

1 **Global survey of the immunomodulatory potential of common drugs**

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21 22 **Abstract:**

23 Small molecule drugs may complement antibody-based therapies in an immune-oncology
24 setting, yet systematic methods for the identification and characterization of the
25 immunomodulatory properties of these entities are lacking. We surveyed the
26 immunomodulatory potential of 1,402 small chemical molecules as defined by their ability
27 to alter the cell-cell interactions among peripheral mononuclear leukocytes *ex vivo*, using
28 automated microscopy and population-wide single-cell image analysis. Surprisingly, some
29 10% of the agents tested affected these cell-cell interactions differentially. The results
30 accurately recapitulated known immunomodulatory drug classes, and revealed several
31 clinically approved drugs that unexpectedly harbor the ability to modulate the immune
32 system, potentially contributing to their physiological mechanism of action. For instance, the
33 kinase inhibitor crizotinib promoted T-cell interactions with monocytes as well as with
34 cancer cells, through inhibition of MST1R/RON (macrophage-stimulating protein receptor)
35 and subsequent upregulation of MHC (major histocompatibility complex) expression. The
36 approach offers an attractive platform for the personalized identification and characterization
37 of immunomodulatory therapeutics.

38

39 **Introduction:**

40 High-content screening using automated fluorescent microscopy has allowed us to
41 objectivize and quantify a great variety of cellular parameters, providing an attractive
42 platform to perform genetic or chemical perturbation screens at unprecedented accuracy and
43 robustness due to the statistical power derived from the large number of events monitored. In
44 particular, the approach has enabled the visualization of the influence of cell-cell and cell-
45 microenvironment interactions, which contribute to population-level phenotypes ¹. It has
46 further facilitated the high-throughput screening of co-culture systems, identifying
47 phenotypes of the individual subpopulations, and resolving the interplay between cell
48 populations that may contribute to an integrated drug response.

49 Automated microscopy has thus far not been adapted for the screening of non-
50 adherent and adherent leukocytes present in blood as a model to study immunology, even as
51 traditional microscopy has proven crucial to understanding the complex interaction dynamics
52 of the immune system ². As other high-throughput screening technologies have been used to
53 measure the impact of indirect factors on immune response propagation, such as signaling
54 proteins and soluble cytokines, automated microscopy can be expected to provide the unique
55 spatial resolution and throughput required to quantitatively screen the modulation of direct
56 signaling by cell-cell contacts (receptor mediated signaling) that drives an immune response.
57 Such information on cell-cell contacts in blood over large drug libraries is of particular
58 interest as many successful drugs affect properties of cells that are not cell autonomous, but
59 rather rely on the modification of the relationship between cells, best illustrated by the recent
60 success of cancer immunotherapy ³.

61 Modulation of both the innate and adaptive immune systems is a highly successful
62 strategy in the treatment of systemic diseases such as inflammatory disorders and cancer,
63 where innovation of targeted biological or chemical agents are at the forefront. For instance,
64 the immunomodulatory drug pomalidomide, which induces cytotoxic T-cell and NK-cell
65 activity, and immune check point inhibitors such as the monoclonal antibody ipilimumab
66 (anti-CTLA4) ⁴, alter the balance of co-stimulatory and co-inhibitory signals that manage
67 self-tolerance and regulate T-cell responses ⁵. In both of these examples, the drug mediates
68 cellular interactions that result in the death of the target cancer cell, a concept underlying
69 many immunomodulatory drugs that have proven successful in treating a variety of malignant
70 diseases ⁴.

71 Here, we describe a high-throughput image-based screening method, and analysis
72 algorithm, which robustly quantifies the immunomodulatory potential of small molecules and

73 other therapeutics, by measuring the changes in the physical interaction of leukocytes. With
74 this method, phenotypic drug screening can be expanded to help realize entities that harness
75 the inherent ability of effector cells, within peripheral blood, to propagate signals and
76 function through direct physical contact - a major goal of immunotherapy.

77

78 **Results:**
79 **Systematic quantification of leukocyte cell-cell contacts**

80

81 We designed a pipeline to directly assay the effects of biologicals and chemical agents
82 for their immunomodulatory properties, through measuring changes in cell-cell contacts of
83 peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) *ex vivo*, by population-wide single cell
84 microscopy of PBMC monolayers (Supplementary Results, Supplementary Fig. 1a, and
85 online methods). Individual cell types were identified using fluorescently tagged antibodies,
86 in various non-overlapping combinations, against extracellular markers unique to the PBMC
87 subpopulations of interest. This revealed extensive cell-cell interactions between the different
88 subpopulations (see close-up in Fig. 1a). As the method requires little material per-test, all
89 assays are performed in the blood of an individual donor, reducing background inflammation
90 due to HLA-mismatching. To assess whether the observed interactions among cells were
91 functionally meaningful and to benchmark the assay, we made use of four biologicals that are
92 known to decrease or increase selected cell-cell contacts: an MHC class II blocking antibody,
93 two clinically used antibodies, rituximab and blinatumomab (Supplementary Fig. 1b), and
94 lipopolysaccharide (LPS).

95 The interaction between T-cells and professional antigen presenting cells (APCs),
96 including dendritic cells and macrophages, is an essential step in triggering an adaptive
97 immune response. APCs present foreign antigens on MHC-II receptors to T-cells, which,
98 upon recognition by the T-cell receptors (CD3; TCR), can lead to a targeted immune
99 response ⁶. Antibodies recognizing the extracellular portion of the MHC-II receptor are
100 known to efficiently obstruct this interaction (Supplementary Fig. 1b, left). When cells were
101 stimulated with vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV), the percentage of CD11c⁺ cells directly
102 contacting CD3⁺ T-cells was significantly reduced by incubation with an MHC-II blocking
103 antibody prior to infection, on average from 33% to 25% (P-value < 0.028; Fig. 1b), as
104 measured over a total of 124,059 cell-cell contacts. Such interaction frequencies are however
105 dependent on several variables that directly influence the outcome. In this example they
106 include: the fraction of all cells that are CD11c-positive (x_a), the fraction of all cells that are
107 CD3-positive (x_b), and the total cell density or overall clustering index, which can be

108 expressed as the fraction of all PBMCs that directly contact one or more PBMCs (x_i). Indeed,
109 all three variables showed fluctuations in the MHC control experiment, among others due to
110 stimuli-dependent differences in cellular activation (Supplementary Fig. 1c) ⁷, which need to
111 be statistically accounted for when interpreting such interaction frequencies. The fraction of
112 cells that are of type A and that interact with cells of type B, if cellular positions and relative
113 abundance of subpopulations were kept equal but cellular identities were shuffled, is given by
114 the formula $E = x_a \cdot x_b \cdot x_i$. Where x_a is the fraction of cells of type A, x_b is the fraction of
115 cells of type B, and x_i is the fraction of cells with one or more cell contacts. Bootstrap
116 analysis confirmed the equation, consistent with the fact the three variables act as
117 independent probabilities in this context (Supplementary Fig. 1d). Scoring alterations in the
118 interaction frequency relative to E then gives an internally normalized interaction frequency,
119 which we term the ‘interaction score’. Further information on the interaction score can be
120 found in the online methods. The interaction score indicates how much the observed
121 interaction frequency deviates from what would be expected by random, which makes it
122 robust to alterations in the relative abundance of either subpopulation as well as to alterations
123 in overall cell density or cell-cell contacts. We use arrows to indicate the directionality of the
124 interaction score, i.e. relating to the fraction of A cells interacting with B cells, which can
125 deviate from the opposite direction in case of strongly uneven subpopulation sizes or in the
126 case of many-to-one cell-cell contacts. Corrected for these influences, the blocking MHC-II
127 antibody was found to not only reduce the CD11c⁺→CD3⁺ T-cell interactions in VSV-
128 stimulated condition, but also in the unstimulated state (Fig. 1c and Supplementary Fig. 1e),
129 likely explained by reduced antigen ‘scanning’ by T-cells ^{8,9}. As expected, both an isotype
130 IgG control antibody and a blocking antibody against CD54, which functions as co-
131 stimulatory signal and is typically not highly expressed on unstimulated monocytes ¹⁰, did not
132 significantly alter the CD11c⁺→CD3⁺ T-cell interaction score in unstimulated condition
133 (Supplementary Fig. 1f). Further, contact-dependent immune activity has been described as
134 early as 1970, where clustering of CD14⁺ monocytes stimulated by bacterial
135 lipopolysaccharides (LPS) is an activation-associated signal ¹¹. Accordingly, the interaction
136 score revealed a significant increase in the interaction between CD14⁺ monocytes resulting
137 from LPS treatment (Supplementary Fig. 1g). In these examples, immune activation and
138 modulation can strongly drive cell proliferation, potentially effecting the number of cells
139 within interacting subpopulations being measured. To additionally confirm that the
140 interaction score is robust to either gain or loss of cellular subpopulations, we simulated
141 fluctuations in the proportion of A and B cells over a wide range (5% to 95%), and then

142 measured the interaction score of $A \leftrightarrow B$; synthetic data provides a controlled environment
143 without compounding factors such as background inflammation. As expected, we found that
144 the score is inherently robust to modifications in cell number (Supplementary Fig. 2a),
145 enabling us to measure altered cell-cell contacts even in the context of cell proliferation and
146 cell death.

147 The anti-cancer biologicals rituximab and blinatumomab induce NK-cell-to-B-cell
148 (Supplementary Fig. 1b, middle) and T-cell-to-B-cell (Supplementary Fig. 1b, right)
149 mediated killing, respectively, where the function of the killing depends on direct physical
150 contacts between effector and target cells¹²⁻¹⁴. Incubation with these biologicals resulted in
151 not only a dose-dependent increase in respective interaction scores, but also in a concomitant
152 loss of target cells (Fig. 1d-e & Supplementary Fig. 2b). In the case of blinatumomab, the
153 results were independent of the marker used to identify the target B-cell (Fig. 1e). Even with
154 the reduction of the target B-cell population, the interaction score is still increased, due to the
155 score's normalization to variations in subpopulation numbers (Fig 1d-e), as described above.
156 Thus, the recapitulation of the effects of biologicals with well-defined mechanisms of action,
157 measured by population-wide imaged based screening and spatial analyses, validates this
158 method for use in an immunomodulatory screening campaign.

159 While biologicals have great precision and efficacy in their mode of action, it would
160 be advantageous to identify small chemical entities with specific immunomodulatory
161 properties that could be more easily handled and manufactured. To determine what classes of
162 drugs, if any, have unknown immunomodulatory effects, we surveyed a collection of 1,402
163 existing drugs (approved, investigational, and experimental, Supplementary Dataset 1) to see
164 if one can benchmark effects against drugs with known immunomodulatory properties, such
165 as steroids and NSAIDs.

