

TOWARDS REDUCED INFECTION RISK FOR 'SUPERBUG' MRSA

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First study to show longer term effectiveness of a therapy to eradicate Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus in hospitalized patients.

Canadian researchers have shown for the first time the longer term effectiveness of a treatment strategy to reduce the risk of health care-associated MRSA infection and transmission among patients, by preventing the colonization of MRSA which generally precedes MRSA infection.

"Our strategy was to target MRSA before potential infection and transmission. We examined the efficacy of a therapy to safely, effectively and over the longer term, eradicate MRSA colonization or decolonize MRSA in patients," says Dr. Andrew Simor, principle investigator of the study, and chief of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

Findings from the study indicated 92 per cent of patients cleared MRSA from all sites after the seven-day treatment of combined topical and oral systemic antimicrobial agents. 74 per cent of these patients remained free of MRSA at three months of follow-up. Eight months after treatment, over half (54 per cent) of those available for follow-up still had negative results of culture for MRSA.

"While we are encouraged by this study to show longer term effectiveness to eradicate health care-associated MRSA in some patients, further research is needed to better understand how and when this strategy might be applied," says Simor, co-Chair of the Canadian Nosocomial Infection Surveillance Program, which works with the Public Health Agency of Canada to conduct ongoing surveillance of MRSA and other healthcare-associated infections.

The study was selected as the lead article in this month's issue of Clinical Infectious Diseases and involved 146 hospitalized patients.

MRSA or methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus is associated with infection and mortality and has been referred to as a 'superbug' due to its combined virulence and resistance to antibiotics. Elderly and immune-compromised patients are generally at higher risk of MRSA infection.

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Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre is transforming health care through the dedication of its more than 10,000 staff members who provide compassionate and innovative patient focused care. An internationally recognized leader in women's health, academic research and education and an affiliation with the University of Toronto distinguishes Sunnybrook as one of Canada's premier health sciences centres. Sunnybrook specializes in caring for newborns, adults and the elderly, treating and preventing cancer, heart problems, orthopaedic and arthritic conditions and traumatic injuries.

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