

# 1 Molecular mechanisms of LC3-associated phagocytosis in 2 the macrophage response to *Paracoccidioides* spp.

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21

## 22 **Abstract:**

23 Paracoccidiomycosis is a systemic fungal infection that is endemic in Latin America. The etiologic  
24 agents are thermodimorphic fungi from the *Paracoccidioides* genus, which are facultative intracellular  
25 parasites of macrophages. LC3-associated phagocytosis (LAP), a noncanonical form of autophagy, is  
26 important in the immune response to similar pathogens, so we sought to determine the role LAP  
27 plays in the macrophage response to *Paracoccidioides* spp. By immunofluorescence, we found that LC3  
28 was recruited to phagosomes containing *Paracoccidioides* spp. in both RAW264.7 and J774.16 cell lines  
29 and in bone marrow-derived macrophages. Interference with autophagy using RNAi against ATG5  
30 reduced the antifungal activity of J774.16 cells, showing that LC3 recruitment is important for proper  
31 control of the fungus by macrophages. Finally, we used pharmacological Syk kinase and NAPH oxi-  
32 dase inhibitors, which inhibit signalling pathways necessary for macrophage LAP against *Aspergillus*  
33 *fumigatus* and *Candida albicans*, to dissect part of the signaling pathways that trigger LAP against *Par-*  
34 *acoccidioides* spp. Interestingly, these inhibitors did not decrease LAP against *P. brasiliensis*, possibly  
35 due to differences in the fungal cell surface compositions. These observations suggest a potential role  
36 for autophagy as target for host-directed paracoccidiomycosis therapies.

37 **Keywords:** Autophagy, LC3 associated phagocytosis (LAP), macrophage, *Para-*  
38 *coccidioides brasiliensis*, fluorescence microscopy.

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40

41 **1. Introduction**

42 The genus *Paracoccidioides* includes several species of thermodimorphic fungi. In nature, it has been  
43 isolated from the soil[1] and is commonly found in armadillo burrows[2]. Upon inhalation by hu-  
44 mans, *Paracoccidioides* spp. can cause one of the most prevalent systemic mycoses in Latin America –  
45 Paracoccidioidomycosis (PCM)[3]. Chronic PCM is characterized by an infection of the respiratory  
46 tract, leading to significant morbidity due to lesions in the lung parenchima. Subsequently, the dis-  
47 ease can disseminate to other organs and tissues, forming secondary lesions in the mucous mem-  
48 branes, skin, lymph nodes and adrenal glands. Acute PCM, on the other hand, is characterized by  
49 disseminated proliferation of fungi in the reticulo-endothelial system, with a high fungal burden in  
50 lymph nodes and the spleen[4]. In a hyperendemic area, such as Rondônia state, Brazil, the mean  
51 annual incidence was 9.4/100,000 people. The mean annual incidence in a Brazilian state with high  
52 incidence was 9.4/100,000 people during 1997-2012, with a case-fatality rate of 10.2% and 9.9% dur-  
53 ing 2001, and 2002, respectively[5].

54 The clinical course of PCM is associated with a deficient immune cell response modulated by the  
55 balance of cytokines released by inflammatory cells in the microenvironment[6]. The presence of *P.*  
56 *brasiliensis* stimulates monocytes to release pro- and anti-inflammatory cytokines, which trigger an  
57 inflammatory granulomatous response characterized by the accumulation of macrophages and ef-  
58 fector cells[7]. Macrophages can act in different ways, depending on the activation state of the mac-  
59 rophage. Activated M1 macrophages are pro-inflammatory cells, responsible for phagocytosis and  
60 microbe killing. M1 macrophages, activated by IFN-gamma, produce high levels of nitric oxide  
61 (NO) and secrete large amounts of IL-12. In contrast, M2 macrophages reside in the tissue and pro-  
62 duce high levels of arginase and anti-inflammatory cytokines[8].

63 PCM treatment usually lasts for six months to two years and many drugs are available. The most  
64 commonly used drugs are sulfonamides, amphotericin B and azole derivatives[9]. Treatment is  
65 time-consuming and often associated with complications and relapse. Drugs may have undesirable  
66 side effects, and some of them are expensive, such as liposomal amphotericin B. Occasional re-  
67 sistant strains have been reported and the search for more selective and efficient antifungals to treat  
68 this and other mycoses continues[10]. Thus, the search for molecular targets involved in host pro-  
69 tection against fungal invasion may be a viable alternative to the use of antifungal drugs.

70 Autophagy is an essential process, conserved in all eukaryotes, characterized by the lysosomal deg-  
71 radation of cytoplasmic organelles or cytosolic components[11]. It is activated by nutrient depriva-  
72 tion, hypoxia, oxidative stress, DNA damage, accumulation of protein aggregates or damaged orga-  
73 nelles[12]. In addition to endogenous substrates, autophagy is activated in response to intracellular  
74 pathogens and can degrade infectious particles and microbes, having a crucial role in resistance to  
75 bacterial, viral and protozoan infection in metazoan organisms[13]. These immune functions of au-  
76 tophagy are important against human pathogenic fungi, such as *Aspergillus fumigatus*[14], *Cryptococ-*  
77 *cus neoformans* and *Candida albicans*[15], and in the suppression of immune responses to protect  
78 hosts from possible collateral damage caused by overly active immunity[16].

79 Autophagy requires autophagy-related genes (ATG) for all steps of the process, from phagophore  
80 initiation to fusion of the autophagosome with the lysosome. Among autophagy proteins, the Atg8  
81 homolog microtubule-associated protein 1 light chain 3 (LC3) is considered a marker of autophago-  
82 some vesicles and participates in a non-canonical autophagy process called LC3 associated phago-  
83 cytosis (LAP[17]). More recent evidence shows that in the case of fungi, it appears to be LAP, rather  
84 than canonical autophagy, that is triggered in response to these agents[18].

