

1 **The integration of sociality, monoamines, and stress neuroendocrinology in fish**
2 **models: Applications in the neurosciences¹**

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23

24 **Abstract**

25 Animal-focused research has been crucial for scientific advancement however, in this matter,
26 rodents are still taking a starring role. Coming out from merely being supportive of evidence found
27 in rodents, the use of fish models has slowly taken a more central role and expanded its overall
28 contributions in areas such as social sciences, evolution, physiology, and recently in translational
29 medical research. In neurosciences, zebrafish has been widely adopted, contributing to our
30 understanding of the genetic control of brain processes, and the effects of pharmacological
31 manipulations. However, discussion continues regarding the paradox of function versus structure,
32 when fish and mammals are compared, and on the potentially evolutionarily conserved nature of
33 behaviour across fish species. From the behavioural stand point we explored aversive/stress and
34 social behaviour in selected fish models, and refer to the extensive contributions of stress and
35 monoaminergic systems. We suggest that, in spite of marked neuroanatomical differences between
36 fish and mammals, stress and sociality are conserved at the behavioural and molecular levels. We
37 also suggest that stress and sociality are mediated by monoamines in predictable and non-trivial
38 ways, and that monoamines could “bridge” the relationship between stress and social behaviour. To
39 reconcile the level of divergence with the level of similarity, neuroanatomy, pharmacology,
40 behavioural analysis, and ecology studies conducted in the laboratory and in nature need to add to
41 each other and enhance our understanding of fish behaviour and ultimately how this all may
42 translate to better model systems for translational studies.

43 **Keywords:** Neuroendocrinology, Social behaviour network, Mesolimbic reward system, Aversive
44 behaviour network

45 **1. Introduction**

46 While the study of fish behaviour goes back to the origins of ethology, with von Frisch's (1938)
47 studies on alarm pheromones and Tinbergen's (1951) on behavioural co-adaptations in sticklebacks,
48 increased interest in that (very heterogeneous) group has soared in the last few years (Gerlai, 2014).
49 The use of classical and modern tools for brain research is enabling the means to answer
50 mechanistic questions in relation to fish behaviour. Moreover, the enormous diversity of
51 behavioural and physiological adaptations in fish allows for these methods to be applied to
52 questions on specific adaptations as well as general neurobehavioural trends. As a result, fish
53 behaviour – especially stress-related and social behaviour – is increasingly being recognized as a
54 tool in the neurosciences (Gerlai, 2014; Maximino et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2015; Soares et al.,
55 2017). A picture is emerging in which complex relationships between fish social behaviour and
56 stress are becoming prominent, and special attention now is given to the applications of these
57 relationships (Oliveira, 2013; Soares et al., 2017).

58 The present article discusses different neurobehavioural questions using fish as models,
59 focusing on stress-related behaviour, monoamines, and sociality in model species. We set the stage
60 by discussing the neuroanatomical underpinnings of social and stress-related behaviour and its
61 equivalents in teleosts, as well as by briefly presenting the monoaminergic innervation of the
62 “social behaviour network”, the “aversive behaviour network”, and the “mesolimbic reward
63 system”. The modulation of aversive behaviour by monoamines follows that, as well as a discussion
64 on coping strategies in fish and its relations to stress and monoamines. Stress both modifies social
65 behaviour (e.g., the defensive functions of shoaling) and is modified by it (e.g., the stressful nature
66 of dominant-subordinate interactions), and different coping styles are associated with different
67 reactivities to social interaction. An overview of the monoaminergic modulation of social behaviour
68 is given, focusing on shoaling in zebrafish and cooperation in cleaning wrasses and gobies. Finally,
69 applications in biological psychiatry and psychopharmacology are outlined. The article provides a

70 larger picture on the frontiers between social behaviour and stress in different fish species, as well
71 as their common modulation by neurotransmitter systems, as well as the open avenues in fish
72 neurobehavioural research on these fields.

73

74 **2. Stress and sociality networks in the vertebrate brain**

75 Monoaminergic systems modulate the activity of specific behavioural circuits which have been
76 implicated in a plethora of functions, from cognition to emotional behaviour (Cools et al., 2007;
77 Rogers, 2010). For vertebrates, a “social behaviour network” (SBN; Newman, 1999) has been
78 proposed which overlaps a “mesolimbic reward system” to form a “social decision making
79 network” (O’Connell & Hofmann, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). The SBN involves, in mammals, the lateral
80 septum, extended medial amygdala, preoptic area/paraventricular nucleus (POA/PVN), anterior
81 hypothalamus, ventromedial hypothalamus, and periaqueductal gray area (Figure 1). The SBN is
82 involved in multiple forms of social behaviour, including sexual behaviour and courtship,
83 aggression, and parental care, and its nodes are reciprocally and massively connected (Goodson,
84 2005; O’Connell & Hofmann, 2011b). By definition, these nodes express sex hormone receptors
85 (Forlano & Bass, 2011; O’Connell & Hofmann, 2011a, 2012). The mesolimbic reward system of
86 mammals involves projections from the ventral tegmental area (VTA) to the nucleus accumbens,
87 lateral septum, ventral pallidum, striatum, pallial amygdala, and hippocampus (Figure 1A). This
88 latter circuit has been proposed to be involved in reward and/or reward seeking (Ikemoto &
89 Panksepp, 1999b; Alcaro & Panksepp, 2011) by allowing the individual to evaluate the relative
90 value and consequence of making choices among external stimuli, and by “mobilizing” goal-
91 directed behaviour that directs the animal to important environmental resources.

92 In addition to its roles in reward and resource seeking, the mesolimbic system is also involved
93 in coping and in the individual’s ability to adapt to chronic social stress (Kvetnansky et al., 2009;

94 Trainor, 2011). Mice that mount active responses after social stress show increased excitability of
95 VTA neurons and associated brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) release in the nucleus
96 accumbens (Krishnan et al., 2007). Mesolimbic DA has also been implicated in encoding predictors
97 of aversive stimuli and forming operant associations as to avoid them (Ilango et al., 2012). Stress-
98 induced increases in tonic levels of DA in the mesolimbic system have been implicated in
99 supporting active coping responses – that is, responses that aim to remove and avoid stressors
100 (Cabib & Puglisi-Allegra, 2012).

101 The latter examples also underline the role of these circuits in regulating responses to stressful
102 and aversive stimuli. Indeed, another layer that could be added to the overlap between SBN and
103 mesolimbic reward system is that of an “aversive behaviour network” (Misslin, 2003; Cezario et al.,
104 2008; Panksepp, 2011; LeDoux, 2012a; Sternson, 2013; Canteras & Graeff, 2014; Andersen et al.,
105 2016). This system is equivalent to the stress/anxiety/fear circuit. In mammals, this network consists
106 of the septum, frontotemporal and striatal amygdaloid systems, periaqueductal gray area (PAG), and
107 extensive and mutual projections with the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis (Figure 1). These
108 structures are highly responsive to stressful and aversive stimuli, including social and non-social
109 stressors, in a variety of species. In addition, this circuit selects appropriate defensive and stress
110 coping responses as a function of threat probability (Fanselow & Lester, 1988; McNaughton &
111 Corr, 2004a; Perusini & Fanselow, 2015). Part of this circuit comprises the fight/flight/freeze “fear”
112 system that has been widely studied in behavioural neuroscience (Misslin, 2003; Panksepp, 2006).
113 Another part of this circuit is associated with responses to uncertain threat, with important
114 behavioural correlates of anxiety-like states (Davis, 2002; Gray & McNaughton, 2003;
115 McNaughton & Corr, 2004a; Maximino, 2012). In theory, anxiety-like behaviour is triggered by
116 uncertain threat, while fear-like behaviour is triggered by distal or proximate threat, i.e. clearly
117 detectable aversive stimuli (Fanselow & Lester, 1988; Perusini & Fanselow, 2015). Whether or not,

118 in fish, those responses are also segregated at the behavioural and neuroanatomical levels is still
119 debated (Kalueff et al., 2012).

120

121 **2.1. A tale of homologies**

122 It is difficult to establish direct homologies between structures found in the SBN, the
123 mesolimbic system, and the aversive behaviour network of amniotes and anamniotes (O’Connell &
124 Hofmann, 2011a), to the point that Goodson & Kingsbury (2013) argued that the SBN is “not yet
125 supported as a pan-vertebrate model”. One of the main reasons of that difficulty is that in teleosts,
126 the developmental eversion of the telencephalon makes it very difficult to establish direct
127 homologies on the basis of topology (Nieuwenhuys, 2011); moreover, the lack of cytoarchitectonic
128 and hodological data on a variety of species also impairs judgments of homology. Numerous
129 homologies that have been proposed for these regions in teleost fish are only partial (Goodson,
130 2005; O’Connell & Hofmann, 2011b; Goodson & Kingsbury, 2013); and important structures (such
131 as mesolimbic DAergic pathways) are absent in teleosts (Rink & Wullimann, 2001; Wullimann &
132 Mueller, 2004; Maximino et al., 2015a). Based on topology, hodology, and expression of receptors
133 for sexual hormones, O’Connell & Hofmann (2011b) proposed direct one-to-one homologs of the
134 periaqueductal gray area and POA in fish, and the anterior and ventral tuberal regions as
135 homologues for anterior and ventromedial hypothalamus, respectively; these structures would
136 comprise the social behaviour network in fish. In the mesolimbic reward system, homologues have
137 been proposed for the basolateral (pallial) amygdala (= dorsomedial telencephalon, Dm; Maximino
138 et al., 2013); and hippocampus (= dorsolateral telencephalon, Dl; Demski, 2013). Subpallial
139 structures in the mesolimbic reward system probably represent partial homologies, with the ventral
140 telencephalon (Vd, Vv, Vc) presenting a pallidal portion and a striatal portion that are equivalent to
141 the pallidum and striatum (including a subpallial amygdala), respectively (Ganz et al., 2012, 2014;
142 Maximino et al., 2013a). While no homologue of the VTA has been described in teleosts, a

143 functional (analogical) equivalent is the ascending dopaminergic projection that originates in the
144 posterior tuberculum (Rink & Wullimann, 2001, 2004; Tay et al., 2011). In relation to the aversive
145 behaviour network, based on expression of ancillary markers, topology, and function, it has been
146 proposed that the supracommissural subpallium (Vs) is a partial homologue of the mammalian
147 extended amygdala, including the striatal component and the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis,
148 while the dorsomedial telencephalon (Dm) is homologous to the frontotemporal component of the
149 amygdala (Maximino et al., 2013a). Finally, the shared structures (bed nucleus of the stria
150 terminalis, lateral septum) are partially homologized to the Vs and ventral (Vv) and lateral (Vl)
151 parts of the ventral telencephalon, respectively (Moreno et al., 2009; Ganz et al., 2012). These
152 homologies and analogies are summarized in Table 1 and Figure 1B.

