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REVIEW ARTICLE

PCOS AND ITS HOMOEOPATHIC MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

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Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder that affects women of reproductive age. It is characterized by irregular menstrual cycles, excess androgen levels, ovarian cysts, and various symptoms such as acne, hirsutism (excessive hair growth), weight gain, and infertility. Homeopathy can be considered as a complementary approach in the management of PCOS, aiming to address the underlying hormonal imbalances

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and support overall health. Here is an overview of the potential scope of homeopathy in PCOS.

INTRODUCTION

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormonal disorder that affects women of reproductive age. It is characterized by a combination of symptoms, including irregular menstrual cycles, excess androgen levels (male hormones), and the presence of multiple small cysts on the ovaries. The exact cause

of PCOS is not yet known, but it may involve a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Insulin resistance, which affects the body's ability to use insulin effectively, is also commonly associated with PCOS.

CAUSES OF PCOS

PCOS is a hormonal disorder that primarily affects ovaries. It is

characterized by an imbalance in sex hormones, which can lead to a variety of symptoms and potential health complications. The precise causes of PCOS are not known, but several factors contribute to its development of PCOS.

These include:

- **Hormonal Imbalance:** PCOS is associated with elevated levels of androgens (male hormones) and insulin. High levels of androgens can disrupt the normal functioning of the ovaries.
- **Genetics:** There appears to be a genetic component to PCOS. If you have a family history of PCOS, you may be at an increased risk.
- **Insulin Resistance:** Insulin resistance is common in people with PCOS, and it can lead to increased insulin production. Elevated insulin levels can stimulate the ovaries to produce more androgens.
- **Inflammation:** Chronic low-grade inflammation may also play a role in PCOS, contributing to insulin resistance and hormonal imbalances.

INCIDENCE

PCOS a significant public health problem and is one of the commonest hormonal disturbances affecting women of reproductive age. The condition affects an estimated 8–13% of women of

reproductive age, and up to 70% of cases are undiagnosed. The prevalence of PCOS is higher among some ethnic group and these groups often experience more complications related to metabolic problems.

The biological and psychological effects of PCOS are mostly related to obesity, body image and infertility and it can lead to mental health challenges and social stigma.

SYMPTOMS

- **Menstrual Irregularities:** Irregular, infrequent, or absent menstrual periods are common in PCOS. Some women may also experience heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding.
- **Excess Androgen Levels:** Elevated levels of androgens can lead to symptoms such as hirsutism (excessive hair growth), acne, and male-pattern baldness.
- **Ovarian Cysts:** Small cysts may form on the ovaries, but not all women with PCOS have visible cysts.
- **Insulin Resistance (IR):** Many women with PCOS have insulin resistance, which can lead to weight gain, difficulty losing weight, and an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes.²
- **Metabolic Disturbances:** PCOS is associated with an increased risk of

metabolic conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and insulin resistance.³

Pregnancy And PCOS

Due to PCOS menstrual cycle may become irregular or scanty and this problem may lead to infertility, around 70 and 80 percent of women with PCOS got this fertility problems, also increases the risk for pregnancy complications. Women with PCOS are more likely to deliver premature babies. They're also at greater risk for miscarriage; high blood pressure, and gestational diabetes .However, women with PCOS can get pregnant using fertility treatments that improve ovulation. Losing weight and lowering blood sugar levels can improve chances of having a healthy pregnancy. PCOS can make it harder to get pregnant and increases risk for pregnancy complications and miscarriage. Weight loss and other treatments can improve the condition related to pregnancy and PCOS.

DIET AND LIFESTYLE

PCOS usually starts with lifestyle changes. It always has great impact on improving the condition like weight loss, diet, and exercise. Losing body weight can help to regulate menstrual cycle and improve PCOS symptoms.

Weight loss can also:

- Improve cholesterol levels

- Lower insulin
- Reduce heart disease and diabetes risks
- Every diet that helps to lose weight can help in this condition. However, some diets may have advantages over others.

Studies comparing diets for PCOS have found that low carbohydrate diets are effective for both weight loss and lowering insulin level. Most carbohydrates from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains helps regulate the menstrual cycle better than a regular weight loss diet as it has low glycemic index.

From few studies it is found that 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise for at least 3 days a week can help women with PCOS lose weight. Losing weight with exercise also improves ovulation and insulin levels.

Exercise is even more beneficial when combined with a healthy diet. Diet plus exercise helps you lose more weight than either intervention alone, and it lowers your risks for diabetes and heart disease.

