Emotional Needs of Children and Their Families: Psychotherapy and Family Therapy Support

Sandy Breckenlas, LGSW, BCD
Director: NY, Scarsdale, CT

Lyme disease, particularly if it is chronic, affects the lives of children and adolescents in a severe and complex manner. The family might feel that the Lyme patient is irritable and impatient, depressed or apathetic, and constantly overfatigued. Disturbances in eating and sleeping patterns are common in adolescents, the role of hormones further complicates the issues. Mood swings often occur in previously peaceful families. School issues can be considerable, and vary from day to day. Fatigue, cognitive and mood problems, and symptoms that might be seen as ADD or ADHD may get in the way of school attendance and academic performance. Children with Lyme often complain about feeling isolated. Profound fatigue may limit, or prevent, socialization. Parents often fail to understand the variations in the levels of functioning from day to day, resulting in their not believing their friends when they complain of these Lyme symptoms. Lyme patients’ friends are often frightened by the trip to the doctors, pills they have to take, blood work and other diagnostics. Their experience of life seems apart from their peers, and their limits or boundaries can be very difficult to understand.

Psychotherapy and family therapy with a Lyme-literate psychotherapist can help in the process of recovery from Lyme disease through developing in patients and parents understanding of the nature of the illness & strategies to deal with it; ability to cope with the flare of symptoms & side effects of medications, yet function as the highest possible level. Ability of parents to advocate on behalf for the child by school, enhanced communication & problem solving within family system. Lyme disease is a medical illness that calls for non-medical support to assure the growth and success of your children.

For Further Reading on School Issues

For Further Reading on Children with Lyme Disease


May 2010 | NASN School Nurse, DOI: 10.1177/1942602X10364664

R. A. Hamlen and D. S. Kliman  Pediatric School Psychology

Lyme Disease: Etiology, Neuropsychological Sequelae, and Educational Impact

see https://lymediseaseassociation.org/category/about-lyme/lyme-kids-a-schools/

For Further Reading on School Issues

Important Information About Kids & Patient Support

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Involvement of the Nervous System in Lyme Disease

Doreen Pietrucha, MD, FAAP
Director of Pediatric Neurology
Jenny Shore Medical Center
Seaport, NJ

The nervous system is frequently affected by Lyme disease. Both the central and peripheral nervous systems are at risk. Frequently, patients with Lyme disease develop an encephalopathy resulting in learning disabilities, difficulties with attention span, memory and wood filling. Children may also have difficulties in handwriting, spelling and arithmetic. Patients complain of headache. A person may also be a Lyme meningitis with an inflammation of the covering over the brain and spinal cord. They may have an inflammation of the brain itself called encephalopathy. Nerves can be infected, such as the trigeminal nerve impairing facial sensation, or the cranial nerves impairing sensory changes and weakness. There have been rare cases of stroke, and patients may have seizures with Lyme disease. In children, we can also see increased pressure in the nervous system called pseudotumor. This also results in headaches and may also affect vision. The muscles may be involved and this can cause weakness and pain. There may be difficulty in evaluating the nervous system as include MRI of the head, SVS, EMG’s and nerve conduction studies.

In addition to treating the Lyme disease with appropriate antibiotic therapy, medications may have to be given to help relieve some of the symptoms and the discomfort that patients have as a result of involvement of the nervous system. They may require anti-convulsants for seizures, diuretics to decrease the increased intracranial pressure for pain, appropriate vision intervention if there are learning problems, and physical therapy for weakness.

It is important for physicians and patients to recognize how frequently the central and peripheral nervous systems may be involved in Lyme disease.
Lyme disease affects visual processing in the brain yet symptoms are often underdiagnosed. The Children of Lyme Disease is a unique nationwide network of children with Lyme disease and their families. The Children of Lyme Disease consists of centers from birth to 18 with Lyme disease, 50%, have no history of arthritis, 75% have had a tick bite, 80% have eye rashes, but all have a history of living in or having visited a Lyme endemic area and have a decline in the way they play and perform in their day to day lives. Children who have dark hair and eyes also experience morning stiffness, rest pain and muscle weakness. Difficulties in the child's ability to participate in sports in the future is another outcome of this disease. This occurs due to fatigue and the treatment and/or focusing problems with vision therapy rather than understand that these are characteristics of a visual processing dysfunction in the brain caused by Lyme related disease.

Recent research has found a biomarker using visual evoked potentials (VEPs), demonstrating that Lyme related disease causes dysfunctional brain visual process functions, an abnormality which causes a imbalance between two visual processes in the brain, causing the functional vision difficulties. A common form of the visual process causes the child's vision to be more difficult to read. Reading is no longer there. Instead of the visual process of seeing the shape of several words before the higher process sees the letters, the child begins to see the words as isolated details of letters—Socia binding—producing instability within the visual process that interferes with comprehension, memory and produces fatigue, headaches and visual fatigue. This condition also affects the children when in busy social settings and the child becomes overwhelmed by schoolwork and by life. Pain and impaired cognitive function make it a difficult situation to attend school and learn and recall new material. Although there is now recognized by an Aapc solicitors tick (a.k.a. deer tick) it can also be transmitted in the nursery. The ticks of the Lyme disease bacteria has been detected in breed cats, however no transmission through human breast milk has been proven to be transmissible. The children born with Lyme disease are frequently diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, anhidrosis, and irritability in their lives with frequent fevers, increased ear and throat infections, irritability, poor attention, confusion, atypical characteristics behavior and mood swings, fearfulness, joint pain, distress and light sensitivity, and difficulty in sleeping, expressions, reading, writing, and making decisions as well as being overwhelmed by schoolwork and by life. Pain impaired cognitive function make it a difficult situation to attend school and learn and recall new material.

Treatment requires an inter-professional team, including the treating physician, a vision specialist such as an ophthalmologist or optometrist practicing Neuro Visual Processing Rehabilitation (NVR) or a vision therapist specializing in long-term emotional social, visual and social problems. The vision examiner may include a sensorimotor evaluator, comprehensive ophthalmologist, and vision therapist. Accommodation and convergence, VEP and a vision balance gait analysis. This vision screen may be diagnostic for distance and near vision with or without the need to rebalance the visual spatial process may be required.

Lyme Disease Association, Inc.

Lyme disease is a chronic infection caused by spirochetes that are transmitted to humans by ticks. It is most common in areas of the Northern Hemisphere where ticks are found. Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in the United States and is caused by the bacterium _Borrelia burgdorferi_. It is a potentially treatable disease, but if not treated promptly and adequately, it can lead to serious and long-lasting health problems. Lyme disease can affect any part of the body and can cause a variety of symptoms, ranging from mild to severe. The most common symptoms include fever, fatigue, and joint pain. In severe cases, Lyme disease can cause serious long-term complications, such as arthritis and neurological damage. Early diagnosis and prompt treatment with antibiotics are crucial to prevent these complications. The Children of Lyme Disease is a unique nationwide network of children with Lyme disease and their families. The Children of Lyme Disease consists of centers from birth to 18 with Lyme disease, 50%, have no history of arthritis, 75% have had a tick bite, 80% have eye rashes, but all have a history of living in or having visited a Lyme endemic area and have a decline in the way they play and perform in their day to day lives. Children who have dark hair and eyes also experience morning stiffness, rest pain and muscle weakness. Difficulties in the child's ability to participate in sports in the future is another outcome of this disease. This occurs due to fatigue and the treatment and/or focusing problems with vision therapy rather than understand that these are characteristics of a visual processing dysfunction in the brain caused by Lyme related disease.

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