

Knowledge, attitudes and behavior towards tick prevention and tick-borne diseases – a survey among Lyme borreliosis cases in Bavaria in 2019

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Since no vaccination against Lyme borreliosis (LB) is available, individual protective measures are prevention options. However, application depends on knowledge and perceptions. We asked LB cases about their knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB) regarding tick prevention and tick-borne diseases to inform future prevention campaigns.

We invited a subset of LB cases reported between weeks 23–35 in 2019 in Bavaria to participate in a KAB survey. We send invitations ≤2 weeks after notification.

Of 1,105 cases invited, 377 participated (34%); 298 were adolescents/adults, 79 were children (median age 59 and 6 years, respectively). 67% (221/328) noticed the tick bite that likely led to the current LB. During summer, 84% spend time outdoors at least multiple days a week. Participants were misinformed, thinking ticks fall from trees (60/377, 16%), vaccination protects against LB (48/377, 13%) and no tick-specific repellents exist (48/377, 13%) or they were not sure they exist (129/377, 35%). Though most believe checking for ticks after time outdoors, wearing long clothes, wearing closed shoes and tugging pants in socks are effective in protecting against tick bites, fewer apply those measures regularly (99% vs. 72%; 93% vs. 40%, 88% vs. 51%; 85% vs. 17%).

Although most participants were well-informed, existing misinformation had effects on perceived effectiveness and the application of protection measures. Information campaigns should specifically address identified misinformation.

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Professional Status of the Speaker

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