

A Note on the Lyme Disease Presentation – Saturday, April 1, 2017
sponsored by MC² and the Environment Committee

150 very engaged members of MC² and the public attended our Environment Committee's Lyme Disease presentation held at Monora Park on Saturday April 1st, 2017. The session was expertly moderated by Environment Committee co-chair Rita Reitsma.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Melanie Wills of the University of Guelph was unable to attend due to illness. Linda Kelso from the Ontario Lyme Alliance ably took her place and provided the audience with detailed information about how to prevent Lyme, how it can be diagnosed and treated and the astounding hurdles Canadians face in dealing with our medical system. Lyme can also present with a number of co-infections. As the disease progresses it becomes more difficult to treat.

Local veterinarian, Dr. Barb Lewars from the Westend Veterinary Hospital provided a fascinating look at how veterinarians are able to diagnose and treat Lyme in animals efficiently, quickly and aggressively. One participant asked her to be his physician!

Our other two presenters and experiential experts were Brenda Bots and Chris Dickinson. They have both struggled with Lyme and the health care system for years. Their personal stories and the accounts of those in attendance were deeply moving and disturbing to the audience, many of whom stayed on well past the noon hour wrap-up to ask questions and talk among themselves. Blacklegged ticks are steadily becoming endemic for most of southern Ontario. The computer modelling, which is showing to be accurate when field studies are done, indicates that by 2020 all of southern Ontario will be endemic. The map from Public Health Ontario is misleading at best. Climate change and the fracturing of our environment are a couple of the variables causing this northward migration of ticks carrying Lyme Disease. Infected ticks have been found as far north as Kenora, Ontario.

Check the list of resources we have provided for your information. The website www.CanLyme.com is one of the best and the most up to date with current research. It is imperative that we all learn the best preventive techniques and how to correctly remove a tick so as not to have more of the bacteria enter our bloodstream. Tick removal kits are available through this website as well.

Highly recommended for viewing are:

- The Nature of Things - *Ticked Off: The Mystery of Lyme Disease*. Check the archives at the CBC.
- a clear and informative lecture by Dr. Peregrine from the University of Guelph titled: *Emergence of Lyme Disease in Canada*. You can find it on YouTube.
- a 24-minute presentation by Dr. Zhang, #16 at the *Federal Conference to Develop a Federal Framework on Lyme*, very informative on the microbiology of Lyme including chronic or persistent Lyme disease.

The claim by many in charge in Canada continues to be that there is little risk of Lyme disease here and that there are few people with the disease. With the courage of people like Elizabeth May, Green Party leader and federal MP, who steered through a private member's bill for a Federal Framework on Lyme and people in the Lyme community, there has been more openness and concern, including from our Minister of Health in Ontario, Eric Hoskins.

As a community we are looking to do more education on prevention, to help facilitate a support group for those directly affected by Lyme Disease in Dufferin-Caledon and also to do fundraising for some of the families who cannot afford out of country costs not covered by our medical system. Please continue to check this website for future announcements and events.

Email us at info@monomulmur.com if you wish further information about the presentation or about local contacts.