

1      **Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines boost the capacity of pre-existing SARS-CoV-2-specific**  
2      **memory B cells to cross-recognize Omicron subvariants**  
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26 **Abstract**

27 Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines comprising ancestral Wuhan-Hu-1 (WH1) and the Omicron BA.1 or  
28 BA.5 subvariant elicit enhanced serum antibody responses to emerging Omicron subvariants. We  
29 characterized the memory B-cell (Bmem) response following a fourth dose with a BA.1 or BA.5  
30 bivalent vaccine, and compared the immunogenicity with a WH1 monovalent fourth dose.  
31 Healthcare workers previously immunized with mRNA or adenoviral vector monovalent vaccines  
32 were sampled before and one-month after a monovalent, BA.1 or BA.5 bivalent fourth dose  
33 COVID-19 vaccine. RBD-specific Bmem were quantified with an in-depth spectral flow cytometry  
34 panel including recombinant RBD proteins of the WH1, BA.1, BA.5, BQ.1.1, and XBB.1.5  
35 variants. All recipients had slightly increased WH1 RBD-specific Bmem numbers. Recognition of  
36 Omicron subvariants was not enhanced following monovalent vaccination, while both bivalent  
37 vaccines significantly increased WH1 RBD-specific Bmem cross-recognition of all Omicron  
38 subvariants tested by flow cytometry. Thus, Omicron-based bivalent vaccines can improve  
39 recognition of descendent Omicron subvariants by pre-existing, WH1-specific Bmem, beyond that  
40 of a conventional, monovalent vaccine. This provides new insights into the capacity of variant-  
41 based mRNA booster vaccines to improve immune memory against emerging SARS-CoV-2  
42 variants.

43 **INTRODUCTION**

44 The mRNA- and adenoviral vector-based COVID-19 vaccines, encoding the Spike (S) protein of  
45 the ancestral Wuhan-Hu-1 lineage (WH1), are highly effective at preventing severe disease and  
46 hospitalization from SARS-CoV-2 (1, 2). However, the emergence of antigenically distinct  
47 Omicron subvariants in 2022 required the use of updated booster vaccinations to overcome reduced  
48 vaccine-induced neutralizing antibody (NAb) responses and maintain efficacy against emerging  
49 variants (3-6). Therefore, in addition to monovalent WH1 vaccines, fourth dose vaccinations were  
50 performed with bivalent vaccines that contain equal parts of mRNA encoding the WH1 and  
51 Omicron BA.1 or BA.5 S protein (6-10).

52 Bivalent vaccines proved significantly more effective at preventing infection and particularly  
53 severe disease or death from Omicron variants compared to monovalent WH1 vaccines (11-13).  
54 Bivalent boosters elicited equivalent levels of NAb against WH1 compared to monovalent vaccines,  
55 and increased NAb levels against the Omicron subvariant encoded by the bivalent vaccine, as well  
56 as descendant subvariants (14-17). Despite the induction of Omicron-specific immune responses,  
57 NAb levels against emerging subvariants are still significantly lower compared to WH1 (14, 15,  
58 18). While NAb levels were initially considered a correlate of protection against COVID-19, the  
59 durable protection against severe disease is suggestive of a more prominent role for memory T- and  
60 B-cells. As the S receptor-binding domain (RBD) is the major target for NAb, quantification of  
61 RBD-specific memory B cells (Bmem) can be used as a correlate of long-term protection against  
62 severe COVID-19 (2, 19-21).

63 Circulating antigen-specific Bmem, detected in peripheral blood by flow cytometry, can be  
64 used to define the kinetics and phenotype of the S- and RBD-specific Bmem response to SARS-  
65 CoV-2 infection and vaccination (19, 22-27). Our group recently showed that a third monovalent  
66 mRNA dose boosted the frequency of WH1-specific Bmem binding Omicron BA.2 and BA.5 (27).  
67 Thus, the question remains whether the use of bivalent booster vaccines for the fourth dose  
68 enhances the recognition of Omicron subvariants compared to a monovalent WH1 vaccine, thereby

69 broadening the SARS-CoV-2-specific immune responses. Here, we characterized and compared the  
70 NAb and Bmem responses following WH1 monovalent, BA.1 or BA.5 bivalent vaccination in a  
71 cohort of healthcare workers (HCW) from the Dutch SWITCH-ON study (28) and the Monash  
72 Immunology cohort.

73 **RESULTS**

74 **Cohort characteristics**

75 HCW were recruited from the Dutch SWITCH-ON study (28) and the Monash Immunology cohort  
76 (25, 27) for direct comparison of antibody and Bmem responses to monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or  
77 BA.5 bivalent fourth dose COVID-19 vaccination (**Table 1**). Eighteen recipients of a monovalent  
78 booster (BNT162b2 or mRNA-1273), 33 BA.1 bivalent booster recipients (BNT162b2.BA1 or  
79 mRNA-1273.214), and 21 BA.5 bivalent booster recipients (BNT162b2.BA5 or mRNA-1273.222)  
80 were included (**Figure 1A**). The monovalent group comprised entirely Monash Immunology  
81 donors, while both bivalent groups were a combination of Monash and SWITCH-ON donors  
82 (**Table 1, Figure 1A**). Peripheral blood was sampled pre-dose four- and 28-days post-dose four  
83 (median 28 days, 27-49; **Table 1, Figure 1A**).

84 There were no significant differences in the age and sex demographics between each of the  
85 three vaccine groups, with similar female preponderance. A significantly higher proportion of  
86 participants in the monovalent booster group had received primary vaccination (doses 1-2; 83%)  
87 with an adenoviral vector vaccine rather than with an mRNA vaccine as compared to both bivalent  
88 groups (48-55%). The time interval between the third and fourth vaccine doses was significantly  
89 different between the three groups, ranging from a median of 220 days (range 133-267) for the  
90 monovalent group, 310 days (194-454) for BA.1 bivalent and 365 (214-533) for BA.5 bivalent  
91 (**Table 1**). More donors in both bivalent groups had experienced a confirmed breakthrough  
92 infection (BTI) prior to dose four than the monovalent group, likely because the bivalent recipients  
93 had longer time intervals between third and fourth doses and thus more chance of infection (**Table**  
94 **1**). The majority of these BTIs were reported between late 2021 and 2023, when Omicron  
95 subvariants were dominant (4). Whilst failing to reach significance, the median interval between  
96 BTIs and the pre-dose four sampling was slightly shorter in the BA.1 group than the BA.5 group,  
97 likely because the BA.5 group received their booster at a later timepoint due to the delayed  
98 introduction of the BA.5 bivalent vaccines (29).

99

100 **Increased neutralization of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron subvariants after a fourth dose booster**

101 Plasma NAb titers against the SARS-CoV-2 WH1, Omicron BA.1, and BA.5 viruses were  
102 measured using a plaque reduction neutralization test (PRNT) before and four weeks after dose  
103 four. All donors, irrespective of vaccine type, had detectable NAb against WH1, BA.1, and BA.5  
104 after dose four (**Figure 1B-D**). The monovalent vaccine elicited a significant increase in NAb titers  
105 against WH1 and BA.1 (**Figure 1B**), while the BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent vaccines elicited significant  
106 increases in NAb against WH1, BA.1 and BA.5. (**Figure 1C-D**). WH1 NAb titers were ~3-4-fold  
107 higher after either monovalent or bivalent vaccination (**Figure 1E**). In contrast, the fold increases in  
108 BA.5 NAb titers were greater after the bivalent boosters than the monovalent booster, with the BA.5  
109 bivalent booster eliciting the largest fold increases in all NAb titers (**Figure 1E**).

110 At baseline (pre-dose four), we observed higher NAb titers in the BA.1 bivalent cohort than  
111 both the monovalent and BA.5 bivalent cohorts. Due to the SWITCH-ON trial structure, the BA.1  
112 bivalent cohort received their fourth dose booster three months earlier than the BA.5 bivalent  
113 cohort, which accounts for the higher titers (30). Individuals with a confirmed SARS-CoV-2 BTI  
114 within six months before a sampling timepoint tended to have higher NAb titers against WH1,  
115 BA.1, and BA.5, which may be contributing to the higher baseline and post-dose four NAb levels in  
116 the bivalent groups (**Figure 1B-D**). Overall, robust neutralization of WH1 as well as Omicron  
117 subvariants four weeks after a monovalent, BA.1 or BA.5 bivalent fourth dose booster was detected,  
118 with the bivalent BA.5 vaccine eliciting the greatest increases in NAb against Omicron BA.1 and  
119 BA.5.

120

121 **Bivalent vaccines boosted RBD-specific Bmem recognizing the vaccine Omicron subvariant**

122 To evaluate the capacity of each vaccine to boost Bmem specific for the variants encoded by each  
123 vaccine, total, WH1, Omicron BA.1, and BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem were quantified and compared  
124 pre- and four-weeks post-dose four using flow cytometry (**Figure 2; Supplementary Figure 1**). In

125 the monovalent and BA.1 bivalent booster groups, B cells specific for WH1 and BA.1 RBDs were  
126 identified through double-discrimination to exclude any B cells binding to a fluorochrome. In the  
127 BA.5 bivalent booster group, double-discrimination was performed for WH1 and BA.5 RBDs  
128 (**Figure 2A**). Within RBD-specific B cells, mature Bmem were defined as CD38<sup>dim</sup> and through  
129 subsequent exclusion of naive IgD<sup>+</sup>CD27<sup>-</sup> B-cells (**Figure 2B**). The BA.1 bivalent group had more  
130 WH1 RBD-specific Bmem cells than the monovalent and BA.5 bivalent group, both at baseline  
131 (pre-dose four) and at four-weeks post-dose four (**Figure 2C**). This is potentially due to the higher  
132 frequency of recent BTIs, which may have impacted RBD-specific Bmem numbers  
133 (**Supplementary Figure 2**). Absolute numbers of WH1 RBD-specific Bmem significantly  
134 increased after both the BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent boosters (**Figure 2C**), but not after the monovalent  
135 booster. The median fold changes in WH1 RBD-specific Bmem numbers were similar between the  
136 three booster vaccine types (**Supplementary Table 1**), suggesting similar effects, which might not  
137 be significant in the monovalent group due to the smaller sample size.

