A Third COVID-19 Vaccine Dose in Kidney Transplant Recipients Induces Antibody Response to Vaccine and Omicron Variants but Shows Limited Ig Subclass Switching

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Abstract
Solid organ transplant recipients (SOTRs) suffer more frequent and more severe infections due to their
compromised immune responses resulting from immunosuppressive treatments designed to prevent
organ rejection. Solid organ transplant recipients (SETM) suffer more frequent and more compromised immune responses resulting from immunosuppressive treatments designed to prevent
organ rejection. Pharmacological immunosuppression can adv compan rejection. Pharmacological immunosuppression can adversely affect immune responses to
vaccination. A cohort of kidney transplant recipients (KTRs) received their third dose of ancestral,
monovalent COVID-19 vaccine vaccination. A cohort of kidney transplant recipients (KTRs) received their third dose of ancestral,
monovalent COVID-19 vaccine in the context of a clinical trial and antibody responses to the vacc
strain, as well as to O vacuum vacuum,
monovalent COVID-19 vaccine in the context of a clinical trial and antibody responses to the vacci
strain, as well as to Omicron variants strain, as well as to Omicron variants BA.1 and BA.5 were investigated and compared with healthy
controls. Total IgG and live virus neutralizing antibody titers were reduced in KTRs compared to contr
for all variants. KTRs strain, as well as to OMID as to UPS and the Omicron variants BA. 1 and B.1 and B.1 and B.1 and B.1 and B.1 and
for all variants. KTRs displayed altered IgG subclass switching, with significantly lower IgG3 antibod
Respons For all variants. KTRs displayed altered IgG subclass switching, with significantly lower IgG3 antibodies.
Responses in KTRs were also very heterogeneous, with some individuals showing strong responses but a
significant nu Responses in KTRs were also very heterogeneous, with some individuals showing strong responses but
significant number showing no Omicron-specific neutralizing antibodies. Taken together, immune
responses after COVID-19 vac significant number showing no Omicron-specific neutralizing antibodies. Taken together, immune
responses after COVID-19 vaccination in KTRs were not only lower than healthy controls but highly
variable, indicating that sim responses after COVID-19 vaccination in KTRs were not only lower than healthy controls but highly
variable, indicating that simply increasing the number of vaccine doses alone may not be sufficient
provide greater protecti variable, indicating that simply increasing the number of vaccine doses alone may not be sufficient to

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This study addresses the challenges faced by kidney transplant recipients (KTRs) in mounting effective provide greater in the control of the study addresses the challenges faced by $\frac{1}{2}$ immune responses against COVID-19. By evaluation This study at
Immune responsion
Importance exponsions
this study report The change in mune responses against COVID-19. By evaluating the antibody responses to a third dose of
monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine and its effectiveness against Omicron subvariants (BA.1 and BA.5
this study reveals si mundary responses against CoVID-19 vaccine and its effectiveness against Omicron subvariants (BA.1
this study reveals significant reductions in both binding and neutralizing antibodies in KTRs co
healthy controls. The rese this study reveals significant reductions in both binding and neutralizing antibodies in KTRs compared to
healthy controls. The research highlights altered IgG subclass switching and heterogeneous responses
within the KTR the althy controls. The research highlights altered IgG subclass switching and heterogeneous responses
within the KTR population. Reduced recognition of variants, coupled with differences in IgG subclasses,
decreases both within the KTR population. Reduced recognition of variants, coupled with differences in IgG subclasses
decreases both the quality and quantity of protective antibodies after vaccination in KTRs. These findit
underscore the Mann are the peppendulation. Distributed recognition of the KTR produced recognition in KTRs. These finding
underscore the need for tailored vaccination strategies for immunosuppressed populations such as KTR.
Alternative underscore the need for tailored vaccination strategies for immunosuppressed populations such as KTRs.
Alternative formulations and doses of COVID-19 vaccines should be considered for people with severely
compromised immun Alternative formulations and doses of COVID-19 vaccines should be considered for people with severely
compromised immune systems, as more frequent vaccinations may not significantly improve the
response, especially regardi Alternative formulations and doses of COVID-19 vacations may not significantly improve the response, especially regarding neutralizing antibodies.
The compromised immune systems, as more frequent vaccinations may not signi compromised immune systems, as more frequent vacuum in may no significantly improvements
response, especially regarding neutralizing antibodies. response, especially regarding neutralizing antibodies.

