<u>Brain-wide oscillatory network encodes an aggressive internal state</u>

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33 ## Keywords

Abstract

Social aggression is an innate behavior that can aid an organism in securing access to resources[1]. Aggression can also disrupt group function and reduce survival under conditions of behavioral pathology[2-4]. Since many brain regions contribute to multiple social behaviors[5-7], expanded knowledge of how the brain distinguishes between social states would enable the development of interventions that suppress aggression, while leaving other social behaviors intact. Here we show that a murine aggressive internal state is encoded by a brain-wide network. This network is organized by prominent theta (4-11Hz) and beta (14-30Hz) oscillations, leading from orbital frontal cortex and medial dorsal thalamus, and converging on ventral medial hypothalamus and medial amygdala. Activity in this network couples to brain-wide cellular firing, and the network is conserved in multiple contexts associated with aggression. Strikingly, network activity during social isolation encodes the trait aggressiveness of mice and causal cellular manipulations known to impact aggression bidirectionally regulate network activity. Finally, we show that the network plays a role in mediating aggressive behavior through causal mediation analysis. Thus, we define a brain-wide network that encodes an aggressive internal state within and across mice.

Social behavior reflects the integration of sensory information with internal affective states. Many subcortical brain regions contribute to aggressive behavior in mammals including lateral septum (LSN) [8, 9], nucleus accumbens [2, 10], lateral habenula [11, 12], the ventrolateral portion of ventromedial hypothalamus [5, 13-17], and medial amygdala [3, 18]. Prefrontal cortex stimulation has been shown to mitigate aggressive behavior in both humans [19, 20] and rodents [21], implicating cortical regions in regulating aggression. Finally, sensory regions, such as those underlying olfaction, also contribute to aggression [22].

To appropriately regulate aggressive behavior, the brain must integrate information across these and other cortical and subcortical regions. Moreover, since many of these regions also regulate non-aggressive social behaviors [5, 23], the brain must ultimately utilize information from overlapping regions to segregate aggression from other social behavioral states. Though efforts have revealed several cellular-level processes within regions that contribute to this

mechanism [13, 16, 24], the complementary network level process that integrates information

across regions to distinguish aggressive states from prosocial states remains unknown.

Addressing this question is of major importance as 1) mammals regularly select from a

repertoire of social behaviors based on external sensory cues to ensure their survival [6, 25],

and 2) a range of psychiatric disorders are broadly marked by a failure to appropriately match

behavior with evolving social contexts [26].

We implanted mice with microwire electrodes across eleven brain regions implicated in

regulating complex social behavior. We then recorded electrical activity from these brain

regions, concurrently, as mice engaged in social encounters that induced aggressive attack

behavior and non-attack social behavior. After confirming that statistical models based on

single brain regions could independently differentiate attack behavior from non-attack social

behaviors, we asked whether this code was also reflected at a network level, where millisecond

timescale information was integrated across all the brain areas. For this analysis, we used a

machine learning approach that models variations in natural patterns of activity within and

between implanted brain regions across seconds of time (a timescale that we reasoned would

allow us to capture socially-relevant internal states) [27]. Our approach also tuned the model to

optimally encode attack vs. non-attack social behavior.

We then applied multiple levels of validation of increasing generalization to our single region

and network level models [28]. 1) We tested whether the models generalized to data collected

from time periods that had not been used to train our model (i.e., hold out sessions). 2) We

tested whether our models generalized to new animals, and 3) we tested an orthogonal

behavioral context associated with aggression. Only the model that was based solely on activity

from ventral hippocampus and the network model survived this level of validation. 4) Next, we

tested whether these two models encoded an aggressive state, more broadly, and not simply

attack behavior. Only the network model encoded the social context of mice during periods

immediately prior to or following aggressive and prosocial interactions. Moreover, network

activity during this interval correlated with trait aggressiveness on a mouse-by-mouse basis. 4)

Finally, we subjected the network to two high levels of experimental validation, each based on

causal cellular manipulations, that bidirectionally impact attack behavior. Specifically, we

developed a closed loop optogenetic stimulation approach that detected when the brain

transitioned into an aggressive state, on a second-by-second basis, and stimulated the

prefrontal cortex in a manner previously known to suppress attack behavior. We also employed

a designer receptor exclusively activated by designer drug (DREADD) based approach to

selectively activate cells in ventral medial hypothalamus in a manner that has been shown to

induce attack behavior. These manipulations bidirectionally impacted network activity. 5) As

this latter manipulation was also performed in mice on a different genetic background, we

further confirmed the generalizability of our network-level findings. Thus, we firmly establish a

network-level mechanism whereby the brain encodes an aggressive state in a manner that

generalizes across context and individuals.

<u>Multiple brain regions fail to independently encode attack behavior across mice and contexts</u>

We initially focused our analysis on the medial prefrontal cortex (i.e., prelimbic and infralimbic

cortex in mice), since this brain region had been implicated in social behaviors [29-31].

Moreover, prior work had shown that optogenetic stimulation of medial prefrontal cortex was

sufficient to suppress attack behavior and increase non-aggressive social behaviors in CD1

strain mice [21]. CD1 mice show periods of attack behavior, defined by biting, boxing

(kicking/clawing), or tussling behavior, when a male C57BL6/J (C57) mouse is introduced into

their home cage [32]. On the other hand, they exhibit periods of non-attack social interactions

such as sniffing, grooming, or resting (placing nose or forepaws against the subject mouse, but

not moving) when exposed to a female intruder [16].

We performed our optogenetic stimulation experiments during these social encounters using a

protocol modeled after prior work, where blue light stimulation is used to activate

channelrhodopsin in the medial prefrontal cortex for the entirety of a social encounter (473nm,

5mW, 20Hz, 3ms pulse width, Fig. 1a) [21]. Control experiments were performed using yellow

light stimulation (593.5nm, 5mW, 20Hz, 3ms pulse width), which does not activate

channelrhodopsin 2[33, 34]. Consistent with the prior report, medial prefrontal cortex

stimulation suppressed attack behavior towards C57 male mice and tended to increase non-

attack social behavior [N=8; t_7=3.43; P=0.0055, and t_7=-2.35; P=0.051 using a two-tailed paired

t-test, for attack and non-attack behavior, respectively, significance determined by a Benjamini-

Hochberg false discovery rate (FDR) correction, Fig. 1a]. However, cortical stimulation

decreased non-attack social behavior toward female intruders (t_7=3.647, P=0.0041, using paired

t-test, significance determined by FDR correction). Thus, medial prefrontal cortex stimulation

was unable to selectively suppress attack behavior. Rather, stimulation suppressed multiple

types of social behavior.

To probe for candidate brain regions that may exhibit such selectivity, we implanted CD1 mice

across multiple cortical and subcortical brain regions known to contribute to social behavior,

including infralimbic cortex, orbitofrontal cortex, prelimbic cortex, lateral septum, nucleus

accumbens, lateral habenula, mediodorsal thalamus, ventromedial hypothalamus, medial

amygdala, primary visual cortex, and ventral hippocampus. Following surgical recovery, we

recorded neural activity while the CD1 mice freely interacted with an intact male C57 mouse

and a female C57 mouse for 300 seconds each. We repeated these encounters over six

sessions, yielding a total of 1800 seconds of neural data and behavior for each exposure (Fig.

1B, see also Supplemental Fig. S1). We recorded a subset of these CD1 mice (N=9 of the 20

mice) as they interacted with a castrated male mouse intruder. Since CD1 mice do not generally

exhibit attack behavior towards castrated males [35], this encounter provided neurophysiology

data during additional non-attack social behaviors that were unpaired paired with female

sensory cues. We also acquired neural activity while the CD1 mice were isolated in their home

cage.

We first verified that each of the implanted brain regions encoded social behavior using

discriminative cross spectral factor analysis non-negative matrix factorization (dCSFA-NMF, see

Fig. 1e) [27]. dCSFA-NMF utilizes supervised machine learning to generate a statistical model

that is both descriptive [integrates brain local field potential (LFP) activity features across time]

and predictive (discovers networks that distinguish between types of external behavior). LFPs

reflect the activity of populations of neurons, and these signals can be consistently sampled

across mice. The electrical functional connectomes networks (*Electome Networks*) generated

from dCSFA-NMF integrate LFP power (oscillatory amplitude across 1-56 Hz; a correlate of

cellular and synaptic activity within brain regions), LFP synchrony (how two regions' LFP

frequencies synchronize across time; a correlate of brain circuit function), and LFP Granger

synchrony (Granger causality testing; a correlate of directional transfer of information across a

brain circuit). Furthermore, dCSFA-NMF generates electome network activity scores (an

indicator of the strength of each network) at a temporal resolution sufficient to capture brain

states underlying the external behavior under observation (in this instance, a resolution of one

second). The electome networks are designed to learn patterns that explain interpretable

correlates of neural activity whose expression relate to measured behavior, facilitating an

overall interpretable model [28]. Any given brain region can belong to multiple electome

networks and each electome network may incorporate any number of brain regions. dCSFA-

NMF thus integrates spatially distinct brain regions and circuits into electome networks that

encode behavior.

