Aim

PCOS affects up to 18% of reproductive aged women1 and coincides with increasing incidence of metabolic syndrome. This study aims to examine the self help practices (diet and exercise) and prevalence of use for complementary medicines (CAMs) by women with PCOS. Perceptions of effectiveness for types of diets, exercise practices and use of CAM were explored.

Methods

A 37 item electronic survey was sent to members of the consumer group POSAA and a link posted on the University Facebook group page. Data were analysed using SPSS and www.Mccallum-layton.co.uk for 95% CI.

Results

A TOTAL OF 493 WOMEN RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY (RESPONSE RATE 71%)

73% of respondents had altered dietary practices and/or practiced regular, vigorous and/or moderate exercise to improve their PCOS. The most common diet was the low GI diet.

Achievement of health goals using diet

Only 8% of respondents had achieved their health goals using exercise alone.

New information

CAM users

Yes 71%
No 29%

Conclusion

Women with PCOS engage in lifestyle behaviours with varying degrees of success. There is disparity between recommendations in the EBG for PCOS2 and dietary practices. Few women felt they achieved their health goals using exercise alone. Women with PCOS are frequent users of complementary medicines.

References

1. March WA et al, Human Reproduction 2010
2. AACPOS Evidence Based Guidelines for the management of PCOS 2011