Genetic integration of the stress response

T.M. Houslay*[1,2], R.L. Earley[3], S.J. White[1,4], W. Lammers[1], A.J. Grimmer[1], L.M. Travers[1,5], E.L. Johnson[3,6], A.J. Young[1] and A.J. Wilson[1]

* Corresponding author: houslay@gmail.com

[1] Centre for Ecology and Conservation, University of Exeter (Penryn Campus), Cornwall, TR10 9FE, UK.

[2] Current address: Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, Downing Street, Cambridge, CB2 3EJ, UK.

[3] Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alabama, Biology Building 211-213, Box 870344, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487, USA.

[4] Current address: Department of Ecology and Genetics, Center for Evolutionary Biology, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden.

[5] Current address: School of Biological Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 7TJ, UK.

[6] Current address: Southern Resesarch, 2000 Ninth Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205, USA.

Abstract

The stress response is a product of selection for an integrated suite of behavioural and physiological traits that facilitate coping with acute stressors. As such, genetic variation in the stress response is expected to reflect genetic variation in, and genetic covariation among, its behavioural and physiological components. Such genetic integration among stress response components has yet to be formally demonstrated using multivariate quantitative genetics, despite its profound implications for optimising human and animal health and understanding the responses of wild populations to natural and anthropogenic stressors. Here we use a laboratory population of wild-derived Trinidadian guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*) to determine levels of genetic variation in behavioural and physiological components of the acute stress response, and to establish whether such variation is integrated into a single major axis of genetic (co)variation. First, using a novel method to characterise behavioural components of the stress response from a widely used Open Field Trial paradigm, we find genetic variation in, and genetic covariation among, behavioural parameters that characterise movement patterns under stress. Second, we find a strong genetic component to variation in both the endocrine response to a confinement stressor and the rate at which this response attenuates following repeated exposures to the stressor. Finally, we show that these behavioural and physiological components of the stress response align on a major axis of genetic (co)variation as predicted, suggesting correlational selection in the past has led to genetic integration. This genetic integration could either facilitate or constrain future responses to selection, depending upon the extent to which the direction of selection aligns with this major axis of genetic covariation among stress response traits. This genetic integration also suggests that, while stress-related disease typically arises from physiological stress responses, selection on the genetically correlated behavioural responses could offer a viable non-invasive route to the genetic improvement of health and welfare in captive animal populations.

Introduction

Stress responses are comprised of physiological and behavioural traits that enable individuals to cope with adverse environmental conditions (Romero 2004; Øverli et al. 2007; McEwen & Wingfield 2010). Although exposure to such stressors tends to negatively impact organismal performance, populations harbour considerable variation in stress response traits (Korte et al. 2005; Koolhaas et al. 2007, 2010), such that some individuals may be better at coping with adversity than others. This variation has immediate implications for understanding and predicting susceptibility to stress-related disease in humans and animals (Barton & Iwama 1991; Koolhaas et al. 1999; McEwen & Wingfield 2003; Romero 2004; Koolhaas 2008), and for improving animal welfare (e.g., in livestock production; Broom & Johnson 1993; von Borell 1995; Möstl & Palme 2002). Among-individual differences in stress responses are likely underpinned by genetic variation (Koolhaas et al. 1999, 2007), enabling a response to selection. This is vital for artificial selection regimes in non-wild populations (Mignon-Grasteau et al. 2005). In addition, differences in stress response are expected to be linked directly to fitness variation (Wingfield 2003; Koolhaas 2008), and should therefore be an important target of natural selection. The evolutionary dynamics of the stress response will therefore impact the resilience of wild populations to environmental stressors, whether natural (e.g. predation risk; Clinchy, Sheriff & Zanette 2013) or anthropogenic (Tarlow & Blumstein 2007; Busch & Hayward 2009; Angelier & Wingfield 2012).

Selection – whether natural or artificial – does not act on single traits in isolation, but rather on multivariate phenotypes (Lande & Arnold 1983; Blows 2007). Glucocorticoid (GC) levels are often used as univariate proxies for the physiological stress response (McEwen & Wingfield 2003; Korte et al. 2005). However, when coping with acute stressors, an individual's first line of defence against a sudden threat is typically a behavioural one (Moberg 2000). For instance, the well-known 'fight-or-flight' response occurs rapidly, with subsequent GC release then helping to mediate

physiological (and further behavioural) responses to acute stressors (Wingfield *et al.*

1998; Wingfield & Kitaysky 2002). The mechanisms that link GCs with the expression of

numerous traits are well established (Sopinka *et al.* 2015; Crossin *et al.* 2016), but if past

selection has favoured particular combinations of trait values, then genetic integration

of behavioural and physiological stress response traits should also be apparent

(McGlothlin & Ketterson 2008; Ketterson, Atwell & McGlothlin 2009; Cox, McGlothlin &

Bonier 2016). The premise that the physiological and behavioural components of the

stress response will be tightly integrated is pervasive in the literature, as encapsulated

in the 'stress coping style' model that predicts an axis of variation from 'reactive'

(behavioural immobility coupled with low endocrine reactivity) to 'proactive'

(behavioural avoidance and high endocrine reactivity) styles of stress response

(Koolhaas *et al.* 1999; Øverli *et al.* 2007). However, with respect to genetic integration,

there is a relative paucity of supporting empirical work.

To date, the best evidence for genetic integration of behavioural and

physiological stress response traits comes from artificial selection studies on

domesticated animal populations. In rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), successful

selection on stress-induced plasma cortisol levels revealed heritable variation in stress

physiology (Pottinger and Carrick, 1999), while subsequent comparison of high-

responding and low-responding selection lines identified correlated changes in stress-

related behaviour (Øverli *et al.* 2001, 2002; Øverli, Winberg & Pottinger 2005; Pottinger

& Carrick 2001; Schjolden *et al.* 2005; Ruiz-Gomez *et al.* 2011). However, some results

lack consistency and/or appear highly context-dependent: low-responding lines showed

more pronounced metabolic stress response under confinement relative to high-

responding (Trenzado, Carrick & Pottinger 2003); boldness was not linked to stress-

responsiveness under standardised testing procedures (Thomson *et al.* 2011); and

behavioural components only of stress coping style were modified by an environmental

change (Ruiz-Gomez *et al.* 2008). Artificial selection on stress-related GC levels has also

produced correlated stress-related behavioural responses (and/or vice versa) in

Japanese quail (*Coturnix japonica*; Hazard et al., 2008b; Hazard et al., 2008a; Jones et al.,

1994) and house mice (*Mus musculus domesticus*; Veenema et al., 2003a; Veenema et al.,

2003b). In the great tit (*Parus major)*, there is evidence for cortisol levels evolving in

response to selection on behavioural 'personality' traits in the great tit (Carere *et al.*

2003; Stöwe *et al.* 2010; Baugh *et al.* 2012), and this association has also been shown at

the phenotypic level in the wild (Baugh *et al.* 2013).

While selection studies provide one useful strategy to test for genetic

integration, an alternative approach is to directly estimate the genetic covariance matrix

(**G**) among stress-related traits in a population. Selection over long time periods for

particular trait combinations is expected to result in tight correlation structure among

those traits being evident in G (Ketterson *et al.* 2009). **G** has been widely used to

scrutinise genetic integration among sets of traits describing behaviour (Oswald, Singer

& Robison 2013), male attractiveness to females (Blows, Chenoweth & Hine 2004; Hine,

Chenoweth & Blows 2004; Hunt *et al.* 2007), and (most commonly) morphology

(following, e.g., Cheverud 1982). Here, we use a lab-based pedigreed population of wild-

derived Trinidadian guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*) to estimate the genetic covariance

matrix **G** for behavioural and physiological components of the acute stress response, in

order to determine whether (i) these components are genetically integrated into a single

major axis of genetic (co)variation, and (ii) the make-up and orientation of this axis

conforms with the expectations of the stress coping style model (Koolhaas *et al.* 2010;

Boulton *et al.* 2015).

The population of guppies studied here is derived from wild individuals sampled

from the lower Aripo River, Trinidad in 2008. The colony has subsequently been

maintained at high population size with no deliberate inbreeding or selection.

Introducing a lone fish to a novel 'open field trial' (OFT) environment is considered a

mild stressor for this shoaling species, offering an opportunity to utilise behavioural

responses to this treatment as a proxy for their behavioural stress response (Houslay *et*

al. 2018). Previous work has demonstrated significant additive genetic (co)variance in

risk-taking and exploratory behavioural responses in this context (White & Wilson

2018; White, Houslay & Wilson 2018), behaviours that also exhibit strong plastic

responses to other acute stressors, including simulated predation events by birds and

predatory fish (Houslay *et al.* 2018). Using a non-invasive waterborne hormone

sampling method, we have also shown that individuals differ in their GC (specifically

free circulating cortisol) response to an acute stressor (handling and short term

confinement associated with the sampling itself; Houslay *et al.* 2019) and that, on

average, this GC response decreases with repeated exposure to the sampling event

stressor. However, nothing is known about the genetic basis of variation in these

physiological components of the stress response, or of their integration with genetic

variation in stress-related behaviours.

