

Endometriosis in Adolescents

Jessica Shim, MD, FACOG

Key Points:

- ★ Endometriosis is more common in adolescents than we may think! Up to 75% of adolescents with chronic pelvic pain resistant to treatment are found to have endometriosis on laparoscopy
- ★ The vast majority of adults with endometriosis report that their symptoms started before age 20
- ★ Similar to adults, there is normally a delay in diagnosing endometriosis in adolescents

Common Symptoms:

- Pain (dysmenorrhea or painful periods, noncyclic pain and dyspareunia or painful intercourse)
 - Early onset dysmenorrhea (within 2 years after menstruation beginning)
- GI (constipation, nausea and diarrhea)
- GU (painful urination, frequency and urgency)
- Pelvic mass/cyst
- Seen with other pain symptoms such as migraines and IBS

Risk factors:

- Family history of endometriosis
- Obstructive congenital anomalies

Treatment:

- Similar to adults
- Medications
 - Hormonal medications (combined estrogen/progesterone or progesterone-only such as pills, IUD, Nexplanon)
 - GnRH analog (medications that lower hormonal levels similar to a menopausal state) are second-line due to long-term side effect of bone-density loss
- Laparoscopy
 - Endometriosis tends to appear like clear or red vesicular lesions in adolescents
 - Most common to see stage 1 or 2 endometriosis
 - Progression of disease postoperatively is similar to adults
- Physical therapy
- Social work involvement to assist with academic well-being and accommodations

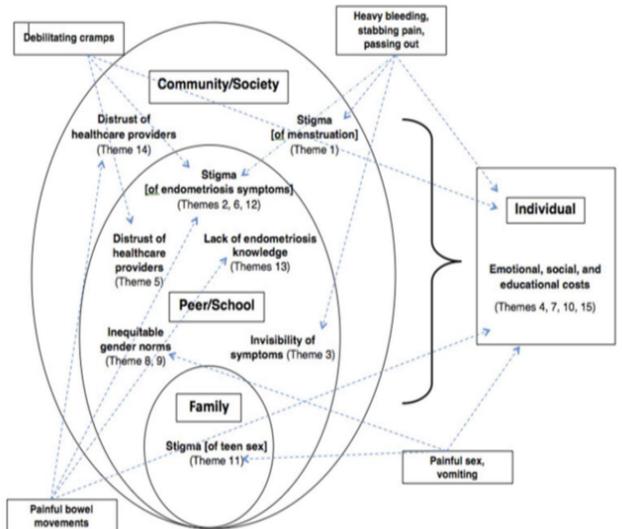


Figure 1 Factors shaping perceptions of symptoms of endometriosis.

