Reprogramming of host energy metabolism mediated by the TNF-iNOS-HIF-1α axis plays a key role in host resistance to *Plasmodium* infection

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Summary (127 words)

TNF has a dual effect in *Plasmodium* infection, bolstering the host's immune defense while also triggering disease. Here, we show that TNF signaling hampers physical activity, food intake, and energy expenditure while enhancing glucose uptake by the liver and spleen as well as controlling parasitemia in *P. chabaudi* (*Pc*)-infected mice. We also demonstrate that TNF is required for expression of inducible nitric oxide synthase (iNOS), stabilization of HIF-1α, expression of glucose transporter GLUT1 and enhanced glycolysis in monocytic cells from *Pc*-infected mice. Importantly, *Pc*-infected iNOS$^{-/-}$, TNFR$^{\Delta Lyz2}$ and *HIF-1α$^{\Delta Lyz2}$* mice show impaired release of TNF and glycolysis in monocytes, together with increased parasitemia and disease tolerance. Together, our findings reveal that TNF-iNOS-HIF-1α-induced glycolysis in monocytes plays a critical role in host defense and sickness behavior in *Pc*-infected mice.

Keywords: Glucose, TNF, iNOS, HIF-1α, monocytic cells, *P. chabaudi*, myeloid cells, malaria.

Introduction

Malaria caused by parasites from the *Plasmodium* genus is the most common mosquito-borne infectious disease (*1*). In 2021, approximately 247 million cases were reported resulting in nearly 619 000 deaths worldwide (*2*). The clinical symptoms include periodic fever episodes that occur synchronously with the rupture of infected red blood cells and the release of erythrocyte and parasite debris (*3*). Besides the characteristic development of fever, which is caused by systemic pro-inflammatory cytokine release (*3*), metabolic disorders like hypoglycemia and hyperlactatemia also occur in patients with malaria. High lactate plasma levels are an important prognostic factor in patients with severe malaria and are related to the development of acidosis (*4–9*).

Successful immunity to *Plasmodium* infection requires the participation of monocytic cells, which have a central role in sensing and phagocytosing parasitized (*10*). In experimental models, monocytes are the major cells responsible for secreting pro-inflammatory pyrogenic cytokines, such as IFN-γ, IL-1β and TNF, during acute malaria episodes (*11–13*). Among these pro-inflammatory cytokines, TNF plays an important role in the pathophysiology of malaria (*14*). In other contexts, TNF has been identified as a major inducer of glucose uptake and metabolism in host immune cells (*14–17*). Glucose is metabolized inside cells through glycolysis to generate energy and biosynthetic intermediates for cell growth, activation and proliferation (*18*, *19*). Moreover, the numerous intermediate metabolites that participate in the glycolysis-mediated conversion of glucose into pyruvate also play important roles in maintaining the activity and effector functions of innate immune cells (*20*).

The hypoxia-inducible factor 1 alpha (HIF-1α) is one of the central regulators of inflammation and glucose metabolism in myeloid cells (*21*). Under normoxic conditions, HIF-1α is hydroxylated and degraded by the proteasome. Under hypoxic conditions resulting from high levels of reactive nitrogen intermediates (RNI), altered mitochondria function and release of reactive oxygen species (ROS), the activity of prolyl-hydroxylase domain (PHD) enzymes is inhibited, leading to stabilization of HIF-1α, and its subsequent translocation to the nucleus (*22*, *23*). In addition, the

expression of HIF-1α is upregulated in response to TNF. This increase in HIF-1

levels when occurring in macrophages has been shown to be associated with

enhanced resistance to infection in different experimental models (*21, 24–28*).

Nevertheless, it is unclear how glucose metabolism, HIF-1α and their interplay

with TNF affects innate immune cells and host resistance to *Plasmodium* parasites.

Here, we investigated the involvement of TNF, RNI and HIF-1α in regulating glucose

metabolism in monocytic cells and whether this pathway plays a role in is host

resistance and disease tolerance in experimental murine malaria. Our findings

demonstrate that both TNF and inducible nitric oxide synthase (iNOS) promote the

expression and stabilization of HIF-1α that in turn enhances expression of the

glucose transporter GLUT1 and glycolysis in monocytic cells in *P. chabaudi-* (*Pc-*)

infected mice. Importantly we show that this biochemical shift in monocytes has an

important role in regulating host energy metabolism, resistance to infection and

disease outcome in experimental malaria.

Results

TNF signaling regulates disease symptoms and energy expenditure in *P.*
***chabaudi*-infected mice.**

125   TNF is involved in the development of protective immunity and clinical
manifestations of malaria in both humans and experimental models (*29–31*). We
first analyzed the time course of parasitemia in *Pc*-infected C57BL/6 mice and
measured blood glucose levels daily at the end of the dark cycle. Parasites were
detected in the circulation, starting at 3 days post-infection (dpi), and the peak of
parasitemia was observed at 8 dpi (Figure 1A). Blood glucose levels significantly
decreased at 8 dpi, coinciding with the peak of parasitemia. At later time points,
parasitemia decreased, and glycaemia returned to homeostatic levels (Figure 1B).
As previously demonstrated (*32*), circulating levels of TNF and the expression of
TNF mRNA in the liver peaked at 6 am (end of dark cycle) at 8 dpi (Figure 1C and
1D). We also observed that the percentage of iRBCs was higher in TNFR$^{-/-}$ (TNFR
p55p75$^{-/-}$) compared to C57BL/6 mice (Figure 1E), as previously reported (*31*). In
addition, while infected C57BL/6 mice displayed hypothermia in response to
infection, the rectal temperature of infected and uninfected TNFR$^{-/-}$ mice was similar
(Figure 1F). Furthermore, circulating levels of MCP1, TNF and IFN-γ were
significantly lower in TNFR1$^{-/-}$ (TNFR p55$^{-/-}$) compared to C57BL/6 mice (Figures 1G-
I), whereas no difference was observed in IL-10 levels (Figure 1J). These results
support the concept that TNF signaling promotes the systemic release of pro-
inflammatory cytokine and plays a key role in controlling parasitemia, along with
disease symptoms in *Pc*-infected mice.

