

CDC: Antibiotic overuse can be lethal

By Betsy McKay and Valerie Bauerlein, Wall Street Journal

The overuse of antibiotics in U.S. hospitals is putting patients at risk and helping to fuel the creation of deadly superbugs, according to a government report released Tuesday.

Prescribing practices vary widely, with doctors in some hospitals providing three times as many antibiotics for patients as physicians in other facilities treating similar types of patients, concluded the report, produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC analyzed prescribing practices at 323 hospitals in 2010 and 11,282 patients at 183 hospitals in 2011. About 36 percent of patients studied were given the powerful antibiotic vancomycin without testing or for too long, the report found.

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