

1 **ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 (AZD1222) vaccine elicits monoclonal antibodies with potent cross-**  
2 **neutralizing activity against SARS-CoV-2 viral variants**

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20

21 **Abstract**

22 Although the antibody response to COVID-19 vaccination has been studied extensively at the  
23 polyclonal level using immune sera, little has been reported on the antibody response at the  
24 monoclonal level. Here we isolate a panel of 44 anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies  
25 (mAbs) from an individual who received two doses of the ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 (AZD1222)  
26 vaccine at a 12-week interval. We show that despite a relatively low serum neutralization titre,  
27 mAbs with potent neutralizing activity against the current SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern  
28 (B.1.1.7, P.1, B.1.351 and B.1.617.2) were obtained. The vaccine elicited neutralizing mAbs  
29 form 8 distinct competition groups and bind epitopes overlapping with neutralizing mAbs  
30 elicited following SARS-CoV-2 infection. AZD1222 elicited mAbs are more mutated than mAbs  
31 isolated from convalescent donors 1-2 months post infection. Spike reactive IgG+ B cells were  
32 still detectable 9-months post boost. These findings give molecular insights into AZD1222  
33 elicited antibody response.

34

35

## 36 Introduction

37 The SARS-CoV-2 encoded Spike glycoprotein is the key target for neutralizing  
38 antibodies (nAbs) generated in response to natural infection. The Spike trimer consists of two  
39 subunits, S1, that is required for interaction with the ACE-2 receptor on target cells, and S2  
40 that orchestrates membrane fusion. Many monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) have been isolated  
41 from SARS-CoV-2 infected individuals allowing identification of key neutralizing epitopes on  
42 Spike (Andreano et al., 2021; Barnes et al., 2020; Brouwer et al., 2020; Graham et al., 2021;  
43 Piccoli et al., 2020; Robbiani et al., 2020; Rogers et al., 2020; Seydoux et al., 2020; Tortorici  
44 et al., 2020). Neutralizing epitopes are present on the receptor binding domain (RBD), the N-  
45 terminal domain (NTD) of Spike and S2. RBD-specific nAbs tend to be potently neutralizing  
46 and target four epitopes (Barnes et al., 2020; Dejnirattisai et al., 2021; Yuan et al., 2020b),  
47 including the receptor binding motif (RBM) which interacts directly with the ACE-2 receptor.  
48 Furthermore, several non-overlapping neutralizing epitopes on NTD have been identified  
49 which are susceptible to sequence variation in this region (Cerutti et al., 2021; Graham et al.,  
50 2021; McCallum et al., 2021; Suryadevara et al., 2021). SARS-CoV-2 infection also generates  
51 a large proportion of non-neutralizing antibodies of which the biological function is not fully  
52 understood (Anderson et al., 2021; Beaudoin-Bussi eres, 2021; Li et al., 2021). Combined,  
53 studying the antibody response to SARS-CoV-2 infection has generated an antigenic map of  
54 the Spike surface (Corti et al., 2021; Dejnirattisai et al., 2021).

55 Following the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 in the human population, vaccines against  
56 COVID-19 have been rapidly developed. Most licenced vaccines use, or encode, a SARS-  
57 CoV-2 Spike antigen to elicit both humoral and cellular responses and many have shown  
58 remarkable efficacy in Phase III trials (Baden et al., 2021; Polack et al., 2020; Voysey et al.,  
59 2021). However, there are concerns that vaccine efficacy could be reduced against newly  
60 emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern (VOC), in particular against the alpha (B.1.1.7),  
61 beta (B.1.351), gamma (P.1) and delta (B.1.617.2) variants which harbour mutations  
62 throughout Spike. Serum neutralizing activity against viral variants has been reported in many  
63 double vaccinated individuals, albeit at a reduced potency (Alter et al., 2021; Collier et al.,

64 2021; Edara et al., 2021; Monin et al., 2021; Supasa et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021d; Zhou  
65 and al, 2021). Despite this reduction, real-world data shows current COVID-19 vaccines are  
66 still highly effective in preventing severe disease and hospitalizations in locations where  
67 SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern are prevalent (Emary et al., 2021; Lopez Bernal et al., 2021;  
68 Madhi et al., 2021).

69 Whilst the antibody response to COVID-19 vaccination has been studied extensively  
70 at the polyclonal level using immune sera (Alter et al., 2021; Collier et al., 2021; Dejnirattisai  
71 et al., 2021; Edara et al., 2021; Emary et al., 2021; Monin et al., 2021; Supasa et al., 2021;  
72 Wall et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021d; Zhou and al, 2021), little has been reported on the  
73 antibody response at the monoclonal level (Amanat et al., 2021; Andreano, 2021; Cho, 2021;  
74 Wang et al., 2021d). To address this paucity of information, we isolated a panel of 44 anti-  
75 SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) from an individual (VA14) who had received 2-  
76 doses of the AZD1222 (ChAdOx1 nCoV-19) vaccine at a 12-week interval (**Figure 1A**). The  
77 AZD1222 vaccine is a replication-defective chimpanzee adenovirus-vectored vaccine  
78 expressing the full-length Wuhan SARS-CoV-2 spike glycoprotein gene (Ramasamy et al.,  
79 2021; Voysey et al., 2021). Even though low serum neutralization titres ( $ID_{50} \sim 100$ ) were  
80 detected in VA14 at 4-months post vaccine booster, nAbs were isolated which displayed  
81 potent cross-neutralizing activity against SARS-CoV-2 viral variants of concern ( $IC_{50}$  values  
82 as low as  $0.003 \mu\text{g/mL}$ ). The AZD1222 vaccine elicited NTD- and RBD-specific nAbs that bind  
83 epitopes overlapping with nAbs generated following natural infection. Assessment at 9-months  
84 post vaccine booster revealed the presence of Spike reactive IgG+ B cells despite  
85 undetectable neutralization. These data suggest that although plasma neutralization may be  
86 sub-optimal for protection from infection, memory B cells may be sufficient to provide rapid  
87 recall responses to protect from serious illness/hospitalizations upon re-infection.

88

## 89 **Results**

### 90 **Serum neutralizing activity following AZD1222 vaccination**

91 Plasma and peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) were isolated from donor  
92 VA14 (23 years, white male) at 4-months (timepoint 1, TP1) and 9-months (timepoint 2, TP2)  
93 after receiving two doses of the AZD1222 vaccine at a 12-week interval (**Figure 1A**). VA14  
94 reported no previous SARS-CoV-2 infection (based on regular PCR testing), did not have N-  
95 specific IgG in their plasma at the time of sampling, and was therefore presumed to be SARS-  
96 CoV-2 naïve. Presence of IgG to Spike was determined by ELISA (**Figure 1B**) and a semi-  
97 quantitative ELISA measured 0.39 and 0.17 µg/mL of Spike IgG at TP1 and TP2, respectively.

98 Plasma neutralizing activity was measured using an HIV-1 (human immunodeficiency  
99 virus type-1)-based virus particles, pseudotyped with Spikes of SARS-CoV-2 variants of  
100 concern, including AZD1222 matched Spike (Wuhan-1, WT), and VOCs B.1.1.7, P.1, B.1.351  
101 and B.1.617.2, and a HeLa cell-line stably expressing the ACE2 receptor (Graham et al., 2021;  
102 Seow et al., 2020). Overall, neutralization titres at 4-months post vaccine boost (TP1) were  
103 low. ID<sub>50</sub>s of ~100 were measured against WT and P.1 but were reduced against B.1.1.7,  
104 B.1.351 and B.1.351 (**Figure 1C**). Although weak binding to Spike was observed at TP2,  
105 neutralization was not detected at a serum dilution of 1:20 (**Figure 1D**).

106

### 107 **Spike reactive B cells detected up to one year following AZD1222 vaccination**

108 Next, we determined the percentage of RBD or Spike reactive IgG expressing B cells  
109 at 4- and 9-months post vaccine booster using flow cytometry (**Figure 1E and Figure S1A-**  
110 **D**). 0.25% of IgG+ B cells were Spike reactive and 0.06% were RBD reactive at 4-months post  
111 vaccine booster. Despite the undetectable neutralization by sera at 9-months post vaccine  
112 booster, 0.27% of IgG+ B cells were Spike reactive.

