

Are antibiotics a safe and effective treatment for acute uncomplicated appendicitis?

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION Appendicitis is a typical cause of acute abdominal pain and the most frequent cause of emergency abdominal surgery. In the last two decades, increasing evidence has been published about the use of antibiotics as an exclusive treatment for acute appendicitis. **METHODS** To answer this question, we used Epistemonikos, the largest database of systematic reviews in health, which is maintained through searches from multiple sources of information, including MEDLINE, EMBASE, Cochrane, among others. We extracted the data from the identified reviews, reanalyzed the data from the primary studies, performed a meta-analysis and prepared a summary of findings table using the GRADE approach. **RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS** We identified 23 systematic reviews including 28 primary studies, of which eight were randomized trials. We concluded the exclusive use of antibiotics for the treatment of uncomplicated acute appendicitis could be less effective than appendectomy, but it might be associated with a lower rate of complications..