

1 **Costs and benefits of sub-lethal Drosophila C virus infection**

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18 **ABSTRACT**

19

20 Viruses are major evolutionary drivers of insect immune systems. Much of our  
21 knowledge of insect immune responses derives from experimental infections  
22 using the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*. Most experiments, however, employ  
23 lethal pathogen doses through septic injury, frequently overwhelming host  
24 physiology. While this approach has revealed a number of immune mechanisms,  
25 it is less informative about the fitness costs hosts may experience during  
26 infection in the wild. Using both systemic and oral infection routes we find that  
27 even apparently benign, sub-lethal infections with the horizontally transmitted  
28 *Drosophila C Virus* (DCV) can cause significant physiological and behavioral  
29 morbidity that is relevant for host fitness. We describe DCV-induced effects on  
30 fly reproductive output, digestive health, and locomotor activity, and we find that  
31 viral morbidity varies according to the concentration of pathogen inoculum, host  
32 genetic background and sex. Notably, sub-lethal DCV infection resulted in a  
33 significant increase in fly reproduction, but this effect depended on host  
34 genotype. We discuss the relevance of sub-lethal morbidity for *Drosophila*  
35 ecology and evolution, and more broadly, we remark on the implications of  
36 deleterious and beneficial infections for the evolution of insect immunity.

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40 Key-words: Sub-lethal infection; systemic infection; oral infection; fecundity;  
41 locomotor activity; fecal excretion; fitness.

42

## 43 INTRODUCTION

44 Viral infections are pervasive throughout the living world (Suttle, 2005; Rosario  
45 & Breitbart, 2011). Viruses of insects have attracted considerable interest (Miller  
46 & Ball, eds, 1998), in part due to their potential role in the bio-control of insect  
47 pests (Lacey *et al.*, 2015), and also because insects are vectors of many viral  
48 pathogens of plants (Whitfield *et al.*, 2015), animals and humans (Conway *et al.*,  
49 2014). The abundance and diversity of insect viruses, combined with the  
50 extensive morbidity and mortality they cause, make viral infections potentially  
51 powerful determinants of insect population dynamics and evolution (Dwyer *et*  
52 *al.*, 2004; Obbard *et al.*, 2006; Wilfert *et al.*, 2016).

53

54 Much of our knowledge of insect immune responses to viral infections has come  
55 from work using the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*, where the focus has been  
56 on elucidating the genetics underlying antiviral immunity (Dostert *et al.*, 2005;  
57 Huszar & Imler, 2008; Kemp & Imler, 2009; Sabin *et al.*, 2010; Magwire *et al.*,  
58 2012). Several RNA viruses have been described and investigated in this context,  
59 including Nora virus (Habayeb *et al.*, 2009), Drosophila A virus (DAV)(Ambrose  
60 *et al.*, 2009), Flock House Virus (FHV) (Scotti *et al.*, 1983) and Drosophila C Virus  
61 (DCV) (Jousset *et al.*, 1977), a horizontally transmitted ssRNA virus in the  
62 *Dicistroviridae* family (Huszar & Imler, 2008). Initial investigations of DCV  
63 infection found that it replicates in the fly's reproductive and digestive tissues  
64 (Lautié-Harivel & Thomas-Orillard, 1990) and that infection results in  
65 accelerated larval development but also causes mortality (Thomas-Orillard,  
66 1984; Gomariz-Zilber *et al.*, 1995). More recent work has shown that systemic  
67 infection with elevated concentrations of DCV causes pathology within the fly's

68 food storage organ, the crop, leading to intestinal obstruction, lower metabolic  
69 rate and reduced locomotor activity (Arnold *et al.*, 2013; Chtarbanova *et al.*,  
70 2014). There is also considerable genetic variation in fly survival when  
71 challenged systemically with DCV, which appears to be controlled by few genes  
72 of large effect (Magwire *et al.*, 2012).

73

74 While this level of detail concerning the physiological consequences and the  
75 underlying genetics of infection is remarkable, it is important to recognize that  
76 our knowledge of viral infections comes almost entirely from experimental  
77 infections that challenge model systems, such as *Drosophila*, with artificially high  
78 viral concentrations during systemic infections. Even in cases where natural  
79 routes of infection have been investigated (Gomariz-Zilber *et al.*, 1995; Ferreira  
80 *et al.*, 2014; Stevanovic & Johnson, 2015; Vale & Jardine, 2015), these have often  
81 been achieved by using much higher doses than flies are likely to encounter in  
82 the wild in order to cause significant mortality. Highly lethal systemic or oral  
83 infections have been useful in unravelling broad antiviral immune mechanisms  
84 (Dostert *et al.*, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2006; Kemp & Imler, 2009; Nayak *et al.*, 2013;  
85 Karlikow *et al.*, 2014), but it is unlikely that the morbidity and mortality they  
86 cause is an accurate reflection of the level of disease experienced by flies in the  
87 wild, where viral infections appear to be widespread among many species of  
88 *Drosophila* as low level persistent infections with apparently little pathology  
89 (Kapun *et al.*, 2010; Webster *et al.*, 2015). Our understanding of the fitness costs  
90 of viral infection in *Drosophila* is therefore severely limited, which is striking  
91 given the evidence from population genetic data that viruses are major drivers of

92 adaptive evolution in *Drosophila* immune genes (Obbard *et al.*, 2006, 2009; Early  
93 *et al.*, 2016).

94

95 To gain a better understanding of the potential fitness costs of DCV infection, we  
96 measured the physiological and behavioural responses of flies challenged with  
97 either a low, sub-lethal concentration of DCV through the oral route of infection  
98 or when exposed to a range of sub-lethal viral concentrations systemically  
99 through intra-thoracic injury. We focused on traits that have been previously  
100 shown to be affected by DCV infection such as survival, fecal excretion, and  
101 locomotor activity, as well as female reproductive output, which is ultimately  
102 important for evolutionary fitness. We find that even apparently benign, sub-  
103 lethal infections can cause significant physiological and behavioural morbidity  
104 that is relevant to fly fitness, and that these effects vary according to viral  
105 concentration, host genetic background and sex.

