Adaptive Immune Responses to Ranaviruses and Immune Evasion Strategies of Ranaviruses

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NIAID

http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/smd/mbi/xenopus

What is adaptive immunity anyway?

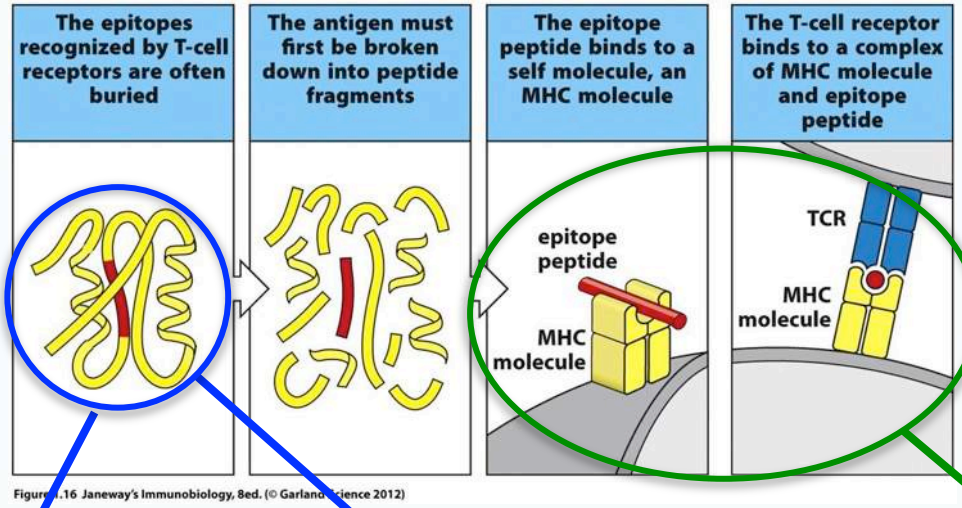
An adaptive Immune System is present in all jawed vertebrates

Characterized by:

- a wide somatic diversification of immune receptor repertoires
- high specificity of immune receptors for antigens,
- long term immunological memory
- and a complex cytokine- and chemokine-mediated regulatory network

- Immunoglobulin (IgM, IgG or IgG-equivalent IgY, IgD)
- T Cell Receptor (α, β, γ, δ)
- MHC class II, classical class Ia (selection), nonclassical MHC class Ib
- RAG-1, 2 mediated gene rearrangement, TdT
- Somatic hypermutation and Antibody class switch (AID-mediated)
- Primary and secondary lymphoid tissues (e.g. thymus, spleen, bone marrow, lymph nodes)

B cell receptors and Abs recognize (bind) epitopes on whole proteins in solution



T cell receptors recognize only peptides bound to MHC molecules

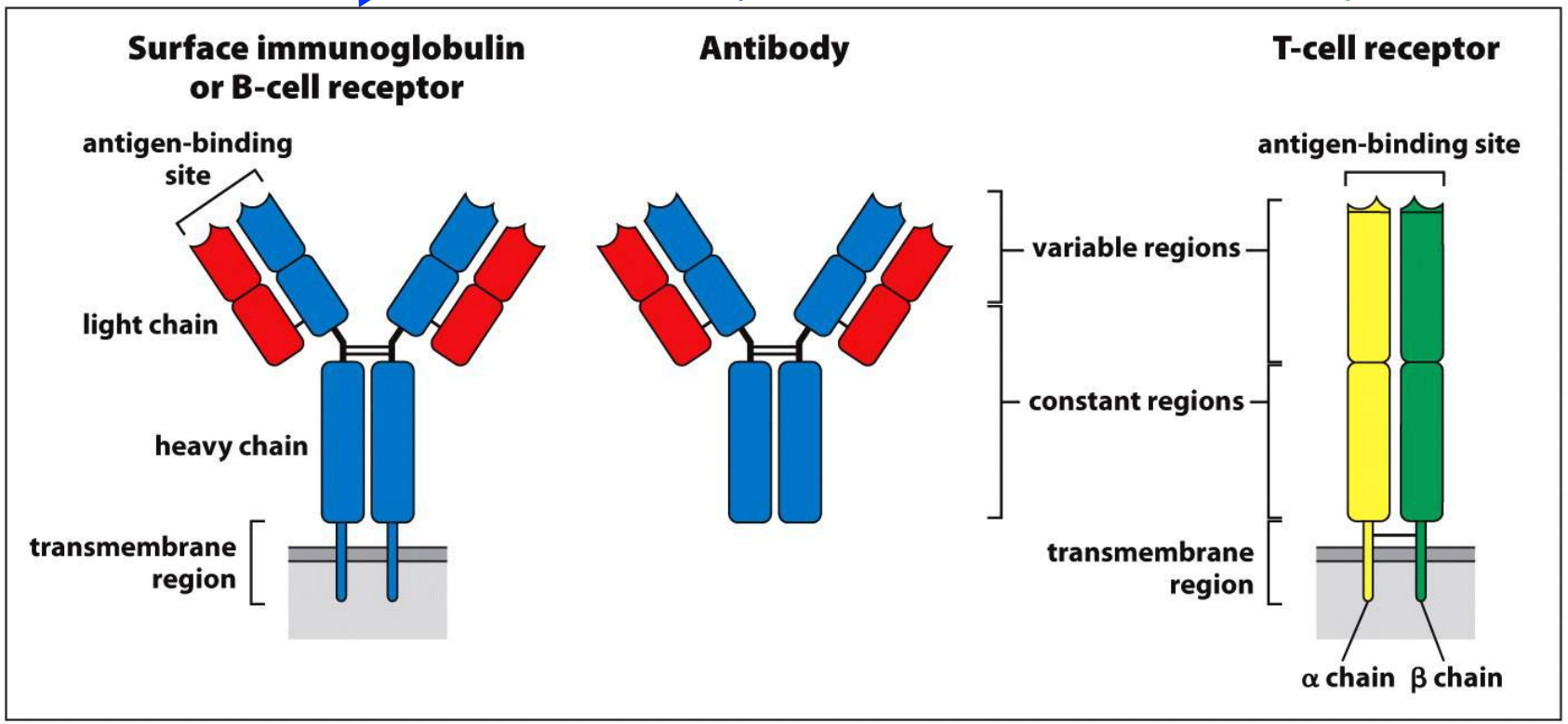
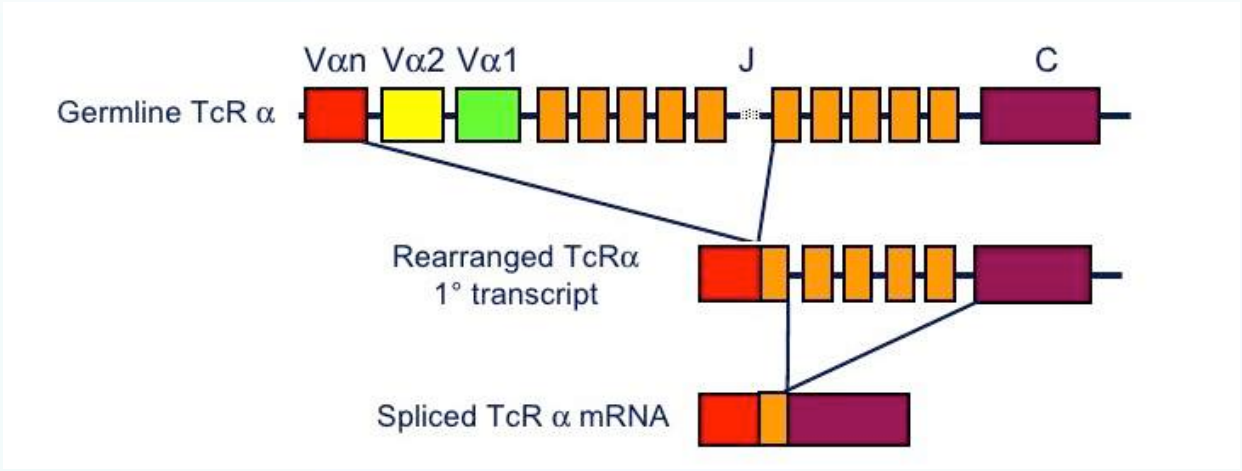
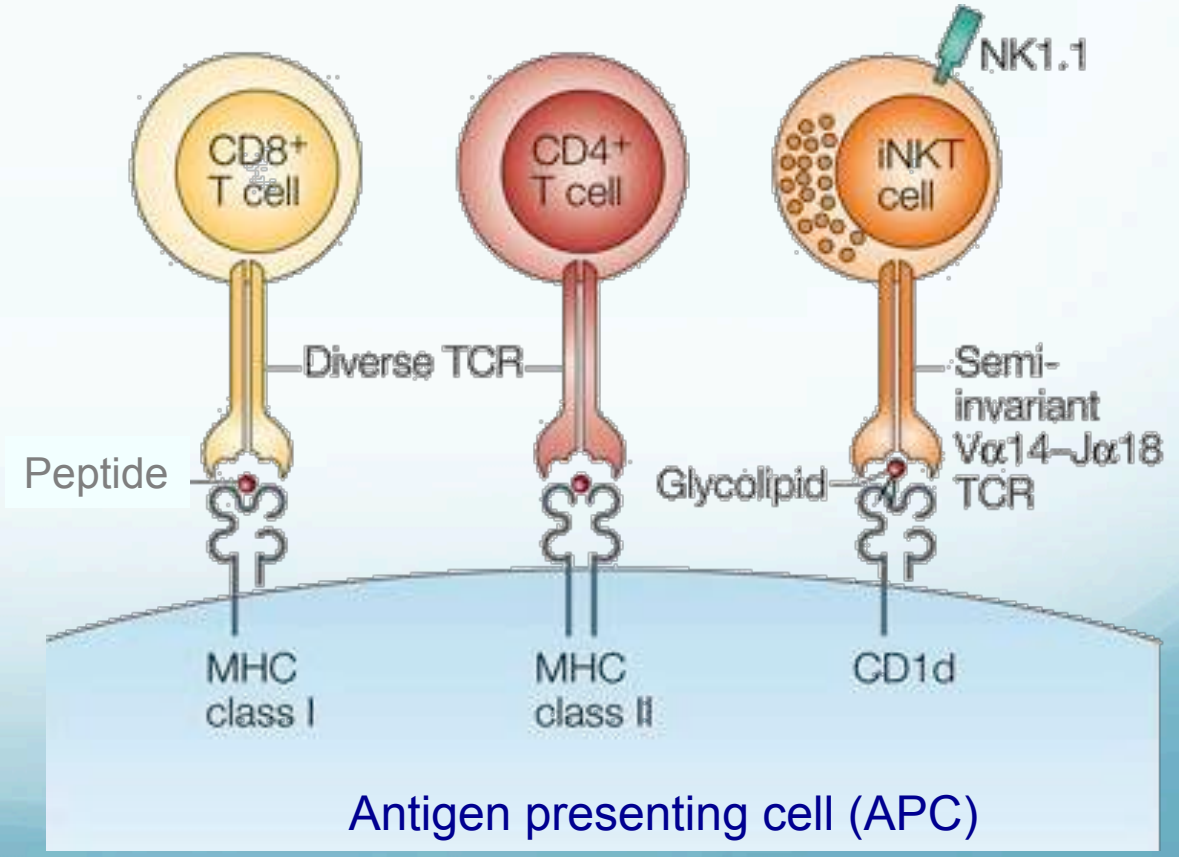


Figure 3.1 The Immune System, 3ed. (© Garland Science 2009)



Somatic lymphocyte gene rearrangement

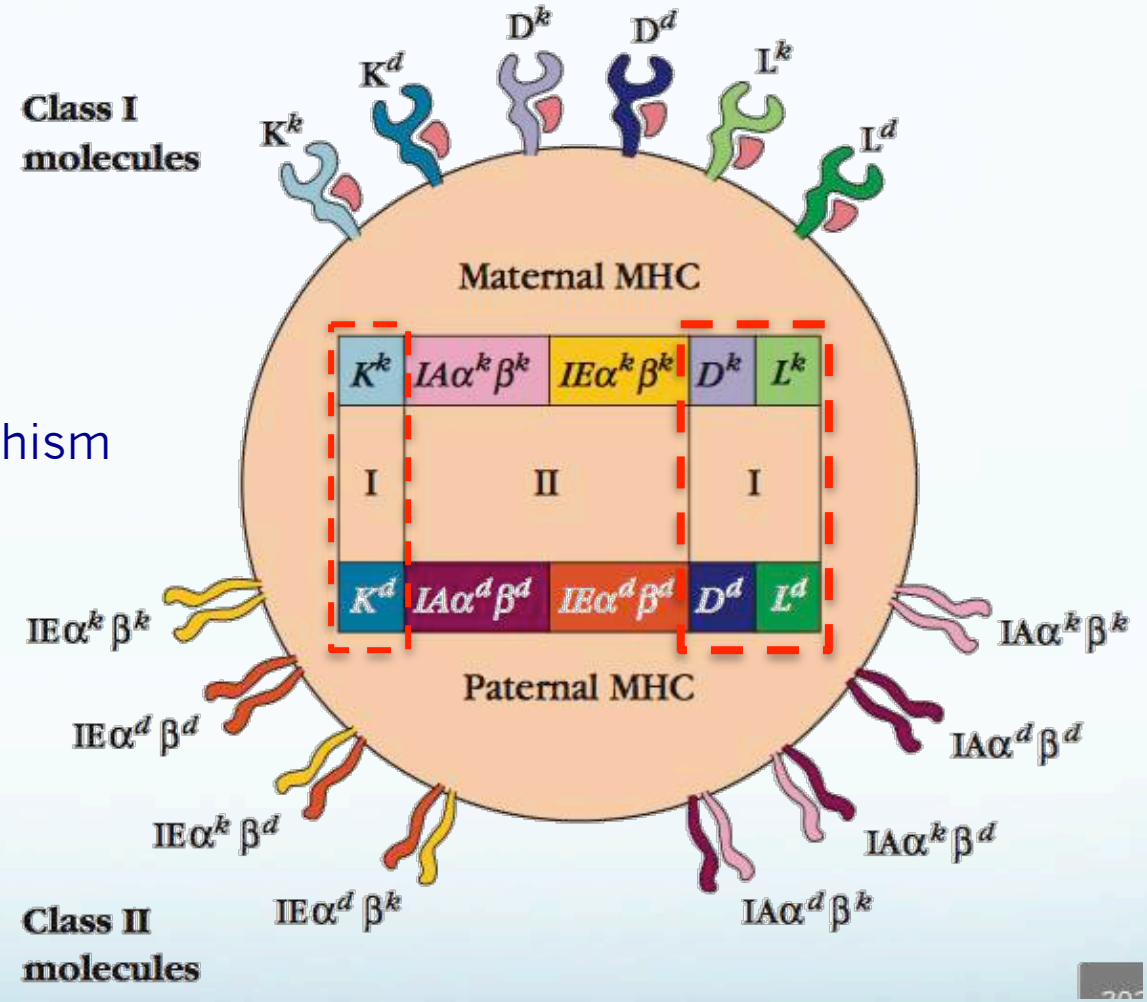


Nature Rev. Immunoloy

Antigen presenting cell (APC)

