Elastography in viral hepatitis related liver disease

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Chronic liver diseases are frequent in daily hepatological practice (HCV, HBV, NAFLD/NASH, ASH, autoimmune, others).

Assessment of chronic liver diseases severity can be performed invasively (by liver biopsy) or non-invasively (biological tests and elastographic methods).
Liver Biopsy in our Dept. of Hepato/Gastroenterology
Timisoara during the time

Liver Biopsy Trend (all indications)
Ultrasound based Liver Elastography can be divided:

1. Shear Waves Elastography:
   a) Transient Elastography- **TE** (FibroScan)
   b) Point Shear wave- **pSWE** [using Acoustic Radiation Force Impulse Quantification (ARFI): **VTQ** (Siemens), **Elast PQ** (Phillips), Hitachi]
   c) Real Time Shear Wave Elastography- **2D SWE** [SuperSonic Imaging Elastography (SSI) (Aixplorer) GE, Toshiba, Philips]

2. Strain Elastography (**RTE**)
Transient Elastography (FibroScan)

- **TE is used for more than 10 years in clinical practice** and many meta-analyses showed its good value for liver fibrosis evaluation, considering liver biopsy as the reference method.

- The **correlation between TE measurements and fibrosis severity on liver biopsy increases with the severity of fibrosis.**
Transient Elastography (FibroScan)

- Is easy to be used (*in some countries like France, is manipulated mainly by nurses*);
- Is a semi-blind method (the liver is not seen during the examination);
- Have different probes: M, XL or pediatric probes, for different patients;
- The probes must be calibrated periodically and this cost!
- More than 1500 published papers on this method!
Transient Elastography (FibroScan)

- The results of TE are **good in patients with chronic hepatitis C, chronic hepatitis B, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), cholestatic liver diseases and others.**

- **TE is now a validated method for liver fibrosis evaluation and many guidelines (such as the EASL Guidelines) and introduced this method in their diagnostic and therapeutical algorithm (1,2).**

1. EASL Recommendations on Treatment of Hepatitis C 2015
2. EASL-ALEH Clinical Practice Guidelines: Non-invasive tests for evaluation of liver disease severity and prognosis
FibroScan- advantages

- **Painless, well accepted by patients;**
- **Rapid method of evaluation (less than 5 min. for 10 valid measurements); Immediate results (in kPa).**

- **But:** Valid measurements in approx. 85% of the cases (with IQR and SR)\(^{(1)}\) or less (2) for standard probe (M probe).
- **Using M and XL probes valid measurements can be obtained in 93.5% of cases** \(^{(3)}\).

Practical value of TE

- For *clinical decision* in hepatology, the results *must* be reproducible and with *high accuracy*, specially *for the confirmation* of liver cirrhosis (and to exclude this disease) and significant fibrosis (F≥2 Metavir).

- *Results from large multicenter prospective studies, meta-analyses are in favor of this method.*

- Transient Elastography is a validated method for liver stiffness assessment [*being proposed too by EASL Guidelines (1,2)*].

- *M and XL probes must be used!*

1. EASL Recommendations on Treatment of Hepatitis C 2015
2. EASL-ALEH Clinical Practice Guidelines: Non-invasive tests for evaluation of liver disease severity and prognosis
TE: Meta-analysis HCV patients

For significant fibrosis (F≥2 Metavir):

- In the **Friedrich-Rust meta-analysis**, based on 50 studies [1], the mean AUROC was 0.84, with a suggested optimal cut-off of 7.6 kPa.

- In the **Tschatzis meta-analysis**, the pooled cut-off for F≥2 Metavir was also 7.6 kPa, with 0.78 pooled sensitivity and 0.89 pooled specificity [2].

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Liver stiffness for the diagnosis of cirrhosis

- LS measurement by means of FibroScan is a reliable method for the diagnosis of cirrhosis, with 87% sensitivity (95% CI: 84-90%), 91% specificity (95% CI: 89-92) as shown in a meta-analysis (1).

- **Meta-analysis:** for F 4 optimal cut-off: 13 kPa with AUROC : 0.94 (0.93-0.95) (2).

- In the Tsochatzis meta-analysis, for HCV patients, proposed cut-off: 12 kPa (3).

3. Tsochatzis EA et al.. J Hepatol. 2011;54(4):650-6
Diagnostic performance for $F \geq 2$
in HBV patients

- HBV: Cut off 7 kPa AUROC 0.81

Marcelin et al: Liver Int 2008
Acoustic Radiation Force Impulse (ARFI) techniques

- These techniques are based on the generation of shear waves by the push-pulse of the ultrasound beam.

- Are implemented in ultrasound machine!

- Can be used in patients with ascites.

- This techniques are devided in:
  - a) Point SWE (very simple)
  - b) 2D-SWE (seem to be more precise!)
a) Point SWE

- Point SWE is integrated into standard ultrasound machines and *is a simple method* for liver fibrosis evaluation.

- It *can also be performed in patients with ascites, like 2D-SWE* and this is an advantage as compared to TE.

- Virtual Touch Quantification (VTQ) was the *first* point SWE method introduced in clinical practice.

