Does chronic Lyme disease exist?

Not even the general medical opinion doubts about a chronic (or late) stage of Lyme disease anymore. However, it is believed to be a rather rare condition, described by only 3-5%. The question is “of what” and “from how many”? Medical insurances have found many different figures that are no real indication to what the reality might be.

Neuroborreliosis vs. borreliosis

It is important to note that there is a difference between chronic Lyme disease and chronic neuroborreliosis. Chronic neuroborreliosis only refers to manifestations of an illness in the nervous system. Here, it is important to consider that all parts of the nervous system can be affected (in various degrees), such as the central nervous system, the cranial nerves, the peripheral and in all probability the autonomous nerve system. For the latter, the necessary literature is yet missing but why should borrelia spare this part of the nervous system or be “unable” to reach it? Patients might describe varying pain appearing in various locations and intensities throughout the nervous system, which can be considered astonishing or even “crazy” and represent a real challenge for both the patient and the doctor. As a result, the main reaction is to diagnose psychic illnesses, anxiety disorders or other illnesses (e.g. rheumatism, etc.). Is a chronic infection, therefore, not possible?

Of course, we consider the exclusion of any other possible illnesses essential, as you may read in the following chapter. Still, we recommend not to rule out a chronic infection right away.

The general chronic type of process (or “late form”) of the Lyme disease refers to a multi-system infection that goes far beyond the nervous system. It also affects organs and organ systems. This is to say that neuroborreliosis does not necessarily mean borreliosis (or Lyme disease) in general; it is not correct to rule out a Lyme diagnosis just because the patient does not show signs of a neuroborreliosis. It is also known that different borrelia strains prefer different organ systems and, therefore, trigger different symptoms.

We do not know how recurrent the general chronic Lyme disease (or borreliosis) is and we do not wish to speculate. In turn, we do not know either how recurrent the acute and chronic neuroborreliosis are. We do not know if this would give us a better idea if more tests were carried out and if the test procedures for antibodies were more sensitive (see: Determination of Antibodies). Besides, there might be many borrelia strains that we have not identified yet or that cannot be detected (see: General Information). It does not alter treatment in each particular case. Nonetheless, we believe that we should consider a possibility of chronic progression of Lyme disease in each individual case, even if the statistics would indicate that it is rare.
An overview research article is from: Daniel J. Cameron: **Proof That Chronic Lyme Disease Exists**, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Infectious Diseases; Volume 2010, Article ID 876450, 4 pages.

Further Literature for the existence of the chronic type of process of Lyme disease.

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