



Clinical Leadership & Infection Control

Hospital linens may be source of C. diff outbreaks, study finds

Written by Mackenzie Bean | October 17, 2018 |
[Print](#) | [Email](#)



44



Commercial laundering processes using industrial detergent and high disinfecting temperatures do not completely eliminate the presence of *Clostridium difficile* bacteria on hospital sheets, according to a [study](#) published in *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*.

For the study, researchers assessed bacterial contamination before and after washing sheets naturally or artificially contaminated with *C. difficile* spores. In one washing process, researchers inoculated cotton sheets with *C. difficile* spores and washed them with sterile uncontaminated pieces of fabric using an industrial bleach detergent in a simulated washing extractor cycle.

Researchers also assessed spore survival on naturally contaminated bedsheets from *C. difficile* patients using the United Kingdom National Health System's healthcare laundry decontamination process. The sheets were washed with industrial detergent at a high disinfecting temperature in a commercial washer before being pressed and dried.

Neither washing process eliminated the presence of pathogenic bacteria. The U.K.'s commercial laundry process only reduced *C. difficile* spore counts by 40 percent.

Researchers concluded current thermal disinfection standards for hospital sheets do not adequately remove *C. difficile* spores. They said hospital linens could be a source of sporadic *C. difficile* outbreaks at healthcare facilities.

"The findings of this study may explain some sporadic outbreaks of *C. difficile* infections in hospitals from unknown sources, however, further research is required in order to establish the true burden of hospital bedsheets in such outbreaks," lead author Katie Laird, PhD, head of the Infectious Disease Research Group, School of Pharmacy, at De Montfort University in the U.K., told *Science Daily*. "Future research will assess the parameters required to remove *C. difficile* spores from textiles during the laundry process."

More articles on clinical leadership and infection control:

[Colorado hospital installs NASA-inspired machine to aid in patients' recoveries](#)

[3 ways hospitals can promote safe injection practices](#)

[Congo reports 24 Ebola deaths in 1 week](#)

© Copyright ASC COMMUNICATIONS 2018.

Interested in LINKING to or REPRINTING this content? View our policies by [clicking here](#).

To receive the latest hospital and health system business and legal news and analysis from *Becker's Hospital Review*, sign-up for the free *Becker's Hospital Review E-weekly* by [clicking here](#).

**Click Here to Access The
Infection Control Products
to Know Database**

Other Becker's Websites

Becker's Hospital Review

ASC Review

Spine Review

Health IT & CIO

CFO

Dental Review

Conferences

Becker's Hospital Review 10th Annual Meeting

Becker's Hospital Review Health IT + Clinical Leadership 2019

Becker's Hospital Review 5th Annual Health IT + Revenue Cycle Conference

Becker's Hospital Review 7th Annual CEO + CFO Roundtable

Contact Us

1.800.417.2035

becker@beckershealthcare.com



Copyright © 2018 Becker's Healthcare. All Rights Reserved. Interested in linking to or reprinting our content? View our policies by clicking here.