To explore whether there was a generalized activity pattern within individual regions that

encoded social behavior, we designed a series of dCSFA-NMF models based on local field

potential (LFP) oscillatory power in frequencies from 1-56Hz. Each model was trained using

observations pooled from twenty CD1 mice to separate periods where mice were socially

isolated from periods where they were engaged in social behavior (e.g., attack behavior

towards the intact males and non-attack social behavior towards male and female mice). The

number of networks for each model was chosen by a validation procedure to balance how

much brain activity is explained by the model, how much the model predicts behavior, and the

parsimoniousness of the model (see methods). To facilitate easy interpretation of the learned

networks, one network was encouraged to preferentially encode isolation from attack and non-

attack social behavior (i.e., supervision). We tested the accuracy of the models in new CD1

mice recorded under all three conditions (N=9 mice).

We observed high accuracy in decoding periods of isolation from social behavior for each

implanted brain area (p<0.05 using Wilcoxon rank-sum, significance determined by FDR

correction for 44 comparisons, Fig. 1c). Next, we designed a new series of models to separate

one of the three social behavioral states from the other three (e.g., attack behavior toward

intact males vs. female, intact male, and castrated male non-attack interactions). These models

were built using observations pooled from the same twenty CD1 mice, and again based on LFP

power. We then tested the accuracy of the models in the same nine hold-out mice. Thus, we

trained and tested the model's generalizability to decode each class of social behavior from the

other three for each of the 11 implanted brain areas (i.e., 33 additional models). Using this

approach, we found that five of the brain region-based statistical models decoded attack

behavior versus non-attack social behavior: infralimbic cortex, lateral habenula, ventral

hippocampus, medial amygdala, and medial dorsal thalamus. V1 successfully decoded the non-

attack male interaction from the other social conditions as well (P<0.05 using one-tailed

Wilcoxon rank-sum test, significance determined by FDR correction for 44 comparisons, see Fig.

1c). None of the other implanted brain regions showed this selectivity. Thus, five regions

independently encoded attack behavior vs. non-attack social behavior in a manner that

generalized across mice.

Our broad goal was to identify a neural mechanism that could be used to suppress aggression

while leaving other social behaviors intact. Thus, we tested whether the putative attack codes

we discovered for the five regions generalized to another context associated with aggression.

Specifically, urine from other male mice has been found to elicit aggressive and dominance

behavior in CD1 males [22, 36, 37]. As such, the most aggressive mice from the training and

testing groups (N=8) were allowed to freely explore a clean inanimate object or an object

covered in urine from another intact CD1 male mouse (seven sessions). We then tested

whether each of the five attack codes could distinguish periods where mice explored the clean

objects from those where mice explored objects covered in urine. Though only ventral

hippocampus model tended to decode behavior in this new context, none of the brain regions

showed statistically significant encoding at the mesoscale-level (LFP) following correction for

the five comparisons (AUC=0.56±0.06, P=0.04 for ventral hippocampus, using one-tailed

Wilcoxon rank-sum test, significance determined by FDR correction for 5 comparisons, Fig. 1d).

<u>An aggressive state is encoded at the network-level</u>

After failing to robustly decode attack behavior using LFPs independently from any of the 11

brain regions, we established that a brain network integrated information across all the

implanted brain regions to encode an aggressive state. This network-level encoding mechanism

generalized to multiple new contexts associated with aggression. Critically, the network also
encoded attack behavior with a predictive efficacy that exceeded independent ventral
hippocampus activity.

For this analysis, we trained a new dCFSA-NMF model using data from all the implanted brain
regions. The model utilized eight electome networks (see methods), one of which was trained
to encode periods of attack-behavior (positive class) from social behavior in castrated male and
female social context (negative class). We also included non-attack social behavior towards
intact males in the negative class to discourage the network from simply learning non-
aggressive sensory cues specific to the intact male (i.e., supervision, electome network #1; see
Fig. 1e). We then validated this network using the set of nine holdout CD1 mice from our single
area coding test analysis. Again, none of these mice were used to train the electome networks.

We found that electome network #1 successfully discriminated between attack behavior and
non-attack social behavior in the test mice (N=9, Wilcoxon signed rank, p=0.0020, Fig. 1e,
middle). Thus, the supervised network generalized to new animals.

Attack behavior is indicative of an aggressive brain state. We also reasoned that it was possible
for a mouse to be in an aggressive internal state though it was not actively exhibiting attack
behavior. Since such a context was likely to be present immediately prior to or following attack
behavior, we tested whether network activity pooled from the 6 seconds surrounding social
behaviors encoded the distinct social conditions (Fig. 2a). Critically, these data windows were
not used to train the network model since they did not contain attack or non-attack social
behavior. Network activity was lower in the intervals surrounding attack behavior compared to
non-attack social interactions with males or females ($F_{3,67}$=28.6, P<0.0001 using Friedman's test,
followed by P<0.05 using Wilcoxon signed-rank test, significance determined by FDR correction,
Fig. 2b). Strikingly, network activity during periods of isolation also negatively correlated with
the time mice spent exhibiting attack behavior towards other males (R=-0.58; P=0.016 using
Spearman's rank correlation, Fig. 2b), encoding aggression on a mouse-by-mouse basis. Thus,
electome network #1 (hereafter referred to as *EN-Aggression Inhibition - AggINH*) represented
a network that putatively inhibited aggression when its activity was highest. In contrast to the

models developed for each of the brain regions independently, *EN-AggINH* activity also

encoded the exposure to male urine (N=8, Network Activity = 9.1±1.0 and 8.3±1.1 for clean and

urine covered objects, respectively; P=0.012 using one railed Wilcoxon signed-rank test;

AUC=0.57±0.02, data not shown). Thus, *EN-AggINH* generalized to a second aggression context.

Next, we tested the model for ventral hippocampus since we observed a trend towards

decoding attack behavior in the urine context. This model failed to encode the aggressive state.

Specifically, activity from hippocampus was statistically indistinguishable between periods

surrounding attack behavior and non-attack social interactions with females and activity during

social isolation ($F_{3,67}$=7.9, P=0.047 using Friedman's test; P=0.36 and 0.72, respectively, using

Wilcoxon signed-rank test, significance determined by FDR correction, Fig. 2b). Moreover, there

was no relationship between hippocampal activity during isolation and the innate

aggressiveness of mice (P=0.60 using Spearman's rank, Fig. 2b). Thus, only network activity

encoded the aggressive internal state.

EN-Aggression Inhibition maps to interpretable biology

EN-AggINH was composed of prominent theta frequency activity (4-11 Hz) in medial amygdala

and beta frequency activity (14-30 Hz) in medial amygdala and prelimbic cortex (Fig. 3a-b).

Prominent synchrony and directionality were also observed in the theta and beta frequency

bands. Indeed, the network showed strong directionality that led from orbital frontal cortex

and primary visual cortex, relayed through medial dorsal thalamus, and infralimbic cortex, and

converged on medial amygdala and ventral hippocampus (Fig. 3c, and Supplementary Fig. S3).

We verified that the activity of *EN-AggINH* truly reflects biological activity, by relating the

electome network to neural firing, as in previous work [38]. To achieve this, we analyzed the

correlation between cellular activity across the implanted brain regions and the activity of *EN-*

AggINH, as cell activity is an undisputed measure of biological function. We then used a

permutation test to rigorously test our findings (Fig. 3e). Specifically, we shuffled cellular firing

within social behavioral conditions, maintaining the relationship between cell firing and

behavior. We then repeated this procedure 1000 times to generate a null distribution for which

only 5% of cells would be expected to exhibit firing coupled to network activity. We found that

~18% of cells showed firing that was coupled to the activity of *EN-AggINH*, far more than could

be explained by chance. Specifically, of the 186 cells recorded, nine (4.8%) showed firing activity

that was positively correlated with *EN-AggINH* and 25 (13.4%) showed activity that was

negatively correlated (Fig. 3f). Thus, we confirmed that *EN-AggINH* activity reflects the

dynamics of cellular activity across the brain.

EN-Aggression Inhibition generalizes to new biological contexts related to aggression

To further validate *EN-AggINH*, we established that activity in this network was modulated by

orthogonal biological conditions that have been shown to induce or suppress aggressive

behavior in mice. In most cases, we performed this analysis in new animals, which is considered

the gold standard of model validation in machine learning by experimental manipulation [39].

We transformed LFP data recorded from these new sessions into our original network model

(Fig. 4a).

