1 Quantitative Analysis of Effects of a Single ⁶⁰Co Gamma Ray

² Point Exposure on Time-Dependent Change in Locomotor

3 Activity in Rats

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23

24 **Abstract**

Fatigue is one of the earliest nonspecific symptoms of radiation exposure in humans, 25but its etiology, mechanism, and dose dependency remain unexplained. Investigating initial 2627behavioral changes caused by irradiation of animals might provide important information to aid understanding of early health effects of radiation exposure and clinical features of 2829radiation injury. Although previous studies in rodents suggested that radiation exposure leads to reduced activity, detailed properties of the effects were unrevealed due to a lack of 30 proper statistical analysis, which is needed to better elucidate details of changes in 31locomotor activity. Ten-week-old male Wistar rats were subjected to single point external 32whole-body irradiation with 60Co gamma rays at 0, 2.0, 3.5, and 5.0 Gy (4 rats per group). 33 2

Infrared sensors were used to continuously record locomotor activity of each rat. Cumulative 34number of movements during the night was defined as "activity" for each day. A non-linear 35mixed effects model accounting for individual differences and daily fluctuation of activity was 36 applied to analyze the rats' longitudinal locomotor data. Despite a small number of animals 37per group, our statistical method successfully revealed characteristics of the changes in 3839locomotor activity after radiation exposure, showing that 1) reduction in activity occurred immediately-and in a dose-dependent manner-after irradiation and 2) recovery to 40 pre-irradiation levels required almost one week, with the same recovery rate in each dose 41 group. In addition to improving our understanding of radiation effects on locomotor activity, 42this statistical framework should be useful to analyze other data with similar structure. 4344

45 **1. Introduction**

In humans, one of the earliest effects of radiation exposure to the whole body or to a large portion of the whole body is a prodromal period of nonspecific signs and symptoms such as nausea, emesis, fatigue, fever, and anorexia [1–2]. The prodromal syndrome is generally mild or absent at total body doses of 1 Gy or less and occurs from minutes to days following exposure [3–5]. However, it is unclear to what extent these symptoms are psychogenic versus radiation-induced. Therefore, the relationship between initial symptoms and radiation dose is not well understood.

52Early effects of irradiation have been studied in regard to radiation therapy. In a detailed 53study of the incidence and severity of side effects during the course of radiation therapy, fatigue was 54the most prevalent and the most severe symptom reported by patients [6]. With fractionated doses of 55radiation for cancer treatment, radiation-induced fatigue sets in within a few days after start of 56treatment and decreases after treatment completion [7]. Although the underlying mechanisms of 57fatigue have been studied under several disease conditions, an understanding of the etiology, 58mechanisms, and risk factors of radiation-induced fatigue remains elusive, and this symptom 59remains poorly managed [8-10]. Investigating initial radiation-related behavioral changes by using 60 animals might provide important information to aid understanding of the health effects of radiation exposure and clinical features of radiation injury. 61

In animals, there have been many studies of radiation-induced behavioral effects, and 6263 performance decrement after irradiation has been noted in several reports. A sub-lethal dose of 64 gamma radiation suppressed aggressive behavior in male mice [11], a lethal dose of gamma 65radiation suppressed locomotor activity in mice [12], and a sub-lethal dose of X-irradiation suppressed volitional activity in rats [13]. Landauer (2002) provided a review of expected 6667 performance decrement after radiation exposure [14]. These reports showed that ionizing radiation temporarily suppresses animals' behavior, but that the effect does not continue for a long period. 68 69 York et al. reported that, 6 h after gamma irradiation with 50 or 200 cGy, spontaneous locomotor

activity in mice was 35% or 36% lower, respectively, than in sham irradiated controls, and that their
activity recovered to sham irradiated level 12 h after irradiation [15].

Although many animal behavioral experiments have a time-dependent data structure with variation among individuals, analyses have typically been performed only at individual time points with no parameterization of the trend in activity over time. Therefore, quantitative analyses have not been made directly on the chronological features. To obtain more detailed and accurate information from data obtained in animal behavior experiments with time-dependent structure and individual variability, application of statistical theory would suggest that analysis based on a mixed effects model [16–17] is both appropriate and effective.

79The purpose of the present study was therefore to examine in detail the changes over time in locomotor activity of rats immediately after external irradiation with ⁶⁰Co gamma rays by using such 80 81 statistical models. Specifically, we aimed to assess the time when reduction of locomotor activity 82 begins, the time when locomotor activity recovers to pre-irradiation level, the dose dependency of the degree of reduction in locomotor activity, and the dose dependency of the rate of recovery. There are 83 individual differences in animal behavior that cannot be ignored, even if the animal type, gender, and 84 85weight are uniform. In addition, when animals are observed over a long period of time, it is expected that common changes in behavior will occur due to indoor conditions such as temperature, humidity, 86 87 and noise, which can change daily, and it is necessary to adjust for these sources of variation.

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88 **2. Materials and Methods**

89 2.1. Experimental Design and Data Collection

2.1.1. Animals. 90 The experiment was approved by the Animal Experiment Committee of 91 Semey Medical University, Republic of Kazakhstan, and was conducted in accordance with the 92Institutional Guide for Animal Care and Use. Ten one-week-old male Wistar rats were purchased 93 from the Kazakh Scientific Center of Quarantine and Zoonotic Diseases, Almaty, Kazakhstan and 94 allowed free access to a basal diet and tap water. Animal rooms were maintained at 19-22 °C with 95 relative humidity 30–70% and a 12 h light cycle. Body weights were measured twice a week during 96 the experiment. At 11 weeks of age, the rats were randomly divided into four groups: control (4 rats) 97 and three irradiated groups (4 rats/group). Each irradiated group received 2, 3.5, or 5.0 Gy of whole 98body gamma irradiation. Controls were handled with all conditions the same as with the other groups, 99except that they were not irradiated (dose 0 Gy). The LD₅₀₍₃₀₎ for this strain of Wistar rats is 7 Gy with 100 cobalt-60 radiation [18].

