



Western Trauma Association algorithm for the evaluation and management of patients with abdominal stab wounds. Circled letters correspond to sections in the associated manuscript. 1The “gold standard” for abdominal exploration is via laparotomy. However, diagnostic and/or therapeutic laparoscopy may be performed in select stable patients and by a highly skilled surgeon experienced in minimally invasive surgical techniques. 2Signs of operative injury include CT scan visualization of bowel injury or secondary signs (unexplained free fluid, free air, bowel wall thickening, mesenteric injury), diaphragm injury, abdominal vascular injury, or contrast extravasation indicating ongoing bleeding. Note that some of these may also be amenable to observation, angioembolization, or endovascular techniques.