



## Treatment of acute otitis media in general practice: quality variations across countries.

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Abstract: BACKGROUND: Recommendations for antibiotic treatment of acute otitis media (AOM) have changed over the years, and today many experts recommend initial observation. However, antibiotic prescribing should be considered in children aged <math>38.5^{\circ}\text{C}</math>, ear discharge and the antibiotic treatment given was recorded. RESULTS: Danish GPs had the lowest antibiotic prescription rate for AOM [72.7% (95% confidence interval (CI) = 67.0-77.8)] and GPs in Kaliningrad had the highest [97.1% (95% CI = 89.8-99.6)]. Narrow-spectrum penicillin was almost exclusively prescribed in the two Nordic countries, while broad-spectrum penicillins, often in combination with clavulanic acid, were prescribed in the other four countries. Macrolides comprised 5-10% of prescriptions. Antibiotic prescribing was associated with the following characteristics of the patients: symptoms for >3 days, ear discharge and fever. Conclusion. The majority of patients with AOM were treated with antibiotics in all six countries, but considerable variations in both prescribing rate and choice of antibiotics were identified.

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