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Sonoelastography for Skeletal Muscle Muscles

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Real-time sonoelastography is a recently developed ultrasound-based imaging technique that evaluates tissue elasticity in real time. It is based on the principle that the compression of tissue produces a strain (displacement) that is lower in hard tissue and higher in soft tissue. Real-time sonoelastography provides information on tissue elasticity, in addition to the shape and vascularity, which are obtained via B-mode and Doppler ultrasound. Similar to B-mode ultrasound, manual or mechanical compression with the transducer and real-time visualization are now available for real-time sonoelastography in actual clinical practice. Tissue elasticity not only varies among different tissues but also seems to reflect disease-induced alternations in tissue properties. Real-time sonoelastography was recently applied to the normal and pathologic tissues in skeletal muscle disease, and it showed promising results and new potentialities. Therefore, it is expected to be a useful imaging modality for providing novel diagnostic information in skeletal muscle diseases because tissue elasticity is closely related to its pathology. It can also be used as a research tool to provide insight into the biomechanics and pathophysiology of skeletal muscle abnormality.

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