

# Pleural empyema. Retrospective review of 343 patients Empiema pleural en 343 casos con tratamiento quirúrgico: Características, resultados inmediatos y factores asociados a morbilidad y mortalidad

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**Background:** Pleural empyema still has a dismal prognosis. **Aim:** To describe features and prognostic factors of patients with pleural empyema subjected to surgical procedures. **Material and Methods:** Retrospective review of 343 patients with pleural empyema (mean age 52 years, 71% males), that were subjected to any type of surgical procedure. **Criteria for diagnosis of empyema** were a positive culture, a fluid pH of less than 7.2 or a compatible macroscopic appearance of the fluid. **Results:** Empyema was secondary to pneumonia in 243 patients (71%), secondary to surgical procedures in 41 patients (12%), secondary to trauma in 19 patients (5.5%), secondary to a lung abscess in 10 patients (3%), tuberculous in 10 patients (3%), neoplastic in two cases (0.6%), secondary to pneumothorax in 2 cases (0.6%) and of unknown origin in 13 patients (4%). A microorganism was isolated from pleural fluid in 89 patients (26%). The surgical procedures performed were 251 decortications by thoracotomy (73%), 70