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14. ABSTRACT The high prevalence of epilepsy among veteran populations with traumatic brain injury (TBI) makes epilepsy one of the congressionally directed topic areas. In previous studies, the electroencephalography (EEG) recording at the cortical surface during TBI induced epileptic seizures revealed hyper-synchronous epileptic bursts, whereas single cell recordings found heterogeneous neuronal spikes during the hyper synchronous EEG bursts (Truccolo et al., 2011). To define the correlation between the EEG and single neuron activity and to determine how different cell types participate in seizure events, we monitor the individual activity of a large number of neurons in vivo using 2 photon microscopy. As a model of the long term effects of TBI, we inject tetanus toxin (TeT) into the visual cortex of mice to induce seizures. The activity dependent calcium indicator GCamp6, which in our case is expressed in selective neurons by gene modification, or in all neurons by virus infection, reports the activity of individual neurons. Several types of neurons from multiple layers of the visual cortex are recorded at several time points. The experimental timeline is shown in Figure 1.					
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1. INTRODUCTION

The high prevalence of epilepsy among veteran populations with traumatic brain injury (TBI) makes epilepsy one of the congressionally directed topic areas. In previous studies, the electroencephalography (EEG) recording at the cortical surface during TBI-induced epileptic seizures revealed hyper-synchronous epileptic bursts, whereas single-cell recordings found heterogeneous neuronal spikes during the hyper-synchronous EEG bursts (Truccolo et al., 2011). To define the correlation between the EEG and single-neuron activity and to determine how different cell types participate in seizure events, we monitor the individual activity of a large number of neurons in vivo using 2-photon microscopy. As a model of the long-term effects of TBI, we inject tetanus toxin (TeT) into the visual cortex of mice to induce seizures. The activity-dependent calcium indicator GCaMP6, which in our case is expressed in selective neurons by gene modification, or in all neurons by virus infection, reports the activity of individual neurons. Several types of neurons from multiple layers of the visual cortex are recorded at several time points. The experimental timeline is shown in Figure 1.

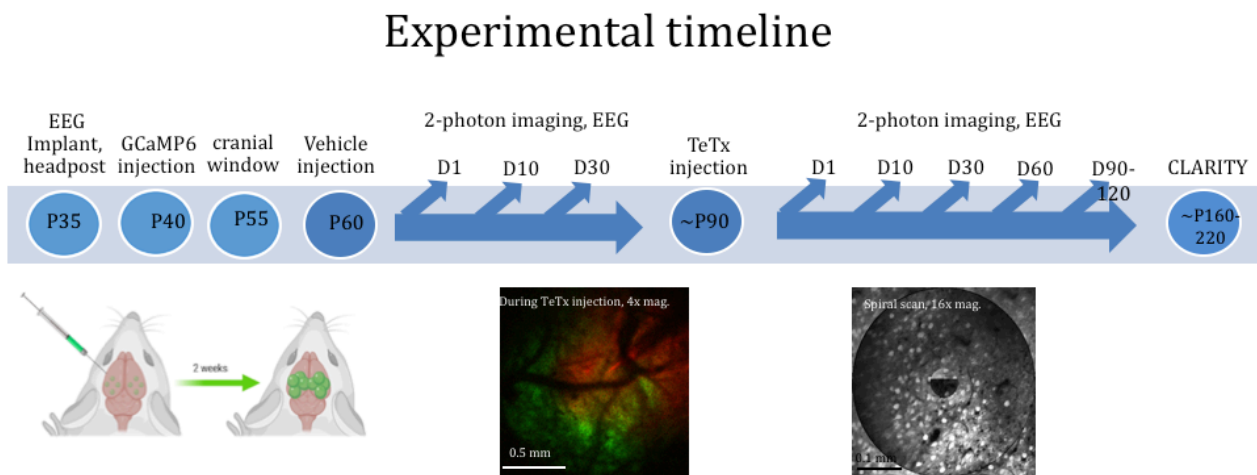


Figure 1 The experimental time line.

