

Australia discovers new solution to fight chronic middle ear infections

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Chronic middle ear infections resulting in hearing loss is a major problem



Bacteria found in children's upper respiratory systems could help fight chronic middle ear infections, the leading cause of preventable hearing loss and deafness.

The University of Queensland's researchers said this discovery helped explain a long-held mystery, while providing hope for potential treatments.

"We've been puzzled for years now, trying to work out why some children never develop chronic ear disease, despite being in a high-risk category for contracting it.

By focusing on the microbiomes in the upper respiratory tracts of disease-resistant kids, we could investigate the ecological networks of bacterial interactions that seemed to be working together to protect against the condition.

It was clear that these two groups of bacteria needed to not only be present, but to be interacting with each other, to provide protection from middle ear infections", said the Australian researchers.

The researchers are hoping to use this information to figure out what the exact mechanism of protection is, and then mimic it in the very young children, as a therapy or a preventative measure.