145   To further address if TNF signaling in *Pc*-infected mice promote malaria
disease parameters, we evaluated alterations in host energy metabolism, as
indicated in physical activity, food intake, overall energy expenditure and respiratory
exchange rate in naïve or *Pc*-infected C57BL/6 and TNFR$^{-/-}$ mice during a 24h
period, at the 8 dpi. We observed that in naïve animals, all of these parameters were
similar in TNFR$^{-/-}$ and C57BL/6 mice (Figures 2A-D, top panels and Figures 2E-H).
In contrast, all the evaluated parameters were decreased in infected C57BL/6 mice

compared to their naïve counterparts during the light and dark cycles. When we
analyzed only infected mice, the alterations in all parameters were milder in TNFR[-/-]
compared to C57BL/6 mice (Figures 2A-D bottom panels and 2E-H).

We then asked whether *Pc* infection might also affect body fat mass and
tissue glucose uptake. We observed a major depletion of fat mass in infected
C57BL/6 mice at 9 dpi, which was less pronounced in TNFR[-/-] animals (Figure 2I),
while the percentage of lean mass was not altered in either wild type or TNFR[-/-] mice
(Figure 2J). We also found that *Pc* infection resulted in a marked increase in glucose
uptake in the liver and spleen of C57BL/6 mice but not in TNFR[-/-] animals (Figure
2K). In contrast to the spleen and liver, glucose uptake in skeletal muscle or white
and brown adipose tissue remained unaltered following *Pc* infection in C57BL/6 mice
(Supplemental 1A-C). The increase in glucose uptake was associated with the
development of hypoglycemia in C57BL/6 but not in TNFR[-/-] mice infected with *Pc*
(Figure 2L).Together, these results support a role for TNF in regulating glucose and
energy metabolism in *Pc*-infected mice, two responses which play an important role
in the pathophysiology of experimental malaria.

Hepatic non-parenchymal cells display enhanced GLUT1 receptor expression
and shift to glycolytic metabolism following *P. chabaudi* infection.
The liver has a key role in regulating host glucose metabolism (*33*). Therefore,
we asked whether *Pc* infection alters the expression of genes related to
carbohydrate metabolism in the liver as measured by RNA-SEQ. We observed an
overall enhancement in the expression of genes related to glycolysis and a reduction
in the expression of genes associated with the Tricarboxylic (TCA) cycle and
gluconeogenesis at 8 dpi (Figure 3A). Enhanced glycolysis relies on the heightened
glucose uptake by cells mediated by different glucose carriers (*34, 35*). However,
the expression of GLUT2 (*Slc2a2),* GLUT5 *(Slc2a5)* and GLUT9 *(Slc2a9)* was
decreased, whereas of GLUT1 (*Slc2a1),* GLUT3 (*Slc2a3)* and GLUT6 *(Slc2a6)* was
increased in the liver of C57BL/6 infected as compared with naïve mice (Figure 3A).
Among the transporters whose expression was increased, GLUT3 is expressed
mainly in neurons (*36*), while *Slc2a6* GLUT6 has been shown to be located in

lysosomes and does not mediate glucose uptake (*37*). GLUT1, on the other hand, is

a ubiquitously expressed and highly effective transporter of glucose. Also, GLUT1 is

the most well-characterized surface glucose transporter in immune cells (*18, 38, 39*).

Therefore, we next quantified GLUT1 protein, and, as expected, an enhancement in

GLUT1 levels was found in the liver of *Pc*-infected C57BL/6 mice, as compared to

the uninfected controls (Figure 3B).

Hepatocytes have an important role in glucose uptake from the circulation,

and they do this primarily through GLUT2 (*38*), whose mRNA expression was

downregulated (Figure 3A) and protein expression unchanged in response to *Pc*

infection (Figure 4K). Since GLUT1 expression can also be induced in hepatocytes

(*18*), we evaluated if GLUT1 expression was enhanced in hepatocytes and non-

parenchymal cells from the liver of infected mice. We found that at 8 dpi, GLUT1

expression was not altered in hepatocytes (Figure 3C) but increased in non-

parenchymal cells (Figure 3D). We also assessed the metabolic activity of these

same hepatic cell populations by quantifying their extracellular acidification rate

(ECAR) and oxygen consumption rate (OCR), which are indicatives of how much

glucose is being metabolized through glycolysis and the TCA cycle, respectively.

Consistent with the observed unaltered GLUT1 expression, we found no change in

the metabolic profile of hepatocytes (Figure 3E) but instead an increase in ECAR of

non-parenchymal cells (Figure 3F) from the liver of *Pc*-infected mice.

CD11b⁺ cells from the spleen shift towards glycolytic metabolism in response

to *P. chabaudi* infection.

The spleen is the main tissue involved in immunity to *Plasmodium* infection,

where the response of immune cells to infection results in a remarkable

splenomegaly (*40*). Consistent with this, we found that the magnitude of glucose

uptake in spleens was higher than in the livers of infected mice (Figure 2K).

Therefore based on the data presented above, we next asked whether the increased

tissue glucose uptake in experimental malaria was associated with the enhancement

of GLUT1 expression and glycolysis in different subsets of immune cells. The levels

of GLUT1 in spleens from *Pc*-infected C57BL/6 mice were also increased at 8 dpi

(Figure 3G). We also assessed GLUT1 expression in $CD4^+$ and $CD8^+$ T

lymphocytes, B lymphocytes and $CD11b^+F4/80^+/CD11c^+/Ly6g^-$ myeloid cells by flow

cytometry (gated as shown in Supplemental 3A and 3B). We found that the $CD11b^+$

subset and, to a lesser extent, $CD4^+$ T cells, but not $CD8^+$ T and B lymphocytes,

displayed increased expression of GLUT1 in response to infection (Figures 3G, 3H

and Supplemental 3C). Importantly, the elevation in GLUT1 expression in monocytic

cells was ~410% versus only ~29% in $CD4^+$ T cells (Figure 3H). In accordance with

the expression of GLUT1 in those cell populations, the metabolic profiles of T and B

lymphocytes were not altered in Pc infected mice (Figure 3I). In contrast, splenic

$CD11b^+$ cells displayed enhanced glycolysis in infected as compared to naive mice

(Figure 3J).

