

# Macrophage polarization and HIV-1 infection

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## ABSTRACT

Polarization of MP into classically activated (M1) and alternatively activated (M2a, M2b, and M2c) macrophages is critical in mediating an effective immune response against invading pathogens. However, several pathogens use these activation pathways to facilitate dissemination and pathogenesis. Viruses generally induce an M1-like phenotype during the acute phase of infection. In addition to promoting the development of Th1 responses and IFN production, M1 macrophages often produce cytokines that drive viral replication and tissue damage. As shown for HIV-1, polarization can also alter macrophage susceptibility to infection. In vitro polarization into M1 cells prevents HIV-1 infection, and M2a polarization inhibits viral replication at a post-integration level. M2a cells also express high levels of C-type lectins that can facilitate macrophage-mediated transmission of HIV-1 to CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells. Macrophages are particularly abundant in mucosal membranes and unlike DCs, do not usually migrate to distal tissues. As a result, macrophages are likely to contribute to HIV-1 pathogenesis in mucosal rather than lymphatic tissues. In vivo polarization of MP is likely to span a spectrum of activation phenotypes that may change the permissivity to and alter the outcome of HIV-1 and other viral infections. *J. Leukoc. Biol.* 87: 599–608; 2010.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: POLARIZED IMMUNE RESPONSES

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of immune activation in the resolution and promotion of infectious diseases [1–5]. Of particular interest are studies of SIV infection, suggesting that the main difference between natural (non-pathogenic) and pathogenic SIV infection is that the latter is characterized by excessive and prolonged activation of the host

Abbreviations: APOBEC=apolipoprotein B mRNA editing enzyme, catalytic polypeptide, DC=dendritic cell, DC-SIGN=dendritic cell-specific intercellular adhesion molecule-3-grabbing nonintegrin, H3K27=histone H3 lysine 27, IL-1ra=IL-1R antagonist, Jmjd3=jumonji domain-containing 3, histone lysine demethylase, MDM=monocyte-derived-macrophages, MP=mononuclear phagocyte(s), MRC1=mannose receptor, C type 1, Mtb=*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, PRR=pattern recognition receptor, SR-A=scavenger receptor-A, TAM=tumor-associated macrophage

immune system [6, 7]. However, immune activation is also needed to induce polarization of the immune system along pro- or anti-inflammatory pathways and to mount an effective host response against invading pathogens [8]. Immunologically driven polarization has been studied most extensively in murine models [9–11] and in the setting of CD4<sup>+</sup> Th cell responses [1, 12, 13]. In humans, proinflammatory Th1 cells are important in mediating resistance to mycobacteria and in providing protection from *Leishmania major* infection [14, 15]. On the downside, Th1 cells are involved in the induction of autoimmunity. Conversely, helminthic infections typically orient immune responses toward a Th2 pathway associated with anti-inflammatory effects, and the maturation of antibodies toward specific IgA and IgE types that are effective in the clearing of microbial agents [2, 16].

In addition to T cells, recent evidence (obtained primarily in the mouse) suggests that MP may also undergo functional polarization, and such a process may play a role, not only in the initiation and orchestration of inflammatory responses but also in the regulation of innate and adaptive immune responses to viral pathogens [17–19]. This review provides a brief overview of human macrophage polarization and its impact on the pathogenesis of HIV-1. A clear understanding of the importance of macrophage polarization may reveal novel strategies for controlling the replicative and pathogenic potential of HIV-1.

## THE MP SYSTEM

Cells belonging to the MP system include circulating monocytes, tissue macrophages, and DCs and are characterized by a high level of plasticity, widespread tissue distribution, and an ability to respond to a wide range of environmental stimuli, most notably, microbial products and host cytokines [20–22]. These different stimuli interact with cell membrane receptors, resulting in activation of distinct intracellular signaling pathways and downstream gene activation. This, in turn, leads to changes in functional properties, such as cellular adhesion and

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migration, cytokine/chemokine production, and antigen processing [23–26].

