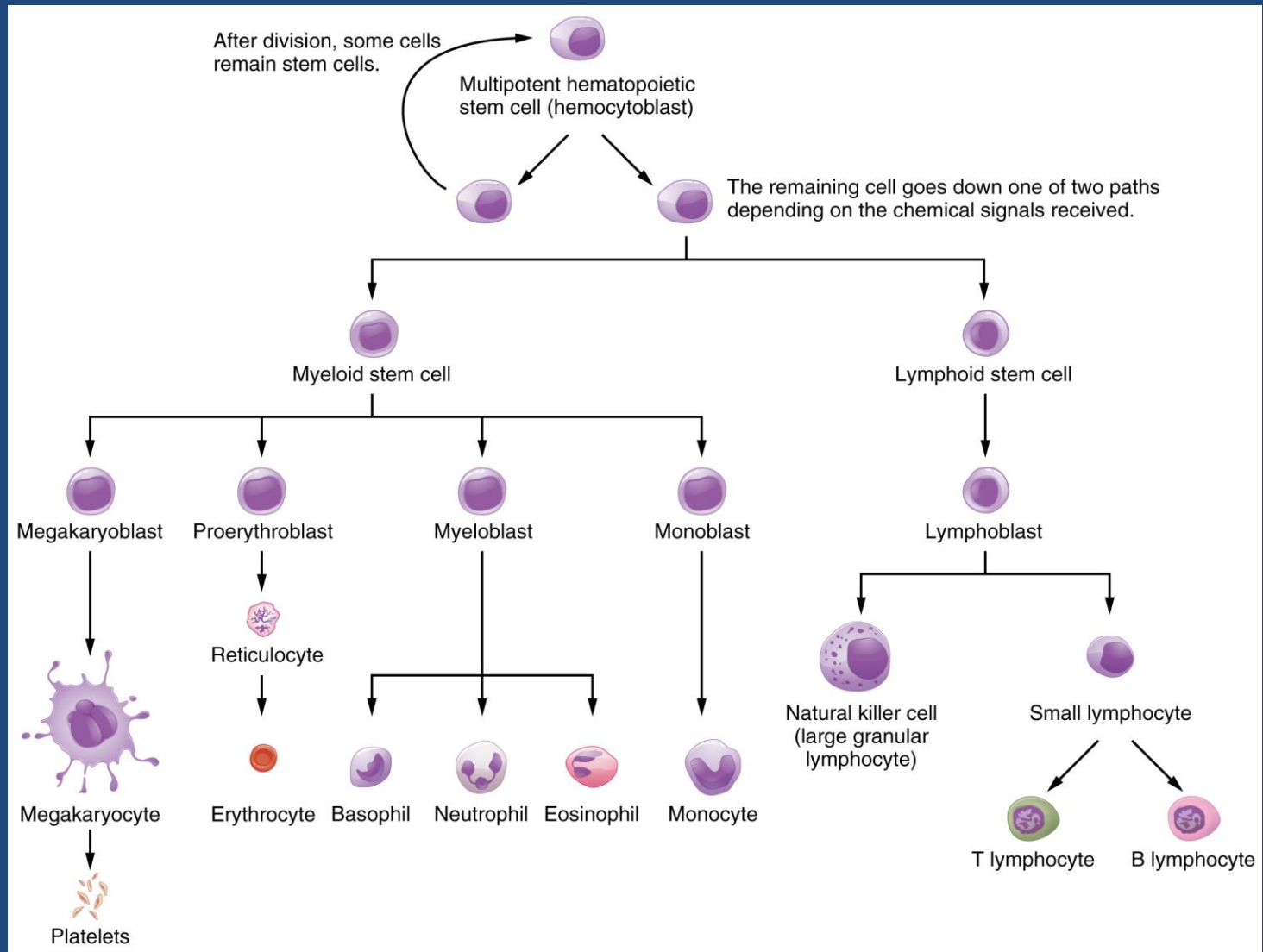


Thrombocytopenia Evaluation

Brenda Shinar, MD, FACP

September 14, 2021



Platelet Pearls

- Neurosurgery, epidural, or lumbar puncture
 - > 100K
- Surgery (C-section, solid organ biopsy)
 - >50K
- Spontaneous vaginal delivery
 - > 30K
- Central venous catheter
 - >20K
- Spontaneous bleeding
 - < 10K
- *1 unit single donor platelet should increase count by 30K*
- 1 single donor platelet is equivalent to platelets present in 6 units of whole blood
- Platelets are stored at room temperature in the blood bank and most likely of all blood products to be contaminated with bacteria; they are only allowed to be stored for 5 days in US blood banks

What is in your differential diagnosis?

- **Decreased Production**

- Bone marrow failure
- Bone marrow suppression
- Chronic alcohol use*
- Congenital macrothrombocytopenia
- Infection
- Myelodysplastic syndrome
- Neoplastic marrow infiltration
- Nutritional deficiencies

- **Sequestration**

- Hypersplenism/Portal hypertension

- **Increased consumption**

- Alloimmune destruction
- Autoimmune syndromes
- DIC/severe sepsis
- Drug induced thrombocytopenia
- HIT
- ITP
- Infections/Sepsis
- Mechanical destruction
- Preeclampsia/HELLP
- TTP/HUS

1. A 35-year-old woman is evaluated following a recent diagnosis of iron deficiency anemia secondary to menorrhagia. She began an oral contraceptive to control the bleeding and oral iron sulfate 6 weeks ago. She has no other medical conditions and takes no additional medication.

On physical examination, vital signs are normal. The conjunctiva are pink. No petechiae or purpura is evident. The remainder of the examination is normal.

Laboratory studies show a hematocrit of 39%, leukocyte count of 5800/uL, and a platelet count of 35,000/uL.

Which of the following is the most appropriate next step in diagnosis?