138 The BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent boosters significantly increased the numbers of BA.1 or BA.5  
139 RBD-specific Bmem, respectively (**Figure 2D, E**). There was no significant change in BA.1 RBD-  
140 specific Bmem after a monovalent booster, but the fold changes in median BA.1 RBD-specific  
141 Bmem after a monovalent and BA.1 bivalent booster were similar (**Supplementary Table 1**). The  
142 fold increase in BA.1 RBD-specific Bmem after a BA.1 bivalent booster was similar to the increase  
143 in BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem after a BA.5 bivalent booster (**Supplementary Table 1**).  
144

145 **RBD-specific Bmem showed signs of recent activation after monovalent and bivalent boosters**  
146 The activation profile of RBD-specific Bmem was defined pre- and post-dose four through  
147 expression of cell-surface markers (**Figure 3; Supplemental Figure 3**). CD71 expression on Bmem  
148 is a marker of recent activation and proliferation, as is low CD21 expression due to downregulation  
149 upon antigen recognition (31, 32). Four weeks after a monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or BA.5 bivalent  
150 booster, frequencies of CD71<sup>+</sup>CD38<sup>dim</sup> WH1 RBD-specific Bmem increased significantly in the

151 BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent booster recipients (**Figure 3A, B**). Frequencies of CD71<sup>+</sup>CD38<sup>dim</sup> WH1  
152 RBD-specific Bmem were not different between monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, and BA.5 bivalent  
153 booster recipients at either timepoint. Frequencies of CD21<sup>lo</sup> WH1 RBD-specific Bmem increased  
154 after all fourth dose boosters, and there were no significant differences between the groups at either  
155 timepoint (**Figure 3C, D**).

156 Within IgG<sup>+</sup> WH1 RBD-specific Bmem, CD27 expression was measured as a marker of  
157 mature, germinal center (GC)-experienced, class-switched Bmem (**Figure 3E**) (33). The  
158 frequencies of CD27<sup>+</sup>IgG<sup>+</sup> WH1 RBD-specific Bmem were higher after all three booster types,  
159 although not significant (p=0.054) for the monovalent group (**Figure 3F**). CD27<sup>+</sup>IgG<sup>+</sup> WH1 RBD-  
160 specific Bmem frequencies before booster vaccination were significantly higher in the monovalent  
161 group than in both bivalent groups. The BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent boosters yielded similar increases  
162 in frequencies of CD38<sup>dim</sup>CD71<sup>+</sup>, CD21<sup>lo</sup>, and IgG<sup>+</sup>CD27<sup>+</sup> BA.1 or BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem,  
163 respectively (**Figure 3B, D, F**).

164 Within the total Bmem population, no changes were observed in the frequencies of  
165 CD38<sup>dim</sup>CD71<sup>+</sup>, CD21<sup>lo</sup>, or IgG<sup>+</sup>CD27<sup>+</sup> total Bmem (**Supplementary Figure 3C-E**). Thus,  
166 recipients of all three vaccines showed activation in their Bmem compartments with slightly higher  
167 increases following the bivalent boosters.

168

#### 169 **mRNA-based priming had a sustained effect on IgG4<sup>+</sup> Bmem after dose four**

170 The Ig isotype and IgG subclass distributions of RBD-specific Bmem were evaluated pre- and four-  
171 weeks post-dose four booster (**Figure 4A**). At both timepoints in all booster type groups the  
172 majority of WH1 RBD-specific Bmem expressed IgG1 (70-88%; **Figure 4B**). The proportions of  
173 IgG1<sup>+</sup> within WH1 RBD-specific Bmem were significantly higher than within total Bmem at both  
174 timepoints and in all groups (**Supplementary Figure 3F**). The monovalent and BA.1 bivalent  
175 boosters did not elicit any significant changes in Ig isotype distribution; however, the IgG3<sup>+</sup>  
176 frequency tended to decrease in both groups, likely due to the slight expansion of the IgG1<sup>+</sup> subset

177 (Figure 4B). Within BA.1-specific Bmem following a BA.1 bivalent booster, the significant  
178 increase in IgG1<sup>+</sup> BA.1-specific Bmem was accompanied by significant decreases in IgG3<sup>+</sup>, IgA<sup>+</sup>,  
179 and IgM<sup>+</sup>IgD<sup>+</sup> subsets (Figure 4B). Following a BA.5 bivalent booster, the proportions of IgA<sup>+</sup>  
180 Bmem within both WH1 and BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem were significantly lower, also likely due to  
181 the slight increase in IgG1<sup>+</sup> frequencies (Figure 4B).

182 We and others have recently reported that a third dose mRNA booster after double-dose mRNA  
183 priming elicits RBD-specific serum IgG4 and an IgG4<sup>+</sup> Bmem population, which are both absent  
184 after mRNA boosting of an adenoviral vector-primed cohort (27, 34, 35). To evaluate if this effect  
185 is sustained after a fourth dose boost, we stratified all donors based on primary vaccination type  
186 (Figure 4C). mRNA-primed donors had significantly higher numbers of IgG4<sup>+</sup> WH1 RBD-specific  
187 Bmem than adenoviral vector vaccine recipients before dose four (Figure 4C). These numbers were  
188 not affected by a fourth dose in mRNA recipients, but were significantly higher after dose four in  
189 adenoviral vector recipients, although still significantly lower than in mRNA-primed donors.  
190 Similar patterns were observed within BA.1 and BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem (Figure 4D, E).

191

192 **Bivalent vaccines broadened the recognition of Omicron subvariants by pre-existing WH1  
193 RBD-specific Bmem**

194 Next, we evaluated the capacity of WH1 RBD-specific Bmem to bind Omicron subvariants BA.1  
195 and BA.5, as well as more recent sublineages BQ.1.1 (sublineage of BA.5) and XBB.1.5  
196 (recombinant of two BA.2 subvariants) (4, 36, 37). The monovalent and BA.1 bivalent donors were  
197 evaluated for BA.1, BA.5, and BQ.1.1 binding within WH1-specific Bmem (Figure 5A,  
198 **Supplementary Table 2 -Tube 2a**). For BA.5 bivalent donors, the panel was expanded to detect  
199 BA.1, BA.5, BQ.1.1, and XBB.1.5 binding within WH1-specific Bmem (Figure 5B,  
200 **Supplementary Table 2 - Tube 2b**). The numbers of WH1 RBD-specific Bmem that bound  
201 Omicron subvariant RBDs were significantly increased after both bivalent boosters, but not after a  
202 monovalent booster (Figure 5C, D).

203 As the BA.1 bivalent group was confounded by higher numbers of RBD-specific Bmem both  
204 pre- and post-dose four (**Figure 5C**), likely due to more recent Omicron BTIs (as discussed above),  
205 the fold increases were evaluated as well (**Figure 5D**). The BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent vaccines  
206 elicited similar fold increases for most variants, except for a larger increase in BA.5 binding for the  
207 BA.5 bivalent cohort. Thus, both the BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent vaccines elicited a greater capacity of  
208 WH1 RBD-specific Bmem to recognize Omicron subvariants, compared to the monovalent  
209 boosters.

210

### 211 **Omicron-only Bmem are increased by a BA.5 bivalent fourth dose booster**

212 An early report indicated that boosting with a bivalent vaccine elicited Bmem with variant-only  
213 specificity, suggesting the recruitment of naive B cells with unique specificities into the booster  
214 response (17). We evaluated this for the BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent vaccines by detection of BA.1 and  
215 BA.5 specific Bmem, respectively, and then evaluation of the fraction that was negative for WH1  
216 binding (**Figure 6A-C**). Pre-dose four, the BA.1 bivalent booster recipients had significantly higher  
217 numbers of BA.1-specific Bmem that did not bind WH1 compared to the monovalent group  
218 (**Figure 6D**). This was associated with the higher frequencies of BTIs during Omicron's circulation  
219 prior to their fourth dose. The absolute number of BA.1<sup>+</sup>WH1<sup>-</sup> Bmem did not change by four-weeks  
220 post-monovalent or BA.1 bivalent booster (**Figure 6D**). In contrast, the number of BA.5<sup>+</sup>WH1<sup>-</sup>  
221 Bmem in was significantly increased following the fourth dose BA.5 bivalent booster (**Figure 6E**).  
222 Thus, in addition to expansion of WH1-specific Bmem with the capacity to bind BA.5, the BA.5  
223 bivalent vaccine elicited expansion of BA.5-only binding Bmem.

224 **DISCUSSION**

225 We here performed for the first time, to our knowledge, a comparative evaluation of the capacity of  
226 monovalent WH1, bivalent BA.1 and bivalent BA.5 mRNA-based COVID-19 booster vaccinations  
227 to elicit Bmem responses that recognize emerging Omicron subvariants. Provided as fourth dose  
228 boosters, all three vaccine types boosted NAb levels against WH1, BA.1, and BA.5 variants.  
229 Monovalent and bivalent boosters similarly activated RBD-specific Bmem, and increased WH1  
230 RBD-specific Bmem numbers. While recognition of Omicron subvariants was not increased in  
231 monovalent booster recipients, binding of BA.1, BA.5 and BQ.1.1 subvariants by WH1 RBD-  
232 specific Bmem was increased by both bivalent boosters, as was XBB.1.5 binding by the BA.5  
233 bivalent booster. BA.5-only binding Bmem numbers were also boosted by the BA.5 vaccine  
234 booster, indicating its capacity to recruit new variant-only specific Bmem.

235 The WH1, BA.1, and BA.5 NAb titers of the bivalent vaccine recipients in our report displayed  
236 similar patterns as those from the SWITCH-ON trial (30, 38). We here extended these findings to  
237 report that both bivalent boosters elicited greater antibody responses than a monovalent booster,  
238 resulting in higher BA.1 and BA.5 NAb titers. This finding aligns with trials of the mRNA-  
239 1273.214 BA.1 bivalent vaccine, which was found to elicit superior NAb titers against its target  
240 antigen, Omicron BA.1, compared to the monovalent mRNA-1273 vaccine (15, 16). We also found  
241 that the BA.5 bivalent booster broadened variant NAb recognition the most, eliciting higher BA.5  
242 NAb titers than the BA.1 bivalent and monovalent boosters, which confirms previous findings for  
243 this vaccine (14, 15, 38-40).

