Human airway macrophages are metabolically reprogrammed by IFN-γ resulting in glycolysis
dependent functional plasticity.

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Abstract

Airway macrophages (AM) are the predominant immune cell in the lung and play a crucial role in
preventing infection, making them a target for host directed therapy. Macrophage effector functions
are associated with cellular metabolism. A knowledge gap remains in understanding metabolic
reprogramming and functional plasticity of distinct human macrophage subpopulations, especially in
lung resident AM. We examined tissue-resident AM and monocyte derived macrophages (MDM; as a
model of blood derived macrophages) in their resting state and after priming with IFN-γ or IL-4 to
model the Th1/Th2 axis in the lung. Human macrophages, regardless of origin, had a strong induction
of glycolysis in response to IFN-γ or upon stimulation. IFN-γ significantly enhanced cellular energetics
in both AM and MDM by upregulating both glycolysis and oxidative phosphorylation. Upon
stimulation, AM do not decrease oxidative phosphorylation unlike MDM which shift to "Warburg"-like
metabolism. IFN-γ priming promoted cytokine secretion in AM. Blocking glycolysis with 2-
deoxyglucose significantly reduced IFN-γ driven cytokine production in AM, indicating that IFN-γ
induces functional plasticity in human AM, which is mechanistically mediated by glycolysis. Directly
comparing responses between macrophages, AM were more responsive to IFN-γ priming and
dependent on glycolysis for cytokine secretion than MDM. Interestingly, TNF production was under
the control of glycolysis in AM and not in MDM. MDM exhibited glycolysis-dependent upregulation of
HLA-DR and CD40, whereas IFN-γ upregulated HLA-DR and CD40 on AM independently of glycolysis.
These data indicate that human AM are functionally plastic and respond to IFN-γ in a manner distinct
from MDM. These data provide evidence that human AM are a tractable target for inhalable
immunomodulatory therapies for respiratory diseases.

Key words: Human alveolar macrophage, Glycolysis, Oxidative Phosphorylation, Immunometabolism,
Infection, Polarization.

Introduction

Airway macrophages (AM) are the sentinels of the lung and the first responders to respiratory insults
such as infection. Despite a large body of evidence indicating that these tissue resident AM have a
distinct phenotype and function to peripherally derived macrophages, there remains a significant lack
of data regarding human AM function and plasticity in response to infection and their ability to change
under the influence of Th1 or Th2 environments. Macrophage function exists on a spectrum of
activation states based on tissue residency, ontogeny, cytokine milieu and the plasticity of the
macrophage in response to environmental factors (1, 2). Much of the research has focused on the

contribution of metabolic pathways to polarising macrophages into distinct pro-inflammatory or
regulatory phenotypes (3). There is a paucity of data on the role of metabolism in response to Th1 or
Th2 microenvironments induced by cytokines-such as IFN-γ or IL-4 respectively, in human
macrophages, especially in tissue resident macrophages, such as AM. A knowledge gap remains as to
whether the tissue resident AM is metabolically and functionally plastic and therefore capable of
mounting effective pro-inflammatory responses despite its homeostatic, regulatory tissue resident
phenotype.

Plasticity of macrophage function requires metabolic reprogramming (4, 5). Since AM play a key role
in directing and propagating immune responses and inflammation in the lung, we sought to determine
the plasticity of AM and monocyte derived macrophages (MDM). Using primary human AM and MDM,
we modelled Th1 and Th2 microenvironments with the addition of IFN-γ or IL-4, respectively. To
further examine the function of IFN-γ or IL-4 primed macrophages, we stimulated cells with the gram-
negative bacterial component, lipopolysaccharide (LPS), or whole bacteria, irradiated *Mycobacterium*
tuberculosis (Mtb; iH37Rv). Firstly, we assessed the metabolic phenotype of unprimed human AM, or
primed with IFN-γ or IL-4. IFN-γ significantly increased the cellular energetics of both human AM and
MDM. Furthermore, subsequent stimulation led to an increase in the extracellular acidification rate
(ECAR), a surrogate marker of glycolysis in both macrophages. Therefore, using the glycolytic inhibitor
2-deoxyglucouse (2DG) we then examined the mechanistic role of glycolysis in the phenotypic and
functional plasticity of both AM and MDM. Herein the functional plasticity is defined as the ability of
primed macrophages to differentially alter cytokine production in response to bacterial stimuli
whereas the phenotypic plasticity is defined by alterations in surface expression of activation markers.

These data demonstrate that human AM are functionally plastic and respond to IFN-γ or IL-4
differently than MDM. These novel data demonstrate differential metabolic responses within human
macrophage subpopulations that are linked with functionality. Furthermore, these data address a
knowledge gap in human respiratory innate immunology and provide evidence that the AM is a
tractable target to support human respiratory health.

Methods

Cell Culture

Buffy coats were obtained with consent from healthy donors (aged between 18-69; ethical approval, Trinity College Dublin). Peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) were isolated by density-gradient centrifugation over Lymphoprep (StemCell Technologies). Cells were resuspended in RPMI (Gibco) supplemented with 10% AB human serum (Sigma-Aldrich) and plated onto non-treated tissue culture plates (Costar) for 7 days. Non-adherent cells were removed by washing every 2-3 days. Cultures were >90% pure based on co-expression of CD14 and CD68.

Human AM were retrieved at bronchoscopy, (ethical approval, St. James's Hospital) previously as reported (6). Cells were plated in RPMI (Gibco) supplemented with 10% FBS (Gibco), fungizone (2.5 µg/ml; Gibco) and cefotaxime (50 µg/ml; Melford Biolaboratories). Cells were incubated for 24 h before washing to remove non-adherent cells. Adherent cells (predominantly AM) were used for experiments**.**

BAL Sample Acquisition

All donors were patients undergoing clinically indicated bronchoscopy and written informed consent for retrieving additional bronchial washings for research was obtained prior to the procedure. Patients were not remunerated for participation in this study. Exclusion criteria included age under 18 years, inability to provide written informed consent or a known (or ensuing) diagnosis of malignancy, sarcoidosis, HIV or Hepatitis C. Patients undergoing biopsy as part of bronchoscopy were also excluded.

