



37 **Abstract**

38 Genetic Alzheimer's disease (AD) risk factors associate with reduced defensive A $\beta$  plaque-  
39 associated microglia (A $\beta$ AM), but the contribution of modifiable AD risk factors to microglial  
40 dysfunction is unknown. In AD mouse models, we observe the concomitant activation of the  
41 HIF1 pathway and the transcription of mitochondrial-related genes in A $\beta$ AM, and the elongation  
42 of mitochondria, a cellular response to maintain aerobic respiration under low nutrient and  
43 oxygen conditions. Overactivation of HIF1 induces microglial quiescence *in cellulo* with lower  
44 mitochondrial respiration and proliferation. *In vivo*, overstabilization of HIF1, either genetically or  
45 by exposure to systemic hypoxia, reduces A $\beta$ AM clustering and proliferation and increases A $\beta$   
46 neuropathology. In the human AD hippocampus, the upregulation of HIF1 $\alpha$  and HIF1 target  
47 genes correlates with reduced A $\beta$  plaques microglial coverage and the increase of A $\beta$  plaque-  
48 associated neuropathology. Thus, hypoxia, a modifiable AD risk factor, hijack microglial  
49 mitochondrial metabolism and converge with genetic susceptibility to cause AD microglial  
50 dysfunction.

51

52 **Introduction**

53 In 1919, Pío del Río-Hortega grouped several morphologic entities of the central nervous  
54 system under the term “microglia”<sup>1</sup> (see<sup>2</sup> for a commented English translation), showing that  
55 microglia could adapt to changing environments by activating migration, proliferation, growth,  
56 and phagocytosis.

57 In Alzheimer’s disease (AD), microglia adapt their morphology and function to cluster and  
58 establish a protective barrier around senile plaques<sup>3</sup>. Increasing evidence implicates the decline  
59 of microglial defensive responses in the progression of the disease: (1) Single-nucleotide  
60 polymorphisms in several genetic *loci* encoding proteins with known roles in innate immunity are  
61 associated with an increased risk of developing AD<sup>4</sup>; (2) functional studies of AD-related  
62 polymorphisms suggest that microglia play a protective role in AD, which is altered by these  
63 individual loss of function genetic variants<sup>5</sup>; and (3) post-mortem studies in AD brains have  
64 reported that microglial cells acquire a dysfunctional phenotype<sup>6</sup>, degenerate<sup>7</sup>, and die by  
65 apoptosis<sup>8</sup>, thereby contributing to the deposition of A $\beta$  and the development of plaque-  
66 associated dystrophic neurites<sup>3,9-11</sup>.

67 But, why do AD microglia become dysfunctional? A $\beta$  activates a plethora of signaling  
68 pathways, which converge in a common microglial neurodegenerative phenotype (MGnD)  
69 observed in all the disease-associated microglia (DAM)<sup>12,13</sup>. Loss of function of genetic AD risk  
70 factors, such as the triggering receptor expressed on myeloid cells 2 (TREM2) and the  
71 apolipoprotein E (APOE), are associated with microglial dysfunction characterized by reduced  
72 clustering and survival around A $\beta$  plaques<sup>9,11,14,15</sup>. Based on those data, it has been suggested  
73 that microglial activation may not only be required to protect against neurodegeneration but also  
74 to avoid a low-energy state induced by the disease<sup>16</sup>.

75 Microglia are the brain cells able to survive closer to A $\beta$  plaques<sup>17</sup> and an upregulation of the  
76 hypoxia-inducible factor 1 (HIF1), the master regulator of oxygen homeostasis<sup>18</sup>, has been  
77 suggested in A $\beta$  plaque-associated microglia (A $\beta$ AM)<sup>16,19</sup>, indicating local low oxygen levels. In  
78 addition to non-modifiable genetic risks, there are also potentially modifiable AD risk factors that  
79 together strongly contribute to the onset of dementia<sup>20,21</sup>, by accelerating the progression of the  
80 disease through multiple mechanisms. Several of these factors (e.g. hypertension, obesity,  
81 atrial fibrillation, diabetes mellitus, physical inactivity, and smoking) converge in altering the

82 vascular system and/or reducing oxygen/nutrient availability<sup>20-22</sup>. We hypothesize that local  
83 clues synergize with systemic diseases progressing with hypoxia to activate HIF1 and  
84 compromise microglial function.

85 **Results**

86 **The HIF1-mediated stress response pathway is induced in A $\beta$ AM**

87 The mRNA levels of *Hif1a* and several HIF1 targets, including those involved in anaerobic  
88 glycolysis (glucose to lactate), are suspected to be upregulated in DAM<sup>16,19</sup>. The switch from  
89 aerobic respiration to anaerobic glycolysis has been proposed as a metabolic adaptation to  
90 sustain DAM energy demand<sup>23</sup> but also a detrimental event<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, we investigated the  
91 contribution of HIF1 to A $\beta$ AM transcription. We first showed that *Hif1a* mRNA is expressed  
92 around A $\beta$  plaques in an AD mouse model (Fig. 1a). We then combined *in situ* hybridization  
93 (ISH) with immunofluorescence for the microglial ionized calcium-binding protein (IBA1) and  
94 revealed that A $\beta$ AM also expressed high *Hif1a* mRNA levels (Fig. 1a), whereas low expression  
95 levels were observed in microglia distal to A $\beta$  deposits and from WT mice (Fig. 1a, b). To further  
96 investigate if *Hif1a* mRNA upregulation has functional consequences over A $\beta$ AM transcription,  
97 we used the transcription factor enrichment analysis (TFEA.ChIP)<sup>24</sup>. We found that HIF1 $\alpha$  and  
98 HIF2 $\alpha$  were among the top proteins predicted as regulators of *APP-PSEN1/+* microglial  
99 transcription (Fig. 1c and Supplementary Table 1), suggesting a preponderant role of HIF-  
100 mediated transcription in A $\beta$ AM.

101 To formally demonstrate a HIF1-dependent transcriptional activation in A $\beta$ AM, we defined  
102 the HIF1/hypoxia-induced microglial module (HMM) using a transcriptomic analysis of primary  
103 microglial cell cultures exposed to hypoxia or normoxia (hypoxia: 1% O<sub>2</sub>; 6 h *versus* normoxia:  
104 21% O<sub>2</sub>; 6 h): we first checked that our cultures were enriched in microglia using  
105 immunofluorescence (Extended Data Fig. 1a) and qRT-PCR (Extended Data Fig. 1b),  
106 performed principal component analysis (Extended Data Fig. 1c), identified the differentially  
107 expressed (DE) genes (Fig. 1d and Supplementary Tables 2–3), validated the DE genes by  
108 qRT-PCR (Extended Data Fig. 1b), and demonstrated their regulation by HIF1 using the  
109 inducible Cx3cr1-Cre::ESRT2-mediated deletion of *Hif1a* in primary microglial cultures (Fig. 1e,  
110 f). We then studied the transcriptional profile of isolated microglia from an A $\beta$  plaque-depositing  
111 (*APP<sub>751</sub>SL/+ -APP-*) and a non-depositing *MAPT<sup>p.P301S/+</sup>* (TAU) mouse model. To this end,  
112 we developed a protocol based in the sorting of CD11b reactive (<sup>+</sup>)/CD45<sup>+</sup> microglia into  
113 CLEC7a<sup>+</sup> (strongly expressed by DAM<sup>13,25,26</sup>) and negative (homeostatic) subpopulations  
114 (Extended Data Fig. 2a–e for the gating strategy employed). CLEC7a-reactive microglia were

115 increased in 12-month-old APP and end-stage TAU mice (pathologic state), but remained  
116 unaltered in age-matched wild-type (WT) or 3-month-old AD models (pre-pathologic state;  
117 Extended Data Fig. 2f). Global gene expression profile studies (Extended Data Fig. 2g and  
118 Supplementary Table 4) followed by gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA) revealed that  
119 pathologic state APP microglia showed a strong enrichment of the HMM (Fig. 1g) while the TAU  
120 model presented only a mild induction (Extended Data Fig. 1e and Supplementary Table 5),  
121 despite a similar MGnD<sup>26</sup> gene set (GS) (Supplementary Table 6) enrichment in both models  
122 (Fig. 1g, Extended Data Fig. 1e and Supplementary Table 5), indicating a similar degree of  
123 activation. Direct comparison of the differentially expressed genes between APP and TAU  
124 pathologic state microglia revealed the HMM as the most enriched GS in APP (Extended Data  
125 Fig. 1f and Supplementary Table 5), although these two experimental models had similar global  
126 transcription profiles (Extended Data Fig. 2g; Supplementary Table 5).

127 Then, we investigated whether the HIF1 pathway was also upregulated in other DAM. We  
128 reanalysed the global expression profile data of microglia isolated from other neurodegenerative  
129 or aging models using CD45/CD11b markers<sup>27-29</sup>. Expectedly, the MGnD GS was activated in  
130 microglia from all models (Extended Data Fig. 1g and Supplementary Table 7), whereas the  
131 HMM was a prominent characteristic of the A $\beta$ AM (Extended Data Fig. 1h and Supplementary  
132 Table 7) and was found only modestly upregulated in others DAM (Supplementary Table 7),  
133 suggesting that A $\beta$ AM may be metabolically challenged by low oxygen levels.

#### 134 **Increased OXPHOS-related transcription in AD microglia**

135 HIF1-mediated transcriptional program normally induces a metabolic switch from aerobic  
136 mitochondrial respiration to anaerobic glycolysis<sup>18</sup>. Paradoxically, the oxidative phosphorylation  
137 (OXPHOS) GS was dramatically enriched in both A $\beta$  and TAU neurodegenerative mouse  
138 models (Fig. 2a, Extended Data Fig. 3a, and Supplementary Tables 5 and 7), including  
139 upregulation of the mRNA levels of genes encoding proteins for all the mitochondrial electron  
140 transport chain complexes (Complex I to IV) and the complex V (ATPase) (Fig. 2a and  
141 Extended Data Fig. 3a). Those data were confirmed by the enrichment of other GSs implicated  
142 in aerobic respiration and ATP production (Fig. 2b). Moreover, GSs related to antiviral  
143 responses and aerobic respiration represented around 50% of the top GSs enriched in DAM  
144 (Extended Data Fig. 3b and Supplementary Table 5). Finally, we verified that OXPHOS GS was

145 enriched in DAM from all the neurodegenerative models and, somehow surprisingly,  
146 substantially reduced in the microglia from aged mice (Extended Data Fig. 3c and  
147 Supplementary Table 7).

148 To corroborate that our results were also relevant for the human disease, we interrogated  
149 the data from a recent human single cell RNAseq study<sup>30</sup>. Microglia isolated from post-mortem  
150 human AD samples clustered in two groups differentiated from Control microglia (Fig. 2c) and  
151 the genes encoding the OXPHOS were significantly overexpressed in microglial cells from AD  
152 samples (Fig. 2c).

153 The OXPHOS upregulation constitutes a *bone fide* indicator of mTOR biosynthetic activity  
154 via mitochondrial activation<sup>31</sup>, a pathway that has been described as regulated by TREM2<sup>16</sup>.  
155 Interestingly, we reanalysed the data from<sup>16</sup> and observed that TREM2 deficiency is indeed  
156 associated with a dramatic downregulation of the OXPHOS GS in microglia from the *5xfAD/+*  
157 mouse model (Fig. 2d and Supplementary Table 9), suggesting that TREM2 activates OXPHOS  
158 transcription in A $\beta$ AM. Induction of protein synthesis, another mTOR activation landmark<sup>32</sup>, was  
159 highly enriched in A $\beta$ AM (Extended Data Fig. 3b and Supplementary Table 5). So, we also  
160 interrogated our transcriptomic data for the presence of an mTOR signature<sup>16</sup> (Supplementary  
161 Table 8) and found a modest enrichment in both the A $\beta$  and TAU models (Extended Data Fig.  
162 3d).

163 Altogether, those data strongly indicate that an increase in the transcription of the aerobic  
164 respiration-related genes is taking place both in AD mouse models and human AD microglia in  
165 a TREM2 dependent manner.

#### 166 **A $\beta$ AM mitochondria are characterized by elongation**

167 We have demonstrated that the A $\beta$ AM is characterized by simultaneous activation of two  
168 antagonistic pathways: (i) the HIF1 pathway (a classical trigger of anaerobic glycolysis<sup>18</sup>) (Fig. 1  
169 and Extended Data Fig. 1) and (ii) aerobic respiration (Fig. 2 and Extended Data Fig. 3). We  
170 have also shown that the HIF1 pathway is particularly enriched in A $\beta$ AM *versus* other DAM (Fig.  
171 1 and Extended Data Fig. 1). This peculiar metabolic adaptation of A $\beta$ AM suggests that  
172 mitochondrial activity is essential for microglial metabolic fitness in response to A $\beta$  and that  
173 HIF1 activation could be an unwanted by-product of the chronic defensive activity of innate  
174 immune cell clusters (only present in A $\beta$ -depositing mouse models). In addition, a reduction of

175 the vasculature around A $\beta$  plaques has been consistently reported in the literature in both the  
176 human AD brain and AD mouse models<sup>22,33</sup>, that could also contribute to the high HIF1  
177 activation. To better understand this paradoxical situation, we search for situations where  
178 mitochondrial activity is preserved despite HIF1 activation and found that cells under nutrient  
179 and oxygen deprivation prevent a HIF1-mediated switch to anaerobic glycolysis by elongating  
180 mitochondria<sup>34</sup>, a well-described process that optimizes aerobic ATP production and prevents  
181 mitophagy<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, we first evaluated mitochondrial levels by immunofluorescence, and  
182 observed a clear upregulation of NDUFS2 complex I protein in A $\beta$ AM when compared with wild-  
183 type or distal to A $\beta$  plaques microglia (Fig. 3a). As A $\beta$ AM phagocyte other cells and are in close  
184 apposition with dystrophic neurites that also contain mitochondria, we investigated the  
185 morphology of A $\beta$ AM mitochondria using electron microscopy. Microglia distant from A $\beta$   
186 plaques presented round-shaped mitochondria (Fig. 3b), but A $\beta$ AM showed elongated  
187 mitochondria surrounded by rough endoplasmic reticulum (Fig. 3c), characterized by increased  
188 perimeter and aspect ratio, and decreased circularity versus A $\beta$  plaque distal or WT microglia  
189 (Fig. 3d).

