

REVIEW

1. Relevance of the title to the content of the article

Good

2. Summary: Presents the general idea of the topic, objectives, research methods, results and conclusions, written in an objective and concise manner; and are found according to the maximum number of words per section.

Good

3. Introduction: Presentation of the subject, justification of the problem, objectives, hypotheses and methodological foundation, exposing the subject in an orderly and detailed manner

Good

4. Methodology: Describes the procedure, methods and techniques used in data collection and analysis.

Good

5. Ethical aspects. Does the manuscript have a paragraph on ethical aspects, where it mentions approval by the ethics committee, informed consent, and strict compliance with research ethics?

Yes

6. Results: They are presented adequately and it is not redundant with tables or graphs shown.

Regular

7. Discussion: They present a level of critical analysis in correspondence with the problem presented. Purposes of the article, scope, support theory and proposed methodological design.

Regular. The importance of assessing CFS cellularity is not reported.

8. Conclusions: Presents the author's inferences and teachings in relation to the investigated topic, it must correspond to the objectives of the study.

Regular

9. References. Quality of bibliographic references and if they are in accordance with the Vancouver format.

Good

10. Redaction. Is the manuscript correctly written? Does it contain any spelling or grammar mistakes?

Acceptable

11. Contributions. What are the main weaknesses of the manuscript and how the author can do to improve it

Indicate the importance of both microscopic and instrumental differential cell counts in the diagnostic flow chart.

There are some typing errors.

Review SI units.

Reviewer C:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

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No

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Remarks

Ethics committee approvals are usually not required for review articles, therefore I am not deducting from the merit of the article due to the absence of such a statement.

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Requires a thorough assessment of grammar and spelling

11. Contributions. What are the main weaknesses of the manuscript and how the author can do to improve it

The authors have addressed a topic of significant clinical importance that is likely to be of interest to neurologists, intensivists, and infectious diseases specialists alike.

The authors may wish to conduct an additional self-review from the perspective of confirming grammatical and spelling accuracy (for e.g. in the introduction itself, Europe is spelt as Eurpoe and the word "ins" is used instead of "in"). There are also sporadic paragraphs where sentences are separated by commas instead of periods.

If the authors feel comfortable doing so, they may consider editing the manuscript to make it more concise - especially considering that the target audience is likely to consist of specialists who may not require the same degree of background information as a physician unfamiliar with CNS infections.

Quito, March 18, 2022

Dear Reviewers,

We have reviewed with great interest your valuable corrections which have helped us to improve the quality of our article.

In this context we make the following mention:

- Regarding the recommendation on grammar: we have corrected the grammar errors; the wording has been improved which allows us to give a better understanding of our manuscript.
- Need for approval by an ethics committee: in our country this type of study does not merit the approval of an institutional ethics committee since we have not used patient information or violated

their privacy. This has been described in the manuscript; however, for future publications we will take this valuable recommendation into account.

- Cell analysis (cytochemical): it was suggested to add cellularity study to our flowchart; our study focuses on the usefulness of lactate in cerebrospinal fluid as a marker of infection, so using the cellularity of the same gives us the objective we have set out to demonstrate. We know that CSF analysis provides valuable information to the clinician, with this in mind this could become a line of investigation for future research.

We are very grateful for the valuable contributions that you have given us, which have served to improve the content of our research.

Sincerely

Jorge Luis Vélez-Páez. MD. MSc. PhD.