

Supplementary Information

Plakoglobin is a mechanoresponsive regulator of naïve pluripotency

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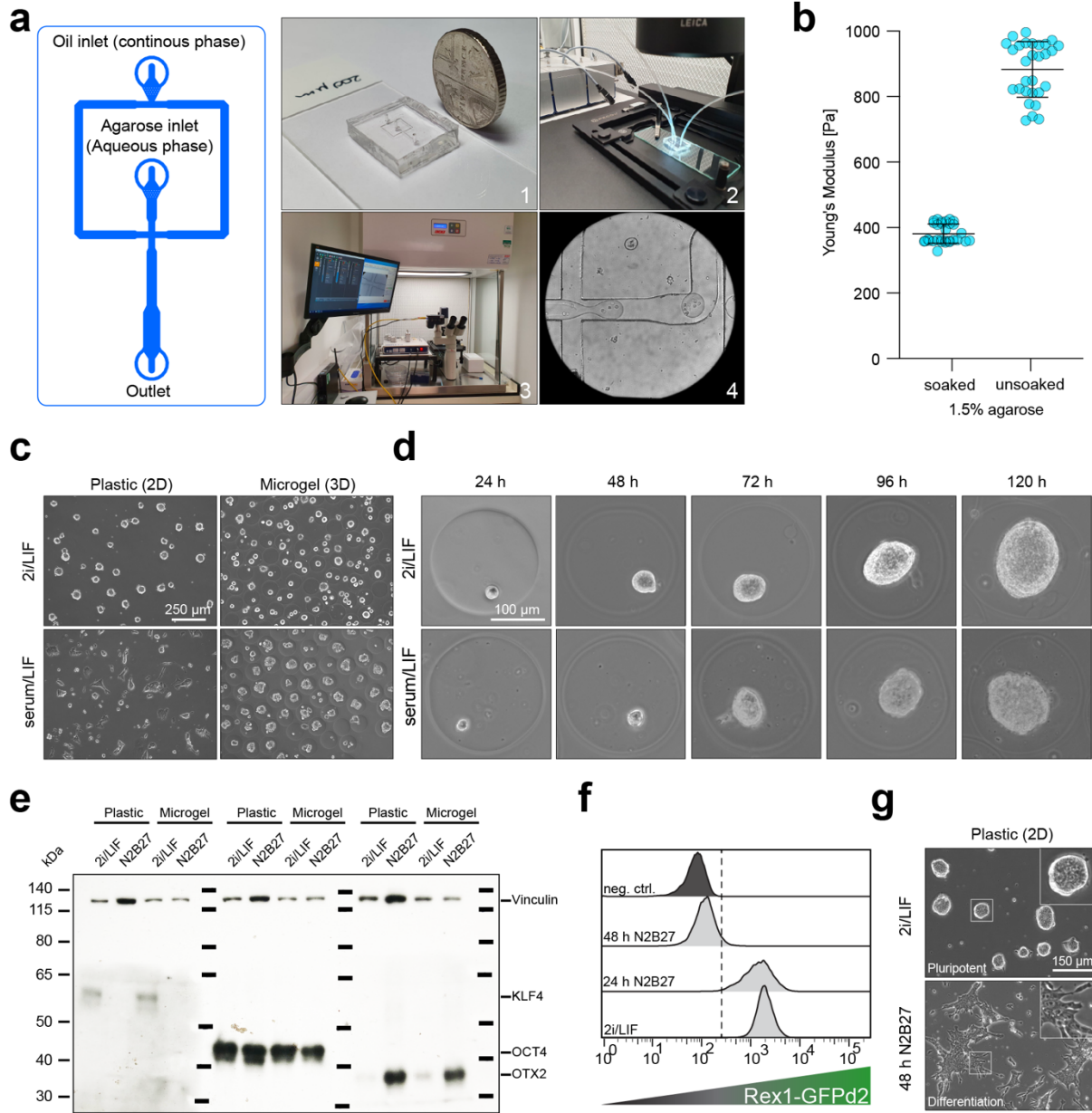
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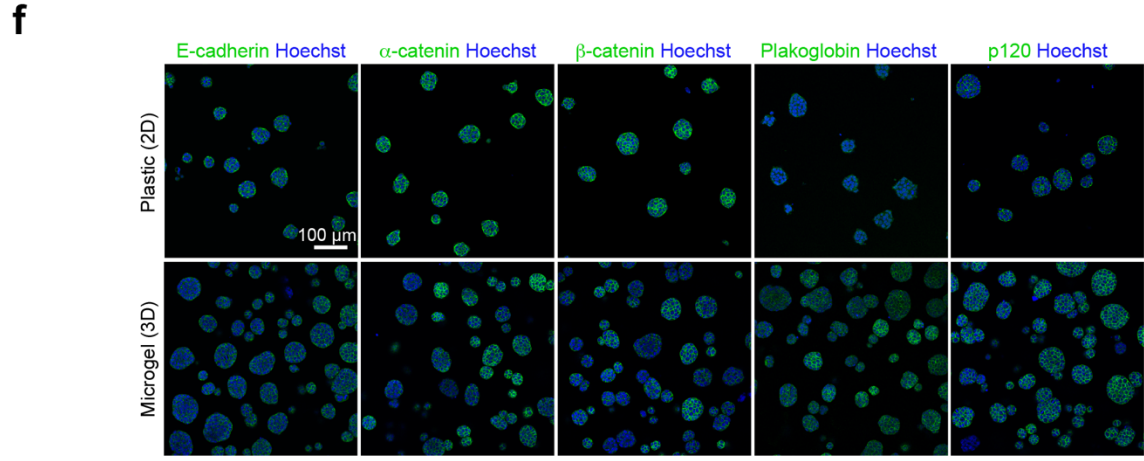
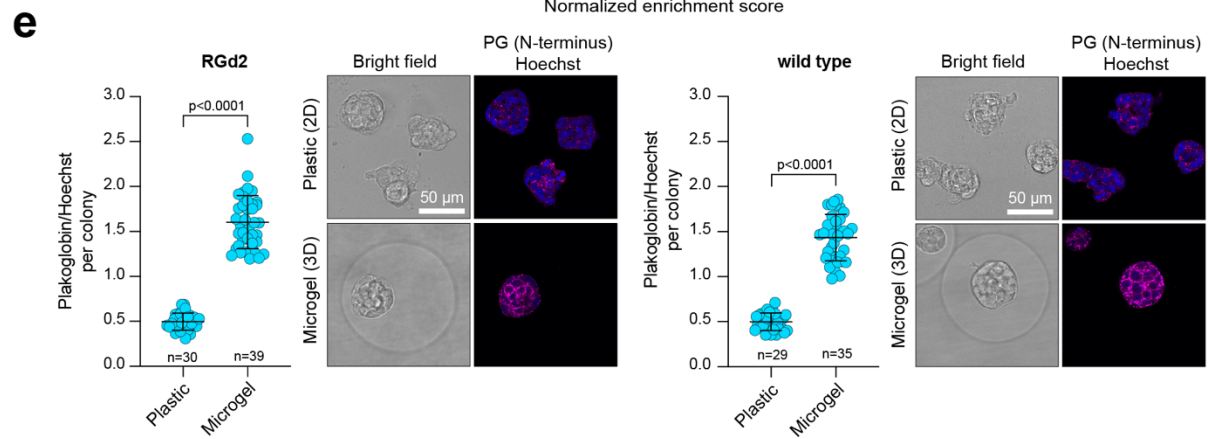
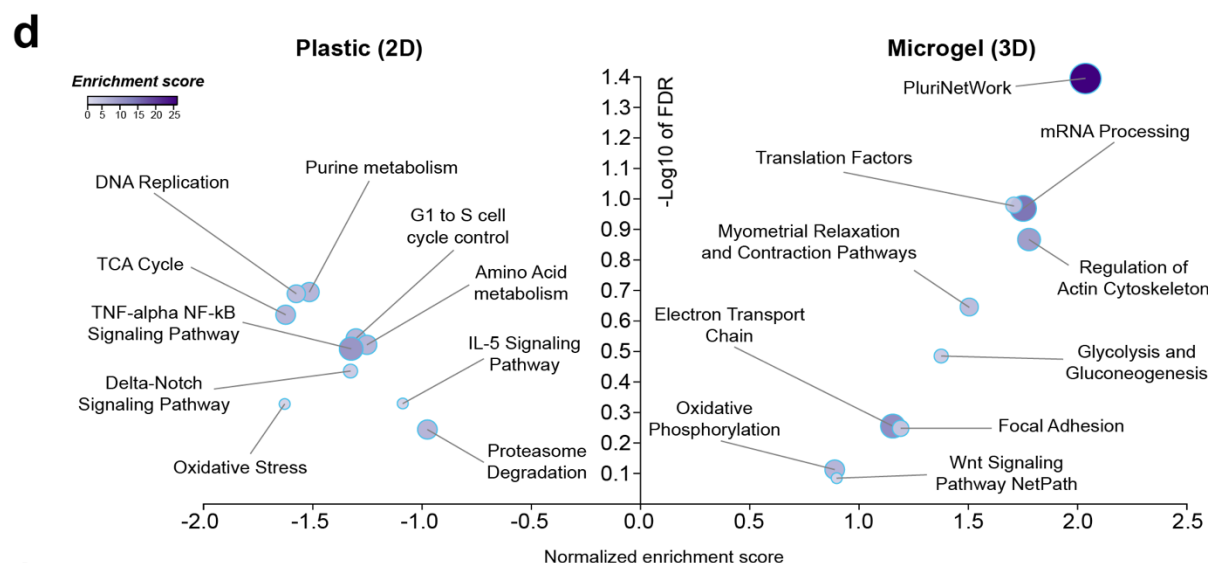
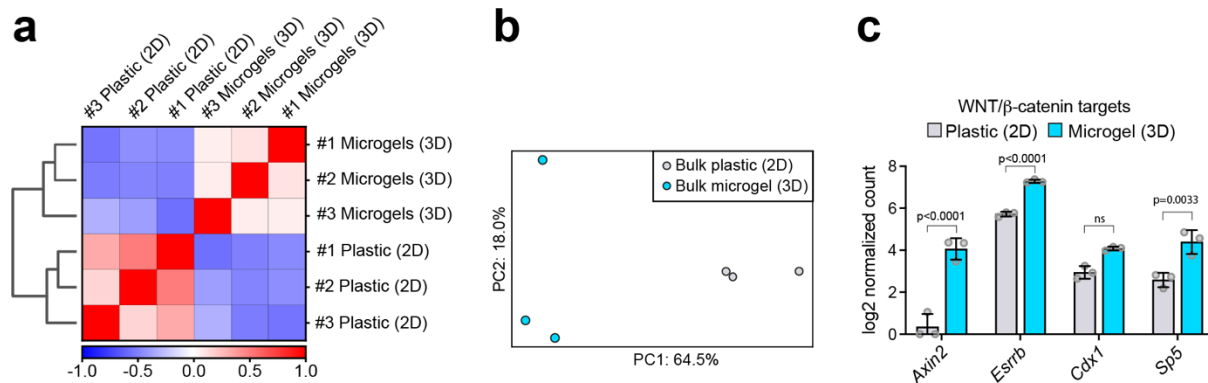
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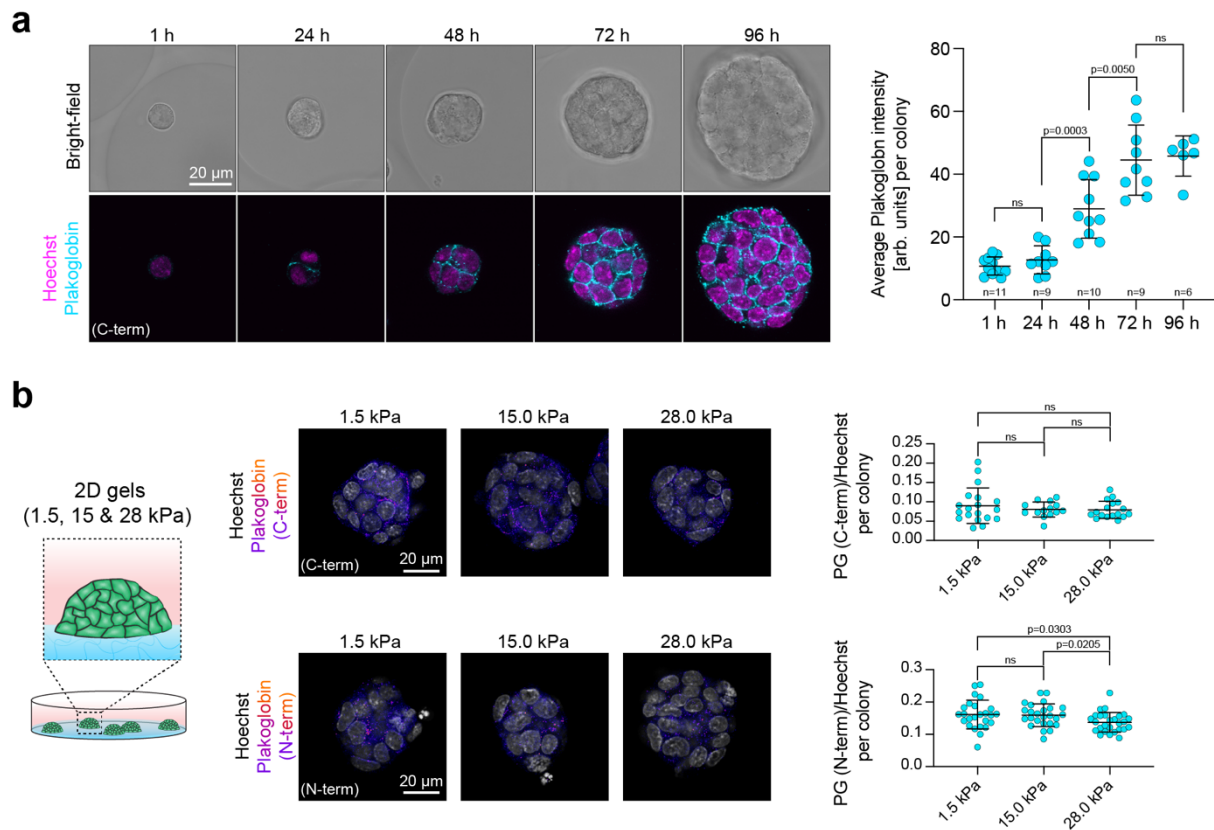