113

### 114 **AZD1222 vaccination elicits antibodies targeting epitopes on NTD, RBD, S2 and Spike**

115 RBD or Spike reactive B cells at 4-months post vaccine booster were sorted into  
116 individual wells and the antibody heavy and light chain genes rescued by reverse transcription  
117 followed by nested PCR using gene-specific primers (Graham et al., 2021). Variable regions  
118 were ligated into IgG1 heavy and light chain expression vectors using Gibson assembly and

119 directly transfected into HEK 293T/17 cells. Crude supernatants containing IgG were used to  
120 confirm specificity to Spike and the variable heavy and light regions of Spike reactive mAbs  
121 were sequenced. In total, 44 Spike reactive mAbs were isolated from VA14.

122 Binding to Spike, S1, RBD, NTD and S2 was determined by ELISA and used to identify  
123 the domain-specificity of each mAb (**Figure 2A**). Of the 40 mAbs isolated using the stabilized  
124 Spike sorting antigen, 45% (18/40) bound RBD, 35% (14/40) bound NTD, 17.5% (7/40) bound  
125 S2 and 2.5% (1/40) bound Spike only (**Figure 2B**). A further four RBD specific mAbs were  
126 isolated using the RBD sorting probe. A similar distribution between mAbs targeting RBD,  
127 NTD and S2 was seen for mAbs isolated from convalescent donors 6-8 weeks post onset of  
128 symptoms (POS) (Graham et al., 2021).

129

### 130 **AZD1222 vaccination elicits neutralizing and non-neutralizing antibodies against** 131 **epitopes across the full Spike**

132 Neutralizing activity of mAbs was initially measured using HIV-1 virus particles  
133 pseudotyped with SARS-CoV-2 Spike encoded by the AZD1222 vaccine. Twenty six of 44  
134 mAbs (59.1%) displayed neutralizing activity of which 21/26 (80.8%) were RBD-specific, 4/26  
135 (15.5%) were NTD-specific and 1/26 (3.8%) only bound Spike (**Figure 2B**). None of the S2-  
136 specific nAbs showed neutralizing activity. 95.5% of RBD-specific mAbs and 38.6% of NTD-  
137 specific mAbs had neutralizing activity (**Figure 2B**). Neutralization potency against wild-type  
138 Spike ranged from 0.025 – 7.3  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ . As previously reported for natural infection, RBD-  
139 specific nAbs had a lower geometric mean  $\text{IC}_{50}$  compared to NTD-specific nAbs (**Figure 2C**)  
140 (Graham et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020).

141

### 142 **AZD1222 elicited mAbs are more highly mutated than mAbs from natural infection**

143 The heavy and light chain variable regions of Spike reactive mAbs were sequenced  
144 and the germline usage and level of somatic hypermutation (SHM) determined using IMGT  
145 (Brochet et al., 2008). An average 4.9% and 2.8% divergence from  $V_H$  and  $V_L$  germlines was  
146 observed at the nucleotide level for AZD1222 elicited mAbs (**Figure 3A**), which is higher than

147 mAbs isolated in our previous study from convalescent individuals 3-8 weeks post onset of  
148 symptoms (1.9% and 1.4% for V<sub>H</sub> and V<sub>L</sub> respectively) (Graham et al., 2021). Three pairs of  
149 related clones were identified (**Figure S2A**).

150 Germline gene usage and divergence from germline of both neutralizing and non-  
151 neutralizing AZD1222 mAbs were compared to a database of SARS-CoV-2 specific mAbs  
152 isolated from convalescent individuals (n = 1292) (Raybould et al., 2021) as well as paired  
153 heavy and light chains of IgG B cell receptors (BCR) from blood of CD19+ B cells from healthy  
154 individuals representative of circulating IgG expressing B cell repertoire (n = 862) (Siu, 2021).  
155 As the SARS-CoV-2 mAb database only included amino acid sequences for some mAbs,  
156 divergence from germline was determined at the amino acid level (which correlated well with  
157 nucleotide divergence (**Figure S2B**)). AZD1222 elicited mAbs from donor VA14 had a  
158 statistically higher amino acid mutation (V<sub>H</sub> 9.2% and V<sub>L</sub> 6.1%) compared to mAbs isolated  
159 from SARS-CoV-2 convalescent donors (V<sub>H</sub> 4.2% and V<sub>L</sub> 3.0%) but had a similar level to B  
160 cell receptors from healthy subjects (V<sub>H</sub> 10.9% and V<sub>L</sub> 8.0%) (**Figure 3B&C**). Similar  
161 differences in mutation levels were observed for both neutralizing and non-neutralizing  
162 antibodies (**Figure S2C**).

163 An enrichment in VH3-30 and VH3-53 germline usage was observed for both SARS-  
164 CoV-2 infection and AZD1222 elicited mAbs similar to that seen for mRNA elicited mAbs  
165 (Wang et al., 2021d) (**Figure 3D**). 3/21 RBD-specific nAbs used the VH3-53/3-66 germlines  
166 which are common amongst nAbs that directly bind the ACE2 binding site on Spike (Barnes  
167 et al., 2020; Graham et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Robbiani et al., 2020; Yuan et al., 2020c).  
168 An enrichment of VH4-34 and VH4-59 germline use was observed for AZD1222 elicited mAbs  
169 only. 11/44 (25.0%) and 8/44 (18.2%) mAbs used VK3-20 and VK1-39 light chains,  
170 respectively (**Figure 3E**).

171

172 **AZD1222 elicited nAbs bind epitopes overlapping with nAbs generated in response to**  
173 **SARS-CoV-2 infection**

174 To gain insight into the epitopes targeted by the AZD1222 elicited nAbs, competition  
175 ELISAs with trimeric Spike and previously characterized nAbs isolated from SARS-CoV-2  
176 infected individuals were performed. The panel of competing antibodies encompassed four  
177 RBD-, two NTD- and 1 Spike-only competition groups (Graham et al., 2021) (**Figures 4A-B**).  
178 Additionally, the ability of nAbs to inhibit the interaction between Spike and the ACE2 receptor  
179 was determined by flow cytometry (**Figure 4D**).

180 Four RBD neutralizing antibody classes have been previously identified and  
181 characterized (Barnes et al., 2020; Yuan et al., 2020b). nAbs that neutralize by binding to the  
182 receptor binding motif (RBM) (equivalent to RBD Class 1) (Barnes et al., 2020; Dejnirattisai et  
183 al., 2021; Yuan et al., 2020a) commonly use the VH3-53 or VH3-66 germ lines. As expected,  
184 the three VH3-53/VH3-66 VA14 nAbs competed with the Group 3 (RBD Class 1) infection  
185 nAbs as well as competing strongly for ACE-2 binding (**Figure 4D**). Group 3 nAbs were most  
186 potent at neutralizing the matched vaccine strain (Wuhan-1) (**Figure 4C**).

187 The majority of RBD-specific nAbs isolated from VA14 (13/20) competed with the  
188 Group 4 (RBD Class 3) RBD infection nAbs (**Figure 4A**) and included both potent and modest  
189 neutralizing Abs with varying degrees of ACE2 competition (**Figure 4C-D**). Five VA14 nAbs  
190 competed with Group 1 (RBD Class 4) RBD infection nAbs and showed a wide range of  
191 potencies and levels of ACE2 competition. Only one VA14 nAb (VA14\_26) competed with  
192 Group 2 (RBD Class 2) RBD infection nAbs which also competed strongly with ACE2.