106

107

## 108 MATERIAL AND METHODS

### 109 *Fly lines and rearing conditions*

110 In experiment 1 (systemic DCV infection) we used *Drosophila melanogaster* line  
111 *G9a<sup>+/+</sup>* described previously (Merkling *et al.*, 2015), kindly provided by R. van Rij  
112 (Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL). This line was maintained on standard Lewis  
113 Cornmeal medium (Lewis, 2014) under standard laboratory conditions at 25°C,  
114 12h: 12h Light:Dark cycle. Experimental flies were generated by setting up 20  
115 replicate Lewis vials with 15 males and 15 females to mate and lay eggs for 24  
116 hours. Three-to-four-day-old adults that eclosed from the eggs laid during this  
117 period were infected systemically (see below) and then followed individually for  
118 health measures.

119

120 In experiment 2 (oral DCV exposure) we used ten *D. melanogaster* lines from the  
121 *Drosophila* Genetic Reference Panel (DGRP): RAL-83, RAL-91, RAL-158, RAL-  
122 237, RAL-287, RAL-317, RAL-358, RAL-491, RAL-732, and RAL-821. Given we  
123 had no prior knowledge of how the DGRP panel vary in response to oral DCV  
124 infection, these lines were chosen randomly. All lines were previously cleared of  
125 *Wolbachia* and have been maintained *Wolbachia*-free for at least 3 years. Fly  
126 stocks were kept at a density of 30 individuals in bottles on standard Lewis  
127 medium at 24.5± 0.5°C. Flies were allowed to mate and lay eggs for three days  
128 and then removed. When eggs had developed into three-day old imagoes, we  
129 picked 16 male and 16 female flies at random from each DGRP line (320 flies in  
130 total). Half of these flies (n=8 replicates) were individually exposed to DCV  
131 through the oral route of infection (see details below) and the other half were  
132 exposed to a sterile Ringers solution (7.2 g/L NaCl; 0.17 g/L CaCl<sub>2</sub>; 0.37 g/L KCl,

133 diluted in sterile water, pH 7.4) as a control (n=8 replicates). Following infection,  
134 all flies were kept individually in vials kept in incubators at 24.5°C ± 0.5 with a  
135 12h:12h light:dark cycle for the remainder of the experiment. Vials were  
136 randomized within trays to reduce any positional effects within incubators.

137

### 138 *DCV stock and culturing*

139 The *Drosophila C Virus* (DCV) isolate used in both experiments was originally  
140 isolated in Charolles, France (Jousset *et al.*, 1977), and was produced in  
141 *Drosophila* line 2 (DL2) cells as described previously (Longdon *et al.*, 2013; Vale  
142 & Jardine, 2015). Infectivity of the virus was calculated by measuring cytopathic  
143 effects in DL2 cells using the Reed-Muench end-point method to calculate the  
144 Tissue Culture Infective Dose 50 (TCID<sub>50</sub>) (Reed & Muench, 1938). The DCV stock  
145 used in this experiment had an infectivity of approximately 4x10<sup>9</sup> DCV infectious  
146 units (IU)/mL. This stock culture was serially diluted to achieve the desired  
147 concentrations (approximately 10<sup>2</sup> 10<sup>3</sup> and 10<sup>5</sup> DCV IU/mL for systemic infection  
148 and 10<sup>5</sup> DCV IU/mL for oral infection) and kept at -80°C until needed.

149

### 150 *Systemic DCV infection and viral titers*

151 We exposed 20 individual male and female flies to each of 4 viral concentrations  
152 (160 flies in total)– 0 (control), 10<sup>2</sup>, 10<sup>3</sup> and 10<sup>5</sup> DCV IU/ml, obtained by serial  
153 diluting the viral stock with 10mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.3). Flies were infected  
154 systemically by intra-thoracic pricking with a needle immersed in DCV  
155 suspension under light CO<sub>2</sub> anesthesia. Control flies were pricked with a needle  
156 dipped in sterile 10mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.3). An additional five individuals for each  
157 sex/dose combination were infected as described above to quantify DCV within

158 flies following infection, using the expression of DCV RNA. Flies were individually  
159 placed in TRI reagent (Ambion) following five days of infection (5 DPI),  
160 homogenized total RNA was extracted using Direct-zol RNA miniprep kit, which  
161 includes a DNase step (Zymo Research), reverse-transcribed with M-MLV  
162 reverse transcriptase (Promega) and random hexamer primers, and then diluted  
163 1:2 with nuclease-free water. qRT-PCR was performed on an Applied Biosystems  
164 StepOnePlus system using Fast SYBR Green Master Mix (Applied Biosystems)  
165 and DCV primers, which include 5'-AT rich flaps to improve RT-PCR fluorescent  
166 signal (Afonina *et al.*, 2007) (DCV\_Forward: 5'  
167 AATAAATCATAAGCCACTGTGATTGATACAACAGAC 3'; DCV\_Reverse:  
168 AATAAATCATAAGAAGCAGGATACTTCTTCCAAACC). We measured the relative  
169 fold change in DCV RNA relative to *rp49*, (Dmel\_rp49 Forward: 5'  
170 ATGCTAAGCTGTCGCACAAATG 3' ; Dmel\_rp49 Reverse: 5'  
171 GTTCGATCCGTAACCGATGT  
172 3'). an internal *Drosophila* control gene, calculated as  $2^{-\Delta\Delta Ct}$  (Livak & Schmittgen,  
173 2001).

174

#### 175 *Oral DCV exposure*

176 In separate pilot infections, we determined that a DCV culture diluted to contain  
177 approximately  $10^5$  DCV RNA copies was enough to establish a viable infection  
178 (Figure S1), but did not cause noticeable mortality, and we used this dilution of  
179 DCV stock to inoculate all ten DGRP lines. Individual flies were exposed to DCV in  
180 vials containing Agar (5% sugar) using 3mL plastic atomizer spray bottles  
181 containing 2mL of the sub-lethal DCV dilution. One spray, releasing roughly 50 $\mu$ L  
182 of DCV dilution (or sterile Ringer's solution), was deployed into each vial. Flies



183 were left in the these 'exposure vials' for three days to allow them to ingest the  
184 viral solution during feeding and grooming, and then tipped into vials containing  
185 clean, blue-dyed Lewis medium (see below).

