A viral toolbox for conditional and transneuronal gene expression in zebrafish

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Abstract:

Zebrafish are an important model in systems neuroscience but a key limitation is the lack of viral

tools to interrogate the structure and function of neuronal circuitry. We developed methods for

efficient gene transfer and retrograde tracing by herpes simplex viruses (HSV1), for conditional

HSV1-mediated gene expression using the Gal4/UAS system, and for transneuronal tracing by

rabies viruses. This toolbox creates new opportunities to visualize and manipulate specific sets of

neurons through the combination of genetic and viral approaches in zebrafish.

9   Introduction

The zebrafish is an important vertebrate model in systems neuroscience because its small, optically

accessible brain provides unique opportunities to study neuronal circuits and behavior[1,2]. Key methods

established in zebrafish include large-scale imaging of neuronal population activity, behavioral

approaches including virtual realities, and genetic manipulations[1–8], but efficient methods for viral gene

transfer are still lacking. Viral vectors are important experimental tools in mammals because they enable

the visualization and manipulation of defined neurons with high spatial, temporal and molecular

specificity, and because they can bypass the need to generate transgenic animals[9,10]. Moreover, engineered

viral tools that cross synapses allow for the visualization and physiological analysis of synaptically

connected neuronal cohorts[11–13]. Our goal was to establish similar methods for specific viral gene transfer

and transneuronal tracing in zebrafish.

21   Results

Previous studies demonstrated that adeno-associated viruses (AAVs), which are widely used in mammals

and other amniotes, fail to infect neurons in the zebrafish brain[14]. Infection of zebrafish neurons by other

viruses has been reported but efficiency was usually low and viral vectors for conditional gene expression

in transgenic fish have not been described. To improve upon these points, we first focused on herpes

simplex virus 1 (HSV1), a DNA virus that can infect zebrafish neurons both locally and retrogradely via

projecting axons without obvious signs of cytotoxicity[15]. We first explored whether HSV1-mediated gene

transfer can be further improved by optimizing the temperature regime. Zebrafish are usually kept at 26 –

28.5 ºC but the temperature range of natural habitats is broad (up to >38 ºC) and temperature tolerance in

the laboratory extends up to ~41 ºC[16,17]. We therefore tested whether viral gene expression is more

efficient at temperatures similar to those of mammalian hosts (37 ºC).

We injected an amplicon type of HSV1 with an insert encoding the red fluorescent protein DsRed under a

non-specific promoter for long-term expression (HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed]) unilaterally into the olfactory

bulb (OB) of adult zebrafish expressing green fluorescent protein (GFP) under the *vglut1* promoter

(Tg[*vglut1*:GFP]). Fish were then maintained at 26 ºC or 36 ºC for 6 days after injection (Fig. 1a).

Consistent with previous results[15], reporter expression (DsRed) was observed in the injected OB (Fig.

S1a). Moreover, retrogradely labeled neurons were present in telencephalic areas that project to the OB,

most notably the posterior zone of the dorsal telencephalon (Dp), the homolog of mammalian olfactory

cortex (Fig. S1a). After incubation at 36 ºC, substantially more neurons expressed DsRed (Fig. 1b). In

addition, retrograde labeling was detected in a small but distinct population of neurons in the dorsal

telencephalon that was not seen at 26 ºC (Fig. 1b, c). DsRed expression at 36 ºC was first detected ~12

hours after injection and stable for at least 10 days (Fig. S1b). Moreover, increasing the temperature from

26 ºC to 36 ºC three days after the injection failed to enhance expression (Fig. 1a, c). These results show

that adjusting the temperature to that of mammalian hosts can substantially increase the efficiency of

HSV1-mediated viral gene transfer in zebrafish.

Viral vectors are often combined with transgenic lines to target specific cell types using two-component

expression systems (e.g., injection of a Cre-dependent viral construct into Cre-expressing mice). In

zebrafish, the most widely used two-component expression system is the Gal4/UAS system. We therefore

explored the possibility to combine viral delivery of UAS-dependent expression constructs with Gal4-

expressing driver lines. We first created a Gateway expression vector[18] to simplify the construction step

of HSV1 for UAS-dependent expression (Fig. 1d). We then generated HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] to

expresses a fusion of the transmembrane protein TVA and the red fluorescent protein mCherry under

UAS control. This virus did not drive expression when injected into the brain of wt zebrafish (n = 3; not

shown).

We injected HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:GFP; *gad1b*:Gal4] fish[19], which

express Gal4 and GFP under the control of the *gad1b* promoter, a marker of GABAergic neurons.

Consistent with the distribution of GABAergic neurons in the cerebellum, GFP was expressed in Purkinje

neurons and in a sparse neuronal population in the granular layer, presumably Golgi cells. mCherry was

co-expressed with GFP in a subset of Purkinje neurons and putative Golgi cells (97.7 ± 1.2 % of

mCherry-positive neurons were also GFP-positive; mean ± s.d.; n = 4 fish; Fig. 1e and f). No expression

was detected in the dense population of GFP-negative granule cells in the granular layer. Co-expression

of mCherry and GFP was also observed when the injection of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] was directed at

a cluster of GABAergic neurons near Dp in Tg[*gad1b*:GFP; *gad1b*:Gal4] fish (94.8 ± 4.5 % of mCherry+

neurons coexpressed GFP; mean ± s.d.; n = 5 fish; Fig. 1g, Fig. S2). Interestingly, mCherry-expressing

neurites arborized extensively in the lateral pallium but spared a region of Dp immediately adjacent to the

gad1b-positive cluster. These observations indicate that the dorsal telencephalon contains specific long-

range projections of GABAergic neurons (Fig. S2a).

