

Loss or Gain of Function? Ion Channel Mutation Effects on Neuronal Firing Depend on Cell Type

1 **Abstract (250 Words Maximum - Currently 231)**

2 Ion channels determine neuronal excitability and disruption in ion channel properties in mutations
3 can result in neurological disorders called channelopathies. Often many mutations are associated
4 with a channelopathy, and determination of the effects of these mutations are generally done at the
5 level of currents. The impact of such mutations on neuronal firing is vital for selecting personalized
6 treatment plans for patients, however whether the effect of a given mutation on firing can simply be
7 inferred from current level effects is unclear. The general impact of the ionic current environment
8 in different neuronal types on the outcome of ion channel mutations is vital to understanding of
9 the impacts of ion channel mutations and effective selection of personalized treatments. Using a
10 diverse collection of neuronal models, the effects of changes in ion current properties on firing is
11 assessed systematically and for episodic ataxia type 1 associated $K_v1.1$ mutations. The effects of
12 ion current property changes or mutations on firing is dependent on the current environment, or cell
13 type, in which such a change occurs in. Characterization of ion channel mutations as loss or gain of
14 function is useful at the level of the ionic current, however the effects of channelopathies on firing
15 is dependent on cell type. To further the efficacy of personalized medicine in channelopathies, the
16 effects of ion channel mutations must be examined in the context of the appropriate cell types.

17 **Significant Statement (120 Words Maximum - Currently 112)**

18 Ion channels determine neuronal excitability and mutations that alter ion channel properties result
19 in neurological disorders called channelopathies. Although the genetic nature of such mutations
20 as well as their effects on the ion channel's biophysical properties are routinely assessed exper-
21 imentally, determination of the role in altering neuronal firing is more difficult. Computational
22 modelling bridges this gap and demonstrates that the cell type in which a mutation occurs is an
23 important determinant in the effects of firing. As a result, classification of ion channel mutations
24 as loss or gain of function is useful to describe the ionic current but care should be taken when
25 applying this classification on the level of neuronal firing.

26 **Introduction (750 Words Maximum - Currently 673)**

27 Neuronal ion channels are vital in determining neuronal excitability, action potential generation and
28 firing patterns (Bernard and Shevell, 2008; Carbone and Mori, 2020). In particular, the properties
29 and combinations of ion channels and their resulting currents determine the firing properties of
30 the neuron (Pospischil et al., 2008; Rutecki, 1992). However, ion channel function can be disturb
31 resulting in altered ionic current properties and altered neuronal firing behaviour (Carbone and
32 Mori, 2020). Ion channel mutations are a common cause of such channelopathies and are often
33 associated with hereditary clinical disorders (Bernard and Shevell, 2008; Carbone and Mori, 2020).
34 The effects of these mutations are frequently determined at a biophysical level, however assessment
35 of the impact of mutations on neuronal firing and excitability is more difficult. Experimentally,
36 transfection of cell cultures or the generation of mutant mice lines are common approaches. Cell
37 culture transfection does not replicate the exact interplay of endogenous currents nor does it take
38 into account the complexity of the nervous system including factors such as expression patterns,
39 intracellular regulation and modulation of ion channels as well as network effects. Transfected

40 currents are characterized in isolation and the role of these isolated currents in the context of other
41 currents in a neuron cannot be definitively inferred. The effects of individual currents *in vivo* also
42 depend on the neuron type they are expressed in and which roles these neurons have in specific
43 circuits. Complex interactions between different cell types *in vivo* are neglected in transfected cell
44 culture. Additionally, transfected currents are not present with the neuron-type specific cellular
45 machinery present *in vivo* and are even transfected in cells of different species. Furthermore, culture
46 conditions can shape ion channel expression (Ponce et al., 2018).

47 Ion channel transfection of primary neuronal cultures can overcome some of the limitations of cell
48 culture expression. In transfected neuronal cell cultures firing can more readily be assessed as en-
49 dogenous currents are present, however the expressed and endogenous versions of the same ion
50 channel are present in the cell (Scalmani et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2018). To avoid the confound of
51 both expressed and endogenous current contributing to firing, a drug resistance can be introduced
52 into the ion channel that is transfected and the drug is used to silence the endogenous version
53 of this current (Liu et al., 2019). Although addition of TTX-resistance to Na_V does not alter the
54 gating properties of these channels (Leffler et al., 2005), the relative expression and conductance
55 of the transfected ion channel in relation to endogenous currents can be variable and non-specific
56 blocking of ion channels not affected by the channelopathy may occur. As the firing behaviour
57 and dynamics of neuronal models can be dramatically altered by altering relative current ampli-
58 tudes (Barreiro et al., 2012; Golowasch et al., 2002; Kispersky et al., 2012; Pospischil et al., 2008;
59 Rutecki, 1992), primary neuronal cultures provide a useful general indication as to the effects of
60 ion channel mutations but do not provide definitive insight into the effects of a channelopathy on
61 *in vivo* firing.

62 The generation of mice lines is costly and behavioural characterization of new mice lines is required
63 to assess similarities to patient symptoms. Although the generation of mouse lines is desirable for
64 a clinical disorder characterized by a specific ion channel mutation, this approach becomes im-

65 practical for disorders associated with a collection of distinct mutations in a single ion channel.
66 Because of the lack of adequate experimental approaches, a great need is present for the ability to
67 assess the impacts of ion channel mutations on neuronal firing. A more general understanding of
68 the effects of changes in current properties on neuronal firing may help to understand the impacts
69 of ion channel mutations. Specifically, modelling approaches can be used to assess the impacts of
70 current property changes on firing behaviour, bridging the gap between changes in the biophysi-
71 cal properties induced by mutations and clinical symptoms. Conductance-based neuronal models
72 enable insight into the effects of ion channel mutations with specific effects of the resulting ionic
73 current as well as enabling *in silico* assessment of the relative effects of changes in biophysical
74 properties of ionic currents on neuronal firing . The effects of altered voltage-gated potassium
75 channel $K_V1.1$ function is of particular interest in this study as it gives rise to the $I_{K_V1.1}$ current and
76 is associated with episodic ataxia type 1. Furthermore, modelling approaches enable predictions of
77 the effects of specific mutation and drug induced biophysical property changes.

78 $K_V1.1$ channels, encoded by the *KCNA1* gene, play a role in repolarizing the action potential, neu-
79 ron firing patterns, neurotransmitter release, and saltatory conduction (D'Adamo et al., 1998) and
80 are expressed throughout the CNS (Tsaour et al., 1992; Veh et al., 1995; Wang et al., 1994). Altered
81 $K_V1.1$ channel function as a result of *KCNA1* mutations in humans is associated with episodic
82 ataxia type 1 (EA1) which is characterized by period attacks of ataxia and persistent myokymia
83 (Parker, 1946; Van Dyke et al., 1975). Onset of EA1 is before 20 years of age (Brunt and van
84 Weerden, 1990; Jen et al., 2007; Rajakulendran et al., 2007; Van Dyke et al., 1975) and is associ-
85 ated with a 10 times higher prevalence of epileptic seizures(Zuberi et al., 1999). EA1 significantly
86 impacts patient quality of life (Graves et al., 2014). $K_V1.1$ null mice have spontaneous seizures
87 without ataxia starting in the third postnatal week although impaired balance has been reported
88 (Smart et al., 1998; Zhang et al., 1999) and neuronal hyperexcitability has been demonstrated in
89 these mice (Brew et al., 2003; Smart et al., 1998). However, the lack of ataxia in $K_V1.1$ null mice

90 raises the question if the hyperexcitability seen is representative of the effects of EA1 associated
91 $K_V1.1$ mutations.

