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## Decrease in Nosocomial Infections During 3-Year Period in Norwegian Hospitals

Gina Pugliese, RN, MS  
Martin S. Favero, PhD

Andersen and coinvestigators from the Department of Hospital Infection, Ullevål University Hospital, Oslo, Norway, analyzed hospital-acquired infections (HAI) by repeated point-prevalence studies (four each year) performed simultaneously at 14 hospitals in a health region (860,000 inhabitants) during the period 1996 to 1998. The study included 3,200 beds and 121,000 discharged patients each year. An overall prevalence rate of HAI of 6.5% (interhospital range, 1.4%-11.7%) was found for the 32,248 patients studied. The rate of HAI was

reduced from 7.7% in 1996 to 5.9% in 1998. Smaller hospitals (<200 beds) generally had lower rates of HAI, community-acquired infections (CAI), postoperative infections, and use of antibacterial agents than the large regional hospital (1,200 beds).

HAI was reduced in nonoperated patients from 5.8% in 1996 to 4.4% in 1998 and in operated patients from 13.2% in 1996 to 10.5% in 1998. The risk of developing HAI was twice as high after surgery. From 1996 to 1998, there was a reduction in urinary tract infections from 2.4% to 1.7%, lower respiratory tract infections from 1.5% to 0.8%, and postoperative wound infections from 5.7% to

4.3%, whereas septicemia remained unchanged (from 0.5% to 0.4%). Rehospitalization because of HAI was registered in 0.6% (interhospital range, 0.3%-1.1%) of patients. The CAI rate in hospitals increased from 8.3% in 1996 to 10.8% in 1998. Approximately 16% (range, 14.4%-20.6%) of the patients had an infection.

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