1 **Distinct cAMP signaling modalities mediate behavioral flexibility and**

2 **consolidation of social status in *Drosophila* aggression.**

4 Nitin Singh Chouhan, Krithika Mohan and Aurnab Ghose*

7 Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune

8 Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pune 411 008, INDIA

15 * Corresponding author:

16 Aurnab Ghose

17 Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune

18 Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pune 411 008, INDIA

19 Email: aurnab@iiserpune.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Social rituals, like male-male aggression in *Drosophila*, are often stereotyped and its

component behavioral patterns modular. The likelihood of transition from one behavioral

pattern to another is malleable by experience and confers flexibility to the behavioral

repertoire. Experiential modification of innate aggressive behavior in flies alters fighting

strategies during fights and establishes dominant-subordinate relationships. Dominance

hierarchies resulting from agonistic encounters are consolidated to longer lasting social

status-dependent behavioral modifications resulting in a robust loser effect.

We show that cAMP dynamics regulated by *Rut* and *Dnc* but not the neuropeptide *Amn*,

in specific neuronal groups of the mushroom body and central complex, mediate

behavioral plasticity necessary to establish dominant-subordinate relationships. *rut* and

dnc mutant flies are unable to alter fighting strategies and establish dominance

relationships during agonistic interactions. This real time flexibility during a fight is

independent of changes in aggression levels. Longer-term consolidation of social status

in the form of a loser effect, however, requires additional *Amn* neuropeptide mediated

inputs to cAMP signaling and involves a circuit-level association between the α/β and γ

neurons of the mushroom body.

Our findings implicate distinct modalities of cAMP signaling in mediating plasticity of

behavioral patterns in aggressive behavior and in the generation of a temporally stable

memory trace that manifests as a loser effect.

INTRODUCTION

Aggression is a social behavior involving competitive interactions over resources to ensure reproductive success and survival. Conspecific agonistic interactions may result in dominance hierarchies where those at higher levels have better access to resources. The social ritual of *Drosophila* aggression is modular and comprises of stereotyped behavioral patterns analogous to a sequence of fixed action patterns. These sequences are present in full complexity in socially naive animals and appear to be pre-wired in the nervous system (Chen et al., 2002; Lim et al., 2014; Hoopfer, 2016). However, during aggressive encounters, experiential inputs can alter the likelihood of transitions between specific patterns and lead to experience-dependent plasticity (Yurkovic et al., 2006; Trannoy et al., 2016). Initial agonistic interaction between naïve flies constitutes a conditioning phase where male flies employ a combination of offensive and defensive fighting strategies and display real time, experience-dependent plasticity to establish dominant or subordinate status (Chen et al., 2002; Yurkovic et al., 2006). In flies, the learned subordinate social status is consolidated into a long lasting loser effect, resulting in an increased probability of losing agonistic encounters against familiar as well as unfamiliar opponents (Yurkovic et al., 2006; Trannoy and Kravitz, 2016; Trannoy et al., 2016).

Aggression is a complex social behavior influenced by a combinatorial interplay between genetic factors, environmental cues and experience. Population level selection for elevated aggression has implicated several genes, which show significant changes in their expression (Dierick and Greenspan, 2006; Wang et al., 2008; Edwards et al., 2009). However, a single social defeat can lead to the development of a robust loser

effect in such hyperaggressive lines, underscoring the modulatory role of experience in

relation to intrinsic abilities (Penn et al., 2010). While regulatory activities of

pheromones, neuromodulatory agents and neurotransmitters associated with

aggression levels are well documented (Dierick and Greenspan, 2007; Hoyer et al.,

2008; Certel et al., 2010; Wang and Anderson, 2010; Wang et al., 2011; Alekseyenko et

al., 2013; Alekseyenko et al., 2014; Andrews et al., 2014; Luo et al., 2014; Yuan et al.,

2014; Kohl et al., 2015; Hoopfer, 2016), little is known about the neurogenetic

underpinnings of the relevant learning and memory components.

Social experience significantly alters activity of flies and involves both classical and

operant conditioning components (Kamyshev et al., 2002). Experience-dependent

behavioral plasticity has also been observed in courtship conditioning assays where

males, after an unsuccessful mating experience, modulate their courtship behavior

(Siegel and Hall, 1979). Learning and memory in a social environment is likely to be

influenced by several factors, including the combinatorial inputs from multiple sensory

modalities. Consequently, central integration and interpretation of complex input

modalities is likely to involve coordination between multiple neurogenetic circuits.

Previous studies have established the centrality of the cyclic adenosine monophosphate

(cAMP) pathway in the formation of operant and classical conditioned memories and in

integration of sensory inputs (Gailey et al., 1984; Bragina and Kamyshev, 2003; Brembs,

2003; Busto et al., 2010). Several mutations associated with defective learning and

memory have been mapped to the genetic loci of cAMP pathway components (Dudai et

al., 1976; Livingstone et al., 1984; Levin et al., 1992; Feany and Quinn, 1995). In this

study, we implicate the cAMP second messenger pathway in behavioral plasticity during

aggressive encounters and in the development of the loser effect. *Rutabaga* (calcium-

calmodulin-dependent adenylyl cyclase; *Rut*) and *Dunce* (cAMP phosphodiesterase;

Dnc) mutants show compromised behavioral flexibility during agonistic encounters and

are unable to establish dominance hierarchies. Mutants of the neuropeptide *Amnesiac*

(pituitary adenylate cyclase activating polypeptide homologue, PACAP; *Amn*), although

competent in modifying behavioral patterns during fights and establishing hierarchies,

show no loser effect. These studies demonstrate distinct cAMP signaling modalities in

specific neural circuits in mediating behavioral flexibility leading to the establishment of

dominance relationships and in the long-term consolidation of social status.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Fly stocks and maintenance

Canton S (CS), rut^{2080} and amn^{c651} lines were obtained from Dr R. Strauss, University of

Mainz, Germany. dnc^1, rut^{2080};UAS-rut and all Gal4 driver lines were obtained from the

stock center at Bloomington, USA. All fly lines were backcrossed for at least nine

generations. The autosomes of the X-linked cAMP pathway mutant alleles used were

equilibrated to that of the control strain. Stocks were maintained at 25^0C, 60% humidity

and a 14h:10h::light:dark cycle on standard food.

Analysis of aggressive behavior

Freshly eclosed flies were isolated and kept in social isolation for a period of 4-5 days

before testing. Acrylic paint marks on the upper thoracic region was used to identify

individuals. Male – male aggression assays were conducted as described earlier (Chen

et al., 2002) with the modification that they were conducted in a six-well chamber. A

food cup with yeast paste and a headless female was placed inside a six-well plate

chamber. A pair of marked, un-anesthetized, age- and size- matched male flies was

introduced into the chamber through gentle aspiration. All fights were conducted at 25^0C

and 60% humidity and recorded using a Sony DCR-SR47E/S video camera. Fights

between socially naïve flies involved three phases. In the 'fight phase' a pair of naïve

flies was allowed to fight for 60 min, this was followed by a 'rest phase' of 60 min where

flies were returned to their original food vials and finally a 'test phase' where previously

matched flies fought against unfamiliar, naïve opponents for 60 min. SONY PMB

software on Windows OS was used for video playback and the fights were manually

curated. In all cases the analyzer was blind to the genotype of the fly. Fights were

analyzed on basis of encounters that involved physical interactions and lasted at least 3

seconds. Encounters were considered separate if the time interval between them

exceeded 2 seconds. Only fights having at least 20 encounters were included in our

analysis. Winners and losers were designated based on an ethologically characterized

three lunge-three retreat rule (developed in (Yurkovic et al., 2006)). Lunge is defined as

a maneuver where a fly rears up on its hind legs and collapses on the opponent (Chen

et al., 2002; Zwarts et al., 2012). A retreat occurs when a fly, in response to an offensive

action, runs/flies away from the opponent or the food cup (territory) (Chen et al., 2002;

Zwarts et al., 2012). Within a trial, a fly was assigned a status of 'winner' if it used three

continuous lunges (without any interim retreats) and its opponent executed three

corresponding retreats (with no intervening lunges) (Yurkovic et al., 2006). The latter

was designated as a 'loser'.

