Applied Neuroscience

- Columbia
- Science
- Honors
- Program
- Fall 2017



Introduction to Neural Circuits

Objective: Experimental Design in Neuroscience

Agenda:

- 1. Neural Circuits
 - Anatomy
 - Physiology
- 2. Sleep
 - EEG



Neural Circuits

Neural Circuit: Functional entity of inter-connected neurons that is able to regulate its own activity using a feedback loop

Features:

- 1. Neurons do not function in isolation
- 2. Neurons are grouped according to function
- 3. Synaptic connections define the circuit

Types of Connections

- 1. Axon-Dendrite
- 2. Neuron-Muscle

Types of Neurotransmitters Used

Location and Length of Connections



Neo-cortex: Part of cerebral cortex concerned with sight and hearing in mammals, regarding as the site of higher intelligence *The neo-cortex has six layers of tissue.*

Pyramidal neuron: Primary component of cortical tissue and named for triangular cell body (soma)

The Neuron Doctrine



"The neuron is the appropriate basis for understanding the computational and functional properties of the brain" (1891)

The Neuron



Properties of a Neuron

- Contents of the neuron enclosed within a cell membrane, which is a lipid bilayer
- The bilayer is impermeable to charged ions
- Each neuron maintains a potential difference across its membrane
 - Inside is -70 to -80 mV relative to outside
 - Ionic pump maintains

 -70 mV difference by
 expelling Na⁺ out and
 allowing K⁺ ions in



[K⁺], [A⁻] [Na⁺], [Cl⁻], [Ca²⁺]

Electrophysiology of a Neuron



Nernst Equation

E = Membrane Potential at which current flow due to diffusion of ions is balanced by electric forces



[K+]

[K⁺], [A⁻]

Cell Membrane Water filled pore [Na⁺], [Cl⁻], [Ca²⁺] lon channel (channel protein) Outside Extracellular fluid Hydrophilic polar head Phospholipid Hydrophobic bilayer non-polar tail Inside Intracellular -[Na⁺], [Cl⁻], [Ca²⁺] fluid

Membrane Proteins: The Gatekeepers

- Properties in membranes act as pores or channels that are ion-specific
- Ionic channels are gated
 - Voltage-gated: Probability of opening depends on membrane voltage
 - Chemically-gated: Binding to a chemical causes channel to open (neurotransmitters)
 - Mechanically-gated: Sensitive to pressure or stretch (sensory neurons)



Neuronal Signaling

- Different types of gated channels are involved in neuronal signaling
 - Graded Potentials: travel over <u>short distances</u> and are activated by the opening of <u>mechanically</u> <u>or chemically gated</u> <u>channels</u>
 - Action Potentials: travel over long distances and are generated by the opening of voltage-gated channels



Action Potential

- Depolarization: a decrease in the potential difference between the inside and outside of the cell
- Repolarization: an increase in the potential difference between the inside and outside of the cell
- Hyperpolarization: returning to the resting membrane potential from either direction



Action Potential



Action Potential Propagation

The action potential is propagated along the axon of the neuron

Voltage-gated sodium channels

Voltage-gated potassium channels





Test Your Understanding

Circle whichever is greater, A or B. If A = B, circle both:

- A. permeability of a neuronal membrane to Na⁺ during the rise phase of an action potential
- B. permeability to K⁺ at the same time

11.

Ι.

- A. permeability of the resting membrane to K⁺
- B. permeability of the membrane to K⁺ during the falling phase of the action potential

III.

- A. concentration of K⁺ in the intracellular fluid before the action potential
- B. concentration of K⁺ in the intracellular fluid immediately after the action potential

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To Identify Neural Circuits







Genetic Screens

Step 1: How do we find one neuron involved in the circuit?

- (A) Forward genetic screen Mutagenesis by X-rays, chemicals or transposons (lightning bolt in diagram) generates mutant flies with abnormal phenotypes. This is a starting point for gene discovery.
- (B) Reverse genetic screen Targeted mutagenesis by RNAi or CRISPR/Cas9 to understand the gene's biological function

Genetic Screens in Drosophila melanogaster



GAL4: yeast transcriptional activator used to regulate gene expression in *Drosophila* by inserting the UAS next to a gene of interest

UAS: upstream activating sequence

Test Your Understanding

A researcher is conducting a forward genetic screen of GAL4 lines in *Drosophila.* Which of the following effector pairs can be attached to UAS for characterization of anatomy <u>and</u> behavior?