COMPLICATIONS

Complications of PCOS can include:

- Infertility
- Gestational diabetes or pregnancy-induced high blood pressure

- Miscarriage or premature birth
- Non alcoholic steatohepatitis — a severe liver inflammation caused by fat buildup in the liver
- Metabolic syndrome — a cluster of conditions including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and unhealthy cholesterol or triglyceride levels that significantly increase your risk of heart and blood vessel (cardiovascular) disease Type 2 diabetes or prediabetes.
- Sleep apnea
- Depression, anxiety and eating disorders
- Cancer of the uterine lining (endometrial cancer)

Obesity commonly occurs with PCOS and can worsen complications of the disorder. PCOS may lead to anxiety, depression, or a negative physical image. Some symptoms such as infertility, obesity and unwanted hair growth can affect family, relationships, work, and involvement in the community.

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of PCOS involves medical history, physical examination, and laboratory tests. Healthcare provider may perform blood tests to check hormone levels, ultrasound imaging to examine the ovaries, and evaluate your symptoms to

make a diagnosis. Polycystic ovary syndrome is diagnosed by the presence of at least two out of the following:

Signs or symptoms of high androgens (unwanted facial or bodily hair, loss of hair from the head, acne, or an elevated blood level of testosterone) – after other causes for this have been excluded;

Irregular or absent menstrual periods – after other causes for this have been excluded; and polycystic ovaries on an ultrasound scan.

Blood tests usually used to detect changes in hormone levels, although these changes are not confirmatory. Women with polycystic ovary syndrome may have elevated levels of:

- Testosterone (an ovarian androgen hormone that influences hair growth);
- Oestrogen (an ovarian hormone that stimulates growth of the womb lining (endometrium);
- Luteinising hormone (LH, a pituitary hormone which influences hormone production by the ovaries and is important for normal ovulation);
- Insulin (a hormone that is principally involved in utilization of energy from food); and

- Anti-müllerian hormone (which is measures the fertility level of the ovaries).

While making a diagnosis, doctors need to make sure that irregular periods and ovulation can be a normal part of puberty or menopause. A woman with a family history of PCOS or type 2 diabetes are at higher risk of PCOS. In addition, the ultrasound picture is not always clear and some women with PCOS may have an ultrasound scan that does not demonstrate polycystic ovaries.

MANAGEMENT

Treatment for PCOS mainly includes management of symptoms and reduction of the risk of complications. Management strategies may include:

- **Lifestyle Changes:** Healthy eating, regular exercise, and weight management are essential for managing PCOS, especially if you are overweight.
- **Medications:** Depending on your symptoms, your healthcare provider may prescribe birth control pills, anti-androgens, or insulin-sensitizing medications.
- **Fertility Treatments:** If you are trying to conceive, fertility treatments like ovulation induction may be recommended.

- **Managing Symptoms:** Treatments for managing specific symptoms, such as acne or excess hair growth, can be prescribed.
- **Regular Monitoring:** Regular check-ups with your healthcare provider are important to monitor and manage PCOS over time.

In conclusion, PCOS is a common hormonal disorder that affects many individuals, causing a range of symptoms and potential health concerns. However, with proper management and lifestyle adjustments, individuals with PCOS can lead healthy lives and manage their symptoms effectively. If you suspect you have PCOS or are experiencing any of its symptoms, it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider for a proper diagnosis and personalized treatment plan.

HOMOEOPATHIC POINT OF VIEW IN MANAGEMENT OF PCOS

Individualized Treatment: Homeopathy follows the principle of individualization, considering the unique symptoms and characteristics of each person. A homeopathic practitioner will assess the specific symptoms and manifestations of PCOS in an individual and prescribe a remedy that best matches the totality of their symptoms.

Hormonal Balance: Homeopathic remedies can help regulate hormonal

imbalances commonly seen in PCOS. Remedies such as Sepia, Pulsatilla, Lachesis, and Thuja are often used based on the symptom presentation of the individual. These remedies are aimed at restoring hormonal balance and promoting overall well-being.

Menstrual Irregularities: Homeopathy can help regulate menstrual cycles in women with PCOS. Remedies like Pulsatilla, Natrum muriaticum, Cyclamen, and Sepia may be considered depending on the specific symptoms and patterns of menstrual irregularities.⁴

Management of Associated Symptoms: Homeopathy can be used to address the various symptoms associated with PCOS, such as acne, hirsutism, weight gain, and mood swings. Remedies like Calcarea carbonica, Lycopodium, Graphites, and Sulphur may be prescribed based on the symptom picture and individual characteristics.⁵

Fertility Support: Homeopathy may be used as a supportive approach to improve fertility in women with PCOS. Remedies such as Natrum carb, or Pulsatilla may be considered, along with an individualized treatment plan to address specific fertility concerns.⁶

It's important to note that Homeopathy should be used as a complementary approach alongside conventional medical management of

PCOS. Lifestyle modifications, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, stress management, and maintaining a healthy weight, are essential components of PCOS management.