We analyzed various parameters to investigate aggression in flies across genotypes.

They include: 1. Encounter frequency (encounters per minute measured as total

number of encounters divided by total time of fighting); 2. Aggression vigor index (the

fraction of time spent fighting in first 10 min from the start of the first encounter); 3.

Latency to engage in an encounter (time in seconds from the start of the fight to initiate

the first agonistic interaction that lasts for at least 3 seconds). In the second fights, the

'Draw' outcomes, where 3 Lunge- 3 Retreat rule was not satisfied, were further divided

into three categories based on Penn *et al*. (2010). This categorization was based on

usage of lunges and retreats by experienced loser flies against a naïve opponent. 'High

intensity' draws consisted of experienced loser flies predominantly using lunges while

'low intensity' draws included usage of retreats. Fights in which the flies did not engage

in agonistic interactions were considered as 'no intensity', and categorized as draws. An

experienced loser fly may not readily engage in agonistic interactions against naïve

opponents. This may preclude escalation during fights and result in higher number of

draws. Thus 'high/low intensity' categorization facilitates better assessment of the

status-dependent behavioral changes manifested as the loser effect.

We devised the loser index in order to assess ability of flies to demonstrate the

experience dependent loser effect. The loser index was calculated as a difference

between the numbers of encounters lost to the encounters won divided by the total

number of encounters in the second fight. Within an encounter, if a fly uses aggressive

actions like lunging, boxing (rearing up on hind legs and striking the opponent with

forelegs), holding (rearing up on hind legs and holding the other fly's abdomen), chasing

(running after the opponent) or fencing (extending its leg forward and pushing the other

fly) (Chen et al., 2002; Zwarts et al., 2012) and the other fly responds with a retreat then

the former fly is a 'winner' and the latter a 'loser' in that encounter.

Analysis of locomotor behavior

Locomotor behavior was analyzed using a negative geotaxis assay as described before

(Ali et al., 2011). A group of ten flies, age and size matched, were introduced into a food

vial one day prior to testing. The flies were placed in two head to head joined empty

food vials with a distance of 8 cm marked on the lower vial. Following a gentle tap to get

all the flies to the base of the vial, the number of flies able to climb above the 8 cm mark

in 10 seconds was scored. The experiment was repeated 10 times for each group and

the average pass rate calculated. Three experimental replicates were carried out for

each genotype.

Statistical analysis

Videotapes were analyzed and each encounter was scored for all fighting strategies and

documented on spreadsheets. All statistical analysis was performed using Statistica 8.0

and Graphpad Prism 6.0 statistical software. Various statistical tests were employed to

facilitate our analysis including Chi-square test, one-factor ANOVA and two-factor

repeated measures ANOVA followed by post-hoc Tukey's or Dunnett's multiple

comparisons tests. Specific information on statistics used in each experiment is

included in the figure legends.

RESULTS

The cAMP pathway mediates establishment of hierarchies within a fight

Pairs of male flies demonstrate stereotyped aggressive behavior towards each other

while competing over resources like food or females. These dyadic interactions begin

with low aggression maneuvers like wing threat and fencing, which then escalate to high

aggression strategies like lunging and tussling. This escalation is a consequence of

experience-dependent behavioral transitions, with one fly demonstrating offensive

strategies with increasing frequency against an opponent fly employing more and more

defensive strategies. These real time behavioral modifications on shorter time scale are

stable within a fight and therefore facilitate formation of social dominance hierarchies.

We have assigned dominance relationships using a previously developed three lunge –

three retreat rule (see Materials and Methods and (Yurkovic et al., 2006)). In wild-type

Canton S (CS) flies, 85% of the fights produced dominance relationships (Figure 1A).

Prior investigations have implicated the cAMP pathway in the development of learning

and memory in multiple conditioning paradigms. cAMP synthesis is regulated by the

enzymatic activity of the *Rut* encoded adenylyl cyclase that catalyzes the conversion of

ATP to cAMP (Livingstone et al., 1984; Levin et al., 1992). *Rut* has been implicated as a

biochemical coincidence detector necessary for the formation of short term memory

(STM) in olfactory conditioning assays (Dudai et al., 1988; McGuire et al., 2005). In

contrast to CS flies, rut^{2080} mutant flies were unable to form dominance relationships

with all their fights ending in draws (Figure 1A; $P < 0.001$). cAMP phosphodiesterase

activity encoded by *Dnc* negatively regulates cAMP levels (Davis and Kiger, 1981).

Consistent with the deregulation of cAMP dynamics, dnc^1 flies display attenuated

formation of dominance relationships with only 67% of the fights resulting in wins/losses

(Figure 1A; $P < 0.01$). The neuropeptide *Amn* is known to stimulate cAMP production

via GPCR signaling mediated stimulation of adenylyl cyclase activity (Feany and Quinn,

1995). However, *amn*[C651] mutant flies displayed wild-type levels of dominance

hierarchies (Figure 1A; 82% of the fights, $P > 0.05$).

For further analysis of experience dependent behavioral modifications during a fight, we

focused on lunges and retreats. These strategies are commonly used offensive (lunges)

and defensive (retreats) maneuvers and previous work have indicated status dependent

modifications in their usage by winner/loser flies (Yurkovic et al., 2006). In line with

previous observations, agonistic interactions resulted in an escalation of aggression

(Yurkovic et al., 2006; Trannoy et al., 2016). In aggressive encounters between CS flies,

the ultimate winners (as established by the 3 lunge-3 retreat rule; see Materials and

Methods) progressively increased the deployment of lunges while the losers

increasingly adapted to the retreating behavior (Figure 1B, C). In contrast, *rut*[2080] mutant

flies were unable to demonstrate any behavioral transitions pertaining to lunges and

retreats (Figure 1B, C; $P < 0.001$). *dnc*[1] flies were not only inefficient in establishing

hierarchies but also displayed compromised behavioral plasticity with significantly

reduced ability to modify the frequency of lunges and retreats compared to CS animals

(Figure 1B, C; $P < 0.001$). *amn*[C651] flies, which are competent in establishing hierarchies,

were able to modify the usage of offensive and defensive strategies as well as CS flies

(Figure 1B, C; $P > 0.05$). These results suggest a correlation between experience

dependent behavioral plasticity and formation of dominance hierarchies following

aggressive encounters.

No significant differences in locomotor activity between wild type and mutant flies were

found using a negative geotaxis assay (see Materials and Methods), thus ruling out the

possibility of motor deficits in these lines (Figure 2A; $P > 0.05$). Multiple parameters

were evaluated to assess the aggression levels of the wild type and mutant lines.

Encounter frequency was significantly lower in rut^{2080} mutants compared to CS flies but

dnc^1 and amn^{C651} mutants were comparable to wild-type flies (Figure 2B; $P_{rut} < 0.05$, P_{dnc}

and $P_{amn} > 0.05$). Aggression vigor index was compromised in all the mutant lines

compared to CS, but was not significantly different between rut^{2080}, dnc^1 and amn^{C651}

flies (Figure 2C; $P_{rut} < 0.001$, P_{dnc} and $P_{amn} < 0.05$).