- I. GFP and Halo-rhodopsin
- II. RFP and Channel-rhodopsin
- III. mCherry and Archae-rhodopsin

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Refining Gene Expression

<u>Step 1:</u> How do we find *one neuron* involved in the circuit? Genetic screens generate expression patterns with more than one cell type. It is possible to achieve single-cell labeling if expression is limited to the overlap of two patterns. In *Drosophila,* this is known as the **split-GAL4 system.**



AD: GAL4 activating domain **DBD:** DNA-binding domain

AD and DBD proteins alone are not able to promote gene expression. Only cells where both enhancers are active produce a functional GAL4 protein.

Split-GAL4 System



Luan et al, 2006; Pfeiffer et al, 2010



Split-GAL4 System

This technique enables detailed anatomical characterization:

- Membrane and synapse resolution
- Cell polarity determination

MCFO is Multi-Color Flp-Out, an alternative technique for refining patterns

Refining Gene Expression



Behavioral Screen

Systematic inactivation or activation of neurons by optogenetics



Thermogenetic Screen in Drosophila melanogaster



Show Copyrighted Video: <u>Robie et al.,</u> <u>Cell 2017</u>

Step 2: Identify additional functional neurons.

- A. Continue to use systematic inactivation or activation
- B. Identify connectivity of neuron of interest. See if activation or inactivation illustrate function.
 - 1. Use serial electron microscopy to trace cell processes



2. Use a transgene to map connections (trans-synaptic virus)

Caveat: This may not work. A functional connection may not act through an anatomical synapse. Instead, the circuit may rely on neuropeptides or hormones that are secreted and diffuse to the cells that they affect.

Tools for Anatomy

Anatomy provides information on the **structure and connectivity of the nervous system**.

Electron Microscopy	Light Microscopy
 Best technique for determining synaptic connectivity High spatial resolution <i>Caveat:</i> No ability to see changes over time as sample must be fixated. 	 Simpler than EM Can be done with dye injection or transgene (i.e. GFP) If a pre-synaptic protein is tagged with GFP, then synapses can be visualized. <i>Caveat:</i> No way to know what synapse is connected to.

Dendrite Morphology





Tools for Anatomy

Anatomy (connectomes) do not provide information about function:

Anatomy enables neuroscientists to generate hypotheses for circuit function.

Caveats:

- Even if two neurons synapse, it doesn't mean these two neurons **act together** to perform a function.
- Even if two neurons are **not** anatomically connected, it doesn't mean they're not **functionally connected.**
 - A form of non-synaptic signaling may exist, implying a chronic circuit (slower signal).

Even though the connectome for C. elegans was determined in 1970, its nervous system was not well understood for the reasons above.

• Researchers need to determine the **functional routes**.

Revealing the secrets of neuronal circuits with recombinant rabies virus technology

Melanie Ginger^{1,2†}, Matthias Haberl^{1,2,3†}, Karl-Klaus Conzelmann⁴, Martin K. Schwarz⁵ and Andreas Frick^{1,2*}

Neurons are not all the same:

- Excitatory neurons make other cells electrically active
- Inhibitory neurons make other cells less electrically active

Neurons that fire together wire together:

• Each neuron is integrating incoming information from hundreds of excitatory and inhibitory neurons— the balance between these and their precise timing will determine if it is active enough to *fire* a signal to its own output neurons

To map neural connections in the brain:

- Rabies virus is used because it exclusively infects neurons efficiently
- Virus can spread from an infected neuron to other neurons connected to it

Step 2: Viral Tracing



Anterograde Transport: tracer moves from soma to synapse, uses kinesin to move viruses along axon in anterograde direction Retrograde Transport: tracer moves from synapse to soma, uses dynein to move viruses along axon in retrograde direction Dual Transport: combines above methods to determine both the inputs and outputs of neuronal circuitry

Step 2: CLARITY





500 um

Step 3: Confirm the role of identified neurons in generation of behavior

A. Use a reporter of neural activity in response to stimulus



Tools for Physiology

Physiology captures molecular signals that underlie neural circuit function:

Caveat:

 Not all neurons signal by action potentials (i.e. neurons in retina and non-spiking interneurons in invertebrates)

There are two ways to do recordings:

- 1. Extracellular recording: electrode outside neuron
- 2. Intracellular recording: electrode inside neuron

Paired Recording: technique in which one inserts electrodes into pre-synaptic neuron and post-synaptic neuron simultaneously

- 1. Inject de-polarizing current to activate pre-synaptic neuron.
- 2. Observe effect on post-synaptic neuron:
 - Excitatory synapse results in EPSP
 - Inhibitory synapse results in IPSP

Tools for Physiology

Paired Recordings

Caveats:

Difficult in practice

Alternative: ChR2-assisted circuit mapping

Pre-synaptic neuron is defined by ChR2 expression. Post-synaptic neuron is defined by targeted patching. *ChR2 is transported into axons where it can transduce photo-stimulation into action potentials. This method provides a way to study long-range connections in brain slice preparations (axons can be stimulated even when severed from parent somata).*

 Recordings are best done in awake, behaving animals but this is not possible because of movement

Alternative: Fictive Behavior

Nerve fibers that connect to muscle are cut (prevents motion) in live animals.

