Title:

Steady-state neuron-predominant LINE-1 encoded ORF1p protein and LINE-1 RNA

increase with aging in the mouse and human brain

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Abstract

Recent studies have established a reciprocal causal link between aging and the activation of

transposable elements, characterized in particular by a de-repression of LINE-1

retrotransposons. These LINE-1 elements represent 21% of the human genome, but only a

minority of these sequences retain the coding potential essential for their mobility. LINE-1

encoded proteins can induce cell toxicity implicated in aging and neurodegenerative diseases.

However, our knowledge of the expression and localization of LINE-1-encoded proteins in the

central nervous system is limited. Using a novel approach combining atlas-based brain mapping

with deep-learning algorithms on large-scale pyramidal brain images, we unveil a

heterogeneous, neuron-predominant and widespread ORF1p expression throughout the murine

brain at steady-state. In aged mice, ORF1p expression increases significantly which is

corroborated in human post-mortem dopaminergic neurons by an increase in young LINE-1

elements including those with open reading frames. Mass spectrometry analysis of endogenous

mouse ORF1p revealed novel, neuron-specific protein interactors. These findings contribute to

a comprehensive description of the dynamics of LINE-1 and ORF1p expression in the brain at

steady-state and in aging and provide insights on ORF1p protein interactions in the brain.

Introduction

Only about 2 % of the human genome are DNA sequences that will be translated into protein. The remaining 98 % are comprised of introns, regulatory elements, non-coding RNA, pseudogenes and repetitive elements including transposable elements. However, some sequences in what is generally considered "non-coding genome" do in fact contain sequences which encode proteins. This is true for specific lncRNAs which can encode peptides or functional proteins [1] but also for a few copies of two transposable element families, Long INterspersed element-1 (LINE-1) and Human Endogenous RetroViruses (HERV). Non-functional copies of retrotransposons, to which LINE-1 and HERV belong, cover about 44% of the human genome as remnants of an evolutionary ancient activity. Depending on the source, about 100 [2] to 146 [3] full-length LINE-1 elements with two open reading frames encoding ORF1 and ORF2 are present in the Human reference genome (GRCh38 Genome Assembly) and several incomplete HERV sequences encoding either or any combination of envelope (env), gag, pro or pol [4] . The LINE-1 encoded protein ORF1p, an RNA binding protein with "cis" preference [5,6], and ORF2p, an endonuclease and reverse transcriptase [7,8] are required for the mobility of LINE-1 elements. LINE-1 elements, as many other transposable elements including HERVs, are repressed by multiple cellular pathways. Due to this, it was generally thought that TEs are repressed in somatic cells with no expression at steady-state [9–11]. However, aging might reduce the reliability of these repressive mechanisms [12]. It is now, 31 years after the initial proposition of the "transposon theory of aging" by Driver and McKechnie [13], generally accepted that TE activation can be both, a cause and a consequence of aging [14,15]. Sparse data has shown that the LINE-1 encoded protein ORF1p is expressed at steady-state in the mouse ventral midbrain [16] and in some regions of the human post-mortem brain [17] and recent data informed about the presence of full-length transcripts in various tissues [18]. Repression of LINE-1 might

thus be incomplete and if so, it remains unclear how cells then prevent cell toxicity associated with LINE-1 encoded protein activity. Indeed, LINE-1 encoded proteins have been demonstrated to induce genomic instability (ORF2p endonuclease-mediated [16,19–24]; inflammation (ORF2p reverse transcriptase-mediated [25–27] and/or nuclear envelope fragility (ORF1p-mediated [28]) and these cellular activities might be causally related to organismal aging and/or cancer , autoimmune and neurological diseases [29]. For instance, LINE-1 activation can drive neurodegeneration of mouse dopaminergic neurons [16], of drosophila neurons [30,31] and of mouse Purkinje neurons [32] which can be at least partially rescued with nucleoside analogue reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) or other anti-LINE-1 strategies. NRTIs are currently being tested in several clinical trials designed to target either the RT of HERVs or the RT encoded by the LINE-1 ORF2 protein. It is not known today, however, to which extend LINE-1 encoded proteins are expressed at steady-state throughout the mouse and human brain, whether there is cell-type specificity and whether activation of LINE-1 encoded proteins is associated with brain aging or human neurodegeneration. Here, using a deep-learning assisted cellular detection methodology applied to pyramidal large-scale images of the mouse brain mapped to the Allen mouse brain atlas combined with post-mortem human brain imaging, co-IP mass spectrometry and transcriptomic analysis of LINE-1 expression, we describe a brain-wide map of ORF1p expression and interacting proteins at steady-state and in the context of aging. We find a heterogenous but widespread expression of ORF1p in the mouse brain with predominant expression in neurons. In aged mice, neuronal ORF1p expression increases brain-wide and in some brain regions to up to 27%. In human dopaminergic neurons, young LINE-1 transcripts and specific full-length and coding LINE-1 copies are increased in aged individuals. We further describe endogenous mouse ORF1p interacting proteins revealing known interactors and unexpected interacting proteins belonging to GO categories related to RNA metabolism, chromatin remodeling, cytoskeleton and the synapse.

Results

Widespread and heterogenous expression of the LINE-1 encoded ORF1p protein in the

wildtype mouse brain

To investigate the expression pattern and intensities of endogenous LINE-1 encoded ORF1p

protein throughout the entire mouse brain, we devised a deep-learning assisted cellular

detection methodology applied to pyramidal large-scale images using a comprehensive

workflow complemented by an approach based on confocal imaging as schematized in Figure

1A. Briefly, starting from sagittal slide scanner images of the mouse brain, we defined

anatomical brain regions by mapping the Allen Brain Atlas onto the slide scanner images using

Aligning Big Brains & Atlases (ABBA). We then employed a deep-learning detection method

to identify all cell nuclei (Hoechst) and categorize all detected cells into neuronal cells (NeuN+)

or non-neuronal cells (NeuN-) and ORF1p-expressing cells (ORF1p+) and cells that do not

express ORF1p (ORF1p-). This workflow allowed us then to characterize cell identity and

ORF1p intensity throughout the whole brain but also in specific anatomical regions. In parallel,

we completed the approach using confocal microscopy on selected anatomical regions allowing

for comparison with higher resolution. Importantly, ORF1p antibody specificity was validated

by blocking the ORF1p antibody with purified mouse ORF1p resulting in the complete absence

of immunofluorescence staining (SupplFigure1A) as well as by immunoprecipitation and mass

spectrometry (Fig 6). Unexpectedly, we found a generalized and widespread expression of

ORF1p throughout the brain of wildtype mice (Swiss OF1 mice, three months-old; Figure 1B).

ORF1p is detectable in all regions and subregions analyzed. The expression pattern (density

and intensity) per region/subregions was however heterogeneous. The ten regions shown in

Figure 1B exemplify visible different densities of ORF1p+ cells with varying levels of

expression. Throughout the entire brain, we found a relatively high density of ORF1p+ cells

with a mean density of $\approx$ 305 ±18 ORF1p+ cells per mm² (mean ±SEM), representing up to

20% of all detected cells (Figure 1C). Among ORF1p+ cells within each analyzed mouse brain,

ORF1p intensities between low and high expressing cells were up to eight-fold different (Figure

1C). We then quantified nine anatomical regions according to the Allen Brain Atlas on four

brains of three-month old mice (Fig1D) with our unbiased workflow (Fig1A) regarding cell

density (Figure 1D), cell proportions (Figure 1E) and fluorescent intensity of ORF1p+ cells

(Figure 1F). This approach permitted the analysis of about 10 000 ORF1p+ cells per animal

highlighting the power of our large-scale analysis. Densities of ORF1p+ cells ranged from the

lowest density in the hindbrain with 154 ±19 cells per mm² (mean ±SEM) to the highest density

of ORF1p+ cells in the isocortex with 451 ±44 cells per mm² (mean ±SEM) and the thalamus

with 446 ±50 cells per mm² (mean ±SEM). This correlated with the percentage of ORF1p+ cells

among all cells identified per region (Figure 1E, r^2=0.96). The percentage of ORF1p+ cells per

anatomical region fluctuated between 10% ±2.1 (ventral striatum, mean ±SEM) and 31% ±1.6

(thalamus, mean ±SEM). The dorsal striatum ("striatal dorsal" in the Allen Brain Atlas

denomination) exhibited the lowest ORF1p expression intensity (658 ±3 mean ±SEM) of all

regions tested, the hindbrain the highest mean intensity of ORF1p per cell (mean 1221 ±8

(SEM)) as illustrated in Figure 1B and quantified in Figure 1D and 1F. Interestingly, cell density

did not correlate with expression levels. Dorsal and ventral striatum for instance display similar

ORF1p intensities per cell but exhibit significant differences in ORF1p cell density and

proportion. The "midbrain motor" region as defined by the Allen Brain Atlas showed an

intermediate cell density (mean 265 ±16 (SEM)) and a rather high ORF1p expression intensity

(mean 1006 ±7.3 (SEM)). Statistical analysis comparing mean density of ORF1p+cells per mm²

or mean intensity per ORF1p+ cells among regions confirmed the heterogeneity concerning

ORF1p expression throughout the mouse brain (Fig1D, 1F). Slide scanner and confocal images

revealed an exceptionally high ORF1p expression intensity in the ventral region of the midbrain

which we identified as the *Substantia nigra pars compacta (SNpc),* an anatomical region

containing dopaminergic neurons which are vulnerable in Parkinson disease (PD). This region

displayed an important density of ORF1p+ cells and a comparatively high level of ORF1p

expression as illustrated by confocal imaging (Figure 1B, panel 8), but could not be quantified

independently with our brain-wide approach due to the geometrically-complex anatomy of this

region and its small size (subregion-level in the Allen Brain Atlas hierarchy). Another region

which could not be included in our brain-wide analysis was the cerebellum due to its extremely

high density of cell nuclei. However, slide scanner and confocal imaging (Figure 1B, panel 10)

revealed that ORF1p is highly expressed in Purkinje cells, while not detectable in the molecular

or granular layers.