We have previously demonstrated that infection with *P. berghei ANKA*

induces a marked increase in monocyte-derived dendritic cells (MO-DCs) in the

spleens of mice (*41, 42*). Therefore we next analyzed changes in numbers splenic

$CD11b^+F4/80^+$ cells (which are ≥90% $CD11c^+Ly6G^-$) (Supplemental 2), and selected

monocytes (G1: DC-SIGN⁻MHCII⁻), inflammatory monocytes (G2: DC-SIGN⁺MHCII⁻

) and MO-DCs (G3: DC-SIGN⁺MHCII⁺) in pc infected mice (Figure 3L). As shown in

Figure 3K and 3L, *Pc* infection resulted in increased frequencies of MO-DCs, and

reduced percentages of inflammatory monocytes and monocytes in spleens (Figure

3K and 3L). At 8 dpi, expression of GLUT-1 was increased in inflammatory

monocytes and MO-DCs but not in monocytes (Figure 3 M). Moreover, when we

compared cells from infected mice, the levels of GLUT1 were similar between MO-

DCs and inflammatory monocytes but significantly higher in MO-DCs compared to

monocytes (Figure 3M). Together these findings suggested that activated

monocytes are the primary cells responsible for increased glucose uptake in the

spleens in *Pc*-infected mice*.*

TNF signaling induces glycolysis in tissues from *P. chabaudi*-infected mice.

As shown above, TNF signaling promotes glucose uptake in livers and

spleens from *Pc*-infected mice (Figure 2K). We next asked whether TNF modulates

glucose metabolism in cells from these same organs. We observed that except for

Hexokinase-3, the expression of mRNAs of glycolytic enzymes (Hexokinase-1,

PFKP and PKM) was increased in C57BL/6 but not TNFR$^{-/-}$ 8-dpi (Figure 4B, D and

E), whereas the signature of gluconeogenesis enzymes (G6PC, G6PC3, FBP1,

PCK1 and PCK2) mRNA remained unchanged (Figures 4F-J). The expression of

GLUT2, the main glucose transporter of hepatocytes, was similar in naïve and

infected mice, both in C57BL/6 and TNFR$^{-/-}$ mice (Figure 4K). The expression of

GLUT1 protein mirrored the mRNA expression of glycolytic enzymes (Figure 4K and

L), and the increased expression of GLUT1 was also lower in splenic CD11b^{+} cells

from Pc-infected TNFR$^{-/-}$ mice (Figure 4L). In agreement with the reduced levels of

GLUT1, splenic CD11b^{+} cells from TNFR$^{-/-}$ infected mice displayed reduced ECAR

when compared with CD11b^{+} from infected wild-type animals (Figure 4M), as

evidenced by lower basal and compensatory glycolysis (Figure 4N).

To further confirm that the observed effects were due to TNF signaling in

myeloid cells we generated mice with conditional deletion of TNF receptor 1 in

lysozyme M- expressing cells ($TNFR1^{\Delta Lyz2}$). As expected, we observed a higher

parasitemia in $TNFR1^{\Delta Lyz2}$ mice than in WT animals (Figure 4O). Moreover,

$TNFR1^{\Delta Lyz2}$ infected mice did not exhibit decreased rectal temperature (Figure 4P)

or blood glucose levels (Figure 4Q). These data demonstrate that during

experimental malaria, TNF signaling plays a key role in inducing GLUT1 expression

and glucose metabolism in activated monocytes.

TNF and HIF-1α signaling crosstalk regulates glycolytic metabolism in myeloid

cells from _P. chabaudi_-infected mice.

The hypoxia-inducible factor 1 alpha (HIF-1α) is an oxygen-regulated

transcriptional activator that plays essential roles in mammalian development,

metabolism and the pathogenesis of several diseases (_43_). Its functions are primarily

associated with the reprogramming of cellular energetic metabolism in response to

hypoxic conditions, while in innate immune cells, HIF-1α can also promote glycolysis

and quickly generate ATP and intermediate metabolites that fuel the activation and

release of pro-inflammatory cytokines (_43_). For this reason, we next asked if HIF-1α

is involved in the TNF-induced reprogramming of glucose metabolism in immune

cells during *Pc* infection. We observed a higher nuclear expression of HIF-1α in the

spleen and liver of infected mice; however, the levels of HIF-1α were lower in livers

of TNFR[-/-] compared to C57BL/6 infected mice (Figure 5A-B).

We next assessed the importance of the HIF-1α pathway for host resistance

to malaria by using mice with conditional deletion of HIF-1α in myeloid cells (*HIF-*

1a[ΔLyz2]) and their WT counterparts (*HIF-1a*[fl/fl]). It has been previously described that

HIF-1α activity can induce the expression of GLUT1 in different mammalian cell

populations (*20*). We found that GLUT1 protein and glycolysis (ECAR) was impaired,

respectively, in monocytic cells, and splenic CD11b[+] cells from infected, as

compared to uninfected *HIF-1a*[ΔLyz2] mice (Figures 5C-5E). Importantly, we observed

a higher parasitemia in *HIF-1a*[ΔLyz2] mice than in WT animals (Figure 5F and

Supplemental 3). At 8dpi with *Pc*, the circulating levels of TNF were decreased in

HIF-1a[ΔLyz2] mice compared to WT animals (Figure 5G). In addition, *Pc*-infected *HIF-*

1a[fl/fl] mice splenocytes displayed enhanced TNF secretion following LPS stimulation

compared to cells from *HIF-1a*[ΔLyz2] infected animals (Figure 5H). Together, these

data demonstrate that the induction of the HIF-1a in myeloid cells is important for

inducing glycolysis, TNF production and control of *Pc* infection.

