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Article type : Original Article

Systemic administration of IL-33 induces a population of circulating KLRG1^{hi} type 2 innate lymphoid cells and inhibits type 1 innate immunity against multiple myeloma

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This is the author manuscript accepted for publication and has undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process, which may lead to differences between this version and the [Version of Record](#). Please cite this article as [doi: 10.1111/IMCB.12390](https://doi.org/10.1111/IMCB.12390)

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Number of words: 10472

Number of Figures: 8

Keywords: Innate immunity, Innate lymphoid cells, Multiple myeloma, IL-33, Cancer immunology, Cytokine, Immunotherapy

Running Head: Type 2 innate lymphoid cells in multiple myeloma.

ABSTRACT

Type 2 innate lymphoid cells (ILC2s) are important producers of type 2 cytokines whose role in hematological cancers remains unclear. ILC2s are a heterogeneous population encompassing distinct subsets with different tissue localization and cytokine responsiveness. In this study, we investigated the role of bone marrow (BM) ILC2s and IL-33-stimulated ILC2s in multiple myeloma, a plasma cell malignancy that develops in the BM. We found that myeloma growth was associated with phenotypic and functional alterations of BM ILC2s, characterized by an increased expression of maturation markers and reduced cytokine response to IL-2/IL-33. We identified a population of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s that preferentially accumulated in the liver and spleen of *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice reconstituted with BM ILC2s. A similar population of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s was observed in the blood, liver and spleen of IL-33-treated wild-type mice. The presence of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice or in IL-33-treated wild-type mice was associated with increased eosinophil numbers but had no effect on myeloma progression. Interestingly, while decreased myeloma growth was observed following treatment of Rag-deficient mice with the type 1 cytokines IL-12 and

IL-18, this protection was reversed when mice received a combined treatment of IL-33 together with IL-12 and IL-18. In summary, our data indicate that IL-33 treatment induces a population of circulating inflammatory KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s and inhibits type 1 immunity against multiple myeloma. These results argue against therapeutic administration of IL-33 to myeloma patients.

INTRODUCTION

Innate lymphoid cells (ILCs) are a group of developmentally related immune cells that integrate multiple pathogen and host-derived signals to ensure tissue homeostasis and provide early protection against infections.¹ Type 2 ILCs (ILC2s) are considered innate counterparts of T helper (Th)2 cells and are dependent on the transcription factors GATA3 and ROR α .² ILC2s respond to epithelium-derived alarmins [i.e. IL-25, IL-33 and thymic stromal lymphopoietin (TSLP)] by releasing high levels of type 2 cytokines such as IL-5 and IL-13. While ILC2s are well known for their contribution to allergic asthma and to anti-helminth immunity,³ their role in cancer is only beginning to be revealed.^{4, 5}

Both tumor-suppressive and tumor-promoting activities of ILC2s have been described. ILC2s appear to facilitate immune escape by promoting the accumulation of myeloid derived suppressor cells (MDSCs)^{6, 7} and by down-regulating NK cell functions.⁸ However, other studies indicated a protective role for ILC2s in mouse cancer models engineered to produce high levels of IL-33^{9, 10} and mouse ILC2-induced eosinophilia was found to protect against experimental lung metastasis.¹¹ Moreover, a recent study reported a protective role of ILC2s in mouse and human pancreatic tumors.¹² The reasons for these discrepancies remain unclear and a deeper knowledge of ILC2 biology is needed to fully understand their role in cancer.

It has now become evident that ILC2s are not a homogenous population, but that distinct ILC2 subsets can be defined based on their phenotype, localization and function. For instance, ILC2s from different tissues exhibit distinct patterns of cytokine responsiveness; lung ILC2s are activated by IL-33,¹³ whereas intestinal ILC2s respond primarily to IL-25,¹⁴ and skin ILC2s respond to TSLP and IL-18.¹⁵ ¹⁶ Heterogeneity of ILC2s was observed within a given tissue as single cell transcriptomic analyses compartmentalized mouse small-intestine ILC2s into four sub-subsets.¹⁷ Moreover, two distinct populations termed “natural” and “inflammatory” ILC2s have been defined in mice,^{18, 19} and memory-like ILC2s have been observed in the mouse lung and mediastinal lymph nodes.¹³ ILC2-plasticity and their ability to differentiate into IFN- γ -producing ILC1s, or IL-17-producing ILC3s further complicates the picture.^{18, 20-22}

IL-33 is a potent activator of ILC2s that recently gained attention in the field of tumor immunity.²³ The ability of IL-33 to promote type 1 immune responses,²⁴ including NK cell activity,^{25, 26} to reduce the suppressive activity of MDSCs²⁷ and to overcome immune tolerance²⁸ supports the idea that IL-33 might represent a suitable adjuvant for cancer immunotherapy.²⁹ However, the pleiotropic activity of IL-33 on cancer cells as well as on immune and stroma cells within the tumor microenvironment may also foster tumor progression.³⁰ Therefore, therapeutic application of IL-33 in cancer warrants further investigation.

In this study, we investigated the role of ILC2s in multiple myeloma (MM), a blood cancer developing in the bone marrow (BM). Since a population of immature ILC2s has been described in the mouse BM,^{31, 32} we asked whether BM ILC2s play a role in immune responses to MM. Moreover, given the importance of type 1 immune responses in myeloma control,^{33, 34} it was necessary to define whether IL-33 could enhance these responses, as previously suggested in other models.²⁴⁻²⁶ We analyzed the response of BM ILC2s to systemic injection of IL-33 and asked whether ILC2 plasticity could be harnessed to promote type 1 immunity in the context of blood cancer. Our data identified a population of blood-circulating KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s that could be derived from BM ILC2s and preferentially accumulated in the liver of IL-33-treated mice. While the presence of these KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s had no effect on myeloma progression in the absence of additional treatment, our work argues against a clinical use of IL-33 in cancer patients since systemic administration of this cytokine abolished the anti-myeloma activity of IL-12 and IL-18 immunotherapy.

RESULTS

BM ILC2s and peripheral mature ILC2s exhibit different phenotypes

Published reports have used different markers to characterize ILC2s and high heterogeneity of ILC2 populations has been reported between different organs.¹⁶ Differences between male and female ILC2s have also been reported.³⁵ Therefore, we first aimed to define the phenotype of BM ILC2s in naïve mice. For this, we compared BM ILC2s with mature ILC2s from the lung and mesenteric lymph nodes (mLN) of both male and female mice. In agreement with established mouse ILC2 markers,³⁶ ILC2s were defined as Lin⁻ID2⁺CD127⁺CD25⁺ lymphocytes in *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice, or alternatively as Lin⁻CD127⁺CD25⁺ST2⁺ lymphocytes in the absence of ID2 reporter (Supplementary figures 1 and 2a). Using female *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice, we observed that, in contrast to lung and mLN ILC2s, BM ILC2s were uniformly ST2^{hi} and Sca1^{hi} and expressed low levels of KLRG1 and CD117 (Supplementary figures 2b and 2c). In agreement with previous reports,^{35, 37, 38} we observed a higher percentage of KLRG1⁺ ILC2s in the lung and BM of male mice, compared to female mice (Supplementary figures 2d and 2e). However, no differences between sexes were observed in the mLN. To investigate the function of KLRG1⁺ and KLRG1⁻ ILC2 subsets, we sorted these two subsets from the BM of male *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice and cultured them in the presence of IL-2 and IL-33. We found that, under these conditions, KLRG1⁺

ILC2s produced more IL-5, IL-6 and IL-13 than KLRG1⁺ ILC2s (Supplementary figure 2f). KLRG1⁺ and KLRG1⁻ ILC2 subsets expressed similar levels of IL-2 receptor α (CD25) and IL-33 receptor (ST2), suggesting that functional differences between these two subsets were not caused by different responsiveness to IL-2 or IL-33 (Supplementary figure 2g). Collectively, these data highlight phenotypic differences between ILC2s in relation with their organ localization and indicate functional differences between KLRG1⁺ and KLRG1⁻ ILC2 subsets at steady state.

