

'Drink medicine' works as well as injection to treat skin sores

October 12 2017, by Teresa Belcher, Particle

When a child is sick, they are never happy to have a painful needle injection. So being able to take a drink medicine instead is definitely a good thing.

This is now the case for the treatment of [skin](#) sores or 'school sores'.

Bugs causing nasty, infectious skin sores

These nasty sores are caused by two types of bugs: *Streptococcus* and *Staphylococcus*

And they affect around [160 million children around the world at any one time](#).

Worse, it seems remote Aboriginal communities in Australia have the highest prevalence in the world—affecting [almost one in two kids](#).

Dr Asha Bowen, [scientist at the Telethon Kids Institute](#), says knowing this was the driver for her PhD to reduce the burden.

She says the sores are highly infectious and usually start from a scratch, insect bite or even from scabies infections.

It then turns into a pus-filled blister, which pops and forms a scab, taking a few weeks to heal.

"If these sores don't get treated, lots of more serious health problems can happen, for example, blood poisoning and bone or kidney or [rheumatic heart disease](#)," Asha says.

Biggest skin sore trial ever

As part of her PhD, Asha undertook the biggest [skin sore trial](#) ever.

This involved a short course of oral antibiotics to over 500 kids with skin sores from remote communities in the Northern Territory.

The oral antibiotic Bactrim was chosen.

The first reason was that it tastes good and is available in a liquid form.

And secondly, it is also able to fight the resistant form of *Staphylococcus*. This antibiotic-resistant bacteria, known as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), is genetically different from other strains. It has become resistant to antibiotics, making it very hard to treat.

Asha says it was also the first time such a trial had been done in a remote context.

'Drink medicine' works as well as injections

The trial showed that 3 days of 'drink medicine' twice a day works just as well as a single injection.

"Bactrim and the needle medicine work just as well as each other," Asha says.

"So that's great news for kids who don't have to have a needle every time

they have skin sores."

Asha says the next study she is working on is the [SToP trial](#).

This stands for 'See, Treat, Prevent [skin sores](#) and scabies'.

"It's planned for the Kimberley to start early next year and will involve around 1000 children in the study over about 3 years," Asha says.

As recognition of her work, Asha was recently named [2017 Woodside Early Career Scientist of the Year](#) at the Premier's Science Awards.

This article first appeared on [Particle](#), a science news website based at Scitech, Perth, Australia. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by Particle

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