In additional experiments we first injected HSV1[*LTCMV*:Gal4] into the OB of wt zebrafish and

subsequently injected HSV1[*UAS*:GFP] into the dorsal telencephalon. Expression of GFP was observed

specifically in OB-projecting neurons of the dorsal telencephalon without expression elsewhere (Fig. 1g).

To assess the efficiency of this intersectional targeting approach we compared the number of labeled

neurons using either the Gal4/UAS system or the one-component approach (injection of

HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into OB). Both approaches yielded similar numbers of labeled neurons in the

dorsal telencephalon (Fig. 1g). We therefore conclude that HSV1 can be combined with the Gal4/UAS

system in intersectional approaches with high efficiency and low leakiness.

We next explored strategies for co-expression of multiple transgenes in the same neurons. When red and

green reporter constructs were co-packaged into the same virus (HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry &

UAS:GFP]), injection into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] resulted in a high rate of co-expression, as

expected (89.5 ± 8.7 % co-expression; mean ± s.d.; n = 3 fish; Fig. S3a, c). Interestingly, co-injection of

the same responder constructs packaged into separate viruses (HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] and

HSV1[*UAS*:GFP]) produced a similar rate of co-expression, even when overall expression was sparse

(84.3 ± 6.0 % co-expression; mean ± s.d.; n = 3 fish; Fig. S3b, c). These results indicate that co-injection

of viruses can be used to co-express multiple transgenes in the same neurons.

In rodents, modified rabies viruses have become important tools to analyze connectivity and structure-

function relationships in neuronal circuits. These vectors can infect specific "starter" neurons and are

transmitted to presynaptic neurons across one synapse. Specific infection is achieved by expressing the

receptor protein TVA in the starter neuron and pseudotyping the virus with the envelope protein EnvA[11].

To limit retrograde transfer to one synapse, an essential glycoprotein (G) is deleted from the viral genome

and supplied in *trans* only in the starter neurons. In zebrafish, the G-deleted rabies virus (RVΔG) has

been reported to infect neurons[14] and to cross synapses when complemented with G but the efficiency of

retrograde synaptic transfer appeared very low[20].

To enhance trans-neuronal tracing efficiency we first explored the effect of temperature. When we

injected EnvA-coated RVΔG expressing GFP (EnvA-RVΔG-GFP) into the telencephalon of wt fish at

36ºC, no GFP expression was observed (not shown). We then injected EnvA-RVΔG-GFP into the

telencephalon of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4; *UAS*:TVA-mCherry] fish that express TVA-mCherry in GABAergic

neurons. After 6 days, efficient and selective infection of neurons expressing TVA-mCherry was

observed at 36ºC but not at 26ºC, nor when the temperature was raised from 26ºC to 36ºC three days post

injection (Fig. S4). Hence, infection of zebrafish neurons by EnvA-RVΔG-GFP required TVA and was

substantially more efficient when the temperature was close to the body temperature of the natural host.

Efficient trans-neuronal spread of the rabies virus depends on the expression level of the glycoprotein in

starter cells[21,22]. We therefore took two steps to enhance glycoprotein expression. First, we optimized

codon usage for zebrafish. Second, we expressed TVA and the codon-optimized glycoprotein (zoSADG)

using HSV1 because viral vectors typically reach higher expression levels than transgenics[15]. In rodents,

starter neurons expressing high levels of G often disappear in parallel with the emergence of

transneuronal expression, presumably because long-term expression of G is toxic[23,24]. We therefore

determined the time course of transgene expression under different experimental conditions. We first

focused on the cerebellum where GABAergic Purkinje neurons receive local synaptic input from different

types of cerebellar neurons and long-range input from neurons in the contralateral inferior olive (climbing

fibers; Fig. 2a). We injected a mixture of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] and EnvA-RVΔG-GFP w into the

cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish and examined expression for up to 10 days. As observed before

(Fig. 1e), mCherry expression was localized to Purkinje neurons and putative Golgi cells. Neurons

expressing GFP were concentrated around the injection site and usually co-expressed mCherry (Fig 2b,

d). Rarely, GFP expression was observed in mCherry-negative neurons (Fig. 2d), which may indicate

TVA-independent viral entry. However, as no GFP expression was observed when EnvA-RVΔG-GFP

was injected into wt animals, it appears more likely that GFP+/mCherry- neurons initially expressed TVA

but subsequently lost expression due to the slight decline of expression driven by the viral promoter

(Fig. S1b). Co-expression of mCherry and GFP was stable for at least 10 days after injection and neurons

expressing GFP only remained very rare (Fig. 2d). These results confirm the specificity of EnvA-RVΔG-

GFP infection and show that expression of TVA-mCherry or the infection of rabies virus alone are not

toxic in the absence of glycoprotein. No expression of GFP was observed in the inferior olive, consistent

with the expectation that the RVΔG does not spread in the absence of glycoprotein.

To examine whether the delivery of glycoprotein to starter cells can drive trans-neuronal spread, we

injected a mixture of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry], HSV1[*UAS*:zoSADG] and EnvA-RVΔG-GFP into the

cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish. Unlike in the absence of glycoprotein, the number of mCherry-

expressing Purkinje neurons and putative Golgi cells now declined over the incubation period of 10 days.

