Preprints are preliminary reports that have not undergone peer review.
They should not be considered conclusive, used to inform clinical practice,
or referenced by the media as validated information.

Interleukin-1 Blockade Attenuates White Matter Inflammation and Oligodendrocyte Loss After Progressive Systematic Lipopolysaccharide Exposure in Near-Term Fetal Sheep

Sharmony B. Kelly
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Vanesa Stojanovska
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Valerie Zahra
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Alison Moxham
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Suzanne L Miller
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Timothy JM Moss
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Stuart B Hooper
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Marcel F. Nold
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Claudia A. Nold-Petry
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Justin M. Dean
University of Auckland
Laura Bennet
University of Auckland
Graeme R. Polglase
Hudson Institute of Medical Research
Alistair J. Gunn
University of Auckland
Robert Galinsky (robert.galinsky@hudson.org.au)
Hudson Institute of Medical Research https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6374-9372

Research

Keywords: inflammation, brain, interleukin-1

Posted Date: February 17th, 2021

DOI: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-202147/v1

License: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Read Full License

Abstract

Background

Increased systemic and tissue levels of interleukin(IL)-1β are associated with greater risk of impaired neurodevelopment after birth. In this study, we tested the hypothesis that systemic IL-1 receptor antagonist (Ra) administration can attenuate neuroinflammation and injury in near-term fetal sheep exposed to lipopolysaccharide (LPS).

Methods

Chronically instrumented near-term fetal sheep at 0.85 of gestation were randomly assigned to saline (control, n=9), LPS infusions (0 h=300 ng, 24 h=600 ng, 48 h=1200 ng, n=8) or LPS plus 3 infusions of IL-1Ra (13 mg/kg infused over 4 h) started 1 h after each LPS infusion (n=9). Sheep were euthanized 4 days after starting infusions for histology.

Results

LPS infusions were associated with electroencephalogram (EEG) suppression with transiently reduced mean arterial blood pressure, and increased carotid artery perfusion and fetal heart rate ($P<0.05$ vs. control). In the periventricular and intragyral white matter, LPS-exposure increased IL-1β immunoreactivity, apoptosis and microglial activation, and reduced astrocyte and total oligodendrocyte survival, but did not change myelin expression or numbers of neurons in the cortex and subcortical regions. IL-1Ra infusions reduced circulating cytokines and improved recovery of EEG activity and carotid artery perfusion. Histologically, IL-1Ra reduced microgliosis, IL-1β expression and apoptosis, and improved total oligodendrocyte survival.

Conclusion

IL-1Ra improved EEG activity and markedly attenuated systemic inflammation, microgliosis and oligodendrocyte loss, but did not improve survival of astrocytes after LPS-induced inflammation in near-term fetal sheep. Further studies of long term brain maturation are now needed.

Background

Perinatal infection is common, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries [1], and is associated with high mortality and poor neurodevelopmental outcomes such as cerebral palsy, that can have devastating lifelong impact [2, 3]. Thus, there is considerable need to develop interventions to prevent disability after infection/inflammation to reduce the growing economic and social burdens of perinatal brain injury on the affected individuals, their families and society [4, 5].

Experimentally, exposure to bacterial products such as lipopolysaccharide (LPS) are consistently associated with white matter injury [6, 7]. In turn, in both term and preterm infants, diffuse/punctate white matter lesions are strongly associated with impaired postnatal brain growth [8]. Most studies of perinatal infection have focussed on the preterm brain, but infection is also common in near-term and term infants both in isolation and in combination with acute hypoxia-ischemia in low, middle [9] and high-income countries [10]. Moreover,

preclinical studies indicate that therapeutic hypothermia does not seem to be neuroprotective after exposure to gram negative infection/inflammation [11–13]. Thus, more effective interventions that target specific injury pathways for neuroinflammation are needed to improve neurodevelopmental outcomes.

Multiple pathways are involved in perinatal infection/inflammation, but interleukin-1β (IL-1β), a pro-inflammatory cytokine, is consistently upregulated in human and experimental perinatal encephalopathy [14–17]. Further, elevated cord blood levels of IL-1β are associated with impaired cerebral metabolism and developmental delay at 2 years of age [18] and white matter injury in neonatal piglets exposed to LPS [19, 20]. Collectively, these data support the hypothesis that IL-1β inhibition may be a viable therapeutic target for attenuating neural injury after perinatal infection/inflammation.

In this study, we tested the hypothesis that IL-1 inhibition started 1 hour after LPS exposure with a clinically available IL-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1Ra), Anakinra, would reduce the severity of neuroinflammation and brain injury in near-term (0.85 gestation) fetal sheep. At this age, brain development in sheep is broadly equivalent to the near term/term infant [21]. A paradigm of progressively increasing doses of LPS was used in this study to reflect the typical progressive increase in inflammation during perinatal infection [22, 23].

Materials And Methods:

All procedures were approved by the Hudson Institute of Medical Research Animal Ethics committee, and were conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (Eighth Edition). Twenty-six pregnant Border-Leicester ewes bearing singleton or twin fetuses underwent aseptic surgery on either day 124 or 125 days gestation. Food but not water was withdrawn approximately 18 hours before surgery. Anaesthesia was induced by i.v injection of sodium thiopentone (20 mL) and maintained using 2–3% isoflurane in oxygen (Bomac Animal Health, New South Wales, Australia). Ewes received prophylactic antibiotics (ampicillin: 1 g i.v; Austrapen, Lennon Healthcare, St. Leonards, NSW, Australia, and engemycin: 500 mg i.v; Schering-Plough, Upper Hutt, New Zealand) immediately before surgery. Isoflurane levels, heart rate, and respiratory rate were continuously monitored throughout surgery by trained anaesthetic staff.

Fetal Instrumentation

A midline maternal laparotomy was performed, the fetus was exposed and polyvinyl catheters were inserted into the right brachiocephalic artery, brachial vein and amniotic cavity. In the case of a twin pregnancy, only one twin was instrumented. An ultrasonic flow probe (3 mm; Transonic Systems, Ithaca, NY, US), was implanted around the carotid artery, enabling continuous monitoring of carotid artery blood flow (CaBF), as a surrogate for brain blood flow[24]. Two pairs of electroencephalograph (EEG) electrodes (AS633-7SSF; Cooner Wire, Chatsworth, CA, USA) were placed through burr holes onto the dura over the parasagittal parietal cortex (10 and 20 mm anterior to bregma, and 10 mm lateral) and secured using surgical bone wax and cyanoacrylate glue. A pair of electrodes was sewn into the nuchal muscle to record electromyographic (EMG) activity as a measure of fetal movement. The fetus was returned to the uterus in its original orientation and all fetal leads were exteriorised through the maternal flank. A catheter was inserted into the maternal jugular vein for administration of post-operative antibiotics and euthanasia at the end of the experimental period. At

the completion of surgery, ewes received fentanyl for 3 days via a transdermal patch placed on the left hind leg (75 μg/h; Janssen Cilag, North Ryde, NSW, USA).

Ewes were housed together in separate metabolic crates in a temperature controlled (20 ± 2°C and relative humidity of 50 ± 10%) room with a 12-hour light-dark cycle with access to food and water *ad libitum*. Four to five days of postoperative recovery was allowed before experiments commenced. Ewes and fetuses received daily i.v. infusions of ampicillin (800 mg, maternal i.v. and 200 mg, fetal i.v.) and engemycin (500 mg, maternal i.v.) for three consecutive days after surgery. Catheters were maintained patent with a continuous infusion of heparinised saline (25 IU/mL) at a rate of (0.2 mL/h).

Experimental Recordings

Continuous recordings of fetal mean arterial blood pressure (MAP), amniotic pressure, CaBF, FHR (derived from the beat-to-beat interval of the carotid artery pulse), EEG and nuchal EMG began 24 hours prior to the first saline or LPS infusion and continued until the end of the experiment (from 129–134 days of gestation). Amniotic and mean arterial pressures were measured using pressure transducers (ADIntruments, Castle Hill, NSW, Australia). The arterial blood pressure signal was collected at 1 kHz using a mains filter. The analogue fetal EEG signal was band pass filtered cut off frequencies set at 1 and 20 Hz, and digitised at a sampling frequency of 400 Hz. EEG power was derived from the analogue signal, while the spectral edge was calculated as the frequency below which 90% of the intensity was present. For data presentation, total EEG power (dB) was normalised by log transformation (20 x log intensity). The analogue fetal EMG signal was high pass filtered with a cut-off frequency of 100 Hz, and digitised at a sampling frequency of 2 kHz.

Experimental Protocol

Experiments started at 129 days of gestation. Fetuses were randomly allocated to three groups: control (vehicle (saline), n = 9), LPS (*Escherichia coli*, 055:B5) + vehicle (n = 8), and LPS + IL-1Ra (Anakinra, 13 mg/Kg i.v. dissolved in saline, n = 9). The dose was guided by previous pharmacokinetic and neuroprotection studies in non-human primates and humans that administered Anakinra (IL-1Ra) i.v. at a dose of 1.4–10 mg/kg [25, 26]. The final dose of IL-1Ra was decided following preliminary trials using our preclinical model of progressive LPS-induced inflammation where we compared i.v. doses of 4–13 mg/kg. In these preliminary trials the 13 mg/kg dose was associated with the greatest reduction in periventricular microgliosis. Thus, 13 mg/kg was chosen for the present study.

Fetuses received 300 ng, 600 ng, and 1200 ng infusions of LPS diluted in 2 mL of saline i.v. (infusion rate: 1 mL/min) at 0, 24 and 48 h, respectively. Controls received an equivalent volume of saline at the same infusion rate. Infusions of IL-1Ra (Anakinra, Sobi, SE-122 76, Chatswood, NSW, Australia) began 1 h after LPS administration on each consecutive day (i.e. 1, 25 and 49 h, respectively), at a rate of 0.75 mL/hr over 4 h. Fetal preductal arterial blood samples were collected every morning (0900 hrs) starting from 30 min before the start of the experiment until the day of post-mortem for pH, blood gases, and glucose and lactate concentrations (ABL 90 Flex Plus analyser, Radiometer, Brønshøj, Denmark).

Four days after the start of infusions, sheep were euthanized by intravenous injection of pentobarbitone sodium (Lethabarb, Virbac, NSW, Australia). The study protocol is illustrated in Fig. 1.

Fetal cytokine measurements

Additional blood samples were collected immediately before LPS or saline infusions, and 2 and 6 h after LPS/saline infusions for measurement of cytokine levels using commercially available bovine assays that cross-react with sheep. Plasma levels of IL-1β, IL-6, IL-10, and tumour necrosis factor (TNF) were quantified using a Milliplex MAP bovine cytokine magnetic bead panel assay kits (cat#: BCYT1-33K; Millipore, Burlington, MA, USA). Time points chosen for cytokine analysis were based on previous studies using similar experimental paradigms [7, 27]. In brief, 96 well plates were washed and then coated with the sample, assay buffer, serum matrix, and antibody-immobilized beads. The plates were left to incubate overnight at 4°C. The plates were washed and filled with the detection antibodies for 1 h. Streptavidin-Phycoerythin was added to the plates for 30 minutes. Finally, sheath fluid was added to the plates and cytokine concentrations were quantified using a Bio-Plex MAGPIX® Multiplex reader with xPOTENT® software (Bio-Rad, Hercules, California, USA).

