

# Northumbria Research Link

Citation: Molyneux, Elizabeth, Dube, Queen, Banda, Francis, Chiume, Msandeni, Singini, Isaac, Mallewa, Macpherson, Schwalbe, Ed and Heyderman, Robert (2017) The Treatment of Possible Severe Infection in Infants: An Open Randomized Safety Trial of Parenteral Benzylpenicillin and Gentamicin Versus Ceftriaxone in Infants <60 days of Age in Malawi. *Paediatric Infectious Diseases Journal*, 36 (12). e328-e333. ISSN 0891-3668

Published by: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1097/INF.0000000000001576>  
<<https://doi.org/10.1097/INF.0000000000001576>>

This version was downloaded from Northumbria Research Link: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/30131/>

Northumbria University has developed Northumbria Research Link (NRL) to enable users to access the University's research output. Copyright © and moral rights for items on NRL are retained by the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. Single copies of full items can be reproduced, displayed or performed, and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided the authors, title and full bibliographic details are given, as well as a hyperlink and/or URL to the original metadata page. The content must not be changed in any way. Full items must not be sold commercially in any format or medium without formal permission of the copyright holder. The full policy is available online: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/policies.html>

This document may differ from the final, published version of the research and has been made available online in accordance with publisher policies. To read and/or cite from the published version of the research, please visit the publisher's website (a subscription may be required.)



**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE



**UniversityLibrary**

1  
2  
3  
4 The Treatment of Possible Severe Infection in Infants: An Open Randomized Safety Trial of  
5  
6 Parenteral Benzylpenicillin and Gentamicin Versus Ceftriaxone in Infants <60 days of Age in  
7  
8 Malawi  
9

10  
11 Elizabeth M. Molyneux, FRCPCH<sup>1</sup>, Queen Dube, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>, Francis Banda, FSACP<sup>1</sup>,  
12  
13 Msandeni Chiume, MMed Paeds<sup>2</sup>, Isaac Singini, PhD<sup>3</sup>, Macpherson Mallewa, PhD<sup>1</sup>,  
14  
15 Edward C. Schwalbe, PhD<sup>4</sup>, and Robert S. Heyderman, PhD<sup>5,6</sup>  
16  
17

18  
19 <sup>1</sup> Department of Paediatrics, College of Medicine, Blantyre, Malawi  
20

21  
22 <sup>2</sup> Department of Paediatrics, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre, Malawi  
23

24  
25 <sup>3</sup> John Hopkins Research Unit College of Medicine, Blantyre, Malawi  
26

27  
28 <sup>4</sup> Department of Health and Life Sciences, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.  
29

30  
31 <sup>5</sup> Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme, College of Medicine,  
32  
33 Blantyre, Malawi  
34

35  
36 <sup>6</sup>Division of Infection & Immunity, University College London, UK  
37

38  
39 **Corresponding author:** Elizabeth M Molyneux Flat 4, Cap Martin, Blundellsands, Liverpool  
40

41  
42 L23 6TD UK: [emmolyneux@gmail.com](mailto:emmolyneux@gmail.com) tel:

43  
44 The authors declare no conflicts of interest  
45

46  
47 **Abbreviated title:** Pen/Gent or Ceftriaxone for Sepsis in Malawian Neonates  
48

49  
50 **Running head:** Antibiotic Choices for Neonatal Sepsis in Malawi  
51

52  
53 **Keywords:** neonatal sepsis, ceftriaxone, adverse events, outcome.  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

**Background:** The World Health Organization recommends benzylpenicillin and gentamicin as antimicrobial treatment of infants with sepsis in low income settings (LICs), and ceftriaxone or cefotaxime as an alternative. In a meta-analysis from 13 LICs, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Klebsiella spp.* and *E.coli* accounted for 55% of infants with sepsis. In a review of bacterial meningitis, resistance to third generation cephalosporins was >50% of all isolates, and 44% of Gram-negative isolates were gentamicin resistant. However, ceftriaxone may cause neonatal jaundice and gentamicin may cause deafness. Therefore, we compared parenteral benzylpenicillin plus gentamicin to ceftriaxone as first line treatment, assessing outcome and adverse events.

**Methods** This was an open randomized trial carried out in the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre, Malawi from 2010 to 2013. Infants < 60 days of age with possible severe sepsis received either benzylpenicillin and gentamicin or ceftriaxone. Adverse events and outcomes were recorded until 6 months post discharge.

**Results:** 348 infants were included in analyses. Outcome in the benzylpenicillin and gentamicin or ceftriaxone groups was similar; deaths were 13.7% and 16.5% and sequelae 14.5% and 11.2% respectively. More infants in the penicillin/gentamicin group required phototherapy: 15% v 5%, p=0.03. Thirteen (6%) survivors had bilateral hearing loss. There was no difference between the treatment groups. By 6 months post discharge 11 more infants had died and 17 more children were found to have sequelae.

**Conclusions** Ceftriaxone and gentamicin are safe for infants in our setting. Infants should receive long term follow up as many poor outcomes occurred after hospital discharge.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

## **Introduction**

In an open, randomized trial of Malawian infants <60 days of age with possible severe bacterial infection, we compared parenteral benzylpenicillin plus gentamicin to ceftriaxone as first line treatment, assessing outcome and adverse events.

## **Background**

Clinically suspected possible severe bacterial infections (pSBIs) are common in low-income settings, especially in the first month of life when mortality and morbidity are high.<sup>1</sup> Early and appropriate therapy are critical to a good outcome. Antimicrobial therapy is guided by World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations: first line therapy with parenteral benzylpenicillin and gentamicin; second line treatment with cefotaxime or ceftriaxone.<sup>2</sup> Gentamicin has a potential for toxicity, especially hearing loss, but methods of monitoring blood concentrations of the drug are rarely available. There are no studies comparing the two regimens for efficacy, adverse events and outcome. Possible severe bacterial infection includes severe pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis. The WHO Young Infants sepsis study group reported that in a multicenter study in low income countries (LIC) in Asia and Africa, the three most common causes of pSBI found were Gram negative enteric bacteria, Group B Streptococcus (GBS) and *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.<sup>3</sup> In a meta-analysis of reports from 13 low income settings, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Klebsiella spp.* and *E.coli* accounted for 55% (39-70%) of culture positive sepsis in all infants;<sup>4</sup> findings confirmed in a review of 21 studies, published after 2000, of neonatal invasive bacteremia in low income settings, 10 of which were in sub Saharan settings.<sup>5</sup> In a six-country review of bacterial meningitis, resistance to second and third generation cephalosporins was present in >50% of all isolates, and 44% of Gram-negative isolates were gentamicin-resistant.<sup>6</sup>

1  
2  
3  
4 Early onset sepsis (<7 days) is often associated with risk factors in the mother and /or  
5  
6 delivery and the causative agents are GBS, *S. aureus* and Gram negative bacteria such as *E. coli*.