iNOS expression promotes HIF-1α stability, glycolytic metabolism and

modulates signs of disease in *P. chabaudi*-infected mice

Our next step was to understand how TNF promotes HIF-1α expression. It is

known that reactive nitrogen intermediates (RNI) induces HIF-1α expression in

particular by enhancing the stability of this transcription factor through a mechanism

that inhibits its degradation (*44*). TNF is also widely described as a major inducer of

iNOS expression and RNI release by myeloid cells, such as monocytes (*45*). As

expected, we observed that splenocytes from *Pc*-infected TNFR[-/-] mice stimulated

ex vivo with LPS released lower levels of RNI than LPS-stimulated cells from

C57BL/6-infected mice (Figure 6A). Importantly, iNOS-deficient mice presented

higher parasitemia than C57BL/6 animals at 8dpi with *Pc* (Figure 6B), as previously

described (*46*). Similar to what was observed in TNFR[-/-] animals, infected iNOS[-/-]

mice did show hypothermia at 8dpi with *Pc* (Figure 6C). Additionally, at this same

time point, we did not observe hypoglycemia in the iNOS$^{-/-}$ mice infected with Pc
(Figure 6D). As expected, splenic CD11b$^+$ cells from iNOS$^{-/-}$ infected mice displayed
increased OCR when compared to C57BL/6 infected with Pc (Figure 6E), indicating
increased basal and maximal mitochondrial respiratory capacities in the absence of
iNOS (Figure 6F).

In accordance with the results obtained in Pc-infected TNFR$^{-/-}$ mice, iNOS
deficiency resulted in reduced hepatic expression of the glycolytic enzymes HK1,
HK3, PFKP and PKM (Figures 6 G-J) as well as reduced GLUT1 expression in
splenic monocytes (Figure 6K). Consistent with these observations, glycolytic
metabolism in splenic monocytic cells of iNOS$^{-/-}$ infected animals was decreased
compared to those of C57BL/6 infected mice, as denoted by a lower ECAR (Figure
6L). Taken together, these data demonstrated that RNI induces HIF-1α expression,
glycolysis, and TNF release by monocytic cells, leading to control of parasitemia but
also promoting clinical signs of disease, such as hypothermia and hypoglycemia, in
Pc-infected mice.

Discussion

Malaria disease manifestations include severe changes in host metabolism.
During the 1980s, studies reported that decreased glycaemia and increased lactate
plasma levels followed by acidosis are common manifestations in patients with
severe malaria (*5, 47–49*). However, more than 40 years later, the mechanisms that
lead to hypoglycemia and increased lactate levels during malaria are poorly
understood. A better understanding of the mechanisms that mediate host metabolic
alterations and the connections of such events with the immune response against
the parasite may provide new insights for therapeutic interventions in malaria
patients. In this study, we found that TNF signaling mediates changes in host energy
metabolism, accompanied by increased expression of GLUT1 and enhanced
glycolysis in monocytes. In addition, we found that TNF-induced RNI stabilizes the
transcription factor HIF-1α, which promotes both a metabolic shift towards glycolysis
and the expression of pro-inflammatory cytokines by monocytes. Furthermore, we

observed that TNF, iNOS and HIF-1α have important roles in controlling *Pc* infection
and signs of systemic inflammation in this mouse malaria model.

Interestingly, we found that glucose uptake was significantly increased in
spleens and livers of *Pc*-infected mice and that this effect was partially dependent
on TNF signaling. Consistently, TNF promoted increased expression of GLUT1 and
glycolytic energy metabolism in non-parenchymal cells and monocytic cells, but not
hepatocytes or lymphocytes in livers and spleens, respectively. These results
indicate that the hypoglycemia of *Pc*-infected mice is caused by TNF-driven GLUT1-
mediated enhanced glucose uptake and glycolysis in monocytic cells.

Following the rupture of parasitized red blood cells, there is a release of
pathogen and danger-associated molecular patterns that activate Toll-like receptors
(TLRs), Nod-like receptors (NLRs), and the cyclic GMP–AMP (cGAS) synthase (*10,*
52). Activation of these innate immune receptors and sensors triggers the production
of high levels of pro-inflammatory cytokines, such as TNF, IL-6, IL1β and IL-12, all
of which participate in host immunity against *Plasmodium* infection (*53*). The
importance of the glycolytic pathway for innate immune cell activation has been
demonstrated in different studies (*20, 54*). For instance, monocyte differentiation
from a resting to an inflammatory state requires a shift in energy metabolism to high
glucose consumption and rapid energy generation by glycolysis (*55*). Activated
monocytes, along with dendritic cells, then produce IL-12, which is critical for the
differentiation of Th1 lymphocytes that produce IFN-γ, a cytokine that activates
splenic macrophages to eliminate *Plasmodium*-infected red blood cells (*10, 53*).

Importantly, we found that similarly to TNFR[-/-] mice, iNOS-deficient mice
display impaired glycolytic metabolism in monocytic cells from *Pc*-infected mice. RNI
can be produced by macrophages in response to priming by IFN-γ or/and activation
triggered by TNF induced by microbial products via TLRs . As observed in TNFR[-/-]
mice, iNOS deficiency resulted in increased parasitemia following *Pc* infection (*56,*
57). HIF-1α is required for the optimal expression of many glycolytic genes in
macrophages, including those encoding GLUT1, hexokinase, phosphofructokinase
and pyruvate kinase (*43*). Recently, it was suggested that RNI promotes *S*-
nitrosylation at the Cys533 residue of HIF-1α (*58*), promoting its stabilization by

direct inactivation of prolyl hydroxylase domains proteins (PHDs) (*59*). Indeed, the

impairment of RNI release during *Pc* infection, resulted in reduced translocation of

HIF-1α to the nuclei of splenic monocytes and non-parenchymal liver cells, which

was markedly increased in infected WT mice. Therefore, we propose that the

mechanism by which TNF signaling regulates HIF-1α stabilization/expression during

Pc infection is mediated by RNI.

Different studies have demonstrated that HIF-1α is critical for host resistance

to different pathogens (*60*), but both the participation of this transcription factor in

malaria as well as the role of glycolytic metabolism in resistance to *Plasmodium*

infection has not been previously explored. The *HIF-1α*$^{\Delta Lyz2}$ animals that are

genetically deficient for HIF-1α, and have impaired glycolysis only in myeloid cells

were more susceptible to *Pc* infection, further demonstrating the importance of

myeloid cells in controlling parasitemia. This finding could be explained by the

importance of glycolysis for the release of TNF and other pro-inflammatory cytokines

by monocytes that are activated during *Plasmodium* infection (*3, 40*). Although we

have found that the *Pc* infection-induced increase in nuclear translocation of HIF-1α

was impaired in the absence of TNF signaling, *HIF-1α*$^{\Delta Lyz2}$ animals also displayed

lower TNF secretion in response to *Pc* infection than WT mice. These observations

suggest that the in vivo relationship between TNF signaling and HIF-1α-driven

glycolysis is complex and that a positive feedback loop between TNF production,

HIF-1α expression and glycolysis must exist during *Pc* infection.

