

Tick Talk: How Researchers Are Using Online Search Behavior to Understand Tick Prevention

Featuring: Dr. Lauri Baker and Cheng-Xian Yang



Main Ideas

- Dr. Baker's tick research is a collaboration with the Southeastern Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases. Her role focuses on the social science aspect related to ticks and public health.
- Contrary to popular belief, ticks can be a year-round issue. With potential bites even in cooler months, it is important to utilize tick protection during every season.
- Cheng-Xian Yang's research on online behavior related to ticks looked into Google Trends and Twitter engagement. Visual aids are found to significantly increase engagement, while URLs are less effective.
- Effective communication strategies for tick prevention are crucial. Collaborations with health organizations and using targeted advertisements are potential ways to raise awareness and educate the public.
- The goal of this research is to understand public perceptions around ticks and tick-borne diseases, empowering individuals to take control of their health.

Discussion Questions

1. The podcast mentions concerns about specific tick species. What are the potential health risks associated with ticks, particularly the Lone Star tick and the Asian Longhorned tick? How might these risks impact different populations?
2. Why do you think there is a misconception that ticks are only a problem in certain seasons? How can this misconception be addressed to promote year-round awareness?
3. In what ways can online behavior, such as Google searches and social media engagement, provide insights into public health concerns? Are there any limitations to this approach?
4. Consider the overall goal of the research, which is to empower people to take control of their health. How can research on ticks and other health issues contribute to empowering individuals and communities?

Tips from the Speaker

Stay up to date on potential health risks year-round.

Science communicators should emphasize the use of visuals when distributing information to the public.

Other Resources

<https://piecenter.com/ticktalk/>

<https://sercoevbd-flgateway.org/>

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