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Community Lyme Disease Education

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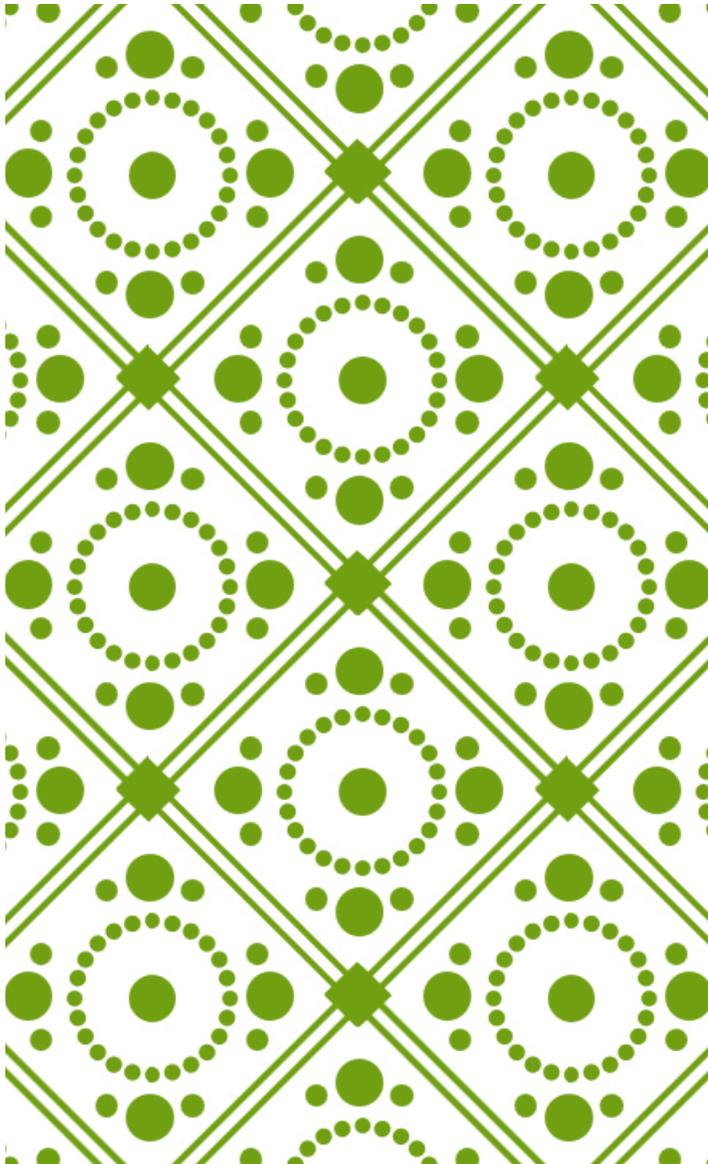
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COMMUNITY LYME DISEASE EDUCATION

