

1 **The Genetic Architecture of Larval Aggregation Behavior in**

2 **Drosophila**

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8           **Abstract**

9           Many insect species exhibit basal social behaviors such as aggregation, which  
10          play important roles in their feeding and mating ecologies. However, the  
11          evolutionary, genetic, and physiological mechanisms that regulate insect  
12          aggregation remain unknown for most species. Here, we used natural populations  
13          of *Drosophila melanogaster* to identify the genetic architecture that drives larval  
14          aggregation feeding behavior. By using quantitative and reverse genetic  
15          approaches, we have identified a complex neurogenetic network that plays a role  
16          in regulating the decision of larvae to feed in either solitude or as a group. Results  
17          from single gene, RNAi-knockdown experiments show that several of the  
18          identified genes represent key nodes in the genetic network that determines the  
19          level of aggregation while feeding. Furthermore, we show that a single non-  
20          coding SNP in the gene *CG14205*, a putative acyltransferase, is associated with  
21          both decreased mRNA expression and increased aggregate formation, which  
22          suggests that it has a specific role in inhibiting aggregation behavior. Our results  
23          identify, for the first time, the genetic components which interact to regulate  
24          naturally occurring levels of aggregation in *D. melanogaster* larvae.

25          Keywords: *Drosophila melanogaster*; fruit fly; vinegar fly; foraging; sociality

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28 **Introduction:**

29 Group formation is one of the simplest forms of social interaction exhibited by  
30 individual animals. Yet, the genetic and physiological mechanisms underlying group  
31 formation are largely unknown for most species. *Drosophila melanogaster* larvae form  
32 simple cooperative group aggregates while feeding, which has been hypothesized to  
33 increase their fitness by providing defense against predation, as well as enabling  
34 individuals to communally digest food substrates more easily (Prokopy & Roitberg,  
35 2001; Sokolowski, 2010; Wu et al., 2003). Previous studies have suggested that in  
36 *Drosophila* and several other insect species, the formation and maintenance of larval  
37 aggregation is primarily regulated by the chemosensory detection of aggregation  
38 pheromones, as well as other sensory modalities (Leonhardt et al., 2016; Louis & de  
39 Polavieja, 2017; Rooke et al., 2020; Steiger & Stokl, 2017; Symonds & Wertheim,  
40 2005; Thibert et al., 2016). Specifically, in *Drosophila melanogaster*, at least two  
41 pheromones produced by larvae have been shown to act as chemoattractants (Mast et  
42 al., 2014). However, the downstream neural and genetic pathways that regulate larval  
43 aggregation behavior remain largely unexplored.

44 To optimize fitness, the decision of individual larvae on whether to aggregate  
45 while feeding is likely regulated by the interplay between attractive and repulsive  
46 signals directly emitted by other conspecifics, or indirectly via feeding-related chemical  
47 changes of the consumed food. Indeed, it has been shown that food patch choice is  
48 influenced by the presence of other larvae, and the decision to choose one food patch  
49 over another is a function of group size (Durisko & Dukas, 2013; Lihoreau et al., 2016)  
50 and genetics (Allen et al., 2017; Fitzpatrick et al., 2007; Kaun, Hendel, et al., 2007;  
51 Kaun, Riedl, et al., 2007). However, although some conserved peptidergic signaling  
52 pathways have been shown to regulate aggregation in *Drosophila* larvae (Wu et al.,

53 2003), most signals and downstream neuronal and genetic pathways that regulate group  
54 size via attractive and repulsive signals, remain unknown.

55         Understanding the genetic architecture that underlies insect aggregation is  
56 important not only for deciphering the biological principles that drive social decision  
57 making in general, but would provide insight into means of offsetting the economic  
58 impact of insect pests. To address this important question, we used the *Drosophila*  
59 Genetic Reference Panel (DGRP) (Mackay et al., 2012) to identify genetic variations  
60 associated with the extent of larval feeding aggregate size. By combining a genome-  
61 wide, quantitative genetics approach with single gene manipulations, we have identified  
62 several key genes that contribute to group size in natural populations of *Drosophila*  
63 larva. Our results highlight the utility of *D. melanogaster* for understanding the genetics  
64 of group formation and provide several genetic targets for further research on this topic.

## 65 **Materials and Methods:**

### 66 *Animals*

67 All fly lines were reared on standard corn syrup-soy food (Achron Scientific), and kept  
68 under a 12h:12h light:dark schedule at 25 °C and 60% humidity. Lines from the  
69 *Drosophila* Genetic Reference Panel (DGRP) (Mackay et al., 2012) used in this study  
70 are available from the Bloomington *Drosophila* Stock Center (BDSC, Bloomington,  
71 IN). UAS-RNAi lines and the *elav*- and *tubulin*-GAL4 lines were from either the  
72 Bloomington *Drosophila* Stock Center or the Vienna *Drosophila* Resource Center  
73 (VDRC) (Dietzl et al., 2007; Perkins et al., 2015). All fly lines used in this study, along  
74 with their stock numbers and genotypes, are listed in Table S1.

