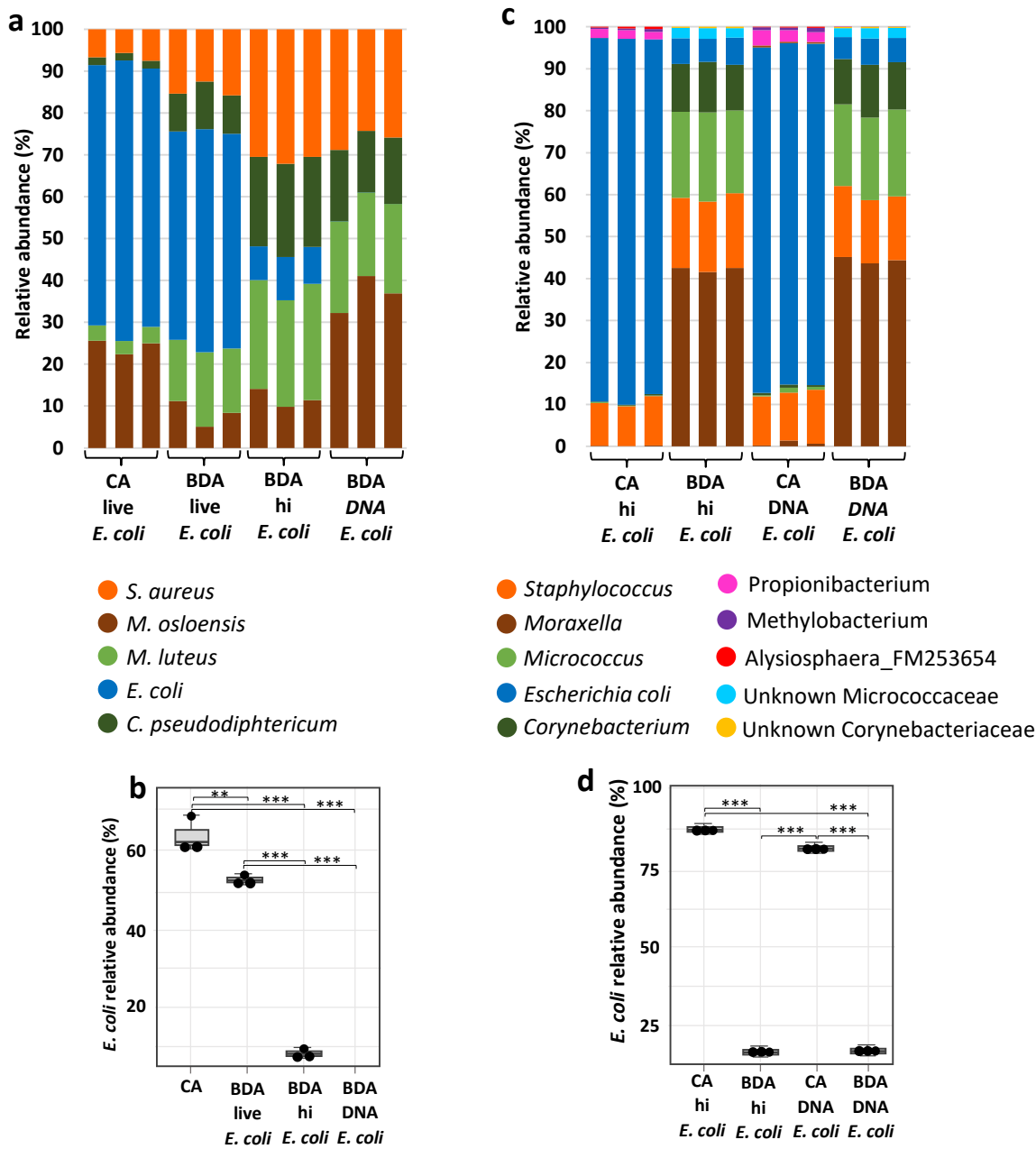


Supplementary Figure S1



Benzonase digest approach efficiently depletes dead bacteria and free bacterial DNA reads. Microbial DNA was extracted using a conventional approach (CA) or the benzonase-digest approach (BDA) before bacterial lysis. **a)** Microbiome analysis of a skin mock community supplemented with live *E. coli* cells, heat inactivated (hi) *E. coli* cells or *E. coli* free DNA. **b)** Relative abundance reads resulting from *E. coli* in the mock community. **c)** Microbiome analysis at genus level of forearm skin samples spiked with hi *E. coli* or *E. coli* free DNA. **d)** Relative abundance of *E. coli* reads in spiked skin samples. P valued were calculated using Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test. * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.