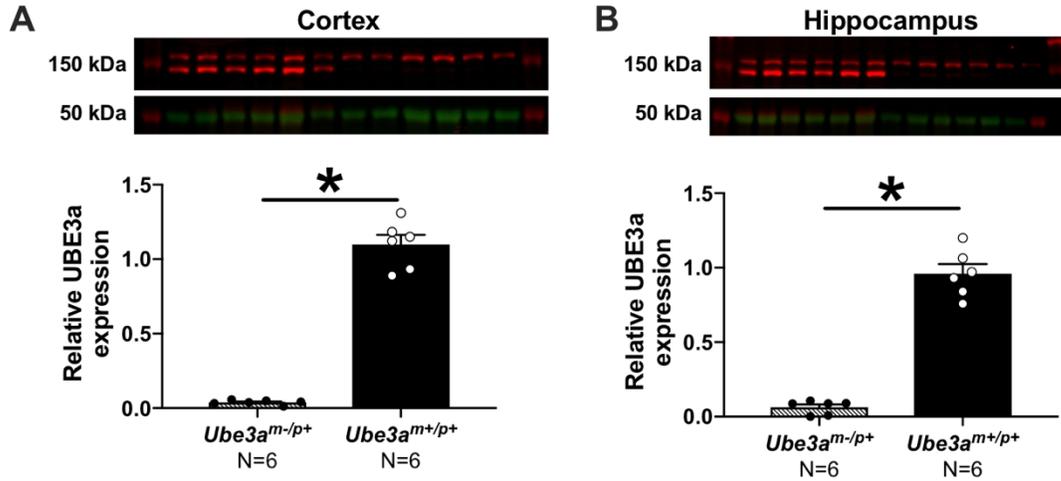
**Fig. 5 Delayed touchscreen learning in  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  rats.**

**a** Representative image of a subject rat performing the touchscreen pairwise discrimination. **b**  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  adult rats took significantly longer to learn the correct response compared to wildtype littermates, requiring **c** more sessions, **d** more trials, **e** more incorrect responses, and **f** more correction trials to reach criterion. **g** The average number of trials completed per session did not differ between genotypes. **h**  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  adult rats took longer to collect the pellet after responding correctly. Mean + S.E.M. is depicted. **b**:  $*p < 0.0001$ , Log-rank (Mantel-Cox test). **c**–**h**:  $*p < 0.05$ , Student's  $t$ -test.

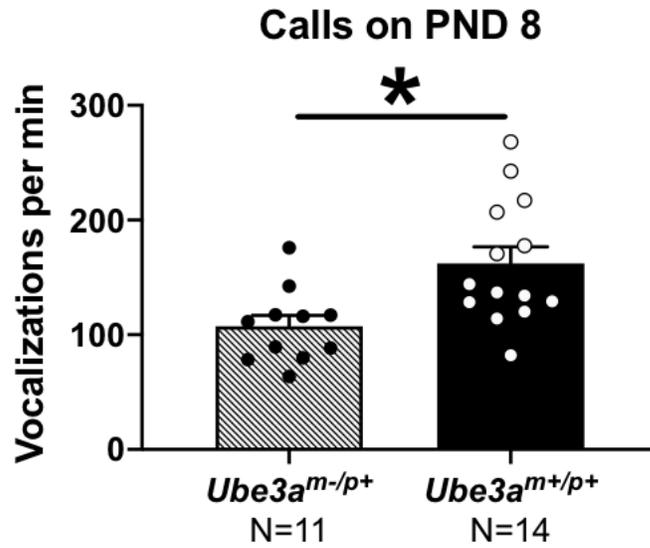
## Supplementary Information



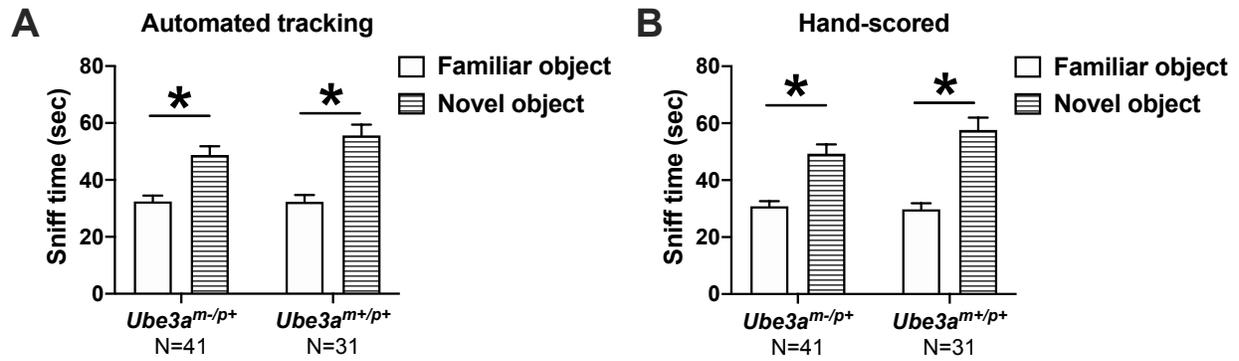
**Supplementary Figure S1. Schematic of the Angelman syndrome rat model.** The rat wildtype (WT) locus encompassing the *Ube3a* coding region is shown on top. Using the CRISPR/Cas9 system the ~90 kb *Ube3a* gene region was deleted and the genomic junction of the *Ube3a* knockout allele was determined by Sanger sequencing. Genomic sequence of the *Ube3a* knockout allele is shown in the lower panel.



**Supplementary Figure S2. Reduced UBE3a protein in *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats.** Western blots of brain samples from *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* and *Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup>* rats show a lack of UBE3a expression (around 95 kDa; red) compared to beta-Tubulin expression (around 50 kDa; green). The upper band was approximately >100 kDa and the lower band was <100 kDa. Quantification confirmed that *Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup>* rats had significantly lower relative expression of UBE3a in both the A) cortex and B) hippocampus compared to wildtypes. Analyses include both males and females. \* $p < 0.05$ , Student's *t*-test. Quantitation was assessed on the lower band.



**Supplementary Figure S3. Reduced rate of isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations corroborated in an independent lab.** A research team at Baylor College of Medicine also discovered  $Ube3a^{m-/p+}$  pups to make significantly fewer calls than wildtype littermates in an independent cohort, illustrating replication. Analyses include both males and females. \* $p < 0.05$ , Student's  $t$ -test.



**Supplementary Figure S4. Intact novel object recognition in *Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> rats.** A) Utilizing automated tracking software, both *Ube3a*<sup>m-/p+</sup> and *Ube3a*<sup>m+/p+</sup> rats were found to spend significantly more time investigating the novel object than the familiar object. B) The same result was found when sniff time was hand-scored by a trained observer blind to genotype. Analyses include both males and females. \* $p < 0.05$ , paired  $t$ -test.

**Supplementary Table 1.** Cohort 1 developmental milestone analysis via repeated measures ANOVA results summary.

Milestone		$F(df)$	$p$	Significant?
Body temperature (°C)	Time	$F(3.935, 279.4) = 26.20$	$p < 0.0001$	Yes
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 0.4083$	$p = 0.525$	No
	Interaction	$F(7, 497) = 1.098$	$p = 0.363$	No
Body weight (g)	Time	$F(1.325, 94.06) = 1586$	$p < 0.0001$	Yes
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 0.0010$	$p = 0.975$	No
	Interaction	$F(7, 497) = 0.5124$	$p = 0.825$	No
Body length (cm)	Time	$F(5.356, 380.3) = 1068$	$p < 0.0001$	Yes
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 0.9787$	$p = 0.326$	No
	Interaction	$F(7, 497) = 1.706$	$p = 0.105$	No
Tail length (cm)	Time	$F(3.472, 246.5) = 2250$	$p < 0.0001$	Yes
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 0.1091$	$p = 0.742$	No
	Interaction	$F(7, 497) = 0.9624$	$p = 0.458$	No
Head width (cm)	Time	$F(1.554, 110.4) = 1.249$	$p = 0.284$	No
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 0.05429$	$p = 0.816$	No
	Interaction	$F(2, 142) = 1.253$	$p = 0.289$	No
Righting reflex (sec)	Time	$F(1.467, 104.2) = 25.59$	$p < 0.0001$	Yes
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 0.6512$	$p = 0.422$	No
	Interaction	$F(4, 284) = 2.240$	$p = 0.065$	No
Circle traverse (sec)	Time	$F(3.971, 282.0) = 217.2$	$p < 0.0001$	Yes
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 1.248$	$p = 0.267$	No
	Interaction	$F(7, 497) = 0.3435$	$p = 0.934$	No
Cliff avoidance (sec)	Time	$F(5.258, 373.3) = 52.43$	$p < 0.0001$	Yes
	Genotype	$F(1, 71) = 1.778$	$p = 0.186$	No
	Interaction	$F(7, 497) = 0.8706$	$p = 0.530$	No

**Supplementary Table 2.** Cohort 1 developmental milestone survival curve analysis via Log-Rank (Mantel-Cox) test results summary.

Milestone	<i>Ube3a<sup>m+/p+</sup></i> Median (N=32)	<i>Ube3a<sup>m-/p+</sup></i> Median (N=41)	Chi square	df	<i>p</i>	Significant?
Eye opening (days)	16	16	3.642	1	<i>p</i> = 0.056	No
Rooting reflex (days)	14	14	0.0798	1	<i>p</i> = 0.777	No
Forelimb grasp (days)	4	4	1.281	1	<i>p</i> = 0.258	No
Bar hold >10 sec (days)	18	16	2.165	1	<i>p</i> = 0.141	No





	113		114		1		4		59		60		63		68		71		73		74		77		80		81		82		15		20		25		26													
	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT	WT										
AbsgVol	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F										
amygdaloid_area	32.66211	29.90887	32.68524	32.20904	30.8699	29.29585	30.95239	30.04039	30.80254	31.20427	30.66683	29.5566	29.93522	34.2369	30.82489	29.75405	30.58463	29.98781	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633	30.58633						
anterior_part_of_anterior_commissure	1.462977	1.350874	1.48861	1.466246	1.390974	1.325452	1.32864	1.34048	1.345226	1.409974	1.398321	1.346687	1.386017	1.560494	1.413533	1.343131	1.325743	1.332273	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625	1.37625					
Aqueduct	1.762667	1.640885	1.761519	1.770368	1.655036	1.572746	1.672201	1.606534	1.676625	1.690246	1.695981	1.662774	1.663705	1.938459	1.635258	1.616358	1.697396	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875	1.668875			
auditory_cortex	22.70194	20.75002	22.49792	22.43132	21.43899	20.30754	20.95147	20.80491	21.5136	21.62808	21.26272	20.23086	20.92639	23.90051	21.34609	20.78547	20.63187	20.91523	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187	20.63187			
basal_forebrain	18.52326	17.21292	18.61918	18.34437	17.62833	16.93681	17.2488	17.05937	17.62064	17.7523	17.42406	16.62781	17.15727	19.35513	17.56281	17.02321	16.81173	17.26312	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	16.81173	
Bed_nucleus_of_stria_terminalis	3.234672	2.96437	3.181425	3.138665	3.112459	2.880199	2.895561	2.997035	3.013176	3.043297	2.97758	2.874575	2.928997	3.350758	3.02354	3.00525	2.907121	3.092036	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	2.966848	
caudoputamen	50.17562	46.52156	50.3057	49.51442	47.67191	46.68104	46.81096	46.35365	47.67358	48.07356	47.13615	44.977	46.34486	52.85512	47.47851	46.11285	45.95452	46.629	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918	47.18918































## Chapter 5

Excessive Laughter-Like Vocalizations, Microcephaly, and Translational Outcomes in the  
*Ube3a* Deletion Rat Model of Angelman Syndrome

This chapter has been submitted for publication: Elizabeth L. Berg, Shekib A. Jami, Stela P. Petkova, Annuska Berz, Timothy A. Fenton, Jason P. Lerch, David J. Segal, John A. Gray, Jacob Ellegood, Markus Wöhr, and Jill L. Silverman (in review). *Journal of Neuroscience*.

## Abstract

Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a rare genetic neurodevelopmental disorder (NDD) characterized by intellectual disabilities, motor and balance deficits, impaired communication, and a happy, excitable demeanor with frequent laughter. We sought to elucidate a preclinical outcome measure in rats that addressed communication abnormalities of AS and other NDDs in which communication is atypical and/or lack of speech is a core feature. We discovered, and herein report for the first time, excessive laughter-like 50-kHz ultrasonic emissions in the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rat model of AS, which suggests an excitable, playful demeanor and elevated positive affect, similar to the demeanor of individuals with AS. Also in line with the AS phenotype, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats demonstrated aberrant social interactions with a novel partner, distinctive gait abnormalities, impaired cognition, an underlying long-term potentiation deficit, and profound reductions in brain volume. These unique, robust phenotypes provide advantages compared to currently available mouse models and will be highly valuable as outcome measures in the evaluation of therapies for AS.

## Significance Statement

Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a severe neurogenetic disorder for which there is no cure, despite decades of research using mouse models. This study utilized a recently developed rat model of AS to delineate disease-relevant outcome measures in order to facilitate therapeutic development. We found the rat to be a strong model of AS, offering several advantages over mouse models by exhibiting numerous AS-relevant phenotypes including overabundant laughter-like vocalizations, reduced hippocampal long-term potentiation, and volumetric anomalies across the brain. These findings are unconfounded by detrimental motor abilities and background strain,

issues plaguing mouse models. This rat model represents an important advancement in the field of AS and the outcome metrics reported herein will be central to the therapeutic pipeline.

## **Introduction**

Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a rare neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by developmental delay, impaired communication skills, intellectual disability, ataxia, motor and balance deficits, and seizures. Those with AS very often display a happy disposition with a high degree of excitability, smiling, and easily provoked laughter (1). AS is caused by the loss of expression or function of the maternally inherited allele of the ubiquitin protein ligase E3A (*UBE3A*), which typically results from a *de novo* deletion in the 15q11-q13 region (2). Restoring a functional copy of *UBE3A* is seemingly possible by innovative gene therapy approaches including antisense oligonucleotides (3), viral vector delivery (4), artificial transcription factors (5), stem cell mediated therapies (6), and the cutting edge Cas9 (7). With these methods to target the underlying cause of AS, which has been known for more than two decades, gene replacement therapy is on the horizon. Indeed, two clinical trials using “gene therapy-like” antisense oligonucleotide interventions began recruitment in 2020, highlighting this as a groundbreaking time in AS and gene therapy research (GeneTx NCT04259281; Roche NCT04428281).

Indispensable to such a strategy of therapeutic development are *in vivo* studies utilizing preclinical model systems with rigorous translational outcomes. However, one domain that is critically impaired in AS and many other neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) but difficult to study in preclinical models is communication. The utility of non-human animals to model this domain is inherently limited by their lack of human-interpretable language, however animal models are not irrelevant to this pursuit and can be useful for communication studies. In fact, the

increasing availability of rat models of NDDs opens up new opportunities in the development of preclinical outcome measures of social communication. While the mouse has been the preferred model species in recent decades due to the sophisticated genetic technologies available, there are complex behaviors and physiological processes difficult or impossible to investigate in mice without confounds that are easily observable/obtained in rats (8). One prominent example is the greater sophistication and complexity in the rat acoustic communication system. Rats emit uniquely detectable ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) that serve as situation-dependent, evolved signals which accomplish important communicative functions that are not observed as functions of mouse USV (9, 10).

There are two main types of USV in juvenile and adult rats. Low-frequency 22-kHz “alarm calls” are produced in aversive situations and are used as warning calls of threats (11-13). High-frequency 50-kHz “pro-social calls” occur in positive contexts such as social investigation and play. These types of calls help to maintain social proximity through eliciting social approach (14), extend periods of play (15), and coordinate complex social interactions such as social cooperation (16). Additionally, 50-kHz USV are associated with the release of dopamine in the nucleus accumbens (17, 18), are self-administered by rats (19), and can be evoked by tickling (20, 21). These calls are thought to reflect optimism (22) and have been compared to laughter (20, 23, 24).

The rat model of AS provides the unique opportunity to investigate these distinct types of vocalizations as well as other types of social behaviors that are difficult to capture with high signal sensitivity, rigor, and reproducibility in mice (9, 25-28), such as same-sex interactions and structured play (29)-(30). To date, studies of communication in AS mouse models have focused on pup and female-induced mating USV while assessments of social behavior have predominantly relied on the metric of sniff/contact time in the three-chambered social approach task or female-

elicited interactions (31-33). Mice do not emit 22-kHz USV like rats and, compared to mice, rats are quicker to approach a same-sex conspecific, show more affiliative behaviors, and have greater consistency in their levels of sociability (34, 35). The broader and more nuanced social behavioral repertoire of rats is particularly obvious during social play, which is a complex process that involves the rapid integration of coordinated physical behaviors with simultaneous bi-directional acoustic communication (36, 37). Therefore, as compared to previous mouse models of AS, the rat model offers a greater diversity of social and communication behaviors to characterize and potentially utilize as preclinical outcome measures (8, 15, 38-42).

Recently, the first reports of a full *Ube3a* deletion rat described the generation and initial characterization of this highly novel genetic model of AS (43, 44). This full deletion model has opened up new avenues of research into the effects of loss of all isoforms of UBE3A and made it possible to investigate the aforementioned complex behaviors that have been difficult to capture with high signal sensitivity in mice. Since the initial studies of this model revealed deficits in motor, cognition, social approach, and pup vocalizations, we sought to explore other social behaviors and further characterize vocalization patterns with the goal of delineating useful metrics for future preclinical studies. Since antisense oligonucleotides and other treatments are being assessed in clinical trials, and novel therapies are being evaluated at the investigational drug discovery level, clinically relevant outcome measures are vital and imperative to demonstrate functional efficacy of the varied intervention approaches.

Our present investigation leveraged the advanced social communication system of the rat to show that the *Ube3a* maternal deletion rat (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>) produces excessive signals of positive affect characteristic of AS. We identified several other AS-relevant phenotypes in the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rat model at various life stages, including atypical interactions with conspecifics and

maladaptive impairments in gait and cognition. We also report, for the first time, reduced hippocampal long-term potentiation, observed in mouse models of AS but not yet in rats, as a putative cellular mechanism underlying the learning and memory deficits apparent in the rat model. Finally, we extended our mesoscopic neuroimaging analysis to adults and discovered decreased brain volume in numerous regions and pronounced increased severity with age.

## Results

### **Overabundant emission of laughter-like 50-kHz calls in juvenile *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats.**

Since deficient expressive communication and elevated rates of positive affect are key clinical features of AS, we sought to quantify these characteristics in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> and *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> (wildtype) rats. While vocalizations are readily collected during social play, recording USV from multiple interacting animals makes it difficult to determine which animal made each call. We therefore took advantage of the fact that rats emit laughter-like 50-kHz calls when social play is simulated by an experimenter via tickling and other physical maneuverings (19, 21, 45, 46). We implemented a standardized heterospecific play procedure (**Figure 1A**) to elicit USV (**Figure 1B**) while maintaining full confidence in the identity of the caller and controlling for the level of physical interaction across subjects.

We discovered that while both groups increased 50-kHz USV emission across consecutive sessions, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> emitted a substantially elevated level of 50-kHz USV (**Figure 1C**;  $F_{\text{Genotype(G)}}(1, 48) = 7.351, p = 0.009$ ;  $F_{\text{Day(D)}}(3.007, 144.3) = 10.82, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{D} \times \text{G}}(4, 192) = 1.052, p > 0.05$ ). In total, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> emitted an average of  $33 \pm 5$  USV per minute (mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.), more than twice the rate of controls, which produced an average of  $15 \pm 3$  calls per minute (**Figure 1D**;  $U = 175, p = 0.007$ ). A closer examination revealed that 50-kHz USV were elevated

during the break and belly tickle phases (**Figure 1E**;  $F_G(1, 48) = 6.927, p = 0.011$ ;  $F_{\text{Phase (P)}}(1.722, 82.64) = 27.83, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{P \times G}(4, 192) = 2.075, p > 0.05$ ; *post hoc*: break,  $p = 0.023$ ; belly tickle,  $p = 0.023$ ), although calling during the other phases also trended higher, providing strong evidence of elevated positive affect and a high hedonic impact of the assay ( $p = 0.057$ ; push and drill,  $p = 0.057$ ; flip over,  $p = 0.057$ ). There was no effect of sex, nor an interaction with sex, ( $p > 0.05$ ) for any parameter.

Additionally, 50-kHz USV were more frequently emitted during the anticipation period immediately prior to the play sessions (**Figure 1F**;  $U = 146.5, p = 0.001$ ). In total, across all four anticipation timepoints (days 2-5),  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  emitted an average of  $9 \pm 2$  USV per minute (mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.), more than four times the rate of wildtypes, which produced an average of  $2 \pm 0.4$  calls per minute. This indicates that  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  predicted the impending onset of play and that the interaction had a high degree of incentive salience.

Excessive vocalization by  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  rats was specific to 50-kHz USV. Production of short 22-kHz USV, which are emitted in modest amounts during play, was low and did not differ between genotypes (**Figure 1G**;  $F_G(1, 48) = 1.771, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_D(1.825, 87.62) = 3.160, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{D \times G}(4, 192) = 1.330, p > 0.05$ ). Elevated 50-kHz calling by  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  was also specific to being provoked by heterospecific play, as 50-kHz and short 22-kHz USV production was normal during exploration of an empty cage (albeit a slight trend toward greater 50-kHz USV; **Figure 1H**; 50-kHz,  $U = 374.5, p > 0.05$ ; 22-kHz,  $U = 433, p > 0.05$ ) and in response to the acoustic presentation of 50-kHz USV (**Figure 1I**; 50-kHz,  $U = 53, p > 0.05$ ; 22-kHz,  $U = 44.50, p > 0.05$ ). No gross abnormalities in call structure were observed. Specifically, 50-kHz calls were of normal duration and peak frequency, suggesting that increased heterospecific play 50-kHz call numbers were not inflated by shorter or broken calls. Since the average duration of the juvenile 22-kHz

USV fell short of the usual durations of adult “typical 22-kHz” USV, we herein refer to them as “short 22-kHz” USV (**Figure S1A-H**).

**Intact social interest but deficient expression of key social interaction behaviors in juvenile *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats.** We sought to investigate whether elevated 50-kHz USV emission in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats was associated with greater social engagement with a conspecific. Starting around two weeks of age, rats play fight with each other by chasing, pouncing, pinning, and wrestling in a manner similar to cats and dogs. Through developmental experience, they learn how to appropriately initiate, engage in, and terminate play bouts with others. In order to more closely examine social behavior and the nuanced reciprocal interactions of social play (**Table S1**), we gave juvenile subjects the opportunity to freely interact with a conspecific (47). Despite greater 50-kHz calling during heterospecific play, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats showed a normal degree of interest in the stimulus animal, demonstrated by the amounts of time spent social sniffing (**Figure 2A**;  $t(20) = 1.646, p > 0.05$ ) and anogenital sniffing (**Figure 2B**;  $t(20) = 0.4457, p > 0.05$ ). Putting forth a similar level of investigative effort suggested that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> are just as motivated for social interaction as controls. Levels of self-grooming (**Figure 2C**;  $U = 38, p > 0.05$ ) and arena exploration (**Figure 2D**;  $U = 30, p > 0.05$ ) were also normal but *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> spent markedly less time following or chasing the stimulus rat (**Figure 2E**;  $U = 29, p = 0.041$ ). The key observation was the reduced time spent rough-and-tumble playing (**Figure 2F**;  $U = 33.50, p = 0.029$ ) compared to wildtypes. In an attempt to reconcile the near lack of play with intact levels of social interest, we quantified specific components of rough-and-tumble play. While the number of side-to-side social contacts via push pasts were similar across genotypes (**Figure 2G**;  $t(20) = 0.3852, p > 0.05$ ), there was a trending reduction in the number of push under or crawl overs (**Figure 2H**;  $U = 31.5,$

$p = 0.061$ ) and almost a complete lack of pouncing in  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  (**Figure 2I**;  $U = 24, p = 0.008$ ). A separate test of olfaction was used to rule out an olfactory deficit as a confounder of social investigation (**Figure S2**).

**Abnormal gait in  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  rats.** In an effort to assess the potential contribution of motor defects to social play behavior, we explored motor dysfunction, which is a core clinical feature of AS prevalent in mouse models (32, 44, 48, 49) and hypothesized by our group to underlie the open field, rotarod, and marble burying phenotypes of AS mouse models. Previously, we discovered lower open field vertical activity in  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  rats while other activity indices were typical (44). Using the DigiGait automated treadmill system, we found that juvenile  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  rats displayed robust abnormalities in limb propulsion time, indicating reduced limb strength and less force produced per unit time compared to wildtypes (**Figure 3A**;  $F_{\text{Genotype(G)}}(1, 44) = 0.0684, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{\text{Limbs(L)}}(1, 44) = 776.8, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{L}\times\text{G}}(1, 44) = 12.80, p < 0.001$ ; *post hoc*: forelimbs,  $p = 0.030$ ; hindlimbs,  $p = 0.022$ ; **Figure 3B**;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 44) = 1.012, p > 0.05, F_{\text{L}}(1, 44) = 687.0, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{L}\times\text{G}}(1, 44) = 9.391, p = 0.004$ ; *post hoc*: forelimbs,  $p = 0.010$ ). No abnormalities in swing time (**Figure 3C**;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 44) = 0.1209, p > 0.05, F_{\text{L}}(1, 44) = 22.62, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{L}\times\text{G}}(1, 44) = 0.2552, p > 0.05$ ) or total stride time (**Figure 3D**;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 44) = 0.9166, p > 0.05; F_{\text{L}}(1, 44) = 13.24, p < 0.001; F_{\text{L}\times\text{G}}(1, 44) = 0.7566, p > 0.05$ ) were discovered, suggesting that the opposing effects of propulsion and brake time canceled each other out. Stride length was normal, which was surprising given the published Zeno walkway data in humans (50), but lends to the hypothesis that  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat}^+}$  have limb weakness since more time was required to produce force for an equal length step (**Figure 3F**;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 44) = 0.9460, p > 0.05; F_{\text{L}}(1, 44) = 12.70, p < 0.001; F_{\text{L}\times\text{G}}(1, 44) = 0.7719, p > 0.05$ ). Forelimb stance width was reduced (**Figure 3G**;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 44) = 1.605, p > 0.05$ ;

$F_L(1, 44) = 939.0, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{L \times G}(1, 44) = 12.46$ ; *post hoc*: forelimbs,  $p = 0.022$ ) while an elevated forelimb paw angle indicated greater degree of external rotation and splaying (**Figure 3H**;  $F_G(1, 44) = 5.957, p = 0.019$ ;  $F_L(1, 44) = 3.726, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{L \times G}(1, 44) = 3.497, p > 0.05$ ; *post hoc*: forelimbs,  $p = 0.006$ ), which has been associated with ataxia, spinal cord injury, and demyelinating disease (51). The observed effects were not attributable to differences in body length (**Figure S3A**) or body width (**Figure S3B**) and, despite abnormalities in some temporal and postural components of gait, the coordination metric of gait symmetry was unaltered (**Figure 3I**;  $t(44) = 1.023, p > 0.05$ ).

**Impaired learning and memory in  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats.** Learning and memory impairments, which are characteristic of AS, may hinder the ability of  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats to learn via developmental experience how to appropriately engage in social interactions. We therefore probed for a juvenile learning and memory deficit using a fear conditioning assay previously used to detect a deficit in adulthood (43). Following successful fear conditioning (**Figure 4A**;  $F_{Phase(P)}(1, 30) = 48.47, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{Genotype(G)}(1, 30) = 0.2203, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{P \times G}(1, 30) = 0.0613, p > 0.05$ ; *post hoc*:  $mat+/pat+, p < 0.0001$ ;  $mat-/pat+, p < 0.001$ ), juvenile  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  displayed normal levels of freezing in response to the training context (**Figure 4B**;  $U = 117.5, p > 0.05$ ) but a robust deficit in cued fear memory 48 hrs after training (**Figure 4C**;  $F_G(1, 30) = 7.395, p = 0.011$ ;  $F_P(1, 30) = 42.36, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{P \times G}(1, 30) = 8.699, p = 0.006$ ; *post hoc*: pre-cue,  $p > 0.05$ ; cue,  $p < 0.001$ ). We assessed the potentially confounding variable of impaired sensorimotor processing by measuring the startle response to an intense acoustic stimulus and quantifying the reduction in startle response following prepulses of varying intensities. Both baseline activity (**Figure S4A**) and the acoustic startle response of  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats was normal (**Figure S4B**), illustrating intact

hearing abilities. While there was a significant main effect of genotype on prepulse inhibition, indicative of a sensorimotor gating deficit, *post hoc* testing revealed no significant difference between groups at any individual prepulse level (**Figure S4C**).

As an additional assessment of cognitive functioning, we quantified spontaneous alternation during exploration of a Y-maze and found that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats displayed reduced spontaneous alternation compared to wildtypes (**Figure 4D**;  $t(46) = 3.115, p < 0.01$ ). *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats made 40% more errors (**Figure 4E**;  $t(46) = 3.827, p < 0.001$ ) and more arm entries (**Figure 4F**;  $t(46) = 3.620, p < 0.001$ ) despite no difference in the total distance moved (data not shown; Student's *t*-test:  $t(46) = 1.721, p > 0.05$ ). Taken together, these metrics indicate additional cognitive deficits in the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats that were not confounded by a locomotor deficiency.

**Reduced hippocampal long-term potentiation (LTP) in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats.** To elucidate the neurobiology underpinning the learning and memory deficits of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats, we quantified long-term potentiation (LTP). Previous studies in mouse models of AS have shown that LTP, a major cellular mechanism underlying learning and memory (52), is impaired (4, 53, 54). Here, we examined the effect of maternal *Ube3a* deletion on hippocampal LTP in adult *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats compared to wildtype littermate controls. Since we found hippocampal-dependent contextual fear memory intact at the juvenile age, but a previous report detected a clear deficit in adults (43), we measured hippocampal LTP in adulthood. Basal synaptic strength (**Figure 5A**;  $F_{\text{Genotype(G)}}(1, 92) = 0.2013, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{\text{Amplitude(A)}}(5, 111) = 94.04, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{G} \times \text{A}}(5, 92) = 0.4107, p > 0.05$ ) and paired-pulse ratio (**Figure 5B**;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 56) = 0.065, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{\text{Interval(I)}}(3, 76) = 20.96, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{G} \times \text{I}}(3, 56) = 0.0758, p > 0.05$ ) were unaltered in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats, suggesting no change in baseline excitatory transmission. However, consistent with the mouse models of AS

(4, 53, 54), we found that the magnitude of LTP was reduced in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (**Figure 5C** and **5D**;  $t(25) = 4.641, p < 0.0001$ ), suggesting a putative mechanism underlying impairment of learning and memory (4, 53-56).

**Neuroanatomical pathology in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats revealed by high-resolution magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).** MRI revealed striking differences in total brain volume at 6.5 months of age, which was decreased by 6.0% in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats ( $q = 0.04$ , **Figure 6, Table S2**). The overall brain volume difference was driven by decreases in the hippocampal region (-6.3%,  $q = 0.04$ ), brain stem (-5.6%,  $q = 0.04$ ), thalamus (-7.7%,  $q = 0.01$ ), cerebellum (-9.0%,  $q = 0.02$ ), and deep cerebellar nuclei (-12.3%,  $q = 0.0001$ ). Additional differences were found throughout the white matter fiber tracts (-7.6%,  $q = 0.02$ ), including but not limited to the cerebral peduncle (-7.6%,  $q = 0.02$ ), internal capsule (-8.4%,  $q = 0.02$ ), and arbor vita of the cerebellum (-11.7%,  $q = 0.0004$ ). Moreover, trends were seen in other large white matter structures including the corpus callosum (-6.7%,  $q = 0.06$ ) and fornix system (-6.0%,  $q = 0.09$ ). A complete list of the regional structural differences in both absolute (mm<sup>3</sup>) and relative (% total brain) volume is provided in **Table S2**.

As we had previously examined *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats at a juvenile age (postnatal day (PND) 21) (44), we felt an age by genotype comparison was warranted. Therefore, we combined the data from our previous work to explore a genotype by age interaction model and found significant interactions between genotype and age for the total brain volume ( $q = 0.048$ ), caudoputamen ( $q = 0.03$ ), white matter fiber tracts ( $q = 0.03$ ; **Figure 6A**;  $F_{\text{Age(A)}}(1, 97) = 546.5, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{Genotype(G)}}(1, 97) = 11.87, p < 0.001$ ;  $F_{\text{A} \times \text{G}}(1, 97) = 10.68, p = 0.002$ ; *post hoc*: juvenile,  $p > 0.05$ ; adult,  $p < 0.0001$ ), hypothalamus ( $q = 0.046$ ; **Figure 6B**;  $F_{\text{A}}(1, 97) = 460.2, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 97) = 5.081,$

$p = 0.026$ ;  $F_{A \times G}(1, 97) = 8.760$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ; *post hoc*: juvenile,  $p > 0.05$ ; adult,  $p = 0.001$ ), hippocampal region ( $q = 0.046$ ; **Figure 6C**;  $F_A(1, 97) = 434.4$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_G(1, 97) = 10.89$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ;  $F_{A \times G}(1, 97) = 8.760$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ; *post hoc*: juvenile,  $p > 0.05$ ; adult,  $p < 0.0001$ ), and thalamus ( $q = 0.02$ ; **Figure 6D**;  $F_A(1, 97) = 430.2$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_G(1, 97) = 11.14$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ;  $F_{A \times G}(1, 97) = 14.96$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; *post hoc*: juvenile,  $p > 0.05$ ; adult,  $p < 0.0001$ ). A full list of the regional genotype by age interactions is located in **Table S3**. Voxelwise changes were also found throughout the brain of adult  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats compared to the juvenile age. The changes in the adults were substantially larger, signaling a more severe neuroanatomical phenotype with age (**Figure 6**).

## Discussion

While there is currently no effective treatment or cure for AS, the genetic cause of maternal *UBE3A* mutations has been well studied and is targetable by gene therapy approaches. Indispensable to such a strategy of therapeutic development are *in vivo* studies utilizing preclinical model systems with a high degree of genetic conservation and behavioral complexity relative to humans. Therefore, while mouse models (specifically, the exon 2 null mutation model) have prevailed as the animal model of choice for studying AS over the past two decades (53),  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats offer a unique and suitable system for investigating certain complexities of the human AS phenotype. Rats provide 1) an enhanced sophistication of social play behavior (47, 57, 58) (59, 60) and 2) an acoustic communication system that allow for the collection, observation, and quantification of rigorous, reliable, translatable outcome measures (9, 10, 61). This is particularly advantageous in modeling certain NDDs (29, 62-66), specifically AS, in which there are strong social communication phenotypes characterized by aberrant social behavior but a high level of

interest in engaging with others, and a robust expression of positive affect (i.e., laughing) but deficits in language and speech (67-76). Our discovery of excessive 50-kHz USV is the first report of this affective outcome measure in a model of AS. Moreover, reduced social play, atypical gait, impaired cognition, and anatomical and cellular physiology anomalies were easily detected in this model.

It is important to state that the purpose of this article is not to compare rat and mice acoustic communication but rather to acknowledge that USV and social play are exhibited more vigorously, reliably, quantifiably, and of greater definition (i.e., specific frequency ranges) in rats (35, 39, 41). Specifically, rats emit three subtypes of USV, which are uniquely dependent on age, environmental conditions, and internal affective state (9, 10, 61). Rat pups emit 40-kHz vocalizations when separated from the nest and juvenile and adult rats emit 22-kHz vocalizations in anticipation of inescapable aversive stimuli—these vocalizations reflect a negative affective state. Rats also produce 50-kHz vocalizations, which are understood to reflect a positive affective state, often co-occur with positively valenced appetitive behavior, and have been referred to as rat laughter (20, 23). We leveraged our model species to investigate expression of USV in both sexes across several contexts, beyond neonatal maternal separation.

While a trend suggested that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats may produce an abnormally high number of laughter-like 50-kHz USV without provocation, we were able to detect a very clear elevation in 50-kHz calling through a manual heterospecific play method. This behavior, suggestive of an enhanced degree of ‘wanting’ and ‘liking’ the interaction (77-80), is a clear and robust phenotype that closely aligns with the AS clinical profile of a happy disposition and easily provoked laughter. This is the first report of this method being used in a genetic rat model and may therefore be encouraging to other groups seeking to study communication in other rat models of NDDs.

Given what is known about the typical functions of rat 50-kHz USV, the increased calling rate could suggest that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats put more effort into eliciting social interaction, or it may be unrelated to the social component of heterospecific play. For instance, the phenotype could be a neurobiological consequence of a disinhibited vocal production pathway as AS is typified by laughter that is easily provoked regardless of stimuli valence (both pleasant and unpleasant), or *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats may be more sensitive to tactile stimulation. Deriving greater reward from physical interactions could help explain why *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats exhibit typical social investigation in the reciprocal interaction test but reduced social approach in the three-chambered and USV playback assays. Previously, we found that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats showed a reduced approach toward the acoustic playback of 50-kHz USV (44). In light of the new evidence here from physical encounters, our previous Berg et al. (44) finding is most likely due to a social-cognitive impairment associated with acoustic stimuli as opposed to reduced social motivation. Regardless of etiology or intended communicative function, if there is indeed one at all, the aberrant call quantity elicited by heterospecific play provides a clear AS-relevant phenotype for use in future preclinical work with this model. This is a particularly valuable outcome measure to the field as it is detectable in both sexes and mouse models of AS have shown inconsistent phenotypes with regards to USV emission. In the presence of a female conspecific, male AS mice displayed a call deficit whereas female AS mice emitted a greater number of calls in one study and a reduced number in another study (31, 81, 82).

One limitation of our USV analysis was the lack of acoustic feature quantification for the calls specifically evoked by heterospecific play. We did, however, subsequently carry out this analysis on all other assays involving USV and found no genotype effect on the acoustic features of 50-kHz and 22-kHz calls across social and non-social contexts. Interestingly, the low frequency

calls emitted in response to 50-kHz USV playback resembled the “short 22-kHz” USV described by Brudzynski et al. (19, 83-86), likely driven by the young age of the animals, which have reduced body size and therefore altered vocal capacity compared to adults. The low frequency calls produced during exploration of an empty cage resembled the “low-shorts” described by Schwarting et al. in the “cage test” (12, 87-90). While a few long “typical 22-kHz” USV known to function as “alarm calls” were observed, they were very low in number and not emitted reliably enough to suggest that our paradigms were aversive or find an effect of genotype. Rather than serving an alarming function, the rare “typical 22-kHz” calls were more likely related to frustration, as subjects never encountered a live “partner” rat during the assay, as previously documented (29).

Juvenile social play is a critical way that rats develop social competence and learn how to appropriately engage and communicate with others. This has been well described by many laboratories and is analogous to play in young children (10, 19, 30, 41, 42, 47, 85, 86, 89, 91-93). In our fine-grained analysis of juvenile reciprocal social interaction, we discovered that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats were socially interested in a novel partner but did not engage in the type of rough-and-tumble play behaviors that are characteristic of the species, albeit specific to sex and strain. The low levels of play in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats are likely attributable to underlying motor and/or cognitive deficits. For instance, hindlimb weakness may be prohibitive for actions such as chasing and pouncing chasing, which are key components of rough-and-tumble play, and/or cognitive impairment(s) may inhibit the learning of play behaviors or sequences over development. It is also possible that excessive, and therefore inappropriately timed, vocal expression may inhibit the natural progression of play from taking place.

In contrast with previous studies on mouse models of AS which have reported both social deficits and “hypersociability,” we found the rat model of AS to exhibit a typical level of social investigation (31, 82, 94). Important factors contributing to this difference likely include the analysis of additional social interaction metrics beyond sniff/contact time and the profound motor deficits that affect gross locomotion in AS mice but not rats, which is a key advantage for the interpretation of behavior in the rat model. Of note, the level of play observed in our wildtypes was lower than that typically found in Sprague Dawley rats (15, 95, 96). This may have been due to mixed genotype housing, which was used to better parse out the effect of the gene deletion from that of the developmental social environment. While our wildtypes were reared by *Ube3a* deletion dams, we do not suspect that this significantly contributed to differences in their behavior since paternal deletions of *Ube3a* have not been shown to have robust effects on behavior (44).

