Lung Ultrasound for the Evaluation of Pulmonary Congestion in Outpatients: A Comparison With Clinical Assessment, Natriuretic Peptides, and Echocardiography

Marcelo Haertel Miglioranza, MD, MHS; Luna Gargani, MD; Roberto Tofani Sant’Anna, MD; Marciane Maria Rover, MD; Vítor Magnus Martins, MD; Augusto Mantovani, MD; Cristina Weber, RN; Maria Antonieta Moraes, RN, PhD; Carlos Jader Feldman, MD; Renato Abdala Karam Kall, MD, PhD; Rosa Sicari, MD, PhD; Eugenio Picano, MD, PhD; Tiago Luiz Leiria, MD, PhD

Conclusions

In an HF outpatient clinic, B-lines were significantly correlated with more established parameters of heart failure (HF) in an outpatient clinic.

Background

Evaluation of pulmonary congestion in chronic HF is challenging. LUS has been recently proposed as a reliable tool for the semiquantification of extravascular lung water through assessment of B-lines.

Methods

This was a cohort study of patients with moderate to severe systolic HF. Receiver-operating characteristic (ROC) analyses were performed to compare LUS with a previously validated clinical congestion score (CCS), amino-terminal portion of B-type natriuretic peptide (NT-proBNP), E/e' ratio, chest x-ray, and 6-min walk test.

Results

Ninety-seven patients were enrolled. Decompensation was present in 57.7% of patients when estimated by CCS, 66% by LUS, 53.6% by NT-proBNP, and 65.3% by E/e'. The number of B-lines was correlated to NT-proBNP (r = 0.72; p < 0.0001), E/e' (r = 0.68; p < 0.0001), and CCS (r = 0.43; p < 0.0001). In ROC analyses, considering as reference for decompensation a combined method (E/e' ≥15 and/or NT-proBNP >1,000 pg/ml), LUS yielded a C-statistic of 0.89 (95% confidence interval: 0.82 to 0.96), providing the best accuracy with a cutoff ≥15 B-lines (sensitivity 85%, specificity 83%). A systematic approach using CCS, E/e', NT-proBNP, chest x-ray, and 6-min walk test in different combinations as reference for decompensation also corroborated this cutoff and found a similar accuracy for LUS.

Conclusions

In an HF outpatient clinic, B-lines were significantly correlated with more established parameters of decompensation. A B-line ≥15 cutoff could be considered for a quick and reliable assessment of decompensation in outpatients with HF.
mitral inflow velocity to early diastolic velocity of mitral annulus; EVLW, extravascular lung water; HF, heart failure; LA, left atrial; LUS, lung ultrasound; LV, left ventricular; NT-proBNP, amino-terminal portion of B-type natriuretic peptide

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Reprint requests and correspondence: Dr. Marcelo Haertel Miglioranza, Unidade de Pesquisa, Instituto de Cardiologia do Rio Grande do Sul, Av. Princesa Isabel, 370, Porto Alegre/RS, CEP 90620-000, Brazil.

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