

The situation is far too dangerous to wait for the results of the government reviews on the treatment, testing and transmission of Lyme disease. We have been given no time scale, and are concerned that for every month that passes, up to 3,000 UK citizens could contract Lyme disease, based on estimates by eminent researchers.

To end the unnecessary suffering of tens of thousands of people the government must ensure with immediate effect that:

1) Lyme disease becomes a notifiable disease.

2) GPs and patients are informed in writing that NHS tests for Lyme do not test for all strains of the Lyme bacteria and also can give false negative results. Also that at least a 1/3 of all people with Lyme disease have other tick-borne infections such as Bartonella and Babesia. These need to be routinely tested for at the same time as Lyme (these tests can also give false negative results).

3) GPs and patients are provided with a clear list of symptoms to look out for. A very comprehensive list has already been compiled by Dr Horowitz and could easily be put in place in our surgeries. Just looking for flu-like symptoms and a bullseye rash is not helpful. Posters with these symptoms, including all the possible rashes, should be up in every surgery.

4) GPs and patients are made aware that infected ticks have been found throughout the UK, there are no particular hot spots, it is everywhere! Also GPs must immediately stop telling patients that Lyme disease is rare.

5) Lyme patients are categorised and treated according to their symptoms. NICE is proposing to divide patients into categories for treatment based on length of infection. This is not helpful as many patients don't know when they were infected. We also need reassurance that all patients who have been diagnosed using private tests will also be treated by the NHS.

6) GPs and patients are informed as to how Lyme disease can be transmitted, including warning pregnant women that they can transmit Lyme to their unborn children.

7) Anyone who has Lyme disease or had Lyme disease in the past, are no longer able to donate blood or organs until further research has been carried out.

8) Warning signs are put up in all parks and open spaces.

9) GPs and patients are informed that Lyme disease can be diagnosed clinically based on symptoms and history of tick exposure.

10) GPs and the public are made aware that children are at particular risk of contracting Lyme disease and warning posters need to go up in all schools in the UK.

Patients must be allowed to take part in implementing these 10 points and in the government reviews on transmission, diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease.