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Study Shows Remote Control Holds More Bacteria Than Toilet Bowl Handle

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Phoenix, AZ (AHN) A new study by University of Arizona Microbiology Professor Chuck Gerba - "The Germ Doctor" - ranks the TV remote control as the highest carrier of bacteria in a patient's hospital room compared to the toilet bowl handle, bathroom door and call buttons.

Even more disturbing is the detection of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) on the remote control. As antibiotic-resistant bacteria, MRSA is a leading cause of infection and death in hospitals.

The total average bacteria found at various hospital room sites were 91, compared to the average for the remote control at 320. Sites tested included: the hand rail, call button, tray table, door knob in/out, bath door out, faucet handle and flush handle.

"At a time when more and more patients are increasingly becoming ill and dying due to hospital-acquired infections, this study has undisputedly identified a leading source of bacteria," says Dr Gerba. "The positive aspect of this study is that there is an easy solution. Since newly opened disposable remotes showed a very small level of bacteria, perhaps we can quickly fix the problem with disposable remote controls."

According to a review published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, infections acquired by patients in hospitals are estimated to affect 2 million people and result in 90,000 deaths, annually.

Patients with hospital-acquired infections spend an average of 14 days in the hospital compared to other patients and account for more than \$9.5 billion in excess medical bills. MRSA cannot be treated with antibiotics and is of major concern to hospital staff as a leading cause of hospital- acquired infection and death.

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