

Fast facts about hospital-acquired infections

Hospital-acquired infections result in significant suffering

- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 90,000 Americans die each year from hospital-acquired infections. More people die from hospital-acquired infections than from auto accidents and homicides combined.
- An additional 1.9 million or so get an infection that does not cause death, but depending on the type of infection, these patients spend from one to 30 extra days in the hospital getting treated. About 5-10% of hospital patients get a hospital-acquired infection.

Hospital-acquired infections contribute to the rising costs of health care

- Hospital-acquired infections add nearly \$5 billion per year to our nation's health care costs. Reducing hospital infections saves health care dollars by reducing lengths of stay and readmissions as well as reducing avoidable deaths and illnesses.
- Postoperative sepsis, a type of bloodstream infection, causes 10.89 additional days in the hospital and additional charges of \$57,727, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Hospitals can prevent hospital-acquired infections

- Studies show that hospitals can reduce infection rates by up to 70 percent through proper implementation of infection control practices, such as hand washing. Despite these facts, one study found hospitals complied with hand washing guidelines less than 50 percent of the time.
- A study of neonatal ICU infection found that a campaign of aggressive monitoring and education dropped the infection rate from 42 percent to 12 percent in five years.

Public reporting of health care quality data saves lives

- A study published in Health Affairs last year on state hospital quality reporting programs concluded that "making performance information public stimulates quality improvement."
- Four states, Missouri, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Florida, have recently adopted laws requiring hospital infection rate data to be available to the public.

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