2. KEYWORDS:

synchronization,
excitation and inhibition balance,
systems neuroscience,
visual cortex,
traumatic brain injury,
epilepsy,
tetanus toxin,
seizure,
GCaMP6
calcium indicators,
patch-Clamping

3. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Major Goals and Objectives:

(as stated in the modifies SOW, site: Jamaica Plain VA Hospital)

START DATE OF THE AWARD (BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE: October, 1, 2015.

TRANSFER DATE TO BVARI (JAMAICA PLAIN VA HOSPITAL): June 1, 2016.

ACURO APPROVAL FOLLOWING TRANSFER: May 31, 2017.

PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT: 10/30/2018 – 10/30/2019

Please note that the original award was initiated at Baylor College of Medicine 10/1/2015. Subsequently, I moved to Jamaica Plain Veterans Administration Hospital, Harvard Medical School 12/27/2015. My laboratory's move was completed on 6/2016. New IACUC and ACURO approvals were necessary before restarting experiments. Final ACURO approval was received 6/1/2017. Therefore due to the administrative delays (in excess of 18 months) incurred by the transfer we requested and were granted first a 1-year no cost extension and then a further no cost extension to complete the original aims. The modified SOW to account for the requested extension is appended below.

SOW

Goals / Timeline as originally stated	New Proposed Timeline	Site
Specific Aims 1, 2 will proceed in parallel		
Study pyramidal and PV+ interneuron cohorts	Months	JP VA H.
Hire a new postdoc, train personnel, Set up the TeT injection experiments, IACUC and ACURO approval. Originally anticipated to take 4 months.	Completed. Originally this was completed at Baylor College of Medicine. It was completed again after transfer at JP VA Hospital (ACURO approval granted 6/1/2017)	BCM and JP VA H.
SA#1,2 proceed in parallel, studying the pyramidal neurons. Originally anticipated to take 16 months (from month 4 to month 20)	Experiments completed. Analysis in progress.	BCM and JP VA H.
Studying PV+ interneuron cohorts. Originally planned from month 9 to 24.	Experiments completed. Analysis in Progress.	JP VA H.
Milestone(s) To Achieve:		
Write a first manuscript. Originally planned from month 16 to 24.	Manuscript is in progress. We expect to submit it for publication by 7/2020	JP VA H.
Study SOM+ and VIP+ interneuron cohorts		
Have SA#1,2 proceed in parallel studying SOM+ interneurons. Originally planned from month 16-30.	Experiments completed. Analysis in progress.	JP VA H.
Have SA#1,2 proceed in parallel studying VIP+ interneurons. Originally planned from month 24-34.	Instead of completing this goal, we opted to focus on completing additional patch-clamp experiments as these give more important scientific information.	JP VA H.

	We therefore deferred the performance of the VIP experiments. We did not have sufficient funds to pursue both goals at this time.	
Write 1-2 additional manuscripts. Originally planned from month 30-36.	We decided to concatenate this manuscript with the manuscript mentioned above into one more comprehensive, larger paper.	JP VA H.
Milestone(s) Achieved: 1. 1-2 Manuscripts	Presentation in American Epilepsy Society Conference 2019 (See below); One comprehensive manuscript is in progress to be submitted ~7/2020	JP VA H.

What Was Accomplished in the period covered by the progress report :

- 1) We analyzed calcium imaging data and wrote the analysis code for analyzing calcium data in conjunction with EEG recordings. Please see the updated table in the appendix. We run the custom MATLAB code for all timepoints. We found micro-seizure events in the 2-photon imaging data and started to characterize them, which is now in progress and expect to be completed in the next 1-2 months.
- 2) Overall, we found that there were stronger micro-seizure events in layer 4 compared to L2/3, more so in the high TeT dose versus the low TeT dose experiments. The microseizure events peaked around day ~30-40 post injection and then subsided between day 60 and day 90, following also the known trajectory of epileptic seizures in this animal model.
- 3) In vivo patch-clamp recordings show that the potential of cells that engage into microseizures increases sharply by ~40mV at the beginning of a microseizure event. This sharp depolarization blocks action potential firing until at the end of the depolarization event a brief burst of spikes of activity are fired. The potential then goes to the baseline slowly, following by a hyper-polarization period. We performed whole cell patch in two different time points: at 30-45 days (10 whole-cell and 1 cell-attached pyramidal recordings from deep layer 2/3 and L4; from 4 animals simultaneously undergoing 2-photon imaging), and day 100 (6 whole cell + 2 cell-attached recordings from deep L2/3 and L4; from 2 animals).

