CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Pulmonary perfusion scintigraphy with the radiopharmaceutical Tc-99m-MAA as an outpatient study

Acute Pulmonary Embolism

An 87-year-old man presented in poor overall condition because of progressively severe dyspnea of 10 days' duration. He underwent pulmonary perfusion scintigraphy. The image shows a nearly total absence of perfusion of the right upper lobe and of multiple other regions in both lungs. In particular, the clearly circumscribed perfusion deficit on the right was pathognomonic for pulmonary embolism. Accordingly, the lung perfusion fractions were abnormally asymmetric—67% on the left and 33% on the right. Low-molecular-weight heparin was given and the patient was urgently admitted to the hospital. A further study revealed a four-level deep venous thrombosis of the left lower limb as the source of the massive pulmonary arterial embolus. This case illustrates the key role of scintigraphy in the sequence of diagnostic tests for pulmonary embolism. Despite the severity of this patient's problem, a rapid and sensitive diagnostic study enabled the immediate initiation of appropriate treatment, with a successful outcome.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that no conflict of interest exists.

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