

Abstract

Ophthalmia neonatorum in small babies is a common problem in neonatal units in Al Ain, but is infrequently associated with sexually transmitted disease agents. A study of 81 babies with ophthalmia neonatorum showed that 81.5% had bacterial or fungal infections. *Staphylococcus aureus* was the commonest causative organism followed by *Escherichia coli* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* while *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* were responsible for less than 5% of all cases. The disease was predominantly mild to moderately severe and easily treated with topical broad-spectrum antibiotic agents which are effective against Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria, including hospital-associated strains. The most effective antimicrobial agents were gentamicin topically or ceftriaxone systemically.