In order to confirm ORF1p expression by an independent method, we performed Western blot

analysis on six micro-dissected regions from the mouse brain (Swiss/OF1 mouse, three-month

old). As shown in SupplFig1C, ORF1p is expressed in all six regions with varying expression

levels confirming the overall presence of ORF1p throughout the brain. We then chose two

regions with significantly divergent ORF1p expression intensities as identified and quantified

on pyramidal large-scale images: the frontal cortex (low) and the ventral midbrain (intermediate

to high). We confirmed a significant higher expression of ORF1p in the ventral midbrain

compared to the frontal cortex using an approach based on the unbiased, automated

quantification of multiple z-stacks using a confocal microscope (Figure 1G) and by Western-

blotting on micro-dissected regions (Figure 1H, 1I). In concordance with the findings stemming

from the large-scale image quantification pipeline (Figure 1F), the ventral midbrain showed $\approx$

2-times higher expression of ORF1p than the frontal cortex as quantified in Figure 1G (1.8-

fold) and Figure I (2.3-fold) validating our cellular detection methodology for pyramidal large-

scale imaging and underscoring the heterogeneity of ORF1p expression levels in the mouse

brain. To investigate intra-individual expression patterns of ORF1p in the post-mortem human

brain, we analyzed three brain regions of a neurologically-healthy individual (Figure 1J) by

Western blotting. We detected two bands, the upper one corresponding to ORF1p ($\approx$ 40kD) and

a lower band ($\approx$ 36kD) of unknown nature, both of which are also detectable in HeLa or HEK

cells (data not shown). ORF1p was expressed at different levels in the cingulate gyrus, the

frontal cortex and the cerebellum underscoring a heterogenous widespread expression of human

ORF1p across the human brain. In summary, our findings reveal the consistent presence of

ORF1p expression throughout the mouse brain in all anatomical regions analyzed with high

regional variability in terms of density of ORF1p+ cells per mm2 per region and ORF1p+

intensity per cell per region. This indicates a consistent presence of a LINE-1 encoded protein

in brain cells and raises several questions concerning cell-type identity of ORF1p expressing

cells and potential functions or consequences of ORF1p expression in the mouse and human

brain.

ORF1p is predominantly expressed in neurons

Following up on our observation of wide-spread expression patterns of endogenous ORF1p

throughout the brain, we first addressed the question of the cellular identity of ORF1p+ cells.

To this end, we used the neuron-specific marker NeuN, which has been used for many decades

to identify post-mitotic neurons in the central nervous system [33] allowing us to determine the

proportion of neuronal (NeuN+) or non-neuronal cells (NeuN-) expressing ORF1p (ORF1p+)

or not (ORF1p-). Making use of our large-scale imaging approach (Figure 1A), we observe

drastic dissimilarities in detected cellular proportions between the white and grey brain matter.

As expected, we observed only 1% of NeuN+ cells in the white matter (corpus callosum; Figure

2A) validating both, the neuronal marker NeuN as such and the ABBA superposition of the

Allen Brain Atlas onto the sagittal brain slices. Interestingly, among the non-neuronal cells

predominant in this region, only 5 cells (mean value of 4 animals) cells were detected as

ORF1p+ indicating a near absence of ORF1p+ cells in non-neuronal cells of the white matter.

In the grey matter, our approach detected 30.5% NeuN+ cells (dark red and yellow bars in

Figure 2A) which, according to the literature, should include all post-mitotic neurons with only

minor exceptions [33–36] and corresponds to the reported proportion of neurons present in the

mouse brain [37]. The nine identified grey matter regions in Figure 2A display the proportions of

the different cell types per region. The proportion of all cells in a given region which are positive

for ORF1p (dark red bars) differs between regions (lowest proportion: hindbrain: 7%; highest

proportion dorsal striatum: 26.6%). In the isocortex and the midbrain motor-related regions, the

majority of neurons detected express ORF1p (54% and 59% by large-scale analysis, Figure 2A;

68.8% and 68.7% by confocal imaging (Figure 2B, quantified in C), respectively), while in the

midbrain sensory related regions the proportion dropped to 25% whereas it reached 82% in the

thalamus (Suppl Figure 2A). Altogether, nearly half of all NeuN+ cells throughout the mouse

brain expressed ORF1p (mean of all regions: 48.2%; Figure 2E). Regarding the cell identity of

ORF1p+ cells brain-wide (except the cerebellum), more than 70% were identified as neuronal

by the large-scale approach (Suppl Figure 2A). The regional analysis indicated that 73%

(isocortex) and 64.4% (midbrain motor) of ORF1p+ cells were also NeuN+ (Suppl Figure 2A).

This contrasted with results obtained by the second approach using confocal imaging on

multiple z-stacks which indicated that 91.3% (frontal cortex) and 88.5% (ventral midbrain) of

ORF1p+ cells were neuronal (Figure 2D). This difference in numbers observed between our

large-scale image cell detection methodology and the confocal workflow are most probably due

to technical limitations inherent to our large-scale pipeline. Indeed, with the latter approach,

region-dependent differences in cell density and signal intensity levels might be the cause for

an underestimation of the proportion of ORF1p+ cells being neuronal due to difficulties in cell

detection by StarDist/Cellpose (high cell density) on a single focal plan, technical difficulties

which are widely reduced by the multiple z-stack based approach when using a confocal

microscope. Notably, we also observed a difference in the % of NeuN+ cells between these two

regions with significantly less NeuN+ cells in the ventral midbrain compared to the frontal

cortex (SupplFig2B). As we could not rule out that ORF1p might also be expressed in non-

neuronal cells, we turned to non-neuronal markers specific for different glial cell populations

using two different astrocytic markers (GFAP, Sox9), the astro- and oligodendrocytic marker

S100b and the microglial marker Iba1[37,38] and performed co-stainings with ORF1p followed by

confocal imaging as illustrated in Figure 2G. We screened multiple images of frontal cortex,

ventral midbrain, hippocampus and striatum and did not find a single cell, which could

unambiguously be defined as non-neuronal, to express ORF1p. This indicated that ORF1p is

not or only very rarely expressed in non-neuronal cells. To assess whether predominant, if not

exclusive ORF1p expression in neurons is mouse brain specific or a pattern also applicable to

the human brain, we investigated the identity of ORF1p expressing cells in the cingulate gyrus

of a healthy human brain. Similar to what we found in the mouse brain, we observed sparse

NeuN expression in the white (Figure 2H, left) and extensive NeuN staining in the grey matter

corresponding to the cortical layers (right, separated by a dashed white line) with ORF1p+ cells

predominantly located in the grey matter. All cells stained by ORF1p were co-stained with

NeuN indicating that ORF1p was expressed in neuronal cells also in the human brain

(Figure2H, right). However, as in the mouse brain, not all neurons expressed ORF1p (Figure

2H, bottom right). Finally, to further confirm the absence of ORF1p expression in non-neuronal

cells and the presence of expression of ORF1p in neurons, we used fluorescence-activated cell

sorting (FACS) to isolate neurons (using a NeuN antibody) from non-neuronal cells (NeuN-)

from the adult mouse brain followed by Western blotting with an antibody against ORF1p

(Figure 2I, 2J). We detected ORF1p exclusively in the neuronal fraction, again confirming our

prior results based on two different imaging approaches. In summary, ORF1p expression in the

mouse brain is widely restricted to neurons of which the majority express ORF1p. This raises

the question of the function and consequences of ORF1p expression specifically in neurons but

also on the dynamic regulation of this expression upon exogenous (exposome) or endogenous

(aging) challenges.

ORF1p expression is increased in the aged mouse brain

ORF1p is expressed at steady-state throughout the brain, but whether there is a dynamic

regulation of this expression is not known. Aging has unequivocally been linked to LINE-1

regulation [15,39] both as a trigger and as a consequence of LINE-1 activation but whether this is

true for the brain has not been thoroughly investigated using ORF1p as a read-out. We therefore

addressed the question whether advanced age (16-month-old mice) was paralleled by a dynamic

regulation of ORF1p expression in the brain compared to young, three-month old mice. In the

context of aging, we globally observed a reduction in the proportion of ORF1p+/NeuN+ cells

using the cell detection workflow applied to large-scale images described in Figure 1A,

phenomenon mainly driven by the midbrain motor, the dorsal striatum, the pallidum and the

thalamus regions (Figure 3A, dark red bars, SupplTable1). The confocal approach applied to

two regions, the frontal cortex and the ventral midbrain (Figure 3B) confirmed a loss of

ORF1p+/NeuN+ cells in the ventral midbrain with no change in cell proportions in the frontal

cortex in accordance with the large-scale imaging approach (Figure 3A). The predominantly

neuronal identity of ORF1p+ cells, however, was unchanged (SupplFig3A) just as the

proportion of neurons expressing ORF1p (SupplFig3B). We observed a significant decrease of

NeuN+ cells in the ventral midbrain (Figure 3B, SupplFig3C). We next analyzed ORF1p

expression levels in the context of brain aging. Interestingly, the mean intensity of ORF1p

expression increased significantly with age throughout the brain (13% increase brain-wide;

Figure 3C). Frequency distribution analysis unveiled a shift in ORF1p mean expression per

cell in aged mice (Figure 3D). Importantly, the Hoechst mean intensity within nuclei of

ORF1p+ cells, serving as an internal control, showed no significant change (Figure 3E). Among

nine analyzed regions, five demonstrated a general increase in ORF1p mean intensity per cell

in aged mice ($p<\!/\!=0.05$), a change independent from inter-individual variations in both young

and aged mice (Figure 3F). An increase of ORF1p expression was also observed in three others

regions but albeit not significant. The only exception was the isocortex which remained

unchanged with aging. The general increase of ORF1p expression (fold change intensity) in the

whole brain, reaching nearly a 30% increase in some regions, is represented on the heatmap in

Figure 1G. These results were confirmed by the confocal imaging approach: ORF1p expression

in the frontal cortex remained unchanged and the ventral midbrain region increased

significantly in aged mice as quantified in Figure 3H and shown with a representative image in

Figure 3I. Overall, these results highlight an age-dependent increase in ORF1p expression in

neurons throughout the brain with some regions showing an increase of up to 30% in ORF1p

intensities.

Coding LINE-1 transcripts are increased in aged human dopaminergic neurons

Following the observation of increased ORF1p expression in the aged mouse brain, among

which the ventral midbrain, and given the age-related susceptibility of dopaminergic neurons

in the *SNpc* to degenerate in PD, we turned to a RNA-seq dataset of laser-captured micro-

dissected post-mortem human dopaminergic neurons of brain-healthy individuals [40], in order to

interrogate full-length LINE-1 expression profiles as a function of age. To avoid read-length

bias to which TE analysis is particularly sensitive, we analyzed only the data derived from 50bp

paired-end reads of linearly amplified total RNA as this dataset regrouped all age categories

(n=41; with ages ranging from 38 to 97 (mean age: 79.88 (SD ±12.07); n=6 $<\!/\!=65y$; n=35 >65y;

mean PMI: 7.07 (SD ±7.84), mean RIN: 7.09 (±0.94). As age-related dysregulation of TEs

might not be linear, we considered individuals with ages-at-death younger or equal to 65 years

as "young" (n=6, 38-65 years, mean age 57.5 years (SD ±9.9)) and individuals older than 65

years as "aged" (n=35, 65-97 years, mean age 83 years (SD±7.8). The expression of the

dopaminergic markers tyrosine hydroxylase (TH) and LMX1B were not different in both

populations indicating no apparent change of dopaminergic identity of analyzed melanin-

positive dopaminergic neurons (Suppl Figure 4A). Next, we compared the expression of repeat

elements at the class, family and name level based on the repeat masker annotation implemented

in the UCSC genome browser using a commonly used mapping strategy for repeats [41]. No overt

dysregulation of repeat elements at either level of repeat element hierarchy was observed (Suppl

Figures 4C,D,E,F), however there was a significant increase in several younger LINE-1

elements including L1HS and L1PA2 at the "name" level (Figure 4A,B). This was not observed

for HERVK-int, a human endogenous retrovirus family with some copies having retained

coding potential (Figure 4B) or other potentially active TEs like HERVH-int, HERV-Fc1 or

SVA-F with the exception of a trend for an increase in AluYa5 transcripts in the >65y group, a

young Alu family mobilized by the LINE-1 retrotransposition machinery (Suppl Figure 4G).