92 Using a diverse set of conductance-based neuronal models we examine the role of current environ-
93 nment on the impact of alterations in channels properties on firing behavior generally and for EA1
94 associated $K_V1.1$ mutations.

95 **Materials and Methods**

96 All modelling and simulation was done in parallel with custom written Python 3.8 software, run on
97 a Cent-OS 7 server with an Intel(R) Xeon (R) E5-2630 v2 CPU.

98 **Different Cell Models**

99 A group of neuronal models representing the major classes of cortical and thalamic neurons includ-
100 ing regular spiking pyramidal (RS pyramidal), regular spiking inhibitory (RS inhibitory), and fast
101 spiking (FS) cells were used (Pospischil et al., 2008). To each of these models, a $K_V1.1$ current
102 ($I_{K_V1.1}$); (Ranjan et al., 2019) was added. A cerebellar stellate cell model from (Alexander et al.,
103 2019) is used (Cb stellate). This model was also used with a $K_V1.1$ current ($I_{K_V1.1}$; (Ranjan et al.,
104 2019)) in addition to the A-type potassium current (Cb stellate + $K_V1.1$) or replacing the A-type
105 potassium current (Cb stellate $\Delta K_V1.1$). A subthalamic nucleus neuron model as described by
106 (Otsuka et al., 2004) are used (STN) and with a $K_V1.1$ current ($I_{K_V1.1}$; (Ranjan et al., 2019)) in
107 addition to the A-type potassium current (STN + $K_V1.1$) or replacing the A-type potassium current
108 (STN $\Delta K_V1.1$). The properties and conductances of each model are detailed in Table 1 and the
109 gating properties are unaltered from the original Cb stellate and STN models. For comparability to
110 typical electrophysiological data fitting reported and for ease of further gating curve manipulations,

111 a Boltzmann function

$$x_{\infty} = \left(\frac{1 - a}{1 + \exp\left[\frac{V - V_{1/2}}{k}\right]} + a \right)^j \quad (1)$$

112 with slope k , voltage for half-maximal activation or inactivation ($V_{1/2}$), exponent j , and persistent
 113 current $0 \leq a \leq 1$ were fitted for the RS pyramidal, RS inhibitory and FS models (Pospischil
 114 et al., 2008). The properties of $I_{K_V1.1}$ were fitted to the mean wild type biophysical parameters of
 115 $K_V1.1$ (Lauxmann et al., 2021).

	RS Pyra- midal	RS Inhib- itory	FS	Cb Stellate	Cb Stellate + $K_V1.1$	Cb Stellate $\Delta K_V1.1$	STN	STN + $K_V1.1$	STN $\Delta K_V1.1$
g_{Na}	56	10	58	3.4	3.4	3.4	49	49	49
g_K	5.4	1.89	3.51	9.0556	8.15	9.0556	57	56.43	57
$g_{K_V1.1}$	0.6	0.21	0.39	—	0.90556	1.50159	—	0.57	0.5
g_A	—	—	—	15.0159	15.0159	—	5	5	—
g_M	0.075	0.0098	0.075	—	—	—	—	—	—
g_L	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	5	5
g_T	—	—	—	0.45045	0.45045	0.45045	5	5	5
$g_{Ca,K}$	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
g_{Leak}	0.0205	0.0205	0.038	0.07407	0.07407	0.07407	0.035	0.035	0.035
$\tau_{max,M}$	608	934	502	—	—	—	—	—	—
C_m	118.44	119.99	101.71	177.83	177.83	177.83	118.44	118.44	118.44

Table 1: Cell properties and conductances of regular spiking pyramidal neuron (RS Pyramidal), regular spiking inhibitory neuron (RS Inhibitory), fast spiking neuron (FS), cerebellar stellate cell (Cb Stellate), with additional $I_{K_V1.1}$ (Cb Stellate $\Delta K_V1.1$) and with $I_{K_V1.1}$ replacement of I_A (Cb Stellate $\Delta K_V1.1$), and subthalamic nucleus neuron (STN), with additional $I_{K_V1.1}$ (STN $\Delta K_V1.1$) and with $I_{K_V1.1}$ replacement of I_A (STN $K_V1.1$) models. All conductances are given in mS/cm^2 . Capacitances (C_m) and $\tau_{max,M}$ are given in pF and ms respectively.

	Gating	$V_{1/2}$ [mV]	k	j	a
	I_{Na} activation	-34.33054521	-8.21450277	1.42295686	—
RS pyramidal,	I_{Na} inactivation	-34.51951036	4.04059373	1	0.05
RS inhibitory,	I_{Kd} activation	-63.76096946	-13.83488194	7.35347425	—
FS	I_L activation	-39.03684525	-5.57756176	2.25190197	—
	I_L inactivation	-57.37	20.98	1	—
	I_M activation	-45	-9.9998807337	1	—
$I_{Kv1.1}$	$I_{Kv1.1}$ activation	-30.01851852	-7.73333333	1	—
	$I_{Kv1.1}$ Inactivation	-46.85851852	7.67266667	1	0.245

Table 2: For comparability to typical electrophysiological data fitting reported and for ease of further gating curve manipulations, a Boltzmann $x_\infty = \left(\frac{1-a}{1+\exp[\frac{V-V_{1/2}}{k}]} + a \right)^j$ with slope k , voltage for half-maximal activation or inactivation ($V_{1/2}$), exponent j , and persistent current $0 \leq a \leq 1$ were fitted for the (Pospischil et al., 2008) models where α_x and β_x are used. Gating parameters for $I_{Kv1.1}$ are taken from (Ranjan et al., 2019) and fit to mean wild type parameters in (Lauxmann et al., 2021). Model gating not listed are taken directly from source publication.

116 Firing Frequency Analysis

117 The membrane responses to 200 equidistant two second long current steps were simulated using
118 the forward-Euler method with a $\Delta t = 0.01$ ms from steady state. Current steps ranged from 0
119 to 1 nA for all models except for the RS inhibitory neuron models where a range of 0 to 0.35
120 nA was used to ensure repetitive firing across the range of input currents. For each current step,
121 action potentials were detected as peaks with at least 50 mV prominence and a minimum interspike
122 interval of 1 ms. The interspike interval was computed and used to determine the instantaneous
123 firing frequencies elicited by the current step. The steady-state firing frequency were defined as the
124 mean firing frequency in 0.5 seconds after the first action potential in the last second of the current
125 step respectively and was used to construct frequency-current (fI) curves.

126 The smallest current at which steady state firing occurs was identified and the current step interval

127 preceding the occurrence of steady state firing was simulated at higher resolution (100 current
128 steps) to determine the current at which steady state firing began. Firing was simulated with 100
129 current steps from this current upwards for 1/5 of the overall current range. Over this range a fl
130 curve was constructed and the integral, or area under the curve (AUC), of the fl curve over this
131 interval was computed with the composite trapezoidal rule and used as a measure of firing rate
132 independent from rheobase.

