

## UTERINE FIBROIDS IN WOMEN

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**Abstract:** Uterine fibroids, or leiomyomas, are the most common benign tumors of the female reproductive system, affecting a significant proportion of women during their reproductive years. Though often asymptomatic, fibroids may present with heavy menstrual bleeding, pelvic pain, infertility, or recurrent pregnancy loss. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical manifestations, diagnostic methods, and treatment options for uterine fibroids, with particular attention to fertility preservation and modern minimally invasive approaches. Current international guidelines and future therapeutic directions are also discussed.

**Keywords:** uterine fibroids, leiomyoma, reproductive health, menorrhagia, infertility, hysterectomy, myomectomy.

### INTRODUCTION

Uterine fibroids, also known as uterine leiomyomas, are benign smooth muscle tumors arising from the myometrium of the uterus. They are hormonally responsive and typically develop during a woman's reproductive years, with prevalence increasing after age 30. It is estimated that up to 70–80% of women may develop fibroids by the age of 50, though not all will experience symptoms.

Despite their benign nature, fibroids can significantly impact quality of life, fertility, and pregnancy outcomes. Understanding the pathophysiological basis of fibroid formation, alongside advances in diagnostic imaging and treatment modalities, is essential for optimizing care, particularly in women desiring to preserve fertility.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Recent advances in molecular medicine have revealed that uterine fibroids are not merely the result of hormonal imbalance but rather originate from a complex interplay of genetic mutations, epigenetic modifications, and abnormal cellular signaling. Although benign in nature, fibroids are monoclonal tumors, meaning that each tumor arises from a single mutated smooth muscle cell that proliferates independently [1].

One of the most frequently implicated mutations is in the MED12 gene, found in up to 70% of fibroids. This gene plays a regulatory role in RNA polymerase II transcription, and its disruption promotes unregulated smooth muscle cell proliferation. Additionally, abnormal activation of Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling, TGF- $\beta$  (Transforming Growth Factor-beta) overexpression, and upregulation of estrogen and progesterone receptors contribute to tumor growth and extracellular matrix (ECM) accumulation [2].

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Such findings underscore that uterine fibroids have a molecular and cellular complexity comparable to neoplastic disorders, thereby prompting research into targeted therapies aimed at interfering with specific molecular pathways, rather than relying solely on hormonal suppression.

Uterine fibroids have profound psychosocial effects, especially in symptomatic women. Chronic heavy bleeding, pelvic pain, sexual dysfunction, and fertility concerns frequently lead to emotional distress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression. Studies indicate that women suffering from fibroids are at increased risk of social withdrawal and reduced interpersonal functioning.

Moreover, due to the normalization of menstrual irregularities in many cultures, women often delay seeking medical attention, assuming their symptoms are part of "normal" menstruation. This delay not only exacerbates symptoms but also contributes to advanced fibroid growth, often requiring more invasive intervention.

Therefore, beyond clinical management, psychological counseling, patient education, and awareness campaigns play a pivotal role in early detection and empowering women to advocate for their reproductive health.

Uterine fibroids significantly affect women's health-related quality of life (HRQoL). Symptoms such as menorrhagia (excessive menstrual bleeding), fatigue from anemia, constant pelvic discomfort, and reproductive challenges can interfere with daily activities, professional performance, and intimate relationships [3].

From an economic perspective, uterine fibroids impose a considerable financial burden on healthcare systems. In the United States alone, direct annual medical costs related to fibroids (diagnostics, medications, surgeries) are estimated to exceed \$4.1 billion, while indirect costs, including lost workdays and decreased productivity, are even higher.

In low-resource countries, where access to healthcare is limited and reproductive health services are underutilized, women often present with large, symptomatic fibroids requiring emergency intervention. These cases are associated with higher complication rates and greater costs. Consequently, the recognition of fibroids as both a clinical and public health issue is essential.

In terms of future treatment, researchers are investigating gene-based therapies, non-hormonal molecular inhibitors, nanotechnology, and regenerative gynecology techniques. The long-term goal is to develop personalized, fertility-sparing, and low-risk treatments that address the root causes of fibroid development [4].

## CONCLUSION

Uterine fibroids are a common but complex gynecologic condition with variable clinical impact. Their management requires an individualized, evidence-based approach, integrating medical, surgical, and minimally invasive options. With advances in imaging, pharmacotherapy, and fertility-preserving procedures, women with fibroids have more choices than ever before. Continued research into the molecular biology of fibroids and long-term outcomes of newer treatments will further improve care for women across all age groups.

## REFERENCES:

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