193 NTD mAbs formed three competition groups (**Figure 4B**). Non-neutralizing mAbs  
194 VA14\_25 and VA14\_58 competed with NTD Group 6 nAbs including P008\_056 which has  
195 been shown to bind NTD adjacent to the  $\beta$ -sandwich fold (Rosa et al., 2021b). These two  
196 nAbs did not inhibit Spike binding to ACE2 (**Figure 4D**). nAbs VA14\_21 and VA14\_22  
197 competed with NTD Group 5 nAbs and showed 51-58% inhibition of Spike binding to ACE2.  
198 Two NTD nAbs (Group 8) did not compete with any of the infection NTD-specific nAbs or  
199 prevent ACE2 binding.

200 The S-only binding nAb VA14\_47 competed with P008\_060 (Group 7) (**Figure 4B**),  
201 the only other S-only infection nAb, and showed 59% inhibition of Spike binding to ACE2



202 **(Figure 4D)**. P008\_060 has been shown to bind a neutralizing epitope on the SD1 domain  
203 (*manuscript in preparation*).

204

#### 205 **AZD1222 elicited nAbs cross-neutralize SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern.**

206 Assessing the cross-neutralizing activity of nAbs isolated from SARS-CoV-2  
207 convalescent donors has revealed that Spike mutations in VOCs selectively hinder  
208 neutralizing activity of specific nAb classes (Graham et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021a; Wang  
209 et al., 2021b; Wang et al., 2021c; Wibmer et al., 2021). Therefore, we measured the  
210 neutralization potency of AZD1222 elicited nAbs against SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern,  
211 including B.1.1.7 (alpha), B.1.351 (beta), B.1.617.2 (delta) and P.1 (gamma) and compared  
212 this to nAbs isolated following natural infection (Graham et al., 2021). Spike proteins from  
213 these VOCs encode mutations in RBD, NTD and S2 (**Figure 5A**). Some RBD mutations are  
214 shared between multiple variants, e.g. B.1.1.7, P.1 and B.1.351 all share an N501Y mutation,  
215 and P.1 and B.1.351 share an E484K mutation and a mutation at K417. In contrast, NTD  
216 mutations vary considerably between VOCs and include both amino acid mutations and  
217 deletions. Although a reduction in neutralization potency was observed for some AZD1222  
218 nAbs, RBD- and NTD-specific nAbs with potent cross-neutralization against all VOCs were  
219 identified (**Figure 5B&C**).

220 All Group 3, several Group 4 (VA14\_33, VA14\_36, VA14R\_38) and one Group 1  
221 (VA14R\_39) RBD-specific nAbs potently neutralized all five variants at IC<sub>50</sub>s below 0.09 µg/mL  
222 (**Figure 5B**). Several nAbs showed enhanced neutralization of VOCs compared to wild-type.  
223 Comparing nAbs elicited following infection (Graham et al., 2021) and vaccination, infection  
224 nAbs showed a greater sensitivity to Spike mutations in VOCs. Cross-neutralization of nAbs  
225 in RBD Groups 1, 2 and 3 was observed for AZD1222 nAbs, whilst some infection nAbs in  
226 these competition groups showed greatly reduced neutralization of VOCs P.1 and B.1.351  
227 which both share the E484K mutation. RBD Group 4 mAbs varied in their neutralization of  
228 VOCs. 6/13 nAbs showed cross-neutralizing activity. The remaining 7 showed a >3-fold  
229 reduction in neutralization against at least one VOC with neutralizing against B.1.351 and

230 B.1.617.2 being most greatly reduced. Despite some RBD nAbs showing a decreased  
231 neutralisation against VOCs, binding to variant RBD in ELISA was retained for most nAbs  
232 except Group 4 nAbs VA14\_19 and VA14\_50 (**Figure S3A**) indicating that binding does not  
233 always correlate with neutralization.

234         Considering the geometric mean IC<sub>50</sub> values, NTD-specific nAbs were most potent at  
235 neutralizing the B.1.1.7 VOC. However, the three NTD-competition groups showed differential  
236 sensitivities towards the other four SARS-CoV-2 variants (**Figure 5C**). For example, Group 5  
237 NTD nAbs had either reduced or lacked neutralization of P.1 and B.1.617.2, whereas Group  
238 8 NTD nAbs VA14\_16 and VA14\_68 maintained potent neutralization of B.1.617.2. NTD-  
239 specific nAb, VA14\_16, had broad reactivity neutralizing all variants with an IC<sub>50</sub> <0.14 µg/mL  
240 and is the only cross-neutralizing NTD-specific nAbs reported thus far (McCallum et al., 2021).  
241 Interestingly, two NTD-specific mAbs that had shown no neutralizing activity against WT  
242 pseudotyped virus, neutralized both B.1.1.7 and P.1 (**Figure 5C**). The differences in  
243 neutralization of VOCs by NTD-specific nAbs were reflected in their binding to S1 of VOCs by  
244 ELISA (**Figure S3B**).

245         The S-only reactive nAbs elicited by vaccination did not neutralize any of the SARS-  
246 CoV-2 variants (**Figure 5D**). In contrast, the infection elicited S-only nAb retained modest  
247 neutralization against P.1 at concentrations up to 47.7 µg/mL.

248         Overall, AZD1222 vaccine elicited nAbs showed greater resistance to Spike mutations  
249 in variants of concern compared to infection elicited nAbs (**Figure 5E**).

250

## 251 **Discussion**

252         Efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines in the face of SARS-CoV-2 emerging viral variants will  
253 be critical for control of the current pandemic. Here we studied the antibody response to the  
254 AZD1222 vaccine administered with a 12-week interval at the monoclonal level. The majority  
255 of studies examining immune sera from AZD1222 vaccinated individuals have revealed a  
256 lower potency against B.1.1.7 (range 2.2 – 9.0-fold) (Dejnirattisai et al., 2021; Emary et al.,

257 2021; Wall et al., 2021), P.1 (2.9-fold) (Dejnirattisai et al., 2021), B.1.351 (range 4.0 – 9.0-fold)  
258 (Dejnirattisai et al., 2021; Madhi et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2021) and B.1.617.2 (range 4.3 –  
259 9.0-fold) (Liu et al., 2021; Wall et al., 2021) compared to neutralization of Wuhan or D614G  
260 variants. Although VA14 had a low plasma neutralizing activity ( $ID_{50} \sim 1:100$ ) at 4-months post  
261 vaccine booster, 59.1% of Spike reactive mAbs isolated from antigen-reactive B cells had  
262 neutralizing activity against the matched vaccine strain, and many of these mAbs displayed  
263 potent cross-neutralizing activity against current SARS-CoV-2 VOCs. RBD and NTD were the  
264 predominant targets for neutralizing antibodies (80.8% and 15.5% of nAbs, respectively).  
265 Importantly, we identified RBD-specific nAbs from each of the four competition groups, and  
266 NTD-specific nAbs, that cross-neutralized all VOCs. The polyclonal nature of the nAb  
267 response elicited by AZD1222 vaccination will likely help limit full vaccine escape in the face  
268 of emerging Spike mutations.

269 Competition ELISAs revealed that nAbs elicited by AZD1222 target overlapping  
270 epitopes of nAbs elicited from natural SARS-CoV-2 infection. However, despite similar  
271 antibody footprints, vaccine elicited nAbs from RBD competition Groups 2 and 3 showed  
272 greater neutralization breadth than those elicited from natural infection. This was also  
273 apparent for some NTD-specific nAbs. This increased neutralization breadth is likely due to  
274 the increased divergence from germline in AZD1222 elicited nAbs (isolated 4-months post  
275 booster) compared to nAbs isolated following natural infection (isolated 2 – 8 weeks post onset  
276 of symptoms) leading to better tolerance of Spike mutations in VOCs. Indeed, several studies  
277 have shown that increased somatic hypermutation enhances neutralization breadth against  
278 VOCs (de Mattos Barbosa et al., 2021; Gaebler et al., 2021; Goel et al., 2021; Muecksch et  
279 al., 2021). Analysis of the antibody-antigen interaction at the molecular level will give further  
280 insight into the specific mechanisms of increased neutralization breadth for AZD1222 elicited  
281 nAbs.