While our studies implicate lack of behavioral plasticity in rut^{2080} mutants in establishing

dominance hierarchies in rut^{2080} versus rut^{2080} fights, it is also possible that the rut^{2080}

flies are unable to execute high intensity maneuvers like lunges. In $rut – rut$ fights,

neither opponent can adjust their fighting patterns depending upon experience resulting

in a lack of escalation beyond low intensity interactions precluding assessment of

behavioral changes in rut^{2080} flies. We therefore analyzed fights between CS and rut^{2080}

mutants. CS flies have intact experience dependent behavioral transitions compared to

rut^{2080} mutants. Therefore pairing CS vs rut^{2080} may better reveal behavioral escalation

during fights. CS vs rut^{2080} fights result in significant dominance hierarchies with 37.5%

of fights ending in a win or a loss, though it remains attenuated compared to CS vs CS

fights (Figure 3A; $P < 0.001$). Interestingly, rut^{2080} flies demonstrate increased lunging

and retreating behavior compared to their performance in $rut-rut$ fights and also win 9%

of the fights against wild-type opponents (Figure 3B, C). rut^{2080} flies, when in a $rut – CS$

fight, are capable of executing and modifying the frequency of use of both lunges and

retreats, although this ability is remains significantly compromised compared to that in

CS flies (in CS – CS fights) (Figure 3B, C; $P < 0.001$ for lunges and $P < 0.05$ for

retreats). The usage of offensive and defensive strategies for rut^{2080} flies against a wild

type opponent are significantly better than *rut-rut* fights (Figure 3B, C; $P < 0.001$ for

lunges and $P < 0.01$ for retreats). These results suggest that rut^{2080} flies are capable of

executing high intensity maneuvers but are compromised in modifying its frequency

during a fight.

Furthermore, dnc^{1} mutants are unable to modify fighting strategies as well as CS flies

but they are less compromised compared to the rut^{2080} flies in *rut-rut* fights (Figure 1A, B,

C). Consistent with the association of ability to modify fighting patterns with the

establishment of dominance relationships, *dnc* mutants do establish hierarchies though

less efficiently than wild-type CS flies (Figure 1A). Similarly, rut^{2080} flies against wild type

opponents demonstrate compromised plasticity and attenuated dominance structures

(Figure 3A, B, C). In fact, usage of lunges/retreats by rut^{2080} flies in *rut* – CS fights is

comparable to those seen in dnc^{1} (Figure 3B, C; $P > 0.05$ for lunges and retreats).

Interestingly, the aggression vigor index is similar for *rut* - CS and *rut* - *rut* fights (Figure

3D; $P > 0.05$). This again suggests that inability to develop hierarchical statuses and

compromised behavioral plasticity seen in *rut* mutants may be independent of

aggressiveness.

This series of experiments establish the role of the cAMP signaling in behavioral

plasticity underlying modification of fighting strategies during agonistic interactions.

Behavioral flexibility, rather than changes in levels of aggression, is correlated with the

generation of dominance hierarchies.

Specific neural circuits are recruited in cAMP-mediated behavioral plasticity

We next asked which components of the *Drosophila* brain were involved in the status-

dependent modifications of aggressive strategies and formation of dominance

relationships. As multiple sensory modalities are likely to be involved in aggressive

encounters, a complex pattern of recruitment of neuronal circuits may underlie the

integration of these sensory inputs (Wang and Anderson, 2010; Wang et al., 2011;

Yoon et al., 2013; Asahina et al., 2014; Lim et al., 2014; Ramin et al., 2014; Hoopfer et

al., 2015; Hoopfer, 2016). To test this, we used the UAS-Gal4 binary system to express

the *Rut* gene product in restricted neuronal populations in a rut^{2080} mutant background.

We chose well-characterized Gal4 drivers that have restricted expression in defined

neuronal populations of the mushroom body and central complex of the fly brain as

these regions are strongly implicated as central integrators in multiple behavioral

paradigms (Table 1) (Joiner and Griffith, 1999; Torroja et al., 1999; Zars et al., 2000b;

Zars et al., 2000a; Neuser et al., 2008; Aso et al., 2009; Blum et al., 2009; Pan et al.,

2009). Pan-neuronal expression of *Rut* using the *Appl*-Gal4 driver completely rescued

the inability to form dominance relationships seen in rut^{2080} mutants (Figure 4A; $P <$

0.001). Similar restoration of dominance hierarchies to wild-type levels was seen with

expression limited to the α/β and γ lobe neurons of the mushroom body using the c309

driver (Figure 4A; $P < 0.001$). Next we tested a panel of Gal4 drivers expressing *Rut* in

different subpopulations of neurons in the MB and the central complex of rut^{2080} flies

(Table 1). UAS-Rutabaga driven by Gal4 drivers c739, 201Y, c305a and c205, but not

c819, partially rescued the inability of rut^{2080} to form hierarchical relationships (Figure

4A; $P < 0.001$). These experiments implicate the independent involvement of the α/β, γ

and α'/β' lobes of the MB together with the F5 neurons of the fan-shaped body (FB) in

neuronal processing leading to the formation of dominance. The ellipsoid body (EB) of

the central complex does not appear to be involved in this function (Figure 4A; $P > 0.05$).

Analysis of behavioral patterns revealed that distinct neuronal circuits mediate *rut-*

dependent behavioral plasticity within a fight (Figure 4 and Table 1). Pan-neuronal

expression of *Rut* using the *Appl*-Gal4 driver rescued the inability to alter the frequency

of use of lunges and retreats seen in *rut^{2080}* mutants (Figure 4B, C; $P < 0.01$). We also

observed a complete rescue of behavioral transitions pertaining lunges and retreats with

Rut expression limited to the α/β and γ lobe neurons of the mushroom body using the

c309 driver (Figure 4D, E; $P < 0.001$). Furthermore, expression of *Rut*, independently in

the α/β, α'/β' or γ neurons of the MB or in the FB also rescued the deficit in the

progressive increase of lunges and retreats seen in *rut^{2080}* flies (Figure 4D, E, F, G; $P <$

0.01). The ellipsoid body (EB) of the central complex does not appear to be involved in

this function as no rescue was observed with the EB only driver (Figure 4F, G; $P > 0.05$).

Restricted expression of *Rut* in specific brain regions rescued the behavioral plasticity of

lunges/retreats and the ability to establish dominance hierarchies within a fight.

To confirm that experience-dependent behavioral flexibility was a major substrate of the

rescue and not an indirect effect of changes in other general features of aggression, we

evaluated multiple aggression related parameters. As the rescue was strongest

(comparable to wild-type) with the *Appl*-Gal4 (pan neuronal) and c309 (α/β and γ

neurons of the MB) drivers, these were used to evaluate changes in aggressiveness.

However, no change in the frequency of encounters, aggression vigor and latencies to

engage was found (Figure 5A – E; *P* > 0.05). These results suggest that though pan

neuronal and α/β and γ drivers fully rescue the ability to alter the intensities of specific

fighting patterns during a fight and the establishment of dominance hierarchies, they do

not affect the levels of aggression in these animals.

