

High mortality, costs with *C. difficile* after spine surgery

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(HealthDay)—For patients undergoing lumbar spine surgery, *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) infection is associated with longer, more expensive hospital stays, and increased mortality, according to a study published in the Sept. 1 issue of *Spine*.

Branko Skovrlj, M.D., from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, and colleagues examined the incidence, comorbidities, and impact on [health care resources](#) of *C. difficile* infection after [lumbar spine surgery](#). Patients were identified from the Nationwide Inpatient Sample for 2002 to 2011.

The researchers found that the incidence of *C. difficile* infection was 0.11 percent among patients undergoing lumbar spine surgery. Patients infected with *C. difficile* were more likely to be older at baseline, and

have comorbidities. The odds of postoperative infection were increased for lumbar fusion ($P = 0.0001$) and lumbar fusion revision ($P = 0.0003$). Decreased odds of infection were seen for small hospital size (odds ratio [OR], 0.5), while urban hospitals were associated with increased infection odds (OR, 2.14). The odds of acquiring [postoperative infection](#) were increased among uninsured patients (OR, 1.62) and patients with Medicaid (OR, 1.33). Hospital length of stay, hospital charges, and inpatient mortality were all significantly increased with *C. difficile*.

"Great care should be taken to avoid *C. difficile* colitis in patients undergoing lumbar spine surgery because it is associated with longer hospital stays, greater overall costs, and increased inpatient mortality," write the authors.

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