

Challenges and Lessons Learned - Virtual Microscopy 2



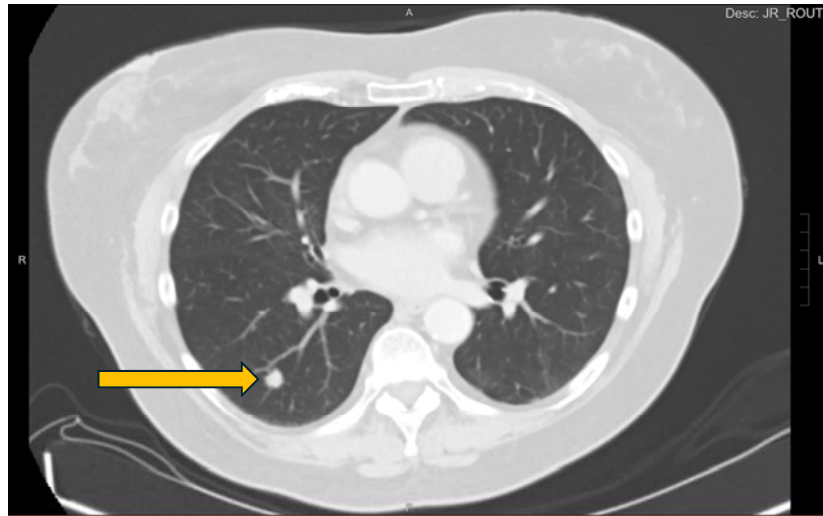
Amy Ly, MD
Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School
Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, MA, USA



Clinical History

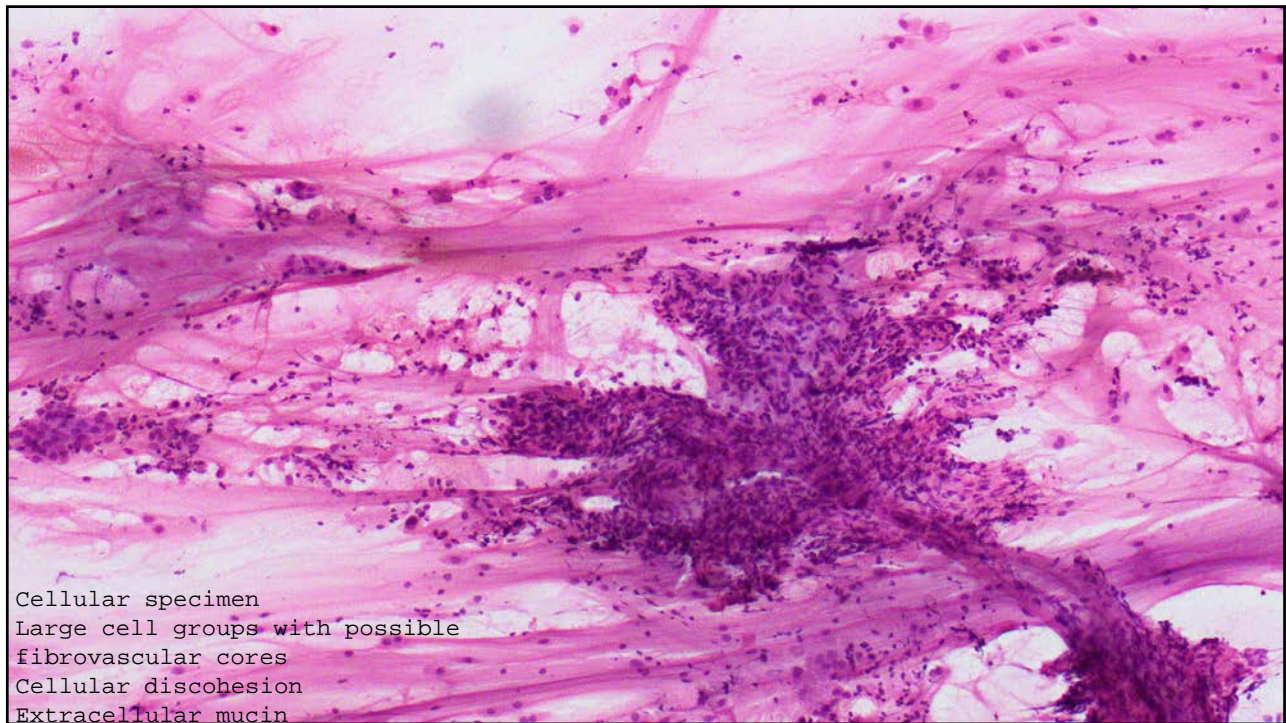
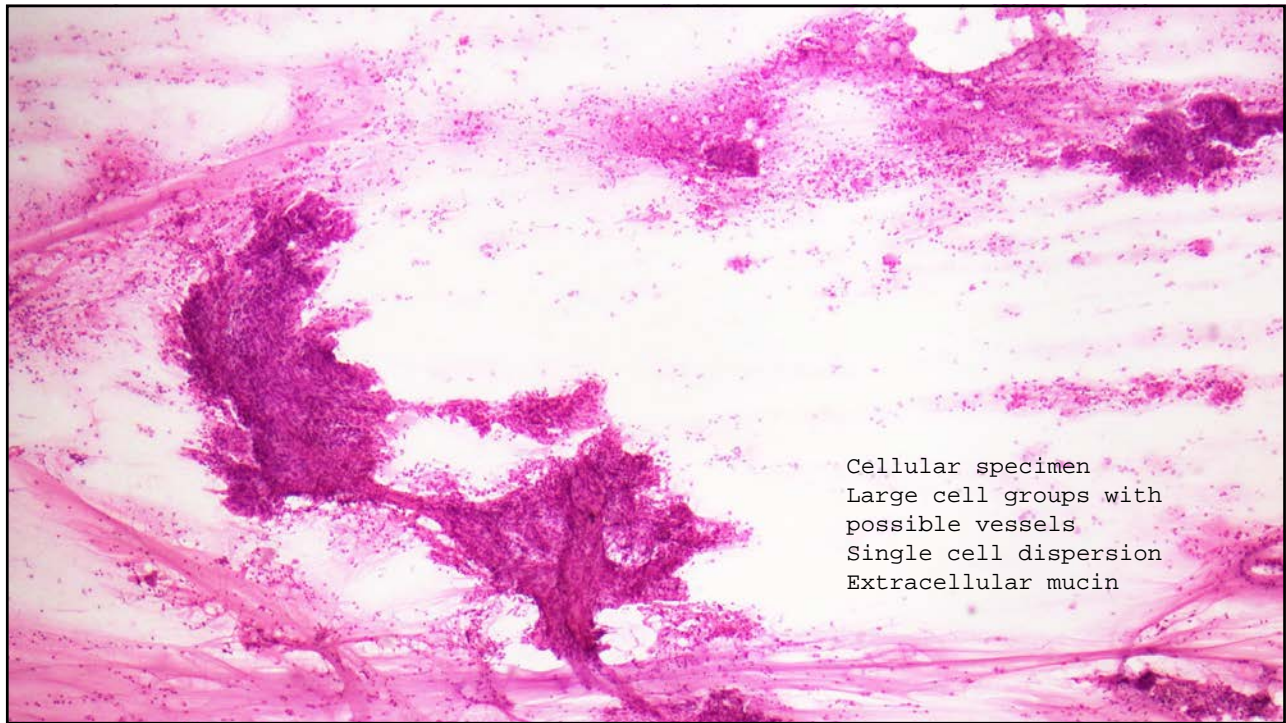
- 71 year old woman
- Former smoker (15 pack years)
- No cancer history
- Screening lung CT:
 - 10mm RLL noncalcified solid pulmonary nodule
 - Several additional 2-3mm and 3-4mm RLL nodules
 - Moderate FDG uptake (SUV 3.4)

Lung PET-CT Scan

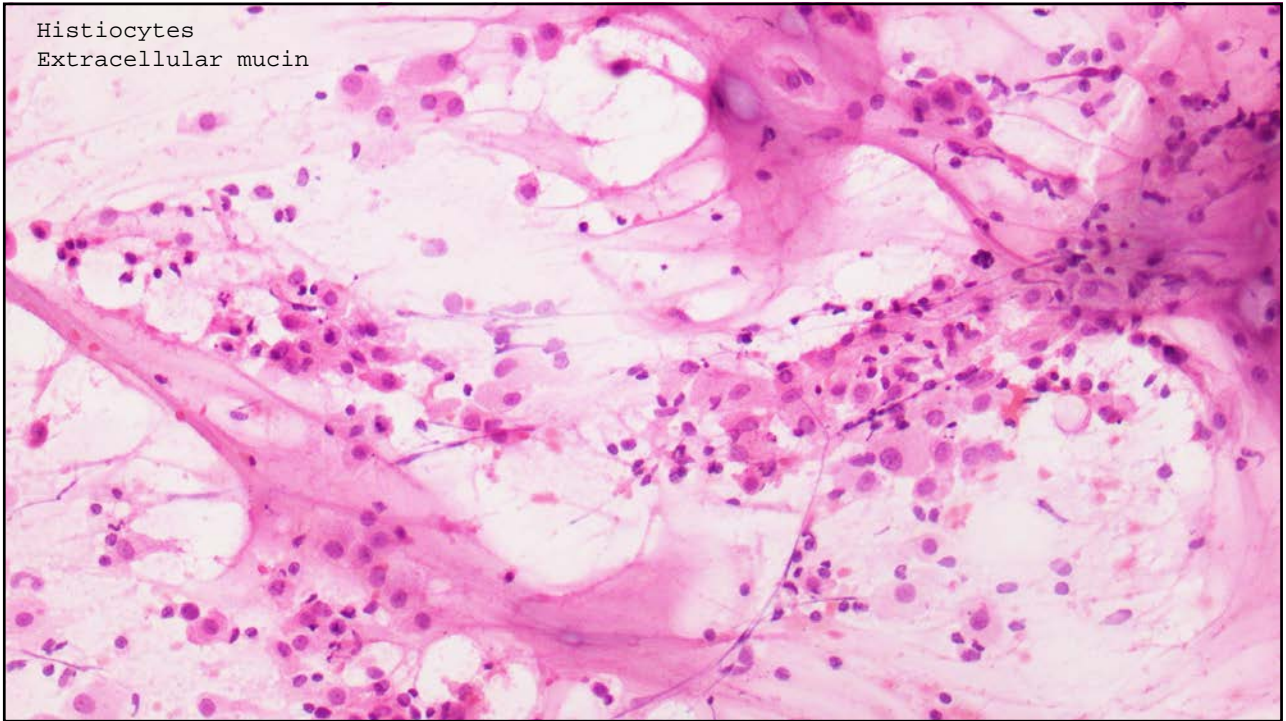


FNA performed of Lung Mass

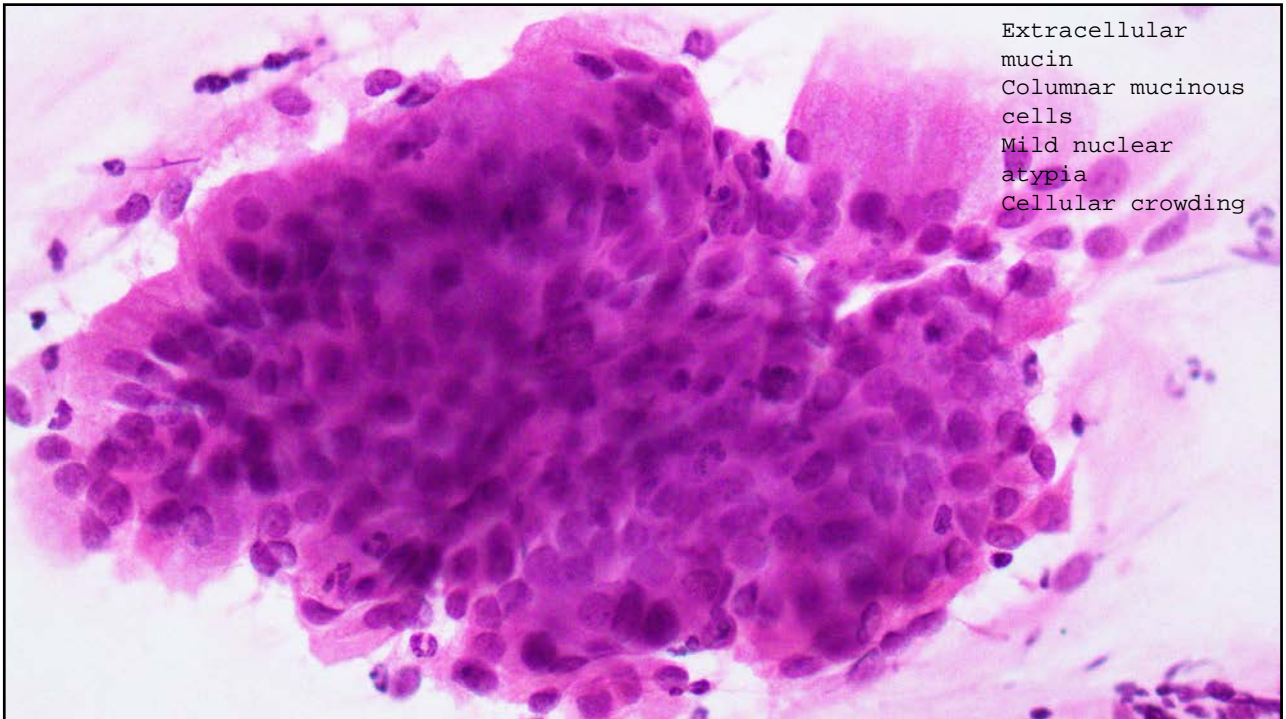
ROSE requested on Rapid H&E stains

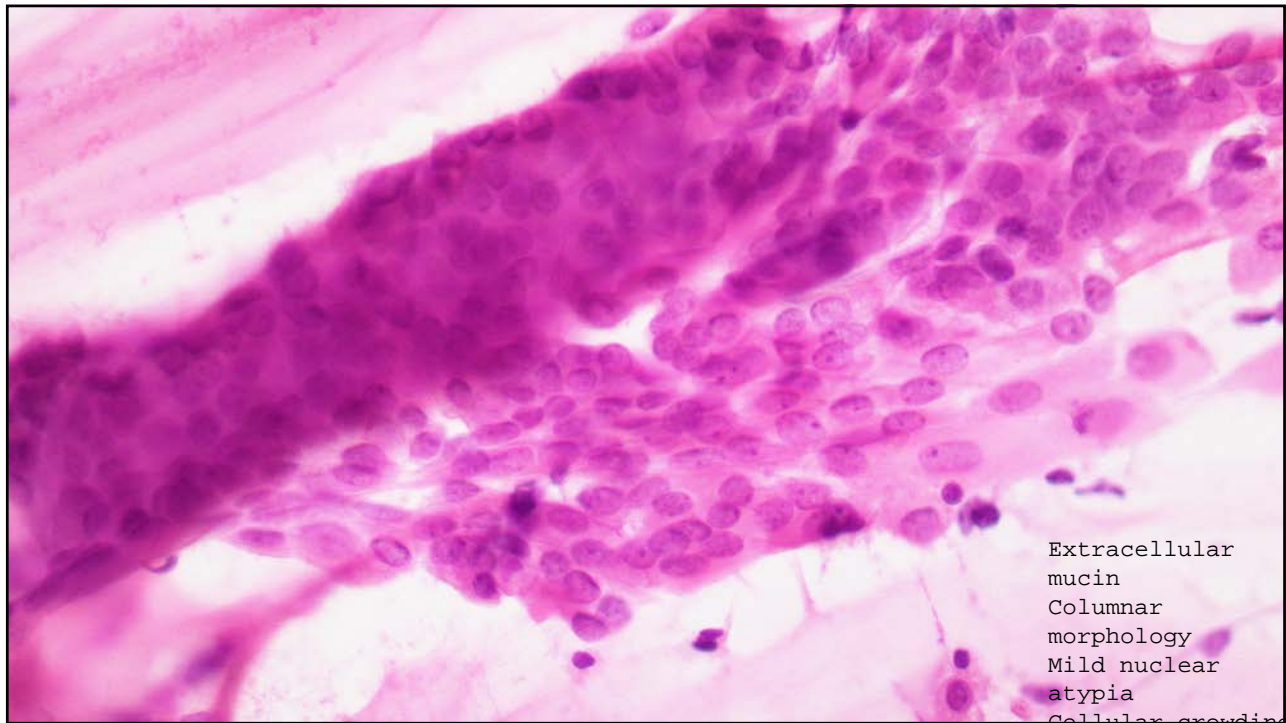


Histiocytes
Extracellular mucin

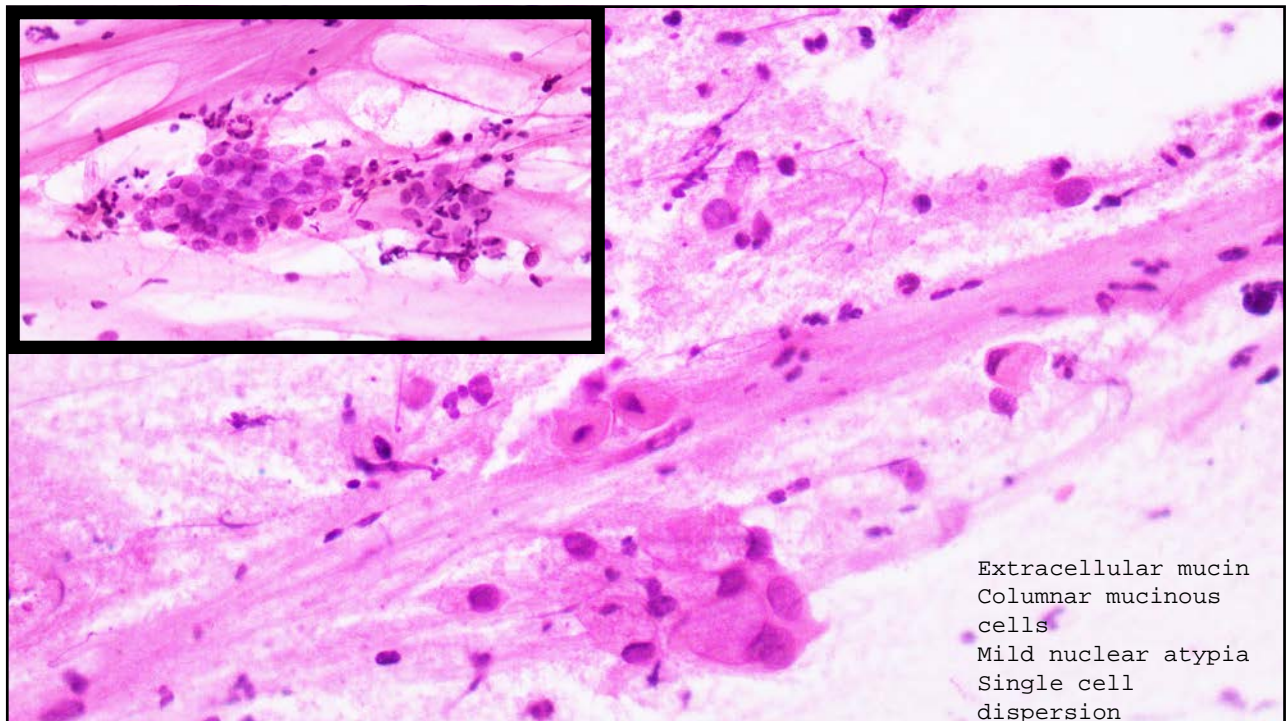


Extracellular
mucin
Columnar mucinous
cells
Mild nuclear
atypia
Cellular crowding





Extracellular
mucin
Columnar
morphology
Mild nuclear
atypia
Cellular crowding



Extracellular mucin
Columnar mucinous
cells
Mild nuclear atypia
Single cell
dispersion

What is your ROSE assessment?