Brain collection and processing

At post-mortem, fetal brains underwent immersion fixation with 10% phosphate buffered formalin for 7 days before processing and embedding using a standard paraffin tissue preparation. Using a brain mould, the right hemisphere was cut with a blocking blade into 5 mm thick coronal blocks. Blocks from the forebrain, approximately 23 mm anterior to stereotaxic zero, with a clearly visible cortex, striatum, and intragyral and periventricular white matter tracts were sectioned using a microtome (Leica Microsystems, Albany, New Zealand) into 8 µm thick coronal sections.

Immunohistochemistry

Slides were baked at 60°C for 1 h then dewaxed in xylene, rehydrated in increasing concentrations of ethanol, and washed in 0.1 mol/L phosphate buffered saline (PBS). Antigen retrieval was performed in citrate buffer (pH 6) using a microwave for 15 minutes. Endogenous peroxide quenching was performed by incubating slides in 0.1% H_2O_2 in methanol. Non-specific antigen blocking was performed using 3% normal goat serum. Sections were labelled with 1:200 rabbit anti-glial fibrillary acidic protein (GFAP; Abcam, cat#: ab68428), 1:200 rabbit anti-ionized calcium binding adaptor molecule 1 (Iba-1, Abcam, cat#: ab153696), 1:200 rabbit anti-oligodendrocyte transcription factor 2 (Olig-2, for oligodendrocytes at all stages of development; cat#: ab42453;), 1:200 mouse anti-cyclic nucleotide 3’ phosphodiesterase (CNPase, for immature and mature oligodendrocytes; Abcam, cat#: ab6319), 1:800 rabbit anti-cleaved caspase3 (Abcam, cat#: ab2302), 1:200 rabbit anti-neuronal nuclei (NeuN, Abcam, cat#: ab177487), and 1:250 rabbit anti-IL-1β (Novus, CO, USA; cat#: NB600-633) overnight at 4° C. Sections were incubated in biotin conjugated IgG (1:200, goat anti-rabbit (Dako, Victoria, Australia) or goat anti-mouse (Vector Laboratories, CA, USA) for 3 h at room temperature before being incubated in avidin-biotin complex (Sigma-Aldrich) for 45 minutes at room temperature. Sections were reacted with 3,3’-diaminobenzidine tetrahydrochloride (Sigma-Aldrich). The reaction was stopped in PBS before slides were dehydrated in xylene and increasing concentrations of ethanol, mounted in dibutylphthalate polystyrene xylene and cover slipped.

Astrocytes (GFAP + cells), microglia (Iba-1 + cells), oligodendrocytes (Olig-2 and CNPase + cells) apoptosis (Caspase 3 + cells), and neurons (NeuN + cells) were visualised using light microscopy (Olympus, Tokyo,

Japan) at 40x magnification and cellSens imaging software (Version 2.3, Olympus). Positive cells or immunoreactivity were quantified for each region of interest from 2 sections per subject using ImageJ software (v2.00, LOCI, University of Wisconsin). The IL-1β immunoreactivity scoring system was adapted from [14]. Scoring was based on the intensity of staining (1 = light, 2 = moderate, 3 = moderate-to-intense and 4 = intense). For each region of interest, average scores from two slides from the right hemisphere were calculated. All imaging and cell counts were performed by an assessor who was blinded to the treatment group.

Data analysis and Statistics

Offline analysis of physiological data was performed using LabChart Pro software (v8.1.3; ADInstruments, NSW, Australia). Physiological data were processed as hourly averages for analysis and presentation. Physiological data are presented from 24 h before the first saline/LPS infusion until the end of the experiment. EEG power and frequency were normalised by subtracting the baseline average (24 h before the first saline/LPS infusion) from the absolute value. Due to a small but significant difference in baseline FHR between the groups, the relative change in FHR was calculated as the percentage change from the 24 h baseline period.

Fetal body and brain weights were analysed using a one-way ANOVA. Blood biochemistry and physiological data were analysed using a two-way ANOVA. Physiological data from the baseline, LPS/saline infusion, and recovery periods were analysed as separate time periods. Histological data were analysed by two-way ANOVA with treatment and brain region as independent factors. For physiological and neuropathological data, when statistical significance was found between groups or between groups and time/brain region, post hoc comparisons were made using the Fisher's least significant difference test [28]. A power analysis for oligodendrocyte loss suggested the study had 90% power to detect a minimum difference of 20 cells/field, with an alpha of 0.05. Statistical significance was accepted when $P < 0.05$. Data are presented as means ± standard error (SE).

Results

Baseline period

Prior to LPS exposure, circulating levels of cytokines, cardiovascular and neurophysiological data and blood biochemistry did not differ between groups and were within the normal range (Figs. 2 and 3, and Table 1).

Table 1
Arterial pH, blood gases, glucose and lactate concentrations. Data are mean ± SE.*P < 0.05 vs. control

	D1 Base	D1 + 2h	D1 + 6h	D2 Base	D2 + 2h	D2 + 6h	D3 Base	D3 + 2h	D3 + 6h	D4 Base	D5 Base
pH											
Saline	7.38 ± 0.01	7.38 ± 0.01	7.38 ± 0.01	7.37 ± 0.01	7.38 ± 0.01	7.38 ± 0.01	7.38 ± 0.01	7.38 ± 0.01	7.37 ± 0.01	7.37 ± 0.01	7.36 ± 0.01
LPS	7.36 ± 0.01	7.32 ± 0.01*	7.34 ± 0.01*	7.35 ± 0.01*#	7.33 ± 0.01*	7.35 ± 0.01*	7.34 ± 0.01*	7.33 ± 0.01*	7.34 ± 0.01*	7.32 ± 0.01*	7.34 ± 0.01
LPS + IL-1Ra	7.38 ± 0.01	7.33 ± 0.01*	7.36 ± 0.01	7.38 ± 0.01	7.34 ± 0.01*	7.37 ± 0.01	7.36 ± 0.01	7.34 ± 0.01*	7.35 ± 0.01	7.35 ± 0.01	7.36 ± 0.01
$PaCO_2$											
Saline	46.6 ± 1.0	45.4 ± 1.0	46.2 ± 1.0	47.2 ± 1.0	46.9 ± 1.4	46.0 ± 1.1	47.4 ± 0.6	46.7 ± 0.8	46.9 ± 1.2	48.0 ± 1.0	47.7 ± 1.1
LPS	49.1 ± 0.4	49.7 ± 1.0*	51.5 ± 1.2*	49.4 ± 0.8	51.7 ± 0.9*	50.7 ± 0.9*	47.7 ± 0.9	48.5 ± 1.2	48.5 ± 0.6	46.0 ± 1.3	48.4 ± 1.0
LPS + IL-1Ra	47.0 ± 1.2	48.5 ± 1.4	49.6 ± 1.0*	49.3 ± 0.8	50.2 ± 1.0*	50.8 ± 1.1*	48.8 ± 0.8	48.3 ± 1.0	48.4 ± 0.7	48.1 ± 1.2	49.2 ± 0.7
PaO_2											
Saline	23.9 ± 1.2	23.8 ± 0.9	23.3 ± 1.5	24.2 ± 1.1	23.6 ± 0.8	25.2 ± 0.9	22.5 ± 1.5	24.3 ± 1.1	24.0 ± 1.4	24.2 ± 1.3	23.9 ± 0.8
LPS	22.1 ± 1.0	22.8 ± 0.8	19.2 ± 0.6*	22.9 ± 1.2	21.1 ± 1.2	20.1 ± 1.3*	22.8 ± 1.1	21.6 ± 1.3	20.8 ± 0.6*	23.5 ± 1.4	23.1 ± 0.7
LPS + IL-1Ra	21.3 ± 0.5	20.0 ± 0.6*	17.8 ± 0.3*	19.3 ± 0.9*	17.8 ± 1.2*	16.7 ± 1.0*	20.8 ± 0.9	19.0 ± 1.0	18.3 ± 0.7*	20.7 ± 1.0	21.2 ± 1.0
sO_2											
Saline	66 ± 2	68 ± 2	65 ± 3	65 ± 2	66 ± 2	69 ± 2	64 ± 3	68 ± 2	66 ± 2	65 ± 2	65 ± 2
LPS	62 ± 3	59 ± 3*	47 ± 2*	59 ± 3	50 ± 4*	48 ± 4*	61 ± 3	56 ± 3*	57 ± 2*	65 ± 2	65 ± 3
LPS + IL-1Ra	64 ± 1	57 ± 3*	51 ± 2*	56 ± 3	50 ± 4*	48 ± 3*	62 ± 2	55 ± 3*	53 ± 2*	63 ± 3	61 ± 2
Glucose											

	D1 Base	D1 + 2h	D1 + 6h	D2 Base	D2 + 2h	D2 + 6h	D3 Base	D3 + 2h	D3 + 6h	D4 Base	D5 Base
Saline	0.9 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.0
LPS	0.9 ± 0.1	1.1 ± 0.1	0.8 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.0	0.8 ± 0.0	0.9 ± 0.2	1.0 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1	1.0 ± 0.0	1.1 ± 0.2	0.9 ± 0.1
LPS + IL-1Ra	0.9 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1	0.8 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1	0.8 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1	1.0 ± 0.1	0.8 ± 0.1	1.0 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1	0.9 ± 0.1
Lactate											
Saline	1.7 ± 0.2	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.2	1.5 ± 0.1	1.4 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1
LPS	1.7 ± 0.1	3.1 ± 0.3*	4.0 ± 0.4*	1.5 ± 0.1	2.3 ± 0.1*	1.9 ± 0.2	1.2 ± 0.1	1.3 ± 0.1	1.3 ± 0.1	1.1 ± 0.1	1.1 ± 0.1
LPS + IL-1Ra	1.6 ± 0.1	2.9 ± 0.4*	4.4 ± 0.9*	1.5 ± 0.2	2.1 ± 0.4	2.1 ± 0.4	1.2 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.3 ± 0.1	1.1 ± 0.1	1.2 ± 0.1

Fetal Biochemistry

In the LPS + vehicle group, pH was lower compared to controls between days 1 and 4 (P < 0.05; day 1 + 2h to day 4, Table 1). In LPS + IL-1Ra treated fetuses, pH was lower than control at + 2 h on days 1, 2 and 3 after LPS infusions. $PaCO_2$ was higher in LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra-treated fetuses between days 1 and 2 after LPS infusion (P < 0.05 vs. control, day 1 + 2 h to day 2 + 6 h). PaO_2 and sO2 were lower in LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups between days 1 and 3 after LPS infusions (P < 0.05 vs control; day 1 + 2h to day 3). Arterial lactate was higher in LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra-treated groups after the first LPS infusion (day 1 + 2 h and + 6 h, P < 0.05 vs. control). After the second LPS infusion, arterial lactate was higher in the LPS + vehicle treated group compared to controls (P < 0.05; day 2 + 2 h, Table 1). There were no differences in pH, blood gases, glucose and lactate concentrations between LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra-treated groups throughout the study period (Table 1).

