

**NEWS**

Your views (2)

Britain's MRSA timebomb

by AIDAN RADNEDGE - Monday, December 11, 2006



Britain has one of the worst MRSA infection rates in Europe, a new study reveals.

Despite Government claims that the NHS is winning the fight against the killer superbug, only four out of 32 European nations surveyed recorded more cases of MRSA

last year.

MRSA, or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, is responsible for 45 per cent of all infections on British hospital wards, rising to 65 per cent of infections caught in intensive care units. Only Malta, Cyprus, Romania and Portugal have higher infection rates, says the annual report by the European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System.

In Germany and France, rates are about half those in Britain, while in Holland, Denmark, Norway and Finland, fewer than ten per cent of hospital infections are caused by MRSA.

MRSA, the most dangerous hospital-acquired bacterium, is resistant to most antibiotics and enters the skin through open wounds to cause potentially-fatal blood poisoning and other diseases.

The number of cases in the UK rose from just over 1,000 in 1996 to 7,212 last year, costing the NHS about £1 billion for treatment and compensation.

Doctors are frustrated that a new antibiotic, Tygacil, which has proven effective at fighting complicated skin or intra-abdominal infections caused by bacteria including MRSA, is not yet approved for use in England – but is available in Scottish hospitals.

Prof Mark Wilcox, a microbiologist at Leeds Teaching Hospital, said: 'The findings in the EARSS report are worrying and clearly illustrate that antibiotic resistance is continuing to increase.'

The Government insisted infection rates were falling and pointed out that it had recently set aside an extra £50million fund for infection control measures in hospitals.

A spokeswoman said: 'We are not complacent. This is really important.'

Share this article [What is this?](#)

[Digg](#)

[Reddit](#)

[Del.icio.us](#)

[Newsvine](#)

[NowPublic](#)

MORE METRO

- [Al Fayed makes Diana inquest demand](#)
- [Workers rally against NHS cuts](#)
- [Top judge charged with exposure](#)
- [Silicon 'to blame' in petrol chaos](#)
- [Couple cleared over salt death](#)

[Add your comment](#)

Your views

2 readers have commented on this story so far. Tell us what you think below!

Here's a sample of the latest comments published. You can click [view all](#) to read all comments that readers have sent in.

Mrsa is out of hand in the United States of America. We have not heard of this new drug as yet. But, I think prevention of MRSA is more important. MRSA stays with us for the rest of our lives. It has been 2 years since I was diagnosed with MRSA after having a Total Hip surgery. Now, my body is breaking out with abscesses, all being diagnosed as Mrsa. In the USA, more than 90,000 patients die from infection and doctors mistakes. This is the same as having a major air crash more than once a week. We are killing ourselves, because no one wants to take the responsibility.

What the Hell do we do?????


- Marilyn Smith, Guilford, Ct. 06437 USA

Our hospitals and nursing homes are filthy diseased and in debt just because this government and parliaments immigration policies

The immigrants who have been employed to staff and clean our once envied services have brought many diseases including tuberculosis and HIV/aids to Britain and the once smell of carbolic which has now has disappeared have been replaced with smells of the orient.

- John Winston Beatson, sheffield england

Add your comment

[Top of page](#) ©2007 Associated Newspapers Limited [Advertising.metro.co.uk](#) [Terms and conditions](#) [Contact us](#) [About Metro](#)  [What is RSS?](#) | [All RSS feeds](#) [Log in/register](#) [Site map](#)