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Cell Targeting and Adjuvant Activity of Dietary Titanium Dioxide

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ABSTRACT

Food-grade titanium dioxide ($fgTiO_2$) is a bio-persistent particle under intense regulatory scrutiny.

Paradoxically, meaningful *in vivo* cellular accumulation has never been demonstrated: the only

known cell targets for $fgTiO_2$ are 'graveyard' intestinal pigment cells which are metabolically and

immunologically quiescent. Here, we identify major new immunocompetent cell reservoirs of $fgTiO_2$

in humans, most notably in the subepithelial dome region of intestinal Peyer's patches. Using

multimodal microscopy techniques with single-particle detection and per-cell / vesicle image

analysis we achieved correlative dosimetry, quantitatively recapitulating human cellular exposures in

a mouse model. Epithelial microfold cells specifically funneled $fgTiO_2$ into LysoMac and LysoDC

cells, which co-accumulated attenuated $\Delta aroA$-*Salmonella* upon sequential oral challenge. By

proximity extension analyses, a clear *Salmonella* effect on pro-inflammatory signalling was

confirmed, but no interaction with $fgTiO_2$ was revealed for 92 protein targets despite marked same-

cell accumulation. In contrast, *Salmonella* caused the $fgTiO_2$-recipient cells to migrate towards the

follicle margins and, sporadically, to the lamina propria recreating the human intestinal tissue

distribution of $fgTiO_2$. Physiologically active cell targets that accumulate $fgTiO_2$ are now identified.

$fgTiO_2$ appears neither a danger signal nor an adjuvant in wild-type genotypes and we demonstrate a

mouse model that finally enables human-relevant risk assessments of ingested (nano)particles.

INTRODUCTION

Titanium dioxide (TiO_2) is a highly versatile nano- and micro- particulate mineral with widespread use in consumer products and manufacturing processes, including as a food and pharmaceutical additive. Although ingested TiO_2 has been proposed as an 'inadvertent' cellular adjuvant for many years[1, 2], the global industry, valued at >$17 billion per annum[3], is now facing a whole new 'bio-nano' challenge. In May 2021, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) questioned the safety of food-grade TiO_2 (fgTiO$_2$; also termed E171) primarily citing unresolved genotoxicity concerns[4]. Based on this, European Commission member states agreed to remove fgTiO$_2$ as an additive in foods. This represented a seemingly pragmatic decision balancing need for this additive (*e.g.,* aesthetics) against hypothetical risk. However, the European Commission also requested that the European Medicines Agency (EMA) evaluate the impact of removal of fgTiO$_2$ from the list of authorised excipients that are permitted in medicinal products. In this case, fgTiO$_2$ is *not* merely about aesthetics: it delivers opacity and protects actives from UV light degradation whilst aiding moisture control and patient compliance. The EMA concluded that any foreseeable ban, impacting the ~ 91,000 medicinal products that contain this pigment in Europe, risks causing pharmaceutical shortages[5]. Moreover, they estimated that a period of 7-12 years would likely be required for implementation of suitable alternatives[5]. Meanwhile, consumer concerns over the safety of fgTiO$_2$ have been expressed beyond Europe. Notably, in 2022, a class action suit was filed against the multinational food company Mars Incorporated in the USA alleging that consumers of the hard-shell candy 'Skittles' are at heightened risk of health effects stemming from genotoxicity[6].

Whilst regulators in other continents / territories have not followed EFSA's 2021 decision, there is widespread agreement that the available data addressing the uptake, biological fate and effects of fgTiO$_2$ is insufficient[7, 8, 9]. In fact, direct toxicity of fgTiO$_2$ in cell culture experiments has not been consistently demonstrated, especially when conditions are carefully controlled to avoid artefactual *in*

vitro cell gorging[10]. In contrast, *in vitro*, fgTiO$_2$ is recognised as a modest adjuvant for primary

danger signals, namely microbe-associated molecular patterns, although cell loading of the particles

needs to be relatively high[1]. Similarly, Kirkland *et al.,*[11] identified any potential genotoxic activity of

various titanium dioxide polymorphs as secondary to cell stress which, certainly for fgTiO$_2$, requires

marked cell loading[1].

Aside from specific cells of the small intestine, there are no known circumstances under which

fgTiO$_2$ markedly accumulates *in vivo*. Systemic exposure to fgTiO$_2$ appears to be very low[12]. Even

allowing for lifetime accumulation in humans it appears that anticipated target organs (liver and

spleen) contain levels of Ti and Ti-rich particulates that are just above the tissue-free background,

and the origin of this slightly enhanced signal is unknown[13]. Consistent with this, many animal

feeding studies show almost no detectable systemic accumulation of fgTiO$_2$[12, 14] and, overall, there

are no convincing *ex vivo* imaging studies showing multiple, heavily-loaded cells. The exception, as

noted above, is the small intestine, in both humans and rodent models[15, 16], and specifically their

large lymphoid follicles termed Peyer's patches. In absence of afferent lymphatics, the apical

surfaces of these follicles possess a unique population of microfold (M) cells that avidly sample the

lumen for bulky macromolecules including small micro- and large nano- particles. This material is

passed to underlying immune cells in the apical, 'subepithelial dome' (SED) region of the follicle

which contains recognised populations of monocyte-derived, lysozyme-expressing cells termed

'LysoMacs' and 'LysoDCs' that are specialised for anti-microbial defence[17]. Overall, the major role

of Peyer's patches is initiating processes for the generation of mucosal IgA and systemic IgG in

response to intestinal antigen thereby orchestrating the sequence of events that leads to gut-

derived humoral immunity. Over time, fgTiO$_2$ is known to accumulate in Peyer's patches, alongside

other persistent particles, in basally located tissue-fixed macrophages termed 'pigment cells'[15, 16].

These cells are of low immunological and metabolic activity and appear to act as lifetime

'graveyards' for persistent particles, presumably limiting systemic absorption through local

sequestration in the same way that tissue-fixed macrophages sequester particulate tattoo inks[15, 16, 18,

19].

So the paradox remains: whilst fgTiO$_2$ is under intense regulatory scrutiny, there is no known site of

accumulation in active (*e.g.,* immuno-competent) cells that could plausibly give cause for concern or

that allows informed risk assessment. Given that the intestine is the only known target of fgTiO$_2$

accumulation we have addressed whether similar, selective cell loading occurs elsewhere (*i.e.,* away

from the 'safe house' base-of-patch pigment cells) and, if so, what cells are targeted, at what

frequency and with what impact? The approach used quantitative image analysis of light and

electron microanalytical data, correlative mouse-human cell dosimetry and broad-target interrogation

of fgTiO$_2$'s capability to adjuvant a primary cellular danger signal *in vivo*.

RESULTS

High-resolution reflectance confocal microscopy of human small intestinal tissue samples identified

bright foci at the base of Peyer's patches (**Figure 1a)** consistent with previous reports of pigment

cells in this region[16, 18, 20]. These cells are known to mostly accumulate ingested engineered

aluminosilicates and fgTiO$_2$[16, 20]. Using Al and Ti as biomarkers for these particles, correlative

analyses using scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy

(EDX) confirmed the presence and co-localisation of these elements (**Figure 1b**; top row).

Reflectant foci were found entirely attributable to Ti-rich particles, as areas with Al but no Ti signals

were not reflectant, whereas all detectable Ti foci yielded reflectance (**Figure 1b**; rows 2-5).

Alongside further checks using mouse tissues known to contain fgTiO$_2$ or not (shown,

Supplementary Figure 1), the reflectance imaging approach was confirmed as a robust, high-

throughput means to detect fgTiO$_2$ in tissue[15].

Figure 1 – Titanium dioxide in human intestinal tissues. a, Tilescanned image acquired by confocal reflectance microscopy. Reflectant foci were detected along the follicle base consistent with previously-reported mineral particle-containing "pigment cells". Of note, similar reflectant foci were also present apically in the immuno-active, subepithelial dome tissue-region, and away from the patch in the (**c**) lamina propria of the regular villous mucosa (VM). Translucent red circle-markers are placed on the reflectant foci to aid visualisation. **b/d/e**, Correlative SEM/EDX analyses performed on the same tissue section shown in (**a/c**). The pigment cell region is shown in (**b**) where X-ray signal for both Al (attributable to aluminosilicates) and Ti (attributable to titanium dioxide) was found. EDX analyses in the (**d**) villous mucosa and (**e**) subepithelial dome regions showed reflectant foci were attributable to Ti. **b/d/e**, In all instances the elemental data for Ti were a near-exact match for the reflectant foci, whereas (**b**) areas with Al signal alone did not reflect. **f**, Reflectance microscopical analyses of nine, randomly-drawn human samples (six frozen, three formalin-fixed paraffin embedded (FFPE)) showed reflectant foci consistent with TiO_2 in the subepithelial dome of *every* sample. *Scale bars: **a** = 50 μm; **b** = 50 μm with 10 μm insets; **c-e** = 10 μm; **f** = 50 μm with 10 μm insets.*

Of significant note, previously unreported populations of human cells containing similar, reflective

material were also identified (i) sporadically in the regular lamina propria (**Figure 1c**) and (ii)

densely in the immuno-active subepithelial dome (SED) region of Peyer's patches (**Figure 1a**).

These cell regions were also subjected to correlative SEM-EDX analyses and, again, reflectant foci

were a match for the Ti signal (**Figure 1d/e**). Given the unexpected density of the newly-identified

Peyer's patch population, whole SED regions from a randomly selected series of nine human

subjects were imaged using the analytically-validated confocal microscopy approach. Albeit with

marked inter-individual variability, reflectant signal was found in the SED of every human case

(**Figure 1f**). Importantly, the recipient cells often exhibited multiple foci per-cell (*i.e.,* high cellular

loading), suggesting specific cellular targeting and accumulation of fgTiO$_2$ (**Figure 1f** – insets) in a

non-pigment cell population.

To investigate the pathways giving rise to the above observations, and to phenotype the newly-

identified population of fgTiO$_2$-accumulating cells, in "Mouse Study 1", we turned to a recently

reported murine model for human-relevant, oral exposure to fgTiO$_2$[15]. Initially we tilescanned a

complete ileal transverse section using high-resolution confocal reflectance microscopy and used

image analysis to segment all cells (cell segmentation accuracies assessed, **Supplementary Figure**

2). This allowed the cellular dose of fgTiO$_2$ to be measured in each cell-object (*i.e.,* the integrated

intensity of the thresholded reflectance signal per cell) enabling the subdivision and display of the

cellular loading of fgTiO$_2$ in three groups: low, intermediate and high (**Figure 2a**). As in the human

samples (**Figure 1**), the patch region was decorated with reflectance signal, notably in the SED and

at the base, and cellular loading was often high – especially in the SED (**Figure 2a**). However,

unlike in human tissue, signal was entirely absent away from the patch except for two small, isolated

foci in the villous epithelium. The resolution of the imaging process allowed detailed investigation of

Figure 2 – A mouse feeding study demonstrates fgTiO₂ specificity for Peyer's patches. a, Single-cell image analysis of a transverse mouse ileal tissue section imaged by tilescanning confocal reflectance microscopy. The cellular dose of fgTiO₂ – measured from the thresholded reflectance (RL) signal – is colour-coded at low (lo), intermediate (int) and high (hi) levels. As in humans (**Figure 1a/f**), fgTiO₂ is loaded into the subepithelial dome of the Peyer's patch and there was evidence of 'precursor pigment cell' formation along the follicle base. Away from the Peyer's patch, two positive cells (**a**, insets) were found in the overlying villous mucosa. In contrast to the human findings (**Figure 1b**) however, both were caused by luminal fgTiO₂ trapped in the invaginated space of goblet cells. **b-d,** To investigate the sensitivity of fgTiO₂ detection by confocal reflectance microscopy, a tissue-region containing a single, isolated reflectant foci was milled out under correlative SEM using a focussed ion beam (**b/c** shows the registered SEM images transparently overlaid onto the confocal reflectance data before lift-out. The white 'rectangle' in (**c**) is caused by electron charging of the platinum strap laid down on the tissue region to be lifted out; (**d**) shows a side-view of the lifted-out lamella). **e-i,** Transfer of the lamella to a transmission electron microscope enabled high resolution imaging and X-ray (EDX) and electron diffraction analysis. A (**g/h**)single particle of fgTiO₂ with an (**i**) anatase diffraction pattern (*i.e.,* as added to the diet) was confirmed responsible for the single reflectant foci observed. **j,** Again, colour-coding the cellular dose of fgTiO₂ into lo, int and hi levels, tissue sections from adjacent caecal patches at the top of the colon were found to be almost completely devoid of fgTiO₂ (n = 4 animals). **k,** Immunofluorescence microscopy showed fgTiO₂ access to Peyer's patches was via GP2-positive microfold (M) cells (translucent red circle-markers are placed on thresholded reflectant foci to aid fgTiO₂ visualisation / the outline of the M-cell was manually drawn by tracing the actin-delineated cell boundary). **L,** Single-cell analysis of a longitudinal section of mouse ileum consistently showed the close association between an M-cell rich, follicle-associated epithelium and fgTiO₂ loading into Peyer's patches. **m/n,** Guided by CD11c and CD3 immunofluorescence labelling for phagocytic mononuclear cells and T-lymphocytes (respectively) sets of images were collected from the subepithelial dome (SED), germinal centre (GC) T-cell zone (TCZ) or overlying villous mucosa (VM) tissue regions from four mice fed the fgTiO₂-supplemented diet (WT + TiO₂) and four control-diet mice (WT). Some fgTiO₂ signal was observed in the GC and TCZ regions of the murine Peyer's patches but the majority was in the SED. In keeping with (**a**), and in contrast to the human findings (**Figure 1b**), in all four mice, no uptake was seen in the villous mucosa demonstrating specificity for M-cell mediated, Peyer's patch targeting. *Scale bars: **a** = 500 µm with insets 5 µm; **b** = 50 µm; **c** = 10 µm; **d** = 5 µm; **e** = 500 nm; **g** = 200 nm; **h** = 20 nm; **j** = 500 µm; **k** = 10 µm; **L/m** = 500 µm.*

these latter events confirming that this signal was not *inside* the tissue, but derived from material

within goblet cell invaginations that were open to the small intestinal lumen (**Figure 2a** – inset).

