Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceptions of Iranian women with polycystic ovary syndrome about health-related quality of life issues: A qualitative study

Authors:

fatemeh bazarganipour (f.bazarganipour@gmail.com)
seyed abdolvahab taghavi (vahab.taghavi@gmail.com)
nazafarin hosseini (hosseinichenar@yahoo.com)
Siobhan Hugh-Jones (S.Hugh-Jones@leeds.ac.uk)

Version: 7 Date: 8 October 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof Jane Fisher

MS:  1666629272161342
Perceptions of Iranian women with polycystic ovary syndrome about health related quality of life issues: A qualitative study

Thank you for the email and sending the reviewers’ comments on the above manuscript for us. We found the comments very helpful and thus revised the paper accordingly. Please find the following point-by-point responses as requested:

1. Reviewer's report: after detailed re-reading of the manuscript revised as per comments by someone else a) there is no originality of the issue addressed as a research article but has importance with relevance to managing affected women in a strict Muslim society. the selection process of the women appears to be biased that affects its conclusion

The manuscript was revised as suggested. We hope you find the revisions satisfactory.

Reviewer's report: see attached

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests: None

This is potentially an important paper containing some very important, hugely sensitive and personal data. The authors need to be commended on their efforts, and if this were to get published, I would refer to it (if appropriate) because there are some very important points made which are often overlooked in the Medical treatment of PCOS patients. It highlights the need for more psychosocial research into the quality of life domains of the many thousands of women suffering from THIS syndrome in relative silence. The method appears to be overall sound – a fairly large sample for a qualitative study – and the results are reasonably well presented. The discussion is rich in detail and only needs (as does the rest) work on language. 1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? YES 2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? MOSTLY, needs some work 3. Are the data sound? SEEMS LIKE IT 4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation? NA 5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? OK 6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? YES 7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? NO 8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? NA 9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? COULD IMPROVE 10. Is the writing acceptable? NEEDS LANGUAGE (AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS EDITING

1. Major points: The paper needs thorough language editing throughout, eg see Abstract:
reluctance to society (social avoidance, social suffering), it is not at all clear what is meant by this, and is not an expression used in this context.

The manuscript was revised as suggested. We hope you find the revisions satisfactory.

2. Abstract should mention nr of participants in the method section of the abstract.

This was revised:

This study is based on qualitative content analysis. This method is used for the in-depth interviews with twenty patients with PCOS who were purposively selected.
3. Small points: Abstract, line 26 remove second ‘patients’ at the end of the sentence: the HRQOL in patients with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) patients.

This was revised:

Understanding health-related quality of life (HRQOL) from a patients’ perspective is critical to developing the appropriate interventions for the improvement or maintenance of HRQOL in patients with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

4. Line 27: change deep understanding to in depth understanding.

This was revised:

The aim of the present study was to provide a depth understanding of the HRQOL in those patients.

5. Conclusion lines 34/35: therefore, it is necessary to cover all those parts of treatment on these patients. Sounds odd. It should probably mention taking a more holistic approach to patient care, beyond treating the physical symptoms. Final sentence abstract: However, our findings may be useful for health care providers while creating a supportive environment to improve the quality of life in PCOS patients. Please remove the ‘However’, as that does not follow at all from the previous sentence. Similarly …‘while creating a supportive environment etc…’ this makes no sense. This is the presentation of a research study. You could make a practice recommendation, but not say that you are creating a supportive environment.

This was revised:

The results of this study suggest that PCOS is a physical - sexual, psychological and social syndrome; therefore, it is necessary to taking a more holistic approach to patient care beyond treating physical symptoms.

6. Introduction: The entire introduction needs thorough English language and syntax editing.

The manuscript was revised as suggested. We hope you find the revisions satisfactory.
7. Page 3 line 55/56: Despite increased attention to the syndrome, psychological aspects syndrome in previous literature… this is not correct. What ‘psychological aspects syndrome are the authors referring to? This does not make sense. And they need to provide refs for that ‘literature’.