190 Altogether, these results indicate that aerobic respiration is a common feature of  
191 neurodegenerative DAM, while the concomitant activation of HIF1-mediated gene expression  
192 and the elongation of their mitochondria suggest that A $\beta$ AM metabolism is compromised.

### 193 **Overactivation of HIF1 induces microglial quiescence**

194 To verify that activation of microglia depends on mitochondrial activity, we treated microglial cell  
195 primary cultures with oligomeric A $\beta$  (oA $\beta$ ) for 24 h and measured the mitochondrial O<sub>2</sub>  
196 consumption rate. Interestingly, 24 h after stimulation, a clear up-regulation of the mitochondrial  
197 maximal respiratory capacity was observed (Fig. 4a), that was accompanied with a slight but  
198 significant increase in the mitochondrial protein SDHA (Complex II), a trend to increase in  
199 NDUFS2 (Complex I; Fig. 4b), and no changes in ATPsyn $\beta$  (Complex V; Fig. 4b). oA $\beta$  also  
200 induced the microglial response characterized by the increase of *Tnf* and *Il6* mRNA levels (Fig.  
201 4c). Altogether, our data indicate that, *in vitro*, mitochondrial activity is upregulated by oA $\beta$   
202 treatment, however, the magnitude of the activation was smaller than *in vivo* probably due to the  
203 rich medium used in culture. To investigate if a reduction of mitochondrial activity by an  
204 exacerbation of the HIF1 response could compromise microglial responses to A $\beta$ , we exposed



205 normoxic and hypoxic microglial cell primary cultures to oA $\beta$  for 24 h. Interestingly, hypoxia  
206 reduced the basal levels of *Tnf* and *Il6* mRNA and blunted the normoxic response to oA $\beta$  (Fig.  
207 4c). A similar reduction in microglial response to the one observed in primary microglial cell  
208 cultures from *Trem2*<sup>-/-</sup> mice exposed to 3 h of oA $\beta$  (Fig. 4c).

209 To further characterize the role of hypoxia in microglial cells, we first reanalyzed the  
210 transcriptomic data obtained from the primary microglial cells exposed to low oxygen levels (1%  
211 O<sub>2</sub>, 6 h; Fig. 1d and Extended Data Fig. 1a). As expected, hypoxia induced a robust  
212 transcriptional response characterized by the coordinated induction of glycolytic genes (Fig. 4d,  
213 Extended Data Fig. 4a, and Supplementary Table 10). Correspondingly, the glycolytic rate  
214 showed a clear increase in primary microglial cells exposed to hypoxia (Fig. 4e). In parallel, low  
215 oxygen levels repressed mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation, as shown by GSEA and  
216 oxygen consumption recordings in hypoxic primary microglial cultures (Fig. 4f–g, Extended Data  
217 Fig. 4b, and Supplementary Table 10). Consequently, *in cellulo* hypoxia induced a significant  
218 decrease in the ratio between the mitochondrial oxygen consumption and the glycolytic proton  
219 efflux rates in microglia (Fig. 4h). Interestingly, the upregulation of anaerobic glycolysis (Fig. 4d,  
220 e and Extended Data Fig. 4c, d) was accompanied by a drastic downregulation of the overall  
221 cellular function, including DNA replication, which suggests that slowdown of mitochondrial  
222 activity may induce microglial quiescence (Extended Data Fig. 5a, b).

223 To evaluate if hypoxia inhibited proliferation of microglia, we used two models: the microglial-  
224 derived BV2 cell line and mouse primary microglial cell cultures. To determine if hypoxia (1%  
225 O<sub>2</sub>, 4 to 48 h) modulates BV2 cell cycle, we measured the percentage of cells in G0/G1, S, or  
226 G2 using propidium iodide (PI) staining and flow cytometry. Brief hypoxia (4 h) did not change  
227 the BV2 cell cycle; however, 24 and 48 h of hypoxia led to a dramatic cell cycle arrest  
228 (Extended Data Fig. 6a). To differentiate between the induction by hypoxia of senescence  
229 (irreversible cell cycle arrest) or quiescence (reversible), we exposed BV2 hypoxic cultures to  
230 24 h of reoxygenation. Interestingly, cell cycle was completely restored after incubation in  
231 normoxia (Extended Data Fig. 6b). In order to evaluate the involvement of HIF in the control of  
232 cell cycle under hypoxia, we interfered the expression of *Hif1a*, *Epas1* (encoding for HIF2 $\alpha$ ) or  
233 *Hif1a* and *Epas1*. Although the degree of suppression reached was small (around 50 – 60% of  
234 the levels of non-interfered cultures; Extended Data Fig. 6c), we were able to observe a

235 decrease in the hypoxia-induced cell cycle arrest when both genes were knocked down  
236 (Extended Data Fig. 6c). To confirm the role of HIF in the hypoxia-mediated cell cycle arrest, we  
237 first exposed BV2 cells to dimethylxalylglycine (DMOG), an inhibitor of the main negative  
238 regulators of HIF stability, the prolyl-hydroxylases (PHDs)<sup>18</sup>, and observed a hypoxia-like cell  
239 cycle arrest in BV2 (Extended Data Fig. 6d). Second, we performed primary microglial cell  
240 cultures from either Egl9 homologue 2 (*Egln2*<sup>-/-</sup>) (encoding for PHD1), *Egln1*<sup>+/-</sup> (PHD2, full  
241 PHD2 deficiency is not viable), or *Egln3*<sup>-/-</sup> (PHD3) mice. The number of microglial cells was  
242 decreased both in the absence of PHD3 or in the presence of half dose of PHD2 (Fig. 4i),  
243 whereas no differences were observed in PHD1-deficient microglia (Fig. 4i), further supporting a  
244 role for HIF in microglial proliferation<sup>36,37</sup>. Finally, we estimated proliferation in primary microglial  
245 cell cultures exposed to 24 h of hypoxia (1% O<sub>2</sub>), using a bromodeoxyuridine (BrdU)  
246 incorporation assay. Hypoxia induced a notable decrease in BrdU reactive microglial cells (Fig.  
247 4j). To confirm the role of HIF1 in the microglial cell cycle arrest induced by hypoxia, we used  
248 primary microglial cell cultures with conditional deletion of *Hif1a* (Fig. 1e) exposed to hypoxia.  
249 As expected, hypoxia produced a ~ 60% decrease in the number of BrdU-reactive cells.  
250 However, microglial proliferation was almost completely restored in HIF1 $\alpha$ -deficient cultures  
251 (Fig. 4k), demonstrating that HIF1 contributes to the reversible microglial cell cycle arrest under  
252 hypoxia.

### 253 **A decrease of mitochondrial metabolism *via* HIF1 reduces A $\beta$ AM**

254 The formation of new A $\beta$  plaques in APP overexpressing mouse models is associated with  
255 microglia proliferation<sup>17,38</sup>. However, we have shown that *in cellulo*, HIF1 overactivation induces  
256 microglial quiescence characterized by low response to oA $\beta$  and a reversible cell cycle arrest  
257 (Fig. 4). Therefore, we postulated that the proliferation, and therefore the clustering, of microglia  
258 around A $\beta$  plaques *in vivo* depends on the balance between glycolysis and aerobic respiration.

259 In normoxia, *Hif* genes are constitutively transcribed and translated but the resultant protein  
260 is degraded by the proteasome through oxygen-dependent hydroxylation by PHDs and von  
261 Hippel-Lindau (VHL)-mediated ubiquitination<sup>18</sup>. As overstabilization of HIF1 by VHL deficiency  
262 induces anaerobic glycolysis and inhibition of aerobic respiration<sup>39</sup>, we created a new  
263 conditional AD mouse model with VHL depletion in adult microglia (*Cx3cr1-Cre::ERT2/+; Vhl*  
264 *Flox<sup>-/-</sup>; APP-PSEN1/+*) (Fig. 5a). VHL deficiency induced the HMM *in vivo*, as demonstrated by

265 global expression profile studies in isolated microglia (Fig. 5b and Supplementary Table 11) and  
266 a decrease in the OXPHOS GS transcription (Fig. 5c). Interestingly, this transcriptional  
267 regulation was associated with a decrease in the percentage of microglia, as observed by flow  
268 cytometry (Fig. 5d). Remarkable, VHL-deficiency induced a decrease in the common microglial  
269 transcriptional phenotype (MGnD GS; Fig. 5e) in a transcriptional phenotype similar to TREM2  
270 deficiency (for a review see<sup>40</sup>) that suggested reduced A $\beta$ AM. Therefore, we quantified the IBA1  
271 immunoreactivity around A $\beta$  plaques and observed a decrease in the microglial coverage of  
272 cortical A $\beta$  deposits in the absence of VHL (Fig. 5f). Altogether, these results indicate that the  
273 downregulation of A $\beta$ AM aerobic respiration by HIF1 stabilization induces a microglial  
274 dysfunctional phenotype similar to the one observed in TREM2 deficiency.

275 Several modifiable AD risk factors (e.g. hypertension, obesity, atrial fibrillation, diabetes,  
276 physical inactivity, and smoking) converge in altering the vascular system and/or reducing  
277 oxygen/nutrient availability<sup>20,22</sup>. We reasoned that those AD risk factors could contribute to the  
278 microglial dysfunction described in the human AD brain by disrupting the HIF1/aerobic  
279 respiration metabolic equilibrium observed in A $\beta$ AM. To test that idea, we exposed 14-month-  
280 old WT or *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice to either normoxia (21% O<sub>2</sub>) or sustained hypoxia (9% O<sub>2</sub>) for 21  
281 days and quantified IBA1+ microglia in the hippocampus. We found a significant decrease in the  
282 number of IBA1+ microglia in hypoxic *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice compared to normoxic *APP-*  
283 *PSEN1*/+ mice, whereas only a trend was detected in hypoxic compared to normoxic WT mice  
284 (Fig. 6a). Similarly, qRT-PCR in hippocampal extracts rendered significantly reduced levels of  
285 *Iba1* mRNA without changing the *glial fibrillary acidic protein (Gfap)* astrocytic mRNA levels in  
286 *APP-PSEN1*/+ (Fig. 6b) and no differences were found in WT mice (Extended Data Fig. 7a).  
287 More strikingly, the distribution of microglia was altered by sustained hypoxia, showing absence  
288 of clustering around A $\beta$  plaques (Fig. 6a), suggesting a defect in A $\beta$ AM. A closer examination of  
289 hippocampal and cortical regions of *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice revealed that hypoxic A $\beta$ AM did not  
290 invade the plaques or were simply absent (Fig. 6c), a phenocopy of the microglial dysfunction  
291 observed in microglia deficient for VHL (Fig. 5f) and in TREM2 deficient mice<sup>40</sup>. This  
292 observation was confirmed using tomato lectin (TL) as an independent microglial marker (Fig.  
293 6c). Quantification of both the IBA1<sup>+</sup> cell number and the area occupied by IBA1<sup>+</sup> staining per  
294 Thio-S+ plaque demonstrated fewer A $\beta$ AM in the hippocampus and the cortex of hypoxic

295 *versus* normoxic *APP-PSEN1/+* mice (Fig. 6d). In sharp contrast, neither the number of reactive  
296 astrocytes (GFAP<sup>+</sup>) nor the number of total astrocytes (glutamine synthetase, GluS<sup>+</sup>) was  
297 altered by sustained hypoxic treatment in *APP-PSEN1/+* mice (Extended Data Fig. 7b).  
298 Moreover, the ratio of astrocytes adjacent to A $\beta$  plaques (within 20  $\mu$ m from the plaque edge)  
299 *versus* total astrocytes was not significantly different (Extended Data Fig. 7b, c). The sustained  
300 hypoxia treatment induced an expected increase in hematocrit (Extended Data Fig. 7d) and no  
301 infarctions were observed in the hypoxic brains of WT or *APP-PSEN1/+* mice (Extended Data  
302 Fig. 7e). Finally, we showed that hypoxia reduced A $\beta$ AM proliferation using Ki67 staining in the  
303 hippocampus and in the cortex of *APP-PSEN1* mice (Fig. 6e) and no changes were observed  
304 by hypoxic treatment in WT mice (Extended Data Fig. 7f).

305 Altogether, these results suggest that systemic comorbidities may contribute to brain  
306 hypoxia/hypoperfusion-induced microglial quiescence by disrupting the HIF1/aerobic respiration  
307 metabolic equilibrium in A $\beta$ AM.

#### 308 **Sustained hypoxia enhances A $\beta$ local pathology**

309 Defects in microglial clustering around plaques by *TREM2* haplo-insufficiency decreased A $\beta$   
310 plaque compaction<sup>9,10</sup>, highlighting the protective barrier function of microglia around plaques<sup>3</sup>.  
311 We therefore asked whether the reduced clustering of microglia induced by sustained hypoxia  
312 correlated with an increase in A $\beta$  levels in *APP-PSEN1/+* mice. We observed a significant  
313 increase in both dense-core Thio-S<sup>+</sup> and total A $\beta$ <sup>+</sup> plaque load and number in the cortex of  
314 hypoxic *APP-PSEN1/+* mice (9% O<sub>2</sub>) compared to normoxic (21% O<sub>2</sub>) AD littermates (Fig. 7a–  
315 f), despite no significant differences in the total A $\beta$  levels by ELISA nor in the processing of  
316 APP<sup>41</sup>. As a control, we also show that no Thio-S<sup>+</sup> (Extended Data Fig. 8a) or A $\beta$ <sup>+</sup> (Extended  
317 Data Fig. 8b) plaques were found in normoxic or hypoxic WT mice. Furthermore, the size  
318 distribution of cortical Thio-S<sup>+</sup> and total A $\beta$ <sup>+</sup> plaques in hypoxic and normoxic *APP-PSEN1/+*  
319 mice revealed an enrichment in plaques under hypoxia, suggesting that low oxygen enhances  
320 A $\beta$  aggregation resulting in more newly-formed plaques (Fig. 7c, f). Levels of soluble A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> in  
321 normoxic and hypoxic *APP-PSEN1/+* mice measured by ELISA showed a trend to increase  
322 under hypoxia (Fig. 7g) and dot blots with a fibrillar A $\beta$  oligomers-specific antibody (OC) showed  
323 a clear increase of OC immunoreactivity in cortical soluble extracts from hypoxic *versus*

324 normoxic *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice (Fig. 7h). Altogether, these data suggest that sustained hypoxia  
325 potentiates A $\beta$  aggregation and deposition in the brain parenchyma.

