Prevalence and clinical history of incidental, asymptomatic pulmonary embolism: a meta-analysis

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Context: Over the last years, there has been an increasing number of reports of incidental pulmonary embolism (PE) detected in patients undergoing chest computer tomography (CT) for reasons other than the research of suspected PE. Natural history of incidental pulmonary embolism remains unclear.

Objectives: to estimate the prevalence of incidental PE, to assess potential factors associated with incidental PE, and to evaluate the clinical history of these patients Data Sources: MEDLINE, EMBASE databases (up to January 2009).

Study Selection: Studies were included if the prevalence of incidental PE was assessed using CT scanning.

Data Extraction: The prevalence of incidental PE in these patients was documented. Separate data for inpatients and outpatients and according to the reason for CT scanning were collected. Weighted mean proportion of the prevalence of incidental PE was calculated. Odds ratios (ORs) and...