

“Polycystic Ovary Syndrome in Adolescents: An insight review”

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ABSTRACT:

PCOS, affecting 6-15% of reproductive-age women, is a hormonal disorder with diverse symptoms such as hirsutism, irregular menstrual cycles, and obesity. Diagnostic criteria like NIH, Rotterdam, and Androgen Excess-PCOS Society consider factors such as hyperandrogenism, chronic anovulation, and polycystic ovary morphology. Hirsutism, acne, and seborrhea are common, but alopecia is rare in adolescents. PCOS, found in both normal-weight and overweight women, worsens with obesity, leading to metabolic and cardiovascular complications. Complex pathophysiology involves hormonal imbalances and insulin resistance. Diagnosing PCOS in adolescents is challenging, with limited imaging techniques. Global prevalence ranges from 2.2% to 26%, with higher rates in Indian women. PCOS is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular risks, and gynecological cancers. Early detection and management are crucial to mitigate long-term health risks

Keywords: PCOS, adolescents, hormonal disorder, irregular periods, androgen levels, polycystic ovaries, puberty, diagnosis, lifestyle modifications, diet, exercise, management, healthcare, complications, research, treatment strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), also known as Stein-Leventhal Syndrome, is a disorder that stems from hormonal imbalance combined with genetic and environmental factors. [1] It affects estimated 6-15% of women of reproductive age and accounts for 72-84% of adult hyperandrogenism. [2-4] It is a prevalent endocrine and metabolic disorder affecting 6-20% of women of childbearing age. [5,6] It is one of the most frequently mentioned causes of infertility accounting for up to 56% of cases. [7,8] Although the contribution of genes is estimated to be 72%, the genetic

loci that have so far been identified as determining the occurrence of this syndrome account for only about 10%. [9,10] It presents with a variety of symptoms such as mild hirsutism, hyperandrogenism, oligomenorrhea, dysfunctional uterine bleeding, and obesity. [11,12] In the youngest women, it is manifested by puberty and menstrual disorders, as well as cosmetic attributes associated with hyperandrogenism. At a later age, problems with ovulation and infertility dominate, followed by metabolic disorders. PCOS is linked to an increased risk of diabetes, dyslipidemia, cardiovascular disease, and fatty liver, as well as a higher risk of cancer, autoimmune diseases, and mental disorders. [13,14,15] Three worldwide conferences have developed somewhat distinctive but covering demonstrative criteria for adult women: the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Conference criteria (1990), the Rotterdam consensus criteria (2003) (Rotterdam ESHRE/ASRM-Sponsored PCOS Consensus Workshop Group 2004), and the Androgen Excess-PCOS Society consensus criteria (2006). [16,17,18] The NIH criteria included hyperandrogenism, chronic anovulation, and avoidance of other causes of these indications. [19] The Rotterdam criteria are the broadest and incorporate the highlights of the other definitions. They permit PCOS to be analyzed with a combination of chronic anovulation and polycystic ovary morphology (PCOM) without hyperandrogenism. [19-23]

1.1 ETIOLOGY:

For the most part, PCOS appears to be a congenital condition that is first diagnosed during adolescence. [24,25] Accumulating evidence indicates that PCOS arises as a complex trait influenced by hereditary and non-hereditary factors. [26] Familial clustering of cases suggested a genetic basis for the disease. [27,28]

Many genes are said to be directly or indirectly promote the progression of the disease. But not now a penetrant gene was identified.^[29] The most important genes to consider with the etiology of PCOS include CYP11A1, CYP17A1, and CYP19A1. PCOS patients have elevated serum LH levels, which stimulate steroidogenesis in androgen-producing theca cells. Steroidogenesis is the process by which cholesterol is made into steroidogenic-specific organs are converted into bioactive compounds. The process is steroidogenic enzymes including steroid reductase, cholesterol side-chain cleavage enzyme (HSD) and cytochrome P450 (CYP) family enzymes. In the ovaries, cholesterol is converted to pregnenolone by CYP11A1 under the influence of the luteinizing hormone (LH). pregnenolone, on the other hand, is first hydroxylated to 17-hydroxy pregnenolone before being converted to dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) by CYP 17A1^[30]. A high-calorie diet and a sedentary lifestyle can be possible causes of worsening PCOS. A high-sugar diet can contribute to PCOS by altering gut microflora, causing chronic inflammation, increasing insulin resistance, and increasing androgen production. Obesity and weight gain worsen the symptoms of this syndrome. Compared with high glycemic index (HGI) diets, low GI (LGI) diets reduced fasting insulin, total and LDL cholesterol, TG values, waist circumference and total testosterone without changing fasting glucose, HDL cholesterol, body weight or free androgen index in PCOS. Patients.^[31,32] Several studies have shown that environmental pollutants such as heavy metals, insecticide, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) significantly affect human health and reproduction. Indeed, there is increasing evidence that environmental pollutants play a role to develop PCOS. Takeuchi

