

The Emerging Role of Quantification of Imaging for Assessing the Severity and Disease Activity of Emphysema, Airway Disease, and Interstitial Lung Disease

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Keywords

Emphysema · Interstitial lung disease · Quantitative CT

Abstract

There has been an explosion of use for quantitative image analysis in the setting of lung disease due to advances in acquisition protocols and postprocessing technology, including machine and deep learning. Despite the plethora of published papers, it is important to understand which approach has clinical validation and can be used in clinical practice. This paper provides an introduction to quantitative image analysis techniques being used in the investigation of lung disease and focusses on the techniques that have a reasonable clinical validation for being used in clinical trials and patient care.

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Introduction

Quantitative CT scanning was introduced in the 1980s, but in the last decade, there has been an explosion in the rate of development of both image acquisition and post-processing technology, including machine and deep

learning, resulting in novel investigation of both obstructive lung disease and interstitial lung disease (ILD) [1–3]. Volumetric thin-section CT imaging permits the assessment of lung volume, regional gas volume, lung parenchyma, fissures, bronchovascular structures, and functional parameters such as regional perfusion and ventilation. These predominantly CT-derived parameters have been used to detect, quantitate, and follow the structural abnormalities in emphysema airway disease and ILD. This in turn has resulted in a growing interest for rigorous validation of quantitative imaging measures in the setting of drug/device discovery as well as for clinical care of patients. Conventional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) even with new ultrashort echo time imaging of the lung parenchyma remains challenging [4]. Using more advanced techniques with hyperpolarized gases, MRI provides unique strategies for evaluating pulmonary structure and function at the alveolar level. Recent changes in the commercial landscape of the hyperpolarized gas field may allow this innovative technology to potentially move into the clinical environment, but for now, it remains

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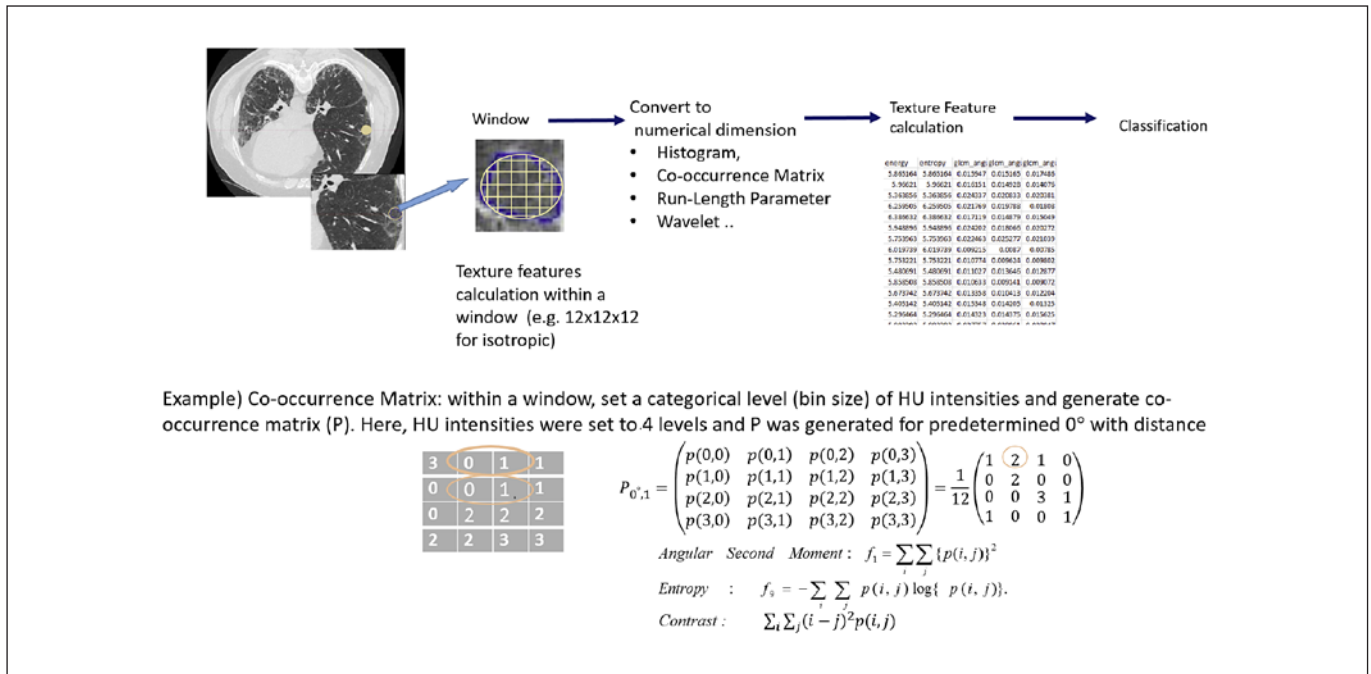


Fig. 1. The classification of a parenchymal abnormality can be extended beyond density measures by using texture analysis which takes into account the pattern, the spatial relationships between voxels, and the magnitude of attenuation. Texture features are derived from a region of interest converted to a numerical dimension

and the following calculation classification can be attributed to similar clusters of features. In a machine-learned model, the classification is driven by visual classification of parenchymal pattern within the region of interest by an expert eye. Image courtesy of Grace Kim UCLA.

mostly a research tool [5]. This review summarizes the emerging role of quantitative image analysis (QIA) of chest CT for assessing the severity and disease activity of emphysema, airway disease, and ILD in routine clinical practice.