244 We found increases in the proportion of CD27<sup>+</sup>IgG<sup>+</sup> RBD-specific Bmem at four-weeks after a  
245 monovalent or bivalent fourth dose, similar to trends we have shown following dose two and up to  
246 six-months post-dose three (27, 41). This indicates a continued maturation of Bmem to become  
247 resting over time after booster vaccination. We also report significant increases in the frequencies of  
248 CD21<sup>lo</sup> and CD71<sup>+</sup>CD38<sup>dim</sup> activated RBD-specific Bmem, illustrating the capacity of fourth dose  
249 boosters to re-activate a proportion of antigen-specific Bmem from quiescence. Others have

250 observed a similar peak in CD21<sup>lo</sup> S-specific B cells at four-weeks post-vaccination (42). It has  
251 been shown that CD21<sup>lo</sup> Bmem have improved antigen-presenting capacity, which suggests that this  
252 CD21<sup>lo</sup> RBD-specific Bmem population may be contributing to the vaccine response by activating  
253 T cells (43).

254 Our group previously reported a significantly larger proportion of IgG4<sup>+</sup> Bmem in mRNA  
255 primary vaccine recipients compared to adenoviral vector recipients (44). Others have corroborated  
256 this expanded IgG4 response after two and three mRNA vaccine doses (34, 35). Notably, we now  
257 show a continued manifestation of this effect after an mRNA fourth dose, in the expression of IgG4  
258 by WH1, BA.1, and BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem. One factor influencing this differential  
259 development of class-switching may be the difference in dosing interval, as mRNA-based primary  
260 vaccines were received three weeks apart compared to 12 weeks between ChAdOx1 adenoviral  
261 vector vaccines, and only a single dose was given to most Ad26.COV2.S recipients (1, 45, 46).  
262 Additionally, the mRNA-encoded S protein is stabilized by proline residues, while in adenoviral  
263 vector vaccines the DNA-encoded S protein can be truncated, and the S1 and S2 subunits are not  
264 stabilized and can be cleaved (47). As the S1 subunit contains the RBD, this difference in antigen  
265 structure may influence the development of the RBD-specific Bmem response (17, 48).

266 Overall, we found that the activation phenotypes and isotypes of RBD-specific Bmem were  
267 similar following either a monovalent or bivalent fourth dose booster. Therefore, the key difference  
268 in the Bmem response elicited by the bivalent boosters, compared to the conventional monovalent  
269 boosters, is the increase in breadth of variant binding. We found no significant increase in Bmem  
270 recognition of any Omicron subvariant RBD four weeks after a monovalent fourth dose booster.  
271 Our group previously observed that the frequency of Omicron BA.2 and BA.5 binding only  
272 increased by six-months post-dose three, so it is possible that measuring at the later timepoint is  
273 required to allow for Bmem maturation (25, 27). However, we found that four-weeks post-dose four  
274 the BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent vaccines boosted the ability of WH1 RBD-specific Bmem to bind  
275 antigenically distinct subvariants including those not contained in the bivalent vaccines, BQ.1.1 and

276 XBB.1.5. This expands on previous analyses of NAb, which showed improved recognition of XBB  
277 and other related subvariants following the BA.5 bivalent mRNA vaccine or an Omicron BTI (14,  
278 15, 39, 49). Therefore, we reveal novel evidence that cross-reactive Bmem binding both WH1 and  
279 Omicron subvariants are boosted by a bivalent fourth dose.

280 The enhanced ability of cross-reactive Bmem to bind Omicron after bivalent vaccination may be  
281 due to ongoing GC reactions that increase BCR affinity for variant RBDs. Exposure to viral variants  
282 through infection or vaccination is known to improve variant recognition by Bmem through  
283 continued maturation in the GC, linked to increased somatic hypermutations and higher cross-  
284 reactive BCR affinity (50, 51). There is evidence that this mechanism may be the cause of improved  
285 Bmem recognition of Omicron following booster vaccination, as bivalent vaccines have been  
286 shown to elicit prolonged GC B cell responses as well as BA.1- and BA.5-specific CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells (5,  
287 17, 52-54).

288 Neither the monovalent nor BA.1 bivalent boosters increased WH1-negative Omicron-specific  
289 Bmem, but BA.5-only Bmem did increase after a BA.5 bivalent booster. This is in line with the  
290 observed increase in neutralization breadth that was greatest following the BA.5 bivalent booster.  
291 There is previous evidence of a rare *de novo* Omicron-only binding Bmem population following  
292 Omicron-based monovalent vaccination; however, in the same study a majority of monoclonal  
293 antibodies isolated from Omicron S-specific Bmem were cross-reactive with the ancestral S protein  
294 (17). Therefore, the inclusion of the WH1 S protein in current bivalent vaccines may be limiting the  
295 development of these *de novo* populations, in a phenomenon known as immune imprinting or  
296 original antigenic sin. Pre-existing immune memory specific for the ancestral strain of a pathogen,  
297 elicited by primary vaccination or infection, can limit recruitment of naive B cells specific for  
298 variant epitopes through competition upon exposures with variant antigen (11, 17, 25, 55).

299 In May 2023, the WHO recommended the use of monovalent Omicron XBB vaccines in an  
300 effort to increase the breadth of SARS-CoV-2 immunity (4, 12, 17). Phase 2/3 trials found that the  
301 XBB.1.5 monovalent mRNA vaccine elicited higher NAb titers against XBB.1.5 and XBB.1.16

302 than a bivalent XBB.1.5/BA.5 formulation (17, 56). Our current data show that the inclusion of  
303 Omicron vaccine antigens can enhance the breadth of Bmem binding to emergent subvariants, and  
304 exclusion of the WH1 antigen may reduce the limitations of immune imprinting (17, 34). Therefore,  
305 our findings support the use of monovalent variant-based mRNA vaccines going forward. However,  
306 preliminary data suggest that the recall of WH1-specific Bmem still dominates the response even  
307 after a monovalent XBB.1.5 booster (57).

308 There are limitations in the translational capacity of the study due to the predominance of  
309 females, the inclusion of only healthy adults under 65 years old, and the majority of donors being  
310 Caucasian. However, the study still provides baseline with which to compare the Bmem responses  
311 of high-risk populations including pediatric, elderly, immunodeficient, and immunocompromised  
312 individuals, which could help tailor their vaccine regimens and optimize their protection against  
313 emerging variants. Unavoidably, the monovalent cohort had a small sample size due to changes in  
314 Australian booster recommendations, resulting in a lower-powered group. Our inclusion of fold  
315 change analyses allowed us to detect some boosting effects of the monovalent fourth dose that may  
316 have not been otherwise significant.

317 Several factors may have contributed to the higher absolute numbers and frequencies of WH1  
318 and Omicron RBD-specific Bmem in the BA.1 bivalent group. Firstly, the majority of the BA.1  
319 bivalent group had at least one confirmed BTI (with Omicron) in the year prior to pre-dose four  
320 sampling, compared to only 22% of monovalent donors. These BTIs may have therefore elicited  
321 more Omicron-specific Bmem, including Omicron-only Bmem, resulting in the higher numbers at  
322 our baseline measures. Secondly, the BA.5 bivalent group received their fourth dose later than the  
323 BA.1 bivalent group, resulting in a slightly longer interval between their last BTI and pre-dose four  
324 sampling, which may have resulted in their lower Omicron-specific Bmem numbers.

325 Overall, Omicron BA.1 and BA.5 bivalent mRNA-based vaccines both increased the capacity of  
326 WH1 RBD-specific Bmem to bind all measured Omicron subvariants beyond that of a monovalent  
327 vaccine, showing that boosting with an antigenically distinct variant enhances the ability of pre-

328 existing Bmem to bind to related subvariants. Our results reveal the cellular immune memory basis  
329 for understanding the higher degree of protection the bivalent boosters confer compared to  
330 monovalent WH1 COVID-19 vaccines, and supports the continued use of variant-based vaccines to  
331 prevent severe disease from emergent variants.

332 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

333 **Study design**

334 From February 2021 to June 2023, healthy adults (18-65 years old, with no immunological or  
335 hematological disease) who received a monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or BA.5 bivalent fourth dose  
336 COVID-19 booster were recruited to a research study conducted by Monash University at the  
337 Alfred Hospital (Australia) (**Table 1**). Additionally, HCW (18-65 years old) were recruited to the  
338 SWITCH-ON study, a multicenter randomized controlled trial involving four academic hospitals in  
339 the Netherlands and randomized to groups who received a fourth dose BA.1 bivalent COVID-19  
340 booster in October 2022, or a BA.5 bivalent booster in December 2022, respectively. Full details  
341 can be found in the trial protocol (29). A combined total of 72 donors, 27 participants from the  
342 Monash University project and 45 participants from the SWITCH-ON study, were analyzed in this  
343 manuscript (**Table 1**). Following written informed consent, peripheral blood samples were collected  
344 pre-dose four booster, and four-weeks post-dose four booster. Blood samples were processed, as  
345 previously described, to perform TruCount analysis, and to isolate plasma or serum and PBMC for  
346 detailed immunological analysis (see below) (24). Demographic information including age, sex,  
347 prior vaccination dates and types, and SARS-CoV-2 infection status were collected throughout the  
348 studies. Reported SARS-CoV-2 breakthrough infections (BTIs) were confirmed with nucleocapsid  
349 protein (NCP)-specific IgG assays, as described previously (24, 25, 27, 58). The studies were  
350 conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by local human research ethics  
351 committees (Monash Immunology cohort: Alfred Health ethics no. 32/21, Monash University  
352 project no. 72794; SWITCH-ON trial: Erasmus Medical Center Medical Ethics Review Committee,  
353 protocol no. MEC-2022-0462, and local review boards of participating centers, and registered at  
354 ClinicalTrials.gov, no. NCT05471440).