282 Although Spike reactive mAbs generated following AZD1222 have not previously been  
283 reported, several studies report mAbs isolated following mRNA COVID-19 vaccination  
284 (Amanat et al., 2021; Andreano, 2021; Cho, 2021; Wang et al., 2021d). Comparison between

285 epitopes targeted by mRNA and AZD1222 elicited nAbs showed a higher proportion of RBM  
286 targeted nAbs following mRNA vaccination (Andreano, 2021; Wang et al., 2021d). A similar  
287 enrichment in VH3-53 and VH3-30 germline usage was observed (Andreano, 2021; Wang et  
288 al., 2021d). Despite differences in the timing of mAb isolation across reported studies, the  
289 AZD1222 mAbs identified had a higher level of SHM compared to mRNA elicited mAbs and  
290 showed greater cross-neutralizing activity (Andreano, 2021; Wang et al., 2021d). Possible  
291 reasons for these differences include; i) timing of mAb isolation following vaccine booster, ii)  
292 timing of vaccine boosters (3-week for mRNA studies vs 12-weeks in this study), iii) a  
293 prolonged antigen persistence for ChAdOx vectored Spike, or iv) differences in Spike antigen  
294 encoded by each vaccine (in particular, mRNA-1273 (Moderna) and BNT162b2 (Pfizer)  
295 vaccines encode Spike with stabilizing mutations and a mutation that prevents S1/S2 cleavage  
296 (Jackson et al., 2020; Walsh et al., 2020)). Understanding these factors will be important for  
297 optimizing vaccine strategies aimed at eliciting the broadest nAb response.

298 Plasma was not available to determine the peak neutralizing response in VA14 and  
299 therefore the relative decline in neutralization following AZD1222 vaccination. The neutralizing  
300 antibody titre was low 4-months post vaccine boost and it is not known if this level would be  
301 sufficient to provide sterilizing or near sterilizing immunity. However, the identification of B  
302 cells producing antibodies with potent cross-neutralizing activity against non-overlapping  
303 epitopes and the presence of Spike+ IgG+ B cells at ~1 year post vaccine prime suggests that  
304 a rapid recall response will likely occur which could be sufficient to protect against severe  
305 disease and/or hospitalization in the face of VOCs.

306 In summary, we show that AZD1222 vaccine administered at a 12-week interval can  
307 elicit nAbs with potent cross-neutralizing activity against SARS-CoV-2 VOCs that target non-  
308 overlapping epitopes on RBD and NTD. Despite undetectable plasma neutralizing activity,  
309 Spike reactive IgG+ B cells are detected up to 1-year following initial vaccine priming. These  
310 data provide important insights into long-term immunity and protection to SARS-CoV-2  
311 emerging variants.

312

313 **Limitations of study:**

314 This study only examines mAbs isolated from one individual and therefore how  
315 representative these mAbs are of the humoral immune response against AZD1222 needs to  
316 be investigated further.

317

318 **EXPERIMENTAL MODEL AND SUBJECT DETAILS**

319 **Ethics.** This study used human samples from one donor collected as part of a study entitled  
320 “Antibody responses following COVID-19 vaccination”. Ethical approval was obtained from the  
321 King’s College London Infectious Diseases Biobank (IBD) (KDJF-110121) under the terms of  
322 the IDB’s ethics permission (REC reference: 19/SC/0232) granted by the South Central –  
323 Hampshire B Research Ethics Committee in 2019.

324

325 **Bacterial strains and cell culture**

326 SARS-CoV-2 pseudotypes were produced by transfection of HEK293T/17 cells and  
327 neutralization activity assayed using HeLa cells stably expressing ACE2 (kind gift James E  
328 Voss). Small and large scale expression of monoclonal antibodies was performed in  
329 HEK293T/17 (ATCC; ATCC® CRL-11268™) and 293 Freestyle cells (Thermofisher Scientific),  
330 respectively. Bacterial transformations were performed with NEB® Stable Competent *E. coli*.

331

332 **METHOD DETAILS:**

333 **Protein expression and purification.** Recombinant Spike and RBD for ELISA were  
334 expressed and purified as previously described (Pickering et al., 2020; Seow et al., 2020).  
335 Recombinant S1 (residues 1-530) and NTD (residues 1-310) expression and purification was  
336 described in Rosa et al (Rosa et al., 2021a). S2 protein was obtained from SinoBiological (Cat  
337 number: 40590-V08B).

338

339 For antigen-specific B cell sorting, Spike glycoprotein consisted of the pre-fusion S  
340 ectodomain (residues 1–1138) with a GGGG substitution at the furin cleavage site (amino

341 acids 682–685), proline substitutions at amino acid positions 986 and 987, and an N-terminal  
342 T4 trimerization domain. RBD consisted of amino acids 331-533. Spike and RBD were cloned  
343 into a pHLsec vector containing Avi and 6xHis tags (Aricescu et al., 2006). Biotinylated Spike  
344 or RBD were expressed in 1L of HEK293F cells (Invitrogen) at a density of  $1.5 \times 10^6$  cells/mL.  
345 To achieve *in vivo* biotinylation, 480µg of each plasmid was co-transfected with 120µg of BirA  
346 (Howarth et al., 2008) and 12mg PEI-Max (1 mg/mL solution, Polysciences) in the presence  
347 of 200 µM biotin (final concentration). The supernatant was harvested after 7 days and purified  
348 using immobilized metal affinity chromatography and size-exclusion chromatography.  
349 Complete biotinylation was confirmed via depletion of protein using avidin beads.

350

351 **ELISA (S, RBD, NTD, S2 or S1).** 96-well plates (Corning, 3690) were coated with S, S1, NTD,  
352 S2 or RBD at 3 µg/mL overnight at 4°C. The plates were washed (5 times with PBS/0.05%  
353 Tween-20, PBS-T), blocked with blocking buffer (5% skimmed milk in PBS-T) for 1 h at room  
354 temperature. Serial dilutions of plasma, mAb or supernatant in blocking buffer were added  
355 and incubated for 2 hr at room temperature. Plates were washed (5 times with PBS-T) and  
356 secondary antibody was added and incubated for 1 hr at room temperature. IgM was detected  
357 using Goat-anti-human-IgM-HRP (horseradish peroxidase) (1:1,000) (Sigma: A6907) and IgG  
358 was detected using Goat-anti-human-Fc-AP (alkaline phosphatase) (1:1,000) (Jackson: 109-  
359 055-098). Plates were washed (5 times with PBS-T) and developed with either AP substrate  
360 (Sigma) and read at 405 nm (AP) or 1-step TMB (3,3',5,5'-Tetramethylbenzidine) substrate  
361 (Thermo Scientific) and quenched with 0.5 M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> before reading at 450 nm (HRP).

362

363 **Fab/Fc ELISA.** 96-well plates (Corning, 3690) were coated with goat anti-human Fc IgG  
364 antibody at 3 µg/mL overnight at 4°C. The above protocol was followed. The presence of IgG  
365 in supernatants was detected using Goat-anti-human-Fc-AP (alkaline phosphatase) (1:1,000)  
366 (Jackson: 109-055-098).

367

368 **IgG digestion to generate F(ab')<sub>2</sub>.** IgG were incubated with IdeS (Dixon, 2014) (4 µg of IdeS  
369 per 1 mg of IgG) in PBS for 1 hour at 37 °C. The Fc and IdeS A were removed using a mix of  
370 Protein A Sepharose® Fast Flow (250 µL per 1 mg digested mAb; GE Healthcare Life  
371 Sciences) and Ni Sepharose™ 6 Fast Flow (50 µL per 1 mg digested mAb; GE Healthcare  
372 Life Sciences) which were washed twice with PBS before adding to the reaction mixture. After  
373 exactly 10 minutes the beads were removed from the F(ab')<sub>2</sub>-dilution by filtration in Spin-X  
374 tube filters (Costar®) and the filtrate was concentrated in Amicon® Ultra Filters (10k, Millipore).  
375 Purified F(ab')<sub>2</sub> fragments were analysed by SDS-PAGE.

