

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PELVIC PAIN AND A HISTORY OF SEXUAL ABUSE ACROSS THE LIFETIME

Kelso, E¹. Hassam, T². Derby, E³. Chowrady, P⁴. Mol, B⁵.

¹ Flinders Medical Centre, South Australia. ² Lyell McEwin Hospital, South Australia.

³ The University of Adelaide, South Australia.

⁴ Waitemata District Health Board, New Zealand. ⁵ Monash University, Victoria.

BACKGROUND

- Australian data estimates one in five women have experienced sexual violence¹
- Sexual abuse history has been associated with multiple conditions including fibromyalgia, PTSD and anxiety disorders²
- Data regarding long-term gynaecological impacts following sexual abuse remains limited

AIM

To evaluate observational data surrounding the association between sexual abuse and chronic pelvic pain during childhood, adulthood and at any point across the lifetime.

HYPOTHESIS

Exposure to sexual abuse acts as a risk factor for chronic pelvic pain.

METHODS

Online electronic databases were screened for variants of terms associated with sexual abuse, and gynaecological symptoms.

Manual screening of abstracts selected observational studies with relevance to the clinical question. Articles were assessed for quality, and data extracted to ascertain the association between pelvic pain and a history of sexual abuse.

A random effects model was used to calculate pooled odds ratios, to determine the impact of sexual abuse at distinct periods across the lifetime.

RESULTS

- 1846 citations identified
- 21 selected for full text analysis

A positive association was identified between chronic pelvic pain and each of childhood sexual abuse, adult sexual abuse and lifetime sexual abuse

CONCLUSION

- A history of sexual abuse acts as a risk factor for chronic pelvic pain
- Appropriate and timely identification of victims of abuse may allow for early intervention, education and provision of effective therapies
- The importance of a sensitive approach to detailed sexual history taking is stressed

References:

1. *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia, 2018*. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Cat. No. FDV2
2. *Sexual Abuse and Lifetime Diagnosis of Somatic Disorders*. JAMA 2009, 302(5)550-561

	Studies included	Sample size	Odds ratio	95% CI	P value
Child abuse	11	5092	2.55	1.78-3.64	<0.05
Adult abuse	8	5115	1.81	1.46-2.25	P>0.05
Lifetime abuse	20	8692	2.18	1.58-3.01	P<0.001

Contact Emma Kelso for further information regarding this study

Email: emma.v.kelso@gmail.com