

Abstract:

In the period 1985-88, 171 fine needle aspirates from paediatric patients with malignant and non-neoplastic masses were processed and evaluated in the Department of Haematology, Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi. Sixty-five needle aspirates had the diagnosis corroborated by histological reports. The rest had relevant clinical and laboratory information to support the cytological diagnosis. The histological diagnosis confirmed cytological diagnosis in 100% for neuroblastoma, 96% for Burkitt's lymphoma, 75% for carcinoma, 68% for sarcoma cases, 53% non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and 50% for Hodgkin's lymphoma. There were no false positives. It is therefore concluded that fine needle aspiration is a useful tool. It may obviate diagnostic surgery, help in planning the course of management of patients and it is diagnostic in Burkitt's lymphoma and neuroblastoma. Fine needle aspiration cytology is an easy, cheap and quick investigation compared to surgical biopsy.