

1 Title: The effect of intrauterine growth restriction on the developing pancreatic immune system

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41 **ABSTRACT**

42 Immune cells in the pancreas are known to participate in organ development. However,
43 the resident pancreatic immune system has yet to be fully defined. Immune cells also play a role
44 in pathology and are implicated in diseases such as diabetes induced by intrauterine growth
45 restriction (IUGR). We hypothesized that the resident immune system is established during
46 neonatal development and disrupted by IUGR. Using single cell RNAseq and flow cytometry
47 we identified many immune cell populations in the near-term fetus (at embryologic day 22) and
48 neonatal (postnatal day 1, 7, & 14) islets, non-endocrine pancreas, and the spleen in the rat.
49 Using flow cytometry, we observed the resident immune system is established during neonatal
50 development in the pancreas and spleen. We identified 9 distinct immune populations in the
51 pancreatic islets and 8 distinct immune populations in the spleen by single cell RNAseq. There
52 were no sex-specific differences in the relative proportion of immune cells in the pancreas or
53 spleen. Finally, we tested if IUGR disrupted the neonatal immune system using bilateral uterine
54 artery ligation. We found significant changes to the percentage of CD11B+ HIS48- and CD8+ T
55 cells in the islets and non-endocrine pancreas and in the spleen. IUGR-induced alterations were
56 influenced by the tissue environment and the sex of the offspring. Future research to define the
57 role of these immune cells in pancreatic development may identify disrupted pathways that
58 contribute to the development of diabetes following IUGR.

59

60

61 INTRODUCTION

62 Previous studies suggest that pancreatic development is dependent on resident
63 macrophages; however, little is known about their function and activity during development.
64 Banaei-Bouchard, et al. first reported the role of macrophages in pancreatic development. Using
65 a macrophage deficient mouse (colony stimulated factor-1 knockout (op/op)), they observed that
66 islets were smaller but more numerous, and pancreatic duct proliferation was increased in
67 macrophage deficient mice¹. This result suggests that a loss of macrophages result in arrested β -
68 cell proliferation and increased islet neogenesis during development.

69 The resident immune system in the pancreas is complex and the tissue microenvironment
70 is a key determinant of immune cell phenotype and activity. There are both innate and adaptive
71 immune cells in normal healthy pancreatic tissue^{2,3}. In the mouse, resident immune cells
72 populate the pancreas during mid gestation on embryologic day 14.5 (e14.5)⁴. Immune cells are
73 initially derived from a yolk-sac precursor and then from a hematopoietic precursor⁵. After
74 initial establishment during fetal development, resident macrophage turnover is predominately
75 from bone marrow-derived precursors, but evidence exists that macrophages in the exocrine
76 compartment can repopulate from a pancreatic precursor⁵. Macrophages acquire their
77 phenotype and activation state during neonatal development. In the mouse, resident macrophage
78 MHCII expression increases over the first 4 weeks of life⁶. Similarly, in the rat islet, the
79 immune system shifts from Th2 driven pathways to Th1 driven pathways from e19 to postnatal
80 day 14⁷. In adult mice, macrophages in the endocrine compartment are classically activated
81 (M1) and express pro-inflammatory proteins and high levels of CD64, CX3CR1, CD11c, and
82 MHCII^{5,6}. Macrophages in the exocrine compartment are alternatively activated (M2) and
83 express anti-inflammatory and pro-resolution proteins and lower levels of CD11c and MHCII^{5,6}.

84 Interestingly, lymphocytes are also found in the pancreas, but very little is known about their
85 homeostatic function. Whitesell, et al. recently determined that there are many subsets of
86 lymphocytes, and that the dominant population expresses IL-10 in the neonatal period ⁸.

87 However, questions remain regarding the role of resident immune cells in tissue
88 homeostasis, development and disease states. It is well established that intrauterine growth
89 restriction (IUGR) causes β -cell failure leading to the eventual development of T2D. We have
90 developed a model of IUGR that leads to the development of T2D in adulthood. Using this
91 model, we and others have determined that IUGR causes systemic and pancreatic inflammation
92 early in life which is key to the development of β -cell failure ^{7,9-14}. However, immune cell
93 populations altered by IUGR, are unknown .

94 Here we sought to determine the effect of IUGR on the normal establishment of resident
95 immune cells. We found that pancreatic immune cell composition differed between the endocrine
96 and non-endocrine compartments in normal developing pancreas. We also observed that IUGR
97 altered these endocrine vs. non-endocrine compartment differences in early life in a sex-specific
98 manner.

99 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

100 **Pancreas and Spleen Sample Collection**

101 The animal care committees of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and University of
102 Pennsylvania approved all animal use and procedures. Pregnant Sprague-Dawley dams were
103 purchased from Charles River for all animal experiments. All euthanasia was performed by
104 intraperitoneal injection of 100mg/kg ketamine and 10mg/kg xylazine.

105 Each litter was a biological replicate, and males and females were analyzed separately to
106 test the role of sex in normal development and following intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR).

107 Each biological replicate was generated by pooling tissues from offspring of the same sex from
108 the same litter to ensure sufficient tissue for measurement. The pancreas and spleen were
109 analyzed from the same rats. At the late fetal stage, embryologic day 22 (e22), pregnant dams
110 were injected with ketamine and xylazine and pups were excised from the uterus. Sex was
111 determined by anogenital distance, and the pancreas and spleens were excised. To ensure
112 sufficient sample for measurement at e22, all tissues from either males or females of the same
113 litter were combined to generate a male and female sample from each litter. To assess offspring
114 post birth, pregnant rats were allowed to spontaneously deliver the litter. Pups were injected
115 with 100mg/kg ketamine and 10mg/kg xylazine followed by decapitation. At postnatal day 1
116 (PD1), tissues were excised from three pups of the same sex and pooled to generate a male and
117 female sample from each litter. At PD7, the tissues of two same sex offspring were pooled to
118 generate a male and female sample from each litter. Finally, the tissue of a single rat at PD14
119 was sufficient for measurement which eliminated the need to pool. Each litter was treated as a
120 biological replicate and three litters were analyzed at e22, PD1, and PD7 and six litters were
121 analyzed at PD14.

122 **Intrauterine Growth Restriction Animal Model**

123 To measure the effect of intrauterine growth restriction on the resident immune system in
124 the pancreas and spleen, we used the bilateral uterine artery ligation method. Pregnant Sprague
125 Dawley rats underwent bilateral uterine artery ligation at day 18 of gestation, as previously
126 described^{7,15,16}. In brief, pregnant rats were anesthetized with isoflurane and pain was managed
127 with local bupivacaine (2mg/kg SQ) and tramadol (12.5mg/kg IP) before surgery and
128 postoperatively. The uterine artery was isolated, and silk suture was used to tie the artery
129 between the first amniotic sac and the uterine horn, bilaterally. Rats recovered from surgery and

130 spontaneously delivered pups. Pups born to dams that underwent surgery (IUGR) or no surgery
131 (controls) were weighed on postnatal day 0 and litters were culled to 7-9 pups per litter to
132 achieve uniformity. IUGR resulted in a 35.3% decrease in male and 40.9% decrease in female
133 birth weight (males: control $8.5\text{g} \pm 0.6\text{g}$ compared to IUGR $5.5\text{g} \pm 1.1\text{g}$ and females: controls
134 $8.3\text{g} \pm 0.6\text{g}$ compared to IUGR $4.9\text{g} \pm 1.3\text{g}$). Dams were given ad libitum access to standard rat
135 chow and water.

136

137 **Immune Cell Isolation from Pancreas and Spleen**

138 Fetal pancreata were digested with 0.3mg/mL Collagenase XI (Sigma C7657) and PD1-
139 PD14 pancreas were digested with 0.6mg/mL in DMEM with 5% FBS at 37°C for 12 minutes
140 with intermittent shaking. Tissue was spun down at 500G for 2 minutes and pellet resuspended
141 in HBSS. Cell suspension was filtered through a 425um mesh filter (Bellco Glass 1985-00040)
142 and washed with HBSS. Cell pellet was resuspended in Histopaque 1.077 (fetal: 1.2mL and
143 PD1-PD14: 3.4mL) and Histopaque 1.119 (fetal: 2.8mL and PD1-PD14: 7.5mL) was added to
144 the suspension. Histopaque 1.119 (fetal: 4mL and PD1-PD14: 12mL) was layered under and
145 Histopaque 1.077 was layered on top ((fetal: 2.8mL and PD1-PD14: 7.5mL). Finally, 4.2uM
146 NaHCO₃ 1% BSA HBSS (fetal: 4mL and PD1-PD14: 12mL) was layered on top. The gradient
147 suspension was spun at 855G with no brake at 4°C for 25 minutes. Islets were visualized in the
148 interphase and aspirated. The pellet was collected and washed in HBSS (non-endocrine portion
149 of pancreas).

