

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PCOS

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Statement of the Problem: The physical symptoms of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) are relatively well recognized these days, but the psychological aspects of PCOS have only recently begun to receive attention. The purpose of this study is to review the psychological aspects of PCOS, and their relationship with biology.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The material reviewed consists of research of the relationship between physiological aspects of PCOS (e.g. testosterone, obesity, subfertility) and psychological aspects (e.g. depression). Meta-analytic research is also used.

Findings: A wide range of psychological problems have been attributed to PCOS. PCOS is a complex condition, but we can say with certainty that anxiety and depression are increased in

PCOS. Low mood in PCOS might be caused by the hypoglycaemia related to insulin resistance. Testosterone contributes directly to some of the troubling symptoms (e.g. acne and hirsutism), but can also improve visuospatial cognition. Although depression might be treated by medication, there is evidence that psychological interventions, such as mindfulness, can help not only psychological issues but also improve hormonal parameters.

Conclusion & Significance: PCOS is not just a medical issue, but a psychological challenge. The biopsychological pathways of psychological issues are only beginning to be understood, and need to be fully explored in order to inform appropriate interventions. Recommendations are made for better awareness of the psychological aspects of PCOS for medical practitioners and psychologists.

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