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IN MARCH, FOCUS ON ENDOMETRIOSIS!



Brussels, 6 March 2023 - Ahead of World Endometriosis Awareness Day on March 28 that is the culmination of Endometriosis Awareness Month, the Brussels University Hospital (H.U.B.) - of which the Erasmus Hospital and its Endometriosis Clinic are a part - is putting the spotlight on this chronic disease that affect more than 1 in 10 women. A genuine public health challenge both in terms of the number of women suffering from the disease and the costs engendered by what is often a medical marathon.

An odyssey of between seven and twelve years before diagnosis: a genuine public health challenge

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to endometrial tissue is present outside the uterus, causing pain in 80% of women with the condition and the risk of infertility in between 30% and 50% of cases. Because the pain recurs monthly at the time of menstruation (dysmenorrhea), endometriosis is considered to be a chronic disease. It affects between 10% and 15% of women of reproductive age. Worldwide, 180 million women suffer from endometriosis. A major problem is that diagnosis can take between 7 and 12 years. This delay in diagnosis and thus in commencing effective treatment can compromise the quality of life and fertility of these women. The costs in terms of public health are also considerable due to this "medical marathon" with its multitude of examinations and treatments but also the resultant absenteeism from school or work. Endometriosis is therefore a major issue for public health.

Reference centres, multidisciplinary and transmission of knowledge to arrive at an earlier diagnosis

The Endometriosis Clinic at the Erasmus Hospital, a part of Brussels University Hospital (H.U.B.), constitutes a response to this protracted search for a diagnosis and to the need for adapted, multidisciplinary treatment. The team at the Endometriosis Clinic is made up of experts in gynaecology and obstetrics (specialists in endometriosis surgery and fertility), medical and surgical gastroenterology, urology, anatomical pathology, algology, medical imaging and nuclear medicine as well as a specialised paramedical staff of nurses, psychologists, sexotherapists, physiotherapists and practitioners of complementary therapies. In addition, for effective treatment of period pains and infertility problems, the Endometriosis Clinic works in close cooperation with the Multidisciplinary Centre for the Evaluation and Treatment of Pain (CMETD) and the Fertility Clinic, both recognised institutions within the Erasmus Hospital. It is the wealth of this expertise, cooperation and interactions that permits an adapted response to women with endometriosis. The development and transmission of knowledge on endometriosis is also a key factor. In fact, strengthening the teaching supports available to generalists and gynaecologists while at the same time promoting the development of quality criteria and national recommendations are essential to improved treatment within the reference centres. Association "Toi Mon Endo", assisted by the H.U.B. Endometriosis Clinic, have submitted proposals to this effect to the KCE (Belgian

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Health Care Knowledge Centre) that intends to continue to act in the interests of all patients affected by this debilitating disease.

Actions and events to increase awareness during the month of March

The month of March, culminating in World Endometriosis Day on 28 March, is the occasion to focus firmly on this disease. A genuine challenge for public health, there is a need both to be able to diagnose endometriosis as early as possible to avoid risks of complications and also to encourage the drawing up of new treatment guidelines. With this in view, during March the Endometriosis Clinic is organising and participating in a number of events:

- On **6 March**, the ULB Circle of Medicine, together with the Endometriosis Clinic and the "Toi Mon Endo" non-profit organisation, are organising an awareness day on the Solbosch campus. More information is available at : <https://fb.me/e/486y0lfVw> and @cercle_medecine_ulb
- On **24 and 25 March**, an event dedicated to professionals: the Endometriosis Congress organised by the CRGOLFB (Collège Royal des gynécologues obstétriciens de langue française de Belgique), with the participation of the Endometriosis Clinic. More info at: <https://www.crgolfb.be/fr>
- **During the week of 27 March**, a fresco on the endometriosis challenge by the artist Juan Mendez will be exhibited at the Erasmus Hospital with the option to inscribe a symbolic word in support of the fight against endometriosis. The association "Toi Mon Endo" will also be present to inform patients, families, friends and collaborators about endometriosis. Make it a date: the Erasmus Hospital lobby from Monday 27 to Friday 31 March!
- **28 March** at 6.30 pm, screening of the documentary film "Below the Belt", produced by Hillary Clinton, at "The Palace" cinema Brussels (paid admission to support the "Toi Mon Endo" association). An avant-première co-organised by "Toi Mon Endo" and the COCOF (French Community Commission), with the participation of the Endometriosis Clinic. More info at: www.toimonendo.com.

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ABOUT THE H.U.B

The Hôpital Universitaire de Bruxelles (H.U.B) is the academic hospital of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), which unites the Jules Bordet institute, the Erasme Hospital and the Queen Fabiola Children's University Hospital (HUDERF) since 2021.

As an international reference center, located in the heart of the Brussels Region, the H.U.B offers high quality general, oncological and pediatric care.

This excellent care, accessible to all, is enriched and sustained by a dual approach of scientific research and teaching for the caregivers of tomorrow.

In 2022, the H.U.B. is composed of more than 6,000 employees who share the following values: Interest of the patient, Respect, Commitment, Solidarity, Diversity and Inclusion, and the principle of Free enquiry.

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ABOUT THE ERASMUS HOSPITAL

The Erasmus Hospital is located on the Erasmus hospital-faculty campus, which includes the Faculty of Medicine (about 3500 students), the Faculty of Motor Sciences (about 1100 students) and the School of Public Health (about 600 students). Opened in 1977 and with a capacity of 1,048 beds, the hospital receives 25,000 to 30,000 inpatients annually and has 350,000 to 400,000 consultations.

More than 4,000 members of staff, in 80 different professions, contribute on a daily basis to providing care under the sign of ambition, excellence and well-being. The Lothier Polyclinic and 2 external centres (the Traumatology and Rehabilitation Centre - CTR and the Geriatric Revalidation Centre - CRG) complete the care offer.

www.erasme.ulb.ac.be

ENDOMETRIOSIS CLINIC

The Endometriosis Clinic at Erasme Hospital offers expert, comprehensive and multidisciplinary care. The team is made up of experts in gynaecology and obstetrics (specialists in endometriosis surgery, fertility specialists), medical-surgical gastroenterology, urology, anatomopathology, algology, medical imaging and nuclear medicine, as well as specialised paramedics: nurses, psychologists, sex therapists, physiotherapists and experts in complementary therapies... The multidisciplinary work of the Endometriosis Clinic makes it possible to offer an individualised and adapted care pathway that takes into account the priority of the patient and the couple. Multidisciplinary consultation meetings are therefore regularly organised, at the end of which a personalised care programme is proposed to each patient.

ABOUT TOI MON ENDO

Toi Mon Endo ASBL was created to raise awareness, educate and bring people together around endometriosis so that girls, women* (*FINTA), are able to identify, understand and live comfortably with their endometriosis.

Missions:

- Accompaniment and support for patients
- Teaching: educational and recreational awareness in secondary schools
- Awareness: our societal mission (to raise awareness)
- Political advocacy: accessibility and recognition of the disease

<https://toimonendo.com/>