## CIRCULATING MONOCYTES

Monocytes, the progenitors of most tissue macrophages, represent 10–30% of all circulating mononuclear leukocytes. Peripheral blood monocytes originate in the bone marrow from a common myeloid progenitor [22] and circulate for only 1–2 days before migrating into peripheral tissues and differentiating into fully mature, resident macrophages, including liver Kupffer cells and brain microglial cells. During their short circulatory life, monocytes are exposed to cytokines such as M-CSF, which can alter their phenotypic and functional properties [27, 28]. As a result, monocytes can be classified into at least three distinct subsets based on their expression of the functional cell surface receptors CD14 and CD16 (i.e., CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>-</sup>, CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup>, and CD14<sup>dim</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup>) as well as on their capacity of secreting proinflammatory cytokines [21, 29–32]. It is unclear, however, whether these phenotypically distinct monocyte subsets represent cells already precommitted to differentiate into polarized M1 or M2 macrophages or DCs. In this regard, Martinez et al. [28] have suggested that under normal conditions blood monocytes are likely predisposed toward an M2 phenotype, mostly devoted to tissue repair, as a result of their stimulation by relatively high levels of M-CSF present in the plasma (estimated to range from 187 to 7604 pg/ml [27]). A transcriptome analysis supports this hypothesis, showing that M2 polarization involves only minimal alterations of macrophage steady-state mRNA in comparison with M1 polarization [28]. It is unclear, however, if tissue-specific signals are required to maintain the M2 phenotype.

## TISSUE MACROPHAGES

At the tissue level, terminally differentiated macrophages are exposed to and are profoundly affected by tissue-specific immune-modulating cytokines, chemokines, and microbial by-products [22, 24, 33]. As a result, when compared with circulating monocytes, lung alveolar macrophages express higher levels of PRRs and scavenger receptors involved in clearing viruses as well as other microorganisms and environmental particles [22, 33]. Osteoclasts, on the other hand, acquire determinants fundamental for bone remodeling [22, 34, 35]. Macrophages located at sites of pathogen entry, such as the intestine, display high phagocytic and antibacterial activities but produce only low levels of proinflammatory cytokines to prevent unnecessary overstimulation of the immune system as a result of constant exposure to commensal and pathogenic microbes [36–38]. Interestingly, some intestinal macrophages, such as those present in the lamina propria of the gastrointestinal tract, survive for a few weeks before undergoing programmed cell death [22]. Such cells are continually replenished by newly recruited blood monocytes that rapidly differentiate into gut macrophages. Other macrophage populations are characterized by a prolonged half-life, ranging from several months (lung alveolar macrophages) to decades (microglial

cells). These cells may be renewed, at least in part, by local proliferation [22, 39, 40]. In contrast, M1 macrophages recruited to sites of acute inflammation typically have short half-lives and exert potent proinflammatory effects that may cause tissue damage [22].

Although polarized macrophages contribute to the pathogenesis of various diseases, little is known about the molecular mechanisms underlying the acquisition and maintenance of macrophage programming. In mice, SHIP-1 dampens LPS-induced M1 activation in vitro. Alternatively, in vivo, SHIP knockout mice display a profound skewing of peritoneal and alveolar macrophages toward an M2 phenotype [41]. In addition to SHIP and Lyn/Hck, increased STAT5 activity may play an important role in M2 programming [42]. Recent studies show alternative activation may also be regulated by epigenetic mechanisms [43]. Specifically, in mice, IL-4 induces an up-regulation of H3K27 demethylase Jmjd3 (in a STAT6-dependent manner), increasing H3K27 methylation at the promoters of M2 genes (arginase 1, mannose receptor) [43]. Similarly, Jmjd3 is also induced in macrophage cell lines stimulated with LPS, suggesting it may play a common role in both phenotypes [44]. Although not yet investigated in humans, these results suggest that chromatin remodeling may play an important role in polarization responses, as reviewed [45].

