

Women's cramps and pain more than imaginary problems

By CAROL MAHONEY

For years, many women accepted severe menstrual pain as something with which they had to live.

And they heard, via old wives tales, that this condition would disappear once they had given birth.

However, endometriosis, the medical name for the condition which causes intense pain, infertility, and eventually could do irreparable pelvic damage is not to be ignored.

New diagnostic techniques are now available to identify the disease so it can be treated.

"It's an old problem with a new concept," said Dr. Asghar Afari, a West Bloomfield gynecologist.

"In essence, it is the migration of tissue normally found in the lining of the uterus to any place else in the body," he said.

Dr. Afari said that when such tissue breaks off, it travels to other organs,

most commonly the ovaries, fallopian tubes, or elsewhere in the pelvic cavity. Once transplanted, the tissue retains the same properties it had in the uterus, that is, it still responds to the same hormonal clock.

The tissue thickens and breaks down with each menstrual cycle, thus causing bleeding outside the uterus which can be painful.

"It's a disease with many faces, very unpredictable and puzzling as far as outcome," he said.

Dr. Afari said the condition is most prevalent among women aged 17 to 35 who are in their peak reproductive years.

Recent studies have concluded that heredity plays a part in whether a woman will develop endometriosis.

"Generally a patient will say her aunt or mother has had the same problem. Knowing this gives us further insight on how to counsel the patient," Afari said.

ENDOMETRIOSIS has also been found to be a contributing factor in loss of work time by women. "Working women lose anywhere from several hours up to two days of work a month," the doctor said, referring to the pain which incapacitates some patients regularly.

The symptom, progressive dysmenorrhea, which is defined as increasing pain from one menstrual period to the next, is one of many which are manifested by women with endometriosis.

Infertility is another. "The incidence of endometriosis in a patient who couldn't become pregnant is 30 to 40 percent," said Afari.

Abnormal bleeding, either hemorrhaging or bleeding in mid-cycle, is another characteristic symptom. Vague or generalized abdominal and low back pain at anytime is also suspect. Afari cautioned women to be wary of such pain when there seems to be no reason for it.

For unexplained pain in the abdominal or pelvic area, Dr. Afari recommends an examination by a gynecologist.

"A pelvic exam should not be painful," he said. "If it is, it means there's some problem."

Regardless of symptoms, however, Afari warned against quick judgments about the condition. Not every woman who complains of menstrual pain should be thought to have endometriosis. Any suspicion can be confirmed with a diagnostic procedure called a laparoscopy.

A laparoscopy is a telescope-like instrument through which a physician may look into the abdominal cavity and pelvic organs. It can be inserted in an incision about one-half inch long in the lower portion of the navel.

"It is an outpatient procedure," said Afari. "A woman can go back to work the next day or within two days. A laparoscopy is regarded to be a safe pro-

cedure in the hands of physicians who frequently deal with the procedure."

ONCE DIAGNOSED, treatment of endometriosis can be medical, surgical or a combination of both. Two forms of medical therapy have been employed, recently.

One form, which uses birth control pills to create a false pregnancy, gives some credence to the old tale which says that giving birth clears up the problem.

In earlier times Dr. Afari said, it was noticed that symptoms of endometriosis disappeared after childbirth, thus creating the myth that pregnancy was a cure.

Actually, he said, the use of birth control pills to treat the condition have not been that outstanding.

A new form of treatment, which creates a temporary menopause, has had more dramatic results.

This is done by using a synthetic an-

drogen to stimulate the pituitary gland. The synthetic androgen, which is taken orally by the patient, causes the ovaries to function to be suppressed and lowers the level of estrogen and progesterone.

Afsari said that according to reports, 70 to 95 percent of those women undergoing such treatment have been cured of abdominal pain. Also the number of pregnancies among previously infertile women after treatment has likewise been high.

Although some small side effects are experienced, Afari said patients generally tolerate the medication.

No long-term studies are yet available on whether the endometriosis is cured permanently, but rates of recurrence at this time are very low.