Supplementary Fig. 1 | Microfluidic-based cell encapsulation. **a**, Schematic of the microfluidic flow-focusing device (FFD) and explanatory images of the encapsulation rig set-up: (1) Single-inlet FFD, (2) Fully connected FFD with oil and agarose inlet and outlet, (3) Microfluidic encapsulation rig in laminar flow hood and (4) FFD crossing of aqueous (agarose) and continuous (oil) phase. **b**, Measurements of the elastic modulus of the ultra-low melting agarose by atomic force microscopy. Measurements were performed on bulk gels that were pre-incubated with medium (soaked) or without pre-incubation. Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations; representative of 3 independent experiments. **c**, Low magnification phase contrast overview images of mESCs in 2i/LIF and serum/LIF cultured on tissue culture plastic or in microgels. Representative of 3 independent experiments **d**, Time course phase contrast images of encapsulated mESCs after 24 h, 48 h, 72 h, 96 h and 120 h of culture in naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) and metastable pluripotent (serum/LIF) conditions. Representative of 3 independent experiments **e**, Western blot analysis of mESCs cultured in 2i/LIF (naïve pluripotency) or for 48 h in N2B27 (differentiation) on tissue culture plastic or within microgels. Analysis provided for the expression of KLF4 (naïve pluripotency marker), OCT4 (general pluripotency marker) and OTX2 (early differentiation marker). Vinculin was used as loading control. Representative of 3 independent experiments. **f**, Flow cytometric analysis of the RGd2 cells during pluripotency (2i/LIF) 24 h and 48 h of differentiation (N2B27). Cells have fully exited after 48 h of differentiation as indicated by the complete loss of Rex1-GFPd2. **g**, Phase contrast images of mESCs cultured on conventional tissue culture plastic in 2i/LIF (pluripotent) and 48 h of culture in N2B27 (differentiation). Representative of 3 independent experiments.