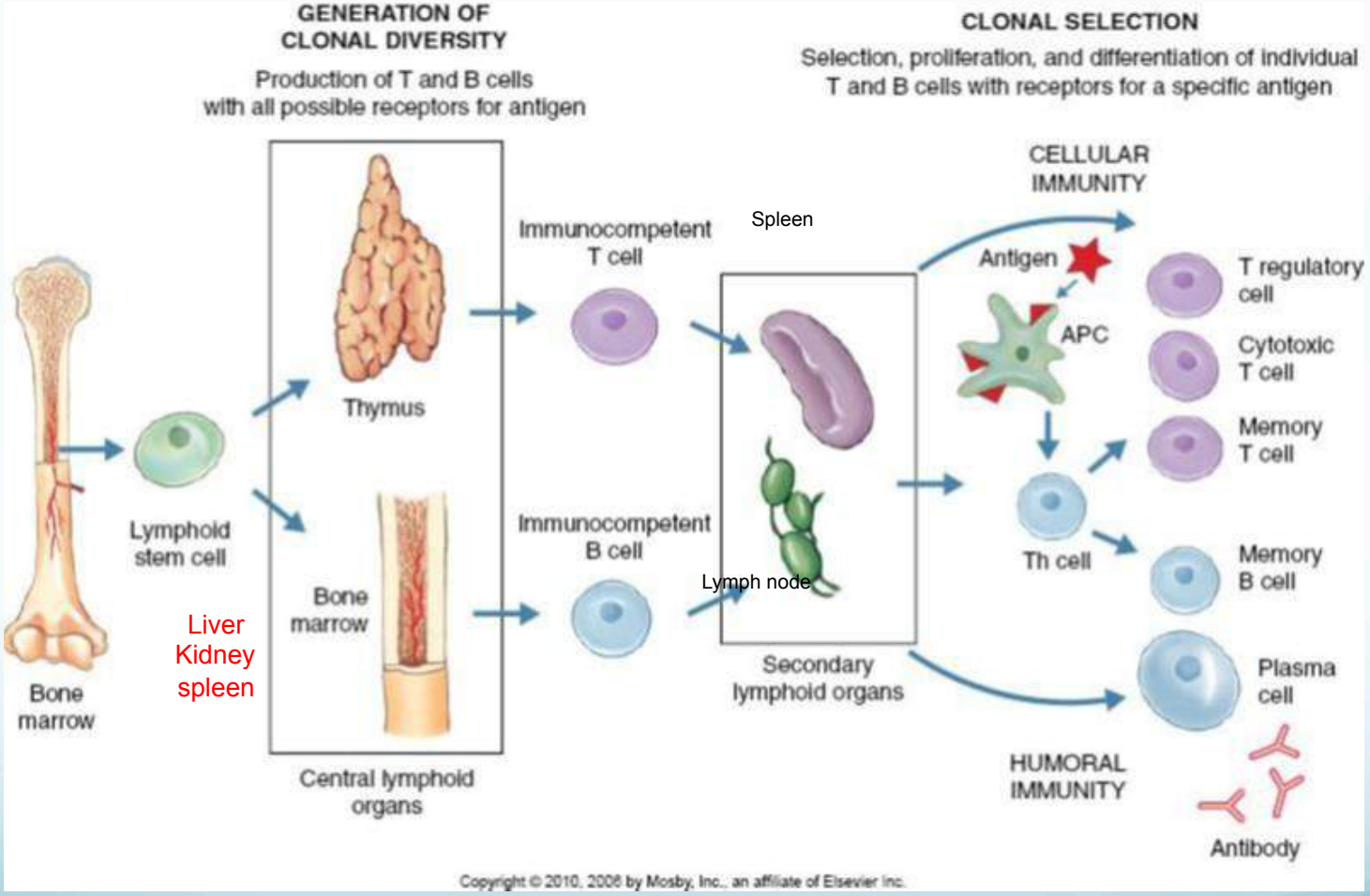
MHC haplotypes

Allelic polymorphism

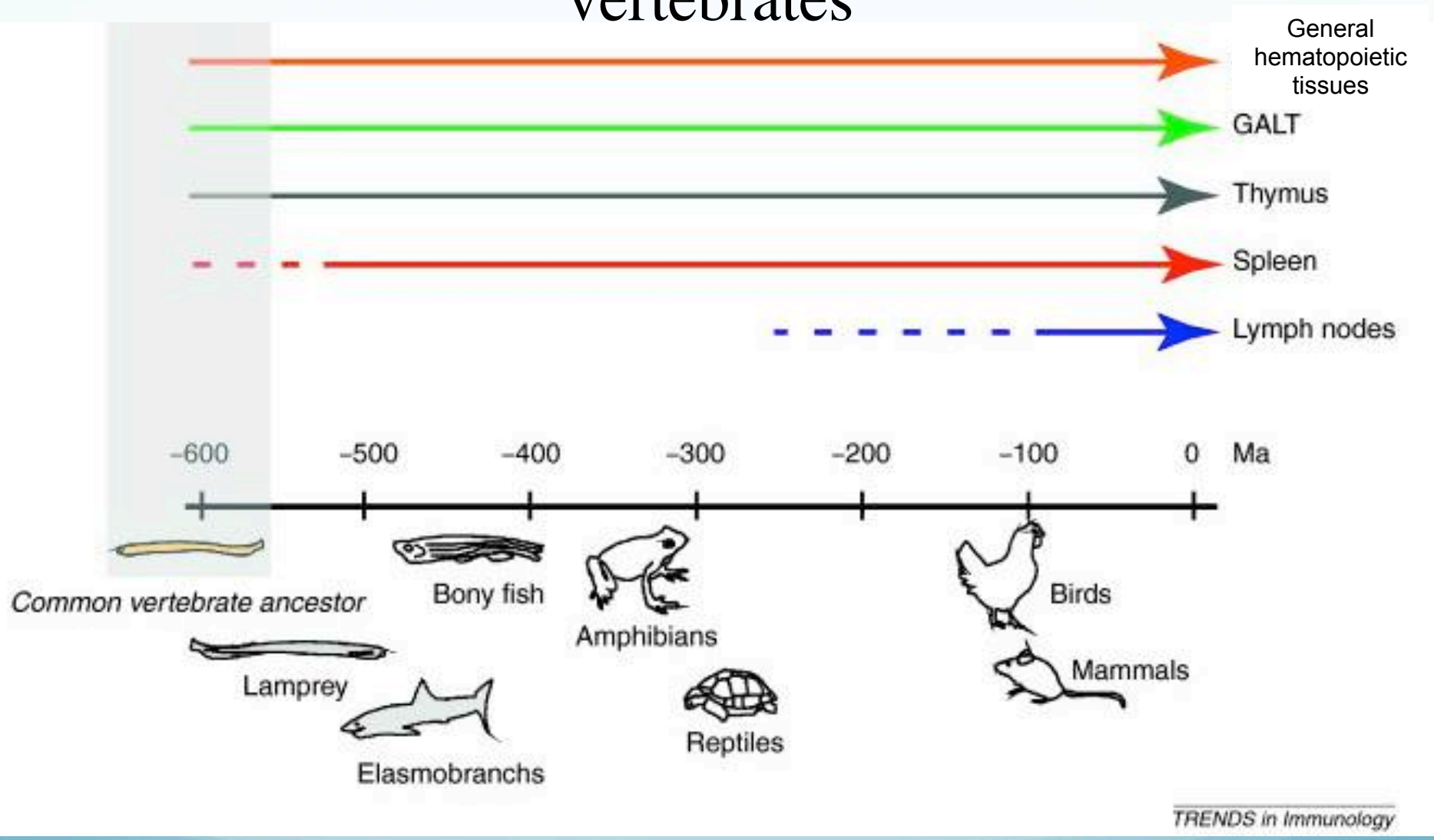


Some amphibian species have only 1 MHC class I gene per genome (*Xenopus*). Other have 2 or 3 genes per genomes (*Ranidae*)

Organization of the immune system



Evolutionary trajectory of lymphoid tissues in vertebrates

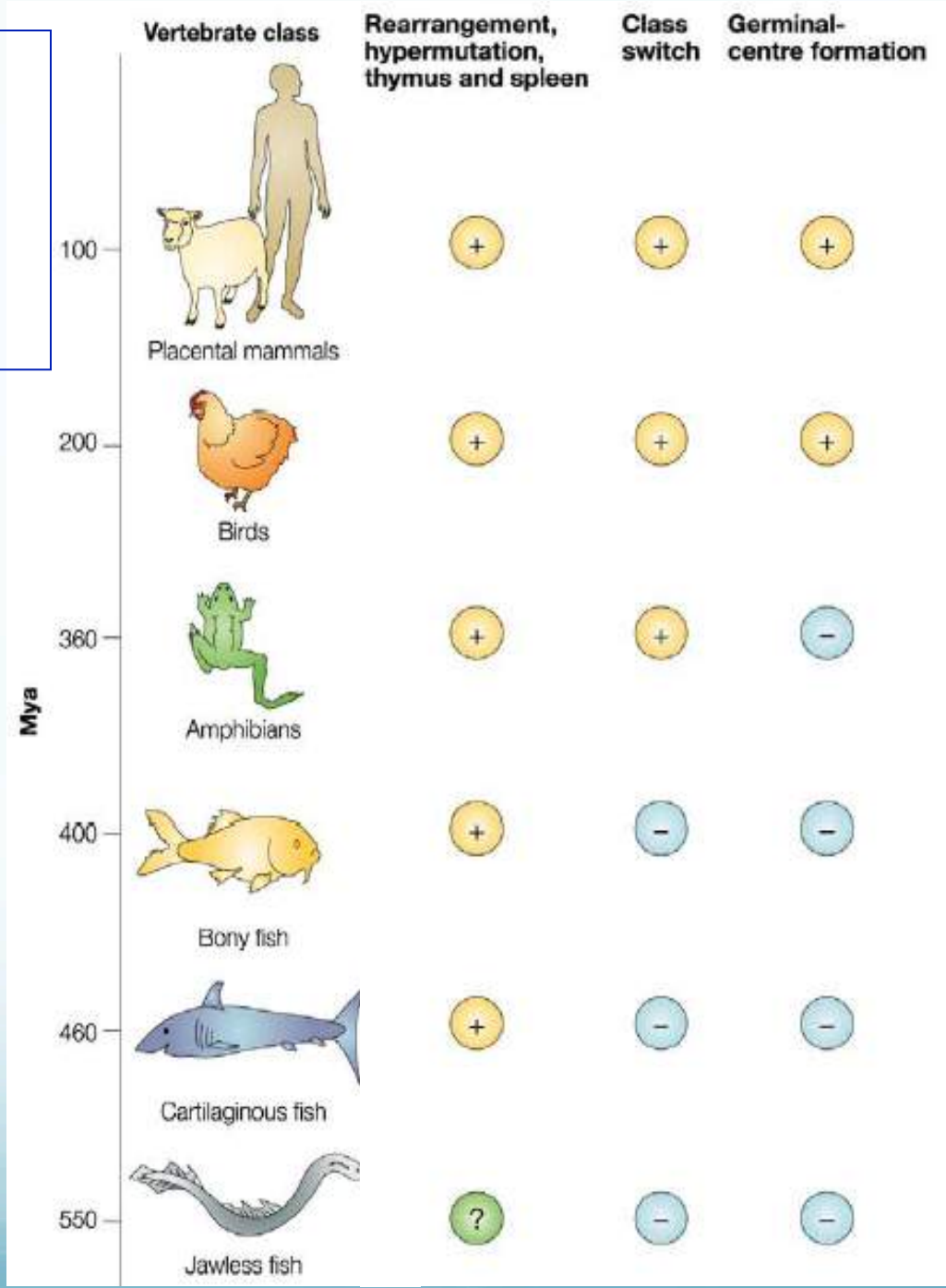


Boehm et al., (2012) Special focus: Structure and function of lymphoid tissues. Trends Immunol. 33:315

Features of an Adaptive Immune System

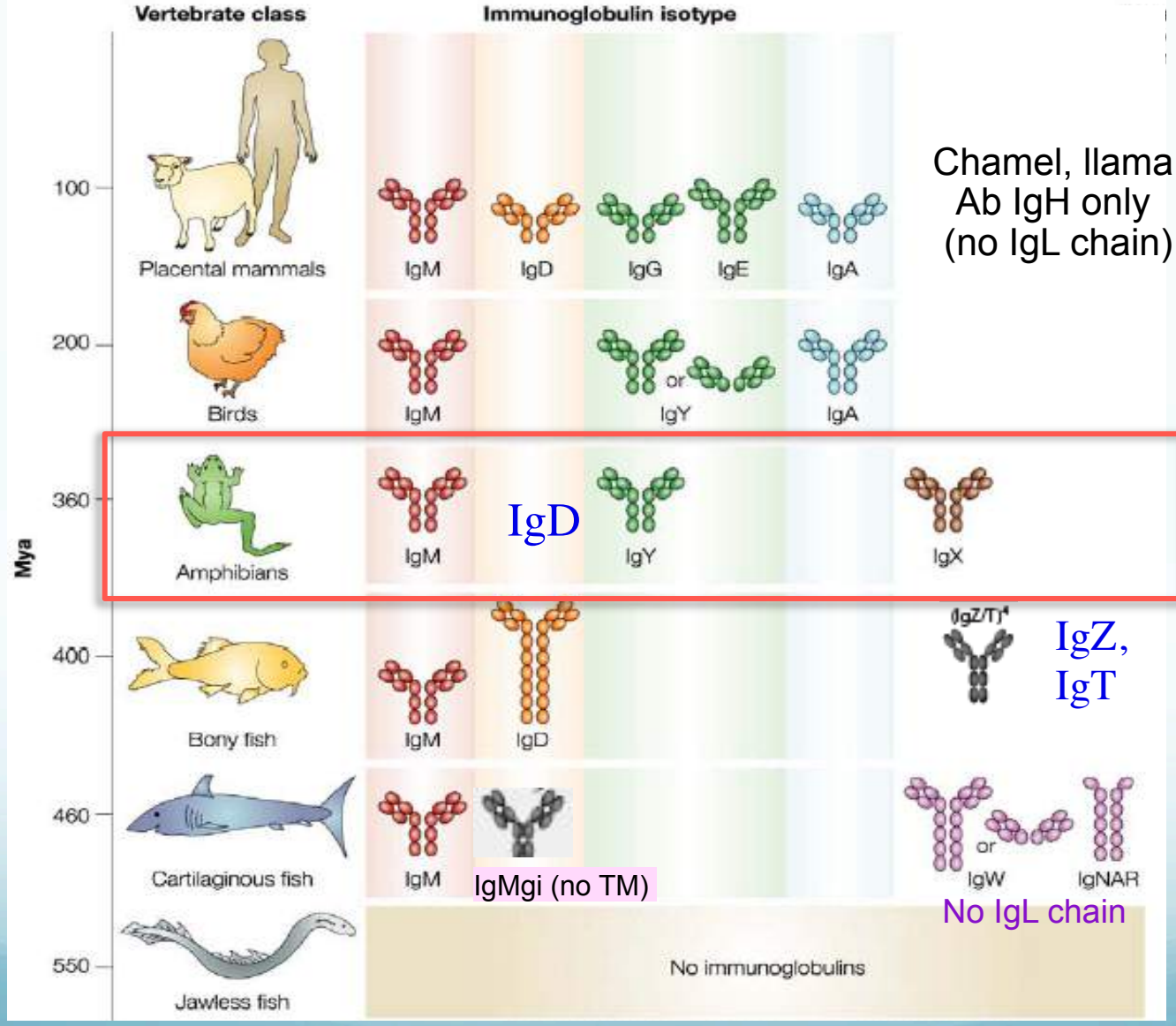
- Ig, TCR, MHC
- RAG 1, 2 expression
- Ab class switch (thymus-dependent)
- Lymphoid Compartments

Flajnik, Nature Rev. Immunology 2, 688-698 (2002)

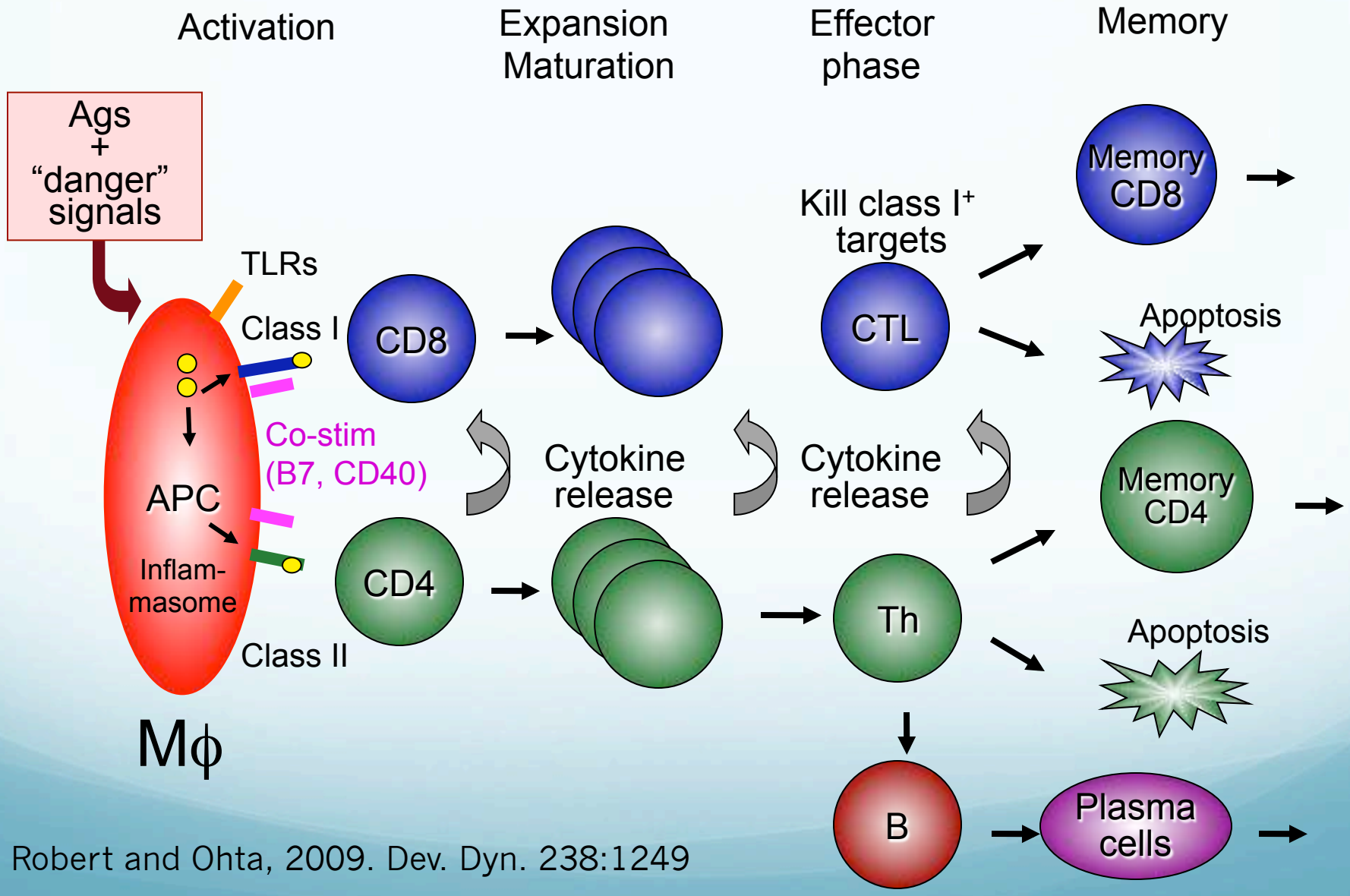


Immunoglobulin Evolution

Flajnik, Nature Reviews Immunology 2, 688-698 (2002)



Antiviral immune responses



Robert and Ohta, 2009. Dev. Dyn. 238:1249

Anurans

Metamorphosis

- External development , absence of maternal influences on embryos
- Tadpoles are immunocompetent but immature
- Immune system develop early (10 days of age)
- Only about 20,000 T cells, mainly innate T cells, in tadpoles
- No classical MHC class I protein expression until metamorphosis
- No NK cells, weaker T cell responses than adults
- Drastic remodeling of the immune system during metamorphosis
- Thymocytes degenerate, new thymic education from new progenitors