150 Intact islets were further purified by adding 20mL 4.2uM NaHCO₃ 1% BSA HBSS and
151 spinning at 500G at 4°C for 2 minutes twice. The pellet was resuspended in 1mL Cell
152 Dissociation Solution (Sigma C5789) which was prewarmed to 37°C and 1mg/mL DNase I-

153 Grade II (Roche 10104159001) by pipetting the cell suspension ten times. Cells were incubated
154 at 37°C for 5 minutes. The resulting cell suspension were washed in PBS and the pellet collected
155 (islets).

156 Splens were excised from rats and cell suspensions were generated using a plunger (BD
157 309585). The resulting cell suspension was pipetted up and down in DMEM to further break
158 apart the tissue before filtering through a 40um filter (Falcon 352340). Cells were then spun at
159 450G at room temperature for 5 minutes. The resulting pellet was resuspended and incubated
160 with ACK lysis buffer (Gibco A1049201) for 1 minute at room temperature to lyse red blood
161 cells. PBS was added to the tube to stop lysis and spun at 450G at 4°C for 5 minutes and the
162 pellet resuspended in PBS.

163

164 **Immune Cell Isolation and staining for Flow Cytometry**

165 Immune cells were isolated from cell suspensions using the StemCell EasySep magnetic
166 assisted cell sorting. Cells were incubated with FcR block (Mouse Anti-Rat Cd32
167 BDBiosciences 550270, RRID:AB_393567) at 50uL/mL followed by biotinylated CD45
168 antibody (BD Biosciences 554876, RRID:AB_395569) at 1ug/mL. Cd45+ cells were isolated
169 following manufacturer EasySep Biotin Positive Selection Kit (StemCell 17655) protocol and
170 the EasyPlate EasySep magnetic plate (StemCell 18102). Resuspended cells were manually
171 counted using a hemacytometer.

172

173 **Flow Cytometry**

174 Cells were resuspended at $1 \times 10^7 / 100 \mu\text{L}$ and co-incubated with fluorescent antibodies
175 following manufacturer protocol. Antibodies include CD3 (BD Biosciences 563949,

176 RRID:AB_2738504), CD45Ra (BD Biosciences 740726, RRID:2740404), CD4 (BD
177 Biosciences 740256, RRID:AB_2740000), CD8 (BD Biosciences 740041, RRID:AB_2739811),
178 CD11B (Biolegend 201809, RRID:313995), HIS48 (BD Biosciences 743057,
179 RRID:AB_2741252). BD Fortessa II flow cytometer was used to measure fluorescence and
180 FlowJo software for analysis. Single cells were identified by SSC-H and SSC-A gating and live
181 cells based on Live/Dead Blue (Invitrogen L23105) staining. The complete gating strategy is
182 shown in Supplementary Figure 1. Isotype controls were used as negative controls.

183

184 **Immune Cell Isolation and staining for Flow Assisted Cell Sorting**

185 Pancreatic islets from PD7 rats were digested as described above. 2 rats were used to
186 generate each sample and 3 samples were prepared. Immune cells were isolated from single cell
187 suspensions via Miltenyi Biotec Magnetic Cells Assisted Sorting. Cells were resuspended in
188 80uL buffer and 20uL CD45 microbeads (Miltenyi Biotec 130-109-682) at 4°C for 15 minutes
189 before adding to a prepared Pre-Separation Filter (130-101-812) and MS column (130-042-201).
190 Cells were collected after filtration and spun down at 400G at 4°C for 5 minutes.

191 Cells were resuspended at 1x10⁷/100uL and co-incubated with fluorescent antibodies
192 following manufacturer protocol. Antibodies include CD3 (BD Biosciences 550353,
193 RRID:AB_393632), CD45Ra (BD Biosciences 740726, RRID:2740404), CD11B (BD
194 Biosciences 562222, RRID:AB_11154584), HIS48 (BD Biosciences 554907,
195 RRID:AB_395595) at 4°C for 30 minutes. Cells were washed and incubated with 1uL
196 Live/Dead Violet dye (Invitrogen L23105) 4°C for 20 minutes. Cells were washed and
197 resuspended in 50% FBS in stain buffer. Cells were sorted on the FACS Aria II to collect live
198 CD45⁺ CD3⁻ CD45Ra⁻ CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺ and CD45⁺ CD3⁻ CD45Ra⁻ CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺ single

199 cells in 100% FBS. Cells were spun at 500G at 4°C for 5 minutes and resuspended in RNAlater
200 ICE (Invitrogen AM7030).

201

202 **Bulk RNASeq in Flow-sorted cells**

203 To further characterize the immune cell population in normal animals during
204 development, we used a separate cohort of animals. RNA was isolated from flow-sorted cells
205 with Qiagen RNAeasy kit (Qiagen 74104) following manufacturer protocol. mRNA libraries
206 were prepared from total RNA using the SMART-Seq protocol¹⁷. In brief, RNA was isolated via
207 RNAClean-XP (Beckman Coulter, Cat#A63987) and full length polyadenylated RNA was
208 reverse transcribed using Superscript II (Invitrogen, Cat#18064014). cDNA was amplified with
209 10 cycles and amplified with the Qubit dsDNA HS Assay Kit (Life Technologies, Inc.
210 Cat#Q32851). 0.33ng of each sample was used to construct a pool of uniquely identified samples
211 with the Nextera XT kit (Illumina Cat# FC-131-1096) and a second amplification of the pooled
212 samples was conducted with 12 cycles. The pooled sample was cleaned up with AMPure XP
213 beads and the final library was sequenced on a NextSeq 1000. Data was mapped against the
214 rat_rn6_refseq genome using DolphinNext pipeline and a STAR¹⁸.

215 To quantitate and normalize the expression data and then assess the differentially
216 expressed genes (DEGs) the data was loaded into R statistical software and analyzed using
217 DESeq2. When CD11B+ HIS48+ to CD11B+ HIS48- cells expression, genes with a log2 fold
218 change greater than 1.5 and an adjusted p-value less than 0.05 were considered significant.

219

220 **Immune cell isolation and staining for single cell RNAseq preparation**

221 PD1 animals were euthanized by decapitation and pancreas and spleens were isolated as
222 described above. Cells were isolated from 5 males and 5 females as described above. Cells were
223 pooled to generate 2 pancreas and 2 spleen samples from both males and females. Cells were
224 resuspended in 50uL BV buffer and 100uL buffer and 1uL FcR block was added and incubated at
225 4°C for 5 minutes. CD45 antibody (BD Biosciences 561586, RRID:AB_10896305) was added
226 and incubated at 4°C for 30 minutes. Cells were washed in PBS and spun down at 500G at 4°C
227 for 5 minutes. Cells were resuspended in PBS and 1uL Live/Dead Violet dye (Invitrogen
228 L23105) for at 4°C for 20 minutes. Cells were washed in PBS and spun down at 500G at 4°C for
229 5 minutes. Cells were resuspended in buffer.

230 Cells were sorted by the FACS Aria II and CD45+ Live cells were collected in 10% FBS
231 in DMEM. 28,000-63,000 cells were collected for each pancreas sample and 100,000 cells were
232 collected for each spleen sample. Cells were spun at 500G at 4°C for 5 minutes and resuspended
233 in PBS. Viability was then confirmed to be above 85% and cells were counted.

234

235 **Single Cell RNASeq Library Preparation**

236 Next generation sequencing libraries were prepared at The Center for Applied Genomics
237 at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia using the 10X Genomics Chromium Single Cell 3' Library
238 & Gel Bead Kit v2 as per manufacturer instructions (PN-120237). cDNA and library preparation
239 quality were confirmed with the Agilent Bioanalyzer High Sensitivity Kit and final concentration
240 was determined with a KAPA Library Quantification Kit (PN-07960140001). Libraries were
241 individually indexed, pooled, and sequenced on the Illumina HiSeq2500 using SBS chemistry v4
242 in a paired-end, single indexing run.