Our analysis indicates that in accordance with the multimodal inputs associated with

dyadic interactions, multiple neuronal groups in the MB (α/β, α'/β', γ) and CC (FB) are

involved in the processing of these inputs that lead to the progressive changes in

offensive and defensive strategies within a fight. The rescue experiments also highlight

the role of cAMP signaling in behavioral plasticity in aggression to be independent of

general changes in aggression levels.

cAMP signaling is necessary for the development of the loser effect

To test if aggression-associated hierarchies developed in the first fights influenced the

outcomes of subsequent fights, losers from first fights were paired with unfamiliar,

socially naïve opponents, after a 60-minute rest period. Dominance relationships were

assigned using the three lunge- three retreat rule as in the first fights. Fights that fell

under the 'draw' category were further subdivided into three groups. 'High intensity'

draws consisted of experienced flies predominantly using lunges in their second fight

without satisfying 3 lunge-3 retreat criteria for dominance relationships. Similarly, 'low

intensity' draws consisted of experienced flies predominantly using retreats. Fights in

which the flies did not engage in agonistic interactions were considered as 'no intensity',

and categorized as draws. For statistical analysis, high and low intensity draws were

grouped with wins and losses, respectively. Consistent with previous studies (Yurkovic

et al., 2006; Trannoy et al., 2016), wild-type CS loser flies always lost to naïve

opponents in their second fights (Figure 6A). This indicates that an experience of social

loss results in a strong loser effect in subsequent fights.

As rut^{2080} flies did not generate winners or losers in the first fight, both the individuals

were considered as experienced and used in second fights. However, as in their first

fights, rut^{2080} mutants were unable to form any dominance relationships in their second

fights (Figure 6A; $P < 0.001$). dnc^1 also displayed no significant loser effect with 18%

losses, 18% wins and 64% draws (Figure 6A; $P < 0.001$).

Surprisingly, amn^{C651} flies did not show any loser effect. 50% of analyzed fights resulted

in losses and the remaining in wins for losers (Figure 6A; $P < 0.001$). Unlike rut and dnc,

amn^{C651} flies develop dominant-subordinate relations as efficiently as CS in their first

fights (Figure 1C) but are still unable to consolidate this experience into a loser effect.

This suggests a special requirement of Amn gene product in stabilizing the hierarchical

structures in flies in the form of a loser effect.

A loser index, calculated as the difference between the number of encounters lost and

the number of encounters won divided by total number of encounters in the second fight

(see Materials and Methods), was used to represent the loser effect as a consequence

of past experience. This allowed direct evaluation of experience-dependent alterations

in fighting strategy in the losers across genotypes in subsequent fights. CS flies showed

a high loser index consistent with their robust loser effect (Figure 6B). In contrast, the

amn^{C651} and dnc^1 losers, and the experienced rut^{2080} flies displayed significantly lower

loser indices (Figure 6B; $P < 0.001$).

These results show that dnc^1 and rut^{2080} flies, which display compromised development

of dominance hierarchies in their first fights, did not display a loser effect. In contrast,

amn^{C651}, which could form dominance hierarchies in their first fights, also lacked the

loser effect. *Amn* appears to have an independent function from *Rut* and *Dnc,* and is

necessary for the stabilization of the social status from the first fight in the form of a

loser effect.

α/β and γ lobes of the MB cooperate to mediate cAMP-dependent loser effect

Previous experience of loss results in a robust loser effect in wild-type flies. We

investigated the neurogenetic circuitry involved in the development of this effect.

In the second fights, both *Appl* and c309 Gal4 driver lines were able to restore the loser

effect in rut^{2080} flies to levels statistically indistinguishable from wild-type CS flies (Figure

7A, B and Table 1). Pan neuronal (Appl) or combined α/β and γ lobe–specific (c309)

expression resulted in most losers losing and a small proportion of non-aggressive

draws (Figure 7A; $P < 0.001$). Loser index in these flies was significantly greater than

controls (Figure 7B; $P < 0.001$) and comparable to wild-type flies (Figure 7B; $P > 0.05$).

Interestingly, expression of UAS-*Rut* limited to individual substructures of the MB and

CC was not sufficient to rescue impaired loser effect observed in *rut* flies (Figure 7B;

Table 1). Expression in individual neuronal subpopulations using the c739, 201Y, c305a

or c205 Gal4 drivers (in the rut^{2080} background), resulted in a higher proportion of non-

draw outcomes in losers paired with naïve opponents but failed to show a robust loser

effect (Figure 7A; $P < 0.001$). As expected, there was no significant change in the loser

index for these flies (Figure 7B; $P > 0.05$). Consistent with compromised learning in the

first fights, expression limited to the EB using the c819 Gal4 driver did not rescue the

loser effect (Figure 7; *P* > 0.05).

Our results suggest the involvement of the MBs, limited to the combined processing by

α/β and γ neurons, in the development of the loser effect.

DISCUSSION

Two distinct experience-dependent behavioral modifications are observed in *Drosophila*

aggression. The first results in dominance relationships correlated with real time,

progressive changes in fighting strategies. The second is the consolidation of the

experience of a previous loss to a loser effect in subsequent fights. Our data indicate

that these behavioral changes involve specific cAMP-mediated signaling and are

processed by overlapping neuronal circuits involving two temporally separated memory

traces.

Rut and *Dnc* enzymes have been implicated in learning and/or STM in multiple

paradigms, including classical conditioning and courtship-associated learning and

memory (Gailey et al., 1984; Livingstone et al., 1984; Bragina and Kamyshev, 2003;

McGuire et al., 2005). *rut* and *dnc* flies do not develop dominance hierarchies as well as

CS flies, with all *rut – rut* fights resulting in draws. Compared to CS, both *rut* and *dnc*

are unable to display experience-dependent modification of fighting strategies and are

deficient in generating losers and winners. *amn* flies, however, modify fighting strategies

and establish hierarchal relationships comparable to CS flies. Our results suggest that

the plasticity in modifying aggressive strategies during a fight is mediated by cAMP

dynamics under the control of *Rut* and *Dnc* gene products (but not *Amn*) and is

necessary to establish dominance structures.

All three cAMP pathway mutants displayed reduction in aggression vigor as compared

to CS. This includes *amn*, which displays normal behavioral flexibility and dominance

hierarchies. These results suggest that the level of aggression in flies is independent of

their ability to modify behavior in an experience-dependent manner. The latency to

engage in fights in cAMP mutants was also comparable to CS. The latter suggest no overt changes in motivational states and support the previous conclusion.

Brain region specific expression of the *Rut* gene product in a *rut* mutant background implicates specific neuronal circuits in status-dependent behavioral changes during agonistic encounters. All the drivers that rescue the establishment of dominance also restore the ability to alter the usage of lunges and retreats during a fight.

Rescue by Appl or c309 did not alter the encounter frequency, aggression vigor or the latency to engage displayed by *rut* mutants. In line with our analysis of cAMP pathway mutants, these results demonstrate that the rescue of dominance observed is attributable to a restoration of experience-dependent plasticity mediated by *Rut* in specific circuits and not a consequence of modified aggressiveness.

Our study suggests a functional role for MBs in learning and memory associated with aggression, consistent with those described in courtship conditioning (Joiner and Griffith, 1999; McBride et al., 1999; Sitnik et al., 2003). Mushroom bodies, which are central to olfactory learning, have been previously correlated with changes in agonistic behavior. *Neuralized* mutants with altered MB organization have been reported to increase aggressiveness when food is limiting (Rollmann et al., 2008). Inhibition of synaptic output from the MB has also been shown to reduce levels of aggression (Liu et al., 2011).

Interestingly, not only neuronal groups of the MB (the α/β, γ and α'/β' neurons) were implicated, the FB but not the EB of the central complex was also found to be functionally involved. The FB has been previously reported to mediate visual learning of specific pattern features like "elevation" and "contour orientation" (Liu et al., 2006; Pan

et al., 2009). A recent study has underscored the importance of CC neurons in

aggression by demonstrating the modulation of aggressive behavior by dopaminergic

PPM3 neurons that synapse onto the FB (Alekseyenko et al., 2013).

