



PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY
LABORATORY
I I T - B O M B A Y

ABSTRACT BOOKLET



International Conference on Psychosocial Challenges Among Women with PCOS - 2025



26TH TO 28TH FEBRUARY 2025

Psychophysiology Laboratory
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Institute of Technology Bombay
Powai, Mumbai - 400076

Preface

On behalf of the Organizing Team from the Psychophysiology Laboratory, we are honoured to invite you to the first edition of the International Conference on the Psychosocial Challenges of women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). This conference, scheduled from the 26th to the 28th of February 2025, is organized by the laboratory, a part of the Humanities and Social Sciences Department of the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Powai, Mumbai.

Though PCOS is an endocrinal condition having significant reproductive and metabolic implications, the psychosocial consequences of this disorder are grossly understudied. This conference promotes social science research in medical conditions, so we have compiled this Abstract Booklet containing the varied innovative research conducted on women diagnosed with PCOS by our colleagues across India.

To truly advance medical care for PCOS, it is important to understand how women with PCOS experience this condition. Moving beyond just the symptomatic medical treatments, it is imperative for more research to investigate the lived realities of those affected, ensuring that their voices shape more comprehensive and patient-centred health care.

The first step to empowering women with PCOS is to acknowledge and address their challenges through scientific discourses. The many benefits of this interdisciplinary collaboration would range from tailoring treatments, enhancing health literacy, strengthening policy frameworks and improving relevant awareness to encourage the affected women to make informed health decisions and be supported psychologically.

Thank you for taking the first step with us.

We are confident that this conference will bring together passionate scientists, faculty members, researchers, doctoral students, and industry experts from India to share the latest knowledge and developments that will inspire more research in this area. The abstracts contained within this booklet were the finest chosen to provide their valuable insights and future directions to this upcoming area in women's healthcare.

Thank you for being a part of the International Conference on the Psychosocial Challenges of women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).!

Professor Azizuddin Khan,

Head of Psychophysiology Laboratory

Schedule of the International Conference on Psychosocial Challenges Among Women with PCOS 2025

	Day 1 (26/02/2025)	Day 2 (27/02/2025)	Day 3 (28/02/2025)
9:00 - 9:30	Registration		Registration
9:30 - 10:00	Inauguration	Keynote 3 Health Communication in PCOS	Workshop
10:00 - 10:30	Keynote 1 Pathophysiology of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome – a Multifaceted Approach	Prof. Shweta Chawak (IITB)	
10:30 - 11:00	Dr. Srabani Mukherjee	Tea and Coffee with Poster Session	
11:00 - 11:30	Tea and coffee		
11:30 - 12:00	Oral 1: Lifestyle and Support Needs	Oral 4: Quality of Life	
12:00 - 12:30			
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14:00 - 15:00	Keynote 2 A Polyvagal Perspective on PCOS Ms. Anuradha Prabhudesai	Keynote 4 PCOS and gut microbiomes: A conversation Dr Geeta Balsarkar	Keynote 5: Physiological basis of Holistic treatment involved in PCOS Dr Prafull Kamble
15:00 - 16:00	Oral 2: Mental Health Challenges	Oral 5: Knowledge and Awareness	Oral 7: Physiological basis of PCOS
16:00 - 16:30	Tea and coffee	Tea and coffee	Tea and coffee
16:30 - 17:30	Oral 3: Psychological and social impacts	Oral 6: Body Image and Stigma	Oral 8: Psychological and Emotional Impacts
			Conclusion

List of poster presentations (10:30 am to 11:30 am - Day 2 - 27th Feb 2025)

Poster No.	Title	Authors
1	A Flawed Femininity? capturing the experience of living with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)	Kulpreet Kaur, Rachana Johri
2	Exploring the Impact of Psychosocial Challenges on Quality of Life, Body Image, and Self-esteem in Women with PCOS and PCOD: A Comparative Study	Sabuj Das
3	Scientific Literacy and PCOS: Bridging Knowledge and Psychosocial Support for Young Adults	Nishtha, Aswathy Raveendran
4	The Unseen Connection: Anxiety, PCOS and Somatic Symptoms	Kranti Momin
5	Lifestyle factors, emotional disturbances and help-seeking behaviour in women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome	Chilka Mukherjee
6	The buffering effect of Self-Esteem between Perceived Stress and Body Appreciation in Women with PCOS: A Comparative study	Kritika Chaurasia
7	Beyond The Cycle: Exploring Social-Systemic Realities of Individuals Diagnosed with PCOS	Anukriti Mishra, Zinaz Dumasia, Ritika Kesharwani
8	Physical Activity, Pain, and Sleep Disturbances in Women with Dysmenorrhea: A Correlational Study	Farheen Ghankar
9	Beyond Hormones Decoding the menstrual maze by exploring intricate influences of PCOD/PCOS	Aditi Patade, Ruhi Sangurdekar, Shivani Mankar, Shravani Pilankar, Shravani Sawant
10	Exploring Relationship Anxiety in Women with PCOS: A Qualitative Study on Its Impact on Relationship Satisfaction and Emotional Well-being	Asma Syed

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11	Impact of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) on Gender Self-Confidence and Cognitive Functioning in Women	Tanika Agarwal, Satvir Singh
12	The Role of Spirituality and Religiosity in Shaping the Socio-Cultural Determinants of PCOS and Personality: A Comprehensive Review	Aradhya Sharma, Aanchal Chaudhary
13	Cost of the Surroundings: Comparison between the sociocultural determinants of PCOS between Delhi and Darjeeling residents	Mahima Gurung
14	Polycystic ovary syndrome and psychological well-being: An invisible struggle	Dr. Raminder Kaur, Maninder Kaur
15	Emotional Sentiment Analysis of PCOS Narratives Using Pre-Trained Language Models	Reeba M Khan

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 1

Theme:

**Lifestyle and Support Needs of women with
PCOS**

Title:

Lifestyle Management and Support Needs of Emerging Adults with PCOS in India

Authors:

1. Sakshi Jadhav, Student, MSc. Psychology (Health and Wellbeing) School of Psychological Sciences, Christ (Deemed to Be University), Bangalore E-mail ID- jadhav.dattajirao@psy.christuniversity.in	2. Dr. Patrick Jude L, Asst. Prof. School of Psychological Sciences, Christ (Deemed to Be University), Bangalore E-mail ID- patrick.jude@christuniversity.in
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Keywords:

Needs and Expectations, PCOS, Lifestyle management

Abstract

Background: PCOS is a hormonal condition that affects 8-13% of the reproductive-aged women. Medications along with lifestyle management including exercise, dietary management, sleep and stress management are a common line of disease management in PCOS. Emerging adults(18-25 years) have a deep impact in various dimensions of their life and face unique challenges in their disease management journey. Understanding their support needs for disease and lifestyle management will help develop better care and tailor-made intervention strategies.

