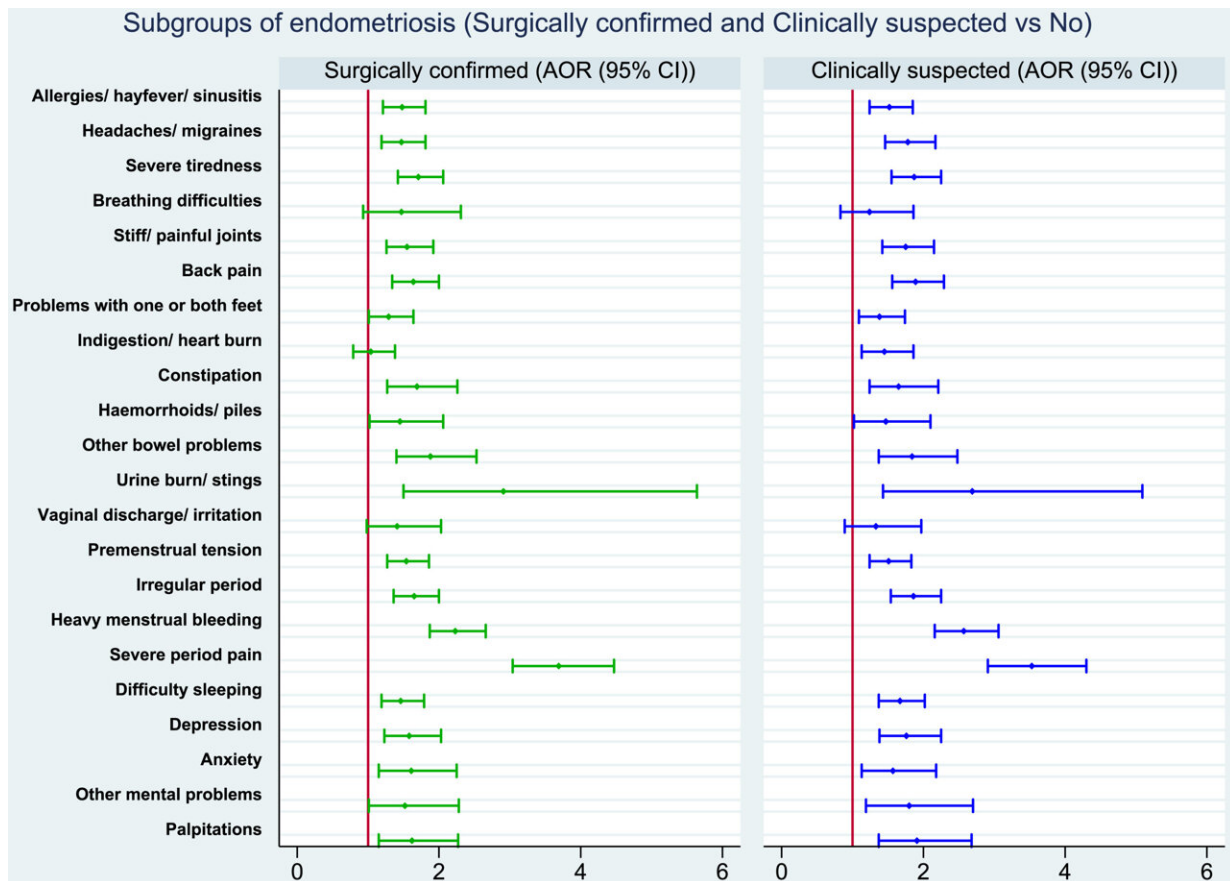


# Multiple endometriosis symptoms can appear a decade before diagnosis, finds study

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Association between subgroups of endometriosis and each symptom (often vs never or rarely). AOR, odds ratio; CI, confidence interval. Credit: *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (2023). DOI: 10.1016/j.ajog.2023.07.033

Australian women with endometriosis can experience symptoms including severe period pain, depression and back pain for around a decade before being diagnosed, a University of Queensland study has revealed.

Researchers from the UQ School of Public Health analyzed data from 7,606 women born between 1973 and 1978 who had been surveyed on their health and well-being every three years from 2009 to 2018. The results are [published](#) in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

Lead author Dr. Dereje Gete said it's the first time multiple [symptoms](#) have been investigated by an Australian longitudinal study.

"Our findings show that women diagnosed with [endometriosis](#) were nearly four times more likely to experience severe period pain than women without the disease," Dr. Gete said. "These women were also nearly two times more likely to experience mental health problems and back pain. And they were more than one and half times more likely have stiff and painful joints.

"Other symptoms included bowel and urinary conditions, severe tiredness, difficulty sleeping, allergies, heart palpitations and headaches. This broad range symptoms along with a tendency to normalize and dismiss period pain meant diagnosis took between seven and 11 years on average.

"This delay significantly reduces quality of life by leaving the women to deal with untreated symptoms, more doctor and hospital visits, and potentially less success with fertility."

The study used data from the [Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health](#) in which 1,149 women, or 15%, self-reported their

endometriosis.

Senior study author Professor Gita Mishra said the findings highlighted the importance of early diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis to reduce the risk of associated symptoms and complications.

"Further research is needed to understand how the [immune system](#) and inflammation are connected to broad range symptoms which may lead to improved treatments," Professor Mishra said. "Women with endometriosis should be encouraged to proactively manage their symptoms through [lifestyle changes](#), medication, or surgery, to improve their [quality of life](#) and prevent further complications."

**More information:** Dereje G. Gete et al, Associations between endometriosis and common symptoms: findings from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ajog.2023.07.033](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2023.07.033)

Provided by University of Queensland

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