

# Antibiotics-resistant gulls worry scientists

June 18 2009

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The resistance pattern for antibiotics in gulls is the same as in humans, and a new study by Uppsala University researchers shows that nearly half of Mediterranean gulls in southern France have some form of resistance to antibiotics. The study is being published today in the journal *PLoS One*.

Bacteria that develop resistance to antibiotics are one of society's greatest future threats and are having a major impact on our ability to use various medical treatments. The spread of resistance is no longer a local problem in hospitals; antibiotic-resistant bacteria are also spreading to and throughout the environment.

The research team at the Uppsala University Department of Medical Pathology has studied the occurrence of antibiotics-resistant bacteria in Mediterranean gulls in southern France.

“Gulls have developed behaviors that entail closer and closer contact with us, and opportunities arise for the exchange of bacteria. This is why they are extremely interesting to study,” says Mirva Drobni, who directed the study.

The findings of the study show that nearly half of the birds carry some form of resistance to antibiotics, and a tenth of them carry ESBL-producing bacteria. These bacteria have the capacity to break down some of our most powerful and important antibiotics and furthermore have an ability to spread extremely rapidly. The researchers were able to show that the resistance pattern was the same among gulls and humans,

which indicates that human- and bird-borne bacteria and their resistance mechanisms are being mutually exchanged.

“These findings are worrisome as they also indicate a higher degree of resistance in [bacteria](#) from gulls than we see in humans in the same region. At present we don’t know whether they constitute merely a reservoir for [antibiotics](#) resistance or whether they are moreover a source of further dissemination to humans,” says Mirva Drobni.

Source: Uppsala University ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Antibiotics-resistant gulls worry scientists (2009, June 18) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-06-antibiotics-resistant-gulls-scientists.html>

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