

## CORRELATION OF VITAMIN D WITH AMH IN PCOS FEMALES

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### Abstract

**Background:** To find the correlation between Vitamin D (25 OH) and AMH levels in patients of PCOS. Study design Cross-sectional observational study. **Materials and Methods:** Hundred PCOS patients satisfying inclusion criteria were enrolled for the study. Vitamin-D and AMH levels were assessed in all the patients using ELISA kit and Its correlation with various, anthropometrical, biochemical parameters and AMH levels was evaluated. Pearson product moment co-relation analysis was used to see correlation among different variables. **Result:** The results of 100 PCOS patients were analyzed. Anthropometric. Parameters including BMI and waist to hip ratio were inversely correlated with Vit-D levels ( $r = 0.297$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ,  $r = -0.282$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ) and the result was statistically significant. AMH correlated negatively with Vitamin D levels in PCOS ( $r = -0.169$ ;  $P > 0.05$ ) and after Vitamin-D supplementation AMH levels reduced from  $7.57 \pm 3.31$  to  $5.78 \pm 2.35$  ( $P < 0.001$ ) which was highly significant. **Conclusion:** Present study showed inverse correlation of Vitamin D with AMH levels in PCOS population. Its supplementation in vitamin D deficient individuals can lower AMH levels in PCOS and thereby may improve ovarian function and address infertility issues.

## INTRODUCTION

PCOS is a heterogeneous disease characterized by confluence of symptoms including menstrual irregularity, an ovulatory infertility, hirsutism as well as other metabolic manifestations including hyperandrogenaemia, dyslipidemia, and insulin resistance.<sup>[1]</sup> It is multifactorial disease which encompasses modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors. Its pathophysiology is complex and is an area where contributions can propose greater benefits. Recently role of Vit D in its pathophysiology was analyzed. Studies found that women with PCOS may also be at elevated risk of vitamin D deficiency.<sup>[2]</sup> Prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in general population is 20-48% but is relatively higher in women with PCOS (approximately 67-85%).<sup>[3]</sup>

Insulin resistance in PCOS is caused by defect in post receptor insulin signaling pathway as a result there is compensatory hyperinsulinemia which directly or indirectly results in hyperandrogenism and aggravates PCOS.<sup>[4]</sup> This insulin resistance is selective; the hyperinsulinemia affects the ovary

because it remains insulin sensitive, despite insulin resistance in skeletal muscle and liver.

The pathogenesis of PCOS remains largely unexplained. According to the literature, abnormal anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH) levels and significant vitamin D deficiency are responsible for a number of different abnormalities observed in PCOS patients.<sup>5</sup> Vitamin D may stimulate insulin synthesis and increases insulin receptor expression or suppression of pro-inflammatory cytokines that possibly contribute to the development of insulin resistance.<sup>[5]</sup> The effect of vitamin D on metabolic and reproductive dysfunction in PCOS may be mediated by insulin resistance. A significant correlation between vitamin D and the LH/FSH ratio has suggested that vitamin D status might contribute to hormone deregulation in PCOS.<sup>[6]</sup> AMH is one of the most reliable markers of ovarian reserve.<sup>[7]</sup> Circulating levels of AMH in Women with PCOS are 2-3 times higher than healthy controls; it also correlates with severity of the syndrome.<sup>[8]</sup> It lowers the follicle sensitivity to circulating FSH thus preventing follicle selection resulting in follicle arrest at the small antral phase. It also inhibits granulosa cell aromatase which increases

intrafollicular androgen levels that affects follicular maturation and ovulation process thereby predisposes an individual to develop PCOS.<sup>[9]</sup> It has been suggested that vitamin D can modulate AMH expression as there is a functional vitamin D response element in the promoter region of the human AMH gene.<sup>[10]</sup> It has been hypothesized that vitamin D may directly affect AMH production; thereby patients with higher concentrations of vitamin D can maintain their ovarian reserve for longer time.<sup>[11]</sup> To date, there have been numerous observational studies and a few interventional studies aimed at viewing the relationship between serum AMH and vitamin D levels, yielding largely conflicting results, therefore the purpose of this clinical study was to further find the correlation between the two parameters in PCOS as improved reproductive outcomes may be the postulated benefit. There by reducing the burden of infertility. Vitamin D may act as an inexpensive and effective alternative/adjunct to the management of symptomatology in PCOS.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study Population

This was an observational study conducted on 100 patients of PCOS in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College and Hospital (JNMCH), A.M.U., Aligarh from November 2018 to December 2020. Study inclusion criteria consisted of women aged between 18-35 years diagnosed with PCOS according to the Rotterdam criteria (Rotterdam ESHRE/ASRM-sponsored PCOS Consensus Workshop Group, 2004). Exclusion criteria included women who were consuming supplemental vitamin D > 500 IU/ day, pregnant women, and women having endocrine diseases including DM, thyroid disorder, elevated prolactin levels and women with a potential iatrogenic (e.g. ovarian surgery, gonadotoxic therapy).