355

356 **PRNT assay**

357 NAb were measured for all donor plasma samples using a plaque reduction neutralization test  
358 (PRNT), as described previously (5, 30, 59). Viruses were isolated and cultured from clinical  
359 specimens from the Department of Viroscience, Erasmus MC, and confirmed by next-generation  
360 sequencing: D614G (ancestral; GISAID: hCov-19/Netherlands/ZH-EMC-2498), Omicron BA.1  
361 (GISAID: hCoV-19/Netherlands/LI-SQD-01032/2022), and Omicron BA.5 (EVAg: 010V-04723;  
362 hCovN19/Netherlands/ZHNEMCN5892) (38). Briefly, heat-inactivated serum was serially diluted  
363 two-fold in OptiMEM without FBS (Gibco). Four hundred PFU of each SARS-CoV-2 variant in an  
364 equal volume of OptiMEM were added to the diluted sera and incubated at 37°C for 1 hour. The  
365 serum-virus mixture was transferred to human airway Calu-3 cells (ATCC HTB-55) and incubated  
366 at 37°C for 8 hours. The cells were then fixed in 10% neutral-buffered formalin, permeabilized in  
367 70% ethanol, and plaques stained with a polyclonal rabbit anti-SARS-CoV-2 nucleocapsid antibody  
368 (Sino Biological) and a secondary peroxidase-labelled goat-anti rabbit IgG antibody (Dako). The  
369 signals were developed with a precipitate-forming TMB substrate (TrueBlue, SeraCare/KPL) and  
370 the number of plaques per well was quantified with an ImmunoSpot Image Analyzer (CTL Europe  
371 GmbH). The 50% reduction titer (PRNT50) was estimated by calculating the proportionate distance  
372 between two dilutions from which the endpoint titer was calculated. An infection control (without  
373 serum) and positive serum control (Nanogam® 100 mg/mL, Sanquin) were included on every assay  
374 plate. When no neutralization was detected, the sample was assigned an arbitrary PRNT50 value of  
375 10.

376

377 **Protein production**

378 DNA constructs encoding the SARS-CoV-2 RBD of WH1, Omicron BA.1, BA.5, BQ.1.1, and  
379 XBB.1.5 were designed incorporating an N-terminal Fel d 1 leader sequence, a C-terminal AviTag  
380 for biotin ligase (BirA)-catalyzed biotinylation, and a 6-His tag for cobalt affinity column  
381 purification (24, 25, 27). The DNA construct encoding the SARS-CoV-2 WH1 NCP protein was

382 generated with an N-terminal human Ig leader sequence and the same C-terminal AviTag and 6-His  
383 tag (24). The DNA constructs were cloned into a pCR3 plasmid and produced using the Expi293  
384 Expression system (Thermo Fisher, Waltham, MA), then purified, biotinylated, and tetramerized, as  
385 described previously (24, 25, 27). This generated fluorescent tetramers [RBD WH1]<sub>4</sub>-BUV395,  
386 [RBD WH1]<sub>4</sub>-BV421 and [RBD BQ.1.1]<sub>4</sub>-BV650 which were used in both panel variations, as well  
387 as [RBD BA.1]<sub>4</sub>-BV480, [RBD BA.1]<sub>4</sub>-BUV737, [RBD BA.5]<sub>4</sub>-BUV496 for the panel used to  
388 analyze monovalent and BA.1 bivalent booster recipients, and [RBD BA.5]<sub>4</sub>-BV480, [RBD BA.5]<sub>4</sub>-  
389 BUV737, [RBD BA.1]<sub>4</sub>-BUV496, and [RBD XBB.1.5]<sub>4</sub>-BUV615 for the panel used to analyze  
390 BA.5 bivalent booster recipients (**Supplementary Tables 2 and 3**).

391

392 **Flow cytometry**

393 *Trucount*

394 Absolute numbers of major leukocyte populations were determined for each peripheral blood  
395 sample as previously described (24, 25, 60). Briefly, 50 $\mu$ L of fresh whole blood was added to a BD  
396 Trucount tube (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA, USA) and incubated with 20 $\mu$ L of the Multitest<sup>TM</sup> 6-  
397 color TBNK reagent (BD Biosciences) containing CD3, CD4, CD8, CD19, CD16, CD45 and CD56  
398 antibodies (**Supplementary Tables 2 and 3**) for 15 minutes at room temperature in the dark.  
399 Subsequently, cells were incubated with 1X BD Lysis Solution (BD Biosciences) for 15 minutes to  
400 lyse red blood cells. Samples were acquired on the BD FACSLyric analyzer and data were analyzed  
401 using FlowJo<sup>TM</sup> Software v10.9.0 (BD Biosciences) as previously described (24, 60). Trucount data  
402 were then used to calculate the absolute numbers of RBD-specific Bmem subsets (60).

403

404 *RBD-specific Bmem analysis*

405 Fluorescent tetramers of WH1, Omicron BA.1, BA.5, and BQ.1.1 RBDs were incorporated into a  
406 19-colour spectral flow cytometry panel to characterize the RBD-specific Bmem response elicited  
407 by a fourth dose booster in the monovalent and BA.1 bivalent fourth dose groups (**Supplementary**

408 **Tables 2 and 3).** Due to the emergence of subsequent Omicron subvariants including XBB.1.5 by  
409 the time the BA.5 bivalent vaccine was distributed, the previous panel was modified for analysis of  
410 samples from BA.5 bivalent fourth dose recipients to include WH1, BA.1, BA.5, BQ.1.1, and  
411 XBB.1.5 RBD tetramers in a 20-colour panel (**Supplementary Table 2 and 3**). For each pre- and  
412 four-weeks post dose four sample,  $10\text{-}15 \times 10^6$  thawed PBMC were incubated at room temperature in  
413 the dark for 15 minutes in a total volume of  $250\mu\text{L}$  with FACS buffer (PBS with 0.1% sodium azide  
414 and 0.2% BSA), fixable ViaDye Red, antibodies against surface markers and  $5\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  each of each  
415 RBD tetramer (**Supplementary Tables 2 and 3**). In a separate tube,  $1\text{-}5 \times 10^6$  PBMCs were  
416 incubated at room temperature in the dark for 15 minutes in a total volume of  $100\mu\text{L}$  with FACS  
417 buffer, fixable ViaDye Red, antibodies against surface markers and fluorochrome-conjugated  
418 streptavidin controls (**Supplementary Tables 2 and 3**). Cells were then washed with FACS buffer,  
419 fixed with 2% PFA for 20 minutes at room temperature in the dark, washed once more and acquired  
420 on the Cytek Aurora (Cytek Biosciences) using SpectroFlo® software v3.1. Data analysis was  
421 performed using FlowJo™ Software v10.9.0 (gating strategy in **Supplementary Figure 1**).  
422

#### 423 **Statistical analysis**

424 Absolute numbers of RBD-specific Bmem were calculated relative to the B cell counts measured by  
425 the Trucount protocol. GraphPad Prism (v9.5.1) software was used for statistical analyses. Unpaired  
426 data were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney test, paired data with the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test,  
427 data across multiple groups with the Kruskal-Wallis test with Dunn's multiple comparisons, and  
428 categorical data with the Chi-squared test.  $p < 0.05$  was considered significant for all statistical tests.

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435

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445

446 **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

447 Study design: HAF, AG, DFP, LGV, PMH, REOH, CHGvK, PHMvdK, RDdV and MCvZ;  
448 Performed experiments: HAF, DG, LG, LMZ, NHT, and MCvZ; Formal analysis: HAF, DG and  
449 LMZ; Subject recruitment/inclusion, vaccination, and sampling: NHT, BJF, AG, DFP, LGV and  
450 PHMvdK; Supervised the work: MPGK, CHGvK, PHMvdK, RDdV, MCvZ; Wrote the manuscript:  
451 HAF and MCvZ. All authors edited and approved the final version of the manuscript.

452

453 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

454 MCvZ, REO'H and PMH are inventors on a patent application related to this work. All the other  
455 authors declare no conflict of interest.

456

#### 457 **DATA AND MATERIAL AVAILABILITY**

458 Data and/or materials will be made available from the corresponding author upon reasonable  
459 request.

460

#### 461 **ETHICS APPROVAL**

462 This study was conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by local human  
463 research ethics committees. Monash Immunology cohort: Alfred Health ethics no. 32/21, Monash  
464 University project no. 72794. The SWITCH ON trial study protocol was approved by the Erasmus  
465 Medical Center Medical Ethics Review Committee (protocol no. MEC-2022-0462), and local  
466 review boards of participating centers, and was registered at ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT05471440).

467

#### 468 **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

469 Written informed consent was obtained from all individual participants prior to inclusion in the  
470 study.

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869 **TABLES (n=1) AND FIGURES (n=6)**870 **Table 1. Participant characteristics of the cohorts**

Cohort detail	mRNA dose 4 group			Statistical comparisons			
	Monovalent WH1	Bivalent BA.1	Bivalent BA.5	p-value			
		n=18	n=33	n=21	Overall	Mono vs BA.1	Mono vs BA.5
<b>Recruitment center</b>							
Monash University	100% (18/18)	21% (7/33)	9.5% (2/21)	<0.0001 <sup>2</sup>			
Erasmus MC	0% (0/18)	79% (26/33)	90% (19/21)				
Age (years; median with range)	48.5 (32-65)	46 (24-59)	48 (22-65)	0.6291 <sup>1</sup>			
Sex (%F)	74	88	67	0.1519 <sup>2</sup>			
<b>Vaccination characteristics</b>							
<b>Primary vaccination/first 2 doses</b>				0.0232 <sup>2</sup>	0.016 <sup>2</sup>	0.0428 <sup>2</sup>	>0.9999 <sup>2</sup>
- mRNA	3 (17%)	15 (45%)	11 (52%)				
- ChAdOx1	15 (83%)	-	-				
- Ad26.COV2.S*	-	18 (55%)	10 (48%)				
<b>1<sup>st</sup> booster/3<sup>rd</sup> dose</b>				-			
- BNT162b2	16 (89%)	33 (100%)	21 (100%)				
- ChAdOx1	2 (11%)	-	-				
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> booster/4<sup>th</sup> dose</b>				-			
- BNT162b2	13 (72%)	-	-				