To confirm the apparent selectivity of $fgTiO_2$ for the lymphoid follicles – rather than the regular

villous mucosa – we questioned whether a single particle in intestinal tissue would be missed by our

reflectance microscopy approach. To do this, a tissue region containing a single, small yet clearly

visible reflectant foci was milled out under correlative SEM, using a focussed ion beam (**Figure 2b-**

d). The milled-out lamella was then transferred to a transmission electron microscope for imaging

with analysis by EDX and electron diffraction. A single particle of $fgTiO_2$, with a diameter around

100 nm and an anatase diffraction pattern consistent with dietary exposure, was identified (**Figure**

2e-i). Since single, disperse particles of $fgTiO_2$ were therefore detectable by the reflectance imaging

strategy we could confirm that ingested $fgTiO_2$ had not been missed with our imaging approach in

the regular villous mucosa and thus was not taken up in this region (**Figure 2a**).

Following from this, we next considered the caecal patches (*i.e.,* large lymphoid follicles of the first

part of the large intestine that adjoins the terminal ileum where Peyer's patches are located). Here,

transverse tissue sections revealed almost no reflectant foci showing that, unlike Peyer's patches, the

neighbouring caecal patch is spared from particle targeting (**Figure 2j**). In spite of the marked

similarity of these secondary lymphoid sites, the microfold (M) cell density of their overlying

epithelium differs greatly: caecal patches have very few (like the villous epithelium) with little

capacity for particle uptake, whereas Peyer's patch epithelium is enriched with mature M-cells that

exhibit distinct particle uptake capability for small particulates in general[21, 22]. Indeed, cells of the

Peyer's patch epithelium stained positively for the mature M-cell marker (GP2) and, here-and-there,

these M-cells were 'caught in the act' with co-signal for $fgTiO_2$ (**Figure 2k**) as had long been

assumed for $fgTiO_2$ but not actually demonstrated[18]. Indeed, longitudinal sections of ileal tissue

containing Peyer's patches consistently demonstrated the close association between fgTiO$_2$ signal

and an overlying, M-cell rich, follicle-associated epithelium (**Figure 2L**). In this way, the above

findings provide a rationale for the specificity of fgTiO$_2$ uptake by the Peyer's patches of the small

intestine. It would appear, therefore, that to explain the presence of fgTiO$_2$ in the human intestinal

lamina propria a mechanism other than direct uptake by the regular villous epithelium must exist

(this is addressed below in "Mouse Study 2"). First, however, we quantified how cell loading with

fgTiO$_2$ varied amongst the major different functional zones of the Peyer's patch.

Sets of confocal reflectance images were collected from the SED, germinal centre (GC), T-cell zone

(TCZ) and overlying villous mucosa (VM) tissue regions (indicated, **Figure 2m**) using tissue

sections taken from four mice fed with the fgTiO$_2$-supplemented diet (+fgTiO$_2$), alongside four

control mice from the same experiment and ingesting the same diet but without added fgTiO$_2$.

Single-cell analysis, using flow cytometry-type gating informed by the negative control tissues,

demonstrated some fgTiO$_2$ signal in the TCZ and GC but established the dominance of the signal,

and the highest cell loading, in the biologically-active SED (**Figure 2n**). As per the whole ileal

cross-section data (**Figure 2a**), in all sections analysed across the four mice, the villous mucosa was

entirely devoid of fgTiO$_2$-positive cells and consistently exhibited the same reflectance distribution

as the negative control mice (**Figure 2n**).

Rodent models provide pragmatic access to healthy pristine tissue (*i.e.,* rapidly flash frozen at

necropsy) from fully controlled experiments (*i.e.,* population-matched with availability of fgTiO$_2$-

negative tissues) in a way that human surgical specimens do not. Nonetheless, it is critical that a

murine feeding model appropriately reports on the human situation. Next, therefore, we exploited the

window-of-insight provided by precision image analysis to consider how the cellular dosimetry of

fgTiO$_2$ in the SED cells of the murine model reflected SED-cell exposure in humans. To do this, the

snap-frozen Peyer's patch tissue sections, taken from six randomly-drawn human samples, were

compared with six murine samples taken from the fgTiO$_2$-fed group. Visually, in both species, there

was marked inter-individual variability in fgTiO$_2$ concentration in the SED (**Figure 3a-L**). To

quantify this, we analysed the thresholded reflectance signal in the tissue sections in four ways,

namely: thresholded reflectance per unit tissue area (*i.e.,* fgTiO$_2$ abundance; **Figure 3m),**

thresholded reflectance per cell (*i.e.,* fgTiO$_2$ load per cell; **Figure 3n**), the number of reflectant foci

per cell (*i.e.,* cellular count of fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicles; **Figure 3o**), and finally the amount of

reflectance signal per foci (*i.e.,* fgTiO$_2$ load per vesicle; **Figure 3p)**. The strategy is schematically

explained in **Supplementary Figure 3**; cell segmentation accuracy assessments are presented in

Supplementary Figure 2; background reflectance comparisons in mice and humans are shown in

Supplementary Figure 4 and examples of the raw reflectance signal, resulting circle-marker

placements and fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle segmentations are shown in **Supplementary Figure 5**. By all

metrics, the data from the two groups showed remarkable overlap and under statistical comparison

none of the measured fgTiO$_2$ distributions were found to be entirely unique to either species

(presented, **Supplementary Figure 6**). Notably when Peyer's patch loading of fgTiO$_2$ from mice on

lower-dose-fgTiO$_2$ diets was analysed, the cellular accumulation of particles in the SED was several

orders of magnitude lower compared to the human situation (**Supplementary Figure 7**). The above

findings therefore establish the apparent ability of the murine model to provide human-relevant data

– quantitatively as well as qualitatively – in terms of fgTiO$_2$ cell targeting and dosimetry in the

biologically-active SED region of the Peyer's patch.

The fgTiO$_2$-targeted cells in the SED were, unsurprisingly, CD11c$^+$ (*i.e.,* phagocytic mononuclear

cells) and not only was the frequency of such cells unaffected by the presence of fgTiO$_2$ particles so

was their expression of the CD11c integrin biomarker (**Figure 4a-h**). Neighbouring cells were

chiefly CD3$^+$ (T cells) and B220$^+$ (B cells) and, similarly, their expression patterns and frequencies

Figure 3 – Establishing correlative human-mouse dosimetry. a-L, Confocal reflectance microscopy showing the range of cellular loading in the subepithelial dome tissue region of (**a-f**), six randomly-drawn human and (**g-L**) six randomly-drawn mouse samples. After acquisition, the image-fields per specimen were manually laid out in order of lowest-to-highest fgTiO$_2$ SED accumulation to visually present the wide variation in fgTiO$_2$ cellular loading. Translucent red circle-markers were placed on thresholded reflectant foci to aid visualisation. **m-p**, Quantitative analysis of the image-data shown in **a-L**. **m**, Thresholded reflectance per unit tissue area (*i.e.,* amount of fgTiO$_2$ per unit tissue area). **n**, Thresholded reflectance per cell (*i.e.,* fgTiO$_2$ dose per cell). **o**, Number of thresholded reflectant foci per cell (*i.e.,* number of fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicles (TLV) per cell). **p**, Thresholded reflectance signal per foci (*i.e.,* fgTiO$_2$ dose per TLV). Statistical comparison of the distributions is presented in **Supplementary Figure 6** (two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum analysis). None of the measured fgTiO$_2$ distributions were found to be entirely unique to either species. **m-p**, By all of the quantitative measures established, feeding a murine diet supplemented with 0.0625% (w/w) fgTiO$_2$ for eighteen weeks provides significant overlap with measured, real-world human exposures. *Scale bars: **a-L** = 50 µm with insets 10 µm; **n** = 20 µm; **p** = 5 µm.*

were not significantly affected by the presence of fgTiO$_2$ (P ≥ 0.26, two-sided unpaired samples T-

tests) (**Figure 4a-h**). Within the Peyer's patch, CD11c[+] cells are known to exhibit a number of sub-

phenotypes in distinct follicular locations[17]. In this regard, the SED localisation and autofluorescence

of the fgTiO$_2$[+] cells were entirely consistent with 'LysoMacs' and/or 'LysoDCs' which represent

extensively-described macrophage and dendritic cell subsets, respectively, that express high levels of

lysozyme alongside a unique autofluorescence signature[17, 23] (see **Figure 4i-s,** and **Supplementary**

Figure 8 for the autofluorescence spectra collected). Indeed, phenotypic markers that help

differentiate LysoDCs from LysoMacs (cell surface CD4 and MHCII) demonstrated a mixed

population of these two cell types for the fgTiO$_2$[+] cells (**Figure 4t/u**).

Whilst similar populations of autofluorescent[hi] SED cells were observed in all mice regardless of

diet, these cells were strongly particle-positive in mice receiving the dietary fgTiO$_2$ (**Figure 4m/s,**

Supplementary Figure 9 and **Supplementary Video 1**). Upon quantification (**Figure 4o**), only

~7% of autofluorescent cells showed no clear particle signal for the +fgTiO$_2$ group (**Figure 4i-s**).

These cells are known to be important in the initial uptake and processing of luminal antigen which

other work suggests may be coated in calcium phosphate to facilitate enzyme resistance during the

early phases of the lumen-to-phagocyte sampling process[24]. Except in Crohn's disease, these cells

have been shown previously to be positive for the immunoregulatory cell surface ligand PD-L1[25].

Again, consistent with this prior work, our quantitative single-cell tissue analyses showed that the

fgTiO$_2$[+] (and therefore CD11c[+], autofluorescence[hi]) cells of the SED were PD-L1[+] (**Figure 4v-y**,

antibody controls presented **Supplementary Figure 10**). This contrasted with precursor pigment

cells at the base of the Peyer's patch which were PD-L1[lo], despite their fgTiO$_2$ content (**Figure 4v-z**).

In other words, based on this finding, and that mice unexposed to fgTiO$_2$ show similar PD-L1[+]

distributions (**Figure 4w**), we can conclude that expression of this immunoregulatory molecule is

unaffected by fgTiO$_2$ uptake (P = 0.34, z = -0.96, two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum analysis) and,

Figure 4 – fgTiO$_2$ selectively targets PD-L1$^+$ LysoMac and LysoDC cells. a-h, *In situ*, single-cell analysis of key immune-cell subtypes of the mouse subepithelial dome. **a/b**, Example images immunofluorescently labelled for B220, CD3 and CD11c (*i.e.,* identifying B-lymphocytes, T-lymphocytes and phagocytic mononuclear cells, respectively) from wild-type (WT) mice fed (**a**) without (WT) or (**b**) with (WT + TiO$_2$) fgTiO$_2$ dietary supplementation (0.0625% w/w of diet). fgTiO$_2$ was measured from thresholded reflectance images. Translucent red circle-markers are placed on reflectant foci to aid visualisation. **c/d**, Flow cytometry-type plots showing cell area / cell aspect ratio, (**e-g**) immunofluorescence distributions and (**h**) cell counts for B220$^+$, CD11c$^+$ and CD3$^+$ cells (n = 3 animals). All measures remained similar regardless of fgTiO$_2$ feeding (cell count comparison (**h**), P = ≥0.26, two-sided unpaired samples T-tests). **i-L**, fgTiO$_2$-recipient cells of the subepithelial dome were CD11c$^+$ in ~ 95% of cases. **m-o**, These cells also exhibited a unique, highly autofluorescent signature as previously-described for subepithelial dome 'lysomac' and 'lysoDC' mononuclear phagocyte cells. **o**, Again, this was true for almost all fgTiO2$^+$/CD11c$^+$ cells and, equally, these autofluorescent cells were similarly present in (**n**) controls without fgTiO$_2$ feeding (further data shown, **Supplementary Figure 7**). **p-u**, Montaged CD11c$^+$/fgTiO$_2$$^+$ or CD11c$^+$/fgTiO$_2$$^-$ cell populations from the SEDs of mice fed the fgTiO$_2$ supplemented diet visualised in terms of (**r/s**) autofluorescence signature. fgTiO$_2$ is seen to both selectively and specifically target the autofluorescent cells and (**t/u**) the diversity of CD4 and MHCII expression confirms that both lysomac and lysoDCs take up fgTiO$_2$. **v-z**, fgTiO$_2$$^+$ cells of the SED expressed the immunotolerance marker programmed death ligand 1 (PD-L1) whereas fgTiO$_2$$^+$ pigment cells at the base of the Peyer's patch tended to lose PD-L1 expression (**y** versus **z**, respectively). **w**, PD-L1 expression in the Peyer's patches was not significantly perturbed by feeding the fgTiO$_2$-supplemented diet (P = 0.34, z = -0.96, two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum analysis, n = 6 animals). *Scale bars: **a/b** = 50 µm; **i/m, p-u** = 10 µm; **x** = 500 µm; **y/z** = 10 µm.*

rather, fgTiO$_2$ is selectively and specifically shuttled into already-PD-L1$^+$ LysoMacs/LysoDCs in the

SED of Peyer's patches in the small intestine. As such, for the first time, we show that there *is* an

immunocompetent cell population that accumulates fgTiO$_2$ in humans, and in a rodent model, which

will now allow the proposed adverse effects of the particulates to be tested.