## 75 ***Larval aggregation assays***

76 Larval aggregation was assayed as follows. Approximately 30, second/third instar  
77 larvae were collected from standard vials using a 15% sucrose solution (w/v). Larvae  
78 were placed onto the center of a 60mm petri dish containing 20% apple juice (v/v) and  
79 1% agar (w/v) *en masse* and allowed to roam the plate freely for 15 minutes.  
80 Subsequently, a picture of the plate was taken (Figure 1A), and the fraction of  
81 aggregating larvae was calculated as described below. All behavioral assays were  
82 conducted at 25 °C and 70 % humidity.

83 Larval groups were defined as an “aggregate” if two or more larvae were both  
84 (i) in physical contact with one another and (ii) burrowing into the agar plate. To  
85 calculate the fraction of larvae that were aggregating, we summed the number of larvae  
86 forming aggregates and divided it by the total number of larvae observable from the  
87 picture taken at the end of the test period.

## 88 ***Genome Wide Association Study***

89 A total of 4-9 behavioral assays were conducted for each DGRP line, and the mean  
90 proportion of aggregating larvae was used for comparison in a genome wide association  
91 study (GWAS). A linear regression model was run using the easyGWAS server (Grimm  
92 et al., 2017), with default parameters, to search for genotype by phenotype associations.  
93 A total of 2,370,987 SNPs from each of 48 DGRP lines were included in the GWAS,  
94 after filtering out any SNPs that were of the same genotype across all lines. Linkage  
95 disequilibrium and minor allele frequencies (MAF) were calculated using PLINK  
96 (Purcell et al., 2007).

## 97 ***Gene Networks***

98 GeneMANIA was used to predict a functional gene interaction network for all genes

99 identified in the initial GWAS containing SNPs with a p-value of less than  $10^{-4.5}$   
100 (Warde-Farley et al., 2010). A gene was said to contain a SNP if the SNP occurred  
101 within  $\pm 500$  base pairs of its coding exons as annotated in the *Drosophila* reference  
102 genome (version 5.57, FB2014 03). Subsequently, co-expression, co-localization,  
103 shared protein domains, and protein-protein interactions were used to calculate the gene  
104 interaction network, and up to 20 genes that were not identified as significant in the  
105 GWAS were allowed to be added to the network. Genes added to the network were  
106 selected such they maximized the number of connections between genes already present  
107 in the network (Warde-Farley et al., 2010).

#### 108 ***Gene Ontology Analysis***

109 Genes containing SNPs with a p-value of less than  $10^{-4.5}$  were screened for functionally-  
110 enriched gene ontologies using the bioprofiling.de servers ProfCom framework  
111 (Antonov et al., 2008). All genes included in the functional gene interaction network  
112 were also screened for functionally enriched gene ontologies using GeneMANIA  
113 (Warde-Farley et al., 2010). The gene interaction network included 20 additional genes  
114 that did not contain significant SNPs; the GO terms found to be associated with this  
115 network are therefore more general to a set of genes commonly found to interact with  
116 one another, rather than those specifically identified in the GWAS.

#### 117 ***Real Time qRT-PCR***

118 mRNA was collected from groups of 10 whole larvae (n=3–4 replicates per line) using  
119 Trizol (ThermoFisher) and reverse transcribed to cDNA using SuperScript III Reverse  
120 Transcriptase (ThermoFisher). Sybr Green (ThermoFisher) was used to amplify and  
121 quantify expression levels for all genes containing significant SNPs identified in the  
122 GWAS. Expression values were calculated relative to the *rp49* control gene using the

123 delta delta Ct method, as we have previously described (Hill et al., 2017; Lu et al.,  
124 2012; Vernier et al., 2019). All qPCR primers used in this study are listed in Table S2.

### 125 ***CG14205-GAL4 Transgenic Flies***

126 An approximately 3 kbp (X:19590171–19593107) region of the *CG14205* promoter was  
127 synthesized by Integrated DNA Technologies, Inc (IDT) and placed into the pUCIDT-  
128 ampR plasmid (IDT). We subcloned this region into the pENTR-1A plasmid  
129 (ThermoFisher) using KpnI and XhoI restriction sites on either side of the promoter,  
130 and then used Gateway cloning (ThermoFisher) to move the promoter into the  
131 pBPGAL4.2::p65 plasmid (Addgene #26229) (Pfeiffer et al., 2010). This plasmid was  
132 subsequently injected into BDSC line #24483 (RainbowGene Inc.), and positive  
133 offspring were identified and back-crossed into *w*<sup>1118</sup>. The *CG14205-GAL4* line was  
134 crossed with *UAS-mCD8::GFP* (BDSC #32188) and imaged in third-instar larvae.

