THE PLACE OF VISUAL INSPECTION WITH ACETIC ACID (VIA) IN A LOW RESOURCE SETTING

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OBJECTIVE: To determine the sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value, negative predictive value and accuracy of VIA.

METHODOLOGY: This was a cross sectional study carried out in the postnatal clinic of Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital Zaria. Clients were counselled and consent obtained. The cervix was examined after it has been exposed with Cusco’s speculum; then painted with 3-5% acetic acid and observed for aceto-white lesions. Suspected areas were biopsied and transported to the Pathology department for reporting. Biopsy served as the reference standard.

RESULTS: The 359 samples taken were analysed. The sensitivity of VIA was 60%, specificity was 99.2%, positive predictive value was 50%, negative predictive value was 99.4% and accuracy was 98.6%.

CONCLUSION: VIA has a high specificity though its sensitivity is low. It can be used as a screening test for premalignant lesions of the cervix in a low resource setting like Nigeria. It can also be incorporated into our national screening programme to complement cervical cytology.