2.1.2. Irradiation with ⁶⁰Co gamma-rays Irradiation was performed with a Teragam K-2
 unit (UJP Praha, Praha-Zbraslav, Czech Republic) at the Regional Oncology Dispensary of Semey.
 Rats were irradiated at 1 m distance from the ⁶⁰Co source at a dose rate of 2.6 Gy/min. Half of the
 radiation dose was administered from the top and the other half was administered from the bottom. A

radiophotoluminescence glass dosimeter, GD-302M [Chiyoda Technol Co., Tokyo, Japan], was used
 for measuring the doses.

2.1.3. Measurements of daily locomotor activity Locomotor activities (hereafter 107 108 abbreviated as "activities") of the rats were measured with infra-red sensors (Model NS-AS01; Neuroscience, Inc., Tokyo, Japan) placed 16 cm above the open-top cages (26.5 x 43 x 14.5 cm). 109 110 Numbers of movements were counted on the basis of change in the strength of infra-red rays emitted 111 from the animals. The rats were placed in separate cages, each outfitted with a sensor, and 112movements were continuously counted by a computerized analysis system (16 channel Multi-digital Counter System [MDC] and DAS System software, Neuroscience, Inc. Tokyo, Japan). 113114 Measurements were started 3 days before irradiation and continued for 20 days after irradiation.

2.1.4. Ethical approval All applicable international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of animals were followed. The animal experiment was approved by the Animal Experiment Committee of Semey Medical University, Republic of Kazakhstan (Protocol No 5 dated 16.04.2014), and conducted in accordance with the Institutional Guide for Animal Care and Use.

119 **2.2. Statistical analyses**

120 2.2.1. Definition of daily activity Because rats are nocturnal animals [19], cumulative 121 number of movements was recorded during the period between 18:00 and 06:00; the number of 7

122	movements so recorded was defined as activity of a rat in one day. As shown in Fig 1, rates of
123	increase in cumulative movements (slopes) were steeper during nighttime (18:00-05:59) than
124	during daytime (06:00–17:59); i.e., the rats were more active at night, as expected.
125	
126	Fig 1. Cumulative number of movements of each of the 16 rats over a 36-hour period.
127	
128	This suggests that the activity defined in this study represents the nocturnal characteristic of rats and
129	it shows that the measure has relevance as an indicator of a rat's activity.
130	2.2.2. Data modeling Logarithmic values of daily activity of each rat as a function of elapsed
131	time relative to day of irradiation are shown for each group in Fig 2.
132	
133	Fig 2. Daily activity of each of four rats belonging to four groups. The vertical axis shows
134	logarithm of daily activity (number of nocturnal movements) and the horizontal axis shows elapsed
135	time in days relative to the day of irradiation (indicated by arrows): (a) the control group, (b) 2.0 Gy
136	group, (c) 3.5 Gy group, and (d) 5.0 Gy group.
137	
138	An acute decrease in activity after irradiation followed by quick recovery to the pre-irradiation level can
139	be seen in every exposed group, whereas no such change or trend was observed in the control

group. There also was large inter-animal variation with daily fluctuation in activity. Therefore we

141 assumed a non-linear mixed effects model [16–17] that takes into account the dose dependency of 142 the decrease in activity, the dose dependency of the recovery rate, individual differences among 143 animals, and daily fluctuations within individual animals. For comparison, we fit a simple non-linear 144 regression model in which individual differences and daily fluctuations were not taken into account.

145 **2.2.3.** Non-linear mixed effects model (NLMM) Let y_{ii} be the log transformed

146 observed activity of rat *i* at time *t* in days since irradiation with dose D_i (t = -3,...,20; i = 1,...,16),

147 where "t = 0" indicates day of irradiation. We assume the model

148
$$y_{it} = f(t \mid D_i, \theta) + \delta_i + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

140

149
$$f(t \mid D_i, \theta) = \xi_0 + \xi_1 t + \xi_2 t^2 - (\beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 D_i^2) \cdot \exp\left[\left\{-\omega_1 \cdot e^{-\omega_2 (D_i - D_0)}\right\} t\right] \cdot h(t)$$

150
$$\delta_i \square N(0, \psi^2), \ \eta_t \square N(0, \varphi^2), \ \varepsilon_{it} \square N(0, \sigma^2), \ t = -3, -2, \dots, 20, \ i = 1, \dots, 16,$$
 (1),

where $\theta = (\xi_0, \xi_1, \xi_2, \beta_1, \beta_2, \omega_1, \omega_2)$ denotes unknown parameters for fixed effects to be estimated. The term $\xi_0 + \xi_1 t + \xi_2 t^2$ expresses the time dependency of activities without radiation exposure. The term $\beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 D_i^2$ expresses whether the dose effect in the initial decrease is linear $(\beta_2 = 0)$ or quadratic $(\beta_2 \neq 0)$, and the term $-\omega_1 \cdot e^{-\omega_2(D_1 - D_0)}$ denotes whether the recovery rate depends on dose $(\omega_2 \neq 0)$ or not $(\omega_2 = 0)$. D_0 denotes a fixed pre-assigned dose value for covariate centering (in this study 2.75 Gy is adopted), $\Delta = (\psi^2, \varphi^2, \sigma^2)$ are unknown dispersion parameters to be estimated, and the terms δ_i , η_i and ε_{ii} represent independent random effects 9

