

## **The Deer----To Fear or not to Fear**

Written by Dr. Anna Hade Duncan

Having moved to Connecticut 11 years ago from the Great State of Texas, I have become a self-proclaimed expert on Lyme Disease. What qualifies you as an “expert” ...you ask? Well.....let me tell you.

My second year in picturesque New England, Lyme Disease caused me to have an auto accident on the dreaded I-95 corridor. Luckily it was stop and go morning traffic, and my temporary lapse of consciousness only caused a fender bender....ok, maybe a fender remover.

“Yes, yes, I know I hit you. No, I know you did not hit me. No, I KNOW I hit you” After several intense minutes of convincing the woman I had hit that it was my fault and I knew it...much to her amazement...the police were called. I arrived at work, late. BUT, there was an upside....my Lyme Test had come back positive. Alright! I had a reason for feeling like I had not slept in days! I had a “reason” for rear ending a car in the next lane that morning.

As a physician, the whole experience that followed, made me very interested in the “disease” and it’s treatment....or recommended treatment....and it’s actual variety of treatment...and finding out that no one REALLY “absolutely” knows the facts of Lyme Disease.

“We have too many deer.” ....”There were deer in my yard this morning!” ....”There are ticks everywhere and I am afraid to go outside” .....Hello! This IS Connecticut, last time I checked...and the home of Old Lyme. Being a transplant and having “survived” Lyme, and NOT fearing the “outdoors”, I am at a loss to understand the fear and terror.

AND, yes, for at least 9 years, I have been informing people...friends, hairdressers, checkers at the grocery store and patients....."Actually the white footed mice carries Lyme" ....after they have gone on about the deer menace. The response is usually "Oh?" ....then back to "the dreaded deer".

So, today, I read a gratifying article online....why not, my patients all read the online articles, then quote them to me...? The original source is The Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies....and it warns that the Northeast will be having a spike in Lyme Disease this Spring. In all honesty, I see Lyme, everywhere! Having been diagnosed and treated for it will do that! So, a "spike" only confirms my suspicions.

Now, about the mice...long story short. Lots of mice, low crop of acorns and the mice are "crashing" ... and there are many blood hungry "nymphal" ticks out there looking for a meal! Since they can't all dive onto their favorite food...the white-footed mice....they will be looking for "other" mammals.

**NEWSFLASH—HUMANS ARE MAMMALS!** Yes, they will be looking for us.

*Borrelia burgdorferi*, the nasty spirochete bacteria, that causes Lyme Disease in humans does not affect the mice.

So, my points? Deer were not mentioned in the article. There is going to be a nasty spike in Lyme Disease this Spring, 2012, in the Northeast. And what I have been trying to teach for years now...FEAR the mice....not the deer, is spot on.

We will have to watch how this plays out....and yes, I will let you know.