326 As the result of the direct neurotoxic effect of A $\beta$ , dense-core (senile) plaques are decorated  
327 with dystrophic neurites, which can be displayed with both ubiquitin (UB) and phospho-TAU (p-  
328 TAU) immunohistochemistry. The AD-linked p.R47H and p.R62H TREM2 variants impair the  
329 microglia barrier function and worsens plaque-associated axonal dystrophies<sup>9-11</sup>. Therefore, we  
330 investigated whether sustained hypoxia could aggravate this neurodegenerative feature in an  
331 AD mouse model. *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice exposed to sustained hypoxia showed a trend to  
332 increase in the UB load (Fig. 7i) and a clear augmentation in the density of p-TAU<sup>+</sup> dystrophic  
333 neurites per Thio-S<sup>+</sup> plaque (Fig. 7j). As expected, we also show that no p-TAU<sup>+</sup> dystrophic  
334 neurites (Extended Data Fig. 8c) were found in normoxic or hypoxic WT mice. We have  
335 previously shown that hippocampal somatostatin and neuropeptide Y interneurons are  
336 particularly vulnerable and die at early stages in a similar AD mouse model<sup>42</sup>. Here, we detected  
337 a significant further decrease in the mRNA levels of both somatostatin (*Sst*) and neuropeptide Y  
338 (*Npy*) under sustained hypoxic stress (Fig. 7k). Thus, these data indicate that sustained hypoxia  
339 leads to an increase in soluble A $\beta$  fibrillar oligomers and newly formed dense-core A $\beta$  plaques,  
340 and aggravates A $\beta$  plaque-associated neurodegenerative phenomena.

#### 341 **Nude A $\beta$ plaques with high pathology in hypoxic brain areas**

342 To study the contribution of HIF1 induction in the AD human brain, we first reanalysed the data  
343 of an RNAseq study of isolated cell types from the human brain<sup>43</sup>. Interestingly, *HIF1a* transcript  
344 was highly abundant in human microglia when compared with other cells types (Fig. 8a),  
345 suggesting a preponderant role of HIF1 in those cells. AD-associated microglial degeneration  
346 has mainly been observed in the human hippocampus<sup>6,7</sup>. To evaluate the potential contribution  
347 of HIF1 to AD, we measured the levels of *HIF1a* mRNA by qRT-PCR and HIF1 $\alpha$  protein by  
348 Western blot in hippocampal samples from AD and non-demented control individuals  
349 (Supplementary Table 12). Both mRNA (a non-significant trend) and protein levels were  
350 upregulated, paralleling the progression of AD pathology (Fig. 8b). The drop in HIF1 $\alpha$  levels at  
351 advanced (Braak V-VI) compared with intermediate (Braak III-IV) stages is likely explained by  
352 the dramatic end-stage cell death and atrophy. We also demonstrated the up-regulation of the  
353 mRNA levels of several HIF-regulated genes in AD (Braak V-VI) human hippocampal samples

354 (Fig. 8c), suggesting that advances stages of the pathology are associated with induction of  
355 HIF1.

356 Human microglial pathology is mainly concentrated in the hilar region of the dentate gyrus<sup>7</sup>,  
357 a brain area with relatively low oxygen levels to preserve neurogenesis<sup>44</sup>. To investigate the  
358 contribution of hypoxia to microglial degeneration, we compared A $\beta$  plaques from the dentate  
359 gyrus (hypoxia-prone region) with those from the perirhinal cortex (control region), as both brain  
360 areas accumulate similar large diffuse neuritic plaques<sup>45</sup>. Remarkably, a significant microglial  
361 depopulation of senile plaques was observed at Braak V-VI stages at the molecular layer of the  
362 dentate gyrus, when compared with plaques from the perirhinal cortex of the same individuals  
363 (Fig. 8d), suggesting that local hypoxia also primes A $\beta$ AM dysfunction in the human AD brain,  
364 generating nude A $\beta$  plaques.

365 An increase in plaque-associated axonal dystrophies have been observed in the brain of  
366 carriers of the AD-linked TREM2 variants<sup>9,10</sup> and sustained hypoxia incremented the local  
367 neuropathology in an AD mouse model (Fig. 7i, j). Therefore, we investigated if the nude A $\beta$   
368 plaques in the human dentate gyrus were also enriched in dystrophic neurites. Triple combined  
369 immunohistochemistry for p-TAU, IBA1, and A $\beta$  in Braak V–VI hippocampal samples revealed  
370 plaques presented dystrophic neurites in the zones of the plaques that were devoid of microglia  
371 (Fig. 8e). To quantitatively demonstrate the relation between nude A $\beta$  plaques and increased  
372 local pathology, we measured the area occupied by IBA1 (microglia), AT8 (p-TAU), and A $\beta$  per  
373 plaque. We anticipate that a microglial area lower than the A $\beta$  area (protection index < 1,  
374 measured per individual plaque) should be less protected than A $\beta$  plaques with larger microglial  
375 occupancy (protection index > 1) for the formation of AT8 reactive dystrophies. In fact, we  
376 demonstrated that A $\beta$  plaques with a protection index smaller than 1 presented higher  
377 dystrophic neurites (Fig. 8e). As a control, we also checked that both groups (protection index <  
378 1 and > 1) had similar A $\beta$  plaque size distribution (Fig. 8e).

379 Altogether, our data strongly suggest that, similar to what was found in TREM2 risk allele  
380 carriers<sup>9,10</sup>, nude A $\beta$  plaques associate with hypoxia-prone human brain areas and elevated  
381 local neuronal pathology in AD patients.

382

## 383 DISCUSSION

384 Increasing evidence indicates that the microglial defensive activity is required to halt the  
385 progression of AD<sup>3,5,9-11</sup>. At the same time, microglia are the cells able to survive closer to A $\beta$   
386 deposits<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, to understand how these cells survive and provide a full response under  
387 challenging conditions is of utmost importance. We show here that A $\beta$ AM is characterized by  
388 the paradoxical concomitant activation of HIF1-induced anaerobic glycolysis and the aerobic  
389 respiration, suggesting local metabolic stress around A $\beta$  plaques. We also show that sustained  
390 overactivation of HIF1 induces microglial quiescence *in cellulo* and a decrease in the ability of  
391 A $\beta$ AM to proliferate and cluster around A $\beta$  plaques *in vivo*. HIF1-mediated reduced coverage of  
392 A $\beta$  plaques associates with worsening of AD neuropathology both in AD mouse models and in  
393 the human AD brain, highlighting the relevance of modifiable AD risk factors related with HIF1  
394 activation.

395 From its discovery, microglial cells were characterized by a surprising morphological  
396 plasticity<sup>1</sup>, which is also observed around A $\beta$  plaques, where microglia proliferate, migrate and  
397 emit thick cytoplasmic projections that constitute a physical barrier against A $\beta$  spreading<sup>3,9,10</sup>.  
398 These morphologic adaptations are accompanied with an exuberant transcriptional modulation  
399 that optimize A $\beta$ AM responses<sup>13,25,26</sup>. Between those transcriptional responses, we found that  
400 the aerobic respiration is highly enriched in DAM transcription. In innate immune cells, HIF1  
401 activation is normally associated with a metabolic switch from aerobic respiration to anaerobic  
402 glycolysis, and the activation of a pro-inflammatory program that include cytokine production  
403 through increased inflammasome signaling<sup>18,46</sup>. It have been suggested that, in AD microglia,  
404 TREM2 activation could reduce this acute response to sustain long-term activity<sup>16</sup>. In the light of  
405 our results, TREM2 activation entails an aerobic respiration-based metabolism, which may  
406 counteract a switch towards a pro-inflammatory state of DAM. In A $\beta$ AM, however, this  
407 equilibrium is at risk, as basal activity of HIF1 is detected and mitochondria elongate, a  
408 characteristic response of cells that maintain aerobic respiration under low oxygen and nutrient  
409 stress<sup>34</sup>. Mitochondrial elongation maximizes tricarboxylic acid cycle (TCA) functioning for  
410 biosynthesis and ATP production, sustaining cell viability under oxygen and nutrient deprivation  
411 and prevents hypoxia- and/or low nutrients-induced mitophagy<sup>35</sup>. TREM2 activation of mTOR  
412 has been shown as pivotal for the microglial metabolic adaptation to confront A $\beta$  deposition<sup>16,19</sup>,

413 and the mitochondrial metabolism may be regulated by mTOR through increased translation of  
414 the transcription factor A, mitochondrial (TFAM) and other key factors<sup>32</sup>. However, the mTOR-  
415 mediated anabolic induction is reduced when nutrient (including oxygen) supply is inadequate  
416 *via* increased HIF1 transcription and translation. Further work will be required to demonstrate  
417 the role of the TREM2/mTOR pathway in regulation of mitochondrial A $\beta$ AM metabolism.

418 The severe A $\beta$ AM dependence on mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation was revealed by  
419 forcing the inhibition of microglial mitochondrial activity *via* (i) sustained hypoxia *in cellulo*, which  
420 induces a slowdown in microglial proliferation and quiescence, or, *in vivo*, by (ii) VHL deficiency  
421 or (iii) sustained hypoxia, mimicking AD modifiable risk factors that reduce brain  
422 perfusion/oxygenation (e.g. hypertension, obesity, atrial fibrillation, diabetes mellitus, physical  
423 inactivity, smoking<sup>20</sup>, and intracerebral atherosclerosis<sup>47</sup>). Similarly, overactivation of HIF1 in  
424 microglia by systemic LPS injection also resulted in a shift towards anaerobic glycolysis,  
425 production of proinflammatory cytokines, and worsening of AD neuropathology<sup>19</sup>. Inversely, both  
426 sodium rutin (a natural flavonoid that induces a switch from anaerobic glycolysis to aerobic  
427 respiration in microglia) and interferon gamma (an inductor of mTOR) attenuated  
428 neuroinflammation<sup>48</sup>, enhanced A $\beta$ AM clustering and phagocytosis<sup>23,48</sup>, and ameliorated the  
429 learning and memory defects observed in amyloidogenic models<sup>23,48</sup>. Interestingly, age, the  
430 main risk factor for AD<sup>20</sup>, may induce a decrease in the mouse microglial OXPHOS GS  
431 (Extended Data Fig. 3c), suggesting that age could also merge with AD genetic<sup>14-16,26</sup> and  
432 modifiable risk factors in hijacking microglial aerobic respiration. The relation between aging and  
433 microglial mitochondrial function will require additional experimental work.

434 The reduced A $\beta$ AM proliferation and clustering by HIF1 overactivation resembles the  
435 phenotype observed in (i) the brain of *TREM2* p.R47H and p.R62H carriers and in AD mouse  
436 models with either (ii) genetic *Trem2* deficiency or (iii) expressing these AD-linked loss of  
437 function<sup>9,10</sup>, and also resulted in increased neuropathology. Thus, in addition to other factors<sup>22</sup>,  
438 systemic sustained hypoxia contributes to AD progression by decreasing the microglial ability to  
439 proliferate and confine A $\beta$  deposits. Therefore, both genetic (TREM2/APOE), systemic  
440 (infections or brain hypoperfusion/hypoxia), and local stress (HIF1) factors converge in reducing  
441 AD microglial clustering and, therefore, their barrier function<sup>5</sup>. Correspondingly, a recent study  
442 has highlighted the role of brain atherosclerosis in AD, suggesting a direct molecular link<sup>47,49</sup>.



443       Of note, we also demonstrated that the human AD brain accumulates HIF1 and HIF1  
444 targets, that a hypoxia-prone region is characterized by the presence of “nude” (microglia-free)  
445 A $\beta$  plaques, and that the absence of microglia correlates with increased periplaque p-TAU  
446 dystrophic neurites. Notably, recent epidemiologic studies have estimated that between a third  
447 and a half of AD cases could be attributable to modifiable risk factors<sup>50-52</sup> and have suggested  
448 that, as age-adjusted incidence and prevalence of dementia might be decreasing (reviewed  
449 in<sup>21</sup>), AD may be preventable. Our results also pave the way for the search of pharmacologic  
450 agents that could improve the mitochondrial metabolic fitness of microglia against the stress  
451 imposed by A $\beta$  plaques and, likely, reduce the progression of AD.  
452

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595 **Author Contributions Statement**

596 A. P., J. V., R. M.-D., N. L.-U., C. R.-M., A. H.-G., and C. O.-S.L., conceived and designed  
597 research; A. P., R. M.-D., N. L.-U., C. R.-M., A. H.-G., M. I. A.-V., M. A. S.-G., E. S.-M., J. C. D.,  
598 A. E. R.-N., V. N., A. G.-A., M. V. S.-M., A. V., and A. G., performed research; A. P., R. M.-D.,  
599 N. L.-U., C. R.-M., A. H.-G., M. I. A.-V., M. A. S.-G., E. S.-M., J. C. D., A. E. R.-N., C. F., V. N.,  
600 A. G.-A., M. V. S.-M., A. V., A. G., M. V., T. B., A. S.-P., J. L.-B., E. B., J. V., and A. P., analyzed  
601 the data; E. J. H., and T. B., provided methodological and/or scientific assistance; E. J. H., and  
602 T. B. contributed with mouse models/samples; A. P, E. B., J. V., and A. S.-P., wrote the  
603 manuscript.