186

#### 187 *Survival following infection*

188 Both systemically and orally infected flies were housed individually following  
189 infection in vials containing Lewis medium. In the systemic infection experiment,  
190 flies were monitored daily for mortality for 38 days post-infection and were  
191 transferred to fresh food vials once a week. In the oral infection experiment, flies  
192 were transferred to fresh food vials every 3-4 days, and mortality was recorded  
193 at this point for the first 32 days post infection and then daily until 40 DPI (oral  
194 infection).

195

#### 196 *Fecal excretion following oral DCV exposure*

197 Following the exposure period, flies were tipped into vials containing blue-dyed  
198 Lewis medium. Blue medium was prepared by adding 0.5g/L FIORI COLORI  
199 brilliant blue FCF E133 granules to standard Lewis medium. Flies remained on  
200 blue Lewis food for the remainder of the experiment and were tipped to new  
201 blue Lewis vials every three to four days. When flies were tipped to new vials,  
202 the old vials were kept for fecal spot counts (measured immediately) and  
203 fecundity measures (see below). Fecal spots were recorded by photographing  
204 vials with a Leica S8APO microscope. A slip of white printer paper (2.5cm x  
205 8.5cm) was inserted into each vial to ensure only spots on one side of the vial  
206 were being photographed. These images were then analyzed with ICY image  
207 software (Version 1.6.1.1 ICY - Bio Imaging Analysis) and fecal spots were

208 counted using 'spot detection' analysis on a 2cm x 4cm region of interest. Each  
209 image was checked individually for miscounts, and miscounted spots were  
210 removed. Fecal excretion was recorded for 30 days following infection.

211

### 212 *Fecundity*

213 The fecundity of individual flies was measured by counting viable offspring  
214 emerging in the vials they were reared in, which happened weekly until day 30 post  
215 infection in the systemically infected flies, and every 3-4 days in the orally  
216 infected flies, for 28 days following exposure to DCV. Short-term fecundity  
217 estimates have been shown to be well correlated with lifetime reproduction in  
218 *Drosophila* (Nguyen & Moehring, 2015) Vials that individuals were tipped from  
219 (and following the recording of fecal shedding in the oral infection experiment),  
220 were placed in the incubators at  $24.5^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 0.5$  with a 12h:12h light:dark cycle to  
221 allow any offspring to develop. After 14 days, the total number of living emerged  
222 adult offspring within each vial was recorded as a measure of female fecundity.

223

### 224 *Activity*

225 Locomotor activity was measured using the *Drosophila* Activity Monitor (DAM2,  
226 Trikinetics) as described previously (Pfeiffenberger *et al.*, 2010; Vale & Jardine,  
227 2015). In the DAM, individual fly activity is recorded when individually housed  
228 flies break an infrared beam passing through a transparent plastic tube placed  
229 symmetrically inside a DAM unit. Activity was measured in a separate  
230 experiment on flies reared and exposed to DCV as described above. In  
231 systemically infected flies, activity was measured on 10 replicate male flies for  
232 each DCV dose the day following septic injury (40 flies in total), and measured

233 for 2 weeks following infection. In the oral infection experiment, activity was  
234 recorded for 24 hours, fourteen days after the initial oral exposure. These  
235 differences in the timing of activity measurements arise from the faster and more  
236 severe effects of systemic infections on locomotor behavior, while we have found  
237 that effects on activity following oral infection take longer to manifest, and  
238 become apparent 10-15 days after DCV ingestion (Vale & Jardine, 2015). Four  
239 replicate flies for each DGRP (10 lines) / sex (M/F) / infection (DCV/Control)  
240 combination were tested (160 flies in total). In both experiments, flies were  
241 placed individually in a single DAM tube containing a small agar plug on one end,  
242 and allocated a slot in one of five DAM unit (each unit can house a maximum of  
243 32 tubes). At least one slot in each DAM unit was filled with an empty tube and at  
244 least two slots were left empty as negative controls. All DAM units were placed in  
245 the incubator (25 °C 12:12 light:dark cycle) and continuous activity data was  
246 collected every minute for 24 hours. Raw activity data was processed using the  
247 DAM System File Scan Software ([www.trikinetics.com](http://www.trikinetics.com)) and the resulting data  
248 was manipulated using R v. 3.1.3 (The R Foundation for Statistical Computing,  
249 Vienna, Austria). Flies that died during the DAM assay (6/40 flies in the systemic  
250 infection experiment; 25/160 in the oral infection experiment) were removed  
251 from the analysis because they would wrongly bias the estimate of activity.

252

### 253 *Data analysis*

254 All analyses were carried out in JMP 12 (SAS). Survival data was analyzed on the  
255 'day of death' using a Cox Proportional Hazards models in with 'fly sex' and 'DCV  
256 exposure' and their interaction as fixed effects (systemic infection experiment)  
257 or 'fly sex', fly 'line' and 'DCV dose' and their interactions as fixed effects (oral

258 infection experiment). In the systemic infection, DCV titers were  $\text{Log}_{10}$ -  
259 transformed and analyzed in a linear model with 'DCV Dose' and 'Sex' and their  
260 interaction as fixed effects. Fecundity following systemic infection was calculated  
261 on the cumulative number of emerged offspring in a model containing 'DCV dose'  
262 as a fixed effect. In the oral exposure experiment, the cumulative number of  
263 offspring was analyzed in a model including 'Fly line' and 'DCV exposure' and  
264 their interaction as fixed effects. Total excretion per fly was analyzed using a  
265 linear model with 'Fly line', 'DCV exposure', and 'sex' as categorical fixed effects,  
266 'Time' as a continuous covariate, and all pair-wise interactions. Activity was  
267 analyzed as the total number of DAM beam breaks recorded per day. Activity  
268 following systemic infection was analyzed in a linear model with 'DCV dose' and  
269 'Time' as fixed effects. Activity following oral infection was measured for 24h and  
270 analyzed in a linear model with 'Fly line', 'Sex' and 'DCV exposure' as fixed  
271 effects. In all analyses, individual replicate was included as a random factor, and  
272 in all cases accounted for only 2-5% of the total variance.