The number of neurons expressing GFP, in contrast, was low initially but increased steeply between 6 and

10 days after injection. In the cerebellum, GFP was expressed in Purkinje cells and throughout the

granular layer (Fig. 2c). The number and spatial distribution of GFP-expressing neurons in the granular

layer was clearly different from mCherry expression in the absence of glycoprotein (Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish

injected with HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry]; Fig. 1e, 2b), indicating that GFP was expressed in granule

cells. Moreover, GFP-positive neurons were found in the contralateral inferior olive (Fig. 2c). We

therefore conclude that *trans*-complementation with zoSADG in starter cells promoted transneuronal

spread of the rabies virus.

Transneuronal viral transfer for synaptic inputs to Purkinje neurons from the inferior olive was quantified

by a convergence index established previously in rodents[22,25]. This index is defined as the number of

transneuronally labeled neurons (here: GFP+/mCherry- neurons in the inferior olive) normalized to the

number of starter cells (here: GFP+/mCherry+ Purkinje neurons) in each individual. The clear spatial

separation of starter neurons from transneuronally labeled neurons minimizes potential counting errors.

The convergence index was 1.00 ± 0.95 (mean $\pm$ s.d.; n = 4 fish; Fig. 2e), which is comparable to values

reported in mammals[22].

To corroborate these results we also examined transneuronal tracing from starter neurons in telencephalic

area Dp. In this area, both glutamatergic principal neurons and GABAergic interneurons receive long-

range input from mitral cells in the OB (Fig. 2f). In addition, Dp receives input from other telencephalic

areas that is not well characterized. When a mixture of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] and EnvA-RVΔG-

GFP was injected into Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish (Fig. 2g), GFP expression was largely restricted to a cluster of

neurons that co-expressed mCherry (Fig. 2g). This cluster was located near a prominent furrow that

separates an anterior from a posterior compartment of Dp, consistent with the known location of

GABAergic neurons in Dp[19]. When HSV1[*UAS*:zoSADG] was added to the injected virus mixture,

mCherry expression became rare while a large number of neurons in different telencephalic areas

expressed GFP (Fig. 2h, i). Moreover, GFP was expressed in the olfactory bulb by neurons with the

characteristic morphology of mitral cells, but not by other cells (Fig. 2h). Similar observations were made

when the infection was targeted to glutamatergic starter neurons by injecting the cocktail of viruses into

Dp of Tg[*vglut1*:Gal4] fish (Fig. S6. Note that *vglut1* is expressed in excitatory neurons in the

telencephalon but not in the OB (Fig. S5), implying that labeling of OB neurons cannot be explained by

direct infection. Convergence indices for projections of mitral cells to GABAergic or glutamatergic starter

neurons in Dp were 0.70 ± 0.21 and 1.31 ± 1.20 (mean $\pm$ s.d.; n = 5 and n = 4 fish, respectively; Fig. 2j).

These results confirm that EnvA-RVΔG selectively infects TVA-expressing target neurons and undergoes

monosynaptic retrograde transneuronal transfer when complemented with zoSADG.

Conclusions

In summary, we found that viral infection and transgene expression in zebrafish can be significantly
enhanced by adjusting the temperature to that of the natural viral host. HSV1 vectors can be combined
with the Gal4/UAS system for intersectional gene expression without obvious leakiness. Retrograde
HSV1-mediated delivery of Gal4 and subsequent HSV1-mediated delivery of a UAS responder can be
used to target projection neurons. Conceivably, viral delivery of UAS responders may also be useful to
overcome the slow loss of expression observed in some Gal4/UAS lines over generations because it
bypasses epigenetic silencing of the highly repetitive UAS elements[26,27]. HSV1-based viral tools thus
provide novel opportunities to target narrowly defined types of neurons in zebrafish by combining the
genetic specificity of promoters and the Gal4/UAS system with the spatial and temporal precision of
injections. Such approaches can immediately capitalize on the broad spectrum of Gal4 driver lines that
has been created using defined promoters and random insertion strategies[28–30]. The development of a viral
toolbox for conditional gene expression thus enables experimental approaches in zebrafish that have
previously been restricted mainly to rodents.

We further established procedures for retrograde monosynaptic tracing using rabies viruses that greatly
enhanced the efficiency of transneuronal transfer compared to a previous study in zebrafish[20].
Temperature adjustments were important but unlikely to be the only factor underlying the enhanced
transneuronal spread because the temperature difference to the previous study was only 1.5 ºC[20]. We
therefore assume that increased glycoprotein expression by codon optimization and viral gene delivery
also contributed significantly. Moreover, efficiency may be affected by the relative timing of glycoprotein
expression and rabies virus infection. Convergence ratios were similar to those observed in rodents
despite the fact that zebrafish neurons are smaller and probably receive fewer synaptic inputs. These
results suggest that the efficiency of transneuronal tracing was in the same range as in rodents although
quantitative comparisons are difficult. In the future, further improvements may be achieved by
modifications that are currently explored in rodents such as the design of optimized glycoproteins[22] or
trans-complementation with a second viral gene[31]. The apparent long-term toxicity of the glycoprotein
may be circumvented by transient expression using a negative feedback system[32]. Hence, rabies-based
transneuronal tracers are promising tools for the structural and functional dissection of neuronal circuitry
in zebrafish.

