

CEUS LI-RADS Update: What is Changing in 2026?

This lecture provides a comprehensive overview of the updates introduced in CEUS LI-RADS® v2026, focusing on their clinical rationale, technical implementation, and implications for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) diagnosis in at-risk populations. The session is designed for radiologists, hepatologists, and trainees involved in liver imaging and multidisciplinary liver care.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the clinical and strategic reasons behind the 2026 update of CEUS LI-RADS.
2. Describe the integration of Kupffer cell agents (KCA) into CEUS LI-RADS and their diagnostic advantages.
3. Apply the new LI-RADS Adequacy Score in clinical practice.
4. Recognize revised criteria for LR-M and LR-5 categories.
5. Incorporate new ancillary features and the Occult Nodule Algorithm into diagnostic workflows.
6. Understand the standardized KCA CEUS imaging protocol and its global implications.

I. Background and Rationale for Update: Overview of LI-RADS mission: standardization of imaging criteria for HCC.

II. Introduction of Kupffer Cell Agents (KCA) into LI-RADS: Differences between blood-pool agents (BPA) and KCA.

III. New LI-RADS Adequacy Score: Importance of image quality in accurate categorization.

IV. Revised LR-M Criteria: Updated definition of rim arterial phase hyperenhancement (APHE) requiring washout.

V. Updated LR-5 Criteria with KCA Integration: Parallel criteria for BPA and KCA CEUS with KCA-specific features: early transitional phase hypoenhancement (1–5 minutes).

VI. New Ancillary Feature Favoring HCC (5 minutes): Delayed KCA hypoenhancement (≥ 10 minutes) as an ancillary feature.

VII. Occult Nodule Algorithm: Definition and clinical challenge of occult nodules with standardized approach for lesions not visible on precontrast ultrasound.

VIII. Standardized KCA CEUS Protocol: Need for protocol harmonization.

Conclusion and Discussion: Summary of key updates and clinical impact.