

The project co-ordinators of **MRSA-net**



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## Euregio network protects against infections

In Germany, antibiotic-resistant bacteria (MRSA) occur up to 20 times more frequently than in The Netherlands. This difference in MRSA rates becomes more obvious than elsewhere at our common border.

The **EUREGIO MRSA-net** project is a network founded to protect the population in the EUREGIO Münsterland/Twente from infections with MRSA. From both sides of the border there is a network of the health care providers under development, who have to deal every day with MRSA. It is primarily composed by hospitals, nursing homes, general practitioners, public health authorities, laboratories etc. MRSA-net is the basis for a cross-border quality group, which wants to create long-term structures for the fight against MRSA, and as an example for the management of other infections.

### Learn from each other

The close co-operation and the exchange of knowledge and know-how regarding MRSA improve the quality of the patient's treatment and the chances for employment in the health care service across our common border.

The wound bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* is the most frequent cause for hospital acquired infections world-wide. Particularly critical are infections by Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), for which there are only few possibilities of antibiotic therapy.

### Community acquired CA-MRSA

For the past few years, medical doctors observed an increase of the so called „community acquired “(CA)-MRSA in both countries, which represents a risk of infection for the healthy population also outside the hospitals.

### Building a network along the MRSA cycle

MRSA is found on the skin of patients every day throughout Europe. Frequently, these patients are discharged with MRSA. This is no further danger for usual contact persons, as long as they do not have open wounds or a strongly weakened immune system.

Because of the prolonged MRSA carrier status, nevertheless, one problem remains: With the next hospitalization, MRSA can be transferred to other patients or can lead to an infection.

### MRSA-net "round table".

The MRSA-net brings together the respective players of the health care systems in the EUREGIO which have to contribute to the solution of the MRSA problem. Representatives, from Dutch and German laboratories, hospitals, public health authorities, chief executive officers and clinical directors of hospitals, infection control personnel, representatives of the health insurances, medical doctor's associations, and the press are able to meet their counterparts at the "round table" to exchange their experiences regarding the MRSA problem under the moderation of the project co-ordinators.

### spa typing - The epidemiological backbone of the network

The epidemiological backbone of the project is a typing network providing a common language based on *S. aureus* protein A (*spa*) gene sequencing of MRSA strains. In summary, the use of *spa* typing as typing method showed cross-border spread of MRSA. The use of the *spa* typing on both sides of the border shows significant differences in the regional epidemiology of MRSA. Based on these experiences, an early warning system for highly virulent MRSA and new co-ordinated regional and cross-border strategies can be developed to fight MRSA.

### Synchronisation of euregional MRSA-protocols

In order to limit the cross-border transmission of MRSA a synchronisation of the current Dutch and German guidelines at a regional level is necessary. Dutch and German guidelines differ in the way of perspectives which result in apparent differences at the level of hospital protocols. A content analysis of national Dutch and German guidelines is conducted, interviews of health care workers on both sides of the border are undertaken in order to design cross-border and user-adapted MRSA guidelines for the EUREGIO.

### MRSA Helpdesk

The MRSA-helpdesk offers information, guidelines and regional protocols and improves their comprehensibility, applicability and acceptability for the cross-border management of MRSA. This knowledge centre also provides the opportunity for direct consultations for difficult cases on a 24h basis for patients, health care providers and the interested public.

### Aims of the project

1. Creation of a cross-border network along the MRSA cycle of the actors in the health care system in the region Münsterland/Twente
2. Synchronisation of the national MRSA guidelines, creation and testing of practicable and user friendly MRSA protocols
3. Training of staff in the health care service
4. Active information of the public in order to increase the attention to infection prevention in general
5. Control of the spread of the so called CA-MRSA, which can cause infections also in healthy people.
6. Close co-operation with the public health authorities (ÖGD/GGD)
7. Creation of a quality group and structures for the long-term decrease of the MRSA rate throughout the EUREGIO

Our border offers a unique chance in the fight against MRSA. Less MRSA will...

- help to open the border even more,
- improve the quality of health care and
- lead to an advantage of location for the entire region.

For all your questions regarding MRSA:

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Phone The Netherlands: +31 (0)53 852 6300

e-mail: [info@mrsa-net.org](mailto:info@mrsa-net.org)

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