

In Brief: The Stealth Lyme Epidemic

Forget everything you think you know about Lyme disease: the ticks, the bullseye rashes, the blood tests, all of it. While writing his memoir *Sit Down Before Reading*, investigating the origin of his own health issues, author Dave Bexfield uncovered overwhelming evidence that the oft mocked and dismissed bacterial infection is instead a stealth epidemic and the single greatest threat to the health of humanity. Unbelievably, he discovered that Lyme is the widespread root cause of innumerable health conditions—from autoimmune diseases and many chronic illnesses to a range of birth defects, cancers, and more—a finding that portends to reshape modern medicine with profound long-term implications for global health.



Dave Bexfield

How It Spreads



The existence of Lyme disease has been traced back tens of thousands of years, far predating humanity. Although thought to be disseminated solely by blacklegged ticks, that's merely how it was discovered. Lyme primarily spreads in humans through sexual relations and from an infected mother to her unborn children. The ancient parasitic disease had remained modestly contained for millennia until the 1950s, when its spread accelerated dramatically due to three major factors: population growth, air travel, and changing diets (more on that in a moment). Today, the stealthy bacterial infection affects at least 1 in 5 humans, a rate that will continue to rapidly increase with each successive generation without intervention.

How It Presents



While a bullseye rash from a tick bite may be an early sign, Lyme disease routinely remains dormant in its human host symptom free for years, often decades, until a major immune system disturbance—usually an illness (e.g., the flu, Covid), trauma (e.g., childbirth, car accident), or stress (e.g., death of a loved one, a breakup)—rousts it from its slumber. Even minor immune disruptions may awaken Lyme, which can include vaccinations, tattoos, innocuous scrapes, piercings, bee stings, etc. Because there are many different strains and people can be infected by more than one, the disease presents in wildly different ways, masquerading as autoimmune diseases, mental illnesses, myriad chronic conditions, birth defects, post-infectious syndromes, and other medical issues, making it all but impossible to reliably and accurately identify. These misdirections have resulted in the near universal failure to develop diagnostic tests and effective treatments for countless health conditions.

Why It Went Undetected



Researchers first identified rogue spirochetes in the human body in the early 1900s, but fellow scientists struggled to replicate many of these early studies. In the 1950s, scientists—frustrated by slow progress—rallied around a controversial theory: that the body must be attacking itself, giving rise to the Darwinian paradox of autoimmune diseases. By the time Lyme was discovered in the 1970s, its spirochetes identified by Dr. William Burgdorfer in the early '80s, autoimmune diseases were considered settled science, a cataclysmic development that reshaped medicine. Without reason to question the science, doctors fatally overlooked the root cause of many illnesses, compounding an exploding problem.



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How It Fooled Scientists



For ages, scientists have noticed a curious pattern in many chronic illnesses: they appear to be weakly influenced by the same mystifying combination of genes, family history, and the environment. All are red herrings, misread by specialists practicing in their specialist bubbles. Because they are one and the same, Lyme shares genetic markers with a number of illnesses. The infection appears to have a degree of heritability when blood relatives sporadically share, for example, the same autoimmune disease, but because Lyme symptoms are so variable, such similar manifestations are more the result of chance. And because Lyme is also spread sexually—affecting partners unrelated by blood—when couples share the same illness, researchers presume the cause to be something in the environment of both individuals. A perfect storm.

The Importance of Manganese



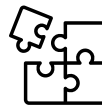
Virtually every living organism requires iron to survive, but not *Borrelia burgdorferi* spirochetes, which require the trace element manganese. Critically, as levels of iron increase in the body, levels of manganese decrease, and vice versa. In contrast with men, menstruating women routinely experience low levels of iron due to monthly blood loss, resulting in excess stores of manganese. Lyme spirochetes are drilling in these storage centers—largely the bones, kidneys, liver, pancreas, and brain—to access the trace element (initially absorbed in the small intestine). This manganese connection unlocks a treasure trove of medical mysteries: why autoimmune diseases most often strike women in their childbearing years, even why certain cancers are rising in younger generations, why mental disorders are more common in men (male brains have significantly larger basal ganglia, the brain's primary manganese storage area).

The Consequences



As hard as it is to comprehend, the epidemic of sickness now engulfing the world is being caused by numerous variations of the same deceptive disease. It's no coincidence that, collectively, rates of autoimmune disease, mental illness, long Covid, chronic conditions, addiction, obesity, cardiac issues, stroke, and many cancers all have been soaring in recent decades, increasing with each successive generation. It's no coincidence that so many diverse health issues (including post-infection syndromes) strangely share the same symptoms—extreme fatigue, brain fog, pain, depression, rashes, and so many others—and that treatments, if they exist, are strikingly similar, typically addressing rampant inflammation... inflammation being triggered by a relentless bacterial infection known as Lyme disease.

The Surprising Solution



Although antibiotics successfully treat Lyme disease when detected early, their effectiveness plunges once the infection becomes entrenched and can evade the treatment. But there is another, indefensible way to target *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The hard-to-detect spirochetes get their energy from a limited group of carbohydrates and sugars, unfortunate staples of the modern-day Western diet. Deny this fuel source, and the bacteria slowly waste away. Diets that starve the spirochetes—ketogenic and intermittent fasting in particular—have been broadly effective, and medications that lower blood sugar accelerate the process. But the most efficient intervention appears to be the newest GLP-1 forms of weight-loss drugs, which not only cross the blood brain barrier, but also swiftly reduce symptoms spanning a wide and disparate range of health conditions, portending to fundamentally change medical practice and public health. The stealth Lyme disease epidemic, now exposed, is not just containable. It's winnable.



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