

Study discovers bug behind most food poisoning

By Dan Buckley

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RESEARCHERS at Cork Institute of Technology have uncovered a new deadly bacteria which they believe is responsible for more cases of food poisoning than either E. Coli or Salmonella.

A combined study involving CIT's Department of Biological Sciences and the Department of Medical Microbiology at Cork University Hospital have uncovered a previously unidentified and potentially fatal disease causing bacterium — *Campylobacter ureolyticus*.

The team of researchers, Dr Roy Sleator, Dr Brigid Lucey and Dr Susan Bullman also worked in conjunction with Seresop, a Limerick-based company specialising in laboratory diagnostics.

The groundbreaking research, which used DNA-based diagnostic techniques developed in-house by the team, reveals that the previously undetected bacterium causes more cases of food poisoning than E. coli or Salmonella combined and is recognised as the third most common cause of bacterial foodborn illness.

The findings of the research, which have recently been published in the peer-reviewed scientific journals *FEMS Immunology and Medical Microbiology* and *Epidemiology and Infection*, have significant implications for how hospitals test for food-poisoning bacteria in the future.

A total of 7194 faecal samples collected over a one-year period from patients presenting with diarrhoea were screened for *Campylobacter*.

Of 349 *Campylobacter*-positive samples, 23.8% were shown to be *Campylobacter ureolyticus*.

"This is, to the best of our knowledge, the first report of *C. ureolyticus* in the faeces of patients presenting with gastroenteritis," said lead researcher Dr Sleator in CIT and PI at UCC's Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre, who added that it may suggest a role for this organism as an "emerging enteric pathogen", or infectious gastrointestinal organism.

Read more: <http://www.examiner.ie/ireland/study-discovers-bug-behind-most-food-poisoning-164097.html#ixzz1V6wq6VD6>