MM development in the BM is associated with subtle modifications of ILC2 phenotype and decreased function.

To characterize the response of BM ILC2s to tumors, we challenged mice with the VK*MYC myeloma cell line Vk12653.³⁴ In this model, MM develops slowly and malignant plasma cells become readily detectable in the BM two to three weeks after Vk12653 cell challenge.³³ At later stages of disease, Vk*MYC myeloma cells colonize the spleen and liver. First, we assessed whether the presence of myeloma cells in the BM altered the potential of cells in this tissue to produce cytokines. We measured cytokine levels in culture supernatants from bulk BM cells obtained from naive and MM-bearing mice at week 5 post-Vk*MYC myeloma cell inoculation. We observed a small increase in thymic stromal lymphopoietin (TSLP) levels in the BM of MM-bearing mice (Supplementary figure 3a). By contrast, IL-25 levels were decreased in the presence of MM (Supplementary figure 3b) and we could not detect IL-33 in the culture supernatants from BM cells (not shown). Moreover, in the absence of re-stimulation, BM cells produced very low levels of IFN- γ , GM-CSF, TNF, IL-4, IL-5, IL-6, IL-10, and IL-17A (Supplementary figure 3c). Thus, MM development was associated with small variations of the availability of the ILC2-activating cytokines TSLP and IL-25 in the BM.

To determine the impact of MM-induced environmental changes on ILC2s, we analyzed the number and phenotype of BM ILC2s at different time points post-tumor cell inoculation. Overall, there was no significant difference in BM ILC2 numbers between naive and MM-bearing mice even though a slight increase in ILC2 frequencies was observed at week 3 post-tumor cell inoculation (Figures 1a and b). Flow cytometry analyses of ILC2 markers revealed phenotypic alterations that correlated with tumor burden (Figures 1c-f). In the presence of MM, BM ILC2s expressed higher levels of the transcription factor GATA3, as well as CD117, KLRG1 and CD25, while the expression of Sca1, CD127 and ICOS was decreased. By contrast, MM development did not affect the expression of the IL-33 receptor subunit ST2. To assess the effects of MM development on ILC2 function, we sorted ILC2s from naive and MM-bearing mice and stimulated them *in vitro* with IL-2 and IL-33. Interestingly, IL-5, IL-6 and IL-13 production from ILC2s isolated from MM-bearing mice was slightly reduced (Supplementary figure 4), suggesting that MM development may drive ILC2 dysfunction. Collectively, these data establish that MM development is associated with phenotypic and functional alterations of BM ILC2s.

Reconstitution of *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice with BM ILC2s has no effect on myeloma progression.

To determine whether the presence of ILC2s influences myeloma growth, we used *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice that lack ILCs. We purified ILC2s from the BM of female *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice and transferred them into *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice. We found that transferred BM ILC2s gave rise to a population of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s that preferentially accumulates in the spleen and liver (Figure 2a and Supplementary figure 5). *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice were injected with 1 x 10⁴ BM ILC2s and challenged two days later with Vk12653 MM cells. Analysis was performed four weeks after tumor cell inoculation. We detected low levels of IL-5 in the sera of ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice while this cytokine was undetectable in control *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice (Figure 2b). This observation supports the predicted functional capacity of transferred BM ILC2s in *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice. However, control and ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice exhibited similar levels of serum IL-6 and IFN-γ. We failed to detect any IL-4 or IL-13 (data not shown). In agreement with the reported role of ILC2s in promoting eosinophil recruitment and proliferation,^{11, 39} we observed increased percentages and numbers of eosinophils in the BM, spleen and liver of ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice (Figures 2c and d). In contrast, control and ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice presented similar percentages of CD11b⁺ myeloid cells, with no difference in MHC-II or CD206 expression (Figure 2c and data not shown). Interestingly, we observed a correlation between the percentages of ILC2s and eosinophils in the spleen and liver, but not in the BM (Figure 2e). Finally, malignant plasma cells were analyzed by flow cytometry in the different organs of control and ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-}. Myeloma burden was similar in the presence or absence of ILC2s (Figures 2f and 2g). Of note, reconstitution of *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice with higher numbers of BM ILC2s (2.3 x 10⁴ cells total, administered in 3 separate injections) similarly expanded eosinophils with no significant effect on MM growth (data not shown). Together, these data indicate that KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s generated from the homeostatic proliferation of BM ILC2s mediate eosinophil expansion. However, neither KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s nor increased eosinophil numbers significantly affected myeloma growth in *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice.

Systemic treatment with IL-33 induces a population of circulating KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s that preferentially accumulates in the spleen and liver.

To characterize ILC2s' response to systemic treatment with IL-33, female WT mice were administered 200 ng of IL-33 intraperitoneally on day 0 and day 2. ILC2s were analyzed on day 5 by flow cytometry. In the BM of IL-33-treated mice, we observed the emergence of a KLRG1^{hi} ILC2 population resembling the one observed in ILC2-reconstituted-*Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice (Figure 3a). Strikingly, KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s were detected in every organ analyzed in mice receiving IL-33, including the spleen and inguinal lymph nodes, that are normally devoid of KLRG1⁺ ILC2s in naive mice. In this analysis, we identified three populations of ILC2s: CD25⁺KLRG1⁻, CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} and CD25^{low}KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s. Since CD25⁺KLRG1⁻ ILC2s dominated in the BM of naive female mice, we think that these cells might represent immature ILC2s and/or ILC2 progenitors. By contrast,

CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} cells were mostly found in the lung and mesenteric lymph nodes of naive mice and we hypothesize that they are mature ILC2s. Finally, CD25^{low}KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s were found in every organ following IL-33 injections and we propose to call them inflammatory ILC2s because they resemble the inflammatory ILC2 population described by Huang et al.¹⁸ Analysis of the kinetics of induction of inflammatory CD25^{low}KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s showed that they were detectable 3 days after the second injection of IL-33 and accounted for the important increase in ILC2 numbers observed in the lung and spleen (Figure 3b). The ability of IL-33 treatment to induce KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s was confirmed in two subsequent experiments using *Rag2*^{-/-} mice (Figure 3c). Similar to our observations in ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice, high numbers of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s were observed in the liver of IL-33-injected *Rag2*^{-/-} mice. KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s were also detected in the blood of IL-33-injected *Rag2*^{-/-} mice. These results suggest that a population of circulating KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s emerges in response to IL-33 treatment and populates highly vascularized organs including the spleen and the liver.

