

# Hospitals in Ukraine seeing surge in drug-resistant infections: CDC

December 8 2023, by Robin Foster

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As the war in the Ukraine rages on, new research shows that hospitals there are waging a battle of their own against a different kind of enemy: antibiotic-resistant "superbugs" that are spreading at an alarming rate.

In a study published Thursday by the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, researchers from the CDC and Ukraine's health ministry

tested 353 Ukrainian patients for infections they caught while being treated in the hospital late last year.

What they found: About 60% of these patients were battling [germs](#) resistant to carbapenem antibiotics, which are considered the last resort in treating bacterial infections.

"In Ukraine, the confluence of high prewar rates of antimicrobial resistance, an increase in the prevalence of traumatic wounds and the war-related strain on [health care facilities](#) is leading to increased detection of multidrug-resistant organisms with spread into Europe," the study authors wrote in the Dec. 8 issue of the CDC publication [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

Health officials have been worrying for some time about how the war may be fueling antimicrobial resistance: In March 2022, the European equivalent of the CDC [urged](#) hospitals to isolate and screen patients from Ukraine for multidrug-resistant organisms.

And a German [report](#) published last year saw infections from [drug-resistant bacteria](#) climb "rapidly" after March 2022 across that country, linked to refugees and evacuated patients from Ukraine.

Other drug-resistance threats have been spotted in Ukraine.

U.S. military doctors treating a Ukrainian soldier said the patient had been infected by six different "extensively drug-resistant bacteria," after he suffered traumatic burns across more than half of his body. They reported their findings in the August issue of the CDC's [Emerging Infectious Diseases](#) journal.

To fight the growing threat, the latest CDC report noted [health officials](#) in the Ukraine will need more training and supplies to help hospitals

treating infected patients during the war, as labs have struggled to find the supplies and manpower to test infections for antibiotic resistance.

**More information:** The National Institutes of Health has more on [superbugs](#).

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