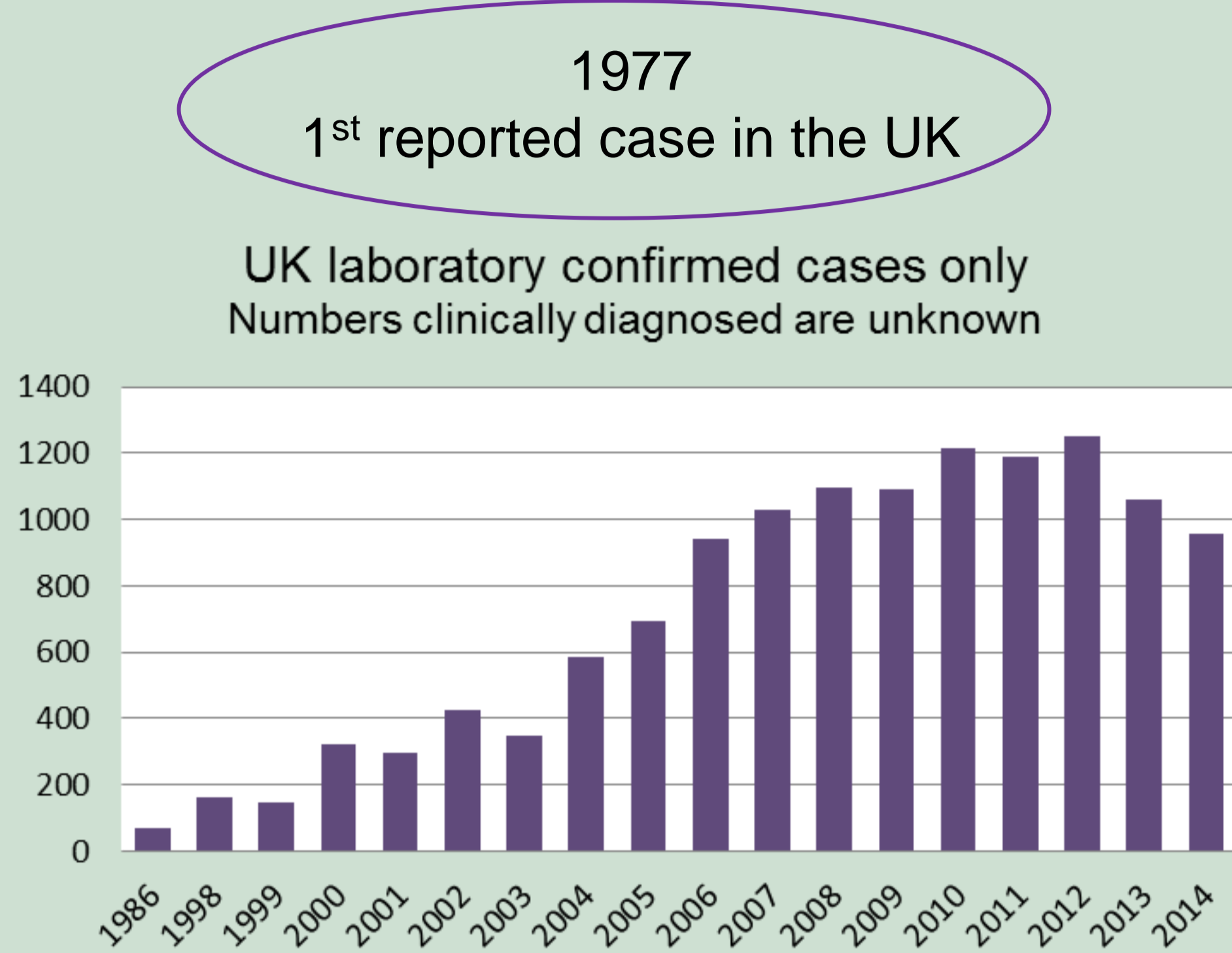


Lyme borreliosis

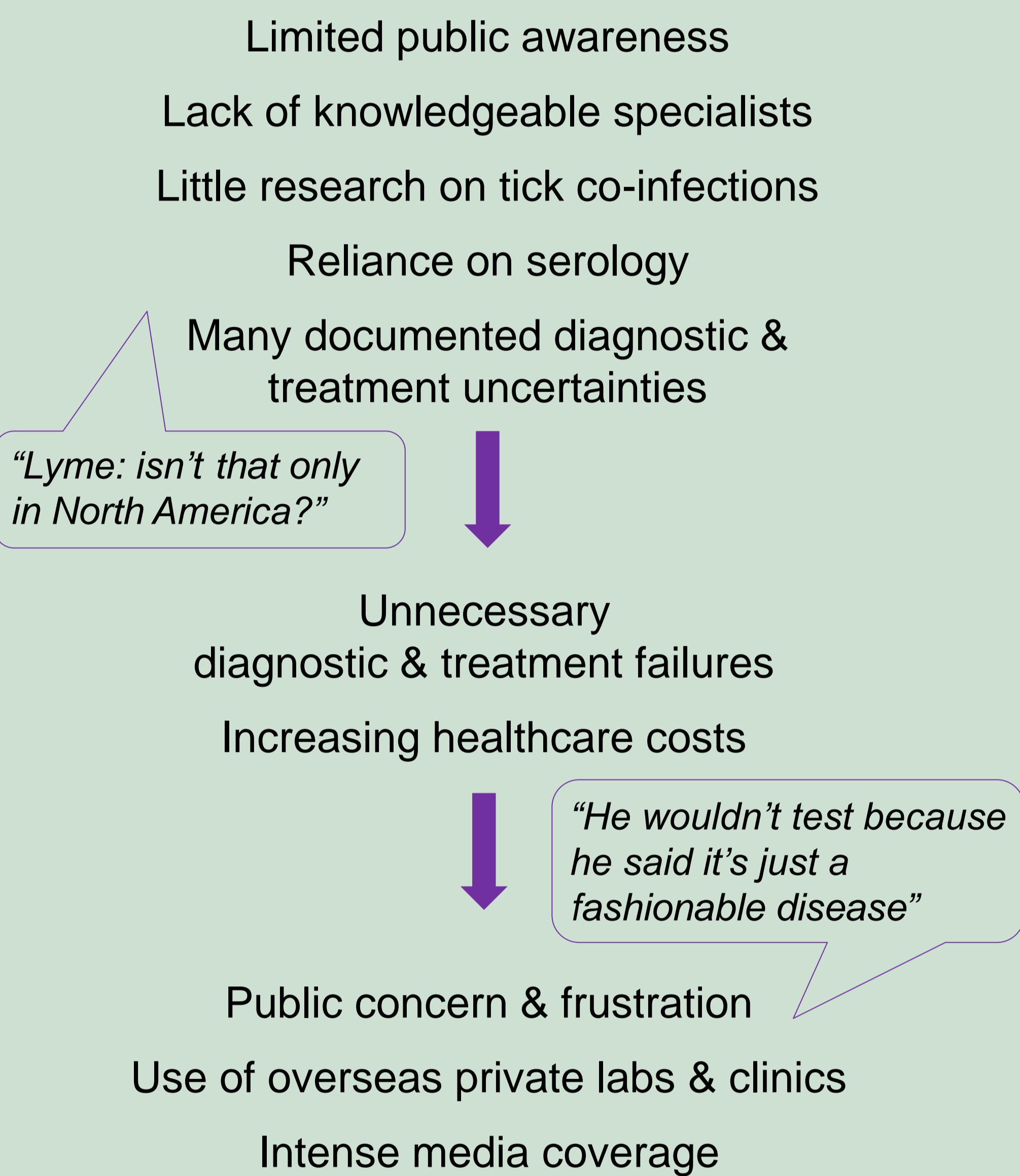
A model for improved diagnosis

Sandra Pearson^a & Stella Huyshe-Shires^b

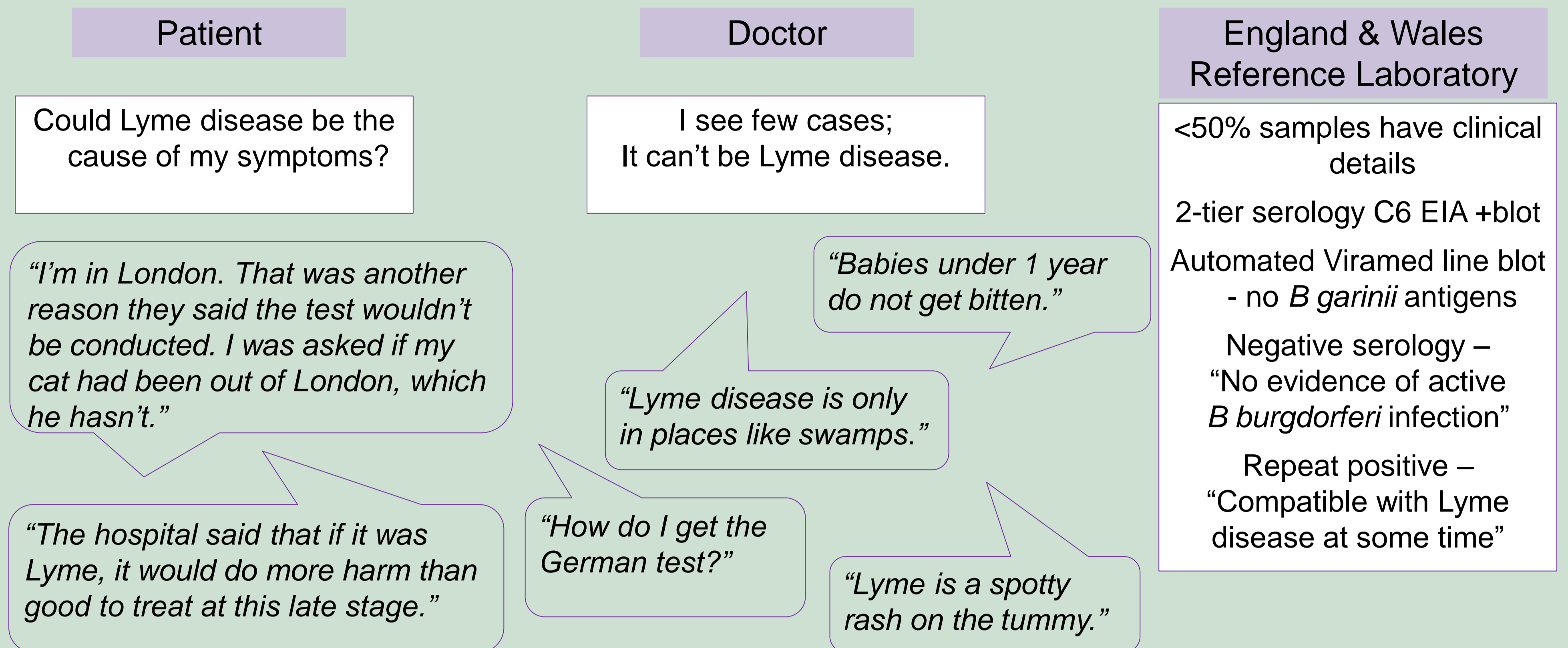
Introduction and background



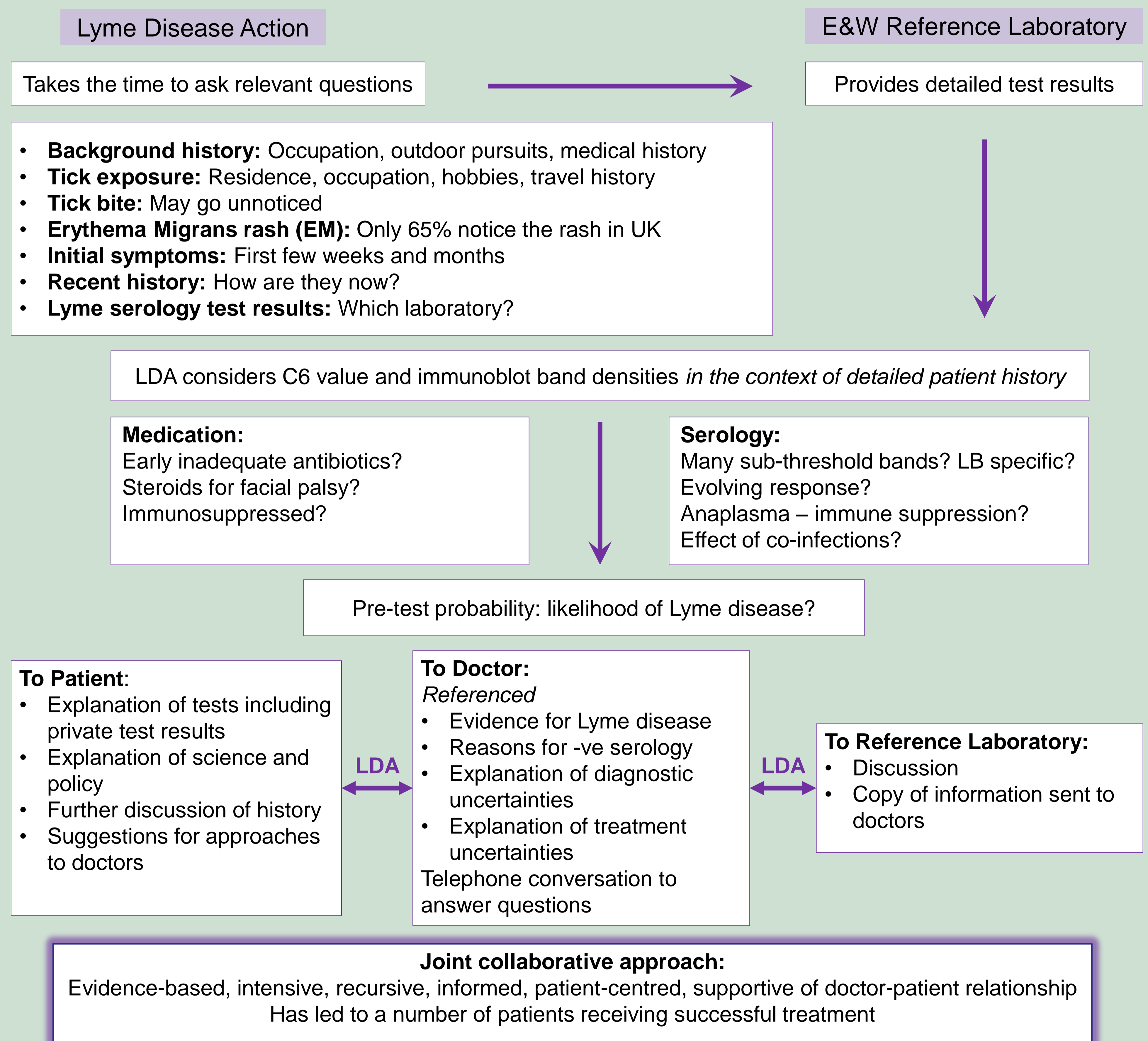
An emerging zoonotic disease in the UK



Historic diagnostic pathway in the UK



A collaborative approach



The information you provided was invaluable in helping me understand the issues involved and giving me confidence to address these issues with the GP, because of the credibility of the information.

Method

