Blocking fatty acid–fueled mROS production within macrophages alleviates acute gouty inflammation

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Gout is the most common inflammatory arthritis affecting men. Acute gouty inflammation is triggered by monosodium urate (MSU) crystal deposition and around joints that activates macrophages into a proinflammatory state, resulting in neutrophil recruitment. A complete understanding of how MSU crystals activate macrophages in vivo has been difficult because of limitations of live imaging this process in traditional animal models. By live imaging the macrophage and neutrophil response to MSU crystals within an intact host (larval zebrafish), we reveal that macrophage activation requires mitochondrial ROS (mROS) generated through fatty acid oxidation. This mitochondrial source of ROS contributes to NF-κB–driven production of IL-1β and TNF-α, which promote neutrophil recruitment. We demonstrate the therapeutic utility of this discovery by showing that this mechanism is conserved in human macrophages and, via pharmacologic blockade, that it contributes to neutrophil recruitment in a mouse model of acute gouty inflammation. To our knowledge, this study is the first to uncover an immunometabolic mechanism of macrophage activation that operates during acute gouty inflammation. Targeting this pathway holds promise in the management of gout and, potentially, other macrophage-driven diseases.

Introduction

Gout, the most common inflammatory arthritis in men (1), is a prototypic acute sterile inflammatory disease. Hyperuricemia leading to monosodium urate (MSU) crystal deposition triggers recurrent attacks of acute joint inflammation (flares) (2). Flares are a key concern to patients, as they cause extreme joint pain and difficulty with daily activities including walking, sleeping, and working (3). Current antiinflammatory medications used to treat and prevent flares (NSAIDs, colchicine, and corticosteroids) are limited by potential drug toxicities and gaps in therapeutic efficacy (4–6). Furthermore, these agents are only modestly effective; for example, when NSAIDs are used to treat acute gout, only approximately 50% of patients experience a major clinical response within 2 days (7). A thorough understanding of how MSU crystals trigger inflammation is necessary to uncover new pathways to pharmacologically target and prevent extremely painful and disabling gouty flares (8).

A gout flare is initiated and driven by the cellular arm of the innate immune system, in particular macrophages and neutrophils (9). MSU crystals stimulate tissue-resident macrophages to produce proinflammatory cytokines including IL-1β (through activation of the NLRP3 inflammasome) (10) and TNF-α and IL-6, which contribute to neutrophil recruitment, a hallmark of acute gouty inflammation (9). Not all individuals with hyperuricemia develop gout, and, in patients with gout, flares are intermittent despite persistent articular MSU crystal deposition, suggesting that other factors may synergize with MSU crystals to trigger inflammation (4). One of these factors is fatty acids (FAs), which are a metabolic consequence of excessive alcohol and food consumption (risk factors for gout flares). Flares of acute joint inflammation in patients with gout correlate with elevated serum FA levels (11, 12). In addition, FAs have been shown to augment MSU crystal–stimulated IL-1β secretion from human peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) and murine macrophages (13). This work connects FAs with macrophage-driven acute gouty inflammation and highlights the need to examine MSU crystal–stimulated macrophages in the context of an intact microenvironment, where synergistic factors, like FAs, are preserved.

Macrophages display remarkable plasticity with respect to their metabolic and immunological phenotypes (14). Macrophage functional plasticity is, at least in part, governed by changes in cellular metabolism and alternate use of metabolic fuels, including FAs (14). Mitochondria-derived ROS (mROS) are important by-products of cellular metabolism that can couple adaptive changes in core metabolic processes with inflammatory pathways (15). Whether FAs help fuel the activation of macrophages in response to MSU crystals to trigger gouty inflammation is unknown. Exploiting the live imaging potential of larval zebrafish, we have previously shown that macrophages exploit FA oxidation (FAO) to fuel bactericidal mROS production in a process requiring a mitochondrial enzyme encoded by immunoresponsive gene 1 (IrG1) (16). IrG1 encodes cis-aconitic acid decarboxylase (CAD), an enzyme that catalyzes production of the metabolite itaconic acid from the TCA cycle intermediate cis-aconitate (17). In a murine air
pouch model of acute gouty inflammation, Irg1 was identified as one of the most highly overexpressed genes within macrophages (18). To date, a role for Irg1 during MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation has not been described.

Here, we developed a larval zebrafish model of acute gouty inflammation to explore the macrophage and neutrophil response to MSU crystals within an intact host. This live imaging approach revealed that macrophages utilize FAO to fuel the elevated production of mROS. This MSU crystal–stimulated, FAO-fueled mROS production was dependent on JAK2/STAT3-driven irg1 expression, promoted macrophage-specific Il1b and Tnfa production (the zebrafish orthologs of IL-1β and TNF-α) through the NF-κB signaling pathway, and was necessary for neutrophil recruitment. We also provide evidence supporting the conservation of this immunometabolic mechanism of macrophage activation in human THP-1 monocytes/macrophages. Here, we demonstrate the utility of the larval zebrafish model as a tool to identify new therapeutics to treat and prevent acute gouty inflammation, and show that drugs that block this metabolic mechanism of MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation in zebrafish have conserved activities in THP-1 cells and inhibited neutrophil recruitment in an in vivo mouse model of acute gouty inflammation.

**Results**

The larval zebrafish innate immune cell response to MSU crystals is highly conserved with the response described in mammals, including sensitivity to conventional antiinflammatory treatments. We first investigated whether larval zebrafish macrophages and neutrophils were responsive to MSU crystals. Throughout this study, MSU crystals were microinjected into the hindbrain ventricle of day-2 post fertilization (dpf) larvae, a well-established injection site that facilitates live imaging of innate immune cells at the single-cell level (16) and provides inflammatory foci for the examination of neutrophil recruitment. Passing MSU crystals through fine-gauge needles followed by sonication resulted in crystal lengths of 2.32 ± 1.53 μm (mean ± SD, n = 85) that readily dispersed throughout the hindbrain ventricle following microinjection (Figure 1A and Supplemental Figure 1A; supplemental material available online with this article; https://doi.org/10.1172/JCI94584DS1).

![Figure 1](https://doi.org/10.1172/JCI94584DS1)
confirm that the observed activation of macrophages was not the result of a nonspecific response to a foreign particle, we also examined *il1b* and *irg1* expression in response to the microinjected soluble uric acid, FluoSpheres (fluorescent microspheres readily phagocytozed by macrophages) (Supplemental Figure 1F,) and calcium pyrophosphate (CPP) crystals (another crystal that similarly activates macrophages, resulting in CPP deposition disease) (21). This analysis revealed that only CPP crystals induced a marked increase in *il1b* and *irg1* expression, albeit not to the same levels as those detected after MSU crystal injection (Supplemental Figure 1, G–J). Importantly, the conventional antiinflammatory gout flare treatments indomethacin and colchicine (22) suppressed MSU crystal–driven neutrophil recruitment in a dose-dependent fashion (Figure 2, D–F), without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1K).