158 due to individual variability, daily fluctuation, and measurement error, respectively. The function
159
$$h(t):h(t) = 0 \ (t < 0), \ h(t) = 1 \ (t \ge 0)$$
 denotes the Heaviside function of t to indicate pre- and
160 post-irradiation dichotomy.
161 Let $\mathbf{y} = (\mathbf{y}_1, ..., \mathbf{y}_{16})', \ \mathbf{y}_i = (y_{t-3}, ..., y_{t,20})', \ i = 1, ..., 16$. It follows from Model (1) that \mathbf{y}
162 has a multivariate normal distribution with mean $\mu(\mathbf{0}) = (\mu_1(\mathbf{0})', ..., \mu_{16}(\mathbf{0})')', \ \mu_i(\mathbf{0}) = f(\mathbf{t} | D_i, \partial),$
163 $\mathbf{t} = (-3, -2, ..., 20)', \ i = 1, ..., 16, \ and \ variance-covariance matrix$
164 $\Omega(\mathbf{\Delta}) = I_{16} \otimes (\rho^2 J_{41} + \sigma^2 I_{41}) + J_{16} \otimes \psi^2 I_{41}, \ where \ I_m$ denotes an m-dimensional unit matrix, and
165 $J_m = \mathbf{1}_m \otimes \mathbf{1}_m'$. Then the likelihood function of $(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{\Delta})$ can be expressed as
166 $L(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{\Delta}) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^8} \sqrt{|\Omega(\mathbf{\Delta})|} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \{\mathbf{y} - \mu(\mathbf{0})\}' \Omega(\mathbf{\Delta})^{-1} \{\mathbf{y} - \mu(\mathbf{0})\}\right)$. Therefore, the maximum likelihood
167 estimates of $(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{A})$, denoted by $(\hat{\mathbf{0}}, \hat{\mathbf{A}})$, are obtained by minimizing the quantity
168 $Q(\theta, \mathbf{\Delta}) = \log(|\Omega(\mathbf{\Delta})|) + \{\mathbf{y} - \mu(\mathbf{0})\}' \Omega(\mathbf{\Delta})^{-1} \{\mathbf{y} - \mu(\mathbf{0})\} + 16 \times \log(2\pi)$. When $\psi^2 = \phi^2 = 0$, Model (1)
169 reduces to an ordinary non-linear regression model (NLRM).
170 **2.2.4. Algorithm and software for implementation of data analyses** The
171 unknown parameters were estimated by using an algorithm for optimization with the
172 limited-memory version of the Broyden–Fletcher–Goldfarb–Shanno method [20] to maximize the

likelihood derived from the model (1), and the AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) [21] and BIC 173

10

- 174 (Bayesian information criterion) [22–23] were calculated. The function 'optim' in the R software ver.
- 175 3.5.1 was used for carrying out numerical analyses.

176	Maximum likelihood (ML) or restricted maximum likelihood (REML) [24] estimates of the
177	parameters in the linear mixed-effects models can be computed with the "Imer" function in the
178	"Ime4" package for R [25]. In this study, the ML method was used to compare the goodness-of-fit
179	of models with the AIC criterion. Estimation results were almost the same with both methods.

180 **3. Results**

181 **3.1. Result of Regression Analysis**

3.1.1. Estimation of fixed effect parameters. Regression analysis was first performed with all parameters of the NLMM (full NLMM), then model selection was applied by choosing the smallest AIC to determine the optimal NLMM (optimal NLMM). The full NLRM and optimal NLRM were defined in the same way. Estimates of fixed-effect parameters and their 95% confidence intervals under the full and optimal NLMM are shown in Tables 1(a) and (b), respectively; those under the full and optimal NLRM are shown in Tables 2(a) and (b), respectively.

Table 1. Estimated fixed effects parameters in the full NLMM (a) and those in the optimal
 NLMM (b).

190	(a)
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			Full NLMM			
		_	95% Confide	ence Interval		
Parameter	Estimate	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound	p-value	
β ₁	0.069	0.015	0.041	0.098	0.000	**
β2	-0.007	0.003	-0.012	-0.001	0.023	*
ω_1	10.391	4.808	0.968	19.815	0.015	*
ω_2	0.082	0.166	-0.243	0.407	0.310	
ξ ₀	4.326	0.020	4.288	4.364	0.000	**
ξ1	0.003	0.041	-0.076	0.083	0.468	
ξ2	-0.008	0.022	-0.052	0.035	0.353	
			*	p < 0.01, *: 0.	$01 \le p < 0.03$	5
	Estimated	random ef	fect parameters: (ψ	$(0.0013)^2, \ \phi^2, \ \sigma^2) = (0.0013)^2$	8, 0.0019, 0	.001
			Log-likelihood	: 643.47, AIC: -1266	6.94, BIC∶ –	1227
			Optimal NLM			
Parameter	Estimate	SE	95% Confide	Upper bound	_ p-value	
	0.066	0.016	0.033	0.098	0.000	**
β ₁	-0.006	0.003	-0.012	0.001	0.000	*
	9.063	2.949	3.283	14.843	0.000	**
ω ₁ ξ ₀	9.005 4.319	0.014	4.290	4.347	0.000	**
50	4.010	0.014	4.200	**: <i>p</i> < 0.01, *:		05
				p < 0.01, .	$0.01 \ge p < 0.$	05
	Estimated I	random effe	ect parameters: $(\overline{\psi}^2)$	-	-	
	Estimated i	random effe	ect parameters: $(\overline{\psi}^2)$	$, \varphi^2, \sigma^2) = (0.0018)$, 0.0019, 0.0	0015
	Estimated I	random effe		-	, 0.0019, 0.0	0015
	Estimated	random effe		$, \varphi^2, \sigma^2) = (0.0018)$, 0.0019, 0.0	0015
Table 2. Esti				$\phi^2, \ \sigma^2 = (0.0018, 0.0018$, 0.0019, 0.0), BIC: –124	0015 4.15
			Log-likelihood: 64	$\phi^2, \ \sigma^2 = (0.0018, 0.0018$, 0.0019, 0.0), BIC: –124	0015 4.15
Table 2. Estin NLRM (b).			Log-likelihood: 64	$\phi^2, \ \sigma^2 = (0.0018, 0.0018$, 0.0019, 0.0), BIC: –124	0015 4.15
			Log-likelihood: 64	$\phi^2, \ \sigma^2 = (0.0018, 0.0018$, 0.0019, 0.0), BIC: –124	0015 4.15

