

NHS Foundation Trust

Use of Ultrasound in Portal Hypertension

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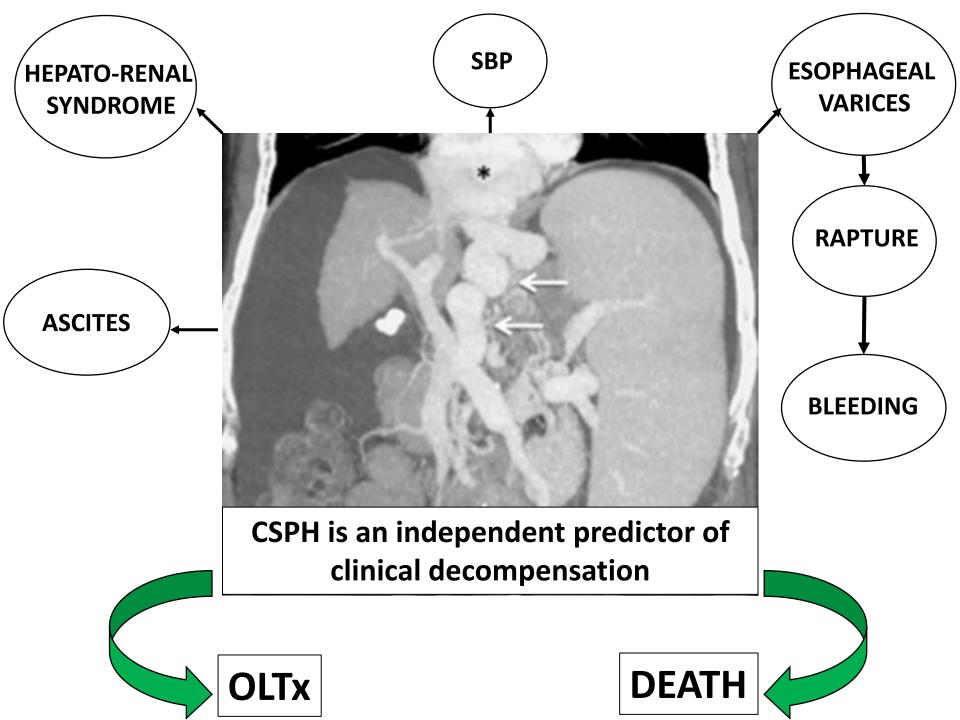
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Portal Hypertension: definition

«Portal hypertension (PH) is a frequent clinical syndrome haemodynamically defined by an increase in the portal pressure gradient (difference between portal vein pressure and inferior vena cava pressure) over the normal limit of 5 mmHg»



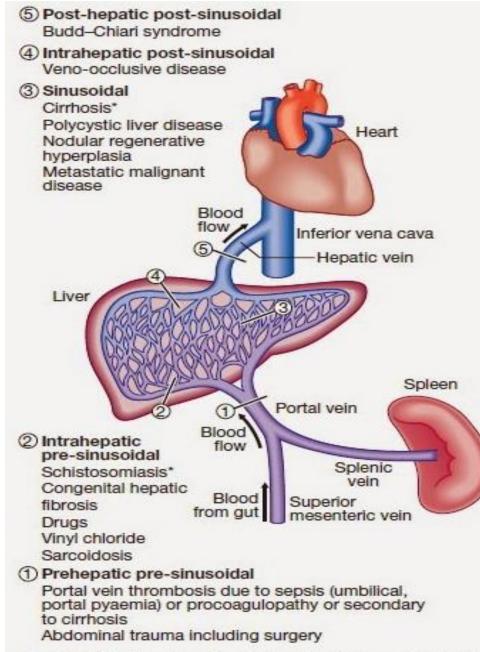


Fig. 23.19 Classification of portal hypertension according to site of vascular obstruction. *Most common cause. Note that splenic vein occlusion can also follow pancreatitis, leading to gastric varices.

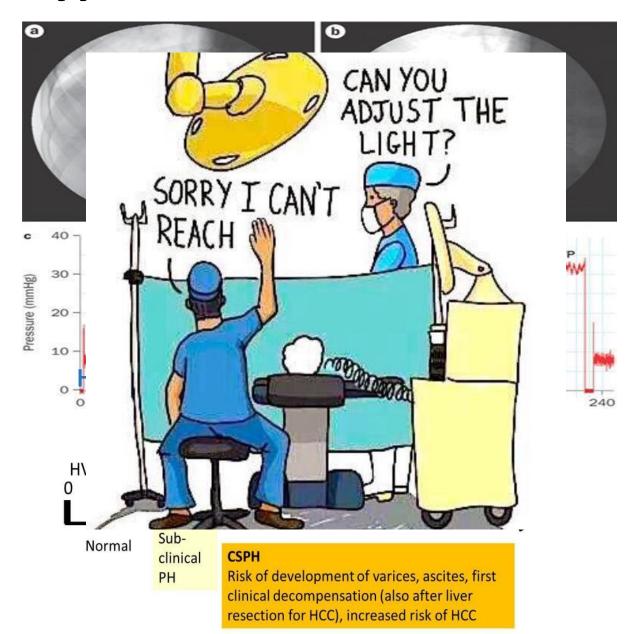
- 1. Pre-hepatic pre-sinusoidal
- 2. Intra-hepatic pre-sinusoidal

3. Intra-hepatic sinusoidal

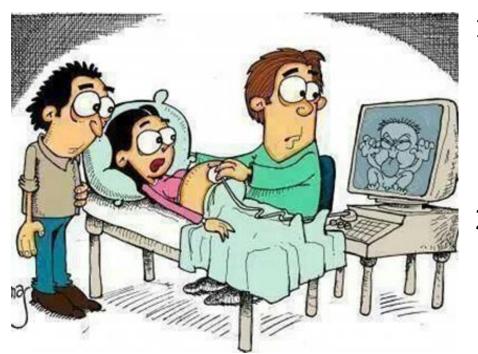


- 4. Intra-hepatic post-sinusoidal
- 5. Post-hepatic post-sinusoidal

Portal Hypertension: reference standard



Role of Ultrasound



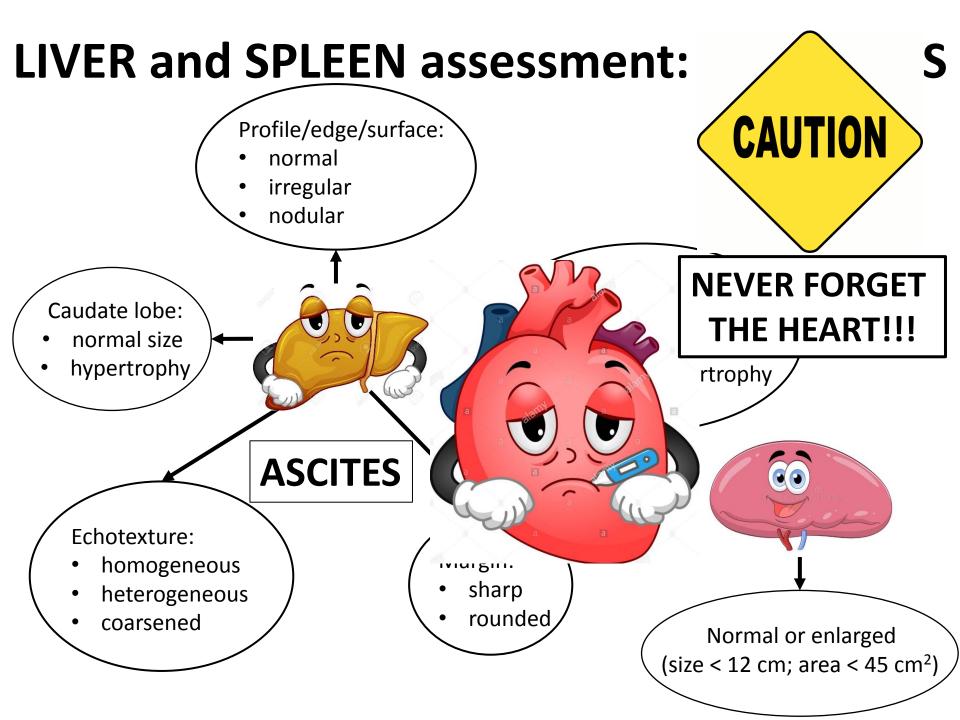
- 1. First-line imaging technique used in patients with suspected PH, since it is noninvasive, repeatable and cheap.
- 2. US examiners should be able to detect and report correctly the most important signs of PH.
- 3. Most US signs of PH are independent of its underlying cause, and their interpretation should always be integrated with clinical information.
- 4. When patients already show overt clinical features of PH and no other data is available, US examination facilitates the classification of the mechanism which led to PH.

Instrument-based requirements

- ☐ Convex transducers between 3.5 and 5MHz. Higher frequencies might be necessary in children. Moreover, linear transducers (7.5–10MHz) might be needed to properly assess the liver surface, since they significantly increase the performance of US in the detection of liver cirrhosis.
- ☐ The US equipment should be provided with **pulsed** and color/power Doppler modules to assess the patency of the vessels and to characterize the haemodynamic features of portal and splanchnic circulations.

