

Reporting Summary

Nature Portfolio wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Portfolio policies, see our [Editorial Policies](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a Confirmed

- The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
- A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
- The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided

Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.
- A description of all covariates tested
- A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
- A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
- For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted

Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.
- For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
- For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
- Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection n/a

Data analysis Data was analyzed using Prism 9.3.1. (GraphPad Software, USA)

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Portfolio [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our [policy](#)

Data that support the findings of this study will be deposited upon publication with the accession codes at Mendeley Data.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

Life sciences Behavioural & social sciences Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf

Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Sample size	486 serum samples collected longitudinally from 98 COVID-19 convalescents and 73 naive individuals, as well as 29 sera from COVID-19 patients with breakthrough infections.
Data exclusions	Six convalescent individuals were excluded because they showed a ≥ 4 - and ≥ 8 -fold increase in a surrogate neutralization and in IC50 neutralization, respectively, independent of vaccination indicating SARS-CoV-2 re-exposure.
Replication	All results presented in this study are based on measurements taken from distinct samples. Results from single samples were not replicated.
Randomization	4554 health care workers were screened for sub-acute/resolved COVID-19. 98 COVID-19 convalescent participants gave written informed consent to be followed up. A sex-, age-, working conditions- and risk factor-matched cohort of 73 naive individuals was established.
Blinding	Laboratory experiments were performed with blinded samples. De-blinding was performed upon data evaluation.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems		Methods	
n/a	Involved in the study	n/a	Involved in the study
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Antibodies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ChIP-seq
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eukaryotic cell lines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Flow cytometry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Palaeontology and archaeology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> MRI-based neuroimaging
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Animals and other organisms		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human research participants		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical data		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dual use research of concern		

Eukaryotic cell lines

Policy information about [cell lines](#)

Cell line source(s)	MDA-MB-231, Vero-E6 (American Type Culture Collection, USA)
Authentication	Cells were authenticated by short tandem repeat (STR) analysis.
Mycoplasma contamination	All cell lines tested negative for mycoplasma contamination.
Commonly misidentified lines (See ICLAC register)	No commonly misidentified cell lines were used in this study.

Human research participants

Policy information about [studies involving human research participants](#)

Population characteristics	Median age was 36 (interquartile range (IQR) 29 to 53) years in naïve and 38 (IQR 29 to 53) years in convalescent participants. 65.8% naïve and 54.1% convalescent participants were female. Median age was 35 (IQR 31 to 38) years in delta- and 42 (IQR 28 to 52) years in omicron-infected participants. For complete description of study populations refer to Extended Data Table 1.
Recruitment	Participants were recruited using E-mails, handouts and via personal communication. Samples were collected between April

Recruitment

2020 and December 2021 at the University Hospital rechts der Isar of the TUM.

Ethics oversight

The study protocols were approved by the ethics committee of the Technical University Munich (TUM) u476/20, 26/21S-SR, 229/21. The study protocol is available upon request.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.