



No evidence for use of overgowns in newborn nurseries

Clinical question

How effective is the wearing of an overgown by attendants and visitors on the incidence of infection and death in infants in newborn nurseries?

Bottom line

There was no evidence to demonstrate that overgowns were effective in limiting death, infection or bacterial colonisation in infants admitted to newborn nurseries. There were also no effects on the length of hospital stay or hand-washing frequency. Based on these studies, use of overgowns may not be a cost-effective policy.

Caveat

Only 2 of the trials were considered to be of good quality, and there was variation between trials regarding policies on use of overgowns. No trials of visitor use of overgowns were found.

Context

Overgowns are widely used in newborn nurseries and neonatal intensive care units. It is thought that gowns may help to prevent the spread of nosocomial infection and serve as a reminder to staff and visitors to wash their hands before contact with an infant.

Cochrane Systematic Review

Webster J, Pritchard MA. Gowning by attendants and visitors in newborn nurseries for prevention of neonatal morbidity and mortality. *Cochrane Reviews*, 2011, Issue 2. Article No. CD003670. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD003670.pub3.

This review contains 8 studies involving 3811 participants.

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