

## Evolution of Antibiotic Consumption in Pediatric Intensive Care Unit during a Five Year Period (2010-2015)

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### Abstract

**Background:** Antibiotic prescription in Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) is frequent. Objective. We proposed to calculate annually antibiotic consumption in a five year period (2010 - 2015) in PICU. Also to determine the number of bacterial isolations in every year included in the study.

**Methods:** Antibiotics included were amikacin, cefotaxime, ceftriaxone, ceftazidime, clarithromycin, meropenem and vancomycin. Antibiotic consumption was expressed by Defined Daily Dose (DDD)/every 100 hospital bed-days (DDD/100 beds). Bacterial isolations from PICU and its antibiotic susceptibility pattern were also analyzed. Bacteria included were *Staphylococcus aureus*, Negative Coagulase *Staphylococcus*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Enterobacter cloacae* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Evolution of antibiotic consumption was compared with bacterial isolations. Children hospitalized in PICU, treated with selected antibiotics during 2010 - 2015 were included.

**Results:** Except amikacin, all antibiotics showed an increase in consumption. Comparing values of DDD/100 beds in year 2010 vs 2015, clarithromycin consumption growth 725% (from 0,004 DDD/100 beds to 0,034 DDD/100 beds) and cefotaxime 175% (from 0,004 DDD/100 beds to 0,011 DDD/100 beds). Vancomycin and Meropenem rised 28% and 26% respectively. Bacterial isolations in PICU, kept steady, during the five year period.

**Conclusions:** The rise in antibiotic consumption is a warning fact. We found a lack of relationship between antibiotic consumption with the number of bacterial isolations. One of the possible consequences is antimicrobial resistance. Policies for an adequate use of antibiotics in our PICU should be developed.

**Keywords:** Antibiotic Consumption; Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU); Nosocomial Infections

### Introduction

Infections are a common cause of admission to Pediatric Intensive Care Units (PICU). Nosocomial infections are a major health problem in critical care units and are associated with an increase of morbidity, mortality and healthcare costs [1-3]. These infections usually are produced by multiresistant bacteria, therefore is necessary the use of wide spectrum antibiotics for treatment [4].

Antimicrobial resistance (AR) is a major health problem worldwide. Resistance can worsen clinical outcomes and augment healthcare costs [5,6]. Massive use of antibiotics is the main risk factor for developing AR [7-11]. One of the suggested strategies for avoid continuous growth of resistance, are policies of rational use of antibiotics in critical care units [12,13].

In 2014, World Health Organization (WHO) established the problem of AR around the world by the elaboration of a document. In this report, is standed out, the development of carbapenem-resistance in *Enterobacteriaceae*, mostly *Klebsiella pneumoniae* (*K. pneumoniae*). Carbapenems are frequently used in critical care unit for treatment of infections produced by Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase

(ESBL) *Enterobacteriaceae* and multiresistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. The WHO's report, states a high level of AR to third generation cephalosporins in *Escherichia coli* and *K. pneumoniae* strains [14]. These facts have been confirmed by other reports [15,16]. WHO's report also emphasizes the spread of methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in community strains [14].

In Centro Hospitalario Pereira Rossell (CHPR), a tertiary level children's hospital, operates a multidisciplinary group, which has tackled the topic of antibiotic consumption and its relationship with antimicrobial susceptibility pattern. The results of these vigilancy have been used in the update of guidelines for empirical antibiotic treatment and for antibiotic prophylaxis. Most of consumption studies have been made in ambulatory patients and in moderate care area of hospital [17-19]. Data of antibiotic consumption in PICU are lacking.

We decide to conduct a study with the goal to calculate antibiotic consumption in the period 2010 - 2015 in PICU of CHPR. Other objective was to establish relationship between antibiotic consumption with number of bacterial isolations and its antimicrobial susceptibility pattern in the same period.

## Methodology

An observational and retrospective study was conducted. Antibiotic consumption in PICU of CHPR was calculated in the period 2010-2015. This is a medical-surgical unit with a maximum capacity of 20 beds. In this PICU are assisted children between 1 month and 14 years.

