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An exploratory survey to estimate prevalence, and perceived knowledge of Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) in young adults

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Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a multifaceted disorder associated with endocrine, reproductive, metabolic and psychological aberrations. The main objectives of this electronic survey were to estimate prevalence, ascertain presence of co-morbidities and to assess awareness regarding PCOS among multiethnic university students. This cross-sectional study included 713 female and 48 male students. Thirty one percent female respondents had a diagnosis of PCOS, while nine percent of women without a formal diagnosis of PCOS reported that they experienced menstrual irregularities and symptom(s) of clinical hyperandrogenism. A positive family history was indicated by 17% of women with PCOS. Common co-morbidities in this population included hypertension, diabetes mellitus, hypo or hyperthyroidism, gastrointestinal disorders and subfertility. They commonly sought information about PCOS from healthcare professionals, support groups, forums, social media, government websites and journal articles. On the other hand, male respondents and women without PCOS reported that they learned about PCOS commonly from healthcare professionals, friends/ family and social media. Several individuals in the latter groups described the extent of their self-perceived knowledge of PCOS as “moderate” and “not knowledgeable at all”. Our survey suggests that the occurrence of PCOS may be higher than that indicated by other epidemiological studies. Increasing awareness about the causes, magnitude and consequences of the condition among young adults, both men and women may be instrumental in improving overall health parameters in affected individuals.

Biography

Manisha Rao is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Kinesiology at Texas Woman's University (Denton, TX). She is passionate about clinical research aimed at improving health of women with polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). She is currently evaluating the effects of a dietary intervention on symptoms, metabolic and inflammatory parameters in PCOS. Her focus also includes disseminating information from existing and new literature to increase awareness about PCOS in community.

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