- A. Transfuse one unit single donor platelets
- B. Order a peripheral smear
- C. Order a bone marrow biopsy
- D. Order a heparin induced thrombocytopenia (HIT) panel
- E. Order a right upper quadrant ultrasound to evaluate for cirrhosis

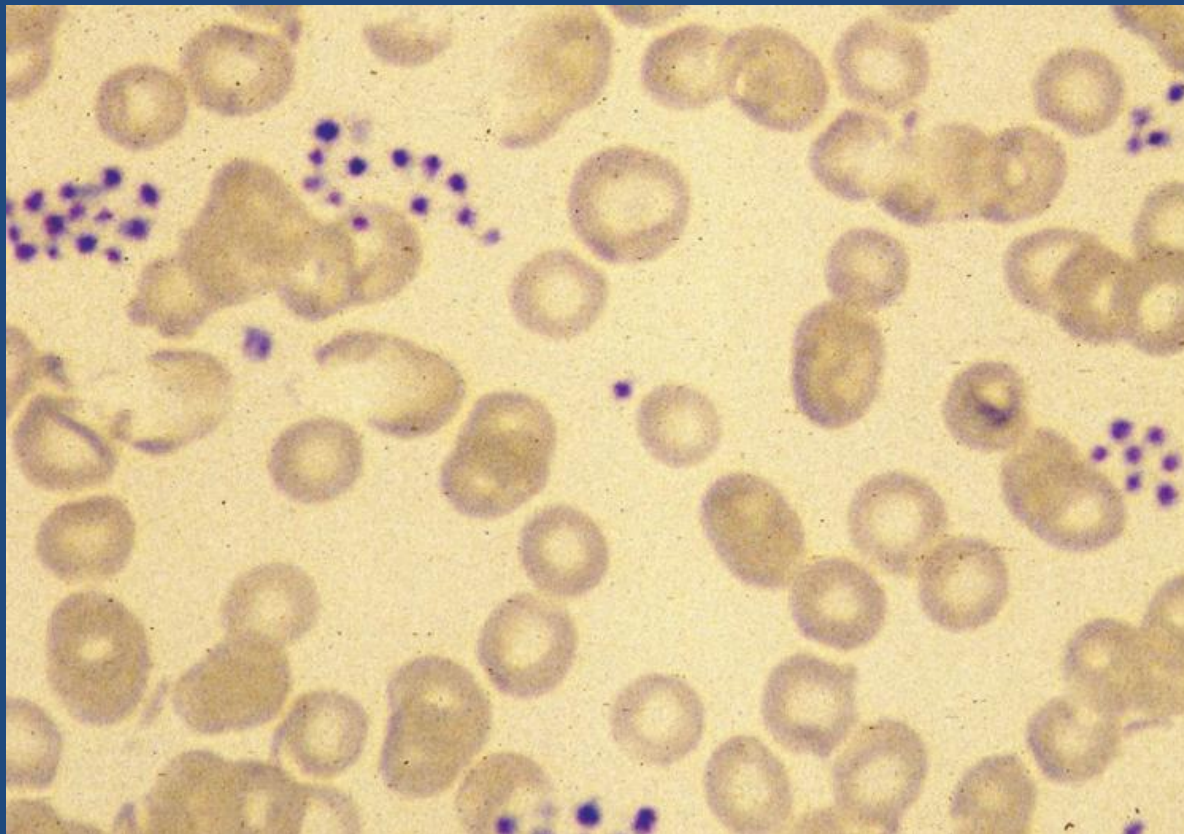
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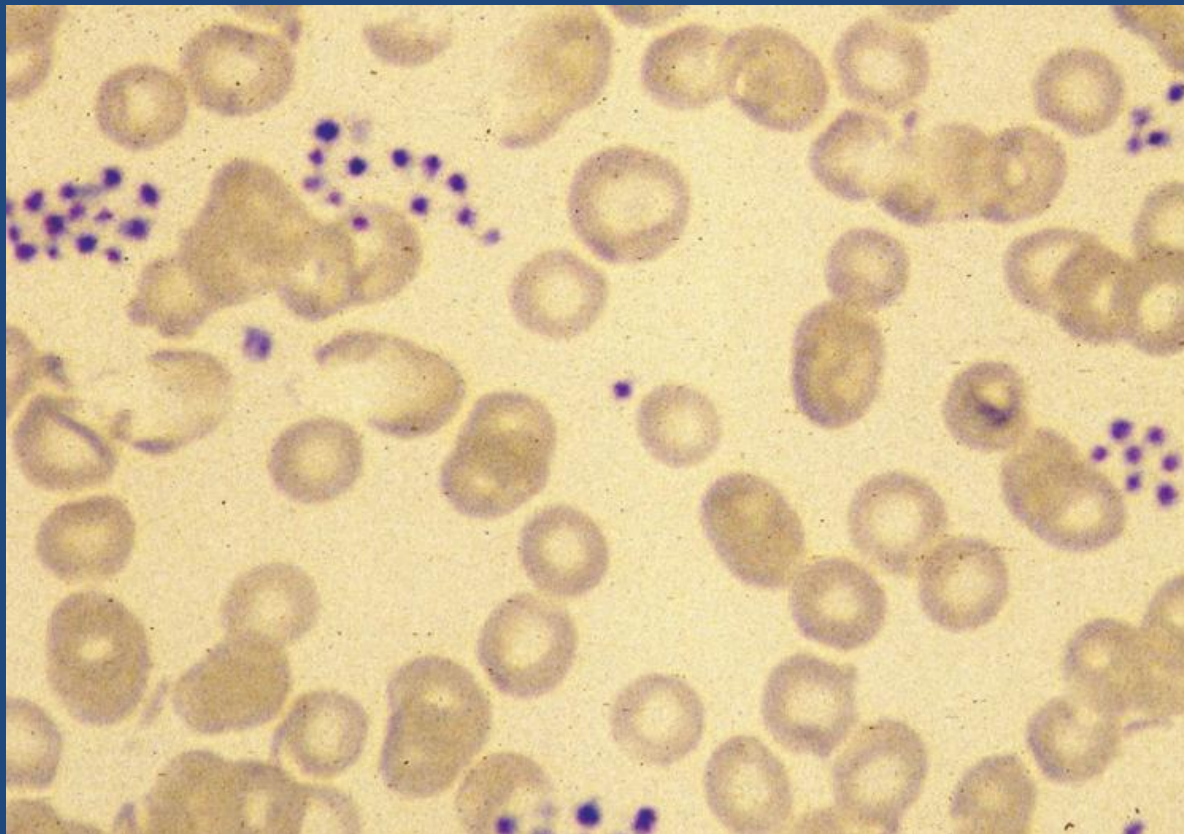
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This is your patient's peripheral smear.

Which of the following is the most appropriate management?