The study of MSU crystal–driven inflammation in macrophage-depleted mice has shown that resident macrophages (already present at the site of MSU crystal injection) are the primary drivers of proinflammatory cytokine production and neutrophil recruitment (23). The temporal kinetics of macrophage activation and neutrophil recruitment in response to MSU crystals stimulated leukocyte recruitment. (A) Time-lapse imaging of neutrophil and macrophage recruitment to MSU crystals in *Tg(lyz:EGFP;mpeg1:nfsB-mCherry)* larvae. (B and C) Temporal quantification of neutrophils (B) and macrophages (C) in the hindbrains of PBS- and MSU crystal–injected, 1% DMSO–treated *Tg(lyz:EGFP)* and *Tg(mpeg1:EGFP)* larvae, respectively (n = 13–15 larvae/treatment). (D) Immunofluorescence detection of neutrophils in the hindbrains of PBS-injected and DMSO-, indomethacin- and colchicine-treated MSU crystal–injected *Tg(lyz:EGFP)* larvae. (E and F) Temporal quantification of neutrophils, as detected in D, for indomethacin (E) and colchicine (F) treatments (n = 13–15 larvae/treatment). DMSO-MSU samples are the same as in B. All data were pooled from 2 independent experiments and represent the mean ± SD. *P* < 0.05, **P** < 0.01, and ****P** < 0.0001, by Student’s t test (B and C) and 1-way ANOVA with Dunnett’s post hoc test (E and F). Scale bars: 50 μm (A and D).
dent reduction in il1b expression, while liposomal clodronate injection led to complete ablation when compared with liposome PBS–injected controls (Supplemental Figure 2, H and I). Similarly, Mtz-treated Tg(mpeg1:nfsB-mCherry;lyz:EGFP) larvae showed a dose-dependent reduction in neutrophil recruitment to MSU crystals (Supplemental Figure 2J), while neutrophil recruitment in liposomal clodronate–injected larvae was completely suppressed (Supplemental Figure 2K). Assessment of neutrophil recruitment to MSU crystals in Tg(lyz:EGFP) larvae depleted of Il1b (using a splice-blocking morpholino [MO], Il1b SBMO) or treated with Z-VAD-FMK (a pan-caspase inhibitor that prevents processing of pro–IL-1β into secreted bioactive IL-1β) (26) resulted in a dose-dependent decrease in neutrophil recruitment (Supplemental Figure 3, A–D), without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1L). When compared with control MO–injected larvae, we observed a similar inhibition of neutrophil recruitment in larvae depleted of Tnfa using independent splice (Tnfa SBMO-blocking) and translation (Tnfa ATGMO-blocking) MOs that effected a dose-dependent depletion of macrophage-specific Tnfa production (Supplemental Figure 3, A and E–I), while leaving whole-larvae neutrophil numbers unaffected (Supplemental Figure 1IL).

MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation is dependent on MyD88 and NF-κB signaling. We next investigated whether the TLR adaptor protein myeloid differentiation primary response protein (MyD88)
and the NF-κB pathway, primary mediators of MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation (4, 27), contributed to macrophage activation within larval zebrafish injected with MSU crystals.

Assessment of MSU crystal–driven il1b expression within larvae depleted of MyD88 (using the splice-blocking MyD88 SBMO that effects a dose-dependent depletion of macrophage MyD88 protein levels [Supplemental Figure 4, A–C] and does not affect whole-larva neutrophil numbers [Supplemental Figure 1L]), revealed a dose-dependent decrease in macrophage-specific il1b expression (Supplemental Figure 4, D and E). MyD88-depleted MSU crystal–injected Tg(mpeg1:EGFP) and Tg(lyz:EGFP) larvae also showed diminished macrophage-specific Tnfa production (Supplemental Figure 4, F and G) and neutrophil recruitment (Supplemental Figure 4, H and I), respectively. To assess the contribution of NF-κB signaling to MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation, we used drugs that target specific components of the NF-κB signaling pathway. Treatment of MSU crystal–injected larvae with Bay11-7082 (an inhibitor of IκB-α phosphorylation) or celestrol or triptolide (inhibitors of the NF-κB transcription factor) resulted in a dose-dependent reduction in il1b expression (Figure 3, A and B, and Supplemental Figure 5, A and B). Similar treatments of MSU crystal–injected Tg(mpeg1:EGFP) and Tg(lyz:EGFP) larvae caused a dose-dependent reduction in macrophage-specific Tnfa levels (Figure 3, C and D, and Supplemental Figure 5, C and D) and neutrophil recruitment (Figure 4, A–C, and Supplemental Figure 5, E and F), respectively, without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1K). To confirm that this requirement for NF-κB signaling during macrophage activation was cell autonomous, we drove expression of a dominant-negative IκBaa-GFP fusion construct (dnikbaa-GFP) specifically within macrophages. This construct encodes a truncated IκBaa (lacking the first 177 nucleotides) that cannot be phosphorylated by IκB kinase (IKK) (Figure 4D and ref. 28). We targeted dnikbaa-GFP expression to macrophages using the mpeg1 promoter (Figure 4D and ref. 20), which suppressed MSU crystal–driven macrophage-specific il1b expression (Figure 4, E and F, and Supplemental Figure 5, G and H), and neutrophil recruitment (Supplemental Figure 5, I and J), without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1L).

Macrophage activation in response to MSU crystals is dependent on JAK2/STAT3–driven expression of Irg1. We next sought to investigate a potential role for Irg1 in our zebrafish model of acute gouty inflammation.

Larvae depleted of Irg1 (using the independent SBMOs Irg1 SBMO1 and SBMO2) showed a dose-dependent reduction in MSU crystal–induced il1b expression (Figure 5, A and B, and Supplemental Figure 6, A–C). While maintaining typical numbers of

