

Humoral profiles of toddlers and young children following SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccination

Nadege Nziza

Ragon Institute

Yixiang Deng

Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT, and Harvard

Lianna Wood

Ragon Institute <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9531-5627>

Navneet Dhanoa

Massachusetts General Hospital <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1020-8430>

Naomi Dulit-Greenberg

Massachusetts General Hospital

Tina Chen

Ragon Institute

Abigail Kane

Massachusetts General Hospital

Zoe Swank

Massachusetts General Hospital

Jameson Davis

Massachusetts General Hospital <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2530-2606>

Melina Demokritou

Massachusetts General Hospital

Anagha Chitnis

Massachusetts General Hospital

Alessio Fasano

Massachusetts General Hospital <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2134-0261>

Andrea Edlow

Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2915-5949>

Nitya Jain

Massachusetts General Hospital

Bruce Horwitz

Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8123-8728>

Ryan McNamara

Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT, and Harvard

Boris Julg

Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT and Harvard <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4687-9626>

Wayne Shreffler

Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital

Galit Alter

Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT and Harvard

Lael Yonker (✉ LYONKER@mgh.harvard.edu)

Massachusetts General Hospital <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1711-8227>

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1 **Humoral profiles of toddlers and young children following SARS-CoV-2**
2 **mRNA vaccination**

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4 Nadège Nziza, PhD¹†, Yixiang Deng, PhD^{1,2}†, Lianna Wood, MD, PhD^{1,3}†, Navneet Dhanoa, BS⁴,
5 Naomi Dulit-Greenberg, BS⁴, Tina Chen, BS¹, Abigail Kane, MD^{4,5}, Zoe Swank, PhD⁶, Jameson
6 Davis, BS⁵, Melina Demokritou, BS⁴, Anagha P. Chitnis, BS⁵, Alessio Fasano, MD^{4,5,6}, Andrea G.
7 Edlow, MD^{6,7,8}, Nitya Jain, PhD^{4,5}, Bruce Horwitz, MD⁵, Ryan McNamara, PhD¹, Boris Julg, MD,
8 PhD^{1,6}, Wayne G. Shreffler, MD, PhD^{4,6}, Galit Alter, PhD^{1,6}†, Lael M. Yonker, MD^{4,5,6}†*

9
10 ¹Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT, and Harvard, Cambridge, MA, USA

11 ²Department of Biological Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA,
12 USA

13 ³Boston Children’s Hospital, Department of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Boston, Massachusetts,
14 USA

15 ⁴Massachusetts General Hospital, Department of Pediatrics, Boston, MA, USA

16 ⁵Massachusetts General Hospital, Mucosal Immunology and Biology Research Center, Boston,
17 MA, USA

18 ⁶Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

19 ⁷Massachusetts General Hospital, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division of
20 Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Boston, MA, USA

21 ⁸Massachusetts General Hospital, Vincent Center for Reproductive Biology, Boston, MA, USA

22 † Contributed equally as co-first or co-last authors

23

24 ***Corresponding author:** Lael Yonker: Massachusetts General Hospital, 55 Fruit St, Jackson 14,
25 Boston, MA 02114. 617-724-2890. Lyonker@mgh.harvard.edu

26

27 **Abstract**

28 Although young children generally experience mild symptoms following infection with SARS-
29 CoV-2, severe acute and long-term complications can occur. SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccines elicit
30 robust immunoglobulin profiles in children ages 5 years and older, and in adults, corresponding
31 with substantial protection against hospitalizations and severe disease. Whether similar immune
32 responses and humoral protection can be observed in vaccinated infants and young children, who
33 have a developing and vulnerable immune system, remains poorly understood. To study the impact
34 of mRNA vaccination on the humoral immunity of infant, we used a system serology approach to
35 comprehensively profile antibody responses in a cohort of children ages 6 months to 5 years who
36 were vaccinated with the mRNA-1273 COVID-19 vaccine (25 µg). Responses were compared
37 with vaccinated adults (100 µg), in addition to naturally infected toddlers and young children.
38 Despite their lower vaccine dose, vaccinated toddlers elicited a stronger functional antibody
39 response than adults, including against variant of concerns (VOCs), without report of side effects.
40 Moreover, mRNA vaccination was associated with a higher IgG3-dependent humoral profile
41 against SARS-CoV-2 compared to natural infection, supporting that mRNA vaccination is
42 effective at eliciting a robust antibody response in toddlers and young children.

43

44 **Introduction**

45 Despite the early misconception that children were spared from COVID-19, children continue to
46 account for approximately twenty percent of all documented cases of COVID-19 infection in the
47 United States, with infants and children under 5 years of age disproportionately affected by high
48 rates of hospitalization¹. While most children experience mild symptoms with acute SARS-CoV-
49 2 infection, severe complications can ensue, even in the youngest children, and myocarditis,
50 cardiomyopathy, renal failure, as well as coagulation and hemorrhagic disorders occur at increased
51 rates with COVID-19². Concerningly, COVID-19 deaths in children far exceed deaths from
52 influenza³ and COVID-19 has now become one of the leading infectious cause of death in the
53 Unites States⁴.

54

55 SARS-CoV-2-targeting mRNA vaccines have become available for individuals six months of age
56 and older^{5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11}. These vaccines have provided substantial protection against hospitalizations
57 and severe disease in children ages 5-17 years^{5, 7, 10, 12}. Moreover, detailed humoral profiling of
58 children and adolescents reveals that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines elicit robust, highly functional
59 humoral immune responses in children in a dose-dependent manner¹³, with strong cross-reactivity
60 against variants of concerns (VOC)^{13, 14}. In children under 5 years of age, mRNA vaccination
61 results in neutralizing immunoglobulin titers comparable to vaccinated adults and vaccination
62 protects against symptomatic infection¹¹. However, detailed humoral profiling in this age group
63 has not yet been investigated. As an individual's humoral immune response evolves with age¹⁵,
64 age-related differences in mRNA vaccine responses must be fully characterized to fully understand
65 the impact of mRNA vaccination in infants and toddlers.

