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Giving hope to women

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Study into fertility disease

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A NEW clinical trial being conducted by Barwon Health will aim to reduce pain from a debilitating disease by comparing the effects of yoga, cognitive behaviour therapy and education.

The controlled study has been designed to improve quality of life and reduce health care costs for endometriosis, which impacts about 700,000 Australians.

Barwon Health, in partnership with Deakin University, Monash Health and the University of South Australia, has received \$893,981 from the Medical Research Future Fund to conduct the randomised trial over five years.

Secondary outcomes include improvement in pain, mental health, fatigue and sleep; along with improved cost-effectiveness to the health system — such as fewer hospital presentations — and within society, including fewer sick days.

Endometriosis has no cure, and causes pain and fertility difficulties. The condition means uterine tissue grows on

the ovaries, fallopian tubes or tissue lining the pelvis or other body parts.

Barwon Health obstetrician gynaecologist Marilla Druitt said the study aimed to reduce the pelvic pain caused by endometriosis, which affects one in nine women aged between 18 and 44 in Australia.

“We already have good evidence that cognitive behavioural therapy is a great treatment for pain, and there is some early research that yoga can also decrease pain associated with endometriosis,” Dr Druitt said.

“Our healthcare system was not designed with an interdisciplinary approach in mind, and we have known for decades that a biopsychosocial approach works much better for most health conditions than a purely medical focus.

“We are seeking to address this with research, which can determine if adding a mind-based intervention, such as group psychology treatment, or adding a mind/body inter-

vention, such as group yoga, improves quality of life for people with endometriosis and pain.

“Our control group will be those having usual gynaecology care, which can involve treatment with hormones and surgery, along with education about endometriosis,” she said.

There will be 258 participants recruited from Barwon Health, Monash Health and endometriosis support groups.

Participants will complete online questionnaires to measure a variety of health aspects before and after the eight-week intervention.

The study is open for participants who have a diagnosis of endometriosis and have had pain for at least six months, are at least 18 years of age, not currently pregnant, with no major physical issues/injuries, and have not recently completed a course of therapist led yoga or cognitive behaviour therapy.

To become a participant, people who qualify for the study can contact thehappystudy@deakin.edu.au