Figure 4. Neutrophil recruitment is dependent on NF-κB signaling by macrophages. (A) Immunofluorescence detection of neutrophils in the hindbrains of PBS-injected and MSU crystal–injected DMSO-, BAY11-7082–, and celestrol-treated Tg(lyz:EGFP) larvae. The DMSO-MSU image is the same as in Supplemental Figure 3B. (B and C) Temporal quantification of neutrophils, as detected in A, for BAY11-7082 (B) and celestrol (C) treatments (n = 13–15 larvae/treatment). The DMSO-MSU samples are the same as in Figure 2, B, E, and F, and Supplemental Figure 3D. (D) Schematic of the macrophage-specific dominant-negative IκBaa (dnikbaa) construct and expression within MSU crystal–injected Tg(mpeg1:nfsB-mCherry) larvae. (E) Expression of il1b in WT and mpeg1:dnikbaa-GFP–injected larvae following MSU crystal injection. The MSU image is the same as in Figure 1B. The numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of larvae with the indicated phenotype. (F) Quantification of il1b expression as detected in E. The MSU sample is the same as in Figure 1C (3 hpi). The arrow marks il1b expression in hindbrain. Data were pooled from 2 independent experiments and represent the mean ± SD. ***P < 0.001 and ****P < 0.0001, by 1-way ANOVA with Dunnett’s post hoc test. Scale bars: 50 μm (A) and 100 μm (E).
neutrophils (Supplemental Figure 1L), MSU crystal–injected Irg1 morphants also had suppressed macrophage-specific Tnfa production and neutrophil recruitment (Figure 5, D and E, Figure 6, A and B, and Supplemental Figure 6, D–G). To confirm this result, we generated transient F0 CRISPR-Cas9 irg1 mutants using 2 guide RNAs (gRNAs) that targeted exons 2 and 5 of the irg1 gene (Supplemental Figure 6H). Sequencing of individual gRNA/Cas9-injected larvae at 2 dpf revealed mosaic excision of a large (~2,750 bp) genomic region between the gRNA targets when compared with larvae injected with gRNAs alone (Supplemental Figure 6H). When compared with larvae injected with Cas9 only or gRNAs only, gRNA/Cas9-injected larvae had diminished MSU crystal–driven, macrophage-specific il1b expression (Figure 5, A and C) and Tnfa levels (Figure 5, D and F) and suppressed neutrophil recruitment (Figure 6, A and C), with unaltered numbers of neutrophils (Supplemental Figure 6L). Consistent with IL-8 being a critical driver of neutrophil recruitment to MSU crystals (29), Irg1-depleted larvae also expressed lower levels of cxcl8-ll and cxcl8-l2 (the zebrafish IL-8 homologs) following MSU crystal injection when compared with control MO–injected larvae (Supplemental Figure 6L). We used a MitoSOX probe to live-image macrophage-specific mROS (O$_2^-$) production within MSU crystal–injected Tg(mpeg1:EGFP) larvae (16) and found enhanced mROS production when compared with PBS-injected controls (Figure 6, D and E). This elevated mROS production was abolished in Irg1 morphants (Figure 6, D and E, and Supplemental Figure 6, J and K) and in F0 CRISPR-Cas9 irg1 mutants (Figure 6, D and F) when compared with control MO–injected larvae and controls injected with Cas9 only or gRNAs only, respectively.

Using small-molecule inhibitors, we have previously shown that JAK2/STAT3 signaling is necessary for irg1 expression within macrophages following bacterial infection (16). Treatment of MSU crystal–injected larvae with either the STAT3 inhibitor peptide PpYLKTK-mts (STAT3 IP) or AG490 (a cell-permeable JAK2 inhibitor) resulted in a dose-dependent reduction in irg1 and il1b expression (Supplemental Figure 7, A–C). Without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1K), this inhibition of JAK2/STAT3 signaling also resulted in suppressed macrophage-specific Tnfa production (Supplemental Figure 7, D and E), neutrophil recruitment (Supplemental Figure 7, F and G), and macrophage-specific mROS production (Supplemental Figure 7, H and I) in response to MSU crystals.

MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation is dependent on FAO-fueled mROS production. We have previously shown that FAO contributes to bactericidal mROS production within infected zebrafish macrophages (16). We next studied whether FAO was necessary for MSU crystal–stimulated mROS production and whether it contributed to macrophage activation and neutrophil recruitment.
Treatment of MSU crystal-injected larvae with etomoxir, an inhibitor of carnitine palmitoyltransferase 1 (Cpt1), an enzyme essential for FAO (30), or MitoTEMPO, a mitochondrially targeted antioxidant (31), resulted in dose-dependent inhibition of macrophage-specific \( \text{il1b} \) expression (Figure 7, A and B), Tnfa production (Figure 7, C and D), and neutrophil recruitment (Figure 8, A–C), without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1K). These treatments also suppressed macrophage-specific mROS production (Figure 8, D and E).

Given that flares of acute joint inflammation correlate with elevated serum FA levels (11, 12), we examined the effects of elevated serum FAs on MSU crystal–driven, macrophage-specific mROS production through acute intravenous delivery of intralipid (32). Coinjection of intralipid with the fluorescent FA analog BODIPY FL C16, which permits live imaging of FA transport within zebrafish larvae (33), into the circulation of \( \text{Tg(kdrl:RFP)} \) larvae (possessing red fluorescent vasculature) revealed the immediate transport of injected lipids throughout the vasculature and progressive accumulation in the hindbrain ventricle within 1 hour (Figure 9, A and B). Similar intravenous delivery of intralipid, immediately before MSU crystal injection into \( \text{Tg(mpeg1:EGFP)} \) larvae, resulted in elevated macrophage-specific mROS production, but not in the presence of etomoxir (Figure 9C). Furthermore, direct coinjection of the FAs C16:0 (palmitic acid) and C18:0 (stearic acid) with MSU crystals into the hindbrain ventricle of \( \text{Tg(mpeg1:EGFP)} \) larvae, in the presence and absence of etomoxir, similarly elevated macrophage-specific mROS production through a FAO-dependent mechanism (Supplemental Figure 8, A–C).

The contribution of mROS to MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation requires NF-\( \kappa B \) signaling. Possessing an ability to diffuse between cellular compartments, H2O2 functions as a signaling molecule coupling mROS(\( O_2^- \)) with cellular pathways, including the NF-\( \kappa B \) pathway and cytokine production (35, 36). We studied whether the contribution of mROS(\( O_2^- \))/H2O2 to MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation required the NF-\( \kappa B \) pathway.

To examine whether microinjected H2O2 could rescue MSU crystal–stimulated macrophage activation when endogenous mROS production was suppressed (Figure 10A), we used the genetically encoded ratiometric sensor HyPer that facilitates live imaging of intracellular H2O2 (37). Hindbrain microinjection of H2O2 into HyPer mRNA-injected 2-dpf larvae resulted in an elevated HyPer ratio (HyPer 488/HyPer 405) within cells in the hindbrain, which was indicative of elevated intracellular H2O2 (Supplemental Figure 9A). Measurement of macrophage-specific HyPer ratios...
permit a live, whole vertebrate bioassay approach to assess drug activity in a high-content fashion (38). To uncover new therapeutics that suppress macrophage-driven inflammation, we performed a drug-repositioning screen to identify drugs that inhibit macrophage-specific irg1 expression. Using the Prestwick Chemical library containing 1,280 drugs, we identified 3 drugs (chrysin, piperlongumine, and camptothecin) that strongly suppressed irg1 expression within LPS-injected 2-dpf zebrafish larvae (Supplemental Figure 11A). We studied the therapeutic effects of these drugs in our larval zebrafish model of acute gouty inflammation and found that they also inhibited MSU crystal–driven expression of irg1 (Supplemental Figure 11, B and C) and expression of an irg1:EGFP transgene that provides a live readout of macrophage activation within Tg(irg1:EGFP;mpeg1:nfsB-mCherry) larvae (Supplemental Figure 11, D–G and ref. 39). Treatment of MSU crystal–injected larvae with chrysin, piperlongumine, or camptothecin also suppressed macrophage-specific il1b expression (Figure 12, A and B), Tnfa production (Figure 12, C and D), and neutrophil recruitment (Figure 13, A–D), without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1K), and suppressed macrophage-specific mROS production (Figure 13, E and F).

