



The Women's Outcomes Research & Knowledge Study

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

Greetings!

As we enter the final year of the W.O.R.K. Study, we pause and reflect on the past 4 years, ever since enrolling our very first participant in February of 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic. We are both grateful and inspired!

In this issue, we are sharing facts about the huge gap in knowledge there is about women's health as well as exciting efforts being made around the globe to address important women's health conditions, such as premenstrual syndrome, endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome, and menopause. There is so much work to be done, because for far too long, women have been understudied and underrepresented in health research.

So a huge shout out to the W.O.R.K. Study cohort of girls and young women for sharing their time, health journeys, and medical records. You are making a difference in women's health!



There is a Huge Gap in Knowledge About Women's Health

- Until only 25 years ago, almost all health research was conducted on men.
- Women spend 25 percent more time in poor health than men across their lives.
- In order to close the health gap that exists between men's health and women's health, four root causes need to be addressed:
 1. **Science:** The study of human biology defaults to the male body, which hides sex-based differences and results in fewer available and less effective treatments for women.
 2. **Data:** Health burdens for women are systematically underestimated, with datasets that exclude or undervalue female conditions—like pelvic pain!
 3. **Care delivery:** Women are more likely to face barriers to care, and experience diagnostic delays and receive unhelpful treatment.
 4. **Investment:** There has been lower investment in women's health conditions relative to how common they are. This reinforces a cycle of weaker scientific understanding about women's bodies.

Source: Closing the Women's Health Gap: A \$1 Trillion Opportunity to Improve Lives and Economies, Insight Report, January 2024



Investments addressing the women's health gap could add years to life and life to years—and potentially boost the global economy by \$1 trillion annually by 2040.





First-Ever White House Initiative on Women’s Health Research

In November 2023, President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden announced the first ever [White House Initiative on Women’s Health Research](#). This is an effort led by First Lady Jill Biden and the White House Gender Policy Council.

The new initiative will fundamentally change how they approach and fund women’s health research. It emphasizes women’s health research across government agencies and recognizes the importance of prioritizing women’s health research at the presidential level.

“Every woman I know has a story about leaving her doctor’s office with more questions than answers. Not because our doctors are withholding information, but because there’s just not enough research yet on how to best manage and treat even common women’s health conditions,” said First Lady Jill Biden.

In order to give women and their healthcare providers the tools and information they need to better prevent, diagnose, and treat conditions affecting women—from rheumatoid arthritis to menopause to Alzheimer’s disease to cardiovascular disease to endometriosis—the nation must fundamentally change how they approach and fund women’s health research.

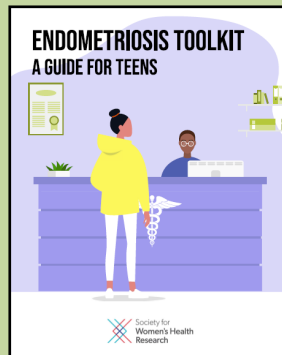
Extremely Painful Periods are Not Normal

One potential cause for frequent and severe pain during and between periods is endometriosis—a chronic gynecological disease in which tissue that looks like the lining of the uterus (the endometrium) grows outside the uterus where it does not belong.

The Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR) created the **Endometriosis Toolkit: A Guide for Teens** to empower teenagers who have menstrual health questions or are living with endometriosis to better understand their health and navigate their care.

Visit: swhr.org to download a copy of the Toolkit*

**Available in English and Spanish*



QUICK REMINDERS!

Do you have a study survey to complete? Please check your survey queue by clicking on the link that was emailed to you from LetsWork@msu.edu

Your time is valuable! You will receive a total of \$105.00 in Amazon.com claim codes if you complete all 8 study surveys.

Don’t forget to redeem your codes and think Spring!



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