154 **2.2 Monoaminergic innervation in teleosts**

155 These three circuits are heavily innervated by monoamines in all vertebrates (O'Connell &
156 Hofmann, 2012). However, the anatomical organization of monoaminergic systems presents
157 significant differences between teleosts and mammals (Kaslin & Panula, 2001; Herculano &
158 Maximino, 2014; Maximino et al., 2015a, 2016). For example, the serotonin (5-HT) neurons in
159 amniotes are restricted to the raphe nuclei (cluster 5-8), while anamniotes present four extra clusters
160 (Lillesaar, 2011; Gaspar & Lillesaar, 2012; Cornide-Petronio et al., 2013; Herculano & Maximino,
161 2014; López & González, 2014). Moreover, genomic events (the “fish-specific duplication event;
162 Meyer & Van de Peer, 2005) resulted in duplication of most the synthesizing enzyme tryptophan
163 hydroxylase, 5-HT receptors, the serotonin transporter, and the vesicular monoamine transporter in
164 teleosts (Norton et al., 2008; Sourbron et al., 2016); similar changes were observed in the
165 catecholaminergic systems, with duplication of the synthesizing enzyme tyrosine hydroxylase and
166 most dopamine receptors (Yamamoto & Vernier, 2011). Teleosts also lack a mesolimbic DAergic
167 system, as described above (Rink & Wullimann, 2001, 2004; Tay et al., 2011).

168 Teleosteans present pretectal and hypothalamic 5-HTergic clusters whose projections and
169 function are poorly described (Lillesaar, 2011; Maximino et al., 2013c; Herculano & Maximino,
170 2014). Nevertheless, one of the most well characterized teleosts in this respect is the zebrafish
171 (*Danio rerio*). The axonal projections from the superior and inferior raphe of zebrafish have been
172 described, with moderate to dense innervation of regions in the mesolimbic reward network, such as
173 the Dl, Dm, Vv/Vl, and posterior tubercular area; low to moderate innervation of nodes in the SBN,
174 including POA, tuberal regions and GC; and moderate innervation of regions in the aversive
175 behaviour network, including Dm, Vs, and caudal hypothalamus (Lillesaar et al., 2009). Other
176 regions which receive serotonergic innervation (Kaslin & Panula, 2001) do not appear to be part of
177 the SBN, aversive behaviour network, or mesolimbic reward systems.

178 Catecholaminergic projections have also been characterized in zebrafish (Rink & Wullimann,
179 2001; Ma, 2003; McLean & Fetcho, 2004; Tay et al., 2011). The POA receives only weak local
180 DAergic projections, and does not appear to receive noradrenergic projections in zebrafish larvae
181 (Tay et al., 2011). In adult animals, low to moderate catecholaminergic innervation of regions of the
182 SBN are found, with moderate innervation of regions in the aversive behaviour network and
183 moderate to high innervation of regions in the mesolimbic reward system (Kaslin & Panula, 2001).
184 A summary of this innervation patterns, as well as the homologies proposed for the teleostean brain,
185 can be found in Table 1.

186 187 **3. The aversive behaviour network of fish: Modulation by 5-HT and DA**

188 Stress is an important risk factor in many diseases, including psychiatric disorders. In the latter
189 case, stress is especially relevant to anxiety and mood disorders, as well as to trauma- and stressor-
190 related disorders (Belzung & Lemoine, 2011). The neurocircuitry associated with these disorders is
191 partially elucidated (Coplan & Lydiard, 1998; Etkin & Wager, 2007; Hartley & Phelps, 2009; Hayes

192 & Northoff, 2011; Jovanovic & Norrholm, 2011), and overlaps extensively with the aversive
193 behaviour network (LeDoux, 2012b).

194 Anxiety-like behaviours have been explored in different fish species, including *Xiphophorus*
195 *nigrensis* (Ramsey et al., 2014), sticklebacks (Thompson et al., 2016), and guppies (Maximino et
196 al., 2010b). Nonetheless, zebrafish is the most widely studied species when it comes to fear, anxiety,
197 and stress (Jesuthasan & Mathuru, 2008; Maximino et al., 2010a; Kalueff et al., 2012; Gerlai,
198 2013). Two assays – the novel tank test (Egan et al., 2009) and the light/dark test (Maximino et al.,
199 2010b) – are widely used in this species, with good pharmacological validation and construct
200 validity for both tests (Maximino et al., 2012; Kysil et al., 2017). In the novel tank test, the novelty
201 of the environment elicit bottom-dwelling (also termed a “diving” response) that is associated with
202 erratic swimming and freezing, representing anxiety-like behavior in this assay (Egan et al., 2009).
203 In the light/dark test, the preference for a black compartment over a white one, associated with risk
204 assessment behaviors, erratic swimming, thigmotaxis, and freezing is interpreted as anxiety-like
205 behavior (Maximino et al., 2010b). Moreover, a relationship between stress and behaviour in these
206 tests is established, as both acute (Giacomini et al., 2016) and chronic (Chakravarty et al., 2013;
207 Marcon et al., 2016) stress increases anxiety-like behaviour in these assays, and exposure to the
208 apparatuses induce cortisol levels (Kysil et al., 2017). A causal link between neuroendocrine and
209 behavioural responses to stress has not been ascertained; since these are modulated by monoamines,
210 these upstream modulators could link both functions. However, as we will show, the behavioural
211 roles of monoamines in unstressed animals are discordant from its functions in neuroendocrine
212 responses, underlining the need for more thorough analyses at both the behavioural and the
213 physiological levels.

214

215 **3.1. Serotonin and the aversive behaviour network of zebrafish**

216 Some of the behavioural functions of the serotonergic system have been described in zebrafish
217 (Herculano & Maximino, 2014). It has been proposed that serotonergic projections to the
218 telencephalon compute the aversive expectation value necessary for the zebrafish to mount an
219 active response to aversive stimuli (Amo et al., 2014). Consistent with that hypothesis, drugs which
220 increase 5-HT levels in the zebrafish brain increase anxiety-like behaviour in the light/dark test and
221 decrease it in the novel tank test (Egan et al., 2009; Sackerman et al., 2010; Maximino et al., 2011,
222 2013b, 2014a; Iturriaga-Vásquez et al., 2012; Kyzar et al., 2013; Stewart et al., 2013; Herculano &
223 Maximino, 2014; Cheng et al., 2016). Moreover, there is a correlation between 5-HT levels in the
224 extracellular fluid *ex vivo* and behaviour in the light/dark test, with higher levels associated with
225 more anxiety-like behaviour in the light/dark test and lower anxiety-like behaviour in the novel tank
226 test (Maximino et al., 2013b).

227 A role for specific 5-HT receptors has also been proposed. In both the light/dark and novel tank
228 tests, the 5-HT_{1A} receptor antagonist WAY 100,635 decreases anxiety-like behaviour (Maximino et
229 al., 2013b); however, the antagonist p-MPPF *increases* anxiety-like behaviour in the novel tank test
230 (Nowicki et al., 2014). Antagonists at 5-HT₂ and 5-HT₃ receptors were shown to increase anxiety-
231 like behaviour in the novel tank test (Nowicki et al., 2014), while 5-HT_{1B} receptor antagonists
232 decrease it (Maximino et al., 2013b; Nowicki et al., 2014).

233 These results suggested that serotonin has a dual role in controlling anxiety-like behaviour in
234 zebrafish, with opposite effects on the light/dark test and the novel tank test. These discrepancies
235 could be due to differences in stimulus control in both tests: while white avoidance/dark preference
236 in the light/dark test is controlled by an approach/avoidance conflict, bottom-dwelling/top
237 avoidance in the novel tank test is controlled by escape from the top (Maximino et al., 2012). This
238 stimulus control is reminiscent of Gray's theory on the difference between fear and anxiety (Gray &
239 McNaughton, 2000; McNaughton & Corr, 2004b), suggesting that 5-HT could have a differential
240 role in fear vs. anxiety in zebrafish (as suggested, for mammals, by the Deakin/Graeff hypothesis;

241 cf. Deakin & Graeff, 1991; Graeff et al., 1996; Paul et al., 2014). Alternative explanations have
242 been proposed; for example, Stewart et al. (2013) suggested that the effects of 5-HT on the novel
243 tank test are better explained as a “serotonin syndrome-like” phenotype. To test both hypotheses, a
244 clearer threatening stimulus is needed, an example of which is the alarm substance, a “panicogenic”
245 stimulus.

246 The alarm substance is produced by club cells of Ostariophysan fish; when these cells are
247 damaged (by, for example, predator attack), the substance is released to the water, immediately
248 producing a dramatic fear-like behaviour (von Frisch, 1938; Jesuthasan & Mathuru, 2008; Døving
249 & Lastein, 2009). When zebrafish are exposed to this alarm substance and subsequently tested in
250 the light/dark test, an increase in aversive behaviour is observed that is blocked by acute pre-
251 treatment with fluoxetine (Maximino et al., 2014b). Interestingly, the same fluoxetine dose
252 *increases* the same behaviour in this test when given to animals that were not exposed to alarm
253 substance (Maximino et al., 2014b), suggesting that this drug is anxiogenic and panicolytic. alarm
254 substance also increases plasma levels of norepinephrine, epinephrine, and glucose, effects which
255 were blocked by fluoxetine (Maximino et al., 2014b). Both behavioural and autonomic effects,
256 however, were not blocked by treatment with WAY 100,635 (Maximino et al., 2014b); interestingly,
257 when animals are exposed to the alarm substance during the novel tank test, WAY 100,635 and
258 methysergide (a 5-HT₂ receptor antagonist) potentiate the effect of alarm substance (Nathan et al.,
259 2015).

260 These results are in line with clinical data (Mortimore & Anderson, 2000; Graeff et al., 2001;
261 Garcia-leal et al., 2014), as well as preclinical data on mammals (Pinheiro et al., 2007; Guimarães et
262 al., 2010; Paul et al., 2014; Graeff, 2016). The participation of this monoamine in behavioural and
263 neuroendocrine responses to stressors appears to be different, however. While it has long been
264 shown that social stressors increase brain 5-HTergic activity in fish that is accompanied by
265 increased cortisol levels (Winberg & Nilsson, 1993), a causal role is more difficult to ascertain. 5-

266 HT_{1A} receptors expressed at all levels of the hypothalamus-pituitary-interrenal (HPI) axis of
267 teleosts, but the mRNA levels in the preoptic region and the head kidney are 12- to 16-fold higher
268 than in the pituitary (Norton et al., 2008; Lim et al., 2013). In goldfish and Arctic charr, 5-HT_{1A} and
269 5-HT₄ receptor activation increase cortisol responses by acting directly in steroidogenic cells in the
270 interrenals (Lim et al., 2013). However, these effects appear to be different in stressed animals, as
271 fluoxetine blocks cortisol responses after chasing stress in zebrafish (de Abreu et al., 2014), and the
272 5-HT_{1A} receptor agonist 8-OH-DPAT does the same in the Arctic charr (Höglund et al., 2002).
273 Höglund et al. (2002) observed that fish receiving this drug with a permanent intraperitoneal
274 catheter, thus decreasing the stress of injection, showed increased cortisol and adrenocorticotrophic
275 hormone (ACTH) levels, while animals which received (stressful) intraperitoneal injections
276 responded with decreased plasma cortisol and ACTH levels. Similarly, 8-OH-DPAT increases
277 cortisol levels in catheterized rainbow trout (Winberg et al., 1997). Thus, it looks as if 5-HT
278 phasically increases basal cortisol levels but decreases cortisol responses to stressors, as well as
279 behavioural and physiological responses to stress.