7  
8  
9 Late onset infections (7-60 days) are commonly caused by bacteria such as *S. pneumoniae*, *S.*  
10  
11 *aureus*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and also GBS.<sup>2</sup>

12  
13  
14 In high-income settings, first line antimicrobial treatment is usually benzylpenicillin or  
15  
16 ampicillin and gentamicin for non-meningitis cases, and cefotaxime with ampicillin for  
17  
18 meningitis or as second line therapy. The ampicillin is to cover *Listeria monocytogenes*  
19  
20 infections.<sup>7</sup> Ceftriaxone has been avoided in infants because of perceived safety issues,  
21  
22 especially in infants who are jaundiced or hypoalbuminaemic,<sup>8</sup> because ceftriaxone can cause  
23  
24 biliary sludging, although this is reversed when treatment ceases and has no persisting sequelae.<sup>8-</sup>  
25  
26

27  
28  
29 <sup>11</sup> Ceftriaxone can form ceftriaxone-calcium complexes if given within 48 hours of a calcium-  
30  
31 containing intravenous (IV) infusion. These complexes precipitate in IV fluid lines, the lungs and  
32  
33 the kidneys, sometimes with fatal results.<sup>12-14</sup> Some national guidelines advise against using  
34  
35 ceftriaxone in premature babies until they attain the gestational age of 41 weeks.<sup>15</sup> Ceftriaxone is  
36  
37 still the drug of choice in neonatal gonorrhoeal ophthalmitis.<sup>16</sup>

38  
39  
40 Except in inflamed meninges, gentamicin has poor CNS penetration, achieves rather poor CSF  
41  
42 levels and does not penetrate well into cells. The therapeutic range is narrow and gentamicin may  
43  
44 control but fail to eradicate Gram negative infections.<sup>17</sup> In Blantyre *Listeria monocytogenes* is  
45  
46 exceptionally rare. This may be because a typical Malawian diet does not include unpasteurized  
47  
48 dairy products or salads. Surrounding countries such as Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe  
49  
50 report similar causes of pSBI as Malawi.<sup>18-20</sup>

51  
52  
53 Cephalosporins are bactericidal antibiotics and although CNS penetration is modest, higher doses  
54  
55 safely achieve therapeutic CSF drug levels. In Malawi benzylpenicillin is appropriate for GBS  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 infections and for most *S. pneumoniae* infections.<sup>21,22</sup> *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and many other  
5  
6 Gram negative bacteria are increasingly resistant to gentamicin.<sup>23,24</sup>  
7

8  
9 The recommended WHO first line therapy may be inadequate empirical therapy where Gram  
10  
11 negative bacteria account for half or more of all cases of SBI in infants <2 months of age. For  
12  
13 this reason, we compared benzylpenicillin and gentamicin to ceftriaxone as first line treatment  
14  
15 for pSBI in infants, and monitored for safety, especially jaundice, during therapy.  
16  
17

## 18 19 Methods

20  
21 This was an open randomized trial carried out in the pediatric department of the Queen Elizabeth  
22  
23 Central Hospital (QECH) in Blantyre, Malawi from March 2010 to February 2013. QECH is an  
24  
25 1100-bedded public government hospital; it is also the main teaching hospital of the Malawi  
26  
27 medical school. It serves as the referral hospital for the southern half of the country and also as  
28  
29 the district hospital for Blantyre. The children's department admits 28,000 children a year and  
30  
31 about 80,000 children are seen annually in the emergency unit.  
32  
33

## 34 35 36 Inclusion criteria

37  
38 Children  $\leq$  2 months of age in whom there was clinical suspicion of severe sepsis, pneumonia or  
39  
40 meningitis were eligible for inclusion. Following WHO guidelines, pSBI (including severe  
41  
42 pneumonia, sepsis and BM) was suspected in the presence of convulsions, bulging fontanelle,  
43  
44 lethargy, coma, poor feeding, irritability, apneic episodes or abnormal cry.<sup>25</sup> In infants <7 days  
45  
46 old an extended diagnostic algorithm included fever, agitation, no spontaneous movement,  
47  
48 cyanosis, slow capillary refill (<3 secs) and lower chest wall in-drawing.  
49  
50

51  
52 Enrolment took place after the guardian was fully informed and written consent was given. We  
53  
54 recorded demographic, clinical and laboratory findings, including details about the pregnancy  
55  
56 and the delivery.  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 **Exclusion criteria**  
5

6  
7 Infants not to be enrolled were: those with clinical severe jaundice (yellow discoloration of the  
8  
9 skin extending to the lower limbs); children with known hypersensitivity to any of the three  
10  
11 antibiotics and those who had been hospitalized for >72 hours, to avoid enrolling nosocomial  
12  
13 infections. Children with previous neurological abnormalities such as hydrocephalus and neural  
14  
15 tube defects were not enrolled. Excluded patients received standard treatment of benzylpenicillin  
16  
17 and gentamicin.  
18  
19

20  
21 **Endpoints**  
22

23  
24 The primary endpoints were differences in outcome and occurrence of jaundice between the two  
25  
26 treatment groups.  
27

28 **Randomization**  
29

30  
31 Randomization was by computer-generated numbers in blocks of ten. Treatment allocations were  
32  
33 sealed in consecutively numbered opaque envelopes and opened in numerical order by the  
34  
35 recruiting clinician at enrolment. Allocation was to either to benzylpenicillin 50,000 iu/kg 8  
36  
37 hourly IV (100,000 iu 8 hourly IV for BM) and daily gentamicin 6 mg/kg IV (standard smaller  
38  
39 doses for low birth weight infants and very premature babies) or ceftriaxone IV 50 -100 mg/kg  
40  
41 od (depending on age) for 5-14 days.  
42  
43  
44

45 **Samples on admission.**  
46

47  
48 Laboratory investigations were carried out at the Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical  
49  
50 Research Programme Laboratories which are externally quality controlled. A blood sample was  
51  
52 taken for a full blood count, culture, electrolytes, glucose and an HIV antibody test  
53  
54 (Determine®). All infants testing positive by HIV antibody test had a blood sample tested by  
55  
56 PCR to identify active HIV infection.  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65



1  
2  
3  
4 Cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) was taken for biochemistry, microscopy and culture. A positive CSF  
5  
6 was one in which a culture was positive or the white cell count was >50 cells/ul with neutrophils  
7  
8 forming the greater proportion of the cells.  
9

### 10 11 **Clinical monitoring and care** 12

13  
14 All infants were monitored by study nurses every 2–4 hours and seen at least twice daily by the  
15  
16 study team. Most infants had hearing tests and when clinically appropriate an ultrasound scan of  
17  
18 the head. Bilirubin levels were measured twice daily with a transcutaneous bilirubinometer  
19  
20 (Konica Minolta Drager Air Shields JM 103). MRIs were carried out when their findings might  
21  
22 benefit the child.  
23

24  
25 We provided supportive care according to unit protocols. Calcium is not added to any infusions  
26  
27 and serum gentamicin levels are not available.  
28