We first performed a high-threshold validation experiment that involved testing whether our

network generalized to new mice. These mice were on different genetic background and

subjected to a new aggression context (Fig. 4b). Specifically, this approach also used a validated

cellular manipulation that causally induces aggression under a behavioral condition that would

otherwise not yield aggressive attack behavior (i.e., we used female social partners). We

expressed an excitatory DREADD (AAV-hsyn-DIO-hM3Dq) in the ESR1+ cells of ventromedial

hypothalamus, since it has been shown that direct excitation of these cells induces aggressive

behavior towards female mice [17, 40, 41]. Experiments were performed in the male F1

offspring of female CD1 strain mice crossed with ESR1-Cre male mice on a C57 strain

background. Subsequently, we implanted the mice with recording electrodes to target the same

brain regions as our initial experiment used to train the network model. Following recovery, we

performed behavioral and neural recording when mice were exposed to a female mouse. The

experimental mice were either treated with saline or CNO (Clozapine N-oxide, which activates

the excitatory DREADD), in a pseudorandomized order, prior to the repeated testing sessions.

As anticipated, treatment with CNO induced attack behavior towards the female mice (N=8; P=

0.0039 for both attack latency and attack number using one-tailed Wilcoxon sign rank; Fig. 4c).

When we probed neural activity across the entire exposure to the female intruder, we found

that treatment with CNO also suppressed *EN-AggINH* activity (N=8, P=0.0039 using one-tailed

Wilcoxon sign-rank; Fig. 4d). Thus, the network model generalized to a second aggression

context induced by a cellular manipulation, and robust to different genetic backgrounds.

Critically, network activity was also lower during the time intervals surrounding attack/non-

attack social behavior for the CNO vs. saline treatment sessions (P=0.02 using one-tailed

Wilcoxon sign-rank; Fig. 4e), again demonstrating the *EN-AggINH* encoded an aggressive state.

Our observations also established that *EN-AggINH* does not simply encode sensory cues

associated with male intruders since the network responses observed in the CNO treated mice

were induced by a female intruder.

EN-Aggression Inhibition mediates attack behavior

We tested whether a cellular manipulation known to causally decrease aggression increased

network activity. For these experiments, we stimulated medial prefrontal cortex when *EN-*

AggINH was naturally suppressed in the brain (signaling the aggressive state). First, we built a

closed loop system that estimated the activity of *EN-AggINH* in real time (Fig. 5a). This

approach employed a new network encoded solely based on power and coherence measures

(i.e., a reduced network, Fig. 5b). While this new network lacked the interpretive power of

dCSFA-NMF, it enabled us to predict aggression states in real time (Fig. 5c). In principle, when

the activity of *EN-AggINH* fell below an established threshold (signaling the onset of aggressive

behavior), our closed loop approach would deliver a one second light stimulation (5mW, 20Hz,

3ms pulse width) to prefrontal cortex. To verify that this real-time estimation system worked as

designed, we tested whether light stimulation was triggered by a decrease in *EN-AggINH*

activity. Indeed, network activity was significantly lower one second prior to stimulation than it

was two seconds prior to stimulation, demonstrating that our approach successfully identified

when the *EN-AggINH* activity decreased below the threshold that signaled the onset of

aggression (N=9; P<0.005 for within-subject comparison of *EN-AggINH* activity 1 vs 2 seconds

prior to yellow light stimulation using one-tailed signed-rank test, Fig. 5d). Importantly, we

found that prefrontal cortex stimulation acutely increased *EN-AggINH* activity (N=9, P<0.01 for

comparison of *EN-AggINH* activity one second after blue vs. yellow stimulation, using one-tailed

signed-rank test, see Fig. 5d). Thus, we confirmed that two cellular manipulations that causality

regulated aggression also bidirectionally impacted *AggINH* activity.

Next, we wondered whether increasing *EN-AggINH* activity via prefrontal cortex stimulation as

the brain transitioned into a putative attack state would suppress aggressive behavior. We also

hypothesized that this approach would not alter non-attack social behavior during interactions

with females. Specifically, since *EN-AggINH* activity was not naturally suppressed during female

interactions we anticipated that the closed loop protocol would deliver less stimulation to the

brain (see Fig. 5e). Using this approach, we found that closed loop stimulation of prefrontal

cortex significantly suppressed attack behavior (N=9 mice that were not used to train the initial

model; t_8=6.1, P=0.0003, Fig. 5f) and increased non-attack behavior ([N=9; t_8=-2.3, P=0.049

comparing blue vs. yellow light stimulation using two-tailed paired t-test for attack behavior

and non-attack behavior], significance determined by FDR correction, Fig. 5f) towards the C57

intact males. No differences in non-attack social behavior were observed during exposure to

female mice (t_8=0.74, P=0.48 using two-tailed paired t-test, significance determined by FDR

correction, Fig. 5f).

Next, we used statistical methods to determine if the change in *EN-AggINH* activity was a

mechanistic route for how closed loop stimulation regulated behavior. We employed

mediation analysis [42], which is a framework to determine whether the impact of a

"treatment" (stimulation) on an outcome (aggressive behavior) is mediated by a change in an

intermediate variable (*EN-AggINH* activity). If so, the intermediate variable is viewed, at least in

part, as a mechanistic route (a mediator) for how the treatment impacts the outcome. We first

set out to use the classic Baron and Kenny approach [42] to determine whether *EN-AggINH*

activity mediates the effect of neurostimulation on aggressive behavior. According to this

statistical approach, there is a mediated effect of network activity on behavior if three

conditions are met: 1) stimulation modulates network activity, 2) network activity correlates

with behavior, and 3) modeling the behavior from network activity and stimulation together is

better than modeling behavior from stimulation alone. We previously identified a significant

direct effect of stimulation on attack behavior (P<0.005, Fig. 5f) and network activity (P<0.0005,

Fig. 5d). In order to match the conditions between the treatment and control cases as closely

as possible, we chose to use windows during the closed-loop stimulation procedure where the

laser was triggered, and then compared blue laser stimulation (treatment) to yellow laser

stimulation (control). A statistical model of behavior using network activity and stimulation (see

Fig. 5g, model 2) significantly outperformed the model using only stimulation (see Fig. 5g,

model 1; nested logistic regression models, P<0.01, likelihood ratio test), satisfying the

necessary conditions to show that *EN-AggINH* is a mediator.

After establishing that *EN-AggINH* activity mediated the impact of PFC stimulation on behavior,

we set out to evaluate the significance of the average causal mediation effect (ACME) and the

average direct effect (ADE) during the same stimulated closed-loop windows using causal

mediation analysis [43]. ACME is the causal effect of stimulation on behavior due to the change

in *EN-AggINH* activity (see. Fig 5g, model 3), and ADE is the causal effect on behavior from

prefrontal cortex stimulation not explained by the change in *EN-AggINH* activity. We found that

there was a significant ACME (P<0.01), but not a significant ADE (P=0.48). This analysis

suggested that *EN-AggINH* activation is the primary mechanism whereby prefrontal cortex

stimulation suppresses aggression.

We also performed an additional control experiment to verify that the suppression of

aggressive behavior observed in response to closed loop stimulation was due to the

synchronization of the light stimulation and endogenous *EN-AggINH* activity, and not simply

due to the dynamic pattern of stimulation delivered using this method. Here, we used the

stimulation patterns from our closed loop experiments to drive stimulation in a new group of

animals. Thus, for these sessions, prefrontal cortex stimulation occurred in a manner that

mirrored our closed loop stimulation experiments, except that stimulation was not fixed to

transitions into the aggressive internal state (i.e., open loop – nonsynchronous; Fig. 5h).

Strikingly, this pattern of stimulation did not impact aggressive behavior (t_7=0.64, P=0.54 using

paired t-test; see Fig. 5i). Together with our mediation analysis, these results suggest that *EN-*

AggINH activity plays a mechanistic role in mediating aggression.

Finally, since prior studies had also shown that prefrontal cortex stimulation induced

hyperactivity [44, 45], we tested whether the suppression of aggressive behavior that resulted

from prefrontal cortex stimulation was also associated with behavioral hyperactivity. While we

found that 20Hz tonic stimulation of prefrontal cortex induced behavioral hyperactivity in the

CD1 mice (N=10; T_9= 3.221 and P = 0.0052 for Velocity; T_9= 3.213 and P=0.0053 for distance

traveled, using one-tailed paired t-test; Fig. 5j), closed loop stimulation of prefrontal cortex had

no impact on gross locomotor behavior (N=9; T_8= 0.584 and P=0.29 for velocity; T_8= 0.86 and P=

0.21 for distance traveled, using one-tailed paired t-test; Fig. 5j). Thus, closed loop stimulation

suppressed aggressive behavior, but it did not induce the off-target effects of impaired pro-

social behavior and psychomotor activation that we observed with the classic 20Hz stimulation

paradigm.

