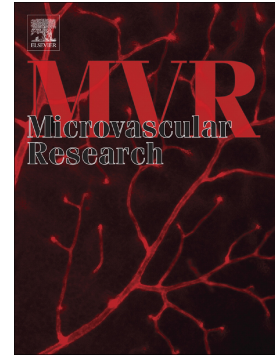


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The Emerging Application of Semi-quantitative and Quantitative Capillaroscopy in Systemic Sclerosis

Carina Mihai^{1,2}, Vanessa Smith³, Rucsandra Dobrota^{1,2}, Ana Maria Gheorghiu¹, Maurizio Cutolo⁴, Oliver Distler²

¹Department of Internal Medicine and Rheumatology, Cantacuzino Hospital, Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, Romania

²Department of Rheumatology, University Hospital Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

³Department of Rheumatology, Ghent University Hospital; Department of Internal Medicine, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

⁴ Research Laboratory and Academic Unit of Clinical Rheumatology, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Genova, Genova, Italy

Address correspondence and reprint requests to

Carina Mihai, Department of Rheumatology, Zurich University Hospital, Gloriastrasse 25, 8091 Zürich, Switzerland. Phone +41 44 255 2687, E-mail: Carmen-Marina.Mihai@usz.ch

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Abstract

Systemic sclerosis (SSc) is a connective tissue disease with high morbidity and mortality, characterized by autoimmunity, obliterative vasculopathy involving mainly the microvasculature, and fibrosis. SSc-specific nailfold capillaroscopic changes have been defined, and nailfold capillaroscopy (NFC) is now unequivocally accepted to be a cornerstone for the early diagnosis of SSc. However, the use of NFC in patients already diagnosed with SSc is still not standardized. Several studies have shown that NFC abnormalities correlate with disease activity and severity and are predictive for disease worsening, such as occurrence of new digital ulcers. More importantly, successful treatment has been shown to diminish NFC abnormalities in severe SSc cases. These findings support the importance of NFC in monitoring patients with SSc and even its role as an outcome measure in SSc clinical trials. It is a matter of debate if Semi-quantitative and Quantitative NFC would be a more sensitive tool than qualitative NFC for meeting these objectives. This review is presenting the emerging application of Semi-quantitative and Quantitative NFC in SSc and its potential benefits.

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