280 There are some methodological issues in mapping behavioural and neuroendocrine roles for 5-
281 HT in stress, as well. One of them regards concerns the post-stress time intervals chosen for testing.
282 Fluoxetine blocks the anxiogenic effect of chasing stress in the novel tank test 2 min after stress
283 (Giacomini et al., 2016). However, peak levels of whole-body cortisol are observed 15 min after
284 stress (de Abreu et al., 2014), an effect that is also blocked by fluoxetine. If stress-induced cortisol
285 responses were causally related to the anxiogenic effect of stress, the temporal order of these effects
286 should be inverted. As it stands, it appears that serotonin phasically inhibits both behavioural and
287 neuroendocrine effects of stress independently.

288

289 **3.2. Dopamine and the aversive behaviour network of zebrafish**

290 Similarly to the serotonergic system, a plethora of differences can be found in the dopaminergic
291 system of teleosts in relation to mammals. As described above, important neuroanatomical (absence
292 of the A9/mesolimbic projection) and genomic (duplication of tyrosine hydroxylase and of some
293 receptors) differences exist between teleosts and mammals, and many of these differences are
294 plesiomorphic in Gnathostomata (Yamamoto & Vernier, 2011). Some roles for dopamine receptors
295 have been described in zebrafish anxiety-like behaviour. Treatment with the dopamine transporter
296 blocker D-amphetamine increases anxiety-like behaviour in the novel tank test without apparent
297 locomotor effects (Kyzar et al., 2013). Similarly, the D₁ receptor antagonist SCH 23390 decreases
298 anxiety-like behaviour (Kacprzak et al., 2017) and reduces social preference (Scerbina et al., 2012)
299 in zebrafish. A developmental role for catecholamines is also suggested by experiments with
300 morpholino knockdown of the tyrosine hydroxylase-coding gene *th1*, which decreases anxiety-like
301 behaviour when the animal reaches adulthood (Formella et al., 2012). Moreover, dopamine
302 transporter-null zebrafish are more sensitive to the D₂/D₃ receptor antagonist sulpiride (Kacprzak et
303 al., 2017).

304 There is also some evidence for a role of dopamine receptors in behavioural and
305 neuroendocrine stress responses, although they are much less developed than in the case of
306 serotonin. Stress induces dopaminergic activity in the brain of tilapia *Oreochromis mossambicus*
307 (Chabbi & Ganesh, 2015). Risperidone, which acts as an antagonist at dopamine D₂ and serotonin
308 5-HT_{2A} receptors, blocks stress-induced cortisol increases in zebrafish, without apparent
309 behavioural effects (Idalencio et al., 2015). The tyrosine hydroxylase blocker α -methyltyrosine
310 produces a similar neuroendocrine effect (Idalencio et al., 2017). Differently from serotonin, then,
311 catecholamines appear to have concordant effects on basal anxiety-like behaviour and on
312 neuroendocrine responses to stress in zebrafish, promoting stress-induced cortisol release.

313 In both the case of 5-HT and catecholamines, the assumption of anatomical and neurochemical
314 conservation in zebrafish (in relation to mammals) is not fully supported by the data; in fact, the

315 most parsimonious interpretation is that mammalian state is derivative (Parent, 1984; Yamamoto &
316 Vernier, 2011; Herculano & Maximino, 2014; Maximino et al., 2015a). The paradox, however, is
317 that, at least in the case of some roles of monoamines in the aversive behaviour network, function
318 appears to be conserved instead of neuroanatomy and genetics (Herculano & Maximino, 2014;
319 Maximino et al., 2016). Questions remain on whether this conservation of function can be explained
320 at the molecular level – that is, if active sites from duplicated proteins are conserved, or if their
321 function is duplicated.

322

323 **3.3. Coping mechanisms and monoamines in fish**

324 While these responses to stressful manipulations appear to differentiate between the
325 neuroendocrine and behavioural roles of 5-HT (but not of catecholamines) in zebrafish, there is a
326 potential confounding variable that has not been accounted for: coping. While many different
327 definitions exist for the term, “coping” usually refers to coherent and stable sets of individual
328 behavioural and physiological differences in responses to stressors. Coping styles are a result of
329 individual differences in perceiving and reacting to the environment. From an eco-physiological
330 point of view, coping styles fundamentally affect the robustness of individuals to challenges such as
331 stress and diseases (Koolhaas et al., 1999; Réale et al., 2007; Coppens et al., 2010; Vindas et al.,
332 2017). behavioural and physiological differences prompted classifying animals into “proactive” and
333 “reactive” coping styles, with the first describing individuals which are “bolder” (which can mean
334 lower anxiety and/or increased impulsivity), more aggressive, dominant, and less flexible to
335 fluctuations in the environment, and the second describing individuals which are “shyer”, less
336 aggressive, usually submissive, and more flexible to fluctuations (Øverli et al., 2007; Coppens et al.,
337 2010). In outbred populations, however, there is consistent evidence (e.g., Frost et al., 2007, 2013;
338 Thomson et al., 2012, 2016) that bold rainbow trout are more flexible than shy fish. These

339 discrepancies suggest that the reduced flexibility in bold individuals results from inbreeding and/or
340 artificial selection, and is rare in the wild.

341 Neuroendocrine responses usually vary between proactive and reactive individuals. For
342 example, it has been suggested that proactive individuals show low basal stress axis activity and
343 less prominent cortisol responses to stress, with higher sympathetic responses to challenges
344 (Koolhaas et al., 1999). For example, Pottinger & Carrick (1999) selected rainbow trout
345 (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) selected for responsiveness of the HPI axis by assessing cortisol responses
346 to repeated confinement stress, and selectively breeding animals at extremes of the endocrine
347 response. These lines show divergent behavioural profiles, with high responding (HR) fish more
348 frequently becoming subordinate (Øverli et al., 2005), habituating more slowly to transfer to a new
349 tank (Øverli et al., 2005; Ruiz-Gomez et al., 2008), showing more behavioural arousal after the
350 introduction of an intruder (Øverli et al., 2005) and more attacks to the intruder (Schjolden et al.,
351 2005a) than low responding (LR) fish. Interestingly, differences were also observed in the intestinal
352 mucosal barrier: using a similar selective breeding (“experimental evolution”) technique as that of
353 Pottinger, Rosengren et al. (2017) generated high responding trout that show lower intestinal
354 permeability during basal conditions, but this was reversed after stress. Thus, it appears that HR
355 trout show a reactive coping style, while LR trout show a proactive style.

356 The notion that coping styles are causally related to cortisol levels, however, has been disputed
357 many times (Øverli et al., 2007; Koolhaas et al., 2010). In juvenile rainbow trout, a mild
358 environmental stressor (exposure to an unfamiliar environment) produces consistent individual
359 differences in cortisol responses, with some animals showing high reactivity and other showing low
360 reactivity (Schjolden et al., 2005b). Moreover, individual differences in aggression in a resident-
361 intruder context and speed of recovery after social isolation were also observed; however, these
362 behavioural differences, while consistent over time and contexts, did not correlate with the
363 individual differences in cortisol responsiveness (Schjolden et al., 2005b). In zebrafish larvae,

364 proactive animals (selected on the basis of latency to emerge into a novel well-lit environment)
365 show higher cortisol levels after netting stress, but faster recovery (Tudorache et al., 2015). These
366 observations might be restricted to larvae, however, as adult proactive animals do not show more
367 cortisol after stress, although their recovery is faster (Tudorache et al., 2013).

368 In zebrafish, proactive vs. reactive coping is usually assessed at the behavioural level, because
369 the size of the animal impairs cortisol analysis without euthanasia. A “boldness-aggression
370 syndrome” is sometimes identified in zebrafish that is reminiscent to the proactive-reactive
371 dimension, with a correlation between aggression and boldness at the population level (Wright et
372 al., 2003; Moretz et al., 2007; Dahlbom et al., 2011; Norton et al., 2011). Animals selected for 5
373 generations on the basis of position on the tank (bold animals were defined by higher position in the
374 tank in relation to shy animals) did not differ in terms of cortisol levels; however, shy animals had
375 higher expression of the 11β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase-coding gene *11b-hsd*, the
376 glucocorticoid receptor-coding genes *gr-a* and *gr-b*, the corticotropin releasing factor-coding gene
377 *crf*, and the brain-derived neurotrophic factor-coding gene *bdnf* in relation to bold animals (Oswald
378 et al., 2013). It should be noted, however, that it is yet to be addressed whether these bold/shy
379 animals correspond to proactive/reactive coping styles.

380 Zebrafish selected for low vs. high stationary behaviour (LSB vs. HSB), which have been
381 argued to exhibit characteristics of proactive and reactive coping styles, respectively, show
382 interesting behavioural and transcriptomic differences (Wong et al., 2012, 2015). LSB animals
383 display less anxiety-like behaviour in the novel tank test and light/dark test, a lower fear-like
384 behaviour during alarm substance exposure, lower latency to feed after a disturbance, and a higher
385 probability of orienting towards a human observer than HSB animals (Wong et al., 2012). 62 genes
386 were found to be upregulated in the brains of proactive (LSB) animals, including genes involved in
387 the biosynthesis and metabolism of organic acids, carboxylic acids, and fatty acids (Wong et al.,
388 2015). The authors suggested that these differences could be related to dealing with oxidative stress

389 in the brain. Moreover, stationary behaviour was positively correlated, in LSB animals, with the
390 expression of the methylsterol monooxygenase-coding gene *msmo1* and 11 β -hydroxysteroid
391 dehydrogenase-coding gene *hsd11b2*, and negatively correlated with *gabbr1a* expression, a gene
392 which codes for the GABA_B receptor.

393 As described above, there is some evidence for a role of the mesolimbic reward system on
394 coping styles in vertebrates – especially in coping with chronic stress (Kvetnansky et al., 2009;
395 Trainor, 2011). There are some suggestions that monoamines participate in these coping responses
396 (Coppens et al., 2010; Koolhaas et al., 2010). Telencephalic levels of *mra* (mineralocorticoid
397 receptor A), *slc6a4b* (serotonin transporter B), and *htr1ab* (5-HT_{1AB} receptor) are higher in HR trout
398 (Rosengren et al., 2017). Likewise, *spiegeldanio* zebrafish – which show increased aggression,
399 exploration, and boldness (i.e., proactive coping) – show higher levels of *slc6a4a* (serotonin
400 transporter A) in the raphe nucleus (Norton et al., 2011); this does not appear to be causal,
401 however, since acute treatment with a serotonin transporter inhibitor does not rescue the
402 behavioural differences. In Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) that escaped an imposed hypoxia by
403 swimming into an adjacent normoxic tank (proactive coping) showed lower DA and DOPAC levels
404 in the Dl than reactive animals (i.e., animals which did not escape hypoxia) (Vindas et al., 2017).
405 While 5-HIAA levels were identical between reactive and proactive animals, it increased in the Dm
406 of proactive animals after stress (Vindas et al., 2017). These later effects might be related to the 5-
407 HT_{1A} receptor, as proactive animals had higher levels of *htr1aa* (5-HT_{1AA} receptor) and *htr1ab* (5-
408 HT_{1AB} receptor) mRNA levels in the Dm than reactive animals (Vindas et al., 2017); while
409 differences in *crf* and *crfbp* (CRF binding protein) were not observed, proactive animals had higher
410 levels of *crhr1* (CRF receptor 1) in the Dl (Vindas et al., 2017). Reactive individuals also showed
411 higher levels of the neural proliferation marker *pcna* (proliferating cell nuclear antigen) in the Dl
412 (Vindas et al., 2017). This suggests that proactive fish are characterized by a stress-induced increase
413 in 5-HT signaling in the Dm and lower DAergic neurotransmission in the Dl.