Sample acquisition during bronchoscopy: Conscious sedation was achieved using intravenous midazolam and lignocaine gel was administered to the nostril. Flexible video-bronchoscope was inserted through the nostril and advanced to the level of the vocal cords by posterior approach. Further lignocaine spray was administered prior to and subsequent to traversing the vocal cords. Following routine bronchoscopy, the bronchoscope was wedged in the right middle lobe bronchus. A total of 180 ml of sterile saline was administered as 60 ml boluses via a connector inserted into the bronchoscope and aspirated within 5–10 s under low suction. The bronchoalveolar lavage fluid (BALF) was then transported directly to the laboratory for AM isolation. Pre- and post-bronchoscopy patient care was not altered by participation in the study. The procedure was prolonged by ~12 min.

Macrophage Stimulation

Macrophages were primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 (both 10 ng/ml) or left unprimed for 24 h. Where indicated, MDM and AM were treated with 2DG (5 mM) for 1 h prior to stimulation with irradiated Mtb strain H37Rv (iH37Rv; MOI 1-10) or LPS (100 ng/ml; Merck). For metabolic flux analysis stimulations were immediately monitored in real-time. All other stimulations were assessed after 24 h.

Metabolic Assays

MDM were placed in ice-cold PBS and incubated at 4°C on ice for 30 minutes, then gently scraped and counted using trypan blue. MDM ($1x10^5$ cells/well) were re-plated onto Seahorse plates, as previously described (7). AM ($1x10^5$ cells/well) were directly plated onto Seahorse plates and washed after 24 h. The ECAR and the oxygen consumption rate (OCR), were measured 3 times every 10 minutes to establish baselines. After 30 minutes macrophages were stimulated in-situ and monitored in real-time,

with Seahorse medium, iH37Rv or LPS. Post stimulation the ECAR and OCR were continually sampled
at 20-minute intervals for times indicated. Analyses were carried out at approximately 150 minutes as
previously described (7). Fold change in ECAR and OCR was calculated compared to unstimulated
unprimed controls at 150 minutes, where unstimulated unprimed macrophages were set to 1. This
allows for analysis of the effects of both priming and subsequent stimulation for and accounts for the
variation in the raw ECAR and OCR reading between runs thereby making each donor its own control.

Percent change in ECAR and OCR was also calculated to equalise groups to the same point prior to
stimulation. Each condition was compared to its own respective primed or unprimed baseline at 30
minutes and this was set to 100%, prior to stimulation, this was carried to examine the capacity of
cells to increase metabolic parameters in response to stimulation. Post stimulation percent change
data was then extracted and analysed at 150 minutes. This controls for the priming effect and enables
the analysis of metabolic capacity in each dataset.

Cytokine assays

124 IL-1β, IL-10 (BioLegend) and TNF (Invitrogen) concentrations in supernatants were quantified by ELISA,
125 according to manufacturer's protocol.

Flow cytometry

Human AM and MDM were placed in ice-cold PBS and incubated at 4°C on ice for 30 minutes. Cells
were removed by gentle scraping, Fc blocked with Human TruStain FcX (BioLegend) and stained with
zombie NIR viability dye and fluorochrome-conjugated antibodies for CD14 (FITC), CD68 (PE), CD86
(BV410), CD40 (BV510), and HLA-DR (APC; all BioLegend). For phagocytosis and antigen processing
assays, MDM were treated with fluorescent beads (Sigma-Aldrich) or DQ-Ovalbumin (Thermo-fisher)
for 30 minutes at 37°C, before scraping as above. DQ-Ovalbumin is fluorescent after proteasomal
degradation marking antigen processing. Cells were fixed with 2% PFA and acquired on a BD FACS
Canto II. Unstained and FMO controls were used to normalise for background and to set gates. Data
were analysed using FlowJo.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism 10. Statistically significant differences
between two or more groups containing more than one variable were determined by two-way ANOVA
with Tukey or Bonferroni multiple comparisons tests as stated. P-values of ≤0.05 were considered
statistically significant and denoted with an asterisk. Alternatively, P-values of ≤0.05 were denoted
with a hashtag where data was analysed in the absence of IFN-γ primed data sets, to analyse statistical
differences between no cytokine and IL-4 treated data sets.

Results

IFN-γ induces metabolic reprogramming in both AM and MDM.

AM alter their metabolism in response to Mtb (8). Human macrophages also undergo a rapid increase
in ECAR early in response to activation (7) and these pathways can be pharmacologically manipulated
(9, 10). The metabolic and functional plasticity of human AM remains unexplored, however recent
evidence shows they express both 'M1' and 'M2' markers (11). Murine AM can be reprogrammed
through an IFN-γ dependent mechanism (12). We therefore sought to examine whether priming

human AM with IFN-γ compared with IL-4 or unprimed AM, could influence their metabolic function
and response to bacterial stimuli. We stimulated with whole bacteria; Mtb (iH37Rv) or gram-negative
cell wall component; LPS. AM were plated in a Seahorse plate and primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 (both 10
ng/ml) for 24 h or left unprimed. AM ECAR and OCR were recorded for 30 min at baseline. AM were
then stimulated in the Seahorse XFe24 Analyzer with medium (control), iH37Rv (MOI; 1-10) or LPS
(100 ng/ml) and ECAR (Figure S1A) and OCR (Figure S1B) were continuously monitored.

At 150 minutes post stimulation fold change compared to unprimed unstimulated AM was calculated
for ECAR (Figure 1A) and OCR (Figure 1B). IFN-γ priming significantly increased the ECAR and OCR of
unstimulated human AM compared with control or IL-4 primed AM (Figure 1A,B). Upon stimulation
with iH37Rv or LPS, AM significantly increased ECAR compared to their respective unstimulated
controls, regardless of cytokine priming (Figure 1A). IFN-γ primed and subsequently stimulated AM
exhibited a significantly increased ECAR compared with stimulated control or IL-4 primed AM (Figure
1A). IL-4 primed iH37Rv stimulated AM increased ECAR to similar extent as unprimed controls (Figure
1A; left). Conversely, IL-4 primed AM stimulated with LPS AM did not increase their ECAR to the same
extent as controls (Figure 1A; right), suggesting that IL-4 reduces the AM ability to increase ECAR in
response to LPS stimulation. IFN-γ significantly increased the OCR of AM in response to stimulation
with iH37Rv or LPS, and had enhanced OCR compared with other stimulated controls (Figure 1B).
These data indicate that priming human AM with IFN-γ increases both glycolytic and oxidative
metabolism, which is then further increased upon stimulation.

Since IFN-γ priming increased cellular energetics in the AM at baseline, we calculated percent change
in ECAR and OCR from the baseline rate of each group in order to assess if IFN-γ or IL-4 primed AM
have altered capacity to change their metabolism in response to stimulation (Figure 1C,D). This was
carried out to equalise all the primed data sets at baseline before stimulation (Figure S1C, S1D). These
data indicate that whilst the peak of glycolysis is elevated in IFN-γ primed AM (Figure S1A), all AM
have a similar capacity to increase glycolysis upon stimulation when baseline differences in
metabolism were adjusted for the effects of cytokine priming (Figure 1C). IFN-γ increased the percent
change in OCR of AM in response to both bacterial stimuli compared to the unstimulated IFN-γ primed
control (Figure 1D). These data indicate that priming AM alters the metabolic baselines of human
tissue resident macrophages and not their ability to respond to bacterial stimuli.

In order to compare the metabolic responses of AM with blood derived macrophages, we next
assessed MDM. Human MDM were left unprimed or primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 (both 10 ng/ml). 24 h
after cytokine priming metabolic flux was monitored by recording ECAR and OCR at baseline for 30
minutes. MDM were then stimulated with medium, iH37Rv or LPS and ECAR and OCR was continuously
monitored (Figure S1E-H).

As per previous observations (7, 13) a sustained increase in ECAR and a transient decrease in OCR
occurred in MDM after stimulation (Figure S1E-H). At 150 minutes post stimulation, fold change was
calculated compared to unprimed unstimulated MDM (Figure 1E,1F). IFN-γ priming significantly
increased the ECAR and OCR of MDM whereas IL-4 priming significantly reduced the ECAR in the
absence of stimulation (Figure 1E,1F). Stimulation of human MDM with iH37Rv or LPS significantly
increased ECAR in all MDM, however, IL-4 primed MDM stimulated with iH37Rv or LPS have
significantly reduced ECAR compared with control or IFN-γ primed MDM (Figure 1E). IFN-γ primed
MDM stimulated with iH37Rv have increased ECAR compared with control MDM (Figure 1E).

Similar to AM, IFN-γ primed MDM have increased OCR compared with control or IL-4 primed MDM
(Figure 1F). In contrast with the AM, stimulation of IFN-γ primed MDM does not further increase OCR
however, the elevated OCR in IFN-γ primed MDM remains significantly higher compared to control or

IL-4 primed MDM when stimulated with iH37Rv (Figure 1F). The percent change in ECAR upon
stimulation (from respective baselines) illustrates that all MDM groups significantly increase ECAR
from their own baseline in response to stimulation (Figure 1G). Interestingly, although IL-4 significantly
reduced ECAR in iH37Rv and LPS stimulated MDM compared with unprimed stimulated controls
(Figure 1E), the IL-4 primed MDM have significantly enhanced capacity to ramp up glycolysis in
response to LPS, as evidence by the significantly increased percentage change in LPS stimulated, IL-4
primed MDM compared with IFN-γ primed controls (Figure 1G). Control or IFN-γ primed MDM
stimulated with either iH37Rv or LPS decreases percentage change in the OCR associated with a
stimulation-induced shift to "Warburg"-like metabolism (Figure 1H). This effect is not observed in IL-
4 primed MDM, moreover, IL-4 primed MDM stimulated with iH37Rv had significantly elevated
percent change in OCR compared with stimulated unprimed or IFN-γ primed MDM (Figure 1H). These
data indicate that IL-4 priming prevents human MDM utilising "Warburg"-like metabolism in response
to stimulation.

Since AM and MDM had distinct responses to priming and stimulation, we next directly compared the
metabolic responses of AM and MDM. AM and MDM had similar levels of ECAR relative to their own
unprimed controls, which were both enhanced upon stimulation (Figure 1I). The OCR is elevated in
the AM compared with the MDM; IFN-γ primed AM exhibit significantly increased OCR compared with
MDM in response to stimulation with iH37Rv or LPS (Figure 1J).

In summary, human AM upregulate glycolysis early in response to stimulation. IFN-γ significantly
promoted cellular energetics (both ECAR and OCR) in unstimulated AM which was further enhanced
by stimulation. IFN-γ promotes increased cellular energetics in stimulated human MDM by promoting
both glycolysis and oxidative phosphorylation, whilst maintaining the capacity for the cells to shift to
"Warburg"-like metabolism in response to stimulation. IL-4 priming significantly reduced the cellular
energetics compared with control or IFN-γ primed MDM. Importantly, IL-4 prevents the drop in OCR
occurring in stimulated MDM thereby inhibiting "Warburg"-like metabolism. IL-4 primed AM had
reduced fold change in glycolysis upon stimulation with LPS compared with controls.

224   IFN-γ promotes HLA-DR and CD40 markedly more on human MDM than AM whereas IL-4 promoted
225   CD86.

Having established that energetic responses are plastic in response to IFN-γ in the AM and that post
stimulation energetic responses are different in human macrophage types under Th1 or Th2 priming
conditions, we next sought to determine the effect on the plasticity of the macrophage phenotype by
examining expression of activation markers associated with antigen presentation function. Human AM
(Figure 2A,2C,2E) and MDM (Figure 2B, 2D, 2F) were primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 for 24 h or left
unprimed. Macrophages were then stimulated with iH37Rv or LPS. After 24 h AM and MDM were
analysed by flow cytometry for expression of HLA-DR (Figure 2A,2B,2G), CD40 (Figure 2C,2D,2H) and
CD86(Figure 2E,2F,2I). A sample gating strategy for the analysis is provided (Figure S2A).

