

ABSTRACT

Challenges of the Diagnosis of Placenta Previa in Low-resource Settings: How is the Quality of Ultrasound Done by Nonradiologists in Cameroon?

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OBJECTIVES

Ultrasound (US) evaluation could ensure early diagnosis of placenta previa (PP) or low-inserted placenta prior to the onset of clinical manifestations. The use of US as a diagnostic tool for varying disease states is gaining ground in Africa; however, its operator dependence constitutes a major setback. Our main goal was to evaluate the accuracy of US in the diagnosis of PP in Cameroon and especially its use by nonradiologists.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We carried out a cross-sectional prospective study in the maternity unit of the Yaoundé Central Hospital during a period of 13 months (1st December 2014–31st December 2015). Our study population involved women with prior cesarean sections, irrespective of the indication of at least 28 weeks of gestational age. During surgery, the diagnosis was confirmed. We included all women with a past history of cesarean section who underwent a third-trimester US scan (USS), especially in the last 4 weeks preceding the cesarean section.

RESULTS

The mean age of our study population was 28.02 years (± 6.13 years), with age extremes at 13 and 44 years, respectively. Out of 761 women who underwent cesarean section, 153 had been diagnosed preoperatively with PP. All the USSs were transabdominal. Third-trimester scans, irrespective of the operator, had a sensitivity of 82 and

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99% specificity. Among the operators, radiologists and obstetricians had the best sensitivity rates (83 and 81%, respectively) as against 71.4% among other operators.

CONCLUSION

Ultrasound scanning (USS) is important in the antenatal period as a diagnostic tool for PP when carried out by radiologists and obstetricians. Routine use of the transvaginal and transperineal routes should be encouraged so as to gain accuracy during third-trimester scanning. However, the nonradiologists need to be trained because of the accuracy lapses involving the USSs which they carry out.