The Role of Bronchoalveolar Lavage in the Diagnosis of Suspected COVID-19 Pneumonia After Multiple Negative Nasopharyngeal Swabs

Anwaar Mohamed Abdulla Habib Safandyar, BSc, MD* Abdulrahman Hassan Ahmed Almadani, CFRCPI**

ABSTRACT

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), became a huge risk to public health. The gold standard to diagnose COVID-19 is by real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR). Nevertheless, false-negative RT-PCR results have been reported in many studies.

Here we present a case of suspected COVID-19 pneumonia in a patient who received three negative RT-PCR results from nasopharyngeal swabs result who was subsequently diagnosed with COVID-19 pneumonia by RT-PCR from bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) collected by performing a bronchoscopy procedure.

Our findings remind healthcare providers that having negative nasopharyngeal swab RT-PCR tests should not exclude the diagnosis of COVID-19 pneumonia. The clinical suspicion, history, laboratory results and radiological imaging play an important role in diagnosing COVID-19 pneumonia. Performing bronchoscopy to collect lower respiratory tract sample (BAL) for suspected COVID-19 pneumonia can be considered in specific situations.

Bahrain Med Bull 2021; 43 (3): 637 - 639

* Resident
Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Department
Bahrain Defence Force Hospital,
Kingdom of Bahrain
E-mail: anwaarsafandyar@gmail.com
** Pulmonology Chief Resident