**CCL3 promotes germinal center B cells sampling by follicular regulatory T cells.**

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## ABSTRACT

Previous studies and our findings suggest upregulated expression of proinflammatory chemokines CCL3/4 in germinal center (GC) centrocytes. However, the role of CCL3/4 for centrocyte interactions with follicular T cells and regulation of humoral immunity is poorly understood. We found that CCL3 promotes chemotaxis of Tfr cells *ex vivo*. *In vivo* CCL3 is not required for Tfr cells recruitment of into the GC light zone. However, B cells-intrinsic production of CCL3 promotes their direct interactions and negative regulation by follicular regulatory T cells (Tfr) within GCs.

## INTRODUCTION

CCL3 and CCL4 (MIP1-$\alpha$ and MIP1-$\beta$) are proinflammatory chemokines that are secreted by various types of immune cells upon activation and play important roles in inflammatory responses and multiple other processes (Menten, Wuyts et al. 2002, Maurer and von Stebut 2004). In B cell cultures with naive, memory, or GC B cells, the cross-linking of B cell receptors (BCRs) upregulates expression and secretion of CCL3/4 (Krzysiek, Lefevre et al. 1999, Bystry, Aluvihare et al. 2001). In addition, analysis of published GC microarray data suggests that expression of CCL3/4 may be elevated in GC centrocytes compared to centroblasts (Caron, Le Gallou et al. 2009, Compagno, Lim et al. 2009, Victora, Dominguez-Sola et al. 2012). Despite multiple indications that CCL3/4 is secreted by activated and GC B cells, the significance of B-cell intrinsic production of proinflammatory chemokines for regulation of humoral response is unclear.

In 2001 Bystry et al. demonstrated that a subset of splenic CD4 T cells that were CD25[high], expressed high levels of TGF-$\beta$ and CTLA-4, and had a suppressive phenotype *ex vivo,* could migrate to CCL4 (but not CCL3) in transwell assays. The above observations raised the possibility that CCL4 may promote Tregs' interactions with activated B cells or dendritic cells (which also produce CCL3/4) to regulate B cell responses. However, whether more recently identified subset of follicular resident Tregs can respond to CCL3 or CCL4 has been unclear (Lim, Hillsamer et al. 2005, Alexander, Tygrett et al. 2011, Chung, Tanaka et al. 2011, Linterman, Pierson et al. 2011).

Tfr cells are a subset of FoxP3[pos] Tregs that play a role in the control of GC responses.

While the majority of Tfr cells arise from natural Tregs, some can be induced from

foreign antigen-specific Th cells (Aloulou, Carr et al. 2016). Similarly to Tfh cells, Tfr cells

develop in the secondary lymphoid organs following foreign antigen challenge, express

the transcription factor Bcl6, upregulate surface expression of CXCR5, PD1 and ICOS

receptors, and localize to the follicles and the GCs (Chung, Tanaka et al. 2011,

Linterman, Pierson et al. 2011, Wollenberg, Agua-Doce et al. 2011). Deficiency in Tfr

cells has been reported to induce a 1.5 to 2-fold increase in GC size at the peak of GC

response (Chung, Tanaka et al. 2011, Linterman, Pierson et al. 2011, Wollenberg, Agua-

Doce et al. 2011), to affect Tfh cell's cytokine production and Ab class-switching (Sage,

Francisco et al. 2013, Sage, Paterson et al. 2014, Wu, Chen et al. 2016), to increase

recruitment of non-foreign antigen (Ag)-specific B cell clones into GCs (Linterman,

Pierson et al. 2011, Wu, Chen et al. 2016), and to promote development of self-reactive

antibodies (Wu, Chen et al. 2016, Botta, Fuller et al. 2017) and even autoimmunity in

influenza-infected mice (Fu, Liu et al. 2018). While multiple mechanisms of Tfr cells'

action have been suggested based on the *in vivo* and *ex vivo* studies (Alexander, Tygrett

et al. 2011, Sage, Francisco et al. 2013, Sage, Paterson et al. 2014, Wing, Ise et al.

2014, Wing and Sakaguchi 2014, Sage, Ron-Harel et al. 2016), whether *in vivo* Tfr cells

only regulate Tfh cells and thus indirectly control GC responses or can also act on the

GC B cells directly remains an open-ended question.

Here we investigated the role of B cell-intrinsic production of CCL3 in the regulation of

GC responses. Based on 2-photon imaging of murine lymph nodes we found that

production of CCL3 by foreign Ag-specific GC B cells promotes their sampling and direct

inhibition by Tfr at the peak of GC response.

**RESULTS**

**A small subset of GC centrocytes upregulates expression of CCL3 and CCL4.**

Based on the previous microarray data (Caron, Le Gallou et al. 2009, Compagno, Lim et

al. 2009, Victora, Dominguez-Sola et al. 2012) GC centrocytes (CC) may have elevated

expression of CCL3/4 compared to centroblasts (CB). To verify expression of *Ccl3* and

*Ccl4* in murine GC B cells, we performed qRT-PCR analysis of GC CC, CB and non-GC

B cells sorted from the draining lymph nodes (dLNs) of immunized mice at 10 days post

immunization (d.p.i) (**Fig. 1a**). Consistent with previous microarray analysis, we found

that expression of CCL3/4 is upregulated in murine GC CC compared to CB (**Fig. 1b, c**).

**CCL3 and CCL4 induce chemotaxis of follicular regulatory T cells *ex vivo.***

To determine whether CCL3/4 may promote chemotaxis of follicular T cells *ex vivo* we

performed transwell migration analysis of CD4 T cells isolated from dLNs of mice at 10

d.p.i. with OVA in Ribi adjuvant. CXCR5$^{high}$ PD1$^{high}$ FoxP3$^{+}$ Tfr cells transmigrated in

response to CCL3 chemokine (**Fig. 2a, b**). Similar trends were observed for CXCR5$^{low}$

PD1$^{low}$ FoxP3$^{+}$ and CXCR5$^{int}$ PD1$^{int}$ FoxP3$^{+}$ CD4 T cells (**Fig. 2a, b**). We also observed

transmigration of Tfr and other regulatory T cell subsets to CCL4 (**Fig. 2c**). The observed

transmigration was predominantly due to chemotaxis rather than chemokinesis, since

addition of CCL3 or CCL4 chemokines to both the upper and the lower wells of the

transwell chamber did not promote Tregs' transmigration (**Fig. 2b, c**). No significant

transmigration of Tfh cells (CXCR5$^{high}$ PD1$^{high}$ FoxP3$^{-}$) to CCL3 and CCL4 chemokines

was observed (**Fig. 2d, e**). These data suggest that CCL3 and CCL4 can induce

chemotaxis of Tfr and possibly other Treg cells *ex vivo*.