243

244 **Single Cell RNASeq Data processing and Analysis**

245 Data was demultiplexed and processed using the cellranger mkfastq and count pipelines
246 (10x genomics, v.6.1.2) for demultiplexing, alignment of sequencing reads to the rattus
247 norvegicus transcriptome (mRatBN7.2), and creation of feature-barcode matrices. Secondary
248 analysis was performed using the Seurat package (v.5.0)¹⁹ within the R computing environment.
249 Spleen and pancreas datasets were analyzed separately. Each dataset was filtered for cell quality
250 to include cells with greater than or equal to 250 UMIs, 250 genes expressed, and mitochondrial
251 content less than 20 percent. Data was merged, normalized, and the top 2000 variable features
252 were used for principal component analysis. The harmony package in R²⁰ was used on the PCA
253 to account for per library batch effects in downstream UMAP and clustering (resolution 0.5).
254 Small clusters expressing high levels of collagen and red blood cell genes were determined to be
255 contaminating clusters and were removed from dataset. Cell types were annotated using
256 canonical marker genes. The dittoSeq R package was used for additional figures²¹.

257 **Statistical analysis**

258 Statistical analysis was performed via GraphPad Prism version 10. Flow cytometric data
259 was tested for normality with the Shapiro-Wilk test. Data that passed normality was tested by a
260 one-way ANOVA followed post hoc pairwise analysis with Fisher's test. Data that failed
261 normality was tested by Kruskal-Wallis test followed by post hoc analysis with Dunn's test.
262 Values that exceeded 2x the standard deviation were considered outliers and removed from
263 analysis. P-values less than 0.05 were considered significant and the p-values for significant
264 tests were recorded on the figure above the comparison groups. Gene expression was
265 considered significant if the log₂ fold change exceeded 1.5 and the adjusted p-value below 0.05.

266

267 **RESULTS**

268 **The immune cell composition in normal pancreas during development**

269 The pancreatic resident immune system is populated during early life. We analyzed
270 samples in the near-term fetus (e22), and neonate (PD1, PD7, and PD14) as these end-points
271 capture the window of time in which the immune system shifts from a predominantly Th2 to a
272 Th1 phenotype. In adults, distinct immune populations exist in the endocrine and exocrine
273 pancreas, thus we enumerated immune cells in the endocrine (islets) and exocrine (non-
274 endocrine portion) pancreas separately. We used a panel of antibodies to detect the major classes
275 of immune cells including B cells (CD45ra+), T cells (CD3+), and myeloid cells (CD11B+)
276 (Supplemental Figure 1). To further delineate the T cell population, we identified the expression
277 of CD4 and CD8 on CD3+ cells. Myeloid cells were further demarcated based on their
278 expression of HIS48.

279 In islets, the dominant immune cell population was CD11B+ HIS48- (Figure 1A) at all
280 time points. This population gradually decreased over the first two weeks of life. The CD11B+
281 HIS48+ population was stable until a significant decrease at PD14 (Figure 1B). The percentage
282 of both CD4+ and CD8+ T cells was very low at e22 and PD1 but gradually increased over time,
283 whereas B cell numbers fluctuated significantly at each time point (Figure 1 C-E). Interestingly,
284 there was no effect of sex on the relative percentage of immune cells.

285 Many immune cells were also abundant in the non-endocrine portion of the pancreas and
286 the dominant population was CD11B+ HIS48- (Figure 2A). The percentage of CD11B+ HIS48+
287 cells decreased over time and was lowest at PD14. The percentage of CD11B+ HIS48+ cells
288 gradually increased with age and plateaued at PD7 (Figure 2B). T cells were very low in
289 abundance at e22 and PD1 but expanded with age (Figure 2C&D). B cells in the non-endocrine

290 pancreas shared a similar pattern of fluctuation over neonatal life to those in the islets (Figure
291 2E). There was also no sex-specific effect on the percentage of immune cells in the non-
292 endocrine portion of the pancreas.

293 The CD11B⁺ cell population clearly separated into HIS48⁻ and HIS48⁺ subpopulations
294 in islets and non-endocrine portion of the pancreas. While HIS48 expression is commonly used
295 in rats to identify myeloid cells, its biological function is unknown. In other rat tissues, HIS48
296 expression identified subsets of macrophages and granulocytes^{22,23}. To identify the phenotype
297 of myeloid cells based on HIS48 expression we analyzed the transcriptome of flow sorted
298 CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ and CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺ cells. There were 26 differentially expressed genes
299 (DEG) between CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺ compared to CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells; 17 genes had higher
300 expression and 9 had lower expression (Figure 3). The genes with increased expression in
301 CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺ cells encode for pro-inflammatory proteins that are known to be highly
302 expressed in neutrophils and classically activated monocytes/macrophages including, *CD177*,
303 *Plyrp1*, *Camp*, *S100A8*, *S100A9*, *Olm4*, *Chit1*, *Hp*, *Padj4*, and *Fcnb* (Table 1). Surprisingly,
304 CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells had high expression of genes commonly expressed by mast cells including
305 *Tpsb2*, *Tpsab1*, *Mcpt2*, *Cpa3*, *Mcpt111*, and *Cmal* (Table 1). The transcriptome of the two
306 subpopulations suggests the population that expressed CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺ contained pro-
307 inflammatory myeloid cells and the population that expressed CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells contained
308 mast cells.

309 **The pancreatic immune landscape in the neonate**

310 Our data suggests there are many immune cell populations in the pancreas during early
311 life. To identify subpopulations not captured by our flow cytometry panel, we used single-cell
312 RNAseq to interrogate the transcriptome of immune cells isolated from PD1 rat islets. These

313 immune cells are likely to participate in islet establishment. Single-cell RNA libraries were
314 prepared from immune cells isolated from PD1 islets by flow sorting of CD45+ live cells.

315 UMAP clustering determined there were 9 distinct immune subpopulations that grouped
316 into the following subclusters: B cell, dendritic cells (DC), macrophages, myeloid cells (5), and
317 natural killer cells (NK) (Figure 4A). Not surprisingly, we did not detect any clusters that
318 expressed high levels of typical T cell markers (*Cd3*, *Cd4*, or *Cd8*) as this population was less
319 than 2% of the total immune population quantified by flow cytometry at PD1. B cells expressed
320 high levels of *Cd24*, *Jchain*, *Cd79b*, *Mki67*, and *Tifa* (Figure 1B). There were many clusters that
321 expressed myeloid cell specific markers including *Ftl1*, *Fcer1g*, and *Lyz2* at varying levels. A
322 clear macrophage population was identified by high expression of these genes and the expression
323 of mannose receptor (*Mrc1*), a marker of pro-resolution macrophages. Myeloid cluster 1, 2, and
324 5 also expressed *Clqc*, *Ftl1*, *Fcer1g*, and *Lyz2*. Interestingly, myeloid cluster 1 also expressed
325 *Ly6C* which is commonly expressed in pro-inflammatory macrophages. Myeloid cluster 5 also
326 expresses high levels of the DEGs with increased expression in the CD11B+ HIS48+ cells as
327 determined by bulk RNAseq (Figure 4D). The DC cluster expressed *Cd74* and *Cst3* which are
328 highly expressed in dendritic cells. Myeloid cluster 3 also expressed moderate *Cd74* and *Cst3*
329 but also expressed *JChain* suggesting these cells may be plasmacytoid DCs. Myeloid cluster 4
330 did not express any transcripts that clearly defined its cell type, but interestingly cells that
331 expressed high levels of CD11B+ HIS48- DEGs, as determined by bulk RNAseq, were found in
332 this cluster (Figure 4E). Finally, a clear cluster of natural killer cells were defined by the
333 expression of *Nkg7*, *Kir2dl1*, and *Ccl5*. The relative percentage of cells in each cluster did not vary
334 by sex, in our limited dataset (Figure 1C).