Plasma cytokines

IL-1β increased 6 h after the first LPS infusion in the LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups compared to controls (P < 0.05, Fig. 2). After the second LPS infusion, IL-1β was higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control and LPS + IL-1Ra groups at + 2 h and + 6 h (P < 0.05, day 2 + 2 and + 6 h, Fig. 2). TNF was higher than control at + 2 h after the first and second LPS infusions in the LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups (P < 0.05, day 1 + 2 h and day 2 + 2 h). At + 6 h after the second LPS infusion, TNF was higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to LPS + IL-1Ra and control groups (P < 0.05, day 2 + 6 h, Fig. 2). IL-6 was higher in LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups compared to control at + 2 h and + 6 h after the first LPS infusion. After the second LPS infusion, IL-6 levels were higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to LPS + IL-1Ra and control groups (P < 0.05, Fig. 2). IL-10 was increased in the LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups compared to control at + 2 and + 6 h after the first LPS infusion (P < 0.05 vs control, day 1 + 2 and + 6 h, Fig. 2). After the second LPS infusion, IL-10 was higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to LPS + IL-1Ra

and control groups at + 2 h and + 6 h (P < 0.05, day 2 + 2 h and + 6 h, Fig. 2). After the third LPS infusion, IL-10 was higher in the LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups at + 2 h compared to control (P < 0.05, day 3 + 2 h, Fig. 2).

Physiology

Fetal heart rate

After the first LPS infusion FHR was increased in the LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups compared to control between 2 and 23 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3). After the second LPS infusion, FHR was increased in the LPS + vehicle group compared to controls between 26 and 44 h (2–20 h after the second LPS infusion, P < 0.05). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, FHR was increased compared to control between 27 and 47 h (3–23 h after the second LPS infusion, P < 0.05). After the third LPS infusion, FHR was significantly higher in the LPS + vehicle group between 50 and 54 h, and at 64 h compared to control (2–6 h and 16 h after the third LPS infusion, P < 0.05). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, FHR was higher between 51 and 56 h, and at 65–71 h, compared to control (3–8 h and 17–23 h after the third LPS infusion, P < 0.05). During recovery, FHR did not differ between groups (Fig. 3).

Mean arterial blood pressure

After the first LPS infusion, MAP was reduced in the LPS + vehicle group between 4 and 16 h compared to control (P < 0.05, Fig. 3). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, MAP was reduced compared to control between 5 and 16 h (P < 0.05). After the second LPS infusion, MAP was reduced in the LPS + vehicle group between 29 and 38 h, 41–42 h and at 46–47 h (5–14 h, 17–18 h and 22–23 h after the second LPS infusion, respectively). In the LPS + IL-1Ra treated group, MAP was reduced compared to control between 31 and 47 h (7–23 h after the second LPS infusion, P < 0.05). After the third LPS infusion, MAP was reduced in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control between 52 and 60 h (4–12 h after the third LPS infusion, P < 0.05, Fig. 3). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, MAP was lower compared to control between 51 and 64 h (3–16 h after the third LPS infusion, P < 0.05). During the recovery period, MAP was reduced in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control at 74, 80 and 95–96 h (P < 0.05). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group MAP was reduced compared to control between 74 and 90 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3).

Carotid arterial blood flow and vascular conductance

After the first LPS infusion, carotid arterial blood flow (CaBF) was higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control between 6 and 18 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3). In the LPS + IL-1Ra treated group, CaBF was higher than control between 5 and 11 h (P < 0.05). After the second LPS infusion, CaBF was higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control between 27 and 34 h, and at 37 and 39 h (3–10 h, and 13 and 15 h after the second LPS infusion, P < 0.05). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, CaBF was higher than control between 29 and 31 h and at 33 h (5–7 h and 9 h after the second LPS infusion, P < 0.05). After the third LPS infusion, CaBF was higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control at 49 h, 52–53 h, 60 and 63 h (1 h, 4–5 h, 12 and 15 h after the third LPS infusion, P < 0.05). There were no differences in CaBF between groups throughout the recovery period. After the first LPS infusion, carotid arterial vascular conductance (CaVC) was higher than control between 3 and 8 h, at 10 h and 13–17 h (P < 0.05). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, CaVC was higher than control between 4 and 18 h (P < 0.05). After the second LPS infusion, CaVC was higher in the LPS + vehicle

group compared to control between 29 and 40 h (5–16 h after the second LPS infusion, P < 0.05). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, CaVC was higher than control between 29 and 35 h (5–11 h after the second LPS infusion, P < 0.05). After the third LPS infusion, CaVC was higher in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control between 52 and 60 h (4–12 h after the third LPS infusion, P < 0.05). In LPS + IL-1Ra treated group, CaVC was higher than control between 51–56 h (3–8 h after the third LPS infusion, P < 0.05, Fig. 3).

EEG power and frequency

After the first LPS infusion, EEG power fell in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control between 3–6 h and at 10 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, EEG power was lower than control at 3 h (P < 0.05). After the second LPS infusion, EEG power was lower in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control between 40 and 44 h (16–20 h after the second LPS bolus, P < 0.05). During the recovery period, EEG power was lower in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control at 72–78 h and 82–96 h (P < 0.05). In LPS + IL-1Ra group, EEG power was higher compared to LPS + vehicle at 77–82 h, and 85–96 h (P < 0.05 vs control, Fig. 3). There were no significant differences in EEG frequency between groups throughout the study period (data not shown).

Nuchal EMG

After the first LPS infusion, nuchal EMG activity was reduced in the LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups compared to control between 1 and 2 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3). During the recovery period, nuchal EMG activity was lower in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control at 60, 80, 86 and 96 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, nuchal EMG activity was higher than control at 53, 58, 60 and 69 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, nuchal EMG activity was higher compared to LPS + vehicle at 77, 79–80, 84–87, 94 and 96 h (P < 0.05, Fig. 3).

Post-mortem findings

There were no significant differences in body weight, brain weight, or the ratio of males to females between the groups (Table 2).

Table 2
Fetal body weights, brain weights, and sex.

	Body Weight (kg)	Brain Weight (g)	Sex (M:F)
Control	4.5 ± 0.2	51.5 ± 1.0	6:3
LPS + vehicle	4.6 ± 0.2	48.8 ± 1.2	7:1
LPS + IL-1Ra	4.7 ± 0.3	49.6 ± 1.6	5:4
Data are means ± SE.			

Histopathology

The number of GFAP + astrocytes was reduced in the periventricular and second intragyral white matter tracts in the LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL-1Ra groups compared to control (P < 0.05, Figs. 4 and 5). In the first intragyral white matter tract, the number of GFAP + astrocytes was reduced in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control. The total number of Iba-1 + microglia and number of amoeboid microglia was increased

in the periventricular and intragyral white matter tracts in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control ($P < 0.05$). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, the total number of Iba-1 + microglia and amoeboid microglia was reduced in the white matter tracts compared to the LPS + vehicle group ($P < 0.05$, Figs. 4 and 5). IL-1β immunoreactivity was increased in the periventricular and first intragyral white matter tracts in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control. In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, IL-1β immunoreactivity was reduced in the periventricular and first intragyral white matter tracts compared to the LPS + vehicle group ($P < 0.05$, Figs. 4 and 5).

The number of caspase 3 + cells was increased in the periventricular and intragyral white matter tracts in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control ($P < 0.05$). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, the number of caspase 3 positive cells was reduced in the periventricular and intragyral white matter compared to the LPS + vehicle group ($P < 0.05$, Figs. 4 and 5).

The number of Olig-2 + oligodendrocytes was reduced in the periventricular white matter in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control ($P < 0.05$). In the first intragyral white matter tract, the number of Olig-2 + oligodendrocytes was not significantly reduced in the LPS + vehicle group compared to control ($P = 0.07$, Fig. 4). In the LPS + IL-1Ra group, the number of Olig-2 + oligodendrocytes was higher in the periventricular and intragyral white matter tracts compared to LPS + vehicle ($P < 0.05$, Figs. 4 and 5). In the intragyral white matter tracts, the numbers of Olig-2 + oligodendrocytes was higher in the LPS + IL-1Ra group compared to control ($P < 0.05$). The numbers of CNPase + oligodendrocytes and area fraction of CNPase staining in the periventricular and intragyral white matter tracts did not differ between groups.

There were no differences in the area fraction of NeuN staining between groups in the cingulate, parasagittal and lateral cortices, caudate nucleus and putamen (Fig. 6)

Discussion

This study shows that IL-1β inhibition during progressive systemic LPS-induced inflammation in near-term fetal sheep reduced microgliosis and apoptosis, and improved survival of oligodendrocytes in the large white matter tracts. The reduction in neuroinflammation was associated with reduced circulating pro- and anti-inflammatory cytokines and improved recovery of EEG power and fetal movement after LPS-exposure.

Clinically, perinatal infection/inflammation is associated with a high risk of neonatal mortality and morbidity. Moreover, in cases of perinatal infection/inflammation, systemic upregulation of IL-1β is associated with increased risk of short and long term neurodevelopmental impairment after birth [29, 30]. Increased IL-1β expression has been detected in the cerebrospinal fluid of term neonates with encephalopathy, and was strongly associated with impaired neurodevelopmental outcomes [31]. Furthermore, at post-mortem, neonates with white matter injury showed increased IL-1β expression localised to areas of white matter gliosis [15]. Similarly, increased circulating levels of IL-1 are associated with acute white matter injury and impaired neural metabolism [19, 20]. These data demonstrate a strong association between elevated systemic and central IL-1β production and perinatal brain injury. However, it remains unknown whether this association is causal. Critically, using a large animal translational model of perinatal infection/inflammation at term, this study shows that IL-1β plays an important role in the pathophysiology of white matter

inflammation and injury, and suggests that targeted systemic inhibition may improve histological and functional outcomes.

Consistent with previous studies from our laboratory and others, LPS infusions were associated with a systemic inflammatory response as shown by elevated cytokine levels, systemic hypotension and tachycardia [7, 27, 32–34]. Repeated LPS infusions were associated with tolerance to subsequent doses indicating reprogramming of the innate immune system. In human and sheep monocytes, repeated LPS exposure is associated with decreased cytokine production and downregulation of the LPS receptor CD14[35–37]. Consistent with these findings, *in vivo* studies in fetal sheep have shown that repeated LPS exposure is associated with attenuation of systemic inflammation [27, 34, 38].