414 In conclusion, coping styles appear to be a promising avenue of investigation that could solve
415 the paradox of a dissociation between neuroendocrine and behavioural roles of monoamines in fish.
416 A more thorough operational definition of coping is still needed, to underline discrepancies between
417 results from experimental evolution experiments and tests assessing inter-individual differences, as
418 well as between experiments that select of the basis of behaviour and cortisol responses.
419 Nonetheless, the research program carries the potential to suggest solutions linking behavioural and
420 neuroendocrine functions of these amines.

421

422 **4. Shoaling and the dopaminergic system in zebrafish**

423 The last common ancestor of modern teleosts (bony fishes) and mammals lived about 400
424 million years ago. Despite this long period of time, the zebrafish has turned out to possess numerous
425 evolutionarily conserved features (Gerlai, 2014), and has been proposed for the modelling and
426 analysis of more complex human neuropsychiatric and neurodevelopmental brain disorders (Gerlai,
427 2010, 2012; Kalueff et al., 2014). A number of such human disorders, albeit mechanistically and
428 causally perhaps unrelated, are characterized by abnormal social behaviour. For example, symptoms
429 and/or diagnostic criteria of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), schizophrenia or fetal alcohol
430 spectrum disorders (FASD) all contain some form or level of social behaviour abnormality (Gillberg
431 et al., 1996; Greenbaum et al., 2009; Hoertnagl & Hofer, 2014). These disorders represent
432 substantial unmet medical needs mostly because their mechanisms and/or causes are poorly
433 understood, and thus development of proper treatments has been difficult.

434 The zebrafish has been proposed to model such disorders to facilitate discovery of their
435 mechanisms and development of treatment (Kalueff et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2015; Shams et al.,
436 2018). However, this type of research suffers from an inherent paradox: in order for one to properly
437 model the chosen human disorder, one has to first know its mechanism, the latter being the reason
438 why the disease model would be created at the first place. Breaking through this conundrum, similar

439 to what is described in the novel *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller, is not an easy task. One way to start the
440 process is to focus on phenotypical features (face validity of the model), and subsequently test
441 whether these features have similar mechanistic underpinnings (construct validity of the model).
442 For example, social behaviour in humans, although a lot more sophisticated and complex than in
443 zebrafish, may share common mechanisms with social behaviour in fish (Oliveira, 2013). For one to
444 model a human disorder with abnormal social behaviour, one first needs to understand unaltered
445 “normal” social behaviour in the chosen model organism. Thus, studying zebrafish social behaviour
446 and its mechanisms, may allow to eventually identify underlying mechanisms common to human
447 and fish, and to start the modeling and analysis of human disorders associated with abnormal social
448 behavioural responses.

449 In this section, we describe the first steps of this research line. First, we will discuss how one
450 can induce and measure social behaviour in zebrafish. Next, we will examine a potential mechanism
451 that may underlie social behaviour in mammals and fish, a proof of concept analysis. Last, we will
452 present an experimental example on how one can utilize the analysis of social behaviour of
453 zebrafish and the knowledge we gained about its mechanism in an empirical model of a human
454 disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

456 **4.1. Zebrafish social behaviour**

457 Although a small and simple vertebrate, the zebrafish possesses a sophisticated social
458 behavioural repertoire. Detailed description of this repertoire is beyond the scope of this review, but
459 briefly, zebrafish have an elaborate courtship display/spawning behaviour, show transient
460 territoriality, exhibit numerous agonistic behaviours, and most importantly shoal, the focus of the
461 current review (Darrow & Harris, 2004; Miller & Gerlai, 2007, 2011; Spence et al., 2008;
462 Suriyampola et al., 2016; Teles & Oliveira, 2016). Shoaling is a form of group forming, or
463 aggregation behaviour, in which subjects stay in close proximity to each other. Fish in a shoal stay

464 in a relatively well-defined distance from each other. Shoaling is a dynamic behaviour in which
465 shoal members monitor each other and constantly adjust their position relative to each other. This
466 dynamism translates to rapid oscillation of shoal cohesion (Miller & Gerlai, 2008), a short time
467 scale (tenth of a second to a second) change. Shoal cohesion also changes on a longer time scale
468 (hours to days). For example, when fish habituate to a novel environment shoal cohesion gradually
469 decreases (Miller & Gerlai, 2007). Whereas when a predator approaches, shoal cohesion is rapidly
470 broken (escape reaction), which is followed by a robust tightening of the shoal, increase of shoal
471 cohesion (Miller & Gerlai, 2007; Speedie & Gerlai, 2008). The strength of shoaling also changes
472 (increases) as zebrafish develop (Buske & Gerlai, 2011). Another dynamic feature of the shoal is its
473 polarization, i.e. its synchronized movement direction. In case of synchronized movement, the shoal
474 is called a school, and the behaviour is called schooling. A recent study confirmed that, as suspected
475 based upon anecdotal accounts, zebrafish group forming is bimodal: fish either shoal (unpolarized
476 aggregate of shoal members moving in an asynchronous manner), or school, polarized group in
477 which members move in synchrony, i.e. in the same direction (Miller & Gerlai, 2012).

479 **4.2. Induction and quantification of shoaling**

480 Shoaling is an inherent feature of the zebrafish, a behaviour that can be observed in nature. But
481 even more importantly, shoaling may be easily induced and quantified in the laboratory too. There
482 are two distinct ways with which shoaling may be induced. One is to allow a group of zebrafish to
483 swim freely in their test tank, the other is to present the single experimental fish with social stimuli.
484 First, we discuss the former.

485 Three or more zebrafish will always form a group in the aquarium and move so that the
486 individuals remain in relative close proximity to each other. This type of social behavior must be
487 distinguished from other social interactions, including reproductive behaviors and aggression. In
488 case of the latter two behaviors, the physical distance between or among interacting fish and the

489 type of interaction, behavioural patterns, differ from what one observes in shoaling. Reproductive
490 behaviors and aggressive responses are characterized by idiosyncratic motor patterns whose
491 sequence is often fixed, these species-specific action patterns are missing in shoaling, where the fish
492 just simply swim or stay close to one another. Another important distinguishing feature of shoaling
493 from these other behaviors is that the distance among shoal members is relatively stable. Although
494 it can change in the short and longer time scale (see below), the change does not follow the
495 ritualized and often fast temporal pattern typical of aggressive or reproductive behaviors. Last,
496 aggressive and reproductive behaviors are also narrowly defined in terms of the number of
497 interacting members, whereas shoaling has been described in nature among as few as three and as
498 many as few hundred zebrafish, although the question of what constitutes an ideal, or usual, or
499 natural, shoal size has started to be empirically investigated only recently (Fernandes et al., 2015b).

500 Shoal cohesion of freely moving zebrafish group can be measured using video-tracking systems
501 that can quantify distances among the fish. Two of the most frequently employed measures to
502 quantify shoal cohesion have been the inter-individual distance, Delaunay distance, or the nearest
503 neighbor distance (Miller & Gerlai, 2007; Saverino & Gerlai, 2008; Lima et al., 2016). The first two
504 are the average of all distances between the focal fish and its shoal members (inter-individual
505 distance) or between all shoal members (Delaunay distance). The latter is the distance between the
506 focal fish and another shoal member closest to it. Each measure has some advantages and
507 disadvantages. Inter-individual distance utilizes all distances one can measure, and thus it does not
508 suffer from loss of information, unlike the nearest neighbor distance. But the value of inter-
509 individual distance is dependent upon the size of the shoal, whereas the value of nearest neighbor is
510 not. Thus, as long as the same number of shoal members are used in experimental analyses,
511 interindividual distance is the recommended measure. Irrespective of which measure one uses, the
512 problem with using live shoals to induce and measure shoaling is that behaviour of the shoal is

513 dependent upon all shoal members: fish in the shoal interact, and this dynamism may complicate
514 interpretation of results.

515 The second way to induce and evaluate shoaling responses in zebrafish is to present social
516 stimuli (live, or computer animated images of, conspecifics) to a single experimental subject
517 (Saverino & Gerlai, 2008; Fernandes & Gerlai, 2009; Qin et al., 2014). A single experimental
518 subject in a novel test tank is highly motivated to join the shoal, thus upon presentation of the social
519 stimuli, it usually approaches the stimuli and stays in close proximity of the stimuli. This response
520 is simple to quantify using video-tracking, as one can just measure the distance between the test fish
521 and the stimulus presentation tank or computer screen. Another advantage of using a single subject
522 presented with social stimuli is that the social stimuli, especially in the case of computer animated
523 images, is experimentally controlled and remain consistent across the test session and in between
524 different sessions too. This reduces experimental error variation and contributes to enhanced
525 replicability of results (Gerlai, 2018). Further advantage of inducing and measuring shoaling in this
526 manner is that one can monitor the behaviour of a single subject, which allows identification of
527 mutation or drug induced changes more precisely than what may be achieved when one has to
528 monitor the complex interactions among multiple subjects, as is the case in live shoals.

529 But does presentation of animated images really induce shoaling responses? Is this artificial
530 stimulus equivalent to live, moving and interactive, conspecifics? This question was addressed in a
531 recent study in which the effect of live conspecifics inside the test tank (cues of all modalities
532 available, stimulus fish interacting), live conspecifics outside the test tank (only visual cues
533 available, stimulus fish interacting), live stimulus fish video-taped and the recording replayed (only
534 visual cues available, stimulus fish not interacting, but move in 3D), computer animated images
535 (only visual cues available, stimulus fish not interacting, and move in 2D) using two different
536 software applications were presented (Qin et al., 2014). The results indicated that experimental
537 zebrafish responded equally well to all these stimuli, i.e., interaction with conspecifics, 3D

538 movement, and cues other than visual are not necessary to induce maximal shoaling responses, as
539 defined by the distance between test fish and the stimulus, in zebrafish (Qin et al., 2014). In
540 summary, presentation of animated conspecifics is a reliable, and consistently controllable stimulus
541 that induces a robust shoaling response that lasts as long as the stimulus is presented.