335

336 **Immune cells in the neonatal spleen**

337 The spleen is a secondary lymphoid organ that has significant roles in immunity and
338 blood homeostasis. The resident immune system in the murine neonate was recently found to
339 vary considerably from the adult²⁴. Mundim Porto-Pedrosa, et al. observed a gradual decline in
340 B cells but increase in T cells in the neonatal period before the adult immune system was
341 established. The authors also reported the number of macrophages and monocytes transiently
342 increased in the neonatal period but returned to post birth levels in adulthood. To elucidate the
343 establishment of the splenic immune system in the rat, we analyzed immune cells isolated from
344 the spleen at e22, PD1, PD7, and PD14.

345 At late gestation, the dominant immune cell population in the spleen was CD11B+
346 HIS48- cells (Figure 5B). Following birth, there was a significant decrease in the percentage of
347 CD11B+ HIS48- cells that increased at PD7. Unlike in the pancreas, the number of CD11B+
348 HIS48+ cells was very low at birth and further declined with age (Figure 5A). Like in the
349 mouse, B cells are abundant in the spleen, and we found the percentage rapidly increased with
350 age (Figure 5E). Interestingly, in the spleen the percentage of T cells also increased with age,
351 similar to the pancreas (Figure 5C&D). This suggests that, like in the mouse, the resident
352 immune system is not fully established at birth but continues to develop during the neonatal
353 period.

355 **The immune landscape in the neonatal spleen**

356 Many subpopulations of immune cells exist beyond the capacity of our flow cytometry
357 antibody panel to detect. Therefore, we analyzed the transcriptome of immune cells isolated
358 from the spleens at PD1 of the same rats as the pancreas scRNAseq analysis. CD45+ live

359 immune cells were isolated from splenic tissue and single cell RNA libraries were prepared and
360 sequenced. The single cell transcriptome clustered into 8 distinct subpopulations that expressed
361 typical cell identifying genes (Figure 6A). B cells, expressing *Ms4a1*, *Ly86*, *Cd24*, *Cd27*, *Cd38*
362 and *Cd79b*, comprised over 50% of the immune cells (Figure 2). B cells further subdivided into
363 immature B cells, based on *Vrep3* expression, and proliferating B cells based on *Mki67*, *Top2a*,
364 and *Tif1* expression (Figure 6B). T cells were a small but identifiable population with expression
365 of *Cd3g*. Expression of myeloid cell type specific genes allowed for clustering into macrophages
366 and neutrophils/monocytes. Macrophages expressed high levels of *Clqc*, *Ftll*, *Fcer1g*, and
367 *Lyz2*. Cells defined as neutrophils/monocytes expressed high levels of *Ftll*, *Fcer1g*, *Lyz2*, and
368 *Ly6C*. Interestingly, the neutrophils/monocytes cluster also contained cells that expressed high
369 levels of the DEGs in CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺ cells determined by bulk RNAseq (Figure 6D). Gene
370 expression of the DEGs increased in CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cell were found in the cluster termed mast
371 cells (Figure 6E). There was also no sex-related difference to the percentage of cells in each
372 cluster (Figure 2C). It is surprising that more immune cells in the spleen expressed canonical
373 genes that allow for more cell-type identification of clusters than those immune cells in the
374 pancreas. This suggests the tissue microenvironment was a major determinant of gene
375 expression in the neonatal rat.

376

377 **Immune cell populations are altered by IUGR**

378 Having observed that there is a dynamic establishment of the pancreatic immune system,
379 we sought to determine if the altered in utero environment elicited by IUGR disrupted normal
380 immune development. The percentage of CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells at e22 was significantly
381 reduced in islets from IUGR males and females compared to controls (Figure 7A). However, the

382 number of CD11B+ HIS48- cells rapidly increases postnatally and is similar to controls.
383 Simultaneously, there was an increase in the percentage of CD8+ T cells in male and female
384 IUGR offspring at e22. Interestingly, the percentage of CD8+ T cells in females rapidly returned
385 to control levels unlike in the males which took longer (Figure 7A&B). Finally, there was also a
386 transient decrease in the percentage of B cells in the islets isolated from male and female IUGR
387 offspring at PD1 that rapidly returned levels similar to controls by PD7 (Figure 7B&C). These
388 early changes in the relative abundance of immune cells in IUGR islets demonstrate that specific
389 immune cell populations were differentially affected by the altered intrauterine milieu.

390 IUGR also had a cell type specific effect on the immune cell composition in the non-
391 endocrine portion of the pancreas. At e22, the percentage of CD11B+ HIS48+ and CD4+ T cells
392 was decreased in female IUGR compared to female control offspring. However, by PD1 the
393 percentage of these populations recovered and did not differ from control female offspring
394 (Figure 8A&B). At PD1, the percentage of CD11B+ HIS48- was increased in male IUGR
395 offspring but interestingly this percentage was decreased at PD7 before reaching a similar
396 percentage to controls at PD14 (Figure 8B-D). Also, at PD1 there was a decrease in the
397 percentage of CD8+ T cells that rebounded at PD7 before normalizing at PD14. IUGR-induced
398 disruption of pancreatic immune composition had a longer lasting effect on the male than female
399 offspring suggesting a sex-specific effect of IUGR. This is particularly important because only
400 males develop glucose intolerance in this model of IUGR.

401 Finally, to test if the alterations induced by IUGR were systemic, we analyzed immune
402 cells in the spleen. Interestingly, we saw different changes in the abundance of immune cells in
403 the spleen compared to in the pancreas. CD11B+ HIS48, CD4+ T cells, and CD8+ T cells were
404 reduced in IUGR female offspring at e22 but were similar to controls postnatally (Figure 9A).

405 Only CD11B+ HIS48+ cells were increased in both male and female IUGR offspring at e22 but
406 were similar in number to controls postnatally (Figure 9A&B). Finally, there was a transient
407 increase in the percentage of CD8+ T cells in male but not female IUGR offspring at PD7
408 (Figure 9C). Like in the pancreas, all populations were normalized by PD14 (Figure 9D). These
409 results demonstrate the influence of the cellular microenvironment on the effect of IUGR.

410 **DISCUSSION**

411 In this study, we quantified and analyzed the resident immune cell populations in the
412 neonatal pancreas for the first time. We found that the pancreatic immune cell landscape
413 significantly changes during the neonatal period. The dominant population in both islets and
414 non-endocrine pancreas were myeloid cells, but the percentage of T and B cells increased with
415 age. We also confirmed that the resident immune system in the rat continued to develop in the
416 neonatal period as previously reported in the mouse. At birth, the majority of residential immune
417 cells were myeloid, but B cells quickly expanded postnatally. Finally, we found significant sex-
418 specific effects of IUGR on the developing pancreatic immune system but only minimal
419 disruption of the developing splenic immune system.

420 Myeloid cells, particularly macrophages, are known to play a vital role in organ
421 development²⁵. Macrophages promote tissue remodeling, angiogenesis, and apoptosis induction
422 through cytokine and growth factor release²⁶. Studies using a pancreatitis model in rodents
423 showed an important role of immune cells in tissue remodeling and demonstrate that immune
424 cells participate in pancreatic development^{27,28}. The precise pathways and immune cells vital to
425 pancreatic development remain to be identified²⁹.

426 Islet remodeling is a normal part of pancreatic development during the first two weeks of
427 life in rodents^{30,31}. During fetal and early neonatal development, new β -cells are predominately

428 formed via differentiation of embryonic ductal cells. In the later postnatal period and into
429 adulthood, new β -cells are formed via replication of preexisting β -cells. The replication rate is
430 low in adulthood but does continue with age. The molecular mediators of β -cell neogenesis and
431 differentiation have been well described. In addition, macrophages have been shown to play a
432 vital role in islet formation. Macrophages participate in pancreatic innervation through
433 phagocytosis of apoptotic nerves³². It has also been demonstrated that macrophages clear
434 apoptotic β -cells which is part of the process of islet remodeling³³.

435 We observed that the majority of immune cells in the neonatal pancreas are myeloid-
436 derived, and many are macrophages. Similar to what has been observed in mice, the percentage
437 of myeloid-derived cells decreased over the neonatal period in rats³⁴. However, the canonical
438 markers used to delineate myeloid subtypes were not highly expressed in the immune cells
439 isolated from the pancreas thus limiting our ability to identify subtypes.