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Acknowledgements

We thank Aya Takeoka and Pawel Zmarz for comments on the manuscript and the Friedrich group for
stimulating discussions. This work was supported by the Novartis Research Foundation, Marie Curie
fellowship and JSPS (C.S.), by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's
Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement no. 742576), and by the Swiss National
Science Foundation (grant no. 31003A_172925/1).

Author contributions

280 C.S. developed the methodology, designed and performed experiments, analyzed data and wrote the
281 manuscript. R.L.N. produced HSV1. H.K.O. produced rabies virus. E.A.B. helped molecular biology to
282 establish HSV1[*UAS*:GFP], M.T. helped to establish rabies virus tracing in zebrafish. S.H. created
283 transgenic fish. G.B.K. supervised the project. R.W.F. supervised the project, and wrote the manuscript.

Competing interests

286 The authors declare no competing interests.

Methods

Animals

Experiments were performed in adult (5 – 15 month old) zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) of both sexes. Fish were bred under standard laboratory conditions (26 – 27°C, 13 h/11 h light/dark cycle). All experiments were approved by the Veterinary Department of the Canton Basel-Stadt (Switzerland).

The following transgenic fish lines were used: Tg[*gad1b*:GFP][28], Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4][19], Tg [*vglut2a*:loxP-DsRed-loxP-GFP][28], Tg[*vglut1*:GFP] (created in this study), Tg[*vglut1*:Gal4] (created in this study), and Tg[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] (created in this study). Note that Tg[*gad1b*:GFP] and Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] were created using the same BAC (zC24M22), that likely produce the same expression pattern under *gad1b*.

Transgenic fish, DNA constructs and virus production

Tg[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] fish were created using standard procedures based on the Tol2 transposon.[33] TVA-mCherry was amplified by PCR from a plasmid (gift from Dr. Uchida, Addgene plasmid #38044 ; http://n2t.net/addgene:38044 ; RRID:Addgene_38044,[34]) and inserted into a 5xUAS vector[29]. Tg[*vglut1*:GFP] fish were established using the CRISPR/Cas9 method[35]. Insertion of a construct containing the hsp70 promoter was targeted at a site upstream of the *vglut1* gene using the target sequence gagagagactcgggcgcgcg. The same procedure and target sequence was used to generate Tg[*vglut1:*loxP-mCherry-loxP-Gal4]. This line was then crossed to Tg[*hspa8*:Cre-mCherry-NLS] (ZFIN ID: ZDB-ALT-201210-1), which expresses Cre ubiquitously, to generate Tg[*vglut1:*Gal4].

For HSV1 production, constructs containing *LTCMV*:DsRed and *LTCMV*:Gal4 were created at the Gene Delivery Technology Core of the Massachusets General Hospital. Constructs containing *UAS*:GFP, *UAS*:TVA-mCherry, and *UAS*:zoSADG were created using the Gateway construct described in this paper (Fig. 1d). The transcriptional blocker (Fig. 1d) and zoSADG (Fig. 2) were synthesized with the following sequences:

Transcriptional blocker:
caataaaatatctttattttcattacatctgtgtgttggttttttgtgtgaatcgatagtactaacatacgctctccatcaaaacaaaacgaaacaaaacaaactag
caaaataggctgtccccagtgcaagtgcaggtgccagaacatttctct

zoSADG:
atggtgcctcaggctctgctgtttgtgcctctgctggtgttccctctgtgcttcggaaaattccctatctacacaatcccggataaactgggaccttggagccc
tatcgacatccaccacctgagctgtcctaacaacctggtggtggaggatgagggatgcactaacctgagcggattctcctacatggagctgaaagtggga
tacatcctggctatcaaggtgaacggattcacctgtacaggagtggtgactgaggctgagacatacacaaacttcgtgggatacgtgacaaccacattca
aaaggaaacacttcagacctacacctgatgcttgtagagctgcctacaactggaagatggctggtgaccctagatatgaggagtccctgcacaaccctta
ccctgactacagatggctgcgtacagtgaagacaacaaaagagagcctcgttatcatcagcccttccgtggccgatctcgatccatatgacagaagcctg
cactctagagtgttcccaagcggaaagtgctctggcgtggcagtgtcttccacttactgctcaaccaaccacgactacaccatctggatgccagagaacc
caagactgggaatgtcttgtgacatcttcactaactctagaggaaaaagagcttctaaaggatctgagacctgcggattcgtggatgagagaggactgtac
aagtctctgaagggagcttgtaaactgaagctgtgtggagtgctgggactgagactgatggacggaacctgggtcagcatgcagacaagcaacgagac
caagtggtgtcctccagacaaactggtgaacctgcacgactttagaagcgatgagattgagcaccttgtggtggaggagctggtgagaaaaagagagg
agtgtctggacgctctggagagcatcatgacaacaaaaagcgtgtctttcagaagactgagccacctgagaaaactggtgcctggattcggaaaggctta
tacaatcttcaacaaaacactgatggaggctgatgctcactacaagagcgtgagaacatggaacgagatcctgccttctaaaggatgcctgagagtggga
ggaagatgtcacccacacgtgaacggagtgttctttaacgggatcatttttgggtcccgacggcaatgtgctcatcccggaaatgcagagcagcctgctcc
agcaacacatggagttgctcgagagtagtgtgatacccttagtccatccactcgcagatccttccacagtgttcaaggatggtgacgaggctgaggacttt

gtagaggttcatctccctgatgtgcacaaccaggtgtctggagtggatctgggactgccaaactggggaaagtacgtgctgctgtctgctggagctctgac

cgctctgatgctgatcatcttcctgatgacatgttgtagaagagtgaacagatctgagcctacacagcacaacctgagaggaactggaagagaggtgagc

gtgacacctcagagcggaaagatcatctctagctgggagtcacataagtctggaggtgaaactagactgtga.

