

UNDERSTANDING AND REDUCING HOSPITAL INFECTIONS CAUSED BY MRSA

Levels of the antibiotic-resistant ‘superbug’ MRSA have fallen in Beaumont Hospital in recent years, according to a study that surveyed the bacterium both in patients and in the hospital ward environment.

The project screened hundreds of patients for MRSA and identified the presence of MRSA strains in the hospital environment to understand better how to control spread of infection caused by MRSA.

“Over the four years of the study there was a decline in the number of samples that we took from the environment that were positive for MRSA,” says Beaumont Hospital consultant microbiologist Prof Hilary Humphreys.

Screening all at-risk patients dramatically improves MRSA detection rates and the research also identified a better way to rapidly detect MRSA to improve the effective use of available resources: a rapid test meant that isolation rooms could be used more efficiently.

The study was carried out with the Dublin Dental School and Hospital Microbiology Unit/Trinity College Dublin, the Health Protection Surveillance Centre and the National MRSA Reference Laboratory based at St. James’s Hospital.

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