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A cellular taxonomy of the bone marrow stroma in homeostasis and leukemia

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SUMMARY

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Data and Software Availability

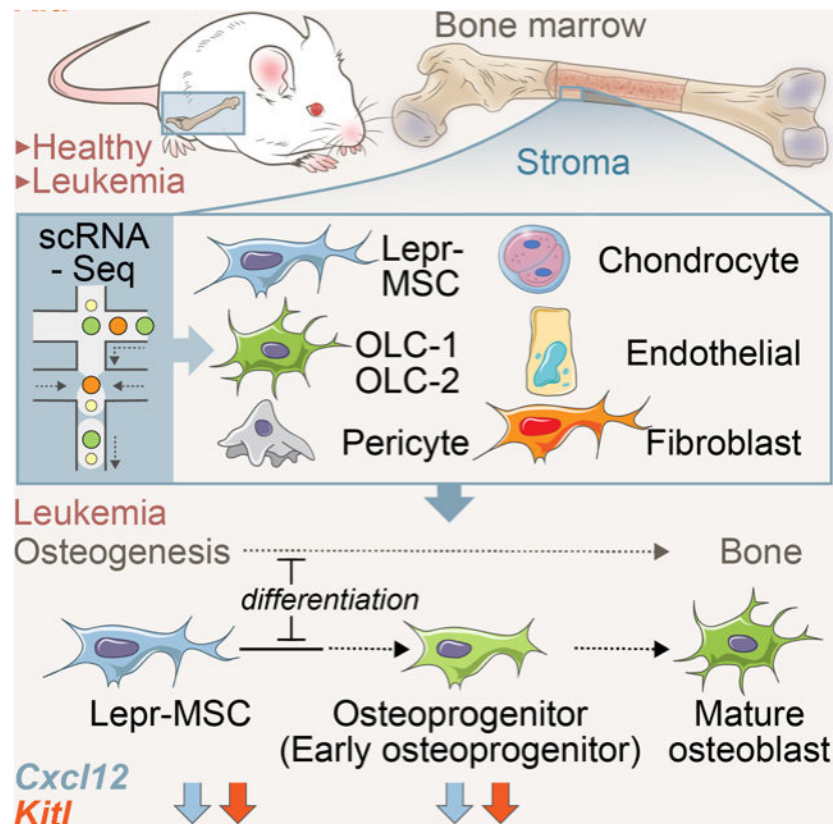
The scRNA-seq data generated in this study are deposited in GEO (GSE128423, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/query/acc.cgi?acc=GSE128423>).

Declaration of Interests

D.T.S., director and shareholder of Magenta Therapeutics, Agios Pharmaceuticals, Editas Medicines, Clear Creek Bio, Red Oak Medicines and LifeVaultBio; a shareholder of Fate Therapeutics, a consultant for Magenta Therapeutics, Clear Creek Bio, Red Oak Medicines, VCanBio and a SAB member of FOG Pharma. A.R., a founder and equity holder of Celsius Therapeutics; a member of the SAB for ThermoFisher Scientific and Syros Pharmaceuticals. M.S.K., employed by Celsius Therapeutics. The authors have filed for patent (62/808,177).

Stroma is a poorly defined non-parenchymal component of virtually every organ with key roles in organ development, homeostasis and repair. Studies of the bone marrow stroma have defined individual populations in the stem cell niche regulating hematopoietic regeneration and capable of initiating leukemia. Here, we use single-cell RNA-seq to define a cellular taxonomy of the mouse bone marrow stroma and its perturbation by malignancy. We identified seventeen stromal subsets expressing distinct hematopoietic regulatory genes spanning new fibroblastic and osteoblastic subpopulations including distinct osteoblast differentiation trajectories. Emerging acute myeloid leukemia impaired mesenchymal osteogenic differentiation and reduced regulatory molecules necessary for normal hematopoiesis. These data suggest that tissue stroma responds to malignant cells by disadvantaging normal parenchymal cells. Our taxonomy of the stromal compartment provides a comprehensive bone marrow cell census and experimental support for cancer cell crosstalk with specific stromal elements to impair normal tissue function and thereby enable emergent cancer.

Graphical Abstract



eTOC Blurp

Molecular definition of the cell populations comprising bone marrow stroma is provided with single cell resolution. Seventeen distinct cell subsets with new mesenchymal, pericyte, fibroblast and endothelial subpopulations, new inferred osteolineage differentiation trajectories and distinctions among Lepr, Nestin and NG2-expressing HSC niche populations defined. The changes imposed by an emergent AML indicate impaired stromal differentiation among mesenchymal cells

and decreased expression of hematopoietic regulatory genes consistent with cancer cells indirectly impairing the normal hematopoietic cells with whom they must compete.

Keywords

Hematopoiesis; stem cell; stroma; bone marrow niche; single-cell RNA-sequencing; leukemia; tumor microenvironment

INTRODUCTION

Stem cell niches are a tissue microenvironment that maintains and regulates stem cell function through cellular interactions and secreted factors (Schofield, 1978; Scadden, 2014). Hematopoiesis provides a paradigm for understanding mammalian stem cell niches with pivotal knowledge from numerous *in vivo* studies on the critical role of specific non-hematopoietic, stromal cells in regulating hematopoietic stem cell (HSC) function (Calvi et al., 2003; Ding et al., 2012; Kunisaki et al., 2013; Mendez-Ferrer et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2003).

One major component is multipotent mesenchymal stem/stromal cells (MSCs), nonhematopoietic cells derived from the mesoderm with potential to differentiate into bone, fat and cartilage *in vitro* (Kfoury and Scadden, 2015). While MSCs are found in most tissues, their diversity and lineage relationships are incompletely understood. For instance, several subtypes of MSCs that regulate HSCs have been described in specialized bone niches. Most of them are located in the perivascular space and associated with arteriole or sinusoidal blood vessels, produce key HSC niche factors such as Cxcl12 and Stem Cell Factor (SCF, also named *Kitl*) (Morrison and Scadden, 2014). They are identified by expression of Leptin receptor (*Lepr*) (Ding and Morrison, 2013; Ding et al., 2012), Nestin (*Nes*) (Mendez-Ferrer et al., 2010) or NG2 (*Cspg4*) (Kunisaki et al., 2013), and were mostly studied in *Lepr*-cre, *Nes*-GFP and NG2-CreER reporter lines, respectively. However, the *Lepr*-cre (Zhou et al., Cell Stem Cell, 2014) and *Nes*-GFP (Mendez-Ferrer et al., Nature 2010) are non-inducible mouse lines with expression throughout development or with discrepancy between expression of the marker gene and that of the endogenous locus. Therefore, it is unclear if these markers delineate distinct or overlapping cell populations. Other non-hematopoietic cells, including bone marrow derived endothelial cells (BMECs) and MSC-descendent osteolineage cells (OLCs), also function as niche cells. BMECs produce Cxcl12 and *Kitl* and are critical regulators of HSC function (Butler et al., 2010; Ding et al., 2012; Doan et al., 2013; Hooper et al., 2009; Itkin et al., 2016; Kobayashi et al., 2010; Kusumbe et al., 2016). OLCs are critical for HSC homing after lethal irradiation and bone marrow transplantation (Lo Celso et al., 2009), modulate hematopoietic progenitor function and lineage maturation (Ding and Morrison, 2013; Yu et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2015), and dysfunction in some of them has been implicated in development of myelodysplasia and leukemia (Dong et al., 2016; Kode et al., 2014; Raaijmakers et al., 2010; Zambetti et al., 2016).

Despite extensive studies, a comprehensive analysis of bone marrow stromal cells is missing, limiting our ability to prospectively isolate and functionally characterize niche

cells. Previous profiling studies used reporter genes to purify bulk cell populations (Morrison and Scadden, 2014), which necessarily underestimate cell complexity and restrict analysis in a marker-biased manner.

Here, we use single cell RNA-seq (scRNA-seq) to chart a comprehensive census of the bone marrow stroma. We identified 17 distinct cell subsets and their gene signatures, and defined stromal cells expressing key niche factors at steady-state hematopoiesis. We further inferred their differentiation relationships, and characterized diversity within specific cell types. Finally, we dissected the global influence of developing acute myeloid leukemia (AML) on the bone marrow microenvironment and described resulting cellular and molecular abnormalities.

RESULTS

A scRNA-seq census of bone marrow stroma identifies six distinct cell populations, and their differentiation relations

To explore the cellular composition of the mouse bone marrow stroma, we profiled non-hematopoietic bone marrow cells from C57Bl/6 mice (n=14) by droplet-based scRNA-seq (Figure 1A,B, S1A–E). Unbiased clustering of the stroma resulted in 17 clusters originating from *bone* or *bone marrow* (Figure 1B (insert), Table S1), spanning MSCs, OLCs, chondrocytes, fibroblasts, BMECs and pericytes and possible transitional states (Figure 1B–H, S1F–H). In particular, there were: (1) MSCs (cluster 1, expressing *Lepr* (Ding and Morrison, 2013) and *Cxcl12* (Greenbaum et al., 2013)); (2) two OLC subsets (Cluster 7 and 8, expressing osteocalcin (*Bglap*) (Delmas et al., 1986)); (3) four chondrocyte subsets (clusters 2, 10, 13 and 17; expressing the chondrocyte markers, Aggrecan (*Acan*) (Doege et al., 1991) and *Col2a1* (Chan et al., 1995)); (4) five fibroblasts subsets (Cluster 3, 5, 9, 15 and 16; expressing Fibroblast specific protein-1 (*S100a4*) (Strutz et al., 1995)); (5) three BMEC subsets (Clusters 0, 6, 11; expressing the pan-endothelial marker Ve-cadherin (*Cdh5*) (Corada et al., 2001)); (6) pericytes (Cluster 12, expressing alpha smooth muscle actin (*Acta2*) (Armulik et al., 2011)); and (7) Clusters 4 and 8, expressing markers of chondrocytes, osteoblasts and fibroblasts. Fibroblasts, OLCs and chondrocytes had the lowest proliferation status (Figure S1I).

To help resolve differentiation relations among cells we used correlations of average expression profiles between clusters (Figure 1F), graph abstraction (Wolf et al., 2017b) (Figure 1G), and diffusion map analysis (Schiebinger et al., 2017) (Figure 1H, S1F). We discuss these below in the context of each lineage and differentiation path.

We validated two of the most abundant subsets, MSCs and BMECs by FACS, showing that the four clusters can be partitioned prospectively by using antibodies that label BMECs (CD31, Sca-1(*Ly6a*), CD34, *Cdh5*) or MSCs (CD106) (Figure S1G, K, L).

Lepr-MSCs produce HSC regulators and partition into subsets spanning a differentiation continuum

The prevailing model of MSCs in the bone marrow is that of a multipotent stem cell that can differentiate into bone cells, adipocytes and chondrocytes (Dominici et al., 2006), but their

exact identity remains unclear. While many protein markers have been proposed and deployed in mice (e.g., *Cxcl12*, *Lepr*, *Nes*, *NG2* (Ding and Morrison, 2013; Ding et al., 2012; Kunisaki et al., 2013; Mendez-Ferrer et al., 2010; Sugiyama et al., 2006), or human (CD73 (*Nt5e*), CD106 (*Vcam1*) (Mabuchi et al., 2013), CD105 (*Eng*) (Dominici et al., 2006), CD90 (*Thy1*) (Pittenger et al., 1999)), there is no single accepted combination and some may also be expressed by pericytes, BMECs and chondrocytes (Kfoury and Scadden, 2015). We hypothesized that more comprehensive transcriptional profiles will better identify subsets and relate them to legacy markers.

