

Ligand Binding-Dependent Functions of the Lipocalin NLaz: an *in vivo* Study in *Drosophila*.

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Running title: In vivo test of NLaz lipid binding-related roles

Abstract word count: 181

Introduction word count: 763

Materials and Methods word count: 1060

Results word count: 2380

Discussion word count: 880

Bibliography: 69 references, 2299 words

Legends word count: 1088

Total word count: 8651

Number of figures: 5

Number of tables: 2

Number of Supplementary figures: 2

Number of Supplementary data files: 2

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LIST OF NON-STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

AGE: Advanced glycation end products
ApoD: Apolipoprotein D
BSA: Bovine serum albumin
CNS: Central nervous system
da: daughterless
DMF: N,N-dimethylformamide
ECL: Enhanced chemiluminescence
EDTA: Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
FOXO: Forkhead box O1 protein
GLaz: Glial Lazarillo
GPI: Glycosylphosphatidylinositol
hApoD: human Apolipoprotein D
HRP: Horseradish peroxidase
IgG: Immunoglobulin G
IIS: Insulin/IGF signaling (IGF: insulin-like growth factor)
JNK: Jun-N-terminal Kinase
 K_d : Dissociation constant
Lcn2: lipocalin 2
L-PGDS: lipocalin type - Prostaglandin D synthase
NGAL: Neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin
NLaz: Neural Lazarillo
NLaz-KO: Neural Lazarillo knock-out mutant
PNGase-F: peptide-N-glycosidase F
PQ: Paraquat
RA: retinoic acid
RBP: Retinol Binding Protein
RpL32: Ribosomal protein L32
SDS-PAGE: sodium dodecyl sulphate - polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
TI: Trypsin inhibitor
TOR: Target of rapamycin protein
UAS: Upstream activated sequence
WT: wild type

ABSTRACT

Lipocalins are small extracellular proteins mostly described as lipid carriers. The *Drosophila* lipocalin NLaz (Neural Lazarillo) modulates the IIS pathway and regulates longevity, stress resistance, and behavior. Here we test whether a native hydrophobic pocket structure is required for NLaz to perform its functions. We use a point mutation altering the binding pocket (NLaz^{L130R}) and control mutations outside NLaz binding pocket. Tryptophan fluorescence titration reveals that NLaz^{L130R} loses its ability to bind ergosterol and the pheromone 7(z)-tricosene, but retains retinoic acid binding. Using site-directed transgenesis in *Drosophila* we test the functionality of the ligand binding-altered lipocalin at the organism level. NLaz-dependent lifespan reduction, oxidative stress and starvation sensitivity, aging markers accumulation, and deficient courtship are rescued by overexpression of NLaz^{WT}, but not of NLaz^{L130R}. Transcriptional responses to aging and oxidative stress show a large set of age-responsive genes dependent on the integrity of NLaz binding pocket. Inhibition of IIS activity and modulation of oxidative stress and infection-responsive genes are binding pocket-dependent processes. Control of energy metabolites upon starvation appears to be, however, insensitive to the modification of the NLaz binding pocket.

Keywords:

Aging

Oxidative stress

Lipid-binding proteins

Pheromonal signalling

Metabolism regulation

INTRODUCTION

Lipocalins are a large family of small extracellular proteins characterized by their well conserved β -barrel structure embracing an internal cavity able to bind small ligands, most of them hydrophobic or amphipathic (1). For some lipocalins we have a good approximation to the role played by their native ligand. For instance, Retinol Binding Protein (RBP) transports vitamin A within the retina (2); Siderocalin (Lcn2 or NGAL) sequesters iron-binding molecules and provides a bacteriostatic mechanism against infections (3); and Crustacyanins carry the pigment giving color to the carapace of crustaceans (4). However the panoply of different physiological functions in which lipocalins are involved, many of them tested by altering their expression levels in genetically-modified organisms (5-8), keeps increasing, and in the vast majority of cases a ligand transport function is assumed but not tested.

A set of lipocalins, including the most ancient ones within the metazoan lineage (9-11), has been functionally linked to the response of organisms to different forms of stress and to the modulation of metabolism, key parameters regulating senescence and longevity (reviewed by 12). Among these are the Lazarillo-related lipocalins, a group including the *Drosophila* lipocalins Neural Lazarillo (NLaz) and Glial Lazarillo (GLaz) (13) and the vertebrate Apolipoprotein D (ApoD). The expression of these lipocalins, both within and outside the nervous system, is boosted by oxidative or metabolic stress and they provide an endogenous mechanism of protection particularly important in situations of aging and neurodegeneration (5, 14-20).

NLaz is induced under the control of the stress responsive JNK pathway, and is able to negatively regulate the IIS pathway (16, 21). NLaz expression increases stress resistance and longevity, but also serves other apparently unrelated functions by regulating fecundity, food-intake and locomotor and courtship behaviors (18, 22). The molecular mechanism by which NLaz is able to perform these varied functions has not been elucidated yet, although general proposals of lipid-transport or interaction with cellular lipid membrane surfaces have been laid out (23, 24). Whether all NLaz functions are carried out using a common biochemical mechanism, or this lipocalin can exert different functions depending on the ligand available for binding in different physiological situations, is still unknown.

Studies testing ligand binding abilities of lipocalins *in vitro* are abundant (25-27), including ApoD and Lazarillo-related lipocalins (23, 28-32). In addition, many lipocalins have been extensively studied at the molecular level, revealing particular residues and regions of the protein scaffold that are important for their ligand binding properties (25, 27, 33-36). The biochemical and biophysical properties of lipocalin-ligand interactions have been reported for some family members, either by solving their crystal structure with the ligand bound to the pocket (31, 37) or by site-directed mutagenesis of residues contributing to the pocket interactive surfaces (26, 27, 35-41). Amino acid substitutions that naturally occur in the binding pocket of RBP result in vitamin A deficiency causing night blindness (42). Also, thanks to their very robust fold, the lipocalins have been used as starting point for protein engineering. Using site-directed random mutagenesis followed by selection techniques, an increasing set of so-called "Anticalins" has been generated with various specific target binding activities, many of them with potential therapeutic benefits (for a review see 43).

In spite of the many known lipocalin mutant forms that result in deficient ligand binding *in vitro*, studies analyzing their effects outside the test tube are rare. Mutant forms of Prostaglandin D synthase (L-PGDS) have recently been tested for their ability to promote cell survival in H₂O₂ treated neuronal cultures (44). A mechanism involving the titration of a free thiol in the protein without alterations of ligand binding capacity has been found. Modifications of the binding pocket of the lipocalin C8 γ have been tested for hemolytic activity (35). Also, Correnti et al. (39) have found that Siderocalin binding pocket mutants that cannot bind siderophores *in vitro* lose their bacteriostatic activity when added to bacterial cultures.

The purpose of this study is to test whether the functions of the lipocalin NLaz are dependent on ligand binding. We designed different mutant forms of NLaz and tested them at three levels of analysis. We assayed their ligand binding capacity *in vitro*, their cell survival promoting activity in a cell culture system, and their effect on longevity, stress resistance, behavior and downstream transcriptional responses *in vivo*. By using site-directed transgenesis in *Drosophila*, we were able to compare the physiological effects of wild type and mutant NLaz expression without the confounding effect of transgene insertion site in the genome. This is, to our knowledge, the first *in vivo* test of the physiological outcome derived from a ligand binding-altered lipocalin at the organism level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Homology modeling of NLaz 3D structure.

The NLaz model was obtained from the Swiss Model Repository platform (45, 46), built using the atomic coordinates of hApoD [PDB entry: 2HZQ] as the best template (31). An estimation of the model quality was assessed by the QMEAN Server (<http://swissmodel.expasy.org/qmean/cgi/index.cgi>) (47).

Cloning, S2 cell lines generation, and stress assays.

NLaz cDNA, translating into residues 1-224 (CG33126, Uniprot reference Q9NAZ4, FlyBase entry FBgn0053126), was subcloned with a C-terminal 6xHis tail into the pRmHa3 vector as previously described (23). NLaz^{L130R}-pRmHa3 was generated by direct mutagenesis of NLaz^{WT}-pRmHa3 following the Quick Change Site Direct Mutagenesis method (QIAGEN). Table 1 lists the oligonucleotides used for mutagenesis, cloning, and sequencing. Transfected cells were selected with 25 μ g/ml blasticidin-S for 3 weeks (Invitrogen).

S2 cells seeded at a density of 2x10⁶/ml were treated with H₂O₂ as an oxidant agent in the presence of pure NLaz^{WT}, NLaz^{L130R} (see below) or a control protein (trypsin inhibitor from soybean, Sigma) as previously described (22). Viability was scored in quadruplicate wells with at least two measurements in each culture well.

Purification of NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} proteins.

Protein expression was induced in the stably transfected S2 cell lines and purified by metal-affinity chromatography followed by two rounds of size-exclusion chromatography (Supplementary Figure 1a), as previously described (23). The purified proteins were deglycosylated by treatment with peptide-N-glycosidase F (PNGase-F) from *Flavobacterium meningosepticum* (New England Biolabs) after denaturation following the protocol supplied by the manufacturer. The purified proteins were analyzed by 12% SDS-PAGE (Supplementary Figure 1b).

Ligand binding assays by tryptophan fluorescence titration

Fluorescence measurement were conducted as described (23) with either NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} diluted at 1 μ M in 10 mM phosphate buffer, 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM EDTA at pH 7.0. The ligands tested were Retinoic Acid (Sigma), Ergosterol (Sigma) and 7(z)-Tricosene (Cayman), and were dissolved in N,N-dimethylformamide (DMF) (Sigma). An apparent K_d was estimated with the assumption of a single binding site.

Generation of transgenic flies by site-specific transgenesis.

NLaz loss-of-function mutant (NLaz-KO) was generated in a w^{1118} background (48) and crossed with a w^{1118} -CS wild type (WT) line to generate the NW5 line used in this study (16).

The full wild type and L130R NLaz cDNAs were subcloned into the pUAS-attB vector (49) (Gen Bank entry EF362409 and FlyBase entry FBmc0003002). A C-terminal truncated version of NLaz was generated by amplifying a cDNA fragment translating into residues 1-176 of NLaz. NLaz^{N165S} was identified by sequencing as a polymorphism in some of our wild type fly stocks. These NLaz versions were also subcloned into the pUAS-attB vector. Constructs were sequenced to confirm orientation and the absence of undesirable mutations. See Table 1 for oligonucleotides used for mutagenesis and cloning.

PhiC31 system-mediated (49) transformation of *Drosophila* strain “y¹ M{vas-int.Dm}ZH-2A w^{*}; M{3xP3-RFP.attP}ZH-86Fb” (BL4749) was used to generate fly lines with all the transgenes inserted in the same chromosomal position (86Fb). NLaz transcription levels in the transgenic flies expressing NLaz^{WT} or NLaz^{L130R} was compared using primers able to amplify both forms, and a mutant-specific primer that does not amplify the WT allele (Table 1). The amounts of mRNA of the NLaz^{L130R} mutant version are similar to those of the WT transcript in the transgenic flies (Supplementary Figure 1d). The expression levels of NLaz transcripts in flies expressing NLaz^{N165S} or NLaz ^{Δ 177-192} are similar to those of WT over-expresser (Supplementary Figure 1d).

Fly handling, lifespan, stress sensitivity and behavioral assays.

Flies were grown in standard laboratory conditions as described (19). Fly survival was assayed in standard media for lifespan determination (n=76-147 male flies/genotype), in vials with filter papers soaked in 10% sucrose-20 mM paraquat (PQ) (Sigma), for oxidative stress sensitivity measurement, or in empty vials for starvation-desiccation sensitivity measurements (n=67-153 male flies/genotype/condition) as previously described (18). Tubes containing the flies were genotype-blinded, and the counting of dead flies in the numbered tubes was randomly performed by two trained observers (M.R. and a lab technician). All tests were carried out at 25°C.

To drive the expression of the NLaz transgenes, the driver da:Gal4 (ubiquitous expression) line was crossed with pUAS-NLaz fly lines or w^{1118} flies (to generate driver-only control flies).

The absence of infection by *Wolbachia pipiens* in our fly strains (Supplementary Figure 1c) was tested as described (18).