166

167 **Chemical rewiring of the leukocytic interaction network**

168

169 Leukocyte interactions across the 1,402 compounds were screened in quadruplicate,
170 resulting in the identification and analysis of the cell-to-cell contacts of over 80 million
171 PBMCs from a single healthy donor blood donation in 7,680 wells. To induce a higher level
172 of cell-cell contacts, alterations of PBMC cell-cell interactions were measured after immune
173 stimulation with vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV), which induces an interferon (IFN)-based
174 inflammatory immune response that is aimed at halting viral replication¹⁵. Pairwise
175 combinations of four major PBMC subpopulations were stained for by immunofluorescence

176 after infection. At the population-level, VSV infection as measured by a single cell GFP-
177 reporter displayed high reproducibility (Fig. 2a and Supplementary Fig. 3a), where VSV
178 preferentially infected myeloid lineage cells (Supplementary Fig. 3b), as expected ⁷. 80
179 Compounds decreased VSV infection while 22 increased it (below -2 or above 2 standard
180 deviations, with $P < 0.05$; Fig. 2b and Supplementary Fig. 3c). Importantly, several known
181 anti-inflammatory compounds led to increased VSV infection, including corticosteroids (Fig.
182 2b and Supplementary Fig. 3d), which may indicate a functional blockage in cellular
183 signaling pathways that rely on soluble factors, and further, that these pathways are active in
184 our model ¹⁶.

185 When analyzing all 246×10^6 cell-cell contacts measured in the screen, it was observed
186 that the monocyte lineage cells had significantly higher numbers of direct neighbors
187 compared to the lymphocyte lineage cells (Fig. 2c). Evaluating the interaction scores between
188 the distinct subpopulations, the highest scores were observed among and between $CD11c^+$
189 and $CD14^+$ monocytes (Fig. 2d), and lower, yet higher than random, interaction scores were
190 observed between all measured monocyte-lymphocyte pairs. In contrast, interaction scores of
191 around zero were observed on average between B- and T-cells, and from T-cells to any of the
192 other cell types, indicative of baseline cell-cell contact frequencies equal to those expected by
193 random for T-cells (Fig. 2d). Overall, many more compounds altered only leukocyte cell-cell
194 contacts (11.6%) than altered only virus infection (2.5%) at 2 standard deviations (Fig. 2e).
195 Similarity in the molecular regulation of cell-cell receptor mediated contacts would be
196 expected to lead to similarity in the drug-induced alterations of those cell-cell contacts.
197 Indeed, comparing overall results revealed the highest similarity in the modulation of cell-cell
198 contacts among and with monocyte lineage cells (Fig. 2f).

199 To analyze the chemical modulation across the entire library, drug annotation
200 enrichments over all interaction scores were calculated and displayed by hierarchical
201 clustering (Fig. 2g, the full list of compounds and their specific immune modulation
202 phenotype is attached as a resource in Supplementary Dataset 2). Inspection of the enriched
203 drug classes altering PBMC cell-cell contacts revealed the presence of four groups,
204 comprising predominant classes of drugs known to modulate the immune system: [1]
205 Steroidal anti-inflammatory compounds such as glucocorticoids that bind to steroid hormone
206 receptors (Fig. 2g, dark grey); [2] Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) including
207 arachidonate 5-lipoxygenase, and cyclooxygenase inhibitors (Fig. 2g, grey); [3] Drugs acting
208 on or mimicking the signaling of the sympathetic nervous system, including catecholamines,
209 adrenaline, dopamine, and associated receptor agonist and antagonists (Fig. 2g, light grey);

210 And [4] a fourth group containing compounds described to act on other systems or previously
211 unreported drug classes (Fig. 2g, yellow). Comparing the top 140 drugs with the strongest
212 changed interaction scores to those 140 with strongest cytotoxicity revealed an overlap of
213 only 11 drugs (7%, Supplementary Fig 3e), indicating that the cell-cell contact analysis did
214 not bias towards drugs with strongly altered cell population sizes.

215 Steroidal anti-inflammatory compounds not only led to strong increased VSV
216 infection, as expected by their mechanism of action, but also displayed significant enrichment
217 for decreased CD14⁺ cell interactions (Fig. 2g-h). Steroidal anti-inflammatories regulate the
218 immune system via the glucocorticoid receptor, reducing the transcriptional activity of pro-
219 inflammatory transcription factors including NF- κ B and IRF3¹⁷, which may explain the
220 observed decreased clustering of CD14⁺ cells and increased VSV infection (Fig. 2g-h).
221 CD14⁺ cell clustering was in fact the cell-cell interaction with the most significant correlation
222 to VSV infection over all measured compounds (Supplementary Fig. 3f, left), with increased
223 infection associated with decreased clustering and vice versa ($P < 2.3 \times 10^{-5}$; Supplementary
224 Fig. 3f, middle). Combined with the increased CD14⁺ cell clustering upon LPS stimulation
225 (Supplementary Fig. 1g) and previous reports¹¹, this singled out CD14⁺ cell clustering as the
226 predominant spatial readout of innate-immune activation and suggested some compounds
227 reduced virus infection by activating an innate immune reaction, which was further
228 confirmed in a second healthy donor (Supplementary Fig. 3f, right).

229 In contrast to the steroidal anti-inflammatory compounds, several NSAIDs reduced
230 CD11c⁺ cell clustering, CD19⁺ B-cell clustering, and CD11c⁺ cell \rightarrow CD3⁺ T-cell interactions
231 (Fig. 2g). NSAIDs act by inhibiting the synthesis of pro-inflammatory signaling molecules
232 and chemo-attractants derived from arachidonic acid¹⁸, including eicosanoids such as
233 prostaglandins and leukotrienes. Interestingly, reduced CD11c⁺ cell \rightarrow CD3⁺ T-cell
234 interactions were observed for sulindic sulfoxide, salicin, celecoxib, tomelukast, and
235 zafirlukast, thus reaching the same phenotype across diverse mode of NSAID action
236 ($P < 3.8 \times 10^{-5}$; Supplementary Fig. 3g)¹⁸. This suggested a strong sensitivity of the CD11c⁺
237 cell \rightarrow CD3⁺ T-cell interaction to modulation by NSAIDs, consistent with previous reports¹⁹.

238 Further, several drugs altered leukocyte cell-cell interactions with known mechanism
239 of action not directly linked to the above described steroidal, NSAID, or nervous system
240 related modes of action. Quinine compounds strongly reduced CD11c⁺ cell \rightarrow CD3⁺ T-cell
241 interactions (Fig. 2g-h), in line with their anti-inflammatory effect and interference in MHC
242 presentation, which has led to their current clinical use in management of rheumatoid arthritis
243 and other inflammatory diseases²⁰. Cholesterol lowering drugs also reduced CD11c⁺

244 cell→CD3⁺ T-cell interactions (Fig. 2g), possibly mediated by the well documented
245 dependency of MHC-II antigen presentation on cholesterol enriched lipid rafts^{21,22}. A subset
246 of cholesterol lowering drugs, HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors (statins), which also reduced
247 CD11c⁺ cell↔CD3⁺ T-cell interactions (Fig. 2g and Supplementary Fig. 3h), have been
248 reported to also act in a cholesterol-independent way via blocking of leukocyte function
249 antigen-1 (LFA-1)-mediated adhesion to and co-stimulation of lymphocytes²³. ACE
250 inhibitors, particularly enalapril and its active metabolite enalaprilat, lead to increased CD14⁺
251 cell clustering as well as increased CD14⁺ cell↔CD19⁺ B-cell interactions (Fig. 2g and
252 Supplementary Fig. 3h), potentially related to their reported inhibitory effect on the
253 expression of the monocyte chemo-attractant protein-1²⁴, that inhibits B-cell migration²⁵.
254 Taxifolins and catechols included plant flavonoids with known antioxidant and anti-
255 inflammatory activity²⁶, which led to decreased CD14⁺ cell clustering (Fig. 2g-h). Further,
256 N-acyl-L-homoserine lactones are components of the bacterial quorum sensing machinery,
257 and led to increased CD3⁺ T-cell clustering and reduced CD19⁺ B→CD3⁺ T-cell interactions
258 (Fig. 2g), which have been shown to activate the immune system and increase survival upon
259 a bacterial infection model in pretreated mice²⁷, and a related compound has been shown to
260 interfere with T-cell differentiation²⁸, although the mechanism of their recognition and effect
261 on T-cells is as yet unresolved.

262 Lastly, the screen revealed several neurological modulators, which mimic or interfere
263 with signaling of the nervous system, particularly the sympathetic nervous system that
264 regulates a close physiological connection between the nervous and immune systems, as
265 having immunomodulatory potential²⁹. For instance, modulators of the neurotransmitter γ -
266 aminobutyric acid (GABA) signaling increased CD19⁺ B-cell clustering (potentially
267 indicating activation, Fig. 2g). GABA, expressed on most PBMC subpopulations³⁰, has been
268 shown to have an anti-inflammatory role in mouse models of autoimmune disorders
269 involving B-cells, including multiple sclerosis³¹ and rheumatoid arthritis³², suggesting B-
270 cell mediated effects. Further, agonists and antagonists of the β -adrenergic receptors altered
271 several CD3⁺ T-cell centered cell-cell contacts (Fig. 2g), consistent with reported expression
272 and function of the β -adrenergic receptors on lymphocytes³³. Agonists increased CD3⁺ T-
273 cell→CD11c⁺ cell interactions, and decreased both CD3⁺ T-cell clustering and CD3⁺ T-
274 cell→CD19⁺ B-cell interactions, while antagonists enriched for decreased CD19⁺ B→CD3⁺
275 T-cell interactions (Fig. 2g), likely related to diverse effects of β 2-adrenergic receptor
276 signaling on distinct subsets of T-cells reported previously³⁴.

277 Taken together, image-based screening of PBMCs enabled the exploration and
278 categorization of the chemical rewiring of the leukocyte cell-cell interaction network, which
279 revealed results in line with a variety of previously reported studies, all from a single
280 phenotypic screen performed on the leukocytes of a single-donor blood sample. The screen
281 here identified small compounds that can modulate and inhibit immune function, implicated
282 novel modes of action for several compounds and existing drugs, and validated numerous
283 effects through imaging.

284

285 **Crizotinib increases T-cell to APC interactions**

286

287 An example of drugs with previously unknown immunomodulatory propensities are
288 the inhibitors of receptor protein-tyrosine kinases (RTKi's), which led to increased
289 interactions between CD11c⁺ cells and CD3⁺ T-cells (Fig. 2g and 3a), despite RTKi's being
290 shown rarely to display immunomodulatory effects^{35,36}. The observed enrichment resulted
291 from the strong phenotypes obtained for both enantiomers of crizotinib (Fig. 3b). (*R*)-
292 crizotinib (from here on referred to as crizotinib) is a MET, ALK and ROS 1 kinase inhibitor
293³⁷ approved for the treatment of ALK-rearranged non-small cell lung carcinoma (NSCLC)
294 and under investigation for the treatment of several additional solid tumors.