- A. Antinuclear antibody and HIV test
- B. Plasma exchange
- C. Prednisone
- D. Repeat platelet count in EDTA free tube

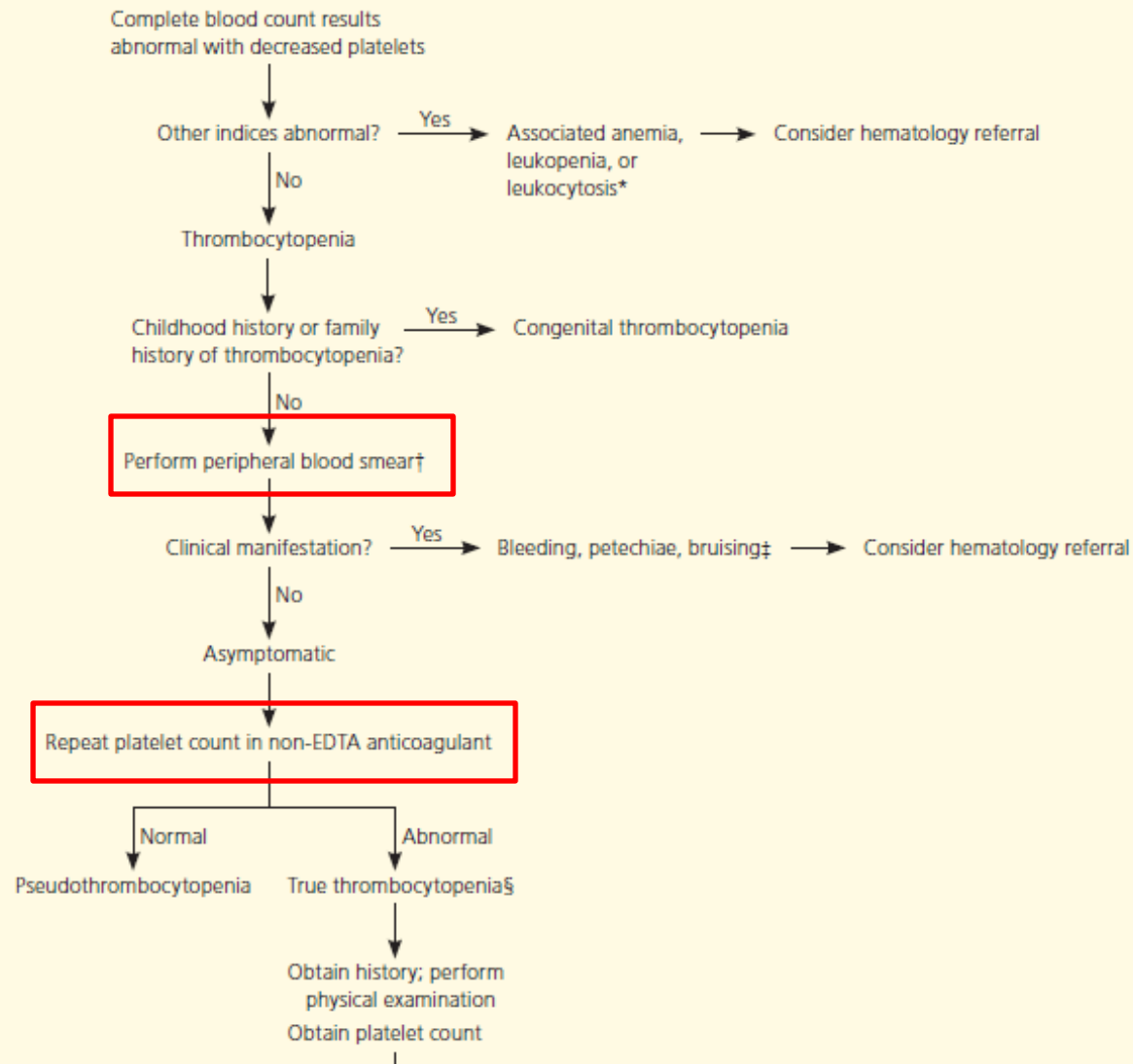


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Management of Thrombocytopenia



2. A 35-year-old woman is evaluated for worsening thrombocytopenia; she is pregnant at 36 weeks' gestation. Medical history is significant for immune thrombocytopenic purpura. Previous platelet counts during this pregnancy have been 80,000-100,000/uL. Her only medication is a prenatal vitamin.

On physical examination, temperature is 37.0 C (98.6 F), blood pressure is 165/110 mm Hg, pulse rate is 95/min, and respiration rate is 18/min. Abdominal examination reveals mild right upper quadrant discomfort on palpation. Reflexes are normal, no clonus is observed. She has lower extremity edema to the level of the knees bilaterally.

Laboratory studies:

Hemoglobin: 10.5 g/dL

Platelet count: 21,000/uL

Alanine aminotransferase: 480 U/L

Aspartate aminotransferase: 600 U/L

Creatinine: 1.2 mg/dL

Urinalysis: 3+ protein

A peripheral smear is shown:

Which of the following is the most appropriate management of this patient's thrombocytopenia?

- A. Emergent delivery
- B. Intravenous immune globulin
- C. Plasma exchange
- D. Prednisone



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Thrombocytopenia in Pregnancy

- **Pregnancy-associated thrombocytopenia (PAT) (>50K)**
 - First diagnosis of thrombocytopenia during pregnancy
 - Negative maternal-platelet associated IgG, Normal coagulation studies
 - Recovery within 12 weeks of delivery
- **Idiopathic thrombocytopenia (ITP)**
 - ITP diagnosed before pregnancy
 - ITP associated with pregnancy
- **Pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH)**
 - New onset hypertension $\geq 140/90$
 - Proteinuria/ 24 hours < 300 mg
- **Pre-eclampsia**
 - Hypertension $>140/90$ with any one of the following:
 - Proteinuria > 300 mg/24 hours
 - Platelet $< 100,000/\mu\text{L}$
 - Creatinine > 1.1 mg/dL or doubling
 - Liver enzymes 2X ULN
 - Pulmonary edema
 - Cerebral or visual symptoms (headache, scotoma, flashing lights)
- **Hemolysis with Elevated Liver Enzymes and Low Platelets (HELLP) (10-20% of severe pre-eclampsia)**
 - 10-20% of women with severe pre-eclampsia develop HELLP
 - 85% of HELLP patients have preeclampsia
 - Microangiopathic anemia (schistocytes)
 - **Immediate delivery is the treatment!**



3. A 45-year-old woman is evaluated in the ED for a 1-day history of abdominal pain and fever. She also reports unexpected heavy menstrual bleeding of 1 day's duration and easy bruising of 2 days' duration. Medical and family histories are unremarkable, and she takes no medications.