Discussion

Discussion

Behavior results from the integration of sensory information with the internal state of an

animal. While many cellular substates that contribute to social behavioral outputs have been

identified, less is known regarding the internal brain states that map sensory inputs to these

behaviors. Here, we set out to discover the internal state that regulates whether an animal will

exhibit aggressive or pro-social behavior. We reasoned that attack behaviors emerge from an

aggressive internal brain state. Thus, we used machine learning to discover the mesoscale

neural architecture of the brain when an animal exhibited attack vs. non attack social

behaviors. Like other well defined internal brain states, such as sleep, we found that the

network distinguishing attack behavior incorporated state dependent patterns of neural activity

across every brain region we measured. For multiple regions, differences were observed in local

oscillatory power, while others exhibited differences in oscillatory synchrony with a broader

collection of regions. Each brain region showed selectivity in the frequencies of oscillations that

contributed to the network. For example, prelimbic cortex showed strong activity in the beta

frequency range, while medial amygdala showed strong activity in the theta frequency range.

No brain region showed prominent activity contributions across all frequencies. We also

observed differences in the activity profile of a primary sensory region, V1, which may reflect a

change in encoding, or differences in sensory input observed during attack behavior. Critically,

the brain state identified during attack behavior was better captured by observing activity

across all the brain regions as an integrated network, than observing independent activity

within each brain region.

Though behavioral output has been classically utilized to infer the internal state of a brain, we

reasoned that an internal brain state was also likely present during intervals immediately

surrounding behavioral output. Thus, we tested whether the 'attack' network showed distinct

activity profiles in the time intervals surrounding attack and non-attack social behaviors.

Indeed, network activity was lower during interval surrounding attack behavior. Strikingly, we

also found that network activity when animals were isolated in their home cage encoded their

trait aggression. Thus, the network did not simply encode behavioral output since it was

observed outside of attack behavior. Rather the network encoded an aggressive internal brain

state.

Interesting, this aggressive brain state was encoded by decreased activity in the network. This

observation does not indicate that overall brain activity is suppressed during aggressive states.

Rather, our findings argue that the aggressive state is encoded by a network that decreases its

activity relative to when mice are socially isolated or engaged in pro-social behavior. Indeed,

our data suggested that several common regions/circuits were activated during aggressive and

pro-social behavior. These common circuits need not be reflected in our network since our

model was trained to differentiate attack vs. non-attack social behavior. Nevertheless, our

discovery of a network that decreased its activity during aggression raises the intriguing

hypothesis that this brain activity inhibits aggression during pro-social engagement. When

activity in this inhibition network is suppressed, aggressive behavior emerges.

This interpretation is supported by our validation experiments where we directly activated

ESR1+-Cre neurons in ventromedial hypothalamus. Our findings showed that direct activation

of these cells induced the aggressive brain state (suppressed *EN-AggINH* activity). When mice

treated with CNO were exposed to a stimulus that would generally produce non-attack social

behavior (i.e., a female mouse), attack behavior emerged. Thus, the presence of the aggressive

brain state changed the mapping between sensory input and behavior output. Similarly, direct

stimulation of medial prefrontal cortex biased mice towards exhibiting non-attack social

behavior when they were exposed to a stimulus that would generally induce attack behavior

(i.e., a male intruder). Our findings showed that medial prefrontal cortex stimulation decreased

the aggressive internal state (increased *EN-AggINH* network activity). Critically, our findings

using mediation analysis argue that the brain state represented by *EN-AggINH* is

mechanistically involved in the translation of medial prefrontal cortex stimulation to a

suppression of attack behavior.

Here, we framed internal brain states as a collection of functions that transform sensory input

into behavior. Indeed, we found that when *EN-AggINH* activity is suppressed, the brain

transforms both male and female social sensory cues into attack behavior. It is also widely

appreciated that sensory input can also cause the brain to transition from one internal state to

another. For example, a loud sound can cause an animal to transition from sleeping to a hyper

aroused internal state. Along this line, we found that exposure to male mice could promote an

aggressive internal state in CD1 mice, even prior to attack behavior, while exposure to a female

mouse did not (under normal conditions). In this framework, one would also anticipate that

many modulatory strategies that regulate attack behavior could mediate their effect by driving

the brain out of the brain state represented by low *EN-AggINH* activity. Indeed, we predict that

delivering a bright visual cue or a strong sensory cue (i.e., air puff) timed to decreases in *EN-*

AggINH activity could also potentially be used suppress attack behavior, since many circuits and

sensory inputs likely converge onto the internal state represented by *EN-AggINH*.

Our closed loop stimulation approach was developed using a neural-network based

approximation technique that was substantially constrained relative to dCSFA-NMF.

Specifically, the reduced encoder was developed solely using power and coherence features.

This approach was necessary because the processing time to calculate granger directionality

was prohibitive for real time implementations. As such, the reduced encoder sacrifices some

predictive efficacy for speed. Nevertheless, we found that the reduced encoder was sufficient

to identify the precise time windows where the brain transitioned into aggression, as marked

by a decrease in *EN-AggINH* activity. In the future, novel approaches may allow for further

improvement in the precision of our real time stimulation approach. For example, future work

could exploit convolutional neural networks to bypass the feature extraction step. These neural

network encoders could be altered to predict both aggressive and pro-social states, such as the

generalized social appetitive network that we recently discovered [7]. By using both networks

concurrently to actuate a closed loop system, it may be possible to further suppress aggressive

behavior relative to pro-social behavior. Indeed, our current findings also pointed to a network

that exhibits increased activity during aggressive behavior (Electome Network 6, see Fig. 2b,

and Supplementary Fig. S4). This network showed strong encoding in the nine hold out test

mice (AUC=0.65±0.03, P<$5×10^{-5}$ using Wilcoxon rank sum), and activity in the network also

generalized to the experiment in which we causally manipulated ventromedial hypothalamus

activity. Though the network failed to encode the urine paradigm, it is possible that it contains

activity that synergizes with *EN-AggINH* to encode aggressive social states more optimally. If

future studies demonstrate this potential, imitation encoders for both Electome Network 6 and

EN-AggINH could be integrated to further optimize closed loop approaches to selectively

suppress aggression.

Multiple neuropsychiatric disorders including mood disorders, psychotic disorders,

neurodevelopmental disorders, and neurodegenerative disorders are associated with deficits in

regulating social behavior, including aggression. While multiple pharmacological approaches

have been instituted to suppress aggressive behavior towards self and others, many of these

strategies act by sedating the individual and can disrupt aspects of pro-social function. Our

discovery of a brain network that encoded an aggressive state raises the potential for novel

approaches to suppress aggressive behavior that spare pro-social behavior. Indeed, compared

to a standard open loop stimulation protocol (20Hz stimulation) which suppressed both attack

and non-attack pro-social behavior, our closed loop stimulation approach spared non-attack

social behavior towards males or females. Intriguingly, the classic open loop stimulation

pattern (20Hz stimulation) also induced behavioral hyperactivity in experimental mice, while

our closed loop stimulation protocol did not. Thus, our findings also show that closed loop

stimulation may limit off target behavioral effects that are induced by classic stimulation

approaches.

Overall, our findings establish a generalized network-level mechanism whereby the brain

suppresses aggression via active inhibition. Moreover, they highlight the exciting potential for

state-specific neuromodulation to regulate internal states.

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Figure Legends

Figure 1. A brain-wide network encodes attack behavior. a) Direct stimulation of prefrontal

cortex suppresses social behavior. Schematic of optogenetic stimulation (left) and social

encounters utilized for testing (middle). Prefrontal cortex stimulation suppressed attack

behavior, increased non-attack social behavior towards male mice, and suppressed non-attack

social behavior towards females (*$P<0.05$ for each comparison). **b)** Schematic for electrical

recordings. Figure shows targeted brain regions (left), and representative local field potentials

(middle) recorded during repeated exposure to social contexts that produce attack and non-

attack social behavior (right). **c)** Framework to test encoding of social states by individual brain

regions (left). All implanted regions encoded social engagement; however, only five selectively

encoded the attack behavior (right). Pink shading indicates $P<0.05$ with FDR correction. **d)**

Attack codes discovered from the five brain regions failed to encode aggressive behavior

induced by male urine (Gray shading indicates $P<0.05$ prior to but not following FDR

correction). **e)** Schematic of machine-learning model used to discover network encoding attack

behavior (left). Encoding across eight learned networks (right). **f)** The supervised network

(purple, *EN-AggINH*) showed the strongest encoding. Data shown as mean ± SEM.

Figure 2. *EN-Aggression Inhibition* encodes an aggressive internal state. Neural activity was

sampled while mice were socially isolated and during intervals surrounding social behavior.

Network activity during this interval encoded attack behavior vs. male and female non-attack

social behaviors, while ventral hippocampal activity did not (P<0.05 using Freidman's test

followed by Wilcoxon sign-rank test). Network during isolation, but not ventral hippocampus

activity, encoded the subsequent total attack time of individual mice (P<0.05 using Spearman's

Rank Correlation).