All HSV1 viruses were produced by Gene Delivery Technology Core in the Massachusetts General
Hospital (https://researchcores.partners.org/mvvc/about). Rabies virus (EnvA-RVΔG-GFP) was produced
by FMI viral core.

Virus injection

Virus injection was performed as described[15] with minor modifications. Fish were anesthetized in 0.03%
tricaine methanesulfonate (MS-222) and placed under a dissection microscope. MS-222 (0.01%) was
continuously delivered into the mouth through a small cannula. A small craniotomy was made over the
dorsal telencephalon near the midline, over the OBs, or over the cerebellum. If multiple viruses were
injected in the same region, virus suspensions were mixed. Phenol red (0.05 %) was added to the
suspension to visualize the injection. Micropipettes pulled from borosilicate glass were inserted vertically
through the craniotomy. The depth of injections was approximately 100 μm in the dorsal telencephalon,
50 μm in the OB, and 100-150 μm in the cerebellum, 300-500 μm in Dp. The injected volume was 50 nl
– 100 nl. After surgery, fish were kept in standard holding tanks at 35 °C – 37 °C unless noted otherwise.

Clearing of brain samples

We adapted the original Cubic protocol[36] to small samples such as adult zebrafish brains. After fixation
with 4% paraformaldehyde overnight, samples were soaked with reagent 1A (10%w/v Triton, 5wt%
NNNN-tetrakis (2HP) ethylenediamine and 10%w/v urea) for 2.5 h at room temperature and for 6 h at
37 °C with mild shaking and multiple solution exchanges. Subsequently, samples were washed in PBS
overnight at room temperature. On the next day, samples were treated with reagent 2 (25% w/v urea, 50%
w/v sucrose and 10% w/v triethanolamine) for refractive index matching, mounted in glass bottom dishes,
and covered by 16 x 16 mm cover glasses to avoid drift. Images were acquired using a Zeiss 10x water-
immersion objective lens (N.A. = 0.45) on an upright Zeiss LSM 700 confocal microscope.

Immunohistochemistry

354   For rabies virus tracing of the cerebellum circuit, GFP and mCherry signals were detected by
355   immunocytochemistry. Brain samples were fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde overnight and sectioned
356   (100 μm) on a Leica VT1000 vibratome. Primary antibodies were anti-GFP (Thermofisher, A10262,
357   1:200) and anti-RFP (5F8, chromotek, 1:200). Secondary antibodies were conjugated to Alexa Fluor 488
358   or 594 (Invitrogen, 1:200).

Neuron counts

For whole brain imaging (Fig1c, 1g and S1b), z stacks (7-10 μm steps) were acquired using an upright
Zeiss LSM 700 confocal microscope with a 10x objective (water, N.A. = 0.45, pixel size 1.25 μm). GFP
or DsRed-expressing neurons in the dorsal telencephalon were counted manually.

Z stacks from individual brain slices (1 – 2 um steps, Fig1f, 2d, 2i, 2j, S1 and S3c) were acquired using an
upright Zeiss LSM 700 confocal microscope with a 20x objective (air, N.A. = 0.8, pixel size 0.625 um).
For non-rabies injections, a single slice, containing the largest number of labelled neurons, was chosen

from each brain sample for cell counting. For rabies injections, all slices were used for cell counting.
Cells expressing GFP and/or mCherry in specific regions (cerebellum, telencephalon, olfactory bulb)
were counted manually.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding authors upon
reasonable request.

Code availability

All code used in this study is available from the corresponding authors upon reasonable request.

Figure Legends

Fig 1. HSV1-mediated gene delivery in adult zebrafish and the Gal4/UAS system

(a) Procedure for testing temperature-dependence of HSV1-mediated gene expression.

(b) Maximum intensity projection after injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into one olfactory bulb
(magenta arrow) of a Tg[*vglut1*:GFP] fish and incubation at 36ºC. White arrowhead indicates the OB-
projecting area in the dorsal telencephalon used for quantification in **(c)** and **(g)**. *vglut1*:GFP expression
served as a morphological marker.

(c) Mean number of labeled neurons in the dorsal telencephalon after injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed]
into the ipsilateral olfactory bulb and incubation at different temperatures. In this and similar plots, black
dots represent data from individual fish, box plot indicates median and 25% and 75% percentiles, circles
and error bars indicate mean and s.d. over individual fish. n: number of fish.

(d) Construction of the UAS vector for HSV packaging. Genes of interest (GOI) are inserted downstream
of the 5xUAS sequences by recombination cloning using the Gateway system. The transcriptional blocker
minimizes leaky expression[37].

(e) Injection of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4; *gad1b*:GFP] double
transgenic fish. Note co-localization of mCherry and GFP in Purkinje cells (arrowheads) and putative
Golgi cells (arrows). ML: molecular layer; PL: Purkinje layer; GL: granular layer.

(f) Fraction of mCherry-positive neurons that co-expressed GFP after injection of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-
mCherry] into the cerebellum or Dp of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4; *gad1b*:GFP] double transgenic fish. n: number of
fish.

