

First worldwide study finds women's productivity at work significantly impacted by endometriosis

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THE FIRST EVER WORLDWIDE STUDY OF THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF ENDOMETRIOSIS HAS FOUND A SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF WORK PRODUCTIVITY AMONG WOMEN WHO SUFFER FROM THE CONDITION – AN INFLAMMATORY DISEASE ASSOCIATED WITH CHRONIC PAIN AND INFERTILITY DURING THE REPRODUCTIVE YEARS.

Endometriosis accounts for a **significant loss of productivity of 11 hours per woman per week** according to a paper published this week in *Fertility and Sterility* [1].



GSWH Study Coordinator, Dr Kelechi Nnoaham from the University of Oxford, presenting results from the study

The Global Study of Women's Health (GSWH) recruited **1,418 women aged 18-45 from 16 participating centres in 10 countries across five continents**. The women were all scheduled to undergo a laparoscopy to determine whether endometriosis was the cause of their symptoms. Standard methods were used to record the extent of any endometriosis found. Women who had been previously diagnosed with endometriosis were excluded from the study.

The participants were asked to complete a 67-item questionnaire, in their own language, about their symptoms and the impact these had on their lives. The responses were analysed to

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compare the impact of symptoms between women with and without a diagnosis of endometriosis.

Study Coordinator, Dr Kelechi Nnoaham, said that the results of this study would help highlight the previously unrecognised plight of an estimated 176 million women around the world whose lives are affected by endometriosis.

Key findings:

- Women with endometriosis experienced an average delay of 7 years from symptom onset until they were finally diagnosed and treated;
- Two-thirds of women sought medical help for their symptoms before the age of 30 (one-fifth below the age of 19);
- 65% of women with endometriosis presented with pain, and one-third of these women were also infertile;
- Infertility alone, without pain, was reported in 14% of women with endometriosis and 29% of those who did not have endometriosis.
- The severity of endometriosis (r-AFS disease stage) did not reflect the severity of a woman's symptoms;
- Women with endometriosis suffer a 38% greater loss of work productivity than those without endometriosis – this difference was mainly explained by a greater severity of pain symptoms among women with endometriosis;
- Reduced effectiveness at work accounts for more loss of work productivity than time missed from work;
- Non-work related activities, such as housework, exercising, studying, shopping and childcare were also significantly impaired by the painful symptoms of endometriosis;
- The pain symptoms of endometriosis reduce quality of life, with the impact being mainly on physical, rather than mental, health. As symptoms become more severe, quality of life is further reduced.

First ever prospective study paves the way for a better understanding of endometriosis

“Our research is the **first ever prospective study to be undertaken in the field of endometriosis to assess the impact of the disease**”, said principal investigator, Dr Krina Zondervan, epidemiologist and senior scientist at the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics.



GSWH Study Coordinator Dr

“We now have to explore **why endometriosis affects different women in different ways**. And, not only are we now able to build on these findings to look at how a woman's experience of the diagnostic and treatment process can be improved, but the data registries resulting from the GSWH will serve as a repository for ongoing and future studies”, said Dr Zondervan.

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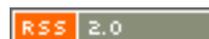
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Publikt

Kelechi Nnoaham, Principal Investigator Dr Krina Zondervan, and WERF trustee Professor Stephen Kennedy

Professor Stephen Kennedy, a co-author and WERF trustee, added: “**Endometriosis affects women during the prime years of their lives**, a time when they should be finishing education, starting and maintaining a career, building relationships and

perhaps have a family. For these women to have their productivity affected, their quality of life compromised and their chances for starting a family reduced, is something society can no longer afford to ignore. **It is time we see serious investment in preventing this debilitating condition in the next generation of women**”, said Professor Kennedy.

Co-authors Kelechi Nnoaham and Lone Hummelshoj speak to Fertility and Sterility about the study: [CLICK HERE](#)  to view the film clip

Source

1. Nnoaham et al. Impact of endometriosis on quality of life and work productivity: a multicenter study across ten countries. [Fertil Steril 2011;96\(2\):366-373](#) .

See also

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