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Analysis of Epidemiological, Clinical and Laboratory Characteristics of Patients with Pleural Effusion

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Objectives: The clinical features of the patients with pleural effusion (PE) may vary according to geographic areas. The aim of this study was to determine the epidemiological, clinical and laboratory characteristics of patients with PE evaluated to our university hospital.

Methods: The sociodemographic characteristics, smoking and asbestos exposure history, symptoms and pleural fluid biochemical laboratory findings were collected. Sociodemographic characteristics, history of cigarette and asbestos contact, symptoms and pleural effusion. X2 and t-test were used for the analysis of the study data.

Results: Of the 285 patients in the study group, 107 (37.5%) were female and 178 (62.5%) were male, 118 (41.4%) were malignant exudate (Group 1), 98 (34.4%) were benign exudate (Group 2), and 69 (24.2%) were transudate (Group 3). Group 1 patients were older than the other groups, but there was no significant difference between gender. Smoking history was significantly lower in Group 3 while asbestos exposure more frequent in Group 1. Pain, cough, voice annoyance, weight loss, anorexia and weakness were observed more frequently in Group 1. Group 1 had a higher rate of hemorrhagic fluid and massive PE while pericardial effusion and ascites with PE were the most common in Group 3 (p<0.001). As expected pleural fluid protein, lactate dehydrogenase, albumin, triglyceride, cholesterol and amylase values were lower, pleural fluid glucose values were significantly higher in Group 3 than others (p<0.001).

Conclusion: Asbestos exposure, smoking history, symptoms of pain, cough, voice annoyance, weight loss, anorexia, weakness and hemorrhagic or massive PE are important suggestive features for malignant effusions.

Keywords: Pleural effusion, diagnosis, epidemiology