604 **Competing Interests Statements**

605 The authors declare no competing interests.

606 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

607 **Fig. 1 | HIF1-mediated transcription is activated in A $\beta$ AM. a, b**, ISH of *Hif1a* mRNA (brown)  
608 and immunohistochemistry for microglia (IBA1, green), nuclear (DAPI; blue) staining in brain  
609 sections of 8-month-old *APP-PSEN1*<sup>+/+</sup> mice proximal (**a**) and distal (**a, b**) to A $\beta$  plaques (yellow  
610 asterisks in **a**). Red arrowheads indicate microglia proximal to A $\beta$  plaques and yellow  
611 arrowheads depict microglial cells not associated with A $\beta$ . Right in (**b**), microglial quantification  
612 of IBA1<sup>+</sup>/*Hif1a*<sup>+</sup> cells in WT and in distal and proximal regions to A $\beta$  plaques ( $n = 4$  mice;  
613 ANOVA, post hoc Tukey's test). **c**, Transcription Factor Enrichment Analysis (TFEA) of *APP-*  
614 *PSEN1*<sup>+/+</sup> microglial transcription<sup>24</sup>. Each dot in the volcano plot represents an individual CHIP-  
615 seq experiment. **d**, Volcano plot (right panel) showing the genes included in the hypoxia/HIF1-  
616 induced microglial module (HMM) (red dots;  $p < 0.01$ , LogFC > 0.5). **e**, Primary microglial cell  
617 cultures from *Cx3cr1-Cre::ERT2*<sup>+/+</sup>; *Hif1a*<sup>Flox/Flox</sup> mice either treated with vehicle (C) or tamoxifen  
618 (T; 100 nM; 6 d) and the effect on HIF1 $\alpha$  expression assayed by qRT-PCR (left panel;  $n = 7$ ;  
619 Student's *t*-test) and by western (right panel) in normoxia (N: 21% O<sub>2</sub>, 24 h) and after DMOG (D:  
620 0.1 mM, 24 h) treatment. **f**, Primary microglial cell cultures from *Cx3cr1-Cre::ERT2*<sup>+/+</sup>; *Hif1a*<sup>Flox/Flox</sup>  
621 *Flox/Flox* mice treated either with vehicle, D, T, or D and T, and the mRNA fold change in D *versus*  
622 vehicle (D) and D and T *versus* T are represented. *Hmbs* levels used as housekeeping controls  
623 ( $n = 5$  *Vegfa*, *Ero1l*, *Prr15*, and *Mxi1*; 3 *Bhlhe40*; 6, *Ccng2*; and 4 *Egln1*; Student's *t*-test, two-  
624 sided). **g**, Gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA) of *APP*<sub>751</sub>*SL*<sup>+/+</sup> DAM *versus* (vs) WT 12-month-  
625 old microglia. Heat maps showing top 30 ranking genes of the HMM (left) and MGnD (right)  
626 gene sets (GSs). Red symbolizes overexpression and blue down regulation (see  
627 Supplementary Data Table for shade values). Right table: 15 top GSs with FWER- $p$ -value less  
628 than 0.05 are listed.

629 Data are presented in all the graphs as mean  $\pm$  standard error of the mean (S.E.M.).  $n$  are  
630 biological independent experiments.

631 **Fig. 2 | AD microglia increase aerobic respiration-related transcription. a**, GSEA of  
632 *APP*<sub>751</sub>*SL*<sup>+/+</sup> DAM *versus* (vs) WT 12-month-old microglia. Heat maps of top 30 ranking leading  
633 edge genes of the oxidative phosphorylation (OXPHOS) GS. Red symbolizes overexpression  
634 and blue down regulation (see Supplementary Data Table for shade values). **b**, Aerobic  
635 respiration-related GSs enriched in *APP*<sub>751</sub>*SL*<sup>+/+</sup> DAM vs WT microglia. **c**, Single-nuclei RNA



636 sequencing of human entorhinal cortex (<http://adsn.ddnetbio.com/><sup>30</sup>). Upper row, left: UMAP  
637 visualization of microglial cells from AD and control samples. Upper row right and lower row:  
638 Relative gene expression (color intensity) of four representative OXPHOS genes. The table  
639 includes the changes in expression (Log<sub>2</sub> fold change and FDR *q*-values) of the OXPHOS  
640 genes between AD and control microglial cells. **d**, Enrichment plot and heat map of the  
641 OXPHOS GS in *Trem2*<sup>-/-</sup>; 5xfAD/+ vs 5xfAD/+ microglia.

642 **Fig. 3 | Mitochondria is elongated in an AD mouse model.** **a**, Left panels, cortical confocal  
643 XY images from 8-month-old *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice stained with mitochondrial complex I  
644 (NDUFS2; green), microglia (IBA1; red), and nuclear (DAPI; blue) markers. Arrows and arrow  
645 heads respectively indicate proximal and distal microglia. Right graph, quantification of the  
646 microglial (IBA1<sup>+</sup>) NDUFS2 signal in WT mice and in distal and proximal areas to A $\beta$  plaques (*n*  
647 = 4 mice; ANOVA, post hoc Tukey's test). **b**, **c**, Electron microscopy images of hippocampal  
648 brain sections distal (**b**) and proximal (**c**) to A $\beta$  plaques in pathologic state *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice.  
649 Microglia can be recognized by its darker cytoplasm and mitochondria by their morphology.  
650 Mitochondria are highlighted with yellow arrows. Some dystrophic neurites are labelled with pink  
651 circles as indicators of A $\beta$  proximity. **c1**, **c2**, and **c4**: Low magnification image of an A $\beta$  plaque.  
652 Blue arrowheads indicate microglial cells. **c2**, **c3**, and **c5** are magnifications of the white  
653 rectangles. Please note that **c3** panel has been rotated 90 degree from the original image (**c2**).  
654 **d**, Quantification of perimeter, aspect ratio, and circularity of mitochondria from microglial cells  
655 from WT and distal and proximal to A $\beta$  plaques (*n* is indicated between brackets; data from 4  
656 WT and 3 *APP-PSEN1*/+ mice; Mann-Whitney U's test with Post-hoc Dunn's test).  
657 Data are presented in all the graphs as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. *n* are biological independent  
658 experiments.

659 **Fig. 4 | Hypoxia induces cell-cycle arrest via HIF1 in microglia *in cellulo*.** **a**, Mitochondrial  
660 respiration oxygen consumption rate (OCR; left) and maximal respiration (right) of control (C) or  
661 oligomeric A $\beta$ -treated (oA $\beta$ ; 10  $\mu$ m; 24 h) mouse primary microglial cultures by Seahorse.  
662 Discontinued lines show injection (FCCP: carbonyl cyanide-4 (trifluoromethoxy)  
663 phenylhydrazone) (*n* = 3 independent cultures; Student's *t*-test). **b**, Protein levels of SDHA,  
664 NDUFS2, and ATPsyn $\beta$  in cultures treated as in (**a**). RPL26 was used as housekeeping (*n* is  
665 indicated between brackets; Student's *t*-test). **c**, *Tnf* and *Il6* mRNA levels in cultures treated as

666 in (a) and exposed to normoxia (N; 21% O<sub>2</sub>; 24 h) or Hypoxia (H; 1% O<sub>2</sub>; 24 h) (upper row) or  
667 from WT or *Trem2*<sup>-/-</sup> mice (lower row) (*n* is indicated between brackets; Student's *t*-test). **d, f,**  
668 Heat map of mouse primary microglial cultures in H (6 h) *versus* N. The top 30 ranking genes  
669 shown; red symbolizes overexpression and blue downregulation (see Supplementary Data  
670 Table for shade values). **e,** Extracellular acidification rate (left) and basal proton efflux rate  
671 (right) of mouse primary microglial cultures in N or H (24 h) by Seahorse. 2-DG, 2-deoxyglucose  
672 (*n* = 5 N and 6 H; Student's *t*-test). **g,** Mitochondrial respiration OCR (left) and basal respiration  
673 OCR (right) of mouse primary microglial cultures in normoxia (N) or H (24 h) by Seahorse.  
674 Discontinued lines show injection (*n* = 5 cultures in N and 6 in H: Student's *t*-test). **h,**  
675 Mitochondrial respiration OCR (mytoOCR)-basal proton efflux rate (glycoPER) ratio of mouse  
676 primary microglial cultures in N or H by Seahorse (*n* = 4 N and 6 H; Student's *t*-test). **i,** Left:  
677 images of primary microglial cultures stained with IBA1 (red) and GFAP (green), and  
678 counterstained with DAPI (blue) from WT (*Egln1*<sup>+/+</sup>) or *Egln1*<sup>+/-</sup> mice. Right graphs show  
679 percentage of microglia in each mutant (KO or HET) relative to their control (C). (*n* is indicated  
680 between brackets; Student's *t*-test). **j,** Images of proliferation in primary microglial cultures (red)  
681 in either N, H, or DMOG (D, 24 h, 0.1 mM), and incubated with 10 μM bromodeoxyuridine  
682 (BrdU; 3h). Insets show a magnification of dotted squares. White arrowheads: BrdU<sup>+</sup>/IBA1<sup>-</sup>;  
683 green arrowhead: BrdU<sup>+</sup>/IBA1<sup>+</sup>. The quantification shown in the right graph (*n* = 4; Student's *t*-  
684 test). **k,** Primary microglial cultures from *Cx3cr1-Cre::ERT2-Hif*<sup>Flox/Flox</sup> mice treated either with  
685 vehicle (C) or tamoxifen (T; 100 nM, 6 d) and the number of BrdU reactive microglial cells in H  
686 (24 h) was estimated and presented as the percentage of N (*n* = 7 C, 6 T; Student's *t*-test).  
687 Data are presented in all the graphs as mean ± S.E.M. Student's *t*-tests were two-sided. *n* are  
688 biological independent experiments.

689 **Fig. 5 | Overstabilization of HIF1 reduces AβAM *in vivo*.** Analysis of microglia from *Cx3cr1-*  
690 *Cre::ERT2/+ APP-PSEN1/+; Vhl*<sup>Flox/-</sup> mice non-treated (Control) or treated (VHL-) with  
691 tamoxifen (TMX, 30 days). **a,** Schematic representation of the mouse models used to generate  
692 genetic hypoxia (HIF overstabilization by VHL deletion) in adult microglia. **b, c,** GSEA. Heat  
693 maps and enplots of up to the top 30 ranking leading edge genes and enrichment plot of HMM  
694 (b) and OXPHOS (c) GSs. Red symbolizes overexpression and blue down regulation (see  
695 Supplementary Data Table for shade values). **d,** Adult microglia were isolated from control or

696 treated (VHL-) with tamoxifen (30 d) mice, using fluorescence-activated cell sorting (left graph).  
697 Right graph, quantification of the percentage of CD45<sup>+</sup>/CD11b<sup>+</sup> cells in mice without (C) or with  
698 tamoxifen (VHL-) treatment ( $n = 5$ ; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **e**, Heat map and enrichment  
699 plot of the MGnD GS. **f**, Left panels, cortical sections stained with IBA1 (red) and Thioflavin-S  
700 (Thio-S; green). Scale bars are 20  $\mu$ m. Right graph, quantification of the percentage of A $\beta$   
701 plaque area occupied by IBA1<sup>+</sup> microglia in mice treated without (C; pale pink bar) or with  
702 tamoxifen (VHL-; 30 d; green bar) ( $n$  is indicated between brackets; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided).  
703 Data are presented in all the graphs as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.  $n$  are biological independent  
704 experiments.

705 **Fig. 6 | Systemic sustained hypoxia decreases clustering of A $\beta$ AM.** **a-e**, 14-month-old WT  
706 and *APP-PSEN1*/<sup>+</sup> (AD) mice in normoxia (N; 21% O<sub>2</sub>) or sustained hypoxia (H; 9% O<sub>2</sub>) for 21  
707 days. **a**, Hippocampal brain slices stained for IBA1. The quantification of the total number of  
708 IBA1 reactive (<sup>+</sup>) microglia is shown in the right bar graph ( $n = 3$  -WT, N- or 4 -other groups-;  
709 Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **b**, Relative levels of *Iba1* and *Gfap* mRNA in the hippocampus of N  
710 and H *APP-PSEN1*/<sup>+</sup> mice. *Gapdh* mRNA was used as housekeeping control ( $n = 4$  mice per  
711 group; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **c**, Hippocampal (Hp; left) and cortical (Cx; right) sections  
712 stained with IBA1 (brown) and Thio-S (blue) or Tomato Lectin (TL; red) and Thio-S (green). **d**,  
713 Quantification of the number of IBA1<sup>+</sup> microglial cells per A $\beta$  plaque (left graph;  $n = 5$  mice;  
714 Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided) and the percentage of area of individual A $\beta$  plaque occupied by  
715 IBA1<sup>+</sup> microglia (right graph;  $n = 7$  Hp/N, 8 Hp/H and Cx/N, or 9 Cx/H mice; Student's  $t$ -test,  
716 two-sided). **e**, Representative images of hippocampal (left panels) and cortical (right panels)  
717 sections stained for Ki67 (brown, phase contrast) and IBA1 (red), and counterstained with Thio-  
718 S (green). Arrowheads indicate Ki67<sup>+</sup> microglia and insets depict the magnification of dotted  
719 squares. Scale bars are 50  $\mu$ m in low magnification panels and 25  $\mu$ m in the insets. The right  
720 graph shows the quantification of the density of Ki67<sup>+</sup> microglial cells ( $n = 9$  mice per group;  
721 Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided).

722 Data are presented in all the graphs as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.  $n$  are biological independent  
723 experiments.