## POLARIZATION OF HUMAN MACROPHAGES ALONG M1 AND M2 PATHWAYS

Macrophages undergo activation in response to a broad spectrum of environmental signals. The type, timing, and concentration of these stimuli determine the range of immune responses. As a result of exposure to different tissue environments, macrophage polarization is likely to span a continuum of functional states. One implication of these features is that unlike T cell activation, macrophage polarization is transient and highly reversible [17, 46]. Recent results also suggest that macrophages, like T cells, may require at least two signals to become fully and functionally polarized [47]. The first signal, usually driven by pathogen interactions with PRRs, such as TLR, cytosolic proteins of the nonobese diabetic-like receptor family, or C-type lectins, primes the resting macrophage. PRR activation also increases chemokine production and the recruitment of different immune cells, including NK cells, naïve T lymphocytes, eosinophils, and basophils, which deliver the second signal required for M1 (IFN- $\gamma$ ) or M2a (IL-4) polarization, respectively [47]. For example, early IFN- $\gamma$  and PRR activation induces a first wave of classical macrophage activation that stimulates IL-12 production, a cytokine crucial for the induction of Th1 responses. The resultant Th1 CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells then produce more IFN- $\gamma$ , inducing a long-lasting M1 phenotype and an effective CD8<sup>+</sup> cytotoxic T lymphocyte response [47]. With the exception of LPS, little is known about the impact of past stimulations on future responses. In the case of LPS, it is known that previous stimulations can lead to TLR tolerance [48–50].

By analogy to the Th1/Th2 classification of CD4<sup>+</sup> helper lymphocytes, it has been proposed that mononuclear phago-

cytes can also be polarized along proinflammatory (M1) or alternatively activated, anti-inflammatory (M2) pathways [18, 19, 51–53]. In healthy tissues, particularly mucosal membranes, M2 activation may represent a default phenotype that serves to maintain a balanced microenvironment in anatomical sites under constant microbial assault [17, 28]. For example, macrophages in the lung, placenta, and gastrointestinal tract express high levels of C-type lectins [54, 55] and exhibit a decreased capacity to produce proinflammatory cytokines, thereby limiting tissue damage [36, 38]. In contrast, M1 macrophages express high levels of classical proinflammatory cytokines, including IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-12, IL-23, and TNF- $\alpha$ . Furthermore, they produce effector molecules such as reactive oxygen and nitrogen intermediates, participate in the induction of polarized Th1 responses, and have been associated to resistance to intracellular pathogens such as viruses and to some forms of tumors [19, 52, 53]. M1 cells also express high levels of MHC class I and class II antigens and secrete complement factors that facilitate complement-mediated phagocytosis [19].

Different stimuli can lead to the polarization of macrophages into M2 cells. To reflect these different forms of activation, M2 macrophages have been subdivided further into M2a, M2b, and M2c cells [19]. M2a cells are induced by exposure of macrophages to IL-4 or IL-13, and M2b macrophages are induced by immune complexes, TLR stimulation, or by the IL-1ra. These cells exert immune regulatory functions and drive Th2 responses. Finally, M2c macrophages are generated by stimulation with the immunosuppressive cytokine IL-10 and play a predominant role in suppressing immune responses and in promoting tissue remodeling [19]. M2 macrophages are, therefore, more heterogeneous than M1 cells and depending on their state of activation, participate in a number of diverse activities aimed at suppressing inflammation, enhancing phagocytosis, promoting tissue repair and eliminating of parasites [18, 19, 47].

Although activation is critical for the induction of an effective immune response, inappropriate and sustained activation/polarization of macrophages can lead to tissue damage, immune dysfunction, and disease pathology. For example, M1 responses, important in mediating resistance against acute viral and mycobacterial infections, may also contribute to the induction of autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis [56–59]. Alternatively, M2 polarization, important in controlling helminthic infections, has been linked to the development and persistence of asthma and allergic diseases [60, 61]. Interestingly, TAM, including tyrosine kinase with Ig-like and EGF-like domains 2 (Tie2)-derived macrophages [62, 63], closely resembles M2 macrophages when analyzed for function and transcriptome expression [64, 65]. M2 macrophages produce anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive cytokines such as IL-10 and TGF- $\beta$  that promote tumor growth and progression [64, 65]. Several lines of evidence suggest that pharmacological skewing of TAM from an M2 toward an M1 phenotype may help preserve anti-tumor activity, as reviewed in ref. [64]. One study reported that the combination of CpG plus anti-IL-10R antibody induces a switch in tumor-infiltrating macrophages from an M2 to an M1 pheno-

type, triggering innate responses that lead to a rapid decrease in tumor size [66, 67].