The link between TNF and HIF-1α has been previously explored in different

cell types. These studies demonstrated a crosstalk between NF-kB and HIF--1α.

TNF signaling is known to recruit different intracellular adaptors that activate multiple

signal transduction pathways. One class of these consists of the TRAF family of

proteins, which can lead to IKK-dependent activation of NF-kB, thereby promoting

inflammatory responses (*61*). Conversely, HIF-1α can also regulate NF-kB

activation. Koedderitzch and collaborators have recently shown that in rheumatoid

arthritis (RA) TNF induces a glycolytic shift via GLUT-1 and HIF-1α. As with malaria,

TNF is a pivotal cytokine involved in the pathogenesis of RA. *In vitro* treatment of

fibroblast-like synoviocytes with TNF induces upregulation of GLUT-1 and HIF-1α,

which depends on TAK1-induced NF-kB activation downstream of TNF receptor 1
(*62*). NF-kB plays a central role in inflammatory responses and orchestrates the
expression of TNF. Moreover, an NF-kB binding site is present in the proximal
promoter site of the HIF-1α gene, indicating that NF-kB activation can regulate its
expression (*63*, *64*).

Plasmodium parasites do not synthesize glucose, being solely dependent on
host glucose as a source of energy required for parasite replication. On the one
hand, the increased glucose uptake and subsequent glycolytic metabolism in
monocytes promote hypoglycemia, helping to starve the erythrocytic stage of the
parasite, controlling its replication. On the other hand, hypoglycemia may also be
detrimental to the host. For instance, lactate, the final product of glycolytic
metabolism of glucose, when secreted in high amounts, causes acidosis with
decreased blood pH and severe consequences to the host, such as extreme fatigue,
pain, overall feelings of physical discomfort and decreased appetite (*5*).

Indeed, we found that the absence of TNF signaling and iNOS reverted the
development of hypothermia, which is a known disease manifestation in *Pc* infection-
induced experimental malaria in mice (*65–67*). Moreover, the attenuation of clinical
symptoms in TNFR[-/-] infected mice extended beyond thermal regulation. Despite
increased parasitemia, the animals displayed restored physical activity, food
consumption, energy expenditure and respiratory exchange rate compared to WT
animals. These findings demonstrate that TNFR[-/-] mice are more "tolerant" to
disease. Thus, our results re-inforce the concept that TNF plays dual opposing roles
in malaria promoting host resistance during malaria while promoting pathology.

In summary, the data reported here reveal that TNF-induced RNI induces HIF-
1α-mediated glycolysis in monocytes promoting host resistance to infection with
Plasmodium. Hence, our findings address a fundamental mechanistic question
concerning the pathophysiology of malaria infection in the vertebrate host. These
findings may provide insights for developing novel therapeutic interventions to treat
this devastating disease.

Materials and Methods

Mice

C57BL/6, iNOS, TNR1$^{-/-}$ and TNFR$^{-/-}$ (TNFR p55/p75 chains double knockout mice) were obtained from the Center for Breeding of Transgenic Mice from the Ribeirao Preto Medical School. Conditional knockout mice (*TNFR1*$^{\Delta Lyz2}$ or *HIF1a*$^{\Delta Lyz2}$) were generated by crossing LysMCre$^{+/-}$ to *TNFR1*^{flfl} or *HIF1a*^{flfl} mice, which were maintained on a C57BL/6 genetic background. Mice used in experiments were sex and age-matched: female mice between 8–12 weeks of age. All mouse lineages were housed in micro-isolators in a maximum number of six mice per cage, in a specific pathogen-free facility at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, or Ribeirão Preto Medical School or University of Massachusetts Medical School, under controlled temperature (22–25°C) and 12-h light-dark cycle and provided with water and food ad libitum.

Ethics statement

All experiments were carried out in accordance with institutional guidelines for animal ethics and approved by the Ethics Committee on Animal Use of Ribeirão Preto Medical School University of São Paulo (CEUA 94 / 2020), Institutional Ethics Committees from Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz-Minas, CEUA/LW15/14, and LW16/18) and UMMS (IACUC A-1369-14-5), respectively.

Experimental Infections

Plasmodium chabaudi chabaudi AS strain (*Pc*) was used for experimental infections (*69, 70*). First, *Pc* was maintained in C57BL/6 mice by serial passages once a week up to eight times. For experimental infection, mice were injected intraperitoneally (i.p.) with 10^5 infected red blood cells (iRBCs) diluted in 100 µl PBS-1X. The percentage of RBCs containing parasites (parasitemia) was measured in the blood with Giemsa at different days post-infection (dpi).

Glucose Measurement

The glucose uptake was measured using 2-[14C]-deoxyglucose. Experiments were

performed at the National Mouse Metabolic Phenotyping Center (MMPC) at UMASS

Medical School. At 6 am on day 8 dpi, basal glucose uptake in individual organs was

measured using an intravenous injection of 2-[14C]-deoxyglucose. After 1h, mice

were anesthetized, and tissue samples were taken for organ-specific levels of 2-

[14C]-deoxyglucose-6-phosphate. Blood glucose levels were measured with an

Accu-chek glucometer.