The robust loser effect seen in wild-type flies is absent in *rut*, *dnc* and *amn* mutant lines.

As in their first fights, all *rut-rut* second fights end in draws. No loser effect was also

seen in *dnc* flies. Both *rut* and *dnc* have compromised development of hierarchies

suggesting that learning within a fight and establishing dominance relationships are

necessary for the development of the loser effect. Interestingly, *amn* flies also lack the

loser effect, though they can adjust fighting strategies and develop dominance

relationships as well as wild-type flies. The *Amnesiac* gene product appears to mediate

the consolidation of the social status acquired during the first fight into the loser effect.

Alternatively, *Amn* may be necessary for a distinct memory phase resulting in the loser

effect. A similar function for *Amn* has been reported in olfactory conditioning

experiments where *amn* mutants fail to develop intermediate-term memory or are

unable to consolidate short-term memory into this relatively longer lasting phase (Feany

and Quinn, 1995; Yu et al., 2006). *Amn* has also been reported to mediate memory

stability in courtship conditioning (Siegel and Hall, 1979). As *Amn* is a secreted

neuropeptide, future rescue experiments using the *Amn* receptor will be useful to

determine the neural circuits subserving *Amn*-dependent establishment of the loser

effect. A less robust, short duration winner effect has been reported in flies (Trannoy

and Kravitz, 2016; Trannoy et al., 2016). It remains to be seen if analogous cAMP

signaling and circuit features are involved in this phenomenon.

Rescue of *rut* simultaneously in the α/β and γ lobe neurons of the MB, not only fully

rescues its ability to generate dominance relationships but also the loser effect.

However, *rut* expression independently in the α/β or the γ neurons was unable to

restore the loser effect, though social hierarchy was rescued. We hypothesize that two

distinct *Rut* dependent memory traces facilitate formation of the temporally distinct

memory phases. A short-lived engram in distinct MB and CC substructures mediates

behavioral plasticity within a fight leading to the formation of dominance relationships.

Combinatorial processing between α/β and γ lobe neurons of the MB enable formation

of a second, longer lasting memory trace that is necessary for the establishment of the

loser effect.

Olfactory conditioning studies have suggested that the α/β neurons are indispensable

for memory consolidation and retrieval, while odor-shock coincidence detection maps to

the γ neurons (Dubnau et al., 2001; Qin et al., 2012; Dubnau and Chiang, 2013). These

observations demonstrate recruitment of specific subsets of MB neurons for initial

associations and others for memory consolidation suggesting circuit level coordination

between MB substructures. Our experiments provide evidence towards such systems

level memory consolidation in aggression where an association between α/β and γ

lobes of the MB is critical for the establishment of the loser effect. However, existence of

two parallel, independent traces with differing kinetics of formation and decay cannot be

formally ruled out.

Experience-dependent modification of innate behaviors involves multiple components

and previous studies have demonstrated the central importance of pheromonal,

aminergic and other modulatory activities in aggressive behavior (Chan and Kravitz,

2007; Dierick and Greenspan, 2007; Hoyer et al., 2008; Dankert et al., 2009; Certel et

al., 2010; Wang and Anderson, 2010; Liu et al., 2011; Zwarts et al., 2012; Alekseyenko

et al., 2013; Alekseyenko et al., 2014; Andrews et al., 2014; Luo et al., 2014; Yuan et al.,

2014; Kohl et al., 2015; Hoopfer, 2016). However, these studies focus on aggression

levels and do not directly assess behavioral plasticity and memory components in

aggression. A recent study indicated that rut^{2080} and amn^1 are unable to demonstrate

dominance hierarchies due to compromised aggression (Trannoy et al., 2016).

However, this study did not explore the lack of behavioral flexibility in these mutants. In

our study, rut^{2080} has low proclivity to engage in the first 10 min of fights, fail to form

dominance relations but are capable of executing high intensity maneuvers. In contrast,

amn^{C651} (a functionally strong allele of amn, (Rosay et al., 2001)) showed reduced

aggression vigor but was still able to establish dominance hierarchies. Further, rescue

of Rut restores dominance patterns but not aggressiveness. Therefore, low aggression

is not correlated with the inability to establish winner-loser statuses in a fight.

In mammals, the cAMP pathway has been shown to influence aggressive behavior

(Breuillaud et al., 2012). cAMP signaling in the basolateral amygdala has also been

correlated with memory associated with conditioned defeat, a paradigm analogous to

the loser effect (Jasnow et al., 2005; Markham et al., 2010). At the circuit level, recent

work in zebrafish has implicated antagonistic regulation by two sub-regions of the dorsal

habenula to establish winner-loser status (Chou et al., 2016).

Our results implicate sequential recruitment of cAMP signaling components with Rut

and Dnc activities required for behavioral flexibility within a fight and, consequently, to

establish dominance hierarchies. Behavioral plasticity, rather than aggressiveness, is

correlated with social status. Establishment of social status facilitates the formation of a

more stable and longer lasting memory phase that requires the additional peptidergic

activity of the neuropeptide amnesiac (*Amn*). Neuronal circuits subserving aggression

associated learning and memory show phasic recruitment. While a short lived *Rut*-

dependent trace in multiple MB and CC substructures mediate learning during agnostic

encounters, combinatorial processing by both α/β and γ lobe neurons of the MB, is

necessary for the development of the longer lasting loser effect.

This study provides mechanistic insight into circuit level associations specific to different

phases of behavioral plasticity and memory in *Drosophila* aggression and the

integration of biochemical signaling at the single neuron level with systems level

consolidation.

1 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** The authors declare no competing financial interests.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: A grant (SR/CSI/156/2012) from the Department of Science

and Technology (DST), Govt. of India to A.G. and intramural funding from IISER Pune

supported this work. We thank Dr D. Barua (IISER Pune, India) for advice on statistical

analysis. We are grateful to Prof. R. Strauss (University of Mainz, Germany) for

providing Canton S, rut^{2080} and amn^{c651} fly lines. Prof. N. K. Subhedar (IISER Pune,

India), Prof. L. S. Shashidhara (IISER Pune, India), Dr. M. Lahiri (IISER Pune, India), Dr.

R. Rajan (IISER Pune, India) and Prof. K. S. Krishnan (NCBS Bangalore, India) are

acknowledged for discussions and critical reading of earlier versions of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

Alekseyenko OV, Chan YB, Li R, Kravitz EA (2013) Single dopaminergic neurons that modulate aggression in *Drosophila*. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 110:6151-6156.

Alekseyenko OV, Chan YB, Fernandez MP, Bulow T, Pankratz MJ, Kravitz EA (2014) Single serotonergic neurons that modulate aggression in *Drosophila*. Curr Biol 24:2700-2707.

Ali Y, Escala W, Ruan K, Zhai R (2011) Assaying locomotor, learning, and memory deficits in *Drosophila* models of neurodegeneration. J Vis Exp:e2504.

Andrews JC, Fernandez MP, Yu Q, Leary GP, Leung AK, Kavanaugh MP, Kravitz EA, Certel SJ (2014) Octopamine neuromodulation regulates Gr32a-linked aggression and courtship pathways in *Drosophila* males. PLoS Genet 10:e1004356.

Asahina K, Watanabe K, Duistermars BJ, Hoopfer E, Gonzalez CR, Eyjolfsdottir EA, Perona P, Anderson DJ (2014) Tachykinin-expressing neurons control male-specific aggressive arousal in *Drosophila*. Cell 156:221-235.

Aso Y, Grubel K, Busch S, Friedrich AB, Siwanowicz I, Tanimoto H (2009) The mushroom body of adult *Drosophila* characterized by GAL4 drivers. J Neurogenet 23:156-172.

