Do Pregnancy and Parenthood Affect the Course of PCO Syndrome? Initial Results from the LIPCOS Study (Lifestyle Intervention for Patients with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome [PCOS]).

Abstract:
Introduction: The impact of pregnancy and parenthood on the long-term course of PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome) is still not known. The LIPCOS study (Lifestyle Intervention for Patients with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome [PCOS] - using the example of pregnancy and parenthood) systematically investigates long-term changes in PCOS symptoms. Method and Patients: The LIPCOS pilot study sent out a questionnaire to 403 patients who had presented with oligomenorrhea between 1991 and 2002. The prospective LIPCOS main study systematically investigated 64 women using structured interviews about lifestyle changes in the last 10 years, created a detailed hormone profile of these women and carried out vaginal ultrasound to calculate ovarian score. Results: Ovarian volume and ovarian score were not significantly lower for women with children (n = 25) compared to women with PCOS who had not had children (n = 39; p = 0.226). More women with children than women who did not have children currently reported a regular daily lifestyle, and the difference was statistically significant (92 % [n = 23/25] vs. 61.5 % [n = 24/39]; p = 0.009). Ten years ago or before the birth of their first child, respectively, no such difference was found between both groups (52 vs. 51.3 %). Over the last 10 years, women with children...
were more likely to have shorter cycles compared to women without children (p = 0.441). 88 % of women with children compared to 69.2 % of women without children reported that currently they had a "healthy diet" (p = 0.130). Serum testosterone levels were slightly lower for women with children (67.6 % of the upper limits of normal ranges) compared to women without children (80 % of the upper limits of normal ranges), but because of the small subgroup sizes the difference was not statistically significant (p = 0.106). Conclusion: The LIPCOS study shows for the first time that pregnancy and parenthood may have an impact on the long-term course of PCOS. Women with children reported shorter cycles and had lower testosterone levels compared to women without children.

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