

# Black women with PCOS have higher risk factors for heart disease, diabetes and stroke

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Black women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) have higher risk factors for heart disease, diabetes and stroke compared with white women, according to a study presented virtually at ENDO 2021, the Endocrine Society's annual meeting.

PCOS is a common disorder characterized by irregular menstrual periods, disruption of normal metabolism and excessive hair growth. PCOS affects up to 10% of all women of reproductive age. The disorder increases the risk for [health conditions](#) including infertility, obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression and certain cancers.

"We found a disproportionate risk for [health complications](#) in Black women with PCOS in the United States, highlighting the need to fully identify and address health disparities in women with PCOS," said lead researcher Maryam Kazemi, Ph.D., a Postdoctoral Associate in Professor Marla Lujan's laboratory in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

Most PCOS research has focused on white women, Kazemi said. In order to find out whether Black women with PCOS share the same [health risks](#), she conducted a systematic review of all available data on the risk of [heart disease](#), diabetes and stroke, known collectively as cardiometabolic disease, to look for health disparities between Black and white women with PCOS in the United States. The review included 11 studies, with a total of 2,851 women (652 Black and 2,199 white).

The analysis found Black women with PCOS have a poorer cardiometabolic risk profile than white women, including higher insulin levels and more insulin resistance (risk factors for diabetes), and increased blood pressure, despite lower

triglyceride levels than [white women](#).

"Our findings support the need to increase public awareness about the disproportionate burden of cardiometabolic risk in young Black women with PCOS," said Kazemi. "These findings have implications for improving the sensitivity of clinical assessments in Black women to avoid underestimating cardiovascular risk in women with PCOS."

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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