Antibiotics included in the analysis were those with highest level of prescription in our PICU (amikacin, cefotaxime, ceftriaxone, ceftazidime, clarithromycin, meropenem, vancomycin). Antibiotic consumption was expressed by Defined Daily Dose (DDD)/every 100 hospital bed-days (DDD/100 beds). A DDD/100 beds was calculated for every year included and for each antibiotic included. The number of DDD/100 beds, is the recommended unit by WHO for measure antibiotic consumption at hospitals. DDD/100 beds was calculated by the following formula [20]:

$$\text{DDD/100 beds} = \frac{\text{consumption during a time period "a"(mg)}}{\text{DDD(mg)} \times \text{n}^\circ \text{ of days in period "a"} \times \text{n}^\circ \text{ of beds} \times \% \text{ bed occupation}}$$

Antibiotic consumption data were provided by the Unidose Unit from the Pharmacy Department. In Unidose Unit are prepared all antibiotic prescriptions from PICU and deliver to nurses for administration. For every year included in the study, the total dose (mg) of selected antibiotics was provided. So, data of antibiotic consumption proceed from those patients hospitalized in PICU between 2010 - 2015 and that were treated with antibiotics included in the study. The cause of antibiotic prescription was not analyzed.

The value of DDD for the antibiotics included was obtained from the WHO's Collaborating Centre for Drug Statistics Methodology. None of the included antibiotics has a specific DDD for children, thus the DDD for its main indication in adults was used. These were amikacin 1g, cefotaxime, 2g, ceftriaxone 2g, ceftazidime 4g, meropenem 2g, vancomycin 2g, clarithromycin 1g [21].

The number of included days was 365, because antibiotic consumption was calculated annually. The number of available PICU beds and the percentage of bed occupation were obtained from the Statistics Department of CHPR.

Bacterial isolations from a sterile site and its antibiotic susceptibility pattern were also analyzed in the period 2010 - 2015. Bacteria included were those most frequently isolated from PICU: *Staphylococcus aureus*, coagulase negative *Staphylococcus* (CNS), *Klebsiella pneumoniae* (*K. pneumoniae*), *Enterobacter cloacae* (*E. cloacae*) and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (*P. aeruginosa*). Data were provided by the Microbiology Laboratory of CHPR.

The protocol study was approved by Institutional Hospital Direction.

## Results

Main clinical features of children hospitalized during the study period are shown in table 1.

Year	Incomes (n)	PIM2 (%)	Mortality (%)	LOS (days)	IMV (%)	Length IMV (days)
2010	556	14.7	3.2	8.91	30.4	9.57
2011	511	10.05	6,7	8.33	30.3	9.48
2012	644	5.68	4.5	6.82	28,9	7.51
2013	609	5.56	3.9	6.76	28,1	7.26
2014	587	4.31	2.6	6.11	24,5	5.92
2015	761	3.73	3.2	4.52	23,2	4.35

**Table 1:** Clinical features of children hospitalized between 2010 - 2015.  
PIM2: Pediatric Index Mortality 2; LOS: Length of Stay; IMV: Invasive Mechanical Ventilation

Antibiotics with the highest value of DDD/100 beds in the period 2010-2015 were ceftriaxone, vancomycin and meropenem. Except amikacin, all antibiotics included showed an increase in consumption. Amikacin consumption kept steady, with little variations between the years included. Clarithromycin consumption rised 750% comparing value of DDD/100 beds in 2010 and in 2015. Cefotaxime consumption was 175% higher in 2015 than in 2010. Vancomycin and meropenem consumption also increased in the period 2010 - 2015, with the highest value of DDD/100 bed in 2013 for both antibiotics. Cetriaxone and ceftazidime also showed a higher consumption in 2015 than in 2010. Data of antibiotic consumption, expresed as DDD/100 beds are shown in table 2 and figure 1. The percent change in consumption compared the year 2010 with 2015 is also shown in table 2.