QIA Overview

Parenchyma

CT densitometry is the most established method of quantifying lung parenchyma on volumetric thin-section CT, acquired usually at total lung capacity (TLC). In the lung parenchyma, CT density measured in Hounsfield units (HU) is determined by the relative amounts of air, soft tissue, and blood in each volume element (voxel). Most scanner manufacturers now provide automated densitometry software, making density quantification more available. For the evaluation of ILD, the global histogram of lung density measures (skewness, kurtosis, and mean lung density) has been used. The deposition of interstitial and alveolar matrix results in an increase in lung density manifest by a rightward shift of the CT frequency

histogram and reduction of its peak (i.e., increasing mean, skewness, and kurtosis) [6, 7]. For emphysema, these algorithms calculate the percentage of low-attenuation voxels at or below a given attenuation threshold, referred to as the percent emphysema or percent low-attenuation area. The optimal cutoff for thin-section CT is between -950 and -970 HU on the basis of comparisons with macroscopic and microscopic morphometry of pathologic specimens [8, 9]. Another approach to quantify emphysema is the “15th percentile” method or “Perc 15,” which reports the HU at the lowest fifteenth percentile of a cumulative frequency distribution for all HU values [10, 11].

Low-attenuation voxels can be due to both parenchymal destruction and air trapping. As both can occur in COPD, it is important to evaluate each component. The densitometric parameters for quantification of air trapping include the ratio of expiratory to inspiratory mean lung density [12, 13], the expiratory to inspiratory relative volume change of voxels with attenuation between -860 and -950 HU [14, 15], and the percentage of voxels below -856 HU in expiration [16]. Volumetric nonrigid registration of inspiratory and expiratory allows biphasic

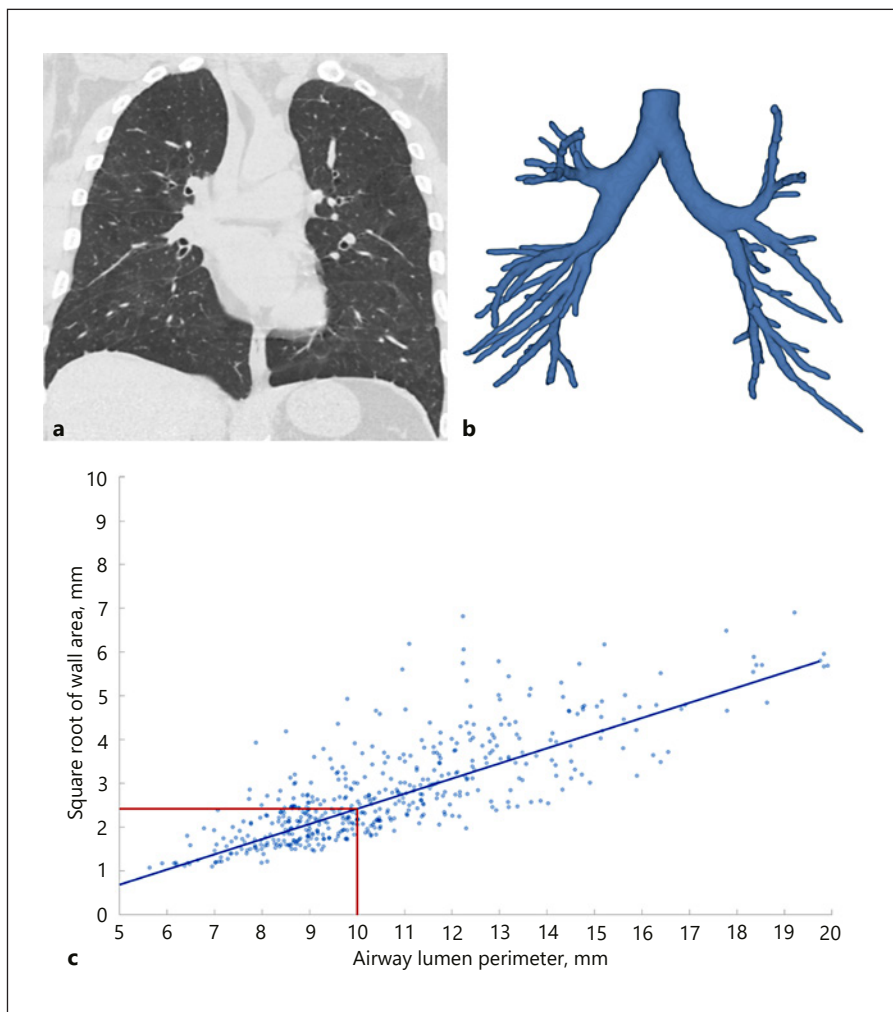


Fig. 2. The airways can be segmented to the level of the first 6 to 10 bronchial generations (a, b), from which measurements can be made using multiplanar reformatted images. The radiologic assessment of airway disease severity is more challenging due to the substantial variability in airway size within and between subjects, even among healthy individuals. To facilitate comparisons between individuals, a useful measure known as Pi10 which represents the square root of the wall area for a hypothetical airway with an internal perimeter of 10 mm has become popular. The Pi10 is based on the linear relationship between the square root of the airway wall area and the internal perimeter of the airway (c) (courtesy of Eva Van Rikxoort Thirona).

