

New study shows rise in drug resistance of dangerous infection in US hospitals

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A new study in the journal *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* reports a surge in drug-resistant strains of *Acinetobacter*, a dangerous type of bacteria that is becoming increasingly common in U.S. hospitals. This study is being posted online today and will appear in the journal's February print edition.

Acinetobacter infections attack patients in hospital intensive care units (ICUs) and others and have recently plagued soldiers returning home from the war in Iraq. These infections often appear as severe pneumonias or bloodstream infections, and require strong drugs to be treated, when they can be stopped at all.

Using data from 300 hospitals around the country, researchers at the Extending the Cure project analyzed trends in resistance to imipenem, an antibiotic often reserved as a last-line treatment. The study found that between 1999 and 2006, there was more than a 300% increase in the proportion of *Acinetobacter* cases resistant to the drug. Extending the Cure is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Pioneer Portfolio, which funds innovative ideas that may lead to breakthroughs in the future of health and health care.

"The findings are troubling because they suggest this bacteria is becoming resistant to nearly everything in our arsenal," said Ramanan Laxminarayan, the principal investigator of Extending the Cure, a project examining [antibiotic resistance](#) at the Washington, D.C. based think-tank Resources for the Future. "There is a lot of attention on

MRSA, but less on infections caused by bacteria like Acinetobacter for which there are fewer drugs in the development pipeline. While all [drug resistance](#) is of concern, it is particularly worrying in the case of bugs for which we have few treatment options."

To address this growing public health threat, the nation must adopt a comprehensive solution to the problem of antibiotic resistance, the researchers said. For example, we should institute more rigorous infection control on a regional basis. In addition, drug companies must be given incentives to develop novel antibiotics that can destroy these [resistant strains](#), according to authors.

Provided by Burness Communications

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