

# Bloodstream infections: Most common type of health care-associated infections in children

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A study published by *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* establishes the prevalence and type of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) in children in Europe and describes risk factors for infection in this population.

The study was based on data from the ECDC point prevalence survey of HAIs and antimicrobial use in European acute care hospitals 2011-2012, and included 770 infections reported in 726 children and adolescents.

The findings show that the prevalence of infections was highest in paediatric intensive care units (15.5% - one in six children) and [neonatal intensive care](#) units (10.7% - one in ten babies). Most HAIs (77%) were identified in infants younger than 12 months.

Bloodstream infections were the most common type of infection (45%), followed by lower [respiratory tract infections](#) (22%). Although the vast majority of [bloodstream infections](#) in the study were reported in infants younger than 12 months, the proportion remained high in other age groups as well. This type of infections in neonates and children are associated with a high mortality and long-term adverse neurological outcomes.

The authors stated that a pan-European programme is urgently required to prevent and reduce the unacceptably high rates of HAIs in children in

Europe, with a focus in neonatal and paediatric intensive care units and addressing the issues related to healthcare-associated bloodstream infections.

This is the largest multinational study describing HAIs in children so far, providing detailed information about the prevalence and distribution of these infections in this specific population. A second point prevalence survey is ongoing in Europe, including improvements to address some of the limitations found during the development of the study, and its results will be published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control after 2017.

**More information:** Walter Zingg et al. Health-care-associated infections in neonates, children, and adolescents: an analysis of paediatric data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control point-prevalence survey, *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* (2017). [DOI: 10.1016/S1473-3099\(16\)30517-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(16)30517-5)

Provided by European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

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