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Solid organ tr
mortality due
initial two-do
responses ag Solid organ transplant recipients (SOTR) and an electronical contribution of the TE interaction and
initial two-dose mRNA vaccine series, many SOTRs exhibit weakened humoral and cellular immul
responses against SARS-CoV-2 mortality due to immunosuppressive medications administered post-transplantation ⁻⁻⁻. Following the
initial two-dose mRNA vaccine series, many SOTRs exhibit weakened humoral and cellular immune
responses against SARS-CoV responses against SARS-CoV-2⁶⁻¹¹. Published studies on the third dose mRNA vaccine in SOTRs shov
increased total anti-Spike (S) IgG antibodies and neutralizing antibodies compared to the initial dose
series, suggesting h responses against SARS-CoV-2 ¹⁹⁹⁹. Published studies on the third dose mRNA vaccine in SOTRs showed
increased total anti-Spike (S) IgG antibodies and neutralizing antibodies compared to the initial dose
series, suggestin series, suggesting higher immunogenicity $12-16$. While previous studies have extensively examined bin
and neutralizing responses in this population, this study focuses on antibody quality- Omicron
subvariant-specific ant series, suggesting higher immunogenicity ²²⁻²⁴. While previous studies have extensively examined binding
and neutralizing responses in this population, this study focuses on antibody quality- Omicron
subvariant-specific and neutralizing responses in this population, this study focuses on antibody quality- Omicron
subvariant-specific antibody and IgG subclass responses- compared to healthy controls (HCs). An in-
depth analysis of S-binding transplant recipients (KTRs, n=81) and HCs (n=11) (**Supplementary Table S1**) was performed to understand KTR responses to the vaccine and antigenically distinct SARS-CoV-2 variants to dete effectiveness of a third vaccine transplant recipients (KTRs, n=81) and HCs (n=11) (Supplementary Table S1) was performed to
understand KTR responses to the vaccine and antigenically distinct SARS-CoV-2 variants to dete
effectiveness of a third vaccine do

understand KTR responses to the vacance and antigenically distinct SARS-Cov-2 variants to determine the variants
Externess of a third vaccine dose in this highly vulnerable population.
The Methods are detailed in the Suppl effectively
The Methods are detailed in the Supplementary Material. This study used
Protection After Transplant (CPAT) pilot trial, assessing the third dose of C <u>「</u>
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Protection
(Supplem
vaccination Protection After Transplant (CPAT) pilot trial, assessing the third dose of COVID-19 mRNA vaccine in KTRs
(Supplementary Table 1)¹⁷. Serum samples were collected pre-vaccination, 30-, and 90-day post-
vaccination. Enzyme (Supplementary Table 1)¹⁷. Serum samples were collected pre-vaccination, 30-, and 90-day post-
vaccination. Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs) measured S-specific IgG and IgG subtypes
against the vaccine and Omi (Supplementary Table 1)⁻⁻. Serum samples were collected pre-vaccination, 30-, and 90-day post-
vaccination. Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs) measured S-specific IgG and IgG subt
against the vaccine and Omicron vacantization. Enzyme-linked interaction. Enzymeration. There is premising a manige start, per
against the vaccine and Omicron variants and microneutralization titers determined. Antibody respons
were compared pre- and pos were compared pre- and post-vaccination across SARS-CoV-2 variants using one-way repeated measures
ANOVA with GraphPad Prism 8 and Stata 15.
Results

were compared pre- and post-vaccination across SARS-CoV-2 variants using one-way repeated measures More in the France Country and State 15.
Results
KTRs mount lower vaccine-induced serologic
third dose vaccine. |
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| KTRs mount lower vaccine-induced serological responses than healthy controls (HCs) after receipt of a third dose vaccine.

