



SURVEY FINDS 8.2% OF PATIENTS HAVE HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTION

Results of third national prevalence survey of healthcare associated infection in England released

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New figures released today by the Hospital Infection Society show that of patients surveyed in 190 acute hospitals in England in 2006, 8.2% had a healthcare associated Infection (HCAI).

In the first national prevalence study conducted in 1980 in 43 hospitals, 9.2% of patients were found to have a HCAI. In the second national study conducted in 1993/4 in 157 hospitals 9.0% of patient were found to have an HCAI.

The most common infections were surgical site infections, gastro-intestinal infections, urinary tract infections, and pneumonia. MRSA was present in 1.3% of patients surveyed (0.2% of patients had an MRSA bacteraemia), while *C.difficile* was seen in 2% of patients.

The survey was funded by the Department of Health (England) as part of efforts to better understand the prevalence of HCAs and to inform action to tackle these infections.

Acute hospitals in England volunteered to take part in the survey, and it involved over 58,000 patients. Parallel surveys were carried out in Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, giving this prevalence survey a unique snapshot look at the situation facing hospitals. Health Protection Scotland is performing a comparable survey. Their results will be available later in the year.

Judy Potter, of the Infection Control Nurses Association, said today, "The fact that so many hospitals across the UK and Republic of Ireland took part shows just how important healthcare staff across the country view the issue of healthcare associated infection and the value of taking a collaborative approach across the UK and Ireland in order to beat HCAI.

The prevalence survey was carried out to establish the number of patients in acute hospitals who had or were being treated for an infection which they didn't have on admission to hospital at the time data was collected. Data was also collected on risk factors for infection and the utilisation of medical devices. This information can also be used to focus efforts to reduce the burden of HCAI”.

Hospitals that participated in the scheme have access to their own results via a secure web-based system hosted by the National Public Health Service for Wales, which will identify the wards and specialties where infections were found, and the numbers and types of infection in their hospitals.

Dr Spencer of the Hospital Infection Society, said, “The web-based system we have developed for participating hospitals will help them to plan their infection control strategies and focus on areas of local concern. This will benefit patients and allow hospitals to give the best care possible.”

Notes to Editors:

The Third Prevalence survey of Healthcare-associated Infections in Acute Hospitals was carried out between February and May 2006. The study was funded by each country's respective Department of Health. A summary of the preliminary results for England is available on the Hospital Infection Society's website: <http://www.his.org.uk> and the Infection Control Nurses' Association website: <http://www.icna.co.uk>

- These data put into context the public perception that MRSA and *C. difficile* affect a large proportion of the patient population. The results show a small decline in overall prevalence of infection even though the NHS is treating more patients than ever before. However owing to changes in definition to bring the present study in line with international definitions, results are not strictly comparable with the previous prevalence studies.
- Prevalence rates are calculated as the number of patients with each infection in proportion to the total number of patients, with the exception of surgical site infections, where the rate is given as a proportion of only those patients who had undergone a surgical procedure. A prevalent infection is one where the patient has specific signs or symptoms of infection or is on treatment for such an infection at the time of the survey.
- MRSA bacteraemia rate (0.2% of patients) includes primary bloodstream infections with MRSA as the causative organism and bloodstream infections secondary to another infection with MRSA as the causative organism.
- Data on other Healthcare-associated Infection in England can be found on the Health Protection Agency at: http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hai/default.htm, and simple guides to MRSA and *C. difficile* can be found on the Department for Health's website at: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/HealthcareAcquiredInfection/fs/en>

- The Hospital Infection Society (HIS) conducted this study in collaboration with the Infection Control Nurse Association (ICNA). The HIS and the ICNA are the professional bodies that represent the interests of healthcare professionals specialising in the prevention and control of HCAI across the UK and Republic of Ireland. Further information about both organisations is available on their respective websites: <http://www.his.org.uk> and <http://www.icna.co.uk>

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