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MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Lyme disease research pilot funded

The Lyme Disease Association of Australia (LDAA) is currently funding a new patient focused pilot research study which is taking place here in Australia. The project aims to test clinical samples from patients, embracing an innovative method for the diagnosis of vector borne infections including those from tick bites.

LDAA CEO Ms Whiteman said, 'Australians who are desperately unwell after a tick bite have waited years for credible research to uncover what is making them sick. This is an extremely exciting project and we believe the results could be ground-breaking.'

'LDAA received a research grant from the Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW and we are delighted to be able to support this research. It is evident the researchers are actually working towards gaining new insights that will help patients receive a reliable diagnosis for this terrible disease. We are hopeful this innovative approach will turn things around for patients.'

The study utilises a proprietary capture methodology that has not previously been employed in the detection of tickborne pathogens in Australia.

The researchers undertaking this project have extensive experience in the fields of microbiology, research science, infectious diseases, auto-immune conditions, and public health. With research previously published in the Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal, a prestigious international journal, they form a formidable team. The lead researcher has worked in the vector borne infectious disease discipline for many years.

Vectors are living organisms that can transmit infectious diseases between humans or from animals to humans. Many of these vectors are bloodsucking insects, which ingest disease-producing microorganisms during a blood meal from an infected host (human or animal) and later inject it into a new host during their subsequent blood meal. Mosquitoes, ticks and fleas are the best-known disease vectors. Vector borne diseases include Lyme disease, malaria and dengue fever.

The study results will be submitted for publication in peer reviewed journals with wide readership by Australian medical practitioners. Ms Whiteman said, 'Evidence of what is making Australian sick after a tick bite could change the lives of thousands of patients who are currently falling through the cracks in this evidence-based policy world.'

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Additional resources for media are available from the Lyme Disease Association of Australia's website www.lymedisease.org.au/media