In the present study, we used the commercially available IL-1Ra, Anakinra, to inhibit IL-1 mediated systemic and central nervous system inflammation in near-term fetal sheep. Anakinra is a recombinant non-glycosylated form of the human IL-1Ra and has been FDA approved for treatment of chronic inflammatory conditions in adults and children. It exerts its physiological effects by binding to the IL-1 receptor and neutralising the effects of IL-1 to prevent downstream inflammatory signalling [39]. It has a molecular weight of 17 kDa and is capable of penetrating the blood brain barrier in humans and sheep [26, 40]. To the best of our knowledge, the temporal profile of circulating cytokines has not been assessed in the setting of IL-1Ra and systemic inflammation in the near-term fetus. Infusion of IL-1Ra starting 1 hour after LPS-induced inflammation led to a sustained reduction in circulating IL-6, from 6 h after the first LPS infusion, and reduced circulating IL-1β, TNF and IL-10 concentrations after the second LPS infusion. These data are consistent with *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies that reported inhibition of pro-and anti-inflammatory cytokines after IL-1Ra administration in adults with chronic inflammatory disease [41, 42], fetal sheep exposed to intra-amniotic LPS [43] and neonatal mice exposed to antenatal LPS and/or postnatal hyperoxia [44]. Collectively, these data demonstrate exogenous IL-1Ra can modulate systemic pro-and anti-inflammatory cytokine production in the fetus and neonate.

Elevated circulating levels of IL-1β are associated with impaired cerebral oxidative metabolism [18] and EEG suppression in neonates [45]. Similarly, in the present study we observed suppression of EEG power and nuchal EMG activity (reflecting reduced neural activity and fetal movement, respectively) after the first LPS infusion, and sustained reductions in neural activity and fetal movement during the recovery period. The suppression of EEG power and fetal movement may reflect inhibition of synaptic activity due to increased local cytokine production and/or hypoxia. Indeed, suppression of EEG activity and fetal movement after the first LPS infusion was associated with mild reductions in arterial PaO_2 and SaO_2. Inflammation and cerebral hypotension/hypoperfusion can trigger active EEG suppression through release of inhibitory neuromodulators and neurosteroids [46–48]. Although in the present study systemic hypotension and EEG suppression were not associated with reduced carotid artery perfusion, there was an increase in circulating lactate concentration in LPS + vehicle and LPS + IL1Ra treated groups after the first and second LPS infusions, suggesting impaired oxidative phosphorylation in response to LPS-induced inflammation at those times. These data are consistent with previous studies in preterm fetal and newborn sheep and raise the possibility that higher cerebral metabolic demand during fetal inflammation increases susceptibility to hypoxic-ischemic injury [7, 27, 49].

This concept is supported by studies in preterm and term neonates whereby antenatal/perinatal inflammation was linked to disturbances in cerebral oxidative metabolism, as shown by increased cerebral oxygen consumption on near infrared spectroscopy [50] and impaired cerebral oxidative metabolism on magnetic resonance spectroscopy [18]. By contrast, during the recovery period, when systemic oxygenation had normalised, suppression of EEG power and fetal movement in LPS exposed fetuses was associated with increased brain tissue IL-1β immunoreactivity. Thus, passive anoxic depolarization and inflammation-induced synaptic inhibition may have modulated EEG activity in LPS-exposed fetuses.

In LPS + IL-1Ra treated fetuses we observed a reduction in the duration of EEG suppression and faster recovery of carotid artery perfusion after the first and second LPS infusions compared to the LPS + vehicle group, suggesting an improvement in cerebral metabolism. Furthermore, arterial lactate concentration did not differ from control in the LPS + IL-1Ra group but was higher in the LPS + vehicle group after the second LPS infusion, suggesting an intermediate improvement in oxidative phosphorylation with IL-1Ra-treatment. During the recovery period, EEG power and fetal movement were improved in the LPS + IL-1Ra treated group. Collectively these data suggest that IL-1 plays an important role in modulating EEG suppression during fetal inflammation.

LPS-induced fetal inflammation was associated with increased numbers of total and activated microglia, in addition to increased apoptosis (caspase-3) and IL-1β immunoreactivity, within the intragyral and periventricular white matter tracts. This was accompanied by reduced numbers of astrocytes and total (Olig-2+) oligodendrocytes in the intragyral and periventricular white matter. The reduction in astrocyte survival likely represents the acute phase of injury during neuroinflammation. For example, reduced astrocyte numbers were reported 48 h after hypoxia-ischemia in neonatal piglets and in mechanically ventilated newborn lambs [51, 52]. There was no apparent effect LPS-exposure or IL-1Ra treatment on myelination, as shown by no differences in numbers of immature and mature oligodendrocytes expressing the CNPase protein or area fraction of CNPase staining. These data are broadly consistent with previous studies in near-term fetal sheep that were exposed to LPS during a similar time-course [53]. This combination of reduced total (Olig-2+) oligodendrocytes with no change in the number of immature and mature (CNPase+) oligodendrocytes or myelination suggests selective loss of late oligodendrocyte precursors in LPS-exposed near-term fetuses. Similarly, we found no overt neuronal loss after LPS-exposure, as shown by no differences in cortical and striatal NeuN staining between the groups. The timing of white matter vulnerability in the near-term brain overlaps with late oligodendrocyte precursor cell proliferation [54]. These data suggest that late oligodendrocyte precursors in the near-term brain are vulnerable to LPS-induced fetal neuroinflammation. Pathologically, these data are highly consistent with clinical findings of diffuse white matter injury in cases of term neonatal encephalopathy [8, 55].The combination of diffuse white matter gliosis with selective oligodendrocyte loss and relative sparing of the gray matter suggests the pathological outcomes in the present study are comparable to a mild injury pattern, consistent with mild neonatal encephalopathy [55, 56].

IL-1Ra treatment during LPS-induced fetal inflammation reduced numbers of total and activated microglia, IL-1β immunoreactivity and apoptosis within the large white matter tracts, but had no effect on astrocyte survival. The reduction in microgliosis was associated with increased total numbers of oligodendrocytes, but had no effect on numbers of immature and mature oligodendrocytes (CNPase positive cells) or myelination

(CNPase immunoreactivity), suggesting improved survival of oligodendrocyte precursors. These data are consistent with evidence that systemic and/or locally produced IL-1β plays an integral role in microglial infiltration and activation [57–59]. Furthermore, our data support a critical role for microglial activation in mediating acute oligodendrocyte loss during fetal inflammation [60] and indicate that targeted inhibition of IL-1β may be a viable therapeutic intervention. Consistent with these observations, administration of IL-1Ra to neonatal rats exposed to LPS or LPS and hypoxia-ischemia was associated with reduced brain tissue IL-1β expression, reduced gliosis, improved myelination and improved motor and cognitive function [16, 61]. In the intragyral white matter tracts, we observed increased numbers of total (Olig-2+) oligodendrocytes in LPS + IL-1Ra treated fetuses compared to vehicle controls. Oligodendrocytes and their progenitor cells express IL-1 receptors [62, 63]. Binding of the IL-1 receptor on oligodendrocytes is a key extracellular signal for initiating oligodendrocyte apoptosis [64]. Thus, we speculate the increased number of total oligodendrocytes in the LPS + IL-1Ra group compared to controls was mediated by anti-apoptotic effects of the IL-1Ra. Further studies are now required to examine the long-term effects of IL-1Ra on oligodendrocyte development and myelination.

In the LPS + IL-1Ra treated group we observed faster restoration of carotid artery perfusion to baseline levels after LPS infusions compared to the LPS + vehicle group. However, there was no effect of IL-1Ra on the severity or duration of hypotension or tachycardia after LPS infusions, suggesting the improved recovery of carotid artery perfusion in the IL-1Ra group was mediated by a local anti-inflammatory effect on the cerebral vasculature and/or tissue. For example, intracisternal injection of IL-1β in adult dogs was associated with a dose dependant increase in basilar artery perfusion and vasodilation, without affecting systemic blood pressure or heart rate. Furthermore, IL-1Ra-treatment reduced the IL-1β-mediated increase in cerebral artery vasodilation and perfusion, which was likely mediated by IL-1β-induced prostaglandin production [65]. By contrast, in preterm fetal sheep, systemic TNF blockade was associated with inhibition of systemic hypotension and tachycardia during LPS-induced inflammation [27]. Collectively, these data suggest that IL-1β has targeted effects on the cerebral vasculature whereas other cytokines, including TNF, play a greater role in modulating the cardiovascular adaptations to systemic inflammation in the fetus.

One of the key translational considerations for potential neuroprotectants is when to treat [66–68]. In the present study, we started IL-1Ra infusions 1 h after infusing LPS. The rationale was to establish proof-of-concept that systemic IL-1Ra started after early-onset fetal inflammation can alleviate neuroinflammation and injury. However, it is important to appreciate that in current practice it is unlikely that inflammation (infectious or sterile) can be detected and treated as soon as it begins. Thus, the present study supports further investigation to determine the window of opportunity of IL-1Ra for treating inflammation-induced brain injury.

Conclusions

In conclusion, IL-1Ra administration to near-term fetal sheep during LPS-induced inflammation prevented microgliosis, reduced circulating cytokines and white matter IL-1β expression, and improved total oligodendrocyte survival and EEG recovery 4 days after starting LPS infusions. These data suggest a possible neuroprotective role for IL-1β inhibition in infants exposed to infection/inflammation during the

perinatal period. Based on these data, further translational preclinical studies are needed to evaluate the effects of IL-1β inhibition on long-term myelination, the optimal dosing regimen and the efficacy of delayed administration to assess the potential for IL-1Ra to improve outcomes after birth.

Abbreviations

CaBF: carotid arterial blood flow; CaVC carotid arterial vascular conductance; CNPase: 2',-3'-Cyclic-nuceotide 3'-phosphodiesterase; EEG: electroencephalogram; FHR: Fetal heart rate; GFAP: Glial fibrillary acidic protein; Iba-1: Ionized calcium-binding adapter molecule-1; IGWM: Intragyral white matter; IL: Interleukin; LPS: Lipopolysaccharide; MAP: Mean arterial blood pressure; Olig2: Oligodendrocyte transcription factor-2; PBS: Phosphate-buffered saline; PVWM: Periventricular white matter; TNF: Tumour necrosis factor

Declarations

Ethics approval: All procedures were approved by the Hudson Institute of Medical Research Animal Ethics committee, and were conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (Eighth Edition).

Consent for publications: Not applicable

Availability of data and materials: The datasets used during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request

Competing interests: The authors declare they have no competing interests

Funding: This study was supported by the CJ Martin Postdoctoral Fellowship and project grants from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (R.G.; 1090890 and 1164954), the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Harold and Cora Brennen Benevolent Trust, Health Research Council of New Zealand (17/601) and the Victorian Government's Operational Infrastructure Support Program.