542 Experiments exploring what may be the “Platonian” essence of “zebrafishness”, i.e. what
543 specific aspects of the shoaling stimulus zebrafish are sensitive to, has also started to be explored
544 (Saverino & Gerlai, 2008; Gerlai, 2017). This line of research is also useful, as it will allow
545 investigators to test potentially subtle abnormalities in the way mutant or drug treated zebrafish may
546 alter their responses to social stimuli (Seguin & Gerlai, 2018). Although at a preliminary stage of
547 research, results already showed that zebrafish are sensitive to certain cues, while ignore others,
548 when making decisions about whether the stimulus is a shoal-mate or not. For example, rectangles
549 moving with the same speed as live zebrafish and occupying the same overall area on the screen as
550 the image of an adult zebrafish and containing scrambled pixels (overall matching color to that of a
551 zebrafish) do not induce a shoaling response (Saif et al., 2013a). Although such moving objects
552 elicit an exploratory approach, the experimental subject quickly moves away from them. On the
553 other hand, in response to a realistic moving image of a zebrafish, the experimental zebrafish not
554 only approaches, but also stays in close proximity of the stimulus. Altering the stripe pattern
555 (vertical vs horizontal stripes, or no stripes at all) makes no difference in the effectiveness of the
556 stimulus. But elongating the stimulus, while keeping its overall surface area constant induces
557 avoidance. Making the stimulus more yellow enhances the shoaling response compared to what a
558 normal (wild type) image of conspecific would induce (Saverino & Gerlai, 2008). In summary,
559 computerized presentation of animated conspecifics is a precisely controlled and reliable way with
560 which shoaling may be induced and with which the importance of particular aspects of the social
561 stimuli may be dissected. After achieving robust induction and precise quantification of behaviour,

562 one may be able to explore the biological mechanism underlying the behaviour. What are the
563 mechanisms of shoaling in zebrafish?

565 **4.3. Mechanisms of shoaling**

566 Likely, shoaling is under the control of, or influenced by, many neurobiological mechanisms,
567 brain areas, neuronal circuits, biochemical pathways and molecular targets. Where should one begin
568 unrevealing such complexity? Systematic analysis of this question would require labor intensive
569 screening of drug targets, mutations, genome wide gene expression changes, and or mapping of
570 gene expression or other neuronal activity related phenotypes in the brain. While ultimately such
571 studies must be conducted, we decided to start instead with a relatively simple proof of concept
572 analysis. That is, we picked a single mechanism, one target, and explored whether it is involved in
573 shoaling. The target was the dopaminergic system.

574 We chose the dopaminergic system as our focus for two main reasons. One, we observed that
575 zebrafish is highly motivated to join shoals. That is, we found social stimuli (sight of conspecifics)
576 to be able to serve as an Unconditioned Stimulus (US), a reward, in learning tasks employed for
577 zebrafish (Al-Imari & Gerlai, 2008). Two, the dopaminergic system has been shown to be involved
578 in reward/reinforcement in mammals (Ikemoto & Panksepp, 1999a; Ikemoto, 2010). We assumed
579 that observing, approaching and/or joining a shoal is a rewarding experience for the zebrafish, one
580 which engages the dopaminergic system. This idea is supported by the notion of the intersection
581 between “social behaviour network” (SBN) and the “mesolimbic reward system” (O’Connell &
582 Hofmann, 2011b).

584 **4.4. The dopaminergic system and shoaling**

585 The above described assumption turned out to be correct. Using HPLC, neurochemical
586 responses to the presentation of conspecific images were quantified, and the authors found that the

587 images induced a robust increase of the level of dopamine and the dopamine metabolite DOPAC,
588 indicating elevated dopamine production (dopamine levels) as well as increased dopamine release
589 (elevated DOPAC levels) (Saif et al., 2013a). The results also indicated that the strength of the
590 dopaminergic response was not linearly correlated with the length of stimulus presentation, a
591 temporal trajectory that suggested that it was the appearance not the constant presence of the social
592 stimuli that triggered the elevated dopaminergic response. It is also important to note that the
593 increased dopaminergic response was found to be specific, i.e. other neurotransmitter systems, e.g.
594 the serotonergic system, were found not to respond to the social stimuli.

595 Another independent piece of evidence suggesting the involvement of the dopaminergic system
596 in shoaling came from a psychopharmacology analysis. A D1 dopamine receptor antagonist was
597 found to dose dependently disrupt shoaling (Scerbina et al., 2012) without altering motor function
598 or perception (but see (Echevarria et al., 2008). 5-HT_{1A} signalling has also been implicated, as a
599 5-HT_{1A} receptor agonist promotes shoaling (Barba-Escobedo & Gould, 2012). Furthermore, strong
600 correlation between developmental changes in dopamine levels (relative to total brain protein) and
601 the strength of shoaling during ontogenesis of zebrafish was also demonstrated (Buske & Gerlai,
602 2011). Last, Mahabir et al. (2013) found alcohol administered during embryonic development to
603 significantly impair both shoaling and the dopaminergic system, a result that brings up the last point
604 to be discussed in this section: how one can utilize the knowledge one has gained about social
605 behaviour of zebrafish in modelling and the analysis of a human CNS disorder.

606

607 **4.5. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Zebrafish as a potential model system**

608 Despite the clear and known adverse effects of alcohol on the developing fetus, pregnant
609 women continue to consume this substance. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) still occur
610 in high frequency (about 1% of live births) and represent the largest number of patients suffering
611 from preventable mental retardation (Lange et al., 2017). FASD means a lifelong suffering for the

612 patient and his/her family and caregivers. The societal burden of FASD in terms of lost productivity
613 and health care costs is also enormous (Popova et al., 2016). There is no cure, nor even appropriate
614 treatment for the disease, mainly because the neurodevelopmental and functional changes resulting
615 from exposure of the embryo to alcohol are poorly understood. The zebrafish has been suggested as
616 a potentially useful tool or model organism for uncovering the effects and mechanisms of
617 embryonic alcohol exposure (Seguin & Gerlai, 2018). Earlier studies utilized high concentrations of
618 alcohol administered for prolonged period of time during embryonic development of the zebrafish
619 and indeed found abnormalities resulting from this treatment that appeared similar to what has been
620 reported for the most severe forms of FASD in humans (Arenzana et al., 2006). We attempted to
621 model/mimic a less severe form of the disease, one which is most prevalent among FASD patients.
622 We employed only low concentrations of alcohol and administered the substance solely for a short
623 period of time during embryonic development of zebrafish (Fernandes & Gerlai, 2009). The low
624 concentrations ranged between 0.25 and 1.00 % (vol/vol %) external bath concentration. We
625 emphasize that these concentrations are of the external bath, into which the zebrafish eggs (with the
626 embryo inside the egg developing) were immersed. It is notable that if these alcohol concentrations
627 were blood alcohol levels, they would be certainly lethal. However, the chorion (the eggshell) of
628 the zebrafish egg protects the embryo and, according to our own findings, allowed only 1/25th of the
629 external concentration to of alcohol to enter the egg (Fernandes & Gerlai, 2009). In other words,
630 the actual alcohol concentration that reached the brain of the developing zebrafish embryo was
631 below of the legal limit of blood alcohol level for driving in North America, i.e. less than 0.08 %.

632 Phenotyping of drug and mutation effects requires a thorough and systematic analysis (Gerlai,
633 2002). We tested many aspects of the behaviour of the embryonic alcohol exposed fish, including
634 their motor function, perception, fear and anxiety, and found no significant alterations. The treated
635 fish appeared to develop normally, looked healthy, and suffered from no obvious defects. However,
636 one test did reveal a robust change. Fish exposed to alcohol at their 24th hour post-fertilization

637 developmental stage for 2 hours exhibited impaired shoaling responses when tested 6 months later,
638 i.e. at their fully grown adult stage. Furthermore, the alcohol effect was found highly dose
639 dependent (Fernandes & Gerlai, 2009). Fish exposed to 0.25% alcohol showed a modest but
640 significant impairment in shoaling, 0.5% and 0.75% alcohol exposed fish showed a stronger
641 impairment in shoaling, and 1% alcohol exposed fish showed such robust impairment that their
642 response to social stimuli was statistically indistinguishable from chance, i.e. they exhibited no
643 shoaling at all (Fernandes & Gerlai, 2009).

644 Interestingly, the impaired shoaling response was found to be accompanied by altered
645 dopaminergic function. When isolated for 24 hours, fish of all groups, i.e. both control and
646 embryonic alcohol treated fish showed similar baseline dopamine and DOPAC levels. However,
647 upon presentation with social stimuli (animated images of zebrafish), control fish robustly increased
648 their dopamine and DOPAC levels, but fish treated with 0.5% and 1.0% alcohol during their
649 embryonic development did not respond to these stimuli at all. i.e. exhibited no change in their
650 dopamine and DOPAC levels (Fernandes et al., 2015).

651 The strong correlation between the blunted or abolished behavioural and neurochemical
652 responses to social stimuli is highly suggestive, but the question of how embryonic alcohol may
653 have impaired the development of dopaminergic system remains unanswered. Alcohol is known to
654 enhance apoptotic cell death. In zebrafish, using tunnel staining, we have found evidence that
655 embryonic alcohol treatment results in elevated number of apoptotic neurons in the developing
656 zebrafish brain. Furthermore, we have also found increased expression of Bax in the brain, a pro-
657 apoptotic protein whose level we quantified using Western blot (Mahabir, Chatterjee, Gerlai,
658 unpublished results). Whether these changes directly affected the development of dopaminergic
659 neurons, or whether other neurons connecting to, or mediating the activity of, the dopaminergic
660 neurotransmitter system have been affected is unknown at this point.

661 Although clearly at the early stages of model development, the zebrafish mild embryonic
662 alcohol exposure model already showed good face and construct validity. Whether the model will
663 be useful for unraveling the potentially complex and target rich mechanisms underlying fetal
664 alcohol spectrum disorders remains to be seen. Similarly, whether the model will turn out to have
665 predictive validity, i.e. treatments, e.g. pharmacotherapeutic applications, would work the same way
666 in the zebrafish and humans, is also an open question.

667 Nevertheless, the past decade of behavioural neuroscience research conducted with the
668 zebrafish suggests this small teleost will continue to make headway in biomedical research, and
669 may enhance our ability to model and mechanistically analyze human central nervous system
670 disorders.

671

672 **5. Stress, monoamines and cooperation: Insights from the cleaner fishes**

673 This section explores the proximate and behavioural links between stress, monoamines and
674 cooperation in fish, aiming specifically at the cleanerfish system. Marine cleaning interactions
675 between varied species have long been considered as textbook examples of mutualistic cooperation
676 (Trivers, 1971; Cushman & Beattie, 1991; Vaughan et al., 2016). By definition, cleaners are usually
677 small fish and shrimps that inspect the body surface, the gill chambers and mouth of other visiting
678 larger fishes, known as clients, in search of ectoparasites, mucus and dead or diseased tissue (Côté,
679 2000). These cleaners are found at specific sites or territories known as cleaning stations which
680 clients actively visit, several times a day and sometimes repeatedly to the same cleaner (Grutter,
681 1995; Bshary & Côté, 2008). For instance, the Indo-pacific cleaner wrasse *Labroides dimidiatus* is
682 able engage in thousands of interactions a day and may feed on more than 1200 “clients” daily
683 (Grutter, 1999). These cleaners’ behaviour has been described in detail during the last few decades
684 (Bshary & Côté, 2008; Soares, 2017; Soares et al., 2017c), which deemed them to be appropriate

685 for developing and testing new paradigms on the proximate mechanisms that render altruistic
686 behaviour as psychologically rewarding (Soares, 2017).

