## Title:

Circulating inflammatory cell profiling and periodontitis: a systematic review and meta-analysis

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#### 23 Abstract

24 Inflammation is a key driver of common non-communicable diseases. Among common triggers of inflammation, chronic gingival inflammation (periodontitis) 25 triggers a consistent humoral host inflammatory response, but little is known on its 26 27 impact on circulating inflammatory cell profiles. We aimed to systematically appraise 28 all the evidence linking periodontitis and its treatment to circulating inflammatory cell 29 profiles. From six databases, 157 studies were eligible for gualitative synthesis and 30 29 studies for meta-analysis. Our meta-analysis showed that participants with 31 periodontitis exhibited a significant mean increase in circulating CD4<sup>+</sup>. 32 CD4<sup>+</sup>CD45RO<sup>+</sup>, IFNy-expressing CD4<sup>+</sup> and CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells, CD19<sup>+</sup>CD27<sup>+</sup> and CD5<sup>+</sup> B cells, CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup> monocytes, and CD16<sup>+</sup> neutrophils but decrease in CD8<sup>+</sup> T and 33 CD14<sup>++</sup>CD16<sup>-</sup> monocytes. Our qualitative synthesis revealed that peripheral blood 34 35 neutrophils of patients with periodontitis consistently showed elevated production of 36 reactive oxygen species (ROS) when compared to those of healthy controls. Some 37 evidence suggested that the treatment of periodontitis reversed the exaggerated 38 ROS production, but limited and inconclusive data was found on several circulating inflammatory cell profiling. We conclude that periodontitis and its treatment are 39 40 associated with minor but consistent alterations in circulating inflammatory cell 41 profiles. These changes could represent key mechanisms explaining the association of periodontitis with other co-morbidities such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, 42 43 and rheumatoid arthritis.

## 44 Introduction

Inflammation is a body response to infection or injury aimed at promoting tissue and 45 overall homeostasis. Evidence accumulated in the past three decades confirmed that 46 47 inflammation not only forces a transient impair in tissue function, but in turn could contribute to the pathogenesis of other systemic diseases and altered homeostasis.<sup>1</sup> 48 49 Inflammatory cells, such as neutrophils, monocytes, macrophages, and dendritic cells initiate inflammation as part of an innate response.<sup>2</sup> The host mounts an 50 51 adaptive inflammatory response, which is mediated by dendritic cells and NK cells to 52 promote T and B lymphocytes functions. The expected outcome of these changes is to achieve a complete resolution of the inflammatory response and alleviate the 53 damage in tissues where the response takes place.<sup>3</sup> Inflammation however plays a 54 key role in the onset and progression of several chronic non-communicable diseases 55 such as Cardiovascular Disease (CVD), Type 2 Diabetes (T2D), and Rheumatoid 56 Arthritis (RA).<sup>4</sup> Sources of inflammation in non-communicable diseases are still not 57 completely understood. 58

Periodontitis is a common chronic inflammatory disease caused by a specific oral dysbiosis and characterized by a progressive loss of soft and hard tissues keeping the teeth.<sup>5</sup> The disease onset and progression could span over decades and when left untreated it leads inevitably not only to tooth loss but also to masticatory impairment and negative influences on the patient's quality of life.<sup>5, 6</sup> Periodontitis is a major public health concern as it affects over the half of world's population and increases costs of oral healthcare.<sup>7, 8</sup>

There is convincing evidence to suggest that periodontitis triggers a systemic inflammatory response, and this could explain its association with an increased incidence of systemic health outcomes including cardiovascular events, T2D

complications, and onset and progression of RA.9-11 One of the plausible 69 mechanisms that could explain these relationships is a change in key circulating 70 inflammatory cell profiles (both innate and adaptive immune systems).<sup>12</sup> No 71 72 collective evaluation of the whole available evidence, however, has been attempted to date. Our aim was to perform a critical and systematic appraisal of the existing 73 74 evidence linking periodontitis and its treatment to circulating inflammatory cell 75 profiles including cell populations and their functions. The inflammatory cells profiled 76 were neutrophils, monocytes, and lymphocytes, whereas the cell functions evaluated were inflammatory mediator releases, cellular functional activities and gene 77 expression or transcripts. 78

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## 80 Material and Methods

The review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines.<sup>13</sup> This study was registered with PROSPERO (Registration Number CRD42020199995), an international prospective register of systematic reviews (<u>https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/</u>).

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#### 86 Eligibility Criteria

Adults aged no less than 18 years old suffering from all forms of periodontitis and undergoing any type of treatment of periodontitis (including whole mouth subgingival scaling, surgical periodontal therapy, supra-gingival scaling and polishing, the adjunctive use of locally delivered antimicrobial therapy, and/or systemic antibiotic therapy) were the main inclusion criteria. With regards to study design, case control studies, nonrandomized, and randomized controlled trials reporting the impact of 93 periodontitis and its treatment on circulating inflammatory cell populations and
94 functions were included.