Interestingly, L1HS expression was highly correlated with L1PA2 expression and this

correlation extended to almost all younger LINE-1 subfamilies weaning down with

evolutionary distance (Figure 5A). This was not true for other active TEs as L1HS was

negatively correlated with HERVK-int expression (Figure 5A). Several regulators of LINE-1

activity have been identified [16,42] and correlation of their expression with L1HS might allow to

infer their relevance of interaction (activation or repression) with L1HS in human dopaminergic

neurons. Besides the co-regulation of young LINE-1 elements (L1HS, L1PA2-11, Figure 5A),

Spearman correlation analysis revealed three known repressors of LINE-1 activity; EN1

(Engrailed 1 [16], Suppl Figure 5A) with important functions for dopaminergic neuron

homeostasis [43], CBX5/HP1a, a heterochromatin binding protein binding to the histone mark

H3K9me3, thereby mediating epigenetic repression [44] (Suppl Figure 5B) and XRCC5/6, also

known as Ku86/Ku70, which are essential for DNA double-stranded break repair through the

nonhomologous end joining (NHEJ) pathway and limit LINE-1 full-length insertions [45] (Suppl

Figure 5C). The transcripts of these genes showed, although not statistically significant, a trend

for decreased expression in the elderly (Suppl Figures 5D-G). Based on the increase of young

LINE-1 families L1HS and L1PA2 in aged human dopaminergic neurons and the finding that

ORF1p was increased in the aged mouse brain, we focused our attention on LINE-1 elements

with coding potential for ORF1 and ORF2 according to the L1Basev2 annotation which are

specific elements comprised in the L1HS and L1PA2 annotation at the "name" level. Most of

the 146 full-length and coding LINE-1 termed UIDs (= Unique Identifier) in the L1Base are

L1HS elements (76.03%), whereas the remaining 35 UIDs belong to the evolutionary older

L1PA2 family (Suppl Figure 6B). The L1Base annotation is based on the human reference

genome (GRCh38) and annotates 146 human full-length (>6kB), intact LINE-1 elements

(ORF1 and ORF2 intact) with a unique identifier from 1 to 146 [3]. Attribution of sequencing

reads to a specific, individual TE copy is problematic [46] and several approaches have been

proposed to circumvent this problem including the mapping of unique reads [41].While several

tools using expectation maximization algorithms in assigning multi-mapping reads have been

developed and successfully tested in simulations [41,47], we used a different approach in mapping

unique reads to the L1Base annotation of full-length LINE-1. Specific "hot" LINE-1 loci in a

given cellular context have been identified [2], but usage of the L1Base annotation enabled an

unbiased approach albeit ignoring polymorphic LINE-1 sequences. Unique read mapping

strategies for repeat elements, especially young LINE-1 elements, will unavoidably

underestimate LINE-1 locus-specific expression levels [41], but will be most accurate in assigning

reads while allowing the comparison of two different conditions analyzed in parallel. Assuming

that expression of UIDs was correlated with mappability, we plotted a mappability count of

each UID (see methods) against its mean normalized read count expression of the six

individuals </=65y. Non-parametric Spearman correlation revealed no correlation between UID

mappability and expression (SupplFig6A) indicating no apparent bias between the two

parameters. However, individual UID dependency of mappability on expression cannot be

excluded, especially for high expressing UIDs like UID-16 for example (Suppl Figures 6A,E).

Expression of LINE-1 at the locus-level has been attributed to artefacts not representing

autonomous transcription including differential high intronic read counts [48] pervasive

transcription or reads attributable to passive co-transcription with genes when the LINE-1

element is intronic [49]. To evaluate the latter, we determined the number of intronic (46.58%)

and intergenic UIDs (78/146; Suppl Figure 6D) and identified the corresponding genes for

intronic UIDs (Suppl Figure 6C). Of the 146 UIDs, 140 passed the threshold of >3 reads in at

least 6 individuals. Differential expression of UID between "young" and "aged" dopaminergic

neurons revealed several significantly deregulated full-length LINE-1 loci. However, while no

single locus stood out, paired analysis of the expression of all UIDs indicated a general increase

(Figure 4D), especially of low expressed UIDs. The comparative analysis of the sum expression

of UIDs per individual comparing young (</=65y) with elderly human dopaminergic neurons,

however, did not reach statistical significance (Figure 4E). Several specific loci were

dysregulated in particular, for instance UID-68 (Figure 4C), a L1HS element located on

chromosome 7 (chr7: 141920659-141926712) in between two genes, CLEC5A (C-type lectin

domain containing 5A) and OR9A4 (olfactory receptor family 9 subfamily A member 4). To

rule out any influence of "hosting" gene transcription interference on measurable UID-68

expression differences (Fig4F, left), we performed Spearman correlation which did not indicate

any correlation between CLEC5A or OR9A4 expression with UID-68 (Fig4F). Further, UID-

68 had a high mappability count of 16 (range of all UIDs: 1-30, mean 9.0 (SD ±6.05),

SupplFig6A) indicating that UID-68 might be a candidate for an age-dependent gain of activity.

L1HS UID-129, located on chromosome 15 (chr15: 54926081-54932099) is intergenic, at ≈

2Mb distance upstream and ≈ 200Mb downstream from the next genes. However, the

mappability count of UID-129 was only 1, indicating possible mapping biases inherent to the

unique read-based mapping strategy employed (Figure 4G and SupplFig6A). Another UID

increased in individuals >65y, the L1HS UID-37 (chr10:98,782,942-98,788,971, minus strand),

located in intron 3 of the HPSE2 gene (mappability count of 13, minus strand), showed no

correlation with its "hosting" gene indicating potential autonomous transcription of this LINE-

1 element and suggesting its contribution to the increase of full-length LINE-1 transcripts

(SupplFig7A). We also inspected UID-127 (chr13:40,356,291-40,362,321, mappability count:

14), a L1PA2 element which slightly decreased in elder individuals (Fig4C). We found a

positive association with LINC00598 (intron 6 of 6; $\leq$/=65y: r=0.2, p=0.71; >65y: r=0.37,

p=0.03), a non-coding RNA which hosts UID-127 in its 6th intron, indicating transcriptional co-

regulation potentially indicative of non-autonomous transcription of UID-127 (SupplFig7B).

The decrease in the expression of UID-137 (Fig4C) was mostly driven by one young individual

with high expression (SupplFig7C) and thus not reflecting an overall decrease (SupplFig7C,

p=0.23). In conclusion, TE expression analysis of this human dataset covering an age-span of

59 years indicates an increase in the expression of young LINE-1 elements including those

which have coding potential in elderly dopaminergic neurons. A slight net sum increase of UID

transcripts/cell might be sufficient for the production of "above steady-state" levels of ORF1p

and ORF2p. Other TEs with coding potential, namely members of the HERV family, were not

increased. Further, correlation analyses suggest that L1HS expression might possibly be

controlled by the homeoprotein Engrailed 1, a protein specifically expressed in dopaminergic

neurons in the ventral midbrain [43], the heterochromatin binding protein HP1, two known

regulators of LINE-1, and the DNA repair proteins XRCC5/6.

Endogenous ORF1p interactors in the mouse brain

To go further in our understanding of steady-state neuronal ORF1p expression across the mouse

brain, we immunoprecipitated ORF1p and performed label-free and quantitative LC/MS-MS to

identify potential protein partners of ORF1p in the mouse brain. We successfully

immunoprecipitated endogenous ORF1p from whole brain lysates (Figure 6A) and identified a

total of 424 potential protein interactors associated with ORF1p in 5 independent experiments

(n=5 mice, TableS1). Using Gene Ontology (GO) analysis, we identified several interacting

proteins belonging to GO terms related to known functions of the ORF1p protein in RNA

binding, preferentially [50] but not exclusively *in cis* [51], for instance RNA decapping and mRNA

catabolic process, or related to the known presence of ORF1p in ribonucleoprotein particles

[52,53] (GO: cytoplasmic ribonucleotide granule) or the presence of ORF1p in p-bodies [51] as shown

in Figure 6B and listed in TableS2. Other GO terms that emerged, to our knowledge not

previously associated with ORF1p, were related to cGMP-mediated signaling (GO: cGMP-

mediated signaling and 3'-5'phosphodiesterase activity: i.e. PDE4A, PDE4B, PDE4DIP) and

the cytoskeleton (GO: microtubule depolymerization, cytoskeleton organization, microtubule

and tubulin binding, cytoskeletal motor activity and protein binding). cGMP signaling is

regulated by 3'-5' phosphodiesterases (PDEs) which degrade 3',5'-cyclic guanosine

monophosphate (cGMP) and 3',5'-cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP), an activity

essential for cell physiology for the integration of extra- and intracellular signals including

neuronal excitability, synaptic transmission and neuroplasticity [54,55]. Further, several ORF1p

interacting proteins were constituents of the mating-type switching/sucrose nonfermenting

complex (SWI/SNF complex), i.e. ARID1A, ARID1B, SMARCA2, SMARCB1, SMARCC2),

an ATP-dependent chromatin remodeler complex disrupting nucleosome/DNA contacts to

facilitate DNA/chromatin accessibility by shifting, removing or exchanging nucleosomes along

DNA [56,57]. Finally, we also observed proteins belonging to the GO term "neuronal cell body",

corroborating with the neuron-specific presence of ORF1p in the brain. A comparative analysis

with previous mass spectrometry studies [53,58–63] aimed at identifying ORF1p interacting proteins

unveiled significantly more common proteins than expected by chance (overrepresentation test;

representation factor 2.6, p< 5.4e-08; Figure 6C), including LARP1, STAU2, ATXN2, RALY,

TARBP2 or DDX21 (for a full list see TableS3). The presence of a significant number of

overlapping ORF1p interactors in different non-neuronal human cells (HEK[53,58,59], HeLa[60],

human breast and ovarian tumors[63] and hESCs[61]) and mouse brain cells (our study), suggest

conserved key interactors between both species and between cell types, with a subset of these

proteins regulating RNA degradation and translation potentially relevant for the LINE-1

lifecycle itself. ORF1p interactors found in mouse spermatocytes [62] were also present in our

analysis including CNOT10, CNOT11, PRKRA and FXR2 among others (TableS3). To unravel

the physical interactions between the identified interactors of endogenous ORF1p within the

mouse brain, we used the STRING database (Search Tool for Recurring Instances of

Neighboring Genes, https://string-db.org/). This analysis generated a network representation,

where physical interactions are represented by edges (Figure 6D). In analogy with the GO term

analysis, ORF1p displayed interactions with various clusters, including well-known RNA

decapping complexes directed against LINE-1 RNA, which also encompassed DCP2 and

DCP1A which had not previously been identified as interacting with ORF1p [64]. Furthermore,