Courtship and mating tests were performed by a trained observer (M.R.) as described (18). The courtship index, representing the proportion of time a male spends actively courting the female for the first 10 min, was scored in 25-30 couples/genotype.

Wild-type flies (expressing the driver alone, w^{1118} ; $da:Gal4/+$) were used as control in over-expression experiments, whereas NLaz-KO flies (w^{1118} ; $NLaz^{NW5}/NLaz^{NW5}$; $da:Gal4/+$) are the control in rescue experiments. All UAS:NLaz transgenes are located in the same locus of the genome (86Fb in chromosome 3).

Metabolic Measurements and AGE assay.

Flies (4-5 day-old) were studied in basal situation and after 8 hours of starvation. Two independent groups of 15 flies per genotype and condition were analyzed. A set of kits were used for triglycerides (BioSystems, Spain), glucose (Sigma, USA) and glycogen (Sigma, USA) measurements, following the manufacturers' instructions. Absorbance was measured by a Versamax microplate reader (Molecular Devices).

Fluorescent AGEs (advanced glycation end products) were measured as described (22).

Quantitative RT-PCR gene expression array.

RNA from pools of 25 homogenized flies per genotype and condition was extracted and reverse transcribed as previously described (18). We used SYBR Green and designed a custom qRT-PCR array (SABiosciences) with 4 replicas per sample to study gene expression changes generated by the expression of $NLaz^{WT}$ or its mutant versions. RNA transcription profiles were determined by the method of direct comparison of Ct values and relative quantities calculated by the $\Delta\Delta Ct$ method (50). The list of genes explored and their relationship to the physiological output that motivated each gene selection is shown in the Supplementary Data File 1. A fold regulation ≥ 2 and $p < 0.05$ for at least one genotype was established for the gene to be considered as a PQ or aging-responsive gene (Supplementary data file 2).

Statistical analyses.

Statistical analyses were performed with SigmaPlot (v 11.0) software. A $p < 0.05$ was defined as a threshold for significant changes. ANOVA was used when assaying for multiple comparisons. The particular tests used for post-hoc analyses depended on homoscedasticity, and are stated in figure legends. Multiple survival curves were compared with a log-rank test followed by Holm-Sidak multiple comparison post-hoc test.

RESULTS

In order to design mutations that could result in altered ligand binding properties we modeled the NLaz tertiary structure in the Swiss Model platform (Figure 1a-b). The average RMSD of the NLaz model is 3.71 Å, and that for the β -sheet and α -helices is 0.74 Å. The QMEAN quality estimate is 0.707, passing the threshold for a reliable model. Based on the well known ligand-protein interactions of the closely related ApoD (31) we designed a binding pocket mutant ($NLaz^{L130R}$; Figure 1b) predicted to hinder ligand binding by introducing a charged residue with a large side chain facing the pocket. Different mutations were then selected as controls. An NLaz allele with a serine in position 165 was found in our wild-type fly stocks, while an asparagine in that position appears in the NLaz sequence of the genome Drosophila database. In this work, the N165 version was selected as the reference wild-type protein, matching the current entries in genomic databases. The $NLaz^{N165S}$ version might represent a polymorphism present in laboratory flies. Since N165 lies outside the binding pocket (Figure 1a and Supplementary Figure 2a), it has the potential to show the

physiological outcomes of expressing an NLaz point mutant unrelated to ligand binding. We also explored the effect of deleting a C-terminal extension (residues 177-192, Figure 1a and Supplementary Figure 2d,e), which is unique to NLaz within the lipocalin family (51), as a different control for the NLaz^{L130R} binding pocket mutant. This C-terminal tail is similar in size to the GPI-anchoring signal peptide present in the lipocalin Lazarillo of grasshoppers and other insects (22, 52), but shows a quite different amino acid composition.

Monitoring NLaz-ligand interactions *in vitro* by intrinsic fluorescence analysis

The proteins of interest were expressed using an inducible expression system in *Drosophila* S2 cells. The proteins were purified from the culture medium by affinity chromatography against a C-terminal His-tag followed by two rounds of size exclusion chromatography to reach a purity > 99% (Supplementary Figure 1a). The proteins produced by S2 cells were successfully secreted into the culture medium, are glycosylated and show signs of intramolecular disulfide bonds, as expected for a correctly folded native NLaz protein (Supplementary Figure 1b). We centered our biochemical analysis on the ligand binding properties of NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R}.

We used tryptophan fluorescence titration to assay the interaction of NLaz with different ligands (Figure 1c-h). One of the two tryptophan residues in NLaz, W128, is predicted to be located within the binding pocket. Its modification by interaction with ligands in the pocket could either quench or enhance its fluorescence emission. All-trans-retinoic acid (RA) produced quenching of the emitted fluorescence (Figures 1c,f) in both, NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R}. RA binding, which is present in most lipocalins tested so far (29, 53-55), substantiates the correct folding of the S2 expressed proteins. We then tested ergosterol, the functional equivalent to mammalian cholesterol in insects, and proved that it produces an enhanced fluorescence over the carrier baseline in NLaz^{WT} (Figure 1d), but not in NLaz^{L130R} (Figure 1g). The same pattern was observed with the pheromone 7(z)-tricosene (56) (Figures 1e,h) demonstrating that the alteration of the pocket introduced by the L130R mutation was compromising the binding to ligands of different sizes, molecular properties and presumed biological functions. Similar apparent *K_d* for the ligand-protein interaction have been obtained for RA-lipocalins by us and others (28, 29). Ergosterol and 7(z)tricosene have been tested for the wild type version of NLaz showing a *K_d* of 2.7 μ M and 4.5 μ M respectively (23). However, no binding was detected in the micromolar range for NLaz^{L130R}.

NLaz^{WT} has stronger cell survival promoting activity than NLaz^{L130R} under oxidative stress in a cell culture-based assay.

In order to test the biological activity of the wild type and ligand binding-altered NLaz, we treated non-transfected S2 cell cultures with H₂O₂ and measured cell viability by trypan blue exclusion analysis (Figure 2a). Neither version of NLaz protein nor an unrelated control protein (Trypsin Inhibitor) had effects on the viability of untreated cells. Upon a pro-oxidant treatment the viability of control cells was reduced to 45%. No rescue was observed when the culture was supplemented with the control protein, but a significant increase in viability was obtained with both NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R}. The increase in viability produced by NLaz^{WT} was nevertheless significantly higher than that obtained with the pocket mutant NLaz^{L130R}.

Monitoring the survival promoting activity of NLaz^{WT} and mutant forms *in vivo*.

The wild type and mutant versions of NLaz were placed downstream of an UAS (upstream activated sequence)-containing promoter to control their expression by the Gal4/UAS system in *Drosophila*. Using PhiC31-mediated transformation all the transgenes were integrated into the fly genome in position 86Fb of chromosome 3, an otherwise neutral site with no phenotypic effects known due to insertion mutations (See Methods section). This strategy aims at ameliorating differences of genetic background and positional effect in expression levels (see Supplementary Figure 1d) and tissue distribution, thus allowing a proper comparison of the effects of different NLaz versions on the fly physiological parameters. In this work we study the ubiquitous expression of the transgenes using the daughterless:Gal4 (da:Gal4) driver. The combination of this driver with the single-site responding transgenes allows for comparisons across genotypes throughout the life of the fly.

***Drosophila* resistance to oxidative stress throughout aging is differentially modulated by NLaz mutant versions.**

We previously demonstrated that the expressions of NLaz and its mammalian homologue ApoD are naturally induced, via JNK signaling activation, upon exposure to the oxidative stress generator paraquat (PQ) (14, 16). The expression of NLaz/ApoD is required to promote survival of both flies and mice under oxidative stress conditions (5, 16, 57).

When flies are exposed to PQ and NLaz^{WT} is overexpressed with a ubiquitous pattern (da:Gal4 driver), young 3 day-old flies increase moderately their survival (Figure 2b), but aged flies (30 day-old) experience a 13.6 and 40.2% increase in median and maximal survival respectively (Figure 2c and Table 2). In contrast, overexpression of the pocket mutant NLaz^{L130R} does not increase, but causes a reduction in the survival of flies (Figures 2b-c and Table 2) with a 13.5 and 8.9% decrease in median and maximal survival of WT aged flies respectively. When the expression of NLaz^{WT} or NLaz^{L130R} is performed in the NLaz null background (flies homozygous for the allele NLaz^{NW5}) the ligand binding-altered version cannot rescue the sensitivity to PQ to the level attained by expressing the wild type NLaz version (Figure 2d). Taken together, these results are in agreement with a need of a native ligand binding activity for NLaz to exert its protective effect upon oxidative stress.

NLaz^{N165S}, bearing a mutated residue located outside the binding pocket (Supplementary Figure 2a), results in extended survival upon PQ treatment in young flies in wild type background, as well as in flies lacking native NLaz (Supplementary Figures 2b-c, and Table 2). Whether this NLaz allele represents a stress resistance promoting polymorphism existing in naturally occurring fly populations deserves further studies.

The mutant NLaz^{Δ177-192} is also predicted not to alter the ligand binding properties of NLaz. It results in a survival curve similar to NLaz^{WT} in young flies exposed to PQ (Supplementary Figure 2d). In the NLaz null mutant background this truncated version of NLaz produces a partial rescue of median survival, but a complete rescue of maximal survival (Supplementary Figure 2e and Table 2). These data again reinforce the idea that the altered ligand binding pocket generated by the L130R mutation, unlike other NLaz protein modifications, decreases significantly the NLaz protective effects upon PQ exposure.

A native binding pocket is required to rescue the *Drosophila* longevity reduction phenotype of the NLaz null mutation.

Since resistance to oxidative stress is often correlated with extended longevity, we tested the ability of NLaz^{L130R} to rescue the decrease in lifespan caused by the absence of NLaz (16).

Expressing the ligand binding-altered NLaz^{L130R} in the NLaz null background results in a lifespan shorter than that of the null mutant (Figure 2e, Table 2). This result is compatible with a requirement for a native ligand binding activity in NLaz in order to obtain a wild type-like longevity pattern. However, it also suggests a potential dominant-negative effect of the NLaz^{L130R} protein. Interactions of NLaz^{L130R} with NLaz functional partners might be more deleterious than the absence of NLaz.

Aging-related markers accumulate early in NLaz null mutant, and their rescue is dependent on NLaz pocket integrity.

We have previously shown that the accumulation of oxidized forms of sugars (AGEs), which are reliable biomarkers of normal aging-related damage, is accelerated in the NLaz null mutants (22). The increase in fluorescent AGEs caused by the lack of NLaz is fully rescued by the ubiquitous expression of NLaz^{WT}, but not by NLaz^{L130R} (Figure 3a), indicating that the beneficial action of NLaz in the delay of age-related damage is dependent on its ligand binding ability.

Fly reproductive behavior also depends on NLaz binding pocket structure.

Since parameters controlling reproduction have also an impact on the rate of aging and longevity, we explored male courtship performance, which is significantly reduced in null NLaz flies ((18) and Figure 3b). NLaz^{WT} rescues this phenotype, while the courtship index of males expressing NLaz^{L130R} is more similar to the null mutant flies than to the wild type control (Figure 3b). This result, together with the inability of NLaz^{L130R} to bind a key male pheromone (Figure 1h), suggests that NLaz binding to specific ligands contributes to the mechanisms controlling courtship behavior.

***Drosophila* resistance to metabolic stress is affected by NLaz ligand binding pocket structure.**

Resistance to metabolic stress is also correlated with an extended longevity, and we have described how NLaz expression can be triggered upon starvation-desiccation conditions and modulates metabolism by acting on the IIS pathway (16). Consequently, a loss of NLaz decreases resistance of flies to the lack of nutrients and water. As expected, the over-expression of NLaz^{WT} significantly increases the resistance of NLaz null flies to starvation-desiccation stress (Figure 2f, Table 2). However, the NLaz^{L130R} point mutant exhibits only a partial rescue of the null mutant phenotype (Figure 2f, Table 2).

Measurements of metabolic state: NLaz binding pocket integrity does not affect the metabolic response to starvation.