Thank you. This was deleted.

8. Method: Participants section needs to state how many women were included. This section needs to be moved to the procedure section as it is WHAT you did: ‘Patients with confirmed diagnosis of PCOS attending the outpatient gynecology clinics in Yasuj and Kashan, Iran were invited to participate in the study. Before their clinic appointments, consenting patients participated in a semi structured interview a administered by a trained assistant in an environment that assured privacy.’

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. The method was revised to comply with suggestions:

Out of the women who were interviewed and invited to participate in the study, 10 refused to participate. No attempt was made to determine why those women did not contact the researcher. The final sample consisted of 20 patients with PCOS. The characteristics of the sample are detailed in Table 1. The age range of participants was 21-34 years. The most of them had diploma level of education and unemployed.

9. Data collection section: is this the same semi-structured interview as was (wrongly) noted in the participants section? If yes, just delete it from the participants section.

The method was revised to comply with suggestions:

Interviews were conducted by FB and were audio recorded. Interview length ranged from 20 min to 1:29 hours (mean: 42 minutes). Interviews were transcribed verbatim by FB to playscript standard.
10. Data analysis section: Here the authors need to specify what they used? Content analysis (ref?), Thematic analysis (ref) IPA?? Etc and use appropriate references for why this method was right for this study’s aims.

The method was revised to comply with suggestions:

There are numerous approaches for analyzing qualitative data. Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages (5). An advantage of the method is that large volumes of textual data and different textual sources can be dealt with and used in corroborating evidence. A qualitative content analysis method was used to reach the objective of the study using conventional method. In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text data (6). Therefore, we selected qualitative content analysis study for present research.

11. Findings: Authors should present their dominant themes (with subthemes) using the same appropriately numbered system as they did in the text—at the start and perhaps show this in a figure. Then they can carry on and discuss them (appropriately labelled as they did).

This was revised.

12. Line 128 ‘reluctance to society’ is not a good term…please change throughout the MS.

This was revised: Exposure and Invasion: the rejecting and invading social world

13. Lines 132-134: Due to several psychological effects of this syndrome and that sexual pleasure is more affected through the mind than the body, it can be expected that psychological consequences of this syndrome affect sexual relations. This is not the way to talk about cognitions or psychological variables. Could the authors get a psychologist to go over the paper to remove the misrepresentation of ‘Mind, body and psychological syndromes’. A) what are the psychological effects (provide the evidence for- for example,
anxiety, depression, or whatever. B) Syndrome, what psychological syndrome, provide the evidence. C) That sexual pleasure is MORE affected through ‘the mind’ than the body??? Evidence (this is not what psychologists would say. D) It can be expected that psychological consequences of this syndrome affect… Nope, evidence please. I suspect these are simply language issues, but please get it checked and edited. The data could be presented slightly less repetitively (the excessive hair comes up frequently) –BUT I am happy to be proved wrong on this as it was obviously a recurring theme.

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. The discussion was revised to comply with suggestions and this part was deleted.

14. Discussion: Line 282: The use of ‘psychopathologic symptoms’ is not useful here. This was not measured. I think the authors would do better to talk about ‘Psycho-social symptoms’ and ‘distress’, as that is what the data show. This stuff is not ‘in their mind’. These women are insulted, stigmatised and ridiculed. Those are the social issues. They will suffer from the psychological distress associated with decreased confidence and self-esteem (hence their staying home and avoiding social meetings), they probably suffer from some depression and anxiety, although this is only indicated here (not measured). In total, their experiences appear to be pretty devastating and need to be highlighted in research such as this.

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. The discussion was revised to comply with suggestions.

15. Line 291: change the term mental consequences to psychological consequences.

This was revised.

I hope you find the revisions satisfactory.
I wish you all the best.

Kind regards

Fatemeh Bazarganipour