Implementation of the NICE prevention and treatment of early onset neonatal infection guideline: The Glasgow experience

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Early onset sepsis (EOS) is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in neonates, typically presenting within the first 72 hours of birth. The management of infants at risk of EOS varies between units. The introduction of the UK NICE guideline: Antibiotics for prevention and treatment of early onset neonatal infection in 2012 aimed to provide clarity and consistency in the management of such infants. Since publication by NICE the impact of this guideline has prompted debate with several units reporting negative consequences including increased length of stay and number of laboratory investigations performed. We implemented the NICE EOS guideline in two tertiary perinatal centres in Glasgow in 2014 and 2015 after undertaking a robust education programme for all staff members who would be involved in utilizing the guideline. The new guideline came with significant changes in practice. We also introduced a neonatal early warning score chart (NEWS booklet) to be used simultaneously. Following implementation, serial interval audits were undertaken to assess impact on patient care and guideline adherence. In contrast to other published reports we have observed a positive impact on patient care with a reduction in length of stay and no increase in laboratory investigations performed. Furthermore no baby became unwell following the changes in practice.

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