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HD **Lyme Disease; Research from Harvard University reveals new findings on Lyme disease**
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LP 2007 JUL 31 - (NewsRx.com) -- "Context Erythema migrans, while not pathognomonic, is the most common manifestation of early Lyme disease. Accurate diagnosis of this rash is essential to initiating appropriate antibiotic therapy," scientists in the United States report.

TD "Objective To determine the sensitivity of history and physical examination characteristics for the diagnosis of erythema migrans. Structured MEDLINE searches of articles written only in English, 1966 through March 2007. Studies were included if they enrolled at least 15 consecutive patients with the diagnosis of erythema migrans and reported original data regarding the history and physical examination characteristics of the patients. One author abstracted data from the studies. Results We separately analyzed the studies from Europe and analyzed both Lyme-endemic and nonendemic areas of the United States to search for potential differences in the clinical presentation. Thirty-two studies from Europe, 20 studies from the United States, and 1 from Europe and the United States met inclusion criteria for a total of 8493 patients. Sensitivity was calculated for each of the variables. No studies included patients without erythema migrans, so specificity data and likelihood ratios could not be determined. Many patients do not recall a tick bite. Associated systemic symptoms, such as fever and headache, are frequently reported. Nausea and vomiting are rare. A solitary lesion is the most frequent presentation in both US (81%; 95% confidence interval [CI], 72%-87%) and European patients (88%; 95% CI, 81%-93%). Central clearing is less common in the endemic United States (19%; 95% CI, 11%-32%) vs Europe (79%; 95% CI, 69%-86%) and the nonendemic United States (80%; 95% CI, 63%-90%). Our analysis of the current available literature suggests that there is no single element in the history or physical examination that is highly sensitive by itself for the diagnosis of erythema migrans," wrote C.D. Tibbles and colleagues, Harvard University.

The researchers concluded: "Clinicians should be aware of the wide variability in the clinical presentation of erythema migrans and the need to factor in multiple components of the clinical examination and epidemiological context."

Tibbles and colleagues published their study in *Jama - Journal of the American Medical Association* (Research from Harvard University reveals new findings on Lyme disease. *Jama - Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2007;297(23):2617-2627). For additional information, contact C.D. Tibbles, Harvard University, School Medical, Beth Israel Deaconess Med Center, Dept. of Emergency Medical, W Clinic Center 2, 1 Deaconess Rd., Boston, MA 02215, USA.

The publisher's contact information for the *Jama - Journal of the American Medical Association* is: American Medical Association, 515 N State St., Chicago, IL 60610-0946, USA.

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