95 Case reports and series, reviews, animal studies and studies including participants
96 under 18 years old, pregnant, or suffering from other systemic diseases were
97 excluded.

98 The inflammatory cells that were profiled were neutrophils, monocytes/macrophages, lymphocytes which are T, B, and NK cells. The circulating inflammatory cell 99 100 populations were the proportion of the cells indicated by cell surface and/or 101 intracellular markers expressed by peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) 102 using flow cytometry. Meanwhile, the function of the cells was the activity of the 103 peripheral blood-derived cells including the investigation on their intracellular 104 cytokine expressions, cytokine release, cellular functional activities, and gene 105 expression or transcripts.

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#### 107 Search Strategy

Six different electronic databases including the Cochrane CENTRAL, MEDLINE, Embase, Web of science, Scopus and CINAHL up to March 2021 with no year restriction but limited to English language were accessed using medical subject headings and free text terms (Supplementary Appendix). Further, manual searches from original manuscripts references list and review articles were conducted.

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## 115 Study Selection

116 Two reviewers (RAI and SOK) independently searched titles and abstracts (when 117 available) and any disagreement was resolved by discussion or moved to full text

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screening. Full reports were retrieved and examined independently in duplicates and any disagreement was resolved by discussion and if necessary, a third reviewer (FD) was consulted. If manuscripts were lacking all information necessary for the appraisal, authors were contacted at least twice to retrieve missing data. Detailed reasons for exclusion of studies were recorded in particular when randomized clinical trials were identified **(Supplementary Table 1)**.

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## 125 Data Extraction

Data were grouped according to study design and reported in evidence tables consisted of study characteristics data, population (age, sex, ethnicity, smoking habit, and systemic health), exposure (case definition for periodontitis), intervention (periodontal treatment modalities), outcome (inflammatory cell populations and functional analysis to determine cell functions), and publication results/conclusions.

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#### 132 **Quality Assessment**

Quality assessment and risk of bias in observational studies, randomized controlled
 trials, and non-randomized studies of interventions were assessed by Newcastle Ottawa Scale (NOS)<sup>14</sup>, revised Cochrane tool (RoB 2)<sup>15</sup>, and ROBINS-I tool<sup>16</sup>,
 respectively.

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#### 138 Data Analysis

Descriptive (summary of evidence retrieved) and quantitative (meta-analysis) methods were used to appraise the included evidence. For meta-analysis, Weighted Mean difference (WMD) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) of the percentage of cell populations between cases (patients with periodontitis) and healthy controls were 143 calculated using random-effect models when at least two studies with data were available whilst fixed effect models were used for the remaining studies. 144 Heterogeneity was assessed using The Cochrane Q heterogeneity statistic and 145 quantified with the  $l^2$  statistic. The overall effect was considered statistically 146 significant if p < 0.05. Publication bias was ascertained using Egger's test<sup>17</sup> and 147 148 visually assessed using funnel plots. Sensitivity analyses were performed in the subgroup of studies with medium-low of risk of bias to confirm/confute the results of 149 150 the meta-analysis. Statistical analyses were performed using R package metafor (version 2.0).<sup>18</sup> 151

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## 153 **Results**

#### 154 **Study Characteristics**

The electronic and manual searches identified 10875 articles of potential relevance after removal of duplicates (**Figure 1**). Following title-abstracts screening, 320 articles were eligible for a full-text assessment. A total of 157 articles were included, consisting of 129 case-control studies, 3 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and 25 non-RCT interventional studies (**Supplementary Table 2 and 3**). Almost perfect agreement between the two reviewers was observed (Kappa score of 0.94)

The majority of studies identified (144 studies) included participants with periodontitis and healthy controls, whereas a small minority recruited patients with periodontitis and reported the effect of periodontal treatment (without control). After screening for available data 29 studies were included in quantitative analysis (**Table 1**) whilst the remaining (157 studies) in qualitative analyses including intervention studies on inflammatory cell populations (11 studies) and cell functions (21 studies). 167 Risk of bias varied across observational studies (Supplementary Table 4) because 168 of differences in a) the selection and definition of controls, b) hospital rather than 169 community settings where controls were recruited and c) ambiguous definitions and 170 descriptions of history of periodontitis. Meanwhile, the risk of bias for nonrandomized trials were of low (six studies), moderate (four studies), and serious 171 172 (three studies) (**Supplementary Table 5**). One RCT study of low risk of bias and two 173 of some concerns mainly due to the randomization, blinding of participants, and 174 research personnel descriptions completed our assessments (Supplementary 175 Table 6).

