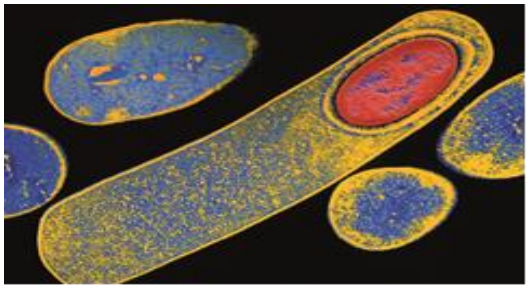

BUG OF THE MONTH

Clostridium Difficile

Who am I?

Clostridium *Difficile* is a bacteria that is found in some people's intestines where it causes no problem, however, some people are more at risk of developing symptoms when the normal bacteria in their bowel is altered, usually by taking certain antibiotics and also if they are over 65, have a weakened immune system and certain underlying conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease, cancer or kidney disease.

Where do I live?

Clostridium Difficile bacteria are found soil and in the digestive system of animals and about 1 in every 30 healthy adults with have the bacteria in their bowel, a higher proportion of young children will carry C. diff as part of their normal bowel flora but it rarely causes illness.

How do I move around?

If people develop diarrhoea Clostridium *Diff*icile can spread easily to others because the bacteria are passed out of the body in the person's diarrhoea; in the environment the cells become resistant (spores) and these spores can survive for long periods on hands, surfaces, and equipment, and can infect others if they ingest them.

What problems do I cause?

The spores of Clostridium *Difficile* can survive in the environment for 12-18 months so can cause a high risk of transmission if not cleaned away effectively. Patients with Clostridium Difficile may carry the bacteria (GDH positive), but have no symptoms.
Some patients may have a toxin positive result. The patient with a toxin positive result should be treated as the bacteria could go on to cause inflammation of the bowel, or perforation, leading the death.
Patients with the GDH positive result should be treated if symptomatic, as this could go on to develop of toxigenic strain

How can you control me?

Prevent Clostridium *Difficile* occurring by **antimicrobial steward ship.**

Prevention is better than cure

Antimicrobial Stewardship

- Is the patient symptomatic of an Infection?
- If possible always send a sample to ensure the correct antibiotic is selected.
- Ensure the correct dose and length of course is prescribed using the Barnsley Formulary

Hand hygiene using liquid soap and water should be undertaken when in contact with a suspected or confirmed case. PPE should be used.
All equipment used with this patient and the environment including high risk and touch areas should be cleaned with a 2 in 1 chlorine product , 1,000 parts per million.
Advice to families should be given regarding hand washing and the use of diluted bleach in high risk/ touch areas.
(household bleach is 30,000 parts per million.