

# A potent synthetic nanobody targets RBD and protects mice from SARS-CoV-2 infection

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## Article

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3  
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30 **ABSTRACT**

31 SARS-CoV-2, the causative agent of COVID-19<sup>1</sup>, recognizes host cells by attaching  
32 its receptor-binding domain (RBD) to the host receptor ACE2<sup>2-7</sup>. Neutralizing  
33 antibodies that block RBD-ACE2 interaction have been a major focus for therapeutic  
34 development<sup>8-18</sup>. Llama-derived single-domain antibodies (nanobodies, ~15 kDa) offer  
35 advantages including ease of production and possibility for direct delivery to the lungs  
36 by nebulization<sup>19</sup>, which are attractive features for bio-drugs against the global  
37 respiratory disease. Here, we generated 99 synthetic nanobodies (sybodies) by *in vitro*  
38 selection using three libraries. The best sybody, MR3 bound to RBD with high affinity  
39 ( $K_D = 1.0$  nM) and showed high neutralization activity against SARS-CoV-2  
40 pseudoviruses ( $IC_{50} = 0.40$   $\mu$ g  $mL^{-1}$ ). Structural, biochemical, and biological  
41 characterization of sybodies suggest a common neutralizing mechanism, in which the  
42 RBD-ACE2 interaction is competitively inhibited by sybodies. Various forms of sybodies  
43 with improved potency were generated by structure-based design, biparatopic  
44 construction, and divalent engineering. Among these, a divalent MR3 conjugated with  
45 the albumin-binding domain for prolonged half-life displayed highest potency ( $IC_{50} =$   
46 12 ng  $mL^{-1}$ ) and protected mice from live SARS-CoV-2 challenge. Our results pave the  
47 way to the development of therapeutic nanobodies against COVID-19 and present a  
48 strategy for rapid responses for future outbreaks.

49 **INTRODUCTION**

50 The coronavirus disease that emerged in early December 2019 (COVID-19)<sup>1</sup> poses  
51 a global health and economic crisis<sup>20</sup>. The causative agent, SARS-CoV-2, uses its Spike  
52 protein (S) to recognize receptors on host cells, an initial step for viral infection<sup>2,3,21,22</sup>.  
53 Key to this virus-host interaction is the binding between the S receptor-binding domain  
54 (RBD) and the host ACE2 protein<sup>4-7</sup>. Therefore, the RBD has been a primary target for  
55 neutralizing antibodies<sup>8-13,23</sup> to block ACE2-binding.

56

57 Llama-derived nanobodies are generally more heat stable, easier and less  
58 expensive for production, and more amenable to protein engineering compared to  
59 conventional antibodies<sup>24</sup>. As single-chain antibodies, nanobody libraries are less  
60 complex to construct and screen, enabling *in vitro* selection of high-affinity binders in  
61 relative short time, typically 2-4 weeks<sup>25-30</sup>. Recently, several nanobody therapeutics,  
62 including the caplacizumab approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, have  
63 been developed for a variety of immune diseases<sup>31</sup>. Of relevance to SARS-CoV-2,  
64 nanobodies can survive nebulization and an inhaler nanobody drug (ALX-0171) has  
65 gone into clinical trials for the treatment of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus<sup>31</sup>. Recent  
66 weeks have witnessed the generation of nanobodies that neutralize SARS-CoV-2 from  
67 several independent groups<sup>14-18</sup>. However, the *in vivo* efficacy of such nanobodies  
68 remains to be investigated.

69

70 Here, we report our efforts in selection and engineering synthetic nanobodies  
71 (sybodies)<sup>26</sup> that are highly potent against SARS-CoV-2, using biochemical and  
72 structural approaches. For the first time, we demonstrate that nanobodies can protect  
73 mice from live SARS-CoV-2 infection. Our results form a preliminary basis for the  
74 development of nanobody therapeutics for COVID-19.

75

76

77 **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

78 **Generation of high-affinity neutralizing sybodies against SARS-CoV-2**

79 SARS-CoV-2 S-RBD binders were selected by performing one round of ribosome  
80 display using three high-diversity libraries (Concave, Loop, and Convex)<sup>26,27</sup>, and three  
81 rounds of phage display using the RBD as the bait under increasingly stringent  
82 conditions. Subsequent ELISA (**Extended Data Fig. 1**) identified 80, 77, and 90 positive  
83 clones, corresponding to 62, 19, and 18 unique binders from the Concave, Loop, and  
84 Convex library, respectively (**Extended Data Table 1**). Eighty sequencing ‘first-comers’

85 of the 99 sybodies were further screened by a convenient fluorescence-detector size  
86 exclusion chromatography (FSEC) assay using crude extract from sybody-expressing  
87 clones. This identified 28 (36%) sybodies, including 9 Concave (21%), 9 Loop (50%),  
88 and 10 Convex (56%) binders that caused earlier retention of the fluorescein-labeled  
89 RBD (**Extended Data Fig. 2A, Extended Data Table 1**).

90

91 The same 80 sybodies were also screened for neutralization activity against  
92 retroviral pseudotypes harboring the SARS-CoV-2 S protein. Using 50% neutralization  
93 at 1  $\mu$ M concentration as a cut-off, 11 Concave (26%), 13 Loop (68%), and 10 Convex  
94 (56%) sybodies were identified as positive (**Extended Data Fig. 3A**). The high positive  
95 rates suggest high efficiency of the *in vitro* selection platform. Of note, none of the  
96 sybodies showed noticeable neutralization activities for the closely related SARS-CoV  
97 pseudovirus (**Extended Data Fig. 3B**), indicating high specificity.

98

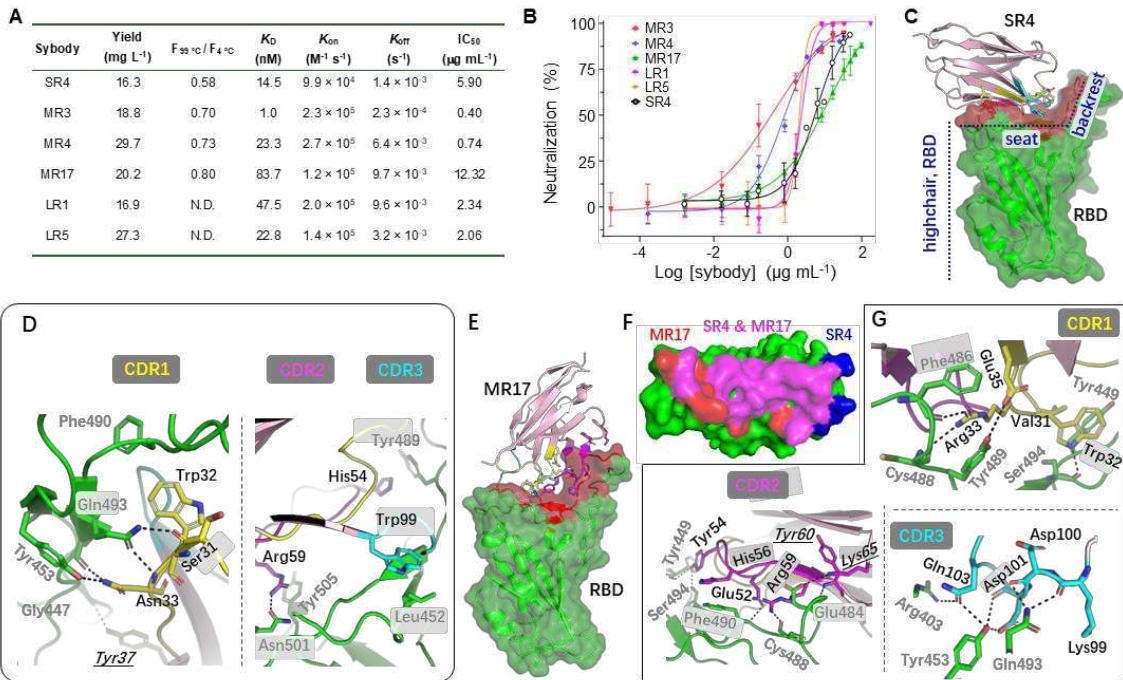
99 Six FSEC-positive neutralizing sybodies, namely SR4 (1), MR3 (31), MR4 (9), MR17  
100 (1), LR1 (31), and LR5 (19) (S, M, L refers to Concave, Loop, and Convex sybodies  
101 respectively; brackets indicate ELISA redundancy), were characterized in more detail  
102 as follows. They could be purified from *Escherichia coli* with high yield (**Fig. 1A**), formed  
103 complexes with RBD on gel filtration (**Extended Data Fig. 2B**), displayed ultra-high  
104 thermostability (**Fig. 1A, Extended Data Fig. 2C**) as originally designed<sup>26</sup>, and bound  
105 to the RBD with relatively high affinity (**Fig. 1A, Extended Data Fig. 4**), with  $K_D$  ranging  
106 from 83.7 nM (MR17) to 1.0 nM (MR3). Consistent with its highest affinity, MR3  
107 showed the slowest off-rate ( $2.3 \times 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ). Using neutralization assays, we determined  
108 IC<sub>50</sub> of the six sybodies (**Fig. 1B**). MR3 was the most potent (IC<sub>50</sub> of 0.40  $\mu$ g mL<sup>-1</sup>),  
109 indicating a largely consistent trend between neutralization potency and binding  
110 kinetics (affinity and off-rate).

111

## 112 **Structure of sybody-RBD complexes**

113

114 To gain mechanistic insights into neutralization, we performed crystallization  
115 trials for several RBD-sybody complexes and obtained crystals for four. Crystals of SR4-  
116 and MR17-RBD diffracted to 2.15  $\text{\AA}$  and 2.77  $\text{\AA}$  resolution respectively and allowed  
117 structure determination (**Extended Data Table 2**). Crystals for MR3- and MR4-RBD did  
118 not diffract beyond 8.0  $\text{\AA}$  despite our optimization efforts.



119 **Fig. 1. Biochemical and structural characterization of neutralizing sybodies. (A)**  
120 Summary of the characterization. Yield refers to purification from 1 L of culture.  
121 Fractional fluorescence (F) indicates remaining gel filtration peak intensity of sybodies  
122 after heating at 99 °C for 20 min. N. D., not determined. **(B)** Neutralization assay. SARS-  
123 CoV-2 pseudoviruses were pre-incubated with different concentration of sybodies  
124 before infection of VeroE6-hACE2 cells. The rate of infection was measured by  
125 fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACS). IC<sub>50</sub> was obtained by Sigmoidal fitting of the  
126 percentage of neutralization. Data are from three independent experiments. **(C)** The  
127 overall structure of SR4 (pink cartoon) in complex with RBD (green surface) which  
128 resembles a short backrest high chair. The binding surface is highlighted red. **(D)** SR4  
129 CDR1 (yellow), CDR2 (magenta), and CDR3 (cyan) all contributed to the binding.  
130 Underlining italics label the framework residue Tyr37. **(E)** The overall structure of the  
131 MR17 (pink cartoon) in complex with RBD (green surface). **(F)** The overlap (magenta)  
132 between the SR4- (blue) and MR17- (red) interacting surfaces on RBD. **(G)** All three  
133 CDRs contributed to the binding with RBD (green). Underlining italics label the  
134 framework residues Lys65 and Tyr60. Dashed lines indicate H-bonding or salt-bridges  
135 between atoms that are <4.0 Å apart. Black texts label sybody residues and grey texts  
136 label RBD residues.

137  
138 The RBD structure resembles a short backrest high chair and SR4 binds to both  
139 the 'seat' and 'backrest' (**Fig. 1C**) with a surface area<sup>32</sup> of 727.37 Å<sup>2</sup> with modest  
140 electrostatic complementarity (**Extended Data Fig. 5A**). Of note, SR4 binds sideways,  
141 as intended by design of the Concave sybody library<sup>26</sup>. All three CDRs contributed to

142 the binding through hydrophobic interactions and H-bonding that involves both side  
143 chains and main chains (**Fig. 1D**). In addition, Tyr37, a framework residue, also  
144 participated binding by forming an H-bond with the RBD Gly447 backbone.

145

146 MR17 also binds to the RBD at the 'seat' and 'backrest' regions but approaches  
147 the RBD at an almost perfect opposite direction of SR4 (**Fig. 1C, 1E**), indicating  
148 divergent binding mode for these sybodies. The binding of MR17 to the RBD occurred  
149 on an 853.94 Å<sup>2</sup> surface area with noticeable electrostatic complementarity (**Extended**  
150 **Data Fig. 5B**). Interestingly, this surface was largely shared with the SR4 binding surface  
151 (**Fig. 1F**). The interactions between MR17 and the RBD were mainly mediated by H-  
152 bonding. Apart from the three CDRs, two framework residues, Lys65 and Tyr60,  
153 interacted with the same RBD residue Glu484, via a salt bridge with its side chain, and  
154 an H-bond with its main chain (**Fig. 1G**).

155

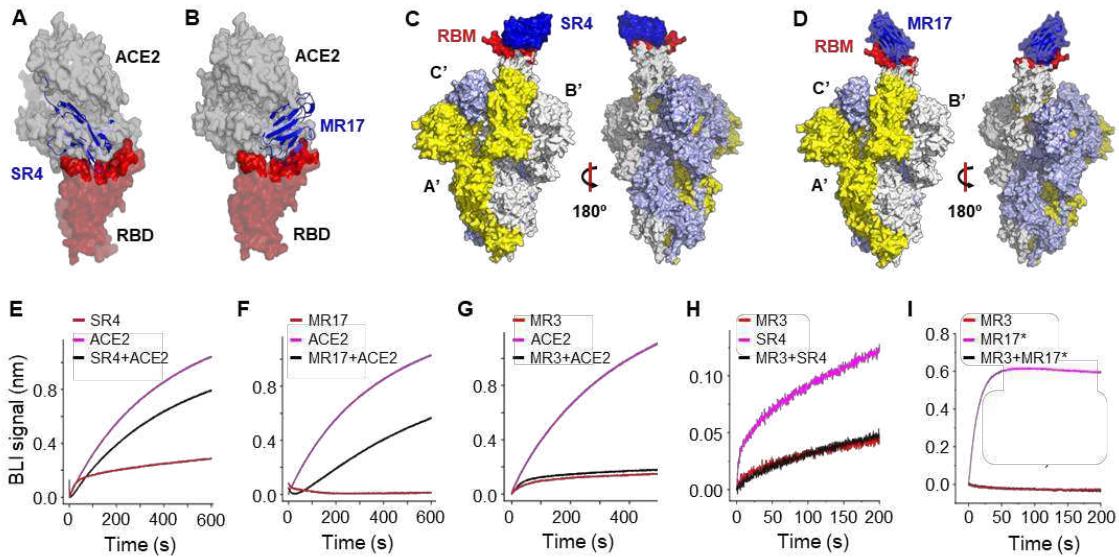
156

### 157 Molecular mechanism for neutralization

158 Structure alignment of SR4-, MR17- and ACE2-RBD<sup>4</sup> showed that both sybodies  
159 engage with RBD at the receptor-binding motif (RBM) (**Fig. 2A, 2B**). Superposing SR4  
160 and MR17 to the S trimer showed both sybodies could bind to the 'up' conformation<sup>2</sup>  
161 of RBD with no steric clashes (**Fig. 2C, 2D**), and to the 'down' conformation with only  
162 minor clashes (**Extended Data Fig. 6**) owing to their minute sizes. Consistent with the  
163 structure observation, both SR4 and MR17 inhibited the binding of ACE2 to RBD, as  
164 revealed by bio-layer interferometry (BLI) assays (**Fig. 2E, 2F**).