IFN-γ significantly increased the expression of HLA-DR compared with control or IL-4 primed
unstimulated AM (Figure 2A). Stimulation with iH37Rv significantly upregulated HLA-DR, but only in
unprimed AM (Figure 2A). Similarly, LPS significantly induced HLA-DR in unprimed or IL-4 primed AM
but not in IFN-γ primed AM (Figure 2A). IFN-γ also significantly increased the expression of HLA-DR
compared with control or IL-4 primed MDM (Figure 2B). Stimulation of IFN-γ primed MDM with iH37Rv
or LPS robustly enhanced the expression of HLA-DR (Figure 2B). IFN-γ priming significantly upregulated
CD40 expression in unstimulated AM (Figure 2C; right). In addition, CD40 was upregulated following

iH37Rv or LPS stimulation of AM in all groups assessed with the exception of IFN-γ primed AM
stimulated with iH37Rv (Figure 2C). IFN-γ increased the expression of the co-stimulatory molecule
CD40 in unstimulated MDM (Figure 2D). Stimulation of MDM with iH37Rv or LPS significantly
increased CD40 expression, with the exception of iH37Rv stimulation in IL-4 primed MDM (Figure 2D).
Expression of CD86 in response to stimulation with iH37Rv was only upregulated in IL-4 primed AM,
however, LPS induced upregulation of CD86 in all AM, with IFN-γ and IL-4 primed AM exhibiting
significantly enhances CD86 expression compared to unprimed control (Figure 2E). CD86 expression
induced by MDM in response to iH37Rv or LPS was enhanced by priming with either IFN-γ or IL-4, with
IL-4 inducing significantly higher expression compared with unprimed or IFN-γ primed MDM (Figure
2F).

In order to directly compare human AM and MDM responses to IFN-γ and IL-4, fold change in HLA-DR,
CD40 and CD86 was calculated compared to the average of respective unstimulated unprimed
controls (Figure 2G-I). The human MDM has increased HLA-DR and CD40 expression in response to
IFN-γ compared to the human AM (Figure 2G,2H). This increased expression of HLA-DR and CD40 by
MDM, becomes even more profound after stimulation. MDM also have greater expression of CD86
when primed with IL-4 compared to AM, which was again enhanced by stimulation (Figure 2I). IFN-γ
primed MDM stimulated with iH37Rv also increased expression of CD86 compared to AM (Figure 2I).

MDM are more dependent on glycolysis for the IFN-γ driven upregulation of HLA-DR and CD40 while
AM are not.

Since IFN-γ drove glycolysis and the expression of the macrophage activation markers CD40 and HLA-
DR in both AM and MDM we wanted to examine if the increased glycolysis was associated with
enhanced expression of activation markers expression. Human AM (Figure 3A,3C,3E) and MDM (Figure
3B,3D,3F) were primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 for 24 h or left unprimed. Macrophages were then treated
with the glycolytic inhibitor, 2DG for 1 h prior to stimulation with iH37Rv or LPS. After 24 h AM and
MDM were analysed by flow cytometry for expression of HLA-DR (Figure 3A,3B), CD40 (Figure 3C,3D)
and CD86(Figure 3E,3F). 2DG-mediated inhibition of glycolysis following stimulation was confirmed
(Figure S2B).

Inhibiting glycolysis with 2DG did not alter expression of HLA-DR on AM (Figure 3A). Interestingly, the
increased expression of HLA-DR in IFN-γ primed MDM was dependent on glycolysis in unstimulated
and iH37Rv stimulated MDM, however, increased expression of HLA-DR by LPS stimulated IFN-γ
primed MDM remained elevated in the presence of 2DG (Figure 3B). Expression of CD40 was not
affected by 2DG in unstimulated or iH37Rv stimulated AM (Figure 3C). Conversely, LPS induced
expression of CD40 was significantly inhibited by 2DG in unprimed and IFN-γ primed AM but not in IL-
4 primed AM (Figure 3C). In contrast, enhanced expression of CD40 in IFN-γ primed MDM in
unstimulated or iH37Rv stimulated MDM was significantly reduced with the addition of 2DG, with no
effect on the expression of CD40 in LPS stimulated human MDM regardless of cytokine priming (Figure
3D). 2DG enhanced expression of CD86 in unstimulated IFN-γ or IL-4 primed AM but did not affect
expression in any stimulated AM (Figure 3E). Interestingly, when unstimulated AM were examined in
the absence of stimulation, IFN-γ priming significantly increased CD86 (Figure 3E). 2DG inhibited the
increased expression of CD86 in response to iH37Rv stimulation in IFN-γ or IL-4 primed MDM, but no
difference was observed in unstimulated or LPS stimulated MDM (Figure 3F).

Cumulatively, these data indicate that IFN-γ upregulates the expression of activation markers more
effectively in human MDM than AM. Since these markers are associated with activating T cells during
presenting antigen, the ability of IFN-γ or IL-4 primed MDM to process antigen was next assessed,
along with the dependency on glycolysis. MDM were primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 for 24 h or left

unprimed. MDM were then treated with 2DG for 1 h prior to stimulation with DQ-Ovalbumin (500
ng/ml) for 30 min. IL-4 primed MDM had significantly reduced ability to process DQ-Ovalbumin
compared with control or IFN-γ primed MDM (Figure S2C). Treatment of MDM with 2DG significantly
reduced antigen processing in all groups, however IFN-γ primed MDM retained enhanced abilities to
process antigen (Figure S2C). The reduced capacity of MDM to process antigen was not due to a
deficiency in phagocytosis, as measured by both bead or bacterial uptake or due to increased cell
death (Figure S2D-F).

Overall, these data suggest that IFN-γ promotes expression of activation markers via increased
glycolysis in human MDM, whereas AM are not as phenotypically plastic in response to cytokine
priming and subsequent stimulation. Moreover, AM upregulation of cell surface markers (with the
exception of CD40) in response to priming or stimulation is not associated with glycolysis, in contrast
to the MDM.

IFN-γ enhances cytokine production in human AM more than MDM.

