

CDC Early Study Pinpoints Problems in School Children with Lyme

Background of 1992 CDC school study of children on home instruction

by Pat Smith, published in the Lyme Times, Summer 2006 (used with permission)

In March 1992, LDA president Pat Smith was invited to the DC office of Congressman Christopher Smith (NJ) to present to officials from the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) information on how Lyme disease impacts school districts. These officials included Duane Gubler, ScD, CDC, Director, Division of Infectious Diseases and David Dennis, MD, MPH, Lyme Disease Program Director. Pat, at the time a Wall Township (NJ) school board member, presented a compilation of data gathered from nine school districts in NJ. The data included children on home instruction, teachers with Lyme, home instruction costs related to Lyme disease, and costs of treatment (actual cost, insurance payment, and family cost). As a result of her presentation, the CDC visited NJ and selected five of the nine districts for an intensive study, beginning with CDC meetings in Pat's district which at the time had 55 Lyme cases. Pat helped the CDC develop some of the study parameters and aided in district cooperation. The draft CDC school district study was completed but never published despite intense efforts on Pat's part to make that happen. Study information however, was presented to a packed house in an October 1992 Wall Township Congressional meeting on Lyme disease hosted by Congressman Smith where Mr. Gubler, Dr. Dennis and Pat all spoke. The draft CDC school district study follows in its entirety with the exception of the eleven data tables which were eliminated due to space constraints.

INTRODUCTION

The following brief narrative summarizes the descriptive findings of a recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and New Jersey State Department of Health field study of the social and economic impact of Lyme disease in school children living in a five-township area of Monmouth and Ocean counties, New Jersey. The analysis of data is restricted to cases (students in grades K-12 in the five-township area who, because of illness diagnosed as Lyme disease, required home instruction in the school years 1990-91 and/or 1991-92). Data on controls are not included because interviews with controls are incomplete. The data provided in this report are derived from interviews with parents of 65 case-patients from 54 households. The background of the investigation, the methods employed (including a copy of the questionnaire), and preliminary summary statistics are included in a report from Dr. Susan E. Lance to CDC Epidemiology Program Office, with copies to the New Jersey State Department of Health, dated August 4, 1992.

[Link to full study with tables](#)

[Link to Lyme Times article on study](#)