- mRNA-1273	3 (17%)	-	-				
- Novavax	2 (11%)	-	-				
- BNT162b2.BA1	-	9 (27%)	-				
- mRNA-1273.214	-	24 (73%) <sup>4</sup>	-				
- BNT162b2.BA5	-	-	11 (52%) <sup>5</sup>				
- mRNA-1273.222	-	-	10 (48%) <sup>6</sup>				
<b>Timing of dose 4 (days post-dose 3; median with range)</b>	220 (133-267)	310 (194-454)	365 (214-533)	<0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	<0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	0.0012 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Timing of sampling (days post-vaccination; median with range)</b>							
<b>Pre-dose 4 (since dose 3)</b>	180.5 (129-191)	308 (176-448)	365 (214-514)	<0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	<0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	0.0001 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Post dose 4</b>	31.5 (28-48)	28 (27-49)	28 (27-30)	<0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	<0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	<0.0001 <sup>1</sup>	>0.9999 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 breakthrough infection (% infected, based on self-reporting and confirmed with NCP serology)</b>							
<b>Any time before pre-dose 4 sampling</b>	22% (4/18)	70% (23/33)	81% (17/21)	0.0003 <sup>2</sup>			
<b>Timing of BTI (days before pre-dose 4 sampling; median with range)</b>	131.5 (61-148)	238 (60-915)	288 (169-938)	0.0026 <sup>1</sup>	0.0830 <sup>1</sup>	0.0028 <sup>1</sup>	0.1319 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Within 6 months of pre-dose 4 timepoint</b>	17% (3/18)	24% (8/33)	5% (1/21)	0.1732 <sup>2</sup> **			
<b>Between pre- and post-dose 4 timepoint</b>	6% (1/18)	6% (2/33)	5% (1/21)	0.9796 <sup>2</sup> **			
<b>Total B-cell count (absolute numbers in cells/<math>\mu</math>L; median with IQR)<sup>3</sup></b>							

<b>Pre-dose 4</b>	203 (148-276)	222 (159-288)	138 (120-212)	<b>0.0057<sup>1</sup></b>	>0.9999 <sup>1</sup>	0.0890 <sup>1</sup>	<b>0.0047<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Post-dose 4</b>	225 (183-253)	189 (133-288)	142 (121-181)	<b>0.0299<sup>1</sup></b>	>0.9999 <sup>1</sup>	<b>0.0425<sup>1</sup></b>	0.0946 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total Bmem count (absolute numbers in cells/µL; median with IQR)<sup>3</sup></b>							
<b>Pre-dose 4</b>	90 (38-114)	77 (43-101)	47 (31-59)	<b>0.0337<sup>1</sup></b>	>0.9999 <sup>1</sup>	0.0793 <sup>1</sup>	0.0590 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Post-dose 4</b>	78 (53-104)	63 (40-106)	42 (28-64)	<b>0.0191<sup>1</sup></b>	0.9133 <sup>1</sup>	<b>0.0195<sup>1</sup></b>	0.1201 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kruskal-Wallis test with Dunn's multiple comparisons; <sup>2</sup>Chi-squared test; <sup>3</sup>Data in **Supplementary Figure 3A, B**

\*Within BA.1 bivalent cohort, 5/18 Ad26.COV2.S recipients only received a single dose for their primary schedule, 1/18 received 2 doses, and 6 received 1 Ad26.COV.S dose followed by 1 mRNA vaccine dose. Within BA.5 bivalent cohort, 1/10 Ad26.COV2.S recipients only received a single dose for their primary schedule, 3/10 received 2 doses, and 6 received 1 Ad26.COV.S dose followed by 1 mRNA vaccine dose.

\*\*Low expected values for chi-squared test

Significant differences (p<0.05) in **bold**

871 **Figure legends (n=6)**

872

873 **Figure 1. SARS-CoV-2 WH1, Omicron BA.1 and BA.5 neutralizing antibody responses**

874 **elicited by monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose boosters. (A)** Study design.

875 Sampling was performed pre- and 4-weeks post-dose 4 (full cohort characteristics in **Table 1**). **(B)**

876 PRNT50 NAb titers against WH1, BA.1, and BA.5 pre- and 4-weeks post-monovalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose, **(C)**

877 BA.1 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose, and **(D)** BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose. In **(A-C)**, solid lines and values above

878 panels indicate geometric means, horizontal dotted line denotes the neutralizing cutoff value of 10

879 for PRNT50, and percentages indicate the frequency of donors producing neutralizing antibody

880 levels. **(E)** Fold changes in NAb titers against WH1, BA.1, and BA.5 4-weeks post-monovalent,

881 BA.1 bivalent, or BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose. In **(E)**, bars and values above panels indicate geometric

882 means with geometric SDs. Monovalent: n=18; BA.1 bivalent: n=24, BA.5 bivalent: n=19. Green

883 values indicate confirmed SARS-CoV-2 BTI prior to sampling. Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed

884 rank test for paired data. \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*\*p<0.0001.

885

886 **Figure 2. Significant increases in RBD-specific Bmem after a BA.1 or BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose**

887 **booster. (A)** Gating strategy for double-discrimination of WH1, BA.1, and BA.5 RBD-specific B

888 cells by gating B cells double-positive for WH1 RBD, BA.1 RBD, or BA.5 RBD, respectively. **(B)**

889 Sequential gating for mature B cells and memory B cells (Bmem) within RBD-specific B-cell

890 populations. **(C)** Absolute numbers of WH1 RBD-specific Bmem pre- and 4-weeks post-

891 monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> doses. **(D)** Absolute numbers of BA.1 RBD-

892 specific Bmem pre- and 4-weeks post-monovalent or BA.1 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> doses. **(E)** Absolute

893 numbers of BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem pre- and 4-weeks post-BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose. Monovalent

894 dose 4, n=18; BA.1 bivalent dose 4, n=33; BA.5 bivalent dose 4, n=21. Solid lines depict medians.

895 Green dots denote confirmed SARS-CoV-2 BTI between pre- and 4-weeks post-dose 4 sampling.

896 Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test for paired data. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

897 **Figure 3. Activated RBD-specific Bmem following monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, and BA.5**  
898 **bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose vaccination. (A-B)** CD38<sup>dim</sup>CD71<sup>+</sup> events within RBD-specific Bmem. **(C-D)**  
899 CD21<sup>lo</sup>CD38<sup>dim</sup> events within RBD-specific Bmem. **(E-F)** CD27<sup>+</sup> events within IgG<sup>+</sup> RBD-specific  
900 Bmem. Monovalent, n=18; BA.1 bivalent, n=33; BA.5 bivalent, n=21. Solid lines depict medians.  
901 Green dots denote confirmed SARS-CoV-2 BTI between pre- and 4-weeks post-dose 4 sampling.  
902 Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test for paired data. Only significant differences  
903 shown. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*\*\*p<0.0001.

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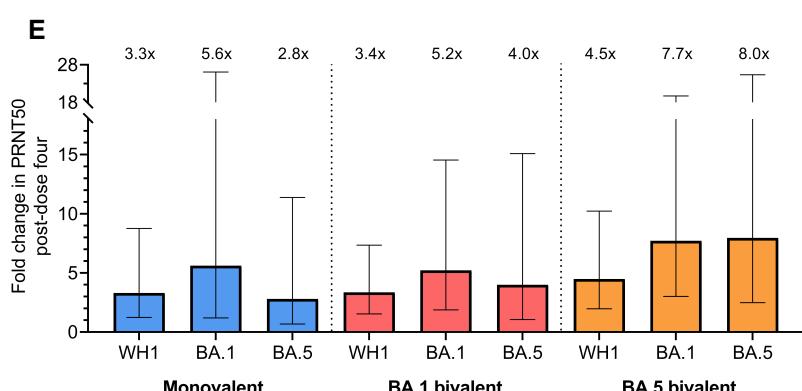
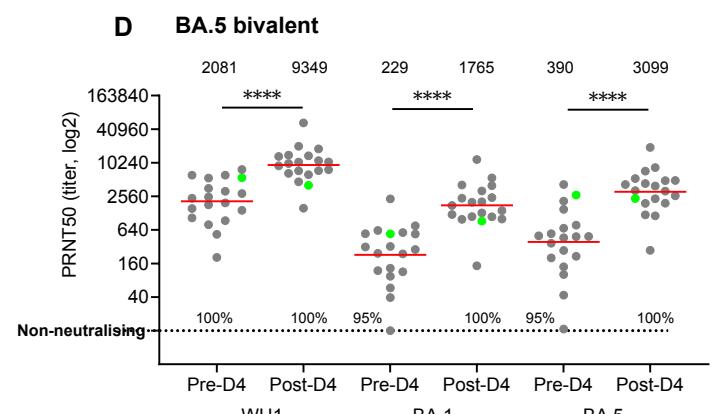
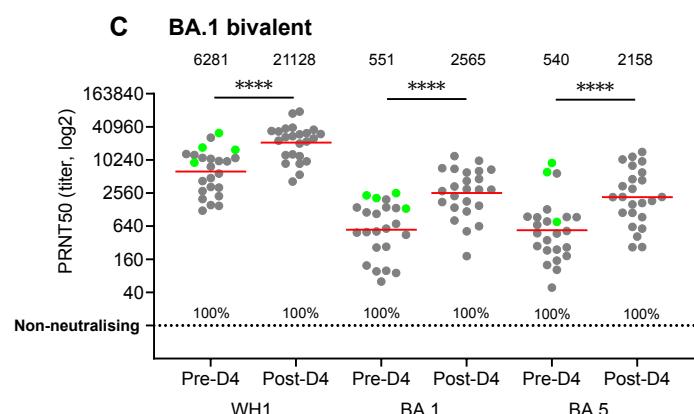
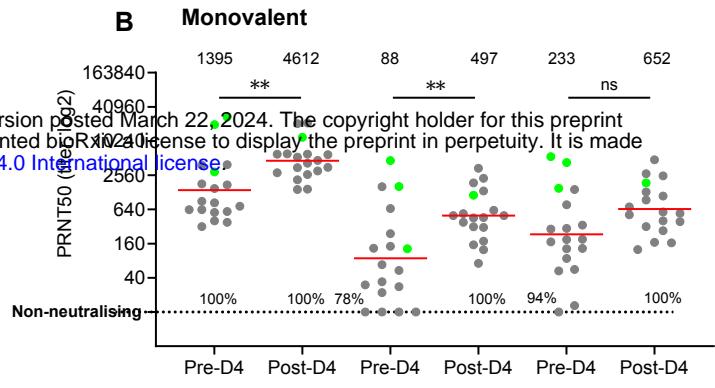
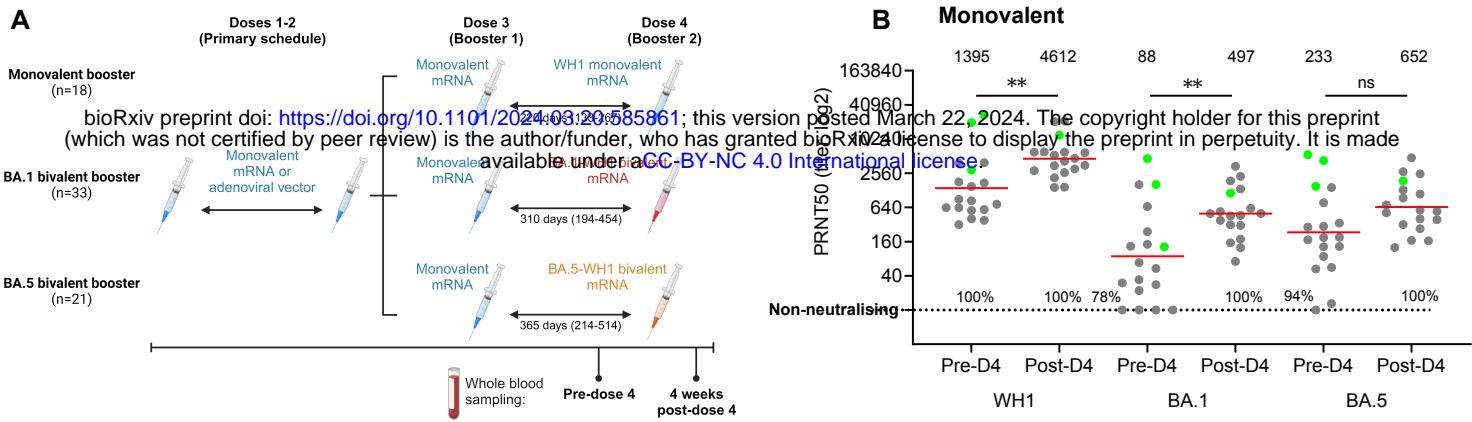
905 **Figure 4. IgG subclass expression by RBD-specific Bmem after monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or**  
906 **BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> doses. (A)** Gating strategy of RBD-specific Bmem for Ig isotype and IgG  
907 subclass expression. **(B)** Distribution of Ig isotype and IgG subclass expressing subsets within  
908 WH1-specific Bmem, BA.1 RBD-specific Bmem, and BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem pre- and 4-weeks  
909 post-dose 4. Monovalent, n=18; BA.1 bivalent, n=33; BA.5 bivalent, n=21. **(C)** Absolute numbers  
910 of IgG4<sup>+</sup> events within WH1, **(D)** BA.1, and **(E)** BA.5 RBD-specific Bmem pre- and post-dose 4 of  
911 all study subjects categorized based on priming with mRNA or adenoviral vector vaccines. **(C)**  
912 mRNA, n=32; adenoviral vector, n=40, **(D)** mRNA, n=18; adenoviral vector n=15, **(E)** mRNA,  
913 n=11; adenoviral vector, n=10. Solid lines depict medians. Mann-Whitney test for unpaired data  
914 and Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test for paired data. Only significant differences  
915 shown. \*p<0.05, \*\*\*\*p<0.0001.