(g) Injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:Gal4] into the olfactory bulb and HSV1[*UAS*:GFP] into the dorsal
telencephalon of wt fish. Note selective expression of GFP in OB-projecting neurons (arrowhead; dashed
outline). Number of neurons labeled in the dorsal telencephalon by a single injection of
HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] **(a)** into the OB (one-way), or by two injections using the two-component
Gal4/UAS system **(g)**. n: number of fish.

Fig 2. Transneuronal tracing using pseudotyped rabies virus in adult zebrafish

(a) Schematic of the cerebellar circuit. Glutamatergic neurons are shown in red colors, GABAergic
neurons in blue colors. Purkinje cells receive extra-cerebellar input exclusively from the inferior olive.

(b) Co-injection of EnvA-RVΔG-GFP and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of
Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish in the absence of glycoprotein. Left: schematic. Center: expression of TVA-mCherry
(magenta) and GFP (green) in the cerebellum. Regions in the Purkinje and granular layers (dashed
rectangles) are enlarged. Right: expression of GFP in the hindbrain. Region covering the inferior olive
(dashed rectangle) is enlarged. Expression of GFP was restricted to putative starter neurons. No
expression was detected in the inferior olive. ML: molecular layer; PL: Purkinje layer; GL: granular layer.

(c) Same as in (b) but the glycoprotein (zoSADG) supplied to starter neurons in *trans* by co-injection of HSV1[*UAS*:zoSADG]. Note expression of GFP in putative granule cells and in neurons of the inferior olive, indicating transneuronal spread.

(d) Number of neurons that expressed GFP and mCherry (putative starter neurons) or GFP alone (putative presynaptic neurons) at different time points after injection of EnvA-RVΔG and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish. Left: without glycoprotein; right: with trans-complementation of zoSADG in starter neurons. Note that labeling of putative presynaptic neurons emerged between 6 and 10 days post injection only when zoSADG was trans-complemented in starter neurons. See the method for details. In all plots, black dots represent data from individual fish, box plot indicates median and the 25% and 75% percentiles, circles and error bars indicate mean and s.d. over individual fish. n: number of fish.

(e) Convergence index for the projection from the inferior olive to the cerebellum at different time points. The convergence index is the numerical ratio of transneuronally labeled neurons (GFP+/mCherry- neurons in the inferior olive) and putative starter cells in the cerebellum (GFP+/mCherry+ Purkinje neurons). n: number of fish.

(f) Schematic of the circuitry in telencephalic area Dp. Glutamatergic neurons are shown in red colors, GABAergic neurons in blue colors. Long-range projections from mitral cells in the olfactory bulb terminate on glutamatergic neurons and on GABAergic interneurons in Dp. Additional long-range projections originate in other telencephalic areas.

(g) Co-injection of EnvA-RVΔG and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into Dp of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish in the absence of glycoprotein. Coronal section through the injected telencephalic hemisphere at the level of Dp. Area outlined by dashed rectangle is enlarged. Co-expression of GFP (green) and mCherry (magenta) indicates starter cells.

(h) Same as in (g) but with trans-complementation of zoSADG in starter neurons by co-injection of HSV1[*UAS*:zoSADG]. Left: coronal section through the injected telencephalic hemisphere. Right: coronal section through the ipsilateral olfactory bulb. Expression of GFP only (green) indicates transneuronally labeled neurons.

(i) Number of neurons in the telencephalon that expressed GFP and mCherry (putative starter neurons) or GFP alone (putative presynaptic neurons) after injection of EnvA-RVΔG and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into Dp with (+) or without (-) trans-complementation with zoSADG in starter neurons (HSV1[*UAS*:zoSADG]). Left: injection into Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish; right: injection into Tg[*vglut1*:Gal4] fish (right). Expression was analyzed 10 days post injection. n: number of fish.

(j) Convergence index for the projection of transneuronally labeled neurons in the OB to Dp when EnvA-RVΔG was targeted to GABAergic neurons (viral injections into Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish) or to glutamatergic neurons (injections into Tg[*vglut1*:Gal4] fish) in Dp. Expression was analyzed at 10 days post injection. n: number of fish.

Supplementary Figure Legends

Fig S1. Temperature-dependence and time course of HSV1-mediated gene expression

(a) Injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into the OB (arrow) and incubation at 26ºC (maximum projection of confocal stack). Boxed areas (OB and Dp) are enlarged below. Note that number of DsRed-expressing neurons is low compared to the expression after incubation at 36 ºC (Fig. 1).

(b) Time course of DsRed expression in the dorsal telencephalon after injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into the ipsilateral OB. Fish were kept at 36 ºC for different durations. Black dots represent data from individual fish, box plot indicates median and 25% and 75% percentiles, circles and error bars indicate mean and s.d. over individual fish. n: number of fish.

Fig S2. Targeting of GABAergic neurons in the telencephalon

(a) Coronal section through the telencephalon at the level of Dp after injection of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4]; Tg[*gad1b*:GFP] double transgenic fish. The injection was targeted to a volume around Dp. mCherry was expressed predominantly in a cluster of GFP-positive neurons associated with Dp. Note long-range projections of mCherry-expressing neurons to multiple telencephalic areas.

(b) Enlargements of boxed region in (a).

Fig S3. Co-packaging versus co-injection

(a) Expression of GFP and mCherry after injection of HSV1[*UAS*:GFP & *UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish. In this virus, two expression constructs, *UAS*:GFP and *UAS*:TVA-mCherry, are packaged into the same virus particles. Expression is observed in Purkinje neurons and in putative Golgi cells. Note high rate of co-expression of GFP and mCherry. ML: molecular layer; PL: Purkinje layer; GL: granular layer.