As noted above, in earlier *in vitro* work, we have shown that the phagocyte proinflammatory

response can be augmented by cellular loading with fgTiO$_2$[1]. Hence, in "Mouse Study 2", we

investigated the *in vivo* adjuvant potential of fgTiO$_2$, specifically in augmenting responses to the

intestinal pathogen Δ*aroA*-deficient, *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium (Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella*)

in the targeted, immuno-competent SED cells of the intestine. The choice of oral bacterial infection

was, again, because it is human-relevant (*i.e.,* commonly experienced[26]) and because it targets

LysoDCs and LysoMacs[27, 28]. Importantly, unlike bacterial fragments, to which the intestine is

uniquely tolerant, Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* is a danger signal that promotes a modest inflammatory

phenotype, albeit limited in effect (no clinical disease), leaving headroom for any adjuvant effect to

be observed. When Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* were gavaged immediately following cessation of 16 weeks

of dietary fgTiO$_2$ or control diet, and tissues collected 3 days later (+3 days), we confirmed marked

same-cell localisation of both particle types (*i.e.,* bacteria and fgTiO$_2$) in the Peyer's patch SED

(**Figure 5a-c**). *Salmonella*-specific faecal IgA was undetectable at this time-point but was clearly

demonstrated at a later time-point (+28 days), confirming a latent, localised immune response in

groups exposed to this oral pathogen (**Figure 5d**).

To test for the interaction between fgTiO$_2$ and Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* infection, and to cover a broad

array of potential outcomes, we undertook protein quantification using the sensitive and accurate

(*i.e.,* dual antibodies per target) proximity extension assay (Olink Mouse Exploratory Panel) which

provided data for 92 different protein biomarkers (repeat-sample and dilution controls presented,

Figure 5 – fgTiO₂-*Salmonella* interactions. To enable studies of particle adjuvanticity and cell migration, in "Mouse Study 2", after the 16-week fgTiO₂ feeding period all animals were switched to a normal laboratory chow diet (*i.e.,* without fgTiO₂-supplementation) then half were orally inoculated with attenuated, Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella*. Tissues were harvested +3 or +28 days after infection. **a-c,** Confocal reflectance micrographs displayed as z-stack maximum projections showing immunofluorescent labelling for flagellin (FliC) to detect the Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* in the Peyer's patch SED region. Marked accumulation of both fgTiO₂ and Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* was observed in autofluorescent, phagocytic mononuclear cells at the +3 timepoint. **d,** Faecal ELISA studies confirmed a marked, *Salmonella*-specific IgA response at the +28 timepoint (bars represent medians with interquartile range error-bars, n = 3-6 samples per treatment group). **e/f,** Protein expression analyses of ileal tissue digests by proximity extension assay (OLINK mouse exploratory panel). **e,** At +28 days, comparison of ileal tissues taken from wild-type (WT) mice unexposed to fgTiO₂ but with (WT +*Sal*) or without (WT) Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* infection confirmed significant increases in expression of key cytokines / chemokines associated with a Th1 immune response (P ≤ 0.026, two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test, n = 5-6 tissues per group). **f,** Protein expression analyses of Peyer's patch-enriched ileal tissue digests in mice treated with Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* alone (WT +*Sal*) or with fgTiO₂ and Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* (WT +TiO₂ +*Sal*) at +3 or +28 timepoints. No significant differences were observed between the two groups (P ≥ 0.2, two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test, n = 6 animals per group) at either timepoint demonstrating no interaction of fgTiO₂ and Δ*aroA*-*Salmonella* despite heavy loading into the same cells. For 23 of the 92 protein analytes (indicated with a magenta box), a proportion of the samples demonstrated expression levels below the analyte-specific limit of detection (similarly, this proportion is displayed on plots by the magenta percentage). Protein abbreviations are defined in **Supplementary Table 1**. *Scale bars: **a-c** = 10 μm.*

Supplementary Figure 11; full protein names shown in **Supplementary Table 1)**. Since

Salmonella Typhimurium induces a Th1 profile in the ileum[29] we first confirmed, using this

analytical approach, that associated cytokines/chemokines were enhanced in ileal tissue from mice

that had been challenged with Δ*aroA-Salmonella*. Of Th1 relevance, the proximity extension panel

detects IL-1 (α&β), TNFα, IL-6, CXCL9 and CCL3[29, 30] and four of these markers (CCL3, CXCL9,

IL1β and TNFα) showed significantly ($P \leq 0.026$, two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum tests) increased

protein expression in the ileum of Δ*aroA-Salmonella*-exposed mice versus unexposed matched

controls at the +28 day time-point (**Figure 5e**). Next, using this same approach, we specifically

sought to determine whether Peyer's patch-enriched ileal tissue demonstrated a functional interaction

between fgTiO$_2$ and Δ*aroA-Salmonella*. Remarkably, for both +3 and +28 time-points, there was not

one protein analyte that significantly differed between the two groups (all $P \geq 0.2$, two-sided

Wilcoxon rank-sum tests) demonstrating no measurable adjuvant activity of fgTiO$_2$ on this enteric

infection in spite of both being heavily recruited to the same cells (**Figure 5f**).

Interestingly, whilst fgTiO$_2$ appeared to have no effect on cellular responses to Δ*aroA-Salmonella,*

an interaction was observed in terms of the spatial distribution of fgTiO$_2$ in the intestine. In the

absence of Δ*aroA-Salmonella* challenge we observed fgTiO$_2$ in the Peyer's patch SED region, as

well as some further towards the base of the patch, at both the +3 and +28 day time-points (**Figure**

6a/b) (just as was recorded in Mouse Study 1). There was, however, a measurable increase in the

number of fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicles per cell (without change in the loading of the individual vesicles)

between the two timepoints (**Figure 6c-j**), suggesting a natural history of vesicular inheritance by

certain cells and, presumably, gradual development towards the well-reported basal pigment cells[15,

16, 20].

Figure 6 – Cellular dosimetry of fgTiO₂ across timepoints and *Salmonella*-induced migration. a/b, Confocal reflectance micrographs from Mouse Study 2 showing the subepithelial dome (SED) tissue region (n = 3 animals per group). After the 16-week fgTiO₂ feeding period, all animals were switched to normal laboratory chow diet (without fgTiO₂ supplementation) and half were orally dosed with Δ*aroA-Salmonella* before tissue harvest at +3 or +28-day timepoints. **a/b,** In the animals fed the fgTiO₂-supplemented diet without *Salmonella* exposure (WT +TiO₂), fgTiO₂-loaded cells were present in the SEDs at both +3 and +28 timepoints. **c-j,** To gain insights into cellular dosimetry changes across the two timepoints, quantitative image analysis of complete Peyer's patch transverse sections was used to precisely measure the number of reflectant foci per-cell (*i.e.,* the fgTiO₂-loaded vesicle (TLV) count per-cell) and the amount of reflectance per foci (*i.e.,* equivalent to the fgTiO₂ dose per-vesicle). **d/e,** At the +28 timepoint, the TLV count per-cell was markedly elevated with a new population of cells with TLV counts >13 forming in the mid-to-basal regions of the follicle. **f/g,** Randomly sampling and montaging the reflectance (RL) information in cells from each of the two timepoints visually displays this, showing (**g**) more heavily-loaded cells at the +28 timepoint. **h,** Moving from cell to vesicle information, in contrast, the amount of reflected light per individual foci remained near-identical across the two timepoints and this was again borne out visually when (**i/j**) individual TLVs were randomly montaged. Collectively, the results suggest vesicular inheritance by certain cells over time, providing a route to the formation of heavily-loaded pigment cells at the follicle base – as is well-described in humans (**Figure 1**). **k/L,** Challenge with Δ*aroA-Salmonella* (WT +TiO₂ +*Sal*) markedly changed this picture (n = 3 animals per group). At the +28 timepoint, SEDs were almost completely devoid of both fgTiO₂ and autofluorescence-positive cells. Out of six SEDs imaged, only two reflectant foci were detectable (indicated by arrows) showing marked migration of fgTiO₂ from the SED tissue compartment after Δ*aroA-Salmonella* exposure. *Scale bars: a/b/k/L = 50 µm, c/d = 250 µm, f/g/i/j, = 10 µm.*

However, challenge with the single oral dose of $\Delta aroA$-*Salmonella* markedly changed this picture.

SEDs were almost entirely devoid of fgTiO$_2$ and autofluorescence-positive cells at +28 days (**Figure**

6k/L), while some cells of the regular villous lamina propria, as well as of the basal aspect of the

Peyer's patch, were now positive for fgTiO$_2$ (**Figure 7a-c**). Consistently, it has been reported that

oral danger signals, including *Salmonella*, deplete the Peyer's patch SED region of previously

absorbed plastic microparticles[31]. The pathway that then enables appearance of fgTiO$_2$ in sporadic

cells of the regular mucosa, as we show here, is not clear but (i) fgTiO$_2$ loading per cell was low

versus most Peyer's patch cells (**Figure 7b/c**) and (ii) many of these cells showed an autofluorescent

signature (**Figure 7d**). As such, LysoDC migration from the patch with re-homing to the gut mucosa

should be considered. These data clearly demonstrate that whilst fgTiO$_2$ is not in itself perceived as a

danger signal in the intestine, unlike $\Delta aroA$-*Salmonella*, the two initially co-localise in Peyer's patch

cells that then migrate to the base of patch (likely LysoMacs). With the *Salmonella* danger signal

present, some also migrate to the intestinal lamina propria (likely LysoDCs) and, collectively, these

processes entirely recapitulate the human exposure scenario in a way that standard murine models do

not.

DISCUSSION

The human small intestine is the only known site of cellular accumulation of dietary microparticles,

as exemplified by fgTiO$_2$[16, 18, 20] (**Figure 1**). We show here that all features of this can be

qualitatively and quantitatively recapitulated in a murine model, but achieving that requires exposure

to human-relevant microbial 'danger signals'. Consistently, in this work, murine dosing with fgTiO$_2$

was undertaken in a manner that reflects real-life exposures (*i.e.,* via the diet at relatively low levels

for a long period of time). Our findings contrast with a prior study, which used bolus dosing via oral

gavage or surgical intervention in fasted animals, where direct fgTiO$_2$ uptake via the epithelium was

reported[32]. Future work may wish to consider the necessity of natural ingestion and concomitant

Figure 7 – Ileal distribution of fgTiO$_2$ following *Salmonella* challenge. a, Single-cell image analysis of tilescanned confocal reflectance images collected from transverse sections of mouse ileal tissue from the fgTiO$_2$-exposed, Δ*aroA-Salmonella*-infected treatment group (+28-day timepoint, n = 3 animals). fgTiO$_2$-positive cells in the Peyer's patches are displayed in red. As in **Figure 6**, the subepithelial dome (SED) regions were devoid of fgTiO$_2$ with the majority of the positive cells located basally around the follicle margins. In contrast to all previous data collected without Δ*aroA-Salmonella* exposure, fgTiO$_2$-positive cells were now also present in the villous mucosa (VM) (displayed in white). **b**, Montaging positive events from villous mucosa regions showed that particle loading was low compared to Peyer's patch cells with the majority containing single reflectant foci. **c**, High resolution imaging of optically cross-sectioned villi confirmed reflectant foci deep in the lamina propria in the same manner as observed in humans (**Figure 1c**). **d**, The majority of the fgTiO$_2$-positive events in the villous mucosa also displayed the same autofluorescence signature as was observed in the particle-recipient cells of the SED. *Scale bars: **a** = 500 µm; **b-d** = 20 µm.*

normal microbial exposures, versus non-physiological dosing in carefully controlled environments,

to recapitulate the human situation and address risk accurately for oral particle exposures.