Blum AL, Li W, Cressy M, Dubnau J (2009) Short- and long-term memory in *Drosophila* require cAMP signaling in distinct neuron types. Curr Biol 19:1341-1350.

Bragina YV, Kamyshev NG (2003) Comparative studies of four *Drosophila* P-insertion mutants with memory defects. Neurosci Behav Physiol 33:73-79.

Brembs B (2003) Operant conditioning in invertebrates. Curr Opin Neurobiol 13:710-717.

Breuillaud L, Rossetti C, Meylan EM, Merinat C, Halfon O, Magistretti PJ, Cardinaux JR (2012) Deletion of CREB-regulated transcription coactivator 1 induces pathological aggression, depression-related behaviors, and neuroplasticity genes dysregulation in mice. Biol Psychiatry 72:528-536.

Busto G, Cervantes-Sandoval I, Davis R (2010) Olfactory learning in *Drosophila*. Physiology 25:338-346.

Certel SJ, Leung A, Lin CY, Perez P, Chiang AS, Kravitz EA (2010) Octopamine
neuromodulatory effects on a social behavior decision-making network in
Drosophila males. PLoS One 5:e13248.

Chan Y-B, Kravitz E (2007) Specific subgroups of FruM neurons control sexually
dimorphic patterns of aggression in *Drosophila melanogaster*. Proc Natl Acad Sci
USA 104:19577-19582.

Chen S, Lee AY, Bowens NM, Huber R, Kravitz EA (2002) Fighting fruit flies: a model
system for the study of aggression. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 99:5664-5668.

Chou MY, Amo R, Kinoshita M, Cherng BW, Shimazaki H, Agetsuma M, Shiraki T, Aoki
T, Takahoko M, Yamazaki M, Higashijima S, Okamoto H (2016) Social conflict
resolution regulated by two dorsal habenular subregions in zebrafish. Science
352:87-90.

Dankert H, Wang L, Hoopfer E, Anderson D, Perona P (2009) Automated monitoring
and analysis of social behavior in *Drosophila*. Nat Meth 6:297-303.

Davis RL, Kiger JA (1981) Dunce mutants of *Drosophila melanogaster*: mutants
defective in the cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase enzyme system. J Cell Biol
90:101-107.

Dierick HA, Greenspan RJ (2006) Molecular analysis of flies selected for aggressive
behavior. Nat Genet 38:1023-1031.

Dierick HA, Greenspan RJ (2007) Serotonin and neuropeptide F have opposite
modulatory effects on fly aggression. Nat Genet 39:678-682.

Dubnau J, Chiang AS (2013) Systems memory consolidation in *Drosophila*. Curr Opin
Neurobiol 23:84-91.

Dubnau J, Grady L, Kitamoto T, Tully T (2001) Disruption of neurotransmission in
Drosophila mushroom body blocks retrieval but not acquisition of memory.
Nature 411:476-480.

Dudai Y, Corfas G, Hazvi S (1988) What is the possible contribution of Ca^{2+}-stimulated
adenylate cyclase to acquisition, consolidation and retention of an associative
olfactory memory in *Drosophila*. J Comp Physiol A 162:101-109.

Dudai Y, Jan YN, Byers D, Quinn WG, Benzer S (1976) dunce, a mutant of *Drosophila*
deficient in learning. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 73:1684-1688.

Edwards A, Zwarts L, Yamamoto A, Callaerts P, Mackay T (2009) Mutations in many
2   genes affect aggressive behavior in *Drosophila melanogaster*. BMC biology 7:29.

3   Feany MB, Quinn WG (1995) A neuropeptide gene defined by the *Drosophila* memory
4   mutant amnesiac. Science 268:869-873.

5   Gailey D, Jackson F, Siegel R (1984) Conditioning mutations in *Drosophila*
6   *melanogaster* affect an experience dependent behavioral modification in courting
7   males. Genetics 106:613-623.

8   Hoopfer ED (2016) Neural control of aggression in *Drosophila*. Curr Opin Neurobiol
9   38:109-118.

Hoopfer ED, Jung Y, Inagaki HK, Rubin GM, Anderson DJ (2015) P1 interneurons
promote a persistent internal state that enhances inter-male aggression in
Drosophila. Elife 4.

Hoyer SC, Eckart A, Herrel A, Zars T, Fischer SA, Hardie SL, Heisenberg M (2008)
Octopamine in male aggression of *Drosophila*. Curr Biol 18:159-167.

Jasnow AM, Shi C, Israel JE, Davis M, Huhman KL (2005) Memory of social defeat is
facilitated by cAMP response element-binding protein overexpression in the
amygdala. Behav Neurosci 119:1125-1130.

Joiner M, Griffith L (1999) Mapping of the anatomical circuit of CaM kinase-dependent
courtship conditioning in *Drosophila*. Learn Mem 6:177-192.

Kamyshev NG, Smirnova GP, Kamysheva EA, Nikiforov ON, Parafenyuk IV,
Ponomarenko VV (2002) Plasticity of social behavior in *Drosophila*. Neurosci
Behav Physiol 32:401-408.

Kohl J, Huoviala P, Jefferis GS (2015) Pheromone processing in *Drosophila*. Curr Opin
Neurobiol 34:149-157.

Levin LR, Han PL, Hwang PM, Feinstein PG, Davis RL, Reed RR (1992) The
Drosophila learning and memory gene rutabaga encodes a Ca^{2+}/Calmodulin-
responsive adenylyl cyclase. Cell 68:479-489.

Lim RS, Eyjolfsdottir E, Shin E, Perona P, Anderson DJ (2014) How food controls
aggression in *Drosophila*. PLoS One 9:e105626.

Liu G, Seiler H, Wen A, Zars T, Ito K, Wolf R, Heisenberg M, Liu L (2006) Distinct
memory traces for two visual features in the *Drosophila* brain. Nature 439:551-
556.

Liu W, Liang X, Gong J, Yang Z, Zhang YH, Zhang JX, Rao Y (2011) Social regulation
of aggression by pheromonal activation of Or65a olfactory neurons in *Drosophila*.
Nat Neurosci 14:896-902.

Livingstone MS, Sziber PP, Quinn WG (1984) Loss of calcium/calmodulin
responsiveness in adenylate cyclase of rutabaga, a *Drosophila* learning mutant.
Cell 37:205-215.

Luo J, Lushchak OV, Goergen P, Williams MJ, Nassel DR (2014) *Drosophila* insulin-
producing cells are differentially modulated by serotonin and octopamine
receptors and affect social behavior. PLoS One 9:e99732.

Markham CM, Taylor SL, Huhman KL (2010) Role of amygdala and hippocampus in the
neural circuit subserving conditioned defeat in Syrian hamsters. Learn Mem
17:109-116.

McBride S, Giuliani G, Choi C, Krause P, Correale D, Watson K, Baker G, Siwicki K
(1999) Mushroom body ablation impairs short-term memory and long-term
memory of courtship conditioning in *Drosophila melanogaster*. Neuron 24:967-
977.

McGuire SE, Deshazer M, Davis RL (2005) Thirty years of olfactory learning and
memory research in *Drosophila melanogaster*. Prog Neurobiol 76:328-347.

Neuser K, Triphan T, Mronz M, Poeck B, Strauss R (2008) Analysis of a spatial
orientation memory in *Drosophila*. Nature 453:1244-1247.

Pan Y, Zhou Y, Guo C, Gong H, Gong Z, Liu L (2009) Differential roles of the fan-
shaped body and the ellipsoid body in *Drosophila* visual pattern memory. Learn
Mem 16:289-295.