Energy management and metabolism is tightly linked to longevity regulation and the rate of aging (reviewed by 12). We have previously shown that triglyceride, glucose and glycogen levels are decreased during starvation levels in NLaz null mutants than in NLaz WT (16). NLaz is induced in response to stress (16) or to a high sugar diet (21), and exerts a negative regulation on the IIS pathway.

Here we explore the effects of eight hours of starvation-desiccation stress on triglycerides, glucose and glycogen levels of flies expressing NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} in the null mutant background. The depletion of triglycerides, glucose and glycogen is significantly larger in the absence of NLaz (Figure 4a-c). This phenotype is either partially or totally rescued by both NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R}. Therefore, energy storage management in response to starvation appears to be unaffected by the altered binding pocket of NLaz^{L130R}.

Transcriptional responses to oxidative stress or aging are modulated by NLaz and are differentially rescued by NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} transgenes.

The expression of a set of 40 genes was explored in the same four fly genotypes as above (Figure 5) using a custom qRT-PCR array (see Methods). Genes were selected to monitor the state of pathways regulating metabolism, aging and stress biomarkers, lipid and carbohydrate metabolism, and pheromonal and neuropeptide signaling. The other two known *Drosophila* lipocalin genes (GLaz and Karl) were also included together with genes related to the innate immune response, given the infection-protective effect known for Karl (16). In addition to technical controls, four potential housekeeping genes were included. Among those, in agreement with the criteria of Ponton et al. (58), we found that RpL32 is the one with least variation among genotypes and conditions, and was used as a reference for the analysis. Each genotype was explored under basal conditions (3 day-old flies), upon PQ exposure (17 h treatment, 3 day-old flies), and with aging (30 day-old flies).

In untreated young flies, the differences between genotypes are small, and only three genes (Dpt, Karl and llp4) fulfill our criteria of altered expression (see Methods) in the NLaz null mutant with respect to heterozygous control flies (Table S2 in Supplementary data file 1). Among these, the expression pattern of the lipocalin Karl is of particular interest: its expression decreases in the NLaz null mutant and is recovered by both NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} ubiquitous expression.

PQ exposure provoked a transcriptional response in 23 of the 40 genes studied while aging modified the expression of 24 genes (Supplementary data file 2). In Figure 5 we show the subsets of responding genes where NLaz^{WT} or NLaz^{L130R} revert the transcriptional change observed in the NLaz null mutant. NLaz ubiquitous expression is able to rescue the effects of PQ in 12 genes (Figure 5a), representing over half the sample of responding genes (Figure 5b). Interestingly, NLaz over-expression rescues the expression of 17 aging-dependent genes (Figure 5c), representing three quarters of the sample (Figure 5b). Furthermore, a differential rescue by the NLaz^{WT} transgene is particularly enriched in the aging-dependent gene sample with approximately half the rescuing effects being dependent on a native NLaz ligand binding pocket (binding pocket dependent vs. independent fractions in Figure 5b).

In the transcriptional response to PQ we found three genes whose expression is differentially rescued by the NLaz^{WT} transgene (boxed in Figure 5a). They are functionally related to lifespan modulation (Lsp2, (59)), detoxification, oxidative and heat stress response (GstE1, (60)), and regulation of neurogenesis by metabolism

(Lip4, (61)). In the response to aging more genes show binding pocket-dependent rescue by NLaz (boxed in Figure 5c). They include genes directly involved in the IIS pathway activity (InR, (12)) and oxidative stress responsive genes that are in turn regulated by the IIS pathway (Gadd45, (62)), genes downstream of the stress-responsive JNK pathway (puc, Karl and Hsp68, (16, 63)), genes related to the immune response (the antibacterial peptide Drs and Karl, (16, 64)), aging-modulated neuropeptides and synaptic proteins (Nplp3 and synaptogyrin (59)), as well as neuropeptides controlling food-intake (sNPF, also downstream of IIS pathway (65-67)).

Among the tested genes, NLaz binding pocket-dependent transcriptional changes were not observed for genes that we had selected for their direct relationship to pheromone synthesis, lipid homeostasis or lipid metabolism.

DISCUSSION

In this study we have tested *in vivo* the requirement of a native ligand binding activity for the lipocalin NLaz to fulfill its physiological functions.

The mutation L130R renders NLaz unable to bind different types of ligands (ergosterol and 7(z)-tricosene). This modification hinders the survival promoting activity of NLaz, both in a cell-based culture system and *in vivo*, where it is unable to rescue the effects of the NLaz null mutation upon oxidative or metabolic stress. NLaz^{L130R} does not rescue the accumulation of an age-dependent marker, and it appears to show a dominant-negative effect in lifespan modulation. Therefore, the residue L130 appears to be a key element in the ligand binding abilities of NLaz *in vivo*, as it has been shown *in vitro* for its human homologue ApoD. The crystal structure of hApoD bound to progesterone, a ligand of the same structural class as ergosterol, shows the residue L129 (equivalent to L130 in NLaz) in direct contact with the ligand (31). When modeling the binding of a very different lipid, arachidonic acid, the same residue shows up as an interacting partner in hApoD (31). L130 lies in close proximity to a tryptophan residue conserved in the entire lipocalin family (W127 in hApoD, W128 in NLaz), which is also known to be involved in the protein-ligand interaction and is probably responsible for most of the intrinsic fluorescence changes observed upon ligand binding in our assays. However, the L130R substitution is predicted to alter a particular sub-site of the binding pocket. Therefore, as confirmed by our results, the binding of chemically distinct ligands can be differentially affected.

Our analysis also shows that the ligand binding-altered version of NLaz (NLaz^{L130R}) cannot rescue courtship behavioral phenotypes. Our data suggest a specific function of NLaz as a mediator of pheromone signals, either at modulating their availability in the extracellular milieu or its reception by the sensory neurons in charge.

Also, the transcriptional changes monitored in our study clearly show that NLaz acts upstream of key pathways modulating the management of resources upon stress or aging. Many of the genes with NLaz-dependent responses to aging or PQ are in fact genes regulated by the IIS pathway, either as direct FOXO targets (Lip4, Gadd45, Sod2, Pepck, and sNPF) or downstream of the TOR pathway (Thor). This further supports our previous findings of a negative control of IIS activity by NLaz (16), and suggests additional consequences derived from NLaz function. Noticeably, only some

of these transcriptional rescues are dependent on the binding pocket modification of NLaz^{L130R}.

Our results show that altering the binding pocket environment differentially affects a subset of NLaz functions. Aging and stress resistance regulation are part of an ancestral set of functions conserved in NLaz-related homologues (5, 57, 68, 69). Since these roles are affected overall by a single site mutation in the pocket that prevents binding of some potential ligands, the integrity of the inter-molecular interactions involving the conserved NLaz L130 residue is clearly required for these functions. Another important finding of our study is that a native binding pocket is not required to rescue some NLaz-dependent metabolic phenotypes and a significant proportion of transcriptional phenotypes downstream of NLaz action upon PQ or aging. These data challenge the view that the integrity of the ligand binding pocket is essential for all molecular mechanisms of action of NLaz.

The new findings help us to refine our previous conclusions about modulation of lifespan through the control of metabolism under stress conditions by NLaz (16). We previously proposed that the lifespan expanding activity of NLaz was due to the systemic action of fat body-derived NLaz on peripheral target tissues, inhibiting IIS and therefore repressing growth (16). Also, we showed that a constitutive lack of NLaz function significantly increases the hunger-driven food intake behavior of the flies, and that they gain weight (particularly fat) with aging (18). Now we find that NLaz mutants have an aging-dependent increased expression of sNPF, a gene involved in food intake and body size (66). This result provides a possible explanation for the food intake and “age-related obesity” phenotypes, and highlights new actions of NLaz within the CNS. NLaz might exert a negative regulation of the expression of sNPF downstream of FOXO in the neuropeptidergic neurons, thus contributing, in addition to its systemic control, to the final metabolic-nutritional status and lifespan of the flies.

We also find that under oxidative stress NLaz modulates the expression of Ilp4 in a binding pocket-dependent manner. Ilp4 is one of the insulin-like peptides described to be part of the CNS specific pool, and it is known to contribute to reactivate neurogenesis during larval development (61), but not to organismal growth. Curiously, NLaz does not alter the expression of Ilp2, Ilp3 or Ilp5 (16), the systemic pool of insulin-like peptides in *Drosophila* that control organismal growth.

In summary, our work, using NLaz as a model lipocalin and taking advantage of standardized *Drosophila* genetic tools, opens the way to identify residues in the binding pocket of lipocalins that are required for complex physiological roles tested in a living organism. These and future results studying other residues in the lipocalin hydrophobic pocket will allow us to experimentally address *in vivo* the more general question of whether ligand binding can account for the full panoply of Lipocalin actions in the organism.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

M.R. designed and performed the experiments, analyzed the data and helped in writing the manuscript. D.S. and M.D.G, designed the research project and helped with experiments and analysis of results, C.C. and R.K.S. participated in the

discussion and design of experiments. M.D.G., D.S. and M.R. wrote the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Dr. J.M. Pereda (CIC, Salamanca, Spain) for providing advice on potential residues to mutate in NLaz. Gene sequencing was performed in the Genomic facility of the Centro de Investigación del Cáncer (CIC, Salamanca, Spain). *Drosophila* transgenesis was carried out in BestGene Inc. (California, USA). E. Martín-Tejedor provided technical assistance throughout the project. We also want to acknowledge the critical and constructive comments of two anonymous reviewers that have certainly improved the manuscript and the accuracy of data presentation and interpretation herein included.

Grant support. This work was supported by grants to M.D.G. and D.S. (Junta de Castilla y León (JCyL) grant VA180A11-2, and Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (MICINN) grants BFU2008-01170 and BFU2011-23978), and M.R. was supported by a JCyL fellowship to young researchers (call#EDU/1708/2008).

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FIGURE AND TABLE LEGENDS

Figure 1. NLaz primary and tertiary structures and intrinsic fluorescence analysis of NLaz-ligand interactions.

(A) NLaz^{WT} amino acid sequence structure. Residues selected to generate point mutant versions of NLaz are boxed in gray and highlighted (L130 in red, N165 in blue). The C-terminal fragment deleted in NLaz^{Δ177-192} mutant is underlined. Some Asn residues are highlighted by rectangles; green for proved and purple for predicted glycosylation.

(B) 3D-surface model of NLaz using hApoD crystal coordinates as a template. The left panel shows wild-type NLaz with the pocket indicated by a curved arrow and the L130 residue highlighted in yellow. The right panel shows a similar view of the model for NLaz^{L130R} protein, with the Arg basic group marked in red and indicated by a white arrow.

(C-H) Changes in intrinsic fluorescence of NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} with different hydrophobic compounds are shown. NLaz^{WT} fluorescence is quenched by retinoic acid (C), and enhanced by ergosterol (D) and the Drosophila pheromone 7(z)-tricosene (E). NLaz^{L130R} fluorescence is quenched by retinoic acid (F), but no interaction was found for NLaz^{L130R} with ergosterol (G) or 7(z)-tricosene (H).

Figure 2. NLaz^{L130R} shows lower survival promoting activity than NLaz^{WT} both in cultured S2 cells and in adult flies upon aging or exposure to stress.

(A) Drosophila S2 cell viability was measured by trypan blue dye exclusion. S2 cells improve their survival upon exposure to hydrogen peroxide (20 mM H₂O₂) when 50 nM of exogenous pure NLaz^{WT} or NLaz^{L130R} proteins are added to the culture medium. Trypsin Inhibitor (TI, 50 nM), added as a control unrelated protein, does not influence cell survival. Two-way ANOVA (p<0.001) followed by Holm-Sidak multiple comparison post-hoc test indicates that the recovery of viability obtained with NLaz^{WT} is significantly larger than that obtained with NLaz^{L130R}. **= p<0.001.

(B) PQ resistance of 3 day-old flies with ubiquitous over-expression of NLaz^{WT} or NLaz^{L130R} in wild type background is not significantly different from that of control flies. However, over-expression of NLaz^{WT} confers more resistance to PQ than over-expression of NLaz^{L130R}.

(C) Upon aging (30 day-old flies) resistance to PQ is increased by ubiquitous over-expression of NLaz^{WT}. However, old flies over-expressing NLaz^{L130R} are more sensitive to PQ than control flies.