Because statistics have shown that one-third of any diagnosis done for infertility has shown some degree of endometriosis present, Afari advises women unable to conceive to investigate the possibility of having this condition.

'Children's Happenings' planned for the holidays

A long list of events under the heading "Children's Happenings" are set to happen from Nov. 17 through Dec. 8 in Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road.

The activity begins with "A Mime Show," at 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17 when Scott McCue's 8-12 year old drama students take the stage.

The young actors and actresses wrote their original pantomime for the production. Admission is \$1.

"A Mime Show" is followed by "Spoon River Anthology," at 3 p.m. that same day. This show is produced by McCue's 13-18 year old students. Admission is \$1.

McCue is active in Greektown's Attic Theatre. He has toured with "The Storytellers," Michigan Opera Theatre and the International Thespian Society. In addition to his classes in the center, he is mime instructor for "Detroupe" of "Young Audiences of Metro-Detroit."

FARMINGTON Community Center's first Book Fair will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, Nov. 29 to Dec. 2.

Special titles in a wide range of sub-

jects to interest the younger reader start at \$1.

Santa Claus luncheons will be given two days this season, on Saturdays, Dec. 1 and 8. Times are 11 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. each day.

Youngsters will lunch with Santa, view a magic show, and be invited to shop in the "Children-Only Boutique" which carries items affordable to the young set.

The \$4 admission fee includes a color photo of the child and Santa Claus.

New on the agenda this season is "A Family Pancake Breakfast With Santa," which gets under way at noon, Sunday, Dec. 2.

This event includes a hearty breakfast, balloons, prizes, clowns, a magic show, photos with Santa Claus and musical entertainment. The "Children's Only Boutique" opens again for the young guests. Admission is \$4.

Advance tickets are recommended for the children's shows.

There is no charge for the Book Fair. Reservations are necessary for the Santa Claus luncheons, and the family pancake breakfast, by stopping in at the center, or calling 477-8404.



JOYCE JULIUS

Joyce Julius lauded BPW honors Holly Jaycette

A lifetime member of the Holly Jaycettes has been awarded the title of "Farmington Woman of the Year" by the Farmington Chapter of Business and Professional Women (BPW).

Joyce Julius, who works with Project Concern in Farmington Hills' Alexander Hamilton Building, took the award during "National Business Women's Week" when local chapters of BPW throughout the nation honored a woman either for her community involvement, or accomplishments in the work force.

Mrs. Julius graduated from Ohio State University, holds a master's degree in viology and biochemistry, and calls herself "a professional volunteer."

In addition to her full-time job, and mothering two daughters, aged 12 and 16, the Holly resident has served the Jaycettes on local, state and national

levels in various capacities.

The organization has given her its most coveted awards: Outstanding Jaycette Key Woman, Outstanding President and Life Time Member of the Holly club.

During the past year she was immediate past president of Michigan Jaycee Auxiliary, Future Directions State Chairperson and a regional program manager.

She is an active participant on the U.S. Jaycette ACT Team (a motivational speaking team which travels throughout the country motivating women) and served as program manager for the Olympic fund drive.

MRS. JULIUS is a member of FISH, a 4H horse leader, and the first woman ever to serve on the Holly Board of Commerce.

She has set up the Jaycee and Jaycette Walks for Mankind throughout

the tri-county area.

Betty Brown, president of Farmington Area's BPW, called Mrs. Julius, "a lady who can take a 24-hour-day and get 36 hours out of it."

Women honored by the club are not BPW members.

Mrs. Julius was recognized for her accomplishments along with nine other women in BPW's District 9. The district includes clubs in Farmington, Livonia, Northville, Novi, Plymouth, Wayne, Westland, Garden City, South Redford and Lola Valley.

The Farmington chapter meets on the first Tuesday of every month for a dinner meeting, and welcome newcomers who are actively engaged in business or the professions.

Membership inquiries will be taken by Mary Samples during the day, at 477-0500, or in the evening at 349-1980.

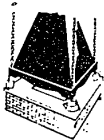
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