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Title: The role of video-assisted thoracic surgery on the diagnostic evaluation and the therapeutic management of thoracic injuries

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Body: AIM: The aim of this study was to evaluate the experience of our institution with the use of video-assisted thoracic surgery (VATS) in chest trauma. MATERIALS - METHODS: Between January 1999 and December 2011, 75,126 patients presented with chest trauma to the emergency room, and 6865 were admitted to our service. Fifty five (55) hemodynamically stable patients (0,8%) underwent VATS. They were 44 men and 11 women with an average age of 42 years (range, 19–67 years). RESULTS: Indications included post-traumatic hemothorax in 26 patients, and post-traumatic empyema in 7, treated after 24 h of trauma. Indications for exploratory VATS in the acute phase included suspected diaphragmatic injury in 6 patients, persistent pneumothorax in 5, continued hemorrhage in 8 and removal of intrathoracic foreign body in 3. There was no mortality and complications occurred in 8 patients (14,54%). CONCLUSIONS: Management of hemodynamically stable thoracic injuries by using VATS provides diagnostic accuracy and therapeutic efficacy. It can be successfully applied in the trauma setting and surgeons should gain experience with its use.