Title: Distinct CD3+ CD14+ T Cell-Monocytes are dynamic complexes that harbor HIV and

are increased with glucose intolerance

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Summary

Persistent systemic inflammation in persons with HIV (PWH) is accompanied by an increased

risk of metabolic disease. Yet, changes in the innate and adaptive immune system in PWH who

develop metabolic disease remain poorly defined. Using unbiased approaches, we show that

PWH with prediabetes/diabetes have a significantly higher proportion of circulating CD14$^+$

monocytes complexed to T cells. The complexed CD3$^+$ T cells and CD14$^+$ monocytes

demonstrate functional immune synapses, increased expression of proinflammatory cytokines,

and greater glucose utilization. Furthermore, these complexes harbor more latent HIV DNA

compared to CD14$^+$ monocytes or CD4$^+$ T cells. Our results demonstrate that circulating

CD3$^+$CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte pairs represent functional dynamic cellular interactions that likely

contribute to inflammation and, in light of their increased proportion, may have a role in

metabolic disease pathogenesis. These findings provide an incentive for future studies to

investigate T cell-monocyte immune complexes as mechanistic in HIV cure and diseases of

aging.

Graphical Abstract

CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell Monocyte complexes

0 minutes — Transient complexes — Related factors — Stable complexes Increased with Diabetes — 0 minutes

HIV

CH_2OH — Glucose

IL-10
CD4⁺ T Reg

240 minutes — Inflammation — Inflammation — 240 minutes

63 **Highlights**

- Persons with HIV and diabetes have increased circulating CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes.

- CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocytes are a heterogenous group of functional and dynamic complexes.

- We can detect HIV in T cell-monocyte complexes.

- The proportion of CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes is positively associated with blood glucose levels and negatively with plasma IL-10 and CD4⁺ T regulatory cells.

Introduction

Persons with HIV (PWH) on antiretroviral therapy often have heightened, chronic inflammation that may contribute to age-related diseases such as diabetes and atherosclerosis.[1-8] This increased risk of age-related diseases offers an opportunity to investigate how inflammation contributes to the development of cardiometabolic disorders. [9] We used unbiased approaches to comprehensively characterize alterations in immune cell populations that distinguish PWH with prediabetes or diabetes from those with HIV alone.

Common flow cytometry analysis workflows may overlook interacting cell populations. Typically, presumed single cells suspensions in droplets of buffered fluid are illuminated by the laser beam to capture cell marker expression. During analysis, steps are taken to eliminate cell aggregates which have commonly been presumed to arise ex-vivo due to cell clumping via adhesion molecules and other factors introduced during sample processing, particles on dying cells, or lack of separation of cells due to high-stream flow rates. [10] [11,12] Recent studies, however, have demonstrated the existence of immunologically relevant cell-cell complexes in the blood of individuals with immune perturbation due to infection, vaccination, and cancer. [13,14] [15] Burel *et. al.* found that the presence of CD3$^+$ T cell - CD14$^+$ monocyte complexes in freshly isolated blood was strongly correlated with their presence in cryopreserved peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs), suggesting that their occurrence in cryopreserved PBMCs is not an artifact of processing or storage. [13] The reorganization of adhesion molecules at the immunological synapse between the monocyte and the T cells indicated an activating interaction between these cells. [13] Similar T-cell complexes have been observed with antigen-presenting B cells. [16,17]

In the context of HIV, the ineffective killing of HIV-infected macrophages by cytotoxic T lymphocytes may lead to prolonged immunologic synapses resulting in greater inflammation due to the secretion of cytokines and chemokines. [18] The hypothesis is supported by a similar

phenomenon in diseases such as familial hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis, where

lymphocytes engage but fail to kill myeloid cells, which leads to prolonged expression of

proinflammatory cytokines and an elevated systemic inflammatory response. [19]

PWH have chronic systemic inflammation which persists despite effective suppression of

plasma viremia on treatment and is thought to contribute to the development of diabetes and

metabolic disease more broadly. Furthermore, once PWH develop diabetes, the altered immune

responses in the context of continued hyperglycemia may create a reinforcing cycle that leads

to further inflammation and greater metabolic dysregulation. To investigate these relationships

further, we used unbiased analyses to investigate alterations in immune factors in the presence

and absence of glucose intolerance in PWH.

Results

Descriptive characteristics of the cohort

The study cohort was comprised of 38 participants with HIV on antiretroviral therapy with long-term suppression of plasma viremia: 14 without diabetes (hemoglobin A1c [HbA1c] <5.7% and fasting blood glucose [FBG] <100 mg/dl), and 24 with prediabetes (HbA1c 5.7-6.4% and/or FBG 100-125 mg/dl) or diabetes (HbA1c ≥6.5%, FBG≥126 mg/dl and/or on anti-diabetic medication) (**Table S1**). Individuals with prediabetes and diabetes were combined into a single metabolic disease group. The clinical characteristics of the participants were largely similar, except for parameters linked to glucose intolerance such as body mass index (p<0.05), waist and hip circumference (p<0.05, p=0.01 respectively), and fasting blood sugar (p<0.001). Individuals without glucose intolerance were younger (median age 39 [IQR 35, 53] versus 49 [IQR 40, 56]), but this difference did not reach statistical significance (p=0.1). There were no notable differences observed in the HIV-related laboratory values or antiretroviral therapy regimens.

Circulating cells of the innate and adaptive immune system differ by metabolic health in PWH

Mass cytometry was used to examine immune cells in cryopreserved peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) of all participants (**Figure S1A**). We identified six primary clusters including CD4[+] T cells, senescent CD4[+] T cells (termed 'CGC[+]' cells due to co-expression of CX3CR1, GPR56, and CD57 surface markers[20]), CD8[+] T cells, monocytes, B cells, and NK cells (**Figure 1A**). A comparison of clusters (abundance/size differences) between individuals with diabetes, prediabetes, and those without revealed several clusters in participants with glucose intolerance that were apparently fewer in PWH without diabetes depicted with the red dotted circles, all p<0.05 (**Figure 1B, Figure S1B**). Other cell types in the blue clusters that were more abundant in PWH without diabetes included classical monocytes, CD8[+] naïve T cells, $\gamma\delta$ T cells,

memory B cells, CD4$^+$ T regulatory cells, and CD14$^+$ CD16$^{+/-}$ Monocytes (**Table S2**). The

heatmap represents the relative expression (median) of the surface immune markers on cells

and the median fold difference in cluster sizes. Magenta clusters were more abundant in

prediabetic/diabetic PWH, whereas blue clusters were more abundant in non-diabetic PWH

(**Figure 1C**). CGC$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells, a population we have previously reported as associated with

both metabolic and cardiovascular disease conditions in treated HIV, were also increased with

diabetes. [2,20,21]

Figure 1. Phenotypic characterization of PBMCs in non-diabetic, prediabetic/diabetic
PWH highlights differences in PBMCs by metabolic disease
(A) UMAP and corresponding heatmap of 1.5 million CD45$^+$ cells from the PBMCs of 38
participants depicting clusters of monocytes, CD4 T cells, CD8 T cells, B cells, monocytes, and
NK cells.
(B) UMAPs stratified by metabolic disease highlighting differences using an overlay approach.
Clusters higher in prediabetic/diabetic are in magenta and those higher in non-diabetic are in
blue.
(C) Heat map shows all the markers that were used to define clusters in the UMAPs. The
median fold difference bar (purple clusters are higher in prediabetics/diabetics and blue are
higher in non-diabetic PWH). Clusters in the heat map are grouped according to the bigger
clusters (CD4$^+$ T cells, CD8$^+$ T cells, Monocytes, B cells, NK cells, DN (double negative CD3$^+$ T
cells), and immune complexes).
See Figure S1.
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We employed the T-REX workflow as an unbiased, granular approach to visualize distinct cell

populations that varied between non-diabetic and prediabetic/diabetic PWH and marker

enrichment modeling (MEM) to identify the markers that define each of the different clusters.