724 **Fig. 7 | Systemic sustained hypoxia enhances A $\beta$  aggregation, spreading, and A $\beta$  plaque-**  
725 **associated axonal dystrophy.** **a-k**, 14-month-old *APP-PSEN1*/<sup>+</sup> mice were exposed to

726 normoxia (N; 21% O<sub>2</sub>) or sustained hypoxia (N; 9% O<sub>2</sub>) for 21 days. **a**, Brain sections were  
727 stained with Thio-S. **b**, Thio-S load (left graph) and plaque density (right graph) in N and H ( $n =$   
728 8; 4 mice per group. Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **c**, Size distribution of Thioflavin-S (Thio-S)  
729 plaques in N and H ( $n = 8$ ; 4 mice per group; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **d**, Brain sections  
730 stained for A $\beta$ . **e**, A $\beta$  load (left) and plaque density (right) were estimated from brain slices from  
731 N and H ( $n = 12$ ; 4 mice per group; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **f**, Size distribution of A $\beta$   
732 plaques in N and H ( $n = 12$ ; 4 mice per group; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **g**, A $\beta_{1-42}$  levels were  
733 quantified by ELISA in soluble brain extracts from N and H ( $n = 4$  mice per group; Student's  $t$ -  
734 test; two-sided). **h**, Fibrillar A $\beta$  was detected by dot blot in soluble cortical extracts from N and H  
735 ( $n = 4$  mice per group; a reference WT sample is shown). **i**, Cortical sections stained for  
736 ubiquitin (UB; right panels) and counterstained with Thio-S (left panels) in N and H. Right graph  
737 shows the quantification of the percentage of total UB load per slice in N and H ( $n = 8$ ; 4 mice  
738 per group; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **j**, Cortical sections stained with Thio-S (left panels) and  
739 for phospho-TAU (p-TAU; right panels) in N and H. Right graph shows the quantification of the  
740 percentage of individual A $\beta$  plaque area occupied by p-TAU+ neurites in N and H ( $n$  is indicated  
741 between brackets; Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided). **k**, *Sst* and *Npy* mRNAs levels were estimated by  
742 qRT-PCR in hippocampal extracts from normoxic (N: grey bars) and hypoxic (H: blue bars)  
743 *APP-PSEN1*<sup>+/+</sup> mice. *Gapdh* mRNA was used as housekeeping control ( $n = 4$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$   
744 Student's  $t$ -test, two-sided).

745 Data are presented in all the graphs as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M.  $n$  are biological independent  
746 experiments.

747 **Fig. 8 | A human hypoxia-prone brain area contains nude A $\beta$  plaques with increased local**  
748 **axonal dystrophy. a**, Fragments/kilobase of *HIF1a* per million mapped reads in human brain  
749 cells (<http://www.brainrnaseq.org/><sup>43</sup>). FA: fetal astrocytes; MA: adult astrocytes; N: neurons; O:  
750 oligodendrocytes; M: microglia/macrophages; E: endothelial cells. **b**, Left, *HIF1A* qRT-PCR of  
751 human hippocampus from control (C; Braak I) and Braak and Braak stages II (ADII), III-IV  
752 (ADIII-IV), and V-VI (ADV-VI) subjects. Dots represent individual values ( $n$  is indicated  
753 between brackets; Kruskal-Wallis' test;  $F = 7.124$ ; *GAPDH* control). Centre, HIF1 $\alpha$  in protein extracts  
754 from human hippocampus ( $\beta$ -actin control). Protein extract from HeLa cells in hypoxia (1% O<sub>2</sub>, 4  
755 h) as HIF1 $\alpha$  control (right). Right, box and whisker graph show HIF1 $\alpha$ / $\beta$ -actin levels ( $n$  is

756 indicated between brackets;  $F = 15.78$ ; Kruskal-Wallis' test). **c**, mRNA levels estimated by qRT-  
757 PCR of human hippocampal samples (**b**) ( $n$  is indicated between brackets; Mann-Whitney U's  
758 test; *VEGFA*:  $F = 32$ ; *HMOX*:  $F = 28$ ; *SLC7A5*:  $F = 45$ ; *BHLHE40*:  $F = 20$ ; and *PRELID2*:  $F =$   
759 173). **d**, Left, staining of microglial cells (IBA1; brown) and A $\beta$  plaques (dark blue) in dentate  
760 gyrus (DG) (hypoxia susceptible area) and perirhinal cortex (control brain area) of human AD  
761 brain (Braak V-VI individuals). Right, plaque periphery covered by IBA1+ microglia ( $n$  is  
762 indicated between brackets from 3 different AD individuals; Mann-Whitney U's test). **e**, Left,  
763 staining of microglial cells (IBA1, brown), p-TAU<sup>+</sup> dystrophic neurites (AT8, magenta), and A $\beta$   
764 plaques (dark blue) in the DG of human AD brain (Braak V-VI). Right: axonal dystrophies (AT8  
765 reactive) and A $\beta$  plaque area in samples with a protection index (IBA1<sup>+</sup> area/individual A $\beta$   
766 plaques area ratio) lower or higher than 1. ( $n$  is indicated between brackets; Mann-Whitney U's  
767 test).  
768 Data are presented in all the graphs as mean  $\pm$  S.E.M. except in panel (**b**) (right), where the box  
769 represent the 25-75%, the central bar the median, and the error bar the maximal and the  
770 minimal values.  $n$  are biological independent experiments.  
771

772 **Human samples**

773 Autopsy samples were obtained from the Neurological Tissue Bank of IDIBELL-Hospital of  
774 Bellvitge (Barcelona, Spain). The study (CEEA-US2017-13) was approved by the local ethics  
775 committee and by the “Comite de Etica de la Investigación (CEI), Hospital Virgen del Rocío”,  
776 Seville, Spain. Samples with signed informed consent from “Banco de tejidos: Fundación CIEN  
777 (BT-CIEN; Centro de Investigación de Enfermedades Neurologicas; Madrid, Spain)” and from  
778 the Neurological Tissue Bank of IDIBELL-Hospital of Bellvitge (Barcelona, Spain), classified by  
779 Braak tau pathology (Supplementary Table 12).

780 **Mice**

781 Mice were housed under controlled temperature (22°C) and humidity conditions in a 12 h  
782 light/dark cycle with *ad libitum* access to food and water. Housing and treatments were  
783 performed according to the animal care guidelines of the European Community Council  
784 (86/60/EEC). All animal procedures were conformed under the Spanish law and approved with  
785 number 26/04/2016/064 (“Consejería de agricultura, pesca y desarrollo rural. Dirección general  
786 de la producción agrícola y ganadera”). Heterozygous B6.Cg-Tg(APP<sup>swe</sup>,PSEN1 $\Delta$ 9E)85Dbo/J  
787 (*APP-PSEN1*/+; stock number 34832-JAX), B6;C3-Tg(Prnp-MAPT\*P301S)PS19Vle/J  
788 (*MAPT.pP301S*/+; stock number 008169), B6.129-Hif1a tm3Rsjo/J (*Hif1a*<sup>Flox/Flox</sup>; stock number  
789 007561), and B6.129S4(C)-VHL tm1Jae/J; (*Vhl*<sup>Flox/Flox</sup>; stock number 012933) mice were  
790 obtained from Jackson Laboratories. B6.129-Cx3cr1 tm2.1(cre/ERT2)Jung/Orl (*Cx3cr1*-  
791 *Cre::ERT2*/+ mice) were obtained from EMMA. APP751SL/+ mice (Sanofi) were provided by  
792 Transgenic Alliance-IFFA-Credo. WT were C57/Bl6J. To activate *Cre::ERT2*-mediated  
793 recombination, mice were fed for 30 days with a tamoxifen diet (400 mg tamoxifen citrate/kg;  
794 Envigo). All experiments were performed with balanced number of male and female mice.

795 ***In vivo* hypoxia treatment**

796 Mice (14-month-old) were chronically exposed to 9% O<sub>2</sub> using a specially designed hermetic  
797 chamber with O<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> controllers and temperature and humidity monitoring (Coy Laboratory  
798 Products, Inc., Grass Lake, MI). Light, feeding, and cleaning cycles were kept uniform for all  
799 groups. Normoxic mice (controls) were also exposed to the same chamber but under a 21%  
800 O<sub>2</sub>.

801 **BV2 cell line culture**

802 The microglial cell line was obtained from the Interlab Cell Line Collection (National Institute for  
803 Cancer Research and Advanced Biotechnology Center, Italy). Cells were grown in RPMI 1640  
804 medium (PAA) with 10% FBS (Gibco), 2 mM L-glutamine (Gibco) and 1% penicillin/streptomycin  
805 (Gibco) in a water-saturated atmosphere of 5% CO<sub>2</sub> and 5% air. Cells were detached by  
806 trypsinization with 0.25% trypsin-EDTA (Gibco). Cells were always plated at 30%–50%  
807 confluence to prevent anaerobic conditions and the activation of microglial cells.

#### 808 **Primary microglial cell cultures**

809 Primary microglia cultures were prepared as previously described<sup>7</sup> from 1 to 3-day-old WT  
810 or *Cx3cr1-Cre::ERT2; Hif1α<sup>Flox/Flox</sup>* mice brains.

#### 811 ***In cellulo* treatments**

812 *Tamoxifen (TMX)*. Primary microglia cultures were treated with 100 nM TMX for 6 days before  
813 microglia isolation by mild trypsinization. *DMOG*. Cells were incubated for 24 h in 1 or 0.1 mM  
814 DMOG dissolved in DMSO. A similar amount of DMSO was added to control cultures. *Hypoxia*,  
815 hypoxic conditions (1% O<sub>2</sub>, and 5% CO<sub>2</sub>) were achieved in a humidified variable aerobic  
816 workstation (Invivo2 300; Ruskinn). *siRNAs*. BV2 cells were transfected with siRNAs (20 nM) in  
817 suspension at 60–70% confluence for 48 h, using Lipofectamine 2000 (Invitrogen) as a  
818 transfection reagent following the manufacturer's instructions.

#### 819 **Flow cytometry**

820 *Cell cycle analysis*. 1 x 10<sup>6</sup> BV2 cells were harvested, PBS washed and resuspended in 5 mL  
821 of ice-cold 70% ethanol, and left overnight at 4°C. Cells were resuspended in 700 μL of  
822 FACS/EDTA (5 mM). Incubated at RT for 15 min, washed twice with 500 μL of FACS/EDTA,  
823 and finally resuspended in 800 μL of FACS/EDTA supplemented with 0.2 mg/mL of RNase A  
824 (Qiagen) and incubated at 37°C in agitation for 1.5 h. Before analysis, 0.04 mg/mL of propidium  
825 iodide (Calbiochem) was added and the samples were incubated at 4°C for 15 min in the dark.  
826 Cells were resuspended in 500 μL of FACS/EDTA. Flow cytometry was performed in a BD  
827 LSRFortessa<sup>TM</sup> and cell cycle distribution was analyzed using BD FACSDiva<sup>TM</sup>  
828 software. *Acute isolation of microglia from adult brain*. Isolated cells were stained with  
829 antibodies CD11b-APC and CD45-PE at 4°C for 30 min. Staining with isotype control-PE and  
830 isotype control-APC was used as a negative control. Both control and experimental samples  
831 were incubated with anti-CD16/CD32 blocker simultaneously. Cells were washed and sorted

832 using a FACS Aria Fusion (Becton Dickinson) flow cytometer and data were acquired and  
833 analyzed with FACSDiva software 8.0 (Becton Dickinson). Gating strategy and data analysis  
834 were made according to guidelines<sup>53</sup>. To separate CLEC7a high and low populations, we used  
835 an anti-CD45-PE and an anti-CD11b-CFblue, with an anti-CLEC7a-FITC at RT for 20 min. Anti-  
836 CLEC7a-FMO control was included (cells stained with anti-CD45-PE and anti-CD11b-CFblue,  
837 but not with anti-CLEC7a-FITC) for autofluorescence values in the FITC channel.

### 838 **RNA extraction and qRT-PCR**

839 *Primary cultures, FACS-isolated microglia, and mouse brain samples:* RNA was extracted using  
840 TRIzol reagent (Life Technologies). RNA samples (0.8 µg for mouse cortical samples and 0.5  
841 µg for primary cultured microglia) were treated with PerfeCTa DNase (Quanta Biosciences) and  
842 copied to cDNA using qScript cDNA Supermix (Quanta Biosciences). cDNA from FACS-isolated  
843 RNA microglia was amplified following the protocol in the microarray section. Real-time qRT-  
844 PCR was performed for all samples in a ViiA 7 Real-Time PCR System (Applied-Biosystems)  
845 using either Power SYBR-Green PCR Master Mix (Applied-Biosystems) or iTaq Universal  
846 Probes Supermix (Bio-Rad) (Supplementary Table 13). *Human samples:* Total RNA and  
847 proteins were extracted using TriPure Isolation Reagent (Roche). RNA integrity (RIN) was  
848 determined by RNA Nano 6000 (Agilent). No significant differences between Braak groups were  
849 observed (RIN = 4.95 ± 1.4). Retrotranscription using 4 µg of total RNA was performed with the  
850 High-Capacity cDNA Archive Kit (Applied Biosystems). 40 ng of cDNA were mixed with 2x  
851 Taqman Universal Master Mix (Applied Biosystems) and 20× Taqman Gene Expression assay  
852 probes (Applied Biosystems) in an ABI Prism 7900HT (Applied Biosystems).

### 853 **Microarrays**

854 RNA quality was assessed using Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer (threshold: RIN > 7). RNA  
855 Amplification, cDNA hybridization and array scanning were performed using GeneChip® WT  
856 Pico Reagent Kit, Mouse Transcriptome 1.0 Array and Scanner 3000 Affymetrix. Raw data from  
857 Expression Console software (Affymetrix) were exported to R-environment using  
858 LIMMA/Bioconductor packages (RStudio, Inc.). Quality assessment, data normalization and  
859 differential expression analysis were performed using Array Quality Metrics package, Robust  
860 Multi-Array method and LIMMA/Bioconductor package respectively. Data is available at Gene  
861 Expression Omnibus repository. Gene expression data from *5xfAD*, *APP751SL+*,



862 *MAPT*<sup>p.P301S/+</sup>, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and aged mouse models were analysed with  
863 the Gene Set Enrichment Analysis (GSEA) using Biological Processes C5-v5.2, KEGG and the  
864 custom HIF1/hypoxia-induced microglial module (HMM), mTOR, and Microglial  
865 neurodegenerative phenotype (MGnD) GSs.

#### 866 **Protein extraction and western blot**

867 *Primary cultures*. Total proteins were extracted using TRIzol reagent (Life Technologies)  
868 according to the manufacturer's instructions. Blotting for HIF1 $\alpha$ , samples were resuspended in  
869 lysis buffer 1 (30 mM Tris-HCl, 2 M thiourea, 7 M urea, 4% (w/v) CHAPS pH 8.5). RC-DC  
870 protein assay kit (Bio-Rad) was used for quantifications. *Human samples*. Proteins were  
871 obtained from frozen human hippocampal tissue after sequential RNA and DNA extraction using  
872 Tripure<sup>TM</sup> Isolation Reagent (Roche). Protein pellets were solubilized using 4% (w/v) SDS, 8 M  
873 urea, 40 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4 under rotation overnight at RT and quantified by Lowry assay.  
874 Western blots were performed using standard procedures. Antibodies used were anti-HIF1 $\alpha$   
875 (1:100), anti-NDUFS2 (1:1,000), anti-SDHA (1:1,000), anti-ATPsyn $\beta$  (1:1,000), anti-RPL26  
876 (1:1,000), and anti- $\beta$ -actin (1:5,000). HRP-conjugated anti-rabbit (1:10,000) or anti-mouse  
877 (1:10,000) antibodies and Western ECL Substrate kit (Bio-Rad) were used for signal  
878 detection.