and Kandaraki et al. found that serum BPA concentration in hyperandrogenic women with PCOS were higher than in non-hyperandrogenic women with PCOS and healthy controls^[33,34]. A separate study found that increasing blood BPA levels were positively associated with serum testosterone levels in PCOS women compared to healthy women. Explains the relationships between different environmental pollutants and PCOS, Vagi. conducted a case-control study that showed higher serum levels of perfluorooctanoate and perfluorooctanesulfonate in women with PCOS.^[35]

1.2 EPIDEMIOLOGY:

Clearly the predominance of PCOS will depend on the criteria utilized to define this cluster. The predominance of PCOS has been decided in different populations, primarily of White or Caucasian and, in one ponder, of Darker races. In a study of 277 women looking for a pre-employment physical in a college within the southeastern US, we initially detailed an in general predominance of PCOS analyzed by the NIH 1990 criteria of 4.0%, with no noteworthy distinction between Whites and Blacks^[82] consequent and more seriously think about of 400 unselected continuous ladies matured 18–45 a long time in the same setting (223 Dark, 166 White, and 11 of other races), the predominance of PCOS was watched to be 6.6%, and still not essentially distinctive between Blacks and Whites (8.0 and 4.8%, separately)^[36]. Predominance estimates for PCOS, as characterized by the NIH/NICHD criteria, demonstrate that PCOS may be a common endocrinopathy affecting 4%–8% of ladies of reproductive age. Recently, a few groups have illustrated that the predominance of PCOS shifts depending on the symptomatic criteria utilized (see Table 1)

Table:1 Prevalence of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) using different diagnostic criteria^[37-40]

Source	Population	NIH/NICHD criteria	ESHRE/ASRM (Rotterdam) criteria	Androgen excess and PCOS society criteria
March et al	728 Australian women	8.7%	17.8%	12.0%
Mehrabian et al	820 Iranian women	7%	15.2%	7.92%
Tehrani et al	929 Iranian women	7.1%	14.6%	11.7%
Yildiz et al	392 Turkish women	6.1%	19.9%	15.3%

II. PATHOGENESIS:

The Pathogenesis of PCOS includes essential theca cell defects^[41] as well as neuroendocrine dysfunction of the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis leading to hyperandrogenemia^[42]. The pathophysiology of these conditions influenced by alterations in steroidogenesis, ovarian folliculogenesis, neuroendocrine function, metabolism, insulin production, insulin sensitivity, adipose cell activity, inflammatory factors, and sympathetomies function^[43]. Androgen excess, observed in approximately 60–80% of patients with PCOS, is a key feature of the disorder. Hirsutism and hyperandrogenism are

manifestations of the excessive androgen production. Indeed, hyperandrogenism, commonly demonstrated by elevated free(unbound) testosterone in circulation, is the most common abnormality observed in the syndrome and plays a major role in perpetuating the aberrant hormone contributors to the pathophysiology of PCOS. Excessive ovarian androgen production is present in the majority of cases, but excessive adrenal androgen production can occur among some. The elevated androgen concentration suppresses sex hormone binding globulin (SHBG) concentrations contributing to higher free testosterone concentrations^[44]

