

Pneumocystis carinii infection. Various aspects on its clinical and laboratory diagnosis Infección por Pneumocystis carinii. Algunos alcances sobre su diagnóstico clínico y de laboratorio.

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P carinii is an opportunistic pathogenic agent able to produce severe infection that must be diagnosed promptly. We analyzed 138 samples from 100 patients suspected of having infection by P carinii. The ortho-toluidine blue and the methenamine stains were used to analyze the samples. Infection was demonstrated in 18 patients, 13 adults and 5 children. Underlying disease was AIDS in 7 and other immunosuppressive disorders in the rest. No immunocompetent patient was infected with P carinii. Proper sample collection is important for diagnosis. When bronchoalveolar lavage is not possible, pharyngo-tracheal aspirate in children and sputum sampling after assisted coughing in adults are recommended. At least 2 staining methods and proper controls are advisable.