Examination procedure

- ☐ The *liver, spleen and portal venous system* should always be examined in any patient with suspected PH.
- ☐ Patient needs to be in a **fasting** state for at least 6 hours (food ingestion induces hemodynamic changes)
- ☐ Examination should be started after 5-10 minutes of a **supine position** (exercise and posture changes induce hemodynamic changes).
- ☐ Quantitative Doppler measurements should be performed in suspended **normal respiration**, avoiding deep inspiration or expiration.



Vascular assessment: color/power Doppler

portal vein (PV) diameter velocity congestion in

dex

where to measure

oblique-transversal scan in epigastrium/ right subcostal region to visualize PV along its longitudinal axis for at least 3 – 4 cm

how to measure and normal values

B-mode,

 measure PV diameter as distance from inner anterior wall to inner posterior wall, perpendicular to the long portal axis, at the cross with hepatic artery or slightly downstream (but≥ 2 cm upstream from portal bifurcation) wherever the vessel walls are best visualized. Aim: to maintain a large angle between US waves and portal walls.

pulsed-Doppler,

- the diameter is to be preferably measured with grayscale B-mode ultrasound, since CDUS, despite facilitating identification of the vessel, also implies a risk of overestimation of the diameter, related to the size of the color pixels.
- measured during normal suspended respiration in the supine position (forced inspiration or left-side decubitus make measurement unreliable)
- normal ≤ 12 mm (diameter increases according to body surface and spleen size)
- place sample volume (≥ 50% of the diameter of PV) in the middle of the lumen at the cross with hepatic artery [8, 12]
- Doppler angle preferably set at 55°, but always ≤ 60°
- Doppler flowmetry, recommended PRF = 4 kHz; wall filter = 100 Hz (decrease to 50 Hz if very slow flow)
- either use concurrent display of color Doppler image and Doppler flowmetry measurement if feasible (top equipment) or freeze B-mode image while displaying Doppler flowmetry tracings
- manual tracing of Doppler signal for at least 2 cardiac cycles or ≥ 2 3 seconds; time averaged maximal velocity is calculated by the equipment in cm/s; the mean velocity can be approximated as the time averaged max velocity *0.57. Direct measurement of the mean portal vein velocity is technically feasible but strongly influenced by Doppler setting [8], resulting in low reproducibility. Measurement of time averaged maximal velocity is recommended
- normal time averaged maximum velocity > 20 24 cm/s⁵

calculated as PV cross-sectional area (diameter/ $2 \times$ diameter/ $2 \times \pi$)/mean portal flow velocity

normal < 0.075

Vascular assessment: B-mode, pulsed-Doppler, color/power Doppler

splenic vein	diameter	transverse scan in epi-	measure SV diameter at least 1 – 2 cm upstream from the spleno-portal confluen-	
		gastrium, to visualize SV	ce, during suspended normal respiration in supine position	
		longitudinal axis	diameter ≥ 10 mm is to be considered enlarged	
superior mes.	diameter	longitudinal scan in epi-	measure SMV diameter about 1 – 2 cm upstream from the mesenteric-portal con-	
vein		gastrium, to visualize	fluence, during suspended normal respiration in supine position	
		SMV longitudinal axis	diameter ≥ 10 mm is to be considered enlarged	
porto-collateral	presence or ab-	•	ls should be actively looked for by US and color Doppler US:	
circulation	sence	paraumbilical vein: falciform ligament		
Circulation	Jenee	•	region posterior to left hepatic lobe. Also check the flow direction.	
			ochondrium posterior to the upper pole of the spleen	
		•	ft hypochondrium between the lower half of the spleen and the left kidney	
hanatiquaina	diameter and no		normal diameter ≤ 1 cm	
hepatic veins	diameter and pa-	right subcostal or right	normal diameter S i Cm	
	tency	intercostal scan (the lat-		
	phasicity of flow	ter especially for Dopp-	the sample volume should be about the same as the diameter of the vein; quanti-	
		ler flow tracing measu-	tative information (flow velocity) is restricted to selected cases (stenosis)	
		rement) allowing main	normal triphasic flow. Flow tracings to be assessed during suspended normal re-	
		axis visualization	spiration (forced inspiration may flatten the tracing. However, if regularly triphasic	
		sampling at 1–3 cm	during forced inspiration, a normal tracing is still ascertained). Assessment best in	
		from IVC	supine position, but also acceptable in left decubitus.	
inferior vena	diameter and pa-	transverse/longitudinal	normal tri-quadriphasic flow; tend to collapse in expiration; caliber < 2 cm.	
cava	tency	scans from the thoraco-		
		abdominal region (in-		
		tercostal and subcostal)		
		,		

hepatic artery	intraparenchy- mal Doppler impe- dance indexes	main lobar branches in the right and left lobe	color Doppler helps in finding the site of measurement, adjacent to the lobar branches of the portal vein. Right branch usually best visualized through an intercostal scan at its entrance to the liver, left branch through an epigastric scan, either during suspended normal respiration or during forced inspiration (to be maintained no longer than approximately 10 seconds, otherwise hypoxia induces vaso dilatation). Increase PRF to improve Doppler tracings, aiming at having a trace occupying approximately ¾ of the screen height. At least 2 identical consecutive complete arterial tracings are required (at best ≥ 3) to confirm that no change in the pulsed Doppler insonation angle occurred during the recording of tracings in any cardiac cycle. Normal: RI < 0.65-0.70; PI < 1.20
splenic artery	intraparenchy- mal Doppler Impe- dance indexes	main branches 1 cm af- ter entering the paren- chyma	color Doppler helps in finding the site of measurement, usually parallel to the intrasplenic veins. Adjust PRF to improve Doppler tracings, aiming at having a trace occupying approximately between ½ and ¾ of the screen height, after having lowered the zero Doppler line. Angle of insonation preferable between 20° and 60°. Measurements through a left intercostal space in the supine position during either suspended normal respiration or forced inspiration (to be kept no longer than approximately 10 seconds, otherwise hypoxia induces vasodilation). Sample volume usually 2–4 mm, often larger than arterial diameter. At least 2 identical complete arterial tracings are required (at best ≥ 3) to confirm that no change in pulsed Doppler insonation angle occurred during the tracing of any cardiac cycle.
superior mesen- teric artery (SMA)	diameter and Doppler impe- dance indexes	longitudinal scan in epi- gastrium, to visualize SMA longitudinal axis	site of assessment: 3–5 cm distal to the origin, ideally shortly after the initial curve, where the course is straight. Sample volume set as large as the artery. Adjust PRF to improve Doppler tracings, aiming at having a trace occupying approximately between ½ and ¾ of the screen height. normal in fasting state: RI > 0.84; PI > 3.20. Diameter ≤6 mm. At least 2 identical consecutive complete arterial tracings are required (at best ≥3) to confirm that no change in pulsed Doppler insonation angle occurred during the tracing of any cardiac cycle.
renal arteries	intraparenchy- mal Dop pler im- pedance indexes	interlobar (or interlobu- lar) arteries	visualize the kidney as superficially as possible (usually through a rather posterior approach). Preliminary CDUS is strongly recommended to visualize the arterial tree. Keep CDUS PRF low (700–800 Hz or few cm/sec in equipments reporting PRF as velocity assuming a 0° angle). Measurements taken either during suspended normal respiration or forced inspiration (to be kept no longer than approximately 10 seconds, otherwise hypoxia induces vasodilation). Sample volume usually 2–4 mm, larger than artery diameter. Adjust PRF to improve Doppler tracings, aiming at having a trace occupying approximately ¾ of the screen height, after having lowered the zero Doppler line. At least 2 identical consecutive complete arterial tracings are required (at best ≥3) to confirm that no change in pulsed Doppler insonation angle occurred during the tracing of any cardiac cycle. normal: RI < 0.70 (in adult patients); PI < 1.15–1.20

Berzigotti A, Piscaglia F. , Ultraschall in Med 2011; 32: 548-571

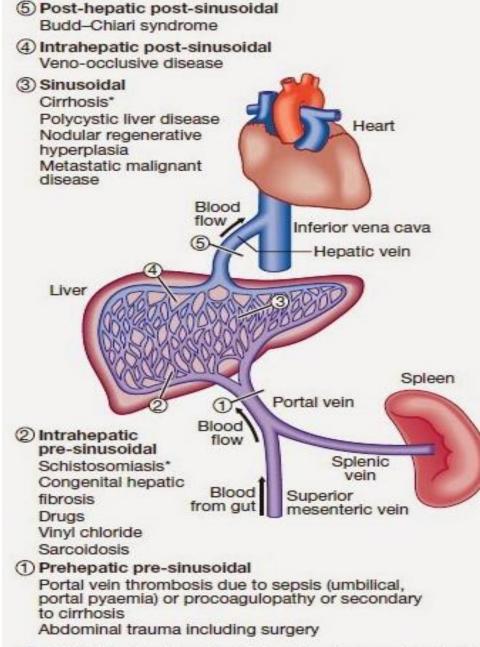


Fig. 23.19 Classification of portal hypertension according to site of vascular obstruction. *Most common cause. Note that splenic vein occlusion can also follow pancreatitis, leading to gastric varices.