**CCL3 does not recruit Tfr cells into the GC light zone.**

To determine if CCL3/4 play a role in the regulation of GC size, we utilized CCL3-KO

mice (Cook, Beck et al. 1995). In unimmunized CCL3-KO and WT mice we observed no

significant difference in the GC B cells numbers in peripheral lymph nodes (pLNs),

spleens, mesenteric LNs (mLNs) and peyer patches (PP) (**Fig. 3a**). However, at 10 d.p.i.

we detected a small, but significant increase in the GC response in the dLNs of CCL3-

KO mice compared to WT that was independent of the antigen or the adjuvant used

(**Fig. 3b-e**). We then tested whether in littermate-control CCL3$^{-/-}$ mice GCs were also

elevated compared to CCL3$^{+/+}$, and confirmed the observed phenotype (**Fig. 3f, g**).

Interestingly, treatment of WT or CCL3-KO mice with CCL4-neutralizing antibodies

during formation of GCs, at 7 d.p.i., did not lead to further increase in the GC response

(**Supplementary Fig. 1**). The observed accumulation of GC B cells at 10 d.p.i. was not

due to significant changes in formation of Tfh and Tfr cells or in their ratio (**Fig. 3h-j**). In

addition, the increase in GC B cells did not lead to significant rise in the numbers of

plasmablasts (PB) at 10 d.p.i. (**Fig. 3k, l**).

Our observations that CCL3 promotes Tfr cells chemotaxis *ex vivo* and plays a role in

the control over GC size *in vivo* led us to ask whether CCL3 produced by GC centrocytes

recruits Tfr cells from the follicles into the GCs. If this hypothesis is correct, the

frequency of Tfr cells in the GC light zone should be reduced in CCL3-KO mice

compared to WT mice. To test this, we analyzed the density of Tregs in the GCs (both in

the light and the dark zones) and in the follicles of the draining LNs from immunized

CCL3–KO and WT mice. Fixed LNs were sectioned and stained with fluorescently

conjugated antibodies towards IgD, CD35, CD4, and FoxP3 and analyzed by confocal

microscopy (**Figure 4a-c**). In WT mice, $CD4^+$ $FoxP3^+$ Treg cells were enriched in the

follicles compared to the GCs (**Figure 4c, d**). In contrast to the expected decrease in the

Tfr cell frequency within the GC light zone of CCL3-KO mice, the density and recruitment

index of $CD4^+$ $FoxP3^+$ cells in the light zones of CCL3 KO and WT mice were

comparable (**Figure 4d, e**). However, the recruitment index calculated for Tregs' access

into the GC dark zone relative to the follicle was higher for CCL3-KO mice (**Figure 4e**).

Interestingly, we also observed modest enrichment of Tfh cells in the dark zones of GCs

in CCL3-KO mice (**Figure 4f, e**). Based on this data we conclude that CCL3/4 is not

required for Tfr cells' recruitment into the GC light zone from the follicles, but may play a

role in limiting access of follicular T cells to the GC dark zone.

**Adoptively transferred Tregs can become Tfrs' and be visualized by 2P**

**microscopy.** We then asked whether CCL3 could promote individual interactions of Tfr

cells with GC B cells *in vivo*. To directly test this, we developed an imaging strategy that

enabled visualization of adoptively transferred Tregs within the GC-containing follicles of

living mice using 2-photon (2P) microscopy (**Fig. 5a**). Because intravenous injection of

Tregs is insufficient to get enough of the transferred Tregs into peripheral LNs for

microscopy analysis, we utilized the fact that adoptively transferred Tregs undergo

proliferation in recipient $FoxP3^{DTR}$ mice upon diphtheria toxin (DTx)-induced ablation of

DTx receptor (DTR)-expressing resident Tregs (Kim, Rasmussen et al. 2007). Of note,

while treatment of $FoxP3^{DTR}$ mice with DTx leads to development of severe autoimmune

disease, pre-transfer of $10^6$ polyclonal Tregs rescues $FoxP3^{DTR}$ mice from autoimmunity

(Kim, Rasmussen et al. 2007). To generate mice with a high number of brightly

fluorescent Tfr cells, we first transferred $10^6$ polyclonal Tregs that expressed both Foxp3-

GFP and tdTomato into Foxp3$^{DTR}$ mice (Bettelli, Carrier et al. 2006, Kim, Rasmussen et

al. 2007). We then treated the Foxp3$^{DTR}$ recipients with 5 μg of DTx two times, one week

apart. As reported before, following transient ablation of Foxp3$^{DTR}$ Tregs, the adoptively

transferred Tregs as well as the remaining endogenous Tregs underwent vigorous

proliferation. At 14 days following the initial DTx treatment, tdTomato Tregs represented

about 50% of all Tregs in the blood (**Fig. 5b**). We then co-transferred Duck Egg

Lysozyme (DEL)-specific HyHEL10 B cells expressing CFP, OVA-specific OTII CD4 T

cells expressing GFP, as well as non fluorescent HyHEL10 B and OTII T cells into the

same recipient mice and induced their recruitment into the GCs by s.c. immunization

with DEL-OVA as previously described (Allen, Okada et al. 2007). By 8 d.p.i. the overall

levels of Tregs in the blood had returned to normal (**Fig. 5b**). Based on confocal and flow

cytometry analysis we determined that over a fifth of CD4$^+$Foxp3$^+$ cells from dLNs

expressed tdTomato and that tdTomato$^+$ cells were almost exclusively Foxp3$^+$ (**Fig. 5c,**

**d**). Additionally, tdTomato$^+$ Foxp3$^+$ cells that were also CXCR5$^{high}$ PD1$^{high}$ had increased

expression of Bcl6$^+$ as expected for Tfr cells (**Fig. 5c**). At 7-8 d.p.i. a relatively minor

fraction of GC-proximal Tfr cells entered into the GCs, while majority of the cells moved

around GCs in proximity to the outer edge GC B cells (**Fig. 5e, Supplementary Movie**

**1**). These data suggest that the adoptive transfer of fluorescent Tregs followed by

transient ablation of non-fluorescent endogenous Tregs and immunization is sufficient to

visualize Tfr cells within GC-associated follicles in living mice by 2P microscopy.

