

## News & Comments

# A study Suggests that 14% of the World Population had Lyme Disease

*Abdul Khadir Nabeel*

It is not clear how common Lyme disease is, even though it is spreading worldwide.

Huge data analysis revealed that more than 14% of people around the world have antibodies to *Borrelia burgdorferi sensu lato* (Bb) infection in their blood. Southeast Asia (16%) was the region with the highest reported seroprevalence, followed by Central Europe (21%), and Western Europe (13.5%). Seroprevalence was lowest in the Caribbean (2%), Southern Asia (3%), and Oceania (nearly 5.5%). In contrast, Lyme disease has become more common over time: Around 8% of people studied from 2001-2010 had antibodies to Lyme disease. By 2021, that share rose to 12%.

14.5% of the nearly 160,000 participants carried the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Bb), which causes the disease. This is the most comprehensive and up-to-date systematic review of the prevalence of the disease worldwide. They used Western blotting analysis which is a more reliable technique and make future studies more accurate if used.

Lyme disease typically develops stereotypical symptoms in about three-quarters of infected people, making it easier to detect early on. But the symptoms can be debilitating and long-lasting if they are not treated fast enough.

Several factors contributed to the increase, including longer, drier summers caused by climate change, animal migration, habitat loss, and "increasing contact with pets", the study said. The study found that farmers and workers who interact with host animals, such as dogs or sheep, were at the greatest risk of contracting an infection from a tick.

### KEYWORDS

Lyme disease, *Borrelia burgdorferi sensu lato*, seroprevalence, Western Europe, Caribbean, Southern Asia, Oceania, Western blotting, infection, endemic, climate change, animal migration, habitat loss, rash, skin disease

