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Title: Incidence and management of isolated subsegmental pulmonary embolism

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Body: Introduction The use of computed tomographic pulmonary angiography (CTPA) has improved the visualization of subsegmental pulmonary arteries. However, the clinical significance of isolated subsegmental pulmonary embolism (ISSPE) is unclear. Also, the incidence and clinical management of ISSPE remains uncertain. Objective To evaluate the incidence and the 3-month clinical outcomes of ISSPE in patients with suspected acute pulmonary embolism. Methods This is a retrospective study of consecutive patients with suspected acute pulmonary embolism undergoing CTPA at the Dicle University Hospital from May 2006 to Jun 2009. ISSPE was defined as one or more pulmonary artery filling defects located in the subsegmental level, with no filling defects visualized at more proximal pulmonary artery levels. Results The mean age of cases was 61.4±16.0 years old, 15 (60%) of them were male. A total of 35 (4.5 %) cases of ISSPE were identified out of 773 cases of pulmonary embolism diagnosed by CTPA. Data could be extracted in 25 (71.4 %) of the 35 cases. Among these 25 patients, 18 (76%) had unprovoked pulmonary embolism. Fifteen (60%) patients were anticoagulated. All patients with concurrent DVT were started on anticoagulation therapy. There was no significant mortality difference between patients who were anticoagulated and not (p=0.66). Conclusion Further studies are needed to establish the benefit of anticoagulation therapy in patients with ISSPE diagnosed on CTPA.