

France eyes tests for NDM-1 superbug

August 17 2010

France will start screening patients for the NDM-1 bacterium, an antibiotic-resistant superbug that has unleashed a health scare, a medical watchdog said on Tuesday.

Patients who have been treated in a foreign hospital and are being transferred to a French hospital for further treatment will be tested for the germ, he said.

"The French medical authorities will shortly announce that all patients who have been hospitalised abroad, regardless of the country, and repatriated to a French hospital, will be screened for NDM-1 bacteria," said Patrice Nordmann, a professor at the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm) who specialises in [antibiotic resistance](#).

"Recommendations will be made in the near future that will outline these measures," he told AFP by phone.

Nordmann, an advisor to the French health ministry, said his team had already developed a test for the NDM-1 germ.

He added that [France](#) had a long-established practice of testing intensive-care patients for antibiotic-resistant strains. Patients with the bacteria are then isolated to prevent infection to others.

The superbug comprises a bacterium containing an enzyme gene called New Delhi metallo-lactamase-1 (NDM-1) that makes it impervious to treatment by almost all antibiotics.

These include drugs known as carbapenems, which are often used as a last resort.

The alarm was sounded last week by a British journal, The [Lancet Infectious Diseases](#).

Researchers said they had identified dozens of cases among Britons who had travelled to South Asia for medical tourism.

Health tourists risked infection and the superbug could spread, they warned.

India's medical establishment reacted furiously to the study, accusing it of seeking to tar a fast-growing business.

Rich-world patients are flocking to India for operations ranging from facelifts to fertility treatments and open-heart surgery that cost in some cases only half that of western Europe.

On Friday, Brussels officials said a Belgian man became the first known fatality from NDM-1. The unnamed man had been hospitalised in Pakistan for a leg injury caused by a car accident, and died after being repatriated to a hospital in Belgium.

(c) 2010 AFP

Citation: France eyes tests for NDM-1 superbug (2010, August 17) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-08-france-eyes-ndm-superbug.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