Changes in macrophage metabolism have been previously associated with altered cytokine
production (5, 8, 14). Having established that both IFN-γ and IL-4 can significantly alter metabolism in
human macrophages we next sought to examine the ability of AM and MDM to secrete cytokines
when primed with IFN-γ or IL-4. Human AM (Figure 4A,4C,4E) and MDM (Figure 4B,4D,4F) were left
unprimed or primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 for 24 h. Macrophages were then stimulated with iH37Rv or
LPS. Supernatants were harvested 24 h post stimulation and concentrations of IL-1β (Figure 4A,4B),
TNF (Figure 4C,4D) and IL-10 (Figure 4E,4F) were quantified by ELISA. While iH37Rv stimulation
resulted in IL-1β production in unprimed AM and MDM, IFN-γ only significantly enhanced the
production of IL-1β by AM (Figure 4A,4B). IL-4 priming attenuated iH37Rv induced IL-1β in both AM
and MDM (Figure 4A,4B). As expected, IL-1β secretion was not induced in response to LPS stimulation
however, in the presence of IFN-γ, IL-1β was detectable (Figure 4A, 4B). TNF was significantly induced
in unprimed or IFN-γ primed, but not IL-4 primed AM in response to iH37Rv and LPS (Figure 4C). IFN-
γ enhanced production of TNF by AM in response to both iH37Rv and LPS. In contrast, IFN-γ enhanced
TNF in response to iH37Rv, but not LPS in MDM (Figure 4C,4D). LPS significantly upregulated the
production of TNF in all MDM. Notably, IFN-γ priming did not enhance TNF production and IL-4 priming
significantly attenuated LPS-induced TNF (Figure 4D). All stimulated AM secreted IL-10 regardless of
priming (Figure 4E). IFN-γ significantly enhanced iH37Rv induced IL-10 in AM compared to unprimed
or IL-4 primed comparators (Figure 4E). IL-4 priming of human AM significantly reduced IL-10
production in response to iH37Rv compared with unprimed AM (Figure 4E). LPS strongly induced IL-
10 production in unprimed MDM, which was significantly attenuated by either IFN-γ or IL-4 priming
(Figure 4F).

These data suggest that the AM has greater functional plasticity in terms of cytokine production in
response to IFN-γ than the MDM, as IFN-γ primed AM had enhanced IL-10 and TNF production, in
response to Mtb and LPS, respectively. In order to directly compare the human AM and MDM
responses, fold change in cytokine production was calculated compared to the average of their
respective iH37Rv (Figure 4G) or LPS (Figure 4H) stimulated unprimed control. IFN-γ enhanced human
AM ability to secrete IL-1β, TNF and IL-10 in response to iH37Rv compared to MDM (Figure 4G). The
IFN-γ primed human AM also has a significantly increased ability to secrete TNF and IL-10 in response
to LPS compared to MDM (Figure 4H), however the difference in IL-10 secretion is more associated
with MDM decreasing IL-10 when IFN-γ primed.

IFN-γ enhanced cytokine production is markedly more reliant on glycolysis in AM compared with
MDM.

Since IFN-γ drove glycolysis in both AM and MDM, we next sought to examine if cytokine production
was associated with enhanced glycolysis. Human AM (Figure 5A,5C,5E) and MDM (Figure 5B,5D,5F)
were primed with IFN-γ or IL-4 for 24 h or left unprimed. Macrophages were treated with 2DG (5 mM)
for 1 h prior to stimulation with iH37Rv or LPS. Supernatants were harvested 24 h post stimulation
and concentrations of IL-1β (Figure 5A,5B), TNF (Figure 5C,5D) and IL-10 (Figure 5E,5F) were
quantified. 2DG significantly abrogated production of IL-1β in both IFN-γ primed AM and MDM
stimulated with iH37Rv (Figure 5A,5B). Moreover, 2DG significantly reduced TNF production driven by
IFN-γ in the AM, and significantly reduced TNF production in unprimed AM stimulated with iH37Rv
(Figure 5C). Unlike IL-1β, TNF production was not affected by 2DG in unprimed or IFN-γ primed MDM.
Conversely, IL-4 primed MDM exhibited increased TNF production in the presence of 2DG (Figure 5D).
IL-10 production was significantly inhibited by 2DG in AM, irrespective of priming or stimulation
(Figure 5E). MDM production of IL-10 in response to LPS or iH37Rv was inhibited with 2DG (Figure 5F).

In summary, IL-1β is under the control of glycolysis in IFN-γ primed AM and MDM. TNF production is
strongly under the control of glycolysis in AM but not in MDM. Cumulatively these data indicate that
IFN-γ promotes cytokine production in the AM via a process that is dependent on glycolysis. Consistent
with the observation that IL-4 attenuated ECAR in LPS stimulated AM, IL-4 reduced cytokine
production in the AM. Furthermore, while IL-10 was not associated with differential energetic profiles,
its production is significantly attenuated by 2DG in both human macrophage populations, irrespective
of priming. These data indicate that IFN-γ priming has a profound effect on AM function which is
mediated, at least in part, by metabolic reprogramming.

Discussion

AM are the first responders to infections and inflammatory insults in the lung. We and others have
reported that lung resident macrophages are dependent on glycolysis to respond to LPS (15) or Mtb
(8, 14), however, their metabolic behaviour is distinct from murine AM (16) reinforcing the need to
define cellular metabolism and its tractability in human macrophages in order to design effective
immunometabolic therapies. We demonstrate here that human AM can be metabolically
reprogrammed by IFN-γ which increased both glycolysis and oxidative phosphorylation and is further
enhanced by stimulation with Mtb or LPS. This is in contrast with literature showing murine AM do
not increase glycolysis in real-time following LPS stimulation (16), although whether IFN-γ can
influence this in mice remains unknown. Our previous work shows that upon activation, the human
MDM underwent "Warburg"-like metabolism associated with an increase in glycolysis with a
concomitant reduction in oxidative phosphorylation (7). We confirmed this observation and this
persists when primed with IFN-γ, unlike AM which do not undergo the shift to "Warburg"-like
metabolism. IL-4 primed macrophages are associated in the literature with an increased reliance on
oxidative phosphorylation (17). Indeed, murine IL-4 primed BMDM have increased ECAR and OCR (18,
19). IL-4 did not promote oxidative metabolism in human AM or MDM, even when stimulated. IL-4
decreased glycolysis while preventing a decline in oxidative metabolism in MDM, inhibiting their shift
to "Warburg"-like metabolism. When directly comparing percentage change in ECAR of unprimed or
macrophages primed with IFN-γ or IL-4, they all had similar rates of change despite profound
differences in maximal ECAR. These data suggest that the resting state of the macrophage, and the
cytokines it has recently been exposed to before activation, may be a key determining factor for the
response and outcome to infections.

