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Title: Karnofsky score, pH and degree of pleural involvement as prognostic factors for survival in patients with malignant pleural effusions

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Body: Objective: The patients with malignant pleural effusions (MPE) have a short survival which is influenced by different factors. We investigate the prognostic value of pleural effusion pH, Karnofsky score and pleural involvement in these patients. Methods: A prospective study was carried out for the period of 2.5 years. A total of 100 MPE patients were treated by video-assisted thoracoscopy with or without pleurodesis in case of trapped lung. Their preoperative fluid pH, Karnofsky score and the degree of pleural involvement were investigated. The last one was defined from 0 (minimum) to 3 (maximum) for each parietal, visceral and diaphragmatic pleuras at the time of thoracoscopy. Results: The overall survival of 21 months in patients with pH>7,40 was statistically longer compared to the 15 months survival in patients with pH<7,40 (p<0,001). Patients with Karnofsky score 10-30 had overall survival up to 6 months, instead of these with Karnofsky score 70-80, who were alive for 21 months. The patients with scores 40-50 and 60 have a survival between 10 to 17 months. A coherence were also found between fluid pH and Karnofsky score with index of correlation equal to 0,5636, also between Karnofsky score and degree of pleural involvement with correlation index 0,7686 and pH and pleural involvement with index equal to 0,6749. Conclusion: We can conclude that some preoperative factors (pH and Karnofsky score) and intraoperative one (degree of pleural involvement) can be useful as prognostic factors for survival in MPE patients.