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Specialty : Musculoskeletal
Lecture Title : Ultrasound of Rotator Cuff Tears
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Ultrasound is a highly effective diagnostic tool for identifying rotator cuff tears, demonstrating a high sensitivity and specificity for full-thickness tears, which is comparable to MRI. Tears are categorized into full-thickness and partial-thickness tears, which are further classified based on depth and location—either articular-sided, bursal-sided, or intratendinous. Additionally, full-thickness tears can be classified based on size, ranging from small (under 1cm) to massive (over 5cm or involving two tendons). Beyond the direct visualization of a tendon defect, ultrasound reveals critical indirect signs of rotator cuff pathology, such as cortical irregularity, the cartilage interface sign, and deltoid compressibility. Despite its effectiveness, clinicians must navigate common pitfalls which may lead to overdiagnosis or underdiagnosis of rotator cuff tears.