165

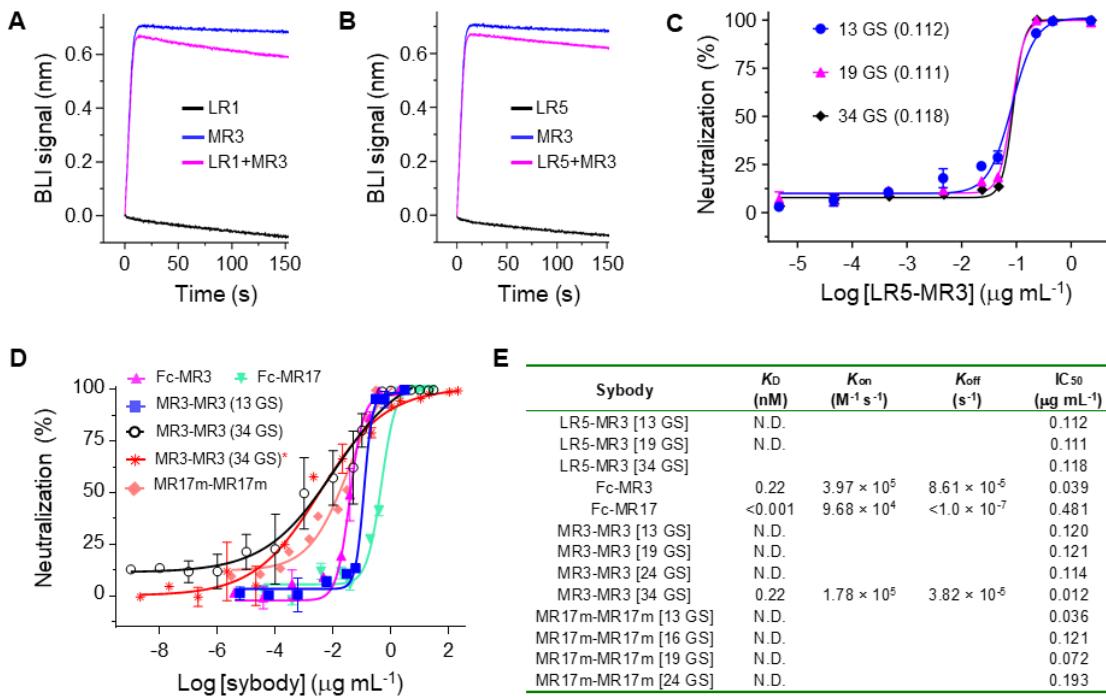
166 To probe the epitope for MR3 without a structure, competitive BLI binding assays  
167 were carried out. The results showed that MR3 could block ACE2 (**Fig. 2G**), and SR4  
168 and MR17 (**Fig. 2H, 2I**), suggesting it also binds to at least part of the RBM, although  
169 the possibility of allosteric inhibition remains to be investigated. Taken together, SR4  
170 and MR17, and probably MR3, neutralize SARS-CoV-2 by competitively blocking the  
171 ACE2-RBD binding.



172  
173 **Fig. 2. Molecular basis for neutralization.** (A,B) Alignment of the SR4- (A) or MR17- (B)  
174 RBD to the ACE2-RBD structure (PDB ID 6M0J)<sup>4</sup> reveals that SR4/MR17 (blue) binds  
175 RBD (red) at the motif (dark red) where ACE2 (white) also binds at. (C,D) Alignment of  
176 the SR4-RBD (C) and MR17-RBD (D) to the 'up' conformation of the RBD from the cryo-  
177 EM structure of the trimer S (PDB ID 6VYB)<sup>2</sup>. A'/B'/C' label three subunits. RBM (red)  
178 marks the ACE2-binding motif. (E-G) Competitive binding for the RBD between sybody  
179 and ACE2. A sensor coated with streptavidin was saturated with 2  $\mu$ g mL<sup>-1</sup> of  
180 biotinylated RBD. The sensor was then soaked in 200 nM of indicated sybody before  
181 further soaked in sybody-containing buffer with (black) or without (red) 25 nM of ACE2  
182 for BLI signal recording. As a control, the ACE2-RBD interaction was monitored in the  
183 absence of sybodies (magenta). (H-I) Competitive BLI assay for the RBD between  
184 sybody pairs. A sensor with immobilized RBD was soaked in 200 nM of MR3 before  
185 further soaked in MR3-containing buffer with (black) or without SR4/MR17 (red). As a  
186 control, the SR4- and MR17-RBD interaction were monitored in the absence of MR3  
187 (magenta). In (I), MR17\* indicates a MR17 mutant (see below). Panels E-I share the  
188 same Y-axis title.

189  
190 **Sybody engineering increased affinity and neutralizing activity**

191  
192 Increasing valency is a common technique to enhance potency for  
193 nanobodies<sup>18,31</sup>. To this end, we engineered three types of divalent sybodies, including  
194 the biparatopic fusion of two different sybodies, the Fc-fusion and direct fusion of the  
195 same sybody.



**Fig. 3. Divalent engineering increased affinity and neutralizing activity. (A,B)** Identification of two non-competing pairs, LR1/MR3 (A) and LR5/MR3 (B), for biparatopic constructs. For BLI assays, sensors coated with RBD were soaked in 200 nM of LR1 or LR5 before further soaked in LR1- or LR5-containing buffer with (magenta) or without (black) 100 nM of MR3. The MR3-RBD interaction profile was obtained in the absence of LR1 or LR5 (blue). (C) Neutralization assay of the biparatopic sybody LR5-MR3 with a GS linker of various length as indicated. Brackets indicate  $IC_{50}$  values in  $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ . (D) Neutralization assays of divalent sybodies. The original SARS-CoV-2 was used for all assays except that the D614G mutant<sup>33</sup> was additionally tested for MR3-MR3 (red asterisk). (E) Summary of binding kinetics and neutralizing activities of the divalent sybodies. N.D., not determined.

For biparatopic fusion, we first identified two sybodies, namely LR1 and LR5 (Fig. 3A, 3B), that could bind RBD in addition to MR3 using the BLI assay. As LR5 showed higher affinity and neutralization activity than LR1 (Fig. 1A), we fused this non-competing sybody to the N-terminal of MR3 with various length of GS linkers ranging from 13 to 34 amino acids (Extended Data Table S1). Interestingly, the linker length had little effect on neutralization activity and these biparatopic LR5-MR3 sybodies were more potent than either sybodies alone (Fig. 1A) with an  $IC_{50}$  of 0.11  $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$  (Fig. 3C). LR5-MR3 may be more tolerant to escape mutants<sup>34-37</sup> owing to its ability to recognize two distinct epitopes.

For Fc-fusion, both MR3 and MR17 were attached to the dimeric human IgG Fc. This decreased  $IC_{50}$  by 10 folds for Fc-MR3 (39 ng mL<sup>-1</sup>) and 25 folds Fc-MR17 (0.48  $\mu\text{g}$

220  $\text{mL}^{-1}$ ), respectively (**Fig. 3D, 3E**). Consistently, the Fc fusion increased the apparent  
221 binding affinity for both sybodies, with a  $K_D$  of 0.22 nM for Fc-MR3 and less than 1 pM  
222 for Fc-MR17 (**Extended Data Fig. 4H, 4I**). Note, however, Fc-MR17 did not gain as much  
223 neutralization potency as for the apparent binding affinity.

224  
225 For direct fusion, MR3 and a rationally designed MR17 mutant (MR17m,  
226 **Extended Data Fig. 7**) that showed comparable  $\text{IC}_{50}$  with MR3 by a single mutation  
227 K99Y (0.50  $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ , **Extended Data Fig. 7G**) were individually linked together via GS  
228 linkers with variable length ranging from 13 to 34 amino acids (**Extended Data Table**  
229 **1**). The optimal construct for MR17m-MR17m had the shortest linker (13-GS) (**Fig. 3D,**  
230 **3E**). By contrast, optimal neutralization activity was observed with the longest linker  
231 (34-GS) for MR3-MR3 (**Fig. 3D, 3E**). Again, MR3-MR3 was superior compared to  
232 MR17m-MR17m, showing a 2-fold higher neutralization activity with an  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of 12  $\text{ng mL}^{-1}$   
233 (**Fig. 3E**). Compared to the monovalent MR3 ( $\text{IC}_{50}$  of 0.40  $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$ ), the divalent  
234 engineering increased the potency by over 30 folds. Notably, MR3-MR3 showed similar  
235 activity to inhibit pseudotypes harboring the original SARS-CoV-2 S or the current  
236 dominant and more infectious mutant D614G S (ref. <sup>33</sup>) (**Fig. 3D**).  
237

### 238 **Divalent MR3 protects mice from COVID-19**

239  
240 The most potent divalent sybody (MR3-MR3) was chosen to investigate the  
241 potential of nanobodies to protect mice from SARS-CoV-2 infection. Nanobodies have  
242 very short serum half-lives of several minutes due to their minute size<sup>38</sup>. To circumvent  
243 this, we fused MR3-MR3 to the N-terminus of an albumin-binding domain (ABD)<sup>39</sup>  
244 which has been known to extend the circulating half-life of its fusion partners by  
245 increase in size and preventing intracellular degradation<sup>31</sup>. Conveniently, we expressed  
246 MR3-MR3-ABD in *Pichia pastoris*, which is the preferred host to express nanobody  
247 therapeutics owing to its robustness and its endotoxin-free production. Small-scale  
248 expression of MR3-MR3-ABD showed a secretion level of  $\sim 250 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$  with an apparent  
249 purity of >80% without purification (**Fig. 4A**). Note, this experiment was carried out  
250 using a shaker which gave cell density of  $\text{OD}_{600}$  of 16. Given its ability to grow to  $\text{OD}_{600}$   
251 of 500 without compromising yield, the expression level of MR3-MR3-ABD may reach  
252 7.5  $\text{g L}^{-1}$  in fermenters. The potential for simple and high-yield production is especially  
253 attractive for the pandemic at a global scale.

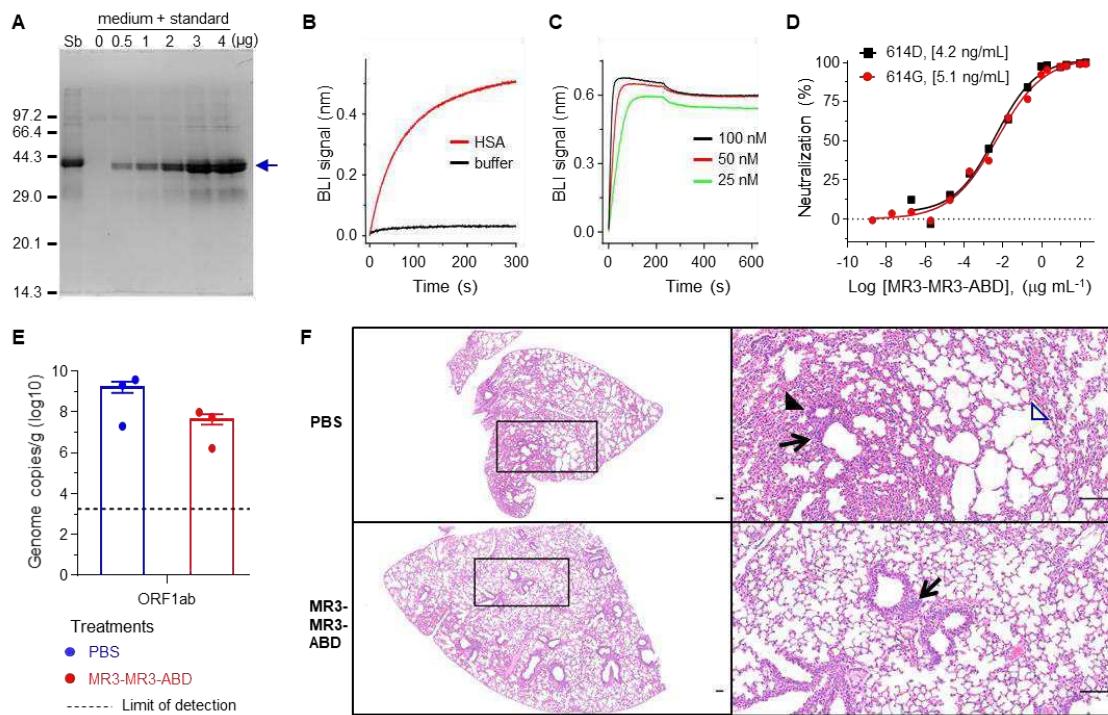
254  
255 Importantly, MR3-MR3-ABD could bind to the human albumin (**Fig. 4B**) while  
256 retaining its ability to bind RBD (**Fig. 4C**) and to neutralize SARS-CoV-2 pseudotypes  
257 harboring either past (614D) and current (614G)<sup>33</sup> SARS-CoV-2 S (**Fig. 4D**). As designed,

258 a serum virus neutralization assay showed that the addition of the albumin binding  
259 domain to the divalent MR3 (MR3-MR3-ABD) extended its *in vivo* stability, displaying  
260 neutralization activity up to 24 h post injection contrary to the other forms (**Extended**  
261 **Data Fig. 8A**). The body weight measures, and the microscopic histopathology analysis  
262 did not reveal any toxicity for the nanobodies for 6 days (**Extended Data Fig. 8B, 8C**).  
263

264 To test the *in vivo* antiviral efficacy of MR3-MR3-ABD, C57BL/6J female mice, aged  
265 6-8 weeks old, were first sensitized to SARS-CoV-2 infection using an adenovirus  
266 expressing the human ACE2 receptor<sup>40</sup> at 5 days before challenge. Mice were infected  
267 via the intranasal route with  $5 \times 10^6$  median tissue culture infectious dose (TCID<sub>50</sub>) of  
268 SARS-CoV-2, and then administered a single dose of 25 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> MR3-MR3-ABD via the  
269 intraperitoneal route at 12 h after virus challenge. A control C57BL/6J group were  
270 given PBS as a mock treatment. Compared to the control group, the lung viral titers of  
271 the sybody group was 50-fold lower than the PBS group, when assessed at 3 dpi (**Fig.**  
272 **4E**). This efficacy is similar to the existing human monoclonal antibody CB6 (2  
273 injections, 50-fold, in rhesus macaques)<sup>41</sup> and better than that for 1B07 (1 injection,  
274 10-fold, mice)<sup>42</sup> when compared under similar sampling points.  
275

276 Histopathological examination revealed that the infected mice in the PBS-treated  
277 group displayed moderate bronchopneumonia lesions, with a large number of  
278 inflammatory cell infiltrations around the bronchioles and terminal bronchioles. The  
279 alveolar walls were thickened, a large number of inflammatory cells were exuded in  
280 the interstitium, accompanied by red blood cell exudation. In addition, part of the  
281 alveolar cavity showed compensatory expansion (**Fig. 4F**). In contrast, the lungs of  
282 sybody-treated mice showed normal alveolar wall structures, and only displayed mild  
283 bronchopneumonia, with a small amount of inflammatory cell infiltration around the  
284 bronchioles (**Fig. 4F**). Taken together, the significant reduction of the lung viral load  
285 and the severity of lung damage demonstrated the *in vivo* efficacy of the MR3-MR3-  
286 ABD against authentic SARS-CoV-2 infection.  
287

288 In summary, the *in vitro* platform was efficient in generating neutralizing sybodies  
289 (the selection process took 2 weeks). Structural and biochemical studies suggested an  
290 antagonistic mechanism to block the ACE2-RBD interaction. Protein engineering  
291 yielded various forms of sybody with higher affinity, neutralization activity, and *in vivo*  
292 stability. Using the most potent construct, we have in the first time demonstrated that  
293 nanobodies can provide post-exposure protection of mice from SARS-CoV-2 infection.  
294 Our results should encourage development of nanobody therapeutics to fight COVID-  
295 19 or future viral outbreaks.



296

297 **Fig. 4. The Divalent MR3 sybody protects mice from live SARS-CoV-2 challenge. (A)**  
 298 Coomassie Blue staining of SDS-PAGE for MR3-MR3-ABD (arrow) expression in pichia.  
 299 Based on the standards, the yield (Lane Sb) was semi-quantified as  $0.25 \text{ g L}^{-1}$ . (B,C) BLI  
 300 binding assays show that MR3-MR3-ABD bind to human serum albumin (HSA) (B) and  
 301 RBD-coated sensors were incubated with 200 nM of HSA (B) or indicated  
 302 concentrations of MR3-MR3-ABD (C) for single monitoring. (D) Neutralization assay of  
 303 MR3-MR3-ABD. Data are from one representative experiment of two independent  
 304 experiments. (E) Lung viral loads as determined by PCR from infected mice at 3 dpi. (F)  
 305 Histopathology of lungs from infected mice at 3 dpi. The arrows denote inflammatory  
 306 cell infiltration. A black triangle indicates typical red blood cell exudation, and a blue  
 307 triangle indicates typical compensatory expansion of the alveolar cavity. The left  
 308 panels denote an overview of the lung at 10x magnification. The right panels denote  
 309 the expanded view of the black boxes in the left panels, at 100x magnification. Bars =  
 310 100 µm.

