

**Supplementary table 1. Borrelial strains used in the study**

Genospecies	Strain	Origin		Serum susceptibility <sup>a</sup>
		Biological	Geographical	
<i>B. burgdorferi</i>	B31	Tick, <i>I. scapularis</i>	USA	Resistant
<i>B. afzelii</i>	FEM1-D15	Human, skin	Germany	Resistant
<i>B. garinii</i>	G1	Human, CSF <sup>b</sup>	Germany	Sensitive
<i>B. spielmanii</i>	A14S	Human, skin	The Netherlands	Resistant
<i>B. lusitaniae</i>	MT-M8	Tick, <i>I. ricinus</i>	Portugal	Sensitive
<i>B. valaisiana</i>	ZWU3 Ny3	Tick, <i>I. ricinus</i>	Germany	Resistant

<sup>a</sup>Serum resistance was determined by incubation of spirochetes in the presence of 50% NHS by a colorimetric growth inhibition assay and by immunofluorescence staining of deposited complement components C3, C6, and C5b-9 (Kraiczy et al., 2000)

<sup>b</sup>CSF, cerebrospinal fluid