

# Taking antibiotic tablets for spots: is there a problem?

Do you think bugs might develop more ways to evade antibiotics if we use lots of them to treat acne?

## **The Project**

Antibiotics are vital for the treatment of infections caused by bacteria. Consequently, antibiotics are essential lifesaving drugs. But, in recent years more people are finding that their infections don't get better with antibiotics. This is because the bugs that cause infections are adapting to evade antibiotics. We call this antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance is a huge problem. If antibiotics stop working, then we can't treat infections.

Many teenagers get acne or 'spots' and doctors often try to help them with antibiotic tablets, sometimes for many weeks or even months. However, sometimes the spots come back after the antibiotics are stopped and the antibiotic course might be repeated. Our study looks at how the antibiotics given for acne might contribute to antibiotic resistance.

The idea for our project came directly from what people – including acne sufferers, members of the public, nurses, doctors, pharmacists and researchers – thought was important to understand about the treatment of acne. However, it is vital that people with acne, or their carers, continue to be involved in the project. We want your help to ensure that we address the questions that matter to you and that we communicate our findings effectively.

In the first session, we want you to look at two studies that we are already working on to see what their results mean to you. In one of these studies, we've collected all the information we can find from already published research to investigate what is already known about the use of antibiotic tablets for acne and antimicrobial resistance. Our other study aims to help us see how big the problem of antimicrobial resistance from antibiotic use for acne might be by describing how antibiotics for acne are currently prescribed in the UK.

We'll also be asking for more hands-on help towards the end of the project. We'll be aiming to invite 8-10 people with acne, and carers of those with acne, to help us communicate the findings of our study to the public. We will create posters and information communicated via social media to make sure that what we communicate is accessible to those who it matters to.

## **Requirements**

Our only requirement is that you have, or have had, acne and/or cared for someone with acne. We will provide training to help you interpret our findings if needed and support will be available.

## **Patient and Public involvement**

We want people who have suffered with or currently have acne or those who care for people with acne to play a key role in the interpretation of our research. This is so we can answer questions that matter and ensure that findings are communicated effectively and accessibly.

*How will people be involved in this research?*

We will present our research findings and ask you what you think about them.

Typical questions may include:

- Are we missing anything?
- Can you see any problems with the research?
- How do we best communicate our findings to people who have acne?

*How will the involvement contribute to our work and what impact might it have?*

Your contributions will help us design and interpret our research and help direct further research proposals. We would value your input on how we communicate the results of our research on social media platforms like Twitter.

Your contributions will be recognised with acknowledgment in journal articles that are modified, or guided, by the discussion in the focus group.

*What is the time commitment of the involvement?*

We are planning 2 meetings in 2021, one in April/May and the second in November/December. Each meeting will last 45 minutes to 1 hour. We might need you to read preparatory materials beforehand, and we will also ask you to offer feedback after the meetings.

The work can be done from home, you will require a laptop or tablet device and access to the internet. All our meetings will be on Zoom.

*When will the involvement start?*

April/May 2021.

*Who else will be involved?*

A team of researchers based at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Contact

If you are interested in becoming involved with the work, or have any questions, please contact Ketaki Bhate ([Ketaki.bhate@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Ketaki.bhate@lshtm.ac.uk)).