

DISSERTATION

Reg3 β restricts the spatiotemporal accumulation of
neutrophil granulocytes within the ischemic heart

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**Reg3 β restricts the spatiotemporal accumulation of neutrophil granulocytes
within the ischemic heart**

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Titel englisch:

Reg3 β restricts the spatiotemporal accumulation of neutrophil granulocytes within the ischemic heart

Titel deutsch:

Reg3 β schränkt die räumliche und zeitliche Anreicherung von neutrophilen Granulozyten im ischämischen Herz ein

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1 Abstract

The onset of myocardial infarction (MI) promptly activates the innate immune system to initiate endogenous repair processes. However, the initially beneficial effects of the inflammatory response can rapidly become injurious for the heart and promote infarct expansion. Neutrophils are the first immune cells that infiltrate the infarcted heart. They clear the injured area from necrotic cardiomyocytes and matrix debris by phagocytosis and the release of degrading enzymes, promoting cardiac remodeling. If not tightly regulated in a spatiotemporal manner, an excessive and prolonged immune response of neutrophils results in an impaired remodeling process. Hence, a timely resolved clearance of neutrophils is fundamental for the resolution of inflammation and wound healing.

This project reveals a novel mechanism for the removal of cardiac neutrophils from the site of inflammation by the cardiomyocyte-derived C-type lectin Reg3 β after the onset of experimental MI. Reg3 β co-localized and directly bound to a subpopulation of inflammatory active cardiac neutrophils inducing an apoptotic-like cell death. In this context, loss of Reg3 β led to an increased accumulation of neutrophils in the remote zone of the infarcted heart at day 4 post-MI, which is presumably associated with the destabilization the left ventricular wall causing cardiac rupture. Reg3 β -mediated cell death of inflammatory active neutrophils was confirmed by LDH release, intracellular ATP decrease and incorporation of Cytotox Green within the first hour of stimulation in vitro. Morphological changes were characterized by cytoplasmic vacuolization and degradation of intracellular organelles without the formation of apoptotic bodies. Resting or unprimed neutrophils from the bone marrow, blood and spleen were not responsive to Reg3 β . Reg3 β binding on primary neutrophils was dependent on the recognition of the carbohydrate residues N-Acetylgalactosamin, N-acetylglucosamine and mannose on the cell surface. Consequently, Reg3 β was internalized by clathrin-mediated endocytosis and transported to azurophilic granules or rather primary lysosomes presumably via the endolysosomal pathway. Concurrently with Reg3 β engulfment, intracellular ROS production rapidly increased and primary lysosomes were destabilized resulting in cytosolic cathepsin release and lysosomal-dependent cell death. Finally, Reg3 β binding and induction of cell death facilitated efferocytosis of neutrophils by macrophages in vivo.

In summary, Reg3 β mediates a ROS-dependent lysosomal cell death in neutrophils, representing a novel clearing mechanism of inflammatory active neutrophils from the site of cardiac damage after the onset of MI contributing to the resolution of inflammation.

2 Zusammenfassung

Unmittelbar nach einem Herzinfarkt wird das angeborene Immunsystem, welches endogene Reparaturprozesse einleitet, aktiviert. Die zu Beginn förderlichen Auswirkungen der inflammatorischen Reaktion können jedoch bald schädlich für das Herz werden und den Infarktbereich vergrößern. Neutrophile Granulozyten wandern als erste Immunzellen in das infarzierte Herz ein. Durch Phagozytose und Freisetzung von degradierenden Enzymen entfernen sie nekrotische Kardiomyozyten und Matrixtrümmer und begünstigen so das kardiale Remodeling. Eine exzessive und anhaltende Immunantwort von neutrophilen Granulozyten kann jedoch zu einem beeinträchtigten Remodeling führen. Daher ist eine räumlich und zeitlich regulierte Entfernung von neutrophilen Granulozyten von grundlegender Bedeutung für ein Abklingen der Inflammation und Förderung von Wundheilung.

Diese Arbeit beschreibt einen neuen Mechanismus zur Entfernung kardialer neutrophiler Granulozyten vom Entzündungsort des infarzierten Herzens durch das aus Kardiomyozyten stammende C-Typ Lektin Reg3 β . Es konnte gezeigt werden, dass Reg3 β mit einer Subpopulation inflammatorisch aktiver kardialer neutrophiler Granulozyten kolokalisiert und direkt an diese bindet, was zu einem apoptotischen Zelltod führte. In diesem Zusammenhang verursachte der Verlust von Reg3 β eine erhöhte Akkumulation von neutrophilen Granulozyten im nicht-infarzierten Bereich 4 Tage nach experimentellem Herzinfarkt, was vermutlich eine Destabilisierung der linksventrikulären Wand und eine Herzruptur zur Folge hatte. Der durch Reg3 β -vermittelte Zelltod der neutrophilen Granulozyten wurde durch LDH-Freisetzung, intrazelluläre ATP-Abnahme und der Aufnahme von Cytotox Green innerhalb der ersten Stunde nach Stimulation *in vitro* bestätigt. Morphologische Veränderungen waren gekennzeichnet durch Vakuolenbildung im Zytoplasma und Degradierung intrazellulärer Organellen ohne die Ausbildung von Apoptoskörperchen. Ruhende oder inflammatorisch inaktive neutrophile Granulozyten aus dem Knochenmark, Blut und Milz waren nicht responsiv auf Reg3 β . Die Reg3 β -Bindung an kultivierte neutrophile Granulozyten aus der Maus erfolgte über Erkennung der Kohlenhydratreste N-acetylgalactosamine, N-Acetylglucosamin und Mannose auf der Zelloberfläche. Daraufhin wurde Reg3 β durch Clathrin-vermittelte Endozytose internalisiert und vermutlich über den endolysosomalen Weg zu azurophilen Granula bzw. primären Lysosomen transportiert. Zeitgleich mit der Aufnahme von Reg3 β stieg die intrazelluläre ROS-Produktion rasch an und die primären Lysosomen wurden destabilisiert, was eine Freisetzung von Cathepsin ins Zytosol zur Folge hatte und somit einen lysosomalen Zelltod auslöste. Außerdem förderte Reg3 β durch die Induktion des Zelltods die Efferozytose von neutrophilen Granulozyten durch Makrophagen *in vivo*.

Zusammengefasst stellt die Induktion des ROS-abhängigen lysosomalen Zelltodes durch Reg3 β einen neuen Mechanismus zur Entfernung inflammatorisch aktiver neutrophiler Granulozyten aus dem geschädigten Herzen nach Infarkt dar.

3 Introduction

3.1 The neutrophil

3.1.1 Biological characteristics

The family of granulocytes, also known as polymorphonuclear (PMN) leukocytes, comprises several cell types including neutrophils, basophils and eosinophils, which are characterized by a distinctive morphological feature, the cytoplasmic granules ([Dancey, Deubelbeiss, Harker, & Finch, 1976](#)). Of them, neutrophils represent the most abundant cell type with about 50-70 % of circulating leukocytes under homeostatic conditions ([Bartneck & Wang, 2019](#)). Mature neutrophils differentiate from hematopoietic stem cells in the bone marrow with a turnover rate of 10^{11} cells per day ([Cannistra & Griffin, 1988](#)). In order to retain the cells within the bone marrow and form a neutrophil reservoir, the bone marrow stromal cell-derived factor 1 (SDF-1) interacts with its major receptor C-X-C chemokine receptor type 4 (CXCR4) on neutrophils ([Q. Ma, Jones, & Springer, 1999](#)). The granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF) disrupts the SDF-1/CXCR4 axis and initiates neutrophil mobilization into the blood stream. Circulating neutrophils are relatively short lived cells with a life span of about 5 days in humans and 18 hours in mice ([Pillay et al., 2010](#)). Once they become senescent or aged cells, they have been shown to upregulate CXCR4 and migrate back to the bone marrow where the cells undergo apoptosis and are phagocytosed by stromal macrophages ([Furze & Rankin, 2008](#)). This in turn stimulates the production of G-CSF creating a positive feedback loop to maintain neutrophils homeostasis ([Martin et al., 2003](#); [Rankin, 2010](#)). Hence, CXCR4 elicits a dual role in neutrophil homeostasis by serving as retention signal for neutrophils in the bone marrow and homing signal back to the bone marrow for aged cells from the circulation. Apart from the bone marrow, neutrophil clearance from the circulation also occurs in the liver ([Hong et al., 2012](#)) and spleen ([Shi, Gilbert, Kokubo, & Ohashi, 2001](#)).

Fully differentiated neutrophils possess four types of granules that are sequentially formed during granulopoiesis in the bone marrow ([Borregaard & Cowland, 1997](#); [Borregaard, Sehested, Nielsen, Sengelov, & Kjeldsen, 1995](#)) and contain microbicidal proteins and proteolytic enzymes. Primary or azurophilic granules enclose myeloperoxidase (MPO), serine proteases, defensins and acidic hydrolases and are considered as primary lysosomes or lysosome-related organelles ([Bainton, 1999](#); [Dell'Angelica, Mullins, Caplan, & Bonifacino, 2000](#)). Secondary or specific granules are smaller than azurophilic granules and contain lactoferrin, neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin (NGAL) and cathelicidin ([Yonggang Ma et al., 2016](#)). The third type, gelatinase granules, are the smallest granules and contain several matrix

metalloproteinases ([Faurschou & Borregaard, 2003](#)). Finally, secretory vesicles function as storage organelles for membrane proteins, e.g. integrins and selectins.

3.1.2 Neutrophils under inflammatory conditions

Tissue resident immune cells including macrophages and mast cells function as sentinels for tissue injury or pathogens. Once they come in contact with danger-associated molecular pattern (DAMPs) or pathogen-associated molecular pattern (PAMPs), the resident cells get activated and release pro-inflammatory cytokines to activate endothelial cells and recruit neutrophils and monocytes from the circulation ([Kono, Karmarkar, Iwakura, & Rock, 2010](#); [McDonald et al., 2010](#); [Miller et al., 2006](#)). Of them, neutrophils are the first immune cells that infiltrate the site of inflammation and represent key players during the early immune response ([Kolaczowska & Kubes, 2013](#)).

The initial exposure to inflammatory mediators such as DAMPs, PAMPs, chemokine (C-X-C motif) ligand 8 (CXCL8), lipopolysaccharide (LPS) or granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) augments the responsiveness of neutrophils for activating stimuli without gene transcription or translation, a process called priming ([Doerfler, Danner, Shelhamer, & Parrillo, 1989](#)). Priming allows a rapid and full activation of neutrophils transforming the cells from senescent circulating to effector cells ([Borregaard et al., 1995](#)) with an increased life span to ensure an efficient immune response ([Colotta, Re, Polentarutti, Sozzani, & Mantovani, 1992](#)). Priming also stimulates neutrophil degranulation that is the mobilization of cytoplasmic granules to the plasma membrane and subsequent release of their content. Gelatinase and specific granules are the first granules to be exocytosed followed by azurophilic granules ([Sengeløv, Kjeldsen, & Borregaard, 1993](#)). Secretory vesicles, in contrast, incorporate into the plasma membrane resulting in the expression of integrins and selectins on the cell surface essential for chemotaxis to the site of inflammation ([Borregaard, Kjeldsen, Løllike, & Sengeløv, 1993](#); [Borregaard, Miller, & Springer, 1987](#)). Neutrophil recruitment and transmigration requires adhesive interaction with the activated endothelial cells and involves several molecular steps ([N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012](#)) (Figure 1). The first step of capturing neutrophils from the blood stream is predominantly mediated by selectins ([Buscher et al., 2010](#)) followed by firm adhesion and crawling through the interaction of integrins and adhesion molecules ([Phillipson et al., 2006](#)). Eventually, cell polarization and deformability facilitate infiltration to the site of injury, which is achieved via inter- or paracellular transendothelial migration ([Lou, Alcaide, Luscinskas, & Muller, 2007](#); [Wegmann et al., 2006](#)). By continuous release of inflammatory mediators such as leukotriene B4 (LTB4) and CXCL8, the neutrophil recruitment and immune response is amplified and maintained ([Lämmermann et al., 2013](#)).

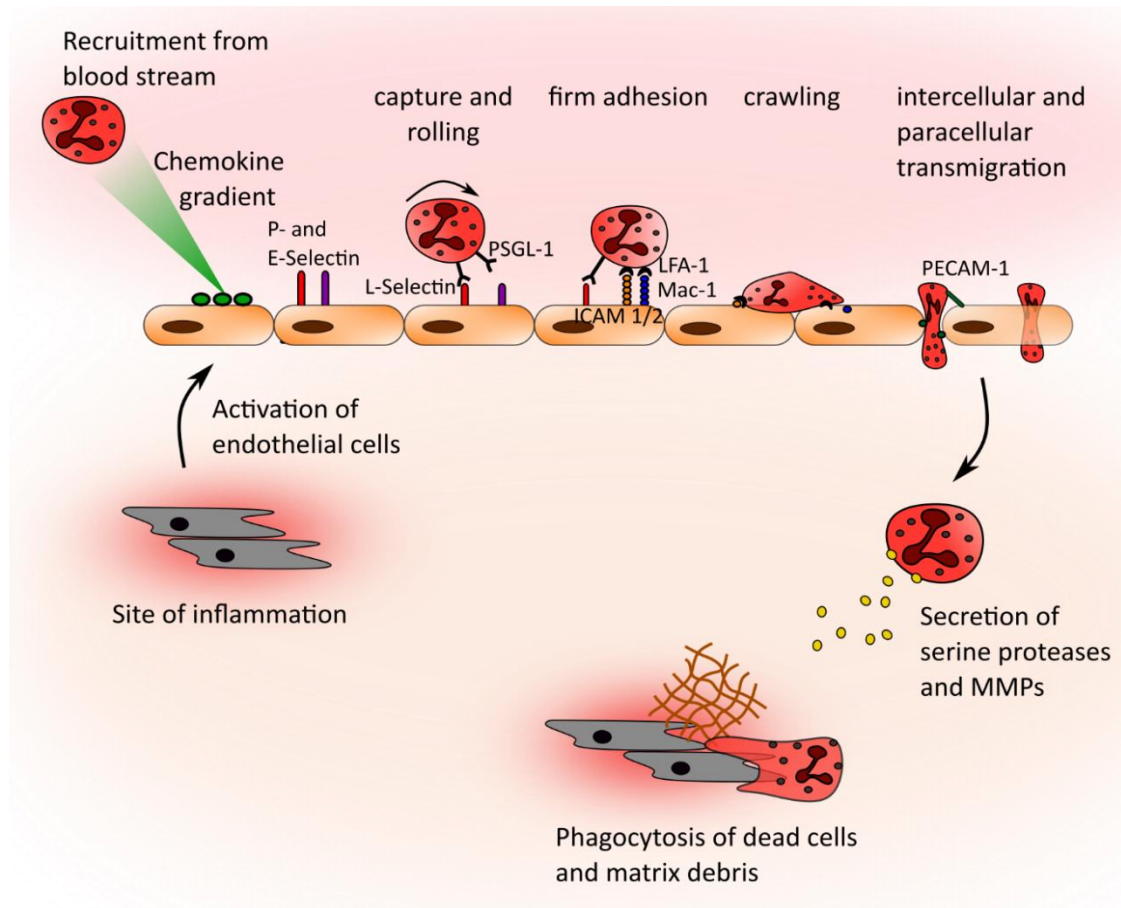


Figure 1: Neutrophil recruitment at the site of sterile injury

Transmigration of neutrophils is carried out by a series of sequential steps. Initially, the release of DAMPs by necrotic cells and pro-inflammatory cytokines by resident immune cells initiates the activation of endothelial cells in the heart. Activated endothelial cells bind chemokines on glycosaminoglycans on their cell surface generating a chemokine gradient to attract neutrophils from the circulation (Kumar et al., 1997). Additionally, endothelial cells upregulate the expression of P- and E-selectins to capture neutrophils onto their cell surface (Butcher, 1991; Lasky, 1992; McEver, Moore, & Cummings, 1995). These selectins bind to P-selectin ligand 1 (PSGL-1) and L-selectin which are expressed by most leukocytes, including neutrophils (Buscher et al., 2010). Rolling motion of the cells emerges from breaking old and forming new bonds of selectins with their ligands (Alon, Hammer, & Springer, 1995; Yago, Zarnitsyna, Klopocki, McEver, & Zhu, 2007). Firm adhesion and crawling on activated endothelial cells is executed by the β -integrins LFA-1 and Mac-1 expressed by neutrophils and their ligands, intercellular adhesion molecule (ICAM) -1 and -2 present on activated endothelial cells (Phillipson et al., 2006). Next, neutrophils start to transmigrate either directly through endothelial cells (intercellular) or through the junctions of endothelial cells (paracellular). The latter is mediated by integrins, adhesion molecules platelet/endothelial cell adhesion molecule 1 (PECAM-1), CD99, and the endothelial cell-selective adhesion molecule (ESAM) (Lou et al., 2007; Wegmann et al., 2006). After transmigration into the inflamed tissue, neutrophils start to secrete degrading enzymes to digest extracellular matrix components and phagocytose necrotic cells (Dehn & Thorp, 2018; Esmann et al., 2010). (Adapted from (Yuan, Shen, Rigor, & Wu, 2012))

Both, under infectious and sterile inflammation, primed and activated neutrophils exhibit four key pro-inflammatory functions. First, increased degranulation and associated release of antimicrobial peptides and serine proteases (Guthrie, McPhail, Henson, & Johnston, 1984) to

digest extracellular matrix components or attack microorganisms. Second, phagocytosis of necrotic cells or microbes to clear the inflamed tissue (Sørensen et al., 2001) and third, enhanced reactive oxygen species (ROS) generation by phosphorylation of cytosolic NADPH oxidase 2 (NOX2) components (Dewas, Dang, Gougerot-Pocidallo, & El-Benna, 2003). Recently, a fourth defense mechanism of neutrophils was identified, called neutrophil extracellular traps or NETs (Brinkmann et al., 2004). NETs are extracellular complexes of chromosomal DNA, citrullinated histones and granule proteins such as MPO or neutrophil elastase (NE), released by neutrophils to trap and kill invading microorganism. Nowadays, NETs are also known to be involved in several non-infectious diseases, as post-injury sterile inflammation and chronic sterile inflammation (Eszter, Gabrielle, & Zsolt, 2017) (Figure 2).

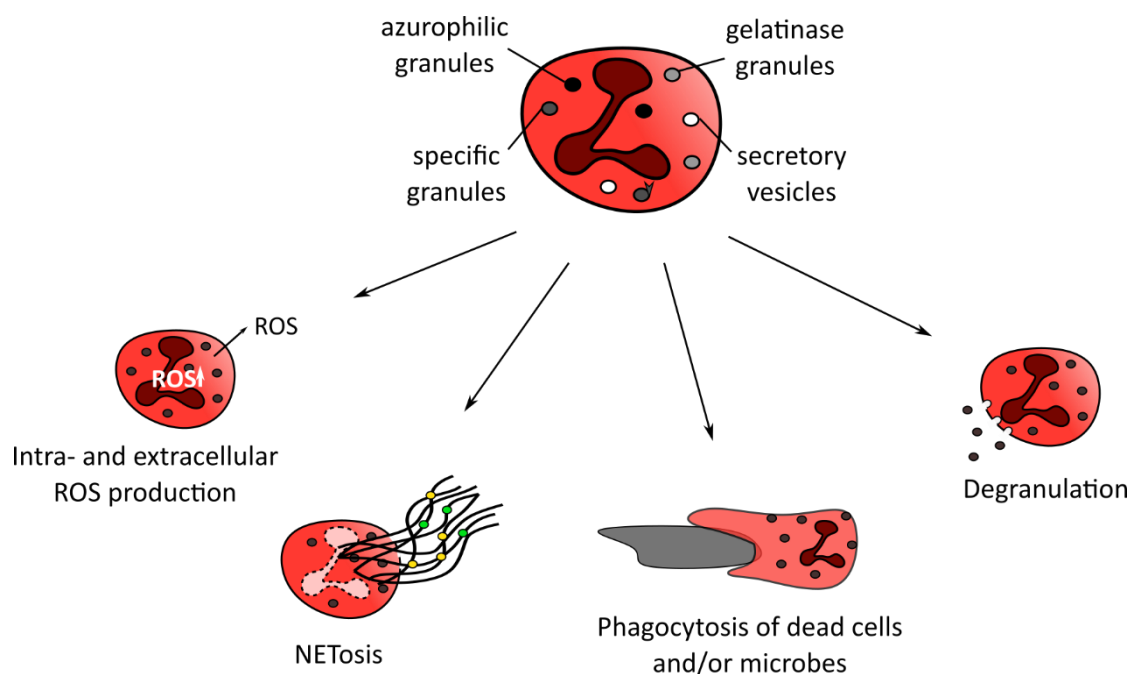


Figure 2: Effector functions of activated neutrophils at the site of inflammation

The main effector functions of primed and activated neutrophils comprise degranulation, phagocytosis, ROS production and the recently added NETosis. Degranulation or exocytosis of granules results in the release of proteolytic enzymes and bactericidal peptides (Guthrie et al., 1984). Phagocytosis of dead cells clears the inflamed tissue and paves the way for healing, whereas removal of pathogens limits tissue injury (Sørensen et al., 2001). NOX2-derived ROS generation at the plasma membrane supports the clearance of bacteria at the site of infection (Dewas et al., 2003) while intracellular ROS generation into phagolysosome lumen ensures the elimination of phagocytosed microbes (Rothe, Oser, & Valet, 1988). The term NETosis is referred to the release of net-like DNA structures armed with neutrophilic granule proteins as MPO and NE to trap and kill bacteria in the tissue (Brinkmann et al., 2004). Two types of NETosis have been described. The suicidal form involves nuclear decondensation, disruption of the membrane and subsequent release of DNA. During the vital NETosis, the nucleus becomes decondensed but the membrane stays intact upon NET release (de Buhr & Köckritz-Blickwede, 2016). (Adapted from (LeBlanc, 2020))

In addition to generating extra- and intracellular ROS, the phagocyte NADPH oxidase NOX2 is known to fulfill diverse functions in neutrophil activity, depending on its cellular location. The enzyme complex consists of several proteins (Figure 3). In resting cells, the heterodimer cytochrome b_{558} composed of the two membrane proteins gp91^{phox} and p22^{phox} resides rather in the membrane of specific granules and secretory vesicles than in the plasma membrane (Borregaard, Heiple, Simons, & Clark, 1983; Nguyen, Green, & Mecsas, 2017) while p47^{phox}, p67^{phox}, p40^{phox} and the small G-protein Rac2 are cytosolic proteins (Vignais, 2002). Upon neutrophil activation, the cytosolic granules are mobilized to the plasma membrane, resulting in the increased of the cytochrome b_{558} content (Borregaard et al., 1983; Nguyen et al., 2017). In parallel the cytosolic NOX2 components are phosphorylated to enable the assembly with the membrane proteins thereby forming the NOX2 complex (Groemping & Rittinger, 2005). The fully activated NOX2 is now capable of producing ROS by reducing oxygen using cytosolic NADPH as electron donor to superoxide ($O_2^{\cdot-}$), a processed referred to as respiratory burst (Chanock, el Benna, Smith, & Babior, 1994). Together with hydrochlorous acid (HOCl) converted from H_2O_2 by MPO, extracellular ROS production serves as highly effective anti-microbial agent by modifying or damaging bacterial molecules and represent a major defense mechanism of neutrophil immune response (Klebanoff, 1970; Rosen & Klebanoff, 1979). Upon phagocytosis of pathogens, however, specific granules incorporating NOX2 in their membrane fuse with the phagosome and produce ROS into the phagosomal lumen contributing to an antimicrobial milieu (Root, Metcalf, Oshino, & Chance, 1975). Consequently, patients that suffer from chronic granulomatous diseases (CGD) are more susceptible to many infections due to an impaired NOX2 activity in neutrophils (Seger, 2010). Beyond its antimicrobial effects, intracellular ROS has been shown to modify cell signaling (Veal, Day, & Morgan, 2007) including cell death (Akahoshi et al., 1997; Blomgran, Zheng, & Stendahl, 2007; Geering & Simon, 2011; Mihalache et al., 2011; von Gunten et al., 2005), neutrophil migration (Nguyen et al., 2017) and angiogenesis (Zhao, Zhao, Chen, Ahokas, & Sun, 2009).

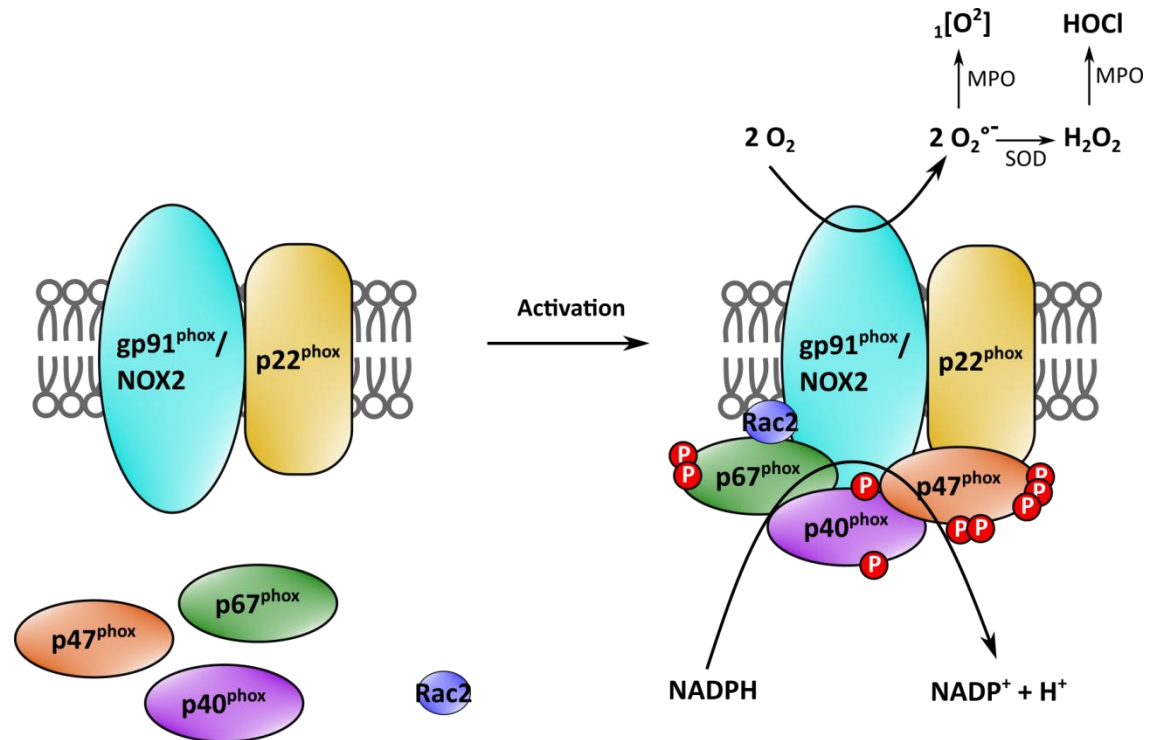


Figure 3: Activation of NOX2 in neutrophils

The NOX2 complex consists of several transmembrane and cytosolic proteins. In resting neutrophils, the components p47^{phox}, p67^{phox}, p40^{phox} and the small G-protein Rac2 are dispersed in the cytosol, the transmembrane components gp91^{phox} and p22^{phox} are located in the membrane of specific and secretory vesicles and to a small amount in the plasma membrane (Borregaard et al., 1993). Upon priming and activation of neutrophils, the cytosolic proteins are phosphorylated by protein kinase C (PKC) and mitogen-activated protein kinases (MAPK) (Sheppard et al., 2005), which is a prerequisite for the translocation to the membrane and assembly with the transmembrane proteins gp91^{phox} and p22^{phox}. gp91^{phox} represents the redox center by transferring electrons from NADPH in the cytosol across the membrane to oxygen thereby generation the O₂⁻ (Smith, Connor, Chen, & Babior, 1996). To prevent intoxication by ROS, the antioxidant scavenging enzyme superoxide dismutase (SOD) transforms two O₂⁻ into the less toxic H₂O₂ (Imlay, 2008). MPO in azurophilic granules further converts H₂O₂ into HOCl or directly converts O₂⁻ into singlet oxygen (Klebanoff, 1970). (Adapted from (Beaumel et al., 2017))

3.1.3 Neutrophil heterogeneity

There is growing evidence that beside their pro-inflammatory activity, distinct neutrophil subsets fulfill different roles during infection, inflammation and cancer (Tsuda et al., 2004) such as modulation of adaptive immunity, resolution of inflammation (Tsuda et al., 2004), neoangiogenesis (Massena et al., 2015) and tumor-associated immune response (Fridlender et al., 2009). Under homeostatic conditions, neutrophil subsets with specific gene and transcription factor expression profiles already exist in the bone marrow (Velten et al., 2017): proliferative precursor cells or pre-neutrophils expressing CD117 and CXCR4, which differentiate into non-proliferative immature CXCR2^{neg} CD101^{neg} and mature CXCR2^{pos} and CD101^{pos} neutrophils (Evrard et al., 2018). Once released from the bone marrow, neutrophil ageing associated with

phenotypical changes of decreased CD62L as well as increased CD11b and CXCR4 expression (Adrover, Nicolás-Ávila, & Hidalgo, 2016; Casanova-Acebes et al., 2013), hypersegmented nucleus and enhanced integrin activation (Casanova-Acebes et al., 2013) contributes to heterogeneity in the circulation. Moreover, mass spectrometry analysis provided hints for tissue specific subsets (Becher et al., 2014) that may be differentially stimulated by tissue-derived signals, i.e. a large population of CXCR4^{pos} neutrophils were found in the lungs to rapidly initiate an immune response against pathogens (L. G. Ng, Ostuni, & Hidalgo, 2019; Yipp et al., 2017).

The phenotypic and functional diversity of neutrophils under inflammatory conditions has been explored in the last years, as well. Here, inflammatory mediators like DAMPs, PAMPs, cytokines and growth factors released from the site of infection or inflammation induce the expression of surface receptors, the secretion of various cytokines (Kolaczkowska & Kubes, 2013; Nourshargh, Renshaw, & Imhof, 2016) and increase the life span of neutrophils by apoptosis inhibition (Geering, Stoeckle, Conus, & Simon, 2013), indicating phenotypic changes of neutrophils upon exposure to external stimuli. Interestingly, aged neutrophils were found to be more effective as first line of defense compared to young neutrophils by means of enhanced bactericidal functions i.e. increased ROS generation and phagocytosis (Uhl et al., 2016). In the context of resolution of inflammation, neutrophil populations with a reparative phenotype have been identified. CD49d⁺CXCR4⁺VEGFR1⁺ pro-angiogenic neutrophils produce matrix metalloproteinase 9 (MMP9) in response to vascular endothelial growth factor A (VEGF-A) and contribute to vascular growth (Massena et al., 2015). Another source for neutrophil plasticity and heterogeneity is represented by reverse migrating neutrophils out of the inflamed tissue, which exhibit an increased life span and capacity for ROS generation and express ICAM1^{high} CXCR1^{low} (Buckley et al., 2006). Neutrophils migrating to secondary lymphoid organs, on the other hand, express an activated phenotype with CD11b^{high} CD62^{low} and CXCR2^{low} (H. R. Hampton, Bailey, Tomura, Brink, & Chtanova, 2015). Whether the different phenotypes under inflammatory conditions arise from tissue specific environmental stimuli, pre-existing subsets in the bone marrow and circulation or both, remains elusive (Kolaczkowska & Kubes, 2013).

3.2 Cardiac remodeling after acute myocardial infarction

The onset of acute MI triggers intrinsic repair mechanisms based on biochemical, molecular, cellular and structural changes, a process referred to as cardiac or left ventricular (LV) remodeling (Gaudron et al., 2001; Hochman & Bulkley, 1982; McKay et al., 1986; Pfeffer, Pfeffer, Fletcher, & Braunwald, 1991) (Figure 4). Immediately after cardiac injury, necrotic cardiomyocytes release DAMPs such as high-mobility group box 1 (HMBG1), interleukin- (IL-) 1 α ,

RNA or heat shock proteins (HSP). In both humans and mice, DAMPs function as pro-inflammatory mediators and promptly activate the innate immune system to clear dead cells and degraded matrix components from the infarct area within the first days post-MI ([Dewald et al., 2004](#); [Nikolaos G. Frangogiannis, 2014](#); [Yang et al., 2002](#)). Thereafter an anti-inflammatory phase follows to initiate resolution of inflammation, fibroblast proliferation and neovascularization, which lasts for about one to two weeks in mice ([Nikolaos G. Frangogiannis, 2014](#)) and for several weeks in humans ([Dewald et al., 2004](#); [Yang et al., 2002](#)). Owing to a very low regeneration capacity of cardiomyocytes in mammals ([Bergmann et al., 2009](#)), the massive loss of contractile tissue is eventually compensated by the formation of a collagenous scar to maintain cardiac architecture and functionality ([Cohn, Ferrari, & Sharpe, 2000](#); [Hochman & Bulkley, 1982](#)). Scar maturation is completed within three to four weeks in mice ([Nikolaos G. Frangogiannis, 2014](#)) and in humans within weeks to months ([Dewald et al., 2004](#); [Yang et al., 2002](#)).

