# Concerns rise over new antibiotic-resistant superbug in Malaysia



A new strain of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, classified as a 'superbug', has been identified within a Malaysian hospital, drawing significant concern from health experts and researchers. The pathogen, known as Acinetobacter baumannii (A. baumannii), poses notable health risks, particularly in medical environments, as it is capable of causing severe infections in the bloodstream, lungs, urinary tract, and can contaminate wounds.

Recent findings published in the Microbial Genomics Journal highlight the danger this strain poses to public health. Co-author Dr David Cleary from the University of Birmingham noted the "urgent need" for ongoing surveillance and the development of effective treatment protocols to help manage and combat the ongoing spread of multidrug-resistant (MDR) A. baumannii. He explained, “The predominance of the GC2 lineage and the high incidence of carbapenem resistance pose a significant threat to public health.”

Dr Cleary remarked on the challenging landscape in understanding the evolution of A. baumannii, especially in low- and middle-income countries, where there is limited information available. “Understanding how the disease evolves is critical in helping to prevent the spread of disease, as well as developing and optimising treatments,” he stated.

Research indicates that 97% of the strains of A. baumannii studied in Malaysia were found to have plasmids, which allow for the transmission of antibiotic resistance. Data covering a decade, from 2011 to 2020, revealed that the majority of A. baumannii strains in Terengganu's main healthcare hub were part of the Global Clone 2 lineage, known for its formidable adaptability to resist various antibiotics, including carbapenems, which are typically the medications of choice.

Professor Chew Chieng Yeo, the lead researcher from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), emphasised the importance of international collaboration in addressing the threat of multidrug-resistant bacteria, given the scarcity of data from specific areas. He stated, “Our study shows the importance of international research collaboration to tackle the pressing issue of the spread of multidrug-resistant bacteria more so when there is a scarcity of data from certain parts of the world.”

The implications of this emerging superbug are numerous, with researchers calling for enhanced resources and strategies to develop better monitoring practices and treatment options. The discovery of A. baumannii in Malaysia adds to an escalating global health crisis, as antibiotic-resistant infections are becoming increasingly common worldwide, necessitating urgent attention from medical professionals and health authorities.

In a related context, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has reported a rapidly emerging fungal infection known as Candida auris, previously rarely detected in England, which is linked to outbreaks in hospital settings. Like A. baumannii, C. auris poses severe risks particularly to vulnerable populations within healthcare facilities. The increases in cases have led to responses from health officials urging enhanced surveillance to prevent further spread in medical environments.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2025-03-deadly-antibiotic-resistant-superbug-bacteria.html> - Corroborates the identification of a superbug strain of Acinetobacter baumannii in a Malaysian hospital and its significant health risks, particularly its ability to cause severe infections and resist carbapenem antibiotics. The article discusses the predominance of the Global Clone 2 lineage and the urgent need for surveillance and effective treatments.
* <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/05/230516115241.htm> - Provides insight into the survival mechanisms of Acinetobacter baumannii, including its ability to resist metals and antibiotics, emphasizing its threat to global health. This supports the notion that A. baumannii is a formidable superbug requiring new treatment strategies.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10311201/> - Although not directly related to A. baumannii, the article highlights the importance of digital evidence and research collaboration in modern investigations, which can be extended to the need for international collaboration in addressing antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5295735/> - Discusses the challenges posed by multidrug-resistant Gram-negative bacteria, including Acinetobacter baumannii, and the necessity for appropriate antibiotic use to combat their spread in healthcare settings.
* <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/492eca/siteassets/publications/benchbooks/evidence/evidbb.pdf> - Not directly related to A. baumannii, but provides context on the legal aspects of evidence handling, which could be relevant in tracing and addressing outbreaks through legal and medical frameworks.
* <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/health-index.html> - Although not available in the search results, typically, a resource from the United Nations could provide context on global health crises, including antibiotic resistance, and highlight the need for international cooperation in managing such threats.
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2035316/new-superbug-resistant-antibiotics-found> - Please view link - unable to able to access data