

Elderly persons, i.e., those ≥ 65 years of age, were affected most by *C. difficile* infections; this age group accounted for 1,506 (65%) of all cases (n = 2,306) in 2006. The 45- to 64-year age group had the next highest number of cases, 451 (20%). Men and women were affected equally in the different age groups; slightly more women (n = 805) than men (n = 701) with *C. difficile* infection were ≥ 65 years of age.

According to state and local health departments, there were no major health campaigns since 2004 that might have selectively increased awareness for *C. difficile* notification. Our results show a continuous increase of cases that even reaches seasonal notification levels of *Salmonella* spp. and rotavirus infections, but the increase is difficult to explain entirely by changes in reporting behavior. We emphasize

the role of individual German states in setting additional surveillance targets for public health. Given the epidemic potential and the severity of the disease, especially among the elderly, surveillance of *C. difficile* should be introduced throughout Germany along with enhanced prevention and treatment strategies (5).

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ANOTHER DIMENSION

The CAT Scan

Ronald O. Valdiserri

I enter your portal through a scrim of invisible rays,
beads of energy outnumbering my regrets.
Supine on a cold bed, part supplicant, part sacrifice.
Like all captives, fearing judgment.
Woosh, then comes the warm tingle of the dye,
everywhere at once.
It feels like a cleansing...
washing away debris, debt, equivocation.
“no,” silently, I correct myself,
acknowledging the iodine’s more melancholy assignment:
building a luminous marquee around 56 years of imperfection and wear.
And the lights blink yellow.

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