

2 pregnancies in 1- Heterotopic pregnancy and the journey after salpingectomy

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Introduction:

Heterotopic pregnancy (HP) is a condition where there are two pregnancies in different places- a eutopic and ectopic pregnancy. Spontaneous HP are rare and happen in less than 1:30,000 pregnancies¹. The incidence can increase with assisted reproductive techniques, previous tubal and pelvic surgery, previous ectopic pregnancy, and pelvic infections.

Patients might present with abdominal pain or vaginal bleeding; however, some may be asymptomatic. 7 in 10 heterotopic pregnancies are diagnosed before 8 weeks of pregnancy². Transvaginal ultrasound scanning plays an essential role in early diagnosis and management of HP.

Case report:

A 34 years old lady, gravida four para two, presented to the early pregnancy unit (EPAU) with abdominal pain, vaginal spotting, and 6 weeks of secondary amenorrhoea. She was not on any contraception and conceived spontaneously. On examination, she had mild lower abdominal tenderness with no guarding and normal observations. An urgent transvaginal ultrasound revealed a eutopic pregnancy (image 1), 2 corpora lutea on the right ovary (image 2), and a right tubal ectopic (image 4) with significant haemoperitoneum (image 3).

The patient had risk factors for an ectopic pregnancy- a lower segment caesarean section and previous surgical termination of pregnancy. In view of the haemoperitoneum, she underwent a right laparoscopic salpingectomy without uterine manipulation. Intraoperatively, the ultrasound findings were confirmed and histology came back confirming ectopic pregnancy. The eutopic pregnancy continued with close monitoring. The patient was delivered by caesarean section at term.

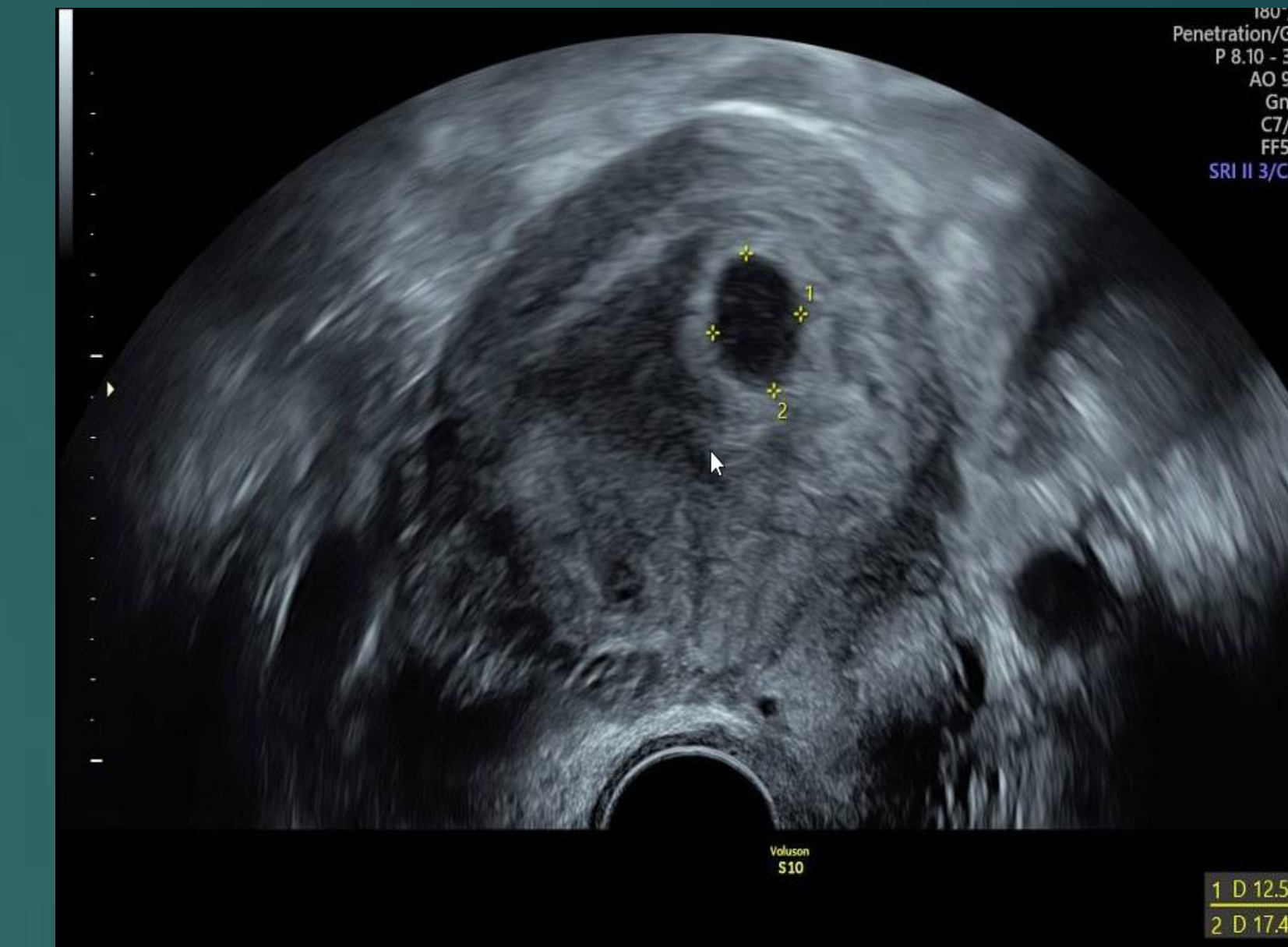
Discussion:

