



Diagnosing Pelvic Pain: Analysing Causes and Medical Approaches

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DESCRIPTION

Pelvic pain is a common symptom that can affect both men and women, frequently leading to significant discomfort and impacting daily life. The pelvis contains a variety of organs, muscles, and connective tissues, establishing pelvic pain are a complex issue with a wide range of potential causes. Pelvic pain refers to discomfort or pain in the lower part of the abdomen, between the heart and pelvis. This pain can be acute (short-term) or chronic (lasting for six months or more) and it can range from mild to severe.

Pelvic pain may be continuous or intermittent and sometimes it can be associated with specific activities, such as sexual intercourse, urination, or bowel movements. Because the pelvis contains organs and structures from multiple body systems reproductive, urinary, digestive and musculoskeletal, the potential causes of pelvic pain are varied. Accurate diagnosis is essential for effective treatment, as the underlying cause of the pain will determine the appropriate intervention.

Diagnosis of pelvic pain

The cause of pain in the pelvis must be determined through an extensive process that includes a complete medical history, a physical examination and for a lot of instances, a wide range of diagnostic testing. The following steps are typically involved in the diagnostic process:

Medical history: The healthcare provider will begin by taking a detailed medical history, including the onset, duration and nature of the pain. The doctors will discuss about any associated symptoms, such as changes in bowel or bladder habits, menstrual irregularities, or sexual dysfunction. A history of previous surgeries, infections, or trauma may also provide important clues.

Physical examination: A physical examination will be conducted to assess the pelvic area for tenderness, swelling, or masses. For women, this may include a pelvic exam to check for

abnormalities in the reproductive organs. For men, a digital rectal exam may be performed to evaluate the prostate gland.

Laboratory tests: Blood tests, urine tests, and vaginal or urethral swabs may be used to check for infections, inflammatory markers, or other abnormalities. Pregnancy tests are usually conducted for women of childbearing age to rule out pregnancy-related causes of pelvic pain.

Imaging studies: Imaging studies such as ultrasound, X-rays, CT scans (Computed Tomography), or MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) may be ordered to visualize the pelvic organs and structures. These tests can help to diagnose conditions such ovarian cysts, fibroids, hernias and appendicitis.

Laparoscopy: In some cases, laparoscopy, a minimally invasive surgical procedure, may be used to directly visualize the pelvic organs. This is particularly useful for diagnosing conditions such as endometriosis, adhesions, or chronic pelvic inflammatory disease that may not be apparent on imaging studies.

Common causes of pelvic pain

The causes of pelvic pain can be widely categorized into gynecological, urological, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal and psychological origins. Below are some of the most common causes of pelvic pain within these categories.

Menstrual cramps: Menstrual cramps are a leading cause of pelvic pain in women. The pain typically occurs just before or during menstruation due to the contraction of the uterus as it decreases its protective cover.

Endometriosis: Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the outer layer of the uterus grows outside the uterus, such as on the ovaries, fallopian tubes, or the inside of the pelvic cavity. This ectopic tissue can cause significant pelvic discomfort, particularly during menstruation and it can result in reproductive problems.

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID): PID is an infection of the female reproductive organs, frequently caused by sexually

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Transmitted Infections (STIs) such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea. It can cause severe pelvic pain, fever and unusual vaginal discharge.

Uterine fibroids: Fibroids are non-cancerous growths that develop on the uterus. Depending on their size and location,

they can cause pelvic pain, heavy menstrual bleeding and pressure on the bladder or bowel.