Here we test for evidence of genetic integration of the behavioural and

endocrine components of the stress response. First, we characterise multiple

behavioural components of the stress response, by developing a novel phenotyping

approach for OFTs, to better distinguish 'flight' behaviour from potentially confounding

variation in activity and exploration traits, and by complementing OFTs with additional

'emergence trials' (ET) and 'shoaling trials' (ST). Second, we characterise two key

physiological components of the stress response by assaying GC levels following

exposure to the first and third handling stress treatments in a stress habituation

paradigm (see methods). All behavioural and physiological traits were assayed multiple

times per individual using fish within a known genetic pedigree structure, enabling us to

partition phenotypic (co)variation in the suite of focal traits into its additive genetic,

permanent environment (here, among-individual), housing group, and residual

components. We predict that there will be a heritable (genetic) component to each trait

measured and that the **G** matrix (the pattern of genetic covariation among traits) will

contain significant among-trait correlation structure. More specifically, based on the

'stress coping style' model (Koolhaas *et al.* 1999) we predict genetic integration of

behavioural and physiological traits in **G** such that a major axis of genetic variation is

present: at one end, genotypes will be predisposed to a low-activity, exploratory

phenotype with lower GC levels, and at the other a 'flighty' phenotype with high GC

levels.

Results

Our data set includes behavioural observations from 7,637 trials (3,812 OFTs, 1,548 ETs

and 1,039 STs) and physiological measures from 1,238 waterborne assays of cortisol

(CORT hereafter). These phenotypic data were collected from 1,518 individual fish

within a genetic pedigree structure comprised of maternal full-sibships nested within

paternal half-sibships (with some connectedness across 5 'generations', as offspring

from one round of breeding were used, where available, as parents in the next). The

number of individuals phenotyped (OFTs = 1,487, ETs = 806, STs = 532) and the mean

number of observations per fish (OFTs = 2.6, ETs = 1.9, STs = 2.0) varied across the

behavioural data types. For the 629 fish that were assayed for cortisol (almost all from

the final generation), the handling and confinement stressor applied in this assay was

performed 3 times (at 48h intervals) for all fish, with the magnitude of the GC response

to the stressor being assessed only for the first and last stressor exposures

(subsequently $Cortisol_1$ and $Cortisol_3$). Full details of husbandry, phenotyping and

analysis are provided in Materials and Methods.

Genetic variance in behavioural components of the stress response

We extracted behavioural data from videos of each trial type using video tracking of fish

(as described in White, Kells & Wilson 2016; Houslay *et al.* 2018). Time to emerge from

the shelter ('*emergence time*') was extracted from ETs and log_n transformed for analysis,

while *shoaling tendency* was calculated from STs as the time spent in the third of the

tank closest to a same-sex shoal (which was visible but physically separated) minus the

time spent in the third of the tank farthest from the shoal. Note that both trials are

considered to assay the behavioural stress response because the fish are subject to

capture and solitary transfer into novel, brightly lit, arenas away from their home tanks

and familiar tank mates.

The OFT was used to quantify three traits over a 4m 30s period following

release into the tank and 30s acclimation: *track length* (distance swum), *area covered* (as

a proportion of the arena floor area), and *time in the middle* (i.e., in the central area of

the open field arena away from the tank walls, which is assumed to be perceived as

riskier). Though these three OFT traits have previously been found to be repeatable and

heritable in this population (White *et al.* 2016, 2018; Houslay *et al.* 2018; White &

Wilson 2018), there is not a strong positive association between *track length* and *area*

covered (Fig 1A). This is interesting because, if fish moved randomly in the arena, then

we would expect *area covered* to increase asymptotically to 100% as *track length*

increases. A plausible explanation is that similar *track lengths* can and do arise from two

distinct stress-response scenarios: a (putatively) less stressed fish could be exhibiting

an exploratory response, leading to relatively high *track length* and *area covered* (fish 1

in Fig 1B), while a (putatively) more stressed fish could be exhibiting a flight response,

which typically manifests as rapid swimming around the walls of the arena, leading to a

similarly high *track length* but lower *area covered* (Fish 4 in Fig 1B).

To quantitatively discriminate these hypothetical exploratory and flight

responses we derived a new trait, '*relative area covered*', using a simple simulation

procedure (see Methods). This allowed us to predict the expected *area covered* for a

given *track length* under the null model of a 'random swim' within the arena (Fig 1C).

Relative area covered is then calculated as *observed area covered – expected area covered*

(Fig 1D). Thus, higher values of *track length* may reflect an exploratory response when

coupled to high values of *relative area covered* and *time in the middle*, but a 'flight'

response when coupled to low values of *relative area covered* and *time in the middle*.

We used univariate pedigree-based 'animal models' (Kruuk 2004; Kruuk &

Hadfield 2007; Wilson *et al.* 2010) to test each trait for additive genetic variation while

controlling for additional random effects of social housing group and non-genetic

among-individual variance (as well as several fixed effects; see methods for full details).

These models confirm the presence of significant additive genetic variation for the

derived *relative area covered* trait, as well as for *track length* and *time in the middle* (

consistent with previous findings; White & Wilson 2018; White *et al.* 2018) and

emergence time (Table 1). The heritabilities of these behavioural traits (adjusted for

fixed effects; see methods) are low to medium (Table 1) and within the range expected

for behavioural traits (Stirling, Réale & Roff 2002). We detected no significant additive

genetic variance for *shoaling tendency* (Table 1), despite there being repeatable

differences among individuals; R = 0.19 ± 0.04; $\chi^2_{0,1}$ = 20.01, P < 0.001).

Genetic variation in physiological components of the stress response

Using a series of nested bivariate animal models, we tested for the presence of additive

genetic variation in cortisol levels ($\log_n$ transformed) following stressor exposure

(handling and confinement), and for genotype-by-environment interaction (GxE) in

cortisol levels across the two samples assayed per fish (i.e. following stressors 1 and 3).

In this context, the environment (E) is the time point at which the fish was exposed to

the stressor. Any GxE present can therefore be interpreted as genetic variance for

habituation to the stressor, given that the average cortisol level was lower following

exposure to the third stressor than the first ($\log_n$ transformed mean ± SE; $Cortisol_1$ =

8.50 ± 0.05, $Cortisol_3$ = 8.05 ± 0.06, Wald $F_{1,12.9}$ = 120.5, P < 0.001). We first modelled

$Cortisol_1$ and $Cortisol_3$ as distinct response variables in a bivariate framework but

assuming no GxE (such that we assume $V_{A\text{-}Cortisol1}$ = $V_{A\text{-}Cortisol3}$ and the cross context

additive genetic correlation $r_{A\text{-Cortisol1,Cortisol3}} = 1$). This model revealed a significant

additive genetic component to variation among individuals in their cortisol levels

following stressor exposure ($\chi^2_{0,1} = 6.58$, P = 0.005).

Expanding the model to allow GxE (by freely estimating separate genetic

variances for $Cortisol_1$ and $Cortisol_3$ as well as the cross-context genetic correlation)

provides a significantly better fit to the data ($\chi^2_2 = 9.65$, P = 0.008). This means that

GxE is present, or (equivalently) that the magnitude of change in cortisol levels from the

first to the third sampling (i.e., the degree of habituation to the stressor) varies among

genotypes. The cross-context genetic correlation is strongly positive ($r_{A\text{-Cortisol1,Cortisol3}} \pm$ SE

$= 0.74 \pm 0.25$), while genetic variance in cortisol levels is greater following exposure to

the first stressor than the third ($V_{A\text{-Cortisol1}} = 0.076 \pm 0.028$, $V_{A\text{-Cortisol3}} = 0.047 \pm 0.029$).

Both findings are apparent when visualising model predictions (Figure 2): while there is

genetic variation in habituation rates (indicated by variation in the slopes of genotypic

reaction norms; Figure 2), there is still positive cross-context genetic correlation

(indicated by little change in the rank order of individuals across the two contexts;

Figure 2). The reduction in genetic variance for cortisol levels between the first and

third stressor exposure arises because genotypes with higher than average cortisol

levels following the first exposure habituate more rapidly following subsequent

exposures (reflected in the model as GxE). In this model we also find that variance in

cortisol explained by average differences among groups is similar across contexts

($V_{Group\text{-Cortisol1}} = 0.034 \pm 0.013$, $V_{Group\text{-Cortisol3}} = 0.045 \pm 0.016$), but that residual variance is

greater following exposure to the third stressor than the first ($V_{R\text{-Cortisol1}} = 0.166 \pm 0.021$,

$V_{R\text{-Cortisol3}} = 0.229 \pm 0.025$). This means that there is no change in variance explained

among groups across contexts, but variance within groups is greater after the third

stressor relative to the first. Overall, this pattern creates a higher adjusted heritability

(the ratio of additive genetic variance to the sum of additive genetic, group and residual

variances after adjusting for fixed effects) for cortisol levels following the first stressor

exposure than the third ($h^2_{Cortisol1}$= 0.275 ± 0.093, $h^2_{Cortisol3}$= 0.146 ± 0.088).

Testing for genetic integration and identifying the major axis of genetic variance

Lastly, to test for the hypothesised genetic integration between behavioural and

physiological components of the stress response, we built a multivariate animal model

to estimate patterns of genetic covariances among these traits (**G**). We excluded *shoaling*

tendency given the absence of detectable genetic variance in the univariate model of this

trait. We also elected to treat cortisol as a single trait (allowing for a fixed effect of

stressor exposure number (1 vs 3) on the mean). Although the analysis described above

shows evidence of GxE, the strong positive genetic correlation between $Cortisol_1$ and

$Cortisol_3$ justifies combining into a single trait here in order to maximise power to detect

overall genetic integration of behaviour and GC expression.