## 135 **Results**

### 136 ***Genetic variation underlying group formation***

137 As *D. melanogaster* larvae develop, they exhibit a gradual increase in aggregation  
138 behavior (Wu et al., 2003). However, the overall genetic architecture that drives the  
139 quantitative aspects of larval aggregation remains largely unknown. Therefore, to better  
140 understand the genetics underlying aggregation, we screened 48 randomly chosen  
141 isogenic wild type lines from the *Drosophila* Genetic Reference Panel (DGRP)  
142 (Mackay et al., 2012) for levels of aggregation in third instar larvae and subsequently  
143 performed a genome wide association study (GWAS) to look for genetic variation  
144 associated with this phenotype.

145           We found that different lines varied significantly in the extent of aggregation,  
146   with some lines tending not to form any aggregates (termed “Low” lines) and other  
147   lines containing as many as 40-60% of aggregating larvae (termed “High” lines) (Figure  
148   1). We then ran ANOVAs to search for genetic variation (SNPs) associated with the  
149   mean fraction of aggregating larvae across lines (Shorter et al., 2015; Swarup et al.,  
150   2013). A total of 2,370,987 ANOVAs were run for each unfiltered SNP in the 48 DGRP  
151   lines analyzed, which uncovered 58 significant SNPs ( $p < 10^{-5}$ ). Subsequently, 17  
152   protein coding genes that fall within 500 bp of these SNPs were further considered as  
153   candidate genes that might be playing a role in larval aggregation decisions (Figure 2,  
154   Table S3).

### 155   *The neurogenetic network of larval aggregation behavior*

156   To investigate whether specific genetic pathways might be playing a role in larval  
157   aggregation decisions, we next used gene ontology (GO) analyses. Because our initial  
158   conservative  $p < 10^{-5}$  significance threshold yielded only 17 protein-coding genes that  
159   might be causally associated with levels of aggregation, we used the less conservative  
160   threshold of  $p < 10^{-4.5}$ , which increased the number of candidate genes to 68. This  
161   analysis indicated that this gene list is enriched for the GO terms “Axon guidance”  
162   (GO:0007411,  $p=0.01$ ) and “Plasma membrane” (GO:0005886,  $p=0.01$ ). To further  
163   expand the analysed gene network, we next extended the empirically defined gene  
164   network by using the following edges: co-expression, co-localization, shared protein  
165   domains, and protein-protein interactions (Supplemental Figure 1A). GO analysis of the  
166   extended gene list was still enriched for “Axon guidance”; however, four out of the top  
167   six enriched GO terms are neural-tissue specific (Supplemental Figure 1B). Together,  
168   these data suggest that at least some of the genetic variations we have identified impact



169 population level phenotypic variations in aggregation decisions via neuronal functions.

170 ***Genetic variations associated with mRNA expression levels***

171 Single nucleotide polymorphisms falling within promoter and enhancer regions of a  
172 protein coding gene often affect mRNA expression levels (Khurana et al., 2016; Nord &  
173 West, 2020; Visel et al., 2009). Since most of the SNPs we have identified in our  
174 GWAS are either intronic or fall upstream of their associated genes (37/46; Table S3),  
175 we next tested the hypothesis that some of the identified SNPs affect gene action via  
176 their effects on mRNA expression levels. To test this hypothesis, we compared the  
177 mRNA expression levels of each of the 17 candidate genes identified in our initial  
178 conservative screen between the three phenotypically highest (“High”) and three lowest  
179 (“Low”) aggregating DGRP lines (Figure 3A, and B) by using real-time qRT-PCR  
180 analyses. We found that at least one SNP (X:19488026) was significantly associated  
181 with higher mRNA expression levels of its parent gene, *CG14205*, in all “low” lines  
182 relative to all “high” lines (one-way ANOVA;  $F(1,4) = 13.43$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ) (Figure 3).  
183 These results suggest that this specific SNP is playing a role in regulating the expression  
184 or stability of the *CG14205* mRNAs. The location of this SNP immediately downstream  
185 of a predicted splice donor site in the annotated intron 5 of *CG14205* (Figure 3C)  
186 suggests that it may affect splicing and/ or stability of the pre-mRNA. Furthermore, we  
187 found a significant interaction between *CG14205* expression level and SNP genotype on  
188 the levels of aggregation between High and Low lines (two-way ANOVA;  $F(2,3) =$   
189  $403.3$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). As *CG14205* expression is significantly higher in Low lines than in  
190 High lines, these data suggest that higher expression levels of *CG14205* may reduce  
191 aggregation in *D. melanogaster* larvae.

