

Resistant food bacteria strains now common: EU study

March 14 2012

Bacteria that cause the main food-borne infections among people in the European Union commonly show resistance to widely-used antibiotics and antimicrobials, an EU report showed Wednesday.

"Resistance to several antimicrobials was commonly detected in zoonotic bacteria (which can be transmitted from animals to humans) such as Salmonella and Campylobacter, which are the main causes of reported food-borne infections in the EU," the report read.

The European Centre for [Disease prevention](#) and Control (ECDC) in Sweden and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in Italy were behind the report, which was based on 2010 data collected from all EU member states.

"[Zoonotic diseases](#) are important public health threats in the EU and resistance of zoonotic bacteria to antimicrobials used to treat these illnesses is an increasing concern both at the European level and globally," EFSA chief Catherine Geslain-Laneelle said in a statement.

Antimicrobials are used in human and [veterinary medicine](#) to kill or block the growth of micro-organisms like bacteria and fungi that cause infections.

But if the micro-organisms become less sensitive to the medication and develop resistance, the treatments are rendered ineffective.

"Zoonotic bacteria that are resistant to antimicrobials are of particular concern as they can be transmitted from animals to food and humans, and may compromise the effective treatment of infections in humans," according to the joint statement.

According to the report, [Campylobacter](#) bacteria, which caused more than 200,000 of the food-borne infections reported in the EU in 2010, frequently is resistant to the "critically important" antibiotic ciprofloxacin.

A high proportion of [Salmonella bacteria](#), which accounted for almost 100,000 reported human cases the same year, was resistant to other common antimicrobials, although resistance to critically important antibiotics remained low, according to the report.

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Citation: Resistant food bacteria strains now common: EU study (2012, March 14) retrieved 28 April 2024 from

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