

**Lyme Disease Advisory Committee Meeting
November 5, 2008
Teleconference, Sacramento California (9:00 to 12:00)**

Committee members in attendance

Vicki Kramer, Ph.D., California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
Robert Lane, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley
Christian Parlier, Lyme Disease Support Network
Susie Merrill, Lyme Disease Support Network
James Miller, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles
Raphael Stricker, M.D., California Medical Association
Scott Morrow, M.D., M.P.H., California conference of Local Health Officers
Barbara Barsocchini, California Lyme Disease Association.

Committee members not in attendance

Victoria Deloney, Ph.N., Sacramento County Public Health
Lisa Messner, CPhT., Lyme Disease Support Network

Other attendees

Anne Kjemtrup, D.V.M., M.P.V.M., Ph.D., CDPH, Committee Coordinator
Kerry Padgett, Ph.D., CDPH, Senior Public Health Biologist
Claudia Erickson, CDPH, Health Communicator
Approximately 20 individuals representing the interested public and public health agencies

Mr. Parlier brought the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

I. Review and approval of May 2008 teleconference minutes:

Dr. Miller made the motion to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Barsocchini seconded. There was no committee discussion or public comment; the minutes were unanimously approved.

II. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Progress report:

Dr. Kjemtrup provided an update of CDPH activities regarding tick-borne disease education and surveillance since March 2008. The annual spring press release resulted in at least seven news stories and outreach opportunities to local agencies to provide similar reports. Many school-age children were presented with tick prevention information through large science fairs, one at the State Capitol and one at a science museum in the Bay Area. The youth-oriented Timothy Tickfinder program has been shared with two other state health departments and a grant to expand its distribution has been submitted to a health care foundation. Tick-borne disease prevention information was provided to many of the Vector-Borne Disease Section's (VBDS) partner agencies including the National Forest Service and Park Service, local vector-control agencies, and the United States Department of Forestry. Training was provided to two local agencies for tick flagging and tick identification. Local health departments in Northern California were made aware of the physician survey results performed by San

Mateo County Mosquito Abatement District and local health department through a teleconference forum of such agencies.

One of VBDS' goals for *Borrelia burgdorferi* surveillance includes collecting adult and nymphal *Ixodes pacificus* ticks from areas where there is little or outdated information available or where Lyme disease (LD) risk is high to better characterize local ecology. Surveillance results of tick testing in California were presented and will be made available on the CDPH-VBDS Lyme disease webpage. With the availability of more advanced molecular identification, other *Borrelia* species are being identified now from *I. pacificus* ticks: the zoonotic potential of these species is unknown. Focused *B. burgdorferi* surveillance projects in northern and southern California continue to be performed by VBDS staff.

The committee encouraged more outreach to Southern California agencies.

Points of committee discussion included:

- The finding of nymphal ticks on picnic benches in Tilden Regional Park is an important item to add to prevention messages.
- It is important to emphasize nymphal tick collection and testing since nymphs represent the greater risk to people for LD transmission.
- The identification of emerging and re-emerging *R. rickettsia* and related organisms in people and ticks in California is interesting.
- Lack of time devoted to tick-borne diseases in medical education is lamentable as is the lack of medical journals specific to the western United States.
- It would be timely for another article in the *Medical Board of California Newsletter*, the monthly report of the California Medical Board.

Public comments consisted of:

- Encouraging use of tick repellent when picnicking on wooden tables.
- Encouraging outreach to mental health professionals.
- Be sure that smaller local media outlets are aware of press releases.

III. Committee Member Updates

Ms. Barsocchini reported that the California Lyme Disease Association (CALDA) has made education of physicians a priority and recently awarded 26 grants to physicians so that they could attend the recent scientific Lyme Disease Association meeting in San Francisco.

Dr. Lane mentioned that his laboratory will publish within the month that western gray squirrels are the primary reservoir for *B. burgdorferi* spirochetes in dense woodlands in northern California. He also announced that one of his laboratory staff and he has completed a taxonomic key for larval ticks, including 30 photographs, to be published in the *Pan Pacific Entomologist*. His laboratory is also wrapping up a long-term study on birds and *B. burgdorferi* in Mendocino County, and he noted that we still do not fully understand the role of birds in far west with respect to LD ecology. Additionally, his

laboratory has developed a PCR test for *B. burgdorferi* in human sera and is currently evaluating the genotype of three positive samples from a collection of 40 tested.

General discussion included the point that the San Mateo County physician survey results will be published in the MVCAC proceedings for next year. The proceedings will eventually be available for purchase on the MVCAC website.

