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1: Int J Antimicrob Agents. 1999 Aug;12(3):245-51.

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ELSEVIER SCIENCE
FULL-TEXT ARTICLE

Vaginal disinfection with chlorhexidine during childbirth.

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether chlorhexidine vaginal douching, applied by a squeeze bottle intra partum, reduced mother-to-child transmission of vaginal microorganisms including *Streptococcus agalactiae* (*streptococcus* serogroup B = GBS) and hence infectious morbidity in both mother and child. A prospective controlled study was conducted on pairs of mothers and their offspring. During the first 4 months (reference phase), the vaginal flora of women in labour was recorded and the newborns monitored. During the next 5 months (intervention phase), a trial of randomized, blinded placebo controlled douching with either 0.2% chlorhexidine or sterile saline was performed on 1130 women in vaginal labour. During childbirth, bacteria were isolated from 78% of the women. Vertical transmission of microbes occurred in 43% of the reference deliveries. In the double blind study, vaginal douching with chlorhexidine significantly reduced the vertical transmission rate from 35% (saline) to 18% (chlorhexidine), ($P < 0.0001$, 95% confidence interval 0.12-0.22). The lower rate of bacteria isolated from the latter group was accompanied by a significantly reduced early infectious morbidity in the neonates ($P < 0.05$, 95% confidence interval 0.00-0.06). This finding was particularly pronounced in *Str. agalactiae* infections ($P < 0.01$). In the early postpartum period, fever in the mothers was significantly lower in the patients offered vaginal disinfection, a reduction from 7.2% in those douched using saline compared with 3.3% in those disinfected using chlorhexidine ($P < 0.05$, 95% confidence interval 0.01-0.06). A parallel lower occurrence of urinary tract infections was also observed, 6.2% in the saline group as compared with 3.4% in the chlorhexidine group ($P < 0.01$, 95% confidence p interval 0.00-0.05). This prospective controlled trial demonstrated that vaginal douching with 0.2% chlorhexidine during labour can significantly reduce both maternal and early neonatal infectious morbidity. The squeeze bottle procedure was simple, quick, and well tolerated. The beneficial effect may be ascribed both to mechanical cleansing by liquid flow and to the disinfective action of chlorhexidine.

Publication Types:

- Clinical Trial
- Randomized Controlled Trial

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