

## Pain free golden staph treatment cleared for use in remote communities

**3 May 2018**

A northern Australian research team has provided reassuring support for the continued use of an oral treatment option for patients with skin infections, finding that there has been inaccurate reporting of resistance to the recommended antibiotic.

Led by Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies), the findings that isolates previously reported as resistant are in fact still susceptible to the oral antibiotic have recently been published in the journal, *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*.

In northern Australia, especially in remote communities, *Staphylococcus aureus*, otherwise known as golden staph, carries a high burden of disease. Eight out of 10 children living in remote Indigenous communities acquire skin sores, as a result of staph and strep infections, at least once before their first birthday.

The ground-breaking study, the Skin Sore Trial, led by Menzies and released in 2014, discovered a pain-free oral treatment option for patients which was more conducive to uptake than the previous intramuscular injection. The oral antibiotic, called trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (Bactrim), has been recommended for treatment of skin sores since.

However, recent reports that strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* may have been resistant to Bactrim, has led to a concern about ongoing prescribing of the oral antibiotic.

According to Menzies' and Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity infectious diseases specialist, Associate Professor Steven Tong and Menzies researcher Dr Tegan Harris, the investigation into the possible resistance to Bactrim was critical to ensure appropriate treatment was being offered to children.

"During the Skin Sore Trial, we detected that some of the golden staph from skin sores were reported as resistant to Bactrim with standard laboratory testing. When we tried to confirm this resistance with additional testing, we were surprised to find that the staph could be easily killed with Bactrim," Dr Harris said.

"We consistently found in two laboratories and by several different techniques that the staph was actually susceptible and not resistant to Bactrim. The implications are that current recommendations to treat skin infections with Bactrim continue to be appropriate," Assoc Prof Tong said.

The paper can be viewed [here](#). For more information about the Skin Sore Trial, visit our website [here](#).

The study was a collaboration between:

- Menzies School of Health Research
- Princess Margaret Hospital for Children
- Wesfarmers Centre for Vaccines and Infectious Diseases
- Telethon Kids Institute
- Charles Darwin University

- University of the Sunshine Coast
- The Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity (Doherty Institute).

ENDS

**Media contact:**

Paul Dale, senior communications officer

Phone: 0439 108 754 or (08) 8946 8485 | Email: [communications@menzies.edu.au](mailto:communications@menzies.edu.au)

**Menzies School of Health Research**

Menzies School of Health Research is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. Menzies has a history of over 30 years of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Indigenous communities across northern and central Australia. Menzies collaborates to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.