295 A repeat of the leukocyte interaction screen over the entire drug library, using a blood
296 donation from a second healthy donor but without background stimulation by VSV infection,
297 reproduced the specific crizotinib effect: the RTKi drug class was the strongest enriched drug
298 class over all cell-cell interactions (Fig. 3c), with significantly increased interactions between
299 CD11c⁺ cells and lymphocytes (i.e. monocyte marker-negative cells) observed upon
300 crizotinib treatment (Supplementary Fig. 4a). As MHC-to-TCR contact dependent signaling
301 drives APC→T-cell interactions and downstream activation, we assayed for altered MHC
302 expression upon crizotinib treatment of PBMCs from additional healthy donors by flow
303 cytometry, and observed a dose-dependent increase of MHC-II surface levels on CD11c⁺
304 cells not observed for an unrelated cytotoxic compound (digitoxin) or DMSO (Fig. 3d).
305 Furthermore, an MHC-II blocking antibody strongly decreased the crizotinib-enhanced
306 interaction between CD11c⁺ monocytes and CD3⁺ T-cells, indicating the MHC-II
307 upregulation mediates the observed immunomodulatory effect (Fig. 3e). Comparison of the
308 T-cell compartment after *ex vivo* crizotinib incubation of PBMCs indicated a crizotinib-
309 induced CD4⁺ Th1, but not Th2, response, which is indicative of an inflammatory and
310 cytotoxic immune milieu (Fig. 3f and Supplementary Fig. 4b).

311 MHC-I and II gene expression is partially under control of overlapping transcription
312 factors³⁸, and MHC-I self-antigen presentation is a crucial factor in mounting a successful
313 anti-cancer immune response³, where increased MHC expression and antigen presentation
314 on cancer cells is a desirable effect in the treatment and maintenance of cancer³⁹. We
315 therefore measured the transcriptional response using RNA sequencing in the colorectal
316 adenocarcinoma-derived cell line (SW480 cells) after treatment with 2 μ M crizotinib (Fig. 4a
317 and Supplementary Dataset 3). The genes upregulated by crizotinib treatment showed
318 significant enrichment for MHC-I annotations (Fig. 4b-c), including all three major MHC-I
319 cell surface receptors (*HLA-A*, *B*, and *C*) as well as the invariant chain β 2 microglobulin
320 (*B2M*) (Fig. 4c), and genes involved in antigen presentation and peptide processing, loading,
321 and trafficking (Fig. 4c). While MHC-II expression is typically restricted to professional
322 APCs, the invariant chain of MHC-II (*CD74*) was also significantly upregulated on SW480
323 cells after crizotinib treatment (Fig. 4c). Crizotinib-enhanced expression of MHC-I on the
324 SW480 cell surface was confirmed by flow cytometry (Fig. 4d-e).

325 Transcription factor binding site enrichment analysis on the upregulated genes
326 revealed strong enrichment for binding sites of CREB and ATF (Fig. 5a), both important
327 transcription factors for MHC-I and -II class genes, that further regulate and cooperate with
328 the MHC class-specific transcription factors *CIITA* and *NLRC5*^{38,40}. Indeed, we observed
329 increased phosphorylation of both CREB and ATF upon crizotinib treatment of SW480 cells
330 (Fig. 5b, and Supplementary Fig. 5a), along with increased transcript levels of *CIITA* and
331 *NLRC5* (Fig. 5c).

332 We recently identified the target spectrum of crizotinib in SW480 cells with chemical
333 proteomics⁴¹, and among the most abundant interactors in these cells was the Macrophage
334 Stimulating 1 Receptor (MST1R, also known as RON), a close c-MET homolog. Crizotinib
335 is described to have a dissociation constant of 25nM to MST1R⁴², to inhibit MST1R with an
336 IC₅₀ of approximately 200nM⁴³, and KINOMEScan results have showed 100% binding of
337 MST1R at 1 μ M (*R*)-crizotinib⁴¹. MST1R is a known negative regulator of MHC-II
338 expression and immune function in mice, as activation by its ligand, Macrophage Stimulating
339 1 (MST1), leads to decreased STAT1 phosphorylation and *CIITA* expression^{44,45}.
340 Furthermore, naive MST1R knockout mice show increased immune cell infiltration in
341 lungs⁴⁶, thus we speculated that crizotinib could increase MHC expression by inhibition of
342 MST1R/RON.

343 Using inducible shRNA targeting MST1R in SW480 cells, the loss-of-function
344 coincided with increased MHC-I surface expression over independent short hairpins after 72h

345 of efficient MST1R knockdown (Fig. 5d-e and Supplementary Fig. 5b-d), while no such
346 increase was observed for the negative control shRNA (Fig. 5e). Furthermore, treatment of
347 SW480 cells with a more potent and specific MST1R-inhibitor, BMS-777607⁴⁷, also led to
348 strong upregulation of *CIITA*, *NLRC5* and *HLA-B* (Fig. 5f), while, as expected, the ligand
349 MST1 did not induce expression of these genes (Supplementary Fig. 5e). Increased MHC-I
350 surface expression upon BMS-777607 was confirmed by flow cytometry (Supplementary
351 Fig. 5f), while incubation with MST1 showed no change in MHC-I surface levels by flow
352 cytometry (Fig. 4d and Supplementary Fig. 5f). Importantly, combined incubation of SW480
353 cells with MST1 and crizotinib led to reduced MHC-I surface levels compared to crizotinib
354 treatment alone (Fig. 4d), and further competition experiments using crizotinib and MST1 in
355 healthy donor blood revealed a full reversal of the crizotinib-increased interactions between
356 CD3⁺ T-cells and CD11c⁺ monocytes (Fig. 5g).

357 To test if crizotinib induced MHC-I expression also *in vivo*, we injected crizotinib or
358 vehicle alone into SCID deficient mice with a SW480 xenografted tumor. Comparison of the
359 tumors by immunohistology indicated significantly higher levels of MHC-I expression in the
360 crizotinib treated mice compared to vehicle control (Fig. 6a-b), recapitulating the *ex vivo*
361 immunomodulatory effect of crizotinib *in vivo*.

362 The immunomodulatory effect of crizotinib was not limited to healthy blood or the
363 SW480 colon-carcinoma cell line: analysis of publicly available transcriptomics data of an
364 ALK-positive NSCLC-derived cell line made resistant to crizotinib by prolonged incremental
365 exposure to the drug (up to 1 μ M), compared to its parental H3122 cell line⁴⁸, also revealed
366 increased expression of MHC-I and II genes (Supplementary Fig. 6a-c). We confirmed this
367 by qPCR, measuring strong upregulation of transcript abundance of *CIITA*, *NLRC5* and *HLA-*
368 *A* upon crizotinib treatment of the parental H3122 cells (Supplementary Fig. 6d). Further, we
369 performed chemical proteomics with the racemic mixture of crizotinib in H3122 cells, which
370 revealed extensive binding of MST1R also in this setting (Supplementary Table 1). Thus,
371 crizotinib interacted with MST1R and led to an increased expression of MHC genes also in
372 this model cell line for NSCLC, for which crizotinib is clinically approved. Intriguingly,
373 MST1R may be a relevant crizotinib target in NSCLC, as a meta-analysis of 15 studies
374 measuring gene expression in lung cancers showed consistent and significant upregulation of
375 *MST1R* specific to NSCLC (Supplementary Fig. 6e).

376 The presentation of self-antigens on MHC-I by cancer cells is a key step in the anti-
377 cancer immune response of the host, and is essential for several checkpoint inhibitor
378 treatments currently under investigation³⁹. To test the immunomodulatory potential of

379 crizotinib in primary patient-derived material, PBMCs of a patient diagnosed with chronic
380 myelomonocytic leukemia, with over 70% CD33⁺ and CD34⁺ blast cells in peripheral blood,
381 were incubated *ex vivo* with crizotinib. Crizotinib-treated peripheral blasts showed a doubling
382 in MHC-I surface expression levels as measured by flow cytometry (Fig. 6c), as well a
383 concentration-dependent increase in T-cell↔blast interactions as measured by automated
384 microscopy (Fig. 6d). The anti-cancer effects of genetic ablation and chemical inhibition of
385 MST1R have been shown *in vivo* in mouse models for lung cancer, revealing increased CD8⁺
386 T-cell tumor infiltration resulting in reduced metastasis⁴⁵. Combined, our data suggest that
387 the crizotinib-mediated MST1R inhibition and subsequent increase in MHC-I surface levels
388 on colon, lung, and blood cancer cells, may aid an anticancer immune response and be
389 beneficial for clinical use in combination with immunotherapy in a range of malignancies
390 (Supplementary Fig. 6f)⁸. A clinical trial combining crizotinib with CTLA-4-blockade by
391 ipilimumab for the treatment of NSCLC may reveal if clinical anti-cancer immune responses
392 benefit from the here discovered immunomodulatory effect of crizotinib (NCT01998126
393 clinicaltrials.gov).

394

395 **Discussion:**

396

397 The work presented here defines the possibility to systematically quantify and identify
398 the immunomodulatory potential of drugs and biologicals over the complex multi-lineage
399 populations in PBMCs of one individual. Prior to this, the technical options and models for
400 measuring system-wide immunomodulatory events at high-throughput were limited, driving
401 the need for such a screening tool. The dataset provides evidence of immunomodulatory
402 potential for some 150 chemical agents, many of which have not been reported to display
403 effects on the immune system and may thus become object of further investigation. As for
404 crizotinib, it is conceivable that the immunomodulatory potential of some of these agents
405 unknowingly contributes to the clinical success of individual drugs. While the library here
406 was screened at single concentrations, it is feasible that additional effects may become
407 apparent at higher, but still safe, concentrations. This large-scale functional characterization
408 of the current collection of “common” drugs represents a new dimension and a potential
409 future standard assay in the characterization of existing and new drugs. It remains to be seen,
410 how often the effects reported here result in altered cell-cell interactions, cell infiltrations and
411 altered immune functions in other tissues. Certainly, the platform can easily be adapted to
412 screen for new agents aiming at specific immunomodulatory effects. Equally exciting is the

413 perspective to perform “personalized” assessments on individual patients or healthy donors
414 on a routine basis. The systematic perturbation of the immune system of an individual over
415 such a varied array of pathways and processes may thus provide a unique functional “profile”
416 of the health status of a person, likely to depend on age, gender, diet and transient and
417 chronic infections. We illustrate how the approach may be useful to identify agents that act
418 immunomodulatory in cancer, but other diseases characterized by increased inflammation,
419 such as rheumatoid arthritis or autoimmune diseases, may be particularly interesting to
420 consider in further studies. The finding that crizotinib, a drug in clinical use, may exerts some
421 of its anti-tumor activity through an immunomodulatory effect may help sharpen its ideal
422 therapeutic window. In general, modulating the immune system by small compounds may be
423 a desirable integrated positive effect that is more common than previously expected, and a
424 result of their full polypharmacological properties^{49,50}.