IV. Review of Fall Press Release

Dr. Kramer read the release. The target date for release is late November/early December. Suggestions and comments by the committee included:

- Be sure to include the use of permethrin and to check yourself for several days after being in tick habitat.
- Point of this press release is to emphasize avoidance of adult ticks and so some of the nymphal tick avoidance suggestions and statements about disease and tick infection prevalence will be saved for the spring press release. VBDS' health communicator recommends no more than 3-4 prevention points in order for the message to be remembered.
- One page format is easier to read.

Additional discussion occurred regarding that the number of reported Lyme disease cases has not increased since Lyme disease was made laboratory reportable – it continues to hover around 100 cases per year. The change in the CSTE criteria to include a “probable” and “suspect” classification cannot be implemented for any reportable disease until electronic reporting is established, hopefully by the end of 2009.

Dr. Kjemtrup responded to a question from the public as to why the ease of acquiring Lyme disease in certain local environments is not emphasized by reminding everyone that the press release covers the entire state so that recommendations have to be general; often local agencies are consulted for the “local picture.”

V. Review letter to medical/nursing school and strategy for implementation

Dr. Kjemtrup reviewed a letter intended to be sent to medical school deans of instruction encouraging them to include information from CDPH on the epidemiology of tick-borne diseases in California. Since this letter was discussed last at the March 2008 meeting, additional allied health professional schools have been considered to be targeted (nursing, physician assistant programs) and two pages are being added to the letter from the “Epidemiology of Tick-Borne Disease” presentation available online for inclusion in curriculum syllabi.

Comments and suggestions from the committee included:

- Add “both the basic science and clinical curriculum.”
- It would be nice if we could figure out a way to send this to practicing physicians.
- Include “bring to the attention of your faculty” as well as inclusion in the syllabi.

Public comment on the letter included:

- The web link to the presentation is not always functional- correct the link in the letter.
- Try to track the hits to the website after the letter is sent out.
- There is little clinical information, including information on mental health effects on Lyme disease, in the presentation.

VI. Review of Timothy Tickfinder CD

Dr. Kjemtrup presented a Microsoft® PowerPoint show version of the “Timothy Tickfinder Don’t Let the Ticks Bite” education program for school children. This partially animated show will be part of the children’s program and placed under a “just for kids” section of the tick-borne disease website. Evaluation of the entire program will be attempted through “train the trainer” sessions of local health departments and school teachers in high risk areas for LD.

Comments from the committee included:

- Include other habitat pictures of where ticks are found, like brushy areas, not just trails.

Suggestions from the public included:

- “Tick repellent” is more accurate than “bug spray”.
- Add “feel carefully” to “look hard for ticks”.
- The presentation does not flow well when using a Macintosh computer.
- Add more information on wearing appropriate clothing.

The committee discussed the utility of using insecticide spraying on residential properties. It was clarified that recommendations for urban application of pesticide is best provided by local vector control agencies or pest control operators.

VII. Committee Discussion: New Research That May Impact Tick-Borne Disease Public Education

The committee discussed material presented at recent scientific meetings on tick-borne diseases. Points pertinent to public education included:

- Persistent infection was a major subject topic at the ILADS conference.
- At ILADS conference, there was a presentation about secondary prevention (early antibiotic treatment to avoid long-term infection) and tertiary prevention (long-term treatment to avoid disability).
- At the International Lyme Borreliosis conference, Dr. Piesman of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviewed a new plant derivative from Alaska cedar (“Nookatone”) that may provide good environmental control of ticks if applied appropriately.
- Both meetings were clinically oriented with little time spent on epidemiology and prevention.

VIII. Public comment

Public comment included the following:

- Medical education should also outreach to mental health providers, OB/GYNs, chiropractors, massage schools and Chinese medicinal herb providers.
- This teleconference format is helpful for public participation.

- People ill with LD are a drain on the State's economy since so many people become disabled.
 - The state's tick database does not include infected ticks in San Francisco. Dr. Padgett of VBDS noted that surveillance for ticks in San Francisco is ongoing and to date no infected *I. pacificus* ticks have been found.
 - Material should include information on non-classical signs of Lyme disease. Dr. Kjemtrup noted that symptoms are described in the CDPH LD brochure and Dr. Miller added that clinical information for physicians is available in other formats.
- IX.** The next in-person LDAC meeting will be March 12, 2009 in Sacramento. A telephone line will likely be provided.

Dr. Miller made the motion to adjourn; Dr. Lane seconded motion and with unanimous approval the meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.