

What is Hysterectomy?

May 30, 2023 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in today's article?

- **Why in News?**
- **What is Hysterectomy?**
- **Criteria for Getting a Hysterectomy**
- **Health Risks Associated with Hysterectomy**
- **Hysterectomy in India**
- **Challenges Associated with Hysterectomy in India**
- **What Measures has the Government Taken So Far?**
- **News Summary**

Why in News?

- The Union Health Ministry has recently urged State Governments to audit hysterectomy trends in public and private hospitals.

- This was done in response to a Supreme Court petition arguing that women from marginalised locations are at risk of unjustified hysterectomies for economic gains and exploitation.

What is Hysterectomy?

- A hysterectomy is a **surgical procedure that removes the uterus (womb)**.
- After surgery, woman can't become pregnant and no longer menstruate.

Criteria for Getting a Hysterectomy

- After caesarean deliveries, hysterectomies are the second-most frequent procedure in women of the reproductive age group.
- Reasons for this surgery include **abnormal bleeding, uterine prolapse, fibroids and cancer**.
 - In some cases, **oophorectomy**, the removal of ovaries (the primary source of oestrogen), is also frequently performed, which is a form of surgical menopause and linked to several chronic conditions.
- The highest percentage of hysterectomies (51.8%) were to treat excessive menstrual bleeding or pain.
- It's more common for **women aged 40 to 50**.

Health Risks Associated with Hysterectomy

- There is evidence about the long-term effects of hysterectomy – both with or without oophorectomy (removal of ovaries).
- A 2022 review of 29 studies found a correlation between hysterectomy and chronic diseases including an **increased risk of cardiovascular events, cancers, depression, metabolic disorders, and dementia**.
- In India, hysterectomies in women above 45 years of age were associated with **hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes and bone disease**.
- More than 45% of the 13,861 women in Beed, Maharashtra who had undergone hysterectomies experienced **aching joints, back pain, depression, and insomnia, among other side effects**.

Hysterectomy in India

- The average age at which hysterectomies are conducted among Indian women is **34**, per community-based studies.
- In comparison, high income countries allow this procedure for women aged above **45**.

- Most surgeries happen in private hospitals (33,559 procedures) as opposed to government hospitals (11,875).
- A majority of these cases are reported among socially and economically disadvantaged women.

Challenges Associated with Hysterectomy in India

• Wombless Women -

- Also, contractors in unorganised sectors such as the sugar-cane-cutting industry misuse hysterectomy, where ‘wombless women’ are the norm to **eliminate the need for menstrual care and hygiene among workers**.

• Lack of Awareness -

- The gap thrives in a culture where gynaecological care and disorders — outside of pregnancy — exist in oblivion.
- Some reports show “rasoli” — indicating a tumour or growth— is often cited as a reason for hysterectomies in medical documents.
- These may be benign growths, manageable by conducting investigative tests and undertaking alternative treatments.
- A 2017 study from Gujarat found **most women assumed that the uterus served no role outside of pregnancy** and that removing the uterus would solve their health issues.
- Moreover, medical ailments are not adequately investigated due to lack of resources, unawareness about gynaecological diseases and misinformation.

What Measures has the Government Taken So Far?

• Union Health Ministry Guidelines -

- The **Union Health Ministry in 2022 issued guidelines to prevent unnecessary hysterectomies** — listing possible indications of when hysterectomy may be required and alternative clinical treatments for gynaecological issues.
- They recommended **setting up district, State-level and national hysterectomy monitoring committees** which to collect data on age, mortality, and occupations, among other details.
- In particular, the guidelines emphasise that **authorities should report hysterectomies conducted for women less than 40 years of age** and incorporate the reason for hysterectomy.
- All States and Union Territories were asked to adopt the Guidelines within three months and report compliance to MoHFW.

• Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana -

- The government’s flagship health insurance programme provides **health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs for 1,949 procedures— including hysterectomies**.

- The government has authorised more than 45,000 hospitals to conduct these operations and also developed two standard treatment guidelines for hysterectomy-related procedures.
- **Blacklisting of Certain Hospitals -**
 - Under the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, hospitals and healthcare facilities found to have coerced women into hysterectomies without informed consent can be blacklisted.
 - The Centre told the Supreme Court that several hospitals were blacklisted and FIRs were filed against facilities that violated norms.

News Summary

- A petition was filed in the Supreme Court w.r.t. Hysterectomy.
- The petitioner, Dr Narendra Gupta, argued that despite the provisions, private hospitals in Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan engaged in unethical practices and unnecessary procedures.
- The petitioner argued that that women from marginalised locations are at risk of unjustified hysterectomies for economic gains and exploitation.
- The Chief Justice of India, **D.Y. Chandrachud**, suggested that hysterectomies for those under 40 should be conducted on approval by two certified doctors.
- The Supreme Court, while hearing the petition, **gave a three-month deadline to States and Union Territories, directing them to implement the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2022.**

Q1) How does Vasectomy work?

A vasectomy works by stopping sperm getting into a man's semen. The tubes that carry sperm from a man's testicles to the penis are cut, blocked or sealed with heat. This means that when a man ejaculates, the semen has no sperm in it and a woman's egg can't be fertilised.

Q2) What is the meaning of Total Fertility Rate (TFR)?

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) — which is the average number of children who would be born to any women in her lifetime. As per the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey, or NFHS-5, India's TFR has declined from 2.2 in 2015-16 to 2.0 in 2019-21.

Source: [Explained | What has India done to curb unnecessary hysterectomies?](#) | [ET](#)