On physical examination, the patient is oriented to person and place, but not time. Temperature is 38.1 C (100.6 F), blood pressure is 170/98 mm Hg, pulse rate is 110/min, and respiration rate is 20/min. Other than confusion, neurologic examination is normal. Subconjunctival hemorrhages are present. Cardiopulmonary examination is normal. Abdominal examination reveals tenderness to palpation without guarding or rebound. Pelvic examination shows blood in the vaginal vault with no cervical motion tenderness or adnexal masses.

Laboratory studies:

Hematocrit: 26%

Leukocyte count: 10,300/uL

Platelet count: 24,000/uL

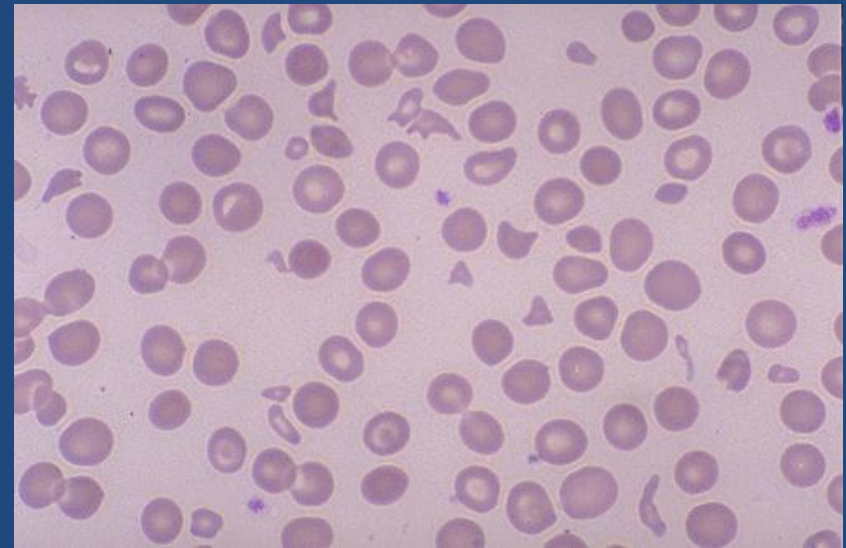
Reticulocyte count: 8.3% of erythrocytes

Bilirubin, Total: 2.3 mg/dL

Creatinine: 3.2 mg/dL

Lactate dehydrogenase: 1500 U/L

A peripheral blood smear is shown:



Which of the following is the most appropriate next step in the management of this patient?

- A. Order an ADAMTS-13 level
- B. Start plasma exchange
- C. Order stool for E. coli 0157:H7
- D. Type and cross and transfuse 1 unit single donor platelets

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On physical examination, the patient is **oriented to person and place, but not time**. **Temperature is 38.1 C (100.6 F)**, **blood pressure is 170/98 mm Hg**, **pulse rate is 110/min**, and respiration rate is 20/min. Other than confusion, neurologic examination is normal. Subconjunctival hemorrhages are present. Cardiopulmonary examination is normal. Abdominal examination reveals tenderness to palpation without guarding or rebound. Pelvic examination shows blood in the vaginal vault with no cervical motion tenderness or adnexal masses.

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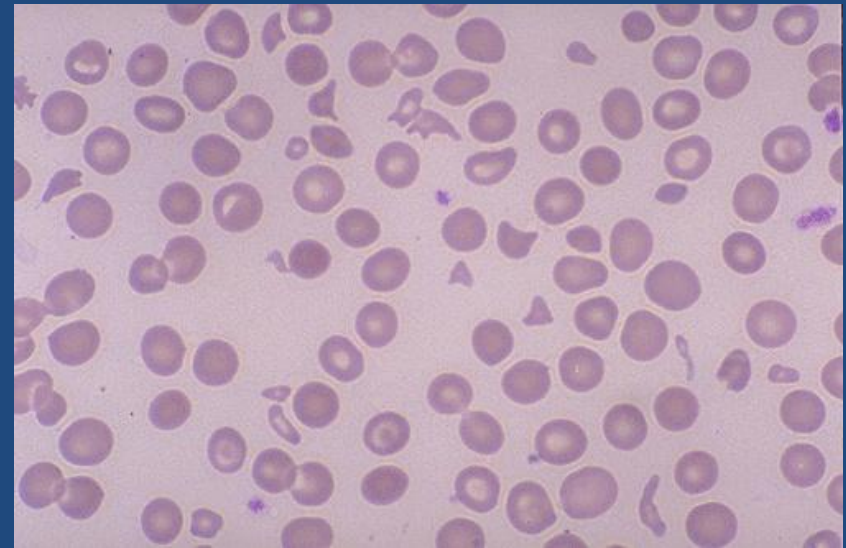
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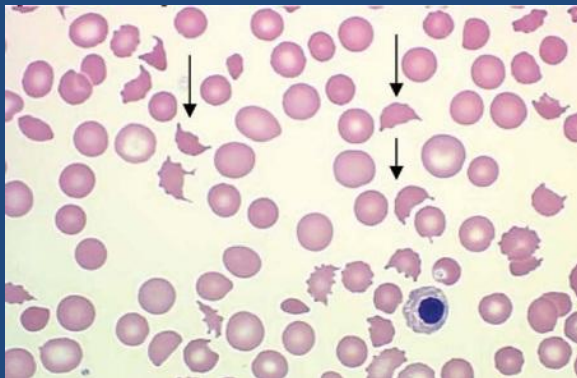
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Diagnose a patient with thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura

Definition of TTP:

- Initiation of intravascular platelet aggregation and coagulation/fibrin strands within the microcirculation
- Deficiency of ADAMTS 13 (< 5% normal activity)
- Cannot break down von Willebrand multimers



Clinical Diagnosis: Pentad of TTP:

1. *Thrombocytopenia
2. *Microangiopathic hemolytic anemia (schistocytes)
3. Neurologic Deficits
4. Kidney Impairment
5. Fever

(Diagnosis needs only these 2 major criteria without another clinically apparent cause to initiate therapy)

Diagnose a patient with thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura

- Associated Conditions:
 - Drug-induced
 - Quinine, clopidogrel, chemotherapy, immunosuppressive agents
 - Pregnancy related
 - Following bloody diarrhea (shiga toxin producing E.coli)
 - Idiopathic (ADAMTS13)
 - Autoimmune (lupus)
 - Hereditary



4. A 65 year-old woman is evaluated in the Emergency Department for a 1-day history of pain and swelling in her left leg. Medical history is significant for coronary artery bypass graft surgery 9 days ago with vein harvesting from the right leg. She also has hypertension and hyperlipidemia. Medications are atorvastatin, atenolol, clopidogrel, and aspirin.

