Recently discovered Salmonella strain could render some infections ‘simply untreatable’

Scientists at North Carolina State University say they’ve discovered disease-causing Salmonella bacteria in the U.S. that can resist one of the few remaining antibiotics available for certain infections. What’s worse, the mutation responsible for this newfound resistance can easily be passed onto other bacteria, raising the risk of some infections eventually becoming untreatable with antibiotics.

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So far, there haven’t been any signs of widespread resistance to colistin among these specific superbugs. But scientists have started to spot genetic mutations that allow bacteria to resist colistin in other bacteria—on bits of free-moving DNA called plasmids.

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What makes this so dangerous is that plasmids can move between bacteria. So it’s possible these MCR genes can find their way to a strain of E. coli resistant to all other drugs, for example. And if that strain infects and seriously sickens a person, there might be no conceivable way for doctors to treat it. If this event happens again and again—and barring the discovery of a new or old drug that can step in where colistin failed—we’d be left with a reality where some infections, especially those in hospitals or other areas where superbugs are prevalent, are simply untreatable.

Read full, original post: Oh No, a Bad Salmonella Has Reached the U.S.