

Contents

1 Introduction	11
1.1 From colonization to invasion	12
1.2 Fungal recognition	12
1.3 IL-17 and fungal infections	14
1.4 Protection from fungal infections	15
1.5 Aim of the thesis	17
2 A Novel T Helper Cell Epitope of <i>Candida albicans</i> Mediates Protection from Fungal Infection	19
2.1 Summary	20
2.2 Introduction	20
2.3 Results	22
2.3.1 Identification of I-Ab-bound peptide epitopes from <i>C. albicans</i>	22
2.3.2 A large fraction of <i>Candida</i> -specific T cells recognizes pALS	23
2.3.3 pALS is conserved in different <i>Candida</i> ssp.	27
2.3.4 pALS is recognized by human memory T cells	27
2.3.5 Immunization of mice with pALS mediates protection from candidiasis	30
2.4 Discussion	31
2.5 Materials and Methods	34
2.6 Supplementary Information	37
2.7 Acknowledgements	38
3 IL-17 regulates systemic fungal immunity by controlling the functional competence of NK cells	39
3.1 Summary	40
3.2 Introduction	40

3.3	Results	43
3.3.1	The role of IL-17RA during systemic candidiasis	43
3.3.2	IL-17RA-deficient NK cells are functionally impaired	45
3.3.3	Functional NK cells restore antifungal defense in IL-17RA ^{-/-} , RORc ^{-/-} and RAGγc ^{-/-} mice	50
3.3.4	NK cells promote the candidacidal activity of neutrophils	51
3.3.5	NK-mediated instruction of neutrophils depends on NK-derived GM-CSF	52
3.4	Discussion	55
3.5	Material and Methods	59
3.6	Supplementary information	61
3.7	Acknowledgments	66
4	A key role for Syk in CD11c⁺ cells in the control of systemic fungal infections	69
4.1	Summary	70
4.2	Introduction	70
4.3	Results	72
4.3.1	The role of Syk signaling in DCs during systemic candidiasis	72
4.3.2	CD11cΔSyk mice displayed no alterations in DC populations	72
4.3.3	CD11cΔSyk mice exhibit an increased infiltration of dysfunctional neutrophils.	74
4.3.4	Selective loss of GM-CSF secretion by NK cells in CD11cΔSyk mice	76
4.4	Discussion	80
4.5	Materials and Methods	81
4.6	Supplementary Information	84
4.7	Acknowledgements	86
5	General Discussion	87
5.1	Vaccination against fungi and Th17 cells	87
5.2	GM-CSF – an essential player in protection from acute Candidiasis	88
5.3	Activation and effector functions of NK cells	90
5.4	DCs orchestrate the innate immune system	91
5.5	IL-17 signaling during acute candidiasis	92
5.6	Conclusions	95