On physical examination, temperature is 37.0 C (98.6 F), blood pressure is 115/68 mm Hg, pulse rate is 65/min, Oxygen saturation breathing ambient air is 96%. Her sternotomy incision is healing well. The cardiopulmonary examination is normal. The left leg is swollen to the mid-thigh.

Laboratory studies reveal a hematocrit of 33%, leukocyte count of 12,000/ul, and platelet count of 55,000/uL. Her platelets before surgery were 250,000/uL.

Duplex ultrasonography of the left leg shows acute thrombus in the common femoral vein.

Which of the following is the most appropriate next step in management?

- A. Await platelet factor 4 immunoassay before initiating anticoagulation
- B. Await serotonin release assay before initiating anticoagulation
- C. Initiate argatroban
- D. Initiate heparin
- E. Initiate warfarin

4. A 65-year-old woman is evaluated in the Emergency Department for a **1-day history of pain and swelling in her left leg**. Medical history is significant for **coronary artery bypass graft surgery 9 days ago** with vein harvesting from the right leg. She also has hypertension and hyperlipidemia. Medications are atorvastatin, atenolol, clopidogrel, and aspirin.

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Who is at risk for HIT(T)?

- Low-risk patients: (<0.1%)
 - medical and obstetrical patients receiving LMWH
 - patients receiving LMWH after minor surgery or minor trauma
 - any patients receiving fondaparinux.
- Intermediate-risk patients: (0.1%-1.0%)
 - medical and obstetrical patients receiving UFH
 - patients receiving LMWH after major surgery or major trauma.
- High-risk populations: (>1.0%)
 - surgical and trauma patients receiving postoperative UFH

* Some patients may receive a combination of UFH and LMWH or UFH and fondaparinux; these patients should be considered to belong to the UFH group.

A. Features of the history and physical examination that support a diagnosis of HIT

Feature	Comments
Fall in platelet count $\geq 50\%$	From highest platelet count after heparin exposure; platelet count fall is 30–50% in 10% of cases
Fall in platelet count begins 5–14 days after immunizing heparin exposure	Heparin administered during or soon after surgery is more likely to be immunizing
Fall in platelet count begins within 24 hours after heparin exposure	May occur in patients with previous heparin exposure within last 100 days
Nadir platelet count $\geq 20 \times 10^9/L$	Nadir may exceed lower limit of normal range (i.e. $150 \times 10^9/L$) in patients with high baseline platelet counts. May be $< 20 \times 10^9/L$ in cases associated with DIC
Venous or arterial thrombosis	Occurring ≥ 5 days after heparin exposure and up to 30 days after heparin cessation
Skin necrosis	At subcutaneous heparin injection sites
Anaphylactoid reaction	Within 30 minutes after intravenous heparin bolus or subcutaneous injection
Absence of alternative causes of thrombocytopenia	Such as infection, other medications known to cause thrombocytopenia, cardiopulmonary bypass within previous 96 hours, intra-aortic balloon pump, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, etc.
Absence of petechiae and other mucocutaneous bleeding	Adrenal hemorrhage secondary to adrenal vein thrombosis may occur in association with HIT



“4 T’s”

2 points

1 point

Thrombocytopenia

>50% drop
nadir > 20K

30-50% drop
nadir 10-19K

Timing

5-10 days
< 1d + prior hep
< 30ds

? 5-10 d
>10 d
<1d + prior hep 30-100d)

Thrombosis

New Clot
anaphylaxis,
skin necrosis

Suspected
progressive or
recurrent clot

alTernative dx

none

possible

Original Article

Clinical effectiveness of a Bayesian algorithm for the diagnosis and management of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia

R. A. Raschke , T. Gallo, S. C. Curry, T. Whiting, A. Padilla-Jones, T. E. Warkentin, A. Puri

First published: 17 July 2017 [Full publication history](#)

DOI: 10.1111/jth.13758 [View/save citation](#)

Cited by (CrossRef): 0 articles  [Check for updates](#)  [Citation tools](#) ▼



Manuscript handled by: A. Greinacher

Final decision: F. R. Rosendaal, 5 June 2017



[View issue TOC](#)
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Abstract

Essentials

- We previously published a diagnostic algorithm for heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT).
- In this study, we validated the algorithm in an independent large healthcare system.
- The accuracy was 98%, sensitivity 82% and specificity 99%.
- The algorithm has potential to improve accuracy and efficiency in the diagnosis of HIT.

Pretest Probability of HIT by 4T score*	ELISA test result (OD)	Reasonable clinical action:
Low (0-3 points) <i><1% chance patient has HIT</i>	>2.00	Order SRA**
	1.50 - 1.99	
	0.60 - 1.49	HIT ruled out***
	< 0.6	
Intermediate (4-5 points) <i>~10% chance patient has HIT</i>	>2.00	Treat HIT
	1.50 - 1.99	Order SRA**
	0.60 - 1.49	
	< 0.6	HIT ruled out***
High (6-8 points) <i>~50% chance patient has HIT</i>	>2.00	Treat HIT
	1.50 - 1.99	
	0.60 - 1.49	Order SRA**
	< 0.60	

IV. Treatment

A. Non-heparin anticoagulants: selection, dosing, and monitoring

Agent	Initial dosing	Monitoring
Argatroban	Bolus: None Continuous infusion: Normal organ function → 2 mcg/kg/min ¹ Liver dysfunction (total serum bilirubin > 1.5 mg/dL), heart failure, post-cardiac surgery, anasarca → 0.5–1.2 mcg/kg/min ²	Adjust dose to APTT of 1.5–3.0 times patient baseline. Monitor APTT every 4 hours during dose titration.
Danaparoid ³	Bolus: Weight < 60 kg → 1500 U Weight 60–75 kg → 2250 U Weight 75–90 kg → 3000 U Weight > 90 kg → 3750 U Accelerated initial infusion: 400 U/hr x 4 hrs, then 300 U/hr x 4 hrs Maintenance infusion: Cr < 2.5 mg/dL → 200 U/hr Cr ≥ 2.5 mg/dL → 150 U/hr	Adjust dose to danaparoid-specific anti-Xa level of 0.5–0.8 U/ml (if assay is available).
Bivalirudin ⁴	Bolus: None Continuous infusion: Normal organ function → 0.15 mg/kg/hr Renal or hepatic insufficiency → dose reduction may be necessary	Adjust dose to APTT of 1.5–2.5 times patient baseline.
Fondaparinux ⁵	< 50 kg → 5 mg SC daily 50–100 kg → 7.5 mg SC daily > 100 kg → 10 mg SC daily Cl _{CR} 30–50 ml/min → use caution Cl _{CR} < 30 ml/min → contraindicated	Some experts recommend adjusting dose to a peak anti-Xa activity of 1.5 fondaparinux-specific U/ml. Others do not recommend routine monitoring.
NOACs ⁶	At the time of writing, none of the NOACs (e.g. rivaroxaban, dabigatran, apixaban) had been assessed for treatment of patients with suspected or proven HIT and none had FDA approval for this indication. Until supporting data are available, their use cannot be endorsed.	