A. Inadequate

B. Adequate

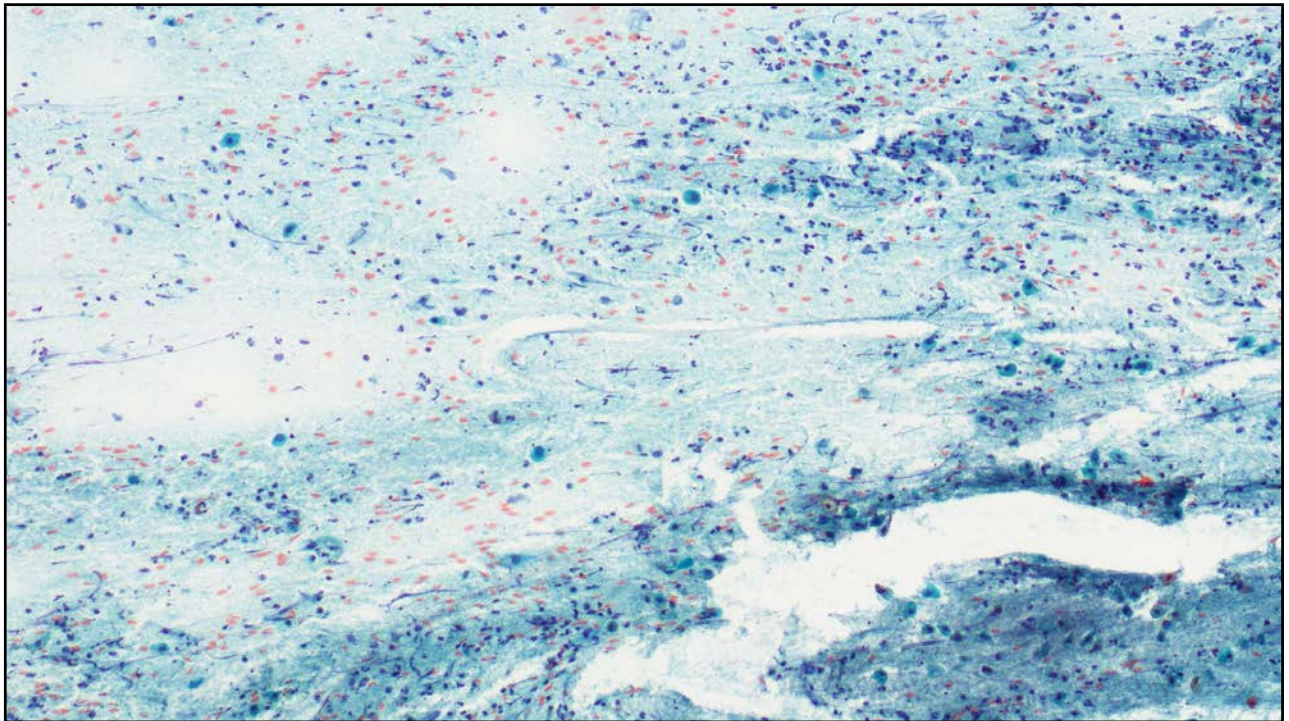
- Mucinous metaplasia (benign)
- Invasive mucinous adenocarcinoma, lung primary
- Metastatic adenocarcinoma (e.g. pancreatic primary)
- Other

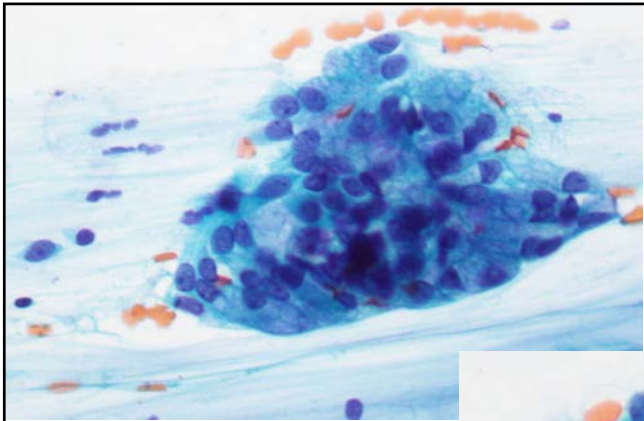
ROSE Diagnosis

"POSITIVE FOR MALIGNANCY

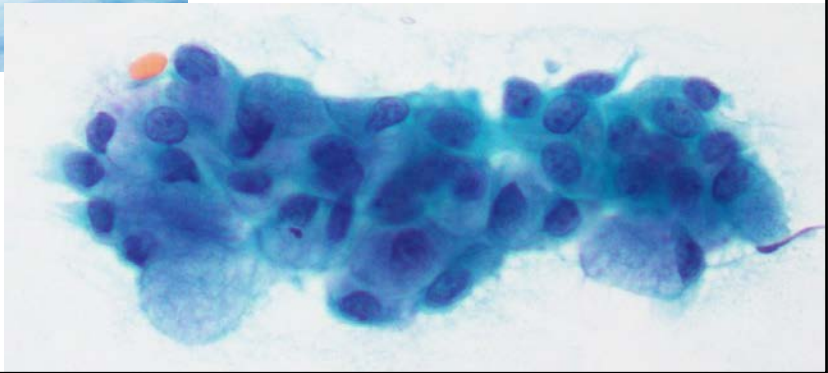
Consistent with mucinous adenocarcinoma"

Additional smears
prepared with Pap
stain

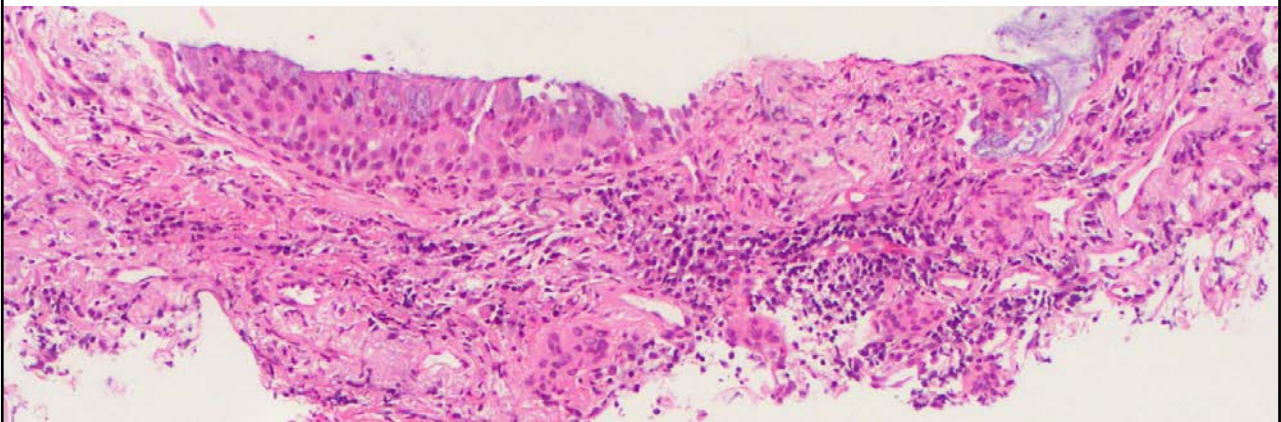




Columnar mucinous
cells
Mild nuclear atypia



RLL nodule, concurrent core
biopsy

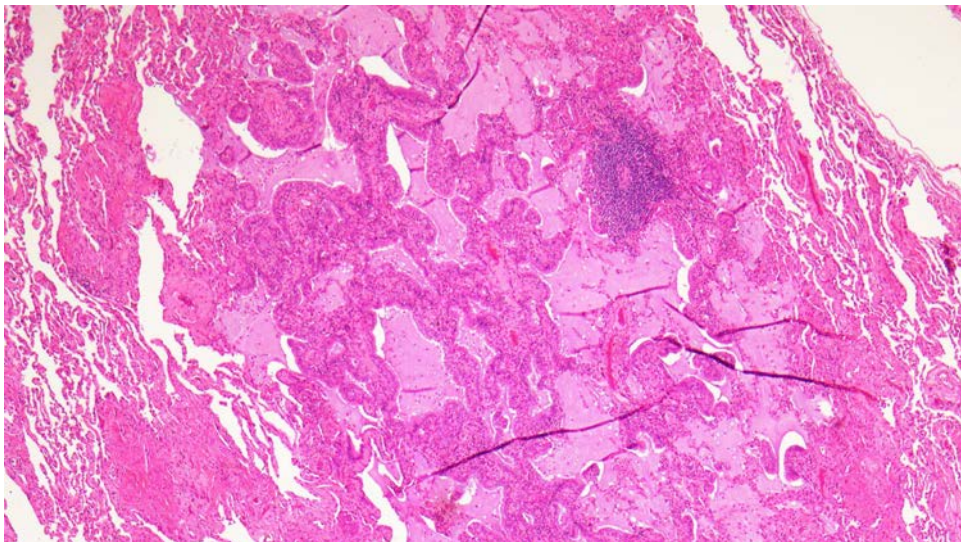


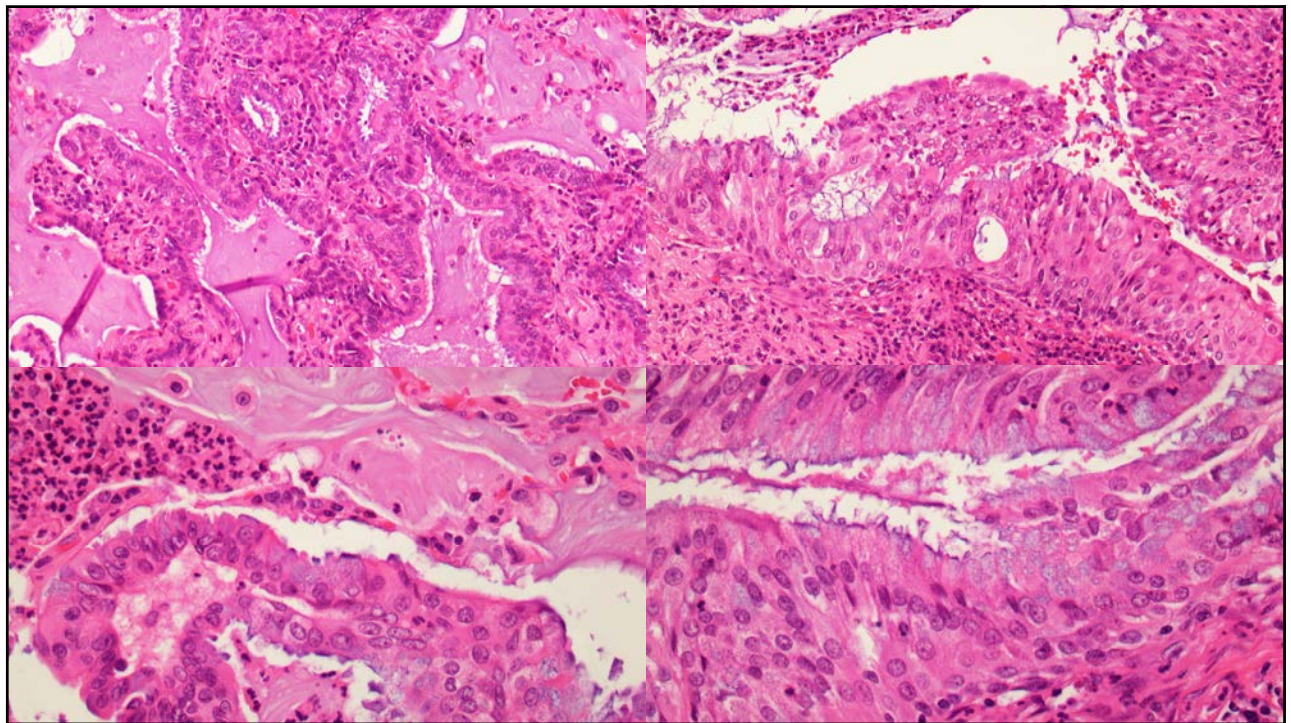
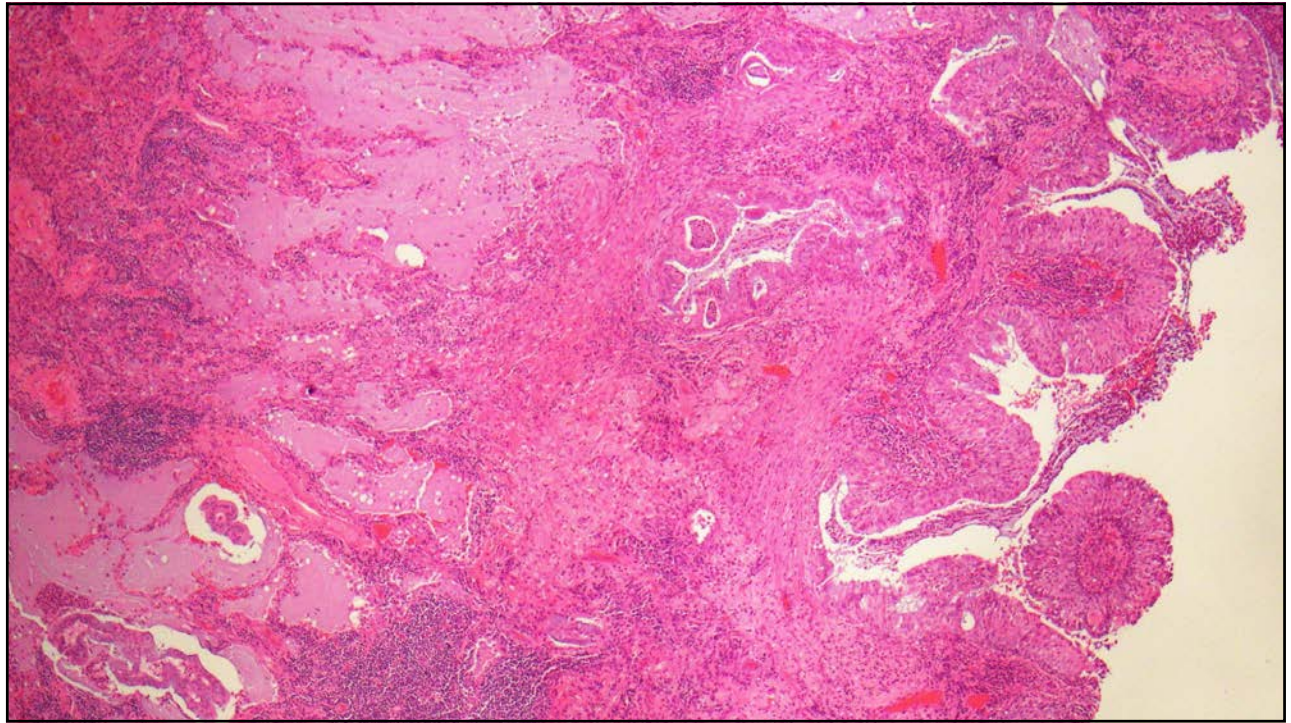
RLL nodule Final Diagnosis

MALIGNANT

Mucinous adenocarcinoma

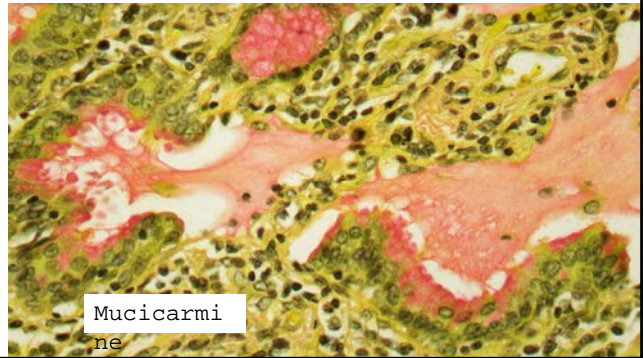
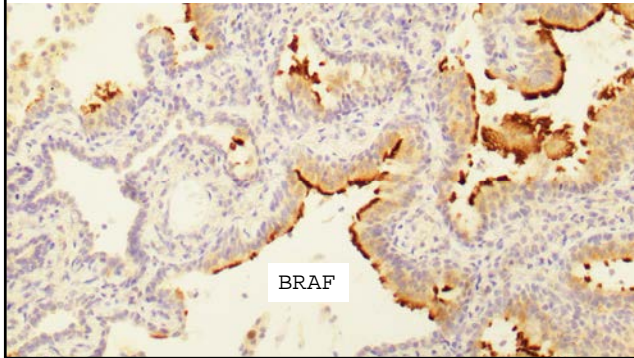
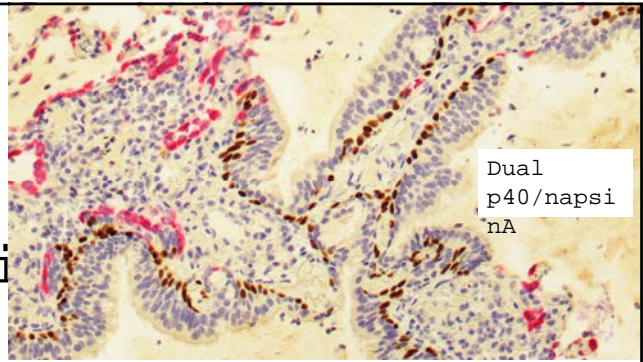
Subsequent Lobectomy:
Bronchiolar adenomas (4 foci)



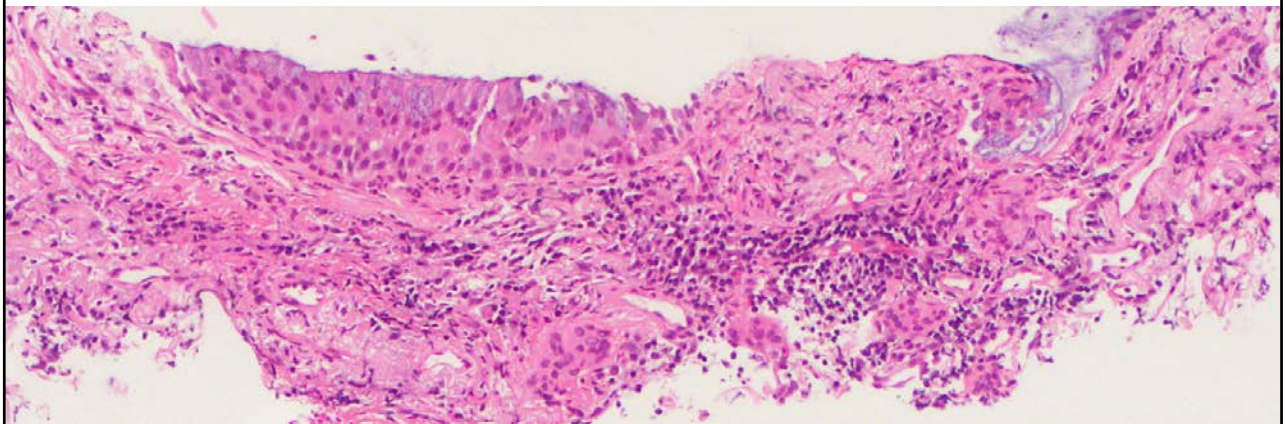


Lobectomy
IHC Stains

All nodes negative



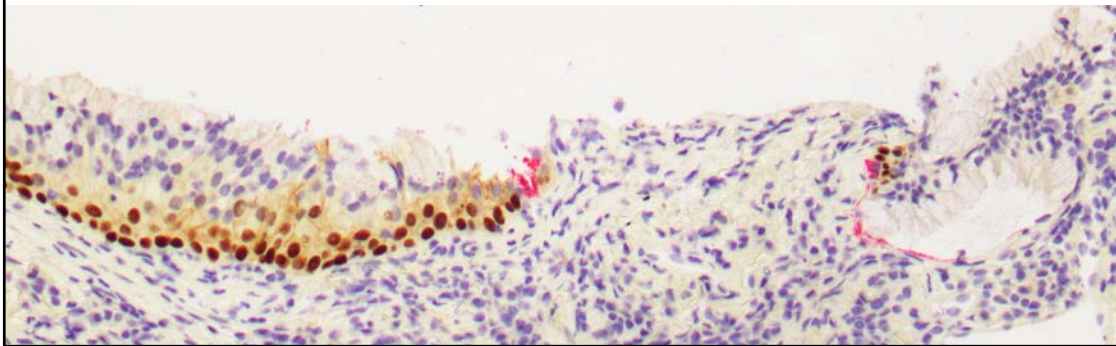
RLL nodule, concurrent core
biopsy



RLL nodule

Dual immunohistochemistry

- p40 (brown)
- Napsin A (red)