687

688 **5.1. Stress mediation of cleaning behaviour: fine-tuning cleaners' performance**

689 One of the most notable behaviours by these animals, is the entering of predators' mouths
690 (while cleaning), a behaviour that has been interpreted as altruistic on behalf of the clients that may
691 simply eat the cleaner (Trivers, 1971). This seemingly fearless behaviour became a paradoxical
692 feature of cleaners' proactivity and 'gutsy' cooperative behaviour but also of putative anxiety and
693 stress control.

694 Indeed, cleaners change behaviour crucially when dealing with piscivorous clients, that is, they
695 seem to have evolved behavioural strategies that enable them to remain safe despite putting
696 themselves at risk. For instance: cleaning gobies dash to inspect predators' despite of not gaining
697 more foraging benefits (i.e. ectoparasites; Soares et al., 2007) and, cleaner wrasses are known to
698 start any interaction with predators with the exclusive provision of tactile stimulation (also known
699 as 'massages' – cleaners touch clients with their pectoral and pelvic fins; a behaviour that is
700 incompatible with foraging), particularly when inspecting hungry piscivorous (Bshary & Würth,
701 2001; Grutter, 2004). This raised questions regarding cleaners' appraisal of fear, or if these fish
702 could be suffering from a kind of "heterospecific boldness syndrome" which would enable them to
703 happily deal with dangerous clients. This hypothesis was later refuted, as cleaners were found to
704 respond with higher cortisol levels when exposed (visually) to piscivorous compared to other
705 harmless clients (Soares et al., 2012b). Furthermore, authors interpreted cleaners' proactivity
706 towards these clients, by rapidly approaching predators, both in captivity and in the wild, and by
707 reducing the time elapsed between client approach and the start of the interaction process, as a way
708 would interrupt the potentially harm of the physiological consequences elicited by predatory clients,
709 securing a safe outcome to these interactions (Soares et al., 2012b). Moreover, it has been observed

710 that interactions following those involving predators, are increasingly more cooperative (Bshary et
711 al., 2008; Gingins et al., 2013), which pointed for a deeper role of stress mechanisms into the short-
712 term modulation of cleaners' cooperative levels. These mechanisms were further investigated in
713 natural conditions, when the exogenous effects of cortisol were found to propitiate cleaners
714 behavioural switch from cooperation to cheating (Soares et al., 2014). Cleaners behavioural change
715 occurred in both directions, under influence of rising cortisol levels: providing more tactile
716 stimulation to smaller clients to gain access to bigger ones that are then bitten or mediated by the
717 antagonism of the glucocorticoid receptors, producing a positive improvement of cleaning service
718 (more tactile stimulation to those clients that are truly valuable – i.e. have more ectoparasites and
719 more mucus), that will be responsible to reinforce current and future relationships (Soares et al.,
720 2014). However, knowing that the scope of stress-mediated effects is also in dependence to animals'
721 learned repertoire (Binning et al., 2017), much research is yet to be done with this system.

722 To facilitate the mechanistic approach to this system, 6 main cognitive modules have been
723 proposed (Soares, 2017), aiming to summarize and organize the main categories of behaviour used
724 by these individuals but also to establish the grounds for future testing. These dimensions are: 1)
725 Predisposition to approach partners, 2) Impulsivity and deception, 3) Social recognition and
726 inference, 4) Learning and memory, 5) Communication and levels of investment and 6) Bonding
727 (see Table 2). Building from the information currently available, we present in Table 2, several
728 putative stress-related effects related to each socio-cognitive modules/dimensions, for the
729 cleanerfish system. At this point, more research is needed, not only to continue with
730 pharmacological testing but also to integrate new behavioural studies coupled with new molecular
731 approaches.

732
733 **5.2. Stress influence to cleaner fish behavioural plasticity: Caribbean cleaning gobies as**
734 **alternative systems**

735 Advances in the evolutionary understanding of social behaviour have come from systems in
736 which individuals exhibit flexible social phenotypes (Richards et al., 2003). For instance, the
737 existence of behavioural polymorphisms between individuals and populations of a single species
738 may arise in response to ecological or social challenges-constraints, thus imposing on individuals
739 the need to adapt to different contexts (Sih & Bell, 2008; Bergmuller et al., 2010). Such adaptive
740 behavioural correlations usually underline physiological trade-offs that will play a key role in
741 explaining much of animals' performance plasticity to operate within their socio-environmental
742 challenges and which should ultimately bear fitness consequences.

743 The role of behavioural plasticity in the context of cleaning behaviour emergence, and more
744 specifically, the proximate mechanisms that underlie its adaptive expression is yet to be discovered.
745 In this regard, the Caribbean cleaning gobies *Elacatinus* spp appears as a good model candidate.
746 Indeed, in the *Elacatinus* clade, the absence of cleaning appears to be associated with a sponge-
747 dwelling habitat or, conversely, the presence of cleaning is associated with living on substrata other
748 than sponge (Rüber et al., 2003; Taylor & Hellberg, 2005). That is the case of the Barbadian
749 broadstripe cleaning goby *E. prochilos*, which occurs on both sponge and live coral (Whiteman &
750 Côté, 2004b), and its foraging mode and social systems differ between the two substrata. Coral-
751 dwelling *E. prochilos* are active full-time cleaners (Arnal & Côté, 2000; Whiteman & Côté, 2002),
752 are found living alone but mostly in pairs (male-female couples; Soares et al., 2009) or in small
753 groups (Whiteman & Côté, 2002) and feed mostly of fish ectoparasites, while sponge-dwelling *E.*
754 *prochilos* occur in large, highly aggressive dominance-structured groups and feed predominantly on
755 polychaete worms that burrow within sponge tissues (Whiteman & Côté, 2004a; Côté & Soares,
756 2011).

757 Nevertheless, it has been suggested that occupiers of both habitats retain foraging and
758 behavioural plasticity: coral dwelling gobies do not rely exclusively on client-gleaned items while
759 sponge dwelling ones appear to engage opportunistically in cleaning (Côté & Soares, 2011). The

760 risk of predation becomes a crucial factor here: sponge dwellers particularly those occupying inner
761 positions in the sponge (dominants) seem to have a more protected live style (White et al., 2007).
762 Seemingly, it is solely amongst those that are “forced” out from the inner and richer areas (less
763 competitive individuals) that opportunistic cleaning is observed (Whiteman & Côté, 2002).
764 Cleaners, while protected by conspicuous color stripes, chemical signals and specific behaviour,
765 which serve to attract cooperative clientele (Lettieri & Streelman, 2010) and help clients recognize
766 cleaners (Stummer et al., 2004), are nevertheless increasingly exposed to potential predators. There
767 has even been a suggestion that adopting a cleaning lifestyle is making the best of a dire situation,
768 based on the observation that the growth rates of juvenile and survival rates of adult sponge
769 dwellers are higher than those that live on coral and clean for a living (White et al., 2007).

770 Stress-related mechanisms should most certainly be crucial mediators of this system. As
771 mentioned above, cleaning gobies exhibit distinct preferences towards some client species over
772 others: e.g. they express these biases by cleaning a greater proportion of visiting individuals of
773 some species over others (Soares et al., 2007), spending more time inspecting these species (Arnal
774 & Côté, 2000), and by attending to these preferred visitors most quickly (Soares et al., 2007).
775 Notably, piscivorous clients are hardly made to wait (Soares et al., 2007) as cleaners’ fast takeover
776 of the situation helps to mitigate potential harmful consequences (see Soares et al., 2012). However,
777 these tests were done with *E. evelynae*, which are solely observed as cleaners and never as sponge
778 dwellers. In Barbados, both species – *E. evelynae* and *E. prochilos* – are reported inhabiting coral
779 reefs, but only *E. prochilos* is observed to have a dual strategy: cleaners and sponge-dwellers. We
780 decided to extend the tests done by Soares et al (2012b) to *E. prochilos*, wondering if cortisol
781 response mechanisms could be related to this species increase in socio-ecological challenges (for
782 methodology, please see Soares et al (2012). Thus, specimens from both species were collected in
783 similar habitats (coral heads) and all were identified as cleaners (aka, none the gobies were
784 collected in sponges). In trials to validate the hormone assay, cortisol immunoreactivity in holding

785 water varied significantly over time and in interaction between treatment and time for *E. evelynae*
786 (for complete results see Soares et al. (2012b)). *E. prochilos* individuals have a significantly wider
787 physiological range when it comes to cortisol secretion (Figure 2). Visual inspection of Figure 2A.
788 shows the amplified range of cortisol response by *E. prochilos* by the second hour but also the
789 ability to sustain that response up to the fourth hour, when it starts to decrease. The wider level of
790 response to the ACTH challenge contrasts with *E. prochilos* response to its putative heterospecific
791 partners: in comparison to a close species of cleaner (*E. evelynae*), *E. prochilos* individuals were not
792 found to react to predatory risk significantly (Figure 2B).

793 The difference between these two species of cleaning gobies, one referred to have an exclusive
794 cleaner strategy and another with the potential to exhibit an alternative behavioural choice, presents
795 an interesting twist: *E. prochilos* can respond more strongly to stressful contexts but these
796 individuals may not have the finer mechanisms that enables them to react to smaller trophic
797 differences between clients. This robustness of *E. prochilos* response may confer them with the
798 ability to be part of an aggressive, structured group as well as being a cleaner, if the opportunity
799 arises or if necessary due to a shortness of available food-patch (sponges). However, the relative
800 bluntness in reacting to clients may expose them to a greater predatory risk while similarly reducing
801 their cleaner-specialist status in comparison to their sympatric competitors, *E. evelynae*. Some of
802 these fundamental features of cleaning gobies' development ecology warrants for additional studies,
803 as to better evaluate the validity of these assumptions. For example, additional data of *E. prochilos*
804 collected within sponges, according to their status (dominant or subordinate), gender (female,
805 male), breeding status and whether these are paired or not, would be extremely informative. That
806 would then be compared to gobies collected at coral heads (aka, cleaning stations), in accordance
807 with those same variables. behavioural data would also be relevant: for instance, comparing
808 learning abilities in the lab and in the natural conditions would be relevant to understand the
809 differences in clientele assemblages between species and behavioural phenotypes.

810

811 **5.3. A cleaner is not always a cleaner: Stress involvement in life history changes**

812 Until now, we have focused either on the fine-tuning/ activational variations of individual
813 differences in cleaning behaviour, or to the prevalence of alternative-mix strategies (plasticity) in
814 some species of cleaners. This focus is solely relevant for the category of the so-called obligatory
815 cleaners, i.e. those species that by being fully specialized, clean during their entire life span.
816 However, these species occur solely in 2 of the most speciose groups of teleost fish (Labridae and
817 Gobiidae; Vaughan et al., 2016) while the remaining majority of the cleaner identified species are
818 categorized as facultative, i.e. clean solely during a particular life stage (mostly during their juvenile
819 phase). Hence, cleanerfish species differ tremendously in life histories, and stress-mechanisms may
820 well be involved in the regulation of these transitions between life-history stages, knowing that
821 these vary in relevance when it comes to social engagement. Basically, most of the facultative
822 cleaner species, at some point (frequently during adulthood), stop interacting with heterospecifics to
823 focus exclusively on their conspecific networks. In comparison with obligate cleaners (with some
824 exceptions), most facultative cleaner species try to avoid dealing with dangerous clients, which may
825 be an indicator of a different risk appraisal (Francini-Filho & Sazima, 2008). Predator inspection is
826 perhaps one of the greatest characteristics of obligate cleaners (see section 5.1.) and that reflects on
827 their choice of clients; which is the case of the Brazilian cleaning goby *E. figaro*, referred to prefer
828 piscivorous clients (Francini-Filho & Sazima, 2008). But so far, no study has focused on the
829 mechanisms underlying the neuro-cognitive background of facultative cleaners' life-history
830 transitions, and how the mechanisms of stress may be implicated.