Seminal early work from Frey and Mantis[33, 34] showed that the mucus-rich glycocalyx markedly

impairs model particle uptake by the regular villous epithelium, whereas the near-absence of these

features overlying Peyer's patches allows direct access of particulates to M-cells. These cells have an

extraordinary ability to engulf luminal particles and macromolecules, passing them through to

abutting cells at their basolateral membrane. We first confirm, unequivocally, that this uptake

mechanism holds true for $fgTiO_2$ and, next, demonstrate that specific SED immuno-competent

phagocytes (LysoMacs and LysoDCs) are the direct recipient cells for cargo from the M-cell. There

is then an on-going process of slow re-arrangement, typified by vesicular inheritance by some of the

cells and gradual particle-loaded-cell movement to the base of the patch. This migration (presumed

to occur in LysoMacs), which must ultimately result in mature pigment cell formation[16, 18], is greatly

accelerated by oral exposure to the bacterial pathogen *S.* Typhimurium. In addition, some particulate

migration out of the patch, to the villous lamina propria, also occurs (typically low-loaded cells,

presumed in LysoDCs). Again, building on formative work on the fate of reporter particles of

fluorescent plastic in the Peyer's patch[31], it is likely that this holds true for oral exposure to soluble

enterotoxin adjuvants as well as pathogenic bacteria (*i.e.,* multiple danger signals). Continuous

exposure to $fgTiO_2$, as happens for many human populations, would then re-load the apical (SED)

phagocytes until another danger signal event occurs. And, in this way, the natural tissue distribution

of cells loaded with dietary microparticles in the human intestine is established.

Thus, for the first time, we describe the natural history of persistent particle routing through – and

beyond – the Peyer's patch following oral exposure. This explains basal pigment cell accumulation

of multiple particle types, including titanium dioxide, silica and aluminosilicates, in human Peyer's

patches as well as the occurrence of sporadic particles elsewhere in cells of the small intestine[16, 18, 20].

Finally, we note that the particulate-accumulating population of apical SED cells are clearly (i)

immunocompetent (*i.e.,* non-quiescent) based upon their migration characteristics, expression of cell

surface immunoregulatory PD-L1 and their previously-described qualities in terms of antimicrobial

defence[17, 28, 35, 36] and (ii) capable of becoming heavily loaded with fgTiO$_2$. Indeed, the exquisite

particle selectivity for this tissue region means that the concentration gradient for area-corrected

reflectance signal was ~14-fold higher than for the Peyer's patch overall and, therefore, ~1,245 fold

higher than that of villous mucosa (**Supplementary Figure 12**). Given that the particulate-loaded

phagocytic cells make up only a minority of the SED[17, 23], then the cell concentration of fgTiO$_2$ is

very high (**Supplementary Video 1**).

We know of no other active particle-funnelling and specific cell-targeting strategy elsewhere in

mammalian biology so it is very likely that SED LysoMacs and LysoDCs provide the first and only

target to enable highly sensitive, per-cell risk assessment of fgTiO$_2$ and other persistent oral

particulates *in vivo*. By exemplification, we addressed the question of whether fgTiO$_2$ is an adjuvant,

or not, with same-cell invasive bacteria. The clear answer was 'no', at least in wild-type genotypes,

despite some *in vitro* evidence to the contrary[1]. To explain such differences it is worth noting that

cell culture studies fail to replicate *in vivo* fidelity in terms of rates of particle uptake, presence of

functional lymphatics and vasculature, cellular cross-talk, or cell migration prior to particle

saturation (cell gorging). Equally, it is probable that mammals have evolved with oral exposure to

other fine particles (*e.g.,* geologically-derived and soot) so effective compensatory mechanisms may

exist *in vivo* but not *in vitro*. Whatever the reasons, after decades of uncertainty, any question marks

hanging over the safety of persistent oral particles can now be precisely addressed, ranging from

genotoxicity through to differential responses of distinct genotypes.

METHODS

Mouse Study 1

The first mouse $fgTiO_2$ feeding study was approved by the Grasslands Animal Ethics Committee

(Palmerston North, New Zealand) in accordance with the New Zealand Animal Welfare Act 1999.

Food-grade, anatase TiO_2 particles ($fgTiO_2$) were purchased from Sensient Colors (St. Louis, MO,

USA). Physico-chemical characterisation of these particles in our previous work shows a particle

diameter distribution of $\sim 50 - 300$ nm, with a median diameter of ~ 130 nm[1]. As described and

extensively characterised previously[15], to enable successful oral delivery, the standard rodent diet

American Institute of Nutrition (AIN)-76A was supplemented with 0.000625%, 0.00625% or

0.0625% (w/w) $fgTiO_2$ (translating to approximately 1, 10 or 100 mg $fgTiO_2$ / kg body-weight / day

respectively[15]). These diets were prepared by Research Diets (New Brunswick, NJ, USA), with

straight AIN-76A without $fgTiO_2$ supplementation used as the 'negative control diet'. Six-week-old

mice (C57BL/6, 50:50 male:female) were housed conventionally with normal feed intake and

weight-gain confirmed bi-weekly[15]. After eighteen weeks feeding, mice were euthanised by CO_2

asphyxiation and cervical dislocation. The gastrointestinal tract was quickly removed and placed in

cold phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). Ileal tissues containing the most distal Peyer's patches (*i.e.,*

closest to the ileal/caecal junction) and adjacent caecal patches were excised and frozen on a cold,

stainless steel bar embedded in dry ice. Tissues were then transferred into cryomolds filled with pre-

cooled optimal cutting temperature compound (OCT) and transferred to $- 80°C$ for storage.

Mouse Study 2

Animal experiments conducted at Cambridge were performed under the authority of Home Office

personal license number PIL IEDB62633, and project license number PPL PF86EABB1. Female

mice (C57BL/6) were purchased from Charles River Laboratories (UK). Upon arrival, mice were

housed conventionally and were monitored for signs of normal health, food ingestion and body-

weight gain throughout the study period. At the start of the study, thirty-six mice (six weeks old)

were randomly divided into two feeding groups. As before, one group received the standard rodent

diet American Institute of Nutrition (AIN)-76A supplemented with 0.0625% (w/w) fgTiO$_2$

(translating to approximately 100 mg fgTiO$_2$ / kg body-weight / day respectively[15]) whereas the

other received straight AIN-76A without fgTiO$_2$ supplementation (*i.e.,* the negative control diet).

After sixteen weeks of feeding, all mice were switched to the negative control diet, and twelve mice

from each diet-group were orally challenged with Δ*aroA*-deficient, *S*. Typhimurium strain SL3261[37]

(Δ*aroA-Salmonella)*. Mice were lightly anaesthetised with isofluorane then orally gavaged with 0.2

mL of inoculum prepared at 5.25×10^9 CFU/mL. Mice were then euthanised by CO$_2$ asphyxiation and

cervical dislocation at two time-points, either +3 or +28 days after *Salmonella* inoculation (*i.e.,* 16

weeks +3 days or 16 weeks +28 days). In this way, four treatment groups (n = 6 control diet, n = 12

control diet + *Salmonella*, n = 6 fgTiO$_2$ diet, n = 12 fgTiO$_2$ diet + *Salmonella*) were established,

with half of the animals analysed at each of the two time-points. Alongside, faecal samples were

collected at three time-points (pre-study, 16 weeks +3 days and 16 weeks +28 days) to enable

enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) studies for *Salmonella*-specific IgA.

Human tissue collection

Following informed consent, and after approval from the Regional Ethical Review Board,

Linköping, Sweden, surgical specimens containing Peyer's patches were collected from the neo-

terminal ileum from six patients with Crohn's disease or colonic cancer (3 males, 3 females;

resection date-range 2017-2018; median age 48 years; age-range 21 – 77 years). In all instances the

ileal tissue specimens formed the resection margins and were macroscopically normal. Peyer's

patches were microscopically identified as previously described[38]. The tissue specimens were fixed

with 4% PBS-buffered (pH 7.4) paraformaldehyde for 12 h at 4°C before immersion in 30% sucrose

and freezing in OCT (LAMB/OCT, Thermo Scientific) in cryomolds. For analysis, the OCT-

embedded tissue samples were rapidly shipped overnight to Cambridge on dry ice. Three

anonymised, formalin-fixed paraffin embedded (FFPE) tissue samples containing ileal Peyer's patch

lymphoid tissue were also analysed to confirm the presence of $fgTiO_2$ in the FFPE specimen-type.

Studies using human tissues at Cambridge were also approved by the UK NHS Health Research

Authority, North West – Greater Manchester East Research Ethics Committee, REC reference

18/NW/0690.

Tissue sectioning and immunofluorescence labeling

Frozen sections were cut at 20-micron thickness using a Leica CM 1900 cryostat, picked up on

Superfrost Plus slides (ThermoFisher, J1800AMNT) and rested at room temperature for 2 h prior to

labelling. FFPE sections were cut at 5-micron thickness, then dewaxed and rehydrated by baking at

60°C for 1 h, transferring through two changes of xylene, a reverse ethanol series (100%, 70%, 50%,

10%) followed by 1 minute rehydration in water. Sections were ringed with hydrophobic barrier pen

(Vector Laboratories, H-4000) and cryostat sections fixed by exposure to fresh 4%, 0.1M PBS-

buffered paraformaldehyde (pH 7.4) for 10 min. All subsequent steps were conducted under gentle

agitation on a rotating shaker. To facilitate antibody penetration, sections were permeabilised for 90

min using 0.3 % (vol/vol) Triton X-100 in 0.1 M PBS (pH 7.4). Block buffer (10% goat serum, 2%

bovine serum albumin, 25 mM glycine diluted in 25 mM Tris-buffered (pH 7.4) saline (TBS)) was

then added to all sections for 1 hour. Primary antibodies or concentration-matched isotype controls

were diluted in block-buffer and incubated at 4°C overnight. All subsequent steps took place at room

temperature. Sections were washed with three changes of block-buffer. Secondary antibodies (where

directly-conjugated primary antibodies were not used) were diluted 1:400 in block buffer and

incubated for 2 h. All antibody concentrations, fluorophore conjugations and manufacturer

information are provided in **Supplementary Table 2**. 500 nM phalloidin-AlexaFluor 647

(ThermoFisher, A22287) and 2 μg/mL Hoechst 33342 (ThermoFisher, H3570) were also included

alongside secondary antibodies to simultaneously label cell outlines (*i.e.,* cytoskeletal f-actin) and

cell nuclei (respectively). Sections were then washed once with TBS prior to mounting with #1.5

coverslips in Prolong Diamond (ThermoFisher, P36965).

Confocal microscopy & imaging controls

Fluorescence and reflectance image-data (2048x2048 pixels per tile) were collected using a diode-

controlled (retrofitted) Zeiss LSM780 confocal microscope equipped with plan-apochromat 63X/1.4

and 40X/1.3 oil-immersion objectives. Fluorescence and reflectance data were collected at the same

time during the same imaging run by sequential scanning with reflected (*i.e.,* back-scattered) light

from a 488 nm excitation laser collected in the range 485 – 491 nm to detect $fgTiO_2$[15]. Where

tilescanning was used, images were acquired with 10% edge overlap. Tiles were stitched using the

Zen Black 2011 SP2 software (Carl-Zeiss, UK) using the nuclei and actin channels for registration

and a 'strict' correlation threshold setting of 1.0. For all datasets under comparison, images were

obtained in a single run using identical settings. For the reflectance imaging, tissues from negative

control mice (*i.e.,* fed AIN-76 only) were used to determine the image acquisition settings and

thresholding for $fgTiO_2$ detection (strategy shown, **Supplementary Figure 1**). For

immunofluorescence work, supporting secondary-only and concentration-matched isotype antibody

controls in tissue-matched serial sections were included. For datasets collected as sets of single

images from the villous mucosa (VM), sub-epithelial dome (SED), germinal center (GC) and TCZ

(T-cell zone) regions of mouse Peyer's patches, landmarks (*e.g.,* villi / follicle-associated epithelium)

and T cell (CD3), B cell (B220) and mononuclear phagocyte (CD11c) immunofluorescence staining

in adjacent sections were used to inform imaging locations. When tilescanning was performed,

images were collected with 10% edge-overlap using focus mapping to facilitate accurate image

stitching whilst minimising acquisition time. To define the autofluorescence signature of the $fgTiO_2$-

recipient cells in the mouse Peyer's patches, lambda scans were performed using the LSM 780

microscope. Using unstained tissue sections, autofluorescence upon excitation from a 405 nm laser

was detected in ~ 10 nm intervals in the range 415-700 nm (spectra presented, **Supplementary**

Figure 8).