425

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441

442 **Author Contributions**

443 G.I.V., B.S., N.K. J.W.B., K.V.M.H, C.-H.L., K.S., A.R., U.W.B., M.S. performed the
444 experiments, P.K., U.J. organized clinical samples, S.K., O.L.d.l.F. provided reagents and
445 intellectual contributions, P.K., U.J. W.R.S., T.H., G.S.F., were responsible for human and

446 animal ethical guidelines, G.S.F. oversaw the project, B.S., G.I.V., G.S.F. analyzed the data
447 and wrote the manuscript.

448

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- 570

571 **Fig 1. Quantifying PBMC cell-cell interactions perturbed by biologicals.** (a) Example 10x
572 image of cell-cell PBMC subpopulation contacts, with selected contacts highlighted (white
573 circles, scale bar is 25µm). (b) Percent of CD11c⁺ cells in contact with CD3⁺ cells, when
574 naive or after stimulation with VSV or LPS, with or without pre-incubation with MHC-II
575 blocking antibody. (c) CD11c⁺→CD3⁺ interaction scores corresponding to (d). Interaction
576 score is calculated as the observed percentage of A cells in relation to B cells log₂-relative to
577 what is expected if data were randomized. (d) The interaction score of CD19⁺ B-
578 cells→CD56⁺ NK cells (black axis; left), CD19⁺ B-cell counts (purple axis; right), or total
579 PBMC counts (blue axis; far right) as function of increasing rituximab concentration. (e)
580 Interaction scores of (left plot) CD3⁺ T-cells→CD19⁺ B-cells or (right plot) CD3⁺ T-
581 cells→CD20⁺ B-cells (black axis; left), B-cell counts (purple axis; right), or total PBMC
582 counts (blue axis; far right) as function of increasing blinatumomab concentration. (b-c) were
583 performed in triplicate, and representative of three independent experiments; (d-e) were
584 performed in at least 5 technical replicates, and are representative of (d) 5, or (e) 2 repeats

585 over various healthy donors. Average and standard error of means, or boxplots, over
586 technical repeats shown. A t-test was used to determine significance in (b-c).

587

588 **Fig 2. Screening for chemical modifiers of PBMC cell-cell contacts.** (a) reproducibility of
589 VSV-infection over four replicates (average of two replicates per axis); dots correspond to
590 compound; color indicates data density. (b) Average change in VSV infection per compound
591 (z-score normalized) against the significance per compound ($-\log_{10}(\text{P-value})$). Selected anti-
592 inflammatory compounds shown. (c) Distributions of the number of direct contacts per cell
593 type normalized to maximum; values aggregated over screen. (d) Left: Interaction scores of
594 each pairwise combination averaged over screen; grey / n.a. indicates not measured; Right:
595 visualization of the average interaction scores as interaction graph. (e) Percentage of
596 compounds with unique or mixed phenotypes at 2-sigma significance. (f) MDS plot of the
597 similarity between results over each measured interaction. Green lines connect interactions
598 whose screening results are ≥ 0.25 . (g) Hierarchical clustering of the enrichment ($-\log_{10}(\text{P-}$
599 $\text{value}) * \text{sign of the phenotype}$) for selected top-enriched drug classes over all interactions
600 measured, including VSV infection phenotype. Blue and red boxes indicate increased or
601 decreased spatial phenotypes. Manual drug annotation class shown below. Light grey
602 numbers indicate number of compounds. (h) Interaction graphs of average phenotypes for
603 selected annotations from (g); red and green arrows indicate decreased or increased average
604 interaction scores respectively (z-score normalized); black arrows indicate no change. (a-h)
605 represent a large-scale screen performed in replicate or quadruplicate, at single-cell
606 resolution, (13,152 cells per well for 7,680 wells). (a-b) measurements performed in
607 quadruplicate. (c-f) summary statistics combined over 1,402 compounds (mean with standard
608 error of mean shown (c)), (g-h) ≥ 3 compounds per compound annotation. (c-h) Represents
609 246,650,047 cell-cell interactions.

610

611 **Fig 3. Crizotinib increases T-cell interactions with monocytes through upregulation of**
612 **MHC-II.** (a) Interaction graph of average interaction scores for compounds annotated as
613 RTKi's; green and red arrows indicate increased and decreased interaction scores,
614 respectively. (b) Interaction scores of $\text{CD11c}^+ \rightarrow \text{CD3}^+$ cells (left), and $\text{CD3}^+ \rightarrow \text{CD11c}^+$ cells
615 (right) after treatment with (*R*)- and (*S*)-crizotinib (red dots) compared to the other RTKi's
616 (grey dots), as well as respective interaction score distributions over the entire screen (grey
617 plots, with 25, 50, and 75-percentiles indicated as horizontal lines). (c) Annotation
618 enrichment analysis over all interaction scores measured in naive PBMCs. Dots indicate

619 individual annotations and their cell-cell interactions. Y-axis indicates significance of
620 annotation enrichment for compounds with a certain phenotype. X-axis indicates average z-
621 score normalized interaction score per annotation. Green dots: results for the RTKi's and
622 lymphocytes \leftrightarrow CD3⁺ interactions; red dots: 'enantiomers of crizotinib' annotation and
623 lymphocytes \leftrightarrow CD3⁺ interactions. (d) Flow cytometry of MHC-II expression on CD11c⁺ cells
624 of naive PBMCs after overnight incubation with (*R*)-crizotinib, digitoxin, or DMSO. Bar
625 graph (gray; lower right panel) represents percentage of double-positive (CD11c⁺/MHC-II⁺)
626 cells in the CD11c⁺ fraction. (e, top) Interaction score of CD11c⁺ \rightarrow CD3⁺ after crizotinib
627 treatment without (left) or with (right) MHC-II antibody. (e, bottom) Schematic of the
628 interpretation of (e, top). Significance values compare to "normal". (f) Flow cytometry CD4⁺
629 CXC3R(CD183)⁺ Th1 T-cells after overnight incubation with (*R*)-crizotinib. (a-c) Data from
630 screens performed in (a-b) quadruplicate or (c) replicate, (d-f) representative of at least three
631 repeats. (e) Results of 164,569 measured cell-cell interactions. T-test was used to determine
632 significance in (e), and standard error of means is shown.

633

634 **Fig 4. Crizotinib drives MHC-I expression in SW480 cells.** (a) Significance (y-axis) and
635 log₂(fold change) (x-axis) of RNAseq gene expression in SW480 cells after 72h of 2 μ M (*R*-
636 crizotinib treatment compared to DMSO; dots indicate individual genes; dot color indicates
637 local data density. Yellow box indicates significantly upregulated genes (n=1500). (b)
638 Annotation enrichment analysis of the genes significantly upregulated by crizotinib treatment
639 (yellow box, (a)); selected top-enriched annotations are shown, MHC-related classes
640 indicated in red. (c) Log₂(fold-change) (y-axis) for selected MHC-related genes (from (a-b)).
641 (d-e) Flow cytometry measured (d) Intensity or (e) MFI of MHC-I on SW480 cells after
642 incubation with (d) 3 μ M crizotinib (blue), 1 μ g/ml MST1 (orange), together (green), or
643 DMSO (red), or (d) increasing concentrations of crizotinib, overnight. (a-c) RNAseq was
644 performed in technical triplicates. (d-e) are representative experiments of at least three
645 repeats. Significance in (b) calculated by one-way ANOVA.

646

647 **Fig 5. Immunomodulatory effect of crizotinib is mediated by MST1R inhibition.** (a)
648 Transcription factor binding site enrichment from genes upregulated in (Fig 4a). (b) Western
649 blot of phospho- and total-CREB/ATF after incubation of SW480 cells with crizotinib. (c,f)
650 QPCR of indicated genes incubated with (c) 10 μ M crizotinib or (f) 1 μ M BMS-777607,
651 normalized to GAPDH. (d-e) (d) Western blot of MST1R in lysates of SW480 cells after
652 induction of siRNA and (e) MFI of MHC-I after overnight siRNA induction. (g) Interaction

653 scores of CD11c⁺→CD3⁺ cells after overnight incubation with crizotinib and/or MST1. (b-g)
654 are representative experiments of at least three repeats. (c, f ,g) t-test, and boxplots or
655 standard error of means are shown.

656

657 **Fig 6. *In vivo* assessment of the immunomodulatory potential of crizotinib**

658 (a) Immunohistochemistry imaging of SW480 xenograft tumors stained with anti-human
659 MHC-I (40x images, scale bar 20µm) and (b) image quantification of MHC-I expression
660 levels for 24-images per group, after treatment with 50mg/kg p.o. vehicle, (*R*)- or (*S*-
661 crizotinib. (c) MFI of MHC-I expression on CD34⁺ blasts and (d) DMSO-relative interaction
662 scores between CD33⁺ blasts and CD3⁺ T-cells after crizotinib treatment in PBMCs of a
663 patient diagnosed with a post-CMML AML. (a-b) Staining was performed on 3 tumors per
664 group, 8 images each; selected images are representative of average. (c-d) are representative
665 experiments of at least three repeats. (b-d) Significance was calculated by a t-test, and
666 boxplots or standard error of means are shown.

667

668 **Online Methods:**

669

670 **Collection and purification of peripheral blood and bone marrow cells.**

671

672 Peripheral blood was obtained from healthy donors, from patients with CMML who were
673 treated at the Medical University of Vienna/General Hospital Vienna, and blood from the
674 Austrian Red Cross. Austrian Red Cross donations were enriched buffy coats. Blood
675 coagulation was prevented with EDTA or heparin. The Ethics Commission at the Medical
676 University of Vienna/General Hospital Vienna approved the collection of samples from
677 healthy donors and patients. All donors and patients provided written informed consent after
678 nature and consequences of the study were explained. All donors were blind to end users.
679 Peripheral blood was diluted 1:1-1:3 in PBS and mononuclear cells were isolated with
680 lymphoprep density gradient from Axis-Shield following manufacturer directions. Purified
681 cells were suspended in RPMI supplemented with 10% FBS and penicillin-streptomycin. For
682 all experiments involving primary cells, cells were cultured in RPMI supplemented with 10%
683 FBS and penicillin-streptomycin.