Directly comparing the AM with the MDM demonstrates that human AM are more reliant on oxidative
metabolism upon IFN-γ priming and stimulation. Previous observations had identified a high baseline

of lactate in supernatants of human AM compared to MDM (8). Interestingly, IFN-γ primed AM and
MDM had significantly reduced capacity to increase ECAR (percentage change) in response to LPS
stimulation, suggesting that there may be a point of maximal glycolysis. This ability to induce max
glycolysis may be advantageous during infection as lactate, a breakdown product of glycolysis, has
been shown to have anti-microbial functions against Mtb (13, 20) . Moreover, pathogens such as Mtb
can downregulate metabolic pathways after infection (21, 22) and IFN-γ is crucial for control of Mtb
via glycolysis *in vivo* (23). Based on our current data, and as recently suggested by others (24), we
speculate that control of Mtb in humans may be dependent on IFN-γ regulating glycolysis and not
"Warburg"-like metabolism.

To our knowledge, we are the first to demonstrate that IFN-γ alone is sufficient to cause metabolic
reprogramming of both lung resident AM and peripherally derived MDM. While other studies have
demonstrated a role for IFN-γ inducing metabolic alterations in macrophages these studies have
focused on murine macrophages (3, 23). In contrast evidence in murine BMDM indicates that alone
IFN-γ does not increase glycolysis but that LPS was required (25). In addition, the use of LPS in
combination with IFN-γ to polarise macrophages toward the an inflammatory phenotype is not a
model easily translatable to humans, which are strikingly more sensitive to LPS than mice (26) and the
'M1' macrophage elicited cannot be subsequently challenged with infectious agents, as the response
is confounded by the initial LPS stimulation. Moreover, the use of LPS in addition to IFN-γ to polarise
the macrophage towards the 'M1' phenotype is arguably not comparable with a macrophage that is
polarised with IL-4 (or IL-10) in the absence of TLR stimuli. We wanted to assess the ability of IFN-γ
alone to affect the function of human macrophages, to enable direct comparisons of macrophage
subpopulations in order to fully assess the functional differences elicited in response to subsequent
stimulation, in keeping with other human models (23).

AM expression of activation markers was more limited compared to MDM, even when primed and
stimulated. AM upregulated only HLA-DR consistently in response to IFN-γ, broadly in keeping with
murine AM (12, 27, 28). In contrast, MDM have a greater capacity to increase all activation markers in
response to IFN-γ and stimulation. The response of IFN-γ primed MDM to Mtb was dependent on
glycolysis for optimal activation marker expression, while LPS upregulated these markers
independently of glycolysis, irrespective of cytokine priming. In contrast the AM was dependent on
glycolysis for upregulation of these markers in response to LPS and not Mtb. These data once again
suggest a differential role of glycolysis within human macrophages.

Glycolytic metabolism in macrophages has been intrinsically linked to cytokine production, particularly
IL-1β (3, 5, 8, 10, 29). We have demonstrated that increased ECAR early in MDM activation is
associated with increased secretion of IL-1β in both MDM and AM (9). Moreover IFN-γ can promote
IL-1β by inhibiting miR-21, a negative regulator of glycolysis in both human MDM and murine BMDM
(30). Our data builds on the observation that IFN-γ upregulates pro-IL-1β by a glycolytic dependent
mechanism in murine BMDM (3), by demonstrating the increased secretion of mature IL-1β by IFN-γ
primed human macrophages. Moreover, we have confirmed that IL-1β secretion is dependent on
glycolysis in IFN-γ primed human AM and MDM, which is line with data from murine BMDM (23). In
the current study we also demonstrate that 2DG can reduce both IL-1β and IL-10 secretion by IFN-γ
primed AM and MDM in response to Mtb. Moreover, 2DG inhibited LPS induced IL-10 in AM and
unprimed MDM. 2DG has previously been shown to inhibit IL-10 production by LPS stimulated human
MDM (4), however, restricting glycolysis using glucose free medium inhibited IL-1β but promoted IL-
10 secretion (8). Furthermore, IL-10 production is inhibited by IFN-γ in human MDM, which is similar
to previous data in IFN-γ primed murine BMDM where IL-10 secretion was also inhibited (31).
However, our data also demonstrates that IFN-γ does not inhibit or promote IL-10 in human AM

stimulated with LPS even though interestingly, IFN-γ primed AM had increased TNF in response to LPS.
This suggests there may be additional pathways involved in IL-10 secretion by human macrophages,
which is supported by reductions in IL-10 secretion by IL-4 primed AM, which are not metabolically
altered.

TNF is crucial to control infections such as Mtb (32-35). We demonstrate that IFN-γ enhances TNF
production in response to Mtb stimulation in human MDM and AM, however AM have a much greater
ability to increase TNF. Moreover, IFN-γ primed AM stimulated with Mtb have significantly more
production of IL-1β, TNF and IL-10 compared with unprimed controls. This is in contrast with IFN-γ
primed MDM which only upregulate TNF compared to their unprimed controls. These data indicate
that effective immune responses to Mtb in the lung may require AM to be primed with IFN-γ and may
in part explain why patients deficient in IFN-γ or associated signalling have increased risk of TB (36,
37). IFN-γ driven production of TNF is dependent on glycolysis in AM. MDM secretion of TNF is
independent of glycolysis and conversely, inhibition of glycolysis in IL-4 primed Mtb stimulated MDM
enhanced TNF production. Previous studies have demonstrated that glycolysis was required by murine
BMDM but not AM to secrete TNF and IL-6 (16). Conversely, our data demonstrates that human AM
need glycolysis for optimal TNF production, especially in the presence of IFN-γ, whereas MDM do not.
Once again, we highlight that there is variation in the metabolic requirements within human
macrophage subpopulations, and importantly, that the AM is metabolically tractable to modulate its
function.

