‘You Always Meet Twice in Life’

A Case of a Spontaneous Heterotopic Ectopic

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Background

Heterotopic ectopic (HE) pregnancy is the synchronous presentation of an intrauterine and extrauterine pregnancy. It is more commonly associated with assisted reproduction[1]. Spontaneous HE pregnancy is thought to occur in 1:30000 births[2] and carries a significant risk of morbidity and mortality.

Case Description

22 –year-old gravida 2 parity 0 woman presented to the emergency department with lower abdominal pain and syncope in the setting of a confirmed intrauterine pregnancy 8+4 weeks gestation of spontaneously conception.

On examination she was vitally stable but tender in the right lower quadrant. Her blood test showed a beta HCG of 217000 and hemoglobin drop of 12 points.
A Pelvic ultrasound demonstrated large volumes of free fluid with echo reflective material, a non-specific complex material noted adjacent to the right ovary raising the suspicion of a HE pregnancy.

The patient was taken for emergent diagnostic laparoscopy which subsequently demonstrated ruptured right HE pregnancy and a salpingectomy performed with an estimated blood loss of 450mL.

The author went on to perform the baby check on the patient’s liveborn male 8 months later following a caesarean section at 40+6 weeks gestation for labour dystocia.

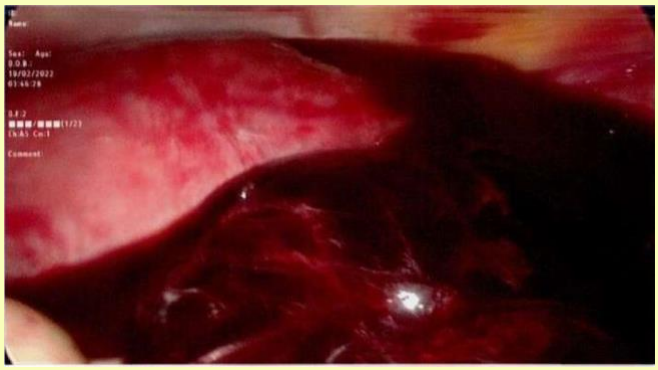

Figure 1: Haemoperitoneum on entry into the abdomen

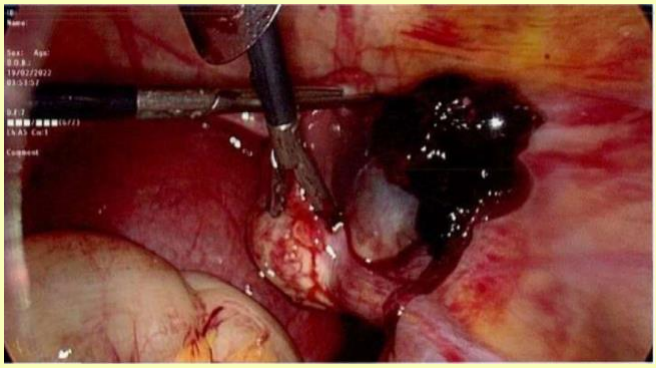

Figure 2: Identification of the right ruptured heterotopic ectopic pregnancy adjacent to a gravid uterus

Discussion

The case highlights the importance of maintaining a broad differential list when reviewing abdominal pain in early pregnancy and not to exclude the possibility of ectopic with an already confirmed intrauterine pregnancy. Furthermore, the case is a reminder of the privilege and joy that comes with continuity of care in the field of obstetrics with a favourable outcome for both mother and baby.

References: 1. Ubom, A.E., Owolabi, A.T., Fadare, O.O., Akindojutimi, J.A. & Adekunle, I.A. (2021). Live Birth after Treatment of a Ruptured Ectopic in a Spontaneous Heterotopic Pregnancy. *Nigerian Journal of Medicine*, 30 (4), 476.
2. Once, M. Ciortea, R., Diculescu, D., Poienar, A., Grigore, A., Lupean, R., Nicula, R., Chira, D. Strilcuc, S. & Mihu, D. (2020). Spontaneous Heterotopic Pregnancy with Unaffected Intrauterine Pregnancy: Systematic Review of Clinical Outcomes. *Medicina,* 56(12): 665.