273

## 274 **RESULTS**

### 275 ***Experiment 1: Sub-lethal systemic infection***

276 In a first experiment, we tested how systemic infection with very low sub-lethal  
277 doses of DCV affected fly health. The survival of both female and male flies  
278 exposed to doses of  $10^2$  and  $10^3$  DCV IU/ ml did not differ from control flies that  
279 had been pricked with sterile buffer solution (Figure 1a). In females, 100% flies  
280 exposed to these doses survived infection during the 38-day survival assay,  
281 while roughly 20% of males died during this period (Figure 1a). However, this  
282 difference in survival between sexes ('sex' effect, Table 1), was also observed in  
283 control flies and therefore is likely to reflect sex-specific responses to injury  
284 during intra-thoracic pricking than to infection. Flies infected with a slightly  
285 higher concentration of  $10^5$  DCV IU/ ml died significantly faster than control  
286 flies. This virus concentration-specific pattern of mortality was generally  
287 consistent with the observed DCV titers measured 5 days following infection,  
288 (Table 2, 'dose' effect) which were generally higher in male flies across all DCV  
289 concentrations (Table 2, 'sex' effect, Figure 1b). Our experiment therefore  
290 spanned the range of sub-lethal viral doses, with  $10^5$  DCV IU/ ml being the  
291 lowest virus concentration with lethality in the experiment (Figure 1a).

292

### 293 ***Fecundity following systemic DCV infection***

294 We used mated females, which allowed us to quantify fly reproductive health  
295 during systemic infection by following the number of adult offspring produced  
296 by individual females for 30 days following infection. The total fecundity  
297 measured during this period varied according to the dose females had received  
298 ( $F_{3,66} = 10.32$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) and we observed that the total reproduction of infected

299 flies was higher than control flies, and increased in a dose-specific manner  
300 (Figure 1c).

301

### 302 *Activity following systemic DCV infection*

303 The locomotor activity of individual male flies infected systemically with all sub-  
304 lethal concentrations of DCV was measured during 18 days after infection in a  
305 Trikinetics® Drosophila Activity Monitor (DAM). All flies included in the analysis  
306 remained alive for the whole period, so changes in activity were not confounded  
307 with potential death of individual flies. We found that flies in all treatments,  
308 including uninfected controls, showed a reduction in activity over the course of  
309 the activity assay (Figure 1d, Table time effect). This general effect is not  
310 especially surprising given the constrained environment experienced by flies in  
311 the DAM tubes, and that the only source of nutrition and hydration is small agar  
312 plug. However, our analysis showed that the temporal reduction in activity  
313 depended on the dose that flies had received ('time x dose' interaction, Table 1).  
314 In the early stages of infection flies receiving the higher of the 4 doses ( $10^3$  and  
315  $10^5$  DCV copies) showed a reduction in activity relative to control flies and those  
316 receiving the lowest dose. Over time, a reduction in locomotor activity was most  
317 apparent in flies infected with the highest dose of  $10^5$  DCV copies (Figure 1d).

318

### 319 ***Experiment 2: Sub-lethal gut infection***

320 In a separate experiment, we tested how exposure to a single sub-lethal dose of  
321 DCV through the oral route of infection impacted upon fly health. We conducted  
322 the experiment on ten fly lines from the DGRP panel (Mackay *et al.*, 2012) and we  
323 included both male and female flies to test for the effects of host genetic

324 background and sex in response to sub-lethal oral infection. While DGRP lines  
325 differ in their lifespan in the absence of infection (Durham *et al.*, 2014), we did  
326 not detect any difference between DGRP lines or between sexes in their survival  
327 during oral DCV infection compared to control flies (Table S1) which, as  
328 expected, was generally non-lethal across all lines.

329

330

331

332 *Fecundity following oral exposure to DCV*

333 Despite not observing any effects on fly survival during infection, we detected  
334 significant variation in reproductive health following exposure to DCV. The total  
335 fecundity of females during the 28 days following oral exposure to DCV (or a  
336 control inoculum) varied significantly between DGRP lines (Figure 2; Table 2),  
337 reflecting well-known genetic differences in the lifetime reproductive output of  
338 these lines (Durham *et al.*, 2014). In addition, we found line-specific fecundity  
339 responses to DCV infection ('infection status x line', Table 2, see also Table S2 for  
340 pairwise contrasts). In some lines (158, 491, 317) low-level oral infection  
341 resulted in a decrease in fecundity; in other lines (821, 358) there was no  
342 detectable effect of DCV exposure; while in 2 lines we detected significant  
343 increases in fecundity in DCV infected flies compared to uninfected control flies  
344 of the same genetic background (Figure 2; see Table S2 for least-square pairwise  
345 contrasts).

346

347 *Locomotor activity following oral exposure to DCV*

348 Overall, DGRP lines differed in their activity in a sex specific way ('Fly line x Sex'  
349 effect Table 2), but these differences were not altered by infection. While we  
350 detected a reduction in locomotor activity following systemic infection (Figure  
351 1d), we did not detect any effect of oral DCV exposure on the overall activity of  
352 flies (Table 2, Figure 3).

353

#### 354 *Fecal excretion following oral exposure to DCV*

355 We quantified fecal excretion for 30 days following DCV exposure as a proxy for  
356 gut health, by counting fecal spots excreted into vials after ingestion of blue-dyed  
357 food. Overall we found that males showed higher levels of fecal excretion  
358 compared to females (Table 2, 'sex' effect; Figure 4) and that DCV infection was  
359 associated with a general reduction in fecal excretion throughout the 30-day  
360 observation period ('Infection status' effect, Figure 4). However, we found that  
361 males and females differed in the overall severity of this reduction ('sex x  
362 infection status' effect), with males showing a greater reduction in defecation  
363 overall (Figure 4). Furthermore, we found significant variation among the DGRP  
364 lines in the magnitude of the effect of DCV on fecal excretion ('fly line x infection  
365 status' effect).