We annotated cluster 1 (Figure 2A) as *Lepr*⁺ mesenchymal *stromal* cells (hereafter referred to as *Lepr*-MSCs) with pre-adipocytic features. First, the cells highly expressed *Lepr*, a perivascular MSC marker (Ding et al., 2012; Morrison and Scadden, 2014), adiponectin (*Adipoq*), a gene highly expressed in preadipocytes (Lara-Castro et al., 2007), and the key HSC niche factors *Cxcl12*, *Kitl* and Angiopoietin-1 (*Angptl*) (Figure 2B,C, S2C). The cells expressed MSC markers (*Nt5e*, *Vcam1* and *Eng*) as well as *Grem1*, a marker of mouse skeletal stem cells (Worthley et al., 2015) (Figure S2A,C). Other previously proposed MSC markers, such as *Thy1*, *Ly6a* and the perivascular MSC markers *Nes* and *NG2* (*Cspg4*), were not expressed in cluster 1, but were expressed in other clusters. This indicated the potential for MSC activity in other clusters (Figure S2A–C). Our designation of mesenchymal *stromal* cells does not preclude the functional attributes of mesenchymal *stem* cells in other stromal populations. Our taxonomy was based on gene expression with annotations of putative functions; current methods do not allow *in vivo* functional assessment of each cell cluster.

Within *Lepr*-MSCs, we distinguished four subsets (*Lepr*-MSC-1–4) by subclustering and diffusion trajectory analysis (Angerer et al., 2016) (Figure 2D,E, S2D,E). While *Kitl* and *Angptl* were comparably expressed in all four subsets, they were distinguished by the expression of *Cxcl12*, *Lepr*, *Grem1* and multiple other genes (Figure 2F, S2E). In particular, one subset (*Lepr*-MSC-4) had significantly higher expression of the key functional OLC-specification genes *Sp7* (osterix), and *Alpl* (Huang et al., 2007; Nakashima et al., 2002)) while the OLC-specification gene *Runx2* showed no difference between the subclusters (Figure S2E,F), suggesting differentiation towards the osteoblastic lineage, supported by the continuous transition inferred between cells from the *Lepr*-MSC and OLC-1 clusters in differentiation trajectories (Figure 1G,H). Indeed, OLCs that include osteoprogenitors and mature osteoblasts, can be derived from MSCs (Park et al., 2012; Worthley et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2014a).

Inferred lineage relations suggest two OLC subsets of different differentiation origins and distinct hematopoietic support potential

To further analyze osteolineage differentiation, we focused on *Lepr*-MSC-4, along with cluster 7 (OLC-1) and 8 (OLC-2) (Figure 3A) that expressed the osteoblast maturation marker *Bglap* (Figure 3B, S3A) (Delmas et al., 1986), and formed a continuum in the diffusion map (Figure 1H). All three clusters differentially expressed *Runx2*, the master regulator transcription factor (TF) controlling the commitment of MSCs to OLCs (Huang et al., 2007), and both OLC-1 and OLC-2 further expressed *Sp7*, its downstream target TF, which together are required for early and late osteolineage differentiation (Figure 3B,C,

S3A). Furthermore, *Bglap* was expressed in a subset of the clusters', along with other osteoblastic maturation makers (*Alpl*, *Col1a1*, *Spp1* and *Pth1r* (Huang et al., 2007)) (Figure 3B,C, S3B).

Whereas Lepr-MS-C4 consisted of putative committed osteolineage MSCs, the cells in OLC-1 spanned a continuum of osteoblastic states in the diffusion map (Figure 3D,E) and differential gene expression (Figure S3C) analyses, including, in order: (1) early osteoprogenitors that were in a cell transition-state from Lepr-MS-C4 (Figure 2E and 3D,E), expressing *Runx2*, *Sp7*, *Grem1*, *Lepr*, *Cxcl12* and *Kitl* (Figure 3F,G, S3C), but not osteoblast maturation markers (*Bglap* and *Col1a1*; Figure 3H); (2) preosteoblasts (*e.g.* late osteoprogenitors), highly expressing the osteoprogenitor marker CD200 (Abdallah et al., 2015; Chan et al., 2015) and *Spp1* (Figure 3I), a marker of later stages of osteoblastic differentiation (Huang et al., 2007), but lowly expressing osteoblast maturation markers (Figure 3H); and (3) mature osteoblasts expressing *Bglap* and *Col1a1* (Figure 3H). In addition, the subcluster included (4) putative chondrocytes expressing low levels of *Sox9*, a TF essential for chondrocyte differentiation (Foster et al., 1994; Wagner et al., 1994), and *Acan*, a chondrocyte marker gene (Doege et al., 1991) (Figure 3J).

Remarkably, the OLC-2 (mostly *bone* origin, Figure 1B (insert)) cells highlighted a distinct subset of OLCs from those found in a continuum from Lepr-MS-C4. Along the continuum spanned by OLC-2 cells (Figure 3D,K, S3D and Table S2) we observed: (1) Osteoprogenitors (8_3), expressing *Runx2*, *Sp7*, *Grem1*, and *Mmp13*, the matrix metalloproteinase that regulates the calcification and degradation of cartilage during the endochondral ossification process (Nishimura et al., 2012) (Figure 3L, S3E), but low levels of *Bglap* and *Sox9* (Figure 3M, S3E); (2) Osteoblasts (8_2) expressing OLC markers (*Runx2*, *Sp7*, *Spp1*, *Bglap* and *Pth1r*, Figure 3L,M, S3E) and (3) osteo/chondrocytes (8_0, 8_1, 8_4 and 8_5) that appeared to be in the process of being ossified into bone (Yang et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2014b). Notably, only OLC-1 cells expressed key hematopoietic regulatory cytokines (albeit 8_3 in OLC-2 expressed relatively low levels *Cxcl12*) (Figure 3M) suggesting that there were two OLC subsets of distinct differentiation origins and with distinct hematopoietic support potential.

Characterization of chondrocyte cell differentiation

We next examined the differentiation of chondrocytes. Cells in five clusters (Clusters 2, 4, 10, 13, 17) all expressed the chondrocyte lineage genes *Sox9*, *Acan* and *Col2a1* (Figure 4A,B), formed a sequence in the overall diffusion map (Figure 4C) and distinguished: (1) Proliferating and resting chondrocytes (Cluster 10) expressing *Col2a1* (Inada et al., 1999) (Figure 4A,B, S1I); (2) prehypertrophic chondrocytes that started the maturation process (Clusters 2 and 17), co-expressing *Ihh*, *Pth1r* (Vortkamp et al., 1996), *Mef2c* (Arnold et al., 2007) (Figure 4A, S4A–C), (3) hypertrophic chondrocytes (Cluster 2) co-expressing *Runx2*, *Ihh*, *Mef2c* and *Col10a1* (Figure 4A, S4A–C) (Arnold et al., 2007); as well as (4) putative chondrocyte progenitor cells (cluster 4) that were in transition into OLC-2 (Figure 4C, 1H) expressing *Grem1* (Figure S4B), OLC markers (*Runx2*, *Sp7*, *Alpl*, *Spp1*) (Figure 3B, S3B) and chondrocyte markers (*Sox9*, *Acan*, Figure 4B).

A fibroblast subset expresses hematopoietic niche regulators

Fibroblasts are cells of mesenchymal origin that are ubiquitous in the bone marrow and consist of phenotypically and functionally distinct subpopulations (Kalluri, 2016). Due to the paucity of distinctive markers and similar morphology and phenotypes, they are commonly confounded in the bone marrow with MSCs and pericytes limiting the accuracy of functional studies (Soundararajan and Kannan, 2018).

Five fibroblasts clusters (3, 5, 9, 15, 16) all highly expressed the fibroblast specific genes Fibronectin-1 (*Fn1*), *S100a4*, Decorin (*Dcn*), and Semaphorin-3C (*Sema3c*) (Figure 4D,E, S4D) lowly expressed the chondrocyte genes *Sox9*, *Acan*, and *Col2a1* (Kalluri, 2016) (Figure 4B), and were distinguishable from both Lepr-MSCs and pericytes.

Fibroblasts-1 (cluster 9) and **2s** (cluster 15) cells expressed the progenitor marker *Cd34* (Figure S1G) and MSC markers (*Ly6a*, *Pdgfra*, *Thy1* and *Cd44*; Figure S4D, E), but not BMEC or pericytes genes (*Cdh5*, *Acta2* (Figure 1C)), suggesting these fibroblasts are MSC-like. Fibroblast-1s also expressed *Cxcl12* and *Angpt1* (Figure 2B, 4G) indicating a possible niche regulatory function that resembles CAFs that facilitate cancer growth and metastasis (Ahirwar et al., 2018; Costa et al., 2018).

Fibroblasts-3 (cluster 16), **Fibroblast-4** (cluster 3), and **Fibroblast-5** (cluster 5) were related to tendon/ligament cells. They co-expressed *Sox9* (Figure 4B) and the TF Scleraxis (*Scx*) (Figure S4F) which regulate differentiation of tenocytes and ligamentocytes (Sugimoto et al., 2013). Fibroblast-4 and -5s further expressed key bone and cartilage genes including the *Spp1* (Figure S3B) and the chondrocyte genes *Nt5e*, *Cspg4* (Figure S2A, S2B) and *Cilp* (Figure S4F). The three clusters formed a continuum from Fibroblasts-3s to Fibroblast-4s and -5s (Figure 4F). Thus, fibroblast-3s may be tenocyte progenitors (Sugimoto et al., 2013), whereas Fibroblast-4s and -5s may consist of tendon/ligament cells (Sugimoto et al., 2013).

Arterial BMECs express higher levels of niche factors compared to sinusoidal and arteriolar vascular cells

We identified three BMEC subsets each supported by distinct differentially expressed genes (Figure 5A,B, S5B and Table S1): cluster 0 consisted of putative sinusoidal BMECs, cluster 6 of cells from arterioles/capillaries and cluster 11 containing BMECs from endosteal and bone marrow arteries. All subsets were related along a continuum (Figure 5C) and expressed known markers of endothelial cells - *Pecam1*, *Cdh5*, *Cd34*, *Kdr*, and *Emcn* (Rafii et al., 2016) (Figure 5B, D). We annotated cluster 0 and 6 cells as *sinusoidal* and *arteriolar* BMECs (sBMECs and aBMECs), respectively. Cluster 0 cells had high expression of *Flt4* (Vegfr-3) and low expression of *Ly6a* (Sca-1), while cluster 6 cells had the opposite pattern (Figure S5A). This was consistent with previous reports that sBMECs are Vegfr-3⁺/Sca-⁻ while arteriolar cells are Vegfr-3⁻/Sca-1⁺ (Hooper et al., 2009; Itkin et al., 2016). Bone-marrow imaging was used to determine whether cluster 11 is a subset of aBMECs or sBMECs. Vwf, expressed exclusively but heterogeneously in cluster 11, stained endosteal and some bone marrow *arteries* but not sinusoids (Figure 5E,F, S5C) indicating these cells are a subset of aBMECs. Also, *Cd34* has been previously associated with aBMECs, not sinusoids, and we

noted gene expression in clusters 6 and 11, not cluster 0 (Coutu et al., 2017). In contrast, *Il6st*, predominantly expressed in cluster 0 and not cluster 6 nor 11 (Figure 5F, S5B), exclusively stained bone marrowsinusoids by bone marrow imaging (Figure 5E). Therefore, cluster 11 is a subset of aBMECs.