ORF1p exhibited interactions with the SWI/SNF complex (highlighted in red) as well as

subunits of the RNA polymerase II complex suggesting a direct or indirect association with

accessible chromatin, a hitherto unknown interaction of ORF1p with chromatin compartments

within the nucleus. Notably, a multitude of novel interactors belonged to the "neuronal cell

body" and "neuron projections" clusters, proposing potential neuron-specific partners of

ORF1p such as Grm2/5, Bai1, Epha4, Kcnn2, Grik2 and Dmd among others. A last cluster,

formed by Ncoa5 (Nuclear Receptor Coactivator 5), Nxf1 (Nuclear RNA Export Factor 1),

Ranbp2 and Nup133 (both nucleoporins), might imply a role for these interactions in L1-RNA

nuclear export and/or a mechanism for the LINE-1 RNP to gain access to the nucleus in post-

mitotic neurons, a process we described recently in human neurons [28]. Altogether, the

identification of known and novel interactors of ORF1p in the mouse brain suggests roles of

ORF1p in the LINE-1 life cycle (RNA binding and metabolism, RNP formation, nuclear access)

but also suggests potential novel physiological roles of ORF1p in the brain related to

cytoskeleton organization, cGMP signaling, neuron-specific functions (i.e. synaptic signaling,

TableS2) and chromatin organization and/or transcription regulation.

Discussion

While LINE-1 derepression in aging has been extensively explored in peripheral tissues and

various pathologies, including cancer, our understanding of LINE-1, particularly ORF1p

expression, in the central nervous system within this context remains limited [18,65,66]. A recent

search of ORF1p peptides in mass spectrometry data spanning 29 different healthy tissues did

not reveal the presence of ORF1p in the brain, suggesting that its presence might lie below

detection limits [18]. Only a few studies explored ORF1p encoded LINE-1 protein expression in

the brain, most focusing on a specific region (in mice [16,32] in rats [68] and in human post-mortem

brain [17]), but it remained unclear if ORF1p is expressed throughout the entire brain, exhibits

cell-type specificity, and most intriguingly, if its expression is influenced by the aging process.

Here, we demonstrate that ORF1p is expressed throughout the entire mouse brain and in at least

three regions of the human post-mortem brain at steady-state. Leveraging a comprehensive

workflow that incorporates brain atlas registration and machine learning algorithms (as

described in the methods section), we quantified tens of thousands of brain cells, enabling a

profound analysis of cell proportions, cell identities, densities and ORF1p expression levels

across the entire brain. Surprisingly, more than one-fifth of detected cells expressed ORF1p.

Strikingly, regional variations in ORF1p expression levels were observed, with each region

exhibiting distinct proportions, cell density, and signal intensity of ORF1p+ cells. In a non-

neurologically diseased human brain, ORF1p is expressed in all three regions examined, that is

the cingulate gyrus, the frontal cortex and the cerebellum. This is in accordance to an earlier

study using histological stainings, which found ORF1p expression in the human frontal cortex,

the hippocampus, in basal ganglia, thalamus, midbrain and the spinal cord [17]. This suggests,

similarly to the mouse brain, a generalized expression across the human brain. On the

transcriptomic level using long-read sequencing of GTEx tissues, brain and liver were

highlighted as the organs displaying the highest expression of putatively active, full-length

LINE-1 elements [67]. However, when the authors looked at sub-regions, they found transcript

expression in cerebellar hemispheres and the putamen, but not in the caudate and the anterior

cingulate gyrus and frontal cortex [67]. This is in contrast to our data and the data from Sur et al,

where ORF1p was found to be expressed in the latter two regions using two different

antibodies. We used the anti-human LINE-1 ORF1p antibody clone 4H1, a well characterized

antibody [66,69]. While the sample size of human post-mortem stainings certainly needs to be

increased in order to draw quantitative conclusions, the presence of the protein in two

independent studies does point to a steady-state expression of ORF1p in the human brain.

In the mouse brain, we find ORF1p to be expressed predominantly if not exclusively in neurons

using immunofluorescence and fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACS). This result is

consistent with previous studies, such as the identification of ORF1p in excitatory neurons

within the mouse frontal cortex [70], its presence in neurons in the ventral midbrain [16] and the

recognition of morphological similarities between stained neurons and ORF1p+ cells in a post-

mortem hippocampus sample of a healthy individual [17]. We also detected ORF1p in Purkinje

cells in the mouse and in bulk human cerebellum. Neuronal specificity or preference of LINE-

1 expression was also shown on the transcriptomic level in a recent study investigating LINE-

1 expression in the mouse hippocampus, where neuronal LINE-1 expression exceeded that of

astrocytes and microglia by approximately twofold [18] and single-nuclei RNA-seq data from the

mouse hippocampus and frontal cortex which confirmed globally that repetitive elements

including LINE-1 are more active in neurons than in glial cells [70]. While ORF1p expression is

suggested to be expressed in microglia under experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis

conditions in the spinal cord [71], no evidence of such expression was observed in non-neuronal

cells under non-pathological condition.

On average, throughout the mouse brain, the majority of neurons were positive for

ORF1p and in some regions (i.e. the thalamus) around 80% of neurons expressed ORF1p.

Comparing the results of both imaging approaches, the percentages of neurons expressing

ORF1p in the ventral midbrain and frontal cortex were roughly similar (around 70% of neurons

expressed ORF1p as quantified by confocal imaging and about 60% of neurons were identified

as ORF1p+ using the slide scanner approach). It is possible that these percentages are

underestimated due to technical issues inherent to the machine-learning based algorithm for cell

detection as our observations often indicated a positive signal in neurons which were classified

as negative due to a particular shape or our stringent intensity threshold. A question which arises

based on these findings is whether specific features distinguish ORF1p+ and ORF1p- neurons.

While we cannot conclude on this question, our results permit to exclude certain possibilities.

There is no specific and clustered ORF1p expression in anatomically defined brain nuclei which

are known to share a specific neurotransmitter (i.e. dopaminergic neurons in the *SNpc)* which

suggests that ORF1p expression does not seem to be strictly neuronal subtype-dependent.

However, there is some degree of cell-type specificity as mouse dopaminergic neurons in the

SNpc express higher levels of ORF1p compared to surrounding, non-dopaminergic neurons [16]

(Figure 1B, panel 8). Further, we observe ORF1p staining in Purkinje cells but not in the

surrounding granular and molecular layer neurons of the cerebellum. Purkinje cells are

inhibitory neurons just as some neurons in the granular layer (i.e. golgi and unipolar brush cells) which are ORF1p negative, so the decisive feature does not appear to be the excitatory or inhibitory nature of a neuron either. Another possibility is a cell-type specific chromatin organization permissive for the expression of LINE-1 and future single-cell studies in the mouse and human brain might reveal those differences.

Because transposable elements are known to become active in somatic tissues during aging [14,15,26,72,73], we aimed to investigate whether there was a corresponding increase at the protein level. In aged mice, ORF1p expression significantly increased throughout the mouse brain consistent with a previously documented increase in ORF1p outside the central nervous system in aged rats [68,74] and aged mice [72]. By quantifying the mean intensity of ORF1p in over 70 000 cells identified as ORF1p+, we were able to characterize the extent of this increase in each anatomical sub-region. Remarkably, apart from the isocortex which did not show any change, ORF1p expression increased in all other brain regions by 7% to 27%, indicating a generalized increase of ORF1p expression in neurons throughout the brain (13%). We did not detect any change in cell identity of ORF1p expressing cells, that is, ORF1p expression remained predominantly if not exclusively neuronal. Intriguingly, we observed a loss of NeuN+ cells, particularly those expressing ORF1p, throughout the brain which was more pronounced in specific regions (ventral midbrain) than in others (isocortex). The loss of NeuN+ cells could either be due to a loss of neuronal identity, as described recently in the context of neuronal aging [75] and in the context of Alzheimer disease and related tauopathies [76], to a neurodegenerative process *per se* or to gliosis related to the aging process [77] (as we observe a slight increase of ORF1p-/NeuN- cells per mm^2). Interestingly, a region with a strong increase in ORF1p expression with aging (ventral midbrain) also had a significant loss of NeuN+ cells while a region with no change in ORF1p expression with aging (isocortex, frontal cortex) did not lose NeuN+ cells. However, further investigations

are necessary to validate a correlation and to investigate an underlying mechanism. An increase of ORF1p might have several direct or indirect consequences on a cell or here, on a neuron. As ORF1p is translated from a polycistronic LINE-1 RNA together with ORF2p, albeit in much higher amounts (the estimated ratio ORF1p to ORF2p is 240:1) [78], it can be expected that a LINE-1 ribonucleotide particles are formed and ORF2-dependent cell toxicity in form of genomic instability [16,19] and single-stranded cytoplasmic DNA triggered inflammation [25,26,72] might result. This has been shown in mouse dopaminergic neurons where oxidative stress induced LINE-1 causally contributed to neurodegeneration [16]. Neurodegeneration was partially prevented by anti-LINE-1 strategies among which NRTIs [16] and similar LINE-1 protein-dependent neuronal toxicity has been shown in drosophila [30,31] and the mouse cerebellum [32]. Recently, ORF1p has been evoked as a destabilizer of the nuclear envelope with negative consequences on nucleocytoplasmic transport and chromatin organization, independently on the known endonuclease or reverse transcriptase-dependent toxic properties of ORF2p [28].

In order to test whether an increase in LINE-1 is a feature of human brain aging, we turned to a unique RNA-seq dataset of human laser-captured dopaminergic neurons of 41 individuals ranging from 38 to 99 years [40]. In accordance with our focus on LINE-1 sequences which are full-length and coding, we developed a rationale to interrogate LINE-1 families with representatives that are coding (L1HS, L1PA2, multimappers; RepeatMasker) and to specifically investigate full-length LINE-1 elements that have intact open reading frames for ORF1p and ORF2p (unique reads; L1Basev2 [3]). Indeed, we find an increase in L1HS and L1PA2 elements in individuals >/=65y as well as an increase in specific full-length LINE-1 elements but only a trend for increase of all full-length LINE-1 in sum in the elderly. This analysis has technical limitations inherent to transcriptomic analysis of repeat elements especially as it is based on short-read sequences. Nevertheless, we tried to rule out several biases by demonstrating that mappability did not correlate with expression and that the expression of

intronic full-length LINE-1 elements is not correlated with the expression of their "hosting"

gene. Interestingly, dysregulated full-length LINE-1 elements in aged dopaminergic neurons

did not correspond to those identified in bladder cancer [79] indicating the intricate nature of this

expression across tissues and pathological conditions. Overall, a slight net sum increase of UID

transcripts/cell might be sufficient for the production of "above steady-state" levels ORF1p and

ORF2p. Further, a dissociation of LINE-1 transcript and protein levels in aging has been

observed recently in excitatory neurons of the mouse cortex. In the absence of transcriptional

changes of LINE-1, protein levels of ORF1p were increased [70].