Mouse RNA-Seq

RNA-seq was performed in biological replicates (3 mice per group). Liver samples

were collected from C57BL/6 mice at different time points: 12 am; 6 am; 12 pm, and

6 pm from mice at day 8 post-infection with *P. ch*. or uninfected control. RNA-seq

libraries were prepared using the TruSeq Stranded mRNA Kit (*Illumina*) following the

manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, poly-A-containing mRNA molecules were

purified using poly-T oligo-attached magnetic beads and fragmented using divalent

cations. The RNA fragments were transcribed into cDNA using SuperScript II

Reverse Transcriptase (*Invitrogen*), followed by second strand cDNA synthesis

using DNA Polymerase I and RNase H. Finally, cDNA fragments then have the

addition of a single 'A' base and subsequent ligation of the adapter. The products

were then purified and enriched by PCR using paired-end primers (*Illumina*) for 15

cycles to create the final cDNA library. The library quality was verified by

fragmentation analysis (*Agilent Technologies 2100 Bioanalyzer*) and submitted for

sequencing on the Illumina NextSeq 500 (*Bauer Core Facility Harvard University*).

These samples were collected in according to the circadian cycle published by our

group (*32*).

RNA extraction and Real-time PCR

Tissue fragments were resuspended in Trizol Reagente (Invitrogen) and total RNA

extraction was performed (Promega) according to manufacturer´s instructions,

and converted into cDNA using High-Capacity cDNA Reverse Transcription Kit

(Applied Biosystems) according to manufacturer's instructions. Sybr Green PCR

Master Mix (Applied Biosystems) was used to carry out the reactions in an QuantStudio 3 Real-Time PCR System (Thermo Fisher Scientific) under standard conditions. qRT-PCR data were presented as 2-ΔΔCt.

Isolation of splenocytes and purification of CD11b⁺, B and T cells.

Spleens from control and infected mice at 8 dpi were dissociated through a 100-μm nylon cell strainer for obtaining single-cell suspensions. For *ex vivo* cultures, known concentrations of splenocytes were resuspended in RPMI 1640 medium supplemented with penicillin, streptomycin, and 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS) (*Gibco, ThermoFisher*). In some experiments, splenocytes (2×10^6 cells) were stimulated in vitro with 1 μg/ml of LPS for 24h, or TNF-α [20ng/ml] or not during 15 minutes. For CD11b+ cell-, B cell- or T cell- purification, immunomagnetic beads for positive selection of CD11b⁺ cells, B cells and T cells (*Miltenyi Biotec*) were used, respectively, according to manufacturer's instructions.

Hepatocyte's isolation.

First, the liver portal vein was cannulated with a 24G catheter. The inferior cava vein was cutted to allow perfusion flow. Perfusion was done with 50 mL of Hanks A and then 25 mL of Hanks B with 20 mg of collagenase. After that, tissue was dissociated and samples were filtered in a 40 mM membrane. Cells were centrifuged: 60x g (5 min, 4oC), disposing of supernatants, 60x g (5 min, 4oC), and resuspended in cold RPMI 10% SFB.

Liver non-parenchymal-cells.

Livers were first digested in a collagenase solution (5 mg/liver in 10 mL of RPMI 2% SFB) at 37oC for 35 min. Then, the solution was added PBS/BSA 0,5% + EDTA in order to inactivate collagenase and cells were differentially separated by centrifugation: 300 x g (10 min, 4oC) disposing supernatants, 60 x g (3 min, 4oC) twice preserving supernatants and finally, 300 x g (10 min, 4oC) disposing supernatants. The samples were filtered through 100 μm cell strainers and centrifuged for 300 x g (10 min, 4oC). Red blood cells were lysed using ACK

(ammonium chloride potassium) buffer. Concentrations of single-cell suspensions
were then adjusted following counting on the hematocytometer.

Western blotting.

Mouse splenocytes, purified CD11b$^+$ splenic cells, isolated hepatocytes, isolated
non-parenchymal cells, or liver total from infected or not mice were lysed with RIPA
buffer solution (*Sigma*) with a protease and phosphatase inhibitor cocktail
(*ThermoFisher)*. After 15 min on ice, lysates were centrifuged at 13,000 × g for 10
min at 4 °C. The proteins were separated in a 10%-acrylamide NUPAGE *Bis-tris*
Protein gels (*Invitrogen*) and transferred onto nitrocellulose membranes.
Membranes were blocked with 5% (wt/vol) nonfat milk (*Molico*) in Trisbuffered saline
with 0.1% Tween-20 (TBST) for 1 h at room temperature and then incubated
overnight at 4°C with primary antibodies. The membranes were incubated with
GLUT1 (*Abcam*, 1:1000), GLUT2 (*Abcam*, 1:1000), Na,K-ATPase (*Cell Signaling,*
1:2000) and β-actin (Sigma, 1:5000) specific antibodies. Subsequently, membranes
were repeatedly washed with TBST and then incubated for 2 h with the anti-Rabbit
HRP-conjugated secondary antibody (1:30.000 dilution; *Sigma-Aldrich*).
Immunoreactivity was detected with Clarity Max ECL Substrate (Biorad) and then
the chemiluminescence signal was recorded on the iBright FL1500 (*ThermoFisher*).
Data were analyzed with iBright FL1500.

Metabolic Profiling.

Metabolic profiling of CD11b$^+$ cells, B cells, T cells, hepatocytes, and non-
parenchymal cells was undertaken using a Seahorse XFe96 Extracellular Flux
Analyzer (*Agilent*) in microplates. Basal oxygen consumption rate (OCR) and
extracellular acidification production (ECAR) were measured by Phenotypic
Seahorse Kit (KIT 103325-100), or Seahorse XF Cell Mito Stress Tests (KIT 103015-
100), or Glycolytic Rate Assay Kit (KIT 103344-100) according to the manufacturer's
instructions.

Flow cytometry

Splenocytes (2×10^6 cells) from mice at 0 (uninfected controls) and 8 days post-
infection were stained with fluorophore-labeled monoclonal antibodies (mAbs)
specific for cell surface markers. The following flow cytometry specific mAbs were
used: CD11c-PECy7 clone N418 (1:200), CD11b-APCCy7 clone M1/70 (1:200),
Ly6c PERCP clone H.K1.4 (1:200), F4/80- PE clone BM8 (1:200), Ly6g FITC clone
1A8 (1:200), CD45 Pacific Blue- clone30F-11 (1:200), CD3 FITC clone 145-2c11
(1:200), CD4 PE clone RM4-5 (1:200), CD8 PERCP clone 53-6.7 (1:200), CD19
PeCy7 clone 6D5(1:200) and Bv510 (Live/Dead kit, ThermoFisher). Intracellular
staining of GLUT1 Alexa Fluor 647 [EPR3915] (1:100) was performed following cell
fixation and permeabilization using the eBioscience Foxp3 Fixation/Permeabilization
Kit. Data were acquired in a FACSCanto II machine (BD Biosciences) and analyzed
using FlowJo software (Tree Star).

