

Are antibiotics required for the treatment of acute serous otitis media in children?

Because of a recent research article by Biner and her colleagues (Turk J Pediatr 2007; 49: 390-396) entitled "The comparison of single-dose ceftriaxone, five-day azithromycin and ten-day amoxicillin/clavulanate for the treatment of children with acute otitis media", I would like to question the requirement of antibiotic administration for serous otitis media.

In this carefully designed and well followed study, failure rates for the three different antibiotic protocol groups were not found to differ from each other, as in earlier studies by Bauchner et al.¹, Rosenfeld et al.², Howie and Schwartz³ and van Buchem et al.⁴. As I responded to those researchers^{5,6}, placebo-controlled approach is not only useful but also important for the interpretation of their results.

Biner et al. also brought to attention the necessity of a non-antibiotic-treated placebo group in their discussion. If it was performed, I believe the authors' conclusion would be very different as I suggested on several occasions, like in non-suppurative sinusitis. We obtained very good results with administration of only saline nose-washing compared to antibiotic-treated controls⁷.

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