



## Endometriosis and infertility.

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Abstract: The relationship of endometriosis, the most common benign gynaecological disease during reproductive life, to infertility is generally ill understood. The association between infertility and minimal to mild endometriosis, when no anatomical defect is evident, may be explained by the following possible mechanisms: alternations in peritoneal fluid (macrophages - immunoglobulins, Interleukin-1, protease inhibitors, prostanoids, an ovum capture inhibitor), ovulatory dysfunctions (anovulation, LUF syndrome), luteal phase defect, disturbed implantation, and spontaneous abortion. These possibilities are discussed. The latest prospective controlled studies offer strong evidence that endometriosis per se is not a direct cause of infertility. On the other hand, the disease usually deteriorates if not treated, and therefore medical or surgical interventions are often needed when expectant treatment or other infertility therapies, e.g., ovulation induction, fail to result in pregnancy. Women with minimal to mild endometriosis only should be diagnosed as having unexplained infertility, which today may be treated by in vitro fertilization.

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