characterization of each voxel for quantification of air trapping. To address the overlap with air trapping and emphysema parametric, response mapping has been proposed. In this technique, volumetric nonrigid registration of inspiratory and expiratory enables biphasic characterization of each voxel for classification and quantification of normal lung emphysema and air trapping [17–20].

Beyond density measures, texture analysis takes into account the pattern, the spatial relationships between voxels, and the magnitude of attenuation values to enable further characterization and quantitation of parenchymal pathology (Fig. 1) [21–23]. Methods such as run-length matrices, fractal measures, and gray-level co-occurrence matrices can be used to determine uniformity, shape, and other morphologically distinct features. In addition, different types of image filtration can be performed to remove noise, enhance edges, and emphasize or extract certain features. This can be used to suggest specific subtypes

of emphysema or to differentiate among visually and pathologically distinct causes of diffuse low-attenuation areas, such as air trapping and other cystic lung processes. In the setting of diffuse lung disease, texture features can differentiate the characteristics of ground glass, reticulation with and without architectural destruction, and honeycomb cysts.

Airways

The airways can be segmented to the level of first 6 to 10 bronchial generations, from which measurements can be made using multiplanar reformatted images (Fig. 2) [24–34]. The common parameters obtained from airway measurements include the total bronchial area or outer airway wall area, the wall area, the internal or lumen area, and the wall thickness. The radiologic assessment of airway disease severity is more challenging due to the substantial variability in airway size within

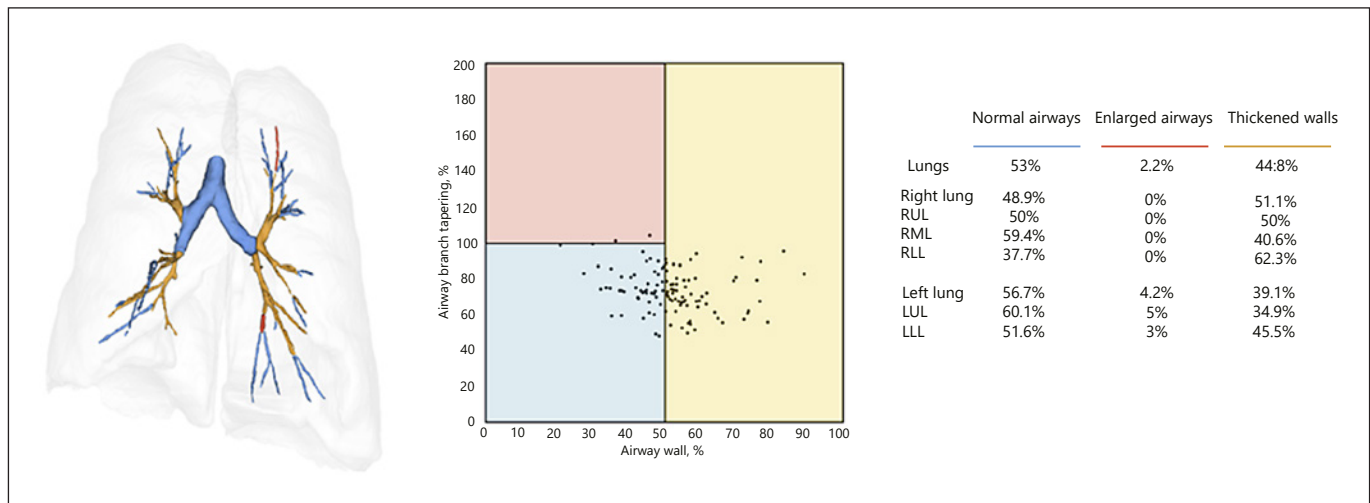


Fig. 3. COPD is widely recognized as a complex heterogeneous syndrome including emphysema and airway disease. There has been increasing interest in including visual and QIA assessments of emphysema (CT density scores) and airways (direct airway and indirect air trapping) to better phenotype patients with COPD. Patients with airway-dominant phenotype are associated with increased chronic cough and exacerbations. In patients with COPD,

there is an increased number of airways with thickened walls but not dilated lumens as shown visually in this tribox plot, and the number of thickened airways can be expressed as the percentage of airways within the lung or lobe to show the distribution and heterogeneity of the airway involvement (courtesy of Eva Van Rikxoort Thirona). QIA, quantitative image analysis.

and between subjects, even among healthy individuals. To facilitate comparisons between individuals, a useful measure known as Pi10 which represents the square root of the wall area for a hypothetical airway with an internal perimeter of 10 mm has become popular. The Pi10 is based on the linear relationship between the square root of the airway wall area and the internal perimeter of the airway (Fig. 3) [33, 35]. Functional respiratory imaging is a postprocessing technology that utilizes computational fluid dynamics to assess airway volume and resistance [36]. Despite a lot of work, the reproducibility, clinical validity, and ease of use of airway measurements remain challenging, and they have not been widely used in the clinical setting.

