The incidence and prevalence rates of various autoimmune diseases are higher in the Northern and Western countries as compared to the Southern and Eastern ([10.1038/cmi.2010.70](https://dx.doi.org/10.1038%2Fcmi.2010.70" \t "pmc_ext) 10.1016/j.autrev.2015.03.008).

Despite this, autoimmune diseases are rarely discussed as a women's health issue. The incidence and prevalence rates of various autoimmune diseases are rising all over the world

Autoimmune diseases are highly debilitating diseases with no cure and only moderately satisfactory but expensive treatment that nonetheless increases patients' vulnerability to deadly infections due to prolonged immunosuppression.

Based on the source

American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA)

Based on the source of information, it is estimated that 5–8% ([1](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#B1)) to 20% (American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association; <https://www.aarda.org/knowledge-base/many-americans-autoimmune-disease/>; accessed on Nov. 20, 2018) of all Americans suffer from at least one autoimmune disease, of which ~78% or three-fourths patients are female, and the rest are male ([Figure 3](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#F3)) ([296](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#B296)). Despite this, autoimmune diseases are rarely discussed as a women's health issue. The incidence and prevalence rates of various autoimmune diseases are rising all over the world ([297](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#B297), [298](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#B298)).

At the global level, increased incidence and prevalence of autoimmune diseases in Western and Northern countries compared to Southern and Eastern countries has led to speculation that alterations in dietary habits such as highly prevalent Western diet, increased exposure to pollution as well as a changing environment may be responsible for this region-specific rise. The National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in 2011 estimated that the cost of treating autoimmune disease in the US is >$100 billion annually ([299](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#B299)); this excludes indirect costs to the patient and family members incurred due to decreased quality of life and loss of productivity. In contrast, autoimmune diseases research funding from NIH was $883 million in FY 2016 and $821 million in FY 2015 ([300](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#B300)). Recently women's health issues have received more attention, and considering autoimmune diseases are a leading cause of death among young and middle-aged women in the United States ([12](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fendo.2019.00265/full#B12)), the plight of autoimmune disease patients should not go unnoticed. Increased funding for research in autoimmune diseases and exploring their link to endocrine transitions, raising awareness among healthcare providers and the general population and developing better support systems for both men and women suffering from autoimmune diseases are some ways to mitigate the toll autoimmune diseases take on our society.