[22,23] The UMAP (**Figure 2A**) displays the distribution of cells from both non-diabetic (blue) and

prediabetic/diabetic (red) PWH and the clusters that were greater than 95% different between

the two groups (**Figure 2B**). We found CD14$^+$ clusters outside of the primary monocyte

population, adjacent to the CD4$^+$ T cells, CD8$^+$ T cells, CD19$^+$ B cells, and NK cells (**Figure 2C**).

Unexpected markers (FOXP3, CTLA4, and CRTH2) also defined the clusters with immune

complexes, suggesting additional potential biomarkers for further investigation (**Figure 2D**).

While FOXP3 and CTLA4 are constitutively expressed on CD4$^+$ T regulatory cells, they can be

expressed on activated cells. We also compared the cluster sizes identified using T-REX

between non-diabetic vs. prediabetic/diabetic using non-parametric analysis. All immune

complex cluster sizes except cluster 3 (CD19$^+$ CD14$^+$ complex) remained significantly higher

(**Figure 2E**). UMAPs highlighting the expression of CD14 and FOXP3 on all CD45$^+$ cells within

the clusters with monocyte complexes, and not in other cells present in PBMCs are shown

(**Figure 2F**). In summary, with TREX, the same clusters were different when we generated the

UMAPs stratified by diabetes status in Figure 1b. The complexes were present within each

cluster of T cells/ B cells/ NK cells and Monocytes. We chose to focus on CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T -cell

monocyte complexes going forward, in the context of HIV reservoir and diabetes.

When we analyzed CD3$^+$CD4$^+$ T cells, we found several subclusters within CD4$^+$ T cells that

were also CD14$^+$ (**Figure S2A**). The CD4$^+$ T cell - CD14$^+$ monocyte clusters were mostly

present in people with prediabetes/diabetes (**Figure S2B-C**). The T-REX workflow generated a

similar result, with the three larger clusters that were higher with glucose intolerance also co-

expressed CTLA4, FOXP3, and CD14 (**Figure S2D**). Similarly, several CD3$^+$CD8$^+$ T cell

subclusters were CD14$^+$ (**Figure S3A**). Stratification by the metabolic group demonstrated that

the CD8$^+$CD14$^+$ subclusters were mainly present in the prediabetic/diabetic participants (**Figure

S3B**). This was confirmed using T-REX analysis, with two of the main clusters labeled

preDM/DM1 and 2, which included cells with CD14, CTLA4, and FOXP3 co-expression (**Figure

S3C-D**).

Figure 2. Classical monocytes complex with T cells, NK cells, and B cells are increased
in the peripheral blood of PWH with glucose intolerance.
(A) UMAP of CD45$^+$ cells from non-diabetic (blue), prediabetic/diabetic PWH (red).
(B) Clusters identified by the T-REX algorithm that are increased and decreased with
prediabetes/diabetes (0 trends towards non-diabetic and 100 towards prediabetic/diabetic).
(C) Clusters higher with prediabetes/diabetes (preDM/DM) or without diabetes (NonDM) are
shown along with the heat map that highlights markers that define the cells within the clusters.
(D) The enrichment scores of markers (increased and decreased) for selected clusters are
shown over the UMAP, adjacent to the clusters. Among the markers that characterize the
clusters, magenta (increased markers), and blue (decreased).
(E) Violin plots showing proportions of select subclusters that are significantly different between
non-diabetes (non-DM and prediabetes/diabetes (preDM/DM).
(F) UMAPs show CD14 and FOXP3 expression on the clusters.
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205 Statistical analysis by Mann-Whitney test (E). See Figures S2 and S3.
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CD3⁺ T cell - CD14⁺ monocyte complexes increase in longitudinal samples

To confirm that the complexes identified by mass cytometry were monocytes complexed to other immune cells and not artifacts, we stained PBMCs with a flow cytometry panel to identify cells with CD3⁺ and CD14⁺ expression (**Figure 3A**). The Z channel shows CD3 expression on lymphocytes and monocytes (**Figure 3A**). Based on the two-dimensional plots, CD3⁺CD14⁺ T cell complexes are among the larger monocyte cells (larger and more granular). We then sorted CD14⁺ monocytes and CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes and used light microscopy to image the cells. Compared to CD14⁺ cells alone, the CD3⁺ CD14⁺ complexes had a higher proportion of cells with presumed immunological synapses due to the proximity of cells and flattening at the connecting points (**Figure 3B**).

We next analyzed longitudinal PBMC samples from 37 of the 38 participants who had a second visit 2-3 years after the first, to assess whether the proportion of CD3⁺ CD14⁺ complexes remained stable or varied over time. CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes ranged from 0.07% to 11.5% of CD3⁺ T cells by flow cytometry at the first visit and 0.55% to 9.5% at the second visit. We observed a significant increase (p=0.03) in the proportion of CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell – monocyte complexes, as a proportion of CD3⁺ live cells, from the first to second visit (**Figure 3C**). When stratified by diabetes status, there was a greater increase in CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes among the non-diabetic compared to the prediabetic/diabetic PWH (**Figure 3D**). This observation suggests that a higher proportion of circulating T cell–monocyte complexes in prediabetes/diabetes represents more of a terminal state and that once PWH have prediabetes or diabetes, then metabolic disease and related complications are frequent, while some of the PWH without diabetes may still be progressing in this direction as they age.

Figure 3. CD14$^+$ classical monocytes form complexes primarily with CD8$^+$ and central memory T cells.
(A) Two-dimensional flow cytometry plot of PBMCs showing CD14, CD3, and Live/Dead stains on PBMCs. CD3$^+$ cells were gated on live cells (including lymphocytes and monocytes), followed by a two-dimensional plot of CD8$^+$ and CD14$^+$ cells.
(B) Bright-field images of CD14$^+$ and CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ cells.
(C) Violin plot showing % CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes in longitudinal time points 2-3 years apart.
(D) Box plots plot showing % CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes in longitudinal time points stratified by diabetes status.
(E) Dot plot showing proportions of CD4$^+$ and CD8$^+$ T cells among CD3+ CD14+ complexes.
(F) Dot plot showing proportions of memory CD3$^+$ T cells (naïve, CD45RO$^-$ CCR7$^+$, TEM, CD45RO$^+$ CCR7$^-$, TCM, CD45RO$^+$ CCR7$^+$, TEMRA, CD45RO$^-$ CCR7$^-$)

Statistical analyses were performed using Mann Whitney U test (C) and Wilcoxon matched pair signed ranks test (D).

T cell-CD14$^+$ monocyte complexes are positively associated with fasting blood glucose and hemoglobin A1C

Based on the observed differences in CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ complexes by diabetes status, we posited that the complexes may drive glucose intolerance. We used partial Spearman rank correlation analysis adjusted for age, sex, and BMI to assess whether the circulating immune complexes were associated with fasting blood glucose and hemoglobin A1C. We found that CD8$^+$ T cell – CD14$^+$ monocyte complexes were associated with fasting blood glucose ($p<0.05$) and hemoglobin A1C ($p<0.01$) (**Figure 4A**). The NK cell – CD14$^+$ monocyte cluster was also positively associated with fasting blood glucose ($p<0.05$) but not hemoglobin A1C. CD4$^+$ T cell – CD14$^+$ monocyte complexes were only positively associated with hemoglobin A1C ($p<0.01$) and not fasting blood glucose (**Figure 4A**).