Our final model contained 5 response traits: *relative area covered*, *time in the*

middle and *track length*, (log-transformed) *emergence time*, and (log-transformed)

Cortisol (treated as two repeats of a single trait; see above). Following transformation

(where applicable), we standardised all traits to standard deviation units, to assist

multivariate model fitting and to prevent eigenvectors (see below) of **G** being dominated

by traits with higher variance in observed units. To simplify interpretation of the

estimated correlation (and covariance) structure in **G** we multiplied log-transformed

emergence time by -1, resulting in higher values for all behavioural traits indicating

individuals that mounted 'bolder' behavioural responses to stressors. Our estimate of **G**

(Table 2) contains significant genetic covariance structure overall (Likelihood Ratio Test

of the full model vs. a model in which we did not allow for additive genetic covariance: χ

$^2_{10}$ = 36.79, P < 0.001). **G** also contains a number of strong pairwise genetic correlations,

both negative and positive, that are statistically significant (based on the bootstrapped

95% confidence intervals not crossing zero). Log-transformed *Cortisol* is correlated

positively with *track length* at the genetic level, and negatively with *relative area covered*

and *time in the middle* (though not all pairwise correlations are individually significant;

Figure 3). *Relative area covered* shows significant genetic correlations with both of the

other OFT traits: positive with *time in the middle*, and negative with *track length*.

Eigen decomposition of **G** provides a more holistic view of the genetic

covariance structure and the level of integration among traits. Here the major axis (first

principal component, PC1) explains 57.8% of the genetic variance in multivariate

phenotype (PC2 = 25.7%; PC3 = 9.3%; PC4 = 5.6%; PC5 = 1.6%). All of the traits except

emergence time load significantly on this axis (Figure 4). *Relative area covered* and *time

in the middle* load in one direction, while *track length* and *Cortisol* load in the other

direction. This suggests that genotypes at one end of this major axis of genetic

(co)variation have more 'exploratory' behavioural responses to stress (i.e., swim shorter

distances, spend more time in the central area of the tank, and cover a high area relative

to their distance travelled in OFTs) and have weaker physiological responses to stress

(i.e., produce lower cortisol levels in response to the stressor). While genotypes at the

other end of this axis have more of a 'flight' type of behavioural response to stress (i.e.,

swim longer distances, stay closer to the edges of arena, and cover a small area relative

to their distance travelled in OFTs) and have stronger physiological responses to stress

(i.e., produce higher cortisol levels in response to the stressor).

Discussion

In this study we sought to determine whether – and to what extent – there exists genetic variation for, and integration between, behavioural and physiological (endocrine) components of stress response. Our results provide three main novel insights. First, we find that genetic variation underpins individual differences in not only stress-related behaviours (including but not limited to relative area) but also stress physiology. Second, we find genetic covariance structure among these stress response traits – including between behavioural and physiological components. Thirdly, the major axis of genetic covariation conforms to that hypothesised in the stress coping styles model. Overall, by estimating genetic correlation structure among traits we find at least some support for the hypothesis of evolutionary integration between behavioural and endocrine components of the stress response.

The open field trial (OFT) paradigm used here is widely applied to study 'shy-bold' type personality variation in fishes (Toms, Echevarria & Jouandot 2010) and other vertebrates (Carter *et al.* 2013; Perals *et al.* 2017). Furthermore, behavioural differences expected to occur along a 'shy – bold' personality axis align closely with predictions from the 'reactive – proactive' model of stress coping (see Boulton *et al.* 2015). However, whether actual behavioural variation matches expectations of these verbal models is an empirical question. In this guppy population, using the directly observed OFT traits, it does not (White *et al.* 2016; Houslay *et al.* 2018). By identifying the 'null' expected relationship between track length and area covered under a random swim we greatly increase biological interpretability. Specifically, using '*relative area covered*' we are able to demonstrate an axis of repeatable and heritable variation that spans from methodical exploration of the arena by (putatively) unstressed fish through to a 'flight' type response to being placed in the OFT arena. Individuals – and genotypes – predisposed to low relative area also have longer track lengths and spend less time in

the middle (i.e., are more thigmotaxic). Given the wide use of OFTs in biomedical

research (e.g., Rex *et al.* 1998; von Horsten, Karl & Pabst 2003) as well as in animal

behaviour, our approach may have broad applicability for discriminating between

exploration and stress/anxiety-related behaviours.

Among the non-OFT behaviours assayed, we find less evidence for genetic

variation and/or integration. Tendency to shoal varies among individuals but is not

detectably heritable. Though not generally considered a stress-response trait *per se*,

shoaling is an anti-predator behaviour in guppies (Herbert-Read *et al.* 2017). We had

therefore predicted that heightened perception of risk in the open field might be

associated with increased shoaling tendency. The absence of detectable genetic variance

meant that we could not test this prediction in **G**, though there was no evidence for such

a pattern at the level of individual phenotype.

By contrast, emergence time is heritable but not significantly correlated with

OFT traits in **G** (nor among individuals). While longer emergence times are typically

interpreted as reflecting a fear of the open arena (i.e., lack of 'boldness'; see Burns

2008), it is notable that the qualitative pattern in **G** in our study actually ran counter to

this expectation. Genotypes predisposed to longer emergence times are associated

(albeit non-significantly) with higher relative area, lower track length, and more time in

the middle during OFT trials. That is, longer emergence times are associated with the

bolder, exploratory and (putatively) less stressed end of the stress response continuum.

This may indicate that at least some individuals do not perceive the shelter area as safer

than the open arena, a possibility also suggested by the fact that some individual

guppies decrease (rather than increase) shelter use following simulated predation

events (Houslay *et al.* 2018).

We also find evidence of significant additive genetic variance in a key

physiological component of the stress response: waterborne cortisol concentrations

following exposure of the fish to a handling stressor. Our findings suggest that

previously detected differences among individuals in cortisol response to a stressor

(Houslay *et al.* 2019) are primarily attributable to genetic effects, with the estimated

heritability (h^2 = 0.26) being >75% of the individual–level repeatability for log(Cortisol).

Moreover, by adopting a reaction norm approach to modelling stress physiology, as

recently advocated by ourselves and others (e.g., Fürtbauer *et al.* 2015; Hau & Goymann

2015; Taff & Vitousek 2016), we detect GxE reflecting genetic differences in the extent of

habituation to the stressor over repeated exposures. This result is potentially important

since poor habituation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal/interrenal (HPA/I)

response to repeated or ongoing stressors can lead to well documented health problems

in human and animal populations (Segerstrom & Miller 2004; Koolhaas 2008; Romero,

Dickens & Cyr 2009; Mason 2010). Heritable variation in habituation to stressors raises

the possibility of developing targeted selection strategies to improve welfare in captive

populations (e.g., Frankham *et al.* 1986; Muir & Craig 1995; Oltenacu & Algers 2009).

These findings also highlight the possibility that habituation could be important for

adaptation in the wild, as many agents of natural selection can be viewed as

environmental stressors (Bijlsma & Loeschcke 2005).

Our findings also highlight that there is greater additive genetic variance (and

heritability) for cortisol levels following the first exposure to the stressor than following

the third. This pattern, which occurs because genotypes that produce the highest

cortisol response at first exposure also show the most marked habituation, is consistent

with the idea of cryptic genetic variance (Paaby & Rockman 2014) being 'released' by

exposure to novel, and so potentially stressful, environments (Ledón-Rettig, Pfennig &

Crespi 2010; Ledón-Rettig *et al.* 2014; Berger *et al.* 2011). All else being equal, it also

means that selection on cortisol levels following stressor exposure should induce a

stronger evolutionary response in naïve relative to habituated fish. However, the strong

positive cross-environment correlation means that the ranking of genotypes is

consistent across repeated stressor exposures. It also means that we would expect a

positively correlated response of habituation to any selection on (average) GC response

and *vice versa*.

Our estimate of **G** shows genetic integration between behavioural and endocrine

components of the stress response: genotypes with more exploratory behavioural

phenotypes in the OFT also produce lower levels of cortisol following the handling and

confinement stressor. This genetic integration of behaviour and physiology is consistent

with the idea that correlational selection in the past has led to the coevolution of these

stress response components. Covariance structure in **G** will also modify, and potentially

constrain, future evolutionary responses to contemporary selection (whether natural or

artificial). Here we have no direct knowledge of selection acting in the wild but note that

we do expect acute stress responses in natural population to be broadly adaptive. In

contrast, it is clear that prolonged, chronic activation of stress response pathways

(notably the HPA(I) axis) frequently jeopardises health and survival in captive animal

populations (Huether 1996; Boonstra 2013). Thus, it could follow that more stress-

responsive genotypes are disadvantaged in captivity, if responsiveness to acute

stressors positively predicts susceptibility to chronic stress. However, even in this

scenario it does not follow that high stress-responsiveness is disadvantageous in the

wild. Rather, since natural selection should purge alleles that are universally

detrimental, it seems more plausible that genetic variation along the major axis

described here is maintained by some form of selective trade-off (as widely

hypothesised for maintenance of personality variation; e.g., Stamps 2007; Wolf *et al.*

2007; Réale *et al.* 2010).