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328

329

330 **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

331 T.L., H.C., and H.Y. selected sybodies under the supervision of C.A.J.H. and M.A.S..  
332 T.L., H.C., and H.Y. purified and crystalized protein complexes with assistance from Y.L..  
333 H.Y. biochemically characterized sybodies. B.Z. and Y.Z. performed neutralization  
334 assays under the supervision of D.La. N.Z., Y.G. and Q.S. performed animal experiments  
335 under supervision of Y.B. and G.W.. W.Q. collected X-ray diffraction data. B.J. helped  
336 with molecular cloning. S.K. performed half-life assays in mice. J.L. and G.W. developed  
337 reagents for the neutralizing assays. G.W. developed the mice model used for in vivo  
338 studies. D.Li. conceived the project, solved the structures, analyzed data, and wrote  
339 the manuscript with inputs from H.Y., T.L., H.C., B.Z., G.W., Y.B., M.A.S., and D.La.

340

341 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

342 The authors declare no conflict of interest.

343

344 **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS**

345

346

347 Materials and Methods

348

349 Extended Data Table 1-2

350

351 Extended Data Fig. 1-8

352 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

353 **Protein expression and purification – SARS-CoV-2 S-RBD for sybody selection**

354 The construct for the RBD with an Avi-tag for biotinylation was made by fusing  
355 DNA, from 5'- to 3'-end, of the encoding sequence for the honey bee melittin signal  
356 peptide (KFLVNVALVFMVVYISYIYAA), a Gly-Ser linker, residues of 330-541 of the SARS-  
357 CoV-2 spike protein (Uniprot [P0DTC2](#)), a Gly-Thr linker, the 3C protease site  
358 (LEVLFQGP), a Gly-Ser linker, the Avi tag (GLNDIFEAQKIEWHE), a Ser-Gly linker, and a  
359 deca-His tag, into a pFastBac-backbone vector by Gibson assembly<sup>43</sup>. Baculoviruses  
360 were generated using standard Bac-to-Bac protocols and expression was achieved by  
361 infecting *Trichoplusia ni* High Five suspension cells at  $2 \times 10^6$  cells per milliliter for 48-  
362 60 h at 27 °C in flasks. The medium from 1 L of culture was filtered through a 0.22-µm  
363 membrane and incubated with 3.0 mL of Ni-Sepharose Excel (Cat 17-3712-03, GE  
364 Healthcare) in the presence of 20 mM of imidazole for 2-3 h at 4 °C with mild agitation.  
365 The beads were washed with 10 column volume (CV) of 20 mM imidazole in **Buffer A**  
366 (150 mM NaCl, 20 mM Tris HCl pH 8.0). The RBD was eluted using 300 mM of imidazole  
367 in **Buffer A**. For biotinylation<sup>26,27</sup>, the purified RBD with the Avi-tag intact (0.8 mg mL<sup>-1</sup>)  
368 was incubated with 5 mM ATP, 10 mM magnesium acetate, 43.5 µM biotin, 22 µg  
369 mL<sup>-1</sup> home-purified BirA in 3.2 mL volume and incubated at 4 °C for 16 h. Biotinylated  
370 RBD was concentrated using a 10-kDa cut-off membrane concentrator to ~3 mg mL<sup>-1</sup>  
371 before loaded onto a Superdex Increase 200 10/300 GL column for size exclusion  
372 chromatography. Fractions containing the RBD were pooled, aliquoted, flash-frozen in  
373 liquid nitrogen, and stored at -80 °C before use.

374

375 **Protein expression and purification – SARS-CoV-2 S-RBD for crystallization**

376 For protein crystallization, the RBD was purified as above. Both the Avi-tag and  
377 the His-tag were removed by 3C protease digestion as follows. The pooled elution from  
378 Ni-Sepharose Excel column was desalting to remove imidazole using a desalting column  
379 (Cat. 732-2010, Bio-Rad) pre-equilibrated in **Buffer A**. The desalted RBD was mixed  
380 with home-purified His-tagged 3C protease at 1:100 molar ratio (3C protease : RBD) at  
381 4 °C for 16 h. The mixture was then passed through a Ni-NTA column which binds 3C  
382 protease, undigested RBD, and the cleaved His-tag. The flow-through fractions were  
383 collected and concentrated to 8-10 mg mL<sup>-1</sup>. The protein was either used directly for  
384 crystallization, or flash-frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80 °C before use.

385

386 For crystallization, fresh RBD or thawed from -80 °C was mixed with desired  
387 sybodies at 1:1.5 molar ratio (RBD:sybody). After incubation on ice for 30 min, the  
388 mixture was clarified by centrifugation before size exclusion chromatography.

389 Fractions containing the complex were pooled, concentrated to  $\sim$ 10-15 mg mL $^{-1}$  before  
390 crystallization trials.

391

392 **Protein expression and purification – sybodies in *Escherichia coli***

393 Sybodies were expressed with a C-terminally His-tag in *Escherichia coli* MC1061  
394 cells. Briefly, cells carrying sybody genes in the vector pSb-init<sup>26,27</sup> were grown in  
395 Terrific Broth (TB, 0.17 M KH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub> and 0.72 M K<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>, 1.2 % (w/v) tryptone, 2.4 % (w/v)  
396 yeast extract, 0.5% (v/v) glycerol) supplemented with 25 mg L $^{-1}$  chloramphenicol to  
397 OD<sub>600</sub> of 0.5 at 37 °C in a shaker-incubator at 220 rpm. The growth temperature was  
398 lowered to 22 °C and the cells were allowed to grow for another 1.5 h before induced  
399 with 0.02% (w/v) arabinose for 17 h. Cells were lysed by osmotic shock. Briefly, cells  
400 from 1 L of culture were re-suspended in 20 mL of TES-high Buffer (0.5 M sucrose, 0.5  
401 mM EDTA, and 0.2 M Tris-HCl pH 8.0) and incubated at 4 °C for 30 min. After this  
402 dehydration step, cells were abruptly rehydrated with 40 mL of ice-cold MilliQ H<sub>2</sub>O at  
403 4 °C for 1 h. The periplasmic extract released by the osmotic shock was collected by  
404 centrifugation at 20,000 $\times$ g at 4 °C for 30 min. The supernatant was adjusted to contain  
405 150 mM of NaCl, 2 mM of MgCl<sub>2</sub>, and 20 mM of imidazole before added with Ni-NTA  
406 resin that had been pre-equilibrated with 20 mM of imidazole in **Buffer A** (150 mM  
407 NaCl and 20 mM Tris HCl pH 8.0). After batch-binding for 2 h, the beads were washed  
408 with 30 mM imidazole, before eluted with 300 mM imidazole in **Buffer A**. The eluted  
409 protein was either used directly or flash-frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80 °C.

410

411 **Protein expression – sybody MR3-MR3-ABD in *Pichia pastoris***

412 The encoding gene for MR3-MR3-ABD (**Table S1**) was cloned into vector pPICZαC  
413 (Invitrogen) immediately in frame with the α-factor signal peptide. To express MR3-  
414 MR3-ABD in yeast, *Pichia pastoris* GS115 and SMD1168H were transformed with *SacI*-  
415 linearized plasmid and selected with 0.1 and 0.5 mg mL $^{-1}$  zeocin on an YPDS agar plate  
416 (1 % (w/v) yeast extract, 2 % (w/v) peptone, 2 % (w/v) glucose, 0.8 M sorbitol, 2 % (w/v)  
417 agarose). Colonies (12 for each strain) were inoculated into 3 mL YPD liquid medium.  
418 Cells were grown in a 30-°C incubator. After 24 h, cells were harvested, washed twice  
419 with methanol-complex medium (BMMY), and suspended in BMMY medium at a final  
420 OD<sub>600</sub> of 4-5 for induction. Methanol was supplemented to the medium to 0.5 % (v/v)  
421 every 24 h. After 3 days of expression, the medium was collected by centrifugation and  
422 the secreted protein was used for SDS-PAGE analysis.

423

424 To quantify the expression level, the supernatant (10 μL) was loaded together  
425 with known amount of MR3-MR3-ABD (purified from *E. coli*, 0.5, 1, 2, 3, and 4 μg) that

426 had been pre-mixed with medium from culture of untransformed GS115. The band  
427 intensity was semi-quantified by densitometry analysis using the Image Lab 5.2  
428 software (Bio-Rad).

429

430 **Protein expression and purification – divalent sybodies in mammalian cells**

431 The encoding sequence of MR3 was cloned into a vector harboring the hinge and  
432 Fc regions of IgG2 (**Table S1**, uniprot P01859) for secretion in mammalian cells. Expi293  
433 cells at density of 2.3 million per milliliter were transfected with the plasmid (final  
434 concentration of 2 mg L<sup>-1</sup>) using linear polyethylenimine (average MW of 25 kDa, 4 mg  
435 L<sup>-1</sup>). Valproic acid was included at a final concentration of 2 mM. Cells were cultured in  
436 a flask for 65 h. The supernatant was collected by centrifugation and filtered through  
437 a 0.22-µm membrane. The filtrate from 2 L of culture was incubated with 3.2 mL  
438 rProtein A beads (Cat SA012005, SmartLifesciences, China) for batch binding at 4 °C for  
439 3 h. The beads were packed into a gravity column, washed with 20 CV of PBS buffer,  
440 before eluted with 0.1 M glycine pH 3.0. The elution was quickly neutralized using 1 M  
441 Tris HCl pH 8.0. The buffer was then exchanged to PBS using a desalt column.

442

443 **Sybody selection – ribosome display and phage display**

444 Sybody selection was performed using a combination of ribosome display and  
445 phage display<sup>26,27</sup>. *In vitro* translation of the ‘Concave’, ‘Loop’, and ‘Convex’ library was  
446 performed according to the manufacturer’s instruction (PUREflex 2.1 kit, Cat. PF213-  
447 0.25-EX, Genefrontier, Chiba, Japan). A reaction mix containing 1.8 µL of nuclease-free  
448 water, 4 µL of solution I, 0.5 µL of solution II, 1 µL of solution III, 0.5 µL of 10 mM  
449 cysteine, 0.5 µL of 80 mM reduced glutathione, 0.5 µL of 60 mM oxidized glutathione,  
450 and 0.5 µL of 1.875 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> disulfide bond isomerase DsbC (DS supplement, Cat.  
451 PF005-0.5-EX, Genefrontier) was warmed at 37 °C. After 5 min, 0.7 µL of mRNA library,  
452 corresponding to 1.6×10<sup>12</sup> mRNA molecules, was added to the pre-warmed mix for *in*  
453 *vitro* translation at 37 °C for 30 min. The reaction was diluted with 100 µL ice-cold  
454 **Panning Solution** (150 mM NaCl, 50 mM magnesium acetate, 0.05 % (w/v) BSA,  
455 0.1 % (w/v) Tween 20, 0.5 % (w/v) heparin, 1 µL RNaseIn, and 50 mM Tris-acetate pH  
456 7.4) and cleared by centrifugation at 20,000×g for 5 min at 4 °C. Biotinylated RBD was  
457 added to the supernatant and the mixture was incubated on ice for 20 min.  
458 Streptavidin beads (Dynabeads Myone Streptavidin T1) were added to pull-down the  
459 complex consisting of nascent sybody binders, the stalled ribosome with the mRNA  
460 encoding the binders, and biotinylated RBD. Selected mRNAs were purified and  
461 reverse-transcribed into single-chain DNA with the primer 5'-  
462 CTTCAGTTGCCGCTTCTTG-3' using a reverse transcriptase (Cat 200436, Agilent).

463 The resulting cDNA library was purified using a DNA purification kit (Cat A740609.25,  
464 Macherey-Nagel), and PCR-amplified using the primer pair 5'-  
465 ATATGCTCTTAGTCAGGTTCAGCTGGTGAGAGCG-3' and 5'-  
466 TATAGCTCTTCATGCGCTCACAGTCACTTGGGTACC-3' for 'Concave' and 'Loop' library,  
467 and the primer pair 5'-ATATGCTCT TCTAGTCAAGTCCAGCTGGTGGAAATCG-3' and 5'-  
468 TATAGCTCTTCATGCAGAACGGTAACCTGGT GCCC-3' for the 'Convex' library. The  
469 product was gel-purified, digested with the Type IIS restriction enzyme *Bsp*QI, and  
470 ligated into the vector pDX\_init<sup>26,27</sup> treated with the same enzyme. The ligation  
471 product was then transformed into *E. coli* SS320 competent cells by electroporation to  
472 generate libraries for phage display.

473  
474 Three rounds of phage display were carried out. The first round was performed  
475 in a 96-well plate coated with 60 nM neutravidin (Cat. 31000, Thermo Fisher Scientific).  
476 Phage particles were incubated with 50 nM biotinylated RBD, washed, and released  
477 from the plate by tryptic digestion with 0.25 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> trypsin in the buffer containing  
478 150 mM NaCl and 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4. The selected phage particles were amplified,  
479 and the second round of selection was performed by switching the immobilizing  
480 matrix to 12 µL of MyOne Streptavidin C1 beads that were pre-incubated with 50 nM  
481 biotinylated RBD. Before releasing the phage particles, the binders were challenged  
482 with 5 µM non-biotinylated RBD to compete off the binders with fast off-rates. The  
483 second selection was repeated with 5 nM of the RBD. After three rounds of selection,  
484 the phagemid was sub-cloned into pSb\_init vector by fragment-exchange (FX) cloning  
485 and transformed into *E. coli* MC1061 for further screening at a single-colony level<sup>26,27</sup>.  
486

#### 487 **Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) – sybody selection**

488 Single colonies carrying sybody-encoding genes in the vector pSb-init were  
489 inoculated into 96-well plates. Cells were grown at 37 °C for 5 h in a shaking incubator  
490 at 300 rpm before 1:20 diluted into 1 mL of fresh TB medium supplemented with 25  
491 µg mL<sup>-1</sup> chloramphenicol. Cells were induced with arabinose as mentioned earlier at  
492 22 °C for 17 h before harvested by centrifugation at 3,220 g for 30 min. Cells were  
493 resuspended in TES Buffer (20 % (w/v) sucrose, 0.5 mM EDTA, 0.5 µg/mL lysozyme, 50  
494 mM Tis-HCl pH 8.0) and shaken for 30 min at room temperature (RT, 22-25 °C). To the  
495 lysate, 1 mL of **TBS** (150 mM NaCl, 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4) with 1 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub> was added.  
496 The mixtures, still in the plate, were then centrifuged at 3,220 g for 30 min at 4 °C. The  
497 supernatant containing sybodies was used directed for ELISA or FSEC assay (below).

498  
499 For ELISA, Protein A was incubated with Maxi-Sorp plate 96 well (Cat. 442404,

500 Thermo Fisher) at 4 °C for 16 h. The solution was then removed and the plate was  
501 blocked by 0.5 %(w/v) bovine serum albumin (BSA) in **TBS** buffer for 30 min at RT. The  
502 plate was washed three times using **TBS** before added with anti-myc antibodies at  
503 1:2,000 dilution in TBS-BSA-T buffer (TBS supplemented with 0.5 %(w/v) BSA and  
504 0.05 %(v/v) Tween 20). The antibody was allowed to bind to protein A for 20 min at RT.  
505 The plate was then washed three times with **TBST** (TBS supplemented with 0.05%  
506 Tween 20). Myc-tagged sybody prepared above was added and incubated for 20 min  
507 at RT. After washing three times with **TBST**, biotinylated RBD or MBP (the maltose-  
508 binding protein, as a control) was added to each well to a final concentration of 50 nM.  
509 After incubation for 20 min at RT, the solution was discarded and the plate was rinsed  
510 three times with **TBST**. Streptavidin conjugated with horseradish peroxidase (HRP) was  
511 added to each well (1:5,000, Cat S2438, Sigma). After incubation at RT for 30 min, the  
512 plate was washed three times again with **TBST**. ELISA signal (absorbance at 650 nm)  
513 was developed by adding 100 µL of developing buffer (51 mM Na<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>, 24 mM citric  
514 acid, 0.006 %(v/v) H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, 0.1 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> 3,3',5,5'-tetramethylbenzidine) followed by  
515 incubation at RT.

516

#### 517 **Sybody selection – fluorescence-detection size-exclusion chromatography (FSEC)**

518 To rapidly characterize RBD binders without purification, we have developed an  
519 analytic, fluorescence-detection size exclusion chromatography (FSEC)-based assay as  
520 follows. Biotinylated RBD<sub>avi</sub> was bound to streptavidin (Cat 16955, AAT Bioquest) which  
521 was fluorescently labeled by fluorescein via amine coupling. The complex is named as  
522 FL-RBD<sub>avi</sub>. To 0.5 µM of FL-RBD<sub>avi</sub>, cell lysate containing unpurified sybodies were  
523 added to an estimated concentration of 0.019 mg mL<sup>-1</sup>, assuming expression level of  
524 20 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. The mixture was loaded onto an analytic gel filtration column (Cat 9F16206,  
525 Sepax) connected to an HPLC system equipped with a fluorescence detector (RF-20A,  
526 Shimadzu). The profile was monitored by fluorescence at the excitation/emission pair  
527 of 482/508 nm. Periplasmic extract without sybodies was used as negative control.  
528 Binders can be identified based on earlier retention volume, presumably reflecting the  
529 bigger size of the FL-RBD<sub>avi</sub>-sybody complex than the FL-RBD<sub>avi</sub> alone.

