

Stethoscope contamination in the neonatal intensive care unit.

Wright IM, Orr H, Porter C.

Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Leeds General Infirmary, UK.

The level of contamination of stethoscopes used in a neonatal intensive care unit was studied, along with the practices used for cleaning these items. A policy of alcohol cleaning was introduced and the effect of this change on the level of bacterial growth was observed after a six-week period. It was found that 71% of stethoscopes showed significant bacterial growth and that this was reduced to 30% after the cleaning procedure change ($P < 0.05$). Stethoscopes and other equipment are a potential source of nosocomial infection on the neonatal intensive care unit.

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