

Endometriosis: an invisible disease affecting half a million Canadians

- 500,000+ Canadian girls and women are affected by endometriosis.¹
- 27.9 years old is the average diagnosis age in Canada.¹
- In Canada, individuals with endometriosis often experience a diagnosis delay of more than five years.¹

Montreal, QC, June 17, 2020 – AbbVie (NYSE: ABBV), a global, research and development-based biopharmaceutical company, sponsored a first of its kind cross-sectional, online survey of 30,000 women in Canada aged 18 to 49. Earlier this year, the results were published in the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada (JOGC)* in a paper entitled “*Prevalence, Symptomatic Burden, And Diagnosis Of Endometriosis In Canada: Cross-Sectional Survey Of 30 000 Women.*”¹

Findings showed that Canadians with endometriosis often experience a diagnosis delay of more than five years. This half decade delay in disease recognition indicates an important unmet need for more timely diagnosis of endometriosis across Canada.¹

“Often misdiagnosed and mismanaged; endometriosis can have a significant negative impact on a person’s physical and mental health and dramatically hinder their overall quality of life. Women need to know that painful periods are not normal. There are treatment options available, as long as endometriosis is identified quickly. Unfortunately, that is not always the case,” says Dr. Sukhbir Singh, MD, Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON, who is a primary investigator in the study.

In Canada, it’s estimated that seven per cent of women will develop endometriosis.¹ Endometriosis is a chronic inflammatory disease that predominantly affects women of reproductive age.² Endometriosis occurs when endometrial tissue grows outside the uterus. Women with endometriosis experience various symptoms including: non-menstrual pelvic pain, pain during intercourse (dyspareunia), heavy menstrual bleeding, pelvic pain, and cramping during menstruation.³ Infertility can also be common with endometriosis.³

“The road for an endometriosis patient is long, with various treatments and no cure. I deal with the physical aspect as well as the emotional and mental pull of it all,” said Alexandra Camara, a Canadian living with endometriosis. “I became symptomatic at an early age. My symptoms increased and became more relevant when I was 14, and at 19, I was formally diagnosed. Receiving a proper diagnosis, then later excision surgery, was monumental to symptom management. To help raise awareness, I’m sharing my story to empower women not to suffer in silence.”

According to a survey, seven out of ten women experience unresolved – on-going - endometriosis pain.⁴

Endometriosis is a life-long journey. Often, patients who are diagnosed and on treatment, or have had surgery, still deal with unmanaged pain. It is important for patients to have continuous support, knowledge and access to clinically proven treatments. If still in pain, be your own advocate, seek out options and speak to a health care expert about all treatment options.

Globally, an estimated 176 million women live with endometriosis.⁵ “Although there is currently no cure for endometriosis, we are committed to researching and supporting Canadians living with endometriosis in an effort to provide resources and hope for this disease,” said Denis Hello, Vice President and General Manager, AbbVie Canada. “AbbVie has conducted some of the largest clinical trials in endometriosis in the world. We will continue to research the disease’s most common symptoms to support disease management needs.”

Resources such as the [Endometriosis Network Canada](#) and online chats via #EndoEmpowered can provide important information and foster a sense of community for endometriosis patients in Canada.

About AbbVie

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¹ Prevalence, Symptomatic Burden, and Diagnosis of Endometriosis in Canada: Cross-Sectional Survey of 30 000 Women. Dr. Sukhbir Singh, et al. [http://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163\(19\)30980-6/fulltext](http://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163(19)30980-6/fulltext). Accessed May 2020.

² YourPeriod.ca. What is Endometriosis? <https://www.yourperiod.ca/endometriosis/what-is-endometriosis/>. Accessed May 2020.

³ YourPeriod.ca. What are the symptoms of Endometriosis? <https://www.yourperiod.ca/endometriosis/what-are-the-symptoms-of-endometriosis/>. Accessed May 2020.

⁴ De Graaff AA, D’Hooghe TM, Dunselman GAJ, Dirksen CD, Hummelshoj L, WERF EndoCost Consortium, Simoens S. The significant effect of endometriosis on physical, mental and social wellbeing: results from an international cross-sectional survey. *Hum Reprod.* 2013;28(10):2677-2685. Accessed May 2020.

⁵ David Adamson, G., Kennedy, S., & Hummelshoj, L. (2010). Creating solutions in endometriosis: Global collaboration through the world endometriosis research foundation. *Journal of Endometriosis*, 2(1), 3-6. Accessed May 2020.