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## 177 Periodontitis on Circulating Inflammatory Cell Populations

Total proportion of 21 cell populations originating from 29 studies were identified and eligible for meta-analyses (**Table 2**). A statistically significant overall effect was observed in twelve cell populations: two cell populations analyses revealed reduced cell number proportions whilst other ten comparison of cell populations exhibited elevated cell number proportions in patients with periodontitis when compared to healthy controls. Heterogeneity varied enormously between meta-analyses (ranging from 0%-94.24%).

Figure 2A shows a significant increased proportion of peripheral CD4<sup>+</sup> (WMD of 4%, 95% Cl 1% to 7%, p = 0.0144), whilst Figure 2B shows a reduced proportion of peripheral CD8<sup>+</sup> cells (WMD of 2%, 95% Cl 1% to 4%, p = 0.0075) in patients with periodontitis compared to healthy controls were observed in ten studies (**Table 2**). No evidence of publication bias was observed (**Supplementary Figure 1**). Three studies reported that the proportion of non-classical monocytes, CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup> (WMD of 4%, 95% Cl 2% to 5%, p < 0.0001) and CD5<sup>+</sup> B cells (WMD of 6%, 95% Cl 3% to 192 10%, p = 0.0001) were increased peripheral blood of patients with periodontitis compared to healthy controls (Table 2; Figure 3A-B). Lastly, fewer studies 193 194 confirmed that the peripheral blood of patients with periodontitis on average exhibited higher proportions of CD16<sup>+</sup> neutrophils (Table 2; Figure 4A), memory B 195 (CD19<sup>+</sup>CD27<sup>+</sup>), CD5<sup>+</sup>CD19<sup>+</sup>, CD20<sup>+</sup>CD23<sup>+</sup>, CD20<sup>+</sup>CD69<sup>+</sup>, CD25<sup>+</sup> cells (**Table 2**; 196 197 Supplementary Figure 2 - 3, and lower proportions of classical monocytes (CD14<sup>++</sup>CD16<sup>-</sup>) (Table 2; Figure 4B). These findings were confirmed in studies with 198 199 low-moderate risk of bias.

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## 201 Periodontitis on Circulating Inflammatory Cell Functions

We identified 26 functional analyses on circulating inflammatory cells between patients with periodontitis and healthy controls in 97 included studies (**Table 3**). These analyses, which were at least reported in two studies, consisted of reactive oxygen species (ROS) production, proliferation, chemotaxis, phagocytosis, adhesion, diacylglycerol kinase (DAGK) activity, tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase formation and elastase activity, actin polymerization, 4 different intracellular cytokines, and 13 different soluble inflammatory mediators.

209 Most of the included studies (24 studies) reported on ROS production in neutrophils. 210 Of these, 14 studies indicated that peripheral neutrophils from patients with 211 periodontitis exhibited higher production of ROS when compared to healthy controls (Table 3A). ROS production detected using either luminol-enhanced<sup>52-54, 57, 58, 60, 64</sup> or 212 lucigenin-enhanced<sup>51, 62, 71</sup> chemiluminescence were consistently elevated in 213 stimulated neutrophils derived from peripheral blood of periodontitis patients. 214 215 Stimulations used in these experiments was heterogeneous including fMLP, PMA, periodontal pathogens, opsonized S.aureus and E.coli. Unstimulated PBMCs and 216

neutrophils in patients with periodontitis exhibited increased ROS production using flow cytometry and lucigenin-enhanced chemiluminescence respectively.<sup>49, 62, 71</sup> Similarly, the majority of studies reported an increased level of TNF- $\alpha$  in cells (5 out of 9 studies) (**Table 3B**), a higher proliferative response of peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) (7 out of 15 studies) (**Table 3C**) and neutrophil elastase activity (2 out of 2 studies) (**Table 3D**) were observed in patients with periodontitis.

In comparison to healthy controls, a significant mean increase of intracellular IFN-y 223 expression was observed in both CD4<sup>+</sup> cells (WMD of 1%, 95% CI 0% to 2%, p = 224 0.0242) and CD8<sup>+</sup> cells (WMD of 2%, 95% CI 1% to 4%, p = 0.002) from 225 226 periodontitis patients (Table 4; Figure 5), whereas the expression of intracellular IL-4 and IL-17 in CD4<sup>+</sup> cells as well as IL-12 in CD14<sup>+</sup> cells were not significantly 227 different between groups (Table 4, Supplementary Figure 4). Levels of IL-2, IL-4, 228 IL-12p70, DAGK, chemotactic response, and phagocytic activity were, however, 229 lower in the peripheral blood-derived cells from patients with periodontitis when 230 compared to that from healthy controls (Table 3E - 3J). The majority of studies 231 232 confirmed no difference in IL-6, IL-10, IL-1β, IFN-y, IL-8, PGE2, TGF-β, MCP-1, IL-13 levels, and adhesion of cells isolated from peripheral blood in patients versus 233 234 controls (Table 3K – 3T), whereas the remaining analyses were inconclusive (Table 3U – 3V). 235

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## 237 Periodontitis Treatment on Circulating Inflammatory Cell Populations

After a comprehensive search, 12 interventional studies reporting the effect of periodontal treatment on peripheral inflammatory cell populations were identified (**Supplementary Table 7**). Three studies were RCTs, and eight studies were non-RCT interventional studies (**Supplementary Table 3**). These studies referred to various periodontal treatment modalities including follow-up of various lengths. In
summary after periodontal treatment, reduced proportion of 32 circulating
inflammatory cell populations and increased percentage of 11 circulating
inflammatory cell populations were reported (Supplementary Table 8).

