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EFFECTS OF PCOS ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF WOMEN AGES 18-45: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Introduction

- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormonal disorder with an unknown aetiology that manifests in women of reproductive age.
- Excessive insulin levels, genetic predisposition, inflammation, and excessive androgen levels are involved in its development.
- PCOS can affect the quality of life (QoL) of women through characteristics like amenorrhea, excess androgens, polycystic ovaries, infertility, hirsutism, acne, and drastic weight gain.
- Associated complications like endometrial cancer, abnormal uterine bleeding, miscarriages, gestational diabetes, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, eating disorders, and depression may also arise, which can further lower QoL.

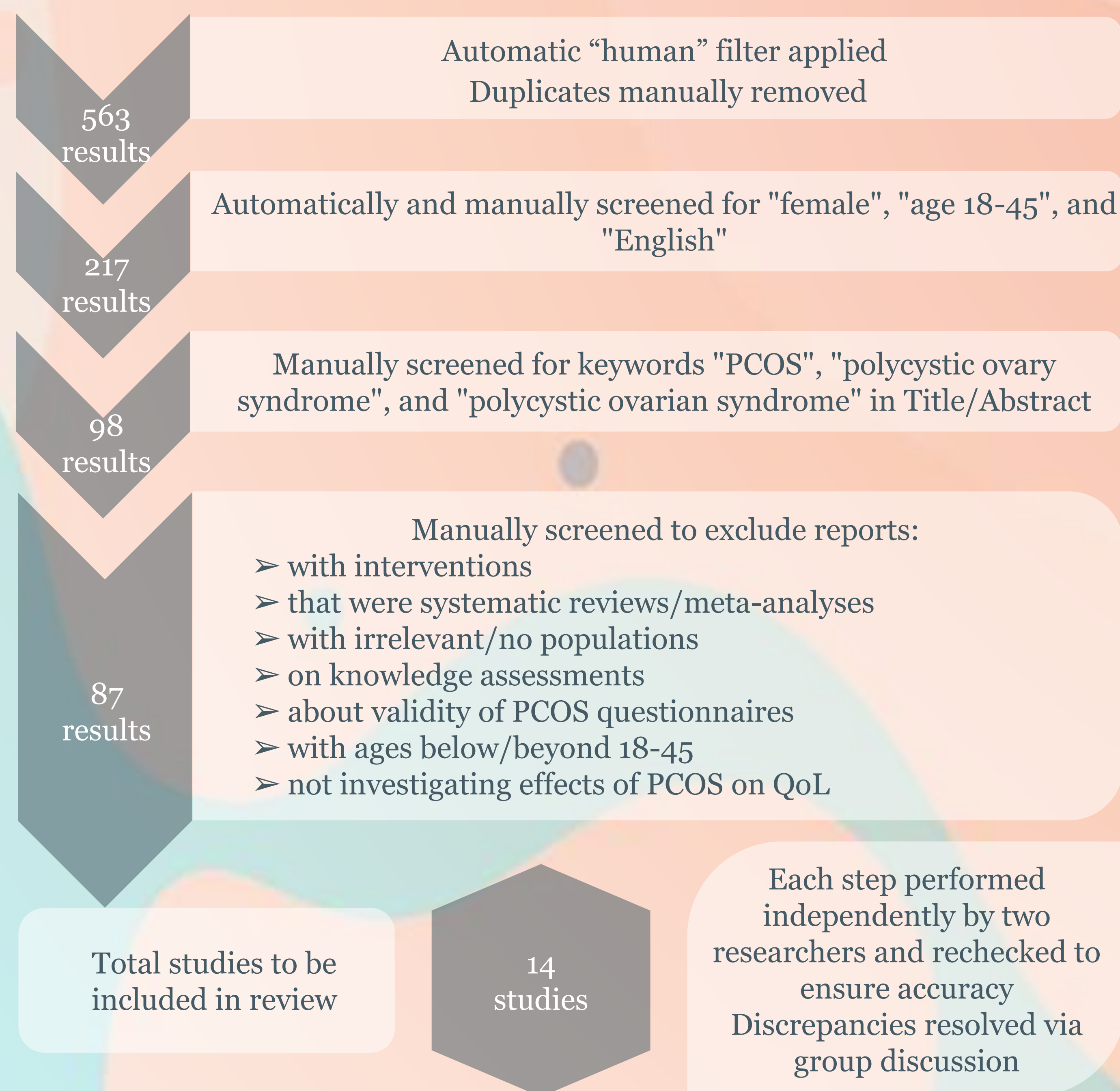
Objective

To systematically review the physical, mental and social effects of PCOS on the quality of life of women ages 18-45.

Methodology

Guidelines followed from the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA).

Database search using keywords "PCOS" and "quality of life".



14 studies

Data extraction tables designed and data extracted on the reports, methods, and participants