				Full NLRM			
			_	95% Confide	ence Interval	_	
	Parameter	Estimate	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound	p-value	
	β1	0.075	0.023	0.030	0.120	0.001	**
	β2	-0.006	0.005	-0.016	0.004	0.104	
	ω ₁	3.922	1.404	1.170	6.674	0.003	**
	ω_2	0.574	0.447	-0.303	1.450	0.100	
	ξ ₀	4.333	0.007	4.320	4.346	0.000	**
	ξı	0.003	0.016	-0.028	0.033	0.435	
	ξ2	-0.011	0.008	-0.027	0.006	0.107	
204					**: <i>p</i> < 0.01, *:	$0.01 \le p < 0$	0.05
205				Estima	ted residual variance	$= \sigma^2 = 0.00$	502
206				Log-likelihood	l: 744.091, AIC: –928	8.17, BIC: -8	83.56
207							
208							
209							
210	(b)						
				Ontimal NI R	M		

				Optimal NLF	RM		
				95% Confid	lence Interval		
	Parameter	Estimate	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound	p-value	
	β1	0.049	0.005	0.039	0.059	0.000	**
	ω1	5.973	1.726	2.590	9.356	0.000	**
	ξo	4.334	0.006	4.323	4.345	0.002	**
	ξ2	-0.010	0.003	-0.016	-0.004	0.000	**
211					**: $p < 0.01$, *:	$0.01 \le p < 0$	0.05

212	Estimated residual variance: $\sigma^2 = 0.0058$
213	Log-likelihood: 742.12, AIC: -930.25, BIC: -899.02

214

3.1.2. Estimation of the random effects parameters. In the optimal NLMM,

variances of the random effects due to individual differences, daily variation, and measurement

217error were 0.0018, 0.0019, and 0.0015, which account for 35%, 36%, and 29% of the total variance, respectively. Predictions of individual differences $(\hat{\delta}_1, \hat{\delta}_2, \dots, \hat{\delta}_{16})$ and those of daily fluctuation 218 $(\hat{\eta}_{_{-3}}, \hat{\eta}_{_{-2}}, \cdots, \hat{\eta}_{_{20}})$ were obtained by calculating posterior means. The predictions $\hat{\delta}_i$ in each of the 219four groups (control group and three irradiated groups) and the predictions $\hat{\eta}_t$ by day are shown in 220panels (a) and (b) of Fig 3, respectively. 221222Fig 3. Predictions of random values. Predictions of random values by individual $\hat{\delta_i}$ by group are 223shown in panel (a) and predictions of random values by day $\hat{\eta}_t$ are shown in panel (b). 224225Residuals in the optimal NLMM and in the optimal NLRM are given by $y_{it} - \hat{f}(t | D_i, \theta) - \hat{\delta}_i - \hat{\eta}_t$ and 226 $y_{_{it}} - \hat{f}(t \,|\, D_i, heta)$, respectively. The standard deviations of residual errors in the optimal NLMM 227 228and optimal NLRM were 0.038 and 0.071, respectively. The distributions of residuals in the NLMM 229and NLRM are shown in Fig 4. 230Fig 4. Parallel boxplots of residual errors in the non-linear mixed model (NLMM) and ordinary 231232non-linear regression model (NLRM). 2333.2. Comparison of goodness of fit of the NLMM and the NLRM 23414

235	There is a large difference between the AICs of the optimal NLMM and the optimal NLRM,
236	which were -1271.80 and -930.25, respectively (See Table 1 (b) and Table 2 (b)). The measurement
237	error variances of the NLMM and NLRM were 0.0015 and 0.0058 (See Table 1 (b) and Table 2 (b)).
238	Therefore the fit of the NLMM was preferable to that of the NLRM in terms of prediction and accuracy.
239	The estimated time dependency of activity in each group under the optimal NLMM is shown in Fig 5.
240	
241	Fig 5. Estimated mean trends of daily locomotor activity in rats by dose group under the
242	optimal NLMM
243	
244	In each of the irradiated groups, activity decreased immediately after irradiation but recovered to the
245	pre-irradiation level within a few days with a common recovery rate irrespective of dose.