440 Surprisingly, we found numerous CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells in the pancreas that express high
441 levels of protease transcripts commonly detected in mast cells. During early pancreatic
442 development, mast cell recruitment to the pancreas may be responsive to pancreatic epithelial
443 expression of a potent mast cell chemoattractant, transforming growth factor beta (TGF β)³⁵.
444 Upon recruitment, mast cells release mediators such as tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF- α),
445 histamine, metalloproteinase 9 (MMP9), and interleukin 4 (IL4)—all of which participate in
446 organ development and angiogenesis in other tissues³⁶. We detected these mediators in myeloid
447 cluster 5 in the single cell RNAseq dataset and found that they are differentially expressed by
448 sorted CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells compared to other myeloid derived cells (CD11B⁺ HIS48⁺).
449 Moreover, in the presence of acute pancreatic inflammation, mast cells participate in the

450 regeneration of pancreatic ducts³⁷. Together these previous studies and our findings suggest that
451 mast cells play an important role in pancreatic tissue remodeling.

452 IUGR disrupts immune cell composition in the offspring pancreas. In both male and
453 female offspring, CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells are reduced at e22 in islets. In contrast, IUGR had an
454 inverse effect on CD8⁺ T cells and increased the number of CD8⁺ T cells at e22. Moreover, in
455 the non-endocrine pancreas in IUGR males, the percentage of CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells was initially
456 increased at PD1 but reduced at PD7. At these same time points, the percentage of CD8⁺ T cells
457 were initially reduced and then increased. The bi-directional changes in the percentage of
458 CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ and CD8⁺ T cells at the same time points suggest that there may be an
459 interaction between these cell types. The transcriptome of CD11B⁺ HIS48⁻ cells demonstrated
460 this population contains mast cells. Interestingly, mast cells and T cells release mediators that
461 induce migration and activation of each other^{38,39}.

462 Finally, we observed that IUGR only acutely altered the percentage of immune cells in
463 the spleen. At embryologic day 22, the percentage of mast cells, proinflammatory myeloid cells,
464 CD4 T cells, and CD8 T cells were altered in female IUGR offspring, but the percentage was
465 similar to controls postnatally. This early response may reflect systemic changes to the immune
466 system following IUGR and highlights the susceptibility of the pancreas to the lasting effects of
467 IUGR.

468 In conclusion, we observed a complex pancreatic resident immune system that is unique
469 from the spleen. Subpopulation percentages changed over the neonatal period, suggesting an
470 active role of the immune system during this critical window of pancreatic development. IUGR
471 disrupted immune cells in both male and female offspring, but the rate of recovery was slower in
472 male offspring. Future research focused on understanding the role of these immune cells,

473 particularly CD11B+ HIS48- and CD8 T cells, in pancreatic development may identify novel
474 pathways responsible for islet failure following IUGR.

475

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483 **Author contributions:**

484 Experimental Design: TNG, RAS

485 Data acquisition and analysis: TNG, JPG, CCC

486 Writing- original draft: TNG, RAS

487 Writing- review & editing: TNG, JPC, CCC, RAS

488 **Competing interests:** The authors declare they have no competing interests.

489

490 **DATA AVAILABILITY**

491 **Data and materials availability:** The sequencing data reported in this study are deposited in

492 GEO. All other data are available in the main text.

493

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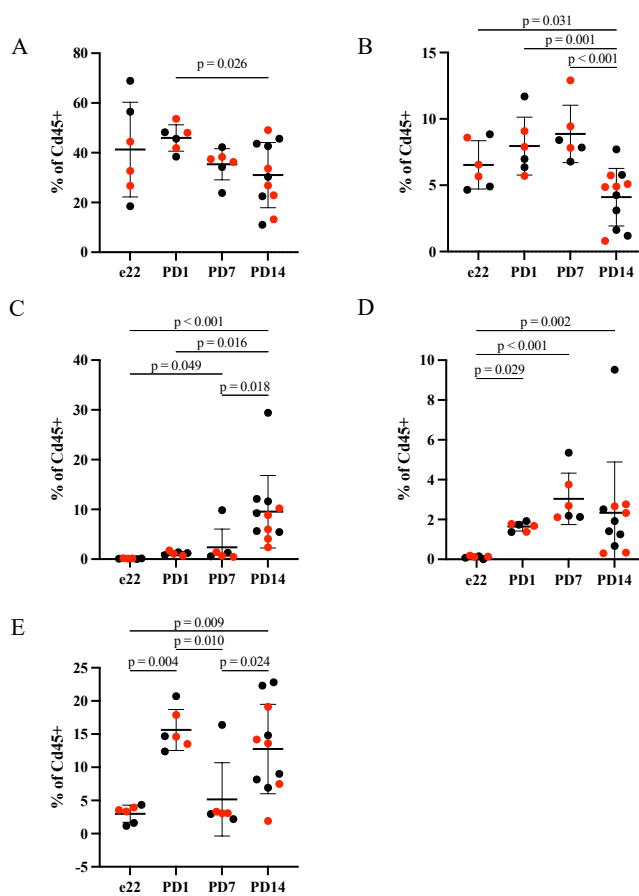
Gene Symbol	Gene Name	Log2FC	adj p-value	Cell Type Specificity	Function
<i>Stfa3</i>	Stefin A3	11.8	8.7E-05	non-specific	proinflammatory
<i>Stfa2l1</i>	stefin A2 like 1	11.4	2.7E-03	non-specific	proinflammatory
<i>Cd177</i>	CD177 molecule	10.9	7.4E-03	neutrophil	neutrophil activation
<i>Pglyrp1</i>	Peptidoglycan recognition protein 1	10.7	7.1E-04	neutrophil	proinflammatory: antibacterial
<i>Camp</i>	Cathelicidin antimicrobial peptide	10.0	2.7E-05	neutrophil	proinflammatory: antiviral
<i>S100a8</i>	S100 calcium binding protein A8	9.9	3.6E-05	neutrophil/ classical monocyte	proinflammatory
<i>Ngp</i>	neutrophilic granule protein	9.9	4.0E-04	neutrophil	negative regulation of angiogenesis
<i>S100a9</i>	S100 calcium binding protein A9	9.6	4.0E-05	neutrophil/ classical monocyte	proinflammatory
<i>Retnlg</i>	resistin like gamma	9.3	3.4E-03	non-specific	immune regulation and glucose metabolism
<i>Olfm4</i>	Olfactomedin 4	8.9	2.7E-03	neutrophil/ non-classical monocyte	antiapoptotic factor
<i>Lcn2</i>	Lipocalin 2	8.6	1.1E-03	neutrophil/ basophil/ nonclassical monocyte	hormone and lipid transportation
<i>Lbp</i>	Lipopolysaccharide binding protein	8.2	1.3E-02	liver	proinflammatory: antibacterial
<i>Chit1</i>	Chitinase 1	7.7	3.6E-02	neutrophil/ classical monocyte/ macrophage	monocyte differentiation
<i>Hp</i>	haptoglobin	7.6	1.0E-02	eosinophil/ classical monocyte	proinflammatory: acute phase protein
<i>Padi4</i>	Peptidyl arginine deiminase 4	6.7	4.8E-02	neutrophil/ monocyte/ macrophage	arginine metabolism
<i>Fcnb</i>	ficolin B	6.1	2.1E-02	neutrophil/ monocyte	proinflammatory: antibacterial
<i>LOC24906</i>	LY6/PLAUR domain containing 8 like 1	5.4	2.9E-02	non-specific	proinflammatory: antibacterial
<i>Sv2b</i>	synaptic vesicle glycoprotein 2B	-9.6	2.1E-02	non-specific	regulation of vesicle trafficking and exocytosis
<i>Tpsb2</i>	Typtase Beta 2	-9.5	2.8E-03	mast cell	trypsin-like serine proteases
<i>Tpsab1</i>	tryptase alpha/beta 1	-9.2	2.6E-02	mast cell	trypsin-like serine proteases
<i>Mcpt2</i>	mast cell protease 2, pseudogene 1	-8.6	1.1E-02	mast cell	protease

<i>Cpa3</i>	Carboxypeptidase A3	-8.5	8.7E-05	mast cell	serine protease
<i>Mcpt111</i>	mast cell protease 1-like 1	-8.2	3.3E-03	mast cell	serine protease
<i>Cma1</i>	chymase 1	-7.9	4.8E-03	mast cell	serine protease
<i>Cdh5</i>	cadherin 5	-7.8	2.1E-02	endothelial cells	endothelial permeability
<i>Hdc</i>	histidine decarboxylase	-6.6	4.6E-02	non-specific	catalyzes histamine to histidine

608 Table 1. Differentially expressed genes were identified by RNAseq comparing CD11B+HIS48+
609 compared to CD11B+HIS48- cells. The log 2-fold change, adjusted p-value are listed for each
610 gene. The specific immune cell type with high expression and the functional role of each gene
611 is listed.

