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From: Hans Evers [<mailto:Jev@sgyn.azm.nl>]

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To: SANCO REFLECTION HEALTH STRATEGY

Subject: Chronic diseases

Endometriosis is a crippling chronic disease affecting between 10% and 25% of women of reproductive age. Diagnosis can be delayed for many years, and during that period the disease may invade and destroy her pelvic organs. Despite the existence of severe pain, significantly decreasing their quality of life, women often find that their experiences are not taken seriously by health care professionals. Little research has been conducted into how endometriosis affects their lives. The experience of endometriosis pervades all aspects of a woman's life. This experience is compounded by the side effects of many (symptomatic) treatments. Women with this disease need to be taken seriously, and not have their pain trivialized. Research into the development of endometriosis will contribute to our understanding of this enigmatic disease, which in turn will lead to developing rational treatment strategies. So far, these are lacking. The incidence of endometriosis is increasing, due in part to women postponing their first pregnancy in order to have a professional career of their own, but also due to, as yet unknown, (environmental?) causes. Endometriosis deserves a place high on the research agenda.

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