EEG changes: Figure 2 illustrates data from animals that received the higher dose of TeT, compared with animals injected with Bovine Serum Albumin (BSA). EEG events are classified into 1) seizures (defined as >10 sec long high-amplitude (>3 SD) events that contain at least ~2 sec of high-frequency oscillations (>10 Hz), and that are clearly visible as an episode with a clear beginning and an end. 2) Interictal spikes: Single, high-amplitude events (>5 SD) and a half-width of ~10 ms. 3) spike-wave events: 4-8 Hz oscillations with clearly visible, alternating spike and wave components, >1 sec long. 4) other abnormal EEG signatures with high amplitudes (>3 SD) that may consist of combinations of event classes 1-3, but lack consistent behavior or are not long enough.

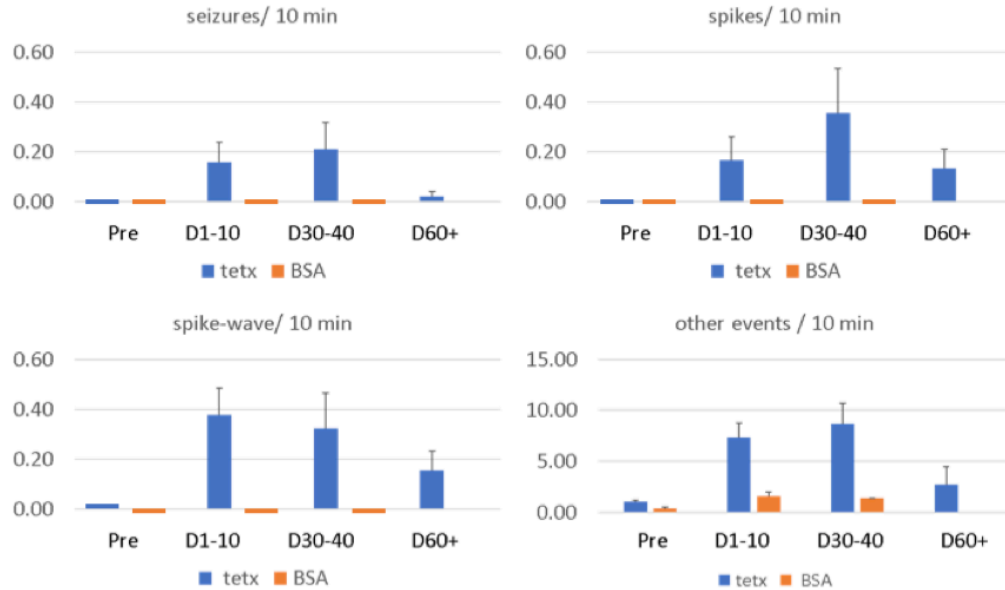


Figure 2: *Pre:* prior to injection. *D1-10:* first 10 days post injection; *D30-40:* days 30-40 post injection; *D60+:* days 60-80 post injection. *Y-axis:* Event frequency (number of events/10min).

Fig. 3 illustrates the observation that local groups of synchronously hyperactive neurons appear over time (Layer 4 > layer 2/3). Figure 3 shows a typical calcium event recorded from layer 4 of area V1 in an animal injected with the high dose of TeT injection. We observed multiple calcium events evolving over several seconds as indicated in the figure. Such events were never noted in control animals injected with BSA (fig 3E). Note that the EEG spectrum has increased power in the range of frequencies 20-60Hz, when the calcium signal is increased (**fig. 3B**) but not increased amplitude. Note also that the focal abnormal calcium events seen sometimes have no obvious correlate on the EEG even though they presumably represent “mini-seizures.” This animal had its PV+ interneurons labeled with Td+ so they look orange when they are double labeled with the green GCamp6s. **Fig. 3C** shows how the calcium signal evolves during the event shown in **panel 3A** in 2 pyramidal (#1,2) and two PV+ (#3,4) interneurons. Note that signals largely co-vary, in pyramidal neurons, but appear more diverse in PV+ cells. We are in the process of analyzing the relative strength of the response seen in pyramidal cells versus PV+ interneurons, to try to understand whether a relative failure of PV+ interneurons to follow pyramidal cell activity contributes to ictal generation in this model.

