

Polycystic Ovarian Disease

Polycystic ovarian disease is also called polycystic ovarian syndrome because the disease causes a group of symptoms and signs. It is also called Stein–Leventhal syndrome to honor those who described the disease and sometimes called hyperandrogenic anovulation to describe the syndrome.

It is one of the leading causes of infertility and causes a variety of symptoms because of the hormonal imbalances. The hallmark of the disease is the presence of multiple small cysts in the ovaries from which the name of the disease arises. There is also increase in androgens or male hormones and resistance to insulin resulting in diabetes like condition.

Symptoms

- ◆ **INFERTILITY:** This is probably the most common presentation. The chronic anovulation or absence of release of the ovum causes infertility. The hormonal changes does not help it either
- ◆ **MENSTRUAL DISORDER:** Oligomenorrhea and amenorrhea are common. These mean less periods and are due to the deficiency of female hormones. However any type of menstrual irregularity is possible
- ◆ **RESULT OF HIGH ANDROGENS:** The high levels of androgen contribute to acne or pimples, hirsutism or male type of baldness, excessive body hair and facial hair, breast atrophy or small breasts, etc. Oily skin and dandruff are also common in these women.
- ◆ **METABOLIC SYNDROME:** This causes so called central obesity or male type of obesity with lot of fat around the abdomen. Intestinal bloating, depression and high blood pressure are some of the features of this. Thick dark brown patches in the skin especially in the arms, legs and thighs, skin tags in the axilla and neck are also some of the features.

SIGNS of PCOD

- ◆ Male pattern of hair in the chest, around the nipple, abdomen and face
- ◆ Acne and oily skin in the face, neck and back
- ◆ Thick dark skin in the armpit, thighs, etc.
- ◆ Enlarged clitoris
- ◆ Small breasts
- ◆ Central obesity

Investigation/Treatments

- ◆ Ultrasound examination reveals multiple cysts in the ovaries.
- ◆ Small ovarian follicles due to follicular arrest is an early finding
- ◆ Blood sugars and Lipid profile are often abnormal
- ◆ Thyroid function tests are carried out to rule out hypothyroidism that may mimic the PCOD
- ◆ Hormone tests
- ◆ Diagnostic laparoscopy
- ◆ **Medical treatment aims to address each of the specific problems that are associated with PCOD.** Insulin Resistance - Hormone Imbalance - Increased Androgens - Irregular Ovulation - Metabolic Syndrome – Treatment of Associated Disorders

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