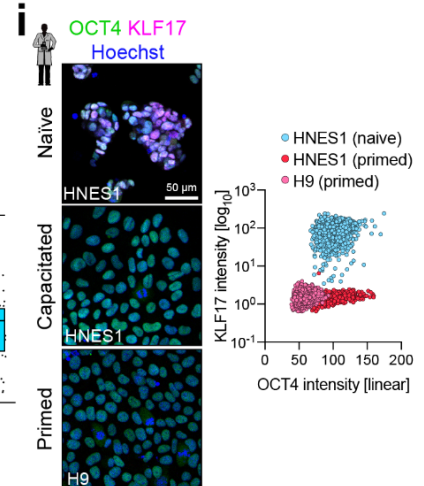
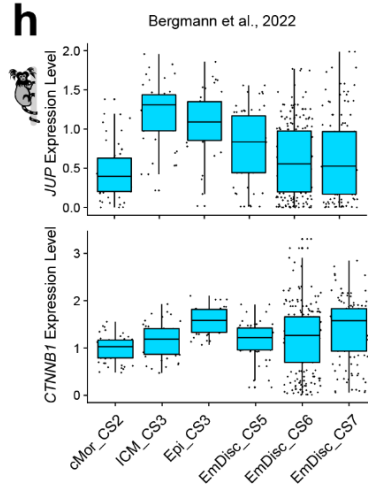
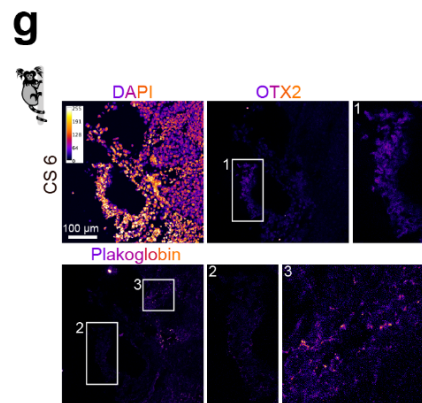
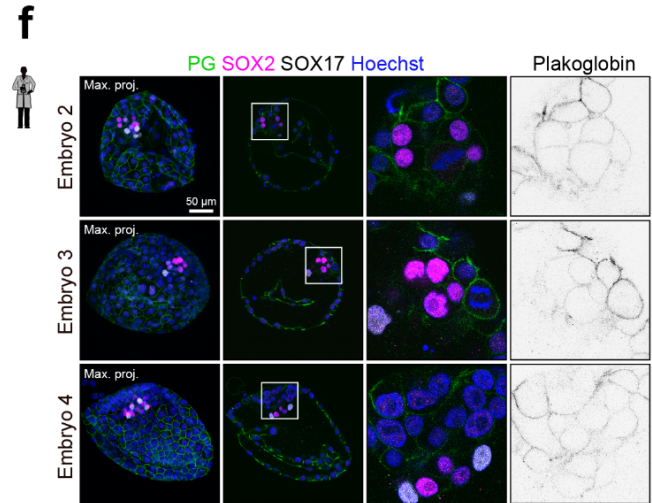
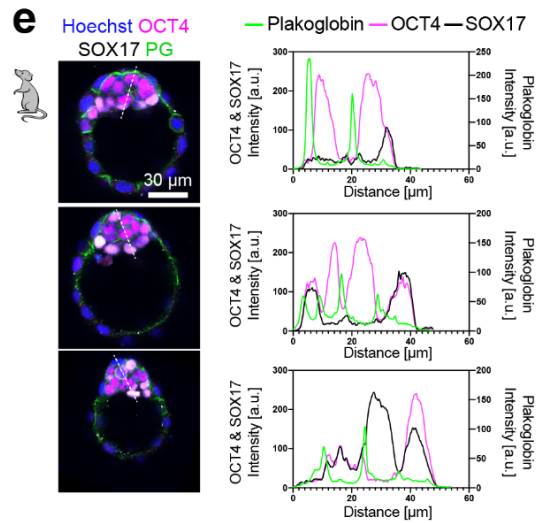
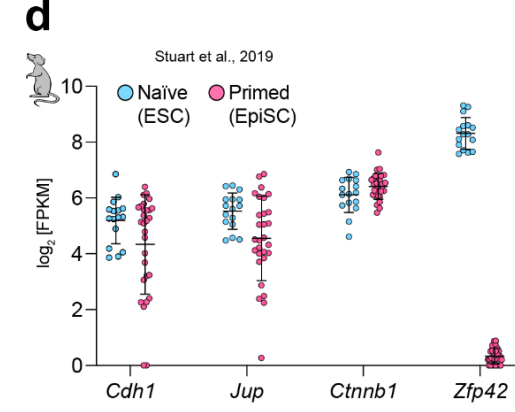
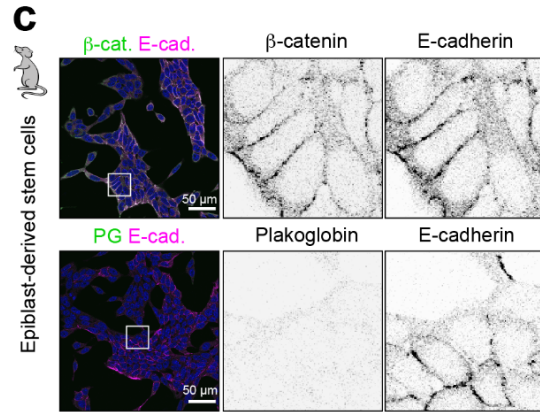
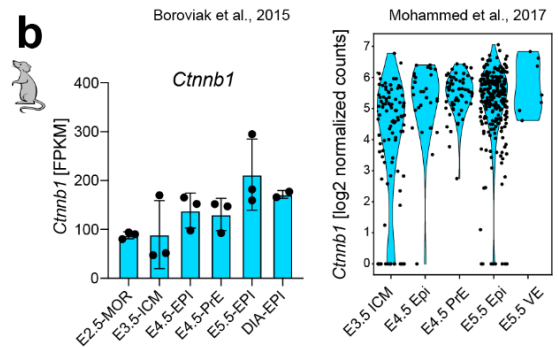
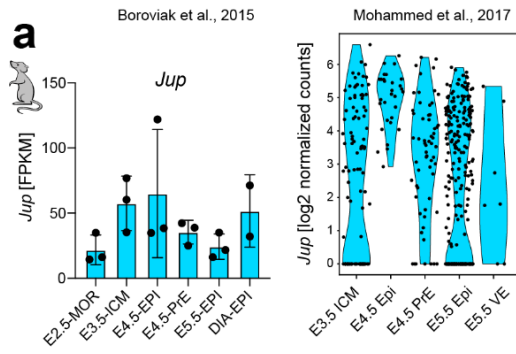


Supplementary Fig. 2 | Comparison of cell culture in microgels (3D) and on plastic (2D).

