

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000766

OUTCOME: 9 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Lyme Disease - Transmission

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Madigan, John

Question:

Growing evidence suggests other forms of transmission for tick borne pathogens such as fleas, mosquitoes, lice, transplacentally from mother to foetus, and through unprotected sex are possible. How does the government intend on responding to combat the possibility of multiple transmission routes? Particularly given Lyme disease is increasing to epidemic proportions in other countries.

Answer:

There is no validated evidence that Lyme disease is transmitted by vectors other than ticks. While congenital transmission is possible, the current evidence does not establish any cause for clinical intervention. The Department of Health is aware of rare case reports of venereal transmission and awaits independent validation in the peer reviewed medical literature.