Discussion

247	One of the advantages of using the more complex NLMM structure, as demonstrated in this
248	paper, is that a second-order dose dependency could be detected in the initial decrease, which was
249	not found with the NRLM (which estimated a linear dependency). Estimated magnitudes of initial
250	decreases at $t = 0$ by dose group and their 95% confidence intervals in the optimal NLMM and
251	those in the optimal NLRM are shown in Fig 6.

253	Fig 6. Fitted dose response curves from the optimal NLMM and the optimal NLRM. The
254	estimated magnitudes of decrease at $t = 0$ by dose group and their 95% confidence intervals and
255	fitted dose-response curves with dotted line from the NLMM and the NLRM are shown in panels (a)
256	and (b), respectively. Cross marks show observed data of individual rats. The fitted dose-response
257	curve from the optimal NLMM was a downward convex quadratic curve.

258

The plots of predictions of individual differences $\hat{\delta}_i$ by dose group (Fig 3 (a)) show that the assumption of homoscedasticity for distributions of individual difference between the four dose groups seems to be satisfied. This means that the random assignment of rats to the four groups was effective in terms of individual differences. The plots of predictions of time-dependent daily fluctuation $\hat{\eta}_i$ (Fig 3 (b)) show that the assumption of independency of each of the random variables η_i seems to be satisfied. The Durbin Watson statistic [26] for $\hat{\eta}_i$ was 2.33 (p-value 0.902), indicating that no strong autocorrelation is observed in daily fluctuation.

Because acute changes were the focus in this experiment, longer observation was not performed, but it is necessary to investigate late effects. The irradiation was a single and sub-lethal dose, so it is considered that damage was acute, disappearing in a short period of time, and resilience to allow recovery from the damage was not affected by irradiation. The effects of chronic low dose exposure remain as future issues to be addressed. As one important example of the need for assessing effects of chronic exposure, a giant earthquake of magnitude M9 struck East Japan on March 11, 2011. Subsequently a 'tsunami' engulfed the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant (FDNPP). As a result, FDNPP reactors 1-3 suffered meltdown and significant amounts of radioactive materials have been released into the environment [27]. The dose to the public is estimated to be low [28], but many Japanese people are worried about the resulting health effects of chronic low dose exposure.

277 In the present study, effects of irradiation on behavior of rats were investigated efficiently, 278despite a small number of animals with large individual differences. This was achieved by using a 279statistical method that accounts for inter-animal differences and daily fluctuation in activity-a 280non-linear mixed model fit to repeated measurements. With such an efficient approach, we were able to demonstrate a temporary, but dose-dependent, decrease in activity following irradiation and a 281282dose-independent common recovery rate. The statistical framework for analyzing longitudinal 283locomotor data in this study should be generally applicable to other repeated measurement data with 284similar structure.