The presence of a eutopic pregnancy does not exclude the presence of an ectopic pregnancy. The presence of a second corpus luteum should trigger a meticulous ultrasound examination of the entire pelvis to exclude the presence of a second pregnancy- either eutopic or ectopic.

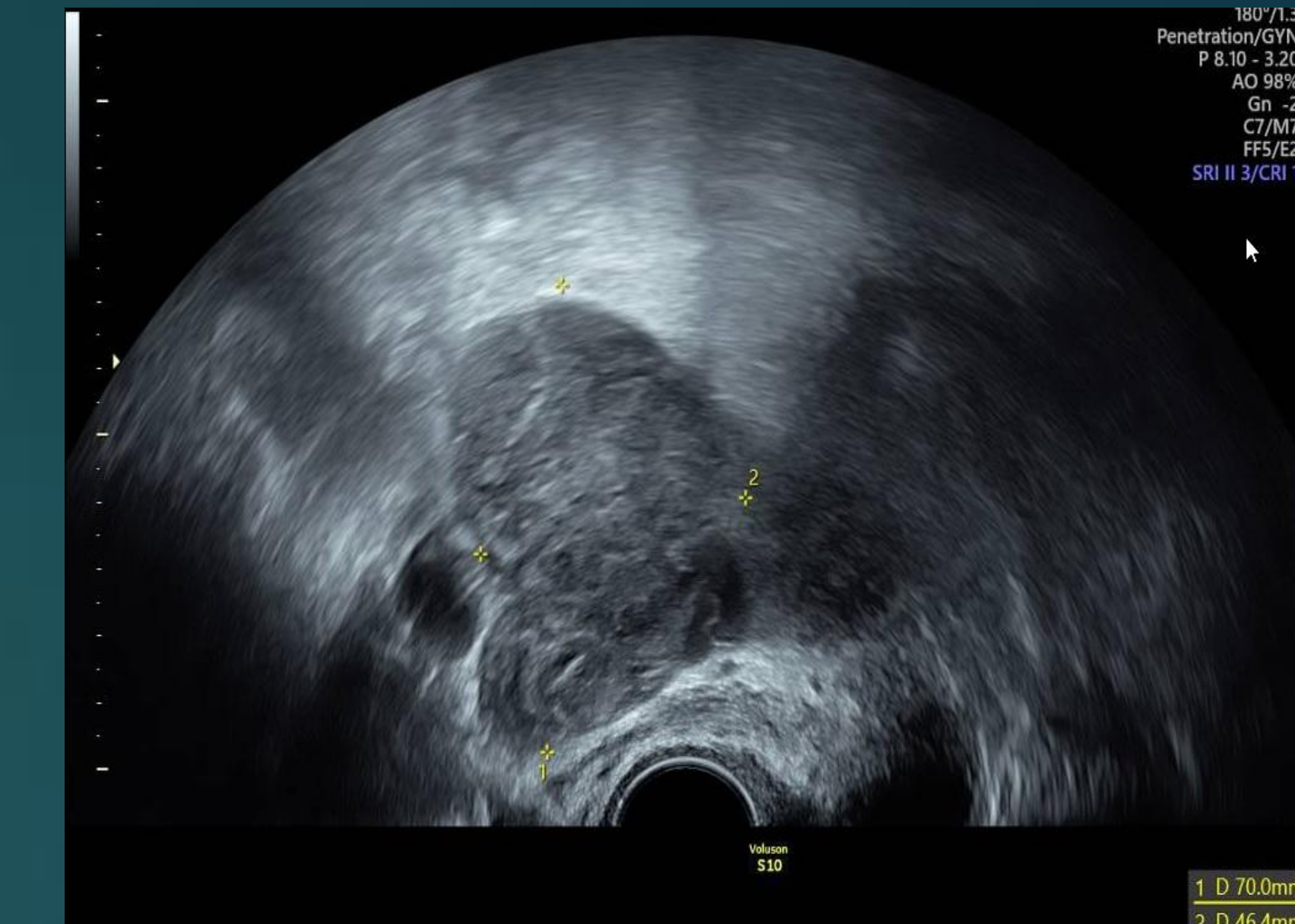
Gynaecology scanning expertise are essential in diagnosis of ectopic pregnancies. Careful and systematic methods of scanning aid in diagnosis and management of patients.

