



Lancashire  
Gynaecologist  
*Eric Mutema*

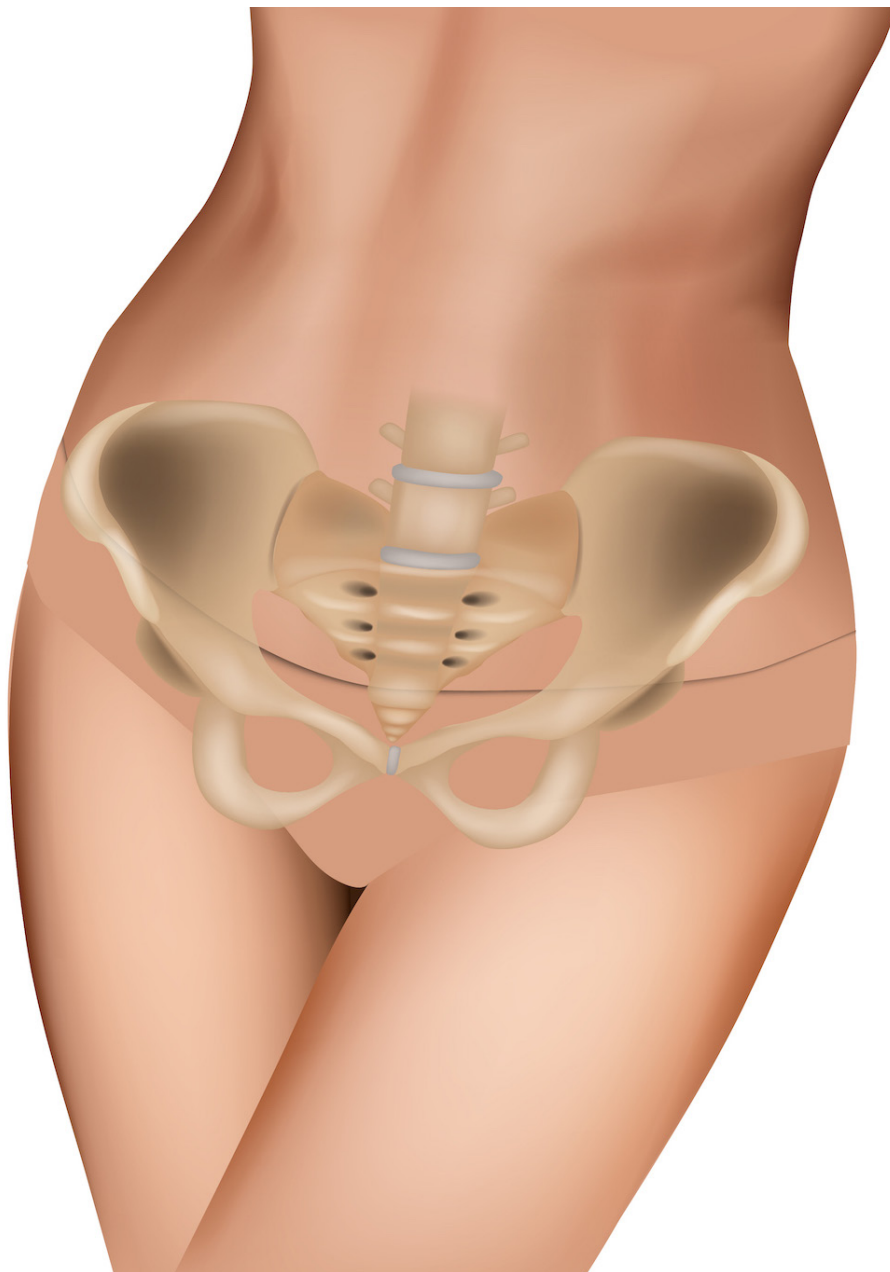
The importance  
of Pelvic Health

## The importance of pelvic health

The pelvis is located between your stomach and your legs and the pelvic floor is the group of muscles and connective tissues attached to the bones at the bottom of your pelvis. If you could look down vertically in-between your hip bones, you would see the pelvic floor muscles at the bottom (or the floor!) of your pelvis.

