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Title: Medical thoracoscopy performed using FOB & single rigid port under conscious sedation

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Body: Background & Objectives: Pleural effusion can remain undiagnosed following thoracentesis in a significant number of cases. We evaluated our own technique for performing thoracoscopy under conscious sedation using a 7mm port and a flexible fiber-optic bronchoscope for the diagnosis of patients with unilateral pleural effusion. We evaluated cost of care by comparing the same procedure with rigid thoracoscopy. Methods: Twenty four patients with unilateral pleural effusion who underwent thoracoscopy under conscious sedation using a 7mm rigid port and a flexible fiber optic bronchoscope during April 2011 to Feb 2012 were retrospectively studied. Two patients who underwent rigid thoracoscopy for evaluation of undiagnosed effusion were taken to consideration for cost analysis. Results: Thoracoscopy done under conscious sedation using FOB and a 7mm port is a safe procedure to perform in the diagnosis of pleural effusion in all cases. The visualization of the pleura and lung using this instrumentation was adequate for to acquire an impression. A forceps biopsy of the pleura could therefore be easily and effectively performed. Cost analysis does reflects 3fold decrease in cost to patient. Conclusion: This technique is considered to have clinical utility as a diagnostic tool for evaluation of pleural effusion. This method is safe and effective. As procedure was performed with FOB, it is user friendly for a pulmonologist and inexpensive to the patient.