

Human trials for Streptococcus A vaccine

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Griffith University's Institute for Glycomics has launched human trials for a vaccine against Streptococcus A, the germ that causes rheumatic fever.

Severe damage to a patient's heart is just one of the possible long term consequences of [rheumatic fever](#). Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has twice had heart surgery to repair damage suffered from rheumatic fever when he was a child.

Professor Michael Good, Principal Research Leader at the Institute for Glycomics has devoted more than 20 years to beating this disease. The key to the vaccine lies in targeting a particular protein found on the surface of Strep A bacteria.

"Previous studies have shown that the vaccine induces a very effective immune response in rabbits and mice," Professor Good said.

"The next important step is to ensure that it is safe and does not cause any adverse effects in people, in particular that the vaccine itself doesn't cause any [heart damage](#)."

Professor James McCarthy, Head of the Infectious Diseases program at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research will carry out the year-long trial involving 20 healthy adults.

"Participants will be monitored very closely for the next 12 months," Professor McCarthy said.

"Each volunteer will be given two doses of the [vaccine](#) and we'll be watching carefully for any signs of heart problems."

Rheumatic fever is a major issue in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in [northern Australia](#).

"Infection rates in these remote Queensland communities are among the highest in the world. Nine out of every ten sufferers in this State are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people," Professor Good said.

Provided by Griffith University

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