

QUICK FACTS

AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS, SJÖGREN'S, AND WOMEN

- Autoimmune disease affects 5 percent to 8 percent of the U.S. population. It is the third most common disease category after cancer and heart disease.¹
- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) estimates that autoimmune diseases affect more than 23.5 million Americans.² The NIH's Office of Research on Women's Health has declared autoimmune diseases to be a major women's health issue because taken as a group they represent the fourth largest cause of disability in women.³
- There are more than 80 types of autoimmune diseases.⁴
- Autoimmune diseases can affect virtually every site in the body, including the endocrine system, connective tissue, gastrointestinal tract, heart, skin, and kidneys. At least 15 diseases are known to be the direct result of an autoimmune response.¹
- Women have a higher risk for some autoimmune diseases.⁴ About 75 percent of autoimmune diseases occur in women, including Sjögren's.³
 - Approximately one-percent of the U.S. population, mostly adult women, are affected with Sjögren's. This is similar to the number of women living with breast cancer.⁵
 - Nine out of ten Sjögren's patients are women. The average age of diagnosis is around 40, although it can occur at all ages.⁶
 - Sjögren's frequency appears to increase with age, with a prevalence of about three-percent (3%) in people above 50 years of age.⁷
- Sjögren's, a systemic autoimmune disease that affects the entire body, is the second most common autoimmune rheumatic disease⁸, affecting as many as four million Americans, with an estimated 2.5 million patients currently undiagnosed.⁶
- According to the Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation, it currently takes an average of three years to diagnose Sjögren's. Sjögren's is often undiagnosed or misdiagnosed because disease symptoms frequently overlap or mimic those of menopause, allergies, or medical conditions such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, and chronic fatigue syndrome. Healthcare providers sometimes treat each symptom individually and do not recognize that a systemic disease is present.⁶

References

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