IL-33-induced KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s have no effect on myeloma progression

Next, we investigated the potential role of IL-33-mediated activation of ILC2s in MM. WT mice were challenged with Vk12653 MM cells and 2 weeks later, mice received two injections of 200 ng of IL-33 2 days apart. At day 6 post-treatment, ILC2s defined as Lin⁻CD127⁺ST2⁺Sca1⁺ or Lin⁻CD127⁺CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} cells were present in the blood of IL-33-treated mice, but they were no longer detectable after 10 days (Figures 4a-b). Mice were sacrificed at 4 weeks post-myeloma injection (i.e. 2 weeks post IL-33 treatment) and organs were analyzed by flow cytometry. In agreement with data obtained in non-tumor-bearing mice, we observed KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in the BM, spleen and liver of IL-33 injected mice, but not in PBS-treated mice (Figures 4c-d). Eosinophil numbers were significantly increased in IL-33-treated mice (Figure 4e). Yet, there was no difference in the percentages of CD11b⁺ macrophages, nor in their expression of the M2-associated marker CD206 (data not shown). Moreover, there was no difference in myeloma burden between IL-33- and PBS-treated mice (Figure 4f). Similarly, IL-33 treatment had no effect on myeloma growth when started simultaneously to tumor injection, either in WT or *Rag2*^{-/-} mice (not shown). Moreover, we did not detect any difference in survival following IL-33 treatment when WT, *Rag2*^{-/-} or *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice were challenged with Vk12598, another Vk*MYC myeloma cell line (Figure 4g). Thus, although a short course of IL-33 treatment induced the expansion of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s and increased eosinophil numbers, it had no influence on myeloma growth.

Combined administration of IL-33 with IL-12 and IL-18 induces a mixed type 1/type 2 response characterized by the production of IL-5, IL-13 and IFN- γ .

Given that IL-12 and IL-18 have previously been shown to promote the conversion of ILC2s into ILC1s,²⁰ and that IFN- γ secretion by ILC1s might limit tumor growth,⁴ we investigated whether combined IL-12 and IL-18 administration could induce protective type 1 innate responses in our

model. First, we observed that addition of IL-12 and IL-18 to our *in vitro* BM cultures induced IFN- γ production from BM ILC2s, suggesting that under these conditions, BM ILC2s acquired ILC1 functional properties (Figure 5a). However, stimulation with IL-12 and IL-18 did not alter ILC2 secretion of IL-5 and IL-13 (Supplementary figure 6). Of note, BM ILC2s from naïve and MM-bearing WT mice secreted similar amounts of IFN- γ upon stimulation with IL-2, IL-33, IL-12 and IL-18 (Supplementary figure 7).

Next, we investigated whether combination of IL-33 with IL-12 and IL-18 potentiates type 1 innate responses *in vivo*. First, *Rag2*^{-/-} mice were injected with IL-33 on day 0, and with IL-33, with or without IL-12 and IL-18 (IL-12/IL-18) on day 2. Analysis of serum cytokine levels on day 4 revealed that mice that had received IL-33 alone developed a type 2 response characterized by increased levels of IL-5 and IL-13 (Figure 5b). Mice that additionally received IL-12/IL-18 exhibited a mixed type 2/type 1 response with increased levels of circulating IL-5, IL-13 and IFN- γ . On day 7, we observed increased percentages of NK1.1⁺CD127⁺ non-NK ILCs in the blood of mice treated with IL-33, with no significant difference between mice treated with IL-33 only or IL-33 combined with IL-12/IL-18 (Figure 5c). Intracellular staining of NK1.1⁺CD127⁺ cells indicated increased the percentages of cells expressing the ILC2-associated transcription factor GATA3 in IL-33-treated mice, while the percentage of cells expressing the ILC1-associated transcription factor T-bet was increased in IL-33/IL-12/IL-18-treated mice (Figure 5c). Moreover, similarly to IL-33 treatment, IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 treatment led to up-regulation of KLRG1 on BM ILC2s (Figures 5d and e). Overall, these data indicated that a mixed type 1/type 2 response was induced with the IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 combination.

To determine whether increased number of IL-12/IL-18 injections improved type 1 responses, *Rag2*^{-/-} mice were injected with IL-33 on days 0 and 2; and mice received daily injections of IL-12/IL-18 from day 4 to day 7 (Supplementary figure 8). However, four consecutive daily injections of IL-12/IL-18 failed to increase the percentages of T-bet⁺ ILCs. Moreover, we noticed that, in this experiment, mice receiving IL-12/IL-18 had ruffled fur, suggesting that increased doses of IL-12/IL-18 may have been toxic. Therefore, we decided to only administer one injection of IL-12/IL-18 in subsequent experiments.

Administration of IL-12 and IL-18 protects *Rag*^{-/-} mice against MM

To determine the effect of exogenous administration IL-12/IL-18 on MM progression, *Rag1*^{-/-} mice were challenged with Vk12653 MM cells and four days later, mice were injected with IL-12 and IL-18. This single injection of IL-12/IL-18 prolonged survival (Figure 6a). NK cells are known to be important mediators of type 1 responses.⁴⁰ Therefore, we used anti-asGM1 Abs that are known successfully to deplete NK cells in the Vk*MYC MM model.^{34, 41} Surprisingly, IL-12/IL-18 injection was still protective in anti-asGM1 Ab-treated mice. Flow cytometry analyses revealed that both NK

cells and CD11b⁺ myeloid cells produced IFN- γ following IL-12/IL-18 injection (Figure 6b-c). Moreover, we observed detectable levels of IFN γ in the serum of *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice treated with IL-12/18, suggesting that this treatment induces type 1 innate response from myeloid cells (Supplementary figure 9). Together, these data demonstrate that exogenous administration of IL-12 and IL-18 protects mice against MM. Given that mice treated with anti-AsGM1 Abs were still protected, we propose that the anti-myeloma effect was at least partially mediated by IL-12/IL-18 activated myeloid cells.

IL-33 favors type 2 innate responses and abolishes type 1 protection against MM

Finally, we wanted to determine the effect of the mixed type 1/type 2 response induced by IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 on MM progression. Female *Rag2*^{-/-} mice were challenged with Vk12653 MM cells and divided into three treatment groups: PBS control, IL-12/IL-18 and IL-33/IL-12/IL-18. Of note, an IL-33 only group was not included as we previously showed that IL-33 alone has no effect on MM growth (Figures 4f and g). IL-33 was administered on days 2 and 4, and IL-12/IL-18 on day 4 post-MM challenge. Cytokine analysis in the serum on day 5 confirmed a type 1 response in the IL-12/IL-18 group characterized by high levels of IFN- γ and TNF whereas the type 2 cytokines IL-5 and IL-13 were increased in the IL-33/IL-12/IL-18-treated group (Supplementary figure 10a). We also detected low percentages of KLRG1^{hi} CD127⁺NK1.1⁻ ILCs in the blood of IL-33/IL-12/IL-18-treated mice but not in the two other groups (Supplementary figure 10b). On day 25, serum M-protein levels of IL-12/IL-18-treated mice were significantly decreased compared with PBS and IL-33/IL-12/IL-18-treated groups (Figure 7a). These data confirm the protection induced by a single injection of IL-12/IL-18 and indicate that IL-33 abolishes this protection. Survival analyses further confirmed that exogenous administration of IL-33 reverses the anti-MM effects of IL-12/IL-18 injection (Figure 7b). Similar data were obtained in another experiment performed with male *Rag1*^{-/-} mice (Figure 7c). In a third experiment, female *Rag1*^{-/-} mice were sacrificed on day 30 post MM-challenge for flow cytometry analysis. Quantification of myeloma burden confirmed that the protection conferred by IL-12 and IL-18 was hampered by IL-33 treatment since myeloma cell numbers were significantly decreased in the liver of IL-12/IL-18- but not IL-33/IL-12/IL-18-treated mice (Figure 7d). Similarly, male mice treated with IL-12/IL-18 showed decreased myeloma burden in their BM, spleen and liver; but this protection was abolished in IL-33/IL-12/IL-18-treated mice (Figure 7e).