Author contributions: Sharmony B. Kelly, Alistair J. Gunn and Robert Galinsky conceptualized and designed the study. Sharmony B. Kelly, Vanesa Stojanovska, Valerie Zahra, Alison Moxham, Suzanne Miller, Timothy JM Moss, Stuart B Hooper, Marcel F. Nold, Claudia A. Nold-Petry, Justin M. Dean, Laura Bennet, Alistair J. Gunn, Graeme R. Polglase, Robert Galinsky undertook experiments and formal analysis of the data. Valerie Zahra and Sharmony B. Kelly designed and undertook all cytokine analyses. Shamony B. Kelly and Robert Galinsky undertook the immunohistochemistry, cell quantification, analysis and preparation of figures. Graeme R. Polglase and Robert Galinsky provided overall oversight of the research. All authors critically reviewed the manuscript and approved the final manuscript as submitted and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Acknowledgements: The authors gratefully acknowledge the technical assistance of Dr Ilias Nitsos, Mr Dalibor Stanojkovic and the Monash Health Translation Precinct Histology Platform.

References

1. Fleischmann C, Reichert F, Cassini A, Horner R, Harder T, Markwart R, Tröndle M, Savova Y, Kissoon N, Schlattmann P, et al: **Global incidence and mortality of neonatal sepsis: a systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Arch Dis Child* 2021.
2. Wu YW, Escobar GJ, Grether JK, Croen LA, Greene JD, Newman TB: **Chorioamnionitis and cerebral palsy in term and near-term infants.** *JAMA* 2003, **290:**2677-2684.
3. Honeycutt A, Dunlap L, Chen H, al Homsi G, Grosse S, Schendel DE: **Economic costs associated with mental retardation, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, and vision impairment–United States, 2003.** *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2004, **53:**57-59.
4. Shih STF, Tonmukayakul U, Imms C, Reddihough D, Graham HK, Cox L, Carter R: **Economic evaluation and cost of interventions for cerebral palsy: a systematic review.** *Dev Med Child Neurol* 2018, **60:**543-558.
5. Eunson P: **The long-term health, social, and financial burden of hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy.** *Dev Med Child Neurol* 2015, **57 Suppl 3:**48-50.
6. Singh K, Patro N, Pradeepa M, Patro I: **Neonatal Lipopolysaccharide Infection Causes Demyelination and Behavioral Deficits in Adult and Senile Rat Brain.** *Ann Neurosci* 2017, **24:**146-154.
7. Galinsky R, van de Looij Y, Mitchell N, Dean JM, Dhillon SK, Yamaguchi K, Lear CA, Wassink G, Davidson JO, Nott F, et al: **Magnetic Resonance Imaging Correlates of White Matter Gliosis and Injury in Preterm Fetal Sheep Exposed to Progressive Systemic Inflammation.** *Int J Mol Sci* 2020, **21**.
8. O'Muircheartaigh J, Robinson EC, Pietsch M, Wolfers T, Aljabar P, Grande LC, Teixeira R, Bozek J, Schuh A, Makropoulos A, et al: **Modelling brain development to detect white matter injury in term and preterm born neonates.** *Brain* 2020, **143:**467-479.
9. Hassell J, Tann C, Idro R, Robertson NJ: **Contribution of perinatal conditions to cerebral palsy in Uganda.** *Lancet Glob Health* 2018, **6:**e248-e249.
10. Tann CJ, Martinello KA, Sadoo S, Lawn JE, Seale AC, Vega-Poblete M, Russell NJ, Baker CJ, Bartlett L, Cutland C, et al: **Neonatal Encephalopathy With Group B Streptococcal Disease Worldwide: Systematic Review, Investigator Group Datasets, and Meta-analysis.** *Clin Infect Dis* 2017, **65:**S173-s189.
11. Falck M, Osredkar D, Wood TR, Maes E, Flatebø T, Sabir H, Thoresen M: **Neonatal Systemic Inflammation Induces Inflammatory Reactions and Brain Apoptosis in a Pathogen-Specific Manner.** *Neonatology* 2018, **113:**212-220.
12. Osredkar D, Thoresen M, Maes E, Flatebø T, Elstad M, Sabir H: **Hypothermia is not neuroprotective after infection-sensitized neonatal hypoxic-ischemic brain injury.** *Resuscitation* 2014, **85:**567-572.
13. Osredkar D, Sabir H, Falck M, Wood T, Maes E, Flatebø T, Puchades M, Thoresen M: **Hypothermia Does Not Reverse Cellular Responses Caused by Lipopolysaccharide in Neonatal Hypoxic-Ischaemic Brain Injury.** *Dev Neurosci* 2015, **37:**390-397.
14. Girard S, Kadhim H, Larouche A, Roy M, Gobeil F, Sébire G: **Pro-inflammatory disequilibrium of the IL-1 beta/IL-1ra ratio in an experimental model of perinatal brain damages induced by lipopolysaccharide and hypoxia-ischemia.** *Cytokine* 2008, **43:**54-62.
15. Girard S, Sébire G, Kadhim H: **Proinflammatory orientation of the interleukin 1 system and downstream induction of matrix metalloproteinase 9 in the pathophysiology of human perinatal white matter damage.** *J Neuropathol Exp Neurol* 2010, **69:**1116-1129.

16. Girard S, Sebire H, Brochu ME, Briota S, Sarret P, Sebire G: **Postnatal administration of IL-1Ra exerts neuroprotective effects following perinatal inflammation and/or hypoxic-ischemic injuries.** *Brain Behav Immun* 2012, **26:**1331-1339.
17. Favrais G, van de Looij Y, Fleiss B, Ramanantsoa N, Bonnin P, Stoltenburg-Didinger G, Lacaud A, Saliba E, Dammann O, Gallego J, et al: **Systemic inflammation disrupts the developmental program of white matter.** *Ann Neurol* 2011, **70:**550-565.
18. Bartha AI, Foster-Barber A, Miller SP, Vigneron DB, Glidden DV, Barkovich AJ, Ferriero DM: **Neonatal encephalopathy: association of cytokines with MR spectroscopy and outcome.** *Pediatr Res* 2004, **56:**960-966.
19. Rocha-Ferreira E, Kelen D, Faulkner S, Broad KD, Chandrasekaran M, Kerenyi Á, Kato T, Bainbridge A, Golay X, Sullivan M, et al: **Systemic pro-inflammatory cytokine status following therapeutic hypothermia in a piglet hypoxia-ischemia model.** *J Neuroinflammation* 2017, **14:**44.
20. Lingam I, Avdic-Belltheus A, Meehan C, Martinello K, Ragab S, Peebles D, Barkhuizen M, Tann CJ, Tachtsidis I, Wolfs T, et al: **Serial blood cytokine and chemokine mRNA and microRNA over 48 h are insult specific in a piglet model of inflammation-sensitized hypoxia-ischaemia.** *Pediatr Res* 2020.
21. Barlow RM: **The foetal sheep: morphogenesis of the nervous system and histochemical aspects of myelination.** *J Comp Neurol* 1969, **135:**249-262.
22. Küster H, Weiss M, Willeitner AE, Detlefsen S, Jeremias I, Zbojan J, Geiger R, Lipowsky G, Simbruner G: **Interleukin-1 receptor antagonist and interleukin-6 for early diagnosis of neonatal sepsis 2 days before clinical manifestation.** *Lancet* 1998, **352:**1271-1277.
23. Oh JW, Park CW, Moon KC, Park JS, Jun JK: **The relationship among the progression of inflammation in umbilical cord, fetal inflammatory response, early-onset neonatal sepsis, and chorioamnionitis.** *PLoS One* 2019, **14:**e0225328.
24. Drury PP, Bennet L, Booth LC, Davidson JO, Wassink G, Gunn AJ: **Maturation of the mitochondrial redox response to profound asphyxia in fetal sheep.** *PLoS ONE [Electronic Resource]* 2012, **7:**e39273.
25. Fox E, Jayaprakash N, Pham TH, Rowley A, McCully CL, Pucino F, Goldbach-Mansky R: **The serum and cerebrospinal fluid pharmacokinetics of anakinra after intravenous administration to non-human primates.** *J Neuroimmunol* 2010, **223:**138-140.
26. Galea J, Ogungbenro K, Hulme S, Greenhalgh A, Aarons L, Scarth S, Hutchinson P, Grainger S, King A, Hopkins SJ, et al: **Intravenous anakinra can achieve experimentally effective concentrations in the central nervous system within a therapeutic time window: results of a dose-ranging study.** *J Cereb Blood Flow Metab* 2011, **31:**439-447.
27. Galinsky R, Dhillon SK, Dean JM, Davidson JO, Lear CA, Wassink G, Nott F, Kelly SB, Fraser M, Yuill C, et al: **Tumor necrosis factor inhibition attenuates white matter gliosis after systemic inflammation in preterm fetal sheep.** *J Neuroinflammation* 2020, **17:**92.
28. Levin JR, Serlin RC, Seaman MA: **A controlled, powerful multiple-comparison strategy for several situations.** *Psychol Bull* 1994, **115:**153-159.
29. O'Shea TM, Allred EN, Kuban KC, Dammann O, Paneth N, Fichorova R, Hirtz D, Leviton A, Extremely Low Gestational Age Newborn Study I: **Elevated concentrations of inflammation-related proteins in postnatal**

blood predict severe developmental delay at 2 years of age in extremely preterm infants.*J Pediatr* 2012, **160:**395-401 e394.