Within the neutrophil subset, suppressive neutrophils (CD16<sup>dim</sup>CD62L<sup>bright</sup>) and 246 247 CD62L<sup>-</sup> neutrophils were reported to decrease up to 6 and 12 months after the treatment, respectively, while an elevated proportion of normal neutrophils 248 (CD16<sup>bright</sup>CD62L<sup>bright</sup>) was reported at 3- and 6-month intervals.<sup>121</sup> Natural killer cells 249 (CD16<sup>+</sup>CD56<sup>+</sup>), B cells (CD19<sup>+</sup>), and CD25<sup>+</sup> cells were all reduced after periodontal 250 surgical treatment.<sup>122</sup> A declined percentage of monocytes (CD14<sup>+</sup>) expressing 251 252 CD36, CD80, TLR2 or TLR4 were also reported after non-surgical periodontal treatments.<sup>123</sup> The periodontal treatment including scaling and root planning (SRP) 253 followed by a systemic antibiotic therapy decreased circulating myeloid dendritic 254 cells (CD1C<sup>+</sup>CCR6<sup>+</sup>) and Th17 cells (CD4<sup>+</sup>IL-17<sup>+</sup>Foxp3<sup>+/-</sup>).<sup>124</sup> Interestingly, 255 periodontal treatment with SRP only was able to decrease both IL-17<sup>+</sup> and IL-256  $17^{+}$ IFN-y<sup>+</sup> cells.<sup>125</sup> 257

Following periodontal treatment, the proportion of CD3<sup>+</sup> and CD3<sup>+</sup>CD25<sup>+</sup> cells were 258 higher, while CD3<sup>+</sup>CD45RA<sup>+</sup> was lower than that in baseline of patients with 259 periodontitis.<sup>122, 126</sup> Intensive periodontal therapy reduced activated (CD8<sup>+</sup>CD38<sup>+</sup>), 260 immunosenescent (CD8<sup>+</sup>CD28<sup>null</sup>), and CD57<sup>+</sup>CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells, while control periodontal 261 therapy did not.<sup>127</sup> Further, the percentage of CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells and their effector memory 262 (CCR7<sup>-</sup>CD45RA<sup>-</sup>) were lower after periodontal treatment compared to baseline. The 263 naive cytotoxic T (Tc) cells (CD8<sup>+</sup>CCR7<sup>+</sup>CD45RA<sup>+</sup>) were higher following treatment 264 compared to baseline.<sup>46</sup> Periodontal treatment reduced HLADR-, CD44-, CD49d-, 265 CD62-expressing CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells<sup>123</sup>, and effector memory T helper (Th) cells 266

267 (CD4<sup>+</sup>CCR7<sup>-</sup>CD45RA<sup>-</sup>)<sup>46</sup>, whereas CD4+, naive Th cells (CD4<sup>+</sup>CCR7<sup>+</sup>CD45RA<sup>+</sup>),
 268 and CD4<sup>+</sup>CD45RA<sup>+</sup> cells were increased after the treatment (46, 127).<sup>46, 128</sup>

Supra- and sub-gingival tooth cleaning modified the proportion of both double 269 270 positive  $(CD4^{+}CD8^{+})$ or negative (CD4<sup>-</sup>CD8<sup>-</sup>) cells. Effector memory (CD4+CD8+CCR7-CD45RA-) and central memory (CD4<sup>+</sup>CD8<sup>+</sup>CCR7<sup>+</sup>CD45RA<sup>-</sup>) 271 double positive cells were reduced, but their naive (CD4<sup>+</sup>CD8<sup>+</sup>CCR7<sup>+</sup>CD45RA<sup>+</sup>) and 272 effector memory expressing CD45RA (CD4<sup>+</sup>CD8<sup>+</sup>CCR7<sup>-</sup>CD45RA<sup>+</sup>) cells were 273 elevated following the intervention. Likewise, a reduction in the percentage of 274 effector memory double negative (CD4 CD8 CCR7 CD45RA) and an increase in the 275 276 proportion of naive double negative cells (CD4 CD8 CCR7 CD45RA<sup>+</sup>) were also observed after the treatment.<sup>46</sup> 277

