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Low Prevalence of MRSA in Community: New York City

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Recent reports indicate that community-acquired methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections are increasing and may now involve persons without risk factors predisposing for acquisition. To estimate the extent of community MRSA in New York City, Shopsis and colleagues from the Public Health Res

earch Institute, Tuberculosis Center and Department of Microbiology, New

York University Medical Center, determined the prevalence of *S aureus* and MRSA nasal colonization in a well-patient population of 500 children and guardians. The prevalence of *S aureus* nasal carriage was 35% for children and 28% for guardians. One person with predisposing risk factors was colonized with an MRSA, which was identified as the predominant clone found in New York City hospitals. A high degree of methicillin-susceptible *S aureus* strain diversity was noted, with no apparent selection for specific clonal types.

The authors concluded that MRSA colonization is not ubiquitous in persons without predisposing risk outside of the healthcare environment. Bacterial competition and a lack of strong selection may limit the community spread of MRSA and can account for its sporadic distribution.

FROM: Shopsis B, Mathema B, Martinez J, Ha E, Campo ML, Fierman A, et al. Prevalence of methicillin-resistant and methicillin-susceptible *Staphylococcus aureus* in the community. *J Infect Dis* 2000; 182:359-362.