PIPADOR REVISION

MRCOG Part 1 Revision Notes

Choriocarcinoma

PATHOLOGY • LECTURE 326

VISUAL EXAMINATION REVISION NOTES

2026 Edition

326

MRCOG PART 1 REVISION NOTES | PATHOLOGY

Choriocarcinoma

Pathology, origin, presentation, FIGO scoring and treatment of gestational choriocarcinoma

No villi	Lungs	Any pregnancy	EMA-CO
Cyto- & syncytiotrophoblast	≈ 80% of metastases	Can precede it	High-risk chemotherapy

■ KEY FACTS: Learning objectives

- Describe the pathology and origin of gestational choriocarcinoma.
- Describe presentation, spread and investigation.
- Describe FIGO scoring and treatment.

326.1 Pathology and presentation

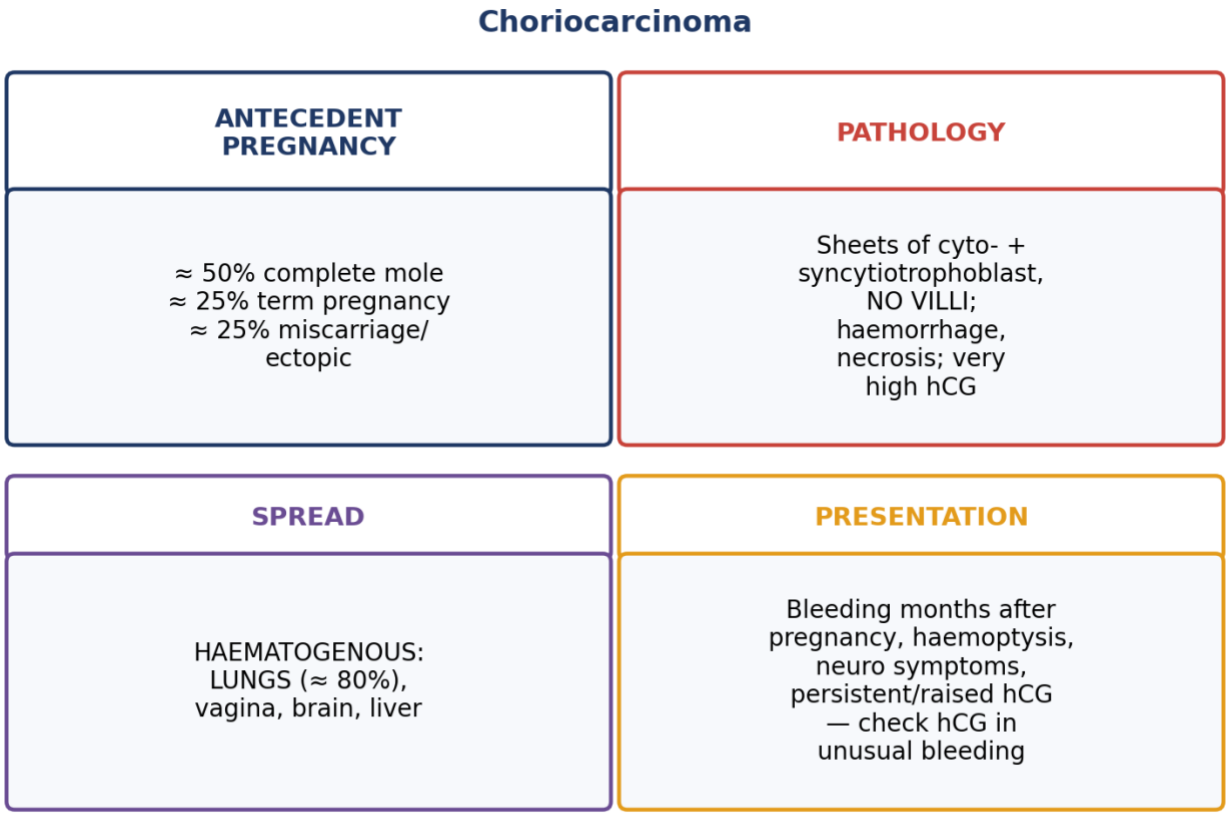


Figure 326.1 — Choriocarcinoma

- Highly malignant, rapidly growing, haemorrhagic tumour with **dimorphic trophoblast** (cytotrophoblast + syncytiotrophoblast) and **no chorionic villi**.
- Incidence ≈ 1 in 50,000 deliveries; may follow any pregnancy, sometimes years later.
- **Any woman with unexplained bleeding, haemoptysis, neurological symptoms or 'metastatic cancer' of reproductive age after a pregnancy should have an hCG test.**

- Non-gestational choriocarcinoma (ovarian germ cell, mixed tumours) has different genetics (no paternal DNA) and worse prognosis.

