

Doctors feel the frustration with Lyme disease

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Doctors have also shared their frustration in a survey taken by Dr. Lynora Saxinger, an infectious disease specialist and associate professor at the University of Alberta's medical school.

The survey reported that "30% [of doctors] said they have been pressured to give antibiotics and almost 90% said they didn't feel they had appropriate educational resources to offer patients."

"The Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (AMMI) in Canada is partnering with the Centre for Effective Practice to develop clinician toolkits to help providers recognize and treat Lyme disease appropriately," writes Glauser.

However, the proposed toolkit may not resolve doctors' frustrations. It may simply dismiss chronic manifestations of Lyme disease. "There is an increasing number of people who have bought into the chronic Lyme industry," states Saxinger.

Mixed messages may continue to cause frustration among doctors. While clinicians are urged to promptly treat early Lyme disease, Dr. Todd Hatchette, president of AMMI seems to recommend otherwise.

"Another common misconception is that Lyme disease snowballs unless treated early," Hatchette writes, "so it can be difficult to convince patients to wait several weeks to see if symptoms resolve before taking tests."

Editor's note: I know from my practice that Lyme disease can be a frustrating illness to treat. There are patients who do well with prompt short-term treatment. Then, there are others, whose symptoms linger and who remain ill.

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References:

1. Glauser W. Combatting Lyme disease myths and the "chronic Lyme industry". CMAJ. 2019 Oct

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