376

377 **F(ab')<sub>2</sub> and IgG competition ELISA.** 96-well half area high bind microplates (Corning®) were  
378 coated with S-protein at 3µg/mL in PBS overnight at 4 °C. Plates were washed (5 times with  
379 PBS/0.05% Tween-20, PBS-T) and blocked with 5% milk in PBS/T for 2 hr at room  
380 temperature. Serial dilutions (5-fold) of F(ab')<sub>2</sub>, starting at 100-molar excess of the IC<sub>80</sub> of S  
381 binding, were added to the plates and incubated for 1 hr at room temperature. Plates were  
382 washed (5 times with PBS-T) before competing IgG was added at their IC<sub>80</sub> of S binding and  
383 incubated at room temperature for 1 hr. Plates were washed (5 times with PBS-T) and Goat-  
384 anti-human-Fc-AP (alkaline phosphatase) (1:1,000) (Jackson: 109-055-098) was added and  
385 incubated for 45 minutes at room temperature. The plates were washed (5 times with PBS-T)  
386 and AP substrate (Sigma) was added. Optical density was measured at 405 nm in 5-minute  
387 intervals. The percentage competition was calculated as the reduction in IgG binding in the  
388 presence of F(ab')<sub>2</sub> (at 100-molar excess of the IC<sub>80</sub>) as a percentage of the maximum IgG  
389 binding in the absence of F(ab')<sub>2</sub>. Competition groups were determined using Ward2 clustering  
390 (R, Complex Heatmap package (Gu et al., 2016)) for initial analysis and Groups were then  
391 arranged by hand according to binding epitopes.

392

393 **Semi-quantitative ELISA.** In 96-well plates (Corning, 3690), 10 columns were coated with  
394 SARS-CoV-2 Spike at 3 µg/mL in PBS, with the remaining 2 columns coated with Goat anti-  
395 Human IgG F(ab')<sub>2</sub> at 1:1000 dilution, and incubated overnight at 4°C. The plates were washed

396 (5 times with PBS/0.05% Tween-20, PBS-T) and blocked with blocking buffer (5% skimmed  
397 milk in PBS-T) for 1 h at room temperature. Serial dilutions of serum and a known  
398 concentrations of IgG standard (in blocking buffer) were added to the Spike coated and  
399 standard curve columns, respectively. After 2 h incubation at room temperature, plates were  
400 washed 5 times with PBS-T. Secondary antibody, goat-anti-human-Fc-AP, was added at  
401 1:1000 dilution in blocking buffer and incubated for 1 h at room temperature. Plates were  
402 washed 5 times with PBS-T and developed with AP substrate (Sigma). Absorbance was  
403 measured at 405 nm. Antigen-specific serum IgG was quantified by averaging values  
404 interpolated from a standard curve of IgG standard using four-parameter logistic regression  
405 curve fitting (Rees-Spear et al., 2021).

406

407 **SARS-CoV-2 pseudotyped virus preparation.** Pseudotyped HIV-1 virus incorporating either  
408 the SARS-Cov-2 Wuhan, B.1.1.7, P.1, B.1.351, B.1.617.2 full-length Spike were produced in  
409 a 10 cm dish seeded the day prior with  $5 \times 10^6$  HEK293T/17 cells in 10 mL of complete  
410 Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium (DMEM-C, 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS) and 1%  
411 Pen/Strep (100 IU/mL penicillin and 100 mg/mL streptomycin)). Cells were transfected using  
412 90 mg of PEI-Max (1 mg/mL, Polysciences) with: 15  $\mu$ g of HIV-luciferase plasmid, 10  $\mu$ g of  
413 HIV 8.91 gag/pol plasmid (Zufferey et al., 1997) and 5  $\mu$ g of SARS-CoV-2 spike protein  
414 plasmid (Grehan et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2020). Pseudotyped virus was harvested after  
415 72 hours, filtered through a 0.45mm filter and stored at  $-80^{\circ}\text{C}$  until required.

416

417 **Neutralization assay with SARS-CoV-2 pseudotyped virus.** Neutralization assays were  
418 conducted as previously described (Carter et al., 2020; Monin et al., 2021; Seow et al., 2020).  
419 Serial dilutions of serum samples (heat inactivated at  $56^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 30mins) or mAbs were prepared  
420 with DMEM-C media and incubated with pseudotyped virus for 1-hour at  $37^{\circ}\text{C}$  in 96-well  
421 plates. Next, HeLa cells stably expressing the ACE2 receptor (provided by Dr James Voss,  
422 Scripps Research, La Jolla, CA) were added (12,500 cells/50 $\mu$ L per well) and the plates were  
423 left for 72 hours. The amount of infection was assessed in lysed cells with the Bright-Glo



424 luciferase kit (Promega), using a Victor™ X3 multilabel reader (Perkin Elmer). Measurements  
425 were performed in duplicate and duplicates used to calculate the ID<sub>50</sub>.

426

427 **Antigen-specific B cell sorting.** Fluorescence-activated cell sorting of cryopreserved  
428 PBMCs was performed on a BD FACS Melody as previously described (Graham et al., 2021).  
429 Sorting baits (SARS-CoV-2 Spike and RBD) was pre-complexed with the streptavidin  
430 fluorophore at a 1:4 molar ratio prior to addition to cells. PBMCs were stained with live/dead  
431 (fixable Aqua Dead, Thermofisher), anti-CD3-APC/Cy7 (Biolegend), anti-CD8-APC-Cy7  
432 (Biolegend), anti-CD14-BV510 (Biolegend), anti-CD19-PerCP-Cy5.5 (Biolegend), anti-IgM-  
433 PE (Biolegend), anti-IgD-Pacific Blue (Biolegend) and anti-IgG-PeCy7 (BD) and Spike-  
434 Alexa488 (Thermofisher Scientific, S32354) and Spike-APC (Thermofisher Scientific, S32362)  
435 or RBD-Alexa488 and RBD-APC. Live CD3<sup>+</sup>CD8<sup>-</sup>CD14<sup>-</sup>CD19<sup>+</sup>IgM<sup>-</sup>IgD<sup>-</sup>IgG<sup>+</sup>Spike<sup>+</sup>Spike<sup>+</sup> or  
436 CD3<sup>+</sup>CD8<sup>-</sup>CD14<sup>-</sup>CD19<sup>+</sup>IgM<sup>-</sup>IgD<sup>-</sup>IgG<sup>+</sup>RBD<sup>+</sup>RBD<sup>+</sup> cells were sorted using a BD FACS Melody  
437 into individual wells containing RNase OUT (Invitrogen), First Strand SuperScript III buffer,  
438 DTT and H<sub>2</sub>O (Invitrogen) and RNA was converted into cDNA (SuperScript III Reverse  
439 Transcriptase, Invitrogen) using random hexamers (Bioline Reagents Ltd) following the  
440 manufacturer's protocol.

441

442 **Full-length antibody cloning and expression.** The human Ab variable regions of heavy and  
443 kappa/lambda chains were PCR amplified using previously described primers and PCR  
444 conditions (Scheid et al., 2009; Tiller et al., 2008; von Boehmer et al., 2016). PCR products  
445 were purified and cloned into human-IgG (Heavy, Kappa or Lambda) expression plasmids(von  
446 Boehmer et al., 2016) using the Gibson Assembly Master Mix (NEB) following the  
447 manufacturer's protocol. Gibson assembly products were directly transfected into HEK-293T  
448 cells and transformed under ampicillin selection. Ab supernatants were harvested 3 days after  
449 transfection and IgG expression and Spike-reactivity determined using ELISA. Ab variable  
450 regions of heavy-light chain pairs that generated Spike reactive IgG were sequenced by  
451 Sanger sequencing.

452

453 **IgG expression and purification.** Ab heavy and light plasmids were co-transfected at a 1:1  
454 ratio into HEK-293F cells (Thermofisher) using PEI Max (1 mg/mL, Polysciences, Inc.) at a  
455 3:1 ratio (PEI Max:DNA). Ab supernatants were harvested five days following transfection,  
456 filtered and purified using protein G affinity chromatography following the manufacturer's  
457 protocol (GE Healthcare).

