

## Study identifies characteristics of hospitals with low rates of surgical site infections

New research published in the December issue of the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* (JACS) suggests that surgical procedures that are shorter in duration and the use of fewer blood transfusions characterize hospitals that have a lower incidence of surgical site infections (SSI). Furthermore, the study concludes that strategies to reduce the length of operations and the number of blood transfusions should complement basic aseptic techniques in the operating room.

Previously, evidence-based prevention measures implemented by the Surgical Infections Prevention Project (SIPP) resulted in a 27 percent reduction in the incidence of SSIs in 44 participating hospitals over the course of one year. This study, part of the first American College of Surgeons-National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS-NSQIP) Best Practices Initiative, aimed to identify "best practices" that have not yet achieved the evidence requirement and therefore were not included in the SIPP.

Researchers compared 20 low SSI incidence and 13 high SSI incidence hospitals with regard to patient characteristics, operative variables, structural variables, and processes of care. Results of the analysis showed that hospitals with high SSI rates performed operations that took significantly longer on average compared with hospitals with low SSI rates. In addition, hospitals with low SSI rates were less likely to administer transfusions than hospitals with high SSI rates. Data showed that hospitals that were substantially more involved with training young surgeons had operations with longer durations.