Evolution of Antibody Immunity to SARS-CoV-2

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Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) has infected 78 million

individuals and is responsible for over 1.7 million deaths to date. Infection is associated

with development of variable levels of antibodies with neutralizing activity that can protect

against infection in animal models. Antibody levels decrease with time, but the nature and

quality of the memory B cells that would be called upon to produce antibodies upon re-

infection has not been examined. Here we report on the humoral memory response in a

cohort of 87 individuals assessed at 1.3 and 6.2 months after infection. We find that IgM,

and IgG anti-SARS-CoV-2 spike protein receptor binding domain (RBD) antibody titers

decrease significantly with IgA being less affected. Concurrently, neutralizing activity in

plasma decreases by five-fold in pseudotype virus assays. In contrast, the number of RBD-

specific memory B cells is unchanged. Memory B cells display clonal turnover after 6.2

months, and the antibodies they express have greater somatic hypermutation, increased

potency and resistance to RBD mutations, indicative of continued evolution of the humoral

response. Analysis of intestinal biopsies obtained from asymptomatic individuals 4 months

after coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) onset, using immunofluorescence, or

polymerase chain reaction, revealed persistence of SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acids and

immunoreactivity in the small bowel of 7 out of 14 volunteers. We conclude that the

memory B cell response to SARS-CoV-2 evolves between 1.3 and 6.2 months after infection

in a manner that is consistent with antigen persistence.

Antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2 were initially characterized in a cohort of COVID-19-

convalescent individuals approximately 40 days (1.3 months) after infection [1]. Between 31

August and 16 October 2020, 100 participants returned for a 6-month follow-up study visit.

Although initial criteria allowed enrollment of close contacts of individuals diagnosed with

reverse transcription (RT–PCR) confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection [1], 13 of the contacts did not

seroconvert and were excluded from further analyses. The remaining 87 participants with RT-

PCR–confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis and/or seroconversion returned for analysis approximately

191 days (6.2 months, range: 165-223 days) after the onset of symptoms. In this cohort,

symptoms lasted for a median of 12 days (0–44 days) during the acute phase, and 10 (11%) of

the participants were hospitalized. Consistent with other reports [2,3], 38 (44%) of the participants

reported persistent long-term symptoms attributable to COVID-19 (Methods and Supplementary

Tables 1 and 2). The duration and severity of symptoms during acute disease was significantly

greater among participants with persistent post-acute symptoms at the second study visit

(Extended Data Fig. 1m-q). Importantly, all 87 participants tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 at

the 6-month follow-up study visit using an approved saliva-based PCR assay (Methods).

Participant demographics and clinical characteristics are shown in Supplementary Tables 1,2.

Antibody reactivity in plasma to RBD and nucleoprotein (N) was measured by enzyme-linked

immunosorbent assay (ELISA) and automated serological assays [1,4,5]. Anti-RBD assays were

strongly correlated (ELISA anti-RBD IgG and IgM/Pylon-IgG and IgM at 1.3 months, r=0.9200

and r=0.7543, p < 0.0001, respectively. Extended Data Fig 2a-d) while anti-N assays showed a

moderate correlation (anti-N IgG ELISA and Roche anti-N total Ig at 1.3 months, r=0.3596, p =

0.0012. Extended Data Fig 2e-f). The anti-RBD and ELISA anti-N antibodies in plasma

decreased significantly between 1.3 and 6.2 months (Fig. 1a-d). Notably, the decreased binding

activity differed significantly by isotype and target. IgM showed the greatest decrease in anti-

RBD reactivity (53%), followed by IgG (32%) while anti-RBD IgA decreased by only 15% and

anti-N IgG levels by 22% (Fig. 1e). In contrast, the Roche anti-N assay[5] showed a small but

significant increase (19%) in reactivity between the two time points (Extended Data Fig 2g)

which might be explained by the use of an antigen bridging approach[6]. In all cases the magnitude

of the decrease was inversely proportional to and directly correlated with the initial antibody

levels such that individuals with higher initial levels showed greater relative changes (Fig. 1f-i,

Extended Data Fig 2h). All measurements were strongly correlated between the two time points

(Extended Data Fig 2i-m) and anti-N IgG correlated with IgM, IgG and IgA anti-RBD reactivity

at 1.3 months, respectively (Extended Data Fig. 2n-p). Notably, individuals with persistent post-

acute symptoms had significantly higher anti-RBD IgG and anti-N total antibody levels at both

study visits (Extended Data Fig. 1a-l).

Plasma neutralizing activity was measured using an HIV-1 virus pseudotyped with the SARS-

CoV-2 spike protein[1,7]. Consistent with other reports the geometric mean half-maximal

neutralizing titer (NT_{50}) in this group of 87 participants was 401 and 78 at 1.3 and 6.2 months,

respectively, representing a five-fold decrease (Fig. 1j-k)[8,9]. Neutralizing activity was directly

correlated with the IgG anti-RBD ELISA measurements (Extended data Fig. 2q-r). Moreover,

the absolute magnitude of the decrease in neutralizing activity was inversely proportional to and

directly correlated with the neutralizing activity at the earlier time point (Fig. 1l). We conclude

that antibodies to RBD and plasma neutralizing activity decrease significantly but remain

detectable 6 months after infection with SARS-CoV-2 in the majority of individuals.

To examine the phenotypic landscape of circulating B cells we performed high-dimensional flow

cytometry on 41 randomly selected individuals at both time points and compared to pre-COVID-

19 samples from healthy individuals (n=20). Global high-dimensional mapping with t-distributed

stochastic neighbor embedding (tSNE) revealed significant persistent alterations in SARS-CoV-2

recovered individuals (Extended data Fig. 3a). The relative representation of clusters 2, 7, 8, 10

corresponding to naïve, memory, plasmablasts and plasma cells was decreased at 1.3 months and

remained so at the later time point. Metacluster 15, which corresponds to immature B cells that

are recent bone marrow immigrants was increased at the early time point but returned to control

levels at the end of the observation period (Extended data Fig. 3b-d).

Whereas plasma cells are the source of circulating antibodies, memory B cells contribute to

recall responses. To identify and enumerate the circulating SARS-CoV-2 memory B cell

compartment we used flow cytometry to isolate individual B lymphocytes with receptors that

bound to RBD [1] (Fig. 2a and Extended data Fig. 4). Notably, the percentage of RBD-binding

memory B cells increased marginally between 1.3 and 6.2 months in 21 randomly selected

individuals (Fig. 2b).

To determine whether there were changes in the antibodies produced by memory B cells after 6.2

months, we obtained 532 paired antibody heavy and light chains from the same 6 individuals that

were examined at the earlier time point[1] (Supplementary Table 3). There was no significant

difference in IGV gene representation at the two time points, including the over-representation of

the *IGHV3-30* and *3-53* gene segments [1,10-15] (Extended data Fig. 5a-b). In keeping with this

observation, and similar to the earlier time point, antibodies that shared the same IGHV and

IGLV genes comprised 8.6% of all sequences in different individuals (Extended data Fig. 5c). As

might be expected, there was a small but significant overall increase in the percentage of IgG-

expressing anti-RBD memory cells, from 49% to 58% (p=0.011, Extended data Fig. 5d-f).

Consistent with the fractional increase in IgG memory cells, the extent of somatic hypermutation

for both IGH and IGL differed significantly in all 6 individuals between the two time points.

Whereas the average number of nucleotide mutations in IGH and IGL was only 4.2 and 2.8 at the

first time point, these values were increased to 11.7 and 6.5 at the second time point (p<0.0001,

Fig. 2c and Extended data Fig. 6a-f). In contrast, the overall average IGH and IGL CDR3 length

and hydrophobicity were unchanged (Extended data Fig. 6g-h).

Similar to the earlier time point, we found expanded clones of memory B cells at 6.2 months

including 23 that appeared at both time points. However, expanded clones accounted for only

12.4% of all antibody sequences after 6.2 months compared to 32% after 1.3 months (p = 0.0225,

Fig. 2d-e). In addition, the overall clonal composition of the memory compartment differed at the

two time points in all individuals examined (Fig. 2d). Forty-three expanded clones that were

present at the earlier time point were not detectable after 6.2 months while 22 new expanded

clones appeared. In addition, the relative distribution of clones that appeared at both time points

also varied. For example, the dominant clones in COV21 and COV57 representing 9.0% and

16.7% of all sequences, respectively, were reduced to 1.1% and 1.9% of all sequences after 6.2

months (Fig. 2d and Supplementary Table 3). We conclude that while the magnitude of the

RBD-specific memory B cell compartment is conserved between 1.3 and 6.2 months after

SARS-CoV-2 infection, there is significant clonal turnover and antibody sequence evolution,

consistent with prolonged germinal center reactions.

