

Endometriosis: Why Research Matters



Endometriosis affects around 1.5 million people in the UK, yet it receives far less research funding than its impact would warrant.

Greater investment in research could significantly improve the lives of those living with endometriosis and deepen our understanding of the condition.

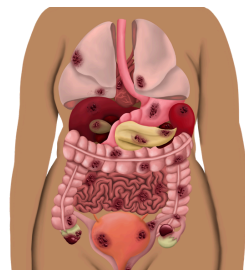
What we know so far

Full-body disease

Endometriosis is understood to be a full-body, or 'systemic' condition, not just a reproductive or pelvic disease.

Pain is one of the main symptoms of endometriosis, and it can have a serious impact on a person's daily life, relationships, and overall wellbeing. The level of pain can vary depending on how severe the condition is and where it is in the body.

One of the reasons this pain occurs is inflammation.¹ Substances involved in inflammation can help new blood vessels grow and can also affect nerves, which send pain signals to the brain.¹ Reducing these inflammatory substances could offer a new and effective way to treat pain caused by endometriosis.¹





Research also suggests that certain immune cells may play an important role in how endometriosis develops, grows, and spreads.²

However, there is still limited research on how the immune system is involved in endometriosis, and more detailed studies are needed to better understand how the condition develops, which could lead to improved treatments and care.

Mental health impacts

Living with endometriosis can increase the risk of depression and anxiety, and people with the condition may also feel isolated, struggle at work, and have a lower quality of life.^{4,5}

New research is looking at how inflammation in the body might be linked to mood disorders in people with long-term conditions like endometriosis.^{6,7,8}

Fertility

Endometriosis does not always cause infertility, and many people with the condition can get pregnant naturally.

While the connection between endometriosis and fertility is not fully understood, endometriosis can lead to inflammation, scarring, and changes in the body that may affect how the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus work.³

Researchers are continuing to study how endometriosis affects fertility, including in people with milder forms of the condition, not just severe cases.



What this means for you

The average time to diagnose endometriosis is 8 years and 10 months,⁹ leaving many people living with ongoing pain and uncertainty, often without clear answers or appropriate support.

Research is helping to change this. As we learn more about endometriosis, there is growing potential for earlier diagnosis, more effective treatments, and care that better reflects the full-body nature of the condition.

Understanding endometriosis as a full-body or 'systemic' condition can help validate a wide range of symptoms and experiences, even when they fall outside of what has traditionally been associated with the disease.

Access to care from a range of healthcare professionals, including those with expertise in pain management, mental health, and fertility, can play an important role in supporting people with endometriosis.

Connecting with others who have endometriosis can also help reduce feelings of isolation and provide practical and emotional support.

While progress can feel slow, research is moving forward. Each new discovery brings us closer to faster diagnoses, safer and more effective treatments, and a future where endometriosis is better understood and better supported.



We're here to support you



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This resource is for educational purposes and should not replace medical advice. If you're concerned about symptoms, please consult a healthcare professional.

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Endometriosis South Coast is a registered charity in England and Wales (1186203). Registered office: The Hive Hub, 22 Edinburgh Road, Portsmouth, PO1 1DH

References

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