KTRs met
 KTRs methind do

Titers of

and 90 and 90 days post vaccination, though not all individuals seroconverted after receiving a third COVID
vaccine (Figure 1). Live virus neutralizing antibody (nAb) titers also increased against ancestral and
Omicron BA.1 and B and 90 days performancing anti-position and anti-position after receiving a third COVID vaccine (Figure 1). Live virus neutralizing antibody (nAb) titers also increased against ancestral and Omicron BA.1 and BA.5 in a port Omicron BA.1 and BA.5 in a portion of the population, but the number of non-responders was
significantly greater in this functional assay when compared to total S protein binding antibodies (Fi
1B). Significantly greater in this functional assay when compared to total S protein binding antibodiently.
1B). significantly greater in this functional associated to the total S protein binding and S p $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$

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-The Spread and Capture and Comicron BA.5 were significantly lower compared to the ancestral strain

(Figure 1C). Similar results were observed when comparing the 90 days post-D3 data. The nAb respons

to Omicron BA.1 and O (Figure 1C). Similar results were observed when comparing the 90 days post-D3 data. The nAb response
to Omicron BA.1 and Omicron BA.5 remained significantly lower than the ancestral strain at 30 (Figure
1D) and 90 days (Fi (Figure 1c). Similar results were observed when comparing the 90 days post-D3 data. The nAb responses
to Omicron BA.1 and Omicron BA.5 remained significantly lower than the ancestral strain at 30 (Figure
1D) and 90 days (F to Omicron BA.5 at 90 days (**Figure 1E**) post-D3, with a significant reduction in reactivity to Omicron BA.1 and
Omicron BA.5 at 90 days post-D3. In our study, four participants with confirmed COVID-19 infection
showed hig 1D) and 50 days (Figure 1E) post-D3, then a significant reduction in reactivity to Omicron BA.1 and
Omicron BA.5 at 90 days post-D3. In our study, four participants with confirmed COVID-19 infectio
showed higher anti-S and Showed higher anti-S and nAb responses, but these outliers did not appear to significantly skew the
results in this study population.
We next compared responses between vaccinated KTRs and HCs at 30 days post-D3. After rec

show the mga random manufacture in the nab responses of the nab responses of the next compared responses between vaccinated KTRs and HCs at 30 days post-D3. After receipt of third mRNA vaccine, 100% of HCs and 90% of KTRs We next compared responses be
third mRNA vaccine, 100% of HC
Spike variants (Figure 1F). Howe |
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|
| We next compared responses against compared with the attention of the same third mRNA vaccine, 100% of HCs and 90% of KTRs had detectable anti-S IgG responses against the three
Spike variants (Figure 1F). However, KTRs had Spike variants (Figure 1F). However, KTRs had consistently lower antibody titers against ancestral S
(93.3-fold decrease), BA.1 (11.4-fold decrease) and BA.5 (120.2-fold decrease) when compared to HCs
(Figure 1F). All HCs (93.3-fold decrease), BA.1 (11.4-fold decrease) and BA.5 (120.2-fold decrease) when compared to H
(Figure 1F). All HCs had detectable nAb responses against all variants post-D3, but among KTRs, the
responders were only 47/ (Figure 1F). All HCs had detectable nAb responses against all variants post-D3, but among KTRs, the nA
responders were only 47/81 to ancestral virus, 22/75 to BA.1 (), and 34/81 to BA.5 (Figure 1G). As
compared with HCs, K (Figure 1F). All HCs had detectable nAb responses against all variants post-D3, but among KTRs, the nAb
responders were only 47/81 to ancestral virus, 22/75 to BA.1 (), and 34/81 to BA.5 (Figure 1G). As
compared with HCs, responders were only 47/81 to ancestral virus, 22/75 to BA.1 (), and 34/81 to BA.5 (Figure 1G). As
compared with HCs, KTRs showed significant reductions in nAb titers against ancestral S (64.3-fold
decrease), BA.1 (237.1-f decrease), BA.1 (237.1-fold decrease), and BA.5 (88.1-fold decrease) (Figure 1G). Taken together, t
data suggested that KTRs mounted improved antibody responses to a third dose of mRNA vaccine,
the titers remained lower an data suggested that KTRs mounted improved antibody responses to a third dose of mRNA vaccine, but
the titers remained lower and a lower proportion of KTRs mounted detectable responses.
KTRs mount lower SARS-CoV-2 Spike spe

the titers remained lower and a lower proportion of KTRs mounted detectable responses.
 KTRs mount lower SARS-CoV-2 Spike specific IgG subclasses than healthy controls (HCs) after a third dose of vaccine.