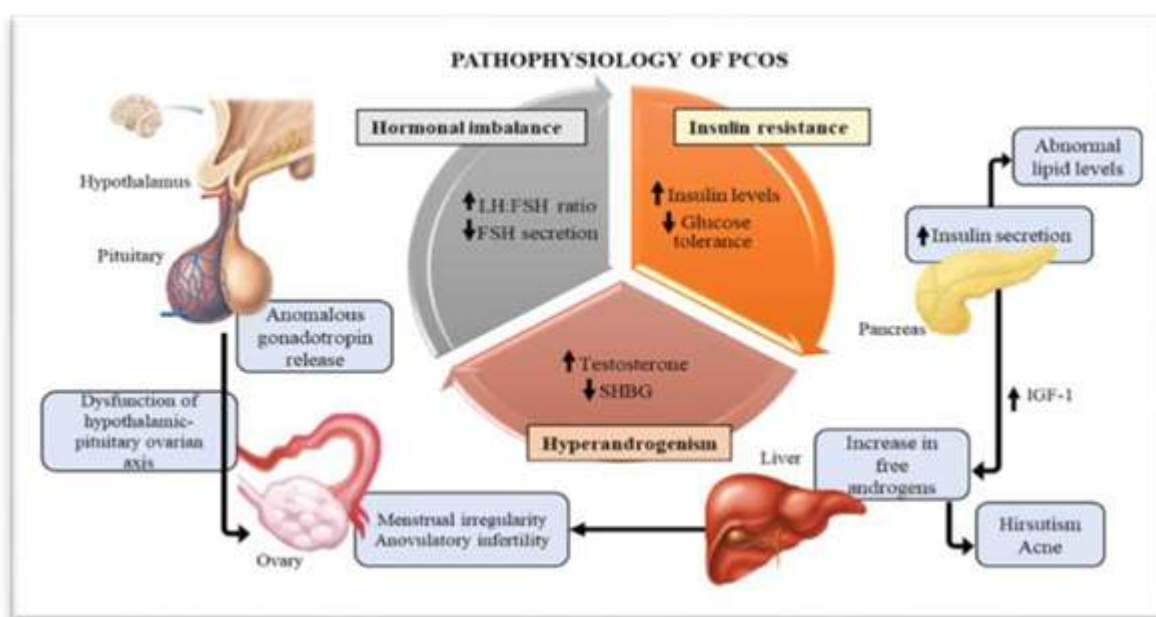


Fig:1 Pathogenesis of PCOS

2.1 Insulin resistance in the pathogenesis of PCOS:

The role of insulin resistance in the pathogenesis of PCOS is supported by observations that improving insulin sensitivity in this condition (through weight loss or drug therapy) improves reproductive, hyperandrogenic and metabolic features.^[45] The following interaction with its receptor, intracellular effects of insulin follow two main pathways via: (i) phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase (PI3-kinase) and (ii) mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAP kinase). Each of these pathways

mediates disparate cellular effects of insulin stimulation. The PI3-kinase pathway mediates metabolic effects (including glucose disposal into skeletal muscle) and the MAP kinase pathway mediates cell growth and steroidogenic effects.^[46]

In PCOS, it appears that only the PI3-kinase pathway is dysfunctional, with the MAP kinase pathway functioning normally.^[47] The result is divergent cellular responses to insulin, with resistance to its metabolic effects and concurrent enhancement of steroidogenesis manifesting as metabolic dysfunction,

hyperandrogenemia and reproductive dysfunction.^[48]

The intact MAP kinase receptor pathway is important in the mechanism by which insulin resistance influences development of hyperandrogenemia in PCOS. In a comparison between urinary steroid profiles in women with PCOS (n=178) and BMI-matched control women (n=100), our own group demonstrated enhanced 5 α reductase activity associated with PCOS. Resulting enhanced conversion of testosterone to the more potent androgen, 5 α -dihydrotestosterone likely contributes to the hyperandrogenism of PCOS.

A further effect of enhanced 5 α reductase activity is the breakdown of cortisol with reduced negative feedback at the pituitary. Consequently, the hypothalamo-pituitary adrenal axis becomes overactive in PCOS, thereby further stimulating adrenal androgen production^[49]

2.2 Genes involved in pathogenesis of PCOS:

Genetic factors involved in inheritance PCOS (Table 2). However, the great heterogeneity of described genomes does not allow unequivocal determination of PCOS genotype is not possible^[50] although the contribution of genes is estimated to be 72% of the genetic loci identified so far, the detection rate of this syndrome is only about 10%^[51,52].

