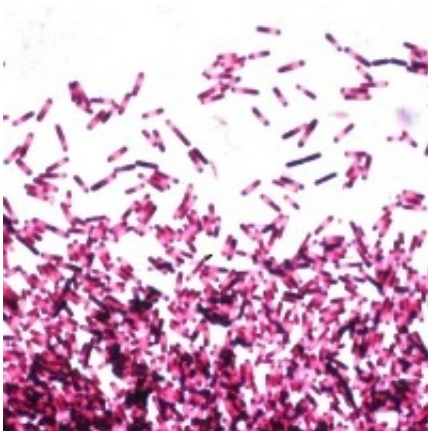


# Study finds serious C. Difficile rates on rise in hospitals

March 17 2014, by David Stacey

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(Medical Xpress)—The incidence of *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI), which causes severe diarrhoea, acute toxic colitis and even death, is on the rise in Australian hospitals, according to a study led by researchers at The University of Western Australia.

Associate Professor Claudia Slimings and Professor Thomas Riley from UWA's School of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine found *C. difficile* incidence had increased dramatically around the world over the past 10 years, with one strain, ribotype 027, being particularly devastating.

This strain was first reported in Australia in 2009 in a woman in Perth who acquired it overseas. The following year, a Melbourne patient who

had not been overseas tested positive for the same strain, representing the first locally acquired case.

The study, published today in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, is the first national collation of surveillance data on CDI. Hospital surveillance programs were instituted nationwide by 2011.

The two-year survey of [hospital](#)-identified C. difficile infections (HI-CDI) looked at data from 450 public hospitals, covering 92 per cent of patient-days in Australian acute public hospitals. A total of 12,683 cases of HI-CDI were identified.

The researchers found an overall incidence of 3.65 HI-CDI cases per 10,000 patient-days, with about a quarter of [cases](#) being community-acquired. The annual incidence rose by 24 per cent from 3.25 per 10,000 patient-days in 2011 to 4.03 in 2012.

The annual incidence of infections acquired in hospital increased 18 per cent, and those acquired in the community climbed 24 per cent over the course of the survey.

**More information:** The study is available online:  
[www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/20 ... -australia-2011-2012](http://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/20...-australia-2011-2012)

Provided by University of Western Australia

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