

## LIVING WITH PCOS IN UZBEK FAMILY TRADITIONS: WOMEN'S EMOTIONS AND SOCIAL PRESSURE

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**Annotation:** This article discusses the psychological state, social pressures, and the impact of family traditions on Uzbek women living with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). The analysis shows that PCOS should be viewed not only as a hormonal issue but also as a psychological and cultural problem. The article specifically examines the role of social support in overcoming the disease.

**Keywords:** PCOS, polycystic ovary syndrome, Uzbek family traditions, women's health, psychological pressure, social pressure, harassment.

### Introduction

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex endocrine disorder characterized by disruption of the ovulation process, hyperandrogenism, and the formation of multiple cysts in the ovaries. According to the World Health Organization, 5-10% of women of reproductive age suffer from this syndrome. In Uzbekistan, PCOS is not only a health-related issue but also directly affects a woman's social status, her role in the family, and her psychological well-being.

The aim of this article is to analyze the experience of Uzbek women living with PCOS in a social and cultural context, highlighting the psychological consequences arising from psychological pressure and societal attitudes.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormonal disorder affecting many women worldwide, including those in Uzbekistan. Living with PCOS presents unique challenges, especially within the context of Uzbek family traditions, where cultural expectations and social norms play a significant role in women's lives.

In Uzbek society, family and community hold great importance, and women are often expected to fulfill traditional roles, such as marriage, motherhood, and household responsibilities. For women diagnosed with PCOS, these expectations can create intense emotional and social pressure. The symptoms of PCOS—such as irregular menstruation, infertility, weight gain, and excessive hair growth—can affect a woman's self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Within families, the pressure to conceive and bear children can be particularly stressful for women with PCOS, as infertility remains a sensitive and often stigmatized topic. This social pressure may lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, misconceptions and a lack of awareness about PCOS in some communities can contribute to misunderstanding and blame directed toward affected women.

Despite these challenges, many Uzbek women with PCOS strive to balance their health needs with societal expectations. Support from family members, healthcare professionals, and social networks plays a crucial role in helping them cope with both the physical and emotional aspects of the condition.

Addressing PCOS within the framework of Uzbek family traditions requires increased awareness, education, and open conversations about women's health. By breaking down stigmas and fostering understanding, it is possible to reduce the social pressures faced by women with PCOS and improve their overall quality of life.

### **Infertility and Pressure for Children**

In Uzbek family traditions, the greatest expectation from a married woman is to have children. Especially, if a woman does not become pregnant within 6–12 months of marriage, it is considered a "problem." The disruption of ovulation due to PCOS leads to infertility in women. This situation, in turn, intensifies social reprimands, verbal pressure, and feelings of self-blame. Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a prevalent endocrine disorder affecting many women globally, including those in Uzbekistan. However, the experience of living with PCOS in Uzbekistan is deeply intertwined with cultural values, family expectations, and social norms that shape women's emotional and social realities.

In Uzbek family traditions, women are often seen as the heart of the family, with strong expectations placed on marriage, fertility, and motherhood. Bearing children is considered a vital role, and infertility or reproductive health issues such as PCOS can carry a significant social stigma. Women diagnosed with PCOS frequently face emotional challenges including anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression, stemming not only from the physical symptoms of the disorder but also from the social pressure to conform to traditional family roles.

The symptoms of PCOS—such as irregular menstrual cycles, excessive hair growth, weight gain, and fertility problems—can be misunderstood by family members or community elders, leading to judgment or blame. In many cases, women may feel compelled to hide their condition to avoid shame or social exclusion. This silence around women's reproductive health often exacerbates feelings of isolation and emotional distress. Social pressure in Uzbek families may also come from expectations to prioritize family duties over personal health. Women with PCOS might struggle to seek medical treatment or psychological support due to fear of being perceived as weak or not fulfilling their expected roles. Furthermore, the conservative cultural environment can limit open discussions about women's health, making it harder for affected women to access accurate information and compassionate care. Despite these obstacles, there is growing awareness and advocacy around women's reproductive health in Uzbekistan. Increasing education about PCOS, improving access to healthcare, and encouraging supportive family environments can help women manage their condition more effectively. Emotional support from family, friends, and healthcare providers is essential in reducing the burden of social pressure and improving psychological well-being.

Ultimately, addressing the challenges faced by women with PCOS within Uzbek family traditions requires a delicate balance between respecting cultural values and promoting women's health rights. Empowering women through education and community dialogue is key

to transforming social attitudes and enabling women to live healthier, more fulfilling lives despite the challenges of PCOS.

### **Impact on Mental Health**

One of the symptoms of PCOS is changes in physical appearance: excessive hair growth on the face and body (hirsutism), weight gain, and acne. Due to the strict societal standards of "beauty" in Uzbek society, these symptoms lead to the development of negative self-perceptions among women. Reasons for Delayed Diagnosis

In Uzbek society, it is still not fully accepted for women to openly seek medical advice regarding their health. Many women feel embarrassed to visit a gynecologist or are hesitant to see a male doctor.

### **Pressure from Family and Society**

Women living with PCOS often face family pressure. They may be blamed by their mother-in-law, father-in-law, spouse, or other relatives for not becoming pregnant.

### **Solutions**

Timely diagnosis of PCOS, treatment based on a comprehensive approach, and a strong system of psychological support significantly improve the quality of life for women.

### **Conclusion**

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is not only a biological challenge for Uzbek women but also a complex psychological and social test. Society and family members must support women not with blame or feelings of shame, but with understanding, listening, and encouragement. Only then can a woman feel like an equal and valued member of society and take bold steps toward overcoming the disease.

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