Table 2: The main genes involved in pathophysiology of PCOS and their metabolic and fertility impact.^[50]

Genes Involved in the Pathophysiology of PCOS				
Steroidogenesis	Insulin Secretion and Action	Effect of Steroid Hormones	Gonadotropin Regulation	Others
CYP21, CYP11a, CYP19, CYP17	IRS group, INSR, CAPN10, FTO	AR, SHBG, DENND1A	FSHR, LHCGR, AMH, HOXA group, BMP	PAI-1
Hyperandrogenism	Diabetes, obesity Oxidative stress	Hyperandrogenism	Infertility	Infertility
Ovulation and Implantation Disorders				
Infertility/Cycle Disorders				
CYP group: cytochrome family p450; INSR: insulin gene; IRSR: insulin receptor substrate; CAPN10: caplain-10; FTO: fat mass obesity; AR: androgen receptor; SHBG: sex hormone binding globulin; DENND1A: connecdenn-1; FSHR: follicle-stimulating hormone receptor; LHCGR: lutein hormone gen receptor; AMH: anti-Mullerian hormone; HOXA: gen responsible for successful implantation; BMP: bone morphogenetic protein; PAI-1: plasminogen activator inhibitor 1.				

The majority of studies show that the mechanisms that trigger PCOS are due to epigenetic changes, including glycation of certain gene end products. Those after translation the changes depend on the environment of the mother organism, which is more a

nd more numerous civilizational factors that cause obesity, as well as hormonal and immunological factors. Disorders associated with the pathogenesis of PCOS in the developing fetus (Figure 3) [53].

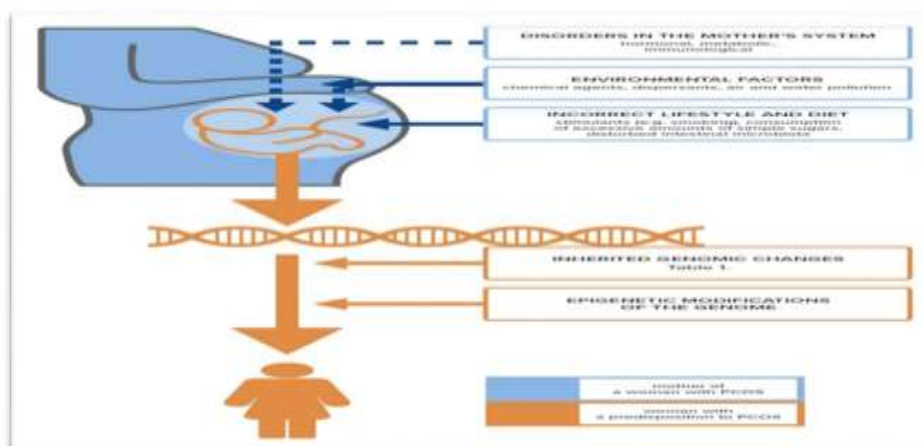


Fig:2 Genetic vulnerability to PCOS.^[53]

Additionally, there is evidence of a genetically male counterpart to PCOS that rules it out the starting point of this syndrome is the ovaries [54]. Men turned out to be tall with genetic risk, the likelihood of developing the “male equivalent” of PCOS increased on the development of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and male pattern baldness [55]. It is possible that the reproductive problems associated with PCOS may be due to biological causes. Mechanisms common to men and women [56].

III. DIAGNOSIS:

The first diagnostic criteria for PCOS in adult women were established by a consensus meeting at the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

in 1990 [57]. Including NIH criteria clinical or biochemical evidence of hyperandrogenism and ovulation disorders [58]. PCOM was not part of their criteria because it was already known at the time that polycystic ovarian morphology is observed in 20–30% of healthy women [59]. The NIH criteria were the standard for diagnosing PCOS for more than a decade until 2012 when the NIH recommended the use of the Rotterdam criteria. The Rotterdam criteria were another step forward in the diagnosis of PCOS by adding PCOM as a diagnostic criterion. PCOS is defined according to the Rotterdam Agreement two of the following three criteria: oligo/anovulation, hyperandrogenism, and polycystic ovaries [60]

Table 3: Differences in criteria for PCOS diagnosis in adolescent patients. [61,62]

