

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Impact of endometriosis on female fertility: evidence and challenges in Argentina

Impacto de la endometriosis en la fertilidad femenina: evidencia y desafíos en Argentina

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ABSTRACT

Endometriosis was identified as a chronic, common and underdiagnosed gynecological condition affecting between 10 % and 20 % of women of reproductive age and closely associated with infertility. Between 30 % and 50 % of those who suffered from it faced difficulties conceiving, which reflected the complexity of its impact on reproductive health, especially in Latin America. This study carried out a systematic literature review that allowed for an analysis of the relationship between endometriosis and infertility, identifying proposed pathophysiological mechanisms, such as hormonal, immunological and anatomical alterations. Despite these advances, there was still a lack of consensus on the exact mechanisms involved and on the effectiveness of available treatments, such as laparoscopic surgery and hormone therapies, whose results were variable and contradictory. The work was contextualized in the Argentine scenario between the years 2020 and 2024, a period marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and an increased visibility of sexual and reproductive rights. However, endometriosis remained absent from the public agenda, and difficulties in early diagnosis and access to specialized treatments continued to affect thousands of women. It was concluded that there is an urgent need to strengthen research, improve medical training and develop public policies that include endometriosis as a priority within reproductive health, in order to guarantee comprehensive care that improves the quality of life of the women affected.

Keywords: Endometriosis; Infertility; Reproductive Health; Diagnosis; Argentina.

RESUMEN

La endometriosis fue identificada como una afección ginecológica crónica, frecuente y subdiagnosticada, que afectó entre el 10 % y el 20 % de las mujeres en edad reproductiva y se asoció estrechamente con la infertilidad. Entre el 30 % y el 50 % de quienes la padecieron enfrentaron dificultades para concebir, lo que reflejó la complejidad de su impacto en la salud reproductiva, especialmente en América Latina. Este estudio realizó una revisión bibliográfica sistemática que permitió analizar la relación entre endometriosis e infertilidad, identificando mecanismos fisiopatológicos propuestos, tales como alteraciones hormonales, inmunológicas y anatómicas. A pesar de estos avances, persistió la falta de consenso sobre los mecanismos exactos implicados y sobre la efectividad de los tratamientos disponibles, como la cirugía laparoscópica y las terapias hormonales, cuyos resultados se mostraron variables y contradictorios. El trabajo fue contextualizado en el escenario argentino entre los años 2020 y 2024, etapa atravesada por la pandemia de COVID-19 y por un aumento en la visibilización de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos. Sin embargo, la endometriosis permaneció ausente de la agenda pública, y las dificultades en el diagnóstico temprano y en el acceso a tratamientos especializados continuaron afectando a miles de mujeres. Se concluyó que existe una necesidad urgente de fortalecer la investigación, mejorar la capacitación médica y desarrollar políticas públicas que incluyan a la endometriosis como prioridad dentro de la salud reproductiva, a fin de garantizar

una atención integral que mejore la calidad de vida de las mujeres afectadas.

Palabras clave: Endometriosis; Infertilidad; Salud Reproductiva; Diagnóstico; Argentina.

BACKGROUND

Endometriosis is a common and often underdiagnosed gynecological condition that affects between 10 % and 20 % of women of reproductive age.^(1,2,3) This disease has been recognized as one of the leading causes of infertility, with estimates indicating that between 30 % and 50 % of women with endometriosis face difficulties conceiving.^(4,5) This highlights the complex and controversial relationship between endometriosis and infertility, which represents a growing challenge in reproductive health worldwide, especially in Latin America, where infertility significantly affects the quality of life of women and their families. Various pathophysiological mechanisms have been proposed to explain how endometriosis may contribute to infertility, including immunological, hormonal, and anatomical alterations.^(6,7,8) However, numerous questions remain about this relationship's exact magnitude and nature.⁽⁶⁾ This condition can compromise egg quality, embryo implantation, and fallopian tube function, but these mechanisms continue to be the subject of debate and lack consensus in the scientific literature. In addition, the effectiveness of available treatments, such as laparoscopic surgery and hormonal interventions, to improve fertility in women with endometriosis has shown inconsistent and contradictory results,^(9,10,11) underscoring the urgent need for further research to obtain more robust clinical evidence.⁽¹²⁾

This analysis is particularly relevant in the Argentine context between 2020 and 2024, a period marked by growing awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues. During these years, amid health challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, significant difficulties in accessing timely gynecological diagnoses were evident, compounded by a notable lack of specialized training on endometriosis at many health system levels. Despite advances in sexual and reproductive rights, such as the effective implementation of the Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy Law and the strengthening of public health policies, endometriosis remained largely absent from the national health agenda.^(13,14,15)

In this context, the findings of this study are of strategic value for promoting concrete actions in the field of public health in Argentina. It is urgent to include endometriosis in reproductive health programs, improve the training of medical professionals, promote local research on the disease, and ensure equitable access to adequate and timely treatments. Only then will it be possible to move toward comprehensive care that responds to the real needs of thousands of women who face this silent disease, which is often invisible but has a profound impact on their physical, emotional, and reproductive well-being?.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

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