29  
30 If the infant deteriorated despite the treatment given, and after discussion with the principal  
31  
32 investigator, an appropriate antibiotic could be added to the treatment schedule or a switch made  
33  
34 to the antibiotic(s) in the other study arm. If the CSF or blood culture report showed that a child  
35  
36 was receiving inappropriate antimicrobial therapy for the bacteria grown, the treatment was  
37  
38 changed for a more suitable antibiotic.  
39  
40

### 41 42 **Follow-up** 43

44  
45 Follow-up was at one and six months after hospital discharge when neurological and hearing  
46  
47 assessments were done. Age-appropriate hearing tests were carried out by trained nurses using  
48  
49 oto-evoked potentials (Echocheck) and distraction tests. The neurological assessment was made  
50  
51 by a trained research clinician.  
52  
53

### 54 55 **Sample size** 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65

1  
2  
3  
4 To detect a 40% lower case fatality rate in the ceftriaxone group than in the benzylpenicillin and  
5 gentamicin group, (ie to reduce the overall case fatality rate of meningitis from 50% to 30%)  
6  
7 with a confidence of 90% and power of 80% required 107 infants in each arm (total = 214). To  
8  
9 detect a difference in jaundice development in the ceftriaxone group of 18% compared to 8% in  
10  
11 the penicillin and gentamicin group, the sample size needed with a confidence of 90% and power  
12  
13 of 80% was 158 in each arm, (total = 316). To allow for mortality (much of it early) and loss to  
14  
15 follow up, an extra 10% were to be recruited; i.e. 174 to each group: 348 in total.  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20

### 21 **Statistical Analysis**

22  
23 Statistical analysis was per protocol, done using Stata version 14.0 StataCorp Texas 77845  
24  
25 USA. The difference in means of normally distributed variables was performed using an  
26  
27 independent samples t-test. Chi-square tests were used to assess relationship between categorical  
28  
29 variables. Univariate logistic regression model was used to assess factors associated with poor  
30  
31 outcome to obtain unadjusted odds ratios. Multivariate logistic regression model was also fitted  
32  
33 to identify factors that are independently associated with outcome. All statistical tests were 2  
34  
35 tailed. Statistical significance was declared at a value of <0.05. The 95% confidence intervals  
36  
37 for the odds ratios were obtained and reported.  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42

### 43 **Adverse events**

44  
45 Severe adverse events were reported to a data safety management board (DSMB) through the  
46  
47 clinical monitor within 48 hours of their occurrence. The main safety endpoint for ceftriaxone  
48  
49 was a transcutaneous bilirubin level at which phototherapy would be instituted. This level  
50  
51 depended on gestational and postnatal age according to departmental bilirubin level graphs (see  
52  
53 tables, Supplemental Digital Content 1 and 2). If levels were reached that required phototherapy,  
54  
55 it was commenced and 8 hourly transcutaneous bilirubin levels were measured. If bilirubin  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 concentrations decreased or remained stable, further doses of ceftriaxone were given and  
5  
6 monitoring continued. If bilirubin concentrations increased, no further ceftriaxone was given.  
7

8  
9 Serious events included deaths, jaundice levels at or beyond ‘phototherapy’ levels, anemia (Hb  
10  
11 <6 g/dl) while on therapy and serious adverse drug reactions (rashes, bronchospasm,  
12  
13 anaphylactic shock).  
14

15  
16 Any changes from one antibiotic to another were reported and the reasons for change  
17  
18 documented. The study was to be stopped if bilirubin levels requiring a change in antibiotic  
19  
20 therapy were found in 30% more of the children receiving ceftriaxone than of those receiving  
21  
22 benzylpenicillin and gentamicin.  
23  
24  
25

## 26 27 28 **Ethical considerations**

29  
30 Benzylpenicillin and gentamicin are widely used to treat neonatal infections despite the  
31  
32 theoretical complications of renal failure and hearing loss. Ceftriaxone can cause conjugated  
33  
34 bilirubinaemia and jaundice without permanent sequelae. Ceftriaxone has been used for several  
35  
36 years in many centers across the region as second line treatment for neonatal infections.  
37  
38

39  
40 Nevertheless because of these theoretical complications all infants were monitored closely.  
41

42  
43 All guardians gave written consent to be enrolled after being fully informed of the study.  
44

45  
46 Permission was granted by the College of Medicine Research and Ethics Committee (COMREC)  
47  
48 to undertake the study (P2010/819) and the trial was registered with clinicaltrials.gov  
49  
50 (NCT01247909).  
51

## 52 53 **Results**

54  
55 From March 2010 to Feb 2013 a total of 351 infants less than 60 days of age were enrolled; one  
56  
57 parent withdrew consent before signing and two infants were deemed not to require antibiotics.  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 The remaining 348 were included in analyses. (Figure 1) Of these, 161 (46.5%) were given  
5  
6 gentamicin / benzylpenicillin and 170 received ceftriaxone: 17 received both. Baseline  
7  
8 characteristics were similar in the two groups, except for prevalence of clinical jaundice (n= 12;  
9  
10 6.5% in the penicillin v 23; 14% in the ceftriaxone group p=0.02). Table 1  
11  
12

13  
14 Overall inpatient mortality was 12%; (n= 41) and a further 11 died within six months of  
15  
16 discharge (total mortality n=52;15%). Sequelae were found in 4.6% (n =16) at hospital discharge  
17  
18 and a further 17 (total =33;12.6%) of 261 survivors at six months after discharge. (Figure 1).  
19

20  
21 Causes of death after discharge could not be verified but six (18.7%) had neurological sequelae  
22  
23 following meningitis, four had significant congenital abnormalities, two HIV positive infants had  
24  
25 further admissions for probable *Pneumocystis jirovecii* pneumonia (PJP), four had been admitted  
26  
27 with severe shock or sepsis and no cause for later death was given.  
28  
29

30  
31 Of the 348 patients, 54 (15.5%) did not have a lumbar puncture done, 42 (14.3%) of the  
32  
33 remaining 294 had positive CSF cultures of which 15 (36.6%) were Group B Streptococcus  
34  
35 (GBS) and 6 (14.6 %) were Gram negative bacteria such as *Acinebacter baumannii*, *E. coli*,  
36  
37 *Klebsiella pneumoniae* (Table 2)  
38  
39

40  
41 Blood cultures were done in 348 children; 105 (30.1%) were positive; of these 62 (59%) grew  
42  
43 coagulase negative staphylococci, 9 (8.5%) were Gram negative bacteria, 15 (14.3%) were GBS  
44  
45 and 11 (10.5%) were *Staphylococcus aureus* (Table 2). Overall more children with a positive  
46  
47 than a negative CSF or blood culture had a poor outcome (25(44%) v 67(33%) p=0.003 and  
48  
49 21(41%) v 54(30%) p=0.04 respectively (see table, Supplemental Digital Content 3). Coagulase  
50  
51 negative staphylococci and alpha hemolytic streptococci may have been contaminants but some  
52  
53 of the infants from whom the samples were taken were very ill. Removing these bacteria from  
54  
55 analyses made no difference to the findings. The combined outcome by CSF and blood culture  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 results comparing no growth with growth (137 v 122) was also significant (p= 0.017) (see table,  
5  
6 Supplemental Digital Content 3)  
7