278 The alteration on the proportion of antigen (Ag)-specific T cells after periodontal treatment were reported in one study.<sup>129</sup> PBMCs were stimulated with 279 Fusobacterium nucleatum or Treponema denticola Ag, labelled as FadA and Td92, 280 respectively then the observation of Ag-specific CD4<sup>+</sup> and regulatory T cells 281 (CD4<sup>+</sup>Foxp3<sup>+</sup>) were accomplished. Periodontal treatment increased the FadA- and 282 Td92-specific CD4<sup>+</sup> cells, whereas only Td92-specific regulatory T cells were 283 reduced in response to the intervention.<sup>129</sup> The final single study investigated the 284 effect of the treatment on T cell receptor (TCR) V $\alpha$ /V $\beta$  in CD3<sup>+</sup>, but only TCR V $\beta$ 22 285 were decreased at 24 months post-intervention.<sup>126</sup> 286

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## 288 Periodontitis Treatment on Circulating Inflammatory Cell Functions

In 21 non-RCT interventional studies, we identified 34 functional analyses to assess
the peripheral inflammatory cell functions following periodontal treatment
(Supplementary Table 9). The included analyses were proliferation, phagocytosis,

292 chemotactic activity, migration inhibition, neutrophil extracellular trap (NET), speed, 293 velocity, resultant vector length, ROS production, PGE<sub>2</sub>, transcriptomic analysis, 294 inflammasomes (ASC and NLRP), enzymes (ATPase and caspase-1), transcription 295 factors (GATA-3, RORC, and T-bet), toll-like receptors (TLR-2 and TLR-4), 296 chemokines (MCP-1, MDC, MIP-1 $\alpha$ , MIP-1 $\beta$ , RANTES), and cytokines (IFN- $\gamma$ , IL-10, 297 IL-12, IL-17, IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-4, IL-6, IL-8, and TNF- $\alpha$ ) (**Supplementary Table 10**).

Proliferative response of T lymphocytes measured by autologous mixed lymphocyte 298 reaction was increased after successful periodontal treatment (45, 82, 127).<sup>45, 128, 130</sup> 299 The treatment also improved the phagocytic activity of both peripheral blood 300 monocytes.<sup>66, 131</sup> Circulating neutrophils and monocytes 301 neutrophils and demonstrated increased chemotactic activity following the intervention.<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, 302 a high variation of leukocyte migration inhibition was observed after the treatment, 303 depending on the group of samples, type of cell stimulation, and day of observation, 304 while the treatment consistently reduced leukocyte ATPase activity.<sup>132</sup> Periodontal 305 treatment decreased NET production<sup>133</sup>, neutrophil speed in response to chemo-306 attractants (fMLP and CXCL8), neutrophil velocity, and accuracy after fMLP 307 stimulation, while neutrophil velocity and accuracy were normalized for CXCL8-308 stimulated neutrophils.<sup>97</sup> The ROS production of peripheral blood neutrophil was 309 lower in post-treatment patients than that in pre-treatment.<sup>61, 62</sup> In addition, 310 periodontal therapy did not affect PGE<sub>2</sub> production in whole blood cell culture.<sup>118</sup> 311

Transcriptomic analysis on peripheral monocytes revealed that the periodontal therapy altered the expression of genes relevant to innate immunity, apoptosis, and cell signaling.<sup>134</sup> Further, the alteration at transcriptional level in PBMCs involving ASC, an inflammasome was decreased after therapy, whilst NLPR3 and its downstream enzyme, Caspase-1 as well as TLR2 and TLR4 were not affected.<sup>135, 136</sup> In CD4+ cells, SRP modified the expression of genes encoding transcription factors,
 RORC was reduced, while GATA-3 was increased after the treatment. No changes
 in T-bet gene were reported in patients after treatment.<sup>125</sup>

320 The production of chemokines and cytokines by peripheral blood-derived cells in most of the collected evidence were not affected by periodontal treatment. The only 321 322 exception was for MCP-1, as either 4-week supplementation of liposomal bovine lactoferrin or SRP and systemic antibiotic therapy reduced MCP-1 production by 323 PMBCs (when compared to pre-treatment values).<sup>124, 136</sup> Periodontal treatment 324 reduced IFN-y production of tetanus toxoid- or Porphyromonas gingivalis 325 (P.gingivalis) or Concanavalin A (ConA)-stimulated PBMCs or stimulated PBMCs, IL-326 327 4 level of *P.gingivalis* or ConA-stimulated PBMCs, and lactoferrin supplementation decreased IL-1β, IL-6, and TNF-α in PBMCs.<sup>47, 129, 136</sup> Lastly, monocyte IL-12p70 328 level increased in patients following SRP and systemic antibiotic administration when 329 compared to baseline values.<sup>107, 118</sup> 330

