



[Patient safety in Europe: spreading innovation and promoting civic participation in healthcare for a zero-tolerance approach to hospital infections.](#)

NEWS

12 February 2019 by [Mariano VOTTA](#) [Cittadinanzattiva] in the [Agora Network network](#)

In order to effectively fight against healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR), it is necessary to adopt innovative solutions together with a decisive action aiming at raising awareness of this issue among the public. Therefore, it is pivotal to engage groups advocating for patients' rights. This is the message that emerges from a two-day event devoted to patient safety, organized on the 4th and 5th of February in Brussels by Active Citizenship Network, the European network of Cittadinanzattiva, with the support of Copma.

Indeed, recent data released by the European Center for Infectious Diseases (ECDC) have reported that the problem of antibiotic-resistant infections is worsening. In Europe, about 33,000 deaths per year are caused by this kind of infections, and almost a third of these occur in Italy. Here, despite the high incidence of this phenomenon, there is a very low level of awareness of the risks associated with HAIs and AMR.

Proper prevention practices, together with the adoption of innovative solutions, could significantly curb HAIs, and consequently, economically benefit the national health system. As a matter of fact, the costs of treating each single infection range from 5.000 to 9.000 euros.

In this regard, on February 5th, 2019, an eco-sustainable probiotic-based cleaning system (Probiotic Cleaning Hygiene System, PCHS) was presented for the first time to the European Commission, as well as to numerous stakeholders and leaders of civic and patients' associations coming from 13 countries. This system exploits microbial biocompetition and reduces HAIs by 52%, guaranteeing long-lasting, stable conditions of hygiene in hospital environments, thus benefitting both patients and the healthcare system as a whole.

"The data raise great concerns", states Cittadinanzattiva's General Secretary Antonio Gaudio, "7,800 people die in Italy every year due to antibiotic-resistant infections contracted during hospitalization, almost twice the number of deaths caused by car accidents. These data place us at the bottom of European rankings. As a European citizen, I wonder if, after the elections of May 2019, the European Parliament will include the issue of HAIs and AMR within the priorities of the EU political agenda for the coming years".

"We have invested in research and innovation," says COPMA's CEO Mario Pinca, "contributing to reduce infectious risks linked to the environment. The PCHS system allows to stably abate surface pathogens causing infections and subsequently reduces antimicrobial resistance. I think that it is time to act concretely, hoping that competent institutions will take on board this innovation."

In Italy, one in 15 patients contracts an infection during hospitalization which was not clinically apparent nor incubated at the time of entry. Additionally, the Pit Health Report of Cittadinanzattiva reports that nosocomial infections have been increasing in the last year (4.9% in 2017 compared to 4.3% in 2016), especially among immunosuppressed patients. Likewise, the number of complaints about the conditions of healthcare facilities has been rising, growing from 30.5% in 2015 to 33.4% in 2017. In particular, citizens complain when they are treated in structures characterized by crumbling environments, poor hygiene conditions, or lacking maintenance. [read less](#) ▲

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