One hundred and twenty-two representative antibodies from the 6.2-month time point were

tested for reactivity to RBD (Supplementary Table 4). The antibodies that were evaluated

included: (1) 49 that were randomly selected from those that appeared only once; (2) 23 that

appeared as singles at both 1.3 and 6.2 months; (3) 23 representatives of newly appearing

expanded clones; (4) 27 representatives of expanded clones appearing at both time points. One

hundred and fifteen of 122 of the antibodies bound to RBD indicating that flow cytometry

efficiently identified B cells producing anti-RBD antibodies (Fig. 3a and Supplementary Tables

4 and 5). Taking all antibodies together, the mean ELISA half-maximal effective concentration

(EC_{50}) was not significantly different at the two time points (Fig. 3a, Supplementary Table 4 and

[1]). However, comparison of the antibodies that were present at both time points revealed a

significant improvement of the EC_{50} after 6.2 months (p = 0.0227, Fig. 3b and Extended data

Fig.7a).

To determine whether the antibodies expressed by memory B cells at the late time point also

showed altered breadth, we compared them to earlier clonal relatives in binding assays using

control and mutant RBDs: The mutations E484K and Q493R[16] were selected for resistance to

class 2 antibodies such as C144 and C121 that bind directly to the ACE2 interaction ridge in the

RBD [1,17-19] while R346S, N439K, and N440K were selected for resistance to class 3 antibodies

such as C135 that do not directly interfere with ACE2 binding [1,16-19] (Fig. 3c). In addition,

V367F, A475V, S477N, and V483A represent circulating variants that confer complete or partial

resistance to class 1 and 2 antibodies [16,17,20] (Fig. 3c). Out of 52 antibody clonal pairs appearing

at both time points, 43 (83%) showed overall increased binding to mutant RBDs at the 6.2-month

time point (Extended data Fig. 7b-k, Supplementary Table 5). For example, C144, an antibody

recovered at the 1.3-month time point, was unable to bind to Q493R or E484K RBDs, but all 5

of its 6.2-month clonal derivatives bound to Q493R, and one also showed binding to E484K

(Fig. 3d). Overall, the most pronounced increase in binding occurred for RBD mutations in

amino acid positions such as E484, Q493, N439, N440 and R346 that are critical for binding of

class 2 and 3 antibodies [16,17] (Fig. 3e, Extended data Fig. 7b-k and Supplementary Table 5).

Next, all 122 antibodies from the 6.2 month time point were tested for activity in a pseudotyped

SARS-CoV-2 neutralization assay [1,7] (Fig. 4a, Supplementary Table 6). Consistent with RBD

binding assays, the mean neutralization half-maximal inhibitory concentrations (IC_{50}) values

were not significantly different at the two time points when all antibodies were compared (Fig.

4a and [1]). However, comparison of the antibodies that were present at both time points revealed a

significant improvement of the IC_{50} values at 6.2 months (p=0.0003, Fig. 4b and Extended data

Fig. 8a).

To determine whether the antibodies exhibiting altered RBD binding also show increased

neutralizing breadth, we tested 5 representative antibody pairs recovered at the two time points

against HIV-1 viruses pseudotyped with E484G, Q493R, and R346S mutant spike proteins (Fig.

4c, Supplementary Table 6). Notably, the Q493R and E484G pseudotyped viruses were resistant

to neutralization by C144; in contrast, its 6.2-month clonal derivative C051 neutralized both

variants with IC_{50} values of 4.7 and 3.1 ng/ml respectively (Fig. 4c-d). Similarly, R346S

pseudotyped viruses were resistant to C032, but a 6.2-month clonal derivative C080 neutralized

this variant with an IC_{50} of 5.3 ng/ml (Fig. 4c, Extended data Fig. 8b-f). Consistent with the

observed changes in binding and neutralizing activity several late-appearing antibodies (e.g.

C051) had acquired mutations directly in or adjacent to the RBD-binding paratope (Fig. 4e,

Extended data Fig. 8g-j). We conclude that memory B cells that evolved during the observation

period express antibodies with increased neutralizing potency and breadth.

Antibody evolution occurs by somatic mutation and selection in germinal centers wherein

antigen can be retained in the form of immune complexes on the surface of follicular dendritic

cells for prolonged periods of time. Residual protein in tissues represents another potential

source of antigen. SARS-CoV-2 replicates in ACE2-expressing cells in the lungs, nasopharynx

and small intestine [21-24], and viral RNA has been detected in stool samples even after the virus is

cleared from the nasopharynx [25-27]. To determine whether there might be antigen persistence in

the intestine after resolution of clinical illness, we obtained biopsies from the upper and lower

gastrointestinal (GI) tract of 14 individuals, an average of 4 months (range 2.8-5.7 months) after

initial SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis (Supplementary Table 7). Immunostaining was performed to

determine whether viral protein was also detectable in upper and lower GI tract, with de-

identified biopsies from individuals pre-dating the pandemic (n=10) serving as controls. ACE2

and SARS-CoV-2 N protein was detected in intestinal enterocytes in 5 of 14 individuals (Fig. 5a-

d, Extended data Fig. 9a-h and 10a-b, and Supplementary Table 7) but not in historic control

samples (Extended data Fig. 9i-l). When detected, immunostaining was sporadic, patchy,

exclusive to the intestinal epithelium and not associated with inflammatory infiltrates (Extended

data Fig. 9a-h and 10a-b). Clinically approved nasopharyngeal swab PCR assays were negative

in all 14 individuals at the time of biopsy. However, biopsy samples from 3 of the 14 participants

produced PCR amplicons that were sequence verified as SARS-CoV-2 (Methods and

Supplementary Table 7). In addition, viral RNA was detected by in situ hybridization in biopsy

samples from the two participants that were tested (Extended data Fig. 10c-d) but not in historic

control samples (Extended data Fig. 10e). Sampling variability during the endoscopic procedure

likely contributed to incomplete concordance between detection of viral RNA and protein assays.

Neutralizing antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 develop in most individuals after infection but decay

with time [6,8,9,28-31]. These antibodies are effective in prevention and therapy in animal models and

are likely to play a role in protection from re-infection in humans [32]. Although there is a

significant decrease in plasma neutralizing activity between 1.3 and 6.2 months, antibody titers

remain measurable in most individuals [8,9,28-31,33-36].

Neutralizing monoclonal antibodies obtained from individuals during the early convalescence

period showed remarkably low levels of somatic mutations that some investigators attributed to

defects in germinal center formation [10,11,13,37-40]. Our data indicate that the anti-SARS-CoV-2

memory B cell response evolves during the first 6 months after infection, with accumulation of

Ig somatic mutations, and production of antibodies with increased neutralizing breadth and

potency. Persistent antibody evolution occurs in germinal centers and requires that B cells are

exposed to antigen trapped in the form of immune complexes on follicular dendritic cells [41]. This

form of antigen can be long-lived because follicular dendritic cells do not internalize immune

complexes. In addition, even small amounts of persistent viral antigen could fuel antibody

evolution. The observation that SARS-CoV-2 mRNA and protein remains detectable in the small

intestinal epithelium in some individuals months after infection is consistent with the relative

persistence of anti-RBD IgA antibodies and continued antibody evolution [34-36].

Memory responses are responsible for protection from re-infection and are essential for effective

vaccination. The observation that memory B cell responses do not decay after 6.2 months [34,35,42],

but instead continue to evolve, is strongly suggestive that individuals who are infected with

SARS-CoV-2 could mount a rapid and effective response to the virus upon re-exposure.