1. Pre-hepatic pre-sinusoidal

2. Intra-hepatic pre-sinusoidal

3. Intra-hepatic sinusoidal



Cirrhosis

4. Intra-hepatic post-sinusoidal

5. Post-hepatic post-sinusoidal

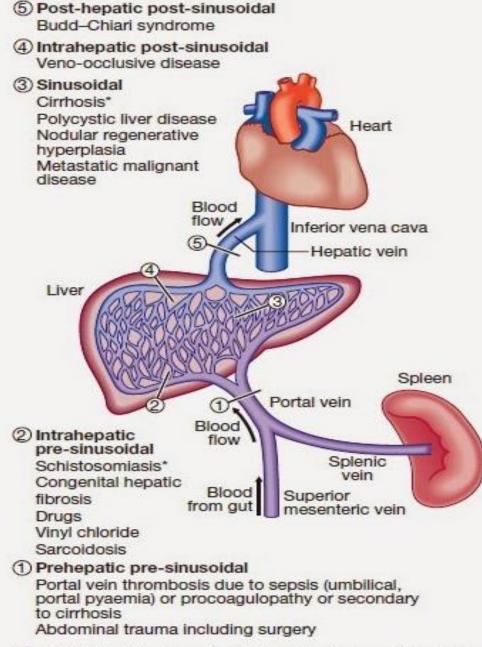
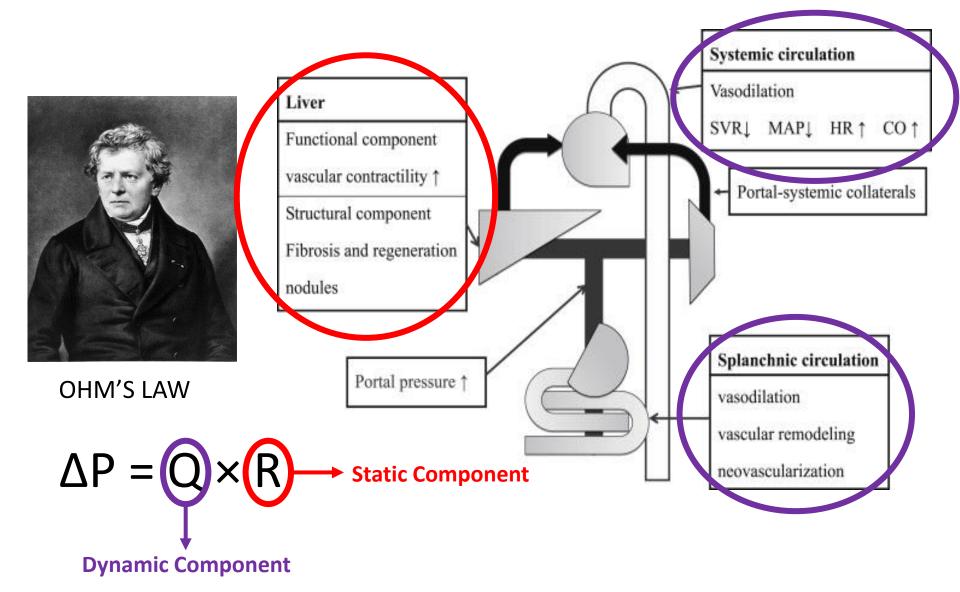


Fig. 23.19 Classification of portal hypertension according to site of vascular obstruction. *Most common cause. Note that splenic vein occlusion can also follow pancreatitis, leading to gastric varices.

3. Intra-hepatic sinusoidal Cirrhosis

Cirrhotic Portal Hypertension: pathogenesis



LIVER CIRRHOSIS

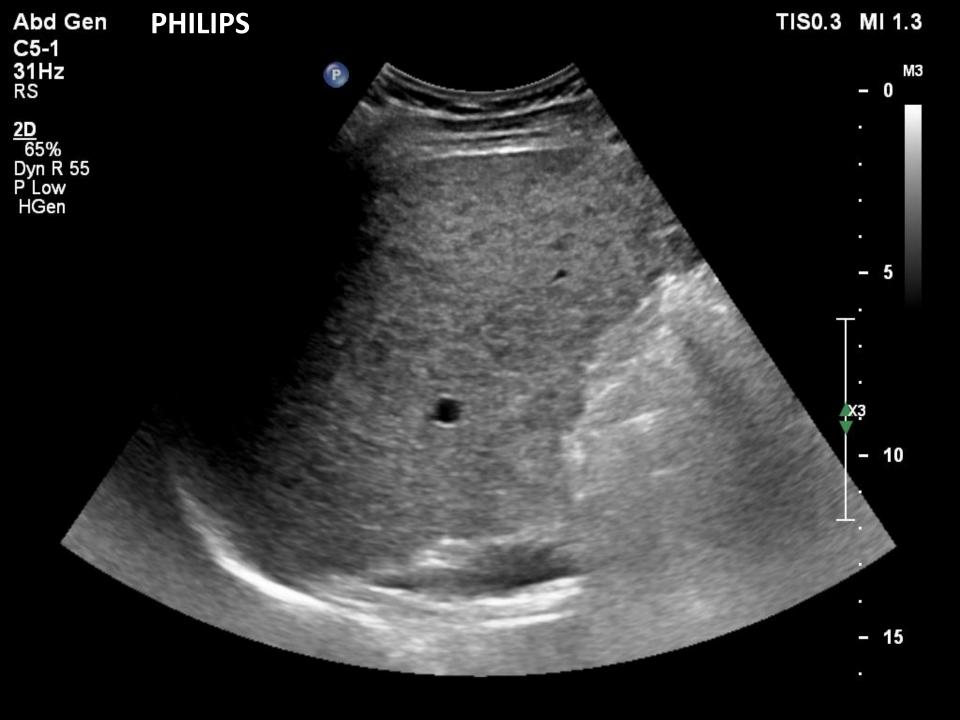
Eco-color Doppler:

- Portal Vein:
 - ✓ Flow velocity (TAPV) < 20-24 cm/sec
 - √ Hepatofugal flow
- Hepatic Artery:
 - ✓ RI > 0,70
- Hepatic Veins:
 - ✓ Monophasic/biphasic Doppler waveform
- Other vessels:
 - ✓ Umbilical vein recanalization
 - ✓ Collateral vessels/varices

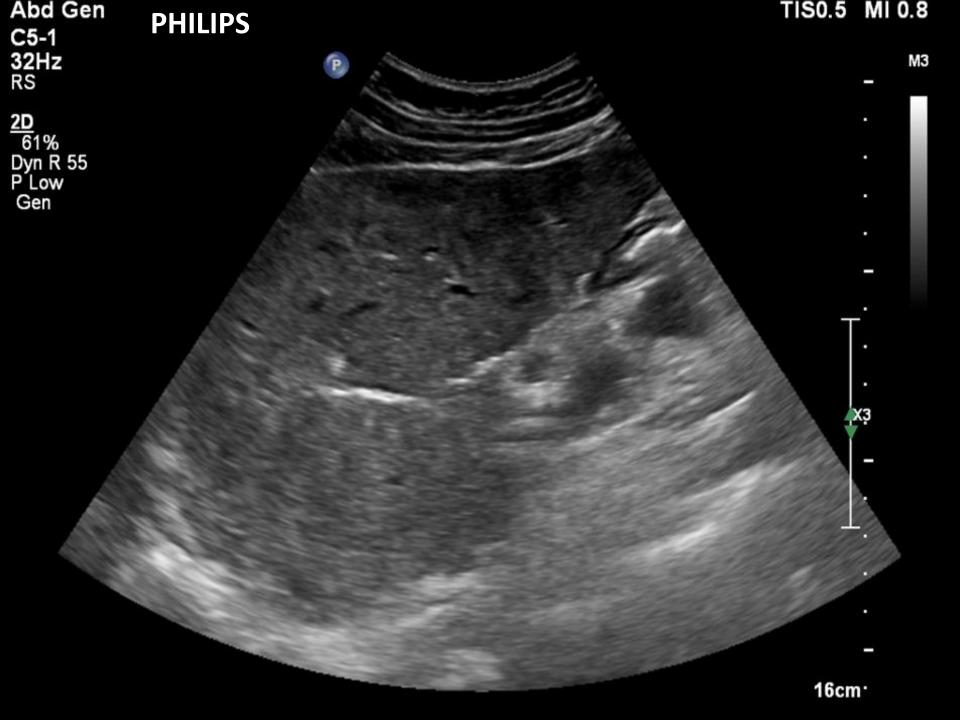
LIVER CIRRHOSIS

B-mode US:

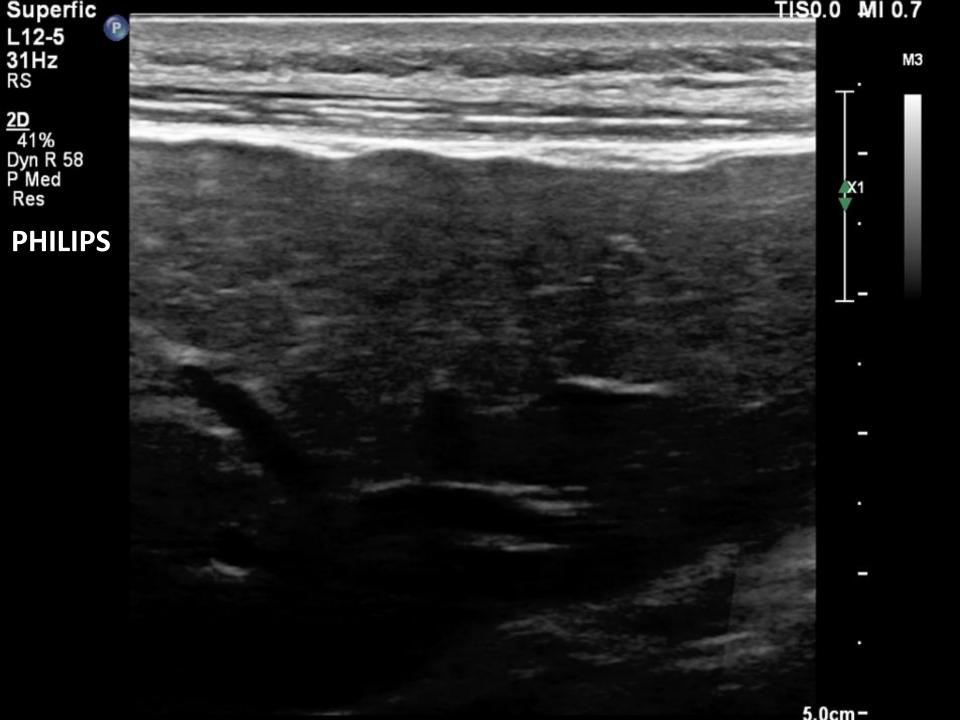
- Irregular/nodular liver profile
- Caudate hypertrophy/right hypotrophy/relative left hypertrophy
- Heterogeneous/coarse echo-texture
- Rounded margin
- PV calibre > 13 mm
- No changes of PV calibre with respiration
- Absence of respiratory phasicity
- Enlarged spleen (size > 13mm, area > 45 cm²)





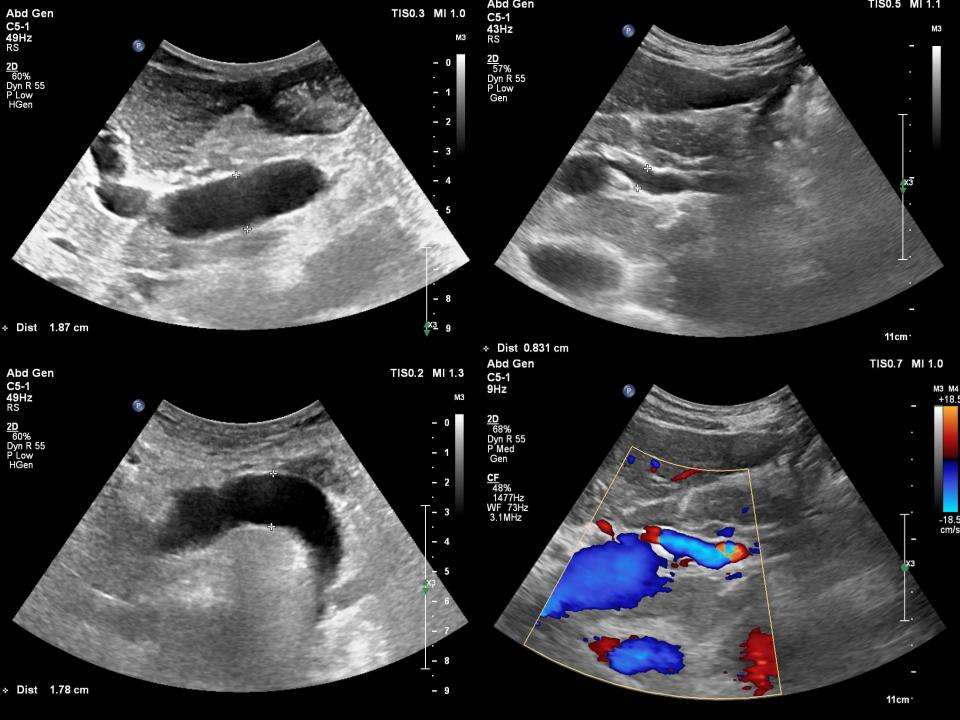


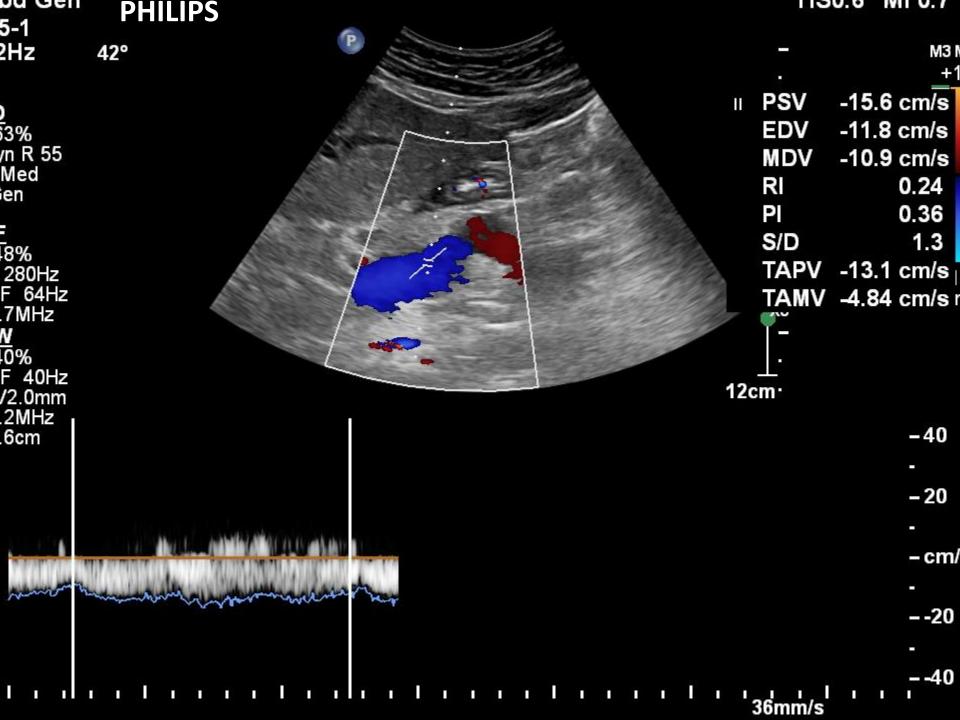




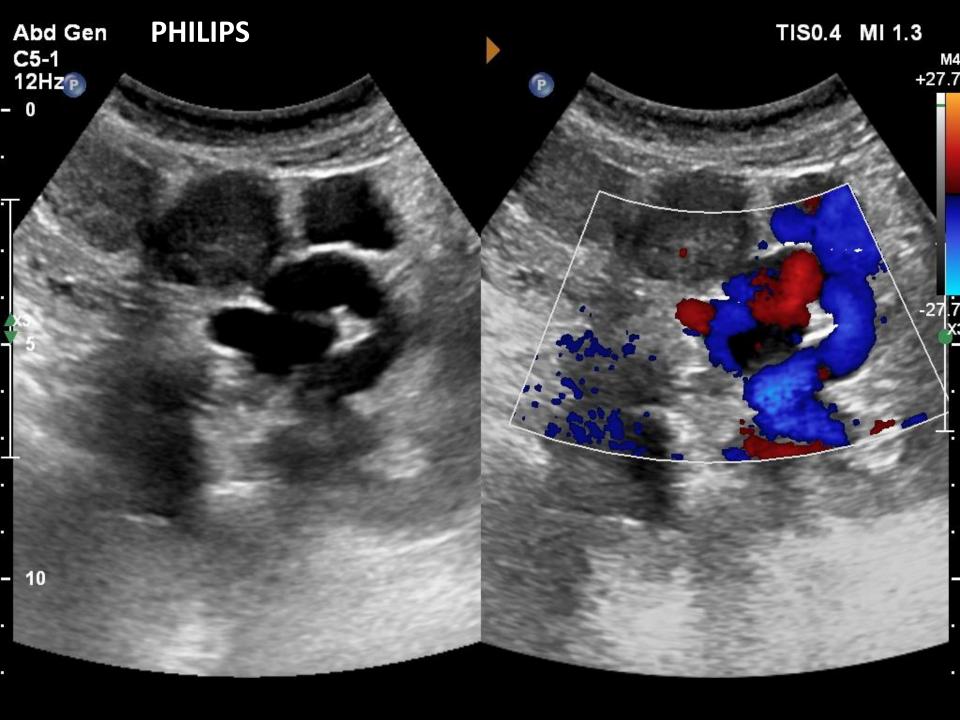
Superfic L12-5 31Hz RS TIS0.0 MI 0.7 МЗ 2D 41% Dyn R 58 P Med Res X1 **PHILIPS** 5.0cm-