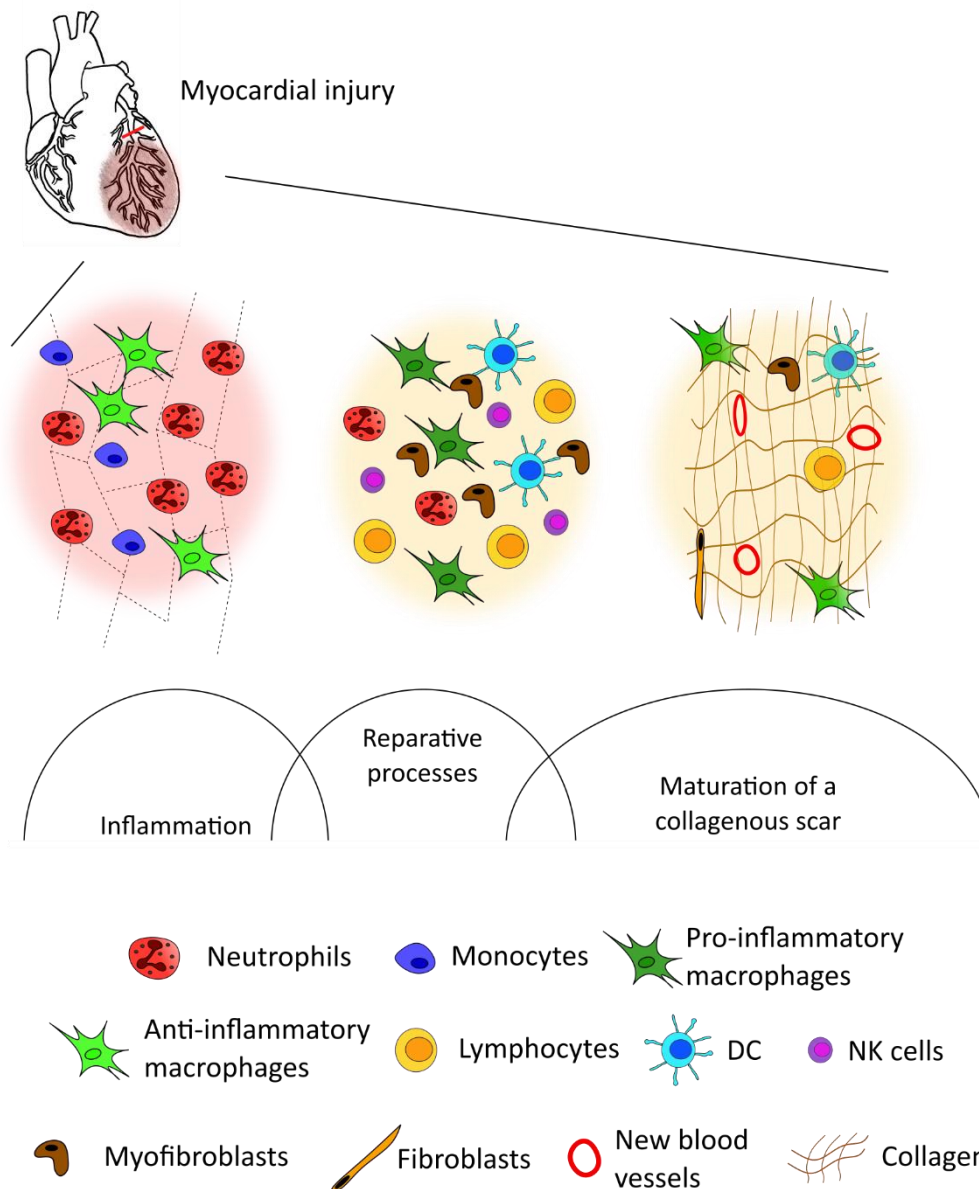


Figure 4: Cardiac remodeling after the onset of MI

The sudden loss of myocardial tissue initiates endogenous repair mechanisms characterized by three overlapping phases. DAMPs released by necrotic cardiomyocytes activate the innate immune system and attract leukocytes to the site of injury (N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012; van Hout, Arslan, Pasterkamp, & Hoefer, 2016). The inflammatory phase is dominated by infiltrating neutrophils followed by monocytes that differentiated into macrophages within the tissue (Y. Ma, Yabluchanskiy, & Lindsey, 2013). Both cell types pave the way for cardiac healing by phagocytosing dead cardiomyocytes and matrix debris (N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012). However, subsequent resolution of inflammation is essential for cardiac healing. Pro-inflammatory macrophages are replaced by anti-inflammatory or reparative macrophages. They remove apoptotic neutrophils from the site of inflammation via efferocytosis, secrete anti-inflammatory mediators and promote angiogenesis and tissue healing (Nahrendorf et al., 2007; Ortega-Gómez, Perretti, & Soehnlein, 2013). Fibroblasts transdifferentiate into myofibroblasts, the main source of collagen, which contributes to scar formation (Nikolaos G. Frangogiannis, Mendoza, Smith, Michael, & Entman, 2000). Finally, neovascularization (Abbott et al., 2004) and the formation of a collagenous scar to maintain cardiac architecture and functionality is initiated (Dobaczewski, Gonzalez-Quesada, & Frangogiannis, 2010; N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012). (Adapted from (Westman et al., 2016))

The outcome of cardiac repair is dependent on a finely balanced and timely coordinated transition between these three healing processes and is executed by a complex interaction amongst tissue-resident cells (cardiomyocytes, endothelial cells, fibroblasts, macrophages, dendritic cells (DC) and mast cells) and invading immune cells (neutrophils, monocytes, macrophages, natural killer (NK) cells and B- and T-lymphocytes) (Burchfield, Xie, & Hill, 2013; N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012; Humeres & Frangogiannis, 2019; Prabhu & Frangogiannis, 2016; Segers, Brutsaert, & De Keulenaer, 2018; Talman & Kivelä, 2018). Finally, chemokines as key players for the orchestration of reparative processes in the heart complete the complexity of cardiac remodeling (B. Chen & Frangogiannis, 2020). Chemokines in general can be distinguished based on the arrangement of their conserved N-terminal cysteine residues namely CC, CXC and CX₃C chemokines whereas the X represents any other amino acid than cysteine (Wilbanks et al., 2001; Zhu, Han, Peng, Qin, & Wang, 2012). Besides their main function of regulating leukocyte recruitment, they also modulate the phenotype of immune cells, angiogenesis and fibroblast proliferation (B. Chen & Frangogiannis, 2020).

Although the early inflammatory response attenuates noxious processes (N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012), inflammation can also harm the host tissue if not tightly regulated. An excessive immune cell infiltration and activation results in adverse cardiac remodeling with the consequence of infarct size expansion and left ventricular wall thinning (Ong et al., 2018; Panizzi et al., 2010). On the other hand, suppression of inflammation by inhibition of the complement system or immune cell infiltration can result in the accumulation of granulation tissue, poor wound healing and increased fibrosis (Horckmans et al., 2017; van Amerongen, Harmsen, van Rooijen, Petersen, & van Luyn, 2007).

3.2.1 The role of inflammation in cardiac remodeling

After the onset of MI, DAMPs and ROS generation in the ischemic heart are involved in cardiac remodeling. DAMPs released by necrotic and stressed myocardial cells in the infarct area activate the complement system (Christia & Frangogiannis, 2013; Hill & Ward, 1971) and bind to pattern recognition receptors (PRRs) of endothelial cells and tissue resident DCs, monocytes, macrophages, lymphocytes and fibroblasts. The activated tissue resident immune cells in turn augment the pro-inflammatory response by releasing inflammatory mediators comprising IL-6, IL-8, IL-1 β and tumor necrosis factor (TNF) α (Nikolaos G. Frangogiannis et al., 1998) (Gordon, Shaw, & Kirshenbaum, 2011; Gwechenberger et al., 1999). They further mediate the recruitment of leukocytes to the site of injury (N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012; van Hout et al., 2016) by releasing chemokines that bind to glycosaminoglycans on endothelial cell surfaces in the heart (Kumar et al., 1997; Zarbock, Ley, McEver, & Hidalgo, 2011) resulting in locally high chemokine

concentrations. In mice, macrophage inflammatory protein-2 α (MIP-2 α) also known as CXCL2, LTB₄, CXCL1, and complement component 5a (C5a) are the main drivers for neutrophil chemotaxis and activation under pathological conditions (Bejjani et al., 2020; Ivey, Williams, Collins, Jose, & Williams, 1995; Sanz & Kubes, 2012). Shortly after neutrophil accumulation, Ly6C^{hi} pro-inflammatory monocytes infiltrate the injured heart in response to CCL2 and differentiate into macrophages within the tissue (Leuschner et al., 2012; Nahrendorf et al., 2007). Both cell types primarily remove dead cells by phagocytosis and secrete degrading enzymes i.e. proteases and MMPs to clear the infarcted heart from extracellular matrix and cell debris (Dehn & Thorp, 2018; Esmann et al., 2010). Moreover, elevated ROS levels, generated by NOX2 of infiltrating neutrophils and macrophages (Zhao, Zhao, Yan, & Sun, 2009) and by the cardiomyocyte NOX4 (Infanger et al., 2010), mediate heart failure by exerting deleterious effects on cardiomyocytes and vascular cells (Dhalla, Elmoselhi, Hata, & Makino, 2000). However, some data demonstrated that ROS production stimulates signal transduction to activate and regulate chemotaxis and cytokine production of leukocytes (Dhalla, Elmoselhi, Hata, & Makino, 2000; Lefer & Granger, 2000; Sellak, Franzini, Hakim, & Pasquier, 1994). In contrast to neutrophils, which are rapidly removed from the infarction area within 7 days, macrophages acquire a reparative phenotype and remain in the damaged tissue during the reparative phase (N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012; Y. Ma et al., 2013).

3.2.2 Resolution of inflammation and initiation of reparative processes

After clearing the infarction area from necrotic cardiomyocytes and degraded extracellular matrix, new structures are required to maintain tissue integrity and heart function. Here, the resolution of inflammation is an essential to initiate the proliferative phase and goes along with the restriction of neutrophil activity and clearance of the cells from the inflamed tissue. Most neutrophils are thought to undergo constitutive or spontaneous apoptosis, a non-inflammatory cell death accompanied with decreased cell function (Savill et al., 1989). However, recent findings proved the ability of neutrophils to migrate back into the vasculature in sterile inflammation (J. Wang et al., 2017). Whether apoptosis is the most relevant pathway for neutrophil removal or other still unknown mechanisms are equally important, is not fully understood.

Apoptotic neutrophils release so called 'find me' signals and flip phosphatidylserine (PS) on the outside of the plasma membrane facilitating subsequent efferocytosis by macrophages (Rather, 1970). The term efferocytosis was defined by deCathelineau and Henson as 'to carry to the grave' and refers to the recognition and engulfment of dead cells by phagocytes (deCathelineau & Henson, 2003; Shi et al., 2001). Efferocytosis of neutrophils triggers a phenotypical change of

macrophages into anti-inflammatory cells and the secretion of IL-10 and transforming growth factor (TGF) β (Ortega-Gómez et al., 2013). Additionally, pro-inflammatory macrophages are replaced by newly recruited Ly6C^{high} monocytes that give rise to locally proliferating and reparative Ly6C^{low} macrophages (Hilgendorf et al., 2014). Together with monocytes, other leukocytes such as DCs and NK cells infiltrate the damaged heart. They mediate the phenotypic switch of the pro-inflammatory to the reparative phase by secreting anti-inflammatory mediators such as TGF β and IL-10 and directly interacting with monocytes (Anzai et al., 2012; Knorr, Münzel, & Wenzel, 2014; Zouggar et al., 2013). Besides the cells from the innate immune system, B- and T-lymphocytes also contribute to early myocardial healing. After MI, the number of B- and T-cells immediately increases in the injured area and peaks around day 7 (Yan et al., 2013). CD4⁺ T-lymphocytes regulate the infiltration of pro-inflammatory Ly6C^{high} monocytes (Hofmann et al., 2012) whereas regulating T-cells (T_{regs}) promote their differentiation into reparative macrophages by the secretion of IL-10, IL-13 and TGF β (Weirather et al., 2014). The direct influence of B-cells to cardiac healing, though, remains unclear, yet (Keppner et al., 2018). TGF β is a pleiotropic cytokine with complex functions during cardiac healing. It possesses potent anti-inflammatory properties by modulating the phenotypical activity of leukocytes (Fan, Ruan, Sensenbrenner, & Chen, 1992; Werner et al., 2000) and attenuates further neutrophil infiltration by the suppressing the expression of adhesion molecules on endothelial cells (Gamble & Vadas, 1988). Additionally, TGF β suppresses CXCL10, which is upregulated after infarction and inhibits angiogenesis (Nikolaos G. Frangogiannis et al., 2000). Angiogenesis is critical for cardiac healing since the formation of new blood vessel can rescue injured or stressed cardiomyocytes thereby avoiding infarct expansion and adverse remodeling (Cochain, Channon, & Silvestre, 2013). Neovascularization is further initiated by VEGF and CXCL12 that regulate the recruitment of endothelial progenitor cells and modulate the formation of new blood vessels (Abbott et al., 2004; Liehn, Postea, Curaj, & Marx, 2011). Together with CCL2 (Morimoto et al., 2006), TGF β also modulates the transdifferentiation of fibroblasts into myofibroblasts (Desmoulière, Geinoz, Gabbiani, & Gabbiani, 1993), which are the dominant source of collagen (Nikolaos G. Frangogiannis et al., 2000). Together with proteoglycans and glycoproteins, collagen constitute the extracellular matrix for scar formation (Liehn et al., 2011; Lindsey, Mann, Entman, & Spinale, 2003). An additional important anti-inflammatory cytokine IL-10 prevents excessive inflammation by inhibiting the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines and chemokines. Furthermore, it promotes the synthesis of tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinase (TIMP), that contribute to extracellular matrix stabilization important for functional recovery of the heart (N. G. Frangogiannis et al., 2000; Steenbergen & Frangogiannis, 2012).

3.2.3 Maturation of a collagenous scar

Lastly, the maturation phase, determined by an attenuated inflammation, neovascularization, and the formation of a collagenous scar, completes the wound healing processes (Dobaczewski et al., 2010; N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012). The majority of myofibroblasts and macrophages are removed from the site of inflammation presumably via apoptosis, though a small population of myofibroblasts persists within the infarction area (Dobaczewski et al., 2010; Takemura et al., 1998; van den Borne et al., 2009). Subsequently, the provisional matrix and granulation tissue are gradually replaced by scar tissue that consists of collagen type I, II, IV and VI with the most abundant components being collagen type I and type III (Bishop, Greenbaum, Gibson, Yacoub, & Laurent, 1990; Swift et al., 2013). MMPs including MMP-2 (gelatinase A), MMP-9 (gelatinase B) and MMP-13 (type I collagenase) are major regulators of collagen deposition and matrix organization. They are present in the myocardial interstitium and are activated by free radicals, hypoxia and cytokines such as TNF α and IL-1 β (Creemers, Cleutjens, Smits, & Daemen, 2001; Nian, Lee, Khaper, & Liu, 2004; Siwik, Chang, & Colucci, 2000) that are known to be upregulated in MI (Spinale et al., 2000). The final maturation of the scar is modulated by fibronectin and collagen through TNF, TGF β and osteopontin (or Eta-1) (Deten et al., 2001; Nian et al., 2004) and includes collagen crosslinking and alignment to stabilize the heart structure and maintain cardiac function. To restore the supply of oxygen and nutrients via the formation of new blood vessels, angiogenesis is activated immediately after the onset of MI and mediated by VEGF, IL-8 and interferon-inducible protein 10 (IP10) which are secreted by mast cells, macrophages and myofibroblasts (Nian et al., 2004).

3.2.4 Therapies for cardiovascular diseases

Nowadays, improvements in clinical therapies for heart attacks have resulted in a decrease in mortality (Moran et al., 2014; Mozaffarian et al., 2015; Nichols, Townsend, Scarborough, & Rayner, 2014). The most successful current therapies including percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI), thrombolysis and coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery aim to restore the occluded blood vessel as early as possible to minimize the ischemia-induced loss of the contractile myocardium (Dalen et al., 1988; Markis et al., 1981). Although improving short-time survival after MI, this strategy can extent tissue damage and infarct size by myocardial reperfusion injury (Jennings, Sommers, Smyth, Flack, & Linn, 1960; Keeley & Hillis, 2007; Yellon & Hausenloy, 2007). The reperfusion of the infarcted tissue maintains intact cardiomyocytes but augments the disruption of already damaged cells (Reimer, Lowe, Rasmussen, & Jennings, 1977). Moreover, it leads to interstitial hemorrhage from injured vessels, which in turn increases the

interstitial pressure and activates signaling pathways resulting in apoptotic and necrotic tissue injury (Yellon & Hausenloy, 2007). However, there are currently no alternative strategies that show a comparable progress in terms of survival rates. Beyond that, long-term mortality due to myocardial infarction-related heart insufficiency or recurrence of MI remains high or is even increasing (Chamberlain et al., 2015; Moran et al., 2014; Smolina, Wright, Rayner, & Goldacre, 2012), making cardiovascular diseases still one of the most common cause of death worldwide (Roth et al., 2018).

The development of novel cardioprotective strategies has gained more interest in recent years. The importance of the early pro-inflammatory phase for reparative processes in the heart has been recognized since early clinical studies attempt to ameliorate cardiac healing by using of broad immunosuppression but turned out to be fatal in terms of functional recovery post-MI (Giugliano, Giugliano, Gibson, & Kuntz, 2003). Further clinical immunomodulatory therapeutic approaches attempted to target specific cell types or early initiators of inflammation while maintaining the beneficial aspects of the initial immune response. They included the antibody-mediated inhibition of leukocyte infiltration via the integrin adhesion receptor (Baran et al., 2001), suppression of complement activation via C5a inhibitors (ENREF_83Mahaffey et al., 2003), depletion of inflammatory cytokines as IL-1, IL-6 and TNF α (Mann et al., 2004) and the inhibition of an excessive inflammation by blocking mast cell degranulation (Holmes et al., 2002). Additionally, some trials focused on the late phase of cardiac healing by modulating B- and T-lymphocytes (Zouggari et al., 2013). However, most of these studies were not effective in reducing infarct size and failed to improve cardiac function or are still conflicting because of a high variability in the study populations, study design and outcome measures (Panahi et al., 2018). Due to the complex and dynamic nature of the immune response as well as the pleiotropic effects of inflammatory cytokines, the target cells, timing and dosage of medication should be carefully considered to avoid severe side effects and optimize infarct healing (Panahi et al., 2018).

3.2.5 The role of neutrophils in cardiac repair and resolution of inflammation

Neutrophils have long been considered detrimental for cardiac repair by promoting tissue injury (Wright, Moots, Bucknall, & Edwards, 2010). However, several clinical studies attempting to suppress neutrophil infiltration and activity failed to improve the reparative processes of the heart (Baran et al., 2001; Faxon, Gibbons, Chronos, Gurbel, & Sheehan, 2002; Harlan & Winn, 2002). Recent findings proved neutrophils to be crucial for cardiac healing, as depletion of neutrophils in the early phase of cardiac remodeling caused a pronounced pro-inflammatory phenotype of macrophages, increased fibrosis and impaired cardiac function resulting in heart

failure of infarcted mice ([Horckmans et al., 2017](#)). Furthermore, a study of Daseke et al. could imply different functions of neutrophils at different stages during post-MI cardiac repair based on proteomic findings. Day 1 neutrophils displayed an increased degranulation activity and enhanced MMP secretion whereas neutrophils at day 3 upregulated apoptotic pathways and modulated extra cellular matrix (ECM) organization. Day 5 neutrophils amplified the ECM remodeling and switched to a reparative phenotype contributing to scar formation at day 7 ([Daseke et al., 2019](#)). It has been demonstrated, that neutrophils possess reparative functions by directly contributing to endothelial repair ([Alard et al., 2015](#)) and promoting angiogenesis via the release of MMPs and VEGF ([Massena et al., 2015](#); [J. Wang et al., 2017](#)) (Figure 5). In addition to directly controlling the growth of new blood vessels, neutrophils secrete annexin A1 to promote macrophage polarization towards a pro-angiogenic phenotype with increased VEGF secretion ([Ferraro et al., 2019](#)). The polarization of macrophages towards a reparative phenotype is further initiated by NGAL released by apoptotic neutrophils ([Mishra et al., 2005](#)). These macrophages are characterized by the expression of proto-oncogene tyrosine-protein kinase MER (MerTK) ([Horckmans et al., 2017](#)) and the secretion of anti-inflammatory mediators as TGF β , IL-10 and VEGF ([Ortega-Gómez et al., 2013](#)). Lastly, neutrophil granules are filled with MMPs and serine proteases that degrade collagens ([M. Lin et al., 2008](#)) and extracellular matrix components ([L. L. Ng et al., 2011](#)) to pave the way for leukocyte infiltration and wound healing. An excessive accumulation and prolonged persistence on the other hand contribute to adverse remodeling and further tissue injury ([Panizzi et al., 2010](#)). Hence, a spatiotemporal accumulation of distinct neutrophil phenotypes that do not only regulate the early inflammatory phase, but also modulate the resolution of inflammation is fundamental cardiac healing processes and restoration of heart structure and function ([Soehnlein, Steffens, Hidalgo, & Weber, 2017](#)).

inflammatory activity and promoted the resolution of inflammation and ([J. Wang et al., 2017](#)). Nevertheless, the removal of neutrophils from the site of inflammation must be tightly regulated to avoid an increased susceptibility to infections due to an accelerated removal ([Seger, 2010](#)) or to avoid enhanced tissue injury due to a delayed clearance ([Panizzi et al., 2010](#)). The mechanisms for a timely restriction of neutrophil accumulation into the ischemic heart are not yet fully understood, though.

3.3 Regenerating islet-derived protein (Reg) 3 β

Reg3 β is a C-type lectin that belongs to the Reg protein family. The Reg family in general consists of four groups: Reg1, Reg2, Reg3 and Reg4 ([Okamoto, 1999](#)). Reg proteins were independently discovered in the context of pancreatic diseases like pancreatic stones formation ([De Caro, Lohse, Sarles, & communications, 1979](#)), regenerating islets after a pancreatectomy in rats ([Terazono et al., 1988](#)), acute pancreatitis samples ([Keim, Rohr, Stöckert, & Haberich, 1984](#)) and hepatocellular carcinomas ([Z. Chen, Downing, & Tzanakakis, 2019](#); [Lasserre, Christa, Simon, Vernier, & Bréchet, 1992](#)).

Humans express five Reg protein members, REG1A, REG1B, REG3A, REG3B and REG4 while in rodents seven Reg protein orthologues are detectable, namely Reg1, Reg2, Reg3 α , Reg3 β , Reg3 γ , Reg3 δ and Reg4 ([Z. Chen et al., 2019](#); [Hartupee et al., 2001](#)). Most Reg proteins share high homologous similarities between two different species, i.e. mouse and human, or within one species ([Z. Chen et al., 2019](#)) (Figure 6). Reg encoding genes from humans and rodents are approximately 3kb in size with six exons and five introns and share the same chromosomal locus (2p12), except for Reg4. ([Abhirath, Anne-Fleur, & Emmanuel, 2012](#); [Hartupee et al., 2001](#)) Reg4 is the last discovered Reg protein and differs from the other Reg proteins with seven introns and a chromosomal locus of 1p11 ([Violette et al., 2003](#)).

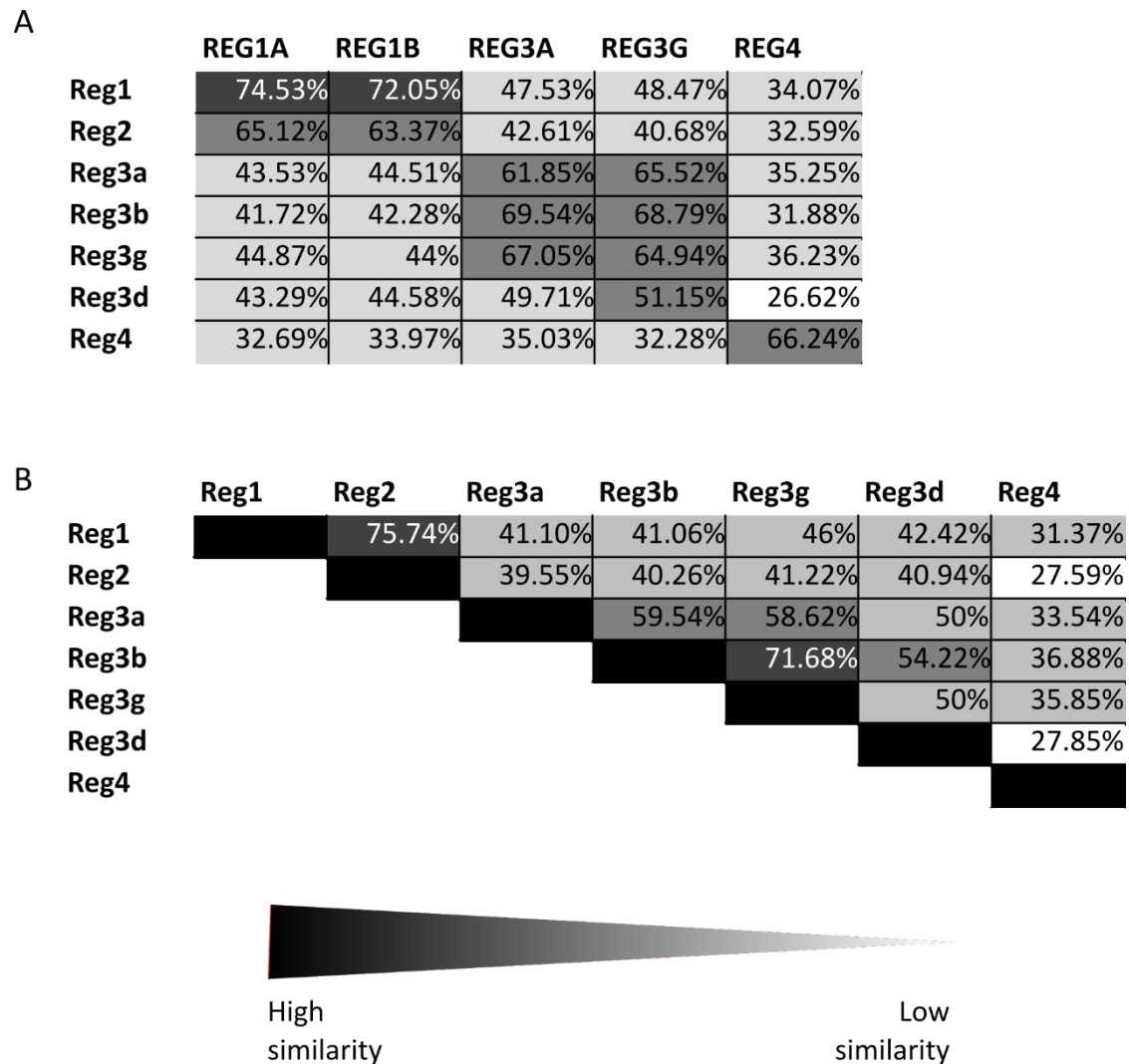


Figure 6: Sequence homology of human and mouse Reg proteins

(A) Sequence homology between Reg proteins of humans (capital letters) and mice (small letters) and (B) between murine Reg proteins to each other. (Adapted from ([Z. Chen et al., 2019](#)))

The superfamily of C-type lectins, which comprises more than 1000 proteins subdivided into 17 groups, characterized by one distinctive feature, the C-type-like lectin domain (CTLD) ([Dieckgraefe et al., 2002](#)). They exhibit a binding affinity to mannose-containing and galactose containing carbohydrates, respectively through conserved residues in the CTLD comprising EPN (Glu-Pro-Asn) and OPD (Gln-Pro-Aps) motifs ([Brown, Willment, & Whitehead, 2018](#); [Weis, Drickamer, & Hendrickson, 1992](#); [Zelensky & Gready, 2005](#)). C-type lectins exist as free or transmembrane proteins and are involved in diverse physiological and pathophysiological conditions. Soluble C-type lectins function as growth factors, opsonins, antimicrobial proteins, components of the ECM and as regulators of processes such as development, respiration, coagulation, angiogenesis and inflammation ([Brown et al., 2018](#)).

Reg proteins belong to the subgroup 6 and are secreted C-type lectins ([Dieckgraefe et al., 2002](#)). In contrast to common C-type lectins, they selectively bind to carbohydrate structures on glycoproteins through the EPN motif ([Dieckgraefe et al., 2002](#); [Lehotzky et al., 2010](#)) in a Ca^{2+} -independent manner ([Drickamer, 1999](#)). Another feature of the Reg proteins, except of Reg4 ([Ho et al., 2010](#)), is a trypsin cleavage site near the N-terminus followed by a putative signal peptide. Trypsin digestion results in a soluble short peptide and a remaining insoluble fragment that forms fibrils whose functions are not clear, yet ([Z. Chen et al., 2019](#); [Graf et al., 2001](#)). Although the discovery of Reg proteins was about half a century ago, the regulation of their expression, function and physiological and pathophysiological conditions and signal transduction is still relatively unknown. Reg proteins appear to be pleiotropic with overlapping functions under normal conditions ([Z. Chen et al., 2019](#)). However, most studies focused on one particular Reg protein, resulting in many different functions of individual Reg proteins lacking a common basis.

Certain Reg3 proteins, including Reg3 β , Reg3 γ and the human HIP/PAP proved to be bactericidal by binding to specific peptidoglycans on the bacteria wall. The murine Reg3 γ and human HIP/PAP homologue were capable to control gut microbiota in mice by spatially segregating gram-positive bacteria from the surface of the small intestine epithelium ([Z. Chen et al., 2019](#); [Mukherjee et al., 2014](#); [Vaishnava et al., 2011](#)). The bactericidal mechanism was based on the formation of an oligomeric pore in the bacterial wall and was completely blocked by the addition of soluble N-acetylglucosamine polymers ([Mukherjee et al., 2014](#)). Reg3 β was shown to have antimicrobial effects on both, gram-negative and gram-positive bacteria ([Farinholt, Dinh, & Kuspa, 2019](#); [Miki, Holst, & Hardt, 2012](#); [Stelter et al., 2011](#)) by binding to N-acetylglucosamine and mannose polysaccharides on the bacteria cell wall via the EPN motif in a Ca^{2+} independent manner ([Cash, Whitham, Hooper, & purification, 2006](#); [Lehotzky et al., 2010](#)). Mutations in the EPN motif resulted in reduced binding to the cell wall and diminished bactericidal effects ([Lehotzky et al., 2010](#)). Therefore, murine Reg3 α is unable to bind carbohydrate residues due to an EPN motif deficiency. Despite their bactericidal role in the intestine, Reg proteins are implicated in different pathologies such as cancer ([Cavard et al., 2006](#); [Violette et al., 2003](#)), diabetes ([Astorri et al., 2010](#)) and inflammation or injury not only in the pancreas but also in other tissues, including the digestive tract ([Hervieu et al., 2006](#)), brain ([Duplan et al., 2001](#)), and heart ([Loerchner et al., 2015](#)). The murine Reg3 β in particular is reported to be upregulated in the early phase of pancreatitis ([Dieckgraefe et al., 2002](#)), to modify cell tumor function by interfering the uptake of extracellular vesicles ([Bonjoch, Gironella, Iovanna, & Closa, 2017](#)) and to mediate macrophage recruitment into the ischemic heart ([Loerchner et al., 2015](#)).

4 Objective of the work

Understanding the dynamics and intercellular communication of tissue-specific and infiltrating immune cells that contribute to cardiac repair is essential for the development of novel therapeutic strategies in cardiovascular diseases. On the basis of a comprehensive knowledge of these cellular interactions, new concepts need to be derived, in particular to maintain the beneficial effects of a well-coordinated immune response for optimized functional recovery of the infarcted heart while preventing excessive inflammation and impaired wound healing.

In this context, Lörchner et al. have identified the C-type lectin Reg3beta (Reg3 β) which was secreted by cardiomyocytes within the ischemic heart upon myocardial infarction ([Loerchner et al., 2015](#)). The loss of Reg3 β provoked in their study a delayed recruitment of macrophages accompanied with a prolonged persistence of neutrophils. According to the authors, this inflammatory dysbalance led to an impaired wound healing culminating in an increased mortality due to cardiac ruptures around day 4 after permanent LAD ligation in mice. Mechanistically, it was shown that Reg3 β directed the recruitment of macrophages to the site of inflammation ([Loerchner et al., 2015](#)). The role of Reg3 β on restricting neutrophil accumulation, however, remained to be determined.

Accordingly, the present work aimed to investigate the possible influence of Reg3 β on the resolution of inflammation upon experimental myocardial infarction in mice by regulating the infiltration, accumulation and removal of neutrophils at the site of cardiac injury. For this purpose, a direct interaction of Reg3 β with neutrophils via specific binding sites has been investigated. Of particular interest here was the impact of Reg3 β on neutrophil motility, viability and inflammatory activity. Furthermore, this project intended to uncover the molecular mechanisms of Reg3 β -mediated neutrophil clearance. By deciphering specific signaling pathways and effector proteins downstream of Reg3 β that modulate neutrophil function and persistence, new targets for a cell-specific therapy should be identified.