133 To obtain the rheobase, the current step interval preceding the occurrence of action potentials was
134 explored at higher resolution with 100 current steps spanning the interval. Membrane responses to
135 these current steps were then analyzed for action potentials and the rheobase was considered the
136 lowest current step for which an action potential was elicited.

137 All models exhibit tonic firing and any instances of bursting were excluded to simplify the charac-
138 terization of firing.

139 **Sensitivity Analysis and Comparison of Models**

140 Current properties of currents common to all models (I_{Na} , I_K , $I_A/I_{Kv1.1}$, and I_{Leak}) were systemati-
141 cally altered in a one-factor-at-a-time sensitivity analysis for all models. The gating curves for each
142 current were shifted ($\Delta V_{1/2}$) from -10 to 10 mV in increments of 1 mV. The slope (k) of the gating
143 curves were altered from half to twice the initial slope. Similarly, the maximal current conductance
144 (g) was also scaled from half to twice the initial value. For both slope and conductance alterations,
145 alterations consisted of 21 steps spaced equally on a \log_2 scale.

146 **Model Comparison**

Changes in rheobase ($\Delta rheobase$) are calculated in relation to the original model rheobase. The
contrast of each AUC value (AUC_i) was computed in comparison to the AUC of the unaltered wild

type model (AUC_{wt})

$$AUC_{contrast} = \frac{AUC_i - AUC_{wt}}{AUC_{wt}} \quad (2)$$

147 To assess whether the effects of a given alteration on $AUC_{contrast}$ or $\Delta rheobase$ are robust across
148 models, the correlation between $AUC_{contrast}$ or $\Delta rheobase$ and the magnitude of current property
149 alteration was computed for each alteration in each model and compared across alteration types.

150 The Kendall's τ coefficient, a non-parametric rank correlation, is used to describe the relationship
151 between the magnitude of the alteration and AUC or rheobase values. A Kendall τ value of -1 or 1
152 is indicative of monotonically decreasing and increasing relationships respectively.

153 **KCNA1/K_v1.1 Mutations**

154 Known episodic ataxia type 1 associated KCNA1 mutations and their electrophysiological charac-
155 terization reviewed in (Lauxmann et al., 2021). The mutation-induced changes in $I_{K_{v1.1}}$ amplitude
156 and activation slope (k) were normalized to wild type measurements and changes in activation $V_{1/2}$
157 were used relative to wild type measurements. The effects of a mutation were also applied to I_A
158 when present as both potassium currents display prominent inactivation. In all cases, the muta-
159 tion effects were applied to half of the $K_{v1.1}$ or I_A under the assumption that the heterozygous
160 mutation results in 50% of channels carrying the mutation. Frequency-current curves for each mu-
161 tation in each model were obtained through simulation and used to characterize firing behaviour as
162 described above. For each model the differences in mutation AUC to wild type AUC were normal-
163 ized by wild type AUC ($AUC_{contrast}$) and mutation rheobases are compared to wild type rheobase
164 values ($\Delta rheobase$). Pairwise Kendall rank correlations (Kendall τ) are used to compare the the
165 correlation in the effects of $K_{v1.1}$ mutations on AUC and rheobase between models.

166 **Code Accessibility**

167 The code/software described in the paper is freely available online at [URL redacted for double-
168 blind review]. The code is available as Extended Data.

169 **Results**

170 To examine the role of cell specific current environments on the impact of altered ion channel
171 properties on firing behaviour a set of neuronal models is used and properties of channels common
172 across models are altered systematically one at a time. The effects of a set of episodic ataxia type
173 1 associated $K_V1.1$ mutations on firing was then examined across different neuronal models with
174 different current environments.

175 **Firing Characterization**

176 Neuronal firing is a complex phenomenon and classification of firing is needed for comparability
177 across cell types. Here we focus on the classification of two aspects of firing: rheobase (smallest
178 injected current at which the cell fires an action potential) and the initial shape of the frequency-
179 current (fI) curve. The quantification of the initial shape of the fI curve using by computing the area
180 under the curve (AUC) is a measure of the initial firing at currents above rheobase (Figure 1A).
181 The characterization of firing with AUC and rheobase enables determination of general increases
182 or decreases in firing based on current-firing relationships, with the upper left quadrant ($+\Delta$ AUC
183 and $-\Delta$ rheobase) indicate an increase in firing, whereas the bottom right quadrant ($-\Delta$ AUC and
184 $+\Delta$ rheobase) is indicative of decreased firing (Figure 1B). In the lower left and upper right quad-
185 rants, the effects on firing are more nuance and cannot easily be described as a gain or loss of
186 excitability.

187 Considerable diversity is present in the set of neuronal models used as evident in the variability
188 seen across neuronal models both in representative spike trains and their fI curves (Figure 2). The

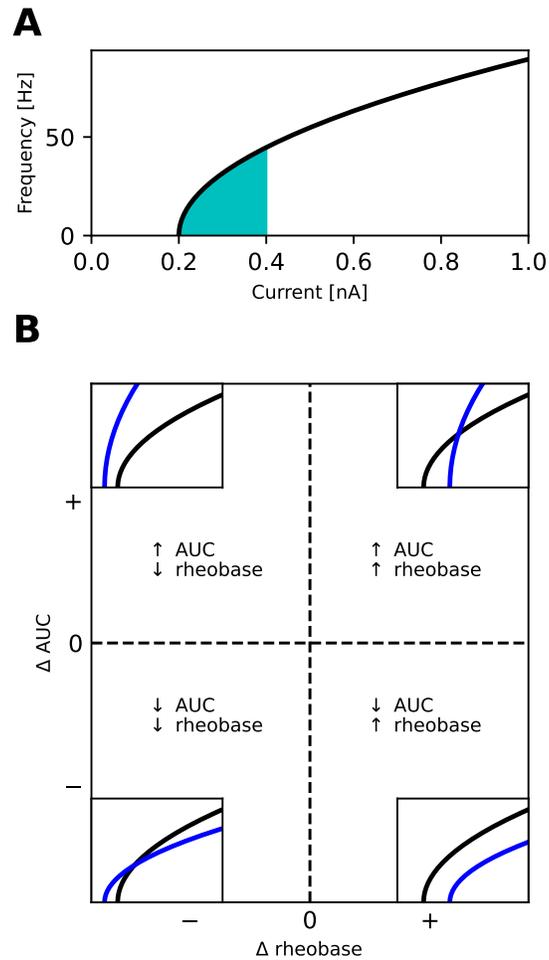


Figure 1: Characterization of firing with AUC and rheobase. (A) The area under the curve (AUC) of the repetitive firing frequency-current (fI) curve. (B) Changes in firing as characterized by ΔAUC and $\Delta rheobase$ occupy 4 quadrants separated by no changes in AUC and rheobase. Representative schematic fI curves in blue with respect to a reference fI curve (black) depict the general changes associated with each quadrant.

189 models chosen all fire repetitively and do not exhibit bursting. Some models, such as Cb stellate
 190 and RS inhibitory models, display type I firing whereas others such as Cb stellate $\Delta K_V 1.1$ and STN
 191 models have type II firing. Type I firing is characterized by continuous fI curve (i.e. firing rate
 192 is continuous) generated through a saddle-node on invariant cycle bifurcation and type II firing is

193 characterized by a discontinuity in the fI curve (i.e. a jump occurs from no firing to firing at a certain
194 frequency) due to a Hopf bifurcation (Ermentrout, 1996; Ermentrout and Chow, 2002). Other
195 models lie on a continuum between these prototypical firing classifications. Most neuronal models
196 exhibit hysteresis with ascending and descending ramps eliciting spikes with different thresholds,
197 however STN +K_V1.1 , STN ΔK_V1.1 , Cb stellate ΔK_V1.1 have large hysteresis (Figure 2).