Newtown Primary Care, Newtown, CT

Tim Woodin

Dec. 2019 – Jan. 2020

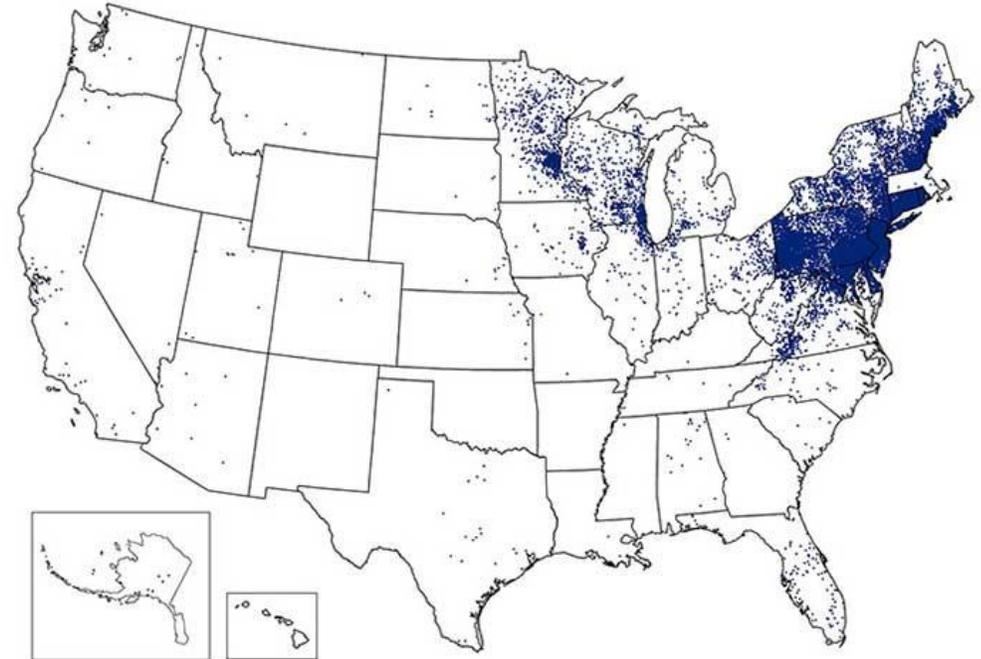
Erica Chang, MD

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- Lyme is a highly misunderstood and discussed disease.
- Information about Lyme disease is inconsistent and conflicting.
- Myths about Lyme disease run rampant, and many online sources present themselves as credible and evidence-based.
- Tick removal remains a pivotal issue, as most people do not know proper technique.

PUBLIC HEALTH COST

- Lyme disease costs approximately \$1.3 billion to the U.S. health system each year.
- With 240,000 – 440,000 new cases of Lyme each year, public health costs are reaching \$3,000/patient on average.
- In Lyme endemic areas of the U.S., unnecessary testing and healthcare costs are skyrocketing.



1 dot placed randomly within county of residence for each confirmed case

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

- “Lyme disease is an extremely hot topic, and education is crucial. There’s so much information on the internet, and its hard for patients to navigate and know which sources to trust” – Nya Rossi, PA-C, Newtown Primary Care, Newtown, CT.
- “I have lots of friends who have had Lyme, or thought they had Lyme, and its hard to know where to start. Some of the information you find online seems really legitimate, but then you talk to your doctor and realize a lot of the testing and treatment isn’t necessary.” – Brad Davis, Western Connecticut community member.

INTERVENTION AND METHODOLOGY

Patients are often looking for information on topics at the time of questioning during the office visit.

Pamphlets are a time-honored staple in the primary care office for distributing information to patients on varying topics regarding disease, health prevention, and lifestyle modifications.

Many patients request information on Lyme disease even if it is not the topic of their current visit.

As time slots for visits increasingly shorten, a pamphlet is a reliable way to educate patients on topics where they may have many questions, including Lyme disease.

RESULTS AND RESPONSE

Patient's responded well to a pamphlet, commenting that they were sometimes nervous to ask about Lyme disease.



One community member noted that asking about Lyme information felt "slightly taboo", and that a pamphlet helped alleviate hesitation.



Providers felt that Lyme disease was frequently discussed during visits, and a pamphlet helps convey information more clearly and concisely.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS AND LIMITATIONS

- Evaluation is limited due to limited time for project (one 6 weeks clerkship).
- Subjective effectiveness will be able to be determined by primary care providers at Newtown Primary Care based on patient feedback.
- Limitations exist whenever you distribute written information to patients including reading level, understanding of medical terminology, and whether the patient reads the information provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS/FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

- Follow-up with patients who received the pamphlet would provide information regarding improvement and quality control.
- Reaching out to Lyme-specific doctors for their perspective on Lyme education and how to collaborate is a great next step
- Hearing from patients with Lyme disease/Chronic Lyme and how education may or may not have changed their decisions regarding their care in the early, middle, and later stages of their disease.

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