85 Given that the host response to *Paracoccidioides* spp. infection could be targeted for disease preven-  
86 tion or therapy, it is important to understand how mammalian hosts respond to *Paracoccidioides* spp.  
87 As LAP has been previously shown to be important in response to other fungi, our aim in this work

88 was to determine the molecular mechanisms involved in LC3 associated phagocytosis in the im-  
89 mune response to *P. brasiliensis*.

90

91 **2. Materials and Methods**

92 **2.1. Cell lines, fungal strains, and growth conditions**

93 The Pb18 and Pb01 isolates of *P. brasiliensis* and *P. lutzii*, respectively, were maintained in  
94 Fava-Netto's medium (1% w/v peptone, 0.5% w/v yeast extract 0.3% w/v proteose peptone, 0.5% w/v  
95 beef extract, 0.5% w/v NaCl, 4% w/v glucose, and 1.4% w/v agar, pH 7.2), at 37 °C. Cultures no older  
96 than five days from the last passage were used for experiments. For fungicidal activity experiments,  
97 fungal CFUs were counted by plating in brain-heart infusion (BHI) agar supplemented with horse  
98 serum and *P. brasiliensis* conditioned medium. All these culture conditions are conducive to the yeast  
99 phenotype, which we used for all experiments.

100 **2.2. Cell lines**

101 The mouse macrophage cell lines RAW 264.7, and J774.16 were used for the detection of LC3-  
102 associated phagocytosis (LAP) *in vitro*. HEK 293T, and J774.16 were used for transfection and trans-  
103 duction assays, respectively. Cells were kept in 100-mm Petri dishes with Dulbecco's Modified Ea-  
104 gle's Medium (DMEM), supplemented with non-essential amino-acid solution and 10% of fetal bo-  
105 vine serum (FBS; Thermo Fisher), and incubated at 37 °C and 5% CO<sub>2</sub>.

106 **2.3. Animals and primary cells**

107 C57BL/6 mice mice were bred at the Animal Center of the the University of Brasília Institute of Bio-  
108 logical Sciences with food and water *ad libitum*. Bone marrow cells from mice six to twelve weeks  
109 old were collected. All procedures were performed in accordance with national and institutional  
110 guidelines for animal care and were approved by the university's Institutional Animal Care Use  
111 Committee (Proc. UnB Doc 52657/2011). Bone marrow-derived macrophages (BMMs) were gener-  
112 ated from bone marrow cells as previously described[19]. Briefly, 2 x 10<sup>6</sup> bone marrow cells were  
113 plated on non-treated 100-mm Petri dishes with RPMI 1640 supplemented with 10% heat-inacti-  
114 vated fetal bovine serum (FBS; Thermo Fisher), 50 µg/mL gentamicin, 50 µM 2-mercaptoethanol  
115 (Sigma-Aldrich) and 20 ng/mL recombinant GM-CSF (Peprotech). The cultures were incubated for 8  
116 days at 37 °C in a humidified 5% CO<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. On day 3, 10 mL of fresh complete medium was  
117 added to the culture. Half of the medium was removed at day 6 and new complete medium was  
118 added. Attached BMMs were collected on day 8 with TrypLE™ Express (Thermo Fisher).

119 **2.4. Production of ATG5 shRNA lentiviral vectors**

120 For the transfection assay we used TAT, REV, GAG-POL and VSV-G vectors engineered from hu-  
121 man immunodeficiency virus 1 (HIV-1) and vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV). Plasmid pLKO.1 was  
122 used to clone shRNAs for RNA interference with murine ATG5 as target. Plasmid expansion was  
123 performed in thermo-competent *Escherichia coli* (Omnimax T1 cells; Thermo Fisher) in lysogeny  
124 broth (LB) with 100 µg/mL ampicillin. Plasmids were purified with the GenElute Plasmid DNA  
125 Miniprep Kit (Sigma-Aldrich), quantified using the Qubit fluorometer (Thermo Fisher) and stored  
126 at -20 °C.

127 HEK 293T cells were trypsinized and harvested at 90-95% confluence. Cells were reseeded at a con-  
128 centration of 3.75 x 10<sup>5</sup> mL<sup>-1</sup> onto a six-well plate containing 2 mL of DMEM +10% FBS per well. A  
129 mix containing OptiMEM media, Lipofectamine 2000 (Invitrogen), and the assembly media contain-  
130 ing the packing plasmids plus the pLKO.1 vectors encoding each shRNA were added to each well.

131 After six hours of incubation, 2 mL of DMEM + 10% FBS were added to the cells, and the superna-  
132 tant was collected after 12 and 24 h. Supernatants were centrifuged at 200 x g for five minutes to re-  
133 move dead cells and debris, and the resulting supernatant was centrifuged again at 20.000 x g for 90  
134 min at 4 °C. Pellets containing lentivirus were resuspended and stored at -80 °C.

135 **2.5. J774.16 cell transduction with ATG5 shRNA lentivirus**

136 After J774.16 cells reached 95% confluence, they were harvested by trypsinization and counted. They  
137 were reseeded onto a 96-well plate containing DMEM + 10% FBS, at 10<sup>4</sup> cells/well. In the following  
138 day, the cell culture medium was exchanged for DMEM + 10% FBS medium supplemented with 8  
139 µl/mL hexadimethrine bromide (Polybrene), and 5, 50 or 100 µL of lentivirus harbouring each shRNA  
140 were added to the cells. In the next day, the medium was exchanged for DMEM + 10% FBS, and after  
141 one more day, transduced cells were selected with puromycin at 0.5 µg/mL (Thermo Fisher). After  
142 48 h of selection, untransduced dead cells were removed from the supernatant. For the second round  
143 of selection, transduced J774.16 cells were harvested and seeded onto a six-well plate with medium  
144 supplemented with puromycin at 5 µg/mL. After reaching confluence, cells were harvested, and total  
145 RNA was extracted using Trizol® (Thermo Fisher). RNA was analyzed by electrophoresis with 1%  
146 agarose, and gene expression evaluated by qPCR.

