

History of Lyme Disease

ORIGINS OF THE DISEASE

Lyme disease was first recognized in the United States in 1975, following a mysterious outbreak of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis near the community of Lyme, Connecticut. The rural location of the Lyme outbreak and the onset of illness during summer and early fall suggested that the transmission of the disease was by an arthropod vector.

In 1982, the etiologic agent of Lyme disease was discovered by Willy Burgdorfer. Burgdorfer isolated spirochetes belonging to the genus *Borrelia* from the mid-guts of *Ixodes* ticks. He showed that these spirochetes reacted with immune serum from patients that had been diagnosed with Lyme disease. Consequently, the Lyme spirochete resembling the syphilis spirochete was given the name *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

METHOD OF TRANSMISSION

W.T. Harvey, MD, MS, MPH and Patricia Salvato, MD of Diversified Medical Practices in Houston, Texas recently published the article- Lyme disease: ancient engine of an unrecognized borreliosis pandemic. They were puzzled by the high number of patients testing positive for Lyme disease. Many of these patients presented with "established" criteria for Lyme disease, but others did not. The fact that southeastern Texas is a 'non-endemic' region, and that many of the patients had no history of erythema migrans rash, led the doctors to question established methods for Lyme disease consideration. Careful reflection of published research leads them to conclude the following. First, the arthropod is not the exclusive vector of Lyme disease. In addition to ticks, *Borrelia burgdorferi* may be carried and transmitted by fleas, mosquitos, and mites. Second, Lyme disease is not exclusively vector-borne. Compelling evidence supports horizontal (sexual) and vertical (congenital) human to human transfer.

Other front-line physicians are arriving at the same conclusions. "Of the more than 5,000 children I've treated, 240 have been born with the disease," says Charles Ray Jones, MD. Dr. Jones, who is the world's leading pediatric specialist on Lyme Disease, says that about 90% of his practice is comprised of patients with the disease. He also states, "Twelve children who've been breast-fed have subsequently developed Lyme".

University of Wisconsin researchers state that dairy cattle and other food animals can be infected with *B. burgdorferi* and hence some raw foods of animal origin might be contaminated with the pathogen. Recent findings indicate that the pathogen may be transmitted orally to laboratory animals, without an arthropod vector. Thus, the possibility exists that Lyme disease can be a food infection

Citing limitations of laboratory tests for the detection of antibodies to *Borrelia*, a study was conducted in 1995 at the University of Vienna (Austria) for the detection of *Borrelia*. Utilizing polymerase chain reaction testing for DNA, *Borrelia* was found to be present in both the urine and breast milk of patients previously diagnosed with Lyme disease. A study conducted at the Sacramento (California) Medical Foundation Blood Center in 1989 states that there is evidence that the transmission of *Borrelia* is possible by blood transfusion. Furthermore, in 1990, a study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia stated that the data demonstrates that *Borrelia burgdorferi* can survive the blood processing procedures normally applied to transfused blood in the USA.

NUMBER OF CASES

Lyme disease is the fastest-growing epidemic in the world. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. affirms that "there is considerable underreporting" of Lyme disease, maintaining that the actual infection rate may be 1.8 million, 10 times higher than the 180,000 cases currently reported. Nick Harris, Ph.D., Director of the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society (ILADS), states "Lyme is grossly under-reported. In the U.S., we probably have about 200,000 cases per year." Dan Kinderleher, MD an expert on Lyme disease, stated on the Today Show in June 10, 2002 that the number of cases may be 100 times higher (18 million in the United States alone) than reported by the CDC.

Joanne Whitaker, MD has developed a "Rapid Identification of *Borrelia burgdorferi*" and has over 3200 positive specimens for *Borrelia burgdorferi* from forty-six (46) states, including Alaska and Hawaii. In addition, Dr. Whitaker has had positive specimens from Australia, Canada, Canary Islands, Brazil, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Considering vector, congenital and sexual transfer, Dr. Harvey and Dr. Salvato estimate that 15.5% of the global population, nearly 1 billion people, could be infected with *Borrelia*.

Lee Cowden, MD states that there are very few symptoms where one should not consider Lyme, especially given that a quarter of the U.S. population may be affected. It is estimated that Lyme disease may be a contributing factor in more than 50% of chronically ill people. The Sierra Integrative Medicine Clinic in Reno, Nevada, states that "Authorities estimate that up to 90 percent of the population could be carrying the Lyme spirochete and that Lyme is a factor in over 50 percent of chronic illnesses."

DORMANCY AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIVATION CAUSED BY WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEM

It is believed that years can pass before symptoms appear in a patient that has been infected with *Borrelia*. In 1998, a study conducted in Switzerland demonstrated that only 12.5% of the patients that tested positive for *Borrelia* developed clinical symptoms confirming that *Borrelia burgdorferi* infection is often asymptomatic. A report from Germany outlines the case of a 12 year old boy that developed Lyme Arthritis 5 years after being bit by a tick. The case indicates that the latency period between tick bite and onset of Lyme Arthritis may last up to 5 years.

All asymptomatic carriers of *Borrelia* are at risk of developing Lyme disease at some point. Stress, an increasing health concern for physicians worldwide, may have been the trigger that activated Lyme disease in a patient in Sweden. The case is reported of a 26 year old woman with latent Lyme borreliosis that was concurrently activated with a herpes simplex virus type 1 infection. Immune suppression by stress may have caused activation of both infections.

PREVALENT ON 6 CONTINENTS

Lyme disease, known as Borreliosis in much of the world, is prevalent on 6 continents and recognized as an epidemic in many countries. Pentacyclic Alkaloid Chemotype *Uncaria tomentosa* has been available to the public in Bulgaria, where a high incidence of Lyme disease exists, since January 2001. Within 2 months it became the most widely sold natural medicine in that country. Dr. Atanas Tzonkov, director of Bulgaria's largest private medical clinic, has treated thousands of patients with Samento. He reports that it has been used successfully to

treat over 100 conditions. A possible theory is that most of these conditions were actually misdiagnosed Lyme disease or Lyme disease was a component of the illnesses that the patient was suffering from.

The following are links to citations of medical and scientific articles from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Library of Medicine (NLM) MEDLINE database. In most cases the number of citations has doubled in the past two years, and in some countries the number has increased four fold.

The following selected search results for Lyme disease, with number of citations, are current as of July 14, 2003:

Total 7687

Search by using name of continent

Africa 49

Asia 167

Australia 43

Europe 1242

South_America 29

Search by using name of region

Baltic States 16

Eastern Europe 279

Far East 125

Middle East 13

Scandanavia 101

Search by using name of country

Austria 195

Belgium 69

Brazil 29

Bulgaria 11

Canada 159

Chile 10
China 74
Croatia 20
Czech Republic 103
Denmark 123
France 352
Germany 1115
Hungary 24
Ireland 35
Israel 31
Italy 192
Japan 211
Mexico 17
Netherlands 370
Norway 58
Poland 174
Romania 11
Russia 197
Slovakia 26
Slovenia 74
Spain 171
Sweden 281
Switzerland 267
Taiwan 16
United_Kingdom 852

U.S.A. 4075

Yugoslavia 108

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