Objectives: This qualitative study aims to understand the support needs and expectations of emerging adults in India with PCOS for lifestyle and disease management.

Method: 12 participants who were emerging adults with PCOS living in India were interviewed using validated key informant interview guide, analysis was done using narrative thematic analysis.

Results: The study revealed that emerging adults with PCOS expressed their needs for awareness and acceptance of PCOS, adequate guidance and support from healthcare professionals, personalized guidance and tailor made lifestyle management strategies, need for accessible and affordable lifestyle management resources, professionals and services and holistic management of PCOS.

Conclusion: PCOS impacts emerging adults in personal, professional, social and other aspects of life. They faced unique challenges in their disease management and understanding their support needs is important in designing lifestyle management interventions and offer better care and support in their PCOS management

Title:

Psychometric Analysis of Lifestyle Scale for PCOS/PCOD (LSPS)

Author:

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|---|
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Keywords:

Lifestyle, PCOS/PCOD, Development, Scale, Women.

Abstract

PCOS is one of the most common endocrinopathies in premenopausal women. Along with genetic causes, lifestyle factors are also considered a major contributor in this disorder. Research proposes that a more sensitive PCOS/PCOD lifestyle measure is needed. This study aims to develop and initially validate a lifestyle scale for women with PCOS/PCOD aged between 18 to 45 years. Women with PCOS/PCOD (n=86) took part in the development and initial validation of 80-items Lifestyle scale for PCOS/PCOD (LSPS)($\alpha=.84$). Participants were recruited using self-reported diagnosis. The instructions were given retrospectively and data was collected using Snowball sampling method. Psychometric analysis (Factor analysis) resulted in a 61-item scale, which need to be further validated on a large sample. The LSPS represents aspects of lifestyle important for women with PCOS/PCOD and may be more sensitive to use in both clinical and research settings.

Title:

Exploring Psychological Capital and Stress in PCOS: Insights into the Mental Health Burden of Women with PCOS

Authors:

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Keywords:

PCOS, PSYCAP, Stress, Perceived Stress

Abstract

Background: Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a prevalent endocrine and metabolic disorder that significantly impacts women's physical and mental well-being. Current literature suggests that women with PCOS experience psychological distress, which may influence their levels of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) comprising of Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism. This study aims to investigate the relationship between perceived stress, PCOS symptoms, and PsyCap in women with and without PCOS within a community-based sample. Additionally, it explores whether perceived stress plays a mediating or moderating role between PCOS symptoms and PsyCap, offering insights into the psychological processes at play.

Methods: A cross-sectional study involving two groups: women diagnosed with PCOS (based on the Rotterdam criteria) and a control group of women without PCOS was followed. Participants will be assessed using validated tools for measuring PsyCap, perceived stress, and PCOS symptoms. Data will be analysed using statistical methods through SPSS to compare differences between the two groups and explore the relationships between the variables.

Significance: The study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological challenges women with PCOS undergo, specifically in relation to their PsyCap, stress levels, and PCOS symptoms. By examining the role of PsyCap in the context of PCOS, our study seeks to identify potential intervention strategies, such as resilience-building tactics and stress management. One of our primary aims is to explore how an individual's psychological resources are affected or contribute to coping with the challenges of PCOS. This paper contributes to addressing the mental health burden associated with PCOS and provides evidence to inform future clinical and psychological interventions.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 2

Theme:

**Mental Health Challenges among women
with PCOS**

Title:

Examining Suicidal Behavior in Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: A Systematic Review Approach

Authors:

1. Niveditha P Joy, PhD Scholar, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru E-mail ID- niveditha0210@gmail.com	2. Arya Thirumeni, PhD Scholar, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru E-mail ID- aryathirumeni@outlook.com
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Keywords:

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Suicidal Behavior, Self-Harm, Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)

Abstract

Examining Suicidal Behavior in Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: A Systematic Review Approach
Women in the reproductive age mostly experience a complicated endocrine disorder of Polycystic Ovary syndrome (PCOS) characterized by hyperandrogenism, ovulatory dysfunction and polycystic ovarian morphology. The reproductive and metabolic implications are well established while the emerging evidence showing the association between PCOS and increased risk of suicidal behaviours which includes suicidal ideations, attempts, self-harm and non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). This review explored the relationship between PCOS and suicidality and aimed to understand its prevalence, patterns and association.

Studies from six major databases -PubMed, Ovid Medline, ProQuest, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, and Scopus, were included and the targeted studies were those published in English. Studies which assessed the association of PCOS with suicidality, suicide attempts, self-harm, or NSSI were included, while the studies only examined the general mental health outcomes, like

depression or anxiety, without looking at the suicidal behaviours were explicitly excluded from the review.

Comparing women without the PCOS condition, prevalence of suicidal behaviours is more among women with PCOS and the factors including, psychological distress linked to infertility, body image dissatisfaction, and social stigma is mainly associated with hyperandrogenic symptoms like hirsutism and obesity. This risk may be compounded by biological mechanism, such as systemic inflammation, hormonal dysregulation and metabolic abnormalities. Women with PCOS has self-harm behaviours or non-suicidal self-injurious behaviours as a maladaptive coping strategy.

Despite growing recognition of these risks, the review identifies gaps in screening and intervention practices targeting suicidality among women with PCOS. Routine mental health evaluations, incorporating assessments for suicidal ideation and self-harm, are recommended as standard care for this population. This study determines the vital necessity for the need for research to examine the pathways and effective prevention strategies for suicidality and self-harm behaviours among women with PCOS.