In vitro, MDM are the most commonly used tool to investigate macrophage phenotype and function, particularly in humans. MDM can be induced to differentiate into M1 cells through exposure to proinflammatory stimuli, such as GM-CSF or IFN- $\gamma$ , alone or in combination with TNF- $\alpha$  or LPS, a component of the cell wall of Gram-negative bacteria [19]. In vitro-derived M2-MDM secrete anti-inflammatory molecules, including IL-1ra, IL-10, and TGF- $\beta$ , thereby inhibiting respiratory bursts and the production of IL-1 $\beta$  and IL-8 [68]. Furthermore, M2-MDM express high levels of the scavenger and MRC1, SR-A, hemoglobin scavenger receptor (CD163) Dectin-1, and DC-SIGN [18, 47] (Table 1).

As only meager information is currently available for M2b and M2c cells under different pathological conditions, we will focus on the role of M1 and M2a (IL-4/IL-13-induced) macrophage polarization in HIV and associated coinfections.

## MACROPHAGE POLARIZATION AND HIV-1 INFECTION

A large number of studies have investigated the effects of individual cytokines and bacterial products on macrophage susceptibility to HIV-1 and other viruses and on the capacity of these cells to support productive or latent infection, as reviewed in refs. [69–71]. These studies have used different model systems and cell lines [72], as well as different viral strains and infection protocols. A consistent finding emanating from these investigations is that the ultimate outcome of host-viral interactions depends frequently on the timing of infection relative to the timing of the stimulus (before, simultaneously, or after) and on the stage of macrophage differentiation (precursor cells, as exemplified by cell lines, monocytes vs. macrophages). To date, only a few studies have examined thoroughly the consequences of M1 versus M2 polarization on viral infections [17, 73–75].

Although important in driving immune responses, increased secretion of inflammatory cytokines as a consequence of viral infection can result in severe tissue damage. Alveolar macrophages, for example, produce large amounts of inflammatory cytokines during infection with respiratory viruses such as human metapneumovirus and respiratory syncytial virus [76, 77]. Cytokines produced by macrophages infected with influenza A virus mediate the typical constitutional and inflammatory effects observed with this disease [78]. Rhinovirus infections increase the level of TNF- $\alpha$  and IL-8 secretion by lung alveolar macrophages [79, 80]. Interestingly, macrophages exposed previously to rhinoviruses show a reduced capacity to mount an antibacterial response, suggesting that these viruses may facilitate secondary infections indirectly [81]. An analytical analysis of viral infection of MP is beyond the scope of the present paper. However, excellent reviews about the subjects are readily available [82–84].

Cells of the MP lineage are the targets of several retroviruses belonging to the lentiviral subfamily and depending on their state of differentiation and activation, can serve as reservoirs of latent or productive infection. Most lentiviruses, with the ex-

**TABLE 1. Differentially Expressed Markers of Human Macrophage Polarization**

M1	M2a
<b>Receptors</b>	
CCR7	DC-SIGN
IL-1R1	DCIR
IL-2ra	MRC1
IL-15ra	CD36
IL-7R	DECTIN 1
CD80	DCL-1
CD86	SR-A
MHC class II	CD163
TLR2	CXCR1
TLR4	CXCR2
<b>Chemokines</b>	
CXCL8	CCL13
CXCL9	CCL14
CXCL10	CCL17
CXCL11	CCL18
CXCL16	CCL20
CCL2	CCL22
CCL3	CCL23
CCL4	CCL24
CCL5	
<b>Cytokines</b>	
TNF- $\alpha$	IL-10
IL12	IL-1ra
TRAIL	
IL-6	
<b>Other factors</b>	
Homeobox expressed in ES cells 1	Growth arrest-specific 7
IFN regulatory factor 1 (IRF1)	Early growth response 2
Activation transcription factor 3	v-MAF
IRF7 [28]	Cathepsin C
Indoleamine-pyrrole 2,3 dioxygenase	Hexosaminidase
Proteasome activator subunit 2	Lipase A cholesterol esterase
Hydroxysteroid (11- $\beta$ ) dehydrogenase	Adenosine kinase
2'-5'-oligoadenylate synthase-like	Ceramide kinase
Proteasome subunit $\beta$ type 9	Heparan sulfate 3-O-sulfotransferase
Proteasome subunit $\alpha$ type 2	Leukotriene A4 hydrolase

DCIR, DC immunoreceptor; DCL-1, DC ligand 1; ES, embryonic stem; v-MAF, viral macrophage-activating factor.

