# Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) 2012

**January 2000 through November 2012**

**4,695 Citations**









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4, 695  Citations

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# Table of Contents


Diagnostic Criteria: Including Phenotypes ..... 5
Diagnostic Criteria: Without Phenotypes ..... 13
Diagnostic Criteria Testosterone Assay ..... 26
Diagnostic Criteria: Age at Diagnosis ..... 30
Epidemiology: Impact of Race/Ethnicity ..... 31
Intrauterine Environment ..... 43
Post- Natal Androgen Exposure ..... 48
Early Phenotypes: Prepuberty Biomarkers ..... 50
Obesity Prior to Puberty ..... 55
Animal Models ..... 60
Cell Based Modeling ..... 65
Environmental Role ..... 66
Genetics, AWAS, Predisposition ..... 68
Type 2 Diabetes and Prediabetes ..... 79
Cardiovascular Disease ..... 119
Obstructive Sleep Apnea ..... 168
Endometrial and Other Cancers ..... 175
Fatty Liver ..... 177
Mental Health ..... 180
Increased Age ..... 187
Prevention Strategies ..... 192
Management of Metabolic Phenotypes ..... 209
Management of Reproductive Phenotypes ..... 265
Pregnancy Outcomes ..... 304
Role of Prevention Strategies for Reproductive and Metabolic Consequences ..... 343
Family Screening ..... 402

# Introduction

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormone disorder that affects approximately 5 million reproductive-aged women in the United States. Women with PCOS have difficulty becoming pregnant (i.e., are infertile) due to hormone imbalances that cause or result from altered development of ovarian follicles. One such imbalance is high blood levels of androgens, which can come from both the ovaries and adrenal gland. Other organ systems that are affected by PCOS include the pancreas, liver, muscle, blood vasculature, and fat.

In addition to fertility impairment, other common symptoms of PCOS include:

- Irregular or no menstrual periods (for women of reproductive age)
- Acne
- Weight gain
- Excess hair growth on the face and body
- Thinning scalp hair
- Ovarian cysts.

Women with PCOS are often resistant to the biological effects of insulin and, as a consequence, may have high insulin levels. As such, women with PCOS are at risk for type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. Obesity also appears to worsen the condition. Costs to the U.S. healthcare system to identify and manage PCOS are approximately $4 billion annually; however, this estimate does not include treatment of the serious conditions associated with PCOS.

For most of the 20th century, PCOS was a poorly understood condition. In 1990, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) held a conference on PCOS to create both a working definition of the disorder and diagnostic criteria. The outcome of this conference, the *NIH Criteria*, served as a standard for researchers and clinicians for more than a decade. In 2003, a consensus workshop in Rotterdam developed new diagnostic criteria, the *Rotterdam Criteria*.

The 2012 NIH Evidence-based Methodology Workshop on PCOS will seek to clarify:

- Benefits and drawbacks of using the *Rotterdam Criteria*
- The condition's causes, predictors, and long-term consequences
- Optimal prevention and treatment strategies.

The NIH workshop is sponsored by the Office of Disease Prevention and the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. A multidisciplinary steering committee developed the workshop agenda. The NIH Library created an extensive, descriptive bibliography on PCOS to facilitate workshop discussion. During the 2½-day workshop, invited experts will discuss the body of evidence and attendees will have opportunities to provide comments during open discussion periods. After weighing the evidence, an unbiased, independent panel will prepare a report that summarizes the workshop and identifies future research priorities.

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# Diagnostic Criteria: Including Phenotypes


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# Type 2 Diabetes and Prediabetes

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# Cardiovascular Disease


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## Increased Age

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# Management of Metabolic Phenotypes

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# Management of Reproductive Phenotypes

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# Pregnancy Outcomes

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# Role of Prevention Strategies for Reproductive and Metabolic Consequences

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