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## 332 **Discussion**

333 This is the systematic review confirming that periodontitis is not only a local 334 inflammatory disease, but it is accompanied by changes in proportion and function of 335 circulating inflammatory cells. Patients with periodontitis exhibited increased 336 numbers of circulating neutrophils (CD16+), T helper (CD4+), Tc1 (CD8<sup>+</sup>), memory (CD19<sup>+</sup>CD27<sup>+</sup>), CD5<sup>+</sup> B cells, and non-classical (CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup>) monocytes, whilst 337 338 reduced cytotoxic T cells (CD8<sup>+</sup>) and classical (CD14<sup>++</sup>CD16<sup>-</sup>) monocytes when compared to healthy controls. Patients with periodontitis also presented altered 339 340 functions of neutrophils and PBMCs (higher production and release of ROS and TNF-α) when compared to controls. Reduced levels of IL-2, IL-4, IL-12p70, DAGK, 341

chemotactic responses, and phagocytic activity in peripheral inflammatory cells were
also found in patients suffering from periodontitis when compared to control.
Collectively a distinct systemic inflammatory cell-profiling is triggered by periodontitis,
and this could contribute to the aggravation or even initiation of other systemic
diseases.

347 Our quantitative analysis on innate inflammatory cells, including classical and non-348 classical monocytes demonstrates that the host response profile present in patients 349 with periodontitis is similar to that was observed in other systemic inflammatory 350 diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), RA, and psoriasis. Common 351 features include lower proportion of classical monocytes and higher numbers of nonclassical monocytes.<sup>137-139</sup> Meanwhile, for adaptive inflammatory cells, increased 352 CD5<sup>+</sup> and memory B cells as reported in patients with SLE<sup>140, 141</sup> as well as higher 353 IFN-y-expressing Th CD4<sup>+142</sup> and cytotoxic T CD8<sup>+</sup> lymphocyte<sup>143</sup> as observed in 354 patients with psoriasis, have been reported in patients with periodontitis when 355 356 compared to healthy controls. Even hyperactive peripheral neutrophils features reported in patients with periodontitis have been observed in patients with 357 inflammatory bowel diseases, including Crohn's disease and Ulcerative colitis.<sup>144, 145</sup> 358 359

# 360 Periodontitis to Altered Inflammatory Cell Profiles: Direct and Indirect 361 Mechanisms

A number of direct and indirect mechanisms could be responsible for the systemic alteration of circulating inflammatory cell proportions in patients with periodontitis. There is sufficient preclinical evidence confirming that the dental plaque biofilm in periodontitis stimulates antigen-presenting cells in the gingival tissues which in turn trigger Th cells differentiation into Th1 cells.<sup>146</sup> This direct mechanism could explain the increased proportion of CD4<sup>+</sup> Th and IFN-γ-expressing CD4<sup>+</sup> Th1 cells found in
the systemic circulation of patients with periodontitis. Further, increased cytotoxic
activity to eliminate damaged periodontal-derived cells could also explain the lower
proportions of peripheral CD8<sup>+</sup> cytotoxic T cells but elevated IFN-γ-expressing CD8<sup>+</sup>
Tc1 cells. Meanwhile, antigen activation of periodontal bacteria on naive T cell may
contribute to an elevated proportion of CD4<sup>+</sup>CD45RO<sup>+</sup> memory T cell population in
peripheral blood presented in our meta-analysis.

Alternatively, the increased local and systemic production of inflammatory 374 375 biomarkers could be an indirect mechanism altering myelopoiesis and granulopoiesis 376 of the bone marrow. IL-6 and IL-1β influence hematopoietic stem and progenitor cell 377 (HPSC) differentiation towards the myeloid lineage, also known as trained myelopoiesis.<sup>147</sup> This is supported by recent evidence suggesting that IL-6, induced 378 by *P.gingivalis* infection triggers osteoclast progenitor (OCP) expansion in the bone 379 marrow which ultimately activate osteoclastogenesis.<sup>148</sup> An alternative mechanism 380 381 could involve neural circuits, particularly those of the sympathetic nervous system which innervates the bone marrow hematopoietic compartment, resulting in altered 382 hematopoiesis.<sup>149</sup> Systemic inflammation caused by periodontitis could also 383 384 stimulate trained granulopoiesis, resulting in hyper-responsive neutrophils increasing their ROS and TNF-α productions.<sup>147, 150, 151</sup> This is consistent with our qualitative 385 386 analysis of available evidence suggesting an elevated ROS and TNFa production in 387 neutrophils derived from peripheral blood of patients with periodontitis when compared to healthy controls. In this context, TNFa is also a regulator of ROS 388 generation.<sup>152</sup> Besides indirect stimulation by cytokines, HSPCs could directly 389 390 respond to commensal oral bacteria via their toll-like receptors (i.e. TLR4), resulting in increased proliferation and differentiation towards myeloid lineage, and 391