684

685 **Non-adherent PBMC monolayer formation, small-molecule screening, viruses, reagents,**
686 **cell lines.**

687

688 50nl of selected screening compounds in DMSO, and DMSO controls, were transferred to
689 Corning 384-well, tissue-culture treated clear bottom plates by a Labcyte Echo liquid handler
690 attached to a Perkin Elmer high-content cell::explorer workstation. Screening compound
691 libraries were obtained from the NIH Molecular Libraries Program, gifts from various groups
692 (see acknowledgements), or designed in-house. Selected compounds were routinely quality
693 controlled by mass spectrometry. Compounds screened are outlined in Supplementary
694 Dataset 1. 50µl of culture media containing approximately 40×10^4 cell / ml is pipetted into
695 each well of a 384-well plate, and incubated at 37°C with 5% CO₂, allowing cells to settle to
696 the bottom; the erythrocyte concentration within the sample after purification should be
697 limited to allow PBMCs space on the well bottom. For virus screens, cells were incubated
698 with compound for 3 hours before VSV-GFP was added in 10µl at MOI=10 for 18 hours.
699 Screen in Figure 2 was performed in quadruplicate (global level) and duplicate (population
700 level) over 384-well plates from a single healthy donor; See figure legend for technical
701 replicate information for other experiments. For the healthy donor naive spatial screen,
702 PBMCs were incubated with compound for 36 hours. For blocking-antibody experiments
703 anti-human HLA-DR (G46-6) (eBiosciences), anti-human CD54 (HA58) (BD Biosciences) or
704 mouse-IgG2a isotype control (C1.18.4) (BioXCell) were incubated for 3 hours prior to
705 overnight stimulation with VSV or 10ng/ml LPS (Invivogen). HLA-DR blocking antibody
706 was incubated overnight prior to treatment with crizotinib for 3 hours. Rituximab (anti-
707 human CD20, Absolute antibody), or Blinatumomab (Amgen, Vienna General Hospital in-
708 patient Pharmacy) were incubated at indicated concentrations in healthy donor blood
709 overnight or 48 hours, respectively. Recombinant MST1 from RnD Systems. All screens
710 were stopped by fixing and permeabilizing the cells with 10µl of a solution of 4%
711 formaldehyde and 0.01% triton-X114 in PBS for 10 minutes at room temperature. Fixative
712 containing medium was removed and 30 µl of an experiment-dependent antibody cocktail in
713 PBS was added to the cells one hour at room temperature, all antibodies at 1:300 dilution.
714 Antibodies were selected for their ability to identify specific populations of interest: Anti-
715 human CD19 (HIB19, APC, B-cells), CD11c (3.9, APC, majority DCs and monocytes), CD3
716 (HIT3a, PE, T-cells), CD14 (61D3, PE, macrophages and monocytes), and CD34 (4H11,
717 APC, hematopoietic progenitors) from eBiosciences, CD20 (2H7, GFP, B-cells) from BD
718 Biosciences, and CD56 (A07788, PE, NK-cell) from Beckman Coulter, were all used in
719 various combinations to identify populations of interests in each experiment, as described in
720 the text. DAPI (Sigma) was used for nuclear detection at 10 µM. SW480 and H3122 cells

721 were cultured in DMEM or RPMI respectively, supplemented with 10% FBS and penicillin-
722 streptomycin. H3122 cells were a kind gift from Eric Haura, and SW480 from Walter Berger.
723 Cells used in experiments regularly undergo ELISA and PCR tests for mycoplasma.

724

725 **Flow cytometry.**

726

727 PBMCs or SW480 cells were kept naive or incubated with small molecules compounds for
728 indicated time points. Antibodies used for flow cytometry are listed above as used for
729 imaging, as well as anti-Human HLA-DQ (SK10, FITC, MHC-II major population), HLA-
730 ABC (G46-2.6, Pe-Cy5, MHC-I major population), CD4 (SK3, PE, T-cell subset),
731 CD183(CXCR3-173, FITC, T-cell subset), and CD194(CCR4-D8SEE, APC, T-cell subset)
732 from eBiosciences. Samples were run on BD LSRFortessa with Diva software and analyzed
733 with FlowJo.

734 **Western Blots.**

735 SW480 cells were plated overnight and stimulated at the indicated time points. Pellets were
736 lysed using IP lysis buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 150 mM NaCl, 5 mM EDTA, 1%
737 Nonidet P-40, 50 mM NaF, 1 mM Na₃VO₄, 1 mM PMSF, 5 g/ml TPCK) and protease
738 inhibitor mixture for 10 min on ice before high-speed clearance, and quantified with
739 Bradford. Proteins were detected with rabbit anti-Phospho-CREB (Ser113)(87G3), mouse
740 anti-CREB (86B10), or rabbit anti-RON (C81H9) (Cell Signaling) and mouse anti-tubulin
741 (Abcam), and detected using a goat anti-mouse or -rabbit (H+L) HRP conjugated secondary
742 antibody (Jackson ImmunoResearch Laboratories), and exposed on film.

743 **RNA isolation and qPCR.**

744

745 RNA was purified from SW480 or H3122 cells using and RNeasy Kit (Qiagen) and was
746 reverse transcribed using oligo dT primers and RevertAid Reverse Transcriptase (Fermentas).
747 qPCR was performed using SensiMix SYBR Green (Bioline) analyzed on a Rotor-Gene Q
748 from Qiagen. Genes CIITA (F: GGCTGGAATTTGGCAGCAC, R:
749 GCCCAACACAAGGATGTCTC), NLRC5 (F: CTGGCCAGTCTCACCGCACAA, R:
750 CCAGGGGACAGCCATCAAAATC), HLA-A (F: AAAAGGAGGGAGTTACTACTCAGG,
751 R: GCTGTGAGGGACACATCAGAG), and HLA-B (F: CTCATGGTCAGAGATGGGGT,

752 R: TCCGCAGATACCTGGAGAAC) were normalized to the housekeeping gene GAPDH
753 (F: GAAGGTGAAGGTCGGAGT, R: GAAGATGGTGATGGGATTTC).

754

755 **MST1R inducible knockdown.**

756

757 97-mer shRNA sequences were obtained as ultramer oligonucleotides (IDT), PCR amplified
758 and cloned into the inducible retroviral miR-E shRNA vector pRT3GEN (pSIN-TRE3G-
759 turboGFP-miR-E-PGK-NeoR) as described previously using standard cloning techniques ⁵¹.

760 The Tet-on competent SW480 cells were generated by virally transducing vector pMSCV-
761 RIEP (pMSCV-rtTA3-IRES-EcoR-PGK-PuroR) and standard retroviral packaging. After

762 virus infection, transformed cells were selected using 5µg/mL puromycin (Sigma-Aldrich),
763 and SW480 RIEP cells were transduced in a similar way using the retroviral shRNA vector

764 pRT3GEN. The following 97mer target sequences were used: Renilla at position 713,
765 TGCTGTTGACAGTGAGCGCAGGAATTATAATGCTTATCTATAGTGAAGCCACAGA

766 TGTATAGATAAGCATTATAATTCCTATGCCTACTGCCTCGGA, MST1R at position
767 606,

768 TGCTGTTGACAGTGAGCGATCCCGGTGACACAGACACAAATAGTGAAGCCACAG
769 ATGTATTTGTGTCTGTGTCACCGGGAGTGCCTACTGCCTCGGA, MST1R at position

770 2313,

771 TGCTGTTGACAGTGAGCGACCAGTGCTGATAGCAGTGCAATAGTGAAGCCACAG
772 ATGTATTGCACTGCTATCAGCACTGGCTGCCTACTGCCTCGGA, and MST1R at

773 position 3822,

774 TGCTGTTGACAGTGAGCGAAGGGAGTACTATAGTGTTCAATAGTGAAGCCACAG
775 ATGTATTGAACACTATAGTACTCCCTGTGCCTACTGCCTCGGA. Following virus

776 transduction and selection using 2mg/mL G418 (Roth), shRNA expression was induced by
777 addition of 2µg/mL doxycycline to the culture media. MHC-I expression was analyzed by

778 flow cytometry after 72 hours of doxycycline addition. pRT3GEN-sh*Ren.713* targeting
779 *Renilla* Luciferase coding sequence served as negative control shRNA. MFI of MHC-I (PE-

780 Cy5 channel) was normalized to uninduced levels. Knockdown efficiency was determined by
781 western blot as described above.

782

783 **RNA Sequencing.**

784

785 SW480 cells were seeded in 6-well plates 24h before (*R*)-crizotinib was added to a final
786 concentration of 2 μ M. After incubation for 72h, medium was aspirated and cells washed with
787 PBS. Total RNA was isolated using the RNeasy kit (Qiagen) and RNA amount was measured
788 using Qubit 2.0 Fluorometric Quantitation system (Life Technologies), both following
789 manufacturer protocols. RNA integrity number (RIN) was determined using Experion
790 Automated Electrophoresis System (Bio-Rad). RNA-seq libraries were prepared with TruSeq
791 Stranded mRNA LT sample preparation kit (Illumina) using Sciclone and Zephyr liquid
792 handling robotics (PerkinElmer). Library amount was quantified using Qubit 2.0
793 Fluorometric Quantitation system (Life Technologies) and the size distribution was assessed
794 using Experion Automated Electrophoresis System (Bio-Rad). Sequencing libraries were
795 pooled, diluted and sequenced on Illumina HiSeq 2000 using 50 bp single-read chemistry.
796 Base calls provided by the Illumina Realtime Analysis software were converted into BAM
797 format using Illumina2bam and demultiplexed using BamIndexDecoder
798 (<https://github.com/wtsi-npg/illumina2bam>). Transcriptome analysis was performed using the
799 Tuxedo suite. TopHat2 (v2.0.10, <http://genomebiology.com/2013/14/4/R36/abstract>) was
800 supplied with reads passing vendor quality filtering (PF reads) and the Ensembl transcript set
801 (*Homo sapiens*, e73, September 2013) as reference. TopHat2 analyses were run
802 independently for each replicate. Cufflinks (v2.1.1,
803 <http://www.nature.com/nbt/journal/v31/n1/full/nbt.2450.html>) was used to assemble
804 transcripts from spliced read alignments, using the Ensembl e73 transcriptome as the
805 reference as well as de novo assembly of transcript models. Differential expression was
806 assessed with Cuffdiff v2.1.1 (<http://www.nature.com/nbt/journal/v28/n5/full/nbt.1621.html>).
807 Transcriptome sets of all replicates for each sample group were combined with Cuffmerge.
808 Finally, cummeRbund
809 (<http://www.bioconductor.org/packages/release/bioc/html/cummeRbund.html>) and biomaRt
810 (<http://www.bioconductor.org/packages/release/bioc/html/biomaRt.html>) were used in
811 combination with custom R scripts to perform quality assessment and further refine analysis
812 results. All sequencing was performed by the Biomedical Sequencing Facility at CeMM
813 (<http://medical-epigenomics.org>). SW480 RNA sequencing results are available in
814 Supplementary Dataset 3. Transcription data from ALK-positive H3122 cells resistant to
815 crizotinib treatment was obtained from NCBI Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO) accession
816 number GSE49508.

