Clinical significance of IFAT test on falciparum malaria patients

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The indirect fluorescent antibody technique (IFAT) has been successfully used in sero-epidemiological studies of malaria (1,2). Whether its clinical application to help in diagnosis or as indicator of prognosis was studied on a total of 83 patients (belonging to different categories of clinical severity) and 100 controls (contact of malaria patients) were studied. The findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Seropositive rate of subjects tested

Patient groups	No. of patients studied	Percentage with positive IFAT	Day 0 GMRT
Test groups: (category)			
(1) Patients with no complication	30	86	485
(2) Patients with complications except cerebral signs & symptoms	29	79	86
(3) Patients with cerebral signs & symptoms	24	83	275
a. Pregnant	3		645
b. Severe [illegible]	[illegible]		562
Control group:	100	33	-

There was no relationships between severity of the categories and the IFAT-positivity rate. Geometric Mean Reciprocal Titre (GMRT) of the patients at day 0 of hospital admission varied widely in different groups of patients (Table 1). A time-course profile study on 9 patients from category (3) and 26 patients from category (2) were followed on day 0, 3, 7, 14, 21 and 28. There were no significant alternations in the level of GMRT during the study period.

The study concluded that IFAT test is of no help in diagnosis and GMRT cannot assist the prognosis of P. falciparum malaria patients.

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