Figure 3. Dynamics and biological components of *EN-Aggression Inhibition*. a) Prominent

oscillatory frequency bands composing *EN-AggINH* are highlighted for each brain region around

the rim of the circle plot. Prominent synchrony measures are depicted by lines connecting brain

regions through the center of the circle. The plot is shown at relative spectral energy of 0.4.

Theta (4-11 Hz) and beta (14-30 Hz) frequency components are highlighted in blue and green,

respectively. **b)** Example relative LFP spectral energy plots for three brain regions corresponding

to the circular plot in A (See Supplemental Figure S3 for full description of network features). **c)**

Granger offset measures were used to quantify directionality within *EN-AggINH*. Prominent

directionality was observed across the theta and beta frequency bands (shown at spectral

density threshold of 0.4 and a directionality offset of 0.3). Histograms quantify the number of

leading and lagging interactions between brain regions. **d)** Schematic depicting directionality

within *EN-AggINH*. **e-f)** *EN-AggINH* maps to cellular activity. e) A representative cell showing

firing activity that is negatively correlated with *EN-AggINH* activity. f) *EN-AggINH* activity

correlated with cellular firing across the brain across the brain.

Figure 4. *EN-Aggression Inhibition* encodes distinct aggression contexts. a) Strategy for

validating *EN-AggINH* using additional aggression paradigms. **b)** Experimental approach for

causally inducing aggression via direct cellular manipulation. **c-e)** Direct activation of ESR1+ cells

in ventromedial hypothalamus. c) Cellular activation induced attack behavior towards female

mice (P<0.001 using sign-rank test), d) decreased *EN-AggINH* activity across during social

interactions with female mice (P<0.01 using one-tailed Wilcoxon sign-rank test) and e) intervals

surrounding these interactions (P<0.05 using Wilcoxon sign-rank test).

Figure 5. *EN-Aggression Inhibition* activity is causally related to aggression. a) Schematic for

closed loop manipulation of *EN-AggINH* activity. **b)** Real-time estimation of aggression. Receiver

operating characteristic depicting detection of aggressive behavior in a mouse using *EN-AggINH*

activity vs. real-time reduced encoder is shown to the right. Dashed blue line corresponds to

the established detection threshold. **c)** Detection of aggression using reduced encoder vs. *EN-*

AggINH across mice (N=9; P=0.43 using two-tailed paired Wilcoxon sign-rank). **d)** *EN-AggINH*

activity relative to light stimulation during closed loop manipulation. Network activity

significantly decreased one second prior to yellow light stimulation (N=9, $^{\#\#}$P<0.005 using one-

tailed sign rank test; note that activity was normalized for each mouse to the average network

activity during isolation). Activity was also higher one second after stimulation with blue light

vs. yellow light (**P<0.01 using one-tailed signed-rank test). **e)** Portion of windows stimulated

during social behaviors (P=0.002 using one-tailed sign-rank test). **f)** Behavioral effects of closed

loop stimulation (**P<0.005 using paired t-test, significance determined using FDR correction).

g) Directed graph with the inferred modes of action derived from mediation analysis. There is a

causal relationship from stimulation to behavior and stimulation to *EN-AggINH* expression

(model 1; P<0.01 using signed rank and paired t-tests). *EN-AggINH* is a mediator from

stimulation to behavior (P<0.01 using nested logistic regression models, likelihood ratio test;

model 2), *EN-AggINH* activation is the primary mechanism whereby prefrontal cortex

stimulation suppresses aggression (P<0.01 using average causal mediation effect, model 3). **h)**

Schematic for nonsynchronous control stimulation. **i)** Nonsynchronous stimulation does not

impact aggressive behavior (P>0.05 using paired t-test). **j)** Impact of open loop (20Hz, fixed) and

closed loop stimulation on locomotor behavior (P**<0.01 using paired two-tailed t-test).

Author contributions

Conceptualization and Methodology – YSG, AT, NMG, SR, DEC, and KD; Formal Analysis – YSG,

AT, NMG, AJF, KKW, DEC, and KD; Investigation – YSG, AT, NMG, GET, AJF, KKW, SR, DEC, and

KD; Resources – YSG, AT, NMG, GET, AJF, KKW, SR, DEC, KD; Writing – Original Draft, YSG, AT,

NMG, SR, DEC, and KD; Writing – Review & Editing, YSG, AT, NMG, KKW, SR, DEC, and KD;

Visualization – YSG, AT, DEC, and KD; Supervision –KKW, DEC, and KD; Project Administration

and Funding Acquisition –SR, DEC, and KD; See Supplemental materials for detailed author

contributions.

578 Declaration of Interests

579 The authors declare no competing interests

580 Materials and Methods

<u>Animals care and use</u>

All procedures were approved by the Duke University Institutional Animal Care and Use
Committee in compliance with National Institute of Health (NIH) Guidelines for the Care and
Use of Laboratory Animals. Mice were maintained on a reverse 12-hr light cycle with *ad libitum*
access to food and water.

Six-month retired breeder male CD1 strain mice (Charles River Laboratories, Wilmington,
Massachusetts) were used to discover a network that encoded aggression, hereafter called *EN-*
AggINH. These CD1 mice were also used to probe the behavioral and network responses to
optogenetic stimulation. Mice were singly housed with enrichment. ESR1-Cre mice on a
C57/Bl6J background were provided by Scott Russo. These mice were crossed with CD1 females
in the Bryan Vivarium at Duke University to obtain F1 offspring. Fourteen-week-old virgin ESR1-
cre F1 male offspring were used to validate *EN-AggINH*. All F1 offspring were group-housed 2-5
mice per cage until they received viral injections in the ventromedial hypothalamus at 7-8
weeks. After surgery, these mice were singly housed with enrichment. All partner mice (intact
males, female, and castrated males) were 7-14 weeks old. These mice were purchased from
Jackson Laboratories (Bar Harbor, Maine) and maintained on a C57BL/6J strain background. All
stimulus mice were housed 5 per cage with enrichment. All behavior testing and
neurophysiological recordings occurred during the dark cycle.

<u>Castration of C57 male mice</u>

Male mice were anesthetized with 1% isoflurane. The scrotal sac was sanitized with betadine
and 70% ethanol. The testes were then moved into the sac by gently palpating the lower
abdomen. Next, an incision was made in the sac and the testes were extracted. After blood flow
was cut off to the testes using a thread tourniquet, the testes were removed. The remaining
fatty tissue was placed back into the scrotum, which was then sutured. Mice were allowed 10
days for recovery prior to experimental use.

Electrode implantation surgery

Mice were anesthetized with 1% isoflurane and placed in a stereotaxic device. Grounding screws were placed above the cerebellum, right parietal hemisphere, and anterior cranium. The recording bundles were designed to target prelimbic cortex, infralimbic cortex, medial amygdala, ventral hippocampus, primary visual cortex, mediodorsal thalamus, lateral habenula, lateral septum nucleus, nucleus accumbens, ventrolateral portion of the ventromedial hypothalamus, and orbitofrontal cortex were centered based on stereotaxic coordinates measured from bregma. [Orbital frontal cortex: anterior/posterior (AP) 2.35mm, medial/lateral (ML) 1.0mm, dorsal/ventral (DV) from dura -2.75mm; infralimbic cortex and prelimbic cortex: AP 1.8mm, ML 0mm, DV -2.7mm from dura; medial amygdala: AP -1.25, ML 2.7mm, DV -4.3 from dura; lateral septum and nucleus accumbens: AP 1.0mm, ML 0mm, DV -4.0mm from dura; ventromedial hypothalamus, lateral habenula, and medial dorsal thalamus: AP -1.47mm, ML 0mm, DV -5.4mm from dura; central hippocampus and primary motor cortex: AP -3.0mm, ML 2.6mm, DV -3.0mm from dura]. We targeted infralimbic cortex and prelimbic cortex by building a 0.6mm DV stagger into the bundle. We targeted lateral septum and nucleus accumbens by building a 0.3mm ML and 1.5mm DV stagger into the bundle. We targeted lateral habenula, medial dorsal thalamus, and ventral medial hypothalamus by building a 0.3mm ML and am1.9mm and 2.5mm DV stagger into our electrode bundle microwires. We targeted primary motor cortex and ventral hippocampus using a 0.3mm ML and 2.5mm DV stagger in our electrode bundle microwires. For optogenetic stimulation experiments, the addition of a Mono Fiberoptic Cannula coupled to a 2.5mm metal ferrule (NA: 0.22, 100mm [inner diameter], 125mm buffer [outer diameter], MFC_100/125-0.22, Doric Lenses, Quebec) was built into the prefrontal cortex bundle. The tip of the fiber was secured 300mm above the tip of the IL microwire. Mice were allowed 10-15 days for to recovery from surgery before behavioral testing.

