定量的超音波を用いた脂肪肝診断の現状と課題:magnetic resonance imaging-proton density fat fraction および組織所見との比較

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抄 録

世界的有病率 25%に達する MASLD (代謝機能障害関連脂肪性肝疾患) において、従来は線維化が予後決定因子とされていたが、近年の研究により高度脂肪肝(magnetic resonance imaging-proton density fat fraction: MRI-PDFF \geq 17.1%)が初期段階での線維化進行を促進することが判明した。これにより肝脂肪量定量の臨床的意義が再評価されている。参照基準は侵襲的な肝生検から MRI-PDFF へと移行しているが、コストやスループットの問題から、実臨床では超音波減衰法が注目されている。日本では4つの手法(controlled attenuation parameter: CAP, ultrasound-guided attenuation parameter: UGAP, attenuation measurement: iATT, attenuation imaging: ATI)が開発され、大規模多施設共同研究により検証された。主要な研究結果として、MRI-PDFF との相関係数は CAP(r=0.662)と比較して、Bモードガイド下の3手法(UGAP: r=0.798、iATT: r=0.761、ATI: r=0.765)で有意に高い相関を示した。脂肪肝診断能もCAP(0.865)より3手法(0.896-0.919)が有意に高かった。2021年に日本超音波医学会で診断基準が作成され、主観的評価から客観的な減衰係数による定量評価へ転換された。2022年にCAP、2024年にiATTとATIが保険収載され、臨床応用が加速している。技術的には、CAP(Aモード)は簡便だが血管等の影響を受けやすく、Bモードガイド下手法は解剖学的精度が高い反面、術者依存性という課題がある。今後は複数の超音波パラメータの組み合わせや機械学習技術の導入により、さらなる診断精度向上が期待される。超音波減衰法は非侵襲的で繰り返し測定可能であり、患者の治療モチベーション向上と個別化医療の実現に寄与する技術として、診療の中核的役割を担うと予想される。

Quantitative ultrasound for the diagnosis of hepatic steatosis: comparative insights from magnetic resonance imaging-proton density fat fraction and histopathology

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Abstract

This comprehensive review examines the current status of ultrasonographic hepatic fat quantification following the nomenclature change from nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) to metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD). Recent studies have demonstrated that severe steatosis (magnetic resonance imaging-proton density fat fraction: MRI-PDFF ≥ 17. 1%) accelerates fibrosis progression in early-stage MASLD, reestablishing the clinical significance of hepatic fat quantification in this globally prevalent condition affecting 25% of the population. While the reference standard has evolved from invasive liver biopsy to MRI-PDFF, cost and throughput limitations have led to the development of ultrasound attenuation methods for clinical practice. Four techniques have been developed and validated in Japan through large-scale multicenter studies: controlled attenuation parameter (CAP), ultrasound-guided attenuation parameter (UGAP), attenuation measurement (iATT), and attenuation imaging (ATI). Comparative analyses revealed significantly superior correlations with MRI-PDFF for B-mode-guided methods (UGAP: r = 0.798, iATT: r = 0.761, ATI: r = 0.765) compared to CAP (r = 0.662). Diagnostic performance (area under the receiver operating characteristic curve: AUROC) was similarly superior for the three B-mode-guided techniques (0.896 - 0.919) versus CAP (0.865). The Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine revised its diagnostic criteria in 2021, transitioning from subjective evaluation to objective quantitative assessment using attenuation coefficients. Clinical implementation has accelerated following insurance coverage approval for CAP (2022) and iATT/ATI (2024). Technically, CAP (A-mode) offers simplicity but susceptibility to vascular interference, while B-mode-guided methods provide anatomical precision with inherent operator dependency. Future developments include combined multiple ultrasonic parameters and machine learning integration for enhanced diagnostic accuracy. Ultrasound attenuation methods represent noninvasive, repeatable technologies that improve patient motivation and enable personalized medicine, positioning them as central tools in contemporary hepatology practice.

Keywords

metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), magnetic resonance imaging-proton density fat fraction (MRI-PDFF), attenuation coefficient (AC), American Association for the Study of Liver Disease (AASLD) practice guideline

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