8  
9 Outcomes were similar between the two treatment groups; inpatient mortality was 11.2% in both  
10  
11 the benzylpenicillin and gentamicin and the ceftriaxone arms. (Table 2) At six months post  
12  
13 discharge, deaths were 13.7% and 16.5% and sequelae in survivors were 14.5% and 11.2%.  
14  
15 respectively, (Figure 1).  
16  
17

18  
19 On multivariate analysis weight on admission, convulsions, not sucking, an oxygen  
20  
21 saturation level < 90% and positive blood culture were each associated significantly with  
22  
23 mortality and sequelae (Table 3).  
24  
25

26  
27 More infants in the penicillin/gentamicin group were clinically jaundiced on admission and more  
28  
29 eventually required phototherapy: n=19; 15% v 7; 5%, p=0.03. (Table 4). Fifteen infants  
30  
31 received phototherapy for 1-2 days, 8 for 3-4 days, 6 for 5-6 days and 4 for 7-11 days. Of the  
32  
33 infants receiving >5 days of phototherapy, two were on ceftriaxone and six were on  
34  
35 benzylpenicillin; one received both drug treatments.  
36  
37

38  
39 Thirteen (6%) of 216 children who were tested had bilateral hearing loss; eight (61.5%) also had  
40  
41 neurologic sequelae suggesting that the cause was the underlying infection. In four of the 13  
42  
43 infants with bilateral hearing loss a lumbar puncture was not done as the infants were too sick;  
44  
45 eight of the remaining nine infants had a positive culture of blood or CSF. There was no  
46  
47 significant difference between the treatment groups. (Table 5)  
48  
49

## 50 **Discussion**

51  
52  
53 In this study more infants had Gram positive than Gram negative infections. When  
54  
55 treated with either benzylpenicillin + gentamicin or ceftriaxone, the outcomes in the two  
56  
57 treatment groups were similar. This finding resembles the results of a meta-analysis of studies  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 that used either of these two protocols.<sup>4</sup> In a previous review of CSF results in our own hospital,  
5  
6 Swann et al reported that more neonatal cultures were sensitive to ceftriaxone than to  
7  
8 benzylpenicillin and gentamicin (99.1% vs 91.8%; p=0.006), especially the Gram-negative  
9  
10 isolates (95.1% v 86.0%; p=0.012).<sup>21</sup> A similar review of neonatal blood cultures done over that  
11  
12 same period of time showed that 53% of the pathogens were Gram-positive and 47% Gram-  
13  
14 negative. The four most common pathogens were *S. aureus*, GBS, *Salmonella* Typhimurium, and  
15  
16 *E. coli*.<sup>22</sup> *Klebsiella sp*, *Acinebacter sp* and *Enterobacter sp*, all considered nosocomial  
17  
18 infections, accounted for 7.3%, 3.1% and 4.6% of the Gram negative pathogens The results of  
19  
20 our study differ because we included all cases of possible severe bacterial infection, as this  
21  
22 reflects clinical practice; only 147 (45%) blood or CSF samples grew bacteria of which 62 (42%)  
23  
24 were coagulase negative staphylococci that may, or may not, have been contaminants. Even if  
25  
26 the coagulase negative staphylococci are excluded we had more Gram positive (n=36/45; 80%)  
27  
28 than Gram negative (n= 9/45; 20%) infections. This is probably because there has been a decline  
29  
30 in invasive non typhoidal salmonella infections in Malawi over the last decade<sup>26</sup> and we  
31  
32 excluded nosocomial infections.  
33  
34  
35

36  
37  
38 More infants in the benzylpenicillin/gentamicin group developed jaundice than in the ceftriaxone  
39  
40 group. Jaundice was caused mainly by the underlying infection; only seven of 24 (30%) infants  
41  
42 commenced phototherapy after starting antibiotics. The overall hospital mortality was 42/348  
43  
44 (12.1%) and 4.6% survived with sequelae. Hearing loss was related to the underlying infection  
45  
46 and not to the treatment. The outcome was worse in culture positive pSBI than in culture-  
47  
48 negative infants (p=0.017) and worse in infants who were HIV infected or exposed than  
49  
50 unexposed (p= 0.008).  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 Forty one children died in hospital but after six months a further 11 had died. Sixteen children  
5  
6 were identified in hospital as having sequelae but by six months 17 more children were found to  
7  
8 have sequelae. It is clear that all infants with pSBI need follow up to ensure additional supportive  
9  
10 care for those who need it as about half who will eventually have sequelae are likely to be missed  
11  
12 at the time of hospital discharge.  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17

### 18 **Conclusions:**

19  
20  
21 Ceftriaxone is safe in infants in our setting – in particular its use was not associated with a higher  
22  
23 frequency of jaundice in this study – and hearing was not affected by gentamicin use. In this  
24  
25 study, which did not include infants likely to have nosocomial infections, the outcome from pSBI  
26  
27 was similar whether infants were treated with benzylpenicillin and gentamicin or with  
28  
29 ceftriaxone. Infants with pSBI should be followed up for at least 6 months, as many may develop  
30  
31 sequelae that were not detected on hospital discharge.  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37

### 38 **Acknowledgements**

39  
40 We thank all the families who allowed us to study and care for their infants. We thank the  
41  
42 paediatric department for their help in recruiting and caring for the children; N. Kennedy, the  
43  
44 clinical monitor and M. Mukaka who gave wise statistical advice. Malawi Liverpool Wellcome  
45  
46 Trust Clinical Research Programme is supported by a strategic award from the Wellcome Trust.  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

