<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>Caesarean Scar Ectopic: sonographic findings and management dilemmas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authors(s)</strong></td>
<td>Hughes, H.; Mulcahy, C.; Moran, Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publication date</strong></td>
<td>2015-12-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conference details</strong></td>
<td>The 47th Annual Scientific Meeting of the British Medical Ultrasound Society: Ultrasound 2015, City Hall, Cardiff, Wales, UK, 9 - 11 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link to online version</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.bmus.org/bmus-annual-meeting-2015/">https://www.bmus.org/bmus-annual-meeting-2015/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Item record/more information</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7370">http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7370</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Caesarean Scar Ectopic: Sonographic findings and management dilemmas

Hughes H1,2, Mulcahy C1, Moran M2

1Fetal Assessment Unit, National Maternity Hospital, Dublin, Ireland. 2Diagnostic Imaging, School of Medicine, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland.

Introduction

The last decade has seen an increase in caesarean section (CS) rates in Ireland and internationally with a concomitant rise in the incidence of caesarean scar ectopic. Greater awareness of the common sonographic presentations of caesarean scar ectopic at different gestational ages may improve detection rates and reduce morbidity (Timor-Tritsch et al., 2012).

Ultrasonic Appearance

1. Empty uterine endometrial cavity and cervical canal.
2. Gestational sac (GS) +/- embryo located anteriorly at the level of the CS scar above the internal cervical os.
3. Appearance of a thin myometrium anterior to the GS adjacent to the bladder.
4. The presence of GS bulging out of the uterine wall contour.
5. Colour Doppler demonstrating evidence of prominent trophoblastic vessels surrounding the caesarean scar.

Case 1

38 yr. old G4 P3, 2 vaginal deliveries, 1 previous CS and 1 ERPC for miscarriage. Presented to E.P.A.U. at 7 weeks gestation, reporting mild pelvic cramping. A TVUS identified a GS containing a live embryo within the caesarean scar. βHcg was 9775mIU/ml.

Case 2

38 yr. old G4 P3, 2 vaginal deliveries, 1 previous CS and 1 ERPC for miscarriage. Presented to E.P.A.U. at 7 weeks gestation, reporting mild pelvic cramping. A TVUS identified a GS containing a live embryo within the caesarean scar. βHcg was 9775mIU/ml.

Case 3

40 yr. old G3 P2, 2 previous CS. She presented with brown PV spotting and back pain at 6 weeks gestation. TVUS demonstrated an empty thin fundal endometrium with a gestational sac containing a yolk sac positioned in the CS scar. There was absence of vascular flow on colour Doppler, as mentioned by Sieczko et al. (2014), suggestive of a failing pregnancy.

Management

The management options in Caesarean scar ectopic pregnancy include expectant management, methotrexate, suction curettage, and hysterectomy. The use of methotrexate or expectant management can be advantageous to reduce morbidity and preserve future fertility if Caesarean scar ectopic is detected in the first trimester (Zosmer et al., 2015).

Irish law currently states that termination of pregnancy is only permissible when there is a real and substantial risk to the life of the mother (Protection of Life during Pregnancy Act, 2013). Jurkovic. (2014) questions whether there is strong enough evidence to conclude that all cases should be terminated as some may progress to a normal pregnancy. The challenge is to discriminate between those at risk using ultrasound predictors as Timor-Tritsch et al. (2012) discuss how acute emergency can develop of uterine abruption, massive hemorrhage or morbidly adherent placenta with a poor obstetric outcome after the first trimester.

These cases demonstrate the critical decision making required to manage challenging cases within the current Irish legislative framework to successfully save these women’s lives.

Conclusion

The knowledge of the ultrasound presentation of caesarean scar ectopic is an essential skill for all obstetric sonographers for accurate diagnosis of this dangerous complicated pregnancy in the current climate of high rates of CS delivery.

References

Table 1: Rising Caesarean section rates in Ireland (E.S.R.I., 2013).

The prevalence of caesarean scar ectopics is thought to be 1 in 2000 pregnancies causing significant morbidity and mortality (Sieczko et al., 2014). Defined as implantation of the pregnancy within the scar, it is thought to occur due to a fistula developed between the scar and the endometrium. The potential for uterine rupture causing massive haemorrhage is caused by trophoblastic invasion from the implantation site without the supportive myometrium (Jungkman and Anderson, 2015).

Four cases identified in an Irish tertiary referral centre over 4 years demonstrate the differing presentations of caesarean scar ectopic and the management dilemmas discussed in the setting of Irish legislation in relation to termination of pregnancy.

Trans-vaginal scanning (TVUS) greatly expedites diagnosis due to higher resolution imaging of the implantation site (Sieczko et al., 2014).

The decision was made to proceed with hysterectomy due to the degree of bladder involvement, risk of rupture and the presenting chance of life threatening hemorrhage.