

Hospital sniffer dog can detect bacterial infections in patients



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Dogs have already proved useful as a means of reducing the stress levels of students at [Yale Law School](#), which has recognized the therapeutic qualities of the animals. Helping humans in a different way, a sniffer dog is now detecting cases of a deadly bacterial infection at the [VU University Medical Center](#) in Amsterdam.

Hospital bugs are easily picked up by patients if they begin to spread, but doctors can be late to diagnose them if visible symptoms aren't present. In the case of *Clostridium difficile* – also known as *C. diff* – infected patients begin to have a distinctive odor in their stools and the center is now using Cliff the beagle to sniff out those affected by the illness. According to [reports](#), the dog has so far correctly identified 97 out of 100 samples from patients, and can also determine presence of the bacterial infection by smelling the air around guests' beds. Cliff notifies staff by sitting next to those with the infection.

It is believed that other canines could be trained to spot signs of the bug in hospitals and help reduce spread by detecting it earlier than humans can. Could dogs' refined senses be helpful in other situations?

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