

Buruli ulcer treatment clinical trial – seeking participants

For Health Practitioners

Buruli ulcer, caused by *Mycobacterium ulcerans*, is on the increase in our region and continues to spread within the suburbs of Geelong, the Bellarine Peninsula and the Surf Coast. As the peak months for lesions to present to health practitioners is upon us (June to November), the Barwon Health Infectious Diseases Unit would like to let you know about a world-first clinical trial to test the effectiveness of a new specific antibiotic called Telacebec in the treatment of Buruli Ulcer.

Most Buruli Ulcers currently require up to 8 weeks of treatment with a combination of dual antibiotic therapy. Current antibiotic treatment is long, requires two different antibiotics, has a high incidence of side-effects, and may cause serious interactions with people's other medications. Additionally, even with antibiotics, most ulcers take at least 4-6 months to heal, requiring costly dressings, regular medical reviews and significant time and inconvenience for the patients.

Through this clinical trial, which is supported by the World Health Organisation, the aim is for Buruli Ulcer treatment to be significantly shorter (reduced to 2-4 weeks), require only one antibiotic, be safer and more tolerable, have less drug interactions and result in significantly shorter healing times for BU lesions. It is hoped through our study that the use of Telacebec monotherapy will become the world recognised standard of care for Buruli ulcer, and also lead to improvements in treatment for Tuberculosis and Leprosy.

If you have a patient newly diagnosed with a Buruli ulcer the Barwon Health Infectious Diseases team would appreciate the opportunity to offer them the option of being treated with this promising new antibiotic in the current study.

Therefore please consider referring your patient to the Infectious Diseases Service at Barwon Health (via UHG OPD or calling the infectious diseases Registrar through UHG switchboard on 4215 0000 or 0466170075) and we will arrange an urgent review. Importantly, however, if referring for care, please do not commence them on Buruli ulcer antibiotic treatment prior to their appointment as this will preclude them from entering the study.

Further information can also be obtained through the Clinical Trials Team at the Adrian Costa Clinical Trials Centre on 03 4215 2878.