RLL nodule

Revised Final Diagnosis

- FNA: ATYPICAL

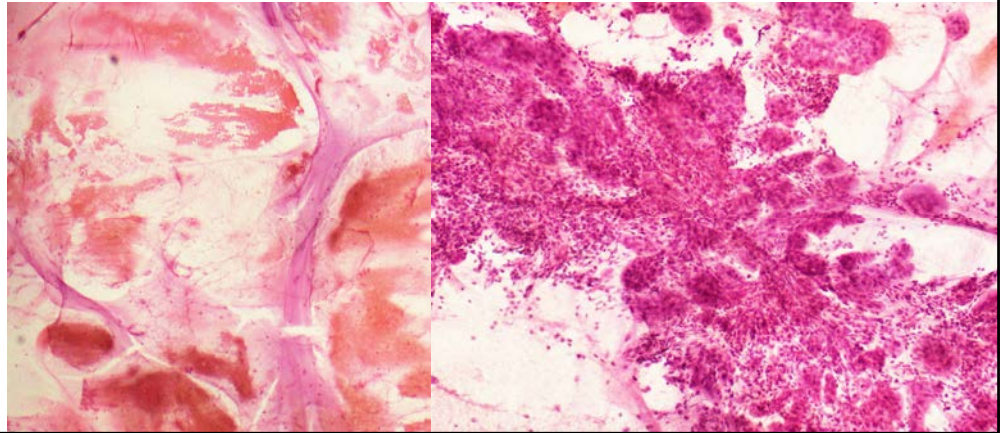
Numerous epithelial cells with mucinous differentiation

- Core biopsy: Findings suggestive of bronchiolar adenoma

Pitfalls: low grade mucinous neoplasms

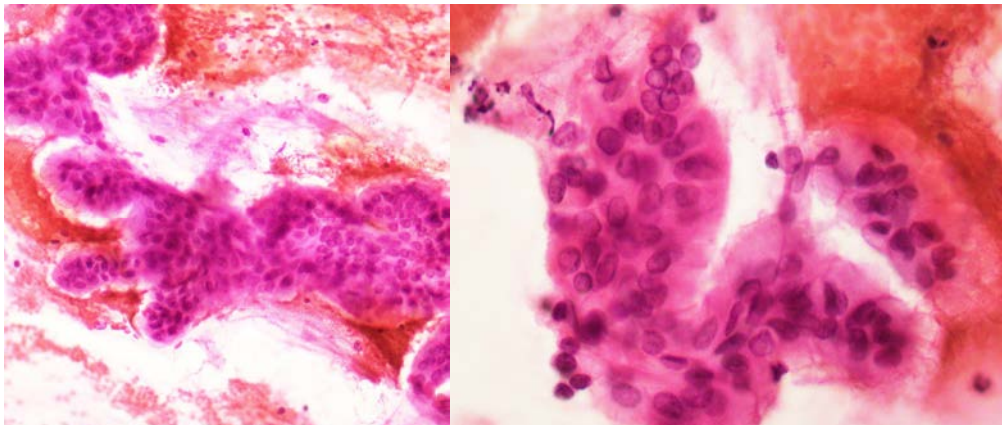
- Bronchiolar adenoma (ciliated muconodular papillary tumor) may mimic invasive or metastatic mucinous adenocarcinoma on FNA

Mucinous
adenocarcinoma,
lung (KRAS
mutant);
TTF1 negative



Mucinous adenocarcinoma, lung (KRAS mutant)

- Morphology not high grade, no mitoses/necrosis

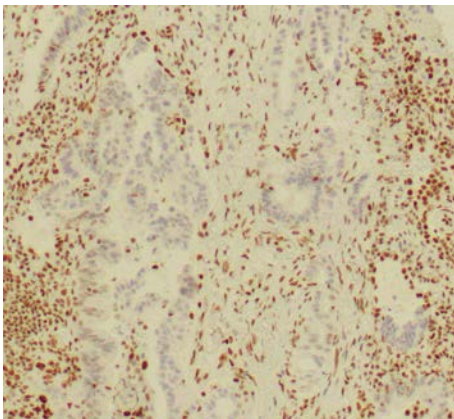


Diagnostic Pitfalls

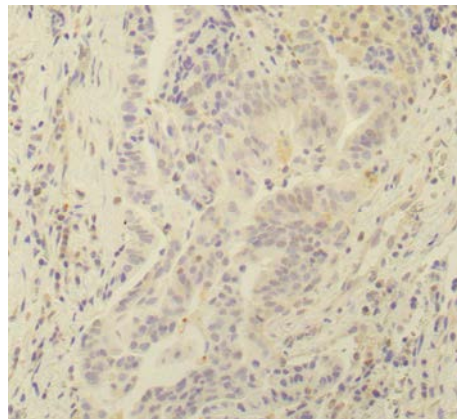
- TTF-1/napsinA negativity in a mucinous tumor does not rule out primary lung, especially when:
 - CK7 positive
 - CDX2/SATB2 negative/weak
 - No known GI/panc primary
 - Lung tumor is solitary and peripheral
- Correlate with available histologic tissue biopsies (and consider signing out together)
- Perform immunohistochemical stains for basal cells (e.g. p40) and cilia (e.g. BRAF)
- Currently no marker is specific for mucinous lung adenocarcinoma

Staining for known mutations: Pancreatic adenocarcinoma spread to lung

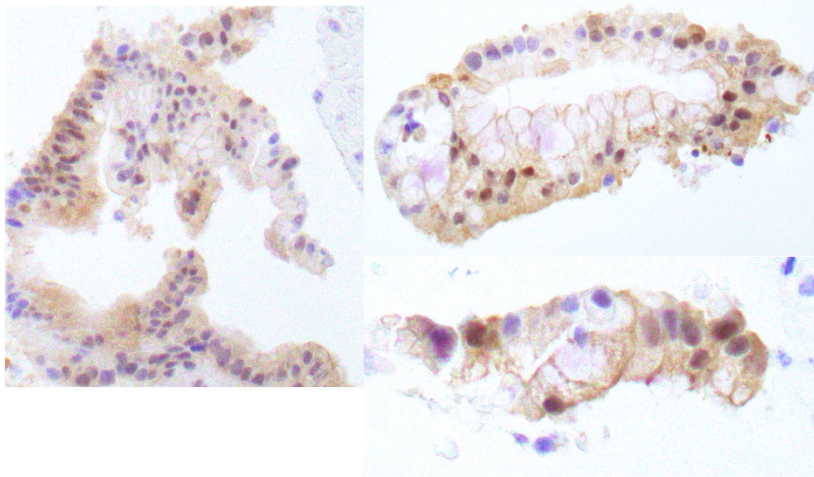
ARID1A (BAF250a) loss



SMAD4 (lost in ~50%)



Marker for pancreas: Annexin



Staining pattern
nuclear and
cytoplasmic
Sensitivity high for
gastric/panc (80-90%)
Not specific enough
to use alone
Use in a panel

References

- Mao TL, Shih leM. The roles of ARID1A in gynecologic cancer. J Gynecol Oncol. 2013 Oct;24(4):376-81. doi: 10.3802/jgo.2013.24.4.376. Epub 2013 Oct 2. PMID: 24167674; PMCID: PMC3805919.
- Mikubo M, Maruyama R, Kakinuma H, Yoshida T, Satoh Y. Ciliated muconodular papillary tumors of the lung: Cytologic features and diagnostic pitfalls in intraoperative examinations. Diagn Cytopathol. 2019 Jul;47(7):716-719. doi: 10.1002/dc.24169. Epub 2019 Mar 8. PMID: 30848550.

Advances in Cytology and Small Biopsies

Jaw mass in a 23-year-old male patient

Mohammad M. Al-Attar, MD
Cytopathology fellow, Mass General Brigham – Harvard Medical School

Clinical history:

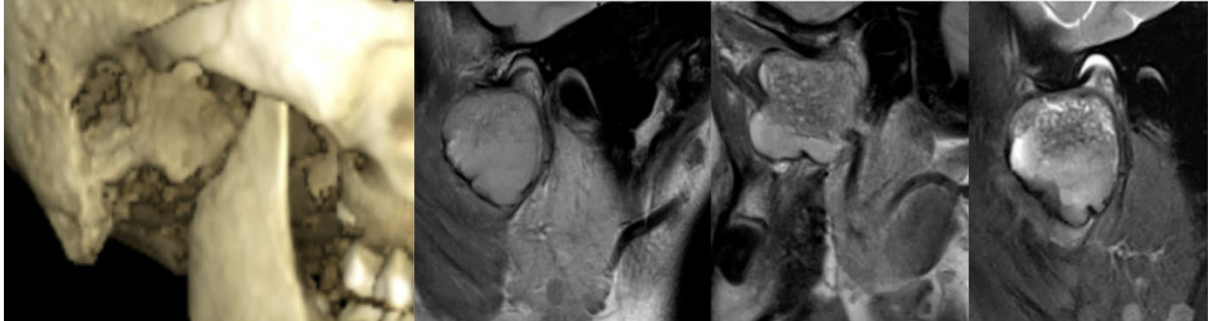
23-year-old male with no significant past medical history.

May 2024: Patient noticed an open bite of the left posterior dentition. 2D radiograph at an outside facility did not pick up any abnormalities.

December 2024: Patient developed pain and sudden swelling in the right temporomandibular joint area.

Patient was referred to maxillofacial surgery at MGH by his dentist.

Imaging



Imaging: 3.6 x 3.0 x 2.9 cm expansile heterogeneously enhancing mass with multi-cystic and solid components centered in the right mandibular ramus and extending to the condyle.

A benign radiologic differential diagnosis (ameloblastoma vs. giant cell tumor of bone) was favored.



3

The patient was referred to the FNA clinic at MGH.

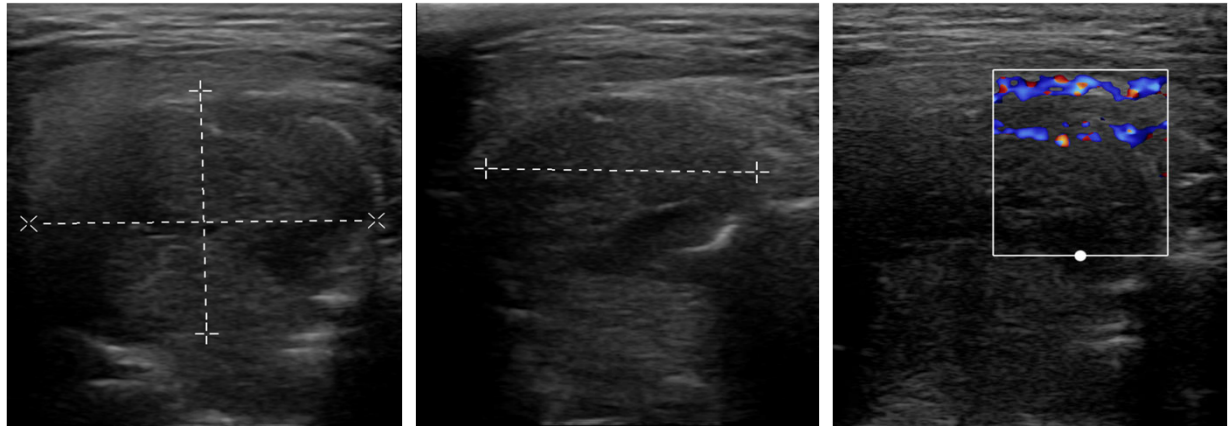
After communicating with the clinicians and radiologists, it was agreed that the mass has a bony cortex that is thin enough for FNA biopsy.

Physical examination revealed a well-defined, non-tender, irregular, firm, fixed swelling/mass lesion in the right temporomandibular joint region, measuring approximately 3 cm in greatest dimension.



4

Bedside ultrasound at FNA clinic



3.0 x 2.28 cm well-defined, solid and cystic mass lesion with irregular borders.

The lesion was heterogeneously hyperechoic and hypoechoic without significant internal vascularity and with minimal peripheral vascularity.



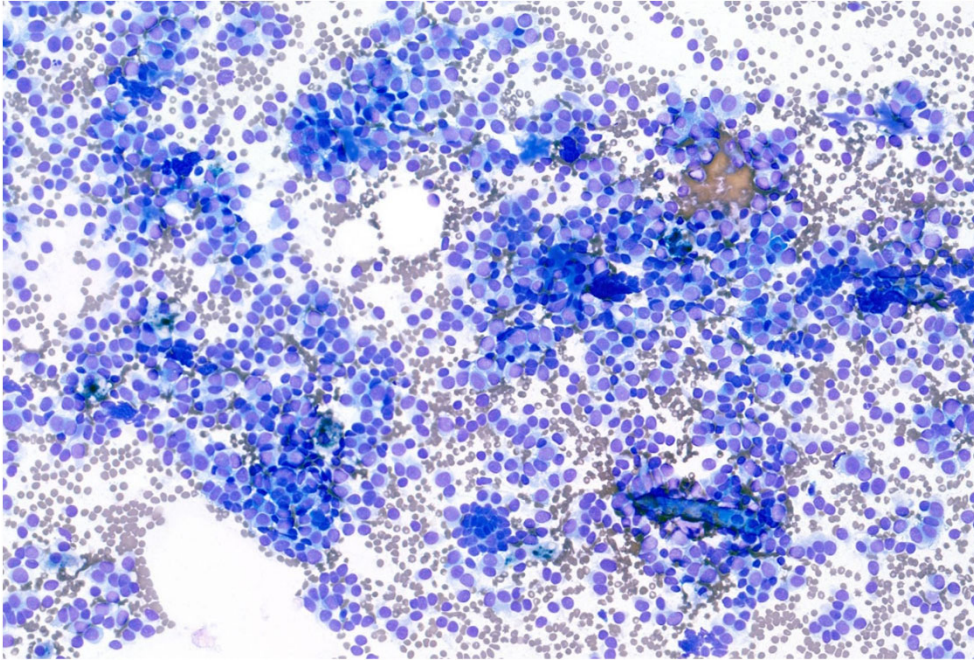
5

On-site smears (Air dried – Diff Quick)

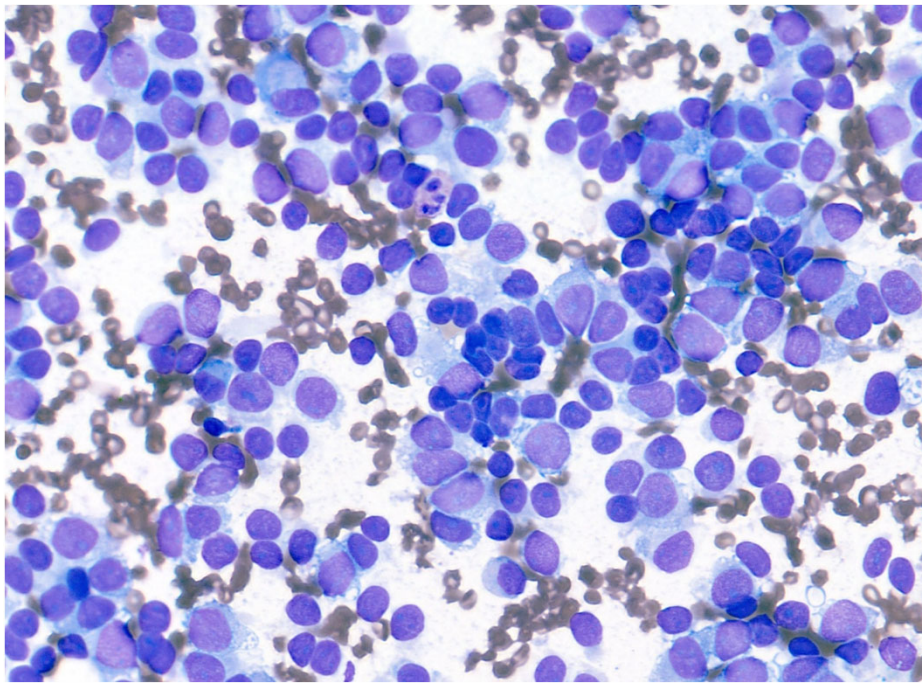
Favor ameloblastoma, awaiting permanents