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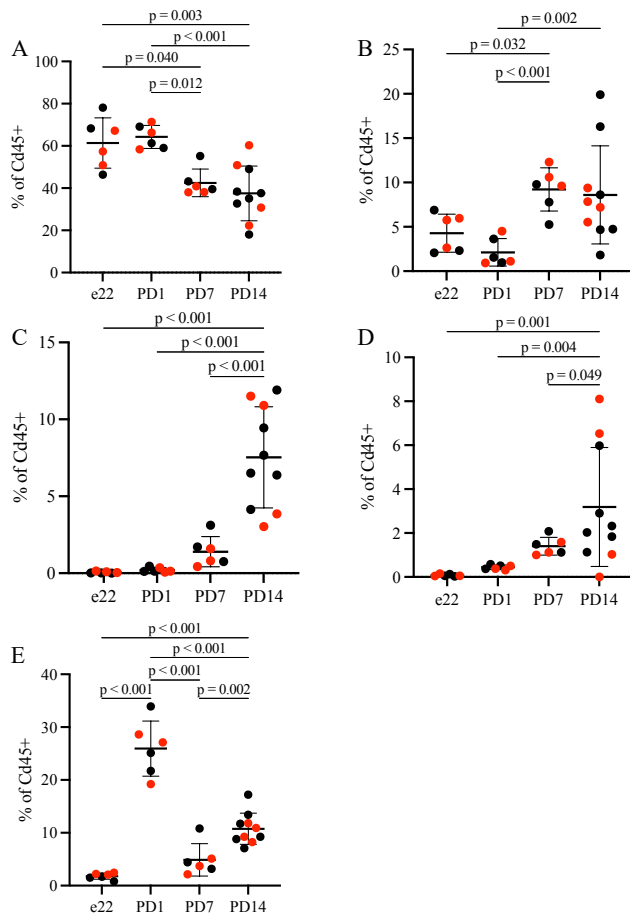
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614

615 Figure 1. Immune cells were isolated from pancreatic islets were identified by protein
616 expression. The relative proportion of immune cells in the pancreatic islet are reported as the
617 percentage of CD45+ cells: CD11B+HIS48- (A), CD11B+HIS48+ (B), CD4+ T cells (C), CD8+
618 T cells (D), B cells (E) in males (black) and females (red). Comparison groups are identified by
619 a bar and the p-value recorded for those with a significant post hoc test.

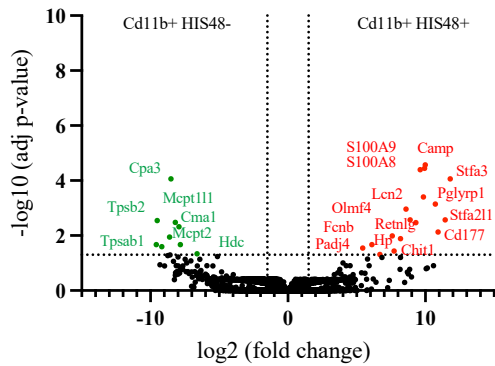
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621

622 Figure 2. Immune cells isolated from the non-endocrine pancreas were identified by flow
623 cytometric detection of surface proteins. The relative proportion of immune cells in the non-
624 endocrine pancreas are reported as the percentage of CD45+ cells: CD11B+HIS48- (A),
625 CD11B+HIS48+ (B), CD4+ T cells (C), CD8+ T cells (D), B cells (E) in males (black) and
626 females (red). Comparison groups are identified by a bar and the p-value recorded for those with
627 a significant post hoc test.

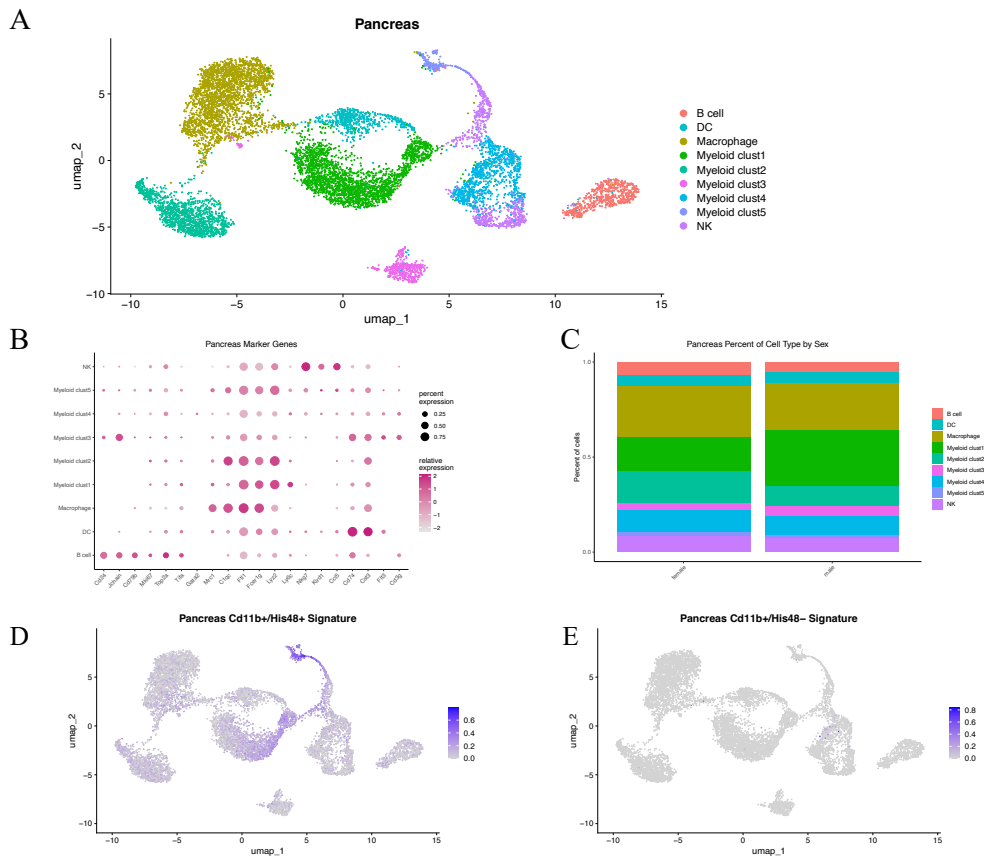
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629

630 Figure 3. Comparing the gene expression of CD11B+ HIS48+ to CD11B+ HIS48- flow sorted
631 cells. Genes with expression greater than log₂ fold change and an adjusted p-value less than
632 0.05 are colored red. Genes with expression less than log₂ fold change and an adjusted p-value
633 less than 0.05 are colored green.

634



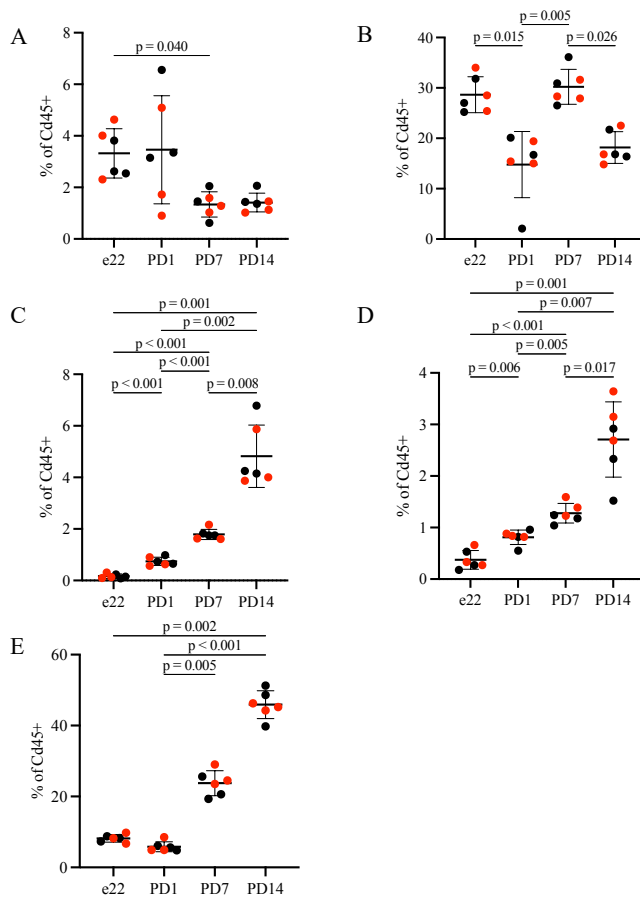
635

636 Figure 4. Pancreatic islet immune landscape at postnatal day 1. Pancreatic islets were isolated
637 from pancreata excised from postnatal day 1 male and female neonatal rats. Immune cells were
638 flow sorted based on CD45 expression and negative live/dead dye. Single cell RNA sequencing
639 of flow sorted cells resulted in the identification of 9 distinct clusters (A). The marker genes that
640 drive clustering are listed (B). The percentage of cells in each cluster separated by sex (C).

