

Endometriosis – the role of the allied health professional

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Oxford Women's Health

- Dietician
- Physiotherapy
- Osteopathy
- Acupuncture
- Counselling/Pain management

Dietetics

- Up to 80 % of those with endometriosis have bowel symptoms and endo can co-exist with IBS
- 65% of those with endometriosis have diarrhoea and only 80% of these are improved with surgery
- Use of the FODMAP diet may be helpful but requires perseverance and regular dietician input has been shown to be of benefit.
- Providing patients with the information and advice they need to take charge of their bodies.

Physiotherapy

- Endometriosis bleeds with menstruation, often leading to inflammation, scarring and adhesion formation inside and pelvic cavity.
- Decrease in pelvic and abdominal organ/muscle/fascia mobility can lead to decreased circulation, tight muscles, connective tissue dysfunction and pain.
- Abdominal muscles have a very close relationship with the pelvic floor muscles and when traumatised by surgery trigger points can form.
- So, a vicious pain cycle where muscle tension creates pain, which creates more muscle tension plus trigger points plus connective tissue dysfunction

Physiotherapy

- Treats connective tissue dysfunction,
- Treats myofascial trigger points,
- Correcting postural and movement dysfunction (often pain not only changes our muscle tone but causes us to move and posture ourselves differently. For instance, we slouch or place unequal weight on one lower extremity)
- Providing patients with the information and advice they need to take charge of their bodies.

Osteopathy

“I have never found enlargements or tumefactions of the uterus or ovaries with a perfectly normal articulation of the hip, sacrum, coccyx, lumbar and lower dorsal vertebrae.[...]

When consulted on such diseases it is wisdom to withhold your opinion until you have found the cause and know that you are right, then your advice will be good and to the point. To the mechanic all abnormalities are effects.” (Still, 1910)

Osteopathy

- Several small studies show improved pain intensity, increased mobility, improved personal productivity and fewer sick days after osteopathic treatment.
- Improved mental health, well being and general satisfaction
- Again, providing patients with the information and advice they need to take charge of their bodies.

Acupuncture/Chinese Medicine

- Recognised endometriosis long before Western Medicine
- The active principle of the therapies has a strong scientific foundation and a great deal of research being done
- Variety of studies concerning moxibustion, warm needling, cold needling, electroacupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and comparison to standard western medical treatments.
- It is effective at reducing symptoms, less so at curing disease when compared to surgery.
- Useful adjunct instead of western suppressive therapy AFTER surgery

Evid based Comp Alt medicine Epub 2014 Feb 19.

The complementary and alternative medicine for endometriosis: a review of utilization and mechanism.

Kong, Zhang et al

Counselling/psychotherapy

- May be an option for those who find it difficult to cope with the emotional rollercoaster of chronic pain, confusion, frustration and subfertility.
- Encourages problem identification and self identification of the solution.
- Endometriosis NZ Endometropolis and Endometriosis UK

Again, providing patients with the information and advice they need to take charge of their bodies.

Thank You

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