

TABLE II: Categorizing risk of poor outcome in patients with parapneumonic effusion.

<i>Pleural space anatomy</i>		<i>Pleural fluid microbiology</i>	<i>Pleural fluid chemistry*</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Risk of poor outcome</i>	<i>Perform drainage</i>
Minimal, free-flowing effusion (<10mm on lateral decubitus film)	AND	Culture and Gram stain results unknown	pH unknown	1	Very low	No
Small to moderate, free-flowing effusion (<1/2 hemithorax)	AND	Negative culture and Gram stain	pH ≥ 7.20	2	Low	No
Large, free-flowing effusion ($\geq 1/2$ hemithorax); loculated or thickened pleura	OR	Positive culture or Gram stain	pH <7.20	3	Moderate	Yes
		Pus	—	4	High	Yes

*pH is the preferred pleural fluid chemistry value and must be determined by blood gas analyzer. If blood gas analyzer is not available, pleural fluid glucose level should be used (glucose ≥ 60 mg/dL is equivalent to pH ≥ 7.20 ; glucose <60 mg/dL is equivalent to pH <7.20).

Modified from Colice GL, Curtis A, Deslauriers J, et al. Chest. 2000;118:1158-1171