(D) Three day-old flies ubiquitously over-expressing NLaz^{WT} show a more extended survival to PQ treatment than NLaz^{NW5} homozygous flies. However, NLaz^{L130R} expression is only able to exert a partial rescue.

(E) In the absence of added stress, the reduced longevity of null NLaz fly mutants is rescued by the ubiquitous over-expression of NLaz^{WT} (evident in terms of maximal survival; see Table 2). However, over-expression of NLaz^{L130R} fails to rescue NLaz loss-of-function longevity, showing a lifespan shorter than that of NLaz^{NW5} homozygous flies.

(F) NLaz^{WT} ubiquitous over-expression rescues the phenotype of sensitivity to starvation-desiccation stress in three day-old NLaz^{NW5} flies, while NLaz^{L130R} expression is only able to exert a partial rescue.

To compare survival distributions, log-rank tests were performed (p-values shown in each panel) followed by Holm-Sidak multiple comparison post-hoc tests. Differences

between NLaz^{NW5} and NLaz^{WT} in D was further assessed by the Cox's F-test ($p = 0.002$) and the Cox-Mantel test ($p = 0.004$).

Figure 3. Aging-related markers accumulation and fly reproductive behavior are dependent on NLaz ligand-binding pocket integrity.

(A) Advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which normally accumulate upon aging, are increased at 3 and 30 days in NLaz null mutants, reflecting an accelerated aging process. NLaz^{WT} over-expression rescues this phenotype, whereas NLaz^{L130R} over-expression is not able to reduce AGEs accumulation. We use heterozygous +/NLaz^{NW5} flies with a single copy of wild type NLaz in its native locus as a control. Two-way ANOVA followed by Holm-Sidak multiple comparison post-hoc test. ** = $p < 0.001$; * = $p < 0.005$. (NLaz^{NW5}, n=29; NLaz^{WT}, n=29; NLaz^{L130R}, n=25).
(B) Courtship behavior index is reduced in NLaz^{NW5} flies. NLaz^{WT} ubiquitous over-expression rescues this phenotype completely. Although the null hypothesis cannot be rejected (the test assumes similarly shaped distributions among groups), NLaz^{L130R} expression results in a courtship index whose distribution is more similar in shape to the null mutant than to the wild type control. Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA on ranks followed by Dunn's multiple comparison post-hoc test. * = $p < 0.005$ (n=25-30 couples/genotype).

Figure 4. Effects of NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} in the fly metabolic homeostasis.

Fly metabolic measurements were performed at basal state and after 8h of starvation-desiccation. Depletion of metabolite stores is represented as % of control levels.

(A) Triglyceride depletion by starvation is bigger in NLaz^{NW5} flies compared to control flies. Neither NLaz^{WT} nor NLaz^{L130R}, ubiquitously over-expressed in the NLaz^{NW5} genetic background, rescue the triglyceride reduction.

(B) Glucose levels after starvation also depends on NLaz expression, but alteration of the NLaz binding pocket structure does not significantly change the responses.

NLaz^{NW5} starved flies present lower levels of glucose compared to control flies, and both NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} over-expressions partially rescue this phenotype.

(C) Glycogen storage depletion depends on NLaz expression, but not on NLaz binding pocket structure. Both NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} maintain equally significant higher levels of glycogen stores after starvation.

(A-B) One-way ANOVA on ranks followed by Tukey multiple comparison post-hoc tests. (C) One-way ANOVA followed by Tukey multiple comparison post-hoc tests. ** = $p < 0.001$; * = $p < 0.05$.

Figure 5. Transcriptional profile analysis shows binding pocket-dependent and independent NLaz modulation of stress and age-responsive pathways.

(A) Subset of genes where the response to PQ shows dependence on NLaz genotype. Only genes with expression changes ≥ 2 ($p < 0.05$) and showing a rescuing effect by either of the NLaz transgenes (fold regulation similar to the WT control) are shown. Boxes indicate genes in which the rescue is dependent on the binding pocket mutation (differential rescue). Genes with large expression changes are shown in separate graphs for scaling purposes.

(B) Percent distribution of genes with transcriptional changes upon PQ or aging classified according to the ability of NLaz transgenes to revert the changes observed in the NLaz^{NW5} null mutant genotype.

(C) Subset of genes whose response to aging is NLaz-dependent. Inclusion criteria as in A. Boxes indicate genes with binding pocket-dependent rescue, with dashed boxed

showing cases with partial dependence. Genes with large expression changes are shown in separate graphs for scaling purposes.

Student's t-test was performed on the quadruplicate $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ values for each gene in each genotype. Fold regulation by either PQ or aging is shown as $2^{-\Delta\Delta Ct}$ when the experimental condition produced an increase in expression, and as $-1/2^{-\Delta\Delta Ct}$ when the condition produced down-regulation of the gene.

Table 1. Primer sequences used for PCR.

Table 2. Effects of ubiquitous expression of different versions of NLaz on fly survival and behavior.

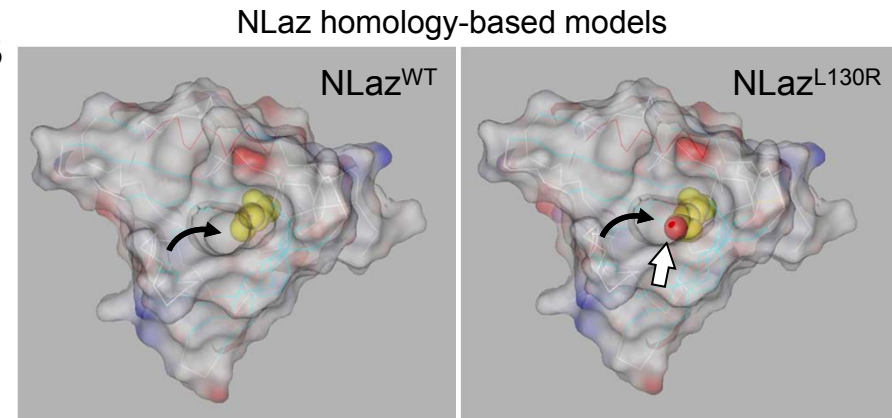
Figure 1

A

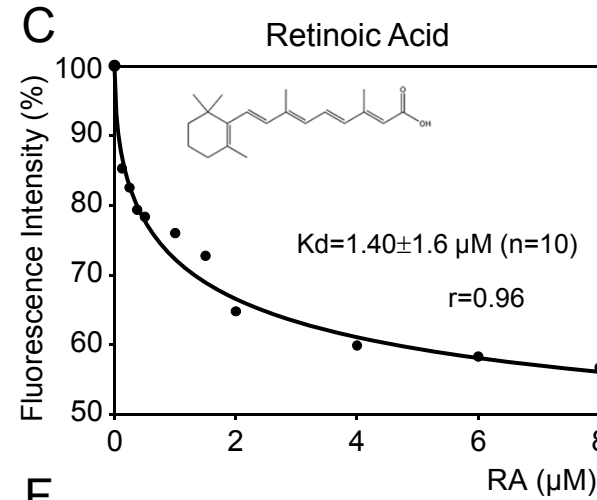
Signal Peptide:
 MNHHSSSHLLLLLISVVF~~G~~AVVVAHA

QVPFPGKCPDVKLLDTFDAEAYMGVWY~~E~~YAAYPFAFEIGK
 KCIYANYS~~L~~IDN~~S~~TVSVVNAAINRFTGQPS~~N~~VTGQAKVLG
 PGQLAVAFYPTQPLTKANYLVLGTDYESYAVVYSCTSVTP
 LANFKIVWIL~~T~~RQREPSAEAVDAARKILEDNDV~~S~~QAF~~L~~ID
 TVQKN~~C~~PRLDG~~N~~GTGLTGEDGLDVDDFVSTTVPNAIEKA

