

# *Epidemiology of Lyme disease*

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## S U M M A R Y

Lyme borreliosis (LB) is the most common tick-borne disease in Europe and North America. LB occurs in all age groups, with equal prevalence in men and women. In Croatia the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Bb) was first isolated in 1991 at the Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Zagreb University Hospital Center from the skin of a patient with Erythema chronicum migrans (ECM) and was designated as P<sub>1</sub> Zagreb. In Croatia ECM as an early skin manifestation of LB was first described by Forenbacher in 1940, followed by Mohar in 1982, Maretić et al. in 1989, Curl 1991, Kansky 1992, Bolanča-Bumber 1997. Šitum described in 1998 in Croatia clinical and laboratory analysis in a group of 148 selected subjects (20 from a risk population of forestry workers from a non-endemic area, 82 from a risk population of forestry workers from a LB endemic area, and 46 LB affected subjects).

In 130 out of 148 subjects with positive tick bite history, clinical manifestation of LB were present in 49 and absent in 81 subjects. Sixty out of 148 study group subjects had a positive IFA test, and 24 had positive PCR test.

The LB is very important for dermatovenerologists because of skin manifestations: ECM, lymphadenosis benigna cutis (LBC) and acrodermatitis chronica atrophicans (ACA).

The appropriate treatment of ECM as early as possible is of utmost importance to prevent the possible occurrence of late manifestations of LB (neurological cardiologic and rheumatologic sequelae). Endemic LB areas in Croatia are Central and North Croatia.

## K E Y W O R D S

Lyme  
disease,  
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## *Introduction*

Lyme borreliosis (LB) or Lyme disease currently is the most common tick-borne disease in Europe and North America. LB is a multisystem disease caused by the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Bb). Small rodents,

hedgehog, birds, deer and vole are natural Bb reservoirs, whereas domestic animals (cattle, sheep, dog, etc.) play an important role in the spread of the disease in inhabited areas (1,2). LB is usually transmitted by ticks