Movement disorders (74) are a hallmark feature of AS, with gait ataxia being one of the most common issues. While the deficits we discovered in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats were not gross or obvious to the eye, subtle aberrations in stance and paw placement, paired with abnormal braking and propelling, reflect impaired motor coordination and may be an advanced way to define gait outcome measures for clinical trials. This impairment is likely linked to limb weakness, with aberrations reflecting greater compensatory mechanisms for *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats than in mice, for which the deficits are gross and confound numerous other assays. All of this evidence suggests that altered postures may affect motor dynamics which in turn results in the gait patterns exhibited by AS individuals and *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. The limb weakness indicated by our gait analysis aligns with the reduced rearing previously observed (44) and is likely a main contributing factor to the lack of rough-and-tumble play and associated behaviors such as pouncing.

We discovered and report for the first time, to our knowledge, of long-term potentiation (LTP) deficits in this rat model (53, 54, 97-99). Our finding of reduced LTP provides a putative cellular signaling mechanism underlying the learning and memory impairments that have been reported herein and previously (e.g., delayed touchscreen learning) (43, 44). Juvenile *Ube3a*<sup>mat- /pat+</sup> rats exhibited deficits in cued fear memory 48 hours after tone-shock training, which extends the previous finding by Dodge et al. of deficient contextual and cued fear conditioning 72 hours post-training at 3-4 months of age (43). We ruled out impaired sensorimotor abilities as a confounding variable since only prepulse inhibition, and not acoustic startle, was affected and not robustly. While reduced hippocampal LTP was discovered, we did not find a deficit in hippocampus-dependent contextual fear memory. One likely explanation for this is that we tested fear memory in juveniles (around 6 weeks of age) but collected electrophysiological readings in adulthood (around 12 weeks of age), suggesting our results become detectable in *Ube3a*<sup>mat- /pat+</sup> in early adulthood. Another limitation was our failure to collect 22-kHz calls during the fear assay. Laser focused on translation, we began this investigation with a focus on 50-kHz, positive, “happy” calls. Fear conditioning deficits have been detected in mouse models of AS, but not in a consistent fashion. While some models have shown a deficit in contextual memory, others have not (32, 100), and the same is true for cued fear memory (32, 100). This is likely the result of varying training protocols, background strain, and the confounding influence of the severe motor deficit in the AS mouse model.

Pronounced deficits in adulthood are supported by magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Previously, we reported a variety of trending volumetric abnormalities at PND 21 (44), however, not previously illustrated anywhere is that in adults (6.5 months) we found substantial decreases in brain volume throughout the brain highlighting a more severe neuroanatomical phenotype with

age. Overall, the total brain volume was decreased in adult *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats, which could indicate a loss of cellular volume or dendritic complexity over time. Additionally, the drastic volume loss in fiber tracts throughout the brain could indicate a loss in axonal numbers, axonal volume, or myelination. Previous research in a mouse model of AS revealed white matter loss to play a large role in the overall microcephaly observed (101), with an 11% loss in the corpus callosum making it the most affected white matter structure. However, this was not the case in our study: we found only a trend towards reduced corpus callosum volume (-6.7%) and the largest white matter deficits were found in the cerebellum, in which overall cerebellar white matter was decreased by 11%. Our rat data reproduces the previous findings by Judson et al. in the mouse and extends on earlier report on younger rats, as the volume loss seen here in the fiber tracts was also disproportionate to the overall brain volume loss, confirming that white matter development plays the major role in the impaired brain growth in the disorder. Another noteworthy discovery was the 9% decrease in the size of the cerebellum. The overall cerebellar loss was consistent with the cortical loss (-9%), however there was a disproportionate loss in the size of the arbor vitae and deep cerebellar nuclei, indicating that the outputs of the cerebellum are impaired.

In conclusion, we discovered that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats exhibit interest in a social partner, but express aberrant social behavior and emit an atypically high level of laughter-like vocalizations. Deficits in other AS-relevant domains were also discovered, including gait and cognition, and reduced hippocampal LTP. Future lines of investigation will assess the circuitry and mechanisms underlying the excessive laughter-like USV and social-cognitive anomalies in USV reception, in addition to pursuing other neurobiological endpoints and biomarkers. The larger size of our rat model compared to mice will facilitate procedures such as accessing the intrathecal space and collecting cerebrospinal fluid without blood contamination, crucial for studying *Ube3a* which is

only imprinted in neurons. Overall, our results indicate that the deletion of maternal *Ube3a* in the rat creates a sophisticated rodent model with high face validity to the human AS phenotype. In the pursuit of effective therapeutics, it is essential to be equipped with a diverse set of behavioral outcome measures and neurological biomarkers by which to assess efficacy. Taken together, we demonstrate that the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rat offers numerous potential outcome measures that are detectable at juvenile and adulthood timepoints.

## Materials and Methods

**Subjects.** Subjects were male and female Sprague Dawley *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats and their wildtype littermates (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>) generated from breeding pairs of paternal *Ube3a* deletion females and wildtype males purchased from Envigo (Indianapolis, IN). The initial generation of *Ube3a* deletion rats using CRISPR/Cas9 was described previously (44). Genotyping was performed using a small sample of tail tissue collected at postnatal day (PND) 2, REExtract-N-Amp (Sigma Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA), and primers Rube1123 TAGTGCTGAGGCACTGGTTCAGAGC, Rube1606r TGCAAGGGGTAGCTTACTCATAGC, Ub3aDelSpfcF6 ACCTAGCCCAAAGCCATCTC, and Ub3aDelR2 GGGAACAGCAAAAGACATGG. All animals were housed in a temperature-controlled vivarium maintained on a 12:12 light-dark cycle. All procedures were conducted in compliance with the NIH Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of the University of California Davis.

To minimize the carry-over effects from repeated testing and handling, six mixed-sex cohorts of rats were tested and behavioral tests were carried out in order of least to most stressful with at least 48 hrs break between tests. Each cohort was comprised of four to nine litters and subjects were

sampled as followed: subjects for 50-kHz ultrasonic (USV) playback were sampled from Cohort 1; contextual and cued fear conditioning from Cohort 2; gait analysis, heterospecific play, and social play from Cohort 3; acoustic startle and long-term potentiation from Cohort 4; spontaneous exploratory USV from Cohort 5; spontaneous alternation from Cohort 6; and olfactory discrimination from Cohort 7. Following behavioral testing, rats from Cohort 3 were perfused for magnetic resonance imaging.

**Juvenile USV in response to heterospecific play.** At postnatal day (PND) 30 through 34, rats were provided daily heterospecific play sessions involving manual stimulation using a slightly abbreviated procedure from those described previously (46, 90, 102). For 5 min on 5 consecutive days, rats were individually manipulated by a familiar experimenter using a single clean hand within a clean, empty version of the home cage with fresh bedding (37.2 cm l x 30.8 cm w x 18.7 cm h; illuminated to ~30 lux) while vocalizations were recorded with an overhead ultrasonic microphone (Avisoft Bioacoustics, Glienicke, Germany) for later scoring by a trained observer blinded to genotype. All rats were handled by the experimenter in a standardized fashion (5 min on 3 days) prior to the first heterospecific play session.

The physical manipulations performed were tickling the subject's neck (2x), tickling the subject's belly (1x), pushing into their shoulders ("push and drill"; 1x), and flipping the subject onto their back and momentarily pinning them down ("flip over"; 3x). Each manipulation lasted 30 sec with three 30-sec breaks interspersed at 0, 60, and 150 sec, during which the experimenter did not initiate touching the subject but moved their hand around the cage to encourage following or chasing. In an effort to provide a standardized experience, a single experimenter carried out the procedure for all subjects and the experimenter remained unaware of USV being emitted during

the test, performing the manipulations in an equivalent manner for all rats. To mitigate any potential effect of order, the sequence of manipulations was re-ordered each day but remained consistent across all animals. The testing order of the subjects was also changed from day to day. The number of calls emitted during each 30-sec interval were counted by a trained observer blinded to genotype and classified as either high (50-kHz) or low (short 22-kHz) frequency using a threshold of 33 kHz. Calls emitted during the minute immediately preceding the heterospecific play sessions on days 2-4 (“anticipation”) were also counted and classified.

**Juvenile spontaneous exploratory USV.** At PND 30, rats were individually placed in a clean, empty version of the home cage (illuminated to ~30 lux) with clean bedding for 5 min while vocalizations were recorded with an overhead ultrasonic microphone (Avisoft Bioacoustics). Recording began immediately following the subject being placed into the cage and no other animals or any experimenter were present in the room during recording. Calls were classified by a trained observer blinded to genotype as either high (50-kHz) or low (short 22-kHz) frequency using a threshold of 33 kHz.

**Juvenile USV in response to playback of 50-kHz USV.** At PND  $30 \pm 4$ , subjects were individually presented with 1-min of natural pro-social 50-kHz USV while on a radial maze illuminated to ~8 lux as described previously (30, 44). Response vocalizations were recorded with an overhead ultrasonic microphone (Avisoft Bioacoustics) and the number of calls emitted during the minute of playback were counted by a trained observer blinded to genotype and classified as high (50-kHz) or low (short 22-kHz) frequency using a threshold of 33 kHz.

**Juvenile social play.** At PND  $38 \pm 1$ , social play behavior was assessed following a protocol described previously (29, 103, 104). Each subject rat was placed with a freely moving, unfamiliar, strain-, sex-, and age-matched wildtype stimulus rat for 10 min in a clean, empty test arena (illuminated to  $\sim 30$  lux) containing a thin layer of clean bedding. In order to facilitate social play, each subject and stimulus animal was socially isolated in a separate holding room for 30 min prior to the test. Stimulus animals were generated from wildtype Sprague-Dawley breeders (Envigo, Indianapolis, IN) and handled in a standardized manner (5 min on 3 days) prior to the assay. The interaction was video-recorded, and behaviors were later scored by a trained observer blinded to genotype as described in **Table S1**. Blind scoring was possible since *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats have normal body weight and are physically indistinguishable from their wildtype littermates <sup>41</sup>.

**Olfactory discrimination.** At  $42 \pm 3$ , the ability of rats to discriminate between a social and non-social odors was tested by measuring the time spent investigating odor-saturated cotton swabs. Subjects were individually tested in clean chambers (40.6 cm l x 40.6 cm w x 28 cm h) dimly illuminated to  $\sim 30$  lux. On the day before the test, rats were habituated to the test chamber containing a clean dry cotton swab (15.2 cm l) for 20 min. The tip of the swab was secured 3 cm above the floor in the center of the arena by being attached to the top of a clean weighted glass dome (7.6 cm d x 10 cm h) and angled downward. On the day of the test, rats were again habituated to the arena containing a clean dry cotton swab for 10 min, followed by a swab soaked in water, then vanilla (1:100 dilution; McCormick, Hunt Valley, MD), and then a social scent. The social scent was collected by wiping a cotton swab in a zig zag pattern along the bottom of a cage of same sex but unfamiliar Sprague Dawley rats (Envigo, Indianapolis, IN). Each saturated swab was presented for 2 min and the order of odor presentation was consistent across all animals. Time

spent investigating the scents (defined as the nose within 2 cm of the cotton swab tip) was measured using videotracking software (EthoVision XT, Noldus Information Technology, Leesburg, VA), which was subsequently validated manually.

**Juvenile gait.** At PND 25, gait metrics were collected using the DigiGait automated treadmill system and analysis software (Mouse Specifics, Inc., Framingham, MA). Subjects were placed individually into the enclosed treadmill chamber and allowed to acclimate before the belt was turned on. The belt speed was slowly increased to a constant speed of 20 cm/sec, at which each rat was recorded making clearly visible consecutive strides for 3-6 sec.

**Juvenile contextual and cued fear conditioning.** At PND  $43 \pm 1$ , learning and memory were assessed using an automated fear conditioning chamber (Med Associates, Inc., Fairfax, VT) following methods previously described (104-106). On day one, rats were trained via exposure to a series of three noise-shock (conditioned stimulus-unconditioned stimulus; CS-US; 80 dB white noise, 0.7 mA foot shock) pairings inside a sound-attenuated chamber with specific visual, tactile, and odor cues. On day two (24 hrs post-training), contextual memory was tested by placing each subject back inside the training environment for 5 min. The chamber contained the identical visual, tactile, and odor cues as the training session, but no noise or foot shock occurred. On day three (48 hours post-training), cued memory was evaluated by placing subjects into a novel context with altered visual, tactile, and odor cues. Following a 3-min period of exploration, the white noise CS was presented for 3 min. Time spent freezing during each test phase was measured using VideoFreeze software (Med Associates, Inc.).

**Spontaneous alternation.** At 10 weeks of age, spontaneous alternation was measured by allowing rats to freely explore a novel Y-maze (black, opaque; arms: 21" l x 4.5" w x 11" h; illuminated to ~30 lux) for 8 min. An overhead camera connected to videotracking software (EthoVision XT; Noldus Information Technology, Wageningen, Netherlands) was used to quantify the number of arm entries, the number of errors (defined as the sum of direct and indirect revisits to an arm), the number of spontaneous alternations, and the maximum number of possible alternations for the entire session.

**Prepulse inhibition of an acoustic startle response.** At 9-10 weeks of age, prepulse inhibition was measured using an SR-Lab System (San Diego Instruments, San Diego, CA). Subjects were placed in a clear plastic cylinder, which was mounted onto a platform connected to piezoelectric transducers inside a sound-attenuating chamber with internal speakers. The background noise level in the chamber was 70 decibel (dB) white noise. Each session consisted of a 5-min acclimation period followed by a pseudo-randomized presentation of 50 trials of five different trial types: one trial type was a 40-ms 120-dB startle stimulus, three trial types involved an acoustic prepulse (74, 82, or 90 dB) presented 120 ms prior to the 120-dB startle stimulus, and there were also trials with no startle stimulus in order to measure baseline movement inside the cylinder. Each trial type was presented in 10 blocks and was randomized within blocks. The intertrial interval varied randomly between 10 sec and 20 sec. Percent PPI was calculated using the equation: % PPI =  $[1 - (\text{Prepulse}/\text{Max Startle})] \times 100$ .

**Long-term potentiation (LTP).** *Acute slice preparation.* At 12-13 weeks of age, subjects were deeply anesthetized with isoflurane and, following decapitation, the brain was

rapidly removed and submerged in ice-cold, oxygenated (95% O<sub>2</sub>/5% CO<sub>2</sub>) ACSF containing (in mM) as follows: 124 NaCl, 4 KCl, 25 NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, 1 NaH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, 2 CaCl<sub>2</sub>, 1.2 MgSO<sub>4</sub>, and 10 glucose. On an ice-cold plate, the brain hemispheres were separated, blocked, and the hippocampi removed. The 400- $\mu$ m-thick slices were then cut using a McIlwain tissue chopper (Brinkman, Westbury, NY). Slices from the dorsal thirds of the hippocampus were used. Slices were incubated (at 33°C) for 20 min and then maintained in submerged-type chambers that were continuously perfused (2-3 mL/min) with ACSF and allowed to recover for at least 1.5-2 hr before recordings. Just prior to start of experiments slices were transferred to a submersion chamber on an upright Olympus microscope, perfused with 30.4°C normal ACSF saturated with 95% O<sub>2</sub>/5% CO<sub>2</sub>.

*Electrophysiological recordings.* A bipolar, nichrome wire stimulating electrode (MicroProbes) was placed in stratum radiatum of the CA1 region and used to activate Schaffer collateral/commissural fiber synapses. Evoked fEPSPs (basal stimulation rate = 0.033 Hz) were recorded in *stratum radiatum* using borosilicate pipettes (Sutter Instruments, Novato, CA) filled with ACSF (resistance 5-10 m $\Omega$ ). Submerged-type recording chambers were used for all recordings. All recordings were obtained with a MultiClamp 700B amplifier (Molecular Devices, San Jose, CA), filtered at 2 kHz, digitized at 10 Hz. To determine response parameters of excitatory synapses, basal synaptic strength was determined by comparing the amplitudes of presynaptic fiber volleys and postsynaptic fEPSP slopes for responses elicited by different intensities of SC fiber stimulation. Presynaptic neurotransmitter release probability was compared by paired pulse facilitation (PPF) experiments, performed at 25, 50, 100 and 250 msec stimulation intervals. LTP was induced by high frequency stimulation (HFS) using a 2x tetanus (1-s-long train of 100 Hz stimulation) with a 10 sec inter-tetanus interval. At the start of each experiment, the maximal fEPSP amplitude was determined and the intensity of presynaptic fiber stimulation was adjusted

to evoke fEPSPs with an amplitude ~40-50% of the maximal amplitude. The average slope of EPSPs elicited 55-60 min after HFS (normalized to baseline) was used for statistical comparisons.

**Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).** At 6.5 months of age, *ex vivo* neuroimaging was carried out by following a previously described protocol (30, 44). Brains were flushed and fixed via transcardial perfusion with 50 mL phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) containing 10 U/mL heparin and 2 mM ProHance (gadolinium contrast agent; Bracco Diagnostics Inc., Monroe Township, NJ) followed by 50 mL 4% paraformaldehyde in PBS containing 2 mM ProHance. Brains were incubated in the 4% PFA solution at 4°C for 24 hrs, transferred to a 0.02% sodium azide PBS solution, and then incubated at 4°C for at least one month before being scanned. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brains within their skulls was carried out using a multi-channel 7.0 Tesla scanner (Agilent Inc., Palo Alto, CA). Seven custom millipede coils were used to image the brains in parallel (107, 108). Parameters used in the anatomical MRI scans: T2 weighted 3D fast spin echo sequence, with a cylindrical acquisition of k-space, and with a TR of 350 ms, and TEs of 10.5 ms per echo for 12 echoes, field of view 36 x 36 x 40 mm<sup>3</sup> and a matrix size of 456 x 456 x 504 giving an image with 0.079 mm isotropic voxels (109). The current scan time for this sequence is ~ 3 hours.

To visualize and compare any changes in the rat brains the images were linearly and non-linearly registered together using the pydpiper framework. Registrations were performed using a combination of mni\_autoreg tools (110) and ANTS (advanced normalization tools) (111). Following registration, a population atlas was created representing the average anatomy of the study sample. At the end of the registration process all the scans were deformed into alignment with one another in an unbiased fashion. This allows for analysis of the deformations required to

register the brains together, which can be used to assess the volume of the individual brains and compared them to one another (112-117). For comparisons to the juvenile brains, a separate registration pipeline was used that included all the brains from this study as well as the previous Berg et al. study. Volumetric differences were calculated on a regional and a voxelwise basis. An in-house manually segmented hierarchical rat brain atlas was used to calculate the volumes of 52 different segmented structures. These structures were derived from multiple atlases (118, 119) and then modified for use in the rat brain.

**Statistical analysis.** Statistical analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism 8 statistical software (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA). Clampex 10.6 software suite (Molecular Devices, San Jose, CA) was used for analyzing electrophysiological data. Sample sizes and statistical tests are detailed throughout the text and in figure legends. Congruent with previous studies, no significant sex differences were detected so the results herein include both males and females.

*Analysis of behavior and LTP.* For single comparisons between two groups, either a Student's *t*-test or Mann-Whitney *U* test was used. Data that passed distribution normality tests, were collected using continuous variables, and had similar variances across groups were analyzed via Student's *t*-test. Alternatively, a Mann-Whitney *U* test was used. To analyze the effects of genotype and a second factor, either two-way or two-way repeated measures (RM) two-way ANOVA was used. In RM ANOVA, genotype was the between-group factor and time, limb set, test phase, scent, or prepulse intensity was the within-group factor. *Post hoc* comparisons were performed following a significant main effect or interaction and were carried out using Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons test controlling for multiple comparisons. Data points within two

standard deviations of the mean were included, all significance tests were two-tailed, and a  $p$ -value of  $< 0.05$  was considered significant.

*Analysis of MRI.* Statistical analyses were used to compare both the absolute and relative volumes voxelwise as well as across the 52 different hierarchical structures in the rat brains. Absolute volume was calculated as  $\text{mm}^3$  and relative volume was assessed as a measure of % total brain volume. Voxelwise and regional differences were assessed using linear models. All image analysis tools and software is available on Github (<https://github.com/Mouse-Imaging-Centre>). Multiple comparisons were controlled for using the False Discovery Rate (120).

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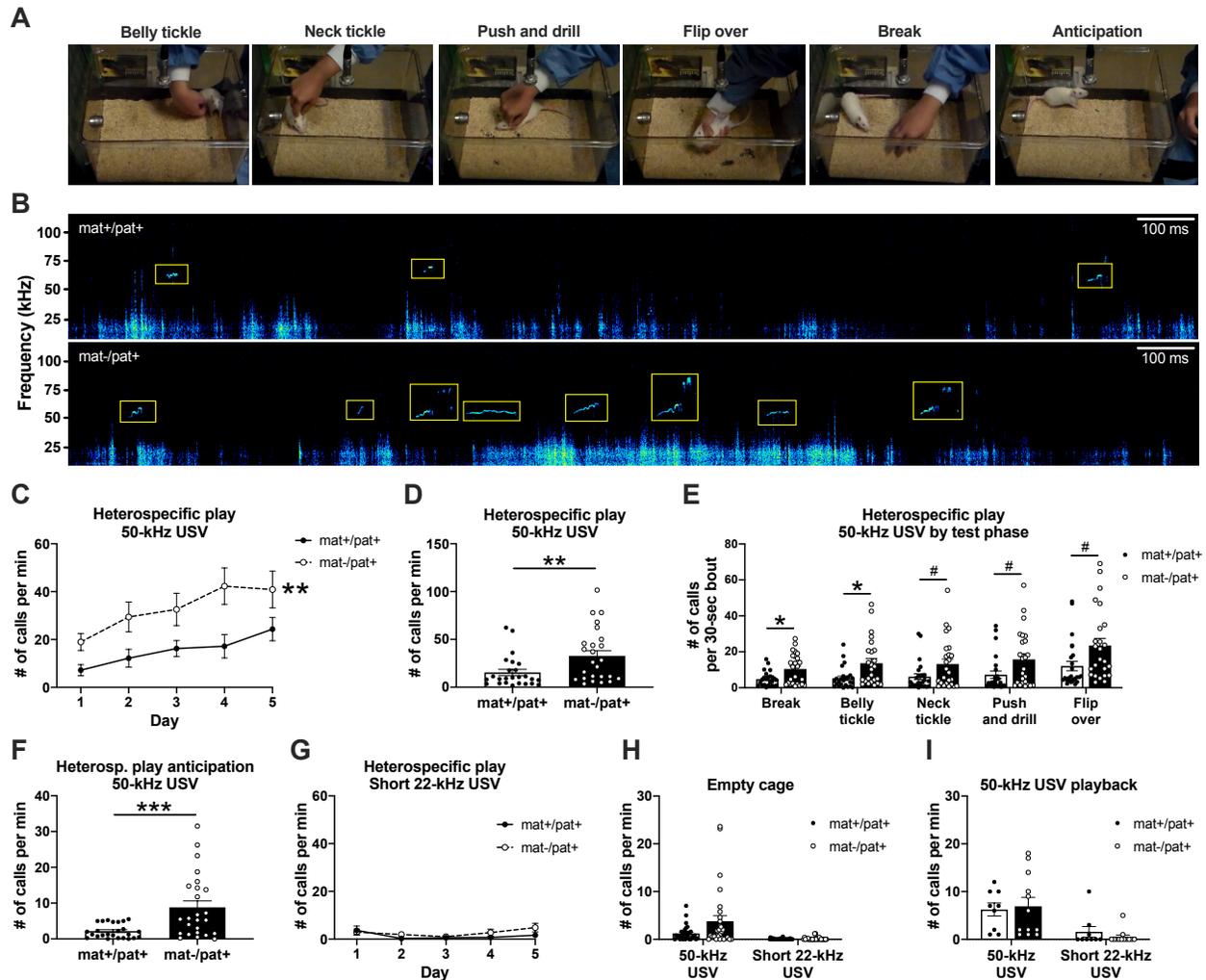
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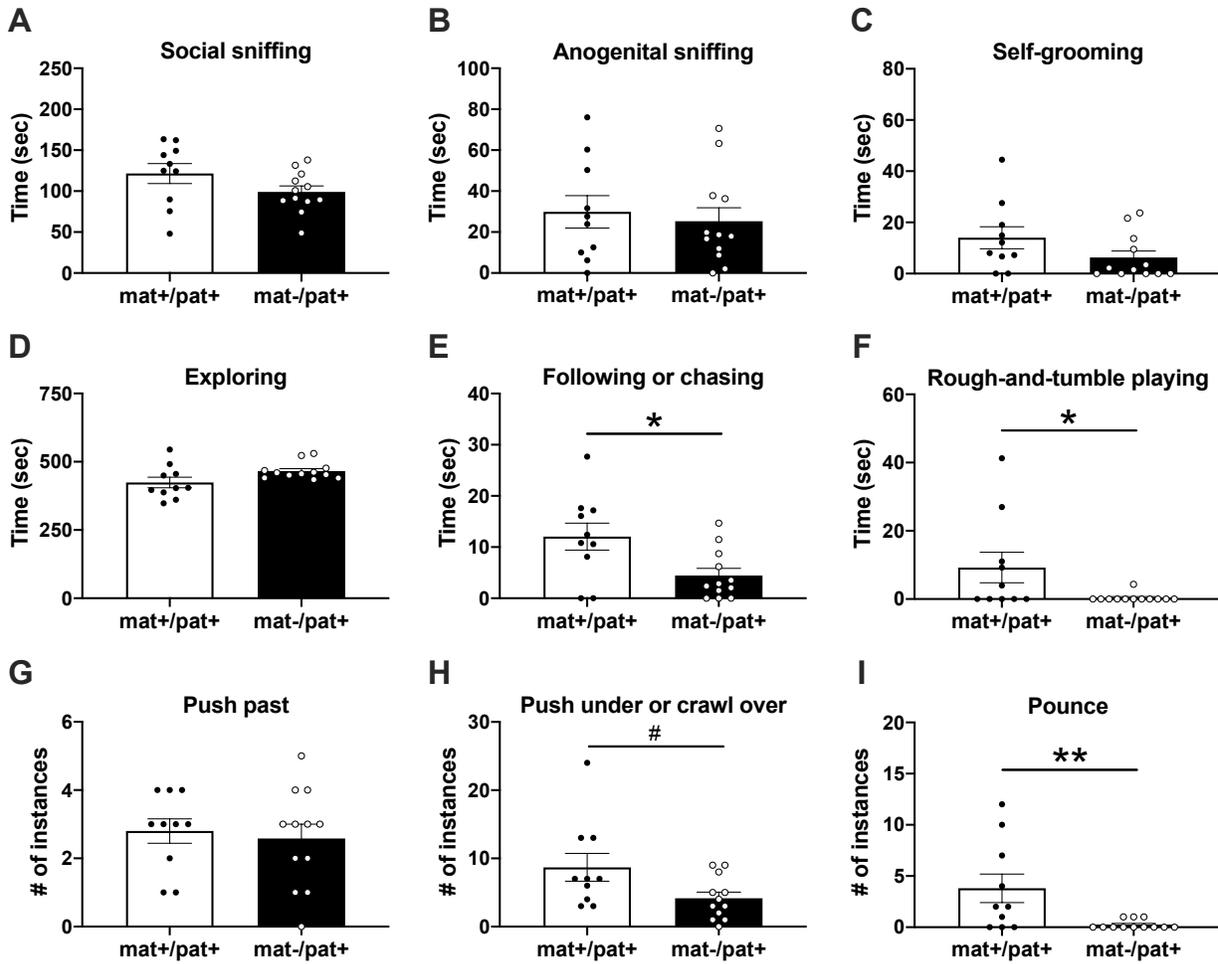
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## Figures

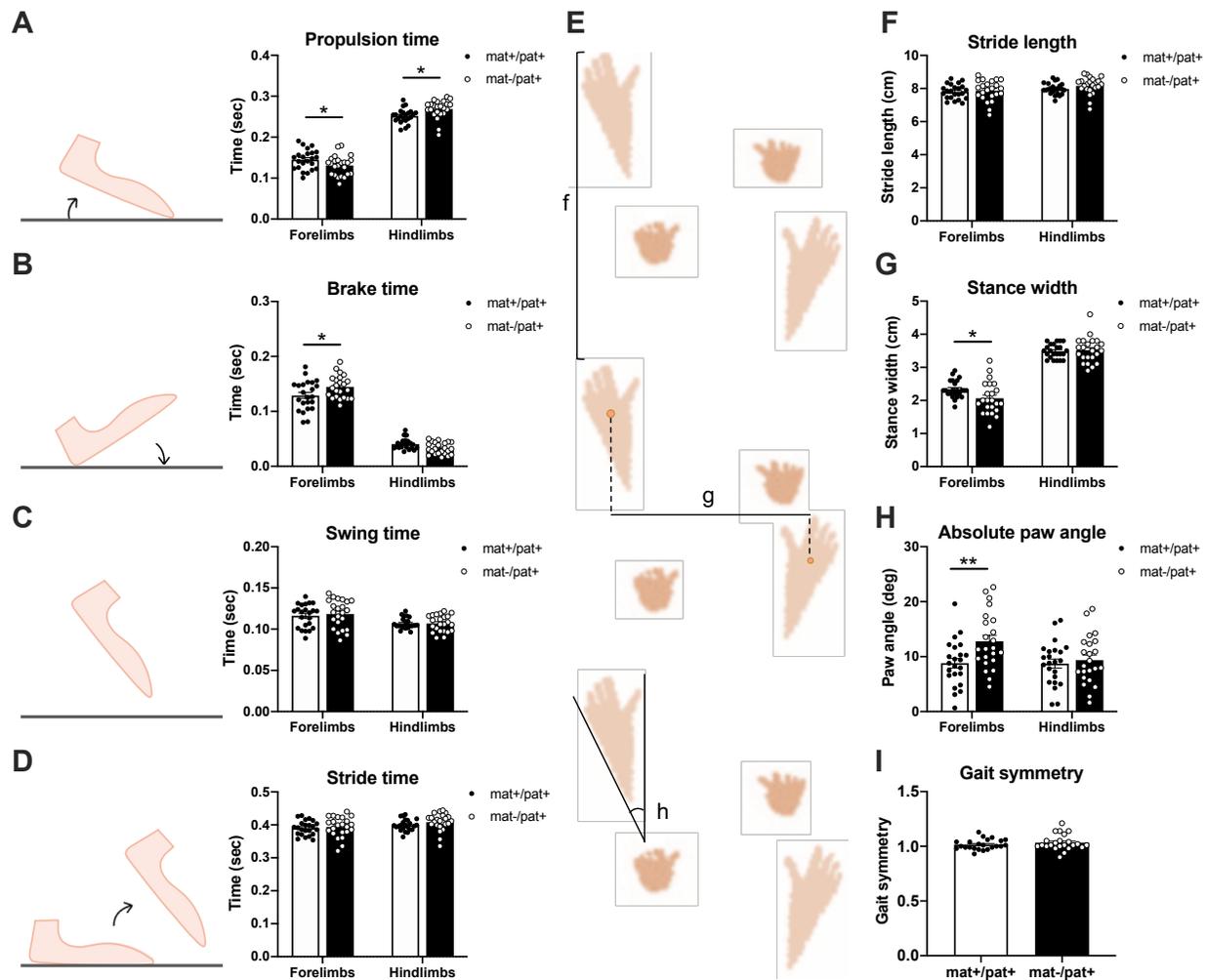


**Figure 1.** Overabundant emission of laughter-like 50-kHz calls in juvenile *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. **(A)** Example images of the manipulations used to mimic social play and elicit ultrasonic vocalizations (USV). **(B)** Example spectrograms of USV from a wildtype littermate control (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; mat+/pat+; upper) and *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rat (mat-/pat+; lower). **(C)** Across five days of heterospecific play sessions, 50-kHz USV emission increased with repeated testing in both mat-/pat+ ( $n = 25$ ) and controls ( $n = 25$ ), but the emission rate was substantially elevated in mat-/pat+. **(D)** On average, mat-/pat+ rats produced 50-kHz USV at more than twice the rate of controls. **(E)** Specifically, 50-kHz calling was abnormally high during the break and belly tickle phases, with trending increases during neck tickle, push and drill, and flip over. **(F)** Prior to the onset of play, mat-/pat+ rats emitted anticipatory 50-kHz USV at more than three times the rate of controls. **(G)** Production of short 22-kHz USV was low, did not differ between genotypes, and did not change over subsequent play sessions. **(H)** The rates of 50-kHz and short 22-kHz calling during empty cage exploration were comparable between genotypes (mat+/pat+,  $n = 32$ ; mat-/pat+,  $n = 29$ ), as were the **(I)** 50-kHz and short 22-kHz calling rates in response to hearing playback of conspecific 50-kHz USV (mat+/pat+,  $n = 9$ ; mat-/pat+,  $n = 12$ ). Of note, long 22-kHz USV known to function

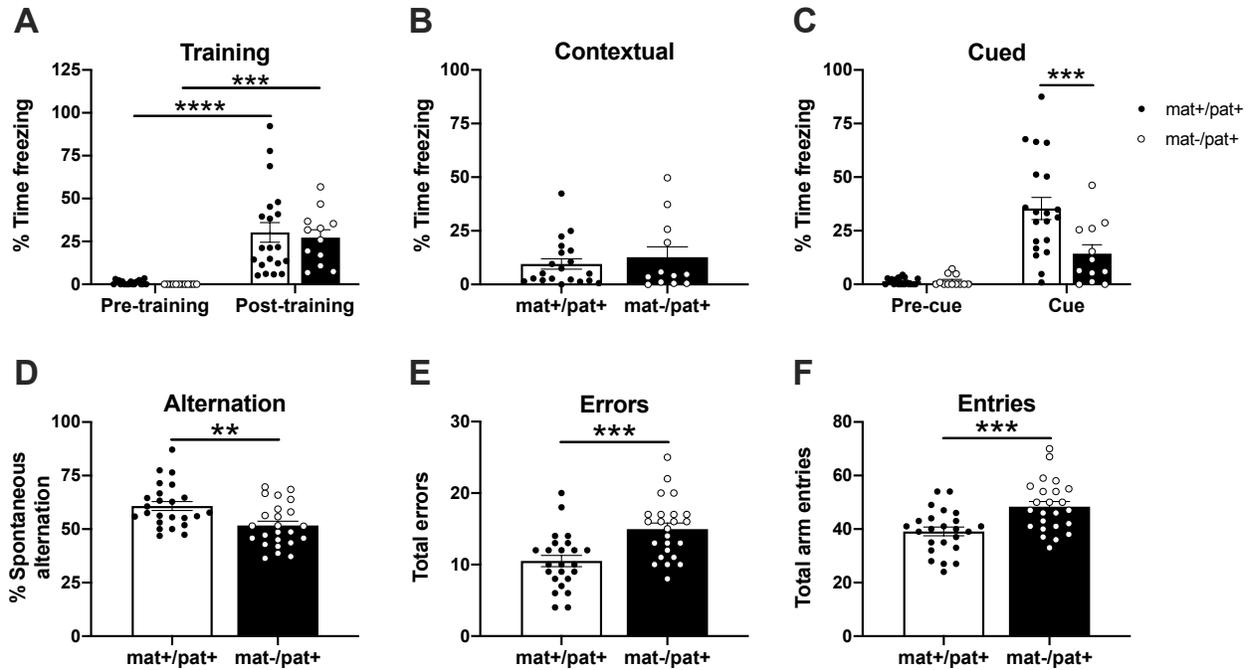
as “alarm calls” were very rarely observed, indicating that our paradigms were not aversive. Data are depicted as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. C:  $**p < 0.01$ , repeated measures ANOVA. D, F:  $***p < 0.001$ ,  $**p < 0.01$ , Mann-Whitney  $U$  test. E:  $*p < 0.05$ ,  $^{\#}p < 0.06$ , repeated measures ANOVA, Holm-Sidak’s *post hoc*.



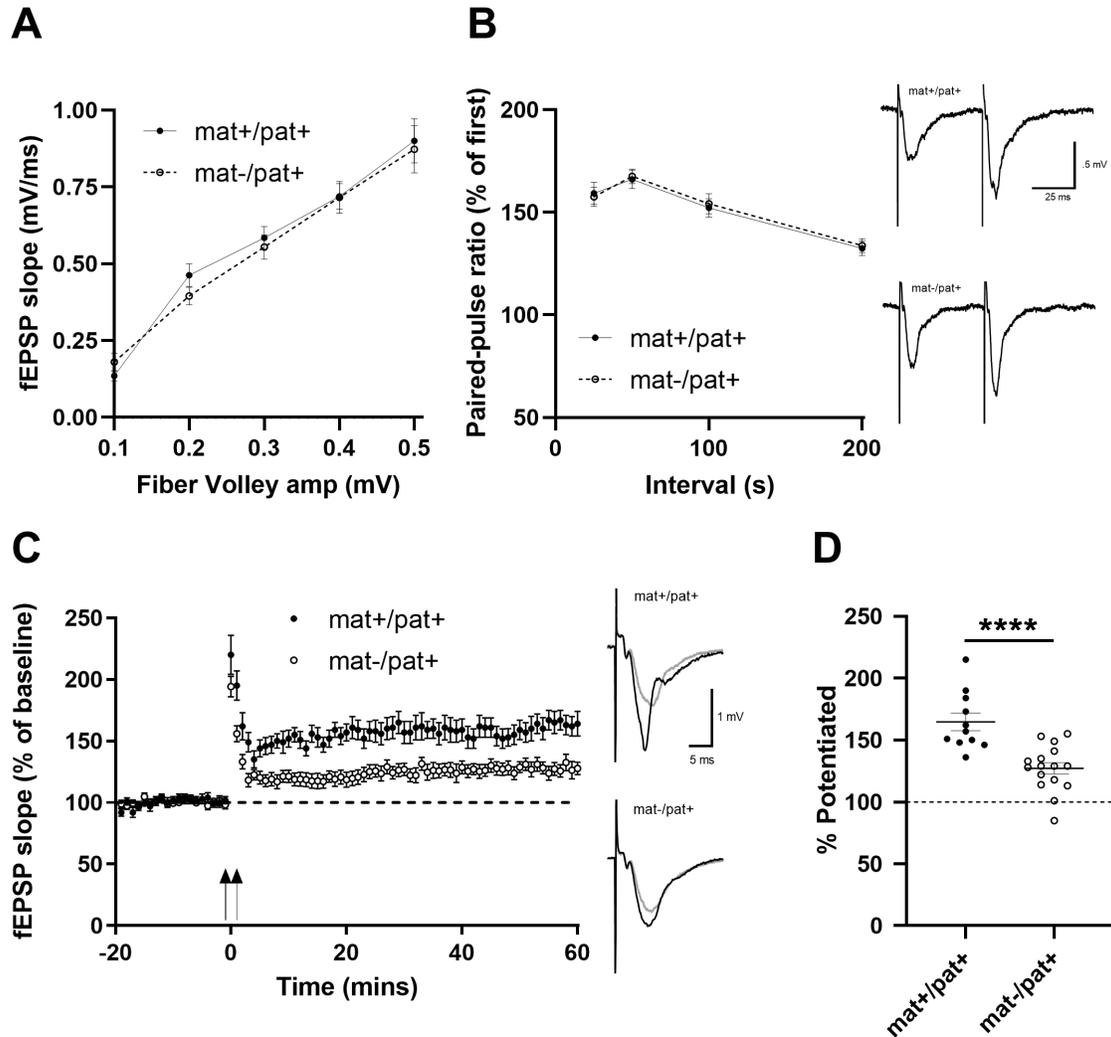
**Figure 2.** Intact social interest but deficient expression of key social interaction behaviors in juvenile *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. (A) During a 10-min interaction session with a novel same-sex wildtype conspecific, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (mat-/pat+;  $n = 12$ ) spent similar amounts of time social sniffing, (B) anogenital sniffing, (C) self-grooming, and (D) exploring the arena compared to wildtype littermate controls (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; mat+/pat+;  $n = 10$ ). (E) Robust deficits, however, were discovered in the time spent following or chasing and (F) rough-and-tumble playing. (G) The number of push pasts were similar across genotypes but (H) there was a trend for mat-/pat+ to less frequently push under or crawl over and (I) mat-/pat+ rats did not perform nearly as many pounces as wildtype littermates. Data are depicted as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ , # $p < 0.065$ , Mann-Whitney  $U$  test.



