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Hyperbaric oxygen as adjuvant therapy in the management of necrotizing fasciitis.

[Jallali N](#), [Withey S](#), [Butler PE](#).

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BACKGROUND: Necrotizing fasciitis (NF) is an uncommon but serious infection of fascia and skin associated with considerable morbidity and mortality. One modality proposed for improving the outcome of this condition is hyperbaric oxygen (HBO) therapy. This is a form of medical treatment that involves intermittent inhalation of 100% oxygen under pressures exceeding the atmosphere. The aim of this article is to review current practice and evidence for the use of HBO as adjunctive therapy in the management of NF. **METHODS:** A survey of published English literature through searches of Medline and PubMed was carried out using the following key words: "necrotizing fasciitis," "Fournier's gangrene," "necrotizing soft tissue infections," "hyperbaric oxygen therapy," "and hyperbaric oxygen chambers." **RESULTS:** The results of studies on the use of HBO therapy in NF are inconsistent. Some studies have demonstrated that HBO can improve patient survival and decrease the number of debridements required to achieve wound control, whereas others have failed to show any beneficial effect. **CONCLUSIONS:** Encouraging results have been achieved with the addition of HBO therapy to standard treatment regimes, thus justifying further research in this field. More robust evidence by way of a prospective randomized trial is necessary before widespread and routine use of HBO in the management of NF can be recommended.

PMID: 15820462 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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