

Evidence Discussion Ataxia (HD-3.1)

- MRI brain is the preferred initial imaging modality for evaluation of ataxia when a central nervous system cause is suspected.^{1,2} MRI of the spinal cord, to include the cervical and thoracic spine, may also be added if clinically indicated.¹
- CT head is not recommended for the initial evaluation of non-traumatic ataxia due to inferior soft tissue resolution when compared to MRI Brain. In addition, MRI brain provides better visualization of the cerebellum and posterior fossa and is more sensitive for the detection of posterior fossa infarcts.¹
- In general, MRI is preferred over CT, unless there is a history of acute trauma or a contraindication to MRI.

References

1. Wang LL, Thompson TA, Shih RY, et al. ACR Appropriateness Criteria® Dizziness and Ataxia. Available at <https://acsearch.acr.org/docs/69477/Narrative/>. American College of Radiology. Revised 2023.
2. ACR ASNR SPR Practice Parameter for the Performance and Interpretation of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of the Brain. Revised 2019.