

PCOS and brain health: Hormonal disorder underdiagnosed, affects 1 in 10 women — and is a sign of cognitive decline later in life

Polycystic ovary syndrome, known as PCOS, has long been known for symptoms such as missed periods or excess body hair. Now, new research has revealed another potential effect: [cognitive dysfunction later in life](#).

The scientific report “is one of the few studies to [investigate cognitive functioning](#) and brain outcomes in those women at midlife,” said Dr. Pauline Maki, a professor and director of the Women’s Mental Health Research Program at the University of Illinois Chicago.

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The chronic condition affects around 8% to 13% of women and girls of reproductive age worldwide, according to the [World Health Organization](#), but as many as 70% could be experiencing PCOS while undiagnosed.

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High androgen levels are one of the characteristic features of PCOS doctors look for during the diagnostic process.

“Essentially, what we could be seeing here is what happens when PCOS is left untreated,” said Mateja Perovi?, a doctoral student in the department of psychology at the University of Toronto, via email. “This is important for any concerned readers to keep in mind. If they are managing their PCOS symptoms, they are already doing a lot to protect their brain health down the line.”

[This is an excerpt. Read the full article here](#)