192           Although the biological functions of *CG14205* are unknown, the protein is  
193 predicted to be membrane bound Acyltransferase 3 (IPR002656) that is related to the  
194 Nose resistant-to-fluoxetine (NRF) protein family in *C. elegans* (Choy & Thomas,  
195 1999). Since several family members have been found to be expressed in the gut  
196 epithelium of worms, it has been hypothesized that they may function as novel  
197 transporters of lipophilic molecules (Choy et al., 2006). However, the specific  
198 biochemical functions of these membrane-bound acyltransferases remain  
199 uncharacterized. Nevertheless, previous studies in the moth *Bombyx mori*, have shown  
200 that various acyltransferases are required for the synthesis of sex pheromones in moths  
201 and other insects (Ding et al., 2016; Mengfang Du et al., 2015; M. Du et al., 2012).  
202 Further, a quantitative trait locus (QTL) associated with intra- and interspecific  
203 variations in sex pheromones in noctuid moths has been mapped to the regulation of a  
204 gene containing a putative Acyltransferase 3 domain (Groot et al., 2013). Therefore, it is  
205 possible that *CG14205* plays a direct role in the synthesis of larval aggregation  
206 pheromones in *D. melanogaster*.

### 207 ***Candidate gene knockdown leads to altered levels of aggregation***

208 To further establish a causal role for the genes identified in our initial screen, we studied  
209 the effects of neuronal-specific RNAi knockdown of each gene by using the pan-  
210 neuronal *elav-GAL4* driver. However, neuronal knockdown of five of the 17 genes we  
211 examined (*Vha36-1*, *dsx-c73a*, *pros*, *cindr*, and *CG45002*) was lethal. Of the remaining  
212 12 genes, neuronal knockdown of knockdown of four of the genes (*CG8187*, *CG14502*,  
213 *CG32206*, and *rn*) lead to higher levels of aggregation relative to controls (Figure 4A,  
214 B, and C). These results suggest that the activity of these four genes affects aggregation  
215 decisions in feeding larvae.

216 In contrast, knockdown of *CG14205* in neural tissues did not significantly alter  
217 aggregation levels. Given the strong association between the specific *CG14205* alleles,  
218 mRNA expression levels, and aggregation levels, we next tested whether genetic  
219 variation in this specific gene affect aggregation decision via its action in non-neuronal  
220 tissues by using the ubiquitous *tubulin*-GAL4 driver to knockdown *CG14205* in all  
221 tissues. As *CG14205* mRNA is expressed to a greater extent in Low aggregating lines,  
222 we hypothesized that knocking down *CG14205* should lead to increased levels of  
223 aggregation. Indeed, global *CG14205* knockdown resulted in an increase in the fraction  
224 of larvae aggregating (one-tailed, Student's T-test,  $p = 0.025$ ; Figure 4D). These results  
225 suggest that *CG14205* functions to suppress aggregation in *D. melanogaster* larvae via  
226 neuronal-independent signalling pathways in the larval midgut.

227 While we do not know yet how the midgut activity levels of *CG14205* might  
228 affect the decision of individual larvae to join a group, it is likely that this decision  
229 controlled by both external sensory stimuli and internal receptors which detect those  
230 stimuli. It is possible that the *CG14205* gene is responsible for the biosynthesis or  
231 release of a sensory stimulus which inhibits larvae from interacting with one another  
232 and forming groups. This hypothesis is consistent with the fact that *CG14205* is  
233 required in non-neuronal cells for maintaining normal levels of larval aggregation  
234 (compared to controls). Further, mining the FlyExpress and Flygut databases revealed  
235 that the expression of *CG14205* is enriched in enterocytes in the larval midgut (Buchon  
236 et al., 2013; Celniker et al., 2009) (Figure 5A-B). This expression pattern was further  
237 confirmed by imaging the transgenic expression of GFP under the control of the  
238 *CG14205* promoter, which revealed strong expression in the most proximal and distal  
239 parts of the midgut (Figure 5C-H). Together, these results suggest that *CG14205* plays a

240 role in the synthesis or release, rather than detection, of an inhibitory molecule  
241 regulating aggregation.