We found that, similarly to single cytokine injections of IL-33, IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 treatment increased the percentage of BM ILC2s expressing KLRG1 in female *Rag1*^{-/-} mice, while IL-12/IL-18 treatment had no effect on KLRG1 expression levels (Figure 8a). Consequently, we observed increased KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in the BM, spleen and liver of IL-33/IL-12/IL-18-treated female mice when compared with PBS and IL-12/IL-18-treated mice (Figure 8b-c); as well as minor changes in NK1.1⁺ cell numbers (Figure 8d). Increased in KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s was also observed in the liver of IL-33/IL-

12/IL-18-treated male mice (data not shown), thereby indicating that IL-33 had similar effect in both sexes. Finally, eosinophils were expanded in IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 treated mice when compared with PBS or IL-12/IL-18 treated mice (Figure 8e). Together, these results support the idea that, in both males and females, IL-33 induces type 2 responses that blocks protective type 1 immunity against MM.

DISCUSSION

There is conflicting information regarding the implication of ILC2s in cancer and the potential therapeutic activity of IL-33. In this study, we observed that ILC2s and a short duration of IL-33 treatment have no impact on MM progression, in the absence of additional therapy. However, we found that IL-33 antagonized the protective effect of IL-12/IL-18 cytokine-therapy. Our data support the idea that systemic administration of IL-33 induces a population of circulating KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s that inhibits protective type 1 immune responses against multiple myeloma.

The role of ILC2s in cancer is unclear. ILC2s have alternatively be defined as protective or pathologic in various mouse and human cancer studies.^{4, 5} In this report, using ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice and IL-33-mediated expansion of ILC2s, we discard a major role of ILC2s in regulating MM development and growth. Our results contrast with previous studies showing a protective role of IL-33-activated ILC2s against mouse subcutaneous tumors and metastases.^{9, 10} Apart from the localization of the tumor (BM, spleen and liver versus subcutaneous), an important difference between these studies and ours is the mode of IL-33 delivery. Here, we used a short systemic IL-33 treatment (2 intravenous injections over 5 days) whereas other studies utilized IL-33-secreting tumors.^{9, 10} While our treatment was sufficient to expand ILC2s in any organ analyzed, it may not have been sufficient to sustain ILC2 activation. This might explain why chronic exposure of tumor-infiltrating ILC2s to IL-33 could protect against cancer^{9, 10} whereas systemic bolus injections of IL-33 used in this study were ineffective.

Very few studies have analyzed ILC2s in the context of hematological cancers. Increased percentages of circulating ILC2s were observed in patients diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukemia,⁴² but not in the other acute myeloid leukemia subtypes.⁴³ Here, we showed comparable ILC2 numbers in the BM of naïve and MM-challenged mice. Interestingly, BM ILC2s from MM-challenged mice expressed increased levels of GATA3, CD117, CD25 and KLRG1, and decreased levels of Sca1 and CD117. These phenotypic changes might indicate a progressive maturation of BM ILC2s in the presence of myeloma. Moreover, we found that MM growth is associated with decreased ability of BM ILC2s to produce cytokines when stimulated with IL-2 and IL-33. Although ILC2s do not seem to influence the growth and dissemination of myeloma cells, functional alterations of ILC2s might

have important implications for the resolution of infections that constitute a major cause of morbidity and mortality for MM patients.^{44, 45}

The mechanisms responsible for altering ILC2-phenotype and function during the course of MM disease remain unknown. In the myeloma infiltrated BM, hypoxia and sustained-inflammation associated with the establishment of an immunosuppressive milieu are likely to influence ILC2 responses.⁴⁶ ILC2s may interact with other immune cells or with stromal cells, either through cell-to-cell contact or through the release of soluble factors. We screened different cytokines and observed a slight increase in the ILC2-activating cytokine TSLP in myeloma-infiltrated BM, suggesting that TSLP might contribute to the phenotypic changes of ILC2s observed in the presence of MM. Moreover, ILC2s express the immune checkpoint PD-1 whose ligand, PD-L1, is highly expressed in the myeloma microenvironment.^{47, 48} Therefore, PD-1/PD-L1 interactions might drive ILC2 exhaustion in MM.

The leading paradigm that ILCs are tissue-resident cells that arise from early progenitors seeding the organs during the embryonic stage has recently been challenged with the description of inflammatory ILC2s emerging in the blood in response to IL-25.^{49, 50} Supporting the hypothesis of migratory ILC2s, a cell population displaying the phenotypic and functional properties of tissue-resident ILC2s can be detected in the human blood.⁵¹ We found that ILC2s circulate in the blood a few days after the injection of IL-33. Our data strongly support the idea that, upon activation, ILC2s lose their tissue-residency properties and enter the bloodstream. The progeny link between the different populations of tissue-resident and migratory ILC2s remains unclear. Huang et al. described a population of ST2⁺KLRG1^{hi} inflammatory ILC2s that arise from gut-resident ILC2s following IL-25 stimulation or helminth infection; these inflammatory ILC2s enter the bloodstream and circulate to the lung where they regenerate the pool of “natural ILC2s”.⁵⁰ While systemic treatment with IL-33 has been shown to expand KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in mouse mesenteric lymph nodes or liver,^{19, 52} it is currently unclear whether all described inflammatory KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s constitute a single population with a common origin, or whether different subsets arise in different organs and in response to different stimulations. Notably, inflammatory ILC2s described in the present study differ from IL-25/helminth-induced inflammatory ILC2s by their high expression of the IL-33 receptor subunit ST-2.^{18, 19} This observation suggests the existence of different subsets of KLRG1^{hi} inflammatory ILC2s.

Several pieces of evidence indicate that, unlike IL-25/helminth-induced ILC2s,⁵⁰ IL-33-induced KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s observed in this study are derived from the BM. First, CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} ILC2s were increased in the BM early after the first injection of IL-33, indicating a possible maturation pathway from CD25⁺KLRG1⁻ ILC2 precursors to CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} ILC2s that might finally differentiate into CD25^{low}KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in pro-inflammatory conditions. Moreover, we observed a similar population

of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in highly vascularized organs (spleen and liver) of *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice injected with BM ILC2s. Finally, our data are in agreement with a previous study indicating that IL-33 promotes ILC2 egress from the BM.⁵³ However, it is possible that several populations of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s with diverse origins co-exist in our model. Notably, the hypothesis that IL-33-induced lung CD25^{low}KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s are derived from lung resident CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} ILC2s would be in agreement with data from Schneider et al. showing that helminth infection expands local ILC2 pools at the site of inflammation.⁵⁴ A limitation of our study is the lack of analysis of ILC2s in the intestine. However, IL-25 is likely to play a more important role than IL-33 on the regulation gut-resident ILC2s.¹⁴ Considered in the context of the current literature, our results indicate the existence of two distinct inflammatory KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s: ST2⁻ IL-25-induced ILC2s that are derived from gut ILC2s and traffic to the lung,^{18, 50} and ST2⁺ IL-33-induced ILC2s described here that are likely to emerge from the BM and preferentially populate the spleen and liver.

