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NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Infection control certification associated with lower MRSA infection rates

Washington, DC, March 9, 2012 -- Hospitals whose infection prevention and control programs are led by a director who is board certified in infection prevention and control have significantly lower rates of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bloodstream infections (BSI) than those that are not led by a certified professional, according to a new study published in the March issue of the *American Journal of Infection Control*, the official publication of [APIC](#) - the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology.

A team of researchers from the Columbia University School of Nursing surveyed infection prevention and control departments of 203 acute care hospitals in California to determine if there is an association between structure and practices of their programs, and frequency of infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria. MRSA bloodstream infection data for 91 of these hospitals were analyzed to see if there were factors that were associated with frequency of this infection. Presence of a board certified director and participation in a multifacility performance improvement project were associated with significantly lower MRSA BSI rates. This is one of the first studies that found an association between specific infrastructure elements, patient care practices, and rates of healthcare-associated infections. MRSA is a type of staph bacteria that is resistant to certain antibiotics and can cause serious infections.

Ninety-seven percent of hospitals in the survey reported some type of screening policy for multidrug-resistant organisms – primarily MRSA – upon patient admission, with the most commonly targeted populations being transfers from nursing homes (77.8%), readmissions within 30 days (75.6%), ICU patients (72.8%), and dialysis patients (63.3%). By contrast, few hospitals reported the use of universal and targeted screening for two other multidrug-resistant organisms: vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE) and *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*). One major reason for this focus on MRSA is legislative requirements in California for these screening programs, but the authors contend that this level of specification on one type of pathogen may limit the ability to address others like VRE and *C. difficile*.

“The association between a board certified professional and fewer MRSA infections likely reflects greater awareness and level of implementation of evidence-based prevention practices,” said APIC 2012 President Michelle Farber, RN, CIC. “This study also adds to an increasing amount of evidence that broad collaborative projects are an effective mechanism to improve performance and patient safety. In addition, the new study is timely as APIC has developed a new competency model for infection preventionists that emphasizes the value of certification. This new data reinforces the value of this credential for enhancing patient safety.”

The Certification in Infection Prevention and Control (CIC[®]) credential, administered by the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. ([CBIC](#)), identifies healthcare professionals who have shown a mastery of knowledge in infection prevention.

Full text of the article is available to journalists upon request; contact Liz Garman, APIC, 202-454-2604, egarman@apic.org to obtain copies.

ABOUT AJIC: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INFECTION CONTROL

AJIC: American Journal of Infection Control (www.ajicjournal.org) covers key topics and issues in infection control and epidemiology. Infection preventionists, including physicians, nurses, and epidemiologists, rely on *AJIC* for peer-reviewed articles covering clinical topics as well as original research. As the official publication of [APIC](http://www.apic.org) - the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology - *AJIC* is the foremost resource on infection control, epidemiology, infectious diseases, quality management, occupational health, and disease prevention. *AJIC* also publishes infection control guidelines from APIC and the CDC. Published by [Elsevier](http://www.elsevier.com), *AJIC* is included in MEDLINE and CINAHL.

ABOUT APIC

[APIC](http://www.apic.org)'s mission is to create a safer world through prevention of infection. The association's more than 14,000 members direct infection prevention programs that save lives and improve the bottom line for hospitals and other healthcare facilities. APIC advances its mission through patient safety, implementation science, competencies and certification, advocacy, and data standardization. Follow APIC on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/apic>.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

[“Certification in infection control matters: Impact of infection control department characteristics and policies on rates of multidrug-resistant infections.”](#) by Monika Pogorzelska, Patricia W. Stone, and Elaine L. Larson, appears in the *American Journal of Infection Control*, Volume 40, Issue 2 (March 2012).

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