Reviewer's report

Title: Cerebrospinal fluid CXCL13 in Lyme neuroborreliosis and asymptomatic HIV infection

Version: 3 Date: 25 November 2012

Reviewer: Tobias Rupprecht

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The authors have addressed some of the points of concern. However, there are still some major points to be addressed before the manuscript is ready for acceptance.

1) The authors state in the discussion section, that the difference between the LNB population in the cross-sectional and the longitudinal study in respect to the CXCL13 levels "might be a random effect". They should calculate a p-value (comparing the CXCL13 values in both groups) to look for the significance of the difference. I guess, that the p-value is below 0.05 (arguing against a random effect) - this value should be added to the results-section and the interpretation should follow in the discussion section.

2) In figure 3, there are only 18 dots in the LNB group, while in the methods section, they describe 19 patients - where is the missing one?

3) In the response to the reviewers, they state that 16 of 19 patients have - according to the criteria of the EFNS - a confirmed LNB. They argued: As this is the majority, they did not further show the exact CXCL13 values of the three patients without confirmed LNB. This is not adequate. As every value is important (it's not about a general significant difference between both populations but about the usefulness of CXCL13 as diagnostic marker!) they should indicate exactly these three CXCL13 values. If they are unusually high or low, they should be definitively omitted. If, for example, all three values are below 250pg/ml, they definitely influence the calculation of sensitivity and specificity of CXCL13 and therefore the conclusion of the manuscript.