A 13-Year-Old Boy with Ataxia 4 Weeks after a Near-Drowning Accident

(See pages 363–364 for the Answer to the Photo Quiz.)

A 13-year-old boy was evaluated at our hospital for fever and ataxia that ensued 4 weeks after a near-drowning accident in a pond of stagnant water. The patient was admitted to another hospital immediately after the accident, where he received mechanical ventilation and advanced life support. This hospitalization was complicated with episodes of ventilator-associated pneumonia that resolved with broad antibiotic coverage. Four weeks after the accident, the patient presented with fever, headache, vomiting, and ataxia and was transferred to our hospital for further evaluation. The physical examination revealed ataxia with right deviation of the gait, and no meningeal signs were detected. Magnetic resonance imaging of the brain showed...
hypersignal in the periventricular and left parietal lobe areas and in both cerebellar and peduncle areas in the fluid attenuation inversion recovery sequence imaging (Figure 1). A lumbar tap was performed that revealed a purulent fluid containing 2400 white blood cells with 90% polymorphonuclear cells. The patient's glucose level was 15 mg/dL, and his protein level was 265 mg/dL. Stains and cultures for bacteria, mycobacteria, and fungi had negative results. A neuroendoscopic surgical drainage of the periventricular brain abscess was performed. Culture of the abscess content yielded a pathogen whose macroscopic and microscopic features are shown in Figure 2.

What is your diagnosis?