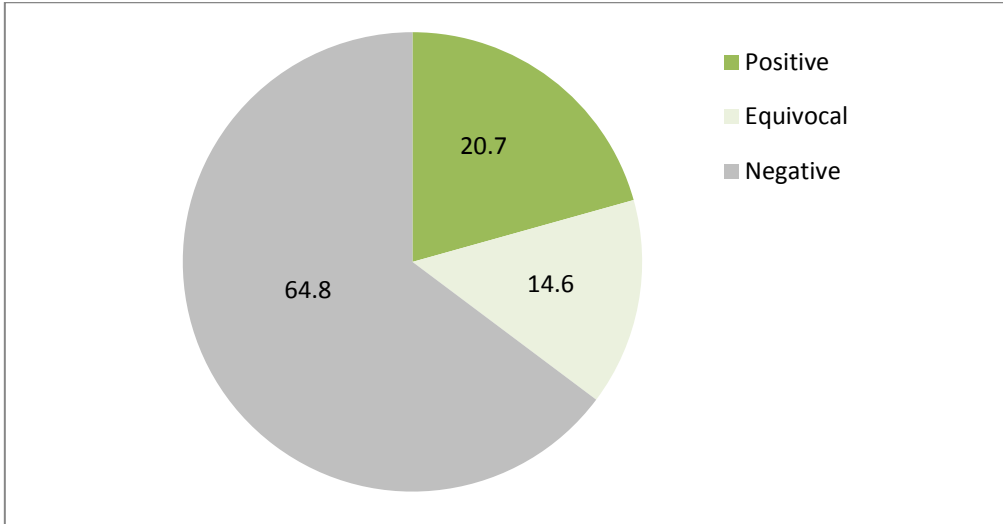


***Borrelia* spp., data=2017, NRC¹**

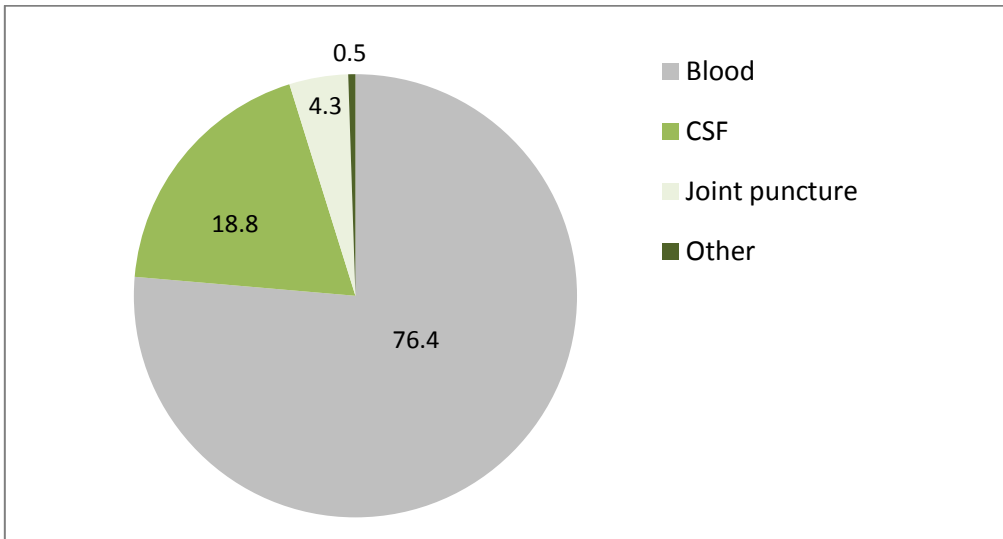
- In 2017, the National reference centre (NRC) for *Borrelia* spp. performed 2,520 tests of which 520 (21%) had a positive result, concerning 493 individuals. Among these, 76 records were discarded because they did not fulfil the definition of a case of Lyme borreliosis (LB). On the other hand, 30 persons with an equivocal serology result but presenting an erythema migrans, were classified as confirmed cases. The total number of patients with a diagnosis of LB at the NRC in 2017 was therefore 447.
- For 62% of tests prescribed, the clinical information, essential for the interpretation of the results, was missing. Because of the lack of clinical information, 60% of the cases of LB were classified as suspected cases. This proportion is comparable to previous years.
- Despite the availability of clear guidelines for the diagnosis of LB (see [BAPCOC](#)), 68 patients (39% of the LB cases with clinical information) presented an erythema migrans, for which serology is not recommended/useful. One third of the persons (33%) had neuroborreliosis, 26% an arthritis and three patients presented with another clinical manifestation (unspecified). Arthritis was the most frequently reported manifestation in children and young adults (< 35 years). The age groups > 35 years were more likely to have neuroborreliosis (NB). The proportions of different manifestations can change one year from another. These differences are difficult to interpret because of the small number of cases with clinical information. The data on erythema migrans (EM) are not representative, since this is a clinical diagnosis.
- The *Borrelia* spp. involved was identified for 10 cases. The species was *B. burgdorferi* s.s. in five persons, *B. garinii* in four and *B. afzelii* in one. All patients presented with an arthritis. However, the occurrence of the different species is not representative, because PCR's are mostly requested on intra-articular liquid samples for patients with arthritis, which is mainly associated with an infection with *B. burgdorferi* s.s.. The most frequent species in Europe is *B. afzelii*, causing more skin manifestations.
- Information on a link with a tick bite (date or place) is available for 86 patients (19%), which is a marked increase compared to previous years (2% in 2015). The reported interval between the bite and the (first) positive test result ranged between 14 days to 18 years (median of 12 weeks).