817

818 **Drug affinity chromatography and protein mass spectrometry.**

819 The crizotinib affinity probe was prepared in two steps from commercially available 3-
820 [(1RS)-1-(2,6-dichloro-3-fluorophenyl)ethoxy]-5-[1-(piperidin-4-yl)-1H-pyrazol-4-
821 yl]pyridin-2-amine (Selleckchem) according to literature and drug-affinity matrices were
822 prepared as described previously (Huber et al., 2014). Briefly, affinity chromatography and
823 elution were performed in duplicate using 25nmol of compound immobilized on 50µL NHS-
824 activated Sepharose 4 Fast Flow beads (GE Healthcare Bio-Sciences) and 10mg total cell
825 lysate as protein input per replicate. For competition experiments, cell lysates were pretreated
826 with 20µM 3-[(1RS)-1-(2,6-dichloro-3-fluorophenyl)ethoxy]-5-[1-(piperidin-4-yl)-1H-
827 pyrazol-4-yl]pyridin-2-amine for 30 minutes. Eluates were labeled with iTRAQ and
828 quantitative protein mass spectrometry and bioinformatics analysis utilizing the R isobar
829 package were performed as previously reported^{48,52}.

830

831 **Xenograft mouse model and immunohistochemistry.**

832

833 All animals were acclimatized for one week, and had free access to water and food during the
834 experiment. Animals were under a 12-hour light cycle, and temperature, humidity and
835 housing per laboratory animal guidelines and regulations. The group size was based on
836 previous experience on variability of tumor growth within control groups. Animals were
837 grouped based on body weight, exclusion/inclusion criteria were pre-established in the
838 ethical permit, and outliers in body weight were excluded; although none for this study;
839 groups were not randomized. SCID mice (female, 5-6 weeks, Scanbur, n = 3/group) were
840 injected s.c. with 1×10^6 SW480 cells together with a matrix gel (1:1) in the sacral area.
841 Treatment was initiated one day after cell inoculation. Vehicle or (S)- or (R)-crizotinib was
842 administered subcutaneously once daily at 25mg/kg for 35 days. (S)- or (R)-crizotinib was
843 diluted in 1% DMSO, 10% ethanol, 10% cremaphore, 10% Tween 80, 69% PBS. Animals
844 were sacrificed 2 hours after last administration of drugs on day 26. Tumors were quickly
845 dissected, snap-frozen, and kept at -80°C until further analysis. Tumor sections were fixed in
846 acetone for 10 min, and rinsed in TBS. The sections were blocked in 3% BSA in TBS. MHC-
847 I antibody (MHC class I clone W6/32, Biolegend) was diluted in BSA in TBS and incubated
848 overnight at 4°C in humid atmosphere. After incubation, the slides were rinsed in TBS with
849 0.025% Triton-X. AlexaFlour555-conjugated secondary antibody (Invitrogen) was diluted
850 1:500 in BSA, and incubated for 1 hour at room temperature. The slides were counter stained
851 with DAPI, and mounted with prolong gold. Images were taken on an LSM780 confocal
852 (Zeiss) with equal laser line power settings over all samples. 8 random images were taken

853 from 3 tumors per group; image analysis was performed blind to the experimenter. All
854 experiments involving animals followed protocols approved by Stockholms Norra
855 djurförsöksetiska nämnd (laboratory animal ethical committee Stockholm) and were in
856 compliance with 2010/63/EU directive.

857

858 **Image and computational analysis.**

859 *Imaging*

860 Each well of a 348-well plate was imaged at 10x with 2x2 non-overlapping images, so that
861 within the 2x2 square was approximately 95% of the well surface. The images were taken
862 sequentially from DAPI, GFP, PE, and APC channels, with lasers and bandpass filter sets set
863 so the channels were non-overlapping; a PerkinElmer Operetta or Opera Phenix automated
864 spinning disk confocal microscope were used. Fluorophores were tested for channel
865 separation on each machine. The raw .tiff images were exported from the microscope for
866 analysis, below and stored for subsequent data mining.

867

868 *Illumination correction*

869 Illumination correction was performed based on a novel algorithm that depends on the
870 observation that PBMCs in the monolayer never fully cover the entire well, but always leave
871 adequate space in between individual cells or clusters of cells to estimate regional
872 background intensities. As we imaged each well entirely (including regions of wells outside
873 of images), we first detect regions of each image that contains areas outside of the well, based
874 on full-well image reconstruction and plate-wide analysis of where outside well areas are
875 most likely. For each individual single-channel image a 2D polynomial with two degrees of
876 freedom in each dimension was fit on \log_{10} -transformed($1 + \text{intensity}$) values, excluding
877 regions of images containing areas outside the well, excluding the brightest 30% of the signal
878 (working under the assumption that bright signal is not background signal, which does not
879 hold for brightfield images), and weighted to a combination of the inverse signal intensity (to
880 weigh dark regions heavier) and a smooth function that weights edges of images heavier, as
881 those are relatively underrepresented compared to the typically brighter center of the image.
882 As the illumination correction function for each individual image is described in the efficient
883 form of a polynomial function, goodness of fit statistics and background patterns and
884 intensities could be compared across each image from the same channel from the entire plate,
885 for outlier detection (3 x interquartile range (IQR) from median statistics). For outliers, fits
886 are retried with different parameters (excluding larger regions of potential outside-well area),

887 or if that fails, corrected with plate-average background correction functions for images of
888 the same channel and at the same site within the other wells. Remaining outlier wells are
889 flagged as potential technical problems. The algorithm has been optimized for robustness
890 over hundreds of imaged 384-well plates containing PBMCs, and improvements in separation
891 of negatively-, singly, and doubly-stained cells have been confirmed.

892 *Background correction*

893 Image-based small compound screens suffer from the fact that small compounds themselves
894 can be sources of fluorescence signal, overlapping in unpredictable ways with the
895 wavelengths of the imaged channels. To correct for small (within 3xIQR from median)
896 background intensity variations, also stemming from other sources such as light source
897 fluctuations, we further corrected for global background differences within all images of the
898 same channel and of each well, and across all wells of the same plate. Outlier background
899 values per well are flagged as potentially auto-fluorescent compound containing or otherwise
900 problematic wells, and discarded from final screen statistics. Finally, illumination- and
901 background-corrected images are reconstructed and stored independently for further image
902 analysis. Improvements at the level of image quality and image analysis results were
903 confirmed, and robustness of the algorithm was improved over hundreds of plates.

904 *Image quality evaluation*

905 All (illumination- and background-corrected) images of each plate were automatically
906 rescaled and merged per well and per plate, allowing for quick visual evaluation of the
907 quality over the entire dataset of a single plate.

908 *Single cell image analysis using CellProfiler (code availability)*

909 Single cell image analysis was performed using CellProfiler v2, based on DAPI-stain derived
910 nucleus ('Nuclei') detection, expansion from nucleus for cell outline detection ('Cells'), and
911 a second and third set of expansions from Cells, to identify a ring outside of each cell for a
912 local background ('LocalBackground') area sampling. Standard CellProfiler intensity, texture
913 and shape features were measured from Nuclei, Cells and the LocalBackground over all
914 channels where applicable. Differences between Nuclear and Cell log-transformed intensities
915 over LocalBackground were used for the plate-wide identification of marker-positive cells,
916 and different stains were thresholded in a supervised manner for the large-scale drug screens.
917 Unsupervised thresholding was performed based on the predominant marker-negative cell
918 population over the entire plate. Thresholds were regularly visually controlled, at the plate-
919 wide population distribution level, as well as at the single cell level, relating images and
920 image analysis results.

921 *SVM-based machine learning for quality control*

922 Iterative SVM-based machine learning was applied at the level of individual cells to identify
923 poorly segmented cells, cells covered by contaminants or artifacts ('blobs'), or false-
924 positively identified cells, as described in ^{4,53}.

925 *Plate-effect correction*

926 Plate-effect correction was performed using a weighted 2D polynomial fit, excluding positive
927 control wells and 5% of the strongest outlier wells, and weighted based on a function that
928 weights outside wells stronger than inside wells and outlier wells weaker compared to wells
929 closer to the plate median. Globally, improvements in reproducibility across replicate wells
930 coming from plates with individually randomized plate layouts, as well as in the separation of
931 positive and negative control wells were confirmed.

932 *Significance calculation & hit selection for large-scale screens*

933 For the large-scale screens, datasets were plate effect normalized, normalized to the median
934 of the DMSO-controls of each plate, and significance of the hits was calculated based on a
935 Student's t-test of mean equals 0, over all replicated wells (n=4 for the virus screens). Final
936 infection and viability scores are calculated as the average over all replicates. Hits were
937 selected based on p-value < 0.01 and based on an absolute average z-score of at least 2. All
938 other significance scores in figures were calculated using a two-tailed t-test, unless otherwise
939 noted.

940 *Compound annotation enrichment analysis*

941 Compounds were annotated based on their annotations as stored in the database and ontology
942 of Chemical Entities of Biological Interest (CHEBI) from the European Bioinformatics
943 Institute (<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/chebi/>) as well as from the KEGG Compound database
944 (<http://www.genome.jp/kegg/compound/>). Overall, this retrieved 136 unique annotations for
945 our library. Enrichment scores were calculated as two-tailed t-test's between the phenotypes
946 of compounds with a given annotation compared to the phenotypes of compounds without
947 that given annotation.

948 *Cell-cell interaction analysis*

949 Pairwise distances (measured in pixels) between all cells in a well were calculated over a
950 reconstruction of nuclear positions over the different images per well. Cells were considered
951 pairwise if the pairwise distance between nuclear centroids was equal to or less than 15
952 pixels. The observed fraction of A→B interacting cells equals the fraction of (all A-type cells
953 interacting with one or more B-type cell). This fraction was log2-transformed against the

954 (E_{AB}) value calculated for that well, i.e. (the fraction of A-type cells of all cells) * (the
955 fraction of B-type cells of all cells) * (the fraction of all cells that have at least one or more
956 contacts within 15 pixels). Results were confirmed to be insensitive to reasonable increments
957 of the '15 pixel' threshold. Although the reference value (E_{AB}) is independent of the direction
958 of interaction, A→B and B→A can diverge as a consequence of the interaction conformation
959 of the two subpopulations. So called 'rosettas' existing for instance of an A-cell binding to
960 many B-cells can induce strongly divergent results between A→B and B→A. Readouts were
961 corrected for plate effects as described above, and analyzed further by various means
962 including drug class enrichment analyses and hit selection strategies as also described above.

963

964 **Online Methods References:**

965

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967 RNAi. *Cell Rep* **5**, 1704-13 (2013).
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- 970 53. Rämö, P., Sacher, R., Snijder, B., Begemann, B. & Pelkmans, L. CellClassifier:
971 supervised learning of cellular phenotypes. *Bioinformatics (Oxford, England)* **25**,
972 3028-3030 (2009).