Deconvolution

Z-stacked image-data (pixel size (XYZ) 1024x1024x123; voxel size (XYZ) 26x26x100 nm) of

fgTiO$_2$-recipient cells was collected using a Zeiss LSM 780 confocal microscope equipped with a

63X/1.4 plan-apochromat oil immersion objective using murine tissue sections embedded in Prolong

Glass (P36984, ThermoFisher) anti-fade reagent (refractive index ~ 1.5). Cell autofluorescence was

excited using the 405 nm laser. The image-stacks were registered to correct spatial drift using

StackReg[39]. The Born and Wolf scalar-based diffraction model[40] was then used to estimate a

theoretical point spread function assuming a refractive index of 1.51 and a autofluorescence emission

maximum of 495 nm (measured, **Supplementary Figure 8**). The registered Z-stack was then

deconvolved using the Richardson-Lucy total variation algorithm (75 iterations, regularisation 1e-12)

within the open-source DeconvolutionLab2[41] software.

fgTiO$_2$ detection using reflected light and circle-marker placement

To enable fgTiO$_2$ detection in biological tissue sections, reflected light and immunofluorescence

information was collected at the same time using a Zeiss LSM780 confocal microscope. The

reflectance images were thresholded to isolate the punctate, reflectant foci caused by the fgTiO$_2$

particles from the background light scatter caused by the biological tissue. As the background level

was similar in both mouse and human specimens (shown, **Supplementary Figure 4**) the same

threshold was used for both mouse and human images, and was determined as the level required to

remove all signal in the reflectance channel for images collected for tissue sections taken from the

negative control mice (*i.e.,* fed the AIN-76 diet only, so no fgTiO$_2$ present). This approach was then

further validated using correlative scanning electron microscopy and energy dispersive X-ray

analyses to confirm that the signal remaining after thresholding contained the expected X-ray signal

for titanium (strategy shown, **Supplementary Figure 1**). Given the small size of the reflectant foci

caused by fgTiO$_2$, a translucent circle-marker was placed on each pixel above the threshold using the

'insertShape' function in MATLAB R2021a (MathWorks) to aid visualisation given the relatively

small size of display in the Figure panels[15]. Examples of the raw signal and subsequent marker

placements are shown for mouse and humans in **Supplementary Figure 5**. Example data and code

demonstrating thresholding and circle marker placement are available at the BioStudies database

under accession number S-BSST875.

Correlative confocal-electron microscopy and energy dispersive X-ray analyses

Once fgTiO$_2$ detection by confocal reflectance microscopy was completed, Prolong-mounted

coverslips were removed from the tissue sections by overnight incubation in PBS at 37°C. Slides

were air dried at room temperature for 24 h, cut down and mounted on aluminum SEM stubs using

colloidal graphite and coated with a thin (~ 15 nm) layer of amorphous carbon (evaporative coater).

Tissue sections were then loaded into a Helios G4 CX Dual Beam high-resolution, monochromated,

field emission gun, scanning electron microscope (SEM) equipped with a precise focused ion beam

(FIB) and in-lens secondary electron and circular backscattered detectors (FEI/ThermoFisher).

Secondary and backscattered electron images were collected at 3 – 5 kV as tilescans for the complete

tissue surface, permitting manual overlay onto the previously-collected confocal tilescans. To enable

correlative confocal-SEM imaging, the 'outline' of the Peyer's patch – particularly the follicle

associated epithelium and basal muscularis layer – were manually registered together using image

overlay, enabling triangulation to target specific regions containing reflectance-positive cells. The

correlative confocal-to-EDX analyses of the human tissues were then carried out directly in the

SEM, using a 150 mm^2 silicon drift detector and AZTEC software (Oxford Instruments). For the

correlative scanning transmission electron microscopy (STEM) used to confirm single-particle

detection by reflectance microscopy, thin lamella of the tissue sample was prepared in the SEM via

the *in situ* lift-out method. Once sites-of-interest had been identified, 500 nm of electron beam

platinum (Pt) was deposited (at 5 kV, 6.4 nA for the electron source) to the surface of the target area.

This was followed by a second Pt layer (1 μm) using the FIB (at 30 kV, 80 pA for the liquid

gallium (Ga) ion source). A bulk lamella was initially cut using the FIB (at 30 kV, 9 nA), before the

final cut-out was performed (at 30 kV, 80 pA). The lamella was attached, using ion beam Pt, to a

copper FIB lift-out grid (Omniprobe, USA) mounted within the SEM chamber (*i.e., in situ*). Final

thinning and polishing of the lamella to electron translucency was performed with a gentle

polish/clean using the ion beam (5 kV, 41 pA). A lamella was then transferred into a Titan[3] Themis

G2 300 kV S/TEM equipped with an S-TWIN objective lens, monochromator, HAADF detector and

a Super-X 4-detector EDX system in a double-tilt specimen holder (FEI/ThermoFisher).

Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) images and on-zone diffraction patterns were recorded

using a OneView CMOS camera (Gatan) and STEM-EDX elemental maps were recorded and

processed using the Velox software (FEI/ThermoFisher).

Cell segmentation of intestinal tissue images

In previous work, we carefully developed and validated staining and image analysis methods

enabling extraction of single-cell data from confocal microscopy images of gastrointestinal tissues[42].

Based on this framework, three cell segmentation pipelines were used to accommodate different

tissue types and differing availabilities of training data. To confirm the reliability of our previously-

published pipelines with the new image-data presented here, the accuracy of the outputs from all

three cell segmentation pipelines were assessed relative to manually-segmented cells by Jaccard

index (presented, **Supplementary Figure 2)**.

Cell segmentation: mouse villous mucosa images

Villous image-fields were directly segmented into cell-objects using the freely-available CellProfiler software[43]. Using the Hoechst 33342 fluorescence information, nuclei were first segmented as primary objects. These were then used as seeds during a marker-controlled watershed process to segment each cell's outline using fluorescence information from the actin channel. The process is schematically demonstrated in **Supplementary Figure 13** with the complete CellProfiler pipeline shown in **Supplementary Note 1**. Test images and the CellProfiler pipeline are also available for download at the BioStudies database under accession number S-BSST875.

Cell segmentation: mouse lymphoid tissue images

Lymphoid tissues (*e.g.,* Peyer's patches and caecal patches) exhibit extremely high cell densities leading to poor cell segmentation accuracies using the simple, marker-controlled watershed approach used for the villous mucosa images[42]. Pixel-classification machine learning can be used to alleviate this problem through the generation of probability images that more precisely delineate each cell's boundary[42]. Here, in mouse lymphoid tissues, these probability images were provided using a 2-D U-Net fully convolutional neural network[44] deployed in MATLAB R2021a (MathWorks, MA). The network has a 256x256x2 (x, y, channels) input layer and uses the nuclear and actin fluorescence information to predict the probability that each pixel belongs to either 'cell outline', 'intracellular environment' or 'background' classifications. The training data consisted of twelve lymphoid tissues images (each containing 2138 x 1900 annotated pixels covering ~16,000 cells prepared by an experienced cell biologist). The image-data flows through a four-layer contracting convolutional path before complete up-convolutional expansion, yielding probability images that exactly match the input-image dimensions. The network was trained for 50 epochs using a batch-size of 12 for 1,200 iterations/epoch. Patches were shuffled every epoch and augmented by simple, random x / y reflection and rotation. Model training was optimised under stochastic gradient descent using cross-

entropy loss. The initial learning rate was 0.05, dropping every 10 epochs by 0.1 under momentum

0.9 and L2 regularisation 1×10^{-4}. The resultant 'Cell Outline' probability images were then loaded

into the CellProfiler pipeline alongside immunofluorescence and reflectance information collected

by the confocal microscope and were used to enable segmentation of individual cells via an

'IdentifyPrimaryObjects module'. This process is schematically demonstrated in **Supplementary**

Figure 14. The complete CellProfiler image analysis pipeline is presented in **Supplementary Note**

2. All U-Net code, the trained network with test-data and the complete CellProfiler pipeline are

available for download from the BioStudies database under accession number S-BSST875.

Cell / TLV segmentation: correlative mouse-human dosimetry

For the correlative analyses investigating the relative amounts of fgTiO$_2$ delivered to individual SED

cells in mice versus in normally-exposed humans, frozen ileal tissue sections containing Peyer's

patches were collected at random from six normally-exposed humans, and six mice fed the AIN-67

diet supplemented with 0.0625% (w/w) fgTiO$_2$. In every instance, care was taken to collect tissue

sections with clear follicle-associated epithelium (*i.e.,* without any overlying villi) to ensure

maintenance of similar histological positioning near the 'center of the dome' of each Peyer's patch.

Reflectance confocal images of the murine and human tissues were then acquired in a single run

under identical settings. After acquisition, the image-fields per specimen were manually laid out in

order of lowest-to-highest fgTiO$_2$ accumulation to visually present the spectrum of (wide) variation

in fgTiO$_2$ cellular loading observed across samples in both the mouse and human tissue specimens.

This was followed by quantitative image analysis to determine the thresholded reflectance per unit

tissue area; then the integrated intensity of the threshold reflectance information per-cell and per-

vesicle objects (method exemplified, **Supplementary Figure 3**). To extract the single-cell and

single-vesicle data, a CellProfiler pipeline was used. To tackle cell segmentation in lymphoid tissues

with high cell densities we have shown in previous work[42] that pixel-classification machine learning

can be used to produce probability images that more precisely delineate each cell's boundary

improving segmentation accuracies when compared to using the raw fluorescence information.

Unlike in mouse lymphoid tissues (method described above), because large amounts of manually-

annotated training data for the human lymphoid images was not available, these probability images

were created by sparse annotation pixel-classification machine learning in the ILASTIK software[45].

Two ILASTIK pixel-classification projects were created (one for the human images, one for the

mouse). Pixel annotations representing 'intracellular environment', 'cell outlines' and 'other'

classifications were made on the fluorescence channel describing the cell outlines (*i.e.,* the actin

channel) (method shown schematically, **Supplementary Figure 15**). The ILASTIK software then

generated probability images representing the probability of each pixel belonging to each

classification. The resultant 'Cell Outline' probability images were loaded into the CellProfiler

pipeline alongside the fluorescence and reflectance information captured by the confocal microscope

and were used to segment individual cells via an 'IdentifyPrimaryObjects' module. As part of this

pipeline, the reflectant foci representing $fgTiO_2$ events were also directly-segmented from the

thresholded reflectance images into '$fgTiO_2$-loaded vesicle' (TLV) objects using a second,

'IdentifyPrimaryObjects' module (method schematically demonstrated, **Supplementary Figure 16**).

The complete image analysis pipeline is presented in **Supplementary Note 3**. Test images and the

complete CellProfiler pipeline are available for download from the BioStudies database under

accession number S-BSST875. The accuracy of the segmented-cell outputs were checked by Jaccard

index relative to manually-segmented cells (presented, **Supplementary Figure 2)**. The accuracy of

TLV segmentation from the raw reflectance information is explored in both mouse and human

images in **Supplementary Figure 5.**

Cell / TLV feature extraction

As described in previous work[42], raw immunofluorescence data were pre-processed by manual

thresholding at the level required to remove $\geq$ 95% of fluorescence in tissue-matched, secondary

antibody-only control images. Alongside, the reflectance data were carefully thresholded at the level

required to remove all signal from the images collected from the negative control group mice (*e.g.,*

fed the AIN-67 diet alone; strategy shown, **Supplementary Figure 1**). Thresholded reflectance and

fluorescence intensity information per cell or TLV object, alongside size and shape features were

then measured for both the immunofluorescence and reflectance channels using the

'MeasureObjectSizeShape' and 'MeasureObjectIntensity' modules in CellProfiler. The number of

TLV objects per cell was measured using a 'RelateObjects' module. Data were preprocessed by

discarding objects outside of the 5th and 95th percentiles by size prior to analysis as is recommended

best-practice[46].

Cell segmentation: block processing tilescans

To avoid memory limitations, when necessary, tilescanned images were cut into smaller pieces, run

through one of the CellProfiler pipelines before reassembling the object segmentation masks and

assigning global cell position coordinates to the extracted object features. This was achieved using

two MATLAB functions developed in our previous work[42]. The first 'TilescanToCellProfiler', reads

stitched images in most microscopy formats and cuts them into manageable tiles with edge-overlap

for processing. The second, 'CellProfilerToTilescan' reassembles the object masks, removes 'double

hits' on overlap edges and assigns global position coordinates values to the extracted features.

Example images and MATLAB code demonstrating these functions is available for download at the

BioStudies database under accession number S-BSST875.

Cell segmentation: accuracy assessment by Jaccard index

The Jaccard index (intersection over union) approach was used to check the accuracy of the cell

segmentation results used in this work. This was achieved by comparing pixel positions inside the

automatically-segmented cell objects against those obtained by manual annotations performed by an

experience cell biologist. The Jaccard index was calculated as:

$$J(A, M) = \frac{|A \cap M|}{|A \cup M|} = \frac{|A \cap M|}{|A| + |M| - |A \cap M|} \qquad \text{(Equation 1)}$$

Where J is the Jaccard distance for two sets of pixel positions for the automated (A) and manual (M)

segmentations, respectively. Scores of zero represent no overlap (false negatives) whereas scores of

1 represent exact pixel-for-pixel intersection. In this way, it is acknowledged that this approach is a

relatively harsh success measure, and that scores of ~ 0.7 indicate a good segmentation result[44]. This

is partially due to the inevitable inaccuracies that are present – even in the manually-annotated data

(*e.g.,* due to outline smoothing, ambiguity in determining the precise position of each cell's boundary

from the fluorescent staining information, and the available image resolution *etc.*).

