



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women Report Chronic Pelvic Pain Not Taken Seriously

(NAPSA)—In the face of constant and severe pelvic pain, how would you feel if you were told your pain was “normal,” or that you were “exaggerating”? And what if the person telling you this was someone you rely on most for support?

For millions of American women, chronic pelvic pain is a debilitating problem. The condition can be frustrating because the cause is often difficult to pinpoint and many women find that even the people closest to them can be unsupportive. In fact, a new survey conducted by the Endometriosis Association shows that chronic pelvic pain is not taken seriously by the people women rely on most—their physicians, families and friends.

The survey found that nearly 60 percent of women with chronic pelvic pain have been told their pain is normal either by their Obstetrician/Gynecologist (Ob/Gyn) or a friend or family member (29 percent). Forty percent of respondents have been told they exaggerate their pain, more than half were told this by their Ob/Gyn and 43 percent by a friend or family member.

Mary Lou Ballweg, president and executive director of the Endometriosis Association, says the survey results are concerning given the impact pelvic pain can

have on a woman's life. “On a regular basis, we see women completely alter their lives because of the debilitating effects of pelvic pain. The frustrating part is that it often takes years for women to receive a diagnosis, and by then, many are unable to work or fully participate in normal activities.”

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Forty-three percent of women surveyed describe their pain as constant and more than half describe the intensity of the pain as severe to unbearable. With the severity of the pain, it's not surprising that more than 80 percent have been unable to work at times due to pelvic pain.

Causes of Chronic Pelvic Pain

Two of the leading causes of chronic pelvic pain are endometriosis and the formation of post-surgical scar tissue, also called adhesions.

Endometriosis is an immune and hormonal disease that affects five million women and girls in the U.S. Adhesions are abnormal

bands of scar tissue that form inside the pelvis after gynecologic surgery. Up to 90 percent of women who undergo gynecologic surgeries will develop adhesions.

Although adhesions and endometriosis are among the leading causes of pelvic pain, few women ever speak to their doctors about these problems. Women should proactively talk with their physicians about chronic pelvic pain, its underlying causes and how it can be treated, or even prevented in some cases.

“Chronic pelvic pain accounts for 12 percent of hysterectomies and 40 percent of laproscopic surgeries. The total cost of treating chronic pelvic pain is more than \$2 billion each year,” said Dr. Charles Miller, reproductive endocrinologist, gynecological surgeon and medical director of Specialists in Reproductive Health in Arlington Heights and Naperville, IL. “As I've seen with many patients and as their survey bears out, chronic pelvic pain exacts a significant emotional as well as physical toll, which makes it even more important that women speak to a doctor at the first signs of pelvic pain.”

For more information about chronic pelvic pain, contact the Endometriosis Association at www.EndometriosisAssn.org or 1-800-992-3636.