

CDC: New Data Show Antibiotic Use in U.S. Hospitals Is Still Too High

Antibiotic resistance – when bacteria stop responding to the drugs designed to kill them – is a healthcare “hot topic” and possibly the most significant infectious disease threat we currently face.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association Internal Medicine* recently published a study in which CDC experts revealed that although the overall rates of antibiotic use in U.S. hospitals have not changed over time, there have been significant changes in the types of antibiotics prescribed.

More than half of patients receive at least one antibiotic during their hospital stay, and the study highlighted an alarming discovery – the types of antibiotics often considered to be the most powerful were also those with the largest increases in use. The use of carbapenems, often called “last resort” antibiotics, increased by 37%. Bacteria that develop resistance to carbapenems are referred to as “superbugs,” “nightmare bacteria” or carbapenem-resistant enterobacteriaceae (CRE) and can be especially difficult to treat.

Although prescribing antibiotics remains common and the use of the most powerful antibiotics is on the rise, a number of studies have shown there are a number of important opportunities for hospitals to improve antibiotic use. CDC has called on all hospitals to improve antibiotics through antibiotic stewardship. “We are committed to combatting antibiotic resistance by ensuring that every hospital in America has an active antibiotic stewardship program so that every patient gets the best possible treatment for their condition.” said Dr. Arjun Srinivasan (CAPT, USPHS), Associate Director for CDC’s Healthcare-Associated Infection Prevention Programs.

Check out the full article and find prescribing guidelines and improvement resources [here](#).

Share with your colleagues and join the conversation!

- Get Smart About Antibiotics: <http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart>