

New Delhi superbug gene reaches the Arctic

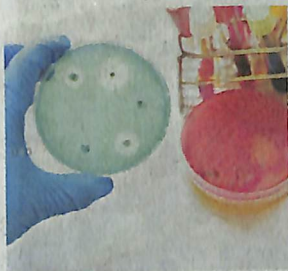
'Carried in the gut of birds and people'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In a significant find in the global spread of multi-drug resistant (MDR) bacteria, scientists have found a "superbug" gene – first detected in New Delhi over a decade back – in one of the last "pristine" places on Earth that is some 12,870 km away.

Soil samples taken in Svalbard – a Norwegian archipelago between mainland Norway and the North Pole – have now confirmed the spread of blaNDM-1 (called New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase-1) into the High Arctic.

This Antibiotic-Resistant Gene (ARG), originally found in Indian clinical settings, conditionally provides multi-drug resistance (MDR) in microorganisms, revealed the research team from U.K.'s Newcastle University.



Soil samples confirmed the spread of blaNDM-1.

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British scientists later found the "superbug" in New Delhi's public water supply. Since then, the resistant gene has been found in over 100 countries, including new variants.

Carried in the gut of animals and people, the new research said that blaNDM-1 and other ARGs were found in Arctic soils that were likely spread through the faecal matter of birds, other wildlife and human visitors to the area.