

Reporting Summary

Nature Portfolio wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Portfolio policies, see our [Editorial Policies](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a	Confirmed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The exact sample size (<i>n</i>) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided <i>Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A description of all covariates tested
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. <i>F</i> , <i>t</i> , <i>r</i>) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and <i>P</i> value noted <i>Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's <i>d</i> , Pearson's <i>r</i>), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection	Fast-scan cyclic voltammetry recordings, waveform generation, and data acquisition were carried out on a PC-based system using two multifunction data acquisition cards and custom software written in LabVIEW (National Instruments, USA). Behavioral experiments were programmed and recorded in MedPC (Med Associates, USA).
Data analysis	Voltammetry data was preprocessed using custom software written in LabVIEW (National Instruments, USA). Preprocessed data were compiled and analyzed using standard functions in MATLAB 2022 (Mathworks, USA), statistical analyses and plot generation was done in Graphpad Prism 9 (Graphpad Software, Inc.) and final figures made in Adobe Illustrator 2023 (Adobe Inc., USA).

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Portfolio [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our [policy](#)

All data in this manuscript will be made available in a public repository following acceptance of the manuscript.

Research involving human participants, their data, or biological material

Policy information about studies with [human participants or human data](#). See also policy information about [sex, gender \(identity/presentation\), and sexual orientation](#) and [race, ethnicity and racism](#).

Reporting on sex and gender

Use the terms sex (biological attribute) and gender (shaped by social and cultural circumstances) carefully in order to avoid confusing both terms. Indicate if findings apply to only one sex or gender; describe whether sex and gender were considered in study design; whether sex and/or gender was determined based on self-reporting or assigned and methods used. Provide in the source data disaggregated sex and gender data, where this information has been collected, and if consent has been obtained for sharing of individual-level data; provide overall numbers in this Reporting Summary. Please state if this information has not been collected. Report sex- and gender-based analyses where performed, justify reasons for lack of sex- and gender-based analysis.

Reporting on race, ethnicity, or other socially relevant groupings

Please specify the socially constructed or socially relevant categorization variable(s) used in your manuscript and explain why they were used. Please note that such variables should not be used as proxies for other socially constructed/relevant variables (for example, race or ethnicity should not be used as a proxy for socioeconomic status). Provide clear definitions of the relevant terms used, how they were provided (by the participants/respondents, the researchers, or third parties), and the method(s) used to classify people into the different categories (e.g. self-report, census or administrative data, social media data, etc.) Please provide details about how you controlled for confounding variables in your analyses.

Population characteristics

Describe the covariate-relevant population characteristics of the human research participants (e.g. age, genotypic information, past and current diagnosis and treatment categories). If you filled out the behavioural & social sciences study design questions and have nothing to add here, write "See above."

Recruitment

Describe how participants were recruited. Outline any potential self-selection bias or other biases that may be present and how these are likely to impact results.

Ethics oversight

Identify the organization(s) that approved the study protocol.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

☒ Life sciences ☐ Behavioural & social sciences ☐ Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see [nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf](https://www.nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf)

Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Sample size

Sample sizes for each group were determined by power analysis with an alpha level of 0.05, and a power of 0.8. The effect sizes and standard deviation used in these calculation were derived from our preliminary findings. Sample size calculations also took into account common factors, which in our experience contribute to subject loss both mid-way through experimentation (i.e. headcap loss, electrode failure, or catheter failure), and post-hoc (electrode misplacement or lack of viral expression).

Data exclusions

Exclusion criteria were set following completion of pilot experiments carried out in short-access animals, and prior to commencing the main voltammetry and optogenetics experiments carried out in long-access animals presented in the paper.

Voltammetry Subjects: Thirty-one rats maintained catheter patency and completed behavioral training in the short-access (ShA cohort) and 66 in the long-access (LgA) cohort. Of those subjects, voltammetry recordings were obtained from at least one experimental timepoint in 17 ShA animals, and 31 LgA animals. Thirteen subjects that completed LgA subsequently underwent incubation of craving behavioral studies during abstinence, and voltammetry recordings were obtained from eight of these animals. Approximately 20% of subject attrition was due to head cap loss or catheter failure during the post-surgery recovery period, prior to beginning experimentation. The remainder of subjects dropped out of the study once experimentation began due to head cap loss, electrode failure, catheter failure or rejection, or in rare instances, failure to acquire self-administration.