### Sample Size

For a study with  $\alpha$  error 5% and power of study 80%, sample size was calculated using formula,  $N = (Z_{1-\alpha/2})^2 p(1-p) / L^2$  Where:  
 $Z_{1-\alpha/2} = 1.96$  (for  $\alpha$  error 5% and  $\beta$  20%)  
 $P =$  expected prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in females with PCOS = 67% = 0.67  
 $L =$  allowable absolute error = 10% =  $(1.96)^2 \times 0.67 \times 0.33 / (0.1)^2 = 85$  (approx. 100) Adding 10% non-response rate, final sample size =  $85 + 10 = 95$

### Procedure

Standard anthropometric data [height, weight (using Omron HBF- 375 Body Composition Monitor), waist (Waist circumference was measured in standing posture at the midpoint between the lower border of the rib cage and the iliac crest) and hip circumference (at the maximum circumference of

the buttocks)] were obtained from each subject. The body mass index (BMI) was calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in metres (kg/m<sup>2</sup>). Waist to hip ratio (waist /hip circumference) was also evaluated which is an index of abdominal fat. Hirsutism was clinically evaluated using the modified Ferriman Galway scoring system. The scoring included evaluating nine body areas including the upper lip, chin, chest, upper back, lower back, upper arm, upper and lower abdomen, thighs.

### Vitamin D levels

Serum was separated by centrifuging the blood at 3000 rpm for 20 minutes at 4°C and stored at -20°C until assayed. Estimation of 25-OH vitamin D levels was performed by using ELISA kit

### Serum AMH

Anti-mullerian hormone assay was used to determine AMH levels using ultra-sensitive AMH/MIS ELISA AL-105-i A kit

### Plasma LH, FSH, PRL

The hormonal parameters LH, FSH and Prolactin levels were assessed from the sample collected from subjects on day 2 or 3 of cycle. The samples were collected and analyzed in endocrinology lab. The kit used for analysis is based on immune radiometric assay. In the kit, mouse monoclonal antibodies present are directed against two different epitopes.

### Methodology

In the study population vitamin D levels were assessed and the study population was divided in to Vitamin D deficient and non-deficient groups. Baseline serum AMH levels were obtained in both the groups. Vitamin D deficient group received vitamin D tablets 60,000 IU once weekly for 12 weeks. Repeat S.AMH and vitamin D levels were tested in vitamin D deficient group to assess any change in vitamin D and AMH levels. Correlation between Vitamin D and AMH levels was evaluated. Further correlation of Vitamin D with BMI was also assessed

### Statistical Analysis

Paired sample t-test was used to assess changes in quantitative variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to see correlation among different variables. All the statistical tests were performed using computer program SPSS version 25.

## RESULTS

### Characteristics of Study Population

Mean age of study participants was  $23.86 \pm 4.4$  years. More than half of the study subjects were graduate (60%) and only 2% were illiterate. More than half of the patients were unmarried (53%).

Around one-third of the patients were working (35%) while more than one-third were students (38%).

In our study, 52% patients were having normal BMI, 32% patients were overweight and 16% patients were obese. Mean BMI of study subjects was  $24.5 \pm 4.51$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Mean waist circumference of

study subjects was  $86.1 \pm 9.35$  cm and 51% subjects were centrally obese.