ception of HIV-1, infect cells of MP lineage preferentially or exclusively. However, the level of viral replication and the outcome of these infections are related intimately to the host im-

mune response and the type of infection. During HIV-1 infection, circulating monocytes and tissue macrophages contribute to the initial seeding and establishment of viral reservoirs [85–87] playing a pivotal role in the infection of certain organs, such as the brain, as reviewed in refs. [88–90]. Although human macrophages can support high levels of HIV-1 replication, particularly in late-stage HIV disease, i.e., AIDS, when CD4 cells are depleted severely and in the context of opportunistic infections [91], they also serve as reservoirs of latent or poorly replicative infection [92–94]. It should be underscored that HIV-1 latency and the persistence of viral reservoirs (eventually harboring antiretroviral-resistant viruses) are the major obstacles nowadays preventing the eradication of this infection [93, 95]. MP and memory CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells latently infected with HIV-1 are not recognized efficiently by the host immune system and can persist for prolonged periods in the face of the administration of antiretroviral therapy [96, 97].

At the functional level, monocytes as well as lung alveolar macrophages isolated from HIV-infected individuals have all shown reduced phagocytic activity [98, 99] in association with decreased phagosome-lysosome fusion and decreased intracellular killing of opportunistic pathogens [100, 101]. Monocytes isolated from patients with AIDS also have defective migratory responses [102, 103], a phenotype that has been linked to a down-regulation of receptors for chemotactic ligands (i.e., C5a and bacterial tripeptides, such as fMLP) [104, 105]. These functional defects, in turn, result in the inefficient control of opportunistic pathogens and further enhancement of activation and disease pathogenesis. Chronic HIV-1-associated immune activation also leads to altered secretion of pro- and anti-inflammatory cytokines and chemokines and ultimately, to dysregulation of the host immune system and the killing of bystander CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells. In addition, HIV-infected macrophages have been implicated in the elimination of effector CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells through interactions between TNF bound to the surface of macrophages and TNFR<sub>II</sub> expressed on CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells [106].

The transmission and pathogenesis of HIV-1 are linked intimately to the activation status of the immune system [107–109]. Prolonged immune activation during chronic infection provides an environment that drives viral replication and disease progression, even in the face of combination antiretroviral therapy [3]. Indeed, the state of immune activation is a stronger predictor of disease progression in patients with advanced HIV-1 disease than the levels of plasma viremia [107].

Recent evidence suggests that increased translocation of bacteria and bacterial byproducts from the gastrointestinal tract, a consequence of HIV-1-induced damage to the gut during acute infection, may drive systemic immune activation and progression to AIDS [110–112]. Given that cells of the MP lineage are the primary targets of LPS-induced activation and that they are key regulators of inflammatory and anti-inflammatory responses, it is important to understand the relationships among immune activation, macrophage polarization, and HIV-1 disease. In this regard, the factors driving macrophage polarization in HIV-1 pathogenesis are complex. Macrophages respond not only to HIV-1 but also to a spectrum of opportunistic coinfections and can be activated sequentially (or simul-

taneously) by different bacterial, fungal, and viral products. The timing and order of these synergistic or competing stimulations will determine the dominant polarization profile.

In vitro, HIV-1 drives macrophages toward an M1-like phenotype [73, 113]. However, unlike LPS, HIV-1-related polarization does not involve a TLR-dependent pathway and does not result in the production of TNF, IL-1 $\beta$ , or IL-6. Instead, HIV-1-primed MDM become hyper-responsive to TLR agonists such as LPS, polyinosinic:polycytidylic acid, and CL097 (TLR7/8 agonist), resulting in a three- to fivefold increase in cytokine production compared with TLR agonists alone [73]. Viral replication in MDM also correlates with increased production of M1 chemokines, such as CCL3, CCL4—up-regulated directly by the viral gene Nef [114]—and CCL5 and a down-regulation of the M2 determinants, such as the scavenger receptor CD163, the mannose receptor CD206, IL-10, and CCL18 [113]. Furthermore, a transcriptional profiling study suggests that these HIV-1-associated alterations may involve the transient expression of genes that regulate the cell cycle, calcium fluxes, apoptosis, and mitogen-activated kinase-dependent pathways [73] (Table 2).