We can only speculate about the reason for an increase in ORF1p in the aged brain. A

recent single-cell epigenome analysis of the mouse brain suggested a specific decay of

heterochromatin in excitatory neurons of the mouse brain with age which was paralleled by an

increase in ORF1p, albeit equally in excitatory and inhibitory neurons, again not indicating any

dependency of ORF1p regulation on the excitatory or inhibitory nature of neurons [70]. Chromatin

and particularly heterochromatin disorganization are a primary hallmark of aging [73] but other

repressive cellular pathways which control the LINE-1 life cycle might also fail with aging [12].

Another possibility is a loss of accessibility of repressive factors to the LINE-1 promoter or an

age-dependent decrease in their expression. Matrix correlation analysis of several known LINE-

1 regulators, both positive and negative, revealed possible regulators of young LINE-1

sequences in human dopaminergic neurons. Despite known and most probable cell-type

unspecific repressive factors like the heterochromatin binding protein CBX5/HP1 [44] or the DNA

repair proteins XRCC5 and XRCC6 [42], we identified the homeoprotein Engrailed as negatively

correlated with young LINE-1 elements including L1HS and L1PA2. Engrailed is an essential

protein for mouse dopaminergic neuronal survival [43] and binds, in its properties as a

transcription factor, to the promoter of LINE-1 [16]. As Engrailed is specifically expressed in

dopaminergic neurons in the ventral midbrain, our findings suggests that Engrailed controls

LINE-1 expression in human dopaminergic neurons as well and serves as an example for a

neuronal sub-type specific regulation of LINE-1.

The heterogenous, brain-wide presence of ORF1p expression at steady-state is

intriguing. In cancer cell lines or mouse spermatocytes, ORF1p interacts with several "host"

proteins, some if not most of which are related to the LINE-1 life cycle. However, a profile of

endogenous ORF1p interactors in the mouse brain might inform on possible other and organ-

specific functions besides its binding to the LINE-1 RNA in "cis" [62]. Among the total 424

potential interactors of endogenous ORF1p in the mouse brain, 38 partners had been previously

identified by mass spectrometry in human cancers, cancerous cell lines and mouse

spermatocytes [53,58–63] (TableS2). Further, GO term analysis contained expected categories like

"P-body", mRNA metabolism related categories and "ribonucleoprotein granule". We also

identified NXF1 as a protein partner of ORF1p, a protein found to interact with LINE-1 RNA

related to its nuclear export [80]. This suggests the conservation of key interactors probably

essential for completing or repressing the LINE-1 life cycle in both species, despite the

divergence of mouse and human ORF1p protein sequences [81]. Along these lines, several ORF1p

protein partners we identified might complete the list of post-transcriptional regulators

implicated in LINE-1 silencing. Recent work conducted on human cancerous cell lines has

demonstrated that MOV10 orchestrates the recruitment of DCP2 for LINE-1 RNA decapping

[64]. In our analysis, we identified DCP2 along with DCP1A, known to enhance the decapping

activity of DCP2 [82], and DCP1b, a pivotal component of the mRNA decapping complex [83].

Intriguingly, MOV10 was not detected in our mass spectrometry analysis, despite its established

role in recruiting DCP2 and forming a complex with L1-RNP to mediate LINE-1 RNA

decapping, as reported by Liu et al. However, we found two enhancers of mRNA decapping,

EDC3 and EDC4, both core components of P-bodies, a membrane-less organelle known to

contain L1-RNP [51]. Multiple ubiquitin-ligase proteins were found although not appearing as a

significantly enriched GO term. These results complete the picture of the post-transcriptional

and translational control of ORF1p and suggest that these mechanisms, despite a steady-state

expression, are operational in neurons. However, several neuron-specific interactors were

identified belonging to GO term categories "neuron projection" (75 proteins) and "neuronal cell

body" (5 proteins), again pointing to the neuron-predominant expression of ORF1p in the

mouse brain. Other interesting aspects were raised from this analysis. Among significantly

enriched GO terms, several were related to the cytoskeleton, the functional consequences of

which need to be determined in future studies. Our screen also identified PDE10A as an

interactor of ORF1p in the mouse brain, a PDE almost exclusively expressed in medium spiny

neurons of the striatum and a target for treatment of neurological diseases related to basal

ganglia function like Huntington's disease, schizophrenia and Tourette syndrome [84].

Interestingly, PDE10A inhibition is related to beta-catenin signaling, another GO term which

emerged from our screen [85]. Finally, we found components of RNA polymerase II and the

SWI/SNF complex as partners of ORF1p. This further indicates that ORF1p has access to the

nucleus in mouse brain neurons as described for other cells [86,87] and recently in human

dopaminergic neurons *in vitro* [28], implying that ORF1p potentially has access to chromatin.

These findings give rise to intriguing questions concerning the potential function of ORF1p as

ORF1p is widely distributed throughout the brain under normal physiological conditions and

interacts with a variety of proteins which might not directly relate to the LINE-1 life cycle.

Moreover, ORF1p exhibits a prominent neuronal presence, with some neurons expressing up

to eight times more ORF1p than others and neurons that do not express ORF1p at all. Future

loss-of-function studies should help to shed light on the necessity of ORF1p for neuronal

functions if they exist. Our data spurs the idea of a possible "physiological" function of ORF1p

as an integrative protein with exapted function in neuronal homeostasis and a loss of restriction

in the aged brain limiting LINE-1 expression to steady-state levels.

Materials & Methods

Animals

Swiss OF1 wild-type mice (Janvier) were housed on a 12h light/dark cycle with free access to water and food. Mice were sacrificed at 3-month or 16-month. Animal experiments were performed according to the EU directive 2010/63/EU.

Mouse tissue dissection and protein extraction

Tissues were extracted from 3-month-old and 16-month-old Swiss/OF1 mice. Briefly, the two hemispheres were separated in ice cold PBS -/-. For each mouse, one hemisphere was rinsed and fixed in 4% PFA for 1h followed by 24h of incubation in 30% sucrose and then washed for 10 min with PBS 1X 3 times. Hemispheres were kept at -20°C until being sliced on a freezing microtome (Epredia, HM 450) with a 20µm thickness. The other hemisphere was dissected in ice cold PBS -/- 1X and 6 brain regions were rinsed, cut in small pieces and dissociated separately using a large (21G) to small gauge (27G) needle in RIPA lysis buffer for 5 min. Lysates were kept on ice for 25 min, were sonicated for 15 min and supernatants were collected after a 30 min centrifugation at 4°C at 14 000 rpm. Proteins were quantified and Laemmli buffer was added before boiling for 10min at 95°C to be used for Western Blot.

Human Samples:

Cerebellum, frontal cortex and cingulate gyrus human samples were provided by Neuro-CEB biobank from a 78-year-old healthy male individual and conserved at -80°C.

Human Samples pulverization and protein extraction

We used the dry pulverizer Cryoprep (Covaris) for pulverization of tissue blocs. Each sample

was disposed in a liquid-nitrogen precooled Tissue-tube bag and dry cryo-pulverized with one

impact at the maximum level. The pulverized brain sample was then weighed and resuspended

in lysis buffer (mg/v) (0.32M sucrose, 5mM $CaCl_2$, 3mM $Mg(CH3COOH)_2$, 0.1mM EDTA,

10mM Tris-HCL pH8, 1mM DTT, 0.1% TritonX-100 and Protease Inhibitors), kept on ice for

30 min with gentle up-and-down pipetting until homogenization. We added 2X RIPA buffer

(v/v) to totals fractions for 30 min on ice. We then sonicated samples 2 times for 15 min.

AtlasSupernatants were collected after a 30 min centrifugation at 14 000 rpm at 4°C, proteins

were quantified and Laemmli buffer was added to be used for Western Blot. All samples were

boiled 10 min at 95°C to be used for Western Blot.

Western-Blot:

We used 1.5mm NuPAGE 4-12% Bis-Tris-Gel (Invitrogen™). Proteins samples were loaded

and gel migration was performed with NuPAGE™ MES SDS Running Buffer (Invitrogen™)

for 45 minutes at 200mV. Gels were transferred onto a methanol activated PVDF membrane

(Immobilon) in a buffer containing: Tris 25 mM, pH=8,3 and Glycine 192 mM, during 1h30 at

400 mA. Membranes were blocked 30 min with 5% milk in TBST (0,2% Tween 20, 150 mM

NaCl, 10 mM Tris pH:8). Primary antibodies were diluted in 5% milk in TBST, and membranes

were incubated o/n at 4 C°. After 3 x 10 min washing in TBST, membranes were incubated for

1h30 with the respective secondary antibodies diluted at a concentration of 1/2000 in 5% milk

TBST. Membranes were washed 3 x 10 min in TBST and were revealed by the LAS-4000

Fujifilm system using Clarity Western ECL Substrate (Bio Rad) or Maxi Clarity Western ECL

Substrate (Bio Rad).

Immunostaining:

Sagittal mouse brains slices were fixed for 10min in PFA 4% and rinsed 3 times for 10min in

PBS -/-. Slices were then incubated 20 min in glycine 100mM, washed 3 times for 5min in PBS

and immersed in 10mM citrate pH 6 at 62°C during 45min for antigen retrieval. Slices were

then immersed 3 times in PBS with Triton X-100 0.2% and incubated in blocking buffer for 1,5

h (PBS with Triton X-100 0.2% and FBS (10%) previously inactivated 20min at 56°C (Gibeco,

16141061). Primary antibodies (ORF1p antibody: abcam ab216324; NeuN antibody: GeneTex

GTX00837) were diluted (1/200 and 1/500 respectively) in blocking buffer and incubated with

slices overnight at 4°C and then washed 3 times for 10 min with PBS. Suitable secondary

antibodies and Hoechst (Invitrogen, 15586276) were incubated for 1,5h at 1/2000 in PBS with

inactivated FBS (10%) and washed 3 times 10 min in PBS. To quench tissue autofluorescence,

especially lipofuscin, TrueBlack Plus (Biotium) in PBS was used during 10min. Slices were

rinsed 3 times in PBS and mounted with Fluoromount (Invitrogen™). For human cingulate

gyrus stainings, the same protocol was performed, with the difference that a human ORF1p

antibody (Abcam 245249) was used. Mouse and human brain slices were imaged by the

Axioscan 7 Digital Slide Scanner (Zeiss) or a Spinning Disk W1 (Yogogawa).

Blocked peptide

The ORF1p antibody (abcam ab216324) was incubated 2h on a turning wheel with excess (4:1)

of mouse ORF1p recombinant protein as in [16] before the blocked antibody was used in the

above-described immunofluorescence protocol.