5 Materials and Methods

5.1 Materials

5.1.1 Chemical reagents

Chemical	Catalog Number	Company
1,4- Dithiothreitol (DTT)	6908.1	Carl Roth
4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid (HEPES)	6763.3	Carl Roth
Acetic acid	KK62.1	Carl Roth
Agar 100 resin	AGR1031	Agar scientific Ltd. UK
Agarose	A9539	Sigma-Aldrich
Ampotericin B (Fungizone)	11510496	Gibco
Aprotinin	A6106	Sigma-Aldrich
autoMACS Rinsing Solution	130-091-222	Miltenyi Biotec
BenchMark™ Protein Ladder	10747012	Invitrogen
Benzamidine	B6506	Sigma-Aldrich
Bicine	B3876	Sigma-Aldrich
Bovine Serum Albumin (BSA)	A9576	Sigma-Aldrich
Brewer Thioglycollate medium	B2551	Sigma-Aldrich
Bromphenol blue	114391	Merck
Calcium chloride (CaCl ₂)	CN93.1	Carl Roth
Casein from bovine milk	C3400	Sigma-Aldrich
Dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO)	D8418	Sigma-Aldrich
Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium, high glucose	11971025	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Ethanol, absolute	5054.1	Carl Roth
Ethanol, denaturated	T913.1	Carl Roth
Ethylcinnamate (ECi)	112372	Sigma-Aldrich
Fetal Calf Serum (FCS)	F2442	Sigma-Aldrich
Fibronectin Solution, bovine	C-43050	PromoCell
Galactose	59-23-4	Sigma-Aldrich
Glucoside	I3750	Sigma-Aldrich
Glutaraldehyde solution	354400	Merck
Hydrogenperoxide (H ₂ O ₂) 30 %	CP26.1	Roth

Leupeptin	103476-89-7	Sigma-Aldrich
MACS BSA Stock Solution	130-091-376	Miltenyi Biotec
MACS Columns MS	130-042-201	Miltenyi Biotec
MACS Separator	130-042-109	Miltenyi Biotec
Magnesium chloride (MgCl ₂)	7786-30-3	Sigma-Aldrich
Mannan	M3640	Sigma-Aldrich
MES SDS Running buffer 20x	NP0002	Invitrogen
Methanol	8388.1	Carl Roth
Mowiol 4-88	0713.1	Carl Roth
N-acetylgalactosamine	A2795	Sigma-Aldrich
N-acetylglucosamine	A8625	Sigma-Aldrich
N-acetylneuraminic acid	19023	Sigma-Aldrich
Amersham™ Protran™ 0.45 µm NC nitrocellulose blotting membranes	10600002	GE Healthcare Life Sciences®
NuPAGE 4-12% Bis-Tris Gel, 1mm x 17well	NP0329BOX	Novex™
Osmoium tetroxide	O5500	Merck
Paraformaldehyde (PFA)	30525-89-4	Merck
PCR Buffer Without MgCl ₂ , 10x concentrated	11699105001	Merck
Gibco™ Penicillin-Streptomycin (10,000 U/mL)	11528876	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Potassium chloride (KCl)	P9327	Sigma-Aldrich
Pre-Separation Filters 30 µm	130-041-407	Miltenyi Biotec
Red Alert™ 10x Western Blot Stain	71078	Merck
Rotiphorese® Gel 40 (29:1 acrylamid/bisacrylamid)	A515.1	Carl Roth
Skim Milk Powder	70166	Merck
Sodium Chloride (NaCl)	3957.1	Carl Roth
Sodium Dodecylsulfate (SDS)	5136.2	Carl Roth
Sucrose	S0389	Sigma-Aldrich
SuperSignal West Femto Maximum Sensitivity Substrate	34094	ThermoFisher Scientific™
TEMED	T9281	Sigma-Aldrich
Tissue-Tek® O.C.T. Compound	4583	Sakura
Tris	4855.1	Carl Roth
Triton-X-100	648463	Sigma-Aldrich
Methyl α-D-mannopyranoside	M6882	Sigma-Aldrich

BioGel P6	1504130	BioRad
Uranyl Acetate	E22400-05	Science Services

5.1.2 Inhibitors, enzymes, recombinant proteins, kits

Inhibitors	Catalog Number	Company
Chlorpromazine hydrochloride	C8138	Sigma-Aldrich
Diphenyleneiodonium chloride (DPI)	4673-26-1	Sigma-Aldrich
Imipramine hydrochloride	I7379	Sigma-Aldrich
Methyl- β -cyclodextrin (M β CD)	C4555	Sigma-Aldrich
Monodansylcadaverine (MDAC)	D4008	Sigma-Aldrich
Nystatin	N6261	Sigma-Aldrich

Enzymes	Catalog Number	Company
DNAse I	79254	Qiagen
Endo H	P0702S	New England Biolabs
Liberase DH Research Grade	5401127001	Roche
O-glycosidase	P0733S	New England Biolabs
PNGase	P0707S	New England Biolabs
Protein Deglycosylation Mix II	P6044S	New England Biolabs
Taq polymerase	45705	ThermoFisher Scientific™
α 1-2,3,6 Mannosidase	P0768S	New England Biolabs
α 2-3,6,8,9 Neuraminidase A	P0722S	New England Biolabs
β -N-acetylhexosaminidase _f	P0721S	New England Biolabs
β 1-4 Galactosidase S	P0745S	New England Biolabs

Recombinant Proteins	Catalog Number	Company
LPS, E. Coli O111:B4	LPS25	Merck
Recombinant murine MIP-2 (CXCL2)	250-15	Peprtech
Recombinant murine granulocyte-colony stimulating factor (G-CSF)	250-05	Peprtech
Recombinant murine interferon- γ (IFN γ)	315-05	Peprtech
Murine regenerating islet-derived protein 3 β (Reg3 β)	AF5110	R&D Systems
N-formylmethionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine (fMLP)	F3506	Sigma-Aldrich

Phorbol-12-myristat-13-acetat (PMA)	1652981	Peprotech
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Kits	Catalog Number	Company
2-D Clean-Up Kit	GE80-6484-51	Merck
Alexa Fluor® 790 Antibody Labeling Kit	A20189	Invitrogen™
BD Cytofix/Cytoperm™	554714	BD Bioscience
CellTiter-Glo® Luminescent Cell Viability Assay	G7570	Promega
CytoTox 96® Non-Radioactive Cytotoxicity Assay	G1780	Promega
Debris Removal Solution	130-109-398	Miltenyi Biotec
EasySep™ Mouse Neutrophil Enrichment Kit	19762	STEMCELL
Lightning-Link® APC Antibody Labeling Kit	705-0030	Nous Biologicals
Macrophage Isolation Kit (Peritoneum), mouse	130-110-434	Miltenyi Biotec
Phagocytosis assay kit (IgG FITC)	500290	Cayman

5.1.3 Antibodies and cell labeling dyes

Primary Antibodies	Catalog Number	Company
Citr. Histone H3	ab176842	Abcam
Citr. Histone H4	ab51997	Abcam
Goat anti mouse Cathepsin B	AF965	R&D Systems
Goat anti mouse Cathepsin D	AF1029	R&D Systems
Goat anti mouse Galectin 1	AF1245	R&D Systems
Mouse anti mouse CD64 APC	139305	BioLegend
Mouse anti mouse CD64 FITC	139315	BioLegend
Mouse anti mouse α -Sarcomeric Actin	A2172	Sigma-Aldrich
Rabbit anti mouse Beclin-1	3495	Cell Signaling Technology
Rabbit anti mouse Cleaved Caspase-1 (Asp296)	89332	Cell Signaling Technology
Rabbit anti mouse Cleaved caspase-3 (Asp175)	9661	Cell Signaling Technology
Rabbit anti mouse Cleaved caspase-7 (Asp198)	8438	Cell Signaling Technology
Rabbit anti mouse Cleaved Caspase-8 (Asp387)	8592	Cell Signaling Technology

Rabbit anti mouse collagen type II	600-401-104	Rockland
Rabbit anti mouse LC3B	PA1-16930	Invitrogen™
Rabbit anti mouse pMLKL (Ser345)	37333	Cell Signaling Technology
Rabbit anti mouse pRIP3 (Thr231/Ser232)	57220	Cell Signaling Technology
Rat anti mouse Caspase-11	14340	Cell Signaling Technology
Rat anti mouse CD115 PE	135505	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse CD11b APC/Cyanine7	101225	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse CD11b FITC	101205	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse CD11b PE	101207	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse CD31	102501	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse CD45 FITC	103107	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse F4/80 PE	123109	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse LAMP1/CD107a	MAB4320	R&D Systems
Rat anti mouse Ly6G BV421	127627	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse Ly6G FITC	127605	BioLegend
Rat anti mouse Ly6G PE/Cyanine7	127617	BioLegend
Sheep anti mouse Reg3beta	AF5110	R&D Systems

Secondary antibodies	Catalog Number	Company
Chicken anti goat AF488	A-21467	Invitrogen™
Chicken anti goat AF594	A-21468	Invitrogen™
Donkey anti rat AF488	A-21208	Invitrogen™
Goat anti mouse AF594	A-11005	Invitrogen™
Goat anti mouse HRP	115-035-146	Dianova
Goat anti rabbit AF594	A-11012	Invitrogen™
Goat anti rabbit HRP	111-035-045	Dianova
Rabbit and rat HRP	RbxRt-003-DHRPX	Dianova
Rabbit anti goat HRP	GAR/IgG(Fc)/PO	Dianova
Rabbit anti sheep HRP	HAF016	R&D Systems

Labeling dyes	Catalog Number	Company
7AAD Viability Staining Solution	420403	BioLegend
Acridine orange base	235474	Sigma-Aldrich
CM-H2DCFDA	C6827	Invitrogen™

DAPI	D9542	Sigma-Aldrich
IncuCyte® Cytotox Green	4633	IncuCyte®
LysoTracker™ Green DND-26	L7526	Invitrogen™
Molecular Probes™ Dihydrorhodamin123	D23806	Invitrogen™
pHrodo™ Red	P36600	Invitrogen™
Po-Pro®-1	P3581	Invitrogen™

5.1.4 Laboratory Equipment

Equipment	Company
1.3ml K3 EDTA Tube	SAI Infusion Technologies
10 cm Petri dishes	Greiner Bio-One®
6-, 12-, 24- and 96-well Cellstar® cell culture plates	Greiner Bio-One®
BD LSRFortessa™ cell analyzer	BD Bioscience
Casting chamber	Hoefer
Cell disruption vessel	Parr Instrument Company
Cell scrapers 25 cm	Sarstedt®
Centrifuge tubes	Beckmann Coulter
ChemiDoc™ MP System	Bio-Rad®
Clean Bench HeraSAFE KS	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Corning™ Costar™ Tranwell™ Permeable Supports	ThermoFisher Scientific™
EasySep™ Magnet	StemCell
Gravity size exclusion column	BioRad
HERAcell™ 150 CO ₂ incubator	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Heraeus™ Fresco™ 21 Microcentrifuge	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Heraeus™ Multifuge™ X3R TX-1000	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Hidex Sense Microplate reader	Hidex
Leica TCS SP8 confocal microscope	Leica Microsystems
LS Columns	Miltenyi Biotec
NanoDrop 2000c UV-Vis spectrophotometer	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Neubauer cell counting chamber	Optik Labor®
Nunc™ Lab-Tek™ II Chamber Slide™ System	ThermoFisher Scientific™
Odyssey® 91201 imaging system	LI-COR Biosciences®
Pre-Separation Filters 30 µm	Miltenyi Biotec

ProteomeLab XL-I Analytical Ultracentrifuge	Beckman Coulter
Reichert Ultracut E ultramicrotome	Leica Biosystems
Scanning electron microscope FEI XL30	Philips®
Screen mesh polyamide monofile, mesh width 200 µm	neoLab Migge GmbH
Sonopuls® HD 2070 ultrasonic homogenizer	Bandelin®
Surgical disposable scalpels	B- Braun®
SW41 Ti Swinging-Bucket Rotor	Beckmann Coulter
Synergy H1	BioTek
Tecnai™ Spirit TEM	FEI™
TEM Grids, Carbon Film coated	Science Services
Transmission electron microscope EM 902	Zeiss®
UltraMicroscope II	LaVision BioTec
XCell II™ Blot Modules	Novex™
XCell SureLock™ Mini-Cells	Novex™

Softwares	Company
BD FACSDiva v6 Software	BD Bioscience
Cytoscape	Open source
FIJI	Open source
GraphPad Prism 5.0	GraphAd Software, Inc.
Image Lab	Bio-Rad®
Imaris	Bitplane
ImSpector	LaVision BioTec
LAS X Life Science	Leica

5.1.5 Media and solutions

Cell culture solutions and medium	
PEB buffer	PBS 2 mM EDTA 0.5 % BSA
Neutrophil culture medium (500 ml)	DMEM (High-Glucose, 4.5 g/l) 5 ml Penicillin (100 U/ml) and Streptomycin (100 µg/ml) G-CSF (10 ng/ml)

Macrophage culture medium (500 ml)	DMEM (High-Glucose, 4.5 g/l) 5 ml Penicillin (100 U/ml) and Streptomycin (100 µg/ml) 25 ml FCS
Casein solution	9 g Casein in 100 ml 1x PBS (pH 7.2) 0.9 mM CaCl ₂ 0.5 mM MgCl ₂ heated up to 60°C while stirring for at least 3 hours

Immunohistochemistry

Fixation solution	4% PFA in PBS, pH 7.4
Permeabilization solution	0.5 % Triton X-100 in PBS
Mowiol mounting medium	2.4 g Mowiol 6 g glycerol 6 ml H ₂ O 12 ml of 0.2 M Tris-Cl (pH 8.5)

Cell harvest

Protein extraction buffer	100 mM Tris, pH 8.8 10 mM EDTA 40 mM DTT 10 % SDS pH adjusted to 8.0 with HCl
Sonification buffer	50 mM Tris, pH 8.0 500 mM NaCl 10 mM Imidazole
Protease inhibitor mix	500 µg/ml Benzamidin 2 µg/ml Aprotinin 2 µg/ml Leupeptin 2 mM PMSF 1 mM Sodium Vanadate 20 mM Sodium Fluoride

Electrophoresis and blotting

Extraction buffer (EP), proteins	0.1 M Tris-HCl, pH 8.8 0.01 M EDTA
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	0.04 M DTT 10 % SDS pH 8
5x Laemmli Buffer	1 M Tris-HCl (pH 6.8) 10 % SDS 50 % Glycerol dissolved in distilled water
10x TBS buffer (5 liter)	400 g NaCl 120.5 g Tris pH to 7.6 Final volume made to 2 L with ddH ₂ O
1x TBS-T (5 liter)	250 ml 20x TBS buffer 5 ml Tween 20 final volume made up with distilled water
1X MES SDS Running buffer (5L)	250ml 20xMES SDS Running buffer final volume made up with distilled water
Blocking solution (Western blot)	5 % skim milk powder in TBS-T
20X Transfer buffer (2L)	163.2 g Bicine 209.3 g Bis Tris 12 g EDTA Final volume made up with ddH ₂ O
1x Transfer buffer (5L)	250 ml 20x Transfer buffer 1000 ml Methanol final volume made up with distilled water

Nitrogen cavitation

Disruption buffer	100 mM KCl 3 mM NaCl 3.5 mM MgCl ₂ 19 mM HEPES
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5.1.6 Genotyping Primers

Primer	Sequence	WT Allele	Targeted Allele
Reg3 β ^{-/-}	5' GTCCTCCATGGTGAAGAGAAC 3'	600 bp	400 bp
	5' ATTCCCATCCACCTCCATTG 3' (WT)		
	5' AGAGGCTATTCGGCTATGACT 3'		
	5' CCTGATCGACAAGACCGGCTT 3' (Targeted)		
Nox2 ^{-/-}	5' AAGAGAAACTCCTCTGCTGTG AA 3'	240 bp	195 bp
	5' CGCACTGGAACCCCTGAGAAAGG 3'		
	5' GTTCTAATCCATCAGAAGCTTATCG 3'		

5.1.7 Mice

Throughout the whole study, 8 to 12 weeks old adult mice with a body weight of 25-30 g were used to ensure the reproducibility of the individual experiments.

All animal experimentations were performed in accordance with the German animal protection law and EU ethical guidelines and were approved by the local governmental animal protection authority Regierungspräsidium Darmstadt (TVA B2/1209) as described by Lörchner et al. (Lörchner, Hou, et al., 2018). Mice were sacrificed by CO₂ euthanasia and cervical dislocation.

5.1.7.1 Wild-type mice

C57BL/6J mice were in-house bred and used as controls as indicated.

5.1.7.2 Mice deficient of Regenerating islet-derived protein 3 β (Reg3b^{-/-})

Mice with a constitutive knock-out of Reg3 β (Reg3b^{-/-}; B6; 129-Reg2^{tm1Lchr}/H) were originally generated by Lieu et al. (Lieu et al., 2006) and obtained from S. Hunt, University College of London. The region from a position within exon 2 to a position in exon 5 was replaced by a reporter/selection cassette, thus deleting exons 3 and 4. Reg3b^{-/-} mice are phenotypically indistinguishable from wild-type mice, develop normally and are fertile.

5.1.7.3 Mice deficient of gp91phox (Nox2^{-/-})

Mice with a constitutive knock-out of Cybb (B6.129S-Cybbtm1Din/J), also known as gp91phox^{-/-} were originally generated by Pollock et al. (Pollock et al., 1995) and kindly provided by R. Brandes, Vascular Research Center Frankfurt a.M. A selection cassette for neomycin-resistance was placed into the third exon thereby disrupting the Cybb gene. Nox2^{-/-} are phenotypically inconspicuously, develop normal and are fertile.

5.2 Methods

5.2.1 Isolation and cultivation of primary neutrophils from the peritoneum

Primary neutrophils were isolated from the peritoneum after the induction of a peritonitis by injecting 1 ml of casein solution intraperitoneal (i.p.) 24 hours and 1 hour prior to the isolation (Swamydas, Luo, Dorf, & Lionakis, 2015). The mice were sacrificed, the peritoneal wall was exposed by removing the abdominal skin and 6 ml of PEB buffer was injected into the peritoneal cavity. After gently massaging the abdomen of the mouse the peritoneal fluid was harvested using a 21G needle and collected in 15 ml tubes on ice. Neutrophils were purified using the EasySep™ Mouse neutrophils enrichment kit from StemCell according to the manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, neutrophils were enriched by negative selection as unwanted cells were targeted with biotinylated antibodies directed against cells other than neutrophils. Labelled cells were crosslinked to magnetic particles using tetrameric antibody complexes and separated with the EasySep™ magnet. Unlabeled, purified neutrophils were poured off into a separate tube and pelleted by centrifugation at 300 x g for 10 min, 4 °C for further experimental procedures.

Purified peritoneal neutrophils were cultivated in fibronectin (1 µg/ml) coated cell culture plates in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium (DMEM), high glucose medium supplemented with 1% Penicillin/Streptavidin (P/S) and 10 ng/ml G-CSF at a density of 6×10^5 cells/ml. After the cells adhered to the culture plate, the medium was removed and fresh medium supplemented with 1% P/S and 10 ng/ml G-CSF was added to the cells.

5.2.2 Isolation and cultivation of bone marrow-derived, blood and splenic neutrophils

Bone marrow-derived neutrophils were harvested from femur and tibia as previously described (Yonggang Ma et al., 2016). After removing skin and muscles the bones were flushed with 8 ml of PEB buffer using a 24 G needle and the cell suspension was collected in a 15 ml tube on ice. Whole blood was harvested by decapitating the mice and collecting the blood in EDTA tubes for 30 minutes rolling at RT to prevent blood clotting.

The spleen was excised, mashed in PEB buffer and filtered through a nylon mesh with 200 µm pore size to obtain a single cell suspension (collected in PEB buffer on ice).

Subsequent to obtaining single cell suspensions of neutrophil populations from different origins, red blood cell lysis was performed with ice cold hypotonic water lysis (hypotonic shock) for 15 sec and restored by adding five times the volume of PEB buffer (Shehadul Islam, Aryasomayajula, & Selvaganapathy, 2017). Neutrophils were purified using the EasySep™ Mouse neutrophils enrichment kit from StemCell and cultured as described above.

5.2.3 Isolation and cultivation of primary macrophages from the peritoneum

Primary macrophages were isolated from the peritoneum after the induction of a peritonitis with 3 % thioglycollate 4 days prior to the isolation. (Ray & Dittel, 2010). The lavage of the peritoneal cavity was performed as described in 5.2.1. Macrophages were purified using the Macrophage Isolation kit from Miltenyi Biotec according to the manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, macrophages isolation is based on negative selection by depleting unwanted cells with biotinylated antibodies directed against non-macrophages. Labeled cells were incubated with anti-biotin antibodies conjugated to MicroBeads and magnetically retained within a MACS Column in the magnetic field of a MACS Separator (Y. Liu et al., 2017). Unlabeled macrophages passed the column and were collected in a separate tube for further experimental procedures. Primary macrophages were cultivated in uncoated 24- and 6-well cell culture plates in DMEM, high glucose medium supplemented with 1% P/S and 5 % FCS at a density of 1×10^6 cells/ml. After the cells adhered to the cell culture plate, the medium was removed and fresh medium supplemented with 1% P/S and 5 % FCS was added to the cells.

5.2.4 Experimental myocardial infarction in adult mice

The experimental procedure of permanent LAD Ligation was conducted by Roxanne Wagner according to the TVA B2/1209 and already described by Lörchner et al. (Loerchner et al., 2015). WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice, 10 to 12 weeks of age, were subjected to a permanent left anterior descending coronary artery (LAD) Ligation. Two hours prior to surgery, the mice received a single dose of 0.1 mg/kg body weight (BW) buprenorphine. The mice were anesthetized with 2% isoflurane and cannulated into the trachea using a 20-gauge intravenous catheter with a blunt end (Loerchner et al., 2015). The mice were artificially ventilated at a rate of 150 strokes per minute using a rodent ventilator with a mixture of O₂ and air (80%) to which 2 % isoflurane was added. During the whole surgery, the mice were placed on a heating pad to maintain body temperature. The fur was removed before opening the thorax between 3rd and 4th rib and dissecting tissue and muscle to uncover the heart. A 7-0 silk suture was used to ligate the left anterior descending coronary artery permanently with a single suture. Infarction was confirmed by discoloration of the ventricle and ST-T changes on ECG. Thorax and skin were closed, animals extubated and allowed to recover from surgery. The mice received another dose of 0.1 mg/kg BW buprenorphine directly after the surgery and 24 hours later. Additionally, 200 mg/kg BW metamizol was administered through the drinking water in the first 3 days post-surgery.

5.2.5 Enzymatic digestion of infarcted heart tissue to isolate cardiac leukocytes

Infarcted hearts were collected and washed with PBS to remove remaining blood in the chambers. The infarction area was mechanically dissected from the atria, right ventricle and septum using scissors and subsequently digested enzymatically with 0.1 mg/ml liberase TH Grade from Roche for 30 minutes at 37°C. The supernatant was collected in PEB buffer on ice and the remaining tissue was digested once more with fresh liberase for 30 minutes at 37°C. After collecting the supernatant, the cell suspension was centrifuged at 300 x g for 10 min, 4°C. The pellet was resuspended in PEB buffer and applied over a 30 µm filter followed by another centrifugation step. Next, cell and matrix debris was removed by resuspending the cell pellet in 4 ml cold PBS and 1 ml of debris removal solution from Miltenyi Biotec. 2 ml of cold PBS were gently layered on top before centrifugation at 3000 x g for 10 min, 4 °C. The debris formed an interphase above the cell pellet, which was aspirated. The cells were washed with 10 ml cold PBS and centrifuged at 1000 x g for 10 min, 4 °C. Finally, red blood cell lysis was performed by hypotonic water lysis followed by a centrifugation step. The isolated and purified leukocytes were resuspended in PEB buffer for further experimental procedures.

5.2.6 Flow cytometry

After the isolation of both, primary cells from the peritoneum and infarcted heart, the concentration was adjusted to 1×10^6 cells in 100 µl PEB buffer per sample according to the manufacturer's instruction of the antibodies. The cell suspension was incubated with specific primary antibodies conjugated to fluorescent dyes for 20 minutes on ice in the dark. Thereafter, cells were washed with PEB buffer and centrifuged at 300 x g for 10 min, 4 °C. Finally, the cells were resuspended in 500 µl PEB buffer and analyzed on BD LSRFortessa™. Data analysis was done with the BD FACS Diva v6 Software.

The primary antibody targeting Reg3β was manually labeled with APC using the Lightning-Link® Antibody Labeling Kit according to the manufacturer's instructions. 10 µg of sheep anti mouse Reg3β from R&D was mixed with 1 µl LL-Modifier solution and incubated with 10 µg Lightning-Link® APC O/N at RT. To eliminate free APC dye, 1 µl of LL-Quencher solution was added to the labeled antibody and mixed well. For cell surface detection of Reg3β, the primary antibody manually labeled with APC was added to the cells together with the other antibodies directed against the cell surface antigens of interest.

Intracellular Reg3β staining was conducted with the Fixation/Permeabilization Solution Kit from BD. Briefly, after antibody staining for surface antigens as described above, the cells were fixed in PFA and permeabilized with saponin. The cells were kept in saponin-containing

permeabilization buffer and incubated with Reg3 β for 20 minutes on ice. After washing the cells once in permeabilization buffer and once in PEB buffer, the pellet was resuspended in PEB buffer for FACS analysis.

Following antibody staining for surface antigens, apoptosis and necrosis was detected by staining 1×10^6 cells in 100 μ l PEB with 25 μ M Po-Pro®-1 and 2.5 μ g/ml 7AAD solution. After 20 minutes incubation, the cells were directly analyzed by flow cytometry without an additional washing step.

5.2.7 Immunohistochemistry

Infarcted hearts were collected, washed with PBS and fixed with 4 % PFA for 2 hours at RT. Afterwards, the fixed heart samples were incubated in 15 % and 30 % sucrose solution for at least 4 hours each, before they were mounted in Tissue-Tec® O.C.T.™ compound and stored at -80 °C. Cryosections with a thickness of 7 μ m were collected on slides and washed with PBS prior to the antibody staining.

For immunohistochemical analysis of primary neutrophils, cells were cultured on 4-well chamber slides with removable well, were washed with PBS and fixed with 4 % PFA for 10 minutes at RT. For intracellular staining, cells were further permeabilized with 0.1 % Triton X-100 in PBS for 10 minutes at RT followed by PBS wash.

Both, tissue sections and cultured cells were incubated with the primary antibody of interest for 2 hours at RT or overnight at 4 °C depending on the antibody. After washing three times with PBS the secondary antibody conjugated to a fluorescent dye or to biotin was added to the samples and incubated for 1 or 2 hours, respectively, at RT in the dark followed by an PBS wash. In case of a biotinylated secondary antibody, the sample was additionally incubated with Streptavidin conjugated to a fluorescent dye for 1 hour at RT. When detecting more than one antigen of interest, the primary, secondary and, if necessary, tertiary antibodies of each antigen were applied one after another. For a nuclear counterstain, the tissue sections or cells were incubated with 4',6-Diamidin-2-phenylindol (DAPI) for 10 minutes at RT. Finally, the slides were washed with PBS and coverslips were mounted with mowiol. Imaging was performed with the Leica TCS SP8 confocal microscope and LAS X Life Science software. Data analysis was done with the imaging software FIJI.

5.2.8 Light sheet microscopy

Three-dimensional imaging of infarcted hearts with light sheet microscopy was adapted from the BALANCE protocol of Merz et al. ([Merz et al., 2019](#)). Adult WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} were subjected to LAD Ligation. At day 1, 2, 4 and 7 post-MI the mice were anesthetized with 180 mg/kg BW

ketamine and 16 mg/kg BW xylazine. The mice received intravenous injections in the retro-orbital sinus with 10 µg of each antibody diluted in PBS in a total volume of 50 µl. Antibodies directed against the neutrophil marker Ly6G were directly coupled with AlexaFluor647. Antibodies directed against the endothelial marker CD31 (samples from day 1, 2 and 4) and collagen type I (samples from Day 7) were manually labeled with AlexaFluor790 using the antibody labeling kit from ThermoFisher. Accordingly, 100 µg antibody solution was added to the AlexaFluor790 dye and incubated for 1 hour at RT in the dark. The antibody solution was applied to a purification column with 1.5 ml resin bed and centrifuged at 1100 x g for 5 minutes to collect the labeled antibody and remove unbound molecules. After 20 minutes incubation, mice were sacrificed and perfused with PBS through the left atrium by making a small cut in the right atrium. The excised hearts were placed in 4 % PFA for 2 hours at RT for chemical fixation followed by dehydration in an ethanol series in dH₂O of 30%, 50%, 70%, 90% and 2x 100 % for at least 4 hours at 4°C each while rolling. Next, the hearts were bleached in 5% hydrogen peroxide and 5% DMSO in 100 % methanol for 4 hours at 4°C. After washing in 100 % ethanol for 1 hour, the samples were warmed up to RT and transferred in pure ethylcinnamate (ECi). The cleared heart was kept in ECi at RT in the dark. Light sheet imaging was performed with the Ultramicroscope II and ImSpector software both from LaVision BioTec. The microscope is based on a MVX10 zoom body from Olympus with a 2x objective and equipped with a Zyla 4.2 PLUS sCMOS camera from Andor.

3D reconstruction and data analysis was done using Imaris Software from Bitplane. Based on the autofluorescence of the heart itself, heart surface area and volume were quantified using the automated Contour Surface tool. The CD31^{neg} area or rather Collagen type II^{pos} area identified the infarction zone and was traced manually using the Contour Surface tool. The surface of the CD31^{pos} or rather Collagen Typ II^{neg} RZ was calculated by subtracting the IZ area from the whole heart area. Infiltrating tissue neutrophils were identified and quantified using the Spot Detection tool based on the size and round shape. Spotted neutrophils located within the infarct or RZ, respectively, were quantified with the Spots split into surface objects tool. Finally, the sum of detected neutrophils in the whole heart, infarct or RZ was normalized to the respective surfaces.

5.2.9 Transwell migration assay

Primary neutrophils from the peritoneum were cultured on permeable polycarbonate membrane inserts with a pore size of 3 µm. 100 ng/ml of recombinant murine Reg3β, 100 ng/ml of recombinant murine CXCL2 as positive control and PBS as control were added to the lower chamber each. After 2.5 hours, cells migrated to the lower chamber were fixed with 4 % PFA

and stained with DAPI for 10 minutes at RT. Cell migration towards PBS, Reg3 β and CXCL2 was assessed from cell counts from five random field per well compared to control cells.

5.2.10 Incucyte® Systems for Live-Cell Imaging

Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were cultured in 24-well plates in culture medium with 250 nM IncuCyte™ Cytotox Green Reagent. Next, cells were stimulated with Reg3 β in different concentrations: 10 ng/ml, 100 ng/ml and 1000 ng/ml. Control cells were treated with PBS. The number of Cytotox Green positive dead neutrophils was recorded using the Incucyte™ System every hour for a total of 6 hours.

5.2.11 LDH assay

The CytoTox 96® Non-Radioactive Cytotoxicity Assay from Promega based on the release of lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) was performed with isolated primary neutrophils from the bone marrow, blood, spleen and peritoneum according to the manufacturer's instructions. The cells were cultured in 24-well plates and stimulated with 100 ng/ml of recombinant murine Reg3 β . Control cells were equally stimulated with 100 ng/ml IFN γ or PBS, respectively.

LDH release was measured after 15 min, 30 min, 45 minutes and 60 minutes post stimulation by transferring 3 x 50 μ l supernatant of each sample into a 96-well plate. The samples were incubated with the LDH substrate tetrazolium salt, which is converted into a red formazan product in the presence of LDH. The absorbance signal of the red formazan product was recorded at 490 nm in the Hidex sense microplate reader, which is proportional to the number of dead cells.

5.2.12 ATP assay

The CellTiter-Glo® Luminescent Cell Viability Assay from Promega based on the quantitation of intracellular ATP was performed with casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum according to the manufacturer's instructions. The cells were cultured in 24-well plates and stimulated with 100 ng/ml of recombinant murine Reg3 β . Positive and negative controls were stimulated with 100 ng/ml IFN γ and PBS, respectively. Intracellular ATP content was measured after 30 minutes and 60 minutes post stimulation by adding the CellTiter-Glo® Reagent to cells resulting in cell lysis and release of intracellular ATP. The assay reaction mix comprises Ultra-Glo™ recombinant luciferase catalyzing the mono-oxygenation from luciferin in the presence of ATP. The generation of the luminescent signal was measured by the luminometer from LI-COR Biosciences® and is proportional to the number of viable cells.

5.2.13 Transmission electron microscopy

Sample preparation of Reg3 β stimulated neutrophils and transmission electron microscopy (TEM) was performed in cooperation with PD Dr. Ulrich Gärtner at the University of Giessen.

TEM was conducted with casein-elicited and bone-marrow-derived neutrophils. The cells were adjusted to 1×10^6 cells/ml culture medium and stimulated with 100 ng/ml Reg3 β in 1.5 ml Eppendorf tubes. Control cells were equally treated with PBS. After 15 min, 30 minutes and 60 minutes the cells were spun down at 300 x g for 10 min, 4 °C and the cell pellet was resuspended in 4 % PFA. The samples were post-fixed in 1 % osmium tetroxide in dH₂O and dehydrated in an ethanol series (25%, 50%, 70%, 90% and 100%) as described by ([Dhandapani et al., 2019](#)). Thereafter, the cells were embedded in agar 100 resin (Agar scientific Ltd. UK) and cut in ultrathin section using the ultramicrotome from Leica. Image acquisition was done with the Zeiss EM 902.

5.2.14 Scanning electron microscopy

Sample preparation of Reg3 β stimulated neutrophils and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) was performed in cooperation with Anika Seipp at the University of Giessen.

Casein-elicited peritoneal and bone marrow-derived neutrophils were cultured on fibronectin coated cover glasses of 10 mm diameter. When attached, cells were stimulated with 100 ng/ml Reg3 β or PBS as control for 15 min, 30 minutes and 60 min. Next, the cells were fixed in 2.5 % glutaraldehyde and post-fixed in 1 % osmium tetroxide. Following a washing step in dH₂O, the samples were dehydrated in an ethanol series, dried by critical point CO₂ treatment and subsequently sprayed with gold as described by ([Zhou et al., 2019](#)). Cells were examined using the Phillips XL30 SEM.

5.2.15 Negative stain electron microscopy

Negative stain electron microscopy (EM) was conducted in cooperation with Saskia Mehlmann and Dr. Özkan Yildiz from the MPI of Biophysics in Frankfurt. Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were disrupted by nitrogen decompression to obtain membrane vesicles. This detergent-free method breaks the cells via pressure and shear stress whereupon cell membrane fragments spontaneously form vesicles. About 50 million neutrophils were collected in 5 ml disruption buffer and placed in the pressure vessel. Nitrogen cavitation was performed at 40 bar for 10 min. EGTA was directly added to the cavitate to a final concentration of 1.5 mM before centrifugation at 400 x g for 15 min, 4 °C to remove nuclei and unbroken cells. Next, the vesicles were pelleted by ultracentrifugation at 43 000 x g for one hour. To further purify the vesicle solution from unwanted debris, the vesicles were applied on a gravity size exclusion column. The

column was manually filled with P-6 resin by adding ~1.5 ml of the resin and centrifugation at 1500 x g for 2 min. The vesicles were added on top of the resin and centrifuged at 1500 x g for 2 minutes. The flow through contains the vesicles whereas the debris remains in the column. Synthetic vesicles composed of 85 % zwitterionic phospholipid (PC) and 15 % acidic phospholipid (PS) were kindly provided by Saskia Mehlmann according to the protocol of Mukherjee et al. ([Mukherjee et al., 2014](#)). The purified vesicles and synthetic liposomes were stimulated with 300 ng of recombinant Reg3 β for 30 minutes. Pre-coated carbon grids were prepared for sample application by placing it into a glow charging unit for 30 seconds at 10 mÅ. Two μ l of sample were applied to the grid and allowed to adsorb to the grid surface for 30 seconds. The liquid was removed by touching the edge of the grid with a sheet of filter paper. Next, two μ l of 1% uranyl acetate staining reagent were placed on the grid and immediately removed with the sheet of filter paper. This step was repeated twice ([van Pee et al., 2017](#)). Imaging of potential pore formation by Reg3 β was performed with the TecnaiTM Spirit TEM from FEITM.

5.2.16 Western blot analysis

To extract total proteins, adherent neutrophil cultures from the peritoneum were lysed in extraction buffer containing protease inhibitors, homogenized by sonification and centrifuged at 10 000 x g for 5 minutes to remove insoluble material. Protein concentration was determined using the DC protein assay from BioRad. Finally, dithiothreitol (DTT) at a final concentration of 40 mM was added to the samples followed by a boiling step at 99 °C for 1 min. Protein samples were mixed with 5X Laemmli buffer and bromphenol blue in a ratio of 3:2 and boiled at 99 °C for 1 min. Approximately 15 μ g of protein were applied on Gradient NuPAGE 4-12 % Bis-Tris gels and SDS-PAGE was run at 75 V for 15 minutes and 165 V until the bromphenol blue reached the bottom of the gel. Separated proteins were blotted to a nitrocellulose membrane at 30 V for 2 hours and visualized afterwards by incubating the membrane with RedAlertTM for 5 min. After blocking with 5 % skim milk for 1 hour at RT, the membrane was immunolabeled with specific primary antibodies of interest in 3 % skim milk solution overnight (O/N) at 4°C. The membranes were washed with TBS-T and incubated with the corresponding secondary antibodies conjugated to horseradish peroxidase (HRP) for 1 hour at RT. Visualization was performed by using SuperSignal West Femto Maximum Sensitivity Substrate in a ChemiDocTM MP System. Quantification of protein expression was based on the mean volume pixel density of the corresponding bands ([Lörchner, Widera, et al., 2018](#)).