The abundance KTRs mount lower SARS-CoV-2 Spike specific IgG subclasses than healthy controls (HCs) and a lose of vaccine.
The abundance of subclass-specific IgG antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 ancestral S was assessed KTRs mount lower SARS-CoV-2 Spike specific IgG subclasses than healthy controls (HCs) after a third dose of vaccine.

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| D3. There were differences in the proportion of individuals who generated subclass specific antibody
responses post-D3. The IgG1, IgG3 and IgG4 responses were the strongest in this cohort, with IgG3
responses showing the l responses post-D3. The IgG1, IgG3 and IgG4 responses were the strongest in this cohort, with IgG3
responses showing the lowest increase at days 30 and 90 post-D3 (Figure 2A). IgG1 and IgG3 subclass
responses were strongest responses showing the lowest increase at days 30 and 90 post-D3 (Figure 2A). IgG1 and IgG3 subcla
responses were strongest at 30 days post-D3 compared to IgG2 or IgG4 (Figure 2B). The abundance
IgG subclasses changed at 90 responses showing the lowest increase at days 30 and 30 post-D3 (Figure 2A). Igo1 and Igo3 subclass
responses were strongest at 30 days post-D3 compared to IgG2 or IgG4 (Figure 2B). The abundance of
IgG subclasses changed responses were strongest at 30 days post-D3 compared to IgO2 or IgO4 (Figure 2B). The abundance or
IgG subclasses changed at 90 days post-D3 with IgG1 responses being the strongest, comparable IgG3
and IgG4 subclass levels Igg subcomes changed at 90 days post-D3 managed at 90 days post-D3, and IgG4 subclass levels and IgG2 responses continuing to be the lowest (Figure 2C). Overall, among KTRs, there was an increase in all IgG subclasses post and IgG4 subclass levels and IgG2 responses continuing to be the lowest (Figure 2C). Overall, among
KTRs, there was an increase in all IgG subclasses post-D3, with IgG1 as the dominant subclass in KTRs
after D3 and IgG2 be Refer D3 and IgG2 being the weakest response (Figure 2D). after D3 and IgO2 being the weakest response (Figure 2D).

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| Were differences in vaccine-induced IgG subclasses between immunocompromised KTRs and
immunocompetent individuals. KTRs had lower levels of all four IgG subclasses (**Figure 2E**), with IgG4
responses being particularly depr immunocompetent individuals. KTRs had lower levels of all four IgG subclasses (Figure 2E), wi
responses being particularly depressed. These findings suggested that KTRs mounted significa
anti-S IgG responses across all sub immunocompetent individuals. KTRs had lower levels of all four IgG subclasses (Figure 2E), with IgG4
responses being particularly depressed. These findings suggested that KTRs mounted significantly low
anti-S IgG responses

responses across all subclasses than HCs after a third dose of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine.
Discussion
The initial two doses and/or a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine elicited anti-S IgG and nAb responses Discussion
The initial two doses and/or a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine elicited anti-S IgG and nAb responses
against the Omicron variants in many, but not all immunocompromised populations, with the level of $\begin{array}{c} \underline{[} \\ \underline{$ The initial t
The initial t
against the
serological
to severely The initial the Omicron variants in many, but not all immunocompromised populations, with the level of
serological responses usually lower when compared to healthy individuals. In KTRs, due to moderatel
to severely immunos serological responses usually lower when compared to healthy individuals. In KTRs, due to moderately
to severely immunosuppressive status, a lower neutralizing activity and reduced S-specific IgG response
were determined w to severely immunosuppressive status, a lower neutralizing activity and reduced S-specific IgG responses to severely immunosuppressive status, a returnal manipulating activity and subsetive specific is the severall
were determined when compared with HCs. These data demonstrate that the overall quantity and
quality of COVID-19 quality of COVID-19 vaccination and boosting induced antibody responses is not as great in KTRs
compared to HCs and that differences still exist after a third vaccine dose. While nAb levels are one
corelate of protection, compared to HCs and that differences still exist after a third vaccine dose. While nAb levels are o
corelate of protection, the role of non-neutralizing antibodies and antibody Fc region functions in
modulating COVID-19 di corelate of protection, the role of non-neutralizing antibodies and antibody Fc region functions in
modulating COVID-19 disease severity remains poorly defined. Antibody Fc regions mediate activati
NK cells and macrophages modulating COVID-19 disease severity remains poorly defined. Antibody Fc regions mediate activa
NK cells and macrophages in addition to fixing complement and mediating antibody dependent ce
cytotoxicity (ADCC) and enhancin MK cells and macrophages in addition to fixing complement and mediating antibody dependent cellular
cytotoxicity (ADCC) and enhancing the production of specific IgG subclasses may help improve
protection from COVID-19 dise NK cells and macrophages in addition to taming complement and mediating and cap (papel mediation cytotoxicity (ADCC) and enhancing the production of specific IgG subclasses may help improve protection from COVID-19 disease cytotoxicity (METE) and enhancing the production of specific IgG subclasted inty the inputed
protection from COVID-19 disease. Consideration should be given to different formulations and
COVID-19 vaccines in people with se protection from COVID-19 vaccines in people with severely compromised immune systems, as more frequent
vaccinations may not significantly increase the non-responding group, particularly when it comes to
neutralizing antibo COVID-19 vaccines in people with severely compromised immune systems, as more frequent
vaccinations may not significantly increase the non-responding group, particularly when it comes to
neutralizing antibodies.
Acknowledg

vacularizing antibodies.

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Disease. We thank the participants for agreeing to be part of the study. Disease. We thank the participants for agreeing to be part of the study.

Figure 1. Serum IgG and nAb responses to SARS-CoV-2 ancestral and Omicron variants in KTRs in comparison of HCs.

Total SARS-CoV-2 Spike (S)-specific IgG (A) and neutralizing antibody (nAb) (B) against the ancestral strain (red), Omicron BA.1 (green), and Omicron BA.5 (blue) variants measured in KTR (n=81) prior to dose 3 (pre-D3), 30 (pre-D3), 30 days post-dose 3 (30 days post-D3), and 90 days post-dose 3 (90 days post-D3). Total anti-
IgG (C) and nAb levels (D) at 30 days post-D3 and nAb levels at 90 days post -D3 (E) were compared
between the ancestr (c) and nAb levels (D) at 30 days post-D3 and nAb levels at 90 days post -D3 (E) were compared
between the ancestral strain, Omicron BA.1, and Omicron BA.5 variants. Total anti-S lgG (F) and nAb (G)
against ancestral strai IgG (C) and nAb levels (D) at 30 days post-D3 and nAb levels at 30 days post-D3 (E) were compared
between the ancestral strain, Omicron BA.1, and Omicron BA.5 variants. Total anti-S IgG (F) and nAb
against ancestral strain between the ancestral strain, Omicron BA.1, and Omicron BA.5 variants. Total anti-5 IgG (F) and nAb (G) against ancestral strain, Omicron BA.1, and Omicron BA.5 variants were compared between KTR and HCs (n=11) at 30 days (n=11) at 30 days post-D3. Dotted lines indicate the limit of detection (LOD), which is -1.52 for the anti-S
IgG ELISA assay (**A, C, F**) and 0.17 for the nAb assay (**B, D, E, G**). Open circles represent non-responders
with (gG ELISA assay (**A, C, F**) and 0.17 for the nAb assay (**B, D, E, G**). Open circles represent non-responders
with negative serological responses that fall below the LOD value. Solid triangles represent patients with
a conf with negative serological responses that fall below the LOD value. Solid triangles represent patients with
a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection during the course of the study. The mean± 95% CI are shown in each a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection during the course of the study. The mean± 95% CI are shown in each
panel. Significance is tested using one-way repeated measures ANOVA (A-E), and unpaired t-tests (F, G).
*p < 0.05, **p < 0 panel. Significance is tested using one-way repeated measures ANOVA (A-E), and unpaired t-tests (F, G)
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, and ****p <0.0001. Fold changes (x) are labeled below the
significance lines. Num *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, and ****p <0.0001. Fold changes (x) are labeled below the significance lines. Number of positive samples out of the total number of samples tested are ind parentheses. significance lines. Number of positive samples out of the total number of samples tested are indicated in
parentheses.
Figure 2. Serum IgG subclass profile to SARS-CoV-2 ancestral strain in KTRs.
SARS-CoV-2 Spike (S)-speci