Criteria Definition		
Menstrual Irregularity	Irregular menses/oligomenorrhea 2 years post-menarche.	Irregular menstrual cycles < 1-year post-menarche represents a normal pubertal transition.
	Menstrual cycles > 90 days 1-year post-menarche.	>90 days for any one cycle > 1-year post-menarche.
Hyperandrogenism	Primary amenorrhea in girls with completed puberty.	Cycles < 21 or >45 days >1 to <3 years post-menarche.
	Evidence of hyperandrogenism:	Cycles < 21 or >35 days 3 years post-menarche.
Polycystic Ovary on Ultrasound	a. Biochemical—no clear testosterone concentration cut-offs; confirmation of biochemical hyperandrogenism in symptomatic adolescents.	Primary amenorrhea by age 15 or >3 years post-thelarche.
	b. Clinical—hirsutism and/or moderate or severe inflammatory acne, especially if unresponsive to topical therapy.	Evidence of hyperandrogenism:
	The presence of PCOM in an adolescent who does not have hyperandrogenism/oligo-anovulation does not indicate a diagnosis of PCOS.	a. biochemical—no clear testosterone concentration cut-offs; calculated free testosterone, free androgen index, or bioavailable testosterone evaluation with high-quality assays.
		b. clinical—hirsutism assessed with standardized visual scales e.g., the Ferriman-Gallwey scale and/or moderate or severe comedonal acne (i.e., 10 or more facial lesions), or moderate to severe inflammatory acne.
Pelvic ultrasound should not be used for the diagnosis of PCOS in those with a gynecological age of <8 years.		

3.1 Polycystic Ovary on Ultrasound: PCOM

The presence of enlarged ovaries with increased stroma and several small peripheral cysts known as PCOM (Polycystic ovary morphology). PCOM is associated with hyperandrogenism, but not always included in the diagnostic part of PCOS. PCOM is an inconsistent finding in healthy girls [63] and adults, but the persistence of PCOM is greater time is observed in hyperandrogenic adolescents [64] in addition, the defining criteria for an ultrasound examination modification of the PCOS model is ongoing [65]. The anatomical appearance of the ovary changes with age [66]. Ovarian volume increases during puberty and reaches adult numbers in the years after the onset of menstruation. It remains stable and declines in

young adulthood after the middle of the fourth decade of life. [67] Follicles size also changes with age and maximum amount during puberty small follicles are observed and as a young adult, and the number of follicles decreases significantly with age. [68]

An ultrasound diagnosis of PCOM is made standardized for adults using the transvaginal route. In the case of young people, the majority of the exams are still successful Transabdominal route with a high physiological follicle number can make follicle count an unreliable criterion to diagnose PCOM. Importance of use of appropriate diagnostic criteria for PCOM in youth exists is emphasized because the application of adult criteria can lead to a falsely elevated prevalence of PCOM (30–40%)

region) [69,70]

Table 4: Suggested criteria for the diagnosis of PCOS in adolescence^[71]

Required	Optional ^a	Not recommended ^b	Comments
1. Irregular menses/ oligomenorrhea 2. Evidence of hyperandrogenism: a. Biochemical b. Clinical (e.g., progressive hirsutism)	1. PCOM 2. Severe cystic acne	1. Obesity 2. Insulin resistance 3. Hyperinsulinemia 4. Biomarkers (e.g., AMH, T/DHT ratio) 5. Acanthosis nigricans	1. Must generally be 2 years post-menarche 2. Must rule out other disorders of hyperandrogenism (e.g., NC-CAH, Cushing syndrome)
PCOS; polycystic ovary syndrome; PCOM, polycystic ovarian morphology; AMH, anti-Müllerian hormone; T/DHT, testosterone to dihydrotestosterone; NC-CAH, non-classical congenital adrenal hyperplasia. ^a These criteria are often used in concert with the required criteria, but should not be used independently as diagnostic features. ^b These criteria have been associated with PCOS but are not diagnostic.			

