

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **New remedy for rotavirus' hefty price tag**

Two vaccines approved this year by the Therapeutic Goods Administration could help stem the tide of rotavirus-related acute gastroenteritis in young children in Australia.

Rotavirus costs the Australian health care system \$30 million a year, confirms a research study published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

The research team, led by Prof. John Carlin from Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital, found that rotavirus causes 10,000 hospital admissions every year for children aged five and under, at the cost of about \$2,000 per admission.

Rotavirus also sends more than 20,000 children under five to emergency departments and more than 100,000 to GPs every year.

Prof. Carlin says the two vaccines, Rotarix and Rotateq, are both considered highly effective, with more than 85% prevention of serious cases of the disease.

The oral vaccines are administered in the first six months of life. They are already available to parents wishing to protect their children from rotavirus-related infections. The researchers say that it is now time to consider whether public funding of these vaccines is warranted to protect the wider community.

"Both vaccines have been widely recommended as effective and valuable additions to the immunisation schedule. We believe that Government authorities should take our findings into account and move quickly to assess whether the vaccines should be publicly funded, if appropriate pricing can be negotiated with the manufacturers."

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### **For more information about this research, contact the research author:**

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