Our data showing accumulation of ILC2s in the liver of ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice contrast with a previous study which did not report ILC2s in the liver following the injection of Lin⁻ Sca1⁺CD25⁺Id2^{hi} BM ILC2s to *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice.³² While the reasons for this discrepancy remain unclear, we should note two factors that might have influenced the outcome of these experiments: the background of host *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice (BALB/c in the study by Hoyler et al. and C57BL/6 in the present study) and the mouse microbiota that is likely to differ between facilities. The idea that ILC2 migration is microbial-mediated is an appealing hypothesis.⁵⁵ In this context, differences in microbiota might influence the circulating properties of ILC2s and thereby their accumulation in the liver. In agreement with our data, other studies reported expansion of liver ILC2s following systemic administration or hepatic expression of IL-33.^{52, 56, 57} Moreover, in a recent review, Martinez-Gonzalez et al. indicated that they observed increased ILC2 numbers in the blood and liver a few weeks after activation, although they did not specify the type of activation.⁵⁸ In light of these findings, we propose that systemic administration of IL-33 induces a population of blood-circulating ILC2s that preferentially expand in the liver.

Our data confirm the existence of sex-driven differences in ILC2 biology.^{35, 37, 38} Interestingly, compared to women, men are slightly more likely to develop MM. However, given the minor role played by ILC2 in MM pathology, sex-driven differences in ILC2s are unlikely underpin sex-driven differences in susceptibility to MM. Importantly, while most of experiments of this study were performed in female mice, we have found that IL-12/IL-18 treatment protects both male and female mice against MM; and that additional injection of IL-33 reverses this protection and induces KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in both sexes.

We established that a single injection of IL-12/IL-18 was sufficient to delay myeloma progression in Rag-deficient mice. These results are consistent with the ability of these cytokines to induce a type 1 immune response characterized by the production of IFN- γ and the protective role of IFN- γ in cancer.⁵⁹ NK cells are known to be potent producers of IFN- γ in response to IL-12 and IL-18.⁴⁰ Surprisingly, we found that anti-AsGM1 Ab-treatment (known to deplete NK cells) did not significantly affect IL-12/IL-18-mediated protection against multiple myeloma, although we observed a non-significant trend toward decreased survival when NK cell were depleted during IL-12/18 injection. Moreover, we found that IL-12/18 treatment induced systemic IFN γ response in *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice, indicating that a type 1 response could be mounted even in the absence of NK cells. However, in agreement with NK cell role in sustaining type 1 responses, increased levels of IFN γ were observed in *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice that had received NK cell transfer. Flow cytometry analysis confirmed that both NK cells and CD11b⁺ myeloid cells produce IFN γ in response to IL-12/18. While additional experiments will be required to definitively rule out a role of NK cells, our data suggest that macrophages, which are also endowed with anti-tumor properties and respond to IL-12 and IL-18,^{60, 61} might protect against MM in our model.

We decided to investigate the potential synergy between IL-33 and IL-12/IL-18 treatments for two reasons: (i) published studies suggested that IL-33 together with IL-12 promote type 1 immunity,^{62, 63} and (ii) we hypothesized that IL-12/IL-18 might promote the differentiation of IL-33-expanded ILC2s into IFN- γ -secreting ILC1s.²⁰ However, we were not able to induce ILC2-ILC1 differentiation *in vivo* and we found that IL-33 treatment abolishes the therapeutic effect of IL-12/IL-18 administration. Loss of protection in IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 treated mice was associated with increased circulating levels of IL-5 and IL-13 and decreased levels of IFN- γ and TNF. These findings indicate that IL-33 induces a type 2 innate immune response that inhibits anti-myeloma type 1 innate immunity.

The precise mechanisms by which IL-33 counteracts the therapeutic effect of IL-12/IL-18 are not fully elucidated. We hypothesized that IL-12/IL-18 might induce M1-polarisation of macrophages that would contribute to tumor-clearance while type 2 cytokines produced by IL-33-induced ILC2s might promote M2-macrophages. However, flow-cytometric analysis of myeloid populations in cytokine-treated mice did not reveal drastic modifications of M1/M2 polarization, at least in terms of CD206 and MHC-II expression. Interestingly, IL-12/IL-18 treatment increased the ratio of lymphoid (CD90⁺) over myeloid (CD11b⁺) cells in both the spleen and the liver, and a similar non-significant trend was observed in the BM (data not shown). These data suggest that IL-12/IL-18 might suppress immunosuppressive myeloid cells and/or increase protective lymphocyte-mediated immunity. Such increased lymphoid/myeloid cell ratio was not observed in IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 treated mice (data not shown), further strengthening the association between high lymphoid/myeloid ratio and myeloma control. An outstanding question is the importance of ILC2s for IL-33-mediated inhibition of IL-

12/IL-18 therapeutic efficacy, for IL-33 might directly act on myeloid cells in an ILC2-independent manner.

In conclusion, our study describes a population of blood-circulating inflammatory KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s that responds to IL-33 and establishes a negative role of IL-33 in the regulation of protective type 1 innate immunity against MM. Our data indicate that IL-12 and IL-18, but not IL-33, should be considered as adjuvants for MM immunotherapy.

METHODS

Mice

All mice used in this study were on a C57BL/6 genetic background. C57BL/6 WT mice were purchased from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research (WEHI) or bred in house at QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute (QIMRB). *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice⁶⁴ were kindly provided by Gabrielle Belz (WEHI, Australia). *Rag1*^{-/-}, *Rag2*^{-/-} and *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice have been previously described.^{34, 65} All mice were bred and maintained at QIMRB and were used at 6-16 weeks of age. Female mice have been used for all experiments except for Figure 1e-f, Figures 7c and e, and Supplementary figures 2d-g. *Rag1*^{-/-} and *Rag2*^{-/-} mice have been alternatively used, depending on availability. All experiments were approved by the QIMRB Animal Ethics Committee.

Vk*MYC cell challenge

Experiments with the Vk*MYC cell lines Vk12653 and Vk12598 were performed as previously described.^{33, 34} Briefly, Vk*MYC cells were expanded in *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice and splenocytes from *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice containing 40-60% of malignant plasma cells were frozen down and used as a source of Vk*MYC MM cells. For Vk*MYC cell challenges, mice were injected intravenously (iv) with live splenocytes from *Il2rg*^{-/-} *Rag2*^{-/-} mice (2 x 10⁶ or 4 x 10⁵ cells, for Vk12653 or Vk12598 cell lines, respectively). The presence of monoclonal Ig (M-protein; quantified as levels of γ -globulin) in the serum was determined by serum protein electrophoresis (HYDRASIS, Sebia Hydragel). Percentages and numbers of malignant plasma cells (MM cells) in the spleen and BM were determined by flow cytometry by gating on CD155⁺CD138⁺B220⁻ live cells as shown previously.³⁴ Mice were either sacrificed at a given time point or monitored overtime for external signs of disease including back-leg paralysis, hunched posture, ruffled fur and swollen abdomen. Sick mice were sacrificed according to a protocol approved by the QIMRB Animal Ethics Committee and in accordance with the NHMRC Guidelines for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes.