#### 879 **Immunodetection**

880 *In cellulo*. Microglial cultures plated on coverslips were stained under standard protocols with  
881 anti-IBA1 and anti-GFAP to detect astrocyte contamination. Images were taken with a BX-61  
882 microscope (Olympus). *BrdU staining*; cultures were incubated (3 h) in a media containing 10  
883  $\mu$ M BrdU (Sigma). Cells were fixed with ice-cold 4% paraformaldehyde for 10 min and  
884 permeabilized with ice-cold 70% ethanol at 4°C overnight. Samples were treated with 2 M HCl  
885 for 15 min to denature the DNA followed by incubation with 0.1 M sodium borate pH 6.8 for 15  
886 min. *Mice*. The brain was removed from perfused mice with PBS and immediately fixed  
887 overnight (15 h) at 4°C with 4% PFA in PBS. The brain was paraffin-embedded using an  
888 automatic tissue processor (ASP300S, Leica) and paraffin blocks cut in 20  $\mu$ m thick coronal  
889 sections using a microtome (RM2255, Leica). Immunostaining was performed according to  
890 standard protocols. Primary antibodies used: anti-IBA1 (1:500), anti-GFAP (1:1,000), anti-GS  
891 (1:1,000), anti-UB (1:400), anti-A $\beta$  6e10 (1:500), anti-NDUFS2 (1:1,000), anti-Ki67 (1:200), and

892 anti-p-TAU (1:500). For immunohistochemistry, Envision+ kit (DAKO) was used for chromatic  
893 staining. Secondary antibodies were added the reaction was developed with 3,3-  
894 diaminobenzidine (DAB, DAKO). For immunofluorescent studies, we used secondary antibodies  
895 anti-mouse or anti-rabbit conjugated with Alexa-488 or Alexa-568. Tomato lectin staining was  
896 performed incubating sections at 37°C for 1 h, followed by incubation with Cy3-conjugated  
897 streptavidin (1:500). Thioflavin-S, DAPI, and Prussian blue staining were used as counterstains.  
898 *Human*. For double labeling light microscopy, sections were incubated with the microglial  
899 marker (anti-IBA1, 1:1,000), followed by the biotinylated secondary antibody and streptavidin-  
900 conjugated horseradish peroxidase. The peroxidase reaction was visualized with 0.05% 3-3-  
901 diaminobenzidine tetrahydrochloride (DAB, Sigma-Aldrich), 0.03% nickel ammonium sulfate,  
902 and 0.01% hydrogen peroxide in PBS. After the DAB-nickel reaction (dark blue end product),  
903 sections were then incubated with the anti-A $\beta$  antibody (1:2,000). The second  
904 immunoperoxidase reaction was developed with DAB only (brown reaction end product). For  
905 triple immunolabeling, dark blue (anti-A $\beta$ ) and brown (anti-IBA1)-peroxidase reactions were  
906 sequentially developed. Sections were then incubated with the p-TAU antibody (1:500) and  
907 visualized using the VECTOR® VIP Peroxidase Substrate Kit (Vector Laboratories). Sections  
908 were then mounted on gelatin-coated slides, air-dried, dehydrated in graded ethanol, cleared in  
909 xylene, and coverslipped with DPX (BDH) mounting medium.

#### 910 ***In situ* hybridization and immunostaining**

911 Brain tissues were cryoprotected in sucrose, embedded in OCT compound (Tissue-Tek), and  
912 kept at -80 °C. 10  $\mu$ m coronal slices were obtained with a cryostat (Leica). RNAscope 2.5  
913 (ACD) protocol was used to detect *Hif1a* mRNA (ACD) according to the manufacturer's  
914 instructions, using a HybEZ oven (ACD). Subsequent immunostaining was performed for  
915 microglia staining (with IBA1 marker) and nuclear staining (DAPI dye). After RNAscope 2.5  
916 protocol, slices were incubated for 10 min in PBS-Triton X100 0.3 % (v/v) and washed in PBS.  
917 Samples were incubated with anti-IBA1 antibody (1:500) O/N at 4 °C. Slices were then  
918 incubated with Alexa 488 anti-rabbit (1:400) for 1 h at RT and DAPI (Sigma, 1:1,000) stained  
919 before mounting with Fluoromount-G. Images were acquired in a confocal microscope (Nikon  
920 A1R+).

#### 921 **Electron microscopy**

922 Mice brains were processed according to standard protocols for electron microscopy  
923 visualization. Selected areas were cut in ultrathin sections, stained with uranyl acetate and lead  
924 citrate, and examined with an electron microscope (JEOL JEM 1400). Quantification of  
925 mitochondrial morphology was performed in Fiji by measuring area, perimeter, and major and  
926 minor axis. The "Fit Ellipse" function was used to calculate the major and minor axes. The  
927 following parameters were calculated: (i) Circularity:  $4\pi \cdot \text{area} / \text{perimeter}^2$ . A value of 1.0  
928 indicates a perfect circle. As the value approaches 0.0, it indicates an increasingly elongated  
929 shape. (ii) Aspect ratio: major axis/minor axes.

### 930 **Bioenergetic analysis of primary microglial cell cultures**

931 *Seahorse Extracellular Flux (XFp) Analyzer (Agilent Seahorse)*. Primary microglial cells ( $3.5 \times$   
932  $10^4$  cells/well) were seeded (80  $\mu\text{l}$ /well) in XFp cell culture mini plates and incubated at 37°C in  
933 a humidified incubator with 5% CO<sub>2</sub> for 24 h in their cell growth medium. For the mitochondrial  
934 stress test, oligomycin (20  $\mu\text{M}$ ) carbonyl cyanide-p-trifluoromethoxyphenylhydrazone (FCCP; 20  
935  $\mu\text{M}$ ) and rotenone/antimycin A (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ; all Agilent Seahorse) were loaded for sequential  
936 delivery. For the glycolytic rate assay test, rotenone/antimycin A (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ) and 2-deoxy-D-  
937 glucose (2-DG; 500 mM; all Agilent Seahorse) were similarly loaded. Following calibration,  
938 oxygen consumption rate (OCR), extracellular acidification rate (ECAR), and proton efflux rate  
939 (PER) were measured every 6 min for 72 min and the compounds were injected sequentially at  
940 18 min intervals. OCR, ECAR, and PER were automatically calculated using Seahorse XFp  
941 software and 4–6 biological independent replicates were assessed for each condition.

### 942 **Microglial coverage and stereological quantification**

943 *Human periplaque coverage*. The periplaque microglial coverage was defined as the  
944 percentage of area stained with IBA1 in the periplaque area (delimited by drawing a circle 30  
945  $\mu\text{m}$  from the plaque edge). Images of IBA1/4G8 stained sections were acquired using the  
946 automated digital microscopy system (Olympus VS120, Denmark) connected to an Olympus  
947 BX61VS with a high-resolution digital color camera (VC50 Olympus). Images from plaques of  
948 the different brain areas (dentate gyrus and perirhinal cortex) were then acquired using the  
949 Olyvia 2.6 image viewer software (Olympus, Denmark) (image size: 1654 pixel x 877 pixel; pixel  
950 size: 28.34 pixel/cm). Digital images ( $n = 3$  individuals Braak V-VI) were processed using the  
951 Visilog 6.3 (Noesis, France) image analysis system. *Dystrophy pathology related to microglial*

952 coverage was quantified per each plaque analyzing the percentages of area stained with AT8  
953 (p-TAU) and with IBA1 in the plaque area. Images of AT8/IBA1/4G8 triple immunostained  
954 sections from dentate gyrus were acquired using the digital microscopy system (Olympus  
955 VS120) as described for periplaque coverage quantification. Digital images were processed  
956 using Fiji (ImageJ). Three different binary masks (AT8, IBA1, and 4G8-reactive area) were  
957 generated using the color threshold segmentation (HSB mode) and each selected area was  
958 measured. Finally, the protection index was calculated as the ratio IBA1/A $\beta$  plaque. *Number,*  
959 *coverage of mouse A $\beta$  plaques, and proliferative microglia.* Amyloid plaques were visualized  
960 with Thio-S staining and were randomly selected blind to the treatment in the cortex and  
961 hippocampus. Quantifications were done in superimages generated with the NewCAST system  
962 (Visiopharm) associated with the microscope BX61 (Olympus). The number of microglia cells  
963 surrounding amyloid plaques was determined after immunostaining for IBA1 and staining with  
964 DAPI using immunofluorescence. Microglia coverage of individual amyloid plaques was  
965 obtained by normalizing IBA1 occupied area by the area occupied for the corresponding Thio-S  
966 reactive plaque, calculated from binary masks generated with appropriate thresholds for all  
967 images in Fiji. Results are presented as a percentage of IBA1 per A $\beta$  plaque area. Proliferative  
968 microglia were identified as double reactive for Ki67 and IBA1. To quantify different signals  
969 around A $\beta$  plaques, we drawn a 50  $\mu$ m radius circle and quantify the density using Fiji (ISH  
970 *Hif1a* mRNA and NDUFS2). In wild-type and regions distal to A $\beta$  plaques, full images were  
971 quantified and a density of the marker was calculated. *Microglial stereology.* The measurements  
972 were performed blind to the treatment. Unbiased stereological approach using an Olympus  
973 BX61 microscope combined with the CAST system. The sample area was then manually  
974 outlined and the total area quantified using CAST software and microglia between two specific  
975 bregma points were estimated using a dissector area of 28,521.3  $\mu$ m<sup>2</sup> (CAST). The dentate  
976 gyrus was chosen as a sample area.

### 977 **Amyloid plaque quantification**

978 These measurements were blind to the treatment. Quantifications were done in superimages  
979 generated with the NewCAST system (Visiopharm) associated with the microscope BX61  
980 (Olympus). *Load.* The Thio-S and A $\beta$  plaques load were estimated using Fiji. A segmented  
981 binary mask was generated and the occupied area by detected particles over a specific

982 constant threshold was quantified. The load was defined as the percentage of total cortex area  
983 occupied by Thio-S and A $\beta$ . *Density*. This parameter was calculated by dividing the number of  
984 detected particles obtained in parallel to the load quantification described above by the sampled  
985 cortical area. *Frequency*. The size of each detected particle obtained with the load quantification  
986 above was registered and density was calculated for different intervals of plaque size.

#### 987 **Dystrophic neurites quantification**

988 Amyloid plaques were visualized upon Thio-S staining. These measurements were blind to the  
989 treatment. Quantifications were done in superimages generated with the NewCAST system  
990 (Visiopharm) associated with the microscope BX61 (Olympus). *Ubiquitin (UB) load*. The UB  
991 load was estimated using Fiji. A segmented binary mask was generated and the occupied area  
992 by detected particles over a specific constant threshold was quantified. The load was defined as  
993 the percentage of cortical brain area occupied by UB. *p-TAU load*. Plaques were randomly  
994 selected by Thio-S staining and the Thio-S and p-TAU area were estimated using Fiji in  
995 individual plaques. Results are presented as a percentage of p-TAU area per amyloid plaque  
996 area.

#### 997 **A $\beta$ ELISA**

998 For soluble A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> quantification, proteins were extracted from acutely dissected hemibrains of  
999 using a Dounce's homogenizer in PBS (8x wet weight/volume buffer) containing phosphatase  
1000 and protease inhibitors (Sigma, 1:1,000). Samples were consecutively centrifuged at 600 g,  
1001 15,000, and 100,000 g in an Optima-Max ultracentrifuge (Beckman-Coulter) at 4°C. The  
1002 supernatant was carefully decanted and stored on ice until used for the assay. For standard  
1003 curve samples, lyophilized A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> synthetic peptide (Anaspec) was used. Human A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> ELISA  
1004 Kit (Invitrogen) was used following the manufacturer's instructions. Measurements were  
1005 normalized by protein levels using RC-DC protein assay kit (Bio-Rad).

#### 1006 **Dot Blot**

1007 Cortical soluble extracts were obtained as described for soluble A $\beta$  quantification. Total protein  
1008 was quantified with RC-DC kit (Biorad), according to manufacturer's guidelines, and using  
1009 bovine serum albumin (BSA) for the standard curve. 1  $\mu$ g of each soluble extract was spotted  
1010 onto a nitrocellulose membrane (GE Healthcare) and air-dried for 30 min. The membrane was  
1011 incubated ON with the primary antibody OC (Millipore, 1:5,000). Signal detection was performed

1012 using a secondary HRP-conjugated anti-rabbit antibody and Western ECL Substrate kit (Bio-  
1013 Rad).

