

Ultrasound as a diagnostic and management tool in hidradenitis suppurativa patients: a multicentre study

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Background: It has been reported that clinical evaluation consistently underestimates the severity of hidradenitis suppurativa (HS). **Objective:** To determine the usefulness of ultrasound as a diagnostic tool in HS compared with clinical examination and to assess the subsequent modification of disease management. **Methods:** Cross-sectional multicentre study. Severity classification and therapeutic approach according to clinical vs. ultrasound examination were compared. **Results:** Of 143 HS patients were included. Clinical examination scored 38, 70 and 35 patients as Hurley stage I, II and III, respectively; with ultrasound examination, 21, 80 and 42 patients were staged with Hurley stage I, II and III disease, respectively ($P < 0.01$). In patients with stage I classification as determined by clinical examination, 44.7% changed to a more severe stage. Clinical examination indicated that 44.1%, 54.5% and 1.4% of patients would maintain, increase or decrease treatment, respectively. For ultrasound examination, these percentages were 31.5%, 67.1% and 1.4% ($P < 0.01$).

Concordance between clinical and ultrasound intra-rater examination was 22.8% ($P < 0.01$); intra-rater and inter-rater (radiologist) ultrasound agreement was 94.9% and 81.7%, respectively ($P < 0.01$). Limitations: The inability to detect lesions that measure ≥ 0.1 mm or with only epidermal location. Conclusion: Ultrasound can modify the clinical staging and therapeutic management in HS by detecting subclinical disease.