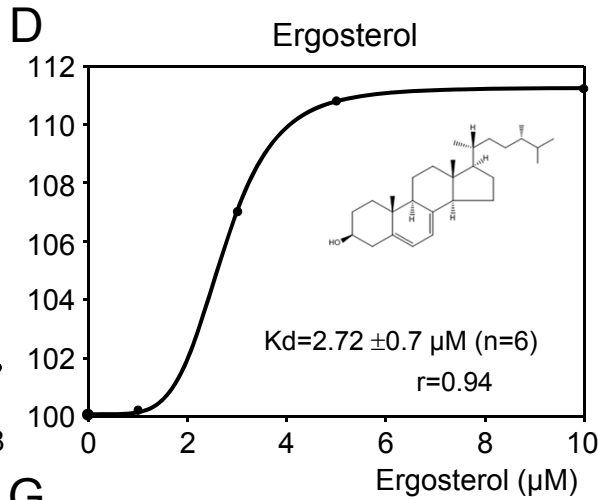
B



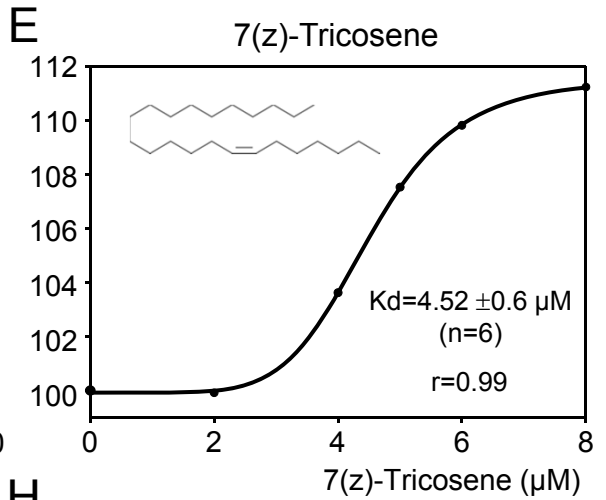
C



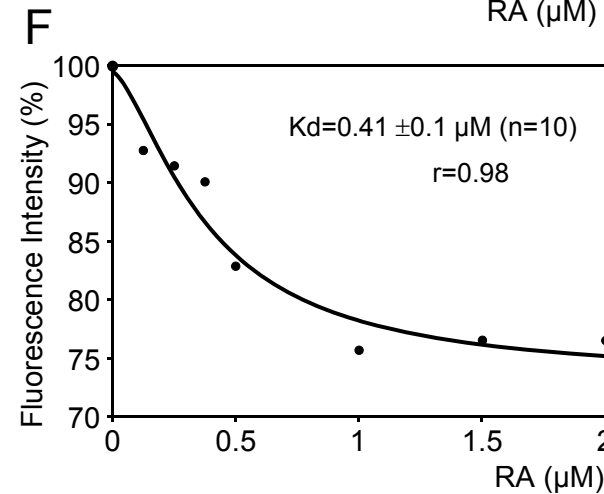
D



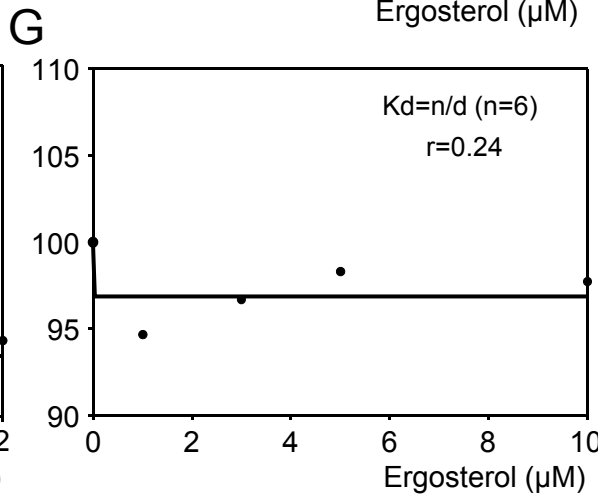
E



F



G



H

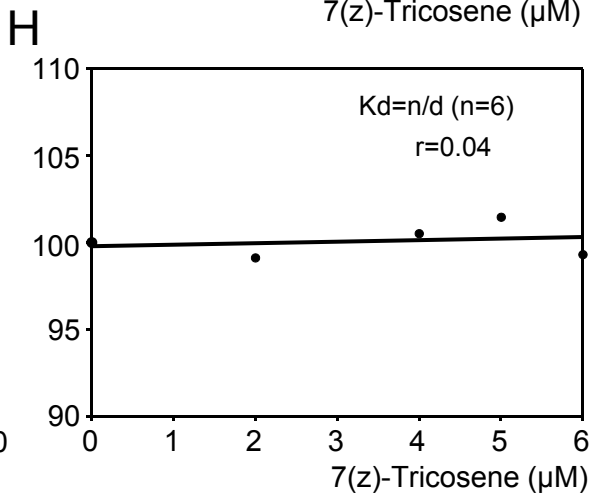


Figure 2

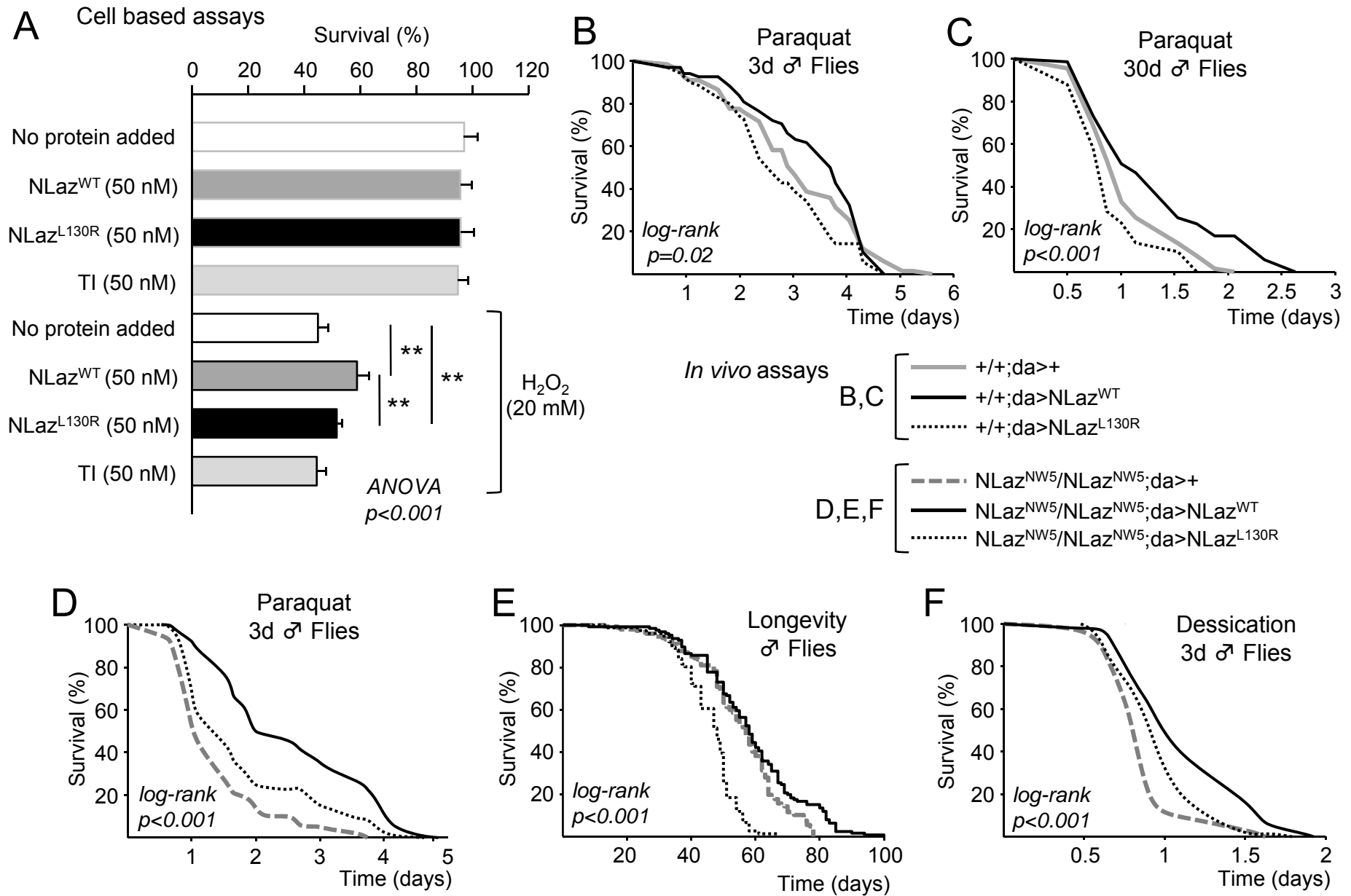


Figure 3

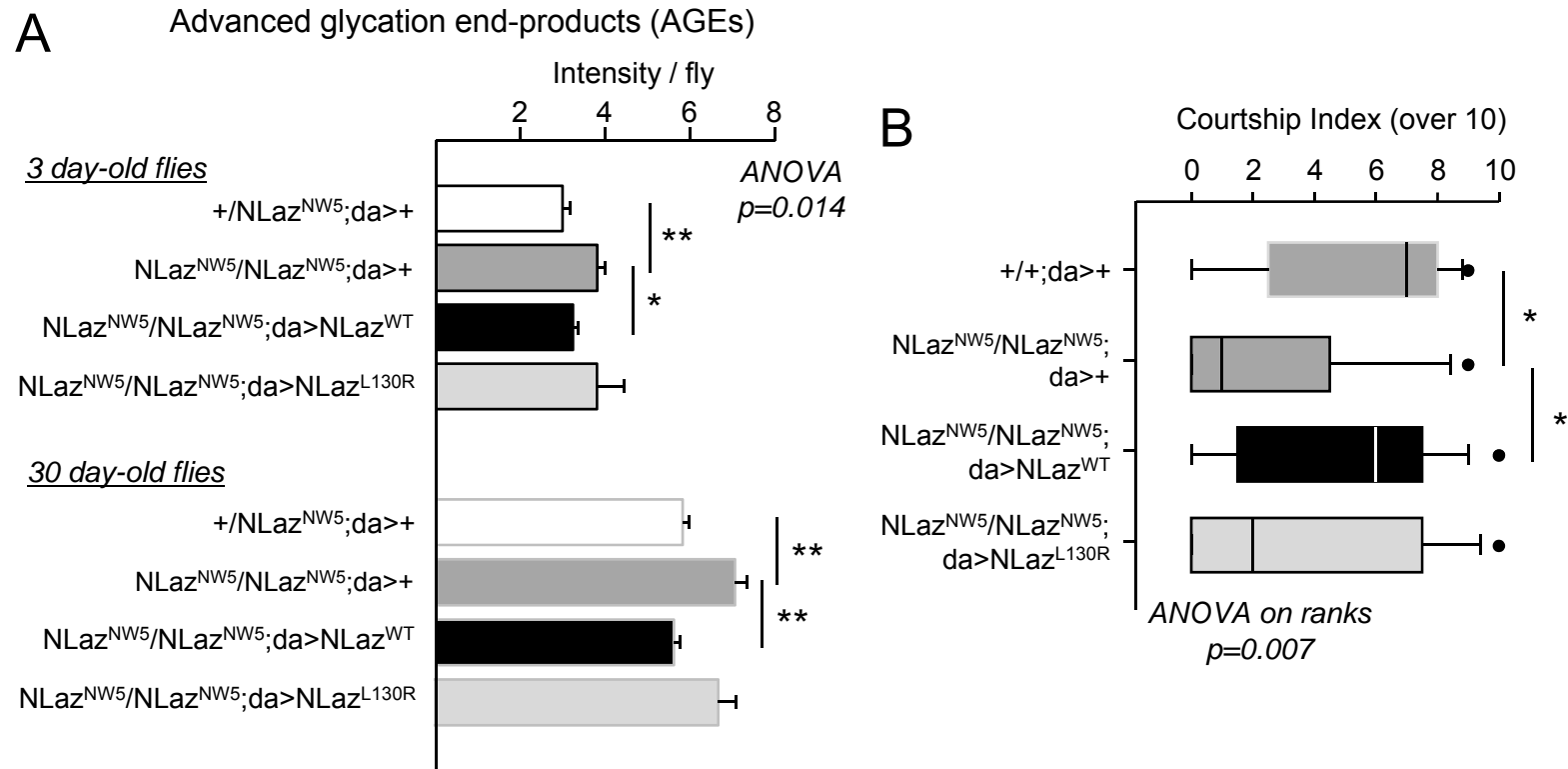


Figure 4

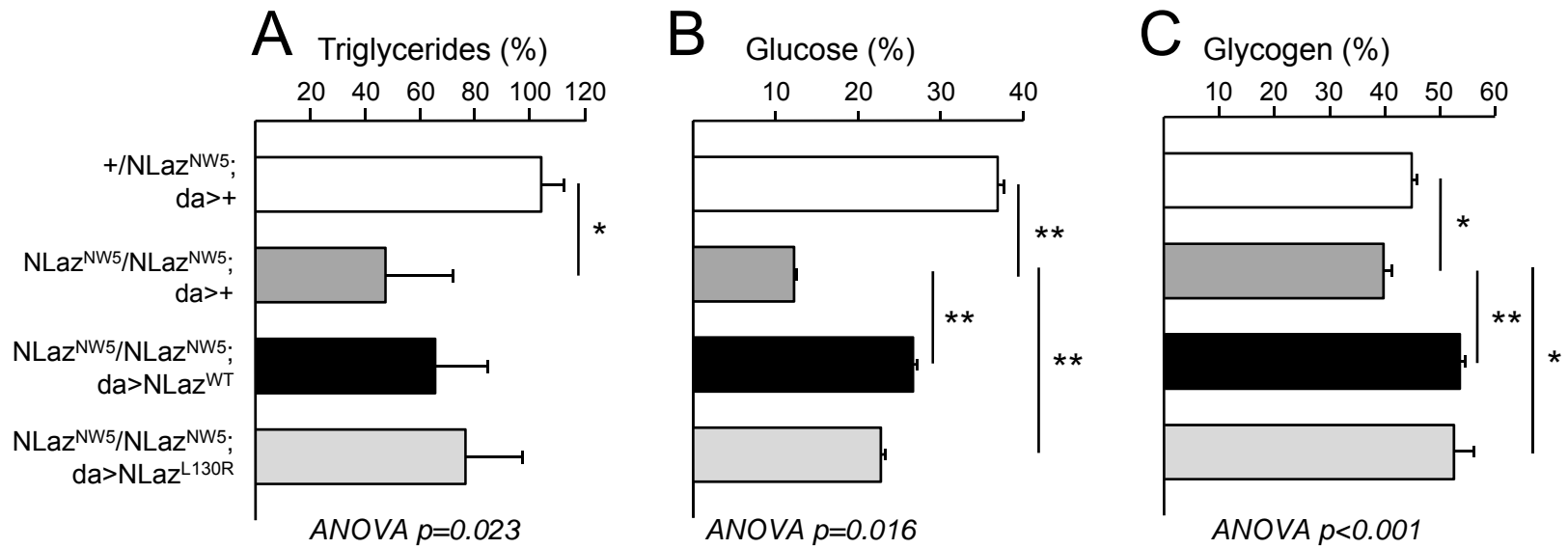


Figure 5

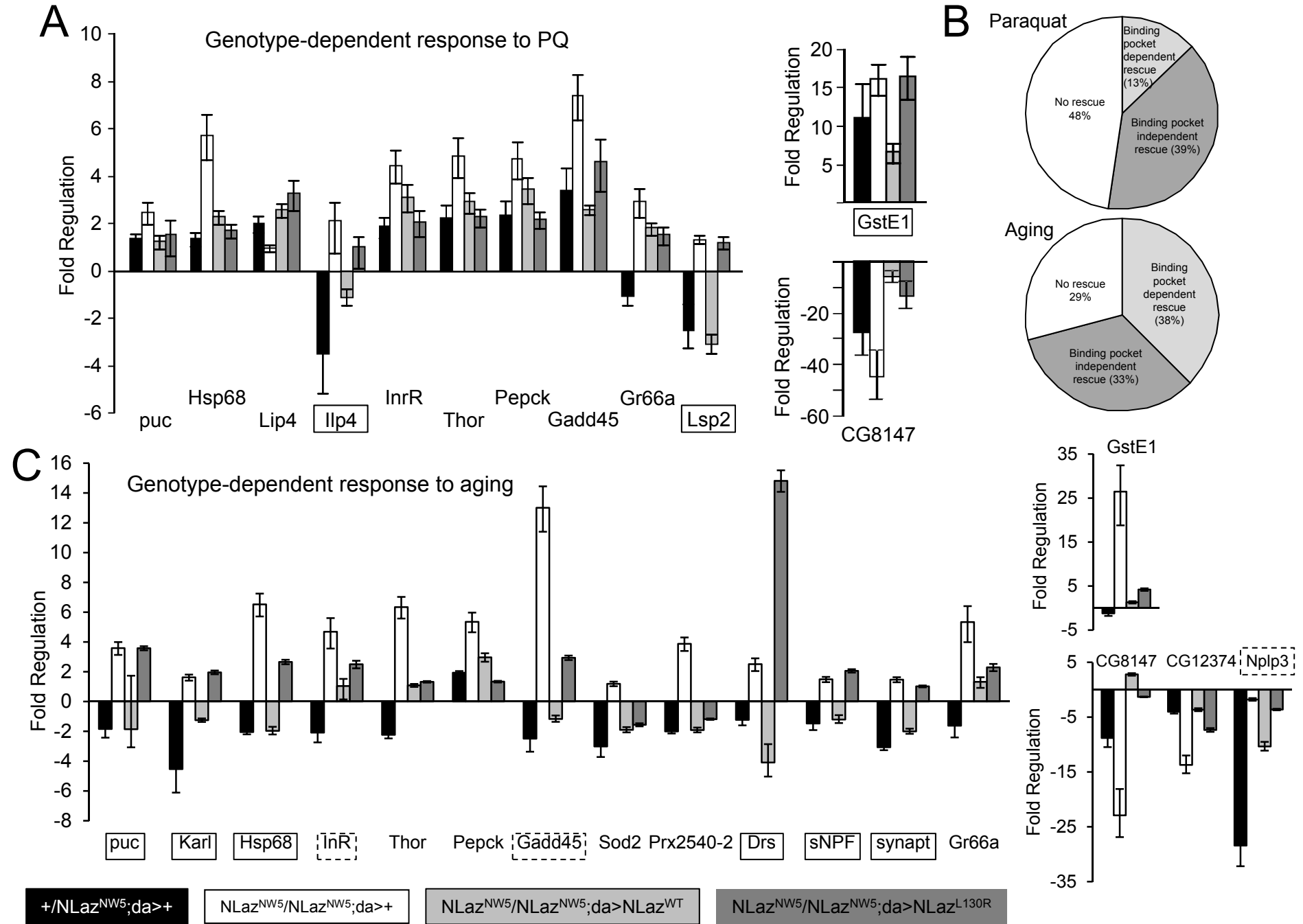


Table 1. Primer sequences.

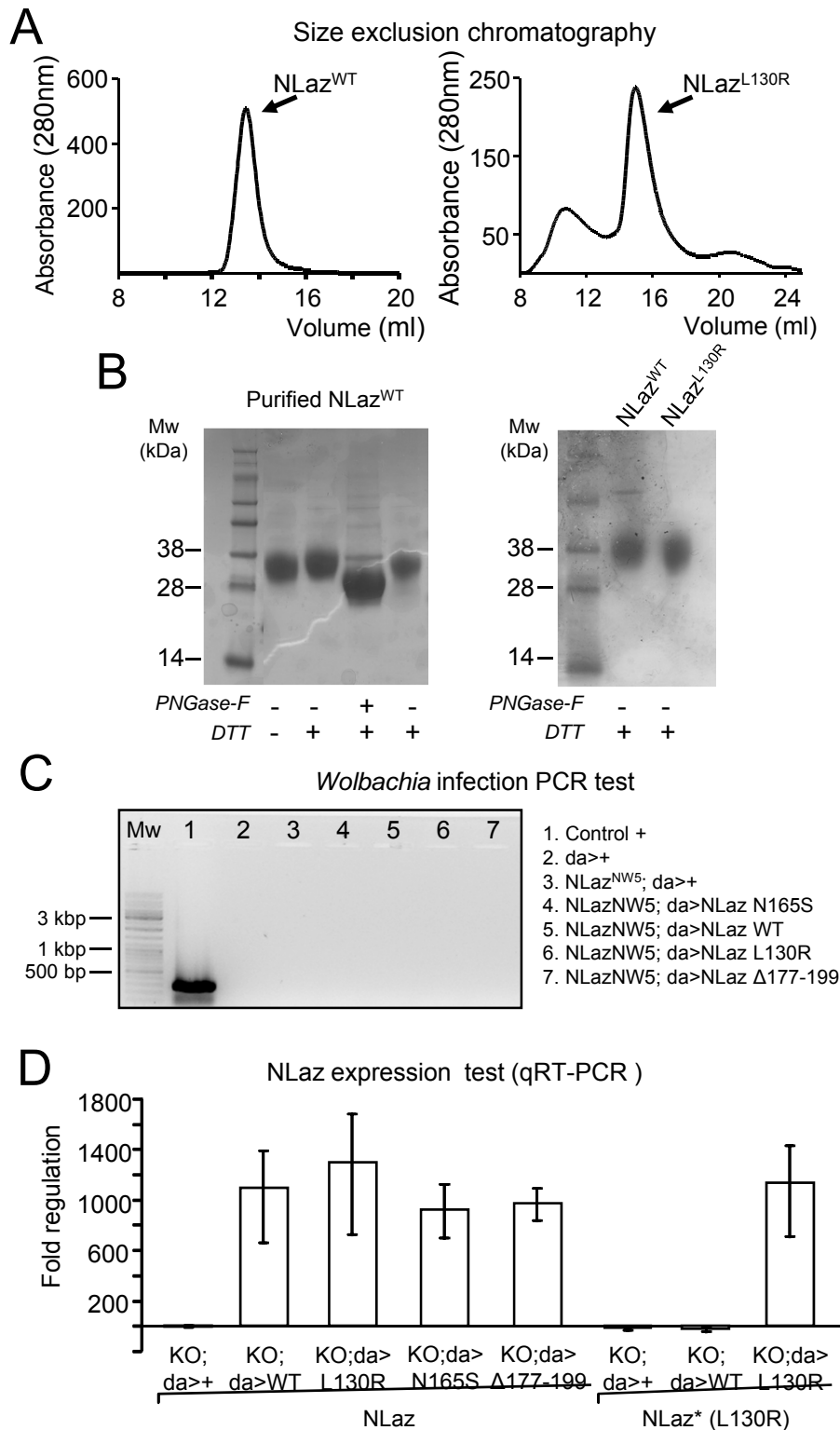
Application	Primer Sequence
Mutagenesis L130R	5'-gccaatttcaaaattgtttggatc <u>ggc</u> actcgtcagcgtgaaccttcagc-3'
	5'-gctgaaggttcacgctgacgagt <u>ggc</u> gatccaacaattttgaaattggc-3'
NLaz ^{WT} and NLaz ^{L130R} qRT-PCR	5'-cgagtacgcagcctatccat-3'
	5'-ccaggtagttggccttcgt-3'
	5'-ggttcacgctgacgagtgcg-3'
DrpL18 qRT-PCR	5'-agaaccgagccaaatcc-3'
	5'-cgaccacgatgtagactcc-3'
From pBS-II to pRmHa-3	5'-caagaattctcagtggatagcgac-3'
	5'-caagcggccgcgagccgcggcaccagtgccttttcaatggcatttgc-3'
NLaz-Δ177-192 from pBSII-KS to pUAS ^t -attB	5'-cgaattctcagtggatagcgac-3'
	5'-cgaattctcaaccatccaaccg-3'
Sequence pBSII-KS	Universal Primer Set (CIC)
Sequence pUAS ^t -attB	5'-gcagtaaagtgaagttaaagtga-3'
	5'tgtccaattatgtcacaccac-3'
Sequence pRmHa-3	5'ccagagcatctggccaatgtgc-3'
Wolbachia rRNA-16S	5'-gaagataatgacgggtactcac-3'
	5'-gtcagatttgaaccagataga-3'