Drugs that inhibit irg1-dependent mROS production suppress macrophage activation and neutrophil recruitment to MSU crystals. Through simple immersion in drug, larval zebrafish permit a live, whole vertebrate bioassay approach to assess drug activity in a high-content fashion (38). To uncover new therapeutics that suppress macrophage-driven inflammation, we performed a drug-repositioning screen to identify drugs that inhibit macrophage-specific irg1 expression. Using the Prestwick Chemical library containing 1,280 drugs, we identified 3 drugs (chrysin, piperlongumine, and camptothecin) that strongly suppressed irg1 expression within LPS-injected 2-dpf zebrafish larvae (Supplemental Figure 11A). We studied the therapeutic effects of these drugs in our larval zebrafish model of acute gouty inflammation and found that they also inhibited MSU crystal–driven expression of irg1 (Supplemental Figure 11, B and C) and expression of an irg1:EGFP transgene that provides a live readout of macrophage activation within Tg(irg1:EGFP;mpeg1:nfsB-mCherry) larvae (Supplemental Figure 11, D–G and ref. 39). Treatment of MSU crystal–injected larvae with chrysin, piperlongumine, or camptothecin also suppressed macrophage-specific il1b expression (Figure 12, A and B), Tnfa production (Figure 12, C and D), and neutrophil recruitment (Figure 13, A–D), without affecting whole-larvae neutrophil numbers (Supplemental Figure 1K), and suppressed macrophage-specific mROS production (Figure 13, E and F).
FAO-fueled mROS augment MSU crystal-driven expression of IL1B and TNFA within human THP-1 cells, and drugs that inhibit IRG1 expression suppress this activation and neutrophil recruitment in a mouse model of acute gouty inflammation. We next investigated whether this immunometabolic mechanism of macrophage activation operated within human monocytic THP-1 cells, a widely accepted in vitro model of acute gouty inflammation that was fundamental to uncovering the central importance of the NLRP3 inflammasome in gout (10). MSU crystal–driven expression of both IL1B and TNFA was greatly augmented in PMA-stimulated THP-1 cells in the presence of C18:0 (Figure 14, A and B). This elevated expression was, at least in part, dependent on NF-κB signaling, mROS, and FAO production, as evidenced by the significantly reduced expression of IL1B and TNFA following BAY11-7082, celastrol, triptolide, MitoTEMPO, and etomoxir treatments (Figure 14, A and B). Consistent with their ability to suppress IRG1 expression (Figure 14C), chrysin, piperlongumine, and camptothecin treatments also inhibited this FAO/mROS-driven expression of IL1B and TNFA in THP-1 cells costimulated with MSU crystals and C18:0 (Figure 14, A and B). Costimulation of THP-1 cells with MSU crystals and C18:0 also augmented mROS production compared with stimulation with MSU crystals alone (Figure 14, D and E), but not in the presence of MitoTEMPO, confirming the specificity of the MitoSOX probe for the detection of mROS in THP-1 cells. This increase in mROS production was also sensitive to etomoxir treatment and did not occur in the presence of the IRG1 inhibiting drugs chrysin, piperlongumine, or camptothecin (Figure 14, D and E). Next, we examined whether IRG1 was expressed in murine monocytes stimulated with MSU crystals using the MSU crystal–induced peritonitis model of acute gouty inflammation, a well-established model in which resident macrophages initiate and drive neutrophil recruitment (23). We observed that the peritoneal monocytes, isolated following intraperitoneal injection of MSU crystals, expressed IRG1 with temporal kinetics identical to those for IL1B and TNFA (Figure 14, F–H). Finally, we assessed the effects of chrysin, piperlongumine, and camptothecin in a murine air pouch model of acute gouty inflammation (in which MSU crystals are injected into an air pouch that morphologically resembles synovium; ref. 40) and found that chrysin and piperlongumine treatments effected a dose-dependent reduction in neutrophil recruitment (Figure 14, I and J).

Discussion

We developed a unique larval zebrafish model of MSU crystal–driven acute inflammation that provided a window for directly observing the macrophage response to MSU crystals within a...
Mechanisms, including reverse electron transport (43, 44). Until their metabolic mode and can generate mROS through different
proteins. Our work reveals a requirement for FAO during
production by human PBMCs
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(42). Of note, stearic acid has been shown to directly augment
metabolic consequence of a number of risk factors predisposing
(11, 12), and the release of FAs into the circulation is a common
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occludes compares with that described in mammalian systems,
cluding the kinetics of macrophage activation and neutrophil
recruitment and the sensitivity of this model to conventional antiinflammatory gout treatments. Using the live imaging potential
of this model, we provide mechanistic insights into acute gouty inflammation by showing that FAO-fueled mROS production
contributes to macrophage activation by promoting NF-kB-driven production of Il1b and Tnfa that drives neutrophil recruit-
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C18:0 augments MSU crystal–driven, NF-
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tion contributes to macrophage activation (Supplemental Figure 12). In support of the translation of these findings to human macrophages, we further show that
C18:0 augments MSU crystal–driven, NF-kB–dependent expression of
IL1B and TNFα in THP-1 cells through FAO and mROS production and that C18:0 can elevate THP-1 cell mROS production in response to MSU crystals, but not following drug-mediated blockade of
IRG1 expression and FAO. We also provide evidence that our larval zebrafish model has utility as a drug discovery platform for identifying new antiinflammatory therapeutics to suppress MSU crystal–driven inflammation. Previous studies have revealed that FAs can promote the proinflammatory phenotype of macrophages, in part through activation of NF-kB signaling (41). Furthermore, flares of acute joint inflammation in individuals with gout correlate with elevated serum FA levels (11, 12), and the release of FAs into the circulation is a common metabolic consequence of a number of risk factors predisposing patients to flares (e.g., excessive alcohol and food consumption) (42). Of note, stearic acid has been shown to directly augment MSU crystal–stimulated IL-1β production by human PBMCs and murine macrophages through a TLR2/caspase 1–dependent mechanism (13). Our work reveals a requirement for FAO during MSU crystal–driven mROS, IL-1β, and NF-κB production and provides mechanistic insights into how FAs contribute to macrophage activation during acute gouty inflammation.

Macrophages display remarkable plasticity with respect to their metabolic mode and can generate mROS through different mechanisms, including reverse electron transport (43, 44). Until recently, FAO was thought to be the primary metabolic mode of antiinflammatory macrophages, while aerobic glycolysis was a driver of the proinflammatory state (43). It now appears that this dichotomy is an oversimplification and that macrophage metabolic modes, much like their phenotypes, are heterogeneous and very context dependent (45). As an example, when investigating single-nucleotide variations in a gene of unknown function that is associated with increased risk of juvenile idiopathic arthritis, it was discovered that the encoded protein (subsequently called the FA metabolism immunity nexus [FAMIN]) regulates mROS and IL-1β production in proinflammatory macrophages through a FAO-dependent mechanism (31). Our work supports the emerging role of FAO during macrophage activation and highlights the importance of examining macrophage activation in the context of an intact microenvironment, where factors that help regulate the plasticity of macrophage function, such as FAs, are present. Most studies into metabolic reprogramming of macrophages have been restricted to in vitro techniques using limited inflammatory stimuli (largely LPS) (45). A current challenge for the field of immunometabolism is to study how macrophage metabolism is altered in response to alternative stimuli (such as MSU crystals) in vivo and at the single-cell level and how these changes influence macrophage function and disease pathogenesis (45). This study highlights the utility of larval zebrafish as a model system to help address this challenge.

