

European Respiratory Society Annual Congress 2013

Abstract Number: 1405

Publication Number: P2664

Abstract Group: 8.1. Thoracic Surgery

Keyword 1: Pleura **Keyword 2:** Tuberculosis - diagnosis **Keyword 3:** No keyword

Title: Causes of pleural effusion in Belarus: Results of video assisted thoracoscopic pleural biopsy

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Body: Background. About one million new cases of pleural effusion (PE) has been diagnosed annually in the world. PE is often the first or single syndrome of certain diseases and it can be the manifestation of more than 50 various diseases. The causes of pleural effusion have large variety in different regions. Purpose of the study was to evaluate the causes of PE in Belarus. Patients and methods. In Belarussian Republican Research and Practical Centre for Pulmonology and Tuberculosis (TB) during the period from 2002 to 2011 600 video assisted thoracoscopies (VATS) have been performed in patients (men - 71% women - 29%) with pleural effusion for diagnostics purpose. Right-sided localisation observed in 55%, left-sided - in 41% and bilateral involvement - in 4% cases. Results. There are the following results of pleural biopsies: TB – 243 cases (40.5%), non-specific inflammation (other infections or inflammation of unknown origin) – 314 cases (52.3%), tumors and metastasis – 43 cases (7.2%). Conclusion: TB is the leading cause of pleural effusion in Belarus among the patientst with PE of unknow diagnosis.