***In vivo* cytokine treatments**

To expand ILC2s, mice received two intraperitoneal (ip) injections of 200 ng recombinant mouse IL-33 (Biolegend) at days 0 and 2. To induce type 1 immune responses, mice received a single ip injection of 200 ng of recombinant mouse IL-12 (Biolegend) together with 200 ng of recombinant mouse IL-18 (Glaxo Smith Kline). In some experiments, mice received four daily ip injections of IL-12 (200 ng) together with IL-18 (200 ng).

Flow cytometry

Single-cell suspensions from mouse spleen, BM, liver, lung or lymph nodes were resuspended in FACS buffer containing 2.4G2 (anti-CD16/32) to block Fc receptors. Cell surface staining was performed using conjugated mAbs (see Supplementary table 1). Dead cells were excluded using live/dead dye Zombie Yellow (Biolegend). The lineage cocktail used included at least TCR β , TCR $\gamma\delta$, CD3, CD19 and CD11c. For some experiments, CD5, CD11b, CD122 and Gr1 were added to the lineage cocktail. For intracellular staining of transcription factors, surface-stained cells were fixed and permeabilized with Foxp3/Transcription Factor Fixation/Fixation kit (eBiosciences) and stained with anti-mouse GATA3 (TWAJ, eBioscience) or T-bet (4B10, Biolegend). For intracellular cytokine staining, membrane-stained cells were fixed and permeabilized with the BD Cytofix/Cytoperm kit (BD Biosciences) and stained with anti-mouse IL-5 (TRFK5, Biolegend) or IL-13 (eBio13A, eBioscience). Cell numbers were determined using BD Liquid Counting Beads (BD Biosciences), according to the manufacturer's instructions. Samples were acquired on an LSR Fortessa 4 lasers flow cytometer (BD Biosciences) and analyzed with FlowJo v10 (Tree Star).

Cell sorting

BM ILC2s were purified from *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice. Briefly, BM cell suspensions obtained from the mouse femurs, tibias and pelvis were stained with anti-CD127-biotin Abs (A7R34, Biolegend) and incubated with streptavidin beads (Miltenyi Biotec) before being positively selected by magnetic-activated cell sorting on MS columns (Miltenyi Biotec). CD127⁺-enriched cells were then stained with anti-lineage (Lin: TCR β , TCR $\gamma\delta$, CD3, CD5, CD11c, CD11b, CD19, CD122 and Gr-1), -CD25 and -Sca1 mAbs and Lin⁻GFP⁺CD25⁺Sca1⁺ cells were sorted on a BD FACS Aria II cell sorter (BD Biosciences) with a purity > 95 %.

Cell culture

Purified ILC2s were cultured at the density of 5×10^3 to 2×10^6 cells per well in 96-well plates. Cells were cultured in RPMI 1640 medium (Gibco) containing 10 % fetal calf serum, 2 mM glutamine, 100 U/ml penicillin, 100 mg.mL⁻¹ streptomycin and 50 mM 2-mercaptoethanol. To promote ILC2 survival and activation, medium was supplemented with IL-2 (20-40 ng.mL⁻¹) and IL-33 (20-40 ng.mL⁻¹). In some experiments, IL-12 (1 ng.mL⁻¹) and IL-18 (20 ng.mL⁻¹) were added to the cultures.

Cytokine analysis

Cytokine levels in mouse sera or culture supernatants were measured using a Cytometric Bead Array (CBA) kit (BD Biosciences) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Levels of thymic stromal lymphopoietin (TSLP), IL-25 or IL-33 in the culture supernatants were measured by ELISA. For TSLP measurement, the assay was performed in 96-well NUNC Maxisorp plates. TSLP standards, and anti-TSLP coating (clone 28F12) and capture (clone 65B12) Abs were purchased from Biolegend. IL-25 and IL-33 were measured using the ELISA-ready-SET-Go! kits from Affymetrix eBioscience according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Statistical analyses

Statistical analyses were carried out using the GraphPad Prism Software. For data presented on a log-scale (MM cell numbers), statistical analyses were performed on the log-transformed data with the indicated test. Two-sample analyses were performed using either a *Mann-Whitney U* test or an unpaired *t*-test. Group analyses were performed with a Kruskal-Wallis test followed by a Dunn's multiple comparison post-hoc test or with a 2-way ANOVA followed by a Tukey's multiple comparison post-hoc test. Log-rank test was used for survival analyses. The Pearson *r* correlation coefficient was calculated to assess correlation between 2 parameters.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CG conceived the study, designed and performed experiments, analyzed and interpreted the data and wrote the manuscript. KS, JC, SK, KM, KN, JS, YY and HH performed experiments. SN, MT, CE and GB provided valuable scientific input and/or essential reagents. MS supervised the study. KS, MT, CE, GB and MS edited and provided critical feedback on the manuscript.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank Liam Town and Kate Elder for breeding, genotyping, maintenance, and care of the mice used in this study. We thank the animal house and flow cytometry facilities at QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute. We thank Dr Cyril Seillet for helpful suggestions and discussion. This work was funded by a grant (1122183) awarded to CG through the Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme and co-funded by Cancer Australia, Cure Cancer Australia and Can Too Foundation and by a NHMRC Program Grant (1132519) and Project Grant (1098960) to MS and MT. CG was supported by a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) of Australia Early

Career Fellowship (1107417). KN was supported by the Naito Foundation and NHMRC Project Grant (1159593). MS and GB were supported by a Senior Principal Research Fellowship (1078671 and 1135898, respectively). CE was supported by an NHMRC Program Grant (1132975) and Fellowship (1154265).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

M. J. Smyth has research agreements with Bristol Myers Squibb and Tizona Therapeutics. All other authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1: MM development is associated with phenotypic and functional alterations of BM ILC2s

