

Is it possible for Lyme disease to be misdiagnosed as ALS?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.med.diseases.lyme/2006-09/msg00866.html>

- *From:* "Lymehelp" <ffffff@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 15 Sep 2006 02:14:03 -0400
-

Is it possible for Lyme disease to be misdiagnosed as ALS? Are there similarities in symptoms between these two diseases?

The question of a relationship between Lyme Disease and ALS first received significant academic attention when Dr. John Halpern who was then a neurologist at Stony Brook conducted a study in which he compared the frequency of blood test positivity to the agent of Lyme disease among patients ALS to community controls. The results indicated a higher percentage of the ALS patients were seropositive for Lyme Disease. Since then, there have been isolated case reports both in the media and one or two in the academic literature indicating that a patient had been misdiagnosed with an ALS-like illness only later to be rediagnosed and treated for Lyme disease with good clinical response. Although we suspect that there may be rare individuals for whom such a relationship does exist, the vast majority of patients with ALS are not thought to have Lyme disease as the cause of their serious disease. Also of interest is that there is now a clinical trial underway sponsored by the NIH in which an antibiotic, Minocycline, is being used for 9 months to see if it is helpful in stabilizing or reducing the progression of ALS; this is being done not because ALS is thought to be infectious in etiology but because minocycline is known to have beneficial anti-inflammatory effects.