

Window on the science



Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a painful condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows into other parts of body where it doesn't belong. Most endometriosis is found in the pelvis and affects the reproductive organs.

1 in 9
Australian women will be diagnosed with endometriosis

830,000
Women living with endometriosis in Australia

200 million
Women living with endometriosis worldwide

Source: Endometriosis Australia

Impact

Endometriosis can have a profound impact on women of all ages, their families, partners and carers, and society as a whole.

The condition typically causes pain, which can be severe, and infertility. It is a highly-individual disease, and symptoms can vary significantly from person to person. Women with endometriosis may experience:

- period pain
- pain with sex
- pelvic pain at other times of the menstrual cycle
- back pain
- low energy
- pain passing a bowel motion
- infertility

Source: The Royal Women's Hospital



Economic cost

Endometriosis costs Australia billions of dollars every year through losses in productivity and direct healthcare costs. There is also a considerable reduction in quality of life for people with the disease.

34,200
Endometriosis-related hospitalisations in Australia

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

\$9.7 billion
Cost of endometriosis in Australia per year

Source: Endometriosis Australia

An area of significant unmet medical need

Endometriosis is an extremely common but frequently under-recognised chronic disease. A 2019 Australian government report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare highlighted significant frustration with the under-recognition and misdiagnosis of the condition, and long delays in diagnosis and treatment.

Diagnosis

Endometriosis has been historically under-recognised by both the medical community and the public, and subsequently underdiagnosed.

Many women living with endometriosis and associated chronic pain do not receive adequate treatment and management until they have had the condition for many years.

7-12 years
Average delay between onset and diagnosis

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Current diagnosis

Today, the only way to diagnose endometriosis is through a laparoscopy, a surgical procedure performed under general anaesthetic.

During the operation, a thin telescope is placed into a patient's navel, allowing doctors to see inside the body and assess the pelvic and abdominal organs. A sample of tissue thought to contain endometriosis is removed and sent to a pathologist to confirm the diagnosis.

A better way

Proteomics International is developing a simple blood test for endometriosis that could be ordered by a GP. It works by looking for protein fingerprints in the blood, called 'biomarkers', that are associated with the disease.

The test will be based on Proteomics International's proprietary Promarker™ platform—the same technology used to develop the PromarkerD test for diabetic kidney disease.