Conclusion:

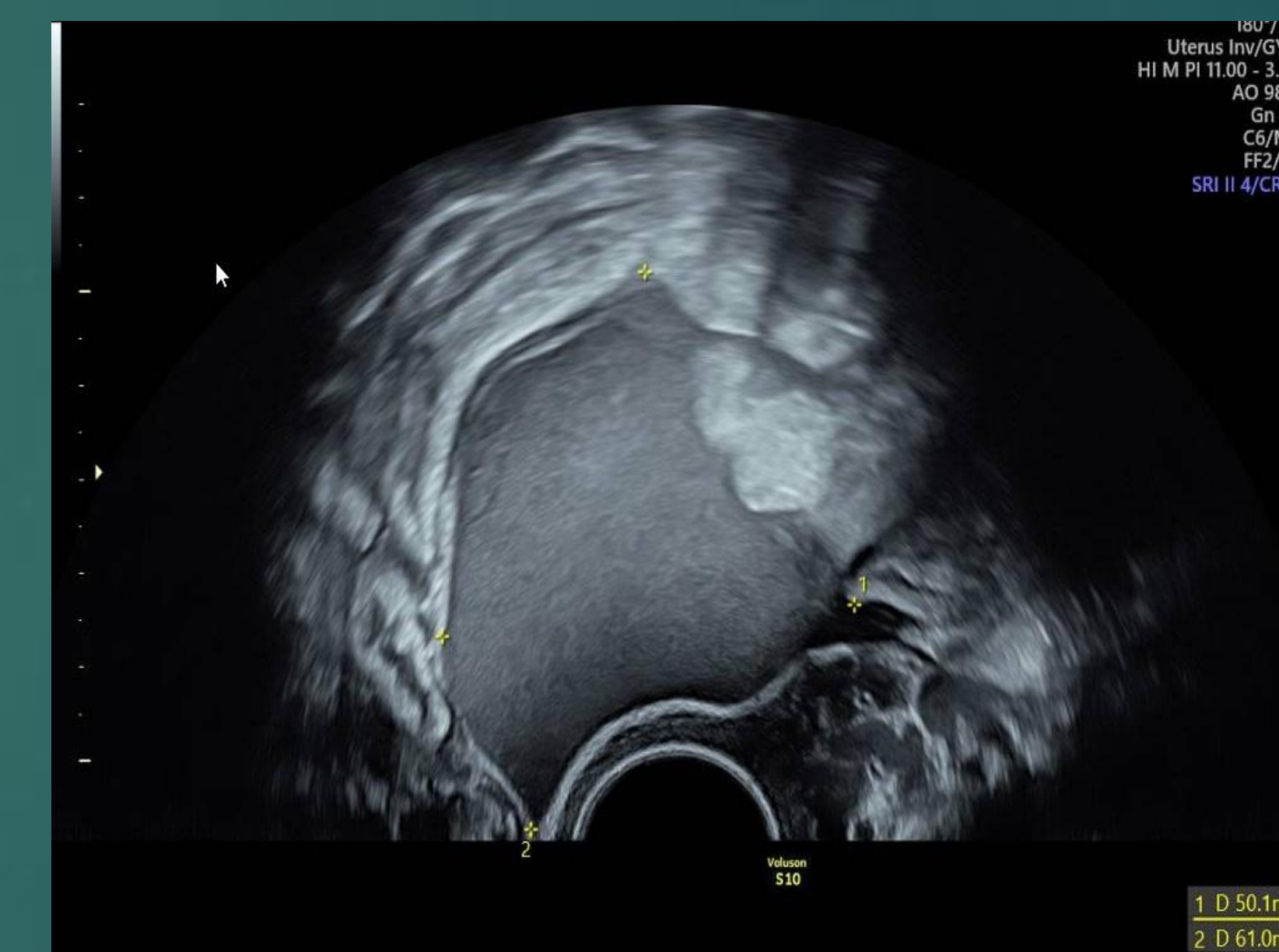
The incidences of HP is increasing with assisted reproductive techniques. HP can potentially become a life-threatening situation. Prompt diagnosis and management is crucial.



