



## Newsletter March 2026

### Message from the Study group Executive Committee

Dear ESGBOR Members,

We thank all ESGBOR members who participated in the recent election of the ESGBOR Executive Committee (EC). All members of the EC were re-elected, and their roles within the committee will remain unchanged. At the beginning of this year, four newsletters will be sent to the group members. To provide more variety, two newsletters will continue in the same format as before, alternating with two newsletters that will focus on specific topics, such as presentations of research groups working in the field of tick-borne diseases. In this newsletter, we provide an overview of recent publications in the field of tick-borne diseases, as well as ongoing projects of high significance to our community. We would like to draw your attention to the review *Lyme Borreliosis* published in Nature Reviews Disease Primers, coauthored by several ESGBOR members.

We hope that this newsletter provides you with useful insights into the current activities of ESGBOR.

Kind regards,

ESGBOR Executive Committee

Anna J Henningsson, Chair  
Mateusz Markowicz, Secretary  
Randi Eikeland, Treasurer  
Alice Raffetin, Education Officer  
Volker Fingerle, Science Officer

### Research projects

- Presentation of tick-borne pathogens of interest in human health found in animals in Europe (leaders: Sulagna Chakraborty, Alice Raffetin)
- Opinion paper about methodology for epidemiological studies about LB (leaders: Anna J. Henningsson, Pierre Boyer, Tinne Lernout, Alice Raffetin)
- Emerging tick-borne-diseases in Europe in Humans (leaders: Violeta Briciu, Franc Strle, Randi Eikeland)
- Tick-borne pathogens of interest in Humans: scientific demonstration of transmission and of diseases (leaders: Pierre Boyer, Reto Lienhard)
- Opinion paper LB diagnostic: *Borrelia* diagnostic in Latin and South America (leaders: Gabi Margos, Volker Fingerle)



## Educational activities 2026

- past events
  - ITPD in Vienna, Austria, 22nd to 25th March [ITPD-Tickborne](#).  
The conference organized by the Austrian Society for Hygiene, Microbiology and Preventive Medicine (ÖGHMP) under the auspices of ESGBOR gathered around 200 participants.
- future events
  - NordTick, Varberg, Sweden, 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April, [Nordtick2026](#)
  - ETBD Conference, Cluj Napoca, Romania, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 2026, [ETBD](#)

## New Publications

Dagostin F, Erazo D, Marini G, Da Re D, Tagliapietra V, Avdicova M, Avšič-Županc T, Dub T, Fiorito N, Knap N, Gossner CM, Kerlik J, Mäkelä H, Markowicz M, Olyazadeh R, Richter L, Wint W, Zuccali MG, Žygutienė M, Dellicour S, Rizzoli A. [Predicting the spatio-temporal risk of human tick-borne encephalitis \(TBE\) in Europe by combining hazard and exposure drivers](#). *One Health*. 2026 Jan 13;22:101331

Dahlberg AO, Aase A, Reiso H, Quarsten H, Øines Ø, Midgard R. [Prevalence and clinical characteristics of Norwegians who report persistent health complaints attributed to tick bites or tick-borne diseases](#).

*BMC Infect Dis*. 2025 Nov 27;25(1):1663. doi: 10.1186/s12879-025-12182-w

*Comment: A study on patients who link chronic health complaints to tick bites examined 470 individuals who attributed long-lasting symptoms such as fatigue, pain, and cognitive difficulties to a tick bite. However, no signs of tick-borne infection that could explain their health problems.*

Holten AR, Bjerkaug AW, Maharjan U, Rykkvin R, Hagen T, Fevang B, Quist-Paulsen E, Hesstvedt L, Hognestad HR, Alfsnes K, Andreassen ÅK, Dunlop O. [A case of fatal hemorrhagic fever associated with tick-borne encephalitis virus infection](#). *Int J Infect Dis*. 2025 Oct;159:107989. doi: 10.1016/j.ijid.2025.107989.

*Comment: Report on rare fatal TBEV infection with severe haemorrhagic complications in an immunocompromised patient.*

Johansson M, Hillerdal H, Ljungqvist Lövmar M, Serrander L, Henningsson AJ, Tjernberg I. Deficiencies in communication between clinical microbiological laboratories and physicians may impair the diagnosis of Lyme borreliosis: a study of the use and application of serology in three neighbouring counties in Sweden. *PLoS One* 2025;20(12):e0339449. DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0339449](#).