The three subsets expressed different ligands and secreted factors (Figure 5B). All three expressed the endothelial tyrosine kinase receptor, Tie2 (*Tek*) for angiopoietin ligands (Figure 5G, S5D). However, *Kitl* and *Cxcl12* were most abundant in aBMECs, and *Kitl* most highly expressed by cluster 11 when compared with cluster 6 (Wilcoxon rank sum test p-value 6.9×10^{-5} and 35% higher average expression per cluster), while sBMECs expressed vastly smaller quantities of either factor (Figure 5G). Differential expression analysis comparing differences between both aBMEC clusters revealed a number of genes characterizing both clusters (Figure S5E and Table S3), suggesting that arterial BMEC may be a distinctively relevant subpopulation within BMECs, that regulates HSC function as has been previously proposed (Ding et al., 2012; Xu et al., 2018).

Pericyte subpopulations vary in hematopoietic regulatory gene expression

NG2⁺ and Nestin⁺ perivascular MSCs, have been proposed as critical regulators of HSC function through production of *Cxcl12* and *Kitl* (Kunisaki et al., 2013; Mendez-Ferrer et al., 2010). Notably, under homeostasis, HSCs reside in perisinusoidal or periarteriolar locations predominantly found in close proximity to Lepr-Cre⁺ cells, also shown to produce *Cxcl12* and *Kitl* (Acar et al., 2015; Ding et al., 2012; Morrison and Scadden, 2014). However, determining whether NG2⁺ and Nestin⁺ perivascular MSCs share developmental origins and functional properties with perivascular Lepr-Cre⁺ cells has been challenging as there is currently no single marker that separates them (Armulik et al., 2011).

We annotated a distinct cluster of perivascular mesenchymal stromal cells/pericytes (cluster 12; hereafter referred to as *Pericytes*), by the co-expression of the classical MSC markers *Nes*, NG2 (*Cspg4*), and the pericytes markers *Acta2*, *Myh11* and *Mcam* (Armulik et al., 2011) (Figure 6A–C, S6A). The pericytes differentially expressed *Jag1*, the Notch signaling ligand, and *Il-6*, both implicated in promoting HSC maintenance (Bernad et al., 1994; Calvi et al., 2003) (Figure S6C). Notably, cells in this cluster expressed only very low levels of *Lepr*, in contrast to the high expression of *Lepr* in Lepr-MSCs (Figure 2B,C). Thus, pericytes and Lepr-MSCs were clearly distinguishable.

Within the pericytes, we identified three subsets (Figure 6D, S6B and Table S2). Pericyte-1 cells, distinguished by relatively higher expression of *Cdh2*, *Lepr* and specific expression of MSC marker *Ngfr*, expressed *Kitl* most abundantly with low levels of *Cxcl12* (Figure 6E,F). Conversely, Pericyte-3 expressed *Cxcl12* with minimal *Kitl* and Pericyte-2 expressed low levels of both suggesting a possible distinction in HSC support. Pericyte-2 and Pericyte-3 had molecular features similar to previously reported periarteriolar cells (NG2-CreER/*Nes*-GFP^{high} (Coutu et al., 2017; Kunisaki et al., 2013)) and perisinusoidal cells (*Nes*-GFP⁺ (Mendez-Ferrer et al., 2010)) respectively. Unlike Lepr-MSCs, none of the pericyte subsets expressed high levels of both *Cxcl12* and *Kitl* (Figure 6E,F and 2F). Therefore, while Lepr-MSCs, NG2⁺ and Nes⁺ cells have each been defined as HSC niche cells, they are molecularly distinct.

Systemic survey of changes in bone marrow stromal cells induced by emerging primary leukemia

Several bone marrow stromal cell populations that regulate hematopoiesis can when perturbed, lead to niche-initiated myelodysplasia or leukemia in animal models (Arranz et al., 2014; Dong et al., 2016; Kode et al., 2014; Raaijmakers et al., 2010). Moreover, myeloid malignancies can remodel their niche to support malignant growth (Hanoun et al., 2014; Schepers et al., 2013; Schmidt et al., 2011).

To comprehensively assess changes in the stroma during malignant growth, we compared (Corral et al., 1996) stromal cell scRNAseq from mice with normal or MLL-AF9-knocked-in bone marrow transplanted 6–10 months before analysis (Figure 7A,B, S7A–D, Table S1).

Remodeling of bone marrow stromal cell proportions in leukemia

We detected significant changes in the proportions of key subsets in leukemia. These often reflected coupled effects in OLCs (increase in OLC-1, reduction in OLC-2), BMECs (reduction in sBMECs, increase in cluster 6 aBMECs), chondrocytes (increase in cluster 2, decrease in 4) and fibroblasts (decrease in Fibroblast-5s, increase in Fibroblast-2s) (Figure 7C, S7E).

The shift in OLCs was consistent with previous studies of leukemia, where OLC lineage dysfunction is caused by leukemia cells and favorable for their growth (Duarte et al., 2018; Frisch et al., 2012; Hawkins et al., 2016; Krevvata et al., 2014; Schepers et al., 2013). Moreover, proportions also varied within the OLC-1 subset with a significant increase in preosteoblasts (subcluster 1), but not in other cells (Figure 7D). While the overall proportion of Lepr-MSCs was unchanged, the relative proportions *within* were impacted by leukemia with significant increase in subcluster 2 and a concomitant reduction in subcluster 3 and 4 (committed osteolineage Lepr-MSCs) (Figure 7D, S7E). Overall, the concomitant decrease in committed osteolineage Lepr-MSCs and increase in preosteoblasts suggests that leukemia induced a block in osteolineage development (Hanoun et al., 2014; Kumar et al., 2018). The changes observed in Lepr-MSCs and OLCs, as well as BMECs, were consistent with the reported abnormalities seen in AML patients where leukemia induces vasculature remodeling that is accompanied by reduced osteocalcin (*Bglap*) serum levels, growth deficiency and impaired osteogenesis (Duarte et al., 2018; Geyh et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 2018; Passaro et al., 2017).

Leukemia compromises osteogenic and adipogenic differentiation pathways in Lepr-MSCs and OLCs

Analyzing changes in intrinsic gene programs within each cluster highlighted blunted adipogenic and osteogenic differentiation programs in Lepr-MSCs and OLCs (Figure S7F–G, Table S4). Cells in both clusters downregulated *Grem1* (Worthley et al., 2015), across all Lepr-MSC subclusters and in early osteoprogenitors (subcluster 0) (Figure 7E) as well as the BMP pathway, including *Bmp4* (GSEA (Subramanian et al., 2005) (GSEA qval=0.027, Table S4) (Wozney et al., 1988) and the early OLC-specification gene *Sp7* (Figure 7F). Mature osteoblasts within OLCs further downregulated *Runx2*, an early marker of osteogenesis, and *Bglap1-3*, late markers of osteogenesis (Lee et al., 2007) (Figure 7F,

Figure S7F). Lepr-MSC cells further downregulated *Adipoq* (Figure 7F, Figure S7F) (Bauche et al., 2007) and other genes in the white adipocyte differentiation (GSEA qval=0.029, Table S4), and the PPAR signaling pathways (GSEA qval=0.022, Table S4) (Tontonoz et al., 1994). This was consistent with reports that AML induces a compromised adipocytic niche that leads to imbalanced stem and progenitor regulation and not favorable for normal blood cell production (Boyd et al., 2017). Furthermore, *Wisp2*, which has been implicated in restricting MSCs to an undifferentiated state (Grunberg et al., 2014; Hammarstedt et al., 2013) was upregulated in all Lepr-MSC subsets and OLC progenitors (subcluster 0 and 1) (Figure S7F,I) further supporting compromised differentiation of Lepr-MSCs and OLCs. Conversely, key genes that inhibit bone formation and calcification were induced in Lepr-MSCs and OLCs (and others) including *Mgp* (inhibits calcification (Luo et al., 1997)), *Igfbp5* and *Igfbp3* (negative regulators on bone formation (Kanatani et al., 2000; Silha et al., 2003), and genes in the ECM degradation pathway (GSEA qval=0.04, Table S4) including *Mmp2*, *Mmp11* and *Mmp13* (Figure 7F, S7G). Taken together, these data are consistent with AML inducing alterations that affect bone formation and breakdown.

The cell profiles further support a model where hypoxia contributes to the undifferentiated state of the MSCs and OLCs (Kim et al., 2009). Hypoxia pathway genes (GSEA qval=0.004, Table S4) were induced in MSCs and OLCs, including the key regulator Hif-2a (*Epas1*), but not *Hif-1a* (Figure 7G, S7H,J), consistent with reports that suppression of bone formation and osteoblast activity is directly linked to Hif-2a and not Hif-1a (Rauner et al., 2016). Notably, the *Wisp2* promoter is regulated by Hif-2a (Fuady et al., 2014).

Leukemia broadly impairs normal hematopoiesis-regulatory gene expression

The changes in the stroma may contribute to altered support of normal blood cell growth through deregulation of the expression of key HSC niche factors, especially *Cxcl12* and *Kitl* across Lepr-MSCs, cluster 6 and 11 aBMECs and the earliest OLCs (subcluster 0) (Figure 7H,I); conversely, *Cxcl12*, *Kitl* and *Angpt1* were upregulated in Fibroblast-1s (Figure 7J). These findings are consistent with prior observations of AML reducing HSC persistence and localization to the bone marrow (Zhang et al., 2012) and that *Cxcl12*-secreting-CAFs (similar to Fibroblast-1s) are associated with a cancer promoting phenotype in breast cancer (Ahirwar et al., 2018; Costa et al., 2018).

Among other factors, *Spp1*, a negative regulator of HSC pool size (Stier et al., 2005) and HSC proliferation (Nilsson et al., 2005), which is correlated with poor prognosis in AML patients (Chen et al., 2017), was upregulated in Lepr-MSCs, OLCs, BMECs, fibroblasts and pericytes (Figure 7H, S7F). Lepr-MSCs downregulated other HSC niche factors including *Angpt1*, an agonist of *Tek* receptor expressed on BMECs and HSCs (Arai et al., 2004) (and upregulated its antagonist *Angpt2* (Gomei et al., 2010)), factors that promote lymphoid (*Il7*) (Muegge et al., 1993; Namen et al., 1988) or myeloid (*Csf1*) differentiation (Mossadegh-Keller et al., 2013), and *Vcam1*, a regulator of HSC homing to bone marrow (Papayannopoulou et al., 1995) (Figure 7H). Thus, the osteogenic differentiation block induced by leukemia in Lepr-MSCs and OLCs, was further accompanied by a loss of HSC niche factor production by multiple cell types.

DISCUSSION

While it is now well appreciated that non-parenchymal cells in the stroma of a tissue play key physiological roles in forming niche cells (Calvi et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2003), the full repertoire of cells that comprise stroma has remained elusive in all complex adult tissues, including the bone marrow. Here, we systematically characterize the stroma of the mouse bone and bone marrow into six broad cell types with 17 cell subsets, with discrete distinctions, differentiation continuums and HSC niche regulatory function often disrupted by the emergence of leukemia (Figure 7K). Note that a complementary analysis of bone marrow stroma using scRNA-seq has been published, after this manuscript was accepted in principle (Tikhonova et al., 2019), which focused on several cell subpopulations pre-sorted by pre-defined markers and on a stress model.