The pelvic floor muscles support the bladder, bowel and the uterus. They prevent incontinence of bladder and bowel, prolapse of pelvic organs (bladder, uterus, rectum) and are also important in sexual function. The pelvic floor can be weakened by pregnancy, childbirth, obesity, prostate treatment and the straining of chronic constipation.

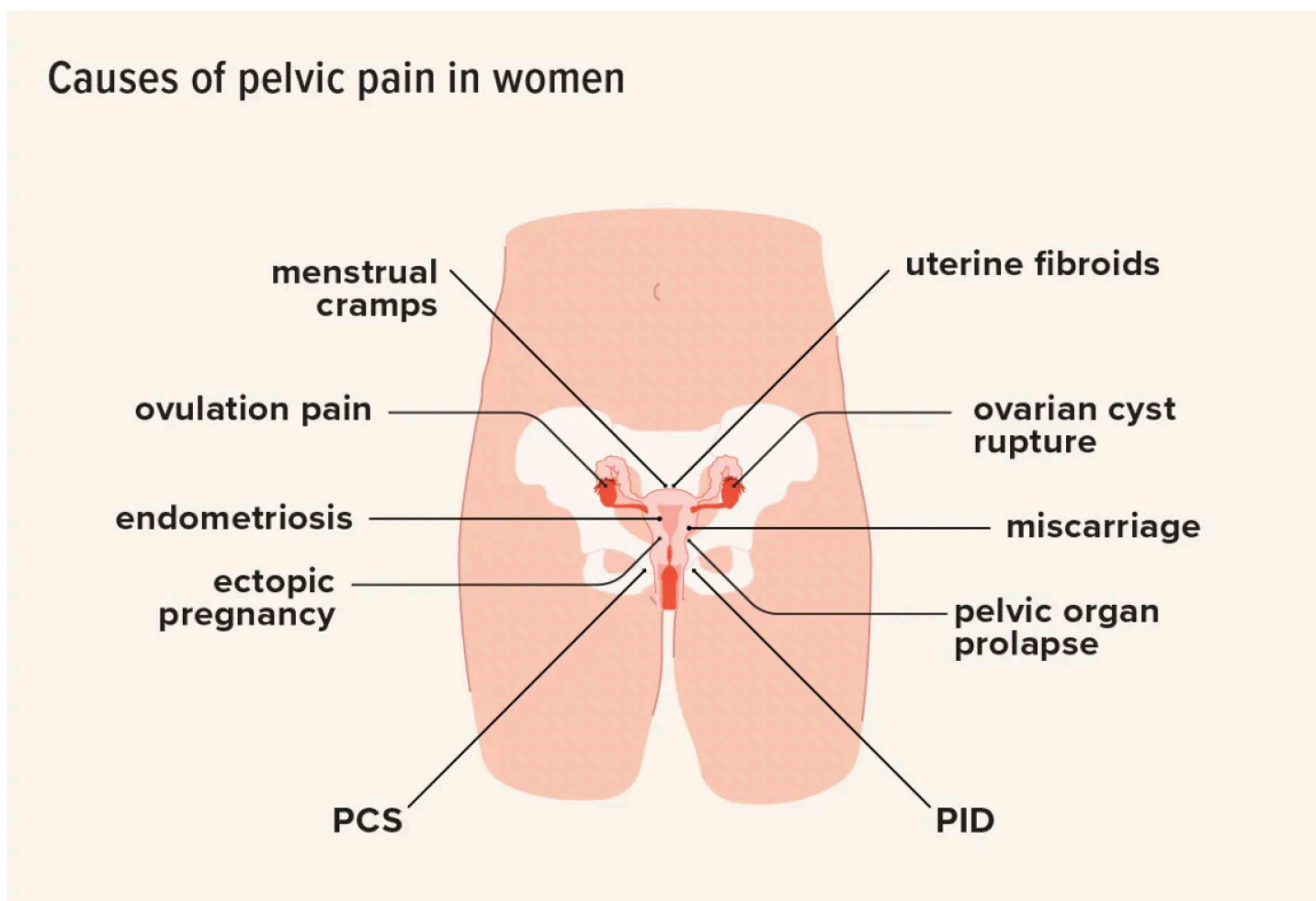
Pelvic health is important for both women and men, but due to the differences between female and male anatomy, the causes of pelvic pain will differ - although there will be common issues that cause pain for both sexes.