530

#### 531 **Bio-layer interferometry assay**

532 The binding kinetics were measured using a bio-layer interferometry (BLI) assay  
533 with an Octet RED96 system (ForteBio). Biotinylated RBD was immobilized on a SA  
534 sensor (Cat 18-5019) that was coated with streptavidin by incubating the sensor in 2  
535 µg mL<sup>-1</sup> of RBD in **Kinetic Buffer** (0.005 %(v/v) Tween 20, 150 mM NaCl, 20 mM Tris

536 HCl pH 8.0) at 30 °C. The sensor was equilibrated (baseline) for 120 s, before incubating  
537 with sybodies at various concentrations (association) for 120 s (for MR3) or 300 s (for  
538 all the others). The concentrations for SR4 are 0, 250, 500, 1000, and 2000 nM. The  
539 concentrations for MR17 are 0, 125, 250, 500, and 1000 nM. The concentrations for  
540 MR3/MR4 are 0, 12.5, 25, 50, and 100 nM. The sensor was then moved into sybody-  
541 free buffer for dissociation and the signal was monitored for 600 s. Data were fitted  
542 for a 1:1 stoichiometry for  $K_D$ ,  $K_{on}$ , and  $K_{off}$  calculations using the built-in software Data  
543 Analysis 10.0.

544

545 For competition binding of the RBD between sybody and ACE2 (Cat 10108-H08B,  
546 Sino Biological), the RBD was immobilized and the sensor was equilibrated as  
547 abovementioned. The sensor was then saturated using 1  $\mu$ M sybody and the system  
548 was equilibrated for 180 s. After saturation, the sensor was moved into sybody  
549 solutions (50 nM) with or without 25 nM ACE2. The association of ACE2 was monitored  
550 for 600 s. As a control, the ACE2-RBD interaction was monitored using sensors without  
551 sybody incubation.

552

553 For the binding assay of MR3-MR3-ABD with HSA, the sensor was coated with RBD  
554 as described earlier before saturated by incubation in 200 nM MR3-MR3-ABD before  
555 soaked with 200 nM HSA for BLI signal monitoring. A control experiment was carried  
556 out in parallel but the sensor was incubated in buffer without MR3-MR3-ABD.

557

### 558 **Thermostability assay**

559 Thermostability assay of sybodies was carried out using fluorescence-detection  
560 size exclusion chromatography<sup>44</sup>. Sybodies at 9  $\mu$ g mL<sup>-1</sup> in **Buffer A** (150 mM NaCl, 20  
561 mM Tris HCl pH 8.0) were heated at 90 and 99 °C for 20 min. The heated samples and  
562 the non-heated samples (4 °C) were analyzed the same way as described in the FSEC  
563 assay above except that the intrinsic tryptophan fluorescence (Ex. 280 nm, Em. 350  
564 nm) was monitored.

565

### 566 **Pseudotyped particle production and neutralizing assays**

567 The retroviral pseudotyped particles were generated by co-transfection of  
568 HEK293T cells using polyethylenimine with the expression vectors encoding the  
569 various viral envelope glycoproteins, the Murine leukemia virus core/packaging

570 components (MLV Gag-Pol), and a retroviral transfer vector harboring the gene  
571 encoding the green fluorescent protein (GFP). The S Protein expressed by phCMV-  
572 SARS-CoV and phCMV-SARS-CoV-2 has been truncated in the cytoplasmic tail by  
573 adding a stop codon which removed 19 amino acids at the C-terminal. Supernatants  
574 that contained pseudotyped particles were harvested 48 h post-transfection and  
575 filtered through a 0.45- $\mu$ m membrane before been used for neutralizing assays.

576

577 VeroE6-hACE2 cells ( $10^4$  cells/well) were seeded in a 48-well plate and infected  
578 24 h later with 100  $\mu$ L of virus supernatant in a final volume of 150  $\mu$ L. Sybodies were  
579 pre-incubated with the pseudotype samples for 1 h at 37 °C prior to cell/virus co-  
580 incubation. After 6 h of co-incubation, the supernatants were removed and the cells  
581 were incubated in medium for 72 h at 37 °C. GFP expression was determined by  
582 fluorescence-activated flow cytometry analysis. The infectivity of pseudotyped  
583 particles incubated with sybodies was compared with the infectivity observed using  
584 pseudotyped particles and Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium-2% fetal calf serum  
585 only and standardized to 100%.

586

587 Average and standard deviation (SD, n=3) were plotted for the IC<sub>50</sub> experiments  
588 except for Fig. 4D which reports data from two independent experiments.

589

## 590 **Crystallization**

591 Crystallization trials were set up using a Crystal Gryphon LCP robot as follows. To  
592 a two-well sitting-drop plate, 70  $\mu$ L of precipitant solution was added to the reservoir.  
593 To each well, 150 nL of protein solution was added using the LCP arm of the robot. The  
594 wells were covered with 150 nL of precipitant solution using the 96-headed tips. Plates  
595 were sealed using a tape (Cat HR4-506, Hampton research) and placed at 20 °C in a  
596 Rocker Imager 1000 for automatic imaging.

597

598 Crystals for the SR4-RBD complex were grown in 20% (w/v) PEG 3,000, 200 mM  
599 sodium chloride, 100 mM HEPES pH 7.5. Cryo protection was achieved by adding  
600 20 % (v/v) glycerol to the mother liquor condition. Crystals for the MR17-RBD complex  
601 were grown in 20 % (w/v) PEG 3,350, 0.2 M magnesium formate. Cryo protection was  
602 achieved by adding 10 % (v/v) glycerol in the mother liquor condition. Crystals for the  
603 MR3-RBD complex were obtained in 9 % (w/v) PEG 8,000, 0.1 M HEPES pH 7.5, 8 % (v/v)  
604 ethylene glycol, 9.6 % (v/v) glycerol. 20% glycerol was included for cryo cooling. Crystals  
605 for the MR4-RBD complex were grown in 10 % (w/v) PEG 8,000, 200 mM zinc acetate,  
606 100 mM MES pH 6.0. Crystals for MR17-K99Y were grown in 0.2 M MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 20 % (w/v)

607 PEG 3,350. Cryo protection was performed by adding 30 %(v/v) glycerol to the  
608 reservoir condition. Crystals were cryo-protected, harvested using a MitGen loop, and  
609 flash-cooled in liquid nitrogen before X-ray diffraction data collection.

610

### 611 **Data collection and structure determination**

612 X-ray diffraction data were collected at beamline BL19U1 (ref.<sup>45</sup>) at Shanghai  
613 Synchrotron Radiation Facility. Diffraction data were collected with a 50 x 50  $\mu\text{m}$  beam  
614 on a Pilatus detector at a distance of 300 – 500 mm, with oscillation of 0.5 - 1° and a  
615 wavelength of 0.97853  $\text{\AA}$ . Data were integrated using XDS <sup>46</sup>, and scaled and merged  
616 using Aimless <sup>47</sup>. The structure was solved by molecular replacement using Phaser <sup>48</sup>  
617 with the RBD structure from PDB 6M0J and the sybody from PDB 5M13 <sup>26</sup> as the search  
618 model. The model was built with 2F<sub>o</sub>-F<sub>c</sub> maps in Coot <sup>49</sup>, and refined using Phenix <sup>50</sup>.  
619 Structures were visualized using PyMol <sup>51</sup>.

620

### 621 **Structure-based design of sybody mutants to improve binding affinity**

622 The structure of the MR17-RBD complex was examined using Coot<sup>49</sup> and PyMol<sup>51</sup>.  
623 A panel of 19 single mutants was designed by virtual mutation using Coot <sup>49</sup> followed  
624 by examining the possible increasing in numbers of H-bonds, salt bridges, or  
625 hydrophobic interactions. The mutations include V31F, V31I, E35F, G47A, G47F, G47W,  
626 E52F, E52M, E52Q, S53k, S53Q, H56F, H56I, H56W, H56Y, K99Y, Q103D, Q103E, and  
627 Q103Y. The mutants were purified and characterized the same way as for MR17.  
628 Because K99Y showed higher neutralization activity than the wild-type, K99W was  
629 designed for the second round.

630

### 631 ***In vivo* stability of sybody in mice**

632 The female 7-week-old ICR mice weighing  $27 \pm 1$  g were intraperitoneally injected  
633 with phosphate buffered saline (PBS) or sybodies MR3, MR3-MR3, or MR3-MR3-ABD  
634 at 25mg kg<sup>-1</sup> in a final volume of 100  $\mu\text{L}$  in PBS. The blood samples were collected at  
635 different time points (2 days preinjection, 6 h, 12h, 1 day, 3 days, 6 days and 14 days  
636 postinjection) and subjected to neutralization assay using SARS-CoV-2 pseudotypes.  
637 Mice weights were measured till 6 days post-injection (n=4). Mice were sacrificed at 1,  
638 3, and 6 days post-injection; their vital organs (heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney and  
639 thymus) were fixed in 4% formaldehyde at 4 °C overnight and then embedded within  
640 paraffin, solidified and cut to 15- $\mu\text{m}$  thickness using a cryotome (Leica Microsystems).  
641 Sections were stained by hematoxylin and eosin. Scale is equal to the original

642 magnification  $\times 100$ .

643

644 **Mice challenge experiments**

645 C57BL/6J female mice (6-8 weeks old) were treated with adenovirus serotype 5  
646 expressing human angiotensin 1 converting enzyme 2 (hACE2) via the intranasal route  
647 as previously described<sup>40</sup>. At 5 days post-adenovirus treatment, the mice were  
648 intranasally infected with SARS-CoV-2 strain hCoV-19/China/CAS-B001/2020 (National  
649 Microbiology Data Center *NMDCN0000102-3*, GISAID databases *EPI\_ISL\_514256-7*)  
650 with a high dose of  $5 \times 10^6$  TCID<sub>50</sub> in a volume of 50  $\mu$ L. After 12 h, the mice of MR3-  
651 MR3-ABD group (n=6) was given 200  $\mu$ L of sybody each (25 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> body weight) by  
652 intraperitoneal injection. The infection control group (n=3) was treated with PBS buffer.  
653 Three days post-infection (d.p.i), three mice were euthanized, and the lung tissues  
654 (~1/8 of the total lungs) were fixed in 4 % (v/v) paraformaldehyde for histopathological  
655 analysis using hematoxylin-eosin staining. The rest of the lungs were weighted and  
656 homogenized for RNA extraction and virus titration by quantitative reverse  
657 transcription PCR (qRT-PCR) using a kit (Mabsky Biotech Co., Ltd.) following  
658 manufacturer protocols. Average and standard deviation of all three individual data  
659 points were reported.

660

661 **Ethics Statement**

662 The animal experiments were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use  
663 Committee of the Institut Pasteur of Shanghai, Chinese Academy of Sciences (Animal  
664 protocol No. A2020009) for in vivo stability assays, and by the Ethics Committees of  
665 Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (SQIMCAS2020010) for the live  
666 virus-related work. The study was conducted in strict accordance with the  
667 recommendations provided in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals  
668 of the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China. All  
669 experiments with live viruses and animals were performed in a biosafety level 3  
670 laboratory and complied with the instructions of the institutional biosafety manual.

671

672 **Data availability**

673 The structure factors and coordinates are available through the protein data bank  
674 (PDB) under accession codes 7C8V (SR4-RBD), 7C8W (MR17-RBD), and 7CAN (MR17-  
675 K99Y in complex with the RBD).

**Table S1. Sequences and FSEC results of sybody binders for the SARS-CoV-2 RBD.**

Sybody	FSEC shift <sup>a</sup>	Sequence <sup>b</sup>
<b>Concave</b>		
SR1	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVAAAYEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAINSMDQTY YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR2	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKQQEMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAAIESNGHTEY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR3	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVWQEEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAITSYGDTTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR4	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYSWNMWWYRQAPGKEREWVAAIESHGDSTR YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGHTYYGQGTQVTVS
SR5	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLCAASGFPVETTEMEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAISSYGETYYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR6	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVGQQEMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAAILSEGNGTEY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAVYVGATYIGQGTQVTVS
SR7	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVWSNEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAITSYGTTEYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR8	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYKREMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAAISSKGVHTEYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR9	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVIAYEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAITSSGTSTYYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR10	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNKREMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAAITSEGRSTEYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR11	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYSMEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAISSWGNETH YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR12	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNMQEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAISSTGWVTY YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR13	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDYMEMEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAITSNGRETYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR14	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDSEEMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAAITSNGDITEYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR15	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKAEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAISSNGSETYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR16	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKKYEMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAAITSKGTYTYYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR17	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEGSEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAIESNGTHTHY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGAGYIGQGTQVTVS
SR18	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPWFQEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAISSQGTHTY YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR19	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNTMEMEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAINSSGQETY YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR20	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVTSYEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAIASWGYHTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR21	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVSKTEMEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAIASAGAETYYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGFSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR22	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVASHMEMEWRQAPGKEREWVAAIASGGQWTYY

			ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGQSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR23	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYTSEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIASTGAETAYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGRSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR24	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAMEMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAAIMSEGWTW EYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGASYIGQGTQVTVS
SR25	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNTAEMWYRQAPGKEREWVAAIYSEGPITEYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGSSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR26	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNREMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIISNGHKTY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGRSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR27	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVWEAEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIISIGTSTAYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCIVYVGKTYIGQGTQVTVS
SR28	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKMAEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIQSAGRETYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGAGYIGQGTQVTVS
SR29	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVSQREMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAIIESEGEQTEY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGRSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR30	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVRKHEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIISKGSNTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGASYIGQGTQVTVS
SR31	Y		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVWQGEMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIISMGYKTY YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAVMGFWYAGQGTQVTVS
SR32	N.D.		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNVAKMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIDSHGAQTH YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAHVGFWYAGQGTQVTVS
SR33	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVGSNEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIQQSGVFTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGSSYLGQGTQVTVS
SR34	Y		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAAGGFPVKDHEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSSGWGTN TYYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGSSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR35	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKHQTMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAAIMSKGRKTEY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYHCHVYVGATYFGQGTQVTVS
SR36	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYMEEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIASYGSETYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGQSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR37	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVSTAEMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAIIESYGNSTEYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR38	Y		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNQEEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIKSWGTLTAY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAHVHGQTYIGQGTQVTVS
SR39	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDASEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIIESQGYETYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGSSYIGQGTQVTVS
SR40	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDSQEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIISNGKSTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGSLYIGQGTQVTVS
SR41	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVGSTEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAISSTGHYTHYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGSSYLGQGTQVTVS
SR42	N		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVQQREMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAIIMSKGVHTE YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCHVYVGASYFGQGTQVTVS
SR43	N.D.		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKKHEMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAIQSKGYTTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVGESYIGQGTQVTVS
SR44	N.D.		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVGTAQMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSYGEYTLA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAHVGFWYTQGTQVTVS
SR45	N.D.		QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDNATMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIHSIGGYTTY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCVGVGKHYYGQGTQVTVS

SR46	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVFTENMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGVWTL ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCVVQVGEWYEGQGTQTV
SR47	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKTETMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGTLYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCEVQVGEWYEGQGTQTV
SR48	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNQNNMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSSGFTLY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCEVQVGFWTGQGTQTV
SR49	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVFHAYMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIIESDGSTHY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTSVYYCAVLVGFYAGQGTQTV
SR50	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLNCAASGFPVQAQVMAWYRQALGKEREWVAAMHSTGYTA YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAHVGFYAGQGTQTV
SR51	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVWESYMRWYRQAPGKEREWVAIQSNGNNT WYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCVVYVGYEYHGQGTQTV
SR52	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNNMEMTWYRQAPGKEREWVAIASDGSYTE YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYVVVGSKYIGQGTQTV
SR53	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYSQHMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSNGTLY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCEVNQGEWYEGQGTQTV
SR54	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVSQARMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIGSSGDFTRY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCEVQVQWYEGQGTQTV
SR55	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDDTNMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSSGGFTLY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCTVWVGDWYEGQGTQTV
SR56	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEHYGMWYRQAPGKEREWVAIRSDGQWTH YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCTVGVSNNYQGTQTV
SR57	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEQAEMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIVSYGHSTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAVFVGFYAGQGTQTV
SR58	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKQENMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSTGNFTLY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAVQVGQWYEGQGTQTV
SR59	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKTSRMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIISYGSVTFYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCYYVGAQYWGQGTQTV
SR60	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEHAQMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIQSYGSTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAHVGFYAGQGTQTV
SR61	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDIAEMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIGSQGMTTH YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCAHVGFYAGQGTQTV
SR62	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVFQENMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSQGSYTL ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCEVNQWYQWYQGTQTV

### Loop

MR1	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQVGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYHSIMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSSGAHTYY DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDGGNWDTYDYGQGTQTV
MR2	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVYFSYMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIINSEGDTYYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGWYNQYDYGQGTQTV
MR3	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIISYGRTLYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDFTGHQAYYDYGQGTQTV
MR4	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPMYAWEMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIRSMGVHT HYSDSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDFTGHQAYYDYGQGTQTV VS
MR5	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDAWEMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAIRSGRRTH YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDFTGHQAYYDYGQGTQTV

MR6	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEDTMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAAITSWGFKTY YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDEGDTSSASYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR7	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNSWMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSYGYKTYA DSVKGRTFISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDEGYFSDEYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR8	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEWAHMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIVSAGHYTV YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDWGSSNQYYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR9	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVASTWMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSYGYHTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDEGYFSTNYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR10	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVANTWMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSYGYRTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDEGATTKVYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR11	N.D.	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEWTSMVWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSAGHHTKY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDEGYFSTNYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR12	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEWSHMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIVSTGEYTKY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDWYGQAKSYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR13	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVKNMNMHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGVETH YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDWGSSYMNWYDYWGQGTQVT VS
MR14	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVMYTHMHHWYRQAPGKEREWVAIVSLGEYTTY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDWGAANKYYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR15	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVDTWMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSYGYKTYA DSVKGRTFISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDFGYASTYYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR16	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVERTWMEWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSYGYRTYY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDEGSASSAYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR17	Y	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGKEREGVAIESYGHGTRY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDDGQLAYHYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR18	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVWEHHMAWYRQAPGKEREWVAITSKGRYTTY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCHVKDAGYFDAQYDYWGQGTQVTVS
MR19	N	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVRNTEHMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIFSMGRFTK YADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDTGSFSEGDYWGQGTQVTVS

### Convex

LR1	Y	QVQLVESGGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITDSGRTYYADS VKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAAEWGYEWPLYASSWYWGQGTQVT VS
LR2	Y	QVQLVESGGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGDINAIGYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALDTDEGQTYA DSVKGRTFVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAMNGYNEPLSYDYEWYGQGTQVT VS
LR3	Y	QVQLVESGGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGTINNITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITSGYTYA VKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAASWGYEWPLVYDDYWYWGQGTQVT VS
LR4	N	QVQLVESGGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFIHSIYYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALNTQHGTTYYAD SVKGRTFVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAARGRNYPNLYWQSYWGQGTQVT VS
LR5	Y	QVQLVESGGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITSNGRTYYADS VKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAATWGYHWPLGAWDYWYWGQGTQV TVS
LR6	Y	QVQLVESGGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALVTTSGNTYYADS

		VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAATWGYSWPLEHDEYWYWGQGTQVT VS
LR7	Y	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITNWGHTYYAD SVKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAFAHGEQYPLYTNKYHYWGQGTQVT S
LR8	Y	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGTIAYIKLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALMTRWGETYYA DSVKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAANYGANFPLQANTYFYWGQGTQVT TVS
LR9	N	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITARGRTYYADS VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAANWGNWPLAYSDYWYWGQGTQVT VS
LR10	N	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGTISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALTTNGHTYYAD SVKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAADWGYDWPLDRYHYWYWGQGTQVT TVS
LR11	Y	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALVTHSGSTYYADS VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAAYWGWDWPLNSQDYWYWGQGTQVT TVS
LR12	N	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSIASIKYLWGFRQAPGKEREGVAALMTRWGETYYA DSVKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAEEGANSPLHAKDYSYWGQGTQVT VS
LR13	N	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITHAGRTYYADS VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAADWGWYWPLVIDHYEWYWGQGTQVT VS
LR14	N	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSIPGITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALVTSNIGHTYYAD SVKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAADWGYQWPLDKAEYWYWGQGTQVT TVS
LR15	Y	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALKTASGQTYYADS VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAADWGYNWLIREEYEYWGQGTQVT S
LR16	Y	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALYTHGYTYYYADS VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAADWGYNIPLNITDYWYWGQGTQVT S
LR17	N	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSIAHIKYLWGFRQAPGKEREGVAALMTRHGQTYYA DSVKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAAYYGANFPLFQTGYTYWGQGTQVT VS
LR18	N	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALVTENGHTYYAD SVKGRFTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAATWGYEWPLSNDYFYWGQGTQVT VS

#### Divalent, bispecific

LR5-MR3 [13 GS]	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITSNGRTYYADS VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAATWGHWPLGAWDYWYWGQGTQVT TVSGGGGGSGGGSGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFVNNAHFMYWYRQAPGKE REWVAAIYSYGRTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWE YDYWGQGTQVTVS
LR5-MR3 [19 GS]	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAAGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITSNGRTYYADS VKGRTVSLDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAATWGHWPLGAWDYWYWGQGTQVT TVSGGGGGSGGGSGGGSGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFVNNAHFMYWY RQAPGKEREWVAAIYSYGRTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKD

	YGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVVS
LR5-MR3 [34 GS]	QVQLVESGGSVQAGGSLRLSCAASGSISSITYLGWFRQAPGKEREGVAALITSNGRTYYADS VKGRFTVSLNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTALYYCAAATWGYHWPLGAWDYWYWGQGTQV TVSGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSC AASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQM NSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVVS
<b>Divalent, monospecific</b>	
Fc-MR3	<b>GSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVSG QTVTSERKCCVECPPCPAPPVAGPSVFLPPPKDTLMSRTPEVTCVVVDVSHEDPEVQFN WYVDGVEVHNAKTPREEQFNSTFRVSVLTVVHQDWLNGKEYKCKVSNKGLPAPIEKTISK TKGQPREPQVYTLPPSREEMTKNQVSLTCLVKGFYPSDIAVEWESNGQPENNYKTPPMlds DGSFFLYSKLTVDKSRWQQGNVFCSCVMHEALHNHTQKSLSLSPGK</b>
MR3-MR3 [13 GS]	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYA DSVKGRTFISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVSG GGGSGGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREW VAIYSYGRFTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDY WGQGTQTVS
MR3-MR3 [19 GS]	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYA DSVKGRTFISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVSG GGGSGGGGGGGGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAP GKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGA ASWEYDYWGQGTQTVS
MR3-MR3 [24 GS]	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYA DSVKGRTFISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVSG GGGSGGGGGGGGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMY WYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCN VKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVS
MR3-MR3 [34 GS]	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYA DSVKGRTFISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVSG GGGSGGGGGGGGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMY WYRQAPGKEREWVAIYSYGRFTLYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCN VKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVS
Fc-MR17	<b>GSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGKEREGVAAIESYGHTRYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDDGQLAYHYDYWGQ GTQTVTSERKCCVECPPCPAPPVAGPSVFLPPPKDTLMSRTPEVTCVVVDVSHEDPEVQFN WYVDGVEVHNAKTPREEQFNSTFRVSVLTVVHQDWLNGKEYKCKVSNKGLPAPIEKTISK TKGQPREPQVYTLPPSREEMTKNQVSLTCLVKGFYPSDIAVEWESNGQPENNYKTPPMlds DGSFFLYSKLTVDKSRWQQGNVFCSCVMHEALHNHTQKSLSLSPGK</b>
MR17m-MR17m (13 GS)	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGKEREGVAAIESYGHTRY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVYDDGQLAYHYDYWGQGTQTVS GGGGSGGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGKERE GVAIIESYGHTRYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVYDDGQLAYHY DYWGQGTQTVS
MR17m-MR17m (16 GS)	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGKEREGVAAIESYGHTRY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVYDDGQLAYHYDYWGQGTQTVS GGGGSGGGGGSGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGK EREGVAAIESYGHTRYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVYDDGQLA

	YHYDYWGQGTQTVS
MR17m-MR17m (19GS)	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGKEREVGAAIESYGHGTRY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVYDDGQLAYHYDYWGQGTQTVS GGGGSGGGGGSGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQ APGKEREVGAAIESYGHGTRYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVYDD GQLAYHYDYWGQGTQTVS
MR17m-MR17m (24 GS)	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQAPGKEREVGAAIESYGHGTRY ADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVYDDGQLAYHYDYWGQGTQTVS GGGGSGGGGGSGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVEVWRMEWYRQ APGKEREVGAAIESYGHGTRYADSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCN VYDDGQLAYHYDYWGQGTQTVS
<b>ABD conjugation</b>	
MR3-MR3-ABD	QVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAAIYSYGRTLYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVS GGGGSGGGGGSGGGGSSSQVQLVESGGGLVQAGGSLRLSCAASGFPVNAHFMYWYRQAPGKEREWVAAIYSYGRTLYA DSVKGRFTISRDNAKNTVYLQMNSLKPEDTAVYYCNVKDYGAASWEYDYWGQGTQTVSAGRAGGGGGSGGGGSGGGSGTIDEW LILKEAKEKAIEELKKAGITS <sup>DYYFDLINKAKTVEGVNALKDEILKA</sup>

677

678 <sup>a</sup>Fluorescence-detection size exclusion chromatography (FSEC) assay for RBD binders.  
 679 Periplasmic extraction was directly mixed with 0.5  $\mu$ M of fluorescently labeled RBD  
 680 and the mixture was loaded onto an analytic gel filtration column. Sybodies that  
 681 caused earlier retention volume (peak shift) are labeled 'Y' and colored red. Sybodies  
 682 that did not peak shift are indicated with 'N'. Sybodies that were not determined for  
 683 FSEC peak-shift are labeled with 'N.D.'. <sup>b</sup>The sequences include 'GSSS' at the N-terminal,  
 684 and 'AGRAGEQKLISEEDLNSAVDHHHHHH' at the C-terminal which contains a myc-tag  
 685 (italic) for ELISA and a hexahistidine tag for purification. GS linker are highlighted in  
 686 italic, when applicable.

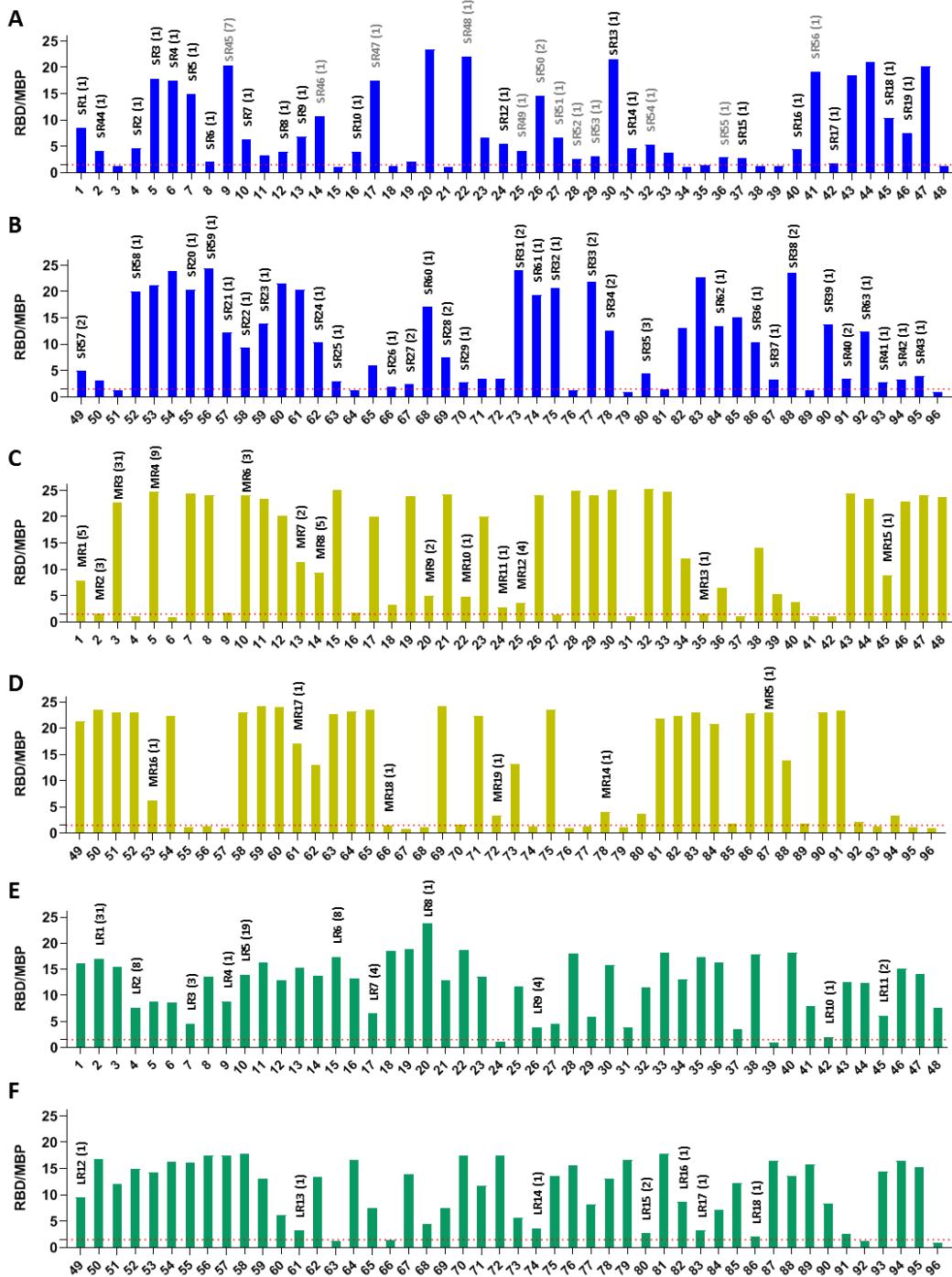
687 **Table S2. Data collection and refinement statistics.**

688

	SR4-RBD	MR17-RBD	MR17(K99Y)-RBD
<b>Data collection</b>			
Space group	P 6 <sub>5</sub> 2 2	P3 <sub>2</sub> 2 1	P3 <sub>2</sub> 2 1
Cell dimensions			
<i>a, b, c</i> (Å)	65.55, 65.55, 344.53	73.69, 73.69, 158.58	74.19, 74.19, 158.40
$\alpha, \beta, \gamma$ (°)	90, 90, 120	90, 90, 120	90, 90, 120
Wavelength (Å)	0.97853	0.97853	0.97853
Resolution (Å)	47.40 - 2.15 (2.23 - 2.15) <sup>a</sup>	49.71 - 2.77 (2.89 - 2.77)	49.90 - 2.94 (3.12 - 2.94)
<i>R</i> <sub>merge</sub>	0.161 (1.203)	0.276 (2.222)	0.218 (1.666)
<i>R</i> <sub>pim</sub>	0.054 (0.395)	0.062 (0.494)	0.052 (0.385)
<i>I</i> / <i>σI</i>	11.4 (2.0)	11.1 (1.5)	12.4 (1.9)
Completeness (%)	99.8 (99.9)	100 (99.9)	99.9 (99.6)
Multiplicity	9.5 (9.9)	21.0 (20.8)	18.4 (19.3)
<i>CC*</i> <sup>b</sup>	0.999 (0.970)	0.997 (0.927)	0.998 (0.920)
<b>Refinement</b>			
Resolution (Å)	47.40 - 2.15	49.71 - 2.77	49.90 - 2.94
No. reflections	25,148	13,256	11,264
<i>R</i> <sub>work</sub> / <i>R</i> <sub>free</sub>	0.1836 / 0.2239	0.2029 / 0.2659	0.2149 / 0.2676
No. atoms	2,810	2,536	2,509
Protein	2,510	2,482	2,465
Ligands	62	54	44
Water	238	0	0
No. residues	322	315	312
B-factors (Å <sup>2</sup> )	35.13	73.28	79.38
Protein	34.16	72.27	78.53
Ligand/ion	55.11	119.79	126.90
Water	40.22		
R.m.s deviations			
Bond lengths (Å)	0.007	0.011	0.004
Bond angles (°)	0.850	1.10	0.68
Ramachandran			
Favoured (%)	98.06	96.12	96.08
Allowed (%)	1.94	3.88	3.59
Outlier (%)	0	0	0.33
<b>PDB ID</b>	7C8V	7C8W	7CAN