#### Vitamin D and AMH levels

Vitamin D deficiency was found in 74% of PCOS subjects and AMH levels were compared in Vitamin D deficient and non-deficient groups as shown in [Table 3]

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of study subjects (N=100)**

S. No.	Variables		No. of subjects (n)	%
1	Age	15-20 Years	23	23
		21-25 Years	40	40
		26-30 Years	29	29
		31-35 Years	8	8
2	Educational Status	Uneducated	2	2
		Primary	0	0
		Secondary	13	13
		Intermediate	25	25
		Graduate or more	60	60
3	Marital Status	Unmarried	53	53
		Married	47	47
4	Working Status	Working	35	35
		House Work	27	27
		Student	38	38

**Table 2: Anthropometric and biochemical parameters of study subjects**

	Variables	Mean $\pm$ SD
1	Age (years)	$23.86 \pm 4.38$
2	BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	$24.58 \pm 4.51$
3	WC (cm)	$86.10 \pm 9.35$
4	WHR	$0.85 \pm 0.06$
5	S. TSH (mIU/L)	$2.65 \pm 0.88$
6	LH (IU/L)	$11.16 \pm 6.16$
7	FSH (IU/L)	$5.04 \pm 2.22$
8	PRL (ng/ml)	$13.23 \pm 7.22$
9	Vitamin D (ng/ml)	$17.27 \pm 5.46$
10	AMH (ng/ml)	$7.47 \pm 3.21$

**Table 3: Mean AMH levels in vitamin D deficient and non-deficient PCOS subjects**

Vitamin D Status	AMH level (mean $\pm$ S.D.)	Test of significance (Independent sample test)
Vit D Deficient (n=74)	$7.57 \pm 3.14$	t (df 98) = 0.582, p value = 0.533, not significant
Vit D non-deficient (n=26)	$7.13 \pm 3.40$	

It was found that mean AMH levels in vitamin D deficient PCOS patients was  $7.57 \pm 3.14$  ng/ml while in vitamin D non-deficient subjects was found to be  $7.13 \pm 3.40$  ng/ml. The difference in baseline mean AMH levels was not found to be statistically significant ( $t = 0.582$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) after application of independent sample t-test.

**Table 4: Correlation between Vitamin D and AMH levels before supplementation (N=100)**

	Vitamin D	AMH (initial) (n=100)
Correlation coefficient		-0.101
p value		>0.05

The correlation of Vitamin D with AMH levels was analyzed by using Pearson product moment correlation analysis. It was observed that Vitamin D and AMH levels were inversely correlated ( $r = -0.101$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) but the result was not statistically significant as shown in [Table 4 and Figure 1].

**Table 5: Vitamin D levels before and after supplementation**

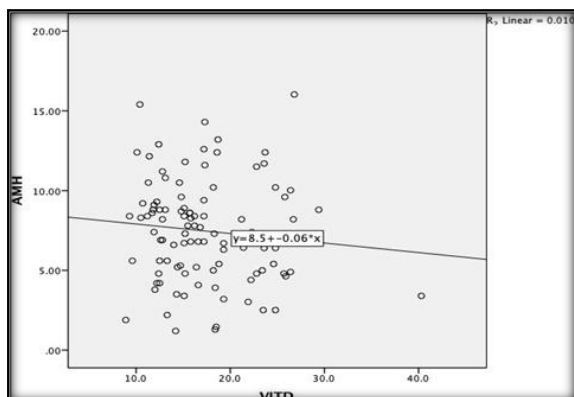
S. No.		Vitamin D	t- Value	P- Value
1	Initial	$14.68 \pm 2.84$	-20.776	$P < 0.001$
2	After Supplementation	$36.98 \pm 8.84$		

**Table 6: Effect of vitamin D supplementation on AMH levels in vitamin D deficient PCOS subjects**

Vitamin D Status	Mean $\pm$ SD of AMH		t- Value	P- Value
	Initial	After Supplementation		
Deficiency (n= 74)	$7.57 \pm 3.14$	$5.60 \pm 2.15$	4.477	<0.001

**Table 7: Mean ± SD of Vitamin D and AMH levels in centrally obese PCOS patients**

Vit D	Central obesity by WC	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	No	63	18.42	5.45
Yes	37	15.33	4.95	
AMH	No	63	7.54	3.01
	Yes	37	7.35	3.55

**Figure 1: Correlation between vitamin D and AMH**

Vitamin D and AMH levels after supplementation  
Vitamin D deficient PCOS subjects were supplemented with 60000IU of Vitamin D for three months following which vitamin D levels and AMH levels were re-validated. We found significant difference in mean Vitamin D levels after supplementation (p value < 0.001) as shown in [Table 5]

Further AMH levels were compared in vitamin D deficient groups before and after Vitamin D supplementation and statistically significant reduction in mean AMH levels was found after supplementation of vitamin D on application of Paired t-test (t=4.477, p<0.001) as shown in [Table 6].