The capacity of macrophages to support HIV-1 infection is dependent on the local tissue environment. Alveolar and vaginal macrophages are susceptible to HIV-1, whereas intestinal macrophages are typically resistant [85, 115]. Intestinal resistance is the result of high levels of IL-10 and TGF- $\beta$ . These cytokines down-regulate the expression of coreceptors required for HIV-1 entry (namely, CCR5 and CXCR4), as well as innate response receptors and costimulatory molecules [115–117]. In vitro, we observed that short-term (18 h) exposure of human MDM to M1 (IFN- $\gamma$  plus TNF- $\alpha$ ) or M2a (IL-4) cytokines prior to infection with HIV-1 resulted in a decreased capacity to support productive HIV-1 infection in comparison with unpolarized MDM [17]. These restrictions occurred at

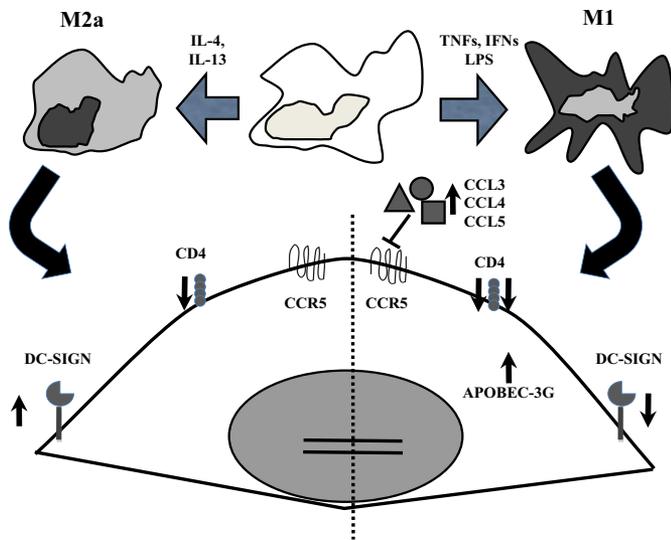
different levels of the viral life cycle (i.e., at an early, preintegration step in the case of M1-MDM and at a post-transcriptional/post-translational step in M2a-MDM). M1 restriction was associated with a more profound down-regulation of CD4 and a greater suppression of HIV-1 replication compared with M2-MDM. M1 polarization also resulted in increased secretion of CCR5-binding chemokines (CCL3, CCL4, and CCL5) and a significant decrease in the synthesis of HIV-1 DNA [17]. M2a polarization, on the other hand, was associated with a more prolonged, although less profound suppression of infection. In contrast to M1 polarization, there was no detectable impairment of HIV-1 DNA synthesis in M2a cells [17]. Other studies have reported that APOBEC-3G mRNA levels are increased in MDM stimulated with IFN- $\alpha$  and to a lesser extent, IFN- $\gamma$  [118] (Table 2 and Fig. 1).

It is still unclear whether macrophage polarization is reversible and whether individual tissue macrophages can switch from an M1 to an M2 activation state as a consequence or a cause of disease progression or whether such a switch requires the differentiation and polarization of newly recruited blood monocytes [20, 46]. We have reported recently that M1- and M2a-MDM reverted to a prepolarization phenotype 3–7 days after removal of the inductive stimulus, although some molecules such as CXCL10 (M1) and CCL22 (M2a) remained elevated after 7 days of culture in the absence of the polarizing cytokines [17]. We also described a contra-modulatory effect of polarization on the secretion of cytokines and chemokines associated with the opposite phenotype—a process that typically peaked 3 days after the initial stimulation. For most phenotypic determinants, reversion to a prepolarization state was associated with a renewed capacity to support productive HIV-1 infection. M1 cells were able to support HIV-1 replication 3 days after removal of the polarizing cytokines. In contrast, M2a cells recovered their ability to produce virus at con-