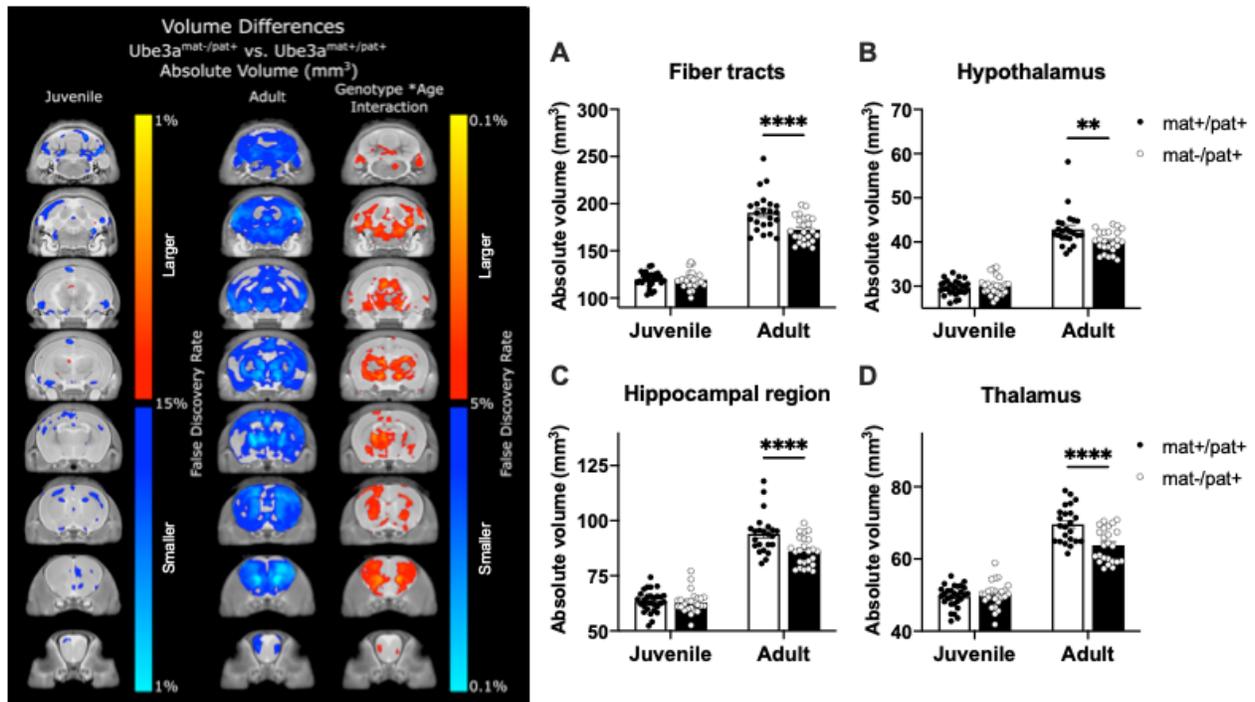
**Figure 3.** Abnormal gait in  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats. **(A)** While treadmill walking,  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats ( $mat-/pat+$ ;  $n = 23$ ) displayed aberrant propulsion time (time from maximal paw contact with belt to just before liftoff) in both sets of limbs. Compared to wildtype littermates ( $Ube3a^{mat+/pat+}$ ;  $mat+/pat+$ ;  $n = 23$ ), propulsion time was decreased in the forelimbs and increased in hindlimbs. **(B)** Brake time (time from initial to maximal paw contact with belt) was significantly elevated in the forelimbs of  $mat-/pat+$  while a trending reduction in hindlimb brake time was found ( $p=0.150$ ). **(C)** Swing time (no paw contact with the belt) and **(D)** stride time (sum of swing and stance time) were similar across genotypes. **(E)** Example paw prints illustrating the spatial gait parameters depicted in panels F, G, and H. **(F)** Stride length did not differ between groups, but **(G)** forelimb stance width was narrower and **(H)** absolute paw angle for the forelimbs was greater, indicating more external rotation in  $mat-/pat+$  rats. **(I)** No significant difference in gait symmetry (ratio of forelimb to hindlimb stepping frequency) was detected. Data are depicted as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.  $**p < 0.01$ ,  $*p < 0.05$ , repeated measures ANOVA, Holm-Sidak's *post hoc*.



**Figure 4.** Impaired learning and memory in  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats. **(A)** During fear conditioning training, juvenile  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  ( $mat-/pat+$ ;  $n = 12$ ) and wildtype littermate controls ( $Ube3a^{mat+/pat+}$ ;  $mat+/pat+$ ;  $n = 20$ ) showed similar increases in freezing post-training. **(B)** When returned to the training context 24 hrs following training,  $mat-/pat+$  rats exhibited a similar level of freezing to wildtypes. **(C)** When introduced to a novel context 48 hrs after training, no difference in freezing pre-cue was found but  $mat-/pat+$  rats froze for less than half the time of wildtypes during presentation of the auditory cue. **(D)** Spontaneous arm alternation during Y-maze exploration was significantly reduced in adult  $mat-/pat+$  rats ( $n = 24$ ) compared to wildtype littermates ( $n = 24$ ). **(E)**  $Mat-/pat+$  rats made 40% more errors and **(F)** made more entries into the maze arms. Bars indicate mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. A, C: \*\*\*\* $p < 0.0001$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , repeated measures ANOVA, Holm-Sidak's *post hoc*. D-F: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , Student's *t*-test.

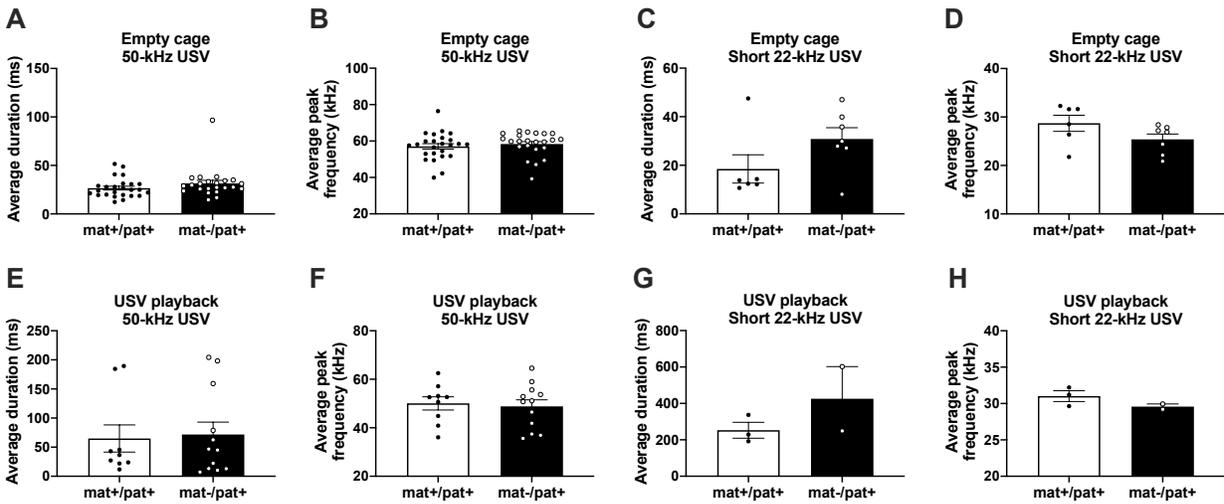


**Figure 5.** Reduced hippocampal long-term potentiation (LTP) in  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats. **(A)** Normal basal synaptic transmission as measured by presynaptic fiber volley amplitudes and postsynaptic fEPSP slopes for responses elicited by different intensities of SC fiber stimulation in  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  ( $mat-/pat+$ ;  $n = 16$ ) and wildtype littermate ( $Ube3a^{mat+/pat+}$ ;  $mat+/pat+$ ;  $n = 11$ ) hippocampal slices. **(B)** Paired-pulse facilitation was unchanged at  $mat-/pat+$  SC-CA1 synapses compared to  $mat+/pat+$  ( $n = 15$   $mat+/pat+$  and  $n = 20$   $mat-/pat+$  slices). (Right) Traces represent fEPSPs evoked by stimulation pulses delivered with a 50 msec interpulse interval. Scale bars: 0.5 mV, 25 msec. **(C)** High frequency stimulation (HFS)-induced LTP in  $mat+/pat+$  ( $n = 11$ ) was significantly greater compared to  $mat-/pat+$  ( $n = 16$ ). Traces at right represent superimposed fEPSPs recorded during baseline and 60 min after HFS. Scale bars: 1 mV, 5 msec. **(D)** Summary graph of average percentage potentiation relative to baseline demonstrating that  $mat+/pat+$  exhibited significantly enhanced SC-CA1 LTP at 60 min after HFS (delivered at time = 0), fEPSPs were potentiated to  $160 \pm 7\%$  of baseline in  $mat+/pat+$  ( $n = 11$ ) and were  $127 \pm 5\%$  of baseline in  $mat-/pat+$  slices ( $n = 16$ ). Data were collected from two rats per genotype. \*\*\*\* $p < 0.0001$ , Student's  $t$ -test.



**Figure 6.** Neuroanatomical pathology in  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats revealed by high-resolution magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). (Left) Slice series comparing absolute volume ( $mm^3$ ) of juvenile and adult populations of  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  ( $mat-/pat+$ ) rats and wildtype littermates ( $Ube3a^{mat+/pat+}$ ;  $mat+/pat+$ ). Red to yellow coloration indicates increased volume compared to wildtype whereas dark blue to light blue indicates decreased volume. The leftmost column is data on juvenile  $mat-/pat+$  rats from Berg et al. (2020) and the center column illustrates the same slices on the adult dataset presented here. Most notably, total brain volume was 6.0% smaller in  $mat-/pat+$  rats compared to wildtype. Additionally, the third column shows the genotype by age interaction highlighting several regions of interest, (right) four of which are shown in panels A-D. Namely, (A) fiber tracts, (B) the hypothalamus, (C) the hippocampal region, and (D) the thalamus. Full detail of regional findings for adult animals and the interaction effect are described in Tables S2 and S3. Group sizes: juvenile  $mat+/pat+$ ,  $n = 29$ ; juvenile  $mat-/pat+$ ,  $n = 25$ ; adult  $mat+/pat+$ ,  $n = 23$ ; adult  $mat-/pat+$ ,  $n = 24$ . Bars indicate mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. \*\*\*\* $p < 0.0001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , two-way ANOVA, Holm-Sidak's *post hoc*.

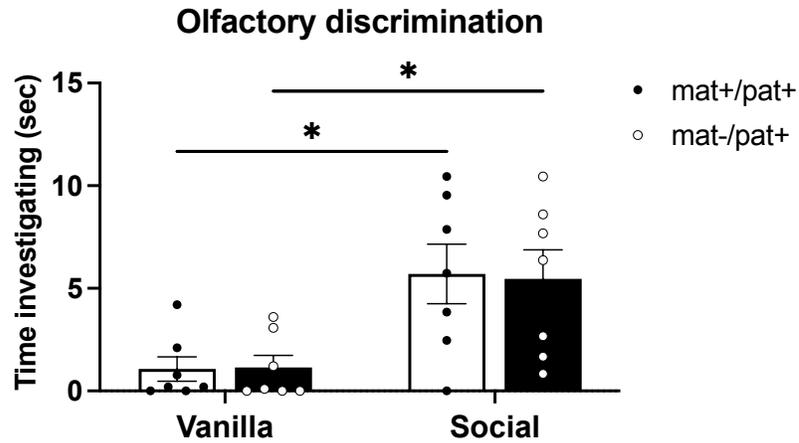
## Supplementary Information



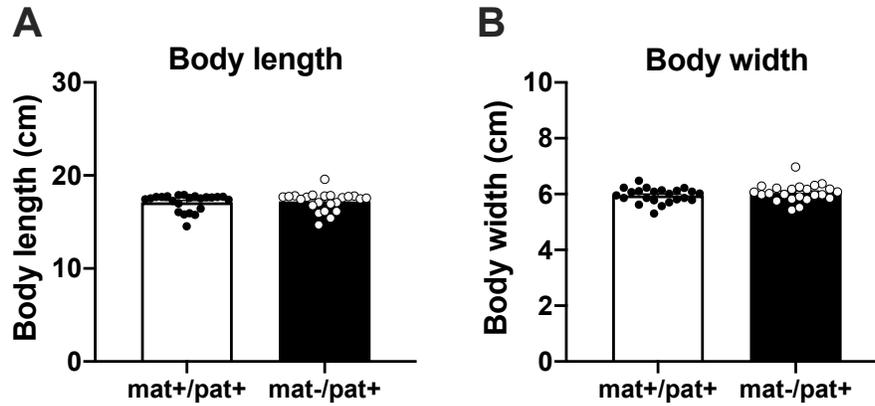
**Figure S1.** No effect of genotype on call durations and peak frequencies of 50-kHz and short 22-kHz USV in juvenile *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats. **(A)** The average duration and **(B)** peak frequency of spontaneous 50-kHz calls made during exploration of an empty cage was comparable between *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats (*mat-/pat+*;  $n = 23$ ) and wildtype littermate controls (*Ube3a<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>*; *mat+/pat+*;  $n = 25$ ). **(C)** The average duration and **(D)** average peak frequency of short 22-kHz calls made within an empty cage were also similar between genotypes (*mat+/pat+*,  $n = 6$ ; *mat-/pat+*,  $n = 7$ ). **(E)** For 50-kHz USV emitted in response to hearing playback of natural pre-recorded 50-kHz rat USV, average duration and **(F)** average peak frequency were comparable between *mat-/pat+* rats ( $n = 12$ ) and wildtype littermates ( $n = 9$ ). **(G)** There was no genotype effect on the average duration or **(H)** average peak frequency of short 22-kHz calls made during USV playback (*mat+/pat+*,  $n = 3$ ; *mat-/pat+*,  $n = 2$ ). Data are depicted as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. A: Mann-Whitney (MW)  $U$  test:  $U = 205$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . B: MW:  $U = 240$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . C: MW:  $U = 12$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . D: Student's  $t$ -test:  $t(11) = 1.699$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . E: MW:  $U = 52$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . F: Student's  $t$ -test:  $t(19) = 0.3179$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . G: MW:  $U = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . H: MW:  $U = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ .

**Table S1.** Ethogram used to score subject behaviors during the juvenile social play assay.

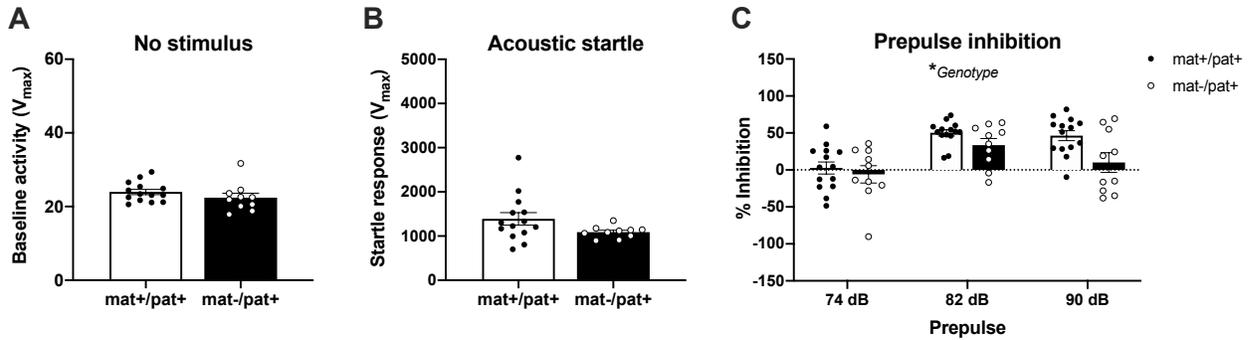
<b>Category</b>	<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Metric</b>
Mutually exclusive state events	Social sniffing	Sniffing the stimulus rat's face, body, or tail.	Time (sec)
	Anogenital sniffing	Sniffing the stimulus rat's anogenital region.	
	Self-grooming	Subject grooming itself.	
	Exploring	Sitting, walking, rearing, or sniffing the ground or wall.	
	Rough-and-tumble playing	Accelerated movement involving chasing and pouncing; often pinning, tumbling, and push past; and sometimes boxing; requires the stimulus rat's participation (reciprocity).	
Non-mutually exclusive state	Following or chasing	Following (walking pace) or chasing (running pace) the stimulus rat.	
Point events	Push past	Directed movement towards the stimulus rat to get next to, or move closely past, without sniffing or otherwise engaging.	Number (#)
	Push under or crawl over	Head dip under the stimulus rat's belly or completely stepping over stimulus rat.	
	Pounce	Both paws placed (via a leap or directed movement) onto the stimulus rat's back.	



**Figure S2.** Typical olfactory discrimination in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. Time spent investigating novel odors was similar for *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (mat-/pat+;  $n = 7$ ) and wildtype littermate controls (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; mat+/pat+;  $n = 7$ ) and both groups spent more time investigating a social scent compared to a non-social vanilla odor. Data are depicted as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. Repeated measures ANOVA:  $F_{\text{Genotype(G)}}(1, 12) = 0.0066$ ,  $p = 0.937$ ;  $F_{\text{Scent(S)}}(1, 12) = 14.20$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ;  $F_{\text{S} \times \text{G}}(1, 12) = 0.0165$ ,  $p = 0.900$ ; Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons test, vanilla vs. social: mat+/pat+,  $*p = 0.035$ ; mat-/pat+,  $*p = 0.035$ .



**Figure S3.** Normal body length and body width in juvenile *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. **(A)** At PND 25, both body metrics of length and **(B)** width were similar between *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (*mat-/pat+*;  $n = 23$ ) and wildtype littermate controls (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; *mat+/pat+*;  $n = 23$ ). Data are depicted as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. A: Mann-Whitney  $U$  test:  $U = 244.5$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . B: Student's  $t$ -test:  $t(44) = 0.2719$ ,  $p > 0.05$ .



**Figure S4.** Intact startle response but impaired sensorimotor gating in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. **(A)** Baseline activity within the testing apparatus was comparable between *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (mat-/pat+;  $n = 10$ ) and wildtype littermates (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; mat+/pat+;  $n = 14$ ). **(B)** There was no effect of genotype on the startle response to a 120 decibel (dB) startle stimulus. **(C)** Prepulse inhibition of the startle response was generally reduced in adult mat-/pat+ rats. Data are depicted as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. A: Students  $t$ -test:  $t(22) = 1.735$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . B: Students  $t$ -test:  $t(22) = 1.157$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . C: Repeated measures ANOVA:  $F_{\text{Genotype(G)}}(1, 22) = 4.740$ ,  $*p = 0.041$ ;  $F_{\text{Prepulse(P)}}(1.898, 41.75) = 20.64$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{P} \times \text{G}}(2, 44) = 2.127$ ,  $p = 0.1312$ ; Holm-Sidak's multiple comparisons test: 74 dB,  $p > 0.05$ ; 82 dB,  $p > 0.05$ ; 90 dB,  $p > 0.05$ .

**Table S2.** Brain volumes for adult *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats and wildtype littermates.

	V1	V2	V9	V11	V15	V18	V21	V22	V24	V31	V32	V37	V39	V43
	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep
Absolute Volume (mm <sup>3</sup> )	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total Brain Volume	1740.83	1714.357	1813.514	1636.148	1667.251	1605.67	1714.136	1684.664	1658.48	1626.099	1802.941	1621.621	1885.971	1670.505
-Basic cell groups and regions	1525.011	1499.889	1589.113	1435.062	1459.763	1404.872	1500.348	1473.63	1451.972	1422.72	1576.227	1418.886	1643.692	1462.347
- -Cerebrum	949.2186	914.1725	1002.0429	896.1187	897.5961	879.9964	939.5508	929.8604	894.2608	883.6589	992.1677	895.3248	1017.0963	922.8515
- - -Cerebral cortex	799.5972	772.117	847.4397	752.3138	755.6047	744.2828	790.51	783.6498	752.5305	749.0111	831.2005	758.2783	858.2855	781.3392
- - - -Cortical plate	754.5214	730.5476	801.1251	709.8023	713.5592	704.6209	745.1878	739.2216	710.9324	709.2354	783.114	716.108	811.1245	738.9033
- - - - -Olfactory areas	128.2734	122.8375	130.1791	117.1892	118.9261	119.6606	129.588	123.3438	119.4186	118.4445	138.4278	123.0547	134.917	124.6806
- - - - - -Main olfactory bulb	43.84406	43.58355	44.65006	37.46402	40.17385	44.50213	45.5029	40.48076	41.28867	40.56169	47.39891	44.46805	46.73507	44.11575
- - - - - - -Hippocampal formation	158.1287	156.6423	168.9933	146.4759	148.2462	149.349	155.061	153.9706	150.5451	149.0951	164.4328	150.6687	171.5817	154.2393
- - - - - - - -Retrohippocampal region	67.60161	68.50156	75.13266	65.24793	66.38342	66.96511	69.58645	69.05708	65.0839	64.45255	73.4163	68.49114	76.58603	68.67258
- - - - - - - - -Subiculum	23.21156	23.05519	26.37443	22.09067	22.39123	22.69608	22.98885	23.36869	22.84866	22.71635	25.19179	23.50444	26.8423	24.25561
- - - - - - - - - -Entorhinal area	44.39005	45.44638	48.75823	43.15726	43.99219	44.26903	46.59761	45.68839	42.23524	41.7362	48.2245	44.98669	49.74373	44.41697
- - - - - - - - - - -Hippocampal region	90.52712	88.14073	93.86059	81.22798	81.86232	82.38838	85.47456	84.91355	85.46124	84.64257	91.01654	82.1776	94.9957	85.56667
- - - - - - - - - - - -Ammon's horn	66.02625	63.88394	68.14126	59.05162	59.48096	59.82481	61.88738	61.6578	62.70793	61.96023	66.08129	59.42546	69.45098	61.82961
- - - - - - - - - - - - -Dentate gyrus	24.50087	24.25679	25.71934	22.17636	22.38179	22.55912	23.58718	23.25575	22.75331	22.68235	24.93526	22.75214	25.54472	23.73706
- - - - - - - - - - - - - -Isocortex	468.1194	451.0678	501.9527	446.1372	446.387	435.6112	460.5388	461.9071	440.9686	441.6958	480.2533	442.3846	504.6258	459.9834
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Cerebral nuclei	149.6214	142.0554	154.6032	143.8048	141.9914	135.7136	149.0408	146.2106	141.7304	134.6478	160.9672	137.0465	158.8108	141.5123
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Pallidum	41.98206	39.36366	43.91583	40.33585	39.26324	37.23803	42.2134	39.84602	42.2134	39.84602	37.59879	46.41056	38.7553	39.72215
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Striatum	107.63932	102.69176	110.68742	103.469	102.72812	98.4756	106.99488	103.99625	101.88435	97.04897	114.55663	98.29122	114.37019	101.79014
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Striatum ventral region	25.7801	24.69151	26.43442	24.99587	24.1892	23.40738	25.65453	25.13839	24.74767	22.63859	29.07862	24.03199	26.86896	24.74419
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Nucleus accumbens	14.15327	12.99695	14.69743	13.47087	13.49886	12.6243	14.00871	13.79239	13.52697	12.51889	15.64867	12.67783	14.53826	13.50503
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Lateral septal complex	9.846204	9.322234	9.717074	9.527267	9.509443	9.340541	9.603954	9.221856	8.808838	8.936404	10.356478	9.564255	11.220886	10.45373
- -Striatum dorsal region	68.00577	64.7285	70.40962	65.0867	65.41446	62.08038	67.82657	65.62226	64.4579	62.14778	70.89757	60.86726	72.1838	62.81469
- -Caudoputamen	68.00577	64.7285	70.40962	65.0867	65.41446	62.08038	67.82657	65.62226	64.4579	62.14778	70.89757	60.86726	72.1838	62.81469
- -Brain stem	378.4739	376.4923	385.3843	351.129	363.8156	347.8852	363.9377	360.0541	361.9034	348.3068	398.97	345.414	407.5291	352.8204
- - -Midbrain	126.0267	119.9976	127.3781	114.9375	116.8	112.2446	114.3982	117.4109	116.2074	111.4942	122.5125	113.6397	133.9614	113.1126
- - -Hindbrain	150.1126	158.0977	152.1073	142.0595	153.8639	143.9493	152.7919	144.5447	147.6227	142.0291	170.5996	138.1535	163.285	143.4794
- - - -Interbrain	102.33455	98.39704	105.89893	94.13198	93.15175	91.69129	96.74761	98.09854	98.07328	94.78358	105.85797	93.62083	110.28267	96.22845
- - - - -Hypothalamus	38.16398	37.56824	39.33033	36.89158	34.17877	34.18899	37.65651	38.73649	36.96464	33.957	42.43162	35.70458	40.25493	36.57401
- - - - - -Thalamus	64.17056	60.82879	66.5686	57.2404	58.97298	57.5023	59.0911	59.36205	61.10864	60.82659	63.42636	57.91626	70.02774	59.65444
- - -Cerebellum	197.3188	209.2245	201.6861	187.8144	198.3511	176.9906	196.8596	183.7152	195.8078	190.7546	185.089	178.1467	219.0664	186.6752
- - - -Cerebellar cortex	192.3058	204.334	196.1708	183.4313	193.889	172.5784	192.0461	178.9169	191.1997	186.2409	180.2923	173.7536	213.8171	182.596
- - - - -Cerebellar nuclei	5.012992	4.890508	5.515254	4.383114	4.452037	4.412243	4.813454	4.798334	4.608057	4.513664	4.796687	4.393155	5.249253	4.079235
- - - - - -Dentate nucleus	1.227655	1.217978	1.369005	1.0858	1.081475	1.073783	1.16249	1.189673	1.141043	1.114257	1.131814	1.088868	1.272965	1.030607
- - - - - - -Interposed nucleus	1.867035	1.810442	2.067861	1.609995	1.653068	1.625434	1.806258	1.774738	1.680633	1.718334	1.832708	1.623705	1.975629	1.497782
- - - - - - - -Fastigial nucleus	1.918302	1.862087	2.078389	1.687319	1.717493	1.713026	1.844706	1.833923	1.78638	1.681073	1.832165	1.680582	2.000659	1.550846
- - - - - - - - -Fiber tracts	193.119	192.2166	202.5877	179.7796	185.8947	179.805	192.2647	190.0443	185.5235	183.2298	203.8946	180.8494	217.1109	184.5295
- - - - - - - - - -medial forebrain bundle system	27.90885	26.74095	28.37289	25.44822	25.99336	25.22655	26.26172	26.4654	26.47408	25.83558	28.59683	25.75378	31.26883	27.27222
- - - - - - - - - - -Cerebrum related	23.06352	22.12687	23.4281	20.9977	21.51487	20.86337	21.75099	21.79818	21.87977	21.32213	23.7665	21.38148	25.96107	22.62904
- - - - - - - - - - - -anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.7459581	0.6860217	0.7237771	0.6948145	0.6979416	0.6351913	0.741033	0.7228808	0.7064441	0.6823922	0.7838577	0.6747447	0.7945819	0.6969668
- - - - - - - - - - - - -fornix system	13.79046	13.35561	13.88871	12.38521	12.67996	12.3954	12.89702	12.72831	13.11929	12.69853	14.12814	12.72873	15.66915	13.72787
- - - - - - - - - - - - - -fimbria	11.42164	11.11339	11.11463	10.19414	10.50914	10.28637	10.63738	10.51561	10.88334	10.54857	11.65726	10.53776	13.05057	11.33771
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -dorsal fornix	2.368821	2.24222	2.374083	2.191072	2.17082	2.109026	2.259635	2.212695	2.235955	2.149958	2.470884	2.190972	2.618573	2.390158
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Cerebellum related fiber tracts	53.68128	55.21427	57.28629	50.27351	53.15555	48.49623	54.15665	52.78377	52.25585	51.78476	51.92961	48.28005	60.04475	48.45118
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Cerebellar peduncles	15.47179	15.46379	15.48222	14.28741	15.0485	13.66868	15.38988	14.87005	14.37436	14.25647	15.58836	13.41172	16.70154	13.75456
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -arbor vitae	38.20949	39.75048	41.80407	35.9861	38.10705	34.82755	38.76677	37.91372	37.88149	37.52829	36.34124	34.86834	43.34321	34.69661
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -lateral forebrain bundle system	83.11352	81.97145	87.91101	77.01784	79.14311	79.22142	82.91053	82.40278	78.95075	78.50235	92.04651	79.40283	94.03326	80.67706
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Corticospinal tract	29.32136	30.10552	31.50033	27.62411	28.39081	29.35891	31.29339	30.03842	28.91534	28.31814	35.60683	30.0796	33.35992	29.04591
- -Cerebral peduncle	10.425233	10.384673	10.70019	9.735008	9.835975	9.708116	10.334682	10.327684	10.021743	9.627572	11.025448	10.054076	11.754213	9.732993
- -Corticospinal tract-other	6.391196	7.986987	6.912638	6.519511	6.442668	7.819621	8.265125	6.744454	6.700797	6.9953	11.212659	7.837896	7.342612	7.032149
- -Internal capsule	12.50493	11.73386	13.8875	12.23715	12.11217	11.83117	12.69358	12.96629	12.1928	11.69527	13.36873	12.18763	14.26309	12.28076
- -Corpus callosum	53.79216	51.86593	56.41068	49.39373	50.7523	49.86252	51.61714	52.36436	50.03541	50.18421	56.43968	49.32323	60.67334	51.63115
- -ventricular systems	22.70008	22.25077	21.81343	21.30652	21.59364	20.99238	21.52286	20.99046	20.98495	20.14853	22.81963	21.88646	25.1688	23.62793

	V5	V6	V17	V19	V25	V30	V34	V36	V38	V40
	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep
Absolute Volume (mm <sup>3</sup> )	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+
	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Total Brain Volume	1782.253	1758.684	2036.1	1865.115	1975.984	1921.458	1960.694	1987.515	1863.185	1853.808
-Basic cell groups and regions	1555.958	1536.364	1780.493	1627.642	1728.936	1673.292	1718.474	1732.031	1621.91	1620.07
-Cerebrum	967.7388	959.0664	1158.1023	1018.7596	1079.768	1031.5895	1073.5236	1069.629	1033.2942	999.7338
-Cerebral cortex	821.5213	812.7577	970.9495	864.9922	917.855	865.0402	908.8268	903.3448	866.4495	842.6581
-Cortical plate	776.4509	767.8963	914.1791	816.6383	867.1613	816.2471	857.7902	855.6527	817.3048	796.0957
-Olfactory areas	129.384	126.7833	155.7732	131.2205	145.9876	131.5453	141.4306	137.4158	135.3973	135.8156
-Main olfactory bulb	44.84457	43.24504	53.0853	42.80169	51.59829	42.19544	45.82877	47.75968	45.78603	47.33609
-Hippocampal formation	166.8429	166.0424	184.1498	171.4945	184.7277	177.652	182.8594	183.9702	175.342	166.0187
-Retrohippocampal region	73.94056	73.87342	87.147	79.22956	81.96543	76.32197	81.76515	81.3421	78.73903	72.75868
-Subiculum	24.43359	25.21265	28.06848	26.61531	28.52182	26.99731	28.0292	28.60637	27.2522	25.61452
-Entorhinal area	49.50697	48.66077	59.07852	52.61424	53.44361	49.32467	53.73595	52.73574	51.48683	47.14416
-Hippocampal region	92.90236	92.16894	97.00281	92.2649	102.76231	101.33006	101.09421	102.6281	96.60296	93.25998
-Ammon's horn	67.57684	66.64357	70.38878	66.96877	74.08712	73.67482	72.90284	73.72363	70.05017	68.54613
-Dentate gyrus	25.32552	25.52537	26.61403	25.29613	28.67518	27.65524	28.19137	28.90447	26.55279	24.71385
-Isocortex	480.224	475.0706	574.2561	513.9233	536.4459	507.0497	533.5002	534.2667	506.5655	494.2615
-Cerebral nuclei	146.2175	146.3087	187.1527	153.7674	161.913	166.5493	164.6969	166.2842	166.8447	157.0757
-Pallidum	40.50981	42.25044	52.73007	43.76104	45.24807	46.50483	46.04376	45.37301	47.598	43.60469
-Striatum	105.70765	104.05825	134.42266	110.00635	116.66492	120.04444	118.65312	120.91122	119.24671	113.47103
-Striatum ventral region	25.47954	25.61206	32.65048	27.17652	27.60787	28.10305	28.6103	27.57721	28.30237	26.89191
-Nucleus accumbens	13.85863	13.76804	17.95618	14.72021	14.9468	15.53847	15.49581	15.11071	15.49342	14.74974
-Lateral septal complex	10.491045	9.827998	11.210959	9.990782	11.338411	11.69458	11.165597	11.67541	11.983029	10.591302
-Striatum dorsal region	65.62628	64.60427	85.69454	68.29527	73.09095	75.8015	74.14261	77.10224	74.64008	71.64048
-Caudoputamen	65.62628	64.60427	85.69454	68.29527	73.09095	75.8015	74.14261	77.10224	74.64008	71.64048
-Brain stem	377.082	379.5436	421.6849	396.7856	415.3291	414.403	418.689	429.8358	396.5638	399.5027
-Midbrain	118.828	124.0205	137.7092	125.2528	132.6069	134.5145	132.1132	136.837	130.2385	127.791
-Hindbrain	160.0926	153.8306	172.8335	165.9836	172.2146	171.329	174.4844	178.9198	156.0217	164.3612
-Interbrain	98.16135	101.69257	111.14217	105.54913	110.50763	108.5595	112.09139	114.07892	110.3036	107.35049
-Hypothalamus	36.98296	38.853	42.33183	38.47126	40.47232	39.47884	42.04636	42.59006	40.13071	40.17299
-Thalamus	61.17839	62.83958	68.81034	67.07787	70.03531	69.08067	70.04502	71.48886	70.17289	67.1775
-Cerebellum	211.1375	197.7542	200.7062	212.0964	233.8386	227.2995	226.2618	232.5666	192.0522	220.8337
-Cerebellar cortex	206.0694	192.7005	194.8137	206.4682	228.2523	221.8221	220.6705	227.076	186.8131	215.6891
-Cerebellar nuclei	5.068108	5.053756	5.89254	5.628186	5.586286	5.477476	5.591267	5.490681	5.239119	5.14455
-Dentate nucleus	1.319922	1.27179	1.426174	1.354868	1.387548	1.337333	1.397542	1.348894	1.235955	1.289796
-Interposed nucleus	1.859897	1.803871	2.238538	2.104694	2.094477	2.07815	2.080241	2.045812	1.940138	1.929218
-Fastigial nucleus	1.888289	1.978095	2.227827	2.168624	2.104261	2.061992	2.113484	2.095974	2.063025	1.925535
-fiber tracts	200.9901	199.5516	230.2371	214.4503	220.6995	221.1428	216.5986	228.4099	215.8817	208.999
-medial forebrain bundle system	28.25585	28.3378	30.94435	29.48185	31.06648	32.67571	30.15528	32.07899	31.49111	29.91266
-cerebrum related	23.4656	23.49851	25.76874	24.36552	25.77915	27.32731	24.96206	26.68763	26.24997	24.71055
-anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.7185716	0.7204414	0.8836955	0.7676659	0.825283	0.8100611	0.8197921	0.8189962	0.800123	0.7957897
-fomix system	14.11629	13.85515	14.33651	14.06296	15.55341	16.67057	14.89482	15.95654	15.75124	14.93167
-fimbria	11.77721	11.43415	11.77451	11.62406	12.97162	14.06845	12.31947	13.26724	13.06154	12.41469
-dorsal fomix	2.339074	2.420996	2.561999	2.438898	2.581793	2.602118	2.57535	2.689301	2.689698	2.516976
-cerebellum related fiber tracts	57.8661	55.19806	61.38939	61.61713	63.13162	61.70813	61.64943	63.33138	55.68557	58.97212
-cerebellar peduncles	15.80021	15.38296	17.72976	16.93668	17.53087	17.12669	17.21381	17.85888	15.47877	16.42136
-arbor vitae	42.06589	39.8151	43.65963	44.68045	45.60074	44.58144	44.43561	45.4725	40.2068	42.55077
-lateral forebrain bundle system	85.40589	86.59464	104.07875	92.49135	93.63165	95.21144	91.90117	99.94075	98.00137	88.38179
-corticospinal tract	30.25827	30.24936	39.22101	33.21439	32.62851	33.28186	32.16828	36.71986	36.05784	31.27146
-cerebral peduncle	10.59013	10.762888	12.691452	11.628738	11.264035	11.566506	11.123814	11.962062	11.287905	11.280635
-corticospinal tract-other	7.006125	6.524413	10.027367	7.498735	6.942481	7.240065	7.142086	10.186865	9.945577	6.601984
-internal capsule	12.66202	12.96206	16.50219	14.08692	14.42199	14.47529	13.90238	14.57093	14.82436	13.38884
-corpus callosum	55.14762	56.34528	64.85774	59.27696	61.00314	61.92958	59.73289	63.22089	61.94352	57.11033
-ventricular systems	25.30485	22.76814	25.36927	23.02338	26.34855	27.02308	25.62129	27.0738	25.3926	24.73916

