Part II—Plan of Attack
Matt sighed as he took a look at the lengthy list of potential pathogens he had jotted down while paging through the library textbooks and reference manuals. “Cutaneous candidiasis, generalized Herpes, impetigo, even leprosy!” he muttered to himself. The organisms and diagnoses seemed limitless. The few hours he had spent researching a possible cause had, however, jogged his memory of infectious disease. He decided his best course of action was simply to take samples from the affected areas and submit them to the microbiology laboratory for stain and culture.

Matt returned to the nursery armed with a set of culture swabs. Joan peered furtively through lidded eyes as he went from isolette to isolette collecting specimens from each baby. Brandishing the culture swabs like weapons, he then marched out of the nursery and down the stairs to the microbiology lab.

“Good afternoon, Dr. Mitchell.” Matt stole a glance at the badge pinned to the lab coat of the young woman who greeted him. He could never figure out how people he couldn’t remember ever meeting seemed to know him by name. Amber Muirhead, MT(ASCP)SM, the badge said.

“Ms. Muirhead, I have a few specimens from the nursery that need priority treatment. The specimens were taken from some unusual skin lesions on three of our infants. I know that we need at least a routine culture and sensitivity with Gram stain. I could order some more esoteric testing, but I’m hoping that we can get some clues from this initial work.”

“We’ll set up the Gram stain right away. I’ll have one of my best microbiologists work just on this case until we can get some answers. If you wish, Dr. Mitchell, you can stay here and read the direct Gram stain yourself.”

“The Case of the Newborn Nightmare” by Andrea Wade
Questions
1. You are the microbiologist in charge of reading the Gram stain for this case. Examine the sample on the slide. Can you identify bacteria? What other kinds of cells might be present? If bacteria are present are they Gram positive or Gram negative? How would you describe the cell morphology?

2. List at least two genera of clinically significant bacteria that are consistent with your observations.

3. List at least two kinds of culture media that we have used in lab that will support the growth of these bacteria.

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