

Publication Alert: IDSA Review Hearing Report—Lipstick on a Pig

To the Editor—Truth in science is established through open debate in an independent process. The scientific process fails when one side of a debate sets the rules, controls the arena, and ensures that its viewpoint prevails. Sadly, this is what the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) has done in the “vindication” of its beleaguered 2006 Lyme disease guidelines described in the final report of the Lyme Disease Review Panel [1].

The letter makes the point that the process was run by the IDSA, that the panel was selected by the IDSA (7 of 8 were members of the IDSA), that the chair of the panel was a past president of the IDSA. Hence, the process was anything but “independent”. Imagine a jury trial where the defendant selects a jury of friends. The letter concludes that the role of a medical society is not to “call the science” according to the vote of a biased panel that represents one side of the debate and whose guidelines are under attack. This latter represents a clear cut organizational conflict of interest.

You can dress it up any way you want to. It’s just lipstick on a pig.

Johnson, L. and R.B. Stricker, Final report of the Lyme disease review panel of the infectious diseases society of america: a pyrrhic victory? Clin Infect Dis, 2010. 51(9): p. 1108-9; author reply 1109-1.

You can follow additional comments on Lyme policy at www.lymepolicywonk.org. You can contact Lorraine Johnson, JD, MBA at lbjohnson@lymedisease.org.