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Claire Smith, Menzies Research Institute *Antimalarial treatment research*



Hi, I'm Claire and I am in my third and final year of a PhD with the Menzies Research Institute studying a novel therapy against malaria.

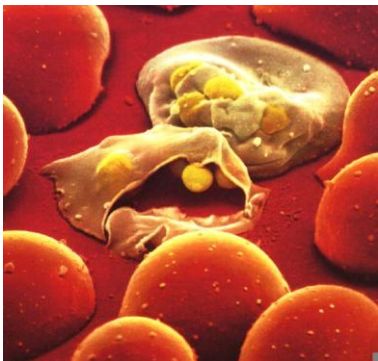
What interested you in science as a child?

Growing up on a farm was a great place for exploring nature and probably encouraged my curiosity about how things worked. I have always been interested in health and disease and in grade 10 at high school I went on work experience at the Menzies Research Institute and had the best week seeing all the different projects that were being run – from large-scale

population surveys to trying to find the genes involved in multiple sclerosis. I knew then I wanted to go onto uni and study something in this area and I chose to do a Bachelor of Biotechnology because of the wide variety of interesting subjects you get to do before choosing which area to focus on.

What is your current research project?

The traditional antimalarial treatments that target parasite enzymes, such as chloroquine, are now virtually useless due to the development of resistance by the parasite. The lack of adequate effective antimalarials, particularly in Africa, has escalated to the point now where malaria is causing almost 1 million deaths every year in Africa alone and most of these are children. My PhD project involves investigating a new type of therapy against malaria targeting host enzymes in the red blood cell that the parasite scavenges. This is a novel approach to antimalarial treatment and may avoid the rapid development of resistance common the current generation of antimalarial drugs.



What are your future aspirations?

Finish my PhD! I have 10 months left then I would love to get a research position overseas.

Find out more about parasites at: <http://parasite.org.au/parasite/introduction/index.html>, and learn about the Menzies Research Institute at: www.menzies.utas.edu.au

www.youngtassiescientists.com