Cell segmentation: cell mapping visualisations

The cell map visualisations displaying the delivered cellular doses of fgTiO$_2$ or TLV counts per-cell

were produced using cell feature information extracted by the CellProfiler

'MeasureObjectIntensities' and 'RelateObjects' modules alongside the object segmentation masks

outputted by each pipeline. Using MATLAB scripts, object feature data were binned into categories

(*e.g.,* 'low, 'intermediate' and 'high' fgTiO$_2$-load based on the integrated intensity of the thresholded

reflectance signal per-cell). Using the segmentation masks, individual cell-objects were then colour-

coded according to these categories to provide a 'tissue map' visualisation. Example data and

MATLAB code demonstrating the creation of these visualisations are available for download from

the BioStudies database under accession number S-BSST875.

Statistical analysis of image-based data

Integrated intensity per object (*i.e.,* per cell or NLV) distributions were compared using two-sided

Wilcoxon rank-sum analysis. This non-parametric approach was chosen for compatibility with

unpaired samples with unequal group sizes[42]. The approach tests the null hypothesis that the

distributions under comparison might reasonably be drawn from one continuous distribution with

equal medians ($P > 0.05$) versus the alternate hypothesis that the distributions are distinct ($P \leq 0.05$).

Pairwise comparisons of cell counts were first checked for distribution normality and variance

homogeneity using Shapiro-Wilk and Barlett tests, respectively. Where these tests were passed (P

>0.05), groups were compared using a two-sided, unpaired samples T-test assuming equal variance.

Olink® proximity extension assay

Using a cold safety razorblade, the frozen mouse ileal tissues were trimmed to isolate the tissue

region containing Peyer's patches and the mass of each sample was recorded. Samples were stored in

Kimble pellet pestle tubes (DWK Life Sciences, K-749520-0000) at -70°C until further processing.

Tissues were lysed using the BioPlex Cell Lysis Kit (BioRad, 171-304011). 500 μL of Cell Wash

Buffer per sample was used for rinsing the tissues. Cell Lysis Buffer was prepared by adding Factors

1 and 2 as per the manufacturer's instructions, as well as Halt Protease Inhibitor Cocktail

(ThermoFisher, 78437; 10 μL of cocktail per 1 mL of buffer). Following a rinse, tissues were

homogenised by adding 500 μL of ice-cold Cell Lysis Buffer and hand grinding on ice using

disposable pestles (DWK Life Sciences, 749520-0000; 20 strokes). Homogenised samples were

frozen at -70°C for at least 4 hours, thawed on ice, sonicated in an Ultrawave U300 ultrasonic bath

(44 kHz, 35 W) on ice for 40 seconds and centrifuged for 5 min at 6,000 x g. Supernatant was

collected into 2 mL cryogenic vials (Corning, 430659) and frozen at -70°C until quantification.

Quantification was performed using the DC Protein Quantification Kit I (BioRad, 5000111) as per

the manufacturer's instructions (Microplate Assay Protocol). Plates (Greiner Bio-One, 650185) were

read using FLUOstar Omega microplate reader at 750 nm and protein concentrations were calculated

by the Omega's MARS Data Analysis software using linear regression fit. All samples were

normalised to 0.77 mg/mL (+/- 0.12) by dilution with Cell Lysis Buffer and re-quantified to confirm

protein concentration. A microplate was prepared for the proximity extension assay by transferring

40 µL aliquots of all samples, negative controls (Cell Lysis Buffer), duplicates of 6 samples, and

dilutions (1:4, 1:8 and 1:16 v/v) of two samples into a 96-well skirted plate (ThermoFisher, AB0800)

in a randomised manner (controls presented, **Supplementary Figure 11**). The plate was sealed

(ThermoFisher, 4306311) and stored at -70°C until shipment on dry ice to Olink (Uppsala, Sweden)

for analysis using the Target 96 Mouse Exploratory panel (www.olink.com/mouse-exploratory). All

protein names and abbreviations are listed in **Supplementary Table 1**. Statistical analysis was

performed using the Olink Analyze 3.6.0 R-package (https://CRAN.R-

project.org/package=OlinkAnalyze). Treatment groups were compared using a two-sample Mann-

Whitney U test with correction for multiple testing using the Benjamini-Hochberg method. The

proximity extension assay data are available for download at the BioStudies database under

accession number S-BSST875.

Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay for *Salmonella*-specific IgA

During Mouse Study 2, faecal pellets were collected pre-study and at the 16-week +3 day and 16-

week +28 day time-points. Samples were weighed and diluted 1:10 (w/v) in 10% PBS containing 1

mM EDTA. The resulting suspension was vortexed for 15 min to facilitate liquefaction then

centrifuged at 400 x g at 4°C for 5 min. The supernatant was aspirated and centrifuged for a second

time at 12,000 x g for 10 min at 4°C. *Salmonella*-specific IgA quantification was then carried by

sandwich ELISA method. Plates were coated with 50 µL lipopolysaccharide (LPS), (Sigma, L2262)

diluted in Reggiardo's buffer (0.05 M glycine, 0.1 M NaCl, 1 mM EDTA, 0.05 M NaF and 0.1%

sodium deoxycholate). Plates were then sealed and incubated overnight at 37°C. Next day, the plates

were washed 3 times with PBS-tween and blotted dry. Blocking buffer from the whole IgA kit

(Affymetrix, 88-50450) was added to each well for 1 hr at 37°C. The faecal supernatant was then

diluted in kit buffer A (Affymetrix, 88-50450) and 50 µL of diluted sample was added to each well.

After three hours of incubation, the plates were washed three times with PBS-tween before addition

of 50 µL horseradish peroxidase-conjugated IgA. Three more washes were carried out before the

addition of 50 µL tetramethylbenzidine substrate for 10 min. This was followed by 50 µL of stop

solution prior to absorption reading at 492 nm on a plate reader. All outputs were calibrated using a

standard curve and corrected for dilution.

ONLINE CONTENT

Data and code are available at the BioStudies database (https://www.ebi.ac.uk/biostudies/) under

accession number S-BSST875.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Data supporting the presented analyses are available for download from the BioStudies database

(https://www.ebi.ac.uk/biostudies/) under accession number S-BSST875. Source data are provided

with this submission.

CODE AVAILABILITY

MATLAB code (using Deep Learning, Image Processing and Computer Vision toolboxes) and

CellProfiler pipelines enabling the presented image analysis workflows are downloadable from the

BioStudies database (http://www.ebi.ac.uk/biostudies) under accession number S-BSST875.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors acknowledge the UK Medical Research Council (grant number MR/R005699/1), the UK

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (grant EP/N013506/1) and the UK

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (grant number BB/P026818/1) for

supporting the work. J.W.W. is grateful to Girton College and the University of Cambridge Herchel-

Smith Fund for supporting him with Fellowships. J.W.W. thanks Debbie Edwards for her assistance

with the microscopy studies and Guy Dew for his comments on the manuscript. The authors thank

Prof. Neil Mabbot and Prof. Simon Milling for their helpful comments. J.D.S. and Å.V.K. were

supported by Swedish Research Council Grant No. 2021-02566. Mouse Study 1 was funded by the

Riddet Institute through its Centre of Research Excellence funding which was awarded by the New

Zealand government. Additional funding was provided by the Ministry for Science and Innovation

contract C11 × 1009 through Nutrigenomics New Zealand, a collaboration between AgResearch,

Plant and Food Research, and The University of Auckland. S.R. was supported by doctoral

scholarships from Massey University. The authors are grateful to Dr. Andrew Grant for his input into

the study design for Mouse Study 2.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

JWW and JJP conceived the concept and designed the analyses. NR obtained funding for SR Ph.D.

studies including Mouse Study 1. SR, NR and DO carried out Mouse Study 1. RJ, ABDS, MM, CB,

JW, PM and JJP carried out Mouse Study 2. AVK and JDS collected the human surgical specimens.

JWW, JR, MM, AF and REH conducted the light microscopical studies. AD, MM, JWW and JJP

performed the protein expression analyses. APB, SM and JWW carried out the electron

microanalytical work. JWW, PR, HDS and JJP performed the data analysis. JWW and JJP wrote the

manuscript in close collaboration with all authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing interests.

Supplementary Information

Cell Targeting and Adjuvant Activity of Dietary Titanium Dioxide

John W. Wills, Alicja Dabrowska, Jack Robertson, Michelle Miniter, Sebastian Riedle, Huw D. Summers, Rachel E. Hewitt, Adeeba Fathima, Alessandra Barreto da Silva, Carlos A. P. Bastos, Stuart Micklethwaite, Åsa V. Keita, Johan D. Söderholm, Nicole C. Roy, Don Otter, Ravin Jugdaohsingh, Pietro Mastroeni, Andy P. Brown, Paul Rees, Jonathan J. Powell.

List of Supplementary Information –

Supplementary Figure 1 – Quantifying $fgTiO_2$ in biological tissues using confocal reflectance microscopy. This explains the methodology used to enable robust quantification of $fgTiO_2$ in mouse and human tissues.

Supplementary Figure 2 – Assessing cell segmentation accuracies. This presents Jaccard index results for each of the cell segmentation strategies used in the study relative to results obtained by hand-drawing.

Supplementary Figure 3 – Image-analysis strategies enabling $fgTiO_2$ quantification. This explains the different image analysis approaches used to measure $fgTiO_2$ at the tissue-region, cell and $fgTiO_2$-loaded vesicle levels.

Supplementary Figure 4 – Background reflectance comparison in human and mouse tissue sections. This demonstrates that the background reflectance signal is highly similar in both mouse and human Peyer's patch tissue enabling reflectant foci to be established using a single threshold.

Supplementary Figure 5 – Circle-marker placement and TLV segmentation examples. This shows examples of the raw reflectance signal and resulting circle-marker and $fgTiO_2$-loaded vesicle segmentations after image processing for a series of mouse and human examples.

Supplementary Figure 6 – Statistical comparisons of the delivered cellular dose of $fgTiO_2$ in mice and humans. Statistical distribution comparisons are presented between the measured dose of $fgTiO_2$ delivered to subepithelial dome cells at both the cell and endosome level.

Supplementary Figure 7 – $fgTiO_2$ dose delivery using different diets. Further confocal reflectance microscopy data is presented comparing $fgTiO_2$ loading into mouse SED cells using diets supplemented with 0.000625, 0.00625 or 0.0625% (w/w) $fgTiO_2$.

Supplementary Figure 8 – Autofluorescence properties of lysomac/lysoDC cells. This Figure presents measured emission spectra for the lysomac/lysoDC autofluorescence signal.

Supplementary Figure 9 – Association of $fgTiO_2$ with lysomac/lysoDC cells. This demonstrates the selectivity and specificity of $fgTiO_2$ for the autofluorescent, lysomac/lysoDC cell population of the murine subepithelial dome.

Supplementary Figure 10 – Immunofluorescence controls for PD-L1. This provides secondary-only and isotype control image-data in support of the PD-L1 immunofluorescence studies.

Supplementary Figure 11 – Olink proximity extension assay controls. This shows the results of the random duplication, sample dilution and blank-buffer controls analysed by proximity extension assay.

Supplementary Figure 12 – Comparing $fgTiO_2$ loading into different ileal tissue compartments. This presents a quantitative comparison of the relative amounts of $fgTiO_2$ delivered to different ileal tissue regions in the murine model.

Supplementary Figure 13 – Mouse villous mucosa cell segmentation. Schematic explanation of the marker-controlled watershed approach used to enable cell segmentation of mouse villous mucosa images.

Supplementary Figure 14 – Cell segmentation of mouse lymphoid tissues using UNET pixel classification. This schematically explains how cell segmentations were achieved in mouse lymphoid tissues using a UNET pixel-classification model.

Supplementary Figure 15 – Mouse-human correlative dosimetry: Peyer's patch cell segmentation. This schematically demonstrates the process used to enable cell segmentation of mouse and human Peyer's patch tissue using sparse-annotation pixel classification machine learning in the Ilastik software.

Supplementary Figure 16 – Mouse-human correlative dosimetry: fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle segmentation. This schematically demonstrates the TLV segmentation approach from the reflectance image data.

Supplementary Table 1 – Olink proximity extension assay full protein names. This Table summarises the full list of proteins assessed by the Olink proximity extension assay alongside their full and abbreviated names.

Supplementary Table 2 – Antibody information Table. This provides the specifics of all antibodies used in the study, including manufacturer information, staining concentrations and the secondary antibodies and fluorophores used for detection.