1  
2  
3  
4 **References:**  
5  
6

- 7       1    Edmond K and Zaidi A. New Approaches to Preventing, Diagnosing, and Treating  
8       Neonatal Sepsis PLoS Med. 2010 Mar; 7(3): e1000213. Published online 2010 Mar  
9       9. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1000213 PMID: PMC2834705  
10  
11  
12  
13       2.    WHO Pocket Book of hospital care for children Guidelines for the management of  
14       common illnesses with limited resources. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition World Health Organisation Geneva  
15       2013.  
16  
17  
18       3.    The WHO young infants study group. Bacterial etiology of serious infections in young  
19       infants in developing countries: results of a multicenter study. *PIDJ*  
20       1999;**18**(supplement):S17-S22.  
21  
22  
23       4    Downie L, Armiento R, Subhi R et al. Community- acquired neonatal and infant sepsis in  
24       developing countries: efficacy of WHO's currently recommended antibiotics: systematic  
25       review and meta-analysis. *Arch Dis Child.* 2013 ;**98**(2):146-54  
26  
27  
28       5.    Huynh B-T, Padget M, Garin B, Herindrainy P, Kermorvant-Duchemin E, Watier L,  
29       Guillemot D, Delarocque-Astagneau E   Burden of bacterial resistance among neonatal  
30       infections in low income countries: how convincing is the epidemiological evidence?  
31       BMC Inf Dis 2015.DOI 10.1186/s12879-015-0843-x.  
32  
33  
34       6    Prasad K, Karlupia N, Kumar A. Treatment of bacterial meningitis: an overview of  
35       Cochrane systematic reviews. *Resp Med* 2009;**103**:945-50.  
36  
37  
38       7    Neonatal neurology. Infection of the nervous system in the newborn. P 305 -309.  
39       Chapter Ed Janet Rennie. Eds McIntosh N, Helms P, Smyth R, Logan S. Forfar and  
40       Arneil 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Churchill Livingstone Elsevier 2008 Edinburgh.  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65



- 1  
2  
3  
4 8 Martin E et al. Ceftriaxone- bilirubin – albumin interactions in the neonate: an in vivo  
5 study *Eur J Pediatr*, 1993;**152**:530-4.  
6  
7  
8  
9 9 Van Reempts PJ, Van Overmere B, Mahieu LM, Vanacker KJ. Clinical experience with  
10 ceftriaxone treatment in the neonate. *Chemotherapy* 1995;**41**:316-22.  
11  
12  
13 10 Gulian JM, Gonad V Delamere C, Palix C. Bilirubin displacement of ceftriaxone in  
14 neonates: evaluation by determination of free bilirubin and erythrocyte-bound bilirubin. *J*  
15 *Soc Antimicrob chemother*. 1987;**19**:823-829  
16  
17  
18 11 Mulhall A, de Louvois J, James J. Pharmacokinetics and safety of ceftriaxone in the  
19 neonate.  
20  
21 *Eur J Pediatr* 1985;**144**:379-382.  
22  
23  
24 12 Monhe SV, Prescott WA, Johnson KK, Kuhman L. Safety of ceftriaxone sodium at the  
25 extremes  
26  
27 of age. *Expert opinion Drug Safety* 2008;**7(5)**:515-23  
28  
29  
30 13 Bradley JS, Wassel RT, Lee L, Nambiar S. Intravenous Ceftriaxone and Calcium in the  
31 Neonate:  
32  
33 Assessing the Risk for Cardiopulmonary Adverse Events. *Pediatrics* 2009, **123**;e609-613  
34  
35  
36 14. FDA Alert Ceftriaxone (marketed as Rocephin) Information Sep 2007  
37  
38  
39 15. Letter to all health professionals from AFSSAPA dated November 2006  
40  
41 [http://www.who.int/selection\\_medicines/committees/subcommittee/2/Ceftriaxone.pdf](http://www.who.int/selection_medicines/committees/subcommittee/2/Ceftriaxone.pdf)  
42  
43  
44 16. Laga M, Naamara W, Burnam RC et al. Single dose therapy of gonococcal ophthalmia  
45 neonatorum with ceftriaxone. *NEJM* 1986;**315**:1382-5.  
46  
47  
48 17. Price EH, de Louvois J, Workman MR. Antibiotics for salmonella  
49 meningitis in children. *J.Antimicrob Chemother* 2006; **46**: 653-655.  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

- 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65
18. English M, Ngama M, Musenda C et al. Causes and outcomes of young infant admissions to a Kenyan District Hospital. *Arch Dis Child* 2003;**88**:438-43.
  19. Hafferjee IE, Bhana RH, Coovadia YM, Hoosen AA, Marajh AV, Gouws E. Neonatal Group B streptococcal infections in Indian (Asian) babies in South Africa. *J Infect* 1991;**22**:225-31.
  20. Nathoo KJ, Pazvakavemba I, Chided OS, Chirisa C. Neonatal meningitis in Harare Zimbabwe: a 2 year review. *Ann Trop Paed* 1991;**11**:11-15.
  21. Swann OV, Everett DB, Furyk JS, Harrison EM, Msukwa MG, Heyderman RS, Molyneux EM. Bacterial meningitis in Malawian infants less than 2 months of age: etiology and susceptibility to World Health Organization first-line antibiotics. *Pediatr Infect Dis J.* 2014 ;33(6):560-5.
  22. Gwee A, Everett D, Molyneux EM Bacteraemia in Malawian neonates and infants 2002-2007: A retrospective review. *BMJ Open* 2012;May 15;2(3).pii.e000906  
doi.10.1136/bmjopen 2012-000906
  23. Maoulainine FM, Elidrissi NS, Chkil G et al. [Epidemiology of nosocomial bacterial infection in neonatal intensive care unit in Morocco.] *Arch Pediatr.* 2014 Jun 30. pii: S0929-693X(14)00230-9. doi: 10.1016/j.arcped.2014.04.033.
  24. Downie L, Armiento R, Subhi R et al. Community-acquired neonatal and infant sepsis in developing countries: efficacy of WHO's currently recommended antibiotics--systematic review and meta-analysis. *Arch Dis Child.* 2013 ;**98**(2):146-54.
  25. Young Infants Clinical Signs Study Group. Clinical signs to predict severe illness in children less than 2 months: a multicentre study. *Lancet* 2008;**371**:135-42.

- 1  
2  
3  
4 26. Feasey NA, Everett D, Faragher EB, Roca-Feltrer A, Kang'ombe A, Denis B, et al.  
5  
6 (2015) Modelling the Contributions of Malaria, HIV, Malnutrition and Rainfall to the  
7  
8 Decline in Paediatric Invasive Non-typhoidal Salmonella Disease in Malawi. *PLoS Negl*  
9  
10 *Trop Dis* 9(7): e0003979. doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0003979  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15

16 **Supplemental Digital content legend**

17  
18 Supplemental Digital Content 1. LEVELS OF BILIRUBIN AT WHICH TO START  
19  
20 PHOTOTHERAPY IN TERM INFANTS  
21  
22

23  
24 Supplemental Digital Content 2. LEVELS OF BILIRUBIN AT WHICH TO START  
25  
26 PHOTOTHERAPY IN PREMATURE INFANTS  
27

28  
29 Supplemental Digital Content 3. CSF and blood culture findings and outcomes in infants with  
30  
31 possible severe bacterial infection.  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65

