Adjustments in the diagnostic work-up, treatment and prognosis of pulmonary embolism

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Pulmonary embolism is a potentially fatal condition, in which an embolus, usually a thrombus originating from one of the deep veins of the legs, blocks one or more pulmonary arteries. This leads to impaired blood flow through the lungs. Pulmonary embolism is the third most common cardiovascular disorder in Western society, affecting 1-2 per 1000 patients per year. The clinical presentation of patients with suspected acute pulmonary embolism varies from only mild symptoms to severe dyspnoea, pain on exertion, syncope, or even cardiogenic shock. This thesis focuses on the diagnostic work-up of pulmonary embolism, its treatment and prognosis. Strategies to improve diagnostic work-up and treatment are investigated. Further insight into prediction of the prognosis of pulmonary embolism is assessed by evaluating location of the clots and clot resolution as well as the duration of patients’ complaints and the quality of life of patients with pulmonary embolism.