

Tourniquet Test in Dengue Fever

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Figure 1: Positive Tourniquet Test: As the patient blood pressure was 110/70 mmHg, the cuff was inflated to 90 mmHg and maintained for 5 minutes. Since he had more than 20, his test was positive.

Tourniquet Test

A 12-year-old patient came to emergency department with a 3 days history of acute-onset fever associated with disseminated myalgia, retro-orbital headache and pruriginous rash on his trunk. Because his neighborhood had an outbreak of dengue fever, he was further evaluated with the tourniquet test - the cuff on the upper arm is inflated to the mid-way between their systolic and diastolic pressure for 5 minutes, and then the number of petechiae in a 2.5 x 2.5 cm square distal to the antecubital fossa is assessed. If the number of petechiae is superior to 10 (20 if following Brazilian guideline), the test is positive (Figure 1). Although not specific, tourniquet test helps to estimate capillary fragility in dengue fever.

The patient received vigorous fluid replacement and symptomatic drugs, after which he reported feeling better. His complete blood count was normal. He was discharged and oriented to hydrate himself and return in case of new symptoms.

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