	V3	V4	V12	V13	V14	V20	V23	V26	V28	V29	V33	V47
	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep
Absolute Volume (mm <sup>3</sup> )	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total Brain Volume	1739.477	1746.058	1845.778	1818.484	1810.639	1699.629	1831.272	1845.172	2094.088	1853.859	1702.359	1972.144
--Basic cell groups and regions	1518.073	1529.402	1612.678	1594.264	1582.755	1486.197	1597.414	1605.219	1826.333	1619.264	1483.31	1720.861
--Cerebrum	946.3864	953.7757	1000.6654	1009.5961	989.4075	907.9523	990.3879	989.5147	1120.6514	1002.4636	909.5261	1079.0936
--Cerebral cortex	798.9224	808.21	844.2639	852.9981	839.4897	771.3174	832.8959	833.4619	949.1319	847.3741	766.4107	911.8684
--Cortical plate	753.6588	763.8574	798.0646	805.1133	794.0317	729.6455	788.2234	787.5947	898.4683	801.7016	725.874	861.2637
--Olfactory areas	124.8048	122.2111	129.8724	133.6472	131.4707	118.81	128.9884	130.884	149.9162	135.0631	120.875	141.1191
--Main olfactory bulb	42.68016	39.38781	42.39206	47.09345	45.31509	39.2852	44.97157	44.77868	53.26957	47.88688	42.49275	50.18242
--Hippocampal formation	158.1469	161.2811	165.1954	170.8998	164.9342	155.1093	168.4184	165.8354	194.7418	175.0932	158.1714	180.7289
--Retrohippocampal region	68.11548	71.64295	74.98624	79.36495	73.60851	69.18205	72.4404	73.98348	84.33156	77.03546	67.47823	79.74749
--Subiculum	23.6189	24.4369	25.28838	26.10031	24.4457	23.99182	25.92174	25.12963	30.80201	27.01925	23.64247	28.61904
--Entorhinal area	44.49658	47.20605	49.69787	53.26464	49.16281	45.19023	46.51866	48.85385	53.52955	50.01621	43.83576	51.12844
--Hippocampal region	90.0314	89.63812	90.20918	91.5348	91.3257	85.92724	95.97803	91.85191	110.41028	98.0577	90.69319	100.98146
--Ammon's horn	66.05179	65.15752	65.08754	66.54655	66.70759	62.58079	69.84546	66.96752	79.92471	70.96052	65.75927	73.38413
--Dentate gyrus	23.97961	24.4624	25.12164	24.98825	24.61811	23.34645	26.13257	24.88439	30.48557	27.09717	24.93392	27.59733
--Isocortex	470.7071	480.3652	502.9967	500.5664	497.6268	455.7263	490.8165	490.8753	553.8103	491.5454	446.8276	539.4157
--Cerebral nuclei	147.464	145.5657	156.4015	156.5979	149.9178	136.6349	157.4921	156.0529	171.5195	155.0895	143.1153	167.2253
--Pallidum	41.5484	40.39576	43.55661	44.4375	41.55548	38.74649	43.83169	43.63912	48.02675	43.49488	39.84415	47.03712
--Striatum	105.91561	105.16993	112.8449	112.16044	108.36231	97.88845	113.66038	112.41374	123.49273	111.59459	103.27118	120.18816
--Striatum ventral region	24.99912	24.89807	26.82987	27.44485	26.01968	24.52389	26.34236	26.24952	29.14949	26.61531	24.92252	28.27218
--Nucleus accumbens	13.68563	13.58402	14.67971	15.35711	14.23232	13.19166	14.91168	14.19957	15.95862	14.60827	13.72991	15.40327
--Lateral septal complex	9.559779	9.145534	9.709752	10.092889	9.684985	9.011397	9.69251	10.123485	10.741645	9.947654	9.041438	11.328808
--Striatum dorsal region	67.30795	67.33546	72.24626	70.51454	68.64116	60.78469	73.79683	72.00003	79.22831	71.03884	65.79564	76.25695
--Caudoputamen	67.30795	67.33546	72.24626	70.51454	68.64116	60.78469	73.79683	72.00003	79.22831	71.03884	65.79564	76.25695
--Brain stem	379.1191	366.2683	400.6788	388.431	381.8522	374.2044	393.8799	404.9197	449.2308	400.9895	376.3893	414.4231
--Midbrain	120.5854	116.5954	126.5738	126.6727	119.3367	116.087	126.7506	127.6033	141.1262	128.1701	119.0179	132.9101
--Hindbrain	156.1664	150.0942	168.4594	156.3141	162.3286	161.9208	158.5921	172.017	185.5923	164.9468	156.9775	166.7672
--Interbrain	102.3673	99.57873	105.64559	105.44412	100.18685	96.19659	108.53724	105.29939	122.51235	107.87256	100.3939	114.74581
--Hypothalamus	37.29711	35.87743	38.2949	39.2735	36.67148	34.64786	39.25579	39.84217	44.32169	38.68499	36.62479	41.90761
--Thalamus	65.07019	63.7013	67.35069	66.17062	63.51537	61.54873	69.28145	65.45722	78.19065	69.18756	63.76911	72.8382
--Cerebellum	192.5677	209.3579	211.3339	196.2369	211.4954	204.0404	213.1461	210.7843	256.4507	215.8113	197.3952	227.3442
--Cerebellar cortex	187.1094	204.2619	205.7268	190.9458	205.9804	198.6534	207.5603	205.1708	250.212	210.1446	191.9406	221.4636
--Cerebellar nuclei	5.458332	5.095951	5.607117	5.291057	5.515039	5.387011	5.585829	5.61343	6.238703	5.666712	5.454528	5.880622
--Dentate nucleus	1.360104	1.300848	1.393359	1.317051	1.380764	1.346703	1.334798	1.398792	1.54154	1.383419	1.332575	1.445673
--Interposed nucleus	2.042622	1.874394	2.081957	1.957618	2.111475	2.023822	2.095038	2.080926	2.380298	2.140484	2.081969	2.189155
--Fastigial nucleus	2.055606	1.920709	2.13157	2.016388	2.022799	2.016486	2.155994	2.133712	2.316866	2.142809	2.039984	2.245794
fiber tracts	198.9109	195.2233	210.9215	201.2473	205.3561	192.8493	211.268	215.8289	242.6374	212.0226	198.1488	225.8833
--medial forebrain bundle system	28.44517	27.12563	28.86563	28.56088	28.04046	26.22155	29.7624	29.6629	33.55171	29.41016	27.53626	32.20842
--cerebrum related	23.58555	22.45189	23.82782	23.50467	23.17679	21.59833	24.64092	24.71082	27.76555	24.27446	22.66942	26.81261
--anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.7237175	0.6771212	0.754658	0.7514968	0.7384301	0.6862869	0.7421411	0.7996073	0.8476385	0.7352132	0.6753755	0.7901969
--fornix system	13.74039	13.00332	13.89495	13.72456	13.52758	12.84293	14.43472	14.66322	16.51969	14.50263	13.52067	15.72601
--fimbria	11.43383	10.77479	11.57564	11.38126	11.26845	10.7025	11.97036	12.10316	13.77375	12.0713	11.2747	13.04197
--dorsal fornix	2.306553	2.228536	2.319311	2.343295	2.259126	2.140428	2.464358	2.560066	2.745944	2.431338	2.27367	2.684036
--cerebellum related fiber tracts	54.74186	56.45801	60.7879	56.15978	60.21059	58.93863	59.16482	62.28137	71.31216	61.62231	58.41605	62.84638
--cerebellar peduncles	15.42664	15.40537	16.59636	15.84908	16.78474	16.31333	16.32955	17.4022	19.92865	17.3859	16.67413	17.34926
--arbor vitae	39.31522	41.05265	44.19155	40.3107	43.42586	42.62529	42.83527	44.87917	51.38351	44.2364	41.74192	45.49712
--lateral forebrain bundle system	87.32326	84.2535	90.76969	86.83014	87.31218	79.49568	92.22654	92.51654	102.91328	90.06962	83.84823	98.75294
--corticospinal tract	31.06048	29.37262	33.80919	31.36261	31.12376	29.05441	32.59805	35.87164	37.08667	32.7179	30.97399	35.19319
--cerebral peduncle	10.76861	9.989739	11.214945	10.59511	11.052775	10.199219	11.372811	11.86919	13.281651	11.226457	10.838329	12.250068
--corticospinal tract-other	6.611733	6.460819	8.363102	6.809561	6.806121	6.626533	7.077063	9.583495	8.246259	7.333146	7.432064	6.994302
--internal capsule	13.68013	12.92206	14.23114	13.95794	13.26487	12.22866	14.14818	14.41895	15.55876	14.1583	12.70359	15.94882
--corpus callosum	56.26279	54.88088	56.9605	55.46754	56.18842	50.44126	59.62849	56.6449	65.82661	57.35172	52.87425	63.55976
--ventricular systems	22.49294	21.43281	22.17843	22.97245	22.52766	20.5826	22.58987	24.12468	25.11755	22.57201	20.89986	25.39937

	V7	V8	V10	V16	V27	V35	V41	V42	V44	V45	V46
	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep
Absolute Volume (mm <sup>3</sup> )	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+
	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Total Brain Volume	2069.789	1945.582	1865.632	1838.135	2053.215	1990.733	1970.301	1929.756	2029.1	1945.026	2067.992
--Basic cell groups and regions	1808.317	1695.61	1632.848	1605.569	1790.941	1734.805	1719.158	1678.818	1769.169	1696.17	1805.697
--Cerebrum	1136.9193	1043.0579	1031.4883	1003.3254	1104.5926	1072.9514	1075.1366	1035.1905	1095.998	1050.6632	1113.5216
--Cerebral cortex	959.0691	883.2293	870.6107	850.7813	929.3491	906.5082	910.6626	870.4221	924.3445	888.925	948.194
--Cerebral cortex	959.0691	883.2293	870.6107	850.7813	929.3491	906.5082	910.6626	870.4221	924.3445	888.925	948.194
--Cortical plate	905.1227	835.081	822.2339	806.3124	879.541	858.8702	861.7922	819.9582	873.988	841.6652	896.9095
--Olfactory areas	147.6889	136.5756	131.8158	130.8649	137.7297	140.1322	143.9076	136.6556	143.0314	142.2353	153.0946
--Main olfactory bulb	48.57714	45.80702	41.99215	44.52285	42.75805	48.97324	51.08007	46.83728	47.89701	50.59658	54.94274
--Hippocampal formation	193.7245	182.2465	173.508	167.9992	190.1395	185.6817	183.0894	179.5829	187.9039	175.0664	184.8962
--Retrohippocampal region	87.03464	80.61859	80.20691	76.3271	86.11309	81.35973	82.34048	77.41545	83.72117	77.94804	83.12718
--Subiculum	29.22139	27.17816	26.74314	24.98738	28.66746	29.20197	28.0925	27.12973	28.98293	26.69821	28.17561
--Entorhinal area	57.81325	53.44043	53.46377	51.33972	57.44563	52.15775	54.24798	50.28572	54.73824	51.24983	54.95158
--Hippocampal region	106.68986	101.62792	93.3011	91.67207	104.02643	104.32202	100.74894	102.16748	104.18274	97.11836	101.76899
--Ammon's horn	76.98036	73.82746	67.69141	66.82113	75.87518	75.71131	73.5479	73.96218	75.57631	70.25836	73.97714
--Dentate gyrus	29.7095	27.80045	25.60969	24.85094	28.15124	28.6107	27.20105	28.2053	28.60643	26.86	27.79184
--Isocortex	563.7092	516.2589	516.9101	507.4482	551.6718	533.0563	534.7952	503.7197	543.0527	524.3635	558.9187
--Cerebral nuclei	177.8502	159.8286	160.8776	152.5441	175.2435	166.4431	164.4739	164.7684	171.6535	161.7382	165.3275
--Pallidum	49.97658	44.70391	45.20988	42.9349	48.13678	46.80819	45.38686	45.61436	48.32177	44.6624	46.14273
--Striatum	127.8736	115.12471	115.66768	109.6092	127.10672	119.63493	119.08706	119.15406	123.33174	117.07581	119.18482
--Striatum ventral region	29.88863	27.63725	28.07732	27.09299	30.8011	28.63326	28.14297	27.15445	29.73517	27.88936	28.84235
--Nucleus accumbens	16.20895	14.83314	15.41718	14.69244	16.63569	15.84669	15.34759	14.90176	16.01926	15.03008	15.50856
--Lateral septal complex	10.84416	10.706953	10.647227	9.835437	10.998601	10.2172	10.677638	11.522025	10.990831	10.719092	10.708772
--Striatum dorsal region	82.22022	72.44335	72.64276	68.63499	80.56781	76.27448	75.91991	76.05731	78.04039	74.2878	75.1818
--Caudoputamen	82.22022	72.44335	72.64276	68.63499	80.56781	76.27448	75.91991	76.05731	78.04039	74.2878	75.1818
--Brain stem	429.673	417.5117	398.594	393.1869	435.3961	429.7668	414.0977	411.0362	433.8351	410.7977	426.7206
--Midbrain	139.5023	131.998	131.7601	124.8112	141.5521	136.4384	133.809	131.2038	140.3564	129.8642	133.7853
--Hindbrain	170.5959	174.0655	158.5522	164.613	175.8852	178.756	168.2672	168.7404	176.6103	172.5163	179.8541
--Interbrain	119.57474	111.44827	108.28175	103.76262	117.95875	114.57242	112.0216	111.09202	116.86842	108.41722	113.08126
--Hypothalamus	43.48907	40.23791	40.5353	38.52417	42.29571	40.96109	39.50854	40.55099	43.02616	38.82217	41.10449
--Thalamus	76.08567	71.21036	67.74646	65.23845	75.66304	73.61132	72.51306	70.54103	73.84225	69.59505	71.97676
--Cerebellum	241.7247	235.0399	202.7653	209.0562	250.9528	232.0864	229.9238	232.5909	239.3362	234.7088	265.4553
--Cerebellar cortex	235.5042	229.0981	197.3658	203.5431	244.6679	226.1462	224.1998	226.9094	233.2171	228.9209	259.5573
--Cerebellar nuclei	6.220478	5.941823	5.399536	5.513091	6.284814	5.94017	5.724037	5.68155	6.119068	5.787906	5.897993
--Dentate nucleus	1.528681	1.489947	1.27712	1.34943	1.605655	1.416429	1.363087	1.358942	1.472181	1.396838	1.425109
--Interposed nucleus	2.317803	2.184944	2.019391	2.087012	2.318885	2.232351	2.126277	2.139791	2.302495	2.171634	2.245855
--Fastigial nucleus	2.373994	2.266932	2.103026	2.076649	2.360275	2.29139	2.234673	2.182817	2.344392	2.219434	2.227029
--fiber tracts	235.8865	224.2949	209.2857	209.6705	236.7119	232.0216	226.8764	225.6447	234.3949	224.2922	237.001
--medial forebrain bundle system	32.93138	31.60612	30.11828	29.37808	33.05851	32.38682	32.17473	33.29054	33.06431	31.42173	32.29723
--cerebrum related	27.3125	26.23506	24.91817	24.25551	27.22128	26.8171	26.66744	27.8497	27.28709	25.99287	26.78392
--anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.8203488	0.7877274	0.7370627	0.7434619	0.8421406	0.7834493	0.7880374	0.8115855	0.8364574	0.7713425	0.7863776
--fornix system	15.93133	15.71596	14.59871	14.22373	16.41059	15.85728	15.53741	17.10346	16.02849	15.34498	15.78214
--fimbria	13.14045	13.08447	12.03416	11.83	13.69826	13.17942	12.88234	14.38774	13.21857	12.73349	13.06494
--dorsal fornix	2.790874	2.631499	2.564544	2.393727	2.712327	2.67786	2.655066	2.715714	2.809924	2.611493	2.717205
--cerebellum related fiber tracts	66.75087	65.78748	58.0917	61.48202	70.10075	65.60805	62.97548	63.20406	67.17011	65.0796	71.52702
--cerebellar peduncles	17.49623	17.64874	16.11545	17.27387	18.19677	18.17887	16.88728	17.20731	18.26163	17.96548	18.90906
--arbor vitae	49.25463	48.13874	41.97626	44.20815	51.90406	47.42918	46.0882	45.99675	48.90848	47.11412	52.61796
--lateral forebrain bundle system	102.81167	94.71904	90.90467	88.21529	99.91503	100.00442	98.41917	97.95546	100.22007	95.23525	98.94682
--corticospinal tract	36.66379	34.06576	33.03131	31.72147	35.04121	35.71832	34.85963	36.39285	35.14004	34.31323	35.35011
--cerebral peduncle	12.537287	12.098853	11.63359	11.497172	12.579549	12.485631	11.811001	11.679131	12.368573	11.732492	12.176066
--corticospinal tract-other	7.502594	7.436105	7.003108	6.991743	7.701018	7.703287	7.59663	10.374957	7.316095	7.248629	7.66717
--internal capsule	16.62391	14.5308	14.39461	13.23255	14.76064	15.5294	15.452	14.33876	15.45538	15.3321	15.50688
--corpus callosum	66.14789	60.65328	57.87336	56.49383	64.87382	64.2861	63.55954	61.56261	65.08003	60.92202	63.59671
--ventricular systems	25.58595	25.6779	23.49878	22.89622	25.56155	23.90701	24.26687	25.29367	25.53579	24.5638	25.29316

Absolute Volume	mat-/pat+		mat+/pat+		%Diff	Effect	P-value	FDR	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD					
Total Brain Volume	1785.29	130.32	1898.44	120.47	-5.96	-0.94	0.00	0.04	*
-Basic cell groups and regions	1560.78	112.47	1657.08	104.21	-5.81	-0.92	0.00	0.04	*
-Cerebrum	975.21	74.67	1028.79	65.10	-5.21	-0.82	0.01	0.09	-
-Cerebral cortex	822.94	62.68	869.50	55.13	-5.35	-0.84	0.01	0.07	-
°-Cortical plate	777.23	58.84	822.13	52.17	-5.46	-0.86	0.01	0.07	-
-Olfactory areas	129.99	9.54	135.28	9.12	-3.91	-0.58	0.06	0.31	
°-Main olfactory bulb	44.55	3.50	46.25	4.14	-3.67	-0.41	0.14	0.67	
-Hippocampal formation	164.02	12.81	174.89	11.80	-6.21	-0.92	0.00	0.04	*
-Retrohippocampal region	73.01	6.33	77.74	5.63	-6.09	-0.84	0.01	0.07	-
-Subiculum	25.04	2.17	26.70	2.04	-6.23	-0.81	0.01	0.07	-
°-Entorhinal area	47.97	4.30	51.04	3.85	-6.02	-0.80	0.01	0.09	-
°-Hippocampal region	91.01	6.89	97.14	6.65	-6.31	-0.92	0.00	0.04	*
-Ammon's hom	66.08	4.89	70.57	4.73	-6.37	-0.95	0.00	0.04	*
°-Dentate gyrus	24.93	2.04	26.57	1.94	-6.17	-0.84	0.01	0.06	-
°-Isocortex	483.22	37.46	511.96	32.34	-5.62	-0.89	0.01	0.06	-
°-Cerebral nuclei	152.27	12.64	159.30	10.45	-4.41	-0.67	0.04	0.25	
-Pallidum	42.78	3.65	44.52	2.88	-3.91	-0.61	0.08	0.40	
°-Striatum	109.49	9.07	114.77	7.61	-4.60	-0.69	0.04	0.21	
-Striatum ventral region	26.27	2.18	27.40	1.70	-4.13	-0.66	0.05	0.29	
°-Nucleus accumbens	14.30	1.23	14.96	0.90	-4.36	-0.72	0.05	0.25	
-Lateral septal complex	10.22	0.94	10.26	0.72	-0.33	-0.05	0.89	1.00	
°-Striatum dorsal region	68.88	5.89	72.92	5.08	-5.54	-0.79	0.02	0.09	-
°-Caudoputamen	68.88	5.89	72.92	5.08	-5.54	-0.79	0.02	0.09	-
-Brain stem	382.98	26.45	405.70	22.24	-5.60	-1.02	0.00	0.04	*
-Midbrain	123.33	8.49	129.41	7.69	-4.70	-0.79	0.01	0.09	-
-Hindbrain	157.20	12.07	167.33	8.95	-6.06	-1.13	0.00	0.04	*
-Interbrain	102.45	7.04	108.95	6.92	-5.97	-0.94	0.00	0.04	*
-Hypothalamus	38.51	2.57	39.64	2.47	-2.87	-0.46	0.13	0.65	
°-Thalamus	63.94	4.81	69.31	4.58	-7.74	-1.17	0.00	0.01	**
°-Cerebellum	202.59	17.00	222.59	20.06	-8.99	-1.00	0.00	0.02	*
-Cerebellar cortex	197.58	16.65	216.88	19.79	-8.90	-0.98	0.00	0.02	*
°-Cerebellar nuclei	5.00	0.49	5.71	0.32	-12.35	-2.22	0.00	0.00	**
-Dentate nucleus	1.23	0.12	1.40	0.08	-12.08	-2.07	0.00	0.00	**
-Interposed nucleus	1.86	0.19	2.14	0.12	-12.91	-2.25	0.00	0.00	**
°-Fastigial nucleus	1.91	0.18	2.17	0.13	-11.98	-2.07	0.00	0.00	**
-fiber tracts	201.16	16.26	217.67	15.09	-7.58	-1.09	0.00	0.02	*
-medial forebrain bundle system	28.42	2.32	30.48	2.23	-6.78	-0.93	0.00	0.04	*
°-cerebrum related	23.55	1.99	25.23	1.89	-6.65	-0.89	0.00	0.05	*
-anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.75	0.06	0.77	0.05	-2.44	-0.38	0.26	1.00	
°-fomix system	14.00	1.25	14.90	1.21	-6.04	-0.75	0.02	0.09	-
-fimbria	11.61	1.08	12.37	1.01	-6.21	-0.76	0.02	0.09	-
°-dorsal fomix	2.39	0.18	2.52	0.20	-5.22	-0.64	0.02	0.14	
-cerebellum related fiber tracts	55.76	4.85	62.64	4.72	-10.98	-1.46	0.00	0.00	**
-cerebellar peduncles	15.64	1.32	17.20	1.09	-9.09	-1.43	0.00	0.00	**
°-arbor vitae	40.13	3.59	45.44	3.71	-11.69	-1.43	0.00	0.00	**
°-lateral forebrain bundle system	87.21	7.69	93.20	6.61	-6.43	-0.91	0.01	0.06	-
-corticospinal tract	31.58	2.96	33.59	2.34	-5.96	-0.86	0.01	0.09	-
-cerebral peduncle	10.74	0.82	11.62	0.82	-7.55	-1.07	0.00	0.02	*
-corticospinal tract-other	7.60	1.39	7.52	0.92	1.14	0.09	0.81	1.00	
°-internal capsule	13.24	1.21	14.45	1.12	-8.38	-1.08	0.00	0.02	*
°-corpus callosum	55.62	4.97	59.61	4.47	-6.70	-0.89	0.01	0.06	-
°-ventricular systems	23.35	2.12	23.69	1.61	-1.44	-0.21	0.54	1.00	

	V1	V2	V9	V11	V15	V18	V21	V22	V24	V31	V32	V37	V39	V43
	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep
Relative Volume (% of total brain volume)	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total Brain Volume	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
-Basic cell groups and regions	87.602523	87.489887	87.626178	87.709792	87.555083	87.494442	87.527944	87.473229	87.548358	87.492828	87.425323	87.498004	87.15362	87.539217
-Cerebrum	54.526783	53.324512	55.254214	54.770027	53.836891	54.805558	54.811917	55.1956	53.920506	54.342257	55.030514	55.211717	53.929583	55.243863
-Cerebral cortex	45.931952	45.038285	46.729151	45.980791	45.320393	46.35341	46.117111	46.516682	45.374711	46.061839	46.102479	46.760513	45.508945	46.772635
-Cortical plate	43.342624	42.613505	44.175292	43.382524	42.798547	43.883295	43.473085	43.879468	42.866504	43.615758	43.435365	44.16001	43.008323	44.232331
-Olfactory areas	7.3685196	7.1652229	7.1782793	7.1625061	7.1330651	7.4523781	7.5599602	7.3215668	7.2004848	7.2839661	7.6778885	7.5883761	7.1537155	7.4636472
-Main olfactory bulb	2.5185722	2.542268	2.4620742	2.2897696	2.4095862	2.7715614	2.6545677	2.4028981	2.4895489	2.494417	2.6289773	2.7421975	2.4780376	2.6408631
-Hippocampal formation	9.0835234	9.1370875	9.318555	8.9524847	8.8916546	9.3013508	9.046015	9.1395436	9.0772937	9.1688821	9.1202541	9.2912401	9.097791	9.2330942
-Retrohippocampal region	3.8832976	3.9957582	4.1429325	3.987899	3.9816092	4.17054	4.0595641	4.0991604	3.9243102	3.9636301	4.0720301	4.2236219	4.0680276	4.1108874
-Subiculum	1.3333617	1.3448302	1.4543273	1.3501633	1.3430029	1.4134959	1.3411334	1.3871425	1.3776868	1.3969844	1.3972609	1.449441	1.4232615	1.4519927
-Entorhinal area	2.549936	2.6509286	2.6886051	2.6377357	2.6386063	2.7570441	2.7184313	2.7120179	2.5466234	2.5666457	2.6747686	2.7741803	2.637566	2.6588948
-Hippocampal region	5.2002275	5.1413288	5.1756198	4.9645863	4.9100441	5.1308133	4.9864515	5.0403849	5.1529859	5.2052532	5.0482262	5.0676206	5.036965	5.1222038
-Ammon's horn	3.7928029	3.7264082	3.7574157	3.6091857	3.5676068	3.7258472	3.6104125	3.6599464	3.7810483	3.8103603	3.6651943	3.6645714	3.6825052	3.7012526
-Dentate gyrus	1.4074246	1.4149206	1.4182047	1.3554006	1.3424367	1.4049662	1.3760399	1.3804385	1.3719376	1.3948935	1.3830325	1.4034942	1.3544599	1.4209511
-Isocortex	26.890587	26.311194	27.678457	27.267533	26.773833	27.12956	26.86711	27.418352	26.58872	27.16291	26.637217	27.280394	26.755817	27.53559
-Cerebral nuclei	8.5948312	8.2862204	8.5250624	8.7892293	8.5164981	8.4521477	8.694806	8.6789176	8.545801	8.2804184	8.9280348	8.4512041	8.4206385	8.4712288
-Pallidum	2.4116117	2.296118	2.4215876	2.4652935	2.4549687	2.3191584	2.4528941	2.5058018	2.4025626	2.3122079	2.541586	2.3899111	2.3563766	2.3778528
-Striatum	6.1832183	5.9901036	6.1034776	6.3239389	6.161527	6.1329912	6.2419131	6.1731152	6.1432366	5.968208	6.358757	6.0612942	6.0642603	6.0933754
-Striatum ventral region	1.4809085	1.4402782	1.4576353	1.5277267	1.4508433	1.4577952	1.496645	1.4921901	1.4921898	1.3922024	1.6128437	1.4819733	1.4246751	1.4812401
-Nucleus accumbens	0.8130185	0.7581239	0.8104393	0.8233283	0.8096477	0.7862325	0.8172461	0.8187027	0.8156245	0.7698726	0.8679524	0.7817998	0.7708634	0.80844
-Lateral septal complex	0.565604	0.5437744	0.5358147	0.5822986	0.5703666	0.5817223	0.5602796	0.5474003	0.5311392	0.5495609	0.5744213	0.589796	0.594966	0.6257826
-Striatum dorsal region	3.9065141	3.7756722	3.8824966	3.9780448	3.923492	3.8663225	3.9568955	3.8952729	3.8865648	3.821894	3.9323289	3.7534825	3.8274077	3.7602216
-Caudoputamen	3.9065141	3.7756722	3.8824966	3.9780448	3.923492	3.8663225	3.9568955	3.8952729	3.8865648	3.821894	3.9323289	3.7534825	3.8274077	3.7602216
-Brain stem	21.741003	21.961138	21.250693	21.460711	21.821285	21.666046	21.231553	21.372458	21.821391	21.419778	22.128844	21.300538	21.60845	21.120583
-Midbrain	7.2394605	6.9995689	7.0238278	7.0248841	7.0055439	6.9905149	6.6738112	6.9693957	7.0068617	6.8565444	6.7951475	7.0077842	7.1030467	6.771162
-Hindbrain	8.6230476	9.2219824	8.3874346	6.6825581	9.2285985	8.9650613	8.9136393	8.5800314	8.9010841	8.7343452	9.4622952	8.5194691	8.6578744	8.5889836
-Interbrain	5.8784919	5.7395887	5.8394327	5.753268	5.5871461	5.7104691	5.6441035	5.823033	5.9134436	5.8288936	5.8714051	5.7732867	5.8475273	5.7604407
-Hypothalamus	2.1922864	2.1913895	2.1687359	2.2547826	2.0500075	2.1292663	2.1968216	2.29936	2.2288264	2.0882492	2.3534669	2.2017833	2.1344406	2.1893984
-Thalamus	3.6862049	3.5481985	3.6706968	3.4984855	3.5371387	3.5812029	3.4472819	3.523673	3.6846172	3.7406449	3.5179387	3.5715041	3.7130868	3.5710423
-Cerebellum	11.334754	12.204255	11.121287	11.479059	11.896895	11.02285	11.48448	10.905154	11.806461	11.730811	10.265949	10.985717	11.615576	11.174776
-Cerebellar cortex	11.046788	11.918988	10.817165	11.211168	11.629863	10.748062	11.203668	10.620331	11.528611	11.453233	9.999002	10.714809	11.337242	10.930587
-Cerebellar nuclei	0.2879656	0.2852678	0.3041197	0.2678923	0.2670286	0.2747914	0.2808093	0.2848244	0.2778482	0.2775762	0.2660479	0.2709113	0.2783316	0.2441917
-Dentate nucleus	0.0705212	0.0710458	0.0754891	0.0663632	0.0648658	0.0668745	0.0678178	0.0706178	0.0688005	0.0685233	0.062776	0.0671469	0.0674965	0.0616943
-Interposed nucleus	0.1072497	0.1056047	0.1140251	0.0984016	0.0991493	0.1012309	0.1053743	0.1053467	0.1013357	0.1056722	0.101651	0.1001285	0.1047539	0.0896604
-Fastigial nucleus	0.1101947	0.1086172	0.1146056	0.1031275	0.1030135	0.1066861	0.1076172	0.1088599	0.1077119	0.1033807	0.1016209	0.1036359	0.1060811	0.092837
-fiber tracts	11.093501	11.212169	11.171003	10.987979	11.149773	11.198129	11.21642	11.280843	11.186357	11.268059	11.309	11.152384	11.51189	11.04633
-medial forebrain bundle system	1.3031922	1.5598239	1.5645256	1.555374	1.559055	1.5710918	1.5320675	1.5709601	1.5962858	1.5888073	1.5861212	1.5881504	1.6579698	1.6325734
-cerebrum related	1.3248577	1.2968064	1.2918621	1.2833619	1.2904398	1.299356	1.2689186	1.2939185	1.3192664	1.3112443	1.3182073	1.3185251	1.376536	1.3546227
-anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.0428507	0.0400163	0.0399102	0.0424665	0.0418616	0.0395593	0.0432307	0.0420995	0.0425959	0.041965	0.0434766	0.0416093	0.0421312	0.0417219
-fornix system	0.7921773	0.7790449	0.7437886	0.7569737	0.760531	0.7719768	0.7523919	0.75554	0.791043	0.7809199	0.7836163	0.7849387	0.8308267	0.8217796
-fimbria	0.6561031	0.6482541	0.6128781	0.6230573	0.6303274	0.6406279	0.620568	0.6241963	0.6562238	0.648704	0.6465691	0.6498288	0.6919815	0.6786996
-dorsal fornix	0.1360742	0.1307907	0.1309107	0.1339165	0.1302036	0.1313487	0.1318236	0.1313434	0.1348195	0.1322157	0.1370474	0.13511	0.1388448	0.14308
-cerebellum related fiber tracts	3.0836601	3.2206985	3.1588557	3.072675	3.1882152	3.2023111	3.1594138	3.1331927	3.1508279	3.1846007	2.8802723	2.9772709	3.1837579	2.9003912
-cerebellar peduncles	0.8887594	0.9020169	0.8537138	0.8732346	0.9025936	0.8512758	0.8978214	0.8826716	0.8667189	0.8767283	0.8646073	0.8270564	0.8855672	0.8233774
-arbor vitae	2.1949007	2.3186816	2.3051418	2.1994404	2.2856217	2.1690354	2.2615924	2.2505212	2.2841089	2.3078724	2.0156644	2.1502151	2.2981907	2.0770132
-lateral forebrain bundle system	4.7743617	4.7814691	4.8475507	4.7072661	4.7469223	4.9338544	4.83687	4.8913481	4.7604282	4.8276489	5.1053534	4.8965097	4.9859335	4.8295013
-corticospinal tract	1.6843322	1.7560823	1.7369775	1.6883625	1.7028516	1.8284523	1.8256072	1.7830511	1.7434844	1.741477	1.9749304	1.8549094	1.7688459	1.7387503
-cerebral peduncle	0.5988657	0.6057474	0.5900252	0.5949956	0.5899517	0.6046146	0.6029091	0.6130412	0.6042728	0.5920656	0.6115257	0.6200016	0.6232446	0.5826378
-corticospinal tract-other	0.367135	0.4658882	0.3811737	0.3454425	0.3864246	0.4870005	0.4821744	0.4003442	0.4040324	0.4301891	0.6219094	0.4833371	0.3893279	0.4209595
-internal capsule	0.7183315	0.6844467	0.7657785	0.7479244	0.7264475	0.736837	0.7405235	0.7696662	0.7351792	0.7192225	0.7414957	0.7515708	0.756273	0.7351525
-corpus callosum	3.0900295	3.0253868	3.1105732	3.0189035	3.0440707	3.1054027	3.1012628	3.108297	3.0169438	3.0861719	3.130423	3.0416003	3.2170876	3.090751
-ventricular systems	1.3039803	1.2979076	1.2028267	1.3022367	1.2951643	1.3073907	1.2556098	1.2459731	1.2653122	1.2390715	1.2656892	1.3		

	V5	V6	V17	V19	V25	V30	V34	V36	V38	V40
	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep
Relative Volume (% of total brain volume)	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+	mat-/pat+
	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Total Brain Volume	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
-Basic cell groups and regions	87.302869	87.35873	87.446245	87.267648	87.49747	87.084495	87.646211	87.145556	87.0504	87.391467
-Cerebrum	54.298621	54.533185	56.878459	54.621812	54.644572	53.687851	54.752225	53.817405	55.458486	53.928659
-Cerebral cortex	46.094539	46.21397	47.68673	46.377419	46.450528	45.01999	46.352302	45.450968	46.503675	45.455522
-Cortical plate	43.565695	43.66312	44.898536	43.784877	43.885037	42.480611	43.749315	43.051383	43.866004	42.943805
-Olfactory areas	7.2595754	7.2089869	7.6505673	7.0355179	7.3880963	6.8461189	7.2132928	6.9139503	7.266981	7.3263035
-Main olfactory bulb	2.5161731	2.4589432	2.607205	2.2948553	2.6112706	2.1960116	2.3373749	2.4029846	2.4574065	2.5534516
-Hippocampal formation	9.3613477	9.4412868	9.0442414	9.1948486	9.3486435	9.2456874	9.326259	9.3266924	9.4108744	8.9555499
-Retrohippocampal region	4.1487129	4.2004942	4.2800943	4.2479718	4.1480817	3.9720863	4.1702147	4.0926534	4.2260446	3.9248229
-Subiculum	1.3709384	1.4336089	1.3785413	1.4270064	1.4434236	1.4050429	1.429555	1.4393034	1.4626674	1.3817245
-Entorhinal area	2.7777745	2.7668854	2.901553	2.8209649	2.704658	2.5670439	2.7406597	2.6533505	2.7633772	2.5430983
-Hippocampal region	5.2126359	5.2407903	4.7641476	4.9468746	5.2005639	5.2736026	5.1560422	5.1663639	5.1848292	5.0307249
-Ammon's horn	3.7916525	3.7893999	3.4570394	3.5905974	3.7493785	3.8343185	3.7182161	3.709337	3.7597002	3.6975852
-Dentate gyrus	1.4209834	1.4513904	1.3071082	1.3562772	1.4511848	1.4392841	1.4378261	1.454302	1.425129	1.3331397
-Isocortex	26.944772	27.012846	28.203728	27.55451	27.148292	26.3888	27.209763	26.881141	27.188148	26.661957
-Cerebral nuclei	8.2040821	8.3192148	9.191741	8.2443924	8.1940441	8.6678606	8.3999288	8.3564375	8.9548113	8.4731375
-Pallidum	2.2729551	2.4023895	2.5897584	2.3462918	2.2899006	2.4202887	2.3483399	2.2829015	2.5546578	2.3521686
-Striatum	5.9311248	5.9168247	6.6019675	5.8981001	5.9041429	6.2475703	6.0515879	6.0835375	6.400154	6.1209699
-Striatum ventral region	1.4296253	1.4563196	1.6035794	1.4570962	1.3971707	1.4625899	1.4591925	1.3875221	1.5190317	1.4506308
-Nucleus accumbens	0.7775905	0.7828604	0.8818909	0.7892387	0.7564231	0.8086812	0.7903227	0.7602816	0.8315556	0.7956455
-Lateral septal complex	0.5886395	0.5588268	0.5506094	0.5356657	0.5738109	0.6086305	0.5694717	0.5874376	0.6431476	0.5713268
-Striatum dorsal region	3.682209	3.6734439	4.2087589	3.661719	3.6989647	3.9449991	3.7814473	3.8793287	4.0060477	3.8645038
-Caudoputamen	3.682209	3.6734439	4.2087589	3.661719	3.6989647	3.9449991	3.7814473	3.8793287	4.0060477	3.8645038
-Brain stem	21.157602	21.581114	20.710422	21.274055	21.018849	21.567112	21.354123	21.626795	21.284188	21.550382
-Midbrain	6.6672913	7.0518922	6.763381	6.7155537	6.7109298	7.0006474	6.7380836	6.8848285	6.9901003	6.8934323
-Hindbrain	8.9825967	8.7469153	8.4884583	8.8993762	8.7153843	8.9166144	8.8991143	9.0021861	8.3739242	8.8661393
-Interbrain	5.5077113	5.7823105	5.4585811	5.6591218	5.5925367	5.6498503	5.7169242	5.7397766	5.9201636	5.7908095
-Hypothalamus	2.0750679	2.2092087	2.0790644	2.062675	2.0482109	2.0546293	2.1444631	2.1428799	2.1538768	2.1670524
-Thalamus	3.4326434	3.5731024	3.3795167	3.5964469	3.5443258	3.5952214	3.5724606	3.5968966	3.7662868	3.6237572
-Cerebellum	11.846663	11.244442	9.8573842	11.37176	11.834033	11.829533	11.539883	11.701376	10.307736	11.912436
-Cerebellar cortex	11.562298	10.957085	9.5679829	11.069998	11.551323	11.544468	11.254714	11.425121	10.026546	11.634921
-Cerebellar nuclei	0.2843652	0.2873601	0.2894033	0.3017608	0.2827091	0.2850687	0.2851678	0.2762586	0.2811916	0.2775126
-Dentate nucleus	0.0740592	0.0723149	0.0700444	0.0726426	0.0702206	0.0695999	0.0712779	0.0678684	0.0663356	0.0695755
-Interposed nucleus	0.1043565	0.1025694	0.1099424	0.1128453	0.1059967	0.1081548	0.1060972	0.1029332	0.1041302	0.1040678
-Fastigial nucleus	0.1059495	0.1124759	0.1094164	0.1162729	0.1064918	0.1073139	0.1077926	0.105457	0.1107257	0.1038692
-fiber tracts	11.277305	11.346643	11.30775	11.497967	11.169093	11.509114	11.047037	11.492235	11.586702	11.274037
-medial forebrain bundle system	1.5854006	1.6113071	1.5197854	1.5806988	1.572203	1.7005685	1.5379901	1.6140251	1.6901762	1.6135792
-cerebrum related	1.3166256	1.3361417	1.265593	1.3063816	1.3046234	1.4222174	1.2731237	1.3427637	1.4088762	1.3329617
-anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.0403182	0.0409648	0.0434014	0.0411592	0.0417657	0.0421587	0.0418113	0.041207	0.0429438	0.0429273
-fornix system	0.7920475	0.7878135	0.7041162	0.7539996	0.7871223	0.8676	0.7596708	0.8028387	0.8453932	0.8054594
-fimbria	0.6608046	0.6501538	0.5782874	0.6232356	0.6564638	0.7321758	0.6283219	0.6675291	0.7010329	0.6696859
-dorsal fornix	0.1312425	0.1376595	0.1258287	0.1307639	0.1306586	0.1354241	0.1313489	0.1353097	0.1443602	0.1357733
-cerebellum related fiber tracts	3.2467949	3.1386002	3.0150479	3.3036638	3.1949459	3.2115264	3.1442658	3.1864605	2.9887301	3.1811342
-cerebellar peduncles	0.8865301	0.8746858	0.8707706	0.908077	0.887197	0.8913382	0.8779447	0.8985532	0.8307694	0.8858177
-arbor vitae	2.3602648	2.2639144	2.1442773	2.3955869	2.3077484	2.3201881	2.2663205	2.2879073	2.1579607	2.295317
-lateral forebrain bundle system	4.7920183	4.9238317	5.1116718	4.9590159	4.7384822	4.9551663	4.6871756	5.0284275	5.259884	4.7675806
-corticospinal tract	1.6977539	1.7199997	1.9262811	1.7808226	1.6512538	1.7321149	1.6406578	1.8475262	1.9352796	1.686877
-cerebral peduncle	0.594199	0.6119853	0.6233216	0.6234864	0.5700469	0.6019651	0.5673406	0.6018602	0.6058392	0.6085115
-corticospinal tract-other	0.393105	0.3709827	0.4924791	0.4020522	0.351343	0.3768006	0.3642632	0.5125428	0.5337944	0.3561309
-internal capsule	0.7104502	0.7370318	0.8104803	0.7552843	0.7298637	0.7533493	0.709054	0.733123	0.7956462	0.7222344
-corpus callosum	3.0942644	3.203832	3.1853907	3.1781933	3.0872284	3.2230515	3.0465177	3.1809013	3.3246038	3.0807036
-ventricular systems	1.4198237	1.2946123	1.2459737	1.2344215	1.3334394	1.4063841	1.306746	1.3621935	1.3628598	1.334505

