An 8-Year-Old Boy with Fever, Axillary Ulcerative Lesion, and Altered Mental Status

(See pages 1327–8 for the Answer to the Photo Quiz)

A previously healthy 8-year-old boy was admitted to the hospital in June with a 7-day history of fever and a lesion on his left axilla that was initially suspected to be the result of a spider bite. On day 3 of his illness, the patient was prescribed erythromycin and prednisone without improvement. The lesion ulcerated with some drainage, and because of the persistent fever, the patient was admitted to the hospital and treated with intravenous vancomycin. At hospital admission, the patient’s temperature was 39.4°C, and there was a weepy ulcerative lesion on the left axilla, with surrounding erythema (figure 1). On day 3 of hospitalization, the patient complained of dizziness and was subsequently noted to be disoriented, with nuchal...
rigidity. A lumbar puncture was performed, and the results of
a Gram stain of the CSF sample were negative for organisms.
Analysis of the CSF sample revealed a RBC count of 50 cell/
mm³ and a WBC count of 2452 cells/mm³ (figure 2). The
patient’s CSF protein level was 173 mg/dL, and his glucose level
was 26 mg/dL. Culture of a blood sample obtained at admission
showed no growth, and culture of a swab sample obtained from
the wound at admission grew a coagulase-negative Staphyloc-
coccus species.

What is your diagnosis?

Figure 2. Wright stain of a CSF sample obtained from the patient