**What are the psychosexual problems associated with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)?**

**Definition**

**Psychosexual problem**:
- Disturbance of sexual functioning
- Caused by mental and emotional difficulties concerning sexuality, rather than physical disorders

**Introduction**

- Affects around 7% of women of reproductive age
- Symptoms include: hirsutism, acne, alopecia, oligomenorrhea or amenorrhea, obesity and infertility
- Cause is unknown and there is no cure—management focuses on symptom control
- Psychological implications include: depression, anxiety and eating disorders

Sexual functioning, to many, is an important part of life and disturbances of it can affect drastically quality of life. It can be affected by many factors, including physical symptoms and mental wellbeing. I will explore the psychosexual effects of PCOS.

**Symptoms of PCOS**

- Decreased sexual satisfaction
- Decreased sexual self-esteem
- Anxiet
- Depression

**Results**

- Women with PCOS and women without had a similar frequency of:
  - Sexual intercourse, thoughts and fantasies
  - However, women with PCOS were significantly less likely to be:
    - Satisfied with their sex life
    - Likely to find themselves sexually attractive
  - Also, women with PCOS were significantly more likely to believe excessive body hair negatively impacted their attractiveness; and have depression

**Discussion**

This study took into account variables like hirsutism, but it was a small sample size, and not all participants had a sexual partner making the sample size even smaller. Also, not all aspects of sexuality were analysed.

**Conclusion**

Women with PCOS are significantly more likely to experience psychosexual disturbances, with degree of body hair causing worse outcomes. The studies, conducted 16 years apart, yielded similar results. However, more research is required with more extensive questioning and larger, more representative study sizes. Psychosexual medicine is in its infancy and can be confronted with embarrassment, but it is important clinicians discuss sexual functioning with their PCOS patients.

**References**


6. Figure 3. Bakar F. Ever had a long, thick facial 'pube' hair grow overnight? [Internet]. 2018 [cited 4 April 2020]. Available from: https://metro.co.uk/2018/03/20/ever-had-a-long-thick-facial-pube-hair-grow-overnight-7377752/