

Comment on Assessment of new culture method for detection of *Borrelia* species from serum of Lyme disease patients; Johnson, BJ et al.

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I have read with great disappointment several reports by the CDC, Fort Collins Group, spear-headed by Barbara Johnson, criticizing Advanced Laboratory's culture technique results reported by Dr. Eva Sapi last year, as being "probably contaminated". Worse than that are the numerous lay reporters and professional medical news media all jumping on this bandwagon without just cause. On top of that, these journalists erroneously reported that contamination of cultures did occur when the CDC, in fact, did not say or prove that. None of these reporters have had the decency to investigate before casting stones. I have personally become involved reviewing the great accomplishment of Advanced Laboratory's development of a culture technique reported to have a high sensitivity (94%) which is more than double the CDCs supported assay techniques sensitivities.

In light of the high reported sensitivity of the culture assay one would think that the CDC should be involved in aiding and supplementing such procedures helping to perfect same (if they feel it lacking) for the public good instead of discarding it outright. That does not seem to ring right to me. Interestingly the CDC did not criticize the culture technique itself (which by the way is excellent in my review) instead they assert that they "cannot rule out" contamination of the reported results. Yet interestingly, if contamination was so rampant not one of the controls was so contaminated and yet they ignore this. And in one report I saw that will be soon published, a supercomputer Blast genome of GenBank analysis disputes Johnson's contamination speculation.

I have firsthand knowledge of Advanced Labs facilities, their personnel, and their analytic techniques, which in my professional opinion are excellent.

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References:

International Journal of Medical Science from. 2013, Vol. 10 page 362. "Improved Culture Conditions for the Growth and Detection of *Borrelia* from Human Serum" authored by Eva Sapi, Namrata Pabbati¹, Akshita Datar, Ellen M Davies, Amy Rattelle, Bruce A Kuo.

J. Clin. Microbiol. doi:10.1128/JCM.01674-13 "Assessment of New Culture Method to Detect *Borrelia* species in Serum of Lyme Disease Patients". B. Johnson, Mark A. Pilgard, and Theresa M. Russell