66

67 In order to characterize the activation of humoral immunity in young children after SARS-CoV-
68 2-specific mRNA vaccination, we used an unbiased system serology approach to analyze antibody
69 levels and Fc-mediated functions in individuals ages 6 months through 5 years. We
70 comprehensively profiled their antibody response following vaccination with the mRNA-1273
71 COVID-19 vaccine (25 µg) and compared it with antibody profiles of vaccinated adults (100 µg),
72 as well as children infected with SARS-CoV-2. Our results reveal a strong activation of humoral
73 immunity post-vaccination in these young children, with a highly functional and cross-reactive
74 humoral immunity in comparison to adults and naturally infected infants.

75

76 **Results**

77 **mRNA-vaccinated infants and toddlers generate robust Immunoglobulin G (IgG) responses**

78 Our first objective was to profile vaccine-induced humoral immunity in infants and toddlers ages
79 6 months through 5 years (n = 18) after completion of the two doses of the pediatric mRNA-1273
80 vaccination series (vaccine dose: 25mcg mRNA-1273) and compare these serologic responses to
81 those generated by fully vaccinated adults (n = 13; vaccine dose: 100mcg mRNA-1273).
82 Demographics of participants are included in **Table 1**; mean age of vaccinated pediatric
83 participants was 2.2 years (range 7 months- 4.5 years). None of the vaccinated adults or children
84 reported SARS-CoV-2 infections prior to or during their vaccine series, which was supported by
85 absence of elevated nucleocapsid responses (**Fig. S1**).

86

87 Our results demonstrate that despite their young age and receipt of only one quarter of the adult
88 dose, total anti-Spike and anti-RBD IgG levels and IgG subclass in young children were similar to
89 adults (**Fig. 1A, Fig. S2**). Interestingly, in contrast to IgG, this young population displayed lower

90 levels of vaccine-induced anti-Spike and anti-RBD IgM and IgA1, which shows the distinct
91 isotype selection between adults and children (**Fig. 1A**). We then compared the binding of spike
92 and RBD-specific antibodies to Fc receptors (FcR), as well as antibody effector functions,
93 including antibody-dependent cellular (monocyte) phagocytosis (ADCP), antibody-dependent
94 neutrophil phagocytosis (ADNP) and antibody-dependent complement deposition or activation
95 (ADCD) in young children and adults. We saw that infants less than 5 years old were able to
96 produce antibodies with strong Fc γ R2A, Fc γ R2B, Fc γ R3A, and Fc γ R3B binding at similar levels
97 as adults, and remarkably, anti-RBD antibodies exhibited stronger ADCP and ADNP effector
98 functions in young children than in adults (**Fig. 1B and 1C, Fig. S1**).

99

100 To determine cross-reactivity of the vaccine-induced humoral response against variants of
101 concern (VOCs), we quantified antibody levels and FcR binding against Spike and RBD for six
102 different SARS-CoV-2 VOCs including wild type (WT), Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and
103 Omicron. While IgM, IgA1, and the FcR for IgA1 (Fc α R) were higher in adults across the different
104 SARS-CoV-2 variants, IgG response was essentially indistinguishable between young children
105 and adults. In fact, the only exceptions were total IgG against RBD Omicron and IgG4 against
106 Spike Gamma, RBD Alpha, RBD Delta, and RBD Omicron, which were significantly increased
107 in young children (**Fig. 1D**).

108

109 To further characterize the capacity of the pediatric population to generate a broad SARS-CoV-2-
110 specific humoral response following mRNA-1273 vaccination, we calculated a Spike and RBD
111 protein breadth score. The breadth score highlights that children less than 5 years old are able to
112 induce a humoral response as robust as adults, with a strong recognition of different VOCs while

113 IgM- and IgA-specific immunity is higher in adults (**Fig. 1E**). Taken together, these results show
114 specificities regarding isotypes selection between young children and adults, with overall similar
115 to enhanced antibody functionality against SARS-CoV-2 proteins in infants and toddlers less than
116 5 years old compared to adults.

117

118 When looking more broadly at antibody responses against common respiratory infections,
119 including non-SARS-CoV-2 human coronavirus (HCoV) HKU1 Spike (HKU1), HCoV-OC43
120 Spike (OC43), and Influenza haemagglutinin (HA), we see a strong age-related difference. In
121 contrast to the robust SARS-CoV-2 vaccine-induced humoral immunity across the age spectrum,
122 young children have significantly lower antibodies titers against HKU1, OC43, and HA.
123 Multivariate analysis highlights a clear separation between the two age categories distributions, as
124 attested by the Partial least squares discriminant analysis (PLS-DA) (**Fig. S3A**). The LASSO-
125 selected features that were used to build the PLS-DA model revealed an enrichment of antibody
126 levels and Fc γ R binding against HKU1, OC43, and HA in adults (**Fig. S3B**). Co-correlates analysis
127 showed strong connections between isotypes and Fc γ R features against non-SARS-CoV-2
128 antigens (**Fig. S1C**), all of which being enriched in older individuals. These antibody profiles in
129 adults reflect prior exposure to these respiratory viruses over their lifetime, while these young
130 children may remain naïve. Alternatively, the lower antibodies could reflect lower total antigen-
131 specific humoral responses to prior infection or the non-mRNA influenza vaccine, or more rapidly
132 waning immunity in these young children.