Consult pharmacy for help with direct thrombin inhibitors!

- HIT patients are at risk of venous limb gangrene and skin necrosis during initiation of warfarin
- Warfarin should not be initiated until platelet count is ≥ 150K
- A parenteral non-heparin anticoagulant should be overlapped with warfarin for ≥ 5 days and until INR has reached intended target

HIT(T) Management

- Patients with HIT without obvious clot should have bilateral LE doppler u/s to evaluate for DVT and doppler u/s in upper limb with CVC *only to screen for DVT*
- Warfarin or DOAC (rivaroxaban) for full dose anticoagulation for 3 months if clot is present and *at least* 1 month if clot is not found

5. A 30 -year-old previously healthy veteran man presented to his primary care doctor 4 weeks before admission to the hospital for fever to 104 and diffuse throat pain. He had cervical lymphadenopathy and was treated empirically for streptococcal pharyngitis with amoxicillin, but after 2 days, his symptoms did not remit, and he went to urgent care where he was given clindamycin and decadron and again discharged to home.

Despite the change in treatment, he continued to have high fever to 103 and diffuse myalgias. He was admitted to the hospital for a possible sepsis. He had a diffuse pink rash on his back and chest at the time of admission. He was started on empiric broad spectrum antibiotics after cultures were obtained. CT of the chest, abdomen, and pelvis revealed diffuse lymphadenopathy and moderate splenomegaly.

Laboratory evaluation revealed the following:

White blood count: 15,000/uL with normal differential

Hemoglobin 7.8 g/dL

Hematocrit 22%

Platelet count: 55,000/uL

AST: 780 U/L

ALT: 1200 U/L

Total bilirubin: 2.5 mg/dL

INR 2.1

Blood cultures: no growth after 72 hours

Urine analysis and culture: negative

Ferritin: 10,000 ng/mL

Which of the following is the most appropriate next step in management?

- A. Order fasting triglycerides and fibrinogen levels
- B. Order excisional lymph node biopsy
- C. Order bone marrow biopsy
- D. Order liver biopsy

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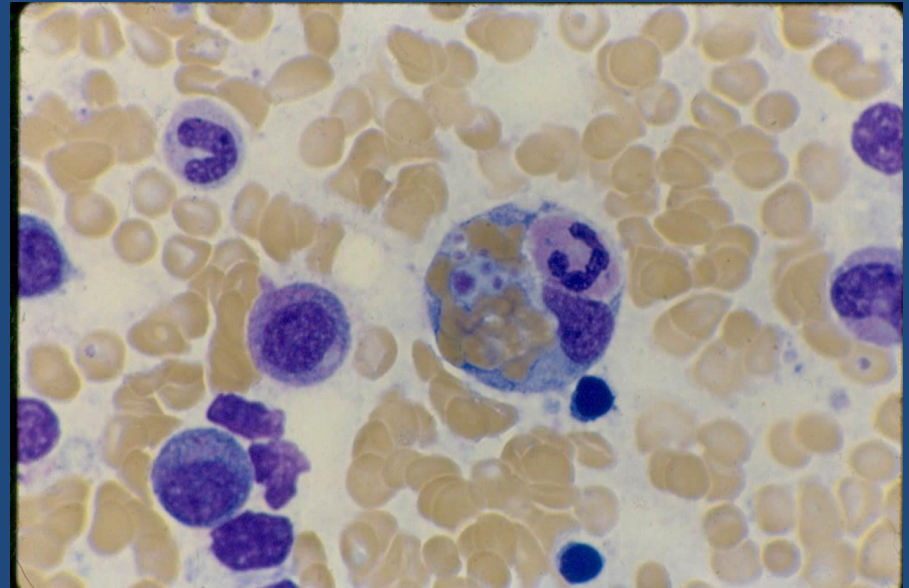
Hemophagocytic Lymphohistocytosis (HLH)

- Life-threatening disorder of excessive immune activation resulting in organ and tissue destruction due to lack of normal downregulation of activated macrophages and lymphocytes
- Genetic predisposition, infectious or autoimmune trigger
- **Unremitting septic shock w/ MSOF**
- Pancytopenia → Hyperferritinemia → bone marrow
- 29 cases diagnosed at B-UMCP
- **Diagnostic Criteria = 5 of the following 8**
 - Fever ≥ 38.5
 - Splenomegaly
 - Peripheral blood cytopenias
 - Ferritin > 3000 ng/mL
 - *Hypertriglyceridemia and or hypofibrinogenemia
 - Hemophagocytosis in bone marrow, lymph node, liver or spleen
 - Low or absent NK cell activity
 - Elevated IL-2 receptor alpha

Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH)

Clinical syndromes

- Fever of unknown origin
 - > 102 F, prolonged
- **Liver disease and coagulopathy**
 - Hepatitis, lymphocytic infiltration
- Bone marrow failure
 - >80% anemia and thrombocytopenia
 - HLH in BM not sensitive or specific!
- **Skin manifestations**
 - 6-65% all types of rashes
- Pulmonary dysfunction
 - Ominous sign, 88% mortality
- **Neurologic manifestations**
 - 33% seizures, decreased LOC, meningitis, cranial neuropathies



HLH Treatment

- Major triggers are infection (EBV plus others), rheumatologic condition, or lymphoid malignancy
- *Greatest barrier to treatment is DELAY in DIAGNOSIS*
- Clinically stable patients
 - Search for cause
 - Treat cause
- Unstable patients
 - Start HLH specific therapy immediately, involve hematology
 - Dexamethasone, etoposide, methotrexate
 - Anakinra (rheumatology dz trigger)

6. A 35- year-old woman is evaluated for the recent onset of a rash on her legs. She has no other symptoms. She does not drink alcohol. Medications are an oral contraceptive and a multivitamin.

