



COVID-19 – Incidental Pick-Up on Non-CT Chest Scans And Modalities

CT scan is used for the diagnosis and triage and follow-up of patients with COVID-19 on a routine basis and many of us are now very familiar with the typical COVID-19 changes on CT scan.

Intensivists use bed-side USG to evaluate the lung and pleura as well.

But COVID-19 is often picked-up on other modalities as well. Asymptomatic patients with COVID-19 changes are seen at least once in 2-3 days in PET/CT (Figs. 1, 2) and sometimes on MRI (Fig. 3) as well. COVID-19 changes are also picked up when scanning the abdomen (Fig. 4) or brain or other areas of the body. While we used to screen the chest in all patients coming for CT scan earlier, that practice has been discontinued for some time now.

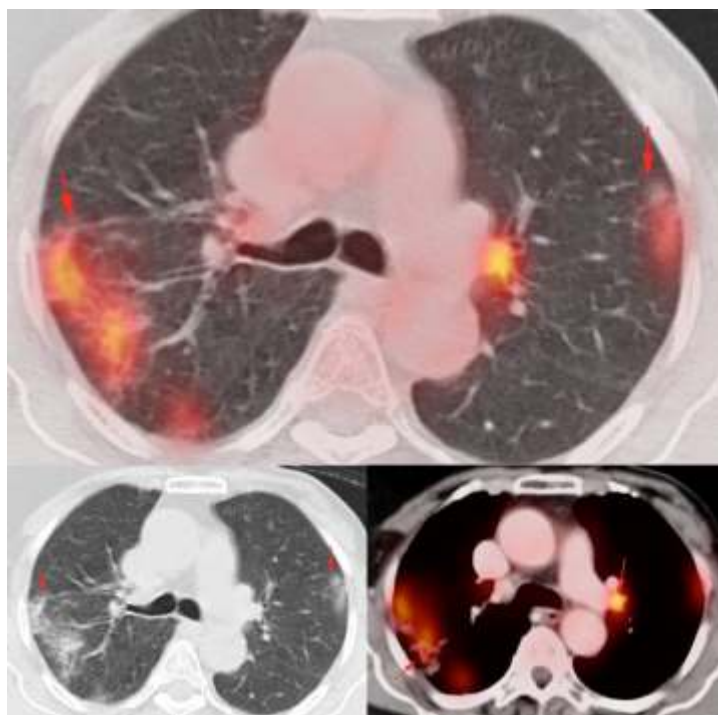


Fig. 1: This 59-years old lady with carcinoma breast came for PET/CT. The CT scan shows typical COVID-19 changes with activity suggesting that this is recent disease with an active left hilar node – these nodes have been described in patients with COVID-19. Her RT-PCR test however was negative.

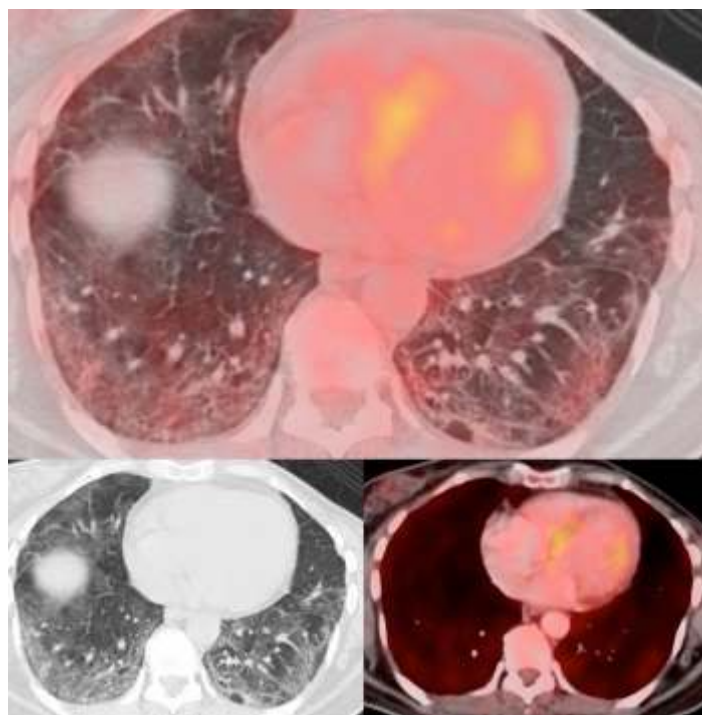


Fig. 2: This is a 52-years old lady with carcinoma breast who had COVID-19 in Aug 2020, for which she was hospitalized. The PET/CT in Sep 2020 shows typical post-COVID changes, but no activity.

At a glance

- ◆ COVID-19 lung involvement can also be seen on PET/CT, MRI and CT scan done for non-chest indications
- ◆ It is often difficult to know whether this is recent COVID or old COVID change, though on PET/CT, the activity gives us a clue.

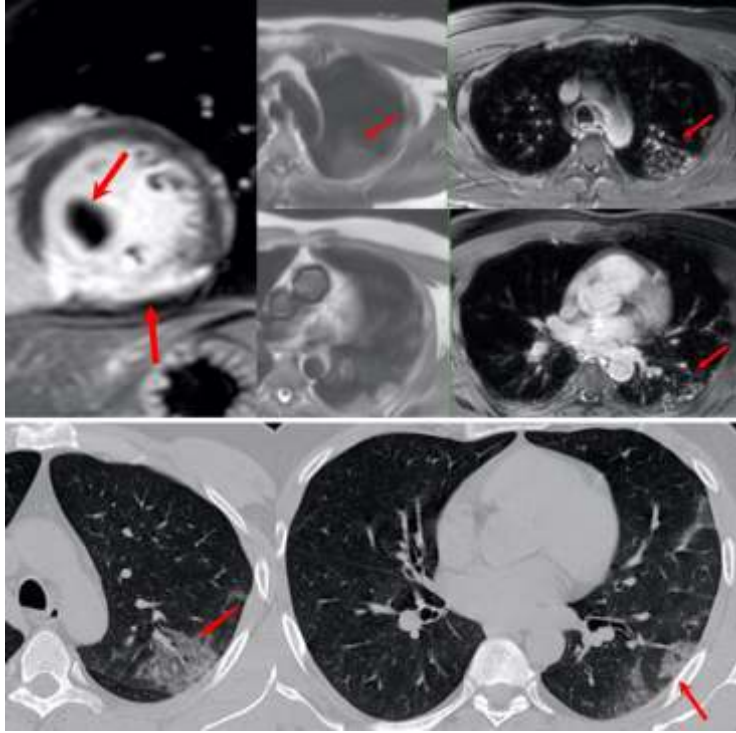


Fig. 3: This 53-years old man had a recent myocardial infarct and came for cardiac MRI, which shows an inferior wall infarct with a thrombus in the left ventricle. Also seen in the lungs were wedge-shaped opacities that were shown to be typical of COVID-19 on a CT scan done immediately. His RR-PCR test came positive the next day.



Fig. 4: This is a 64-years old man who came for a CT KUB for a ureteric calculus. The basal segments of the lungs show typical COVID-19 changes, for which he was asymptomatic. It is not possible to say whether these are current lesions or old sequelae.

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Owner, Printer & Publisher: Dr. Bhavin Jankharia

Published at: Dr. Jankharia's Imaging Centre

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