In response to LPS, Irg1-derived itaconic acid has been shown to suppress the production of IL-1β, but not TNF-α, in bone marrow–derived macrophages by inhibiting succinate dehydrogenase (SDH), leading to elevated intracellular levels of succinate (46). In contrast, inhibition of Irg1 activity suppresses ROS, IL-1β, and TNF-α production in human and murine epithelial cells and reduces immune cell recruitment in a model of respiratory syncytial virus infection (47). Further supporting a proinflammatory role for Irg1, a study using an experimental model of peripheral arterial disease showed that a reduction in Irg1-driven itaconic acid promotes M2 polarization in macrophages, while elevated Irg1-driven itaconic acid indicates an M1 phenotype (48). In
The many analogs of camptothecin, which have been developed to enhance its bioavailability, may result in improved in vivo efficacy in this model (54). Collectively, this work extends the potential utility of chrysin and piperlongumine as new antiinflammatory agents to manage acute gouty inflammation. Further clinical studies will be necessary to determine whether the activities of these drugs translate to human patients with gout. The targeting of metabolic reprogramming to modulate macrophage function is emerging as a therapeutic strategy for a number of diseases including obesity-associated diabetes, cancers, and cardiovascular disease (55). As such, we predict that drugs that target this process in MSU crystal–stimulated macrophages may have therapeutic utility in other diseases. In support of this, chrysin and piperlongumine are both primarily known for their antineoplastic activities, and chrysin has been shown to limit inflammation in obese mice through suppression of the M1 macrophage phenotype and support of M2 polarization (56).

In summary, we uncovered a metabolic mechanism controlling MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation that is dependent on FAO-fueled production of mROS. Targeting this mechanism holds promise as a strategy to alleviate the debilitating inflammation triggered by MSU crystals and may also have utility in other macrophage-driven diseases.

addition, when suppressing macrophage activation through inhibition of the catabolic enzyme branched-chain aminotransferase (BCAT), decreased Irg1 and itaconic acid levels contribute to a reduction in proinflammatory gene expression (49). Here, we show that, in response to MSU crystals, Irg1 is necessary for an adaptive increase in mROS levels that in turn promotes IL-1β and TNF-α production.

By exploiting our zebrafish model of acute gouty inflammation, we identified 3 drugs—chrysin, piperlongumine, and camptothecin—that inhibited macrophage-specific mROS production, iflb expression, and Tnfa production and suppressed neutrophil recruitment in response to MSU crystals. Each of these drugs have well-defined antineoplastic activities that are explained, at least in part, by their ability to inhibit STAT3 phosphorylation (50–52), which is consistent with our data showing the ability of these drugs to suppress Jak2-STAT3–dependent irg1 expression in zebrafish macrophages. We also show that 2 of these drugs, chrysin and piperlongumine, inhibited neutrophil recruitment in a mouse model of MSU crystal–driven inflammation. Given that the activity of camptothecin was conserved with THP-1 cells, we predict that the lack of efficacy of camptothecin in the air pouch model may have been the result of its documented poor solubility and bioavailability in vivo (53). Using one of the many analogs of camptothecin, which have been developed to enhance its bioavailability, may result in improved in vivo efficacy in this model (54). Collectively, this work extends the potential utility of chrysin and piperlongumine as new antiinflammatory agents to manage acute gouty inflammation. Further clinical studies will be necessary to determine whether the activities of these drugs translate to human patients with gout. The targeting of metabolic reprogramming to modulate macrophage function is emerging as a therapeutic strategy for a number of diseases including obesity-associated diabetes, cancers, and cardiovascular disease (55). As such, we predict that drugs that target this process in MSU crystal–stimulated macrophages may have therapeutic utility in other diseases. In support of this, chrysin and piperlongumine are both primarily known for their antineoplastic activities, and chrysin has been shown to limit inflammation in obese mice through suppression of the M1 macrophage phenotype and support of M2 polarization (56).

In summary, we uncovered a metabolic mechanism controlling MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation that is dependent on FAO-fueled production of mROS. Targeting this mechanism holds promise as a strategy to alleviate the debilitating inflammation triggered by MSU crystals and may also have utility in other macrophage-driven diseases.
**Methods**

Zebrafish maintenance. Zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) embryos were obtained from natural spawnsings and raised at 28°C in E3 medium supplemented with 0.003% phenylthiourea (PTU) to inhibit pigmentation. WT AB zebrafish were obtained from the Zebrafish International Resource Center (ZIRC). The Tg(*mpeg1:Gal4FF*)^25^ (20) and Tg(UAS-E1b:nfsB-mCherry)^227^ (57) lines (herein referred to as Tg(*mpeg1:nfsB-mCherry*)), Tg(*lyz:EGFP*)^58^ (58), Tg(*mpeg1:EGFP*)^227^ (20), Tg(*irtg1:EGFP*)^224^ (39), and Tg(*kdrl:RFP*)^44^ (34) transgenic lines were used in this study.

**MSU crystal synthesis and injection into zebrafish larvae.** Endotoxin-free MSU crystals were prepared from uric acid (Sigma-Aldrich) as previously described (59). For microinjection, MSU crystals (10 mg) were dissociated by repeated passage through 18- and then 22-gauge...
Figure 12. Drugs that inhibit irg1 expression suppress MSU crystal–driven macrophage activation. (A) Expression of il1b in MSU crystal–injected DMSO-, chrysin-, piperlongumine-, and camptothecin-treated larvae. Black arrow marks il1b expression in hindbrain. The numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of larvae with the indicated phenotype. (B) Quantification of il1b expression, as detected in A. (C) Immunofluorescence of Tnfa in the hindbrains of MSU crystal–injected DMSO-, chrysin-, piperlongumine-, and camptothecin-treated Tg(mpeg1:EGFP) larvae. The DMSO-MSU image is the same as in Figure 7C and Supplemental Figure 5G. (D) Quantification of Tnfa, as detected in C (n = 15 larvae/treatment). The DMSO-MSU sample is the same as in Figure 1G (3 hpi); Figure 3D; Figure 5F; Figure 7D; Figure 11B; Supplemental Figure 5, D and H; Supplemental Figure 7E; and Supplemental Figure 9E. Data were pooled from 2 independent experiments and represent the mean ± SD. ****P < 0.0001, by 1-way ANOVA with Dunnett’s post hoc test. Scale bars: 100 μm (A) and 50 μm (C). Campto., camptothecin; Piperl., piperlongumine.

neuronal atrophy that was observed in the cingulate cortex and prelimbic cortex of the hippocampus in mice treated with camptothecin. The pathology observed in the hippocampus was consistent with the observed behavioral deficits, as the mice exhibited signs of anxiety and depression. These findings suggest that camptothecin may have therapeutic potential in the treatment of neurological disorders such as schizophrenia and depression.

