

Researchers tackle increasing threat of tick-borne infections in Europe

One of Europe's largest tick research projects, NorthTick, has come to an end. Since 2019, researchers from seven countries in the North Sea region have been working to prevent tick-borne infections, develop better diagnostic methods and optimize patient management. The work has been done within the framework of an EU Interreg project with a budget of approximately SEK 70 million.

- We have more ticks and thus more people affected by tick-borne diseases. In recent years, new tick-borne diseases have also been discovered, and, with climate change, increased urbanization and other human impacts on the ecosystem, we are seeing changes in their distribution in Europe, says Per-Eric Lindgren, project manager and professor of microbiology at Linköping University. He sees the broad interdisciplinary network of expertise in tick-borne infections created in NorthTick as one of the greatest benefits. The network consists of key people from national and regional authorities in the participating countries.

The aim of NorthTick is to reduce the number of people affected by tick-borne infections and to ensure that those affected receive the best possible care. The project has three main components:

- Communication and prevention
- Development of diagnostics
- Development of common recommendations for a better and harmonized management of affected patients.

Knowledge about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of various tick-borne diseases is increasing, but it is a challenge to get this knowledge out to the health care system and the general public.

- One of the strengths of the project has been that we have worked across borders in the North Sea region, which increases the understanding of how the different countries handle diagnostics and clinical care, it gives the opportunity to learn from each other, says Per-Eric Lindgren. He also emphasizes the importance of dialogue with the patient associations for both Lyme disease and TBE, and mentions that the project has had continuous contact with the associations.

Contact

Local contact