## 242 **Discussion**

243 It is often assumed that group and social behaviors arise via complex interactions  
244 between many genes. Here, we have used an unbiased behavioral quantitative genetic  
245 screen to identify population-level natural genetic variations that underlie aggregation in  
246 *D. melanogaster* larvae. As expected, our analysis revealed that the decision of  
247 individuals on whether to aggregate with other conspecifics is likely depended on a  
248 complex genetic network that acts in both neuronal and non-neuronal tissues.  
249 Furthermore, by using *in vivo* genetic manipulations, we show that at the population  
250 level, both qualitative and quantitative variations could be causally associated with the  
251 overall observed behavioral variations between individuals. However, whether the  
252 specific identified genes exert their impact on aggregation via a common pathway, and  
253 the exact cellular and physiological processes affected by these genes, remain unknown.

254       Specifically, we found that quantitative expression variations across different  
255 alleles of the *CGI4205* gene, which encodes a putative acetyl transferase, are strongly  
256 associated with larval aggregation while feeding; DGRP lines that exhibit low levels of  
257 aggregation express higher levels of *CGI4205* transcripts relative to those that display  
258 high levels of aggregation (Figure 3B). These data suggest that the activity of *CGI4205*  
259 inhibits the formation of larval aggregates. While the mechanism regulating this  
260 variation in transcript levels is not known, the SNP identified in our initial GWAS  
261 screen is adjacent to a predicted intronic splice donor site (Figure 3C), which may affect  
262 mRNA splicing and/ or stability via posttranscriptional processes. How *CGI4205*  
263 activity in the gut might regulate larval aggregation remains unknown. Although our  
264 RNAi knockdown studies indicate that *CGI4205* is not specifically required in neurons,

265 it remains a possibility that it influences larval behavior via its action in glia or the  
266 endocrine system. Alternatively, this gene could be required for the production of a  
267 chemical signal that modulates larval aggregation decisions via the enzymatic  
268 modification of gut metabolites (Blomquist et al., 2010; Chiu et al., 2019; Hunt &  
269 Borden, 1990).

270         Recent studies have identified both specific chemical cues—pheromones—and  
271 receptors to be required for directing aggregation behaviors in *D. melanogaster* larvae  
272 (Mast et al., 2014). Although most of what is known about pheromone synthesis in  
273 *Drosophila* and other insects relates to cuticular hydrocarbons production by fat-body  
274 cells and the oenocytes (Makki et al., 2014; Wicker-Thomas et al., 2015; Zelle et al.,  
275 2019), our data indicate that gut derived metabolites can also possibly act as  
276 pheromones in *Drosophila*. The possible contribution of *CG14205* to pheromone  
277 synthesis is further supported by previous findings about the contribution of  
278 acyltransferases to pheromonal signalling in other insect species (Ding et al., 2016;  
279 Zhang et al., 2017). Therefore, it is possible that this enzyme functions in the production  
280 of some inhibitory chemical cues that *Drosophila* larvae are responsive to during  
281 feeding.

282         Previous studies by us and others have shown that pheromone-driven social  
283 interactions in *Drosophila* and other insects often require the balancing action of both  
284 attractive and repulsive cues (Allison & Cardé, 2016; Ben-Shahar et al., 2010;  
285 Blomquist & Vogt, 2003; Lu et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2014; McKinney et al., 2015; Zelle  
286 et al., 2019). However, in our study, the knockdown of all identified candidate genes  
287 leads to increased levels of larval aggregation, which suggest that the primary  
288 contributions of these genes are to suppression of aggregation. One possible  
289 interpretation of these data is that in natural populations of *D. melanogaster*, it may be

290 that it is more beneficial for larvae to suppress aggregation as a function of density to  
291 maximize larval fitness. Another non-mutually exclusive explanation might be that our  
292 lab assay conditions, and the specific behavioral paradigm used, biased our screen  
293 towards the identification of genes whose role contributes specifically to the  
294 suppression of larval aggregation.

295         Nevertheless, our study has uncovered several novel genes involved in directing  
296 social aggregation while feeding in *Drosophila* larvae. Although we do not know yet  
297 the specific molecular and cellular mechanisms by which any of these genes affect  
298 larval feeding behaviors, our data further indicate that natural genetic polymorphisms  
299 affect larval social feeding behaviors via both neuronal and non-neuronal pathways  
300 (Allen et al., 2017; Anreiter et al., 2017; Sokolowski, 2010).

### 301 **Disclosure statement**

302 The authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.

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502

## 503 **Figures**

504 **Figure 1: Variation in levels of aggregation between natural populations of**  
505 **Drosophila. (A)** An image of a DGRP line (Line 75) that showed low levels of  
506 aggregation, and **(B)** an image of a DGRP line (Line 101) that showed high levels of  
507 aggregation. White arrowheads point to groups of aggregating larvae. **(C)** Boxplots  
508 showing the fraction of aggregating larvae for each of the 48 DGRP lines that were  
509 included in the GWAS (n=5–9 replicates per line); outliers are shown with open circles.  
510 DGRP lines with either low (Low) or high (High) levels of aggregation that were used  
511 in subsequent analyses are labeled and shown in either light or dark blue, respectively.