#### 1014 **List of abbreviations**

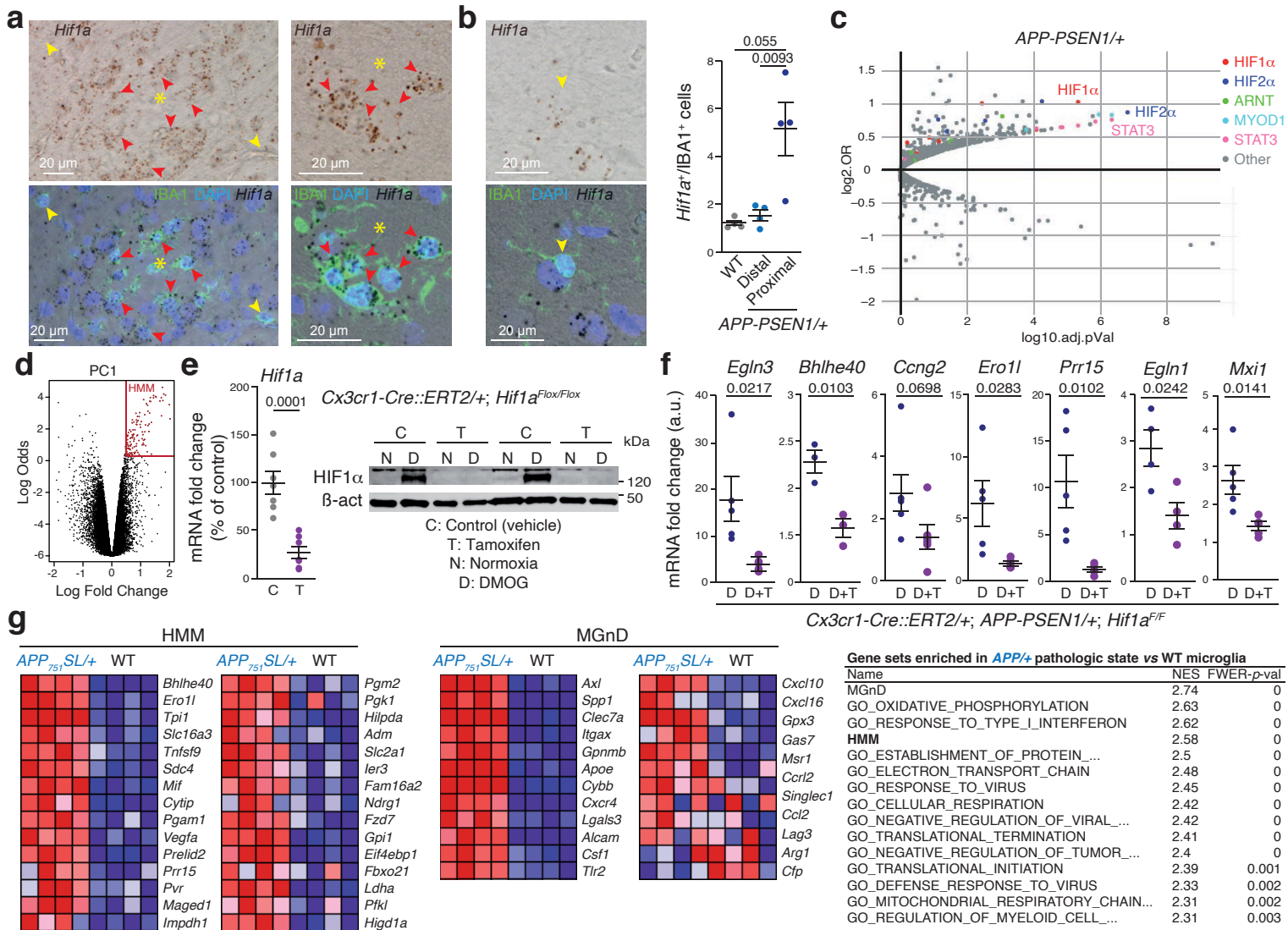
1015 AD: Alzheimer's disease; DAM: Disease-associated microglia; TREM2: Triggering receptor  
1016 expressed on myeloid cells 2; APOE: Apolipoprotein E; MGnD: Microglial neurodegenerative  
1017 phenotype; mTOR: Mechanistic/mammalian target of rapamycin; HIF1: Hypoxia-Inducible factor  
1018 1; A $\beta$ AM: A $\beta$  plaque-associated microglia; ISH: *In situ* hybridization; TFEA: Transcription factor  
1019 enrichment analysis; HMM: HIF1/hypoxia-induced microglial module; DE: Differentially  
1020 expressed; ES: End-stage; WT: Wild-type; GSEA: Gene set enrichment analysis; OXPHOS:  
1021 Oxidative phosphorylation; H: Hypoxia; N: Normoxia; R: Reoxygenation; D: DMOG; PI:  
1022 Propidium iodide; BrdU: Bromodeoxyuridine; oA $\beta$ : Oligomeric A $\beta$ ; PFA: Paraformaldehyde; ON:  
1023 Overnight; RT: Room temperature.

#### 1024 **Statistical analysis**

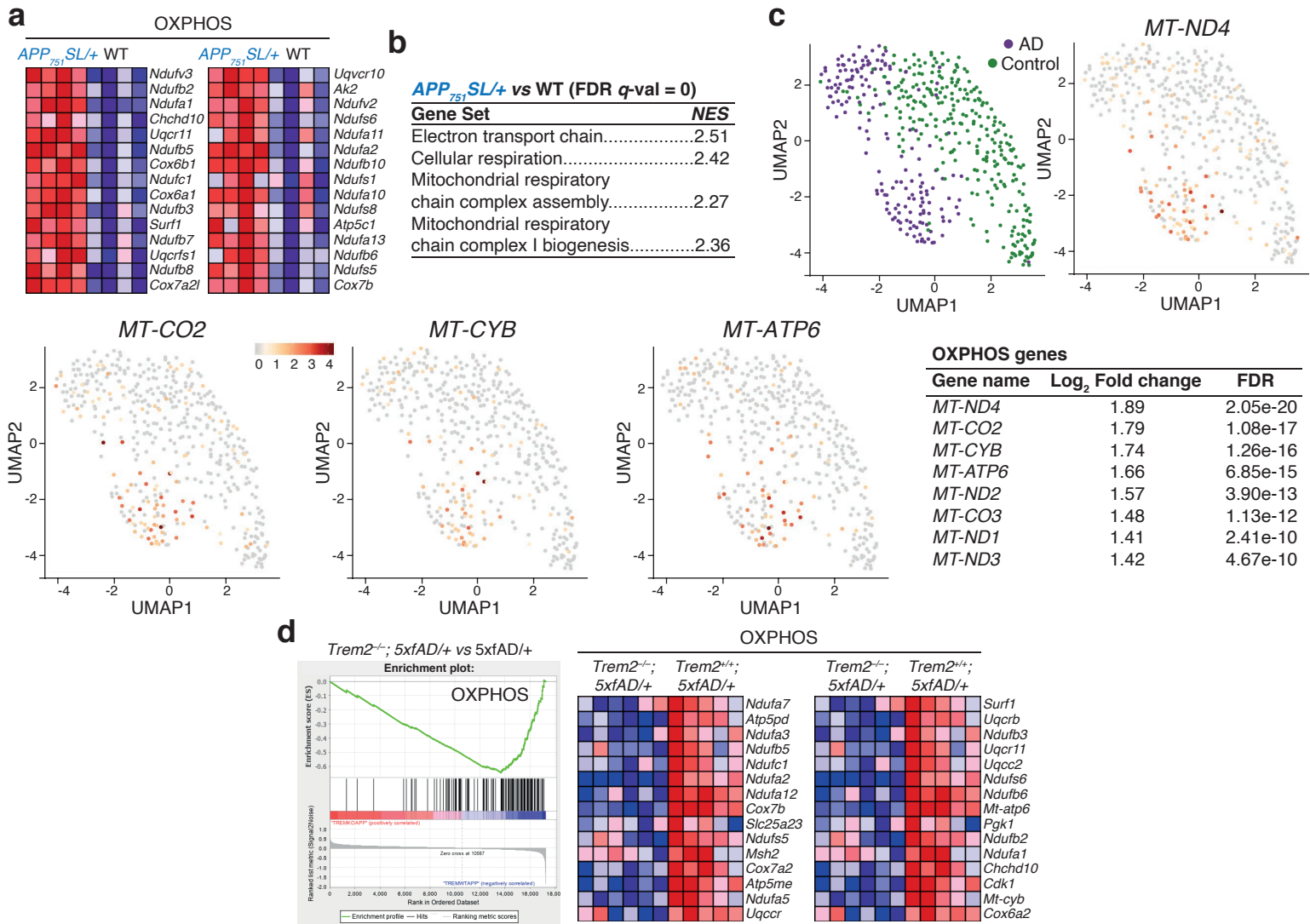
1025 All individual measurements constitute biological replicates. Samples with an  $n < 9$  were  
1026 analyzed using parametric tests. Samples with an  $n \geq 9$  were evaluated for normal distribution  
1027 using D'Agostino and Pearson's omnibus normality test. Comparisons between two groups  
1028 were performed with two-sided unpaired Student's *t*-test whereas comparisons between more  
1029 than two groups were done with ANOVA with Tukey's test. Data are expressed as mean  $\pm$   
1030 standard error of the mean (S.E.M.) at less specified in the figure legends;  $p \leq 0.05$  was  
1031 considered statistically significant. For human samples, different groups were compared using  
1032 Mann-Whitney U's test. Statistical analyses and graphs were performed in GraphPad Prism  
1033 version 9.0 (GraphPad Inc.).

#### 1034 **Data availability**

1035 The raw data are available at the Source Data accompanying this article. Transcriptomics data  
1036 are available at GEO with the following accession numbers: (i) Mouse primary microglial  
1037 cultures exposed to normoxia or hypoxia: GSE97423; (ii) Isolated Clec7a<sup>+</sup> microglia from WT,  
1038 *APP*<sub>751SL</sub> and *MAPT*<sub>p.P301S</sub> mice: GSE129296; and (iii) Isolated microglia from *APP*-  
1039 *PSEN1*<sup>+/+</sup>; *VHL*<sup>Flox/-</sup> with or without TMX treatment GSE168059.