30. O'Shea TM, Shah B, Allred EN, Fichorova RN, Kuban KC, Dammann O, Leviton A, Investigators ES: **Inflammation-initiating illnesses, inflammation-related proteins, and cognitive impairment in extremely preterm infants.***Brain Behav Immun* 2013, **29:**104-112.
31. Aly H, Khashaba MT, El-Ayouty M, El-Sayed O, Hasanein BM: **IL-1beta, IL-6 and TNF-alpha and outcomes of neonatal hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy.***Brain Dev* 2006, **28:**178-182.
32. Feng SY, Phillips DJ, Stockx EM, Yu VY, Walker AM: **Endotoxin has acute and chronic effects on the cerebral circulation of fetal sheep.***Am J Physiol Regul Integr Comp Physiol* 2009, **296:**R640-650.
33. Feng SY, Samarasinghe T, Phillips DJ, Alexiou T, Hollis JH, Yu VY, Walker AM: **Acute and chronic effects of endotoxin on cerebral circulation in lambs.***American Journal of Physiology - Regulatory Integrative & Comparative Physiology* 2010, **298:**R760-766.
34. Lear CA, Davidson JO, Booth LC, Wassink G, Galinsky R, Drury PP, Fraser M, Bennet L, Gunn AJ: **Biphasic changes in fetal heart rate variability in preterm fetal sheep developing hypotension after acute on chronic lipopolysaccharide exposure.***Am J Physiol Regul Integr Comp Physiol* 2014.
35. Kallapur SG, Jobe AH, Ball MK, Nitsos I, Moss TJM, Hillman NH, Newnham JP, Kramer BW: **Pulmonary and Systemic Endotoxin Tolerance in Preterm Fetal Sheep Exposed to Chorioamnionitis.***J Immunol* 2007, **179:**8491-8499.
36. Kramer BW, Kallapur SG, Moss TJ, Nitsos I, Newnham JP, Jobe AH: **Intra-amniotic LPS modulation of TLR signaling in lung and blood monocytes of fetal sheep.***Innate Immun* 2009, **15:**101-107.
37. Mengozzi M, Fantuzzi G, Sironi M, Bianchi M, Fratelli M, Peri G, Bernasconi S, Ghezzi P: **Early down-regulation of TNF production by LPS tolerance in human monocytes: comparison with IL-1 beta, IL-6, and IL-8.***Lymphokine Cytokine Res* 1993, **12:**231-236.
38. van den Heuij LG, Mathai S, Davidson JO, Lear CA, Booth LC, Fraser M, Gunn AJ, Bennet L: **Synergistic white matter protection with acute-on-chronic endotoxin and subsequent asphyxia in preterm fetal sheep.***J Neuroinflammation* 2014, **11:**89.
39. Arend WP: **The mode of action of cytokine inhibitors.***J Rheumatol Suppl* 2002, **65:**16-21.
40. Sadowska GB, Chen X, Zhang J, Lim YP, Cummings EE, Makeyev O, Besio WG, Gaitanis J, Padbury JF, Banks WA, Stonestreet BS: **Interleukin-1β transfer across the blood-brain barrier in the ovine fetus.***J Cereb Blood Flow Metab* 2015, **35:**1388-1395.
41. Launay D, Dutoit-Lefevre V, Faure E, Robineau O, Hauspie C, Sobanski V, Hachulla E, Labalette M, Hatron PY, Dubucquoi S: **Effect of in vitro and in vivo anakinra on cytokines production in Schnitzler syndrome.***PLoS One* 2013, **8:**e59327.
42. Kötter I, Wacker A, Koch S, Henes J, Richter C, Engel A, Günaydin I, Kanz L: **Anakinra in patients with treatment-resistant adult-onset Still's disease: four case reports with serial cytokine measurements and a review of the literature.***Semin Arthritis Rheum* 2007, **37:**189-197.
43. Kallapur SG, Nitsos I, Moss TJ, Polglase GR, Pillow JJ, Cheah FC, Kramer BW, Newnham JP, Ikegami M, Jobe AH: **IL-1 mediates pulmonary and systemic inflammatory responses to chorioamnionitis induced by lipopolysaccharide.***Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2009, **179:**955-961.

44. Nold MF, Mangan NE, Rudloff I, Cho SX, Shariatian N, Samarasinghe TD, Skuza EM, Pedersen J, Veldman A, Berger PJ, Nold-Petry CA: **Interleukin-1 receptor antagonist prevents murine bronchopulmonary dysplasia induced by perinatal inflammation and hyperoxia.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* 2013, **110:**14384-14389.
45. Bajnok A, Berta L, Orbán C, Veres G, Zádori D, Barta H, Méder Ü, Vécsei L, Tulassay T, Szabó M, Toldi G: **Distinct cytokine patterns may regulate the severity of neonatal asphyxia-an observational study.** *J Neuroinflammation* 2017, **14:**244.
46. Billiards SS, Walker DW, Canny BJ, Hirst JJ: **Endotoxin increases sleep and brain allopregnanolone concentrations in newborn lambs.** *Pediatr Res* 2002, **52:**892-899.
47. Hunter CJ, Bennet L, Power GG, Roelfsema V, Blood AB, Quaedackers JS, George S, Guan J, Gunn AJ: **Key neuroprotective role for endogenous adenosine A1 receptor activation during asphyxia in the fetal sheep.** *Stroke* 2003, **34:**2240-2245.
48. Hirst JJ, Cumberland AL, Shaw JC, Bennett GA, Kelleher MA, Walker DW, Palliser HK: **Loss of neurosteroid-mediated protection following stress during fetal life.** *J Steroid Biochem Mol Biol* 2016, **160:**181-188.
49. Galinsky R, Hooper SB, Wallace MJ, Westover AJ, Black MJ, Moss TJ, Polglase GR: **Intrauterine inflammation alters cardiopulmonary and cerebral haemodynamics at birth in preterm lambs.** *J Physiol* 2013, **591:**2127-2137.
50. Stark MJ, Hodyl NA, Belegar VK, Andersen CC: **Intrauterine inflammation, cerebral oxygen consumption and susceptibility to early brain injury in very preterm newborns.** *Arch Dis Child Fetal Neonatal Ed* 2016, **101:**F137-142.
51. Martin LJ, Brambrink AM, Lehmann C, Portera-Cailliau C, Koehler R, Rothstein J, Traystman RJ: **Hypoxia-ischemia causes abnormalities in glutamate transporters and death of astroglia and neurons in newborn striatum.** *Ann Neurol* 1997, **42:**335-348.
52. Nott F, Jane Pillow J, Dahl M, Kelly SB, Melville J, McDonald C, Nitsos I, Lim R, Wallace EM, Jenkin G, et al: **Brain inflammation and injury at 48 h is not altered by human amnion epithelial cells in ventilated preterm lambs.** *Pediatr Res* 2020.
53. Svedin P, Kjellmer I, Welin AK, Blad S, Mallard C: **Maturational effects of lipopolysaccharide on white-matter injury in fetal sheep.** *J Child Neurol* 2005, **20:**960-964.
54. Back SA, Luo NL, Borenstein NS, Levine JM, Volpe JJ, Kinney HC: **Late oligodendrocyte progenitors coincide with the developmental window of vulnerability for human perinatal white matter injury.** *J Neurosci* 2001, **21:**1302-1312.
55. Li AM, Chau V, Poskitt KJ, Sargent MA, Lupton BA, Hill A, Roland E, Miller SP: **White matter injury in term newborns with neonatal encephalopathy.** *Pediatr Res* 2009, **65:**85-89.
56. Qiao M, Meng S, Scobie K, Foniok T, Tuor UI: **Magnetic resonance imaging of differential gray versus white matter injury following a mild or moderate hypoxic-ischemic insult in neonatal rats.** *Neurosci Lett* 2004, **368:**332-336.
57. Hoogland ICM, Houbolt C, van Westerloo DJ, van Gool WA, van de Beek D: **Systemic inflammation and microglial activation: systematic review of animal experiments.** *J Neuroinflammation* 2015, **12**.

58. Threlkeld SW, Lynch JL, Lynch KM, Sadowska GB, Banks WA, Stonestreet BS: **Ovine proinflammatory cytokines cross the murine blood-brain barrier by a common saturable transport mechanism.***Neuroimmunomodulation* 2010, **17:**405-410.
59. Liu X, Quan N: **Microglia and CNS Interleukin-1: Beyond Immunological Concepts.***Front Neurol* 2018, **9:**8.
60. Peferoen L, Kipp M, van der Valk P, van Noort JM, Amor S: **Oligodendrocyte-microglia cross-talk in the central nervous system.***Immunology* 2014, **141:**302-313.
61. Pang Y, Cai Z, Rhodes PG: **Disturbance of oligodendrocyte development, hypomyelination and white matter injury in the neonatal rat brain after intracerebral injection of lipopolysaccharide.***Brain Res Dev Brain Res* 2003, **140:**205-214.
62. Blasi F, Riccio M, Brogi A, Strazza M, Taddei ML, Romagnoli S, Luddi A, D'Angelo R, Santi S, Costantino-Ceccarini E, Melli M: **Constitutive expression of interleukin-1beta (IL-1beta) in rat oligodendrocytes.***Biol Chem* 1999, **380:**259-264.
63. D'Souza SD, Antel JP, Freedman MS: **Cytokine induction of heat shock protein expression in human oligodendrocytes: an interleukin-1-mediated mechanism.***J Neuroimmunol* 1994, **50:**17-24.
64. Takahashi JL, Giuliani F, Power C, Imai Y, Yong VW: **Interleukin-1beta promotes oligodendrocyte death through glutamate excitotoxicity.***Ann Neurol* 2003, **53:**588-595.
65. Osuka K, Suzuki Y, Watanabe Y, Dogan A, Takayasu M, Shibuya M, Yoshida J: **Vasodilator effects on canine basilar artery induced by intracisternal interleukin-1 beta.***J Cereb Blood Flow Metab* 1997, **17:**1337-1345.
66. Galinsky R, Dean JM, Lear CA, Davidson JO, Dhillon S, Wassink G, Bennet L, Gunn AJ: **In the Era of Therapeutic Hypothermia, How Well Do Studies of Perinatal Neuroprotection Control Temperature?***Dev Neurosci* 2017, **39:**7-22.
67. Galinsky R, Dean JM, Lingam I, Robertson NJ, Mallard C, Bennet L, Gunn AJ: **A Systematic Review of Magnesium Sulfate for Perinatal Neuroprotection: What Have We Learnt From the Past Decade?***Front Neurol* 2020, **11:**449.
68. Galinsky R, Bennet L, Groenendaal F, Lear CA, Tan S, van Bel F, Juul SE, Robertson NJ, Mallard C, Gunn AJ: **Magnesium Is Not Consistently Neuroprotective for Perinatal Hypoxia-Ischemia in Term-Equivalent Models in Preclinical Studies: A Systematic Review.***Dev Neurosci* 2014, **36:**73-82.