641 Expression of differentially expressed genes, determined by bulk RNA sequencing of flow sorted
642 CD11B+ HIS48+ (D) and CD11B+ HIS48- (E) are identified in the single cell RNAseq feature
643 plots.

644

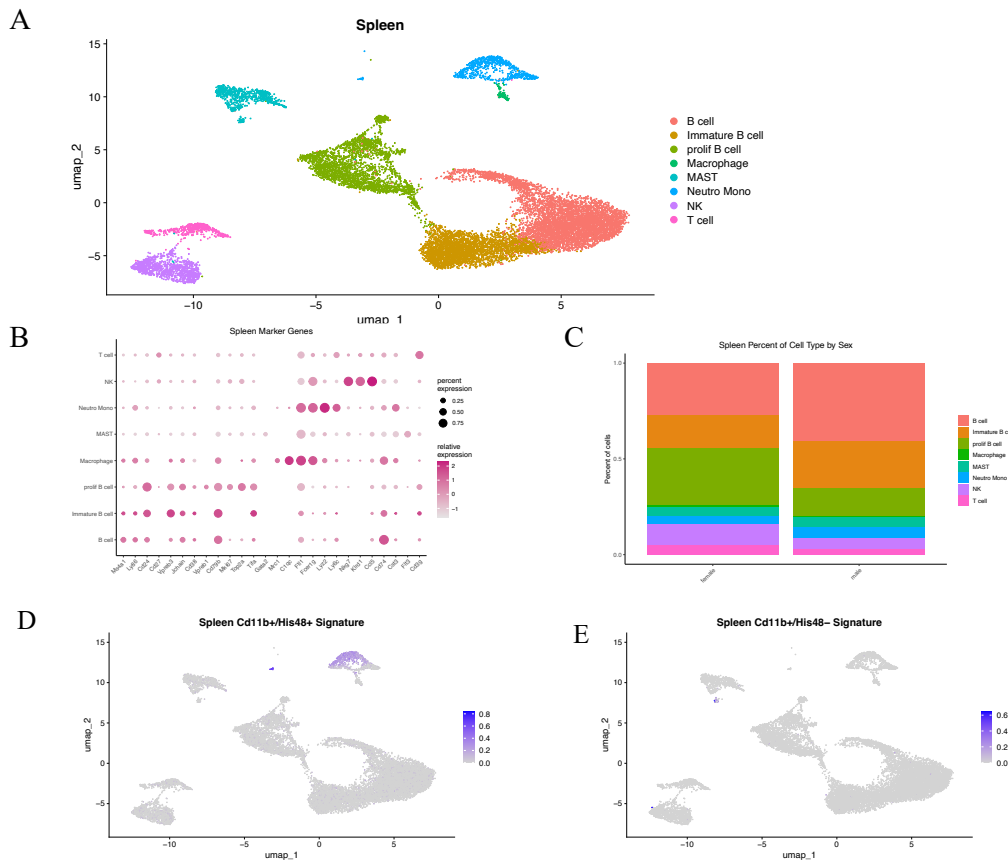
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646

647 Figure 5. The relative proportion of immune cells in the spleen are reported as percentage of
648 CD45+ cells: CD11B+HIS48- (A), CD11B+HIS48+ (B), CD4+ T cells (C), CD8+ T cells (D), B
649 cells (E) in males (black) and females (red). Comparison groups are identified by a bar and the
650 p-value recorded for those with a significant post hoc test.

651



652

653 Figure 6. The immune landscape in the spleen at postnatal day 1. 8 total clusters were identified

654 by single cell RNA sequencing of immune cells isolated from the spleen (A). The marker genes

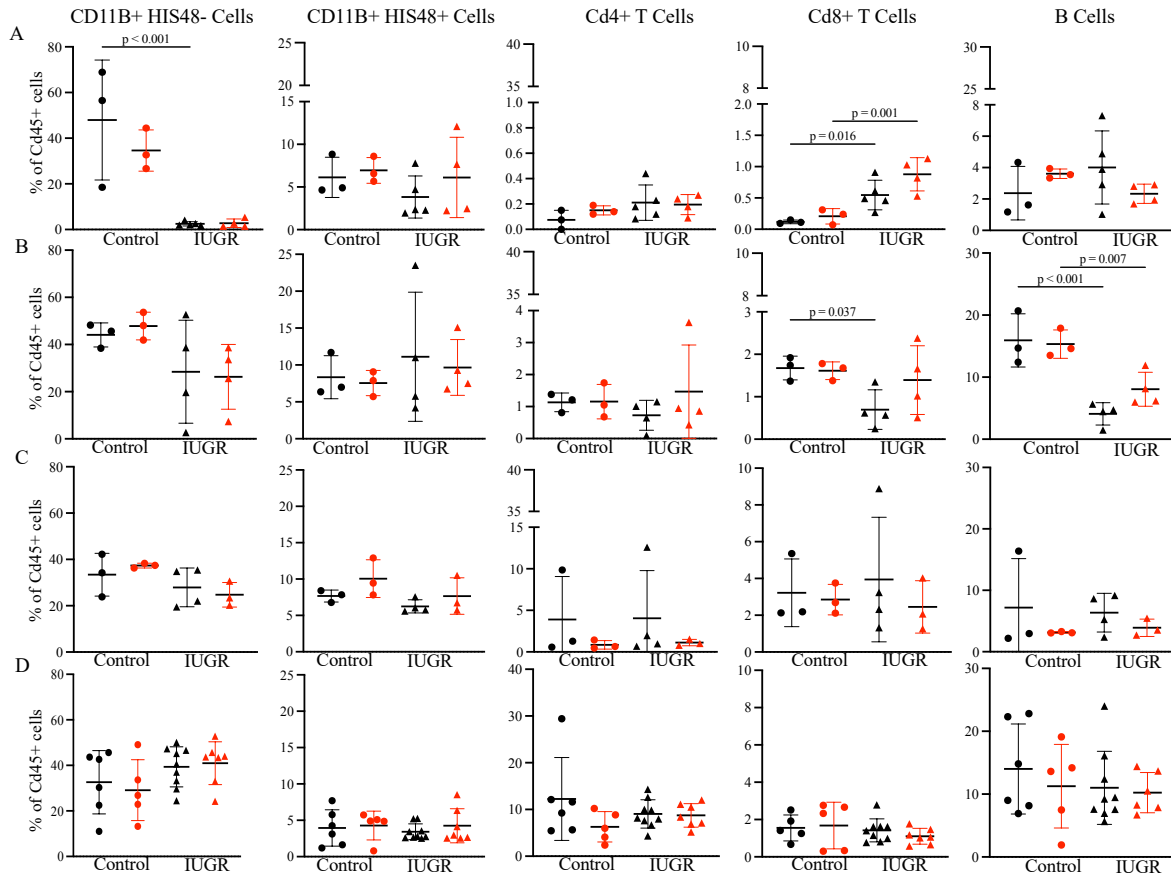
655 that drive clustering are listed (B). The percentage of cells in each cluster separated by sex (C).

656 Expression of differentially expressed genes, determined by bulk RNA sequencing of flow sorted

657 CD11B+ HIS48+ (D) and CD11B+ HIS48- (E) are identified in the single cell RNaseq feature

658 plots.

