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Impervious Density and *Borrelia burgdorferi* s.l. Seropositivity within the German National Cohort (NAKO)

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Introduction

The environment influences tick density and activity. We investigated the effect of varying buffers around the residential address on the association between impervious density and *Borrelia burgdorferi* s.l. seropositivity in NAKO (German National Cohort) participants.

Methods

We included 14,195 participants from four NAKO study centers. Impervious density was dichotomized indicating the presence (<0.3) or the absence (≥ 0.3) of greenspace at home addresses during baseline examination (2014–2019). Utilizing an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) *B. burgdorferi* s.l. antibodies (IgG) were measured in blood samples. Previous analyses showed associations for age, sex and migration background. We performed adjusted hierarchical models with the study centers as random intercept.

Results

We detected an OR of 1.85 (95%-CI 1.39–2.48) for a 100 m buffer of less imperviousness compared to higher impervious density, of 1.59 (1.23–2.05) for a 250 m buffer, of 1.52 (1.22–1.90) for a 500 m buffer, of 1.26 (1.03–1.55) for a 1000 m buffer and of 1.01 (0.81–1.25) for a 5000 m buffer. When stratifying for the degree of urbanization the association between imperviousness and IgG-seropositivity was significant for the urban subgroup and the 100 m buffer only (OR 1.60, 95%-CI 1.05–2.44).

Conclusion

Our findings of possibly adverse effects of less imperviousness (in a 100 m buffer) contrast with the potentially beneficial effects of green spaces, e.g. on mental health.

Keywords

Borrelia burgdorferi, vectors, impervious density, NAKO, seroprevalence

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Professional Status of the Speaker

PhD Student

Junior Scientist Status

Yes, I am a Junior Scientist.

Authors: BETKER, Philine (Department of Epidemiology, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Inhoffenstrasse 7, 38124, Braunschweig, Germany.); Ms MEYERDIERKS, Dörthe (Department of Epidemiology, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Inhoffenstrasse 7, 38124, Braunschweig, Germany; Department of Epidemiology,

Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI), Inhoffenstraße 7, 38124 Braunschweig, Germany; Ph.D. Programme "Epidemiology", Braunschweig-Hannover, Germany.)

Co-authors: Dr WOLF, Kathrin (Institute of Epidemiology, Helmholtz Zentrum München GmbH, German Research Center for Environmental Health, Neuherberg, Germany); Prof. KARCH, André (Institute of Epidemiology and Social Medicine, University of Münster, Münster, Germany); Prof. PETERS, Annette (Institute of Epidemiology, Helmholtz Zentrum München GmbH, German Research Center for Environmental Health, Neuherberg, Germany; Institute for Medical Information Processing, Biometry, and Epidemiology (IBE), Faculty of Medicine, LMU Munich, Munich, Germany); Prof. PISCHON, Tobias (Molecular Epidemiology Research Group, Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association (MDC), Berlin, Germany; Biobank Technology Platform, Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association (MDC), Berlin, Germany; Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Berlin, Germany); Dr KLETT-TAMMEN, Carolina J. (Department of Epidemiology, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Inhoffenstrasse 7, 38124, Braunschweig, Germany); Dr CASTELL, Stefanie (Department of Epidemiology, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Inhoffenstrasse 7, 38124, Braunschweig, Germany)

Presenter: BETKER, Philine (Department of Epidemiology, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Inhoffenstrasse 7, 38124, Braunschweig, Germany.)

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