

More antibiotic use tied to rise in diarrheal infections in hospitals, study finds

October 22 2012



Kids, elderly especially vulnerable to serious consequences from *C. difficile* bacteria.

(HealthDay)—Greater use of antibiotics is the main reason for an increase in the number and severity of *Clostridium difficile* infections among hospitalized children and elderly people, researchers report.

This type of bacteria is the most common cause of [diarrhea](#) in hospitals and is linked to 14,000 deaths in the United States each year.

For the study, Mayo Clinic researchers analyzed national data from about 13.7 million children who were hospitalized over a five-year period and found that the more than 46,000 with *C. difficile* infections had much longer hospital stays, were more likely to require partial or total removal of the colon, were more likely to be admitted to long- or

short-term care facilities and had a higher risk of death.

"Despite increased awareness of *C. difficile* in children, and advancements in management and prevention, this remains a major problem in hospitalized children," gastroenterologist Dr. Sahil Khanna, said in a Mayo Clinic news release.

The researchers also looked at data from 1.3 million hospitalized adults with *C. difficile* infections and found that those over 65 spent more time in the hospital, were more likely to be sent to a nursing home and had a greater risk of death.

These findings suggest that being over age 65 is an [independent risk factor](#) for poorer outcomes among adults with *C. difficile* infection, the researchers said.

The study authors said that greater [use of antibiotics](#) is the main reason for the growing number of *C. difficile* infections. This is because antibiotics destroy the [good bacteria](#) that protect against infections.

The study was scheduled for presentation at the American College of Gastroenterology's annual meeting in Las Vegas. The data and conclusions of research presented at medical meetings should be viewed as preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [C. difficile infection](#).

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Citation: More antibiotic use tied to rise in diarrheal infections in hospitals, study finds (2012, October 22) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-10-antibiotic->

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