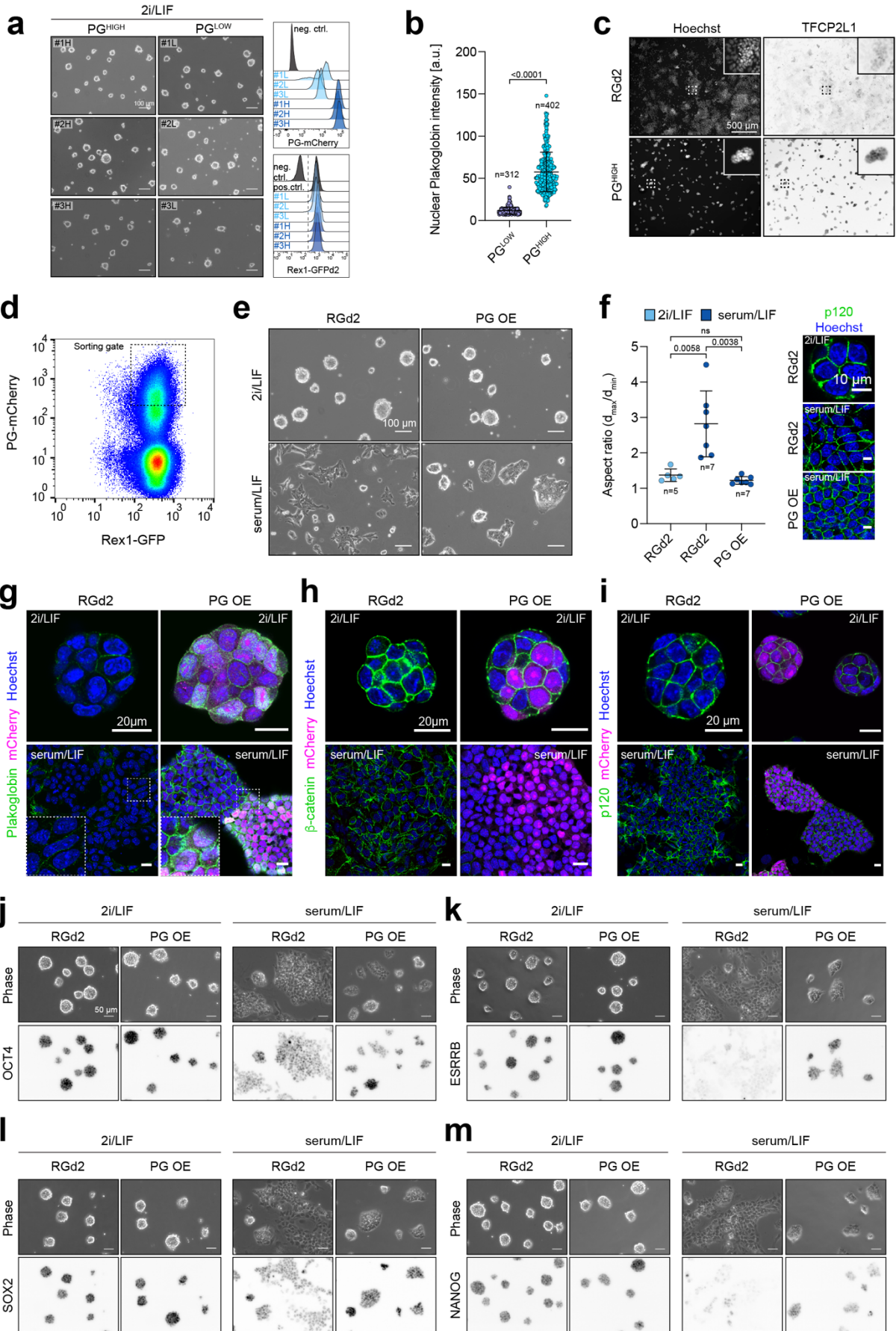
a, Pearson correlation coefficient heatmaps for each bulk RNA-seq replicate sample for both mESCs seeded on plastic (2D, N=3) or encapsulated in microgels (3D N=3) under naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) culture conditions. **b**, Principal component (PC; PC1=64.5%, PC2=18.0%) dimensional reduction plot of each sequenced replicate from mESCs cultured in 2i/LIF on plastic or encapsulated in microgels. **c**, Bulk RNA-seq analysis of known WNT/ β -catenin target genes. Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations and statistical significance levels across 3 replicates per condition are Bonferroni-adjusted p -values computed via differential gene expression analysis using the two-tailed DESeq2 tool. **d**, Gene set enrichment analysis using the most differentially expressed genes ($|\log_2$ fold-change $| > 0.5$ and Bonferroni-adjusted p -value $< 10^{-3}$) between mESCs cultured on tissue culture plastic in 2i/LIF and in agarose microgels, highlighting a significant enrichment of the PluriNetWork (WikiPathways) under microgel culture conditions. The statistical test for differential expression analysis was a two-tailed DESeq2 across 3 replicates per condition. **e**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) mESCs (RGd2 (left) and wild type (right)) cultured on plastic and encapsulated in microgels stained for Plakoglobin (PG). Plakoglobin levels were quantified for colonies grown on plastic (RGd2 n=30 colonies; wild type n=29 colonies) and in microgels (RGd2 n=39 colonies; wild type n=35 colonies). Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations. p -values were determined by a two-tailed unpaired t -test with Welch's correction. **f**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) cultured mESCs on plastic (2D) and encapsulated in microgels (3D). Cells were stained for E-cadherin, α -catenin, β -catenin, Plakoglobin, δ -catenin and nuclei with Hoechst. Scale bar: 100 μ m. Representative of 3 independent experiments.



