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Antibiotics failing youngsters;   
Half of **children** resistant to common antibiotics  
  
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HALF of all **children** are now resistant to some of the most common antibiotics, causing fears that treatment could be rendered "ineffective", a major study has found.

Researchers from Bristol University and Imperial College London examined levels of resistance to antibiotics in urinary tract infections caused by E.coli - a bacteria responsible for four in five such infections.

The global research, involving almost 80,000 samples, found that many of the most commonly prescribed antibiotics drew high levels of resistance. **Children** are among the most common consumers of antibiotics and routine use has been shown to increase the risk the drugs will not work in adulthood.

Within Western countries, more than half of all samples were resistant to ampicillin, along with almost a quarter to trimethoprim and three in 10 to co-trimoxazole.

Studies have suggested up to half of antibiotics given to adults may fail due to superbugs, but little has been known before about the prevalence of bacterial resistance in **children.**Researchers Continued on Page 2 Continued from Page 1 reviewed 58 studies from 26 countries around the world involving 78,000 E. coli samples taken from **children.**

The study, published in the BMJ, concluded that resistance to some of the most common antibiotics "could result in several drugs becoming ineffective first-line treatments in many countries". The figures were even higher in countries outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Urinary tract infections are common in childhood, with one in 10 girls and one in 30 boys likely to experience them at some stage. The study showed that resistance was particularly high in the months immediately after treatment, for a period of up to six months. "Prevalence of resistance to commonly prescribed antibiotics in primary care in**children** with urinary tract infections caused by E.coli is high, particularly in countries outside the OECD, where one possible explanation is the availability of antibiotics over the counter," said Ashley Bryce, the lead author, at the University of Bristol.

Dr Ceire Costelloe, a co-leader of the study, from Imperial College London, said: "The results also suggest previous antibiotic use increased the subsequent risk of E.coli resistance to that particular antibiotic - for up to six months after treatment."

Prof Grant Russell, of Monash University in Australia, said the findings were "compelling evidence" of the need to cut down on the use of antibiotics. However, he said he was not confi-dent that there was the "will and commitment" to do so.

Earlier this year, an investigation into the death of William Mead, a baby who died from blood poisoning, said doctors were under "constant pressure" not to prescribe antibiotics, even when they believed **children** needed them. Other studies have suggested that giving**children** antibiotics could cause obesity and diabetes.