**Group A streptococcal pharyngitis**

Lok-Yee Joyce Li,1,2 Shin-Yi Wang,3 Cheng-Yu Tsai,4 Cheng-Jung Wu 5,6

1Department of Medicine, Shin Kong Wu Ho Su Memorial Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan
2School of Medicine, Taipei Medical University College of Medicine, Taipei, Taiwan
3National Taiwan University Hospital Hsinchu Branch, Hsinchu, Taiwan
4Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Imperial College London, London, UK
5Department of Otolaryngology, Taipei Medical University Hospital Hsinchu Branch, Ministry of Health and Welfare, New Taipei City, Taiwan
6National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu, Taiwan

**DESCRIPTION**

A 6-year-old boy presented to the emergency department with severe throat pain and raging fever for 1 day. The patient was unable to eat solids foods because of pain. On physical examination, cervical node lymphadenopathy, a swollen uvula and palatal petechiae were noted (figure 1). The rapid strep test is done to help quickly determine whether a sore throat is caused by a streptococcal infection. The result of a throat culture is compatible with the diagnosis of group A streptococcal pharyngitis. The patient was treated with penicillin and topical analgesia. The primary reason to treat this self-limited illness with antibiotics is to reduce the risk of complications such as rheumatic fever, meningitis, endocarditis and retropharyngeal abscesses.1–3 Antibiotic therapy also reduces the risk of suppurative complications of streptococcal infection.4 A Cochrane review of randomised, placebo-controlled trials showed that antibiotic therapy significantly reduced the risks of acute otitis media and peritonsillar abscesses.5 Treatment with antibiotics is effective if given within 9 days of the onset of symptoms.

**Learning points**

- Treat this self-limited illness with antibiotics which could reduce the risk of complications such as rheumatic fever, meningitis, endocarditis and retropharyngeal abscesses.
- Common symptoms include cervical node lymphadenopathy, a swollen uvula and palatal petechiae.

**Figure 1** Palatal petechiae were noted.