



Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis – New Practice Guidelines

The new practice guidelines [1] for hypersensitivity pneumonitis (HP) published in Aug 2020 simplify to some extent our approach to this condition.

Definition:

HP is an immune-mediated disease that manifests as ILD in susceptible individuals after exposure to an identified or unidentified factor.

Types:

Nonfibrotic:

This replaces the earlier terms, “acute”, “subacute” and “inflammatory”. Nonfibrotic HP may either present with ground glass attenuation and air trapping (Fig. 1) or with ill-defined centrilobular nodules (Fig. 2), both showing a diffuse cranio-caudal and axial distribution.

Fibrotic:

This replaces the earlier term, “chronic” and is characterized by coarse reticular opacities, traction bronchiectasis/bronchiolectasis and honeycombing with an axial distribution pattern (Fig. 3). There is usually patchy air trapping and often the “triple density” sign (Fig. 4) may be seen.

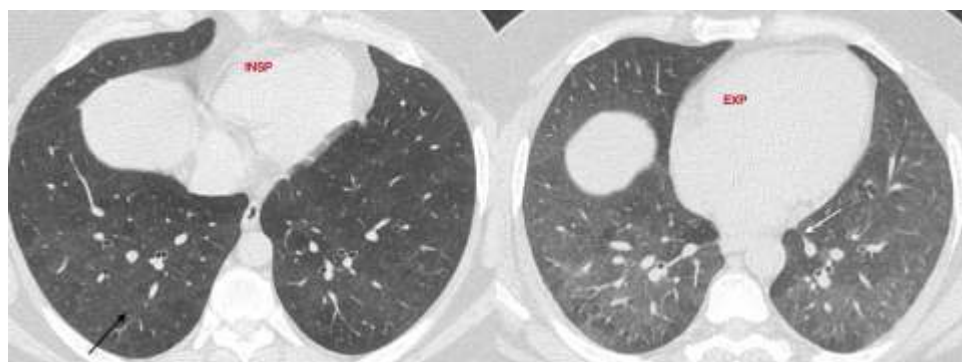


Fig. 1: Nonfibrotic HP showing ground glass (black arrow in inspiratory image) and air trapping (white arrow in expiratory image).

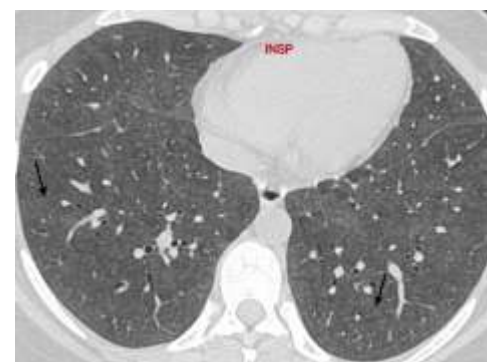


Fig. 2: Nonfibrotic HP with ill-defined centrilobular nodules (black arrows).

*At a glance:*

- ◆ There are new clinical practice guidelines published for the diagnosis of hypersensitivity pneumonitis (HP).
- ◆ HP is now classified into nonfibrotic and fibrotic varieties.
- ◆ The “triple density” sign is specific, but not very sensitive for the diagnosis of fibrotic HP.

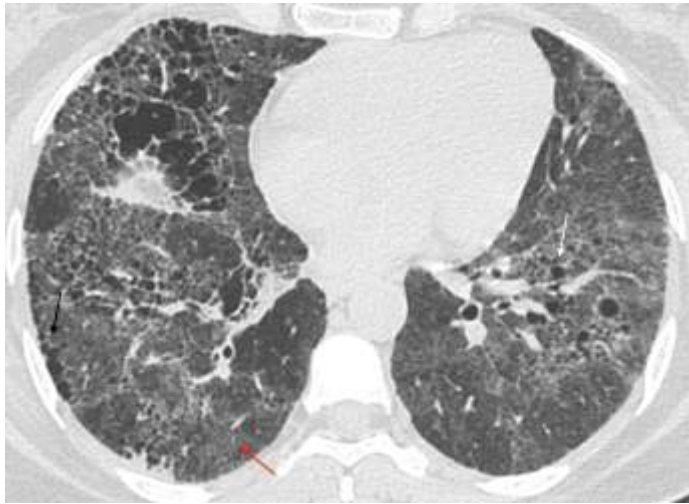


Fig. 3: Fibrotic HP with honeycombing (black arrow), traction bronchiectasis (white arrow) and reticular opacities with ground glass (red arrow) and an axial distribution pattern.

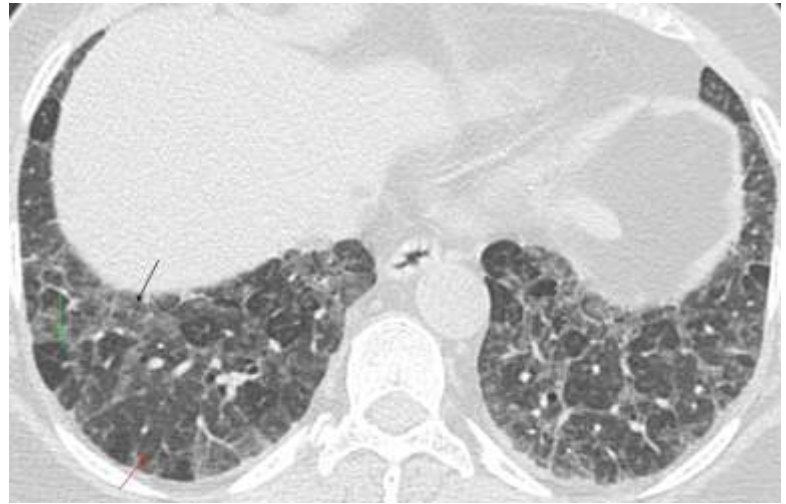


Fig. 4: Triple density sign. The green arrow shows a lucent area, while the red arrow shows normal lung and the black arrow shows ground glass (three different densities and hence the “triple density” sign).

Reference

1. Raghu G, Remy-Jardin M, Ryerson CJ, Myers JL, Kreuter M, Vasakova M, et al. Diagnosis of Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis in Adults. An Official ATS/JRS/ALAT Clinical Practice Guideline. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med.* 2020 Aug 1;202(3):e36–69.

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