- *Several meta-analyses shown its good value as compared to liver biopsy or TE.*
Point SWE (VTQ) – very simple
Meta-analysis: 13 studies, 1163 patients
Predicting significant fibrosis (F≥2)

- For ARFI (VTQ) elastography the summary Se was 0.74 (95% CI: 0.66-0.80), the summary Sp was 0.83 (95% CI: 0.75-0.89).

- For TE, the summary Se was 0.78 (95% CI: 0.72-0.83), the summary Sp was 0.84 (95% CI: 0.75-0.90).

- The diagnostic odds ratio of ARFI (VTQ) and TE did not differ significantly [mean difference in rDOR =0.27 (95% CI -0.69 to 0.14)].

Meta-analysis

Predicting Liver cirrhosis (F=4)

- For ARFI (VTQ) elastography, the summary Se was 0.87 (95%CI: 0.79-0.92), the summary Sp was 0.87 (0.81-0.91).

- For TE, the summary Se was 0.89 (95%CI: 0.80-0.94), the summary Sp was 0.87 (95%CI: 0.82-0.91).

- The diagnostic odds ratio of ARFI (VTQ) and TE did not differ significantly [mean difference in rDOR =0.12 (95%CI -0.29 to 0.52)].

VTQ- Meta-analysis

- 36 studies with 3951 patients (1):
- The mean diagnostic accuracy of ARFI (VTQ) expressed as the AUROC were:
  a) 0.84 for the diagnosis of significant fibrosis (F ≥ 2),
  b) 0.89 for the diagnosis of severe fibrosis (F ≥ 3) and
  c) 0.91 for the diagnosis of liver cirrhosis (F = 4).

pSWE from Philips – Elast PQ
Elast PQ: paper published last year

- 228 consecutive subjects with chronic viral hepatopathies (1) (26% HBV, 74% HCV), from whom 51% had liver cirrhosis. *Liver stiffness (LS) was evaluated in the same session by means of 2 elastographic methods: TE (FibroScan, EchoSens) and ElastPQ (Affinity, Philips) techniques.*

- The AUROCs were calculated considering TE as the reference method: 0.94 for significant fibrosis (F≥2), 0.97 for severe fibrosis (F≥3) and 0.97 for cirrhosis (F=4).

- A strong correlation between measurements obtained by *Transient Elastography* and ElastPQ (*r=0.85, p<0.001*).

1. Mare R, Sporea I, Lupusoru R. The value of ElastPQ for the evaluation of liver stiffness in patients with B and C chronic hepatopathies. Ultrasonics 2017 Feb 9;77:144-151
Point SWE from Hitachi

**YOUR APPLICATION**

**Shear Wave Measurement (SWM)**

**Median values of liver stiffness**
Study based on 445 patients
Reliability index VsN > 50% improves diagnostic performance of SWM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fibrosis Stage</th>
<th>SWM, kPa (interquartile range)</th>
<th>Ruling-in F≥2 (95% CI)</th>
<th>Ruling-out F≥2 (95% CI)</th>
<th>Ruling-in F=4 (95% CI)</th>
<th>Ruling-out F=4 (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild/No fibrosis (F0-F1)</td>
<td>4.8 (4.0-5.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant fibrosis (F2)</td>
<td>7.2 (5.7-9.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced fibrosis (F3)</td>
<td>8.5 (6.7-9.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liver cirrhosis (F4)</td>
<td>14.0 (11-17)</td>
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</table>

Cutoff, KPa
- F≥2: 6.78 (5.55)
- F=4: 9.15 (8.41)

Sensitivity
- F≥2: 76.9 (90.6)
- F=4: 83.3 (90.6)

Specificity
- F≥2: 90.3 (72.2)
- F=4: 90.1 (82.2)

*Ferraioli et al., J Gastrointestin Liver Dis, 2017*
b) **2D-SWE (real time SWE)**

- **2D-SWE** is an elastographic method integrated into a standard ultrasound machine, it *is a numeric and color coded method.*

- *Published papers revealing its good results for liver fibrosis assessment.*

- **Super Sonic Imagine (SSI)(Aixplorer)** was the first used in practice (1,2), followed by **2D-SWE.GE** and others [**Canon (Toshiba), Philips**].

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c) **2D-SWE** (color coded and numeric values)

SuperSonic Imagine (SSI) (Aixplorer): kPa or m/s
2D-SWE with propagation map (Toshiba)
Meta-analysis: Data on both 2D-SWE and liver biopsy was available in 1134 patients from 13 sites, as well as on successful transient elastography (TE) in 665 patients. (1).

Main etiologies: Most patients had chronic hepatitis C (HCV, n = 379) and hepatitis B (HBV, n = 400).

Histology: 40.8% of the patients had minimal or no fibrosis, 19.3% had significant fibrosis, 14.0% had severe fibrosis and 26.0% had cirrhosis.

Results of the study

- AUROCs of 2D-SWE in patients with HCV and HBV were:
  - 86.3% and 90.6% for diagnosing significant fibrosis (F≥2),
  - 92.9% and 95.5% for diagnosing cirrhosis, respectively.