198 **Sensitivity analysis**

199 A one-factor-at-a-time sensitivity analysis enables the comparison of a given alteration in current
200 parameters across models. Changes in gating $V_{1/2}$ and slope factor k as well as the current con-
201 ductance affect AUC (Figure 3 A, B and C). Heterogeneity in the correlation between gating and
202 conductance changes and AUC occurs across models for most currents. In these cases some of the
203 models display non-monotonic relationships

204 (i.e. $|\text{Kendall } \tau| \neq 1$). However, shifts in A current activation $V_{1/2}$, changes in K_V1.1 activation
205 $V_{1/2}$ and slope, and changes in A current conductance display consistent monotonic relationships
206 across models.

207 Alterations in gating $V_{1/2}$ and slope factor k as well as the current conductance also play a role in
208 determining rheobase (Figure 4 A, B and C). Shifts in half activation of gating properties are simi-
209 larly correlated with rheobase across models, however Kendall τ values departing from -1 indicate
210 non-monotonic relationships between K current $V_{1/2}$ and rheobase in some models (Figure 4A).
211 Changes in Na current inactivation, K_V1.1 current inactivation and A current activation have affect
212 rheobase with positive and negative correlations in different models (Figure 4B). Departures from
213 monotonic relationships occur in some models as a result of K current activation, K_V1.1 current
214 inactivation and A current activation in some models. Current conductance magnitude alterations
215 affect rheobase similarly across models (Figure 4C).

216 **K_v1.1**

217 The changes in AUC and rheobase from wild-type values for reported episodic ataxia type 1 (EA1)
218 associated K_v1.1 mutations are heterogenous across models containing K_v1.1 , but generally show
219 decreases in rheobase (Figure 5A-I). Pairwise non-parametric Kendall τ rank correlations between
220 the simulated effects of these K_v1.1 mutations on rheobase are highly correlated across models
221 (Figure 5J). However, the effects of the K_v1.1 mutations on AUC are more heterogenous as re-
222 flected by both weak and strong positive and negative pairwise correlations between models (Fig-
223 ure 5K).

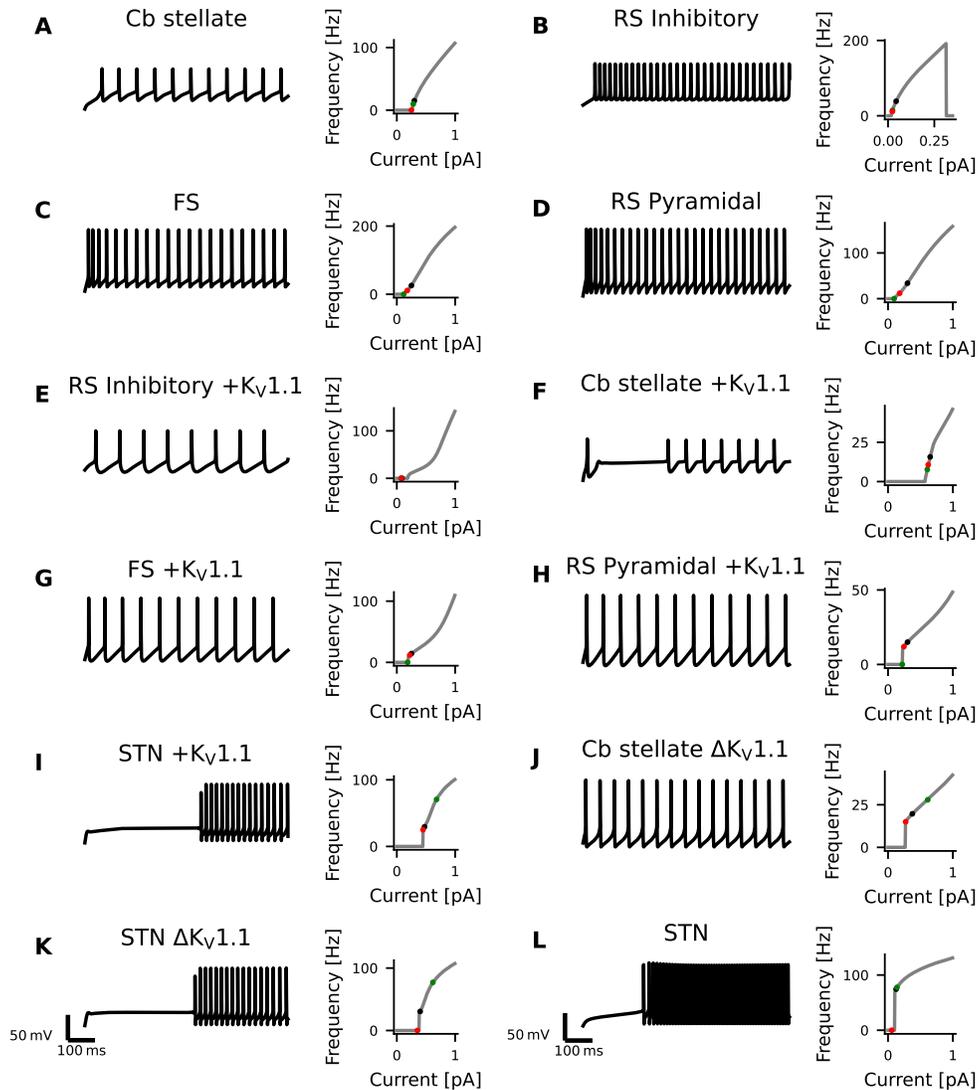


Figure 2: Diversity in Neuronal Model Firing. Spike trains (left), frequency-current (fI) curves (right) for Cb stellate (A), RS inhibitory (B), FS (C), RS pyramidal (D), RS inhibitory + $K_V1.1$ (E), Cb stellate + $K_V1.1$ (F), FS + $K_V1.1$ (G), RS pyramidal + $K_V1.1$ (H), STN + $K_V1.1$ (I), Cb stellate $\Delta K_V1.1$ (J), STN $\Delta K_V1.1$ (K), and STN (L) neuron models. Black marker on the fI curves indicate the current step at which the spike train occurs. The green marker indicates the current at which firing begins in response to an ascending current ramp, whereas the red marker indicates the current at which firing ceases in response to a descending current ramp (see Figure 2-1).

