

“Fake news” charges do not give credit to the Lyme disease community

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<http://danielcameronmd.com/fake-news-charges-do-not-give-credit-to-the-lyme-disease-community/>

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1. Polly Murray’s children and neighbors suffered from Lyme disease rather than Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis.
2. Alan Steere described a cluster of adolescents and adults with Lyme disease in Lyme Connecticut.
3. William Burgdorfer discovered *Borrelia burgdorferi* in the midgut of the Ixodes scapularis tick.
4. James Krause discovered *Babesia microti* in the same ticks.
5. Eric Logigian described chronic neurologic Lyme and Lyme encephalopathy in Lyme disease patients despite antibiotic treatment.

In a recent article in the *American Journal of Medicine*, Drs. Shapiro, Baker, and Wormser cite examples of tests which failed to prove persistent infection and sexual transmission of the Lyme bacterium. [1] The authors highlight the ineffectiveness of such tests.

These doctors, however, could have cited examples of where the two-tier diagnostic test failed in both human and animal models. They also could have discussed studies which found Lyme disease patients suffer from chronic illness despite treatment. [2,3]

Instead, Drs. Shapiro, Baker and Wormser argue that the problem is not Lyme disease but “fake research,” “fake blood cultures,” “fake diagnoses, and “fake laboratory research.” [1] The authors even suggest that legislators stop passing laws to protect physicians who treat Lyme disease. “This makes it difficult for medical review boards to safeguard public health by disciplining those who put patients at risk,” they state.

If the medical community wishes to broaden its knowledge of Lyme disease, it would be more reasonable to give credit to the Lyme disease community which has worked tirelessly to understand this complex disease. Articles that claim Lyme disease patients, advocates, and professionals are pushing “fake news” does little to further our knowledge and advance patient care.

References:

1. Shapiro ED, Baker PJ, Wormser GP: False and Misleading Information about Lyme Disease. *Am J Med* 2017.
2. Weitzner E, Visintainer P, Wormser GP: Comparison of males versus females with culture-confirmed early Lyme disease at presentation and at 11-20 years after diagnosis. *Diagn Microbiol Infect Dis* 2016.

3. Logigian EL, Kaplan RF, Steere AC: Chronic neurologic manifestations of Lyme disease. *N Engl J Med* 1990, 323(21):1438-1444.

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