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Hemophilus Influenzae and Otitis Media

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It can be deduced from the culture-results obtained after sterile puncture of the middle ear in 335 cases of acute otitis media that the causative agent is not the staphylococcus, which is frequently found in smears from the external meatus, but—in order of importance—the pneumococcus, the hemophilus influenzae and the streptococcus haemolyticus.

Further analysis of the culture-results shows that as the number of recurrences increases, the hemophilus influenzae relatively increases, and the pneumococcus and streptococcus haemolyticus decrease.

Whether or not antibiotics are administered in the beginning of acute otitis media, makes no difference in this shift in relations, nor does an adequate choice of the antibiotic.

The increased tendency to chronicity and recurrence when a hemophilus influenzae infection is involved is also demonstrated in the mastoidectomies in the course of an acute otitis media (time-indication). Here also the high percentage of hemophilus influenzae which is found becomes apparent. In the acute masto-oiditis the pneumococcus, and not the hemophilus influenzae, was most frequently encountered.

It can be deduced from the culture-results of 100 selected frequently recurring cases of acute otitis media that the percentage of hemophilus influenzae after the third recurrence rises over 50 %.

This implicates that when an antibiotic is given at the third or next recurrence without a known culture-result generally chlor-ampenicol will be the most effective.