392 preferential differentiation of lymphoid lineage into dendritic cells.<sup>153</sup> Our review 393 confirmed that alteration of peripheral lymphocytes could be a direct effect of skewed 394 myelopoiesis and/or due to the migration of activated lymphocytes previously primed 395 in inflamed periodontal tissues.<sup>154</sup>

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## **397** Treatment of Periodontitis Modifies Circulating Inflammatory Cell Profiles

This review also provides some initial evidence that periodontal treatment alters the 398 399 proportion and function of circulating inflammatory cells. Suppressive neutrophils, TLR-expressing monocyte, immunosenescent cytotoxic T cells, naive, central, and 400 effector memory T cells were affected by periodontal treatment.<sup>46, 121, 123, 127</sup> Further 401 improvement in phagocytic activity, chemotactic response, and ROS production of 402 peripheral blood-derived cells, including neutrophils and monocytes were noted.<sup>61, 62,</sup> 403 66, 96, 131 404 Collectively, this suggests a possible causal association between 405 periodontitis and proportion and function of circulating inflammatory cells. In turn, this could also explain the association between periodontitis and other common chronic 406 407 co-morbidities, such as CVD and T2D. Further research, however, to address this hypothesis is required. 408

Evidence suggested that the treatment of periodontitis could alleviate the symptoms 409 of patients with systemic inflammation such as, RA, SLE, and psoriasis. The current 410 systematic review and meta-analysis revealed evidence for a favorable effect of 411 periodontal treatment on RA activity.<sup>155</sup> Patients suffering from RA and concomitant 412 periodontitis had lower disease activity score with 28 joint counts (DAS28), 413 erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR), tender joint counts (TJC), swollen joint counts 414 (SJC), visual analogical scale (VAS), and the level of serum CRP following 415 periodontitis treatment compared to without the treatment.<sup>156</sup> Further in a prospective 416

417 study, SLE disease activity index (SLEDAI) of patients with SLE and chronic 418 gingivitis was reduced six months after the management of the gingival 419 inflammation.<sup>157</sup> Lastly evidence from a single RCT suggested that treatment of 420 periodontitis improved clinical outcomes in patients with concomitant psoriasis. 421 Indeed 8-weeks after management of periodontitis patients with psoriasis exhibited 422 reduced disease area and severity index (PASI) score when compared to patients 423 who had delayed periodontal therapy.<sup>158</sup>

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## 426 Implication of Periodontitis-induced Circulating Inflammatory Cell Alteration to

## 427 Non-communicable Diseases

Recent evidence confirms the role of inflammatory cells in a number of chronic diseases such as CVD, T2D, and RA. This includes cells involved in either innate immune response, such as monocyte subsets, or adaptive immune response which are T and B lymphocyte subsets. The contribution of these cells is evident in the onset and/or progression of the non-communicable diseases mentioned above.

433 T lymphocyte subsets play a prominent role in the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis, 434 and the modification of these cells are linked to hypertension and the increased risk of cardiovascular events. Antigen presenting cells recognize oxidized LDL (OxLDL) 435 436 antigenic peptide and ApoB activate CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells and their differentiation into Th1 437 cells. These cells (marked as IFN-y-expressing CD4<sup>+</sup>) have shown to promote atherogenesis.<sup>159</sup> An experimental mouse model confirmed a crucial role of CD4<sup>+</sup> T 438 439 cell-priming with antigen presenting cells and traffic between circulation and vessel wall during early stages of atherosclerosis.<sup>160</sup> CD4<sup>+</sup> cell trafficking markers, CD4492, 440 CD49d, CD62L, and CD11a were all implicated in the onset of atheroma.<sup>161, 162</sup> 441 Interestingly, periodontal treatment reduced the proportion of CD44-, CD49d- and 442 443 CD62-expressing CD4<sup>+</sup> T cells and activated (CD8<sup>+</sup>CD38<sup>+</sup>), immunosenescent (CD8<sup>+</sup>CD28<sup>null</sup>), and CD8<sup>+</sup>CD57<sup>+</sup> T cells.<sup>123, 127</sup> Increased peripheral effector memory 444 T helper cells have been linked to faster subclinical atherosclerosis and 445 cardiovascular events.<sup>163</sup> In this review, we identified evidence suggesting that 446 periodontal treatment reduced these T cell subsets.<sup>46</sup> Further research should 447 address the hypothesis that T lymphocyte subsets could be influenced by 448 periodontal treatment and link them to vascular phenotypes including endothelial 449 dysfunction and hypertension. 450