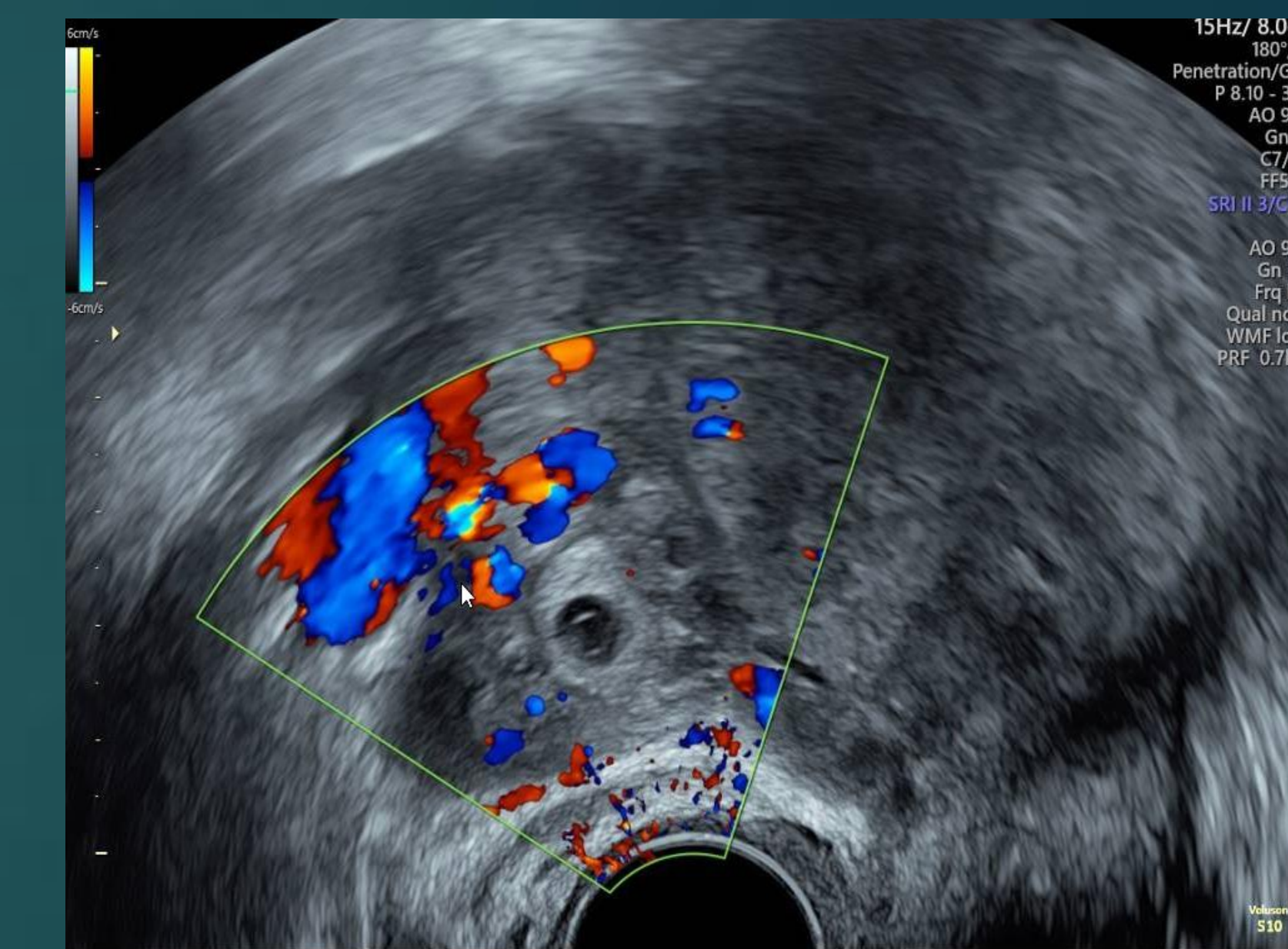
1. Eutopic pregnancy



2. Solid corpus luteum



3. Haemoperitoneum



4. Ectopic with yolk sac

References:

- 1 Govindarajan mj, rajan r. 2008. Heterotopic pregnancy in natural conception. [Online]. [26 January 2025]. Available from: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2700683>
- 2 Hassani KI, Bouazzaoui AE, Khatouf M et-al. Heterotopic pregnancy: A diagnosis we should suspect more often. J Emerg Trauma Shock. 2010;3 (3): 304. doi:10.4103/0974-2700.66563