These findings provide a clear set of definitions and tools, including refined understanding of the relation between markers and cell types (and their limitations), clarify prior controversies, and lead to several unexpected observations. Here we highlight some of these key findings.

First, OLCs segregated into two subsets that appear to arise from distinct lineage trajectories. Only one of these, which emerges from Lepr-MSCs, expresses high HSC regulatory genes and does so at the early osteoprogenitor stage of development.

Second, one of the five fibroblasts subsets we identified, expressed *Cxcl12*. *Cxcl12*-expressing fibroblasts have been implicated in aggressive solid tumors (Ahirwar et al., 2018; Costa et al., 2018). We thus hypothesize that they may participate in bone metastases; future studies can test this possibility.

Third, BMECs consisted of a distinctive artery subset that was enriched for expression of hematopoietic regulators. This cell population was apparent in a periendosteal location and bone marrow and was in marked contrast to the large sinusoidal endothelium subset that minimally expressed the HSC niche factors, *Cxcl12* and *Kitl*, despite prior reports that perisinusoidal positioning of HSC is common (Acar et al., 2015).

Fourth, we clarified that *Lepr*⁺ cells are common across multiple cell types, including osteolineage, endothelial, pericyte and fibroblastic cells. Thus, the use of *Lepr*-driven Cre to alter particular genes could impact their expression across many cell types, and must be interpreted with extreme care, especially where *Lepr*-Cre is expressed throughout development, as commonly done to date (Zhou et al., 2014a). We further showed that there was discordant expression of *Cxcl12* and *Kitl* among pericyte subpopulations that segregated with low level *Lepr*, NG2 (*Cspg4*) and *Nes* expression. Future studies can assess if these reflect functional distinctions in hematopoietic support, and how this subpopulation tracks with periaarteriolar, quiescent HSCs (Kunisaki et al., 2013).

Finally, the presence of AML distorted the stromal compartment in select and specific ways. Osteogenic differentiation blockade occurs in *Lepr*-MSCs and OLCs, is accompanied by a cell intrinsic bone remodeling phenotype and disturbed production of hematopoietic regulatory factors that affect normal hematopoiesis. While most studies show that osteoblast

numbers are either reduced (Frisch et al., 2012; Krevvata et al., 2014; Kumar et al., 2018) or increased (Hanoun et al., 2014; Schepers et al., 2013), depending on type of leukemia model used, our study supports a loss of bone maturation phenotype and function. A parenchymal tumor affecting the maturation of tissue stromal cells does suggest a distinct type of cross-interaction between emerging cancer cells and their mesenchymal neighbors. It may be that differentiation blockade is not restricted in a cell autonomous manner to cancer cells, but may extend to the broader cell context of a cancerous tissue. These findings are consistent with a model where emerging cancer cells influence the stromal cells in the tissue they inhabit. They can alter differentiation patterns of those stromal cells, changing the complexity of cell types that are thought to play critical roles in governing tissue homeostasis. Furthermore, the malignant cells in our study reduced the expression of regulatory signaling molecules known to be essential for normal hematopoietic function. In so doing, the malignant cells create a microenvironment no longer as conducive to normal hematopoietic cell production and, thereby, impairing the parenchymal cells with which they compete. These data provide experimental support for a paradigm in which the establishment of a malignant clone within a tissue shapes the features of the stromal landscape of that tissue. The result compromises stromal cell support of normal parenchymal cells, fundamentally altering the competitive landscape of the tissue to disadvantage normal cells. In this way, cancer cells act not as fully independent and destructive rogues, but rather as self-serving architects of their neighborhood pushing out normal occupants by creating a less supportive environment.

Our stroma cell census will now allow a clearer and more consistent definition of the ways in which specific stromal cells contribute to homeostasis and aberrant hematopoiesis, and provide a foundation for developing stromal-targeted therapies in hematologic disease. It also offers experimental evidence for tumor evolution in which cross-communication between parenchymal and stromal elements may influence the emergence of cancer.

STAR METHODS

Contact for Reagent and Resource Sharing

Further information and requests for resources and reagents should be directed to and will be fulfilled by the lead contact David Scadden (david_scadden@harvard.edu).

Experimental models

Mice—The MLL-AF9 knock-in mice (Corral et al., 1996) and CD45.1 (STEM) mice (Mercier et al., 2016) were described previously. Littermates were used as controls for all experiments involving MLL-AF9 knockin and CD45.1 (STEM) mice. Male C57BL/6 mice (CD45.2, Jackson Laboratory) at age 6–8 weeks were employed as transplant recipients and for steady-state scRNA-seq experiments. All animal experiments were performed in accordance with national and institutional guidelines. Mice were housed in the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Animal Research Facility on a 12 hour light/dark cycle with stable temperature (22° C) and humidity (60%). All procedures were approved by MGH Internal Animal Care and Use Committee.

Generation of leukemic mice—To generate leukemic mice, we first crossed the MLL-AF9 knock-in mice (Corral et al., 1996) with the CD45.1 (STEM) mice (Mercier et al., 2016) to generate donor chimeric CD45.1.2 mice. Mice positive for the MLL-AF9 fusion transgene were used as donors (male, 4 weeks of age), and littermates (male, 4 weeks of age) negative for the MLL-AF9 fusion transgene were used as controls. Mice were sacrificed via CO₂ asphyxia; tibiae and femurs were harvested and excess soft tissue was eliminated. Bones were crushed and washed in PBS and passed through a 70µm filter into a collection tube and 1×10⁶ whole bone-marrow cells were transplanted by retro-orbital injection into 6–8 weeks old male CD45.2 C57BL/6 recipient mice. One day prior to transplantation, mice were subjected to whole body irradiation (2 × 6Gy) with a 6-hour interval from a ¹³⁷Cs source. Monthly retro-orbital bleeding was performed on isoflurane anesthetized mice and blood was withdrawn using heparinized capillaries and collected into EDTA containing tubes to prevent coagulation. Complete blood counts were done using the Element Ht5 Auto Hematology analyzer. Subsequently, RBCs were lysed as described previously and cells were stained in PBS, 2% FBS using the following antibodies: CD45.2-APCCy7 (Biolegend, Ref#109824, clone 102), CD45.1-FITC (Biolegend, Ref# 110706, clone A20), CD11b-Alexa Fluor 700 (Biolegend, Ref# 101222, clone M1/70), GR1-Brilliant violet 570 (Biolegend, Ref#108431, clone RB6-8C5), B220-eFluor450 (eBioscience, Ref#48-0452-82, clone RA3-6B2), and CD3e-APC (eBioscience, Ref#17-0031-83, clone 145-2c11), in addition to 7-Aminoactinomycin D (7AAD; ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#A1310) for viability to monitor donor chimerism within the different lineages and the appearance of leukemic blasts characterized by a distinct scatter and lower GR1 and CD11b expression within the myeloid compartment. Leukemic mice were determined by the combination of disease symptoms, white blood cell counts and appearance of leukemic blasts.

Methods details

Isolation of bone marrow stroma cells—To obtain bone and bone marrow stromal cells for scRNA-seq, mice were sacrificed via CO₂ asphyxia. Bones (femur and tibia) were harvested and placed in Media 199 (ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#12350039) supplemented with 2% Fetal Bovine Serum (FBS, ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#10082147). Muscle and tendon tissue was removed and bone marrow was flushed. Stromal cells from the bone marrow fraction were isolated by digestion with 1 mg/mL STEMxyme1 (Worthington, Ref#LS004106) and 1 mg/mL Dispase II (ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#17105041), in Media 199 supplemented with 2% FBS for 25 min at 37°C. Stromal cells from the bone fraction were isolated by gently crushing and cutting bones (including epiphysis) into small fragments and digested in the same digestion mix as the bone marrow for 25 min, at 37°C with agitation (120 rpm). After digestions, both fractions were filtered through a 70µm filter into a collection tube (Fisher Scientific, Ref#08-771-2), pooled into one sample or run separately (*e.g.* for bone *vs.* bone marrow fraction scRNA-seq analysis), and erythrocytes lysed in ACK-lysis buffer (ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#A1049201) for 5 minutes on ice. Cells were then stained in Media 199 supplemented with 2% FBS for FACS cell sorting.

FACS enrichment of bone marrow stromal cells—For flow cytometry and FACS, cells were resuspended in Media 199 supplemented with 2% FBS and stained for Ter119-APC (eBioscience, Ref#17-5921-82, clone TER-119), CD71-PECy7 (Biolegend,

Ref#113812, clone RI7217), CD45-PE (eBioscience, Ref#12-0451-82, clone 30-F11), CD3-PE (Biolegend, Ref#100206, clone 17A2), B220-PE (Biolegend, Ref#103208, clone RA3-6B2), CD19-PE (Biolegend, Ref#115508, clone 6D5), Gr-1-PE (Biolegend, Ref#108408, clone RB6-8C5), and Cd11b-PE (Biolegend, Ref#101208, clone M1/70) for 30 minutes on ice. Dead cells and debris were excluded by FSC, SSC, 7-AAD (ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#00-6993-50) and Calcein AM (ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#C3099) profiles. FACS and cytometry was performed on a BD FACS Aria II sorter, and sorted bone marrow stromal cells were collected in Media 199 supplemented with 2% FBS and 0.4% UltraPure BSA (ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref#AM2616). Bone marrow stroma was enriched by sorting of live cells (7-AAD-/Calcein+) negative for erythroid (CD71/Ter119) and immune lineage markers (CD45/CD3/B220/CD19/Gr-1/CD11b). For flow cytometric analysis (e.g. Figure S1K), we used Ly6a/Sca-1 (Biolegend, Ref#108127, clone), CD31 (Pecam1) (BD Bioscience, Ref#565097), Vcam1 (Biolegend, Ref#105710), CD34 (eBioscience, Ref#11-0341-82), Cdh5/CD144 (Biolegend, Ref#138006)

Immunostaining of bone marrow sections—Tissue preparation, immunostaining and imaging of full-bone femoral sections was performed as previously described (Coutu et al., 2018). Briefly, bones were fixed overnight in 4% paraformaldehyde and decalcified using 10% ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA, pH=8) for two weeks. Longitudinal bone sections were stained overnight at RT with primary [anti-CD31 (goat, R&D, Ref#AF3628), anti-IL6st (rat, eBiosciences, Ref#17-1302-82), anti-collagen type I (rabbit, Cedarlane, Ref#CL50151AP), anti-von Willenbrand factor (rabbit, Thermo Scientific, Ref#RB-281-AO), anti-Endomucin (rat, eBiosciences, Ref#14-5851-82)] and secondary antibodies (CF488, CF555, CF633 and CF680, Biotium). Detection of IL6st was performed by biotin-streptavidin CF555 amplification. Sections were then optically cleared using graded series of 2,2-thiodiethanol (TDE, Sigma).

Full-bone imaging was performed on a Leica TCS SP8 confocal microscope equipped with two photomultiplier tubes, three HyD detectors and three laser lines (405-nm blue diode, argon and white light) using type F immersion liquid (RI: 1.518) and 20× multiple immersion objective (NA 0.75, FWD 0.680 mm). Images were acquired at 8-bit, 400 Hz and 1024×1024 or 2048×2048 resolution with 2.49 μ m z-spacing.