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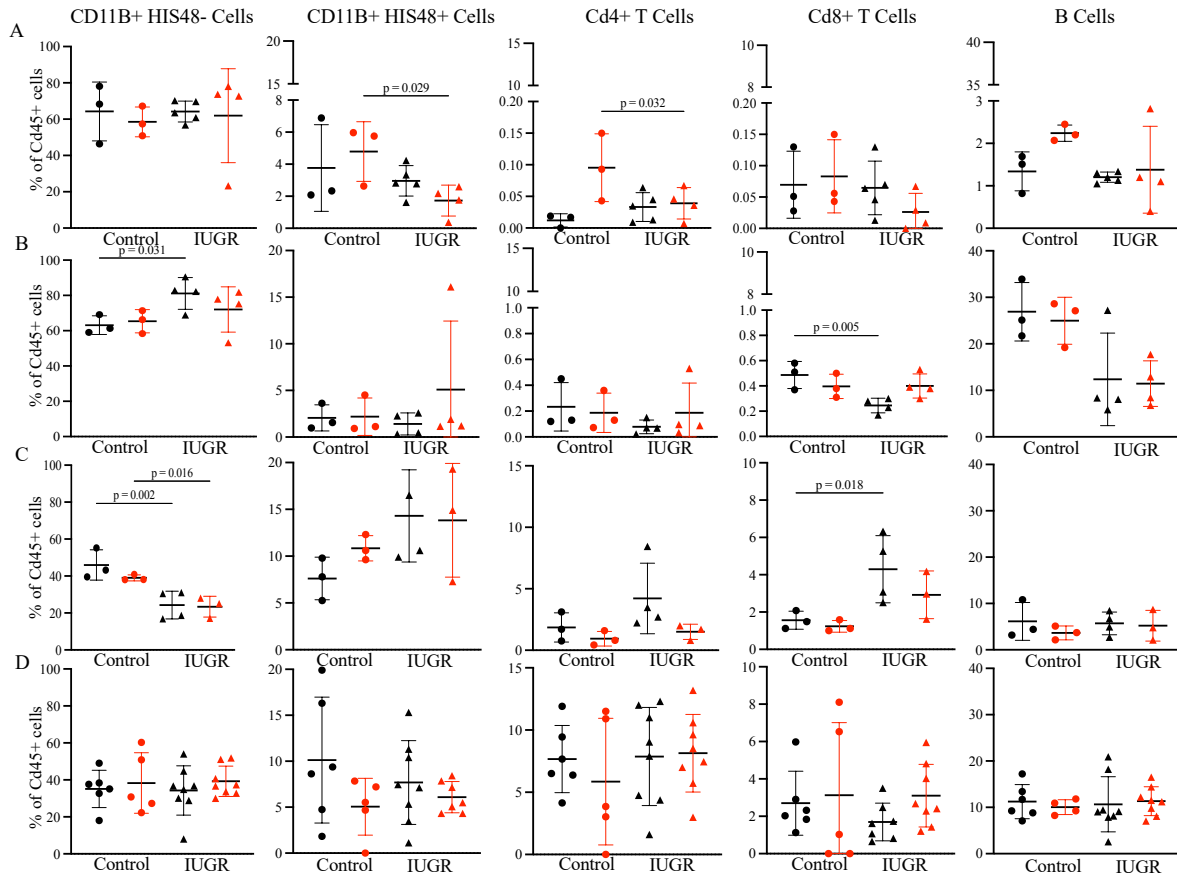
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661 Figure 7. Immune cell composition in the islets following IUGR. Immune cells were quantified

662 at e22 (A), PD1 (B), PD7 (C), and PD14 (D) in males (black) and females (red). Comparison

663 groups are identified by a bar and the p-value recorded for those with a significant post hoc test.

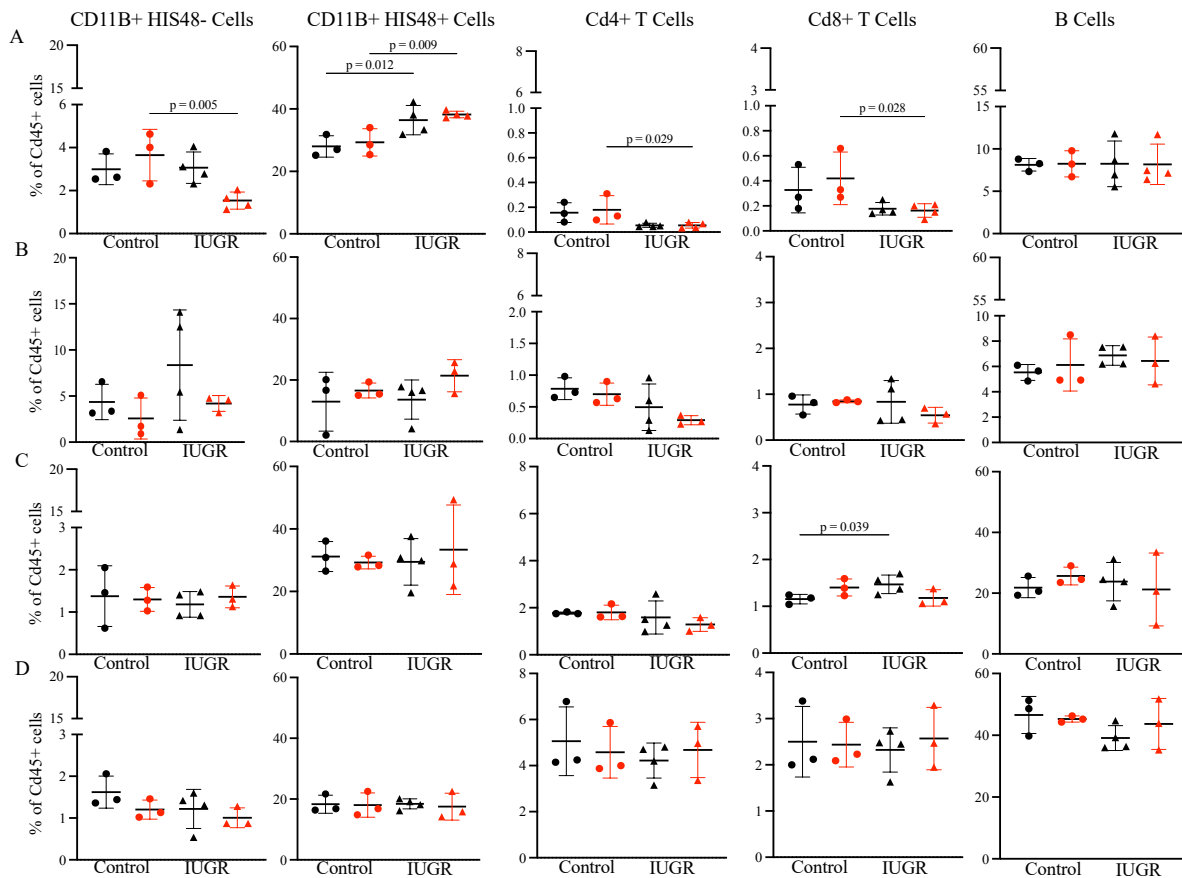
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665

666 Figure 8. Immune cell composition in the non-endocrine pancreas following IUGR. Immune
667 cells were quantified at e22 (A), PD1 (B), PD7 (C), and PD14 (D) in males (black) and females
668 (red). Comparison groups are identified by a bar and the p-value recorded for those with a
669 significant post hoc test.

670



671

672 Figure 9. Immune cell composition in the spleen following IUGR. Immune cells were
 673 quantified at e22 (A), PD1 (B), PD7 (C), and PD14 (D) in males (black) and females (red).

674 Comparison groups are identified by a bar and the p-value recorded for those with a significant
 675 post hoc test.

676

677 Supplemental Figure 1. Immune cell types were identified by cellular surface protein expression.

678 Single cells were gated to only include live CD45+ cells. T cells were identified by CD3
 679 expression. CD3+ cells were further analyzed to quantify CD4 and CD8 T cells. CD3- cells
 680 were further gated on CD45Ra to identify B cells. CD3- CD45Ra- cells were further gated on
 681 CD11B and HIS48 to quantify myeloid cells.