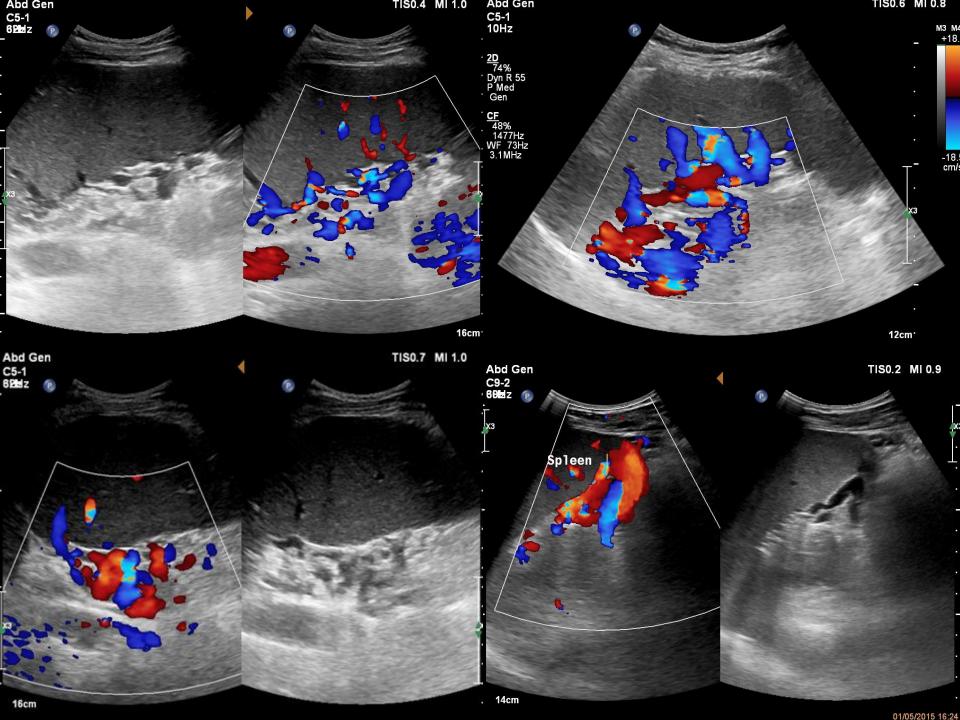


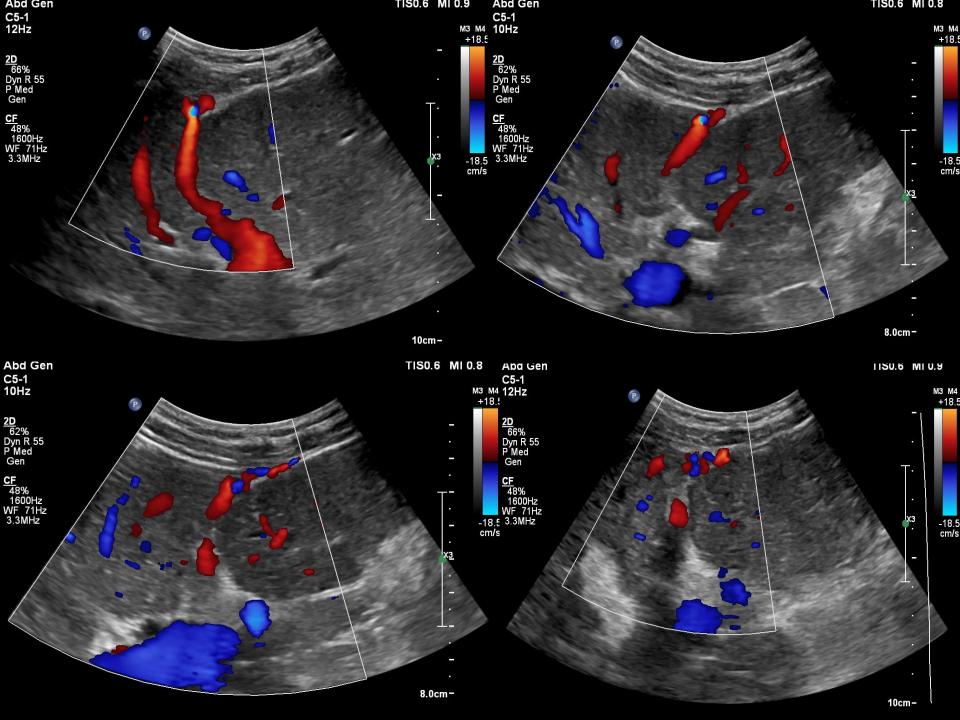












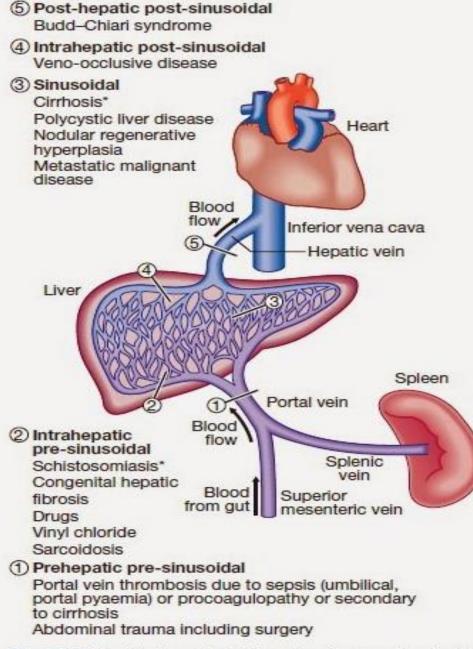


Fig. 23.19 Classification of portal hypertension according to site of vascular obstruction. *Most common cause. Note that splenic vein occlusion can also follow pancreatitis, leading to gastric varices.

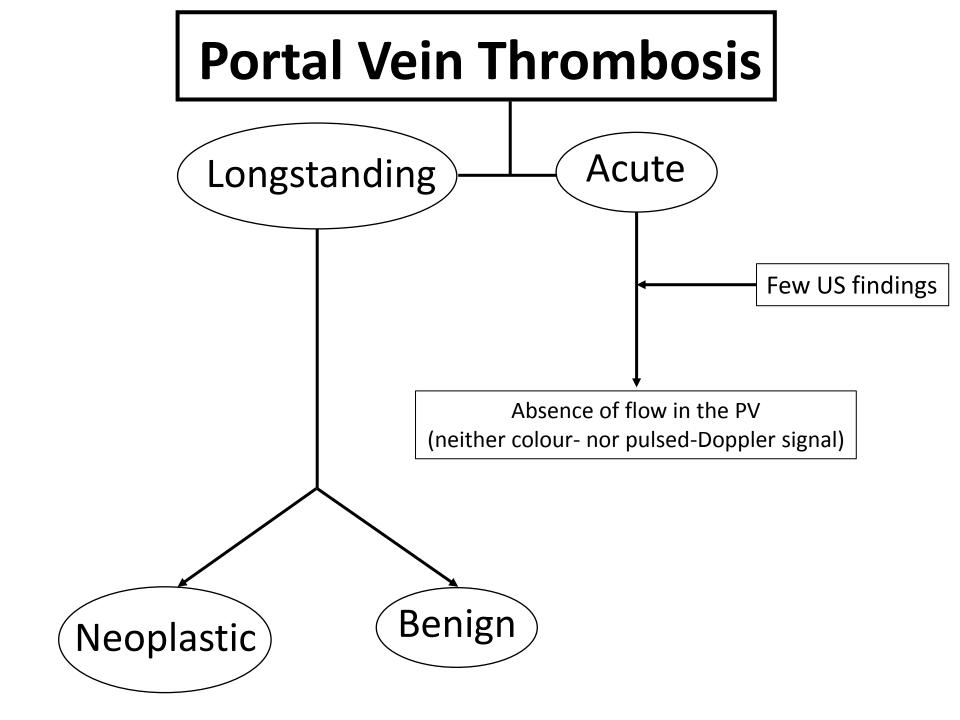
Pre-hepatic pre-sinusoidal
 Intra-hepatic pre-sinusoidal

