

PCOS is a massive issue among reproductive-age women.

Pal Mogheti*

Department of Medicine, University of Verona and Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria Integrata Verona, Verona, Italy.

Introduction

PCOS is one of the most frequent reasons of female infertility, affecting 6% to 12% of reproductive-age women in the United States (up to 5 million). But there's a lot more to it. This chronic health problem lasts well beyond childbearing years. Insulin resistance is common in women with PCOS; their bodies can produce insulin but not efficiently utilise it, increasing their risk of type 2 diabetes. They also have increased levels of androgens, which can prevent eggs from being produced (ovulation) and cause irregular periods, acne, thinning scalp hair, and excessive hair growth on the face and body.

The exact causes are unknown at this time, however elevated androgen levels are thought to play a role. Excess weight and family history, both of which are linked to insulin resistance, can also play a role.

According to a recent study, PCOS, or polycystic ovarian syndrome, affects one out of every four women worldwide. Nearly 40% of Indian women of reproductive age could be impacted by the disease. The bad news is that the illness can be recognised sooner, but due to a lack of awareness, it goes misdiagnosed for a significant portion of adolescence. Infertility is the most common symptom of PCOS, which presents a significant challenge to gynaecologists and complicates pregnancy planning [1].

What specifically is PCOS?

PCOS is a hormonal illness that affects women and is marked by numerous cysts (fluid-filled sacs) in the ovaries. This causes aberrant hormonal levels, resulting in irregular menses (menstrual cycle), infertility, and other serious long-term health concerns such as unexplained weight gain, type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance, and other serious long-term health complications. Women with PCOS also encounter cosmetic issues such as acne, skin tags, hair thinning, and excessive hair growth on the face and back. The most common hormonal problem among women of reproductive age is Polycystic Ovarian Disease (PCOD). One of the most prevalent PCOS symptoms is infertility. Because the symptoms of PCOS appear to be unconnected, the disorder is frequently neglected and misdiagnosed. The major causes of PCOS are unknown, but factors such as high insulin, low-grade inflammation, or inheritance may play a role [2].

What are the effects of PCOS on women?

September is PCOS Awareness Month around the world. Metropolis Healthcare Ltd, India's biggest global chain of diagnostic clinics, undertook a detailed study on Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) to observe trends of PCOS cases in Mumbai as part of an intensive online and offline campaign to raise awareness about PCOS. Metropolis Healthcare did a comprehensive analysis on 738 samples processed in 2014 to better understand the severity of the condition in Mumbai [3]. Their research revealed that:

Early detection of PCOS is critical because it allows women to take full control of their health. Women can have a stress-free reproductive phase if they are well handled. If PCOS is not detected, it can lead to a variety of health concerns, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiac difficulties, and uterine lining cancer. It's critical to keep track of your symptoms and speak with your doctor about them [4].

Regarding the impact of PCOS on various areas of a woman's health

Hormonal disorders such as PCOS have a direct physical impact that can be emotionally draining. These issues can be controlled if you get advice from a professional as soon as possible to address the frequent hormonal swings to which you are subjected. PCOS and its impact on quality of life is a severe issue that affects many women throughout the world. It is reasonable to assume that a patient with PCOS will experience anxiety. Early diagnosis is critical for proper disease treatment and living a better life, as it allows for the avoidance of long-term metabolic problems and cardiovascular diseases [5].

Treatment

If you have irregular monthly periods, are having problems getting pregnant, or has excessive acne or hair growth, see your doctor. If you're diagnosed with PCOS, inquire about getting tested for type 2 diabetes and how to manage it if you do. Making healthy lifestyle changes like decreasing weight if you're overweight and increasing physical activity can help you prevent or delay type 2 diabetes, improve diabetes management, and prevent or postpone other health issues.

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*Correspondence to: Pal Mogheti, Department of Medicine, University of Verona and Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria Integrata Verona, Verona, Italy., E-mail: palo.mogheti@univr.it

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