**Table 2. Factors Related to HIV-1 Infection Differentially Expressed in Polarized Human MDM**

	M1		M2a		Role in HIV-1 pathogenesis
	mRNA	Protein	mRNA	Protein	
<b>Cytokines, chemokines</b>					
IL-12	↑↑↑	N.D.	↑	N.D.	↓ HIV-1 replication
IL-10	n.a.	↑	n.a.	–	↓ HIV-1 replication
TNF- $\alpha$	↑↑↑↑	n.a.	↑↑	n.a.	↑ HIV-1 replication
IL-6	↑↑↑↑	↑	↑↑	–	↑ HIV-1 replication
IL-8	n.a.	↑	n.a.	–	↑ HIV-1 replication
CCL2	n.a.	↑	n.a.	↓	↑ HIV-1 replication; ↓ virion release
CCL3	n.a.	↑↑	↑	↑	CCR5 ligand; ↓ HIV-1 replication
CCL4	n.a.	↑	n.a.	–	CCR5 ligand; ↓ HIV-1 replication
CCL5	↑↑↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	N.D.	CCR5 ligand; ↓ HIV-1 replication
CXCL10	↑↑↑↑	↑↑↑↑	↑↑	–	↑ HIV-1 replication
CCL22	n.a.	–	n.a.	↑	↓ HIV-1 replication
<b>Membrane receptors</b>					
CD4	n.a.	↓	n.a.	↓	Primary HIV entry receptor
CCRS	n.a.	–	n.a.	–	HIV entry coreceptor
DC-SIGN	↑↑	↓	↑↑↑↑	↑	HIV attachment and transfer receptor

↓, 0 to 25-Fold decrease; –, no change; ↑, 0 to 25-fold increase; ↑↑, 25 to 200-fold increase; ↑↑↑, 200 to 500-fold increase; ↑↑↑↑, >500-fold increase; N.D., not detectable; n.a., not available.



**Figure 1. Impact of human MDM polarization on HIV-1 infection and replication.** M1- and M2a-polarized MDM have shown decreased levels of CCR5-dependent HIV-1 replication in comparison with unpolarized cells [17]. However, this ultimate effect is likely a result of differential and multifactorial effects triggered by cell polarization, including up-regulation of CCR5-binding chemokines, APOBEC-3G, and profound down-regulation of CD4 in M1- but not M2-MDM [17]. A divergent regulation of DC-SIGN in M1- versus M2-MDM might differentially contribute to spreading of bound HIV-1 to T lymphocytes and other target cells.

control levels 7 days after polarization [17]. These findings are in agreement with a recent study reporting that macrophages retain the capacity to switch from one activation state to another based on the expression of CD163 and CD206 and the secretion of CCL3 and CCL18 [20]. Collectively, these findings suggest that functional polarization may be an important regulator of susceptibility to HIV-1 infection and efficiency of viral replication in human macrophages. The transient and reversible nature of polarization may represent a mechanism through which infected tissue macrophages, typically resistant to viral-induced cytopathic effects [91, 119, 120], can cycle between a state of inefficient versus productive viral expression. An improved understanding of these events may lead to new insights for suppressing virus replication or alternatively, for unleashing HIV-1 production in latently and poorly, productively infected cells, rendering them more visible to immune recognition in the perspective of viral eradication [121–123].

An important determinant discriminating between M1 and M2 polarization is the hemoglobin scavenger receptor, CD163. This receptor is expressed at high levels on M2 and at low levels on M1 cells [17] and has proven particularly useful for the identification and characterization of perivascular macrophages in the brain tissue of humans, monkeys, and mice [124]. Several studies have reported significant accumulations of CD163 within the perivascular cuff and nodular lesions of the CNS of humans and nonhuman primates with HIV-1 and SIV encephalitis [124, 125], suggesting that alternatively activated M2 macrophages may contribute to the pathology and

immune dysfunction observed in these disorders [126]. Another recent study observed an increased accumulation of CD163<sup>+</sup> macrophages in uninflamed hearts from SIV-infected animals compared with hearts from SIV-infected animals with myocarditis or uninfected controls [127]. Furthermore, in this study, CD163 expression was correlated positively with the number of SIV-infected cells, suggesting that the CD163 population of macrophages was associated with decreased inflammatory infiltration and an increased myocardial viral burden [127].