831 There are some insights coming from tests done on obligate cleaners, focusing on the role of
832 the arginine vasotocin (AVT) system. The nonapeptide arginine vasotocin (AVT), homologous to
833 mammalian arginine vasopressin (AVP), is involved in many aspects of fish physiology but most
834 deeply in the responses to stress (Balment et al., 2006). Studies have shown that AVT mediates the

835 hypothalamic-pituitary-interrenal (HPI) axis activation (Backström et al., 2011; Gesto et al., 2014).
836 In obligate cleaners' *L. dimidiatus*, the increase of AVT levels, with exogenous peripheral infusions,
837 cause them to simply cease all mutualistic activities, but not conspecific behaviour (Soares et al.,
838 2012a, 2012c). These results contrast with those found with cortisol treatments, with cleaners
839 altering strategic tactics towards their clientele (see section 5.1 above, and Soares et al. (2014) and
840 Binning et al (2017)). Thus, we are in view of different stress response magnitudes, producing
841 significant behavioural responses: smaller variations of cortisol producing new metabolic-dietary
842 demands which justifies a change in behavioural pursuit (Soares et al., 2014) and the mediation of
843 AVT on the structural, life history changes between cleaning and non-cleaning, which ultimately
844 underlies a tremendous switch in social and cognitive output (Soares et al., 2012a, 2012c, Cardoso
845 et al., 2015a, 2015b).

846

847 **5.4. Stress, monoamines and cleaning: an emergent mixture mediating social complexity**

848 At this point we can surely state that stress plays a relevant role in this system: it works to fine-
849 tune cleaners' behavioural states, hence contributing to strategic changes, but overall it helps
850 cleaners to cope with socio-environmental challenges, being the most remarkable, the way they deal
851 with predatory vulnerability but also being involved in life history changes. While cleaners dispose
852 of behavioural and other structural variables to cope with stress, other physiological mechanisms
853 are set to regulate its impact.

854 For instance, stress factors are known to induce brain dopamine activity in fish (Chabbi &
855 Ganesh, 2015). Naturally, because the functions of the dopaminergic (DA) system are multiple,
856 involving decision-making, learning and reward mechanisms (for example, Messias et al (2016a,
857 2016b); Schultz (2002, 2006); Soares (2017)), the relationship between dopamine and stress will
858 also be complex, contextual and brain-region specific. As such, the DA system should respond
859 differently to distinct types of stressors as it confers to animals the ability to discriminate between

860 change-related stimuli (Pani et al., 2000). Thus, if DA hyperactivity could lead to a higher
861 propensity to develop addictions, compulsive behaviour, and novel-seeking behaviour, on the other
862 hand, DA depletion may lead to tremendous cognitive impairments and pathologies (for instance,
863 Brozoski et al. (1979); Cools et al. (2001)); while both extreme cases should underlie unbalanced
864 states of individual stress response. Exogenous manipulations made to cleaners' DA system
865 revealed disproportional behavioural changes due to impairment: the treatment with D1 and D2-like
866 receptor antagonists made cleaners interact more but not to forage, rather to almost exclusively
867 provide tactile stimulation to clients (Messias et al., 2016a). This costly investment in clients, when
868 prolonged (in the case of D1 influence) should work as an omission of the predicted reward
869 (Messias et al., 2016a) and may elicit an increase of stress response. Moreover, D1 blockage seems
870 also to be related to an increase of novelty seeking behaviour in cleaners (Soares et al., 2017b). On
871 the other hand, the increase of DA activity seems to enable cleaners learning abilities (Messias et
872 al., 2016b), being that this so-called motivational increase to learning new tasks could be coupled
873 with an increase of stress levels, which at this point is purely speculative. Interestingly, when signal
874 and reward differ (in time and space), a scenario that in natural conditions would occur when a
875 situation of an observing bystander client, DA blockage reduces cleaner impulsiveness towards the
876 sign (sign-tracking response, see Soares et al (Soares et al., 2017a)), which suggests that stress-
877 control mechanisms should also be in place.

878 The serotonergic system has also a crucial modulator role on animal stress response and on
879 helping animals to cope with stress. For instance, social stressors are known to increase brain
880 serotonin turnover in fish (Winberg & Nilsson, 1993; Winberg et al., 1997; Dahlbom et al., 2012;
881 Teles et al., 2013), indicating that animals make use of available serotonin to cope with stress
882 effects. Cleaners, whether engaging or not in stressful interactions (depending on the client
883 inspected), need to cope rapidly if they want to continue to forage. The effect of the so-called
884 "serotonin activity facilitators", both fluoxetine and 8-OH-DPAT, motivated cleaners to interact

885 more frequently and become more likely to provide physical contact to clients (tactile stimulation;
886 Paula et al., 2015). On the other hand, the action of serotonin blockers was mostly observed by the
887 significant reduction in the willingness to clean but also, in the rise of confrontational attitude in
888 relation to other smaller conspecifics (Paula et al., 2015) and in delaying the learning competence of
889 cleaners (Soares et al., 2016). Whether this exogenous blockage is eliciting an increase of cleaners'
890 stress levels, beyond what they can normally cope while cleaning, its yet to be discovered.

891

892 **6. A way forward: Integration between stress and sociality in fish**

893 While there are consistent structural differences in the aversive, social behaviour, and
894 mesolimbic reward networks between fish and mammals, the degree of behavioural conservation in
895 functions of aversive behaviour/stress and sociality between fish and mammals appears striking. For
896 example, an important role for dopamine in shoaling (Buske & Gerlai, 2011; Scerbina et al., 2012;
897 Saif et al., 2013a) parallels the role of this neurotransmitter in the mesolimbic reward-SBN
898 interface. Indeed, shoaling appears to be a motivated behaviour (Al-Imari & Gerlai, 2008) that leads
899 to dopamine release (Saif et al., 2013b). Nonetheless, it is now clear that teleosts do not possess a
900 dopaminergic mesolimbic projection *per se*, having no ventral tegmental area nor a nucleus
901 accumbens (Yamamoto & Vernier, 2011). Instead, a functional analogue (the posterior tuberculum)
902 produces dopamine that is released in a partial homologue (the dorsal nucleus of the ventral
903 telencephalon) (Rink & Wullimann, 2001, 2004; Tay et al., 2011). Thus, a paradox of function vs.
904 structure is observed when fish and mammals are compared (Figure 3). This underlying theme – of
905 conserved function without conserved structure – resonates throughout all monoaminergic systems
906 in teleosts (Figure 3A; Herculano & Maximino, 2014; Maximino et al., 2015b, 2016); indeed, at
907 least in the serotonergic system, it is the mammalian state that appears to be derived (Herculano &
908 Maximino, 2014).

909 What, if any, are the shared functions of monoamines in stress and sociality in fish? The work
910 reviewed here gives a few hints. First, 5-HT contributes to passive behavioural responses in
911 unstressed animals, increasing avoidance of potentially dangerous places but decreasing avoidance
912 of certain threat (Figure 3B); in stressed animals, however, 5-HT appears to act differently in
913 proactive vs. reactive animals, with increased 5-HTergic signaling possibly promoting active
914 responses to reduce stress and/or eliminate aversive stimuli. DA appears to have a similar role on
915 anxiety and fear, with the activation of D1 receptors increasing anxiety, and the activation of D2
916 receptors promoting stress-related cortisol release. However, DA and 5-HT appears to have
917 opponent roles in modulating sociality, with D1 and D2 receptors inhibiting cleaning mutualisms
918 but promoting shoaling, and 5-HT_{1A} receptors promoting cleaning and shoaling (Figure 3B).

919 The research reported in this review suggests that the same systems which modulate aversive
920 behaviour and stress also participate in sociality in fish. Moreover, it is now clear that social
921 interactions are also stressful for fish – especially in the case of mutualistic species, in which every
922 interaction carries the potential for predation. However, stress tends to increase shoaling and
923 decrease social preference (Giacomini et al., 2016). Is it possible that cortisol is the mediator of D2-
924 like effects on cooperation (Figure 3C)? What are the roles of this receptor on shoaling? What, if
925 any, are the roles of D1-like receptors on shoaling? These are all open questions that should clarify
926 the interaction between monoamines and stress in fish sociality.

927 The relationship between stress coping and sociality is also of interest here. Reactive coping is
928 associated with submissive behaviour and higher reactivity to social encounters, both of which can
929 make social interactions highly stressful. As a result, reactive animals should be less adapted to
930 fluctuating social interactions, showing lower social competence. The suggestion that reactive
931 coping, in fish, is associated with higher stress-induced 5-HT neurotransmission in the Dl (part of
932 the mesolimbic reward system) and lower stress-induced increases in 5-HT signaling in the Dm

933 (part of both the mesolimbic reward system and the aversive behaviour system) suggest that 5-HT
934 tends to inhibit social approach after stress in the Dl and promote it in the Dm.

935 These observations on the relationships between coping, monoamines, and social behaviour
936 also hint to applications to modeling psychiatric disorders in teleost fish. It has been suggested
937 (Trower & Gilbert, 1989) that individuals with social anxiety disorder suffer from alterations in
938 mechanisms that select socially appropriate behaviour, always acting “as if” they are in a
939 subordinate position. The emergence of fish as model organisms in biological psychiatry (Kalueff et
940 al., 2014; Soares et al., 2017c) positions the findings reported in this review in this larger context.
941 An example is the reported application of social behaviour in zebrafish models of FASD, which
942 shows the potential of these approaches in the discovery of targets and basic mechanisms involved
943 in brain diseases. The rapid increase in the use of fish in biological psychiatry and
944 psychopharmacology (Kalueff et al., 2014) suggests the utility of such approaches.

945 The direction pointed by this review suggests novel avenues for understanding stress and
946 sociality in fishes in at least two levels: the level of taxon-specific innovations, and the level of what
947 is conserved with vertebrates. For example, understanding fish stress and sociality at the functional
948 neuroanatomical level is probably going to pinpoint solutions which were found by this specific
949 taxon, but will also be able to reveal “deep homologies” between fish and mammals. At the
950 functional level, many of these conserved neurobehavioural functions are currently being used to
951 investigate human diseases, employing fish behaviour (and its modulation by monoamines) as
952 behavioural models in biological psychiatry and psychopharmacology. To reconcile the level of
953 divergence with the level of similarity, neuroanatomy, pharmacology, behavioural analysis, and
954 ecology studies conducted in the lab and in nature need to add to each other and enhance our
955 understanding of fish behaviour and ultimately how this all may translate to better model systems
956 for translational studies.

