

# Did you know? Anti-infective medication errors



## Did you know?

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# 172

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NHS Resolution received 172 claims relating to anti-infective medications between 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2020. Anti-infective medications include antibiotics, antivirals and antifungals.

# 68

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Out of these 172 claims, 68 were settled with damages paid, 51 without merit and 53 remain open.

# £2,612,667

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The total cost of closed claims is **£2,612,667**. This includes payments for claimant legal costs, NHS legal costs and damages.

The analysis in this leaflet only focuses on closed claims that have been settled with damages paid and concern an element of the prescribing process: prescribing, transcribing, dispensing, administering and monitoring. Claims concerning a failure to recognise that an anti-infective was indicated have not been included within the analysis.

# Key facts

The World Health Organisation highlights a range of medications associated with particularly high-risk medications using the acronym **A-PINCH**:

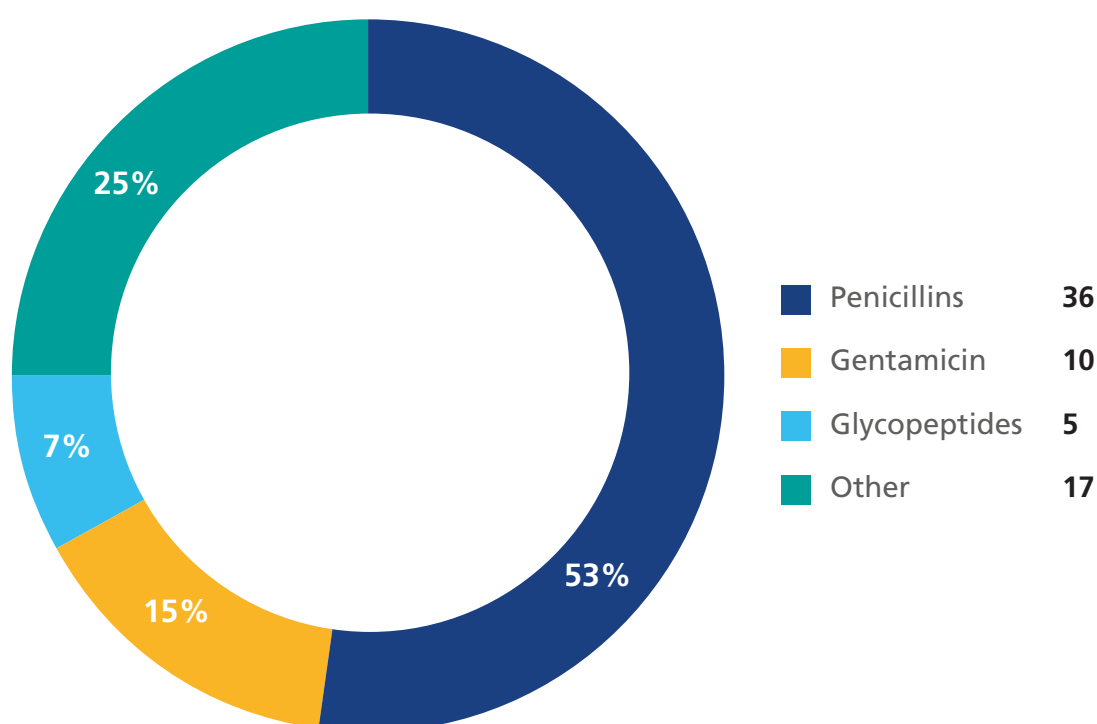


Significant patient harm has resulted in claims concerning anti-infective medications. Such claims are seen across all specialities. The types of harm identified within anti-infective medication error claims include:

- Death
- Anaphylaxis
- Acute kidney injury
- Unnecessary pain

# Results

The chart below shows that penicillins, gentamicin and glycopeptides result in the most claims. Examples of glycopeptides include vancomycin and teicoplanin.



## Did you know?

Key causes of anti-infective medication error claims:

- Failure to check allergy status
- Failure to cross-check the ingredients of a medication against allergy status
- Failure to adjust dose of medication to the patient's weight
- Failure to adjust dose of medication according to renal function

# What can you do?

- When prescribing antibiotics, refer to the [British National Formulary \(BNF\)](#) for guidance on adjusting dosages according to patient weight, kidney function and the frequency of monitoring.
- Refer to the [traffic light system](#) for antibiotics and penicillin allergy.
- Ensure that the weight of a patient is regularly checked and adjust drug doses accordingly.
- Check the allergy status of the patient at each point of the medication process.
- Review local guidelines to ensure they incorporate national guidance and support clinicians to prescribe, administer and monitor the effects of anti-infectives appropriately. Examples of relevant national guidance include NICE quality standards on [antimicrobial stewardship](#) and [sepsis](#).
- Access the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on [acute kidney injury](#) to find information and advice on the prevention, detection, and management of acute kidney injury.
- Review your organisation's claims history regarding medication errors and ensure that learning is shared with clinicians.

8th Floor  
10 South Colonnade  
Canary Wharf  
London, E14 4PU  
Telephone 020 7811 2700  
Fax 020 7821 0029  
Email [nhsr.safety@nhs.net](mailto:nhsr.safety@nhs.net)

Arena Point, Merrion Way  
Leeds LS2 8PA  
Telephone 0113 866 5500

[www.resolution.nhs.uk](http://www.resolution.nhs.uk)

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This is part of a series of 'Did you know?' publications that address medication safety – [download and read more on our website.](#)

