

# How Clinicians Can Create High-Quality Research Questions in Sexual Medicine

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*Vancouver, Canada (Coast Salish traditional territory)*

# **Topics**

- 1. Deriving research questions from clinical experience**
- 2. Developing registries/biobanks to address these questions**
- 3. Identifying a sustainable research niche**
- 4. Multidisciplinary collaboration to foster impactful and translational research**
- 5. Patient oriented research**

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# Deriving research questions in the clinic

## Type of experience

- Seeing rare/unique case(s)
- Identifying unanswered question(s) in the clinic
- Years of experience seeing a disease/condition/ symptom

## Research

- *Case report/series*
- *Retrospective/Prospective cohort*
- *Cohort or Clinical trial – ensure correct study design*

# Rare/unique case(s)

## CLINICAL CONUNDRUM

**Clinical Conundrum: A 33-Year-Old  
With Pain Post-Orgasm and a History  
of Endometriosis**

# Rare/unique case(s)

*The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 2024, 21, 807–815

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jsxmed/qdae084>




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Original Research



OXFORD

## Pain with orgasm in endometriosis: potential etiologic factors and clinical correlates

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# Unanswered questions

- Why does deep dyspareunia occur in endometriosis?

# Clinical experience and study design



# Clinical experience and study design

- Green: endo
- Red: nerve fibres

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# Registry and Biobank

- Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Interdisciplinary Cohort (EPPIC)
- Endometriosis Determinants of Oncogenesis (ENDOONC)
- Key facilitators:
  - Buy in from clinical colleagues and administrators
  - In kind support from established researchers and existing resources
  - Initial seed funds



# Registry and Biobank

- **Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Interdisciplinary Cohort (EPPIIC)**
- Integrated with clinical processes: all new referrals complete baseline questionnaires online
- Consent obtained to use data for clinical only or for both clinical + research (85%)
- Physical examination and surgical data collected with standardized form
- Follow-up questionnaires annually (need reminders/incentives)

# Registry and Biobank

- **Endometriosis Determinants of Oncogenesis (ENDOONC)**
- Integrated with clinical processes: all samples are stored in pathology archive
- Annotation: stored samples are annotated
- Consent obtained for prospective collection of high value samples (e.g. for studies requiring fresh tissue and for primary cell culture)
- Linkage: To baseline questionnaires, physical examination and surgical data, and to follow-up questionnaires in the registry

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# Finding a research niche

## Based on research environment

- What gap exists in:
  - Institution (hospital, university, research institute)
  - State/province
  - National
  - International
- Matching to existing priorities:
  - Institution
  - Funding agencies

## Based on knowledge/skillset

- Clinical practice: knowledge of disease/condition and access to patients
- Surgical practice: access to human samples
- Existing or new research skill:
  - Statistics/epidemiology
  - Clinical trials
  - Other skills to study human subjects or derived tissues/cells

# Finding a research niche

## Based on research environment

- Filled gap in endometriosis research at institution/province
- Joined the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) with its aligned priorities
- Oriented research to peer review committee(s) of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

## Based on knowledge/skillset

- Knowledge of endometriosis
- Access to patients and surgical samples
- Previous research training in statistics
- New research training in pain assessment (e.g. QST)



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# Multidisciplinary collaboration

- Qualitative methods
- Statistics/Epidemiology
- AI/Machine learning
- Pain neurophysiology
- Basic lab science



# Multidisciplinary collaboration

## Goal

- Be a good collaborator
- Be a professional
- Be a good colleague
- Be friendly
- Be generous
- Be passionate
- Be visionary

## Examples

- *Share your expertise*
- *Discuss authorship early*
- *Give & take*
- *Attend local/int'l conferences*
- *Volunteer for committees, etc.*
- *(Co)-lead the research*
- *Provide the big picture*

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# Patient oriented research

## Patient research partners

- Arises from good clinical care
- Can be involved in:
  - Study conception
  - Study design
  - Knowledge translation
  - Peer researchers
- Utilize best practices (e.g. diversity, remuneration)

## Knowledge translation (KT)

- Disseminating research to the public (e.g. public events, website, social media)
- Liaise with foundations and leverage KT for philanthropy

# Art gallery

- Photovoice
- Digital storytelling

**(Shared with consent on [Pelvicpainendo.ca](http://Pelvicpainendo.ca))**

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# Thank you!

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- @pelvicpainendo
- Yonglab.med.ubc.ca
- Pelvicpainendo.ca
- BCwomens.ca/our-services/gynecology/pelvic-pain-endometriosis



# Annual Meeting 2026

**February 12-15, 2026**

**Hyatt Regency Long Beach  
Long Beach, CA - USA**

**Save The Date**