Figure Legends

Fig. 1: Plasma antibody dynamics against SARS-CoV-2.

a–d, Results of ELISAs measuring plasma reactivity to RBD (**a**,**b**,**c**) and N protein (**d**) at the

initial 1.3 and 6.2 month follow-up visit, respectively. **a**, Anti-RBD IgM. **b**, Anti-RBD IgG. **c**,

Anti-RBD IgA **d**, Anti-N IgG. The normalized area under the curve (AUC) values for 87

individuals are shown in **a,b,c** and **d** for both time points, respectively. Positive and negative

controls were included for validation [1]. **e**, Relative change in plasma antibody levels between 1.3

and 6.2 months for anti-RBD IgM, IgG, IgA and anti-N IgG in all 87 individuals, respectively. **f-**

i, Relative change in antibody levels between 1.3 and 6.2 months plotted against the

corresponding antibody levels at 1.3 months. **f**, Anti-RBD IgM. r = -0.83, p <0.0001. **g**, Anti-

RBD IgG. r = -0.76, p <0.0001. **h**, Anti-RBD IgA. r = -0.67, p <0.0001. **i**, Anti-N IgG. r = -0.87,

p <0.0001. **j.** Ranked average half-maximal inhibitory plasma neutralizing titer (NT50) at 1.3

months (blue) and 6.2 months (red) for the 87 individuals studied. **k.** Graph shows NT50 for

plasma from all 87 individuals collected at 1.3 and 6.2 months p <0.0001. **l.** Relative change in

plasma neutralizing titers between 1.3 and 6.2 months plotted against the corresponding titers at

1.3 months. For **a-e**, **k** plotted values and horizontal bars indicate geometric mean. Statistical

significance was determined using two-tailed Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test in **a-d**, **k**

and Friedman with Dunn's multiple comparison test in **e**. The *r* and *p* values in **f** – **i** and **l** were

determined by two-tailed Spearman's correlations.

Fig. 2: Anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD antibody sequences.

a, Representative flow cytometry plots showing dual AlexaFluor-647–RBD- and PE–RBD-

binding B cells for six study individuals (gating strategy is in Extended Data Fig.5). Percentage

268 of antigen-specific B cells is indicated. **b.** As in **a.** graph summarizes %RBD binding memory B

269 cells in samples obtained at 1.3 and 6.2 months from 21 randomly selected individuals. Red

270 horizontal bars indicate geometric mean values. Statistical significance was determined using

271 two-tailed Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test. **c,** Number of somatic nucleotide mutations

272 in the IGVH (top) and IGVL (bottom) in antibodies obtained after 1.3 or 6.2 months from the

273 indicated individual or all six donors (right). Statistical significance was determined using two-

274 tailed Mann–Whitney U-tests and horizontal bars indicate median values. **d,** Pie charts show the

275 distribution of antibody sequences from six individuals after 1.3 [1] (upper panel) or 6.2 months

276 (lower panel). The number in the inner circle indicates the number of sequences analyzed for the

277 individual denoted above the circle. Pie slice size is proportional to the number of clonally

278 related sequences. The black outline indicates the frequency of clonally expanded sequences

279 detected in each participant. Colored slices indicate persisting clones (same IGHV and IGLV

280 genes and highly similar CDR3s) found at both timepoints in the same participant. Grey slices

281 indicate clones unique to the timepoint. White slices indicate singlets found at both timepoints,

282 while the remaining white area indicates sequences isolated once. **e.** Graph shows relative

283 clonality at both time points for all six donors. Red horizontal bars indicate mean values.

284 Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed t-test.

285 **Fig. 3: Anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD monoclonal antibody reactivity.**

286 **a,** Graphs show anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD antibody reactivity. ELISA EC_{50} values for all

287 antibodies measured at 1.3 [1] and 122 selected monoclonal antibodies at 6.2 months. Horizontal

288 bars indicate geometric mean. Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed Mann–

289 Whitney U-test. **b**, EC_{50} values for all 52 antibodies that appear at 1.3 and 6.2 months. Average

290 of two or more experiments. Horizontal bars indicate geometric mean. Statistical significance

was determined using two-tailed Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test. **c,** Surface

representation of the RBD with the ACE2 binding footprint indicated as a dotted line and

selected residues found in circulating strains (grey) and residues that mediate resistance to class 2

(red, C144) and 3 (green, C135) antibodies highlighted as sticks. **d.** Graphs show ELISA binding

curves for C144 (black dashed line) and its clonal relatives obtained after 6.2 months (C050-54,

solid lines) binding to wild type, Q493R, R346S, and E484K mutant RBDs. **e.** Heat map shows

log2 relative fold change in EC_{50} against indicated RBD mutants for 26 antibody clonal pairs

obtained at 1.3 and 6.2 month with the most pronounced changes in reactivity. The participant

origin for each antibody pair is indicated above. All experiments were performed at least twice.

Fig.4: Anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD monoclonal antibody neutralizing activity.

a, SARS-CoV-2 pseudovirus neutralization assay. IC_{50} values for all antibodies measured at 1.3

months[1] and 122 selected antibodies at 6.2 months. Antibodies with IC_{50} values above 1 µg/ml

were plotted at 1 µg/ml. Mean of 2 independent experiments. Red bar indicates geometric mean.

Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed Mann-Whitney U-test. **b,** IC50 values

for 52 antibodies appearing at 1.3 and 6.2 months. Red bar indicates geometric mean. Statistical

significance was determined using two-tailed Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test. **c,** IC_{50}

values for 5 different pairs of mAb clonal relatives obtained after 1.3 (blue) or 6.2 months (red)

for neutralization of wild type and mutant SARS-CoV-2 pseudovirus. Antibody IDs of the 1.3

months/6.2 months mAb pairs as indicated. **d,** Graph shows the normalized relative

luminescence values for cell lysates of $293T_{ACE2}$ cells 48 hpi with SARS-CoV-2 pseudovirus

harboring wt RBD or three mutant RBDs (wt, Q493R, E484G, R346S RBD mutants are shown

in black, red, green and blue, respectively) in the presence of increasing concentrations of two

mAbs C144 (1.3 months, dashed lines) or C051 (6.2 months, solid lines). Experiments were

performed at least twice. **e,** Surface representation of two adjacent "down" RBDs (RBD$_A$ and

RBD$_B$) on a spike trimer with the C144 epitope on the RBDs highlighted in cyan and positions of

amino acid mutations that accumulated in C051 compared to the parent antibody C144

highlighted as stick side chains on a Cα atom representation C051 V$_H$V$_L$ binding to adjacent

RBDs. The C051 interaction with two RBDs was modeled based on a cryo-EM structure of C144

Fab bound to spike trimer [17].

Fig. 5: Immunofluorescence imaging of intestinal biopsies.

a, Immunofluorescence images of human enterocytes stained for EPCAM (red), DAPI (blue) and

either ACE2 (green, **a** and **c**) or SARS-CoV-2 N (green, **b** and **d**) in intestinal biopsies taken 92

days after COVID-19 symptom onset of participant CGI-088 in the terminal ileum (**a-b**) or

duodenum (**c-d**). Arrows indicate enterocytes with detectable SARS-CoV-2 antigen. White scale

bar corresponds to 100 μm. The experiments were repeated independently at least twice with

similar results.

Methods
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Data reporting

No statistical methods were used to predetermine sample size. The experiments were not

randomized and the investigators were not blinded to allocation during experiments and outcome

assessment.

Study participants. Previously enrolled study participants [1] were asked to return for a 6-month

follow-up visit at the Rockefeller University Hospital in New York from August 31 through

October 16, 2020. Eligible participants were adults aged 18-76 years and were either diagnosed

with SARS-CoV-2 infection by RT-PCR (cases), or were close contacts (e.g., household, co-

workers, members of same religious community) with someone who had been diagnosed with

SARS-CoV-2 infection by RT-PCR (contacts). Close contacts without seroconversion against

SARS-CoV-2 as assessed by serological assays (described below) were not included in the

subsequent analysis. Most study participants were residents of the Greater New York City tri-

state region and were asked to return approximately 6 months after the time of onset of COVID-

19 symptoms. Participants presented to the Rockefeller University Hospital for blood sample

collection and were asked to recall the symptoms and severity of clinical presentation during the

acute (first 6 weeks) and the convalescent (7 weeks until second study visit) phase of COVID-19,

respectively. The severity of acute infection was assessed by the WHO Ordinal Clinical

Progression/Improvement Scale (https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/covid-19-therapeutic-

trial-synopsis). Shortness of breath was assessed through the modified Medical Research Council

(mMRC) dyspnea scale [43]. Participants who presented with persistent symptoms attributable to

COVID-19 were identified on the basis of chronic shortness of breath or fatigue, deficit in

athletic ability and/or three or more additional long-term symptoms such as persistent

unexplained fevers, chest pain, new-onset cardiac sequalae, arthralgias, impairment of

concentration/mental acuity, impairment of sense of smell/taste, neuropathy or cutaneous

findings [2,3]. All participants at Rockefeller University provided written informed consent before

participation in the study and the study was conducted in accordance with Good Clinical

Practice. Clinical data collection and management were carried out using the software iRIS by

iMedRIS. The study was performed in compliance with all relevant ethical regulations and the

protocol for studies with human participants was approved by the Institutional Review Board of

the Rockefeller University.

