

[IMAGE]

Bad Company

Nearly 10% of women of reproductive age suffer from *endometriosis*, a painful disease in which the tissue that normally lines the uterus, the endometrium, forms outside the uterus and develops into small growths. Besides pain and inflammation, this disorder may cause infertility, and based on a recent study in *Human Reproduction*, it may also be associated with other disorders.

The study compared immune-system-disorder, chronic-pain, and allergy prevalence in over 3,500 women with endometriosis to women in the general population. It seems this condition keeps bad company. Women with endometriosis were found to be significantly more likely to suffer from multiple disorders, including:

- chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) - more than 150 times more likely;
- fibromyalgia - almost twice as likely;
- hypothyroidism - seven times;
- rheumatoid arthritis - 1.5 times;
- allergies - over three times;
- asthma - more than double the risk;
- multiple sclerosis - seven times; and
- lupus - over 20 times more likely.

Despite pelvic pain and other symptoms of endometriosis, many women are not diagnosed with the disorder for many years. Women should be aware of the symptoms, such as extreme pain during periods, heavy or irregular bleeding and fatigue, and discuss any concerns with their doctors. Also, if you suffer from any of these conditions, it may not be a coincidence that you also suffer from different disorders.

Reference:

Sinaii N, Cleary SD, et al. High rates of autoimmune and endocrine disorders, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome and atopic diseases among women with endometriosis: A survey analysis. *Human Reproduction* 2002;17(10), pp. 2715-2724.

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