

30 APRIL 2018

MEDIA RELEASE



ABOVE: Stephanie sporting a bullseye rash for Lyme Disease Awareness month.

Social Media Explodes with Lyme Disease Rashes!

Social Media is exploding with pictures of people wearing a bullseye rash, one of the rashes that approximately 50% of people with Lyme disease may get after a tick bite.

This May the Lyme Disease Association of Australia (LDAA), as part of their annual May Lyme awareness month, is asking everyone to pop on a temporary tattoo and post their picture to social media with the hashtag **#ItsASign**

This May the Lyme Disease Association of Australia and its supporters are lighting up social media to raise awareness of an early symptom of Lyme (like) disease.

Lyme disease is an emerging global epidemic with an estimated 1 million people and counting around the world who are infected each year.

Incidence in Australia is rapidly increasing and it is estimated that there are hundreds of thousands of patients suffering from a vector borne disease, the majority of whom are misdiagnosed or unable to access treatments.

The fun temporary tattoo worn by supporters depicts a 'bullseye rash', one of the few visible signs of an invisible disease. While only approximately 50% of patients develop a rash, for those that do it is a helpful early sign of an infection that requires immediate medical treatment. The rash appears days to weeks after the bite from an infected vector (commonly ticks) and spreads outwards, and sometimes can reoccur long after the bite. Rashes do not always present as a perfect bullseye. Solid rashes and solid spreading rashes without a distinct centre can also indicate a Lyme disease infection. Furthermore, many patients neither develop a rash at all, nor do they remember a bite.

In Australia the exact number of people with Lyme (like) disease is unknown as Australian health officials do not recognise the disease as locally acquired, thus there is no surveillance.

A Senate Inquiry 'Growing evidence of an emerging tick-borne *disease* that causes a *Lyme* like illness for many Australian patients' was held in 2016 with over 1200 submissions received from concerned Australians.

"People are being bitten by ticks and presenting to their doctors with symptoms and are being told it's nothing to worry about," said LDAA's Vice President Jennifer Sherer, "this campaign is to warn people of the potential dangers of ticks and if you have symptoms after a tick bite, you need to get checked. If your doctor won't listen to you, it's important that you find one that will."

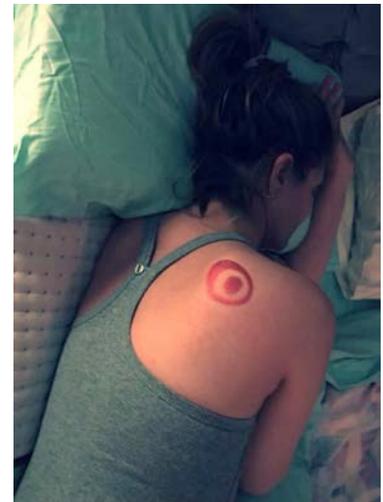
Working to bridge the Lyme research gap, the LDAA in conjunction with the CWA of NSW, has recently funded a new Australian patient-focused research pilot study. In further initiatives this month, the LDAA has launched Lyme-Ed, a powerful online training program for both patients and practitioners; established the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to inform Australia's health officials of vector-borne diseases; and partnered with world-renowned Lyme specialist, Dr Richard Horowitz, as the LDAA's first Lyme patron. These new initiatives are in place to develop world-class testing and treatment options for sick Australians. The LDAA partners with global experts to lead the way as Australia's health officials develop policies for action.

If you would like to be a part of May Lyme Awareness month you can download a virtual bullseye rash here

<https://lymediseasemappingproject.org/profilepic/ldaa/>

To follow the campaign, you can visit the LDAA's Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/LymeDiseaseAustralia/>



Right: *Lyme patient Dyan Moore wearing a bullseye rash temporary tattoo for May Lyme Awareness.*

--END--

Media enquiries: media@lymedisease.org.au, Jen on 0410 293 145

For enquiries please contact us here: <http://www.lymedisease.org.au/contact-us/>

You can find out more about the Pilot Patient study here: <http://www.lymedisease.org.au/media-releases/>

You can find out more about Lyme-Ed here: <http://www.lymedisease.org.au/lyme-disease-patient-and-practitioner-training/>

You can find out more about the Scientific Advisory Committee here: <http://www.lymedisease.org.au/scientific-advisory-committee/>

You can learn more about the LDAA's patron Dr Richard Horowitz here: <http://www.lymedisease.org.au/aboutus/our-patron/>