973

974

975 **Data Availability:**

976 The RNA sequencing data from Supplementary Dataset 3 can be found on the Gene
977 Expression Omnibus (accession number GSE93124). The protein interactions from this
978 publication, in Supplementary Table 1, have been submitted to the IMEx
979 (<http://www.imexconsortium.org>) consortium through IntAct and assigned the identifier IM-
980 25603. The datasets integrated for the meta-analysis of MST1R expression in lung cancers
981 (Supplementary Figure 6e) was retrieved from www.oncomine.com (exact data sets are
982 referenced below the figure). The transcription data from ALK-positive H3122 cells resistant
983 to crizotinib treatment was previously published and obtained from NCBI Gene Expression
984 Omnibus (GEO) accession number GSE49508.

985

986 **Competing Financial Interests:**

987 The spatial screening and interaction score for use in immunomodulatory drug discovery is
988 patent pending with G.I.V., B.S., N.K., G.S.F. listed as inventors, WO2016046346. The

989 patents are licensed to Alcyte GmbH (Vienna, Austria), which G.I.V., B.S., N.K., and G.S.F.
990 have co-founded.

991

992 **Additional Information:**

993 Any supplementary information, chemical compound information, and source data are
994 available in the online version of the paper. Reprints and permissions information is available
995 online at <http://www.nature.com/reprints/index.html>. Correspondence and requests for
996 materials should be addressed to G.S.F.