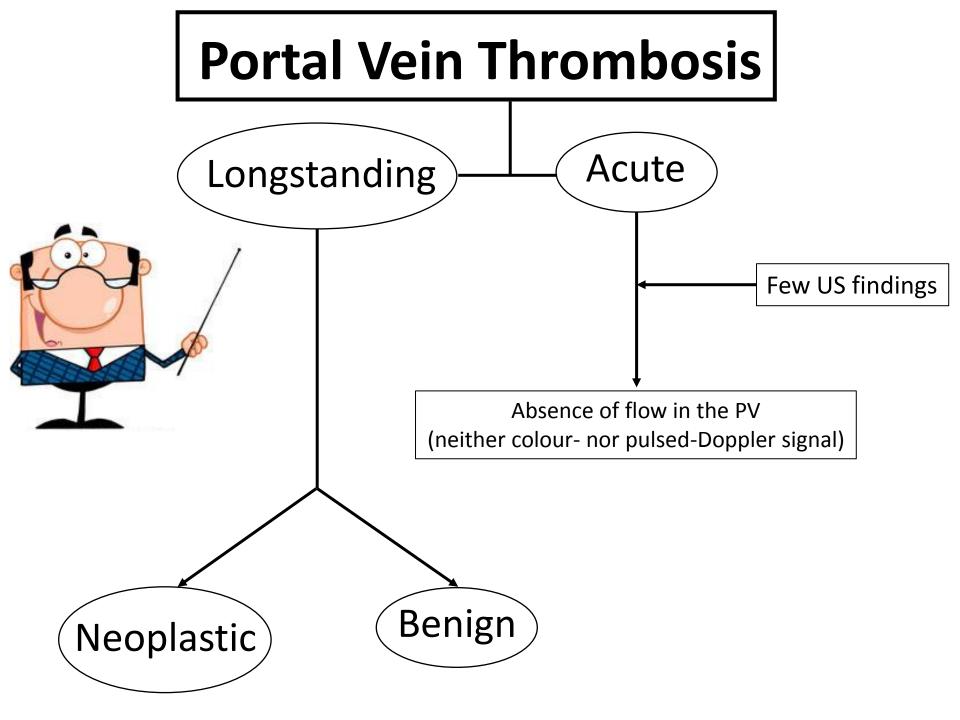
Portal Vein Thrombosis

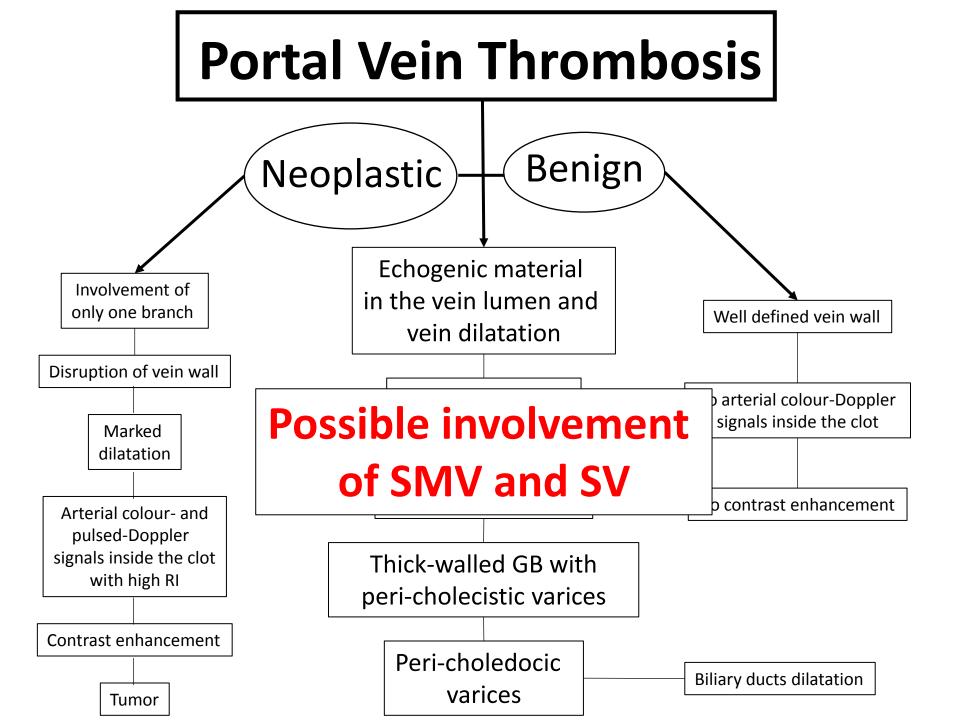
Cirrhosis

4. Intra-hepatic post-sinusoida

5. Post-hepatic post-sinusoidal





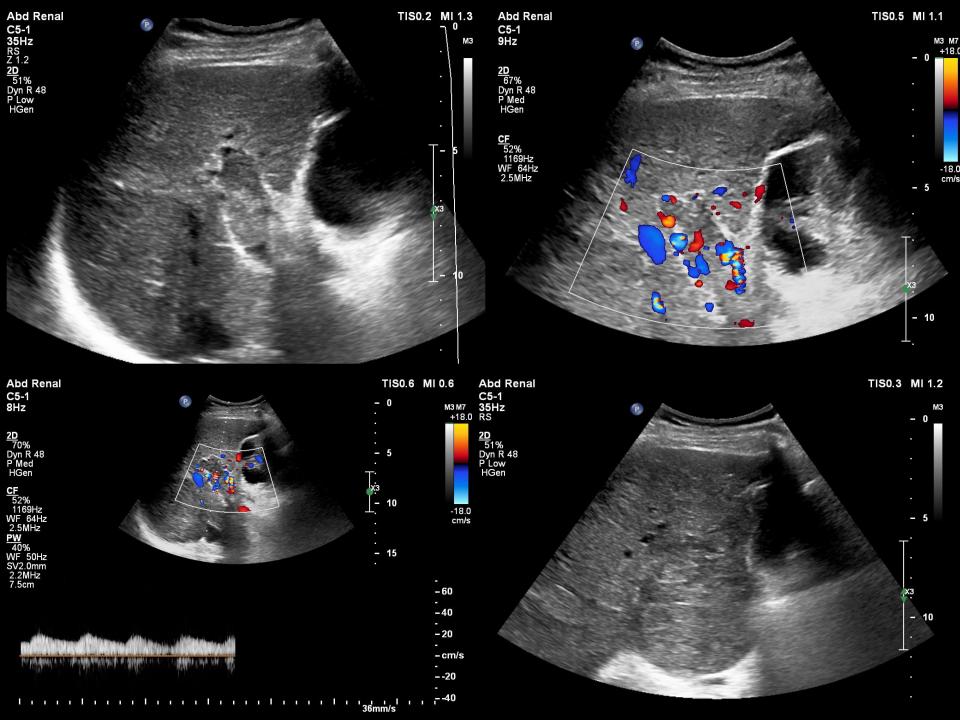


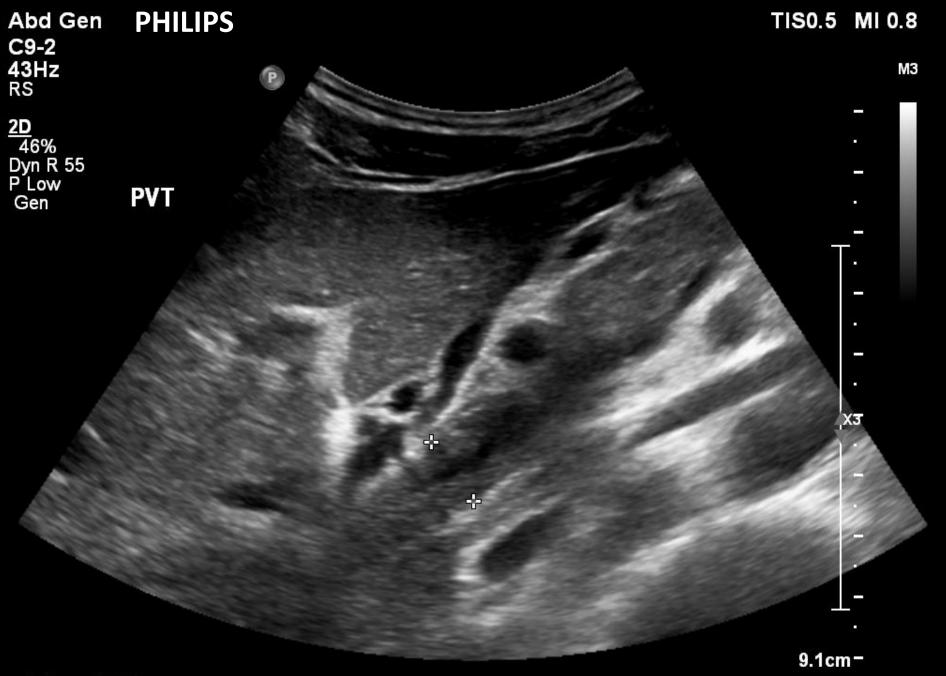
Portal Vein Thrombosis B-mode US:

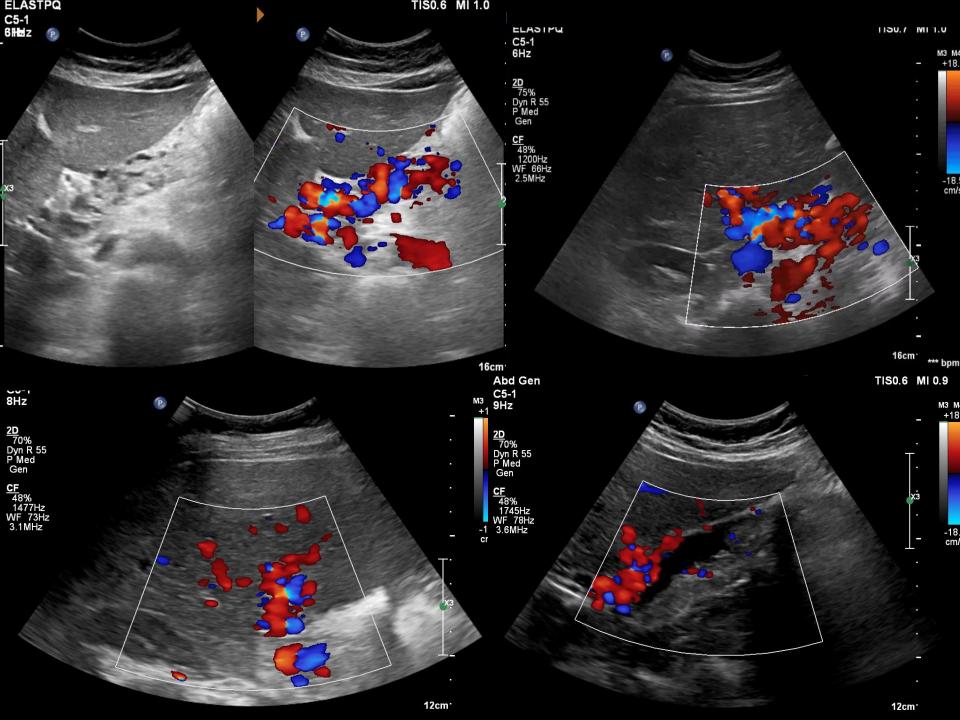
- Normal or heterogeneous liver parenchyma
- Focal liver lesion
- A marked heterogenous hepatic area: infiltrating carcinoma
- Hepatic artery hypertrophy
- Enlarged spleen (size > 13mm, area > 45 cm²)