Blood Vessels

New QCT methods are being developed to assess vessel structure and perfusion to better understand the relationship between these changes, emphysema and ILD. Several approaches exist for automated vessel segmentation allowing for some measurements including total cross-sectional area, volume of the small vessels (3D), and the ratio of blood vessel volume in vessels $<5 \text{ mm}^2$ in cross section (BV5) to total blood vessel volume (as a measure of pruning). Cross-sectional area of subsegmental small pulmonary vessels has been shown to correlate with the

extent of CT density measures of emphysema and reflects difference between COPD phenotypes [37, 38]. The volume of segmented pulmonary vessels, including arteries and veins but excluding vessels at the hilum, expressed as a percentage of lung volume has been proposed as an independent measure of IPF severity [39–41]. Beyond structure perfusion can be assessed using dual-energy CT. This has led to the identification of regional perfusion heterogeneity within subjects with the same pattern and can be used to monitor and document reversible vasoconstriction [42, 43]. The clinical significance of these findings still needs to be clarified.

Fissures

The fissures subdivide the human lungs into different lobes, and air may flow through between lobes resulting in interlobar collateral ventilation (Fig. 4) [44]. Identifying the fissures is achieved using an anatomic knowledge-based model (usually airways and vessel trees), gray-level, and shape information [45–49]. The assessment of the completeness or integrity of fissures, as a biomarker for collateral flow, was first applied in a subgroup analysis of subjects undergoing endobronchial valve (EBV) placement for treatment of emphysema [45]. In this prespecified analysis, patients with a fissure integrity score $>90\%$ of the fissure abutting the treatment lobe were shown to

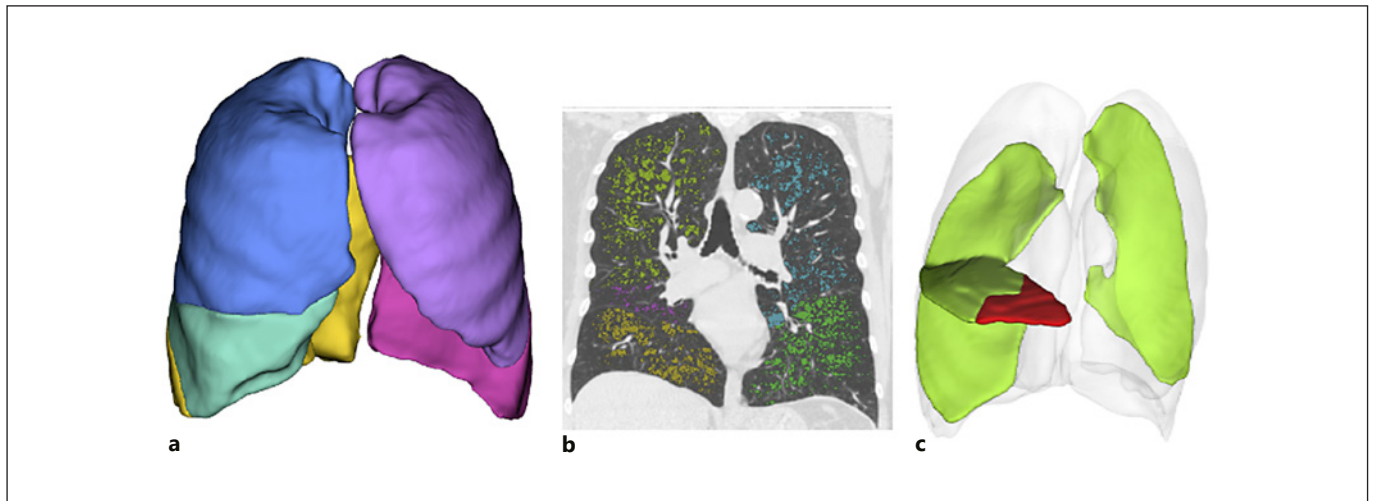


Fig. 4. For the selection of subjects for EBV, QCT is an essential component of both patient selection and lobe selection for treatment. Using automated algorithms, the lungs are segmented to the lobar level (a), the fissure integrity or completeness is measured using a second algorithm (b) (incomplete coverage shown in red for minor fissure), and the percentage of pixels below -920 and/or

-950 HU (depending on valve manufacture guidelines) in each lobe (shown by the pixel overlay) is calculated to assess disease severity in each lobe and the homogeneity in disease destruction between upper and lower lobes (c) (courtesy of Eva Van Rixooort Thirona). EBV, endobronchial valve.

have significant improvement in their forced expiratory volume in 1 s (FEV1) compared to those whose FIS was $<90\%$ [41]. The majority of automated fissure detection methods use feature descriptors targeted toward normal fissure anatomy [46–56]. Validation of fissure integrity, as a marker for collateral flow between lobes, has been confirmed both indirectly by improved treatment outcome as well as directly from local flow measurements within the lobes [57–60]. There is no relationship between fissure integrity and type or extent of emphysema and association between fissure integrity and pulmonary function measures, such as FEV1 and FEV1/FVC [61–64].