Quantification of confocal acquisitions

Analysis was performed with a custom-written plugin [88] developed for the Fiji software [89], using

Bio-Formats [90] and 3D Image Suite [91] libraries. Nuclei were detected using Hoechst channel

with the 2D-stitched version of Cellpose [92] (model = 'cyto', diameter = 30, flow threshold =

0.4, cell probability threshold = 0.0, stitching threshold = 0.75). Z-stack images were rescaled

to obtain 3D nuclei that are filtered by volume to avoid false positive detections. NeuN and

ORF1p+ cells were detected in their respective channel in the same manner as nuclei, but with

different Cellpose settings (model = 'cyto2', diameter = 40, flow threshold = 0.4, cell

probability threshold = 0.0, stitching threshold = 0.75). Then, each cell was associated with a

nucleus having at least half of its volume in contact with it. Cells without any associated nucleus

were filtered out. Each nucleus was thus labeled according to NeuN and/or ORF1p positivity.

ABBA Registration and Qupath analysis

We registered each sagittal brain section with the Allen Mouse Brain Atlas (CCFv3 [93]), using

the Aligning Big Brains & Atlases plugin [94] in Fiji. Registration brain regions and subregions

were imported into QuPath software [95] for downstream processing.

In each brain subregion, cell analysis was done with custom Groovy scripts [88] developed for

QuPath. In brief, Hoechst nuclei were detected with StarDist 2D [10], applying the DSB 2018

pretrained model with the following parameters: percentile normalization = [1 - 99], probability

threshold = 0.75, overlap threshold = 0.25. Cells in NeuN and ORF1p channels were detected

with Cellpose 2D (percentile normalization = [1 - 99], model = 'cyto2', diameter = 30, flow

threshold = 0.4, cell probability threshold = 0.0). Nuclei and cells were then filtered by area and

intensity mean in their respective channel, once again to avoid false positive detections.

Minimum intensity threshold was based on the channel background noise. This noise was

estimated for each subregion as the mean intensity of pixels not belonging to any nucleus or

cell detected in the corresponding channel. Finally, each cell was associated with a nucleus

having its centroid located inside the cell mask. Cells without any associated nucleus were

filtered out. Each cell containing a nucleus was thus identified as NeuN+ or NeuN- and ORF1p+

or ORF1p-. Intensity means values were normalized by subtracting the background noise

computed in the corresponding channel and subregion. As a last step, subregional results were

merged into regional ones and data were analyzed using the Pandas Python library [96].

FACS

Mouse brains were dissociated with Adult Brain Dissociation kit (Miltenyi Biotec, 130-107-

677) and incubated with the coupled antibody NeuN Alexa 647 (Abcam, ab190565) or the

control isotype IgG Alexa 647 (Abcam, ab199093). Stained cells were filtered a last time with

a 40μm filter before FACS sorting (FACS ARIA II). Neuronal and non-neuronal cells were

collected in RIPA for protein extraction in an appropriate volume in order to achieve equal

cell concentrations (10 000 cells/μl).

RNA-seq analysis

The RNA-seq dataset from Dong et al [40] was downloaded from dbGAP (phs001556.v1.p1) and

contains unstranded paired-end 50bp and 75bp reads from pooled laser-capture micro-dissected

dopaminergic neurons from human post-mortem brain (107 samples) from 93 individuals w/o

brain disease. RNA-seq had been done on total and linearly amplified RNA. We focused our

analysis on data obtained with 50bp reads, in order to avoid mappability bias, while still

regrouping all age categories (n=41; with ages ranging from 38 to 97 (mean age: 79.88 (SD

±12.07); n=6 </=65y; n=35 >65y; mean PMI: 7.07 (SD ±7.84), mean RIN: 7.09 (±0.94)).

Sequencing reads were aligned on the Human reference genome (hg38) using the STAR mapper

(v2.7.0a) 3 and two different sets of parameters. Genome-wide individual repeat quantification

was performed using uniquely mapped reads and the following STAR parameters: --

outFilterMultimapNmax 1 --alignEndsType EndToEnd --outFilterMismatchNmax 999 --

outFilterMismatchNoverLmax 0.06. Repeats class, family and name quantification was

performed using a random mapping procedure and the following parameters : --

outFilterMultimapNmax 5000 --outSAMmultNmax 1 --alignEndsType EndToEnd --

outFilterMismatchNmax 999 --outFilterMismatchNoverLmax 0.06 --outSAMprimaryFlag

OneBestScore   --outMultimapperOrder   Random.

Repeats annotations were downloaded from the UCSC Table Browser (repeatMasker database:

https://genome.ucsc.edu/cgi-bin/hgTables) and coordinates of LINE-1 full length and coding

elements were downloaded from the L1base database 2 (http://l1base.charite.de/l1base.php; [3])

selecting LINE-1 full length elements containing two predicted complete open reading frames

for ORF1 and ORF2 (UID= Unique IDentifier) from the LINE-1 database

(http://l1base.charite.de/l1base.php) and corrected genomic intervals with the repeat masker

annotation of the corresponding genomic locus. Repeat quantification from the aligned data

was done using a gtf file composed of all genes (Gencode v29) and all individual repeat

elements. This strategy was used to avoid overestimation of repeat elements due to overlaps

with expressed genes. For individual repeat quantification of the full length L1 elements

(L1base), we therefore used a gtf of all genes and all L1base entries, and ran the FeatureCounts

tool [97] with the following parameters: -g gene_id -s 0 -p. In the context of the family-based

analysis, we used a gtf with all genes and all annotated repeats elements and ran FeatureCounts

with -g gene_family -s 0 -p -M. Before DeSeq2 analysis, we remove all genes and repeat

elements with less than 10 reads in a minimum of n individuals, n being the number of

individuals in the condition containing the fewest individuals ("young" condition: n=6, 38-65y,

mean 57.5 years). We use the same conditions with genes and UIDs with less than 3 reads in a

minimum of n individuals. Finally, we calculated the scaling factors using DeSeq2 on all genes

+ all repeat elements or all gene + UID according to the quantification method and then applied

these scaling factors to the corresponding counts tables.

In order to test for the mappability of each UID (= full-length and coding LINE-1), we extracted

the bed track « main on human:umap50 (genome hg38) from the UCSC genome browser (≈

7Mio regions) directly into Galaxy (usegalaxy.org) and joined genomic intervals with a

minimum overlap of 45bp of this dataset with a dataset containing the annotation of UIDs

extracted from L1Basev2 [3] corrected in length with repeat masker and completed with

information on whether the UID is intra- or intergenic and, if intragenic, in which gene

(NM_ID, chr, strand, start, end, gene length, number of exons, gene symbol) the fl-LINE-1 is

located, which resulted in 1266 regions. We then used the "group on data and group by"

function in Galaxy and counted the number of overlapping 50kmers with all 146 UIDs

(=mappability score). Correlation analysis (non-parametric Spearman) was then done between

the mappability score and the normalized read counts.

Immpunoprecipitation of ORF1p from the mouse brain

For immunoprecipitation, we used ORF1p (abcam, ab245122) and IgG rabbit (abcam,

ab172730) antibodies. The antibodies were coupled to magnetic beads using the Dynabeads®

Antibody Coupling Kit (Invitogen, 14311D) according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

We used 5µg of antibody for 1 mg of beads and used 1.5mg of beads for IP. Individual mouse

brain lysates (n=5), homogenized using dounce and sonicated, were incubated with ORF1p or

IgG-control coupled beads and a small fraction was kept as input. Each of these two tubes

containing coupled beads and brain lysates were diluted in 5 ml buffer (10 mM Tris HCl, 150

mM NaCl, protease inhibitor). The samples were then incubated overnight on a wheel at 4°C.

Samples were then washed 3 times with 1 ml buffer (10 mM Tris HCl pH 8, 150 mM NaCl)

using a magnet and then resuspended in the same buffer. The samples were boiled in Laemmli

buffer (95°C, 10 min) and 20 µl of each sample were deposited on a 4-12% Nupage gel

(Invitrogen, NP0336) to be revealed by WB. For samples used in Mass Spectrometry study,

beads were washed with buffer (10 mM Tris HCl pH 8, 150 mM NaCl) using a magnet. After

3 washes with 1ml buffer the beads were washed twice with 100 µL of 25 mM NH4HCO3

(ABC buffer). Finally, beads were resuspended in 100 µl of 25mM ABC buffer and digested

by adding 0.20 µg of trypsine/LysC (Promega) for 1 hour at 37 °C. A second round of digestion

was applied simultaneously on the beads by adding 100 µL of 25 mM ABC buffer and to the

previous digest by adding 0.20 µg of trypsin/LysC for 1 hour at 37 °C. Samples were then

loaded into homemade C18 StageTips packed by stacking three AttractSPE® disk (#SPE-

Disks-Bio-C18-100.47.20 Affinisep) into a 200 µL micropipette tip for desalting. Peptides were

eluted using a ratio of 40:60 CH3CN:H2O + 0.1% formic acid and vacuum concentrated to

dryness with a SpeedVac device. Peptides were reconstituted in 10 µL of injection buffer in

0.3% trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) before liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-

MS/MS) analysis.

Mass Spectrometry

Online chromatography was performed with an RSLCnano system (Ultimate 3000, Thermo

Scientific) coupled to a Q Exactive HF-X with a Nanospay Flex ion source (Thermo Scientific).

Peptides were first trapped on a C18 column (75 µm inner diameter × 2 cm; nanoViper Acclaim

PepMapTM 100, Thermo Scientific) with buffer A (2/98 MeCN/H2O in 0.1% formic acid) at

a flow rate of 2.5 µL/min over 4 min. Separation was then performed on a 50 cm x 75 µm C18

column (nanoViper Acclaim PepMapTM RSLC, 2 µm, 100Å, Thermo Scientific) regulated to

a temperature of 50°C with a linear gradient of 2% to 30% buffer B (100% MeCN in 0.1%

formic acid) at a flow rate of 300 nL/min over 91 min. MS full scans were performed in the

ultrahigh-field Orbitrap mass analyzer in ranges m/z 375–1500 with a resolution of 120 000 at

m/z 200. The top 20 intense ions were subjected to Orbitrap for further fragmentation via high

energy collision dissociation (HCD) activation and a resolution of 15 000 with the intensity

threshold kept at 1.3×105. We selected ions with charge state from 2+ to 6+ for screening.

Normalized collision energy (NCE) was set at 27 and the dynamic exclusion of 40s. For

identification, the data were searched against the Mus Musculus (UP000000589_10090

012019) Uniprot database using Sequest HT through proteome discoverer (version 2.4).