Single cell RNA-seq—Single cells were encapsulated into emulsion droplets using Chromium Controller (10× Genomics). scRNA-seq libraries were constructed using Chromium Single Cell 3' v2 Reagent Kit according to the manufacturer's protocol. Briefly, post sorting sample volume was decreased and cells were examined under a microscope and counted with a hemocytometer. Cells were then loaded in each channel with a target output of ~4,000 cells. Reverse transcription and library preparation were performed on C1000 Touch Thermal cycler with 96-Deep Well Reaction Module (Bio-Rad). Amplified cDNA and final libraries were evaluated on a Agilent BioAnalyzer using a High Sensitivity DNA Kit (Agilent Technologies). Individual libraries were diluted to 4nM and pooled for sequencing. Pools were sequenced with 75 cycle run kits (26bp Read1, 8bp Index1 and 55bp Read2) on the NextSeq 500 Sequencing System (Illumina) to ~70–80% saturation level.

Quantification and Statistical Analysis

Pre-processing of scRNA-seq data—ScRNA-Seq data were demultiplexed, aligned to the mouse genome, version mm10, and UMI-collapsed with the Cellranger toolkit (version 2.0.1, 10x Genomics). We excluded cells with fewer than 500 detected genes (where each gene had to have at least one UMI aligned). Gene expression was represented as the fraction of its UMI count with respect to total UMI in the cell and then multiplied by 10,000. We denoted it by TP10K – transcripts per 10K transcripts.

Dimensionality reduction—We performed dimensionality reduction using gene expression data for a subset of variable genes. The variable genes were selected based on dispersion of binned variance to mean expression ratios using *FindVariableGenes* function of *Seurat* package (Satija et al., 2015) followed by filtering of cell-cycle, ribosomal protein, and mitochondrial genes. Next, we performed principal component analysis (PCA) and reduced the data to the top 50 PCA components (number of components was chosen based on standard deviations of the principal components – in a plateau region of an “elbow plot”).

Clustering and sub-clustering—We used graph-based clustering of the PCA reduced data with the Louvain Method (Blondel et al., 2008) after computing a shared nearest neighbor graph (Satija et al., 2015). We visualized the clusters on a 2D map produced with t-distributed stochastic neighbor embedding (t-SNE) (Maaten and Hinton, 2008). For sub-clustering, we applied the same procedure of finding variable genes, dimensionality reduction, and clustering to the restricted set of data (usually restricted to one initial cluster).

Differential expression of gene signatures—For each cluster, we used the Wilcoxon Rank-Sum Test to find genes that had significantly different RNA-seq TP10K expression when compared to the remaining clusters (paired tests when indicated) (after multiple hypothesis testing correction). As a support measure for ranking differentially expressed genes we also used area under receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve.

Filtering hematopoietic clusters and doublets—Based on cluster annotations with characteristic genes, we removed hematopoietic clusters from further analysis. It is further expected that a small fraction of data should consist of cell doublets (and to an even lesser extent of higher order multiplets) due to co-encapsulation into droplets and/or as occasional pairs of cells that were not dissociated in sample preparation. Therefore, when we found small clusters of cells expressing both hematopoietic and stromal markers we removed them from further analysis (original cluster 14). A small number of additional clusters and subclusters was marked by genes differentially expressed in at least two larger stromal clusters and were annotated as doublets if their average number of expressed genes was higher than the averages for corresponding suspected singlet cluster sources and/or they were not characterized by specific differentially expressed genes (original clusters 18 and 19). All marked doublets were removed from further analysis.

Impact of dissociation on clustering—We checked the possible impact of dissociation by several analyses. First, we re-ran the clustering of our data set but after removing the known dissociation artifact genes (van den Brink et al., 2017) from the data matrix. We did

not observe substantial clustering changes in this approach. Specifically, the number of clusters remained the same and 98% of cell pairs had the same cluster assignment. Second, we performed binning of cells into “clusters” based on the expression of *only* dissociation signature scores (with the same bin sizes as the real clusters): the adjusted random index between our full clustering and this binning was 0.009 (for equivalent clustering the value is 1). This indicated that our global clustering was not driven by the dissociation signature expression. Third, we repeated this test for clusters that were further subclustered. The values were: 0.242 (Lepr-MSc, cluster 1), 0.006 (OLC-1, cluster 7), 0.027 (OLC-2, cluster 8), and 0.024 (Pericytes, cluster 12). This indicated that only the subclustering of Lepr-MSc cells was possibly partially correlated with dissociation signature or other biological processes with correlated signatures (we note that immediate early gene expression is the main feature of the “dissociation signature” and can also be a biological phenomenon). For visual clarity we show in Figure S1J the expression of the dissociation signature score (Tirosh et al., 2016) across a tSNE plot of our cells.

Estimation of proliferation status—To score cells for their relative proliferation status, we used a set of characteristic genes involved in cell-cycle (Kowalczyk et al., 2015). For each cell we computed the average expression (TP10K) of cell-cycle genes as a proxy for proliferation status.

Diffusion maps computation and visualization—We performed non-linear dimensionality reduction of scRNA-seq data by restricting a sparse diffusion matrix of expression data to the eigenspace spanned by eigenvectors corresponding to the top diffusion matrix eigenvalues. We used the *destiny* package (Angerer et al., 2016), where we used the local estimation of Gaussian kernel width, and the number of nearest neighbors for diffusion matrix approximation was set to the smaller value between the square root of the number of all single cells in the data and 100. The diffusion matrix was constructed on sets of variable genes computed with the same procedure as the one used for clustering and sub-clustering of the data, such that variable genes were re-computed for each diffusion map.

We visualized diffusion maps following the approach described in (Schiebinger et al., 2017). Specifically, we built a nearest-neighbor graph in the projected space using an implementation of k-NN algorithm from the package *FNN* (Beygelzimer et al., 2015), and then computed a force-directed layout using *ForceAtlas2* (Jacomy et al., 2014) from the *Gephi* package (Bastian et al., 2009).

Connectivity of cell clusters—We quantified the connectivity of single-cell clusters using the partition based graph abstraction method PAGA (Wolf et al., 2017a), a part of the single-cell analysis package *Scanpy* (Wolf et al., 2018). The computations were carried out on the same subset of variable genes as for clustering, using default parameters.

Cell identity assignment in the leukemia data—For scRNA-seq data from control and leukemic mice, we removed hematopoietic cells from the data as described above, and assigned cell types/identities to each cell using differential expression signatures derived from steady state data. Specifically, we collected up to 50 top, most differentially expressed genes (Table S1) in each of the 20 original clusters from the homeostasis data set as

signatures. For each candidate cell, we computed its signature scores for each of the 20 signatures. Each signature score was computed against a background gene set of randomly selected genes. A cell was assigned to the cell-type/cluster with the best signature score. When assigning the sub-cluster identity, we further scored against signature genes of sub-clusters (Table S2) that consisted of up to 20 most differentially expressed sub-cluster genes.

Changes in cluster sizes in leukemia data—For each cluster, we used the Wald test to quantify the association of condition (control, leukemia) with binomial models. Specifically, for each sample, we collected numbers of cells belonging to a given cluster and the number of cells outside of the cluster. Then we fit a generalized linear model with binomial parameters to the combined data with and without a parameter indicating condition (control, leukemia). We used an R implementation of Wald test to assess the statistical significance of the difference between the two models. Finally, we corrected the Wald test p-values from all clusters for multiple-hypothesis testing (Benjamini and Hochberg, 1995).

Differential expression in leukemia data—We observed some contamination of single cell data likely due to ambient RNA. Therefore, prior to computing differentially expressed genes between leukemia and control, we filtered out those genes that were differentially expressed in the hematopoietic contingent of the data when compared with the stromal contingent. The filtered genes were identified separately in leukemia and control conditions, since their respective hematopoietic contingents are known to be different. Specifically, this was achieved by computing differentially expressed genes using Bonferroni corrected Wilcoxon Sum-Rank Test as implemented in *FindAllMarkers* function (default parameters) of the Seurat package and excluding genes from hematopoietic clusters with adjusted p-values < 0.05.

Then, separately for each cluster, we computed genes that were differentially expressed between leukemia and control in two ways. First, we used Bonferroni corrected Wilcoxon Rank-Sum Test (using *FindMarkers* of Seurat package, $\log_{fc}.\text{threshold}=\ln(1.2)$) to discover differentially expressed genes between conditions. Second, for each cluster, we computed average TP10K expression of cells in every replicate. Then, we used those values in a t-test to assess differences between leukemia and control conditions. This approach mimics bulk RNA-seq measurements. The second approach, although less powerful for discovery of differentially regulated genes, helped us to identify genes that tended to be coherently regulated in samples.

Gene set enrichment analysis—We used Gene Set Enrichment Analysis (GSEA) with MSigDB (Subramanian et al., 2005) gene sets to identify pathways and cellular states having induced or repressed expression in each cell cluster. Specifically, we used the pre-ranked analysis mode, with gene transcripts ranked according to differential expression analysis results (Wilcoxon Rank-Sum Test) of comparing leukemic and control conditions in each cluster. The most significantly over-expressed genes were placed at the top of the ranked list, while the most under-expressed were at the bottom before running the test.

Classify cells as having bone marrow origin—We used additional sequencing data samples from bone and bone marrow, together with a supervised classification strategy to

determine tissue origin of cells in our original data set. Specifically, we trained a multi-class Random Forest (RF) classifier using the R package “randomForest” (Liaw and Wiener, 2002) on a dataset combining cells from bone and bone marrow, clustered separately. The RF classifier was trained on the subset of variable genes (determined with Seurat package) from all data sets, using 5000 trees. The number of training cells per cell cluster was sampled to a min of 70% of cluster size or 1000. The remaining cells comprised the test set and were predicted with an accuracy of 93.1%. The RF model was then used to predict the cluster of origin of every cell in our data set. Lineage identity was assigned based on lineage origin of predicted cell class.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Highlights

- A single cell bone marrow stromal cell atlas at steady state and emergent leukemia
- A portal for comparative cell and molecular analyses of bone marrow stromal cells
- Distinction among putative niche cells and types of osteolineage differentiation
- Leukemia remodeling of stroma to the disadvantage of normal hematopoietic cells