Table 2. Effects of ubiquitous expression of different versions of NLaz on fly survival.

Background	♂ da>UAS transgene	N	Experiment	ANOVA <i>p</i> -value	Log Rank Test		t-Test	
					<i>p</i> -value	%Change Median Survival	<i>p</i> -value	%Change Maximal Survival
<i>WT</i> (<i>w¹¹¹⁸</i>)	NLaz ^{N165S}	67 / 72	Paraquat (3 d)	0.02	0.005	38.74	0.318	-6.50
	NLaz ^{WT}	67 / 68			0.533	23.14	0.073	-6.50
	NLaz ^{L130R}	67 / 70			0.080	-13.92	0.017	-6.50
	NLaz ^{Δ177-192}	67 / 71			0.079	21.49	0.073	-6.50
<i>WT</i> (<i>w¹¹¹⁸</i>)	NLaz ^{WT}	67 / 71	Paraquat (30 d)	<0.001	0.002	13.56	<0.001	40.16
	NLaz ^{L130R}	67 / 74			0.019	-13.46	0.026	-8.90
<i>NLaz^{NW5}</i> (NLaz-KO)	NLaz ^{WT}	147 / 126	Longevity	<0.001	0.005	1.75	<0.001	17.65
	NLaz ^{L130R}	147 / 76			<0.001	-15.79	<0.001	-19.72
<i>NLaz^{NW5}</i> (NLaz-KO)	NLaz ^{N165S}	153 / 106	Paraquat (3 d)	<0.001	<0.001	181.51	<0.001	46.04
	NLaz ^{WT}	153 / 128			<0.001	90.4	<0.001	46.04
	NLaz ^{L130R}	153 / 93			<0.001	36.09	<0.001	23.68
	NLaz ^{Δ177-192}	153 / 120			<0.001	47.20	<0.001	46.04
<i>NLaz^{NW5}</i> (NLaz-KO)	NLaz ^{WT}	119 / 150	Desiccation	<0.001	<0.001	22.26	<0.001	21.74
	NLaz ^{L130R}	119 / 76			0.002	22.26	0.964	0.00

The first number in the third column accounts for N in the background sample, and the second number is N for the UAS transgene sample.

Figure S1



Supplementary Figure 1. Protein purifications and fly lines characterization tests.