3.2 Menstrual irregularities:

One of the most important problems faced by healthcare providers in particular anovulatory dysfunction is diagnosed in primary care based on the irregular cycles of the adolescent. This has long been understood that the period between periods is accompanied by maturation Hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (HPO) axis and period establishing a regular ovulation cycle. For this therefore, the average cycle for an adult can last 28 days (range 24-35). Some time starts right after menstruation, with a significant difference in cycle length and a high ratio Anovulatory cycles, especially in the first year after menarche [72] Guidelines recommend considering PCOS based on cyclical irregularity in the third year after menstruation. At this point, 95% of cycles fail 21-45 days and periods last 2-7 days. Menstrual irregularities at this age have been shown to be highly correlated with oligomenorrhea at the age of 18 years [73] Children can be especially overweight. Tendency to premature pubic arch and pubic arch and in turn may be more prone to premature menstruation and PCOS; They should be considered a high-risk population and receive special attention throughout the course of the postmenstrual cycle [74,75,76]. Because PCOS is a diagnosis of exclusion, there are other causes of irregular cycles (such as hypothyroidism or hyperprolactinemia) must be considered and ruled out before diagnosing PCOS. A study of menstrual disorders after two years irregular cycles seem to have become the norm worldwide [77,78,79].

IV. TREATMENT OF ADOLESCENT PCOS:

Adolescents with pre-existing PCOS symptoms [80] often require treatment to manage their symptoms. For adolescents with a clear diagnosis of PCOS, treatment should include education about PCOS and lifestyle interventions. These interventions can be tailored to address the most common complaints and symptoms. Interventions may include: Metformin; Combined oral contraceptive pills (COCP); Spironolactone; local Hirsutism and Acne Treatment. Management of Comorbid Conditions; regular Follow-Up; Planning for Transition to Adult Care Providers [81]

4.1 Oral contraceptives (OCs):

OCs are a type of medication that can be used as a first line of treatment for women who are unable to ovulate due to menstrual irregularities. They are available in two forms: progesterone only pills and combined pills that contain both estrogen (estradiol dose up to 50 µg) and progesterone (norethisterone, desogestrel) [82]. OCs reduce the circulating androgen levels by increasing the SHBG (see Fig:6). [83] Women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) are more likely to develop cancers, however, OCs may reduce the risk of ovarian cancer [84]. OCs are not known to affect insulin resistance, however, they may demonstrate variability in lipid profiles that may lead to metabolic disorders [85]. Therefore, OCs should be used based on the risk grade and should be discontinued immediately if any discrepancies are observed.

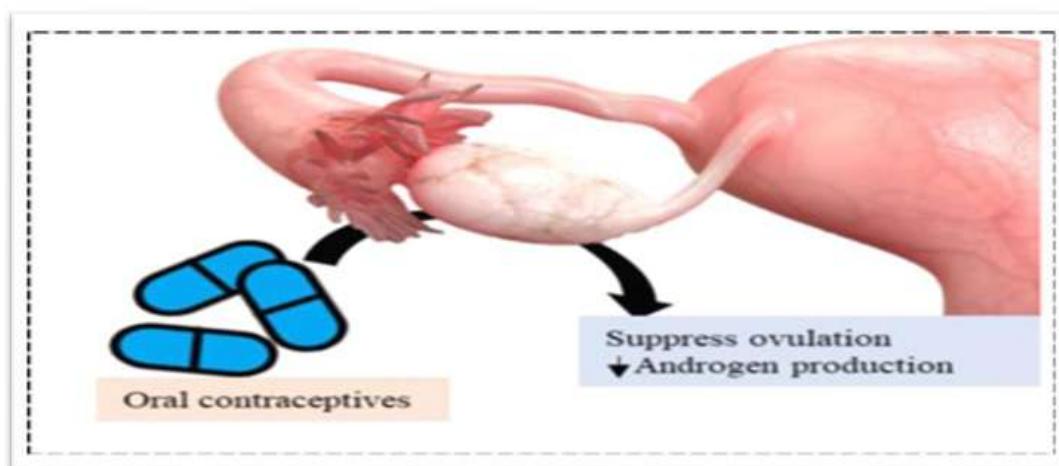


Fig:3.Mechanism of OCPs.[86]