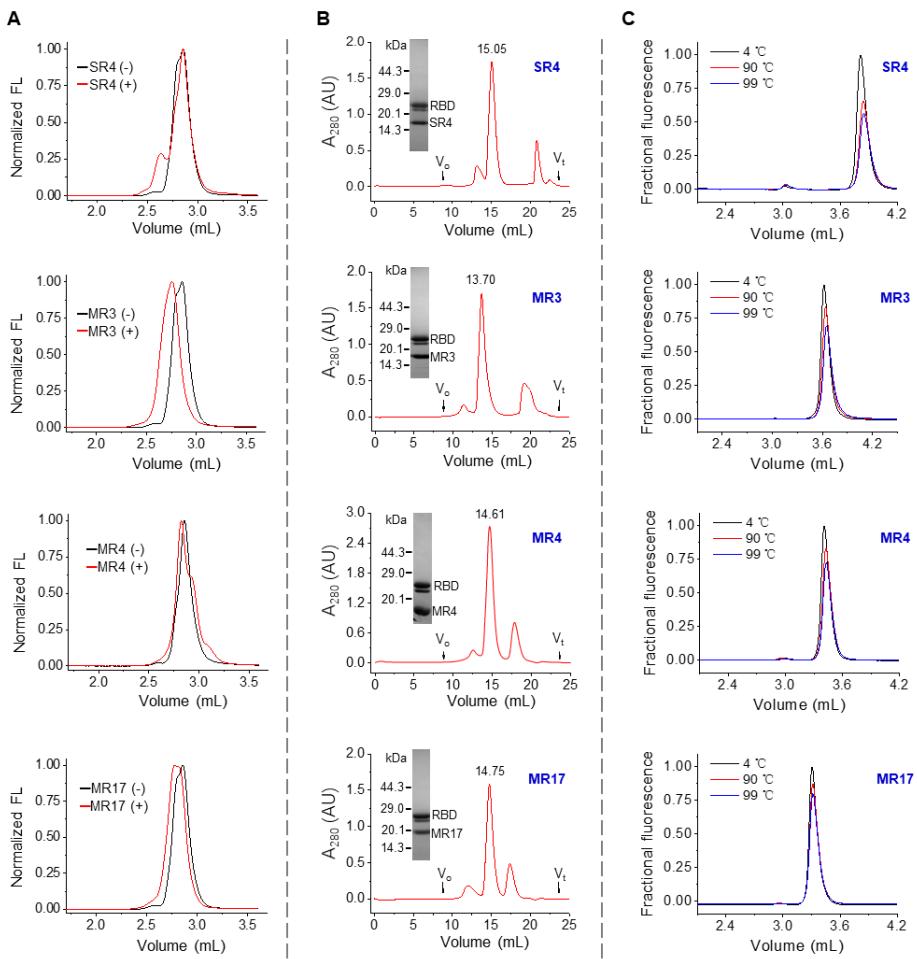
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<sup>a</sup>Highest resolution shell is shown in parenthesis. <sup>b</sup> $CC^* = \sqrt{\frac{2CC_{1/2}}{1+CC_{1/2}}}$



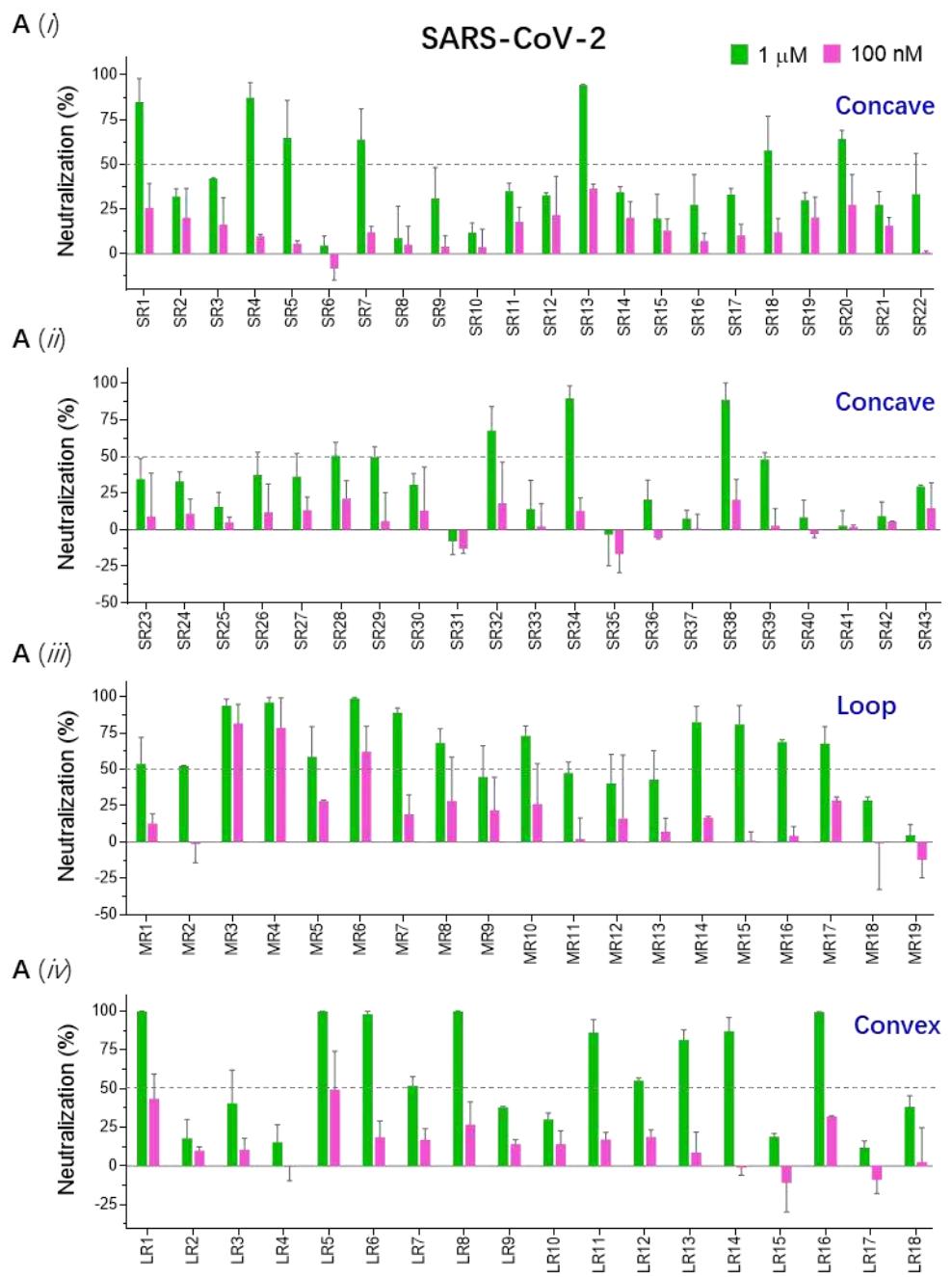
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691 **Extended Data Fig. 1. Identification of RBD binders using ELISA. (A,B)** Results for the  
692 Concave library. **(C,D)** Results for the Loop library. **(E,F)** Results for the Convex library.  
693 The ratio between the ELISA signal ( $A_{650}$ ) of wells with the RBD and of wells with the  
694 unrelated maltose-binding protein (MBP) is plotted. The signal for MBP is typically  
695 between 0.04-0.09. A red dashed line guides the cut-off at a ratio of 1.5. Unique  
696 clones are labeled with the redundancy shown in brackets.



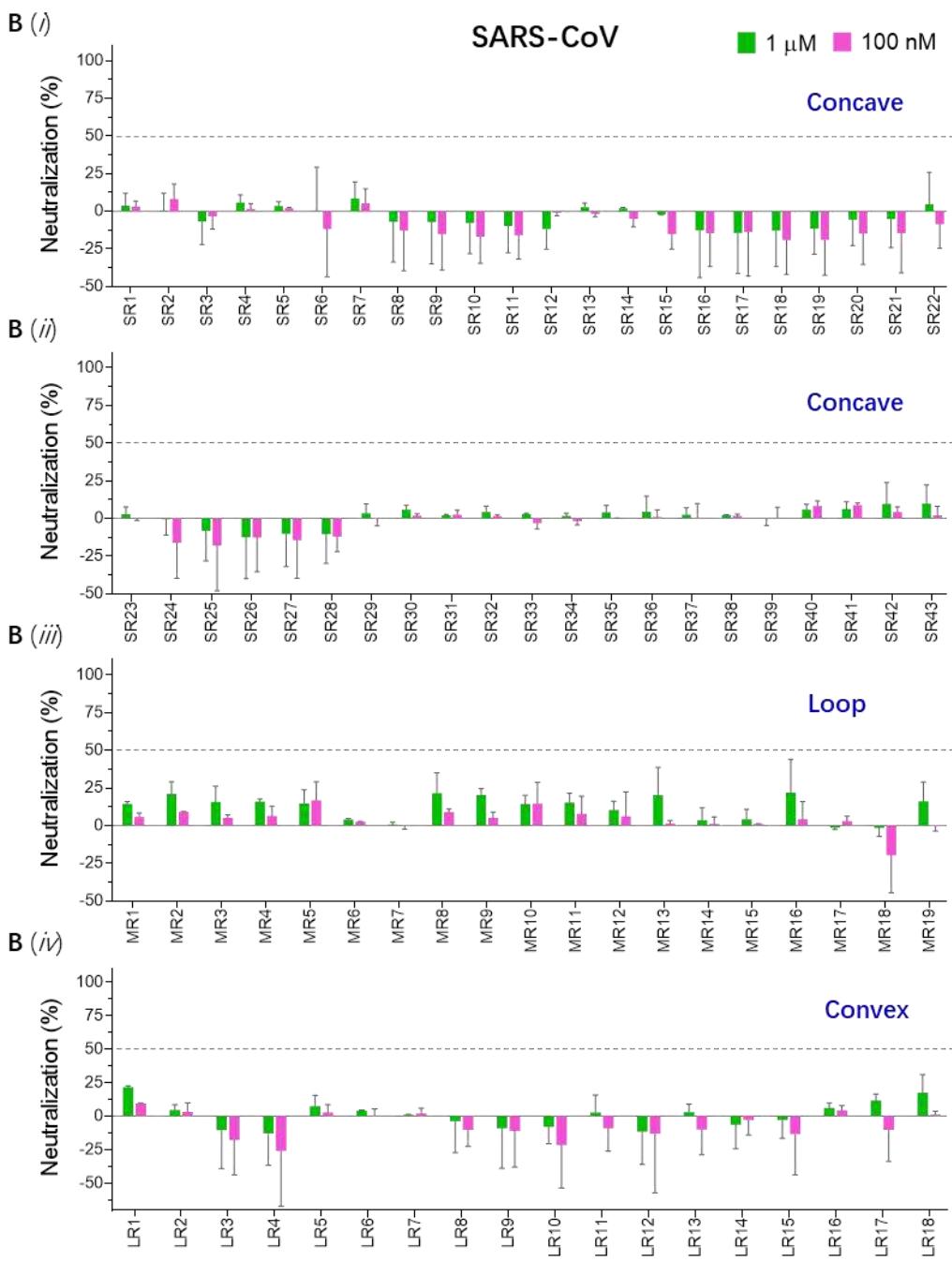
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698 **Extended Data Fig. 2. Characterization and purification of sybody-RBD complexes. (A)**  
 699 Fluorescence-detector size exclusion chromatography (FSEC) of the RBD in the absence  
 700 (black, -) and presence (red, +) of crude periplasmic extract from sybody clones.  
 701 Biotinylated RBD was fluorescently labeled through binding to streptavidin that was  
 702 conjugated with an amine-reactive fluorescein variant. The concentration of RBD was  
 703 0.5  $\mu$ M. Fluorescence (Ex. 482 nm, Em. 508 nm) was normalized before plotting. The  
 704 extent of peak shift follows the order of SR4<MR4<MR17<MR3. Fluorescence trace  
 705 before the void volume ( $V_o$ , 1.78 mL) is not shown. (B) Preparative size exclusion  
 706 chromatography of the indicated sybody-RBD complexes. SDS-PAGE images of the  
 707 main-peak fraction for all four sybodies are shown in the inset. Numbers label the  
 708 elution volume for the main peak. The results for SR34, SR38, MR6, LR1, and LR5 were  
 709 similar to the 4 sybodies here and are not shown. (C) Fluorescence-detection size  
 710 exclusion chromatography (FSEC) profile of the thermostability assay. Sybodies SR4,  
 711 MR17, MR3, and MR4 were incubated at indicated temperatures for 20 min before  
 712 loading on to an analytical size exclusion chromatography column. The elution profile  
 713 was monitored using the intrinsic tryptophan fluorescence. Fluorescence intensities  
 714 were normalized to the peak value of the unheated sample.



**Extended Data Fig. 3** - to be continued on the next page

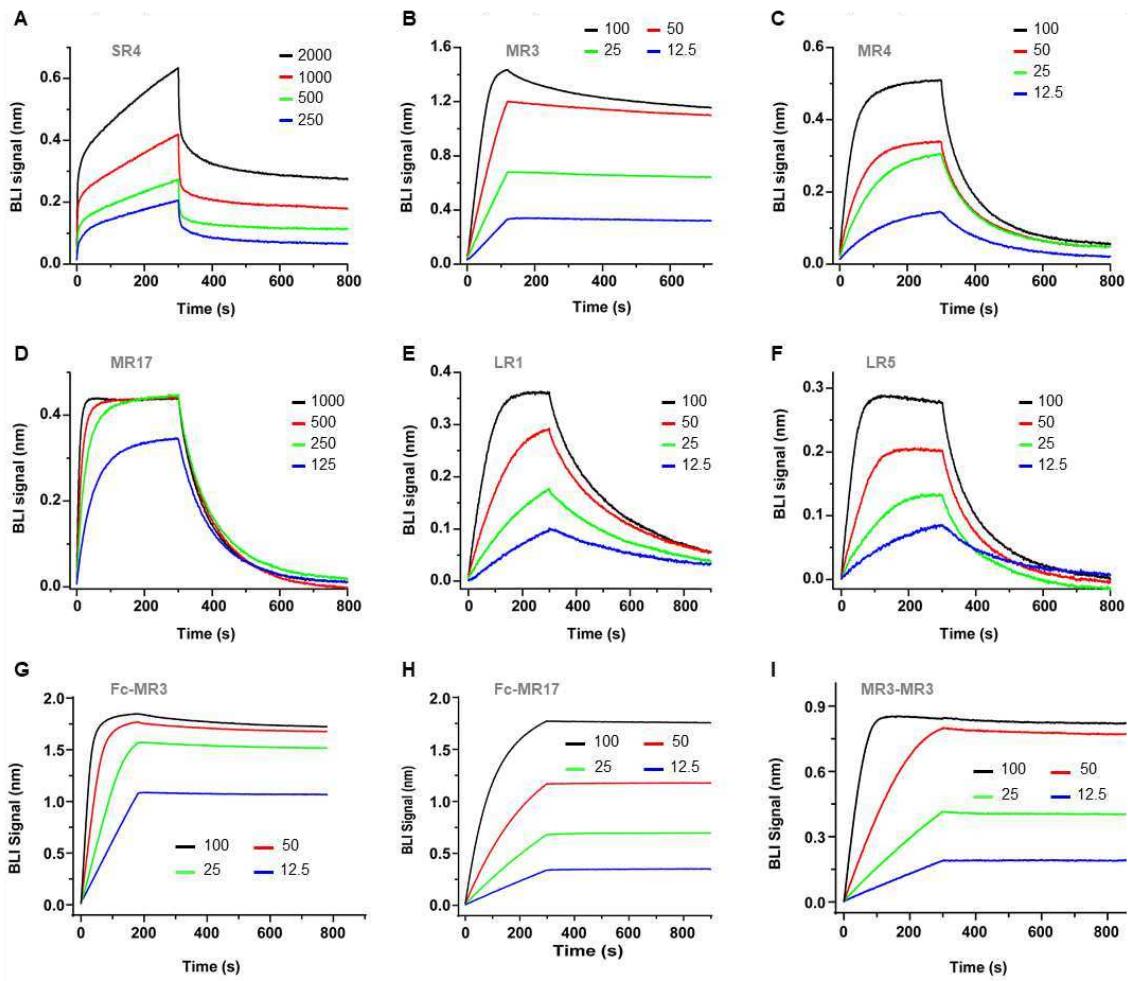
Extended Data Fig. 3 - continued from the previous page