(b) Expression of GFP and mCherry in the Purkinje layer after co-injection of two independent viruses (HSV1[*UAS*:GFP] and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry]) into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish. Note that the rate of co-expression was high even though GFP and mCherry were delivered by separate viruses. Note also that the overall expression was sparse, implying that co-expression was unlikely to occur by chance.

(c) Percentage of GFP and mCherry-expressing neurons among all fluorescent neurons. Filled circles represent data from individual fish, box plot indicates median and the 25% and 75% percentiles, and open circles indicate mean over individual fish. n: number of fish.

Fig S4. Temperature-dependence of infection by rabies virus

(a) Experimental scheme: Rabies virus (EnvA-RVΔG-GFP) was injected into the telencephalon of transgenic fish expressing TVA-mCherry in GABAergic neurons (Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4; *UAS*:TVA-mCherry]).

(b) Expression of TVA-mCherry and GFP when fish were kept at 26 ºC for 6 days after injection. Note
almost complete absence of GFP expression.

(c) Expression of TVA-mCherry and GFP when fish were kept at 36 ºC for 6 days after injection. Note
strong GFP expression.

(d) Expression of TVA-mCherry and GFP six days after injection when the housing temperature was
increased from 26 ºC to 36 ºC 3 days after injection. GFP expression was weak and sparse.

Fig S5. Expression pattern of *vglut1* and *vglut2* in olfactory bulb and Dp

(a) Coronal cross sections through the OB and anterior telencephalon from Tg[*vglut2a*:RFP; *vglut1*:GFP]
double transgenic fish. Note that *vglut2a* (magenta) is expressed by axons of olfactory sensory neurons
innervating glomeruli in the OB and by a subset of mitral cells, while expression of *vglut1* (green) in the
OB is weak or absent. Dotted lines outline OBs.

(b) More posterior coronal cross sections through the telencephalon of the same fish at the level of Dp.
Note that expression of *vglut2a* and *vglut1* in the telencephalon are largely complementary. Neurons in
Dp express primarily *vglut1*. Dotted areas indicate the dorsal lateral telencephalic area (Dl) and Dp.

Fig S6. Transneuronal tracing using pseudotyped rabies virus from *vglut1*+ neurons in Dp in adult
zebrafish

(a) Co-injection of EnvA-RVΔG and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into Dp of Tg[*vglut1*:Gal4] fish in the
absence of glycoprotein. Coronal section through the injected telencephalic hemisphere at the level of Dp.
Area outlined by dashed rectangle is enlarged. Co-expression of GFP (green) and mCherry (magenta)
indicates starter cells.

(b) Same as in (a) but with trans-complementation of zoSADG in starter neurons by co-injection of
HSV1[*UAS*:zoSADG]. Left: coronal section through the injected telencephalic hemisphere. Right:
coronal section through the ipsilateral olfactory bulb. Expression of GFP only (green) indicates
transneuronally labeled neurons.

Fig 1. HSV1-mediated gene delivery in adult zebrafish and the Gal4/UAS system

(a) Procedure for testing temperature-dependence of HSV1-mediated gene expression.

(b) Maximum intensity projection after injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into one olfactory bulb (magenta arrow) of a Tg[*vglut1*:GFP] fish and incubation at 36ºC. White arrowhead indicates the OB-projecting area in the dorsal telencephalon used for quantification in (c) and (g). *vglut1*:GFP expression served as a morphological marker.

(c) Mean number of labeled neurons in the dorsal telencephalon after injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into the ipsilateral olfactory bulb and incubation at different temperatures. In this and similar plots, black dots represent data from individual fish, box plot indicates median and 25% and 75% percentiles, circles and error bars indicate mean and s.d. over individual fish. n: number of fish.

(d) Construction of the UAS vector for HSV packaging. Genes of interest (GOI) are inserted downstream of the 5xUAS sequences by recombination cloning using the Gateway system. The transcriptional blocker minimizes leaky expression[37].

(e) Injection of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4; *gad1b*:GFP] double transgenic fish. Note co-localization of mCherry and GFP in Purkinje cells (arrowheads) and putative Golgi cells (arrows). ML: molecular layer; PL: Purkinje layer; GL: granular layer.

(f) Fraction of mCherry-positive neurons that co-expressed GFP after injection of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum or Dp of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4; *gad1b*:GFP] double transgenic fish. n: number of fish.

(g) Injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:Gal4] into the olfactory bulb and HSV1[*UAS*:GFP] into the dorsal telencephalon of wt fish. Note selective expression of GFP in OB-projecting neurons (arrowhead; dashed outline). Number of neurons labeled in the dorsal telencephalon by a single injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] (a) into the OB (one-way), or by two injections using the two-component Gal4/UAS system (g). n: number of fish.

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(a) Schematic of the cerebellar circuit. Glutamatergic neurons are shown in red colors, GABAergic neurons in blue colors. Purkinje cells receive extra-cerebellar input exclusively from the inferior olive.