512 **Figure 2: A genome-wide association study identified 58 SNPs that were associated**  
513 **with the extent of larval aggregation across DGRP lines. (A)** Manhattan plot  
514 showing transformed p-values for each of the SNPs included in the GWAS. SNPs with  
515 a p-value less than  $10^{-5}$  (shown by the dashed gray line) were retained for further  
516 analysis and are outlined in red. **(B)** A higher resolution view of SNPs highlighted in  
517 **(A)**. (Top) Transformed p-values and (Middle) minor allele frequencies (MAFs) for  
518 each of the retained SNPs. SNPs that fell within  $\pm 500$  base pairs of the coding region of  
519 a gene are labeled and highlighted together. Some SNPs fell within the coding region of  
520 genes on both the plus and minus strand of DNA and are labelled accordingly. (Bottom)  
521 Linkage disequilibrium matrix between all of the retained SNPs.

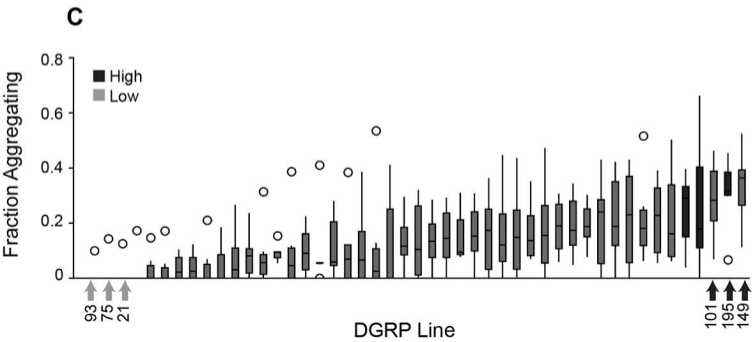
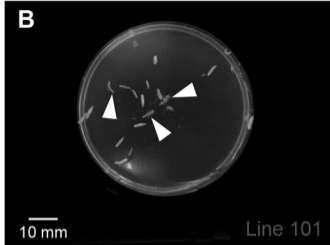
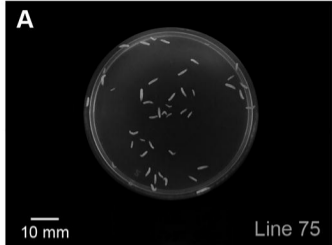
522 **Figure 3: mRNA expression analysis of SNP-containing genes in lines with either**  
523 **low or high levels of aggregation. (A)** Relative mRNA expression levels for each of  
524 the SNP-containing genes identified in the GWAS (n=3–4 replicates per line). Low  
525 aggregating lines are shown in light blue, and High aggregating lines are shown in dark  
526 blue. **(B)** Relative mRNA expression levels for the *CG14205* gene. A significant

