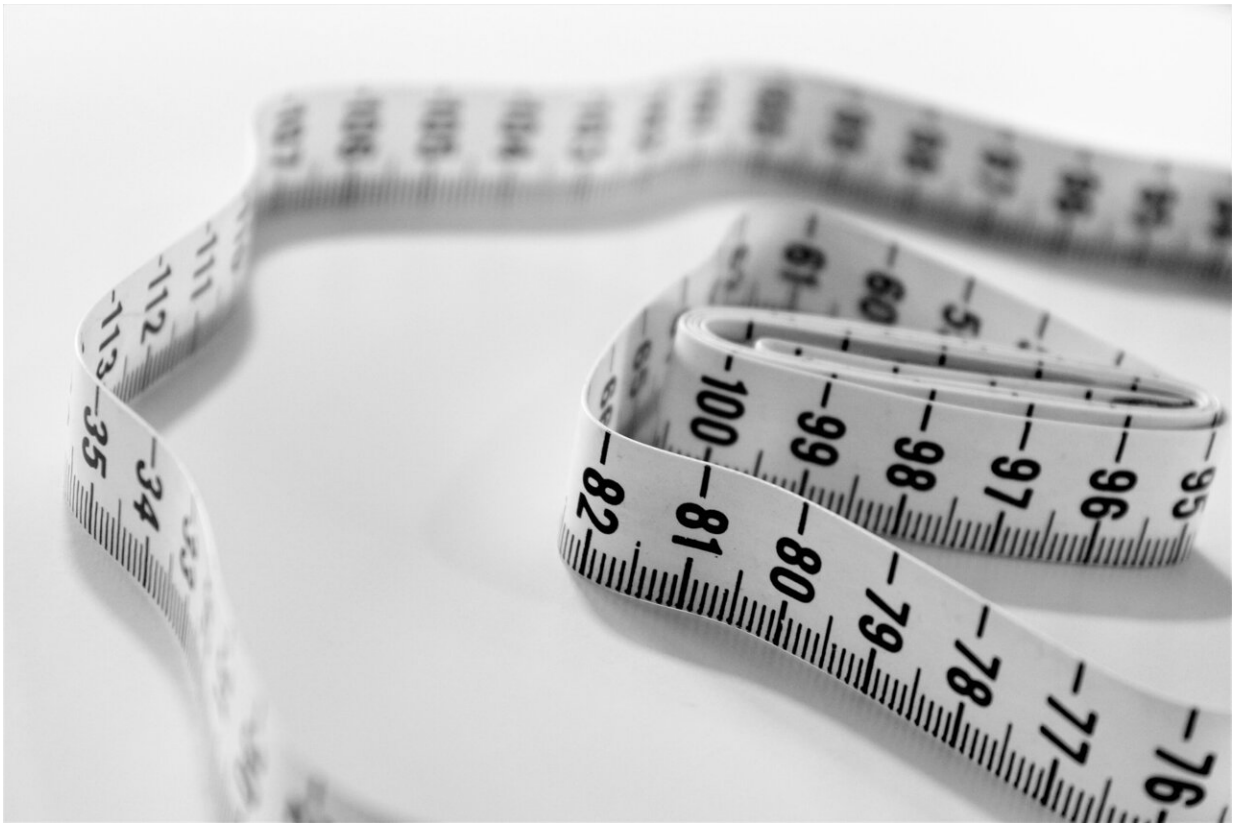


# Body image concerns significantly higher in women living with PCOS

June 15 2023

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Women living with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) experience greater body image concerns than individuals without the condition, according to research being presented Saturday at ENDO 2023, the

Endocrine Society's annual meeting in Chicago, Ill.

PCOS affects 7% to 10% of women and is the most common cause of infertility. It is also linked to metabolic health problems such as diabetes, cardiovascular health conditions, and [mental health conditions](#) including depression and anxiety.

"Although PCOS, depression and anxiety have a substantial correlation, it remained unclear whether there is a similar correlation between PCOS and body image issues," said Punith Kempegowda, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Acute Medicine at the Institute of Applied Health Research, University of Birmingham in Birmingham, U.K. "If left untreated, body image issues can result in Body Dysmorphic Disorder, a mental health condition in which a person spends a lot of time stressing about imperfections in their looks. This may also increase the risk of developing eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia."

Kempegowda and colleagues conducted a [systematic review](#) and meta-analysis of all studies on [body image concerns](#) published as of July 2022. They identified nine relevant studies, with sample sizes ranging from 33 to 201 for people with PCOS and from 22 to 225 for people without PCOS, resulting in a total of 918 women with PCOS and 865 without PCOS for their review.

The researchers conducted a meta-analysis of three studies using the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire Appearance Scales (MBSRQ-AS). The findings were clinically significant, showing women living with PCOS reported feeling worse on appearance evaluation and appearance orientation compared to those without PCOS.

Kempegowda and the group also completed a meta-analysis of two studies showing significantly greater overweight preoccupation, lower

body areas satisfaction, and higher self-classified body weight on MBSRQ-AS subscales in those with PCOS compared to those without the condition.

Finally, a [meta-analysis](#) of two studies using the Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA) showed significantly lower scores for weight satisfaction in [women](#) living with PCOS compared to those without. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the BESAA appearance and attribution scores between the two groups.

"Our study emphasizes the need for increased awareness and screening for body image concerns in those with PCOS as it may increase the risk of developing eating disorders and adversely affect their quality of life," Kempegowda said.

Kempegowda is scheduled to present at the Society's ENDO 2023 reproductive health news conference at 11:30 AM Central on Thursday, June 15.

**More information:** Conference livestream at [endomediastream.com](https://endomediastream.com).

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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