Cytokine measurement.

Plasma was collected from whole blood and supernatants were collected from cell
cultures. Cytokine concentration in these samples were determined using CBA
mouse Inflammation Kit (BD™) or ELISA according to the manufacturers'
instructions (*Biolegend*).

Food Intake and Physical Activity

Mouse food intake and physical activity were assessed for 3 days prior to infection
and at days 6, 7 and 8 dpi with *Pc* using metabolic cages (*TSE Systems*,
Chesterfield, MO) located at the National Mouse Metabolic Phenotyping Center
(MMPC) at UMASS Medical School. Mice were housed under controlled temperature
and lighting, with food and water ad libitum. Food intake and physical activity
monitoring was fully automated using the *TSE Systems LabMaster* platform.
LabMaster cages allowed the use of bedding, thus, minimizing any animal anxiety
during the experimental period. Physical activity was calculated based on
quantitative measurement of horizontal and vertical movement (XYZ-axis). In
addition, non-invasive measures of O_2 consumption and CO_2 production were used
to calculate the respiratory exchange ratio to reflect energy expenditure.

RNA-Seq Analysis

Gene expression of each experimental group was shown at different time points 12 am; 6 am; 12 pm and 6 pm. The average expression of all time points was calculated for visualization in heatmaps. The heatmaps presented in Figure 3 was developed with a free version of the software Morpheus (https://software.broadinstitute.org/morpheus). For hierarchical clustering, we used linkage from the average expression of each gene in metric One Minus Pearson Correlation.

Statistical analysis

GraphPad Prism 7.0 software was used for statistical analysis. Multiple-group comparisons were performed with either one-way ANOVA (followed by Tukey's post hoc test) or two-way ANOVA (followed or not by Sidak's post hoc test). Unpaired two-tailed Student's t-test was used for the comparison of two conditions. Results are expressed as means ± SEM. P value ≤ 0.05 was considered significant.

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reagents, materials, and/or analysis tools, and K.C.M. and R.T.G. wrote the

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Caspase-1 Activation Mediates Inflammation and Hypersensitivity to

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Figures

Fig. 1. *P. chabaudi*-infected mice display enhanced TNF production associated
with increased disease parameters. C57BL/6 mice were infected or not *i.p.* with
P. chabaudi (10^5 iRBCs). **(A)** Parasitemia was determined at 0, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 12
days-post-infection (dpi). **(B)** Blood glucose levels were measured with a glucometer
at 0, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 12 dpi. Means of blood glucose levels were compared between
infected (red) and uninfected (blue) mice at the same time points. ****$P<0, 0001$ - *t-*
test. **(C)** Blood TNF Levels were measured by ELISA at 8 dpi. Means of blood TNF
levels were compared between infected (red) and uninfected (blue) mice at the same
time points. ***$P<0, 001$ – *onewayANOVA*. **(D)** TNF m-RNA was determined at 8
days-post-infection (dpi). **(E)** Parasitemia was determined at 8 days-post-infection
(dpi) in C57BL/6 and TNFR deficient mice. **(F)** Rectal temperature was determined
at 8 dpi in C57BL/6 and TNFR deficient mice. **(G-J)** MCP-1, TNF, IFN and IL-10 was
measured by CBA Kit at 8 dpi.*$P≤0,1$, **$P≤0.01$, ***$P≤0.001$, **** $P≤0.0001$, ns =
non-significant *oneway*ANOVA).

Fig. 2. The detrimental effects of *P. chabaudi* infection on physical activity,
food intake and energy metabolism are partially dependent on TNF receptor
signaling. Mouse energy balance from C57BL/6 and TNFR-/- was assessed using
metabolic cages (TSE 959 Systems, Chesterfield, MO) at 3 days prior to infection
(uninfected) (C57BL/6: blue, TNFR-/-: gray) and at 8 days post-infection (dpi) with *P.*
*chabaudi (*105 infected RBCs) (C57BL/6: red, TNFR-/-: orange). Scores for **(A and**
E) physical activity, **(B and F)** food intake, **(C and G)** energy expenditure, **(D and H)**

respiratory exchange, and **(I and J)** percentual of fat mass and lean mass are
depicted. Hourly measurements of such parameters are shown in top row panels for
mice 3 days prior to infection (uninfected) and in middle row panels for infected mice.
The average values for light and dark cycles in all groups are depicted in bottom row
panels. *ı* P≤0.05, *ıı* P≤0.01, *ıııı* P≤0.0001, ns = non-966 significant (comparisons
within the same group at 3 days prior to infection vs 8 dpi), *P≤0.05, ** P≤0.01, ***
P≤0.001 (comparisons between C57BL/6 and TNF-/- mice) (*t-test*). **(K)** Glucose
uptake was measured 2-[14C] deoxyglucose. Experiments were performed at the
National Mouse Metabolic Phenotyping Center (MMPC) at UMASS Medical School.
Basal glucose uptake in individual organs of infected (red) and uninfected (blue)
mice was measured using an intravenous injection of 2-[14C] deoxyglucose. After
1h, mice were anesthetized, and tissue samples were taken for organ-specific levels
of 2-[14C] deoxyglucose-6-phosphate. **(L)** Blood glucose levels were measured with
a glucometer at 8dpi. ****P<0, 0001 – *oneway-ANOVA.*