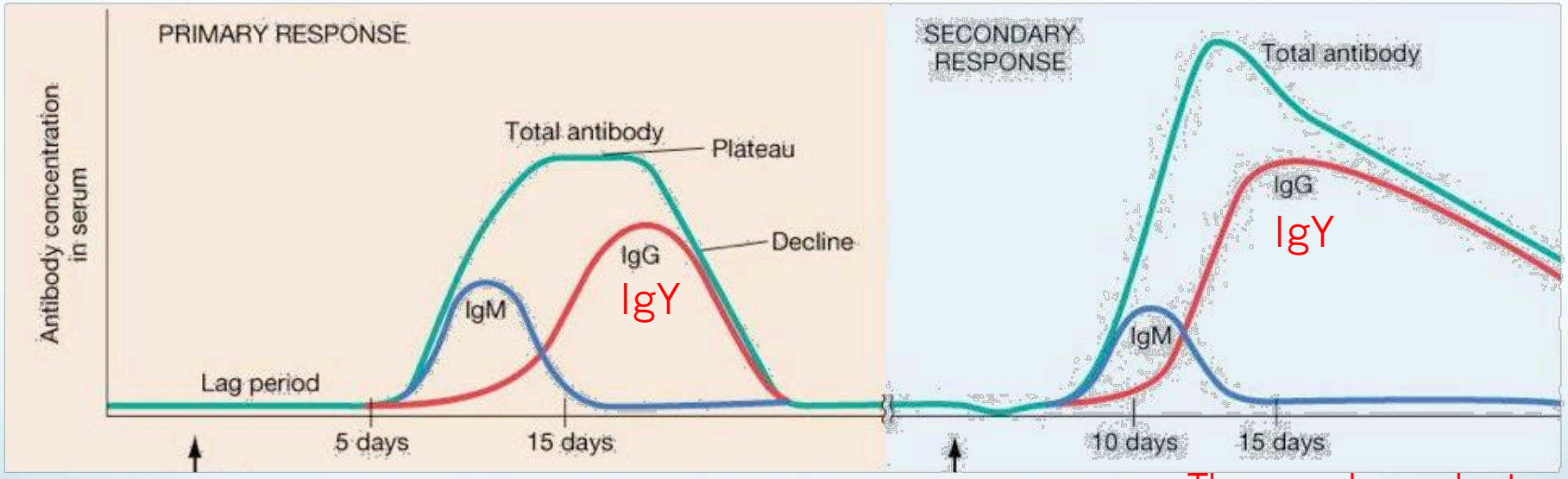
Urodelean adaptive immunity

- Relatively poor adaptive immunity compared to anurans
- Low IgM antibody heterogeneity (no specific IgY is produced
- Expanded MHC class I repertoire (~100 genes) that may include classical and nonclassical MHC class I as well as a non-polymorphic MHC class II
- Based on chronic rejection of allografts and xenografts, weak immune responses appear to characterize most species of salamanders
- High susceptibility to ranavirus infection
- But still able to survive in pathogen-rich environments

Importance of B cells and antibodies in host response to ranavirus

Humoral (antibody) response

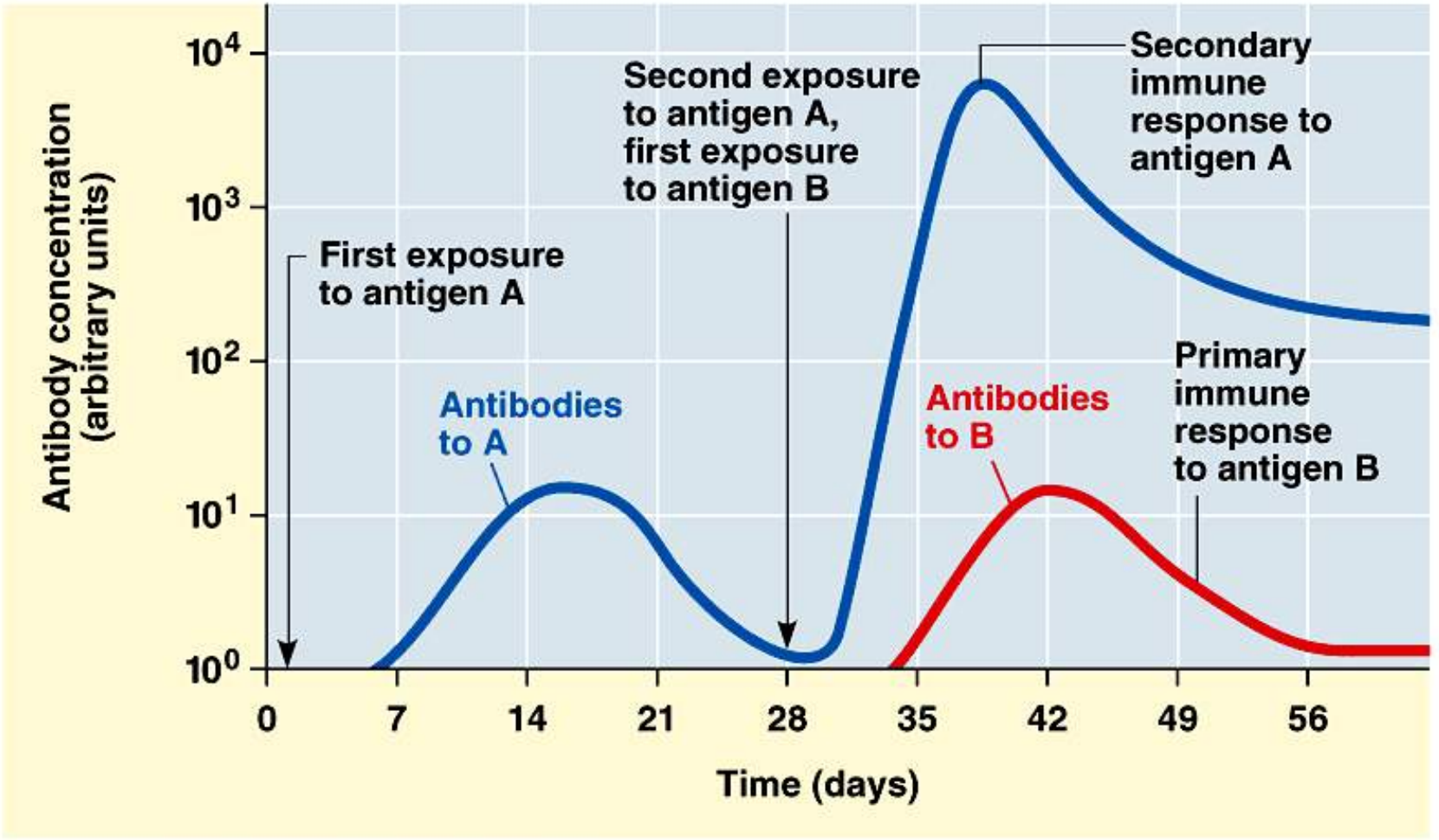
Primary *vs* secondary antibody responses



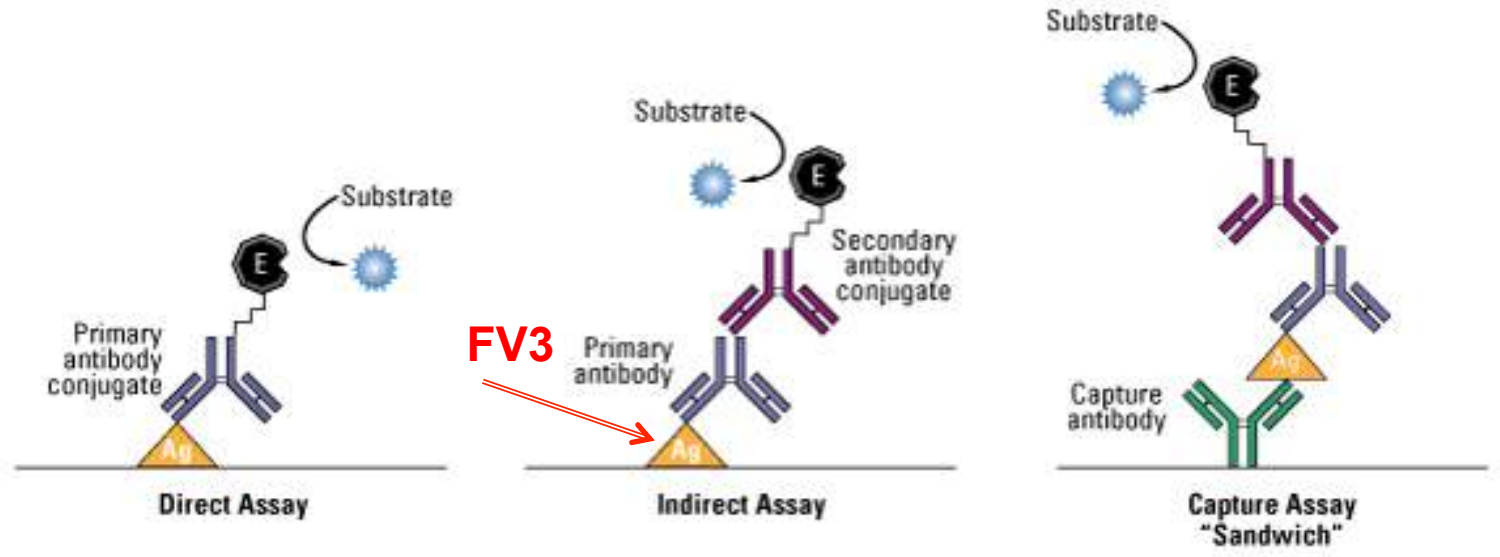
Thymus-dependent

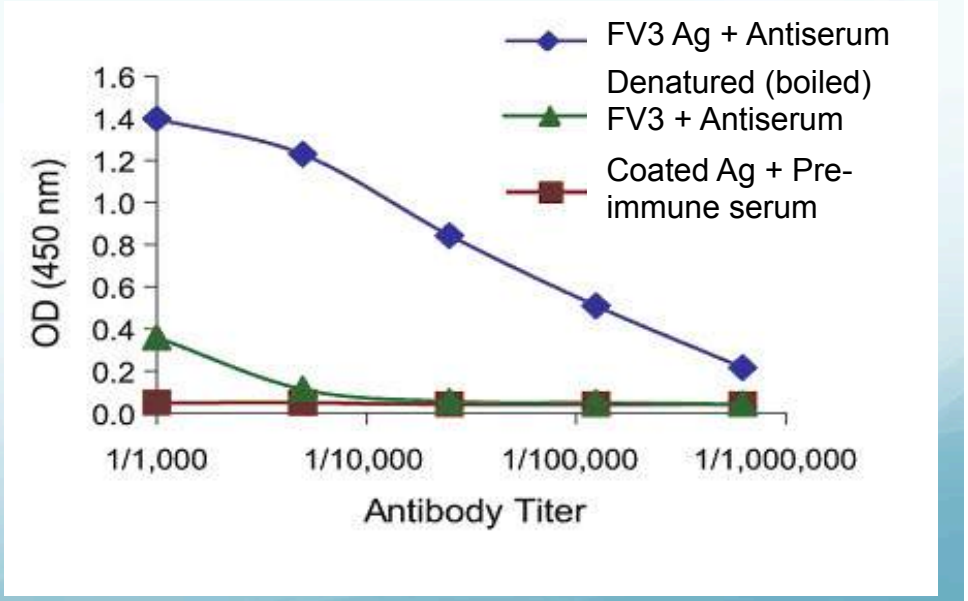
Thymus-dependent
Faster
More specific

Humoral (antibody) response



Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbant Assay (ELISA)

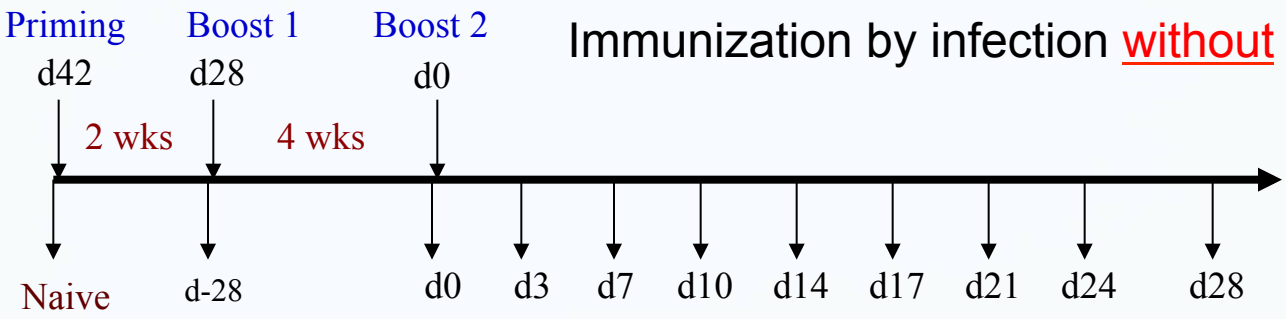




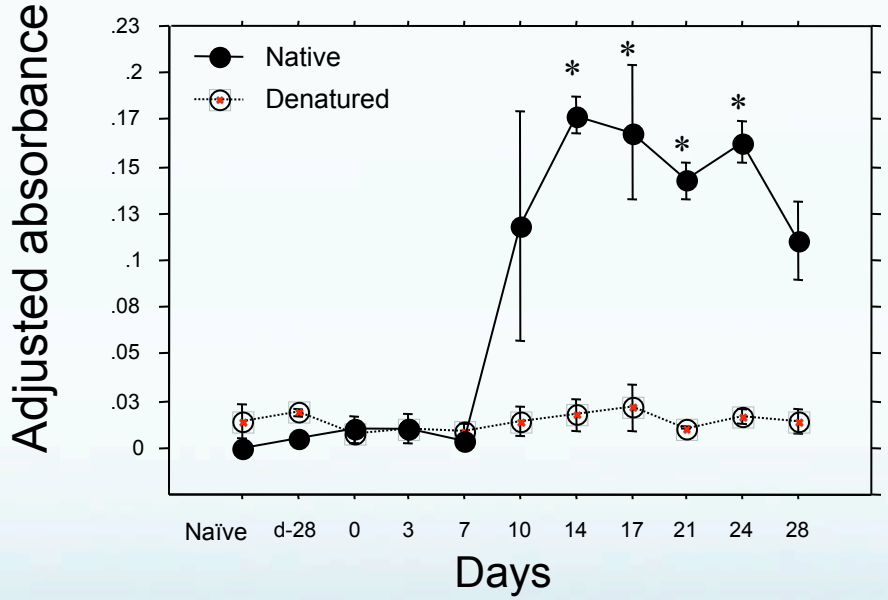
Humoral response

- *Xenopus* and mammals have similar organization and usage of their Ig genes (RAG-dependent VDJ rearrangements)
- Thymus-dependent switch IgM to IgY (IgG functional equivalent), T-B collaboration
- But *Xenopus* antibodies are limited in heterogeneity, mature poorly in affinity (less than 10 fold) and their serum titer increase only slightly during a secondary response
- How important is the humoral response in the resistance against natural pathogens such as FV3 infection?

