Evolving strep may lead to vaccine

Some strains develop aggressive toxins

By Lauran Neergaard

WASHINGTON — The same bacteria that cause simple strep throat sometimes trigger bloodstream or even flesh-eating infections instead, and over the years, some researchers have uncovered how some strains of this bug evolved to become more aggressive. The bacterial sleuthing may offer clues for developing a vaccine against group A streptococcus, and for detecting and fighting outbreaks.

The reason one person recovers easily from strep throat and another gets an invasive infection has to do with individual immune systems, but Monday’s research found genetic changes can play the game to produce coming more virulent.

“These increased amounts of toxins are like throwing an accelerant onto the fire,” said Dr. James M. Musser of the Houston Methodist Research Institute, who led the project being reported in the Journal of Clinical Investigation.

Group A strep causes 600 million illnesses worldwide a year and is responsible for an estimated 600,000 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC said the bacteria can cause pneumonia, kidney infections, meningitis, sepsis, toxic shock syndrome, and death. There is no vaccine for strep, and more aggressive, rare forms of infections can be particularly dangerous.

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“When you put that music on, you don’t know what’s going on with their heart, mind and soul. Music opens all three. They’re remembering their childhood, they’re remembering sock hops, dances they had to do in high school. They remember who they are.”

By JP Maloney

Music Is Our Weapon co-founder

The man dancing and belting out “Blue Suede Shoes” was no Elvis Presley. He didn’t have the drawling musicality or the hip-thrusting dance moves. His blue down jacket, guarding against the room’s air-conditioned chill, was no spangled white jumpsuit. His hair had gone white long ago. The lyrics were unintelligible, the shuffle stilted, but the performance was riveting. Hours earlier, Philip Caruso, 67, who has dementia, had been sitting silent and still by himself in a corner of the Cedar Hill Healthcare Center rec room. Behind the transformation: a pair of headphones and a stack of music questionnaires, the volunteers are on a quest: to find the songs that move them.

“Songs of hope

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Music

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Over the course of a few visits to the nursing home, Caruso and the two other people who, depending on “the person isn’t aware of it, their mind can be triggered like Alzheimer’s,” said Robert Krout, a professor at Southern Methodist University. “Music therapy especially “has oriented and active, in incorporating getting to interact with others and have some speech again. Depending on “the person’s situation at that time, what music is used and how that music is used,” music can also be used for calming purposes. “In some cases, for example in Alzheimer’s patients, who are often confused, anxious or agitated, Barbra Streisand, Robert Krout, a professor at Southern Methodist University. “Music therapy especially “has emotionless wonderful medium in our lives,” she said. “I get my own radio “Yes, it does. They hear that music, it brings down generationally. We listen to music on our phones all day, even if you haven’t heard that song since, since it was part of that relationship.

On that recent Saturday, Rodriguez sent Young away from Cedar Hill with some drawings – a gift. “My heart is full,” she said. “I hope you’ll visit us again.” Rodriguez said as the volunteers began filling out the forms: “Bring more music.”

We’ll be putting together packages that will distribute to those in need.

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