Figure 2. Serum IgG subclass profile to SARS-CoV-2 ancestral strain in KTRs.

spanned tested are the total number of positive samples out of the total number of the total are indicated in
Pigure 2. Serum IgG subclass profile to SARS-CoV-2 ancestral strain in KTRs.
SARS-CoV-2 Spike (S)-specific IgG s r
**Figure 2. Serl
**SARS-CoV-2 S
(purple) agair
dose 3 (30 da (purple) against ancestral strain were measured in KTRs (n=81) prior to dose 3 (pre-D3), 30 days post-
dose 3 (30 days post-D3), and 90 days post-dose 3 (90 days post-D3) (**A**). Anti-S IgG subclasses antibody
levels agains the changes of serological responses in IgG subclasses from pre-D3, 30 days post-D3, to 90 days post-D3 dose 3 (30 days post-D3), and 30 days post-dose 3 (30 days post-D3) (A). Anti-3 igO subclasses antibody
levels against SARS-CoV-2 ancestral strain were compared at 30 days post-D3 (B) and 90 days post-D3 (C
in KTRs with an levels against SARS-Cov-2 ancestral strain were compared at 30 days post-D3 (D) and 90 days post-D3 (e)
in KTRs-with anti-S total IgG (red) as a reference on the left of both panels. A summary panel of anti-S
IgG subclassigG subclass-specific antibody levels against ancestral strain are shown and connected by lines to shov
the changes of serological responses in IgG subclasses from pre-D3, 30 days post-D3, to 90 days post-I
(D). Comparison Ig subclasses from pre-D3, 30 days post-D3, to 90 days post-D3

IgG subclass-specific antibody levels against ancestral strain were made

between KTRs and healthy controls (HCs) (n=11) at 30 days post-D3 (E). Dotted lines (D). Comparison of anti-S IgG subclass-specific antibody levels against ancestral strain were made
between KTRs and healthy controls (HCs) (n=11) at 30 days post-D3 (E). Dotted lines indicate the limit of
detection (LOD), (b). Comparison of anti-3 igo subclass-specific antibody levels against ancestral strain were made
between KTRs and healthy controls (HCs) (n=11) at 30 days post-D3 (E). Dotted lines indicate the l
detection (LOD), which between KTRs and healthy controls (HCs) (n=11) at 30 days post-D3 (E). Dotted lines indicate the limit of
detection (LOD), which is -3.00 for the subclass-specific IgG ELISA assay. Open circles represent non-
responders wi patients with a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection during the course of the study. The mean± 95% CI are
shown in each panel. Significance is tested using mixed-effects model (A), one-way repeated measures
ANOVA (B, C), and un shown in each panel. Significance is tested using mixed-effects model (A), one-way repeated measures
ANOVA (B, C), and unpaired t test (E). $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$, and $****p < 0.0001$. Fold shown in each panel. Significance is tested using mixed-effects model (A), one-way repeated measures
ANOVA (B, C), and unpaired t test (E). *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, and ****p <0.0001. Fold ANOVA (B, C), and unpaired t test (E). μ < 0.05, μ < 0.01, μ × 0.001, and μ ×0.0001. Fold

changes (x) are labeled below the significance lines is much change of the total number of samples tested are indicated in parentheses. of samples tested are indicated in parentheses.

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Anti-S IgG (log10 AUC)

Anti-S IgG (log₁₀ AUC)

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