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**TOPIC: METHICILLIN-RESISTANT *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS* AND
PENICILLIN-RESISTANT PNEUMOCOCCI**

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We are witnessing the geographic expansion of both methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and penicillin-resistant pneumococci over large geographic areas. With both of these developments, it appears that, as resistance to the β -lactam antibiotic increases, the more homogenous the strain is genetically and the more likely it is that the strain will develop multiresistant factors. Molecular fingerprinting techniques have played an important role in identifying these trends.

An example of the capacity of these strains to spread geographically occurred with the spread in Brazil of a single strain of MRSA from Porto Allegre, through Rio, to Manaus, a distance of 5,000 kilometers.¹ An analogous example can be seen in New York City, which has a unique clone of MRSA that is widely distributed from Stony Brook, Long Island, to Westchester County, to hospitals in Manhattan and Queens. The mechanism of this spread has yet to be completely understood.

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