Title:

Mental Health Challenges of Women with PCOS: A Comparative Study of Urban and Rural Rajasthan

Author:

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Keywords: -**Abstract**

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) affects 1 in 5 women globally, with a prevalence rate of nearly 15% among reproductive-age women in India. Beyond physical symptoms, PCOS significantly impacts mental health, leading to high rates of anxiety, depression, and social alienation. This abstract explores the psychosocial challenges faced by women with PCOS in urban Jaipur and rural Tonk, Rajasthan, emphasizing the disparities arising from socioeconomic and infrastructural differences.

In Jaipur, where healthcare access is relatively advanced, approximately 60% of women with PCOS report anxiety disorders stemming from societal pressures to conform to traditional beauty norms, marital expectations, and workplace challenges. Despite better diagnostic facilities, the stigma around infertility and visible symptoms such as weight gain and hirsutism exacerbate feelings of inadequacy. Data suggest that 47% of urban women with PCOS experience depressive symptoms, often linked to body image distress and professional disruptions. In contrast, rural areas like Tonk face an acute lack of awareness and delayed diagnosis, with over 70% of women unaware of PCOS as a medical condition. Limited access to gynaecological care and deeply rooted cultural stigmas further isolate these women, with 85% reporting symptoms of severe social anxiety and low self-worth. Traditional remedies are often the only recourse, sidelining the psychological toll of the condition. Rural women also face heightened stigma, as PCOS symptoms are frequently misattributed to moral failings or supernatural beliefs, intensifying their mental health challenges.

The study underscores that the psychosocial burden of PCOS in Rajasthan is compounded by neglect, misinformation, and inadequate mental health support, disproportionately affecting rural women. Addressing this requires a comprehensive approach, including mental health integration in reproductive healthcare, targeted public health campaigns to dispel myths, and improved access to diagnostic and therapeutic resources. Such interventions are critical to mitigating the mental health impacts of PCOS and fostering equitable health outcomes for women in both urban and rural settings

Title:

Comparison of Stress, Anxiety and Depression between women with PCOS and without PCOS

Authors:

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Keywords:

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, Stress, Anxiety, Depression

Abstract

Background: Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder, commonly diagnosed women of the reproductive age group. The Indian Fertility Society observed a prevalence rate of 3.7%–22.5% in India. According to an Indian study, the prevalence of Anxiety and Depression in PCOS was found to be 38.6% and 25.7%, respectively. It is common for almost all women diagnosed with PCOS to experience negative emotions such as frustration, anxiety, and sadness. However, the number of research studies in this area are inconclusive and inconsistent. Aim: To compare the levels of Stress, Anxiety and Depression between women diagnosed with PCOS and those without PCOS. Method: It is a cross-sectional hospital-based study conducted on 60 women using a purposive sampling method from private clinics of Nagpur, Maharashtra. Result: Analysis of data on independent sample t-test reveals that the levels of stress and anxiety were higher among women diagnosed with PCOS. Conclusion: The present study emphasizes the need for psychoeducation and brief psychotherapy to women diagnosed with PCOS for anxiety and stress-related problems.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 3

Theme:

Psychological and Social Impacts of PCOS

Title:

From Dorms to Dining Tables: How Social Support Influences PCOS Management in College Students

Authors:

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Keywords:

Social Support, PCOS, College students, Quality of life, Comparative study

Abstract

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a multifaceted condition that affects both physiological and psychological well-being, ultimately affecting the quality of life. This study aims to explore the importance of family support in the management of socio-emotional symptoms of PCOS in college students, particularly by comparing the experiences of students living with family and those who live independently in and around the college campus. This research uses a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative data from the Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Questionnaire (PCOSQ) with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. The PCOSQ assesses four key areas: emotional well-being, concerns about body hair, weight-related issues, challenges with infertility, and menstrual irregularities. This comprehensive approach allows for a deeper understanding of the experiences related to the condition.

The study consists of 60 college going students with PCOS (30 participants living with family, 30 participants living away from family around or in the college campus). To enhance the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants. These interviews aimed to gain deeper insights into the socio-cultural experiences of students managing PCOS between different social environments. Thematic analysis of the interview data illuminated several important factors: the emotional and practical support provided by family, the challenges associated with independently managing stress related to PCOS, and the vital role that peer and community support plays in reducing feelings of isolation.

The results revealed noteworthy findings where students who lived with family members reported significantly higher quality-of-life scores. In contrast, those residing independently appreciated their autonomy but also articulated feelings of isolation and challenges in accessing practical support. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provided a nuanced understanding of how familial social support affects the management of PCOS.

These findings highlight the profound impact of familial social support on physiological and psychological well being of the participants. Future implications include developing family-based interventions, fostering peer support networks, and creating tailored resources for students living independently, ultimately contributing to improved socio-emotional well-being and quality of life for young adults managing this multifaceted condition.

Title:

Long-Term Effects of PCOS on Couple Dynamics: An Analysis of Psychological and Social Impacts on Spouses.

Authors:

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Keywords:

PCOS; Couple; Relationship Dynamics; Psycho-social Challenges

Abstract

Background: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a multifaceted endocrine disorder that impacts nearly 10% of women of reproductive age. While the clinical symptoms of PCOS are well-documented, the wider psychosocial effects on couples, particularly regarding shifts in their relationship dynamics, have not been thoroughly investigated. This review seeks to shed light on the long-term consequences of PCOS on couple interactions, emphasizing the psychological and social challenges encountered by partners.

Method: A thorough literature review was performed using major databases such as PubMed, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. The search utilized keywords including "PCOS," "couple dynamics," "psychological impact," "social impact," "spouses"," psychological challenges", and "social challenges" was used. The inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed articles published in English over the past two decades, specifically addressing the psychosocial dimensions of PCOS and its effects on intimate relationships. The selected articles were critically evaluated, and pertinent data were extracted and synthesized to highlight recurring themes and identify gaps in the current literature. The focus has been in identifying literature from Indian studies, in order to identify the scope to extend it to subsequent evaluation. Guidelines for conducting critical reviews in Psychology research by Klerk and Pretorius were followed while doing the critical analysis.