	V3	V4	V12	V13	V14	V20	V23	V26	V28	V29	V33	V47
Relative Volume (% of total brain volume)	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+	/hpf/large mat+/pat+
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total Brain Volume	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
-Basic cell groups and regions	87.271806	87.591707	87.371179	87.669949	87.414167	87.442436	87.229751	86.99563	87.213766	87.345586	87.13262	87.258385
-Cerebrum	54.406376	54.624514	54.213746	55.518558	54.644106	53.420617	54.081966	53.627234	53.51501	54.074425	53.427397	54.716775
-Cerebral cortex	45.928886	46.287695	45.740273	46.9071	46.364278	45.381516	45.481824	45.169876	45.324356	45.70866	45.02051	46.237415
-Cortical plate	43.326747	43.747539	43.237302	44.273873	43.853673	42.929692	43.042399	42.68408	42.904993	43.245015	42.639302	43.671441
-Olfactory areas	7.1748462	6.9992578	7.0361875	7.3493745	7.2610112	6.9903491	7.0436505	7.0933225	7.159021	7.2855109	7.1004412	7.1556185
-Main olfactory bulb	2.4536203	2.2558134	2.2967042	2.5897093	2.5027126	2.3113985	2.4557559	2.4268025	2.5438076	2.5830918	2.4961098	2.5445617
-Hippocampal formation	9.091635	9.2368696	8.9499062	9.3979271	9.1091709	9.1260681	9.1967987	8.9875307	9.2995996	9.444796	9.2913069	9.1640823
-Retrohippocampal region	3.9158598	4.1031254	4.0625817	4.3643469	4.0653333	4.0704207	3.9557422	4.0095709	4.0271259	4.155411	3.9638073	4.0436951
-Subiculum	1.3578162	1.3995469	1.3700662	1.4352785	1.3501145	1.4115916	1.4155046	1.3619126	1.4709033	1.4574598	1.3888064	1.4511638
-Entorhinal area	2.5580436	2.7035786	2.6925161	2.9290684	2.7152188	2.6588291	2.5402376	2.6476583	2.562226	2.6979511	2.5750009	2.5925308
-Hippocampal region	5.1757741	5.1337424	4.8873256	5.0335774	5.0438381	5.0556468	5.2410581	4.9779592	5.2724757	5.2893828	5.3275008	5.1203898
-Ammon's horn	3.7972212	3.7327351	3.526293	3.659452	3.6842015	3.6820265	3.8140407	3.6293375	3.8166834	3.8277194	3.8628321	3.721033
-Dentate gyrus	1.3785529	1.4010073	1.3610326	1.3741254	1.3596366	1.3736204	1.3486217	1.3486217	1.4557922	1.4616629	1.4646687	1.3993567
-Isocortex	27.060266	27.511411	27.251202	27.526577	27.483491	26.813281	26.801944	26.603227	26.446372	26.514713	26.247554	27.35174
-Cerebral nuclei	8.4774906	8.3368193	8.473473	8.6114533	8.2798283	8.0391015	8.6001479	8.4573633	8.1906539	8.3657657	8.4068813	8.4793656
-Pallidum	2.388557	2.3135406	2.3597968	2.4436564	2.2950726	2.2970728	2.3935106	2.3650435	2.2934447	2.3461806	2.3405257	2.3850753
-Striatum	6.0889342	6.0232781	6.1136767	6.1677991	5.9847551	5.759401	6.2066356	6.0923177	5.8972082	6.0195835	6.0663573	6.0942893
-Striatum ventral region	1.437163	1.4259589	1.4535805	1.5092159	1.437044	1.4428967	1.4384734	1.4226056	1.3919897	1.4356707	1.4639991	1.4335758
-Nucleus accumbens	0.7867669	0.7779822	0.7953129	0.8445007	0.7860385	0.7761494	0.8142799	0.7695526	0.7620797	0.7879925	0.8065226	0.7810419
-Lateral septal complex	0.5495778	0.5237818	0.526052	0.5550167	0.5348932	0.5301979	0.5292775	0.5486472	0.512951	0.5365917	0.5311123	0.5744412
-Striatum dorsal region	3.869436	3.8564274	3.9141359	3.8776552	3.7909909	3.5763505	4.0298126	3.9020769	3.7834279	3.8319441	3.8649686	3.8667029
-Caudoputamen	3.869436	3.8564274	3.9141359	3.8776552	3.7909909	3.5763505	4.0298126	3.9020769	3.7834279	3.8319441	3.8649686	3.8667029
-Brain stem	21.795005	20.976869	21.707854	21.360154	21.089361	22.016828	21.508542	21.944821	21.452336	21.629989	22.109866	21.013836
-Midbrain	6.9322791	6.6776361	6.8574769	6.9658408	6.590861	6.8301376	6.9214513	6.9155233	6.7392679	6.9136919	6.9913514	6.7939371
-Hindbrain	8.977779	8.5961749	9.1267422	8.5984669	8.9652659	9.526832	8.6602154	9.3225455	8.8626791	8.8974836	9.2211749	8.4561371
-Interbrain	5.884947	5.7030597	5.7236347	5.7984629	5.5332316	5.6598581	5.9268771	5.706752	5.8503917	5.8188115	5.8973401	5.8183282
-Hypothalamus	2.1441565	2.0547674	2.0747295	2.1596836	2.0253336	2.0385543	2.1436351	2.1592659	2.1165152	2.0867277	2.1514414	2.1249772
-Thalamus	3.7407905	3.6482923	3.6489052	3.6387793	3.507898	3.6213038	3.7832419	3.5474861	3.733876	3.7320832	3.7459261	3.693351
-Cerebellum	11.070437	11.990318	11.449584	10.791236	11.680705	12.004996	11.639238	11.423558	12.246415	11.641193	11.595392	11.527769
-Cerebellar cortex	10.756647	11.69846	11.145804	10.500274	11.376116	11.688045	11.334215	11.119332	11.948495	11.335522	11.274978	11.229586
-Cerebellar nuclei	0.3137916	0.2918546	0.3037807	0.2909598	0.3045908	0.3169522	0.3050245	0.3042226	0.2979198	0.3056711	0.32041	0.2981842
-Dentate nucleus	0.0781904	0.074502	0.0755015	0.0724258	0.0762584	0.0792351	0.0728891	0.0758082	0.0736139	0.0746237	0.0782781	0.0733046
-Interposed nucleus	0.1174274	0.10735	0.1127956	0.1076511	0.1166149	0.1190743	0.1144034	0.1127768	0.1136675	0.115461	0.1222991	0.1110038
-Fastigial nucleus	0.1181738	0.1100026	0.1154836	0.1108829	0.1117174	0.1186427	0.117732	0.1156376	0.1106384	0.1155864	0.1198328	0.1138758
-fiber tracts	11.435098	11.180803	11.427241	11.066762	11.341637	11.346553	11.536681	11.696953	11.586781	11.436824	11.63966	11.453692
-medial forebrain bundle system	1.6352714	1.5535354	1.5638733	1.5705874	1.548665	1.5427808	1.625231	1.6075954	1.6022111	1.5864292	1.6175354	1.6331678
-cerebrum related	1.3558989	1.2858616	1.2909364	1.292542	1.2800337	1.2707673	1.3455631	1.339215	1.3259018	1.3094016	1.3316474	1.3595665
-anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.0416055	0.03878	0.0408856	0.0413255	0.0407828	0.0403786	0.040526	0.0433351	0.0404777	0.0396585	0.0396729	0.0400679
-fornix system	0.789915	0.7447244	0.7527964	0.7547254	0.7471163	0.7556314	0.7882346	0.7946804	0.7888728	0.7822941	0.7942314	0.7974068
-fimbria	0.6573142	0.6170923	0.6271415	0.6258653	0.6223466	0.6296962	0.6536637	0.6559367	0.6577446	0.6511445	0.6606715	0.6613092
-dorsal fornix	0.1326004	0.1276324	0.1256549	0.1288598	0.1247695	0.125935	0.1345708	0.138744	0.1311284	0.1311501	0.13356	0.1360974
-cerebellum related fiber tracts	3.1470298	3.2334556	3.2933484	3.0882746	3.3253779	3.467735	3.2308046	3.3753693	3.4054042	3.324002	3.4314766	3.1867034
-cerebellar peduncles	0.8868551	0.8822943	0.8991526	0.8715545	0.9270064	0.9598171	0.8917053	0.9431207	0.9516625	0.9378221	0.979472	0.8797157
-arbor vitae	2.2601748	2.3511619	2.3941964	2.2167201	2.3983721	2.5079173	2.3390993	2.4322486	2.4537417	2.3861793	2.4520045	2.3069877
-lateral forebrain bundle system	5.0200871	4.8253552	4.9176927	4.7748641	4.8221749	4.6772372	5.0362011	5.0139792	4.9144678	4.8584936	4.9254141	5.0073899
-corticospinal tract	1.7856218	1.6822248	1.831704	1.7246569	1.7189379	1.709456	1.7800769	1.9440811	1.7710177	1.7648537	1.8194746	1.7845142
-cerebral peduncle	0.6190717	0.572131	0.6075999	0.5826342	0.610435	0.600085	0.6210334	0.6432566	0.6342451	0.6055723	0.6366653	0.6211548
-corticospinal tract-other	0.3800989	0.3700232	0.4530936	0.3744636	0.3758961	0.3898811	0.3864561	0.5193822	0.3937876	0.3955612	0.4365744	0.3546547
-internal capsule	0.7864508	0.7400705	0.7710104	0.7675591	0.7326071	0.71949	0.7725876	0.7814421	0.742985	0.7637204	0.7462345	0.8087046
-corpus callosum	3.2344659	3.1431304	3.0859887	3.0502078	3.103237	2.9677806	3.2561242	3.0698981	3.14345	3.0936398	3.1059401	3.2228762
-ventricular systems	1.2930864	1.227497	1.2015762	1.2632748	1.2441829	1.2110055	1.2335617	1.3074488	1.1994505	1.2175689	1.2276999	1.2879065

	V7	V8	V10	V16	V27	V35	V41	V42	V44	V45	V46
	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep	/hpf/largep
Relative Volume (% of total brain volume)	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+	mat+/pat+
	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Total Brain Volume	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
--Basic cell groups and regions	87.367215	87.151814	87.522512	87.347719	87.226179	87.144032	87.253572	86.996387	87.189838	87.205518	87.316444
--Cerebrum	54.929237	53.611613	55.288948	54.583888	53.798195	53.897303	54.567125	53.643595	54.013996	54.017951	53.845547
--Cerebral cortex	46.336564	45.396663	46.665725	46.285028	45.263117	45.536403	46.219466	45.105293	45.554408	45.702474	45.850951
*--Cortical plate	43.730192	42.921912	44.072673	43.865788	42.837258	43.143415	43.739114	42.490253	43.072692	43.272697	43.371033
--Olfactory areas	7.1354568	7.0197812	7.065477	7.119439	6.7080018	7.0392263	7.3038383	7.0814963	7.0490069	7.3127711	7.4030557
*--Main olfactory bulb	2.346961	2.3544122	2.2508271	2.4221752	2.0824926	2.4600607	2.5925008	2.4271089	2.3605052	2.6013318	2.6568159
--Hippocampal formation	9.3596255	9.3671971	9.3002264	9.1396551	9.2605743	9.3273031	9.2924584	9.30599	9.2604554	9.0007229	8.9408566
--Retrosplenial region	4.2050006	4.1436747	4.2991817	4.1524208	4.194061	4.0869233	4.1790813	4.0116704	4.1262048	4.0075577	4.0197051
--Subiculum	1.4118053	1.3969167	1.4334628	1.3593876	1.396223	1.4668954	1.4257974	1.4058632	1.4283638	1.3726403	1.3624622
*--Entorhinal area	2.7931953	2.746758	2.865719	2.7930332	2.797838	2.6200274	2.7532839	2.6058072	2.697661	2.6349175	2.6572434
--Hippocampal region	5.1546249	5.2235228	5.0010452	4.9872327	5.0665142	5.2403823	5.1133781	5.2943211	5.134431	4.9931651	4.9211501
--Ammon's horn	3.7192371	3.7946208	3.6283367	3.6352678	3.6954328	3.8031876	3.7328256	3.8327219	3.7246222	3.6122067	3.577245
*--Dentate gyrus	1.4353879	1.4289015	1.3727086	1.3519649	1.371081	1.4371942	1.380553	1.4615993	1.4098088	1.3809584	1.3439046
--Isocortex	27.235105	26.534934	27.70697	27.606688	26.868682	26.776886	27.142817	26.102766	26.76323	26.959203	27.027121
*--Cerebral nuclei	8.592673	8.2149506	8.6232226	8.2988518	8.5350779	8.3608952	8.3476535	8.5383023	8.459588	8.3154775	7.9945909
--Pallidum	2.4145737	2.297714	2.4233011	2.335786	2.3444588	2.3513043	2.3035496	2.3637372	2.3814386	2.2962367	2.2312818
*--Striatum	6.1780983	5.9172376	6.1999194	5.9630658	6.1906191	6.0095919	6.0441049	6.1745661	6.0781499	6.0192414	5.7633115
--Striatum ventral region	1.4440424	1.4205132	1.5049763	1.4739391	1.50014	1.4383275	1.4283589	1.4071442	1.4654364	1.4338811	1.3947032
*--Nucleus accumbens	0.7831209	0.7624012	0.8263784	0.7993123	0.8102264	0.7960229	0.7789465	0.7722095	0.7894761	0.7727444	0.7499333
--Lateral septal complex	0.5239259	0.5503213	0.5707035	0.535077	0.535677	0.5132381	0.5419293	0.5970716	0.5416604	0.5511028	0.5178343
*--Striatum dorsal region	3.9723962	3.7234797	3.8937347	3.7339472	3.9239831	3.8314771	3.8532138	3.9412915	3.8460593	3.8193731	3.6354976
*--Caudoputamen	3.9723962	3.7234797	3.8937347	3.7339472	3.9239831	3.8314771	3.8532138	3.9412915	3.8460593	3.8193731	3.6354976
--Brain stem	20.759266	21.459476	21.365092	21.390534	21.205578	21.58837	21.016977	21.299905	21.380666	21.120422	20.634538
--Midbrain	6.7399286	6.7844994	7.0624914	6.7900997	6.8941684	6.8536765	6.7912974	6.7989839	6.9171751	6.6767334	6.4693335
--Hindbrain	8.242188	8.9467059	8.4985785	8.9554358	8.5663313	8.9794061	8.5401774	8.7441314	8.7038736	8.8696141	8.6970404
*--Interbrain	5.7771464	5.7282741	5.8040251	5.6449945	5.7450754	5.7552881	5.6855069	5.7567391	5.7596186	5.5740756	5.4681672
--Hypothalamus	2.1011354	2.0681683	2.1727382	2.0958292	2.0599747	2.0575883	2.0052033	2.1013532	2.1204554	1.9959718	1.9876523
*--Thalamus	3.6760109	3.6601058	3.6312874	3.5491653	3.6851007	3.6976993	3.6803037	3.6554378	3.6391627	3.5781038	3.4805144
*--Cerebellum	11.678712	12.080699	10.868451	11.373278	12.224232	11.658339	11.669476	12.052866	11.79519	12.067129	12.836379
--Cerebellar cortex	11.378174	11.775299	10.579032	11.073349	11.916331	11.359946	11.378962	11.75845	11.493623	11.769555	12.551175
*--Cerebellar nuclei	0.3005368	0.3054008	0.2894213	0.2999285	0.3060962	0.2983911	0.2905159	0.2944181	0.3015656	0.2975747	0.2852039
--Dentate nucleus	0.0738569	0.076581	0.0684551	0.073413	0.078202	0.0711511	0.0691817	0.0704204	0.0725534	0.0718159	0.0689127
--Interposed nucleus	0.1119826	0.1123028	0.1082417	0.1135396	0.1129392	0.1121371	0.1079164	0.110884	0.1134737	0.1116506	0.1086008
*--Fastigial nucleus	0.1146974	0.1165169	0.1127246	0.1129759	0.1149551	0.1151028	0.1134178	0.1131136	0.1155385	0.1141082	0.1076904
--fiber tracts	11.396645	11.528422	11.217952	11.406698	11.528841	11.655084	11.514809	11.692914	11.551668	11.531578	11.460441
--medial forebrain bundle system	1.5910501	1.6245072	1.6143741	1.5982548	1.6100852	1.6268791	1.6329855	1.7251165	1.6295062	1.6154915	1.5617676
*--cerebrum related	1.319579	1.3484428	1.3356423	1.3195717	1.3257881	1.3470968	1.3534704	1.4431721	1.3447878	1.3363765	1.2951656
--anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.0396344	0.040488	0.0395074	0.0404465	0.0410157	0.0393548	0.0399958	0.0420564	0.0412231	0.0396572	0.0380261
*--fornix system	0.7697079	0.8077768	0.7825075	0.7738131	0.7992631	0.7965548	0.7885805	0.8863017	0.789931	0.7889344	0.7631625
--fimbria	0.6348691	0.6725222	0.6450447	0.6435871	0.6671615	0.6620386	0.653826	0.745573	0.6514499	0.6546694	0.6317694
*--dorsal fornix	0.1348386	0.1352551	0.1374625	0.1302259	0.1321015	0.1345163	0.1347543	0.1407284	0.1384813	0.1342652	0.1313934
--cerebellum related fiber tracts	3.2250084	3.3813779	3.1137813	3.3448044	3.4141943	3.295673	3.1962365	3.2752358	3.3103401	3.3459501	3.4587668
--cerebellar peduncles	0.8453147	0.9071188	0.8638065	0.9397498	0.886254	0.9131747	0.8570914	0.8916832	0.8999867	0.9236627	0.9143681
*--arbor vitae	2.3796933	2.4742591	2.2499753	2.4050546	2.5279408	2.3824983	2.3391451	2.3835526	2.4103534	2.4222874	2.5443986
*--lateral forebrain bundle system	4.9672537	4.8684168	4.8725938	4.7991736	4.8662722	5.0234974	4.9951337	5.0760542	4.939139	4.8963484	4.784681
--corticospinal tract	1.7713781	1.750929	1.7705158	1.7257421	1.7066508	1.7942296	1.769254	1.8858783	1.7318042	1.7641528	1.709393
--cerebral peduncle	0.6057278	0.6218629	0.6235737	0.6254803	0.6126757	0.6271876	0.5994516	0.6052128	0.6095596	0.6032049	0.5887869
--corticospinal tract-other	0.3624811	0.3822047	0.3753746	0.3803716	0.3750712	0.3869573	0.3855568	0.5376305	0.3605586	0.3726752	0.3707543
*--internal capsule	0.8031693	0.7468614	0.7715675	0.71989	0.7189038	0.7800845	0.7842457	0.7430349	0.7616865	0.7882722	0.749852
*--corpus callosum	3.195876	3.1174877	3.102078	3.073432	3.1596214	3.2292678	3.2258797	3.1901759	3.2073348	3.1321957	3.075288
*--ventricular systems	1.2361622	1.3198056	1.2595614	1.2456223	1.2449524	1.2009149	1.2316326	1.3107186	1.2584786	1.2629034	1.2230782

Relative Volume	mat-/pat+		mat+/pat+		%Diff	Effect	P-Value		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD					
Total Brain Volume	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00				
-Basic cell groups and regions	87.43	0.18	87.29	0.17	0.16	0.84	0.01	0.03	*
-Cerebrum	54.62	0.75	54.19	0.59	0.78	0.72	0.04	0.08	-
-Cerebral cortex	46.09	0.63	45.80	0.52	0.63	0.55	0.10	0.19	
°-Cortical plate	43.53	0.58	43.31	0.48	0.52	0.46	0.16	0.27	
°-Olfactory areas	7.28	0.21	7.13	0.15	2.23	1.05	0.01	0.02	*
°-Main olfactory bulb	2.50	0.14	2.44	0.14	2.58	0.45	0.13	0.24	
°-Hippocampal formation	9.19	0.15	9.21	0.15	-0.28	-0.18	0.55	0.72	
°-Retrohippocampal region	4.09	0.11	4.09	0.11	-0.17	-0.06	0.83	0.92	
°-Subiculum	1.40	0.04	1.41	0.04	-0.30	-0.11	0.71	0.84	
°-Entorhinal area	2.69	0.09	2.69	0.10	-0.11	-0.03	0.92	0.97	
°-Hippocampal region	5.10	0.12	5.12	0.13	-0.37	-0.15	0.61	0.76	
°-Ammon's horn	3.70	0.09	3.72	0.09	-0.42	-0.17	0.55	0.72	
°-Dentate gyrus	1.40	0.04	1.40	0.04	-0.22	-0.08	0.79	0.92	
°-Isocortex	27.06	0.43	26.97	0.45	0.34	0.20	0.48	0.66	
°-Cerebral nuclei	8.53	0.25	8.39	0.17	1.62	0.79	0.04	0.08	-
°-Pallidum	2.40	0.09	2.35	0.05	2.14	0.97	0.02	0.07	-
°-Striatum	6.13	0.17	6.05	0.13	1.41	0.68	0.06	0.12	
°-Striatum ventral region	1.47	0.06	1.44	0.03	1.92	0.89	0.04	0.09	-
°-Nucleus accumbens	0.80	0.03	0.79	0.02	1.63	0.59	0.11	0.21	
°-Lateral septal complex	0.57	0.03	0.54	0.02	5.93	1.58	0.00	0.00	**
°-Striatum dorsal region	3.86	0.12	3.84	0.10	0.42	0.16	0.63	0.76	
°-Caudoputamen	3.86	0.12	3.84	0.10	0.42	0.16	0.63	0.76	
-Brain stem	21.46	0.32	21.38	0.38	0.35	0.20	0.46	0.65	
-Midbrain	6.91	0.15	6.82	0.14	1.35	0.68	0.03	0.08	-
-Hindbrain	8.81	0.27	8.82	0.30	-0.20	-0.06	0.83	0.92	
°-Interbrain	5.74	0.12	5.74	0.11	0.02	0.01	0.97	0.97	
°-Hypothalamus	2.16	0.08	2.09	0.05	3.35	1.27	0.00	0.00	**
°-Thalamus	3.58	0.10	3.65	0.08	-1.89	-0.89	0.01	0.03	*
°-Cerebellum	11.35	0.58	11.71	0.46	-3.06	-0.78	0.02	0.07	-
°-Cerebellar cortex	11.07	0.58	11.41	0.46	-2.96	-0.73	0.03	0.08	-
°-Cerebellar nuclei	0.28	0.01	0.30	0.01	-6.99	-2.42	0.00	0.00	**
°-Dentate nucleus	0.07	0.00	0.07	0.00	-6.72	-1.60	0.00	0.00	**
°-Interposed nucleus	0.10	0.00	0.11	0.00	-7.62	-2.31	0.00	0.00	**
°-Fastigial nucleus	0.11	0.00	0.11	0.00	-6.55	-2.55	0.00	0.00	**
-fiber tracts	11.26	0.16	11.46	0.16	-1.75	-1.26	0.00	0.00	**
°-medial forebrain bundle system	1.59	0.04	1.61	0.04	-0.86	-0.35	0.27	0.44	
°-cerebrum related	1.32	0.04	1.33	0.04	-0.73	-0.27	0.39	0.58	
°-anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.00	3.68	1.32	0.00	0.00	**
°-fornix system	0.78	0.03	0.78	0.03	-0.05	-0.01	0.97	0.97	
°-fimbria	0.65	0.03	0.65	0.03	-0.24	-0.06	0.85	0.92	
°-dorsal fornix	0.13	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.89	0.28	0.35	0.53	
°-cerebellum related fiber tracts	3.12	0.11	3.30	0.11	-5.36	-1.64	0.00	0.00	**
°-cerebellar peduncles	0.88	0.02	0.91	0.03	-3.45	-0.90	0.00	0.00	**
°-arbor vitae	2.25	0.09	2.39	0.08	-6.08	-1.73	0.00	0.00	**
°-lateral forebrain bundle system	4.88	0.14	4.91	0.10	-0.54	-0.27	0.46	0.65	
°-corticospinal tract	1.77	0.09	1.77	0.06	-0.05	-0.01	0.97	0.97	
°-cerebral peduncle	0.60	0.02	0.61	0.02	-1.68	-0.60	0.03	0.08	-
°-corticospinal tract-other	0.43	0.07	0.40	0.05	7.39	0.62	0.10	0.19	
°-internal capsule	0.74	0.03	0.76	0.03	-2.61	-0.76	0.01	0.05	*
°-corpus callosum	3.11	0.08	3.14	0.07	-0.83	-0.36	0.25	0.42	
°-ventricular systems	1.31	0.06	1.25	0.04	4.76	1.66	0.00	0.00	**

**Table S3.** Age by genotype interaction for absolute brain volumes of juvenile and adult *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats and wildtype littermates.

	Age * Genotype Interaction
	FDR
Total Brain Volume	0.048160816
--Basic cell groups and regions	0.048328625
--Cerebrum	0.060273407
--Cerebral cortex	0.06162697
°--Cortical plate	0.06162697
--Olfactory areas	0.162112068
°--Main olfactory bulb	0.818146498
--Hippocampal formation	0.050207275
--Retrohippocampal region	0.06162697
--Subiculum	0.137297219
°--Entorhinal area	0.060273407
°--Hippocampal region	0.045652624
--Ammon's horn	0.043450029
°--Dentate gyrus	0.060273407
°--Isocortex	0.06162697
°--Cerebral nuclei	0.045652624
--Pallidum	0.049445369
°--Striatum	0.045652624
--Striatum ventral region	0.060273407
°--Nucleus accumbens	0.06162697
--Lateral septal complex	0.26465486
°--Striatum dorsal region	0.02888415
°--Caudoputamen	0.02888415
--Brain stem	0.026628963
--Midbrain	0.026628963
--Hindbrain	0.060273407
°--Interbrain	0.020181397
--Hypothalamus	0.045652624
°--Thalamus	0.020181397
°--Cerebellum	0.06162697
--Cerebellar cortex	0.06162697
°--Cerebellar nuclei	0.135651527
--Dentate nucleus	0.105732771
--Interposed nucleus	0.261336982
°--Fastigial nucleus	0.109005783
--fiber tracts	0.02888415
--medial forebrain bundle system	0.026628963
°--cerebrum related	0.026628963
--anterior commissure, temporal limb	0.048328625
°--fornix system	0.026628963
--fimbria	0.026628963
°--dorsal fornix	0.048328625
--cerebellum related fiber tracts	0.055278686
--cerebellar peduncles	0.060273407
°--arbor vitae	0.060273407
°--lateral forebrain bundle system	0.02888415
--corticospinal tract	0.020181397
--cerebral peduncle	0.020181397
--corticospinal tract-other	0.071509727
°--internal capsule	0.020181397
°--corpus callosum	0.050793185
°--ventricular systems	0.137297219

## Chapter 6

Insulin-Like Growth Factor-2 Does Not Improve Behavioral Deficits in Mouse and Rat Models of Angelman Syndrome

This chapter has been submitted for publication: Elizabeth L. Berg\*, Stela P. Petkova\*, Heather A. Born, Anna Adhikari, Anne E. Anderson, and Jill L. Silverman (in review). *Molecular Autism*.

## Abstract

Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a rare neurodevelopmental disorder for which there is currently no cure or effective therapeutic. Since the genetic cause of AS is known to be dysfunctional expression of the maternal allele of ubiquitin protein ligase E3A (*UBE3A*), several genetic animal models of AS have been developed. Both the *Ube3a* maternal deletion mouse and rat models of AS reliably demonstrate behavioral phenotypes of relevance to AS and therefore offer suitable *in vivo* systems in which to test potential therapeutics. One promising candidate treatment is insulin-like growth factor-2 (IGF-2), which has recently been shown to ameliorate behavioral deficits in the mouse model of AS and improve cognitive abilities across model systems. We used both the *Ube3a* maternal deletion mouse and rat models of AS to evaluate the ability of IGF-2 to improve electrophysiological and behavioral outcomes. Acute systemic administration of IGF-2 had an effect on electrophysiological activity in the brain and on a metric of motor ability, however the effects were not enduring or extensive. Additional metrics of motor behavior, learning, ambulation, and coordination were unaffected and IGF-2 did not improve social communication, seizure threshold, or cognition. The generalizability of these results to humans is difficult to predict and it remains possible that dosing schemes (e.g., chronic or subchronic dosing), routes, and/or post-treatment intervals other than those used herein may show more efficacy. Despite a few observed effects of IGF-2, our results taken together indicate that IGF-2 treatment does not profoundly improve behavioral deficits in the mouse or rat model of AS. These findings shed cautionary light on the potential utility of acute systemic IGF-2 administration in the treatment of AS.

## Background

Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a rare neurodevelopmental disorder caused by the loss of functional ubiquitin protein ligase E3A [1]. Specifically, AS results from deficient expression of the maternal allele, which leaves the entire brain deficient of UBE3A due to neuron-specific imprinting that silences the paternal allele [2-6]. AS is characterized by developmental delay, intellectual disability, impaired communication, gross and fine motor deficits, as well as seizures [7-12]. Since these symptoms are severe and persistent, and there is currently no effective therapeutic or cure for the disorder, those with AS require lifelong supportive care. It is therefore imperative that novel strategies to treat AS are developed.

Several *in vivo* models have been generated to aid in the pursuit of effective treatments, including a conventional germline mouse [13] with a deletion of *Ube3a* in exon 2, a conditional mouse with tamoxifen reactivation [14], a larger deletion mouse [15], and rat model with a full *Ube3a* gene deletion [16]. Various models recapitulate phenotypes of AS and therefore provide useful systems in which to test candidate treatments. Lacking a functional level of UBE3A protein in the brain, models show hypo-locomotion, poor balance, impaired coordination, atypical gait, complex cognitive deficits, alongside communication deficits and aberrant social behavior. Since many of these behavioral deficits are not unique to AS, therapies that are effective for other disorders with shared symptomology, such as autism or other syndromic NDDs, may also be effective in treating AS [17-21].

Insulin-like growth factors (IGFs), a family of proteins with similar structure to insulin, have recently emerged as potential treatments for the social deficits, communication impairments, and repetitive behaviors of genetic syndromes associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) [18, 22-30]. IGF-1 is being evaluated as a novel treatment for core symptoms of syndromic autisms

in one of the first clinical trials of its kind (NCT01970345) [17-21, 28-33]. IGF-1 is an FDA approved, commercially available compound that crosses the blood-brain barrier and has beneficial effects on synaptic development by promoting neuronal cell survival, synaptic maturation, and synaptic plasticity. Since IGF-1 has shown efficacy in reversing deficits in mouse and neuronal models of three single gene causes of ASD (namely Rett syndrome [22, 23, 26], Phelan McDermid syndrome [27, 34], and Fragile X syndrome [28]), it may therefore be effective in treating autism spectrum disorders more broadly.

IGF-2, which is important for normal growth and development, tissue repair, and regeneration, has also shown promising effects on ASD-relevant behavioral domains in preclinical studies [35-40]. Injections into the hippocampus have demonstrated that IGF-2 is crucial to the consolidation and enhancement of memories and may be effective in ameliorating memory impairments [30, 41-43]. Since the chemical properties of IGF-2 allow it to exert action within the central nervous system after crossing the blood-brain barrier [44, 45], systemic delivery of IGF-2 represents a highly translational route of treatment. A study in mice by Stern et al. (2014) found that following systemic administration of IGF-2 via subcutaneous injection, adult male C57BL/6J mice showed enhanced novel object recognition, social recognition, contextual fear memory, and working memory [42]. Moreover, in the BTBR mouse model of ASD, Steinmetz et al. (2018) found that IGF-2 treatment normalized behavior in the marble burying task, improved social interaction and social memory deficits, and enhanced novel object recognition along with other types of memory [30].

Despite substantial biological and behavioral differences between the inbred strain BTBR, previously used as an idiopathic ASD model, and the *Ube3a* maternal deletion model of AS, the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mouse model of AS was recently reported by Cruz et al. (2020) to exhibit behavioral

rescue following acute systemic IGF-2 treatment [46]. These encouraging results prompted us to i) investigate if the effects of IGF-2 would be rigorous, reproducible, and inter-laboratory reliable, ii) examine both the mouse and rat model of AS to determine whether IGF-2 could ameliorate or reduce the severity of communication deficits unique to the rat model of AS [16] and evaluate phenotypes observed across species (i.e., motor impairment), and iii) extend the standard, albeit non-translational, rescue of performance in the cerebellar dependent rotarod assay to a rescue of nuanced impairments in gait, which are being utilized as outcome measures in both AS models and AS individuals.

Following a dose range investigation using intra-cranial electroencephalography (EEG) recordings, we employed a battery of behavioral assays to evaluate the effect of systemic IGF-2 on social communication and several motor and learning outcomes in the mouse and rat models of AS. A subcutaneous injection was used to deliver IGF-2 to mice and rats 20 minutes prior to the start of testing. We utilized the standard behavioral protocol of our laboratory and IDDRC behavioral core [16, 47-54] as well as the protocols utilized by Cruz et al. [46] to compare data directly, fairly, and congruently. A comprehensive battery of tests confirmed that IGF-2 did not change basic functions including physical characteristics, general behavioral responses, and sensory reflexes, which indicated safety. Disappointingly, however, our data did not provide strong support for reproducibility or inter-laboratory reliability of IGF-2's improvement on outcomes since we observed a general lack of effect of IGF-2 in several behavioral domains across two AS rodent models.

## **Methods**

**Subjects.** All animals were housed in a temperature-controlled vivarium and provided food and water *ad libitum*. Animals were maintained on a 12:12 light-dark cycle with the exception of those used for EEG, which were maintained on a 14:10 light-dark cycle. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of the University of California, Davis or the Baylor College of Medicine and conducted in accordance with the National Institutes of Health Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. Mouse colonies were maintained by breeding *Ube3a* deletion males (B6.129S7-*Ube3a*<sup>tm1Alb</sup>/J; Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, ME; Stock No. 016590) with congenic C57BL/6J (B6J) female mice, and rat colonies were maintained by breeding *Ube3a* deletion males with wildtype Sprague Dawley females (Envigo, Indianapolis, IN). Subject animals were generated by breeding *Ube3a* deletion females with wildtype males, producing maternally inherited *Ube3a* deletion animals (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>; mat-/pat+; Angelman Syndrome model) and wildtype littermate controls (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; mat+/pat+). Additionally, a mixed-sex cohort of congenic B6J mice was generated from B6J breeder pairs and tested following methods previously described by Cruz et al. (2020) [46] and outlined again in **Supplementary File 1**.

Pups were marked for identification and genotyped as previously described [16, 55]. In order to minimize carry-over effects from repeated testing and handling, at least 24 hours were allowed to elapse between the end of one task and the start of another, and assays were performed in order of least to most stressful. All behavioral testing included both sexes, was conducted blinded to genotype and treatment group, and was carried out between 08:00 and 18:00 h (ZT1-ZT11) during the light phase. Between subjects, all surfaces of the testing apparatus were cleaned using 70% ethanol and allowed to dry. For assays involving bedding, the bedding was replaced between subjects. At least 1 hour prior to the start of behavioral testing, mice were habituated in

their home cages to a dimly lit empty holding room adjacent to the testing area. Two cohorts of mice were tested as follows: Cohort 1 was sampled from 22 litters and, beginning at 8 weeks of age (PND 55), was tested in i) open field, ii) beam walking, iii) DigiGait, iv) novel object recognition, and v) pentylenetetrazol-induced seizures; Cohort 2 was sampled from 15 litters and beginning at 8 weeks of age were tested in i) accelerating rotarod and ii) marble burying. Two cohorts of rats were tested as follows: Cohort 1 was sampled from 6 litters and was tested in i) accelerating rotarod at PND  $38 \pm 4$ ; Cohort 2 was sampled from 7 litters and was tested in i) pup ultrasonic vocalizations at PND 10 and ii) pro-social USV playback at 9 weeks of age. One mixed-sex cohort of 7 rats was used for recording EEG at 1-2 months of age.

**Systemic treatment with insulin-like growth factor-2 (IGF-2).** IGF-2 (catalog #792-MG, R&D Systems, Inc., Minneapolis, MN) was dissolved in 0.1% bovine serum albumin (BSA) in phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). Prior to testing, a random number generator was used to randomly assign subjects of each genotype to receive either IGF-2 or vehicle (0.1% BSA-PBS). IGF-2 solutions were made fresh prior to every task and, for multi-day tests, injections were carried out only on the first training day. The acute systemic dosing paradigm used herein was based on previous studies showing IGF-2 enhancing cognition [42, 43] and improving behavioral phenotypes of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice when administered 20 min prior to testing [46]. Therefore, for all behavioral tests, IGF-2 was delivered 20 min prior to the task. For optimal post-injection data quality while maintaining relevance to the timescale of behavioral tests, IGF-2 was administered 60 min prior to EEG collection. A minimum of two days was allowed to elapse between injections. The 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2 dose administered to rats was selected based on a dose response analysis of

EEG activity following administration of 10, 30, and 60  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2, while mice were administered 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2 to match the dose previously found effective by Cruz et al. [46].

**Electroencephalography (EEG).** To acquire EEG recordings, rats were implanted with two subdural electrodes over the somatosensory cortex and one hippocampal depth electrode as previously described [67]. Rats were anesthetized with isoflurane and positioned within a stereotaxic frame. The cortical recording electrodes were placed at -1.0 mm posterior and  $\pm$  3.0 mm lateral relative to bregma, while the hippocampal depth electrode was placed -4.0 mm posterior, +2.8 mm lateral, and -2.8 mm ventral. Metabond (Parkell, Edgewood, NY) and dental cement (Co-Oral-Itte Dental Mfg; Diamond Springs, CA) were used to secure all electrodes, except for the ground electrode which was sutured in the cervical paraspinous region. Electrodes were connected to the commutator via 6-channel pedestal and rats were given minimum 1 week recovery prior to data collection. For pain management, rats were provided with slow release buprenorphine and lidocaine/bupivacaine on the day of surgery, as well as Rimadyl tablets on the day prior to, the day of, and the day after surgery. Video synchronized EEG data was acquired using the Nicolet system (Natus, Pleasanton, CA) and Labchart V8 software (AD Instruments, Colorado Springs, CO) and then inspected and analyzed by a trained experimenter blinded to genotype and treatment group. Pre-injection baseline data (60 min in duration) were recorded from rats 24 hrs prior to administration of vehicle and post-injection data (60 min in duration) were collected 60 min following injection. Data were analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA with group as the between-group factor and frequency as the within-group factor or using two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

## **Behavioral Assays.**

*Accelerating rotarod.* To test motor coordination, balance, and motor learning, subjects were placed on an Ugo-Basile accelerating rotarod (Stoelting Co., Wood Dale, IL) as described previously in mice and rats [16, 47, 56]. Animals were placed on the cylinder while it rotated at 5 revolutions per minute, and then it slowly accelerated to 40 revolutions per min over the course of the 5 min trial. On three consecutive days, subjects were given three trials per day with a 45-60 min inter-trial rest period. The latency for each subject to fall off the cylinder was recorded with the maximum achievable latency being 300 seconds. Data were analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA with group as the between-group factor and day as the within-group factor.

