

## P9. Lyme As An Occupational Disease

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Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tick-borne disease in the United States. Case reports and studies are scarce about lyme; its epidemiology in our country is not well known, but also lyme seropositivity has been shown by these limited studies.

The Lyme disease bacterium normally lives in mice, squirrels, and other small mammals.

Outdoor workers in endemic areas are at risk of Lyme if they work at sites with infected ticks. Worksites with woods, bushes, high grass, or leaf litter are likely to have more ticks.

All outdoor workers at risk of Lyme disease include; construction, landscaping, forestry, brush clearing, land surveying, farming, railroad work, oil field work, utility line work, park or wildlife management. Anyone has contact with animals that may carry the ticks (including domestic animals like dogs, cats, goats, cows...) and as an occupation veterinarians are at risk.

In a study made by Brian et al in USA, it is found that lyme disease seroprevalence increased 2.3 folds in outdoor employees recent 3 years.

Bown et al calculated a % 1 incidence rate for lyme disease in New Jersey state and showed higher risk in outdoor persons than those working indoors.

In a study made by Thorin et al in France, seroprevalence of Lyme disease is calculated of about %26 in a rural area and the risk was significantly higher in woodcutters.

Kuiper et al investigated Lyme disease among forestry workers in the Netherlands, with a three-fold higher seroprevalence than among matched controls.

As a conclusion Lyme borreliosis is an occupational disease, often not diagnosed among this high-risk group, warrants more attention to achieve early recognition and to prevent late complications.

**Keywords:** lyme, occupational health, risky groups