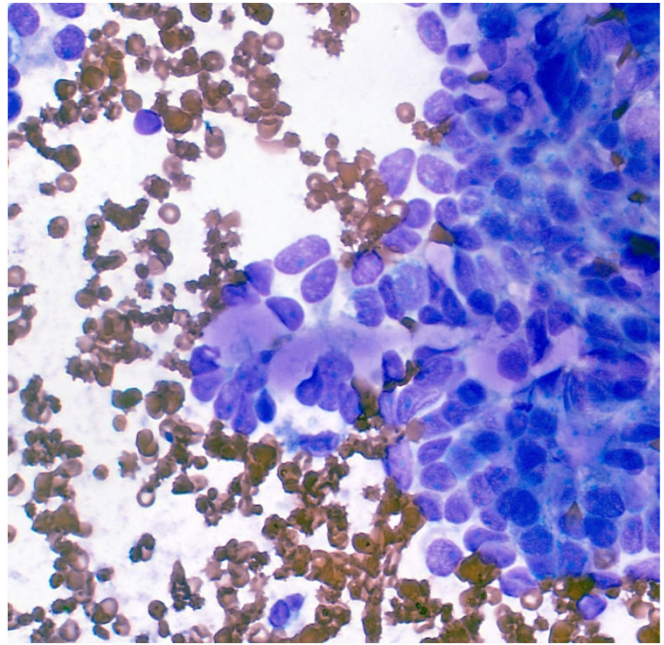
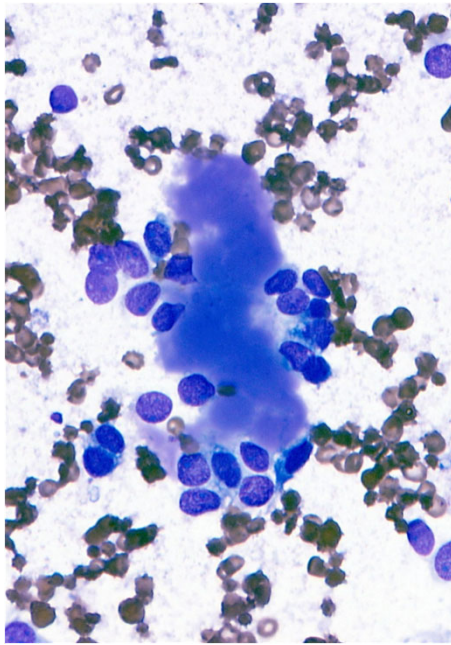
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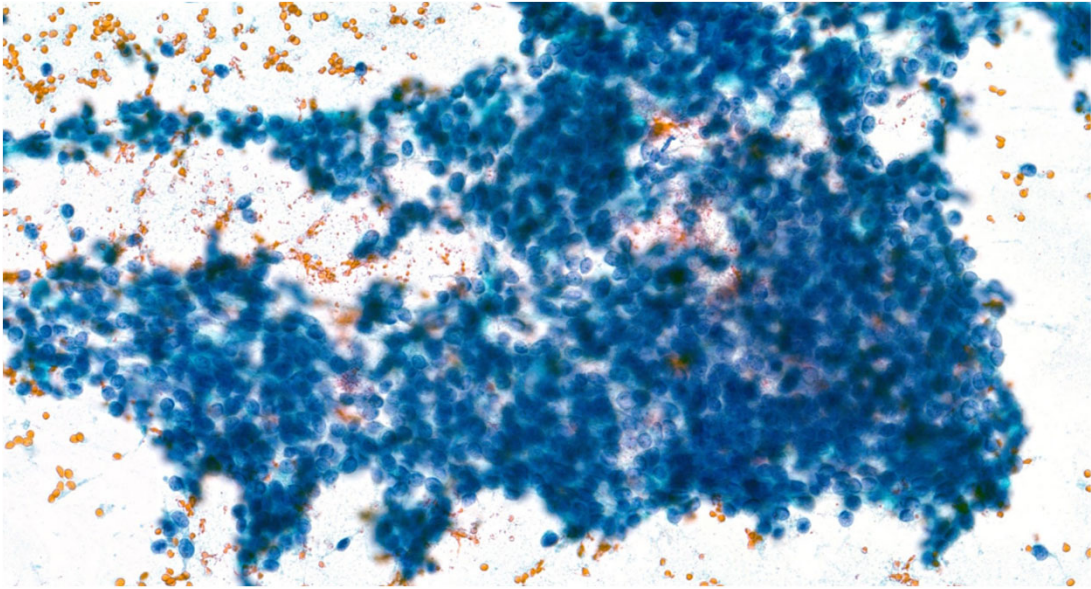


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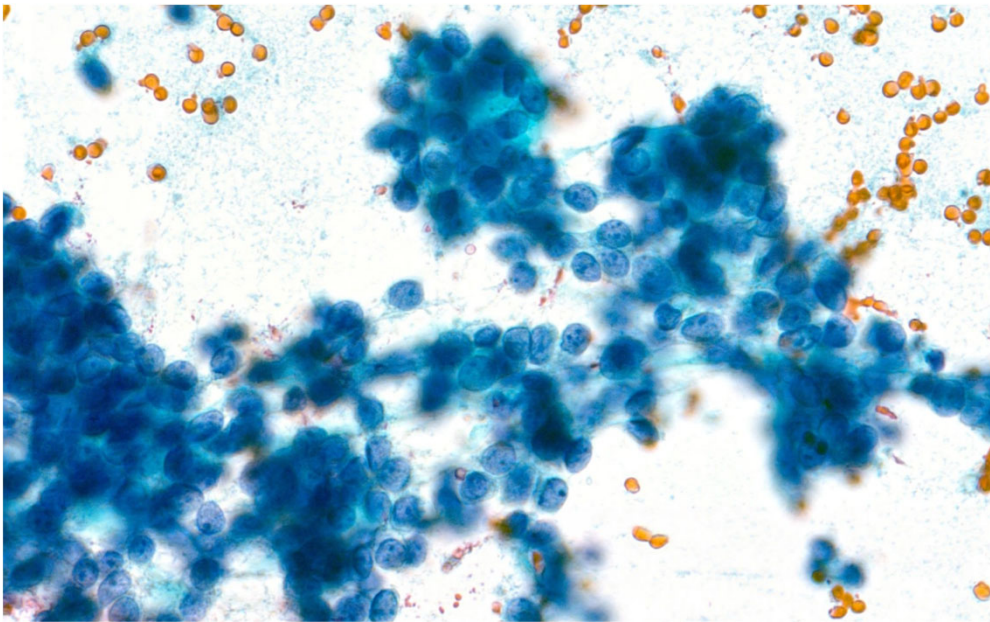
Alcohol fixed smears (Pap stain) and cell block



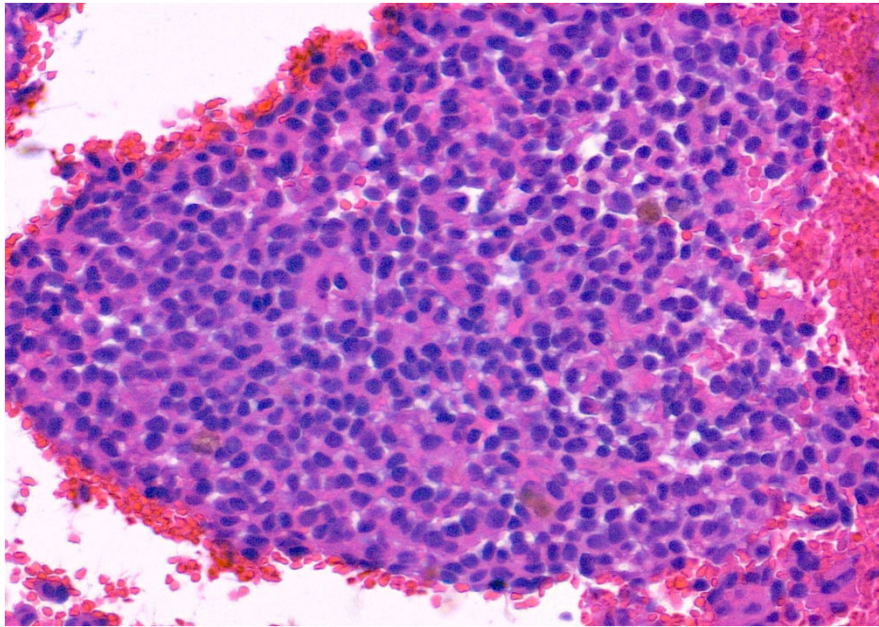
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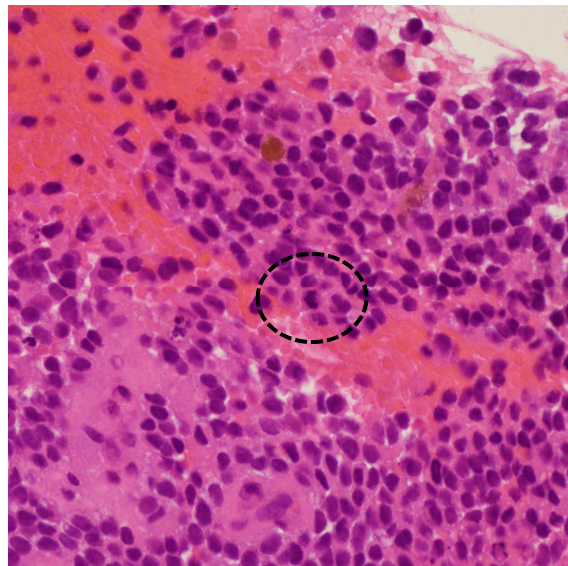
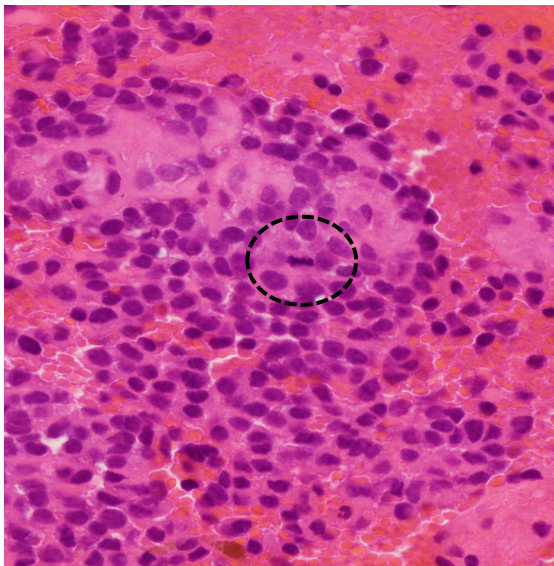
11



12



13



Mitoses

14

Summary of cytologic findings:

Cellular smears.

Groups of small round monomorphic tumor cells with finely granular chromatin, inconspicuous (and some pinpoint) nucleoli.

Moderate amount of cytoplasm, eosinophilic to clear

Globular and band-like matrix material as well as some cells with possibly squamous features are also present.

Scattered mitotic figures are identified.

No giant cells are present.

No necrosis is seen.



15

Differential diagnosis

Ameloblastoma.

Small round blue cell tumors:

Ewing sarcoma.

Rhabdomyosarcoma and subtypes.

Lymphoma.

Metastasis: Melanoma, neuroblastoma, Wilm's tumor, poorly differentiated carcinoma

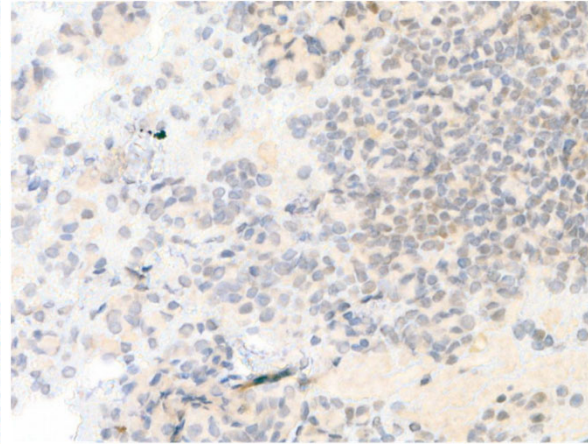


16

Immunohistochemistry...



**CK MNF 116
(Neg)**



**BRAF
(Neg)**



17

Solid Fusion Assay (Molecular testing)

RESULTS:

A fusion transcript was identified involving EWSR1 exon:7 (NM_005243.4) and FLI1 exon:9 (NM_002017.5).

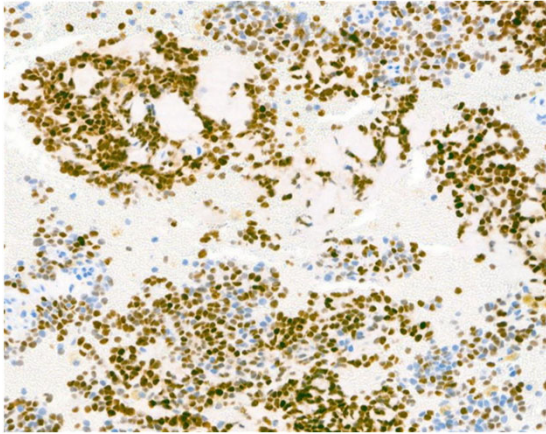
No other reportable fusion transcripts were identified.

INTERPRETATION:

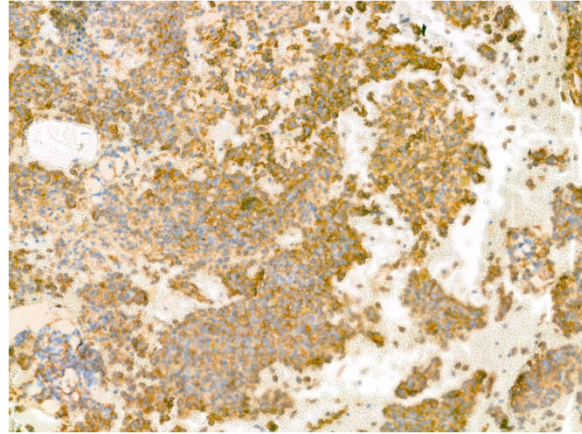
POSITIVE for EWSR1::FLI1 gene fusion



18



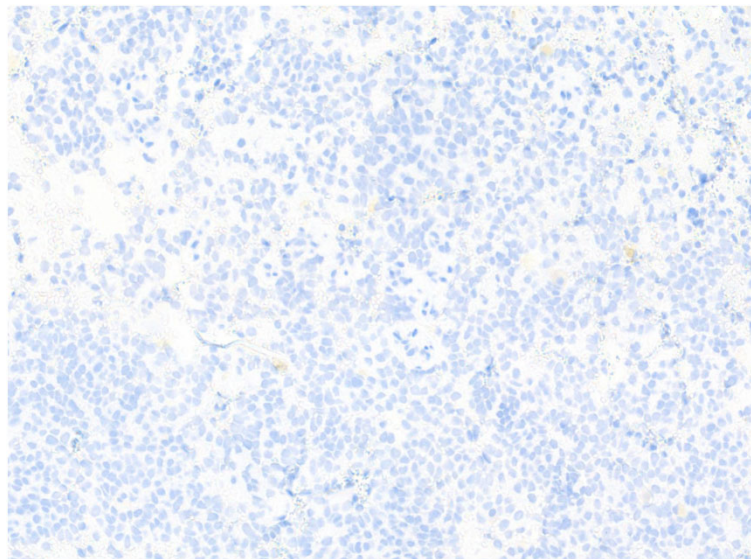
NKX2.2
(Pos)



CD99
(Pos)



19



Desmin
(Neg)



20

Final diagnosis:

Ewing Sarcoma



21

Ewing sarcoma

Second most common malignant bone tumor in children/young adults.

Peak incidence in second decade of life. (nearly 80% of patients are younger than 20 years of age).

Overall male predilection (M:F ratio: 3:2).

More common in individuals of European descent (compared to individuals of African or Asia descent).

Most are sporadic.

Vast majority occur in bone.
12% are extra-skeletal.



22

Ewing sarcoma of the head and neck

1-9% of Ewing sarcoma cases.

40% in skull and facial bones.

30% centered in soft tissue

9% in mandible (0.09-0.81 %)

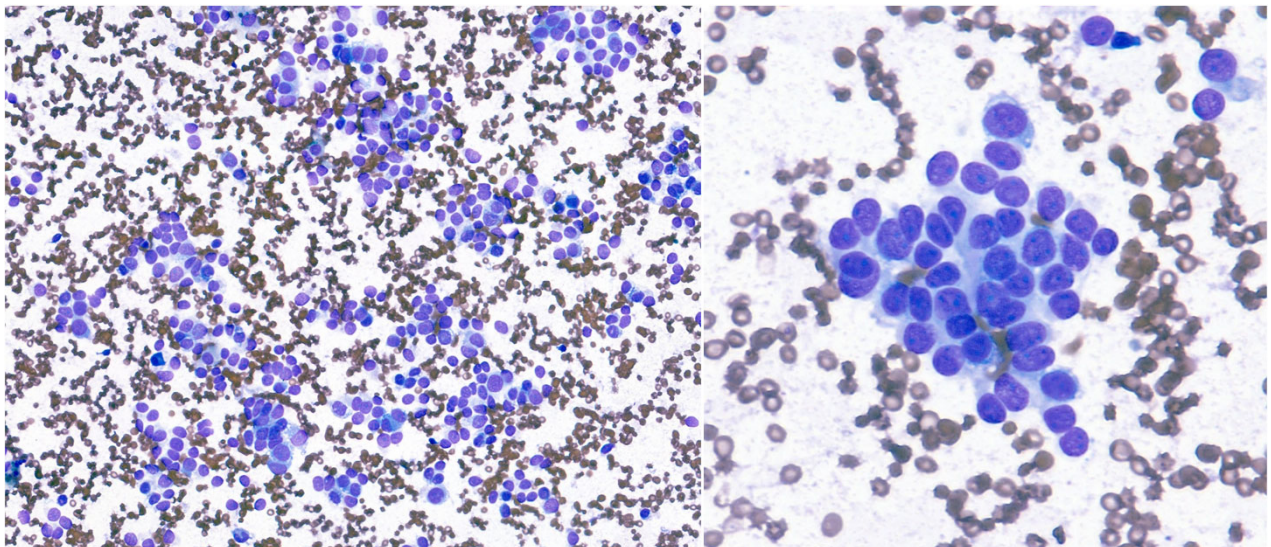
~ 50% of head and neck Ewing sarcomas arise in patients aged < 18 years

85% occur in the first four decades of life.

Slight male predominance.

Prognosis better than that of other tumor sites (smaller size, lower metastatic rate)

5-year survival is 70% for localized disease and 30% for metastasis at presentation.



Immunohistochemistry:

CD99 typically shows strong diffuse membranous reactivity (Not specific).

NKX2.2 shows nuclear staining (high sensitivity, moderate specificity)

FLI1 and ERG are often expressed in cases with the corresponding gene fusion.

Cytokeratins expressed in 30% of cases

Neuroendocrine markers expressed in 50% of cases

+/- S100 and TRK proteins.



25

Molecular testing:

Gene fusion involving a FET gene (*FUS*, *EWSR1*, or *TAF15*) and an ETS gene.

Most common fusion is EWSR1::FLI1 - t(11;22)(q24;q12), present in 85% of cases.

Second most common fusion is EWSR1::ERG - t(21;22)(q22;q12)

Other less common reported fusions:

EWSR1::ETV1, EWSR1::ETV4, EWSR1::FEV, FUS::ERG, and FUS::FEV



26

Adverse prognostic factors:

Presence of metastasis (most important)
Anatomical location.