Characteristic	Unit of measure	Ceftriaxone N =170	Penicillin/Gentamicin N=161	Total * N = 331	P value
Sex:N (%)	Female	82/167 (49%)	75/157 (48%)	157/324 (48%)	0.83
Known Birth weight	Number (%)	123 (72)	132 (82)	255 (77)	0.05
Admission weight Kgs	Number known (%) Median [IQR]	170 (100) 3.2 [1.9, 4.5]	160 (99) 3.1 [1.9, 4.2]	330 (99.5)	0.49
Age groups: n (%)	≤7 days 8days -30days ≥ 30 days	34 (20) 93 (55) 43 (25)	43 (27) 78 (48) 40 (25)	77 (23) 171(52) 83 (25)	0.33
Mode of delivery n(%)	LSCS <sup>a</sup> /Instrumental SVD Unrecorded	16 (9) 151(89) 3 (2)	10 (6) 150 (93) 1 (1)	26 (8) 301(91) 4 (1)	0.31
Parity: n (%)	Single Twins Unrecorded	152 (89) 16 (9.5) 2 (0.5)	151 (94) 9 (5.5) 1 (0.5)	303(92) 25 (7.5) 3 (0.5)	0.21
Temperature: n (%)	<36.5 <sup>o</sup> C 36.5- 37.5 <sup>o</sup> C >37.5 <sup>o</sup> C Unrecorded	26 (15.5) 106 (62.5) 36 (21.5) 2 (0.5)	20 (12) 98 (61) 41 (26) 2 (1)	46 (14) 204(62) 77 (23) 4 (1)	0.56
Fever days:n (%)	≤1 day 1 - 2 day >2 days Unrecorded	85 (50) 40 (24) 43 (25) 2 (1)	78 (48) 42 (26) 40 (25) 1 (1)	163(49) 82 (25) 83 (25) 3 (1)	0.88
Sucking : n (%)	Yes No Unrecorded	116 (68) 52 (31) 2 (1)	124 (79.5) 36 (22) 1 (0.5)	240(72.5) 88 (26.5) 3 (1)	0.10
Convulsions: n (%)	Yes No Unrecorded	22 (13) 147 (86.5) 1 (0.5)	15 (9.5) 145 (90) 1 (0.5)	37 (11.5) 292(88) 2 (0.5)	0.38
Total bilirubin <sup>b</sup> n (%)	<1mmol/l >1 mmol/l Unrecorded	158 (93.5) 9 (5.5) 3 (1)	138 (86) 21 (13) 2 (1)	296(90) 30 (9) 4 (1)	<b>0.02</b>
Difficult breathing: n (%)	No Yes Unrecorded	82 (48) 85 (50) 3 (2)	80 (49.5) 80 (49.5) 1 (0.5)	162(49.5) 165(49.5) 4 (1)	0.91
Cough days: n (%)	≤1 day >1 day Unrecorded	119 (70) 50 (29.5) 1 (0.5)	112 (69.5) 48 (30) 1 (0.5)	231(70) 98 (29) 2 (0.5)	1
Haemoglobin	Number tested (%) Median g/dl {range}	162 (95) 12.5 {3.6-39}	148 (92) 12.95 {1.1 -22.8}	310(94)	0.26
Oxygen saturation %	≤90% >90% Unrecorded	112 (66) 49 (29) 9 (5)	106 (66) 48 (30) 7 (4)	218(66) 97 (29.5) 16 (4.5)	0.90
Total blood WBC : n(%)	≤5000 cm <sup>3</sup> 5 - ≤10,000 cm <sup>3</sup> 10 - ≤15,000 cm <sup>3</sup> >15,000cm <sup>3</sup> Unrecorded	16 (9) 49 (29) 52 (31) 44 (26) 9 (5)	18 (11) 38 (24) 44 (27) 47 (29) 14 (9)	34 (10.5) 87 (26) 96 (29) 91 (27.5) 23 (7)	0.65
Malaria Parasites on BF <sup>c</sup> or positive MRDT <sup>d</sup> n(%)	Negative Not done	155 (91) 15 (9)	144 (89) 17 (11)	299(90) 32 (10)	0.71

\*excluded 17 cases who received both antibiotic therapies; <sup>a</sup> = lower section Caesarean section;

<sup>b</sup> measured transcutaneously <sup>c</sup> Blood film; <sup>d</sup>Malaria rapid diagnostic test

Table 1 Baseline characteristics on admission

**Table 2. CSF and Blood culture findings in neonatal sepsis**

	<b>CSF culture results</b>		<b>Blood Culture results</b>	
	Number(%)		Number(%)	
Not done/missing	53	(15)	7	(2)
No growth*	254	(73)	220	(66)
Group B streptococcus	15	(4)	16	(5)
Coagulase negative staphylococcus	8	(2)	63	(19)
<i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> **	8	(2)	5	(1)
<i>Streptococcus pyogenes</i>	2	(1)	0	
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	0		11	(3)
Group D streptococcus	0		1	(0.5)
Alpha haemolytic streptococcus	2	(1)	3	(1)
Gram negative <sup>x</sup>	6	(2)	9	(2.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>(100)</b>

\*12 CSFs with no growth on culture had white cell counts (number of cells = 23-clumps in pus) suggestive of meningitis, 3 of these infants had positive blood cultures (1 each of Group B streptococcus, coagulase negative staphylococcus and alpha haemolytic streptococcus, \*\*1 had Gram positive diplococci on Gram stain, but was culture negative)

<sup>x</sup>The Gram negative bacteria were *E. coli* 3, *Acinebacter baumannii* 2, *salmonella* Typhimurium 1, *Enterobacter cloacae* 1, *Acinebacter lwoffii* 1.

All diplococci, micrococci, and bacilli were considered contaminants. Coagulase negative staphylococci and alpha haemolytic streptococci may have been contaminants but some of the infants from whom the samples were taken were very ill.

Table 3 Multivariate analyses of variables affecting outcome

Variable	Number assessed	Outcome		Multivariate	
		Alive, no Sequelae N= 186	Dead or Sequelae N= 91	OR, 95% CI	P value
Gentamicin/Penicillin	134	96 (63)	38 (37)		
Ceftriaxone	143	90 (72)	53 (28)	0.69 (0.34, 1.36)	0.28
CSF culture -ve	200	136 (68)	64 (32)		
CSF culture +ve	36	21 (58)	15 (42)	2.15 (0.89, 5.15)	0.08
Blood culture -ve	181	128 (71)	53 (29)		
Blood culture +ve	93	55 (59)	38 (41)	2.15 (1.07, 4.38)	<b>0.033</b>
Weight Kg >2.5	225	162 (72)	63 (28)		
<=2.5	51	24 (47)	27 (53)	2.46 (1.12, 5.42)	<b>0.024</b>
HIV -ve	195	134 (69)	61 (31)		
HIV exposed	56	42 (75)	14 (25)	1.15 (0.49,2.58)	
HIV+ve	9	3 (33)	6 (67)	4.30 (0.84,25.2)	0.22
Convulsion none	248	175 (71)	73 (29)		
Convulsions	27	9 (33)	18 (67)	5.22 (1.82,16.7)	<b>0.003</b>
Sucking	200	153 (77)	47 (24)		
Not sucking	74	30 (41)	44 (59)	2.61 (1.26, 5.44)	<b>0.010</b>
Oxygen saturation $\geq$ 90%	179	130 (73)	49 (27)		
Oxygen saturation < 90%	83	46 (55)	37 (45)	2.34 (1.12, 4.96)	<b>0.025</b>
Cough $\leq$ 1 day	195	126 (65)	69 (35)		
Cough > 1day	80	58 (73)	22 (28)	0.78 (0.49, 2.58)	0.53