285 **Supporting Information**

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288 **Reference**

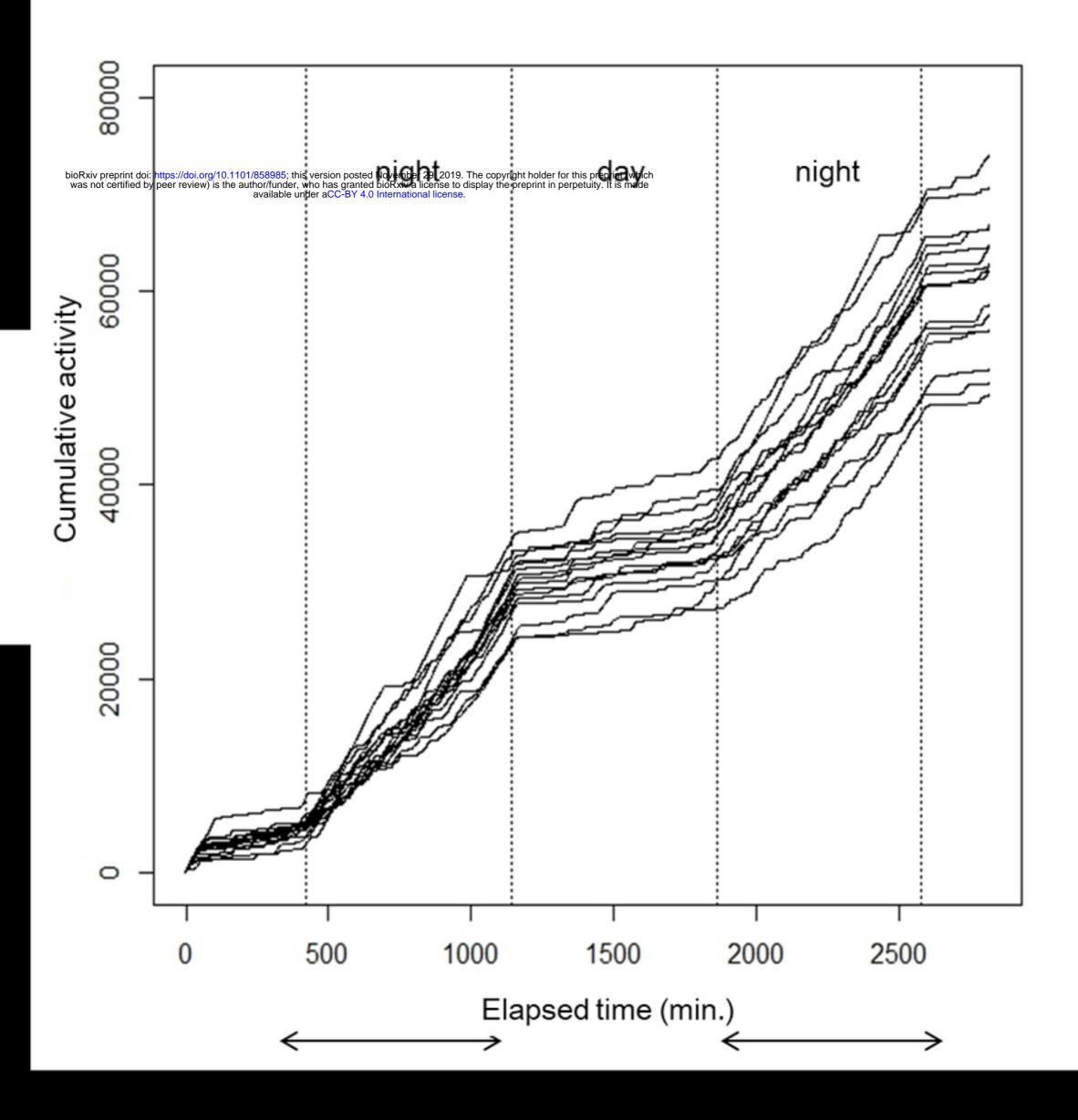
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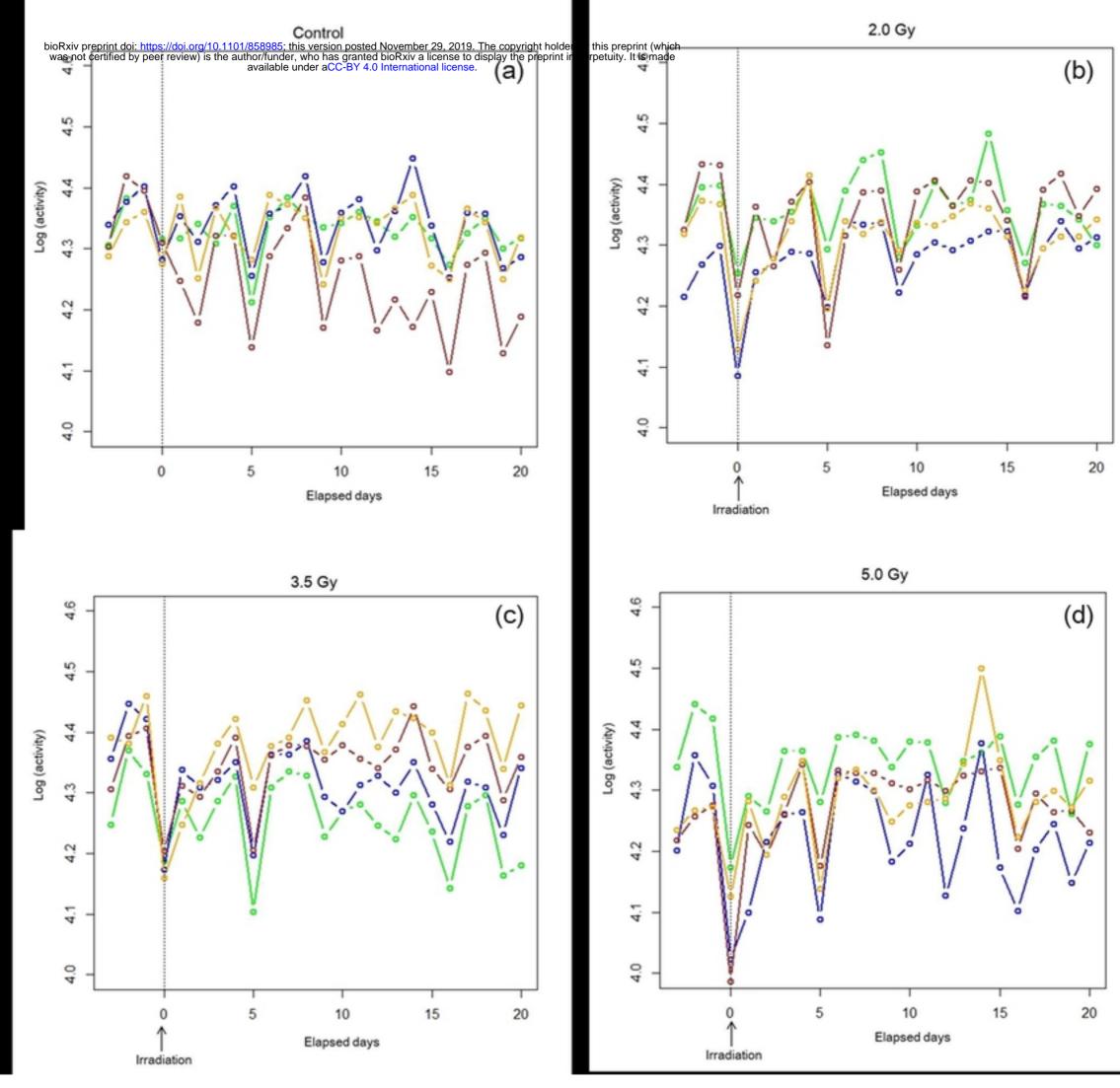