Anti-FV3 IgY antibody response



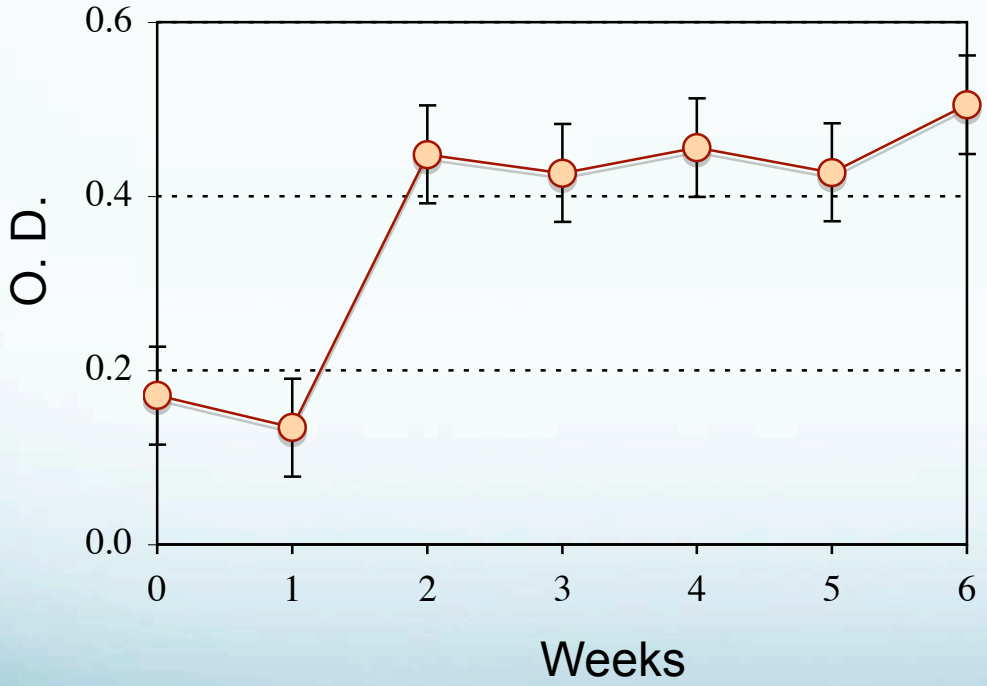
Immunization by infection without adjuvant



Xenopus anti-FV3 IgY (**1:200** dilution, O.D. = 0.4)
Rabbit anti-FV3 IgG (**1:20,000** dilution O.D. = 1.1)

Maniero et al., Dev Comp Immunol 2006, 30:649

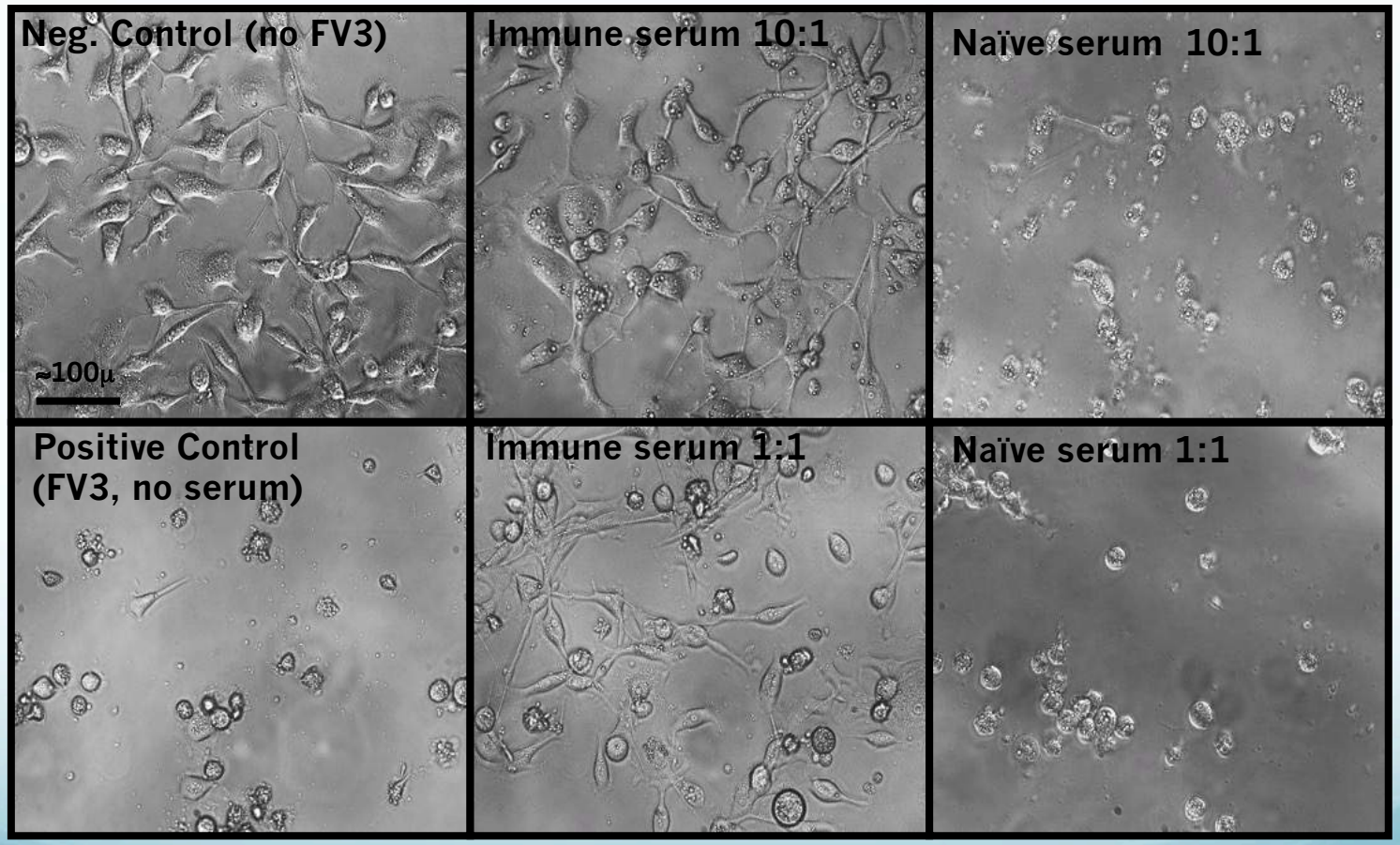
Long lasting B cell memory
(Re-infection 15 months after primary infection)



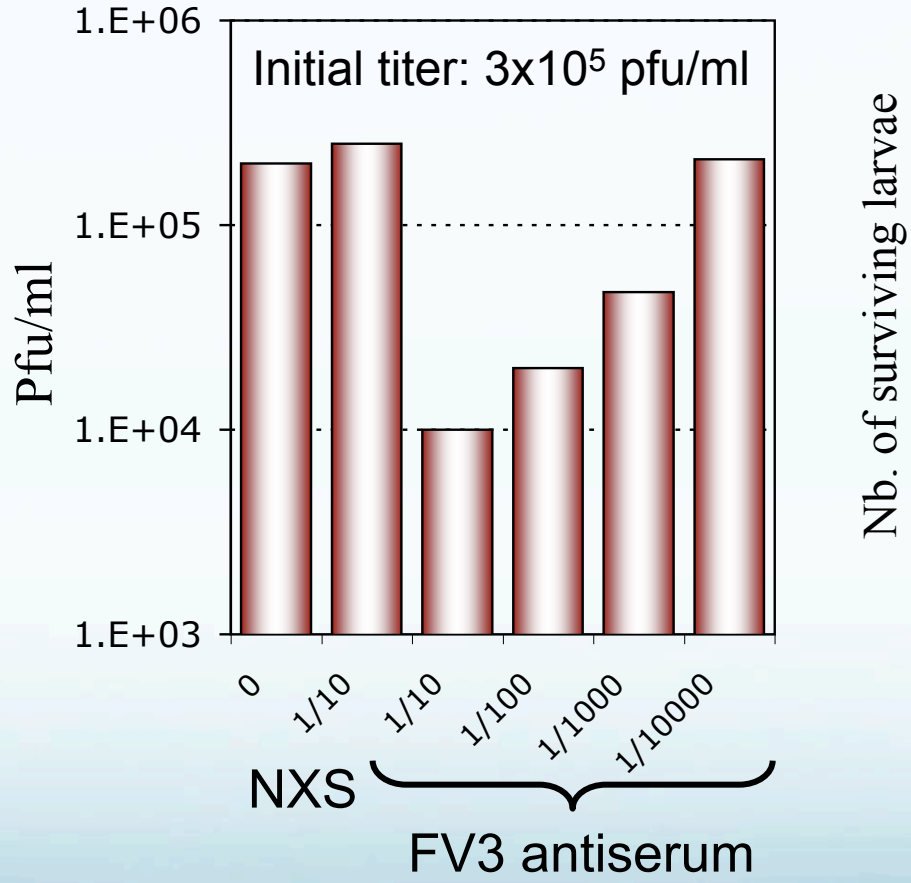
Anti-FV3 IgY (1:100 dil.)

Rabbit serum
anti-FV3
1:20,000 dilution
O.D. = 1.1

Xenopus adult produce neutralizing anti-FV3 antibodies



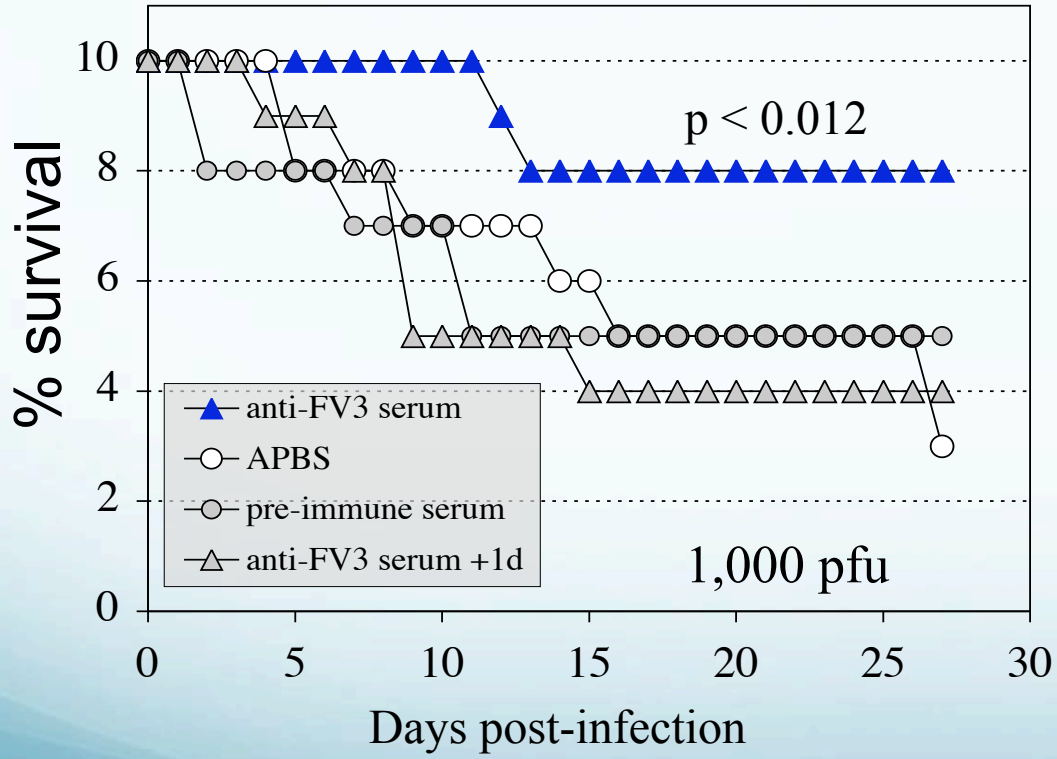
Neutralization capacity of *Xenopus* anti-FV3 serum by TCID50



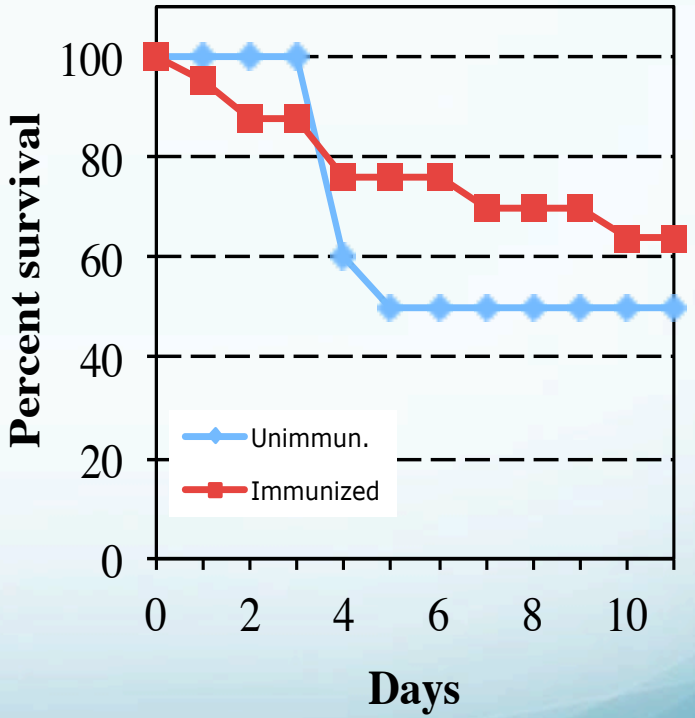
Maniero et al., Dev Comp Immunol 2006, 30:649

Tadpole exhibit poor anti-ranavirus antibody responses

Passive protection of anti-FV3 antiserum in susceptible larvae



Immunization FV3 Heat inactivated + alum



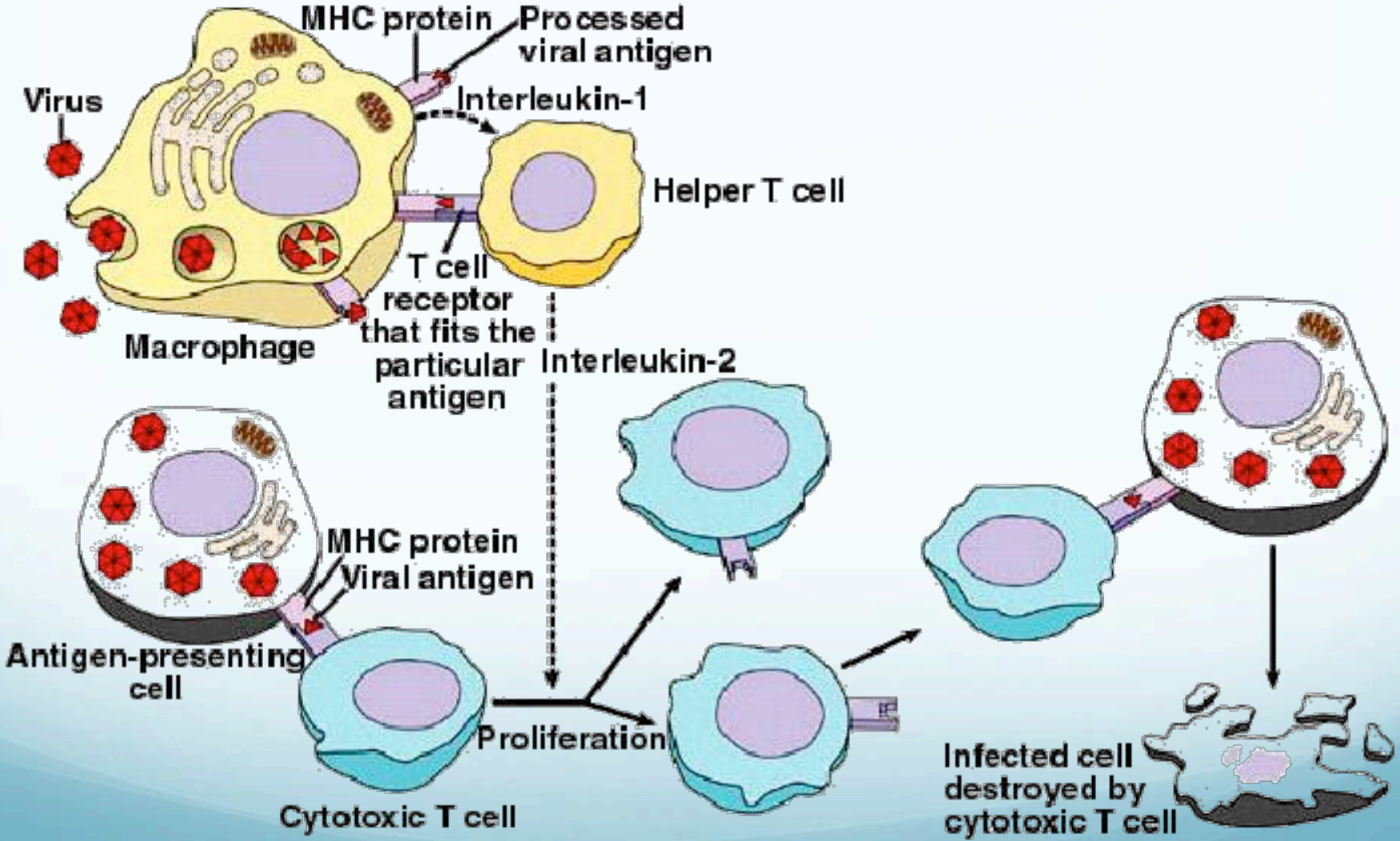
1,000 pfu/animal
~ 10 ug of protein

Summary I

- Anuran amphibians like *Xenopus* are capable to generate effective antibodies (IgM and IgY) against ranaviruses
- More efficient, IgY, antibody response is elicited during a secondary infection (No anti-FV3 Ab detected in adult sera during a primary infection in absence of adjuvant in *Xenopus*)
- FV3-specific IgY antibodies (thymus-dependent IgG equivalent) detected from 10 up to 24 days after re-infection (no adjuvent)
- B cell memory lasting at least 15 months after a first infection
- Serum of immunized frogs contain antibodies that can neutralize ranavirus (*Xenopus* adults can generate potent neutralizing anti-FV3 antibodies, that are able to provide passive protection to susceptible tadpoles
- Compared to adult frogs, tadpoles exhibit poor anti-ranavirus antibody response