Gastrointestinal biopsy cohort. To determine if SARS-CoV-2 can persist in the

gastrointestinal tract, we recruited a cohort of 14 individuals with prior diagnosis of and recovery

from COVID-19 illness. Eligible participants included adults, 18-76 years of age who were

previously diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR or through a combination of clinical

symptoms consistent with COVID-19 plus evidence of seroconversion, and presented to the

gastroenterology clinics of Mount Sinai Hospital. Endoscopic procedures were performed for

clinically indicated conditions as detailed in Supplementary Table 7. All participants were

asymptomatic at the time of the endoscopic procedures and negative for SARS-CoV-2 by nasal

swab PCR (Cycle threshold (Ct) cut-off <38).

The CLIA certified laboratory of the Mount Sinai Health System validated the laboratory-

developed nasopharyngeal swab real time RT-PCR test according to the New York State

Department of Health Wadsworth Center validation procedure for SARS-CoV-2[44]. Informed

consent was obtained from all participants. The biopsy-related studies were approved by the

Mount Sinai Ethics Committee/IRB (IRB 16-0583, The impact of viral infections and their

treatment on gastrointestinal immune cells).

SARS-CoV-2 saliva PCR test

The SARS-CoV-2 PCR method for saliva samples was developed and its performance

characteristics determined by the Rockefeller University Clinical Genomics Laboratory. This

laboratory-developed test has been authorized by New York State under an Emergency Use

Authorization (EUA) for use by authorized laboratories. Saliva was collected into guanidine

thiocyanate buffer as described [45]. RNA was extracted using either a column-based (Qiagen

QIAmp DSP Viral RNA Mini Kit, Cat#61904) or a magnetic bead-based method as described [46].

Reverse transcribed cDNA was amplified using primers and probes validated by the CDC or by

Columbia University Personalized Medicine Genomics Laboratory, respectively, and approved

by the FDA under the Emergency Use Authorization. Viral RNA was considered detected if the

cycle threshold (Ct) for two viral primers/probes were <40.

Blood samples processing and storage. Peripheral Blood Mononuclear Cells (PBMCs) were

obtained by gradient centrifugation and stored in liquid nitrogen in the presence of FCS and

DMSO. Heparinized plasma and serum samples were aliquoted and stored at -20°C or less. Prior

to experiments, aliquots of plasma samples were heat-inactivated (56°C for 1 hour) and then

stored at 4°C.

High throughput automated serology assays

Plasma samples from 80 out of 87 participants were tested by high throughput automated

serology assays. The Roche Elecsys anti-SARS-CoV-2 assay was performed on Roche Cobas

e411 (Roche Diagnostics, Indianapolis, IN). The Elecsys anti SARS CoV-2 assay uses a

recombinant protein representing the N antigen for the determination of antibodies against

SARS CoV 2. This assay received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) approval from the

United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [5]. The Pylon COVID-19 IgG and IgM

assays were used to measure plasma IgG and IgM antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, respectively.

Plasma samples were assayed on the Pylon 3D analyzer (ET HealthCare, Palo Alto, CA) as

previously described [4]. This assay was implemented clinically as a laboratory-developed test

under New York State Department of Health regulations. Briefly, the assay was performed using

a unitized test strip containing wells with pre-dispensed reagents. The COVID-19 reagent

contains biotinylated recombinant versions of the SARS-CoV-2 S-Protein RBD and trace

amounts of N protein as antigens that bind IgG and IgM, respectively. The cut off values for both

Pylon assays were determined using the mean of non-COVID-19 samples plus 6 Standard

Deviations (SDs). The results of a sample are reported in the form of a cutoff index (COI) or an

index value (IV), which were determined by the instrument readout of the test sample divided by

instrument readout at cut off.

ELISAs

ELISAs [47,48] to evaluate antibodies binding to SARS-CoV-2 N (Sino Biological 40588-V08B),

RBD and additional RBDs were performed by coating of high-binding 96-half-well plates

(Corning 3690) with 50 µl per well of a 1µg/ml protein solution in PBS overnight at 4 °C. Plates

were washed 6 times with washing buffer (1× PBS with 0.05% Tween-20 (Sigma-Aldrich)) and

incubated with 170 µl per well blocking buffer (1× PBS with 2% BSA and 0.05% Tween-20

(Sigma)) for 1 h at room temperature. Immediately after blocking, monoclonal antibodies or

plasma samples were added in PBS and incubated for 1 h at room temperature. Plasma samples

were assayed at a 1:67 starting dilution and 7 additional threefold serial dilutions. Monoclonal

antibodies were tested at 10 µg/ml starting concentration and 10 additional fourfold serial

dilutions. Plates were washed 6 times with washing buffer and then incubated with anti-human

IgG, IgM or IgA secondary antibody conjugated to horseradish peroxidase (HRP) (Jackson

Immuno Research 109-036-088 109-035-129 and Sigma A0295) in blocking buffer at a 1:5,000

dilution (IgM and IgG) or 1:3,000 dilution (IgA). Plates were developed by addition of the HRP

substrate, TMB (ThermoFisher) for 10 min (plasma samples) or 4 minutes (monoclonal

antibodies), then the developing reaction was stopped by adding 50 µl 1 M H_2SO_4 and

absorbance was measured at 450 nm with an ELISA microplate reader (FluoStar Omega, BMG

Labtech) with Omega and Omega MARS software for analysis. For plasma samples, a positive

control (plasma from participant COV72, diluted 66.6-fold and seven additional threefold serial

dilutions in PBS) was added to every assay plate for validation. The average of its signal was

used for normalization of all of the other values on the same plate with Excel software before

calculating the area under the curve using Prism V8.4 (GraphPad). For monoclonal antibodies,

the EC50 was determined using four-parameter nonlinear regression (GraphPad Prism V8.4).

Expression of RBD proteins

Mammalian expression vectors encoding the RBDs of SARS-CoV-2 (GenBank MN985325.1; S

protein residues 319-539) and eight additional mutant RBD proteins (E484K, Q493R, R346S,

N493K, N440K, V367F, A475V, S477N and V483A) with an N-terminal human IL-2 or Mu

phosphatase signal peptide were previously described [49].

SARS-CoV-2 pseudotyped reporter virus

SARS-CoV-2 pseudotyped particles were generated as previously described [1,50]. Briefly, 293T

cells were transfected with pNL4-3ΔEnv-nanoluc and pSARS-CoV-2-S$_{\Delta 19}$. For generation of

RBD-mutant pseudoviruses, pSARS-CoV-2-S $_{\Delta 19}$ carrying either of the following spike

mutations was used instead of its wt counterpart: Q493R, R346S or E484G [51]. Particles were

harvested 48 hpt, filtered and stored at -80°C.

Pseudotyped virus neutralization assay

Fourfold serially diluted plasma from COVID-19-convalescent individuals or monoclonal

antibodies were incubated with SARS-CoV-2 pseudotyped virus for 1 h at 37 °C. The mixture

was subsequently incubated with 293T$_{Ace2}$ cells for 48 h after which cells were washed with PBS

and lysed with Luciferase Cell Culture Lysis 5× reagent (Promega). Nanoluc Luciferase activity

in lysates was measured using the Nano-Glo Luciferase Assay System (Promega) with the

Glomax Navigator (Promega). The obtained relative luminescence units were normalized to

those derived from cells infected with SARS-CoV-2 pseudotyped virus in the absence of plasma

or monoclonal antibodies. The half-maximal inhibitory concentration for plasma (NT_{50}) or

monoclonal antibodies (IC_{50}) was determined using four-parameter nonlinear regression (least

squares regression method without weighting; constraints: top=1, bottom=0) (GraphPad Prism).

High-dimensional data analysis of flow cytometry data

viSNE and FlowSOM analyses were performed on B cells using the Cytobank platform

(https://cytobank.org). viSNE analysis was performed using equal sampling of 4893 cells from

each FCS file, with 7500 iterations, a perplexity of 30, and a theta of 0.5. The following markers

were used to generate viSNE maps: IgA, CD305, TGFb-RII, CD138, CD10, CD272, IgD, CD24,

CD21, CD95, HLA-DR, IgG, CD279, CD38, IgM, CD274, CD27, CD23, CXCR5, CD32,

CD86, CD40, CD85j, CD11c, and CXCR3. Resulting viSNE maps were fed into the FlowSOM

clustering algorithm[52]. The self-organizing map (SOM) was generated using hierarchical

consensus clustering on the tSNE axes.

Heatmap visualization

Heatmaps to display column-scaled z-scores of MFI for individual FlowSOM clusters according

to marker expression were created using the R function pheatmap.