*Isolation-induced pup ultrasonic vocalizations (USV).* On PND 10, neonatal rats were assessed by collecting 40 kHz vocalizations made when isolated from dam and littermates following a previously described protocol [16, 47, 56, 57]. Rat pups were selected from the nest at random and placed in a small plastic container with clean bedding. The container was placed inside a sound attenuating chamber for three min while calls were recorded with an ultrasonic microphone and Avisoft-RECORDER software (Avisoft Bioacoustics, Glienicke, Germany). Using spectrograms generated with Avisoft-SASLab Pro software, calls were manually counted by a trained investigator blinded to genotype and treatment group. Data were analyzed using two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

*Pro-social USV playback.* To evaluate social behavior, the behavioral response to hearing playback of natural conspecific 50-kHz USV social contact calls was quantified following an established protocol [16, 47, 58]. Prior to the test, all subjects were handled in a standardized

manner for 5 min on three consecutive days. Subjects were individually placed on an eight-arm radial maze (arms: 40 cm l x 10 cm w) elevated 48 cm above the floor, surrounded by a black curtain, and illuminated to ~8 lux with indirect white light. An active ultrasonic speaker (ScanSpeak, Avisoft Bioacoustics) was placed 20 cm away from the end of one arm while a second inactive speaker was placed symmetrically at the opposite arm to serve as a visual control. After a 15-min habituation period, an Ultra SoundGate 116 Player (Avisoft Bioacoustics) was used to present one of two 1-min acoustic stimuli: (1) pro-social 50-kHz USV or (2) a time- and amplitude-matched white noise control stimulus. Following a 10-min inter-stimulus interval, the second stimulus was presented, and the test session ended after an additional 10-min post-stimulus period. The order of the stimuli was counterbalanced in order to account for possible sequence effects. An overhead camera and EthoVision XT videotracking software (Noldus Information Technology, Wageningen, Netherlands) were used to measure stimulus-induced changes in locomotion and location on the maze. Intact behavioral inhibition was defined as moving significantly less during the minute of white noise compared to the minute prior by paired *t*-test. Intact social approach was defined as spending significantly more time on the arms proximal to the active speaker compared to the distal arms during the minute of pro-social 50-kHz USV playback and subsequent two min by paired *t*-test. As a control metric for motor behavior, distance traveled during this timeframe (i.e., the minute of USV playback and subsequent two min) was also analyzed using two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

***Open field locomotion.*** General exploratory locomotion was assayed as previously described [55, 59, 60]. Subjects were individually placed within a novel open field (40 cm l x 40 cm w x 30.5 cm h), which was dimly illuminated to ~30 lux, and allowing them to explore for 30

min. Photocell beam breaks were detected automatically by the VersaMax Animal Activity Monitoring System (AccuScan Instruments, Columbus, OH) to measure horizontal activity, vertical activity, and center time. Data were analyzed using two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

***Beam walking.*** A beam walking motor task was carried out by individually placing subjects at one end of a 59 cm long beam as described previously [59]. The beam was elevated 68 cm above a cushion and the time taken to cross the beam was measured. A darkened goal box (12 cm d cylinder) was placed on the far end of the beam in order to provide motivation to walk across. On the first day, three training trials on a large diameter (35 mm) beam were conducted to allow animals to become accustomed to the task. Animals that had scores of 60 seconds on all three trials were excluded from analysis. On the following day, subjects were placed back on the large diameter beam and then on a beam of intermediate width (18 mm d) before being placed onto the test beam, which was the narrowest and therefore most challenging (13 mm d). Two trials per beam were carried out with an inter-trial rest interval of at least 30 minutes and trial duration was capped at a maximum of 60 seconds. The two-trial average latency to traverse the test beam was recorded and data were analyzed via two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

***Marble burying.*** To evaluate marble burying, twenty black glass marbles (15 mm d) were arranged in a 4 x 5 grid on top of 4 cm of clean bedding within a standard mouse cage (27 cm l x 16.5 cm w x 12.5 cm h) following a protocol similar to those described previously [49, 61]. Subjects were individually placed in the center of the cage and allowed to explore for 20 min. The

testing room was dimly illuminated to ~15 lux. The number of marbles buried (defined as at least 50% covered by the bedding) at the end of the test session was recorded. Data were analyzed using two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

***Pentylentetrazol-induced seizures.*** Susceptibility to primary generalized seizures was behaviorally assessed by systemically administering 80 mg/kg pentylentetrazol (PTZ; a GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor antagonist) via intraperitoneal injection and observing the timing and progression of the subsequent convulsions following a protocol described previously [55, 62, 63]. Immediately following injection of PTZ, animals were individually placed in a clean empty standard mouse cage (27 cm l x 16.5 cm w x 12.5 cm h) and watched carefully by a trained observer blinded to genotype and treatment condition. The latency to generalized clonus was recorded and analyzed using two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

***Novel object recognition (NOR).*** Learning and memory were tested by individually presenting subjects with two identical objects and later testing their ability to recognize the familiar object over a novel one using an established protocol previously described [49, 53, 59, 64]. The NOR assay was carried out within an opaque matte white arena (41 cm l x 41 cm w x 30 cm h) in a 30-lux room and consisted of five phases: a 30-min habituation to the arena on the day prior to the test, a 10-min habituation to the arena on the test day, a 10-min object familiarization session, a 60-min isolation period, and a 5-min object recognition test. Following the 10-min habituation on the day of the test, each animal was removed from the arena and placed in an individual clean holding cage while two clean identical objects were placed inside the arena. Each subject was then returned to its arena and allowed to explore and familiarize with the objects for 10 min. Subjects

were then returned to their holding cages and placed in a nearby low light holding area outside of the testing room. The arenas were cleaned, let dry, and one clean familiar object and one clean novel object were placed inside the arena where the two identical objects had previously been located. After a 60 min interval, subjects were returned to their arenas and allowed to explore the objects for 5 min. Time spent investigating each object was measured using EthoVision XT videotracking software (Noldus Information Technology) and validated by manual scoring by a trained observer blinded to genotype and treatment group. Object investigation was defined as time spent sniffing the object when the nose was within 2 cm of the object and oriented toward the object. Animals who did not spend at least 5 sec sniffing the objects during the familiarization phase were removed from analysis and recognition memory was defined as spending significantly more time investigating the novel object compared to the familiar object by paired *t*-test within group. Object preference was calculated as time spent sniffing the novel object compared to total time sniffing both objects. Fifty percent represents equal time investigating the novel and familiar object (a lack of preference) whereas >50% demonstrates intact recognition memory.

***DigiGait.*** Gait metrics were collected using the DigiGait automated treadmill system and analysis software (Mouse Specifics, Inc., Framingham, MA). Subjects were placed individually into the enclosed treadmill chamber and allowed to acclimate before the belt was turned on and the speed was slowly increased from 5 cm/sec to a constant speed of 20 cm/sec. For each subject, 3-6 sec of clearly visible consecutive strides at the belt speed of 20 cm/sec was recorded. Gait analysis was conducted using the DigiGait software package and was carried out by an experimenter blinded to genotype and treatment condition. Right and left fore- and hindlimbs were

averaged together. Data were analyzed per limb set using two-way ANOVA with genotype and IGF-2 treatment as between-group factors.

**Statistical Analysis.** All statistical analyses were carried out using Prism 9 software (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA). All significance levels were set at  $p < 0.05$  and all  $t$ -tests were two-tailed. Outliers were identified and excluded using Grubb's test and D'Agostino & Pearson tests were used to check assumptions of normality. Two-way ANOVAs were used to analyze the effects of both genotype and IGF-2 treatment and two-way repeated measures ANOVAs were used for comparisons across time points (e.g., rotarod). Paired  $t$ -tests were used for comparisons within a single group. Subsequent to ANOVAs, *post hoc* testing controlling for multiple comparisons was carried out using Sidak's or Tukey's multiple comparisons test. In the case of rotarod, Dunnett's multiple comparisons test was used to test for specific differences between days or groups. Since the overall goal of the study was to evaluate the potential for IGF-2 to ameliorate behavioral deficits, emphasis was placed on i) the comparison between wildtype  $Ube3a^{mat+/pat+}$  vehicle and  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  vehicle to confirm the genotype deficit and ii) the comparison between  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  vehicle and  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  IGF-2 to identify any effect of IGF-2 treatment on the deficit. Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  standard error of the mean (S.E.M.) unless otherwise noted and detailed statistics are described in **Supplementary File 2**.

## Results

**IGF-2 reduced cortical and hippocampal delta power in  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats.** Since  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats display the elevation in EEG delta power that is characteristic of AS, we sought to examine whether this core phenotype could be normalized by IGF-2. Prior to treatment, we

confirmed via cortical electrodes that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats recapitulated the human phenotype of elevated delta power (**Fig. 1A**; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle, 1 Hz,  $p < 0.001$ ; 2 Hz,  $p < 0.001$ ) and, while not statistically significant, hippocampal delta power also appeared elevated (**Fig. 1B**). Specifically, we found that cortical power was elevated at 1 and 2 Hz, frequencies within the 0.5-4 Hz delta band, and that power at these frequencies (“delta power”) was still elevated compared to wildtype following treatment with vehicle (**Fig. 1C and 1D**; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle, cortex,  $p < 0.0001$ ; hippocampus,  $p = 0.034$ ). Treatment with 10, 30, or 60  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2, however, significantly reduced cortical delta power in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> compared to vehicle (10  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2,  $p < 0.0001$ ; 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2,  $p < 0.0001$ ; 60  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2,  $p < 0.0001$ ). Hippocampal delta power was also reduced in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> by treatment with 10 or 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2, but not 60  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2 (IGF-2 vs. vehicle, 10  $\mu\text{g/kg}$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ; 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; 60  $\mu\text{g/kg}$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). To more closely examine dose differences on the EEG phenotype of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats, we analyzed each dose’s effect on summed power at 1 and 2 Hz (“delta power”). We found no effect of IGF-2 on delta power in wildtype but cortical delta power in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats was reduced following treatment with 10 or 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2 (**Fig. 1E**; IGF-2 vs. vehicle, 10  $\mu\text{g/kg}$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ; 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ) and hippocampal delta power was reduced by treatment with 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2 (**Fig. 1F**; 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2 vs. vehicle,  $p = 0.043$ ). The promising effect of 30  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  IGF-2, specifically, to reduce the elevated delta power of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats in both the cortex and hippocampus prompted our investigation of this dose in subsequent behavioral testing.

### **IGF-2 did not improve motor learning or social communication in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats.**

In order to assess whether IGF-2 could ameliorate the robust motor learning deficit of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-</sup>

/pat<sup>+</sup> rats, we tested *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> and wildtype littermate controls (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat<sup>+</sup></sup>) with IGF-2 or vehicle treatment on an accelerating rotarod (**Fig. 2A**). The rotarod deficit of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> rats was apparent across the three day task, and statistically significant by stringent posthoc by the third day of testing, when the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle group was only able to stay on the rotarod for two thirds the time of the wildtype vehicle group ( $p = 0.046$ ). *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> rats also exhibited a motor learning deficit, which was unaffected by IGF-2 treatment. While the wildtype vehicle and wildtype IGF-2 groups significantly improved their performance from session 1 to 3 (by 142% and 118%, respectively), both the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle and *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> IGF-2 groups failed to improve over the course of the test (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle,  $p < 0.001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> IGF-2,  $p < 0.001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle,  $p > 0.05$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> IGF-2,  $p > 0.05$ ), contrasting the recent report by Cruz et al. [46].

We also evaluated the effect of IGF-2 on social communication outcomes, both at an early postnatal timepoint and during adulthood. The *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle group emitted 30% fewer isolation-induced pup USV at PND 10 compared to wildtype vehicle (**Fig. 2B**;  $p = 0.024$ ), reproducing our earlier publication [16], but IGF-2 had no effect on the calling rate of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> rats (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> IGF-2,  $p > 0.05$ ). Then in adulthood, we used a USV playback paradigm to present subjects with pro-social 50-kHz USV and a time- and amplitude-matched white noise acoustic control (**Fig. 2C**). All groups, regardless of genotype or treatment, exhibited the expected behavioral inhibition in response to the noise control wherein they moved less during playback of the noise compared to pre-noise baseline exploration, indicating intact hearing abilities (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle,  $p < 0.001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> IGF-2,  $p < 0.001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> vehicle,  $p < 0.0001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat<sup>+</sup></sup> IGF-2,  $p < 0.0001$ ). This is further supported by the observation of equivalent levels of locomotion in all groups following initiation of 50-kHz

USV playback (data not shown; two-way ANOVA:  $F_{\text{Genotype}}, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{\text{Treatment}}, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{\text{G} \times \text{T}}, p > 0.05$ ). In response to the pro-social 50-kHz USV, only the wildtype vehicle and wildtype IGF-2 groups showed the typical social approach response by spending more time on the arms proximal to the speaker compared to the distal arms (**Fig. 2D**;  $Ube3a^{\text{mat+}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle,  $p = 0.004$ ;  $Ube3a^{\text{mat+}/\text{pat+}}$  IGF-2,  $p = 0.045$ ). Both the  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle and  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  IGF-2 groups failed to show a preference for the proximal arms in response to the USV ( $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle,  $p > 0.05$ ;  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  IGF-2,  $p > 0.05$ ), reproducing our earlier publication [16]. Given no differences in the response to a non-social stimulus and the absence of a motor impairment, the reduced social approach response in both groups of  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  rats reveals a social communication deficit that is not ameliorated by treatment with IGF-2.

**IGF-2 did not markedly improve motor deficits, seizure threshold, or object recognition in  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  mice.** Next, we examined the ability of IGF-2 to improve the known behavioral deficits of  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  mice. While  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  mice showed strong motoric deficits, performance was not affected by treatment with IGF-2. First, exploration of a novel open arena was used to assess overall locomotive activity. Horizontal activity, which was 40% lower in  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  mice than wildtype littermates (**Fig. 3A**;  $Ube3a^{\text{mat+}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle vs.  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle,  $p < 0.0001$ ), was not affected by IGF-2 ( $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle vs.  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  IGF-2,  $p > 0.05$ ). A similar pattern was observed for vertical activity wherein  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  mice showed 54% less rearing and vertical movement compared to wildtype (**Fig. 3B**;  $Ube3a^{\text{mat+}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle vs.  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle,  $p < 0.0001$ ), but this was unaffected by IGF-2 ( $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  vehicle vs.  $Ube3a^{\text{mat-}/\text{pat+}}$  IGF-2,  $p > 0.05$ ). There was no genotype difference or effect of IGF-2 on time spent

in the center of the open field (**Fig. 3C**). These data were similar to the recent Cruz et al. report [46].

We also assessed balance and motor coordination using a beam walking task but found that IGF-2 did not have an enhancing effect in wildtypes nor ameliorated motor coordination deficits observed in the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> group. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice took longer to cross compared to wildtype littermates regardless of treatment with IGF-2 (**Fig. 3D**;  $F_{\text{Genotype}}, p = 0.016$ ;  $F_{\text{Treatment}}, p > 0.05$ ;  $F_{\text{G} \times \text{T}}, p > 0.05$ ). However, in the accelerating rotarod task of motor coordination, we were able to detect a moderate effect of IGF-2 in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice (**Fig. 3E**). While *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice had consistently poorer performance, falling off earlier compared to wildtypes on all three test days (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle, day 1,  $p < 0.0001$ ; day 2,  $p = 0.001$ ; day 3,  $p = 0.019$ ), *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice treated with IGF-2 only showed a deficit on the first day of testing (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2, day 1,  $p = 0.007$ ; day 2,  $p > 0.05$ ; day 3,  $p > 0.05$ ). The effect, however, was only moderate in that the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2 group was not significantly better than the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle group on any day (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2, day 1,  $p > 0.05$ ; day 2,  $p > 0.05$ ; day 3,  $p > 0.05$ ).

In the marble burying assay, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice covered 88% fewer marbles compared to wildtype littermates but there was no effect of IGF-2 treatment in either group (**Fig. 3F**). Marble burying was lower in the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle group compared to wildtype vehicle ( $p = 0.002$ ) and lower in the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2 group relative to wildtype IGF-2 ( $p = 0.004$ ). As described in previous reports, our laboratory interprets the lack of marble burying as a function of the low motor activity of AS mice, as opposed to traditional interpretations of anxiety-like or repetitive behavior, contrasting other AS laboratories [65]. In a fully capable, typically active mouse, marble burying may hold more meaning, however, after more five years of focused study on these mice, we cannot

delineate the motor impairments related to marble burying. We also investigated IGF-2's influence on seizure threshold in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice using the chemo-convulsant pentelenetetrazol. While *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice exhibited a reduced latency to generalized clonus seizure, latency to seize was unaffected by IGF-2 treatment (**Fig. 3G**). The *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle group was 44% quicker to seize than wildtype vehicle ( $p = 0.026$ ), and the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2 group was 64% faster to seize compared to wildtype IGF-2 ( $p = 0.002$ ).

To test the cognition enhancing capabilities of IGF-2 treatment, we evaluated novel object recognition with a standard protocol and found that all groups, regardless of genotype or treatment, demonstrated intact novel object recognition (**Fig. 3H**). Within each group, more time was spent more time investigating the novel object compared to the familiar one (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle,  $p < 0.001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> IGF-2,  $p = 0.001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle,  $p = 0.006$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2,  $p = 0.006$ ). In addition to the dichotomous yes/no analysis of object recognition, we also explored whether IGF-2 influenced the continuous metric of object preference. There were no differences, however, in percent preference for the novel object across genotypes or treatment (**Fig. 3I**). To facilitate more direct comparisons with the results of Cruz et al. (2020), we also attempted to validate their novel object recognition protocol within our own laboratory. We found, however, that the task failed to elicit recognition memory in congenic C57BL/6J mice, the background strain of the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mouse model, suggesting it would not be fruitful to apply to *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice (**Fig. S1**). Concomitantly, using the methods of Cruz et al. [46], we observed that IGF-2 treatment did not affect the cognitive performance of C57BL/6J mice in either the novel object recognition or a contextual fear conditioning task.

As an innovative and unique investigation of nuanced motor phenotypes, we probed for any effect of IGF-2 on several metrics of gait using the automated DigiGait system. While walking

on a treadmill, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice took wider, longer, and fewer steps compared to wildtype littermates. The elevated forelimb and hindlimb stance widths exhibited by *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice (**Fig. 4A**; *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle, fore,  $p = 0.005$ ; hind,  $p = 0.039$ ) were not affected by IGF-2 treatment (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2,  $p > 0.05$ ) and the longer forelimb and hindlimb stride lengths (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle, fore,  $p < 0.001$ ; hind,  $p < 0.0001$ ) were further increased by IGF-2 (**Fig. 4B**; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2, fore,  $p = 0.021$ ; hind,  $p = 0.031$ ). IGF-2 also led to further reduction of forelimb stride frequency and did not have an effect on the reduced hindlimb stride frequency displayed by *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice (**Fig. 4C**; *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle, fore,  $p < 0.0001$ ; hind,  $p < 0.0001$ ; *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2, fore,  $p = 0.021$ ; hind,  $p > 0.05$ ) and, interestingly, IGF-2 had varying effects on the time taken to propel each step (**Fig. 4D**). The elevated propulsion time required by *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle,  $p = 0.005$ ), indicative of limb weakness, was unaffected by IGF-2 in the forelimbs and further elevated by IGF-2 in the hindlimbs, whose function is largely force generation and propulsion (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2, fore,  $p > 0.05$ ; hind,  $p = 0.032$ ). In alignment with taking longer steps, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice held their paws in a swing state off the ground longer than wildtypes, in both forelimbs and hindlimbs (**Fig. 4E**; *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle, fore,  $p < 0.001$ ; hind,  $p < 0.0001$ ). Neither metric differed between *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle and *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> IGF-2 groups (fore,  $p > 0.05$ ; hind,  $p > 0.05$ ). Finally, despite increased propulsion and swing times, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice spent a normal amount of time braking, which was unchanged by IGF-2 treatment (**Fig. 4F**).

## Discussion

Novel data uncovered by this work illustrated that acute systemic administration of IGF-2 reduced delta spectral power in EEG, a theorized biomarker in AS. This was a very promising initial finding. However, disappointingly, the overwhelming majority of metrics for motor behavior, learning, and coordination were unaffected and IGF-2 did not improve social communication, seizure threshold, cognition, or gait. Although our study returned mostly negative results with regard to the potential for IGF-2 to improve behavioral deficits in AS, our findings are nevertheless important to disseminate, in particular as they contrast other reports [46]. While overall inter-laboratory replication was a goal of ours, we did establish strong reproducibility within and between our labs (Anderson and Silverman), as shown previously [16, 67].

We observed a moderate effect of IGF-2 on day 1 of rotarod testing in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice, but this did not extend across the rotarod time course that addresses motor learning and it was non-existent in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. However, we were able to replicate all of the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mouse and rat model deficits previously reported by our groups [16, 66-68] and discover significant reduction of the elevated delta power in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> EEG by IGF-2 treatment. This the first report of detection of alterations in EEG power spectral density (PSD) without any behavioral phenotypic change. One potential explanation as to why we observed effects on EEG activity but no changes in behavioral performance is that the increase in delta power may not have substantial behavioral significance. To our knowledge, it has yet to be shown that delta power is strongly tied to behavioral outcomes, despite many laboratories' working hypothesis that PSDs are effective biomarkers [69-74]. However, we find this explanation unlikely in light of recent evidence from our laboratory illustrating reductions delta power with concomitant behavioral improvements [75].

Given that we were unable to reproduce, nor extend, the broad phenotypic rescue shown in earlier work, it is critical to highlight that our study employed standardized experimental

protocols for behavioral testing [51, 76, 77], which differed from those used by Cruz et al. (2020) [46]. We had aimed to leverage these protocol differences to show that the effects of IGF-2 treatment were robust enough to carry across laboratories and therefore bode well for translation to the clinic. Inter-laboratory methodological discrepancies included rotarod intertrial interval duration, open field lighting and duration, marble quantity and burying criterion, as well as object exploration times and post-training delays. When observing latencies, we did not record scores that exceeded the duration of the test (e.g., Figure 4, Cruz et al., 2020). Additionally, while our washout period was shorter compared to previous work, we do not suspect that this hindered our ability to detect effects of IGF-2 since we did not find evidence of IGF-2 having an effect greater than one day in duration. Moreover, if our washout period had been inadequate, the compounding effects of IGF-2 would have been revealed in subsequent testing. However, this was not the case and for each cohort of animals tested, the final assay of the test battery revealed no effect of IGF-2.

2. Arguably, one of the most crucial methodological details that sets our behavioral experiments apart from those conducted previously is our large sample sizes, which were upwards of 25 animals per group. Since pooling data from small subgroups (i.e.,  $n=3-4/\text{group}$ ) can artificially inflate error rates and requires that all groups be subjected to the same exact conditions, it is recommended practice in rodent behavioral testing to use group sizes of 10 to 20 animals within a given experiment. Therefore, we only used small groups in the collection of initial pilot data and for collection of the behavioral data described herein, we used large cohorts with enough subjects per group to achieve ample statistical power. Moreover, the novel object recognition findings in the prior report utilized a protocol i) not validated in congenic B6J mice (i.e., there was not recognition as defined by greater time spent with novel vs. familiar object) and ii) not congruent with many of the best recommended practices disseminated by the IDDRC behavioral working group [78].

Our study was thorough and unique, as we used two different model species and large sample sizes, and we investigated the strongest reported phenotypes in each established model. Our dual species approach allowed us to measure social communication in the rat, which exhibits more nuanced social behavior and employs a more sophisticated communication system as compared to the mouse, and we leveraged the mouse model for its strong motor phenotypes. Because our rotarod paradigm consisted of three consecutive days, we were able to assess motor learning and not solely motor function. Having both of these metrics available in both species was key as wildtype mice exhibited a ceiling effect that impeded interpretation of a motor learning deficit, but we were able to evaluate this outcome in rats since their performance changed significantly across test days. By comparing results across species, and across tests within the same behavioral domain, we were able to provide a more thorough and convincing assessment of this IGF-2 treatment paradigm.

While we did see a few promising trends in EEG and rotarod, we also detected effects on gait in the opposite direction than desired (i.e., worsening the phenotype), and the overwhelming majority of our findings indicate that any effect of IGF-2 is minor and does not lead to robust, reliable, or reproducible behavioral changes in either genotype. We did not observe alterations in wildtype mice, which suggests that IGF-2 does not have motor, communication, or cognition enhancing properties in the time windows we assessed. Furthermore, we did not observe alteration in seizure threshold or susceptibility. An obvious difference from previous work was Cruz et al.'s utilization of 129 background mice for their audiogenic seizure procedure. AS model mice on the traditional B6J background do not exhibit susceptibility to audiogenic seizures [66]. We utilized the B6J background with a chemo-convulsant instead, as 129s have a 70% reduced corpus

callosum which adds to their seizure susceptibility [79, 80], and sensory-dependent audiogenic seizures are triggered by divergent neural circuitry compared to chemo-induction [81].

Therapeutic mimetics of the IGF pathway are being evaluated as small molecule therapy for AS. They activate PI3K-Akt-mTOR and Ras-MAPK-ERK pathways and have been shown to increase synapse number and synaptic plasticity [82, 83]. Spine numbers have been shown to be reduced in AS mouse models [84] and activity dependent ERK phosphorylation and synaptic plasticity are impaired [85-88]. The therapeutic hypothesis is that through upregulating synaptic plasticity and synapse number, these compounds may have benefit in AS. We wanted to disseminate our mostly negative data as some caution should be taken in interpreting IGF-2 data, as this ligand shows some non-specificity in binding both the IGF-1 and IGF-2 receptors. Clinically, IGF-2 mimetics have shown some level of benefit in phase 2 studies in Rett syndrome [89] and Fragile X syndrome [90].

## **Limitations**

The major limitation of the present study is that the results are confined to the three doses (10, 30, and 60  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ ) and one route of administration (acute subcutaneous injection) used. Particularly, our behavioral results are limited to a 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  injection of IGF-2 delivered 20 min prior to behavioral testing. It remains possible that different doses, injection timing and/or frequency, post-administration interval, and/or routes of administration may show greater efficacy in improving the endpoints measured herein. For instance, our negative results using an acute systemic treatment of IGF-2 do not preclude the possibility that chronic delivery of IGF-2 could ameliorate behavioral deficits over longer periods of time.

## **Conclusions**

IGF-2 did not show robust effects on key behavioral domains of relevance to AS in two genetic rodent models of AS, in contrast to a recently published report. Our findings are cautionary and emphasize that it is important for independent labs to try to replicate each other's experiments – after all, we are in pursuit of therapeutics with broad and reliable efficacy that stand up to the test of minor cross-lab methodological variations. Minimally two cohorts with standardized methods from the literature should be evaluated. Future studies that examine EEG activity during behavioral tasks may be the most informative to confirm that subtle alterations in spectral power have functional meaning before its confirmation as a robust biomarker.

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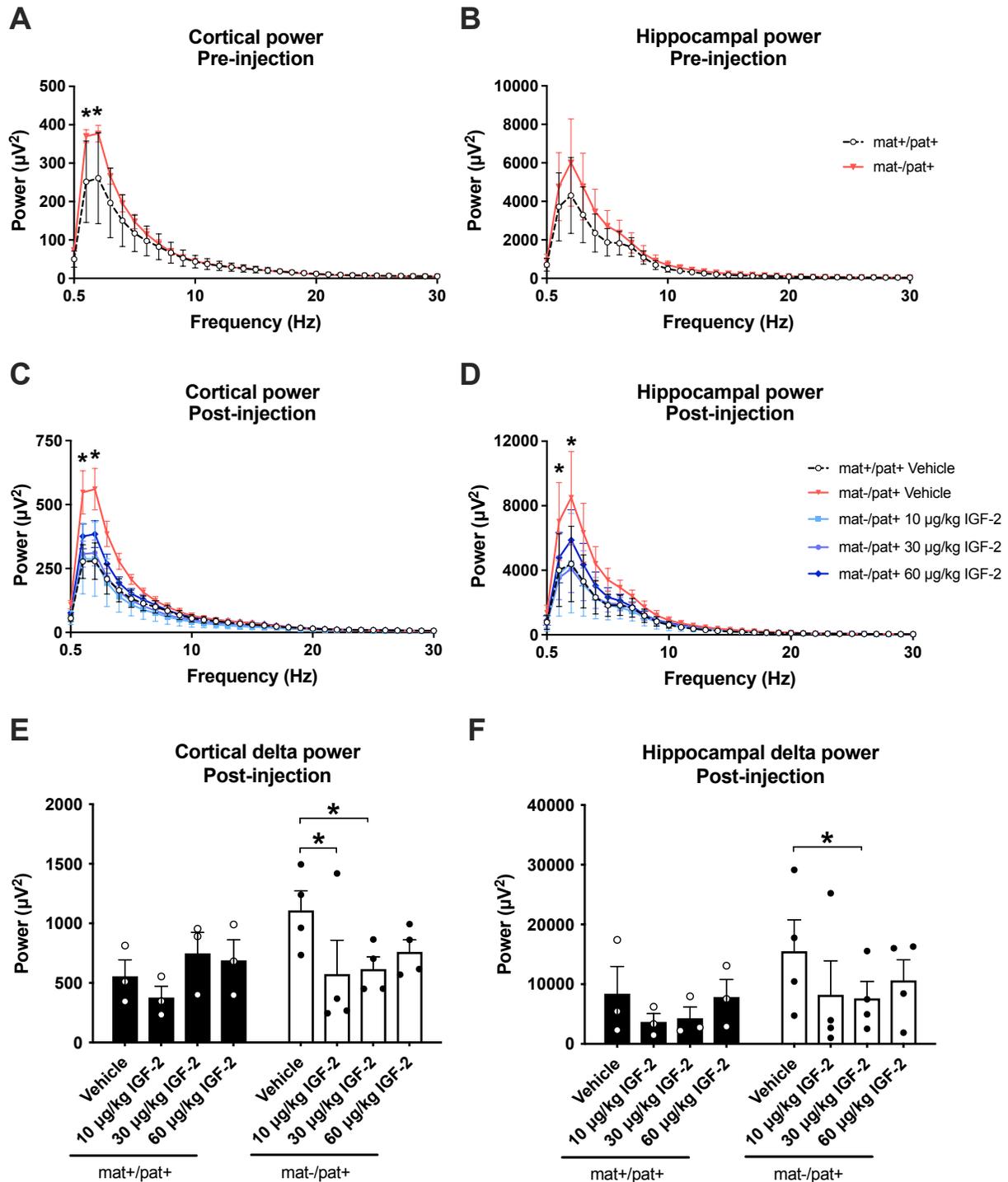
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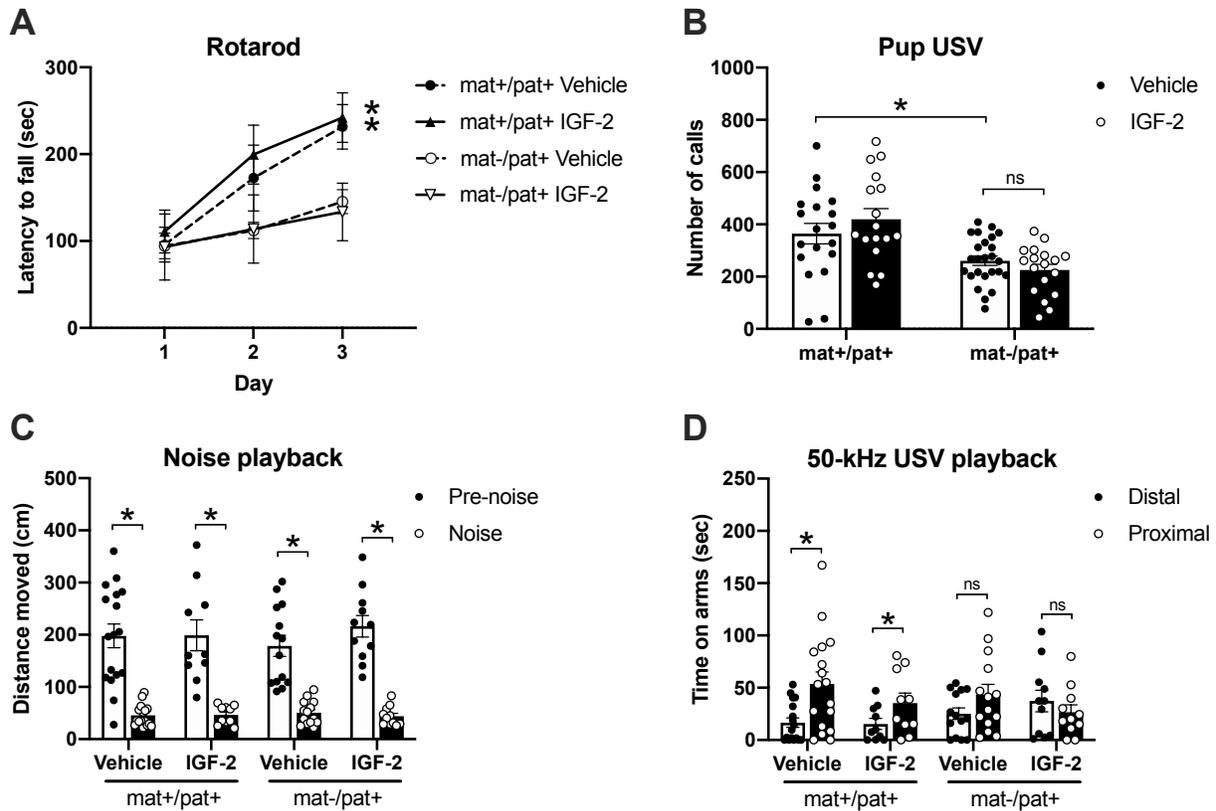
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## Figures

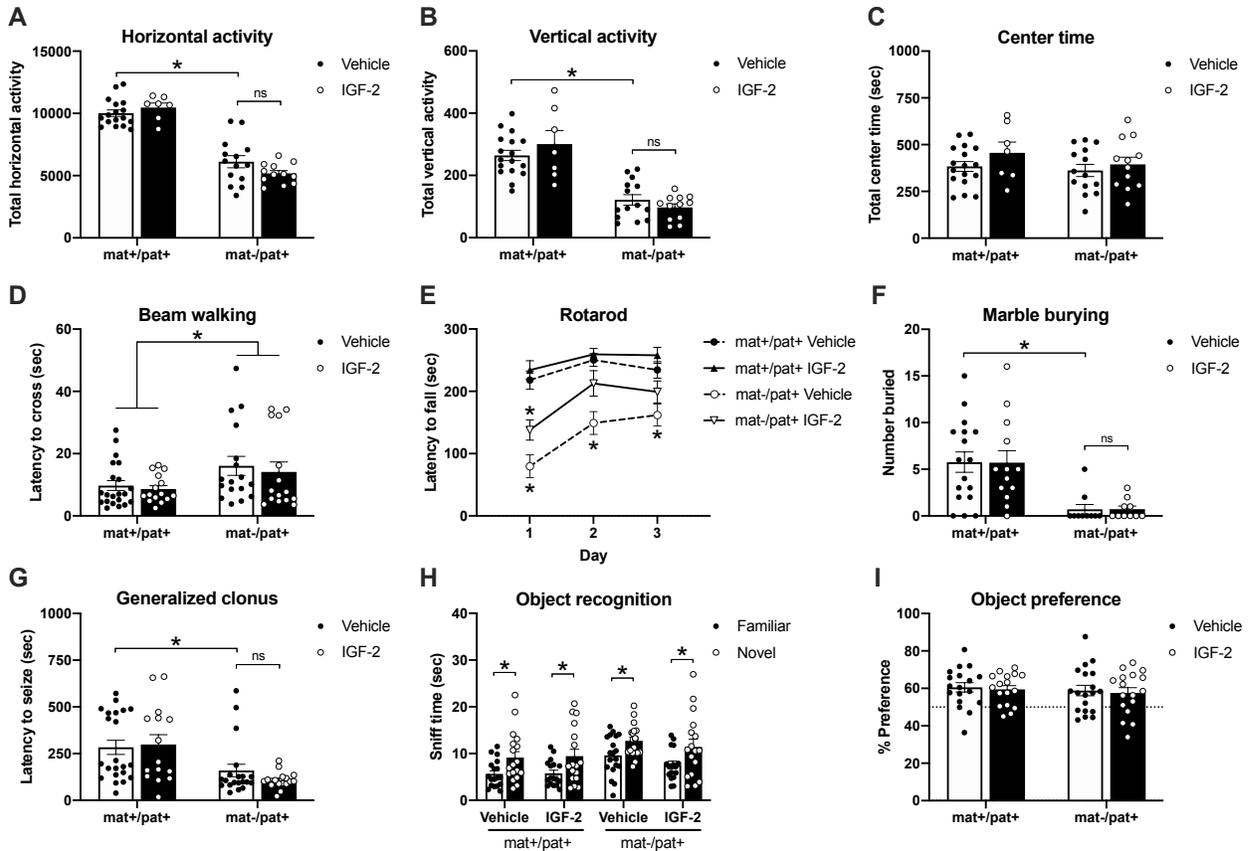


**Fig. 1** IGF-2 reduced cortical and hippocampal delta power in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. (A) Baseline cortical power pre-injection was elevated in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> (*mat-/pat+*) rats at 1 and 2 Hz compared to wildtype (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; *mat+/pat+*) rats. (B) Pre-injection hippocampal power trended higher in *mat-/pat+* rats. (C) Following injection of vehicle, cortical power was higher in *mat-/pat+* than

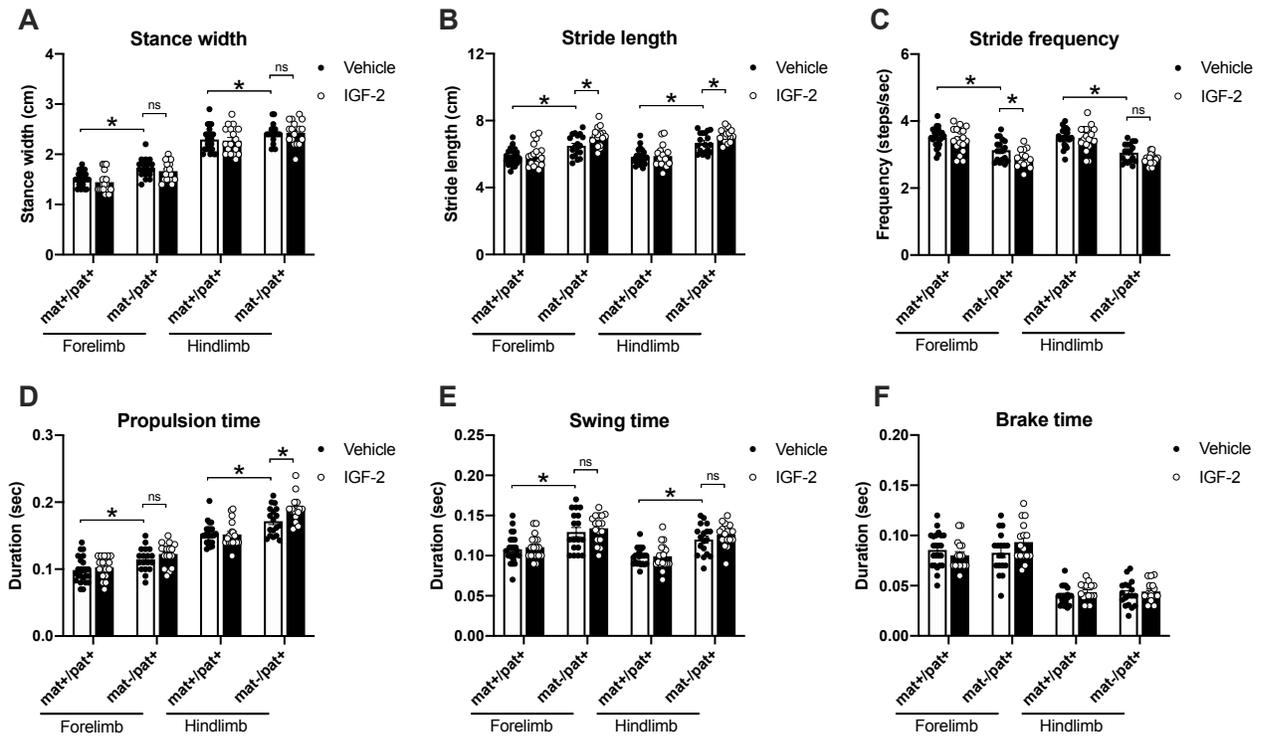
wildtype rats at 1 and 2 Hz. Compared to vehicle, treatment with 10, 30, or 60  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2 led to reduced 1 and 2 Hz power in mat-/pat+ rats. **(D)** Post-injection hippocampal power was higher in mat-/pat+ rats at 1 and 2 Hz, which was reduced by treatment with 10 and 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2. **(E)** Cortical power at 1 and 2 Hz (“delta power”) was lower in mat-/pat+ rats following treatment with 10 or 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2 compared to vehicle while **(F)** hippocampal delta power (at 1 and 2 Hz) was reduced by 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2. Delta power in wildtype rats was not affected by IGF-2. Data are expressed as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.  $n = 3-4$  rats/genotype. A-D:  $*p < 0.05$ , mat-/pat+ vs. mat+/pat+, Sidak’s multiple comparisons following repeated measures ANOVA. E, F:  $*p < 0.05$ , Tukey’s multiple comparisons following repeated measures ANOVA.



**Fig. 2** IGF-2 did not rescue or improve motor learning or social communication in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-pat+</sup> rats. **(A)** Latency to fall off an accelerating rotarod significantly improved from session 1 to 3 for both wildtype groups (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; mat+/pat+), but not for either *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> group (mat-/pat+). **(B)** At PND 10, mat-/pat+ pups emitted fewer isolation-induced ultrasonic vocalizations (USV) than wildtype littermates, but IGF-2 had no effect on vocalization rates in mat-/pat+ rats. **(C)** All groups showed behavioral inhibition (i.e., reduced locomotion) during playback of white noise compared to baseline. **(D)** During playback of pro-social 50-kHz USV, only the wildtype groups, and not mat-/pat+ rats, spent significantly more time on the arms proximal to the speaker compared to the distal arms (i.e., social approach). Data are expressed as mean ± S.E.M. *n* = 6-25 rats/group. A: \**p* < 0.05, Day 1 vs. 3, Dunnett's multiple comparisons following repeated measures ANOVA. B: \**p* < 0.05, Sidak's multiple comparisons test following two-way ANOVA. C, D: \**p* < 0.05, paired *t*-test. ns, not significantly different, *p* > 0.05.



**Fig. 3 IGF-2 did not markedly improve motor deficits, seizure threshold, or object recognition in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice.** (A) Horizontal and (B) vertical activity in an open field assay were reduced in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice (*mat-/pat+*) compared to wildtype littermates (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>, *mat+/pat+*), but unaffected by IGF-2. (C) Center time did not differ among groups. (D) Latency to cross a thin beam was elevated in *mat-/pat+* mice, but unchanged by IGF-2. (E) Accelerating rotarod performance was moderately improved by IGF-2 treatment in *mat-/pat+* mice, only on first day of testing. (F) Regardless of IGF-2 treatment, *mat-/pat+* mice demonstrated a marble burying deficit and (G) *mat-/pat+* mice were quicker to exhibit generalized clonus following pentylenetetrazol administration, which was unaffected by IGF-2. (H) All groups demonstrated intact novel object recognition as measured by more time spent investigating the novel object compared to the familiar object and by (I) novel object percent preference. Data are expressed as mean ± S.E.M. *n* = 10-22 mice/group. A-C, F, G, I: \**p* < 0.05, Sidak's multiple comparisons following two-way ANOVA. D: \**p* < 0.05, main effect of genotype, two-way ANOVA. E: \**p* < 0.05 vs. *mat+/pat+* vehicle, Dunnett's multiple comparisons test following repeated measures ANOVA. H: \**p* < 0.05, paired *t*-test. ns, not significantly different, *p* > 0.05.



