

May 03 2016 : The Times of India (Mumbai)

'60% women with infertility issues have polycystic ovaries'

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Mumbai

New Clinic Opens In Parel To Tackle Hormonal Disease

The incidence of a hormonal disorder called polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) among women has increased to such an extent that the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has inaugurated a special clinic at its Parel centre.

The National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health (NIRRH), situated right next to KEM Hospital in Parel, will also undertake genetic research into the causes of PCOS.

"The main idea is to evolve a model PCOS clinic that can be replicated in public hospital across the country," said NIRRH director Dr Smita Mahale. NIRRH has been involved in several pathbreaking research projects, including the birth of the city's first test tube baby over 30 years ago.

The idea of a clinic came from the findings of an infertility clinic run by the NIRRH. "We found that over 60% of the women who come to our infertility clinic suffer from PCOS," said gynaecologist Dr Anushree Patil, who is also a part of the PCOS clinic. The incidence in the general public is 20%. "An estimated 1 in 10 women of childbearing age suffer from PCOS. It's an emerging health problem of national concern," said NIRRH scientist Dr Beena Joshi, who is planning a multicentric study to find the prevalence of PCOS soon. She had, a few years ago, found that 22.5% of the teenaged girls who attended NIRRH's youth clinic had PCOS.

NIRRH's studies also found that a majority of the women with PCOS are overweight and are more likely to suffer from infertility, type-2 diabetes, hypertension, atherosclerosis endometrial cancer and pregnancyrelated complications. "There is clearly a need to educate women about following an active lifestyle and eating a better diet to keep these complications at bay ," said Dr Mahale.

As PCOS needs holistic care, the NIRRH clinic, which was inaugurated by ICMR director general Dr Soumya Swaminathan, will have experts helping women with weight reduction, diet, cosmetic and psychological issues, among others.

Dr Sanjay Chauhan, who heads NIRRH's department of clinical and operational research, said, "This PCOS clinic is first of its kind in India in a government health research institute. It will have doctors like an infertility specialist, dermatologist, psychiatrist, nutritionist and yoga expert from reputed institutes in Mumbai to provide holistic management to women with PCOS."