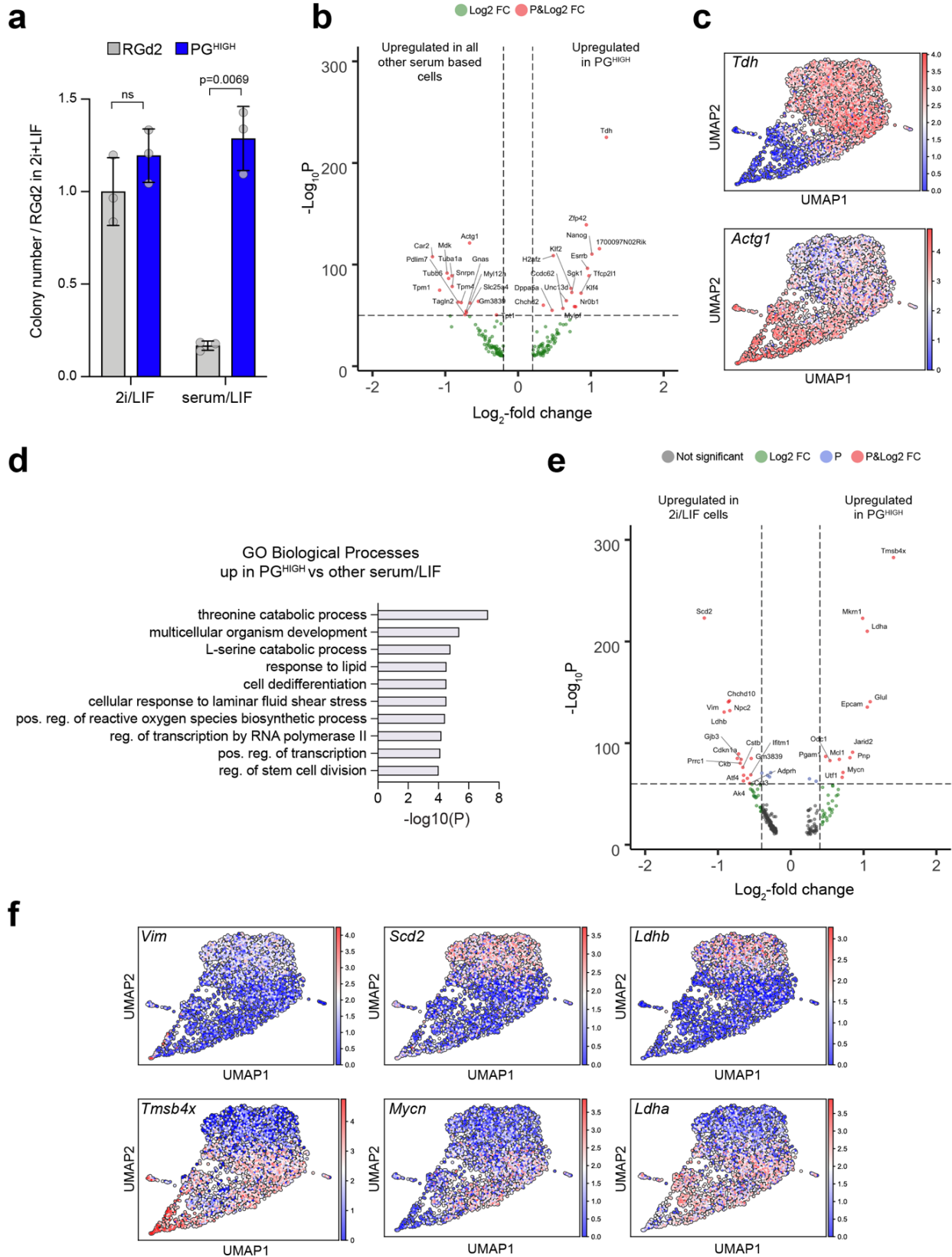
Supplementary Fig. 3 | Microenvironmental regulation of Plakoglobin. **a**, Representative confocal immunofluorescence images of a time-course over 96 h of naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) microgel encapsulated mESCs. Cells were stained for Plakoglobin. Average Plakoglobin levels were quantified per colony, significant upregulation was observed as early as 48 h after encapsulation. Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations. p -values were determined by a two-tailed unpaired t -test with Welch's correction. **b**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) mESCs cultured on commercially available (see methods) 2D polydimethylsiloxane gels with varying stiffnesses (1.5 kPa, 15 kPa and 28 kPa). Cells were stained for Plakoglobin (C-term and N-term). Plakoglobin levels (indicated on the right) remained mostly constant irrespective of 2D gel stiffness. Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations. p -values were determined by a two-tailed unpaired t -test with Welch's correction; 3 independent experiments.



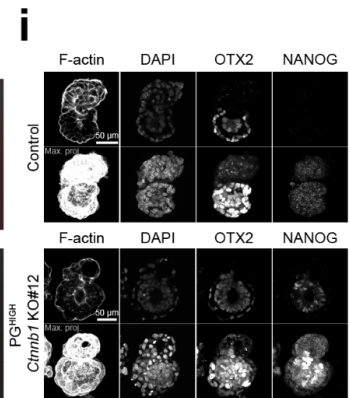
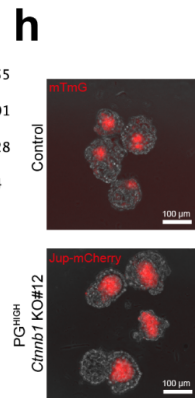
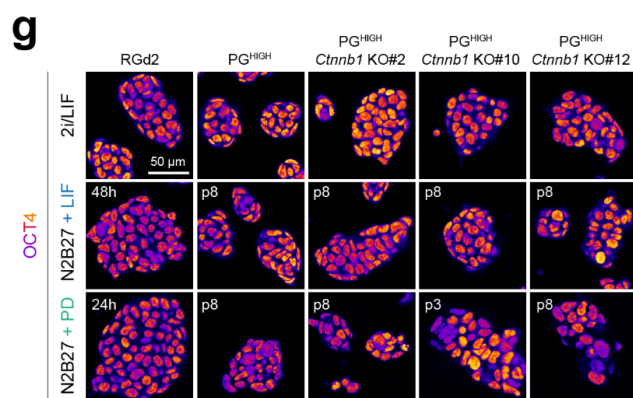
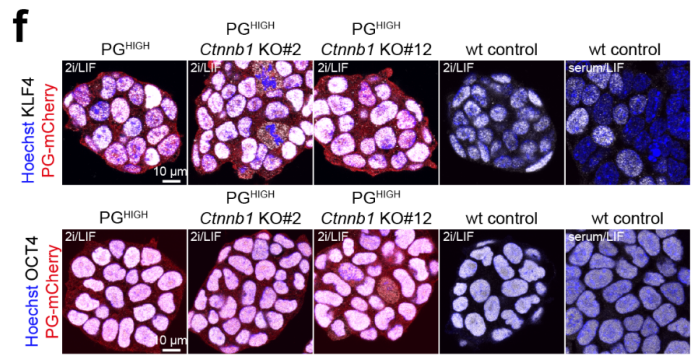
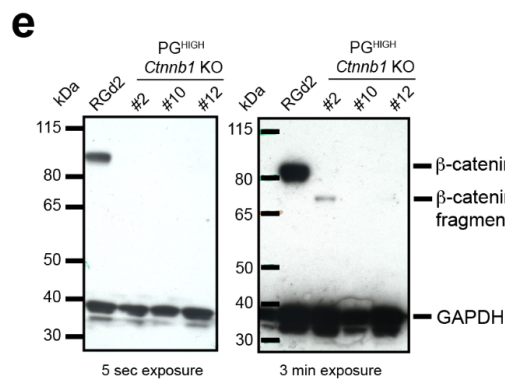
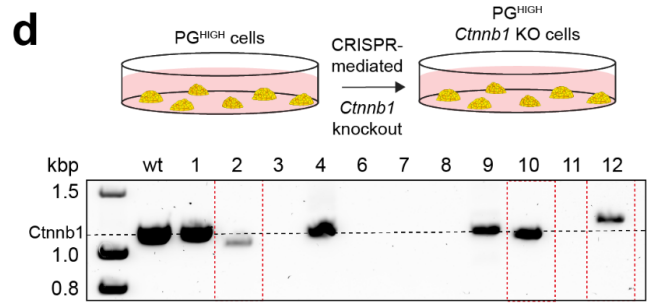
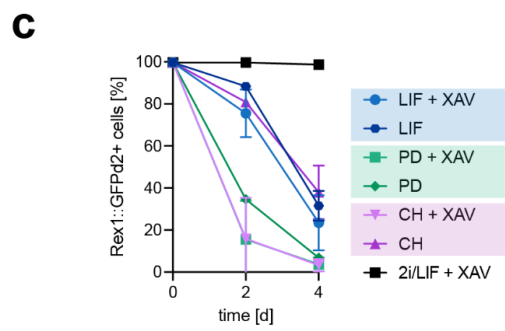
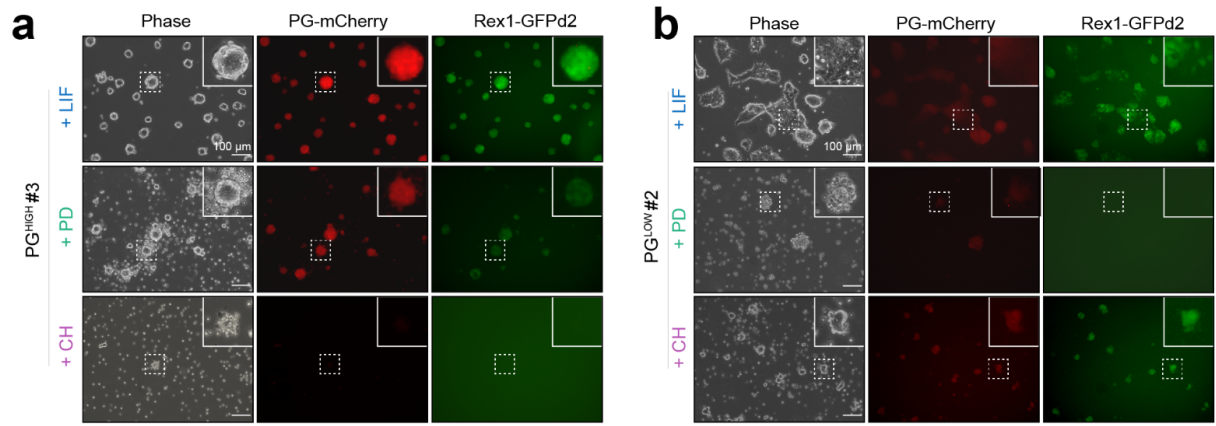
Supplementary Fig. 4 | Plakoglobin expression in the embryo. a&b, Meta-analysis of RNA-seq data^{10, 43} for *Jup* (Plakoglobin) and *Ctnnb1* (β -catenin) during early embryogenesis. MOR = morula, ICM = inner cell mass, EPI = Epiblast, DIA-EPI = diapause epiblast, PrE = primitive endoderm, VE = visceral endoderm. **c**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of mouse epiblast-derived stem cells (post-implantation) stained for β -catenin (β -cat.), Plakoglobin (PG) and E-cadherin. Scale bar: 50 μ m. Representative of 3 independent experiments. **d**, Meta-analysis of single-cell RNA-seq data⁴⁸ of naïve mouse ESCs (pre-implantation) and primed post-implantation epiblast-derived stem cells (EpiSCs). **e**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of blastocysts (~E4.25) stained for Plakoglobin, OCT4 (epiblast marker) and SOX17 (primitive endoderm marker). Fluorophore intensities were quantified along the white dotted line marked in the merged image and are shown on the right. Primitive endoderm cells lost Plakoglobin expression once sorted to the inner cell mass' surface. Scale bar: 30 μ m. **f**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of human blastocysts (Day 7) stained for SOX2 (epiblast marker), SOX17 (hypoblast marker) and Plakoglobin. Inserts show a magnified view of the inner cell mass. Scale bar: 50 μ m. **g**, Immunofluorescence images of Carnegie stage 6 marmoset embryo stained for OTX2 and Plakoglobin. Inserts (1) and (2) show a magnified view of the embryonic disc and insert (3) of the maternal tissue. Scale bar: 100 μ m. **h**, Meta-analysis of spatial RNA-Seq data⁵² for *JUP* and *CTNNB1* expression in the marmoset embryo from Carnegie stage (CS) 2 to CS7. cMor = compacted morula, ICM = inner cell mass, Epi = epiblast, EmDisc = embryonic disc. In boxplots, the box represents interquartile range and median, and whiskers are drawn to minimum and maximum excluding outliers. **i**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of naïve, capacitated and primed hPSCs stained for OCT4 (general pluripotency marker) and KLF17 (primate-specific naïve pluripotency marker). Scale bar: 50 μ m. Representative of 3 independent experiments.



