LymeMD News

LYME DISEASE RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF MARYLAND

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2008

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OUR MISSION AND OUR WORK

LymeMD was founded to improve the quality of life and care of patients with Lyme disease through research. In less than a year after receiving IRS approval as non-profit 501(c)(3) we have made considerable progress.

Thanks to the diligence of our dedicated, all-volunteer team and generous founding supporters, we are well on our way.

Our first project, a review of 400+ charts of patients referred for evaluation of Lyme disease is complete. One of the first findings from the initial analysis of this database is alarming: despite being known for more than 30 years, *Lyme disease is still misdiagnosed and unrecognized.*

✦ In patients referred for Lyme disease consultation, approximately 20% of their Lyme rashes were initially misdiagnosed.

✦ About 15% of suspected acute Lyme patients did not present with a rash, resulting in delays in diagnosis and effective therapy.

Of patients who were initially misdiagnosed, 50% received an initial antibiotic likely to be ineffective against Lyme disease.

These results confirm the urgent need for our research. As Lyme disease remains unrecognized or incorrectly undiagnosed, the problem of chronic symptoms know as post-treatment Lyme syndrome will grow.

These results show how important our work is.

FEATURED VOLUNTEER: *CAROL SIEGMEISTER*

The work of the Foundation is to support research needed to improve the understanding and care of patients with persistent symptoms of Lyme disease. Our featured volunteer, Carol Siegmeister (shown in the photo at left with Dr. Aucott), understands our mission very, very well. Because of Carol's own experience with post-treatment Lyme syndrome, she believed that she would never return to the health and vigor that she had always enjoyed.

Thankfully, Carol's recovery has dispelled those fears.

We appreciate the energy and enthusiasm she brings to our work. Carol is currently leading our community outreach in Lyme disease education and awareness. Thanks to Carol, we are off to a great start in funding our upcoming study of the immune system response to acute infection in Lyme disease.

IT'S NOT A SPIDER BITE...

The warm weather is here, and new cases of acute Lyme disease are not far behind. We've shed our heavy clothing, and we're outdoors as much as possible. But with this wonderful time of year comes tick bites. And in approximately 2% of those bites Lyme disease will occur.

Most people are aware that the earliest sign of Lyme disease can be the bull's eye rash. But what is not generally known is that *only 20%* of erythema migrans rashes have the distinctive bull's eye appearance. The majority are uniformly red and round or oval.

The Lyme Disease Research Foundation of Maryland found that patients and physicians commonly misdiagnose the Lyme rash as a spider or bug bite when it lacks the bull's eye appearance. Consequently, the rash can be ignored, leading to delay or a lost opportunity for diagnosis. Unlike a spider bite, Lyme's rash lasts for a week or longer and grows progressively larger. The rash is typically painless and not intensely itchy.

So, the next time you think you or someone close to you has a spider bite, watch that rash closely. If it resolves in a day or two and doesn't grow beyond 2 inches in diameter, it isn't likely to be Lyme disease. But beware the 'spider bite' that gets larger and lasts – it could be Lyme disease!

THANK YOU!

We are so grateful to the many contributors and supporters who have helped LymeMD to reach this level of activity.

Your encouragement, interest, and donations have allowed us to move forward in this vital area.

A special thanks to our newsletter consultant, **Ricki Baker**, for her advice and expertise!

Lyme MD

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Contributions are welcome and can be made directly on the website