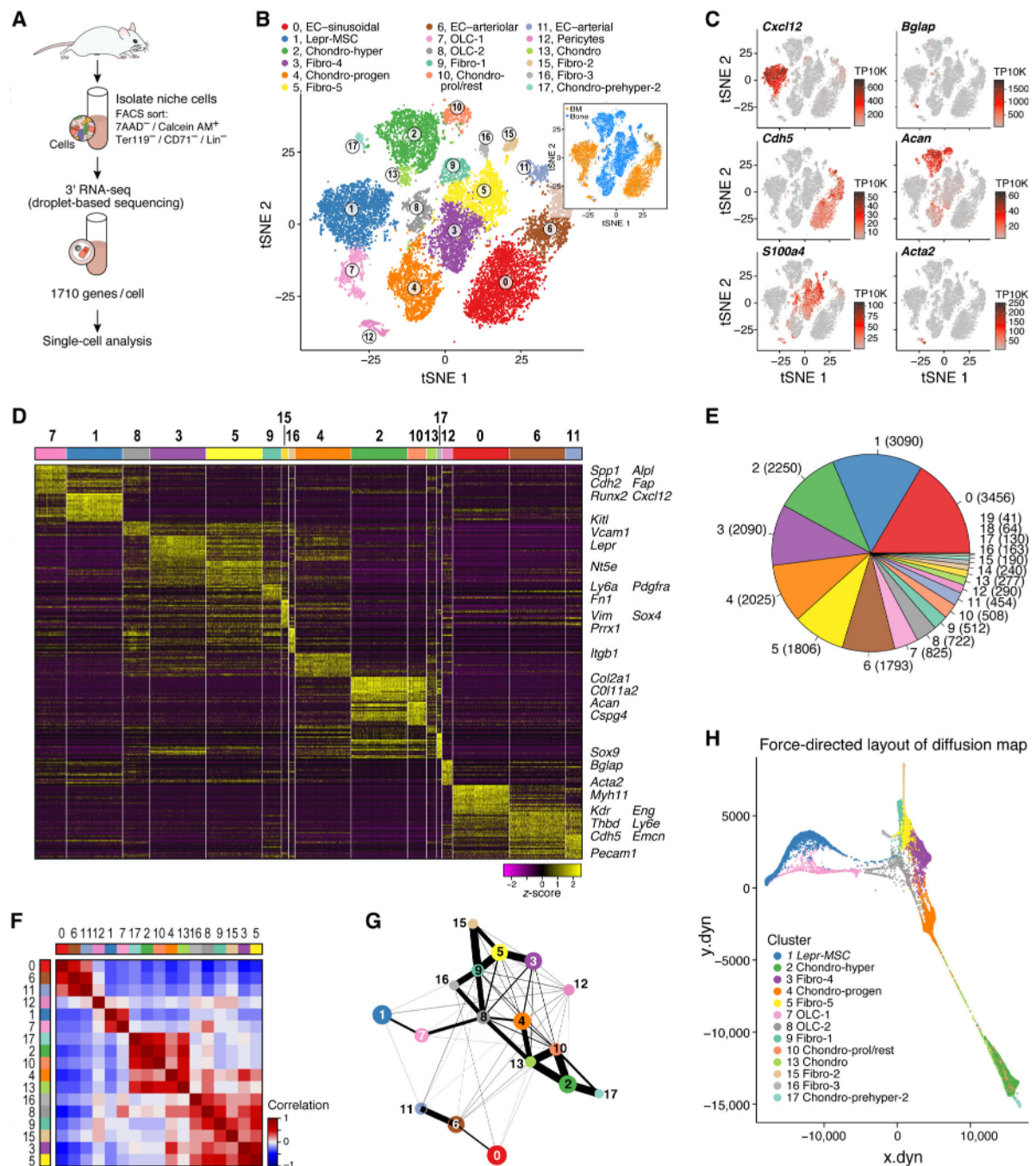


Figure 1. A single cell atlas of the mouse bone marrow stroma.

(A) Study Overview. (B,C) Seventeen bone marrow stroma cell clusters. t-SNE of 20,896 nonhematopoietic cells (mixed bone and bone marrow fractions, n=6 mice), annotated *post hoc* and colored by clustering or bone (~10,000, non-hematopoietic cells, n=4 mice) or bone marrow (~10,000 non-hematopoietic cells, n=4 mice) location (insert) (B) or by expression (color bar, TP10K) of key cell type marker genes (C). (D) Cluster signature genes. Expression (row-wise z-score of $\ln(\text{TP10K}+1)$) of top differentially expressed genes (rows) across the cells (columns) in each cluster (color bar, top, as in B). The largest clusters were

down-sampled. Key genes highlighted on right. **(E)** Number of cells in each subset. Color bar as in B. **(F–G)** Differentiation relations between cells or clusters. **(F)** Pearson's correlation (color bar) between the average gene expression profiles of clusters (rows, columns, color code as in B). **(G)** Relatedness (edges; width indicates strength) between clusters (nodes, colored as in B) based on cluster graph abstraction. **(H)** A force directed layout embedding (FLE) of the cells (dots) from a diffusion map (50 components) computed with the cells from strongly connected clusters (as indicated in G and F, without clusters 1, 6, 11, 12).

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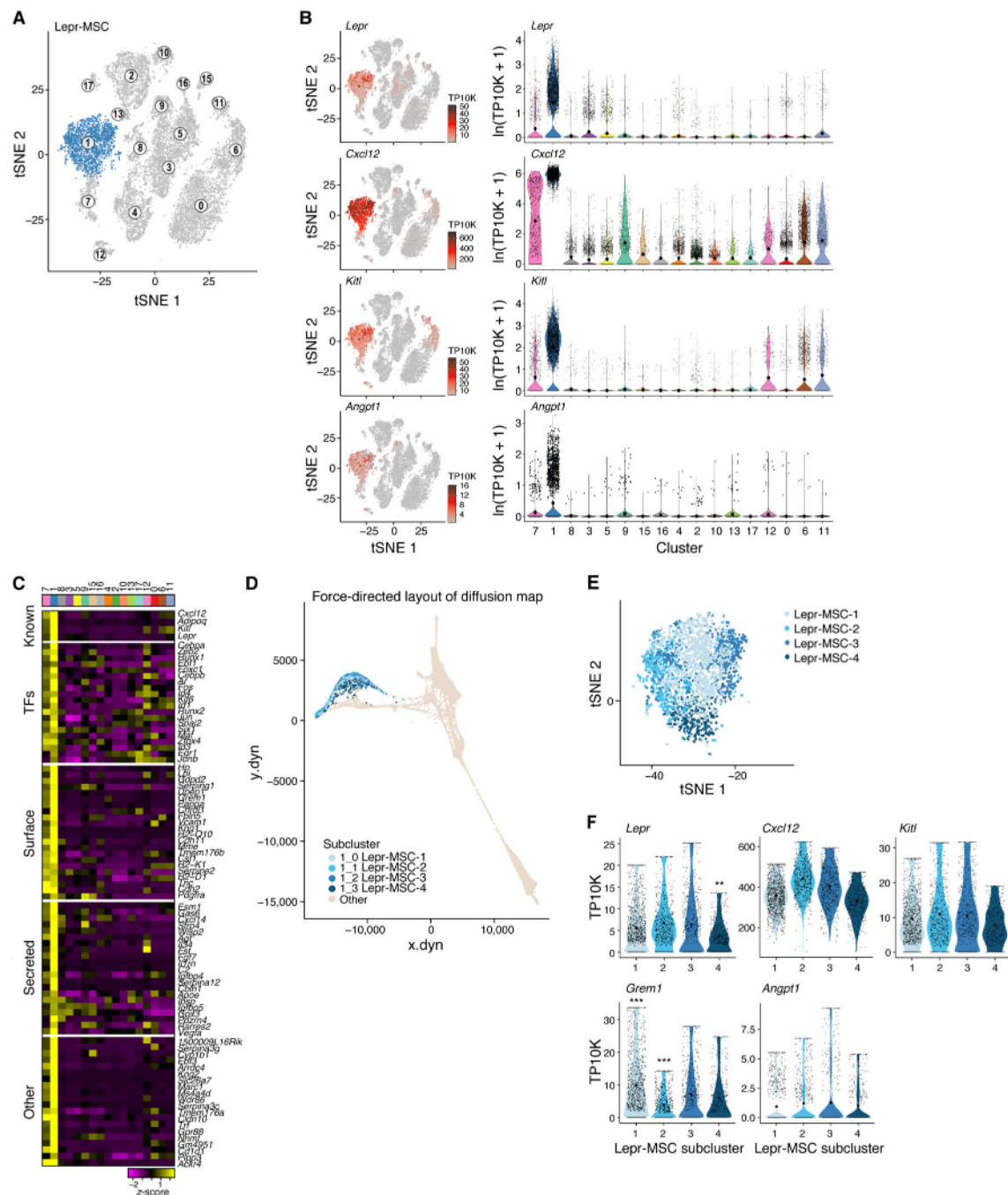


Figure 2. Four subsets of HSC regulator-producing Lepr-MSCs form a differentiation continuum.

(A–C) Signature genes for Lepr-MSCs in the stroma atlas. (A,B) tSNE of Figure 1B colored by cluster-1 membership (A), or by expression (color bar, TP10K) of key MSC marker genes (B, left) (right), along with the corresponding distributions of expression levels ($\ln(TP10K + 1)$, y axis) across clusters of Figure 1B (x axis). (C) Expression (row-wide z-score of $\ln$ of average TP10K) of top differentially expressed genes (rows) in the cells of each cluster (columns) (color bar, top, as in Figure 1B), ordered by five gene categories

(labels on left). **(D–F)** Four Lepr-MSc subclusters span a differentiation continuum. **(D,E)** Continuous transition across the subclusters. Four subclusters colored on the FLE of the diffusion map from Figure 1H (E) or on a zoom-in to the Lepr-MSc cluster in Figure 2A. **(F)** Distributions of expression levels (TP10K, *y* axis, censored scale) for select marker genes across the 4 subclusters. Stars for significant differential expression of select genes.

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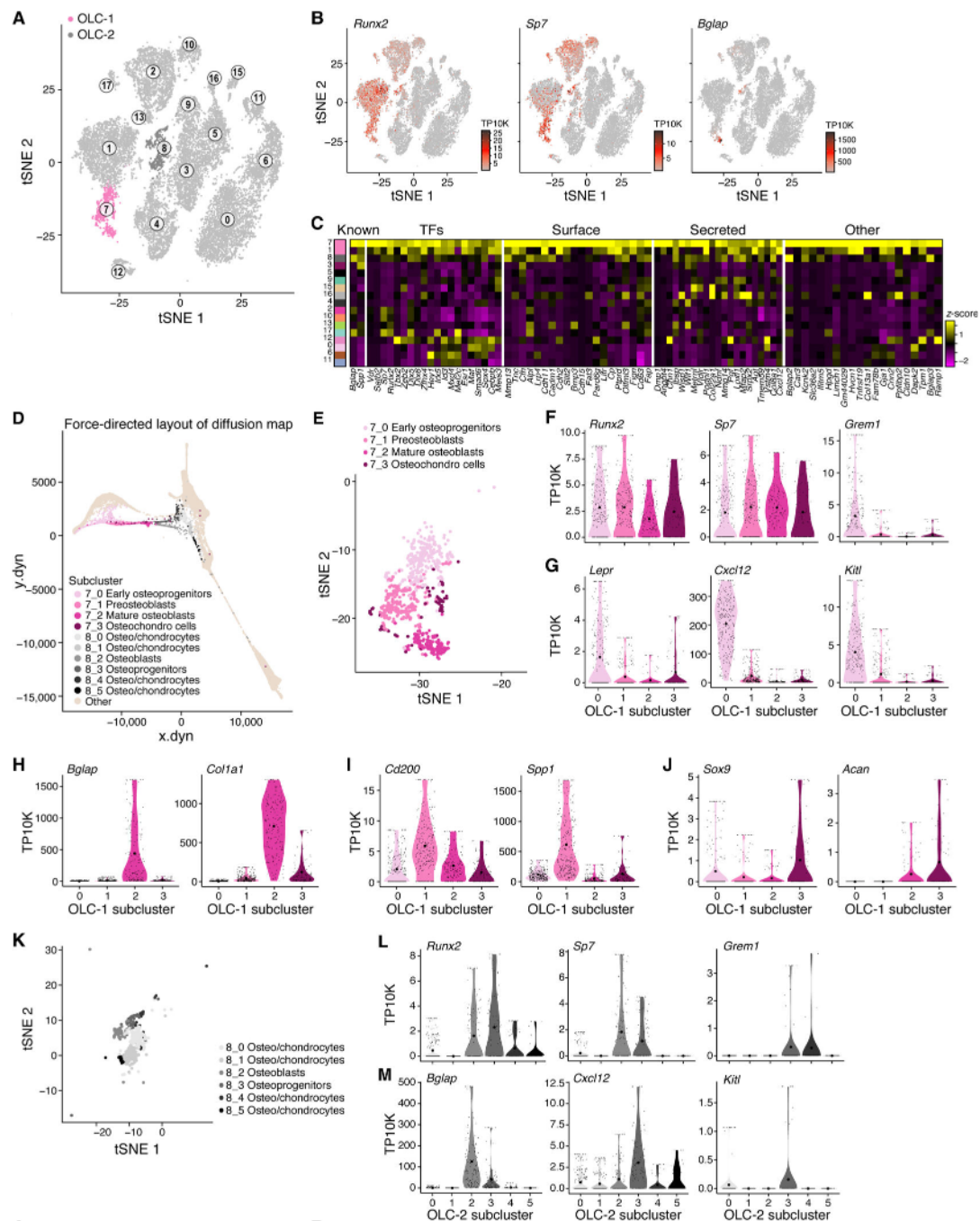


Figure 3. Two OLC subsets of distinct differentiation origins and hematopoietic support potential.