Figures

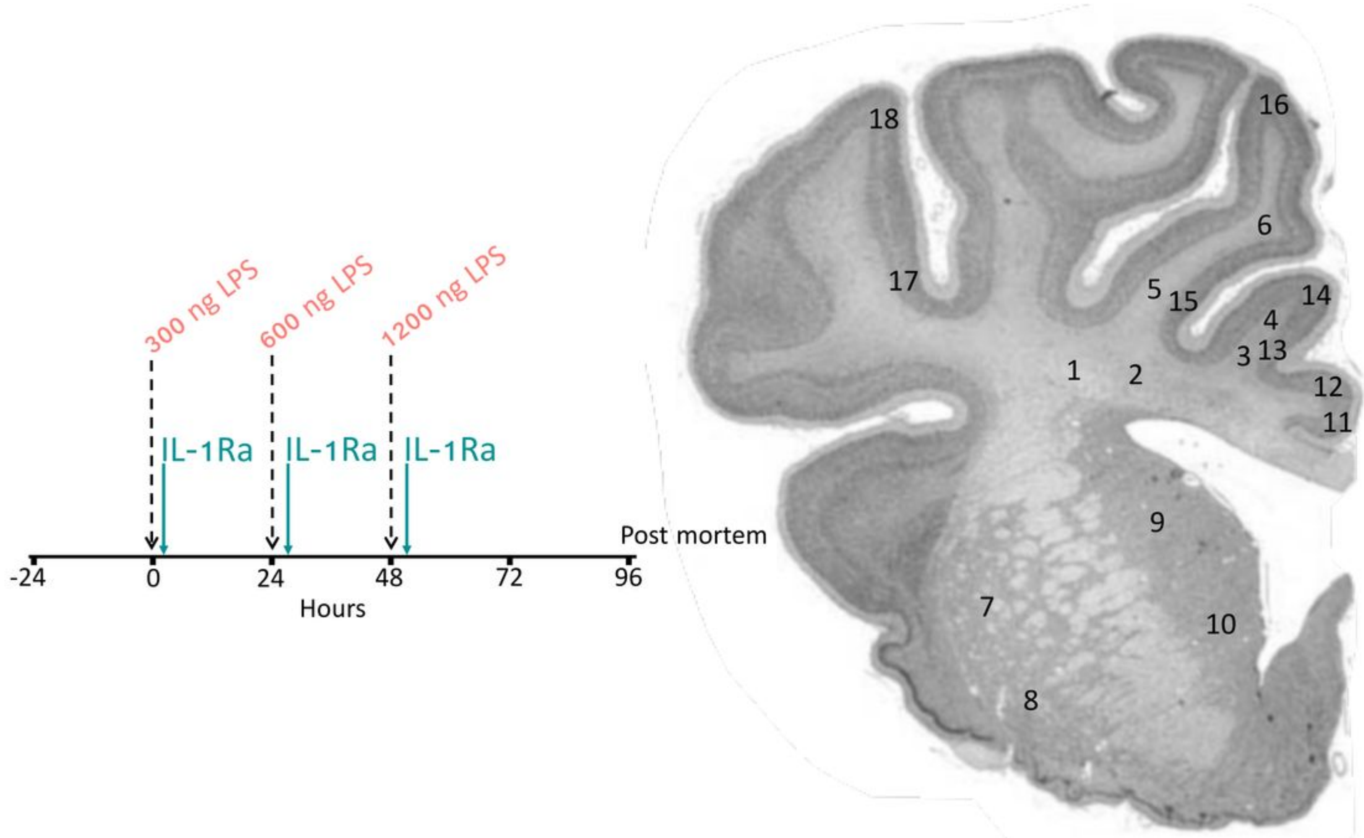

Figure 1

Schematic outlining the study design. The study consisted of 3 groups: control (vehicle, n=9), LPS+vehicle (n=8) and LPS+IL-1Ra (n=9). The dashed vertical lines show the timing of LPS/vehicle infusions. The vertical green lines show the timing of IL-1Ra infusions (13 mg/kg) which were started 1 h after LPS infusions. Controls received an equivalent volume of vehicle (saline) during the infusion periods. Continuous physiological recordings were performed throughout the experimental period. Fetal preductal arterial blood was collected immediately before LPS or vehicle infusions and + 2 and + 6 h thereafter for measurement of cytokine levels and blood biochemistry. At 96 hours brains were collected for histological assessment. Numbers indicate regions of interest (ROIs) for assessment of the periventricular (1, 2), first (3, 4) and second (5, 6) intragyral white matter tracts, caudate nucleus (7, 8), putamen (9, 10), cingulate cortex (11, 12), first (13, 14) and second (15, 16) parasagittal cortices, and the lateral cortex (17, 18).

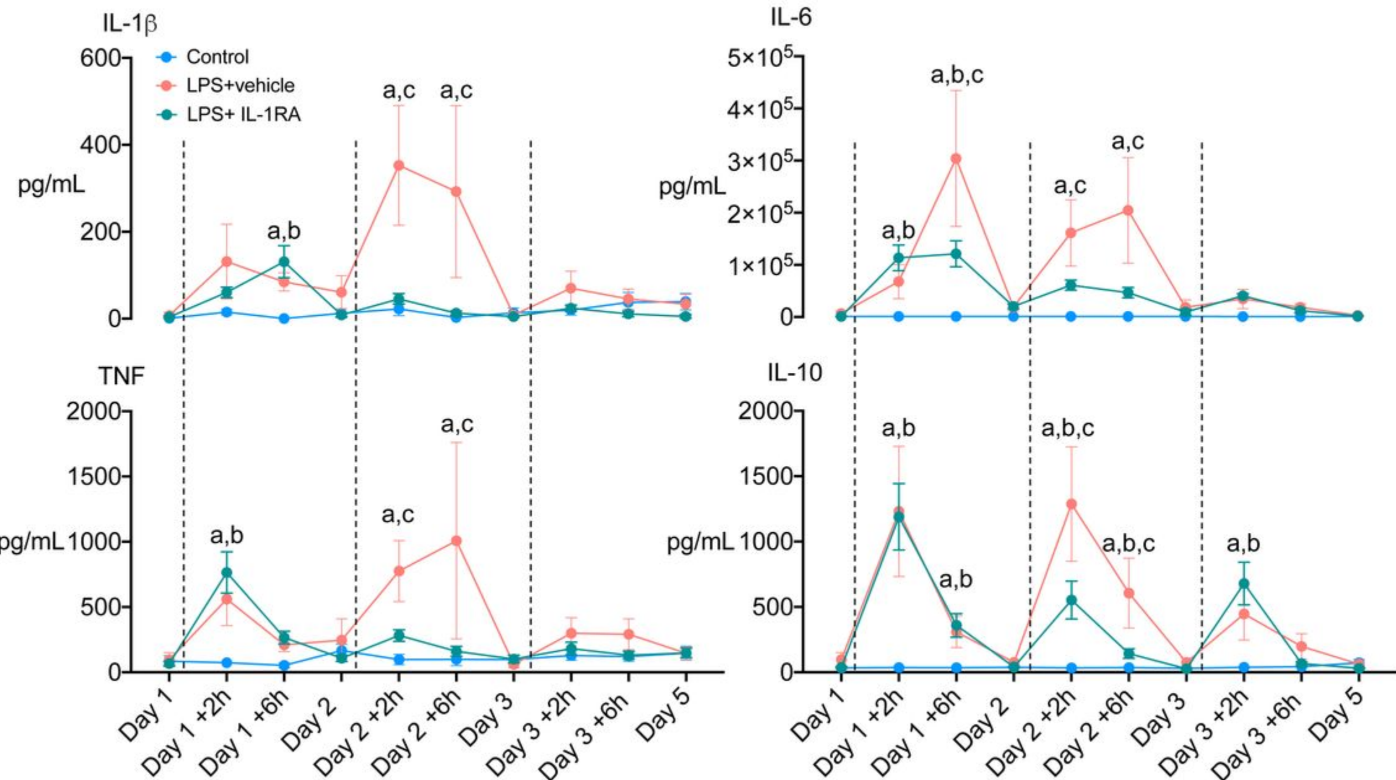

Figure 2

Time course of changes in plasma interleukins (ILs)-1β, 6, 10, and tumour necrosis factor (TNF) in control (blue circles, n = 9), LPS+vehicle (red circles, n = 8) and LPS+IL-1Ra (green circles, n = 9) groups. Dashed vertical black lines represent administration of LPS/vehicle infusions. Data are hourly means ± SE. a=P < 0.05 LPS+vehicle vs. control, b=P<0.05 LPS+IL-1Ra vs control, c=P < 0.05 LPS+vehicle vs. LPS + IL-1Ra.

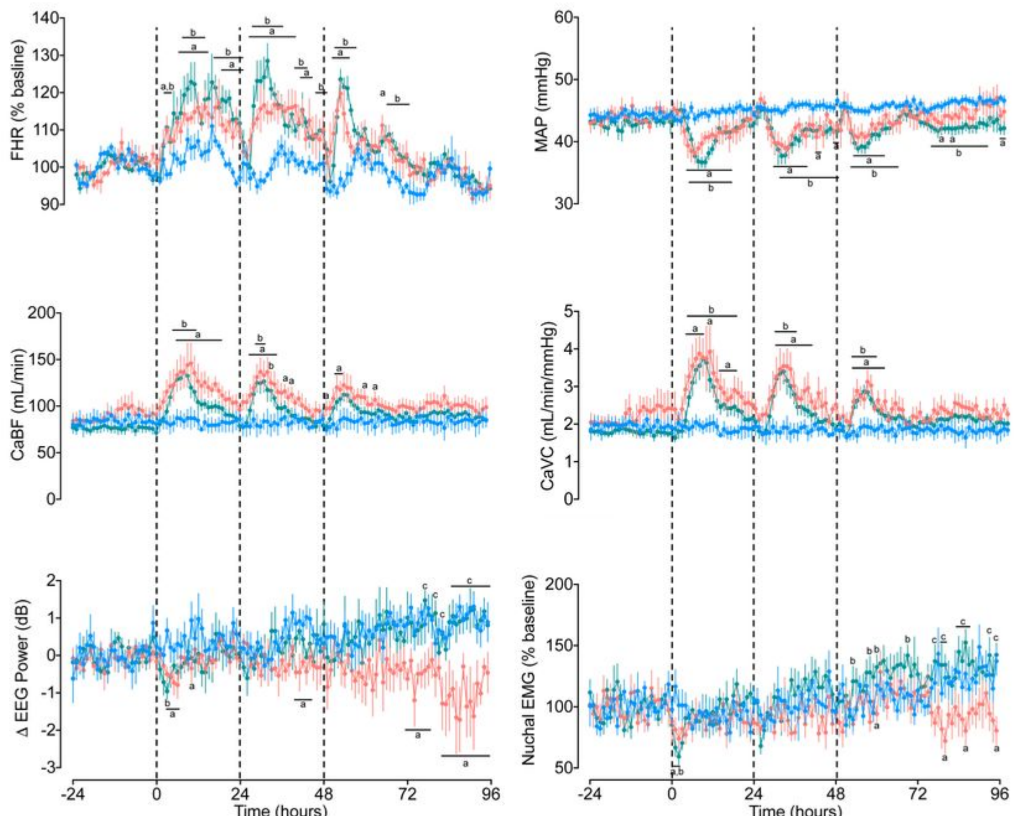

Figure 3

Cardiovascular, cerebrovascular and neurophysiological changes over time. Mean arterial pressure (MAP), fetal heart rate (FHR), carotid artery blood flow (CaBF) and vascular conductance (CaVC), EEG power and nuchal electromyography (EMG) in control (blue circles, n = 9), LPS+vehicle (red circles, n = 8), and LPS+IL-1Ra (green circles, n = 9) groups. Data are hourly means ± SE. a=P<0.05 control vs. LPS+vehicle, b=P<0.05 LPS+ IL-1Ra vs. control, c=P < 0.05 LPS+vehicle vs. LPS+IL-1Ra <0.05 LPS+vehicle vs. LPS + IL-1Ra.

