



MEDIA RELEASE

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Study results show K12 probiotic helps prevent rheumatic fever

As the Government launches a new rheumatic fever awareness campaign this week, results from a recent European clinical trial show that the daily use of a Kiwi-developed oral probiotic, [BLIS K12](#)™, is associated with a significant and ongoing reduction in throat infections and other streptococcal diseases among children.¹

Rheumatic fever is a complication of a throat infection caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes* bacteria. Left untreated, the bacteria can cause serious health problems, including heart failure or heart valve damage. Children and young people from Pacific and Māori communities are the most vulnerable.

The Government's \$65 million programme to reduce the number of new rheumatic fever cases by two-thirds by June 2017 is falling behind its target and the goal might not be reached till 2019 or later.

BLIS K12 or *Streptococcus salivarius* K12 is the world's first probiotic for the mouth and throat and is hostile to the growth of *Streptococcus pyogenes*, the most important bacterial cause of throat infections in humans.

"BLIS K12 populates the mouth and throat with a beneficial strain of *Streptococcus salivarius* which not only crowds out the bad bacteria, but produces antimicrobial peptides that add a level of protection against them coming back. As this latest study shows, it is effective in preventing streptococcal throat infections. We believe this probiotic should be considered, alongside other strategies, as one way of reducing streptococcal sore throats and the possible complications such as rheumatic fever in our communities," explains BLIS Technologies chief technology officer, Dr John Hale.

The study, published in the *Drug Healthcare and Patient Safety Journal* by a team from Velleja Research led by Dr Francesco Di Pierro in Italy, ran an observational study of 124 schoolchildren in 2014. The treated group of 48 children with a recent history of recurrent pharyngeal streptococcal disease (sore throats) received a daily oral dose of BLIS K12 for 90 days. A control group of 76 children with no recent history of sore throats who were not given BLIS K12 was also monitored.

During the trial the incidence of throat infections (streptococcal pharyngo-tonsillitis) was reduced by 90 percent in the treated group compared to the previous (pre-treatment) year and was lower than the untreated low risk control group.

The authors reported that the results agree with previous findings that BLIS K12 offers benefits to children in reducing streptococcal disease along with some other throat and ear infections.²

BLIS K12 is present in ThroatGuard Lozenges and ToddlerProtect powder, both of which are available over-the-counter from pharmacies and online at www.blis.co.nz

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References

1. Di Pierro F¹, Colombo M², Zanvit A³, Rottoli AS⁴. *Positive clinical outcomes derived from using Streptococcus salivarius K12 to prevent streptococcal pharyngotonsillitis in children: a pilot investigation.* Drug Healthc Patient Saf. 2016 Nov 21;8:77-81. eCollection 2016.
2. F. Di Pierro, M. Colombo, M.G. Giuliani, M.L. Danza, I. Basile, T. Bollani, A.M. Conti, A. Zanvit, A.S. Rottoli. *Effect of administration of Streptococcus salivarius K12 on the occurrence of streptococcal pharyngo-tonsillitis, scarlet fever and acute otitis media in 3 years old children.* **Eur Rev Med Pharmacol Sci** Year: 2016 Vol. 20 - N. 21 Pages: 4601-4606.

About BLIS Technologies

Blis Technologies Limited was formed to commercialise advanced probiotic strains that work outside the gut. Professor John Tagg of the Microbiology and Immunology Department at the University of Otago gathered and extensively catalogued a collection of more than 2000 of these bacteria over a period of more than 30 years. Blis Technologies acquired the rights to this unique collection of bacteria from the University of Otago and in July 2001, the company was listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange. In the time since its listing, the company has developed consumer products for throat health, halitosis (bad breath), immune support and teeth and gum health.

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