Results: According to Grant and Booth (2009), critical analysis provides a 'launchpad' for conceptual development and subsequent testing. In the current study, the issues that were identified were related to PCOS, such as infertility and body image concerns, contributing to marital dissatisfaction and disrupting sexual dynamics. These challenges can result in diminished intimacy and heightened conflict within the relationship. The prolonged experience of PCOS is associated with increased marital tension and a higher risk of divorce. However, social support—particularly among couples facing infertility—along with open communication about concerns and emotions, mutual support, relocating from in-laws' homes, and seeking professional assistance, can alleviate some of the adverse effects on couple dynamics.

Conclusion: The psychological and social challenges experienced by partners of women with PCOS are significant and can have lasting effects on relationship dynamics. The critical analysis has set the stage for future research that should aim to develop targeted interventions that enhance communication between couples, provide education to the spouse on PCOS and its aftermath, provide emotional support, and alleviate the psychosocial burden on spouses. By addressing these issues, healthcare professionals can improve the overall well-being of couples affected by PCOS.

Title:

“Are you a man? Why do you have a moustache?” – Psychosocial burdens of polycystic ovarian syndrome on emerging adults

Authors:

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Keywords:

polycystic ovarian syndrome, PCOS, body image, appearance anxiety, mental health

Abstract

Polycystic ovarian syndrome is a chronic and debilitating health condition with concomitant psychosocial challenges or mental disorder comorbidities. This paper reports the findings of a qualitative study on the lived experiences of emerging adults with polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). The study documented the psychosocial burdens borne by women living with polycystic ovarian syndrome. A total of nineteen (N=19) females who were clinically diagnosed with PCOS participated in the study. The age of the participants ranged between 18 and 29 years. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect the data. The average duration of the interviews was 75 minutes. The six step method of reflexive thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke was followed to derive relevant themes from the data set. The findings include 4 superordinate themes and interconnected sub-themes. They are - (i) Psychosocial burdens of undesirable bodily changes – hirsutism and appearance teasing, fat shaming, androgenic alopecia and attribution of irresponsibility, weight related social appearance anxiety, low body esteem, self-blaming (ii) Psychosocial burdens of dysregulated mood and menstruation - stereotypes and stigma of menstrual irregularities, crying spells, anger tantrums and guilt, pain, absenteeism and sub-optimal academic performance (iii) Management and coping strategies - customized treatments, lifestyle modifications, self-talk, journalling and (iv) Areas of policy imperatives – poor social awareness, misconceptions, medical gaslighting and menstrual leave policy.

The findings of the study have the potential to provide actionable insights for psychologists, sexual and reproductive health professionals, social workers, practitioners of community medicine, policy makers and lay people.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 4

Theme:

Quality of Life of women with PCOS

Title:

Assessment of Quality of Life in Different Phenotypes of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome.

Authors:

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Keywords: -**Abstract**

Introduction: Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common endocrine disorder in women of reproductive age with a global prevalence of around 5%-8%. It is characterized by clinical or biochemical hyperandrogenism (HA), ovulatory dysfunction (OD) and polycystic ovaries (PCO). Due to its highly heterogeneous presentation, PCOS is divided into 4 phenotypes. Extensive research over the years led to a paradigm shift from recognizing PCOS as a gynecological and endocrine condition to now presenting PCOS as a multisystem disorder with physical and psychological implications, leading to an overall diminished quality of life. Recent studies have indicated that different PCOS phenotypes differ in hormonal, anthropometric, and metabolic indices. Still, very few studies have considered phenotypic distribution while assessing their quality of life.

Objective: This study aimed to assess the overall quality of life in different phenotypes of PCOS.

Methods: This is a case-control study which enrolled 100 female PCOS patients and 50 age-matched control females. Cases were then subdivided into different phenotypes, as per the Rotterdam Criteria. Quality of life was assessed using the PCOS-QoL questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 35 questions, based on 6 PCOS-related domains. Higher scores indicated a better quality of life.

Results: The quality-of-life scores indicated PCOS patients have a lower quality of life as compared to healthy controls. The most prevalent phenotype in our study was phenotype D followed by A, B and C. Phenotype A had the highest BMI, WHR followed by B, C, and D. Regarding menstrual irregularities, phenotype B had the highest menstrual irregularities followed

by A D, and C. Hirsutism, measured by modified Ferriman Gallway score (mFG) was highest in A followed by B, C, and D. However, it is interesting to note that we reported a higher quality of life scores in phenotypes C & D as compared to A & B. There statistically significant difference between quality-of-life scores between A, B, and D. On comparing another milder phenotype C, with severe phenotypes A & B, we report that both phenotypes lower quality of life, however, it was insignificant. Comparative analysis among groups highlighted the role of different parameters affecting the quality of life in different phenotypes.

Conclusion: PCOS is a heterogenous disorder, different phenotypes of PCOS differ in terms of hormonal, anthropometric, and metabolic indices, however, there is limited evidence assessing these differences in terms of psychological issues and quality of life. Phenotypic classification of PCOS patients will aid in personalizing treatment and management taking into consideration the role of different parameters which affect the quality of different phenotypes. This study provides an important opportunity to advance the understanding of the requirement of specific mental health screening for each phenotype.

Title:

Relationship between Health Anxiety and Quality of Life in women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).

Authors:

1. Vianca Sawardekar, SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce, E-mail ID- ps.vianca@outlook.com	2. Rakshita Palande, SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce, E-mail ID- rakshitapalande05@gmail.com
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Keywords:

Health Anxiety, Quality of Life, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Psychological functioning.

Abstract

Background: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is an endocrine disorder which affects women predominantly of reproductive age. The clinical manifestations of the disorder are diverse and may include irregular periods, acne, obesity, cysts on ovaries, infertility along with psychological dysfunctions.

Objective: The purpose of our study was to understand the relationship between Health Anxiety and Quality of Life in women with PCOS.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted with a total sample size of fifty four participants (N=54). Sampling technique used was snowball sampling and the psychological scales utilized were Short Health Anxiety Inventory (HAI-18) and World Health Organization's Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF) scale. Data was collected using Google forms.