Ventilation/Perfusion

MRI using hyperpolarized gases allows direct visualization of the airspaces of the lung and provides for evaluation of pulmonary structure and function. Recent studies in humans using hyperpolarized ^3He and increasingly the more available hyperpolarized ^3Xe to measure ventilation, diffusion, and partial pressure of oxygen have been useful [65–75]. Inhaled ^3Xe is also readily dissolvable in lung tissue allowing for the evaluation of gas exchange, uptake, and transport [76]. While still very much limited to centers of expertise, recent advances in gas polarization technology make it increasingly feasible to deploy these techniques into the clinical setting [77].

QIA Assessing the Severity and Disease Activity of Emphysema

COPD Phenotypes

COPD is widely recognized as a complex heterogeneous syndrome including emphysema and airway disease. There has been increasing interest in including visual and QIA assessments of emphysema (CT density scores) and airways (direct airway and indirect air trapping) to better phenotype patients with COPD [78, 79]. These approaches have classified patients into emphysema or airway-dominant and mixed phenotypes with variable proportions of patients falling into these categories in different COPD populations [80, 81]. The emphysema-dominant CT phenotypes have been shown to correlate with different pulmonary function parameters [82], body mass index [83], dyspnea severity [84], exacerbations [85], rapid decline of FEV1 [86], and pulmonary-related mortality [87]. Patients with airway-dominant phenotype are associated with increased chronic cough and exacerbations [88]. The mixed phenotype has shown associations with more severe dyspnea and more frequent hospitalizations than the other CT-based phenotypes [89]. The relationships of these phenotypes with clinical parameters and outcome measures have however varied between different studies suggesting a need to reach a consensus on the most appropriate method for quantifying emphysema and airways in COPD studies.

Quality of Life and Symptom Measures

CT density measures of emphysema extent have correlated with several QOL tools including the ST Georges Respiratory Questionnaire (SGRQ), multidimensional *Body Mass Index, Airflow Obstruction, Dyspnea, Exercise* (BODE) score, and Medical Research Council (MRC) tool. Increased CT density scores reflecting increased parenchymal destruction have been shown to be predictive of clinically significant changes in these scores [90–95]. Interestingly, airway-predominant disease phenotype cohorts are associated more strongly with changes in the SGRQ, while emphysema-predominant phenotype shows more changes with BODE. Increased dyspnea has been independently associated with both emphysema and airway disease identified on chest CT scans of subjects with COPD [96, 97]. Even among individuals without COPD, emphysema on chest CT has been associated with dyspnea. Airway wall thickening (Pi10) has been associated with higher COPD Assessment Test scores, and the patient reported presence of cough, wheeze, and sputum [96–100].

Lung Function

CT density measures of emphysema are for the most part inversely correlated with both absolute and percent-predicted FEV1 [101–103], although there is heterogeneity in the published data. Much of the heterogeneity is due to differences in acquisition parameters, as well as differences in segmentation and quantitation algorithms [103]. The importance of standardized noncontrast thin-section CT performed at suspended full inspiration is very important. CT density and gas transfer measures are also significantly correlated with the variation again being reduced by standardizing for CT acquisition parameters. Functional respiratory imaging is an alternative approach for observing changes in airway volume and resistance and has been shown to be more sensitive than FEV1 [104, 105]. CT-based measures of TLC demonstrate good correlation with TLC measured by plethysmography, the former may be underestimated, particularly in the presence of air trapping [106, 107]. Thus, a normal TLC on chest CT suggests the absence of restrictive lung physiology, and a high TLC likely indicates the presence of hyperinflation.

Longitudinal studies designed to evaluate lung function decline have found CT density measures are independently associated with the rate of annual FEV1 decrease. Functional small airway disease on parametric response mapping has also been correlated with lung function decline in patients with emphysema. CT mea-

asures of small airway abnormality have been demonstrated in current and former smokers even without spirometric evidence of obstruction. These results suggest that subjects with mild to moderate COPD and smokers with preserved pulmonary function who have evidence of emphysema or air trapping on chest CT may be at increased risk for disease progression.