Supplementary Video 1 – fgTiO$_2$ targets autofluorescent lysomac/lysoDC cells of the murine subepithelial dome. This video presents a 3-D render of the murine subepithelial dome demonstrating the selectivity and specificity of fgTiO$_2$ targeting for the autofluorescent lysomac/lysoDC cell population.

Supplementary Note 1 – Image analysis pipeline enabling cell segmentation of mouse villous mucosa image fields. This section presents the CellProfiler pipeline used to segment and extract cell features from the mouse villous mucosa images. The CellProfiler project and sample image data are available for download from the BioStudies archive accompanying this paper.

Supplementary Note 2 – Image analysis pipeline for fgTiO$_2$ and immunofluorescence marker quantification in mouse lymphoid tissues. This section presents the CellProfiler pipeline used to measure immunofluorescence marker and fgTiO$_2$ features in segmented cells. The CellProfiler project and sample image-data are available for download from the BioStudies archive accompanying this paper.

Supplementary Note 3 – Image analysis pipeline enabling the correlative mouse-human dosimetry studies. This section presents the CellProfiler pipeline used to measure cell and fgTiO$_2$ loaded vesicle (TLV) properties in the mouse and human tissue sections. The CellProfiler project and sample image data are available for download from the BioStudies archive accompanying this paper.

Supplementary Figure 1 – Detecting and quantifying fgTiO$_2$ in biological tissues using reflectance confocal microscopy. a/b, Using murine Peyer's patch tissue sections, known to be positive or negative for fgTiO$_2$ (*i.e.,* fed a diet with fgTiO$_2$ (WT +TiO$_2$) or without (WT) fgTiO$_2$), laser excitation and detector gain settings were optimised such that the signal from the brightest reflectant foci caused by fgTiO$_2$ approached saturation at the detector. At the same time, the confocal pinhole was used to obtain an optical section of ~1 micron in the Z-dimension enabling robust data collection from the centre of 20 micron-thickness tissue sections avoiding any surface-based signal. These microscope settings were universally applied during data acquisition using a Zeiss LSM780 laser scanning confocal microscope diode-retrofitted to maintain consistent laser excitation power. **c/d**, During the image analysis process, the murine tissues from the control-diet animals (*i.e.,* without fgTiO$_2$ supplementation) were used to inform a threshold for the reflectance channel ensuring that only the (**d**) signal from the highly reflectant foci caused by fgTiO$_2$ remained. **e/f**, To enable visualisation of these small reflectant foci, a translucent red circle marker was placed on each pixel above the threshold during the image analysis process. To orientate the images, dashed lines indicate the follicle-associated epithelium overlying the Peyer's patches. **g/h**, Once microscopy settings and image analysis thresholds were established using the murine tissues, the exact same settings were taken forward to enable the detection of fgTiO$_2$ in human tissues. **i-k**, To further validate the method in human tissues, correlative SEM-EDX analyses were carried out in the same tissue sections to confirm that the (**j**) reflectant foci detected by reflectance microscopy were an exact match for the (**k**) physical X-ray signal for Ti (further data shown, **Figure 1**). *Scale bars: **a-h** = 50 µm; **h**-inset and **i-k** = 10 µm.*

Supplementary Figure 2 – Testing the accuracy of the automated cell segmentations against manually-drawn examples. a-c, To check the accuracy of the three cell segmentation pipelines used, hand-drawn cell segmentations were performed by an experienced biologist. The results from the automated procedures were then compared – cell-object-by-cell-object – against the manually-drawn examples using the commonly employed intersection-over-union approach (Jaccard index). Per-object scores and distributions are shown for each analysis. A score of 1 represents a perfect pixel-area overlap between manual and automated cell segmentations. Due to the inherent inaccuracies present (*e.g.,* due to line thickness and outline smoothing *etc.,*) scores ≥ 0.7 typically represent a good segmentation result.

Supplementary Figure 3 – Image analysis of fgTiO$_2$ at the tissue-region, single-cell and fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle levels. a-c, To determine the abundance of fgTiO$_2$ per unit tissue area, masks of the tissue region-of-interest were (**b**) drawn manually. **c**, The thresholded reflectance signal attributable to fgTiO$_2$ (explained, **Supplementary Figure 1**) was then measured within these masked areas. **d-f**, The dose of fgTiO$_2$ delivered to individual cells was obtained by first segmenting all cells in the tissue region-of-interest and then (**f**) integrating the thresholded reflectance signal in each cell-object. **g-i**, Similarly, the count of fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicles (TLV) per cell and the dose of fgTiO$_2$ per fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle were obtained by segmenting each individual, reflectant foci and counting these per (**f**) cell-object, or, by integrating the thresholded reflectance signal in each segmented TLV-object. *Scale bars: **a-h** = 50 µm, **i** = 10 µm.*

Hoechst 33342 {Nuclei} / RL {TiO$_2$} / TiO$_2$ markers

Supplementary Figure 4 – Comparison of the background reflectance intensities in human and mouse tissue sections. **a/b**, Image-regions containing subepithelial dome tissue but no reflectant foci were identified (yellow boxes) in (**a**) human or (**b**) mouse Peyer's patch datasets. **c**, The reflectance intensity information (per pixel) in these image-regions was overlaid as normalised histograms. The distributions are extremely similar: the optical sectioning imposed by the confocal microscopy technique means that the reflectance data is collected in a Z-depth of about 1 micron from the center of each 20-micron tissue section. The reflectance signal in this volume is largely driven by the cellular make-up of the tissue. In both mouse and humans, this tissue region predominantly consists of B-lymphocytes likely explaining the similar distributions observed. *Scale bars = 250 µm.*

Supplementary Figure 5 – Examples of circle-marker placement and fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle (TLV) segmentation using mouse or human reflectance data. In the Left or Right panels, the first column exemplifies the raw reflectance signal collected by the confocal microscope. The second column shows the resultant circle-marker placements on thresholded reflectant foci (*i.e.,* representing fgTiO$_2$ events). The third column exemplifies reflectant foci segmentations into 'fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle' (TLV) objects. *Scale bars = 5 µm.*

Supplementary Figure 6 - Statistical comparison of fgTiO$_2$ loading into Peyer's patch subepithelial dome cells in mice and humans. In each analysis, each of the six mouse and six human distributions presented in **Figure 3** were statistically compared by two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum analysis. This tests the null hypothesis that each pairwise comparison could reasonably have been drawn from continuous distributions with equal medians (P >0.05) against the alternate hypothesis that the distributions are distinct (P < 0.05). **a**, Using the measure of thresholded reflectance per cell (*i.e.* fgTiO$_2$ dose per cell) 31 out of 36 of the mouse-human comparisons reject the alternate hypothesis and thus might reasonably have been drawn from the same distributions. **b**, By the measure of the count of thresholded reflectant foci per cell (*i.e.,* the number of fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicles (TLV) per cell) 25 out of 36 of the mouse-human comparisons were determined similar. **c**, Using the measure of thresholded reflectance signal per foci (*i.e.,* fgTiO$_2$ dose per TLV) 33 out of 36 of the mouse-human distributions were statistically similar. By each measure of the delivered cellular dose, feeding mice a diet supplemented with 0.0625% fgTiO$_2$ for eighteen weeks is seen to provide significant overlap with measured, real-world human exposures to fgTiO$_2$ in this tissue region.

Supplementary Figure 7 – Comparison of fgTiO$_2$ delivery into the murine Peyer's patch subepithelial dome using diets supplemented with differing levels of fgTiO$_2$. American Institute of Nutrition (AIN)-76A diets containing 0.000625%, 0.00625% or 0.0625% fgTiO$_2$ (approximately 1.0, 10.0 or 100 mg fgTiO$_2$ / kg body-weight / day respectively) were prepared and fed alongside a negative control diet (AIN-76A alone) for eighteen weeks. **a-d**, After necropsy, the confocal reflectance microscopy approach (explained, **Supplementary Figure 1**) was able to detect delivery of fgTiO$_2$ into the SEDs for all three fgTiO$_2$-supplemented diets. Image analysis revealed that only the highest diet (0.0625% or 100 mg fgTiO$_2$ / kg body-weight / day) was able to recreate a similar cellular loading in the murine Peyer's patches to that observed in humans (presented, **Figure 3** with statistical comparison in **Supplementary Figure 6**). Dashed lines indicate the follicle-associated epithelium overlying the subepithelial dome tissue-region. *Scale bars: **a-d** = 25 µm; insets = 10 µm.*

Supplementary Figure 8 – Determining the autofluorescence emission spectrum of murine lysomac/lysoDC cells. a/b, Under 405 nm laser excitation, reflectance data and lambda stacks for unstained murine Peyer's patch tissue sections were collected from animals fed either the (**a**) negative control diet (WT) or the (**b**) control diet supplemented with 0.0625% fgTiO₂ (WT +TiO₂). In both groups, a population of highly autofluorescent cells were observed in the Peyer's patch subepithelial dome (magenta) that (**b**) co-located with fgTiO₂ in the WT+TiO₂ samples. **c,** From each lambda stack, spectra were collected from eight locations (indicated by the cross-hair markers in **a/b**) and then averaged (**c**, thick lines) to determine the spectral fingerprint of the autofluorescence signal. Under 405 nm excitation, the emission max was ~ 495 nm. The presence of fgTiO₂ did not appear to affect the emission characteristics of the autofluorescence signal. *Scale bars: **a/b** = 50 μm.*

Supplementary Figure 9 – Selectivity and specificity of fgTiO$_2$ for autofluorescent lysomac/lysoDC cells in the murine subepithelial dome. (Main) Max projection of image data collected as a Z-stack using confocal reflectance microscopy. Cell nuclei were fluorescently labelled using Hoechst 33342 (grey). Cytoskeletal actin was labelled with phalloidin-AlexaFluor 647 (red). fgTiO$_2$ (white foci) was seen to selectively and specifically target the highly autofluorescent (blue) mononuclear phagocytic cells. The inset shows a high magnification max projection image of a single autofluorescent cell taken from the area indicated by the yellow box in the main image. The autofluorescence signal was deconvolved (Born and Wolf theoretical point-spread function, Richardson-Lucy deconvolution for 75 iterations via DeconvolutionLab2 software). The output demonstrates the punctate, vesicular nature of the autofluorescence signal and its close association with fgTiO$_2$ at the subcellular level. *Scale bars = 10 μm.*

Supplementary Figure 10 – immunofluorescence control data supporting the anti-PD-L1 immunofluorescence labelling. Image-data were collected by laser scanning confocal microscopy. **a**, Secondary-only control data (*i.e.,* AlexaFluor 647+ secondary antibody staining in absence of the anti-PD-L1 primary antibody). This shows a clean image with minimal signal in the AlexaFluor 647 channel ruling out non-specific secondary antibody binding and autofluorescence contributions to the measured PD-L1 immunofluorescence data. **b**, Clean images were also obtained when the anti-PD-L1 primary antibody was switched for a concentration-matched 'isotype control' (*i.e.,* an irrelevant antibody of the same isoclass as the anti-PD-L1 primary antibody). This suggests that the anti-PD-L1 primary antibody is not bound non-specifically in this tissue region. **c**, In contrast, strong immunofluorescence labelling was detected in the subepithelial dome using the anti-PD-L1 primary antibody sequentially detected by an AlexaFluor 647-plus secondary antibody. All image data were collected using identical microscope settings. The apical aspect of the follicle-associated epithelium is indicated by the dashed line. *Scale bars = 50 µm.*

Supplementary Figure 11 – Proximity extension assay controls. a, Five random samples across treatment groups were duplicated at random positions on the 96-well plate to assess measurement reproducibility (1=WT+Sal, 2=WT+TiO$_2$+Sal, 3=WT, 4=WT+Sal, 5=WT+TiO$_2$+Sal). **b/c**, Serial dilutions of one (**b**) WT + Sal sample and one (**c**) WT +TiO$_2$ +Sal sample were prepared and placed at random positions on the 96-well plate to test for measurement linearity across a wide concentration range. Alongside, two blank lysis buffer-only controls were also included to assess background and indicate limits of detection (1=1:1, 2=1:4, 3=1:8, 4=1:16 dilutions; 5=blank1, 6=blank2).