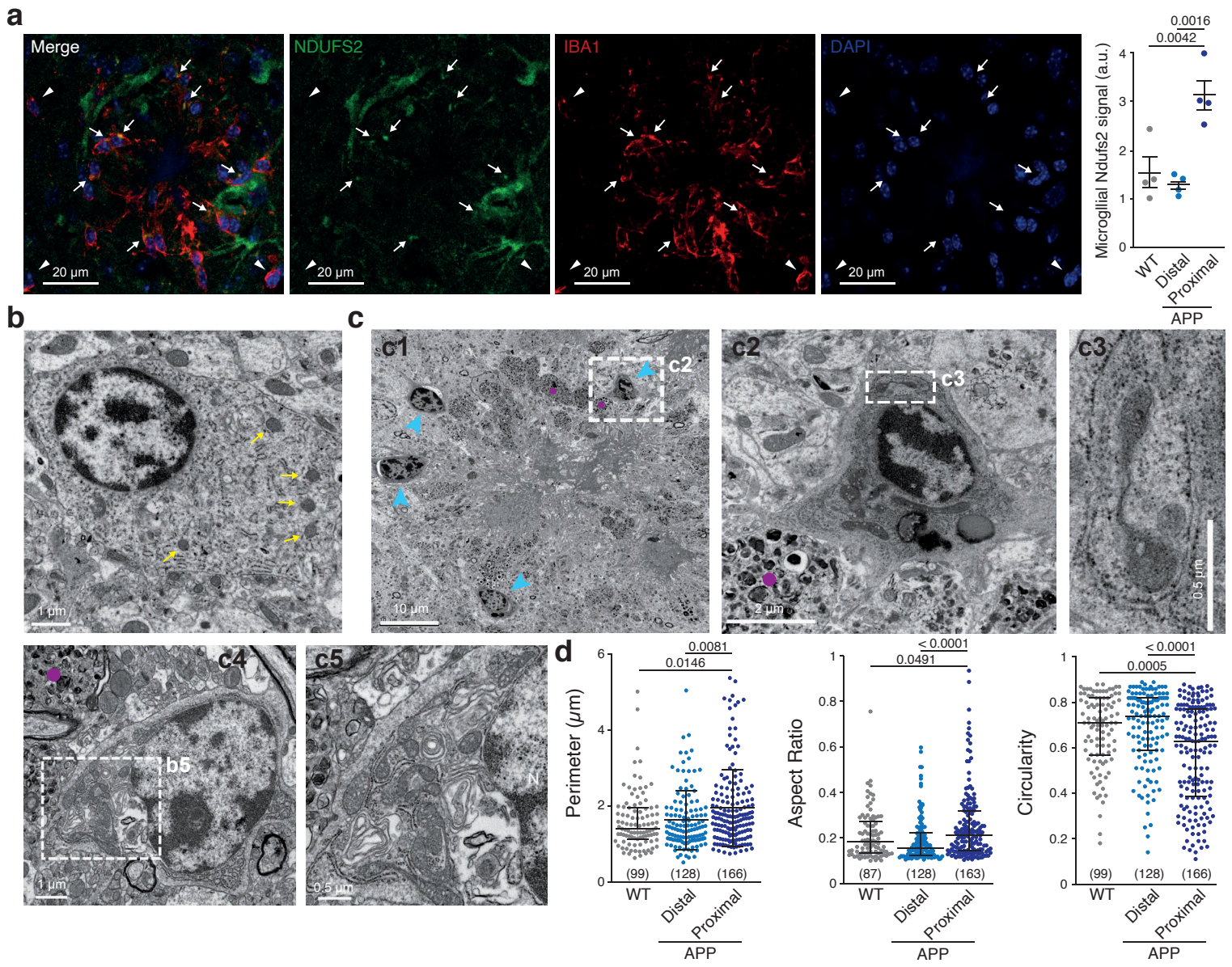


March-Diaz et al., Figure 1

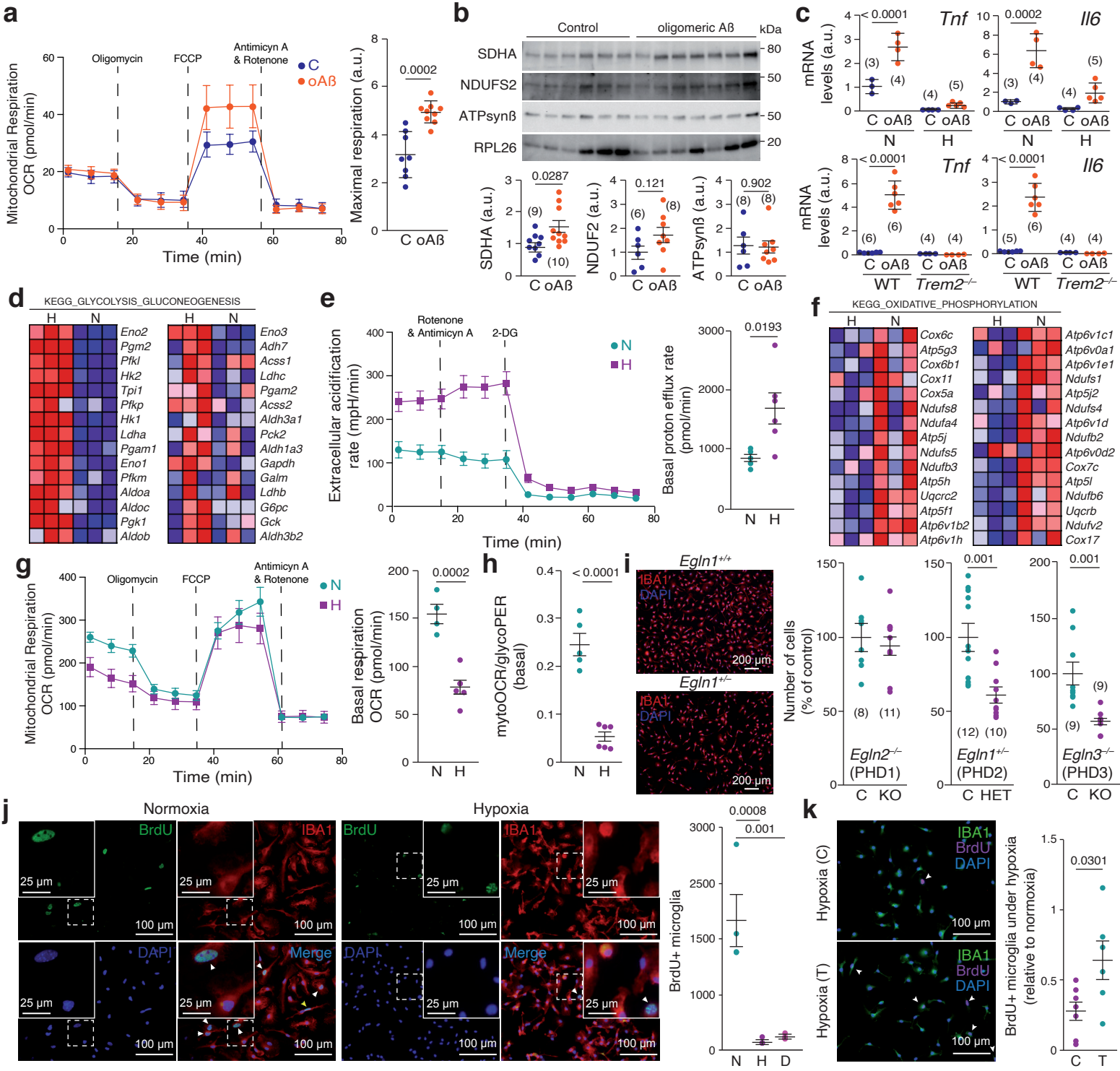


March-Diaz *et al.*, Figure 2

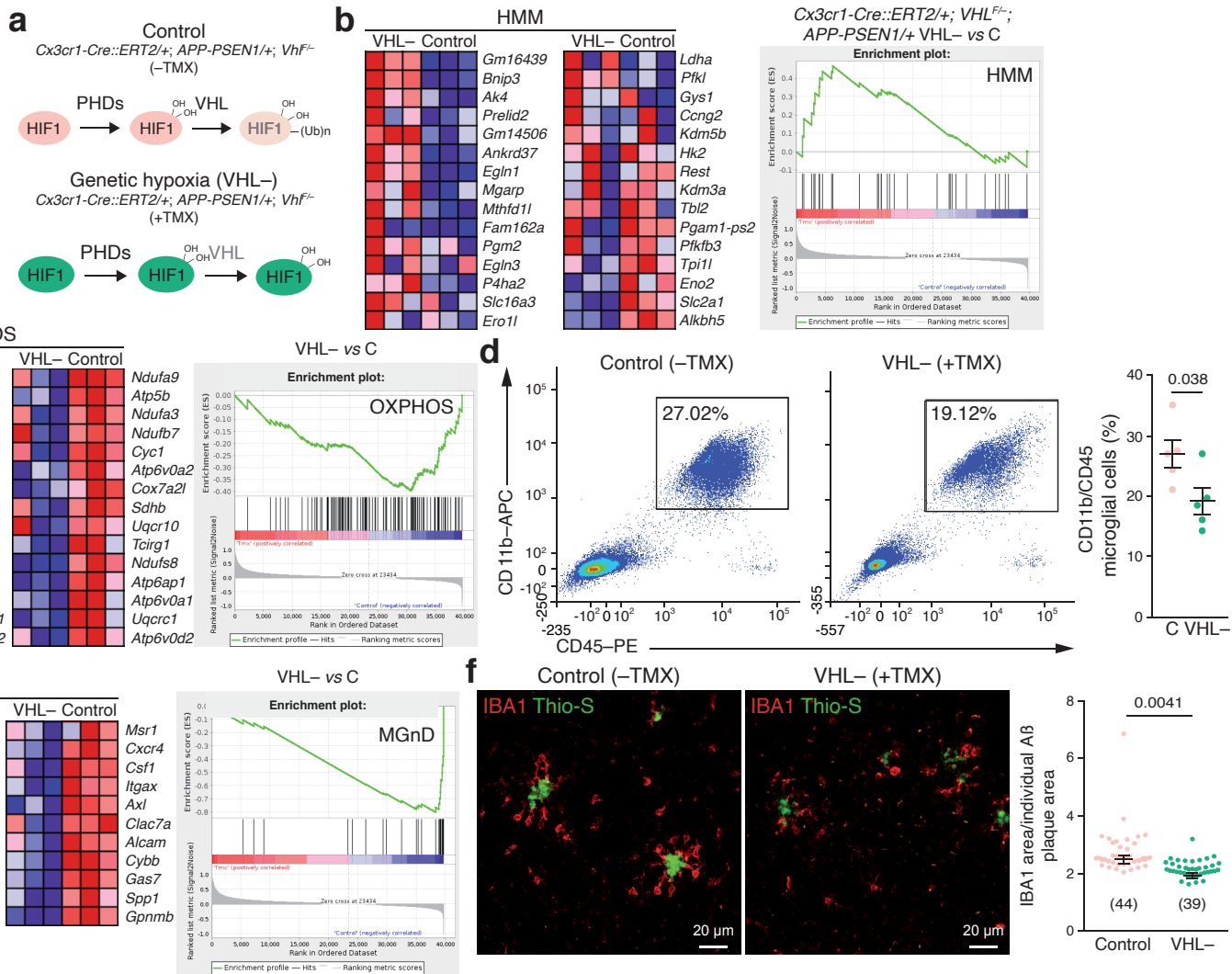




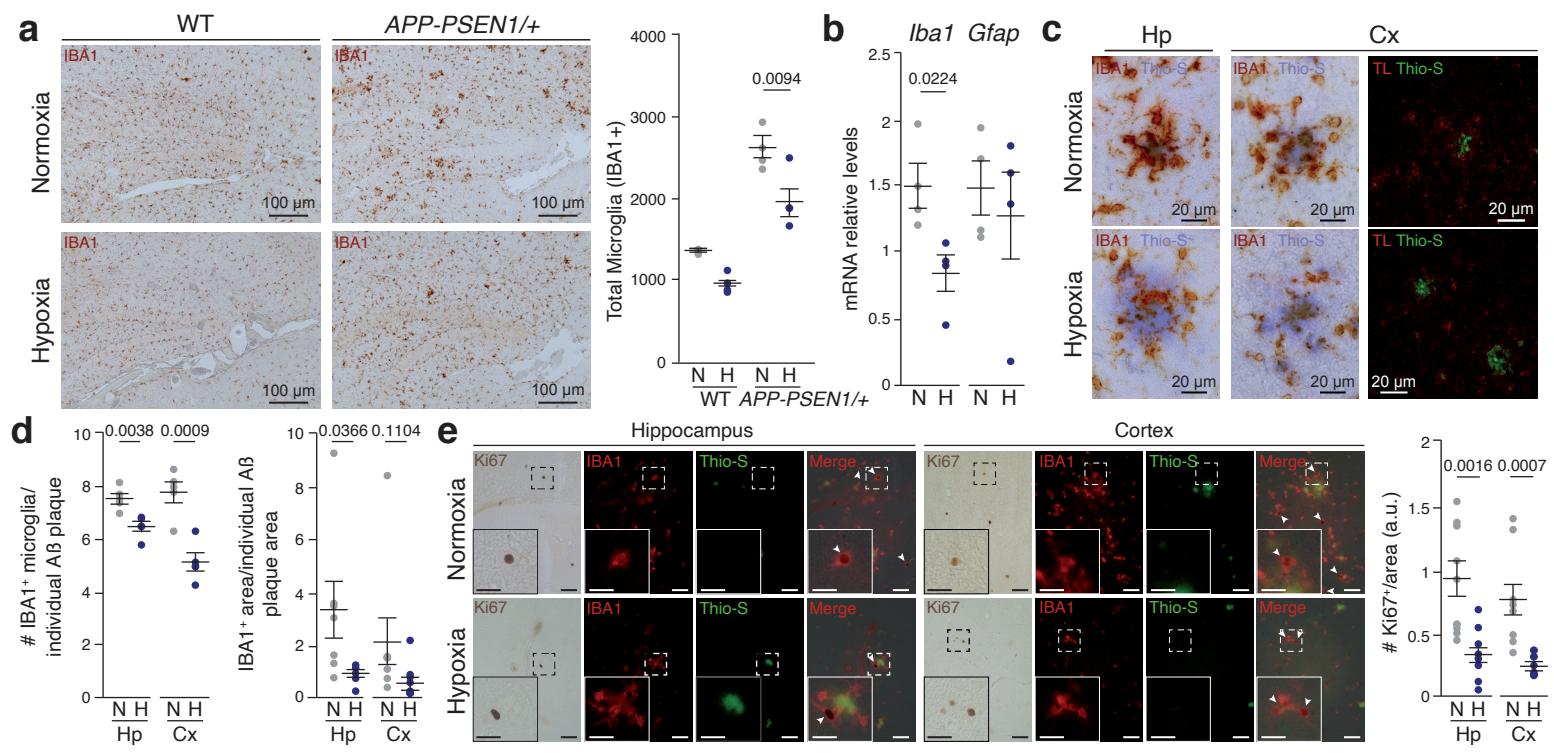
March-Diaz *et al.*, Figure 3



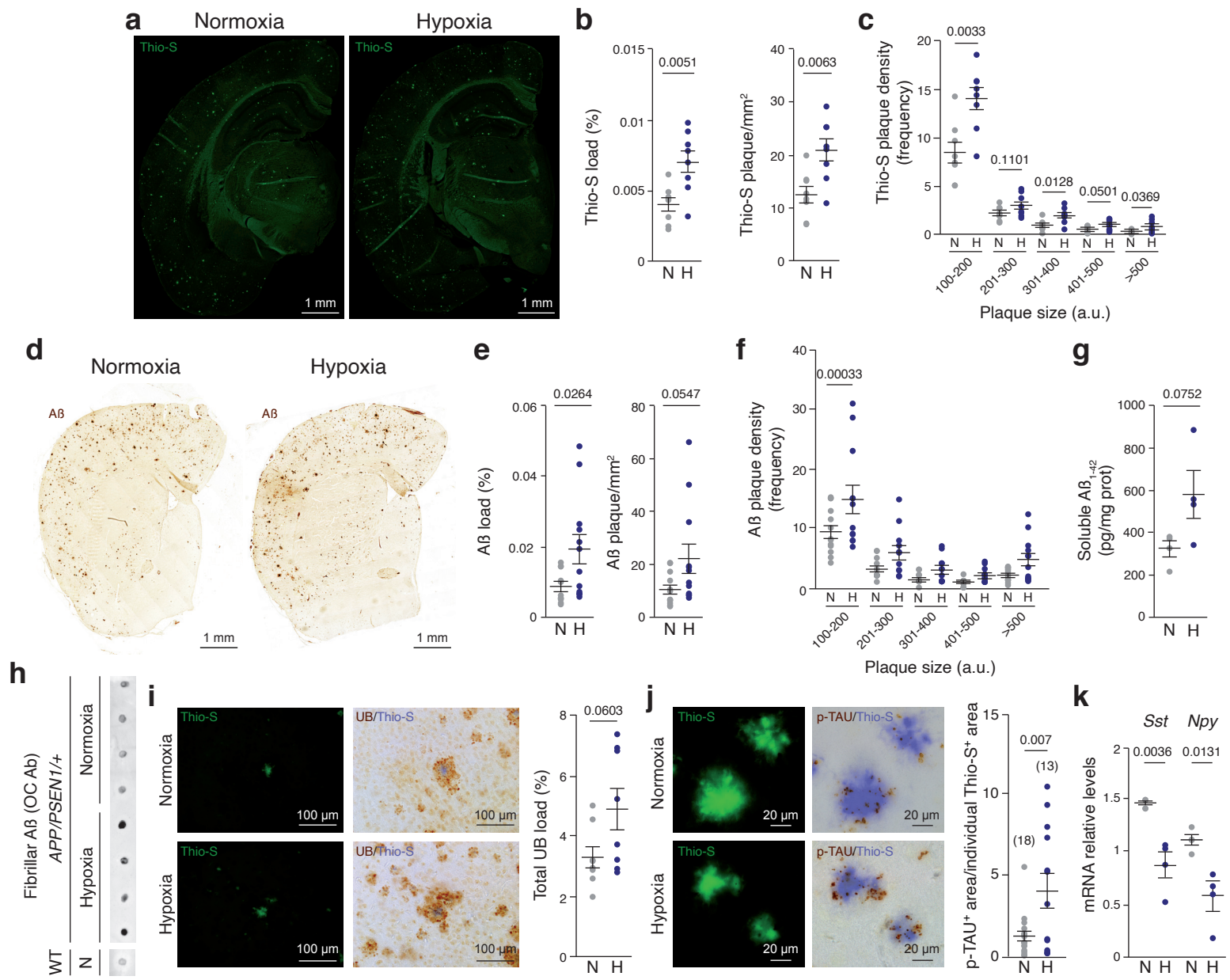
March-Diaz et al., Figure 4



March-Diaz *et al.*, Figure 5



March-Diaz *et al.*, Figure 6



March-Diaz *et al.*, Figure 7

