



The Women's Outcomes Research & Knowledge Study

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025

Winter Greetings!

As the W.O.R.K. Study winds down and we share our Winter newsletter, we are working hard behind the scenes, analyzing data to help understand how pelvic pain is impacting women's lives, find opportunities for change and education, and share what we are learning.

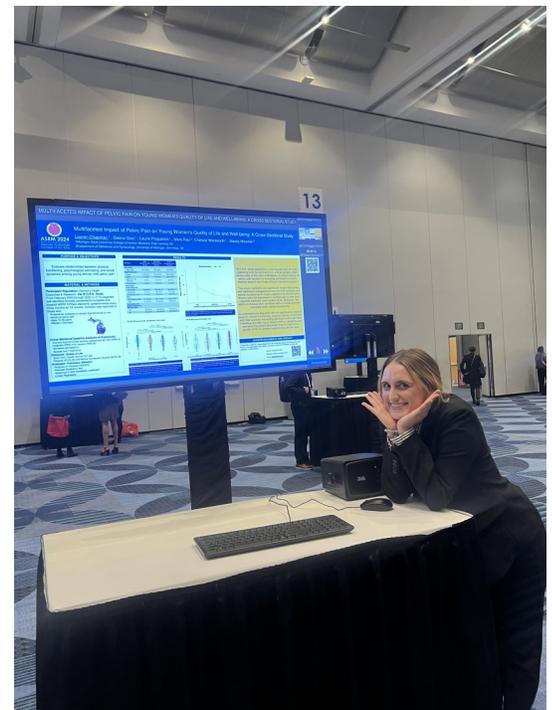
In October 2024, Lauren Chapman, MPH, medical student in the MSU College of Human Medicine, attended the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) Scientific Congress in Denver, Colorado. This conference was an opportunity to share findings from the W.O.R.K. Study with doctors, nurses, scientists, and other reproductive health professionals.

Lauren's analyses showed that W.O.R.K. Study women who felt dismissed or isolated due to their pain reported lower quality of life overall. Additionally, the ability for women to discuss their condition with a trusted health care provider pointed to better mental health. Also important was that having an endometriosis diagnosis did not significantly impact mental health scores, however feeling comfortable with their health care provider and feeling believed in their pain did. Very important evidence for the health care community.

These findings highlight the importance of health care providers validating pain and maintaining patient-provider trust in an effort to improve the quality of life for women experiencing pelvic pain.



Photo above: Lauren Chapman at the ASRM conference in Denver, Colorado in October 2024.



Right photo: Lauren Chapman presenting about the W.O.R.K. Study at the ASRM conference poster session.

Women's Pain Has a History of Being Ignored in Health Care, but There is Hope!

Women's pain has historically been ignored and undertreated in health care settings. Research shows that women experience higher levels of pain than men but are less likely to receive pain medication. This highlights the need for improved understanding and treatment of women's pain. Also, biases in medicine, stemming from historical misunderstandings of women's bodies and health, have led to women's pain being dismissed as emotional or less significant than men's.

Efforts are being made to address the longstanding issue of women's pain being overlooked in health care, with greater awareness of gender biases, increased representation of female doctors, and a focus on finding objective measures of pain to improve diagnoses and treatments for women.

“Historically, women’s health care has received less attention, research and funding, and that has impacted women’s health outcomes today—including how pain is measured, researched and treated,” according to Dr. Irene Aninye, chief science officer at the Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR). She further explained that conclusions found for men were considered to apply to women and we have learned that this is not true. There are important sex and gender differences when it comes to both health and pain.

There is good news. Dr. Aninye says, “Experts are starting to see improvements in taking women’s symptoms and pain more seriously. Conditions that specifically impact women, like endometriosis and menopause, are gaining more attention. But, there is still much work to be done to make these topics mainstream.”

The hope is that objective measures of pain, rather than just things like a 0-10 scale, could validate that people are in pain, identify what type of pain they have, and suggest potential treatments. Too often, the patient voice is ignored or dismissed, and so the hope is that more women’s health research in this area, and hard scientific data will be impossible to ignore.

Source: [Society for Women's Health Research](#)



**Are you interested in participating in future research studies
addressing women’s health topics?**

**We’ll share new opportunities with you on our website and via email, so
please let us know if your email changes!**



Exciting news—Please spread the word!

Our friends at Endo Black Inc. and George Mason University College of Public Health recently launched an exciting project to help young women and girls with symptoms of endometriosis.

The project, SurrEndo, is an app-based game designed to break down stigma and foster support for Black and Latina young women and girls, ages 14-25, dealing with endometriosis. Plus, it’s a chance for players to help us learn more about how gaming can help people with endometriosis—all while having fun!

If you’d like to learn more about how to become involved, please click on the link below:

https://chhs.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cAwGbBaYvR3fXAG

You can also email the research team, led by Dr. Jhumka Gupta at surrendo.nova@gmail.com

Making the Most of Your Health Care Visit

When you see a doctor or other medical provider, you may be asked questions about your health. You should ask questions too. Together, you and your doctor will make decisions about your health care and any treatment you may need. If you are ready for the conversation, you will be able to speak for yourself and help make the best decisions about your health care. Here are some tips for how to discuss your health concerns, including pain, with your doctor / medical provider:

- **Find a doctor / healthcare provider you trust.** Seek health care advice and treatment from someone you believe will be empathetic and understanding of any concerns you might have.
- **Ask questions and seek to understand.** Bring a list of specific questions and concerns you have to your medical appointments. Tell your health care provider that you would like to go over the list with them. It is important to make sure you understand everything your provider says. Ask for simple, clear explanations. Ask your provider to draw a picture if you think that might help. Take careful notes.
- **Discuss pain management options.** If you're thinking about having a medical procedure, ask your provider about any pain you might experience or any pain management that is available.
- **Bring a support person.** Bring along a trusted family member or friend to your medical visits—someone to help you ask questions and be your advocate.
- **Keep calm.** If your concerns are brushed aside, be persistent. Feeling dismissed or that you're not being taken seriously can be frustrating. It is best to remain calm and restate your primary question or issue. Again, it's okay to ask questions and request more information so you can understand the treatment plan and your options.
- **Seek a second opinion.** If your current health care provider isn't answering your questions or giving you the information you need, find one who will listen to your concerns.
- **Share your story.** Sharing your story and experiences on social media raises awareness in both the general public and among medical providers, and is already leading to change. Share your health stories / journeys where and when you feel comfortable. Speaking out can improve awareness of women's health and even influence research and funding decisions.



For more information, visit: acog.org/womens-health/faqs/making-the-most-of-your-health-care-visit

Please Stay Connected!

Email: letswork@msu.edu

Website: go.msu.edu/workstudy

