An Unexpected Colonoscopic Finding in a 13-Year-Old Boy

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A 13-year-old male presented to the Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health emergency department with a 2-day history of constipation and a 1-day history of rectal bleeding. He had also passed several stools containing blood following administration of a laxative. At the time of evaluation, the patient was afebrile and denied anti-inflammatory drug ingestion, illicit substance abuse, epistaxis, hematemesis, travel outside Indiana, and consumption of raw or undercooked meat. Digital rectal examination revealed an ulcer in the posterior wall and a hemorrhoid in the anterior wall, while the remainder of the physical examination was unremarkable. A complete blood count and coagulation studies indicated mild anemia and an elevated neutrophil count, but other parameter values were within normal limits. A radiograph of the child’s abdomen was also performed, which showed only a moderate amount of gas and stool retention. The patient’s medical history was significant for developmental delay and Nissen fundoplication for esophageal reflux. Based on these findings, the patient was admitted for further evaluation by the gastrointestinal service.

A colonoscopy performed the following morning confirmed the presence of a raised, erythematous, and friable rectal ulcer, while the rest of the colon and terminal ileum appeared normal. Biopsy specimens of the colon, terminal ileum, and rectal ulcer obtained during the colonoscopy did not reveal an obvious cause of the rectal ulcer, and the intestinal mucosa was unremarkable. However, one hematoxylin-and-eosin-stained section of the colon biopsy specimen revealed an ovoid object containing abundant eosinophilic granules measuring 1.0 by 0.75 mm in the greatest dimension (Fig. 1) in the lumen. The pathologist queried as to the presence of an intestinal parasite.