133

134

135

136 **mRNA-1273 vaccination induces lasting, cross-reactive immunity in young children**

137 In order to evaluate the impact of mRNA-1273 vaccination on the evolution of humoral immunity
138 in young children, we measured antibody levels and Fc functionality prior to vaccination (V0),
139 one month after the first dose (V1), one month after the second dose (V2), six months after
140 vaccination (V6), in addition to one month after boosting (Post-boost) (**Fig. 2, 3**). After just one
141 vaccine dose, strong production of IgG, IgM, and IgA against Spike WT could be observed in
142 these infants (**Fig. 2A**), with robust antibody binding to Fc γ R (**Fig. 2B**). Similarly, antibody
143 effector function, characterized by ADCP, ADNP and ADCD, was significantly increased at V1
144 compared to V0 (**Fig. 2C**). Peak antibody responses were generally observed 2 months after the
145 first dose of vaccination (**Fig. 2**), as attested by the high antibody levels and functionality (**Fig.**
146 **2C**). Of note, IgM levels started to wane after V1 (**Fig. 2A**); In the setting of rising IgG and IgA1
147 titers, this supports antibody maturation with efficient class switching. Although the number of
148 individuals that was included for the post-boost analysis was low, our results highlighted a strong
149 activation of the immune system one month after boosting, especially for Fc γ R binding and
150 antibody-induced neutrophil activation (**Fig. 2B, C**).

151

152 To evaluate the ability of mRNA-1273 vaccination to elicit broadly cross-reactive antibody
153 responses and their durability over time in young children, we compared the antibody responses
154 to Spike antigens from wild type through Omicron variants at each time point (**Fig. 3**). Total IgG
155 responses to full-length Spike were similar across all variants. However, IgG responses to the
156 Omicron RBD were consistently lower post-vaccination for all subclasses and Fc γ Rs (**Fig. 3A,**
157 **3B**), which is not unexpected given the large number of mutations in the RBD of Omicron in
158 comparison to other variants and is consistent with cross-reactivity seen in older individuals^{13, 14}.

159 To determine the breadth of antibody responses over time, breadth scores were calculated for each
160 IgG subclass and each FcγR over the time as described above (**Fig. 3C**). Breadth was highest for
161 IgG3, although this response did wane prior to boost. IgG2 and IgG3 responses both expanded
162 with boosting, with minimal change in IgG1 responses. FcγR binding showed similar breadth for
163 each FcγR tested, with a robust initial response, some waning in response at 6 months after
164 vaccination, and increased breadth after boosting. Again, the breadth scores highlighted a broad
165 anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody response shortly after vaccination that wanes over 6 months, but then
166 appears to re-expand to peak levels post-boost.

167

168 **Vaccination produces greater IgG3 than natural infection in young children**

169 To evaluate whether natural infection induces equivalent immunity compared to vaccination, we
170 compared anti-Spike and anti-RBD titers, and Fc binding and effector function in serum collected
171 from a group of 8 children (**Table 1**: mean age, 3.7 years; range: 1-5 years) one-month following
172 acute SARS-CoV-2 infection, defined as symptomatic COVID-19 confirmed by PCR or rapid
173 antigen test at the time of illness, and a second group of children one month after completion of
174 their first dose of vaccine (V1). We did not detect a significant difference in total IgG levels (**Fig.**
175 **4A**), FcγR binding (**Fig. 4B**) and antibody functionality (**Fig. 4C**) between the naturally infected
176 group and the vaccinated group. This suggests that the induction of humoral immunity following
177 vaccination is as strong as the response induced by natural SARS-CoV-2 infection in infants and
178 toddlers. Interestingly, the IgG3 response to both Spike and RBD was significantly higher in
179 vaccinated young children compared to infected children (**Fig. 4A**). Levels of IgG3, a highly potent
180 IgG subclass with the greatest levels of functionality^{16, 17, 18}, correlate strongly with neutralization
181 ^{19, 20}, suggesting that in young children vaccination induces a more mature and potent antibody

182 response than natural infection with SARS-CoV-2. Further, this robust vaccine-induced IgG3
183 response is consistently elevated across different VOCs (**Fig. 4D**) highlighting the benefit of cross-
184 reactivity gained by vaccination compared to natural infection. As expected, anti-nucleocapsid
185 antibody responses induced by natural infection were absent in children vaccinated with the
186 mRNA-1273 vaccine as the vaccine does not encode for nucleocapsid (**Fig. 4D**). Of note, the
187 elevated IgG1 levels against the Delta strain of Spike in the infected group reflect the VOC at time
188 of infection based on the timing of samples collected (eight of ten of the children were infected
189 with SARS-CoV-2 prior to the Omicron surge) highlighting the specificity of response in natural
190 infection. Notably, vaccine-induced IgG3 levels still remained significantly higher than natural
191 infection, even for the Delta strain. Taken together, these results show that mRNA-1273
192 vaccination in infants and children less than 5 years of age elicits strong humoral activation, with
193 production of a highly mature and developed antibody response, suggesting a more effective
194 humoral response following vaccination in comparison to natural infection with SARS-CoV-2.

195

196 **Discussion**

197 The availability of novel mRNA vaccine technology represented a key inflection point in the
198 COVID-19 pandemic, dramatically reducing hospitalizations and deaths caused by SARS-CoV-2.
199 However, with the novelty of the mRNA vaccine strategies, the impact on immune response in
200 pediatric populations remains largely unknown. Thus, the risk/benefit ratio of vaccinating young
201 children must be thoroughly analyzed; comprehensive profiling of the humoral immune response
202 following vaccination, including characterization of antibody response profiles and cross-
203 protective potential is critical. While in-depth antibody titers and effector function have been

204 described for mRNA-vaccinated adults and children ages 5 years and older^{13, 14}, limited
205 information exists for younger age groups.