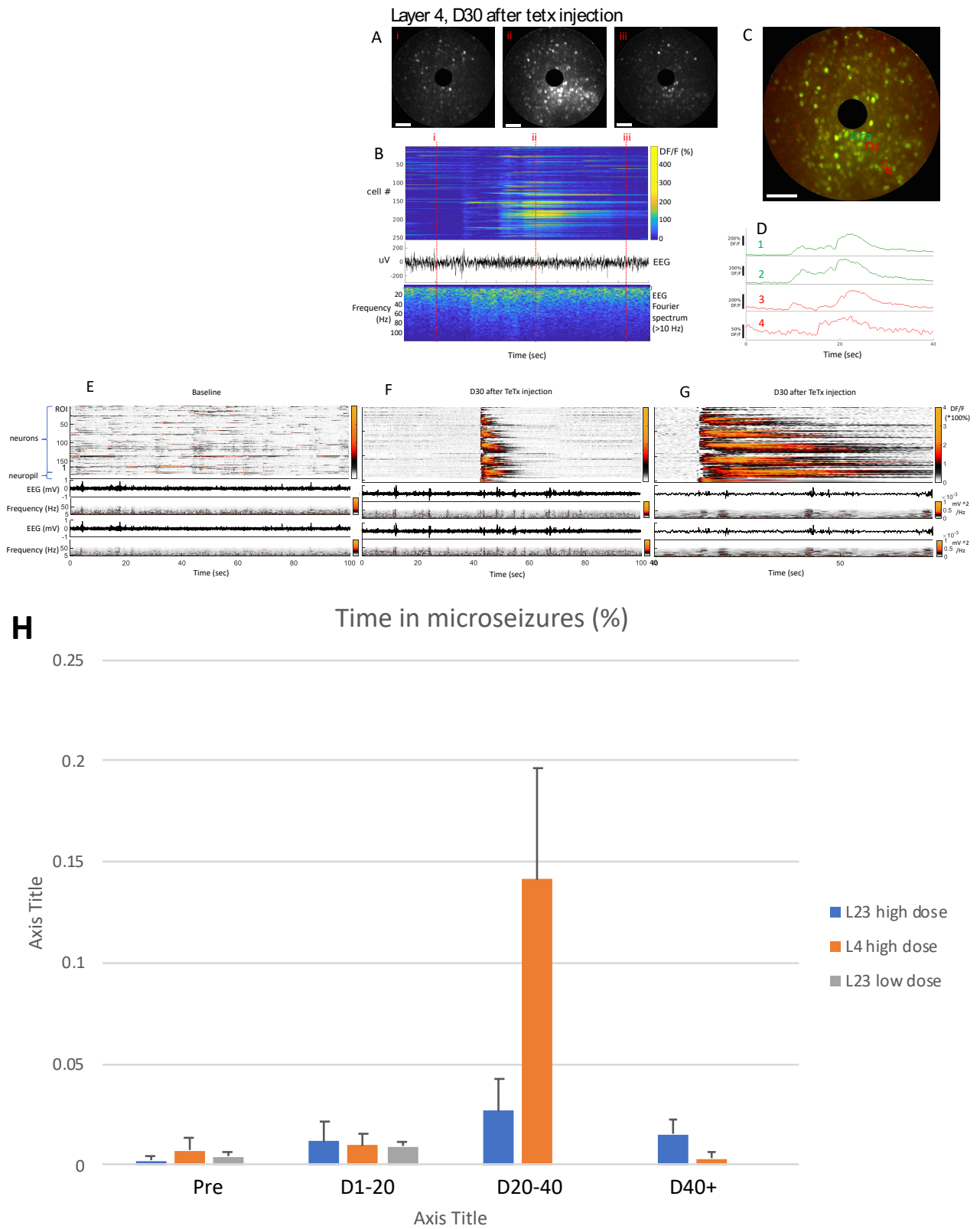


Figure 3. Local groups of synchronously hyperactive neurons appear over time (Layer 4 > layer 2/3). A) Neural population labelled with GCaMP6m, scanned in spiral mode, 400 μ m