326.2 Scoring and treatment

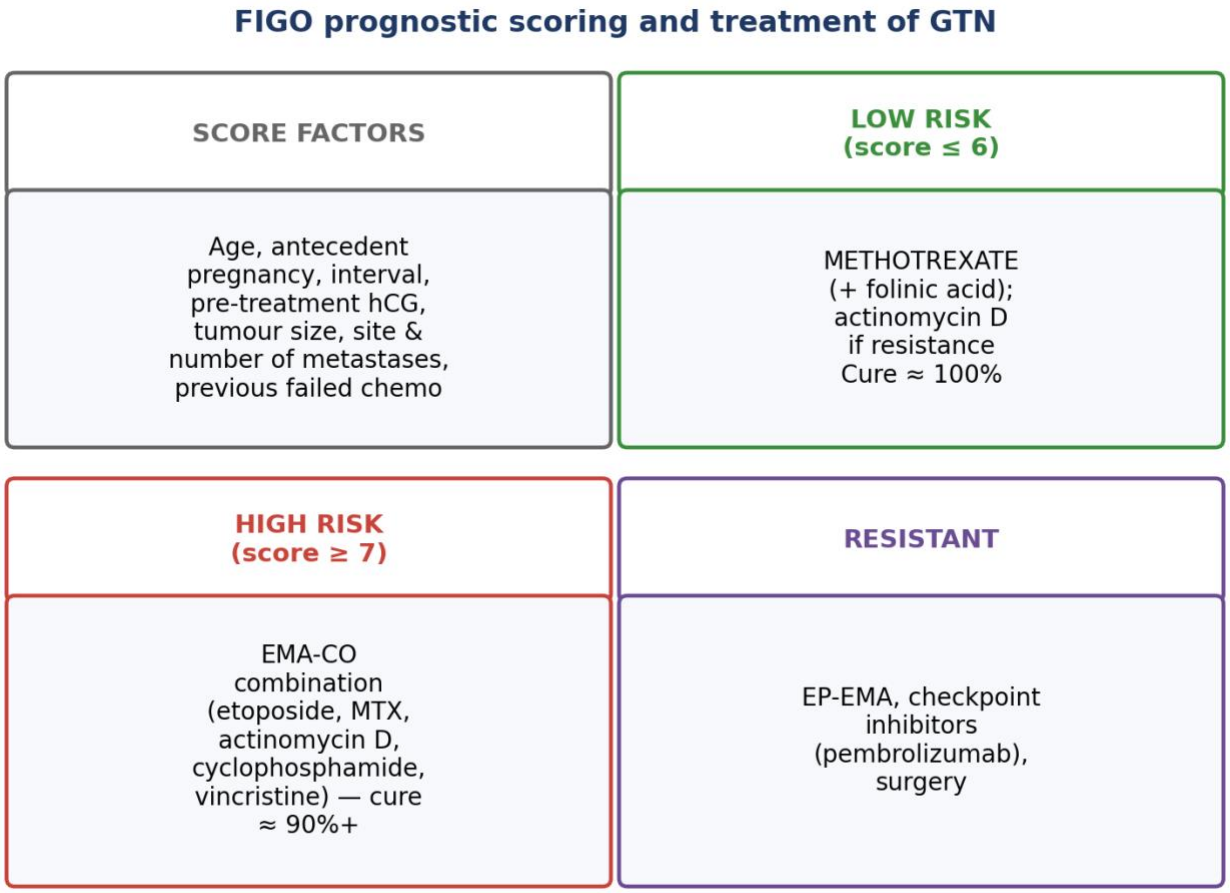


Figure 326.2 — FIGO prognostic scoring and treatment

Topic	Details
Investigations	• HCG, Doppler USS pelvis, CXR/CT chest, MRI brain, CT abdomen • Avoid biopsy of vascular lesions
Treatment	• Chemotherapy per score at a GTD centre • Brain metastases — high-dose methotrexate in EMA-CO, ± radiotherapy/surgery
Outcomes	• High cure rates even with metastases (≈ 90%+ high risk) • Worst prognosis with liver/brain metastases, long interval, term antecedent pregnancy
Follow-up	• Lifelong hCG surveillance (urine) • Contraception for 1 year after treatment

326.3 Must-know summary

■ **EXAM TIP**

- Dimorphic trophoblast, NO villi, haemorrhage; very high hCG.
- Follows mole (50%), term pregnancy (25%) or miscarriage/ectopic (25%).
- Haematogenous spread — lungs, vagina, brain, liver.
- FIGO score ≤ 6 methotrexate; ≥ 7 EMA-CO; highly curable.

■ **MNEMONIC / MEMORY AID**

Choriocarcinoma — 'Cannonball lungs, Copious hCG, Cured by Chemo'.