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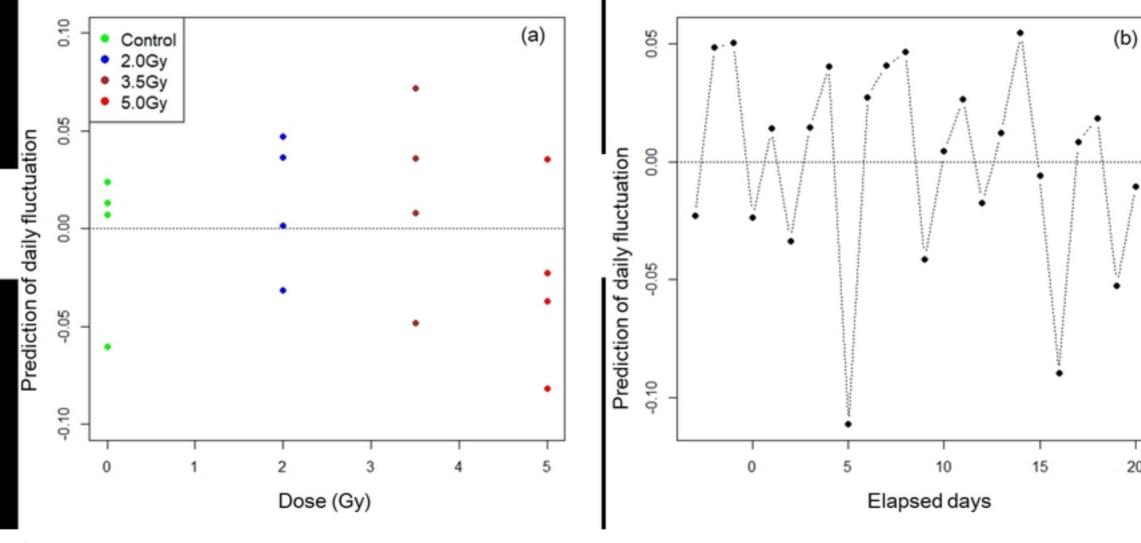
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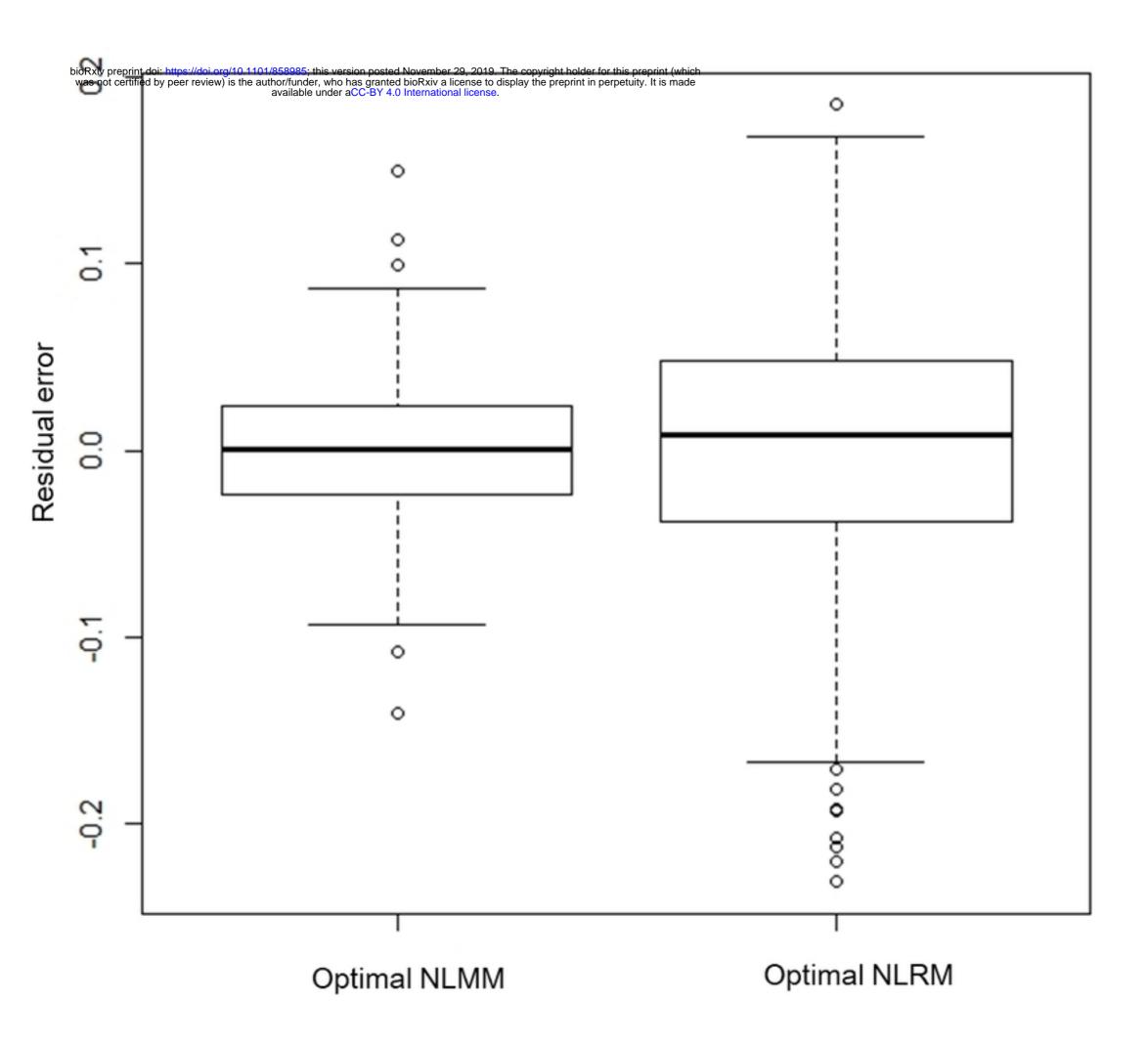
