Asian ‘Superbug’ causes trouble worldwide

Daniel Zimmermann

HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: The emergence of a bacteria-resistant genetic mutation in Asia and other countries is posing a significant threat to global health, a multinational team of researchers reports. According to their study published in the current issue of The Lancet Infectious Diseases, evidence of increased prevalence of a gene that makes bacteria resistant to antibiotics was detected in Enterobacteriaceae isolated in India, Pakistan and the UK. The researchers called for co-ordinated international surveillance of the enzyme to prevent its spread through medical and dental tourism.

New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM-1), which was first identified by UK Professor Tim Walsh in a hospital in India last year, has been found to be resistant in a wide range of antibiotics including penicillin and amoxicillin which are commonly used after dental procedures. In addition, it also affects the efficiency of carbapenems, a group of antibiotics reserved for use in emergencies when other antibiotics have failed.

Prof. Walsh told the New Scientist that due to travelling and medical tourism throughout the region, bacterial mutations like NDM-1 increasingly find their way from India and Pakistan to other countries. He said meanwhile the gene has been turning up from being rarely observed just a few years ago to in between 1 and 5 per cent of all infections involving Enterobacteriaceae. Mutated genes have been recently isolated, for example, in the United States, Sweden, Turkey, Israel, Greece, and the UK, he said.

Infectious disease experts have warned clinicians be increasingly aware of the possibility of NDM-1 producing bacteria in patients who have received medical services in India and Pakistan. They are also advised to specifically inquire about this risk factor when carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae are identified in their country.

Dentist seeks US class action suit vs Nobel Biocare

STOCKHOLM - Swiss dental implant maker Nobel Biocare has been sued by a California dentist seeking class-action status on behalf of dentists whose patients have suffered complications such as bone loss from one of its products.

A company spokesman said on Monday the NobelDirect dental implant was safe and that Nobel Biocare (NORN.NX) would fight the lawsuit, which was filed in the U.S. District court in Los Angeles. The suit by Jason M Yamada seeks compensation for dentists who have had to perform surgery on their patients, or pay for restorative surgery, after complications from the implants, which it said were defectively designed.

“Because of Nobel’s practices, plaintiff and the class members now face a flood of complaints from injured dental patients who have needed, and will need, immediate intervention to remove the implants,” lawyer Brian M Lener, who represents Yamada, said in a statement.

The suit by Jason M Yamada, a dentist seeking class-action status on behalf of dentists whose patients have suffered complications such as bone loss from one of its products, was filed in the U.S. District court in Los Angeles. The suit by Jason M Yamada seeks compensation for dentists who have had to perform surgery on their patients, or pay for restorative surgery, after complications from the implants, which it said were defectively designed.

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