



Our Children are Victims of the Lyme Wars

James Edward Katz, M.D.

This year there will be over 400,000 cases of Lyme disease in the US civilian population, an increase of 300% over 20 years. At the same time, there has been a decreased incidence of 95% in our deployed military. Welcome to the Lyme War.

These contrasting outcomes exist because early in the Lyme epidemic, infectious disease doctors defined Lyme disease narrowly, with overemphasis on lab tests. Subtle and prolonged cases were missed. Insurers would not pay for empiric therapies, such as prolonged antibiotic treatment without the diagnosis. Patients with continuing and atypical symptoms were told they had a psychosomatic illness, and their insurance didn't cover it. They became furious citizen action groups, attacking researchers who differed from their point of view with lawsuits and physical violence. SmithKline withdrew its LYMERix vaccine in 2003. Hospitals screened mail the same way they did for the Unabomber.

[This year there will be over 400,000 cases of Lyme disease in the US civilian population, an increase of 300% over 20 years. Click To Tweet](#)

Military strategy is to attack anything that can disable a soldier, be it a bug or bullet. Insect repellent (DEET) and behavioral rules (avoid tall grass, etc.) hadn't been effective. Battle dress treated with the insecticide permethrin killed ticks rapidly. Getting dressed in the morning is not a behavioral change.

Permethrin is the oil of the chrysanthemum flower. It is considered safe for treating head lice in three-month-olds as well as pregnant women. It is used by organic farmers. A soldier can wear treated clothing for 18 hours/day for 10 years with zero toxicity.

[Permethrin is the oil of the chrysanthemum flower. It is considered safe for three-month-olds as well as pregnant women. Click To Tweet](#)

The peak incidence of Lyme is 5-15-year old children. Spraying permethrin on a child's shoes and socks reduces the risk of a tick bite by 76 times. Can't schools become a focus of prevention?

[Spraying permethrin on a child's shoes and socks reduces the risk of a tick bite by 76 times. Click To Tweet](#)

However, Lyme research is also a casualty of the Lyme War. Those who fund or do research avoid the warring parties. As a result, the US invests \$14,000 per case of HIV, but only \$90 per active Lyme case. Tick populations are expanding. More Lyme disease will follow. You can now get Lyme in all 50 states.

Perhaps there could be a truce to allow the prevention studies that document the best and safest uses of permethrin for our children.

[Please see our previous article about Lyme and permethrin here](#) for detailed instructions on safe and effective application to shoes and clothing.