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Rapid point of care diagnosis of malaria among children presenting to the children emergency room of NAUTH, Nnewi- a preliminary report

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Objective: To determine the prevalence and associated factors of malaria among children that present to the Children's Emergency Room (CHER) of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi using a rapid test kit.

Methodology: This is a preliminary report of a cross-sectional study conducted among children aged 0-18 years presenting at the CHER of NAUTH, Nnewi. Data on sociodemographic profile, temperature on presentation and malaria parasite rapid diagnostic test (MP-RDT) results were obtained using semi-structured questionnaires. Data analysis was done using STATA 16.0, means, frequency and percentages were calculated. Cross-tabulation was done for variables using Chi square (and Fisher's exact tests of association) where applicable, with level of significance for tests of association set at $p < 0.05$.

Result: Sixty-six children participated in the study, out of which 40(60.6%) were males. The mean age of participants was 3.1 ± 1.1 years, 31 (47.0%) children were febrile, with an axillary temperature above 37.4°C , while 35(53.0%) were afebrile. Only 10 (15.2%) of participants had a positive MP-RDT. Nine of the 10 positive participants (90%) were males. Prevalence of malaria among males is 9/40 (22.5%), compared to 1/26 (3.8%) among females. Gender significantly influenced MP-RDT ($p = 0.039$).

Conclusion: Malaria is more common among males. Reasons for this need to be explored. Presence of fever did not connote malaria.

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