Supplementary Fig. 5 | Plakoglobin expression promotes naïve pluripotency in metastable culture conditions. **a**, Phase contrast images of clonally expanded PG^{LOW} (#1L, #2L, #3L) and PG^{HIGH} (#1H, #2H, #3H) cells cultured in 2i/LIF. Scale bar: 100 μm . **b**, Quantification of nuclear Plakoglobin immunofluorescence signal (ref. Fig.5D) in PG^{LOW} (n=312 cells) and PG^{HIGH} (n=402 cells) cells cultured under serum/LIF conditions. Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations; *p*-values were determined by a two-tailed unpaired *t*-test with Welch's correction; 3 independent experiments. **c**, Epifluorescence images of RGd2 and PG^{HIGH} cells in metastable pluripotent conditions (serum/LIF) stained for the naïve pluripotency marker TFCEP2L1. Scale bar: 500 μm . Representative of 3 independent experiments. **d**, Flow cytometric analysis of *CAG::Jup-2A-mCherry* transfected RGd2 cells. PG OE cells were sorted based on positive Rex1-GFPd2 and PG-mCherry signal (sorting gate indicated as a rectangle). **e**, Phase contrast images of RGd2 and PG OE cells cultured in naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) and metastable pluripotent (serum/LIF) conditions. PG OE cells remained as tightly packed colonies under metastable conditions in serum/LIF similar to naïve cells in 2i/LIF. Scale bar: 100 μm . Representative of 3 independent experiments. **f**, Aspect ratio measurements ($\text{distance}_{\text{max}}/\text{distance}_{\text{min}}$) of RGd2 cells (in 2i/LIF n=5, in serum/LIF n=7) and PG OE cells (in serum/LIF n=7). Cell morphology is indicated by confocal immunofluorescence images on the right with cells stained for cortical p120. Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations; *p*-values were determined by a two-tailed unpaired *t*-test with Welch's correction; 2 independent experiments. Scale bar: 10 μm . **g-i**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of RGd2 and PG OE cells in naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) and metastable pluripotent (serum/LIF) conditions. Cells were stained for Plakoglobin (d), β -catenin (e) and p120 (f). Scale bar: 20 μm . Representative of 3 independent experiments. **j-m**, Epifluorescence and phase contrast images of RGd2 and PG OE cells under naïve pluripotent (2i/LIF) and metastable pluripotent (serum/LIF) conditions. Cells were stained for OCT4 (g), ESRRB (h), SOX2 (i) and NANOG (j). Scale bar: 50 μm . Representative of 3 independent experiments.



Supplementary Fig. 6 | Single-cell sequencing elucidates plakoglobin-induced re-establishment of naïve pluripotency. **a**, Colony formation assay of RGd2 and PG^{HIGH} cells. Error bars indicate the mean and standard deviations; (N=3). **b**, Volcano plot of genes with log₂-fold change > 0.2 and -log₁₀(p-value) > 50, comparing PG^{HIGH} cells against all other serum/LIF cultured samples, calculated using a two-tailed Wilcoxon rank sum test. **c**, Gene-expression values projected on the UMAP plot for *Tdh* (upregulated in naïve 2i/LIF control cells and PG^{HIGH} in serum/LIF) and *Actg1* (upregulated in all other serum/LIF samples). **d**, List of Gene Ontology for Biological Processes upregulated in PG^{HIGH} cells compared to all other serum/LIF samples. **e**, Volcano plot of genes with log₂-fold change > 0.4 and -log₁₀(p-value) > 60, comparing PG^{HIGH} cells against naïve (2i/LIF) control cells. **f**, Gene-expression values projected on the UMAP plot for *Vim*, *Scd2* and *Ldhb* (upregulated in naïve 2i/LIF control cells) and *Tmsb4x*, *Mycn* and *Ldha* (upregulated in all serum/LIF samples), calculated using a two-tailed Wilcoxon rank sum test.