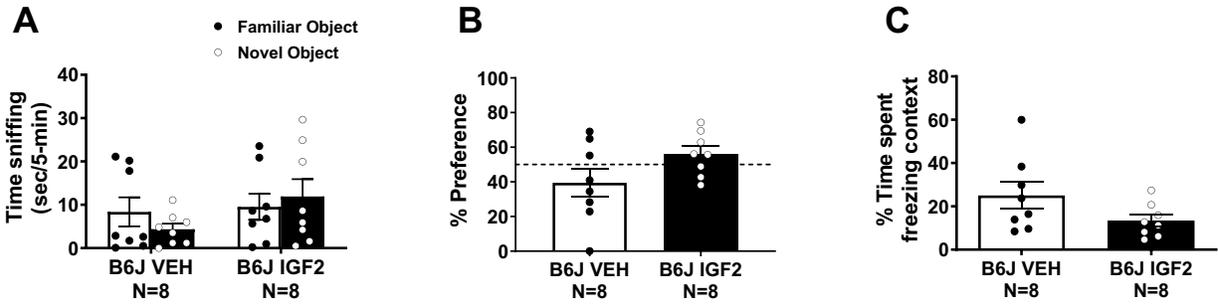
**Fig. 4** IGF-2 did not rescue or improve gait deficits in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> mice. (A) Compared to wildtype littermates (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>; mat+/pat+), *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> (mat-/pat+) mice exhibited wider stances while treadmill walking, which were unaffected by IGF-2 treatment. (B) Stride lengths were increased in mat-/pat+ mice and were further increased by IGF-2 while (C) the reduced stride frequency of mat-/pat+ mice was further decreased in forelimbs by IGF-2. (D) IGF-2 had no effect on the elevated forelimb propulsion time of mat-/pat+ mice and led to further elevation of the increased hindlimb propulsion time. (E) Swing time was elevated in mat-/pat+ mice, regardless of IGF-2 treatment and (F) brake time was normal in mat-/pat+ mice and unchanged by IGF-2. Data are expressed as mean ± S.E.M. *n* = 17-24 mice/group. A-F: \**p* < 0.05, Sidak's or Tukey's multiple comparisons test following two-way ANOVA (per limb set). ns, not significantly different, *p* > 0.05.

## Supplementary Information

### Methods

*Novel object recognition (NOR) in C57BL/6J mice.* Learning and memory were tested by individually presenting subjects with two identical objects and later testing their ability to recognize the familiar object over a novel one following a protocol previously described by Cruz et al. (2020) [1]. The NOR assay was carried out within an opaque matte white arena (41 cm l x 41 cm w x 30 cm h) in a 30-lux room and consisted of four phases: a 5-min habituation to the arena on the day prior to the test, a 3-min object familiarization session, a 24-hr isolation period, and a 5-min object recognition test. Twenty min prior to the familiarization phase, mice were administered 30  $\mu$ g/kg IGF-2 or vehicle via subcutaneous injection. Following the 5-min habituation period, each animal was removed from the arena and placed in an individual clean holding cage while two clean identical objects were placed inside the arena. Each subject was then returned to its arena and allowed to freely explore and familiarize with the objects for 3 min. After 24 hrs, subjects were returned to their arenas and allowed to freely explore one familiar and one novel object for 5 min. Time spent investigating each object was measured manually by a trained observer blinded to treatment group. Recognition memory was defined as spending significantly more time investigating the novel object compared to the familiar object by paired *t*-test within group. Object preference was calculated as time spent sniffing the novel object compared to total time sniffing both objects. Fifty percent represents equal time investigating the novel and familiar object (a lack of preference) whereas >50% demonstrates intact recognition memory. The effect of IGF-2 on percent preference was analyzed using unpaired *t*-test (**Supplementary File 2**).

***Contextual fear conditioning in C57BL/6J mice.*** Contextual fear conditioning was carried out using an automated fear conditioning chamber (Med Associates, Inc., Fairfax, VT, USA) following the training protocol previously described by Cruz et al. (2020) [1]. On the training day, mice were administered 30 µg/kg IGF-2 or vehicle via subcutaneous injection and, after a 20 min delay, exposed to a noise-shock (CS-US) pairing within a testing chamber with specific visual, odor, and tactile cues. After 2 min, a 2-sec foot shock (0.7 mA) was delivered. A 1 min exploration period followed the noise-shock pairing before the mouse was placed back in the home cage. Twenty four hours later, the subject was placed back inside the training environment for 5 min. The chamber contained identical contextual cues as the training session, but no foot shock occurred, and the percent time spent freezing was automatically measured by VideoFreeze software (Med Associates). The effect of IGF-2 on percent time freezing was analyzed using unpaired *t*-test (**Supplementary File 2**).



**Fig S1. IGF-2 did not enhance cognition in novel object recognition or contextual fear conditioning tasks in pure congenic C57BL/6J mice.** The cognitive enhancing capabilities of IGF-2 were assessed in congenic C57BL/6J (B6J) mice. **(A)** Novel object recognition was tested using the protocol of Cruz et al. (2020) with administration of 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2 20 minutes before the familiarization phase and the recognition memory test 24 hours after familiarization. Neither vehicle (VEH) nor IGF-2-treated mice met the criteria for recognition memory as they did not spend more time sniffing the novel object compared to the familiar object. **(B)** There was no difference between vehicle and IGF-2 groups in percent preference for the novel object. **(C)** Contextual fear conditioning was evaluated using the training protocol of Cruz et al. (2020) with administration of 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  IGF-2 20 minutes before the training session and the contextual memory test 24 hours after training. There was no difference in percent time freezing between the vehicle and IGF-2 group. Data are expressed as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.  $n = 8$  mice/group.

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# Supplementary File 2

## Figure 1 Statistics

Panel A	Cortical power pre-injection	Two-way RM ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	5545	1	5545	F (1, 5) = 0.4673	P=0.5246
			Frequency	1807711	50	36154	F (50, 250) = 37.00	P<0.0001
			Interaction	56918	50	1138	F (50, 250) = 1.165	P=0.2248
			Subject	59329	5	11866	F (5, 250) = 12.14	P<0.0001
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test (mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle)	<b>Frequency (Hz)</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			0.5	>0.9999				
			1	0.0005				
			2	0.0008				
			3	0.3485				
Panel B	Hippocampal power pre-injection	Two-way RM ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	2464318	1	2464318	F (1, 5) = 0.3025	P=0.6060
			Frequency	474082389	50	9481648	F (50, 250) = 11.72	P<0.0001
			Interaction	12471481	50	249430	F (50, 250) = 0.3082	P>0.9999
			Subject	40736376	5	8147275	F (5, 250) = 10.07	P<0.0001
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test (mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle)	<b>Frequency (Hz)</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			0.5	>0.9999				
			1	0.9999				
			2	0.6884				
			3	0.9266				
Panel C	Cortical power post-injection	Two-way RM ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	125432	7	17919	F (7, 20) = 1.048	P=0.4303
			Frequency	8039513	50	160790	F (50, 1000) = 122.4	P<0.0001
			Interaction	757746	350	2165	F (350, 1000) = 1.649	P<0.0001
			Subject	341859	20	17093	F (20, 1000) = 13.02	P<0.0001
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Frequency (Hz)</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>			
			1	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001			
				mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 10 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001			
			2	mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 30 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001			
				mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 60 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001			
mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001							
mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 10 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001							
mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 30 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001							
mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 60 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001							
Panel D	Hippocampal power post-injection	Two-way RM ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	45888149	7	6555450	F (7, 20) = 0.9609	P=0.4848
			Frequency	1386484435	50	27729689	F (50, 1000) = 37.08	P<0.0001
			Interaction	250201546	350	714862	F (350, 1000) = 0.956	P=0.6901
			Subject	136442974	20	6822149	F (20, 1000) = 9.123	P<0.0001
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Frequency (Hz)</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>			
			1	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0343			
				mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 10 µg/kg IGF-2	0.0014			
			2	mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.0002			
				mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.6278			
mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001							
mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 10 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001							
mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 30 µg/kg IGF-2	<0.0001							
mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.0933							
Panel E	Cortical delta power post-injection	Two-way RM ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	202284	1	202284	F (1, 5) = 0.6891	P=0.4443
			Treatment	456776	3	152259	F (3, 15) = 3.885	P=0.0308
			Interaction	423496	3	141165	F (3, 15) = 3.602	P=0.0386
			Subject	1467817	5	293563	F (5, 15) = 7.491	P=0.0111
		Tukey's multiple comparisons test	<b>Genotype</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>			
			mat+/pat+	Vehicle vs. 10 µg/kg IGF-2	0.6917			
				Vehicle vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.642			
				Vehicle vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.8416			
			mat-/pat+	10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.1432			
10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.257							
30 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.9828							
mat-/pat+	Vehicle vs. 10 µg/kg IGF-2	0.0084						
	Vehicle vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.0151						
	Vehicle vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.1039						
	10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.9902						
	10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.563						
30 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.7387							
Panel F	Hippocampal delta power post-injection	Two-way RM ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	135138612	1	135138612	F (1, 5) = 0.7055	P=0.4393
			Treatment	172835342	3	57611781	F (3, 15) = 4.044	P=0.0272
			Interaction	19257328	3	6419109	F (3, 15) = 0.4505	P=0.7206
			Subject	957798152	5	191559630	F (5, 15) = 13.45	P<0.0001
		Tukey's multiple comparisons test	<b>Genotype</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>			
			mat+/pat+	Vehicle vs. 10 µg/kg IGF-2	0.4476			
				Vehicle vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.5637			
				Vehicle vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.998			
			mat-/pat+	10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.9969			
10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.5469							
30 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.6672							
mat-/pat+	Vehicle vs. 10 µg/kg IGF-2	0.0657						
	Vehicle vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.0432						
	Vehicle vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.3002						
	10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 30 µg/kg IGF-2	0.9958						
	10 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.8						
30 µg/kg IGF-2 vs. 60 µg/kg IGF-2	0.6749							

**Figure 2 Statistics**

Panel A	Rotarod	Repeated measures ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>	
			Time	100473	2	50237	F (1, 985, 41.69) = 69.07	P<0.0001	
			Group	72136	3	24045	F (3, 21) = 1.744	P=0.1887	
			Time x Group	26350	6	4392	F (6, 42) = 6.038	P=0.0001	
		Dunnett's multiple comparisons test (day 1 vs. day 3)	<b>Group</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>					
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle	0.0004					
			mat+/pat+ IGF-2	0.0002					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.055					
		Dunnett's multiple comparisons test (mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle)	<b>Day</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>					
			Day 1	0.9999					
Day 2	0.3598								
Day 3	0.0458								
Panel B	Pup USV	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>	
			Genotype	430577	1	430577	F (1, 75) = 24.55	P<0.0001	
			Treatment	1858	1	1858	F (1, 75) = 0.1059	P=0.7457	
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>					
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0239					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.6222					
Panel C	Noise playback	Paired t-test (pre-noise vs. noise)	<b>Group</b>	<b>t and df</b>	<b>P-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle	t=7.297, df=16	<0.0001				
			mat+/pat+ IGF-2	t=5.164, df=9	0.0006				
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle	t=6.157, df=13	<0.0001				
			mat-/pat+ IGF-2	t=8.434, df=10	<0.0001				
Panel D	50-kHz USV playback	Paired t-test (distal vs. proximal)	<b>Group</b>	<b>t and df</b>	<b>P-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle	t=3.348, df=16	0.0041				
			mat+/pat+ IGF-2	t=2.321, df=9	0.0454				
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle	t=1.427, df=13	0.1772				
			mat-/pat+ IGF-2	t=0.8548, df=10	0.4127				

**Figure 3 Statistics**

Panel A	Horizontal activity	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	237447445	1	2.4E+08	F (1, 46) = 146.0	P<0.0001
			Treatment	665621	1	665621	F (1, 46) = 0.4094	P=0.5255
			Interaction	5438585	1	5438585	F (1, 46) = 3.345	P=0.0739
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001				
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.1303				
Panel B	Vertical activity	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	336319	1	336319	F (1, 46) = 70.63	P<0.0001
			Treatment	436.9	1	436.9	F (1, 46) = 0.09176	P=0.7633
			Interaction	10319	1	10319	F (1, 46) = 2.167	P=0.1478
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001				
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.6151				
Panel C	Center time	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	19543	1	19543	F (1, 46) = 1.255	P=0.2684
			Treatment	31079	1	31079	F (1, 46) = 1.996	P=0.1645
			Interaction	4604	1	4604	F (1, 46) = 0.2956	P=0.5893
Panel D	Beam walking	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	582.8	1	582.8	F (1, 64) = 6.170	P=0.0156
			Treatment	40.21	1	40.21	F (1, 64) = 0.4257	P=0.5164
			Interaction	2.874	1	2.874	F (1, 64) = 0.03043	P=0.8621
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0981				
			mat+/pat+ IGF-2 vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.2369				
Panel E	Rotarod	Repeated measures ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Time	72808	2	36404	F (1.692, 76.12) = 21.11	P<0.0001
			Group	299534	3	99845	F (3, 45) = 20.31	P<0.0001
			Time x Group	21053	6	3509	F (6, 90) = 2.034	P=0.0691
		Dunnett's multiple comparisons test (day 1 vs. day 3)	<b>Group</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle	0.5591				
			mat+/pat+ IGF-2	0.1749				
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0098				
		Dunnett's multiple comparisons test (vs. mat+/pat+ Vehicle)	<b>Day</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>			
			Day 1	mat+/pat+ IGF-2	0.8047			
				mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001			
				mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.0039			
			Day 2	mat+/pat+ IGF-2	0.8689			
mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0006							
mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.2883							
Day 3	mat+/pat+ IGF-2		0.4784					
	mat-/pat+ Vehicle		0.0111					
	mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.2981						
Panel F	Marble burying	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	301.2	1	301.2	F (1, 46) = 22.49	P<0.0001
			Treatment	0.01561	1	0.01561	F (1, 46) = 0.001166	P=0.9729
			Interaction	0.01561	1	0.01561	F (1, 46) = 0.001166	P=0.9729
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0023				
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	>0.9999				
Panel G	Generalized clonus	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	442915	1	442915	F (1, 69) = 17.92	P<0.0001
			Treatment	6311	1	6311	F (1, 69) = 0.2554	P=0.6149
			Interaction	20525	1	20525	F (1, 69) = 0.8305	P=0.3653
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Adjusted p-value</b>				
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.026				
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.5381				
Panel H	Object recognition	Paired t-test (familiar vs. novel)	<b>Group</b>	<b>t and df</b>	<b>P-value</b>			
			mat+/pat+ Vehicle	t=4.089, df=17	0.0008			
			mat+/pat+ IGF-2	t=3.982, df=16	0.0011			
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle	t=3.122, df=18	0.0059			
			mat-/pat+ IGF-2	t=3.192, df=16	0.0057			
Panel I	Object preference	Two-way ANOVA	<b>ANOVA table</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F (DFn, DFd)</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			Genotype	57.51	1	57.51	F (1, 67) = 0.4963	P=0.4836
			Treatment	24.79	1	24.79	F (1, 67) = 0.2140	P=0.6452
			Interaction	0.1372	1	0.1372	F (1, 67) = 0.001184	P=0.9727

**Figure 4 Statistics**

Panel	Variable	Limb	ANOVA table	SS	DF	MS	F (DFn, DFd)	P-value	
				Comparison	Adjusted p-value				
Panel A	Stance width	Forelimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.9009	1	0.9009	F (1, 69) = 29.28	P<0.0001
				Treatment	0.1272	1	0.1272	F (1, 69) = 4.135	P=0.0459
				Interaction	0.01786	1	0.01786	F (1, 69) = 0.5806	P=0.4487
		Tukey's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0045					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.8174					
	Hindlimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.5551	1	0.5551	F (1, 69) = 13.42	P=0.0005	
			Treatment	0.004924	1	0.004924	F (1, 69) = 0.1190	P=0.7312	
			Interaction	0.01	1	0.01	F (1, 69) = 0.2418	P=0.6245	
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0393					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.8119					
Panel B	Stride length	Forelimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	17.43	1	17.43	F (1, 69) = 60.00	P<0.0001
				Treatment	1.397	1	1.397	F (1, 69) = 4.811	P=0.0317
				Interaction	1.297	1	1.297	F (1, 69) = 4.467	P=0.0382
		Tukey's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0004					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.021					
	Hindlimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	22.85	1	22.85	F (1, 69) = 116.0	P<0.0001	
			Treatment	0.6194	1	0.6194	F (1, 69) = 3.143	P=0.0806	
			Interaction	1.059	1	1.059	F (1, 69) = 5.376	P=0.0234	
		Tukey's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.0312					
Panel C	Stride frequency	Forelimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	4.824	1	4.824	F (1, 69) = 58.72	P<0.0001
				Treatment	0.3077	1	0.3077	F (1, 69) = 3.745	P=0.0571
				Interaction	0.2882	1	0.2882	F (1, 69) = 3.508	P=0.0653
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.0213					
	Hindlimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	6.329	1	6.329	F (1, 69) = 107.4	P<0.0001	
			Treatment	0.09467	1	0.09467	F (1, 69) = 1.607	P=0.2092	
			Interaction	0.232	1	0.232	F (1, 69) = 3.938	P=0.0512	
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.0558					
Panel D	Propulsion time	Forelimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.006743	1	0.006743	F (1, 69) = 21.65	P<0.0001
				Treatment	0.0005767	1	0.0005767	F (1, 69) = 1.852	P=0.1780
				Interaction	0.00008093	1	0.00008093	F (1, 69) = 0.2599	P=0.6118
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0053					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.363					
	Hindlimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.01701	1	0.01701	F (1, 69) = 53.35	P<0.0001	
			Treatment	0.0007698	1	0.0007698	F (1, 69) = 2.414	P=0.1248	
			Interaction	0.002031	1	0.002031	F (1, 69) = 6.372	P=0.0139	
		Tukey's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0033					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.032					
Panel E	Swing time	Forelimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.01091	1	0.01091	F (1, 69) = 32.78	P<0.0001
				Treatment	0.0002719	1	0.0002719	F (1, 69) = 0.8167	P=0.3693
				Interaction	0.00004343	1	0.00004343	F (1, 69) = 0.1305	P=0.7190
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	0.0003					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.6238					
	Hindlimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.01186	1	0.01186	F (1, 69) = 64.58	P<0.0001	
			Treatment	0.00003816	1	0.00003816	F (1, 69) = 0.2078	P=0.6500	
			Interaction	0.0002315	1	0.0002315	F (1, 69) = 1.260	P=0.2655	
		Sidak's multiple comparisons test	mat+/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ Vehicle	<0.0001					
			mat-/pat+ Vehicle vs. mat-/pat+ IGF-2	0.4827					
Panel F	Brake time	Forelimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.0004719	1	0.0004719	F (1, 69) = 1.460	P=0.2311
				Treatment	0.0001162	1	0.0001162	F (1, 69) = 0.3593	P=0.5508
				Interaction	0.0001147	1	0.0001147	F (1, 69) = 3.549	P=0.0638
	Hindlimb	Two-way ANOVA	Genotype	0.00004612	1	0.00004612	F (1, 69) = 0.4559	P=0.5018	
			Treatment	0.000167	1	0.000167	F (1, 69) = 1.651	P=0.2031	
			Interaction	0.00001722	1	0.00001722	F (1, 69) = 0.1703	P=0.6812	

## Figure S1 Statistics

Panel A	Object recognition	Paired t-test (familiar vs. novel)	<b>Group</b>	<b>t and df</b>	<b>P-value</b>
			B6J Vehicle	t=1.746, df=7	0.1243
			B6J IGF-2	t=1.075, df=7	0.3182
Panel B	Object preference	Unpaired t-test (B6J Vehicle vs. B6J IGF-2)	<b>t and df</b>	<b>P-value</b>	
			t=1.776, df=14	0.0975	
Panel C	Context freezing	Unpaired t-test (B6J Vehicle vs. B6J IGF-2)	<b>t and df</b>	<b>P-value</b>	
			t=1.730, df=14	0.1056	

## Chapter 7

Investigation of an Antisense Oligonucleotide Therapy in the *Ube3a* Deletion Rat Model of Angelman Syndrome

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## Abstract

Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a neurodevelopmental disorder caused by disrupted functioning of maternal *UBE3A*, the gene encoding ubiquitin protein ligase E3A. Those with AS exhibit developmental delay, intellectual disability, impaired communication, motor deficits, and seizures. Since *UBE3A* in neurons is solely expressed from the maternal allele, it is believed that the AS phenotype is predominantly driven by neuronal deficiency of active *UBE3A*. While the paternal allele of *UBE3A* is intact, it is epigenetically silenced by a long non-coding RNA, termed *UBE3A* antisense transcript (*UBE3A-ATS*). Therefore, a putative therapeutic approach for AS is to restore levels of *UBE3A* in neurons by targeting and knocking down *UBE3A-ATS* to unsilence the paternal allele. Antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs) offer a mechanism by which *UBE3A-ATS* can be bound and degraded, facilitating paternal *UBE3A* expression. Here, we examined ASO tolerability and ASO-mediated changes in expression of *UBE3A-ATS*, *Ube3a* RNA, and *UBE3A* protein in the *Ube3a* deletion rat model of AS. This study therefore represents the first gene reactivation effort in the rat model of AS. Through an investigation of two different ASO compounds, a wide dose range, and three routes of administration, we identified an ASO treatment that successfully achieved reduction of *UBE3A-ATS* expression in the brain. Although further molecular and behavioral characterization following ASO delivery is warranted, we found that the rat model of AS generally exhibited normal susceptibility to ASO-related adverse effects. The model of ASO treatment established here in rats, which can be delivered via the same route of administration as used in human clinical trials, offers a powerful tool for the continuing pursuit for a safe and effective therapy for those with AS.

## Abbreviations

AS: Angelman Syndrome; Ube3a: ubiquitin protein ligase E3A; Ube3a-ATS: Ube3a antisense transcript; ASO: antisense oligonucleotide; CNS: central nervous system; CSF: cerebrospinal fluid; SAE: serious adverse event; EEG: electroencephalographic; aCSF: artificial CSF; ICM: intracisterna magna; ICV: intracerebroventricular; IT: intrathecal.

## Introduction

Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a rare neurodevelopmental disorder that occurs in about one in 15,000 live births and is characterized by developmental delay, intellectual disabilities, communication deficits, motor impairments, and frequent seizures. AS is caused by the loss of function of the chromosome 15 gene *UBE3A* (ubiquitin protein ligase E3A), and specifically results from dysfunction of the maternal allele. This can occur for a variety of reasons, with the most common being deletion or mutation of the gene. Within neurons, the maternal allele of *UBE3A* is solely responsible for producing active UBE3A protein and the paternal allele is kept epigenetically silenced<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the maternal allele disruption that occurs in AS leaves the brain severely lacking active UBE3A thus impeding normal cellular functioning and resulting in AS phenotypes<sup>2-5</sup>.

UBE3A has several important biological roles, including acting as a ligase within the ubiquitin proteasome pathway, which is responsible for the appropriate marking and degradation of surplus cellular products. Without functional UBE3A to aid in protein clearance, levels of UBE3A substrates are likely to be dysregulated, disrupt intracellular homeostasis and synaptic functioning, interfere with neurodevelopment, and lead to the numerous phenotypic deficits observed in AS<sup>6-9</sup>. Since the symptoms are pervasive and severe, those with AS require lifelong caretaking and there remains a great unmet need for an effective therapeutic. Over the last few

decades, mouse models of AS have greatly facilitated the investigation of various treatment strategies, yet there is still no gene-specific treatment available to the AS population to date<sup>10-18</sup>.

Fortunately, since the genetic cause of AS has been identified and well-studied, it is presumably targetable by various molecular and gene therapy approaches. The most direct and seemingly promising approach for treating AS would be to restore functional levels of UBE3A in neurons. One mechanism for achieving this is through the use of antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs) to reduce or knock down the long non-coding RNA, called *Ube3a* antisense transcript (*Ube3a-ATS*), that is responsible for silencing the paternal allele of *UBE3A* in neurons. ASOs are short synthetic DNA strands that can be created to specifically bind the sequence of *Ube3a-ATS*. ASO binding to *Ube3a-ATS* RNA initiates RNase H1-mediated degradation of the transcript, thereby removing the brake off the paternal allele and facilitating expression *UBE3A* (**Figure 1**). While ASOs are not technically considered gene therapy since they target RNA, they can be classified as a “gene therapy-like” treatment.

ASOs are currently being evaluated in humans with AS through two separate clinical trials, and a third trial is set to begin soon. While various ASO therapies have been tested in non-human primates and human clinical trials for a range of diseases without the occurrence of serious adverse events (SAEs)<sup>19-27</sup>, a unique situation recently arose in one of the currently active clinical trials for AS. In said trial, all patients administered the ASO exhibited mild to moderate lower extremity weakness<sup>28,29</sup>. For two of the five patients, the weakness progressed into an inability to walk. Onset of the first SAE prompted a pause in ASO administration, during which time the other cases manifested but all eventually resolved within a few months. Encouragingly, clinical efficacy persisted for months and patients continued to demonstrate improvements across several

behavioral domains such as motor, communication, and sleep, and none of the participants dropped out of the study.

The SAE, however, sparked a few key questions including whether a dose is possible that can achieve behavioral improvements but avoid the SAE, and whether AS individuals are more susceptible to SAE development compared to controls. This cannot be carried out in neurotypical volunteer subjects due to the risks associated with UBE3A overexpression<sup>30</sup>. Studies of the ASO in non-human primates had not indicated any risk of the lower extremity weakness observed in humans, despite delivery of doses much higher than what was provided in the clinical trial (accounting for cross-species equivalencies).

Importantly, all of the non-human primate research was carried out in non-AS model animals since a genetic non-human primate model of AS has yet to be developed. Therefore, in order to shed light on the question of differential ASO tolerability in the AS population, as well as help elucidate the pathophysiology of the clinical trial SAE, the present study sought to establish a paradigm of ASO administration in AS model animals and to compare outcomes between AS model animals and wildtype controls. An auxiliary goal was to compare ASO tolerance across different routes of entry into the central nervous system (CNS). Namely, we tested intracisterna magna injection, intracerebroventricular delivery as was previously used in a mouse model of AS<sup>31</sup>, and intrathecal lumbar puncture, which is the mode of administration used to deliver ASOs to AS patients.

To achieve these aims, we took advantage of the rat model of AS, which offers several crucial advantages compared to currently available mouse models. In addition to greater physiologic and metabolic similarity to humans, the larger size of the rat facilitates access to cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) spaces, thereby enabling both injections and CSF withdrawals<sup>32</sup>.

Additionally, the rat model does not display the elevated weight or severe gross motor deficit exhibited by the mouse model of AS. The lack of these potentially confounding phenotypes in the rat greatly benefits the clear evaluation of specific effects due to ASO treatment. As reported previously, the rat model of AS recapitulates several key AS phenotypes including learning and memory impairments, aberrant social behavior, communication deficits, poor motor coordination, altered EEG activity, and microcephaly<sup>33-37</sup>. This makes it a strong model of the disorder with high construct and face validity and offers the long-term opportunity to harness these phenotypes in the assessment of ASO efficacy.

Although our study is the first to utilize ASO technology in the rat model of AS, candidate ASOs for application in rats have already been identified. Following *in vitro* screening on a set of custom-designed ASOs targeted to various sites along the rat *Ube3a-ATS*, two candidate compounds were identified: ASO 1.1 and 3.1. We initially pursued both ASO 1.1 and 3.1 to determine the more tolerable and effective molecule *in vivo*. Mortality rates and weight change were used to assess tolerability, and expression of *Ube3a-ATS* RNA, *Ube3a* RNA, and UBE3A protein were measured as indications of molecular efficacy. Our study revealed that ASO 3.1 was capable of downregulating expression of rat *Ube3a-ATS* and that this dose could feasibly be delivered by intrathecal lumbar puncture, therefore mirroring the delivery route used in humans.

## Methods

**Subjects.** All animals were housed in a temperature-controlled vivarium maintained on a 12:12 light-dark cycle and provided food and water *ad libitum*. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of the University of California Davis and conducted in compliance with the National Institutes of Health Guide for the Care and Use of

Laboratory Animals. *Ube3a* subject rats were generated by breeding *Ube3a* deletion females with wildtype Sprague Dawley males (Envigo, Indianapolis, IN). The resulting maternally inherited *Ube3a* deletion animals (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>) were tested alongside wildtype littermate controls (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>).

Animals were given identifying marks as pups and again at weaning as previously described<sup>34</sup>. A small tissue sample collected on postnatal day 2 was used to genotype each subject following a previously reported protocol<sup>34</sup>. As multiple independent labs have found sex differences in the rat model to be not significant<sup>33,34</sup>, and this aligns with the equal incidence rates of AS across sex in humans, mixed-sex cohorts were utilized for the present study. Three independently generated cohorts of rats were used: Cohort 1 was sampled from 6 litters and tested at 3 months of age; Cohort 2 was sampled from 7 litters and tested at 4-5 weeks of age; and Cohort 3 was sampled from 9 litters and tested at 6-8 weeks of age.

**Rat *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs).** Single strand oligonucleotides were used to bind the RNA transcript antisense to *Ube3a* (*Ube3a-ATS*) that is responsible for the silencing of paternal *UBE3A*. The efficacy of two rat-specific oligonucleotides, termed ASO 1.1 and 3.1, were compared. The sequences of the ASOs were designed to be complementary to, and therefore target, different sites along *Ube3a-ATS*. Based on the results from Cohort 1, subsequent cohorts focused solely on ASO 3.1. Lyophilized ASO (ChemGenes, Wilmington, MA) was resuspended in sterile endotoxin-free saline. Saline solely constituted the vehicle for Cohorts 1 and 2 whereas artificial cerebrospinal fluid (aCSF; Harvard Apparatus, Holliston, MA) was used as the vehicle for Cohort 3. Therefore, for Cohort 3, 25  $\mu$ L saline per mg ASO was used for resuspension

and the remainder of the solution consisted of aCSF. Initial doses of ASO were selected based on previous dosing regimens used in non-human primates and mice (data unpublished).

**Routes of ASO administration.** *Intracisterna magna (ICM) injection.* Cohort 1 was administered ASO (50 or 75  $\mu\text{g}$  of ASO 1.1 or 3.1) or vehicle (saline) via ICM injection. Rats were anesthetized and placed into a stereotaxic frame with the head angled downward. A small incision at the base of the head was made and 10  $\mu\text{L}$  of ASO or vehicle was injected into the cisterna magna using a 100  $\mu\text{L}$  syringe (Hamilton Company, Reno, NV) at a rate of 30  $\mu\text{L}$  per 30 sec. The needle was left in place for 30 sec before being slowly removed and the incision was sutured. Carprofen (Rimadyl; Zoetis, Parsippany-Troy Hills, NJ) was used for management of post-operative pain.

*Intracerebroventricular (ICV) injection.* Cohort 2 was administered ASO (75, 120, 180, or 300  $\mu\text{g}$  of ASO 3.1) or vehicle (saline) via bilateral ICV injection. Rats were anesthetized and placed into a stereotaxic frame with the head positioned lateral to the base of the frame. The skull was exposed, and a surgical drill was used to create two burr holes at 1.0 mm posterior and  $\pm 1.5$  mm lateral to bregma. Through each burr hole, a 10  $\mu\text{L}$  Neuros syringe (Hamilton) was lowered to a depth of 3.5 mm and delivered 2.5  $\mu\text{L}$  of ASO or vehicle at a rate of 1  $\mu\text{L}$  per 30 sec. For each injection, the needle was left in place for 1 min before being slowly withdrawn. Burr holes were filled with bone wax (CP Medical Inc., Norcross, GA) before the incision was sutured. Carprofen (Zoetis) was administered to manage post-operative pain.

*Intrathecal (IT) injection.* Cohort 3 was administered ASO (300 or 400  $\mu\text{g}$  of ASO 3.1) or vehicle (aCSF) via IT injection. Rats were anesthetized and positioned in the prone position over a 50 mL Falcon tube in order to arch the lumbosacral area. A small incision was made and 40  $\mu\text{L}$  of ASO or vehicle was injected into the intrathecal space between the sixth lumbar (L6) and first

sacral (S1) vertebrae using a 100  $\mu$ L syringe (Hamilton) at a rate of 30  $\mu$ L per 30 sec. The needle remained in place for 30 sec before being withdrawn slowly and the incision was sutured. Carprofen (Rimadyl; Bio-Serv, Flemington, NJ) was provided for post-operative pain management.

**Molecular analyses.** *Tissue extraction.* Two weeks following ASO administration, rats were anesthetized, CSF was collected from the cisterna magna, and rats were cervically dislocated. For fresh tissue collection, brains were rapidly extracted and the CSF, brain tissue, and a sample of liver as a peripheral tissue control were placed into individual tubes and flash frozen over dry ice. Brain tissue was later homogenized and separated for genomic DNA, RNA, or protein. For eventual histological evaluation, a subset of tissue was fixed using 4% paraformaldehyde (PFA). For Cohort 1, one brain hemisphere per rat was fixed in 4% PFA. For a subset of Cohort 2, CSF was collected from the cisterna magna, a liver sample was retrieved, and rats were immediately transcardially perfused with cold 1X phosphate-buffered saline containing 10 U/mL heparin followed by 4% PFA. The CSF and liver sample were flash frozen over dry ice, while the fixed brain was cryopreserved via 30% sucrose soak.

*Quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR).* For Cohort 1, total RNA was isolated using the Direct-zol RNA Miniprep Kit (ZymoResearch, Irvine, CA). RNA was reverse transcribed using the SuperScript VILO MasterMix (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA). *Ube3a-ATS* expression was measured by RT-qPCR and *Ube3a* expression was determined by Taqman. All reactions were performed in triplicate. RT-qPCR was performed using 2 $\times$  iQ SYBR mix (Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA) with the CFX384 Real-Time System C1000 Touch system (Bio-Rad). Gene expression analysis was performed with *Pgkl* as a reference gene using at least three biological

replicates and the following primer sequences: rat *Ube3a-ATS* primers (rUbe3a-AS\_qF1 5'-AGTTACCACCTGCAAGGAGC -3'; rUbe3a-AS\_qR1 5'-ACTGATCCCTGTGTCTCTTAGGT -3'), rat *Pgk1* primers (Pgk1\_qF 5'-CTTTGGACAAGCTGGACGTG -3'; Pgk1\_qR 5'-ACAACCGACTTGGCTCCATT -3'). Taqman reaction was performed using TaqMan Fast Advanced Master Mix (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA) with the following primer/probe mixes: Ube3a Rn01409804\_m1 (labeled with FAM) and Pgk1 Rn00821429\_g1 (labeled with VIC). RT-qPCR and Taqman reactions were executed with the CFX384 Real-Time System C1000 Touch system (Bio-Rad) and gene expression analysis was performed with *Pgk1* as the reference gene. Relative target gene expression was calculated as the difference between the target gene and the reference gene ( $dCq = Cq[\text{target}] - Cq[\text{Pgk1}]$ ). Data are presented as  $\Delta\Delta Cq$  normalized to *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle.

For Cohort 2, tissue was immersed in 350  $\mu$ l of Trizol and sonicated using a QSonica (QSonica, Newtown, CT). Sonicated tissue was then centrifuged at 10,000 rcf and supernatant was removed and incubated with an equivalent volume of 100% molecular grade ethanol. Total RNA then was extracted following Direct-zol RNA Extraction (ZymoResearch). cDNA was generated using RevertAid Random Hexamer (ThermoFisher, Waltham, MA). SYBR Green (ThermoFisher) based quantitative real-time PCR was performed using 10 ng of cDNA on a QuantStudio 6 Flex (Applied Biosystems). The *Ube3a-ATS* primers used were: Forward 5'-AGTTACCACCTGCAAGGAGC -3'; Reverse 5'-ACTGATCCCTGTGTCTCTTAGGT-3'. Data are presented as  $\Delta\Delta Cq$  normalized to wildtype vehicle.

*Western blots.* Protein was extracted using Pierce RIPA Buffer (ThermoFisher) with Protease & Phosphatase Inhibitor Cocktail (ThermoFisher). Protein concentrations were measured using Pierce Bicinchoninic acid assay kit (ThermoFisher). Forty micrograms of protein lysate were

separated on a 4-20% Stacking TGX Gels (BioRad) and transferred overnight at 30 V onto Immobilon-FL PVDF membrane (Millipore Sigma, Burlington, MA). PVDF membranes were blocked for 1 hr with Intercept Protein-Free Blocking Buffer (LI-COR, Lincoln, NE). Following blocking, PVDF membranes were incubated with ms-Ube3a (1:1000, Millipore Sigma, E8655) and rb-beta actin (1:2000, Millipore Sigma, SAB5600204) in Intercept for 2 hrs at room temperature. Following incubation, membranes were washed with Tris-buffered saline with Tween (TBST) 3X for 5 min. Membranes were then incubated with Goat anti-rabbit LI-COR 680 (1:2000) and goat anti-mouse LI-COR 800 (1:2000) in Intercept TBS for 1 hr at RT. Following incubation, membranes were washed 3X with TBST before storing in 1X TBS. Membranes were imaged on Odyssey CLx imager (LI-COR). Quantitative analysis was performed using Empiria Studio software (LI-COR).

**Statistical analyses.** All statistical analyses were performed using Prism 9 software (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA). All significance levels were set at  $p < 0.05$  and tests were two-tailed. Repeated measures ANOVAs or mixed-effects models were used for comparisons across time (i.e., weight). One-way ANOVAs were used to analyze the effect of treatment on a single parameter. Two-way ANOVAs were used to analyze the effects of both genotype and ASO treatment. Sidak's multiple comparisons *post hoc* tests were used to detect differences between specific groups. Dunnett's multiple comparisons *post hoc* test was used to detect differences from the vehicle group. Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  standard error of the mean (S.E.M.) unless otherwise noted and group sizes are depicted by individual data points or provided in figure legends.

## Results

We assessed whether CNS administration of two novel ASOs targeted to knock down *Ube3a-ATS* was generally tolerated by rats, as well as differentially tolerated by *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats compared to wildtype littermate controls, and whether ASO treatment showed molecular efficacy in the brain. In general, we found that the ASO compounds, doses, and routes of administration tested were tolerable by both genotypes, with a few exceptions in which subjects died within 12 hours after receiving ASO. Taking into account all ten iterations of ASO administration, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats showed the same susceptibility to post-ASO mortality as wildtype littermates (Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test:  $W = -2.000$ ,  $p = 0.875$ ).

**Intracisterna magna administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides.** ICM administration of 50 and 75  $\mu\text{g}$  of ASO 1.1 or 3.1 were generally well-tolerated. Out of 31 animals injected, only 1 subject (*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> administered 75  $\mu\text{g}$  of ASO 1.1) died (**Table 1**). Overall mortality was therefore 0% for the ICM procedure based on vehicle group survival, 0% for ASO 3.1, but 20% for ASO 1.1. After receiving ASO or vehicle, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats and wildtype littermates were monitored and weighed daily to check for major adverse effects on general health. Neither wildtype (**Figure 2B**;  $F_{\text{Treatment(T)}}(4, 6) = 2.220$ ,  $p = 0.183$ ;  $F_{\text{Day(D)}}(1.945, 11.67) = 34.15$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{T}\times\text{D}}(44, 66) = 0.9931$ ,  $p = 0.503$ ) nor *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (**Figure 2C**;  $F_{\text{T}}(4, 14) = 0.7005$ ,  $p = 0.604$ ;  $F_{\text{D}}(1.423, 19.92) = 16.57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $F_{\text{T}\times\text{D}}(44, 154) = 1.282$ ,  $p = 0.138$ ) displayed any robust changes in body weight as a result of ICM ASO treatment. Across all doses of ASO, *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats did not show a difference in ICM ASO tolerability compared to wildtype as measured by percent weight change within the acute post-injection period: wildtypes gained an average of 5% body weight from pre-injection baseline to one-week post-injection and

*Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats gained an average of 2% in the same time frame (Student's *t*-test:  $t(23) = 1.200$ ,  $p = 0.242$ ).