below the dura. Scan was taken 30 days after TeT injection. Panel i and iii show a snapshot of baseline activity, while ii is taken during a period of hypersynchronous, elevated activity that is clearly visible in most cells. See **B**) for a raster plot of the DF/F calcium activity (top) with simultaneously acquired EEG (voltage: middle, Fourier spectrum: bottom). Note that there is no change in EEG amplitude during the elevated cellular activity, but the high-frequency spectral power is increased during the event. **C**) parvalbumin-expressing (PV+) interneurons were co-labelled with tdTomato and appear yellow, while all other neurons are green. **D**) putative pyramidal cells (green) exhibit a highly correlated activity increase, whereas some PV+ interneurons have distinct time courses. **E**) Reference activity in another animal prior to TeTx injection, and 30 days after BSA injection. Top: calcium traces (DF/F) for neurons (top) and neuropil (bottom). Below: EEG ipsilateral to imaged window, relative power spectrum. Bottom two rows: contralateral EEG and power spectrum. Note that the time point prior to TeTx injection corresponds to D30 after vehicle injection in the same area. **F**) Activity from the same group of cells 30 days later, showing a microseizure in the calcium activity plot. **G**) Same event shown in F, zoomed in to 15 seconds around the seizure event. Note that neuropil activity changes before neurons respond, EEG shows only subtle changes. **H**) Percent of time spent in a state of micro-seizure in L4 vs L2/3 as a function of time after TeT injection. Note that the microseizures are most abundant in L4 around 20-40 days post injection. This is currently based on the assessment of 3 animals; the analysis of 4 additional animals is pending.

Figure 4 shows that in vivo single cell electrophysiology confirms calcium imaging results:

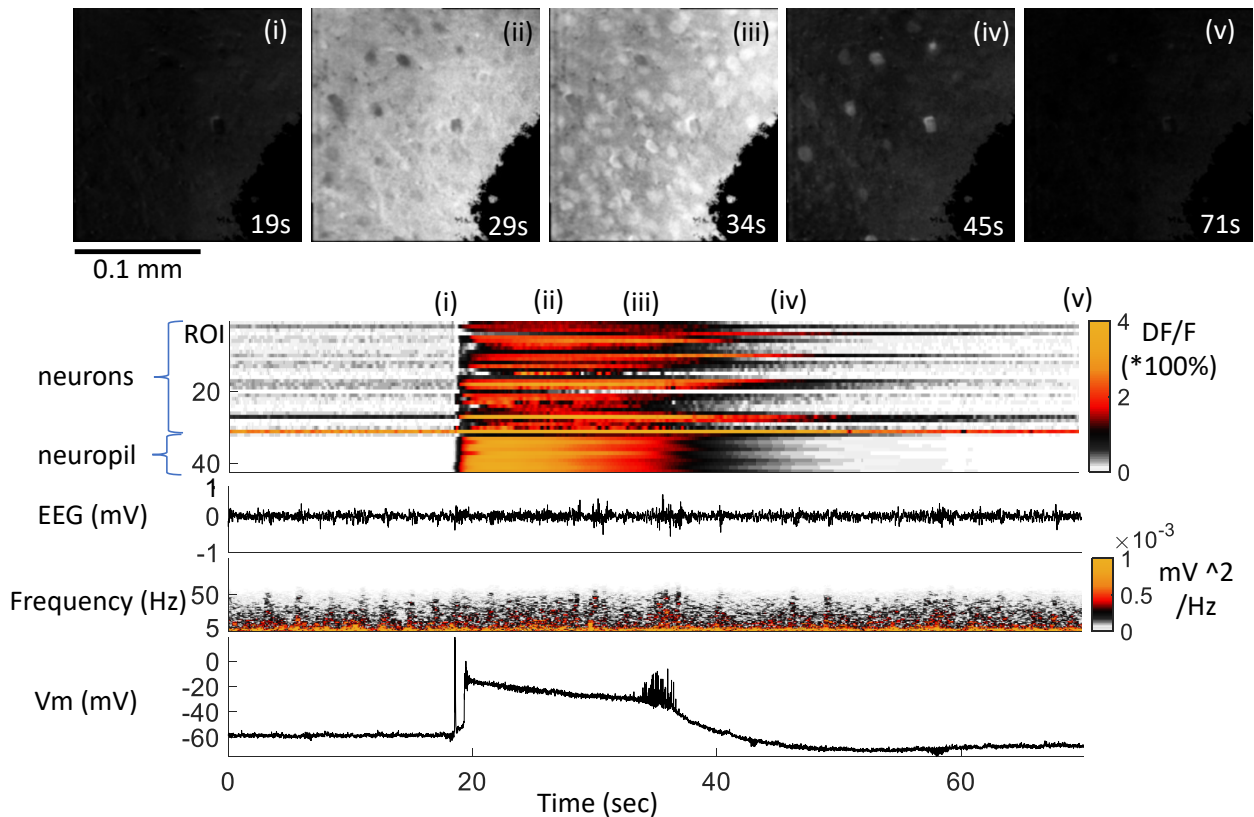


Figure 4: Top: calcium images before (i), during (ii, iii) and after (iv, v) the event recorded in vivo during spiral scanning. The raster plot shows the calcium signal (DF/F) in both neurons

and neuropil patches following the convention in figure 3. The EEG trace appears below the raster plot. ***Bottom:*** Spectrogram of the whole-cell voltage trace (orange) and simultaneously recorded EEG voltage (red) during a “microseizure” event in L4 of a high-dose TeTx injected animal, D45 post injection. The plot below is the membrane voltage of a pyramidal neurons (whole-cell recording). Note the sharp rise of the potential inducing a depolarization block, followed by a burst of spikelet firing at the end of the depolarization wave and a slow return to baseline following a long period of slight hyperpolarization. These events occurred at an average rate of 1-5 per hour in high-dose animals around day D30-45 post -injection.

Summary: Tetanus toxin injection in L5/L6 of mouse V1 causes local hyperactivity to emerge over several weeks. We show that mice develop several different types of abnormal EEG discharge patterns, including bilateral spikes and less frequently seizures after unilateral injection of TeT. These patterns (seizures, single spikes, spike-wave complexes, irregular oscillations) evolve dynamically over several weeks, peak around 10-30 days post TeT injection, and gradually subside thereafter. Longitudinal calcium imaging over several weeks shows prominent, localized groups of hyperactive and hypersynchronous neurons. Although the toxin spreads to upper layers during injection, most of the hyperactivity occurred in deeper layers. The abnormal events of brief hyperactivity typically lasted for a few seconds and were not always accompanied by overt changes in the EEG. Single-cell patch clamp recordings revealed that neurons inside the “microseizure” focus were strongly depolarized throughout these events. Taken together, this indicates that the TeT model may serve as a useful paradigm for studying the effects of mild traumatic brain injury on hyper-excitability and epileptogenesis. Next steps include the analysis of chronic interneuron contributions to seizure generation and rigorous analysis of how groups of neurons evolve synchronous firing patterns over time. We are in the process of writing a comprehensive manuscript, outlining all our observations, which we expect to be ready for submission ~7/2020.

Opportunities for training and professional development:

Dr Meyer, Lombardo and Palagina continued to be trained on performing Calcium imaging and simultaneous EEG recordings in TeT injected animals, on how to perform EEG analysis, and Meyer on patch clamping.

Results Disseminated to communities of interest:

Current Period: We reported our results in the American Epilepsy Society Meeting 12/2019: AES presentation 12/2019: **J. F. Meyer, Z. Hao, S. Smirnakis**, “Local disinhibition via tetanus toxin injection reshapes neural activity and EEG patterns in mouse neocortex”, abstract #3.007, American Epilepsy Society Annual meeting, Baltimore, 2019.

Final dissemination of our results will be through our current manuscript which is in preparation, expected to be submitted ~7/2020.

Prior Period: We have modified the TeT injection strategy, increasing the concentration of TeT injected. This made this seizure model more reliable in terms of exhibiting seizure events, and therefore better amenable to in-vivo 2-photon microscopy analysis. We reported on this at the Boston VA Research Week Conference, May, 2018.