Step 3: Connectivity by Electrophysiology


Step 3: Overview of Electrophysiology



A. Chemical Synapse

Action potential (**black**) triggered in pre-synaptic neuron evokes an EPSP (**blue**) in post-synaptic neuron.

B. Electrical Synapse

Action potential (**black**) in first neuron produces attenuated voltage signals (**blue**) in second cell.

C. Plasticity of Synaptic Transmission

In control, pre-synaptic neuron evokes an EPSP in postsynaptic cell (left) or no response (right) in case of silent synapse. After **potentiation** (**red**), the efficacy of synaptic transmission is enhanced.

Step 3: Overview of Electrophysiology



D. Axonal Processing

Pre-synaptic membrane potential-dependent axonal integration (left) and conduction failure (right). *Pre-synaptic spike fails to propagate in axon when it is evoked from a hyper-polarized potential (-80 mV).*

E. Retrograde Signaling

Retrograde signaling established between an interneuron (I) and a Purkinje cell (PC).

Depolarization-Induced Suppression (DSI) of

inhibition. Red arrow indicates the release of endocannabinoids from PC to pre-synaptic terminal of interneuron.

Summation



Temporal Summation:

Occurs when post-synaptic potentials arrive near same time

Test Your Understanding

The process by which a neuron summates synaptic excitation and inhibition is called:

- A. Plasticity
- **B.** Integration
- C. Convergence
- **D.** Pulse Frequency Modulation
- E. Dis-inhibition

In the nervous system, the strength of the stimulus is coded into:

- A. Frequency of Action Potentials Generated
- B. Amplitude of Action Potentials Generated
- C. Both Frequency and Amplitude of Action Potentials Generated

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Tools for Imaging

Paired Recordings

Disadvantages:

- Can only measure electrical signals
- Lacks spatial resolution (difficulty in localizing current)
- Low through-put (takes time to set up recording and can only do small number of neurons at once)

Physiology provides temporal resolution and anatomy provides spatial resolution.

Imaging Techniques

 Calcium Sensors GCaMP is used to monitor calcium activity of many neurons at once.

Voltage Sensors

Voltage sensors change fluorescence intensity in response to changes in voltage across the membrane.

Whole-Brain Imaging: Neural Activity in the Zebrafish

Step 4: Organize Neurons by Epistasis Analysis

A. Inactivate a pair of neurons together and observe whether the behavioral defect is enhanced.

1. If enhanced, neurons likely function in parallel.

2. If not enhanced, neurons function in series.

B. Activate a pair of neurons together and observe if behavior is enhanced over a single activation.

- 1. If enhanced, neurons likely function in parallel.
- 2. If not enhanced, neurons likely function in series.

C. Activate neuron X and see if neuron Y responds.

- 1. If it does, neuron Y is downstream of X.
- 2. If it does not, neuron Y is upstream of or in parallel with X.

D. Activate neuron Y and see if neuron X responds.

- 1. If it does, neuron Y is upstream of or in parallel with X.
- 2. If it does not, neuron Y is downstream of X.

Inactivation experiments show <u>necessity</u>. Activation expressions show <u>sufficiency</u>.

Inactivation Experiments

To show a neuron is <u>necessary</u> for a behavior, one needs to illustrate that the loss of that neuron results in <u>partial or</u> <u>complete loss of behavior</u>.

Techniques

- A. Laser Ablation
- B. Synaptic Silencing
 - Transgenic method where protein blocks chemical synaptic transmission in neuron

(i.e. tetanus toxin, genetic mutants)

- If synaptic silencing doesn't result in loss of behavior, neuron may receive input directly from environment or gap junctions.
- C. Electrical Silencing
 - Hyper-polarize the neuron through current injection
 - Halo-rhodopsin and Archae-rhodopsin (Arch)

Activation Experiments

In some cases, inactivation won't show any effect because there is <u>redundancy</u> in the circuit. An activation experiment will overcome this problem.

