This report describes contrast-enhanced low mechanical index endoscopic ultrasound (CELMI-EUS), a new real-time technique with high resolution.

A 73-year-old man presented with unspecific abdominal pain and suspected liver cirrhosis (Fig. 1) and a pancreatic mass. CELMI-EUS was performed using the Hitachi 900 HV device combined with an electronic echo endoscope (Hitachi/Pentax EG3870UTK; Hitachi, Tokyo, Japan) and adapted dynamic contrast harmonic wideband pulsed inversion software, with low mechanical index (0.09 – 0.30), before and up to 180 seconds after injection of 4.8 ml SonoVue (Bracco, Milan, Italy). To improve the contrast in microvessels, microbubble tracing imaging (MTI) was applied.

Enhancement of the liver parenchyma persisted for up to 5 minutes under continuous scanning conditions. No significant destruction of bubbles was visualized. CELMI-EUS revealed arterial rim enhancement and delineated central necrosis, typical signs of neuroendocrine metastases (Fig. 2 and Video 1). Histological examination revealed neuroendocrine tumor metastasis.

While EUS has become established over the past 20 years, real-time contrast applications using low mechanical index were restricted to the transabdominal approach [2]. Recent advances in technology have supported the development of new endoscopic systems, making it possible to use CELMI-EUS as with a recently described prototype [3]. To distinguish between contrast medium signals and tissue signals, two ultrasound pulses with a 180° inverted phase are sent out at the same vector line. The received echo information from these two pulses is added, eliminating the linear information of the fundamental (tissue) signals. The nonlinear echo information of the contrast media can be displayed (Fig. 3) [3]. CELMI-EUS may improve our understanding of morphologic imaging methods through additional analysis of functional criteria such as perfusion, with better characterization of, for example, tumors, lymph node staging, and organ infiltration. This improved image documentation will enhance confidence in the method.
References

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Endoscopy 2009; 41: E43–E44
© Georg Thieme Verlag KG Stuttgart - New York
ISSN 0013-726X

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