(b) Co-injection of EnvA-RVΔG-GFP and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish in the absence of glycoprotein. Left: schematic. Center: expression of TVA-mCherry (magenta) and GFP (green) in the cerebellum. Regions in the Purkinje and granular layers (dashed rectangles) are enlarged. Right: expression of GFP in the hindbrain. Region covering the inferior olive (dashed rectangle) is enlarged. Expression of GFP was restricted to putative starter neurons. No expression was detected in the inferior olive. ML: molecular layer; PL: Purkinje layer; GL: granular layer.

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(e) Convergence index for the projection from the inferior olive to the cerebellum at different time points. The convergence index is the numerical ratio of transneuronally labeled neurons (GFP+/mCherry- neurons in the inferior olive) and putative starter cells in the cerebellum (GFP+/mCherry+ Purkinje neurons). n: number of fish.

(f) Schematic of the circuitry in telencephalic area Dp. Glutamatergic neurons are shown in red colors, GABAergic neurons in blue colors. Long-range projections from mitral cells in the olfactory bulb terminate on glutamatergic neurons and on GABAergic interneurons in Dp. Additional long-range projections originate in other telencephalic areas.

(g) Co-injection of EnvA-RVΔG and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into Dp of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish in the absence of glycoprotein. Coronal section through the injected telencephalic hemisphere at the level of Dp. Area outlined by dashed rectangle is enlarged. Co-expression of GFP (green) and mCherry (magenta) indicates starter cells.

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(j) Convergence index for the projection of transneuronally labeled neurons in the OB to Dp when EnvA-RVΔG was targeted to GABAergic neurons (viral injections into Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish) or to glutamatergic neurons (injections into Tg[*vglut1*:Gal4] fish) in Dp. Expression was analyzed at 10 days post injection. n: number of fish.

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(a) Injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into the OB (arrow) and incubation at 26ºC (maximum projection of confocal stack). Boxed areas (OB and Dp) are enlarged below. Note that number of DsRed-expressing neurons is low compared to the expression after incubation at 36 ºC (Fig. 1).

(b) Time course of DsRed expression in the dorsal telencephalon after injection of HSV1[*LTCMV*:DsRed] into the ipsilateral OB. Fish were kept at 36 ºC for different durations. Black dots represent data from individual fish, box plot indicates median and 25% and 75% percentiles, circles and error bars indicate mean and s.d. over individual fish. n: number of fish.

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(a) Coronal section through the telencephalon at the level of Dp after injection of HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4]; Tg[*gad1b*:GFP] double transgenic fish. The injection was targeted to a volume around Dp. mCherry was expressed predominantly in a cluster of GFP-positive neurons associated with Dp. Note long-range projections of mCherry-expressing neurons to multiple telencephalic areas.
(b) Enlargements of boxed region in (a).

a Co-injection: HSV1[*UAS*:GFP] and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry]

250 μm

ML

PL

GL

b Co-packaging: HSV1[*UAS*:GFP & *UAS*:TVA-mCherry]

250 μm

ML

PL

c

n = 3   n = 3

GFP+/mCherry+ neurons (%)

co-injection   co-packaging

Fig S3. Co-packaging versus co-injection.

(a) Expression of GFP and mCherry after injection of HSV1[*UAS*:GFP & *UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish. In this virus, two expression constructs, *UAS*:GFP and *UAS*:TVA-mCherry, are packaged into the same virus particles. Expression is observed in Purkinje neurons and in putative Golgi cells. Note high rate of co-expression of GFP and mCherry. ML: molecular layer; PL: Purkinje layer; GL: granular layer.

(b) Expression of GFP and mCherry in the Purkinje layer after co-injection of two independent viruses (HSV1[*UAS*:GFP] and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry]) into the cerebellum of Tg[*gad1b*:Gal4] fish. Note that the rate of co-expression was high even though GFP and mCherry were delivered by separate viruses. Note also that the overall expression was sparse, implying that co-expression was unlikely to occur by chance.

(c) Percentage of GFP and mCherry-expressing neurons among all fluorescent neurons. Filled circles represent data from individual fish, box plot indicates median and the 25% and 75% percentiles, and open circles indicate mean over individual fish. n: number of fish.

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(a) Coronal cross sections through the OB and anterior telencephalon from Tg[*vglut2a*:RFP; *vglut1*:GFP] double transgenic fish. Note that vglut2a (magenta) is expressed by axons of olfactory sensory neurons innervating glomeruli in the OB and by a subset of mitral cells, while expression of vglut1 (green) in the OB is weak or absent. Dotted lines outline OBs.

(b) More posterior coronal cross sections through the telencephalon of the same fish at the level of Dp. Note that expression of *vglut2a* and *vglut1* in the telencephalon are largely complementary. Neurons in Dp express primarily *vglut1*. Dotted areas indicate the dorsal lateral telencephalic area (Dl) and Dp.

Fig S6. Transneuronal tracing using pseudotyped rabies virus from vglut1+ neurons in Dp in adult zebrafish

(a) Co-injection of EnvA-RVΔG and HSV1[*UAS*:TVA-mCherry] into Dp of Tg[*vglut1*:Gal4] fish in the absence of glyco-protein. Coronal section through the injected telencephalic hemisphere at the level of Dp. Area outlined by dashed rectangle is enlarged. Co-expression of GFP (green) and mCherry (magenta) indicates starter cells.
(b) Same as in (a) but with trans-complementation of zoSADG in starter neurons by co-injection of HSV1[*UAS*:zoSADG]. Left: coronal section through the injected telencephalic hemisphere. Right: coronal section through the ipsilateral olfactory bulb. Expression of GFP only (green) indicates transneuronally labeled neurons.