

# Researchers report high burden of infections acquired in hospitals in Europe

18 October 2016

More than 2.5 million cases of healthcare-associated infections are estimated to occur in the European Union and European Economic Area (EU/EEA) each year, according to a study published by Alessandro Cassini, Diamantis Plachouras and colleagues from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), The Robert Koch Institute (Berlin, Germany) and the Centre for Infectious Disease Control, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (Bilthoven, The Netherlands), in *PLOS Medicine*.

The researchers used data from the ECDC point prevalence survey of healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial use in European acute care hospitals to estimate the burden of six common types of healthcare-associated infections: healthcare-associated pneumonia, healthcare-associated [urinary tract infections](#), [surgical site infections](#), healthcare-associated *Clostridium difficile* infections, healthcare-associated neonatal sepsis, and healthcare-associated primary bloodstream infections. They estimated that the more than 2.5 million cases of these healthcare-associated infections occurring each year in the EU/EEA result in a burden of approximately 2.5 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). Furthermore, the combined burden for Europe of these six types of healthcare-associated infections was estimated to be higher than that of other communicable diseases under surveillance at ECDC, such as influenza, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

While the findings are limited by the accuracy of some of the estimates, the authors were able to adjust the analysis according to the severity of the underlying condition that was the reason for the initial hospitalization.

The authors note that "infections acquired in hospitals are a common and largely preventable complication of hospitalization and surgery," and

that "increasing efforts for prevention are imperative to decrease this burden."

**More information:** Cassini A, Plachouras D, Eckmanns T, Abu Sin M, Blank H-P, Ducomble T, et al. (2016) Burden of Six Healthcare-Associated Infections on European Population Health: Estimating Incidence-Based Disability-Adjusted Life Years through a Population Prevalence-Based Modelling Study. *PLoS Med* 13(10): e1002150. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1002150](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002150)

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