Favorable prognostic factors:

Complete pathological response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy



27

PMID: 19787372

Small round blue cell tumor workup

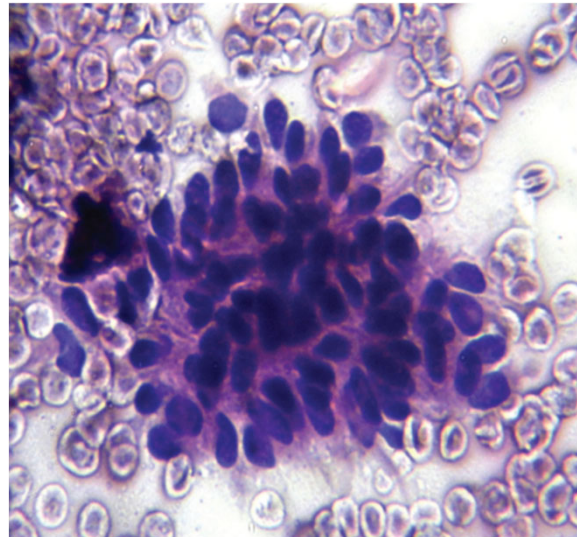
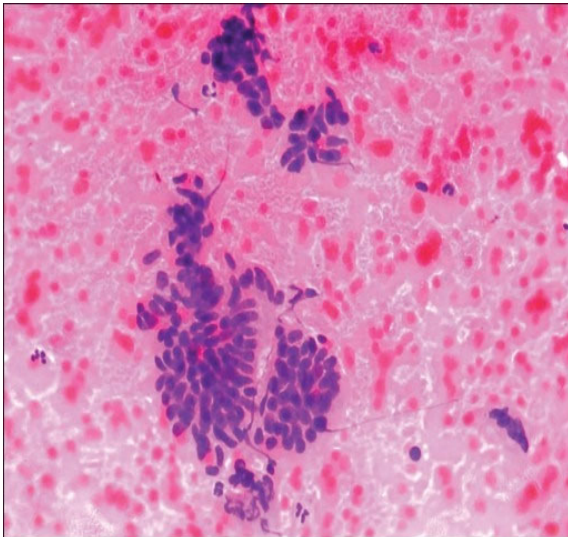
	Histochemical staining	Immunohistochemistry	Molecular diagnostics
Ewing sarcoma/PNET	PAS positive	CD99+	Translocation EWSR1
Neuroblastoma	–	CD99–, CD56+	MYCN amplification
Alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma	–	MYF4 (myogenin)+, Desmin+	Translocation FKHR (FOXO1A)
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma/leukemia	PAS negative	CD45+	Depending on subtype
Small cell carcinoma	–	Keratin+, neuroendocrine markers	–
(Poorly differentiated) synovial sarcoma	–	CD99+, BCL-2+	Translocation SS18 (SYT)
Small cell osteosarcoma	Deposition of bone (alkaline phosphatase)	–	–
Mesenchymal chondrosarcoma	Deposition of cartilage	–	–
Desmoplastic small round cell tumor	–	Coexpression keratin and desmin	Translocation EWSR1
Melanoma	–	Melanocytic markers+	–



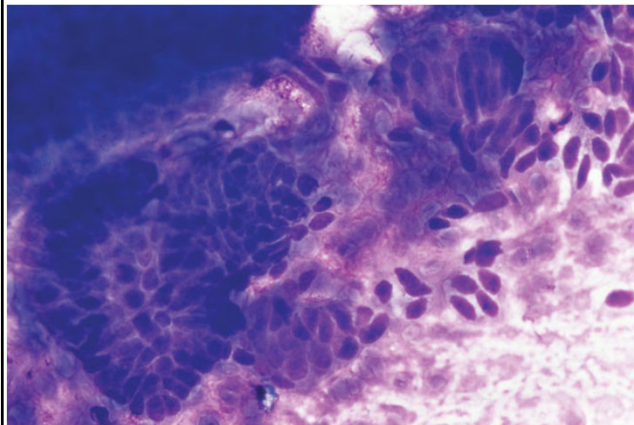
28

Ameloblastoma cytology

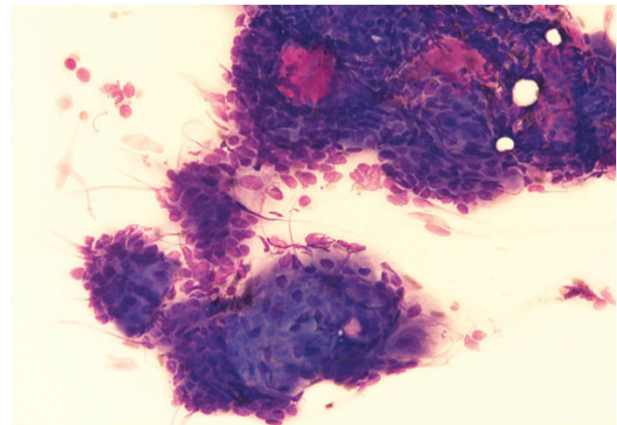
PMID: 25538387
PMID: 29937671



29



Palisading



Squamous metaplasia



Not a common specimen in cytology

30

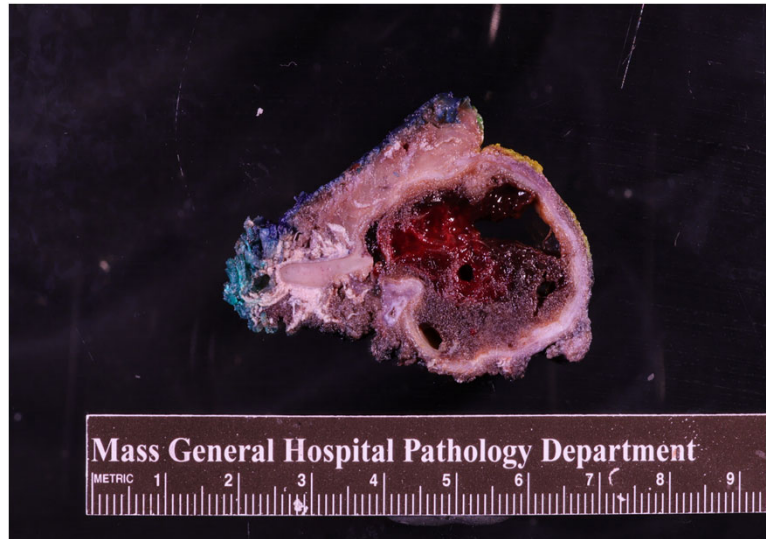
Surgical resection correlation:

The patient underwent chemotherapy followed by complex resection of the right mandible, condyle, infratemporal fossa, and parapharyngeal space, with left fibula flap reconstruction.

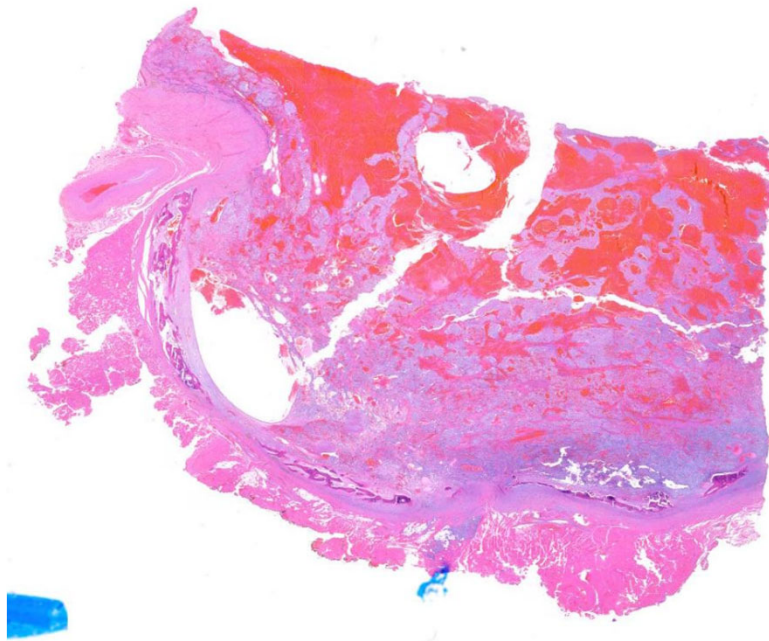
Final diagnosis:

Ewing sarcoma with EWSR1::FLI1 gene fusion (3.9 cm).

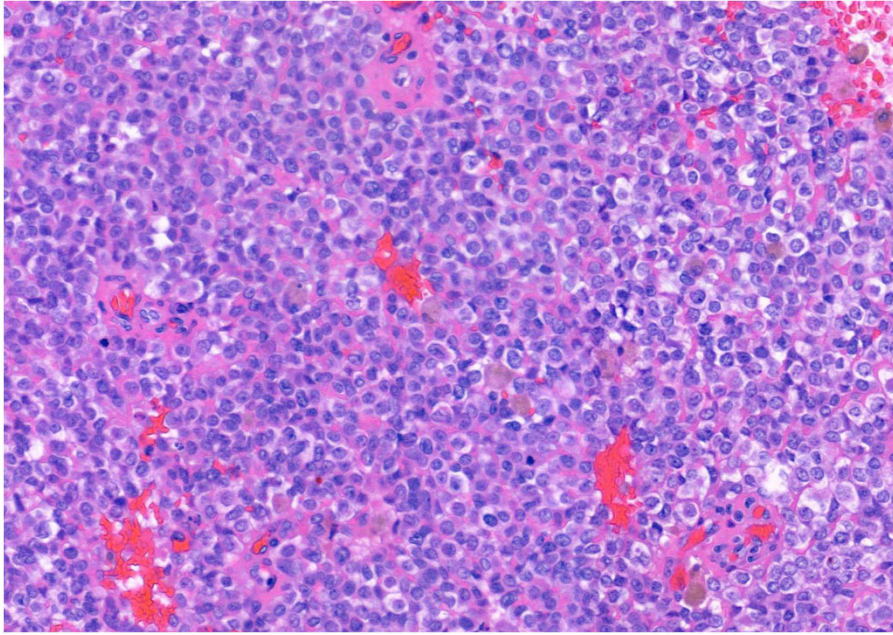
Resection margins negative for tumor.



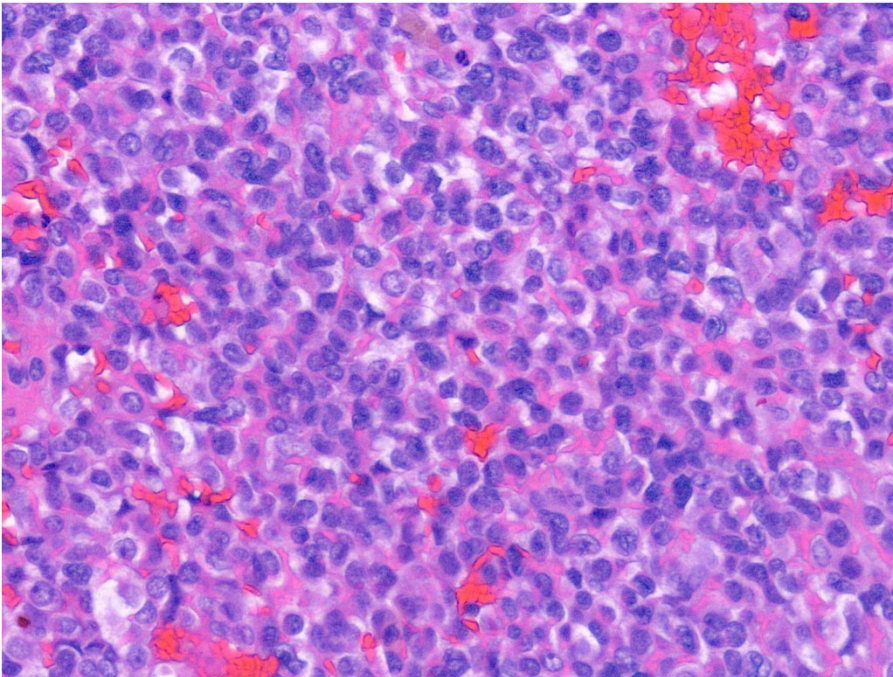
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32



33



34

Lessons I learned as a trainee

- 1- Radiology is very important, but pathologists should keep an open mind.
- 2- Cytomorphologic overlap between different SRBCTs, and between Ewing sarcoma and ameloblastoma.
On-site diagnosis is preliminary and subject to change.
- 3- Typical features aren't always present!
- 4- Triaging samples with minimal tissue amount should start with tests that are most likely to yield a definitive diagnosis.
- 5- FNA by a pathologist vs. radiologist vs. clinician.



35

Thank you



Mass General Brigham

Acknowledgements:

Dr. Martha Pitman

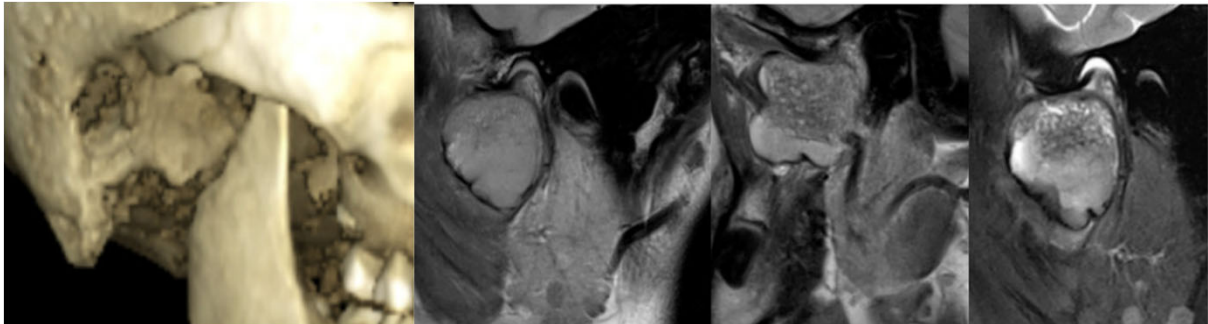
Dr. Ivan Chebib

Dr. William Faquin

Dr. Bayan AlZumaili



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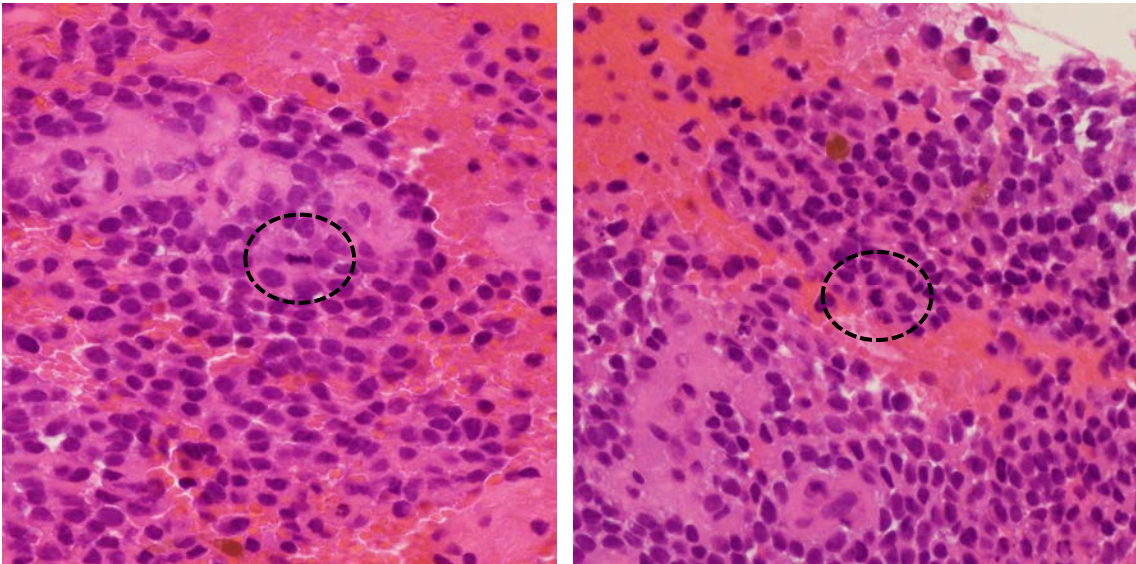


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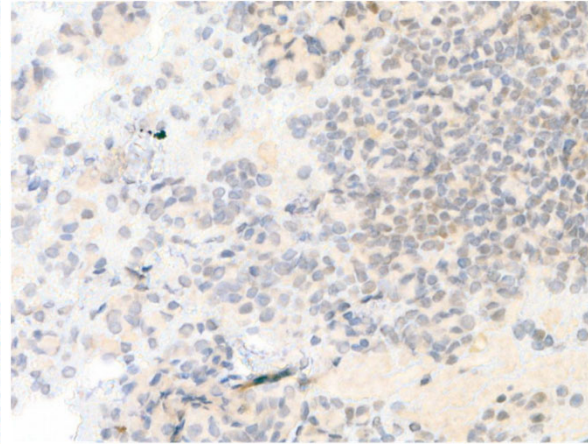


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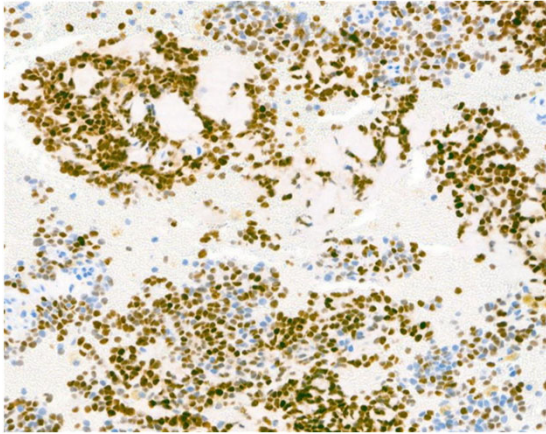
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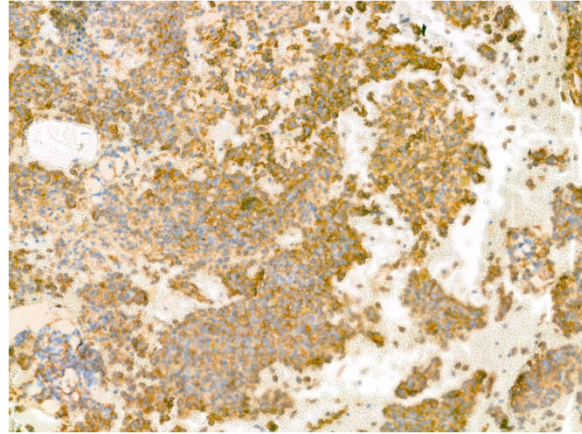
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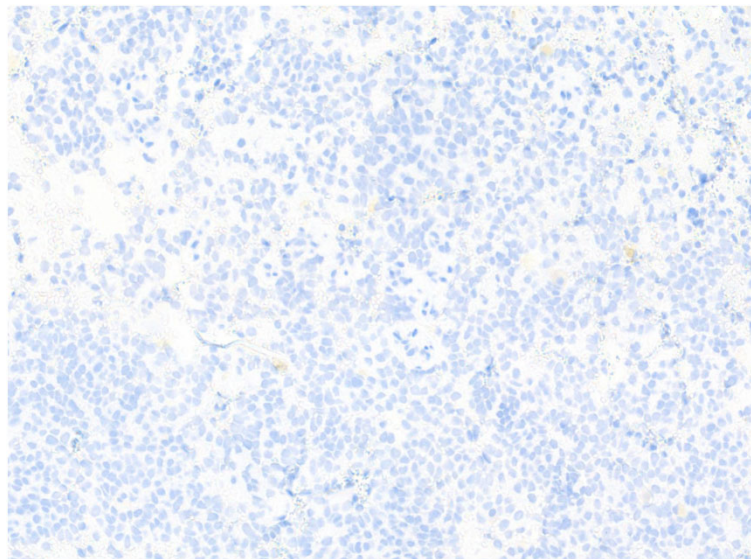
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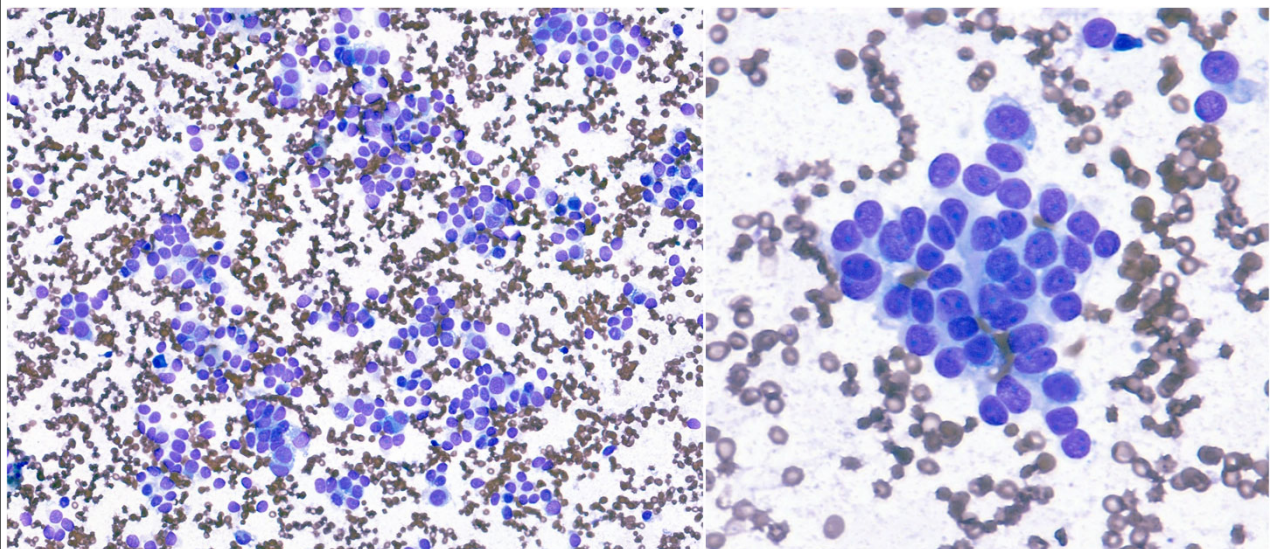
~ 50% of head and neck Ewing sarcomas arise in patients aged < 18 years

85% occur in the first four decades of life.