(A–C) Two OLC subsets. (A,B) tSNE of Figure 1B colored by cluster 7 (OLC-1) and cluster 8 (OLC-2) membership (A), or by expression (color bar, TP10K) of key OLC marker genes (B). (C) Expression (column-wise z-score of ln of average TP10K) of top differentially expressed genes (rows) ordered by four gene categories (labels on top) in the cells of each cluster (columns, color bar, left, as in Figure 1B). (D) Continuous transition across the subclusters. OLC-1 and OLC-2 subclusters color coded on the FLE of the diffusion map

from Figure 1H (D). **(E–J)** OLC-1 subsets. **(E)** A zoom-in to OLC-1 in Figure 3A labeled by four subclusters and annotated *post hoc* (legend). **(F–J)** Distributions of expression levels (TP10K, *y* axis, censored scale) for select marker genes across the OLC-1 subclusters. **(K–M)** OLC-2 subsets. **(K)** A zoom-in to OLC-2 in Figure 3A labeled by six subclusters and annotated *post hoc* (legend). **(L,M)** Distributions of expression levels (TP10K, *y* axis, censored scale) for select marker genes across the OLC-2 subclusters.

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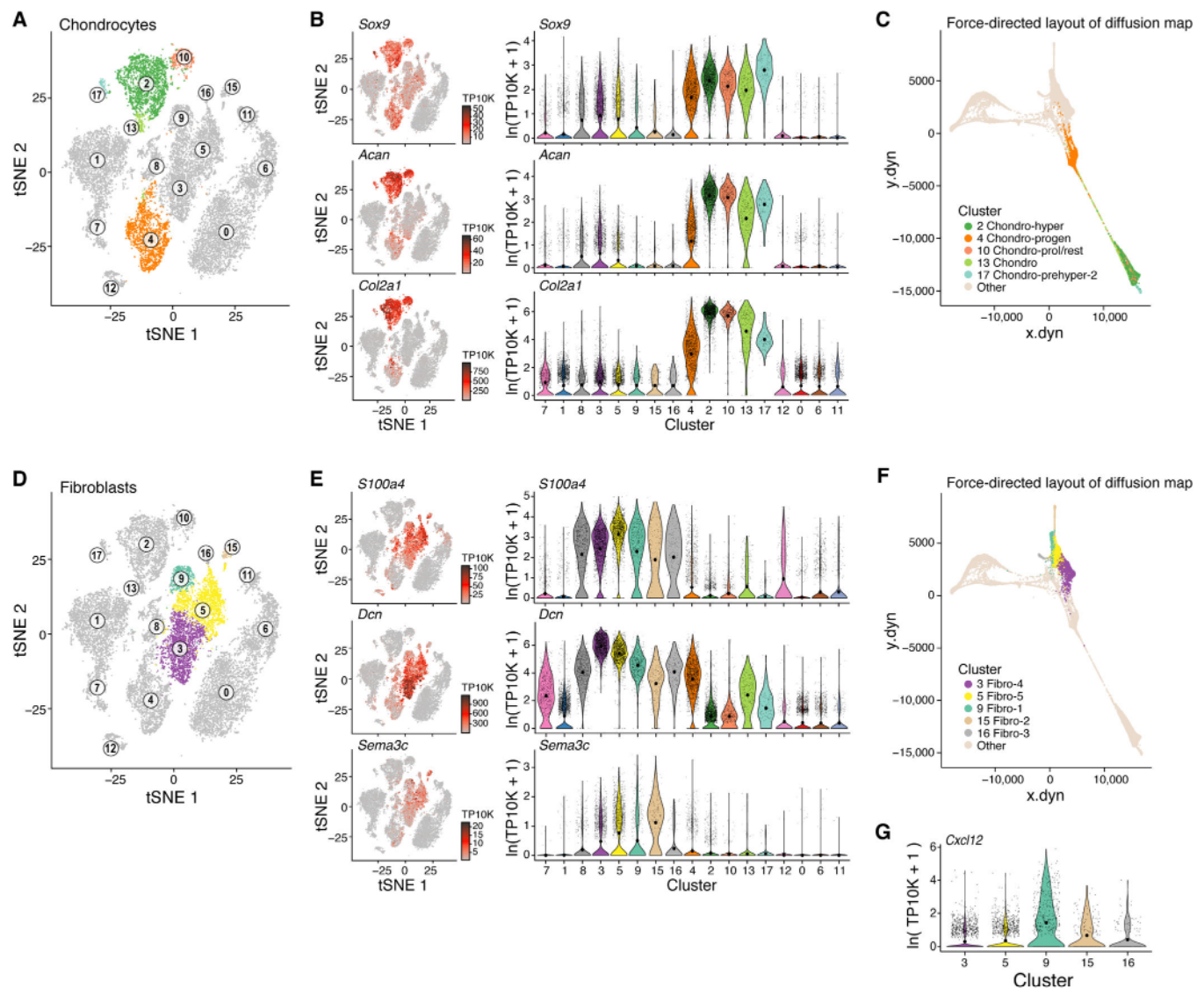


Figure 4. Chondrocyte and fibroblasts subsets highlight differentiation paths and hematopoiesis support, respectively.

(A–C) Subsets across chondrocyte differentiation. (A,B) Signature genes for chondroid subsets. tSNE of Figure 1B colored by membership in five chondroid clusters (A), or by expression (color bar, TP10K) of key marker genes (B, left) (right), along with the distributions of expression levels ($\ln(\text{TP10K} + 1)$, y axis) for the same genes across clusters of Figure 1B (x axis). (C) Continuous transition across the chondroid subclusters. The five subclusters colored on the FLE of the diffusion map from Figure 1H. (D–F) Fibroblast subsets. (D,E) Signature genes for fibroblast subsets. tSNE of Figure 1B colored by membership in five fibroblast clusters (A), or by expression (color bar, TP10K) of key marker genes (B, left) (right), along with the distributions of expression levels ($\ln(\text{TP10K} + 1)$, y axis) for the same genes across the clusters of Figure 1B (x axis). (F) Relations between the fibroblast subclusters. The clusters colored on the FLE of the diffusion map from Figure 1H. (G) Distribution of *Cxcl12* expression level ($\ln(\text{TP10K} + 1)$, y axis) across the fibroblast clusters (x axis).

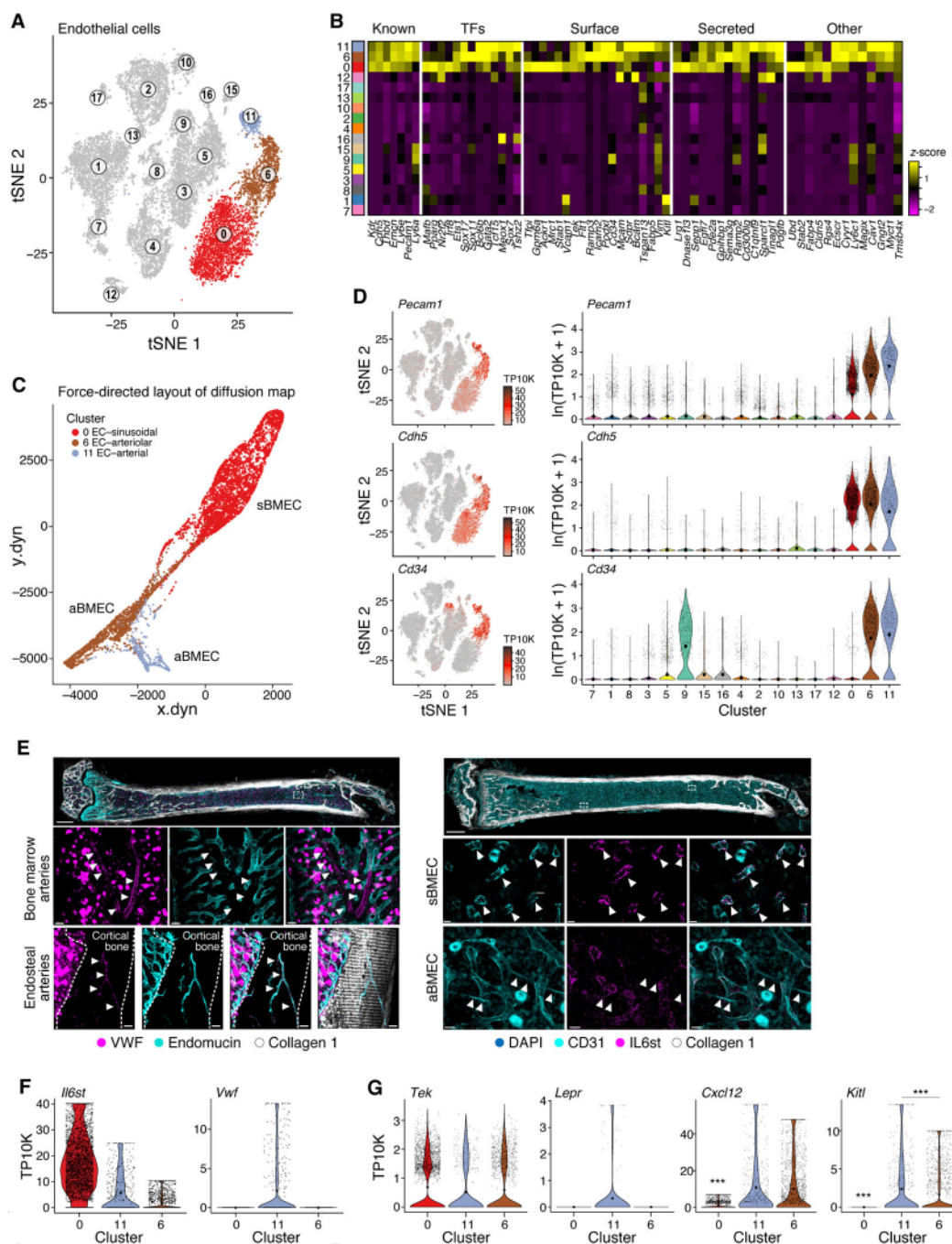


Figure 5. Arterial BMECs express higher levels of niche factors compared to sinusoidal and arteriolar vascular BMECs.

