

Data from the Companion Animal Parasite Council predicts human Lyme disease outbreaks¹

The more dogs with Lyme disease, the higher the incidence of this tick-borne illness in humans, according to the results of a study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Using data from unique "prevalence maps" provided by the Companion Animal Parasite Council scientists found that people in areas with a higher-than-average number of dogs with Lyme disease are at greater risk of contracting the disease.

In the study, CDC analyzed data from previously published disease prevalence maps, which showed the prevalence of antibodies to the agent of Lyme disease in dogs, and cross-referenced it with U.S. national surveillance data on the occurrence of Lyme disease in humans. CAPC provides real-time, online maps track the incidence of Lyme disease and a variety of other parasite-borne infections in both cats and dogs.

Specific findings include:

- Human Lyme disease incidence was effectively zero when the canine seroprevalence was <1.3 percent.
- Among 14 states with canine seroprevalence >5 percent, median annual human Lyme disease incidence was about 100-fold higher (24.1 cases/100,000 population) and positively correlated with canine seroprevalence

The findings confirm that pets often serve as sentinels for zoonotic disease and their impact in human health.

¹ Source: Companion Animal Parasite Council (www.PetsAndParasites.org) an independent nonprofit council comprised of parasitologists, veterinarians, medical, public health and other professionals that provides information for the optimal control of internal and external parasites that threaten the health of pets and people.