206

207 Humoral responses are known to vary with age ²¹, with the capacity to generate antibodies
208 increasing over time, including following administration of SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccines ^{13, 14}.

209 Remarkably, despite receiving only a quarter of the adult dose, our study suggests that infants and
210 toddlers younger than 5 years are capable of generating titers of anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgG that are
211 comparable to adults. The impact of diminished IgA and IgM in children in the setting of SARS-
212 CoV-2 is not clear. In adults with COVID-19, elevated levels of anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgA immune
213 complexes are associated with severe disease²² and in children with MIS-C, anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgA
214 immune complexes activate intravascular neutrophil extracellular traps which may contribute to
215 endothelial damage²³. However, IgA is also a key antibody for mucosal immunity, combating
216 pathogens at the airway surface²⁴. Additionally, circulating IgA does not directly correlate with
217 mucosal IgA²⁵; future studies will be needed to fully characterize mucosal immunity following
218 vaccination and to compare mucosal responses in children and adults.

219

220 Fc binding capacity of anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgG may play important protective functions including
221 enhanced activation of monocytes and neutrophils. Here we demonstrated that vaccinated young
222 children display comparable Fc binding capacity as compared to vaccinated adults. The pediatric
223 nasal passages contain higher quantities of neutrophils than adults and these pediatric neutrophils
224 tend to be primed for anti-viral responses²⁶. Thus, the combination of these activating antibodies
225 and primed neutrophils may lead to efficient containment of the virus at the nasal surface. Direct
226 humoral profiling of the pediatric mucosal surface may reveal important differences between

227 children and adults with potential implications for current vaccine strategies, as well as the
228 development of mucosal vaccination strategies for COVID-19.

229

230 In addition to this strong and functional antibody response in young children two months after the
231 first dose of vaccination, our results showed that this pediatric population was able to maintain
232 functional humoral immunity for at least 6 months. We observed signs of efficient antibody class
233 switching^{27, 28}, as IgM levels rapidly decreased 1 month after vaccination, when IgG and IgA
234 continued to be produced, in addition to increasing FcR binding and Fc-mediated functionality.
235 Moreover, the analysis of vaccine-induced humoral immunity against VOC highlighted a strong
236 and sustained antibody response over time with Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta, while Omicron-
237 specific immunity tended to be slightly lower, as reported previously¹³. It has been hypothesized
238 that the naïve pediatric immune system facilitates the evolution and adaptation of immune response
239 to allow broader immunity against future viral exposures^{29,30}, which might explain the more robust
240 VOCs-specific antibody response in infants compared to adults. Of the IgG subclasses, though,
241 IgG3 declined the most by 6 months but responded well to boosting, highlighting the importance
242 of boosters in maintaining effective protection against SARS-CoV-2 over time. Collectively, these
243 data suggest that the vaccine can provide long-term immunoprotection against COVID-19 in
244 young children, with likely efficacy against emerging VOCs.

245

246 Interestingly, our analysis suggests that mRNA vaccine series provides superior protection than
247 viral exposure, as attested by the higher IgG3 response against different VOCs in the vaccinated
248 group. With IgG3 being the most functional IgG subclass^{16, 17, 18}, these data show that vaccination
249 in this young population elicits a stronger and more functional humoral immune response

250 compared to natural infection. We also observed that the antibody response against Delta, which
251 is the strain that was circulating at the time of sample collection, was higher in the infected group.
252 This suggests that adapting vaccine strategies to incorporate genetic variations that appear in
253 emerging respiratory viruses will be an important strategy to maintain vaccine efficacy.

254

255 While our study is limited in size, the overall population of vaccinated young children is limited
256 in part because of parental/guardian vaccine hesitancy. Additionally, routine phlebotomy presents
257 numerous challenges in children. However, our data set advances the depth of understanding of
258 antibody responses to the mRNA vaccine in young vaccine-eligible children and helps inform the
259 risk/benefit ratio for providers and parents/guardians. As vaccines result in a dramatic
260 improvement in morbidity and mortality of adults related to COVID-19 following mRNA
261 vaccination³¹, and we see comparable- if not improved- vaccine responses in young children, we
262 expect vaccines will also reduce severe disease and long-term complications in this young
263 population as well. As COVID-19 has become one of the leading infectious cause of death in
264 children, and infected children can suffer from post-COVID complications³², vaccination
265 strategies for these young children, as well as their impact on the maturing immune system, need
266 to be studied in depth. Overall, our data suggest that vaccination offers robust protection against
267 future SARS-CoV-2 infections, potentially superior to natural infection, and thus support the
268 notion that mRNA vaccination of this youngest group is highly effective. These results also
269 provide insight for the design of the future mRNA-based vaccine technologies for this pediatric
270 population.

271

272 **Methods**

273 **Participant enrollment**

274 Families with children 6 months to 5 years of age who were participating in the KidCOVE study,
275 a phase two/three clinical trial to assess the safety and efficacy of the mRNA-1273 two-dose
276 vaccine in healthy children (clinicaltrials.gov NCT04796896), at Massachusetts General Hospital
277 (MGH) were approached for enrollment in the MGH Pediatric COVID-19 Biorepository (IRB:
278 2020P000955). Families with children who were infected with SARS-CoV-2 in the past 2-8 weeks
279 and were presenting to MGH for a well-child visit or hospital visit were also approached and
280 offered enrollment in the MGH Pediatric COVID-19 Biorepository. Parents/guardians provided
281 informed consent prior to participation.