5.2.17 Intracellular ROS measurement

Intracellular ROS levels were detected using the cell permeable dyes Dihydrorhodamine (DHR) 123 and the chloromethyl derivative of 2',7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein diacetate (CM-H₂DCFDA) (Rothe et al., 1988). In the presence of ROS, both dyes are oxidized resulting in the formation of fluorescent adducts that are trapped inside the cell and thereby serve as intracellular ROS indicator. Cells from WT mice were stimulated with 100 ng/ml of recombinant murine Reg3 β for 15 min, 30 min, 45 minutes and 60 minutes and labeled with 150 μ M DHR123 or rather 1 μ M CM-H₂DCFDA in medium 10 minutes before Reg3 β stimulation stop. Cells were washed with cold PEB, centrifuged for 10 minutes at 300 x g, 4 °C and resuspended in PEB. Intracellular ROS levels were determined by analyzing the mean fluorescent intensity (MFI) of both dyes by flow cytometry. For the investigation of the role of NOX2 in Reg3 β -mediated cell death of neutrophils, intracellular ROS levels were detected in peritoneal neutrophils from *Nox2*^{-/-} mice after Reg3 β stimulation using DHR123 as described above. Additionally, casein-elicited neutrophils WT mice were pretreated with 1 μ M diphenyleneiodonium chloride (DPI) (Buck et al., 2019) for 10 minutes at 37 °C, washed with medium, centrifuged for 10 minutes at 300 x g, RT and resuspended in medium for intracellular ROS analysis with DHR123.

5.2.18 Assessment of lysosomal membrane permeabilization

Lysosomal membrane permeabilization (LMP) was investigated in casein-elicited peritoneal neutrophils post Reg3 β stimulation and cardiac neutrophils post-MI (Figure 7).

The galectin puncta assay detects the translocation of cytosolic galectin to leaky lysosomes (Aits et al., 2015) resulting in a dot like pattern of galectin. Peritoneal cells were cultivated and stimulated with 100 ng/ml of recombinant murine Reg3 β for 30 minutes at 37 °C. Control cells were treated with PBS. The cells were washed with PBS and fixed with 4% PFA for 10 minutes at RT followed by permeabilization with 0.1 % Triton X-100 for 10 minutes at RT. Neutrophils were stained for intracellular Galectin-1 and the lysosomal marker LAMP1 (J. W. Chen, Murphy, Willingham, Pastan, & August, 1985). Galectin translocation was analyzed using fluorescence microscopy.

The release of lysosomal enzymes upon LMP into the cytosol was examined by analyzing the co-localization of cathepsin B and D with primary lysosomes in peritoneal neutrophils. The cells were cultivated and stimulated with Reg3 β for 30 minutes at 37 °C. Subsequently, the cells were washed with PBS, fixed with 4% PFA for 10 minutes at RT and permeabilized with 0.1 % Triton X-100 for 10 minutes at RT followed by an intracellular staining for cathepsin B, D and the lysosomal marker LAMP1. Co-localization of lysosomal enzymes and lysosomes as well as diffuse

staining of cathepsins throughout the entire cells upon LMP ([Boya et al., 2003](#)) was determined by fluorescence microscopy.

The lysosomotropic dyes acridine orange (A/O) and LysoTracker (LTR) Green accumulate in acidic organelles as lysosomes and endosomes ([Repnik, Česen, & Turk, 2016](#)). Upon destabilization of the lysosomal membrane the lysosomal pH increases resulting in a decreased A/O and LTR staining. Peritoneal neutrophils were cultivated and stimulated with Reg3 β for 15 min, 30 min, 45 minutes and 60 min. 15 minutes before stimulation stop the cells were labeled with 5 μ g/ml A/O at 37 °C. After washing the cells with PEB, pale cells that lost their A/O staining were quantified using flow cytometry. Cardiac neutrophils were isolated from infarcted hearts at day 1, 2, 4 and 7 post-MI and labeled with 5 μ g/ml A/O for 15 minutes at 37 °C and 50 nM LTR for 30 minutes at 37 °C. The cells were washed and stained for CD45, CD11b, CD64 and Ly6G to identify neutrophils. Decrease of lysosomal staining was assessed with flow cytometry.

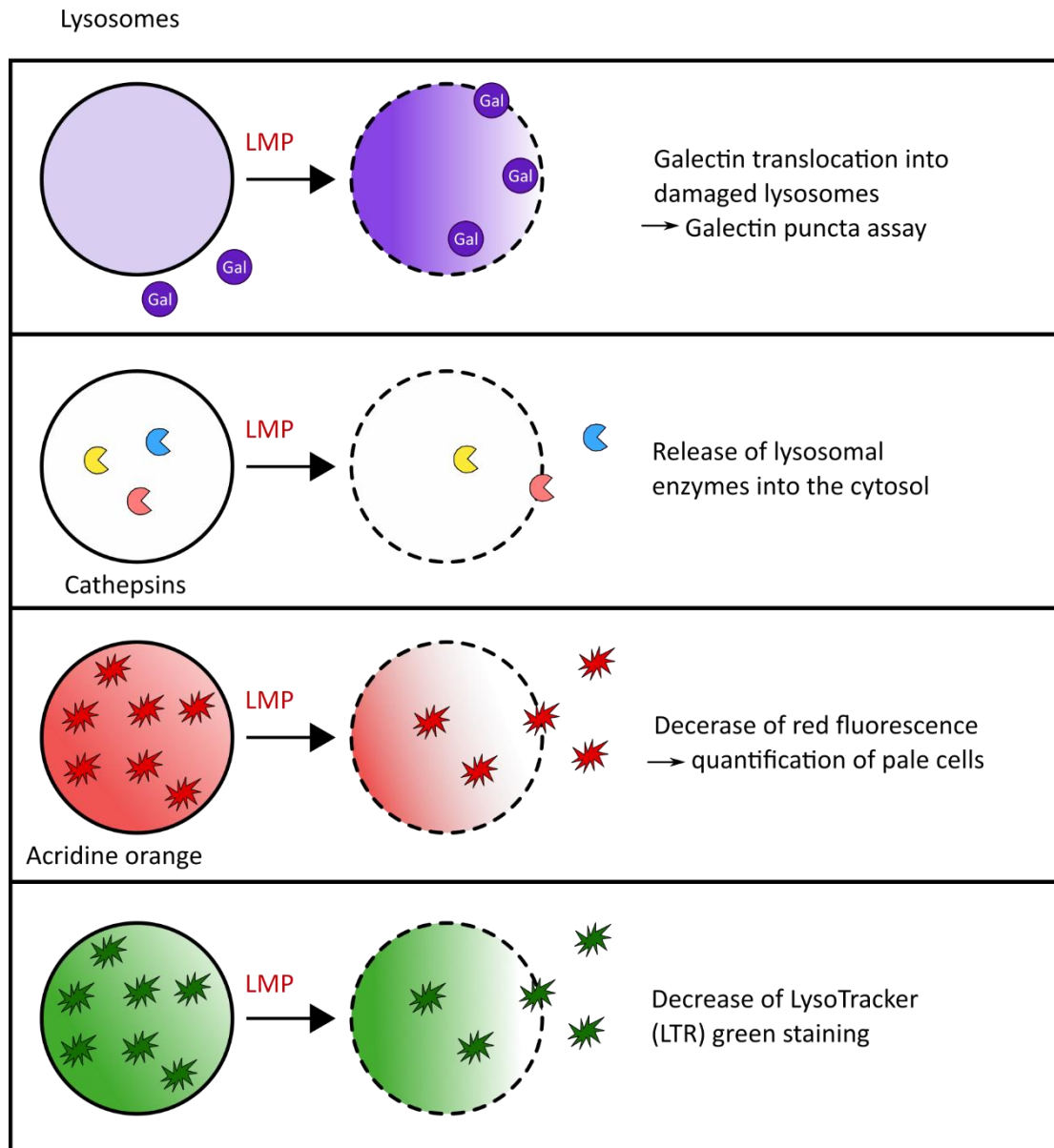


Figure 7: Methods to detect LMP

The scheme illustrates different methods to investigate the destabilization of the lysosomal membrane. The translocation of galectins to leaky lysosomes (= galectin puncta assay), the release of cathepsins from lysosomes into the cytosol, the quantification of pale cells that lost their A/O staining and finally, the decrease of the LTR staining. (Adapted from (F. Wang, Gómez-Sintes, & Boya, 2018))

5.2.19 Deglycosylation of glycoproteins

Reg3 β binding to carbohydrate residues of peptidoglycans on the cell surface of neutrophils was assessed by treating the cells with different exoglycosidases which break the glycosidic bond at terminal carbohydrate residues prior to Reg3 β treatment. Casein-elicited peritoneal neutrophils were cultured and treated with α 2-3,6,8,9 Neuraminidase A (8 mU), β 1-4 Galactosidase S (16 mU), β -N-acetylhexosaminidase f (6 mU) and α 1-2,3,6 Mannosidase (0.04 mU) for 30 minutes at

37 °C. The protein deglycosylation mix II contains all enzymes and reagents to remove the most common N- and O-linked glycans and was applied as positive control. Following enzymatic pretreatment, the medium was removed, the cells were cultured in fresh cell culture medium and stimulated with Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) for additional 30 minutes at 37 °C. Next, Reg3 β -mediated cell death upon binding was estimated by LDH assay as described above. Basal cytotoxicity of deglycosidases was excluded by former dose-response studies.

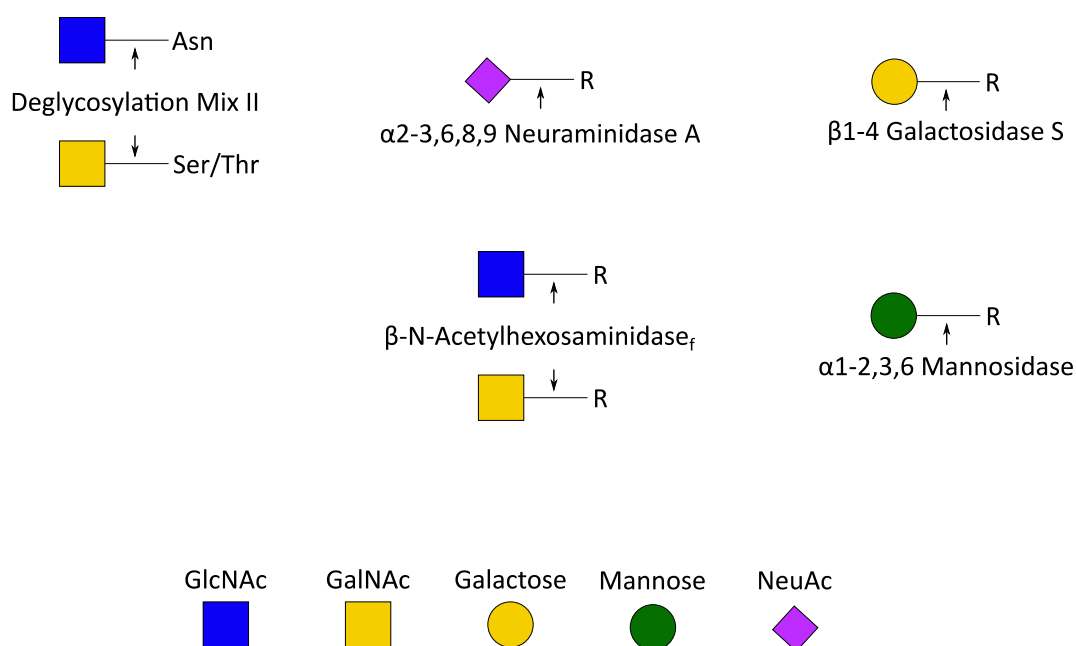


Figure 8: Protein deglycosidases

To assess the binding capacities of Reg3 β to carbohydrate residues of glycoproteins on the cell surface of neutrophils, the cells were pre-treated with different exoglycosidases prior to Reg3 β stimulation. The protein Deglycosylation Mix II contains all enzymes and reagents to remove common N- and O-linked glycans without protein degradation. N-linked glycans are removed from asparagin residues on the core protein by PNGase F. O-linked glycans are removed by a series of exoglycosidases from the serine or threonine residue of the core protein. The exoglycosidase α 2-3,6,8,9 Neuraminidase A cleaves linear and branched terminal neuraminic acid residues, β 1-4 Galactosidase S catalyzes the hydrolysis of terminal β 1-4 linked galactose residues from oligosaccharides, β -N-acetylhexosaminidase_f cleaves β -N-acetylgalactosamine and glucosamine residues and α 1-2,3,6 Mannosidase removes α 1-2, α 1-3 and α 1-6 linked mannose residues from glycans.

Asn = Asparagine; Ser/Thr = Serine or Threonine; R = residue; GlcNAc = N-acetylglucosamine; GalNAc = N-acetylgalactosamine; NeuAc = neuraminic acid

5.2.20 Carbohydrate competition binding assay

A competitive binding assay of Reg3 β interacting with neutrophils in the presence of the mono-, di- and polysaccharides was performed with the aim to inhibit Reg3 β binding to its potential targets on the cell surface. N-acetylneuraminic acid (400 mM), Galactose (400 mM), N-acetylgalactosamine (100 mM), lactose (400 mM), N-acetylglucosamine (400 mM), Glucose (400 mM), α -methyl mannoside (400 mM) and mannan (30 mM) were each incubated with Reg3 β for 30 minute sat 37 °C. Next, the Reg3 β -carbohydrate mix was added to cultured primary neutrophils isolated from the peritoneum for 30 minutes at 37 °C. Inhibition of Reg3 β binding was assessed by LDH assay as described before. Basal cytotoxicity of inhibitors was saccharides by former dose-response studies.

5.2.21 Inhibition of endocytosis

Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were cultured and treated with inhibitors for different endocytosis pathways. The inhibitors and their mechanism of action are summarized in Table 1.

Inhibitor	Mechanism	Pathway
Chlorpromazine	Causes the depletion of adaptor proteins and clathrin from the plasma membrane (L. H. Wang, Rothberg, & Anderson, 1993).	Clathrin-mediated endocytosis
Monodansylcadaverine (MDAC)	Affects the function of clathrin and clathrin-coated vesicles (Schlegel, Dickson, Willingham, & Pastan, 1982).	Clathrin-mediated endocytosis
Methyl- β -cyclodextrin (M β CD)	Cholesterol extraction from the membrane (Holz, 1974 ; Kilsdonk et al., 1995).	Caveolae-mediated endocytosis
Nystatin	Cholesterol extraction from the membrane (Holz, 1974 ; Kilsdonk et al., 1995).	Caveolae-mediated endocytosis
Imipramine	Inhibits membrane ruffle formation (H. P. Lin et al., 2018).	Macropinocytosis

Table 1: Endocytosis inhibitors and their mechanism of action

Clathrin-mediated endocytosis was inhibited with chlorpromazine (1 μ M) and MDAC (1 μ M), caveolae-mediated endocytosis with M β CD (1 μ M) and nystatin (1 μ M) and micropinocytosis with imipramine (1 μ M). All inhibitors were added to the cultured cells and incubated for 30 minutes at 37 °C directly followed by stimulation with Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) for 30 minutes at 37 °C. Inhibition of endocytosis was monitored by measuring LDH release. Basal cytotoxicity of inhibitors was excluded by former dose-response studies.

5.2.22 In vivo efferocytosis assay

Efferocytosis of neutrophils by macrophages in the peritoneum was analyzed using the pH sensitive rhodamine-based pHrodo™ Red dye according to the manufacturer's instructions. This cell labeling dye is non-fluorescent at neutral pH but turns bright red upon acidification in the phagosome following phagocytosis. Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were labeled with 1 µg/ml pHrodo™ Red for 30 minutes at 37°C. After washing with PEB buffer, the cells were incubated with 100 ng/ml Reg3β or PBS as control for another 30 minutes at 37 °C. The cells were washed with PEB and 15 million labeled neutrophils, Reg3β stimulated and unstimulated control cells, respectively, were injected i.p. into a WT mouse with accumulated macrophages in the peritoneum 4 days after thioglycollate injection. After one hour, the peritoneal cells were isolated and stained for CD11b and F4/80 to identify macrophages. Efferocytosis of neutrophils by macrophages was determined by the quantification of RFP⁺ macrophages with flow cytometry.

5.2.23 In vitro phagocytosis assay

Phagocytotic activity of primary macrophages from the peritoneum was detected using FITC labeled IgG-coated latex beads from Cayman. Isolated and purified macrophages from the peritoneum were cultivated in 6-well plates. When adherent, the cells were stimulated with 100 ng/ml Reg3β and IgG FITC latex beads were directly added to the cultured cells and incubated for 2.5 hours at 37 °C. Control cells were equally treated with 1 µg/ml LPS or PBS. Cells were detached using accutase and centrifuged at 300 x g for 10 min, 4°C. The cell pellet was resuspend in PEB buffer and trypan blue was added to quench surface bound IgG FITC followed by another washing step with PEB buffer. Phagocytotic activity was determined by analyzing FITC positive macrophages with flow cytometry.

5.2.24 Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis and graphical illustrations were elaborated using Graph Pad Prism 5.0. Differences between two groups were assessed using the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Houston test. For the comparison of more than two groups One-Way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's post test was applied. Two-Way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's correction was used for the comparison of two independent groups over time. Correlation analysis was performed with linear regression and calculating Pearson's correlation coefficient r_p or Spearman correlation coefficient r_s as indicated. A p-value of $p < 0.05$ was considered significant in all evaluations unless otherwise indicated.

6 Results

6.1 The role of Reg3 β in restricting neutrophil persistence after the onset of myocardial infarction

6.1.1 Neutrophil persistence in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice is restricted to the heart after the onset of myocardial infarction

Initially, the dynamics of neutrophil persistence within the infarcted heart in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice compared to WT mice was investigated. Kinetic studies concerning the number of neutrophils in WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice subjected to permanent LAD Ligation were performed with flow cytometry (Figure 9). Neutrophils were defined as CD45^{hi} CD11b^{hi} CD64^{lo} Ly6G^{hi} as shown in the gating scheme (Figure 9A) (Lörchner, Widera, et al., 2018). In line with previous findings (N. G. Frangogiannis, 2012; Yan et al., 2013) a massive and rapid accumulation of neutrophils at the site of injury of approximately 3×10^3 cells/mg infarct tissue was observed within the first two days post-MI equally in both mouse strains. At day 4, however, the neutrophil numbers in WT mice substantially declined to $\sim 0.8 \times 10^3$ cells/mg whereas in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice the numbers remained significantly higher with 2×10^3 cells/mg, confirming the results of Lörchner et al. (Loerchner et al., 2015). At day 7, neutrophils were equally cleared/removed from the infarcted heart in both mouse strains (Figure 9B).

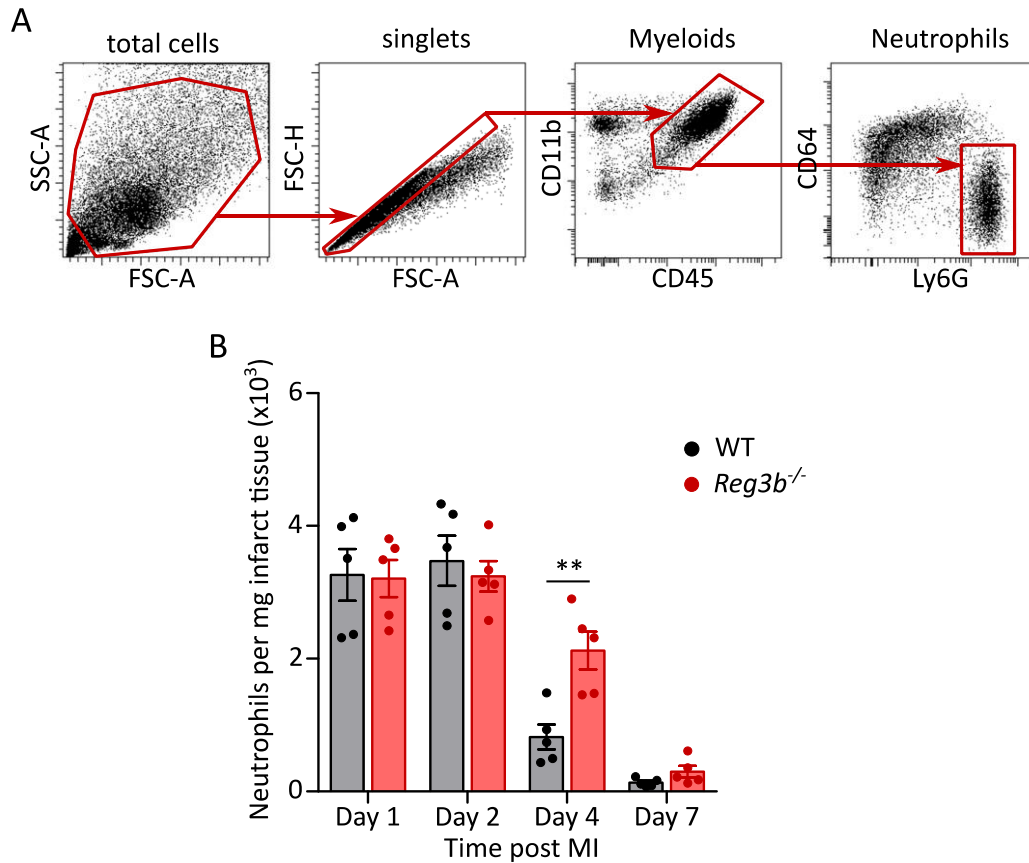


Figure 9: Neutrophils persist in the ischemic heart at day 4 post-MI in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice

(A) Infarcted hearts were enzymatically digested and cardiac leukocytes were isolated. By plotting the forward scatter (= cell size) against the sideward scatter (= cell granularity), the total cell population is defined and small cell debris is excluded. Following doublet exclusion, the leukocyte marker CD45 and myeloid marker CD11b identify the myeloid cell population. Finally, the cell population negative for the macrophage marker CD64 and positive for the neutrophil marker Ly6G represents the cardiac neutrophils. FSC = forward scatter; SSC = sideward scatter; A = area; H = height

(B) Purified cell suspensions from the infarct area of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice at day 1, 2, 4 and 7 post LAD ligation were analyzed by flow cytometry. Neutrophils were identified as CD45^{hi} CD11b^{hi} CD64^{lo} Ly6G^{hi}. Cells per mg infarct tissue were calculated by normalization of the percentage of neutrophils to the weight of infarct tissue. Data are shown as mean \pm SEM and are representative of eight independent experiments. WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} n = 5. **p \leq 0.01 was determined by regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-tests.

Under inflammatory conditions, granulopoiesis in the bone marrow is increased and high numbers of neutrophils are released into the circulation and migrate to the site of injury (Kolaczowska & Kubes, 2013). In order to dissect the impact of Reg3 β deficiency on neutrophils from the periphery, the number of cells from the bone marrow, blood and heart of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice were compared by means of flow cytometry 4 days post-MI (Figure 10). Bone marrow-derived and blood neutrophil subsets were identified as CD45^{hi} C11b^{hi} CD115^{lo} Ly6G^{hi}

and determined as cells per femur+tibia and cells/ml blood, respectively. Cardiac neutrophils were identified and counted as described above. Interestingly, the persistence of neutrophils at day 4 post-MI due to the loss of *Reg3b*^{-/-} was not observed in the bone marrow and peripheral blood but restricted to the heart after the onset of MI.

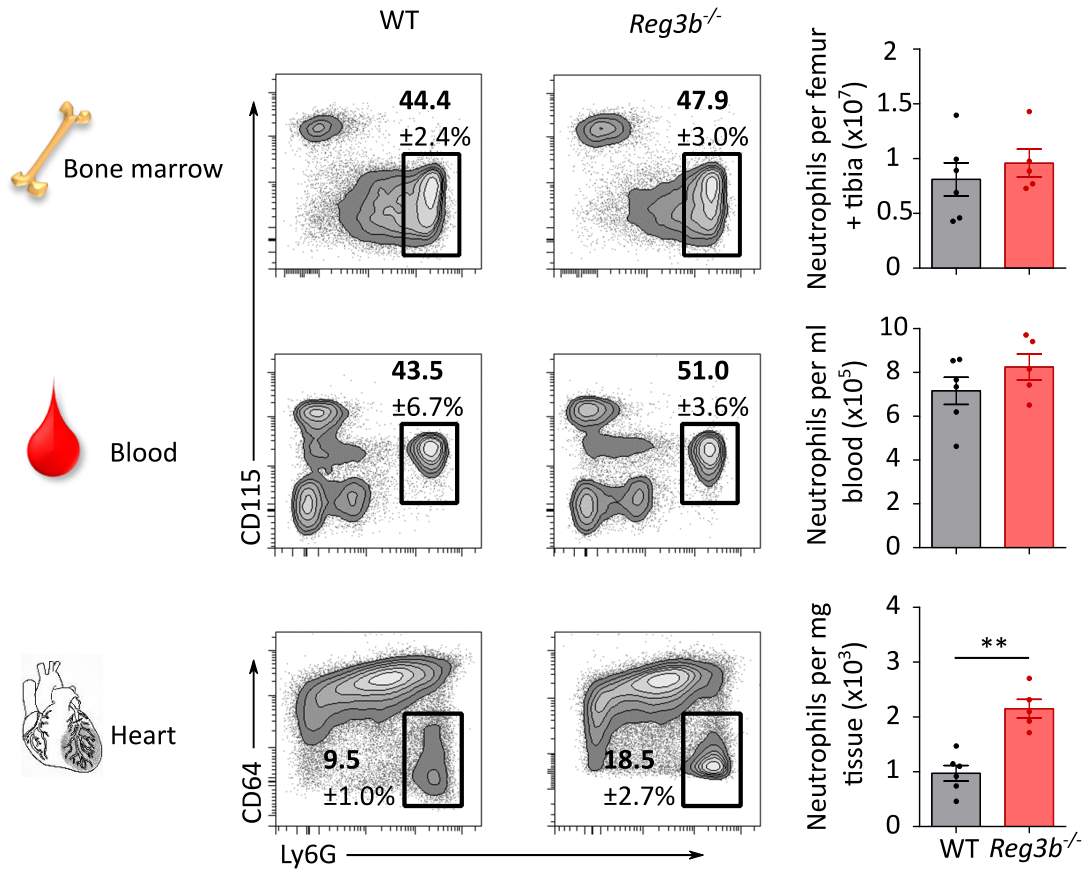


Figure 10: Neutrophil persistence in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice is restricted to the heart post-MI

Flow cytometric quantification of neutrophils derived from the bone marrow, peripheral blood and cardiac infarct tissue of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice at day 4 post-MI. Representative contour plots from individual WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice display gated neutrophil populations from indicated tissues. Percentage of cells are shown as mean ± SEM. Corresponding calculations of total neutrophils per femur and tibia, per ml blood or per mg infarct tissue are shown as mean ± SEM. Data represent the results of two independent experiments. WT n = 6, *Reg3b*^{-/-} n = 5. **p ≤ 0.01 was determined by two-tailed Mann-Whitney test.

6.1.2 *Reg3β* has no impact on neutrophil migration

Since *Reg3β* functions as chemoattractant for macrophages, a transwell migration assay was performed to examine potential chemotactic effects of *Reg3β* on neutrophils. As expected,

neutrophils did not exhibit an increased migration rate in response to Reg3 β compared to control cells, whereas the migration activity in response to the positive control CXCL2 was ~ 4.6 fold higher (Figure 11).

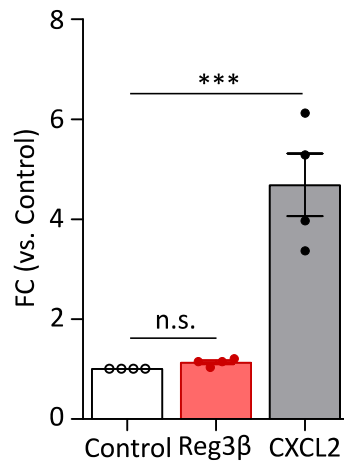


Figure 11: Neutrophils do not exhibit migratory effects in response to Reg3 β

Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were cultured on transwell inserts to analyze cell migration in response to Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) by counting the cells migrated on the cell culture plate after 2.5 hours. CXCL2 (100 ng/ml) was used as positive control. Data represent the fold change of cell migration in response to Reg3 β or rather CXCL2 vs. control and are shown as mean \pm SEM of two individual experiments. n = 4. ***p \leq 0.001; n.s. = not significant was determined by one-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's post test.

The migration assay implies a different role and effector mechanism of Reg3 β for neutrophils than for macrophages and reaffirms the concept of its role in neutrophil clearance from the site of inflammation.

6.1.3 Loss of Reg3 β promotes an accumulation and persistence of neutrophils within the remote zone of the infarcted heart

Reg3b^{-/-} mice display an increased mortality rate due to an increased incidence of fatal acute cardiac rupture (Loerchner et al., 2015). The continuous secretion of tissue degrading enzymes by persisting neutrophils may contribute or even expand to further tissue damage (Haslett, 1992; Zimmerli, Seligmann, & Gallin, 1986). To verify the role of neutrophils on left ventricular wall instability in Reg3b^{-/-} mice, 3-dimensional (3D) imaging using light sheet microscopy combined with in-vivo antibody labeling was applied. Antibodies directed against the neutrophils marker Ly6G, endothelial cell marker CD31 and collagen type III were used.

A permanent LAD ligation provokes the collapse of coronary arteries inside the infarct area visible by a CD31^{neg} area in the first days post-MI (Merz et al., 2019). At day 7, the infarct area was identified based on the collagenous content of the mature scar. The cellular distribution within the whole heart was assessed by calculating and comparing the number of neutrophils located in the infarct zone (IZ) and the non-infarcted remote zone (RZ) of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice. On top, the determination of heart and infarct surface area provided information about the effect of Reg3 β on heart dilation and expansion of infarct injury.

The size of the heart after the onset of MI as well as the size of the infarction area was not affected by the loss of Reg3 β (Figure 12A). Similar to previous findings obtained with flow cytometry, detection of neutrophils in the whole heart revealed a persistence at day 2 post-MI in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice (Figure 12B). However, considering RZ and IZ separately, differences became apparent. The dynamics of neutrophil accumulation within the CD31^{neg} or rather Collagen type III^{pos} IZ after permanent LAD Ligation was similar in both mouse strains despite a slight but not significant increase of neutrophils in the IZ of *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice at day 1 and 2 (Figure 12B).

In contrast, mice deficient of Reg3 β depicted an increased infiltration of neutrophils in the RZ peaking at day 2 and 4 with $\sim 2 \times 10^{-4}$ neutrophils/ μm^2 RZ in *Reg3b*^{-/-} vs. $\sim 1 \times 10^{-4}$ neutrophils/ μm^2 RZ in WT mice. At day 7, WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice displayed a similar reduction of neutrophils in the RZ with $\sim 3 \times 10^{-5}$ in *Reg3b*^{-/-} and $\sim 2 \times 10^{-5}$ in WT mice (Figure 12B).

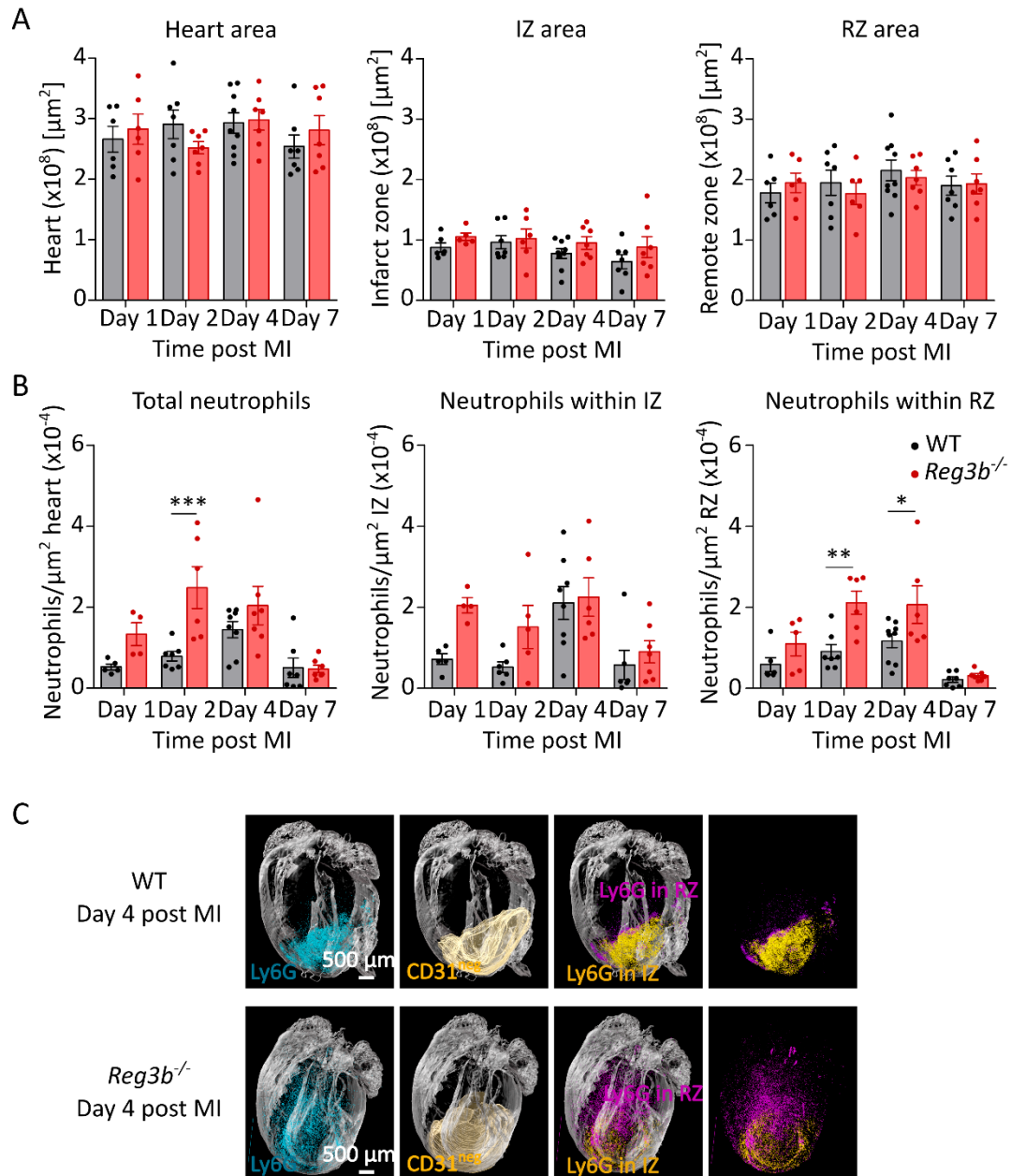


Figure 12: Neutrophils accumulate in the remote zone of *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice at day 2 and 4 post-MI

Infarcted hearts of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice were stained for the neutrophil marker Ly6G conjugated to AF647, the endothelial cell marker CD31 conjugated to AF790 and collagen type III conjugated to AF790, respectively, by in vivo antibody staining i.v. prior to ECI clearing. Image processing and analysis was done with Imaris. (A) The heart size was calculated by means of the autofluorescence of the heart itself. The IZ was identified by CD31^{neg} area at day 1, 2 and 4 and by collagen^{pos} area at day 7. The RZ was calculated by subtracting the IZ from the heart surface. (B) Total neutrophil counts, neutrophils located in the CD31^{neg} or rather Collagen type II^{pos} IZ and in the CD31^{pos} or rather Collagen type II^{neg} RZ were normalized to the heart surface area, IZ or rather RZ area. Data are shown as mean ± SEM and represent the results of eight independent experiments. WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} n = 4-8. *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01 was determined by regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-tests. (C) Representative 3D reconstruction display the total neutrophils (cyan) within the whole heart (grey) as well as neutrophils located in the IZ (yellow) and neutrophils located in the RZ (magenta) from individual WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice at day 4 post-MI.