458

459 **ACE2 competition measured by flow cytometry.** To prepare the fluorescent probe,  
460 Streptavidin-APC (Thermofisher Scientific, S32362) was added to biotinylated SARS-CoV-2  
461 Spike (3.5 times molar excess of Spike) on ice. Additions were staggered over 5 steps with  
462 30 min incubation times between each addition. Purified mAbs were mixed with PE conjugated  
463 SARS-CoV-2 S in a molar ratio of 4:1 in FACS buffer (2% FBS in PBS) on ice for 1 h. HeLa-  
464 ACE2 and HeLa cells were washed once with PBS and detached using PBS containing 5mM  
465 EDTA. Detached cells were washed and resuspended in FACS buffer. 0.5 million HeLa-ACE2  
466 cells were added to each mAb-Spike complex and incubated on ice for 30 m. The cells were  
467 washed with PBS and resuspended in 1 mL FACS buffer with 1  $\mu$ L of LIVE/DEAD Fixable  
468 Aqua Dead Cell Stain Kit (Invitrogen). HeLa-ACE2 cells alone and with SARS-CoV-2 Spike  
469 only were used as background and positive controls, respectively. The geometric mean  
470 fluorescence for PE was measured from the gate of singlet and live cells. The ACE2 binding  
471 inhibition percentage was calculated as described previously (Graham et al., 2021; Rogers et  
472 al., 2020).

473

474 **Monoclonal antibody sequence analysis.** The heavy and light chain sequences of SARS-  
475 CoV-2 specific mAbs were examined using IMGT/V-QUEST  
476 ([http://www.imgt.org/IMGT\\_vquest/vquest](http://www.imgt.org/IMGT_vquest/vquest)) to identify the germline usages, percentage of  
477 SHM and CDR region lengths. To remove variation introduced through cloning using mixture  
478 of forward primers, 5 amino acids or 15 nucleotides were trimmed from the start and end of  
479 the translated variable genes. D'Agostino & Pearson normality test, Kruskal-Wallis test with

480 Dunn's multiple comparisons post hoc test, Ordinary one-way ANOVA with Tukey's multiple  
481 comparisons post hoc test and two-sided binomial tests) were performed using GraphPad  
482 Prism software. Significance defined as  $p < 0.0332$  (\*),  $0.0021$  (\*\*),  $0.0002$  (\*\*\*) and  $>0.0001$   
483 (\*\*\*\*).

484

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488 Wendy Barclay for providing the B.1.617.2 Spike plasmid and James Voss and Deli Huang  
489 for providing the Hela-ACE2 cells.

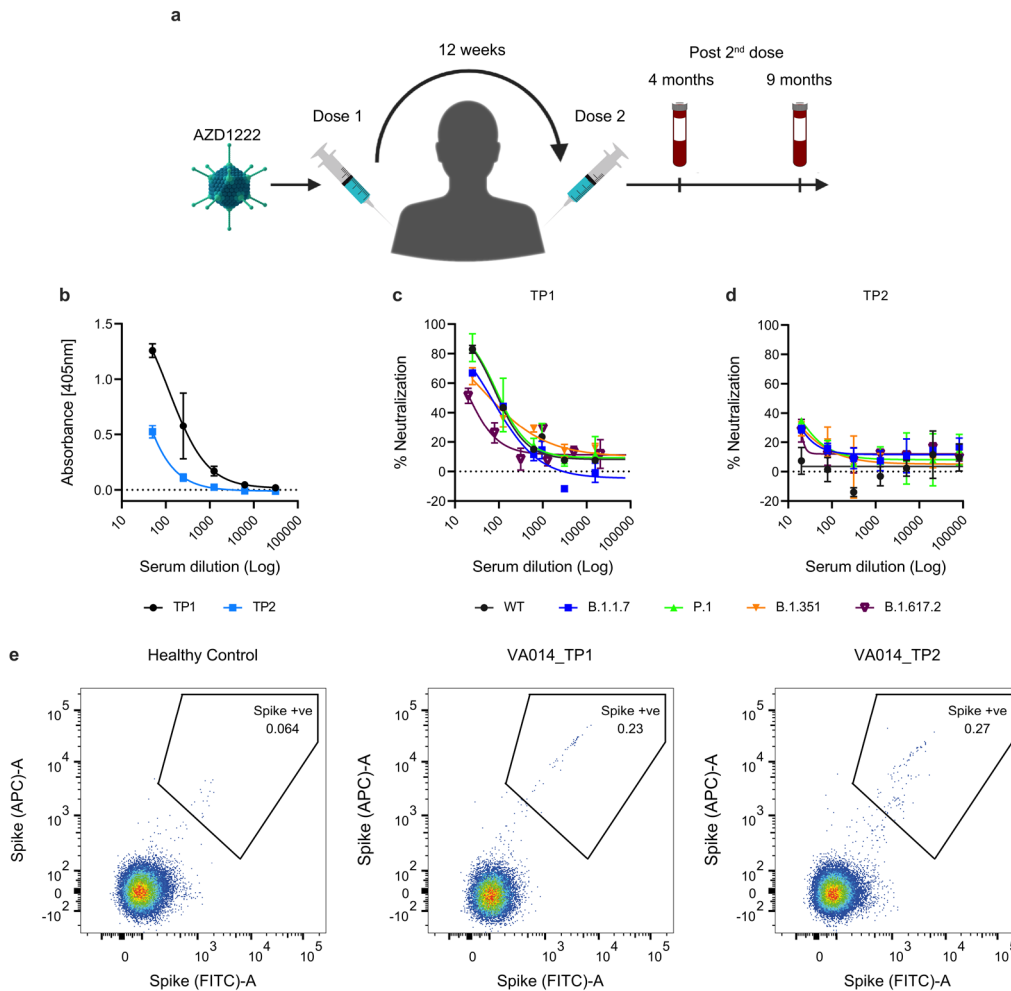
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508 **Figure Legends**

509 **Figure 1: VA14 plasma neutralization and Spike reactive B cells. A)** Timeline of AZD1222  
510 vaccination and blood sampling for donor VA14. **B)** Plasma IgG binding to Spike at TP1 (4-  
511 months post booster) and TP2 (9-months post booster). Plasma neutralizing activity against  
512 HIV-1 based virus particles, pseudotyped with the Wuhan, B.1.1.7, P.1, B.1.351 or B.1.617.2  
513 Spike at **C)** TP1 and **D)** TP2. **E)** Fluorescent activated cell sorting (FACS) showing percentage  
514 of CD19+IgG+ B Cells binding to SARS-CoV-2 Spike at TP1 and TP2. A healthy control PBMC  
515 sample collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was used to measure background binding  
516 to Spike. The full gating strategy and sorting of RBD specific B cells can be found in  
517 **Supplementary Figure 1.**

