



The Forgotten Fetus

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We present a case of a fetus that was left inside a septated uterus for 2 months after curettage.

A 37 year old, gravida 6 para 5, arrived at the emergency department due to expulsion of tissue measuring 6 x 3 x 1 cm from her vagina, with no pain or bleeding [Figure]. Her vital signs were normal and there were no significant findings in the physical examination. The uterus was well contracted. Transvaginal sonography revealed a septated uterus with thin, regular endometrium. No urinary tract anomalies were demonstrated. The tissue was sent for histopathologic examination and the pathologic diagnosis was an otolytic fetus.

Two months earlier the patient had undergone uterine curettage due to fetal demise at 22 weeks gestation. Fetal biometry was appropriate for 18 weeks gestation. The pathologic diagnosis then was fetal parts and placenta.

Mullerian fusion defects are found in 3.2% of fertile women, and most are septated uteri [1]. Other authors report that uterine anomalies present in 0.1–0.5% of the general population, but in 10–15% of patients with recurrent pregnancy loss [2]. Pregnancy losses in the first 20 weeks were observed in 88% of septated uteri [3]. One hypothesis for this high pregnancy wastage



is the implantation on the poorly vascularized septum. Even in pregnancies that are carried to term there is an increased risk of low birth weight, abnormal fetal lie, uterine bleeding [4], preterm delivery and cesarean section. Trial of labor after cesarean deliveries yields higher rates of uterine rupture [5].

In addition to these potential complications of septated uteri, one must keep in mind that the irregular cavities of septated uteri are sometimes hard to evacuate. Therefore, we recommend a sonographic

reexamination during or after uterine evacuation in patients with Mullerian fusion anomalies in order to validate an empty uterus.

References

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There are some men whom a staggering emotional shock, so far from making them mental invalids for life, seems, on the other hand, to awaken, to galvanize, to arouse into an almost incredible activity of soul.

William McFee, in Harbours of Memory, 1921