366 **DISCUSSION**

367

368 We find that sub-lethal infections with DCV can cause measurable morbidity that  
369 is relevant for the fitness costs experienced by *D. melanogaster* during DCV  
370 infection. In systemic and oral infections with doses that did not cause mortality  
371 we observed DCV-induced effects on fly reproductive output, digestive health,  
372 and locomotor activity.

373

374 *Systemically infected flies increase reproductive output*

375 We found that the fly line used in the systemic infection experiment showed an  
376 increase in reproductive output when infected with sub-lethal doses of DCV.  
377 There are numerous examples from both invertebrates and vertebrates of  
378 fecundity increases following infection (Bonneaud *et al.*, 2004; Vale & Little,  
379 2012; Leventhal *et al.*, 2014; Vézilier *et al.*, 2015). In addition, earlier work  
380 reported that DCV infection could increase ovariole number and decrease  
381 development time in *D. melanogaster* (Thomas-Orillard, 1984; Gomariz-Zilber &  
382 Thomas-Orillard, 1993). However, a subsequent re-analysis of these data showed  
383 very weak support for the beneficial effects of DCV infection (Longdon, 2015). It  
384 is notable however that neither of the earlier studies measured the number of  
385 viable offspring of infected flies compared to healthy ones. The fecundity data we  
386 report therefore suggests that DCV may indeed result in increased reproductive  
387 output.

388

389 A dose-dependent increase in fecundity could suggest a direct effect of DCV  
390 infecting fly ovaries, but it is unclear why such a strategy would be adaptive for

391 the virus. An alternative hypothesis may instead involve more complex  
392 interactions between the allocation of resources during DCV infection, and how  
393 they relate to fly nutritional stress and reproductive investment. For example, *D.*  
394 *melanogaster* females selected under conditions of nutritional stress were found  
395 to produce a greater number of ovarioles, while the offspring of starved mothers  
396 also exhibited greater investment in reproduction (Wayne *et al.*, 2006). Similar  
397 to the studies cited above, this work also focused on ovariole number and egg  
398 production, and did not quantify female lifetime fecundity. Given that DCV  
399 infection is known to lead to intestinal obstruction, one possibility for the  
400 increase in the number of adult offspring we observed in infected flies is that  
401 DCV-induced nutritional stress leads to a greater production of ovarioles, and  
402 consequently, an increased number of offspring. Given we only tested a single fly  
403 line however, it important to note that this response may not be universal. As we  
404 discuss below fecundity responses to infection have generally been found to  
405 differ between host genotypes (Vale & Little, 2012; Parker *et al.*, 2014)

406

#### 407 *Fecundity costs and benefits of DCV infection are genotype-specific*

408 Similar to systemically infected flies (Figure 1c), we also find evidence for  
409 fecundity benefits in orally exposed flies, but these benefits were only revealed  
410 in two out of the ten genetic backgrounds we tested. Indeed, in three of the  
411 tested lines, DCV infection resulted in lower reproductive output. Taking  
412 fecundity as a proxy for evolutionary fitness, the existence of genotype specific  
413 fitness costs and benefits means that DCV could be a potentially powerful driver  
414 of *D. melanogaster* evolutionary dynamics. Previous analyses of *Drosophila* spp.  
415 population genetic data have shown that the fastest evolving *D. melanogaster*

416 genes are those involved in RNAi-based antiviral defense (Obbard *et al.*, 2006,  
417 2009; Early *et al.*, 2016), but the DCV-induced fitness costs that drive this rapid  
418 evolution in wild-infected flies (where infections are persistent and often non-  
419 lethal), has remained obscure. These data suggest that genotype-specific  
420 fecundity costs and benefits of DCV infection could potentially mediate the arms-  
421 race between flies and viruses.

422

423 *Systemically infected flies show a dose-dependent decline in activity over time*

424 Reduced activity, or lethargy, following infection is a common response to  
425 infection across a range of taxa (Hart, 1988; Adelman & Martin, 2009; Sullivan *et*  
426 *al.*, 2016). The most obvious explanation for reduced activity is simply that  
427 infected individuals are sick, and lethargy reflects the underlying pathology of  
428 infection (Moore, 2013). A popular alternative explanation is that infection-  
429 induced lethargy evolved as an adaptive host strategy that conserves energy,  
430 which may then be allocated to other physiological tasks such as mounting an  
431 immune response (Hart, 1988; Adelman & Martin, 2009).

432

433 Support for the adaptive nature of these ‘sickness behaviours’ has come mainly  
434 from vertebrate species challenged with deactivated pathogens or their derived  
435 components, which are sufficient to stimulate an immune response without  
436 causing pathology (Adelman & Martin, 2009; Lopes *et al.*, 2016). In addition to  
437 vertebrates, sickness behaviors including lethargy and anorexia have also been  
438 described in insect hosts (Ayres & Schneider, 2009; Kazlauskas *et al.*, 2016;  
439 Sullivan *et al.*, 2016). However, in the current experiment it is not possible to  
440 disentangle the effect of an adaptive sickness behavior from the direct effect of

441 pathology caused by replicating DCV. Regardless of the underlying cause of  
442 reduced activity, it is likely to come at an additional cost of lower involvement in  
443 fitness-enhancing activities such as foraging, competing for resources with  
444 conspecifics, or courtship and mating (Adelman & Martin, 2009; Adamo *et al.*,  
445 2015; Vale & Jardine, 2016). Further, reduced activity following infection can  
446 also reduce the potential for disease spread (Lopes *et al.*, 2016). In the context of  
447 understanding sub-lethal DCV infection in an ecological setting, reduced activity  
448 may therefore be a potentially important source of DCV-induced fitness costs  
449 and benefits.

450

451 We did not find an effect of oral DCV exposure on fly activity. Previous work has  
452 shown that *Drosophila*, especially females, show a reduction in activity following  
453 oral infection with DCV (Vale & Jardine, 2015). However, the viral concentration  
454 that flies were exposed to in that experiment was at least 1000x higher, so it is  
455 likely that in the current experiment flies did not ingest virus in quantities large  
456 enough to affect locomotor activity.