To evaluate the inflammatory activity of persisting neutrophils in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice, the expression of neutrophilic granule proteins was analyzed in the IZ and RZ of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice at day 4 post-MI. The expression of NE, MPO, NGAL and MMP-9 was increased in the RZ of *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice compared to WT mice. Contrary, the IZ displayed equal expression levels of all proteins (Figure 13).

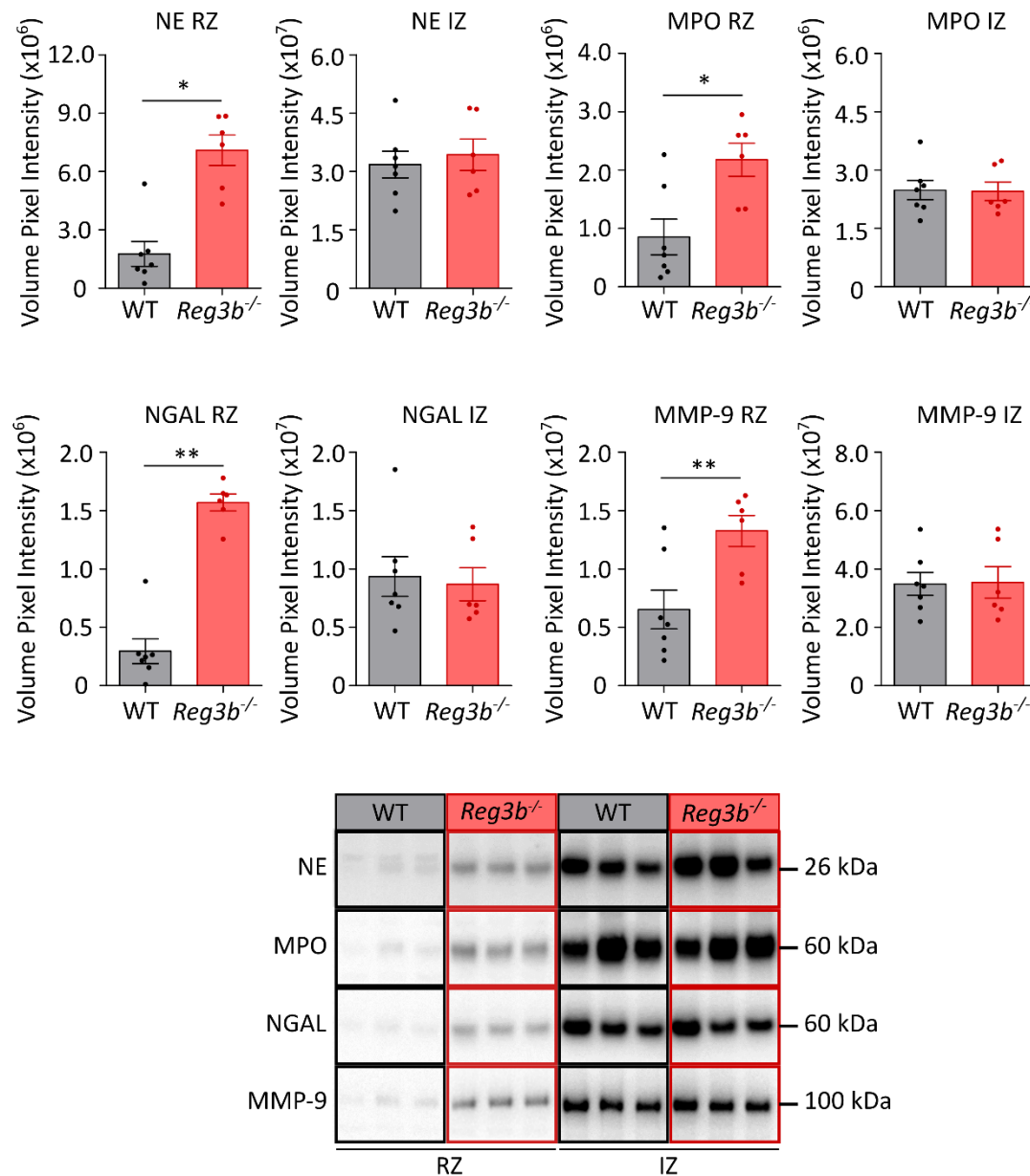


Figure 13: Loss of Reg3 β results in an increased expression of neutrophilic granule proteins in the remote zone at day 4 post-MI

Western blot analysis of neutrophilic granule protein expression in infarcted heart samples of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice fractionated for RZ and IZ 4 days post MI. Quantitative analysis of the volume pixel intensity of NE, MPO, NGAL and MMP-9 in the RZ and IZ of myocardial tissue and representative western blots. Data are shown as mean \pm SEM. WT n = 7, *Reg3b*^{-/-} n = 6. *p \leq 0.05; **p \leq 0.01 was determined by two-tailed Mann-Whitney test.

Conclusively, genetic loss of Reg3 β caused a neutrophil persistence restricted to the heart at day 4 after permanent LAD ligation in mice without affecting the heart and infarct size. Three-dimensional imaging of the whole heart revealed an infiltration of persisting neutrophils in the RZ of *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice. Furthermore, the accumulation of inflammatory active neutrophils in the intact myocardium is believed to be associated with cardiac rupture observed at day 4 post-MI (Loerchner et al., 2015).

6.1.4 Reg3 β co-localizes with neutrophils in the ischemic heart

The findings so far have shown the impact of Reg3 β deficiency on the overall presence and spatial distribution of neutrophils within the ischemic heart. The direct contribution of Reg3 β on neutrophil clearance required further investigations. Immunohistochemical analysis of infarcted hearts of WT mice 4 days post-MI revealed a close proximity of infiltrated neutrophils and Reg3 β within the border zone of the infarct area suggesting a direct interaction (Figure 14). Moreover, fluorescence labelling of cardiomyocytes and Reg3 β is indicative of cellular origin of Reg3 β by stressed but not fully necrotic cardiomyocytes within the ischemic area as already stated by Lörchner et al. (Loerchner et al., 2015).

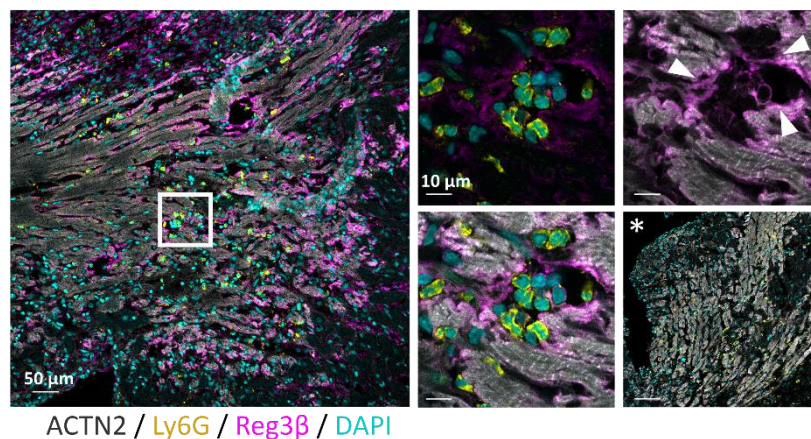


Figure 14: Reg3 β and neutrophils directly interact in the infarcted tissue

Frozen tissue sections of WT infarcted hearts 4 days post-MI were stained for cardiomyocytes with sarcomeric actinin (grey), neutrophils with Ly6G (yellow), Reg3 β (magenta) and counterstained with DAPI (cyan). Representative images demonstrate a direct interaction of Reg3 β and infiltrated neutrophils within the border zone. White arrows indicate the secretion of Reg3 β by stressed cardiomyocytes at the border zone. * displays a frozen tissue section of an infarcted heart 4 days post-MI of *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice as staining control for Reg3 β . Scale bar as indicated.

Next, 3D imaging using light sheet microscopy combined with in vivo antibody staining was applied to validate the direct interplay of neutrophils and Reg3 β in the whole heart. 3D reconstructions of infarcted hearts stained for Ly6G and Reg3 β displayed a comparable distribution of neutrophils and Reg3 β in the left ventricle (Figure 15A), whereas the non-infarcted control heart did not indicate any neutrophil infiltration or Reg3 β expression as expected (Figure 15C). To further examine the direct interaction of neutrophils and Reg3 β , both signals were merged in 2D image stacks. A partial co-localization of cells and protein was observed primarily in the border zone of the left ventricular wall (Figure 15B). By plotting the intensity signals of Ly6G and Reg3 β obtained from the 3D images, against each other in a density scatter plot, a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.55 confirmed the moderate co-localization. An additional cross correlation analysis verified the accuracy of the co-localization analysis. By shifting the Ly6G image pixel by pixel in x/y (grey) and z (black) direction relative to the Reg3 β image and calculating the respective Pearson's R, the correlation coefficients constantly decreased (Figure 15D).

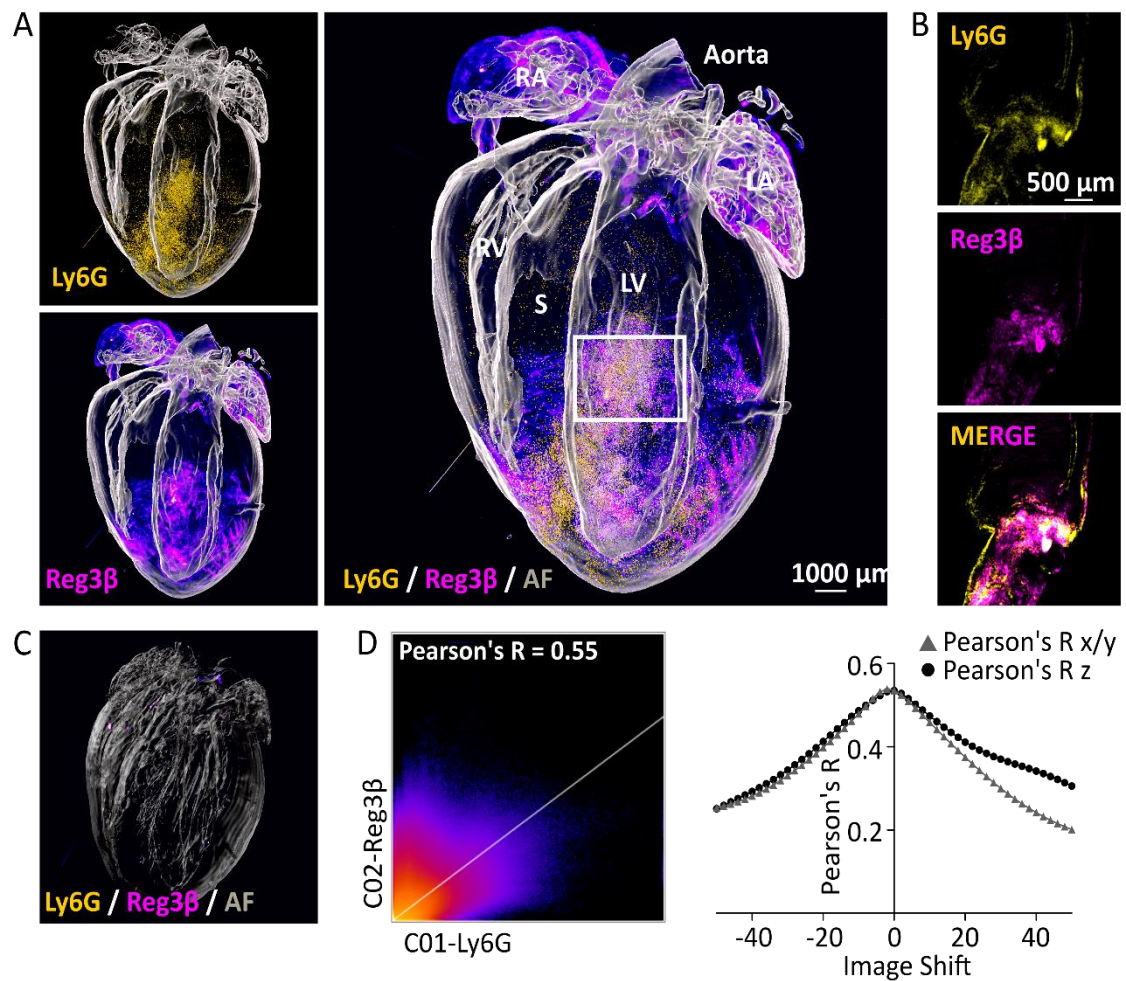


Figure 15: Reg3β and neutrophils partially co-localize within the ischemic heart

Infarcted hearts of adult WT mice were stained for the neutrophil marker Ly6G conjugated to AF647 and Reg3β conjugated to AF790 in vivo prior to ECI clearing 4 days post-MI. (A) Representative 3D reconstructions show the distribution of neutrophils (Ly6G in yellow) and Reg3β (magenta) within the whole heart. (B) The enlarged image section of the left ventricular wall visualizes the partial co-localization of neutrophils and Reg3β (white) in the border zone. (C) A non-infarcted WT heart was used as staining control. (D) Co-localization analysis using the Coloc2 plugin from ImageJ displays the scatter plot of the Ly6G and Reg3β signal intensities and the calculated correlation coefficient by linear regression. The cross correlation function was obtained by plotting the respective Pearson's R as a function of the pixel shift in x/y and z direction. WT n = 3.

Taken together, these results indicate that cardiomyocyte-derived Reg3β co-localized with and bound to a certain proportion of infiltrating neutrophils in the ischemic heart, assuming a direct impact on neutrophil accumulation and clearance by Reg3β.

6.2 Underlying mechanisms of Reg3 β -mediated neutrophil clearance

6.2.1 Reg3 β binding to neutrophils coincides with decreased cell viability

Following the evidence of co-localizing neutrophils and Reg3 β in the injured heart, a direct binding of Reg3 β to cardiac neutrophils was further examined by flow cytometry. Reg3 β was detected via antibody staining on the cell surface of cardiac neutrophils from day 1 until day 7 post-MI. According to the isotype control, Reg3 β bound to a subpopulation of neutrophils that constantly increased from 11 % at day 1 up to 20 % at day 7. In this context, the Reg3 β unbound or Reg3 β negative binding subpopulation significantly decreased from 88 % at day 1 to 70 % at day 7 post-MI (Figure 16).

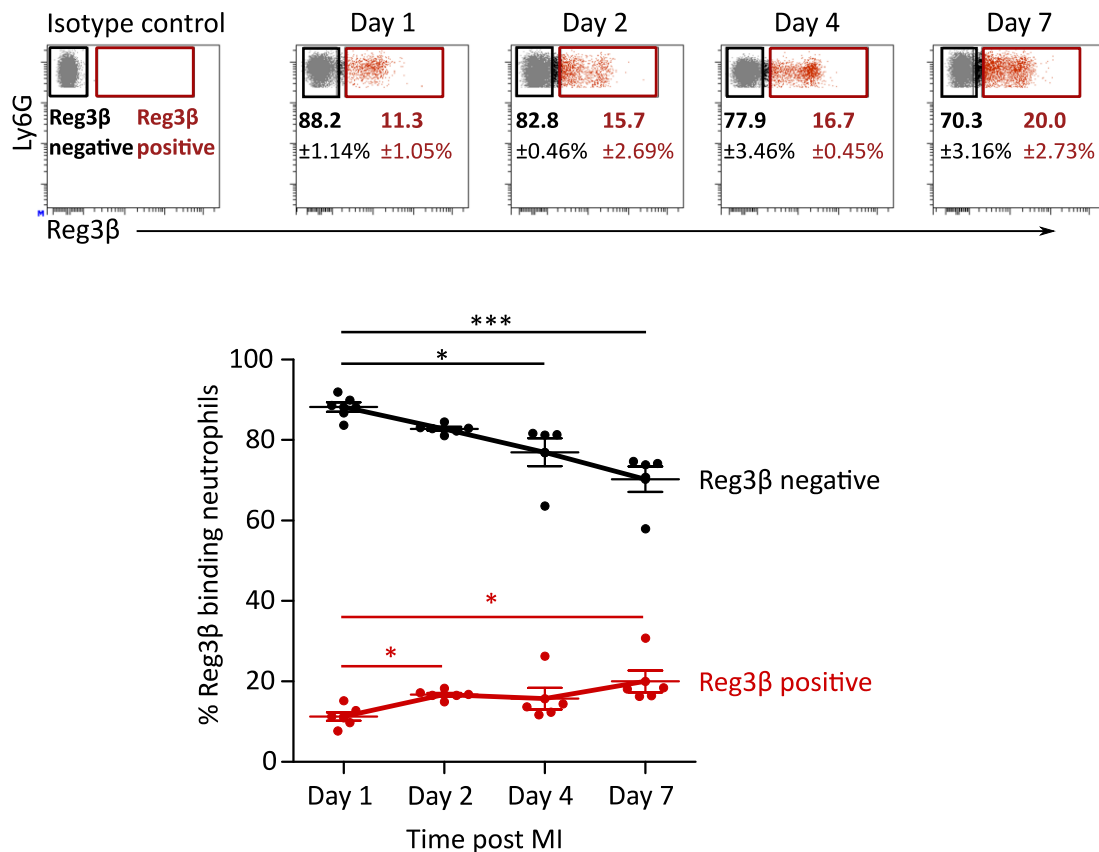


Figure 16: The Reg3 β -binding neutrophil subpopulation increases over time post-MI

Infarcted hearts of WT mice were digested at indicated time-points post-MI and analyzed with flow cytometry. Neutrophils were identified as CD45^{hi} CD11b^{hi} CD64^{lo} Ly6G^{hi} and examined for cell surface binding of Reg3 β at each time-point. Representative dot plots display the dynamics of Reg3 β positive and negative binding neutrophil population post-MI. The gate determining the Ly6G^{hi} and Reg3 β -binding population was set according to the corresponding isotype control of the Reg3 β antibody. Percentage of cells are shown as mean \pm SEM of four independent experiments. Day 1 and 2 n = 6; day 4 and 7 n = 5. *p \leq 0.05; ***p \leq 0.001 was determined by regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-tests.

Regarding the potential role of Reg3 β on neutrophil removal, both populations were analyzed for apoptotic and necrotic cell death events 4 days post-MI using flow cytometry with the intention to study the consequences of Reg3 β binding to the cell viability of neutrophils (Figure 17). Due to the changes in permeability of the cell membrane during apoptosis, the cyanine dye Po-Pro1 can enter the cell whereas the cell impermeant dye 7AAD cannot (Idziorek, Estaquier, De Bels, & Ameisen, 1995; D. Wlodkowic, Telford, Skommer, & Darzynkiewicz, 2011). Cells with a pronounced loss of membrane integrity are permeable to both, Po-Pro1 and 7AAD, and are termed aponecrotic (Idziorek et al., 1995; Donald Wlodkowic, Skommer, & Pelkonen, 2007). The relative number of Po-Pro1^{neg} and 7AAD^{neg} viable neutrophils was around 80 % in the Reg3 β negative binding population and dropped to ~ 40 % in the Reg3 β positive-binding population. The percentage of Po-Pro1^{pos} and 7AAD^{pos} aponecrotic neutrophils was 40 % in the Reg3 β positive-binding fraction but nearly absent with ~ 1.5 % in the Reg3 β negative binding population. Contrary, the relative number of Po-Pro1^{pos} and 7AAD^{neg} apoptotic cells was comparable with ~15 % in both populations, suggesting that Reg3 β binding induces aponecrotic cell death but not apoptosis to cardiac neutrophils (Figure 17).

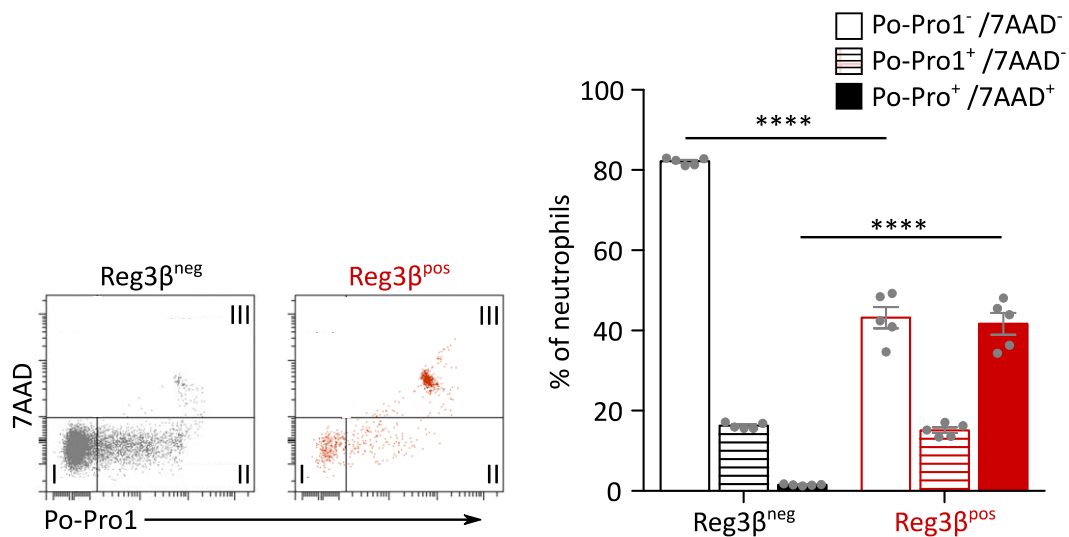


Figure 17: Reg3 β positive-binding neutrophils display an increased aponecrotic phenotype

Infarcted hearts of WT mice were enzymatically digested 4 days post-MI and analyzed for neutrophil cell death by flow cytometry. Neutrophils were identified as CD45^{hi} CD11b^{hi} CD64^{lo} Ly6G^{hi} and cell death was determined using the apoptotic marker Po-Pro1 and the necrotic marker 7AAD. Representative dot plot illustrates the identification of viable cells in quadrant I (Po-Pro1^{neg} / 7AAD^{neg}), apoptotic cells in quadrant II (Po-Pro1^{pos} / 7AAD^{neg}) and aponecrotic cells in quadrant III (Po-Pro1^{pos} / 7AAD^{pos}) of Reg3 β negative binding (grey) and Reg3 β positive-binding cardiac neutrophils (red). Relative numbers of viable, apoptotic and aponecrotic neutrophils are shown as mean \pm SEM. N = 5. ****p \leq 0.0001 was determined by regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-tests.

Next, a correlation analysis was performed to test the association between Reg3 β binding to cardiac neutrophils and the concurrence of aponecrotic cell death. Relative numbers of Reg3 β negative binding or rather Reg3 β positive-binding neutrophils were plotted against the respective numbers of Po-Pro1^{pos} / 7AAD^{pos} aponecrotic cells obtained from day 1, 2, 4 and 7 post-MI (Figure 18). Reg3 β positive-binding neutrophils exhibited a strong and positive correlation of 0.63 (Pearson's), or rather 0.78 (Spearman's) with aponecrotic cells. In contrast Reg3 β negative binding neutrophils negatively correlated with aponecrotic neutrophils with a correlation coefficient of -0.24 (Pearson's) and -0.11 (Spearman's), respectively, substantiating that Reg3 β binding is associated with the induction of an apoptosis-necrosis like cell death to a subpopulation of cardiac neutrophils.

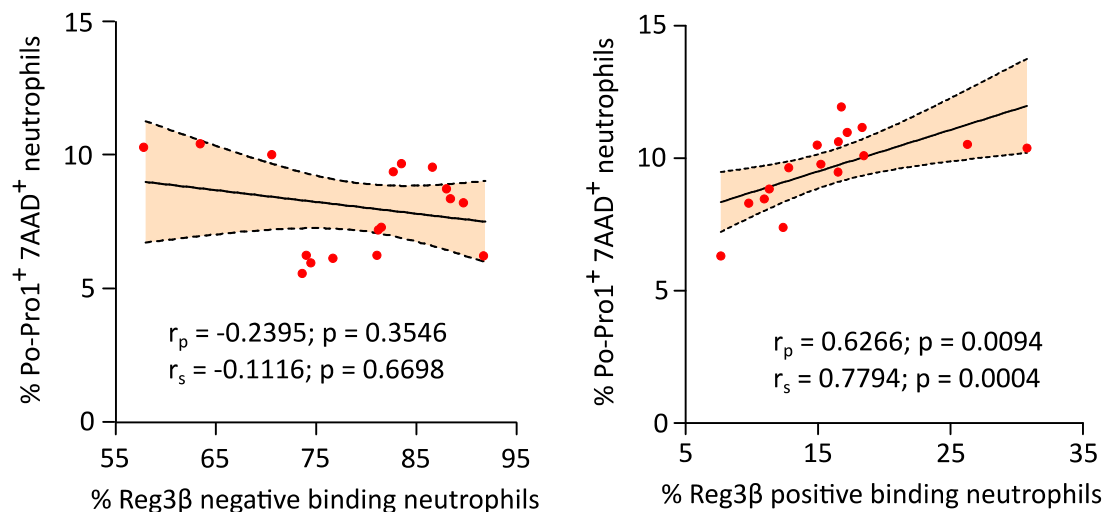


Figure 18: Reg3 β binding correlated with the induction of aponecrosis in neutrophils

Reg3 β negative and positive binding neutrophils obtained from infarcted hearts of WT mice at day 1, 2, 4 and 7 post-MI were plotted against Po-Pro1^{pos} / 7AAD^{pos} aponecrotic neutrophils. Pearson's correlation coefficient r_p and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient r_s were calculated by linear regression with 95 % confidence band of the best-fit line.

Based on the findings of an increasing Reg3 β positive-binding neutrophil population, it can be concluded that the proportion of aponecrotic neutrophils also increases over time and thus Reg3 β directly contributes to the removal of neutrophils during cardiac healing.

Considering the correlation between cell death and Reg3 β binding, neutrophil cell death was studied in mice deficient for Reg3 β compared to WT mice after the onset of MI using the same apoptotic and necrotic cell death marker as described before (Figure 19). With regard to apoptosis (Po-Pro1^{pos} / 7AAD^{neg}) both mouse strains displayed the same kinetics over time post-

MI, strengthening the assumption that Reg3 β induced neutrophil cell death is different from apoptosis. The percentage of apoptotic cells slightly increased from ~10 % apoptotic cells at day 1 to ~17 % at day 2 followed by a constant decrease back to ~12 % until day 7. Aponecrotic cell death events, however, constantly increased from ~10 % at day 1 up to ~20 % at day 7 in WT mice but remained nearly at the same level between 11 % and 14 % in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice demonstrating a significant reduced neutrophil cell death in Reg3 β deficient mice after LAD ligation.

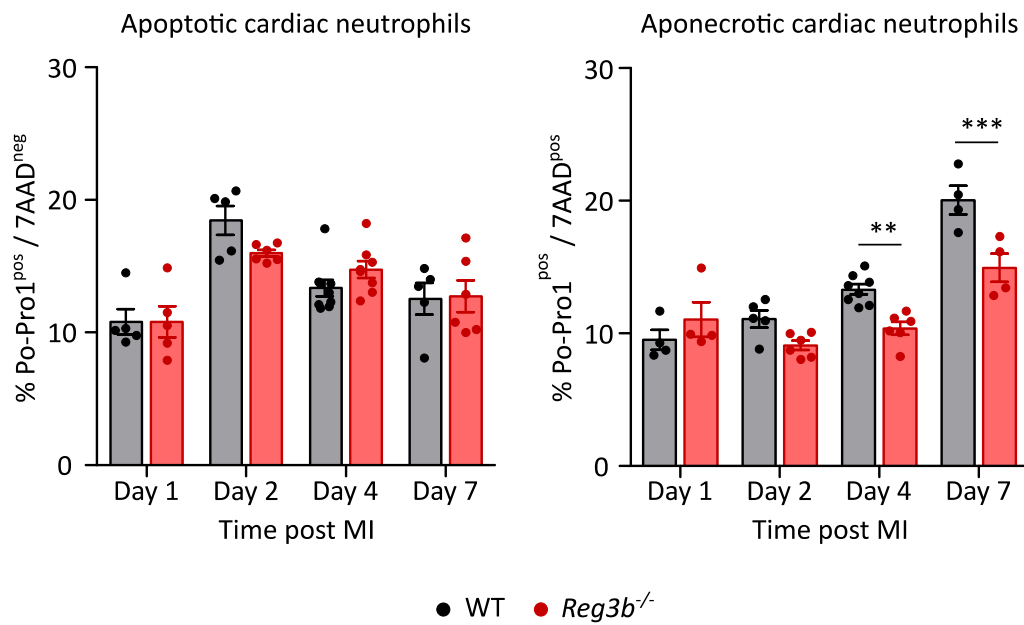


Figure 19: Loss of Reg3 β coincides with a reduced aponecrotic cell death in cardiac neutrophils

Infarcted hearts of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice were enzymatically digested at day 1, 2, 4 and 7 post-MI and analyzed for apoptotic and aponecrotic cell death events in cardiac neutrophils using Po-Pro1 and 7AAD. Neutrophils were identified as CD45^{hi} CD11b^{hi} CD64^{lo} Ly6G^{hi}. Percentage of Po-Pro1^{pos} / 7AAD^{neg} apoptotic and Po-Pro1^{pos} / 7AAD^{pos} aponecrotic cardiac neutrophils are shown as mean \pm SEM of four independent experiments. WT, *Reg3b*^{-/-} n = 4 - 6. **p \leq 0.01, ***p \leq 0.001 was determined using regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-test.

In summary, loss of Reg3 β results in the persistence of neutrophils restricted to the heart after the onset of LAD ligation. Neutrophils of *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice mainly accumulated in the RZ within the ischemic heart presumably leading to destabilization of the left ventricular wall. Additionally, Reg3 β co-localizes and binds to a subpopulation of cardiac neutrophils inducing aponecrotic cell death, hence, contributing to neutrophil clearance from the site of inflammation.

6.2.2 Reg3 β has a direct cytotoxic effect on inflammatory active neutrophils

Based on the findings in vivo, the direct impact of Reg3 β on neutrophil clearance was further examined by different in vitro cytotoxicity assays with primary neutrophils from the peritoneum. The usage of peritoneal neutrophils instead of cardiac cells provides the advantage of a very large cell yield that can be used simultaneously for several assays. Furthermore, the induction of a peritonitis by casein injections mainly enriches inflammatory active cells reflecting the situation in the infarcted heart.

Peritoneal neutrophils, labeled with the cyanine nucleic acid dye Cytotox Green, were stimulated with Reg3 β in different doses and neutrophil viability was assessed. The relative number of Cytotox green positive dead cells was measured every hour using life imaging (Figure 20A). Surprisingly, the highest concentration of Reg3 β with 1000 ng/ml exhibited the weakest cytotoxicity. On the other hand, the lower Reg3 β concentrations of 10 and 100 ng/ml revealed a similar progress with a strong increase of dead cells within the first 60 minutes followed by a continuous but moderate increase in the next hours. However, only stimulation with 100 ng/ml Reg3 β demonstrated a significant cytotoxicity in the first hours post stimulation, suggesting this concentration as optimum for the induction of neutrophil cell death. Hence, all further in vitro experiments were conducted with 100 ng/ml Reg3 β .

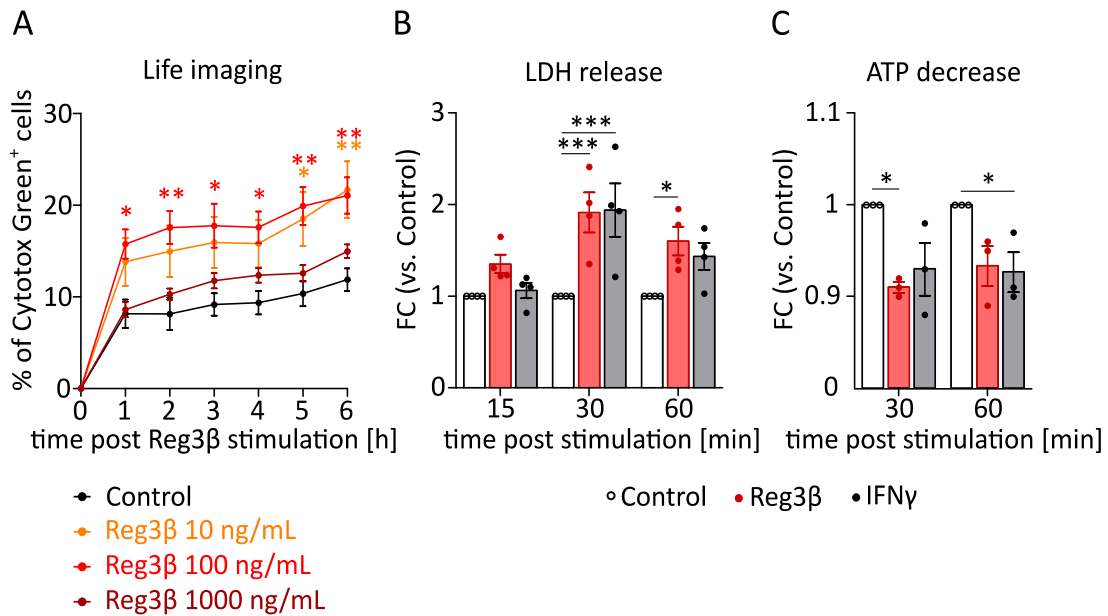


Figure 20: Reg3β has a direct and fast cytotoxic effect on neutrophils

(A) Casein-elicited peritoneal neutrophils were cultivated and stimulated with Reg3β in different concentrations (10, 100 and 1000 ng/ml), control cells were treated equally with PBS. Cell death was determined by counting the relative number of Cytotox Green positive cells every hour in a total of 6 hours using life imaging. Percentage of dead cells is shown as mean ± SEM of three independent experiments. N = 4. (B) LDH release of peritoneal neutrophils was measured after Reg3β (100 ng/ml) treatment for 15, 30 and 60 minutes. (C) Decrease of cell viability was determined based on intracellular ATP levels after 30 and 60 minutes of Reg3β (100 ng/ml) stimulation. IFNγ (100 ng/ml) was used as positive control. Cell death is represented as fold change of treated to control cells and shown as mean ± SEM of two independent experiments. Control, Reg3β, IFNγ n = 3-4. *p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01, ***p ≤ 0.001 was determined using regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-test.