(A–B) Three BMEC subsets. (A,B) tSNE of Figure 1B colored by membership in three BMEC clusters (A), orexpression (column-wise z-score of ln of average TP10K) of top differentially expressed genes (columns) ordered by five gene categories (labels on top) in the cells of each cluster (rows, color bar, left, as in Figure 1B) (B). (C) Continuous transition across the subclusters. FLE of a diffusion map of BMECs, color coded by cluster membership. (D) Expression (color bar, TP10K) of key marker genes (D, right), along with

the distributions of expression levels ($\ln(\text{TP10K}+1)$, y axis) for the same genes across clusters of Figure 1B (x axis) (D, left). (E) (**left**) VWF expression in endosteal arteries, but not sinusoids. (left-top) High magnification images of femoral diaphysis showing VWF expression by arteries (white arrowheads) in addition to megakaryocytes, but not endomucin-expressing sinusoids or central sinus (left bottom). Endosteal arteries (white arrowheads) marked by both VWF and endomucin. Bone surface is marked by Col.1 expression. Scale bars are 100um (full bone) 50um. (**right**) IL6st expression in venous, but not arteriolar endothelium. Full-bone imaging of femoral sections showing sinusoidal endothelium expressing both CD31 and IL6st (right-top), while arteriolar endothelium is only expressing CD31. Bone surface is marked by Col.1 expression. Scale bars are 700um (full bone), 15um (mid panel) and 20um (low panel). (F–G) Key marker genes. Distributions of expression levels (TP10K, y axis) for select genes across the three clusters (x axis).

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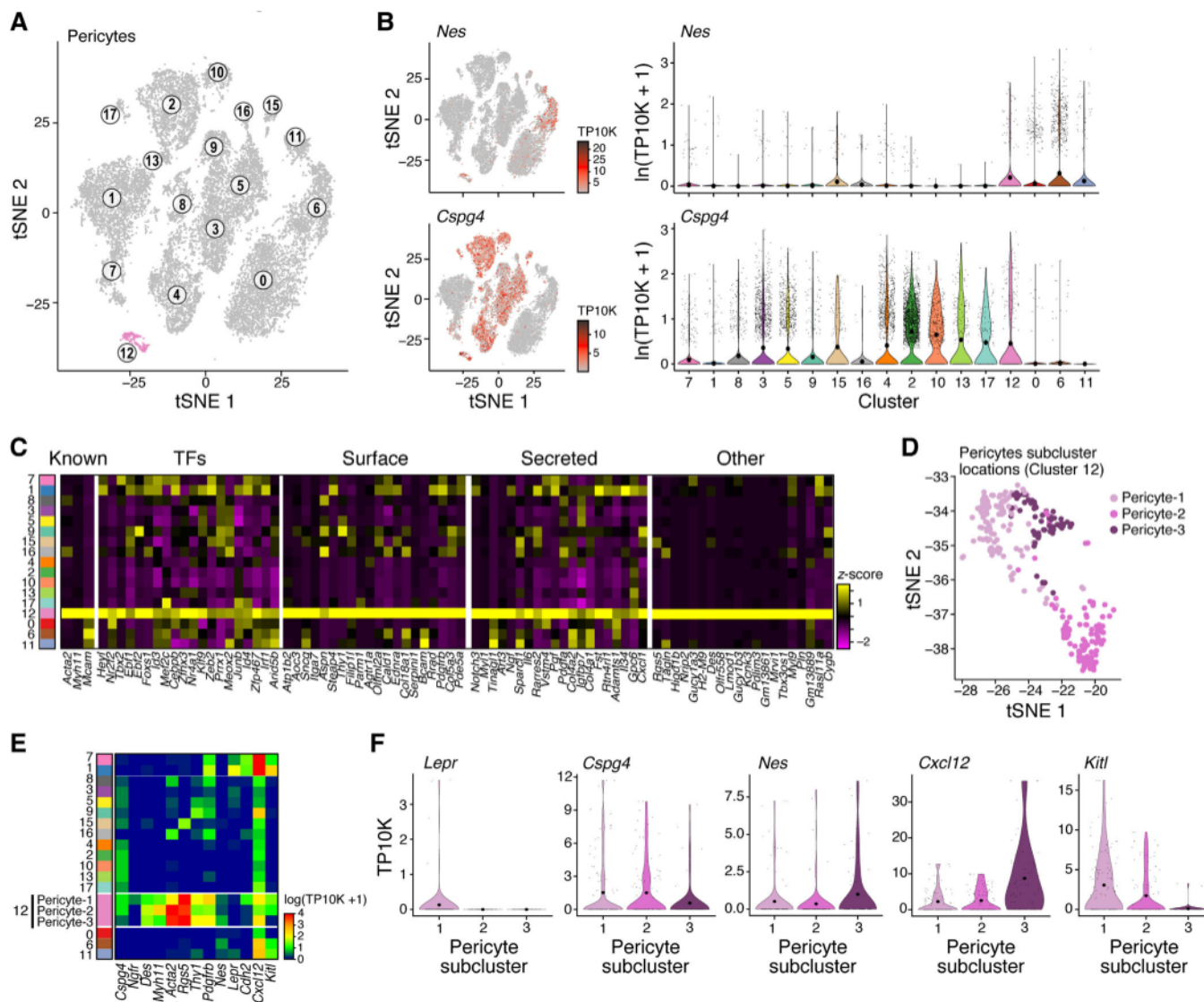


Figure 6. Three distinct subpopulations of pericytes that vary in hematopoietic regulatory gene expression.

(A–C) Signature genes for Pericytes in the stroma atlas. **(A,B)** tSNE of Figure 1B colored by cluster-12 membership (A), or by expression (color bar, TP10K) of key pericyte marker genes (B, left) (right), along with the distributions of expression levels ($\ln(\text{TP10K}+1)$, y axis) for the same genes across the clusters of Figure 1B (x axis). **(C)** Expression (column-wise z-score of $\ln$ of average TP10K) of top differentially expressed genes (columns) in the cells of each cluster (rows) (color bar, left, as in Figure 1B), ordered by five gene categories (labels on left). **(D)** Pericyte subclusters color coded on the zoom-in of to the pericyte cluster from **Figure 6A**. **(E)** Average expression ($\ln(\text{TP10K}+1)$) of select HSC niche genes (x axis) in clusters of Figure 1B (y axis). Three pericyte subclusters indicated. **(F)** Distributions of expression levels (TP10K, y axis, censored scale) for select marker genes across the subclusters.

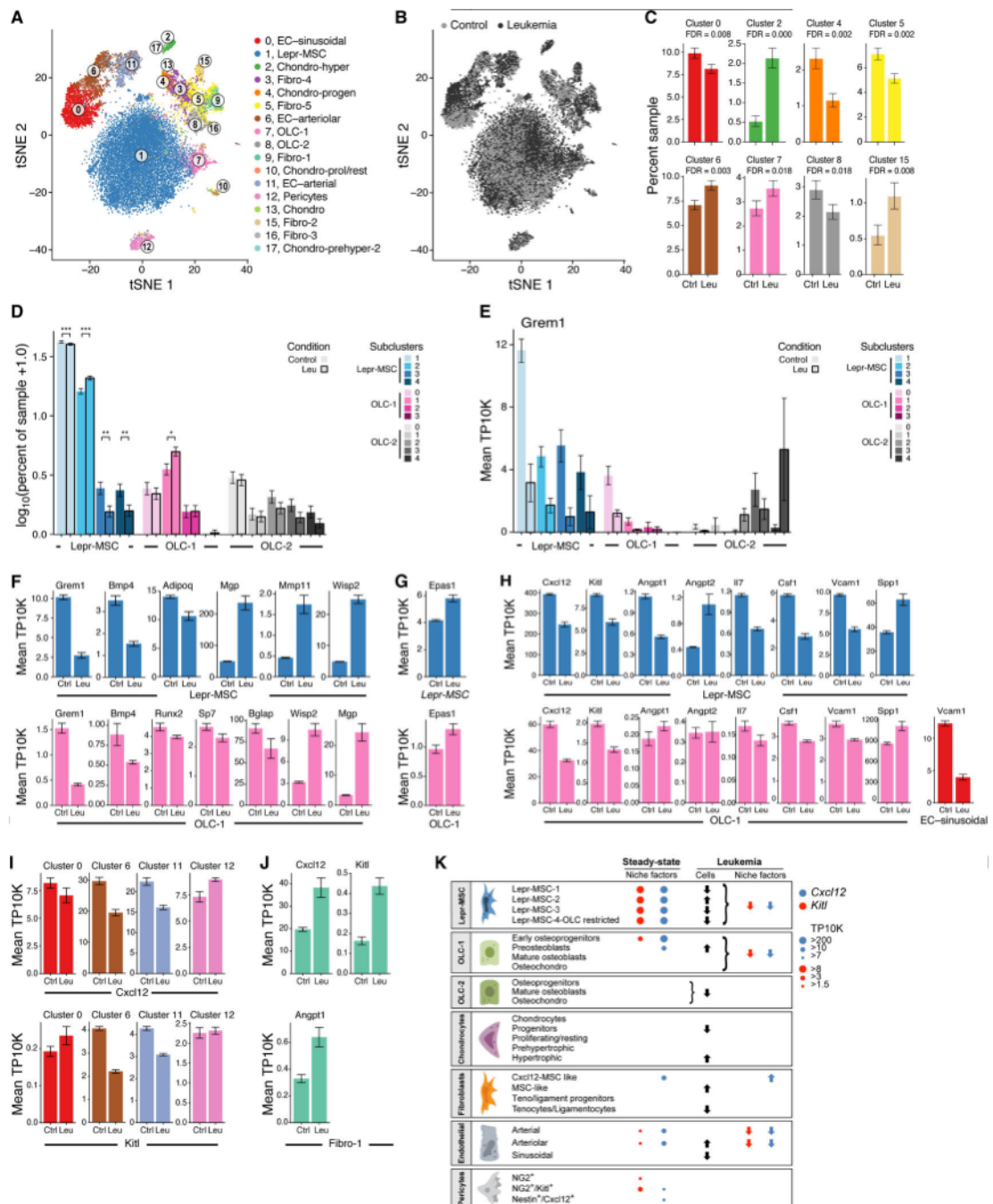


Figure 7. Remodeling of the bone marrow stroma in leukemia.

(A,B) A census of the leukemic bone marrow stroma. tSNE of 23,004 cells (dots) from mice transplanted with control (n=5, 12,456 cells) or leukemia allele bearing (n=4, 10,548 cells) bone marrow colored by cluster assignment (as in Figure 1B), or by condition (control: light grey; leukemia: dark grey). (C,D) Compositional changes in bone marrow stroma. Binomial fit mean as percent of cells (y axis) assigned to specific cluster (C) or to Lepr-MS-C and OLCs subclusters (D) among control or leukemic samples (x axis). Error bars: 95% confidence interval of the binomial fit mean. (E) Changes in *Grem1* expression in Lepr-

MSCs and OLCs. Average of samples (TP10K, y axis) in Lepr-MSK and OLC subclusters (x axis). Error bars: SEM. (F–H) Changes in niche remodeling, hypoxia and hematopoietic regulator genes in Lepr-MSKs, OLC-1s and sBMECs in leukemia. Average expression (TP10K, y axis) of niche genes in Lepr-MSKs (top) and OLC-1s (bottom). Error bars: SEM. (I,J) Changes in *Cxcl12*, *Kitl* and *Angpt1* expression in BMECs, pericytes or fibroblasts. Average expression (TP10K, y axis) of the denoted genes in specific cell clusters. Error bars: SEM. (K) A census of the bone marrow stroma in homeostasis and leukemia. Horizontal boxes: broad cell types, with subsets noted. Circles: expression levels of key niche factors, *Kitl* and *Cxcl12*. Dark arrows: changes in subset proportion in Leukemia. Colored arrows: changes in relative expression in leukemia.