457

458 *The severity of DCV-induced digestive dysfunction is sex-specific*

459 Previous work has shown that DCV infection results in digestive dysfunction,  
460 leading to increased body mass due to the inability to excrete digested food  
461 (Arnold *et al.*, 2013; Chtarbanova *et al.*, 2014). We found that this measure of gut  
462 health varied between genotypes and also between sexes. Extensive genetic  
463 variation for gut immune-competence has previously been reported in the DGRP  
464 panel (Bou Sleiman *et al.*, 2015), which could underlie some of the variation we  
465 observe in DCV-associated digestive dysfunction in some lines. Although that

466 study focused on enteric infection with entomopathogenic bacteria, the  
467 mechanisms that mediate variation in gut health during infection include general  
468 processes of gut damage and repair, such as the production of reactive oxygen  
469 species (ROS) and the production of intestinal stem cells during epithelial repair  
470 (Buchon *et al.*, 2013). It is plausible that these mechanisms also mediate disease  
471 severity during enteric virus infection, but we are unaware of any systematic  
472 study of genetic variation in gut immune-competence during viral infection.

473

474 The mechanistic basis of the observed sex differences in fecal excretion is less  
475 clear. The Malpighian tubules are the main organ involved in osmoregulation and  
476 excretion of waste matter in insects (Dow & Davies, 2001). *D. melanogaster* male  
477 and female Malpighian tubules have been shown to differ at the transcriptional  
478 level with over 18% of genes (2308 genes) showing sex-specific expression  
479 (Huylmans & Parsch, 2014). We measured fecal excretion by quantifying fecal  
480 spots on the sides of the vials. Given that females are known to also spend more  
481 time feeding (Wong *et al.*, 2009), it is possible that females also defecate more  
482 on the surface of the food compared to males, and therefore spend less time on  
483 the sides of the vials. Only a few studies have investigated sex differences in fecal  
484 excretion in *D. melanogaster*, finding inconsistent patterns of excretion between  
485 sexes (Zeng *et al.*, 2011; Urquhart-Cronish & Sokolowski, 2014). The link  
486 between fecal excretion and fitness is not as clear as with fecundity or locomotor  
487 activity, but it is relevant in the context of disease transmission of fecal-orally  
488 transmitted pathogens such as DCV. The study of temporal trends in fecal  
489 excretion and how they vary with host sex and genetic background may

490 therefore be used as a useful model to understand the sources of heterogeneity  
491 in pathogen shedding (Vale *et al.*, 2013).

492

#### 493 *Concluding remarks*

494 Altogether, these measures of sub-lethal morbidity give insight into the potential  
495 fitness costs of low-level, persistent DCV infection in *Drosophila*. More generally,  
496 the combination of both positive and negative effects on fly fitness effects  
497 according to the specific host genetic background presents a non-trivial  
498 evolutionary scenario for host immune defense (Gandon & Vale, 2014). For  
499 instance, frequent encounters between beneficial symbionts and detrimental  
500 pathogens are hypothesized to have played a role in the evolution of aphid  
501 immune systems, which lack several components of the IMD immune pathway  
502 critical for the recognition and elimination of Gram-negative bacteria (Gerardo *et*  
503 *al.*, 2010). The combination of fitness costs and benefits of infection, such as  
504 those incurred during DCV infection, may therefore have driven the evolution of  
505 immune defense across a wide range of host taxa, from insects to mammals  
506 (Elsik, 2010; Gerardo *et al.*, 2010; Lee & Mazmanian, 2010; Gandon & Vale,  
507 2014).

508

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707 **Tables**

**Table 1 - Systemic infection**

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<i>Survival</i>	<b>DF</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p-value</b>
DCV concentration	4	45.24	0.0001
Sex	1	8.37	0.0038
DCV concentration $\times$ Sex	2	8.26	0.0161

<i>Viral titer</i>	<b>DF</b>	<b>F Ratio</b>	<b>p-value</b>
DCV concentration	3	3.14	0.0399
Sex	1	7.34	0.0111
DCV concentration $\times$ Sex	3	1.35	0.2776

<i>Activity per day</i>			
Time (DPI)	1	290.68	0.0001
DCV concentration	3	5.17	0.0016
Time (DPI) $\times$ DCV concentration	3	5.51	0.001

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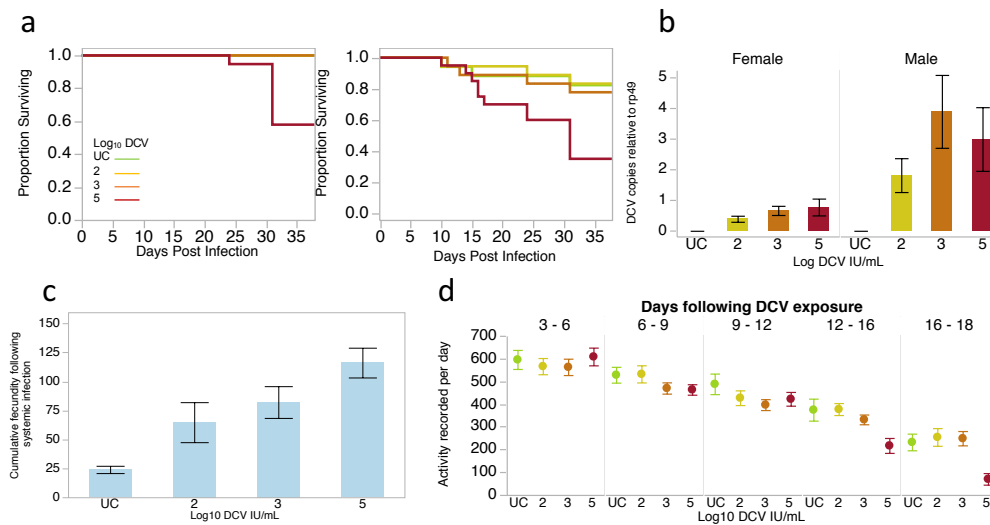
**Table 2 - Oral infection**

