



Diagnostic Virology Laboratory Newsletter



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The most common virus isolated in March was parainfluenza virus type 3 and it is the most likely cause of viral respiratory illnesses at this time. Looks like spring is here! Since the number of RSV and influenza virus detections has decreased dramatically, please order rapid RSV/FLU A&B screens only on patients strongly suspected to have infection with these viruses. Viral culture is the test of choice to diagnose respiratory illness caused by parainfluenza virus, adenovirus and picornavirus.

Virology Question of the Month

Can you identify the SARS agent in your lab?

SARS, or serious acute respiratory syndrome, is now a multi-country outbreak of unexplained atypical pneumonia. If your patient meets criteria for SARS you must alert your local infection control and public health officials. A virus is strongly implicated as the cause, and the leading contender at this time is a novel coronavirus. Other agents and possible co-factors are also under active investigation. Coronaviruses are difficult but not impossible to cultivate and also may be detected by RT – PCR and electron microscopy. We therefore need advance notice from the clinician, so that special handling in the laboratory, and shipment to reference laboratories, such as the CDC can be arranged. More information on SARS can be obtained at the websites www.cdc.gov, www.who.int, www.ha.org.hk and www.aap.org.

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You can also visit our website @:
www.bcm.tmc.edu/pedi/infect/dvl

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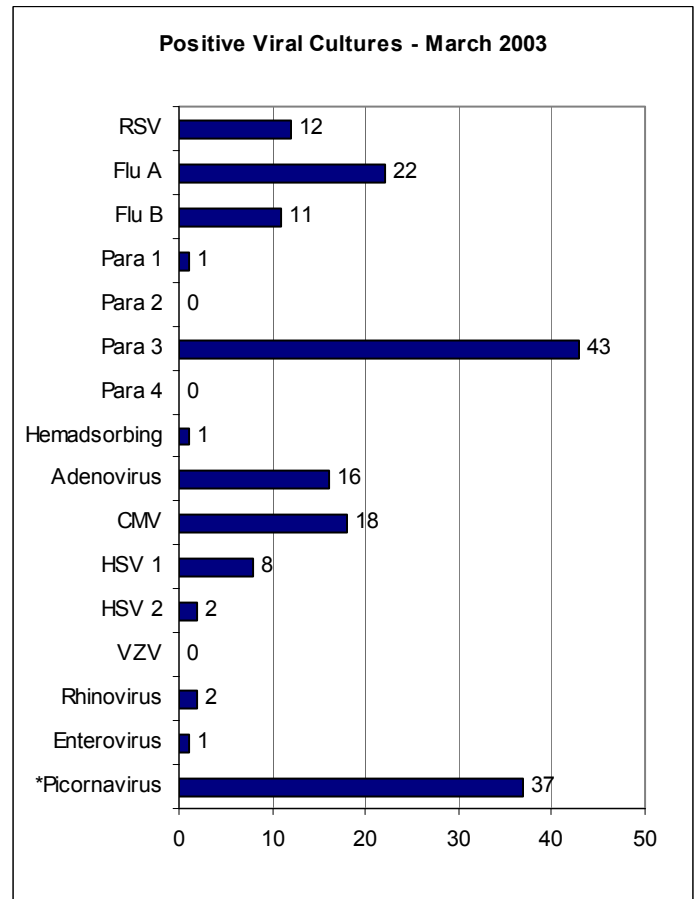
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Positive viral cultures – March 2003



Viral cultures – March 2003

Total	636
Positive	174
% Positive	27.3

EIA Rapid Test Results – March 2003

	RSV EIA	Flu A	Flu B
Tested	540	546	546
Positive	12	10	4
% Positive	2.2	1.8	0.7

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