A 14-month-old male infant was evaluated for a palpable, ovoid subcutaneous lesion that appeared over 2 months on the left upper arm. The overlying skin was unremarkable and physical examination was otherwise unremarkable. Of note, the infant had recently had a 1-year check-up with completion of vaccine series and was otherwise well. The lesion was excised and microscopic examination was performed.
Silver (GMS), colloidal iron, and Alcian blue stains were performed and were negative.

What is your [differential] diagnosis?
Final diagnosis: Deep granuloma consistent with vaccine granuloma

• Biopsy showed palisading granulomas with epithelioid histiocytes containing granular material

• Vaccines with aluminum adjuvants can elicit a granulomatous reaction; in some cases an aluminum stain may be revealing

• Correlation with clinical history is required in these cases = don’t forget to ask about vaccines in any patient population when these histologic findings are present!
  – DDx also includes granuloma annulare

References: PMID: 33496022, PMID: 32983893, PMID: 16405667