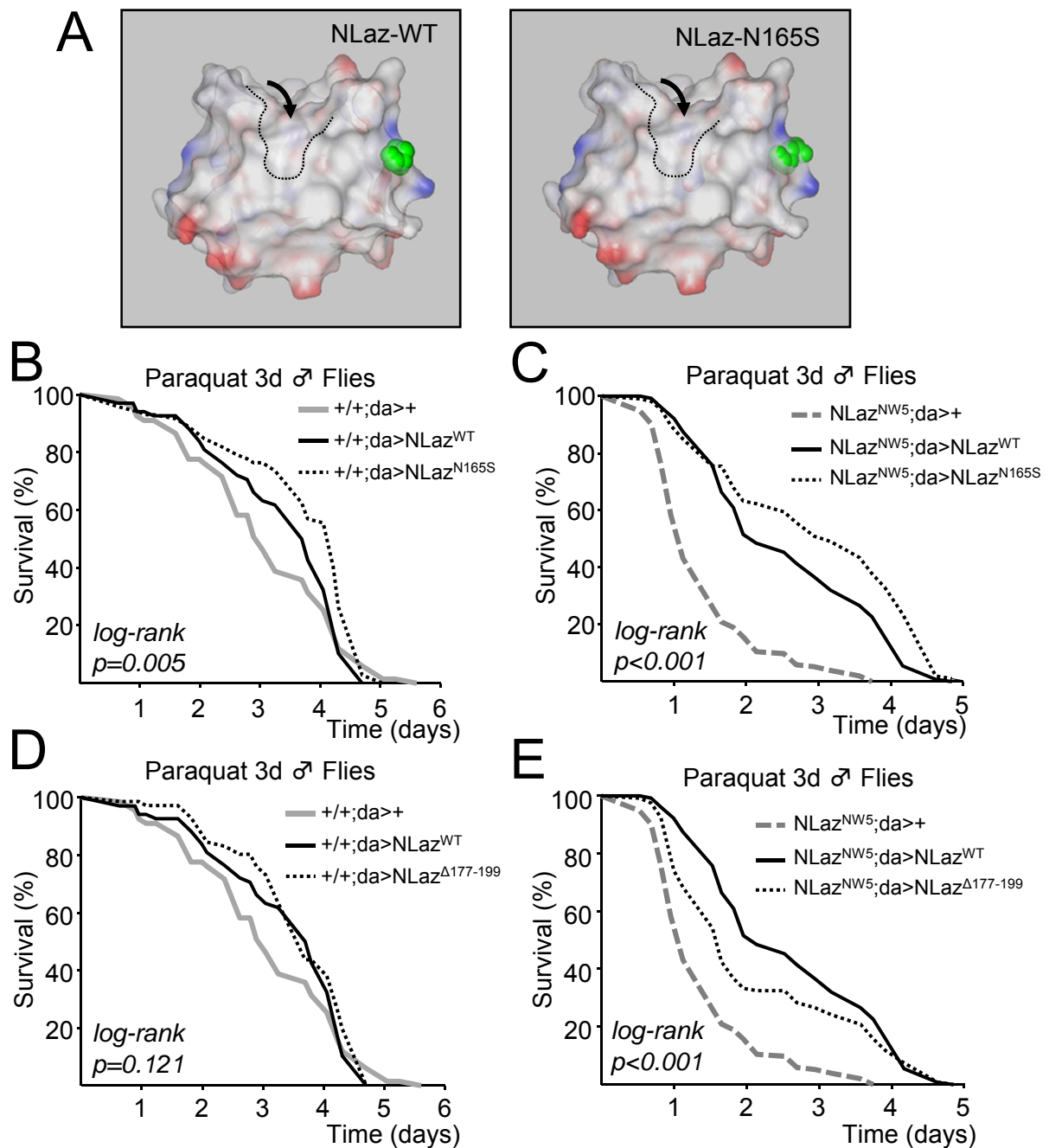
(A) Purification of NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} from S2 cells. Size-exclusion chromatography elution profiles of enriched extracts obtained after metal affinity chromatography of culture media from stably transfected S2 cells.

(B) SDS-PAGE analysis of NLaz^{WT} purified from S2 cells (left panel). The redox-state of the protein affects slightly its electrophoretic mobility, while a large shift is observed after deglycosylation. No differences in electrophoretic mobility are detected between NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{L130R} purified from S2 cells (right panel).

(C) Fly lines used in this study are free of *Wolbachia* infection. PCR of genomic DNA extracts from all lines employed. Primers against the rRNA-16S gene of *Wolbachia* endosymbiont were used (Table 1). DNA from *Dirofilaria immitis* worms infected with *Wolbachia* was used as a positive control.

(D) NLaz transcription levels in transgenic flies expressing NLaz^{WT}, NLaz^{L130R}, NLaz^{N165S} and NLaz^{Δ177-199}. We used a pair of primers able to amplify both forms, and a mutant-specific primer that does not amplify the WT allele (Table 1). Expression NLaz levels are comparable in all over-expressors. The mRNA levels of the NLaz^{L130R} mutant version are similar to those of the WT transcript in the transgenic flies where we observe differences in NLaz phenotypes.

Figure S2



Supplementary Figure 2. Deletion of the C-terminal portion (177-199) of NLaz and the NLaz^{N165S} variant alter stress resistance.

(A) Model of NLaz^{N165S} protein structure compared to NLaz^{WT}. Backbone and surface models are superimposed. A lateral view is shown. The binding pocket is pointed by an arrow and is outlined by a dashed line. N165 or S165 residues are labeled in green.

(B) Over-expression of NLaz^{N165S} in a wild-type genetic background is able to increase fly resistance against PQ when compared to control flies at 3 days of age.

(C) Resistance to paraquat of young flies expressing NLaz^{N165S} in NLaz^{NW5} null background is higher than that of flies expressing NLaz^{WT}.

(D) Ubiquitous over-expression of both NLaz^{WT} and NLaz^{Δ177-199} in wild-type background does not increase significantly the resistance to PQ in young flies.

(E) NLaz^{Δ177-199} expression rescues the PQ phenotype when expressed in NLaz^{NW5} null mutant background.

Log-rank tests followed by Holm-Sidak multiple comparison post-hoc tests were used in B-E.

Supplementary Data File 1 . Transcriptional profile data. Genes selected for expression studies and gene expression in basal conditions. Transcriptional profile data. **Tables S1 and S2.**

Table S1. Genes selected for expression studies.					
Gene Symbol	Refseq #	Official Name / Mamalian orthologue	RT2 Cat.No.	Functional category	
Act5C	NM_001014725	Actin 5C	PPD00467	Housekeeping	
Akt1	NM_169705	serine/threonine-protein kinase	PPD09200	Metabolism control (IIS pathway)	
bsk	NM_164900	Basket / JNK	PPD11004	Stress response pathway (JNK pathway)	
Cat	NM_080483	Catalase	PPD07567	Oxidative stress response (Foxo target)	
CG12374	NM_136975	Carboxypeptidase-like (Zn) CG12374	PPD04510	Age/Oxidative stress specific response (vs. starvation/infection)	
CG8147	NM_001038951	Alkaline phosphatase-like CG8147	PPD08516	Age/Oxidative stress specific response (vs. starvation/infection)	
Ddc	NM_078876	Dopa decarboxylase	PPD03531	Neurotransmitter/Hormonal systems	
desat1	NM_144474	Desaturase 1	PPD11642	Lipid / Hormonal systems	
Dpt	NM_057460	Diptericin	PPD05159	Immune response	
Drs	NM_079177	Drosomycin	PPD06186	Immune response	
foxo	NM_142073	Forkhead box, sub-group O	PPD08986	Metabolism control (IIS and Sir2 pathways)	
Gadd45	NM_136420	Growth arrest and DNA damage-inducible	PPD03876	Oxidative stress response-DNA repair (Foxo target)	
Gapdh1	NM_001038847	Glyceraldehyde 3 phosphate dehydrogenase 1	PPD03944	Housekeeping	
GLaz	NM_079003	Gliat Lazariello	PPD04541	Lipocalin family / Oxidative stress response	
Gr66a	NM_079247	Gustatory receptor 66a	PPD06616	Chemoreception in pheromone sensing neurons	
GstE1	NM_137479	Glutathione S transferase E1	PPD05094	Oxidative stress response	
GstS1	NM_079043	Glutathione S transferase S1	PPD66725	Oxidative stress response	
Hr96	NM_079769	Hormone receptor-like in 96	PPD10079	Lipid homeostasis	
Hsp68	NM_001031945	Heat shock gene 68	PPD13069	Oxidative stress response (JNK pathway)	
llp4	NM_140104	Insulin-like peptide 4	PPD06800	Metabolism control / Neurogenesis control (IIS pathway)	
InR	NM_079712	Insulin-like receptor	PPD09691	Metabolism control (IIS pathway)	
Jafrac1	NM_058162	Thioredoxin peroxidase 1	PPD11559	Oxidative stress response (Foxo target)	
Karl	NM_132520	Karl	PPD00966	Lipocalin family / Immune response	
Lip4	NM_135574	Lipase 4	PPD02897	Metabolism control (Foxo target)	
Lsd-1	NM_142926	Lipid storage droplet-1	PPD09917	Lipid metabolism	
Lsp2	NM_080077	Larval serum protein 2	PPD11062	Lifespan-Aging modulation	
Mgst1	NM_079957	Microsomal glutathione S-transferase-like	PPD10883	Oxidative stress response	
mio	NM_134812	Missing oocyte	PPD02026	Lipid metabolism	
Nplp3	NM_144453	Neuropeptide-like precursor 3	PPD11605	Neural activity/ Lifespan-Aging modulation	
Pepck	NM_079060	Phosphoenolpyruvate carboxykinase	PPD05115	Carbohydrate metabolism (Foxo target)	
Prx2540-2	NM_078959	Peroxiredoxin 2540-2	PPD04249	Oxidative stress response	
puc	NM_079549	Puckered (JNK-specific phosphatase)	PPD08362	Stress response pathway (JNK pathway)	
RpL18	NM_139834	Ribosomal protein L18	PPD06501	Housekeeping	
RpL32	NM_079843	Ribosomal protein L32	PPD10569	Housekeeping	
S6k	NM_079217	RPS6-p70-protein kinase	PPD06382	Metabolism control pathway	
Sir2	NM_058003	NAD-dependent histone deacetylase Sir2	PPD03110	Lifespan-Aging modulation / Metabolism control	
sNPF	NM_078881	Short neuropeptide F precursor	PPD03613	Neuropeptide hormones / Food intake regulation / Stress response	
Sod2	NM_057577	Superoxide dismutase 2 (Mn-SOD)	PPD04905	Oxidative stress response	
Spt-I	NM_136998	Serine palmitoyltransferase subunit I	PPD04542	Lipid metabolism	
synaptogyrin	NM_137064	Synaptogyrin	PPD04615	Neural activity/ Lifespan-Aging modulation	
Thor	NM_057947	Thor / 4E-BP (eIF4E binding protein)	PPD02171	Metabolism control (IIS - TOR pathways)	
Tk	NM_141884	Tachykinin	PPD08785	Neuropeptide hormones / Stress response	
to	NM_079773	Takeout	PPD10117	Lipid metabolism / Lifespan-Aging modulation	
whd	NM_078961	Withered	PPD04258	Lipid metabolism	
Controls					
DGDC	SA_00146	Fly Genomic DNA Contamination	PPD66893	Technical control	
RTC	SA_00104	Reverse Transcription Control	PPX63340	Technical control	
PPC	SA_00103	Positive PCR Control	PPX63339	Technical control	

Table S2. Gene expression comparisons in basal conditions. Expression in flies of each genotype at 3 days of age was compared with the w1118 ; Nlaz NWS/+; da:Gal4/+ control. p values are calculated based on a Student's t-test of the replicate 2-ΔCT values for each gene in the control group and treatment groups. p values less than 0.05 are indicated in red. Up-regulations are shown in red and down-regulations in blue.

Gene Symbol	-/- ; da>+		-/- ; da>Nlaz-WT		-/- ; da>Nlaz-L130R	
	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value
Act5C	1.001	0.96843	1.289	0.08226	1.281	0.06374
Akt1	-1.172	0.03338	-1.298	0.00568	-1.447	0.00460
bsk	-1.011	0.92925	-1.069	0.71340	-1.032	0.69246
Cat	-1.132	0.37087	-1.057	0.56660	1.145	0.45657
CG1237	-1.038	0.45605	-1.534	0.00009	-2.228	0.00002
CG8147	-1.483	0.00259	-10.367	0.00000	-3.809	0.00001
Ddc	1.008	0.93340	1.047	0.68979	1.168	0.14218
desat1	-1.051	0.46832	-1.243	0.04395	-1.078	0.27147
Dpt	4.410	0.00002	63.570	0.00000	13.513	0.00000
Drs	-1.113	0.63387	4.599	0.00004	1.456	0.00750
foxo	-1.345	0.00976	-1.313	0.00438	-1.450	0.00158
Gadd45	-1.307	0.12868	-1.220	0.13537	-1.060	0.72584
Gapdh1	-1.352	0.19108	-1.425	0.05864	-1.303	0.07286
GLaz	1.009	0.87518	-1.082	0.10049	-1.263	0.00782
Gr66a	-1.340	0.33279	-1.177	0.49413	1.247	0.47097
GstE1	-1.191	0.68953	1.382	0.20157	1.241	0.29282
GstS1	-1.301	0.00370	-1.962	0.00010	-1.838	0.00038
Hr96	-1.076	0.48599	-1.295	0.02979	-1.015	0.83008
Hsp68	-1.268	0.00516	-1.203	0.02425	-1.371	0.00223
InR	-1.586	0.00060	-1.929	0.00016	-1.383	0.01687
Jafrac	1.101	0.19687	1.079	0.14682	1.022	0.76704
Karl	-2.434	0.00022	2.674	0.00000	1.026	0.77165
Lip4	1.311	0.02100	-1.253	0.02485	-1.203	0.06966
llp4	-4.167	0.02306	-4.076	0.03266	-3.060	0.04019
Lsd-1	-1.271	0.00975	-1.992	0.00001	-1.618	0.00012
Lsp2	1.088	0.56817	2.084	0.00010	-1.009	0.88738
Mgst1	-1.023	0.89408	1.203	0.17277	1.254	0.09054
mio	-1.895	0.03709	-2.085	0.06450	-2.276	0.04994
Nplp3	-1.825	0.00030	-2.665	0.00002	-2.892	0.00003
Pepck	-1.624	0.00040	1.115	0.08810	1.276	0.00589
Prx254	1.049	0.54468	-1.223	0.03380	1.150	0.09191
puc	-1.142	0.03390	-1.366	0.02986	-1.132	0.37226
RpL18	1.160	0.55173	1.392	0.14750	1.757	0.00801
RpL32	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000
S6k	-1.372	0.04942	-1.623	0.00530	-1.499	0.02345
Sir2	1.050	0.60638	-1.093	0.17760	-1.019	0.72289
sNPF	-1.154	0.37812	-1.115	0.33652	-1.154	0.22055
Sod2	-1.129	0.37138	-1.099	0.33513	-1.122	0.35336
Spt-I	1.262	0.02655	1.009	0.90201	-1.075	0.41873
synapt	-1.226	0.00053	-1.169	0.00209	-1.163	0.20411
Thor	-1.277	0.00136	-1.354	0.00163	1.154	0.02945
Tk	-1.003	0.87159	-1.880	0.01431	-1.525	0.07503
to	-1.221	0.04269	-1.030	0.54535	-1.349	0.00015
whd	-1.473	0.00002	-1.579	0.00004	-1.353	0.03662