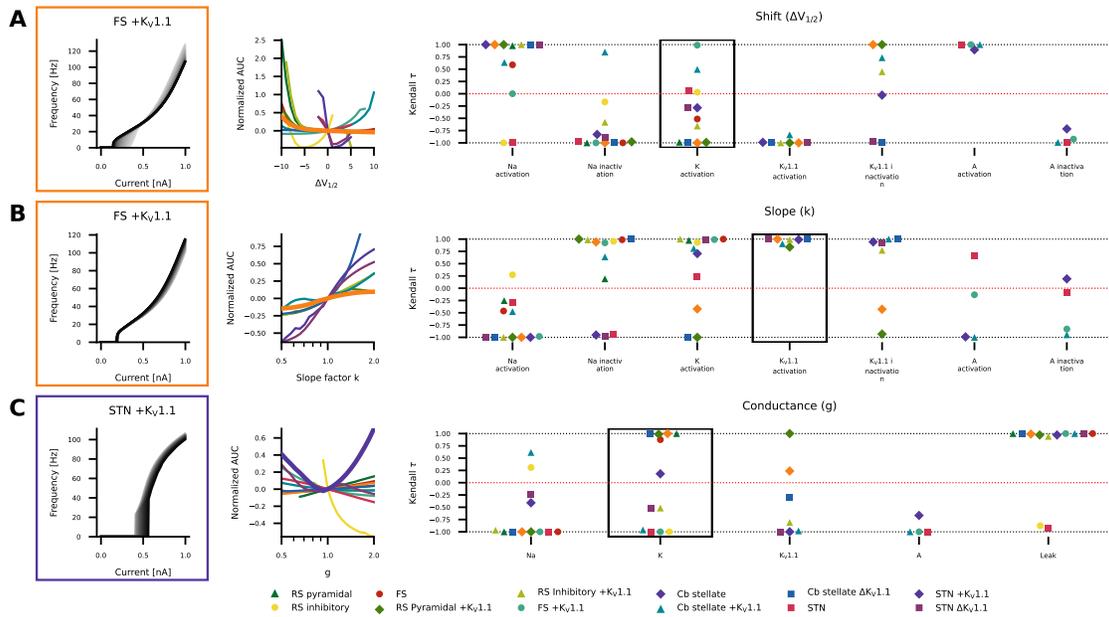


Figure 3: The Kendall rank correlation (Kendall τ) coefficients between shifts in $V_{1/2}$ and AUC, slope factor k and AUC as well as current conductances and AUC for each model are shown on the right in (A), (B) and (C) respectively. The relationships between AUC and $\Delta V_{1/2}$, slope (k) and conductance (g) for the Kendall τ coefficients highlights by the black box are depicted in the middle panel. The fI curves corresponding to one of the models are shown in the left panels.

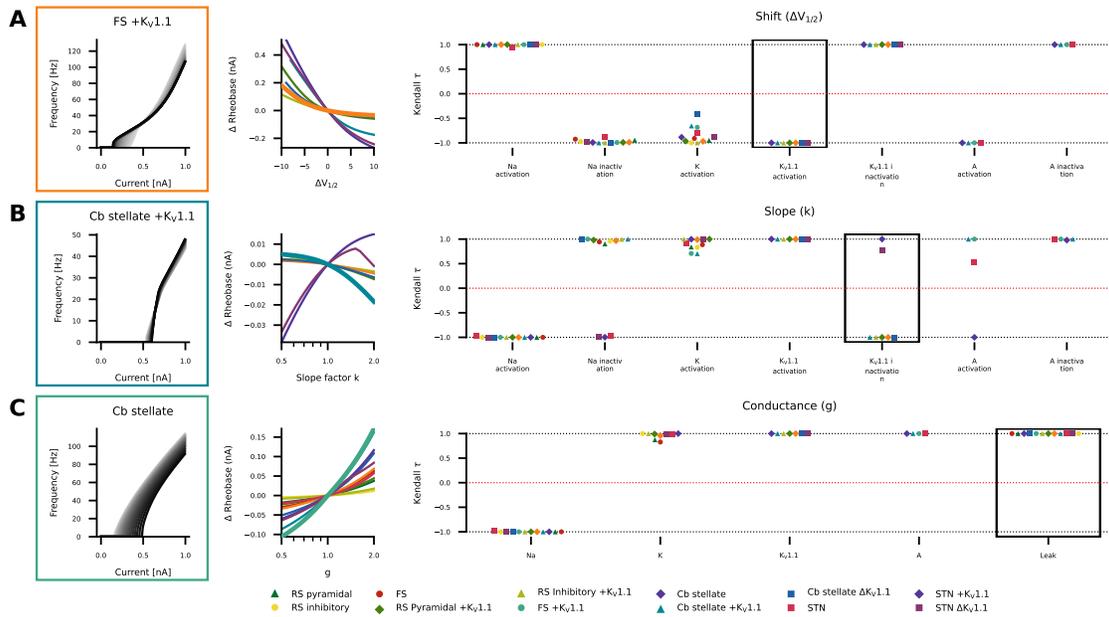


Figure 4: The Kendall rank correlation (Kendall τ) coefficients between shifts in $V_{1/2}$ and rheobase, slope factor k and AUC as well as current conductances and rheobase for each model are shown on the right in (A), (B) and (C) respectively. The relationships between rheobase and $\Delta V_{1/2}$, slope (k) and conductance (g) for the Kendall τ coefficients highlights by the black box are depicted in the middle panel. The fI curves corresponding to one of the models are shown in the left panels.