Conclusions and future directions

Here we find evidence for genetic variation in – and integration of – behavioural

and physiological (endocrine) components of the stress response. The structure of **G**

holds with the widely used 'reactive – proactive' model of stress coping style variation

(Koolhaas *et al.* 2007), but is more consistent with a continuous axis of variation in

acute stress responsiveness. Interestingly, genotypes that are more responsive (in the

sense of displaying flight-type behaviour and higher cortisol levels) also exhibit faster

habituation of GC physiology when subject to repeated stressors.

Our results suggest that correlational selection in the past has likely shaped the

multivariate stress response, and that continued evolution of stress-related behaviour

will have consequences for glucocorticoid physiology and *vice versa*. Determining

contemporary selection on the stress response, and testing the possibility that genetic

variation is maintained by fitness trade-offs, is thus an obvious – if empirically

challenging – next step. In a more applied context, integration of behavioural and

endocrine stress-response components at the genetic level has potential utility for

genetic improvement of captive populations. Specifically, it may be possible to identify

non-invasive, high throughput, behavioural biomarkers and target them in selection

schemes to reduce chronic activation of the HPA/I axis and its attendant deleterious

effects. The efficacy of this approach will necessarily depend on (i) the presence of

standing genetic variance for health and welfare under chronic stress, and (ii) strong

genetic correlation structure between target traits and behavioural markers of acute

stress-response.

Table 1: Estimated variance components, along with adjusted heritability, for each trait as estimated in a univariate model (± standard error). Chi-

square test statistics and p-values are provided for the pedigree term, testing for the presence of significant additive genetic variance (V_a).

Trait	V_a	V_{pe}	V_{group}	$V_{residual}$	h^2	$\chi^2_{0,1}$	P
Relative area covered	26.35 ± 9.37	72.42 ± 9.28	33.33 ± 6.86	205.22 ± 5.90	0.08 ± 0.03	20.7	<0.001
Time in the middle	588.48 ± 139.61	554.58 ± 109.57	203.29 ± 53.41	2070.06 ± 60.08	0.17 ± 0.04	53.7	<0.001
Track length	26832.64 ± 5925.25	32204.05 ± 4868.88	9956.4 ± 2626.41	93921.54 ± 2711.28	0.16 ± 0.03	86.3	<0.001
Shoaling tendency	0 ± 0	2457.36 ± 570.96	708.87 ± 316.30	9900.95 ± 622.10	0 ± 0	0	0.5
log(Emergence time)	0.12 ± 0.05	0.06 ± 0.06	0.05 ± 0.02	1.07 ± 0.05	0.09 ± 0.04	23.2	<0.001
log(Cortisol)	0.07 ± 0.02	0.02 ± 0.02	0.01 ± 0.01	0.15 ± 0.01	0.26 ± 0.08	22.0	<0.001

444 Table 2: Additive genetic covariance-correlation matrix (G) from the full multivariate animal model. Genetic variances provided on the shaded

445 diagonal, with genetic covariances below and genetic correlations above. 95% confidence intervals in parentheses are estimated from 5000

446 bootstrapped replicates. Where the confidence intervals for any estimate do not cross zero the estimate is considered statistically significant (at the

447 0.05 alpha level) and are shown in bold.

	Relative area covered	Time in the middle	Track length	-log(Emergence time)	log(Cortisol)
Relative area covered	**0.074 (0.029,0.122)**	**0.761 (0.549,0.955)**	**-0.506 (-0.758,-0.184)**	-0.503 (-1.394,0.256)	-0.414 (-1.035,0.225)
Time in the middle	**0.075 (0.031,0.124)**	**0.130 (0.062,0.191)**	**-0.554 (-0.774,-0.295)**	-0.117 (-0.791,0.531)	**-0.686 (-1.165,-0.220)**
Track length	**-0.048 (-0.086,-0.008)**	**-0.070 (-0.116,-0.022)**	**0.121 (0.067,0.171)**	0.559 (-0.026,1.256)	0.279 (-0.238,0.823)
-log(Emergence time)	-0.038 (-0.083,0.014)	-0.012 (-0.070,0.040)	**0.055 (0.001,0.106)**	**0.079 (0.011,0.149)**	-0.177 (-0.910,0.560)
log(Cortisol)	-0.038 (-0.091,0.011)	**-0.082 (-0.138,-0.021)**	0.032 (-0.026,0.085)	-0.017 (-0.073,0.038)	**0.111 (0.036,0.191)**

Figure 1: The lack of a strong positive relationship between observed *tracklength* and *area covered*

(panel 1), is initially puzzling given expected autocorrelation and that both are used as positive

indicators of exploratory (or 'bold') behaviour. Inset examples of OFT tracks from 4 individuals (panel

2) shed light on this. Fish A and B appear to be exploring the tank, while C and D are engaging in a

stereotypical 'flight' behaviour characterised by strong thigmotaxis (remaining close to tank walls)

and/or rapid movement along tank walls. As a consequence, individuals B and C have similar *area*

covered during the OFT as a consequence, but very different *track lengths*. We simulated random

movements to define an expected null relationship between *area covered* and *track length* (panel 3;

dashed red line shows the third order polynomial model fit; see Appendix A). The polynomial

regression was then used to predict the expected area covered under random movement for each

trial's observed *track length*, and the '*relative area covered*' was calculated as the observation minus

this prediction. Panel 4 shows the resultant *relative area covered* plotted against *track length* for all

trials (dashed red line at *relative area covered* = 0, shows where individuals of any *track length* are

expected to lie if they move randomly with respect to direction). From this it is apparent that fish A

and B have high *relative area covered*, while C and D do not.

Figure 2: Guppies habituate to the waterborne sampling procedure, as shown by a decline in log-

transformed cortisol levels following stressor exposure declining from their first stressor exposure to

their third. Black circles and associated bars denote predicted population means (± standard error)

from mixed model analysis. Reaction norms (grey lines) depict the predicted genetic deviations for

each individual from the average pattern. GxE is evidenced by the slight reduction in genetic variance

over the repeated sampling events (i.e., that the reaction norms (therefore) are not parallel; see main

text).

Figure 1: The additive genetic relationship between log-transformed cortisol (y-axis) and four behaviours (a, *relative area covered*; b, *time in the middle*; c,

track length; d, *-log emergence time*). Points show (predicted) bivariate genetic deviations from the population means, plotted for those individuals in the

pedigree with cortisol data. In each case the black ellipse depicts the shape of the relationship as estimated from **G**, with 5000 bootstrapped replicates in

grey showing the associated uncertainty.

489   Figure 2: Trait loadings from the first eigen vector (principal component) of **G**. This axis explains

490   57.8% of the genetic (co)variation found in the focal behavioural and physiological components of the

491   stress response in our guppy population. Points show trait loadings from the first eigen vector of our

492   estimate of G, with bars representing 95% confidence intervals on each loading (calculated from 5000

493   bootstrapped replicates of the model).

Materials and methods

Husbandry and breeding

We used fish taken from our captive population housed at the University of Exeter's Penryn campus, which is descended from wild fish collected in 2008 from the lower Aripo River in Trinidad. This population has been maintained at a population size of several thousand, and has undergone no deliberate selection or inbreeding. All fish are fed to satiation twice daily (0800 – 1000h and again at 1600 – 1800h) using commercial flake food and live *Artemia nauplii*. Water temperature is maintained at 23-24°C in well-aerated closed system tank stacks that undergo 25% water changes each week and with weekly tests for ammonia, nitrate and nitrite levels. Lighting is kept at a 12:12 light/dark cycle. The experiment described in this study was carried out in accordance with the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 under licence from the Home Office (UK), and with local ethical approval from the University of Exeter.

To create our pedigreed sub-population, female fish were sampled haphazardly from the stock tanks and kept in female-only groups for 3 months. Isolation from male contact minimised the chance of females carrying viable sperm from previous matings. For the first generation of offspring, we used a group breeding design (as detailed in White and Wilson, 2018); briefly, females were tagged under anaesthetic (buffered MS222 solution) using visible implant elastomer (VIE) to allow individual identification. We then assigned groups of 4 females to 1 male in 15L breeding tanks (18.5cm x 37cm x 22cm), and inspected females daily for high gravidity (swollen abdomens and enlarged 'gravid spots'). Heavily gravid females were then isolated in 2.8L brood tanks to give birth (and were returned to the breeding tanks either after producing a brood or two weeks of isolation). Any offspring produced in the breeding tanks were excluded from the experiment as maternal identity could not be positively identified. For the following generations, after 3 months of isolation from males we moved females into individual 2.8L tanks, with 1 male then circulated among 3 females. Males were moved between females every 5-8 days. In this way, females did not have to be moved to brood tanks, and any offspring could be assigned to mothers definitively. In this setup, offspring were moved to a separate brood tank on the day of birth. Note that as the gestation period for guppies is approximately 1 month,

any brood produced by a female less than one month after exposure to their designated male was

recorded in the pedigree as having unknown paternity.