Greater systemic inflammation, in aggregate, is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular and metabolic disease[24]. There were no significant differences in plasma cytokines among the 38 participants by group comparison, including IL-1β, IFN-γ, TNF-α, IL-6, IL-17, and IL-10 (Data not shown). We performed Spearman rank correlation analyses adjusted for factors related to HIV (CD4:CD8 ratio, duration of antiretroviral therapy) and diabetes

(hemoglobin A1C). We found that the immune complexes with monocytes [Clusters18, 19, 26,

27, 28, and 29] were strongly correlated with each other. Notably, all clusters were negatively

correlated with circulating CD4$^+$ T regulatory cells (CL 25) (**Figure 4B**). CD8$^+$ T cells (p<0.01), B

cells (p<0.05), and NK cells (p<0.05) complexed with monocytes were also negatively

correlated with plasma IL-10 (p<0.05). The CD4$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte cluster was negatively

correlated with IL-10 but this was not statistically significant (p=0.067). Cluster 32 was

comprised of CD3$^+$ T cells (both CD4 and CD8) complexed with CD14$^+$ monocytes that were

less correlated with the other complexes. This was a much smaller cluster than all other

complexes and positively correlated with plasma sCD163 (p=0.075) and plasma IL-17A

(p=0.03). We considered whether the relationship between the immune complexes and IL-

10/CD4 T regulatory cells might depend on the level of blood glucose. To test this hypothesis,

we included an interaction term (hemoglobin A1C*IL-10 and hemoglobin A1C*CD4 T regulatory

cells) in a linear regression model with the immune complexes as the dependent variables

(**Figure S4A**). The coefficients for the interaction terms were negative and statistically

significant (**Figure S4B**), suggesting that the effect of IL-10 and CD4$^+$ T regulatory cells on the

immune complexes decreases as hemoglobin A1C increases or vice versa. In other words, the

relationship between the immune complexes and hemoglobin A1C is weaker for individuals with

higher levels of IL-10 or CD4 T regulatory cells.

Figure 4. T cell-Monocyte immune complexes positively associated with blood glucose are negatively associated with IL-10.
(A) Heatmap shows partial Spearman correlation of immune complex clusters and CD4 T regulatory cells and hemoglobin A1c, fasting blood glucose adjusted for age, sex, and BMI. UMAP with clusters is included for reference.
(B) Heatmap shows partial Spearman correlation of immune complex clusters and CD4 T regulatory cells and inflammatory cytokines (IL-10, IL-6, sCD14, sCD163, IL-15, IL-17, and IL-1β] adjusted for CD4:CD8, antiretroviral therapy duration, and hemoglobin A1C.

See Figure S4.

CD4$^+$ T cells complexed with CD14$^+$ monocytes include TH1, TH17, and TH2 phenotypes

To better characterize the CD4$^+$ T cells complexed with CD14$^+$ monocytes, we first analyzed the

memory subsets using CCR7 and CD45RO (**Figure 5A**). Similar to our analysis with total CD3$^+$

T cells, CD14$^+$ monocytes were largely complexed with CD4$^+$ TCM and TEM cells in both non-

diabetic and prediabetic/diabetic PWH (**Figure 5B**). Several markers of activation were used to

define activated CD4$^+$ T cells (CD137/OX40 and HLADR/CD38). Representative two-

dimensional flow charts show the expression of these markers on CD4$^+$ T cells from non-

diabetic and prediabetic/diabetic PWH (**Figure 5C**). In general, there was a significantly higher

proportion of activated, CD137$^+$ OX40$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells and HLA-DR$^+$ CD38$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells in

prediabetic/diabetic PWH compared to non-diabetic (**Figure 5D, left panels**). Focusing on

immune complexes, we observed that CD4$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cells had a higher proportion of CD137

and OX40 expressing cells (**Figure 5D, top right panel**). Irrespective of metabolic status, all

cells within immune complexes were HLADR$^+$ CD38$^+$. Circulating activated T cells and immune

complexes were correlated with fasting blood glucose (**Figure 5F**). Using chemokine receptor

markers, we defined CD4$^+$ T helper subsets within the T cell-monocyte complexes. CD4$^+$ T cells

from prediabetic/diabetic PWH compared to non-diabetic had a significantly higher proportion of

TH2, TH17, and TH1 CD4$^+$ T cells (**Figure 5G**). A similar trend was observed with CD4$^+$ CD14$^+$

T cell-monocyte complexes which had higher proportions of Th1 and Th17 cells. In summary,

the T-cell monocyte immune complexes consist of activated immune cells, enriched for

inflammatory memory subsets.

Figure 5. CD4$^+$ T cells complexed with CD14$^+$ monocytes in prediabetic/diabetic PWH are activated with a larger proportion of TH17 and TH1 cells.
(A) Two-dimensional flow cytometry plots show memory CD4$^+$ T cells (Naïve, CD45RO$^-$ CCR7$^+$; TCM, CD45RO$^+$ CCR7$^+$; TEM CD45RO$^+$ CCR7$^-$; TEMRA CD45RO$^-$ CCR7$^-$).
(B) Memory CD4$^+$ T cell subsets in non-diabetic and prediabetic/diabetic PWH have a similar distribution of memory T cell subsets.
(C) Representative plots showing CD137/OX40 and HLA-DR/CD38 co-expression on CD4+ T cell – CD14+ monocyte complexes stratified by diabetes.
(D) Dot plots show % CD137$^+$ OX40$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells and % CD137$^+$ OX40$^+$ CD14$^+$ complexes.
(E) Dot plots show % HLA-DR$^+$ CD38$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells and % HLA-DR$^+$ CD38$^+$ CD14$^+$ complexes.
(F) Activated T cells -monocyte immune complexes are correlated with fasting blood glucose.
(G) PWH with pre-diabetes/diabetes have a higher proportion of TH2 (CRTH2/CCR4), TH17 (CCR6/CD161), and TH1 (CXCR3) cells stratified by diabetes.
(H) CD4$^+$ T helper cells within CD4$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes have higher proportions of TH2, TH17, and TH1 cells.
Statistical analyses were performed using the Mann-Whitney U test (D-E), Spearman correlation (F), and the Kruskal-Wallis test (G-H).

T cell-monocyte pairs form stable complexes and have particles consistent with HIV

In order to understand the durability of the T cell-monocyte complexes given their abundance,

we sorted CD3$^+$ T cell-CD14$^+$ monocyte immune complexes and imaged them over 4.5 hours.

Time-lapse imaging of the CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte immune complexes shows dynamic

and heterogeneous relationships between CD14$^+$ monocytes and CD3$^+$ T cells (**Figure 6A-B,**

movies CD and E). We observed several stable complexes over a period of 5 hours (**Figure**

6C, D) and a proportion of monocytes (antigen-presenting cells, APCs) that transiently

interacted with T cells (**Figure 6E**).

Macrophages are HIV reservoirs that may effectively form synapses and infect CD4$^+$ T cells. [25]

We hypothesized that HIV transfer may be enhanced by T cell-monocyte complexes in

circulation. We sorted CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes and employed transmission

electron microscopy (TEM) to capture the T cell and monocyte pairs interacting with high

resolution. We observed T cells in immunological synapses with monocytes (**Figure 6F-i,ii**) with

100nm particles in T cells-monocyte pairs (**Figure 6F-i,ii**) and T cells among sorted CD3$^+$

CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes consistent with HIV (**Figure 6G**).

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Figure 6. CD3+ CD14+ T cell - monocytes form stable complexes
(A) Phase-contrast microscopy of sorted CD3+ CD14+ T cell-monocyte complexes at time 0.

(B) Pie chart showing the percentage of (CD14 antigen presenting cells (APCs) that are stably
associated with T cells, transiently associated with T cells or not associated with T cells over
4.5hrs.
(C & D) Show insets of stable complexes, right hand panel shows the time overlay and the color
code. A yellow asterisk (*) in c marks a T cell that proliferates. Scale bars – purple pseudocolor
defines T cell and green marks APC.
(E) Time series demonstrating transient interactions between APC and three T cells (marked
1,2,3). Blue arrowheads and numbers mark point of interactions between APC and T cells.
(F) TEM of CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes. Inset highlights ultrastructural cell-cell
interactions (i) and (ii) and the presence of 100nm diameter particles (black arrow).
(G) TEM of CD3$^+$ T cell among sorted CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes 3 days post-
culture. Enlarged image (i) highlighting 100nm diameter particles (black arrow).
Scale bars are 50μm A, 20μm C-E, 4μM F, 500nm F(i), F(ii), G (i), and 1μm G.
See movies CD and E.

Using ddPCR, we quantified HIV DNA in sorted CD4$^+$ T cells, CD14$^+$ monocytes, and CD3$^+$

CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes from 6 PWH on antiretroviral therapy. Representative

images show LTR (blue) and RNAse P copies (green) in CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ complexes (**Figure 7A**),

CD4$^+$ T cells (**Figure 7B**), and CD14$^+$ cells (**Figure 7C**). We found that CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-

monocyte complexes had significantly more HIV DNA copies per million cells compared to

paired single CD4$^+$ T cells and CD14$^+$ monocytes (**Figure 7D-E**). Monocytes are reported to be

infected with latent human CMV, therefore used ddPCR to quantify CMV. [26] We did not detect

CMV DNA using three different sets of primers against US28, gB, and IE-1 (**data not shown**) in

immune complexes from all 6 participants (ages 24 to 59). Taken together, we were able to

detect HIV using ddPCR, which was highest in CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes.

If the immunological synapses between CD3$^+$ T cells and CD14$^+$ monocytes are an antigen-

driven process, we posited that clonally expanded T cells could be present within the CD3$^+$

CD14$^+$ complexes. Among 4 representative participants with higher HIV DNA copies in their

CD3$^+$ T cell-CD14$^+$ monocyte complexes, we index-sorted single complexes per well and

sequenced the $\alpha\beta$ TCR chains. The majority of the TCRs were single clones with a few clonal

TCRs (>2 T cells with identical CDR3), (**Figure 7F**). We used TCRmatch

(http://tools.iedb.org/tcrmatch/) to predict the antigen specificity of the clonal TCRs among those

identified. The majority of the clonal (CDR3 >2) TCRs that we found in public databases were

predicted to bind viral antigens (CMV, EBV, SARSCoV2), with one predicted to bind HIV

[CASKEGGAGGYTF] (**Table S3**). In addition, two CDR3 were predicted to bind an epitope from

the coagulation factor VIII. In summary, these data suggest that circulating T cell-monocyte

complexes may be partly driven by the presentation of herpes viral antigens. In PWH,

monocytes may be complexed with HIV-infected T cells, which places the monocyte in proximity

to infected cells to allow the formation of functional synapses.

T cell-monocyte complexes have RNA transcriptomes enriched for genes important for

activation and adhesion

We performed a single-cell transcriptomic analysis of PBMCs from a participant with a large

proportion of T cell-monocyte complexes as determined by CyTOF and flow cytometry. Using

CITE seq and RNA transcriptomic profiles, we classified immune cell complexes/doublets that

would have been excluded from further analysis based on traditional analysis approaches.

UMAP shows the different cell types that were classified based on their transcriptomic profile

(**Figure 7G**). We found several clusters that had immune complexes including a T cell-non-

classical monocyte cluster, T cell-classical monocyte cluster, B cell-monocyte cluster, T cell-B

cell cluster, and megakaryocyte-T cell cluster**.** UMAPs and violin plots show CITE-seq

expression of several surface markers, CD14, CD16, CD3, CD4, CD69, and CD8 (**Figure 7H-I**).

Classical monocytes paired with T cells had an almost equal representation of T cells with

clonal and non-clonal TCRs. Non-classical monocytes on the other hand were mostly paired

with clonal TCRs (**Figure 7J**).

Figure 7. CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes have more copies of HIV compared to CD4⁺ T cells and CD14⁺ monocytes alone and are transcriptionally more activated through direct antigen presentation.

(A) Representative ddPCR plot showing HIV (blue) and RNase P (green) copies in sorted CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes.

(B) Representative ddPCR plot showing HIV (blue) and RNase P (green) copies in sorted CD3⁺ CD4⁺ T cells.

(C) Representative ddPCR plot showing HIV (blue) and RNase P (green) copies in sorted CD14⁺ monocytes.

(D) Violin plot shows HIV viral copies per million cells from the 6 participants in each of the sorted cell types – CD14⁺, CD3⁺ CD4⁺, CD3⁺ CD14⁺.

(E) The line plot shows HIV viral copies in paired samples.

(F) Circos plot shows paired TCRαβ CDR3 sequences expressed on T cells complexed with monocytes from one representative participant

(G) UMAP of PBMCs processed for 10X sequencing from a participant with a high proportion of immune complexes, highlighting T cell-monocyte doublets, B cell-T cell doublets, and B cell-monocyte doublets.

(H) UMAPs highlight surface marker expression on PBMCs using CITE seq barcoded antibodies.

(I) Violin plots show the difference in the surface marker expression levels between all the cells.

(J) TCR sequences were obtained, and the stacked bar chart shows the total number of cells with TCRs and is color-coded based on the clonality of the cells, with 2 or greater considered clonal.

(K) Bar plots depict protein translation by measuring puromycin uptake (puromycin), and changes in uptake with the addition of inhibitors (2DG, oligomycin, and 2DG plus oligomycin(DGO)) for each subset of cells [CD3⁺ CD14⁺, CD14⁺ monocytes, CD16⁺ monocytes, and CD4/CD8 T cell subsets (naïve, TCM, TEM and TEMRA) for 15 individuals (Blue: NonDM, Green: PreDM and Magenta: DM).

(L) Bar plots show percent glucose dependence (top) and percent mitochondrial dependence (bottom).

(M) The proportion of CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes decreases with the inhibition of oxidative phosphorylation by oligomycin. There is no change in glucose inhibition by 2DG.