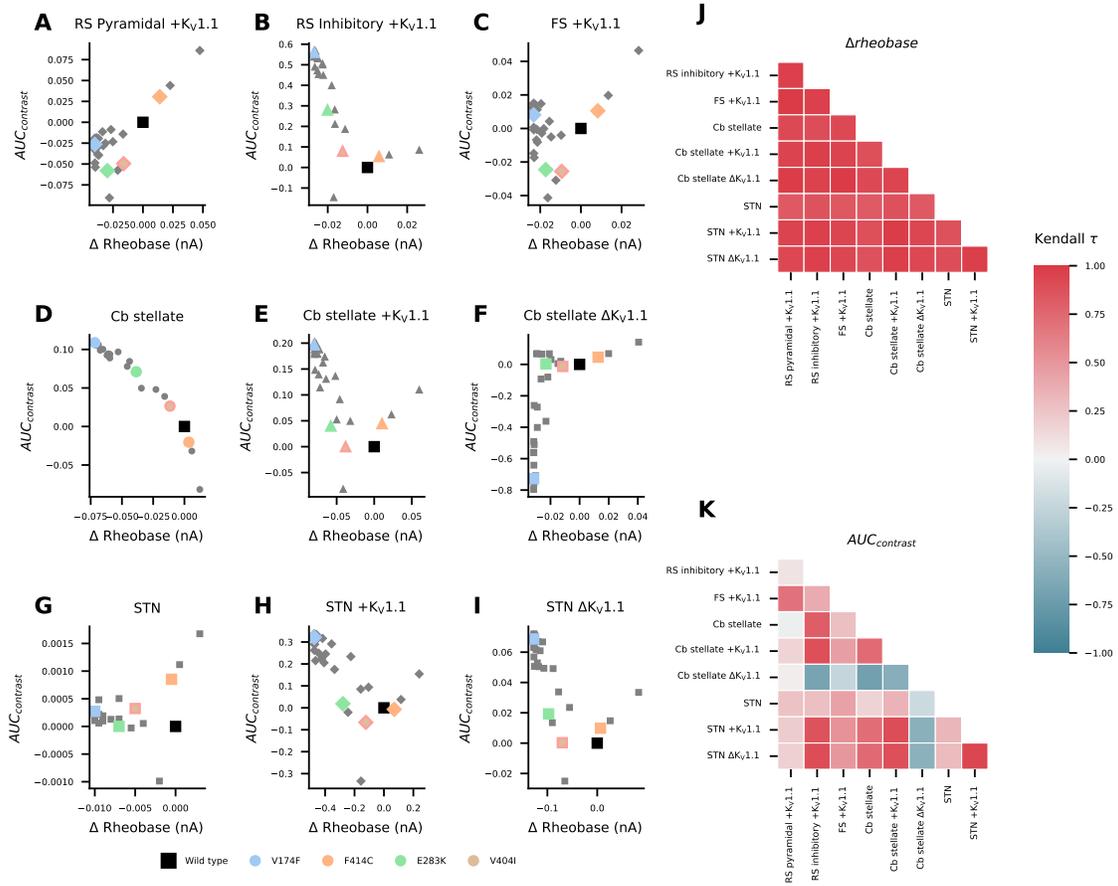


Figure 5: Effects of episodic ataxia type 1 associated $K_V1.1$ mutations on firing. Effects of $K_V1.1$ mutations on AUC ($AUC_{contrast}$) and rheobase (Δ rheobase) compared to wild type for RS pyramidal + $K_V1.1$ (A), RS inhibitory + $K_V1.1$ (B), FS + $K_V1.1$ (C), Cb stellate (D), Cb stellate + $K_V1.1$ (E), Cb stellate $\Delta K_V1.1$ (F), STN (G), STN + $K_V1.1$ (H) and STN $\Delta K_V1.1$ (I) models V174F, F414C, E283K, and V404I mutations are highlighted in color for each model. Pairwise Kendall rank correlation coefficients (Kendall τ) between the effects of $K_V1.1$ mutations on rheobase and on AUC are shown in J and K respectively.

224 **Discussion (3000 Words Maximum - Currently 1780)**

225 Using a set of diverse conductance-based neuronal models, the effects of changes to current prop-
226 erties and conductances on firing were determined to be heterogenous for the AUC of the steady
227 state fI curve but more homogenous for rheobase. For a known channelopathy, episodic ataxia type
228 1 associated $K_V1.1$ mutations, the effects on rheobase is consistent across cell types, whereas the
229 effect on AUC is cell type dependent.

230 **Validity of Neuronal Models**

231 The $K_V1.1$ model from (Ranjan et al., 2019) is based on expression of only $K_V1.1$ in CHO cells
232 and represents the biophysical properties of $K_V1.1$ homotetramers and not heteromers. Thus the
233 $K_V1.1$ model used here neglects the complex reality of these channels *in vivo* including their ex-
234 pression as heteromers and the altered biophysical properties of these heteromers (Coleman et al.,
235 1999; Isacoff et al., 1990; Rettig et al., 1994; Roeper et al., 1998; Ruppertsberg et al., 1990; Wang
236 et al., 1999). Furthermore, dynamic modulation of $K_V1.1$ channels, although physiologically rel-
237 evant, is neglected here. For example, $K_V\beta2$ plays a role in K_V1 channel trafficking and cell
238 membrane expression (Campomanes et al., 2002; Manganas et al., 2001; Shi et al., 2016) and
239 $K_V1.1$ phosphorylation increases cell membrane $K_V1.1$ (Jonas and Kaczmarek, 1996). It should
240 be noted that the discrete classification of potassium currents into delayed rectifier and A-type is
241 likely not biological, but rather highlights the characteristics of a spectrum of potassium channel
242 inactivation that arises in part due to additional factors such as heteromer composition (Glasscock,
243 2019; Stühmer et al., 1989), non-pore forming subunits (e.g. $K_V\beta$ subunits) (Rettig et al., 1994;
244 Xu and Li, 1997), and temperature (Ranjan et al., 2019) modulating channel properties.

245 Additionally, the single-compartment model does not take into consideration differential effects on
246 neuronal compartments (i.e. axon, soma, dendrites), possible different spatial cellular distribution
247 of channel expression across and within these neuronal compartments or across CNS regions nor

248 does it consider different channel types (e.g $\text{Na}_V1.1$ vs $\text{Na}_V1.8$). More realistic models would con-
249 sist of multiple compartments, take more currents into account and take the spatial distribution of
250 channels into account, however these models are more computationally expensive, require current
251 specific models and knowledge of the distribution of conductances across the cell. Despite these
252 limitations, each of the models can reproduce physiological firing behaviour of the neurons they
253 represent (Alexander et al., 2019; Otsuka et al., 2004; Pospischil et al., 2008) and capture key as-
254 pects of the dynamics of these cell types. The firing characterization was performed on adapted
255 firing and as such currents that cause adaptation are neglected in our analysis.

256 **Current Environments Determine the Effect of Ion Channel Mutations**

257 One-factor-at-a-time (OFAT) sensitivity analyses such as the one performed here are predicated
258 on assumptions of model linearity, and cannot account for interactions between factors (Czitrom,
259 1999; Saltelli and Annoni, 2010). OFAT approaches are local and not global (i.e. always in refer-
260 ence to a baseline point in the parameter space) and therefore cannot be generalized to the global
261 parameter space unless linearity is met (Saltelli and Annoni, 2010). The local space around the
262 wild type neuron is explored with an OFAT sensitivity analysis without taking interactions be-
263 tween parameters into account. Comparisons between the effects of changes in similar parameters
264 across different models can be made at the wild type locale indicative of experimentally observed
265 neuronal behaviour. In this case, the role of deviations in the ionic current properties from their
266 wild type in multiple neuronal models presented here provides a starting point for understanding
267 the general role of these current properties in neurons. However, a more global approach would
268 provide a more holistic understanding of the parameter space and provide insight into interactions
269 between properties.

270 Characterization of the effects of a parameter on firing with non-parametric Kendall τ correlations
271 takes into account the sign and monotonicity of the correlation. In other words Kendall τ coeffi-

272 cients provide information as to whether changing a parameter is positively or negatively correlated
273 with AUC or rheobase as well as the extent to which this correlation is positive or negative across
274 the parameter range examined. Therefore, Kendall τ coefficients provide general information as to
275 the sensitivity of different models to a change in a given current property, however more nuanced
276 difference between the sensitivities of models to current property changes, such as the slope of the
277 relationship between parameter change and firing are not included in our analysis.

278 Although, to our knowledge, no comprehensive evaluation of how current environment and cell
279 type affect the outcome of ion channel mutations, comparisons between the effects of such mu-
280 tations in certain cells have been reported. For instance, mutations in the SCN1A gene encoding
281 $\text{Na}_v1.1$ result in epileptic phenotypes by selective hypoexcitability of inhibitory but not excitatory
282 neurons in the cortex resulting in circuit hyperexcitability (Hedrich et al., 2014). In CA3 of the hip-
283 pocampus, mutation of $\text{Na}_v1.6$ similarly results in increased excitability of pyramidal neurons and
284 decreased excitability of parvalbumin positive interneurons (Makinson et al., 2016). Additionally,
285 the L858H mutation in $\text{Na}_v1.7$, associated with erythromyalgia, has been shown to cause hypoe-
286 citability in sympathetic ganglion neurons and hyperexcitability in dorsal root ganglion neurons
287 (Rush et al., 2006; Waxman, 2007). The differential effects of L858H $\text{Na}_v1.7$ on firing is depen-
288 dent on the presence or absence of another sodium channel $\text{Na}_v1.8$ (Rush et al., 2006; Waxman,
289 2007). In a modelling study, it was found that altering the sodium conductance in 2 stomatogastric
290 ganglion neuron models from a population models decreases rheobase in both models, however
291 the initial slope of the fI curves (proportional to AUC) is increased in one model and decreased
292 in the other suggesting that the magnitude of other currents in these models (such as K_d) deter-
293 mines the effect of a change in sodium current (Kispersky et al., 2012). These findings, in concert
294 with our findings suggest that the current environment in which a channelopathy occurs is vital in
295 determining the outcomes of the channelopathy on firing.

