



Study Summary

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has contracted with Abt Associates and our partner the Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) to help improve empirical antibiotic prescribing practices and delivery to nursing home (NH) residents in general as well as residents transferred to local emergency departments (EDs) by creating facility-specific antibiograms.

This project will test whether the use of NH antibiograms help to reduce inappropriate prescribing practices and whether or not they are helpful to physicians who must make antibiotic prescription decisions without bacteriology laboratory test results.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an antibiogram?

Antibiograms aggregate information for an entire institution over a period of several months or a year. They display the organisms present in clinical specimens sent for laboratory testing, and the susceptibility of each organism to an array of antibiotics. Antibiograms are routinely prepared by hospital laboratories but are not routine in the NH setting.

How will antibiograms be created?

The NH Antibiogram report will be generated by US Laboratories using resident cultures collected from the Spaulding Center – West Roxbury over the past several months.

Why is this study important?

Antibiotics are among the most commonly prescribed pharmaceuticals in long-term care settings, yet reports indicate that a high proportion of antibiotic prescriptions are inappropriate. The adverse consequences of inappropriate prescribing practices are serious and have become a major public health concern.

What is the potential impact of this study?

Outcomes of interest include reduced reliance on broad-spectrum antibiotics as initial therapy, and fewer clinical failures of antibiotics that are first prescribed.

What is my role in the study?

Nurses, physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants will be asked to complete a survey prior to the implementation of the Antibiogram program, and following the conclusion of the Antibiogram program.

To obtain more information about this study, please contact Rosanna Bertrand, Project Director (617-349-2556). You may also call Kendall Hall, AHRQ Project Officer (301-427-1333).