282

283 **Sample collection**

284 Blood was collected prior to vaccination (Pre-vaccine), one month following the first vaccination
285 (V1), one month following the second vaccination, (V2), and six months following the second
286 vaccination (V6). If a booster dose was received, blood was collected prior to receipt of the booster
287 dose (if greater than six months from first vaccination), and one month following the booster (post-
288 boost). Participants could opt out of providing blood at any of the time points. Blood was collected
289 by venipuncture or by capillary microneedle device, processed for plasma, and stored at -80°C.
290 All procedures were approved by the MGB IRB.

291

292 Banked samples from adults who had received the Moderna mRNA1273 vaccine were used for
293 comparison. Detailed information regarding enrollment and specimen collection for this IRB-
294 approved study were previously published [21].

295

296 **Antigens**

297 SARS-CoV-2 D614G or variants of concern Spike and RBD proteins, in addition to NTD, S1,
298 nucleocapsid, HCoV-HKU1 Spike (HKU1), and HCoV-OC43 Spike (OC43) antigens, were
299 expressed in mammalian HEK293 cells and purchased from Sino Biological. Influenza
300 haemagglutinin (HA) was obtained from Sino Biological. NHS-Sulfo-LC-LC kit was used for
301 antigen biotinylating, according to the manufacturer's instruction (Thermo Fisher Scientific).

302

303 **Antibody isotype, FcR binding and functions**

304 Antibody isotype and subclass levels (IgG, IgG1, IgG2, IgG3, IgG4, IgM, and IgA1), as well as
305 Fc-receptor (FcR) binding profiles (FcyR2A, FcyR2B, FcyR3A, FcyR3B, and Fc α R) were
306 measured using a custom multiplex Luminex assay as described previously³³. Plasma samples
307 were diluted between 1:50 and 1:500, depending on the secondary reagent. For functional analyses,
308 antibody-dependent complement deposition (ADCD), cellular phagocytosis (ADCP) and
309 neutrophil phagocytosis (ADNP) were performed as described previously^{34,35,36} with 1:50 diluted
310 plasma samples. MFI values were analyzed by flow cytometry on an iQue analyzer (Intellicyt).

311

312 **VOC breadth score**

313 Spike and RBD protein breadth score were calculated by categorizing each antigen response as
314 positive or negative and calculating the percentage of Spike and RBD variant antigen responses
315 for each secondary (isotype or FcR) at each timepoint. We defined a positive response as six
316 standard deviations above the mean of the SARS-CoV-2-unexposed controls for the same antigen
317 and isotype or Fc receptor.

318

319 **Statistical analysis**

320 GraphPad Prism (v.9.2.0) and RStudio (v.1.3 and R v.4.0) were used to perform data analyses. We
321 calculated breadth score by categorizing each antigen response as positive or negative and
322 calculating the percentage of positive Spike and RBD variant antigen responses for each antibody
323 feature at each timepoint. We defined a positive response as six standard deviations above the
324 mean of the COVID-unexposed controls for the same antigen and isotype or Fc receptor.

325

326 Multivariate analyses to compare vaccinated adults and children were built as described
327 previously^{35, 37}. Data were normalized using z-scoring, then a least absolute shrinkage and
328 selection operator (LASSO) approach was used for feature selection. For classification and
329 visualization, partial least square discriminant analysis (PLS-DA) models were performed using
330 LASSO-selected features, followed by a ten-fold cross-validation to assess model accuracy. Co-
331 correlates of LASSO selected features were represented in a network format and identified using
332 Spearman method followed by Benjamini-Hochberg correction.

333

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452

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456

457 **Author contributions**

458 N.N. and T.C. performed the serological experiments. N.N., Y.D., L.W., N.D., N.D.G., R.M., B.J.,
459 G.A. and L.Y. analyzed and interpreted the data. A.K., Z.S., J.D., M.D., A.C., A.F., A.E., N.J.,
460 B.H., W.S. and L.Y. managed the sample collection. N.N, G.A. and L.Y. drafted the manuscript.
461 All authors critically reviewed the manuscript.

462

463 **Competing interests**

464 G.A. is a V.P. at Moderna, a founder and equity holder of Seromyx Systems, and an employee and
465 equity holder of Leyden Labs. G.A.'s interests were reviewed and are managed by MGH and
466 Partners HealthCare in accordance with their conflict-of-interest policies. All other authors declare
467 that they have no competing interests.

