

**FIBRINOLYSIS OF LOCULATED PLEURAL EFFUSION IN MALIGNANT MESOTHELIOMA**

Dear Sir

I wish to congratulate Dr T Balamugesh and coauthors on their article<sup>(1)</sup>. They concluded that the usefulness of intrapleural fibrinolysis has not been previously reported in loculated pleural effusion due to mesothelioma. Can the authors comment on why they think intrapleural fibrinolysis has not been commonly used or is unique in patients with mesothelioma?

From the available literature, we know that intrapleural fibrinolysis using streptokinase has been reported by Davies et al<sup>(2)</sup>. In this study, two out of ten patients had mesothelioma and were treated with intrapleural fibrinolysis. Can the authors please comment on this apparent discrepancy and how different their case is from that of Davies et al?

Yours sincerely,

Lin Kuo Hung  
Department of Neurosurgery  
Singapore General Hospital  
Outram Road  
Singapore 169608

**REFERENCES**

1. Balamugesh T, Christopher DJ, Rajesh T, Prince J. Fibrinolysis of loculated pleural effusion in malignant mesothelioma. *Singapore Med J* 2004; 45:594-5.
2. Davies CW, Traill ZC, Gleeson FV, Davies RJ. Intrapleural streptokinase in the management of malignant multiloculated pleural effusions. *Chest* 1999; 115:729-33.

---

**AUTHOR'S REPLY**

Dear Sir,

Dr Lin Kuo Hung's comments and queries are appreciated. We agree with his contention that fibrinolysis in mesothelioma has been mentioned in the literature previously. In the series by Davies et al, two of the patients had mesothelioma<sup>(1)</sup>. The difference is that in their cases, the amount of pleural effusion was 50% and 70% of the hemithorax, respectively, while in our case, the whole of the hemithorax was involved.

It was believed that malignancy was a contraindication to intrapleural fibrinolysis<sup>(2)</sup>. Although recently, fibrinolysis has been advocated in the British Thoracic Society guidelines for the management of multiloculated malignant pleural effusions<sup>(3)</sup>, its usefulness in the management of pleural effusion secondary to malignant mesothelioma has not been mentioned in any of the recent reviews on malignant mesothelioma<sup>(4-6)</sup>. The purpose of our case report was to highlight the importance of offering a trial of fibrinolysis in such patients, providing useful palliation especially when pleurodesis is successful.

Yours sincerely,

Thangakunam Balamugesh  
Devasahayam Jesudas Christopher  
Department of Pulmonary Medicine  
Christian Medical College  
Vellore  
Tamil Nadu 632004  
India

**REFERENCES**

1. Davies CW, Traill ZC, Gleeson FV, Davies RJ. Intrapleural streptokinase in the management of malignant multiloculated pleural effusions. *Chest* 1999; 115:729-33.
2. Intrapleural streptokinase for empyema? *Drug Ther Bull* 1997; 35:95.
3. Antunes G, Neville E, Duffy J, Ali N. BTS guidelines for the management of malignant pleural effusions. *Thorax* 2003; 58:29-38.
4. BTS Statement: British Thoracic Society Standards of Care Committee Statement on malignant mesothelioma in the United Kingdom. *Thorax* 2001; 56:250-65.
5. Parker C, Neville E. Lung cancer \*8: Management of malignant mesothelioma. *Thorax* 2003; 58:809-13.
6. Pirolesi M, Rusthoven J. Malignant pleural mesothelioma: update, current management, and newer therapeutic strategies. *Chest* 2004; 126:1318-29.