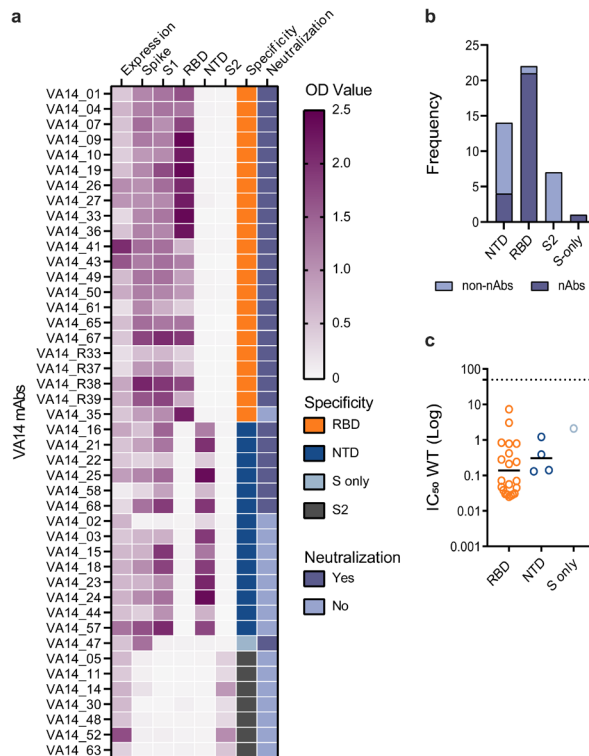


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521 **Figure 2: AZD1222 elicits neutralizing and non-neutralizing antibodies targeting RBD,**  
 522 **NTD, S1 and S2 domains of Spike. A)** Heatmap showing IgG expression level and binding  
 523 to SARS-CoV-2 Spike domains, RBD, NTD, S1 and S2. The figure reports OD values from a  
 524 single experiment (range 0–2.5) for undiluted supernatant from small scale transfection of 44  
 525 cloned mAbs. Antigen binding was considered positive when OD at 405 nm was >0.2 after  
 526 background was subtracted. SARS-CoV-2 Spike domain specificity for each antibody is  
 527 indicated. Neutralization activity was measured against wild-type (Wuhan) pseudotyped virus  
 528 using either small-scale purified IgG or concentrated supernatant. **B)** Frequency of  
 529 neutralizing and non-neutralizing antibodies targeting either RBD, NTD, S-only or S2. Graph  
 530 only includes mAbs isolated using Spike as antigen-bait for B cell sorting. **C)** Neutralization  
 531 potency ( $IC_{50}$ ) against wild-type (Wuhan) pseudotyped virus for mAbs targeting either RBD,  
 532 NTD or non-S1. The black line represents the geometric mean  $IC_{50}$ . Related to  
 533 **Supplementary Figure 2.**

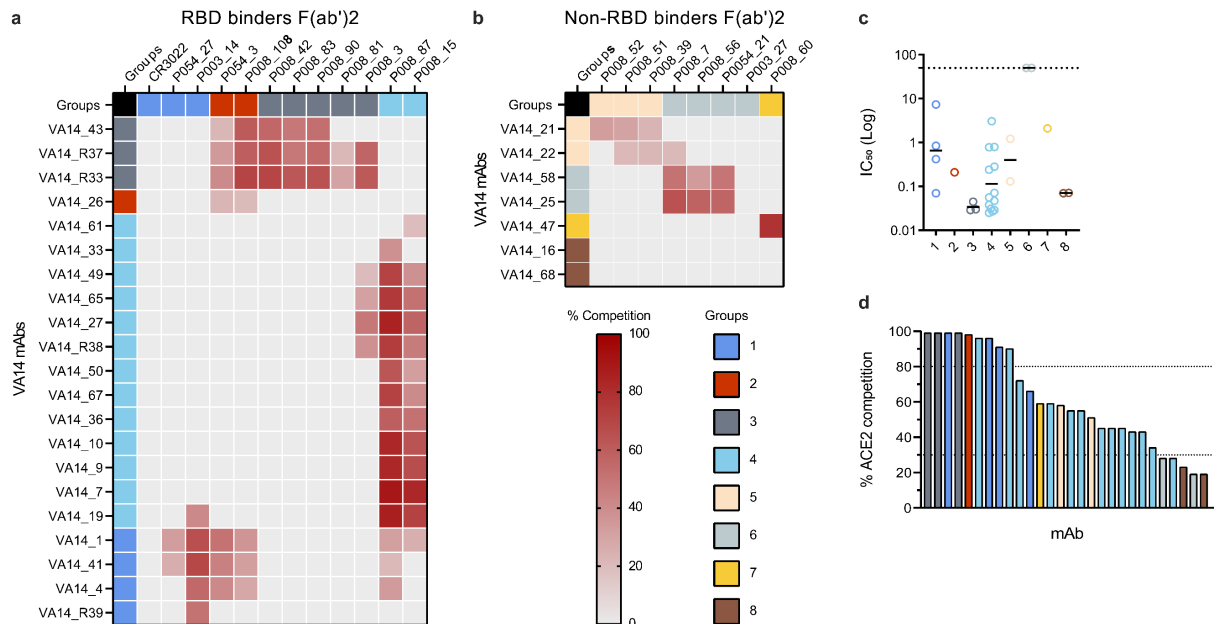


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536

537 **Figure 3: AZD1222 elicited monoclonal antibodies are more mutated than those elicited**  
 538 **following SARS-CoV-2 infection. A)** Truncated violin plot showing the percentage nucleotide  
 539 mutation compared to germline for the VH and VL genes of Spike-reactive mAbs isolated  
 540 following AZD1222. Divergence from germline (based on amino acid alignments) for **B)** VH  
 541 and **C)** VL genes for Spike reactive mAbs from natural infection, AZD1222 vaccination and  
 542 IgG BCRs from SARS-CoV-2 naïve individuals (Siu, 2021). D'Agostino & Pearson tests was  
 543 performed to determine normality. Based on the result a Kruskal-Wallis test with Dunn's  
 544 multiple comparison post hoc test was performed. \* $p < 0.0332$ , \*\* $p < 0.0021$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.0002$  and  
 545 \*\*\*\* $p < 0.0001$ . Graph showing the relative abundance of **D)** VH and **E)** VL genes in mAbs elicited  
 546 from AZD1222 vaccination compared to SARS-CoV-2 infection mAbs (Raybould et al., 2021)  
 547 and IgG BCRs from SARS-CoV-2 naïve individuals (Siu, 2021). A two-sided binomial test was  
 548 used to compare the frequency distributions. \* $p < 0.0332$ , \*\* $p < 0.0021$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.0002$  and  
 549 \*\*\*\* $p < 0.0001$ . Related to **Supplementary Figure 2**.