Enzyme specificity was set to trypsin and a maximum of two-missed cleavage sites were

allowed. Oxidized methionine, Met-loss, Met-loss-Acetyl and N-terminal acetylation were set

as variable modifications. Maximum allowed mass deviation was set to 10 ppm for

monoisotopic precursor ions and 0.02 Da for MS/MS peaks. The resulting files were further

processed using myProMS97 v3.10.0. FDR calculation used Percolator and was set to 1% at

the peptide level for the whole study. The label free quantification was performed by peptide

Extracted Ion Chromatograms (XICs), reextracted by conditions and computed with

MassChroQ version 2.2.21 [98]. For protein quantification, XICs from proteotypic peptides

shared between compared conditions (TopN matching) with missed cleavages were used.

Median and scale normalization at peptide level was applied on the total signal to correct the

XICs for each biological replicate (n=5). To estimate the significance of the change in protein

abundance, a linear model (adjusted on peptides and biological replicates) was performed, and

p-values were adjusted using the Benjamini–Hochberg FDR procedure. Proteins with at least

three peptides, identified in each biological replicates of ORF1p condition, a 10-fold enrichment

and an adjusted p-value ≤ 0.05 were considered significantly enriched in sample comparisons.

Unique proteins were considered with at least three peptides in all replicates. Protein selected

with these criteria were used for Gene Ontology enrichment analysis and string network

analysis.

The mass spectrometry proteomics data have been deposited to the ProteomeXchange Consorti-

um (http://proteomecentral.proteomexchange.org) via the PRIDE partner repository [99] with the

dataset identifier PXD047160.

GO term and STRING network analysis

Gene Ontology analysis was performed using GO PANTHER (PANTHER: Making genome-

scale phylogenetics accessible to allPaul D. Thomas, Dustin Albou and Huaiyu MiProtein

Society. 2022;31(1):8-22. doi:10.1002/pro.4218) and String network physical interactions were

retrieved using the STRING database v11.5 (https://string-db.org/) and then implemented in

Cytoscape software [100].

Statistical analyses

In column comparisons, data in each column were tested for normality using two normality and

lognormality tests (Shapiro-Wilk test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test). Data which passed the

normality tests were analyzed subsequently by a parametric test, data which did not pass the

normality tests were analyzed by a non-parametric statistical test as indicated in the figure

legends. The significance threshold was defined as $p < 0.05$. Statistical analyses were done with

PRISM software (v10).

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Contributions

J.F. and R.L.J. conceived the project. T.B. carried out most of the experimental work and analyzed the data. T.B., S.S. and J.F. analyzed the transcriptomic data. O.M.B. and S.S contributed to the experimental work and performed the FACS analysis. T.B. and J.F. wrote the manuscript. T.B., P.M. and H.M. developed the image analysis pipeline. B.L. carried out the MS experimental work and D.L. supervised MS and performed data analysis with T.B.. Read alignment, quality control and mapping were done by N.S..

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

     Figure Legends

     Figure 1: Widespread and heterogenous expression of ORF1p protein in the mouse brain

     (A) Schematic representation of the unbiased cell detection pipeline on large scale and confocal

     images. Immunofluorescent images on sagittal mouse brain slices were either acquired on a

     digital pathology slide-scanner (DNA stain: Hoechst, neuronal marker; NeuN, protein of

     interest: ORF1p). Pyramidal images aquired with the slide scanner were then aligned with the

     hierarchical anatomical annotation of the Allen Brain Atlas using ABBA. Once the regions

     defined, a deep-learning based detection of cell nuclei (Hoechst staining, Stardist) and cell

     cytoplasm (NeuN staining, Cellpose) was performed on each sub-region of the atlas. Objects

     were filtered according to the background intensity measured in each sub-region for each

     channel (NeuN and ORF1p). The identity and intensity measures were analyzed at the regional

     and whole brain level. In parallel, confocal images (multiple z-stacks) of two selected regions

     (frontal cortex and ventral midbrain) were also acquired and identity and intensity were

     quantified using Cellpose and Stardist.

     (B) Widespread and heterogenous expression of the LINE-1 encoded protein ORF1p in the

     mouse brain. Representative image of ORF1p immunostaining (orange) of a sagittal section of

     the brain of a young (three months-old) mouse acquired on a slide scanner. Scale bar = 1mm.

     (1-10) Representative images of immunostainings showing ORF1p expression (orange) in 10

     different regions of the mouse brain acquired on a confocal microscope. Nuclei are represented

     in blue (Hoechst), scale bar = 50µm. (1) Isocortex, (2) Hippocampus, (3) Striatum dorsal, (4)

     Thalamus, (5) Midbrain motor, (6) Pallidum, (7) Hypothalamus, (8) Substantia nigra pars

     compacta, (9) Hindbrain, (10) Cerebellum.

     (C) ORF1p expression profile in the mouse brain. The entire mouse brain with the exception of

     the olfactory bulb and the cerebellum were analyzed according to the pipeline on large-scale

images described in (A). Bar plot showing the total number of ORF1p+ cells per mm² in the mouse brain. Data is represented as mean ±SEM, n=4 mice (top). Bar plot indicating the proportion of ORF1p+ cells compared to all cells detected. Data is represented as mean ±SEM, n=4 mice, 202001 total cells analyzed (middle). Scatter plot showing the mean intensity of ORF1p per ORF1p+ cell. Data is represented as mean ±SD, n=4 mice, 40999 ORF1p+ cells analyzed (bottom).

(D-F) ORF1p expression profile (density, proportion and expression) in defined anatomical regions of the mouse brain. Nine anatomical regions as defined by the Allen Brain Atlas and mapped onto sagittal brain slices with ABBA were analyzed using the pipeline on large scale images described in (A). (D) ORF1p+ cell density in 9 different regions. Bar plot showing the number of ORF1p+ cells per mm². Data is represented as mean ±SEM; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; adjusted p-value, one-way ANOVA followed by a Benjamin-Hochberg test. (E) Proportion of ORF1p positive cells in 9 different regions. Bar plot showing the proportion of ORF1p+ cells among all cells detected per region. Data is represented as mean ±SEM. (F) Mean ORF1p expression per cell in 9 different regions. plot showing the mean intensity of ORF1p signal per ORF1p+ cell in 9 different regions. Data is represented as mean ±SD. The number of analyzed cells per region is indicated in the figure. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; ****p<0.0001; adjusted p-value, nested one-way ANOVA followed by Sidak' multiple comparison test.

(G) ORF1p expression in the frontal cortex and ventral midbrain. Confocal images with multiple z-stacks were analyzed using Cellpose and Stardist. Dot plot representing the mean expression of ORF1p per ORF1p+ cells. Individual (four three-month-old Swiss/ OF1) mice are represented each by a different color, the scattered line represents the median. ****p<0.0001, nested one-way ANOVA. Total cells analyzed = 4645.

(H-I) ORF1p expression in the frontal cortex and the ventral midbrain. (H) Western blots showing ORF1p (top) and actin expression (bottom) in four individual mice per region which

were quantified in (I) using actin as a reference control. The signal intensity is plotted as the

fold change of ORF1p expression in the ventral midbrain to ORF1p expression in the frontal

cortex. *$p<0.05$ ob; two-sided, unpaired student's-test.

Figure 2: ORF1p is predominantly expressed in neurons in the mouse brain

(A) ORF1p expression is absent in the white matter (corpus callosum) and predominantly

expressed in neurons. Proportion of ORF1p+/NeuN+, ORF1p+/NeuN-, ORF1p-/NeuN+ and

ORF1p-/NeuN- cells in the white matter (corpus callosum) and the grey matter (left) and in

nine different regions (right) analyzed by the cell detection pipeline on large scale images

presented in *Figure1A*. Exact values can be found in *Suppl. Table 1*.

(B) Representative confocal microscopy images showing ORF1p (red) and NeuN expression

(green) in two different regions of the mouse brain. The bottom images show the merge of the

two stainings, an overlap of both markers is represented in orange. z-projections; scalebar =

25μm

(C) ORF1p is predominantly expressed in neurons. Proportion of ORF1p+/NeuN+,

ORF1p+/NeuN+, ORF1p+/NeuN-, ORF1p-/NeuN+ and ORF1p-/NeuN- cells, ****$p<0.0001$;

calculated using chi-square test on the cell number of the four different cell-types analyzed by

confocal microscopy on multiple z-stacks (p2).

(D) Proportion of ORF1p+ cells identified as NeuN+ or NeuN- in two different regions,

analyzed by confocal microscopy on multiple z-stacks (p2). ns: non-significant; chi-square test,

n=4 mice.

(E) Proportion of neurons (NeuN+) expressing ORF1p in different regions of the mouse brain

as quantified using the cell detection pipeline on large scale images (p1).

(F) Proportion of neurons expressing ORF1p in the frontal cortex and ventral midbrain

quantified on confocal images using confocal approach. ns: non-significant; chi-square test on

the cell number of the different cell-types analyzed; n=4 mice, data is represented as mean ±

SEM.

(G) ORF1p does not colocalize with glial or microglial cell markers. Representative confocal

microscopy images showing ORF1p staining (red) and three different glial cell (GFAP, Sox9,

S100b) or microglial (Iba1) markers (white). z-projections, scalebar = 50µm.

(H) Representative acquisition showing NeuN positives cells (green) In grey (right) but not in

white matter (left) in a cingular gyrus in healthy human brain acquire on slide scanner; scale

bar = 400µm (left) and zoom on grey matter with a confocale showing ORF1p in red;

representative image scale bar = 5µm (right).

(I-J) Isolation of neuronal cells by FACS confirms predominant neuronal expression of ORF1p.

(I) Neuronal (NeuN+) cells isolated by fluorescent activated cell sorting (FACS). Dot plots

showing autofluorescence versus an appropriate control antibody (IgG rabbit 647; left) and an

antibody against NeuN (name of the AB 657, right). The P4 window represents isolated NeuN+

cells (pink) and the P5 fraction NeuN- cells (orange) containing the same number of cells as

sorted in P4 for comparison, others NeuN- are represented in blue. (J) Western blot. ORF1p

expression (top), in NeuN- and NeuN+ FACS-sorted cells stemming from I.

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Figure 3: ORF1p expression is increased throughout the whole mouse brain in the context

of aging

(A) Proportion of ORF1p+/NeuN+, ORF1p+/NeuN+, ORF1p+/NeuN-, ORF1p-/NeuN+ and

ORF1p-/NeuN- cell-type in the whole brain (left) and the different analyzed regions (right) of

young (three-month aged, n=4) and aged (16-month-old, n=4) mice using the cell detection

pipeline on large scale images presented in Figure 1A (p1), data is represented as mean ± SEM.

(B) Proportion of ORF1p+/NeuN+, ORF1p+/NeuN+, ORF1p+/NeuN-, ORF1p-/NeuN+ and

ORF1p-/NeuN- cell-type in two different regions of young and aged mice, analyzed on multiple

z-stack confocal images (p2). ns: non-significant; *p<0.05 calculated using two-way ANOVA

with sidak's multiple comparisons test on the cell number of the different cell-types analyzed;

data   is   represented   as   mean   ±   SEM.

(C) ORF1p mean expression per ORF1p+ cell in the brain analyzed on large-scale images (p1).

