

Prevalence, characteristics and management of endometriosis

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BACKGROUND

Endometriosis is a chronic current condition that is characterised by the presence and the proliferation of endometrial tissue outside the uterine cavity.¹ The major clinical problems experienced by women suffering from endometriosis are pelvic pain and infertility.²

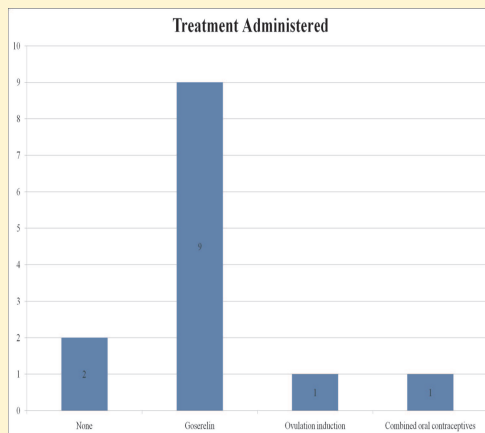
AIM

To investigate the demographic, clinical and laparoscopic findings in Maltese women being investigated for infertility in whom endometriosis is diagnosed.

RESULTS

Endometriosis associated with infertility seems to affect women whose ages range from 23 to 43 years and 30 to 33 years. The most common symptoms were dysmenorrhoea (n=16) and dyspareunia (n=9) as expected, with some women complaining of abdominal pain. However, some women were found to be asymptomatic. The treatment strategies which were implemented were targeted at either achieving pregnancy directly or at reducing the endometriotic lesions to subsequently achieve pregnancy.

Figure 1: Treatment administered versus number of patients (n=13)



METHOD

The hospital records of all female patients of reproductive age who had an elective laparoscopy carried out to investigate infertility at St. Luke's Hospital and Mater Dei Hospital between the period September 2003 to May 2008 were retrieved.

A data sheet was developed and used in a pilot study. The data sheet was completed for each patient using data collected from the patients' records.

Data from 24 patient files was gathered. Subsequently the data sheets were analysed using SPSS version 17.0.

Table 1: Demographic, clinical and laparoscopic findings	
N=24	
Demographic	
Age	25-33 years
Occupation	
Professional	4
Managerial/Administration	2
Higher clerical	1
Semi-skilled	6
State income	1
House carer	6
Primary infertility	17
Secondary infertility	6
Smoker	7
Clinical	
Age at menarche	13 years
Menstrual flow	
Heavy	8
Moderate	12
Duration of cycles	28-29 days
Duration of menses	5-6 days
Dysmenorrhoea	16
Dyspareunia	9
Laparoscopic	
Few spots of endometriosis	7
Severe endometriosis	3
Scarring in the Pouch of Douglas	7
Infiltrating lesions in uterosacral ligaments	5
Fibroids	6
Cysts	5

The treatment selection consisted of goserelin (n=9), ovulation induction (n=1) or combined oral contraceptives (n=1). In certain cases where endometriosis was mild or minimal no treatment was administered (n=2).

CONCLUSION

The findings from the pilot study indicate that the data sheet developed for this study captures the demographic, clinical and laparoscopic data. From the preliminary results, endometriosis associated with infertility occurs primarily in the 25 to 33 age range and presents with dysmenorrhoea and dyspareunia.

REFERENCES

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