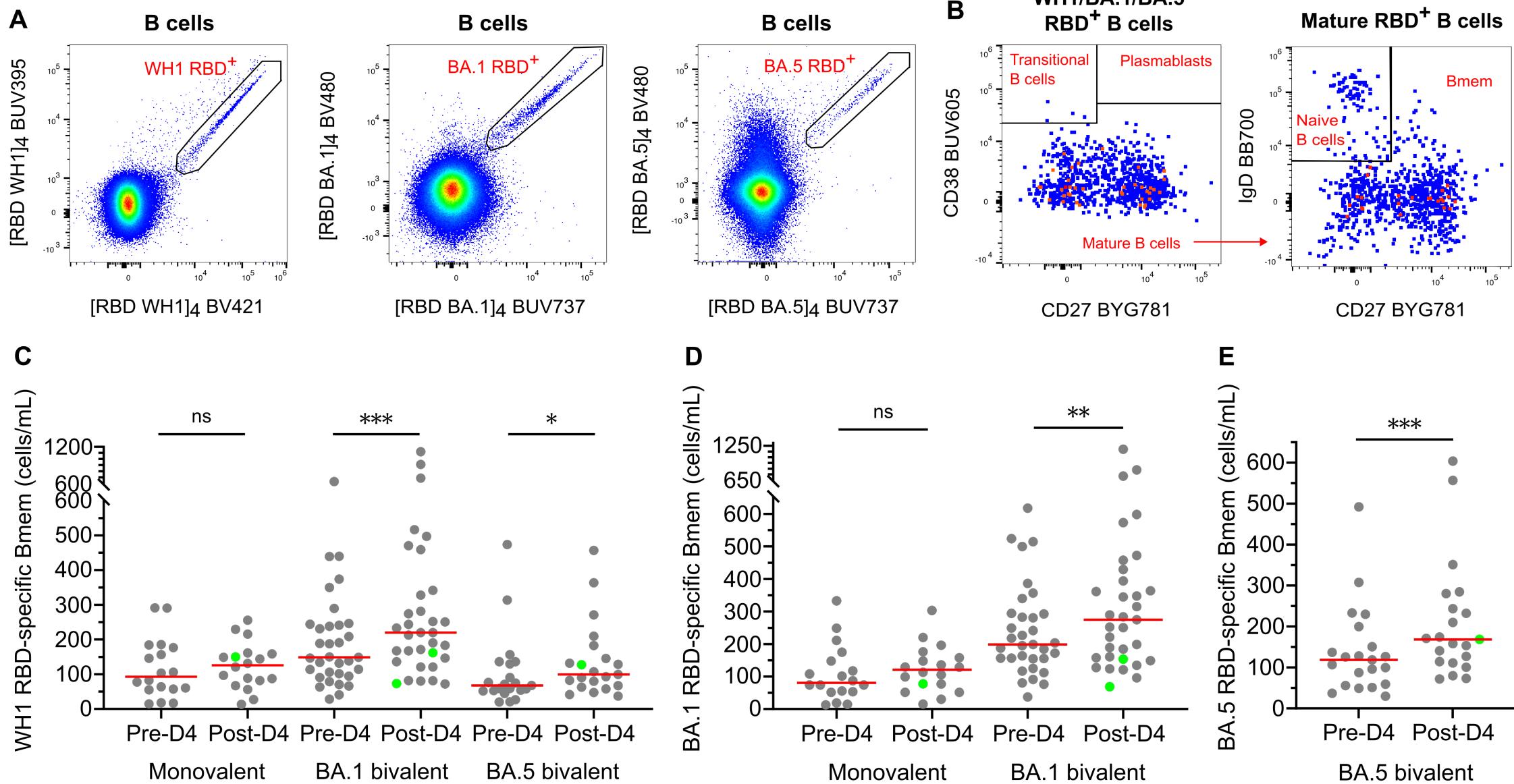
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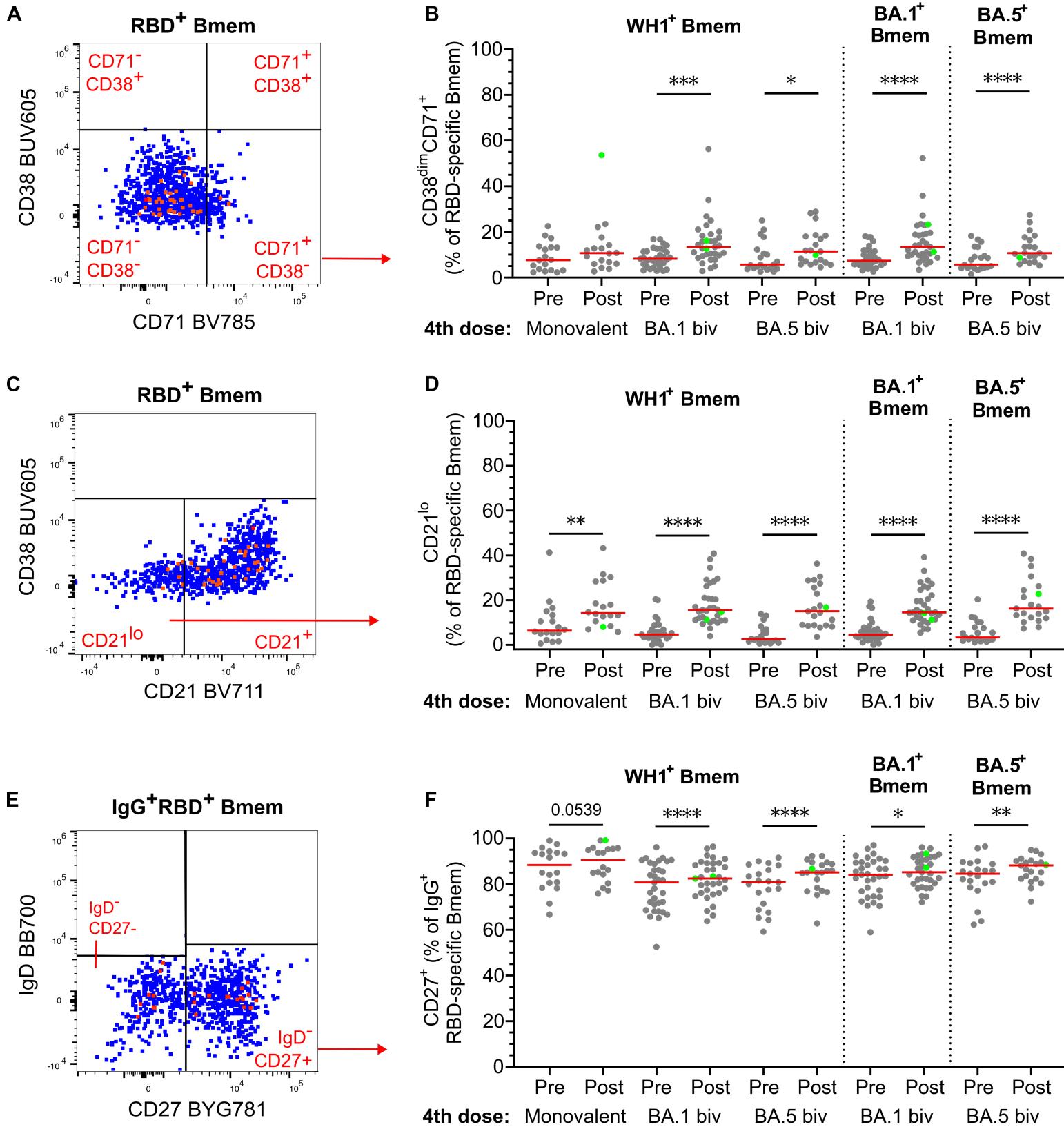
917 **Figure 5. Enhanced capacity of WH1 RBD-specific Bmem to bind Omicron subvariants after**  
918 **boosting with bivalent vaccines. (A)** Gating strategy to quantify WH1 RBD-specific Bmem that  
919 recognize Omicron BA.1, BA.5, and BA.1.1 in monovalent and BA.1 bivalent dose 4 recipients.  
920 Representative plots from a BA.1 bivalent booster recipient post-dose 4. **(B)** Gating strategy to  
921 quantify WH1 RBD-specific Bmem that recognize Omicron BA.1, BA.5, BA.1.1, and XBB.1.5 in  
922 BA.5 bivalent dose 4 recipients. Representative plots from a BA.5 bivalent booster recipient post-