Collateral Ventilation

Quantitative CT analysis of fissure integrity or completeness has been shown to be a useful surrogate measure of collateral ventilation in selecting patients for endobronchial treatment of emphysema (Fig. 1) [50, 108–110]. QCT Fissure Integrity Score (FIS) has been validated in this setting using the Chartis device, which directly measures collateral flow and treatment outcome defined as target lobe value reduction (TLVR) ≥ 350 mL [111]. Patients with an incomplete fissure (and thus significant CV) have a significantly lower benefit from valve treatment, as the occluded lobe can be backfilled with air through the collateral channels [111, 112]. The accuracy for correctly classifying and predicting therapeutic TLVR with EBV was similar for physiologic measurement using the Chartis system and structure assessment of fissures on HRCT. Patients with TLVR ≥ 350 mL had statistically significant improvement in respiratory function, exercise performance, and quality of life measures [60, 111–114]. More recent data support the use of quantitative CT measurements to screen in patients for further analysis and/or treatment with fissure completeness [56, 104, 113]. The QCT evaluation is noninvasive and thus is increasingly used as the screening test of choice.

Exacerbations

QCT measures of emphysema extent, change in emphysema extent score, airway lumen, and wall thickness have been shown to be associated with an increase in annual COPD exacerbation rate and duration irrespective of degree of spirometry measure airflow limitation in the COPD gene study [88, 115–118]. Another QCT measure of the ratio of the pulmonary artery diameter to the aorta diameter >1 has also been demonstrated to be a strong and independent predictor of severe exacerbations, even when adjusted for lung function and prior history of exacerbations [119].

Mortality

A higher CT density score for emphysema reflecting increased amount of emphysema is a significant independent predictor of all-cause, respiratory, or cardiovascular

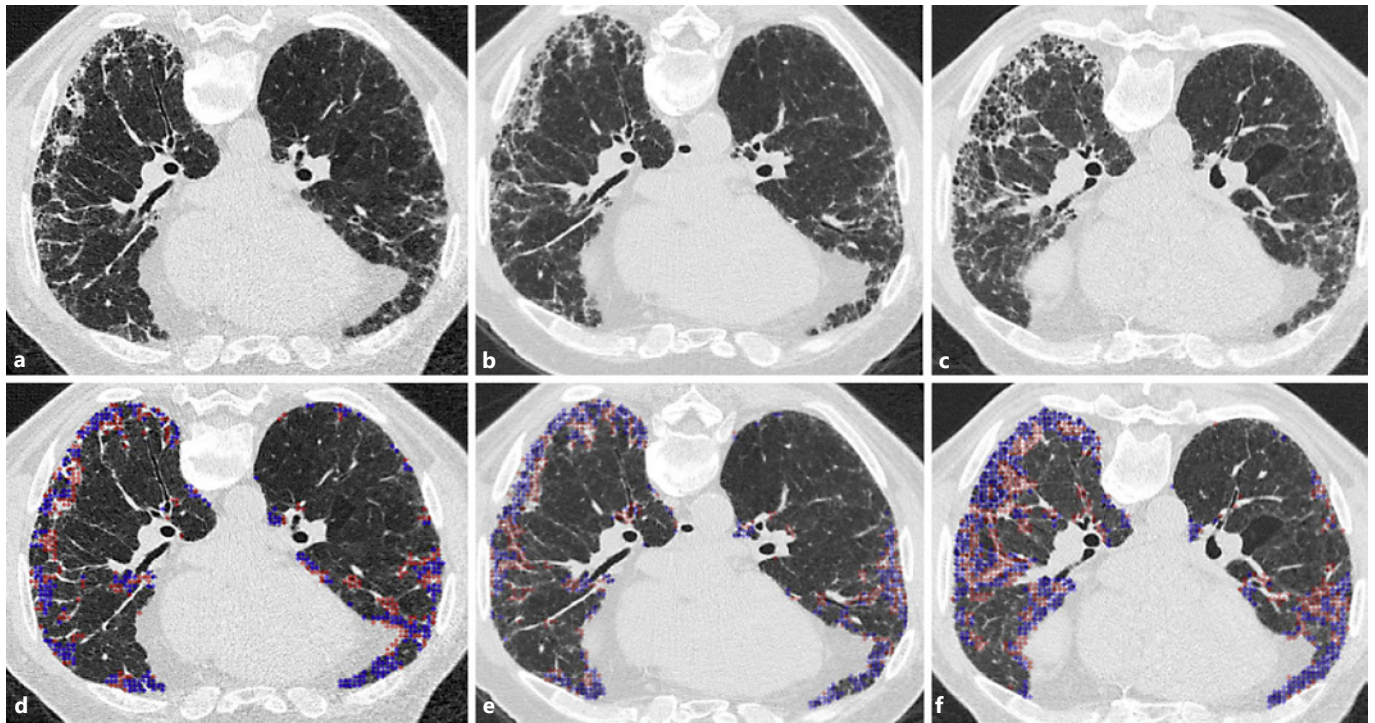


Fig. 5. QLF can be used to measure the extent of fibrosis at baseline and also the change in fibrosis over time. A case of an 81-year-old male with IPF with baseline and follow-up with clear progression HRCT longitudinal TLC scans (top): baseline (a), 1 year (b), and

