For Immediate release

Media Release

New research finds antibiotic use may put some children at risk of dangerous bacteria

Although antibiotics are used to treat life-threatening infections such as meningitis and pneumonia, they may also put some children at risk of acquiring new bacteria.

Infectious Disease Paediatrician A/Prof Penelope Bryant will be presenting on the results of new research at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases (ASID), on 30 March.

The early findings show for the first time that antibiotic use in children can disrupt the bacteria in their noses. A similar pattern of disruption correlates with acquiring Staphylococcus aureus (golden Staph infections).

A/Prof Bryant says “Your nose is a hothouse of bacteria, and some of these can cause severe infections if they manage to enter the body. These results suggest that in some children antibiotics might make them more likely to acquire these bacteria.”

While most infections caused by golden Staph can be treated with antibiotics, there are antibiotic resistant strains of the bacteria that do not respond to treatment, such as methicillin-resistant S. aureus (MRSA).

Antibiotics prescribed for unrelated infections, may be driving golden Staph bacteria to become resistant.

ASID President Cheryl Jones says “Antibiotic resistance is a major concern in Australia and around the world. This research has potentially important implications for understanding how resistant bacteria emerge and evolve.”

A/Prof Bryant says “The next step is to determine whether these changes can be prevented. We don’t want to stop using antibiotics – and parents should still give them to their children as prescribed – we just need to be careful how we use them, and work out ways to prevent their unwanted effects.”

****ENDS****
INTERVIEWS AND PHOTOS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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A/Prof Penelope Bryant
A/Prof Penelope Bryant is a Consultant Paediatrician specialising in Infectious Diseases, working at the Royal Children's Hospital and doing research at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and the University of Melbourne. Her particular areas of clinical and research interest include the use and misuse of antibiotics in hospital and in the home.
**ASID President Cheryl Jones**

Prof Cheryl Jones is the ASID President, Stevenson Professor of Paediatrics and Head of Department at the University of Melbourne, and Infectious Diseases Consultant at the Royal Children's Hospital.

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**About the Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases (ASID)**

The Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases is the peak professional body for infectious diseases and microbiology in the region. Membership encompasses Infectious Diseases Physicians, Clinical Microbiologists, Scientists, Infection Control Practitioners, Public Health Physicians, Sexual Health Physicians, Veterinarians and others eminent in the field of infectious diseases.

**About the ASID Annual Scientific Meeting**

The ASID Annual Scientific Meeting is the leading Australasian meeting for adult and paediatric infectious disease and clinical microbiology specialists. The meeting is taking place in the Blue Mountains this year. The conference is an ideal opportunity for connecting clinicians, microbiologists and other health professions with a common interest in infectious diseases, and provides a friendly forum for the exchange of scientific advances in the prevention, diagnosis and management of clinical infectious diseases. International speakers offer expert global perspectives, and Australasian research and expertise is highlighted with keynote lectures, proffered papers, symposia and educational workshops.