Lyme Disease Action (LDA) is a not-for-profit patient organisation founded in response to the lack of quality information in the UK on tick-borne diseases.

To assist both patients and doctors, LDA established a formal email help line to enable patients and doctors to request case specific information.

- Confidential email ticket system via secure server
- Operates 365 days/year including evenings
- Wide range of questions and queries
- 2 volunteers: establishing facts, giving information, refining questions
- Input from Medical Director
- On-line reference library of >1300 papers
- > 1,000 callers/year and rising
- 10 – 20 open tickets daily
- Medics helpdesk responds to clinicians' queries

LDA has developed a working relationship with the Lyme Borreliosis reference laboratory run by Public Health England. This includes an arrangement to enable access to detailed test results and case based discussions.

The aim is to combine relevant clinical history with detailed test results and with knowledge from research papers. This enables a more informed approach to an individual's diagnosis and treatment.

Conclusion

The working relationship between patient, GP and laboratory, with LDA as the central hub, enables a more detailed analysis of a complex, poorly understood disease history. LDA has the knowledge and time to ask the necessary questions and formulate a comprehensive case for clinical discussion and consideration.

This integrative approach openly acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses of serology testing in Lyme borreliosis diagnostics and supports a pragmatic approach to medical treatment. It has resulted in a number of patients obtaining a diagnosis and treatment with a successful outcome. Additional benefits include the fostering in doctors of an increased understanding of tick-borne disease and a reduction in patients' alienation and frustration.