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### **UK - Highest Rates of Clostridium Difficile in Europe**

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A study published in The Lancet has found that Britain has the highest number of cases of Clostridium difficile in Europe. The research, which involved hospitals in 29 countries in Europe, looked for the bug and in particular a dangerous type known as 027.

The study revealed that Europewide the 027 strain made up only five percent of total C diff cases and was the sixth most prevalent type of the bug. However in Britain, the 027 strain made up at least a quarter of cases of C diff with around 25,500 cases of the bug annually.

The study's chief author Dr Martijn Bauer, of the Leiden University Medical Centre, and the National Centre for Infectious Disease Control, in the Netherlands, said many of the hospitals which had the highest numbers of C difficile infection came from countries in northern and central Europe.

A spokesman for the Health Protection Agency said: "Since 2007 the rate of C difficile infection (CDI) in England has fallen markedly from 11.1 cases per 10,000 population in 2007/08 to 5.1 per 10,000 population in 2009/10."

"Hospitals are encouraged to continue to submitting samples, so that they can be best placed to continue to identify clusters of cases and so prevent and control CDI. This will also afford the greatest chance of identifying emergent C difficile ribotypes, including those that are more common in some other countries in Europe."

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