

Assessment of Health Literacy and Awareness of Female Residents of Barangay Dagatan, Sabang, and Marauoy Lipa, Batangas on Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract : Health literacy and awareness of Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is a global issue that is under-addressed in the Philippines. Conducting a thorough review of the country's ability to recognize and comprehend the severity of the syndrome should be undertaken, as early treatment is essential to avoid further disorder complications. This research aims to assess the health literacy and awareness of the female residents of Barangay Dagatan, Sabang, and Marauoy Lipa, Batangas on PCOS. It followed a cross-sectional study, and data gathering was done through a pre-assessment using the Single Item Literacy Screener (SILS) and an online population-based survey questionnaire about PCOS awareness. The participants, as based on the objectives and purposive sampling method, were females aged 18-45 years old. Data were analyzed statistically using STATA 13.1 software. The study showed that 339 (76%) out of 444 respondents passed the SILS meaning the residents have proficient health literacy. Among the 339 respondents, 87% (287) had previous knowledge about PCOS. The respondents showed minimal awareness of PCOS symptoms which could be attributed to its broad spectrum of information. Respondents were shown to be most knowledgeable about PCOS physiology, treatment, beliefs, and its remedies. The respondents' age had no significant association with their health literacy ($p=0.31$) and PCOS awareness ($p=0.60$). A significant association was noted, however, in their educational attainment linked with their health literacy ($p<0.0001$) and PCOS awareness ($p=0.001$). It is suggested that reproductive health education even in the lower year levels must be optimized and Local Government Unit (LGU)/Non-Government Organization (NGO)-held seminars should be conducted for knowledge reinforcement. Reliable health information should be more accessible to the public and clinicians must emphasize the importance of the majority of early screening as part of routine physical examination for women of reproductive age to increase health literacy and awareness about PCOS and actively engage in the management of the disease.

Keywords : age, awareness, educational attainment, health literacy, polycystic ovarian syndrome

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