Voltammetry Recording: Voltammetry recordings obtained from individual sessions were excluded in cases where electrical noise exceeded 0.2 nA, animals became disconnected from the drug delivery tubing, or when tethering altered the animal's regular behavior patterns (i.e. induced freezing). In rare cases where more than one electrode was functioning in an animal during a given session, the average of the signals obtained from both electrodes was used for analysis. To minimize the introduction of bias due to variance in electrode sensitivity across subjects, in cases where only voltammetry data from a single experimental time point (session) from an animal was obtained, this data was excluded.

Optogenetics: Thirty-four rats completed the optogenetics studies and data from five of these subjects were excluded due to lack of viral expression or off target placement of optic fibers.

Conditioned Approach Behavior: When scoring conditioned approach behavior, on rare trials where the animal's head was outside of the camera view, these trials were excluded from statistical analysis.

Replication	All experiments were carried out in multiple cohorts at different times. The behavioral patterns observed were consistent across cohorts, and thus results were replicated internally.
Randomization	For optogenetic studies, each subject underwent both unstimulated (control) and stimulated sessions with untethered baseline sessions in between, and the order of stimulated and unstimulated sessions was counterbalanced across subjects.
Blinding	Most of the behavioral analyses presented in this study were collected automatically by MedPC (Med Associates, USA), however in the case of the assessment of conditioned approach behavior, scoring of videos was performed by experimenters who were blind to the experimental conditions (subject group & session type).

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

n/a	Involved in the study
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Antibodies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Eukaryotic cell lines
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Palaeontology and archaeology
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animals and other organisms
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical data
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dual use research of concern
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Plants

Methods

n/a	Involved in the study
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ChIP-seq
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Flow cytometry
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> MRI-based neuroimaging

Antibodies

Antibodies used	<p>anti-tyrosine hydroxylase monoclonal, clone LNC1- (Millipore, MAB318)</p> <p>anti-dsRed, polyclonal- (Clontech, 632496)</p> <p>Alexa Fluor® 488 AffiniPure Donkey Anti-Mouse IgG (H+L) polyclonal - (AB_2340846, Jackson Immunoresearch)</p> <p>Cy™3 AffiniPure Donkey Anti-Rabbit IgG (H+L) polyclonal - (AB_2307443, Jackson Immunoresearch)</p>
Validation	<p>All antibodies were validated for use in mouse tissue, and found to be selective for the targets of interest in immunohistochemistry preparations.</p> <p>Primary Antibody: anti-tyrosine hydroxylase monoclonal, clone LNC1 Host: Mouse Target: Tyrosine Hydroxylase, labeling Dopamine neurons Info: https://www.emdmillipore.com/US/en/product/Anti-Tyrosine-Hydroxylase-Antibody-clone-LNC1,MM_NF-MAB318?bd=1</p> <p>Primary Antibody: anti-dsRed polyclonal Host: Target: mCherry Info: https://www.takarabio.com/products/antibodies-and-elisa/fluorescent-protein-antibodies/red-fluorescent-protein-antibodies?catalog=632496</p> <p>Secondary Antibody: Alexa Fluor® 488 AffiniPure Donkey Anti-Mouse IgG (H+L) Info: https://www.jacksonimmuno.com/catalog/products/715-545-150</p> <p>Cy™3 AffiniPure Donkey Anti-Rabbit IgG (H+L): https://www.jacksonimmuno.com/catalog/products/711-165-152</p>

Eukaryotic cell lines

Policy information about [cell lines and Sex and Gender in Research](#)

Cell line source(s)	<i>State the source of each cell line used and the sex of all primary cell lines and cells derived from human participants or vertebrate models.</i>
Authentication	<i>Describe the authentication procedures for each cell line used OR declare that none of the cell lines used were authenticated.</i>
Mycoplasma contamination	<i>Confirm that all cell lines tested negative for mycoplasma contamination OR describe the results of the testing for mycoplasma contamination OR declare that the cell lines were not tested for mycoplasma contamination.</i>
Commonly misidentified lines (See ICLAC register)	<i>Name any commonly misidentified cell lines used in the study and provide a rationale for their use.</i>

Palaeontology and Archaeology

Specimen provenance	<i>Provide provenance information for specimens and describe permits that were obtained for the work (including the name of the issuing authority, the date of issue, and any identifying information). Permits should encompass collection and, where applicable, export.</i>
Specimen deposition	<i>Indicate where the specimens have been deposited to permit free access by other researchers.</i>
Dating methods	<i>If new dates are provided, describe how they were obtained (e.g. collection, storage, sample pretreatment and measurement), where they were obtained (i.e. lab name), the calibration program and the protocol for quality assurance OR state that no new dates are provided.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tick this box to confirm that the raw and calibrated dates are available in the paper or in Supplementary Information.	
Ethics oversight	<i>Identify the organization(s) that approved or provided guidance on the study protocol, OR state that no ethical approval or guidance was required and explain why not.</i>

