



British scientists have found a superbug that is resistant to most antibiotics and are warning that it is widespread in India and could soon appear worldwide. The superbug has so far been identified in 37 people who returned to the U.K. after undergoing surgery in India or Pakistan.

In an article published online Wednesday in the journal *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, doctors reported finding a new gene, called NDM-1. The gene alters bacteria, allowing them to become resistant to nearly all known antibiotics. It has been seen largely in *E. coli* bacteria, the most common cause of urinary tract infections, and on DNA structures that can be easily copied and passed onto other types of bacteria.

The researchers said the superbug appeared to be already circulating widely in India, where the health system is much less likely to identify its presence or have adequate antibiotics to treat patients.

"The potential of NDM-1 to be a worldwide public health problem is great, and coordinated international surveillance is needed," the authors wrote. Aside from the U.K., the resistant gene has also been detected in Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, the U.S. and Sweden. The researchers said that since many Americans and Europeans travel to India and Pakistan for elective procedures like cosmetic surgery, it was likely the superbug would spread worldwide.

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