Results: Preliminary findings from our study indicate that increase in Health anxiety leads to decrease in Quality of life in Physical [$r(52) = -0.657, p < .001$] Psychological [$r(52) = -0.490, p < .001$], Social [$r(52) = -0.489, p < .001$] and Environmental [$r(52) = -0.628, p < .001$] as well as overall quality of life [$r(52) = -0.581, p < .001$]. We also found that PCOS symptoms appear in clusters with body image-related symptoms as the most common cluster followed by cyst development, menstruation-related symptoms, and psychological symptoms. Infertility and metabolic risk were the least prevalent symptoms in our sample. Additionally, we found that health anxiety is lesser in people with four symptoms compared to people with four or more symptoms [$t = -2.20, p = 0.033$]. Findings also suggest that quality of life (Physical [$t = 2.68, p = 0.010$] Psychological [$t = 2.25, p = 0.029$], Environmental [$t = 2.34, p = 0.0023$] and Overall quality of life [$t = 2.03, p = 0.048$]) is higher for women with less than 4 symptoms compared to those with four or more symptoms.

Conclusion: We concluded that Health Anxiety is negatively related with Quality of Life for Women with PCOS.

Title:

Functionality under attack – the disabling effect of PCOS

Authors:

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Keywords:

PCOS/ PCOD, Women's Health, Functionality & wellbeing

Abstract

Background: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex multifaceted endocrine disorder that impacts the physical, emotional, and social well-being of those affected. Beyond its well-documented physical symptoms, PCOS profoundly disrupts women's lives across various facets of life leading to a diminished quality of life. It affects approximately 10% of women globally. While its physical symptoms, such as irregular periods, weight gain, and infertility, are well-recognized, less attention has been given to how PCOS disrupts women's functionality across personal, professional, and social domains.

Objective: This study explores the lived experiences of women diagnosed with PCOS.

Methods: A qualitative research design was used, involving semi-structured interviews with 13 women diagnosed with PCOS. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling, all the participants belonged to the Delhi NCR region. Data was analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006;2019). This approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences and the identification of key themes.

Findings – Thematic analysis revealed four major themes – 1. Professional Functionality 2. Personal Functionality 3. Social Functionality 4. Intersections between the domains.

Conclusion – The themes underline the disabling nature of PCOS showing its pervasive impact on women's functionality across multiple domains of lives. The research underscores an urgent need for seeing and treating PCOS as more than just a physical ailment and introducing holistic healthcare approaches and greater awareness to support women living with PCOS.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 5

Theme:
Knowledge and Awareness of PCOS

Title:

Stigmatized, Sensationalised and Stereotyped: A Textual Discourse Analysis of PCOS in Indian Print and Digital Media

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Keywords:

Polycystic ovary syndrome, PCOS, Textual Discourse, Stigma, Indian Media, Print Media, Digital Media.

Abstract

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, also known as PCOS, is a common hormonal disorder which affects millions of women worldwide. It has physical and mental health implications that are wide-ranging, like infertility, diabetes, endometrial cancer, obesity, anxiety, mood disorders, and many more. PCOS has been a much-talked-about condition in the past few years, especially in India, and the portrayal of PCOS in Indian media has been on the rise recently. But how accurate is the information provided? What are the narratives, and are they changing for the better? So far, the emphasis has been on physical symptoms, fertility changes and lifestyle interventions while the underlying causes are overlooked, and the psychological implications are neglected. From sensationalist headlines like “A Curse called PCOS” to a narrow focus on the physical implications, this article aims to analyse critically how PCOS is framed and perceived by print and digital media in the Indian context. Using a textual discourse analysis, we will delve into the content, language, the portrayal of cultural and societal biases in print and digital media articles, and the accessibility of this information to women from marginalised communities.

Additionally, this article will also address the validity of the information presented for PCOS in Indian media and the experiences of women with healthcare professionals who treat this condition. Our article will emphasise the urge to look into women’s healthcare more effectively, hoping to pave the way for healthcare professionals and others to be more aware and mindful while treating PCOS. Upon reviewing articles from big print & digital media houses, there is an extensive need to spread more awareness, provide accurate information and create a space for women diagnosed with PCOS to receive personalised treatment plans involving a psycho-physiological and holistic approach. In conclusion, this article aims to advocate for a more informed, inclusive, destigmatised and holistic representation of PCOS in Indian print and digital media.

Title:

Understanding PCOS Knowledge across Different Populations: A Systematic Review and Analysis of Assessment Methods

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Keywords:

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, Knowledge Assessment, Healthcare Education, Global Health, Systematic Review, PRISMA

Abstract

Background: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex endocrine disorder affecting 8-13% of reproductive-age women globally. Despite its prevalence and significant health implications, PCOS remains widely misunderstood, highlighting the importance of knowledge in diagnosing, managing, and treating this condition effectively. One of the critical reasons why knowledge about PCOS is crucial is its impact on diagnosis. PCOS is often misdiagnosed or undiagnosed due to its varied and overlapping symptoms with other conditions. Even then, knowledge and awareness about PCOS vary considerably across populations and geographical regions. This systematic review aims to evaluate and synthesise existing literature on PCOS knowledge among various population groups worldwide and identify validated assessment tools for measuring PCOS knowledge.

Methods: A comprehensive literature search was conducted across major electronic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Science Direct, Jstor and Google Scholar, following the guidelines of The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. Studies published between 2000 and Nov 2024 that assessed PCOS knowledge among different populations in the English language were included. Data extraction focused on knowledge levels, awareness patterns, geographical variations, and assessment methodologies.

Preliminary Results: A total of 8676 studies were retrieved, and 35 of them met the inclusion criteria. Initial analysis reveals significant variations in PCOS knowledge across different populations. Healthcare professionals generally demonstrated better understanding than the general population, though notable knowledge gaps existed even among medical practitioners. Nursing and medical students showed varying levels of awareness, with significant differences between countries. Women diagnosed with PCOS typically possessed better knowledge about

symptoms but limited understanding of long-term health implications. Several validated questionnaires for assessing PCOS knowledge were identified, though most were region-specific and lacked cross-cultural validation. Very few studies reported standardisation procedures and psychometric properties.

Conclusions: This review highlights significant disparities in PCOS knowledge across different population groups and geographical regions. The findings emphasise the need for standardised, culturally appropriate educational interventions and assessment tools. The review also identifies crucial gaps in current literature, particularly regarding PCOS awareness in developing countries and among different healthcare specialities. These insights will be valuable for developing targeted educational programs and improving PCOS awareness globally.

Title:

A brief evaluation of existing National Healthcare policies in India to its relevance to Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS): Addressing the Gaps and Challenges in PCOS Treatment and Management.

