

A total of 301 patients were randomly assigned to a treatment group: 157 to the dexamethasone group and 144 to the placebo group. CONCLUSIONS Early treatment with dexamethasone improves the outcome in adults with acute bacterial meningitis and does not increase the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding. Treatment with dexamethasone was associated with a reduction in the risk of an unfavorable outcome (relative risk, 0.59; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.37 to 0.94; $P=0.03$).