Risk of bias assessed and used to condition the reliability of the evidence

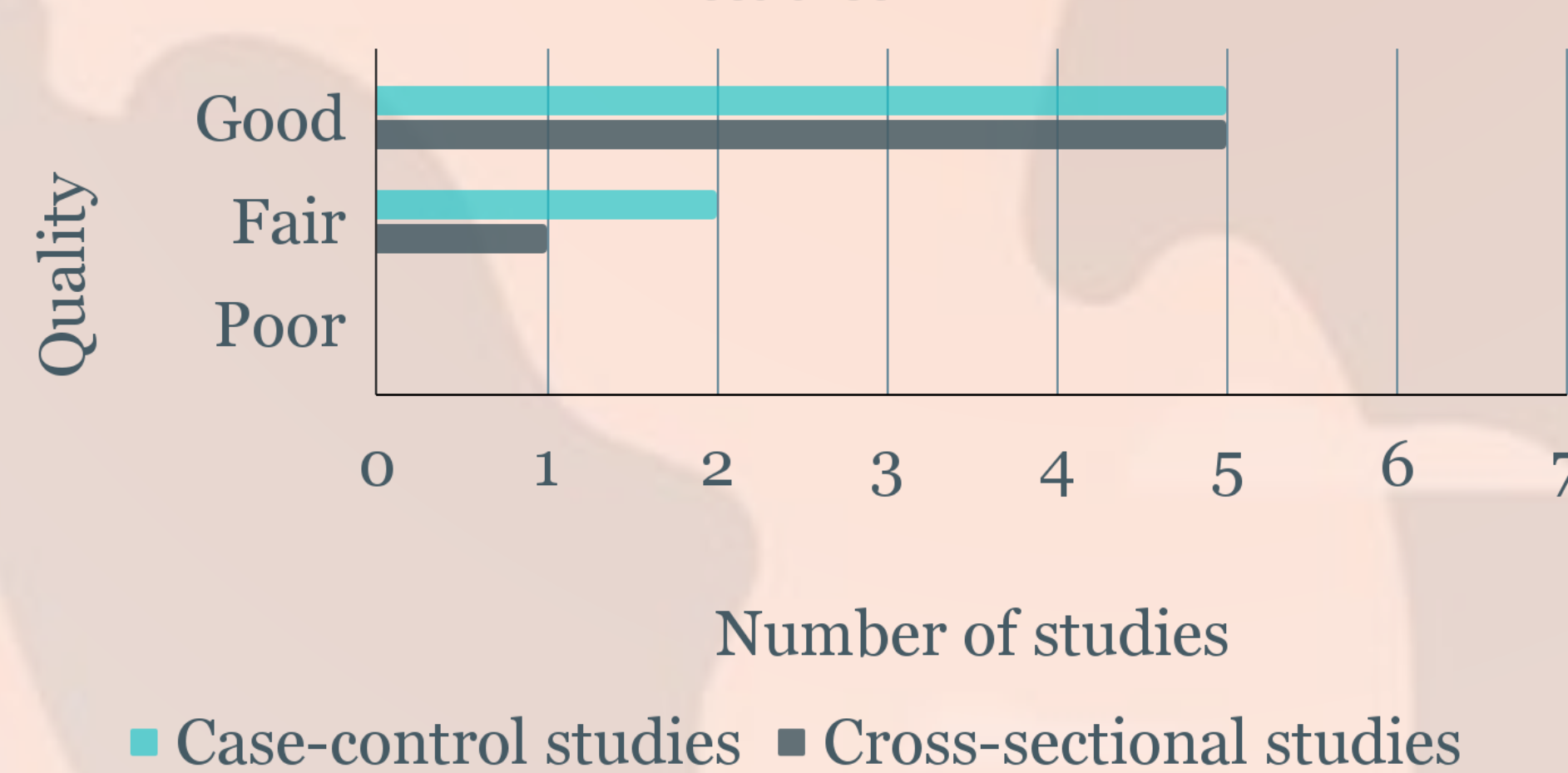
Preliminary synthesis conducted to summarize raw results and outcomes assessed

Main effects and subcategories tabulated from individual studies

Narratives and graphs used to summarize main findings within and among the studies

Results

Graph 1: Graph showing the overall risk of bias of the studies



The single qualitative study was assessed to "Include" in the review

Table 1: Table showing the major effects of PCOS investigated in the studies

14 studies	Physical effects (13 studies)	Mental effects (13 studies)	Social effects (8 studies)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ obesity/high BMI ➤ hirsutism ➤ acne ➤ irregular menstrual cycles ➤ infertility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ depression ➤ stress/distress ➤ anxiety ➤ lowered self-esteem/body uneasiness/poor body image ➤ lowered emotional well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ lowered social well-being ➤ impaired relationships ➤ education/occupation interference

Discussion

Analysis of the 14 studies revealed that despite geographic heterogeneity, multiple aspects of QoL are negatively affected in PCOS patients. In addition to the clinical manifestations of PCOS, factors like environment, socio-economic standing, self-efficacy, and time from diagnosis can also influence QoL.

Physical effects:

- Weight gain/fluctuating weight (most bothersome effects).
- Excess androgens → highly prevalent hirsutism, acne, infertility, and irregular menstruation (oligomenorrhea/ amenorrhea) → negatively affected QoL.
- Discomfort and pain often reported. Impaired olfactory function negatively affected QoL (needs further research).

Mental effects:

- Greater psychological distress (influenced by infertility), more severe depressive symptoms, and higher anxiety and stress levels (more likely in overweight/obese patients due to weight gain).
- Hirsutism reduced feeling of femininity/attractiveness → affected self-esteem.
- Impacted emotional well-being and less overall satisfaction with life. Frequent mood swings, frustration, irritability, eating disorders → further reduce QoL.

Social effects:

- Body not viewed as fitting social/media standards → lowered self-esteem → discomfort, introversion, and social withdrawal.
- Infertility (major concern) due to society's pressure for children.
- Affected leisure and impaired relationships (mostly through perceived unattractiveness) → may reject bonds → lower social well-being and QoL.
- Frequently reported social/lifestyle restrictions and limitations → influenced social dysfunction and affected sexual activity.

Conclusion

- Obesity, infertility, menstrual problems, hyperandrogenism, dysregulated emotions, increased psychiatric disorders, and impaired relationships, were the most prevalent effects of PCOS that lowered the QoL of women ages 18-45.
- Lack of regional and locally-based studies justifies the need for further research to increase knowledge and identify possible local/cultural impacts.

References

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