

**Knowledge, occurrence and associated factors of self-reported symptoms of polycystic ovary syndrome among female students of College of Nursing, Jaffna**

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**Background and Objective:** Knowledge regarding polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is essential for early detection and treatment. The objective of this study was to assess knowledge and self-reported PCOS and to determine the associated factors among students of the College of Nursing Jaffna.

**Methods:** This institution-based descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out from August to December 2021 among female students between 21 and 26 years at the College of Nursing Jaffna, using a self-administered questionnaire that consisted of sections related to knowledge, associated factors, and self-reporting of PCOS. Data analysis was performed using chi-square and t-test in SPSS.

**Results:** The response rate was 94% (216/230). A greater proportion of respondents were Tamils (97.7%), Hindus (81.9%), and first-year students (44.9%). The median (IQR) of age was 23 (22-24) years, age at menarche 13 (12-13) years, and BMI 20.0 (20.7-23.5) kg/m<sup>2</sup>. In the sample, 62.5% (n=135) had heard about the condition PCOS, and just over 50% were aware of the features of PCOS. Complications of PCOS known by participants were subfertility (39.8%), diabetes mellitus (24.5%), endometrial cancer (16.2%), and non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (6.5%). Possible management options for PCOS known by participants include medication (58.8%), surgery (43.5%), exercise (44.4%), indigenous medicine (28.7%), and dietary modification (48%). Among the participants, 17 (7.9%, 95% CI: 4.8%-12.1%) reported having hirsutism, while 33 stated they had menstrual irregularity (n=33, 15.3%). Only three participants (1.4%) reported that multiple cysts were found in their ultrasound scan of ovaries. Health seeking for conditions related to PCOS include acne (23.3%), hair loss (21.8%), and menstrual irregularities (8.8%). The BMI was associated with the Ferriman Gallwey Hirsutism score.

**Conclusions:** More than half the participants had heard about the condition called PCOS. Knowledge regarding the complications was comparatively less. Hirsutism was associated with BMI. Educating young women regarding PCOS is recommended.

**Keywords:** Polycystic ovary syndrome, Knowledge, Self-reported symptoms, Occurrence