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Prevention of healthcare-associated infections in neonates: Room for improvement

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Infants in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) are highly susceptible to infection due to the immaturity of their immune systems. Healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) are majorly associated with prolonged hospital stay, and could be a potential significant risk factor for neurological development problems and death. Improving HCAI control is a priority for NICUs. Many factors contribute to the occurrence of HCAIs in neonates such as poor hand hygiene, low nurse infant ratios, environmental contamination and unnecessary use of antibiotics. Prevention of HCAIs is based on improving neonatal management, avoiding unnecessary usage of central venous catheters, restriction in usage of antibiotics and H2 blockers, and introducing antifungal prophylaxis if necessary. Quality improvement interventions to reduce HCAIs in neonates seem to be the cornerstone of infection control.

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