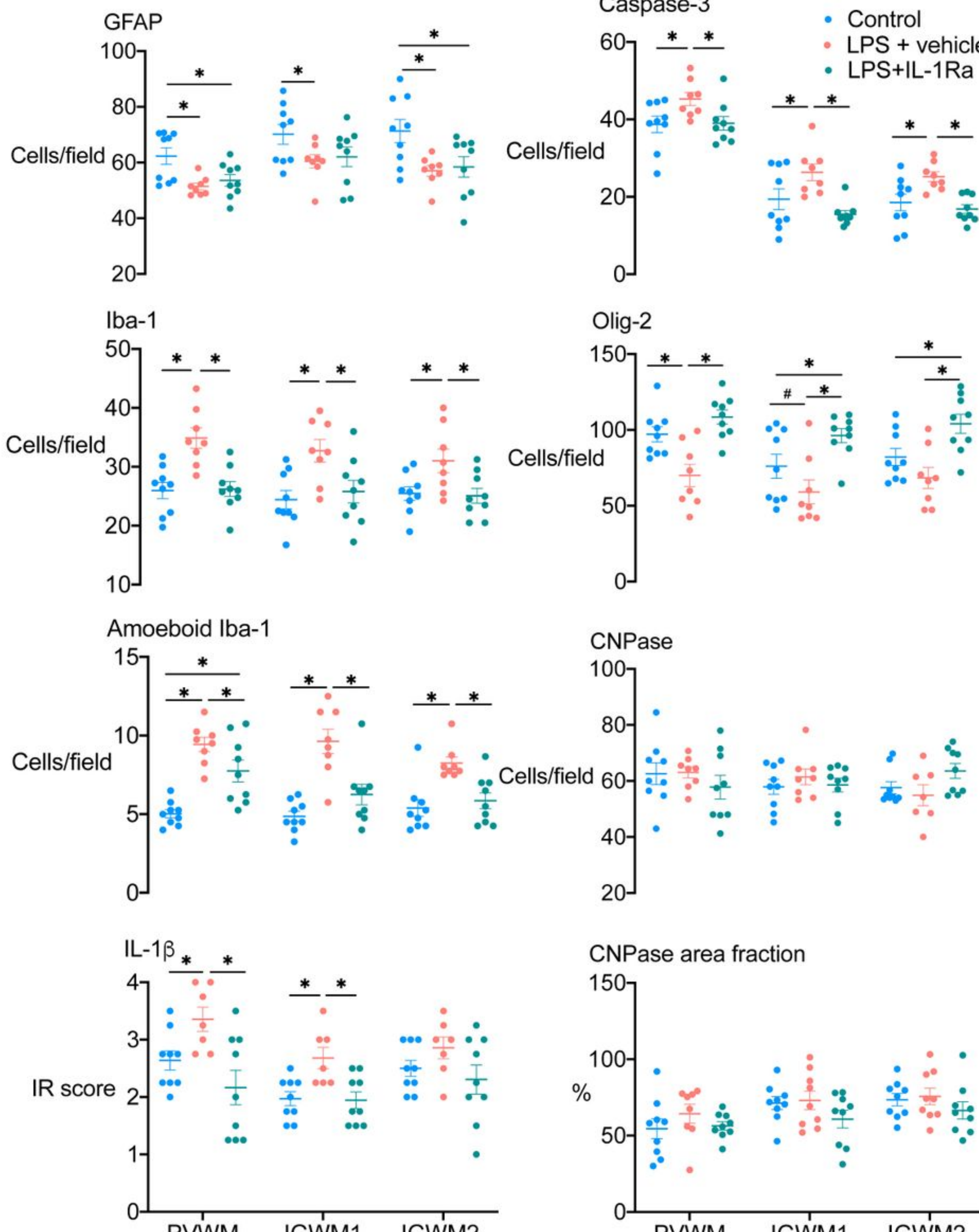

Figure 4

White matter immunohistochemistry. Glial fibrillary acidic protein (GFAP), ionized calcium binding adaptor molecule (Iba-1), amoeboid (Iba-1+) microglia, IL-1β immunoreactivity score, caspase 3, oligodendrocyte transcriptase factor-2 (Olig-2), and 2’,3’-cyclic nucleotide 3’-phosphodiesterase (CNPase) positive cell counts and % area of CNPase positive staining in the periventricular white matter (PVWM), first and second intragyral white matter tracts (IGWM 1 and IGWM 2) in control (blue circles, n = 9), LPS+vehicle (red circles, n

= 8), and LPS+IL-1Ra (green circles, n = 9) groups. Data are means ± SE. *P < 0.05 vs. control, #P = 0.07 vs. control

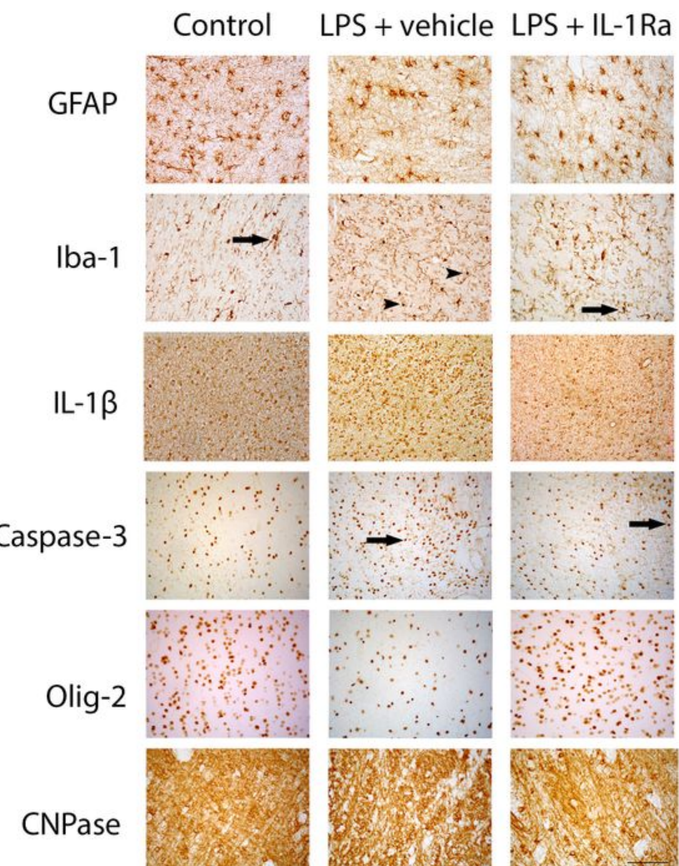

Figure 5

Representative photomicrographs showing positive staining of GFAP, Iba-1, IL-1β, caspase 3, Olig-2, and CNPase in the periventricular white matter tracts. Scale bar = 100 μm. Arrows in the Iba-1 photomicrographs indicate microglia displaying a resting ramified phenotype, characterised by a small cell body with > 1 branching process. Arrowheads indicate microglia displaying an amoeboid morphology, characterised by a

large cell body with ≤ 1 branching process. Arrows in the caspase-3 photomicrographs indicate positive cells displaying both staining and apoptotic bodies.

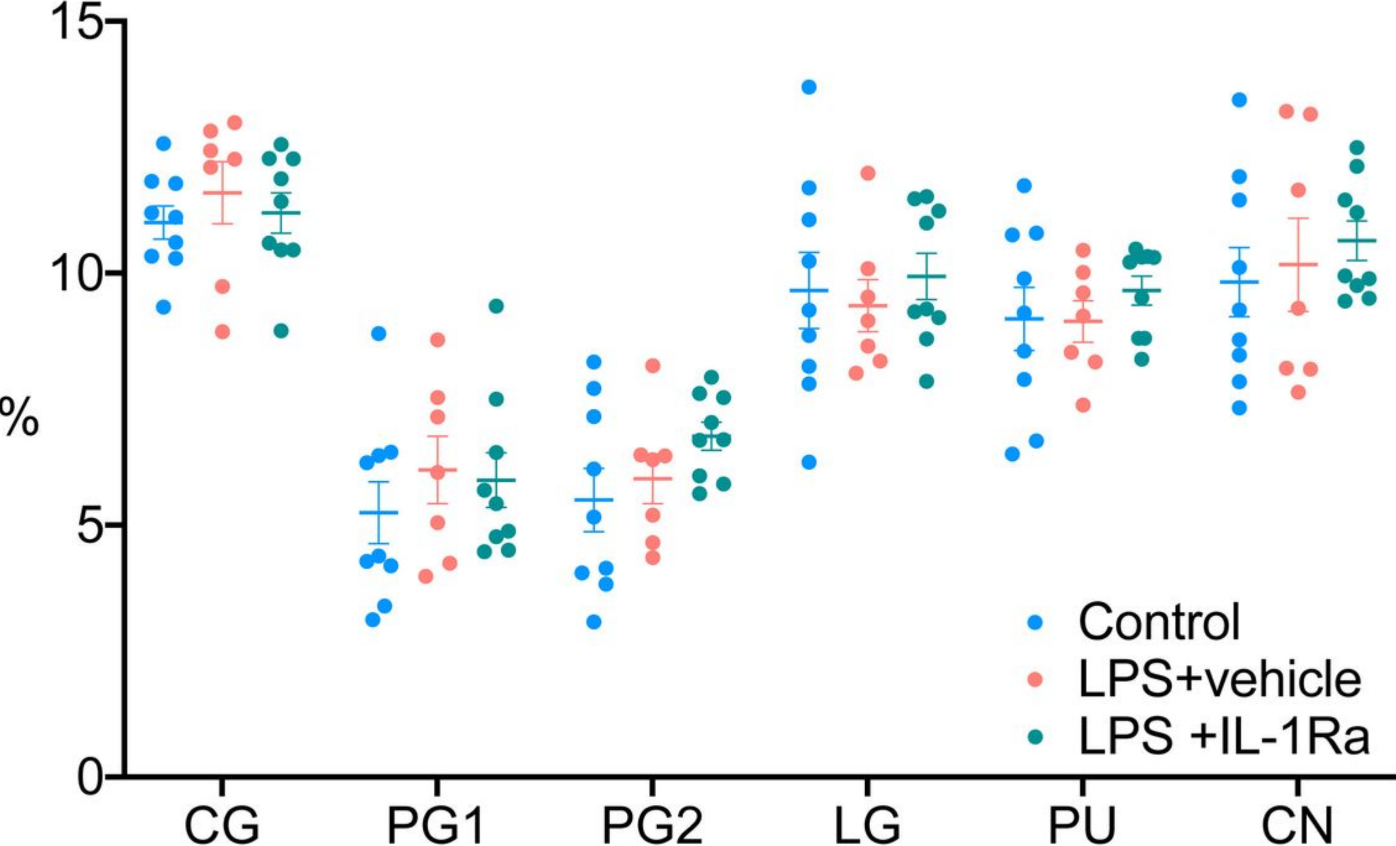

Figure 6

Neuronal survival in cortical and subcortical brain regions. Anti-neuronal nuclei (NeuN) % area staining in the cingulate gyrus (CG), first and second parasagittal gyri (PG 1 and PG 2), lateral gyrus (LG), caudate nucleus (CN) and putamen (PU) in control (blue circles, n = 9), LPS+vehicle (red circles, n = 8), and LPS+IL-1Ra (green circles, n = 9) groups. Data are means ± SE.