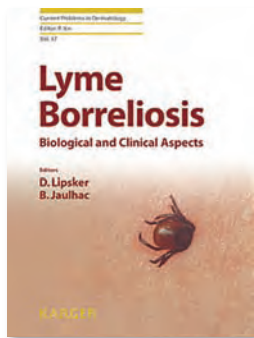


# Lyme Borreliosis: Biological and Clinical Aspects

(Current Problems in Dermatology volume 37)



Editors: Lipsker D, Jaulhac B  
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Reviewed by:  
 Nick Gutowski, Exeter.

This conveniently sized book is from the 'Current Problems in Dermatology' series. Cutaneous manifestations are the most frequent signs of Lyme disease. Despite the series title the book deals with all aspects of Lyme borreliosis, contributors come from the fields of microbiology, infectious diseases, neurology, rheumatology, internal medicine and dermatology. The book editors are from Strasbourg and the contributing chapter authors are from Continental Europe, therefore there is a European slant to the content, but adequate coverage of North American Lyme borreliosis. Lyme infection can easily be acquired outside the UK and then present to UK clinicians, therefore it is important to be aware of significant differences in disease expression between North American and European Lyme. There are also differences in manifestations between children and adults. There is one predominant species in North America and at least 4 pathological species in Europe, transmission to the host from the tick is not immediate but depends on the species (slower in North America) and does not always result in illness. Lyme borreliosis only occurs in the northern hemisphere.

The book is in two parts, the first part has six chapters and makes up the bulk of the book, 154 pages. The first five chapters cover in depth all aspects of Lyme and are entitled: *Borrelia burgdorferi* sensu lato diversity and pathogenicity; Life cycle and transmission of *Borrelia burgdorferi*; Epidemiology; Clinical manifestations and diagnosis of Lyme borreliosis; and Treatment and prevention of Lyme disease. The final sixth chapter in the first section 'Other tick borne diseases in Europe' lists these diseases. I found this chapter a little hard going, particularly the classification of all Rickettsioses.

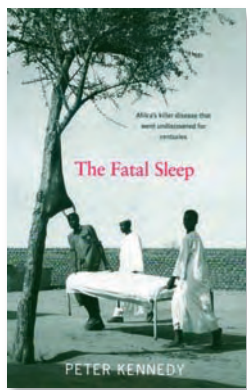
The second part of the book provides six short and very help-

ful discussion chapters on frequently asked questions about Lyme borreliosis. These are entitled: What should one do in case of a tick bite?; When is the best time to order a western blot and how should it be interpreted?; Is serological follow-up useful for patients with cutaneous Lyme borreliosis?; How do I manage tick bites and Lyme borreliosis in pregnant women?; What should be done in case of persistent symptoms after adequate antibiotic treatment for Lyme disease? (this latter question is a most vexing problem and assuming the diagnosis of Lyme is correct and there is no active infection, repeated courses of antibiotics are not recommended but emotional support and symptomatic treatment is indicated); and the final chapter: What are the indications for lumbar puncture in patients with Lyme disease?

Each book chapter has a helpful representative abstract at the beginning and is well referenced, inevitably there will be some newer references that are not quoted (I noticed one recent UK epidemiological study was absent) but reference coverage generally is good. There is some duplication in content between chapters but I found this helpful to reinforce points. It allows each chapter in some respects to be read as a 'stand alone', but see below regarding neuroborreliosis. There is a section of 8 colour figures, some composite, in the Clinical manifestations and diagnosis of Lyme borreliosis chapter, including borrelial lymphocytoma and acrodermatitis chronica atrophicans.

Overall the book is very readable and provides detailed information on Lyme borreliosis and can be considered as a reference of current knowledge. Those who want to read exclusively about neuroborreliosis will have to look through several chapters to extract all the information, inevitably there is some variation between information in each chapter. ♦

## The Fatal Sleep



Author: Kennedy P.  
 Published by: Luath Press Ltd, 2007.  
 ISBN: 978 1 9052 2267 4  
 Price: £20.00

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Not for gentle slumber. It is not often that I take more than a year to write a book review, but this is no reflection on the book; if anything, it is the opposite. I had hoped Peter Kennedy's popular science book on African trypanosomiasis, *The Fatal Sleep*, would be good bedtime reading, expecting to read a chapter or two, and nod off into gentle slumber. But in fact the opposite was the case. After just a few pages I realised this was no bed-time book, and if I wasn't careful I would be gripped, and ruin the whole week. So I tucked it away, saving it for a holiday, when I could really enjoy it. And a rainy week in Edinburgh provided just such an occasion. Part autobiography, part historical novel, part travelogue, part encyclopaedia, part discursive thesis, *The Fatal Sleep* has a little bit of everything, and as such it is a great read. Mind you, given the subject matter, it would be hard for it to be otherwise. Sleeping sickness is one of those fascinating neurological infections that surely captures the imagination of every medical student: a slowly progressive parasitic disease, caused by the bite of a tsetse fly, that is invariably fatal if untreated, where the treatment seems to kill almost as many as it cures; a parasite where ecology, climate, economic, and political conditions contrive to make control almost impossible; a disease where even the name of the parasite itself, *Trypanosoma brucei* gambiense or rhodesiense, conjures up images of Scottish tropical medicine pioneer Sir David Bruce hacking his way through the jungles of the Gambia and Rhodesia to determine its cause; how could this be anything other than a fascinating condition?

In this book Kennedy draws us into his passion for this disease, and indeed for all of Africa itself. Describing first his medical student days at University College London, with the likes of Sir Lancelot Spratt, Kennedy describes the chance encounters that led

to his visits to Africa, and ultimately his involvement with trypanosomiasis; he describes with great accuracy his observations of patients, the need for better control of the vector and animal reservoirs, the challenges faced in establishing a mouse model, and how he hopes these will help with the development of new treatments. Kennedy makes compelling arguments about the need for further work in this area; with one third of Africa held captive by the tsetse fly, with few advances in diagnosis and treatment over the last century, and a treatment for neuroinvasive disease which kills a staggering one in twenty of those who receive it, few would argue with the fact that this is a neglected tropical disease. Thankfully with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and heroic efforts from clinicians and scientists working in Africa, and support from *Medicine Sans Frontieres* things are beginning to move in the right direction, but there is a great deal to do.

Occasionally the book is a little idiosyncratic, but if anything this adds to the appeal: I am not sure I wanted to know the population of Tororo in Uganda, to the last man (402,621 – for those that do want to know!); but I particularly enjoyed Kennedy's "what on earth am I doing here?" moments, which all those who have worked in the tropics will recognise. In the foreword Kennedy worries whether lay readers will understand all the intricacies of the science. He needn't be concerned; even if they don't understand every word, they will certainly grasp the main messages. As for medical readers I think they will be delighted, charmed, horrified and fascinated in equal measure. And even if the book does nothing more than raise awareness among medics of this terrible problem, it will have achieved a great deal. ♦