Whether the AM can respond to IL-4 has been debated (38). Here we demonstrate that the human
AM can respond to IL-4 with evidence that IL-4 reduced glycolysis in response to LPS stimulation. In
addition, AM were functionally altered by IL-4 resulting in reduced IL-1β and IL-10 production and
upregulated CD86. These data provide evidence that the human AM is capable of responding to IL-4
which may inform type 2 lung immunity, and susceptibility to infection in patients with asthma, for
example.

Trained immunity improves innate responses to infection and is emerging as a key component of host
directed therapies (HDT) and strategies to improve vaccine efficacy and the design of respiratory
mucosal vaccines (27, 28, 39-41). Both IFN-γ and IL-4 can induce trained immunity in murine and
human macrophages (12, 19, 42, 43). MDM trained with IFN-γ and LPS, and stimulated with Mtb had
increased TNF in the acute activation phase of trained immunity (19), which we observed in IFN-γ
primed MDM subsequently stimulated with Mtb. We also observed an increase in TNF, IL-1β and IL-
10 in AM potentially suggesting that AM will be a target for innate training, as increased IL-1β is
associated with optimal training (39, 43, 44). AM from mice that received an inhaled adenovirus
vectored vaccine undergo trained immunity mediated by IFN-γ resulting in elevated MHC-II
expression, enhanced cytokine production, and protection against specific and non-specific infection
challenges (12, 27). We have previously demonstrated that an adenovirus vectored vaccine induces
trained immunity in human monocytes and postulated that this may be IFN-γ dependent (45). The
current study provides evidence that IFN-γ can metabolically reprogramme the human AM, resulting
in enhanced HLA-DR expression and cytokine production in response to subsequent stimulation.
Cumulatively this highlights the importance of ascertaining whether IFN-γ can induce trained
immunity in the human AM, which may enhance the design of respiratory mucosal vaccines.

Immune augmentation therapies delivered directly to the lung are necessary to help combat the
growing threat of drug resistant pathogens, including Mtb. We have demonstrated such approaches
both *in vitro* and *in vivo* (9, 10, 46-49). Clinical trials have indicated that nebulized IFN-γ is a viable HDT
to help combat Mtb (50, 51) and is in clinical trials for sepsis
(https://clinicaltrials.gov/study/NCT04990232). Our data supports the use of inhalable IFN-γ as an

immuno-supportive therapy which modulates metabolic responses. Moreover, our data indicates that
IFN-γ affects metabolism and cytokine secretion in AM significantly more than MDM which lends
support for the therapeutic strategy of delivering IFN-γ to the lung, by targeting the macrophage
population that most need immune augmentation (1) and limiting potential side effects.

Study limitations

We acknowledge that our *in vitro* model is simplified and may not fully reflect macrophages *in vivo*.
Nevertheless, these data address knowledge gaps in human macrophage biology and are required to
aid the translation of immunometabolism into clinical benefits in respiratory medicine. We used LPS
and irradiated Mtb to model successful macrophage responses to infection. Future experiments
should examine how virulent respiratory pathogens such as gram-negative *Pseudomonas aeruginosa,*
Klebsiella pneumoniae and Mtb effect human AM in Th1 or Th2 environments, to determine infection-
specific effects.

The inhibition of glycolysis with 2DG cannot definitively link all observations solely to glycolysis, as
limiting glycolysis will ultimately limit oxidative phosphorylation. Blocking oxidative phosphorylation
with oligomycin reduced LPS induced cytokine secretion in the human AM and not MDM (52), both
glycolysis and oxidative phosphorylation may therefore be needed for optimal AM function. The
concentration of 2DG used only partially inhibited glycolysis, however ablation of glycolysis induces
significant cytotoxicity and confounds assay outcomes. Therefore, where 2DG had no effect, a role for
glycolysis cannot be definitively excluded. Furthermore, only one dose of IFN-γ was utilised due to
limitations in AM yield, however, recently both low and high doses of IFN-γ have been shown to have
similar effects on AM *in vitro* (53).

Establishing the immunometabolic and functional outputs of human macrophages will aid in future
work examining the plasticity of the human AM. While we have established herein that the human
AM is plastic in response to IFN-γ, since the AM is yolk-sac derived and long-lived, this raises the
question of whether the plasticity of the AM can allow multiple sequential changes to respond and
adapt to changing microenvironments in the lung. Another question raised is whether other tissue
resident macrophages behave similarly to AM or whether they have unique responses.

Conclusion

Human AM and infiltrating MDM both increase glycolysis and oxidative phosphorylation in response
to IFN-γ, and stimulation results in a further increase in glycolysis. Cumulatively, the data presented
herein suggests that the MDM maybe more phenotypically plastic than the AM, while the AM have
enhanced functional plasticity in their ability to produce cytokine after exposure Th1 and Th2
cytokines. Our data supports the hypothesis that there may be distinct roles for AM and infiltrating
MDM during infection since IFN-γ increased metabolic responses are mechanistically associated with
different cellular functions. Our data demonstrates that cytokine production in human AM can be
promoted by supporting cellular metabolism, thus providing evidence that human tissue resident AM
are a tractable target for host-directed immuno-supportive adjunctive therapies.

Ethics statement

507 All research herein was carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and ethically
508 approved, as outlined in the materials and methods section.

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Author contributions:

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COM data acquisition, analysis and interpretation, critical revision of the article.

AIB data acquisition, analysis and interpretation.

OST data acquisition.

ED data acquisition.

KMG data acquisition.

OOG data acquisition.

DMM data acquisition.

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FOC data acquisition.

PN data acquisition.

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SAB conception and design, data acquisition, analysis and interpretation, original draft of the article, critical revision of the article, funding acquisition, final approval of the article.

JK conception and design, funding acquisition, final approval of the article.

All authors have approved the final version of this article.

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Data availability

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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e0295312.