Techniques

- A. Restore genetic function in neuron
 - Rescue experiment (i.e. NT synthesis)
- **B. Electrical Activation**
 - De-polarize the neuron through current injection
 - Channel-rhodopsin 2 (ChR2)

If both activation and inactivation experiments are done and result in the expected effect on behavior, <u>and</u> a physiological response is observed, it is reasonable to conclude that neuron of interest acts in neural circuit.

Neural Circuit Motifs



A. Feedforward excitation



B. Feedforward inhibition



C. Convergence/divergence



A. Feed-forward Excitation

Allows one neuron to relay information to its neighbor. Long chains of these can be used to propagate information through the nervous system

B. Feed-forward Inhibition

A pre-synaptic cell excited an inhibitory interneuron, which then inhibits the next follower cell. This is a way of limiting excitation.

C. Convergence/ Divergence

One post-synaptic cell receives convergent input from a number of different pre-synaptic cells and any individual neuron can make divergent connections to different postsynaptic cells.

Divergence allows one neuron to communicate with many neurons in a network. **Convergence** allows a neuron to receive input from many neurons in a network.

Neural Circuit Motifs

D. Lateral inhibition





E. Feedback/Recurrent inhibition F. Feedback/Recurrent excitation





F1



D. Lateral Inhibition

A pre-synaptic cell excites inhibitory interneurons, which inhibit neighboring cells in the network.

E. Feedback/ Recurrent Inhibition

F. Feedback/ Recurrent **Excitation**

Test Your Understanding

This term best represents a neural circuit where one presynaptic neuron synapses with several post-synaptic neurons in order to amplify a sensory signal:

- A. Feed-Forward Excitation
- B. Convergence
- C. Divergence
- **D.** Lateral Inhibition

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This term best represents a neural circuit where one presynaptic neuron synapses with several post-synaptic neurons in order to amplify a sensory signal:

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- **C. Divergence**
- **D.** Lateral Inhibition

Explanation:

Diverging circuits allows one neuron to communicate with many neurons (i.e. skeletal muscle contractions). On the other hand, converging circuits allows one neuron to receive many inputs (i.e. spinal cord to brain).

Properties of Neural Circuits

- 1. Feedback
- 2. Degeneracy
- 3. Competition
- 4. Modularity

Degeneracy: the ability of multiple different configurations or mechanisms to produce the same outcome or serve the same function

Competition: small-scale axon elimination during development of nervous system

Modularity: permits an organism to process a new input without evolving an entirely novel circuit from scratch (i.e. building diverse objects using existing building-blocks)

Step 5: Circuit is Complete





Multi-Sensory Circuits



Case Study:

A dimorphic pheromone circuit in *Drosophila* from sensory input to descending output

Vanessa Ruta, Sandeep Robert Datta, Maria Luisa Vasconcelos, Jessica Freeland, Loren L. Looger & Richard Axel

Abstract

Drosophila show innate olfactory-driven behaviours that are observed in naive animals without previous learning or experience, suggesting that the neural circuits that mediate these behaviours are genetically programmed. Despite the numerical simplicity of the fly nervous system, features of the anatomical organization of the fly brain often confound the delineation of these circuits. Here we identify a neural circuit responsive to cVA, a pheromone that elicits sexually dimorphic behaviours¹⁻⁴. We have combined neural tracing using an improved photoactivatable green fluorescent protein (PA-GFP) with electrophysiology, optical imaging and laser-mediated microlesioning to map this circuit from the activation of sensory neurons in the antennae to the excitation of descending neurons in the ventral nerve cord. This circuit is concise and minimally comprises four neurons, connected by three synapses. Three of these neurons are overtly dimorphic and identify a malespecific neuropil that integrates inputs from multiple sensory systems and sends outputs to the ventral nerve cord. This neural pathway suggests a means by which a single pheromone can elicit different behaviours in the two sexes.

Neural Circuit

DC1 Glomeruli Sensory Neuron DA1 Projection Neuron Olfactory Receptor Neuron (ORN) DN1 Descending **Motor Neuron**



Ruta, V. et al. 2010 Nature

Neural Circuits of Sleep

Prominent Computational Neuroscientists: Gyorgy Buzsaki, NYU Terry Sejnowski, UCSD Roger Traub, IBM

What is the biological function of sleep? Why do we dream? What are the underlying brain mechanisms? What is its relation to anesthesia?

Biological Rhythms

Rhythms are ubiquitous in the mammalian CNS and span a broad range of frequencies.