2 years (c); overlays of color QLF (blue + red) score at baseline QLF 9% (415 mL) (d), 1-year QLF 14% (581 mL) (e), and 2-year QLF 31% (1102 mL) (f); image courtesy of Grace Kim UCLA. TLC, total lung capacity.

mortality in smokers with and, notably, without COPD [87, 120–122]. This is true for both visual and quantitative assessments of emphysema. There is a well-documented relationship between QCT emphysema scores and the Body Mass Index, Airflow Obstruction, Dyspnea, and Exercise (BODE) index, a well-validated predictor of mortality in subjects with COPD [87, 99, 123–127]. This relationship is strongest with FEV1, but there are independent significant relationships between emphysema and the other BODE components including body mass index, modified Medical Research Council dyspnea scale (mMRC), and exercise tolerance as measured by the 6-min walk distance (6MWD). The relationship between quantitative measures and patient outcomes in COPD is less well defined. In one study, a relationship between segmental wall area percentage and BODE score was demonstrated, albeit it is much weaker than the relation with quantitative emphysema measures [128]. However, in other studies, airway wall thickness as measured by Pi10 was not associated with increased mortality. The extent of bronchiectasis has been shown to be associated with decreased survival in patients with COPD [87, 124].

Drug and Device Discovery

QCT has the potential to offer new biomarkers to accelerate drug discovery through either enriching cohorts based on CT phenotypes or offering more specific regional measures not possible with conventional techniques. The most validated of these biomarkers is the use of CT density measures for assessing therapy in the setting of alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency patients. In 2 trials, changes in CT density were the primary outcome measure [129, 130]. The Perc CT density measure was a log-transformed and volume-adjusted study. The duration of this study was 2–3 years, and the rate of density decline was measured in g/L^{-1} per year. In these studies, only a low-to-moderate correlation between CT density and FEV1, KCO, and exercise tolerance was shown, further emphasizing role of CT density as an independent biomarker. QCT has also been used to enrich cohorts for trials evaluating EBV therapies by assessing extent of emphysema fissure integrity scores to ensure target lobes were good candidates for therapy. Also, TLVR has been used as a measure of successful lobar volume reduction with an MICD of 350 mLs proposed as meaningful treatment response.

Interstitial Lung Disease

ILD Phenotype

HRCT is an essential component of an initial ILD evaluation and also has become part of the armamentarium of tools used for routine management of these patients. The visual pattern and distribution of fibrosis on HRCT diagnosis is a standard method for diagnosing the nature of the clinical diagnosis and outcome [131–135]. However, radiologic evaluation of ILD and further characterization of pulmonary fibrosis can be difficult even for the subspecialist radiologist. Studies have found only fair to moderate interobserver agreement for overall CT classification of pulmonary fibrosis [136, 137]. Machine-learned texture feature algorithms have been shown to be powerful in distinguishing between normal parenchyma and abnormal parenchymal patterns due to fibrosis and ground glass (Fig. 5) [138, 139]. More recently, deep learning techniques have been shown to classify fibrotic lung disease with essentially equivalent performance to subspecialist radiologists [140]. These approaches may strengthen our ability to make predictions regarding outcomes in patients with ILD, such as response to specific therapies and mortality, which could substantially improve patient management [7, 140, 141].

Physiology

The relationship between pulmonary function tests and QCT measures of diffuse lung disease has been shown both at a single point in time and changes over time. Several machine-learned algorithms have shown an inverse relationship between the quantitated extent of fibrosis and forced viFVC measures on spirometry. In the setting of scleroderma lung, a similar relationship has been shown between the extent of lung involvement and DLCO [142]. Change in texture-based and QCT scores has been shown to correlate with changes in forced vital capacity (FVC). Interestingly, change in QCT texture measures after 4–6 months has been shown to predict >10 FVC decline at 12–18 months [143]. In this context, it is feasible that parenchymal changes occur prior to deterioration of pulmonary function tests. This has led to the increased use of CT to follow-up patients with diffuse lung disease, with the additional advantage of being able to better assess disease progression in patients with coexistent emphysema, since PFTs may be confounded by this overlap.

The GAP (gender, age, and physiology) model has been developed to improve the prognostication for patients with IPF. The addition of QCT measures of fibrosis extent has been shown to further improve the prognosti-

cation over the conventional model [7]. This suggests that QCT measures of structural abnormalities representing fibrosis are measuring additional attributes of the disease process that add to the evaluation of these patients. QCT fibrosis score has also been shown to be an alternative to DLCO diffusion capacity of carbon in a modified GAP assessment maybe offering a simpler method for determining risk of death in patients with IPF.

Mortality

IPF has a poor prognosis, with an overall median survival time of approximately 3 years [144, 145]. Predicting which course a patient's disease will take remains a difficult challenge for clinicians and researchers [146–148]. A greater extent of fibrotic changes on HRCT is known to be predictive of mortality across the spectrum of ILD including IPF, RA-ILD, SSc-ILD, chronic HP, pulmonary sarcoidosis [149], and unclassifiable ILD [150]. The extent of fibrosis by several QCT measures has been consistently associated with survival in patients with IPF [151, 152]. The extent of emphysema at CT (i.e., the emphysema score) also has been associated with survival in patients with IPF; however, the findings are less consistent among studies. Using QCT in addition to PFTs provides more tangible evidence to help monitor patients with IPF, guide treatment decisions, and plan for transplant or palliative care.

