

British find genetic code of 'superbug'

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British scientists have mapped the genetic code of a bacterium that is the leading cause of hospital-acquired infections in developed countries.

The discovery, made by a research team led by the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute near Cambridge, is outlined in an article published in Nature Genetics, the Times of London reported Monday.

Researchers say finding the complete genome sequence of the "superbug" clostridium difficile is the first step toward developing new ways of treating and preventing infection.

The pathogen, which causes more than 44,000 infections in Britain each year, is usually treatable only with metronidazole and vancomycin.

Scientists say it acquires resistance to antibiotics by swapping genes with other bacteria

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