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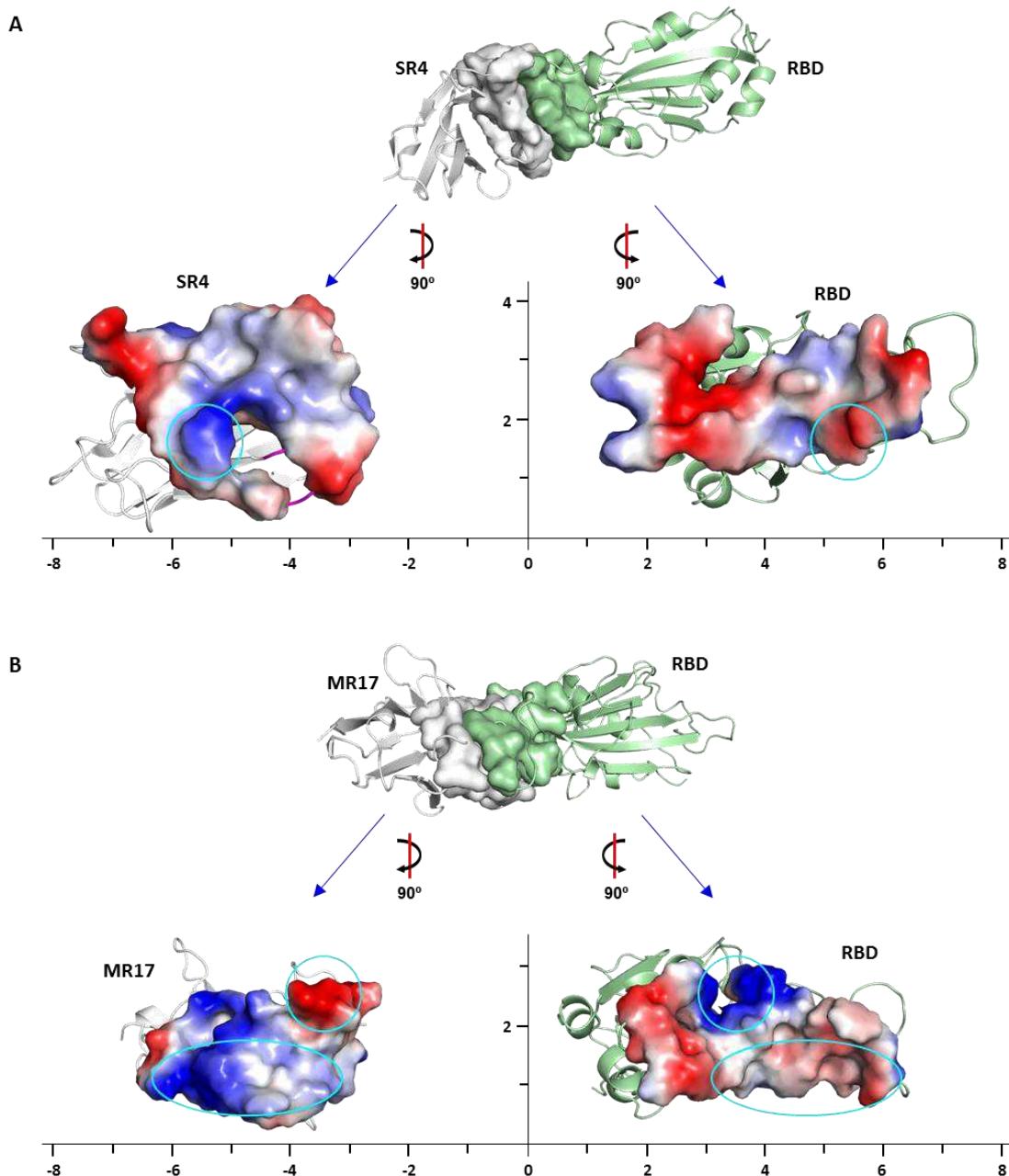
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718 **Extended Data Fig. 3. Neutralization activity of 80 sybodies. (A)** Neutralization assay  
 719 results for SARS-CoV-2 pseudovirus. **(B)** Neutralization assay results for SARS-CoV  
 720 pseudovirus. VeroE6-hACE2 cells were infected with a premix of pseudotypes and  
 721 sybodies at two concentrations (1  $\mu$ M and 100 nM). Infectivity were measured after 3  
 722 days using FACS and the percentage of neutralization was calculated for each sybody.



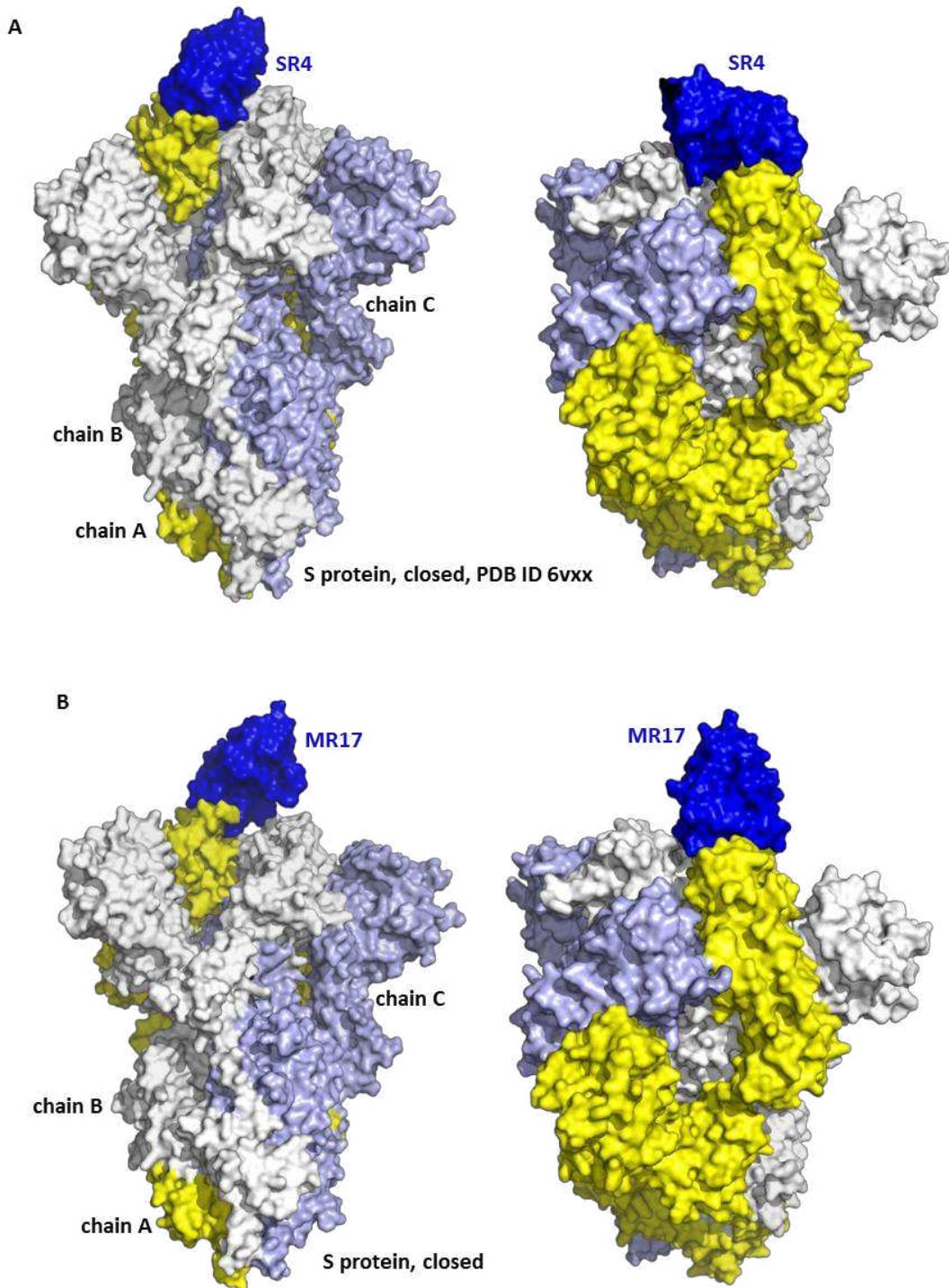
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724 **Extended Data Fig. 4. Kinetics for sybody-RBD binding.** (A-I) Biotinylated RBD  
 725 immobilized on a streptavidin-coated sensor was titrated with various concentrations  
 726 (nM) of sybodies as indicated. Bio-layer interferometry (BLI) data were fitted with a 1:1  
 727 stoichiometry.

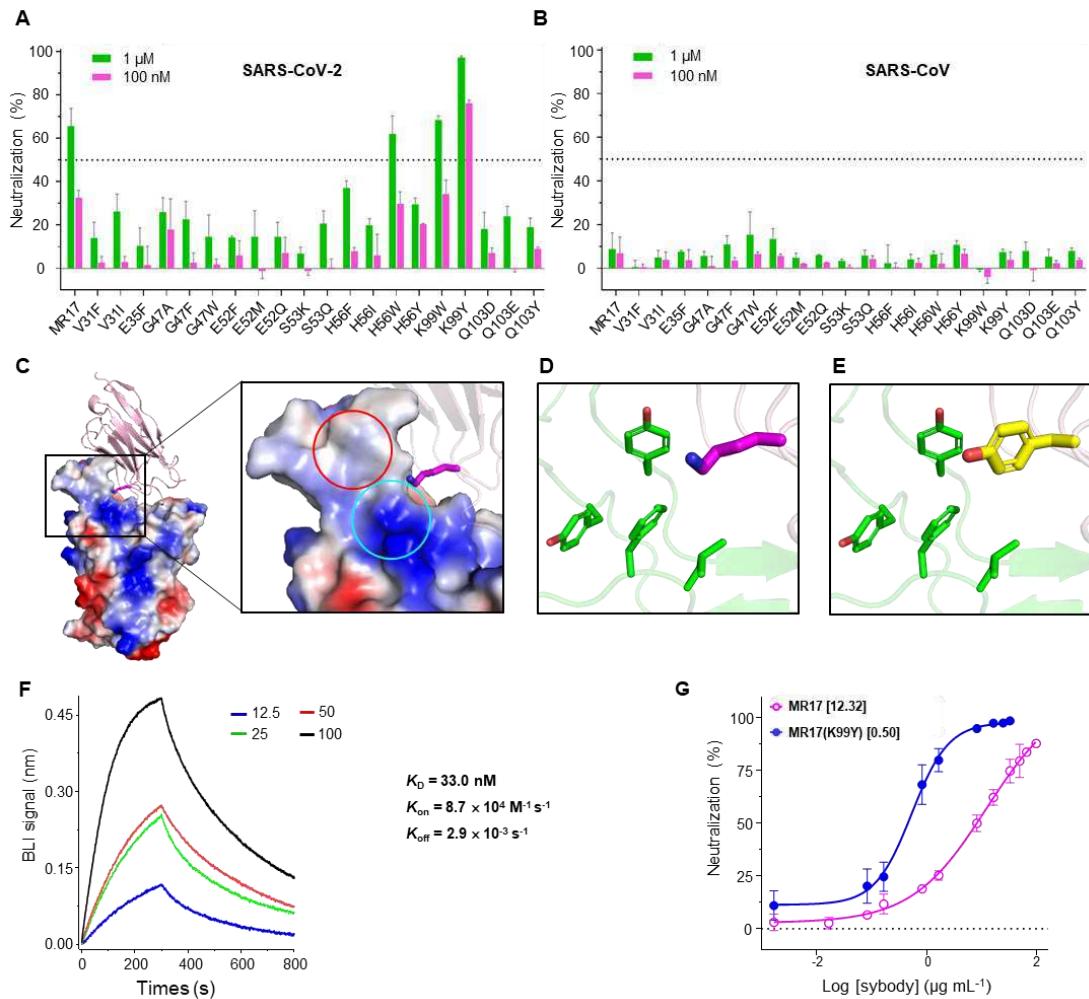


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729 **Extended Data Fig. 5. Electrostatic complementarity of the sybody-RBD binding**  
 730 **surface. (A,B)** ‘Open-book’ view of molecular electrical potential surfaces of the  
 731 interface between the RBD and SR4 (A) and between the RBD and MR17 (B). The  
 732 electrical potential maps were calculated by Adaptive Poisson-Boltzmann Solver (APBS)  
 733 <sup>52</sup> built-in in PyMol. The unitless ruler guides the view of the relative distances between  
 734 the opened surface pairs. Cyan circles highlight electrostatic complementarity.

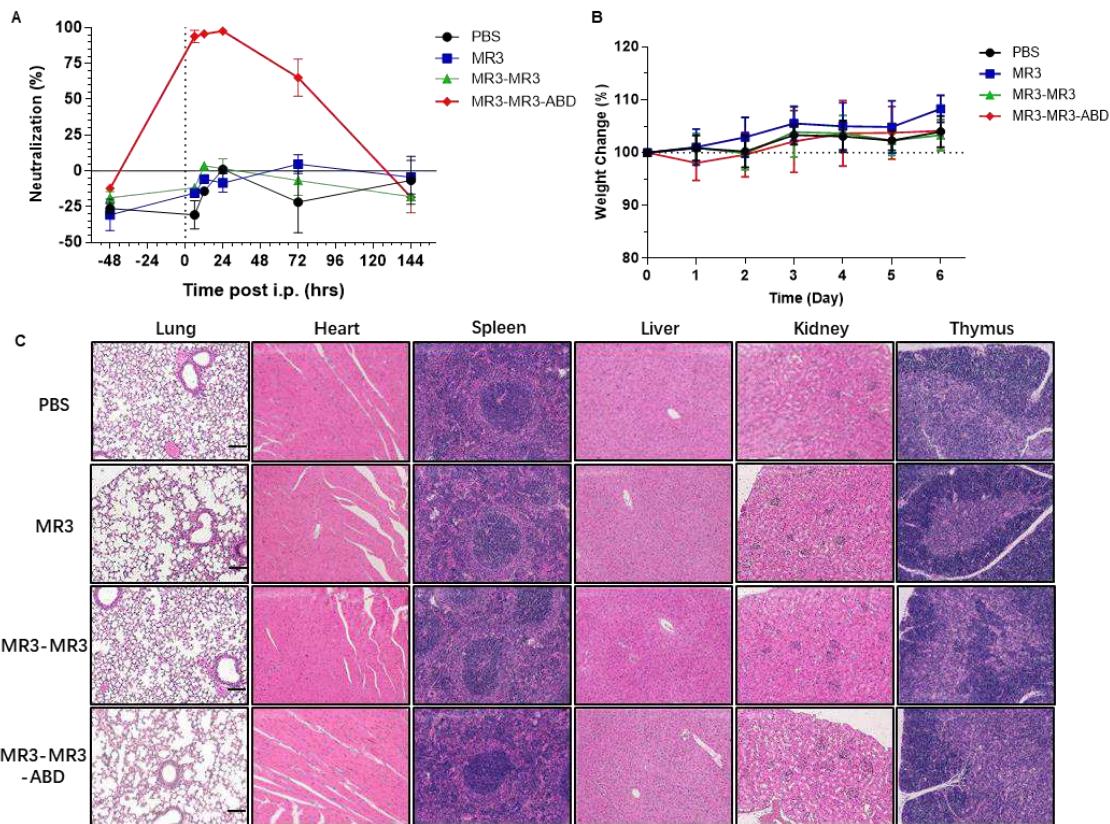


737 **Extended Data Fig. 6. SR4 and MR17 may bind to the SARS-CoV-2 S RBD in the 'closed'**  
 738 **conformation. (A,B)** The structure of SR4-RBD (A) and MR17-RBD (B) were aligned to  
 739 the closed conformation (PDB ID 6VXX)<sup>2</sup> of SARS-CoV-2 S protein. No significant clashes  
 740 were observed for both sybodies. The three chains of S are colored yellow, white, and  
 741 pale blue. Sybodies are colored blue.



