

According to a recent study reported in the [New York Daily News](#) as many as 48,000 people die each year from pneumonia and blood borne infections (sepsis) acquired in our nation's hospitals. Investigators reviewed hospital discharge records from as many as 69 million in-patient hospital admissions between 1998 and 2006, and found that these infections lengthened admissions from eleven to fourteen days and added approximately \$33,000 to \$46,000 in costs to those admissions.

Acquiring a hospital borne infection greatly increased the chances of death for patients. [Reuters reported](#) that between 11 percent and 20 percent of individuals who acquire these infections do not survive. Unfortunately, in many instances healthy people who come to our hospitals for routine surgery become ill and die as a result. In addition to the far greater tragedy of needless loss of life, the cost in terms of money and resources greatly burdens our health system.

Handwashing, improved hygiene, and screening patients as they check in were reported as effective measures to prevent infection, but are hard to enforce, studies have shown. Unfortunately, patients themselves must be vigilant to ensure our healthcare providers observe good infection control.