OR =odds ratio; CI = confidence interval

**Table 4** Transcutaneous bilirubin levels at admission and the rise in bilirubin levels with benzylpenicillin +gentamicin and ceftriaxone

Serum bilirubin levels $\mu\text{mol/L}$	Benzylpenicillin/ Gentamicin N	Benzylpenicillin/ Gentamicin requiring phototherapy N(%)	Ceftriaxone N	Ceftriaxone requiring Phototherapy N(%)
<5	100	0	135	0
5 - <10	17	0	14	1
10 - <15	18	2	14	1
15 - <20	11	6	5	3
>20	14	11	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>19 (15%)</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>7 (6%) p=0.03</b>
Not done*	18	0	18	0
Received both antibiotic regimens*	17	1		
<b>Rise in serum bilirubin level (<math>\mu\text{mol/L}</math>) during admission</b>				
<10	26	0	24	0
>10	0	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>

\* 36 had no bilirubin measured or it was not measured immediately on admission

**Table 5**  
**Hearing test results (and neurological deficits) in survivors in the benzylpenicillin/gentamicin and ceftriaxone treatment arms at 6 months follow up**

<b>Hearing status(neuro deficits) N</b>	<b>Benzylpenicillin/gentamicin</b>	<b>Ceftriaxone</b>	<b>Received both antibiotics</b>
Bilateral Hearing Loss	4 ( 4 with global delay)	2(1 CP 1 blind)	0
Unilateral Hearing Loss	5 (1 with global delay)	5	0
<b>Total with hearing deificts</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
Normal Hearing	50 (4 global delay, 1 hemiplegia (1 fine motor deficit)	52 (4 hydrocephalus, 2 blind (5 global delay, 1 hemiplegia)	8 (1 global delay)
<b>TOTAL TESTED</b>	<b>68 (11 with neuro deficits)</b>	<b>64 (14 with neuro deficits)</b>	<b>8 (1 with neuro deficits)</b>
Children not tested or Inconclusive result	56	61	4
<b>TOTAL survivors at 6 months</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>12</b>



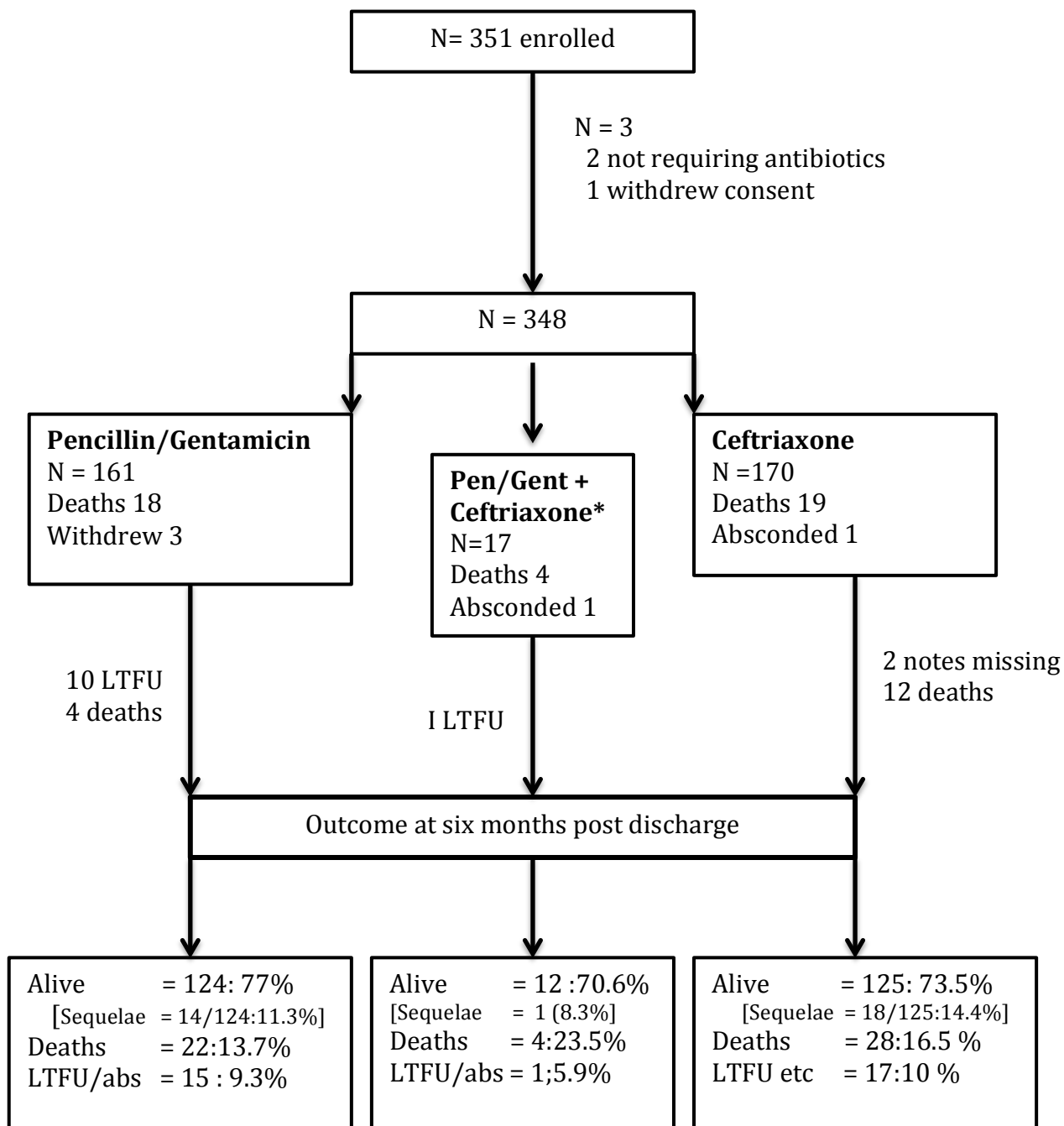
**Table 7 ORIGINAL**

**Hearing test results and neurological deficits in treatment arms benzylpenicillin/gentamicin and ceftriaxone at 6 months follow up**