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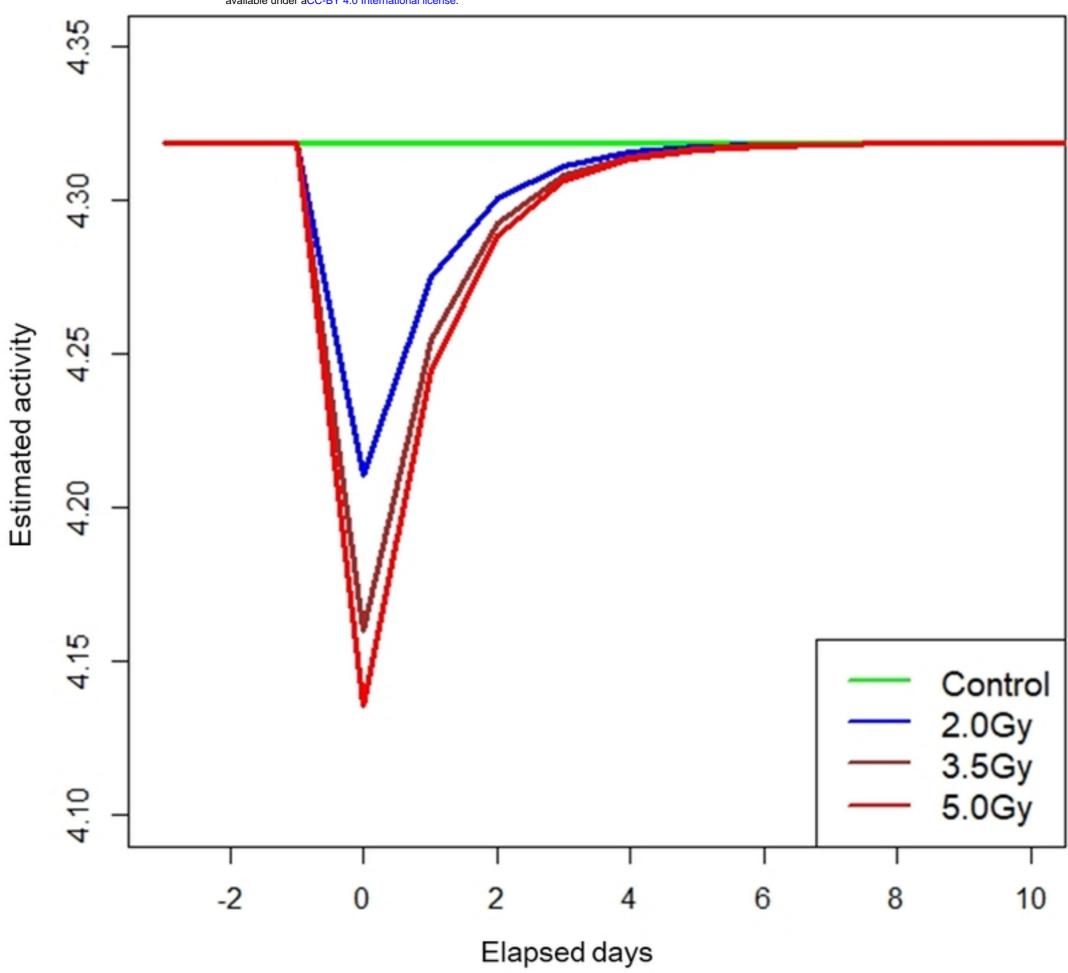
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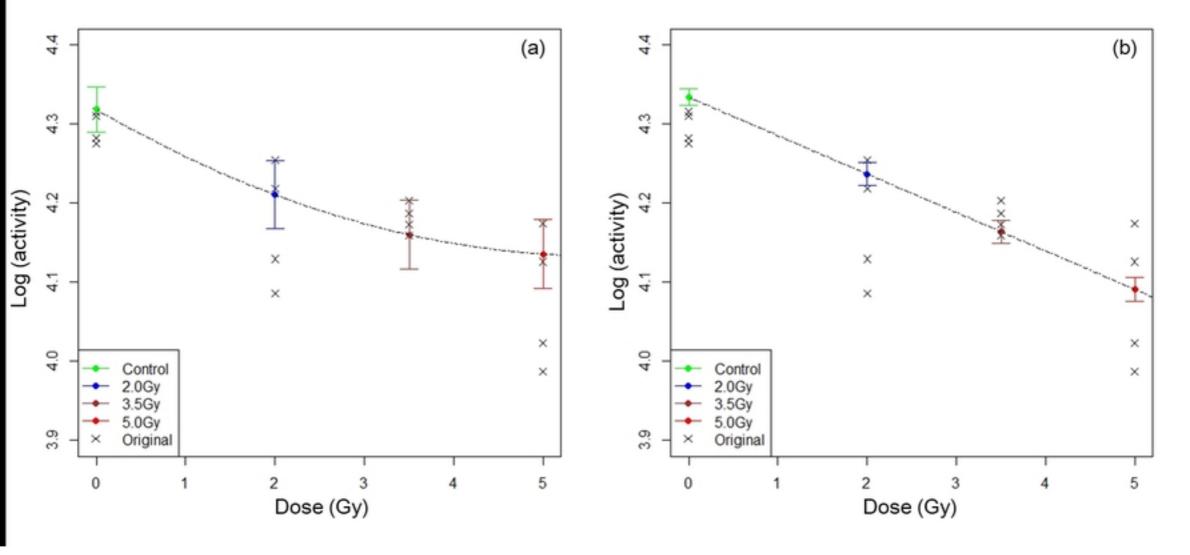
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