Slight male predominance.

Prognosis better than that of other tumor sites (smaller size, lower metastatic rate)

5-year survival is 70% for localized disease and 30% for metastasis at presentation.



Immunohistochemistry:

CD99 typically shows strong diffuse membranous reactivity (Not specific).

NKX2.2 shows nuclear staining (high sensitivity, moderate specificity)

FLI1 and ERG are often expressed in cases with the corresponding gene fusion.

Cytokeratins expressed in 30% of cases

Neuroendocrine markers expressed in 50% of cases

+/- S100 and TRK proteins.



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Molecular testing:

Gene fusion involving a FET gene (*FUS*, *EWSR1*, or *TAF15*) and an ETS gene.

Most common fusion is EWSR1::FLI1 - t(11;22)(q24;q12), present in 85% of cases.

Second most common fusion is EWSR1::ERG - t(21;22)(q22;q12)

Other less common reported fusions:

EWSR1::ETV1, EWSR1::ETV4, EWSR1::FEV, FUS::ERG, and FUS::FEV



20

Adverse prognostic factors:

Presence of metastasis (most important)
Anatomical location.

Favorable prognostic factors:

Complete pathological response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy



21

PMID: 19787372

Small round blue cell tumor workup

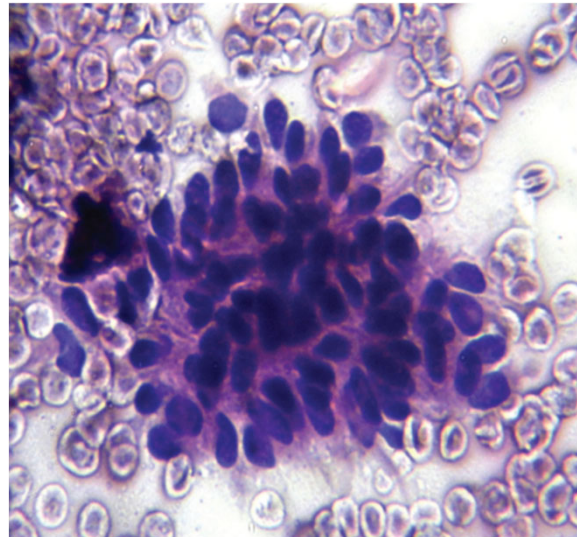
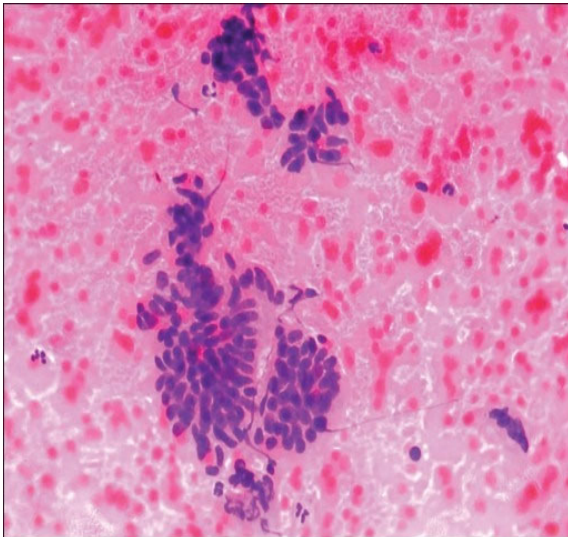
	Histochemical staining	Immunohistochemistry	Molecular diagnostics
Ewing sarcoma/PNET	PAS positive	CD99+	Translocation EWSR1
Neuroblastoma	–	CD99–, CD56+	MYCN amplification
Alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma	–	MYF4 (myogenin)+, Desmin+	Translocation FKHR (FOXO1A)
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma/leukemia	PAS negative	CD45+	Depending on subtype
Small cell carcinoma	–	Keratin+, neuroendocrine markers	–
(Poorly differentiated) synovial sarcoma	–	CD99+, BCL-2+	Translocation SS18 (SYT)
Small cell osteosarcoma	Deposition of bone (alkaline phosphatase)	–	–
Mesenchymal chondrosarcoma	Deposition of cartilage	–	–
Desmoplastic small round cell tumor	–	Coexpression keratin and desmin	Translocation EWSR1
Melanoma	–	Melanocytic markers+	–



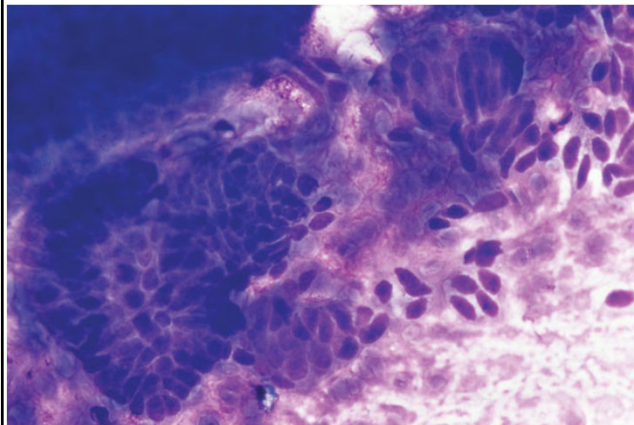
22

Ameloblastoma cytology

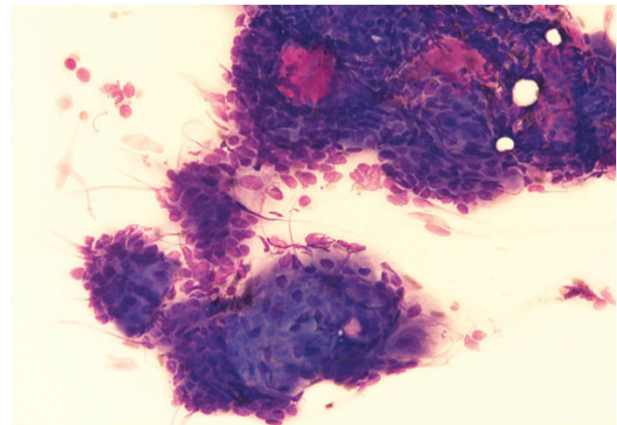
PMID: 25538387
PMID: 29937671



23



Palisading



Squamous metaplasia

PMID: 2196502
0



Not a common specimen in cytology

24

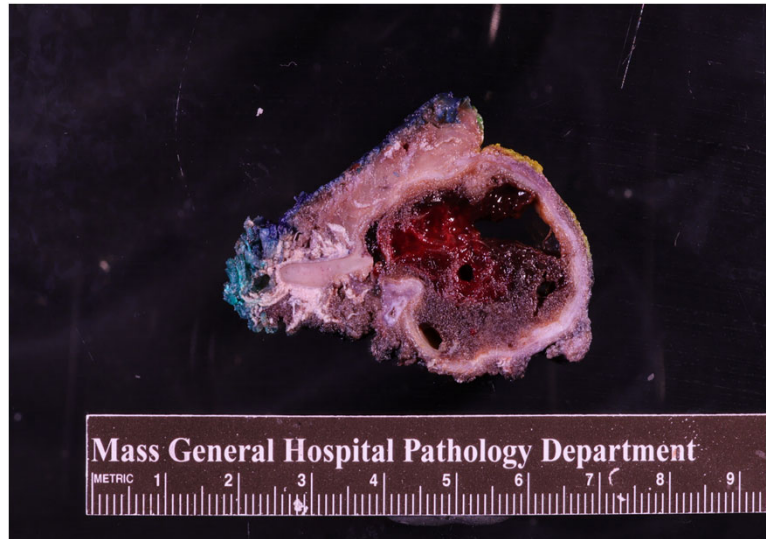
Surgical resection correlation:

The patient underwent chemotherapy followed by complex resection of the right mandible, condyle, infratemporal fossa, and parapharyngeal space, with left fibula flap reconstruction.

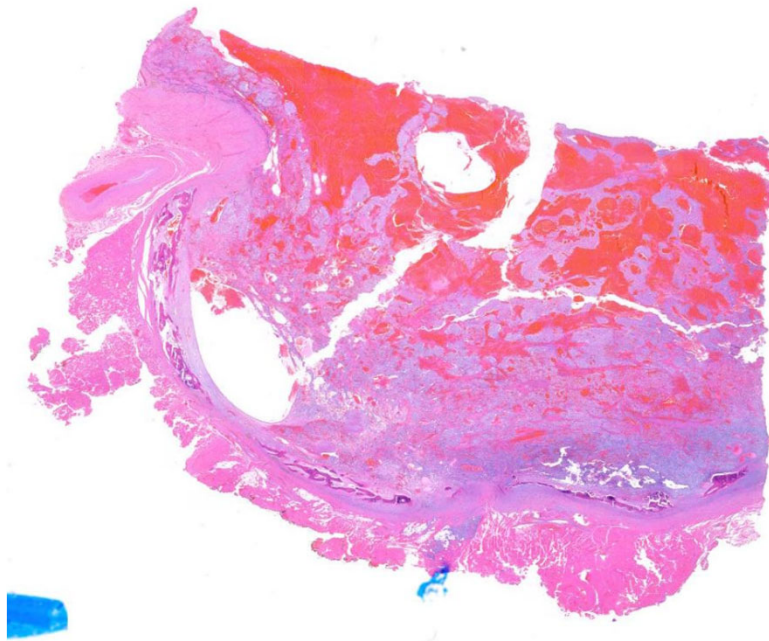
Final diagnosis:

Ewing sarcoma with EWSR1::FLI1 gene fusion (3.9 cm).

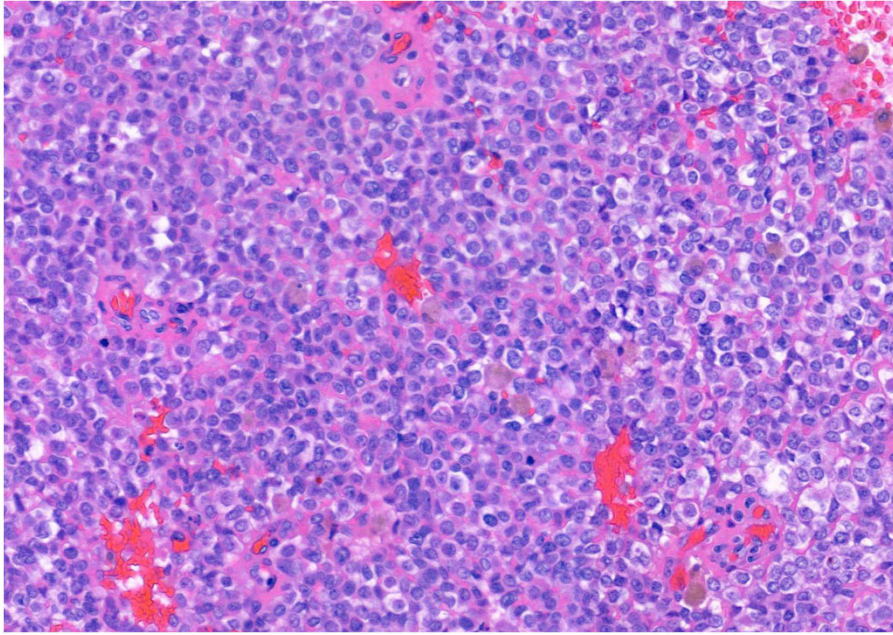
Resection margins negative for tumor.



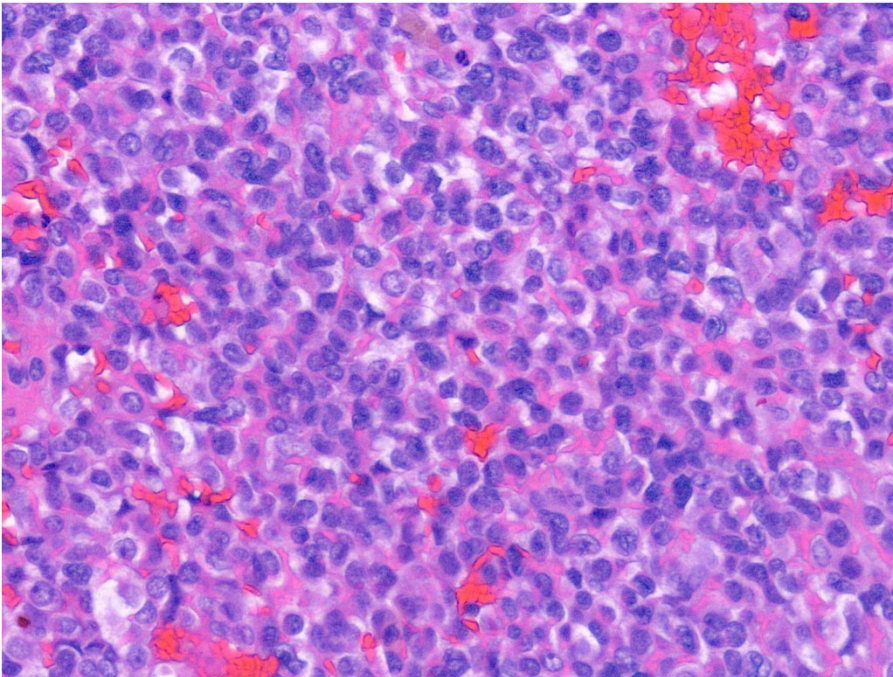
25



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28

Lessons I learned as a trainee

- 1- Radiology is very important, but pathologists should keep an open mind.
- 2- Cytomorphologic overlap between different SRBCTs, and between Ewing sarcoma and ameloblastoma.
On-site diagnosis is preliminary and subject to change.
- 3- Typical features aren't always present!
- 4- Triaging samples with minimal tissue amount should start with tests that are most likely to yield a definitive diagnosis.
- 5- FNA by a pathologist vs. radiologist vs. clinician.



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Thank you



Mass General Brigham

Acknowledgements:

Dr. Martha Pitman
Dr. Ivan Chebib
Dr. William Faquin
Dr. Bayan ALZumaili



Challenges and Lessons Learned Virtual Microscopy 2

Ruhani Sardana MD.
Cytopathology Fellow
Mass General Brigham Hospitals

06/10/2025 4:30-6:00 pm EST

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Disclosure

I have no disclosure or conflict of interest in relation to this presentation

CASE 1



3

Clinical History

70 years female with chronic kidney disease found to have incidental multiple pancreatic cysts



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Imaging

MRCP

Pancreatic head shows a conglomerate of simple appearing cysts
Measuring approx. 7.3 x 4.3 cm, stable from prior studies.
Findings may represent IPMN

Pancreatic body shows a 6.2x5.6x5.4 cm circumscribed
mixed solid-cystic mass with multiple enhancing internal septation.
Differential diagnosis includes primary pancreatic neoplasm
cannot rule out adenocarcinoma. Recommend sampling.



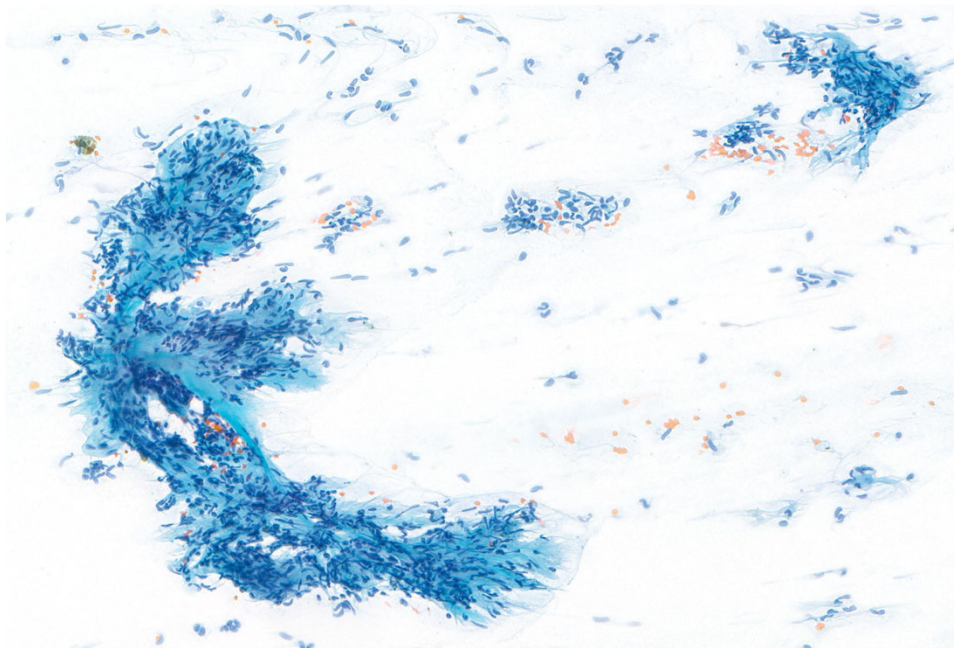
EUS

A well-defined mass was identified in pancreatic body which was solid and cystic measuring 5.8x5.1 cm.