Statistical analysis using Kruskal Wallis (D), Wilcoxon test (E), Mann Whitney Test (L, M)

See Figure S5, S6 and S7 and Tables S5-S7

Differential gene expression of CD3⁺ CD14⁺ doublet cluster versus classical monocytes

(singlets) showed increased expression of genes that enrich for T cell activation [*CCL5, IL7R,*

CD3E, *CD2*, *CD8B*, *LCK*, *CD7, and* HLA-DPA1] and the adaptive immune response [*CD3E,*

PRF1, GZMM, LIME1, SKAP1, and CD247] (**Figure S5A, Table S4**). Genes involved in lipid

localization [*THBS1, RETN, ACSL1, TSPO, CD36, IRS2*], granulocyte activation, and

neutrophil-mediated immunity [*S100A12, S100A8, S100A9, CDA, MNDA, RETN, CD36,*

GLUT3, LYZ] were significantly higher in monocytes than in the T cell-monocyte complexes. On

the other hand, differential gene expression of CD3⁺ CD14⁺ T cell-monocyte complexes versus

T cells enriched for genes involved in antigen processing and presentation *[HLA-DRA, CD74,*

HLA-DRB1, HLA-DQA1, HLA-DQB1, HLA-DPA1, HLA-DPB1, and *HLA-DRB5]* (**Figure S7B,**

Table S5). Non-classical monocytes complexed with T cells were also transcriptionally different

compared to singlet non-classical monocytes. Similar to the classical monocytes, the T cell-

non-classical monocyte complexes enriched for genes involved in the adaptive immune

response [*CD3E, IL7R, CD8B, PRF1, GZMM, CD247, SKAP1, LIME1,* CD7, and *TNFAIP3 –*

bold genes were also upregulated in T cell-classical monocytes versus monocytes]. Several

overlapping pathways were overrepresented in CD16$^+$ single-cell non-classical monocytes over

the T cell-non-classical monocyte complexes including neutrophil-mediated immunity

[*SERPINA1, FCER1G, FTH1, LGALS3, CD68, ATP6V0C, PSAP, CFD, STXBP2, SLC11A1,*

S100A11, CMTM6], granulocyte activation and platelet degradation [*TIMP1, SERPINA1,*

FCER1G, PSAP, CFD, ALDOA, STXBP2, LYN, and *PECAM1*] (**Figure S5C, Table S6**). The

differential gene expression between CD3$^+$ CD16$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes versus T cells

had an over-representation of genes that enriched for several pathways including IL-10

production [*FCER1G, LILRA5, LILRB1, VSIR, PYCARD*, and *LGALS9*] and negative regulation

of T cell activation [*LST1, LYN, HMOX1, LGALS3, CD74, MNDA, LILRB1, VSIR, PTPN6, CD86,*

CEBPB, and *LGALS9*]. Pathways highly represented in T cells compared to these CD3$^+$ CD16$^+$

T cell-monocyte doublets included protein localization to the membrane (**Figure S5d Table S6**).

Our analysis of immune complexes from 10x sequencing data is confounded by complexes that

may be formed due to technical artifacts, where more than one cell ends in a single droplet.

Therefore, we used existing 10X sequencing data from sequenced PBMCs from individuals

receiving cardiac surgery (n=10), to create artificial clusters by combining single T cells and

monocytes. The differential gene expression between T cells-classical monocytes complexes

compared to artificial doublets (single memory T cells and classical monocytes grouped for

comparison) showed higher levels of *GNLY, HLA-DRA, HLA-DPA1, HLA-DPB1, HLA-DRB1,*

MT-ND4, and MT-ND3 with overrepresentation of several pathways including MHCII antigen

presentation and TCR signaling (**Figure S6A-C, Table S6**). Taken together, these data suggest

that in vivo, monocytes form durable complexes with a subset of clonal memory T cells that

persist ex-vivo. The T cell-classical monocyte complexes have transcriptomes that suggest an

activated inflammatory response which differs from the artificial doublets.

Changes in metabolism can be very informative of the inflammatory state and functional profile

of immune cells. [27] While immune cells can rely on both glucose and mitochondria for energy

production, activated cells mostly rely on glycolysis. [28] We measured glucose and mitochondrial

dependencies of PBMCs *ex vivo* using SCENITH. Based on the puromycin uptake, $CD3^+ CD14^+$

T cell-monocyte complexes and $CD14^+$ monocytes at baseline appear to be more metabolically

active than T cells (**Figure 7K**). While both $CD14^+$ monocytes and $CD3^+ CD14^+$ immunologic

complexes were mainly glucose-dependent, the latter had a higher mitochondrial dependence

(**Figure 7L**). We next posited that if the immune synapse formation/maintenance is a high

energy function based on the presence of mitochondria close to the synapse (**Figure S7A-B**),

then incubation of PBMCs with metabolic pathway inhibitors (2DG, oligomycin) would affect the

proportions of immune complexes detectable by flow cytometry. While the proportion of $CD3^+$

$CD14^+$ complexes remained the same after inhibition of glycolysis with 2DG, there was a

significant decrease in the percent of detectable $CD3^+ CD14^+$ immune complexes with inhibition

of oxidative phosphorylation (**Figure 7M**). Taken together, these initial studies suggest that the

cells that make up the $CD3^+ CD14^+$ immune complexes may use both glycolysis and oxidative

phosphorylation, though inhibition of mitochondrial ATP synthesis reduced the proportion of

complexes.

Discussion

This study reveals that circulating immunologic monocytes complexed with T cells are increased in the presence of glucose intolerance in PWH, suggesting that these immune cell interactions may contribute to the elevated burden of diabetes and metabolic disease associated with long-term HIV infection. Importantly, the immune complexes have RNA transcriptomes that demonstrate an inflammatory profile. Additionally, there is an inverse association between the immune complexes and anti-inflammatory responses like IL-10 and CD4$^+$ T regulatory T cells. Many of these complexes remain intact over a 4-hour time-lapse ex-vivo, which suggests that they form prolonged synapses that may be an additional driver of inflammatory response. Although immune complexes in blood have traditionally been ignored, recent findings implicate them in immune perturbation, [13] Among the possible explanations for the accumulation of circulating immune complexes, are the presence of HIV within these complexes and the fact that they are increased with glucose intolerance, maybe a reflection of a bidirectional and self-reinforcing loop that exists between complex-driven inflammation (driven by HIV) and elevated blood sugar.

Monocytes are important leukocytes that constitutively leave the circulation to survey tissue. CD14$^+$ classical monocytes represent close to 90% of total monocytes and are more likely to become macrophages after transmigration into tissues. On the other hand, CD14^{lo} CD16$^+$ non-classical monocytes tend to differentiate into dendritic cells and may re-enter the blood circulation. [29] In PWH on antiretroviral therapy, replicating and integrated HIV can be detected in circulating monocytes. [30-33] Although CD14^{lo} CD16$^+$ non-classical monocytes may be more prone to HIV infection, [34] due to the study design using CD3 and CD14 to detect the immune complexes, we show here that HIV viral particles within CD14$^+$ cell-classical monocyte complexes. Our imaging studies allow us to speculate that HIV could be transferred from either cell type. Within tissues, macrophages infected with HIV can effectively transmit HIV to CD4$^+$ T

cells, suggesting these cellular interactions may be an important contributor to T cell loss and

the establishment of the cellular reservoir. [25,35,36]

HIV cure will require the elimination of viral reservoirs, which has been a challenge due to the

inability of the immune system to eliminate latently infected cells. [18,37] The field recognizes that

there is a lot of heterogeneity in the viral reservoir which includes both cell types as well as their

viral activation states including the latent virus that is not transcriptional active and the

transcriptionally active virus which can be in a spectrum plus or minus viral protein expression.

[37] The immune-complex imaging suggests that these complexes are heterogeneous, many of

which remain intact over a 5-hour window. Thus, these complexes may adhere to inflamed

endothelium and be recruited together and help establish and replenish viral reservoirs within

tissues. Future studies will investigate the recruitment of these cells to better understand this.

Interestingly, our T cell receptor sequencing data consisted of clonal cells however there were

no dominant clones to suggest that these complexes are driven by a single antigen. However,

based on previously published public TCRs which are limited by what has been studied, a large

proportion of the TCRs expressed were against EBC, CMV, HIV, and SARS-CoV2. While this

may be biased by predominant TCRs in public databases, it implies that other chronic infections

such as EBV and CMV may also be important. While we were able to detect HIV by droplet

digital PCR, we did not detect CMV DNA within these complexes. However, additional studies

that use multiple modalities for detecting viruses (HIV, CMV, EBV, Influenza antigens, DNA,

RNA transcripts) are warranted.

