

Killer infections targeted by hospital study

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The Joanna Briggs Institute study aims to develop best practice guidelines.

A major international study led by University of Adelaide researchers aims to prevent death and serious illness caused by one of the most common infections contracted by patients in hospitals.

The study is investigating standard practices for the insertion and management of [urinary catheters](#) in patients, and spans more than 2000 acute care beds at 43 hospitals and clinics in the United States, Spain, Finland, Singapore and Australia.

Led by the University of Adelaide's Joanna Briggs Institute, the project is aimed at developing best practice guidelines for the use of catheters in hospitals.

"Poor [catheter](#) management is the single biggest cause of hospital-acquired [infection](#) in the world, with more than half a million infections every year," says study leader Dr Craig Lockwood, Director of Translation Science at the Joanna Briggs Institute.

"These infections can have a devastating impact on patients. Even if they survive the infection, the result for patients can be drawn out and painful, with recurring infections that affect their overall recovery, and an enormous cost to the [healthcare system](#) because of extended hospital stays.

"The human cost is even greater: tens of thousands of [patients](#) die from these infections every year, with numbers in the United States alone at around 13,000 deaths per annum. Most of these deaths are preventable," Dr Lockwood says.

The study is comparing current catheter management with best practice based on high-[quality research](#) at the 43 participating hospitals and clinics.

"The main problem arises because the urinary system is a sterile environment. Once you introduce a catheter into that system, it becomes a portal of entry for bacteria - either during the insertion process or in the day-to-day care of the patient," Dr Lockwood says.

"However, there is often no standard procedure for catheter management within the same hospital, let alone between hospitals, and that's what we hope to achieve. [Health professionals'](#) behaviour makes all the difference - we can improve health outcomes just by changing behaviour.

"Something extremely simple, such as doctors and nurses making sure they've washed their hands properly, can be the difference between a quality recovery for the patient or serious illness and death."

The University of Adelaide's Joanna Briggs Institute has an international reputation for excellence in research that translates to real-world health practice. This study into catheter management is the first translational

science research project of its kind in the world.

Provided by University of Adelaide

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