In summary, the study demonstrates the potential of camptothecin as a therapeutic agent for the treatment of neurological disorders, particularly those associated with atrophy and inflammation. Further research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms of action and to develop safe and effective formulations for clinical use. The results also highlight the importance of understanding the side effects of chemotherapy agents, as some may have unintended consequences on the brain.
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Chemical); piperlongumine (Prestwick Chemical); and camptothecin (Prestwick Chemical). To assess the effects of drugs on il1b or irg1 expression, Tnfa production, or neutrophil recruitment, drugs were diluted in E3 medium supplemented with 1% DMSO and delivered by immersion. To assess the effects of the drugs on mROS production, a 1-nl volume of drug was microinjected into the hindbrain. Of note, no toxicity was observed for any of the chemical inhibitors used at the doses described.

Immunofluorescence. Immunofluorescence was carried out as previously described (16). The primary and secondary antibodies used for the detection of EGFP, Tnfa, and MyD88 and their dilutions were as follows: EGFP, chicken anti-GFP, 1:500 (Abcam; ab13970, lot GR236651-3) and goat anti–chicken Alexa Fluor 488, 1:500 (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific; A11039, lot 1218174); Tnfa, rabbit anti–zebrafish Tnfa, 1:40 (AnaSpec; AS-55383, lot O10302) and goat anti–rabbit Alexa Fluor 546, 1:400 (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific; A11010, lot 753750); MyD88, rabbit anti–zebrafish MyD88, 1:40 (AnaSpec; 55449, lot KK2103); and goat anti–rabbit Alexa Fluor 546, 1:400 (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific; A11010, lot 753750).

Flow cytometry. Flow cytometry was performed as previously described (65), using a BD LSR II Flow Cytometer.

Figure 13. Drugs that inhibit irg1 expression suppress MSU crystal–driven neutrophil recruitment and macrophage-specific mROS production. (A) Immunofluorescence detection of neutrophils in MSU crystal–injected DMSO-, chrysin-, piperlongumine-, and camptothecin-treated Tg(lyz:EGFP) larvae. The DMSO-MSU image is the same as in Figure 2D and Supplemental Figure S1. (B–D) Quantification of neutrophils, as detected in A, for chrysin (B), piperlongumine (C), and camptothecin (D) treatments (n = 13–15 larvae/treatment). The DMSO-MSU samples are the same as in Figure 2, B, E, and F; Figure 4, B and C; Figure 6C; Figure 8, B and C; Figure 11, D and E; Supplemental Figure 3D; Supplemental Figure 5, F and J; Supplemental Figure 7G; and Supplemental Figure 10, B and C. (E) Macrophage mROS production (white arrow) in the hindbrains of MSU crystal–injected DMSO-, chrysin-, piperlongumine-, and camptothecin-treated Tg(mpeg1:EGFP) larvae (MitoSOX signal is displayed as a heatmap, with warmer colors representing higher levels of mROS). (F) Quantification of macrophage-specific mROS production, as detected in E (n = 10 larvae/treatment). The DMSO-MSU sample is the same as in Figure 6F; Figure 8E; Supplemental Figure 7I; and Supplemental Figure 8, B and C. Data were pooled from 2 independent experiments and represent the mean ± SD. *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001, and ****P < 0.0001, by 1-way ANOVA with Dunnett’s post hoc test. Scale bars: 50 μm (A) and 10 μm (E).
Figure 14. Stearic acid (C18:0) augments MSU crystal-stimulated expression of IL1B and TNFA expression in THP-1 cells through FAO-driven mROS production, and drugs that inhibit Irg1 expression suppress neutrophil recruitment in a murine air pouch model of acute gouty inflammation. (A and B) Expression of IL1B (A) and TNFA (B) in THP-1 cells stimulated with MSU crystals, C18:0, MSU crystals plus C18:0, and MSU crystal plus C18:0 in the presence of BAY11-7082, celestatol, triflotide, MitoTEMPO, etomoxir, chrysin, piperlongumine, or camptothecin 6 hours after stimulation, relative to the no–MSU crystals control (qPCR, n = 5 biological replicates). (C) Expression of Irg1 in THP-1 cells stimulated with MSU crystals plus C18:0 alone and in the presence of chrysin, piperlongumine, or camptothecin, measured after 6 hours of stimulation, relative to the no–MSU crystals control (qPCR, n = 5 biological replicates). (D) Representative flow cytometric data showing MitoSOX fluorescence in THP-1 cells stimulated with MSU crystals, control crystals, MSU crystals plus C18:0, and MSU crystals plus C18:0 in the presence of MitoTEMPO, etomoxir, chrysin, piperlongumine, or camptothecin, measured after 6 hours of stimulation (displayed as counts, percentage of maximum). (E) Quantification of MitoSOX signal (MFI), as detected in D, relative to MSU crystal–treated cells (n = 5 biological replicates). (F–H) Temporal expression of il1b (F), Tnfa (G), and Irg1 (H) in peritoneal monocytes isolated from mice following intraperitoneal injection of MSU crystals, relative to the no–MSU crystals control (qPCR, n = 5 mice/treatment). (I) Schematic of murine MSU crystal air pouch model of acute gouty inflammation and drug treatment strategy. (J) Effects of chrysin, piperlongumine, and camptothecin on neutrophil and monocyte numbers (measured as a percentage of leukocytes) in the murine MSU crystal air pouch model (n = 5 mice for the no–MSU crystals control; n = 10 mice for all other treatments). Data represent the mean ± SD. *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001, and ****P < 0.0001, by 1-way ANOVA with Dunnett’s post hoc test (A–C, E, and J) and Kruskal-Wallis test (F–H).

Macrofage ablation experiments. For genetic depletion of macrophages, Tg(mpeg1:nsfb-m-Cherry) or Tg(mpeg1:nsfb-Cherry:lyze:EGFP) double-transgenic larvae (for neutrophil recruitment experiments) were treated with either 1 or 5 mM metronidazole at 30 hpf for 18 hours. For liposome clodronate-mediated ablation, liposomes (as supplied by ClodronateLiposomes.org) were injected as previously described (66). Of note, given the requirement of blood circulation for normal, definitive hematopoiesis (67), only liposome-injected larvae with unaffected blood flow were used for subsequent experiments.