Penn JK, Zito MF, Kravitz EA (2010) A single social defeat reduces aggression in a
highly aggressive strain of *Drosophila*. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 107:12682-12686.

Qin H, Cressy M, Li W, Coravos JS, Izzi SA, Dubnau J (2012) Gamma neurons mediate
dopaminergic input during aversive olfactory memory formation in *Drosophila*.
Curr Biol 22:608-614.

Ramin M, Domocos C, Slawaska-Eng D, Rao Y (2014) Aggression and social
experience: genetic analysis of visual circuit activity in the control of
aggressiveness in *Drosophila*. Mol Brain 7:55.

Rollmann SM, Zwarts L, Edwards AC, Yamamoto A, Callaerts P, Norga K, Mackay TF,
Anholt RR (2008) Pleiotropic effects of *Drosophila* neuralized on complex
behaviors and brain structure. Genetics 179:1327-1336.

Rosay P, Armstrong JD, Wang Z, Kaiser K (2001) Synchronized neural activity in the
Drosophila memory centers and its modulation by amnesiac. Neuron 30:759-770.

Siegel RW, Hall JC (1979) Conditioned responses in courtship behavior of normal and
mutant *Drosophila*. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 76:3430-3434.

Sitnik N, Tokmacheva E, Savvateeva-Popova E (2003) The ability of *Drosophila*
mutants with defects in the central complex and mushroom bodies to learn and
form memories. Neurosci Behav Physiol 33:67-71.

Torroja L, Chu H, Kotovsky I, White K (1999) Neuronal overexpression of APPL, the
Drosophila homologue of the amyloid precursor protein (APP), disrupts axonal
transport. Curr Biol 9:489-492.

Trannoy S, Kravitz EA (2016) Strategy changes in subsequent fights as consequences
of winning and losing in fruit fly fights. Fly 0.

Trannoy S, Penn J, Lucey K, Popovic D, Kravitz EA (2016) Short and long-lasting
behavioral consequences of agonistic encounters between male *Drosophila*
melanogaster. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 113:4818-4823.

Wang L, Anderson DJ (2010) Identification of an aggression-promoting pheromone and
its receptor neurons in *Drosophila*. Nature 463:227-231.

Wang L, Dankert H, Perona P, Anderson D (2008) A common genetic target for
environmental and heritable influences on aggressiveness in *Drosophila*. Proc
Natl Acad Sci USA 105:5657-5663.

Wang L, Han X, Mehren J, Hiroi M, Billeter JC, Miyamoto T, Amrein H, Levine JD,
Anderson DJ (2011) Hierarchical chemosensory regulation of male-male social
interactions in *Drosophila*. Nat Neurosci 14:757-762.

Yoon J, Matsuo E, Yamada D, Mizuno H, Morimoto T, Miyakawa H, Kinoshita S,
Ishimoto H, Kamikouchi A (2013) Selectivity and plasticity in a sound-evoked
male-male interaction in *Drosophila*. PLoS One 8:e74289.

Yu D, Akalal DB, Davis RL (2006) *Drosophila* alpha/beta mushroom body neurons form
a branch-specific, long-term cellular memory trace after spaced olfactory
conditioning. Neuron 52:845-855.

Yuan Q, Song Y, Yang CH, Jan LY, Jan YN (2014) Female contact modulates male
aggression via a sexually dimorphic GABAergic circuit in *Drosophila*. Nat
Neurosci 17:81-88.

Yurkovic A, Wang O, Basu AC, Kravitz EA (2006) Learning and memory associated
with aggression in *Drosophila melanogaster*. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 103:17519-
17524.

Zars T, Wolf R, Davis R, Heisenberg M (2000a) Tissue-specific expression of a type I
adenylyl cyclase rescues the rutabaga mutant memory defect: in search of the
engram. Learn Mem 7:18-31.

Zars T, Fischer M, Schulz R, Heisenberg M (2000b) Localization of a short-term
memory in *Drosophila*. Science 288:672-675.

Zwarts L, Versteven M, Callaerts P (2012) Genetics and neurobiology of aggression in
Drosophila. Fly 6:35-48.
17

FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. cAMP signaling is required for establishing dominance relationships.

(*A*) CS and amn^{C651} flies form stable dominance relationships (win/loss) in 85% and

82% in their first fights, respectively. rut^{2080} displayed no dominance structures while

dnc^1 showed dominance in 67% of their fights. (Two-tailed Chi-square test; ** $P < 0.01$,

*** $P < 0.001$, n=30). *, indicates comparison with CS. (*B*) CS winner flies progressively

increase lunging. A similar trend was seen with amn^{C651} flies ($P > 0.05$). In contrast,

rut^{2080} ($P < 0.001$) and dnc^1 ($P < 0.01$) flies demonstrated significantly deficient lunging

trends. (Two factor repeated measures ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's multiple

comparison test, '*P*' is the interaction term, mean ± SEM, n=30). (*C*) Both CS and

amn^{C651} loser flies ($P > 0.05$) showed progressive increase in retreats while this was

significantly compromised in rut^{2080} ($P < 0.001$) and dnc^1 ($P < 0.01$).

dnc^1 mutants, although compromised in modifying fighting strategies compared to CS

flies, demonstrate better trends compared to rut^{2080} mutants ($P < 0.001$ for lunges; $P <$

0.01 for retreats) (Two factor repeated measures ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's

multiple comparison test, '*P*' is the interaction term, mean ± SEM, n=30).

Total number of lunges/retreats in every three successive encounters is analyzed and

their mean is reported. SEM: Standard error of the mean.

Figure 2. Aggression levels in cAMP pathway mutant flies.

(*A*) Locomotor activity in flies was analyzed using negative geotaxis assay. No

significant differences were observed between CS and cAMP pathway mutants in their

average pass rate (One factor ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's multiple

comparison test, mean ± SEM, n=30). (*B*) Encounters per minute is lower in rut^{2080} flies

(*P* < 0.05) but is comparable in amn^{c651} and dnc^1 flies compared to CS flies (*P* > 0.05)

(One factor ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's multiple comparison test, mean ±

SEM n=30). *, indicates comparison with CS. (*C*) Aggression vigor index, defined as the

fraction of time spent fighting in first 10 minutes, is significantly lower in rut^{2080} (*P* <

0.001), amn^{c651} (*P* < 0.05) and dnc^1 (*P* < 0.05) flies in comparison to CS flies (One

factor ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's multiple comparison test, mean ± SEM

n=30). *, indicates comparison with CS. (*D*) Latency to engage in an encounter is not

significantly different in rut^{2080} (*P* > 0.05), dnc^1 (*P* > 0.05) and amn^{c651} (*P* > 0.05) flies in

comparison to CS flies. (One factor ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's multiple

comparison test, mean ± SEM ,n=30). SEM: Standard error of the mean.

Figure 3. rut^{2080} flies display improved lunging/retreating behavior against wild type

opponents.

(*A*) The rut^{2080} flies show attenuated dominance structures against a wild type opponent

compared to CS v CS fights (*P* < 0.001) but improved hierarchical relationships

compared to rut^{2080} v rut^{2080} fights (*P* < 0.01) (Two-tailed Chi-square test; *** *P* < 0.001,

++ *P* < 0.01, n=25). *, indicates comparison with CS and +, with rut^{2080}. (*B*) and (*C*) The

rut^{2080} flies against a wild type opponent demonstrate significantly better status-

dependent modification of lunges/retreats compared to rut^{2080} v rut^{2080} fights (*P* < 0.001

for lunges and *P* < 0.01 for retreats) and is comparable to dnc^1 flies (*P* > 0.05). The

lunge/retreat trends for rut^{2080} flies in rut^{2080} v CS fights are compromised compared to

CS flies ($P < 0.001$ for lunges; $P < 0.05$ for retreats). (Two factor repeated measures

ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's multiple comparison test, 'P' is the interaction

term, mean ± SEM, n=20).