The management of PCOS typically involves a multidimensional approach tailored to the individual's specific symptoms and needs.

IN RELATION TO ORGANON- "Organon of Medicine" is a foundational text written by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy.^{7,8} While the "Organon" does not specifically mention PCOS, it provides general principles and guidelines that can be applied in the treatment of hormonal disorders and gynecological conditions, including PCOS. Here are a few key points from the "Organon" that are relevant to the understanding and treatment of PCOS in homeopathy:

- Individualization
- Totality of Symptoms
- Vital Force and Dynamic Disease
- Similarity and Similimum

IN RELATION TO REPERTORY

Repertory of Hering's Guiding Symptoms

- Genitalia, female, ovaries, affections (undefined) – ARN, KREOS, LYC, Pall, Plat

- Genitalia, female, ovaries, congestion- Apis, BELL, Ham, Polyg-h, SEP, Syph, Ust
- Genitalia, female, ovaries, swelling (see congested, enlarged, inflammation, tumour)- APIS, bell, BUFO, Con, Ham, IOD, LACH, LIL-T, Ust
- Genitalia, female, ovaries, tumours – APIS, Apoc, APS, BAR.M, CALC, COLO, Iod, LYC, PLAT, Podo

Kent's Repertory of Homeopathic Materia Medica⁹

- GENITALIA FEMALE; TUMORS; Ovaries: Apis., Lach., Lyc., ars., bar-m., calc., coloc., iod., plat., podo., apoc., ars- fl -ac., graph., hep., staph., stram., syph., thuj., zinc.

Synthesis Repertory: Synthesis Repertory is another comprehensive repertory frequently used by homeopaths. Some rubrics related to PCOS that can be found in Synthesis Repertory include:¹⁰

- Female, Ovaries, Polycystic
- Female, Sterility, Polycystic ovary

Complete Repertory: The Complete Repertory is a more recent repertory that has an extensive range of rubrics. Some rubrics related to PCOS that can be found in the Complete Repertory include:

- Female, Ovaries, Polycystic
- Female, Sterility, Polycystic ovary
- Female, Menstruation, Irregular

IN RELATION TO MATERIA MEDICA(M.M)^{11,12}

- **Sepia:** Sepia is often indicated in cases of PCOS where there are irregular menstrual cycles, hormonal imbalances, and associated symptoms such as mood swings, irritability, and low libido. It is also useful when there is a tendency towards excessive hair growth or hair loss.
- **Pulsatilla:** Pulsatilla is commonly prescribed when there are hormonal imbalances, irregular menstrual cycles, and a tendency towards emotional sensitivity, weepiness, and mood swings. It is often suitable for individuals who experience relief from open air and gentle motion.
- **Lachesis:** Lachesis may be considered when there is an imbalance of hormones, irregular menstrual cycles, and symptoms such as hot flashes, palpitations, and mood swings. It is often suitable for individuals who feel worse with tight clothing or pressure.
- **Calcarea Carbonica:** Calcarea Carbonica is indicated in cases where there is excessive weight gain, especially around the abdomen, along with irregular menstrual cycles, fatigue, and cold intolerance. It is often suitable for individuals who crave eggs and have a sluggish metabolism.

- **Natrum Muriaticum:** Natrum Muriaticum may be considered when there are irregular menstrual cycles, excess hair growth, and emotional symptoms such as sadness, grief, or an introverted personality. It is often suitable for individuals who have a craving for salty foods. May have chronic tendency of headaches. Aversion to heat of sun. Reserved nature; has weeping spells especially when alone. Sympathy or consolations aggravate.
- **Thuja Occidentalis:** Thuja is commonly used when there are hormonal imbalances, irregular menstrual cycles, and symptoms such as acne, oily skin, and excessive hair growth. It may be considered in cases where there is a history of vaccination.
- **Apis Mellifica:** Administered for PCOD with pricking pains
- **Graphites:** Taken to treat PCOD with constipation.
- **Kali Carbonica:** PCOS where the menses are suppressed altogether for several months. Backache is associated with majority of symptoms. Very anxious and sensitive. Anxiety especially for her family members.
- **Lycopodium:** PCOS primarily on the right ovary. Hair fall and hair thinning. There is also bloating and constipation.

Nausea, vomiting, anxiety, and insomnia

- **Ferrum Metallicum:** This is another useful remedy for delayed first menses where there is debility, languor, palpitation, sickly complexion and puffiness about the ankles. It corresponds to weakly, chlorotic women with flushed face, pale and livid with blue margins around the eyes. It is especially useful in those who have been dosed with quinine.

These are just a few examples of homeopathic remedies that may be considered in the treatment of PCOS.

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