

# Women with PCOS experience poor health and quality of life beyond reproductive years

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Women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) experience poor health and quality of life into their late forties, according to new research published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

PCOS is a common yet underdiagnosed condition affecting 6-18 percent of women at reproductive age, but its side effects extend beyond infertility and menstrual irregularities. Women with PCOS experience psychological issues like anxiety and depression that continue well beyond fertile age.

"Most PCOS studies focus on women during reproductive age, but symptoms like mental health issues and excess hair growth continue into the late forties," said the study's principal investigator, Terhi Piltonen, M.D., Ph.D. of the University of Oulu in Finland. "Our study focuses on this population and shows that women with PCOS have lower life satisfaction and poorer health up to their late reproductive years."

The researchers studied a longitudinal cohort of 5,889 women at ages 31 and 46 and identified women with PCOS from this Northern Finland Birth Cohort 1966. The investigators found women with PCOS have [poor health](#) and quality of life compared to those without the condition. Mental distress was the strongest contributing factor to poor quality of life.

"More interventions are needed to improve the [quality of life](#) for women with PCOS who are in their late thirties and forties. These [women](#) should be screened regularly for [mental health issues](#) and treated for other distressing symptoms like excess hair growth," Piltonen said.

**More information:** Salla Karjula et al. Population-based data at ages 31 and 46 show decreased HRQoL and life satisfaction in women with PCOS symptoms, *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* (2020). [DOI: 10.1210/clinem/dgz256](https://doi.org/10.1210/clinem/dgz256)

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