Eco-color Doppler:

- Portal cavernoma transformation
- Hepatic Artery:
 - ✓ RI > 0,70
- Collateral vessels/varices









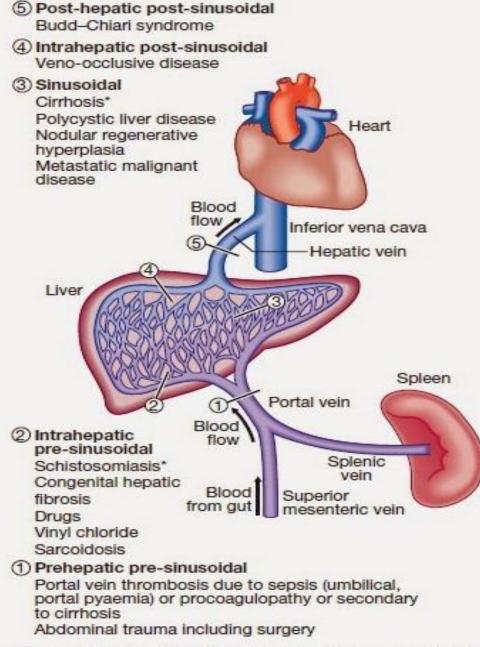


Fig. 23.19 Classification of portal hypertension according to site of vascular obstruction. *Most common cause. Note that splenic vein occlusion can also follow pancreatitis, leading to gastric varices.

1. Pre-hepatic pre-sinusoidal

2. Intra-hepa re-sinusoidal

- Chronic right heart failure with cardiac liver cirrhosis
- 2. Tricuspid valve disease
- 3. Constrictive pericarditis
- 4. Intra-hepa pst-sinusoidal
- 5. Post-hepatic post-sinusoidal

PH related to Heart disease

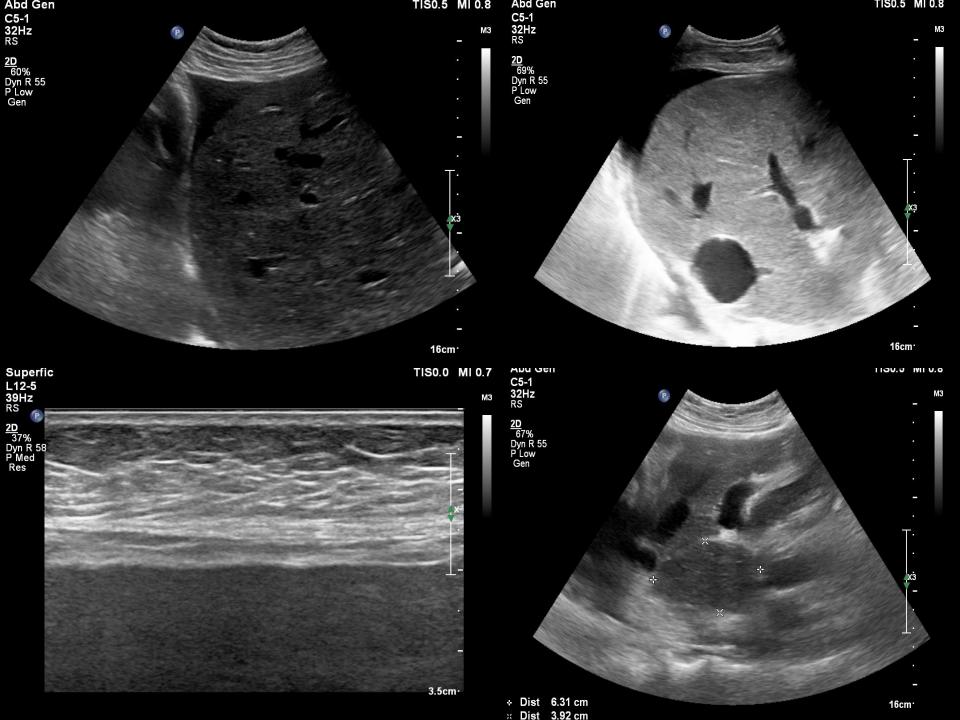
B-mode US:

- Enlarged/congested liver
- US features of liver cirrhosis (cardiac cirrhosis)
- Enlarged spleen (size > 13mm, area > 45 cm²)
- US features of tricuspid regurgitation and/or heart failure
- PV size > 13 mm
- No PV calibre changes with respiration
- IVC calibre > 2 cm
- HVs calibre > 1 cm
- No IVC inspiratory collapse or < 40%

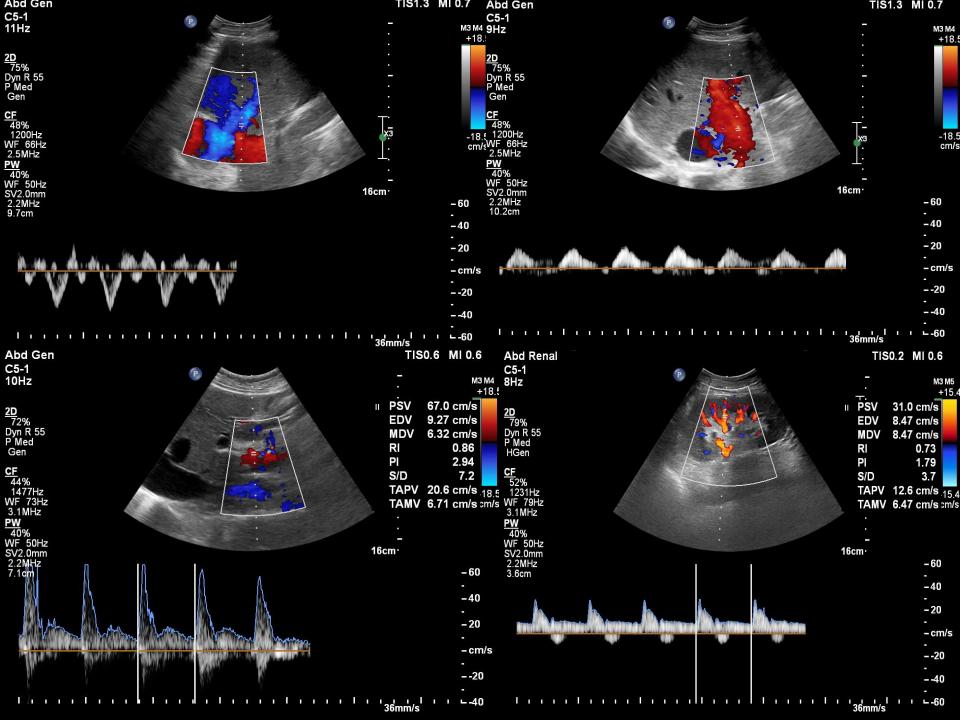
PH related to Heart disease

Eco-color Doppler:

- Portal Vein:
 - ✓ Phasic flow
 - ✓ Hepatofugal flow
 - ✓ Flow velocity (TAPV) < 20-24 cm/sec
- **Hepatic artery:** RI > 0,70
- Hepatic Veins:
 - ✓ Quadriphasic Doppler waveform
- Other vessels:
 - ✓ Umbilical vein recanalization
 - ✓ Collaterals vessels/varices





