

Abstract

This thesis adapts a life course approach in epidemiology to endometriosis. Endometriosis is a highly prevalent chronic disease affecting women in reproductive age. Firstly, the topic of this disease is introduced, the situation and current knowledge in Australia is discussed. Positive changes in a national level are presented. Secondly, early life exposers and maternal behaviour are investigated as possible risk and protective factors. A systematic review of early life factors identified a low birthweight and formula feeding of infants as risk factors for the development of endometriosis. Lastly, the relation of birthweight, weight at childhood and endometriosis was analysed using data of Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health. Other risk and protective factors were evaluated and included into the analysis. Logistic regression was used for determination of statistical significance. High weight at 10 years old was found to be a protective factor against endometriosis.