



ABSTRACTS: VOLUME 8, SPECIAL ISSUE {8th Undergraduate Conference}

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF AN EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM AMONG PALESTINIAN WOMEN WITH POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME

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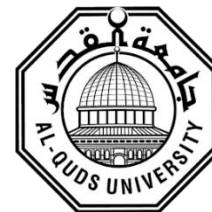
Abstract

Background: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is one of the most common endocrine disorders among women of reproductive age and is associated with reproductive, metabolic, and psychological complications. It can lead to menstrual irregularities, infertility, insulin resistance, and an increased risk of long-term conditions such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Despite its high prevalence and clinical significance, misconceptions and inadequate knowledge about PCOS remain widespread, particularly among young women. This lack of awareness may delay diagnosis, limit proper management, and negatively affect health-seeking behavior. Therefore, improving women's understanding and perceptions of PCOS is essential.

Objectives: This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of an educational lecture in improving women's knowledge and perceptions regarding PCOS.

Methods: A pre- and post-interventional study was conducted among 232 women from different residential backgrounds. A validated questionnaire measured knowledge and perceptions before and after a PCOS awareness lecture. Data were analyzed using paired t-tests; reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = 0.85–0.89.

Results: Nearly half of the participants (43.1%) reported social media as their main source of information about PCOS, reflecting the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping health awareness. More than half of the participants (53.4%) resided in cities, which may contribute to better access to health information compared to those living in towns (43.5%) or camps (3.0%). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire assessing knowledge and perceptions related to PCOS. The questionnaire demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.851 to 0.898, indicating strong internal consistency. A targeted educational lecture about PCOS, including its causes, symptoms, complications, and management strategies, was delivered to participants. The results showed a highly significant improvement in overall knowledge after the intervention (pre-test mean = 1.39, post-test mean = 1.49; $p < 0.001$). Knowledge regarding increased androgen levels in PCOS improved by 37.2%, increasing from



31.4% in the pre-test to 68.6% in the post-test. Correct knowledge about metformin use increased by 36.4% (from 31.8% to 68.2%), while awareness of surgical management improved by 40% following the lecture. Additionally, participants demonstrated better understanding of lifestyle modifications, including diet and physical activity, as essential components of PCOS management. Knowledge improvement among participants residing in cities and camps was also highly significant ($p < 0.001$), reflecting the strong effect of the intervention across different demographic groups. Participants' perceptions toward PCOS showed a statistically significant positive change after the lecture (pre-test mean = 2.37, post-test mean = 2.47; $p = 0.032$). The intervention reduced feelings of stigma and helplessness, improved understanding of disease controllability, and reinforced the role of lifestyle modification in managing symptoms and improving quality of life.

Conclusion: The educational lecture was effective in improving knowledge and perceptions of PCOS. These findings highlight the importance of structured educational interventions in raising awareness and promoting better health outcomes among women.

Keywords: PCOS, educational intervention, knowledge, perception, women's health, awareness.