**GC B cells' CCL3 promotes their contacts with Tfr, but not Tfh cells *in vivo*.**

To determine whether GC B cells' intrinsic production of CCL3 promotes their direct

interactions with Tfr cells or with Tfh cells *in vivo* we utilized the experimental setup

developed by us (**Fig. 5**) and in previous work (Allen, Okada et al. 2007) and outlined in

**Figures 6a** and **b**. For analysis of T cell interactions with CCL3$^{+/+}$ and CCL3$^{-/-}$ GC B

cells, recipient mice were co-transferred with CCL3$^{+/+}$ HyHEL10 B cells that expressed

CFP and CCL3$^{-/-}$ HyHEL10 B cells that expressed GFP. To determine Tfr cells'

interactions with GC B cells we tracked tdTomato$^+$ Tfr cells when they contacted or

passed through the GCs, and analyzed their interactions with fluorescent CCL3$^{+/+}$ and

CCL3$^{-/-}$ foreign Ag-specific HyHEL10 B cells within the same GCs (**Fig. 6c,**

**Supplementary Movie 2**). To take into account the ambiguity of correct identification of

B-T cell interactions by 2P imaging, we used both "strict" and "non-strict" definitions of

contacts between GC B cells and follicular T cells. By "strict" we define the interactions

that based on the cell colocalization analysis in 3D have taken place with high

confidence. By "non-strict" interactions we identify all likely interactions identified based

on cell proximity, including the "strict" interactions. The data was analyzed in a blinded

fashion to avoid possible bias in cell contact definition (**Fig. 6d, Supplementary Movie**

**3**). We calculated the normalized contact frequency (NCF) of Tfr cells with fluorescent

$CCL3^{+/+}$ and $CCL3^{-/-}$ GC B cells by dividing the total number of Tfr cell contacts with

$CCL3^{+/+}$ or $CCL3^{-/-}$ GC B cells by the average numbers of fluorescent B cells of each type

present in the imaged GCs. Tfr cells' NCF was lower for $CCL3^{-/-}$ compared to $CCL3^{+/+}$

GC B cells in 5 experiments, independently of the "strict" vs "non-strict" B-Tfr cell contact

definition (**Fig. 6e-h**). The differences in Tfr cell contact frequencies with $CCL3^{+/+}$ and

$CCL3^{-/-}$ GC B cells were not due to distinct migratory properties of $CCL3^{+/+}$ and $CCL3^{-/-}$ B

cells (**Supplementary Fig. 6**). In contrast to Tfr cells, OTII Tfh cell NCF with $CCL3^{+/+}$ vs.

$CCL3^{-/-}$ GC B was comparable (**Fig. 6e-h, Supplementary Movie 4**). The ratio of T

cells' NCF with $CCL3^{+/+}$ vs. $CCL3^{-/-}$ GC B cells was significantly lower for Tfh compared

to Tfr cells (**Fig. 6f, h**).

While Tfr cells formed more frequent contacts with $CCL3^{+/+}$ GC B cells, duration of Tfr

cell interactions with $CCL3^{+/+}$ and $CCL3^{-/-}$ GC B cells was comparable (**Fig. 6i, j**).

Additionally, no significant difference in the duration of Tfh cell contacts with $CCL3^{+/+}$ vs.

$CCL3^{-/-}$ GC B cells was observed (**Fig. 6i, j**). The vast majority of Tfr and Tfh cell

contacts with GC B cells were shorter than 5 min (**Fig. 6i-l**). However, while a substantial

number of both Tfh and Tfr cells also formed more prolonged interactions with GC B

cells, no Tfr cells' interactions with GC B cells exceeding 7.5 min were observed  (**Fig.**

**6k, l, Supplementary Movies 3, 4**).

**Transient depletion of Tregs leads to relative increase in $CCL3^{+/+}$ vs. $CCL3^{-/-}$**

**HyHEL10 GC B cells at the peak of GC response.** To determine whether Tfr cells may

act on CCL3-proficient GC B cells and modulate their participation in GC response we

sought to determine whether transient depletion of Tregs after formation of GCs could

affect relative involvement of CCL3 proficient and deficient B cells in the GC response. In

order to test that, we co-transferred CCL3$^{+/+}$ and CCL3$^{-/-}$ HyHEL10 B cells into recipient

FoxP3$^{DTR}$ mice, immunized mice to promote HyHEL10 cell entry into GC response and

then treated mice with diphtheria toxin (DTx) to promote transient depletion of FoxP3$^{+}$

cells or with PBS for control (**Fig. 7a**). We hypothesized that CCL3 secreted by GC B

cells promotes their direct interactions with and inhibition by Tfr cells. In that case,

depletion of Tfr cells should lead to increased expansion of CCL3-proficient compared to

CCL3-deficient GC B cells (**Fig. 7b**). As expected, treatment of the recipient mice with

DTx at 6 d.p.i. led to significant drop in Tfr cells numbers in 3 days (**Fig. 7c, d**) and small

increase in the GC B cell numbers (**Fig. 7e**). Consistent with that, upon the transient Tfr

cell depletion, we detected a small increase in CCL3$^{+/+}$ HyHEL10 B cell numbers,

however CCL3$^{-/-}$ HyHEL10 GC B cells were virtually unchanged (**Fig. 7f**). As a result of

this, there was significant enrichment of CCL3$^{+/+}$ vs. CCL3$^{-/-}$ HyHEL10 B cells within GCs

(**Fig. 7g**). Therefore, the data is consistent with direct CCL3-dependent inhibition of GC

B cells by Tregs at the peak of GC response (**Fig. 7b**).

**DISCUSSION:**

While Tfr cells have been shown to control the numbers, specificity to foreign antigen

and cytokine production of Tfh cells that support GC responses *in vivo* (Sage, Francisco

et al. 2013, Sage, Paterson et al. 2014, Wing, Ise et al. 2014, Wu, Chen et al. 2016)

whether Tfr cells can directly affect GC B cells *in vivo* has not been definitively

demonstrated. While this study does not exclude the role of Tfr cells in the regulation of

Tfh cell numbers and the magnitude of foreign-Ag specific response, it suggests that

secretion of CCL3/4 by B cells is important for direct Tfr-mediated regulation of GC B

cells. First, we determined that GC centrocytes upregulate expression of CCL3/4

compared to centroblasts. We then showed that Tfr cells as well as the other Treg

subsets are responsive to CCL3 and CCL4 in transwell assays and demonstrated that

CCL3 production by foreign Ag-specific GC B cells increases their sampling efficiency by

Tfr cells. Finally, consistent with a model of direct inhibition of CCL3-producing GC B

cells by Tfrs, we found that depletion of regulatory T cells at the peak of the GC

response results in a small but significant increase in the numbers of CCL3-proficient,

but not CCL3-deficient HyHEL10 GC B cells. Future studies should assess which

molecular players, including TGF-β, PD1, CTLA-4, GLUT1, and IL21 (Alexander, Tygrett

et al. 2011, Sage, Francisco et al. 2013, Sage, Paterson et al. 2014, Wing, Ise et al.

2014, Sage, Ron-Harel et al. 2016, Wu, Chen et al. 2016) may be involved into the

observed direct regulation.

Future studies should examine the impact of B cell-intrinsic CCL3 deficiency on the

kinetics of B cell participation in the GC and memory response, and foreign Ag-specific

Ab responses and dissect the contribution of Tfr cells to the regulation. They should also

assess whether CCL3 contributes to better control over bystander or self-reactive B cell

clones in GCs and conveys better protection against development of autoimmunity.

Interestingly, although CCL3 and CCL4 are coexpressed in activated and GC B cells,

neutralization of CCL4 at the time of GC formation did not promote significant increase in

the GC response in WT or CCL3-KO mice. It is possible that CCL4 expression in CCL3

KO cells is reduced as has been reported before (Patterson, Pesenacker et al. 2016).

Alternatively, CCL4 concentration produced by GC B cells is suboptimal for promotion of

Tfr cell response.

We suggest two possible models that could explain the increased sampling of CCL3-

proficient GC B cells by Tfr cells. First, the observed effect could be due to local

chemoattraction of Tfr cells to CCL3-secreting GC B cells. Since BCR crosslinking has

been reported to induce upregulation of CCL3/4 production in GC B cells (Krzysiek,

Lefevre et al. 1999), we hypothesize that GC centrocytes that recently acquired antigen

from FDCs (and possibly T cell help) are likely to produce more CCL3/4 than other GC B

cells, and thus could form local short-range gradients of these chemokines. In that case,

to preserve local CCL3 gradient around migrating GC B cell, secreted CCL3 would have

to be rapidly internalized and removed by other cells within GCs. Alternatively to the first

model, CCL3 chemokine secreted by GC B cells could be transiently immobilized on the

surface of selected GC B cells in association with chemokine-binding

glycosaminoglycans (Liang, Triandafillou et al. 2016) and may serve to stabilize very

transient probing interactions of GC B cells with Tfr cells that are beyond the resolution

capabilities of intravital 2P microscopy. Both of these models can lead to decreased

efficiency in productive sampling of CCL3 KO B cells by Tfr cells. Future studies should

examine whether CCL3 is uniformly upregulated in GC CC or whether there is a subset

of cells with elevated expression of CCL3/4. In the later case the advantage that CCL3$^{hi}$

GC B cells may have in contacting Tfr cells may be significantly underestimated.

Future studies should address whether CCR5, CCR1, or both of these receptors are

involved in the observed CCL3-mediated regulation and interactions between GC B cells

and Tfr cells.

Previous intravital imaging studies of Tfh cell interactions with cognate GC B cells

revealed that majority of these encounters are transient (Allen, Okada et al. 2007).They

also suggested that a small fraction of the interactions that are more prolonged (> 5-10

min) may be more efficient for productive communication between the cells and for GC B

cell selection (Qi, Cannons et al. 2008, Shulman, Gitlin et al. 2014).  In this study we

found that similarly to Tfh cells, a majority of interactions between foreign-antigen

specific GC B cells and natural Tfr cells *in vivo* are shorter than 5 min. Interestingly, Tfr

cells also formed a few interactions with GC B cells that were more prolonged. However,

while a few Tfh cell contacts with GC B exceeded 7.5 min, none of these have been

observed for Tfr cells. This discrepancy may be due to non-cognate interactions or very

weak cognate interactions between foreign antigen specific GC B cells and natural Tfr

cells. Future studies should directly address whether Tfr cells recognize MHCII/self-

peptides on GC B cells via T cell receptors (TCR), and how prevalent these cognate

interactions are. In addition, whether cognate interactions of Tfr cells with self antigen-

presenting GC B cells exert much stronger negative control of potentially self-reactive

GC B cells must be examined, as well as the contribution of CCL3 to that regulation.

In summary, our findings suggest that local CCL3 chemokine production by GC B cells

promotes their interactions and direct inhibition by Tfr cells at the peak of GC response.

**MATERIALS AND METHODES**

**Mice, immunizations, and bone marrow chimeras**. C57BL/6 (B6, WT) mice were

purchased from the National Cancer Institute, Charles River or Jackson Laboratories.

B6-CD45.1 (002014), CCL3-KO (002687), β-actin-CFP (004218), UBC-GFP (004353),

Stop-tdTomato (007909) and E2a-Cre (003724) mice were from Jackson Laboratories.

HyHEL10 (Allen, Okada et al. 2007), MD4 (Goodnow, Crosbie et al. 1988), OTII

(Barnden, Allison et al. 1998), Foxp3$^{EGFP}$, and Foxp3$^{DTR}$ mice were from internal

colonies. All mice were housed in specific-pathogen free conditions.  Relevant mice were

interbred to obtain HyHEL10 CFP$^+$, HyHEL10 GFP$^+$ CCL3-KO, OTII GFP$^+$, OTII

tdTomato$^+$, MD4 CFP$^+$, and tdTomato$^+$ Foxp3$^{EGFP}$ mice. 6-12 weeks old mice were

immunized s.c. with the protein antigens OVA (Sigma), DEL-OVA (produced as

previously described (Allen, Okada et al. 2007)), or NP-KLH (Biosearch Technologies),

mixed in either Ribi (Sigma) or Complete Freund Adjuvant (CFA, Sigma). In some

experiments 50 μg of anti-CCL4 (R&D clone 46907) or isotype control rat Abs (R&D

clone 54447) were s.c. administered into the preimmunized mice. All experiments were

performed in compliance with federal laws and institutional guidelines as approved by

the University Committee on Use and Care of Animals.

**Cell isolation, flow cytometry analysis and cell sorting.** Lymphocytes were isolated

by homogenizing lymph nodes (LNs) and/or spleens into a single cell suspension in

DMEM medium (Corning) containing 2% fetal bovine serum (FBS, Atlanta Biologicals),

antibiotics (50 IU/mL of penicillin and 50 μg/mL of streptomycin; Gibco) and 10 mM

HEPES (Gibco) and straining through a 70 μm mesh filter (Falcon) in the presence of 20

μg/ml of DNase I (Sigma-Aldrich). Red blood cells were lysed using Tris-buffered $NH_4Cl$.

The following antibodies and reagents were used for flow cytometry analysis: CD3 (BD,

145-2C11), CD4 (BD, RM4-5), CD8 (BD, 53-6.7), CD25 (BD, PC61.5), B220 (BD, RA3-

6B2), CD19 (BD, 1D3), CXCR5 (BD, 2G8), Fas (BD, Jo2), IgM (BD, R6-60.2), IgM$^a$ (BD,

DS-1), Vβ5 (BD, MR9-4), CD43 (BD, S7), CD19 (Biolegend, 6D5), CD45.1 (Biolegend,

A20), CD45.2 (Biolegend, 104), IgD (Biolegend, 11-26c.2a), PD-1 (Biolegend, RMP1-

30), CXCR4 (eBiosciences, 2B11), CD86 (Biolegend, GL1), Foxp3 (eBiosciences, FJK-

16s), GL-7 (eBiosciences, GL-7), SA-qDot607 (Life Technologies), SA-DyLight 488

(Biolegend). Single-cell suspensions were incubated with biotinylated antibodies for 20

minutes on ice, washed twice with 200 μl PBS supplemented with 2% FBS, 1 mM EDTA,

and 0.1% NaN (FACS buffer), and then incubated with fluorophore-conjugated

antibodies and streptavidin for 20 minutes on ice, and washed twice more with 200 μl

FACS buffer. For FoxP3 staining the cells were permeabilized and stained using FoxP3

staining buffer set (eBioscience) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Cells were

then resuspended in FACS buffer for acquisition. All flow cytometry analyses and cell-

sorting procedures were done using FACSCanto II and FACSAria IIIu respectively.

FlowJo Software (v 9.7; TreeStar) was used for data analyses and plot rendering.

**Cell purification and adoptive transfers**. For adoptive transfers, cells were isolated

from combined spleens and LNs of donor mice and CD4 T cells or B cells were enriched

using autoMACS (Miltenyi Biotec) as described before (Allen, Okada et al. 2007). The

purity of B cells was >95%, and CD4 T cells >70% for all experiments. Lymphocytes

were adoptively transferred by intravenous injection into the lateral tail vein.

**Generation of mice with Tregs and Tfr cells expressing tdTomato.** In order to

generate mice with fluorescent Tregs the following scheme was utilized: first, tdTomato

expressing mice were crossed with Foxp3$^{EGFP}$ mice. Second, tdTomato$^+$Foxp3$^{EGFP}$ Tregs

were sorted and adoptively transferred into Foxp3$^{DTR}$ mice where endogenous Tregs

were transiently ablated by DTx treatment (Sigma). To sort tdTomato expressing Tregs,

the LNs and spleens from the tdTomato$^+$Foxp3$^{EGFP}$ mice were combined and lymphocyte

suspension was prepared as described above. The lymphocytes were separated from

RBCs using Ficoll-Paque (GE Healthcare) gradients per manufacturer's instructions

using 14 mL round bottom tubes (Falcon). Single cell suspensions were enriched for

CD4$^+$ T cells as described above. Following the enrichment, EGFP$^+$ cells were sorted

into DMEM medium supplemented with 10% FCS. The purity of sorted Tregs as

determined by intracellular Foxp3 staining was > 99%. About 0.8-1.5 million of purified

tdTomato$^+$ Tregs were then transferred into recipient Foxp3$^{DTR}$ mice via tail vein injection.

Finally, one day later the endogenous nonfluorescent Tregs in the recipient Foxp3$^{DTR}$

mice were ablated by intraperitoneal injection of 5 $\mu$g/kg of DTx in PBS. The DTx

treatment was repeated once more a week later.

**Cell culture and chemotaxis.** Transwells with 5 $\mu$m pore size (Corning) were used.

CD4 T cells were isolated and enriched as described above from draining peripheral LNs

of mice s.c. immunized with OVA in Ribi at 10 days following immunization. T cells were

resuspended with RPMI 1640 (Corning) supplemented with 2% fatty acid free BSA

(Sigma-Aldrich), 10 mM HEPES, 50 IU/mL of penicillin, and 50 mg/mL of streptomycin

(HyClone). For chemotaxis analysis the lower chambers of transwells were filled with the

same medium mixed with various concentrations of CCL3 or CCL4 chemokines

(PeproTech). For chemokinesis analysis both upper and lower chambers of transwells

were filled with either 200 ng/mL of CCL3 or with 400 ng/mL CCL4. Transwells with

chemokines and resuspended CD4 T cells were incubated at 37°C and 5% $CO_2$ for 10

minutes. After that, CD4 T cells were placed in the upper chambers of transwells at

$4 \times 10^5$ cells per well and incubated at 37°C and 5% $CO_2$ for 3 hours. Two to three

replicas per condition have been performed per experiment. The transmigrated fraction

of cells was stained and analyzed via flow cytometry. Chemotactic index was calculated

as the ratio of cells that transmigrated to chemokine compared to no cytokine control.