¹ Results of the NRC, consisting of two laboratories and therefore not geographically representative for the whole country

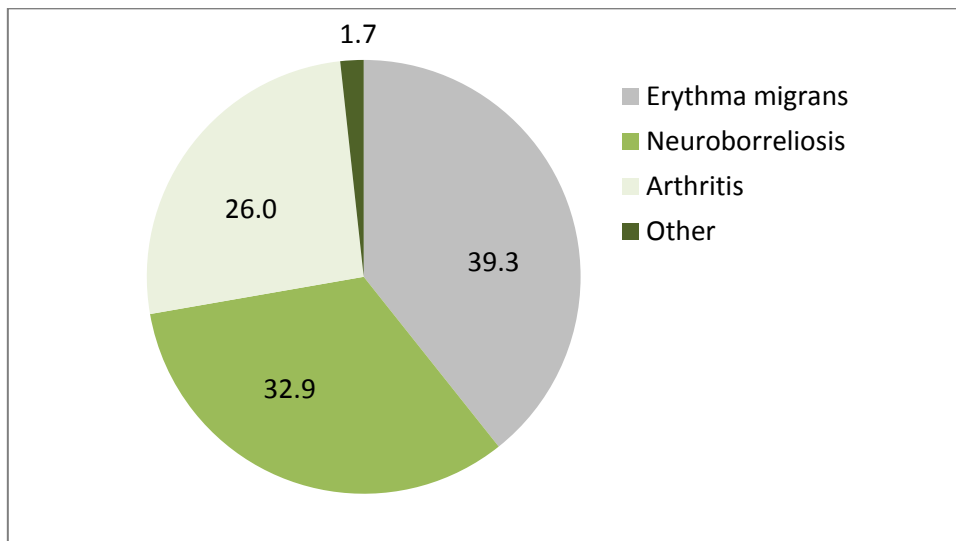
Number of tests performed and results in percentage (n=2,520)



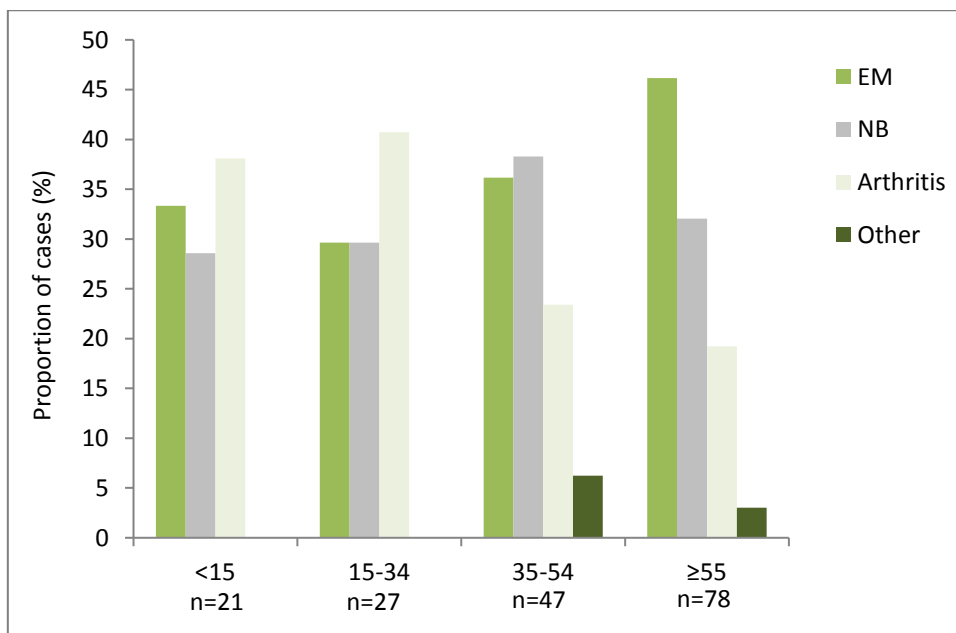
Type of specimen sent for diagnostics in percentage (n=2,492)



Clinical presentation in % (n=173)



Clinical presentation by age group (n=173)



EM: Erythema migrans

NB: Neuroborreliosis

National reference center for *Borrelia* spp.

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