



Staphylococcus contamination of a blood sample mimicking platelet clumps

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We present the case of a febrile patient with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. A Cell-Dyn (Abbott,) analysis gave an image of platelet clumps (Figure 1) with a platelet count of $7 \times 10^9/L$. Light microscopy smear examination showed clusters of cocci (Figure 2). New blood sampling was performed and positivity for *Staphylococcus epidermidis* was documented in the first vacuum tube whereas no micro-organism growth was observed in the second one.

Our findings confirm that automated platelet counts can suffer from many interferences including bacterial aggregates which may lead to misinterpretation. We cannot rule out the possibility that in our case a non-sterile EDTA tube might have been the source of contamination.

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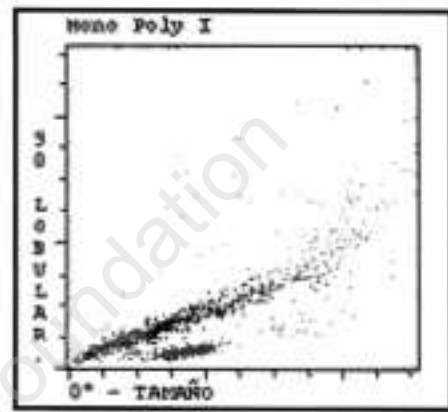


Figure 1. Cell-Dyn histogram resembling platelet clumps.

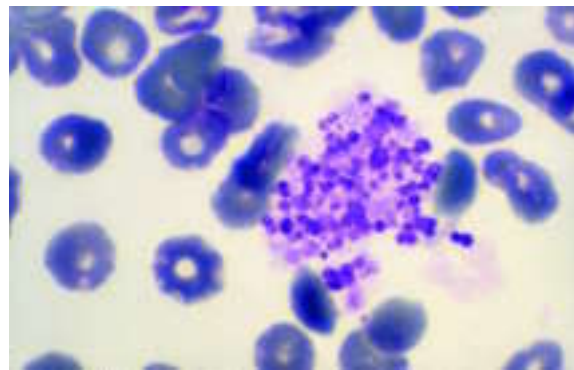


Figure 2. Light microscopy image of the cocci (MGG slide stain).