Supplementary Fig. 7 | Plakoglobin sustains pluripotency independently of β -catenin.

a&b, Phase contrast and epifluorescence (PG-mCherry and Rex1-GFPd2) images of PG^{HIGH} and PG^{LOW} cells 6 days after culture in either PD, LIF or CH. Scale bar: 100 μ m. Representative of 3 independent experiments. **c**, Flow cytometric analysis of the Rex1-GFPd2 reporter in microgel encapsulated cells. Cells were cultured with the sole supplementation of PD (+XAV), LIF (+XAV) or CH (+XAV). **d**, CRISPR-mediated knockout of *Ctnnb1* (β -catenin) in PG^{HIGH} cells. (see methods). Genomic knockout verification of *Ctnnb1* in PG^{HIGH} cells. *Ctnnb1* KO clone #2, #10 and #12 are highlighted by the red dotted lines. Representative of 3 independent experiments. **e**, Western blot analysis of RGd2 and PG^{HIGH} *Ctnnb1* KO (clone #2, #10 and #12) cultured under naïve conditions in 2i/LIF. β -catenin was detected in RGd2 cells but not in clone #10 and #12. Long exposure (3 minutes) revealed a small amount of truncated β -catenin in clone #2. GAPDH was used as loading control. **f**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of PG^{HIGH}, PG^{HIGH} *Ctnnb1* KO (clone #2 and #12) and wild type control cells stained for KLF4 (naïve pluripotency marker) and OCT4 (general pluripotency marker). Scale bar: 10 μ m. Representative of 3 independent experiments. **g**, Representative confocal immunofluorescence images of RGd2 and PG^{HIGH} *Ctnnb1* KO (clone #2, #10 and #12) cells cultured in 2i/LIF, LIF-only and PD-only. Cells were stained for the general pluripotency marker OCT4. Scale bar: 50 μ m. Representative of 3 independent experiments. **h**, Representative phase contrast images merged with epifluorescence images of mouse embryo chimeras before fixation. Control and PG^{HIGH} *Ctnnb1* KO#12 cell contribution to the embryos was confirmed by mCherry signal. Scale bar: 100 μ m. **i**, Confocal immunofluorescence images of mouse embryos chimeras. 8-cell embryos were aggregated with 3-5 control (N=19 embryos) or PG^{HIGH} *Ctnnb1* KO#12 (N=24 embryos) cells cultured until a post-implantation-like state (see methods) and stained for NANOG and OTX2. Scale bar 50 μ m.

a**PG^{HIGH} Ctnnb1 KO #2:**

exon 3

wt: TTTTCCAGT**CCTTCACGCAAGAGCAAGTAGCT**GGTAAAGCATTGTGTTTGAAGTAGCATTAAAGTTTCTTGACAGGGGTGTGTGACAGCTCAGCCACAGCACAAAGTGGT

PG K02: TTTTCCAGT-----CAAGTGGTT [-94 bp]

exon 6

wt: GGAAGGAGCTAAATGGCAGTGC-GCCTAGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

PG K02: GGAAGGAGCTAAATGGCAGTGC**CATTCT**GTGCTGGTGGACTGCAG [+1 bp, 5 subs]**PG^{HIGH} Ctnnb1 KO #10:**

exon 3

wt: TTTTCCAGT**CCTTCACGCAAGCAAGTAGCT**GGTAAAGCATPG K010: TTTTCCAGT**CCTTCA**-----CAAGTGGTT [-2 bp]

exon 6

wt: CGCCATCAGCAGCTGCAATAATCTCTGCTCCATCAGGAAGGAGCTAAATGGCAGTGGCCTAGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

PG K010: CGCCATCAG-----TGGACTGCAGTGGTGGACTGCAG [-38 bp, +15 bp]

PG^{HIGH} Ctnnb1 KO #12:

exon 3

wt: TTTTCCAGT**CCTT**-----CACGCAAGAGCAAGTAGCTGGTAAAGCATPG K012: TTTTCCAGT**CCTT**ATTTGGTCTATTGGTTAAAAATGAGCTGATTTAACAAAAATTTAACGGGAATTTAACAAAATATTACGTTTACAATCAAGAGCAAGTAGCTGGTAAAGCAT

[+76 bp, 2 subs]

exon 6

wt: GGAAGGAGCTAAATGGCAGTGGCCTAGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

PG K012: GGAAGGAGCTAAATGGCAGTGGCCTAGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

PAM spacer

b**PG^{HIGH} Ctnnb1 KO #2:**

exon 3

TTTTCCAGTCAAGTGGT

GGAAGGAGCTAAATGGCAGTGC**CATTCT**GTGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

-94bp

PG^{HIGH} Ctnnb1 KO #10:

exon 3

TTTTCCAGT**CCTT**-----CACGCAAGAGCAAGTAGCTGGTAAAGCATTTTTCCAGT**CCTT**ATTTGGTCTATTGGTTAAAAATGAGCTGATTTAACAAAAATTTAACGGGAATTTAACAAAATATTACGTTTACAATCAAGAGCAAGTAGCTGGTAAAGCAT

-2bp

exon 6

CGCCATCAGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

CGCCATCAGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

-38bp

PG^{HIGH} Ctnnb1 KO #12:

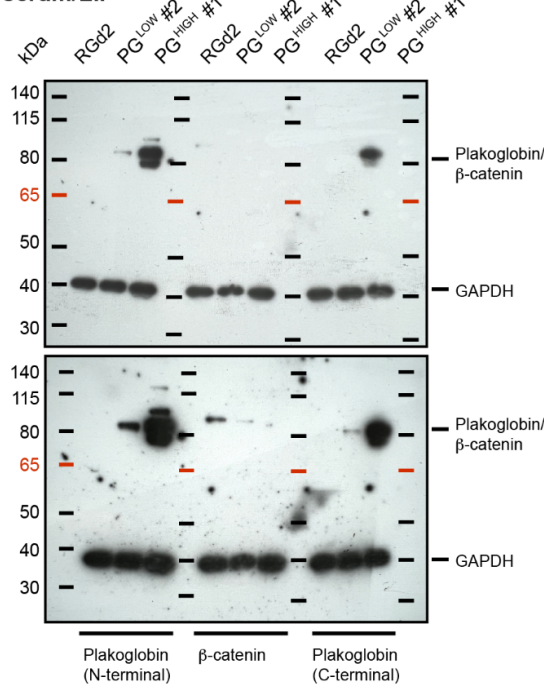
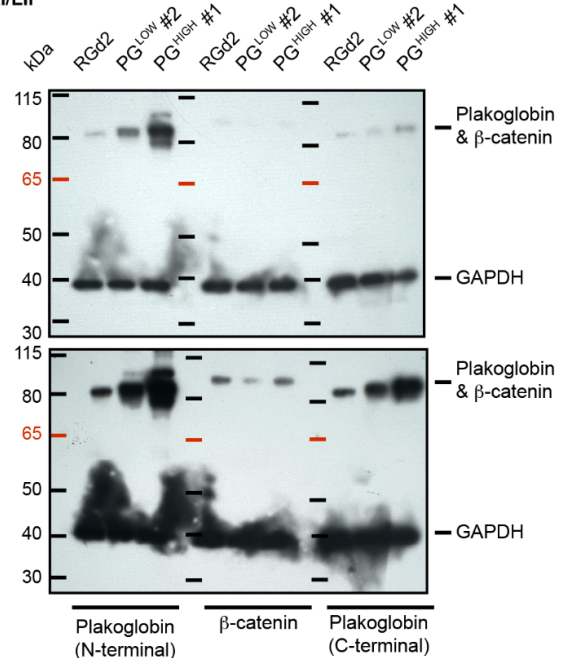
exon 3