Plot showing the ORF1p mean expression per ORF1p+ cell in young (n=4) and aged (n=4)

mice in the whole brain (except cerebellum and olfactory bulb). 74985 total cells were analyzed;

* p<0.05, two-way ANOVA with sidak's multiple comparisons; data is represented as mean ±

SEM.

(D) Frequency distribution of ORF1p mean intensity in ORF1p+ cells. ***p<0.001,

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

(E) Frequency distribution of Hoechst mean intensity in the nuclei of ORF1p+ cells. ns: non-

significant, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

(F) Mean ORF1p expression per ORF1p+ cell in nine different anatomical regions. Plot

showing the ORF1p mean expression per ORF1p positive cell (n=74985). Adjusted p-value are

represented, two-tailed nested t-test followed by a Benjamin, Krieger and Yukutieli test; n=4

young and n=4 aged mice per region, data is represented as mean ± SEM.

(G) Color-coded representation of fold-changes of ORF1p expression changes with aging.

Represented is the fold-change in percent (aged vs young) of the "mean of the mean" ORF1p

expression per ORF1p+ cell quantified mapped onto the nine different regions analyzed as

shown in (F).

(H) ORF1p expression is increased in the ventral midbrain of aged mice. Dot plot representing

ORF1p expression in two different regions of young and aged mice analyzed on confocal

images with multiple z-stacks; total cells analyzed = 8381 ns: non-significant *p<0.05, two-

tailed one-way ANOVA; dashed lines represent the medians.

(I) Representative confocal microscopy acquisition showing increased ORF1p expression (red) in the ventral midbrain region of aged mice (one z plan is shown). Cell nuclei are shown in blue (Hoechst staining). Scalebar = 50μm.

Figure 4: Young LINE-1 elements are increased in aged human dopaminergic neurons

TE transcript expression in RNA-seq data of laser-captured micro-dissected post-mortem human dopaminergic neurons of brain-healthy individuals was analyzed using RepeatMasker (multimappers) or the L1Base (unique reads).

(A) Volcano plot of differential analysis of LINE-1 expression using DESeq2 comparing young (</=65y, n=6) or aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons at the "name" level of RepeatMasker. Young LINE-1 elements, including the two families L1HS and L1PA2 that have coding copies, are highlighted in red.

(B) Scatter plots of normalized read counts ("name" level) of the young L1HS and L1PA2 families as well as the human endogenous virus family HERVK-int, another TE family with coding potential comparing young (</=65y, n=6) or aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons. Mann-Whitney test, p<0.05.

(C) Volcano plot of differential expression analysis of TE expression using DEseq2 comparing young (</=65y, n=6) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons at the locus-level of specific full-length LINE-1 elements (140 of 146 "UID's" as annotated in L1Base; threshold >3 reads in at least 6 individuals).

(D) Pairwise comparison of the expression of 140 out of 146 full-length LINE-1 elements comparing young (</=65y, n=6) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons. Wilcoxon matched signed rank test, p<0.0001 (left panel).

(E) The sum of read counts of all UIDs per individual were plotted comparing young (</=65y, n=6) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons.

(F-G) Dysregulated locus-specific full-length LINE-1 elements (UID-68 and UID-129) are

plotted as scatter plots comparing young (</=65y, n=6) and aged (>65y, n=35) human

dopaminergic neurons. (F) UID-68 is located adjacent to the genes CLEC5A and OR9A4 (left).

Spearman correlation analysis of the expression of UID-68 and CLEC5A (middle) or OR9A4

(right) in young (</=65y, n=6, black dots) or aged (>65y, n=35, red squares) human

dopaminergic neurons. (G) UID-129 is intergenic.

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Figure 5: Potential regulators of LINE-1 expression in human dopaminergic neurons

Correlation of the expression of evolutionary related and distant LINE-1 elements with known

regulators in human dopaminergic neurons

(A) Spearman correlation of evolutionary close (L1HS, L1PA2-17) and distant LINE-1 (L1PB

and L1MA5) as well as HERV elements with coding potential (HERV-Kint, HERV-Fc1,

HERV-Fc2 and HERV-H-int) with known regulators of their expression. HERV-W and

TREX1 did not pass the normalized read count threshold of >3 reads in >6 individuals.

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Figure 6: Endogenous ORF1p interactors in the mouse brain

Immunoprecipitation (IP) of endogenous ORF1p from the mouse brain. WB against ORF1p

showing ORF1p enrichment after IP but no signal in the IgG control. Five independent samples

were then prepared for proteomic analysis by mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS).

(B) GO slim enrichment analysis of proteins identified as endogenous ORF1p protein partners

in the mouse brain by LC/MS-MS. ORF1p-immunoprecipitated proteins were categorized into

GO slim terms. The nine GO slim term with the highest fold-change are plotted. Fold

enrichment is depicted on the upper axis and displayed as bars, the FDR value appears on the

lower axis and is represented by the black points. BP: Biological Process, CC: Cellular

Component,   MF: Molecular   Function.

(C) Venn diagram showing common interactors (purple) between interactors of endogenous

ORF1p in the mouse brain identified in this study (red) and known (published) interactors of

ORF1p (blue). Statistical significance of the overlap between the two groups of proteins was

tested by an overrepresentation test (http://nemates.org/MA/progs/overlap_stats.html).

(D) ORF1p associates with the SWI/SNF complex (red), RNA pol II complex (orange) and

interactors belonging to GO terms related to neuronal cell body & neuron projection (green).

Known interactors previously published [53,58–63] are indicated with a purple ring. STRING

network of physical interactions where nodes represent proteins partners identified in (A) and

edges thickness represents the strength of shared physical complexes. Only proteins sharing

physical interactions were represented.

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1109 **Supplementary Figures**

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Suppl Figure 1

(A) Selective recognition of ORF1p antibody. IHC showing ORF1p positives cells in sagittal

mouse brain slice (left) and abolition of the signal when blocking the antibody with purified

ORF1p (right).

(B) ORF1p is expressed in six different brain regions in the mouse.

Brain regions were micro-dissected from a three-month old mouse brain. Western blot showing

ORF1p expression in 6 brain regions. ORF1p (Top), Actin (bottom).

1118

Suppl Figure 2

(A) ORF1p cell identity. Proportion of ORF1p+ cells identified as NeuN+ (black) or NeuN-

(grey), in the whole brain (left) and in 9 different regions analyzed (right) using the cell

detection pipeline on large scale images presented in Figure 1A; data is represented as mean ±

SEM, n=4 mice.

(B) Proportion of neurons in the frontal cortex and ventral midbrain quantified using confocal

approach. *p<0.05, chi-square test on the cell number of the different cell-types analyzed; n=4

mice, data is represented as mean ± SEM.

1127

Suppl Figure 3

(A) Proportion of ORF1p+ cells being neuronal in the ventral midbrain comparing young and

aged mice as quantified using confocal approach. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test; data is

represented as mean ± SEM.

(B) Proportion of neurons expressing ORF1p in the ventral midbrain comparing young and

aged mice as quantified using confocal approach. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test; data is

represented as mean ± SEM.

(C) Proportion of neurons in the ventral midbrain comparing young and aged mice as quantified

using confocal approach. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test; data is represented as mean ± SEM.

1137

Suppl Fig4

(A-B) Comparison of the expression of dopaminergic markers tyrosine hydroxylase (TH, A)

and LMX1B (B) between young (</=65y, n=6)) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic

neurons. Mann Whitney test.

(C, E) Volcano plot of differential expression analysis of TE expression using DEseq2

comparing young (</=65y, n=6) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons at the

"class" (C) and "family" (E) level of RepeatMasker.

(D) Scatter plot comparing the expression of LINE at the "class" level between young (</=65y,

n=6)) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons. Mann Whitney test.

(F) Scatter plot comparing the expression of LINE and Alu at the "family" level between young

(</=65y, n=6)) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons. Mann Whitney test.

(G) Scatter plot comparing the expression of HERVH-int, HERV-Fc1 and two non-coding,

non-autonomous but active TEs in the human genome, AluYa5 and SVA-F at the "name" level

between young (</=65y, n=6)) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons. Mann

Whitney test.

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Suppl Fig5

(A-C) Correlation analyses of L1HS expression with Engrailed 1 (EN1, A, Spearman r=-0.43,

p=0.002), CBX5/HP1 (B, Spearman r=-0.35, p=0.01) and XRCC6 expression (C, Spearman r=

-0.394, p=0.005). Normalized read counts are plotted. Black dots correspond to young

individuals (</=65y), red dots correspond to aged individuals (>65y).

(D-G) Scatter plots comparing the expression of EN1, CBX5/HP1, XRCC5 and XRCC6

between young (</=65y, n=6)) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons. Student's

t-test (EN1) or Mann Whitney test (HP1, XRCC5/6).

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Suppl Fig6

(A) Correlation of mappability (UMAP hit counts over UID, see methods) and UID expression

(normalized read counts). Spearman correlation.

(B-D) *In silico* analysis of annotated full-length LINE-1 elements as in L1Basev2 (human

reference genome hg38). (B) Percentage of L1HS and L1PA2 elements among the 146 full-

length elements (UID1-146). (C) Presence (blue, with gene symbol) or absence (white) of a

"hosting" gene among the 146b annotated full-length LINE-1 in the human reference genome

(D) Percentage of full-length LINE-1 elements located inside or outside a gene.

(E) Mean expression of all 146 full-length LINE-1 elements in dopaminergic neurons of all

individuals </=65y.

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Suppl Fig7

(A-C) Dysregulated locus-specific full-length LINE-1 elements are plotted as scatter plots

comparing young (</=65y, n=6) and aged (>65y, n=35) human dopaminergic neurons. (A)

UID-37 is located in an intron of the gene HPSE2 (left). Spearman correlation analysis of the

expression of UID-37 and HPSE2 in young (</=65y, n=6, black dots) and aged (>65y, n=35,

red squares) human dopaminergic neurons. (B) UID-127 is located within the 6th intron of the

non-coding RNA LINC00598 (left). Spearman correlation analysis of the expression of UID-

127 and LINC00598 in young (</=65y, n=6, black dots) and aged (>65y, n=35, red squares)

human dopaminergic neurons. (C) UID-137 is intergenic.

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1185 **References**

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Figure 1:

1:Isocortex 2:Hippocampus 3:Striatum dorsal 4:Thalamus 5:Midbrain motor 6:Pallidum 7:Hypothalamus 8:Substantia nigra 9:Hindbrain 10:Cerebellum

Figure 2:

Figure 3:

Figure 4:

Figure 5:

Figure 6:

Suppl Figure 1:

A

B

Suppl Figure 2:

A

B

Suppl Figure 3:

Suppl Figure 4:

Suppl Figure 5:

Suppl Figure 6:

Suppl Figure 7:

A

UID-37
(HPSE2)

B

UID-127
(LINC00598)

C

UID-137
(intergenic)