



## MEDIA ADVISORY

# UPDATES ON LYME DISEASE, A TICK-TRANSMITTED ZONOSIS, AND MOSQUITO-BORNE INFECTIONS

**February 26, 2008 (VANCOUVER)** – Canada's leading clinical and medical microbiologists and infectious disease specialists will gather in Vancouver, BC, on February 28, 2008, starting at 8:00 am, to listen to a presentation that describes the epidemiology of Lyme disease, and the prospects for control and prevention. Participants will also learn about and discuss some mosquito-borne viruses transmitted within Canada to humans; and give an update on the public health impact of Canadians encountering travel-associated diseases.

- **Recent Trends and Controversies of Lyme Disease** – Participants will hear the latest information about the disease and the necessary measures required to report, contain and treat infected individuals.
- **A Canadian Perspective to Mosquito-Borne Viruses:** Participants will hear an update on Canada's latest development in the diagnosis, surveillance and treatment of mosquito-borne viral associated illnesses such as the West Nile; and public health measures to respond to these mosquito-transmitted diseases.

All educational sessions, clinical vignettes and symposia are open to media. The Annual Conference is organized by the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada ([www.ammi.ca](http://www.ammi.ca)) and the Canadian Association for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases ([www.cacmid.ca](http://www.cacmid.ca)).

### About Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is caused by a bacterium that is carried and transmitted through bites from several species of ticks. Although the risk of contracting Lyme disease is highest in the regions where ticks are established, researchers have shown that there is a low risk of encountering the relevant tick vectors in areas currently considered to be non-endemic. In addition, it appears that the ticks may be establishing themselves in new areas that are currently unidentified.

The first sign of early Lyme disease is the appearance of a 'bull's-eye' skin rash. The infection may spread and involve the joints, and occasionally the nervous system, and the heart.

Prompt treatment with antibiotics is very effective in curing Lyme disease. Death from Lyme disease is very rare.

### **About West Nile Virus**

For most Canadians, the risk of West Nile virus infection is low, and the risk of serious health effects from the virus is even lower. However, anyone exposed to mosquitoes in an area where West Nile virus is active is at risk for infection. Some individuals with weaker immune systems are at risk of developing more serious infections such as meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain or spinal cord), encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and acute flaccid paralysis (a polio-like syndrome that can result in the loss of function of one or more limbs).

At this time, there is no specific treatment, for West Nile virus.

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For more information about the AMMI Canada - CACMID Annual Conference 2008 go to [www.ammi.ca/annual\\_conference](http://www.ammi.ca/annual_conference).

To pre-register for the Conference or to request an interview, please contact:

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