## What causes pelvic pain?

Pelvic pain can arise from the body's digestive, reproductive or urinary system. Some pelvic pain, particularly chronic pelvic pain, can also arise from trauma to the muscles and connective tissue (ligaments) in the structures of the pelvic floor.

A female pelvis has space for the womb to expand during pregnancy, and for the birth canal to support the delivery of a baby. Pelvic pain is more common in women, sometimes as a result of trauma caused by pregnancy and childbirth. Pelvic inflammatory disease happens when the female reproductive organs become infected. Other common causes of pelvic pain for women include ovarian cysts, fibroids and endometriosis.



Men are affected by a weakness of the pelvic floor muscles too, and causes of pain in the male pelvis can include urinary tract infections, hernia, sexually transmitted infection, or prostatitis, which is inflammation of the prostate.

Men and women will be affected by pelvic pain caused by digestive issues, like irritable bowel syndrome, diverticulitis or simply due to constipation.



## Pelvic pain symptoms

Pain may be a harmless sign that you're fertile, a digestive disorder, or a warning that there is something more serious happening.

If your pain onset is sudden and severe, you should consult a doctor immediately as acute pelvic pain is often the sign of an infection.

Pelvic pain that lasts more than six months is termed chronic, and due to a long-term problem.

Other symptoms include:

- a pain that comes on slowly but does not go away
- a dull or heavy ache, or feeling of pressure
- a twisted or knotted feeling
- a cramping or throbbing pain, which may come and go
- pain only when you're doing something, like exercising, having sex, or urination

While occasional pelvic pain is common, anyone unsure about why it is happening should see a doctor.

If the cause of the pain has been identified, any changes, such as increasing severity, is another sign that the problem needs to be reassessed.

Identifying the underlying cause of pelvic pain is important. Even one of the most common causes of pelvic pain, like urinary tract infections (UTIs) will need treatment to prevent serious complications. Anyone unsure about the cause of pelvic pain should see a doctor.

## Diagnosis and treatment

To identify the cause of the pain, a doctor will want to know about the patient's clinical history and obtain the relevant information and be able to ask the right questions. It is also important that the patient describes the symptoms as accurately as possible.

Examination is an important part of a consultation and this might include a MRI scan which can be used to detect tumours and cysts of the pelvis, urinary tract, diseases of the small intestine as well as causes of pelvic pain in women such as fibroids, endometriosis, adenomyosis and other abnormalities of the reproductive organs. If a gynaecological problem is suspected, patients should expect to have an internal/vaginal examination. Blood tests may be also necessary to determine whether there is an infection.

The treatment options will vary depending on the cause of the problem but could include pain relief medications, antibiotics to combat an infection, or physiotherapy for a muscle or ligament issue. Women may be referred to a gynaecologist for further diagnosis and support.

## Physiotherapy

Specialist physiotherapists can help some patients with pelvic floor dysfunction caused by pregnancy and childbirth, or other issues including incontinence and pelvic pain. They will recommend exercises for the pelvic floor muscles, and these can be effective for many people. The good news is that pelvic floor muscle exercises are easy to perform and can be done anywhere.



Mr Eric Mutema  
Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist  
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## How the Lancashire Gynaecologist can help

The Lancashire Gynaecologist, Mr Eric Mutema is a Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. He specialises in the treatment of Urogynaecology and his training in this field means that he is an expert in treating all aspects of female pelvic floor problems including vaginal prolapse, obstetric anal sphincter injuries and urinary incontinence.

Mr Mutema has also treated male patients with pelvic problems.

If you have concerns about pelvic pain Mr Mutema's knowledge of this issue combined with his excellence in patient-centred care, empathy and consideration for the individual, will provide you with an accurate diagnosis and the best possible course of treatment.



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