296 Cell type specific differences in current properties are important in the effects of ion channel mu-

297 tations, however within a cell type heterogeneity in channel expression levels exists and it is often
298 desirable to generate a population of neuronal models and to screen them for plausibility to biolog-
299 ical data in order to capture neuronal population diversity (Marder and Taylor, 2011). The models
300 we used here are originally generated by characterization of current gating properties and by fit-
301 ting of maximal conductances to experimental data (Alexander et al., 2019; Otsuka et al., 2004;
302 Pospischil et al., 2008; Ranjan et al., 2019). This practice of fixing maximal conductances based
303 on experimental data is limiting as it does not reproduce the variability in channel expression and
304 neuronal firing behaviour of a heterogeneous neuron population (Verma et al., 2020). For exam-
305 ple, a model derived from the mean conductances in a sub-population of stomatogastric ganglion
306 "one-spike bursting" neurons fires 3 spikes instead of 1 per burst due to an L shaped distribution
307 of sodium and potassium conductances (Golowasch et al., 2002). Multiple sets of current con-
308 ductances can give rise to the same patterns of activity also termed degeneracy and differences in
309 neuronal dynamics may only be evident with perturbations (Goaillard and Marder, 2021; Marder
310 and Taylor, 2011). Variability in ion channel expression often correlates with the expression of
311 other ion channels (Goaillard and Marder, 2021) and neurons whose behaviour is similar may pos-
312 sess correlated variability across different ion channels resulting in stability in neuronal phenotype
313 (Lamb and Calabrese, 2013; Soofi et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2009). The variability of ion currents
314 and degeneracy of neurons may account, at least in part, for the observation that the effect of toxins
315 within a neuronal type is frequently not constant (Khaliq and Raman, 2006; Puopolo et al., 2007;
316 Ransdell et al., 2013).

317 **Effects of KCNA1 Mutations**

318 Moderate changes in delayed rectifier potassium currents change the bifurcation structure of
319 Hodgkin Huxley model, with changes analogous to those seen with $K_V1.1$ mutations resulting in
320 increased excitability due to reduced thresholds for repetitive firing (Hafez and Gottschalk, 2020).
321 Although the Hodgkin Huxley delayed rectifier lacks inactivation, the increases in excitability seen

322 are in line with both score-based and simulation-based predictions of the outcomes of *KCNA1*
323 mutations. LOF *KCNA1* mutations generally increase neuronal excitability, however the different
324 effects of *KCNA1* mutations across models on AUC are indicative that a certain cell type spe-
325 cific complexity exists. Increased excitability seen experimentally with $K_V1.1$ null mice ([Smart](#)
326 [et al., 1998](#); [Zhou et al., 1998](#)), with pharmacological $K_V1.1$ block ([Chi and Nicol, 2007](#); [Morales-](#)
327 [Villagrán et al., 1996](#)), by ([Hafez and Gottschalk, 2020](#)) and with simulation-based predictions of
328 *KCNA1* mutations. Contrary to these results, ([Zhao et al., 2020](#)) predicted *in silico* that the depolar-
329 izing shifts seen as a result of *KCNA1* mutations broaden action potentials and interfere negatively
330 with high frequency action potential firing, however comparability of firing rates is lacking in this
331 study. Different current properties, such as the difference in I_A and $I_{K_V1.1}$ in the Cb stellate and
332 STN model families alter the impact of *KCNA1* mutations on firing highlighting that knowledge of
333 the biophysical properties of a current and its neuronal expression is vital for holistic understanding
334 of the effects of a given ion channel mutation both at a single cell and network level.

335 **Loss or Gain of Function Characterizations Do Not Fully Capture Ion Channel Mu-** 336 **tation Effects on Firing**

337 The effects of changes in current properties depend in part on the neuronal model in which they
338 occur and can be seen in the variance of correlations (especially in AUC) across models for a given
339 current property change. Therefore, relative conductances and gating properties of currents in the
340 current environment in which an alteration in current properties occurs plays an important role in
341 determining the outcome on firing. The use of loss of function (LOF) and gain of function (GOF)
342 is useful at the level of ion channels and whether a mutation results in more or less ionic current,
343 however the extension of this thinking onto whether mutations induce LOF or GOF at the level of
344 neuronal firing based on the ionic current LOF/GOF is problematic due to the dependency of neu-
345 ronal firing changes on the current environment. Thus the direct leap from current level LOF/GOF
346 characterizations to effects on firing without experimental or modelling-based evidence, although

347 tempting, should be refrained from and viewed with caution when reported. This is especially
348 relevant in the recent development of personalized medicine for channelopathies, where a patients
349 specific channelopathy is identified and used to tailor treatments (Ackerman et al., 2013; Gne-
350 chi et al., 2021; Helbig and Ellis, 2020; Weber et al., 2017). However, the effects of specific ion
351 channel mutations are often characterized in expression systems and classified as LOF or GOF to
352 aid in treatment decisions (Brunklaus et al., 2022; Johannesen et al., 2021; Musto et al., 2020).
353 Interestingly, both LOF and GOF Na_v1.1 mutations can benefit from treatment with sodium chan-
354 nel blockers (Johannesen et al., 2021), suggesting that the relationship between effects at the level
355 of ion channels and effects at the level of firing and therapeutics is not linear or evident without
356 further contextual information. Therefore, this approach must be used with caution and the cell
357 type which expressed the mutant ion channel must be taken into account. Experimental assessment
358 of the effects of a patients specific ion channel mutation *in vivo* is not feasible at a large scale due
359 to time and cost constraints, modelling of the effects of patient specific channelopathies is a de-
360 sirable approach. Accordingly, for accurate modelling and predictions of the effects of mutations
361 on neuronal firing, information as to the type of neurons containing the affected channel, and the
362 properties of the affected and all currents in the affected neuronal type is needed. When modelling
363 approaches are sought out to overcome the limitations of experimental approaches, care must be
364 taken to account for model dependency and the generation of relevant cell-type or cell specific
365 populations of models should be standard in assessing the effects of mutations in specific neurons.

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648 **Figure/Table/Extended Data Legends**

Figure 1: Characterization of firing with AUC and rheobase. (A) The area under the curve (AUC) of the repetitive firing frequency-current (fI) curve. (B) Changes in firing as characterized by Δ AUC and Δ rheobase occupy 4 quadrants separated by no changes in AUC and rheobase. Representative schematic fI curves in blue with respect to a reference fI curve (black) depict the general changes associated with each quadrant.

Figure 2: Diversity in Neuronal Model Firing. Spike trains (left), frequency-current (fI) curves (right) for Cb stellate (A), RS inhibitory (B), FS (C), RS pyramidal (D), RS inhibitory +K_V1.1 (E), Cb stellate +K_V1.1 (F), FS +K_V1.1 (G), RS pyramidal +K_V1.1 (H), STN +K_V1.1 (I), Cb stellate Δ K_V1.1(J), STN Δ K_V1.1(K), and STN (L) neuron models. Black marker on the fI curves indicate the current step at which the spike train occurs. The green marker indicates the current at which firing begins in response to an ascending current ramp, whereas the red marker indicates the current at which firing ceases in response to a descending current ramp.

