

UNIT 3: GYNECOLOGY
SECTION A: GENERAL GYNECOLOGY

Educational Topic 39: Chronic Pelvic Pain

Rationale: Chronic pelvic pain may be a manifestation of a variety of gynecologic and non-gynecologic conditions

Intended Learning Outcomes:

A student should be able to:

- Define chronic pelvic pain
- Define the prevalence and common etiologies of chronic pelvic pain
- Describe the symptoms and physical exam findings in a patient with chronic pelvic pain
- Discuss evaluation and management options for chronic pelvic pain
- Discuss the psychosocial issues associated with chronic pelvic pain

TEACHING CASE

CASE: A 24 year-old G0 woman presents to you as a self-referral for pelvic pain. She describes a four-year history of intermittent lower abdominal and pelvic pain that is now constant in nature. The pain is always present, sometimes sharper in the left lower quadrant and not related to menses. She has occasional nausea and is sometimes constipated. Nothing makes the pain better or worse. Over the years, she has used acetaminophen and ibuprofen, and has not found any relief and reports that this pain is making her life miserable. She is otherwise healthy and denies smoking. She reports menarche at age 13 and has regular cycles. She experiences occasional premenstrual bloating and cramps, and reports discomfort at other times of the month. She had a trial of oral contraceptives, which only minimally improved symptoms and a laparoscopy that was normal. She has never been sexually active, and upon further questioning reports that her oldest brother sexually abused her as a child. On physical examination, she has a somewhat flattened affect, but smiles occasionally. Trapezius and paraspinous muscles are tender on palpation with no costovertebral angle tenderness. Abdomen is soft with two well-healed laparoscopic incisions, and mild tenderness to deep palpation in the lower quadrants. Pelvic examination including rectovaginal examination is entirely normal except for mild bilateral adnexal tenderness.

REFERENCES

Beckman CRB, et al. Obstetrics and Gynecology. 7th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2013.

Hacker NF, Moore JG, et al. Essentials of Obstetrics and Gynecology. 5th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders, 2010.