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**Purpose:** To develop an experimental animal model of infection by *M.chelonae*, a non tuberculosis mycobacterium in keratomileusis. Methods: Prospective study with 21 New Zealand rabbits. Twenty-six eyes of 21 rabbits underwent uneventful partial keratomileusis with nasal hinge by automatized corneal shaper microkeratome (ACS by Bausch&Lomb) under general anesthesia. Eyes were immunosuppressed by local injection of methyl prednisolone. Rabbits were divided in 3 different groups regarding the substance put on the interface. As Controls, 5 rabbits had bilateral keratomileusis with BSS Ô (ALCON) in the interface; as Subjects: 8 animals had unilateral keratomileusis with 1 microliters of 10<sup>4</sup> inactive bacteria as inoculum in the interface; 8 animals had unilateral keratomileusis with 1 microliters of 10<sup>4</sup> active bacteria as inoculum in the interface. Trimetoprim drops were administrated every 4 hours. Animals were examined by slit lamp on the first postoperative day and every week after surgery until 4 or 7 weeks. Slit lamp photos were taken to evaluate clinical signs, Animals were sacrificed every week up to 4 weeks (controls) or 7 weeks (subjects). Corneal samples were taken for microbiologic and histopathologic studies. Results: Controls did not develop clinical disease. Subjects (infected rabbits) will be presented.