

Study examines bed bug infestations in 2,372 low-income apartments in New Jersey

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Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*). Credit: Allen Szalanski, Bugwood.org

In order to determine where bed bug outbreaks are occurring and the best way to prevent and control infestations, entomologists examined 2,372 apartments in New Jersey and looked at factors such as the age, race, and gender of the inhabitants. The results are published in the *Journal of Medical Entomology*.

Dr. Changlu Wang and colleagues from Rutgers University examined 43 low-income apartment buildings and 2,372 individual [apartments](#). They found that about 12 percent of apartments had [bed bug](#) infestations, although the rates of infestation varied from building to building.

They also learned that:

- Women were more likely to report symptoms of bed bug bites and more likely to express concern upon learning their homes were infested.
- Infestations were more prevalent in the homes of African Americans than in those of white or Hispanic residents.
- Fifty percent of residents with bed bug infestations were completely unaware of them.
- Apartment buildings with a high turnover of tenants had higher bed bug infestations.

Statistics like these are critical for controlling bed bug infestations, Dr. Wang explained, because "[they] can be used to target our education and bed bug prevention efforts to the most [vulnerable communities](#)."

The researchers also found that they were able to detect nearly 75 percent of infestations with brief visual inspections that took just 10 minutes or less per apartment, which would cost about \$12 per apartment for labor based on a \$50/hour labor rate.

More information: The full article, "Bed Bugs: Prevalence in Low-

Income Communities, Resident's Reactions, and Implementation of a Low-Cost Inspection Protocol," is available at dx.doi.org/10.1093/jme/tjw018

Provided by Entomological Society of America

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