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Reporting Summary

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

Statistics

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

n/a	Confirmed	
☐	☒	The exact sample size (*n*) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
☐	☒	A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
☐	☒	The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided *Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.*
☒	☐	A description of all covariates tested
☐	☒	A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
☒	☐	A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
☒	☐	For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. *F*, *t*, *r*) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and *P* value noted *Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.*
☒	☐	For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
☒	☐	For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
☒	☐	Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's *d*, Pearson's *r*), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on statistics for biologists contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about availability of computer code

Data collection	Chromium Controller Firmware (10X Genomics).
Data analysis	Cell Ranger (Version 6.1.2); R software (Version 4.1.2); Seurat package (Version 4.1.1).

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

Data

Policy information about availability of data

All manuscripts must include a data availability statement. This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:
- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our policy

Raw single cell RNA sequencing and Seurat object will be available before publication.

Research involving human participants, their data, or biological material

Policy information about studies with human participants or human data. See also policy information about sex, gender (identity/presentation), and sexual orientation and race, ethnicity and racism.

Reporting on sex and gender	N/A
Reporting on race, ethnicity, or other socially relevant groupings	N/A
Population characteristics	N/A
Recruitment	Adult lung specimens were collected with the informed consent of the patients, and aborted embryo specimens were obtained with the informed consent of the pregnant women.
Ethics oversight	The use of human lung tissue in this study was approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Fuwai Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences.

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

Field-specific reporting

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

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

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

Life sciences study design

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

Sample size	No statistical methods were used to pre-determine sample size.
Data exclusions	No data were excluded from the analysis.
Replication	We performed single cell RNAseq on 10 lungs,), with comparable results among the donors in the same group. The same samples were used for the histological validation experiments.
Randomization	Randomization was not relevant due to the study design.
Blinding	Blinding was not relevant due to the study design.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

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

Materials & experimental systems

n/a	Involved in the study
☐	☒ Antibodies
☒	☐ Eukaryotic cell lines
☒	☐ Palaeontology and archaeology
☒	☐ Animals and other organisms
☒	☐ Clinical data
☒	☐ Dual use research of concern
☒	☐ Plants

Methods

n/a	Involved in the study
☒	☐ ChIP-seq
☒	☐ Flow cytometry
☒	☐ MRI-based neuroimaging

Antibodies

Antibodies used	Rabbit anti-FTL (Proteintech, #10727-1-AP, 1:200) Mouse anti-SFTPC (Abcam, #ab90716, 1 μg/ml)

Rabbit anti-EEF1A1 (Proteintech, #11402-1-AP, 1:200)
Rabbit anti-AGER (Abcam, #ab216329, 1:1000)
Mouse anti-VIM (Abcam, #ab8978, 2μg/ml)
Rabbit anti-p21 (Proteintech, #10355-1-AP, 1:1000)

Validation

Validation statements are available from manufacturers' websites:
Rabbit anti-FTL (https://www.ptgcn.com/products/FTL-Antibody-10727-1-AP.htm)
Mouse anti-SFTPC (https://www.abcam.cn/prosurfactant-protein-c-antibody-ab90716.html)
Rabbit anti-EEF1A1 (https://www.ptgcn.com/products/EEF1A1-Antibody-11402-1-AP.htm)
Rabbit anti-AGER (https://www.abcam.cn/rage-antibody-epr21171-ab216329.html)
Mouse anti-VIM (https://www.abcam.cn/vimentin-antibody-rv202-cytoskeleton-marker-ab8978.html)
Rabbit anti-p21 (https://www.ptgcn.com/products/P21-Antibody-10355-1-AP.htm)

Plants

Seed stocks

N/A

Novel plant genotypes

N/A

Authentication

N/A