Drug Discovery

QCT methods for quantifying disease on HRCT could provide rapid, objective measurement of disease extent and change over time. In recent years, some of these tools have been used to analyze CT imaging data in clinical trials both retrospectively and prospectively [153–157]. For QCT measures to be used as biomarkers for drug or device efficacy, the algorithms must be stable. There must be cut-points defined for the detection of disease and established predictive or surrogate outcome measures of disease. For treatment efficacy to be assessed, the derived measure of disease extent must have algorithms that are stable and have established cutoff points for meaningful change. This requires extensive clinical validation beyond the initial development and analytic validation. Almost all the algorithms have initial analytic validation within the setting of a drug trial and few have had extensive clinical validation, but clearly this is an area of active research [149].

Clinical Application of QCT

The implementation of QCT into clinical practice requires that the workflow be optimized from scan request



CT Screening Test Result

Patient Name: **John Smith** (MRN: 123 45 678)
 DOB: 01-MAY-1953

Scan Date: 05-DEC-2016
 Referring Physician: Jane Jones

Screening Test	Your Results	Measurement
Lung Cancer Screening	Negative Benign Probably Benign Suspicious	LungRADs Category: 4B Mean diameter: 18.4 mm
COPD (Emphysema)	None Minimal Mild Moderate Severe	Low Attenuation Area: 35%
COPD (Airways)	Normal Abnormal	Average Segmental Diameter: 4.2 mm
Interstitial Lung Disease	None Minimal Mild Moderate Severe	Fibrosis: < 1% Ground Glass: < 1% Honeycombing: < 1%
Coronary Artery Calcification	None Minimal Mild Moderate Severe	Calcium Score: 81
Aortic Calcification	None Minimal Mild Moderate Severe	Calcium Volume: 0 mm ³
Aortic Diameter	Normal Abnormal	Diameter: 36 mm

Detailed Findings:

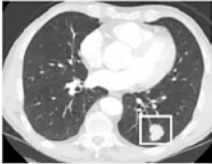
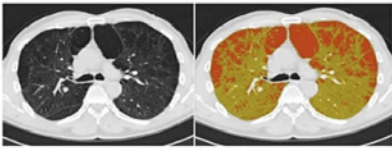
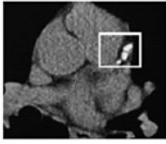
Lung Nodule	Anatomic Location: Left lower lobe Mean diameter: 18.4 mm Volume: 3262 mm ³ Mean Attenuation: 79 HU	
Emphysema Score	Whole Lung: 35% RUL: 44% RML: 35% RLL: 33% LUL: 41% LLL: 22%	
Coronary Artery Calcification	Location: LAD Area: 27 mm ² Density Factor: 3 Score: 81	

Fig. 6. QCT is being used increasingly in patient care outside of the clinical trial setting. CT chest reports are evolving from the traditional descriptive report with sometimes subjective qualitative estimate for disease burden by the radiologist to an automated report multiple algorithms running simultaneously to measure and populate a report with the information needed for clinical care. An example of this is shown in the QCT report for chest CT studies in which the different findings are presented in a table with easy-to-identify normal and abnormal results, measures, and index image.

through image acquisition, analysis, and workflow. It is important that referring clinicians identify the clinical question to be addressed by the imaging and not simply order an imaging study. The acquisition protocol to perform quantitative analysis needs to be performed using the correct set of parameters including usually noncontrast,

thin section <1 mm, and nonenhancing reconstruction Kernel [158, 159]. It is important to acquire the images at the correct suspended lung volume usually TLC for parenchyma measures of disease, functional residual capacity for airway measurements, or at residual volume for assessment of air trapping [160]. Follow-up studies to assess

change should be performed on the same CT machine if possible and with the same acquisition parameters and breathhold. Artifacts such as patient motion, beam hardening, variation in inspiratory effort, differences in image acquisition and reconstruction techniques, or inaccurate preprocessing steps such as segmentation of anatomic structures affect accuracy and reproducibility of measures. The imaging chain should be automated to allow image processing, including segmentation and quantitative analysis, to be performed before the images are reviewed and reported on [161]. Ideally, the report should be structured to easily capture and depict the quantitative data (Fig. 3).

Conclusion

Increasingly, quantitative chest CT is finding application in routine clinical care of patients (Fig. 6). Clinicians need to understand the different measures available from

a plethora of software applications. They also must understand which algorithms have robust clinical validation, so that they can be used safely in clinical practice. It is important that standardized good-quality CT studies are acquired, requiring clear communication between clinicians and radiologists. This communication will ensure that the correct CT study is performed and the correct quantitative measures are made to answer the clinical question.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no conflicts of interest.

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