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Keywords: -**Abstract**

Background: In India, PCOS remains to be overlooked in national healthcare policies, though it affects women's health significantly, thus creating a need for evaluation of existing policies and revisions addressing the gaps and challenges.

Aim: To evaluate the existing health care-related Indian policies based on how relevant it was to PCOS, their limitations, and potential areas of revisions of policies to suit the treatment and management of PCOS, and explore the barriers and challenges to the implementations of the proposed recommendations.

Materials and Methods: By using secondary data collected from Google Scholar and official websites of the Indian Government about healthcare policies, a systematic review was conducted. The inclusion criteria included healthcare policies relevant to adolescent and adult women in India, such as (NHM) and (RKSK), (RMNCH+A), and the like. Employing a narrative synthesis approach aided in assessing the relevance and effectiveness of the current Indian healthcare policies with respect to PCOS treatment, management, and challenges like lack of awareness about the disorder, delays in diagnosis, lack of optimal treatment, and associated psychosocial needs. "PCOS" and "Indian Healthcare Policies" were used as a part of the literature search. **Results:** Highlighted the lack of research on the effectiveness of existing policies with respect to PCOS. Lack of dedicated guidelines for PCOS and related issues have impacted the screening, diagnosis, and treatment. Though several policies address PCOS indirectly, its effects are severely limited in actual treatment and management. Mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety, body image issues, self-esteem issues, along with infertility, and other comorbid conditions are not addressed. Further, potential areas of revision that can complement current policies like (RKSK), (RMNCH+A), and like have been proposed, such as inclusion of educational seminars for middle-schoolers and parents at school related to menstrual health and PCOS, awareness programs about risks and symptoms, accessible community-based screening, training for healthcare professionals in recognition of PCOS in early stages, and integrated clinics offering holistic treatment, including lifestyle intervention, inclusion of PCOS care in insurance packages (PMJAY), mental health

support through counselling and tele-support services, and inclusion of PCOS in PMMVY, (JSY), and (NPCDCS).

Conclusions: In India, PCOS remains to be shadowed by the existing national healthcare policies. There is a serious lack of focus on addressing the various aspects of PCOS in terms of physical, emotional, and psychological concerns. There exists a consequential lack of awareness, delays in diagnosis, subpar treatments, and management of the hormonal disorder. These concerns, however, can be tackled by proper and systematic revisions of the healthcare policies, with a special focus on difficulties in indigent resource communities, as they are the most affected. Accessible, affordable treatment, along with proper education and necessary counseling, must be the focus while undertaking the restructuring of healthcare policies. Culturally sensitive intermediation, which is evidence-backed, is necessary in refining the treatment and management of PCOS.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 6

Theme:

**Body Image and Stigma associated with
PCOS**

Title:

The Weight of Words and Standards in PCOS: Societal and Self-Standards in Shaping Body Image and Coping

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Keywords:

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), psychosocial dimensions, body image, societal standards, appearance evaluation, coping strategies, perfectionism, self-standards, mental health,

Abstract

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a multifaceted condition with significant psychological and social challenges, particularly regarding body image (Weiner et al., 2004; Dewani et al., 2023). The current study explores the interplay between societal feedback, self-imposed standards in shaping body perceptions, and body image coping strategies among women with PCOS. The study aims to address a critical yet underexplored area in psychosocial factors in PCOS. A mixed-methods design would be used. Quantitative data will be collected using validated scales. Semi-structured interviews will be used to collect qualitative data. External societal influences are measured using the Verbal Commentary on the Physical Appearance Scale (VCPAS) and the Feedback on the Physical Appearance Scale. Body image perception is assessed through the Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation Scale (FNAES) and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS), addressing fear of external judgment and internalized body-related attitudes. Coping mechanisms are evaluated with the Body Image Coping Strategies Inventory (BICSI). Self-imposed standards are explored using the Personal Standards Subscale of the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) and the Attitude Towards Self Scale. The sampling would be purposive. The sample would consist of 18-40-year-old women diagnosed with PCOS. Advanced statistical analyses, including structural equation modeling (SEM), will examine direct and mediating pathways, particularly the role of self-imposed standards in moderating the relationship between societal commentary, body image perception, and coping strategies.

Preliminary hypotheses propose that heightened exposure to societal commentary and elevated self-imposed standards exacerbate body image related issues. It is also proposed that these factors would also lead to increased maladaptive coping behaviors such as avoidance and appearance

fixing.

The study thus aims to study the intersection of societal pressures and self-standards and offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the psychological burden and dynamics of PCOS beyond psychological symptoms like depression and anxiety. The findings can benefit professionals working with clients diagnosed with PCOS to provide more sensitive services considering the influence of such psychosocial factors. The findings can also help mental health professionals working with clients diagnosed with PCOS to focus on factors such as self-standards, body image coping, and body perception to improve overall well-being.

Title:

Virtual Pressures - Social Media's Role in Perceived Stigma & Body Image Dissatisfaction in Indian women with PCOS

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Keywords:

PCOS, Social Media Use, Perceived Stigma, Body Image Dissatisfaction

Abstract

In the present time, PCOS is known to be one of the most prevalent reproductive endocrine disorders that radically have an impact not just on an individual's physical health but also their psychological well-being, which in turn might impact body image dissatisfaction through perceived stigma. Particularly in the digital world, social media usage can additionally influence these perceptions by reinforcing unrealistic societal beauty standards. The aim of this research is to investigate the link between social media usage, perceived stigma, and body image dissatisfaction among young adult Indian women aged 18–25 diagnosed with PCOS. Using a correlational design, 100 participants (50 with PCOS & 50 without) will be employed through healthcare networks and online platforms.

Participants will be asked to complete the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS; Marciano et al., 2020) to measure social media behaviors as well as the Stigma Scale for Chronic Illness (SSCI; Rao et al., 2009) to assess perceived stigma, & the Body Self-Image Questionnaire – Short (BSIQ-S; Pruzinsky & Cash, 1990) to evaluate body image dissatisfaction. Statistical analyses may include correlational testing to examine relationships among variables, independent t-tests to compare PCOS and non-PCOS groups, and further analysis to assess whether perceived stigma mediates the relationship between social media use & body image dissatisfaction.