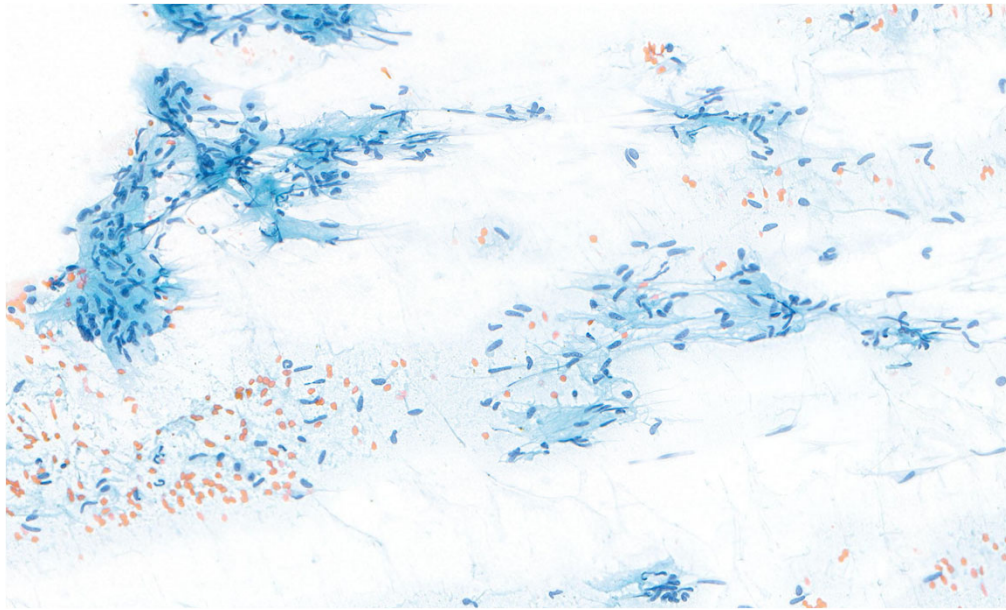
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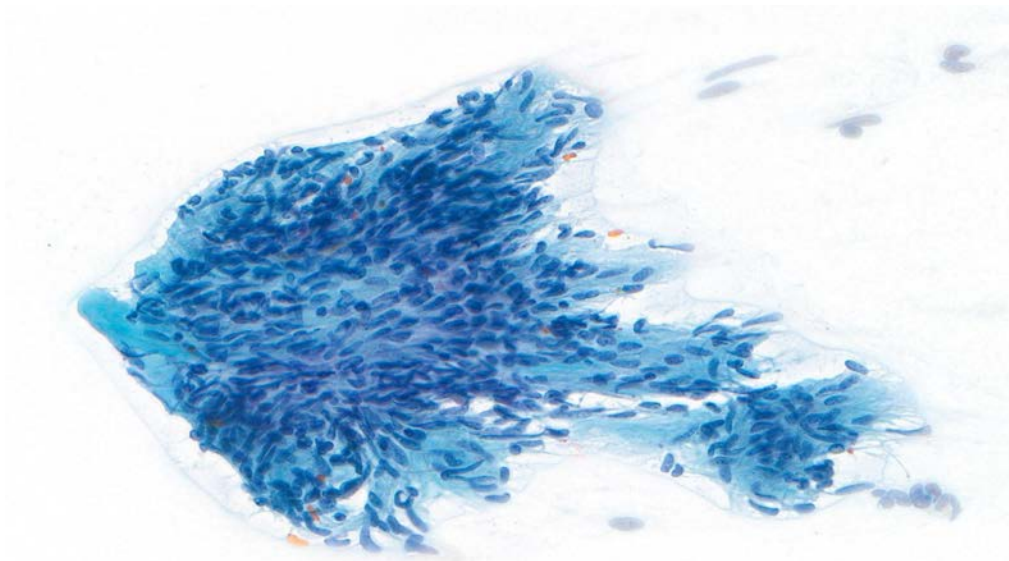
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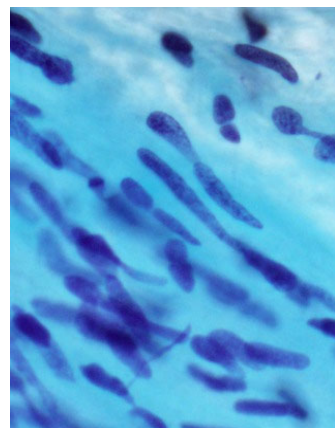
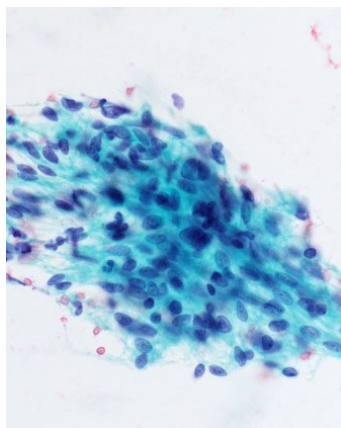
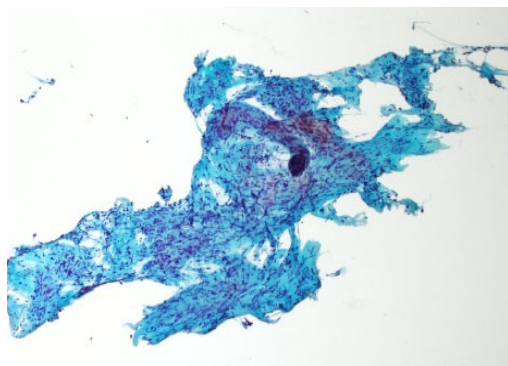
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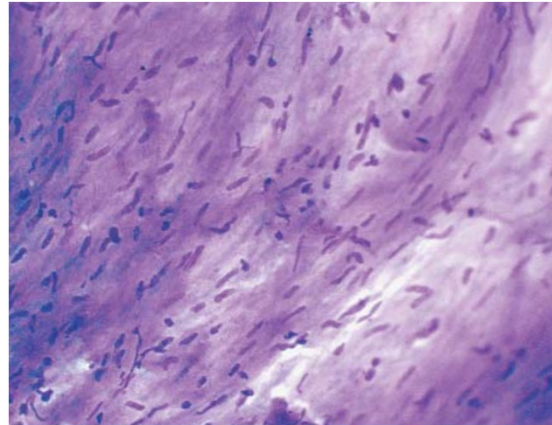
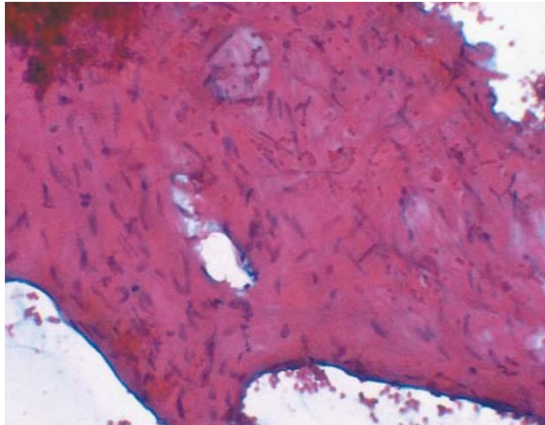
Schwannoma facts



Spindle cell neoplasm showing large cohesive cluster (Pap stain x40, x100), with cells arranged in fascicles haphazardly in dense fibrillary stroma. There is anisonucleolysis with pointed nuclear tips (Pap stain x400)



Leiomyoma facts



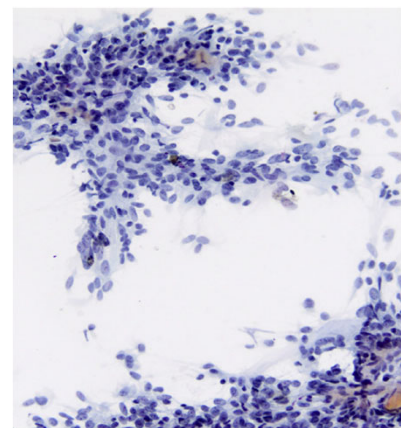
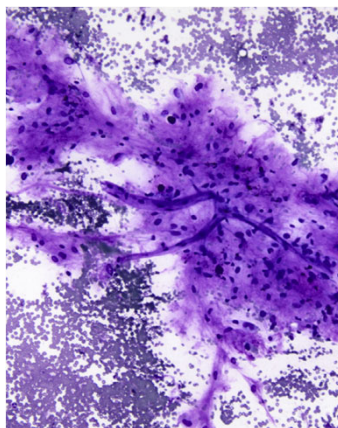
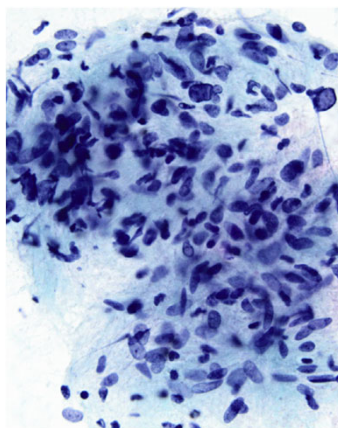
Spindle cell neoplasm forming fascicles with relatively low cellularity and monomorphic spindle cells with eosinophilic cytoplasm, vesicular nuclei



Garg, Karuna et al. "Morphologic features of uterine leiomyomas associated with hereditary leiomyomatosis and renal cell carcinoma syndrome: a case report." *The American journal of surgical pathology* vol. 35,8 (2011): 1235-7. doi:10.1007/978-94-007-3182-2_901

11

Solitary Fibrous Tumor Facts



Severely tight clustered jagged clusters contain euchromatic elongated nuclei. Spindle cells are arranged along collagenous core, with cells at the edge appear to be loose and detach themselves



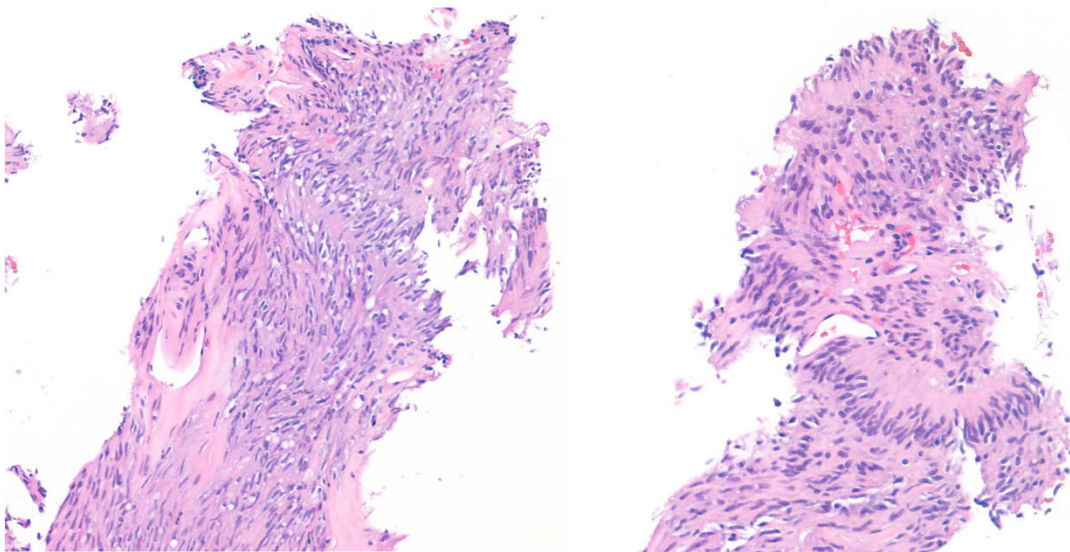
Wakely PE Jr, Rekhi B. Cytopathology of solitary fibrous tumor: a series of 34 cases. *J Am Soc Cytopathol*. 2021;11:12. doi:10.1016/j.jasc.2021.03.005

12

Let's work up !

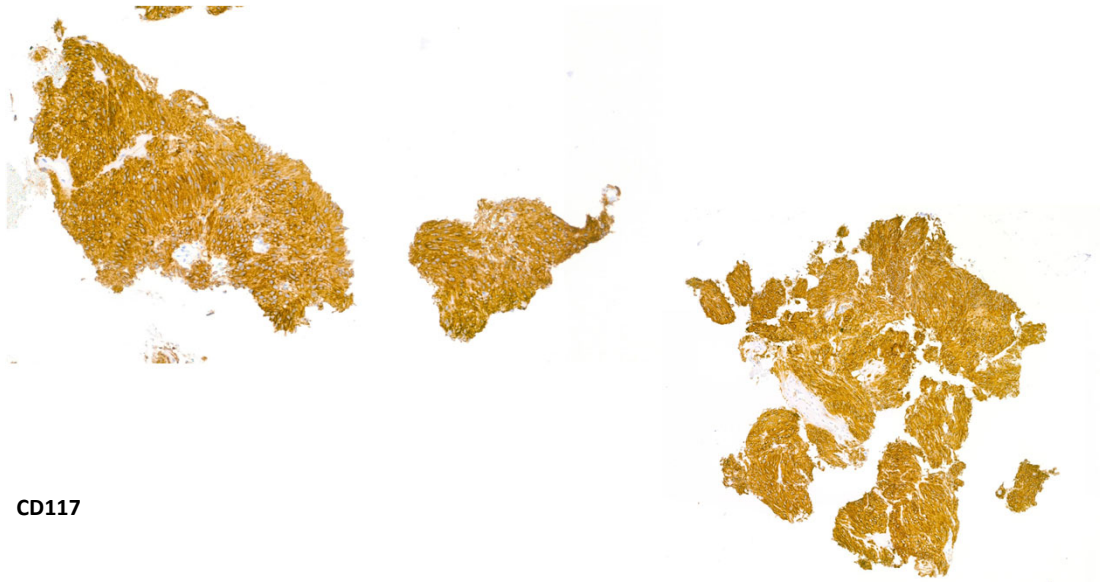


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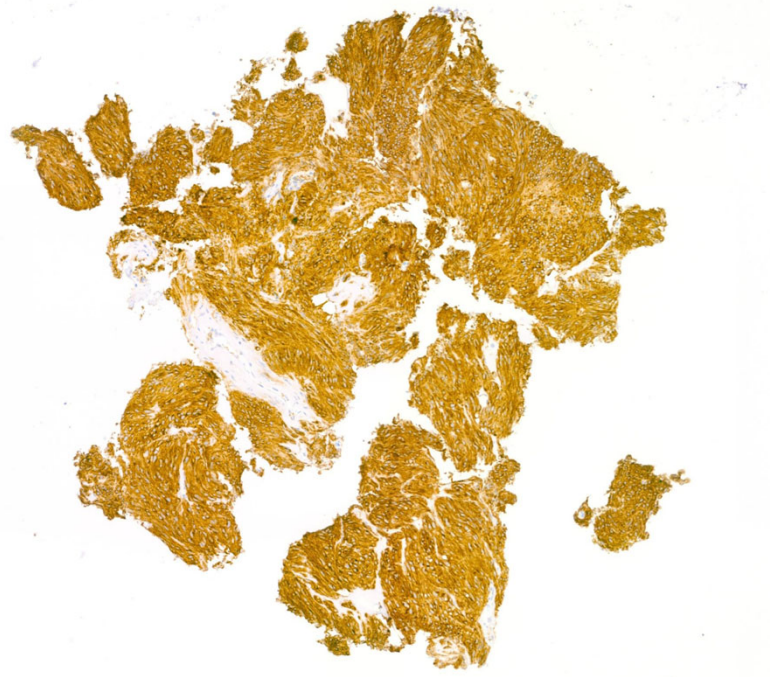


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CD117



DOG1



Diagnosis

Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor

- High cellularity, elongated monomorphic spindle cells
- Large sized clusters in a non-fascicular growth pattern with fibrillary stroma
- Prominent single cells in background
- Blunted nuclear ends



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Helpful clues

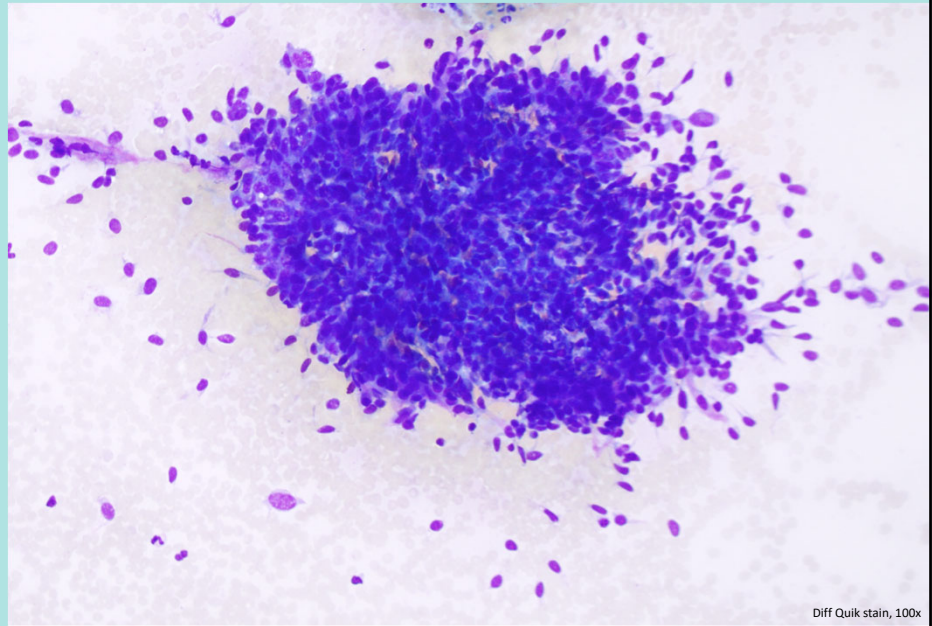
	GIST	Schwannoma	Leiomyoma	Solitary Fibrous Tumor
Cellularity	High	High	Low	Moderate
Pattern	Non-fascicular, Fibrillary	Cohesive, haphazard	Fascicular	Ragged, shedding at edge
Background	Stripped nuclei	Lymphocytes +/-	-	Stripped nuclei
Stroma	Fibrillary	Fibrillary, Metachromatic (Diff-Quik)	-	Collagenous core
Nuclear detail	Blunted ends	Pointed ends Anisonucleosis +/-	Vesicular, bland	Elongated, euchromatic
IHC	DOG-1, c-KIT/CD117	S100	Desmin	CD34, STAT6



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Bonus Case for Curious Minds!

3.2 cm mass arising in the
oral cavity



Diff Quik stain, 100x

CASE 2



Clinical History

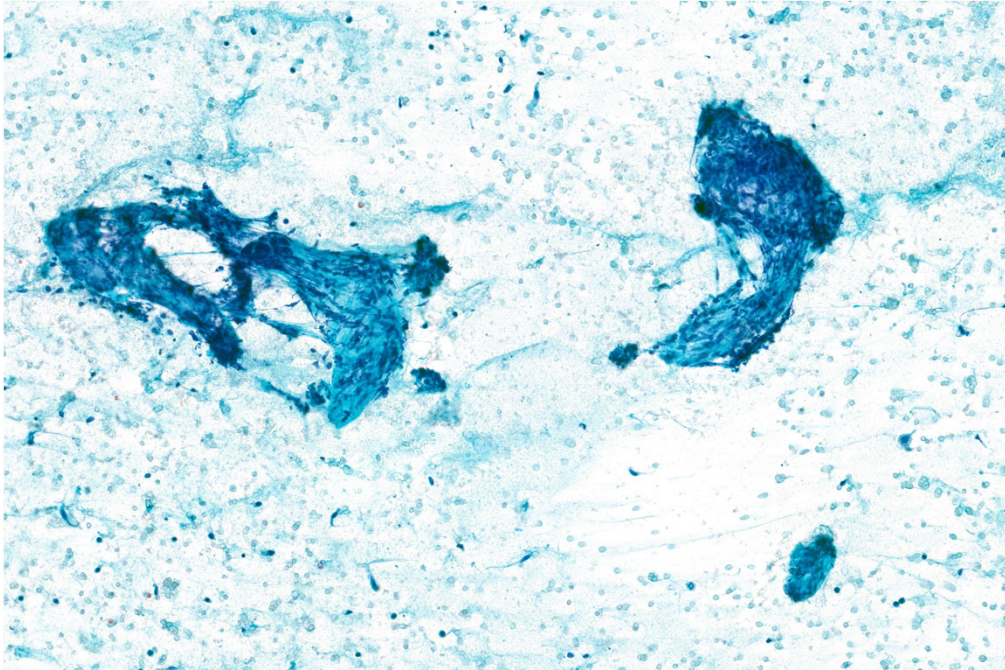
80 years old man noted swelling and redness in in his left foot. This was treated with antibiotics and compression stockings. DVT was ruled out.