**Two Photon Microscopy.** Inguinal LNs (ILNs) were either explanted or surgically

exposed for intravital imaging and perfused as previously described (Allen, Okada et al.

2007, Grigorova, Schwab et al. 2009). ILNs were imaged with a Leica SP5 II (Leica

Microsystems) fitted with a MaiTai Ti:Sapphire laser (Sepctra-Physics) that was tuned to

870 nm. Each *xy* plane spanned 435 $\mu$m x 435 $\mu$m and with z spacing ranging from 2-3

$\mu$m detecting emission wavelengths of 430-450 nm (second harmonic emission of

collagen), 465-500 nm (for CFP$^+$ cells), 520-550 nm (for GFP$^+$ cells), and >560 nm (for

tdTomato$^+$ cells), every 20-25 seconds. Images were acquired by Leica Advanced

Fluorescent Suite (Leica Microsystems). Analysis of the imaging data and generation of

3D rotations and time-lapse image sequences were performed using Imaris 7.6.5 x 64

(Bitplane). Videos were processed with a median noise filter. Semi-automated cell

tracking in 3D was performed with Imaris 7.6.5 x 64, and then verified and corrected

manually. 3-dimensional GC volume was defined based on the distribution of HyHEL10

CFP B cells by combination of visual analysis and a custom-made MATLAB program

that performed time integrated image rendering of CFP signal. TdTomato$^+$ Tregs and Th

that transited within the follicles and GCs were tracked. Their interaction with WT and

CCL3-KO B cells within defined GCs volume were visually identified and categorized

either as a strict contact as defined when cell-to-cell contact was unambiguous or a non-

strict contacts where cells could be observed in extreme proximity (~1 $\mu$m). Finally, we

normalized the number of contacts to the average number of WT or CCL3-KO B cells

within the GC volume accessible to Tfr or Tfh cells to arrive at a normalized contact

frequency. Annotation and final compilation of videos was performed in Adobe After
Effects CS5.5 (Adobe).
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**RT-PCR Analysis**. RNA from sorted cells was obtained using RNeasy Kit (Qiagen)
following the manufacturer's instructions. RNA was treated with DNase to remove
genomic DNA (Ambion). The concentration of RNA was calculated using a NanoDrop
2000 (Thermo) and cDNA was synthesized using a SuperScript III kit (Invitrogen)
following the manufacturer's instructions. Preamplification of target genes was performed
using PreAmp Kit (AB Biosystems) for 10 cycles. TaqMan assays were obtained from
Applied Biosystems and RT-PCR was carried out on a RealPlex 2 (Eppendorf).
Expression levels of CCL3/4 were normalized to the level of β2m.
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**Statistical analysis.** All statistical tests were computed with PRISM (GraphPad) after
consultation with a University of Michigan Center for Statistical Consultation and
Research representative. Statistical analysis of data normalized to the control samples
were performed using a one-sample *t*-test. For comparisons between two groups *t*-test
was utilized. Welch's correction was applied for data with unequal variances. For data in
which more than two groups or more than two time points were analyzed, two-way
ANOVA followed by Dunnet post-hoc analysis was done. In cases where we did not
assume normally distributed data and the data was from paired measurements, we used
the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. *P* values of less than 0.05 were considered statistically
significant. All statistically significant results were labeled. No samples were excluded
from the analysis.
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449 **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**
450 Z.L.B. planned, performed and analyzed experiments and prepared the manuscript;
451 M.M., R.W. and J.S.T. helped with various aspects of other experiments; J.B.G., M.I.I.,
452 and S.S.S. performed blind analysis of the imaging data; I.G. planned, performed and
453 analyzed experiments, and prepared the manuscript.
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**FIGURES**

**Figure 1. A small subset of GC centrocytes upregulates CCL3/4 expression**. qRT-PCR
analysis of CCL3 and CCL4 expression in GC and non-GC B cells sorted from the draining LNs of
mice s.c. immunized with 50 $\mu$g ovalbumin (OVA) in Ribi at 10 days post immunization (d.p.i). **a,**

The gating strategy for cell sorting. **b, c**, Relative expression of CCL3/4 in bulk GC centroblasts
(CB) and centrocytes (CC) as normalized to non-GC B cells (FAS$^{low}$ GL7$^{low}$). Chemokine $C_T$
values were normalized to β2m $C_T$. Bars represent mean with dots representing average values
per experiment. Data represent n=3 independent experiments, 4 mice total. *, P<0.05, two-tailed
Student's *t*-test.

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**Figure 2**. **Chemotaxis of Tfr cells to CCL3 and CCL4 *ex vivo*. a-e,** *Ex vivo* transwell assay of
CD4$^+$ T cells purified from dLNs of WT mice at 10 d.p.i. with 100 $\mu$g OVA in Ribi and analyzed by
flow cytometry using the gating strategy as in (a). Transmigration of CXCR5$^{high}$PD1$^{high}$ (Fol., black
bars), CXCR5$^{int}$PD1$^{int}$ (Int., grey bars), or CXCR5$^{low}$PD1$^{low}$ (Low, white bars) CD4$^{pos}$ CD8$^{neg}$ B220
$^{neg}$ cell populations that also express Foxp3 (b, c) or were FoxP3 $^{neg}$ (d, e) were measured against
CCL3 (b, d) and CCL4 (c, e). The chemokines were added either to the lower chambers (chamb.)
of transwells for analysis of chemotaxis or to both the upper and the lower chambers for analysis
of chemokinesis. Chemotactic index was calculated as the ratio of cells that transmigrated
towards the chemokine vs. no chemokine control (dashed red line). Chemotaxis and
chemokinesis data are derived from 3 and 2 independent experiments correspondingly with 2
mice per experiment. Bars represent mean ± SEM, *, $P<0.05$, two-tailed, one-sample Student's *t*-
test (compared to 1).