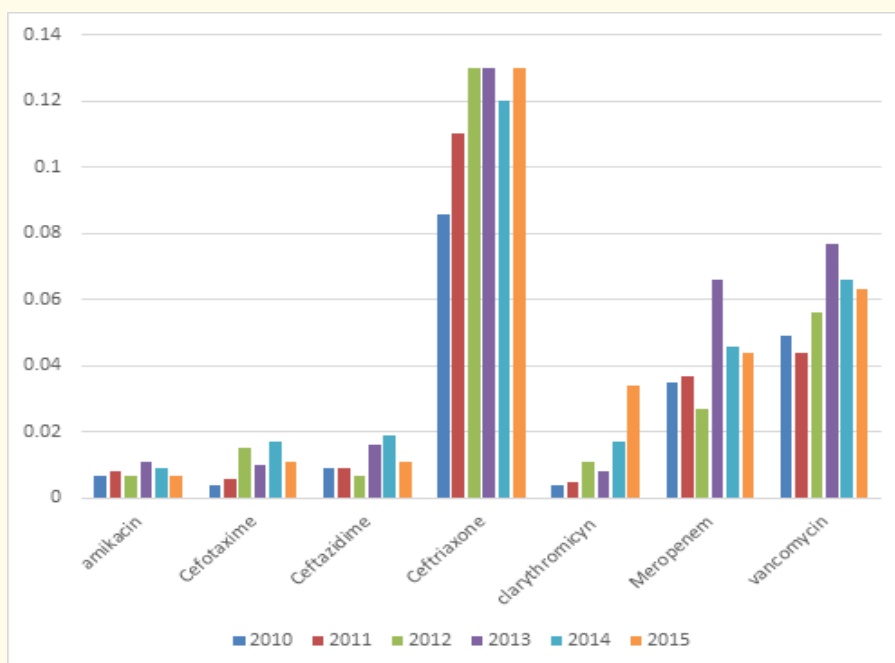


Figure 1: Evolution of antibiotic consumption. PICU- CHPR, 2010-2015 (DDD/100 beds).

Year	DDD/100 beds						
	Amikacin	Cefotaxime	Ceftazidime	Ceftriaxone	Clarithromycin	Meropenem	Vancomycin
2010	0,007	0,004	0,009	0,086	0,004	0,035	0,049
2011	0,008	0,006	0,009	0,11	0,005	0,037	0,044
2012	0,007	0,015	0,007	0,13	0,011	0,027	0,056
2013	0,011	0,01	0,016	0,13	0,008	0,066	0,077
2014	0,009	0,017	0,019	0,12	0,017	0,046	0,066
2015	0,007	0,011	0,011	0,13	0,034	0,044	0,063
% change 2010 vs 2015	0%	175%	22%	51%	750%	26%	28%

Table 2: Evolution of antibiotic consumption. PICU CHPR, 2010-2015 (DDD/100 beds-day).

Number of bacterial isolations showed scarce variations during the study period (Table 3-5). The only exception was CNS, that in 2010 and 2013 showed an increase (Table 3). The pattern of antibiotic susceptibility of *Staphylococcus aureus* and coagulase negative are shown table 2. Staphylococcal isolations were 100% susceptible to vancomycin. CNS had a multiresistant pattern to others antibiotics. *S. aureus* isolations presented high level of resistance to oxacillin, without resistance to Trimethoprim Sulphamethoxazole (Table 3).

Coagulase negative Staphylococcus						
Antibiotic	2010 n = 37 (%)	2011 n = 27 (%)	2012 n = 28 (%)	2013 n = 40 (%)	2014 n = 22 (%)	2015 n = 27 (%)
Oxacillin	89,2	88,5	92,9	89,7	81,8	85,2
Gentamicin	43,2	51,9	39,3	52,5	45,5	25,9
TMP-SMX	32,4	37	25	32,5	36,4	25,9
Clindamycin	59,5	51,9	71,4	65,0	45,5	48,1
Erythromycin	94,6	74,1	89,3	90,0	72,7	81,5
Vancomycin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staphylococcus aureus						
	n = 5 (%)	n = 5 (%)	n = 9 (%)	n = 4 (%)	n = 5 (%)	n = 1 (%)
Oxacillin	60,0	60,0	22,0	50,0	80,0	100
Gentamicin	0	40,0	11,0	25,0	60,0	0
TMP-SMX	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clindamycin	40,0	60,0	0	0	0	100
Erythromycin	60,0	60,0	0	0	20,0	100
Vancomycin	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 3:** Isolations and antibiotic resistance pattern of Staphylococcus. 2010 - 2015.  
TMP-SMX: Trimethoprim Sulphamethoxazole

At the end of the study period, *P. aeruginosa* isolations recovered antimicrobial susceptibility to ceftazidime and ciprofloxacin. Isolations resistant to aminoglycosides were not identified and resistance to carbapenems was low (Table 4).

Antibiotic	2010 n = 4 (%)	2011 n = 4 (%)	2012 n = 4 (%)	2013 n = 6 (%)	2014 n = 5 (%)	2015 n = 3 (%)
Ceftazidime	0	25	50,0	16,7	20	0
Imipenem	25,0	50	0	16,7	0	0
Meropenem	0	25	0	0	0	0
Amikacin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gentamicin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ciprofloxacin	25,0	50	0	0	0	0

**Table 4:** Isolations and antibiotic resistance pattern of Pseudomonas aeruginosa. 2010 - 2015.

The evolution of antimicrobial susceptibility of *K. pneumoniae* and *E. cloacae* are shown in table 4. Frequency of isolations with ESBL was high till 2014. After this year, the number of isolations ESBL producing *Enterobacteriaceae* was low. All isolations were susceptible to carbapenems. Amikacin resistance was infrequent, but gentamicin resistance was common (Table 5).

