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**BANDEMIA IN SHIGELLOSIS**

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Bandemia is a phenomenon observed in infections caused by gram negative organisms, particularly of shigella species. The occurrence has not been quantitated as a diagnostic guideline implicating shigella organisms prior to availability of culture results. We have looked at bandemia in 55 patients with documented shigellosis and compared it to that in 36 non-shigella diarrhoea cases. A 5% or more band cells in the peripheral blood smear is being proposed as a significant indicator of possibility of shigellosis given the proper clinical set up.

Shigellosis, an infection caused by various shigella species is characterised by bandemia, an increase in number of band cells (stabs) in the differential count of the white blood cells. The phenomenon has occasionally been associated with other gram negative organisms such as E.coli and Salmonella but not viral infections although recent reports have attributed the appearance of immature neutrophils in rota virus enteritis<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this study is to identify a cut off point in the number of band cells that favours diagnosis of shigellosis prior to availability of blood and stool culture results.