

**Part 2:**  
**Medical combatants in the ‘Lyme wars’**

The major medical combatants in the “Lyme wars” in the U.S. are the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society (ILADS).

Today, the dominant U.S. medical diagnostic and treatment model for Lyme is the clinical guidelines for Lyme issued by the Infectious Diseases Society of America (North America, that is).

What are the primary differences between the two contending medical views?

The ruling IDSA maintains that Lyme is hard to catch and easy to cure in any stage, using just 2 to 4 weeks of oral antibiotics. That guideline is backed up by the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Juris Doctor Susan Ronn explained that the Infectious Diseases Society of America—the IDSA—“claims the science is firmly on the side of their guidelines’ prescribed testing and treatment regimen and that chronic Lyme does not exist.

“ILADS claims the spirochete can sometimes elude existing testing mechanisms,” Ronn continued, “and also may survive in the host’s body despite short-term treatment.”

Ronn noted, “Both camps in the Lyme Wars—the Infectious Diseases Society of America [IDSA] and the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society [ILADS]—have published Lyme disease practice guidelines.

“The guidelines conflict regarding diagnosis and treatment.”

This medical battle, Ronn concluded, “has left some physicians and patients struggling with the fallout of no clear path of diagnosis or treatment for what many view as a complex, little-understood illness.” (“In the Lymelight: Law and Clinical Practice Guidelines,” Southern Medical Law Journal, June 2009)

Lyme is not the first instance in medical history in which doctors disagree about treatment approaches. However, in other instances, doctors in the U.S. are supposed to inform patients of the different views and treatment options.

So why is the disagreement over the testing, diagnosis and treatment of Lyme a battlefield in the U.S.?

*Next: ‘Perfect storm’: Lyme pathogen & capitalist interests*