

# Women diagnosed with PCOS twice as likely to be hospitalized

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Women diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome - the most common hormone disorder in women of reproductive age - face a heightened risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, mental health conditions, reproductive disorders and cancer of the lining of the uterus than healthy women, according to a new study published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a leading cause of infertility. The condition occurs when a woman's body produces slightly higher amounts of testosterone and other androgen hormones than normal. The resulting hormone imbalance can cause irregular or absent menstrual periods, infertility, weight gain, acne, excess hair on the face and body, or thinning hair on the scalp. As many as 5 million [women](#) nationwide have PCOS, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Women's Health.

"PCOS has profound implications for a women's reproductive health as well as her long-term risk of chronic illness," said one of the study's authors, Roger Hart, MD, MRCOG, FRANZCOG, CREI, of the University of Western Australia and Fertility Specialists of Western Australia, both in Perth, Australia. "Our study indicates women who have PCOS have twice as many hospital admissions as women without the condition. Additional health care resources should be directed to address the risks facing this population."

The population-based retrospective cohort study examined health

records for 2,566 women ages 15 and older who were diagnosed with PCOS during a hospital visit in Western Australia between 1997 and 2011. This population's records were compared to hospitalization records for 25,660 women of similar ages, who were identified using voter registration records. Researchers tracked the participants' hospitalization records until the women reached a median age of 35.8 years.

Researchers analyzing the data found women who were diagnosed with PCOS were more likely to be hospitalized for reasons unrelated to [reproductive health](#) or injury than their counterparts. Women who had PCOS were more likely to have miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies or other gynecological conditions such as irregular menstrual periods and endometriosis. Women who had PCOS also had a higher rate of endometrial cancer, or cancer of the lining of the [uterus](#).

Women diagnosed with PCOS were hospitalized more often for mental health disorders such as depression, stress and anxiety than other study participants. A PCOS diagnosis also was associated with a higher risk of late onset [diabetes](#), high blood pressure, [heart disease](#), asthma and musculoskeletal disorders.

"We found women who have PCOS are particularly prone to developing metabolic and cardiovascular disease," Hart said. "Since only 25 percent of the women we studied were older than 40, we anticipate the rate of diagnosis would rise as these women continue to age."

The Endocrine Society recommended screening women and teens diagnosed with PCOS for heart disease risk factors and diabetes in its [Clinical Practice Guideline](#) on the condition.

The co-author of the study is Dorota A. Doherty of the University of Western Australia and the Women' and Infants' Research Foundation,

King Edward Memorial Hospital in Perth, Australia.

The study, "The Potential Implications of a PCOS Diagnosis on a Woman's Long-term Health Using Data Linkage," was published online, ahead of print.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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