Biotinylation of viral protein for use in flow cytometry

Purified and Avi-tagged SARS-CoV-2 RBD was biotinylated using the Biotin-Protein Ligase-

BIRA kit according to manufacturer's instructions (Avidity) as described before [1]. Ovalbumin

(Sigma, A5503-1G) was biotinylated using the EZ-Link Sulfo-NHS-LC-Biotinylation kit

according to the manufacturer's instructions (Thermo Scientific). Biotinylated ovalbumin was

conjugated to streptavidin-BV711 (BD biosciences, 563262) and RBD to streptavidin-PE (BD

Biosciences, 554061) and streptavidin-AF647 (Biolegend, 405237)[1].

Single-cell sorting by flow cytometry

Single-cell sorting by flow cytometry was described previously [1]. Briefly, peripheral blood

mononuclear cells were enriched for B cells by negative selection using a pan-B-cell isolation kit

according to the manufacturer's instructions (Miltenyi Biotec, 130-101-638). The enriched B

cells were incubated in FACS buffer ($1\times$ PBS, 2% FCS, 1 mM EDTA) with the following anti-

human antibodies (all at 1:200 dilution): anti-CD20-PECy7 (BD Biosciences, 335793), anti-

CD3-APC-eFluro 780 (Invitrogen, 47-0037-41), anti-CD8-APC-eFluor 780 (Invitrogen, 47-

0086-42), anti-CD16-APC-eFluor 780 (Invitrogen, 47-0168-41), anti-CD14-APC-eFluor 780

(Invitrogen, 47-0149-42), as well as Zombie NIR (BioLegend, 423105) and fluorophore-labelled

RBD   and   ovalbumin   (Ova)   for   30   min   on   ice.   Single

CD3−CD8−CD14−CD16−CD20+Ova−RBD-PE+RBD-AF647+ B cells were sorted into

individual wells of 96-well plates containing 4 µl of lysis buffer ($0.5\times$ PBS, 10 mM DTT, 3,000

units/ml RNasin Ribonuclease Inhibitors (Promega, N2615) per well using a FACS Aria III and

FACSDiva software (Becton Dickinson) for acquisition and FlowJo for analysis. The sorted cells

were frozen on dry ice, and then stored at $-80\,°C$ or immediately used for subsequent RNA

reverse transcription.

Antibody sequencing, cloning and expression

Antibodies were identified and sequenced as described previously [1]. In brief, RNA from single

cells was reverse-transcribed (SuperScript III Reverse Transcriptase, Invitrogen, 18080-044) and

the cDNA stored at $-20\,°C$ or used for subsequent amplification of the variable IGH, IGL and

IGK genes by nested PCR and Sanger sequencing. Sequence analysis was performed using

MacVector. Amplicons from the first PCR reaction were used as templates for sequence- and

ligation-independent cloning into antibody expression vectors. Recombinant monoclonal

antibodies and Fabs were produced and purified as previously described [1].

Computational analyses of antibody sequences

Antibody sequences were trimmed based on quality and annotated using Igblastn v.1.14. with

IMGT domain delineation system. Annotation was performed systematically using Change-O

toolkit v.0.4.540 [53]. Heavy and light chains derived from the same cell were paired, and

clonotypes were assigned based on their V and J genes using in-house R and Perl scripts

(Extended data Fig. 5). All scripts and the data used to process antibody sequences are publicly

available on GitHub (https://github.com/stratust/igpipeline).

The frequency distributions of human V genes in anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies from this study

was compared to 131,284,220 IgH and IgL sequences generated by [54] and downloaded from

cAb-Rep[55], a database of human shared BCR clonotypes available at https://cab-

rep.c2b2.columbia.edu/. Based on the 82 distinct V genes that make up the 1703 analyzed

sequences from Ig repertoire of the three participants present in this study, we selected the IgH

and IgL sequences from the database that are partially coded by the same V genes and counted

them according to the constant region. The frequencies shown in (Fig. S4) are relative to the

source and isotype analyzed. We used the two-sided binomial test to check whether the number

of sequences belonging to a specific IgHV or IgLV gene in the repertoire is different according

to the frequency of the same IgV gene in the database. Adjusted p-values were calculated using

the false discovery rate (FDR) correction. Significant differences are denoted with stars.

Nucleotide somatic hypermutation and CDR3 length were determined using in-house R and Perl

scripts. For somatic hypermutations, IGHV and IGLV nucleotide sequences were aligned against

their closest germlines using Igblastn and the number of differences were considered nucleotide

mutations. The average mutations for V genes was calculated by dividing the sum of all

nucleotide mutations across all participants by the number of sequences used for the analysis. To

calculate the GRAVY scores of hydrophobicity [56] we used Guy H.R. Hydrophobicity scale based

on free energy of transfer (kcal/mole) [57] implemented by the R package Peptides (the

Comprehensive R Archive Network repository; https://journal.r-project.org/archive/2015/RJ-

2015-001/RJ-2015-001.pdf). We used 532 heavy chain CDR3 amino acid sequences from this

study and 22,654,256 IGH CDR3 sequences from the public database of memory B cell receptor

sequences [58]. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to determine whether the GRAVY scores are

normally distributed. The GRAVY scores from all 532 IGH CDR3 amino acid sequences from

this study were used to perform the test and 5,000 GRAVY scores of the sequences from the

public database were randomly selected. The Shapiro–Wilk P values were 6.896×10^{-3} and

2.217×10^{-6} for sequences from this study and the public database, respectively, indicating that

the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, we used the two-tailed Wilcoxon

nonparametric test to compare the samples, which indicated a difference in hydrophobicity

distribution ($P = 5 \times 10^{-6}$) (Extended data Fig. 6h).

Heatmap of log2 relative fold change in EC50 against the indicated RBD mutants for antibody

clonal pairs obtained at 1.3 and 6.2 months (Fig.3e and Extended data Fig. 7k) was created with

R pheatmap package (https://github.com/raivokolde/pheatmap) using Euclidean distance and

Ward.2 clustering method.

Biopsies and Immunofluorescence

Endoscopically obtained mucosal biopsies were formalin fixed and paraffin embedded. Sections

(5µm) were cut, dewaxed in xylene, and rehydrated in graded alcohol and phosphate-buffered

saline (PBS). Heat-induced epitope retrieval was performed in target retrieval solution (Dako,

S1699) using a commercial pressure cooker. Slides were then cooled to room temperature,

washed in PBS and permeabilized for 30 minutes in 0.1% Triton X-100 in PBS. Non-specific

binding was blocked with 10% goat serum (Invitrogen, 50062Z) for 1 hour at room temperature.

Sections were then incubated with a combination of primary antibodies diluted in blocking

solution overnight at 4°C. Slides were washed 3 times in PBS and then incubated in secondary

antibody and 4′,6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (1ug/mL) for 1 hour at room temperature. Sections

were washed in PBS 3 times and then mounted with Fluoromount-G (Electron Microscopy

Sciences, 1798425). Controls included, omitting primary antibody (no primary 995 control), or

substituting primary antibodies with non-reactive antibodies of the same isotype (isotype

control). A Nikon Eclipse Ni microscope and digital SLR camera (Nikon, DS-Qi2) was used to

visualize and image the tissue.

The antibody used to stain sections for N protein was raised in rabbits against SARS-CoV N and

is cross-reactive with SARS-CoV-2 N protein [59].

Antigen	Clone	Vendor	Catalogue number	Host species	Conjugate	Dilution
ACE2	Polyclonal	Abcam	ab15348	rabbit	unconjugated	1:1000

EPCAM	SPM491	GeneTex	GTX34693	mouse	unconjugated	1:100
SARS-CoV-2 nucleocapsid	Polyclonal	Spiegel, M. *et al*. [59]	N/A	rabbit	unconjugated	1:2000
No known specificity (isotype control)	Polyclonal	Abcam	ab37415	rabbit	unconjugated	1:100 to 1:2000 corresponding to the concentration of the targeted polyclonal rabbit antibody
Yeast GAL4 (isotype control)	15-6E10A7	Abcam	ab170190	mouse	unconjugated	1:100 to 1:2000 corresponding to the concentration of the targeted monoclonal mouse antibody
Mouse IgG H&L	Polyclonal	Abcam	ab150116	goat	Alexa Fluor 594	1:1000
Rabbit IgG H&L	Polyclonal	Abcam	ab150077	goat	Alexa Fluor 488	1:1000

SARS-CoV-2 PCR (intestinal biopsies)

To determine if SARS-CoV-2 RNA is present in the gastrointestinal tract we isolated

RNA from endoscopically obtained mucosal biopsies using Direct-zol miniprep kit (Zymo

research, Cat. No. R2050). Reverse transcribed cDNA was amplified using 2019-nCov Ruo Kit

(IDT) to detect viral nucleocapsid genomic RNA. Amplification of sub-genomic nucleocapsid

RNA was done using following primers and probe: sgLeadSARSCov2_F   5'-

CGATCTCTTGTAGATCTGTTCTC -3'[27], wtN_R4 5' – GGTGAACCAAGACGCAGTAT –

3', wtN_P4 5' – /56-FAM/TAACCAGAA/ZEN/TGGAGAACGCAGTGGG/3IABkFQ/ – 3'.