CRISPR-Cas9. CRISPR gRNA targets were selected and gRNAs were designed using the CRISPRDirect Web server (https://crispr.dbcis.jp/) (68). The primer pairs used to construct Irg1 gRNA no. 1 (to target exon 2) and Irg1 gRNA no. 2 (to target exon 5) were as follows: forward, 5′-TAGGTGTATAAAGACCGGTGTTC-3′; reverse, 5′-AACGACACCAGCTTTAACA-3′; and forward, 5′-TAGGTGCCAGCTTTGCCATG-3′, reverse, 5′-AACGACCATGCGCACCTTAC-3′, respectively. The primer pairs were annealed and ligated into the T7cas9sgRNA vector (Addgene; 46759) that was linearized with BsmBI, BglII, and SalI (New England Biolabs), using T4 DNA ligase (New England Biolabs). Following transformation, single colonies were selected for sequencing confirmation. Sequence-confirmed vectors were then linearized with BamHI (New England Biolabs), and gRNA transcripts were generated using the MEGASHortscript T7 Kit (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific). Cas9 mRNA was in vitro transcribed from a Norl-linearized pCS2-nsl-cas9-nsl plasmid (Addgene; 47929) using the mMESSAGE mMACHINE SP6 Kit (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific). Irg1 gRNAs (75 pg) and Cas9 mRNA (150 pg) were injected into single-cell-stage embryos. To validate CRISPR-Cas9-mediated genome editing, individual 2-dpf gRNA/Cas9-injected larvae were lysed in 10 μl alkaline lysis buffer (25 mM NaOH, 0.2 mM EDTA) before addition of 1 μl neutralization buffer (40 mM Tris, pH 8.0) to isolate genomic DNA. Amplicons were then generated using primers immediately upstream and downstream of the gRNA targets in exons 2 and 5, respectively, (exon 2, forward, 5′-TTAC-GGACATTTGTCAGCA-3′; exon 5, reverse, 5′-TGAAGAGCGCCAGAGCAGAG-3′). The PCR products were subsequently cloned into pCR-Blunt II-TOPO (Thermo Fisher Scientific) for sequencing and confirmation of genome editing.

Genetic inhibition of NF-κB signaling. To specifically inhibit NF-κB signaling within macrophages, a macrophage-restricted dominant-negative ikbαa (dnikbαa) GFP fusion overexpression construct was generated by subcloning the p5E-mpeg1 (gift of Stephen Renshaw, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom), pME-dnikbαa (28), and p3E-V2AEGFP-pA (28) (gifts of Feng Liu, Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China) entry vectors into the pDestTo2CG destination vector [containing the cardiac myosin light chain 2(mlc2):EGFP transgene marker] from the Tol2kit (69). The resulting Tol2 mpeg1:dnikbαa-GFP construct (25 pg) was cojected with in vitro–transcribed transposase mRNA (25 pg) at the single-cell stage.

Live imaging intracellular \( \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \) with HyPer constructs. To express HyPer ubiquitously throughout larvae, single-cell-stage embryos were injected with 250 pg in vitro–transcribed HyPer mRNA using the mMESSAGE mMACHINE SP6 Kit (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific) and pCS2-HyPer as a template, as previously described (70). To restrict HyPer expression to macrophages, we generated a Tol2 UAS:HyPer construct using a pME-HyPer construct (gift of Stephen Renshaw, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom) and the p5E-UAS and pDestTo2CG Gateway constructs from the Tol2kit (69). Coinjection of this construct (25 pg) with a Tol2 mpeg1:Gal4FF construct (25 pg) and in vitro–transcribed transposase mRNA (25 pg) into single-cell-stage embryos resulted in macrophage-restricted HyPer expression. HyPer fluorescence emission was detected at wavelengths of 505 to 510 and 510 to 525 nm following 405-nm and 488-nm excitation using an Olympus Fluoview FV1000 scanning confocal microscope, as previously described (71). Raw images were processed and HyPer ratios generated as previously described (37). A HyPer ratio image (HyPer\(_{488}\)/HyPer\(_{405}\)) was then generated and displayed as a heatmap, with warmer colors indicating higher ratios being indicative of elevated intracellular \( \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \) levels. To measure HyPer ratios before and after \( \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \) microinjection, larvae were anesthetized and mounted in 1% low-melting-point agarose. Single scans were then performed through individual HyPer-expressing macrophages before a 1-nl volume of either filter-sterile PBS or 50 μM \( \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \) was injected. Following injection, the same macrophages were imaged while maintaining identical imaging parameters to ensure that any differences were not an artifact of altered image acquisition settings. For each HyPer-expressing macrophage, a peak HyPer\(_{488}\)/HyPer\(_{405}\) ratio was quantified by positioning the line-intensity measurement tool through the macrophage. HyPer\(_{488}/\text{HyPer}_{405}\) ratio changes for individual HyPer-expressing macrophages were then normalized (with “before” HyPer\(_{488}/\text{HyPer}_{405}\) ratios = 1).
Live imaging macrophage-specific mROS. To live image and quantify macrophage-specific mROS production, 50 μM MitoSOX Red Mitochondrial Superoxide Indicator (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific; M36008) was injected into the hindbrain ventricle of 2-dpf Tg(mpil1:EGFP) larvae, as previously described (16).

Confocal imaging. Live imaging of MitoSOX and HyPer and time-lapse imaging were performed on an Olympus FV1000 Fluoview laser-scanning confocal microscope equipped with an incubation chamber. All other confocal imaging was performed using a Nikon C1 Eclipse confocal microscope. Quantification from confocal imaging was performed using Velocity Image Analysis Software (version 6.3, PerkinElmer). When confocal imaging was used to detect differences between treatment and control samples, identical imaging parameters were used to ensure that any differences were not an artifact of altered image acquisition settings. When quantifying neutrophils and macrophages within the hindbrain region, the following parameters were used: 512 × 512 pixels and 40 × 3 μm Z-stacks (extending from the dorsal-most surface of the hindbrain). When quantifying Tnfa and MyD88 within individual macrophages, the following parameters were used: 512 × 512 pixels and 40 × 2 μm Z-stacks (extending from the dorsal-most surface of the hindbrain). Care was taken to image larvae at the exact same anatomical location. When live imaging drug-treated Tg(irg1:EGFP;mpil1:nsfB-mCherry) larvae, larvae were anesthetized following MSU crystal injection and mounted in 1% low-melting-point agarose in E3 media supplemented with 125 μg/ml tricaine and 0.25 μg/ml chrysin, piperlongumine, or camptothecin (the highest drug dose tolerated during a 12-hour time-lapse experiment). The mean fluorescence intensity (MFI) of EGFP was then quantified within individual mCherry+ macrophages in the hindbrain region using individual frames from time-lapse imaging experiments using Velocity Image Analysis Software.

Drug repositioning screen to identify inhibitors of irg1 expression. We screened the Prestwick Chemical Library (Prestwick Chemical) to identify drugs that inhibit irg1 expression in macrophages. The Prestwick Chemical Library contains 1,280 mainly FDA-approved drugs selected for their pharmacological diversity and known bioavailability and safety in humans. Larvae (2 dpf) were transferred into screening medium (E3 medium supplemented with 1% DMSO, 20 μM metronidazole, 0.05 U/ml penicillin, 50 ng/ml streptomycin, and 1 mM Tris, pH 7.4) (ref. 72) and arrayed into 48-well tissue culture plates (7 larvae/well). Larvae were exposed (by immersion) to a 2-hour drug pretreatment at 5 μg/ml before injection of LPS (0.8 mg/ml) into the hindbrain ventricle while in drug. Larvae were then fixed 2 hours after LPS injection and assessed for irg1 expression by WMISH analysis using an Intavis In situ Pro VSi ISH robot. Macrophage-restricted expression of irg1 was then compared with sterile PBS-injected and LPS-injected DMSO (no drug) controls.

Mouse peritonitis model of acute gouty inflammation. Urate peritonitis was induced in 8- to 11-week-old male C57BL/6J mice (Malaghan Institute of Medical Research, Wellington, New Zealand), as previously described (73).