Chronic systemic inflammatory responses in PWH may partly explain the high incidence and

prevalence of diabetes. [38,39] Similarly, there is growing evidence inflammation is important in the

pathogenesis of type 2 diabetes. [40] IL-10 is an anti-inflammatory cytokine that is expressed by

several cell types including macrophages, Th2 cells, regulatory T cells, dendritic cells, and B

cells.[41] Several studies including the Leiden 85-plus study have shown that immune cells from

individuals with metabolic syndrome or type 2 diabetes expressed lower levels of IL-10 upon

stimulation.[42] While untreated HIV infection may be associated with increased expression of IL-

10, which in turn is thought to suppress T-cell responses.[43] Over time and with antiretroviral

therapy treatment, IL-10 expression decreases and may be associated with metabolic disease

in PWH.[44,45] Furthermore, a study looking at the effects of exercise suggests that PWH are

unable to increase IL-10 expression when compared to HIV-negative individuals.[46] In this study,

the relationship between the T cell-monocyte complexes and IL-10 and the interaction between

hemoglobin A1C and IL-10 reinforces the notion that complexes arise in the setting of

inflammation.[47] Taken together, a state of systemic inflammation in PWH, compounded with

diabetes and a lack of adequate inhibitory responses, could enhance the presence of the T cell-

monocyte immune complexes.

A recent study on immunometabolism of $CD4^+$ T cells in the context of HIV showed that the

infectivity of the $CD4^+$ T cells was more dependent on the metabolic activity of the T cells and

less on the activation status.[48,49] They separated $CD4^+$ T cells based on their metabolic activity

and then infected with HIV and observed a higher magnitude of HIV infection with those that

were more metabolically active (both oxidative phosphorylation and glycolysis). Interestingly,

they also showed fewer cells with latent HIV infection, when they partially inhibited glycolysis

using 2DG, suggesting that the steps required for HIV to establish latency are glucose

dependent. In our study, $CD3^+$ $CD14^+$ immune complexes were metabolically active with

dependence on glucose than oxidative phosphorylation. Based on the recent study, this would

make the T cells and possibly monocytes better able to support an HIV viral reservoir.

Importantly, the formation of these immune complexes is an energy-demanding process, and

the inhibition of oxidative phosphorylation may have been sufficient to affect some of these

immunological synapses as previously published.[50]

In summary, we have defined specific features of metabolically active, dynamic T cell-monocyte

immune complexes increased with glucose intolerance in the setting of chronic HIV infection. In

PWH, these cells also represent a fraction of the HIV reservoir that is likely to be recruited into

the tissue to establish a tissue reservoir. The complex interplay between inflammatory and

metabolic disorders makes these cells particularly interesting. Future studies investigating these

cells in vivo will provide insight into their role in the development of metabolic disease and

complications that may arise from this.

Limitations of the study

This is a cross-sectional study that is not able to show causality, therefore while the

inflammatory immune complexes are increased in persons with HIV with increased glucose

tolerance and appear to carry HIV, we are currently unable to make conclusions as to whether

these immune complexes are important in the pathogenesis of the metabolic disease. Another

limitation is that our conclusions cannot be extended to HIV-negative individuals at this time.

Future studies in mouse models and human cohorts with and without metabolic disease,

including PWH are needed to understand the extent to which the immune complexes may be

important in the pathogenesis of a metabolic disease or may be associated with complications

related to metabolic disease.

STAR Methods

KEY RESOURCES TABLE

CYTOF Reagents

Target	Metal Tag	Tag Isotope	Source or reference
CD45	Y	89	Fluidigm
CCR6	Praseodymium (Pr)	141	Fluidigm
CD57	Neodymium (Nd)	142	Fluidigm
CD127	Neodymium (Nd)	143	Fluidigm
CD38	Neodymium (Nd)	144	Fluidigm
CD4	Neodymium (Nd)	145	Fluidigm
CD8a	Neodymium (Nd)	146	Fluidigm
CD14 M5E2	Neodymium (Nd)	148	Fluidigm
CD45RO	Samarium (Sm)	149	Fluidigm
CD86	Neodymium	150	Fluidigm
ICOS	Europium (Eu)	151	Fluidigm
TCRgd	Samarium (Sm)	152	Fluidigm
CD45RA	Europium (Eu)	153	Fluidigm
GPR56	Samarium (Sm)	154	CIC core
PD-1	Gadolinium (Gd)	155	Fluidigm
CXCR3	Gadolinium (Gd)	156	Fluidigm
OX40	Gadolinium (Gd)	158	Fluidigm
CCR7	Terbium (Tb)	159	Fluidigm
CD28	Gadolinium (Gd)	160	Fluidigm
CD152/CTLA4	Dysprosium (Dy)	161	Fluidigm
FoxP3	Dysprosium (Dy)	162	Fluidigm
CRTH2	Dysprosium (Dy)	163	Fluidigm

CD161	Dysprosium (Dy)	164	Fluidigm
CD19	Holmium(Ho)	165	Fluidigm
NKG2D	Erbium (Er)	166	Fluidigm
CD27	Erbium (Er)	167	Fluidigm
CD138	Erbium (Er)	168	Fluidigm
CD25	Thulium (TM)	169	Fluidigm
CD3	Erbium (Er)	170	Fluidigm
CD20	Ytterbium (Yb)	171	Fluidigm
CX3CR1	Ytterbium (Yb)	172	CIC core
CD137	Ytterbium (Yb)	173	Fluidigm
HLA-Dr	Lutetium (Lu)	174	Fluidigm
CCR4	Lutetium (Lu)	175	Fluidigm
CD56/NCAM	Ytterbium (Yb)	176	Fluidigm
Nuc acid --Ir	Iridium (Ir)	191/193	Fluidigm
Cisplatin	Platinum (Pt)	195	Fluidigm
CD16	Bismuth (Bi)	209	Fluidigm

Flow Cytometry Reagents

BD ARIA

Target	Fluorescent Tag	Source or Reference	Catalog number
CD3 (Clone SK7)	BV786	BD Biosciences	#563800
CD4 (Clone RPA-T4)	PcPCy5.5	BD Biosciences	#560650
CD8 (Clone PRA-T8)	A700	BD Biosciences	#557945
CCR7 (Clone 150503)	BV421	BD Biosciences	#562555
CD45RO (Clone UCHL1)	PECF594	BD Biosciences	#562299
LIVE/DEAD Fixable Aqua	N/A	ThermoFisher	#L34957

CD57 (Lot 4182924)	FITC	BD Pharmingen	# 555619
CX3CR1(Clone 2A9-1)	PE	BD Biosciences	#565796
GPR56 (Clone CG4)	PECY7	BioLegend	#358205
CD14 (Clone M5E2)	APC	BD Biosciences	#561383
CD19 (Clone HIB19)	V500	BD Biosciences	#561121
CYTEK			
GPR56 (Clone 4C3)	APC	BioLegend	#391905
CCR7 (Clone G043H7)	Spark NIR 685	BioLegend	#353257
CD38 (Clone HIT2)	AF700	BD Biosciences	#560676
KLRG1 (Clone 2F1-KLRG1)	APC CY7	BioLegend	#138425
CD14 (Clone 63D3)	APC Fire 810	BioLegend	#367155
CX3CR1 (Clone 2A9-1)	PE	BD Biosciences	#565796
CD45RO (Clone UCHL1)	PE-CF594	BD Biosciences	#562299
CXCR3 (Clone G025H7)	PE-CY5	BioLegend	#353755
PD1 (Clone EH12.2H7)	PE Fire 700	BioLegend	#329918
CD27 (Clone O323)	PE-CY7	BioLegend	#302859
Puromycin AF488	PE Fire 810	Millipore,	#MABE343-AF488
CD16 PerCP	PerCP	Biolegend	#302030
L/D Zombie Violet	BB660	BioLegend	#423113
CD3 BV480 (Clone UCHT1)	BV480	BD Biosciences	#566166
CD19 BV510 (Clone HIB19)	BB510	BioLegend	#302241
CD8 BV570 (Clone RPA-T8)	BB570	BioLegend	#301037
CD4 BV650 (Clone RPA-T4)	BV650	BioLegend	#300535
CD28 BV711 (Clone CD28.2)	BV711	BioLegend	#302947
CXCR5 BV785 (Clone J252D24)	BV785	BioLegend	#356935
Energy Metabolism Profiling with SCENITH			

