

Azithromycin given in labor cuts maternal, neonatal infections

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(HealthDay)—Administration of azithromycin during labor is associated

with a reduction in maternal and neonatal clinical infections, according to a study published online Jan. 27 in *Pediatrics*.

Claire Oluwalana, M.D., from the Medical Research Council Unit in Banjul, the Gambia, and colleagues conducted a randomized trial involving 829 Gambian [women](#) in labor. Participants were given an oral dose of azithromycin or placebo and were followed for up to eight weeks after delivery.

Eight infants died per arm during the follow-up period. There were no reports of [maternal deaths](#) or serious adverse events related to the intervention. The researchers found that the azithromycin group had a significantly lower incidence of maternal infections (3.6 versus 9.2 percent; relative risk [RR], 0.40; 95 percent confidence interval [CI], 0.22 to 0.71; $P = 0.002$) and significantly lower prevalence of mastitis (1.4 versus 5.1 percent; RR, 0.29; 95 percent CI, 0.12 to 0.70; $P = 0.005$) and fever (1.9 versus 5.8 percent; RR, 0.33; 95 percent CI, 0.15 to 0.74; $P = 0.006$). In the azithromycin group, newborns had a lower overall prevalence of infections (18.1 versus 23.8 percent; RR, 0.76; 95 percent CI, 0.58 to 0.99; $P = 0.052$) and [skin infections](#) (3.1 versus 6.4 percent; RR, 0.49; 95 percent CI, 0.25 to 0.93; $P = 0.34$).

"Azithromycin given to women in labor decreases infections in both women and newborns during the puerperal period," the authors write.

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