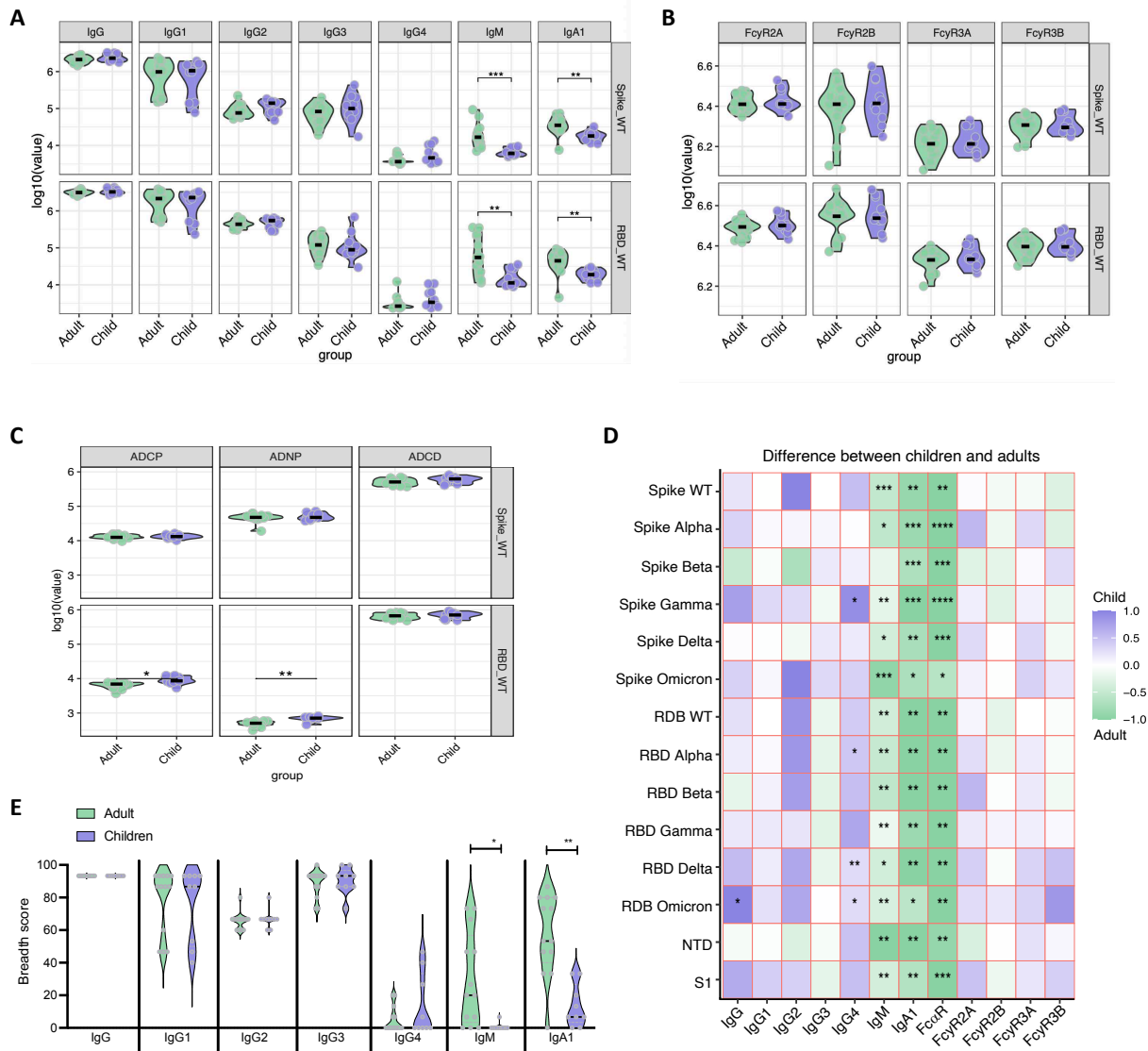
468

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475

476 **Figures**



477

478 **Fig. 1. mRNA-1273 vaccination induces a strong humoral immunity in children less than 5**

479 **years old.** Antibody levels and functionality were measured in the plasma of children less than 5

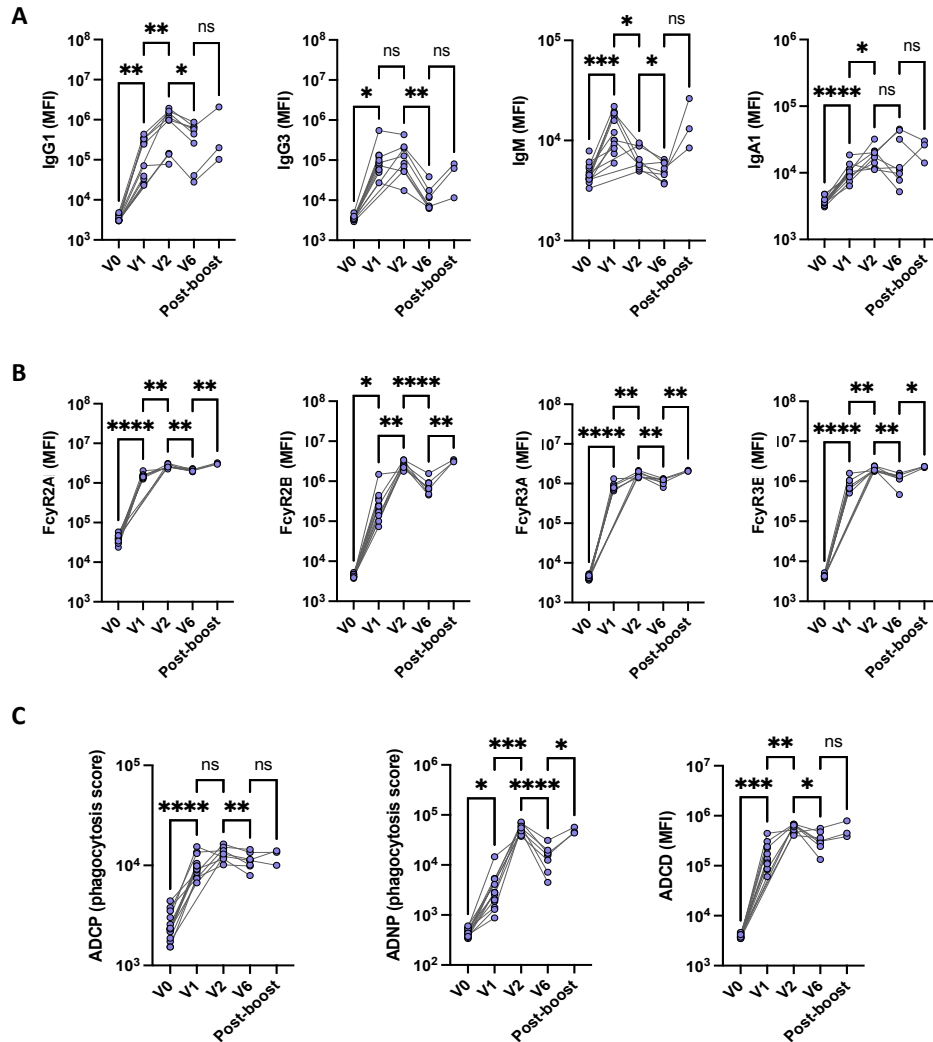
480 years old and adults, 2 months after vaccination. **(A)** Total IgG, IgG1, IgG2, IgG4, IgG4, IgM and