451 Monocyte subsets are also involved in atherosclerosis. Classical monocytes are short-lived cells that can differentiate into monocyte-derived macrophages and 452 monocyte-derived dendritic cells.<sup>164, 165</sup> These cells are recruited to the site of 453 454 inflammation, recognize and phagocytose pathogens, secrete various inflammatory cytokines, and recruit other immune cells for regulation of the inflammatory 455 response.<sup>166, 167</sup> A reduced number of peripheral classical monocytes in periodontitis 456 could be an indicator of enhanced inflammation within the periodontal tissue. On the 457 458 other hand, non-classical monocytes are considered patrolling cells that exhibit a 459 distinct motility and crawling pattern along the vasculature, at the luminal side of vascular endothelium. Besides that, these cells recognize and clear dying endothelial 460 cells to maintain vascular homeostasis.<sup>168</sup> Endothelial dysfunction which is partly 461 induced by vascular inflammation is evident in patients with periodontitis.<sup>169</sup> It is easy 462 to speculate that alterations in peripheral non-classical monocytes in periodontitis 463 could be responsible of the vascular dysfunction (Figure 6). 464

Th1 and Th17 are both pro-inflammatory T cell subsets that are increased in T2D 465 and they are also linked to impaired insulin signaling and glucose tolerance.<sup>170, 171</sup> A 466 reduced proportion of Treg cells which are usually involved in controlling excessive 467 pro-inflammatory responses has been reported in patients with diabetes.<sup>172, 173</sup> 468 Similarly, B cells play an important role in metabolic diseases and in experimental 469 models, B2 B cells promote pro inflammatory responses and insulin resistance<sup>174</sup>, 470 whereas B1a<sup>175</sup> and B1b<sup>176</sup> B cells ameliorated insulin resistance and glucose 471 intolerance. The results of our review confirmed increased proportions of IFN-y-472 expressing CD4<sup>+</sup> Th1, CD20<sup>+</sup>CD23<sup>+</sup> B (B2), and CD5<sup>+</sup> B (B1a) cells, indicating that 473 474 alteration of these subsets in periodontitis may contribute to diabetes complications 475 (Figure 6). Further research investigating the role of Th1-Th17 subsets in patients
476 with periodontitis and the impact of its treatment to T2D is recommended.

Several inflammatory cells, including monocytes, T and B cells orchestrate the 477 478 pathogenesis of RA. Conflicting evidence exists on the role of peripheral classical monocytes and non-classical monocytes in patients with RA.<sup>138</sup> Experimental animal 479 480 models suggested that non-classical monocytes recruited to synovial joint, differentiate into inflammatory macrophages inducing arthritis in mice.<sup>177</sup> Further, a 481 reduced proportion of circulating Treg cells is associated with early signs of the 482 disease (172) as these cells are responsible for immunosuppression (163), 483 484 particularly suppressing the pro-inflammatory function of Th17 (173) and Th1 (174).<sup>169, 178-180</sup> Lastly, memory B cells contribute to osteoclastogenesis via 485 expression of RANKL<sup>181</sup>, whereas the generation of IgM autoantibody by CD5<sup>+</sup> B 486 cells<sup>182, 183</sup> in RA forms immune complex and drives synovial inflammation.<sup>11, 184, 185</sup> 487 488 Our meta-analyses confirmed an increased percentage of non-classical monocytes (CD14<sup>+</sup>CD16<sup>+</sup>), circulating memory (CD19<sup>+</sup>CD27<sup>+</sup>) and CD5<sup>+</sup> B cells in patients with 489 490 periodontitis suggesting these cell subsets could explain a two-way relationship 491 between periodontitis and RA (Figure 6).

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## 493 Study Limitation

Some limitations should be highlighted in this systematic review starting with high level of heterogeneity observed in the published evidence (mainly due the case definition of periodontitis). Despite our sensitivity analyses in studies with mediumlow Risk of Bias, we urge caution in interpreting the results of the review especially when inferring a causal association between periodontitis and inflammatory cell subpopulation and their functions.<sup>186</sup> A wide variety of cell-functions assays/analyses reported in small and often uncontrolled studies, undermine the potential impact of periodontitis on cell proportions and their function. Nevertheless, this was the first collective attempt of comprehensively appraise the evidence linking periodontitis to circulating cell proportions and functional differences.

504

## 505 **Conclusion**

In conclusion, periodontitis is associated with alterations in peripheral inflammatory cell profiles, and this could mediate the association of the disease with other common systemic co-morbidities such as CVD, T2D and RA. Further research should focus on models of inflammation to unravel the exact mechanisms of these association as well as to demonstrate a potential benefit in treating periodontitis over systemic complications in patients with other common co-morbidities by large randomized clinical trials.

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## 514 **Data Availability Statement**

515 Data supporting the finding of the study are available in this article and its

516 supplementary file, or from the corresponding author upon request.

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## 518 **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

519 The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any 520 commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of 521 interest.

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## 524 Authorship

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527 RAI was involved in the formulation of study design, literature search, data curation, 528 data interpretation and writing the original draft. DM was involved in the search 529 strategies. SOK was involved in literature search and data curation. SH performed 530 the statistical analysis. FD was involved in the formulation of study design, writing 531 the original draft, data interpretation, and supervision of the study. All authors 532 approved the final version of the manuscript.

533

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