

# THE THREAT OF MULTIDRUG-RESISTANT INFECTIONS TO CHILDREN

EXPERT TESTIMONY, RESEARCH, AND COMMENTARY

**“Infectious diseases have a significant impact upon American children.** Children contract infections more often than adults and are more likely to spread infections to playmates, schoolmates, siblings, parents, and grandparents. . . . With all our resources and expertise in prevention, as well as drug discovery and development, it is unconscionable not to have an effective therapy for each and every bacterial infection.”

— Testimony of John S. Bradley, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics before the Committee on Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, U.S House of Representatives, June 9, 2010

**“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that late-onset MRSA infection in US neonatal ICUs [intensive care units] increased 300 percent from 1995 to 2004.”**

— A.M. Milstone et al., “The Past, Present, and Future of Healthcare-Associated Infection Prevention in Pediatrics: Multidrug-Resistant Organisms,” *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* 31 Suppl 1 (2010):S18–S21

**“As a pediatric infectious diseases physician, I have helplessly watched a patient die from a highly resistant Gram-negative infection** where we simply had no drugs available for treatment. Unfortunately, I’m not alone. This is happening in hospitals across the country more and more often. Boosting the development of **new antibiotics to treat resistant Gram-negative infections is an urgent public health priority.”**

— Jason G. Newland, Co-Chair, Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society Committee on Antimicrobial Stewardship, e-mail messages to The Pew Charitable Trusts, March 20, 2012 and April 4, 2012

**“Infection remains second only to malignancy as cause of death in pediatric oncology patients.** . . . Fifty percent or more of children with hematologic malignancies [cancers of the blood] will have a documented infection at some point during their therapy.”

— L.C. Bailey et al., “Infections in Pediatric Patients with Hematologic Malignancies,” *Seminars in Hematology* 46, no. 3(2009):313–24

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“In 2009, the rate of skin infections among children that required hospitalization climbed to 9.4 cases per 10,000 children, up from about 4.5 cases per 10,000 in the year 2000. Overall, **about 71,900 children spent time in the hospital in 2009 because of severe skin infections.**”

— Tara Parker-Pope, “More Children Hospitalized with Skin Infections,” *New York Times’ Well* blog, August 11, 2011

“We don’t want to find ourselves in a situation in which we have been able to save a child’s life after a cancer diagnosis, **only to lose [him or her] to an untreatable multi-drug resistant infection.**”

— William Evans, Pharm.D., director and CEO, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, letter to Representative Phil Gingrey (R-GA), August 8, 2011

“**We need new antibiotics, and we need them now . . .** Children with congenital diseases like cystic fibrosis are particularly susceptible to infection, and all too often, our treatment options are limited by drug resistance. For some of these children, the only effective drug is colistin, which is notorious for its harmful side effects, including nerve and kidney damage. **This lack of options is unacceptable.**”

— Mark Kline, M.D., chairman, Department of Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children’s Hospital, letter to Representative Phil Gingrey (R-GA), November 9, 2011

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[WWW.PEWHEALTH.ORG/ANTIBIOTICS](http://WWW.PEWHEALTH.ORG/ANTIBIOTICS).

The Pew Health Group’s Antibiotics and Innovation Project addresses the growing public health challenge of multidrug-resistant infections by supporting policies that stimulate and encourage the development of antibiotics to treat life-threatening illnesses.