

On April 11, our guest speaker was Dr. Susan Evans CEO Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia. She is an author, gynaecologist, pain specialist and excellent communicator. Susan's subject and speciality is endometriosis and pelvic pain in teenagers an initiative of former Health Minister Greg Hunt.

Here's a summary from our top notch minute taker Sharon Norton.

Women and girls with period, endometriosis pain. Australian doctors are getting good at laparoscopy. Realised that to fix women's pain, not just surgery and hormones. Aim to get better outcomes for people with pain.

Girls in puberty start getting chronic pain conditions. Headaches migraine and abdominal issues. More than period pain going on. Dysmenorrhea. Bad periods and pelvic pain and endometriosis all overlap each other. People with pain feel bad generally.

Women present with more illnesses such as chronic fatigue syndrome.

National Action Plan put in place by Greg Hunt, Health Minister at the time. Top 3 – education plan for teens, and how to get help and what to do. Started in SA! Funding for 80 schools in SA only as a trial. Difficult to contract with each state individually.

In 20 to 25 percent of schools in each state – except public schools in NSW. Trained educators with health qualifications. 60,000 students so far – 1 hour structured program with individual follow up after presentation. Distant places also covered.

Aim for year 10 students to be in pain program – not designed to teach about periods generally. Year 10 where have had some science already. If diagnosis is left too late – girls have either missed too much school or are focusing on exams etc.

Smaller centers put many year levels together when presentations are given.

- Also sessions for boys – different questions – but teaching to support women in pain.
- Queensland – milestone recently in visiting juvenile detention centre. Sporting groups also.
- Pre PPEP talk presentations – so can focus on pain aspect. And next steps session.
- Health practitioner education is also part of the remit. No Health practitioner comes out of training fully equipped to deal with the bigger picture of pain conditions in this area. Undersupply of specialists in this area.
- There was going to be a specialist pain centre in each state, instead have chosen to set up general women's health clinics led by GP's. Will be general women's health. Investment is very small compared to the need. · www.pelvicpain.org.au
- Instagram: @PPEPtalk /@PelvicpainfoundationAUS

Wonderful to see this education available for teenage girls and health professionals, so they will be much better informed about management of this challenging condition.