



“Neonates in intensive care are more susceptible to sepsis. Infection is commonly acquired via the transcutaneous portal. It is necessary to identify the most effective yet safest topical antiseptics for use in neonates to reduce nosocomial sepsis.” Ponnusamy et al (2014).

Reference:

Ponnusamy, V., Venkatesh, V. and Clarke, P. (2014) Skin antiseptics in the neonate: what should we use? *Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases*. 27(3), p.244-50.

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Abstract:

**PURPOSE OF REVIEW:** Neonates in intensive care are more susceptible to sepsis. Infection is commonly acquired via the transcutaneous portal. It is necessary to identify the most effective yet safest topical antiseptics for use in neonates to reduce nosocomial sepsis.

**RECENT FINDINGS:** Recent national surveys indicate that a wide range of topical antiseptic preparations are used in the neonatal nursery. There are very few comparative studies in neonates and no robust evidence in favour of any particular antiseptic. There are significant safety and potential toxicity issues for neonates with all the commonly used antiseptics,



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particularly in very small immature babies. There are no convincing roles for routine application of emollient creams on the skin, topical antiseptics on the umbilical stump, or maternal vaginal washes with chlorhexidine for the prevention of neonatal infection.

SUMMARY: Large multicentre trials are needed to determine the optimal antiseptic to use for neonates undergoing intensive care, especially for extremely preterm infants.

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