

# Negative initial bone marrow aspirate does not rule out acute lymphoblastic leukemia

Monica Davini<sup>1</sup>, Kevin Shiah<sup>2</sup>, and Anurag Agrawal<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Arizona

<sup>2</sup>Touro University California College of Osteopathic Medicine

<sup>3</sup>UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

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## Abstract

Patients with precursor-B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (B-ALL) may initially present with a prodrome, cytopenia(s) with abnormal bone marrow cellularity, but without clonal abnormalities. Prior cases of “indolent ALL” report infections preceding B-ALL diagnosis. Here we describe our institutional experience, eight patients over a 15-year period with a prodrome (2% of B-ALL diagnoses) prior to definitive diagnosis. Patients ranged from 3-15 years of age (median 5 years), requiring a median 3.5 months from presentation to diagnosis, with a median 3 bone marrow aspirates (BMA) to reach definitive diagnosis. Practitioners must be aware that initial negative BMA does not rule out B-ALL.

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