

Pelvic pain may be tied to bladder

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ASK THE EXPERT

enough to have significant effects on quality of life.

Question: Can the bladder be a missed cause of pelvic pain?

Answer: The urinary bladder is a muscular organ in the pelvis and can be a precipitating factor for pelvic pain. Interstitial cystitis (IC) is a bladder disorder that can cause varying degrees of pelvic pain, discomfort, burning or pressure and may be associated with urinary urgency (persistent urgent need to go to the bathroom), frequency

Current estimates indicate that IC affects 1 million Americans and is nine times more prevalent in females than males. The exact cause of IC is not fully understood. However, one of the most acceptable theories indicates that patients with IC have gaps in the protective lining of the bladder cavity which allows toxic irritants from the urine to go into the bladder wall muscle and irritate it. When IC is suspected, the patient is usually given a questionnaire focused on bladder symptoms. Other diagnostic tests can be done at the physician's office.

IC is a chronic disorder that cannot be totally cured; however, treatment is directed towards symptom relief to improve the patient's quality of life.

(urinating too often) and painful sexual intercourse. Although symptoms of IC may resemble those of recurring urinary tract infections, a urine test is usually free of bacteria. Symptoms can be severe

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