Ornstein K, Broholm C, Dessau RB, Petersson AC. [Lyme arthritis: Demographic characteristics and \*Borrelia ospA\* genospecies in synovial fluid. A 17-year cohort study in Sweden](#). *Ticks Tick Borne Dis*. 2025 Dec 11;17(1):102582. doi: 10.1016/j.ttbdis.2025.102582.

*Comment: A Swedish study found that the most common Borrelia species in synovial fluid were Borrelia afzelii (49%) and Borrelia burgdorferi sensu stricto (33%). Other detected species included B. garinii (9%), B. bavariensis (7%), and B. spielmanii (2%). The findings challenge the previous assumption that Lyme arthritis is mainly caused by B. burgdorferi sensu stricto*

Paulsen KM, Diekmann MJ, Dieseth MS, Soleng A, Strakova P, Salát J, Růžek D, Krogfelt KA, Granquist EG, Vikse R, Stuen S, Andreassen ÅK. [Experimental evidence for milk-borne transmission of tick-borne encephalitis virus to suckling lambs](#). *Ticks Tick Borne Dis*. 2026 Mar;17(2):102609. doi: 10.1016/j.ttbdis.2026.102609



*Comment: A Norwegian study found evidence that TBEV can be transmitted through milk from ewes to lambs. Eight ewes were experimentally infected and housed with 16 lambs for 18 days. Although none of the animals developed symptoms, viral RNA and TBE antibodies were detected in both ewes and lambs.*

Skudal H, Stenstad T, Lorentzen ÅR, Quist-Paulsen E, Egeland J, Fevang B, Jaïoun K, Veje M, Hansen BÅ, Solheim AM, Kersten H, Eikeland R. Tick-borne encephalitis in Norway: A cohort study of clinical course and health-related quality of life at three- and twelve-month follow-up. *Eur J Clin Microbiol Infect Dis*. 2026 Feb;45(2):567-579.

*Comment: The study found that 41% of TBE patients still had persistent symptoms one year after illness.*

Strle F, Strle K, Marques A, Henningsson AJ, Eikeland R, Lemieux JE, Tsao JI, Mead PS, Wormser GP Lyme borreliosis. *Nat Rev Dis Primers* **12**, 15 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41572-026-00691-0>

Strobl J, Kleissl L, Eder J, Connolly S, Frey T, Gail LM, Kopf A, Weninger S, Markowicz M, Bartíková P, Freystätter C, Schmetterer K, Strobl H, Stockinger H, Wijnveld M, Stary G [Human epidermal Langerhans cells induce tolerance and hamper T cell function upon tick-borne pathogen transmission](#). *Nat Commun*. 2025 Nov 28;16(1):11715.

Zindrili R, Lager M, Simpson M, Alnabulsi A, Secombes CJ, Henningsson AJ, Brittain-Long R, Alnabulsi A, Wang T, Lindgren PE. [Seroprevalence and seroconversion of Lyme borreliosis among tick-bitten individuals: A multi-assay serosurveillance study](#). *Ticks Tick Borne Dis*. 2026;17(2):102618. doi: 10.1016/j.ttbdis.2026.102618. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41687259

## ESCMID Global updates

Visit our **sessions on the ESCMID Global 2026!**

**18.04.2026**, 16:15-17:15

1-hour Symposium: Outsmarting ticks: decoding tick-host-pathogen interactions and advancing vaccines against tick-borne diseases

**19.04.2026**, 8:30-10:30

2-hour Symposium: The rise of tick-borne diseases: why are things changing?

**20.04.2026**, 08:30-09:30

ESGBOR business meeting in Room ICM 2

**21.04.2026**, 14:30 - 15:30

Meet-the-Expert: How to use serological tests for Lyme borreliosis



## Other matters

- **NoSTick** - Nordic Society for Research on Ticks and Tick-borne Infections was launched last year: <https://www.nostick.org/>
- **Harald Reiso** recently retired at the Norwegian center for tick-borne diseases. **Snorre Brundtland Sæverås** joined as a new member of staff as general practitioner.
- Anne Marit Solheim at Sørlandet Hospital **defended her PhD thesis** on 28 November 2025. Her research examined the treatment of neuroborreliosis in adults, and her dissertation was titled "*European neuroborreliosis in adults.*"
- Johanna Strobl from the Department of Dermatology, Medical University of Vienna, received the *Gerold Stanek Prize for Excellence in Research in Tick-Borne Diseases* during the ITPD 2026 in Vienna for her work on immunological mechanisms underlying tick-borne pathogen transmission to human skin.