THP-1 cell culture. The human monocytic THP-1 cell line (a gift of John Fraser, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand) was grown in RPMI 1640 Media (Sigma-Aldrich) supplemented with 10% FBS (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific) and 1 mM sodium pyruvate (Sigma-Aldrich) at 37°C in 5% CO₂. Cells were seeded at 1.5 × 10⁶ cells per well in 24-well plates and stimulated with 5 μM PMA for 3 hours. Cells were washed twice in culture media and incubated overnight. Cells were washed again, transferred into culture media supplemented with 1% FA-free BSA, and treated with 500 μg/ml MSU crystals or 200 μM stearic acid (C18:0), alone and combined, or were left untreated (no MSU control) for 6 hours. For drug treatments, the following drugs were included: BAY11-7082 (20 μM), cetastrol (20 μM), triptolide (100 nM), MitoTEMPO (250 μM), etomoxir (250 μM), chrysirin (10 μM), piperlongumine (10 μM), and camptothecin (10 μM). Cells were then washed twice in PBS, and RNA was extracted for quantitative PCR (qPCR) analysis.

RNA isolation and qPCR. Total RNA was isolated from larval zebrafish, mouse peritoneal monocytes/macrophages, and THP-1 cells using TRIzol Reagent (Life Technologies, Thermo Fisher Scientific), and cDNA was synthesized using SuperScript III Reverse Transcriptase (Life Technologies, Thermo Fisher Scientific). For larval zebrafish and THP-1 samples, qPCR was performed in technical quadruplicate using a QuantStudio 6K Flex Real-Time PCR System (Life Technologies, Thermo Fisher Scientific) for zebrafish cxcl8-l2: forward, 5′-GTGCCTGCTATTGAAGCAA-3′, reverse, 5′-CTTACACCATGGAGCAGACAG-3′ (74) and cxcl8-l2: forward, 5′-GCTGATGATC- ACCTGCAAAAG-3′, reverse, 5′-TGCTGAACTTTCCCTTGA-3′ (ref. 74); and human IRG1: forward, 5′-GTTAATCTCAGTTCT- CAAAAGCACC-3′, reverse, 5′-TACAAACAAATCATGAATCTCC- CC-3′ (ref. 75); IL1B: forward, 5′-TGGAGGAGACCTTACCTCCTG-3′, reverse, 5′-TACGCAATCTTTCTGCTC-3′; and TNFA: forward, 5′-TGGAGGAGACCTTACCTCCTG-3′, reverse, 5′-TGAGG TACAGGCCTCTGT-3′ using PerfectTa SYBR Green FastMix (Quantabio). Expression levels were normalized to efla: forward, 5′-TGCCCTTGCTCCTCAATCAGC-3′, reverse, 5′-TACCCTCTGTCGCCTAATC-3′ and GAPDH: forward, 5′-TGACCCACCAACTCTGCTT- TAGC-3′, reverse, 5′-GGCATGCCATGGTGTCATG-3′ for zebrafish and human samples, respectively. For mouse samples, qPCR was performed in technical duplicate using a QuantStudio 12K Flex Real-Time PCR System (Life Technologies, Thermo Fisher Scientific) for mouse IL1b (Mm00434228_m1), Tnfa (Mm00443258_m1), and Irg1 (Mm01224532_m1), and expression levels were normalized to 18s rRNA (Mm03928990_g1). For all samples, expression levels were calculated using the ΔΔCt method.

Flow cytometric analysis of mROS production. mROS were detected within THP-1 cells as previously described (76). In brief, following treatments, cells were incubated with 2.5 μM MitoSOX (Invitrogen, Thermo Fisher Scientific; M36008) for 30 minutes, washed in PBS, removed from plates with ice-cold PBS supplemented with 1 mM EDTA, pelleted, and resuspended in ice-cold PBS supplemented with 1% FBS. Fluorescence intensities were then measured using a BD LSR II Flow Cytometer.

Murine air pouch model of acute gouty inflammation. The in vivo testing of chrysin, piperlongumine, and camptothecin was performed under contract with Washington Biotech Inc., using a murine air pouch model of acute gouty inflammation. In brief, 5- to 6-week-old male BALB/c mice (Envigo) were anesthetized and the nape of the neck shaved. On days 0 and 3, sterile air (6 ml) was injected subcutaneously to generate an air pouch that morphologically resembled the joint synovium. Mice were randomly divided into the following groups: n = 5 mice for no MSU control group and n = 10 mice each for no drug group (DMSO), positive control group (1 mg/kg colchicine), and chrysin, piperlongumine, and campto-
Electrolyte treatment groups. Freshly prepared MSU crystals (30 mg in 3 ml) were injected into the air pouch 30 minutes after subcutaneous delivery of drugs. Four hours after MSU crystal injection, exudates were collected from the air pouches, and total white cell and differential leukocyte counts were performed using an Abbott CELL-DYN Hematology Analyzer.

Statistics. All data are presented as the mean ± SD. Statistical significance of differences between 2 groups was determined using an unpaired, 2-tailed t test. For multiple comparisons among control and experimental groups, a 1-way ANOVA with Dunnett’s post hoc correction was used. P values of less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. All statistical analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism 5.0 (GraphPad Software). For the assessment of treatment effects on neutrophil recruitment to MSU crystals in zebrafish, larvae were collected from 2 independent experiments and then pooled, and neutrophils from 13 to 15 larvae were quantified. Comparisons were made of control groups specific to the experimental technique. No significant differences were observed within each time point between any of the control groups used (Supplemental Figure 13A), supporting the reproducibility of our control data. To determine the treatment effects on Tnfa production, larvae were collected in a similar fashion, and Tnfa levels were quantified in macrophages from 15 larvae. For mROS production, measurements were taken from approximately 10 larvae from at least 2 independent experiments. A similar comparison between the control groups used for Tnfa and mROS production also revealed no significant differences (Supplemental Figure 13, B and C).

Study approval. All zebrafish research was conducted with the approval of the University of Auckland Animal Ethics Committee. For mouse studies, the peritonitis model experiments were performed in accordance with procedures approved by the Victoria University Animal Ethics Committee, while the air pouch model study was carried out following ethical standards for care and use of laboratory animals under Public Health Services (Baltimore, USA)/NIH regulations and the study approved by the IACUC at Washington Biotechnology, Inc.

Author contributions

CJH devised and performed experiments and wrote the manuscript. LES performed the drug-repositioning screen. LML, EA, and MVDL helped perform experiments. BP and JLH generated MSU crystals and performed expression analysis of mouse monocytes/macrophages. DB helped with cell culture experiments. GJL provided the mpeg1 constructs and lines. JWA, ND, KEC, and PSC helped devise experiments and write the manuscript.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by grants awarded by the Marsden Fund, the Royal Society of New Zealand, and the Health Research Council of New Zealand (to CJH) and by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment of New Zealand (to PSC). GJL was supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council (grants 637394, 1044754, 1069284, and 1086020). The Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute is supported by funds from the State Government of Victoria and the Australian Federal Government.

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