Importance of T cells in host response to ranavirus

The T Cell Immune Defense



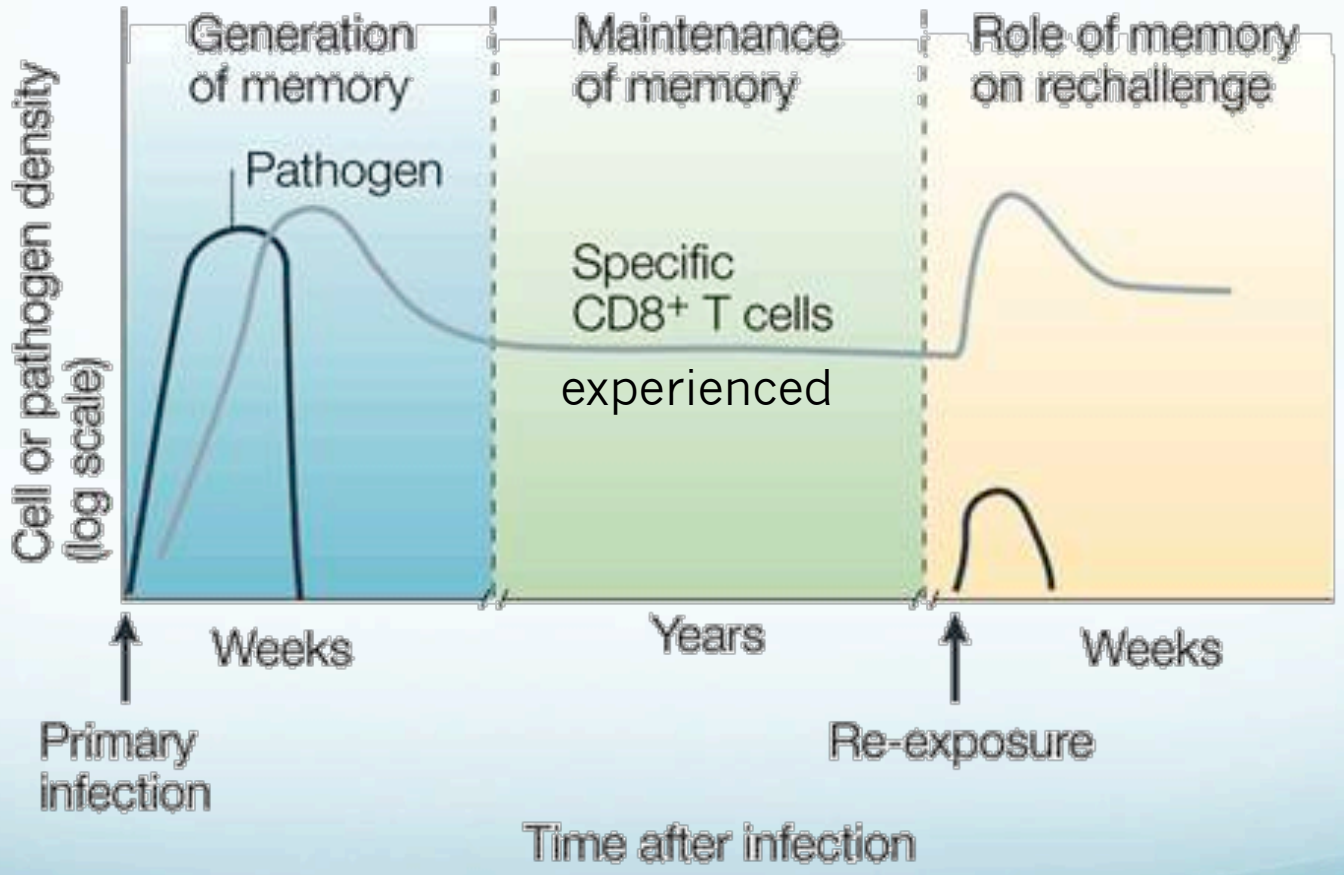
Assessing T function by sublethal γ-irradiation

- T cell differentiation in the thymus is dependent on cell division, which is very sensitive to γ-irradiation
- Whole body γ-irradiation 5 to 10 Gray depletes mostly thymocytes and T cells
- This impairs adaptive immunity for 1 to 2 week (e.g., Skin graft rejection)
- Resistant adult *Xenopus* become susceptible and die from FV3 infection following sublethal γ-irradiation
- Infected γ-irradiated frogs also release more virus into the environment

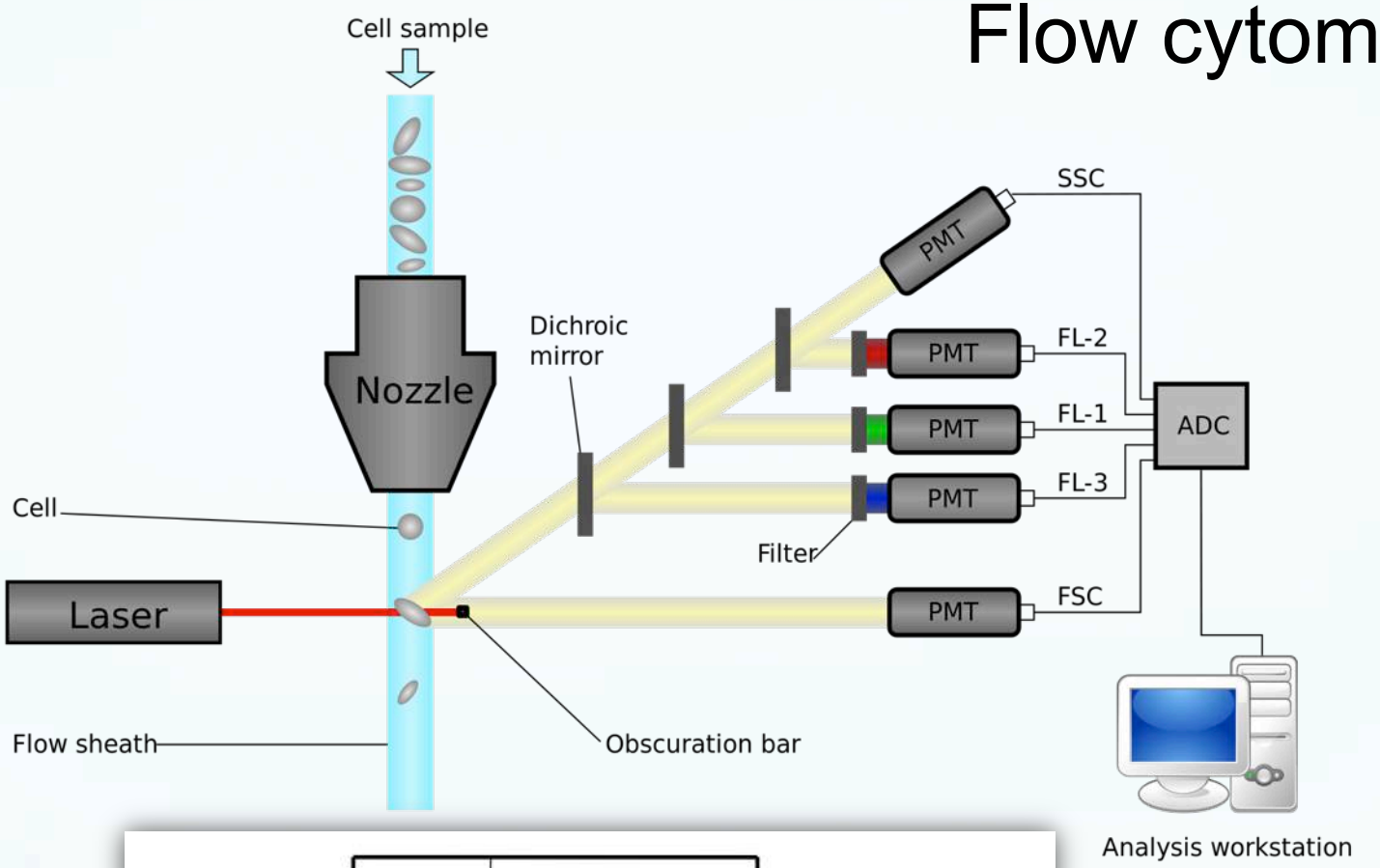
More specific assessment of CD8 T cells by Ab treatment

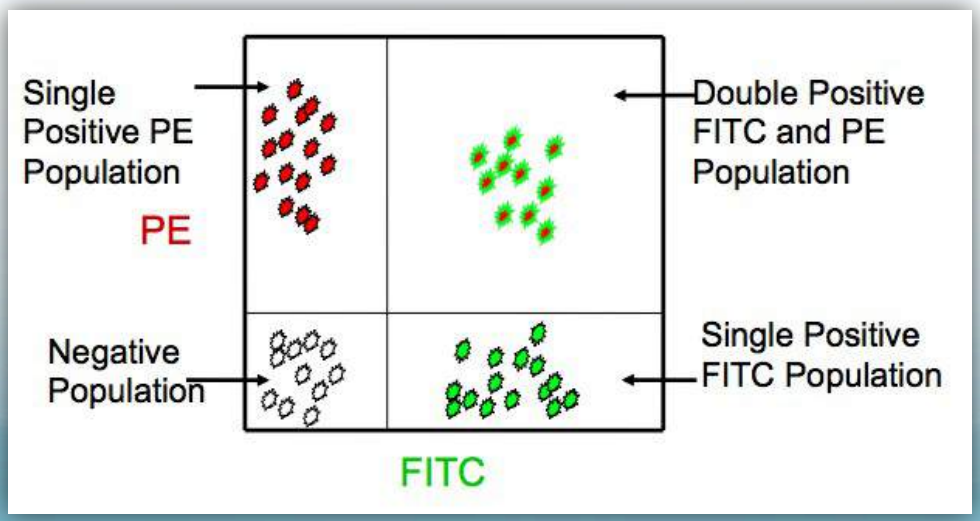
- *In vivo* CD8 depletion by anti-CD8 mAb-treatment increases susceptibility to FV3 in adults

T cell memory



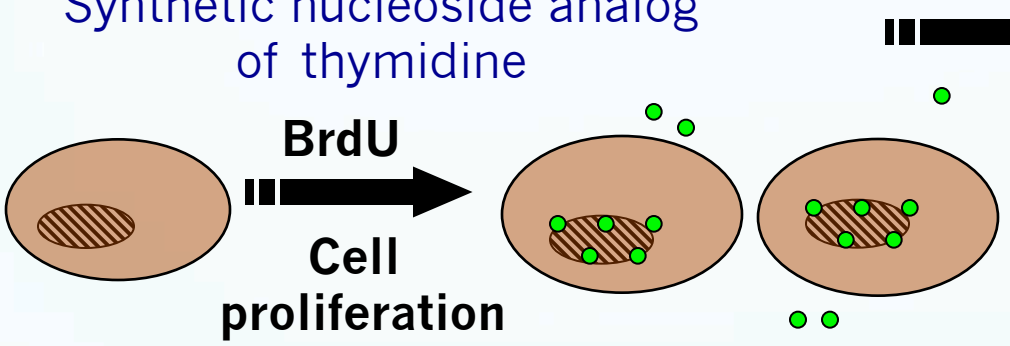
Flow cytometry



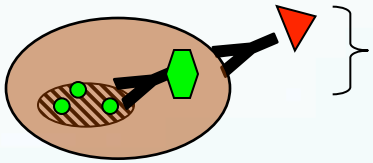


Detecting *in vivo* cell proliferation upon FV3 infection, primary response

Bromo deoxyUridine (BrdU)
Synthetic nucleoside analog of thymidine



Surface labeling followed by intracellular

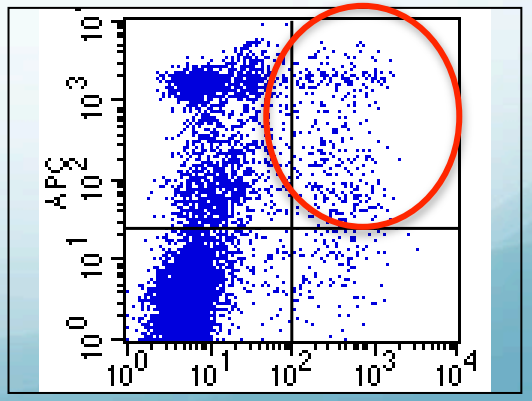


FV3 infection and BrdU incubation (added in water in obscurity)

FV3 (10^6 pfu)

6 days → **+ BrdU** → **2 days**

Flow cytometry



+ BrdU

Primary
FV3 + BrdU 2d before harvest

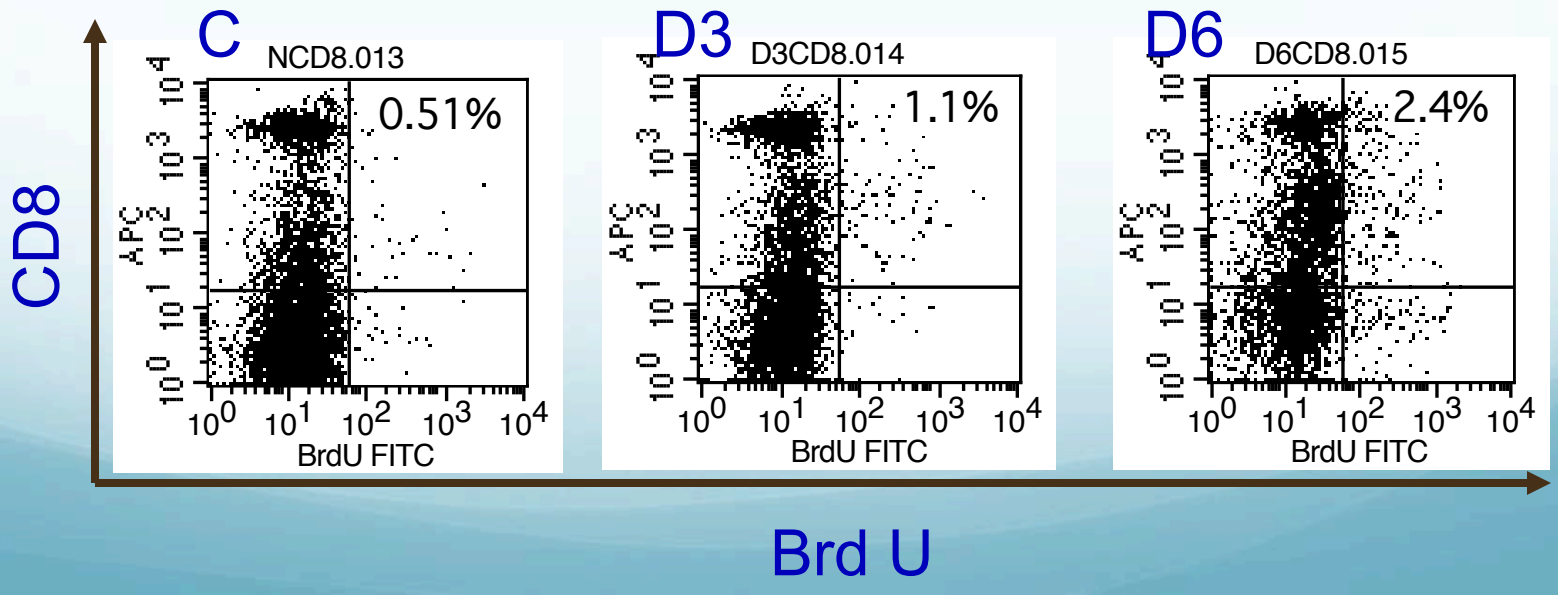
Secondary
FV3 + BrdU 2d before harvest

0 3 6 9 - 1 month - 0 3 6 9

Spleen
2-color flow cytometry
αCD8 or class II (surface)
αBrdU (intracellul)