Supplementary Figure 12 – Quantitative comparison of fgTiO₂ loading into different tissue compartments of the murine ileum. a, Tilescanned reflectance confocal microscopy data (110 stitched images) covering a complete, ileal transverse tissue section containing a Peyer's patch. Manually-drawn region-of-interest masks for the villous mucosa (VM), Peyer's patch (PP plus red SED region) and subepithelial dome (SED) tissue regions are overlaid. **b-d**, The thresholded reflectance signal attributable to fgTiO₂ (methodology explained, **Supplementary Figure 1**) was then measured per unit tissue area within these different regions. Despite its large surface area, the normally-absorptive villous mucosa is practically impermeable to fgTiO₂. In contrast – facilitated by a overlying epithelium rich in M-cells – the Peyer's patches show considerable uptake. The selectivity for this site means that the concentration gradient for area-corrected reflectance signal was (**b**) ~87-fold higher in the Peyer's patch when directly compared against the surrounding villous mucosa. Moreover, most of this Peyer's patch signal was localised within the immunocompetant SED region where the area-corrected reflectance was (**c**) ~14-fold higher than for the patch overall and, therefore, (**d**) ~1,245 fold higher than that of villous mucosa. *Scale bar = 1 mm.*

Supplementary Figure 13 – Cell segmentation of mouse villous mucosa images using a marker-controlled watershed algorithm. **a,** Nuclei and actin fluorescence images were loaded into a CellProfiler pipeline. **b**, First, nuclei were segmented via an 'IdentifyPrimaryObjects' module using information from the Hoechst 33342 channel. **c**, The resultant nuclei-objects were then used as seeds during deployment of a marker-controlled watershed approach to find each cell's boundary using fluorescence information from the actin channel. **d**, Cell segmentation boundaries overlaid on the nuclei and actin fluorescence information. *Scale bars = 25 µm.*

Supplementary Figure 14 – Cell segmentation of mouse lymphoid tissues using UNET pixel-classification. **a**, Using the nuclei and actin fluorescence channels alongside paired pixel-classification labels as input, the network was trained to predict the probability that pixels in the input images belonged to one of three classes ('intracellular', 'cell outline' or 'background'). **b**, The trained model was then used to generate probability images for unseen lymphoid tissue images. These probability images represent the likelihood for every pixel in the image belonging to the indicated class. **c**, To segment cell-objects and extract features (*e.g.,* per-cell intensity and size/shape information), the 'intracellular' probability images were loaded into CellProfiler alongside the fluorescence and reflectance data and cell segmentation was achieved from the 'intracellular' probability image using an 'IdentifyPrimaryObjects' module. *Scale bars: **a** = 25 µm, **b** = 200 µm (with insets 50 µm), **c** = 50 µm.*

Supplementary Figure 15 – Cell segmentation of human or mouse Peyer's patch images using pixel-classification machine learning in Ilastik. (**a**) Feature selection in the Ilastik software. (**b**) A small number of pixel annotation indicating the different classes desired are made by drawing onto the nuclei and actin image data. (**c**) The Ilastik software then uses machine learning to attempt classification of all pixels in the image into each category. The images represent the likelihood for every pixel in the image belonging to the indicated class. (**d-g**), The probability map information can then be segmented into cell objects via an 'IdentifyPrimaryObjects' module in Cell Profiler. *Scale bars = 100 μm.*

Supplementary Figure 16 – fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle (TLV) object segmentation from reflectance images. Using a CellProfiler pipeline, the (**a**) raw reflectance information was (**b**) thresholded to remove background signal caused by the biological tissue whilst leaving the punctate, reflectant foci representing fgTiO$_2$. **c**, These thresholded reflectant foci were then segmented into 'fgTiO$_2$-loaded vesicle' objects using an 'IdentifyPrimaryObjects' module in CellProfiler. Red represents the segmentation boundaries for each TLV object. *Scale bars = 100 µm with 10 µm in insets.*

Supplementary Table 1– Full list of proteins and abbreviated names assessed by the proximity extension assay
(Olink Mouse Exploratory Panel)

Protein	ID	Protein	ID
Amyloid beta A4 precursor protein-binding family B member 1-interacting protein (Apbb1ip)	Q8R5A3	Epithelial cell adhesion molecule (Epcam)	Q99JW5
Appetite-regulating hormone (Ghrl)	Q9EQX0	Erythropoietin (Epo)	P07321
Aryl hydrocarbon receptor (Ahr)	P30561	Follistatin (Fst)	P47931
Axin-1 (Axin1)	O35625	Follistatin-related protein 3 (Fstl3)	Q9EQC7
C-C motif chemokine 2 (Ccl2)	P10148	Forkhead box protein O1 (Foxo1)	Q9R1E0
C-C motif chemokine 20 (Ccl20)	O89093	Friend leukemia integration 1 transcription factor (Fli1)	P26323
C-C motif chemokine 3 (Ccl3)	P10855	Gamma-enolase (Eno2)	P17183
C-C motif chemokine 5 (Ccl5)	P30882	GDNF family receptor alpha-1 (Gfra1)	P97785
C-X-C motif chemokine 9 (Cxcl9)	P18340	Glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (Gdnf)	P48540
Cadherin-6 (Cdh6)	P97326	Glucagon (Gcg)	P55095
Calsyntenin-2 (Clstn2)	Q9ER65	Granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (Csf2)	P01587
Carbonic anhydrase 13 (Ca13)	Q9D6N1	Growth-regulated alpha protein (Cxcl1)	P12850
Carboxypeptidase E (Cpe)	Q00493	Hepatocyte growth factor (Hgf)	Q08048
Caspase-3 (Casp3)	P70677	Immunoglobulin superfamily member 3 (Igsf3)	Q6ZQA6
Contactin-1 (Cntn1)	P12960	Integrin beta-1-binding protein 2 (Itgb1bp2)	Q9R000
Contactin-4 (Cntn4)	Q69Z26	Integrin beta-6 (Itgb6)	Q9Z0T9
CXADR-like membrane protein (Clmp)	Q8R373	Interleukin-1 alpha (Il1a)	P01582
Cysteine-rich motor neuron 1 protein (Crim1)	Q9JLL0	Interleukin-1 beta (Il1b)	P10749
Cytosolic phospholipase A2 (Pla2g4a)	P47713	Interleukin-10 (Il10)	P18893
Delta-like protein 1 (Dll1)	Q61483	Interleukin-17A (Il17a)	Q62386
Dihydropteridine reductase (Qdpr)	Q8BVI4	Interleukin-17F (Il17f)	Q7TNI7
Disintegrin and metalloproteinase domain-containing protein 23 (Adam23)	Q9R1V7	Interleukin-23 receptor (Il23r)	Q8K4B4
		Interleukin-5 (Il5)	P04401
Dual specificity mitogen-activated protein kinase kinase 6 (Map2k6)	P70236	Interleukin-6 (Il6)	P08505
Dynactin subunit 2 (Dctn2)	Q99KJ8	Kit ligand (Kitlg)	P20826
Legumain (Lgmn)	O89017	Seizure 6-like protein 2 (Sez6l2)	Q4V9Z5
Leucine-rich repeat transmembrane protein FLRT2 (Flrt2)	Q8BLU0	Serine/threonine-protein kinase PAK 4 (Pak4)	Q8BTW9
Lipoprotein lipase (Lpl)	P11152	Serine/threonine-protein kinase receptor R3 (Acvrl1)	Q61288
Matrilin-2 (Matn2)	O08746	Soluble calcium-activated nucleotidase 1 (Cant1)	Q8VCF1
Melanoma-derived growth regulatory protein (Mia)	Q61865	Synaptosomal-associated protein 29 (Snap29)	Q9ERB0
N(G),N(G)-dimethylarginine dimethylaminohydrolase 1 (Ddah1)	Q9CWS0	Tenascin-R (Tnr)	Q8BYI9
NAD kinase (Nadk)	P58058	Transforming growth factor beta receptor type 3 (Tgfbr3)	O88393
Neurogenic locus notch homolog protein 3 (Notch3)	Q61982	Latency-associated peptide transforming growth factor beta-1 (Tgfb1)	P04202
Neurotrophin-3 (Ntf3)	P20181	Tripeptidyl-peptidase 1 (Tpp1)	O89023
Perilipin-1 (Plin1)	Q8CGN5	Troponin I, cardiac muscle (Tnni3)	P48787
Peroxiredoxin-5, mitochondrial (Prdx5)	P99029	Tumor necrosis factor (Tnf)	P06804
Platelet-derived growth factor subunit B (Pdgfb)	P31240	Tumor necrosis factor ligand superfamily member 12 (Tnfsf12)	O54907
Plexin-A4 (Plxna4)	Q80UG2	Tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily member 11B (Tnfrsf11b)	O08712
Poly [ADP-ribose] polymerase 1 (Parp1)	P11103	Tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily member 12A (Tnfrsf12a)	Q9CR75
Protein CYR61 (Cyr61)	P18406	Tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily member 27 (Eda2r)	Q8BX35
Protein delta homolog 1 (Dlk1)	Q09163	Tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily member 6 (Fas)	P25446
Protein phosphatase inhibitor 2 (Ppp1r2)	Q9DCL8	Tyrosine-protein kinase Yes (Yes1)	Q04736
Protein S100-A4 (S100a4)	P07091	V-set and immunoglobulin domain-containing protein 2 (Vsig2)	Q9Z109
Protransforming growth factor alpha (Tgfa)	P48030	Vascular endothelial growth factor D (Vegfd)	P97946
Receptor tyrosine-protein kinase erbB-4 (Erbb4)	Q61527	WAP, Kazal, immunoglobulin, Kunitz and NTR domain-containing protein 2 (Wfikkn2)	Q7TQN3
Repulsive guidance molecule A (Rgma)	Q6PCX7		
Ribosomal oxygenase 2 (Riox2)	Q8CD15	WNT1-inducible-signaling pathway protein 1 (Wisp1)	O54775

Supplementary Table 2 – Antibody information Table

PRIMARY ANTIBODIES	Product no	Supplier	Dilution primary	Stock concentration	Host	Secondary	Detection	Figure
Anti-mouse GP2	D278-3	MBL		1 mg/mL	Rat	aRat AF647+	AlexaFluor 647+	2
Anti-mouse CD3	AB5690	Abcam	1:150	0.2 mg/mL	Rabbit	aRb AF568	AlexaFluor 568	2
Anti-mouse CD11c	AB33483	Abcam	1:400	0.5 mg/mL	Armenian Hamster	aHam A488	AlexaFluor 488	2
Anti-mouse B220	50045280	ThermoFisher	1:50	0.2 mg/mL	Rat	-	EFluor 660	4
Anti-mouse CD11c	53011482	ThermoFisher	1:25	0.2 mg/mL	Rat	-	AlexaFluor 488	4
Anti-mouse CD3	17003282	ThermoFisher	1:50	0.2 mg/mL	Rat	-	EFluor 570	4
Anti-mouse PD-L1	AB213480	Abcam	1:100	0.5 mg/mL	Rabbit	aRb A647+	AlexaFluor A647+	4
Anti-mouse MHCII	PE-65122-100UG	ThermoFisher	1:25	0.2 mg/mL	Rat	-	PE	4
Anti-mouse CD4	12-0041-82	ThermoFisher	1:25	0.2 mg/mL	Rat	-	PE	4
Anti-flagellin	AB93713	Abcam	1:100	1 mg/mL	Rabbit	aRb A568	AlexaFluor A568	5

SECONDARY ANTIBODIES	Product no	Supplier	Stock concentration	Host	Secondary dilution	Fluorophore
Goat anti-Rabbit IgG (H+L)	A-11011	Thermo-Fisher	2 mg/mL	Goat	1:400	AlexaFluor568
Goat anti-Hamster IgG (H+L)	A-11008	Thermo-Fisher	2 mg/mL	Goat	1:400	AlexaFluor488
Goat anti-Rabbit IgG (H+L)	A32733TR	Thermo-Fisher	2 mg/mL	Goat	1:400	AlexFluor647 plus
Goat anti-Rat IgG (H+L)	A48265	Thermo-Fisher	2 mg/mL	Goat	1:400	AlexFluor647 plus

Supplementary Video 1 – 3-D animation demonstrating the selectivity and specificity of fgTiO$_2$ for autofluorescent lysomac / lysoDC immune cells. The video shows a 3-D render of image-data collected as a Z-stack from the murine subepithelial dome tissue compartment using confocal reflectance microscopy. Cell nuclei were fluorescently labelled using Hoechst 33342 (grey). Cytoskeletal actin was labelled with phalloidin-AlexaFluor 647 (red). fgTiO$_2$ (white foci) are seen to selectively and specifically target the highly autofluorescent (blue) mononuclear phagocytic cells.

Supplementary Note 1 – Mouse villous mucosa image analysis pipeline. This section presents screenshots of the CellProfiler image analysis pipeline used to measure per-cell intensity and shape/size features enabling the detection of fgTiO$_2$ in the mouse villous mucosa images. The pipeline and sample image data are available for download from the BioStudies archive accompanying the paper.

Supplementary Note 2 – Mouse lymphoid tissue image analysis pipeline using UNET-generated probability maps: This section presents screenshots of the CellProfiler image analysis pipeline used to measure per-cell reflectance (fgTiO$_2$) and immunofluorescence intensities (here, PD-L1 quantification from **Figure 4** is shown) and cell shape/size features. The pipeline and sample image data are available for download from the BioStudies archive accompanying the paper.

Supplementary Note 3 – Mouse-Human correlative dosimetry pipeline: This section presents screenshots of the CellProfiler image analysis pipeline used to measure per-cell and TLV-object intensity and shape/size features enabling the correlative mouse-human dosimetry work. The pipeline and sample image-data are available for download from the BioStudies archive accompanying the paper.