



**CDC Travel Alert:  
Carbapenem-Resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*  
Infections Following Invasive Medical Procedures in  
Tijuana, Mexico**

**January 14, 2019**

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The CDC recently issued a Travel Alert regarding cases of surgical site infections caused by Verona Integron-Encoded Metallo-beta-lactamase (VIM)-producing carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (VIM-CRPA) among United States residents who underwent invasive medical procedures in Tijuana, Mexico. Most (but not all) of the cases were associated with bariatric surgery, and half had their surgery done at the Grand View Hospital. The Grand View Hospital has been closed by the Mexican government until further notice. To date, no cases have been reported among California residents.

The LA County Department of Public Health asks clinicians to call 213-240-7941 to report a case or to receive assistance. Mechanism testing to confirm carbapenemase-producing bacteria is available through the Los Angeles County Public Health Laboratory.

The clinical section of the CDC Travel Alert is excerpted below. The full travel alert can be found [here](#).

- US health care providers should be vigilant for the possibility of resistant infections occurring in patients who have traveled abroad for medical procedures. Take measures to control the spread of multidrug-resistant organisms in the United States.
- Providers caring for patients with a history of invasive procedures in Mexico should be aware of the potential for infections caused by resistant pathogens. The pathogen implicated in the current cluster of infections is carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (CRPA). The resistance mechanism is a metallo- $\beta$ -lactamase encoded by a mobile genetic element known as the Verona integron.
- CRPA are drug-resistant and difficult to treat, requiring protracted and complex antibacterial drug combinations and courses. Consult with an infectious disease specialist.
- When caring for patients who have a history of having undergone invasive procedures in Mexico, obtain cultures, perform antimicrobial susceptibility testing to guide treatment, and test any carbapenem-resistant bacteria for Verona integron and other plasmid-mediated carbapenemases. Report any CRPA surgical site infections in patients who had invasive procedures in Mexico to your local or state health department.
- When admitting patients who have a history of overnight stays in health care facilities outside the United States, consider performing rectal screening for carbapenemase-

producing organisms. This recommendation applies to patients hospitalized outside the United States at any time during the 6 months before their US-based hospital admission.

- Consider placing such patients in isolation and contact precautions while awaiting screening results.

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