997

998

999

Figure 1

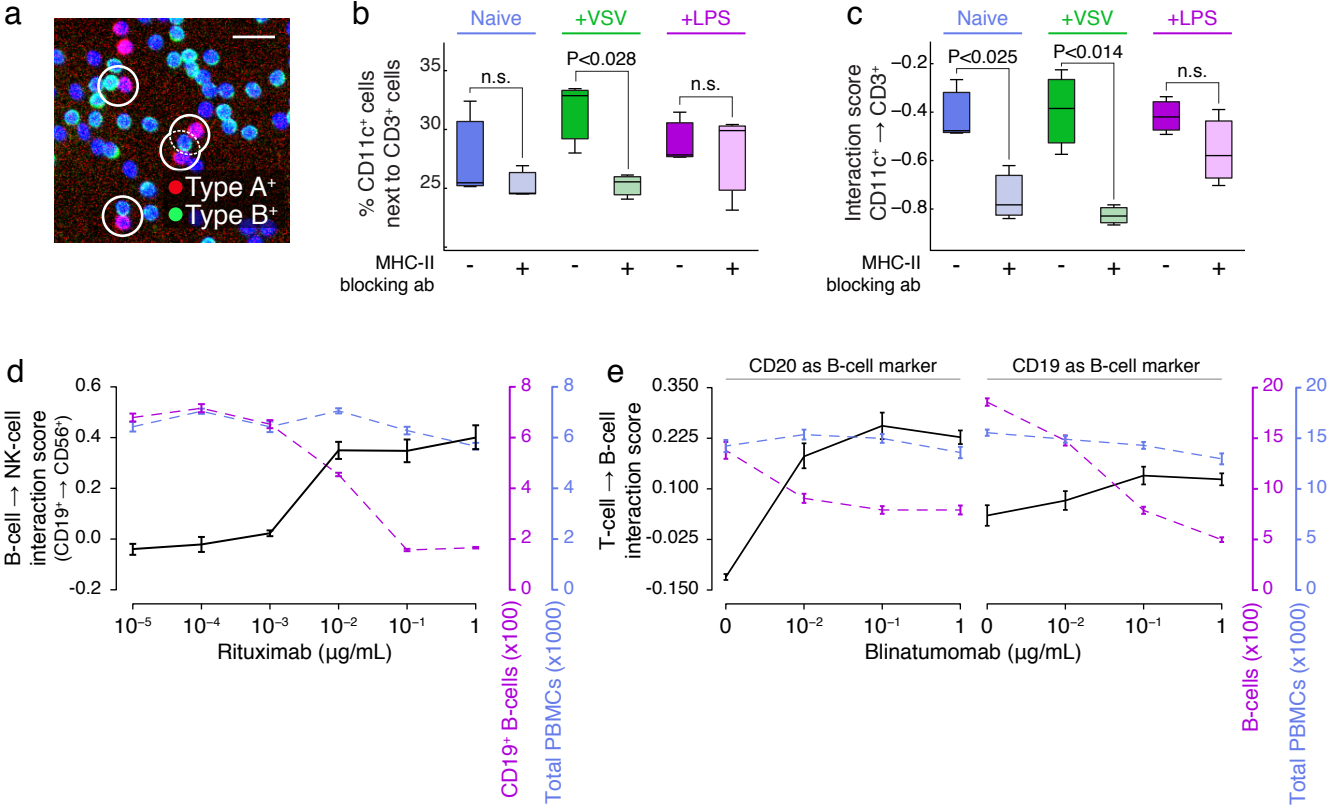


Figure 2

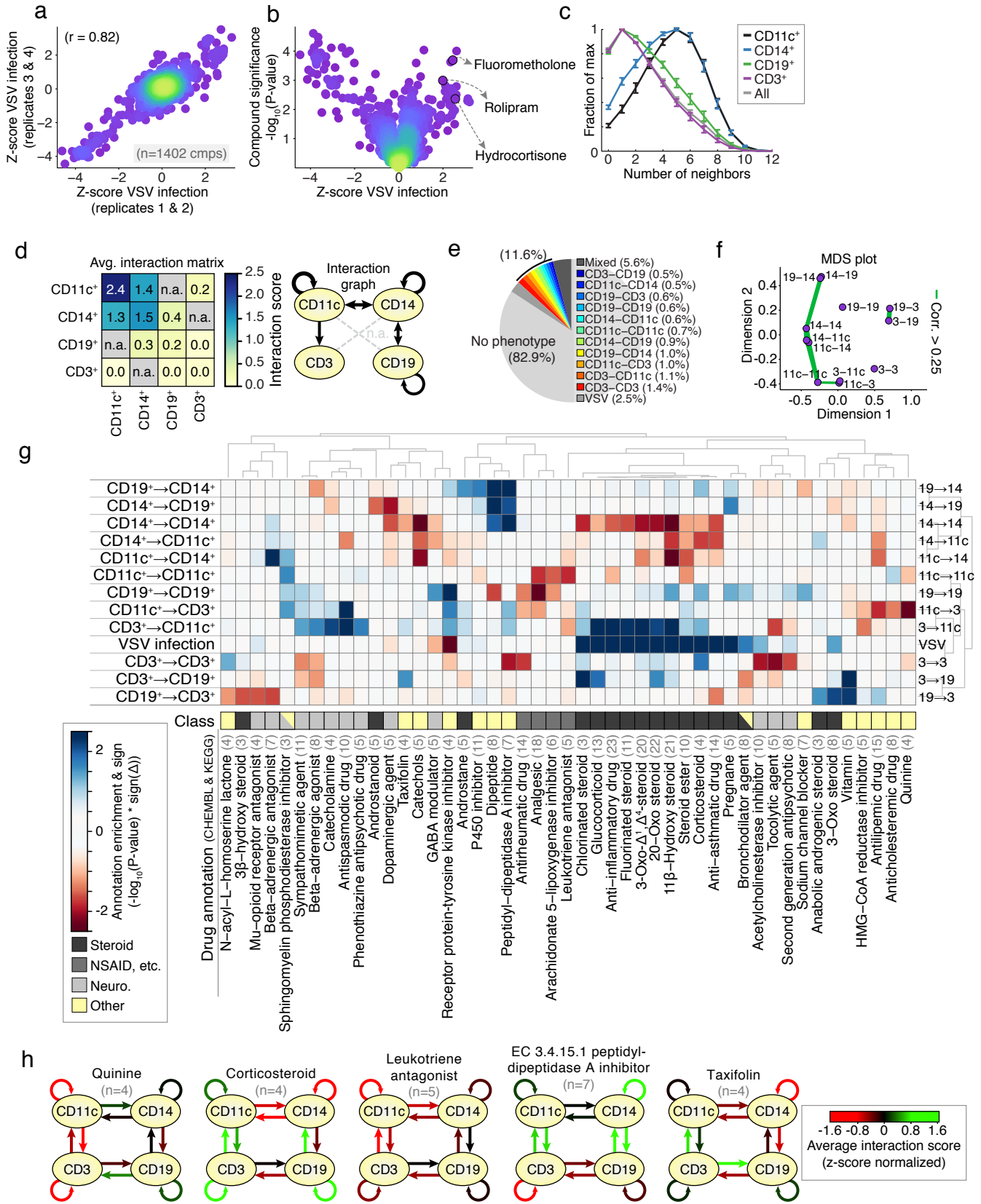


Figure 3

Healthy donor PBMCs

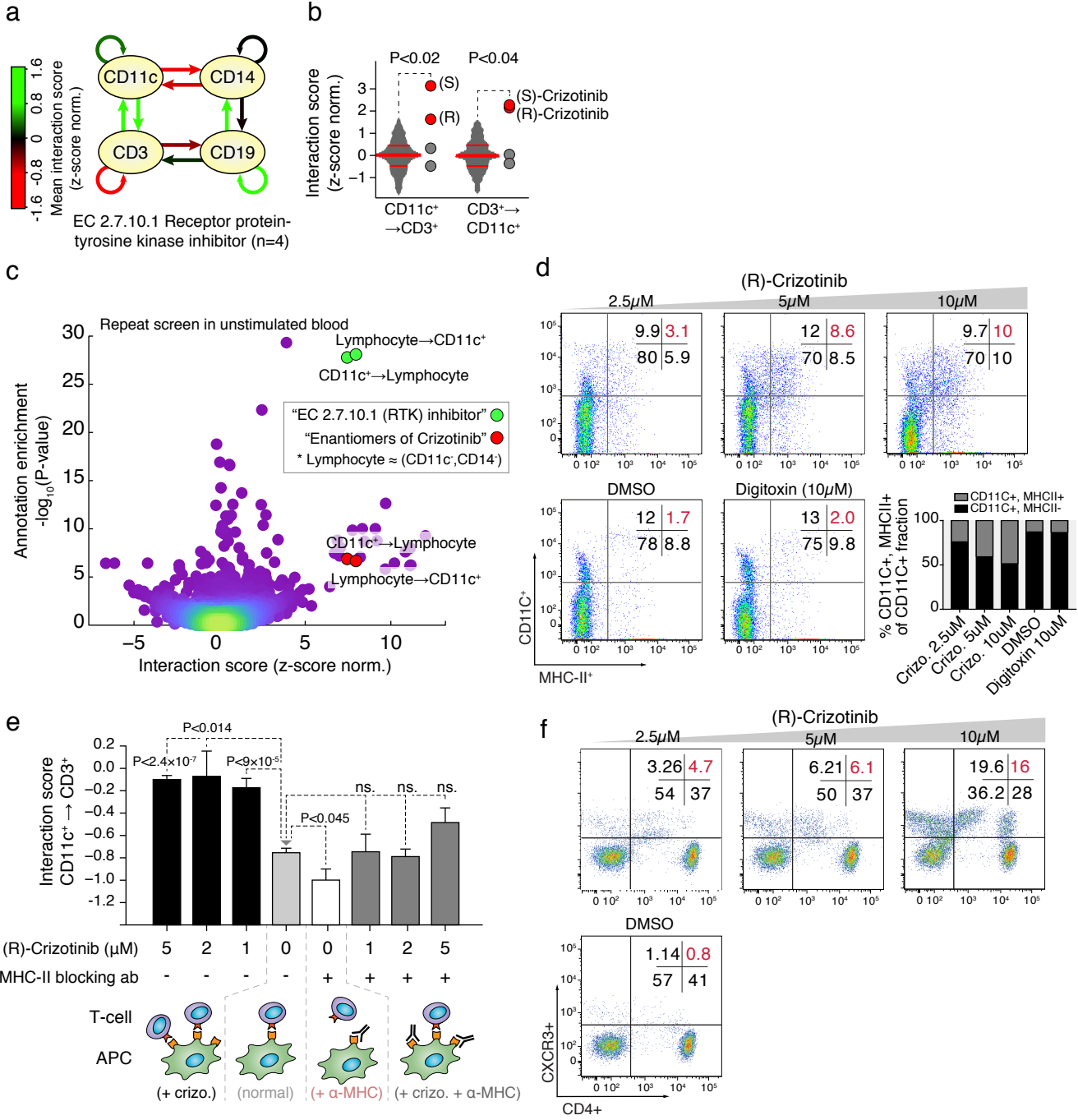


Figure 4

Colon cancer cell line (SW480)

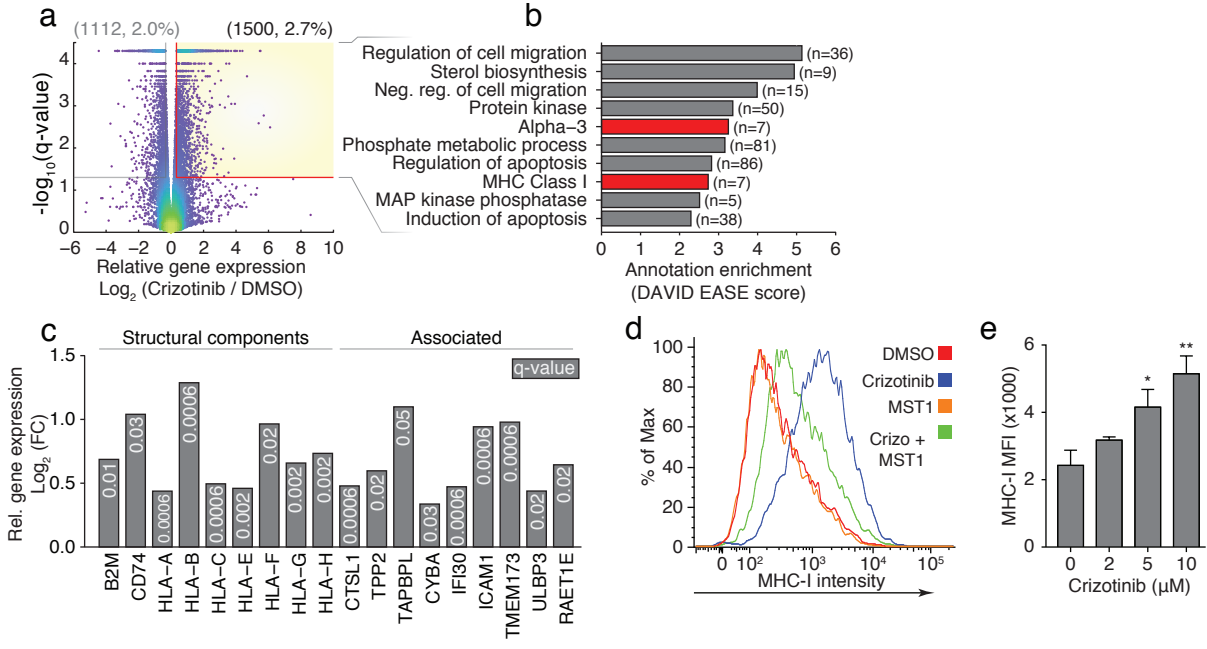


Figure 5

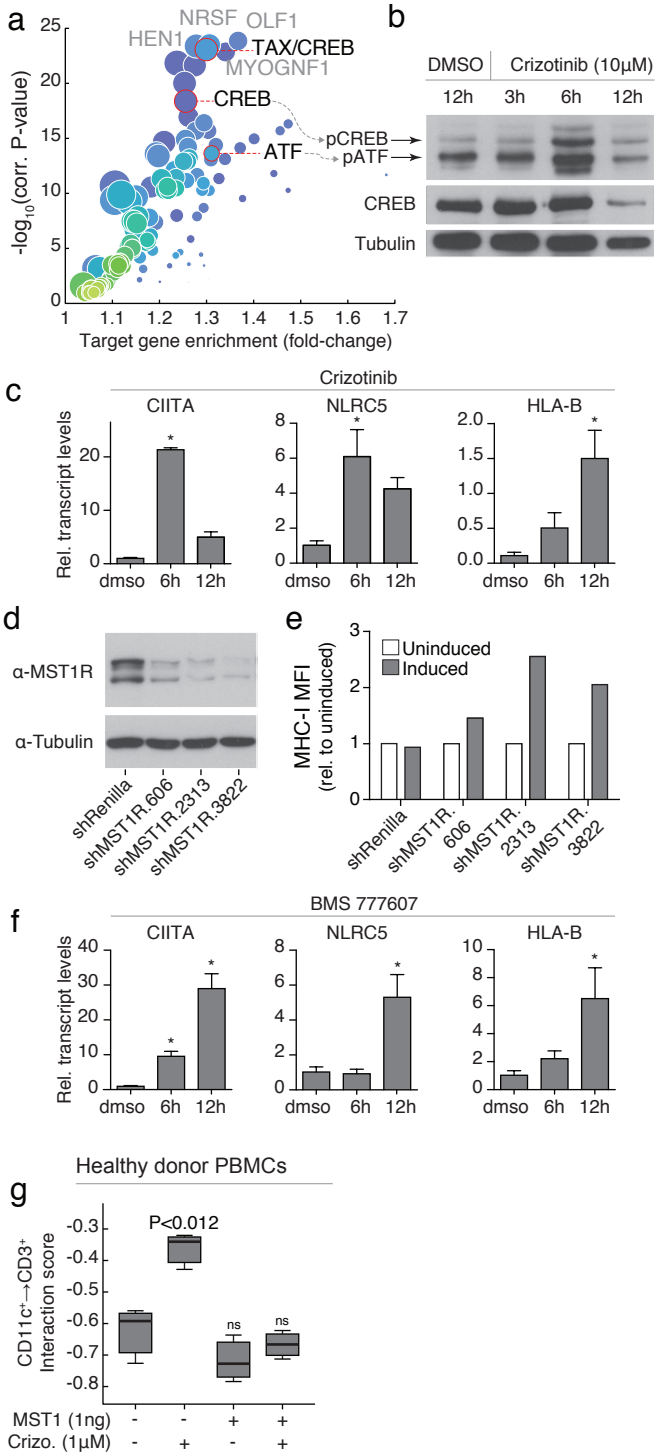
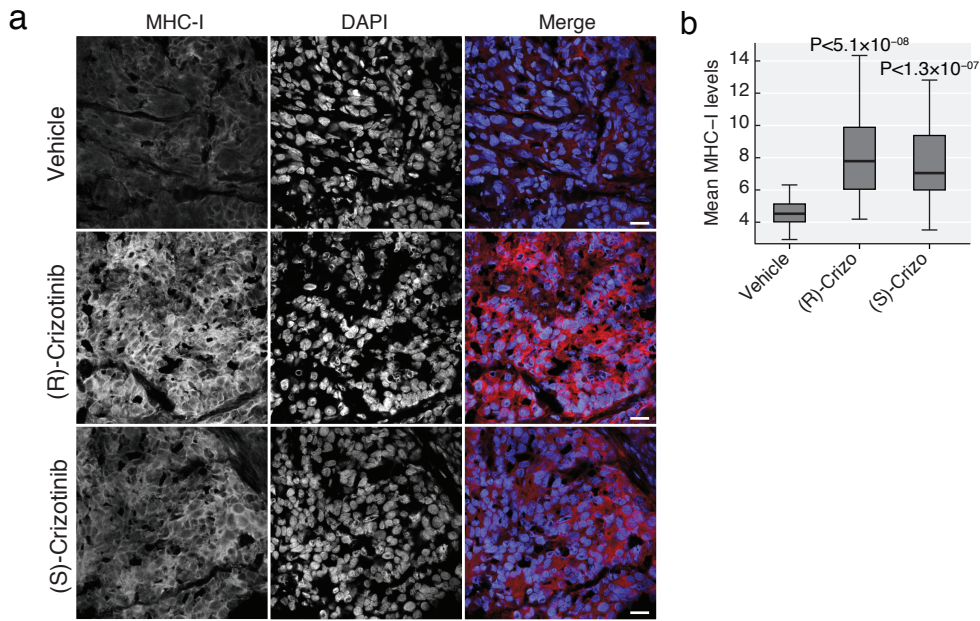
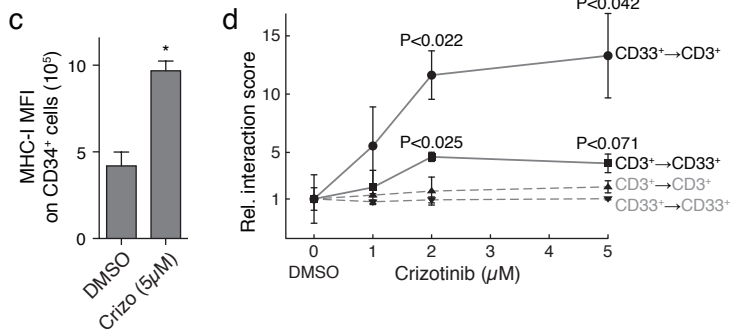


Figure 6

SW480 mouse xenografts



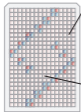
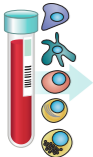
CMML patient PBMCs



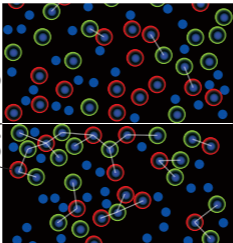
PBMC
purification/plating

High-throughput
microscopy

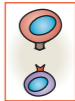
Data Analysis



Drug x
Drug y



Interaction
Score



Low
immunological
potential

Interaction
Score



High
immunological
potential