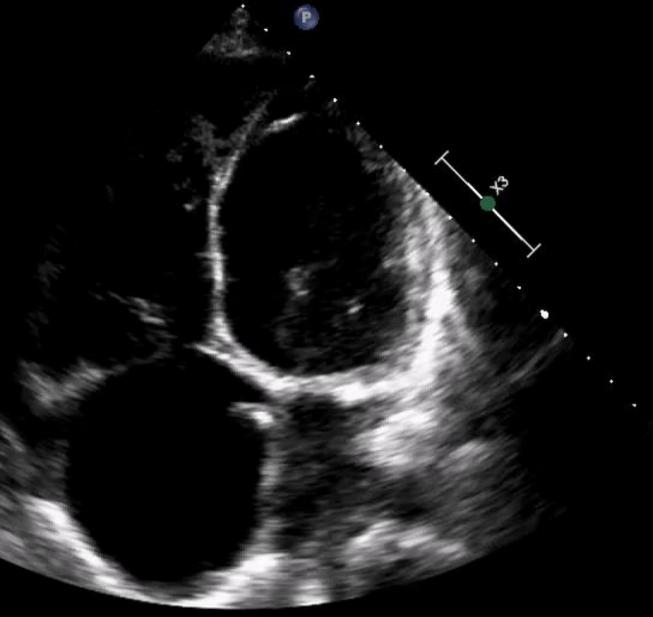


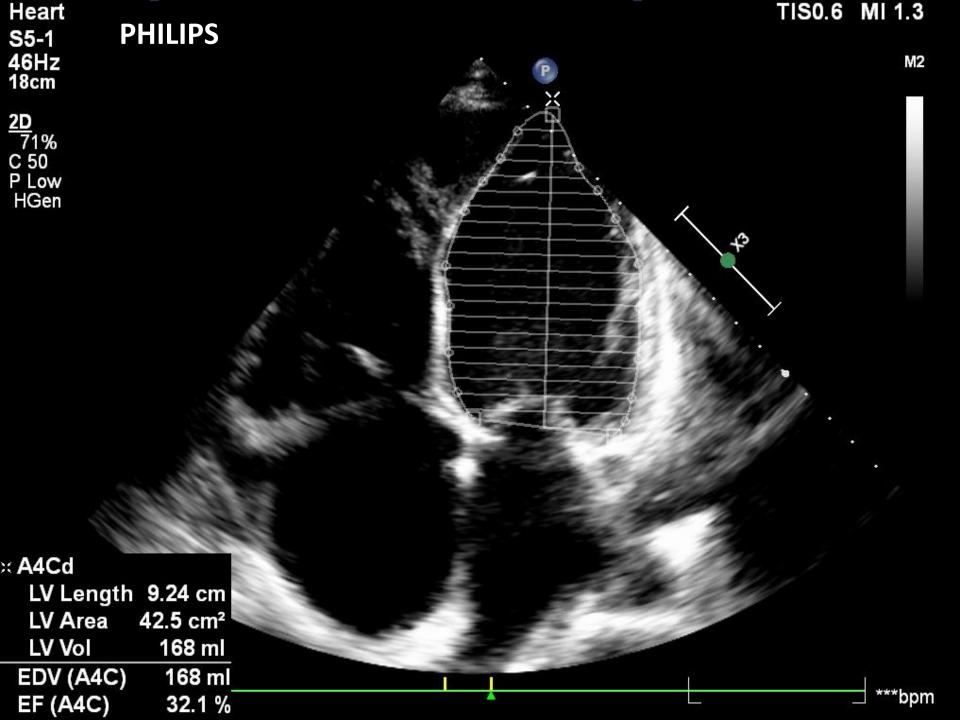
Heart S5-1 46Hz ^{18cm}

2D 71% C 50 P Low HGen **PHILIPS**

TIS0.6 MI 1.3

M2





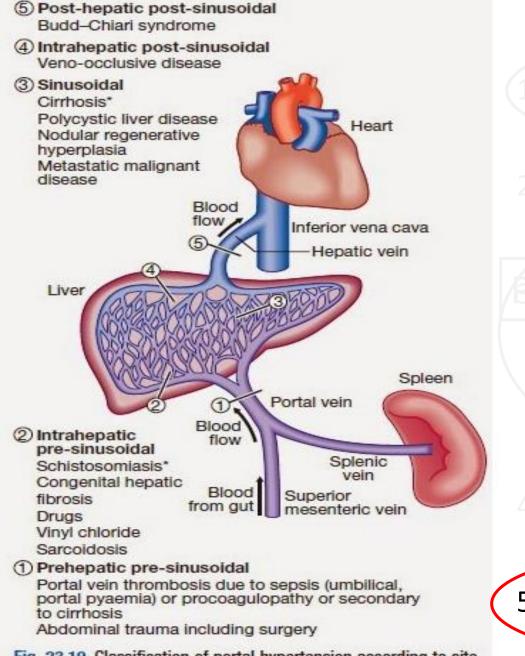


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Budd-Chiari syndrome (HVs thrombosis) 4. Intra-hepa ost-sinusoidal 5. Post-hepatic post-sinusoidal

Budd-Chiari Syndrome

In the acute form of BCS

Eco-color Doppler:

Lack of visualization of one or more hepatic veins at the color-Doppler

B-mode US:

A thrombus filling the vein, vein stenosis, or a tumor invading or compressing the veins.

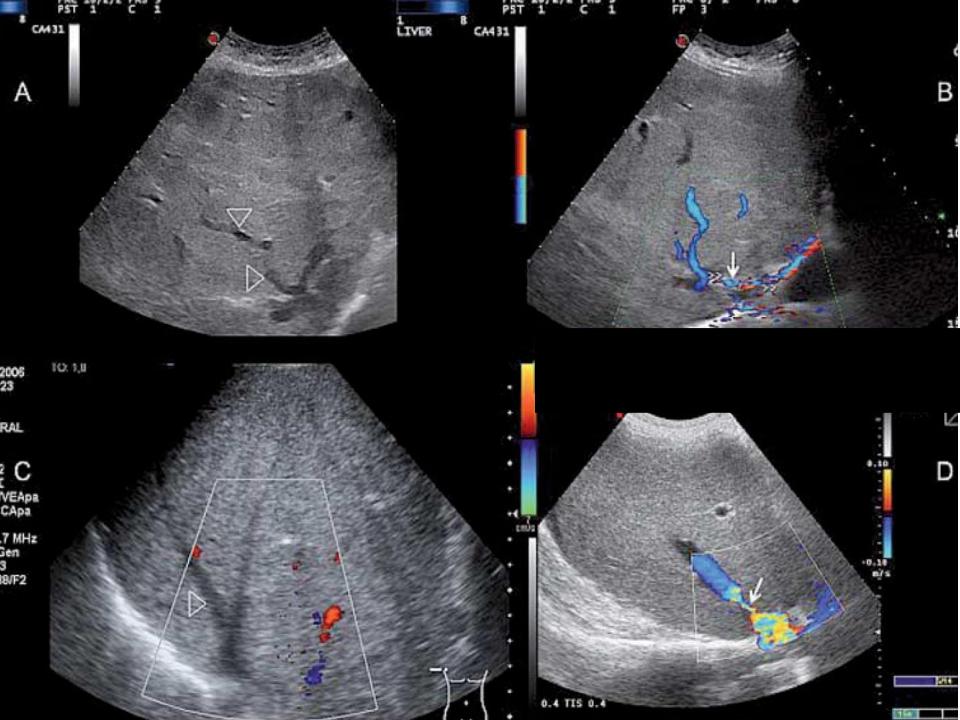
In subacute and chronic forms of BCS

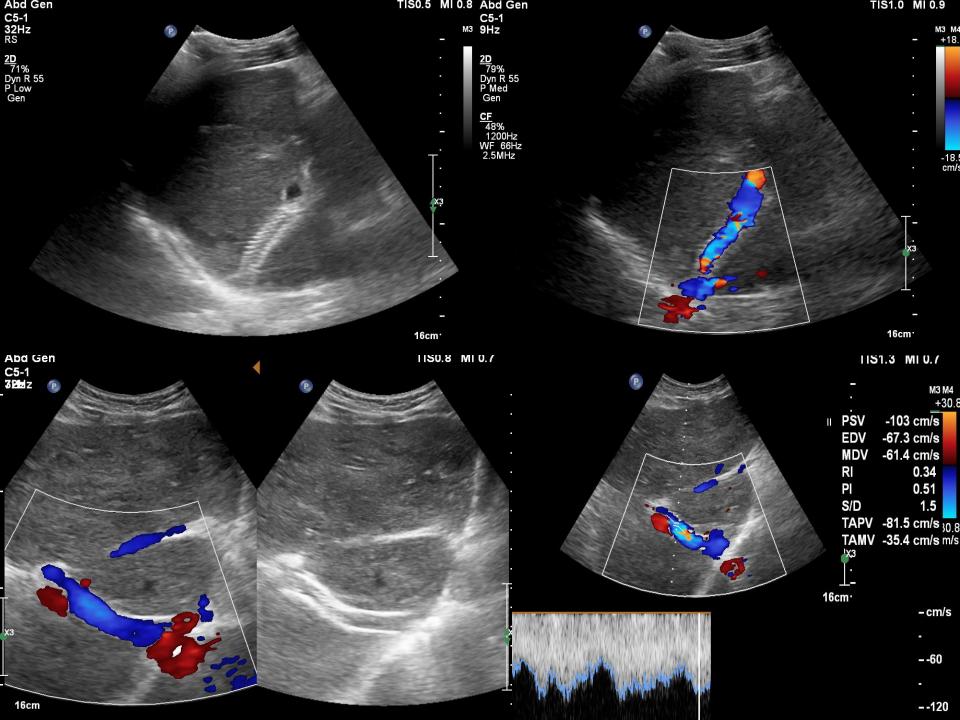
Eco-color Doppler:

 A fragmented vein with flow reversal, or new venous vessels that drain sub-capsular circulation to another hepatic vein or directly to the inferior vena cava

B-mode US:

- A fibrous tract replacing the obstructed hepatic veins
- Caudate lobe and caudate vein hypertrophy
- Enlarged liver with grossly heterogeneous echo-texture





Limitations of US examination in this field

- ☐ Abdominal air interposition which may prevent correct and complete visualization of the abdominal organs and vessels.
- ☐ Massive ascites also impairs the imaging of the liver and abdominal vessels.
- ☐ A well recognized limitation of quantitative Doppler measurements is the **inter-equipment and inter-observer variability** which reduces the comparability of this data among different centers.
- ☐ Patients in follow-up should preferably be examined by the same operator and with the same equipment whenever possible.
- ☐ Cooperative studies have shown that it is possible to reduce interobserver variability by using a standardized protocol of examination

