

LYME DISEASE – BORRELIOSIS

Beautiful, sunny weather persisting this year encourages spending free time in nature.

However, we must remember that while enjoying the beauty of outdoors we are accompanied by creatures, which may cause us tons of problems and unpleasantness. When going for a walk to a park or forest it is necessary to protect yourself against ticks, because these inconspicuous arachnids transfer dangerous diseases.

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Translated from: „Sukces po poznańsku”, November 2018

Today we are talking to Dr. Adriana Chełminiak, a neurologist specialist from Dr. Hanka Hertmanowska Memorial Neurological Non-Public Health Care Center and MS Treatment Institution in Plewiska.

Why does a neurologist treat Lyme disease?

Adriana Chełminiak: Borreliosis, apart from multiple sclerosis, is one of the main reasons for reporting to our center of patients with neurological disorders. As one of the confluences accompanying patients with multiple sclerosis and significantly affecting the effectiveness of their therapy it was a challenge, that our patron, Dr. Hanka Hertmanowska took up. She devoted a lot of her time and energy to it in the last years of life. She presented the results of her observations at the annual ACTRIMS-ECTRIMS 2014 conference in Boston. Nowadays, it is more and more often that ailments that were once identified with some particular disease are, in fact, the result of a completely different one. An interdisciplinary view of the patient is needed. Lyme disease, especially chronic, can take a variety of forms. The patients often come to us with a completely different suspicion. But often, it is also the other way round - they come convinced that they are suffering from neuroborreliosis, and it turns out that they are suffering from a different one.

Where does the conviction that they are suffering from Lyme disease come from?

Omnipresent advertising has good informative impact. Thanks to it, a lot of people realize that, a formerly insignificant minor unpleasantness, such as a tick, mosquito or spider bite, can, however, bring severe consequences that will manifest themselves years after the incident. It is good that we attach more importance to our health, because minimizing the significance of ailments, treating them with home-made methods, or so popular, self medicating is the reason why many patients report to the doctor when the disease is already in its advanced stage and much more difficult to treat. Nowadays, many patients turn to Internet for help. They enter the symptoms and they are convinced that they have found the answer. They also do a number of tests without consulting a doctor. Sometimes they get the diagnosis right, but often, because they want to speed the process up or do the doctor's job for them, they waste a lot of money. I strongly encourage to check with the doctor first in order to verify the symptoms and be referred to appropriate tests.

Can you get Lyme Disease only from a tick bite?

Unfortunately not. Lyme disease is an infectious disease and even droppings of a tick are enough to infect us. That is why it is so important to remember about the hygiene. It is also necessary to mention the possibility of being infected by a person who is (usually completely unaware) a carrier - the disease is also transmitted through the mucous membranes, so if one of the partners is ill, it is also advisable to examine the other.

Is it true that Lyme disease can cause changes in the brain?

Yes. The list of complications - the effects of Lyme disease - is long. The disease can cause, for example, myocarditis or it can affect joints, especially wrist, elbow or knee joints. It can also cause chronic, progressive encephalomyelitis.

When to go to the doctor?

If you find a tick, remove it, or even suspect a tick bite, you should report to our center, get tested, and maybe treated. If therapy is needed - the sooner we start it, the shorter it will be and the better chance it will give to minimize the damage to the body. However, if we do not remember the bite, and there are symptoms of nervous or muscular system - unexplained headaches and dizziness, fast fatigue, sensory or visual disturbances, or even mood disorders - it is also worth to come to our Center. Together, we will consider the causes and try to find their source and possible solution.

Internet forums are full of different methods of treatment. Their members give each other advice. What methods do you use to treat your patients ?

We always make the decision about the treatment and the method of treatment together with the patient, taking into account, first of all, the state of their health, possible accompanying diseases, lifestyle. We present various possibilities, directly speaking about their advantages and disadvantages or the anticipated length of treatment. Together, we choose therapy so that it is effective for the patient, but at the same time the least burdensome.

Is referral needed?

No, we are a private center.

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