Viral surgery

For optogenetic experiments [21], we used CD1 mice that showed an attack latency < 60s when exposed to an intact C57 male. CD1 mice were anesthetized with 1% isoflurane and placed in a stereotaxic device. The mice were unilaterally injected with AAV2-CamKII-Chr2-EYFP (purchased from the Duke Viral Vector Core, Durham, NC; courtesy of K. Deisseroth), based on stereotaxic coordinates from bregma (left Infralimbic cortex: AP 1.8mm, ML 0.3mm, DV -2.0mm from the brain). A total of 0.5mL of virus was infused at the injection site at a rate of 0.1mL/min over five minutes and the needle left in place for ten minutes after injection. For the open loop stimulation experiment, CD1 mice were implanted with an optic fiber (Mono Fiberoptic Cannula coupled to a 2.5mm metal ferrule (NA: 0.22, 100mm [inner diameter], 125mm buffer [outer diameter], MFC_100/125-0.22, Doric Lenses, Quebec)) 0.3mm above the injection site immediately after viral syringe was removed. These mice were allowed 3 weeks for recovery prior to behavioral testing. For the closed-loop experiments, CD1 mice were allowed 3 weeks for viral expression prior to implantation with an optrode.

For the ESR1-Cre validation experiment, F1 offspring were bilaterally injected with AAV2-hSyn-DIO-GqDREADD (obtained from Addgene) based on stereotaxic coordinates measured from bregma (AP -1.5mm, ML ±0.7mm, DV -5.7mm from the dura). A total of 0.3mL of virus was

infused bilaterally at a rate of 0.1mL/min and the needle left in place for five minutes after
injection. Two weeks after viral infusion, F1 males were screened for aggressive behavior
towards females. The F1 males received i.p. injections of CNO (1mg/kg) at the start of the
screening session. Thirty-five minutes after injection, a novel C57 female was placed in the
home cage for 5 minutes. Screening was repeated one week and two weeks later. Only F1
males who attacked females for at least two of the three screening sessions (9/13 mice) were
implanted with electrodes [17]. The eight mice that showed good surgical recovery were
subjected to further experiments.

<u>Histological analysis</u>

Histological analysis of implantation sites was performed at the conclusion of experiments to
confirm recording sites and viral expression. Animals were perfused with 4% paraformaldehyde
(PFA) and brains were harvested and stored for at least 96 hrs in PFA. Brains were
cryoprotected with sucrose and frozen in OCT compound and stored at -80C. Brains were later
sliced at 40mm. Brains from mice used to train and validate the network were stained using
NeuroTrace fluorescent Nissl Stain (N21480, ThermoFisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) using
standard protocol. Specifically, Nissl staining for brain tissue occurred on a shaker table at room
temperature. Tissue was washed in PBST (0.1% Triton in phosphate-buffered saline solution) for
10 minutes. It was then washed for five minutes in PBS twice. The tissue was then protected
from light for the remainder of the protocol. The tissue was incubated in 1:300 Nissl diluted in 2
mL PBS for 10 minutes. After the Nissl incubation, tissue was washed once in 0.1% PBST for 10
minutes, then twice in PBS for 5 minutes. Brains from ESR1 mice and mice used for 20 Hz or
closed loop stimulation were mounted in Vectashield mounting medium containing DAPI (H-
1200-10, Vector Laboratories, Newark, CA). Images were obtained at 10x using an Olympus
fluorescent microscope. Of the 297 total implantation sites in the training and testing set of
mice, 17 were mistargeted (~5.7% error rate). Of these mistargeted implants, 13 were within
200μm of the targeted structure. Given our prior work demonstrating high LFP spectral
coherence (in the 1-55Hz frequency range) across microwires separated by 250um, in both
cortical and subcortical brain regions [38], we chose to retain these animals in our analysis. The
other four mistargeted implants were within 350μm of the targeted structure. The most
reliably mistargeted site was ventral medial hypothalamus for which 4 animals were implanted
within 200um of the target, and 2 animals were implanted within 350 μm of the target.

Machine learning analysis typically benefits from larger data sets. Thus, we concluded that
maintaining a higher number of data points likely outweighed the effect of a small number of
mistargeted brain regions, particularly since our LFP measures were robust to the targeting
inaccuracies we observed histologically. As such, we pooled data from all 20 implanted animals
to learn our initial model. We employed a similar strategy for our validation analysis, where an
animal was only removed from the validation set if there was clear histological confirmation of
mistargeting >200μm for any of the recorded regions. Specifically, presuming accurate targeting
with 94.3% certainty and targeting within 200um at a higher certainty, we included animals
with missing or damaged histological slices in our analysis. However, if there was clear
histological confirmation of mistargeting for any of the recorded regions, the animal was
removed from the validation testing. Critically, our validation procedure implies that the

machine learning models were robust regardless of any slight imprecision in the animals we
utilized for training.

<u>Neurophysiological data acquisition</u>

Mice were connected to a data acquisition system (Blackrock Microsystems, UT, USA) while
anesthetized with 1% isoflurane. Mice were allowed 60 minutes in their home cage prior to
behavioral and electrophysiological recordings. Local field potentials (LFPs) were bandpass
filtered at 0.5-250Hz and stored at 1000Hz. An online noise cancellation algorithm was applied
to reduce 60Hz artifact (Blackrock Microsystems, UT, USA). Neural spiking data was referenced
online against a channel recording from the same brain area that did not exhibit a SNR>3:1.
After recording, cells were sorted using an offline sorting algorithm (Plexon Inc., TX) to confirm
the quality of the recorded cells. Only cell clusters well-isolated compared to background noise,
defined as a Mahanalobis distance greater than 3 compared to the origin, were used for the
unit-Electome Factor correlation analysis. We used both single and multi-units for our analysis
as our objective was to determine whether Electome Network activity was reflective of cellular
activity. Neurophysiological recordings were referenced to a ground wire connected to ground
screws above the cerebellum and anterior cranium.

<u>Behavioral recordings and analysis for training/testing models</u>

The CD1 mice used for training and testing the electome model were first subjected to
screening to assess their basal level of aggressiveness. Screening occurred once a day for three
consecutive days prior to surgical implantation. For each screening session, an intact male C57
was placed in the CD1's home cage for 5 minutes and the latency to first attack was recorded.
To ensure that our network generalized broadly across CD1 mice, we used a training and testing
set for which ~50% of the mice showed high aggression (i.e., latency to attack < 60s), and ~50%
of the mice showed low to moderate aggression (i.e., latency to attack > 60s). Animals were
screened in cohorts, and we excluded 16/45 mice from further experiments.

All screening/testing occurred within the home cage of mice except for the quantification of
cortical stimulation induced gross locomotor activity. These latter experiments were performed
in a 44cm × 44cm × 35cm (L×W×H) open field arena. Subject mice (CD1 and ESR1 males) were
acclimated to the recording tether for three days prior to the first recording session. Each
acclimation session involved anesthetizing the mouse with 1% isoflurane, tethering the subject
mouse, allowing 60 minutes to recover from isoflurane, then placing a male C57 in the home
cage for 5 minutes. Mice were then anesthetized with isoflurane again and detached from the
tether. The aggressive tone of experimental mice was determined based on average latency to
attack partner mice during the second and third acclimation sessions.

After screening, mice were implanted, and data was acquired across 1-6 behavioral
testing/recording sessions following recovery. Sessions were separated by 5-7 days. Recordings
for all social encounters were performed in the home cages of the CD1 mice. Each behavioral
testing session began with 5 minutes of recording prior to introduction of the social stimulus.
All mice were subjected to encounters with an intact C57 male mouse and a female c57 mouse.
A subset of eighteen mice were also subjected to an encounter with a castrated male mouse,

and another subset of eighteen mice were subjected to exposure to objects covered in CD1
mouse urine. Six mice were recorded under all four conditions. Data observations (1 second
each) were pooled across eleven CD1 mice for training the network model. Object pairs
included yellow duplex blocks, curved red duplex blocks, weighted 5 mL conicals, glassware
tops, and objects assembled from black legos®. The CD1 mice were exposed to a different pair
of objects during each session. Order of exposure to stimulus mice and objects was shuffled for
every session.

For ESR1 male behavioral testing, mice were injected with either saline or CNO (1mg/kg, i.p.)
after the five-minute baseline recording. Thirty-five minutes after this injection, mice were
exposed to an intact male C57, a castrated male C57, and a female C57, presented in
pseudorandom order. Mice were subjected to six total recording sessions (three in which they
were treated with saline and three in which they were treated with CNO), again in
pseudorandom order. Sessions were separated by 5 days to allow an adequate washout of
CNO[46].

Behavior was scored for each second as an "attack", "non-attack social interaction", or "non-
interaction". One second windows were identified as "aggressive" if the mouse was engaged in
biting, boxing (kicking/clawing), or tussling behavior [32]. Windows were labeled as "non-attack
social interaction" if the mouse had his nose or forepaws touching the stimulus mouse (intact
male/female/castrated male) or object, but was not biting, boxing, or tussling. Examples of
behaviors labeled "non-attack social behavior" included sniffing, grooming, or resting (placing
nose or forepaws against the subject mouse, but not moving). If the stimulus mouse had
his/her forepaws or nose on the CD1, but it was not reciprocated, this was labeled "non-
interaction". CD1 straight approach, sideways approach, and chasing of the stimulus mouse
could result in attack (biting/kicking/tousling), non-attack social behavior (nose or paw touch),
or withdrawal without any touch. Thus, while sideways approach and chasing are regularly
labeled as "aggressive" in the literature [32, 47, 48], and straight approach is regularly labeled
as "pro-social", these behaviors lacked consistent resolutions. Moreover, mice also
demonstrated these behaviors towards female and castrated mice (non-attack social context).
One second windows containing these behaviors were labeled "non-interaction". All other
timepoints not labeled "attack" or "non-attack social" were also labeled "non-interaction".
These behavioral criteria were selected to include ethologically aggression-related behaviors
and maximize the likelihood that the CD1 was aware of the presence of the stimulus mouse or
object during the behavioral window, while remaining confident in the classification of "attack"
and "non-attack social" window labels.

While tail rattling is not an attack behavior like the other behaviors that were labeled as
"attack", it was consistently only demonstrated by aggressive mice towards intact male mice.
Moreover, tail rattling is well-recognized in the literature as an aggressive behavior. Thus, we
included this behavior in the "attack behavior category." In our subset of 20 mice used for
training the network, tail rattling was observed 8 ± 4s out of the 135 ± 26s 'attack windows' per
mouse.

The videos used to generate the labels for training and testing our machine learning model was
hand-scored by a trained researcher. Videos from ESR1 mice and optogenetic stimulation were
automatically tracked using DeepLabCut [49, 50]. This information was then used for creating
behavioral classifiers in SimBA [51].

<u>LFP preprocessing and signal artifact removal</u>

Each LFP signal was segmented into 1s non-overlapping windows. If there were multiple intact
channels implanted in a region, they were averaged to produce a single signal. Windows with
non-physiological noise were removed using an established automated heuristic [7]. Briefly, the
envelope of the signal in each channel was estimated using the magnitude of the Hilbert
transform. The Median Absolute Deviation (MAD) of the magnitude was then calculated on
each channel of each recording. Signal was marked as non-physiological if the envelope
exceeded a high threshold (5x MAD, which is roughly 4x the standard deviation for a normally
distributed signal). Any data adjacent to non-physiological data that had an envelope value
above a smaller threshold (0.167 MAD) was also considered non-physiological. All data marked
in this way was ignored when averaging channels for each region. Any channels with standard
deviation less than 0.01 was removed as well. If no channels were usable for a given region
within a window, that whole window was removed from the data. This set of heuristics
resulted in 34.7±5.1% of the data being excluded from analysis. After this, 60Hz line artifact was
further removed using a series of Butterworth bandpass filters at 60Hz and harmonics up to
240Hz with a stopband width of 5Hz and stopband attenuation of -60dB. Finally, the signal was
downsampled to 500Hz.

<u>Estimation of LFP oscillatory power, cross-spectral coherence, and Granger directionality.</u>

Signal processing was performed using Matlab (The MathWorks, Inc. Natick MA). For LFP
power, spectral power was estimated using Welch's method using a 250-millisecond window
and 125 millisecond step. Windows were zero-padded to give a 1Hz resolution. Cross-spectral
coherence was estimated pairwise between all regions using Welch's method and magnitude-
squared coherence defined as

$$C_{AB}(\omega) = \frac{|Psd_{AB}(\omega)|^2}{Psd_{AA}(\omega)Psd_{BB}(\omega)},$$

where A and B are two regions and $Psd_{AA}(\omega)$ and $Psd_{AB}(\omega)$ are the power and cross spectra
at a given frequency ω, respectively.

Spectral Granger causality features were estimated using the Multivariate Granger Causality
(MVGC) MATLAB toolbox [52]. To get stable Granger causality estimates, a 6th order highpass
Butterworth filter – with a stopband at 1Hz and a passband starting at 4 Hz – was applied to the
data using the *filtfilt* function (MATLAB, The MathWorks, Inc. Natick MA). Granger causality
values for each window were estimated with a 20 order AR model at 1 Hz intervals to align with
the power and coherence features. Granger features were processed identically to a previously
reported approach [7]. Briefly, Granger features were exponentiated to approximately maintain
the additivity assumption made implicitly by NMF models [7, 53] as, $\exp(f_{A \to B}(\omega))$, where
$f_{A \to B}(\omega)$ is the Granger causality at frequency ω from region A to region B. The exponentiated

feature is a ratio of total power to unexplained power. Exponentiated Granger feature values
were truncated at 10 to prevent implausible values.

Data for single region and network-level machine learning analyses

We used 21,460 seconds of data, pooled across the twenty mice, to train/validate our single
region and network models. This included a total of 4680 seconds while mice were socially
isolated in their home cage, 14,890 seconds where CD1 mice exhibited non-attack social
behavior (3542 seconds towards intact males, 9067 seconds towards females, and 2,281
seconds towards castrated), and 1,890 seconds where mice exhibited attack behavior towards
the intact males.

Single region decoding

To test the efficacy of any single brain region as a biomarker for aggression, we extracted
power at 1 Hz frequency bins over 1-56 Hz from each region. We then used the *fitglm* function
(MATLAB, The MathWorks, Inc. Natick MA) for binary outcomes with the logit link function to
build a predictive model from the power across frequencies. One second windows were pooled
from the twenty CD1 mice and used to generate a series of logistic models for each of the 11
brain regions. The models were trained to distinguish behavioral windows from one social state
exhibited by CD1 mice, from two other social states. These three social states included 1) male-
directed attack, 2) female non-attack social interactions, and 3) castrated male non-attack
social interactions. We also developed a model to distinguish 4) periods where CD1 were
isolated in their home cage from any of the three social states. Each model was then tested on
data from a holdout set of nine mice. The Area under the receiver operating curve (AUC) was
calculated for each holdout mouse to determine the performance of the model. False discovery
rate was used to correct for multiple hypothesis testing.

Discriminative Cross-Spectral Factor Analysis – Nonnegative Matrix Factorization

The network was trained to distinguish between behavioral windows when the CD1 mice
showed aggressive behavior towards intact C57 males, and windows where they exhibited pro-
social behavior. These latter windows comprised pro-social interactions towards intact C57
males, castrated C57 males, or C57 females. Here, we used data from twenty-seven mice to
learn the final model, with a split of 20 and 7 for model training and internal validation.

We used Discriminative Cross-Spectral Factor Analysis – Nonnegative Matrix Factorization
(dCSFA-NMF) model [27]. This approach assumes each window of is an independent stationary
observation and examines dynamics in brain activity only at the scale of windows. A 1 second
window was chosen to balance capturing fine-grained transient behavior with sufficient length
to properly estimate spectral features [7]. Each window has associated spectral power,
coherence, and Granger causality features (in total $p = 9,586$ features), which is represented
as $x_i \in \mathbb{R}^p$ for the ith window. Each window was associated with a behavioral label that
identified which condition the CD1 mouse was subjected to during that window (intact male,
castrated male, or female) and whether the CD1 mouse was engaged in aggressive or non-
aggressive behavior during that window, and the aggressive behavior was coded as $y_i \in \{0,1\}$.

As a short description of the dCSFA-NMF model, the features are described as an additive
positive sum of K non-nonnegative electrical functional connectome networks. This model is
learned using a supervised autoencoder. The objective we use to learn the parameters is

$$\min_{W,d,\phi} \sum_{i=1}^{N} Loss_X\big(x_i, Wf(x_i;\phi)\big) + \lambda\, Loss_Y\big(y_i, df(x_i;\phi)\big) + \mu\, Loss_{EN}(A).$$

Here, $Loss_X$ is the reconstruction loss of the features derived from electrophysiology, which for
our work was an L_2 loss. Our predictive loss $Loss_Y$ is the cross-entropy loss commonly used for
binary classification. Each of the K networks is represented in vector form and combined to
make a matrix $W \in R^{p \times K}$. The electome factor scores are given by the multi-output function
$f(x;\phi): R^p \to R^K$, where ϕ represent the parameters of the function. In our model, the multi-
output function was an affine transformation of $Ax + b$ followed by a softplus rectification,
defined as $softplus(x) = \log(1 + \exp x)$, thus $\phi = \{A, b\}$. Parameters $d \in R^k$ represent the
relationship between the electome factors and the behavior. A sparsity constraint is enforced
so that $d = [d_1, 0, …, 0]$, meaning that only a single electome is used to predict behavior,
simplifying interpretation. λ is a weighting parameter used to control the relative importance
of prediction. We chose a value that kept the two losses approximately equal during training,
which corresponded to 1.