Fig. 3. *P. chabaudi* infection stimulates Increased GLUT1 expression in hepatic
non-parenchymal and splenic CD11b+ cells associated with an altered host
metabolic profile. C57BL/6 mice were infected or not *i.p.* with *P. chabaudi* (10^5
iRBCs). (**A**) RNA-seq was performed in livers from infected and uninfected mice. (**B**)
GLUT1 expression in livers of infected (8 dpi) or uninfected mice was evaluated on
the liver by western blot. (**C and D**) GLUT1 expression in **(C)** hepatocytes or **(D)**
hepatic non-parenchymal cells isolated from livers from C57BL/6 infected (8dpi) or
uninfected mice, quantified by western blot (expression of β-actin was used as
control). Data are representative of a total of 4 experiments with similar profile. **(E)**
Hepatocytes or **(F)** Hepatic non-parenchymal cells were purified from livers
harvested from infected (red - 8 dpi) and uninfected (blue) mice and cultured *ex vivo*
for quantification of extracellular acidification rate (ECAR) by Seahorse XFe96. (**G, I**
and J) T cells, B cells and myeloid cells (CD11b+) were purified from splenocytes of
infected and uninfected mice using magnetic beads and **(G)** GLUT1 expression was
evaluated by western blot. (**I**) T and B cells or (**J**) CD11b+ purified from spleens were
cultured *ex vivo* for quantification ECAR. (**H, K, L and M**) graphs showing GLUT1
expression evaluated by flow cytometry in splenic cells from infected (red – 8 dpi)
and uninfected (blue) mice. ***P≤0.001 and ****P≤0.0001 (*t-test.* **P≤0.01,
****P≤0.0001, ns = non-significant (two- way ANOVA).

Fig. 4. *P. chabaudi* infection triggers increased glycolysis in monocytic cells
in a TNF-receptor dependent. C57BL/6 or TNFR-/- mice were infected or not *i.p.*
with *P. chabaudi* (10^5 iRBCs). (**A**) Glycolytic and gluconeogenesis pathways. **(B-E)**
PCR of glycolytic enzymes **(F-J)** PCR from liver of gluconeogenesis enzymes at 8
dpi. .*P≤0,1, **P≤0.01, ns = non-significant *onewayANOVA.* (**K and L**) GLUT1

expression in **(K)** livers of infected (8 dpi) or uninfected mice was evaluated by western blot. **(L)** Representative histogram and and graph showing GLUT1 expression evaluated by flow cytometry in CD11b+/F4/80+/CD11c+/Ly6G- cells from spleens of infected (8 dpi) or uninfected C57BL/6 or TNFR-/- mice. ****P≤0.0001, ***P≤0.001 and *P≤0.05) (*t-test*). **(M and N)** CD11b+ cells were purified from spleens harvested from infected (8 dpi) C57BL/6 (red) and TNFR-/- (orange) mice or uninfected C57BL/6 (blue) and TNFR-/- (gray) mice and cultured *ex vivo* for evaluation of ECAR by Seahorse XFe96 Analyzers. ****P≤0.0001 (*two-way ANOVA*). **(O)** Parasitemia was determined at 8 days-post-infection (dpi) from *TNF-R1aΔLyz2* and Wild-type mice. **(P)** Rectal temperature was determined at 8 dpi in WT and *TNF-R1aΔLyz2* at 8 dpi. **(Q)** Blood glucose levels were measured with a glucometer at 8dpi. Data are representative of a total of 3-5 experiments with similar profile.

Fig. 5 HIF-1α contributes to glycolysis induction during *Pc* infection. (**A**) HIF-1a expression in spleen and **(B)** liver of infected (8 dpi) or uninfected C57BL/6 and TNFR-/- mice was evaluated by western blot. (expression of nucleofosmin -NFM- was used as control). **(C)** Representative histogram and and graph showing GLUT1 expression evaluated by flow cytometry in CD11b+/F4/80+/CD11c+/Ly6G- cells from spleens of infected (8 dpi) or uninfected *HIF-1aΔLyz2* and Wild-type mice. **(D and E)** CD11b+ cells were purified from spleens harvested from infected (8 dpi) WT (red) and *HIF-1aΔLyz2* (pink) mice or uninfected WT (blue) and *HIF-1aΔLyz2* (purple) mice and cultured *ex vivo* for evaluation of ECAR by Seahorse XFe96 Analyzers. ****P≤0.0001 (*two-way ANOVA*). **(F)** Parasitemia was determined at 8 days-post-infection (dpi) from *HIF-1aΔLyz2* and Wild-type mice. **(G)** Blood TNF Levels were measured by ELISA at 8 dpi. **(H)** TNF levels in supernatants from splenic cells harvested from infected (8 dpi) or uninfected *HIF-1aΔLyz2* and Wild-type mice mice and stimulated *ex vivo* with LPS [1ug/mL] or not during 24H.*P≤0,1, **P≤0.01, ***P≤0.001, **** P≤0.0001, ns = non-significant *onewayANOVA*). Data are representative of a total of 3-4 experiments with similar profile.

Fig. 6. Malaria disease parameters in iNOS deficient mice mirror those observed in TNF receptor deficient animals (A) Nitrite levels in supernatants from CD11b+ splenic cells harvested from infected (8 dpi) or uninfected C57BL/6 mice and stimulated *ex vivo* with LPS [1ug/mL] or not during 48H.**** P≤0.0001, ns = non-significant *onewayANOVA*). **(B)** Parasitemia was determined at 8 days-post-infection (dpi) from C57BL/6 and iNOS knockout mice. **(C)** Rectal temperature was determined at 8 dpi. **(D)** Blood glucose levels were measured with a glucometer at 8dpi. **(E and F)** CD11b+ cells were purified from spleens harvested from infected (8 dpi) C57BL/6 (red) and iNOS knockout (green) mice or uninfected C57BL/6 (blue) and iNOS knockout (beige) mice and cultured *ex vivo* for evaluation of ECAR by Seahorse XFe96 Analyzers. ****P≤0.0001 (*two-way ANOVA*). **(G-J)** PCR from liver

of glycolytic enzymes at 8 dpi. *P≤0,1, **P≤0.01, ns = non-significant
onewayANOVA. **(K)** Representative histogram and graph showing GLUT1
expression evaluated by flow cytometry in CD11b+/F4/80+/CD11c+/MHCII+ cells
from spleens of infected (8 dpi) or uninfected C57BL/6 or iNOS-/- mice. **(L)** CD11b+
splenic cells were purified from infected C57BL/6 (red - 8 dpi), iNOS-/- (green - 8
dpi), and uninfected mice and cultured ex vivo for quantification of proton efflux rate
(PER) using glycolytic rate assay by Seahorse XFe96.