A subset of proinflammatory monocytes expressing high levels of CD16 (the FcR $\gamma$ III) is markedly up-regulated in HIV-1<sup>+</sup> patients, especially in patients with advanced disease [128, 129]. In vitro and in vivo CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup> monocytes are more susceptible to HIV-1 infection than CD16-negative cells [130, 131], and they are an important source of the proinflammatory cytokine TNF- $\alpha$  [132]. Furthermore, CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup> MDM are more efficient at activating resting T cells, and in vitro conjugates formed between CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup> MDM and T cells are major sites of virus production [133, 134]. CD16<sup>+</sup>CD163<sup>+</sup> monocytes, a potential precursor of alternatively activated populations, have also been described as expanded during HIV-1 infection [135]. Unlike CD16<sup>+</sup>CD163<sup>-</sup> cells, the frequency of CD16<sup>+</sup>CD163<sup>+</sup> monocytes is positively correlated with HIV-1 viremia and negatively with peripheral CD4<sup>+</sup> T cell counts (in patients with CD4, <450 cells/ $\mu$ l), reinforcing the hypothesis that a switch to Th2 immune responses and toward an M2-like phenotype is associated with disease progression [135].

Mucosal macrophages are located at the interface with the external environment, where they serve as one of the first lines of defense against microorganisms that have breached the epithelial barrier [37, 38, 115]. Yet, several viruses are able to gain entry and exploit these cells for purposes of virus transmission and dissemination, often by exploiting C-type lectins [136–139]. In this regard, M2-MDM express high levels of several C-type lectins, including DC-SIGN [18, 47]. Studies in our laboratory have demonstrated that DC-SIGN is strongly up-regulated on the surface of M2a-MDM and that these DC-SIGN-expressing MDM can transfer CXCR4-dependent HIV-1<sub>IIB</sub> efficiently (not efficiently replicating in polarized and unpolarized MDM) to IL-2 PBMC (E. Cassol et al., submitted; Fig. 1). Our findings are consistent with an independent study, demonstrating that an IL-4-enriched environment is associated with increased capture, integration, production, and transfer of CCR5-dependent HIV-1 by MDM [140]. Collectively, these observations suggest that similar to DC [141–143], DC-SIGN<sup>+</sup> M2a macrophages may play a pivotal role in HIV-1 transmission. However, in contrast to DC-SIGN<sup>+</sup> DC that bind and transport HIV-1 to lymphatic tissues for presentation to T cells [55], resident tissue macrophages are nonmigratory cells that are likely to play an important role in the pathogenesis of mucosal infection and in sexual transmission.

### IMPACT OF MICROBIAL COINFECTIONS ON MACROPHAGE POLARIZATION

In Africa and other areas of the developing world, Mtb [144, 145] and parasitic infections [146, 147] contribute to the mod-

ulation of macrophage activation in persons coinfecting with HIV-1. As with most microbes, acute Mtb infection drives these cells toward an M1 phenotype [148, 149]. Experimentally, macrophages activated by Mtb secrete high levels of TNF- $\alpha$ , IL-6, IL-12, IL-1 $\beta$ , CCL2, CCL5, and CXCL18 [148]. In the absence of effective therapy, prolonged secretion of these molecules in vivo can result in a cytokine storm similar to that observed in patients with systemic inflammatory response syndrome (sepsis) and multiple organ failure [150]. As observed in other bacterial infections such as chronic brucellosis, chronic Mtb infection is associated with a switch from an M1 toward an M2 phenotype [148]. These alternatively activated macrophages are a major source of IL-10 and can promote Mtb recrudescence without activating and inducing anti-Mtb T cell immunity [151–153]. In contrast to Mtb and HIV-1, helminths are extremely efficient at triggering M2 activation in tissue macrophages [154–156]. In patients coinfecting with HIV-1, a helminth-induced switch toward an M2 response can accelerate disease progression [157, 158]. Paradoxically, M2 responses, which are required for wound healing and worm expulsion, also increase HIV-1 replication [159–161]. Unexpectedly, treatment of intestinal helminths in African populations is not associated with a reduction in HIV-1 viremia (i.e., the number of copies of HIV RNA measured in 1 ml plasma, with a single virion containing two copies of genomic RNA on average) [162].

## CONCLUSIONS

The concept of immune cell polarization, including the polarization of tissue macrophages, provides a valuable but somewhat simplistic framework for unraveling the complexity of host-viral interactions. Continued investigation of this complex network of inter-related interactions may lead to new insights for controlling HIV-1, as well as other microbial diseases, causing a great burden on human health in the underdeveloped and industrialized world.

## AUTHORSHIP

All authors contributed equally to the writing of this review.

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