147 **2.6. Fungal killing assay**

148 For CFU experiments, stably transduced J774.16 cells were seeded onto a 96-well plate at 2 x 10<sup>4</sup> cells  
149 per well in DMEM supplemented with 10% FBS and activated with murine IFN-γ at 200 U/mL plus  
150 LPS at 1 µg/mL. After 24 h of activation and adhesion, the J774.16 cells were co-incubated with *P.*  
151 *brasiliensis* suspensions. To prepare these fungal suspensions, *P. brasiliensis* yeast cells were scraped  
152 from solid media and suspended in PBS. After vortexing with 2 – 4 mm glass beads for 30 s, large  
153 clumps were removed by decanting and the suspension strained through a 40 µm cell strainer. The  
154 viable cell density on the resulting suspension was counted in a hemocytometer using the vital dye  
155 Phloxine B. J774.16 cells were co-incubated with *P. brasiliensis* for 24 h, with a multiplicity of infection  
156 (MOI) of one. After this period, CFUs were counted by plating the same dilution for each well onto  
157 BHI agar plates and incubating at 37 °C until colonies appeared (5 to 7 days). Controls included un-  
158 transduced J774.16 cells and wells with no macrophages. The experiment was repeated inde-  
159 pendently three times in different days, each with four or five wells per condition.

160 **2.7. Co-incubation of macrophages and *Paracoccidioides* spp. for LC3 immunofluorescence**

161 In different experiments, macrophages were either plated onto glass-bottom dishes (Mattek®) or on  
162 24-well plates with sterile circular coverslips for 24 h. *P. brasiliensis* yeast cells were harvested from  
163 five day old culture plates by scraping the surface of the fungal mat, vortexing the cell chunks in PBS,  
164 passing the suspension through a 40-µm cell strainer and measuring cell density in a hemocytometer.  
165 Fungal cells were inoculated onto the plated macrophages at a MOI of one. The dishes were incubated  
166 for 12 to 24 h at 37 °C in the presence of 5% CO<sub>2</sub> to allow infection. Afterwards, the plates were  
167 processed for immunofluorescence as described below. In some experiments, we added the Syk-se-  
168 lective tyrosine kinase inhibitor piceatannol (at 10 or 30 µM) (Invivogen, San Diego, CA, catalog #  
169 t1rl-pct) or the NADPH oxidase inhibitor diphenyleneiodonium chloride (DPI; at 10 or 20 µM)  
170 (Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, Missouri, catalog #D2926) to the dishes. Inhibitors were added 10 min  
171 before stimulation and remained in culture for the duration of the experiments.

172 **2.8. LC3 immunolocalization**

173 After 12 or 24 hours of infection, the cells were fixed with ice-cold methanol for ten minutes and  
174 washed with PBS. After that, they were incubated with a 1% BSA solution in 1X PBS containing pri-  
175 mary antibody (rabbit polyclonal IgG against human LC3, 1:1000 dilution, Santa Cruz Biotechnology)

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176 for one hour at 37 °C. They were then washed three times with PBS and incubated with the secondary  
177 antibody (goat IgG against rabbit IgG conjugated with AlexaFluor® 488, Thermo Fisher Scientific)  
178 diluted 1:2000 in the same conditions as the primary one. The cells were afterwards washed three  
179 times with PBS and the glass-bottom dishes (or coverslips) were mounted with ProLong Gold Anti-  
180 fade Mountant (Thermo Fisher Scientific). Samples were documented in a Zeiss Axio Observer Z1  
181 epifluorescence microscope equipped with a 63x NA 1.4 oil immersion objective and a cooled CCD  
182 camera. Image stacks were deconvolved with a constrained iterative algorithm on Zeiss ZEN and  
183 then processed on ImageJ and Adobe Photoshop. No non-linear modifications were made.

184 **2.9. Statistical analysis**

185 For ATG5 knockdown, ANOVA and Dunnett's multiple comparison pos-hoc tests were performed  
186 on Graphpad Prism. For LAP quantitative analysis, a Fisher's exact test was performed to compare  
187 proportions of fungi on LC3-positive vacuoles on Graphpad Prism. For CFU analysis, a mixed-anal-  
188 ysis ANOVA was used, with shRNA as a fixed effect and replicate as a random factor. Pairwise  
189 comparisons were made using Tukey's HSD to correct for multiple comparisons. Analysis was per-  
190 formed in R using the MultComp package[20].

191

192 **3. Results**

193 **3.1. LC3 is recruited to phagosomes containing *Paracoccidioides* spp. in murine macrophages**

194 To test whether macrophages use LAP against *Paracoccidioides* spp., we performed LC3 im-  
195 munofluorescence experiments with different types of macrophages that had been infected with the  
196 fungus. Controls for autofluorescence and non-specific secondary antibody binding were negative  
197 (**Figure S1**). LC3 was detected in vacuoles containing *Paracoccidioides* spp. cells in all tested macro-  
198 phages (RAW264.7, J774.16, and BMM) that had been incubated with *P. brasiliensis* or *P. lutzii* for 12  
199 or 24 hours (**Figure 1A-C**). These experiments showed that LC3 recruitment does not occur in all  
200 vacuoles containing *Paracoccidioides* spp., suggesting that this process might take more time for com-  
201 pletion or that macrophages do not use LAP against all internalized fungi. Furthermore, we fre-  
202 quently observed LC3 recruitment around daughter but not mother cells (**Figure 1B**). Interestingly,  
203 we also detected LC3 around apparently extracellular *Paracoccidioides* spp. cells.

204

205 **3.2. LAP is important in the murine macrophage response to *P. brasiliensis***

206 After confirming the occurrence of LAP in murine macrophages incubated with *Paracoccidi-  
207 oides* spp., we performed a loss-of-function experiment by knocking down the ATG5 gene in J774.16  
208 macrophages. For that purpose, we produced five different lentiviral vectors containing different  
209 shRNAs against ATG5. J774.16 cells were transduced with lentiviral particles and knockdown levels  
210 of ATG5 were determined by quantitative PCR. The ATG5 knockdown efficacy varied greatly among  
211 the vectors. Two (A, and B) were the most efficient in knocking the gene down, especially in the  
212 lowest amount used (5 µL). Vectors A and B reduced ATG5 gene expression by approximately 97%  
213 relative to the negative control EGFP shRNA (**Figure 2A**). Next, ATG5-silenced J774.16 cells were  
214 incubated with *P. brasiliensis* and a fungal killing assay (CFU) was performed. When compared to the  
215 EGFP control or non-transduced J774.16 cells, the fungal killing assay showed that ATG5 knockdown  
216 significantly increased the survival of *P. brasiliensis* in macrophages (**Figure 2B**).

217

218 **3.3. Macrophages use a different mechanism to trigger LAP against *Paracoccidioides* spp. in com-**  
219 **parison with *C. albicans***

220 The molecular mechanism of macrophage LAP against *C. albicans* and *Aspergillus fumigatus* has been  
221 previously determined[21,22]. Two key steps in this mechanism are dependent on the Syk kinase  
222 and the NADPH oxidase complex. To test if the same happened in macrophages infected with *Para-*  
223 *coccidioides* spp., we used pharmacological inhibitors to block these well-described components of  
224 autophagy pathways. Surprisingly, the inhibition of Syk by piceatannol led to a dose-dependent in-  
225 crease in LC3-positive phagosomes containing *P. brasiliensis*, whereas inhibition of NADPH oxidase  
226 by diphenyleneiodonium chloride (DPI) did not affect LAP (**Figure 3 and Table 1**). As a control, we  
227 used the same inhibitors in macrophages infected with *C. albicans*. As described previously in the  
228 literature[21], inhibition of Syk or NADPH oxidase in *C. albicans* leads to a decrease in LAP in  
229 BMMs (**Figure S2 and Table 1**).

230

231 **4. Discussion**

232 About 1.5 million people die every year from systemic fungal infections[23]. Most of these  
233 diseases can only be treated with a small number of drugs, which are often toxic, expensive or take a  
234 long time to be effective. This is especially true for paracoccidioidomycosis, which in less severe cases  
235 are usually treated with sulfonamides for 12 – 24 months and in more severe cases is treated with the  
236 nephrotoxic amphotericin B or its expensive lipid formulations[24]. Even when therapy successfully  
237 clears the fungal infection, as many as 40% of the patients have fibrotic sequelae as a result of pul-  
238 monary inflammation[25,26]. Thus, host-targeted therapies that modulate the antifungal immune re-  
239 sponse have a great potential in the therapy of PCM and other systemic mycoses. Our results suggest  
240 that LAP might be one such possible target for host-directed therapies.

241 LAP is a form of non-canonical autophagy and plays important roles in the macrophage im-  
242 mune response against microbes[27], including fungi[28]. It has been studied in the macrophage re-  
243 sponse to *Histoplasma capsulatum*[29,30], *C. albicans*[15,31], *C. neoformans*[15,32], *Aspergillus fumi-*  
244 *gatus*[14,22] and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*-derived zymosan[33]. Our results show that LAP is also used  
245 by different types of immortalized and primary murine macrophages against two species of the ge-  
246 nus *Paracoccidioides*. LC3 accumulated differently around buds and mother cells and was only found  
247 in part of the phagosomes containing *Paracoccidioides* spp. cells, which could suggest these fungi  
248 might evade LAP. Such immune evasion has been observed in macrophages interacting with *A. fu-*  
249 *migatus*, which use an outer layer of melanin to shield cell wall PAMPs from recognition by receptors  
250 that trigger LAP[14].

251 This interpretation is also compatible with our findings with Syk kinase and NADPH oxidase  
252 inhibitors. In macrophages that have ingested *C. albicans*[31], *A. fumigatus*[22] or *H. capsulatum*[29],  
253 LC3 recruitment to phagosomes initiates after Dectin-1 recognition of  $\beta$ -glucans, followed by Syk  
254 activation and NADPH oxidase-dependent generation of reactive oxygen species. On the other hand,  
255 LAP has been found to be triggered by other pattern recognition receptors such as TLR2 [33] or even  
256 phagocytic receptors such as those for Fc $\gamma$ [34] or complement[35]. These different LAP pathways  
257 may explain our observation of the opposing LAP effects of Syk and NADPH inhibitors in macro-  
258 phages challenged with *P. brasiliensis* or *C. albicans*.

259 Our fungal killing assays with ATG5 shRNAs suggest the recruitment of LC3 to phagosomes  
260 containing *Paracoccidioides* spp. seems to play a role in their proper antifungal activity. The absolute  
261 differences in CFUs between control and ATG5-knockdown cells were not very large (16.8% for clone  
262 A and 29.7% for clone B, in comparison with the EGFP control). However, these small differences  
263 might be due to the overall limited antifungal effect of J774.16 cells, as indicated by the fact that the

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264 EGFP control cells themselves only reduced the CFU counts by 31.3% in comparison with the wells  
265 that contained fungi without macrophages. This host-protective role of autophagy *in vitro* is con-  
266 sistent with results our group has obtained in an unrelated project (manuscript submitted). In that  
267 work, we tested if there were differences in LAP between dendritic cells obtained from two mouse  
268 strains, one of which resistant and the other susceptible to *P. brasiliensis* infection. The percentage of  
269 LC3-positive phagosomes was higher in the resistant strain, which constitutes indirect evidence that  
270 LAP might play a role in murine infections.

271 Despite the congruent evidence from our experiments *in vitro* and those with macrophages  
272 and dendritic cells from susceptible and resistant mouse strains our group has done (manuscript  
273 submitted), care is warranted in reaching strong conclusions regarding macrophage LAP in immu-  
274 nity to *Paracoccidioides* spp. In macrophages infected with the closely related *H. capsulatum*, LAP is  
275 actually detrimental to the host and exploited by the fungus to survive[30]. Moreover, the literature  
276 on antifungal LAP in macrophages is ripe with apparent contradictions that highlight how complex  
277 this mechanism is. In macrophages infected with *C. neoformans* *in vitro*, for instance, we found that  
278 LAP was host-protective[15] but another group found it benefitted the pathogen[32,36]. In invasive  
279 candidiasis models, we[15] and others[16,21,37] found that autophagy was host-protective, whereas  
280 other experiments showed it was not necessary for proper responses to *C. albicans*[38]. As further  
281 experiments with *Paracoccidioides* spp. and other fungi uncover more details on the mechanism that  
282 triggers LAP and its role on immune effector functions, we might be able to rely on a new generation  
283 of specific autophagy modulating compounds[39-42] for host-directed therapy in paracoccidioido-  
284 mycosis.

285

286 **Author Contributions:** Conceptualization: A.M.N., A.C. and P.A.; writing—original draft preparation: G.P.O.J.,  
287 H.R.S., K.C.M.G. and A.M.N; supervision: A.M.N., I.S.P. and M.S.S.F.; cell lines, and fungal strains maintenance:  
288 H.C.P., I.S.P., P.A., M.S.S.F. and A.M.N.; production of ATG5 shRNA lentiviral vectors, transduction, transfec-  
289 tion, and fungal killing assay: K.C.M.G., T.K.S.B., K.T.R., S.F., F.C.K.G., L.F.F., A.R.N. and H.C.P.; BMM produc-  
290 tion: F.A.H.; co-incubation of macrophages and *Paracoccidioides* spp. for LC3 immunofluorescence: G.P.O.J. and  
291 H.R.S.; LC3 immunolocalization: G.P.O.J., H.R.S., K.T.R. and F.C.K.G.; Statistical analysis of the data: G.P.O.J.,  
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301

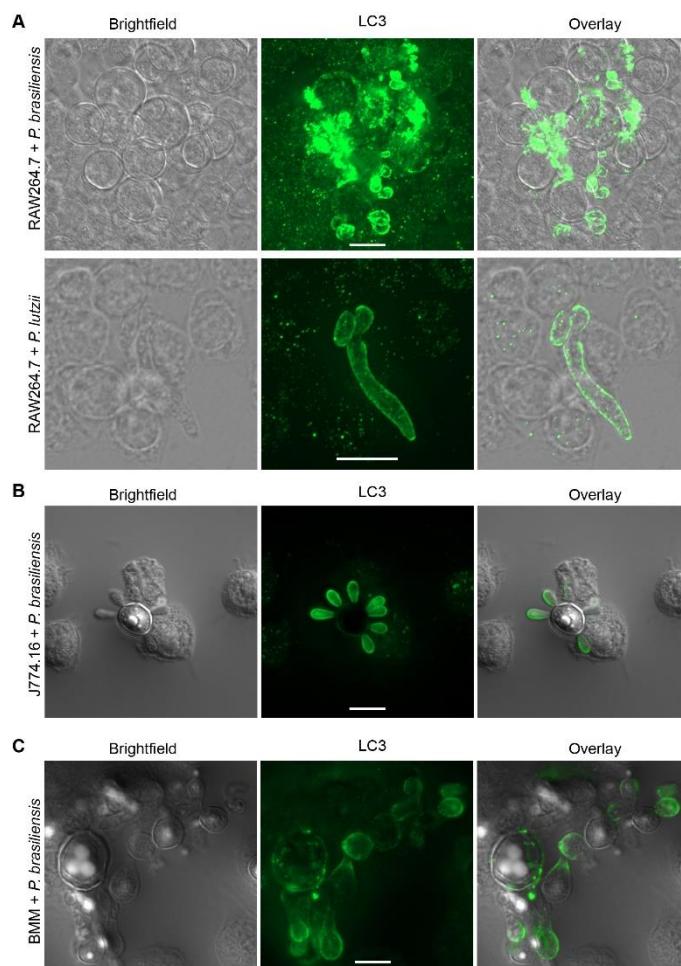
302 **Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