TTTTCCAGT**CCTT**-----CACGCAAGAGCAAGTAGCTGGTAAAGCATTTTTCCAGT**CCTT**ATTTGGTCTATTGGTTAAAAATGAGCTGATTTAACAAAAATTTAACGGGAATTTAACAAAATATTACGTTTACAATCAAGAGCAAGTAGCTGGTAAAGCAT

exon 6

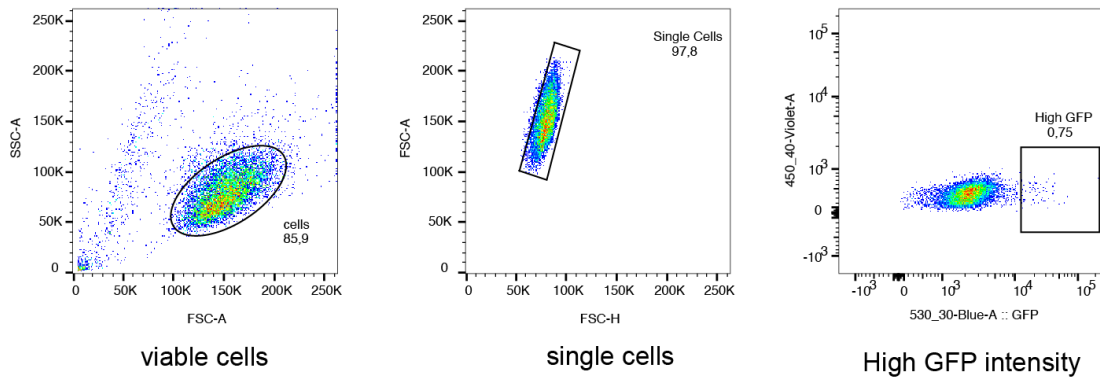
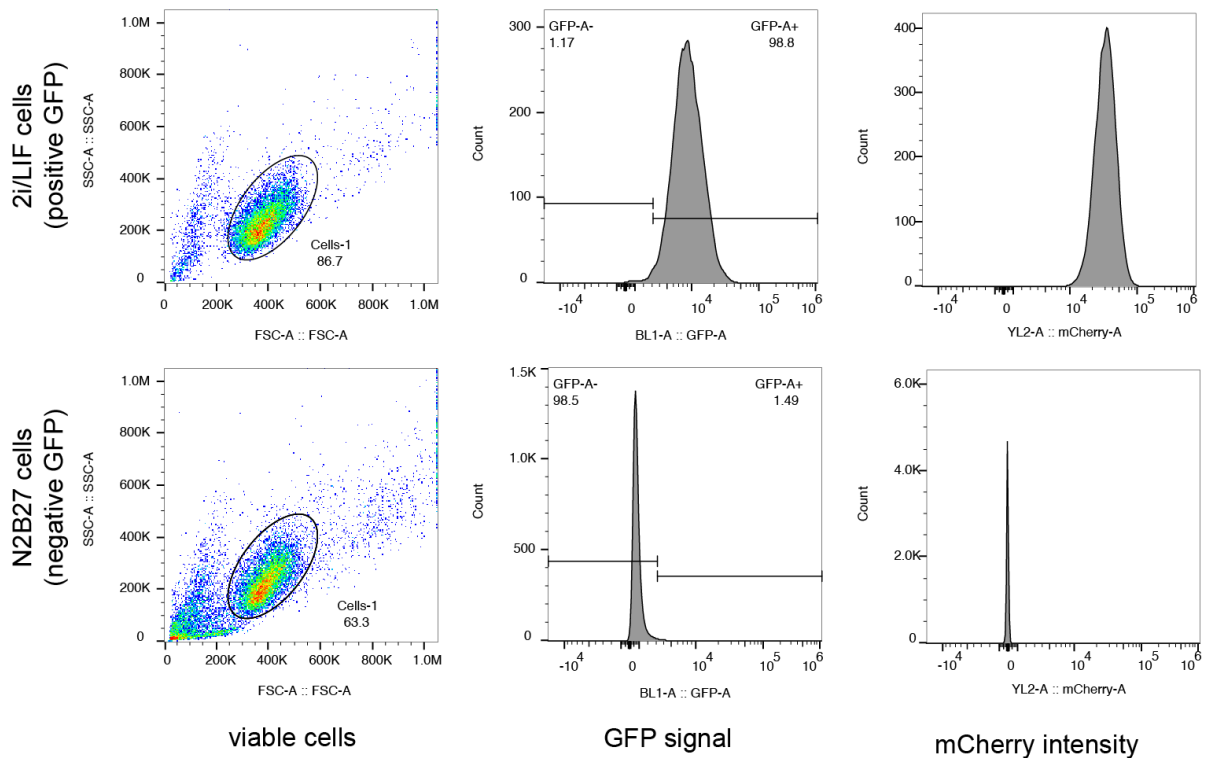
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GGAAGGAGCTAAATGGCAGTGGCCTAGCTGGTGGACTGCAG

c serum/LIF**d 2i/LIF**

Supplementary Fig. 8 | Validation of *Ctnnb1* KO in PG^{HIGH} cells.

a&b, Genotyping of PG^{HIGH} *Ctnnb1* KO clones #2, #10, and #12 by Sanger sequencing with observed edits in exon 3 and 6 of *Ctnnb1* marked in red and gRNA target sequences in green (PAM in bold). **c&d** Complete membranes of Western blot analysis shown in Fig. 5e in serum/LIF (**c**) and 2i/LIF (**d**) with short (top) and long (bottom) exposure times and additional N-terminal Plakoglobin antibody.

a**b**

Supplementary Fig. 9 | Gating for Rex1GFPd2 cells in single cell sorting and flow cytometry analysis. **a**, Gating during single cell sorting for cell line generation. Cells were gated for cell viability, for single cells to exclude doublets and GFP intensity. **b** Gating strategy for flow cytometry analysis. Viable cells were selected by gating. The GFP signal of viable cells was plotted in histogram plots, the gate for positive and negative GFP signal was positioned in between the positive (2i/LIF) peak and the negative (N2B27) gate. This gating was applied for the analysis of the data shown in Figure 1 (e & f), 5 (f), 7 (b - e, h), S1 (f), S5 (a), S6 (a) and S7 (c).

Primary antibodies used for immunofluorescence stainings:

Target	Dilution	Manufacturer	Reference
a-catenin	1:200	Cell Signaling Technology	#3236S
b-catenin	1:200	Cell Signaling Technology	#cs8480
E-cadherin	1:100	Thermo Fisher Scientific	13-1900
ESRRB	1:300	R&D Systems,	PP-H6705-00
KLF17	1:500	Atlas Antibodies	HPA024629
KLF4	1:400	R&D Systems	AF3158
NANOG	1:200	Thermo Fisher Scientific	14-5761-80
NANOG	1:200	abcam	ab80892
OCT4	1:200	Santa Cruz	sc5279
OTX2	1:200	R&D Systems	AF1979-SP
p120	1:800	Cell Signaling Technology	#59854
Plakoglobin	1:250	abcam	ab184919
Plakoglobin	1:400	Cell Signaling Technology	#2309
SOX17	1:400	R&D systems	AF1924
SOX2	1:100	R&D systems	MAB2018
T 'Brachury'	1:200	R&D systems	AF2085
TFCP2L1	1:300	R&D Systems	AF5726

Primary antibodies used for western blotting:

Target	Dilution	Manufacturer	Reference
b-catenin	1:500	Cell Signaling Technology	#cs8480
GAPDH	1:1000	Cell Signaling Technology	#5174
KLF4	1:1000	R&D Systems	AF3158
OCT4	1:1000	Santa Cruz	sc5279
OTX2	1:600	R&D Systems	AF1979-SP
Plakoglobin	1:1000	abcam	ab184919
Plakoglobin	1:600	Cell Signaling Technology	#2309
Vinculin	1:1000	Cell Signaling Technology	#4650

Supplementary References

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