Within 24h of a female producing a brood we recorded her weight (g) and brood size. We kept

juvenile fish in full-sib family groups in 2.8L tanks before moving them to 15L 'growth' tanks at an

average age of 56 days. At an average age of 133 days (range 59-268) we tagged individuals and

placed them into mixed family groups of 16-20 adults (with an even mix of males and females), kept in

15L tanks. Note that variation in tagging age arose largely because groups were necessarily

established sequentially as sufficient individuals from multiple families reached a large enough size

that we deemed the procedure to be safe. Each adult group comprised a mix of fish from different

families, reducing the potential for common environment effects to upwardly bias our genetic

parameter estimation.

Overview of behavioural phenotyping

Behavioural phenotyping commenced at least one week after tagging. In all trials, we filmed

movement behaviour of individual fish using a Sunkwang video camera equipped with a 6-60mm

manual focus lens suspended over the tank. We used the tracking software Viewer II (BiObserve) to

extract behavioural data from each recording (detailed below). The tank was lit from below using a

light box, and screened with a cardboard casing to prevent external visual disturbance. After each

behavioural trial, the individual tested was weighed and then moved to a temporary 'holding tank'.

Once a full group (as described above) had been tested, all were moved from the holding tank back to

their home tank. We replaced the water in the testing and holding tanks between groups to reduce the

build-up of hormones or other chemicals. The first offspring generation experienced 4 repeat open

field trials (OFTs) over a 2-week period, with at least 48h between trials. Subsequent generations

experienced 4 repeat behavioural trials, alternating 2 OFTs with 2 emergence trials (ETs). For the final

2 generations, we extended the OFTs by including a shoaling trial (ST) at the end of each OFT.

Open field trials (OFT) followed the methodology described by White et al (2016). Briefly, we assessed

individual behaviour in a 20cm x 30cm tank, filled to a depth of 5cm with room-temperature water

from the main supply. We caught fish individually from their home tank, examined them quickly for

identification tags, then placed them immediately into the centre of the OFT tank. After allowing 30s

for acclimation, we filmed behaviour for 4m30s. Behaviours characterised from the tracking software

were *track length* (the total distance the fish moved during the trial; cm), *area covered* (the percentage

of 1cm x 1cm grid squares through which the fish moved during the trial; %), and *time in middle* (time

spent in a rectangular inner zone which was defined as being the same size as an outer area; seconds).

Shoaling trials (ST) were appended to a subset of OFTs, by positioning a small tank containing 10 stock

fish (of same sex as the test subject) next to one end of the OFT tank but with visual cues blocked by a

cardboard divider. At the end of the normal OFT, we removed this divider slowly, allowing the focal

animal to have visual contact with the shoal. We began recording the shoaling trial 30s after removing

the divider in order to limit any artefacts of slight disturbance. (Note that we used a further cardboard

casing around the shoaling tank to avoid any additional external visual stimulus). We then recorded

behaviour of the test fish for an additional 3 minutes. We characterised *shoaling tendency* via the

tracking software by subdividing the tank area into 3 equal-sized rectangular areas: one next to the

tank holding the group of same-sex fish, one farthest from this group, and the central area. We then

calculated *shoaling tendency* as the time spent in the 1/3 area closest to the same-sex group after

subtracting the time spent in the 1/3 area farthest away. The decision to use a single-sex shoal aimed

to reduce any effects of (potential) mate preference and/or avoidance, but also this necessitated

replicate arena setups allowing male and female individuals from each group to be tested in the

OFT/ST concurrently. We randomised which tank was used for each sex in each group and recorded

this information.

Emergence trials (ET) followed the methodology described by White *et al.* (2016). Briefly, we tested

individuals in a 20cm x 40cm tank, filled to a depth of 8cm with room-temperature water from the

main supply. A 10cm section of the tank length was walled off creating a shelter area (20cm x10cm),

the walls and floor of which were painted black. The focal fish was placed into the shelter area and

allowed to acclimate for 30s, at which point we opened a sliding door to allow access to the rest of the

tank, which was brightly lit from below and otherwise bare. *Time to emerge* (in seconds) was recorded

by the tracking software automatically as the fish exited the shelter area and emerged into the open

tank section. Trials were ended either at emergence or at 15 min if the fish had not emerged by that

point; in the case of non-emergence, fish were given the maximum value (i.e., 900s).

Derivation of 'relative area' from OFT trials

The '*area covered'* variable assayed in the OFT is calculated in BiObserve by dividing the arena (i.e., the

total area of the tank as viewed from the camera) into 1cm x 1cm grid squares. The path taken by the

fish during observation is then used to determine what proportion of these grid squares the fish

entered. However, we sought to derive a measure of '*relative area*' that describes whether a fish covers

a large, or small area relative to its observed *tracklength.*

To do this we simulated 'random swims' within the arena across the observed range of

tracklengths. We first selected 40 OFT results at random from our total data set and extracted the

coordinates of the fish in each frame from the raw tracking file, creating a set of x and y movements

and their associated distances. As original coordinates were recorded in pixels we used the calibration

of the software to convert to cm units. We then use a 'random walk' algorithm to select a movement

(i.e., step size and direction) from this observed distribution at random, and calculate the new

coordinates. If the movement keeps the 'fish' within the bounds of the 'tank' (i.e., defined as a 20cm x

30cm arena), the movement is accepted and coordinates added to a movement matrix; if not, a new

movement is drawn from the distribution. If the movement is greater than 1cm in distance, we break

the movement into a number of smaller parts to be added to the matrix (such that we capture the

coordinates of grid squares through which the 'fish' moved along the way). Once the total distance of

the random walk reached or exceeded the *tracklength* set as the simulation objective, the path is

terminated and the area covered is calculated by counting the number of unique grid squares in the

matrix of coordinates and dividing by the total number possible.

After simulating random walks across 500 values of *tracklength* (using a vector of 100 values

evenly spaced across the range of true data, repeated 5 times), we modelled (simulated) area covered

as a fourth order polynomial function of *tracklength*. Using this regression model (which explained

97.8% of the variance in simulated data), we calculated the *relative area* for each actual OFT trial as

the observed area covered minus the area covered under a random swim, as predicted from our

regression model and the observed *tracklength*.

Waterborne hormone sampling

On completion of behavioural data collection, individuals entering the endocrine testing program were

left undisturbed for a minimum of two weeks. Waterborne hormone sampling was then conducted

over a 5-day period that included three handling and confinement stressor exposures with 48h

between each. We followed the method described by Houslay et al (2019) to obtain repeated non-

invasive GC measures of individuals using holding water samples from the first and third

confinements. Note that only two samples per fish were analysed because the financial and time costs

of doing three was deemed prohibitive. We nonetheless applied the stressor stimulus three times as

our prior study showed this was sufficient to produce a strong habituation response, i.e., a significant

decrease in water-borne cortisol over the three sampling periods (Houslay *et al.* 2019)).

We collected samples between 1200 – 1400h to control for diel fluctuations in GC levels. For

each sample, we netted an entire group from their home tank quickly using a large net, transferring

them to 2 holding tanks (containing water from the home tank supply) for moving to an adjacent quiet

room (performed within 20s of the net first hitting the water). We then transferred fish to individual

Pyrex beakers containing 300ml of clean water from the main supply (which serves the main housing

units), which has been warmed to the appropriate temperature (mean = 24.1°C, range 23-24.9°C).

Beakers were placed within cardboard 'chambers' to prevent fish from seeing each other or

experiencing outside disturbance. One fish was transferred every 30s, alternating across holding

tanks, such that all fish were in their beakers within 10min of the initial netting. After 60 mins in the

beaker, each fish was removed by pouring its sample through a clean net into a second beaker, with

the fish then quickly checked to confirm ID and returned to the holding tank until the entire group

could be returned to its home tank.

We immediately filtered each water sample using Grade 1 filter paper (Whatman), then passed them

slowly through solid phase C18 extraction columns (Sep-Pak C18, 3cc, Waters) via high-purity tubing

(Tygon 2474, Saint Gobain) under vacuum pressure (Earley *et al.* 2006). Columns were primed

beforehand with 2 x 2ml HPLC-grade methanol followed by 2 x 2ml distilled water, and were washed

afterwards with a further 2 x 2ml distilled water to purge salts. We then covered both ends of each

column with film (Parafilm M, Bemis) and stored them at -20C for future analysis. We washed all

beakers, tubes and funnels with 99% ethanol and rinsed them with distilled water prior to each

sampling procedure. The remainder of the endocrine assay procedure, involved elution, resuspension,

separation and quantification of free cortisol by enzyme immunoassay (EIA) using Cayman Chemicals,

Inc EIA kits). Detailed methods are exactly as described by Houslay et al (2019), and so not repeated

here (note that here we assayed the free fraction of cortisol only). To validate the cortisol kits, we

examined whether the kit standard curve was parallel to a serial dilution curve derived from pooled

guppy water-borne hormone extract. 20µl was taken from each of the male samples and pooled; 20µl

was taken from each of the female samples and combined into a separate pool. 400µl of the pools was

serially diluted from 1:1 to 1:128 and these samples were assayed alongside the kit standard curve on

two occasions (June and December 2017, marking the start and finish of sample processing). All

dilution curves were parallel to the standard curve (slope comparison test, Zar 1996, p.355; June,

male: t_{12} = 0.029, P = 0.97; June, female: : t_{12} = 0.343, P = 0.74; December, male: : t_{12} = 0.119, P = 0.91;

December, female: : t_{12} = 0.224, P = 0.83). The serial dilution curves also identified 1:32 as an

appropriate dilution to ensure that all samples fell on the linear phase of the standard curve. A total of

37, 96-well plates were used and pooled sample was included at the beginning and end of each plate.