**Figure 3. Increased GC response in CCL3-KO mice following immunization**. **a-g**, Flow cytometry analysis of the GC B cells (Fas^high GL7^high IgD^low) as a fraction of total B cells (a-d, f) or total lymphocytes (e, g) in WT and CCL3-KO mice. **a**, Analysis of GCs in pLNs (inguinal, brachial and auxillary LNs combined), spleens, MLNs, and PP from unimmunized mice. **b-g**, Analysis of GCs in the dLNs from mice s.c. immunized with 50 μg of 4-Hydroxy-3-nitrophenyl (*NP*) acetyl-*hapten* conjugated to *Keyhole limpet hemocyanin (*KLH) in Ribi adjuvant (b) or 50 μg of OVA in Complete Fruend's Adjuvant (CFA) (c) or 50 μg OVA in Ribi (d-g) at 10 d.p.i. **f-l,** Flow cytometry analysis of GC (f, g), Follicular T cell (h-j), and plasma cell (PC) (k, l) response in dLNs of WT and CCL3-KO littermate conrol mice s.c. immunized with 50 μg OVA in Ribi at 10 d.p.i. **h-j**, Tfr (CXCR5^high PD1^high FoxP3^pos in h) and Tfh (CXCR5^high PD1^high FoxP3^neg in i) cells as a fraction of CD4 T cells. **k, l**, PB gating strategy (k) and PBs as a fraction of total lymphocytes (l). Each symbol represents one mouse. Bars represent mean. Data are derived from 2 or 3 independent experiments. *, P<0.05, Student's *t*-test (two-sided in b-e, one-sided in f, g).

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**Figure 4. CCL3 does not recruit Tfr or Tfh cells into the GC light zone.**
Immunofluorescent analysis of Tfr and Tfh cell localization in the GCs and follicles of
draining pLNs from WT or CCL3-KO mice at 10 d.p.i. with 50 µg OVA in Ribi. **a-c**,
Representative example of a confocal image of pLN section and its analysis. **a**, Confocal
image of a GC-containing 10 µm section of pLN from WT mouse, stained with antibodies
against IgD (white), CD35 (blue), CD4 (green) and Foxp3 (red). **b**, Magnified image from
the inset (in **a**) that illustrates how Treg (CD4$^+$Foxp3$^+$) and Th (CD4$^+$Foxp3$^-$) cells were
identified. **c**, Reconstruction of GC light zone (blue area), dark zone (black area), follicle
(white area), Tregs (red circles) and Th cells (green circles) within the confocal image
shown in (**a**) using manually defined surfaces in Imaris. Scale bars – 50 µm in **a**, **c** and
10 µm in **b**. **d-g** Quantitative analysis of Treg (**d, e**) and Th (**f, g**) cell abundance in the
GCs and the follicles. Density of Tregs (**d**) and Th cells (**f**) in GC dark zone (DZ), light
zone (LZ) and follicles around GCs calculated as the number of T cells in each zone
normalized to the total area of that zone. Recruitment index calculated as the density of
Tregs (**e**) or Th cells (**g**) in GC DZ or LZ normalized to their density in the GC-containing
follicle. **d-g**, Each symbol represents analysis of pLN section with a distinct GC. Data
represents n=3 independent experiments with 4 total mice per genotype. Bars represent
mean. *, P<0.05, two-tailed Student's *t*-test.

**Figure 5. 2P visualization of Tfr cells and HyHEL10 GC B cells. a**, Experimental diagram for
generation of recipient mice with large numbers of highly fluorescent tdTomato[+] Tregs and
visualization of Tfr and HyHEL10 (Hy10) GC B cells in the dLNs by 2P microscopy. **b**, Flow
cytometry analysis of the endogenous and transferred TdTomato[+] Treg numbers in the blood of
FoxP3$^{DTR}$ mice throughout their treatments with DTx and immunization, performed as in (a). **c-e**,
Analysis of dLNs from mice generated through the procedure described in (a) at 8 d.p.i. **c**,
Representative flow cytometry analysis of Bcl6 expression in the CXCR5$^{low}$PD1$^{low}$ and
CXCR5$^{high}$PD1$^{high}$ subsets of tdTomato[+] Tregs (top panels), endogenous Tregs (middle panels)
and endogenous Th cells (bottom panels). **d**, Confocal immunofluorescence analysis of dLN
sections for the fraction of tdTomato[+] cells that express Foxp3 (left bars) and fraction of Foxp3+
cells that express tdTomato[+] (right bars) in GC-containing follicles.**e**, Representative 2P imaging
analysis of Tfr cells localization with respect to GCs. A snapshot (left panel) from an intravital
imaging experiment as analyzed in Imaris software. Cell trajectory analysis for Tfr cells (middle
panel) and both Tfr cells and GC B cells (right panel). Scale bars 40 μm. Data are from 2
independent experiments.

**Figure 6. Tfr cells make less frequent contacts with CCL3-KO B cells in GCs.** 2P imaging
analysis of Tfr and Tfh cells contacts with CCL3$^{+/+}$ CFP and CCL3$^{-/-}$ GFP HyHEL10 GC B cells in
the dLNs of mice at 8 d.p.i. **a, b**, Experimental diagrams for imaging GC B cell interactions with
Tfr (a) and Tfh (b). **c**, A snapshot (**left panel**) and cell trajectory analysis (**right panel**) from
an intravital imaging experiment performed as described in a**.** Scale bars - 50 μm. Auto-
fluorescent cells are orange. **d,** Time-lapse images of Tfr cells interacting with CCL3$^{+/+}$ or CCL3$^{-/-}$
HyHEL10 B cells within GCs. Cell contacts were verified in 3D space, classified as Strict
(definitive contacts) and Non Strict (all possible contacts) and indicated by white arrows. Yellow
star illustrates pseudopod extension by a Tfr cell towards CFP GC B cell. Images are displayed
as 20 μm z-stacks. Scale bars - 5 μm. **e-j**, Quantitative analysis of CCL3$^{+/+}$ (blue circles) and
CCL3$^{-/-}$ (green circles) HyHEL10 GC B cell interactions with Tfr or Tfh cells. Closed symbols
represent intravital and opened symbols - explanted dLNs imaging. The data was analyzed in a
blinded fashion to avoid possible bias in cell contact definition. **e, g,** Normalized contact
frequency (NCF) calculated for Strict (e) and Non Strict (g) as the number of Tfr or Tfh cells'
interactions with CCL3$^{+/+}$ and CCL3$^{-/-}$ HyHEL10 B cells within defined volume of GCs normalized
to the average number of HyHEL10 cells of each genotype. Linked symbols correspond to GC B

