Critical illness–associated cerebral microbleeds in COVID-19 acute respiratory distress syndrome

Octave Cannac, Laurent Martinez-Almoyna, MD, and Sami Hraiech, MD, PhD


Correspondence
Dr. Martinez-Almoyna
laurent.martinez-almoyna@ap-hm.fr

A 63-year-old man developed coronavirus disease 2019 acute respiratory distress syndrome requiring mechanical ventilation and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO). Brain MRI performed because of delirium revealed callosal and juxtacortical hematomas associated with countless and punctate cerebral microbleeds disseminated in the corpus callosum and along the gray/white matter interface (figure).

This pattern, only detected by blood-sensitive MRI sequences, is typical of critical illness–associated cerebral microbleeds (CI-aCMB), a rare condition reported in patients with acute respiratory failure, requiring mechanical ventilation, and sometimes undergoing ECMO.1 Even though the pathophysiologic mechanisms remain unknown (probably related to severe hypoxemia), a relatively high proportion of CI-aCMB published cases are induced by influenza.2–4

In this patient infected with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, we postulate a possible contribution of a viral-related endotheliopathy.
## Study funding
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## Disclosure
The authors report no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to Neurology.org/N for full disclosures.

## References

## Appendix Authors

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Octave Cannac</td>
<td>Hôpitaux Universitaires de Marseille</td>
<td>Drafting and revision of manuscript for intellectual content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurent Martinez-Almoyna, MD</td>
<td>Hôpitaux Universitaires de Marseille</td>
<td>Drafting and revision of manuscript for intellectual content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sami Hraiech, MD, PhD</td>
<td>Hôpitaux Universitaires de Marseille</td>
<td>Revision of manuscript for intellectual content</td>
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