Intra-assay coefficients of variation ranged from 0.12-19.83% with a median of 3.08%; the inter-assay

coefficient of variation was 19.22%.

Statistical methods

All data handling and analysis was performed in R version 3.4.1 (R Core Team 2017). We used the

'tidyverse' set of packages for data handling and visualisation (Wickham 2017), and ASreml-R 3.0

(Butler 2009) for fitting linear mixed effects models (as described in full below). We also used 'nadiv'

for pedigree preparation and to estimate (approximate) standard errors on linear functions of

variance components as estimated from the mixed models (Wolak 2012). All models fitted assumed

(multivariate) Gaussian error structures, and we visually assessed residuals to verify this was

reasonable (after data transformation in some cases). To test for significance of among individual

and/or genetic (co)variance components, we fitted nested models with different random effects

structures and compared them using likelihood ratio tests (LRTs). We calculated $\chi^2_{n\text{DF}}$ as twice the

difference in model log likelihoods, with the number of degrees of freedom (n) equivalent to the

number of additional parameters in the more complex model. When testing a single random effect

(variance component), we assumed the difference to be asymptotically distributed as an equal mix of

χ^2_0 and χ^2_1 (denoted $\chi^2_{0,1}$; Self and Liang, 1987; Visscher, 2006).

For each OFT and ST behaviour in turn (*relative area, time in middle, track length, shoaling tendency,*

and *emergence time*), we used the random effects specification to partition phenotypic variation (V_p,

conditional on fixed effects as described below) into the effects of additive genetics (V_a), permanent

environment defined as the non-(additive) genetic component of among-individual differences, V_{pe}),

and housing group (V_{group}), as well as residual variation ($V_{residual}$). We natural log-transformed

emergence time prior to analysis to meet assumptions of residual normality and homoscedasticity. For

all behavioural traits, we included fixed effects of assay *repeat*, the *order within each group* in which

the fish was trialled (mean-centred continuous predictor), *temperature* (mean-centred and scaled to

standard deviation units), *time* (in minutes from midnight, mean-centred and scaled to standard

deviation units), *age* (mean-centred and scaled to standard deviation units), *sex*, and the *generation*

from the breeding population. For *shoaling tendency* only, we incorporated an additional fixed effect of

setup (as detailed above). We tested the significance of genetic variance for each behaviour by LRT

comparison of the corresponding full model to one in which the (additive) genetic random effect was

excluded.

Cortisol data were also natural log-transformed for analysis. We formulated a bivariate model to test

for both additive genetic variation and genotype-by-environment interaction (GxE) in cortisol levels

across the two 'contexts' (i.e. samples retained for each individual at first and third confinement,

denoted $Cortisol_1$, $Cortisol_3$). Random effects were first used to partition phenotypic (co)variance

(conditional on fixed effects) into among-group and residual components. Fixed effects included the

context-specific means, and overall effects of the *order* in which the fish was caught from each group

for assay (mean-centred continuous predictor), *temperature* (mean-centred and scaled to standard

deviation units), *time of day* (mean-centred and scaled to standard deviation units), *age* (mean-centred

and scaled to standard deviation units), and *sex*. In addition, we included fixed covariates of *body mass*

(mean-centred and scaled to standard deviation units) and a *sex* by *body mass* interaction (see Houslay

et al. 2019 for rationale of controlling for body size effects on waterborne hormone levels in this way).

Note that modelled in this way each individual is sampled only once for each context-specific cortisol

trait so no random effect of individual identity is included. To test for additive genetic variation (V_a)

we compared this first bivariate model to a second formulation that also included the (additive)

genetic merit, but under the assumption that this is invariant with context within an individual (such

that $V_{a1}=V_{a3}$ and $r_{a1,3}=1$ and there is no GxE). We then test for the GxE by comparing the second model

to a third in which we allow GxE (i.e., the context-specific genetic variances are free to differ and the

cross-context genetic correlation can be <+1).

Lastly, we built a multivariate animal model to estimate **G** and to test the hypothesised genetic

integration among behavioural and physiological stress components. We retained only response traits

that harboured significant V_a as shown in univariate models, and so the final model comprised

response traits *relative area, time in middle, track length, emergence time* (log transformed), and

Cortisol (log transformed). We multiplied (transformed) *emergence time* by -1 to simplify

interpretation of estimated correlation structures (i.e., higher values for all behavioural traits then

represent nominally 'bolder' behaviours). We also scaled all (transformed) response variables to

standard deviation units. This was to facilitate model fitting, and also prevent scale effects

complicating interpretation of eigenvectors of **G**. Fixed and random effects were fitted on each trait as

specified for the univariate models. Note that one exception to this is that we elected to treat *Cortisol*

as a single repeated-measures trait here (with two repeats, one per context) such that a permanent

environment effect was now included.

We specified additive genetic genetic (**G**), permanent environment (**PE**), group (**GROUP**), and residual

(**R**) covariance structures as unstructured matrices to be estimated. Note that **R** partitions

observation-level covariances (as opposed to individual-level in **PE**) that are not definable or

statistically identifiable if traits are not measured at the same time (i.e., all covariances relating to

emergence time or *Cortisol*). Where this was the case we constrained specific covariance terms in **R** to

equal zero. We tested for overall additive genetic covariance among the traits by comparing this model

against a reduced one in which **G** was specified as a diagonal matrix (i.e., additive variances are

estimated but covariances are assumed to equal zero). To aid the interpretation of covariance terms

contained in **G,** we calculated the corresponding genetic correlations r_a from the full model. For any

pair of traits (x,y), $r_{a(x,y)} = COV_{a(x,y)} / (\sqrt{(V_{a(x)})} \times \sqrt{(V_{a(y)})})$. We also subjected our estimate of **G** to eigen

decomposition to determine the proportion of additive genetic variation captured by each principal

component and assess whether a single major axis of variation could indeed explain most of the

genetic variance in the multivariate phenotype (consistent with a simple proactive-reactive coping

style model). We estimated uncertainty on the trait loadings associated with each principal component

(eigenvector) using a parametric bootstrap approach as described by Boulton et al (2014).

For visualisation of bivariate relationships at the additive genetic level, we used the R package 'ellipse'

(Murdoch & Chow 2018) to determine the coordinates of an ellipse representing the approximate 95%

confidence region of deviations based on the point estimate of **G**. We repeated this procedure for the

corresponding regions defined from 5000 bootstrapped values of **G** (i.e., to indicate uncertainty arising

from estimation of the genetic covariance structure itself)**.**

REFERENCES

Angelier, F. & Wingfield, J.C. (2012) Importance of the glucocorticoid stress response in a changing

world: Theory, hypotheses and perspectives. *General and Comparative Endocrinology*, **190**, 118–

128.

Barton, B.A. & Iwama, G.K. (1991) Physiological changes in fish from stress in aquaculture with

emphasis on the response and effects of corticosteroids. *Annual Review of Fish Diseases*, **1**, 3–26.

Baugh, A.T., van Oers, K., Naguib, M. & Hau, M. (2013) Initial reactivity and magnitude of the acute

stress response associated with personality in wild great tits (Parus major). *General and*

Comparative Endocrinology, **189**, 96–104.

Baugh, A.T., Schaper, S. V., Hau, M., Cockrem, J.F., de Goede, P. & Oers, K. van. (2012) Corticosterone

responses differ between lines of great tits (Parus major) selected for divergent personalities.

General and Comparative Endocrinology, **175**, 488–494.

Berger, D., Bauerfeind, S.S., Blanckenhorn, W.U. & Schäfer, M.A. (2011) HIGH TEMPERATURES REVEAL

CRYPTIC GENETIC VARIATION IN A POLYMORPHIC FEMALE SPERM STORAGE ORGAN.

Evolution, **65**, 2830–2842.

Bijlsma, R. & Loeschcke, V. (2005) Environmental stress, adaptation and evolution: an overview.

Journal of evolutionary biology, **18**, 744–9.

Blows, M.W. (2007) A tale of two matrices: multivariate approaches in evolutionary biology. *Journal of*

evolutionary biology, **20**, 1–8.

Blows, M.W., Chenoweth, S.F. & Hine, E. (2004) Orientation of the genetic variance-covariance matrix

and the fitness surface for multiple male sexually selected traits. *The American naturalist*, **163**,

329–340.

Boonstra, R. (2013) Reality as the leading cause of stress: Rethinking the impact of chronic stress in

nature. *Functional Ecology*, **27**, 11–23.

von Borell, E. (1995) Neuroendocrine integration of stress and significance of stress for the

performance of farm animals. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, **44**, 219–227.

Boulton, K., Couto, E., Grimmer, A.J., Earley, R.L., Canario, A.V.M., Wilson, A.J. & Walling, C.A. (2015)

How integrated are behavioral and endocrine stress response traits? A repeated measures

approach to testing the stress-coping style model. *Ecology and Evolution*, **5**, 618–633.

Boulton, K., Grimmer, A.J., Rosenthal, G.G., Walling, C.A. & Wilson, A.J. (2014) How stable are

personalities? A multivariate view of behavioural variation over long and short timescales in the

sheepshead swordtail, Xiphophorus birchmanni. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, **68**, 791–

803.

