Pain in Your Pelvic Area?

Book a doctor's visit ASAP to get checked for endometriosis.

September 2, 2019 By Kate Ferguson

Nearly 10 years ago at the First Annual Blossom Ball fundraiser for the Endometriosis Foundation, actress Whoopi Goldberg declared that she thought everyone knew about endometriosis, or endo for short. This common pelvic disorder occurs when tissue that usually lines the uterus grows in other areas where it doesn't belong.

The painful condition affects an estimated 176 million women worldwide but isn't well known or understood by either females or health care providers, say health care agencies.

Goldberg said she had experienced endo about 30 years prior to her addressing the crowd at the Prince George Ballroom in New York City that evening of April 20, 2009. She said she was lucky to have been treated by a doctor who knew about the condition and "cleared it up" for her.

But many women endure years of painful periods and ovulation, pain during or after sexual intercourse, heavy bleeding, chronic pelvic pain, fatigue and infertility before they're diagnosed with endometriosis.

When patients are Black women, doctors sometimes link these symptoms of endo to other pelvic problems they commonly experience, such as pelvic inflammatory disease, uterine fibroids or a pelvic infection, says Idries J. Abdur-Rahman, MD, a board--certified ob-gyn and contributor to BlackDoctors.org.

He advises women with ongoing pelvic pain who are unsatisfied with their doctor's assessment to get a second opinion.

There's no cure for endometriosis, but hormonal meds and surgical procedures, such as laparoscopy, which is used both to diagnose the condition and remove affected tissue, and hysterectomy, which removes the uterus, can relieve pain.

Recently, however, the Food and Drug Administration approved the new drug Orilissa (elagolix) for treating the moderate to severe pain caused by endometriosis.

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