Klebsiella pneumoniae						
Antibiotic	2010 n = 4 (%)	2011 n = 8 (%)	2012 n = 4 (%)	2013 n = 2 (%)	2014 n = 3 (%)	2015 n = 4 (%)
Ampicillin/sulbactam	50,0	62,5	50,0	100	66,7	0
Ceftazidime	75,0	62,5	50,0	50,0	66,7	0
Cefotaxime	75,0	62,5	50,0	50,0	66,7	0
Imipenem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meropenem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amikacin	50,0	0	0	0	0	0
Gentamicin	50,0	50,0	50,0	0	33,3	0
TMP-SMX	25,0	50,0	50,0	0	33,3	25,0
Enterobacter cloacae						
Antibiotic	n = 2 (%)	n = 2 (%)	n = 4 (%)	n = 3 (%)	n = 3 (%)	n = 1 (%)
Ampicillin/sulbactam	100	100	100	100	66,7	0
Ceftazidime	100	0	50	33,3	0	0
Cefotaxime	100	0	50	33,3	0	0
Imipenem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meropenem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amikacin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gentamicin	50	0	0	0	0	0
TMP-SMX	50	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 5:** Isolations and antibiotic resistance pattern in Klebsiella pneumoniae and Enterobacter cloacae. 2010-2015.  
TMP-SMX: Trimethoprim Sulphamethoxazole

## Discussion and Conclusion

Our study is the first report that quantify evolution of antibiotic consumption in a PICU during a 5 year period in Uruguay and also internationally. Antibiotic consumption was shown together with the evolution of bacterial isolations and its susceptibility pattern in the same period. One of the most important findings was that antibiotic consumption and the number of bacterial isolations were not related. Rise in consumption was not matched with a growth in the number of bacterial isolations. Clarithromycin was the one with highest rise in consumption. Neither *Bordetella* sp. nor *Mycoplasma* sp. were included in the study. Any way this high consumption is a warning fact. This rise in clarithromycin consumption may be secondary to its use in severe bronchiolitis, which is a common practice in our PICU.

Between 2001 and 2006, antibiotic consumption was quantified for ambulatory assistance and for moderate care sectors in the same Hospital. PICU was excluded from this study. During this period, methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* acquired in community emerged, and there was a significant rise in antibiotic consumption, specially for clindamycin, Trimethoprim Sulphamethoxazole, ceftriaxone and vancomycin [19]. Similar experiences, calculating antibiotic consumption have been made in other countries [22].

In our study antibiotic consumption was calculated in an accurate way. This was secondary to precise data of consumption provided by the Unidose Unit from Pharmacy Department. This Unit records all antibiotic prescriptions from PICU and the quantity of prepared antibiotic for each patient during PICU stay. Thus we knew with accuracy the amount of each antibiotic included in the study that was prepared by the Unit and subsequently administered to hospitalized patients in PICU from 2010 to 2015.

Antibiotic consumption was expressed as DDD/100 beds. This is an international unit that allows to compare consumption between countries and in different periods. The DDD/100 beds detects changes in prescription patterns, but not causes of these changes [20]. The main limitant of our study is the use of DDD from adults. It has been stated that pediatric DDD are very difficult to assign due to body weight variation. Thus establishing antibiotic consumption in pediatric populations is difficult. The problem of DDDs value is the main weakness of our study, because results of antibiotic consumption are less reliable. Liem, *et al.* have developed neonatal DDDs to quantify antibiotic consumption in neonates, but in children have not been established [23]. It has been suggested the use of Days of Therapy (DOT) in children, but has not been validated for hospitalized children [24]. Despite that DDD/100 beds shows limitations in children, we could obtain an approach to antibiotics consumption in the period 2010 - 2015.

A trend toward a higher consumption for all antibiotics was found with exception of amikacin. This trend was not associated with an increase in number of bacterial isolations. According to the nature of the study, we cannot conclude that antibiotic use was inappropriate. Nevertheless some findings of our experience should be analyzed.