Anti-puromycin (Clone 12D10)	AF488	Millipore Sigma	#MABE343
Puromycin solution	N/A	Sigma Aldrich	#P8833-10MG
Oligomycin A	N/A	Sigma Aldrich	#75351-5MG
2-deoxy-D-glucose 2mM	N/A	Sigma Aldrich	#D8375
Software and Algorithms			
R 4.1.2	The R project for Statistical Computing	https://www.r-project.org/	
Cytobank Vanderbilt	Cytobank	Vanderbilt.cytobank.org	
GraphPad Prism version 9.5.0	GraphPad Software	https://www.graphpad.com	
FlowJo V	Tree Star	https://www.flowjo.com	
TCRmatch	IEDB	http://tools.iedb.org/tcrmatch/	
VGAS	IIID	https://www.iiid.com.au/software/vgas	

Resource availability

Requests for further details on protocols and data included in this study are available upon

request from the lead contact, celestine.wanjalla@vumc.org

Study Participants

All PWH were previously recruited for the *HIV, Adipose Tissue Immunology and Metabolism*

cohort (HATIM) at the Vanderbilt Comprehensive Care clinic from 2017 to 2020 (first visit) and

2021 to 2022 (second visit). The cohort was developed to study contributors to metabolic

disease in treated HIV infection and included individuals without diabetes (hemoglobin A1c

[HbA1c] <5.7% and fasting blood glucose [FBG] <100 mg/dl), with prediabetes (HbA1c 5.7-6.4%

and/or FBG 100-125 mg/dl), and diabetes (HbA1c ≥6.5%, FBG≥126 mg/dl and/or on

medications to treat diabetes). All PWH were on antiretroviral therapy with sustained viral

suppression for a minimum of 12 months before the study, with a CD4[+] T cell count > 350

cells/ml (**Supplemental Table 1**). The cohort excluded individuals with inflammatory illnesses,

substance abuse (amphetamines and cocaine), greater than 11 alcoholic drinks per week, and

active hepatitis B and C. The study is registered at ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT04451980) and

additional details are previously published. [2] This study was approved by the Vanderbilt

University of Medicine Institutional Review Boards. Participants in this study provided written

informed consent and questions answered where applicable. Records and samples are stored

with de-identified labels. The investigators carried out studies by the guidelines of the United

States Department of Health and Human Services.

Mass cytometry

Cryopreserved PBMCs were thawed in RPMI media containing Nuclease S7 (20ul). The

PBMCs were pelleted, washed in PBS without calcium or magnesium, and resuspended in 1ml

RPMI media followed by incubation with 10uM Cisplatin (3 minutes before quench with

RPMI/10% fetal bovine serum) to stain for LIVE/Dead cells. Cells were then washed twice with

PBS/1% BSA. For all 37 antibodies included in the panel, we made a master mix with the

surface markers (**Supplemental Table 2**). The cells were incubated with the master mix of

antibodies for 30 minutes at room temperature, followed by two washes with PBS, and a fix with

1.6% paraformaldehyde. The cells were washed two additional times with PBS and then

resuspended in 1ml of cold methanol and stored at -20°C. One day prior to running the samples

on the Helios, the cells were washed twice with PBS and resuspended in PBS/1% BSA. Cells

were then stained with intracellular markers (CTLA4 and FOXP3) for 20 minutes at room

temperature. The cells were then stained with 2ul (250nM) of DNA intercalator (Ir) in PBS with

1.6% PFA. Just prior to running the cells were washed in PBS followed by Millipore water. For

analysis, we resuspended 500,000 cells/ml of Millipore H_2O. $^1/_{10}$ volume of equilibration beads

were added to the cells, which were then filtered and run on the Helios.

FCS files from the Helios cytometer were bead-normalized using the premessa R package's

normalizer GUI method.[51] FCS files were then submitted to a gating scheme using Flowjo to

clean the data of debris (DNA-), Fluidigm beads (175++165++), events that showed obvious

doublet character by Gaussian parameters (EventLength high Residual high), and dead cells

(cisplatin[+]). Using Flowjo, various cell types were targeted for analysis including CD45+

lymphocytes, CD4[+] T cells, CD8[+] T cells, Monocytes, B cells, and NK cells (refer to gating

scheme figure if appropriate). Gated subsets were exported from Flowjo for further analysis.

The R programming language (version 4.2.1) was used for the subsequent analysis steps.

CD45+ lymphocyte exports were downsampled to 40000 events per sample, CD4[+] T cell

exports were downsampled to 40000 events per sample, CD8+ T cell exports were

downsampled to 40000 events per sample, Monocyte exports were downsampled to 30000

events per sample, B cell exports were downsampled to 30000 events per sample, and NK cell

exports were downsampled to 30000 events per sample. All FCS file handling in R was done

using the flowCore package. [52] Each downsampled subset was passed through the following

workflow: Subset parameters were transformed using the function asinh(x/5). A nearest

neighbor search was done to produce a weighted adjacency matrix with a number of nearest

neighbors set to the dimension of subset + 1. [53] The Leiden community detection algorithm was

used to cluster the adjacency matrix. [54] Uniform Manifold Approximation and Projection (UMAP)

was done for subset visualization using the uwot R package. [55]

Tracking Expanding populations (T-REX) and Marker Enrichment Modeling (MEM) of

enriched features

The T-REX algorithm was performed as published. [23] In brief, we classified cells of interest

measured using mass cytometry including CD45$^+$ cells, CD3$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells, CD3$^+$ CD8$^+$ T cells,

CD3$^-$ CD19$^-$ HLA-DR$^+$ monocytes, and CD3$^-$ CD56$^+$ CD16$^+$ NK cells. UMAP analyses were

performed for concatenated non-diabetic participants (group 1) and prediabetic/diabetic

participants (group 2). This was followed by K nearest neighbor (KNN) analyses to search for

the nearest neighbors for each cell. The difference in the percent change per cell between

group 1 and group 2 is calculated based on the abundance of these cells in each group in the

KNN region. ≤5% and ≥95% changes in cell percentages were considered significant, which we

clustered using DBSCAN. The phenotype of the clusters that were significantly different

between the groups was determined using the MEM package.

Flow cytometry

PBMCs were stained with fluorescently tagged antibodies as previously published. [20] In brief,

thawed and washed PBMCs were stained with Aqua (Live/Dead marker) for 10 minutes at room

temperature, followed by the addition of fluorescently tagged antibodies against T cells [CD3-

BV786, CD4-PerpCP cy5.5, CD8-A700], monocytes [CD14-APC], T-cell memory subsets

[CD45RO and CCR7]. CD19 antibody was included in the Aqua channel (therefore we did not

evaluate CD19 cells for flow cytometry). For the SCENITH assay, we used antibodies [anti-

puromycin, Zombie, CD3, CD4, CD8, CD14, CD16, CD19, CD27, CD28, CD38, CCR7,

CD45RO, CX3CR1, CXCR3, PD1, CXCR5, IgD, and KLRG1).