It is hypothesized that higher social media use is likely to be associated with greater body image dissatisfaction and higher perceived stigma. This study eventually aims to shed light on the intricate relationship between social media utilization and its impact on perceived stigma, & dissatisfaction with body image within the Indian context, ultimately aiding in the creation of culturally appropriate interventions to enhance mental well-being & digital literacy among women with PCOS.

Title:

Exploring Identity Distress and Body Image Challenges in Women with PCOS

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Keywords:

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Identity Distress, Body Image, Women's Health.

Abstract

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a condition that affects a significant number of women, and most are not even aware of its effects on their bodies until they are diagnosed and educated on it. Though its physical symptoms are now known and are being discussed in recent times, its psychological aspects, particularly in relation to body image and identity distress, have not been fully explored. This study aims to investigate the potential relationship between PCOS and body image challenges specifically focusing on how PCOS may contribute to identity distress and body image challenges in women with this condition. This research is being done with the aim to understand whether women with PCOS may experience issues with their body image as the physical symptoms of PCOS include weight changes and skin issues and it also aims to understand whether these challenges have any affect or if there is any identity distress among these women. The study will explore the psychological implications of living with PCOS, specifically focusing on how the condition may influence women's experiences of body image issues and their broader identity distress. The findings may contribute to expanding the understanding of PCOS on its psychological implications and maybe highlight the importance of addressing body image concerns and identity distress in women with the condition. This research may also provide valuable insights for future support and intervention strategies aimed at improving the overall lives of women with PCOS.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 7

Theme:

Biomedical or Physiological Basis of PCOS

Title:

"From Tradition to Taste: Redesigning Unani Joshanda for Improved Efficacy and Compliance in PCOS Management"

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Keywords:

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, Unani medicine, Joshanda, menstrual irregularities, hormonal regulation, quality-by-design, pharmaceutical dosage forms.

Abstract

Background: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex endocrine disorder that impacts on physical, mental, and social well-being of a woman. Conventional treatments often focus on symptom management, but holistic approaches like Unani medicine provide promising alternatives. Joshanda, a traditional herbal decoction, has been used to manage reproductive and metabolic disorders, including PCOS. However, its unappealing taste can hinder patient compliance. This study aimed to evaluate the clinical efficacy of Unani Joshanda in managing PCOS symptoms and to develop its modified dosage forms to improve palatability and adherence.

Methods: A pilot clinical study was carried out in the outpatient department of the Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine (RRIUM), Mumbai, involving 30 women aged 20–35 years diagnosed with PCOS using the Rotterdam criteria. Participants were administered Unani Joshanda (250 mL, twice daily post meals) over an eight-week period. Clinical outcomes were evaluated based on symptom improvement, including menstrual irregularity, acne, hirsutism, and obesity. Laboratory investigations, such as hormonal assays (LH, FSH, and testosterone) and lipid profiles, were performed to assess physiological changes. Patient adherence and satisfaction were also documented. To address the palatability issue, Joshanda was reformulated into pharmaceutical

dosage forms, including pellets and effervescent tablets, using a quality-by-design (QbD) approach. The formulation process focused on optimizing parameters like taste masking, particle size, disintegration time, and dissolution profile. The redesigned formulations were tested for compliance with pharmaceutical standards.

Results and Conclusion: The study demonstrated significant improvements in PCOS symptoms with Unani Joshanda, including enhanced menstrual regularity ($p < 0.05$), reduced acne severity ($p < 0.05$), and a mean BMI reduction of $1.2 \pm 0.4 \text{ kg/m}^2$. Hormonal profiles showed a favourable decrease in LH:FSH ratio and testosterone levels. However, the bitter taste of Joshanda limited adherence, especially among younger patients. Reformulated dosage forms like pellets and effervescent tablets exhibited acceptable dissolution rates and rapid disintegration, promising improved compliance. This study highlights the efficacy of Joshanda in managing PCOS while advocating for future large-scale trials to validate its therapeutic potential and palatable formulations

Title:

Genetic, Environmental, and Pharmacological Perspectives in the Management of PCOS: Pathophysiology, Interventions, and Future Directions

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Keywords:

Insulin resistance, hormonal imbalance, pharmaceutical therapies, allopathy, Ayurveda, PCOS, hereditary and environmental variables, customized treatment, integrative medicine, fertility.

Abstract

Anovulation, hyperandrogenism, and polycystic ovaries are the hallmarks of PCOS, a prevalent and complicated endocrine condition that affects women of reproductive age. Its development and progression are influenced by both hereditary and environmental factors, making it a complex pathophysiology. In addition to outlining the available treatments, difficulties, and potential avenues for further study and clinical application, this review seeks to provide readers with a thorough grasp of the genetic, environmental, and pharmaceutical viewpoints in the management of PCOS.

Many genetic loci and variants have been linked to insulin resistance, ovarian dysfunction, and androgen excess, indicating that genetic factors are a significant contributor to the pathogenesis of PCOS. Insulin resistance and increased luteinizing hormone (LH), two hormonal abnormalities linked to PCOS, are influenced by these genetic predispositions. Environmental variables also play a major role in the development and aggravation of PCOS, including eating choices, stress, obesity, and a sedentary lifestyle. Personalized treatment plans are crucial since the interplay between environmental triggers and genetic vulnerability makes clinical management of PCOS even more challenging. The mainstay of PCOS treatment continues to be pharmacological therapies, which are intended to control menstrual periods, lower hyperandrogenism, and enhance fertility. The many symptoms of PCOS are frequently treated using allopathic methods, including oral contraceptives, anti-androgens (like spironolactone), insulin-sensitizing medications (like metformin), and ovulation-inducing medications (like clomiphene citrate). However, there are many issues with these therapies, including poor long-term effectiveness, patient non-compliance, and adverse effects. Alternative therapies like Ayurveda are becoming more popular in the treatment of PCOS, and herbal remedies like Ashoka and Shatavari may help with reproductive health and hormone balance. Targeting the underlying causes of PCOS via nutrition, lifestyle modifications, and natural cures, Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on a holistic approach that frequently enhances traditional pharmaceutical treatments. The management of PCOS remains

difficult despite the availability of numerous medicines, especially when it comes to the disorder's heterogeneity and the variation in patient reactions to those treatments. To maximize results for women with PCOS, there is an increasing need for more individualized, integrative strategies that incorporate genetic, environmental, and pharmaceutical aspects. In addition to creating tailored treatments that target the underlying pathophysiology of PCOS, future research should concentrate on expanding our knowledge of the genetic and environmental interactions that contribute to the condition. To sum up, a comprehensive strategy that incorporates environmental factors, genetic insights, and a mix of pharmaceutical and complementary therapies is necessary to enhance PCOS management. More research is required to improve treatment plans, especially in integrative and customized medicine, to meet the various requirements of women with this complicated illness.