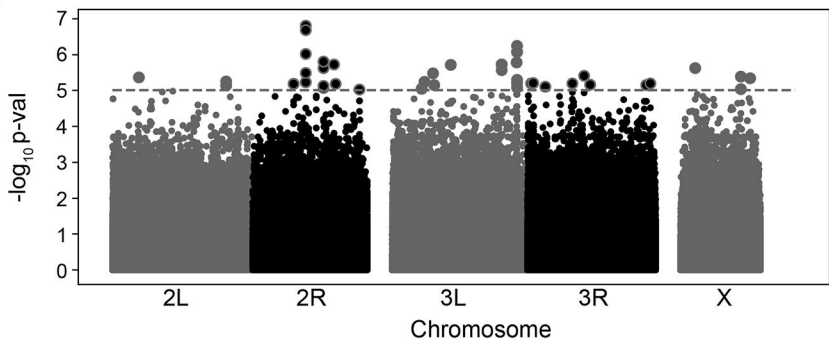
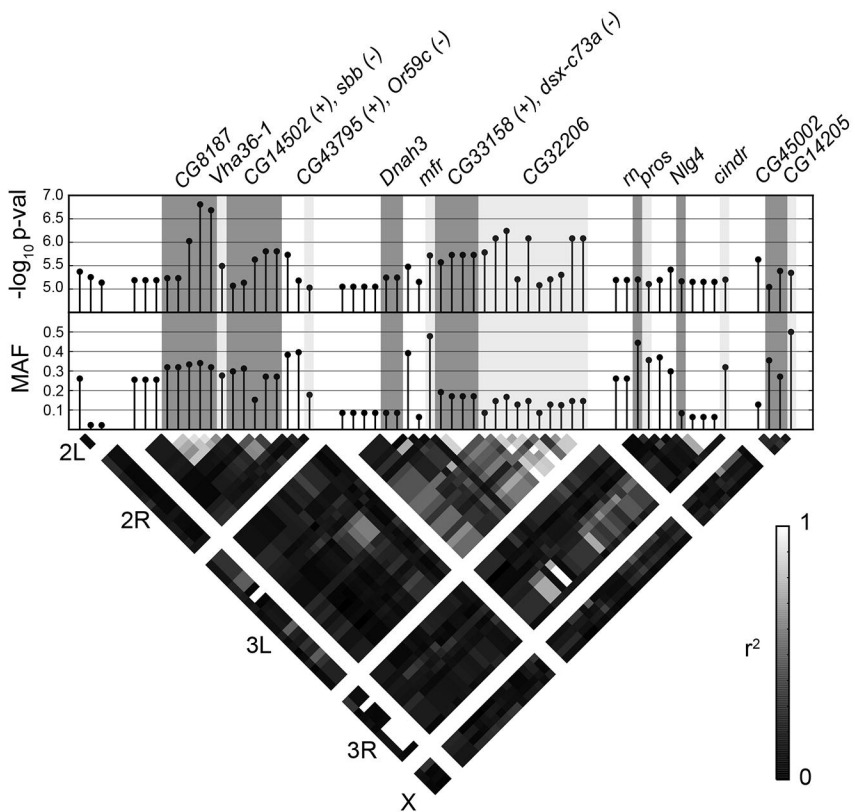
527 association between SNP genotype and *CG14205* mRNA expression was identified ( $p$   
528  $< 0.05$ ; one-way ANOVA), whereby Low aggregating lines had higher levels of  
529 expression than High aggregating lines. Note that Low and High lines segregated by  
530 genotype, as shown in (C). (C) Transformed  $p$ -values for associations (ANOVAs)  
531 between specific SNP haplotypes and relative mRNA expression level of the gene  
532 associated with that SNP. SNPs falling within the same gene are labeled and highlighted  
533 together, and SNPs which were significantly associated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with mRNA  
534 expression of its gene are outlined in red. (D) Genetic architecture of the *CG14205* gene  
535 and the DNA sequences surrounding the significantly associated SNP for each of the  
536 Low and High DGRP lines. Note that the SNP, X:19488026 (denoted by a red arrow  
537 head), falls just past the exon-intron boundary within intron 5 and is positioned to  
538 potentially effect mRNA splicing.

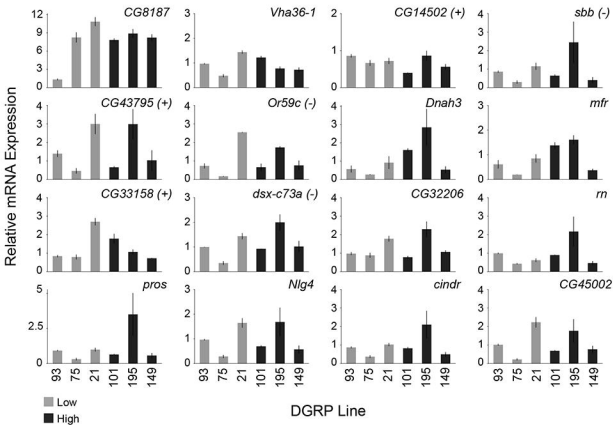
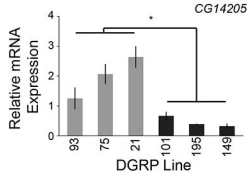
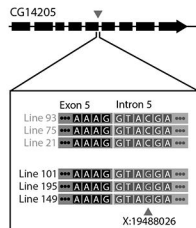
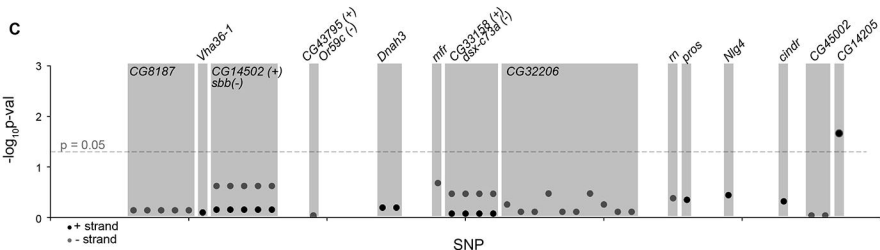
539 **Figure 4: Neuronal knockdown of some candidate genes leads to altered**  
540 **aggregation behavior. (A)** Pan-neuronal RNAi-mediated knockdown of SNP-  
541 associated genes (UAS-RNAi lines from the Vienna Drosophila Resource Center).  
542 Knockdown of *CG8187* (n=5-8,  $p < 0.05$ ), *CG14502* (n=8-9,  $p < 0.05$ ), *CG32206*  
543 (n=7-9,  $p < 0.01$ ), or *rn* (n=8-9,  $p < 0.01$ ) using *elav*-GAL4 lead to increased levels of  
544 aggregation when compared to parental controls (n=6-19, for all other lines). All  
545 statistical comparisons used one-way ANOVA followed by a Tukeys HSD *post-hoc*  
546 test. (B) Pan-neuronal RNAi-mediated knockdown of SNP-associated genes (UAS-  
547 RNAi lines from the Bloomington TRiP collection). Knockdown of *Dnah3* using *elav*-  
548 GAL4 lead to a decrease in fraction of larvae aggregating (n=7-17,  $p < 0.01$ ), whereas  
549 no other gene knockdowns were significantly different from control (n=4-17). Pairwise  
550 Students T-tests were run between each gene knockdown and control to look for  
551 statistical significance, and  $p$ -values were adjusted for multiple comparisons using a

