

## Sex 'superbug' feared to be 'more infectious than AIDS' discovered in Hawaii

By Daily Mail Reporter

Health officials are warning that two cases of a so-called 'sex superbug' have been confirmed in Hawaii. Hawaii News Now reports that the 'sex superbug' is a resistant strain of gonorrhea. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has asked Congress for \$50 million to find a new antibiotic to treat the drug-resistant strain of the disease. The first case in the nation was identified in a young woman in Hawaii in May 2011.

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The 'sex superbug' called H041 was first discovered in Japan in 2011. It spread to Hawaii, and has now surfaced in California and Norway.

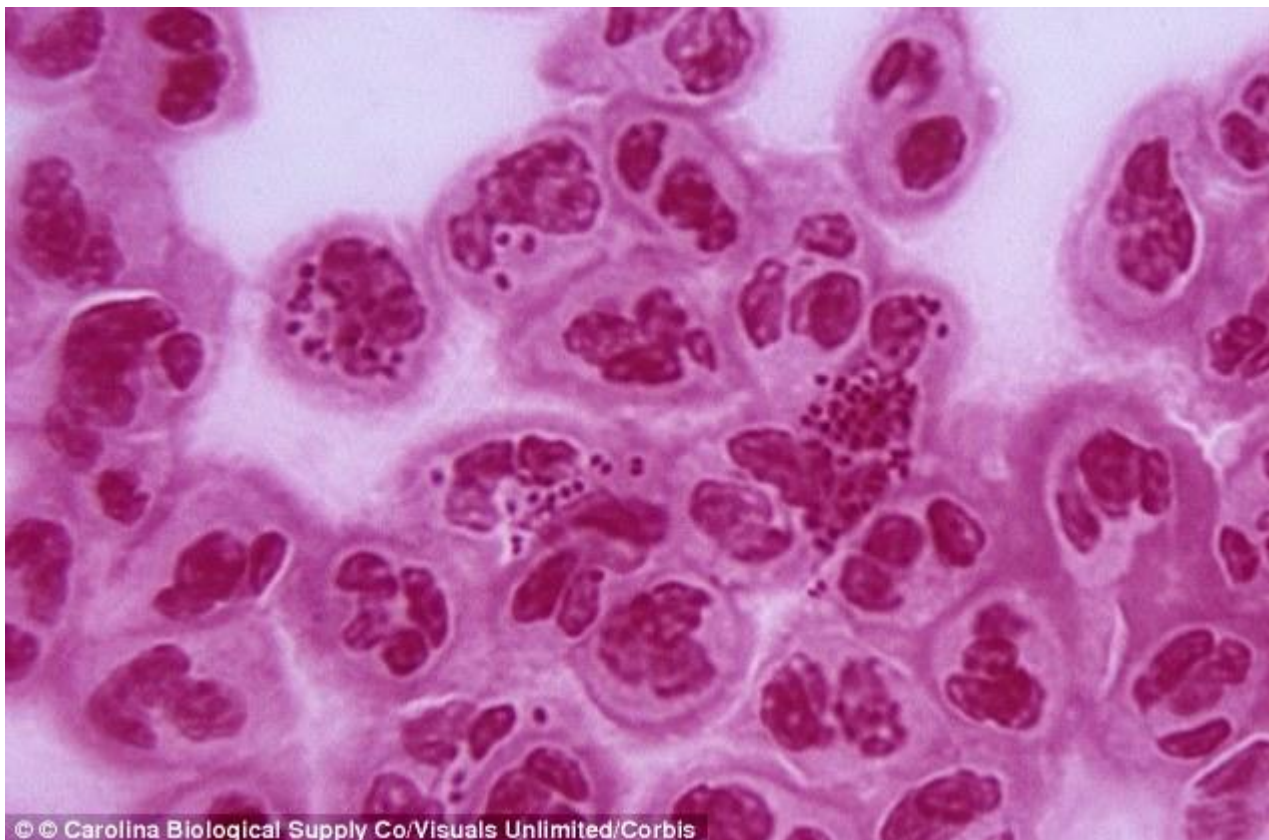
Peter Whiticir with the State Department of Health says advisories have been sent to physicians and health care providers around Hawaii to be on the lookout for the resistant strain of gonorrhea. Doctors are warning that an antibiotic-resistant strain of gonorrhoea, now considered a superbug, has the potential to be as deadly as the AIDS virus.

Gonorrhea is the second most commonly reported sexually transmitted infection in North America.

'This might be a lot worse than AIDS in the short run because the bacteria is more aggressive and will affect more people quickly,' Alan Christianson, a doctor of naturopathic medicine told [CNBC](#). Nearly 30 million people have died from AIDS related causes worldwide, but Christianson believes the effect of the gonorrhea bacteria is more direct.

'Getting gonorrhea from this strain might put someone into septic shock and death in a matter of days,' Christianson said. 'This is very dangerous.'

In a briefing on Capitol Hill last week, William Smith, executive director of the National Coalition for STD Directors, urged Congress to target nearly \$54 million in immediate funding to help find an antibiotic for HO41 and to conduct an education and public awareness campaign.



The 'superbug' was first discovered in Japan and some health officials have said it could rival AIDS

Although no deaths from HO41 have been reported as yet, experts say avoiding the disease completely is the best course of action.

'People need to practice safe sex, like always,' Christianson said. 'Anyone beginning a new relationship should get tested along with their partner.'

'The way gonorrhoea works, not everyone knows they have it. And with this new strain it's even more important than ever to find out.'

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted disease that has been known since medieval times. Sometimes known as 'the clap,' the infection can result in painful sores and genital discharge, and is associated with ectopic pregnancies and sterility in both men and women.

Left untreated, gonorrhoea can lead to a host of complications including pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and blood stream infections.

It also raises the risk for HIV because the lesions permit the AIDS-causing virus easier access to the bloodstream. Gonorrhoea is especially common among people between the ages of 15 and 24. The disease became curable in the 1940s when penicillin and other antibiotics were introduced. Since then, the medical world has created more new drugs that killed the ever-mutating gonorrhoea bacteria.

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On a state-by-state basis, pockets of the U.S. are seeing giant spikes in the disease. Utah saw a 74 percent rise in gonorrhoea cases in 2012, with the trend continuing into the first few months of this year.

In Minnesota, cases rose 35 percent in 2012, according to the state's department of health, and according to the latest statistics from the CDC, 'During 2010–2011, 61% (31/51) of states, plus the District of Columbia, reported an increase in gonorrhoea rates.'

Cephalosporin, the last available class of antibiotics recommended for the treatment of gonorrhoea, has been failing worldwide and there is the very real prospect that all types of gonorrhoea will soon become untreatable.

Professor Cathy Ison, head of the National Reference Laboratory for Gonorrhoea in the U.K. told the [BBC](#) last week: 'There is a possibility that if we don't do something then it could become untreatable by 2015.'