481 IgA1 against Spike and RBD WT. **(B)** FcγR2A, FcγR2B, FcγR3A and FcγR3B binding against

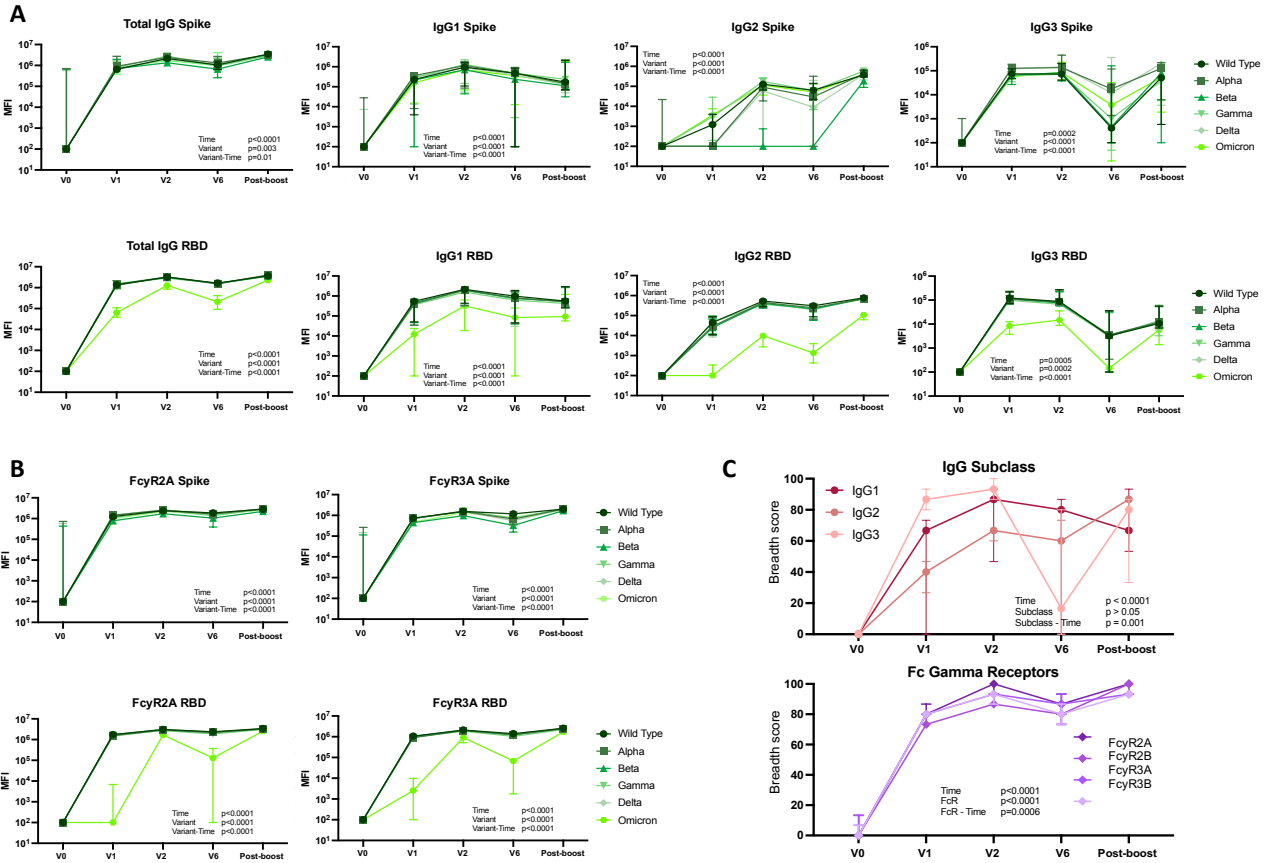
482 Spike and RBD WT. **(C)** ADCP, ADNP and ADCD against Spike and RBD WT. **(D)** Heatmap

483 shows the univariate comparison between SARS-CoV-2-specific antibody response in children

484 and adults. Difference between the median of Z-scored MFI data are represented, where the color
485 corresponds to the group that has the highest antibody response. (E) Breadth score was calculated
486 by categorizing each antigen response as positive or negative, with positive response defined as 6
487 standard deviations above the mean of the COVID-unexposed controls, then calculating the
488 percentage of positive Spike and RBD variant antigen responses for each secondary. Non-
489 parametric Mann-Whitney U-test was used to calculate statistical significance, followed by
490 Benjamini-Hochberg correction for multiple testing. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** p
491 < 0.0001 .
492



493 **Fig. 2. Strong impact of mRNA-1273 vaccination on antibody response overtime.** Antibody
 494 levels (A), binding to FcγR (B) and function (C) against Spike WT was analyzed in children at
 495 different timepoints: before vaccination (V0), 1 month (V1) after first dose of mRNA-1273
 496 vaccine, 2 months (V2) after the first dose of mRNA-1273 vaccine, in addition to 1 months after
 497 the second dose, 6 months (V6) after the first mRNA-1273 vaccination in addition to 5 month after
 498 the 2 doses, as well as 1 month after boosting (post-boost). Connecting lines represent identical
 499 individuals that were followed over time, and statistical differences were calculated between 2
 500 consecutive timepoints. Wilcoxon signed rank test was used to calculate differences between
 501 timepoints for paired data. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** $p < 0.0001$.