Figure Legends

Figure 1. IFN-γ increases energetic metabolism in the AM but enhances "Warburg"-like metabolism
in MDM in response to inflammatory stimuli. Human AM (A-D) were isolated from bronchoalveolar
lavage fluid. PBMC were isolated from buffy coats and MDM (E-H) were differentiated and adherence
purified for 7 days in 10% human serum. Cells were left unprimed (black) or primed with IFN-γ (red)
or IL-4 (blue) (both 10 ng/ml) for 24 h. Baseline measurements of the Extracellular Acidification Rate
(ECAR) and the Oxygen Consumption Rate (OCR) were established before AM or MDM were
stimulated with medium (circle), irradiated Mtb H37Rv (iH37Rv; MOI 1-10; square) or LPS (100 ng/ml;
triangle), in the Seahorse XFe24 Analyzer, then monitored at 20-minute intervals. At 150 minutes, post
stimulation fold change in ECAR (A, E, I) and OCR (B, F, J) was analysed, and percentage change (from
baseline of the respective treatment group) was also calculated for ECAR (C, G) and OCR (D, H) at 150
minutes. A direct comparison of AM (white bar) and MDM (black bar) was also assessed at 150 minutes
(I, J). Each linked data point represents the average of technical duplicates for one individual biological

donor (MDM; n=8-9, AM; n=9-10). Statistically significant differences were determined using two-way
ANOVA with a Tukey (A-H) or Bonferroni post-test (I-J); *P≤0.05, **P≤0.01, ***P≤0.001, ****P≤0.001.

Figure 2. IFN-γ boosts activation marker expression on MDM to a greater extent than AM. Human
AM (A, C, E) isolated from bronchoalveolar lavage fluid. PBMC were isolated from buffy coats and
MDM (B, D, F) were differentiated and adherence purified for 7 days in 10% human serum. Cells were
left unprimed (black) or primed with IFN-γ (red) or IL-4 (blue) (both 10 ng/ml) for 24 h. AM or MDM
were left unstimulated (circle) or stimulated with iH37Rv (MOI 1-10; square) or LPS (100 ng/ml;
triangle). After 24 h cells were detached from the plates by cooling and gentle scraping and stained
for HLAR-DR (A, B), CD40 (C, D), CD86 (E, F) and analysed by flow cytometry. Fold change of HLA-DR
(G), CD40 (H) and CD86 (I) was calculated for AM (white bar) and MDM (black bar) based on the
average of their respective no cytokine controls. Each linked data point represents the average of
technical duplicates for one individual biological donor (n=8-9). Statistically significant differences
were determined using two-way ANOVA with a Tukey (A-F) or Bonferroni post-test (G-I); *P≤0.05,
P≤0.01, P*≤0.001, ****P≤0.001.

Figure 3. Glycolysis is required for IFN-γ induced expression of activation markers by MDM and not
AM. Human AM (A, C, E) isolated from bronchoalveolar lavage fluid. PBMC were isolated from buffy
coats and MDM (B, D, F) were differentiated and adherence purified for 7 days in 10% human serum.
Cells were left unprimed (black) or primed with IFN-γ (red) or IL-4 (blue) (both 10 ng/ml) for 24 h. Cells
were left untreated (solid) or treated with 2DG (5 mM; empty) 1 h prior to stimulation with iH37Rv
(MOI 1-10; square) or LPS (100 ng/ml; triangle) or left unstimulated (circle). After 24 h cells were
detached from the plates by cooling and gentle scraping and stained for HLAR-DR (A, B), CD40 (C, D),
CD86 (E, F) and analysed by flow cytometry. Each linked data point represents the average of technical
duplicates for one individual biological donor (n=8-9). Statistically significant differences were
determined using two-way ANOVA with a Tukey post-test (A-F); *P≤0.05, **P≤0.01, P***≤0.001,
****P≤0.001.

Figure 4. IFN-γ enhances cytokine production more in AM compared with MDM. Human AM (A, C,
E) isolated from bronchoalveolar lavage fluid. PBMC were isolated from buffy coats and MDM (B, D,
F) were differentiated and adherence purified for 7 days in 10% human serum. Cells were left
unprimed (black) or primed with IFN-γ (red) or IL-4 (blue) (both 10 ng/ml) for 24 h. AM or MDM were
left unstimulated (circle) or stimulated iH37Rv (MOI 1-10; square) or LPS (100 ng/ml; triangle).
Supernatants were harvested 24 h after stimulation and concentrations of IL-1β (A, B), TNF (C, D) and
IL-10 (E, F) were quantified by ELISA. Fold change in IL-1β, TNF and IL-10 was calculated for AM and
MDM based on the average of respective no cytokine controls for iH37Rv (G) and LPS (H). Each linked
data point represents the average of technical duplicates for one individual biological donor (AM;
n=12-13, MDM; n=8-10). Statistically significant differences were determined using two-way ANOVA
with a Tukey (A-F) or Bonferroni post-test (G-H); *P≤0.05, **P≤0.01, ***P≤0.001, ****P≤0.0001 or
#P≤0.05, ##P≤0.01, ####P≤0.0001 (where IFN-γ treated data sets were excluded for post-test analysis
to analyse statistical differences between no cytokine and IL-4 treated data sets).

Figure 5. Cytokine secretion by AM is more reliant on glycolysis than MDM. Human AM (A, C, E)
isolated from bronchoalveolar lavage fluid. PBMC were isolated from buffy coats and MDM (B, D, F)
were differentiated and adherence purified for 7 days in 10% human serum. Cells were left unprimed
(black) or primed with IFN-γ (red) or IL-4 (blue) (both 10 ng/ml) for 24 h. Cells were left untreated
(solid) treated with 2DG (5 mM; empty) for 1 h prior to stimulation with iH37Rv (MOI 1-10; square) or
LPS (100 ng/ml; triangle) or left unstimulated (circle). Supernatants were harvested 24 h after
stimulation and concentrations of IL-1β (A, B), TNF (C, D) and IL-10(E, F) were quantified by ELISA. Each

linked data point represents the average of technical duplicates for one individual biological donor
(AM; n=12-13, MDM; n=8-10). Statistically significant differences were determined using two-way
ANOVA with a Tukey post-test (A-D); *P≤0.05, **P≤0.01, ***P≤0.001, ****P≤0.0001 or #P≤0.05,
##P≤0.01 (where IFN-γ primed data sets were excluded for post-test analysis to analyse statistical
differences between no cytokine and IL-4 treated data sets).

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5