Brains have evolved a variety of systems for rhythmic control:

- Waking and sleeping
- Cardiac rhythm
- Breathing cycle



Sleep

Sleep is not a single state, but a complex set of brain processes that supports many physiological needs.

- Sleep deprivation affects attention
- Tasks that require more attention drive sleep need and sleep intensity
 - Could sleep and attention have coevolved as brain states that regulate each other?
- Does sleep require a brain?

Current Biology

Available online 21 September 2017 In Press, Corrected Proof — Note to users CelPress

Report

The Jellyfish Cassiopea Exhibits a Sleep-like State

Ravi D. Nath^{1, 2, 3}, Claire N. Bedbrook^{1, 3}, Michael J. Abrams^{1, 3}, Ty Basinger¹, Justin S. Bois¹, David A. Prober¹, Paul W. Sternberg^{1, 2}, Viviana Gradinaru¹, Lea Goentoro^{1, 4}, ¹

Do Jellyfish Sleep?





Trends in Neurosciences

Sleep



Trends in Neurosciences

Brain rhythms

- Alpha rhythm (8-13 Hz) appears at the occipital cortex when eyes close. [resting condition] {rolandic mu rhythm; temporal tau rhythm}
- Beta rhythm (13-30 Hz) is associated with alertness.
- Gamma rhythm (30-80 Hz) is related to sensory integration and feature binding.
- Theta rhythm (4-8 or 4-10 Hz)
- **Delta rhythm** (0.5-4 or 1-4 Hz)
- Sleep spindle (12-15 Hz or 7-15 Hz) {sigma rhythm}
- K complex (<0.5 Hz) {(very) slow oscillation}

Sleep stages EEG Stages EEG Stages EEG Stages EEG Stages EEG Stages



Stage 2 - 9: Spindles

Ogilvie, Sleep Med. Rev., 5, 247-270, 2001.

 $1 \sec$

50 µV

Electroenchaplography (EEG)



Current in the EEG measuring circuit depends on the nature and location of the current sources, on the electrical properties of the brain, skull and scalp and on location of both electrodes. *Source: Nunez et al (1891)*

Electroenchaplography (EEG)

EEG is an electrophysiological monitoring method to record electrical activity of the brain:

- Often non-invasive
- Measures voltage fluctuations resulting from ionic current within neurons
- Used to diagnose epilepsy
- Limited spatial resolution
- Temporal resolution
 at millisecond scale

Excited

Relaxed

Electrodes

Electrodes are small metal discs that are places on the scalp in special positions.

- Each electrode site is labeled with a letter and a number
- Letter: F is frontal lobe and T is temporal lobe
- Number: Even number means right side of head and odd number means left side of head
- Can be made of: stainless steel, tin, gold or silver covered with a silver chloride coating





Intra(cranial/cerebral) EEG



Depth electrodes



Strip electrodes



Grid electrodes

Test Your Understanding:

EEG activity is thought to arise from which of the following?

- A. Cortical layers I and VI
- B. Axonal action potentials
- C. Horizontal dipoles
- D. Excitatory and inhibitory post-synaptic potentials

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<u>Explanation:</u> EEG activity arises from the outermost cortex layer I and does not directly capture axonal action potentials. EEG is most sensitive to post-synaptic potentials generated in the superficial layers of the cortex.

EEG Instrumentation

Electroencephalography Recording System



Analog EEG instruments use an amplifier, galvanometer and a writing device.

The output signal from the amplifier passes through the wire causing the coil to oscillate. A pen mounted on the galvanometer moves up and down each time the coil moves. The pen draws the trace onto paper moving below it.

The amplifier output is controlled by high and low frequency filters (bandwidth) and sensitivity controls (affects size of activity displayed). A digital EEG system converts the waveform into numerical values.

EEG Monitoring



a. Electrode used to measure evoked potential signal from the skull of a rat **b.** Location of electrode array c. Electrode mounted and fixed with dental cement **d.** Electrode recordings of voltage over time

Characteristic patterns of the brain activities in the neocortex and hippocampus

	Awake	Non-REM sleep			REM
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3-4	sleep
Cortex	Alpha wave Gamma wave		Spindle K complex	Delta wave Theta wave	Gamma wave
Hippocampus	Theta wave HVS	High-voltage spike (HVS) with high-frequency ripple (~200 Hz)			Theta wave

Buzsaki, *Neuroscience*, 31, 551-70, 1989. Gottesmann, *Neurosci. Biobehav. Rev.*, 16, 31-8, 1992. Steriade et al., *Science*, 262, 679-85, 1993. Steriade, *Neuroscience*, 101, 243-76, 2000.