Kidney
Immuno-histo (αCD8 or class II)
PCR, RT-PCR,
TCID50

Flow Cytometry Output

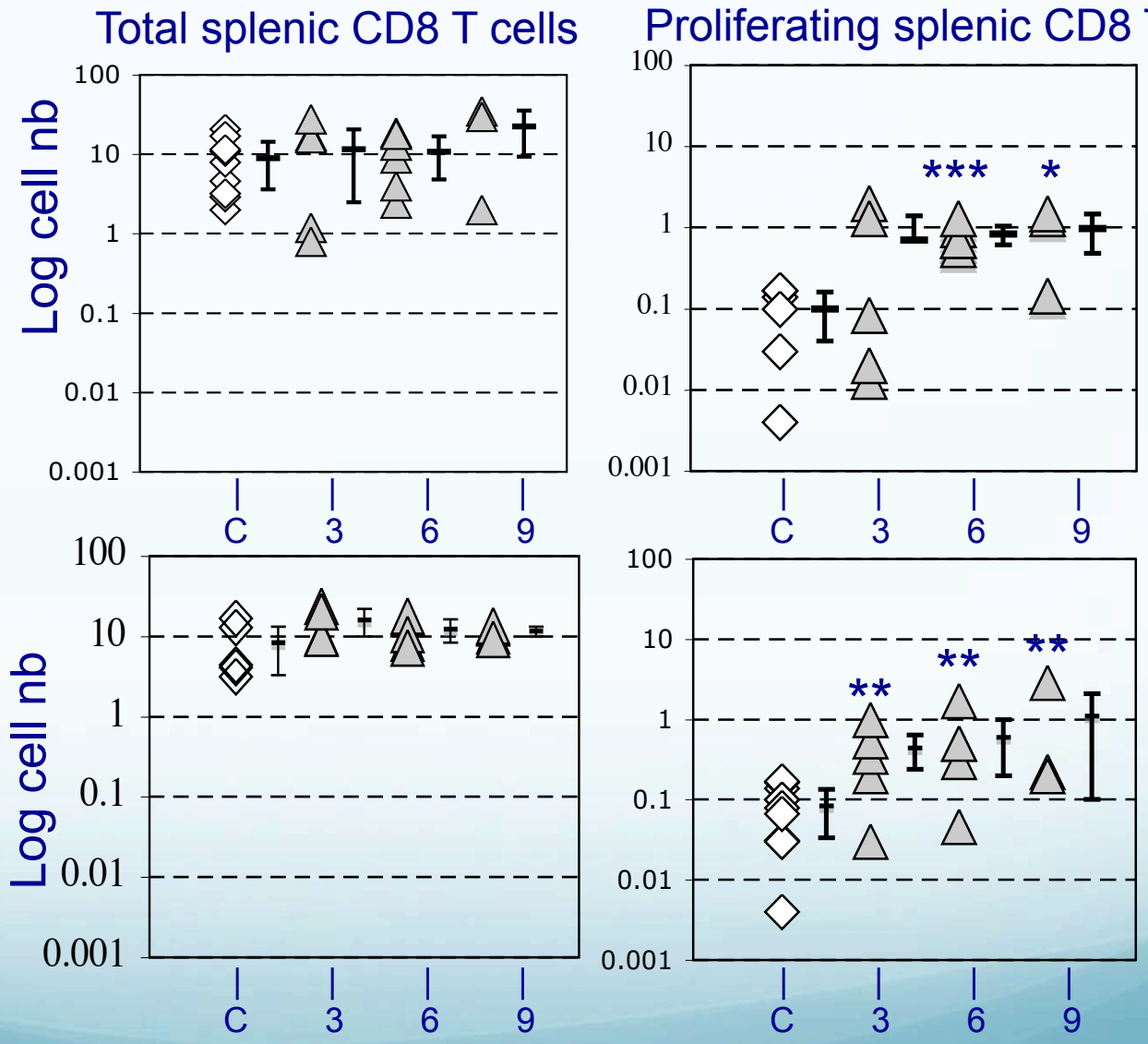


CD8 T cell proliferative response

* P < 0.05
** P < 0.01
*** P < 0.001

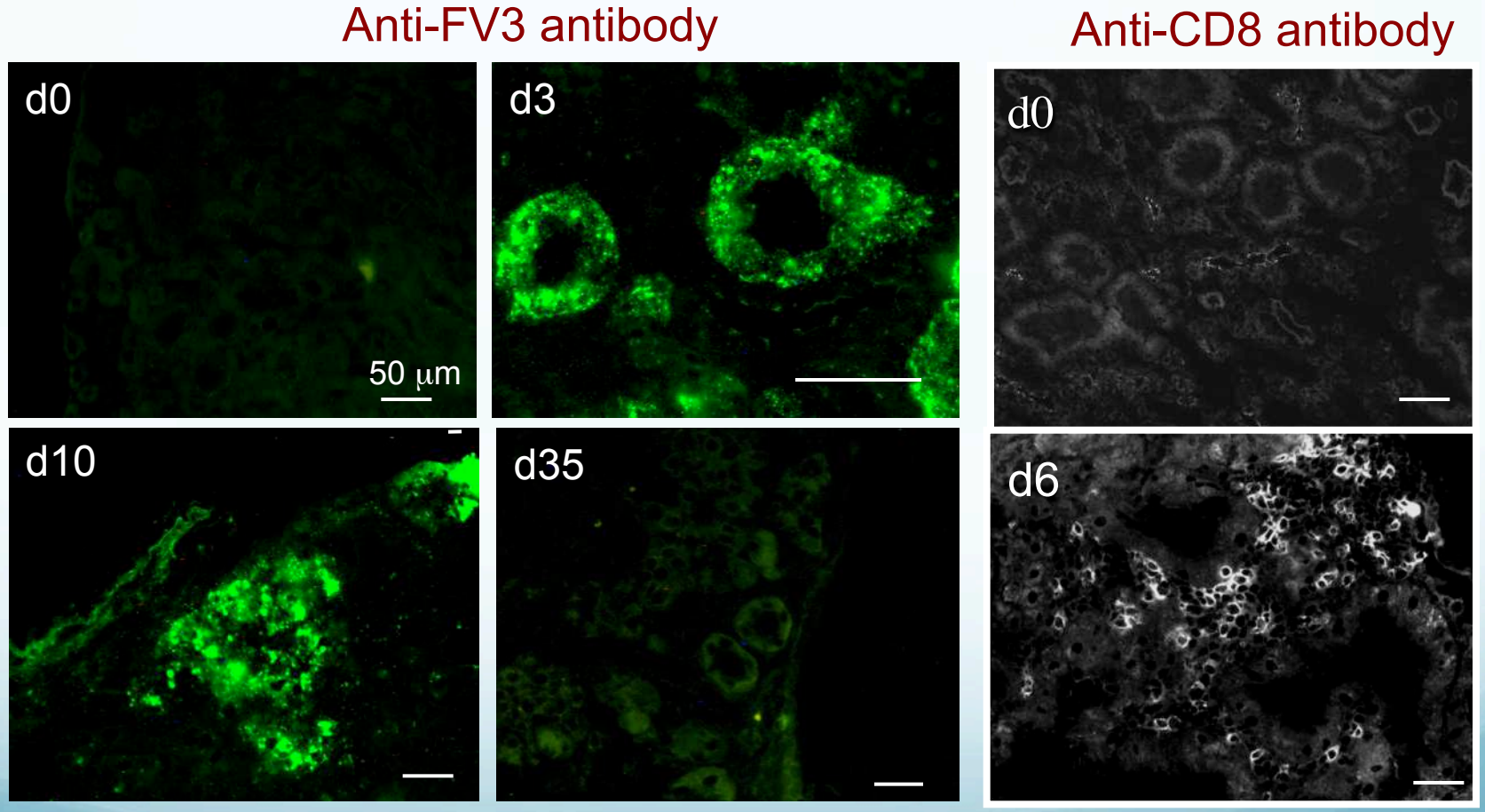
Primary

Secondary



Morales & Robert, J. Virol. 2007

Detection of FV3 and CD8 T cells in the kidney of infected adult frogs



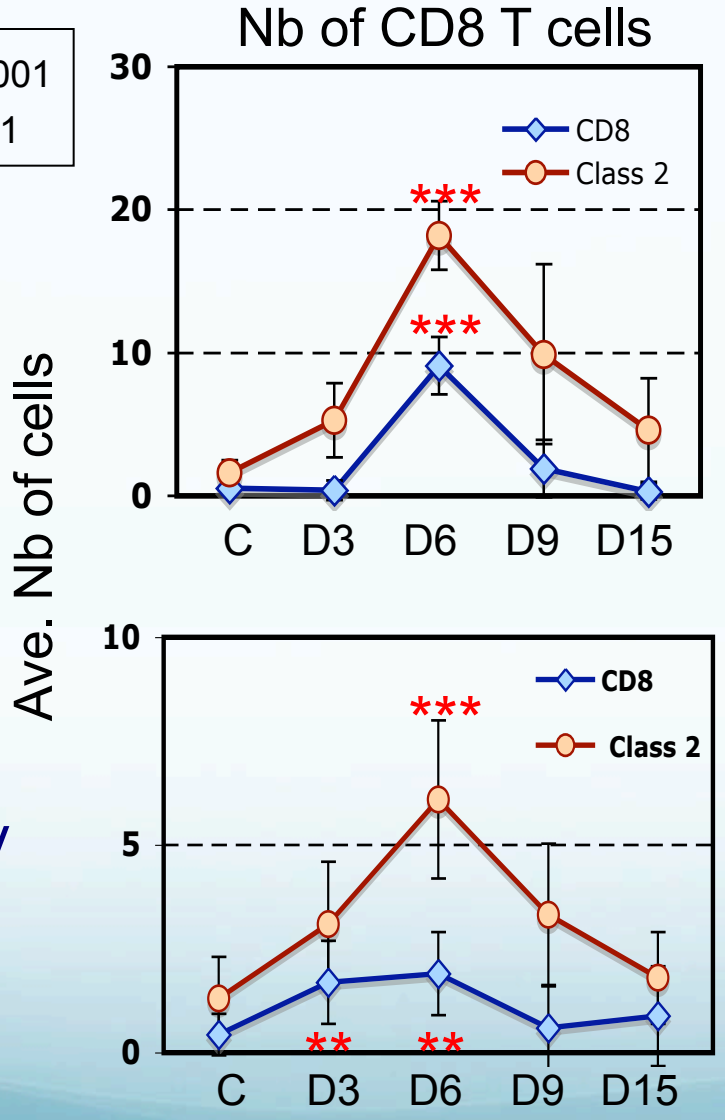
Robert et al. (2005). Virology; 332: 667

Lymphocyte infiltrates in the kidney infected frogs

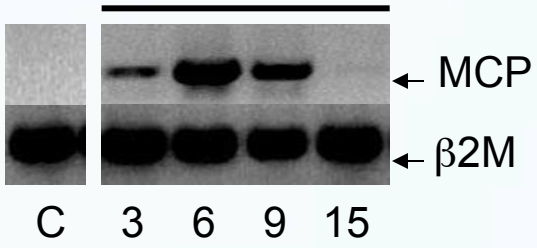
*** P< 0.001
** P< 0.01

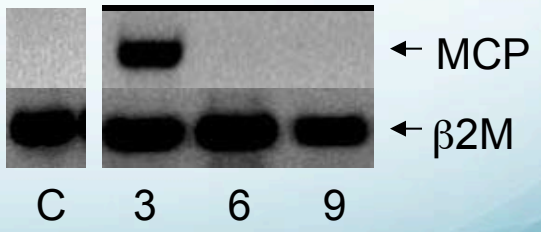
Primary

Secondary



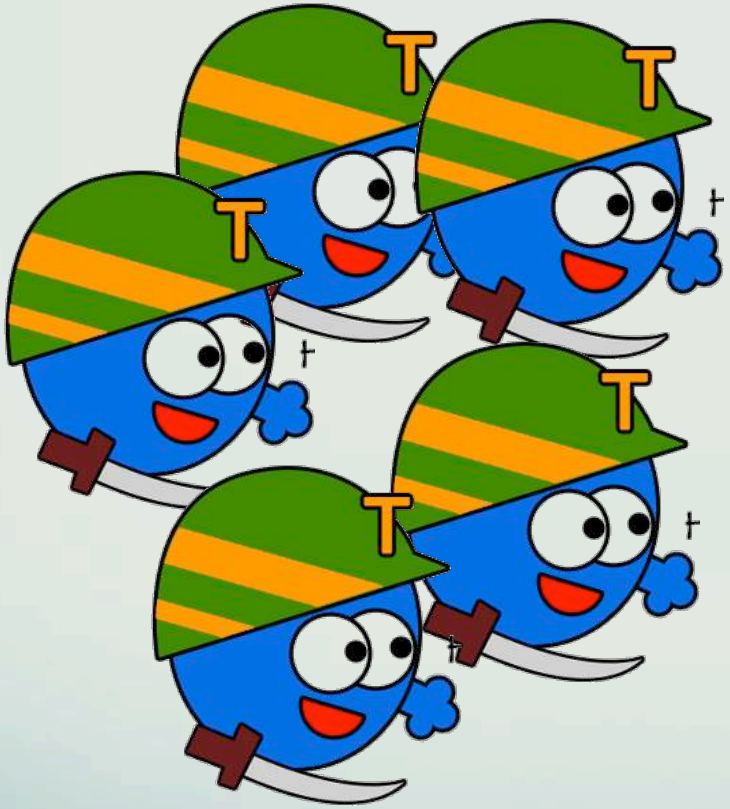
PCR





Morales & Robert, J. Virol. 2007

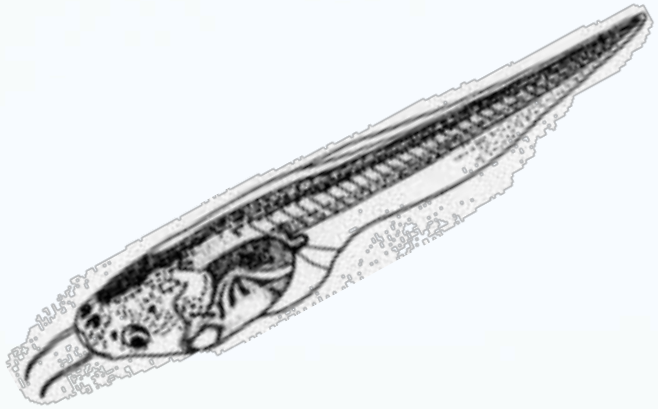
Tadpoles

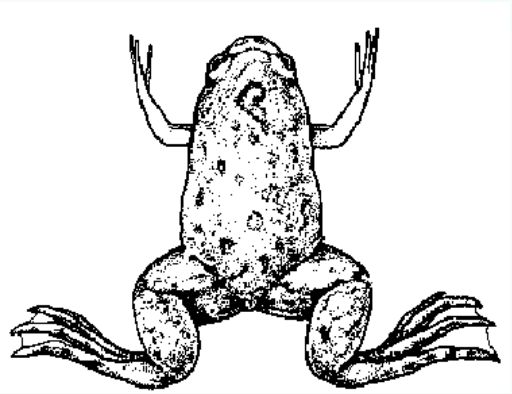


Innate T cells

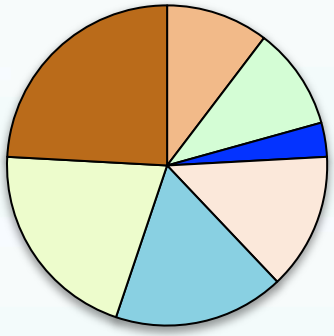
Adult

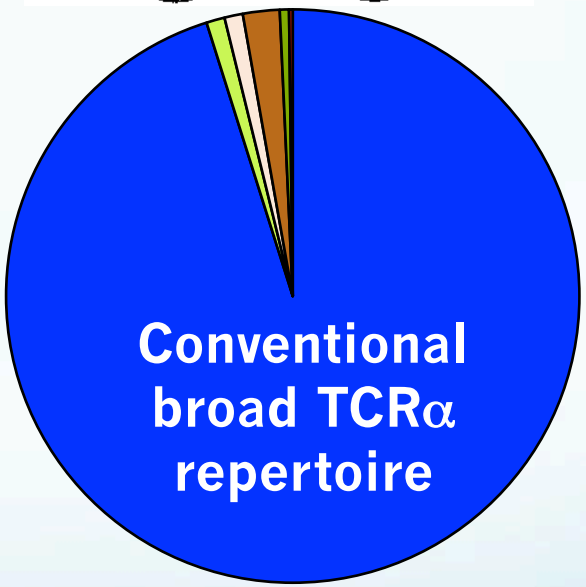
Conventional cytotoxic or killer T cells





6 Dominant
Invariant
T cell Receptors





20 thousand T cells

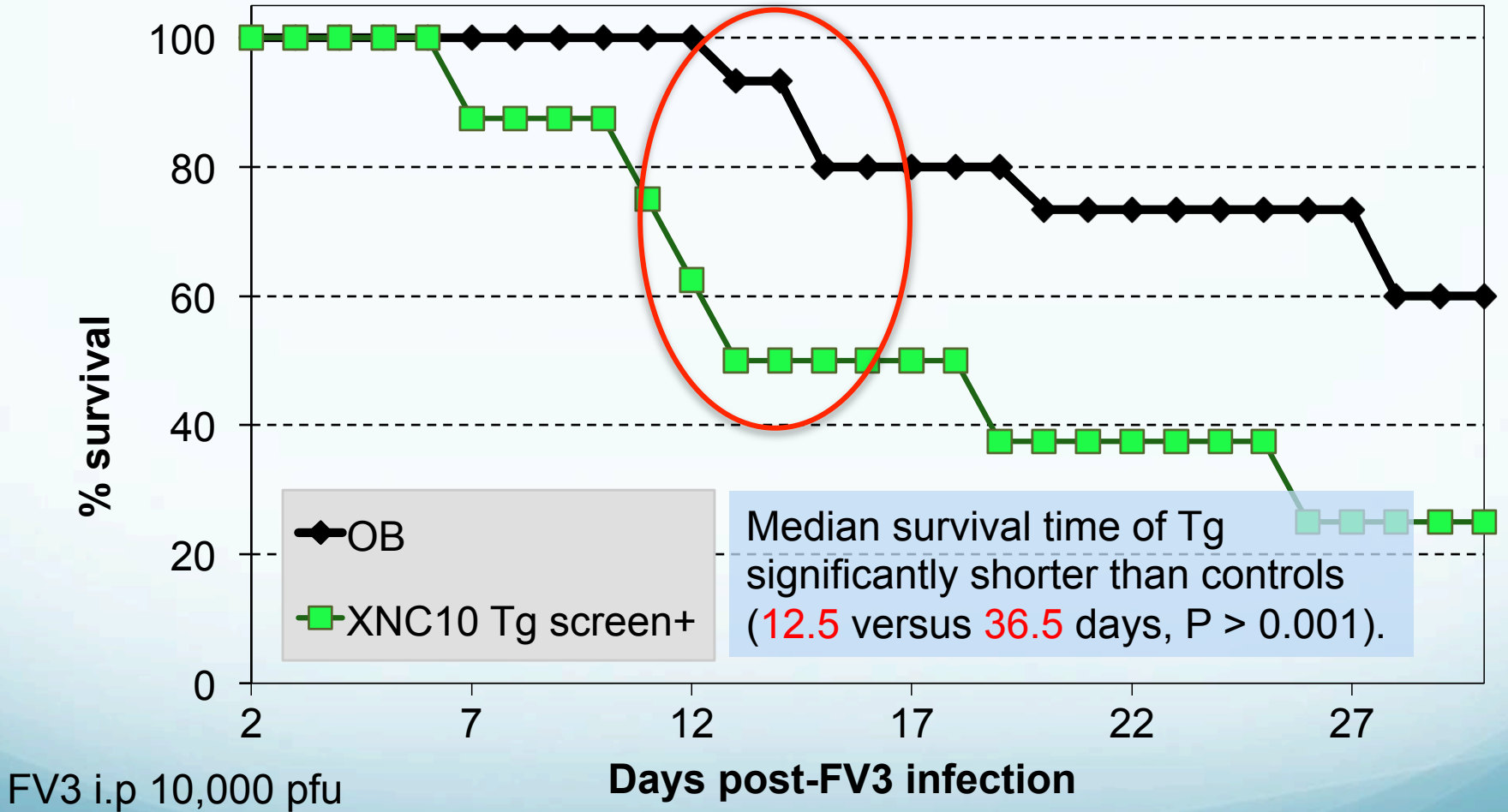
5 millions total T cells

15 days old

1-2 year old

Robert & Edholm, Immunogenetics (2014) 66:513.