Plans for the next reporting period:

Although we have requested and received an additional no cost extension, funding is coming to an end and we will petition to close the grant soon. We expect to complete a comprehensive manuscript on our findings and submit it for publication on 7/2020.

4. IMPACT:

Preliminary results from this work were presented in the American Epilepsy Society Conference, 12/and were well received. We are currently preparing a comprehensive manuscript, to be submitted ~7/2020.

The impact of our project on:

1) the development of the principle discipline: We have improved the understanding of how seizures get generated in the TeT model and discovered that neurons in layer 4 form small hyper-synchronised groups that fire exuberantly together entraining the circuit. These “microseizure” events have at times no obvious EEG correlate. We studied the role that interneurons play in this analysis.

2) other disciplines: nothing to report

3) technology transfer: we will make available all software methods developed for EEG and Calcium analysis upon completion of the analysis.

4) society beyond science and technology: nothing to report

5. CHANGES / PROBLEMS

No-Cost Extension: As reported previously, there was a delay associated with the Award transfer from Baylor College of Medicine to BVARI at JP VA Hospital (Boston VA System). The new ACURO approval was obtained on 5/31/2017. Subsequent to this, there was also a delay incurred from 11/2017 to 2/2018 due to procedural issues involving our IACUC approval that we reported previously, which have been resolved. Given these delays we have obtained a 1-year no cost extension and submitted an amended SOW that was approved on 9/2018. In August 2019 we had to extend this by 6 months. Overall, we were successful in completing the large majority of the proposed aims (See SOW). The goals were almost entirely completed, excepting the study of the VIP+ interneurons. The reason this was deferred was that we felt that it would be more valuable scientifically to obtain patch-clamp recordings from the neurons that participated in the microseizures, to validate and understand the mechanism of the observed calcium events. Unfortunately dedicating personnel time to this meant that there was not enough funding left to study in parallel VIP+ cells. One reason this was not possible is that there had been already a large delay to transfer the grant from Baylor College of Medicine to the JP VA, and re-obtain ACURO and IACUC approval after the transfer to the new institution, which delayed progress. We plan to seek additional funding in the future to study more comprehensively VIP+ cells as well as other types of interneurons.

Personnel Changes:

No additional personnel changes during this period.

6. PRODUCTS

AES presentation 12/2019: **J. F. Meyer, Z. Hao, S. Smirnakis**, “Local disinhibition via tetanus toxin injection reshapes neural activity and EEG patterns in mouse neocortex”, abstract #3.007, American Epilepsy Society Annual meeting, Baltimore, 2019.

Manuscript in Preparation.

7. PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

Name: Stelios Smirnakis

Project Role: Principal Investigator

Researcher Identifier: orcid.org/0000-0002-1929-2811

Nearest person month worked: 2 months

Contribution to Project: Conceive and Design the project. Participate in experimental planning and analysis.

Name: Jochen Meyer

Project Role: Instructor

Researcher Identifier: orcid.org/0000-0002-3976-3334

Nearest person month worked: 10

Contribution to Project: Participate in training, experiments and analysis, though a subcontract at Baylor College of Medicine. His sub-contract came to an end on 9/30/2018.

Name: Ganna (Anna) Palagina

Project Role: Postdoctoral Associate.

Researcher Identifier: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9857-9062>

Nearest person month worked: 12

Contribution to Project: Chief responsibility is to perform data analysis, and help Dr Lombardo with experiments.

Name: Joseph Lombardo

Project Role: Postdoctoral Associate.

Researcher Identifier: orcid.org/0000-0003-4806-0849

Nearest person month worked: 12

Contribution to Project: Conduct Experiments and perform data analysis with the help of Dr Palagina.

No other organizations were involved as partners. During the period of the report, Dr Meyer was continuing to perform analysis supported by other funds at Baylor College of Medicine.

8. SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

None.

neural activity has been obtained. BSA: Control animals injected with bovine serum albumin. CNMF: Algorithm used for data pre-processing (based on an algorithm devised by E. Pnevmatikakis). Patching: Animals that underwent patch-clamp experiments. Note that some animals were injected first with BSA and monitored for 30-60 days and then injected with TeT. This allowed them to serve as their own controls.