Total number of lunges/retreats in every three successive encounters is analyzed and

their mean is reported. SEM: Standard error of the mean

Figure 4. Distinct neuronal circuits mediate behavioral plasticity during agnostic

encounters.

Restricted expression of *Rut* in specific sub-population of neurons in rut^{2080} flies yields

differential rescue of learning impairment in first fights. (*A*) Lack of development of

hierarchies in rut^{2080} flies is rescued upon expression of UAS-*Rut* (in a rut^{2080}

background) pan-neuronally (Appl), in the α/β and γ lobes of the MB (c309), α/β lobes of

the MB (c739), γ lobes of the MB (201Y), α'/β' lobes of the MB (c305a) and in the F5

neurons of the FB. No rescue was seen upon reintroduction of *Rut* to the EB (c819).

(Two-tailed Chi-square test; ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$, +++ $P < 0.001$, n≥15). *, indicates

comparison with CS and +, with rut^{2080}; UAS-*Rut*/+. (*B*) - (*G*) Ability to progressively

increase lunges/retreats was rescued (relative to rut^{2080} flies) by expressing *Rut* either

pan-neuronally (Appl; $P < 0.001$ for lunges and retreats) or in α/β and γ (c309; $P <$

0.001 for lunges and retreats), α/β alone (c739; $P < 0.001$ for lunges, $P < 0.01$ for

retreats), α'/β' (c305a; $P < 0.01$ for lunges, $P < 0.05$ for retreats) alone, γ (201y; $P <$

0.001 for lunges, $P < 0.05$ for retreats) alone and in the FB (c205; $P < 0.001$ for lunges,

P < 0.01 for retreats). EB (c819; *P* > 0.05 for lunges and retreats) expression did not

show any rescue. (*B*) and (*C*) are comparisons of *Appl*-Gal4 with CS and no Gal4

control, (*D*) and (*E*) are comparisons of MB restricted Gal4 drivers (c309, c739, 201y

and c305a) with no Gal4 control and (*F*) and (*G*) comparisons are of central complex

restricted Gal4 drivers (c205 and c819) with no Gal4 control (Two factor repeated

measures ANOVA followed by post hoc Tukey's multiple comparison test, *'P'* is the

interaction term, mean ± SEM, n≥15).

Total number of lunges/retreats in every three successive encounters is analyzed and

their mean is reported. SEM: Standard error of the mean

Figure 5. Aggression levels are unchanged upon rescue of aggression-associated

learning.

(*A*) In comparison to rut^{2080};UAS-Rut/+ control flies, *Rut* expression in α/β and γ lobes of

the MB (c309; *P* > 0.05) or pan-neuronally (Appl; *P* > 0.05) resulted in a comparable

number of encounter frequencies (One factor ANOVA followed by post hoc Dunnett's

multiple comparison test, mean ± SEM, n=20). (*B*) There is no significant improvement,

as compared to rut^{2080};UAS-Rut/+ control flies, in aggression vigor index in response to

Rut expression either pan-neuronally or in the α/β and γ lobes (*P* > 0.05; One factor

ANOVA followed by post hoc Dunnett's multiple comparison test, mean ± SEM, n=20).

(*C*) Latency to engage in an encounter (*P* > 0.05) remains comparable upon *Rut*

expression using either Appl or c309 Gal4 driver lines in comparison to rut^{2080};UAS-

Rut/+ control flies (One factor ANOVA followed by post hoc Dunnett's multiple

comparison test, mean ± SEM, n=20).

SEM: Standard error of the mean.

Figure 6. cAMP signaling is necessary for developing loser mentality.

(*A*) CS losers lost all their second fights against naïve opponents while *amn*^{C651} flies lost

and won equal number of fights. *dnc*^{1} flies show weak dominance relationships and

their interactions largely ended in draws, again suggestive of memory defects. All

previously experienced *rut*^{2080} flies engaged in draws. (Two-tailed Chi-square test; *** *P*

< 0.001, n≥20). *, indicates comparison with CS. (*B*) Loser index assesses the

experience dependent modulation of fighting strategies of experienced flies in their

second fights against a naïve opponent. *rut*^{2080}, *dnc*^{1} and *amn*^{C651} flies, all showed

severely compromised loser indices compared to CS. (One factor ANOVA followed by

post hoc Dunnett's multiple comparison test, *** *P* < 0.001, mean ± SEM, n≥20). *,

indicates comparison with CS.

Figure 7. Recruitment of specific neuronal circuits for the development of the loser

effect.

(*A*) Rescue experiments expressing *Rut* (in a *rut*^{2080} background) either pan-neuronally

(Appl) or in the α/β and γ lobes of the MB (c309) showed a strong recovery of the loser

effect. Expression in the α/β lobes (c739), γ lobes (201Y), α'/β' lobes (c305a) and in the

FB of *rut* mutants resulted in partial recovery of dominance relationships. No rescue

was seen upon the reintroduction of *Rut* in the EB (c819) of *rut*^{2080}. (Two-tailed Chi-

square test;*** *P* < 0.001, $^{+++}$ *P* < 0.001 n≥15). *, indicates comparison with CS and +,

with rut^{2080}; UAS-*Rut*/+. (*B*) Loser index analysis revealed that pan-neuronal and α/β

and γ lobe combined expression is able to rescue the loser effect. All other

combinations did not show any rescue. (One factor ANOVA followed by post hoc

Tukey's multiple comparison test, *** $P < 0.001$, +++ $P < 0.001$, mean ± SEM, n≥15).

*, indicates comparison with CS and +, with rut^{2080}; UAS-*Rut*/+. SEM: Standard error of

the mean.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Table 1: Expression patterns of Gal4 drivers used and rescue results

Gal4 drivers	Expression pattern	Rescue of dominance relationships (1st fight)	Rescue of loser effect (2nd fight)
Appl	Pan-neuronal (Torroja et al., 1999; Neuser et al., 2008)	Winners: Y* Losers: Y*	Y*
c309	αβ and γ lobes of the MB (Joiner and Griffith, 1999; Aso et al., 2009; Blum et al., 2009)	Winners: Y* Losers: Y*	Y*
c739	αβ lobes of the MB (Joiner and Griffith, 1999; Zars et al., 2000a; Aso et al., 2009; Blum et al., 2009)	Winners: Y* Losers: Y*	N
201Y	γ lobes and αβ lobes (sparse) of the MB (Joiner and Griffith, 1999; Zars et al., 2000b; Aso et al., 2009; Blum et al., 2009)	Winners: Y† Losers: Y*	N
c305a	50% of α'β' lobes of the MB; weak expression in AL and EB (Aso et al., 2009; Blum et al., 2009)	Winners: Y† Losers: Y*	N
c205	F5 neurons of the FB (Liu et al., 2006; Pan et al., 2009)	Winners: Y* Losers: Y*	N
c819	R2/R4m neurons of the EB (Liu et al., 2006; Pan et al., 2009)	Winners: N Losers: N	N

Y: yes; N: no; MB: Mushroom bodies; EB: Ellipsoid body; FB: Fan shaped body; AL: Antennal lobes

(*, $P<0.001$; †, $P<0.01$; Indices were compared between rut^{2080}/Y; UAS-rut/+ and rut^{2080}/Y; UAS-rut/Gal 4).