Broom, D.M. & Johnson, K.G. (1993) Assessing welfare: short-term responses. *Stress and Animal*

Welfare, pp. 87–110. Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht.

Burns, J.G. (2008) The validity of three tests of temperament in guppies (Poecilia reticulata). *Journal of*

comparative psychology, **122**, 344–356.

Busch, D.S. & Hayward, L.S. (2009) Stress in a conservation context: A discussion of glucocorticoid

actions and how levels change with conservation-relevant variables. *Biological Conservation*, **142**,

2844–2853.

Butler, D. (2009) asreml: asreml() fits the linear mixed model.

Carere, C., Groothuis, T.G.G., Möstl, E., Daan, S. & Koolhaas, J.M. (2003) Fecal corticosteroids in a

territorial bird selected for different personalities: Daily rhythm and the response to social stress.

Hormones and Behavior, **43**, 540–548.

Carter, A.J., Feeney, W.E., Marshall, H.H., Cowlishaw, G. & Heinsohn, R. (2013) Animal personality: What

are behavioural ecologists measuring? *Biological Reviews*, **88**, 465–475.

Cheverud, J.M. (1982) Phenotypic, Genetic, and Environmental Morphological Integration in the

Cranium. *Evolution*, **36**, 499.

Clinchy, M., Sheriff, M.J. & Zanette, L.Y. (2013) Predator-induced stress and the ecology of fear.

Functional Ecology, **27**, 56–65.

Cox, R.M., McGlothlin, J.W. & Bonier, F. (2016) Hormones as Mediators of Phenotypic and Genetic

Integration: An Evolutionary Genetics Approach. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, **56**, 126–

137.

Crossin, G.T., Love, O.P., Cooke, S.J. & Williams, T.D. (2016) Glucocorticoid manipulations in free-living

animals: Considerations of dose delivery, life-history context and reproductive state. *Functional*

Ecology, **30**, 116–125.

Earley, R.L., Edwards, J.T., Aseem, O., Felton, K., Blumer, L.S., Karom, M. & Grober, M.S. (2006) Social

interactions tune aggression and stress responsiveness in a territorial cichlid fish (Archocentrus

nigrofasciatus). *Physiology and Behavior*, **88**, 353–363.

Frankham, R., Hemmer, H., Ryder, O.A., Cothran, E.G., Soulé, M.E., Murray, N.D. & Snyder, M. (1986)

Selection in captive populations. *Zoo Biology*, **5**, 127–138.

Fürtbauer, I., Pond, A., Heistermann, M. & King, A.J. (2015) Personality, plasticity and predation:

linking endocrine and behavioural reaction norms in stickleback fish. *Functional Ecology*, n/a-

n/a.

Hau, M. & Goymann, W. (2015) Endocrine mechanisms, behavioral phenotypes and plasticity: known

relationships and open questions. *Frontiers in Zoology*, **12**, S7.

Hazard, D., Couty, M., Richard, S. & Guémené, D. (2008a) Intensity and duration of corticosterone

response to stressful situations in Japanese quail divergently selected for tonic immobility.

General and Comparative Endocrinology, **155**, 288–297.

Hazard, D., Leclaire, S., Couty, M. & Guémené, D. (2008b) Genetic differences in coping strategies in

response to prolonged and repeated restraint in Japanese quail divergently selected for long or

short tonic immobility. *Hormones and Behavior*, **54**, 645–653.

Herbert-Read, J.E., Rosén, E., Szorkovszky, A., Ioannou, C.C., Rogell, B., Perna, A., Ramnarine, I.W.,

Kotrschal, A., Kolm, N., Krause, J. & Sumpter, D.J.T. (2017) How predation shapes the social

interaction rules of shoaling fish. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, **284**,

20171126.

Hine, E., Chenoweth, S.F. & Blows, M.W. (2004) Multivariate quantitative genetics and the lek paradox:

genetic variance in male sexually selected traits of Drosophila serrata under field conditions.

Evolution, **58**, 2754–62.

von Horsten, S., Karl, T. & Pabst, R. (2003) Behavioral phenotyping of mice in pharmacological and

toxicological research. *Experimental and Toxicologic Pathology*, **55**, 69–83.

Houslay, T.M., Earley, R.L., Young, A.J. & Wilson, A.J. (2019) Habituation and individual variation in the

endocrine stress response in the Trinidadian guppy (Poecilia reticulata). *General and*

Comparative Endocrinology, **270**, 113–122.

Houslay, T.M., Vierbuchen, M., Grimmer, A.J., Young, A.J. & Wilson, A.J. (2018) Testing the stability of

behavioural coping style across stress contexts in the Trinidadian guppy. *Functional Ecology*, **32**,

424–438.

Huether, G. (1996) The central adaptation syndrome: Psychosocial stress as a trigger for adaptive

modification of brain structure and brain function. *Progress in Neurobiology*, **48**, 569–612.

Hunt, J., Blows, M.W., Zajitschek, F., Jennions, M.D. & Brooks, R.C. (2007) Reconciling strong stabilizing

selection with the maintenance of genetic variation in a natural population of black field crickets

(Teleogryllus commodus). *Genetics*, **177**, 875–80.

Jones, R.B., Satterlee, D.G. & Ryder, F.H. (1994) Fear of Humans in Japanese-Quail Selected for Low or

High Adrenocortical-Response. *Physiology & Behavior*, **56**, 379–383.

Ketterson, E.D., Atwell, J.W. & McGlothlin, J.W. (2009) Phenotypic integration and independence:

Hormones, performance, and response to environmental change. *Integrative and Comparative*

Biology, **49**, 365–379.

Koolhaas, J.M. (2008) Coping style and immunity in animals: Making sense of individual variation.

Brain, Behavior, and Immunity, **22**, 662–667.

Koolhaas, J.M., de Boer, S.F., Buwalda, B. & Van Reenen, K. (2007) Individual variation in coping with

stress: A multidimensional approach of ultimate and proximate mechanisms. *Brain, Behavior and*

Evolution, **70**, 218–226.

Koolhaas, J.M., de Boer, S.F., Coppens, C.M. & Buwalda, B. (2010) Neuroendocrinology of coping styles:

Towards understanding the biology of individual variation. *Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology*, **31**,

307–321.

Koolhaas, J.M., Korte, S.M., De Boer, S.F., Van Der Vegt, B.J., Van Reenen, C.G., Hopster, H., De Jong, I.C.,

Ruis, M.A.W. & Blokhuis, H.J. (1999) Coping styles in animals: Current status in behavior and

stress- physiology. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, **23**, 925–935.

Korte, S.M., Koolhaas, J.M., Wingfield, J.C. & McEwen, B.S. (2005) The Darwinian concept of stress:

Benefits of allostasis and costs of allostatic load and the trade-offs in health and disease.

Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews, **29**, 3–38.

Kruuk, L.E.B. (2004) Estimating genetic parameters in natural populations using the "animal model."

Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, **359**, 873–890.

Kruuk, L.E.B. & Hadfield, J.D. (2007) How to separate genetic and environmental causes of similarity

between relatives. *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*, **20**, 1890–1903.

Lande, R. & Arnold, S.J. (1983) The measurement of selection on correlated characters. *Evolution*, **37**,

1210–1226.

Ledón-Rettig, C.C., Pfennig, D.W., Chunco, A.J. & Dworkin, I. (2014) Cryptic genetic variation in natural

populations: a predictive framework. *Integrative and comparative biology*, **54**, 783–793.

Ledón-Rettig, C.C., Pfennig, D.W. & Crespi, E.J. (2010) Diet and hormonal manipulation reveal cryptic

genetic variation: Implications for the evolution of novel feeding strategies. *Proceedings of the*

Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, **277**, 3569–3578.

Mason, G.J. (2010) Species differences in responses to captivity: Stress, welfare and the comparative

method. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, **25**, 713–721.

McEwen, B.S. & Wingfield, J.C. (2003) The concept of allostasis in biology and biomedicine. *Hormones*

and Behavior, **43**, 2–15.

McEwen, B.S. & Wingfield, J.C. (2010) What is in a name? Integrating homeostasis, allostasis and stress.

Hormones and Behavior, **57**, 105–111.

McGlothlin, J.W. & Ketterson, E.D. (2008) Hormone-mediated suites as adaptations and evolutionary

constraints. *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences*,

363, 1611–1620.

Mignon-Grasteau, S., Boissy, A., Bouix, J., Faure, J.M., Fisher, A.D., Hinch, G.N., Jensen, P., Le Neindre, P.,

Mormède, P., Prunet, P., Vandeputte, M. & Beaumont, C. (2005) Genetics of adaptation and

domestication in livestock. *Livestock Production Science*, **93**, 3–14.

Moberg, G.P. (2000) Biological response to stress: implications for animal welfare. *The biology of*

animal stress: basic principles and implications for animal welfare, pp. 1–21.

Möstl, E. & Palme, R. (2002) Hormones as indicator of stress. *Domestic animal and endocrinology*, **23**,

67–74.

Muir, W.M. & Craig, J. V. (1998) Improving animal well-being through genetic selection. *Poultry Science*,

77, 1781–1788.

Murdoch, D. & Chow, E.D. (2018) ellipse: Functions for Drawing Ellipses and Ellipse-like Confidence

Regions.