Neither antibiotic consumption showed a clear relation with the number of isolations nor with the incidence of nosocomial infections in PICU. The incidence of bacteremia associated to central venous catheter (BCVC) diminished from 5.06/1000 days in 2010 to 2.38/1000 days in 2013. In 2016 incidence was less than 1.0/1000 days of catheterization [25,26].

The year with highest value of consumption for most antibiotics was 2013. Nevertheless, in this year, only CNS showed an increase in the number of isolations. Also in this year the incidence of BCVC was lower than in 2010. The lack of association between antibiotic consumption with the number of isolations and with the incidence of BCVC in PICU, is a significant fact.

One of the possible causes of rise in antibiotic consumption is illness severity of children admitted to PICU. To predict mortality risk at admission, Pediatric Index of Mortality 2 (PIM2) is used in our PICU. As shown in table 1, mean value of PIM2 diminished from 2010 to 2015. In 2010, mean value of PIM2 was 14.9% and subsequently fell progressively to a zenith value of 3.71% in 2015. This fall of PIM2, was not related with a minor antibiotic consumption. Length of stay in PICU and duration of invasive mechanical ventilation also diminished and mortality kept steady (Table 1). Based on these data, illness severity is not a plausible explanation for the observed rise in consumption.

In Intensive Critical Care Units and in PICU, antibiotic consumption use to be 10 times higher than in moderate care area [27]. This elevated consumption may be related to different causes. One of them is the unjustified use of antibiotic for prophylaxis and in viral infections [28,29]. This inappropriate use may be related to illness severity. In severe bronchiolitis produced by Syncytial Respiratory Virus (SRV), when mechanical ventilation is required, bacterial co-infection may be present in 20% - 40% of cases [30,31]. This fact, may contribute to the frequent use of antibiotics in severe SRV bronchiolitis, specially ceftriaxone and cefotaxime. Both of them presented high consumption and use to be prescribed in children with SRV bronchiolitis in our PICU.

Data of evolution of antimicrobial susceptibility of isolations should be highlighted. First of all, Staphylococcal isolations showed a multiresistant pattern and were 100% susceptible to vancomycin. Thus vancomycin is a reasonable option for Staphylococcal infections treatment in our PICU. Although vancomycin susceptibility was universal, minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC) value to vancomycin was not informed. MIC's value of vancomycin is one of the main predictors of success treatment and a major determinant in the dosage and should be informed for guide treatment [32,33].

*P. aeruginosa* isolations showed variability in carbapenems susceptibility in different years of study, but all isolations were susceptible to aminoglycosides (gentamicin and amikacin). Based on these results, aminoglycosides could be considered as treatment option for *P. aeruginosa* infections in our PICU.

Although there was a rise in meropenem consumption during the study, Carbapenemase producer *Enterobacteriaceae* were not isolated. The presence of ESBL was frequent in isolations of *Enterobacteriaceae*, so third generation cephalosporins are not recommended for infections produced by *Enterobacteriaceae* in our PICU. Isolations of *Enterobacteriaceae* were globally susceptible to amikacin. Based on the obtained results of the susceptibility pattern of gram negative bacteria, amikacin may constitute an option in management of nosocomial infections produced by *P. aeruginosa* and *Enterobacteriaceae*. Despite widespread use of amikacin, pediatric clinical trials which evaluate comparative efficacy of amikacin in treatment of nosocomial infections are lacking. Most of clinical studies focus on antimicrobial susceptibility pattern with limited data to clinical evolution and comparative efficacy with other antibiotics [34,35].

Although one of the inclusion criteria of the study was that bacterial isolation should be obtained from a sterile site, the presence of contaminant cannot be rejected, specially for CNS. This is other weakness of our study.

From the obtained results we cannot affirm that antibiotics use was inappropriate, although a lack of association between antibiotic consumption and the number of bacterial isolations was a warning fact. Antibiotic use is frequent in critically ill children, even when a viral infection has been confirmed or when the risk of invasive bacterial infection is low. This practice is difficult to change, because is based on different beliefs about antibiotics benefits and risks in critically ill children. The excessive and unjustified use of antibiotics increases the risk of developing AR [7-11,36,37].

Developing antimicrobial rational use policies is necessary for minimizing the impact of AR. For the success of this intervention is crucial the involvement of all PICU staff. For this policy, also is essential the knowledge of antimicrobial susceptibility pattern of PICU bacterial microbiome and apply a de-escalating therapy in antibiotic treatment for avoid the use of wide-spread antibiotics for prolonged periods [38].

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### Conflict of Interest

None of the authors presented conflict of interest and none to declare.

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