957

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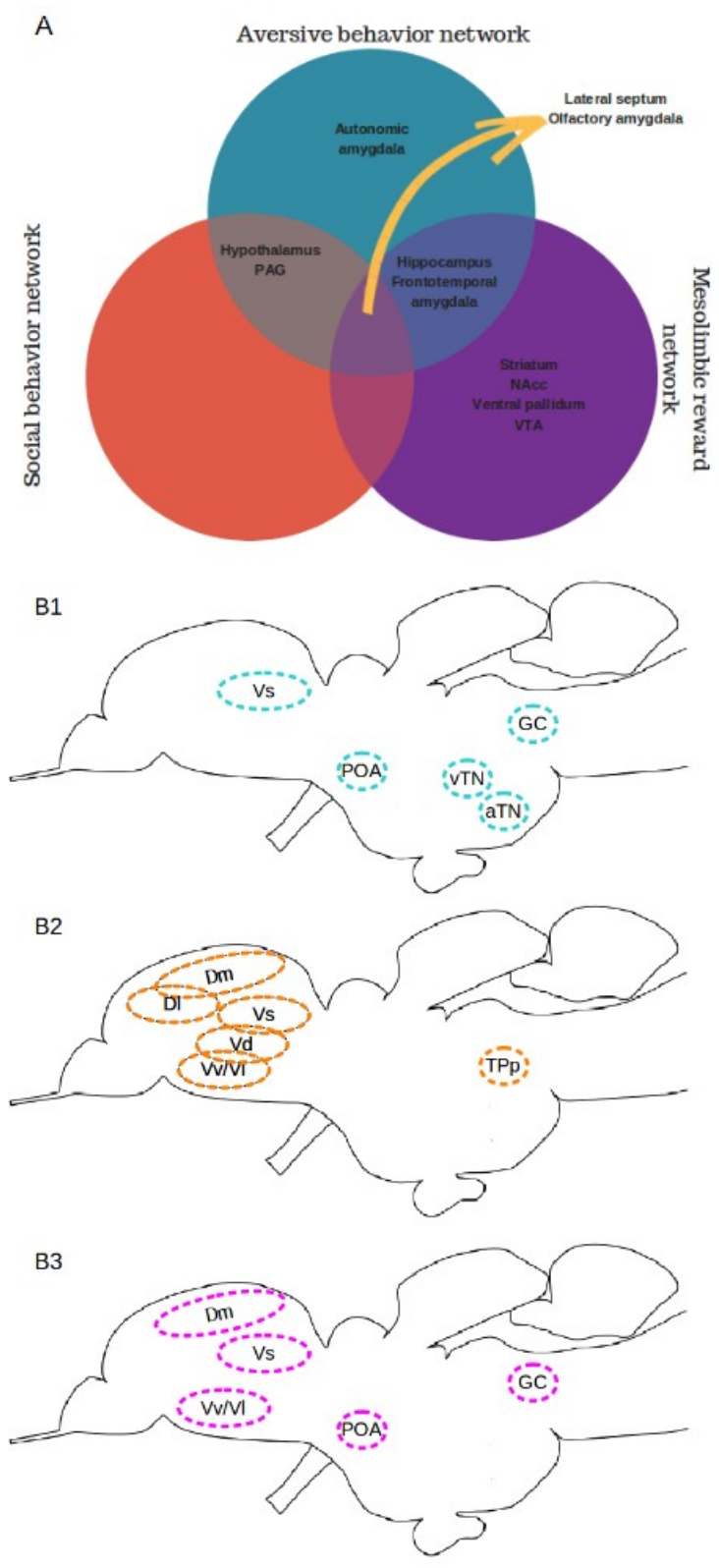
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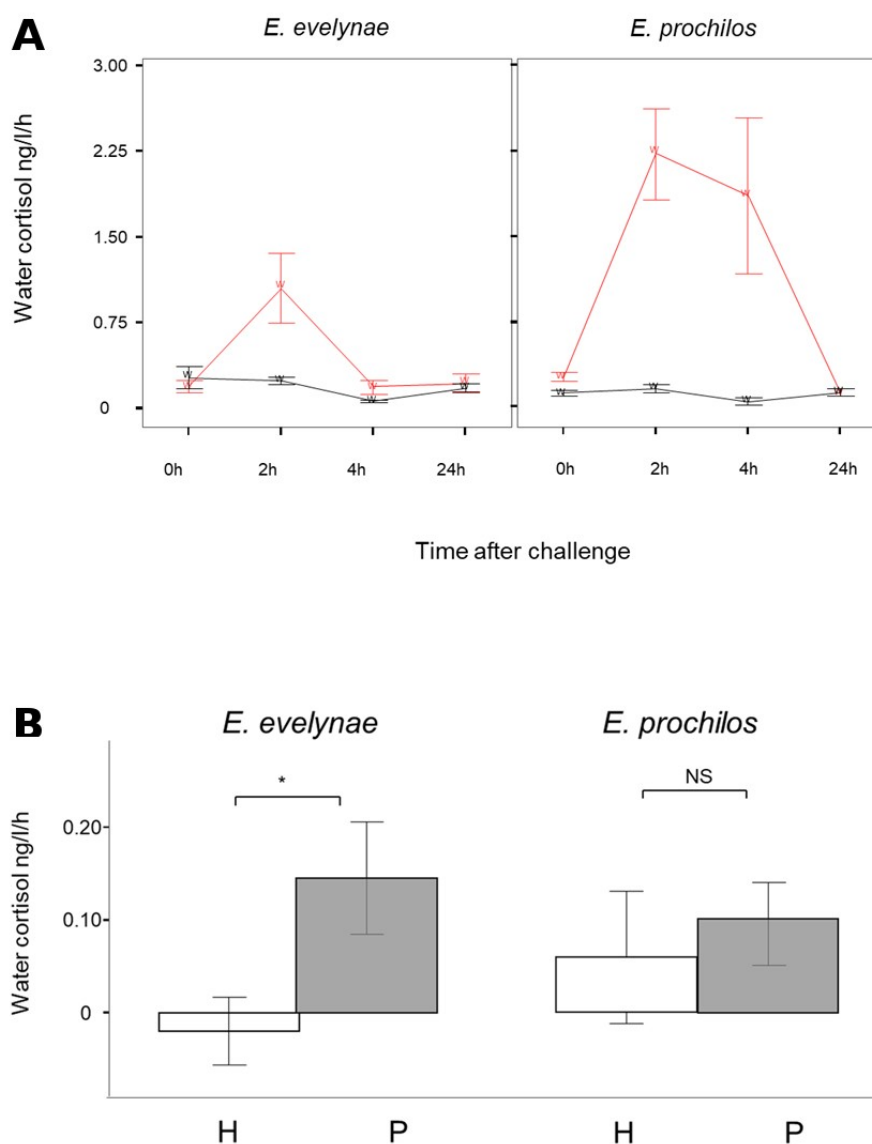
1591 **Figure captions**

1592 **Figure 1.** (A) Intersections between structures involved in the defensive behaviour network, social
1593 behaviour network, and mesolimbic reward network in the vertebrate brain. Structure names refer to
1594 mammalian nomenclature. (B1) The mesolimbic reward network in the teleostean brain. (B2) The
1595 social behaviour network in the teleostean brain. (B3) The aversive behaviour network in the
1596 teleostean brain. (A) Adapted from Soares et al. (2017c); (B1) and (B2) adapted from O'Connell &
1597 Hoffman (2011b). Abbreviations in (A): NAcc: nucleus accumbens; VTA: ventral tegmental area.
1598 Abbreviations in (B): aTN: anterior tuberal nucleus; Dl: dorsolateral telencephalon/lateral pallium;
1599 Dm: dorsomedial telencephalon/medial pallium; GC: griseum centrale/central gray; POA: preoptic
1600 area; Vd: dorsal nucleus of the ventral telencephalon/dorsal subpallium; Vl: lateral nucleus of the
1601 ventral telencephalon/lateral subpallium; Vs: supracommissural nucleus of the ventral
1602 telencephalon/supracommissural subpallium; vTN: ventral tuberal nucleus; Vv: ventral nucleus of
1603 the ventral telencephalon/ventral subpallium.



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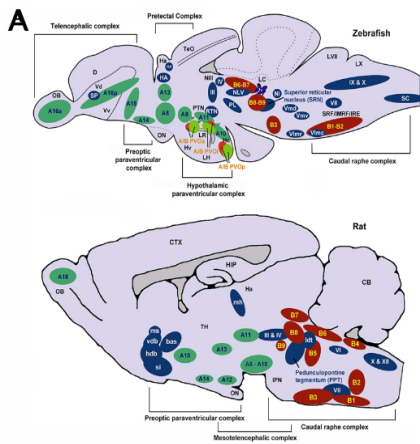
1606 **Figure 2.** (A) Temporal variation of cortisol levels in holding-water of cleaning gobies (*E. evelynae*
 1607 and *E. prochilos*) individuals challenged with an intra-peritoneal injection of porcine ACTH (red
 1608 line) or Ringer's solution (black line). Interaction effect: 2-way RM-ANOVA, $F_{3,27} = 9.83$;
 1609 $p=0.008$ (B) Same individual response variations of holding-water cortisol to either harmless (H)
 1610 and/or predatory (P) client stimuli. Variation in hormone levels are relative to baseline levels
 1611 (control). P values refer to pairwise T tests (*, 0.05; NS > 0.05). Error bars represent ± 1 SEM. N =
 1612 7 for *E. evelynae* and N=10 for *E. prochilos*. M. C. S., unpublished data.



1614

1615 **Figure 3.** (A) Lack of neuroanatomical conservation of main monoaminergic nuclei in teleosts in
1616 relation to mammals. In teleosts (upper panel), monoaminergic centers proliferate throughout the
1617 brain; while rodents (lower panel) concentrate 5-HTergic neurons (red) in the raphe complex,
1618 teleosts have extra nuclei in the hypothalamus and pre-tectum. Likewise, teleosts have extra
1619 DAergic nuclei in the telencephalon, and no ventral tegmental DAergic neurons. Adapted from
1620 Parker et al. (2013) and Maximino et al. (2015b). (B) Differential roles of dopamine and serotonin
1621 receptors on social and aversive behaviour in teleost fish. (C) Putative pathways for dopaminergic
1622 mediation of shoaling and cooperation in teleosts. Social interaction (with conspecifics, in the case
1623 of zebrafish, and heterospecific clients, in the case of cleaner wrasse) is known to increase DA
1624 levels in the brain. The activation of D1-like or D2-like receptors inhibit cooperation in cleaners,
1625 and the activation of D1-like receptors promote shoaling in zebrafish. Inside the box marked with a
1626 question mark, a mediation by cortisol of the D₂ receptor response is proposed. Figure made on
1627 Piktochart (<https://create.piktochart.com/output/7200807-untitled-infographic>).

Monoaminergic modulation of fish social and aversive behavior



	Social behavior	Aversive behavior and stress	Other
D1R	Promotes shoaling Inhibits cleaning interactions	Promotes anxiety-like behavior Promotes stimulated CORT release	Inhibits novelty seeking Promotes learning
D2R	Inhibits cleaning interactions		
5HT1AR	Promotes shoaling Promotes cleaning interactions	Inhibits stimulated CORT release Promotes anxiety-like behavior Inhibits fear-like behavior	Promotes learning
5HT1BR		Promotes anxiety-like behavior	
5HT2R		Promotes anxiety-like behavior Inhibits fear-like behavior	