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Animals and other research organisms

Policy information about [studies involving animals; ARRIVE guidelines](#) recommended for reporting animal research, and [Sex and Gender in Research](#)

Laboratory animals	Adult Wistar Rats. All studies begun at approx. 8 weeks old.
Wild animals	This study did not involve wild animals.
Reporting on sex	All subjects were males.
Field-collected samples	This study did not involve field-collected samples.
Ethics oversight	All animal use was approved by the University of Washington Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Protocol number: 4073-01.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Clinical data

Policy information about [clinical studies](#)

All manuscripts should comply with the ICMJE [guidelines for publication of clinical research](#) and a completed [CONSORT checklist](#) must be included with all submissions.

Clinical trial registration	<i>Provide the trial registration number from ClinicalTrials.gov or an equivalent agency.</i>
Study protocol	<i>Note where the full trial protocol can be accessed OR if not available, explain why.</i>
Data collection	<i>Describe the settings and locales of data collection, noting the time periods of recruitment and data collection.</i>
Outcomes	<i>Describe how you pre-defined primary and secondary outcome measures and how you assessed these measures.</i>

Dual use research of concern

Policy information about [dual use research of concern](#)

Hazards

Could the accidental, deliberate or reckless misuse of agents or technologies generated in the work, or the application of information presented in the manuscript, pose a threat to:

- | No | Yes |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> National security |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Crops and/or livestock |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystems |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other significant area |

Experiments of concern

Does the work involve any of these experiments of concern:

- | No | Yes |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate how to render a vaccine ineffective |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Confer resistance to therapeutically useful antibiotics or antiviral agents |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance the virulence of a pathogen or render a nonpathogen virulent |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase transmissibility of a pathogen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Alter the host range of a pathogen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Enable evasion of diagnostic/detection modalities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Enable the weaponization of a biological agent or toxin |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other potentially harmful combination of experiments and agents |

Plants

Seed stocks	Report on the source of all seed stocks or other plant material used. If applicable, state the seed stock centre and catalogue number. If plant specimens were collected from the field, describe the collection location, date and sampling procedures.
Novel plant genotypes	Describe the methods by which all novel plant genotypes were produced. This includes those generated by transgenic approaches, gene editing, chemical/radiation-based mutagenesis and hybridization. For transgenic lines, describe the transformation method, the number of independent lines analyzed and the generation upon which experiments were performed. For gene-edited lines, describe the editor used, the endogenous sequence targeted for editing, the targeting guide RNA sequence (if applicable) and how the editor was applied.
Authentication	Describe any authentication procedures for each seed stock used or novel genotype generated. Describe any experiments used to assess the effect of a mutation and, where applicable, how potential secondary effects (e.g. second site T-DNA insertions, mosaicism, off-target gene editing) were examined.

ChIP-seq

Data deposition

- ☐ Confirm that both raw and final processed data have been deposited in a public database such as [GEO](#).
- ☐ Confirm that you have deposited or provided access to graph files (e.g. BED files) for the called peaks.

Data access links <i>May remain private before publication.</i>	For "Initial submission" or "Revised version" documents, provide reviewer access links. For your "Final submission" document, provide a link to the deposited data.
Files in database submission	Provide a list of all files available in the database submission.
Genome browser session (e.g. UCSC)	Provide a link to an anonymized genome browser session for "Initial submission" and "Revised version" documents only, to enable peer review. Write "no longer applicable" for "Final submission" documents.

Methodology

Replicates	<i>Describe the experimental replicates, specifying number, type and replicate agreement.</i>
Sequencing depth	<i>Describe the sequencing depth for each experiment, providing the total number of reads, uniquely mapped reads, length of reads and whether they were paired- or single-end.</i>
Antibodies	<i>Describe the antibodies used for the ChIP-seq experiments; as applicable, provide supplier name, catalog number, clone name, and lot number.</i>
Peak calling parameters	<i>Specify the command line program and parameters used for read mapping and peak calling, including the ChIP, control and index files used.</i>
Data quality	<i>Describe the methods used to ensure data quality in full detail, including how many peaks are at FDR 5% and above 5-fold enrichment.</i>
Software	<i>Describe the software used to collect and analyze the ChIP-seq data. For custom code that has been deposited into a community repository, provide accession details.</i>

Flow Cytometry

Plots

Confirm that:

- ☐ The axis labels state the marker and fluorochrome used (e.g. CD4-FITC).
- ☐ The axis scales are clearly visible. Include numbers along axes only for bottom left plot of group (a 'group' is an analysis of identical markers).
- ☐ All plots are contour plots with outliers or pseudocolor plots.
- ☐ A numerical value for number of cells or percentage (with statistics) is provided.

