

Serotyping and bacteriocin typing indicated that the same *P aeruginosa* strain was isolated from the food dye, as well as the respiratory cultures of the majority of patients tested.* The other isolates of *P aeruginosa* most likely represented background or baseline infection in the intensive care unit.

The understanding of the pathogenesis of ventilator-associated pneumonia is important to implement appropriate preventive and therapeutic interventions. The stomach's role may vary depending on several factors: gastric pH; presence of ileus or upper gastrointestinal disease; use of antacids or enteric feeding; gastric reflux associated with the supine position; and the presence of a gastric or nasogastric tube.⁹ Craven has suggested that the migration of microorganisms from the stomach to the lungs may occur through various mechanisms.¹⁰ The nasogastric tube may act as a conduit for microorganisms to ascend into the nasopharynx. The nasogastric tube also may affect lower esophageal sphincter competence and, therefore, allow reflux of these microorganisms from the stomach to the nasopharynx. This is most likely to occur when the patient is in the supine position. Once the nasopharynx becomes colonized, organisms may descend into the respiratory tract and result in lower respiratory tract disease. We feel that our outbreak of *P aeruginosa* respiratory infections in ventilated patients supports these concepts.

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Nursing Home Fined \$75,000 for Isolating Patient for 9 Months

by Gina Pugliese, RN, MS
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The New York State Division of Human Rights has fined a nursing home and its administrator \$75,000 after the nursing home placed a stroke patient with HIV in isolation for more

than 9 months. The human rights division said the quarantine was motivated by unreasonable fear, panic, and prejudice. The patient was 36 years old at the time he suffered a stroke that paralyzed his left side. After his transfer from the hospital to the nursing home, it was discovered that he was HIV positive, and nursing home offi-

cials confined him to isolation. The patient was not removed from isolation until he filed a complaint with the division of human rights.

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