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## Preventing Spread of VRE in Long-Term-Care Facility

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Silverblatt and coinvestigators from the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Providence, Rhode Island, conducted a study to test the hypothesis that infection control practices can prevent the spread of vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) to residents of a long-term-care facility (LTCF) from an affiliated acute-care facility with a high endemic rate of colonization. A point-prevalence study of the rate of rectal colonization was conducted in a state-supported veterans nursing home and an acute-care veterans hospital. The participants were residents in a state veterans home. Patients with rectal colonization by VRE were identified

before transfer to the state veterans home. To eliminate colonization, Contact Isolation, as well as the use of oral bacitracin, was practiced for colonized veterans. Rectal swabs and cultures for VRE were performed and clinical records reviewed, and recording of presumptive risk factors for VRE colonization was noted. The risk factors were age, gender, length of stay at nursing home, treatment with vancomycin or oral antibiotics, hospitalization at the acute-care facility during the previous year, use of indwelling urethral catheters, presence of diarrhea, and fecal or urinary incontinence.

Cultures were taken for 69 of 200 residents in the first study (1996) and for 130 of 230 residents in the second study (1998). Residents who consented to culture differed

from those who did not only with regards to gender (2 vs 7,  $P=.012$ ). In neither study were any residents found to be colonized with VRE who had not already been identified as positive on admission.

The authors concluded that adherence to infection control practices by the patient-care staff of the LTCF was associated with the absence of transmission of VRE colonization among its residents. The presence of rectal colonization with VRE in an acute-care patient should not be a barrier to acceptance in an LTCF.

FROM: Silverblatt FJ, Tibert C, Mikolich D, Blazek-D'Arezzo J, Alves J, Tack M, et al. Preventing the spread of vancomycin-resistant enterococci in a long-term care facility. *Am Geriatr Soc* 2000;48:1211-1215.