cells in the same movie. *, P<0.05, Wilcoxon matched-pairs test. **f, h,** Ratios of the Tfr or Tfh cell
NCF with CCL3$^{+/+}$ over CCL3$^{-/-}$ HyHEL10 B cells from the same movie. *, P<0.05, Student's t-
test. **i, j**, Contact duration between Tfr or Tfh and HyHEL10 GC B cells of each genotype
undergoing Strict (i) or Non Strict (j) interactions. Red lines represent medians. Data from 5
independent experiments (5 mice) per T cell type. **k, l,** Time histograms for duration of strict (k)
and non-strict (l) contacts between Tfr and Tfh cells with WT HyHEL10 GC B cells.

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**Figure 7. Tregs repress B cell participation in GCs at 9 d.p.i. in a CCL3-dependent way. a**,
Experimental outline. FoxP3[DTR] recipient mice were transferred with HyHEL10 B cells, immunized
with 50 µg DEL-OVA in Ribi s.c. and then treated either with PBS or 5 µg DTx in PBS i.p. 3 days
before analysis. **b**, Suggested model of CCL3-dependent regulation of GC B cells by Tfr cells and
prediction for CCL3[+/+] and CCL3[−/−] GC B cell participation in GCs upon ablation of Tfr cells at 9
d.p.i. **c-g**, Flow cytometry analysis of cell participation in immune response at 9 d.p.i. in DTx-
treated and control mice. **c-e,** DTx-mediated depletion of Tfr cells at 9 d.p.i. Representative
example of Tfr ablation (in c) and Tfr fraction of total lymphocytes (in d) and increase in GC
response in DTx-treated mice (in e). **f, g,** CCL3[+/+] and CCL3[−/−] HyHEL10 GC B cells in PBS and
DTx-treated mice shown as the total numbers of cells in dLNs (f) or as the % of total GC B cells.
The data are from 5 independent experiments. Each dot represents a single mouse and red lines
correspond to the mean values. Paired analyses are indicated using solid black line. *, p<0.05, **,
p<0.01, ****, P<0.0001. Two-sided (in d, g) or one-sided (in e, f) Student's t-test.

## SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

**Supplementary Figure 1. CCL4 neutralization in GCs does not amplify GC response in WT or CCL3-KO mice. a**, Experimental strategy. **b-e**, GC B cells (B220$^{pos}$ CD4$^{neg}$ CD8$^{neg}$ FAS$^{high}$ GL7$^{high}$) in the dLNs of WT (b, c) and CCL3-KO (d, e) mice as a fraction of B220$^{+}$ cells (b, d) or lymphocytes (c, d) at 10 d.p.i. with OVA in Ribi.

**Supplementary Figure 2: HyHEL10 GC CCL3$^{+/+}$ CFP (blue circles) and CCL3$^{-/-}$ GFP (green circles) cell motility analysis. Red lines represent medians. Data are from 4 independent experiments.**

870 **SUPPLEMENTARY MOVIE LEGENDS**
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**Movie S1. 2-photon imaging of Tfr cells migration in respect to Tfh cells and GC B**
**cells.** Also see **Figure 5e**. A time-lapse sequence of a 110 μm z-stack of a GC in an
explanted inguinal lymph node imaged at 8 days after immunization. HyHEL10 GC B
cell; cyan. Tfr; red. Tfh; green. Colored lines indicate the trajectories of the indicated cell
types, tracked by Imaris and manually verified. Mice were generated as described in the
**Figure 5a**. Time is shown as hh:mm:ss and z-stacks were acquired at 20 second
intervals.

**Movie S2. Intravital imaging of Tfr cells in respect to the GCs containing both**
**CCL3$^{+/+}$ and CCL3$^{-/-}$ HyHEL10 B cells.** The data shown corresponds with the images in
**Figure 6**. A time-lapse sequence of a GC within inguinal LN of a mouse prepared as
described in **Figure 6a** and subjected to intravital imaging at 8 days post immunization.
180 μm z-stack. GC volume (gray surface) was defined based on the distribution of CFP
HyHEL10 cells. Quantitative analysis in **Figure 6e-l** was performed for Tfr cells (red)
interactions with HyHEL10 GC B cells (CCL3$^{+/+}$; cyan. CCL3$^{-/-}$; green.) within GC
volumes defined in the same fashion. The tracks of individual Tfr cells outside the GC
are labeled in purple while interior tracks are represented in yellow lines. Time is
expressed as hh:mm:ss and z-stacks were acquired at 20 second intervals.

**Movie S3. Examples of Tfr cells interactions with GC B cells identified as "strict"**
**or "nonstrict" for quantitative analysis.** A time-lapse sequence of a representative Tfr
(red) entering the GC (dashed white line) and then undergoing contacts with HyHEL10
CCL3$^{+/+}$ (cyan) or CCL3$^{-/-}$ (green) HyHEL10 GC B cells within inguinal LN of a mouse
prepared as described in **Figure 6a** and subjected to 2P imaging at 8 days post
immunization. A 40 μM slice is in view. Inlets are zoomed in and 3D rotated to visualize
the contact. Time is expressed as mm:ss and z-stacks were acquired at 25 second
intervals

**Movie S4. 2-photon imaging of Tfh cells interacting with GC B cells**. A time-lapse
sequence of a GC within an inguinal LN of a mouse prepared as described in **Figure 6b**
and subjected to explant imaging at 8 days post immunization. 140 um z-stack**.**
Quantitative analysis was performed for Tfh cells (red) interactions with HyHEL10 GC B
cells (CCL3$^{+/+}$, cyan; CCL3$^{-/-}$, green) within the GC and can be found in **Figure 6e-l**.
Examples of long duration (>5 minutes) contacts and short duration (<5 minutes)
contacts are shown in 10 um z-projections. Time is shown as hh:mm:ss for both time of
the movie and for duration of the indicated contacts. Z-stacks were acquired at 20
second intervals.

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