*Increased susceptibility to FV3 infection of **XNC10 - deficient** Tg tadpoles lacking XNC10- iT cells*



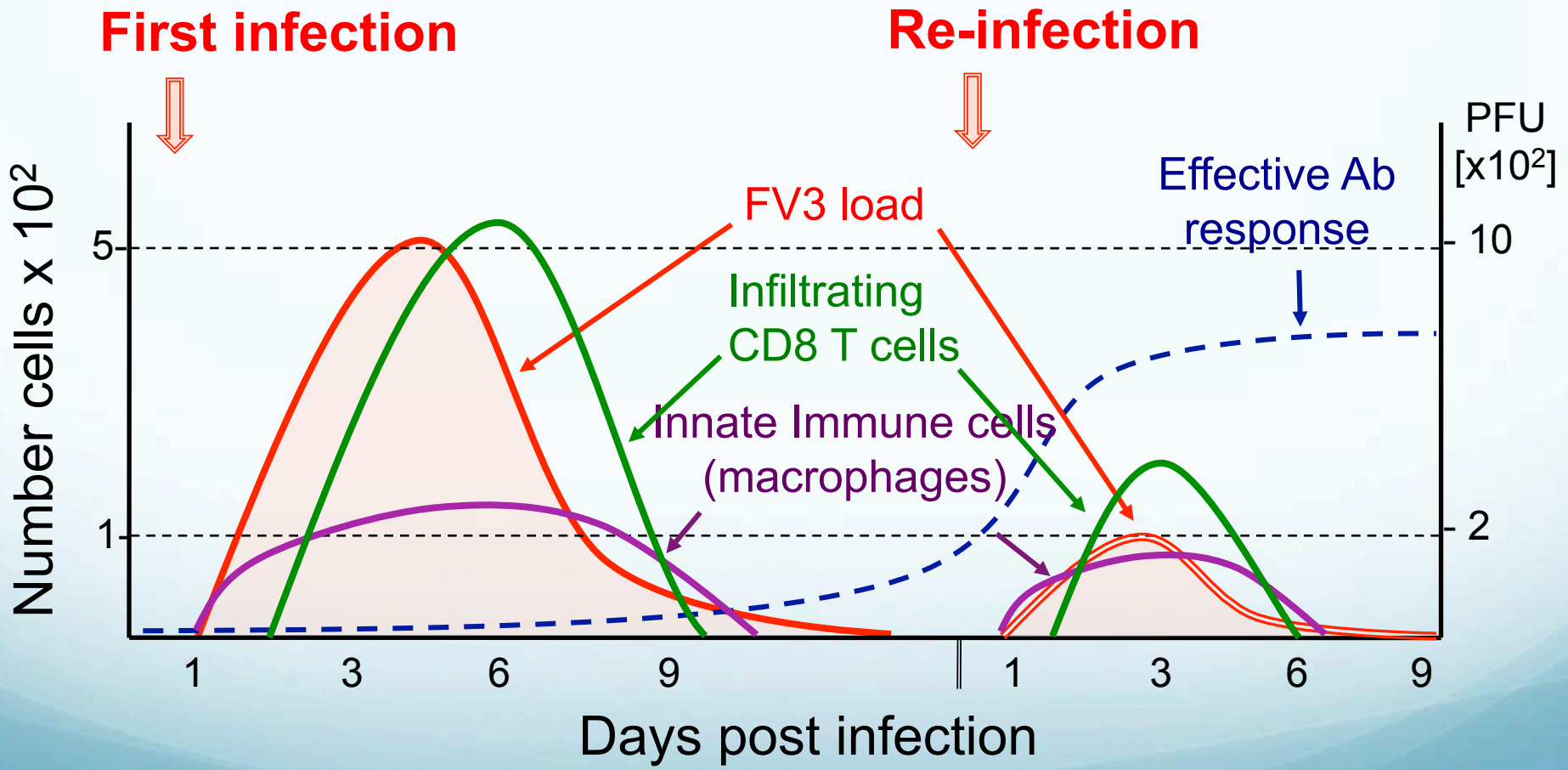
FV3 i.p 10,000 pfu

Edholm et al., PNAS. 2013, 110:14342

Summary II

- **CD8 T cells play a major role during a primary ranaviral infection**
  - γ-irradiated adults are more susceptible to FV3 infection
  - *In vivo* CD8 depletion with anti-CD8 mAb-treatment increases susceptibility to FV3 in adults
  - CD8 T cell infiltrate infected tissues then contract during viral clearance
- **Critical involvement of CD8 T cells during a ranaviral secondary infection and immunological memory**
  - Faster recovery of Infected adults
  - Faster infiltration of CD8 T cells and class II^+ cell in kidneys
  - Faster viral clearance
- **Critical involvement of XNC10-restricted innate T cells**
  - Thus tadpoles do generate T cell responses

Xenopus adult immune response kinetics in infected kidneys



Chen & Robert, 2011, Viruses, 3:2065

How ranavirus can overcome host immune defenses?

Virulence

Ability of a virus to cause disease in the infected host animal

Virulence genes encode molecules that contribute to the pathogenicity of the organism and enable them to achieve the following:

- Viral replication
- Invasiveness (colonization of a niche in the host, attachment to cells)
- Tropism
- Enable the virus to spread in the host
- Intrinsic cell killing effects
- Obtain nutrition from the host
- **Immune evasion**, immune suppression (avoiding immune recognition, modification and inhibition of immune response)

Immune modulators:

- Apoptosis
- Cytokine or immune receptor mimics (*Virokines*, *viroreceptors)*
- Complement binding proteins
- Modifiers of MHC class I and class II pathways

Immune evasion strategies of ranaviruses

Ranaviruses can:

- Cross species barriers of many ectothermic vertebrates, suggesting potent immune evasion strategies
- Persist quiescently in resistant host species, which may serve as asymptomatic carriers for viral dissemination
- Disseminate to immune privileged and distal end-organs and tissues and immune
- Persist quiescent in cells such as macrophages
- Likely to use an arsenal of virulence and immune evasion viral genes (function of only 1/3 of the 98-105 ORFs known or inferred based on sequence homology)

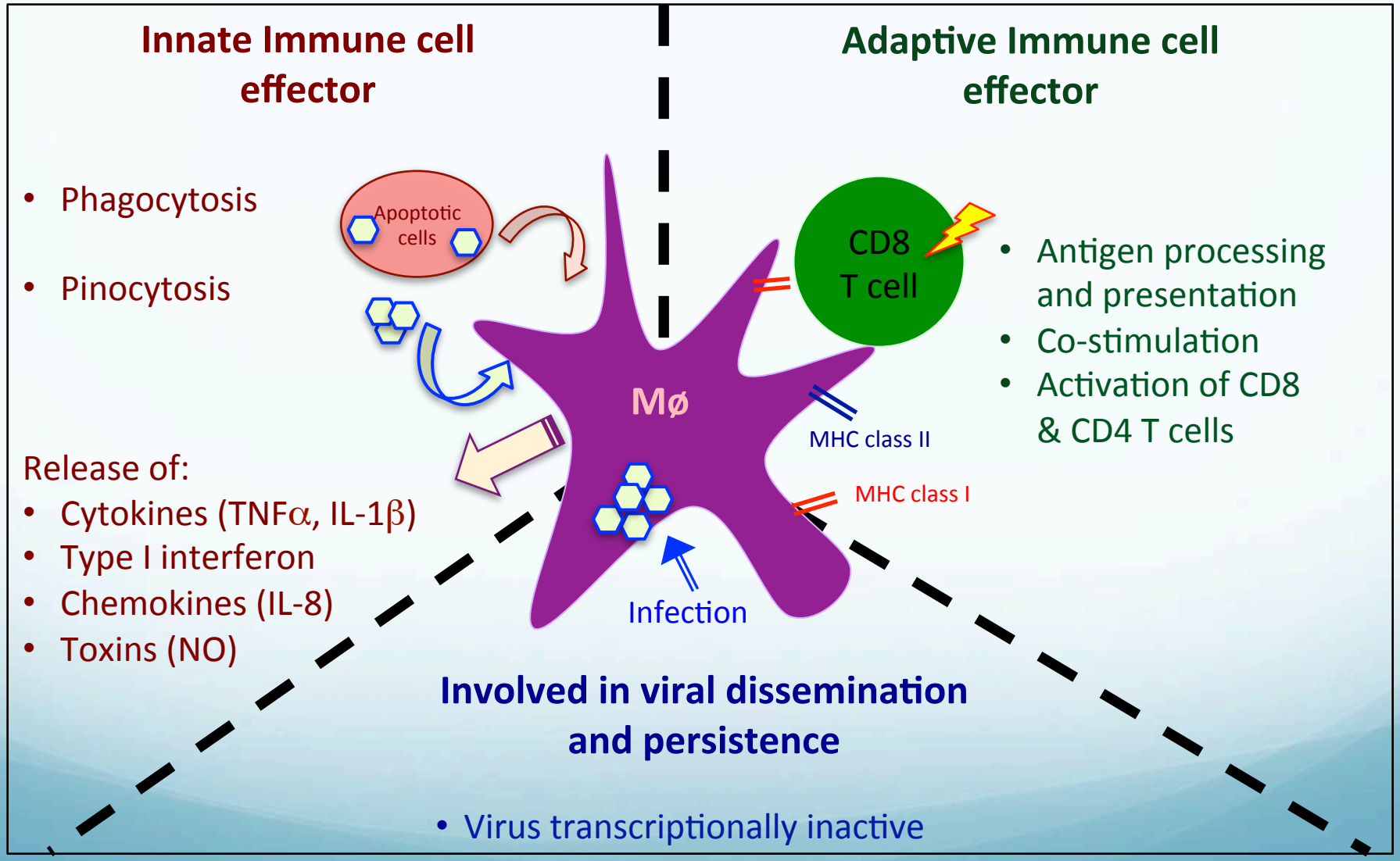
Putative ranavirus virulence and immune evasion genes

- Some virulence genes identified by sequence homology
- Characterization of immune evasion genes by site-specific viral gene deletion or knockout

1. **vIF2α homologue**: Antagonist of protein kinase R (PKR)
2. **Caspase activation and recruitment domain-containing (CARD) protein**: Interfere with CARD domains containing pro-apoptotic, pro-inflammatory and/or interferon responsive
3. **β-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase homolog**: may play a role in dampening host immune responses
4. **18K immediate-early protein**: unknown function but conserved among ranaviruses

De Jesús Andino et al., 2015; Virology 485:162

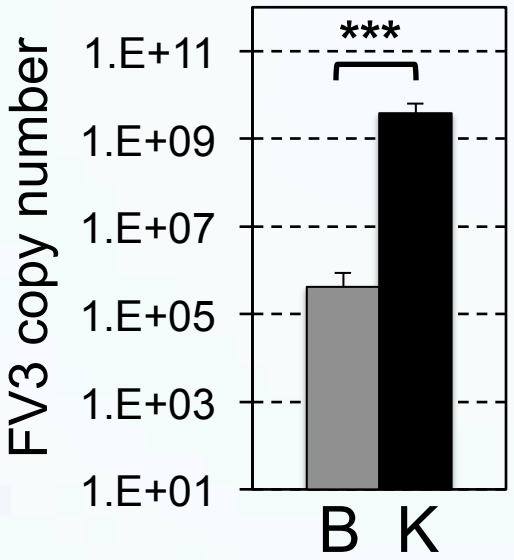
Complex role of macrophages in Xenopus host defenses against RV