Previous work has also found that the reconstruction loss can reduce overfitting and make the
learned predictions more robust [54]. To further reduce overfitting of the predictive aspect of
the encoder, we applied an elastic net loss [55] on the encoder $Loss_{EN}$ with a weighting μ and
the ratio between the L_1 and L_2 losses set to .5. The value for μ was set to a small value that
had worked well previously. In this work, power features were also upweighted by a factor of
10 to accommodate that there were many more Granger features and truncated at 6 to
prevent outliers from dominating the predictions.

These models and statistical analyses were implemented with Python 3.7 and Tensorflow
version 2.4. Parameters were learned with stochastic gradient descent using the Nesterov
accelerated ADAM optimizer [56]. Learning was performed for 30000 iterations, which was
observed to be ample for parameter convergence. The learning rate and batch size were set to
1e-3 and 100 respectively, values that have empirically performed well in similar applications.

Predictive performance was evaluated in new mice not involved in learning the network. Given
processed data from the new mice, factor scores were estimated as an evaluation of the
encoder learned during training of the dCSFA-NMF model.

<u>Code and data availability</u>

This learning algorithm is publicly available code at <u>https://github.com/carlson-</u>
<u>lab/encodedSupervision</u>. Data will be made available for replication purposes and pre-agreed
upon scientific extensions with a material transfer agreement.

<u>Hyper-parameter selection</u>

The dCSFA-NMF procedure requires selection of several settings in the algorithm. Specifically,
we must choose the number of electome factors K, the importance of the supervised task λ,

the relative importance of the power features, coherence features, and Granger features, and
the parameterization of the mapping function $f(x_i; \phi)$. Besides K, these settings were chosen
to match previously used values or follow heuristics.

To choose the value of K, we evaluated the reconstruction error (Mean Squared Error) on the
seven internal validation mice, which evaluates how well the Electome networks describe the
neural measurements. As the goal for our analysis was to maintain high reconstruction and
effectively predict the behavior, an elbow analysis was used to choose the number of electome
networks K after which we observed minimal gains in explaining the data.

Validating Model Dimensionality

A frequent concern of latent variable models (including dCSFA-NMF) is the dependence of the
networks and encoder on the choice of latent dimensionality. To address this concern, we
performed a sensitivity analysis on the supervised network to determine the extent to which
the choice of this dimensionality influenced the learned aggressive network electome and
encoder. In this sensitivity analysis, we estimated a dCSFA-NMF model allowing the number of
total networks to range from two to twenty. We then compared the similarity between each
learned encoder and decoder to our model with eight networks (the final model used in this
work). This was quantified using the cosine similarity, which measures the angle between two
networks (or encoders), ranging from -1 to 1. A value of 1 indicates perfect alignment (pointing
in the same direction), 0 is orthogonal, and -1 indicates that the vectors point in opposite
directions (Supplementary Figure S2).

We found that the supervised network maintained a strong consistency across most
dimensions, particularly between 5-10 networks, as shown by the cosine similarities being
greater than 0.95. The supervised encoders were virtually identical all the models except the
one that utilized three networks. This model learned a network that was positively associated
with aggression.

To evaluate the robustness of the similarities across most of the supervised networks, we
created a null distribution of the similarities across randomly chosen generative networks.
These later similarities were substantially lower both for the network composition and the
encoder. This indicates that as far as the supervised electome and encoder are concerned,
latent dimensionality is not particularly influential on the resulting network, and by extension
the biological interpretation.

Decoder Information Content

The amount of information contained in the predictive model was quantified by the reduction
in uncertainty. The associated formula for this reduction in uncertainty, known as the Bernoulli
entropy, is 1-1*(p log_2(p) +(1-p)log_2(1-p)), where p is the accuracy of the model. At the
extremes, an accuracy of 0.5 (random guessing) removes no uncertainty, whereas an accuracy
of 1 or 0 completely eliminates uncertainty.

Single cell correlation to Electome Factor activity

Data acquired during the third behavioral testing session was from the twenty implanted mice
were used for cellular analysis. We used Spearman correlation to quantify the relationship
between cellular firing windows and the activity of the electome network used to classify attack
behavior. We performed 1000 permutations of randomly shuffling 1 second windows within
each class for attack and non-attack social interactions with male, female and castrated C57
mice. This approach maintained the relationship between network activity and behavior and
the relationship between cell firing and behavior. We then calculated the spearman correlation
between network activity and cell firing for each permutation. A cell was deemed positively
correlated if its unshuffled spearman Rho was above 97.5% of the permutated distribution and
negatively correlated if it was below 2.5%.

Real-Time Encoder Approximation

Because Granger causality features were too computationally demanding for real-time
calculation, we developed a 'fast' dCSFA-NMF model that relied only on power and coherence
features for estimation of aggressive state to use in the closed-loop stimulation experiments.
This 'fast' model was trained on the same data. The model was trained using regularized
regression to best predict the output of the full encoder. As such, this reduced encoder is also
an affine transformation followed by a SoftPlus activation with a smaller parameter set,
$\phi_r = \{A_r, b_r\}$. This approximation explained a large component of the variance of the
supervised network score on the hold-out validation mice ($R = 0.47$, p-value <10^{-16}).

Optogenetic stimulation

Mice were anesthetized with 1% isoflurane, then tethered to for electrophysiological recording
and had an optic patch cable places over the optic fiber cannula. The mice were then allowed
60 minutes for recovery prior to session recording. For the fiber only optogenetic stimulation
experiments, CD1 mice experienced two stimulation sessions. For closed loop optogenetic
stimulation, CD1 mice experienced three sessions of behavioral screening, then two sessions of
closed-loop, then two sessions of open-loop, then one session of random stimulation.
Stimulation sessions were separated by 5-7 day between sessions. For behavioral screening,
CD1 mice were exposed to intact C57 males, females, and castrated male mice for 5 minutes
each. Screening session two and three were used to determine reduced network threshold at
which 40% of aggressive behavioral windows could be detected. For each session, mice were
recorded for 3 minutes of baseline in their home cage, then during the three social encounters.
Mice were recorded in an open field for 5 minutes after each session. The order of the three
social encounters were shuffled for each session. During each condition, the CD1 mouse
received two segments of alternating blue (473nm) and yellow (593.5nm) light stimulation, for
two minutes each.

For open-loop, CD1 mice received light stimulation for the entirety of the two-minute segment.
For closed-loop, mice received stimulation for one second when reduced network score
dropped below threshold.

For nonsynchronous stimulation, each CD1 mouse was randomly matched to a different mouse
that had been used for closed-loop stimulation. Each non-synchronous mouse was then
subjected to the identical order of conditions and yellow and blue light stimulation blocks as

their individually matched closed-loop mouse. Light stimulation was delivered using the pattern
implemented for the closed-loop partner mouse.

<u>Mediation Analysis</u>

For the Baron and Kenny approach [42] to establish that *EN-AggINH* expression mediated the
behavioral effect of the neurostimulation, we first used two results previously described in the
methods to establish that there was an effect from the neurostimulation on network
expression and on behavior. We next limited the data used to the most relevant case, which is
on the closed-loop stimulation. We limited ourselves to windows of LFP data during the closed-
loop experiment where the laser was activated, either from the blue laser or the yellow laser to
match the cases between the treatment and control as closely as possible. As only blue light
should significantly manipulate neural activity, this is viewed as the treatment, and the yellow
light is set as the control.   We followed the procedures outlined in "LFP preprocessing and
signal artifact removal" to preprocess the data and remove data with significant artifacts. *EN-*
AggINH expression was calculated by projecting the data into the learned model. The
remaining data was then fit into two logistic regression models to predict behavior using the
statsmodel package in python [57]. The first model used only the stimulation to predict
behavior (behavior ~ const + stimulation), and the second model used stimulation and network
expression to predict behavior (behavior ~ const + network_expression + stimulation). These
two models were compared by using a likelihood ratio test to evaluate whether the second
model was significantly better.

For the causal mediation analysis, we again need to roughly balance treatment and control
groups. We used the same data as described above in the classic mediation analysis. We define
the treatment as blue versus yellow light stimulation, the mediator as *EN-AggINH* expression,
and the outcome as aggressive versus non-aggressive behavior. Data was screened to remove
windows with missing data. These data were then used in the causal mediation analysis
approach proposed by Kosuke, Keele, and Tingley [43] by using the statsmodels package in
python [57].

<u>Statistics</u>

GraphPad Prism and Matlab were used for statistical analyses of behavior and network activity.
Paired T-tests were used for comparing within subject behavioral response to optogenetic
stimulation or CNO application and corrected for false discovery rate for multiple hypothesis
testing through the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure. One tailed Wilcoxon signed rank tests were
used to compare within-subject mean network score responses to optogenetic stimulation,
stimulus mouse exposure and interaction, and CNO injection. Data is presented as mean ±
standard error of measurement, throughout the paper, unless otherwise specified.

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Figure 1

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Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5