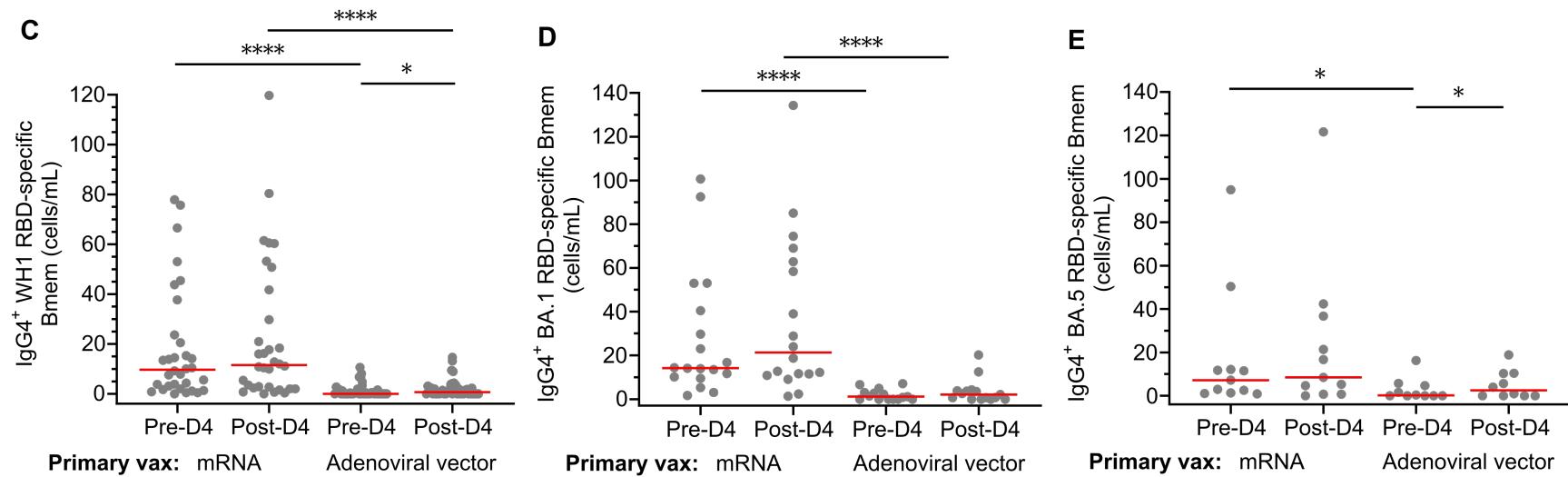
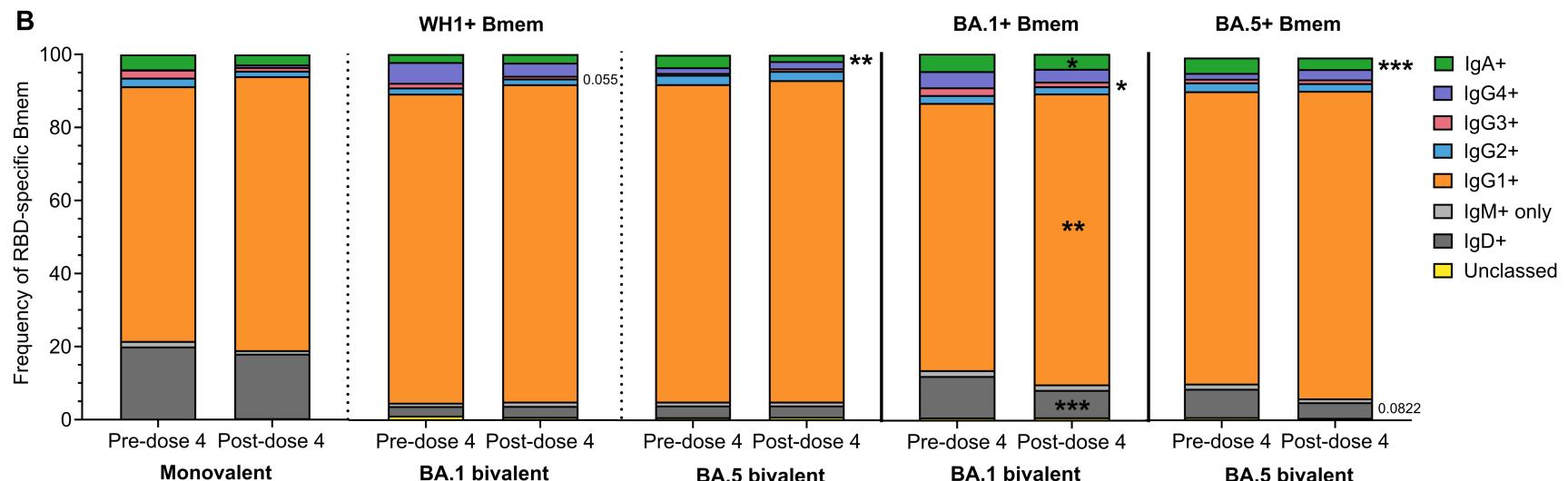
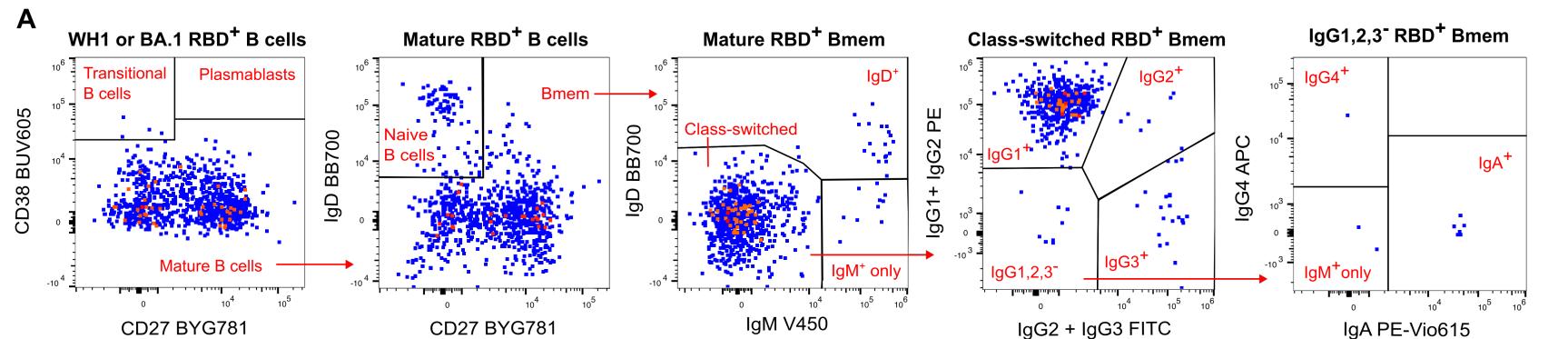
923 dose 4. **(C)** Absolute numbers of BA.1, BA.5, BQ.1.1, and XBB.1.5-specific cells within WH1  
924 RBD-specific Bmem pre- and 4-weeks post-monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or BA.5 bivalent dose 4.  
925 **(D)** Fold changes in WH1 RBD-specific Bmem binding Omicron BA.1, BA.5, BQ.1.1, or XBB.1.5  
926 4-weeks post-monovalent, BA.1 bivalent, or BA.5 bivalent 4<sup>th</sup> dose. In **(D)**, bars and values above  
927 panels indicate medians with IQR. Monovalent, n=18; BA.1 bivalent, n=33; BA.5 bivalent, n=21.  
928 Solid lines indicate medians. Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test for paired data. Only  
929 significant differences shown. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*\*\*p<0.0001.  
930

931 **Figure 6. Omicron-only Bmem are increased by a BA.5 bivalent, but not a BA.1 bivalent or**  
932 **monovalent fourth dose booster (A-B)** Gating of BA.1<sup>+</sup> only Bmem, negative for WH1 RBD  
933 binding, within BA.1 RBD-specific Bmem. Performed on monovalent and BA.1 bivalent dose 4  
934 recipients. **(C)** Gating of BA.5+ only Bmem, negative for WH1 RBD binding, within BA.5 RBD-  
935 specific Bmem. Performed on BA.5 bivalent dose 4 recipients. **(D)** Absolute numbers of  
936 BA.1<sup>+</sup>WH1<sup>-</sup> Bmem before and 4-weeks post-monovalent or BA.1 bivalent dose 4. **(E)** Absolute  
937 numbers of BA.5<sup>+</sup>WH1<sup>-</sup> Bmem before and 4-weeks post-BA.5 bivalent dose 4. Monovalent, n=18;  
938 BA.1 bivalent, n=33; BA.5 bivalent, n=21. Blue dots denote any confirmed SARS-CoV-2 BTI  
939 before pre- or 4-weeks post-dose 4 sampling. Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test for paired  
940 data. \*\*p<0.01.