(a-b) Female C57BL/6 WT mice were challenged iv with 2×10^6 Vk12653 MM cells. Naive age-matched female C57BL/6 WT mice were used as control. (a) At week 1, 3 and 5 post tumor cell-inoculation, ILC2 percentages within total BM CD45.2 $^{+}$ cells were analyzed. Data were pooled from 2 independent experiments with 2 to 5 mice per group each and analyzed with a one-way ANOVA

followed by Holm's Sidak multiple comparison test. (b) Numbers of ILC2s per femur were determined at week 3 post tumor cell-inoculation. Data were pooled from 3 independent experiments with 2 to 5 mice per group each and analyzed with a *Mann-Whitney U test*. (c-f) Male or female C57BL/6 WT or *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice were challenged iv with 2 x 10⁶ Vk12653 MM cells. Naïve sex and age-matched mice were used as control. Marker expression on BM ILC2s was analyzed by flow cytometry at different time after Vk12653 cell-inoculation. (c) Representative staining for GATA3, Sca-1, CD117 and KLRG1 on BM ILC2s from female C57BL/6 WT mice at week 5 post-tumor cell inoculation (red line). Staining in control naïve female C57BL/6 WT mice is shown in black and filled histograms represent the FMO. (d) Quantification of data shown in (c). Data are shown as mean ± SD of n = 5 mice per group from 1 experiment, representative of 2 independent experiments. Data were analyzed with an unpaired *t-test*. ** P < 0.01; *** P < 0.001. N: Naïve; Vk: challenged with Vk12653 MM cells. (e) The MFI of each marker in MM-bearing mice was normalized to the mean MFI obtained in control naïve mice. Graphs show correlation between the relative MFI of each marker and the percentages of malignant CD155⁺ plasma cells (MM cells) in the BM. (f) Correlation between the percentages of KLRG1⁺ ILC2s and MM cells in the BM of female mice. Data were pooled from 2 to 7 experiments with a total of n = 28 to 63 mice and analyzed with a Pearson correlation test. (g) Female *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice were challenged with Vk*MYC cells. At week 3 post-tumor cell inoculation, ILC2s were sorted from the BM and cultured overnight in the presence of IL-2 (40 ng.mL⁻¹) and IL-33 (40 ng.mL⁻¹). BM ILC2s from naïve mice were used as control. Cytokine levels in the supernatant were measured by cytometric bead array (CBA). Data are shown as mean ± SD from 3 independent experiments. Data acquired within the same experiment are displayed with similar symbols, each symbol represents a technical replicate (culture well). Data were analyzed using a 2-way ANOVA with experiment and mouse treatment (Vk*MYC or naïve) as variables. * P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01. Vk: Vk12653-challenged mice.

Figure 2: KLRG1^{hi} ILCs promote eosinophil accumulation in MM-bearing mice but do not influence tumor burden

ILC2s were sorted from the BM of *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice and injected iv into *Il2rg*^{-/-}*Rag2*^{-/-} mice (10 000 ILC2s per mouse). Two days later, ILC2-constituted *Il2rg*^{-/-}*Rag2*^{-/-} mice as well as control *Il2rg*^{-/-}*Rag2*^{-/-} mice were injected iv with 2 x 10⁶ Vk12653 MM cells and analysis was performed at day 26 post MM cell inoculation. (a) Cells are gated on live CD45.2⁺ cells. The lineage cocktail used was: TCRβ, TCRγδ, CD3, CD5, CD19, CD11c. The percentages of ID2⁺ cells and CD25/KLRG1 expressing subsets are shown. (b) Levels of IL-5, IL-6 and IFN-γ in the sera of control (-) and ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-}*Rag2*^{-/-} mice were determined by cytometric bead array. (c) Percentages of eosinophils (CD11b^{int} SiglecF⁺) and CD11b^{hi} myeloid cells were analyzed by flow cytometry. (d) Quantification of eosinophil numbers in the BM, spleen and liver of control and ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg*^{-/-}*Rag2*^{-/-} mice. (e) Percentages of Lin⁻ID2⁺CD25⁺ ILC2s correlate with eosinophil percentages in

the spleen and the liver but not in the BM of ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg^{-/-}Rag2^{-/-}* mice. (f) Percentages and (g) absolute numbers of malignant CD155⁺ plasma cells (MM cells) in the BM, spleen and liver of control or ILC2-reconstituted *Il2rg^{-/-}Rag2^{-/-}* mice were analyzed by flow cytometry. Data are from 1 experiment with n = 10 mice per group and were analyzed with a *Mann-Whitney U test* (b, d, f and g) or with a Pearson correlation test (e). * P < 0.05; *** P < 0.001.

Figure 3: Systemic injection of IL-33 induces a population of circulating KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s that accumulates in the liver.

(a-b) Female C57BL/6 WT mice received 2 ip injections of 200 ng of IL-33 on day 0 and day 2. Groups of 3 mice were sacrificed on day 1, day 2 (before the 2nd injection of IL-33) and day 5; and ILC2s in the BM, lung, spleen, mesenteric lymph nodes (mLN) and inguinal lymph nodes (iLN) were analyzed by flow cytometry. (a) Representative staining on day 5 after gating on live CD45.2⁺ Lin⁻ CD127^{+/low} lymphocytes. The lineage cocktail used was Lin = TCRβ, TCRγδ, CD3, CD5, CD19, CD11c. Numbers indicate the percentages of CD25⁺KLRG1⁻, CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} and CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} cells. (b) Quantification of CD25⁺KLRG1⁻ (green), CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} (purple) and CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} (red) ILC2 numbers in the BM, lung and spleen. Graphs show means ± SD from 1 experiment with n = 3 mice per group. (c) Female Rag2^{-/-} mice received 2 ip injections of 200 ng of IL-33 on day 0 and day 2 and CD25⁺KLRG1⁻, CD25⁺KLRG1^{int}, and CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} ILC2 subsets were analyzed by flow cytometry on day 5. Graphs show means ± SD of n = 3 IL-33-injected and n = 2 PBS-injected mice. Data are from 1 experiment representative of 2 independent experiments.

Figure 4: IL-33 treatment of myeloma-bearing mice expands KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s but does not affect tumor growth

(a-f) Female C57BL/6 WT mice were injected iv with 2 x 10⁶ Vk12653 MM cells on day 0. Then, mice were injected ip with 200 ng of recombinant IL-33 on days 14 and 16. (a) The presence of ILC2 in the blood was analyzed by flow cytometry on day 20. ILC2 were gated on CD45.2⁺Lin⁻CD127^{low/+} cells as Sca1⁺ST2⁺ (upper panel) or CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} (bottom panel). Numbers indicate the percentages of cells within live CD45.2⁺ cells. The lineage cocktail used was TCRβ, TCRγδ, CD11c, CD3, CD19. (b) Percentages of CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} ILCs were quantified in the blood on days 20 and 24 (i.e. 6 and 10 days respectively after the first injection of IL-33). (c) ILC2 were analyzed by flow cytometry on day 28 in the BM, spleen and liver. Representative dot plots gated on Lin⁻CD127^{low/+} cells are shown. Numbers indicate the percentages of CD25⁺KLRG1⁻, CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} and CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} cells within live CD45.2⁺ cells. (d) Graphs show mean ± SD of absolute numbers of CD25⁺KLRG1⁻ (green), CD25⁺KLRG1^{int} (purple) and CD25⁺KLRG1^{hi} (red) ILCs as gated in c. (e) Numbers of eosinophils at day 28. (f) Numbers of CD155⁺ malignant plasma cells (MM cells) at day 28. (g) C57BL/6 WT (circles), Rag2^{-/-} (triangles) or *Il2rg^{-/-}Rag2^{-/-}* mice (squares) were injected iv with 4x10⁵ Vk12598 cells on day 0 and received two ip injections of 200 ng IL-33 (purple) or PBS (black) on

days 0 and 2. Survival was monitored overtime. Data are from 1 experiment with (a-f) n = 10 or (g) n = 7 mice per group. (e) Data were analyzed with a *Mann-Whitney U test*. *** P < 0.001.