4.2 Antiandrogens:

These are effective forms of contraception, including antiandrogens, may be considered as a treatment for hirsutism and androgen-related alopecia. However, the potential teratogenic effects

of antiandrogens on male fetuses, as well as their interference with external genital development, necessitate the use of effective contraception. This recommendation, based on a conditional evidence-based review with a GRADE of very low, was primarily made in adult women and was based on the use of flutamide or finasteride, spironolactone's, alone or in conjunction with a diet intervention.[87] This group includes: Spironolactone, Flutamide, Cyproterone acetate. Which reduces androgen secretion by inhibition by androgen receptor antagonists and is preferred as the first-line drug in hirsutism treatment.[88] Spironolactone is an anabolic agent that produces an antiandrogenic effect

when taken at high doses. When taken alone, it leads to more frequent periods, so it is usually used in combination with OCPs to create synergy and overcome the problem.[89] Flutamide is an orally-tolerated anabolic agent used to treat prostate cancer and has the same efficacy as spironolactone in the treatment of hirsutism.[90,91,92] Flutamide is commonly used in conjunction with metformin due to its potential to cause hepatotoxicity when taken on its own. [93] Additionally, Cyproterone Acetate is a powerful antiandrogen with a progestogenic effect. When used in conjunction with Ethinylestradiol, it can

be used as a treatment for acne and hirsutism. Finasteride is an inhibitor of 5- α -reductase, which has been shown to reduce hirsutism scores. However, its use

in women is restricted due to its teratogenic properties. It is recommended for postmenopausal women and those who are unable to ovulate.[94]

4.3 Insulin sensitizers:

This class of medicinal products is typically utilized to address metabolic co-morbidities associated with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) by reducing insulin resistance and restoring insulin levels to a normal range. By reducing the HOMA-IR, the associated androgen levels will decrease, resulting in an improvement in menstrual cycles.[90]

4.4 Metformin:

Metformin has been shown to increase insulin sensitivity in liver by reducing the activity of gluconeogenic enzymes such as PEPCK, glycogen synthase, and glucose-6-phosphatase, as well as inhibiting the liver's uptake and conversion of lactate to alanine and glucose to alanine. Metformin also increases peripheral glucose uptake, reduces fatty acid oxidation, and decreases glucose absorption from the intestine.

At the cellular level, the effects of metformin on AMPK are mediated by phosphorylation, which modulates the activity of both catalytic α 1 and α 2 subunits of AMPK. This results in improved muscle glucose uptake when insulin is present. In mice skeletal muscle cell lines, the effect of metformin is mediated by threonine α 2-residue α 2-phosphorylation, which is maintained upon discontinuation of the medication.[95] The use of metformin has been shown to have a modest beneficial effect on the lipid profile of patients with PCOS.[96] Additionally, it does not appear to have

a teratogenic effect when used during pregnancy. Furthermore, it has been shown to reduce inflammation and complications associated with pregnancy.[97]

Furthermore, when used in conjunction with Clomiphene Citrate, it has been found to increase the ovulation rate and pregnancy rate of infertile patients with PCOS [98]. Furthermore, when combined with antiandrogens such as flutamide, it has been observed to have a synergetic effect in women with PCOS who are obese, although this effect is not observed to be safe for laboratory animals.[99] Furthermore, a beneficial effect was observed to improve hyperandrogenism of PCOS women with the use of metformin and lifestyle modification [100]

V. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, addressing polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) in adolescents requires a multidisciplinary approach. Early recognition, coupled with lifestyle interventions, forms the cornerstone of management. Regular monitoring and individualized care are crucial for mitigating long-term complications. Further research is needed to enhance our understanding of PCOS in adolescents and refine treatment strategies, ensuring comprehensive and effective support for this population. Oral contraceptives like norethisterone, desogestrel, are commonly prescribed for PCOS to regulate menstrual cycles, reduce androgen levels, and manage symptoms. While effective for many, individual responses vary, and potential side effects should be discussed with a healthcare provider for personalized guidance and monitoring. Antiandrogens, like spironolactone, can be effective in managing PCOS symptoms like acne and hirsutism by blocking androgen effects. However, individual responses and potential side effects vary, necessitating careful consideration and monitoring under the guidance of a healthcare provider. Insulin sensitizers, like metformin, are used in PCOS to improve insulin resistance. They can help regulate menstrual cycles and manage metabolic aspects. While generally effective, individual responses vary, and consulting with a healthcare provider is crucial to assess suitability, potential side effects, and monitoring needs.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest to be declared.

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