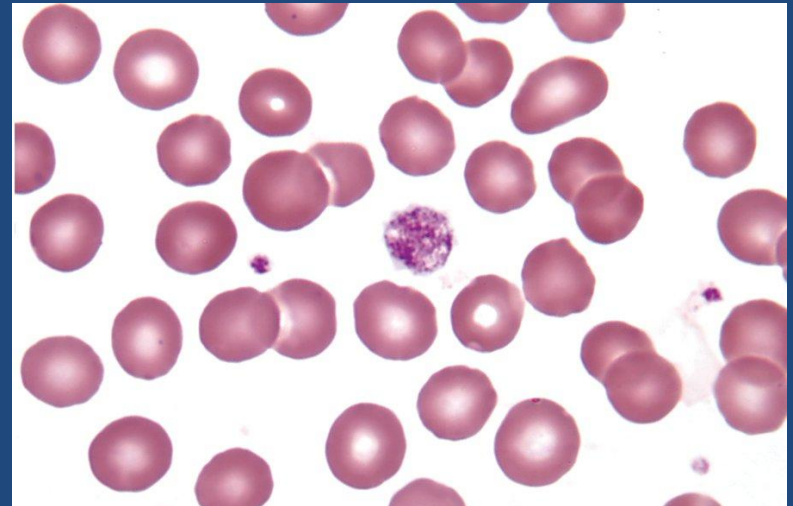
On physical examination, vital signs are normal. Non-pruritic, non-blanching red macules are noted on the lower extremities. Abdominal examination reveals no splenomegaly.

Laboratory studies show a hematocrit of 38%, a leukocyte count of 7000/uL, and a platelet count of 31,000/uL.

The peripheral blood smear is shown.

Which of the following is the most likely diagnosis?

- A. Thrombotic thrombocytopenia purpura
- B. Henoch Schonlein purpura
- C. Leukocytoclastic vasculitis
- D. Immune thrombocytopenic purpura
- E. Systemic lupus erythematosus



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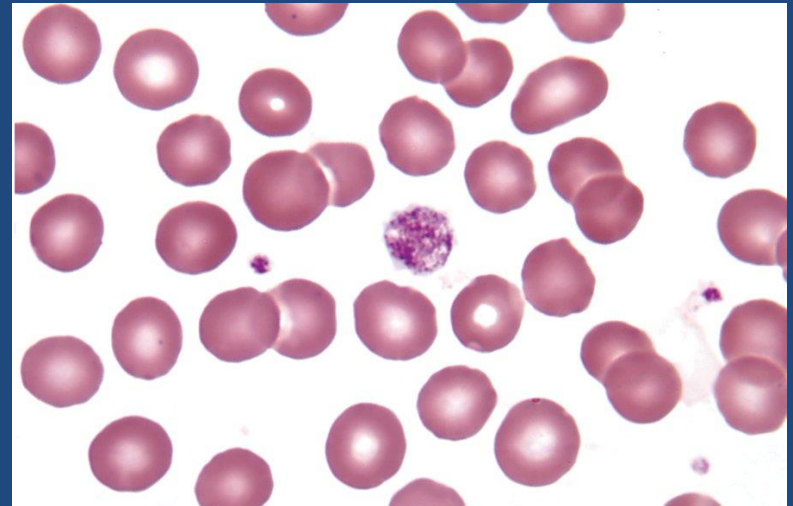
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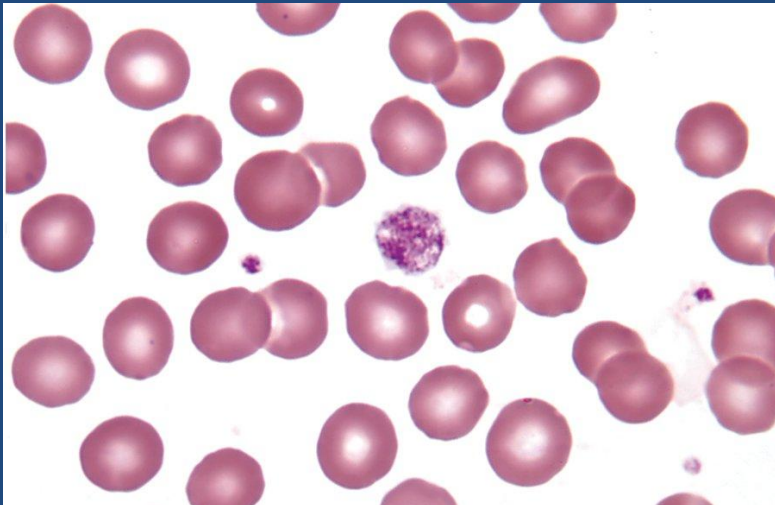
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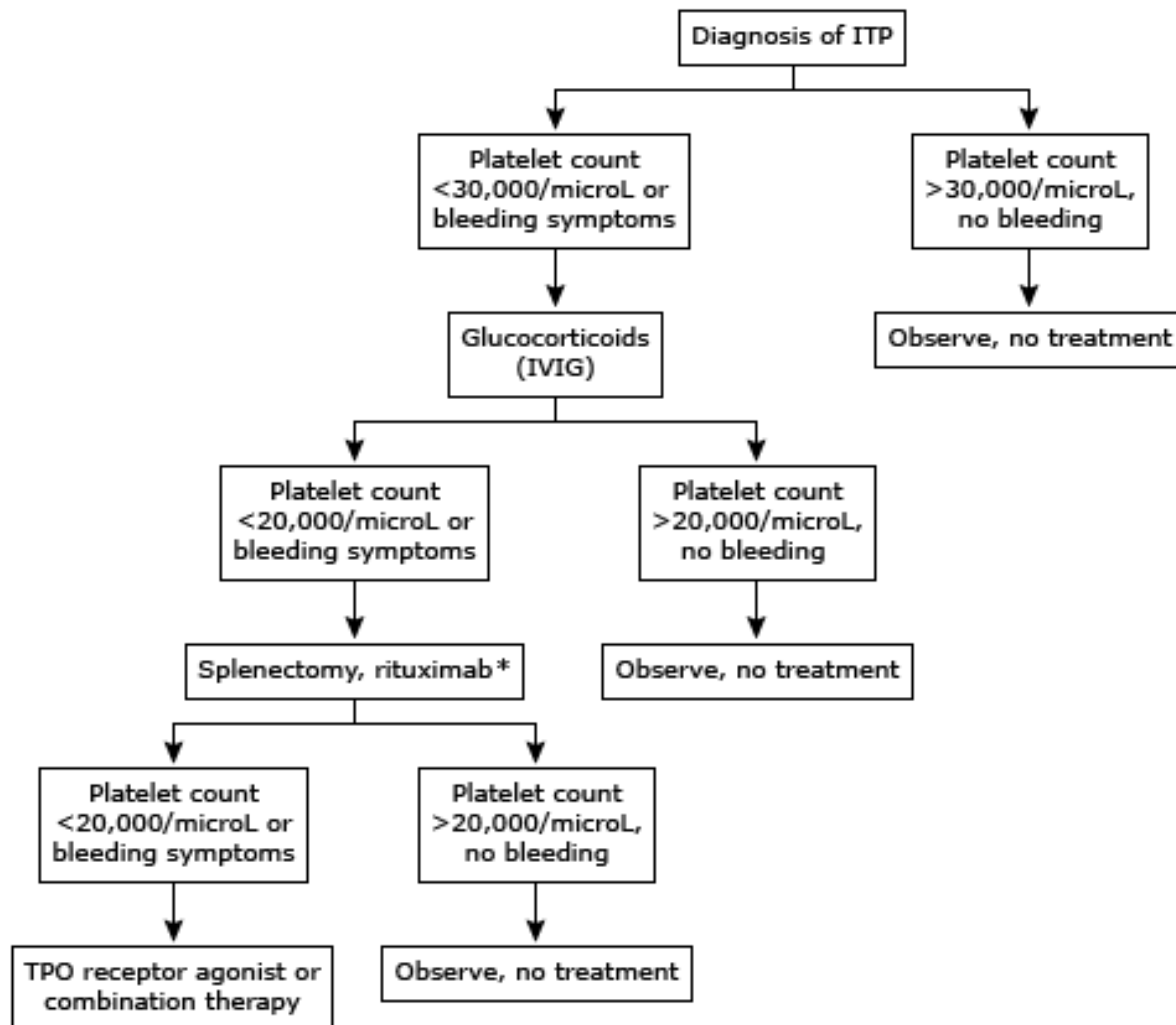


Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP)

- Diagnosis of exclusion
- No splenomegaly
- No other cytopenias
- No coagulopathies
- Drugs
 - Quinine
- Infections
 - HIV
- Alcohol
 - With or without liver disease
- Nutritional deficiencies
 - B12, folate, copper
- Rheumatologic disease
 - Systemic lupus erythematosus
 - Antiphospholipid antibody syndrome



Treatment approach in immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) in adults



7. A 42-year-old woman is evaluated for thrombocytopenia. She was admitted to the hospital one week ago for newly diagnosed acute myeloid leukemia. She has been receiving leukoreduced, irradiated erythrocyte and platelet transfusions since admission. Yesterday, her platelet count was 8000/uL. A platelet count checked 30 minutes after a random, donor-pooled platelet transfusion was 11,000/uL. This morning her platelet count was 6000/uL. Thirty minutes after a random donor-pooled platelet transfusion, the platelet count is 9000/uL. She has had four uncomplicated pregnancies and deliveries. Medications are daunorubicin, cytarabine, cefepime, posaconazole, valacyclovir, and ondansetron.

On physical examination, vital signs are normal. No splenomegaly is present. Ecchymoses are seen at previous venipuncture sites. She has scattered petechiae over the lower extremities. The remainder of the examination is normal.

Peripheral blood smear reveals no schistocytes or platelet clumps.

Which of the following is the most appropriate management?

- A. Transfuse ABO-matched platelets
- B. Transfuse HLA-matched platelets
- C. Transfuse washed platelets
- D. Observation

7. A 42-year-old woman is evaluated for thrombocytopenia. She was admitted to the hospital one week ago for newly diagnosed acute myeloid leukemia. She has been receiving leukoreduced, irradiated erythrocyte and platelet transfusions since admission. Yesterday, her platelet count was 8000/uL. A platelet count checked 30 minutes after a random, donor-pooled platelet transfusion was 11,000/uL. This morning her platelet count was 6000/uL. Thirty minutes after a random donor-pooled platelet transfusion, the platelet count is 9000/uL. She has had four uncomplicated pregnancies and deliveries. Medications are daunorubicin, cytarabine, cefepime, posaconazole, valacyclovir, and ondansetron.

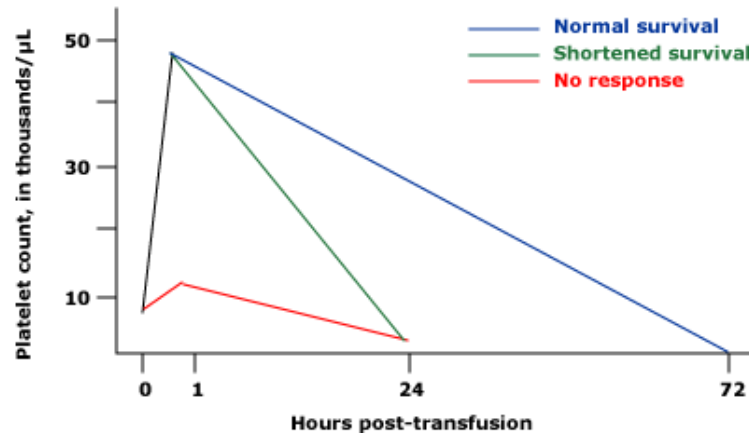
On physical examination, vital signs are normal. No splenomegaly is present. Ecchymoses are seen at previous venipuncture sites. She has scattered petechiae over the lower extremities. The remainder of the examination is normal.

Peripheral blood smear reveals no schistocytes or platelet clumps.

Which of the following is the most appropriate management?

- A. Transfuse ABO-matched platelets
- B. Transfuse HLA-matched platelets**
- C. Transfuse washed platelets
- D. Observation

Patterns of response to platelet transfusion



Two patterns can be seen in refractory patients. A normal increment at one hour following transfusion with return to the baseline count within 24 hours (green curve) is typical of the shortening of platelet survival seen with sepsis, hematopoietic cell transplantation, disseminated intravascular coagulation, and possibly in bleeding patients and those taking medications that interfere with platelet survival. The second pattern consists of little or no increment in platelet count, even within one hour of transfusion (red curve); this pattern is seen with alloimmunization.

Graphic 82283 Version 2.0

2 types of platelet refractoriness:

- 1. Non-immune:**
normal response at 1 hour but back down in 24 hours
- 2. Immune:**
little to no increase in plt count even 1 hour after transfusion

Diagnosis and management of platelet refractoriness