Life imaging of dead cells over time revealed an extensive increase within the first hour. Therefore, the following cytotoxicity assays focused on early cell death events that take place within 60 minutes.

LDH, a soluble cytosolic enzyme, is present in most eukaryotic cells. A key feature of cells undergoing apoptosis, necrosis or other forms of cellular death constitutes the release of this enzyme into the extracellular milieu (Decker & Lohmann-Matthes, 1988; Korzeniewski & Callewaert, 1983). Assessment of LDH release demonstrated a significant increase of neutrophil death after 30 minutes (~1.8 fold) and 60 minutes (~1.6 fold) of Reg3β stimulation. (Figure 20B). Next, the cell viability assay based on the measurement of intracellular ATP was applied. Cytosolic ATP, a hallmark of healthy cells, is decreasing during cell death (Maehara, Anai, Tamada, & Sugimachi, 1987). In concurrence with the LDH assay, neutrophils treated with Reg3β for 30 minutes displayed a significant decrease of intracellular ATP levels (~ 0.9 fold) (Figure 20C). All three assays demonstrated a direct cytotoxicity of Reg3β to peritoneal neutrophils in

vitro comparable to the positive control IFN γ (Nandi & Behar, 2011). Noteworthy, Reg3 β -mediated induction of neutrophil cell death is a very fast process that occurs within 30 minutes post stimulation.

Previous results displayed a neutrophil persistence in Reg3 β deficient mice restricted to the heart (Figure 10). However, after the onset of myocardial infarction Reg3 β expression is upregulated in the ischemic heart but also in the serum of mice (Lörchner, Widera, et al., 2018) assuming peripheral neutrophils, that differ in their maturation and activation status, might also be targeted by Reg3 β . Thus, the impact of Reg3 β on cell viability of resting neutrophils from the bone marrow (Itou, Collins, Thoren, Dahlgren, & Karlsson, 2006), mature but inactive or unprimed neutrophils from the blood (Mayadas, Cullere, & Lowell, 2014) and mature neutrophils from the reservoir in the spleen (Deniset, Surewaard, Lee, & Kubes, 2017; Puga et al., 2011) were further examined using the LDH assay. Remarkably, none of the neutrophil populations were responsive to Reg3 β and exhibited similar levels of cell death as control cells over time except for splenic neutrophils, which showed a slight but not significant increase of LDH release after 15 minutes. Bone marrow-derived, splenic and blood neutrophils treated with IFN γ though, died within 60 minutes as expected (Figure 21).

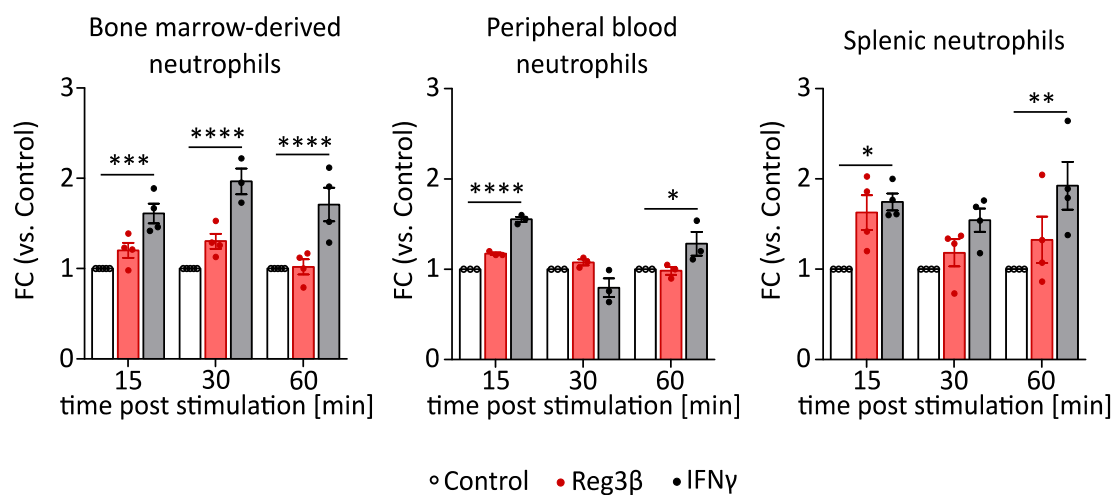


Figure 21: Resting and inactive neutrophils are not responsive to Reg3 β

Neutrophils from the bone marrow, blood and spleen were treated with Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) and IFN γ (100 ng/ml) as positive control. Cell death was monitored by analyzing LDH release after 15, 30 and 60 minutes. Data represent the fold change of treated to control cells and are shown as mean \pm SEM of two individual experiments. Control, Reg3 β , IFN γ n = 3-4. *p \leq 0.05, **p \leq 0.01, ***p \leq 0.001, ****p \leq 0.0001 was determined using regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-test.

In contrast to casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum, bone marrow-derived, peripheral blood and splenic neutrophils are not fully active (Devi, Laning, Luo, & Dorf, 1995; Tansho, Abe, & Yamaguchi, 1994) indicating that Reg3 β exerts cytotoxic effects only on inflammatory active neutrophils.

Since the cytotoxicity of Reg3 β is manifested in its binding to neutrophils, the binding capacities of Reg3 β to bone marrow-derived, blood, and splenic neutrophils were analyzed by flow cytometry. As expected, Reg3 β did not bind to any neutrophils populations neither in mice post-MI nor in healthy mice providing an explanation for the lack of cytotoxicity (Figure 22).

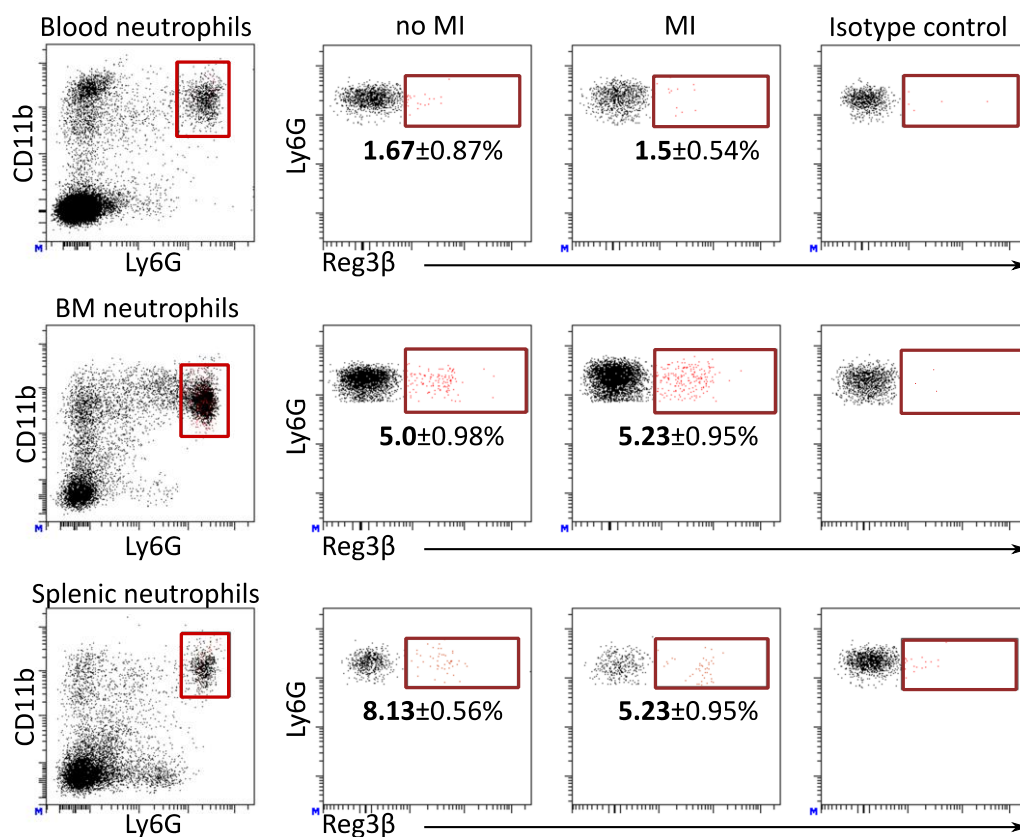


Figure 22: Reg3 β does not bind to blood, bone marrow and splenic neutrophils post-MI

Neutrophils from the peripheral blood, bone marrow and spleen was harvested from WT mice 4 days post-MI and stained for Reg3 β . Blood, bone marrow-derived and splenic neutrophils from mice without MI were used as controls. Neutrophils were identified as CD45⁺ CD11b⁺ and Ly6G⁺ populations. The gate for the Reg3 β binding neutrophil population was set according to the isotype controls. Dot plots are representative of three individual experiments. Percentages of the Reg3 β positive neutrophil populations are shown as mean \pm SEM.

In addition to the in vitro cytotoxicity assays, morphological changes after Reg3 β treatment were assessed over time using transmission electron microscopy (TEM) and scanning electron microscopy (SEM). Unstimulated control cells from the peritoneum displayed the typical phenotype of mature and activated neutrophils including a highly granular cytosol filled with vesicles, a segmented or multilobulated nucleus (Fliedner, Cronkite, Killmann, & Bond, 1964; Schudel, 1965) and an amoeboid-like morphology with extended pseudopods (Ekpenyong, Toepfner, Chilvers, & Guck, 2015; Fernández-Segura, García, Santos, & Campos, 1995; Yap & Kamm, 2005). Immature and inactive bone-marrow neutrophils appeared more round, filled with less granules and no extended pseudopods demonstrating the phenotypic diversity of neutrophils during maturation and activation (Figure 23) (L. G. Ng et al., 2019). Upon Reg3 β stimulation, however, there were prominent changes in the morphology of peritoneal neutrophils. Already after 15 minutes, the cells featured cytoplasmic vacuolization, a nearly complete loss of granules and membrane ruffling. The longer the stimulation time, the more dramatic the phenotypic changes became. After 60 minutes of Reg3 β stimulation, the intracellular content appeared dissolved but membrane integrity was still maintained (Figure 23).

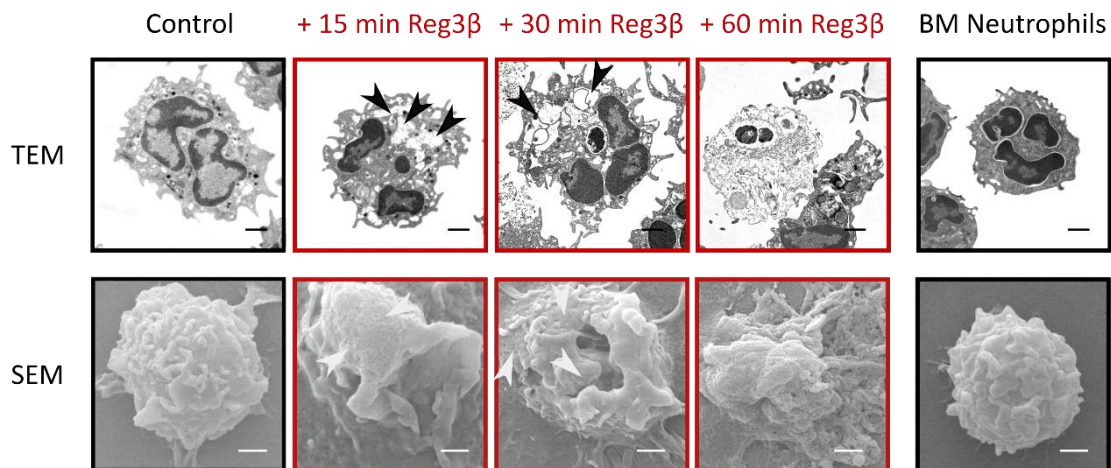


Figure 23: Reg3 β treatment of peritoneal neutrophils causes morphological changes

Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) and scanned electron microscopy (SEM) of peritoneal neutrophils after 15, 30 and 60 minutes of Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) stimulation. Compared to unstimulated control cells (black frame), Reg3 β stimulated cells (red frame) exhibited a decrease in cytosolic granules, formation of cytoplasmic vacuolization (black arrows) and membrane ruffling (white arrows) until complete collapse of intracellular structures without losing membrane integrity. Bone marrow-derived neutrophils were isolated from femur and tibia of WT mice. Images are representative of two individual experiments. Scale bar = 1 μ m.

Summarized, Reg3 β -mediated cell death is characterized by cytoplasmic changes as vacuolization and loss of intracellular content with a sustained membrane integrity. Yet, the cells do not exhibit key characteristics of apoptosis as the formation of apoptotic bodies (Falcieri et al., 2000; Gorczyca, Melamed, & Darzynkiewicz, 1993), rounding of the nucleus and condensation of nuclear heterochromatin (Kennedy & DeLeo, 2009; Savill et al., 1989) confirming the results regarding apoptotic cell death in peritoneal and cardiac neutrophils by flow cytometry.

6.2.3 Reg3 β does not activate common cell death pathways

Although morphological analysis assumed a Reg3 β -mediated cell death mechanism different from apoptosis, neutrophils are known to undergo different cell death pathways including necroptosis, NETosis, pyroptosis and autophagy (Dąbrowska, Jabłońska, Iwaniuk, & Garley, 2019). Therefore, the expression of various markers specific for distinct cell death pathways was analyzed in cultured neutrophils post Reg3 β stimulation. Namely, the expression of caspase-8, cleaved caspase-3 and -7 to detect the activation of apoptosis (Savill et al., 1989; Yamashita et al., 1999), the phosphorylation of MLKL and RIP3 during necroptosis (X. Wang, He, Liu, Yousefi, & Simon, 2016), cleaved caspase-1 (Miao et al., 2010; Ryu et al., 2017) and caspase-11 (Sun et al., 2018) for the induction of pyroptosis and microtubule-associated protein 1A/1B-light chain 3 (LC3) (Mitroulis et al., 2010) and Beclin-1 (Lv et al., 2017; Sharma, Simonson, Jondle, Mishra, & Sharma, 2017) for autophagy. Finally, citrullinated histone H4 and H3 were detected in the supernatant of neutrophil cultures for the detection of NETosis (Brinkmann et al., 2004) (Figure 24).

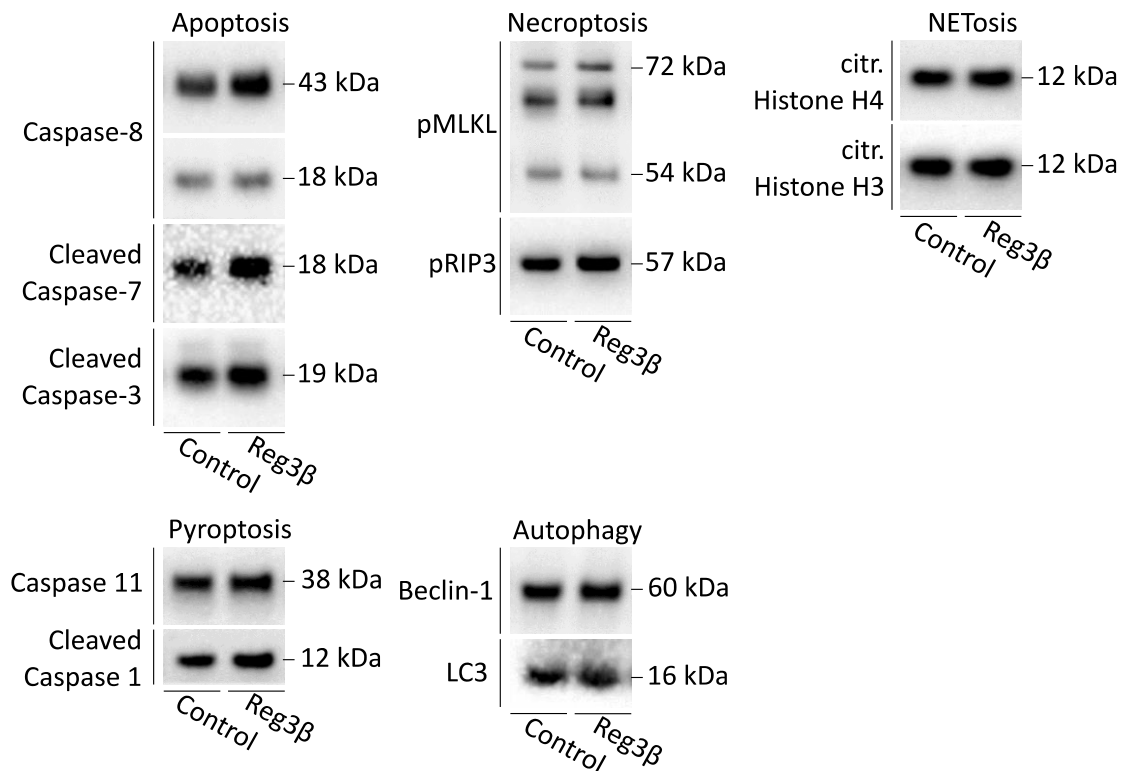


Figure 24: Common neutrophil cell death mechanisms are not activated upon Reg3 β treatment

Western blot analysis of cell death markers for apoptosis, necroptosis, pyroptosis, autophagy and NETosis in lysates of peritoneal neutrophils after 60 minutes of Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) stimulation. Blots are representative of two individual experiments.

Unexpectedly, none of the cell death pathways appeared to be regulated upon Reg3 β stimulation, assuming a different mechanism for the induction of cell death than apoptosis, necroptosis, NETosis, pyroptosis or autophagy.

Necrosis was long thought to be a non-regulated cell death thereby disadvantageous for tissue homeostasis and wound healing. New findings could show that necrosis comprises signs of regulated processes such as ATP depletion, increased ROS generation, proteolysis of calpains and cathepsins and mitochondrial dysfunction ([Festjens, Vanden Berghe, & Vandenabeele, 2006](#)). Both, in vivo and in vitro data suggest a neutrophil cell death different from apoptosis with morphological signs for a regulated necrosis by means of the incorporation of the cell impermeant dye 7AAD of neutrophils binding to Reg3 β and the rapid cell death induction 30 minutes after Reg3 β stimulation associated with cytoplasmic vacuolization and dissolving of intracellular content. Consequently, the cells were examined for additional characteristics, which further substantiate and define the necrotic cell death.

6.2.4 Reg3 β does not induce cell lysis by pore formation in the plasma membrane of neutrophils

Lectins of the Reg3 family in the intestine are bactericidal proteins for Gram-positive bacteria providing a spatial segregation of the gut microbiota and the intestinal epithelium (Vaishnava et al., 2011). The human Reg3 β orthologue HIP/PAP recognizes the bacteria by binding peptidoglycan carbohydrates (Vaishnava et al., 2011) and kills the bacteria by the formation of a membrane permeabilizing pore (Mukherjee et al., 2014). Our data revealed a fast and necrotic-like cell death of neutrophils after Reg3 β treatment. Hence, potential pore formation in neutrophil membrane vesicles obtained by nitrogen cavitation was investigated by negative stain EM (Figure 25). Although some structures resembled pores (dashed circles) they were equally found on Reg3 β stimulated (red box) and untreated control vesicles (black box). The pore formation of HIP/PAP was shown on synthetic liposomes whose composition was similar to the bacterial cell surface (Mukherjee et al., 2014). However, when using the same liposomes as control, identical pore-like structures were observed in both, control and Reg3 β stimulated conditions.

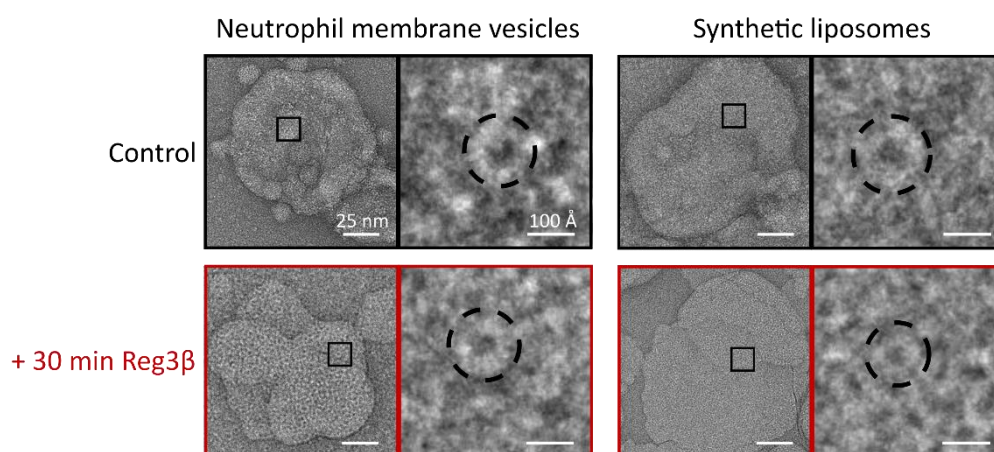


Figure 25: Negative stain EM did not reveal pore formation by Reg3 β on neutrophil membranes

Neutrophil membrane vesicles were obtained by nitrogen cavitation of casein-elicited peritoneal neutrophils. The vesicles were purified by size exclusion chromatography prior to Reg3 β stimulation (300 ng) for 30 minutes. Control vesicles remained untreated. Synthetic liposomes with the composition of 85 % zwitterionic phospholipid (PC) and 15 % acidic phospholipid (PS) were equally stimulated. For imaging, the vesicles or rather liposomes were placed on a carbon grid and stained with uranyl acetate. Individual pore-like structures are shown in the dashed circles of the right panel. Imaging was performed with TecnaiTM Spirit TEM from FEITM. Scale bars as indicated.

Neutrophil membrane vesicles as well as synthetic liposomes displayed no discernible pore formation upon Reg3 β treatment, assuming the detected pore-like structures were normal irregularities of the membrane or rather liposome surface. Additionally, these results suggest a different killing mechanism of Reg3 β for neutrophils than inducing cell lysis via pore formation in the plasma membrane.

6.2.5 Reg3 β -mediated cytotoxicity is based on a ROS-dependent lysosomal destabilization

The generation of ROS by NOX2 ([Chanock et al., 1994](#)) represents a major defense mechanism of neutrophil immune response but is also associated with the induction of neutrophil cell death ([Akahoshi et al., 1997](#); [Blomgran et al., 2007](#); [Geering & Simon, 2011](#); [Mihalache et al., 2011](#); [von Gunten et al., 2005](#)). On this account, the kinetics of ROS generation after Reg3 β stimulation was analyzed in peritoneal neutrophils. WT peritoneal neutrophils exhibited a significant increase of intracellular ROS levels after 45 minutes (~ 3 fold) and 60 minutes (~ 3.6 fold). In contrast, pre-treatment with the NOX2 inhibitor DPI ([Buck et al., 2019](#)) or cells deficient for NOX2 did not show an enhanced ROS generation upon Reg3 β stimulation similar to the unstimulated control cells. (Figure 26A). The increase of intracellular ROS generation in peritoneal neutrophils from WT mice in response to Reg3 β could be confirmed by measuring ROS levels using a different compound than DHR123, but based on the same principle, called CM-H₂DCFDA (Figure 26B).

The question whether NOX2-derived ROS is involved in the initiation of Reg3 β -mediated cell death, was addressed by analyzing cell death based on LDH release in NOX2 deficient (*Nox2*^{-/-}) peritoneal neutrophils. Compared to the positive control IFN γ , the cells did not demonstrate a decreased viability in response to Reg3 β over time assuming that Reg3 β -mediated neutrophil cell death is dependent on NOX2-derived ROS generation (Figure 26C).

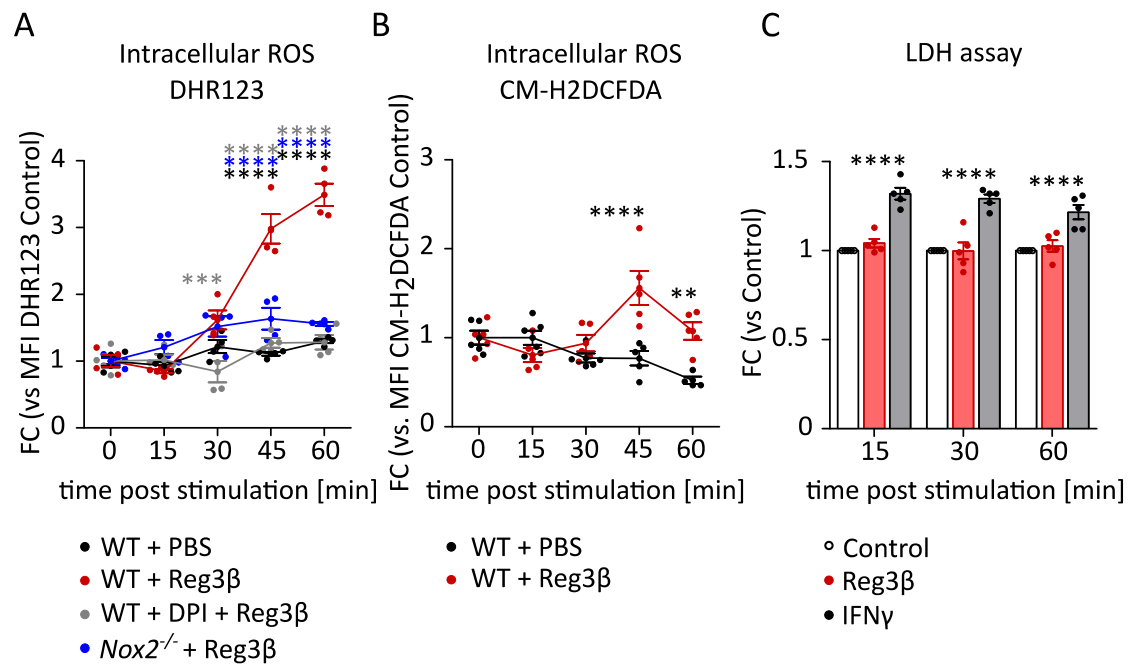


Figure 26: Reg3β-mediated cell death is dependent on enhanced intracellular ROS generation by NOX2

(A) Intracellular ROS generation was analyzed in peritoneal neutrophils of WT mice and *Nox2*^{-/-} mice, as well as in WT neutrophils pre-treated with the NOX2 inhibitor DPI (1 μM) at indicated time points post Reg3β (100 ng/ml) stimulation. Cells were labeled with DHR123 (150 μM) for ROS detection using flow cytometry. Data are shown as fold change of Reg3β treated to control cells as mean ± SEM of four individual experiments. n = 4 for all groups. (B) Intracellular ROS generation was analyzed in peritoneal neutrophils of WT mice at indicated time points post Reg3β (100 ng/ml) stimulation. Control cells were treated with PBS. Cells were labeled with CM-H₂DCFDA (1 μM) for ROS detection using flow cytometry. Data are shown as fold change of Reg3β treated to control cells as mean ± SEM of four independent experiments. WT+PBS, WT+Reg3β n = 5. (C) Peritoneal neutrophils of *Nox2*^{-/-} mice were stimulated with Reg3β (100 ng/ml) and IFNγ (100 ng/ml) as positive control. Cell death was determined based on LDH release after 15, 30 and 60 minutes post Reg3β treatment. Data display the fold change of treated to control cells and are shown as mean ± SEM of three individual experiments. Control, Reg3β, IFNγ n = 5. **p ≤ 0.01, ***p ≤ 0.001, ****p ≤ 0.0001 was determined using regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-test.

In vivo analysis regarding Reg3β-mediated cell death to neutrophils implied a necrotic-like cell death different from apoptosis. Nevertheless, the expression analysis of various cell death marker did not display any changes in response to Reg3β. Based on the morphological changes of Reg3β treated neutrophils, the cells appeared to be degraded from the inside. In that sense, it has been demonstrated that increased ROS generation is also linked to lysosomal membrane destabilization (Cai et al., 2018; Nilsson, Ghassemifar, & Brunk, 1997; Terman, Kurz, Gustafsson, & Brunk, 2006). Subsequent release of lysosomal enzymes as cathepsins into the cytosol (Repnik, Stoka, Turk, & Turk, 2012) results in lysosomal-dependent cell death (LDCD) due to the

degradation of intracellular components and cytosolic acidification (De Duve, 1965). In neutrophils, the lysosomal enzymes cathepsin B and D are located in azurophilic granules (Levy, Kolski, & Douglas, 1989; Tufet, 2008) also known as primary lysosomes (Bainton, 1999). To investigate the integrity of primary lysosomes, neutrophils from WT and *Nox2*^{-/-} mice were labeled with the lysosomal stain A/O and stimulated with Reg3 β . Subsequently, pale cells that lost their lysosomal staining were quantified with flow cytometry. In WT mice that actively generate NOX2-derived ROS, the relative number of pale cells significantly increased up to ~30 % after 45 minutes and to ~50 % after 60 minutes. In contrast, in cells deficient for NOX2, the primary lysosomes mainly remained intact with continuous Reg3 β stimulation with around 10 % of pale cells after 60 minutes. (Figure 27A). The sharp increase of pale cells in WT mice assumes an extensive loss of primary lysosomes in neutrophils upon Reg3 β treatment, which in turn can lead to necrosis (Yu, Persson, Eaton, Brunk, & Medicine, 2003). Further evidence for lysosomal membrane permeabilization provided the translocation of cytosolic galectin to leaky lysosomes clearly visible in the dot like pattern of galectin-1 in stimulated neutrophils. In unstimulated control cells galectin remained ubiquitously distributed in the cytosol (Figure 27B). Moreover, Reg3 β treatment resulted in the release of lysosomal cathepsin B and D into the cytosol whereas in the control cells the cathepsins remained co-localized with primary lysosomes (white arrows, Figure 27B).

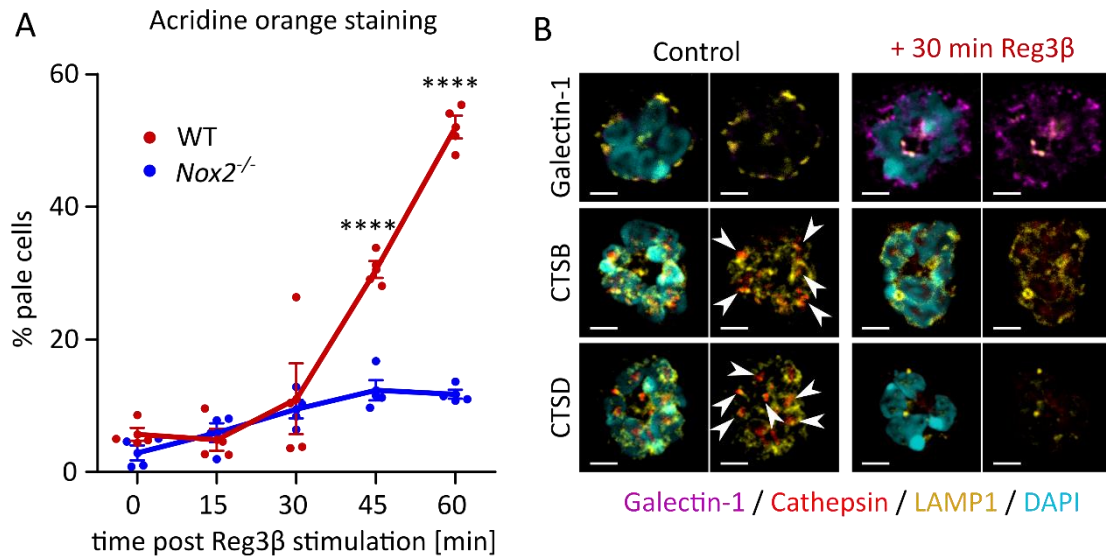


Figure 27: The lysosomal membrane is permeabilized upon Reg3β stimulation of peritoneal neutrophils

(A) Peritoneal neutrophils from WT and *Nox2*^{-/-} mice were labeled with the lysosomotropic dye A/O (5 μg/ml) and increase of pale cells was quantified at indicated time points post Reg3β (100 ng/ml) stimulation with flow cytometry. Percentage of pale cells are shown as mean ± SEM of two individual experiments. WT, *Nox2*^{-/-} n = 4. ****p ≤ 0.0001 was determined using two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-test. (B) Peritoneal neutrophils were stained for Galectin-1 (magenta), the lysosomal marker LAMP1 (yellow) and DAPI (cyan) for the Galectin puncta assay. Assessment of cathepsin release into the cytosol was conducted by immunohistochemical staining of cathepsin B (CTSB) and D (CTSD) (red), LAMP1 (yellow) and DAPI (cyan) in Reg3β (100 ng/ml) treated neutrophils. White arrows indicate co-localized cathepsins and lysosomes. Images are representative for three individual experiments. Scale bar = 3 μm.

Following the evaluation of Reg3β-mediated destabilization of primary lysosomes in vitro, the effect of Reg3β on primary lysosomes of cardiac tissue neutrophils over time post-MI was examined. Cardiac neutrophils of WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice were labeled with A/O as shown before and additionally with LTR. The relative number of pale cells at day 1 and 2 post-MI was equal in both mouse strains with ~40 % at day 1 and ~30 % at day 2. At day 4 and 7 the relative number of neutrophils with destabilized lysosomes significantly increased up to ~60 % at day 4 and ~50 % at day 7 in WT mice compared to ~20 % pale cells in Reg3β deficient mice. These observations were confirmed by the quantification of LTR positive neutrophils post-MI. Cardiac neutrophils of WT mice displayed a substantial decrease of lysosomal staining at day 4 (~85 % decrease) and at day 7 (~100 % decrease) compared to *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice with around 60 % decrease at day 4 and 7 (Figure 28).