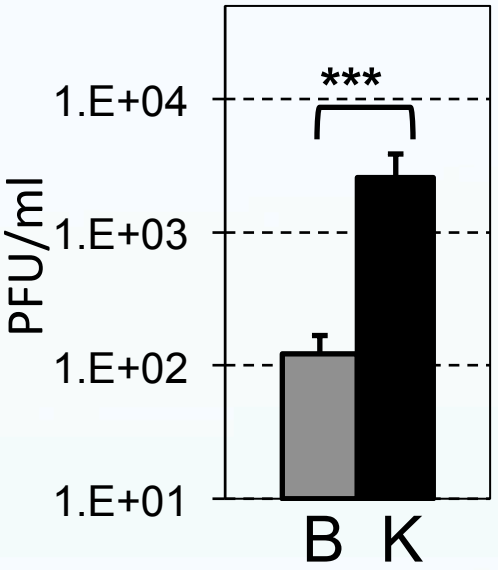


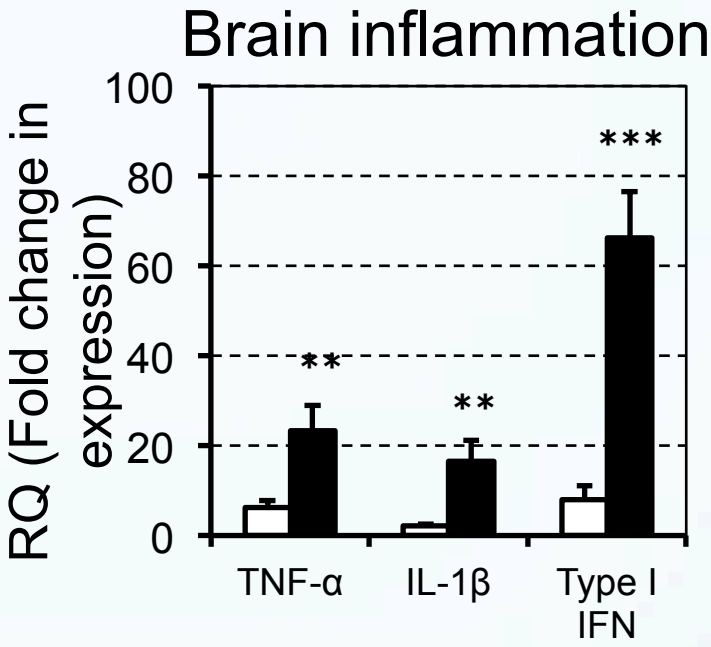
Chen & Robert, 2011, Viruses, 3:2065

FV3 disseminate into the brain of tadpoles but not adult frogs

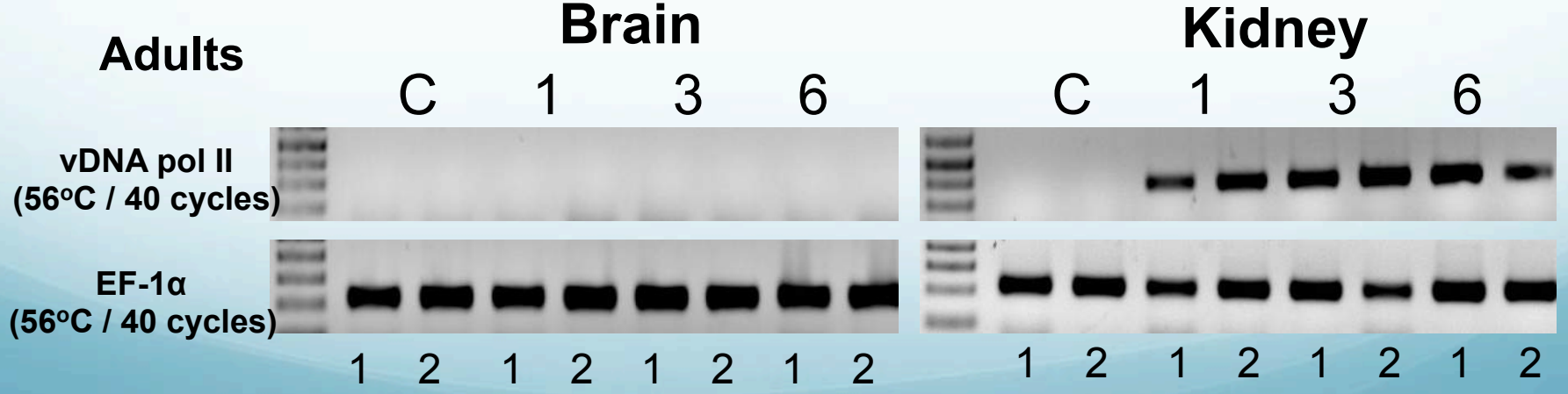
Tadpoles



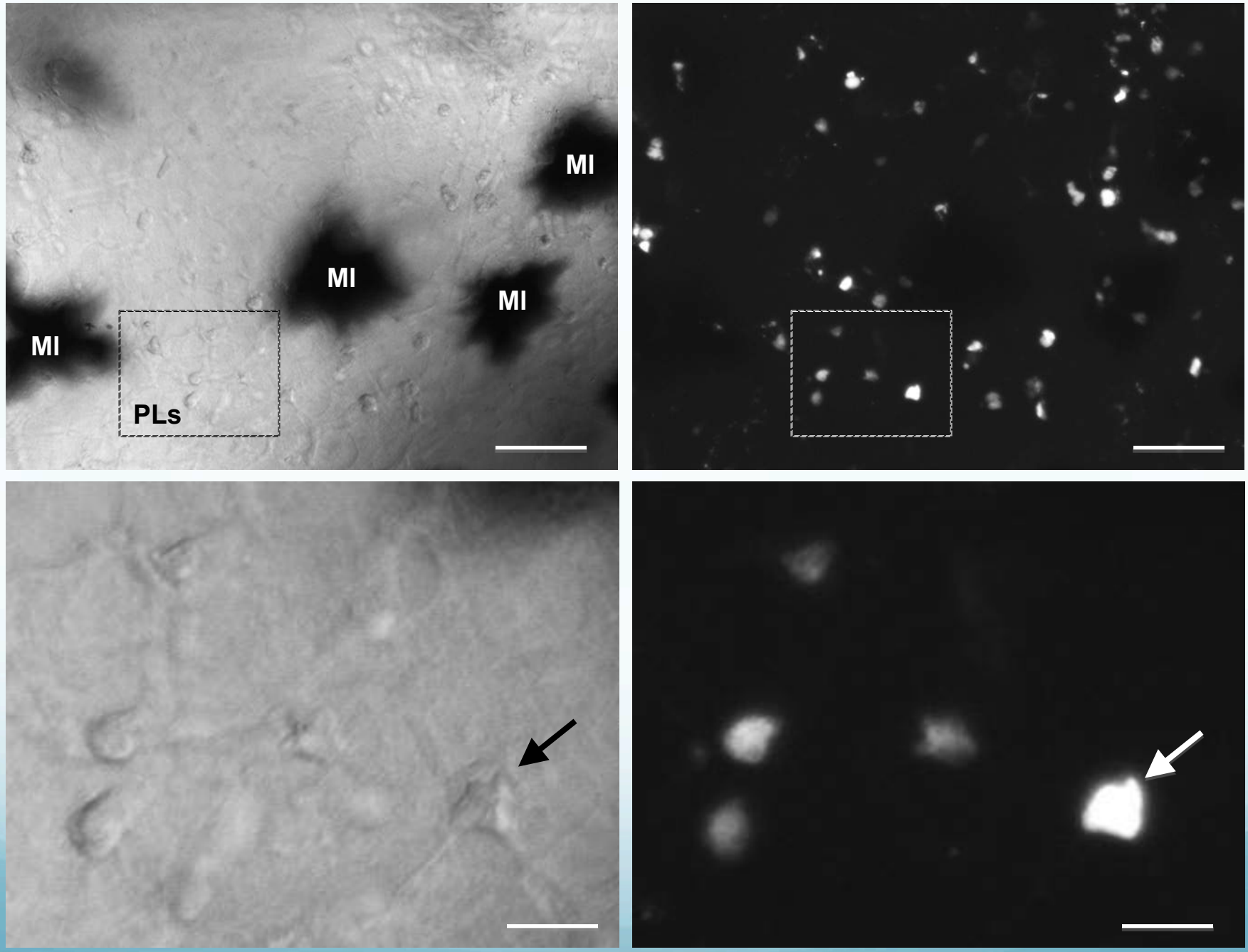




Adults

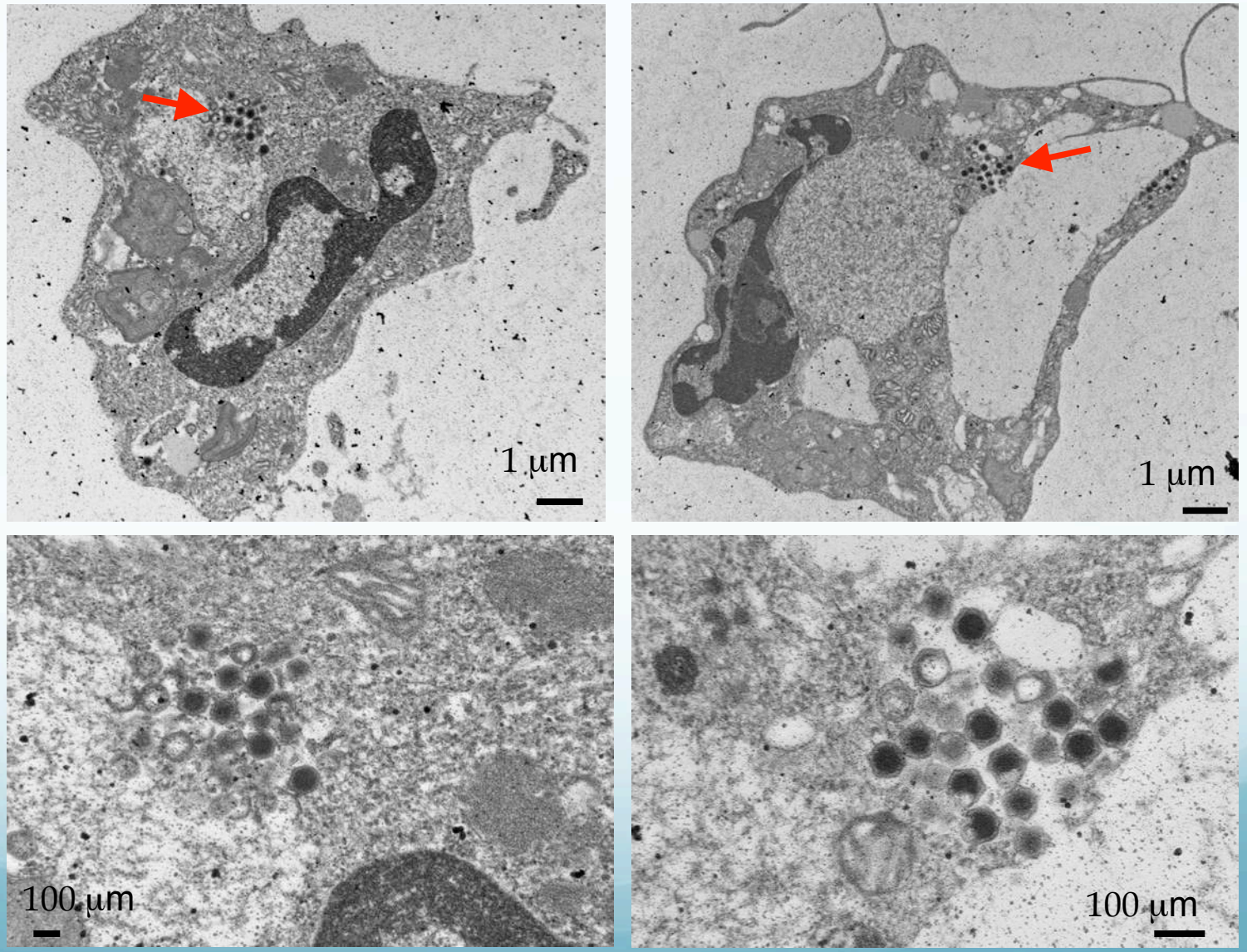


De Jesús Andino et al., 2016; Scientific Report (in press)



De Jesús Andino et al., 2016; Scientific Report (in press)

Mø infected in vitro for 2 days with FV3



Morales et al., 2010, J. Virol. 84:4912

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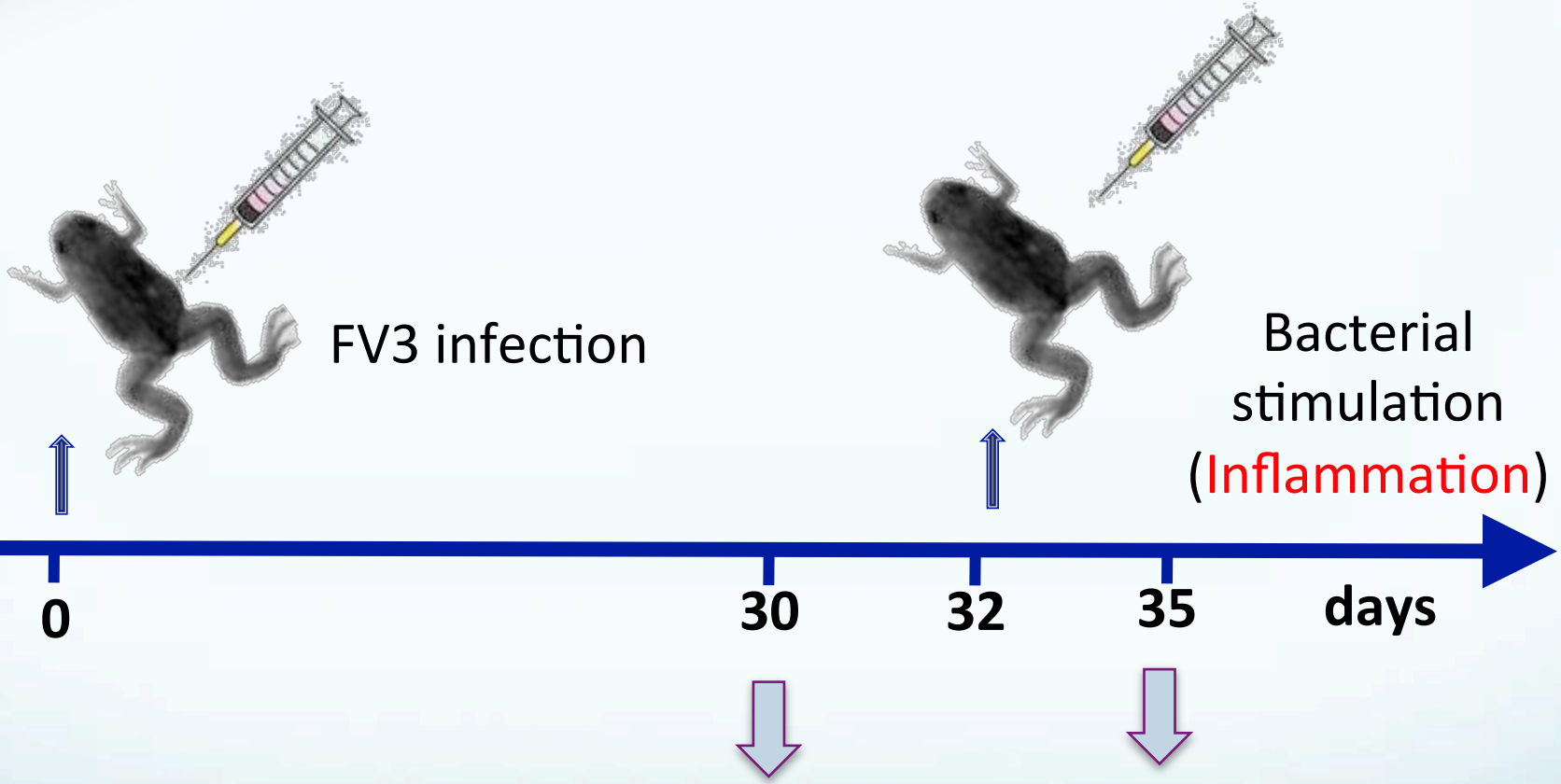
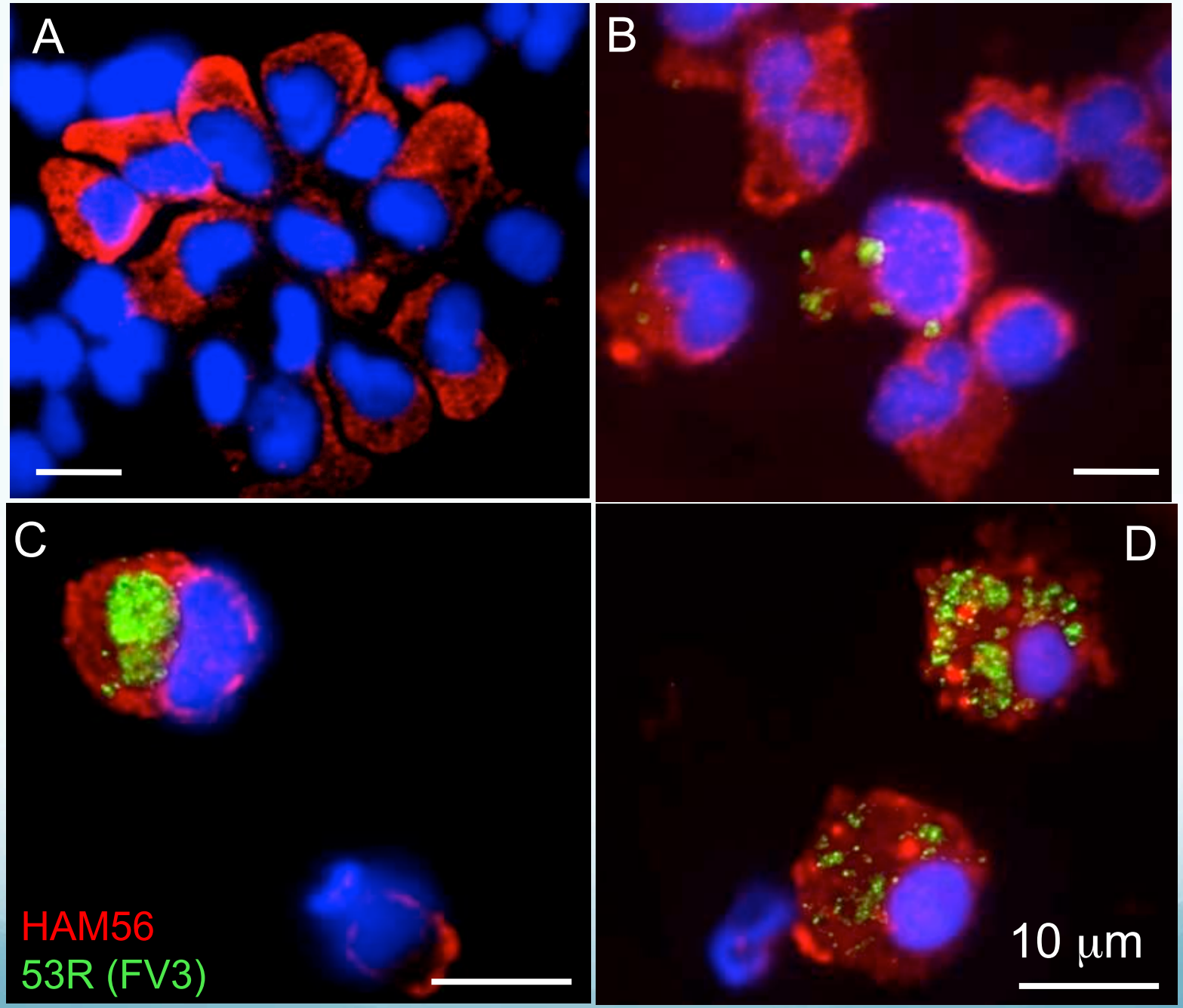
Experimental Method

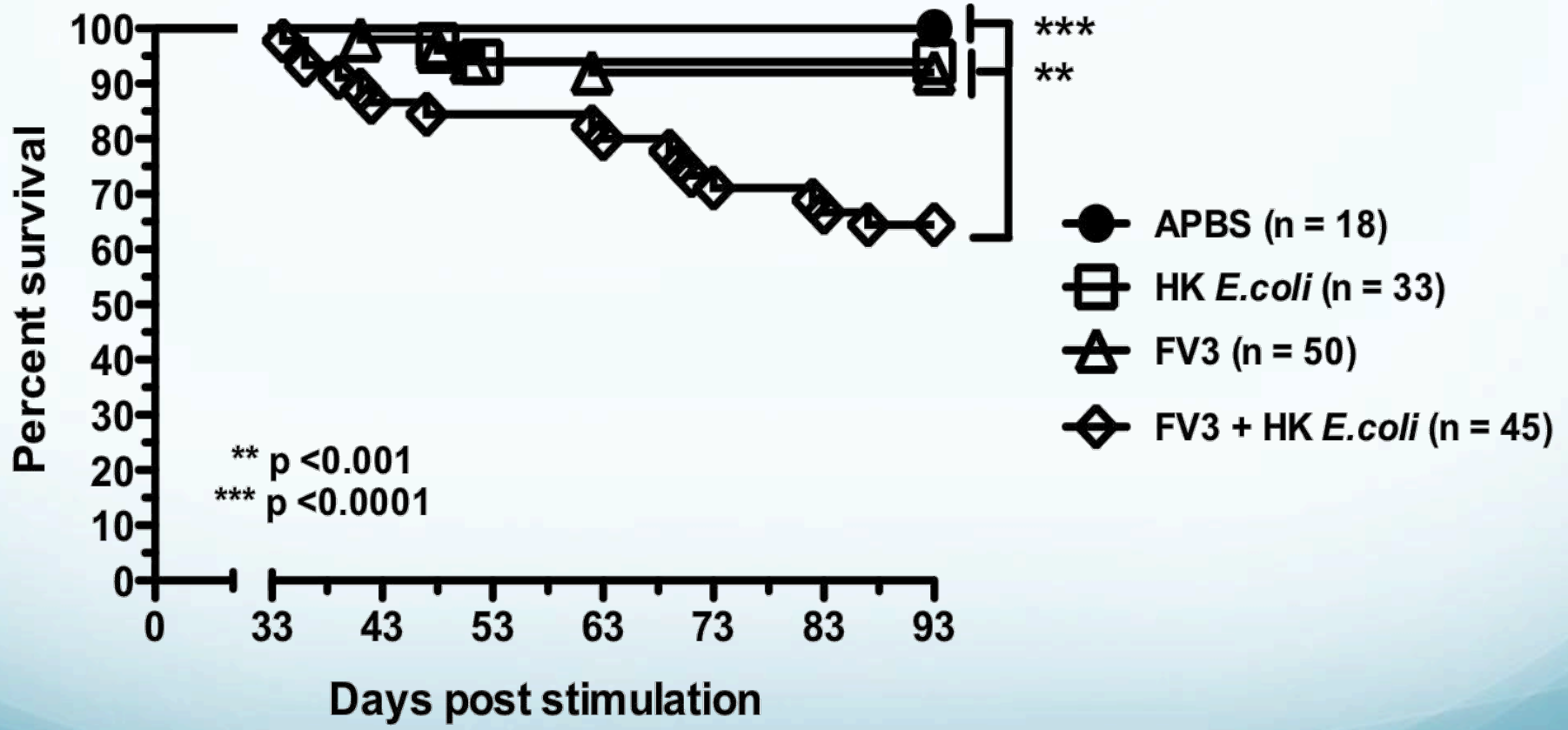


Collect macrophages
RNA and DNA isolation
Virus load, viral transcription



Robert et al., PLOS One, 2014; 9(11):e112904

Survival curve in adult frogs after FV3 infection, followed by bacterial stimulation



Robert et al., PLOS One, 2014; 9(11):e112904

Host immunity to ranavirus

- **Adults: Resistant, clear FV3 within 2 weeks**
  - Early innate immune response
  - Critical involvement of cytotoxic T cells and antibodies
  - FV3 persists quiescent in some asymptomatic adults
  - Immunological memory. Upon secondary infection: faster recovery, viral clearance & T cell response; and protective antibodies
- **Tadpoles: More susceptible, most succumb infection**
  - Less efficient B and T cell responses (mainly innate T cells)
  - delayed and/or inadequate innate anti-FV3 response
  - Inefficient viral clearance & wider tissue dissemination
  - Ranaviruses may be more pathogenic in tadpoles