<b>Hearing status (neuro deficit) N</b>	<b>benzylpenicillin/gentamicin</b>	<b>Ceftriaxone</b>	<b>received both antibiotics</b>
Bilateral Hearing Loss	13 8(5 global delay)	4 (1 CP, 1 blind, 1 seizures)	1 (1 global delay)
Unilateral Hearing Loss	8 4(1 global delay)	4	0
Inconclusive test results	4 2	2	0
Normal Hearing	191 90 (4 global delay, (1 hemiplegia 1 fine motor)	96 (4 hydrocephalus, 2 blind) 5 (5 global delay, 1 hemiplegia)	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>216</b> <b>104 (12 neuro deficits)</b>	<b>106 (15 neuro deficits)</b>	<b>6 (1 neuro deficit)</b>
Not tested	135 62	67	6

neuro = neurological; CP = cerebral palsy

Figure 1

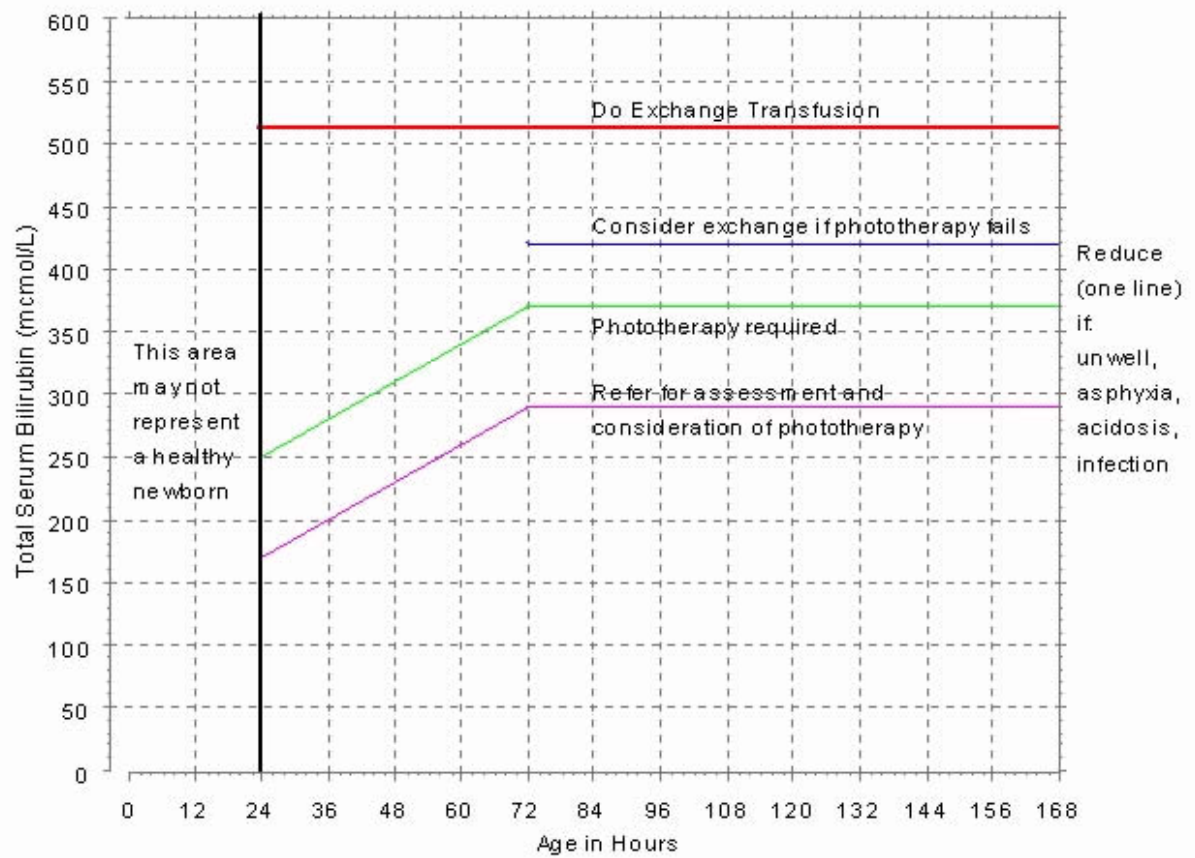


\* ceftriaxone was added during treatment : LTFU = Lost to follow up: abs = absconded

Figure 1. Study enrollment and outcome

SDC Table 1

## LEVELS OF BILIRUBIN AT WHICH TO START PHOTOTHERAPY IN TERM INFANTS

**Use Only for Well Term Infants without Haemolytic Disease**

SDC Table 2

## LEVELS OF BILIRUBIN AT WHICH TO START PHOTOTHERAPY IN PREMATURE INFANTS

Gestational age	Day 1	Day2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
24 wks	3.5 mg/dl	5.8	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6
	60 umol/L	100	130	130	130	130	130
26 wks	5.3 mg/dl	7.6	9	9	9	9	9
	90 umol/L	130	160	160	160	160	160
28wks	6.4 mg/dl	8.8	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
	110 umol/L	150	180	180	180	180	180
30wks	8.2 mg/dl	10.5	12	12	12	12	12
	140 umol/L	180	210	21	210	210	210
32wks	9.3 mg/dl	11.7	13	13	13	13	13
	160 umol/L	200	230	230	230	230	230
34 wks	9.8 mg/dl	12.2	14	14	14	14	14
	170 umol/L	210	240	240	240	240	240
36 wks	11 mg/dl	13.4	15	15	15	15	15
	190umol/L	230	260	260	260	260	260

**SDC Table 3 CSF and blood culture findings and outcomes in infants with possible severe bacterial infection.**

**3a CSF culture and overall outcome at 6 months post discharge**

Culture	Outcome at 6 months post discharge					p value
	alive	dead	sequelae	LTFU*	Total	
No growth*	134	30	37	14	215	No growth v combined positive cultures P = 0.003 (Chi- squared test)
coagulase negative staphylococcus	4	3	0	0	7	
Group B streptococcus	6	3	3	0	12	
Not done	16	10	1	4	31	
Gram negatives	1	1	1	3	6	
<i>Strep pneumoniae</i> <sup>a</sup>	3	3	0	0	6	
<i>Streptococcus pyogenes</i>	2	0	0	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>279</b>	

<sup>a</sup>*Streptococcus pneumoniae*

Of 12 no growth but cell counts suggestive of Bacterial Meningitis, 4 were Alive, 1 Died, 1 had sequelae and 1 was lost to follow up \*LTFU = lost to follow up/absconded

**3b Blood culture and overall outcome at 6 months post discharge**

Culture	Outcome at 6 months post discharge					p value
	alive	dead	sequelae	LTFU*	Total	
No growth	124	28	26	9	187	No growth v combined positive cultures P= 0.04
Coagulase neg staph <sup>a</sup>	30	7	8	7	52	
Group B streptococcus	5	5	1	1	12	
Not done	2	0	0	0	2	
Gram negatives	3	3	1	1	8	
<i>Strep pneumoniae</i> <sup>b</sup>	3	1	1	0	5	
A haem streptococcus	2	0	2	0	4	
Group D streptococcus	1	0	0	0	1	
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	3	5	0	1	9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>279</b>	

\*LTFU = lost to follow up <sup>a</sup>coagulase negative staphylococci; <sup>b</sup> *Streptococcus pneumoniae*; <sup>c</sup> alpha haemolytic streptococcus.