

The relationship between endometriosis symptomatology, sexual distress, and avoidance of sex and negative impact on sex

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Background:

Endometriosis affects approximately 10% of women of childbearing age and is associated with pelvic pain, abnormal bleeding, and infertility. Little is known about the relationship between endometriosis-related symptoms, sex-related distress, and avoidance of sex and negative impact on sex life.

Methods:

Women (N=2060; mean age=30 years) with a diagnosis of endometriosis completed a questionnaire measuring endometriosis symptomatology, sex-related pain (dyspareunia), sexual distress, avoidance of sex and the perceived negative impact of endometriosis symptoms on sex.

Results:

In bivariate and multivariate logistic regression models, higher endometriosis symptom frequency, dyspareunia, and sexual distress were associated with greater avoidance of sex and higher perceived negative impact of endometriosis on sex life. In particular, with a two- and three-fold increase in the odds of avoiding sex and reporting a negative impact on sex lives, respectively, for each point increase in dyspareunia. Similarly, there was a 7% to 11% increase in avoidance of sex and negative impact on sex lives, per one-point increase in symptom frequency and sexual distress.

Conclusion:

The results highlight the often-considerable impacts of endometriosis symptomatology on women's sex lives and wellbeing. Better medical and counselling services may be needed to ameliorate the negative impact of endometriosis on women's sex lives.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.