

Teaching NeuroImages: Distinct brain microhemorrhage pattern in critical illness associated with respiratory failure

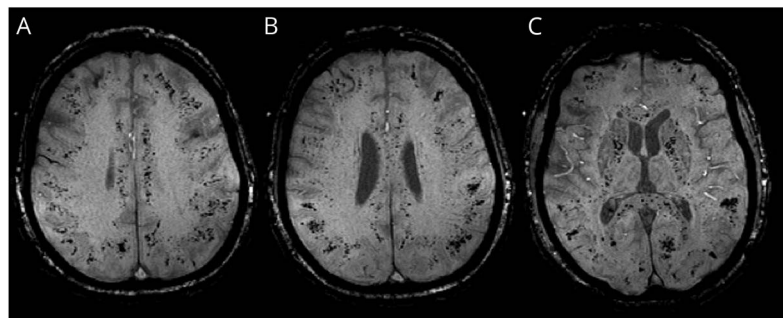
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Figure MRI of the brain shows distinct microhemorrhage pattern in critical illness associated with respiratory failure



(A–C) Axial susceptibility-weighted imaging MRI shows extensive punctate microhemorrhages involving the subcortical white matter, corpus callosum, and internal capsules.

A 51-year-old man with dementia presented with altered mental status and unremarkable initial brain CT and MRI. Hospitalization was complicated by aspiration pneumonia, hypoxia, and acute respiratory distress syndrome requiring intubation. He improved with antibiotics, but 1 week later developed seizures. MRI revealed new multiple microhemorrhages involving the subcortical white matter, internal capsules, and corpus callosum, sparing the deep white matter and deep gray nuclei (figure). This distinctive pattern is seen in critically ill patients with respiratory failure¹ and resembles high altitude exposure.² It is important to distinguish this from other causes of microhemorrhages including hypertension, diffuse axonal injury, and amyloid angiopathy.

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Author contributions

J.P. Hall: acquisition and interpretation of data, crafting of manuscript. Dr. Minhas: study concept and design, acquisition of data, critical revision of manuscript for intellectual content. Dr. Kontzialis: study concept and design, critical revision of manuscript for intellectual content. Dr. Jhaveri: study concept and design, acquisition and interpretation of data, critical revision of manuscript for intellectual content, study supervision.

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Disclosure

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