



Bringing awareness to endometriosis

National awareness months and days span a variety of topics, from celebrated foods (think National Ice Cream Day, National Bagel Day, National Pizza Day) to businesses (free Slurpee at 7-Eleven) to our terrain: health issues. March alone is a national health awareness month for over 10 conditions, one of which is endometriosis.

Endometriosis is a topic that is relevant to both our patients and providers, judging by the number of page views on our website (**Table**). Endometriosis is estimated to affect over 6 million women in the United States.¹ Symptoms include pain, bleeding between menses, gastrointestinal problems (such as diarrhea, constipation, bloating, and nausea), and infertility. Although the most common symptom is pain, more than one-third of women with grade IV endometriosis present

without pain, suggesting the need to keep endometriosis in the differential, even if pain free.²

National awareness months are useful not only to bring awareness to a particular disease or disorder but also to raise interest, provide knowledge, and offer a better understanding of the condition. With this month being National Endometriosis Awareness Month, *Contemporary OB/GYN*[®] is featuring an article on page 11 on how patients use social media to learn more about the condition on page 11.

Research on endometriosis includes understanding the etiology or cause; the role of genetics, hormones, and the immune system; and management options. Interestingly, funding for endometriosis from the National Institutes of Health has fluctuated from \$6 million to \$15 million since 2008 (**Figure**).³ Compared with

other diseases with similar 2020 and estimated 2021 funding, endometriosis affects a much greater proportion of the population than the funding might suggest.

Endometriosis is diagnosed when endometrial tissue—which typically is inside and lines the uterus—is present outside the uterus, most commonly in the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and the tissue lining the pelvis. Although history and physical exam may be helpful with the diagnosis, definitive diagnosis often requires laparoscopy. Given the common symptoms, on average it takes more than 7 for a woman to get the diagnosis.

Scholarly peer-reviewed articles about endometriosis in PubMed have risen almost every year and now top 2000 per year. Despite this, more studies need to be done. For an illness that affects 1 in 10 women, this

TABLE. Contemporary OB/GYN[®] Endometriosis Articles

Article	Page views	Type	Date published
Noninvasive ultrasound diagnosis of endometriosis	20,437	Peer reviewed	March 26, 2020
Ovarian cysts and endometriosis	16,463	Peer reviewed	June 22, 2011
Diagnosing and treating diaphragmatic endometriosis	11,878	News story	March 29, 2021
Diagnosing and treating vulvo-perineal endometriosis	10,375	News story	June 16, 2021
Study finds IVF success negatively correlates with endometriosis severity	10,201	News story	July 9, 2018

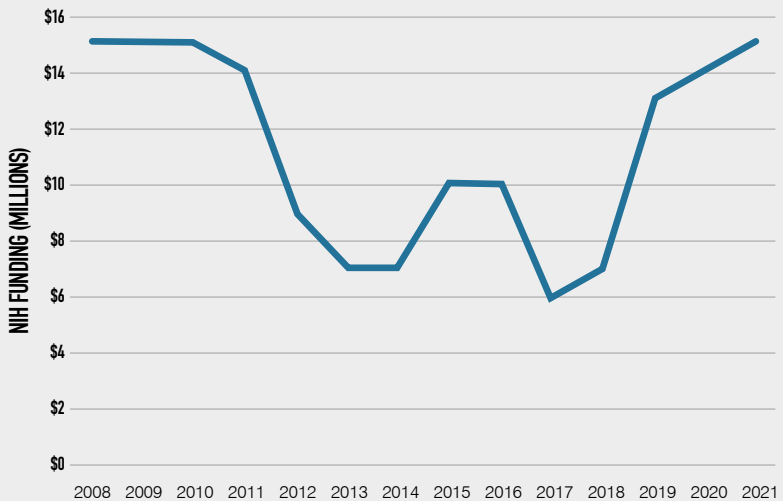
month, let's up the ante on support, research, and commitment to an issue that significantly and adversely affects women's health—and that of their families. ■

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contemporaryobgyn.net/view/editorial-endometriosis-awareness

FIGURE. National Institutes of Health Funding—Endometriosis³



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