303

304

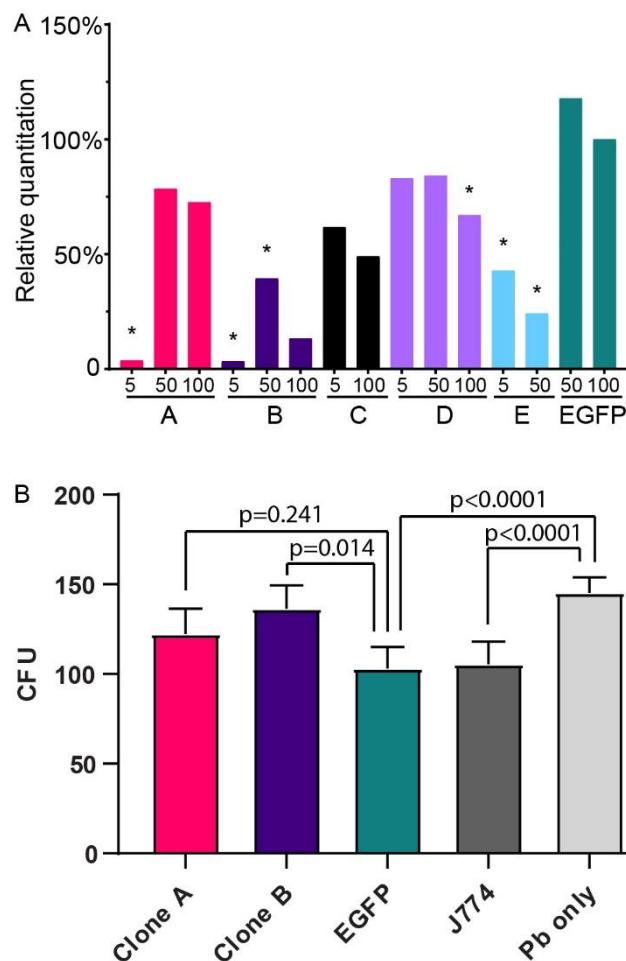
305

306 **Figures**



308 **Figure 1 – LC3 associated phagocytosis (LAP) is activated in murine macrophages against *Paracoccidioides*  
309 spp. (A) LAP was detected after 24 h in RAW264.7 incubated with *P. brasiliensis* and *P. lutzii*. (B) The same  
310 phenomenon was confirmed after 12 h of the *P. brasiliensis* interaction with J774.16 and (C) bone marrow derived  
311 macrophages (BMM), scale bars: 10  $\mu$ m. Experiments were repeated at least twice in different days and had  
312 similar results.**

313



314

315 **Figure 2 – LC3 associated phagocytosis (LAP) is important for the death of *P. brasiliensis* phagocytized by**

316 *J774.16* murine macrophages. (A) Five microlitres of lentiviruses A and B knocked down ATG5 expression by

317 approximately 97% in *J774.16* relative to the scrambled EGFP knockdown controls, as measured by real-time

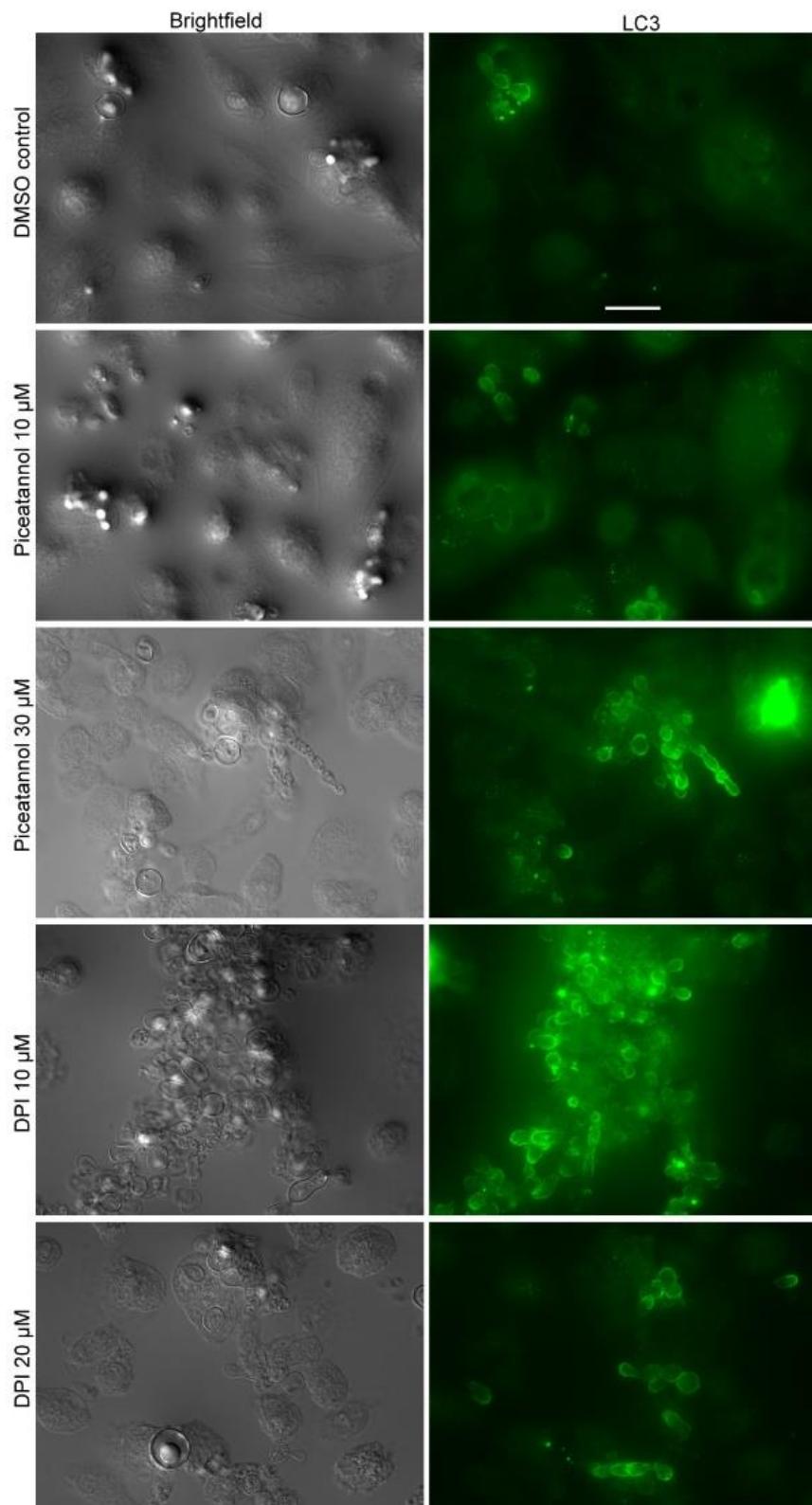
318 RT-PCR. Numbers on the X axis represent the volume of each lentiviral vector used in transduction. \* represents