- **CONCLUSION:** *2D-SWE has good to excellent performance for the non-invasive staging of liver fibrosis.*

Twelve studies were included in this meta-analysis and reported on 1635 patients (liver biopsy as the reference, mixed etiologies) (1).

The pooled sensitivity and specificity were 0.78 and 0.95 respectively, for fibrosis stages F≥1, 0.84 and 0.81 for F≥2, 0.89 and 0.84 for F≥3, and 0.88 and 0.86 for F=4.

The AUROC’ were 0.87 for F≥1, 0.85 for F≥2, 0.93 for F≥3, and 0.93 for F=4.

Conclusion of the study: “2D-SWE could be used for staging of liver fibrosis. Especially, it has high diagnostic accuracy for severe fibrosis and cirrhosis.”

Results with 2D-SWE.GE

- 331 consecutive subjects with or without chronic hepatopathies (1) in whom LS was evaluated in the same session by means of 2 elastographic techniques: TE (FibroScan, EchoSens) (M or XL probes) and 2D-SWE.GE (LOGIQ E 9 XD clear 2.0, GE Healthcare).

- Reliable LS measurements were obtained in 95.8% subjects by 2D-SWE.GE and 94.2% by TE (p=0.44).

- A very strong correlation was found between the LS values obtained by the 2 methods: r=0.83, p<0.0001.

- The best cut-off value for F≥2, F≥3 and for F=4 were 6.7 kPa, 8.2 kPa and 9.3 kPa.

2D-SWE with a propagation map
2D-SWE with a propagation map

- 115 consecutive patients underwent 2D-SWE by two different operators and TE by sonographers on the same day (1).
- The correlation coefficient of the intra-class correlation test between an experienced radiologist and a third-year radiology resident was 0.878.
- There was a moderate correlation between SWE and TE ($r = 0.511$) in the diagnosis of hepatic fibrosis.
- The best cutoff values predicting significant hepatic fibrosis and liver cirrhosis by 2D-SWE were $>1.78 \text{ m/s} (AUROC = 0.777)$ and $>2.24 \text{ m/s} (AUROC = 0.935)$, respectively.
- Conclusion of the study: “2D-SWE with a propagation map is a reliable method for predicting hepatic fibrosis, regardless of operator experience”.

1. Lee ES et al. Shear Wave Liver Elastography with a Propagation Map: Diagnostic Performance and Inter-Observer Correlation for Hepatic Fibrosis in Chronic Hepatitis. PMC4664940
2D-SWE with a propagation map – our experience

- **142 subjects** with or without chronic liver disease, in which LS was evaluated in the same session by means of **TE** (Fibroscan, EchoSens) and a **2D-SWE technique with vibration control** from Canon (Toshiba) (implemented on the Aplio I900 system).

  *For classification we used the TE as a reference method.*

- **Results:** 124 subjects with both methods had reliable LS measurements.

  The **mean LS values obtained by 2D-SWE were significantly lower than those obtained by TE.**

  A direct, significant correlation (r=0.65), was obtained between LS values assessed by means of 2D-SWE and TE (p<0.001).

  The cut-off values for 2D-SWE for diagnosing significant fibrosis, F≥2 were >6.4 kPa (AUROC=0.85), for F4 was >10.6 kPa (AUROC=0.95).

Comparative study: TE, ARFI (VTQ) and SSI in chronic liver diseases

- A total of 349 consecutive patients with chronic liver diseases who underwent liver biopsy.
- For each patient, liver stiffness was assessed by SSI, ARFI (VTQ), FibroScan (M and XL probes).
- SSI, Fibroscan, and ARFI correlated significantly with histological fibrosis score (r=0.79, p<.00001; r=0.70, p<.00001; r=0.64, p<.00001, respectively).
- Conclusion: No significant difference between methods was observed for the diagnosis of mild fibrosis and cirrhosis.

Have in mind in liver Elasto!

- Different elastographic systems give different values for the same degree of liver fibrosis! *Than the cut-off values must be known for the system with which we work!*

- There are some **confounding factors** in liver elastography: fasting or not (**liver elastography must be performed in fasting conditions**), **increases** aminotranpherasis (**confident values < 100 iu/ml**), obstructive jaundice, right hearth failure (**all increasing elastographic values**), others.
One or more elastographic methods for liver fibrosis assessment? (1)

- Transient Elastography is a validated method for liver stiffness assessment [being proposed too by EASL Guidelines (2,3)].

- But, in this moment, in my opinion, the body of evidence for others methods (like point or 2D-SWE) is enough strong (meta-analyses or large multicenter studies) for the introduction of this techniques in clinical practice in hepatology!

2. EASL Recommendations on Treatment of Hepatitis C 2015
3. EASL-ALEH Clinical Practice Guidelines: Non-invasive tests for evaluation of liver disease severity and prognosis
CONCLUSIONS

- **Body of evidence regarding the value of ultrasound based elastographic methods for liver fibrosis evaluation is large enough** to enable their use in daily hepatological activity.

- The **new EFSUMB Guidelines on Liver Elastography 2017** (1), that was recently published support this reality.

- In real life, **in many cases, in clinical situations, Liver Elastography replaced Liver Biopsy!**

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