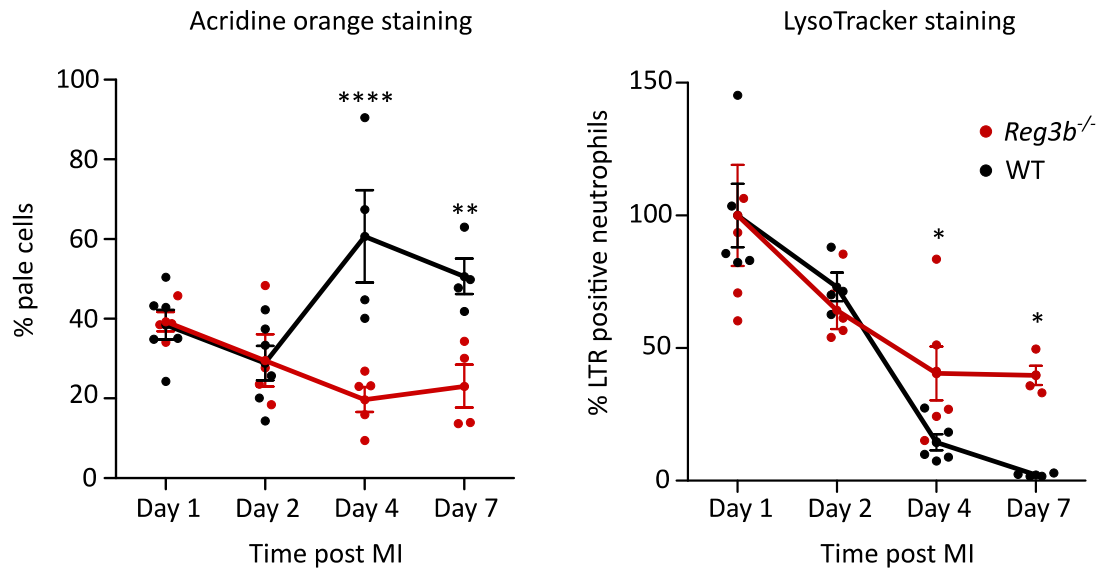


Figure 28: Lysosomal membrane permeabilization occurs in cardiac neutrophils of WT mice post-MI
Cardiac neutrophils isolated from WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice were labeled with the lysosomal dyes A/O (5 µg/ml) and LTR Green (50 nM) to monitor the degradation of lysosomes at day 1, 2, 4 and 7 post LAD ligation. Neutrophils were identified as CD45^{hi} CD11b^{hi} CD64^{lo} Ly6G^{hi}. The percentage of pale cells and LTR positive neutrophils are shown as mean ± SEM of four individual experiments each. WT, *Reg3b*^{-/-} n = 4-5. *p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01 and ****p ≤ 0.0001 were determined using regular two-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-test.

Summarized, the in vitro data revealed a Reg3β-mediated necrotic cell death to inflammatory active neutrophils, which was characterized by the release of LDH, decrease of intracellular ATP (Figure 20), cytoplasmic vacuolization and degradation of cytoplasmic components (Figure 23), without activating any common cell death pathways (Figure 24). Yet, neutrophils exhibited enhanced NOX2-derived intracellular ROS levels (Figure 26) resulting in the destabilization of primary lysosomes and cytosolic release of lysosomal enzymes (Figure 27) which could also be confirmed in vivo in cardiac neutrophils post-MI (Figure 28).

6.2.6 Reg3β binds to glycoproteins on neutrophil membranes

Light sheet microscopy and flow cytometry based analysis indicated a direct binding of Reg3β to neutrophils (Figure 14 and Figure 15), yet leaving out the identity of the Reg3β binding site. Reg3β belongs to the C-type lectin family, which was shown to bind carbohydrate residues of glycoproteins on the cell surface of bacteria (Lehotzky et al., 2010). Therefore, treating peritoneal neutrophils with different deglycosidases to catalyze the removal of terminal carbohydrate residues from N- and O-linked glycans (Figure 8) provided information about potential binding partners for Reg3β. The importance of carbohydrate residues of

peptidoglycans for Reg3 β binding was confirmed by the positive control Protein Deglycosylation Mix II from NEB. The enzyme mix removed all N-linked and many common O-linked glycoproteins and protected the cells from Reg3 β -mediated cell death. The exoglycosidases galactosidase, N-acetylhexosaminidase, that removes terminal N-acetylglucosamine and N-acetylgalactosamine residues, as well as mannosidase were also able to rescue the cells from Reg3 β cytotoxicity whereas pre-treatment with neuraminidase did not alter the cytotoxic effect of Reg3 β (Figure 29).

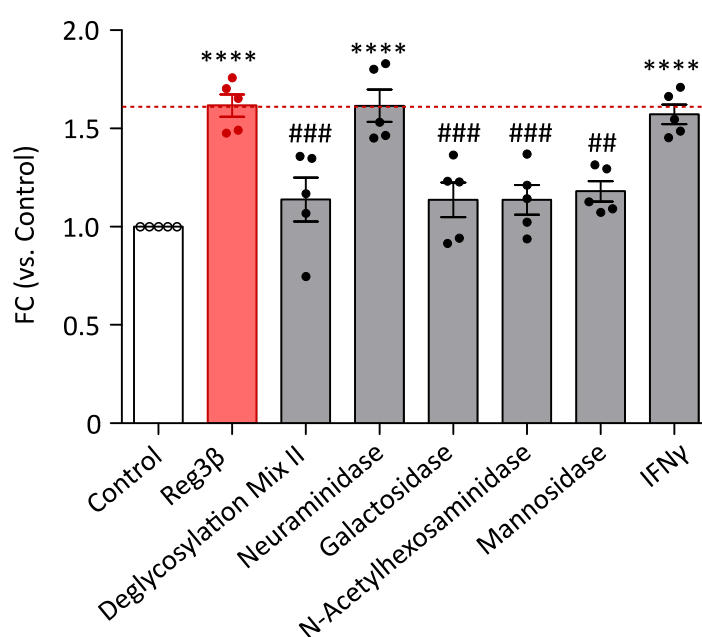


Figure 29: Reg3 β -binding depends on carbohydrate residues of glycoproteins on the cell surface of neutrophils

Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were pre-treated with different deglycosidases as indicated for 30 minutes prior to Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) stimulation for 30 minutes at 37 °C. Cell death was estimated by LDH release of pre-treated cells compared to cells stimulated with Reg3 β only (red bar) and untreated control cells (white bar). IFN γ (100 ng/ml) was used as positive control. Basal cytotoxic effects of enzymes were excluded by former dose-response studies. Data represent the fold change of treated cells vs control cells and are shown as mean \pm SEM. N = 5 for all groups. ****p \leq 0.0001 (vs. control), ##p \leq 0.01, ###p \leq 0.001 (vs. Reg3 β) were determined by one way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's post test.

To confirm galactose-, N-acetylglucosamine-, N-acetylgalactosamine- and mannan-containing glycoproteins as potential binding sites for Reg3 β , a competition assay with soluble carbohydrates was performed (Figure 30). Several mono-, di- and polysaccharides were

pre-incubated with Reg3 β , before added to cultured neutrophils. Subsequently, cell death was monitored by analyzing LDH release.

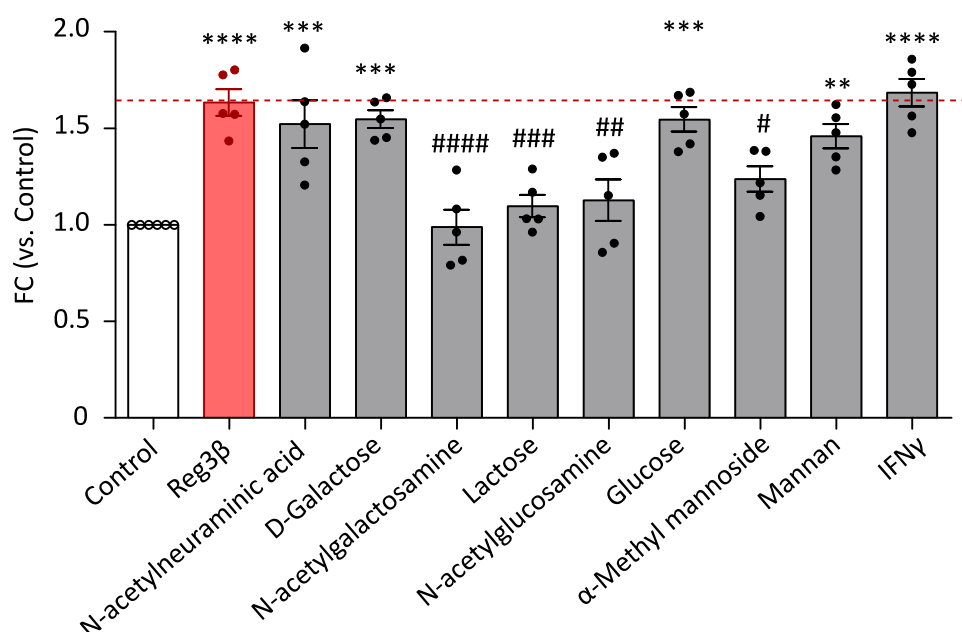


Figure 30: Reg3 β -mediated neutrophil cell death is blocked in the presence of N-acetylgalactosamine, lactose, N-acetylglucosamine and mannose

Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) was incubated with the indicated soluble carbohydrates for 30 minutes at 37 °C each. Casein-elicited peritoneal neutrophils were stimulated with the pre-incubated Reg3 β for 30 minutes at 37 °C. Cell death was monitored by LDH release compared to unstimulated control cells (white bar) and cells treated with Reg3 β only (red bar). IFN γ (100 ng/ml) was used as positive control. Basal cytotoxic effects of the soluble glycans were excluded by former dose-response studies. Data represent the fold change of treated cells vs control cells and are shown as mean \pm SEM. N=5 for all groups. . ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, **** $p \leq 0.0001$ (vs. control), # $p \leq 0.05$, ## $p \leq 0.01$, ### $p \leq 0.001$ (vs. Reg3 β) were determined by one way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's post test.

N-acetylneuraminic acid did not prevent Reg3 β -mediated cell death confirming the results of pre-treatment with neuraminidase. In contrast to soluble galactose, lactose and N-acetylgalactosamine blocked Reg3 β cytotoxicity assuming the acetyl-group or the combination of glucose and galactose is additionally required for Reg3 β binding. N-acetylglucosamine but not glucose rescued the cells from Reg3 β -mediated cell death verifying the positive results of pre-treatment with N-acetylhexosaminidase. The last carbohydrate mannose promoted neutrophil survival as did the corresponding enzyme mannosidase whereas the polymeric form mannan could not decrease neutrophil death. Both assays suggest the

peptidoglycan residues N-acetylgalactosamine, N-acetylglucosamine and mannose as binding site for Reg3 β .

6.2.7 The neutrophil cytotoxicity of Reg3 β is based on clathrin-mediated endocytosis

Upon binding of Reg3 β to specific peptidoglycan residues (Figure 30), primary lysosomes of neutrophils are rapidly destabilized in a ROS-dependent manner (Figure 26 - Figure 28). To evaluate whether Reg3 β directly interacts with the primary lysosomes, endocytosis and subsequent transport to the lysosomes was investigated.

Initial flow cytometry based analysis revealed an enhanced binding of Reg3 β to permeabilized neutrophils relative to unpermeabilized neutrophils supporting the concept of Reg3 β being internalized (Figure 31). Additionally, both neutrophils subsets, Reg3 β^{low} and Reg3 β^{high} binding neutrophils, followed the same progress as shown after detection of surface bound Reg3 β . The Reg3 β^{high} binding neutrophils population was increasing over time with around 43 % positive neutrophils at day 1 and around 55 % positive neutrophils at day 7. The Reg3 β^{low} binding population was decreasing from ~54 % at day 1 to ~42 % at day 7.

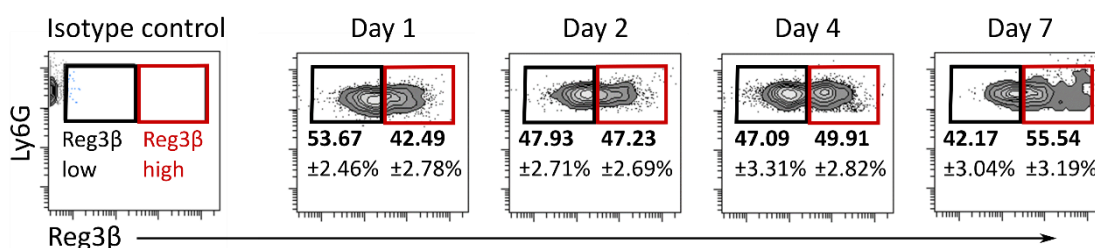


Figure 31: Reg3 β is detected intracellular in cardiac neutrophils post-MI

Infarcted hearts of WT mice were digested at indicated time-points post-MI and analyzed with flow cytometry for intracellular Reg3 β . Neutrophils were identified as CD45^{hi} CD11b^{hi} CD64^{lo} Ly6G^{hi} and fixed and permeabilized prior to Reg3 β staining. Representative dot plots display the Reg3 β low (black) and high (red) binding neutrophil populations over time post-MI. The gate determining the Ly6G^{hi} and Reg3 β -binding population was set according to the corresponding isotype control of the Reg3 β antibody. Percentage of cells are shown as mean \pm SEM of four independent experiments.

Endocytosis describes the engulfment of extracellular fluids, particles or microorganisms by invagination of the plasma membrane and subsequent formation of endosomes (Huotari & Helenius, 2011). There are three major types of endocytosis (Marsh, 2002). Phagocytosis describes the recognition and ingestion of large particles such as bacteria or dead cells into plasma membrane-derived vesicles called phagosome and is mainly executed by immune cells

(Rosales & Uribe-Querol, 2017). Micropinocytosis is referred to the unspecific uptake of extracellular particles via actin-driven extension of plasma membrane ruffles and appears to be restricted to innate immune cells (Redka, Gütschow, Grinstein, & Canton, 2018). The third type of endocytosis is receptor-mediated endocytosis, which can be further subdivided into clathrin- and caveolae-mediated endocytosis. Ligands are recognized by their specific cell surface receptors and subsequently internalized into clathrin- and caveolae coated membrane vesicles, respectively (Doherty & McMahon, 2009). The formation of these coated vesicles requires several adaptor proteins involved in different steps (Kaksonen & Roux, 2018). As phagocytosis is only referred to the uptake of microorganism and dead cells, the engulfment of Reg3 β by neutrophils was examined using specific inhibitors for micropinocytosis (imipramine), clathrin-mediated (chlorpromazine and MDAC) and caveolae-mediated endocytosis (M β CD and nystatin). Reg3 β -mediated cell death was solely inhibited after chlorpromazine and MDAC treatment, but not after M β CD, nystatin or imipramine, indicating that Reg3 β is endocytosed by neutrophils via the clathrin-mediated pathway (Figure 32).

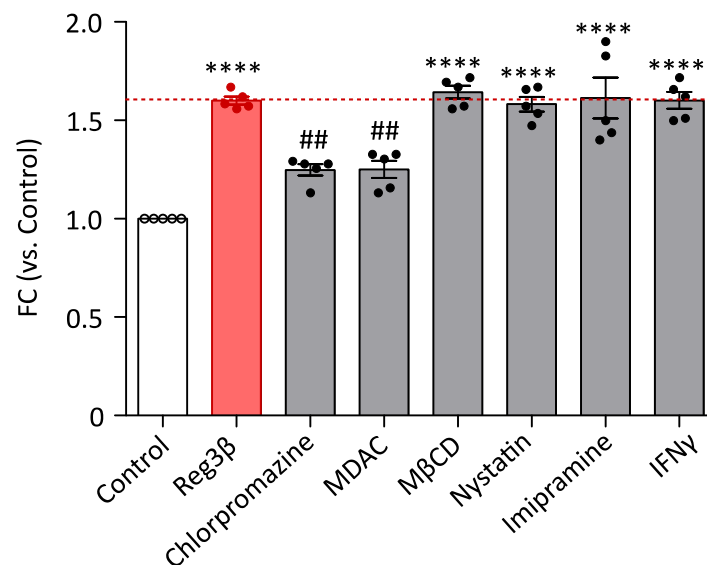


Figure 32: Inhibition of clathrin-mediated endocytosis abrogates the neutrophil cytotoxicity of Reg3 β

Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were pre-treated with inhibitors for clathrin- and caveolae-mediated endocytosis as well as for micropinocytosis for 30 minutes followed by Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) treatment for additional 30 minutes. Cell death was determined using the LDH assay. IFN γ (100 ng/ml) was used as positive control. Basal cytotoxic effects of inhibitors were excluded by former dose-response studies. Data represent the fold change of treated cells (grey bars) vs control cells (white bar) and Reg3 β only treated cells (red bar) and are shown as mean \pm SEM. N = 5 for all groups. *p \leq 0.05, **p \leq 0.01 (vs. control), #p \leq 0.05 (vs. Reg3 β) were determined by one way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's post test .

Following endocytosis, early endosomes mature into late endosomes (Huotari & Helenius, 2011), and finally fuse with lysosomes (Luzio, Pryor, & Bright, 2007) or in case of neutrophils, with azurophilic and specific granules (Segal, Dorling, & Coade, 1980). Staining for the lysosomal marker LAMP1 and Reg3 β in peritoneal neutrophils demonstrated a co-localization of Reg3 β and primary lysosomes (white arrows) after Reg3 β treatment affirming the transport of internalized Reg3 β into lysosomal compartments (Figure 33).

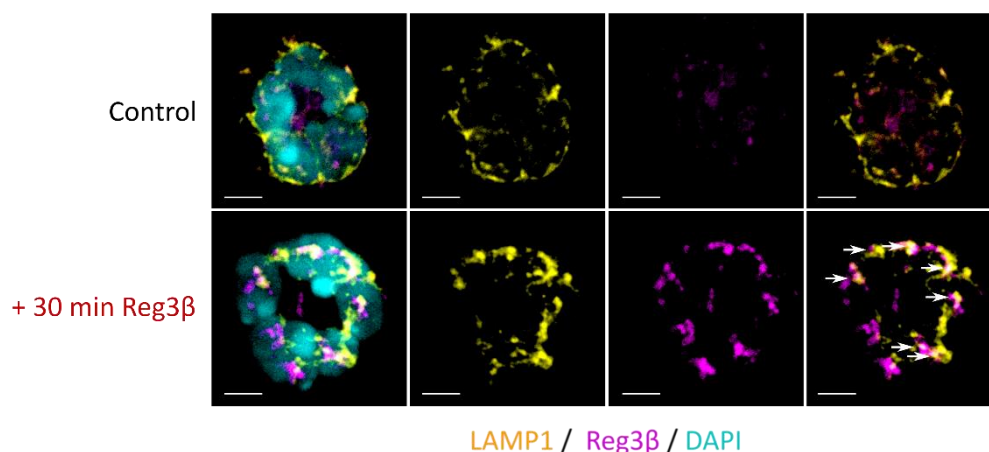


Figure 33: Reg3 β co-localizes with primary lysosomes upon entering the cell

Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were stained for LAMP1 (yellow), Reg3 β (magenta) and DAPI (cyan). Cells were stimulated with Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) for 30 minutes, control cells remained untreated. White arrows indicate co-localized lysosomes and Reg3 β in treated cells. Images are representative for two individual experiments. Scale bar = 3 μ m

Based on these findings, Reg3 β binds specific carbohydrate residues of glycoproteins (N-acetylgalactosamine, N-acetylglucosamine and mannose) on the cell membrane of neutrophils and enters the cell via clathrin-mediated endocytosis. Once internalized, Reg3 β is transported to primary lysosomes followed by a destabilization of the lysosomal membrane eventually leading to lysosomal dependent cell death.

6.2.8 Reg3 β facilitates efferocytosis of dying neutrophils by macrophages

The clearance of dead neutrophils, a hallmark for the resolution of inflammation, is generally executed via efferocytosis by macrophages. The main function is to prevent secondary necrosis resulting in unwanted release of harmful intracellular contents and triggering an immune response (Haslett, 1997; Savill et al., 1989). To elucidate the fate of dying neutrophils after Reg3 β treatment, peritoneal neutrophils labeled with a pH sensitive fluorophore were injected into the peritoneum of WT mice 4 days post thioglycollate treatment to accumulate inflammatory active

macrophages. Efferocytosis by macrophages in vivo was quantified based on the increased fluorescence intensity within the acidic environment of the phagosome. Without additional Reg3 β stimulation, around 46 % of labeled neutrophils were engulfed by macrophages. The number of efferocytosed neutrophils, however, significantly increased up to 66 % when pre-treated with Reg3 β (Figure 34A).

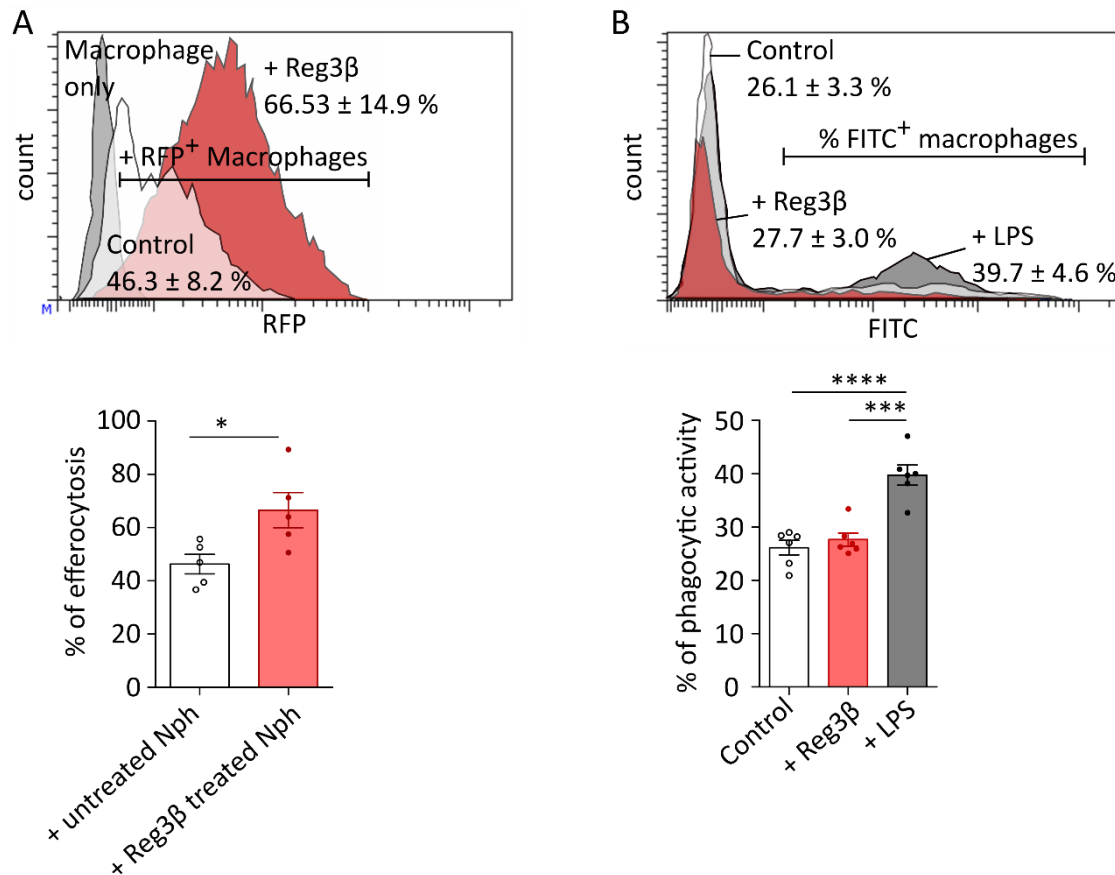


Figure 34: Efferocytosis of neutrophils by macrophages is enhanced after Reg3 β pre-treatment

(A) Casein-elicited neutrophils from the peritoneum were labeled with the pH sensitive dye pHrodo RedTM (1 μ g/ml) for 30 minutes followed by Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) treatment for 30 minutes. Control cells remained untreated. Labeled neutrophils were injected into the peritoneum of WT mice 4 days post thioglycollate injection. After one hour, the peritoneal cells were harvested and stained for CD11b and F4/80 to identify macrophages. The number of engulfed neutrophils was determined by means of CD11b⁺ F4/80⁺ RFP⁺ macrophages by flow cytometry. Representative histograms and corresponding quantification display the number of RFP⁺ macrophages with and without Reg3 β pre-treatment. Data are shown as mean \pm SEM of three individual experiments. Untreated, treated n = 5. *p \leq 0.05 was determined by two-tailed Welch's t-test. (B) Thioglycollate-elicited macrophages were cultivated and incubated with IgG-FITC for 2.5 hours. The phagocytic activity in response to Reg3 β (100 ng/ml) and LPS (1 μ g/ml) compared to untreated control cells was analyzed by flow cytometry. Trypan blue was added to the cells to quench cell surface bound IgG-FITC before measuring. Representative histograms and corresponding quantifications display the percentage of FITC⁺ macrophages as mean \pm SEM of three individual experiments. Control, Reg3 β , LPS n = 6. *p \leq 0.05 was determined by one-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's post test.

Additionally, the effect of Reg3 β on the phagocytic activity of macrophages was examined using IgG-FITC particles. In response to LPS around 40 % of macrophages ingested IgG particles whereas unstimulated control cells displayed a phagocytic activity of around 26 %. Stimulation with Reg3 β did not increase the number of phagocytosed IgG-FITC particles compared to the control cells (Figure 34B) demonstrating that Reg3 β has an impact on the efferocytosis of neutrophils but not on the phagocytic activity of macrophages itself.

The cardiomyocyte-derived C-type lectin Reg3 β is released after the onset of MI and represents a new player in the resolution of inflammation by directly regulating the clearance of neutrophils from the site of injury. Reg3 β binds to a specific subpopulation of inflammatory active neutrophils in the ischemic heart and enters the cell via clathrin-mediated endocytosis. Subsequently, destabilization of primary lysosomes accompanied with increased ROS production causes an apoptotic, lysosomal cell death characterized by cathepsin release and cytoplasmic vacuolization. Furthermore, Reg3 β enhances the efferocytosis of dying neutrophils by macrophages that are recruited by Reg3 β . In conclusion, Reg3 β prevents the accumulation of inflammatory active neutrophils in the healthy myocardium and thereby a destabilization of the left ventricular wall resulting in heart failure.

7 Discussion

The output of cardiac remodeling after injury is mainly affected by the immune-inflammatory response, which is dominated by the infiltration of neutrophils and monocytes or rather macrophages (Y. Ma et al., 2013; Prabhu & Frangogiannis, 2016; Swirski & Nahrendorf, 2018). In this context, Reg3 β , a cardiomyocyte derived C-type like-lectin was initially identified as a novel regulator for macrophage trafficking within the ischemic myocardium. Its role on restricting neutrophil persistence at the site of injury, however, remained unknown (Loerchner et al., 2015). In this work, a novel feature of Reg3 β was determined that is the temporal and spatial restriction of the accumulation of neutrophils at the site of injury. Upon infiltration into the heart, Reg3 β bound to a subset of inflammatory active neutrophils. Consequently, a ROS-dependent lysosomal cell death was initiated and resulted in a rapid decline of neutrophil numbers at day 4 post-MI (Figure 35). Regarding the importance of a tightly regulated inflammatory response of neutrophils for cardiac healing, this study identified a novel mechanism for neutrophil clearance from the infarcted heart by Reg3 β contributing to the resolution of inflammation. In conclusion, Reg3 β represents a novel key player in the early immune response after the onset of myocardial infarction by simultaneously modulating the recruitment macrophages and the removal of neutrophils.

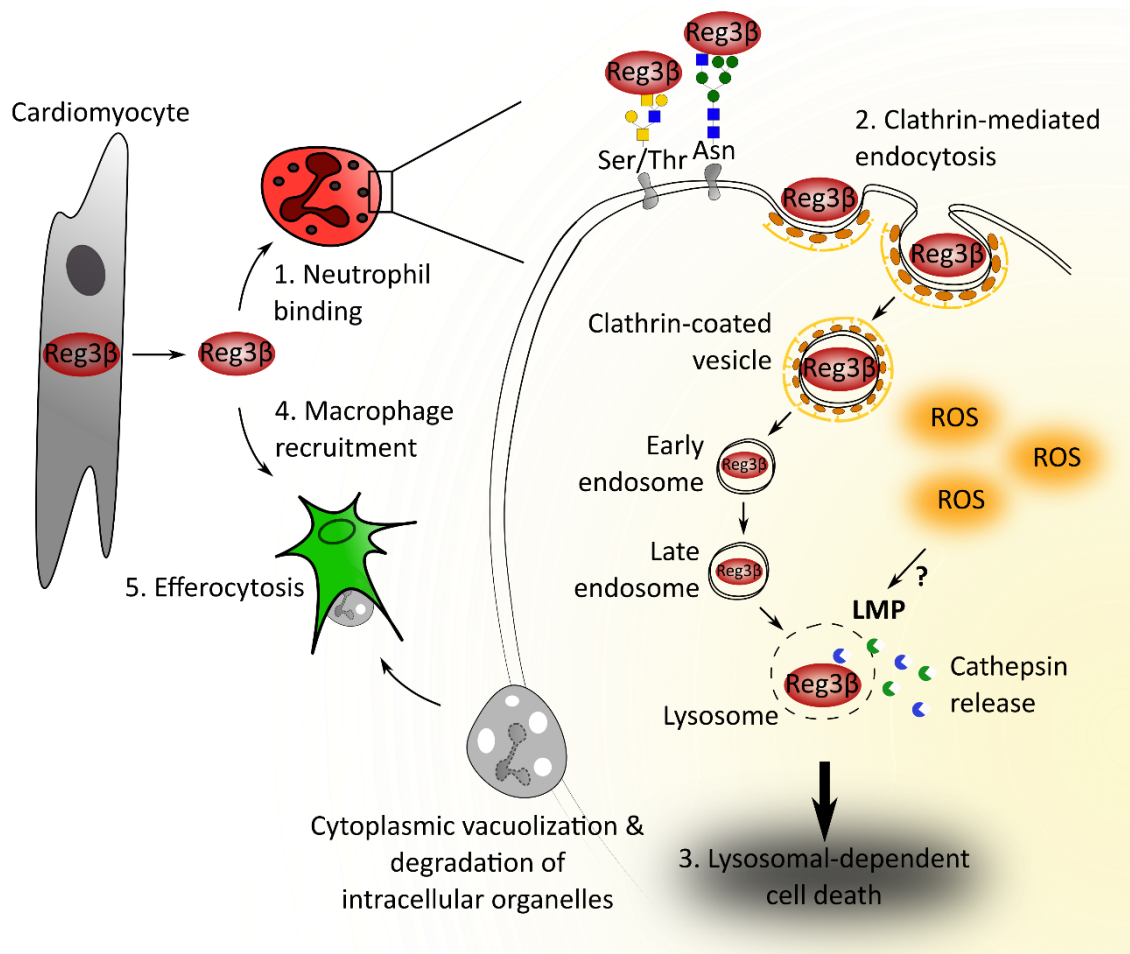


Figure 35: Model of Reg3β-mediated neutrophil removal via the induction of a ROS-dependent lysosomal cell death

Reg3β is secreted by stressed cardiomyocytes after the onset of MI and binds to infiltrating neutrophils via the recognition of specific carbohydrate residues on the cell surface. Upon binding, Reg3β is internalized via clathrin-mediated endocytosis and transported to the lysosomal like azurophilic granules. Simultaneously, intracellular ROS generation is increased and the lysosomal membrane is destabilized. LMP results in the release of cathepsins into the cytosol and finally to lysosomal-dependent cell death of neutrophils characterized by cytoplasmic vacuolization and degradation of intracellular organelles. In addition to neutrophil elimination, Reg3β recruits macrophages to the site of injury and facilitates the efferocytosis of dying neutrophils. Reg3β represents an important key factor for cardiac remodeling by directly restricting the accumulation and inflammatory activity of neutrophils via the induction of a ROS-dependent lysosomal cell death.

7.1 The critical role of Reg3β-mediated neutrophil clearance for cardiac healing

The accumulation of neutrophils into the injured heart peaked at day 2 post-MI and rapidly declined from day 4. Accordingly, the resolution of neutrophil infiltrates from the heart is essential for cardiac healing and functional recovery after the onset of MI. The underlying

mechanisms of neutrophil removal from the site of cardiac injury are not fully understood, yet. It is assumed that the majority of neutrophils undergo spontaneous apoptosis, though the initial trigger remain unclear (Fox, Leitch, Duffin, Haslett, & Rossi, 2010). More recent findings could prove a reverse migration of neutrophils from the site of inflammation back to the circulation by the upregulation of the surface marker CXCR4 (J. Wang et al., 2017). CXCR4 was also found to be upregulated on neutrophils migrating into lymph nodes that drain the inflammatory site (Gorlino et al., 2014). A delayed removal of neutrophils from the site of infarction, however, promotes an excessive inflammation and tissue injury. On this account, mice deficient for Reg3 β suffered from an adverse cardiac remodeling due to a transient persistence of cardiac neutrophils at day 4 post-MI. The prolonged accumulation of neutrophils was not observed in the bone marrow, blood and spleen but restricted to the heart indicating the critical role of Reg3 β for a timely clearance of neutrophils from the site of cardiac injury.

This study provided evidence for the co-localization and direct binding of Reg3 β on a subset of infiltrating neutrophils. Reg3 β binding was correlated with the induction of a necrotic-like cell death, different from apoptosis, termed aponecrosis. Therefore, the data suggest a novel removal mechanism, which involves the direct induction of a necrotic-like cell death by Reg3 β binding thereby promoting resolution of inflammation. To investigate the effect of neutrophil persistence on cardiac remodeling, the spatial distribution of immune cells in the infarcted heart was assessed using light sheet microscopy according to a recently published protocol of Merz et al. (Merz et al., 2019). The group revealed an accumulation of neutrophils in the heart after ischemia reperfusion (I/R) injury rather in the border zone of the infarction area than in the damaged heart tissue itself (Merz et al., 2019). Although a permanent LAD Ligation (instead of transient occlusion) was used in this study, the results of Merz et al. could be confirmed in WT mice. Upon the loss of Reg3 β , neutrophil infiltrates in the *Reg3b*^{-/-} strain displayed an increased accumulation in the healthy myocardium around day 4 post-MI. In contrast to macrophages, Reg3 β did not exhibit any chemotactic effects on neutrophils, which might be the reason why the persisting neutrophils in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice were able to migrate in the non-infarcted RZ. Moreover, the cells exhibited a sustained inflammatory activity suggesting a suppressive role of Reg3 β on neutrophil motility and activity. The prolonged secretion of degrading enzymes in the non-infarcted RZ by neutrophils may presumably be associated with the increased mortality due to cardiac rupture in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice. Hence, by directly modulating the accumulation, inflammatory activity and removal of neutrophils after the onset of MI, Reg3 β represent a novel key player for cardiac healing mechanism.