Title:

A Personal Odyssey: Navigating 10 years of PCOS Journey and the impact of it's sociocultural determinants

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Keywords: -**Abstract**

This research examines the sociocultural factors that affect the management of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) through a decade-long personal exploration of an individual who investigated various treatment options, including allopathy, homoeopathy, and Ayurveda. The importance of this study is emphasized by the significant health consequences of PCOS, a common endocrine disorder impacting one in four urban middle-class women in India.

The individual's experience indicated that initial treatment approaches were ineffective in addressing the disorder, with lifestyle changes—such as dietary adjustments, increased physical activity, and stress management—ultimately leading to the most notable improvements in symptoms. Further, to validate these personal insights, the study conducted telephonic interviews with six experienced gynaecologists and 25 women aged 20 to 30. The purpose of these interviews was to collect perspectives and experiences related to the management of PCOS. Results from both the qualitative interviews and literature review consistently indicated that unhealthy lifestyles, poor dietary habits, lack of physical activity, societal stigma, and limited awareness negatively affect health outcomes for women with PCOS. Women who actively pursued lifestyle changes reported better symptom management compared to those who depended solely on medical interventions. Furthermore, socio-economic factors, including educational attainment and healthcare access, significantly impact women's capacity to effectively manage PCOS. The findings highlight the essential role of lifestyle modifications as a primary strategy for alleviating PCOS symptoms and advocate for enhanced awareness and culturally appropriate interventions to encourage healthier lifestyle practices among affected women. This study enhances the understanding of the relationship between lifestyle factors and the psychosocial difficulties encountered by women with PCOS.

In conclusion, while genetic and environmental factors significantly affect PCOS management, lifestyle changes emerge as the primary medium to treat this disorder.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 8

Theme:

Psychological and Emotional Impacts of PCOS

Title:

Role of Illness Perception on Emotional distress among unmarried females living with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

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Keywords:

PCOS, emotional distress, illness perception, mental health, self-care.

Abstract

Background: Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a major endocrine disorder generally found in reproductive-aged women and associated with reproductive, metabolic, cosmetic, and psychological outcomes. Because there is no cure for PCOS, management of PCOS is important in self-care efforts. The perception of the illness underlies an individual's motivation to adopt self-care behaviors.

Purpose: The objective of the study was to explore PCOS patients' illness perception and its relationship to perceived emotional distress.

Methods: Females with diagnosed PCOS were recruited from the university hospital (Banaras Hindu University) in Varanasi, India, between January and August 2023. They assessed illness perception and emotional distress using the Illness Perception Questionnaire-Revised (IPQ-R) and Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21) respectively. A total of 186 participants' data was analyzed. Correlation analysis was done to observe the relationship between illness perception and psychological distress and hierarchical regression tested the predictive values of illness perception on depression, anxiety, and stress, collectively known as emotional distress.

Results: Results show higher levels of severity of depression, anxiety, and stress among PCOS patients. Further results revealed a positive and significant correlation between illness perception dimensions and emotional distress among PCOS patients particularly on the dimensions of illness identity, emotional representation, and psychological causal attributes ($p < .001$). In the fully adjusted regression model, illness perceptions accounted for 31.8% of the variance in psychological distress, ($R^2 = .318$, $F(8,186) = 10.053$, $p < .001$), reporting a significant improvement in predictive power ($\Delta R^2 = .295$, $\Delta F = 10.053$, $p < .001$). Overall, the results revealed that illness perception has substantially emerged as a strong predictor of emotional distress (depression, anxiety, stress) of these patients with PCOS.

Conclusions: Significant relationships between illness perception and emotional distress were observed in PCOS patients. The study emphasized the importance of cognition and emotions of related illnesses in maintaining the mental health status of PCOS patients. The findings show the significance of addressing illness beliefs in patients with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) when designing interventions. Specifically, clinicians and researchers should aim to strengthen patients' positive illness perceptions to promote sustainable improvements in health outcomes and reduce psychological distress.

Title:

Comparing Emotional Contagion and Empathy in Women With and Without PCOS: Implications for Mental Health and Social Functioning

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Keywords:

Emotional contagion, empathy, PCOS, Mental Health

Abstract

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is a widespread hormonal disorder that significantly affects women's physical and emotional well-being. Emotional contagion, the process by which individuals consciously or unconsciously mimic other's emotions, and empathy, the ability to understand and share feelings, are crucial components of social and emotional functioning. However, limited research explores how these constructs differ in women with and without PCOS. This study aims to compare levels of emotional contagion and empathy in women with PCOS and those without, focusing on how these variables interact and contribute to interpersonal and psychological well-being. The study employs a quantitative, correlational design, involving 100 women aged 18–30 years from the urban Indian population (50 women diagnosed with PCOS and 50 with no diagnosis of PCOS) through purposive sampling. Emotional contagion will be measured using the Emotional Contagion Scale (ECS), and empathy will be assessed through the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ). Both the tools are standardized and validated for research purposes. Participants will complete an online survey capturing demographic data, PCOS status, emotional contagion, and empathy levels. Data analysis will involve independent t-tests to identify group differences and regression models to explore relationships between emotional contagion, empathy, and PCOS-related variables. These findings will provide insights into how PCOS affects emotional and interpersonal dynamics, offering suggestions for targeted interventions to enhance emotional regulation and social functioning in women with PCOS. The study has significant implications for clinical practice and psychological interventions. By exploring emotional contagion and empathy in the given population, the research can contribute to developing therapeutic strategies that address emotional sensitivity, improve coping mechanisms, and foster better mental health outcomes. Additionally, the findings can be used to build educational programs aimed at reducing social stigma and improving social support systems for women with PCOS, thereby fostering a more inclusive approach towards women's healthcare and wellbeing.