Supplementary Data File 2. Transcriptional profile data. Gene expression changes triggered by Paraquat treatment and aging.
Transcriptional profile data. *Tables S3 and S4.*

Table S3. Gene expression comparisons of 3 days flies treated for 17 h with PQ with control flies of each genotype. *p* values are calculated based on a Student's *t*-test of the replicate 2^{-ΔCt} values for each gene in the control group and treatment groups. *p* values less than 0.05 are indicated in red. Up-regulations are shown in red and down-regulations in blue.

Gene Symbol	+/- ; da>+ (PQ vs. Control)		-/- ; da>+ (PQ vs. Control)		+/- ; da>Nlaz-WT (PQ vs. Control)		+/- ; da>Nlaz-L130R (PQ vs. Control)	
	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value
Act5C	1.080	0.64586	1.084	0.67628	-1.137	0.14188	1.567	0.0000
Akt1	1.017	0.82186	1.450	0.00007	1.380	0.00123	1.571	0.00027
bsk	-1.349	0.22539	1.046	0.86969	1.143	0.44734	1.279	0.03281
Cat	-1.039	0.76239	1.556	0.00022	1.183	0.00205	1.524	0.01534
CG1237	-9.970	0.00000	-13.674	0.00000	-7.387	0.00000	-5.051	0.00000
CG8147	-27.606	0.00000	-44.839	0.00000	-5.805	0.00000	-13.511	0.00000
Ddc	-1.516	0.01410	-1.337	0.02769	-1.354	0.00493	1.056	0.32784
desat1	-2.420	0.00010	-2.027	0.00001	-1.600	0.00248	-1.396	0.00021
Dpt	2.255	0.00004	1.991	0.00004	-20.740	0.00000	-2.257	0.00008
Drs	1.812	0.02333	2.340	0.00036	-2.473	0.00026	1.512	0.00036
foxo	-1.774	0.00019	-1.251	0.01420	-1.442	0.00010	-1.072	0.16082
Gadd45	3.419	0.00037	7.415	0.00000	2.620	0.00000	4.614	0.00001
Gapdh1	-3.602	0.00342	-1.567	0.07232	-2.174	0.00263	-1.045	0.44976
GLaz	-2.141	0.00002	-2.221	0.00000	-1.667	0.00000	-1.181	0.04135
Gr66a	-1.025	0.88273	2.954	0.00068	1.821	0.00593	1.535	0.01218
GstE1	10.947	0.00440	16.078	0.00007	6.604	0.00080	16.503	0.00000
GstS1	-1.759	0.00054	-1.230	0.00161	1.028	0.74450	1.217	0.10148
Hr96	-1.127	0.16779	-3.406	0.37900	1.063	0.54653	1.172	0.01844
Hsp68	1.399	0.00282	5.755	0.00000	2.288	0.00001	1.732	0.00000
InR	1.897	0.00025	4.467	0.00000	3.141	0.00091	2.096	0.00084
Jafrac	1.425	0.00138	1.278	0.00169	1.183	0.00266	2.353	0.00001
Karl	-1.894	0.00225	1.347	0.02570	-1.951	0.00005	1.719	0.00298
Lip4	2.035	0.00002	1.002	0.96271	2.575	0.00000	3.274	0.00000
llp4	-3.488	0.03697	2.117	0.18010	-1.140	0.58492	1.010	0.93531
Lsd-1	-1.962	0.00002	-2.408	0.00005	-1.036	0.27274	1.496	0.00007
Lsp2	-2.490	0.00216	1.346	0.00192	-3.066	0.00000	1.225	0.06080
Mgst1	-1.434	0.05709	-1.209	0.15701	-1.551	0.00013	1.107	0.01213
mio	1.025	0.96199	2.531	0.00023	-1.079	0.79606	2.002	0.16243
Nplp3	-3.814	0.00001	-4.428	0.00002	-6.671	0.00000	-1.409	0.02443
Pepck	2.379	0.00021	4.731	0.00000	3.471	0.00002	2.212	0.00000
Prx254	2.950	0.00000	2.509	0.00001	1.732	0.00012	1.245	0.00331
puc	1.371	0.00356	2.508	0.00001	1.271	0.23545	1.576	0.09594
RpL18	1.146	0.58380	1.026	0.91643	1.106	0.51049	1.432	0.00059
RpL32	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000
S6k	-1.581	0.01124	-1.090	0.48048	-1.149	0.32823	1.051	0.74253
Sir2	-1.113	0.27683	1.311	0.01832	1.203	0.01185	1.151	0.00934
sNPF	-1.148	0.22731	1.291	0.09971	1.122	0.18456	1.235	0.00856
Sod2	-1.663	0.00942	-1.314	0.02937	-1.523	0.00000	1.064	0.46572
Spt-1	-1.404	0.00161	-1.628	0.00102	-1.245	0.00952	-1.080	0.36353
synapt	-1.571	0.00005	-1.012	0.81790	-1.014	0.86483	1.034	0.85412
Thor	2.277	0.00007	4.880	0.00000	2.923	0.00001	2.299	0.00000
Tk	-1.561	0.04728	-1.402	0.00588	1.484	0.01579	1.383	0.06986
to	-1.183	0.08093	1.092	0.36494	1.318	0.00477	1.476	0.00005
whd	-1.184	0.00271	1.270	0.00164	1.200	0.00603	1.115	0.53095

Table S4. Gene expression comparisons of 3 vs. 30 day-old flies of each genotype. *p* values are calculated based on a Student's *t*-test of the replicate 2^{-ΔCt} values for each gene in the control group and treatment groups. *p* values less than 0.05 are indicated in red. Up-regulations are shown in red and down-regulations in blue.

Gene Symbol	+/- ; da>+ (30 d vs. 3 d)		-/- ; da>+ (30 d vs. 3 d)		+/- ; da>Nlaz-WT (30 d vs. 3 d)		+/- ; da>Nlaz-L130R (30 d vs. 3 d)	
	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value	Fold Regulation	p-value
Act5C	-1.542	0.06321	1.197	0.29363	-1.401	0.02413	2.156	0.00001
Akt1	-1.672	0.00040	1.625	0.00192	-1.183	0.02144	1.806	0.00007
bsk	-1.837	0.02556	1.376	0.07002	-1.777	0.06654	1.875	0.00001
Cat	-1.140	0.59566	2.002	0.00058	1.043	0.64200	1.371	0.04269
CG1237	-4.017	0.00000	-13.712	0.00000	-3.657	0.00000	-7.343	0.00000
CG8147	-8.803	0.00000	-22.907	0.00000	2.798	0.00001	-1.316	0.00001
Ddc	-1.995	0.00307	1.068	0.58010	-1.713	0.00064	1.256	0.02046
desat1	-1.288	0.02715	-1.771	0.00094	1.444	0.00859	-1.115	0.05137
Dpt	1.171	0.23333	-1.130	0.22003	-3.122	0.00000	42.877	0.00000
Drs	-1.228	0.38725	2.511	0.00032	-4.091	0.00006	14.817	0.00000
foxo	-1.542	0.00102	-1.159	0.33855	-1.211	0.02149	1.387	0.00010
Gadd45	-2.492	0.00519	13.009	0.00000	-1.167	0.08599	2.936	0.00001
Gapdh1	-9.964	0.00018	1.433	0.08215	-5.559	0.00020	-3.726	0.00000
GLaz	-1.743	0.00095	-1.909	0.00002	-1.544	0.00000	1.054	0.37975
Gr66a	-1.385	0.36476	5.332	0.00015	1.324	0.20643	2.294	0.00013
GstE1	-1.217	0.80575	26.472	0.00006	1.313	0.14101	4.203	0.00000
GstS1	-4.133	0.00002	-1.053	0.49674	-2.662	0.00364	-1.360	0.01648
Hr96	-1.678	0.00351	1.214	0.15648	-1.093	0.21807	1.335	0.00199
Hsp68	-2.046	0.00005	6.524	0.00002	-1.970	0.00004	2.660	0.00000
InR	-2.084	0.00230	4.690	0.00011	1.042	0.59538	2.500	0.00004
Jafrac	-1.330	0.01034	1.632	0.00333	-1.189	0.00028	1.491	0.00054
Karl	-4.532	0.00007	1.622	0.01491	-1.255	0.00156	1.960	0.00002
Lip4	-1.181	0.12714	1.067	0.51384	1.045	0.10813	1.686	0.00004
llp4	-4.712	0.02160	3.039	0.02089	-3.311	0.29345	1.306	0.46516
Lsd-1	-1.848	0.00003	-1.924	0.00016	1.934	0.00087	1.004	0.94163
Lsp2	1.167	0.32893	1.717	0.00036	3.499	0.00000	2.975	0.00001
Mgst1	-1.816	0.01465	-1.060	0.55326	-1.362	0.01045	-1.145	0.01262
mio	-2.228	0.02669	2.815	0.00309	-2.186	0.52800	2.559	0.00214
Nplp3	-28.416	0.00000	-1.792	0.00253	-10.340	0.00000	-3.613	0.00027
Pepck	1.936	0.00003	5.351	0.00002	2.970	0.00011	1.335	0.00043
Prx254	-2.002	0.00019	3.876	0.00011	-1.912	0.00001	-1.184	0.00754
puc	-1.840	0.00880	3.589	0.00002	-1.854	0.65336	3.579	0.00000
RpL18	1.142	0.55893	1.465	0.12492	1.546	0.01499	1.307	0.01551
RpL32	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000	1.000	1.00000
S6k	-1.825	0.00455	1.061	0.68089	-1.090	0.17141	1.473	0.00468
Sir2	-1.373	0.00288	1.927	0.00048	-1.024	0.70739	1.790	0.00002
sNPF	-1.473	0.08927	1.492	0.01589	-1.206	0.10719	2.058	0.00002
Sod2	-3.013	0.00072	1.194	0.13122	-1.899	0.00000	-1.563	0.00231
Spt-1	-1.284	0.03626	-1.303	0.05097	-1.448	0.00049	1.355	0.00208
synapt	-3.063	0.00000	1.473	0.00262	-2.000	0.00001	1.018	0.96504
Thor	-2.229	0.00001	6.340	0.00002	1.088	0.14582	1.326	0.00944
Tk	-2.567	0.00561	-1.181	0.06543	-1.490	0.04258	1.233	0.24832
to	-1.403	0.00485	1.492	0.00536	1.641	0.00029	2.100	0.00000
whd	-1.503	0.00081	1.548	0.00278	1.068	0.57877	1.382	0.02675