502

503 **Fig. 3. Similar antibody responses across variant epitopes.** Median and 95% confidence interval

504 at each timepoint for (A) Total IgG, IgG1, IgG2 and IgG3, as well as (B) FcγR2A and FcγR3A

505 binding against Spike and the RBD. Mixed effect models were run, and p values reported for time,

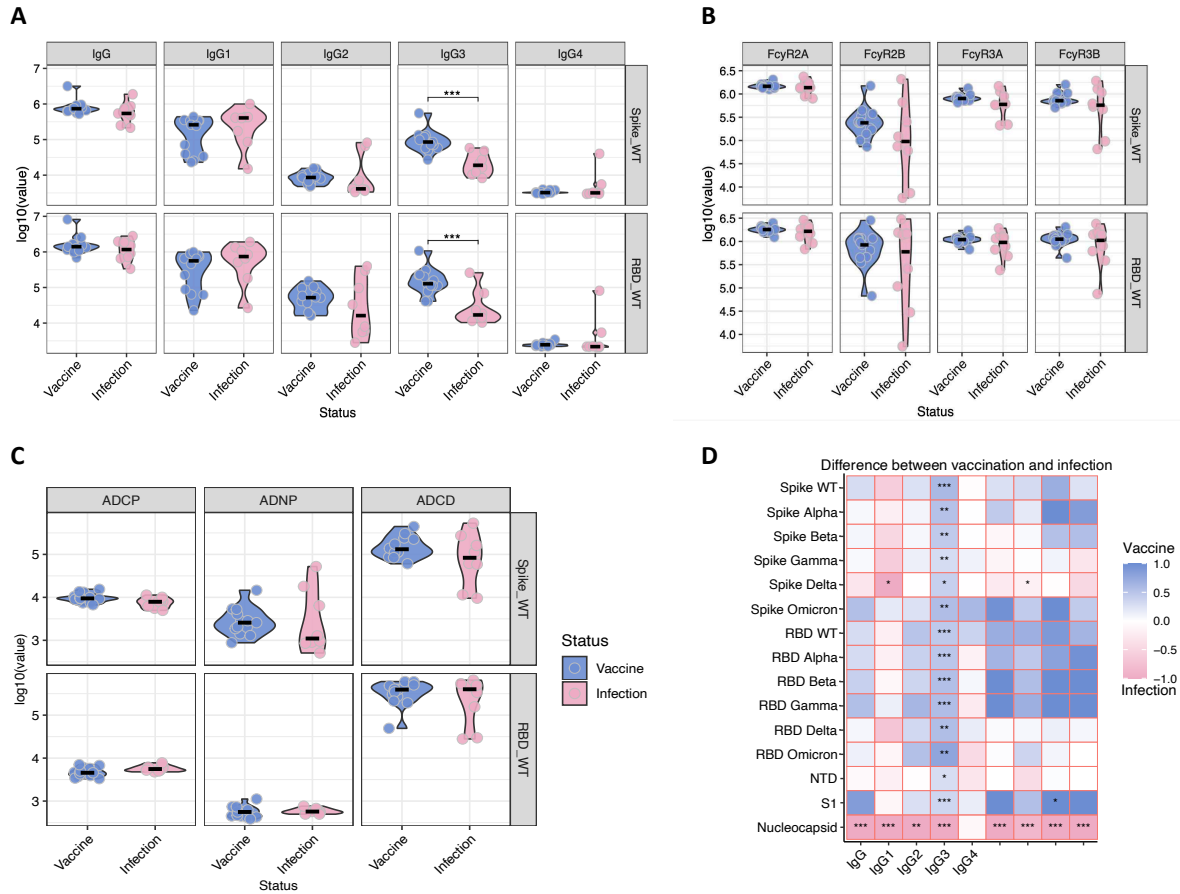
506 variant and variant-time interaction coefficients. (C) Breadth score was calculated by defining

507 positive responses to each antigen response as 6 standard deviations above the mean of the

508 COVID-unexposed controls for the same antigen and subclass or FcR. We then calculated the

509 percentage of Spike and RBD variant antigen responses for each secondary individual at each

510 timepoint.



511

512 **Fig. 4. Distinct antibody response between vaccination and natural infection in children**

513 **under five.** Antibody response was measured in the plasma of children 1 month after vaccination

514 or diagnosis (on average). **(A)** Total IgG, IgG1, IgG2, IgG4 and IgG4 against Spike and RBD WT.

515 **(B)** FcγR2A, FcγR2B, FcγR3A and FcγR3B binding against Spike and RBD WT. **(C)** ADCP,

516 ADNP and ADCD against Spike and RBD WT. **(D)** Heatmap illustrates the difference between

517 the median of Z-scored MFI data of the vaccinated and infected groups. Non-parametric Mann-

518 Whitney U-test was used to calculate statistical significance, followed by Benjamini-Hochberg

519 correction for multiple testing. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

520

521 **Table 1.** Demographics of mRNA-vaccinated and convalescent infants and children enrolled.

Patient Characteristics	mRNA-1273 vaccinated (n = 19)	COVID-Recovered (n = 5)	Total children enrolled (n = 24)
Age at Enrollment, mean (min, max)	2.2 (0.6, 4.5)	3.7 (1, 5)	2.5 (0.6, 5)
Male Sex, number (%)	7 (36.8)	3 (60)	10 (42)
Hispanic, number (%)	8 (42.1)	2 (40)	10 (42)
Race, number (%)			
American Indian/Native Alaskan	1 (5.3)	0 (0)	1 (4.2)
Asian	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Black	2 (10.5)	0 (0)	2 (8.3)
Other	5 (26.3)	2 (40)	7 (29.2)
Unknown	2 (10.5)	0 (0)	2 (8.3)
White	9 (47.4)	3 (60)	12 (50)

522

523

Supplementary Files

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