Droplet digital PCR

We sorted CD3$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells, CD14$^+$ monocytes, and CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes

into separate Eppendorf tubes with PBS. Cells were pelleted and resuspended in lysis buffer

[Tritonx100 (0.1%), Tris HCL (10mM), and Proteinase K (400ug/ml)] at 55°C for 10 hours.

Additional proteinase K was added during the heat inactivation stage at 95°C for 5 minutes. For

HIV DNA quantitation, we used LTR primers (LTR 5'AGC ACT CAA GGC AAG CTT TA-3', and

reverse primer -LTR 5' TGT ACT GGG TCT CTC TGG TTA G-3', and probe 5'-FAM-GCA GTG

GGT TCC CTA GTT AGC CAG AGA G-3IABkFQ3'). [56] HIV transcripts were quantified as

copies/million cells. 19ul of the ddPCR SuperMix (LTR primers & RPP30 housekeeping

gene primers and probes), and 6ul of cell lysates were mixed and aliquoted per well (96-well

twin tec plate) and droplets generated with an AutoDG. Droplets were read using a plate reader,

and the positive droplet threshold was manually set using the negative droplet control (media

only).

Single-cell T-cell receptor (TCR) sequencing

We sequenced TCRs from single cells as previously published. [57] In brief, we index sorted

single $CD3^+$ $CD14^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes into 96 well plates with 3µL of lysis buffer. We

used primers with uniquely tagged barcodes with a unique molecular identifier (UMI) for reverse

transcription. This allowed for multiplexing. cDNA was pooled and amplified using the KAPA

HiFi HotStart ReadyMix (Roche, Basel, Switzerland), as per the manufacturer's instructions. We

quantified individual TCR gene expression using the UMIs [58-60]. Nested PCRs were done

targeting the TCR. 2µL of pooled cDNA was enriched for TCRab genes using the TSOend

primer and the constant region primers, TCRA or TCRB. These products were purified and

pooled. We created indexed libraries for sequencing using Truseq adapters and quantified using

the Jetseq qPCR Library Quantification Kit (Meridian Biosciences Inc., OH, USA), as per the

manufacturer's instructions. We sequenced samples on an Illumina MiSeq using a 2×300bp

paired-end chemistry kit (Illumina Inc., CA, USA). Sequencing reads were quality-filtered and

demultiplexed to assign reads to individual wells and sequences mapped to the TCRA and

TCRB loci and assigned TCR clonotypes using the MIXCR software. [61] Circos plots were

generated using the visual genomics analysis studio (VGAS).[62]

Time-lapse imaging

CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes were sorted as above and resuspended in RPMI with

10% fetal bovine serum (FBS). The cells were then plated on poly-L-Lysine pre-coated

coverslips at a density of 15,000 -40,000 complexes per 100 μl media. The cells on the

coverslip were placed in a 24-well plate and time-lapse imaging was captured using an EVOS

M5000 imaging system. Image J Version 1.53t 24 August 2022 was used for image analysis.

Transmission electron microscopy

CD3$^+$ CD14$^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes, CD3$^+$ CD4$^+$ T cells, and CD14$^+$ monocytes were sorted

as above and plated on poly-L-Lysine pre-coated coverslips. For day 3 samples, we added RPMI

media supplemented with human IL-2 [10ng/mL]. For doublet imaging, the cells were plated on a

poly-L-lysine coated coverslip for 1-2 hours. Then when the cells are bound to the coverslip, the

media was aspirated and then the cells were fixed with 2.5% glutaraldehyde solution in 0.1 M

sodium cacodylate buffer. [63] After secondary fixation, samples were washed for five mins with

0.1 M sodium cacodylate buffer (7.3 pH). From there, we performed two washes of five mins with

diH$_2$O to ensure the plates were cleaned. While keeping all solutions and plates at room

temperature, the samples were incubated with 2.5% uranyl acetate, diluted with H$_2$O, at 4 °C

overnight. Following this, samples were dehydrated using an ethanol gradient series. After

dehydration, the ethanol was replaced with Eponate 12™ mixed in 100% ethanol in a 1:1 solution,

then incubated at room temperature for 30 mins. This was repeated three times for 1 hour using

100% Eponate 12™.

The plates were finally placed in new media and cured in an oven at 70 °C overnight. The plates

were cracked upon hardening, and the cells were separated by submerging the plate in liquid

nitrogen. An 80 nm thickness jeweler's saw was used to cut the block to fit in a Leica UC6

ultramicrotome sample holder. The section was placed on formvar-coated copper grids

counterstained in 2% uranyl acetate for 2 mins. Then the grids were counterstained by Reynold's

lead citrate for two mins. Images were acquired by TEM on either a JEOL JEM-1230, operating

at 120 kV, or a JEOL 1400, operating at 80 kV. [64]

Single-cell RNA sequencing

We performed 10X sequencing on PBMCs from one prediabetic participant with a significant

proportion of $CD3^+$ $CD14^+$ T cell-monocyte complexes as determined by flow cytometry. PBMCs

were thawed and washed with PBS (no calcium or magnesium), and the pellet was

resuspended in 100µL of cell staining buffer. The cells were incubated with Fc receptor-blocking

solution (5 µL, TruStain). Cells were incubated on ice for 10 minutes. A Total Seq C master mix

containing surface antibodies (CD3 clone UCHT1 #300479, CD4 clone SK3 #344651, CD8a

clone SK1 #344753, CD14 clone 63D3 #367137, CD16 clone 3G8 #302065, CD69 clone FN50

#310951) was prepared. 3µL of the master mix was added to each sample, which was

incubated on ice for 30 minutes. The cells were washed three times and resuspended in 0.04%

BSA in PBS. We submitted twenty thousand cells that were loaded onto the Chromium Single

Cell 5' assay (10x Genomics). Cells were encapsulated and feature barcoded, with library

preparation, cDNA amplification, and sequencing (50bp paired-end reads, on NovaSeq 6000 S2

platform). We aligned the raw sequencing reads to the human genome (hg38) using STAR

v.2.7.2a. We identified cells using cell ranger (version 7.1). Downstream analysis was

performed using the Seurat V4. [65] We filtered out cells with ≤ 200 genes, umi ≤ 400 or > 4000,

and ≤ 10% mitochondrial genes expressed. We used DoubletFinder with default settings to

identify heterotypic doublets. We then performed downstream analyses on the RNA count

matrix including feature selection, scaling and centering counts, principal component analysis,

Uniform Manifold Approximation, and Projection (UMAP) reduction, shared nearest neighbor

graph construction, and finally cluster determination. Annotation was performed using cell-

specific gene markers. Doublets were identified by the expression of multiple cell lineages and

confirmed by DoubletFinder classification.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis in this study was performed in Graph pad Prism version 9.5.0 and R version

4.2.1.

Data and code availability

Gene expression data from this study have been deposited in the NIH Gene Expression

Omnibus (GEO) accession numbers: GSE229707 and GSE230276.

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The graphical abstract was created using BioRender.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, C.N.W., J.R.K.; Methodology, C.N.W., J.S., J. O., X.Z., M.M., S.A.M., H.B.,

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Analysis, C.N.W., J.S., J.O., C.M.W., R.G., A.C., S.P. ; Investigation, C.N.W., C.M.W., J.R.K;

Resources, J.R.K., S.A.K.; Data Curation, C.N.W., S.B., Q.S., J.S., J. R. K.; Writing – Original

Draft, C.N.W.; Writing – Review & Editing original draft., C.N.W., J.S., J. O., X.Z., M.M., S.A.M.,

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Declaration of interests

The authors have no competing interests.

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