

'Deadly diarrhea rates doubled in 10 years'

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According to a study published in the American Journal of Infection Control infections with the intestinal superbug *C. difficile* (CDI) nearly doubled in ten years in US hospitals without noticeable improvement in patient mortality rates or hospital lengths of stay.

C. difficile is the most common bacteria responsible for causing healthcare-associated infections in US hospitals and is linked to 14,000 deaths each year, as per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In this study from the University of Texas College of Pharmacy, researchers analysed ten years of data from the US National Hospital Discharge Surveys (NHDS). From 2001 to 2010, rates of CDI among hospitalised adults rose from 4.5 to 8.2 CDI discharges per 1,000 total adult hospital discharges.

"Our study found that peak CDI incidence occurred in 2008, with a slight decline through 2010. The leveling off of CDI incidence toward the end of our study period may be the result of increased antibiotic stewardship programs and improved infection control measures such as use of contact precautions, cleaning & disinfection of equipment, and environment & hand hygiene," said Dr Kelly Reveles, lead author of the study.

The researchers found out that most CDI patients were female (59 percent) and more than 65 years of age (70 percent).

Of the 2.2 million adult CDI discharges, 33 percent had a principal diagnosis of CDI; 67 percent were classified as secondary CDI, meaning that CDI was not the primary reason they were hospitalised. Approximately 7.1 percent, or 154,184 patients, died during the study period.