Quantitative PCR was performed using QuantTect probe PCR kit (Qiagen, Cat. No. 204345)

under following conditions: 95 15', 95°C 15 sec, 60°C 1 min using the Applied Biosystem

QuantStudio 6 Flex Real-Time PCR System. Viral RNA was considered detected if the cycle

threshold (Ct) for viral primers/probes was <40. Samples from positive wells were column

purified and presence of N1 sequences additionally verified by Sanger sequencing.

SARS-CoV-2 RNA detection by probes proximity ligation.

Probes were designed with a 20-25 nucleotides homology to SARS-CoV-2 genomic RNA.

Probes were assessed by NCBI BLAST to exclude off target binding to other cellular transcripts.

IDT OligoAnalyzer (Integrated DNA Technologies) was used to identify probe pairs with similar

thermodynamic properties; melting temperature 45-60ºC, GC content of 40-55%, and low self-

complementary. The 3' end of each one of the probes used for proximity ligation signal

amplification is designed with a partially complementary sequence to the 61bp long backbone

and partially to the 21bp insert as previously described (Supplementary Table 8). smFISH probes

were designed with a complementary 3' end to the biotin detection probe (Supplementary Table

8).

Paraffin embedded samples were sectioned at ten microns. Sections were deparaffinized using

100% xylene, 5 min at room temperature, repeated twice. Slides were rinsed in 100% ethanol, 1

min at room temperature, twice and air dried. Endogenous peroxidase activity was eliminated by

treating the samples with 0.3% hydrogen peroxide, 10 min at room temperature followed by

washing with DEPC treated water. Samples were incubated 15 min at 95-100 °C in antigen

retrieval solution (ACDBio, Newark, CA, USA) rinsed in DEPC treated water and dehydrated in

100% ethanol, 3 min at room temperature and air dried. Tissue sections were permeabilized 30

min at 40°C using RNAscope protease plus solution (ACDBio, Newark, CA, USA) and rinsed in

DEPC treated water.

Hybridization was performed overnight at 40°C in a buffer based on DEPC-treated water

containing 2× SSC, 20% formamide (Thermo Fischer Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA), 2.5 %

(vol/vol) polyvinylsulfonic acid, 20 mM ribonucleoside vanadyl complex (New England Biolabs,

Ipswich, MA, USA), 40 U/ml RNasin (Promega, Madison, WI, USA), 0.1% (vol/vol) Tween 20

(Sigma Aldrich), 100 μg/ml salmon sperm DNA (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA,

USA), 100 μg/ml yeast RNA (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA). DNA probes

dissolved in DEPC-treated water were added at a final concentration of 100nM (Integrated DNA

Technologies, Coralville, IA, ISA). Samples were washed briefly and incubated in a buffer

containing, 2× SSC, 20% formamide, 40 U/ml RNasin at 40 °C and then washed four times (5

min each) in wash buffer, PBS, 0.1% (vol/vol) Tween 20, and 4 U/ml RNasin (Promega,

Madison, WI, USA). Slides were then incubated with 100 nM insert/backbone oligonucleotides

in PBS, 1× SSC, 0.1% (vol/vol) Tween 20, 100 μg/ml salmon sperm DNA (Thermo Fisher

Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA), 100 μg/ml yeast RNA (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham,

MA, USA), 40 U/ml RNasin at 37 °C. After four washes, tissues were incubated at 37°C with

0.1 U/μl T4 DNA ligase (New England Biolabs, Ipswich, MA, USA) in 50mM Tris-HCl, 10mM

MgCl2, 1mM ATP, 1mM DTT, 250μg/ml BSA, 0.05% Tween 20, 40 U/ml RNasin, followed by

incubation with 0.1 U/μl phi29 DNA polymerase in 50 mM Tris–HCl, 10 mM MgCl2, 10 mM

(NH4)2SO4, 250 M dNTPs, 1mM DTT, 0.05% Tween 20, 40 U/ml RNasin pH 7.5 at 30 °C.

Slides were washed and endogenous biotin was blocked using Avidin/Biotin blocking kit

(Vector laboratories, Burlingame, CA, USA) according to the manufacture instructions. Rolling

cycle amplicons were identified using a biotin labeled DNA probe at a concentration of 5 nM at

37 °C in PBS, 1× SSC, 0.1% Tween 20, 100 μg/ml salmon sperm DNA, 100 μg/ml yeast RNA.

After washing, samples were incubated with 1:100 diluted streptavidin-HRP (Thermo Fisher

Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA) in PBS, 60 min at room temperature followed by washing.

Fluorescent labeling was accomplished using Alexa Fluor 647 Tyramide SuperBoostKit (Thermo

Fischer Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA) according to manufacture instructions. Hoechst 33342

was used for nuclear counterstaining (Thermo Fischer Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA) and

samples were mounted in ProLong gold antifade (Thermo Fischer Scientific, Waltham, MA,

USA).

SARS-CoV-2 RNA detection by smFISH.

Hybridization was performed overnight at 40°C in a buffer based on DEPC- treated water

containing 2× SSC, 20% formamide (Thermo Fischer Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA), 2.5 %

(vol/vol) polyvinylsulfonic acid, 20 mM ribonucleoside vanadyl complex (New England Biolabs,

Ipswich, MA, USA), 40 U/ml RNasin (Promega, Madison, WI, USA), 0.1% (vol/vol) Tween 20

(Sigma Aldrich), 100 μg/ml salmon sperm DNA (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA,

USA), 100 μg/ml yeast RNA (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA). DNA probes

dissolved in DEPC-treated water were added at a final concentration of 10nM (Integrated DNA

Technologies, Coralville, IA, ISA). Samples were washed briefly and incubated in a buffer

containing, 2× SSC, 20% formamide, 40 U/ml RNasin at 40 °C and then washed four times in

wash buffer, PBS, 0.1% (vol/vol) Tween 20, and 4 U/ml RNasin (Promega, Madison, WI, USA).

Samples were washed and endogenous biotin was blocked using Avidin/Biotin blocking kit

(Vector laboratories, Burlingame, CA, USA) according to the manufacture instructions. Slides

were incubated with a biotin labeled DNA probe at a concentration of 10 nM at 37 °C in PBS, 1×

SSC, 0.1% Tween 20, 100 μg/ml salmon sperm DNA, 100 μg/ml yeast RNA. After washing,

samples were incubated with 1:100 diluted streptavidin-HRP (Thermo Fisher Scientific,

Waltham, MA, USA) in PBS, 60 min at room temperature followed by washing. Samples were

labeled using ImmPACT-DAB substrate, counter stained using hematoxylin QS and imbedded in

VectaMount AQ mounting medium (Vector laboratories, Burlingame, CA, USA) according to

the manufacture instructions.

Data presentation

Figures arranged in Adobe Illustrator 2020.

Competing interests: The Rockefeller University has filed a provisional patent application in

connection with this work on which D.F.R. and M.C.N. are inventors (US patent 63/021,387).

R.E.S. is on the scientific advisory board of Miromatrix Inc and is a consultant and speaker for

Alnylam Inc. S.M. has served as a consultant for Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Morphic and Glaxo

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Data availability statement: Data are provided in SI Tables 1-8. The raw sequencing data and

computer scripts associated with Figure 2 have been deposited at Github

(https://github.com/stratust/igpipeline). This study also uses data from "A Public Database of

Memory and Naive B-Cell Receptor Sequences" (https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.35ks2), PDB

(6VYB and 6NB6) and from "High frequency of shared clonotypes in human B cell receptor

repertoires" (https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-0934-8).

Code availability statement: Computer code to process the antibody sequences is available at

GitHub (https://github.com/stratust/igpipeline).