**Molecular analysis of RNA and protein following intracisterna magna administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides.** Two weeks after ICM delivery of ASO, we quantified expression of *Ube3a-ATS* RNA, *Ube3a* RNA, and UBE3A protein in the cortex and cerebellum. In the cortex, treatment with ASO did not change levels of *Ube3a-ATS* (**Figure 3A**;  $F_{\text{Treatment(T)}}(4, 14) = 2.057$ ,  $p = 0.141$ ) or *Ube3a* RNA expression (**Figure 3B**;  $F_{\text{T}}(4, 14) = 1.678$ ,  $p = 0.211$ ) in either *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats or wildtype littermates. Trends, however, revealed the most promising dose to be 75  $\mu\text{g}$  ASO 3.1, although it did not markedly affect UBE3A protein levels (**Figure 3D**;  $F_{\text{T}}(1, 5) = 0.08459$ ,  $p = 0.783$ ;  $F_{\text{Genotype(G)}}(1, 5) = 269.7$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{T}\times\text{G}}(1, 5) = 2.180$ ,  $p = 0.200$ ). As expected, Western blot revealed *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats to exhibit robust reductions in UBE3A protein in the cortex compared to wildtype (Sidak's multiple comparisons: vehicle,  $p = 0.0001$ ; 75  $\mu\text{g}$  3.1,  $p = 0.0002$ ).

In the cerebellum, ASO treatment did not notably influence expression of *Ube3a-ATS* (**Figure 3E**;  $F_{\text{T}}(4, 14) = 2.232$ ,  $p = 0.118$ ) or *Ube3a* RNA (**Figure 3F**;  $F_{\text{T}}(4, 14) = 2.017$ ,  $p = 0.147$ ). UBE3A protein levels, however, were moderately increased by 75  $\mu\text{g}$  ASO 3.1 in wildtype rats (**Figure 3H**;  $F_{\text{T}}(1, 5) = 381.7$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{G}}(1, 5) = 24.52$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ;  $F_{\text{T}\times\text{G}}(1, 5) = 20.60$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ; Sidak's multiple comparisons: *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>,  $p = 0.003$ ). Cerebellar UBE3A in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats was unaffected by treatment, although the expected protein deficiency was found compared to wildtype (Sidak's multiple comparisons: *Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup> vs. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>, vehicle,  $p < 0.001$ ; 75  $\mu\text{g}$  3.1,  $p < 0.0001$ ). The favorable trend of 75  $\mu\text{g}$  ASO 3.1 to both reduce cortical *Ube3a*-

*ATS* and elevate UBE3A expression in the cortex and cerebellum of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats prompted our investigation of this ASO molecule in subsequent testing.

### **Intracerebroventricular administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides.**

Given the trend for 75 µg ASO 3.1 to reduce expression of *Ube3a-ATS* and increase *Ube3a* RNA, we focused our efforts on ASO 3.1 at doses of 75 µg and higher. Additionally, we sought out greater efficacy by administering ASO at the juvenile age rather than in adulthood. We found that *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats showed normal susceptibility to death following ICV ASO administration: out of 40 animals injected, 1 subject (wildtype) administered 180 µg ASO 3.1 and 3 subjects (2 wildtype, 1 *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>) administered 300 µg of ASO 3.1 died (**Table 2**). Mortality was therefore 0% for the ICV procedure based on vehicle group survival, 0% for 75 µg, 0% for 120 µg, but 12.5% for 180 µg, and 37.5% for 300 µg ASO 3.1. Across modes of delivery for 75 µg ASO 3.1, ICM and ICV both showed full tolerance (i.e., no mortality).

ICV delivery of ASO 3.1 had no major effects on general health or post-injection weight for wildtypes (**Figure 4B**;  $F_{\text{Treatment(T)}}(4, 7) = 0.2664, p = 0.891$ ;  $F_{\text{Day(D)}}(1.118, 7.827) = 70.40, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{TxD}}(52, 91) = 0.08485, p > 0.9999$ ) or *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (**Figure 4C**;  $F_{\text{T}}(1.358, 25.81) = 216.5, p < 0.0001$ ;  $F_{\text{D}}(4, 19) = 1.830, p = 0.165$ ;  $F_{\text{TxD}}(52, 247) = 0.8873, p = 0.691$ ). And, in line with normal mortality rates, ICV ASO 3.1 tolerability was comparable across genotypes as measured by percent weight change across the acute post-injection period: wildtypes gained an average of 28% body weight from baseline to one-week post-injection and *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats gained an average of 26% (Student's *t*-test:  $t(26) = 0.5946, p = 0.557$ ).

Two weeks following administration of 300 µg ASO 3.1, we detected reduced expression of *Ube3a-ATS* RNA in the cerebrum of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats compared to vehicle (**Figure 4D**;  $F_{\text{T}}(4,$

5) = 5.700,  $p = 0.042$ ;  $F_G(1, 5) = 0.1983$ ,  $p = 0.675$ ;  $F_{T \times G}(4, 5) = 0.7426$ ,  $p = 0.602$ ; Dunnett's multiple comparisons test: *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> vehicle vs. 300  $\mu$ g 3.1,  $p = 0.042$ ). We did not observe alterations in *Ube3a-ATS* RNA in the cerebellum (**Figure 4E**;  $F_T(4, 5) = 4.633$ ,  $p = 0.062$ ;  $F_G(1, 5) = 2.838$ ,  $p = 0.153$ ;  $F_{T \times G}(4, 5) = 2.988$ ,  $p = 0.131$ ).

**Intrathecal administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides.** IT administration of ASOs represents the most translational route of delivery, as it mimics the lumbar puncture procedure used to administer ASOs to humans. We therefore sought to investigate the tolerability of this route in rats, which is feasibly higher compared to other modes due to the larger allowable injection volume and therefore less concentrated dosage. Indeed, we found that IT delivery showed improved tolerance and led to lower mortality compared to ICV delivery for the same dose (300  $\mu$ g ASO 3.1): only 8.3% mortality for IT versus 37.5% mortality following ICV. *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats appeared to show a greater susceptibility to mortality following the higher (400  $\mu$ g) ASO dose compared to wildtypes, with 37.5% mortality in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> but 0% in wildtypes (**Table 3**). Of the 36 total animals injected, 1 rat administered 300  $\mu$ g ASO (wildtype) and 3 rats administered 400  $\mu$ g ASO (2 wildtype, 1 *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>) died. Overall mortality was therefore 0% for the IT procedure based on vehicle group survival, 8.3% for 300  $\mu$ g, and 21.4% for 400  $\mu$ g ASO 3.1.

IT injection of ASO 3.1 did not affect general health as indicated by body weight changes in wildtype (**Figure 5B**;  $F_{\text{Treatment}(T)}(2, 13) = 0.0166$ ,  $p = 0.984$ ;  $F_{\text{Day}(D)}(1.671, 24.55) = 103.8$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) or *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats (**Figure 5C**;  $F_T(2, 13) = 0.2647$ ,  $p = 0.771$ ;  $F_D(13, 195) = 111.5$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) in the two weeks following the injection. This was unconfounded by baseline pre-injection weights, which did not differ across the ASO treatment groups (Student's  $t$ -test:  $t(20) = 0.8771$ ,  $p = 0.391$ ) or by differences in pre-injection weights between those that died after and

those that survived the 400 µg dose (Student's  $t$ -test:  $t(12) = 0.5526, p = 0.611$ ). Across both doses of ASO,  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats did not exhibit differential tolerability to IT ASO 3.1 relative to wildtype as measured by percent weight change across the acute post-injection period: both wildtypes and  $Ube3a^{mat-/pat+}$  rats gained an average of 10% body weight from baseline to one-week post-injection (Student's  $t$ -test:  $t(20) = 0.3669, p = 0.718$ ).

## Discussion

Despite the cause of AS being known for decades and various therapeutic strategies being investigated in that time, there is still no gene-specific treatment available to those with AS. The seemingly most targeted and promising treatment approach would be to compensate for the dysfunctional maternal allele of *UBE3A* by providing an alternative source of active UBE3A protein to neurons. This could be achieved via numerous mechanisms, including delivery of UBE3A to the brain using viral vectors<sup>10</sup> or stem cells<sup>38</sup>, or by unsilencing the paternal allele of *UBE3A*<sup>30,31,39</sup>. Viral vectors have shown some efficacy in the mouse model of AS<sup>10,39</sup>, but their implementation poses several methodological challenges. These include achieving adequate biodistribution, selecting an appropriate promoter and protein isoform(s), providing multiple isoforms, and delivering appropriate amounts of UBE3A to each cell over time<sup>30,40</sup>. Functional levels of UBE3A fall within a relatively narrow range, as overexpression of UBE3A is associated with other neurodevelopmental disorders including Duplication 15q syndrome and autism spectrum disorders<sup>41</sup>.

Unsilencing the paternal allele offers a therapeutic approach to restoring UBE3A levels without this risk of overexpression, as it leverages the intact paternal copy of UBE3A already present in the neurons of those with AS<sup>30</sup>. Since the paternal allele is silenced by a long non-coding

RNA transcript that overlaps and is antisense to *UBE3A*<sup>42,43</sup> (*Ube3a-ATS*) numerous strategies are currently being pursued to inactivate or downregulate this transcript. Disruption of *Ube3a-ATS*, either via transcriptional truncation<sup>44</sup> or Cas9 targeting<sup>39</sup>, improved behavioral deficits in mouse models of AS and the binding of *Ube3a-ATS* by an artificial transcriptional repressor led to partial unsilencing of the paternal allele in mice<sup>45</sup>. Topoisomerase inhibitors, and topotecan in particular, have also shown efficacy in downregulating *Ube3a-ATS* expression and unsilencing the paternal allele<sup>18</sup>. However, topoisomerase inhibitors, which are widely used as chemotherapeutics, are not targeted compounds and therefore carry high risk of off target effects due to inhibition of other transcripts, among other mechanisms.

On the other hand, ASOs provide a much greater degree of specificity because they are custom designed to the sequence to be targeted. Compared to viral-mediated therapies, ASOs offer several advantages and are not subject to many of the aforementioned limitations (e.g., biodistribution, control of protein level). ASOs are delivered to the CNS via injection into the CSF, as they do not cross the blood brain barrier, and the natural dynamics of CSF flow help to broadly distribute ASOs throughout the CNS<sup>19</sup>. Their small size (typically 18-20 bases; 6-8 kDa) and water solubility aids in their circulation, and ASOs are readily taken up by neurons<sup>19,30</sup>. An additional advantage to ASO therapeutics is their broad applicability across the AS population. Although the specific genetic disruption to maternal *UBE3A* differs between AS individuals, restored expression of neuronal *UBE3A* would be expected to benefit all patients, across age groups. One of the main limitations to ASO therapies is that they do not result in a permanent change. Over time, ASOs get endogenously degraded and therefore must be administered every few months, which is not ideal for a genetic disorder that lasts a lifetime<sup>19,29,40</sup>.

Despite this limitation, however, ASOs have demonstrated profound efficacy in the treatment of other genetic disorders. The resounding success of the ASO nusinersen (Spinraza) for the treatment of spinal muscular atrophy set a promising precedent for the application of ASOs to AS<sup>19,20,30,46</sup>. Using a mouse model of AS, Meng et al. (2014) found that a single intracerebroventricular (ICV) injection of an ASO targeted to the mouse *Ube3a-ATS* showed good biodistribution and moderate unsilencing of the paternal allele<sup>31</sup>. And now, in 2021, there are currently two active clinical trials (NCT04428281: Roche/Genentech, compound RO7248824; NCT04259281: GeneTx/Ultragenyx, compound GTX-102) and one starting soon (Ionis/Biogen) in which ASOs are being administered to patients with AS. Both of the active clinical trials, still in Phase I, are largely focused on evaluating the safety and tolerability of ASOs. The occurrence of a serious adverse event in one of the current trials prompted us to establish an *in vivo* model of ASO administration by which an AS population could be compared to a control population.

The present evaluation of ASO administration in the *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rat represents the first report of ICM- and IT-delivered ASOs in an animal model of AS, and of the first gene reactivation treatment in the rat model of AS. Though ICM administration of two candidate ASOs, we were able to identify the more promising compound and, via ICV delivery, we narrowed in on an effective dose range for rats. The comparable ASO tolerances observed between the AS model and wildtype littermates will be informative for ongoing clinical trials, which are limited by their inability to assess safety and tolerance in neurotypical subjects. Furthermore, we uncovered favorable evidence that our ASO 3.1 is capable of knocking down *Ube3a-ATS* in the brain, highlighting its potential to unsilence the paternal *Ube3a* allele.

Compared to administration of ASO through ICV injection, IT delivery was revealed to have enhanced tolerability, which is encouraging with regard to the general translation of ASO

research in animal models to humans. ICV is a common mode of CNS delivery in animals, as it is performed precisely via a stereotactic frame and can therefore be readily achieved in small animals such as mice. Although IT is the route of administration used in humans, it is much more difficult to perform in small animals. Therefore, for work in animal models that demonstrates ASO efficacy via ICV, lack of full tolerability may not pose a significant issue. Future studies, however, should more deeply elucidate the relationship between modes of delivery by comparing molecular efficacy in addition to tolerability.

While we did not observe significant hindlimb weakness resembling the SAE observed in the clinical trial, future work will seek to elicit this phenotype in the rat by utilizing higher and/or more frequent intrathecal doses. The SAE seen clinically may be the result of accumulated ASO doses and therefore may only manifest with a repeated dosing paradigm. To enhance our ability to detect the phenotype, an extended post-injection observation period can be used, including assays to quantify motor functioning. Since the rat model exhibits deficits in open field rearing activity, gait, and accelerating rotarod, these tests can be leveraged to probe for ASO-related hindlimb weakness and/or behavioral improvements. Modeling the clinical SAE in the rat will allow for detailed inspections into the physiological cause that are not possible in living AS patients and can help determine which factors of the clinical trial ASO administration (e.g., dosage, timing, etc.) should be altered to best avoid the SAE without substantial loss of efficacy.

It is important to note that the generalizability of the present findings to human applications is considerably limited, as we utilized rat specific ASOs and each ASO compound elicits different biochemical responses *in vivo*. Neither the mortality rates nor specific doses used here in rats should be directly translated to humans, thus mortality was not a major deterrence in our pursuit of an effective ASO for rats. However, our development of an *in vivo* AS model of IT ASO-

mediated paternal allele unsilencing is expected to open up numerous avenues for future investigation with important clinical implications. Preeminently, an extremely important and therefore heavily deliberated topic revolves around the timing of treatment<sup>30,39,40,47-50</sup>. The ability to perform precisely timed IT injections of an effective ASO in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> and wildtype controls will help shed light on the necessity to deliver treatment before critical periods of development, as well as how frequently it should be delivered.

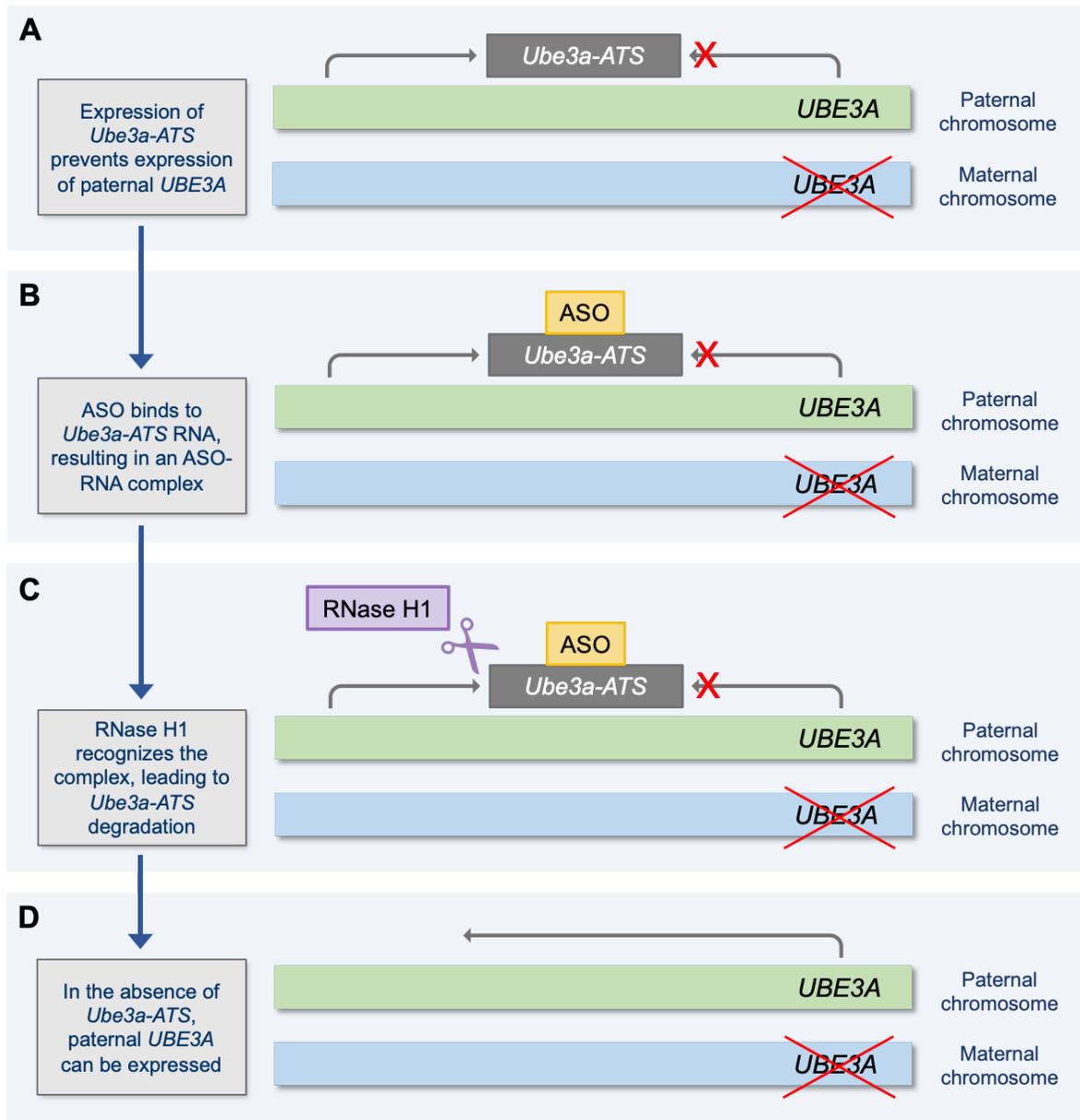
Meng et al. (2014) found that, in a mouse model of AS, a single ICV dose of ASO reduced *Ube3a-ATS* for several months, but that levels returned to baseline after 20 weeks<sup>31</sup>. Interestingly, despite a well-tolerated ASO, successful and sustained knockdown of *Ube3a-ATS*, and evidence for unsilencing of the paternal allele, the Meng et al. study did not observe substantial improvement of the model's behavioral deficits. Hypothesized reasons for this included the timing of treatment being late, time allotted for recovery and therefore neural circuitry rewiring being short, and induced UBE3A protein levels being insufficient. Future collection of behavioral metrics in the rat model following ASO administration can help to elucidate the relationships between all of these variables, molecular efficacy, and behavioral rescue.

In addition to behavior, future histological analyses can help to reveal whether AS model rats show increased susceptibility to ASO toxicity on a cellular level. Acutely, ASOs can elicit adverse effects through their affinity for non-RNA molecules. By chelating calcium ions in the CSF and by binding to cell surface receptors, ASOs can disrupt cell signaling and neurotransmission<sup>51</sup>. ASOs can also produce adverse outcomes through liver toxicity, binding off-target RNAs, and activating the immune system either by being recognized as foreign DNA or causing uncontrolled amplification of the complement cascade<sup>51-53</sup>. Local overexpression of UBE3A around the spinal cord may also lead to cellular toxicity and negatively impact the ability

of dorsal root ganglia to transmit sensory information<sup>54,55</sup>. Although the present findings only indicated infrequent acute toxicity, potentially due to liver toxicity or complement cascade activation, the current study's evaluation of ASO tolerance was limited to gross measures of mortality and body weight. Therefore, detailed analyses on the microscopic scale can help to delineate if certain types of toxicities may pose safety concerns to the AS population and elucidate which type(s) contributed to the clinical SAE.

ASO tolerability, distribution, and duration of action are also of interest to many other areas of biomedical research, as ASOs offer a viable therapeutic strategy for numerous CNS diseases. Aside from AS, there are currently eight antisense drugs, all delivered intrathecally, being tested in clinical trials for neurological disorders and many more drug discovery programs seeking potential antisense therapies<sup>19</sup>. As highlighted by the unexpected SAE of the AS clinical trial, ASOs remain a developing technology and implementation strategies are still evolving. Preclinical models with high construct and face validity to the human disorder, such as the rat model of AS, will be invaluable tools in the ongoing characterization of ASO activity *in vivo*, which will ultimately improve our ability to bring any ASO into the clinic safely and effectively.

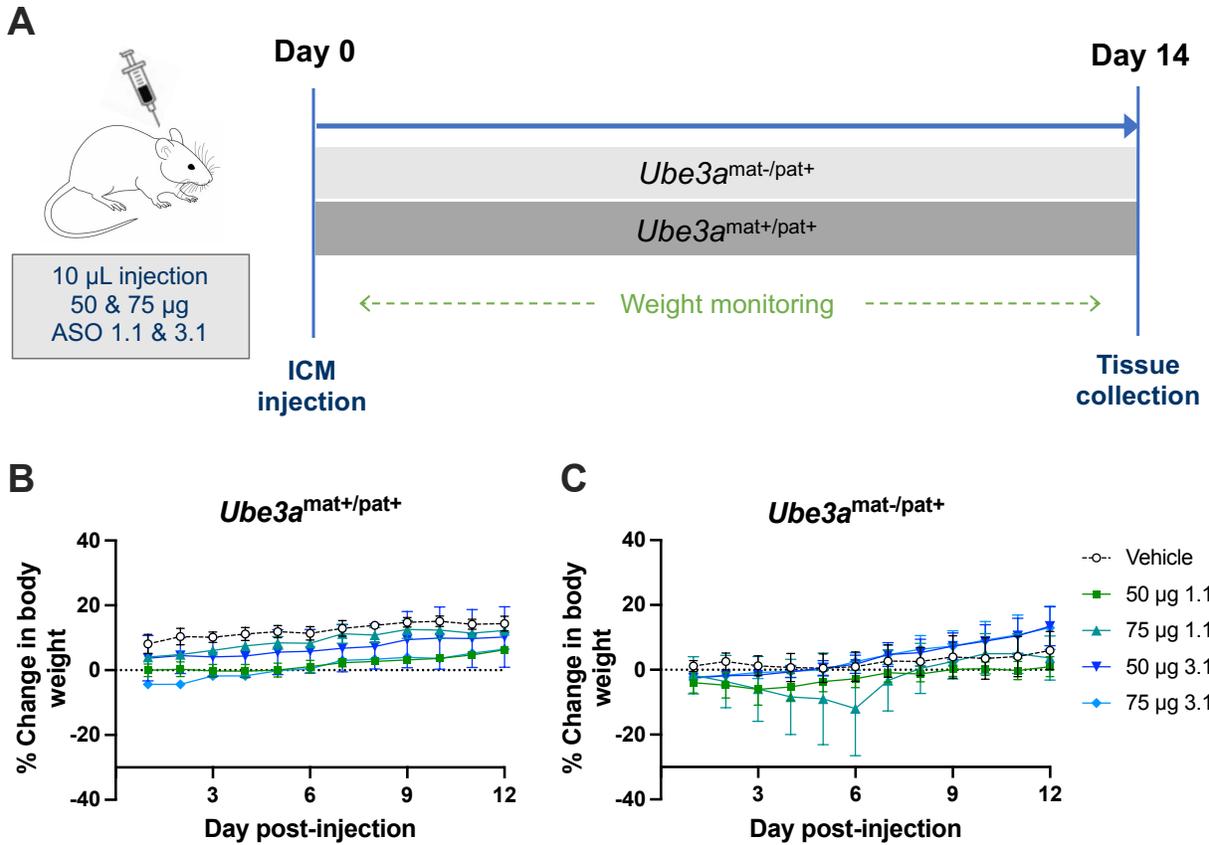
## Figures



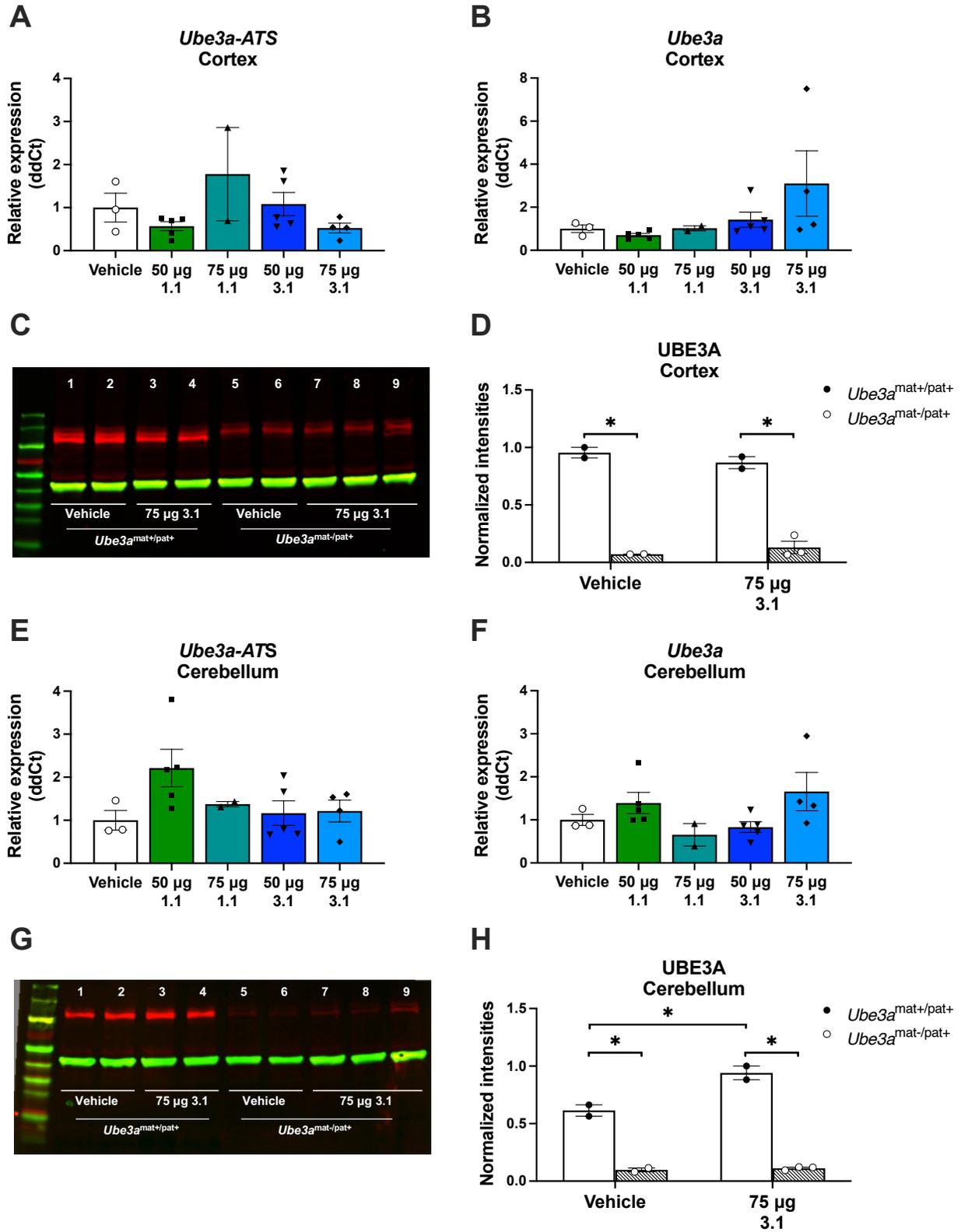
**Figure 1.** Schematic depicting the mechanism underlying antisense oligonucleotide (ASO) therapy for Angelman Syndrome (AS). **(A)** The normal silencing of paternal *UBE3A* in neurons is maintained by expression of a competing transcript that runs antisense to *UBE3A*, called *Ube3a-ATS*. Dysfunction of maternal *UBE3A*, as occurs in AS, therefore results in the loss of functional *UBE3A* protein in the brain. **(B)** Injection of an ASO with a sequence complementary to *Ube3a-ATS* RNA results in the ASO binding *Ube3a-ATS*. **(C)** The ASO-RNA complex is recognized by a protein called RNase H1, which leads to the degradation of *Ube3a-ATS* RNA. The DNA-based ASO is left intact and made available to bind additional *Ube3a-ATS* transcripts. **(D)** Without interference by *Ube3a-ATS*, the paternal allele of *UBE3A* can be expressed, providing a source of active *UBE3A* protein to neurons.

**Table 1.** Mortality rates for ASO delivered via intracisterna magna injection.

		Vehicle	ASO 1.1		ASO 3.1	
		10 $\mu$ L	50 $\mu$ g	75 $\mu$ g	50 $\mu$ g	75 $\mu$ g
<i>Ube3a</i> <sup>mat+/pat+</sup>	Injected	2	3	2	2	2
	Died	0	0	0	0	0
	% Mortality	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Ube3a</i> <sup>mat-/pat+</sup>	Injected	3	5	3	5	4
	Died	0	0	1	0	0
	% Mortality	0	0	<b>33.3</b>	0	0
Combined	Injected	5	8	5	7	6
	Died	0	0	1	0	0
	% Mortality	0	0	<b>20</b>	0	0



**Figure 2.** Intracisterna magna administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs). **(A)** Experimental design for administration of ASO 1.1 and 3.1 into the cisterna magna of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats ( $n = 19$ ) and wildtype littermates (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>;  $n = 11$ ). **(B)** Changes in body weight following the injection did not differ between treatment groups for either wildtype or **(C)** *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. Data are expressed as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.

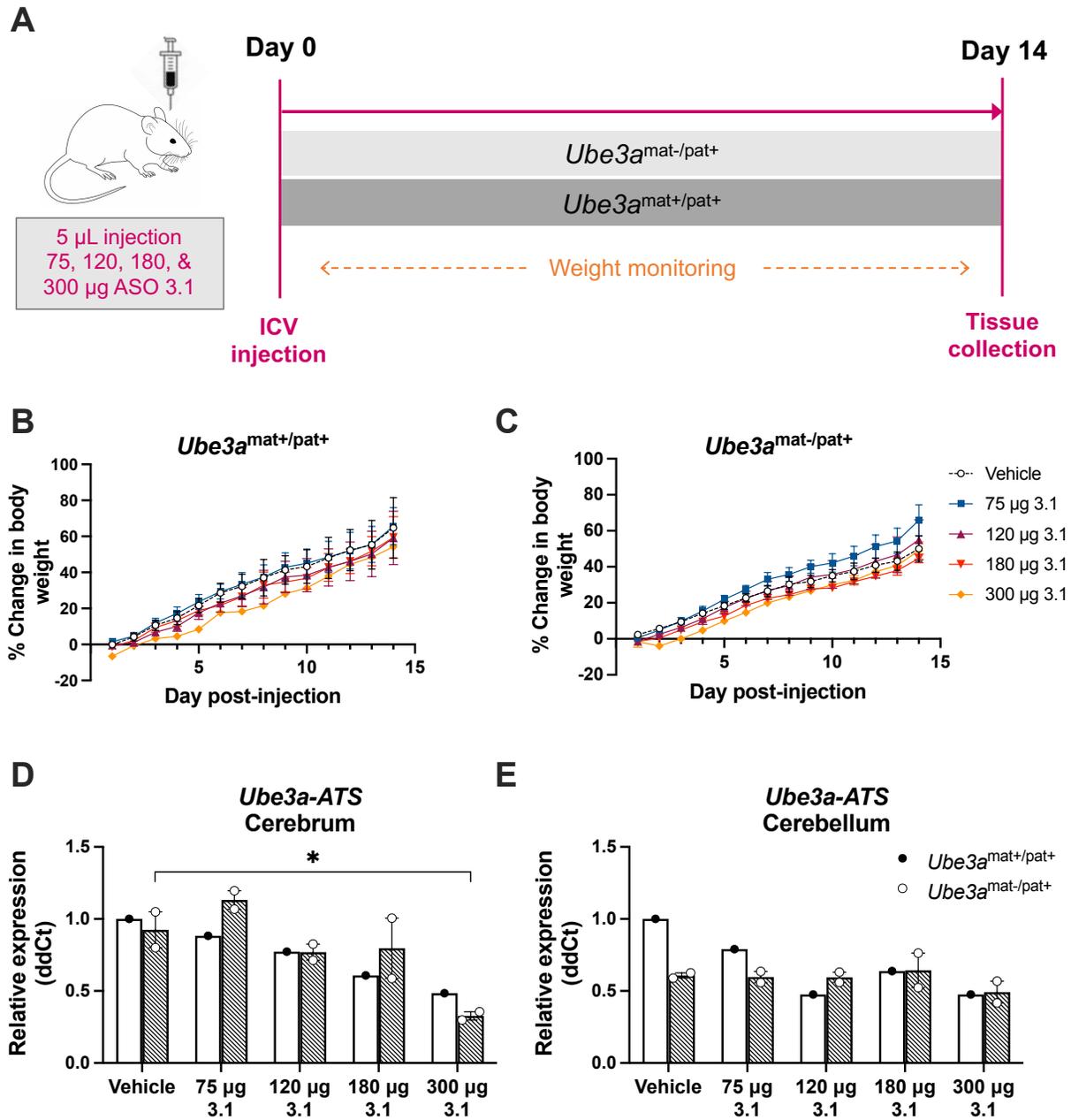


**Figure 3.** Molecular analysis of RNA and protein following intracisterna magna administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs). (A) Expression of the *Ube3a* antisense transcript

(*Ube3a-ATS*) RNA and **(B)** expression of *Ube3a* RNA in the cortex were not affected by ASO treatment in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats. **(C)** Western blot analysis of cortical UBE3A protein expression in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats and wildtype littermates (*Ube3a*<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>) treated with 75 µg ASO 3.1. **(D)** Quantification of the blot revealed *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats to have deficient UBE3A levels compared to wildtype, but no influence of ASO treatment. **(E)** Expression of *Ube3a-ATS* RNA and **(F)** expression of *Ube3a* RNA in the cerebellum of *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats were not altered by ASO treatment. **(G)** Western blot analysis of cerebellar UBE3A protein expression in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> and wildtype rats treated with 75 µg ASO 3.1. **(H)** Western blot quantification illustrated deficient UBE3A protein levels in *Ube3a*<sup>mat-/pat+</sup> rats, and increased UBE3A expression in wildtype treated with 75 µg ASO 3.1 compared to vehicle. Data are expressed as mean ± S.E.M. \**p* < 0.05, Sidak's multiple comparisons test following two-way ANOVA.

**Table 2.** Mortality rates for ASO 3.1 administered by intracerebroventricular injection.

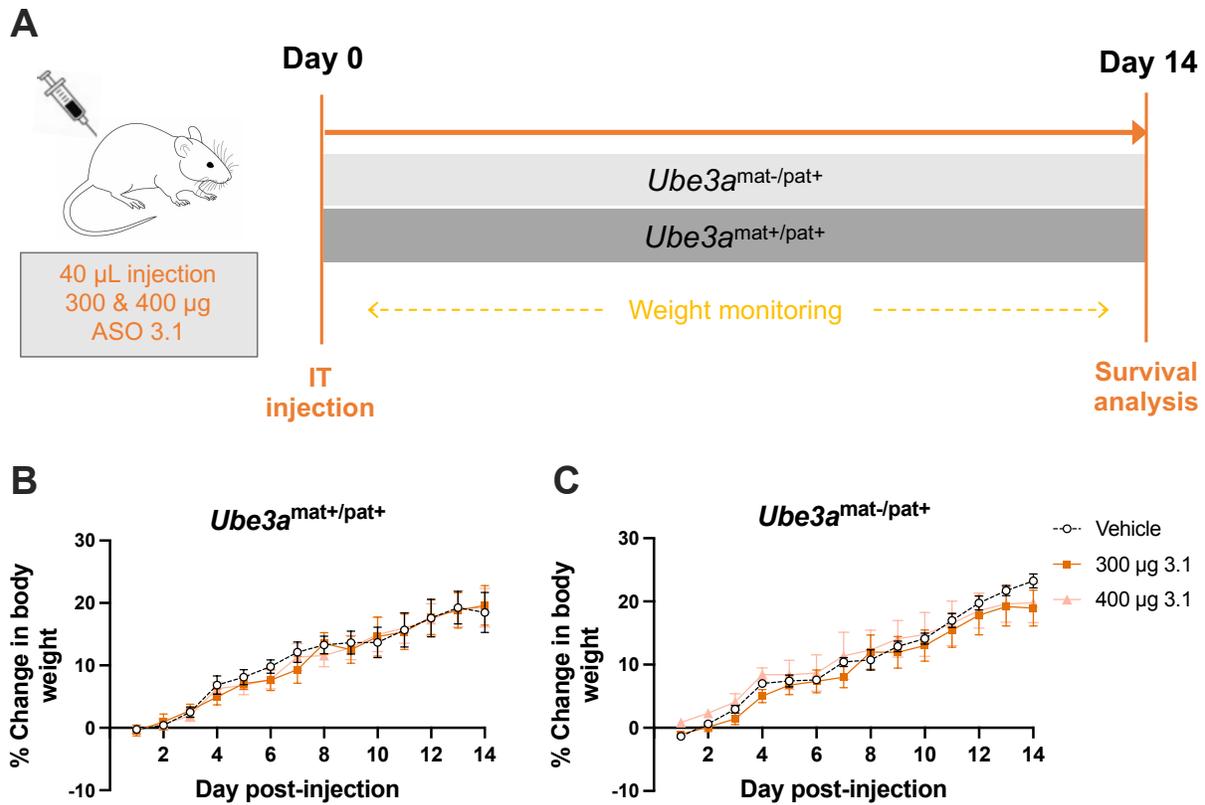
		Vehicle	ASO 3.1			
		5 $\mu$ L	75 $\mu$ g	120 $\mu$ g	180 $\mu$ g	300 $\mu$ g
<i>Ube3a</i> <sup>mat+/pat+</sup>	Injected	3	3	3	3	3
	Died	0	0	0	1	2
	% Mortality	0	0	0	<b>33.3</b>	<b>66.7</b>
<i>Ube3a</i> <sup>mat-/pat+</sup>	Injected	5	5	5	5	5
	Died	0	0	0	0	1
	% Mortality	0	0	0	0	<b>20</b>
Combined	Injected	8	8	8	8	8
	Died	0	0	0	1	3
	% Mortality	0	0	0	<b>12.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>



**Figure 4.** Intracerebroventricular administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides (ASO). (A) Experimental design for administration of ASO 3.1 into the lateral ventricles of *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats ( $n = 24$ ) and wildtype littermates (*Ube3a<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>*;  $n = 12$ ). (B) Changes in body weight following the injection did not differ across treatment groups in either wildtype or (C) *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats. (D) Expression of the *Ube3a* antisense transcript (*Ube3a-ATS*) in the cerebrum was reduced in *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats treated with 300 µg ASO 3.1 relative to vehicle. (E) Cerebellar expression of *Ube3a-ATS* was unaffected by treatment with ASO. Data are expressed as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. \* $p < 0.05$ , Dunnett's multiple comparisons test following two-way ANOVA.

**Table 3.** Mortality rates for intrathecal injection of ASO 3.1.

		Vehicle	ASO 3.1	
		40 $\mu$ L	300 $\mu$ g	400 $\mu$ g
<i>Ube3a</i> <sup>mat+/pat+</sup>	Injected	5	6	6
	Died	0	1	0
	% Mortality	0	<b>16.7</b>	0
<i>Ube3a</i> <sup>mat-/pat+</sup>	Injected	5	6	8
	Died	0	0	3
	% Mortality	0	0	<b>37.5</b>
Combined	Injected	10	12	14
	Died	0	1	3
	% Mortality	0	<b>8.3</b>	<b>21.4</b>



**Figure 5.** Intrathecal administration of *Ube3a-ATS* antisense oligonucleotides (ASO). **(A)** Experimental design for administration of ASO 3.1 into the intrathecal space of *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats ( $n = 16$ ) and wildtype littermates (*Ube3a<sup>mat+/pat+</sup>*;  $n = 16$ ). **(B)** Changes in body weight following the injection did not differ between treatment groups for wildtype or **(C)** *Ube3a<sup>mat-/pat+</sup>* rats. Data are expressed as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.

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