550

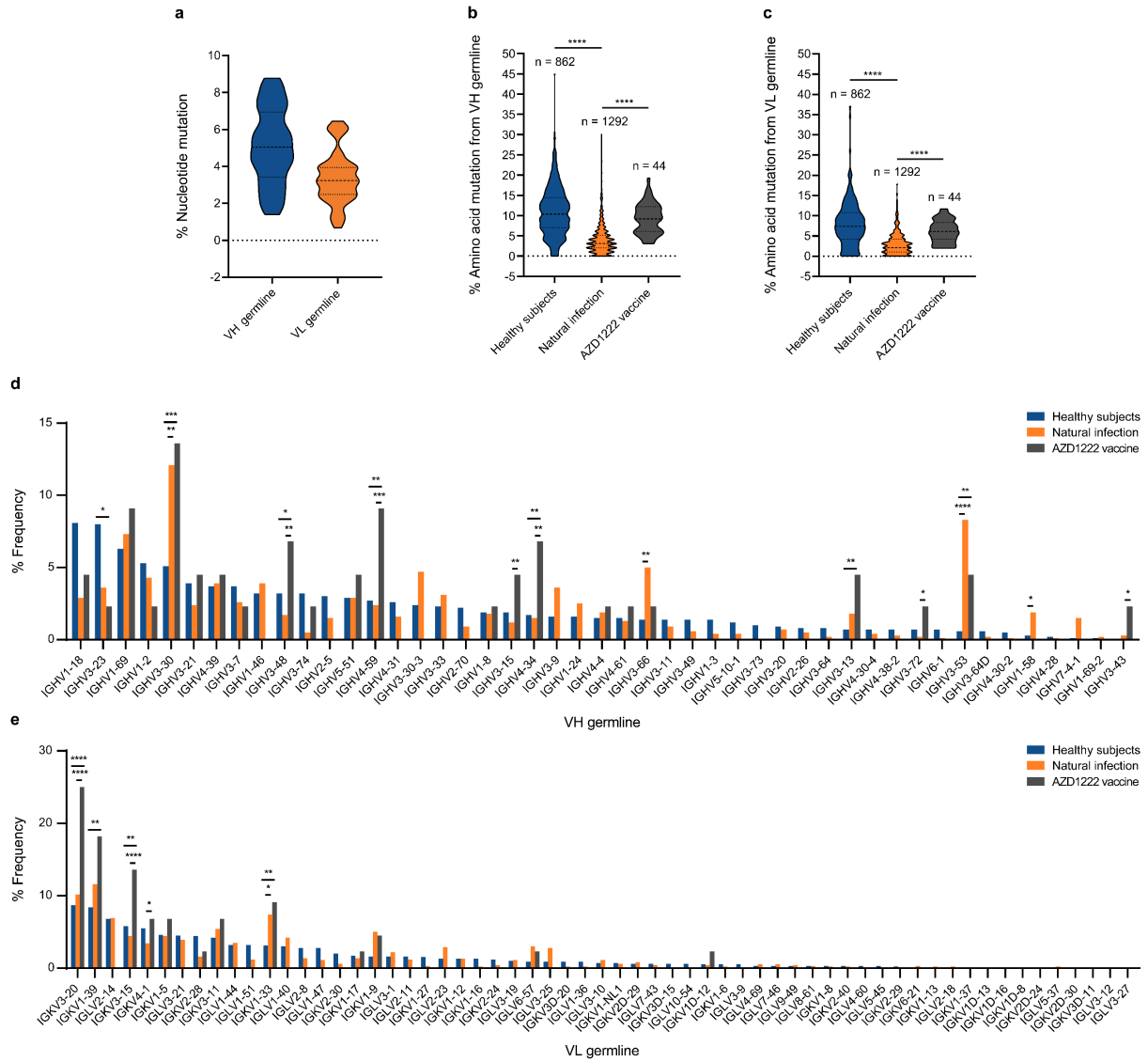
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555 **Figure 4: AZD1222 nAbs target epitopes overlapping with nAbs elicited following**  
556 **natural SARS-CoV-2 infection. A-B)** Competitive binding of AZD1222 and SARS-CoV-2  
557 infection elicited nAbs. Inhibition of IgG binding to SARS-CoV-2 Spike by F(ab)<sub>2</sub>' fragments  
558 was measured. The percentage competition was calculated using the reduction in IgG binding  
559 in the presence of F(ab')<sub>2</sub> (at 100-molar excess of the IC<sub>80</sub>) as a percentage of the maximum  
560 IgG binding in the absence of F(ab')<sub>2</sub>. Competition was measured between **A)** RBD-specific  
561 and **B)** NTD-specific/S-only nAbs. **C)** Neutralization potency (IC<sub>50</sub>) of mAbs targeting either  
562 RBD, NTD or non-S1 and/or in competition Groups 1–8 against SARS-CoV-2 WT  
563 pseudotyped virus. Competition groups are colour coded according to the key. The black lines  
564 represent the geometric mean IC<sub>50</sub> for each group. IC<sub>50</sub> values are the average of three  
565 independent experiments performed in duplicate. **D)** Ability of nAbs to inhibit the interaction  
566 between cell surface ACE2 and soluble SARS-CoV-2 Spike. nAbs (at 600 nM) were pre-  
567 incubated with fluorescently labeled Spike before addition to HeLa-ACE2 cells. The  
568 percentage reduction in mean fluorescence intensity is reported. Experiments were performed  
569 in duplicate. Bars are colour coded based on their competition group.



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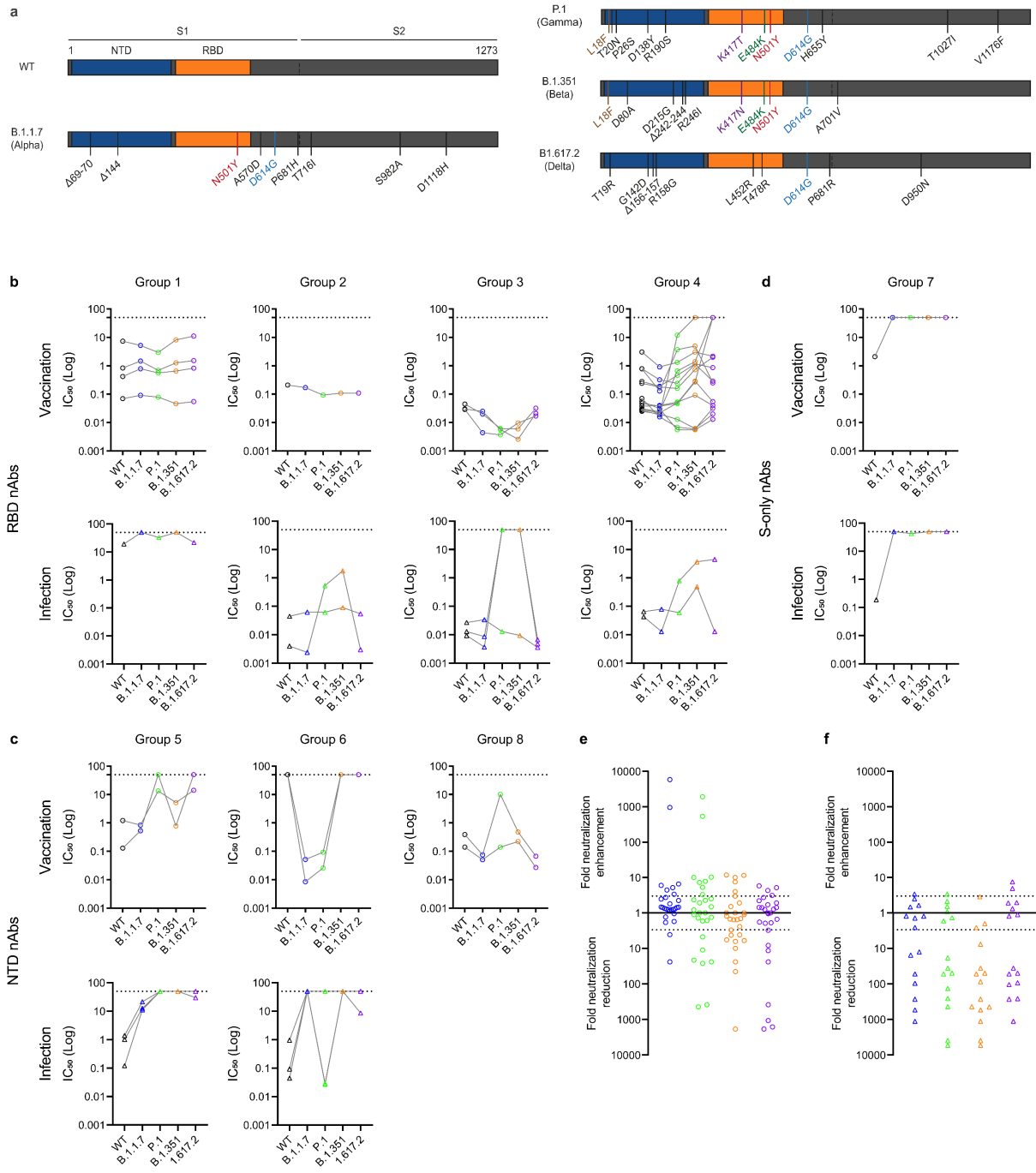
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580 **Figure 5: AZD1222 generates nAbs with cross-neutralizing activity against SARS-CoV-**  
581 **2 viral variants. A)** Schematic showing mutations present in the Spike of SARS-CoV-2 viral  
582 variants of concern (B.1.1.7, P.1, B.1.351, B.1.617.2). **B)** Neutralization by RBD-specific nAbs  
583 isolated following AZD1222 vaccination or SARS-CoV-2 infection against main variants of  
584 concern. nAbs are separated by competition group (Groups 1-4). **C)** Neutralization by NTD-  
585 specific nAbs isolated following AZD1222 vaccination or SARS-CoV-2 infection against main  
586 variants of concern. nAbs are separated by competition group (Groups 5, 6 and 8). **D)**  
587 Neutralization by S-only specific nAbs isolated following AZD1222 vaccination or SARS-CoV-  
588 2 infection against main variants of concern. Fold enhancement or reduction in neutralization  
589  $IC_{50}$  against VOCs B.1.1.7, P.1, B.1.351, B.1.617.2 compared to the  $IC_{50}$  against wild-type for  
590 **E)** AZD1222 elicited mAbs and **F)** infection mAbs. The dotted line indicates a 3-fold reduction  
591 or enhancement in neutralization. Related to **Supplementary Figure 3 and Supplementary**  
592 **Table 1.**



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