

## Life Sciences Reporting Summary

Nature Research wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form is intended for publication with all accepted life science papers and provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. Every life science submission will use this form; some list items might not apply to an individual manuscript, but all fields must be completed for clarity.

For further information on the points included in this form, see Reporting Life Sciences Research. For further information on Nature Research policies, including our data availability policy, see Authors & Referees and the Editorial Policy Checklist.

## ▶ Experimental design

## 1. Sample size

Describe how sample size was determined.

Sample size was reported in the figure legends.

For mouse studies, statistical significance was determined using the Mann-Whitney test ( $n \geq 4$ ). To protect animal welfare, a minimal number of animals were used (5 mice were used per group for the majority of experiments).

For in vitro studies, statistical significance was determined using the two-tailed student's t-test ( $n \geq 2$ ), and 3 replicates per condition were used in the majority of in vitro experiments.

To determine VIR-O and AV-T switching frequencies, a minimum of 6 colonies for each strain was tested.

For biofilm assays, 6 individual wells per strain were used and repeated experiments gave consistently reproducible results.

For the electron microscopy to visualize capsule, a representative image was shown. Multiple images shown similar differences.

Growth curves were repeated at least three times and a representative experiment was shown for each.

## 2. Data exclusions

Describe any data exclusions.

N/A, no data has been excluded.

## 3. Replication

Describe whether the experimental findings were reliably reproduced.

All the experiments were reliably reproduced.

## 4. Randomization

Describe how samples/organisms/participants were allocated into experimental groups.

There was no randomization in the animal experiments. The mouse groups used in this study were age- and gender-matched, housed in the same facility or purchased directly from Jackson Laboratory (Bar Harbor, Maine). Thus, the mouse groups were equivalent (other than genotype) at the start of experiments. Therefore any differences observed within groups were attributable to the infecting bacterial strains or genotype of the mice.

## 5. Blinding

Describe whether the investigators were blinded to group allocation during data collection and/or analysis.

No blinding was performed for animal studies. The mouse groups used in this study were age- and gender-matched, housed in

the same facility or purchased directly from Jackson Laboratory (Bar Harbor, Maine). Thus, the mouse groups were equivalent (other than genotype) at the start of experiments. Therefore any differences observed within groups were attributable to the infecting bacterial strains or genotype of the mice.

Note: all studies involving animals and/or human research participants must disclose whether blinding and randomization were used.

## 6. Statistical parameters

For all figures and tables that use statistical methods, confirm that the following items are present in relevant figure legends (or in the Methods section if additional space is needed).

- |     |           |
|-----|-----------|
| n/a | Confirmed |
|-----|-----------|
- The exact sample size ( $n$ ) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement (animals, litters, cultures, etc.)
  - A description of how samples were collected, noting whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
  - A statement indicating how many times each experiment was replicated
  - The statistical test(s) used and whether they are one- or two-sided (note: only common tests should be described solely by name; more complex techniques should be described in the Methods section)
  - A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as an adjustment for multiple comparisons
  - The test results (e.g.  $P$  values) given as exact values whenever possible and with confidence intervals noted
  - A clear description of statistics including central tendency (e.g. median, mean) and variation (e.g. standard deviation, interquartile range)
  - Clearly defined error bars

*See the web collection on statistics for biologists for further resources and guidance.*

## ► Software

Policy information about availability of computer code

### 7. Software

Describe the software used to analyze the data in this study.

Statistical analyses were performed using Prism 5 ver 5.0 (GraphPad Software). No custom codes were used.

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the paper but not yet described in the published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers upon request. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). *Nature Methods* guidance for providing algorithms and software for publication provides further information on this topic.

## ► Materials and reagents

Policy information about availability of materials

### 8. Materials availability

Indicate whether there are restrictions on availability of unique materials or if these materials are only available for distribution by a for-profit company.

No restrictions and no unique materials were used.

### 9. Antibodies

Describe the antibodies used and how they were validated for use in the system under study (i.e. assay and species).

N/A. No antibodies were used.

### 10. Eukaryotic cell lines

a. State the source of each eukaryotic cell line used.

No eukaryotic cell lines were used.

b. Describe the method of cell line authentication used.

N/A

c. Report whether the cell lines were tested for mycoplasma contamination.

N/A

d. If any of the cell lines used are listed in the database of commonly misidentified cell lines maintained by ICLAC, provide a scientific rationale for their use.

N/A

## ► Animals and human research participants

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Policy information about studies involving animals; when reporting animal research, follow the ARRIVE guidelines

### 11. Description of research animals

Provide details on animals and/or animal-derived materials used in the study.

Wild-type C57BL/6J mice were purchased from Jackson Laboratories and used at age 8-10 weeks; all experiments used age- and sex-matched mice. All the knockout mice used in this study were generated in the C57BL/6J mice background.

Policy information about studies involving human research participants

### 12. Description of human research participants

Describe the covariate-relevant population characteristics of the human research participants.

N/A. No human research participants were involved.