Review: no evidence exists that paracetamol and ibuprofen differ for short term pain relief or safety in children, but ibuprofen more effectively reduces fever


What is the relative effectiveness and safety of paracetamol (acetaminophen) and ibuprofen for short term treatment of pain and fever in children?

METHODS

**Main results**

17 RCTs (n = 1820) met the selection criteria. Most trials used single doses of 10 mg/kg of each drug and a double blind design. Meta-analysis was done using a fixed effects model. Meta-analysis of 3 trials of children with pain after dental extraction or sore throat pain showed that ibuprofen (4–10 mg/kg) did not differ for short term pain relief (table). Meta-analysis of 17 trials that examined single doses of ibuprofen (5–10 mg/kg) and paracetamol (10–15 mg/kg) for fever showed that ibuprofen was more effective than paracetamol for reducing fever (table).

**Conclusions**

No evidence exists that paracetamol and ibuprofen differ for short term safety or relief of moderate to severe pain in children. Ibuprofen reduces fever more effectively than paracetamol.