	<b>DF</b>	<b>F Ratio</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b><i>Fecundity</i></b>			
DGRP Line	9	16.17	<.0001
DCV exposure	1	0.99	0.3186
DGRP Line × DCV exposure	9	2.59	0.0076
<b><i>Activity per day</i></b>			
DGRP Line	9	2.91	0.0037
Sex	1	0.02	0.8947
DCV exposure	1	1.45	0.2315
DGRP Line × Sex	9	2.18	0.0277
DGRP Line × DCV exposure	9	0.67	0.7352
Sex × DCV exposure	1	0.12	0.7244
<b><i>Fecal excretion</i></b>			
DGRP Line	9	32.17	0.0001
Sex	1	212.66	0.0001
Time (DPI)	1	29.95	0.0001
DCV exposure	1	72.83	0.0001
DGRP Line × DCV exposure	9	4.46	0.0001
Sex × DCV exposure	1	13.45	0.0003
Time (DPI) × DCV exposure	1	0.23	0.6295
DGRP Line × Sex	9	31.22	0.0001
DGRP Line × Time (DPI)	9	1.28	0.2405
Sex × Time (DPI)	1	0.06	0.806

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Figure 1

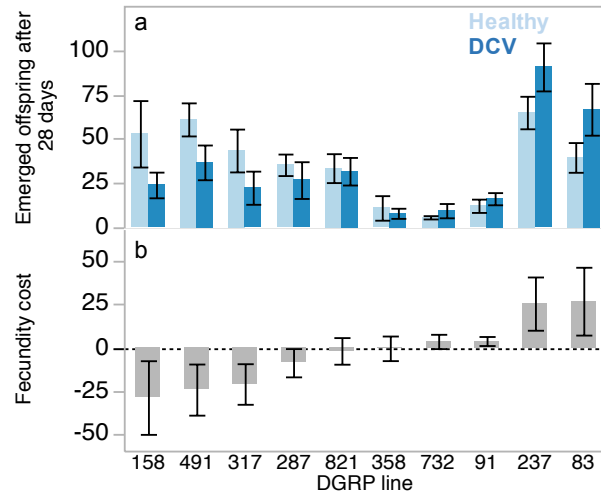


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712 **Figure 1.** Sub-lethal systemic infection. 1a. Kaplan-Meier curves showing the  
713 survival of 20 replicate flies exposed systemically to sub-lethal concentrations of  
714 DCV. 1b. DCV titers measured in male and female flies relative to an internal  
715 control gene (rp49), following 3 days of systemic infection with sub-lethal  
716 concentrations of DCV. For each DCV concentration, data are the average of  
717 duplicate qPCR reactions for 5 individual flies. 1c. Total fecundity recorded for  
718 30 days following systemic infection in mated females. Data are the means  $\pm$  SE  
719 of 18-19 replicate female flies. 1d. Daily locomotor activity of male flies  
720 following systemic infection with DCV. Data are 3 day averages of 7-10 replicate  
721 flies for each inoculation concentration. UC are uninfected controls.

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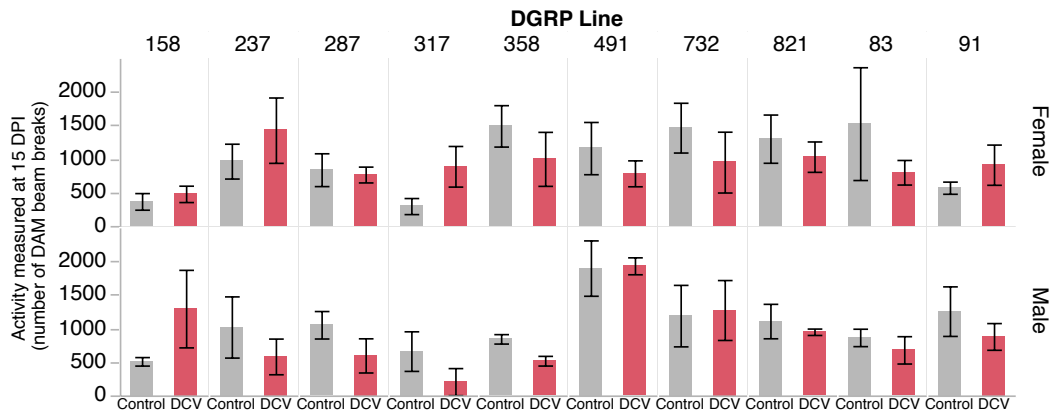
725 **Figure 2.** Fecundity following oral DCV exposure. 2a. The cumulative number of  
726 adult offspring from healthy (light bars) or DCV-exposed (dark bars) single  
727 female flies over the course of the 28-day experiment. 2b. Shows the fecundity  
728 difference between healthy and infected flies for the same 10 DRGP lines. In both  
729 plots, DGRP lines are ordered from the greatest decrease to the highest fecundity  
730 increase. Significant pairwise contrasts (reported in Table S2) are indicated by  
731 asterisks. Data are the mean  $\pm$  SE of eight individual replicate females.

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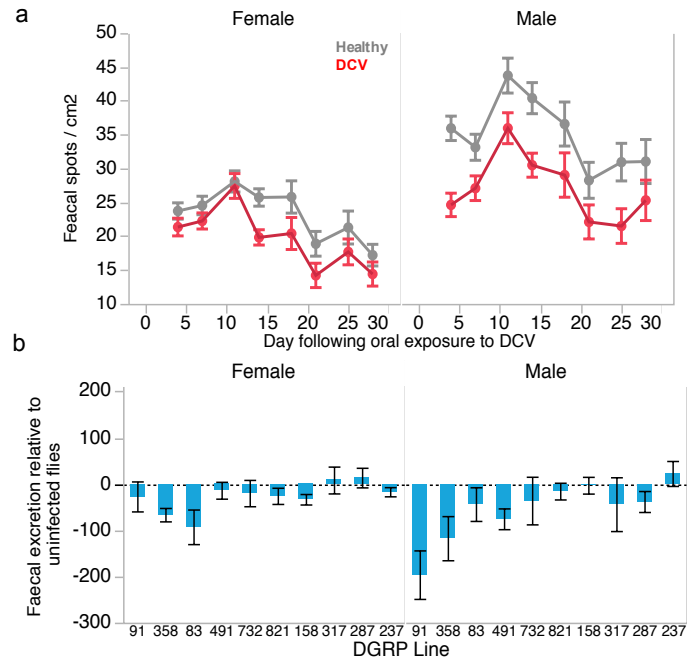
737 **Figure 3.** Locomotor activity following oral DCV exposure. Data show mean  $\pm$  SE

738 activity of four replicate flies per sex and DGRP line, measured for 24 hours 14

739 days following exposure to DCV (red) or uninfected controls (grey).

