

Healthcare Associated Infections Cost Europe 5.5 Billion Euros per year

A round table on patient safety and healthcare associated infections (HCAIs) organised by Health First Europe and cohosted by MEPs Liz Lynne and Amalia Sartori revealed the extent of the burden of HCAIs on Europe's healthcare systems.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) claims that HCAIs cause 37,000 deaths per year and contribute to a further 110,000 deaths across the EU. The result of these infections is an additional 16 million days of hospital stays per year and a cost of 5.5 billion euros per year. This is an enormous burden and if it continues, could cause serious problems regarding the sustainability of healthcare systems in the EU.

MEP Liz Lynne highlighted the need for the exchange of best practice among member states and hopes that the incidence of HCAIs can be reduced by 40% by 2015. Everyone was in agreement that creating clear targets, set guidelines and co-operation between member states is the next logical step. Future actions could include the use of rapid PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) MRSA testing on admission to hospital.

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