Multiple PET avid, enlarged lymph nodes were seen bilaterally in lower extremities ranging from 0.5 to 1.2 cm in largest dimensions

No significant neoplastic history

Patient presented to our FNA clinic for sampling of the lymph node in the left popliteal fossa

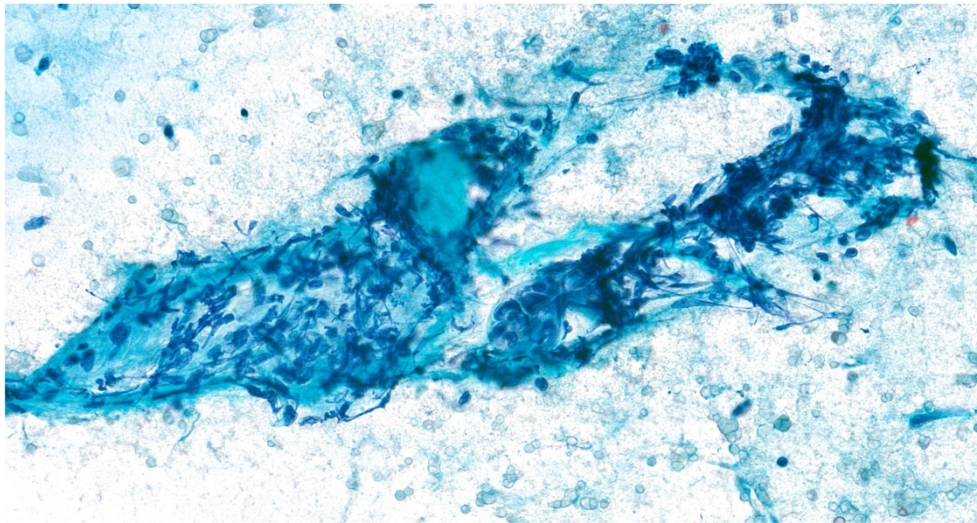




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Pap stain, 10x

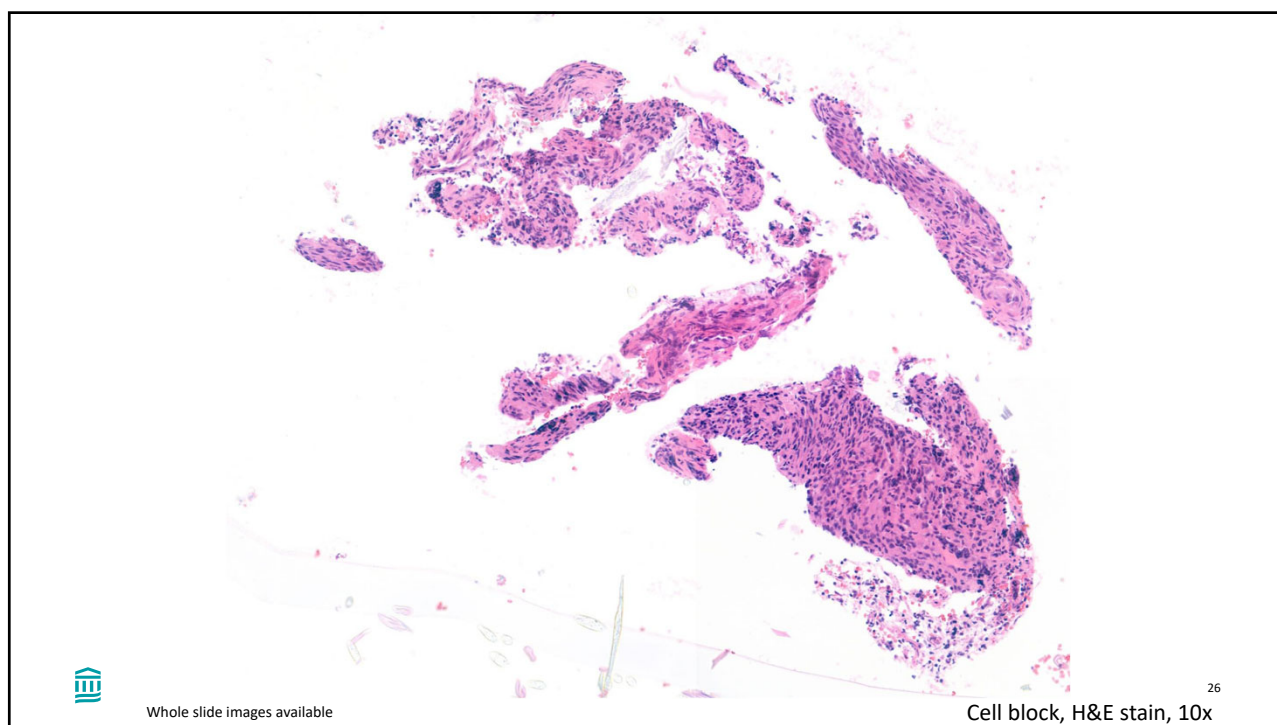
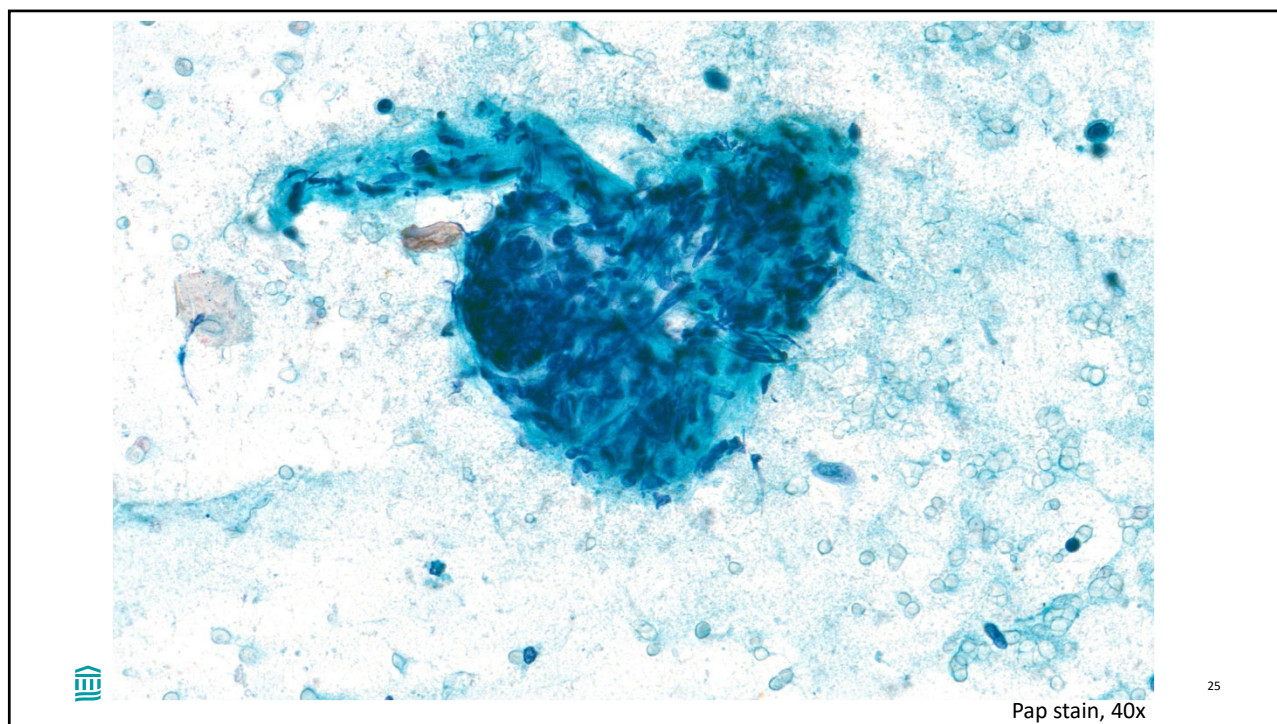
23

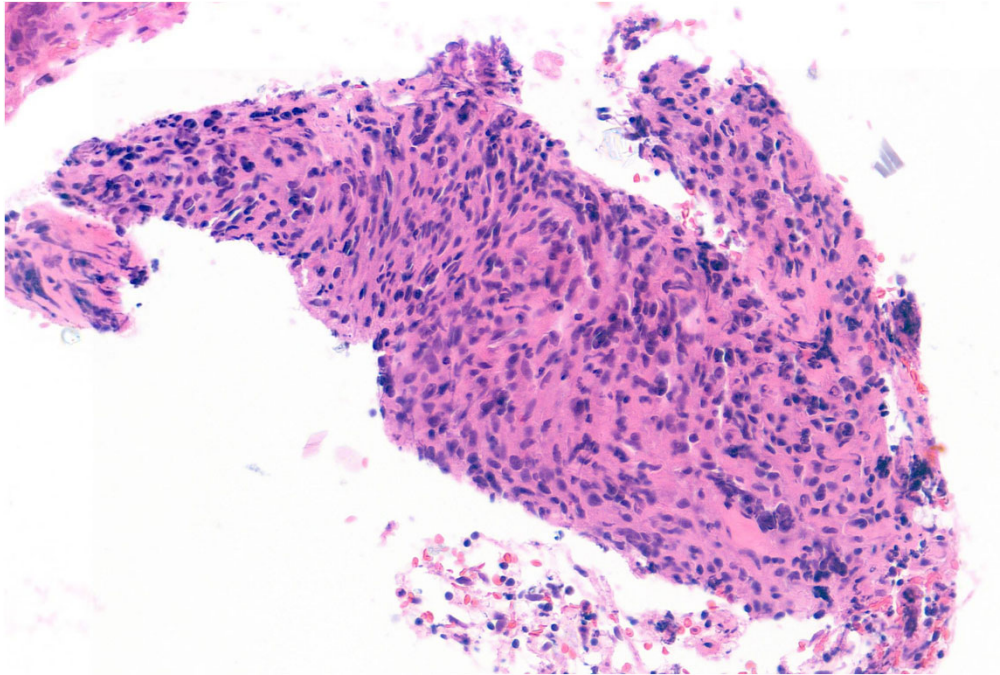


Whole slide images available

Pap stain, 40x

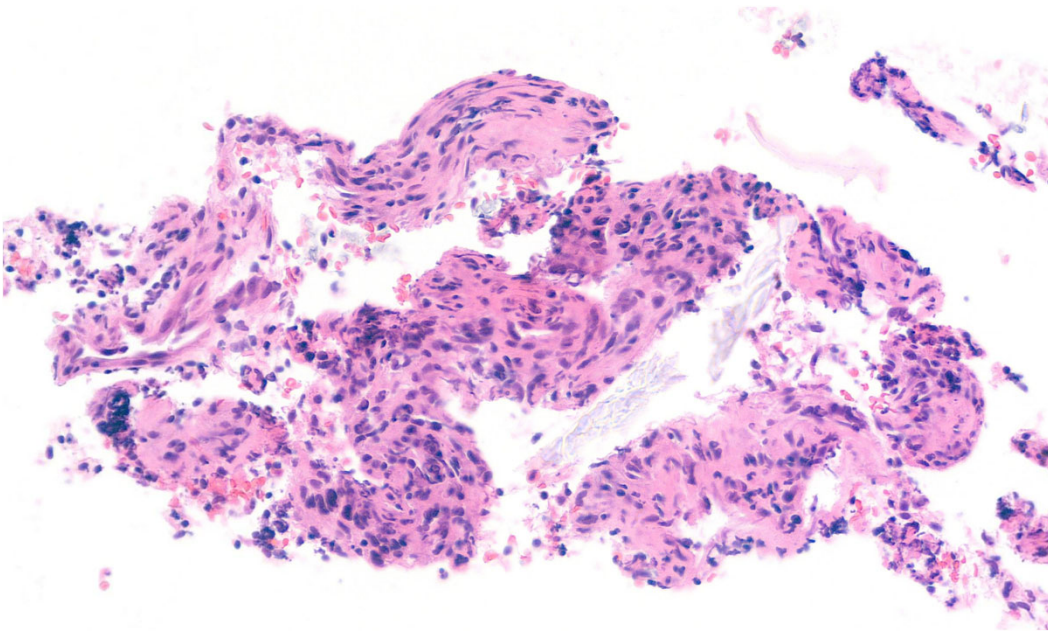
24





27

Cell block, H&E stain, 40x

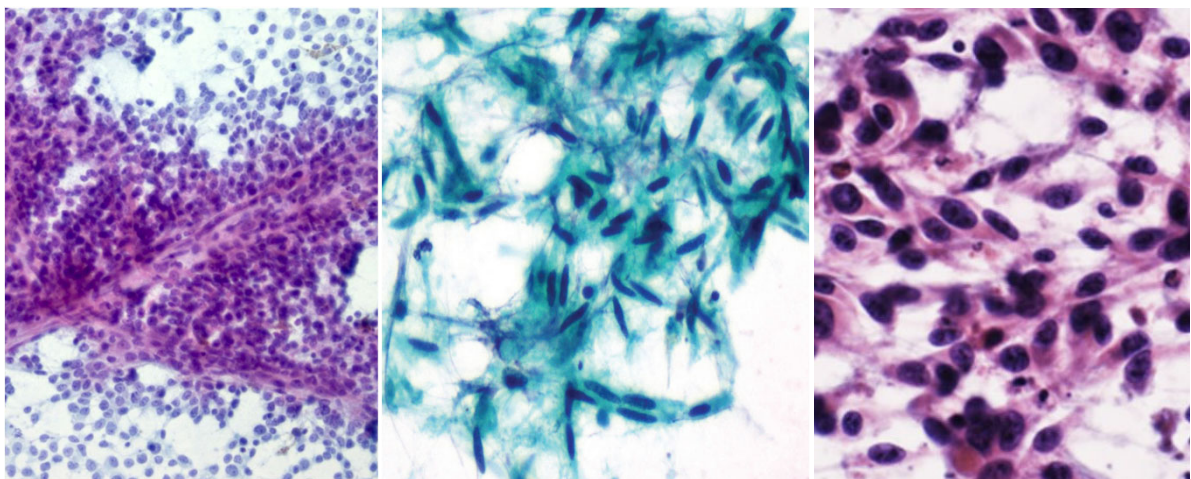


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Cell block, H&E stain, 10x

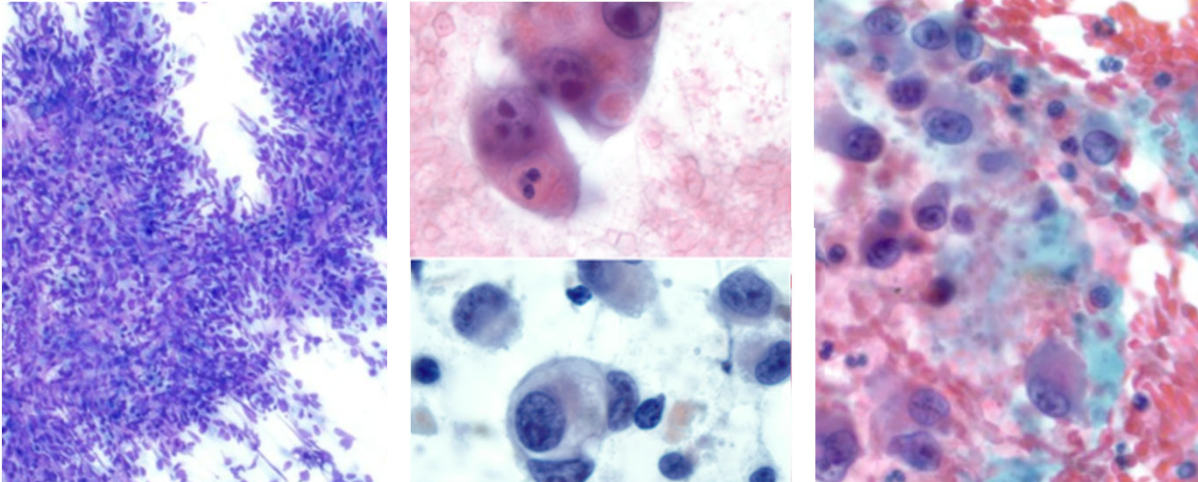
Melanoma Facts



Predominantly interlacing fascicles and whorls of spindle cells. Prominent macro-nucleoli, pseudoinclusion, binucleate cells are rare



Angiosarcoma Facts



Prominent papillary groups with central fibrovascular cores surrounded by pleomorphic spindled tumor cells (Diff-Quik stain, $\times 200$), Vaso-formative features, endothelial wrapping of tumor cells



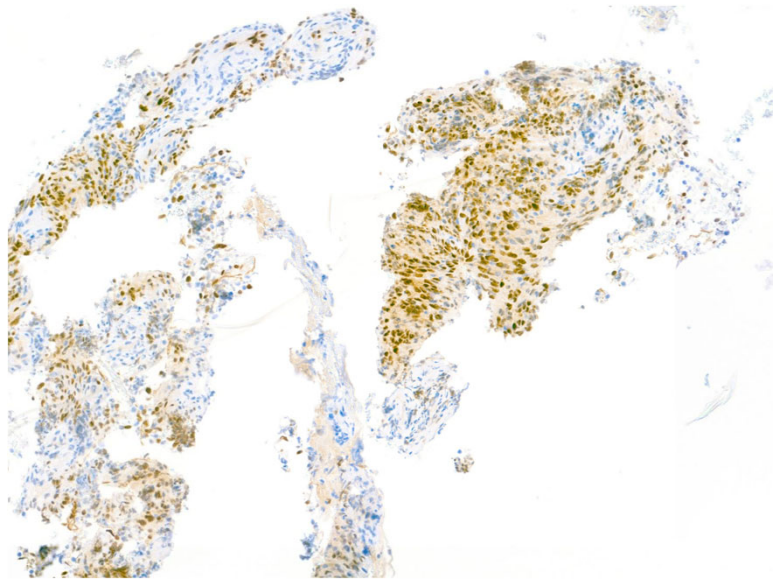
Geller, Rachel L et al. "Cytologic features of angiosarcoma: A review of 26 cases diagnosed on FNA." *Cancer cytopathology* vol. 124,9 (2016): 659-68. doi:10.1002/cncy.21726

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Let's work up !



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ERG

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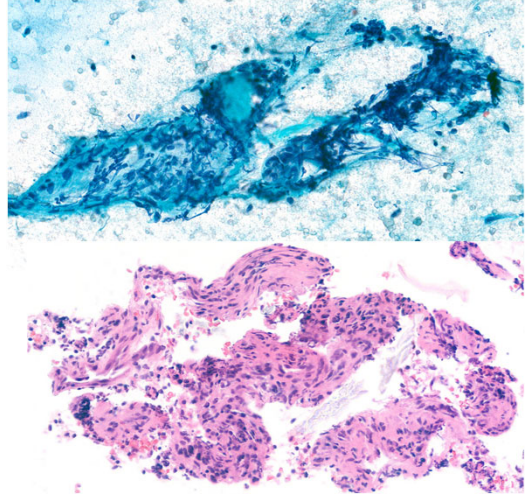
HHV8

34

Diagnosis

Kaposi sarcoma

- Hypercellular smear
- Atypical spindle cells with moderate amount of cytoplasm with minimal nuclear atypia
- Hemorrhagic background +/-
- Cell block:
 - Vaso-formative architecture, slit like spaces
 - Extravasated RBCs, hemosiderin
 - Uniform cells with mild nuclear atypia
 - Eosinophilic globules "Dorf Balls"
 - Plasma cells



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Helpful clues

- Melanoma:
 - Eccentric nuclei, prominent nucleoli, "demons" binucleation
 - Peritheliomatous pattern
 - Cytoplasmic melanin pigment
 - Positive: Sox10, Melan A, HMB45 Negative: ERG, SMA
- Angiosarcoma:
 - Epithelioid to spindle cells, hob nailing, loose clusters
 - Marked nuclear atypia, atypical mitotic figures, necrosis
 - Cytoplasmic vacuoles
 - Positive: ERG Negative: HHV8
- Poorly differentiated carcinoma:
 - Diverse morphologic spectrum; clusters, discohesive pleomorphic spells
 - Positive: Keratins



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Thank You

