

## **Over 20% of Lyme disease patients remain ill after treatment**

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“Clinically, PTLDS is largely a diagnosis of exclusion, requiring documentation of prior Lyme disease, appropriate treatment, and onset of unexplained, subjective symptoms within six months after a Lyme disease diagnosis that persist for at least six months after completion of antibiotic treatment,” writes Moon from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. [4]

Many patients remain ill with PTLDS, says Moon. “Up to 20% of cases in treatment trials experience persistent subjective symptoms after antibiotic treatment, called post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome (PTLDS),” writes Moon, citing a 2010 review by Marques. [5]

### **Researchers examined 9,657 cases of Lyme disease in central and northeastern Pennsylvania to determine the incidence of illness consistent with PTLDS.**

They analyzed electronic medical records from Geisinger, an integrated health system.

Moon and colleagues found the proportion of Lyme disease cases consistent with PTLDS was “22.8% (n = 1556) in all cases and 21.6% (n = 253) in positive test cases.”

The high risk of PTLDS was lower than a 34.4% incidence seen in a nation-wide insurance claims study by Adrion in 2015. [6]

“But this study,” writes Moon, “did not exclude pre-existing diagnoses and used a broader definition of PTLDS.”

The risk of PTLDS was 9% higher in Lyme disease cases than in controls.

There is no evidence that the doctors at Geisinger evaluated whether their patients might have suffered from a persistent tick-borne infection.

*Author’s note: I do not use the term PTLDS. The term implies that there is a test to prove a tick-borne infection has cleared. There is not. I remain concerned that a doctor may not look for a persistent infection once their patient has been diagnosed with PTLDS.*

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[Single dose of doxycycline for Lyme disease leads to poor outcome for 61-year-old man](#)

[Case report: Persistent pain and fatigue after treatment for Lyme disease](#)

**References:**

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