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D.J., J.Y., G.M.D., Y.B., R.E.S. and Z.Z. carried out experiments. A.G. and M.Cipolla produced

antibodies. A.H., D.S.B., M.Turroja, K.G.M., M.Tankelevich, C.G. and M.Caskey recruited

participants and executed clinical protocols. I.S., R.P, J.D. and C.U.O. processed clinical

samples. T.Y.O. and V.R. performed bioinformatic analysis. C.G, P.D.B., P.J.B., T.H., S.M. and

M.C.N. wrote the manuscript with input from all co-authors.

 Extended Data Legends

Extended Data Fig. 1: Clinical correlates of plasma antibody titres.

a, Normalized AUC anti-RBD IgG titres at 1.3 months for participants with (n=38) or without

(n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **b**, Normalized AUC anti-RBD IgG titres at 6.2 months

for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **c**, Normalized

AUC anti-RBD IgM titres at 1.3 months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent

post-acute symptoms. **d**, Normalized AUC anti-RBD IgM titres at 6.2 months for participants

with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **e**, Normalized AUC anti-RBD

IgA titres at 1.3 months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute

symptoms. **f**, Normalized AUC anti-RBD IgA titres at 6.2 months for participants with (n=38) or

without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **g**, Normalized AUC anti-N IgG titres at 1.3

months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **h**,

Normalized AUC anti-N IgG titres at 6.2 months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49)

persistent post-acute symptoms. **i**, IV values of anti-RBD IgG titres at 1.3 months for participants

with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **j**, IV values of anti-RBD IgG

titres at 6.2 months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute

symptoms. **k**, COI values of anti-N total Ig titres at 1.3 months for participants with (n=38) or

without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **l**, COI values of anti-N total Ig titres at 6.2

months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **m**, NT50

values at 1.3 months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute

symptoms. **n**, NT50 values at 6.2 months for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49)

persistent post-acute symptoms. **o**, Age in years for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49)

persistent post-acute symptoms. **p**, Severity of acute infection as assessed by the WHO Ordinal

Clinical Progression/Improvement Scale for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. **q**, Duration of Symptoms during acute infection for participants with (n=38) or without (n=49) persistent post-acute symptoms. Horizontal bars indicate median values. Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed Mann–Whitney U-tests.

Extended Data Fig. 2: Correlations of plasma antibody measurements.

a, Normalized AUC for IgG anti-RBD plotted against Pylon IgG anti-RBD index values at 1.3 months. **b,** Normalized AUC for IgG anti-RBD plotted against Pylon IgG anti-RBD index values at 6.2 months. **c,** Normalized AUC for IgM anti-RBD plotted against Pylon IgM anti-RBD index values at 1.3 months. **d,** Normalized AUC for IgM anti-RBD plotted against Pylon IgM anti-RBD index values at 6.2 months. **e**, Normalized AUC for IgG anti-N plotted against Roche COI values for anti-N total Ig titres at 1.3 months. **f,** Normalized AUC for IgG anti-N plotted against Roche COI values for anti-N total Ig titres at 6.2 months. **g**, Anti-N total Ig Cut-off Index (COI) values for 80 individuals at the initial 1.3 and 6.2 month follow-up visit. **h**, Relative change in anti-N total Ig levels between 1.3 and 6.2 months plotted against the anti-N total Ig levels at 1.3 months. **i,** Normalized AUC for IgM anti-RBD at 6.2 months plotted against IgM anti-RBD at 1.3 months. **j**, Normalized AUC for IgG anti-RBD at 6.2 months plotted against IgG anti-RBD at 1.3 months. **k**, Normalized AUC for IgA anti-RBD at 6.2 months plotted against IgA anti-RBD at 1.3 months. **l**, Normalized AUC for IgG anti-N at 6.2 months plotted against IgG anti-N at 1.3 months. **m**, COI values for anti-N total Ig titres at 6.2 months plotted against anti-N total Ig titres at 1.3 months. **n**, Anti-RBD IgM titres at 1.3 months plotted against anti-N IgG titres at 1.3 months. **o,** Anti-RBD IgG titres at 1.3 months plotted against anti-N IgG titres at 1.3 months. **p,**

Anti-RBD IgA titres at 1.3 months plotted against anti-N IgG titres at 1.3 months. **q**, NT50

values at 1.3 months plotted against anti-RBD IgG titres at 1.3 months. **r**, NT50 values at 6.2

months plotted against anti-RBD IgG titres at 6.2 months. The *r* and *p* values were determined

by two-tailed Spearman's correlations.

Extended Data Fig. 3: Persistent longitudinal changes in the phenotypic landscape of B cells in individuals recovered from COVID-19

a, Global viSNE projection of pooled B cells for all participants pooled shown in background

contour plots, with overlaid projections of concatenated controls, convalescent participants 1.3

and 6.1 months respectively. **b**, viSNE projection of pooled B cells for all participants of B cell

clusters identified by FlowSOM clustering. Column-scaled z-scores of median fluorescence

intensity (MFI) as indicated by cluster and marker. **c**, Frequency of B cells from each group in

FlowSOM clusters indicated. Each circle represents an individual control individual (n=20)

(gray), convalescent participant at 1.3 months post-infection (n=41) (red), or convalescent

participant at 6.2 months post-infection (n=41) (green). Horizontal bars indicate mean values.

Significance determined by two-tailed paired t-test for comparisons between time points within

individuals and two-tailed unpaired t-test for comparison between controls and convalescent

individuals. **d**, Individual viSNE projections of indicated protein expression.

Extended Data Fig. 4: Flow cytometry.

a, Gating strategy used for cell sorting. Gating was on singlets that were CD20+ and CD3−CD8−CD16−Ova−. Sorted cells were RBD-PE+ and RBD-AF647+. **b,** Flow cytometry showing the percentage of RBD-double positive memory B cells from month 1.3 or month 6 post-infection in 21 randomly selected participants.

Extended Data Fig. 5: Frequency distributions of human V genes.

a, Two-sided binomial tests were used to compare the frequency distributions of human V genes of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies from donors at 1.3 months to 6.2 months [1] (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p <$ 0.01

*** $p < 0.001$, **** = $p < 0.0001$). **b,** Two-sided binomial tests were used to compare the frequency distributions of human V genes of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies from this study to sequence from *C. Soto et al.* [54] (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** = $p < 0.0001$). **c,** Sequences from all six individuals with clonal relationships depicted as circos plots as in Figure 2d. Interconnecting lines indicate the relationship between antibodies that share V and J gene segment sequences at both IGH and IGL. Purple, green and grey lines connect related clones, clones and singles, and singles to each other, respectively. **d,** For each participant, the number of IgG heavy chain sequences (black) analyzed at month 1.3 (left panel) or month 6.2 post-infection (right panel). The number in the inner circle indicates the number of cells that was sorted for each individual denoted above the circle. **e,** The same as d but showing combined data for all six participants. **f,** Comparison of the percentage of IgG positive B cells from all six individuals at month 1.3 or month 6.2 post-infection. The horizontal bars indicate the mean. Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed t-test.

Extended Data Fig. 6: Analysis of antibody somatic hypermutation of persisting clones, CDR3 length and hydrophobicity.

a-f, Number of somatic nucleotide mutations in both the IGVH and IGVL of persisting clones found at month 1.3 and month 6.2 time points in six participants (a) COV21, (b) COV47, (c) COV57, (d) COV72, (e) COV96, and (f) COV107. The VH and VL gene usage of each clonal expansion is indicated above the graphs, or are indicated as "Singlets" if the persisting sequence was isolated only once at both time points. Connecting line indicates the SHM of the clonal pairs that were expressed as a recombinant mAbs. **g,** For each individual, the number of the amino acid length of the CDR3s at the IGVH and IGVL is shown. The horizontal bars indicate the mean. The number of antibody sequences (IGVH and IGVL) evaluated for each participant are n = 90 (COV21), n = 78 (COV47), n = 53 (COV57), n = 87 (COV72), n = 104 (COV96), n = 120 (COV107). Right panel show all antibodies combined (n = 532 for both IGVH and IGVL). Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed Mann–Whitney U-tests and horizontal bars indicate median values (n.s.=non-significant, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** = $p < 0.0001$). **h,** Distribution of the hydrophobicity GRAVY scores at the IGH CDR3 in 532 antibody sequences from this study compared to a public database (see Methods for statistical analysis). The box limits are at the lower and upper quartiles, the center line indicates the median, the whiskers are 1.5× interquartile range and the dots represent outliers. Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test (n.s.=non-significant, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** = $p < 0.0001$).

