

Obesity raises type 2 diabetes risk in women with PCOS

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Women with obesity and polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, according to a study presented virtually at ENDO 2021, the Endocrine Society's annual meeting. Normal-weight women with PCOS are not at increased risk, the researchers found.

Women with PCOS had a more than three-fold increased risk of developing type 2 [diabetes](#) during their lifetime, the study found. This risk was evident only in women who met the criteria for overweight or obesity, but not in lean women.

"We strongly suggest weight management in women with obesity and PCOS in an attempt to reduce this major risk of developing type 2 diabetes," said lead researcher Sarantis Livadas, M.D., Ph.D., of Athens Medical Center in Athens, Greece.

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 can lead to obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, which are often life-long conditions. Between 50%-80% of women with PCOS have obesity, and obesity is known to be a risk factor for diabetes.

The link between PCOS and diabetes has been based on a small number of studies, mostly evaluating women with the condition and obesity.

In the new study, the researchers analyzed 23 previous studies in order to assess the impact of obesity in subsequent type 2 diabetes development in women with PCOS. The studies included a total of 60,336 women with PCOS and 259,444 without the disease. A total of 8,847 women in the studies had type 2 diabetes.

"We conclude that only women with PCOS and [obesity](#) have an [increased risk](#) for type 2 diabetes development, in contrast to the current notion that all [women](#) with PCOS have a significant risk for developing type 2 diabetes," said Livadas. "This finding underscores the impact of early detection of this PCOS population and prompt lifestyle modification to avert the development of type 2 diabetes."

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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