Figure 5: Combination of IL-33, IL-12 and IL-18 injections induces a mixed type 1/type 2 response in Rag^{-/-} mice

(a) ILC2s were sorted from the BM of female *Id2*^{GFP/GFP} mice and cultured overnight in the presence of IL-2 (40 ng.mL⁻¹) and IL-33 (40 ng.mL⁻¹) with or without IL-12 (1 ng.mL⁻¹) and IL-18 (20 ng.mL⁻¹). Cytokine levels in the culture supernatants were measured by cytometric bead array (CBA). Data are shown as mean ± SD from 4 independent experiments. Data acquired within the same experiment are displayed with similar symbols, each symbol represents a technical replicate (culture well). Data were analyzed using a 2-way ANOVA with experiment and culture conditions as variables. (b-c) On day 0, female Rag2^{-/-} mice were injected with IL-33 (200 ng, ip) or PBS as control. On day 2, mice were injected with IL-33, with or without IL-12 and IL-18 (200 ng, ip), or PBS as control. (b) Serum was collected on day 4 and cytokine levels were analyzed by CBA. (c) On day 7, blood was collected and ILCs were analyzed by flow cytometry. Cells were gated on live CD45.2⁺ lymphocytes and non-NK ILCs defined as NK1.1⁻CD127⁺ were then divided into GATA3⁻Tbet⁻ (double negative: DN; black), GATA3⁺Tbet⁻ (red), GATA3⁻Tbet⁺ (blue) and GATA3⁺Tbet⁺ (DP: double positive; purple) ILCs. Numbers indicate the % of each population within the gate. (d, e) Marker expression on BM ILC2s (NK1.1⁻CD127⁺CD25⁺Sca1⁺) was analyzed by flow cytometry on day 7. (d) representative histogram showing KLRG1 expression on BM ILCs. Filled grey: PBS; red: IL-33; purple: IL-33 + IL-12 + IL-18. Data are from 1 experiment and are shown as representative FACS-plots and mean ± SD of 4 or 5 mice per group. Data were analyzed with (b, e) a 1-way ANOVA followed by a Dunnett's multiple comparison post hoc test or (c) a 2-way ANOVA followed by a Tukey's multiple comparison post-hoc test.

Figure 6: Administration of IL-12 and IL-18 induces IFN-γ production and prolongs the survival of MM-challenged Rag^{-/-} mice.

(a) Female Rag1^{-/-} mice were challenged with VK12653 cells (2 x 10⁶ cells, iv) on day 0. Mice were treated with anti-asialoGM1 (asGM1) Abs (100 µg, ip) on days 3, 7 and 11 or control IgG. Mice received a single injection of IL-12 and IL-18 (200 ng, ip) or PBS as control on day 7. Survival was analyzed using a Log-rank test. Data are from one experiment with n = 7 or 8 mice per group. (b-c) Rag2^{-/-} mice received a single injection of IL-12 and IL18 (200 ng, ip) or PBS as control. One day later, spleen and BM cells were collected and re-stimulated for 90 min in PMA-ionomycin plus transport inhibitors. IFN-γ production by CD11b⁺ myeloid cells (Mθ) and NK1.1⁺ NKp46⁺ NK cells was determined by intracellular staining. (b) Representative staining. NK cells and Mθ from PBS (grey) and IL-12/IL-18 (blue) treated mice. CD11b⁺NK1.1⁻ cells from these mice are shown as control (same control data are used for both graphs). (c) Data were pooled from 3 experiments, with a total of

n = 9 mice, and analyzed with a *Mann-Whitney U* test. Data acquired within the same experiment are displayed with similar symbols. * $P < 0.05$; *** $P < 0.01$.

Figure 7: Exogenous administration of IL-33 abolishes the anti-myeloma effect of IL-12 and IL-18.

Female Rag2^{-/-} mice (**a-b**), male Rag1^{-/-} mice (**c, e**) and female Rag1^{-/-} mice (**d**) were challenged with Vk12653 MM cells (2×10^6 cells, iv) on day 0. Mice received injections of IL-33 (200 ng, ip) or PBS as control on days 2 and 4. Some mice also received IL-12 and IL-18 (200 ng, ip) on day 4. (**a, c**) M - protein levels were analysed by serum electrophoresis on day 23 (**c**) or day 25 (**a**). Data are shown as mean $\pm$ SD of one experiment with n = 8 mice per group and were analysed with a Kruskal Wallis test followed by Dunn's multiple comparison post hoc test. (**b**) Survival was monitored overtime. Data were analysed with a Log-rank test. (**d, e**) Mice were sacrificed on day 30 for flow cytometry analysis. -Number of myeloma cells in the BM, spleen and liver were quantified. Data are shown as geometric mean $\pm$ SD of one experiment with n = 8 or 9 mice per group and were analysed with a Kruskal Wallis test followed by Dunn's multiple comparison post hoc test.

Figure 8: ILC2s and eosinophils are expanded in IL-33/IL-12/IL-18 treated mice but not in mice receiving IL-12/IL-18 only.

Female Rag1^{-/-} were challenged with Vk12653 MM cells (2×10^6 cells, iv) on day 0. Mice received injections of IL-33 (200 ng, ip) or PBS as control on days 2 and 4. Some mice also received IL-12 and IL-18 (200 ng, ip) on day 4. Mice were sacrificed on day 30 for flow cytometry analysis. (**a**) BM ILC2s (gated as NK1.1⁻CD127⁺CD25⁺Sca1⁺) were analysed for their expression of KLRG1. Grey: PBS; Green: IL-12 + IL-18; Purple: IL-33 + IL-12 + IL-18. (**b**) Representative dot plot graphs showing the percentages of NK cells and KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s in the liver and spleen. Cells were gated on CD45.2⁺ live lymphocytes. (**c**) Absolute numbers of KLRG1^{hi} ILC2s. (**d**) Absolute numbers of NK cells/ILC1s (gated as CD127⁻NK1.1⁺). (**e**) Absolute numbers of eosinophils (Siglec-F⁺). Data are shown as geometric mean $\pm$ SD of one experiment with n = 9 mice per group and were analysed with a Kruskal Wallis test followed by Dunn's multiple comparison post hoc test.

Figure 1

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Figure 2

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Figure 3

a C57BL/6 WT mice

b WT C57BL/6 mice

c Rag^{-/-} mice

CD25^{low}KLRG1^{hi}
CD25⁺KLRG1^{int}
CD25⁺KLRG1⁻

Figure 4

imcb_12390_f4.pptx

a C57BL/6 WT mice

b

c

d

e

f WT C57BL/6 mice

g

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Title:

Systemic administration of IL-33 induces a population of circulating KLRG1(hi)type 2 innate lymphoid cells and inhibits type 1 innate immunity against multiple myeloma

Date:

2020-09-18

Citation:

Guillerey, C., Stannard, K., Chen, J., Krumeich, S., Miles, K., Nakamura, K., Smith, J., Yu, Y., Ng, S., Harjunpaa, H., Teng, M. W. L., Engwerda, C., Belz, G. T. & Smyth, M. J. (2020). Systemic administration of IL-33 induces a population of circulating KLRG1(hi)type 2 innate lymphoid cells and inhibits type 1 innate immunity against multiple myeloma. IMMUNOLOGY AND CELL BIOLOGY, 99 (1), pp.65-83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imcb.12390>.

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