Extended Data Fig. 7: ELISA of wt/mutant RBD for mAbs.

a, EC50 values for binding to wild type RBD of shared singlets and shared clones of mAbs

obtained at the initial 1.3 and 6.2 months follow-up visit, divided by participant (n = 6 (COV21),

n = 13 (COV47), n = 3 (COV57), n = 6 (COV72), n = 15 (COV96), n = 9 (COV107). Lines

connect shared singlets/clones. mAbs with improved EC50 at 6.2 months follow-up visit are

highlighted in green, remaining mAbs are shown in black. Statistical significance was

determined using two-tailed Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test. **b-j,** Graphs show ELISA

binding curves for different antibodies obtained at 1.3 months (dashed lines) and their clonal

relatives obtained after 6.2 months (solid lines) binding to wild type, R346S, E484K, Q493R,

N439K, N440K, A475V, S477N, V483A and V367F RBDs (colors as indicated). Antibody IDs

of pairs as indicated on top of panels (1.3m / 6.2m). **k,** Heat map shows log2 relative fold change

in EC_{50} against the indicated RBD mutants for 52 antibody clonal pairs obtained at 1.3 (black)

and 6.2 months (red). The clonal and participant origin for each antibody pair is indicated above.

Extended Data Fig. 8: Neutralization of wt/mutant RBDs, C51 alignment and binding

projection.

a, IC50 values of shared singlets and shared clones of mAbs obtained at the initial 1.3- and 6.2-

months follow-up visit, divided by participant (n = 6 (COV21), n = 13 (COV47), n = 3 (COV57),

n = 6 (COV72), n = 15 (COV96), n = 9 (COV107). Lines connect shared singlets/clones. mAbs

with undetectable IC50 at 1.3 months are plotted at 10 μg/ml and are highlighted in red, mAbs

with improved IC50 at 6.2 months follow-up visit are highlighted in green, remaining mAbs are

shown in black. Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed Wilcoxon matched-pairs

signed rank test. **b-f,** The normalized relative luminescence values for cell lysates of 293TAce2

cells 48 hpi with SARS-CoV-2 pseudovirus harboring wt RBD or RBD-mutants (wt, Q493R,

E484G and R346S RBD shown in black, red, green and blue, respectively) in the presence of

increasing concentrations of mAbs obtained at the 1.3 months initial visit (1.3m, dashed lines)

and their shared clones/singlets at the 6.2 follow-up visit (6.2m, continuous lines). Antibody IDs

as indicated. **g,** VH and VL amino acid sequence alignment of C144 and derivative antibodies

C051, C052, C053 and C054. Germline-encoded residues are highlighted in green. Residues in

the proximity of RBD-binding C144 paratope are highlighted in red.

h-j, Surface representation of two adjacent "down" RBDs (RBD_A and RBD_B) on a spike trimer

with the C144 epitope on the RBDs highlighted in cyan and positions of amino acid mutations

that accumulated in **h,** C052. **i**, C053 and **j**, C054 compared to the parent antibody C144

highlighted as stick side chains on a $C\alpha$ atom representation. The C052, C053 and C054

interactions with two RBDs was modeled based on a cryo-EM structure of C144 Fab bound to

spike trimer [17].

Extended Data Fig. 9: **SARS-CoV-2 antigen in human enterocytes in the gastrointestinal**

tract 3 months post COVID-19 and Pre-COVID-19 historic control individuals without

detectable SARS-CoV-2 antigen.

a-j, Immunofluorescence images of human gastrointestinal tissue are shown. Staining is for

EPCAM (red), DAPI (blue) and SARS-CoV-2 nucleocapsid (green) Samples are derived from

intestinal biopsies in the gastrointestinal tract as indicated (a-j). (a-h) are biopsies from

participant CGI-088 (Supplementary Table 7) taken 92 days post COVID-19 symptom onset. (i-

j) is a biopsy 27 months prior to COVID-19 symptom onset from the same participant CGI-088.

Arrows indicate enterocytes with detectable SARS-CoV-2 antigen. Isotype and no primary

controls for each tissue are shown in the right two columns. White scale bar corresponds to 100

μm. **k-l**, Immunofluorescence images of biopsy samples in the gastrointestinal tract (k-ileal, l-

duodenal) obtained from 10 different Pre-COVID-19 historic control individuals between

January 2018 and October 2019 are shown. Staining is for EPCAM (red), DAPI (blue) and

SARS-CoV-2 nucleocapsid (green). White scale bar corresponds to 100 μm. All experiments

were repeated independently at least twice with similar results.

Extended Data Fig. 10: **SARS-CoV-2 antigen and RNA is detectable in different intestinal**

segments in multiple COVID-19 convalescent individuals

a, Immunofluorescence (IF) images of biopsy samples in the gastrointestinal tract in different

individuals are shown. Staining is for EPCAM (red), DAPI (blue) and SARS-CoV-2

nucleocapsid (green). Samples are derived from intestinal biopsies from 4 participants (CGI089,

CGI092, CGI100 and CGI106) taken at least 3 months after COVID-19 infection. Arrows

indicate enterocytes with detectable SARS-CoV-2 antigen. White scale bar corresponds to 100

μm. The experiments were repeated independently at least twice with similar results. **b**,

Quantification of SARS-CoV-2 positive cells by immunofluorescence. The number of cells

staining positive for the nucleocapsid protein (N) of SARS-CoV-2 per mm^2 of intestinal

epithelium is shown. The graphs show biopsy samples from the indicated individuals of the

duodenum (left) and terminal ileum (right), respectively. Black dots represent the number of

available biopsy specimen for each individual from the respective intestinal segment (CGI-088

n=4 duodenal/n=2 ileal, CGI-089 n=2 duodenal/n=2 ileal, CGI-092 n=6 duodenal/n=3 ileal,

CGI-106 n=4, CGI-100 n=4). Boxes represent median values and whiskers the 95 % CI. **c-d,**

SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA was visualized in intestinal biopsies of participant CGI-089 (c) and

CGI-088 (d) using in situ hybridization. SARS-CoV-2 genomic RNA (black) and Hematoxylin

and Eosin staining by smFISH/IHC technique in the duodenum (left) or terminal ileum (right).

Arrows indicate enterocytes with detectable SARS-CoV-2 RNA. **e**, Pre-COVID-19 historic

control individuals show no detectable SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA in duodenal (left) or ileal (right)

biopsies. White scale bar corresponds to 100 μm. The experiments were repeated independently

three times with similar results.

Supplementary Tables

Supplementary Table 1: Cohort summary is provided as a separate Excel file.

Supplementary Table 2: Individual participant characteristics is provided as a separate Excel file.

Supplementary Table 3: Antibody sequences from 1.3 and 6.2 month time point is provided as a separate Excel file.

Supplementary Table 4: Sequences of the cloned monoclonal antibodies is provided as a separate Excel file.

Supplementary Table 5: Half maximal effective concentrations (EC50s) of the monoclonal antibodies is provided as a separate Excel file.

Supplementary Table 6: Inhibitory concentrations of the monoclonal antibodies is provided as a separate Excel file.

Supplementary Table 7: Gastrointestinal biopsies cohort characteristics is provided as a separate Excel file.

Supplementary Table 8: Proximity ligation and smFISH probe sequences is provided as a separate Excel file.

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1060

a

b

d

e

c

	IC 50 [ng/ml]			
	wt	Q493 R	E 484 G	R 346 S
C144	2.73	>1000 0	4114.07	1.78
C051	11.99	4.68	3.10	13.56
C548	19.13	>1000 0	1591.77	10.84
C549	10.95	2.35	2.29	8.33
C032	100.69	62.42	45.68	>1000 0
C080	21.52	21.25	6.00	5.31
C132	1024.35	796.48	1406.57	>1000 0
C512	21.55	20.78	12.17	4022.02
C164	87.89	139.53	369.18	57.24
C143	191.23	1576.12	4402.39	224.99
C055	4.98	6.52	44.78	4.03

a

COVID-19 Recovered Donors

Healthy Donors   1.3m   6.2m

b

c

Metacluster 1   Metacluster 2   Metacluster 3   Metacluster 4   Metacluster 5

Metacluster 6   Metacluster 7   Metacluster 8   Metacluster 9   Metacluster 10

Metacluster 11   Metacluster 12   Metacluster 13   Metacluster 14   Metacluster 15

d

CD10   CD11c   CD138   CD19   CD20   CD21   IgG

CD23   CD24   CD27   CD272   CD274   CD279   IgM

CD305   CD32   CD38   CD40   CD85j   CD86   TGFβ-RII

CD95   CXCR3   CXCR5   HLA-DR   IgA   IgD

SARS-CoV-2 nucleocapsid EPCAM DAPI   Isotype control   No primary control