

E-Pearl of the Week

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Tap Three Times for Neoplasms

Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) cytology can be used in patients with suspected meningeal metastasis or central nervous system (CNS) lymphoma. Often the result is negative, but it is important to keep in mind that if clinical suspicion remains high in the setting of a negative CSF cytology, it should be sent again. With leptomeningeal metastases from solid tumors outside the CNS, the cytology is positive in only about 60 percent on the first attempt, and an additional 22 percent on the second. Cytology may be positive even less frequently with lymphoma, and up to three attempts may be necessary to increase sensitivity to the 80 percent range. It is also desirable to send a large volume to increase the yield.

Reference

Wasserstrom W, Glass J, Posner J. Diagnosis and treatment of leptomeningeal metastases from solid tumors: experience with 90 patients. *Cancer* 1982;49:759-72.

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