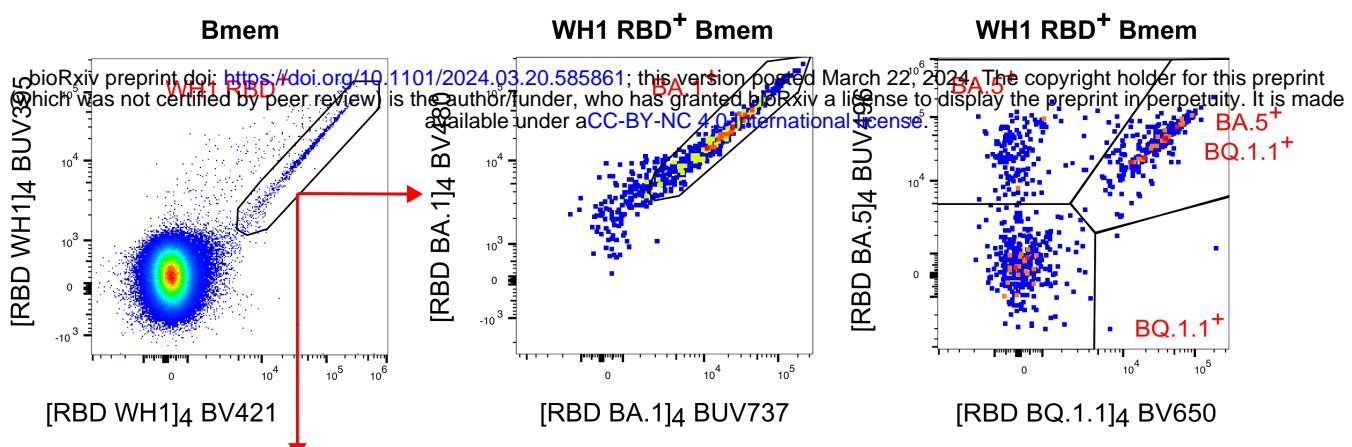




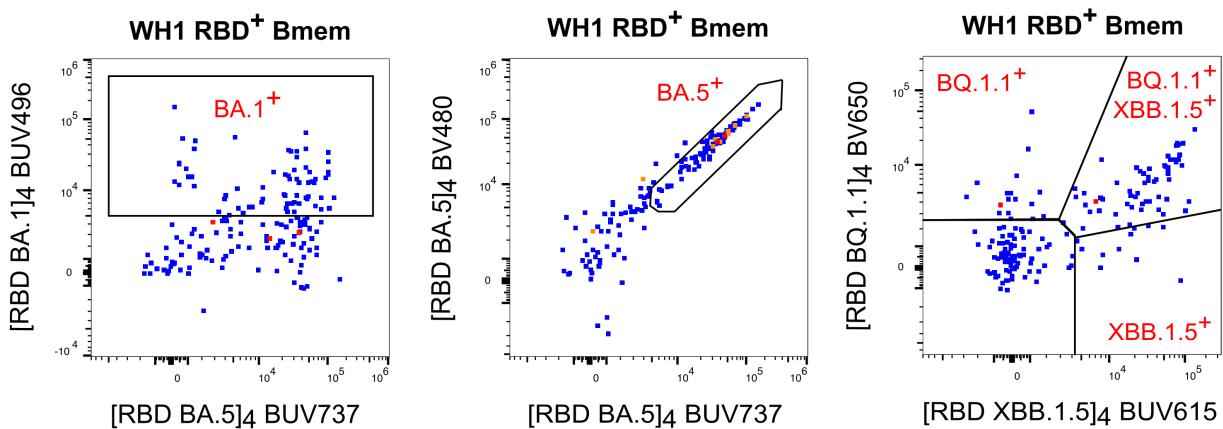




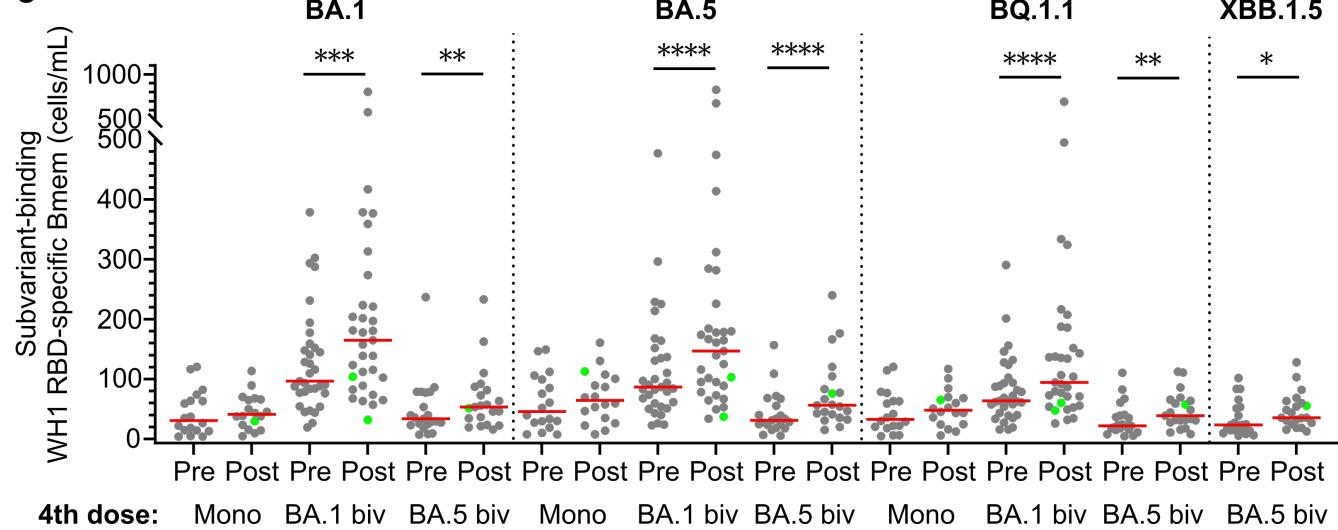
### A Monovalent and BA.1 bivalent dose 4 recipients



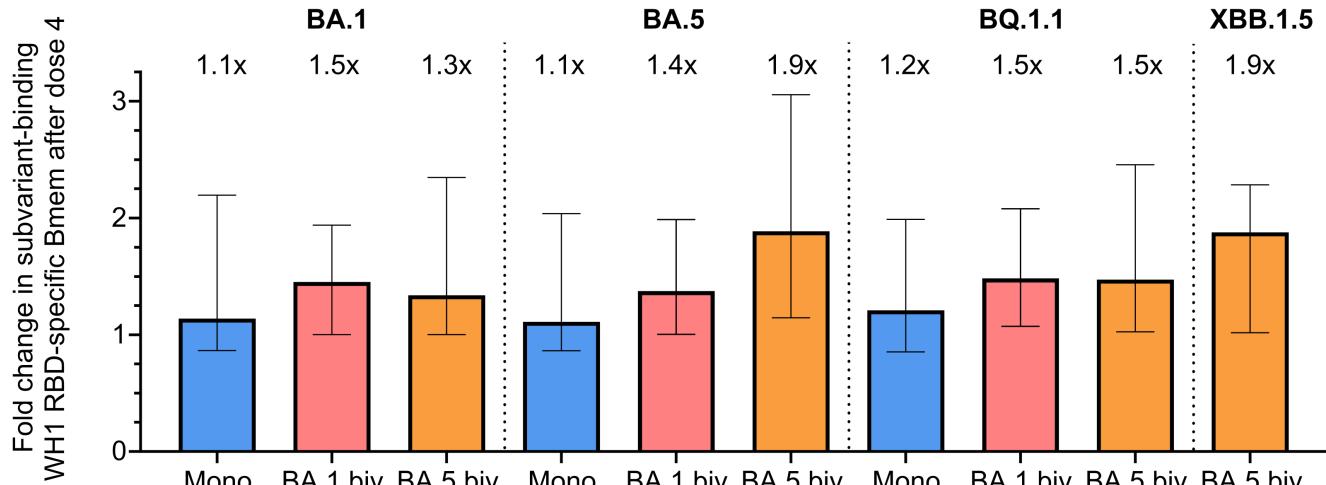
### B BA.5 bivalent dose 4 recipients

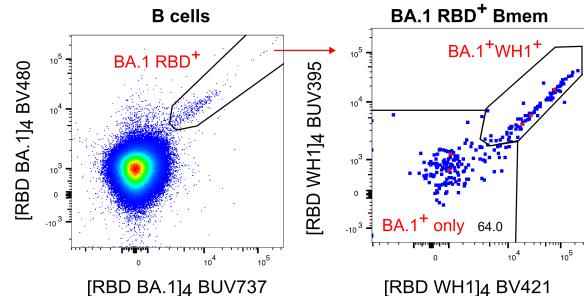
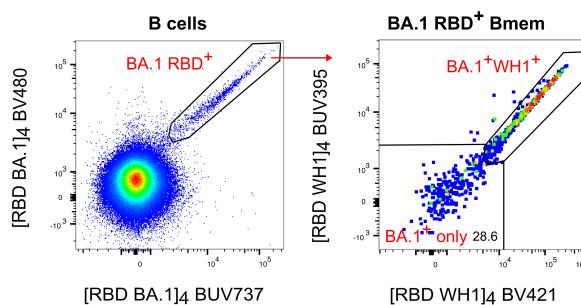
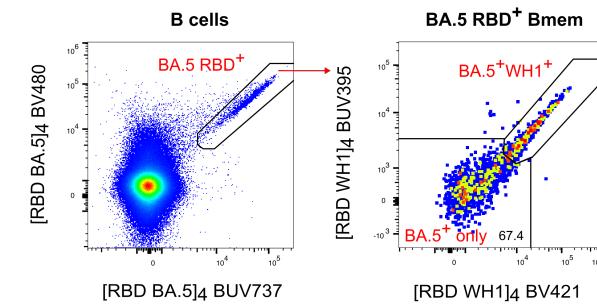
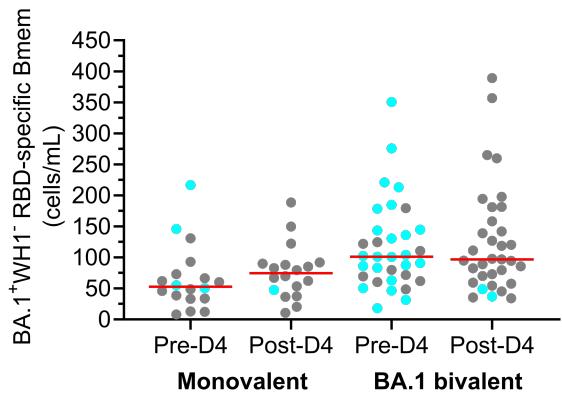


### C



### D



**A Monovalent dose 4 recipients****B BA.1 bivalent dose 4 recipients****C BA.5 bivalent dose 4 recipients****D****E**