742

743 **Extended Data Fig. 7. Structure-based design of a MR17 mutant (MR17m) with**  
 744 **improved affinity and potency.** (A,B) Neutralization assay for SARS-CoV-2 (A) or SARS-  
 745 CoV (B) pseudotypes by the wild-type MR17 sybody and the 20 rationally designed  
 746 single-mutants (See **Methods**). Sybody concentrations were used at 1  $\mu$ M (green) and  
 747 100 nM (magenta) concentrations. Data are from three independent experiments.  
 748 (C,D) Rational for the design of K99Y. The positively charged Lys99 pokes to an area  
 749 (boxed) that contains a hydrophobic patch (red cycle) and a positively-charged surface  
 750 (cyan cycle). Electrostatic repel and hydrophobic mismatch would make Lys99  
 751 unfavorable at this position. According to the original library design, Lys99 was  
 752 unvaried<sup>26</sup>, meaning that Lys99 was not *selected* and hence opportunities for  
 753 optimization. (E) The K99Y mutation fits the hydrophobic microenvironment well, as  
 754 revealed by the crystal structure of MR17m (**Extended Data Table 2**). (F) Binding  
 755 kinetics of MR17m binding to RBD. BLI signals were recorded under indicated MR17m  
 756 concentrations (nM). (G) Comparison of neutralization activity of MR17 and MR17m.  
 757 IC<sub>50</sub> values ( $\mu$ g mL<sup>-1</sup>) for SARS-CoV-2 are indicated in brackets. Data for MR17 are from  
 758 **Fig. 1B**. Data are from three independent experiments.



759

760 **Extended Data Fig. 8. Evaluation of *in vivo* stability and toxicity of nanobodies. (A).**  
 761 Neutralization activity of sera from mice injected with sybodies. Sera were collected  
 762 from mice injected with sybodies MR3, MR3-MR3, MR3-MR3-ABD, or PBS at the  
 763 indicated time points. For neutralization assay, sera were preincubated with SARS-CoV-  
 764 2 pseudovirus for 1 h before infection at 1/200 dilution. The infection rates on VeroE6-  
 765 hACE2 were measure by FACS 3 days post infection. (B) Body weight changes. The body  
 766 weight data are presented as means  $\pm$  the SD of mice in each group (n= 4). No  
 767 significant differences are observed. (C) Representative histopathology of the lungs,  
 768 heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidney, and thymus for the different sybodies injected. At  
 769 day 3, the organ were collected, fixed, sliced and stain with hematoxylin and eosin.  
 770 The images and areas of interest are magnified 100  $\times$ . Bars indicate 100  $\mu$ m.

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# Figures

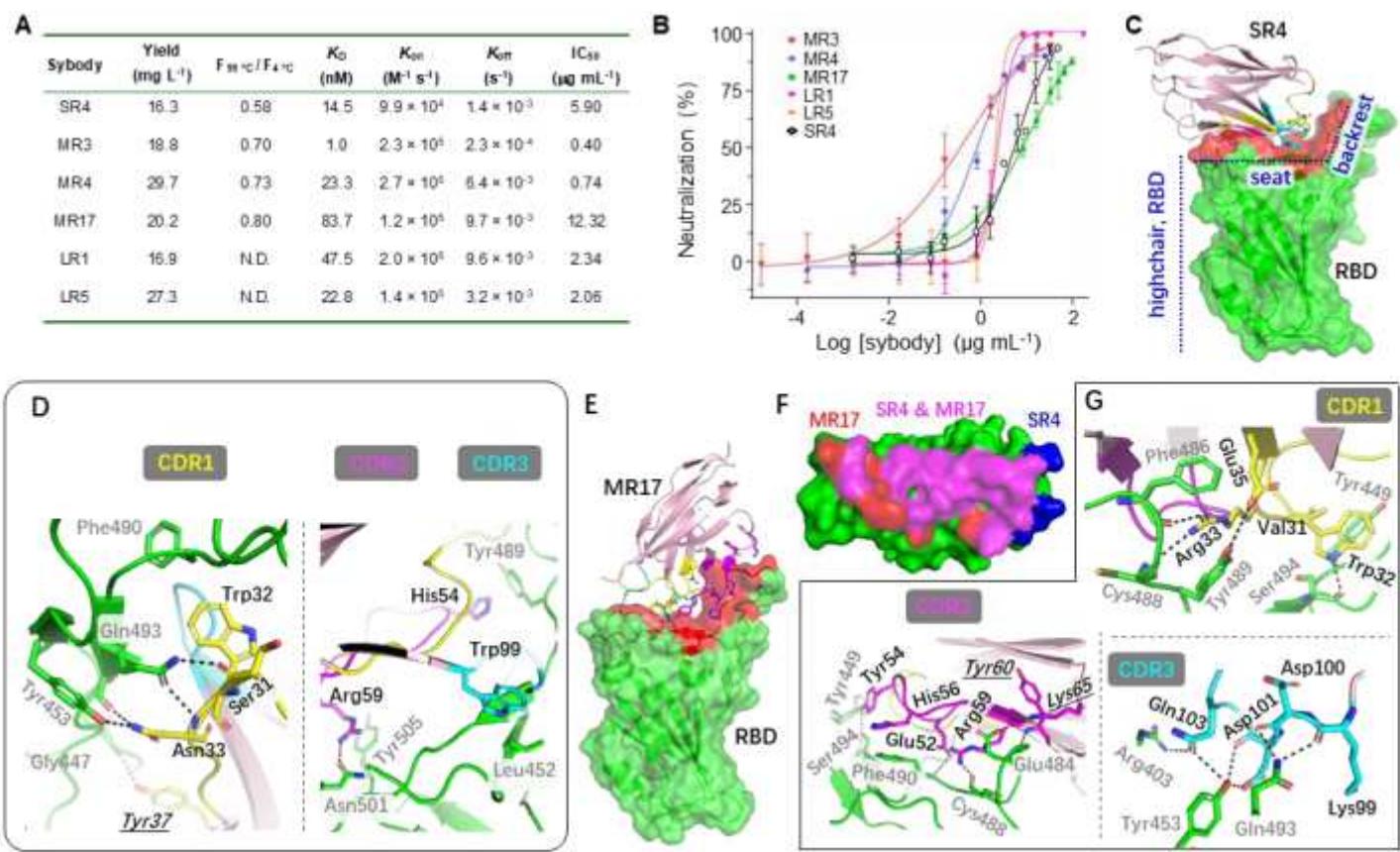
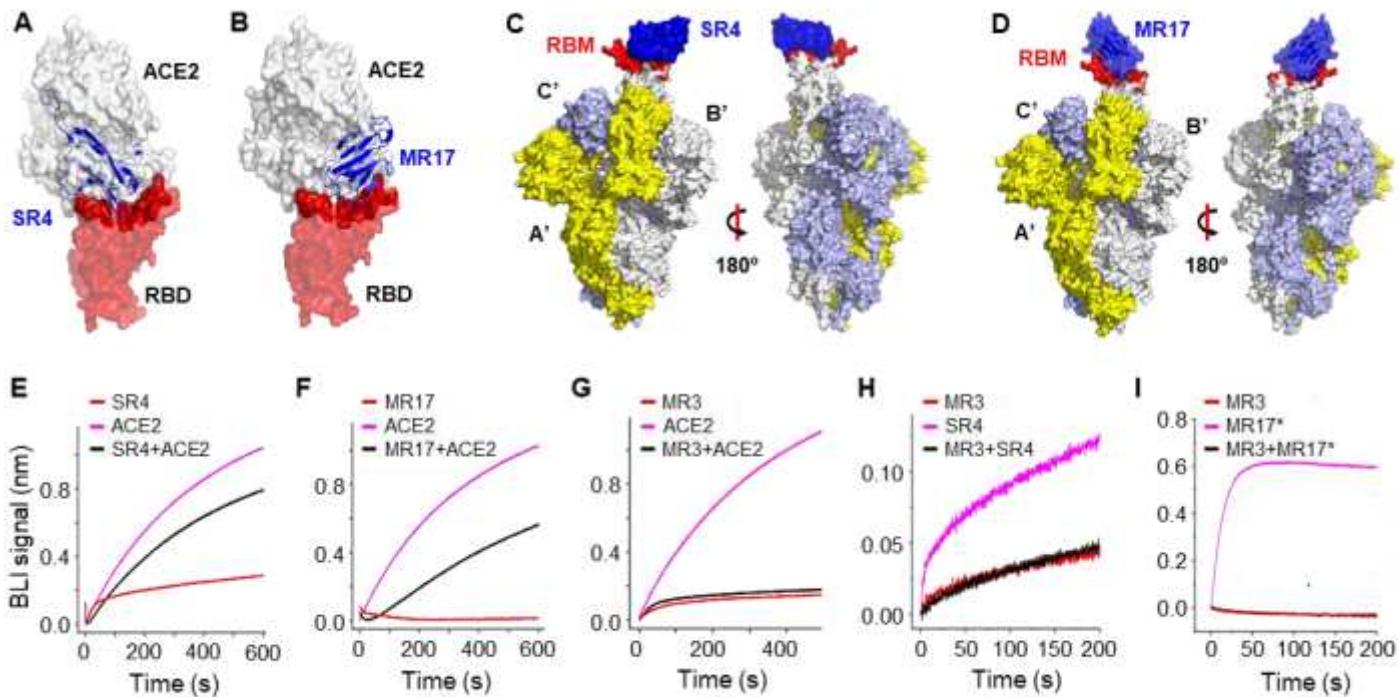


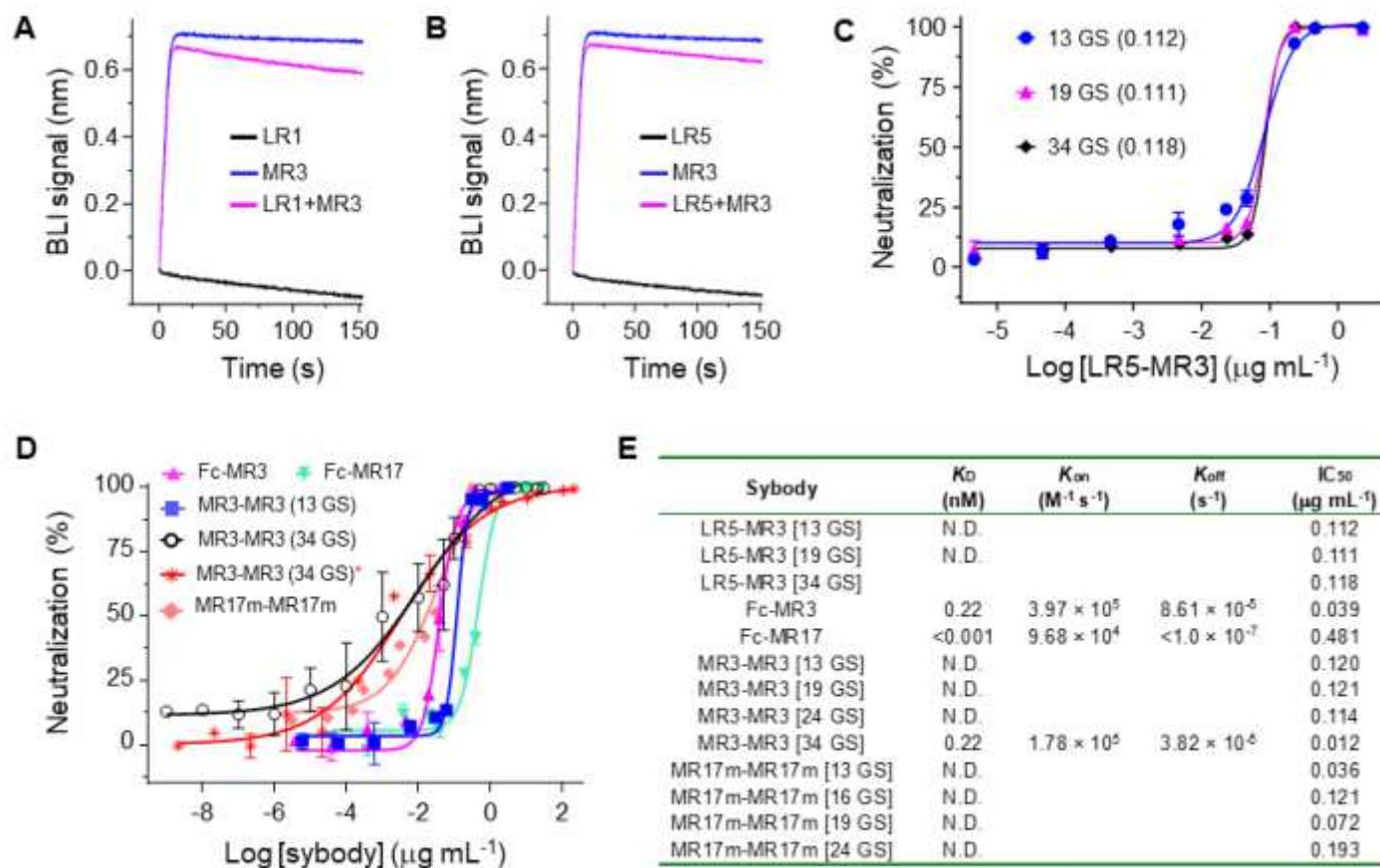
Figure 1

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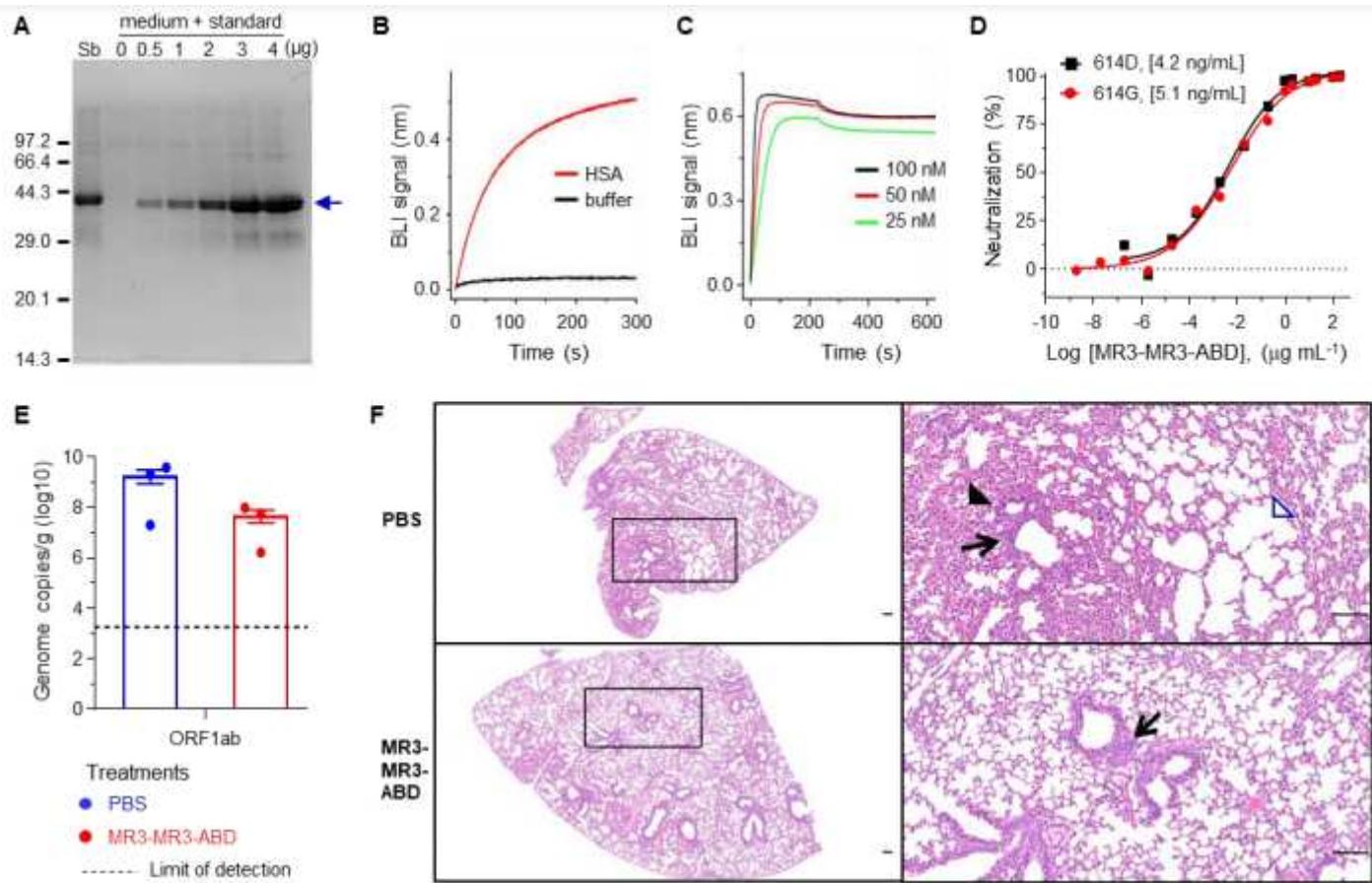
**Figure 2**

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**Figure 3**

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**Figure 4**

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