Methods: a cross-sectional study was carried out from March to August 2008. All physicians working at public paediatric emergency services in Recife, Brazil, were approached for consent. A knowledge, attitude and practice questionnaire, with closed questions and short statements was applied. Answers were considered adequate according to national and international guidelines.

Results: 219 physicians (median age 44 years, 86% female) took part in the study and 201 had been involved in the care of a suspected case. Physicians who worked at a referral hospital or had graduated in the last 10 years performed better on knowledge, attitude and practice ($p < 0.01$); those who had completed residency performed better on knowledge and attitude ($p < 0.01$), but not on practice. Failure to undress an acutely febrile child for examination, not giving penicillin soon after suspicion and not recognizing haemodynamic instability as a contra-indication for lumbar puncture were observed in 13, 12 and 38% of answers, respectively.

Conclusions: Physicians working in paediatric emergency rooms are likely to be often involved in the initial management of suspected cases in settings where severe cases of meningococcal disease co-exist with sub-optimal conditions of care. The identification of gaps in knowledge, attitude and practice is useful to inform policymakers and to propose further audit and research questions.

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ASSOCIATION OF SERUM CYTOKINES & ALBUMIN IN VISCERAL LEISHMANIASIS

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Background and aims: Investigating the cause of hypoalbuminemia in the Visceral leishmaniasis (kala azar), this study was designed to measure the levels of these cytokines in kala azar patients and to assess any correlation between their levels with serum albumin.

Methods: From March 2007 to May 2008, thirty kala azar patients, were enrolled in the study. The diagnosis was documented by the presence of related clinical signs and symptoms plus at least one positive laboratory test (one or more of these three: Indirect fluorescent antibody (IFA) equal to or more than 1/128, k39 strip test, and bone

marrow aspiration). We measured the serum levels of albumin, and cytokines at the pre-treatment state and also one week after treatment and in a control group consisting of 38 healthy children.

Results: Albumin was decreased and IL-6 and TNF were increased significantly in the pre-treatment state. IL-1 was not statistically decreased in the pre-treatment.

There was a negative association between serum albumin and IL-6 levels in both the pre- and post-treatment states. ($r = -0.43$ and $r = -0.35$ respectively). In the post-treatment state serum albumin increased and IL-6 levels decreased. This increment wasn't statistically significant, that could be explained by the low number of patients.

Conclusion: Serum levels of IL-6 and TNF are increased significantly in the active phase of kala azar. Also, there is a negative association between serum levels of IL-6 and albumin in the active and convalescent states of the visceral leishmaniasis.

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SENSITIVITY AND SPECIFICITY OF THE RAPID INFLUENZA ANTIGEN TEST CLEARVIEW® EXACT INFLUENZA A AND B FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA A/H1N1 (2009)

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Reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) is considered to be the reference test for diagnosis of influenza, because of its high sensitivity and specificity. Rapid Influenza Antigen Test (RIAT) is, however, useful because of its fast response time. Various kinds of RIAT have shown excellent specificity for the diagnosis of pandemic influenza A/H1N1 in adult patients, but their sensitivity was low (30 to 50%). Not many studies have been performed in a paediatric population which is known to have higher viral loads. Therefore, our aim was to compare RIAT Clearview® Exact Influenza A and B to specific RT-PCR in children seen in our