

The best alternative treatment for . . .

Lyme disease

What is Lyme disease?

Although the world's attention was riveted on a small cluster of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) cases last year, it is Lyme disease (LD) that is considered one of the fastest-growing illnesses in the world. LD is rampant in the US (with an estimated 200,000 new cases a year) and massively underreported. Indeed, US doctor Dan Kinderleher, an expert on LD, has estimated that some 18 million Americans are infected. Although doctors in Europe are less likely to look for LD, positive specimens have been detected in Europe—including Scotland, Ireland, England, France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Denmark—and the disease is burgeoning all over the world.

This modern-day plague was first identified in 1975, after a large cluster of children living around the rural community of Lyme, Connecticut, suffered an outbreak of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. Seven years later, Dr Willy Burgdorfer, Scientist Emeritus of the US National Institutes of Health and leading researcher into human diseases and the animal organisms that transmit them, discovered the causative agent.

Suspecting some infective insect carrier of the disease, Burgdorfer found a spirochaete (a spiral-shaped bacterium) of the genus *Borrelia*, similar to the syphilis spirochaete, living in the gut of the *Ixodes* ticks in the area and, through tests with LD victims, linked them to the disease. These ticks ordinarily feast off the blood of mice, deer, birds and other animals. This particular spirochaete—*Borrelia burgdorferi* (Bb)—now bears his name.

However, the 'Lyme' tick is not the only transmitter of the disease. The Bb spirochaete can also be transmitted by fleas, mosquitoes and mites. Furthermore, the disease does not require the insect to bite and infect you.

There is some evidence that it can be transmitted between humans either through sex or in the womb. There is even the possibility that it can be transmitted through food. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin have found that dairy cattle and other animals in the human food chain can be infected and pass it on. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, believes that Bb can even survive the purification processes of donated blood and so can also be passed through blood transfusion.

What are the symptoms?

Lyme disease can masquerade as many other degenerative illnesses, particularly those characteristic of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS; which Stephen Hawking has).

Suspect Lyme disease if you have chronic fatigue, ALS or other degenerative disease, or even a sudden onset of heart problems or transient ischaemic attacks. Many Parkinson's patients test positive for Lyme. Dr Atanas Tzonkov, director of the largest private medical clinic in Bulgaria (where LD is rampant) has successfully treated more than a hundred conditions as misdiagnosed cases of LD.

What doctors tell you

Lyme disease is often treated with long courses of antibiotics, but doctors vastly overplay the success rates. Spirochaetes can survive even long-term antibiotic therapy and remain in cells, beyond the immune system's reach (Liegner K *et al.*, Abstract 63; Masters E *et al.*, Abstract 65; Fifth International Conference on Lyme Borreliosis, 1992). Long-term antibiotics often leave the patient in an even worse state.

Lynne McTaggart

Key points

- Lyme disease is epidemic
- Many illnesses such as ALS or ME could, in fact, be Lyme disease
- Antibiotics don't often work
- A simple herb can cure Lyme disease

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

One small study has had remarkable success with a rare type of cat's claw (*Uncaria tomentosa*). The benefits of most types of cat's claw are counteracted by tetracyclic oxindole alkaloids (TOA), which prevent the most active compounds, pentacyclic oxindole alkaloids (POA), from helping to boost the immune system. Even a tiny amount of TOA can undo most of the positive benefits of POA.

However, cat's claw from the Peruvian jungle, called *prima uña de gato*, or samento, is virtually TOA-free. It also contains lavish amounts of acid glycosides, found in the latest quinolone antibiotics, the standard treatment for Lyme. The herb is a natural and selective antimicrobial – unlike conventional antibiotics – and also offers anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and anti-infective effects. POA can repair the immune-system damage caused by Bb, and helps to ultimately overpower the infection.

In a pilot study of 28 patients conducted by noted US cardiologist William Lee Cowden, half carried on taking antibiotics, and half followed an alternative regime, including a personalised diet, detoxification and 600 mg/day of samento. Of the 14 patients taking the antibiotics, three improved slightly, three got worse and the rest had no change in their condition. In contrast, all but one (who dropped out for cancer treatment) of the samento-treated group reported dramatic improvements. At the end of six months, 85 per cent of the patients tested negative for Bb (Cowden WL *et al.*, 'Pilot study of pentacyclic alkaloid-chemotype of *Uncaria tomentosa* for the treatment of Lyme disease', presented at The International Symposium for Natural Treatment of Intracellular Microorganisms, Munich, Germany, 29 March 2003).

Scientists investigating TOA-free cat's claw suggest that it should be taken for eight to 12 months to kill all generations of spirochaetes in the body. The herb should also be combined with a wholefood diet and an extensive detox programme.

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