7.2 Reg3 β binds to a specific subset of inflammatory active neutrophils

The fact that Reg3 β only bound to a small population of cardiac neutrophils followed by the induction of cell death raised the question of a defined neutrophil subset with distinct functions in the infarcted heart. Under inflammatory conditions, granulopoiesis in the bone marrow is increased and high numbers of fresh neutrophils are released into the circulation and recruited to the site of inflammation where they get primed and activated by inflammatory mediators (Evrard et al., 2018; Kolaczowska & Kubes, 2013). Beside the bone marrow and blood, the spleen also serves as reservoir for neutrophils (Deniset et al., 2017). Consistent with this, Reg3 β binding was not observed on unprimed and inactive neutrophils from the bone marrow, blood and spleen, suggesting the specific Reg3 β binding neutrophil subset is defined by an inflammatory active status. Furthermore, the persistence of neutrophils in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice results in an impaired cardiac healing (Loerchner et al., 2015), implying the Reg3 β -binding subset possesses pro-inflammatory features. Interestingly, the lectin galectin 1 triggers intracellular ROS production upon binding to specific glycoproteins of primed neutrophils i.e. after transmigration into the inflamed tissue (Almkvist, Dahlgren, Leffler, & Karlsson, 2002; Carlsson et al., 2007; Karlsson, Follin, Leffler, & Dahlgren, 1998) but not to inactive blood neutrophils (Almkvist et al., 2002). Neutrophil priming is concomitant with degranulation, defined by the mobilization of secretory vesicles to the surface. The vesicles do not contain antimicrobial proteins but rather a reservoir of membrane receptors. Thus, the fusion of the secretory vesicles with the plasma membrane results in the appearance of new receptors on the cell surface allowing the cells to interact with chemokines, cytokines and adhesion molecules at the site of inflammation (Borregaard, Sørensen, & Theilgaard-Mönch, 2007; Sengeløv et al., 1993). This might give an explanation why Reg3 β cannot bind to unprimed neutrophils from the bone marrow, blood and spleen, followed by the induction of cell death comparable to galectin 1. After the onset of myocardial infarction, neutrophils are recruited to the site of inflammation from the circulation. If Reg3 β was able to bind and eliminate blood neutrophils, the initial immune response in the heart would no longer emerge. As shown in the study by Horckmans et al. on antibody depletion of neutrophils in the early phase of the immune response this leads to an increased fibrosis and enhanced mortality (Horckmans et al., 2017).

Recent studies determined a phenotypic heterogeneity and functional diversity of neutrophils under both homeostatic and inflammatory conditions (Christoffersson & Phillipson, 2018). The bone marrow harbors a CD101^{neg} immature neutrophil population as well as CD101^{pos} mature neutrophils (Evrard et al., 2018). Of them, the CD101^{pos} population is released into the circulation under homeostatic conditions. However, an increasing number of CD101^{neg}

immature neutrophils was detected in the blood of tumor bearing mice contributing to tumor progression (Evrard et al., 2018). The identification of disease progressing neutrophils in different pathological settings might serve as a basis for new therapeutic strategies. CXCR4 on the other hand represents a surface marker that is associated with an anti-inflammatory and reparative phenotype of neutrophils. To maintain homeostasis under basal conditions, aged neutrophils in the circulation are guided back to the bone marrow by the upregulation of CD11b and CXCR4 and downregulation of CD62L (Adrover et al., 2016; Casanova-Acebes et al., 2013). Regarding resolution of inflammation, CXCR4 was expressed on neutrophils that migrated out of the inflamed tissue either back to the circulation (J. Wang et al., 2017) or to the draining lymph nodes (Gorlino et al., 2014). Another distinct neutrophil subset actively promoting angiogenesis in the inflamed tissue has been identified as CD49d⁺CXCR4⁺VEGFR1⁺ (Massena et al., 2015). Therefore, the phenotypical and functional characterization of neutrophil subsets, as the Reg3 β -binding subset, is critical for the design of a cell-specific therapy. A targeted modulation of pro- and anti-inflammatory neutrophils may optimize cardiac healing and prevent heart failure.

7.3 Neutrophils die via necrotic-like cell death

Flow cytometry and electron microscopy revealed an apoptotic cell death in neutrophils upon Reg3 β binding. 7AAD, a cell impermeant dye, was able to enter Reg3 β binding cells, indicating an irreversible damage to the plasma membrane. Moreover, the number of apoptotic neutrophils in the ischemic heart did not differ between WT and *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice, indicating Reg3 β does not activate the apoptotic machinery. Although members of the Reg3 group, to which Reg3 β belongs to, were shown to be bactericidal in relation to Gram-negative and -positive bacteria (Miki et al., 2012) a cytotoxic effect of Reg proteins on eukaryotic cells has not been described, so far. Yet, in addition to the in vivo data, in vitro cytotoxicity assays revealed a direct and fast induction of neutrophil cell death upon Reg3 β treatment. However, the highest concentration of 1000 ng/mL used in this setting did not affect the cell viability. This ineffectiveness of Reg3 β at higher concentrations might be explained by other findings, in which the bactericidal activity of Reg3 γ was inhibited when added in high concentration to the bacterial cells due to filament formation (Mukherjee et al., 2014). The formation of fibrils or filaments was also shown in the pancreas, allowing Reg proteins to resist digestion by pancreatic proteases (Ho et al., 2010).

The antibacterial mechanism of the human Reg3 protein HIP/PAP on Gram-negative bacteria was demonstrated by Mukherjee et al. by using synthetic liposomes and negative stain EM. They

provided evidence of a pore formation in the bacterial membrane leading to cell lysis (Mukherjee et al., 2014). Here, the same method was used to investigate a potential pore formation upon Reg3 β treatment on synthetic liposomes according to the protocol of Mukherjee et al. (Mukherjee et al., 2014) but also on neutrophils membrane vesicles obtained from nitrogen cavitation. Since neither the synthetic liposomes nor the membrane vesicles displayed any pore-like structures, the underlying mechanism of Reg3 β -mediated induction of neutrophil cell death appears to be different from the Reg3 protein mediated killing of bacteria via cell lysis. The type of cell death can have different immunological consequences. Cells undergoing apoptosis are engulfed by phagocytes without triggering any inflammatory reactions (Ortega-Gómez et al., 2013). Efferocytosis of apoptotic cells can even suppress the immune response and contribute to the resolution of inflammation (D. R. Green, Ferguson, Zitvogel, & Kroemer, 2009). Apoptosis is a programmed cell death with signaling cascades, several effector proteins and morphological characteristics as cell rounding, nuclear condensation and the formation of apoptotic bodies (Kerr, Wyllie, & Currie, 1972).

Necrosis on the other hand has long been considered as a non-regulated, accidental cell death, defined by cell swelling and the uncontrolled release of intracellular content resulting in the activation of the immune system (Douglas R. Green & Llambe, 2015). Nowadays, there is knowledge about the existence of several pathways of regulated necrosis. Of them, NETosis (Brinkmann et al., 2004), necroptosis (X. Wang, Yousefi, & Simon, 2018), pyroptosis (X. Chen et al., 2016), autophagy dependent and LDCD (Conus et al., 2008; Loison et al., 2014) are known to occur in neutrophils.

Although, the known cell death pathways overlap and share a substantial degree of interconnectivity (Lorenzo Galluzzi et al., 2018), the individual pathways can be defined or rather modulated by specific morphological characteristics and effector molecules. TEM and SEM analysis of primary neutrophils treated with Reg3 β displayed morphological resemblance to autophagy owing to cytoplasmic vacuolization (Denton, Kumar, & Differentiation, 2019) and NETosis based on the degradation of intracellular organelles (Brinkmann et al., 2004), but no apoptotic features as chromatin condensation or the formation of apoptotic bodies (Kerr et al., 1972). Of note, none of the effector proteins of apoptosis, necroptosis, NETosis, autophagy and pyroptosis were shown to be upregulated in response to Reg3 β suggesting a different type of regulated necrosis with similar features to autophagy and NETosis. To confirm this hypothesis, further investigations such as functional assays for individual effector proteins of each cell death pathway are required. These could include enzyme activity assays (i.e. caspases or protein kinases for apoptosis (McStay & Green, 2014) and necroptosis (Maki & Degterev, 2013)), monitoring the release of intracellular cytokines (i.e. IL-1 β for pyroptosis (den Hartigh & Fink,

2018)) and inflammatory mediators (i.e. citrullinated histones for NETosis (Tsourouktsoglou et al., 2020)) or histological analysis of the formation of intracellular organelles (i.e. autophagosomes for autophagy (Yoshii & Mizushima, 2017)). The relevance and impact of regulated necrosis in physiological and pathophysiological conditions is not fully understood as necrotic cells can cause tissue injury and disease progression but may also promote tissue repair and wound healing (L. Galluzzi, Buqué, Kepp, Zitvogel, & Kroemer, 2017). With regard to Reg3 β -mediated clearance of cardiac neutrophils, the induction of a necrotic-like cell death seems to be advantageous for cardiac repair since the delayed clearance of neutrophils from the site of inflammation in *Reg3b*^{-/-} mice deteriorates wound healing processes.

7.4 Reg3 β induces a ROS-dependent lysosomal neutrophil cell death

In response to inflammatory stimuli such as DAMPs, PAMPs, CXCL8, LPS or GM-CSF, activated neutrophils produce ROS via the NADPH oxidase complex NOX2 (Nguyen et al., 2017). Depending on the subcellular localization of NOX2, ROS can be released extracellular and intracellular (Nguyen et al., 2017). The assembly and activation of NOX2 at the cell membrane results in extracellular ROS production, which represents a highly effective anti-microbial tool for the defense of invading pathogens (Klebanoff, 1970; Rosen & Klebanoff, 1979). Upon phagocytosis of bacteria or fungi, the NOX2 complex is located at the phagosomal membrane enabling the ROS generation into the phagosomal lumen to degrade the engulfed target (Rothe et al., 1988). However, intracellular ROS production is not only activated upon phagocytosis of pathogens, but also associated with intracellular signaling (Lambeth & Neish, 2014). ROS is known to augment the inflammatory activity of neutrophils by stimulating the release of neutrophil granules and pro-inflammatory cytokines and is involved in neutrophil migration towards a chemokine gradient (Veal et al., 2007). This study demonstrated a sharp increase of intracellular ROS levels in activated neutrophils from the peritoneum upon Reg3 β stimulation in vitro. Moreover, Reg3 β lacked cytotoxic effects on peritoneal *Nox2*^{-/-} neutrophils, which are deficient for ROS production suggesting Reg3 β -mediated cell death is dependent on intracellular ROS generation. In this regard, the regulation of cell death of activated neutrophils at the site of inflammation was demonstrated to be linked with intracellular ROS generation (M. B. Hampton, Vissers, Keenan, & Winterbourn, 2002). ROS was shown to be involved or even a potent mediator of several cell death pathways in neutrophils (Xu, Loison, & Luo, 2010), including apoptosis (Kasahara et al., 1997), necroptosis (X. Wang et al., 2018), NETosis (Remijnsen et al., 2011) and LCD (Mannick et al., 2001). Since the expression analysis of effector proteins were not indicative for the activation of apoptosis, necroptosis and NETosis, further analysis focused

on the investigation of ROS-dependent LDCD in activated neutrophils upon Reg3 β stimulation. Furthermore, sulfasalazine, a sulfonamide used for the treatment of rheumatic and chronic inflammatory intestinal diseases, is known to induce cell death specifically to neutrophils and not to other leukocytes by an enhanced ROS production ([Akahoshi et al., 1997](#)).

LDCD shares morphological features with necrosis, apoptosis, autophagy-dependent cell death and ferroptosis and is known to amplify or initiate these cell death pathways ([Aits & Jäättelä, 2013](#); [Kroemer & Jaattela, 2005](#)). This underlines the complexity of this not fully understood cell death mechanism. Nevertheless, the Nomenclature Committee of Cell Death (NCCD) declared the LDCD as an independent form of regulated cell death primarily characterized by LMP, cathepsin release into the cytosol and subsequent degradation of intracellular organelles ([De Duve, 1965](#); [Lorenzo Galluzzi et al., 2018](#)). LDCD upon LMP can occur in different cell types. ROS-mediated LDCD was shown in intervertebral disc cells upon bupivacaine treatment characterized by swelling of organelles and severe disruption of plasma membrane ([Cai et al., 2018](#)). Similarly, macrophages died through a caspase independent, LMP- mediated cell death in response to mycobacterium tuberculosis ([Lee, Remold, leong, & Kornfeld, 2006](#)). In neutrophils, cathepsin D release from azurophilic granules, the lysosome-like organelles ([Bainton, 1999](#); [Dell'Angelica et al., 2000](#)), was found to directly process caspase 8 resulting in cell death. Importantly, granule permeabilization occurred prior to the caspase activation, indicating LMP as primary inducer of neutrophil cell death ([Conus et al., 2008](#)). Upon bacterial ingestion, neutrophils underwent apoptosis, driven by lysosomal disruption and cathepsin D release into the cytosol ([Prince et al., 2008](#)). Most of these defined features of LDCD have been proven to occur in neutrophils after Reg3 β treatment. The increasing number of neutrophils that lost their lysosomal staining as well as the translocation of galectin-1 to leaky lysosomes indicates a destabilization of primary lysosomes in neutrophils upon Reg3 β stimulation. Furthermore, the cytosolic release of cathepsin B and D as well as the collapse of intracellular structures post Reg3 β stimulation reflect the morphological changes during LDCD. A direct association between the degradation of intracellular organelles and the release of cathepsins into the cytosol still remains to be examined by enzyme activity assays with cytosolic fractions in future investigations. However, subcellular fractionation of primary neutrophils has only been performed in human cells but not in mice ([Udby & Borregaard, 2007](#)). Further studies with human neutrophils might also allow the examination of the enzymatic activity of cytosolic cathepsins after Reg3 β treatment.

The degree of lysosomal enzyme release into the cytosol determines the type of cell death. Moderate enzyme release leads to apoptosis ([Yu et al., 2003](#)), whereas a strong or complete disruption of lysosomes immediately induces necrosis ([Berghe et al., 2010](#); [Li et al., 2000](#)). The sharp increase of pale neutrophils, which lost their lysosomal staining upon exposure to Reg3b,

indicates a strong disruption of lysosomes confirming the previous findings for a necrotic-like cell death. In contrast to WT neutrophils, the primary lysosomes of *Nox2*^{-/-} neutrophils were not degraded upon Reg3 β stimulation indicating the destabilization of the lysosomal membrane is driven by intracellular ROS production. ROS is a well-known inducer for LMP by enhanced lipid peroxidation (Terman et al., 2006). Apart from that, lysosomes contain free iron but lack enzymes for H₂O₂ degradation. In the presence of ROS, free iron catalyzes H₂O₂ into hydroxyl radical (OH \cdot), also known as fenton reaction, which destabilizes the lysosomal membranes (Eaton & Qian, 2002). Hence, the in vitro data strongly imply a ROS-dependent LMP followed by the release of hydrolytic enzymes resulting in necrotic cell death after Reg3 β treatment. The in vivo data confirmed the degradation of primary lysosomes resulting in regulated necrosis of cardiac neutrophils of WT mice at day 4 post-MI, whereas the lysosomes in neutrophils from Reg3 β -deficient mice remained largely intact.

Nevertheless, the underlying mechanism of how Reg3 β directly modulates ROS production and lysosomal degradation remains to be investigated. This study demonstrated an enhanced production of intracellular ROS by Reg3 β stimulation, but did not provide information about the type of oxidants produced and the localization of NOX2 assembly. The activation site of NOX2 can be assessed by immunohistochemistry (Winterbourn, Kettle, & Hampton, 2016) and might help to understand how and where in the cell ROS is generated. Biochemical studies may identify both the specific oxidants produced in Reg3 β -stimulated neutrophils as well as their cellular targets. Finally, a neutrophil-specific NOX2 knockout mouse subjected to permanent LAD Ligation might provide new insights into the role of ROS in Reg3 β -mediated neutrophil clearance from the injured heart. The direct impact of Reg3 β on lysosomal degradation may be examined by analyzing the membrane integrity of isolated primary lysosomes. The isolation and purification of neutrophil granules has only been conducted in human cells so far, suggesting future analysis should be performed with human neutrophils.

7.5 Specific glycoproteins represent a potential binding site of Reg3 β on the neutrophil cell surface

Immunohistochemical and flow cytometric analysis revealed a direct binding of Reg3 β on the cell surface of a specific cardiac neutrophil population. Interestingly, Reg3 β was not able to bind to neutrophils from the bone marrow, blood and spleen suggesting a distinct profile on the cell membrane of inflammatory active neutrophils. Since Reg3 β exerts different effects on macrophages and neutrophils (recruitment vs. induction of cell death), there is also the

assumption of cell-type specific binding sites associated with distinct downstream signaling. Consequently, one key aspect of this project was to identify the recognition mechanism of Reg3b for this particular neutrophil population.

So far, there is no known receptor or binding site for Reg proteins, including Reg3 β , except the exostosin-like glycosyltransferase 3 (EXTL3) (Kobayashi et al., 2000), which is still controversially discussed. The glycosyltransferase is responsible for the biosynthesis of heparan sulfate and located at the golgi membrane (Busse et al., 2007). However, Kobayashi et al. identified the EXTL3 receptor for Reg on the cell membrane (Kobayashi et al., 2000). The direct interaction of Reg proteins and EXTL3 has also not sufficiently demonstrated, yet. The analysis of binding partners for Reg1 using a yeast two-hybrid method, could not detect clones homologous to EXTL3 (Mueller, Zhang, & Zenilman, 2008). As part of the C-type lectin family, Reg proteins were shown to bind specific peptidoglycans on bacterial membranes through their CTLD (Lehotzky et al., 2010). The bactericidal activity of murine Reg3 γ and human HIP/PAP depends on the binding to polymers of alternating N-acetylglucosamine and N-acetylmuramic acid (N-acetylglucosamine with a phosphoenolpyruvate) and the mannose polymer mannan but not mannose itself (Bonjoch et al., 2017; Cash et al., 2006). Important for peptidoglycan binding and bacterial killing is the EPN motif, which is also present in Reg3 β (Lehotzky et al., 2010). The removal of common N- and O-linked glycoproteins from the cell surface of neutrophils using a protein deglycosylation mix blocked the Reg3 β -mediated cell death suggesting Reg3 β binding is dependent on peptidoglycans on the cell membrane. Subsequent analysis with individual deglycosidases and carbohydrate competitive binding assays revealed a high affinity interaction between Reg3 β and neutrophils via terminal N-acetylglucosamine, N-acetylgalactosamine and mannose. The murine Reg3 β shares about 70% homologous similarity with Reg3 γ or rather human HIP/PAP (Z. Chen et al., 2019), what may explain the differences in their binding affinities to mannose and its polymer mannan. Additionally, the bactericidal effect of human HIP/PAP is different from the neutrophil clearing mechanism mediated by murine Reg3 β in that bacteria are directly lysed upon Reg protein binding (Mukherjee et al., 2014) and neutrophils are eliminated via the regulated necrotic cell death LDCD.

Recent findings examined the glycoprotein profiles of granules, secretory vesicles and plasma membrane proteins of human neutrophils using liquid chromatography and tandem mass spectrometry (Venkatakrishnan et al., 2020). The glycopeptide profiling revealed distinct signatures insofar azurophilic granules were characterized by paucimannosidic N-glycans (up to 4 mannose units attached to the N-glycan core) but lacked the presence of O-glycans, whereas specific and gelatinase granules displayed complex N- and O-glycans. In contrast, oligomannose (5 and more mannose units attached to the N-glycan core) and complex type N-glycans with N-

acetyllactosamine repeats, a disaccharide consisting of galactose and N-acetylglucosamine, were predominant on secretory vesicles and the plasma membrane of human neutrophils. Thus, the mobilization of secretory vesicles during degranulation in activated neutrophils is able to alter the carbohydrate profile of the cell surface, which might explain the specific binding of Reg3 β to inflammatory active neutrophils. The presence of high mannose oligosaccharides on the human neutrophil membrane was confirmed by analyzing the surface marker CD11b/CD18 using matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization (MALDI) mass spectrometry (Kelm et al., 2020). Moreover, by selectively targeting these glycans with lectins, transmigration and inflammatory functions such as phagocytosis and ROS production were altered or even inhibited in neutrophils (Kelm et al., 2020) similar to the findings of Reg3 β having an impact on neutrophil motility and inflammatory activity.

Glycosylation is critical for the regulation of the immune response by mediating cell-cell and cell-ligand interactions. The neutrophil glycan biology is not fully understood yet. However, technological advances in glycoanalytics provide new insights into the structural and functional diversity of glycoproteins as well as their spatiotemporal expression during the maturation in the bone marrow, movement in the blood circulation and inflammatory activity at the site of injury. Therefore, a MS-based glycome profiling of Reg3 β positive and negative binding neutrophils will promote the characterization of the Reg3 β binding neutrophil subset. To further determine its specific function for cardiac remodeling, additional comprehensive analysis of structural differences in the cell membrane of Reg3 β binding neutrophils such as microvilli, cilia, endocytic pits and tight junctions using scanning ion conductance microscopy (SCIM) should be performed (B.-C. Liu et al., 2013). Here, it is important to include macrophages in the structural analysis of the cell membrane to elaborate the cell specific binding of Reg3 β to neutrophils and macrophages.

7.6 Clathrin-mediated endocytosis of Reg3 β induces enhanced ROS production and neutrophil cell death

Reg3 β binding to the cell surface of neutrophils was demonstrated by flow cytometry using a specific antibody directed against Reg3 β . By permeabilizing the cells prior to the antibody staining for Reg3b, the number of cells positive for Reg3 β substantially increased, suggesting Reg3 β enters the cell after binding to the cell membrane. Inhibition studies for endocytosis revealed an internalization of Reg3 β via clathrin-mediated endocytosis upon binding to specific glycoproteins on the cell surface of neutrophils. Subsequent to endocytosis, Reg3 β was found to be co-localized with primary lysosomes inside the cell indicating Reg3 β is transported through

the endolysosomal pathway. However, the correlation between endocytosis of Reg3 β , increased ROS production and LMP-mediated LDCD requires further investigations to elucidate the direct mechanism of Reg3 β binding to neutrophils. Phagocytosis of microorganism by neutrophils is ultimately linked to increased ROS production into the endolysosomal lumen and has an impact on neutrophil viability by the induction of apoptosis (Watson, Redmond, Wang, Condrón, & Bouchier-Hayes, 1996) or autophagy (Mitroulis et al., 2010). Following endocytosis, early endosomes mature into late endosomes (Huotari & Helenius, 2011) associated with endosomal acidification (Maxfield & Yamashiro, 1987). Late endosomes fuse with lysosomes (Luzio et al., 2007) or in case of neutrophils with azurophilic and specific granules (Peyron, Maridonneau-Parini, & Stegmann, 2001; Segal et al., 1980), thereby forming the endolysosomal compartment (Luzio et al., 2007). Azurophilic granules carry hydrolytic enzymes and proteases to digest the engulfed cargo (Burgoyne & Morgan, 1993). Specific granules carrying the membrane components of NOX2 (Borregaard et al., 1983) enable the assembly and activation of NOX2 on the endolysosomal membrane resulting in ROS production into the lysosomal lumen (Bylund, Campsall, Ma, Conway, & Speert, 2005; Lamb et al., 2012). Inhibition of NOX2 derived ROS generation was shown to block phagocytosis-induced cell death (PICD) in neutrophils (Watson et al., 1996). In line with that, neutrophils from CGD patients exhibited a reduced PICD following phagocytosis compared to healthy controls (Coxon et al., 1996). Beside the activation of intracellular ROS production during phagocytosis of pathogens, the internalization via clathrin-mediated endocytosis of priming agents such as fMLP and TNF α led to enhanced ROS generation and degranulation in neutrophils (Creed, Tandon, Ward, & McLeish, 2017; McLaughlin et al., 2006). Hence, the binding of immunomodulatory agents on specific carbohydrate residues of primed neutrophils and subsequent internalization via clathrin-mediated endocytosis is associated with enhanced ROS production and cell death supporting the yet undescribed mechanism of Reg3 β -mediated neutrophil removal via ROS-dependent lysosomal cell death in the infarcted heart. However, it remains to be investigated whether endocytosis of Reg3 β causes intracellular ROS production and if so, whether lysosomal cell death is directly triggered by the increased ROS levels during endocytosis of Reg3 β or by the direct interaction between Reg3 β and primary lysosomes. The association between increased ROS generation and endocytosis of Reg3 β can be further analyzed by monitoring intracellular ROS levels after the inhibition of endocytosis in neutrophils stimulated with Reg3 β . Whether LMP is caused by directly binding of Reg3 β to the lysosomes or the incorporation into their membranes is yet to be determined i.e. using electron microscopy for ultrastructural analysis.

7.7 Consequences of Reg3 β -mediated removal of neutrophils for cardiac healing

The inflammatory response after the onset of MI is dominated by the infiltration of neutrophils within hours (Y. Ma et al., 2013). Here, the number of neutrophils rapidly decreased around day 4 post-MI in WT mice. In this context, the data revealed a direct impact of Reg3 β on neutrophil viability associated with the induction of an apoptotic cell death, which contributed to the suppression of neutrophil activity. It has been shown that dead cells, both apoptotic and necrotic, are capable of amplifying the acute inflammatory response due to the release of DAMPs and intracellular content, if not removed properly (Faouzi et al., 2001; Majno, La Gattuta, & Thompson, 1960). Neutrophils are filled with degrading and toxic components, as DAMPs and proteolytic enzymes, that harm the surrounding tissue and augment inflammation if released uncontrolled. Clearance of apoptotic neutrophils prevents secondary necrosis or cell lysis and subsequent release of noxious factors (Nathan, 2002) and is considered as pro-resolving, by stimulating the production of anti-inflammatory mediators (Ortega-Gómez et al., 2013). Impaired or delayed efferocytosis of dead neutrophils is associated with many inflammatory and autoimmune diseases (Vandivier, Henson, & Douglas, 2006). The accumulation of necrotic or lysed cells stimulates macrophages to produce pro-inflammatory mediators as TNF α , whereas apoptotic cells do not (Fadok, Bratton, Guthrie, & Henson, 2001). On the other hand, some pathogens accelerate neutrophil apoptosis resulting in a sudden cell lysis and triggering immune responses (Greenlee-Wacker et al., 2014). Therefore, it is not only fundamental to understand the mechanism of leukocytic cell death but also its impact on engulfing immune cells.

Following Reg3 β -mediated induction of neutrophil cell death, the immune cells seemed to be removed by efferocytosis from the inflamed tissue. Reg3 β indirectly modulated the proper removal of Reg3 β -treated neutrophils by enhancing the efferocytosis by macrophages without affecting the actual phagocytic activity of macrophages. However, efferocytosis of Reg3 β pre-treated neutrophils by macrophages was examined in the peritoneum, as the removal of dead neutrophils by macrophages in the infarcted heart has several limitations. First of all, neutrophils infiltrating the infarcted heart need to be labeled to enable their detection in macrophages afterwards. When using neutrophil reporter mice, the endogenous fluorescence might disappear due to the degradation of the cells upon efferocytosis. Second, ex-vivo labeling of the cells poses the challenge of injecting the cells into the infarcted myocardium post-MI. Most importantly, the optimal time point of neutrophil injection post-MI must be set, to avoid adverse side effects on the given immune response in the heart. Therefore, the exact mechanism of how macrophages recognize the Reg3 β binding neutrophil subset remains elusive.

Conclusively, this study demonstrated a complex immunomodulatory function of Reg3 β and its relevance for reparative processes after the onset of MI. Moreover, Reg3 β was detected in patients with acute coronary syndromes, providing the opportunity for new therapeutic strategies in cardiovascular diseases ([Lörchner, Widera, et al., 2018](#)). So far, immunomodulatory clinical studies, targeting neutrophils, have not been successful in humans ([Baran et al., 2001](#)). The main challenge is the development of a neutrophil specific therapy in order to avoid unwanted side effects due to their close relationship to other myeloid cells. Additionally, novel treatments should aim to attenuate neutrophil-mediated tissue injury while maintaining the beneficial effects in the early immune response after the onset of MI. By simultaneously regulating macrophage recruitment and neutrophil removal, Reg3 β provides evidence for a cell type-specific immunomodulatory function. Further, Reg3 β initiates resolution of inflammation by mediating the clearance of a pro-inflammatory neutrophil population at day 4 post-MI without affecting the initial neutrophil immune response. This novel mechanism of a spatiotemporal regulation of cardiac neutrophil accumulation and clearance post-MI prevents excessive inflammation and heart failure while maintaining a balanced and well-coordinated immune response for an optimized cardiac healing and functional recovery after the onset of MI ([Panahi et al., 2018](#)).

8 Literature

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10 List of abbreviations

μm	Microgram
3D	Three-dimensional
A/O	Acridine orange
Asp	Asparagine
ATP	Adenosin tri phosphate
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
BW	Body weight
C5a	Complement component 5a
Ca ²⁺	Calcium ²⁺
CABG	Thrombolysis and coronary artery bypass graft
CGD	Chronic granulomatous diseases
CM-H ₂ DCFDA	Chloromethyl derivative of 2',7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein diacetate
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CTLD	C-type-like lectin domain
CXCL	C-X-C motif chemokine ligand
CXCR	C-X-C chemokine receptor
DAMP	Danger associated molecular pattern
DAPI	4',6-Diamidin-2-phenylindol
DC	Dendritic cells
dH ₂ O	Distilled water
DHR123	Dihydrorhodamine 123
DMEM	Dulbecco's modified medium
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DPI	Diphenyleneiodonium chloride
DTT	Dithiothreitol
ECi	Ethylcinnamate
ECM	Extracellular matrix
EXTL3	Exostosin-like glycosyltransferase 3
FCS	Fetal calf serum
fMLP	N-formylmethionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine
FSC	Forward scatter
G-CSF	Granulocyte colony-stimulating factor

GM-CSF	Granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor
h	Hour
HEPES	4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid
HMBG1	High-mobility group box 1
HRP	horseradish peroxidase
HSP	Heat shock protein
i.p.	Intraperitoneal
i.v.	Intravenous
I/R	Ischemia reperfusion
IFN γ	Interferon gamma
IL	Interleukin
IP10	Interferon gamma induced protein 10
IZ	Infarct zone
LAD	Left anterior descending coronary artery
LAMP1	Lysosome-associated membrane protein 1
LAP	Latency-associated peptide
LDCD	Lysosomal-dependent cell death
LDH	Lactate dehydrogenase
LMP	Lysosomal membrane permeabilization
LPS	Lipopolysaccharide
LTB ₄	Leukotriene B ₄
LTR	LysoTracker
LV	Left ventricle
MAPK	Mitogen-activated protein kinase
MDAC	Monodansylcadaverine
MerTK	Proto-oncogene tyrosine-protein kinase MER
MFI	Mean fluorescence intensity
mg	Milligram
MI	Myocardial infarction
min	Minutes
MIP-2 α	Macrophage inflammatory protein-2 alpha
MMP	Matrix metalloproteinase
MPO	Myeloperoxidase
M β CD	Methyl- β -cyclodextrin

NE	Neutrophil elastase
NET	Neutrophil extracellular trap
NeuAc	Neuraminic acid
ng	Nanogram
NGAL	Neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin
NK cells	Natural killer cells
NOX2	NADPH oxidase 2
O/N	Over night
P/S	Penicillin/Streptavidin
PAMP	Pathogen-associated molecular pattern
PBS	Phosphate-buffered saline
PCI	Percutaneous coronary intervention
PECAM-1	Platelet endothelial cell adhesion molecule 1
PFA	Paraformaldehyde
PICD	Phagocytosis-induced cell death
PKC	Protein kinase C
PMA	Phorbol-12-myristat-13-acetat
PMN	Polymorphonuclear
PS	Phosphatidylserine
PSGL-1	Selectin P ligand 1
Reg3 β	Regenerating islet-derived protein 3 beta
ROS	Reactive oxygen species
RT	Room temperature
RZ	Remote zone
SDF-1	Stromal cell-derived factor 1
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulfate
SEM	Scanning electron microscopy
Ser/Thr	Serine/Threonine
SOD	Sodium dismutase
SSC	Sideward scatter
TEM	Transmission electron microscopy
TGF β	Transforming growth factor β
TIMP	Tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinase
TNF α	Tumor necrosis factor α

T _{reg}	Regulating T-cells
VEGF-A	Vascular endothelial growth factor A
WGA	Wheat germ agglutinin
WT	Wild-type

11 Selbstständigkeitserklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, die vorgelegte Thesis selbstständig und ohne unerlaubte fremde Hilfe und nur mit den Hilfen angefertigt zu haben, die ich in der Thesis angegeben habe. Alle Textstellen, die wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus veröffentlichten Schriften entnommen sind, und alle Angaben die auf mündlichen Auskünften beruhen, sind als solche kenntlich gemacht. Bei den von mir durchgeführten und in der Thesis erwähnten Untersuchungen habe ich die Grundsätze gute wissenschaftlicher Praxis, wie sie in der ‚Satzung der Justus-Liebig-Universität zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis‘ niedergelegt sind, eingehalten. Gemäß § 25 Abs. 6 der Allgemeinen Bestimmungen für modularisierte Studiengänge dulde ich eine Überprüfung der Thesis mittels Anti-Plagiatssoftware.

Bad Nauheim, den 15.10.2020_____

(Julia Detzer)

12 Publications and scientific presentations

12.1 Peer-reviewed publications

Merz SF, Korste S, Bornemann L, Michel L, Stock P, Squire A, Soun C, Engel DR, **Detzer J**, Lörchner H, Hermann DM, Kamler M, Klode J, Hendgen-Cotta UB, Rassaf T, Gunzer M, Totzeck M. (2019). Publisher Correction: Contemporaneous 3D characterization of acute and chronic myocardial I/R injury and response. *Nat Commun*, 10(1), 2312. doi:10.1038/s41467-019-10804-2

Lörchner H, Hou Y, Adrian-Segarra JM, Kulhei J, **Detzer J**, Günther S, Gajawada P, Warnecke H, Niessen HW, Pöling J, Braun T. (2018). Reg proteins direct accumulation of functionally distinct macrophage subsets after myocardial infarction. *Cardiovasc Res*, 114(12), 1667-1679. doi: 10.1093/cvr/cvy126

12.2 Scientific presentations

Poster Presentations:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2019 | Internal meeting MPI-HLR, Bad Marienberg, Germany |
| 2019 | IMPRS graduate school retreat, Hohenroda, Germany |
| 2018 | The Neutrophil International Symposium, Quebec City, Canada |
| 2018 | Internal meeting MPI-HLR, Bad Marienberg, Germany |
| 2017 | IMPRS graduate school retreat, Kreuth, Germany |

Oral Presentations:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2019 | IMPRS graduate school evaluation, Bad Nauheim, Germany |
| 2018 | IMRPS graduate school retreat, Bad Weilburg, Germany |

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