Methodology

Sample preparation	<i>Describe the sample preparation, detailing the biological source of the cells and any tissue processing steps used.</i>
Instrument	<i>Identify the instrument used for data collection, specifying make and model number.</i>
Software	<i>Describe the software used to collect and analyze the flow cytometry data. For custom code that has been deposited into a community repository, provide accession details.</i>
Cell population abundance	<i>Describe the abundance of the relevant cell populations within post-sort fractions, providing details on the purity of the samples and how it was determined.</i>
Gating strategy	<i>Describe the gating strategy used for all relevant experiments, specifying the preliminary FSC/SSC gates of the starting cell population, indicating where boundaries between "positive" and "negative" staining cell populations are defined.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tick this box to confirm that a figure exemplifying the gating strategy is provided in the Supplementary Information.	

Magnetic resonance imaging

Experimental design

Design type	<i>Indicate task or resting state; event-related or block design.</i>
Design specifications	<i>Specify the number of blocks, trials or experimental units per session and/or subject, and specify the length of each trial or block (if trials are blocked) and interval between trials.</i>
Behavioral performance measures	<i>State number and/or type of variables recorded (e.g. correct button press, response time) and what statistics were used to establish that the subjects were performing the task as expected (e.g. mean, range, and/or standard deviation across subjects).</i>

Acquisition

Imaging type(s)	<i>Specify: functional, structural, diffusion, perfusion.</i>
Field strength	<i>Specify in Tesla</i>
Sequence & imaging parameters	<i>Specify the pulse sequence type (gradient echo, spin echo, etc.), imaging type (EPI, spiral, etc.), field of view, matrix size, slice thickness, orientation and TE/TR/flip angle.</i>
Area of acquisition	<i>State whether a whole brain scan was used OR define the area of acquisition, describing how the region was determined.</i>
Diffusion MRI	<input type="checkbox"/> Used <input type="checkbox"/> Not used

Preprocessing

Preprocessing software	<i>Provide detail on software version and revision number and on specific parameters (model/functions, brain extraction, segmentation, smoothing kernel size, etc.).</i>
Normalization	<i>If data were normalized/standardized, describe the approach(es): specify linear or non-linear and define image types used for transformation OR indicate that data were not normalized and explain rationale for lack of normalization.</i>
Normalization template	<i>Describe the template used for normalization/transformation, specifying subject space or group standardized space (e.g. original Talairach, MNI305, ICBM152) OR indicate that the data were not normalized.</i>
Noise and artifact removal	<i>Describe your procedure(s) for artifact and structured noise removal, specifying motion parameters, tissue signals and physiological signals (heart rate, respiration).</i>
Volume censoring	<i>Define your software and/or method and criteria for volume censoring, and state the extent of such censoring.</i>

Statistical modeling & inference

Model type and settings	<i>Specify type (mass univariate, multivariate, RSA, predictive, etc.) and describe essential details of the model at the first and second levels (e.g. fixed, random or mixed effects; drift or auto-correlation).</i>
Effect(s) tested	<i>Define precise effect in terms of the task or stimulus conditions instead of psychological concepts and indicate whether ANOVA or factorial designs were used.</i>
Specify type of analysis:	<input type="checkbox"/> Whole brain <input type="checkbox"/> ROI-based <input type="checkbox"/> Both
Statistic type for inference	<i>Specify voxel-wise or cluster-wise and report all relevant parameters for cluster-wise methods.</i>
(See Eklund et al. 2016)	
Correction	<i>Describe the type of correction and how it is obtained for multiple comparisons (e.g. FWE, FDR, permutation or Monte Carlo).</i>

Models & analysis

n/a	Involvement in the study
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Functional and/or effective connectivity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Graph analysis
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Multivariate modeling or predictive analysis
Functional and/or effective connectivity	<i>Report the measures of dependence used and the model details (e.g. Pearson correlation, partial correlation, mutual information).</i>
Graph analysis	<i>Report the dependent variable and connectivity measure, specifying weighted graph or binarized graph, subject- or group-level, and the global and/or node summaries used (e.g. clustering coefficient, efficiency, etc.).</i>
Multivariate modeling and predictive analysis	<i>Specify independent variables, features extraction and dimension reduction, model, training and evaluation metrics.</i>