552 Bonferroni correction. **(C)** TRiP-RNAi-mediated knockdown of *CG14205* in neural  
553 tissues, using the *elav*-GAL4 driver, did not lead to altered aggregation (n=8 per group,  
554  $p > 0.05$ ; onetailed Students T-test). **(D)** TRiP-RNAi-mediated knockdown of *CG14205*  
555 in all tissues, using the *tubulin*-GAL4 driver, led to a significant increase in the fraction  
556 of larvae aggregating compared to control (n=11–12,  $p = 0.025$ ; one-tailed Students T-  
557 test).

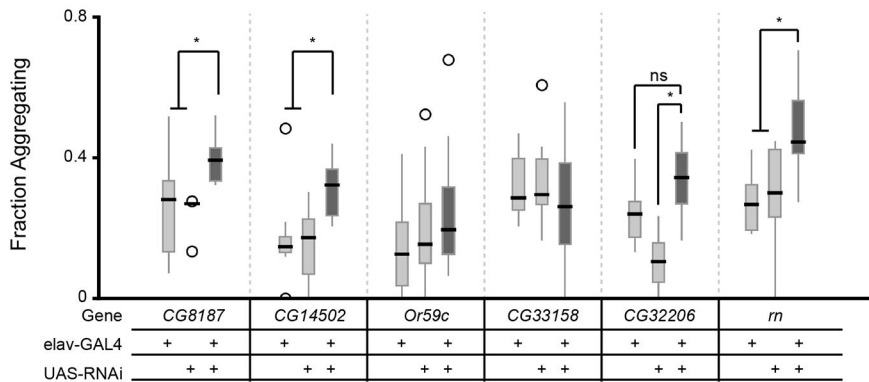
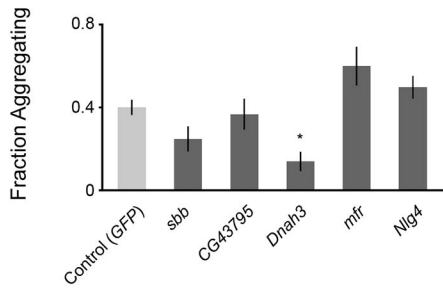
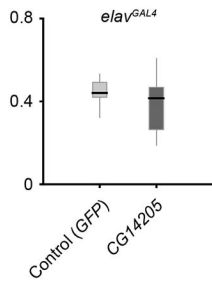
558 **Figure 5: Interaction network of SNP-containing genes.** **(A)** Expression levels of  
559 *CG14205* across larval tissues. Data were extracted from the FlyAtlas database. **(B)**  
560 Expression levels of *CG14205* across midgut cell types. ISC, Intestinal stem cells; EB,  
561 Enteroblasts; EC, Enterocytes; EE, Enteroendocrine cells; VM, Visceral muscle. **(C)**  
562 *CG14205* expression is restricted to an anterior and posterior regions of the larval  
563 midgut. Image of an intact larva expressing GFP under the control of the *CG14205*  
564 GAL4 line. **(D-F)** Image of 3<sup>rd</sup> instar dissected gut: **(D)** Visible light image, **(E)** GFP  
565 image, **(D)** Overlay. **(G)** High resolution confocal image of *CG14205*-expressing  
566 anterior region (pink dashed box in E). Arrow shows GFP expression in stereotypical  
567 enterocytes. **(H)** High resolution confocal image of *CG14205*-expressing posterior  
568 region (blue dashed box in E).



**A****B**

**A****B****D****C**



**A****B****C****D**