319  $p < 0.05$  compared to the scramble EGFP (ANOVA and Dunnet multiple comparison pos-hoc test). (B) Fungal

320 killing assay showing that ATG5 knockdown significantly increased the survival of *P. brasiliensis* (Pb) in macro-

321 phages, p-value from mixed-analysis ANOVA and Tukey's HSD multiple comparison pos-hoc test.

322



323

324 **Figure 3 – Effect of Syk and NADPH oxidase inhibition on bone marrow derived macrophages (BMM) LAP**  
325 **against *P. brasiliensis*.** Piceatannol (10, 30  $\mu$ M) and diphenyleneiodonium chloride (DPI) (10, 20  $\mu$ M) were used  
326 to inhibit Syk and NADPH oxidase, respectively. Syk inhibition led to a dose-dependent increase in LAP,  
327 whereas NADPH oxidase inhibition did not seem to affect LAP. Scale bar: 20  $\mu$ m.  
328

329 **Table 1. Recruitment of LC3 to vacuoles containing *P. brasiliensis* and *C. albicans* in primary macrophages.**  
330 BMMs were infected with either fungi in the presence or absence of Syk and NADPH oxidase inhibitors and  
331 processed for immunofluorescence microscopy as shown in Figure 3. The total number of ingested fungi and  
332 the number of fungi on LC3-positive vacuoles was then counted.

333

Fungus	Treatment	Number of macrophages with phagocytosed cells positives for LC3				
		Number of macrophages with phagocytosed cells	Number of macrophages with phagocytosed cells positives for LC3	Percentage (%) of phagocytosed cells positive for LC3	Fisher exact test	Odds ratio
<i>P. brasiliensis</i>	DMSO	218	39	17.89		
	Piceatannol 10µM	317	87	27.44	0.0429	1.534
	Piceatannol 30µM	208	62	29.81	0.0267	1.666
	DPI 10µM	231	46	19.91	0.7228	1.113
	DPI 20µM	222	47	21.17	0.4822	1.183
<i>C. albicans</i>	DMSO	103	58	56.31		
	Piceatannol 10µM	121	53	43.80	0.2973	0.778
	Piceatannol 30µM	75	30	40.00	0.2314	0.71
	DPI 10µM	84	21	25.00	0.006	0.444
	DPI 20µM	119	25	21.01	0.0003	0.373

