

..... INTRODUCTION

AND

..... AIM OF THE WORK

INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE WORK

Fever is probably the most frequent, and certainly one of the most important manifestations of diseases in children. It accounts for up to one third of all cases presented to the pediatrician (Giesel, 1961 ; Strasser et al., 1979). It is best defined as an increase in temperature over what is normal for a given individual at that particular time of day and not merely an isolated temperature greater than 37°C (Wolf et al., 1975).

The term FUO should be reserved for children with (1) documented fever for more than 1 week duration, (2) fever documented in hospital, and (3) no apparent diagnosis after an investigation in hospital (Behrman and Vaughan, 1983). It is used synonymously with pyrexia of unknown origin (PUO), fever of obscure origin (FOO), fever of unexplained origin (FUO), cryptogenic fever, obscure fever and persistent perplexing pyrexia (El-Rooby, 1979 ; Moffet, 1981).

Anything can cause a fever of unknown origin (McClung, 1972). The frequency of the various possible causes of prolonged undiagnosed fever are considerably different in children than in adult; children have more viral, collagen-inflammatory and miscellaneous causes of fever

(Moffet, 1981). The most important task for pediatricians is to determine the fever's aetiology. Searching for the underlying cause of prolonged fever requires an open mind and a carefully organized approach by the physician including certain clinical tests which can be considered routine for these patients (Dinarello & Wolff, 1979).

In a critically ill child, speed may be important. However, if the illness is more chronic, the evaluation can proceed more slowly (Feigin, 1981). Once diagnosis has been done, therapy becomes less haphazard and the care of the child assumes a more rational course (Cone, 1969).

This work was carried out to evaluate the various aspects of FUO in young children. It sheds some light on its definition, incidence, aetiology and clinical picture as well as the recent approaches in its diagnosis and management.