Oltenacu, P.A. & Algers, B. (2009) Selection for Increased Production and the Welfare of Dairy Cows:

Are New Breeding Goals Needed? *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment*, **34**, 311–315.

Oswald, M.E., Singer, M. & Robison, B.D. (2013) The Quantitative Genetic Architecture of the Bold-Shy

Continuum in Zebrafish, Danio rerio. *PLoS ONE*, **8**, 1–10.

Øverli, Ø., Pottinger, T.G., Carrick, T.R., Overli, E. & Winberg, S. (2002) Differences in behaviour

between rainbow trout selected for high- and low-stress responsiveness. *The Journal of*

experimental biology, **205**, 391–5.

Øverli, Ø., Pottinger, T.G., Carrick, T.R., Øverli, E. & Winberg, S. (2001) Brain monoaminergic activity in

rainbow trout selected for high and low stress responsiveness. *Brain, Behavior and Evolution*, **57**,

214–224.

Øverli, Ø., Sørensen, C., Pulman, K.G.T., Pottinger, T.G., Korzan, W., Summers, C.H. & Nilsson, G.E. (2007)

Evolutionary background for stress-coping styles: Relationships between physiological,

behavioral, and cognitive traits in non-mammalian vertebrates. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral*

Reviews, **31**, 396–412.

Øverli, Ø., Winberg, S. & Pottinger, T.G. (2005) Behavioral and Neuroendocrine Correlates of Selection

for Stress Responsiveness in Rainbow Trout—a Review. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, **45**,

463–474.

Paaby, A.B. & Rockman, M. V. (2014) Cryptic genetic variation: Evolution's hidden substrate. *Nature*

Reviews Genetics, **15**, 247–258.

Perals, D., Griffin, A.S., Bartomeus, I. & Sol, D. (2017) Revisiting the open-field test: what does it really

tell us about animal personality? *Animal Behaviour*, **123**, 69–79.

Pottinger, T.G. & Carrick, T.R. (1999) Modification of the plasma cortisol response to stress in rainbow

trout by selective breeding. *General and Comparative Endocrinology*, **116**, 122–132.

Pottinger, T.G. & Carrick, T.R. (2001) Stress responsiveness affects dominant-subordinate

relationships in rainbow trout. *Hormones and Behavior*, **40**, 419–427.

R Core Team. (2017) R: A language and environment for statistical computing.

Réale, D., Garant, D., Humphries, M.M., Bergeron, P., Careau, V. & Montiglio, P.-O. (2010) Personality

and the emergence of the pace-of-life syndrome concept at the population level. *Philosophical*

transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences, **365**, 4051–4063.

Rex, A., Voigt, J.P., Voits, M. & Fink, H. (1998) Pharmacological evaluation of a modified open-field test

sensitive to anxiolytic drugs. *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior*, **59**, 677–683.

Romero, L.M. (2004) Physiological stress in ecology: Lessons from biomedical research. *Trends in*

Ecology and Evolution, **19**, 249–255.

Romero, L.M., Dickens, M.J. & Cyr, N.E. (2009) The reactive scope model - A new model integrating

homeostasis, allostasis, and stress. *Hormones and Behavior*, **55**, 375–389.

Ruiz-Gomez, M. de L., Huntingford, F.A., Øverli, Ø., Thörnqvist, P.-O. & Höglund, E. (2011) Response to

environmental change in rainbow trout selected for divergent stress coping styles. *Physiology &*

Behavior, **102**, 317–322.

Ruiz-Gomez, M. de L., Kittilsen, S., Höglund, E., Huntingford, F.A., Sørensen, C., Pottinger, T.G., Bakken,

M., Winberg, S., Korzan, W.J. & Øverli, Ø. (2008) Behavioral plasticity in rainbow trout

(Oncorhynchus mykiss) with divergent coping styles: When doves become hawks. *Hormones and*

Behavior, **54**, 534–538.

Schjolden, J., Backström, T., Pulman, K.G.T., Pottinger, T.G. & Winberg, S. (2005) Divergence in

behavioural responses to stress in two strains of rainbow trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss) with

contrasting stress responsiveness. *Hormones and Behavior*, **48**, 537–544.

Segerstrom, S.C. & Miller, G.E. (2004) Psychological stress and the human immune system: a meta-

analytic study of 30 years of inquiry. *Psychological bulletin*, **130**, 601–30.

Self, S.G. & Liang, K. (1987) Asymptotic properties of maximum likelihood estimators and likelihood

ratio tests under nonstandard conditions. *J. Am. Stat. Assoc.*, **82**, 605–610.

Sopinka, N.M., Patterson, L.D., Redfern, J.C., Pleizier, N.K., Belanger, C.B., Midwood, J.D., Crossin, G.T. &

Cooke, S.J. (2015) Manipulating glucocorticoids in wild animals: Basic and applied perspectives.

Conservation Physiology, **3**, 1–16.

Stamps, J.A. (2007) Growth-mortality tradeoffs and "personality traits" in animals. *Ecology Letters*, **10**,

355–363.

Stirling, D.G., Réale, D. & Roff, D.A. (2002) Selection, structure and the heritability of behaviour. *Journal*

of Evolutionary Biology, **15**, 277–289.

Stöwe, M., Rosivall, B., Drent, P.J. & Möstl, E. (2010) Selection for fast and slow exploration affects

baseline and stress-induced corticosterone excretion in Great tit nestlings, Parus major.

Hormones and Behavior, **58**, 864–871.

Taff, C.C. & Vitousek, M.N. (2016) Endocrine Flexibility: Optimizing Phenotypes in a Dynamic World?

Trends in Ecology and Evolution, **31**, 476–488.

Tarlow, E.M. & Blumstein, D.T. (2007) Evaluating methods to quantify anthropogenic stressors on wild

animals. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, **102**, 429–451.

Thomson, J.S., Watts, P.C., Pottinger, T.G. & Sneddon, L.U. (2011) Physiological and genetic correlates of

boldness: Characterising the mechanisms of behavioural variation in rainbow trout,

Oncorhynchus mykiss. *Hormones and Behavior*, **59**, 67–74.

Toms, C.N., Echevarria, D.J. & Jouandot, D.J. (2010) A Methodology Review of Personality-Related

Studies in Fish: Focus on the Shy-Bold Axis of Behaviour. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, **26**, 12.

Trenzado, C.E., Carrick, T.R. & Pottinger, T.G. (2003) Divergence of endocrine and metabolic responses

to stress in two rainbow trout lines selected for differing cortisol responsiveness to stress.

General and Comparative Endocrinology, **133**, 332–340.

Veenema, A.H., Meijer, O.C., de Kloet, E.R. & Koolhaas, J.M. (2003a) Genetic selection for coping style

predicts stressor susceptibility. *Journal of Neuroendocrinology*, **15**, 256–267.

Veenema, A.H., Meijer, O.C., De Kloet, E.R., Koolhaas, J.M. & Bohus, B.G. (2003b) Differences in basal and

stress-induced HPA regulation of wild house mice selected for high and low aggression.

Hormones and Behavior, **43**, 197–204.

Visscher, P.M. (2006) A Note on the Asymptotic Distribution of Likelihood Ratio Tests to Test Variance

Components. *Twin Research and Human Genetics*, **9**, 490–495.

White, S.J., Houslay, T.M. & Wilson, A.J. (2018) Evolutionary genetics of personality in the Trinidadian

guppy II: sexual dimorphism and genotype-by-sex interactions. *Heredity*.

White, S.J., Kells, T.J. & Wilson, A.J. (2016) Metabolism, personality and pace of life in the Trinidadian

guppy, Poecilia reticulata. *Behaviour*, **153**, 1517–1543.

White, S.J. & Wilson, A.J. (2018) Evolutionary genetics of personality in the Trinidadian guppy I:

maternal and additive genetic effects across ontogeny. *Heredity*.

Wickham, H. (2017) tidyverse: Easily Install and Load "Tidyverse" Packages.

Wilson, A.J., Réale, D., Clements, M.N., Morrissey, M.B., Postma, E., Walling, C.A., Kruuk, L.E.B. & Nussey,

D.H. (2010) An ecologist's guide to the animal model. *The Journal of animal ecology*, **79**, 13–26.

Wingfield, J.C. (2003) Control of behavioural strategies for capricious environments. *Animal Behaviour*,

66, 807–816.

Wingfield, J.C. & Kitaysky, A.S. (2002) Endocrine responses to unpredictable environmental events:

Stress or anti-stress hormones? *Integr Comp Biol*, **42**, 600–609.

Wingfield, J.C., Maney, D.L., Breuner, C.W., Jacobs, J.D., Lynn, S., Ramenofsky, M. & Richardson, R.D.

(1998) Ecological Bases of Hormone-Behavior Interactions: The "Emergency Life History Stage."

American Zoologist, **38**, 191–206.

Wolak, M.E. (2012) Nadiv: An R package to create relatedness matrices for estimating non-additive

genetic variances in animal models. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, **3**, 792–796.

Wolf, M., van Doorn, G.S., Leimar, O. & Weissing, F.J. (2007) Life-history trade-offs favour the evolution

of animal personalities. *Nature*, **447**, 581–4.

Zar, J.H. (1996) *Biostatistical Analysis*. Prentice-Hall International, Inc., London.