

QUESTION
 A 65-year-old male patient with a long history of hypertension and diabetes mellitus presents to the clinic with a 2-week history of increasing fatigue, weight loss, and intermittent fevers. He reports a recent change in his stool color to a pale, clay-like appearance. Physical examination reveals a pale conjunctiva and a 1-cm ulcer on the right side of the tongue. Laboratory studies show a hemoglobin of 10 g/dL, hematocrit of 30%, and a white blood cell count of 12,000/mm³ with a left shift. The patient's most likely diagnosis is:

- ANSWER**
 A. Acute leukemia
 B. Chronic leukemia
 C. Multiple myeloma
 D. Squamous cell carcinoma of the tongue
 E. Small cell carcinoma of the lung

ANSWERS

The correct answer is D. Squamous cell carcinoma of the tongue. The patient's symptoms of fatigue, weight loss, and fevers are nonspecific but concerning. The pale stool color suggests malabsorption or obstruction, which can be associated with a large tumor. The physical findings of a pale conjunctiva and a tongue ulcer are highly suggestive of a malignancy. The laboratory findings of anemia and leukocytosis with a left shift are consistent with a hematologic malignancy or a severe infection. However, the combination of a localized ulcer and systemic symptoms points towards a primary tumor.