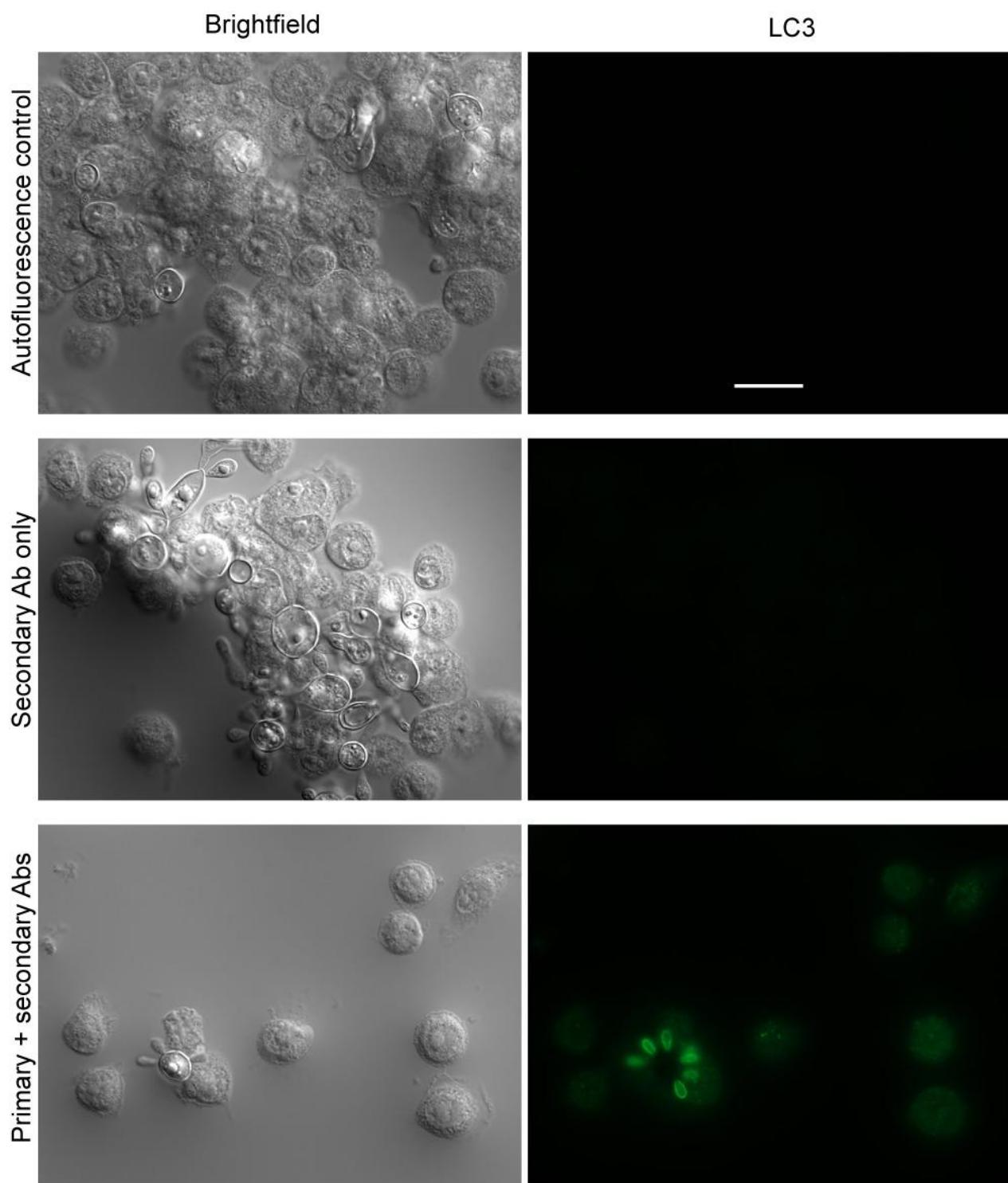
334

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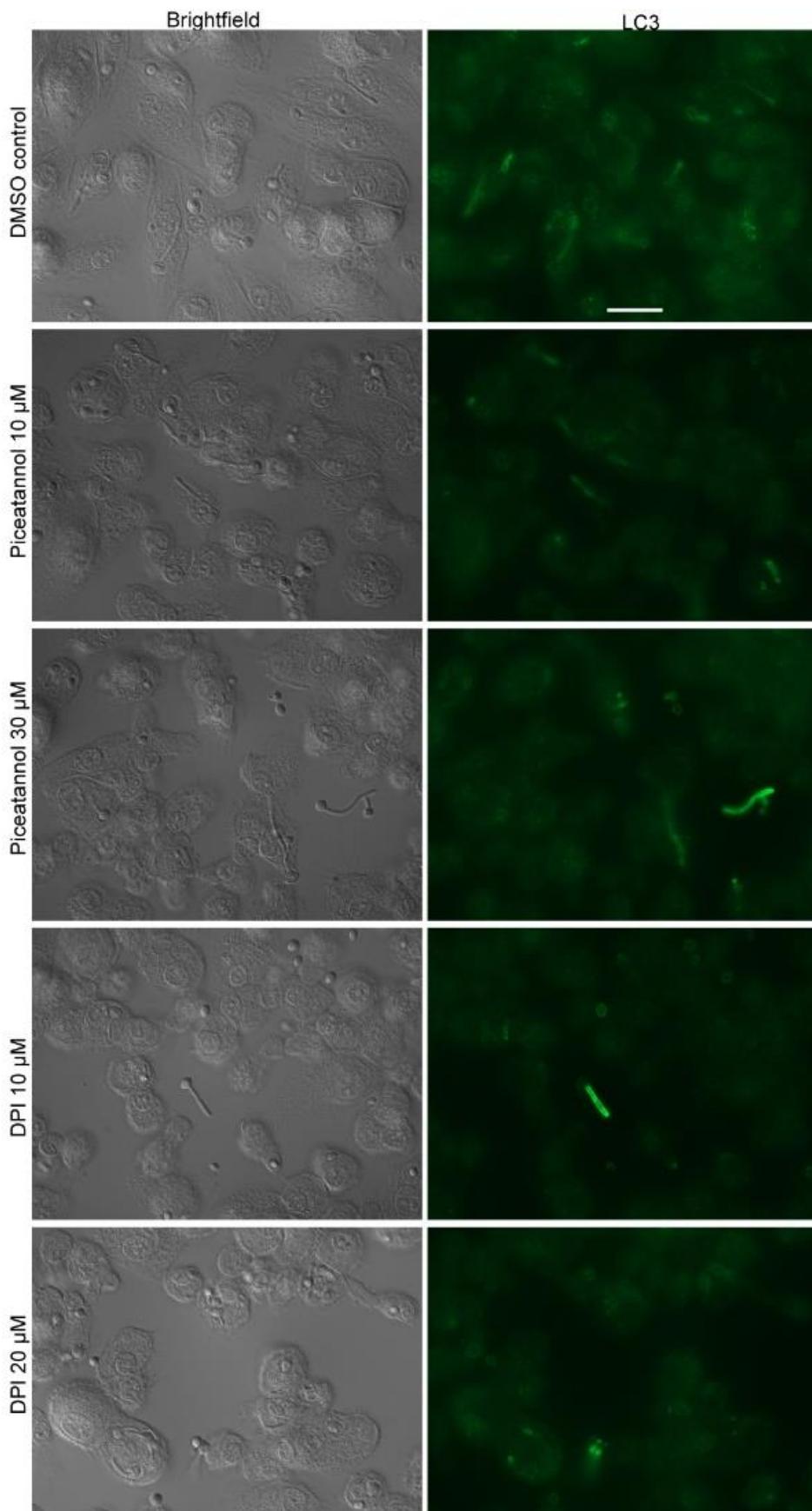
336 **Supplementary Material:**

337



338

339 **Figure S1 – Immunofluorescence microscopy controls.** Autofluorescence and non-specific secondary antibody  
340 binding controls were used to verify our LAP experiments. No fluorescence was identified in either control ex-  
341 periments. The bottom panel is the whole field of figure 1B. Scale bar: 10  $\mu$ m.  
342



343

344 **Figure S2 – Inhibition of Syk and NADPH in macrophages infected with *C. albicans*.** BMMs were infected  
345 with *C. albicans* for 12 h in the presence of Syk and NADPH oxidase inhibitors. The cells were then used for LC3  
346 immunofluorescence, showing a decrease in LAP. Scale bar: 20 µm  
347

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