Figure 3: The Kendall rank correlation (Kendall τ) coefficients between shifts in $V_{1/2}$ and AUC, slope factor k and AUC as well as current conductances and AUC for each model are shown on the right in (A), (B) and (C) respectively. The relationships between AUC and $\Delta V_{1/2}$, slope (k) and conductance (g) for the Kendall τ coefficients highlights by the black box are depicted in the middle panel. The fI curves corresponding to one of the models are shown in the left panels.

Figure 4: The Kendall rank correlation (Kendall τ) coefficients between shifts in $V_{1/2}$ and rheobase, slope factor k and AUC as well as current conductances and rheobase for each model are shown on the right in (A), (B) and (C) respectively. The relationships between rheobase and $\Delta V_{1/2}$, slope (k) and conductance (g) for the Kendall τ coefficients highlights by the black box are depicted in the middle panel. The fI curves corresponding to one of the models are shown in the left panels.

Figure 5: Effects of episodic ataxia type 1 associated K_V1.1 mutations on firing. Effects of K_V1.1 mutations on AUC ($AUC_{contrast}$) and rheobase (Δ rheobase) compared to wild type for RS pyramidal +K_V1.1 (A), RS inhibitory +K_V1.1 (B), FS +K_V1.1 (C), Cb stellate (D), Cb stellate +K_V1.1 (E), Cb stellate Δ K_V1.1(F), STN (G), STN +K_V1.1 (H) and STN Δ K_V1.1(I) models V174F, F414C, E283K, and V404I mutations are highlighted in color for each model. Pairwise Kendall rank correlation coefficients (Kendall τ) between the effects of K_V1.1 mutations on rheobase and on AUC are shown in J and K respectively.

	RS Pyra- midal	RS Inhib- itory	FS	Cb Stellate	Cb Stellate +K _V 1.1	Cb Stellate Δ K _V 1.1	STN	STN +K _V 1.1	STN Δ K _V 1.1
g_{Na}	56	10	58	3.4	3.4	3.4	49	49	49
g_K	5.4	1.89	3.51	9.0556	8.15	9.0556	57	56.43	57
$g_{K_{V1.1}}$	0.6	0.21	0.39	—	0.90556	1.50159	—	0.57	0.5
g_A	—	—	—	15.0159	15.0159	—	5	5	—
g_M	0.075	0.0098	0.075	—	—	—	—	—	—
g_L	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	5	5
g_T	—	—	—	0.45045	0.45045	0.45045	5	5	5
$g_{Ca,K}$	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
g_{Leak}	0.0205	0.0205	0.038	0.07407	0.07407	0.07407	0.035	0.035	0.035
$\tau_{max,M}$	608	934	502	—	—	—	—	—	—
C_m	118.44	119.99	101.71	177.83	177.83	177.83	118.44	118.44	118.44

Table 1: Cell properties and conductances of regular spiking pyramidal neuron (RS Pyramidal), regular spiking inhibitory neuron (RS Inhibitory), fast spiking neuron (FS), cerebellar stellate cell (Cb Stellate), with additional I_{K_V1.1} (Cb Stellate Δ K_V1.1) and with I_{K_V1.1} replacement of I_A (Cb Stellate Δ K_V1.1), and subthalamic nucleus neuron (STN), with additional I_{K_V1.1} (STN Δ K_V1.1) and with I_{K_V1.1} replacement of I_A (STN K_V1.1) models. All conductances are given in mS/cm². Capacitances (C_m) and $\tau_{max,M}$ are given in pF and ms respectively.

Extended Data 1: TODO: Caption for code in zip file.

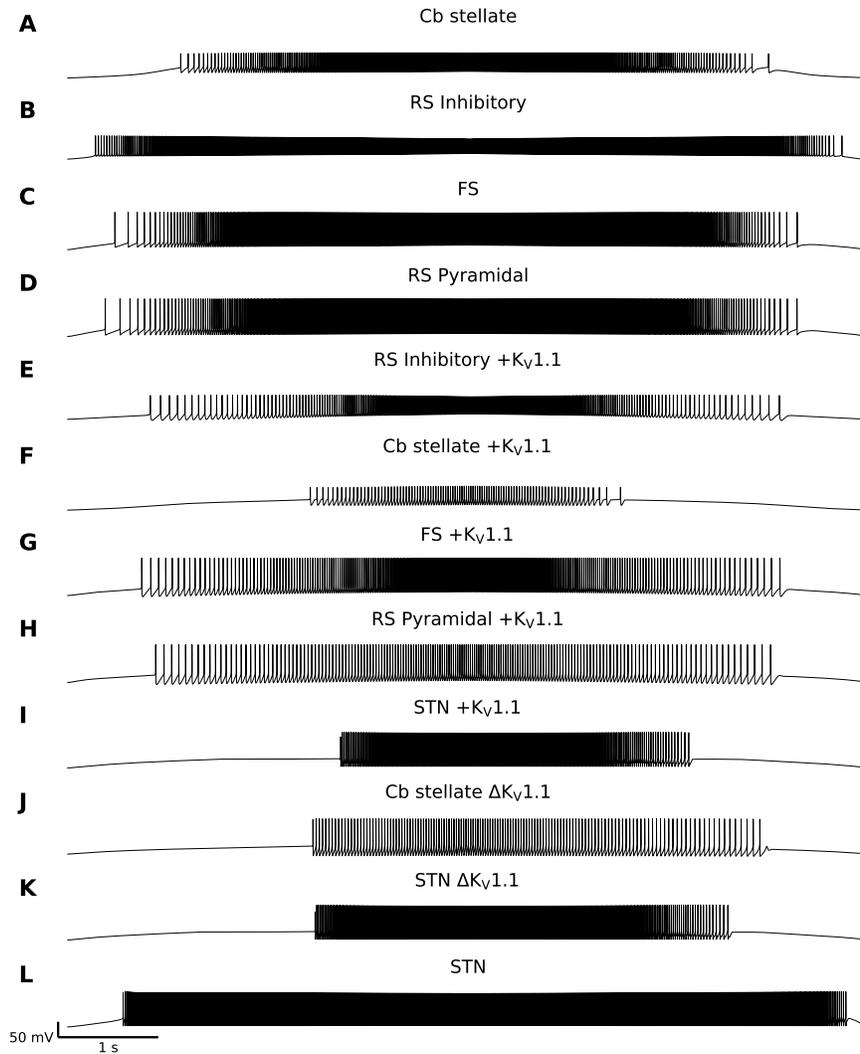


Figure 2-1: Diversity in Neuronal Model Firing Responses to a Current Ramp. Spike trains for Cb stellate (A), RS inhibitory (B), FS (C), RS pyramidal (D), RS inhibitory +K_v1.1 (E), Cb stellate +K_v1.1 (F), FS +K_v1.1 (G), RS pyramidal +K_v1.1 (H), STN +K_v1.1 (I), Cb stellate Δ K_v1.1 (J), STN Δ K_v1.1 (K), and STN (L) neuron models in response to a slow ascending current ramp followed by the descending version of the current ramp. The current at which firing begins in response to an ascending current ramp and the current at which firing ceases in response to a descending current ramp are depicted on the frequency current (f) curves in Figure 2 for each model.