# Researchers band together in global battle on bacterial biofilms

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The discovery that bacteria are not loners, but social creatures that congregate and chemically communicate in communities — termed biofilms — has sparked a global scientific effort to control spread of these slimy coatings that grow on hospital surfaces, inside tubing, and a multitude of other places. That's the topic of an article scheduled for the June 9 issue of *Chemical & Engineering News*, ACS' weekly newsmagazine.

In the C&EN cover story, Senior Editor Lisa M. Jarvis points that biofilms are the major culprit behind hospital-acquired infections that are now the fourth leading cause of death in the United States, claiming thousands of lives each year. Biofilms also cause other problems ranging from dental plaque to the biofouling of ship hulls. The films are large, complex communities of bacteria that are difficult to kill.

But researchers from academia and industry are now collaborating in a global effort to develop promising new strategies to combat this problem. New approaches include the development of non-stick surfaces and the identification of chemicals that silence bacterial communication or starve them of key nutrients. The first commercial compound to specifically target biofilms is still a few years away, according to the article.

Source: ACS