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743 **Figure 4.** Fecal excretion following oral DCV exposure. 4a. The general effect of  
744 DCV exposure (red) or a control inoculum (grey) on the number of fecal spots  
745 shed over time. Data are plotted separately for males and females. Each time  
746 point is the mean  $\pm$  SE of 8 replicate individual flies averaged across all 10 DGRP  
747 lines. 4b. Shows the difference between control and infected flies for each DRGP  
748 line. Data are the mean  $\pm$  SE of eight individual replicate flies for each sex and  
749 line combination.

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Supplementary File for

**Costs and benefits of sub-lethal *Drosophila C* Virus infection**

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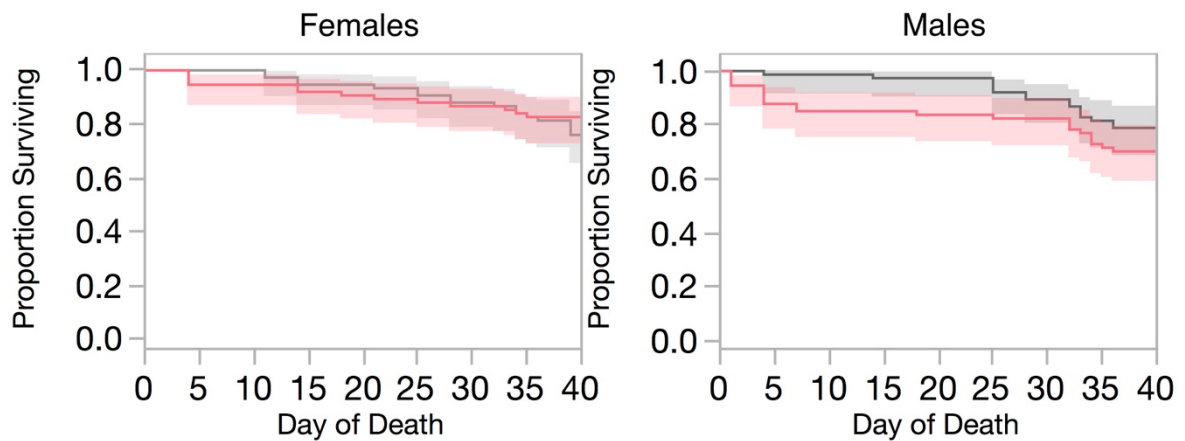
This file contains:

- Table S1. Cox proportional hazards analysis of survival following oral exposure to DCV.
- Table S2. Least Square Means Student's t pairwise contrasts between exposed and control fecundity following oral DCV exposure.
- Figure S1. DCV increases in titer following oral exposure to approximately  $10^5$  DCV copies.

782 **Table S1. Output of Cox proportional hazard model testing variation in**  
 783 **survival following oral infection.**  
 784

Survival during oral infection	DF	$\chi^2$	p-value
DGRP Line	9	3.87084122	0.9197
Sex	1	3.82E-07	0.9995
DGRP Line*Sex	9	2.85864198	0.9696
Infection status	1	4.73E-08	0.9998
DGRP Line* Infection status	9	0.74383375	0.9998
Sex* Infection status	1	1.07E-06	0.9992
DGRP Line*Sex* Infection status	9	0.25051421	1

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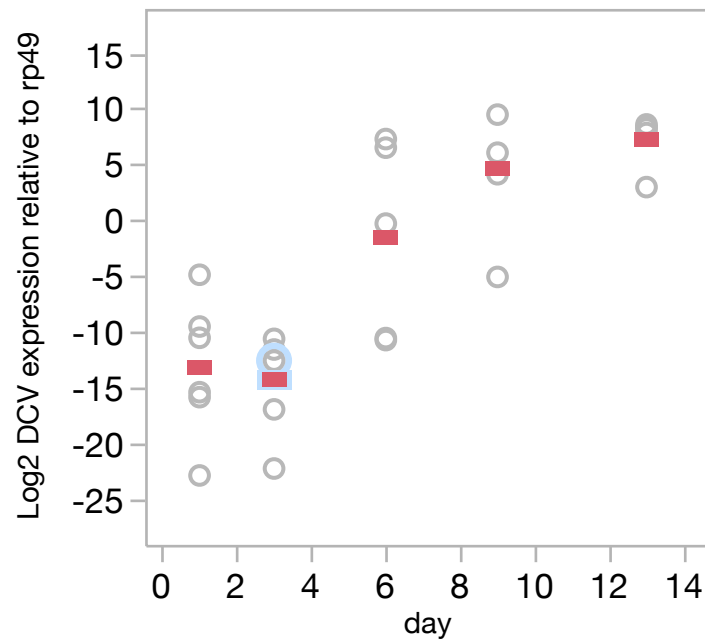


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**Table S2. Least Square Means Student's t pairwise contrasts between exposed and control fecundity following oral DCV exposure**

DGRP line	NumDF	F Ratio	p-value
83	1	5.0178	0.036
91	1	0.2916	0.590
158	1	7.4368	0.007
237	1	5.6287	0.019
287	1	1.0515	0.306
317	1	4.6993	0.042
358	1	0.0525	0.819
491	1	4.7059	0.031
732	1	0.3253	0.569
821	1	0.0813	0.776

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797 **Figure S1.** DCV increases in titer following oral exposure to with approximately  
798  $10^5$  DCV copies ( $F_{1,27} = 57.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This experiment was carried out in *D.*  
799 *melanogaster* OreR. Data show the Log2 DCV expression relative to an internal  
800 *Drosophila* control gene (rp49), measured in six individual female flies at each  
801 time point following exposure. Oral exposure to DCV was carried out as  
802 described in the main text.