

Japan detects its first case of NDM-1 superbug

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Japan on Monday said it has detected its first case of an antibiotic-resistant "superbug" that surfaced in South Asia and has triggered a global health alert.

A hospital linked to the Dokkyo Medical University in Tochigi prefecture north of Tokyo detected a drug-resistant "superbug", a bacterium carrying the New Delhi metallo-lactamase-1 (NDM-1) gene, in a patient last year, a hospital official told AFP.

The case follows a warning from the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) last month calling on global health authorities to monitor the drug-resistant [superbug](#) that is believed to have spread from India.

"A patient who came home from India, in his 50s, had fever symptoms while he was hospitalised in May last year, and after a blood test the hospital detected an antibiotics-resistant bacterium," the official said, adding that the patient fully recovered.

After examination doctors found that the bacterium contained the NDM-1 gene, making it difficult to treat with standard drugs, he said.

The WHO has said research published in The Lancet medical journal on August 11 identified a new gene that enables some types of [bacteria](#) to be highly resistant to almost all antibiotics.

"While multi-drug resistant bacteria are not new and will continue to

appear, this development requires monitoring and further study to understand the extent and modes of transmission, and to define the most effective measures for control," it said.

Multi-drug resistant bacteria generally "constitute a growing and global public health problem," the UN health agency noted.

The Lancet reported last month that bacteria containing the NDM-1 gene had been found in 37 Britons who had received medical treatment in South Asia.

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

Indian doctors warned earlier this year about the threat from the bacteria -- months before the British study -- saying that patients could spread them worldwide.

In August a Belgian man became the first such known fatality.

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