#### **Vitamin D and AMH levels in centrally obese PCOS**

Vitamin D and AMH levels were also compared in PCOS group with central obesity (WC>85cm) and without central obesity and it was found that Vitamin D levels were significantly lower in centrally obese group (MSD1 18.42±5.45, MSD2 15.33±4.95) on application of chi2 test, however AMH levels were not affected by waist circumference as shown in table.<sup>[7]</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

Vitamin D is believed to play a crucial role in maintenance of biological equilibrium, and its contribution in pathophysiology of complex PCOS disorder is well established. Its deficiency alters the metabolic pathways in PCOS and its prevalence is found to be more in PCOS population.<sup>[12]</sup>

In our study the frequency of Vitamin D deficiency was found to be 74% which is in alliance with other studies.<sup>[13-16]</sup> That reported increased prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in PCOS, however as it was not a case control study true prevalence could not be

estimated. It was postulated that Vitamin D receptor gene polymorphism predisposes an individual to develop PCOS and specifically CDX2 gene mutation increases the susceptibility to insulin resistance and therefore prevalence of Vitamin D deficiency is found to be more in PCOS population.<sup>[17]</sup>

Correlation of vitamin D with AMH levels in PCOS  
The relationship of vitamin D with AMH is complex. Data in the current study presents an inverse correlation between vitamin D and AMH levels in patients of PCOS (r= -0.101, p>0.005), it was seen that as the Vitamin D levels increased, AMH levels declined however the correlation was not statistically significant. The mean AMH levels in VDD group were higher than non VDD group but the difference was statistically insignificant.

Studies have demonstrated that AMH gene is up regulated by vitamin D via functional vitamin D response elements that bind to vitamin D receptor (VDR) present within the AMH promoter site and therefore the deficiency may affect AMH gene expression and modulates its level not necessarily in one direction.<sup>[18]</sup>

Jukic and coworkers found evidence that low vitamin D levels were associated with low AMH levels and other biomarkers of ovarian reserve however study population was not on PCOS females.<sup>[19]</sup> Similarly, Merhi and coworkers observed a positive correlation between serum concentrations of vitamin D and AMH in late reproductive age group.<sup>[20]</sup> The association between vitamin D and AMH levels was also confirmed by Dennis and coworkers, who demonstrated a significant positive seasonal correlation of vitamin D and AMH levels.<sup>[21]</sup> According to the study, higher vitamin D levels observed in the summer season were associated with higher AMH concentrations. Results of Drakopoulos and coworkers showed no correlations between serum vitamin D levels and ovarian reserve in infertile women.<sup>[22]</sup> Monica and coworkers showed no correlation between Vitamin D levels and AMH levels and also demonstrated that AMH levels were affected by expression of VDR gene, Fok1 and Apa1 SNPs within the AMH promoter site which leads to the enhancement of AMH synthesis in PCOS women.<sup>[23]</sup> The findings of Kim and coworkers were likewise.<sup>[24]</sup>

Further AMH levels were evaluated following supplementation with vitamin D supplements for three months and we found that there was significant reduction in AMH levels (t=4.477, p<0.001).

Raised AMH levels in PCOS cause decreased sensitivity of follicles to gonadotropins and as result growth is halted at pre antral stages, also it causes high LH levels and impaired follicular maturation which affects reproductive potential,<sup>[25]</sup> and therefore reducing AMH levels through supplementation improves reproductive outcome. Similar results were reported by Irani and coworkers who demonstrated improved folliculogenesis after vitamin D supplementation.<sup>[26]</sup> Dastorani et al conducted their study on 40 infertile women in which 20 were having PCOS. They also showed that vitamin D supplementations significantly reduced serum AMH levels in PCOS women.<sup>[27]</sup> Naderi and coworkers suggested that vitamin D supplementation leads to increased serum AMH levels.<sup>[28]</sup> A systemic review proposed decrease in AMH levels following supplementation.<sup>[29]</sup> In contrast to our study, Cappy et al. were unable to demonstrate any significant correlation between vitamin D supplementation and AMH levels in women with PCOS diagnosed with vitamin D deficiency.<sup>[30]</sup> Similarly, Pearce and coworkers conducted their study on 340 PCOS women, and did not find any changes in AMH levels following changes in vitamin D levels.<sup>[31]</sup> Thus a complex relationship exists between Vitamin D and AMH, and the variations in AMH levels are directed with a purpose to improve reproductive outcome.

#### **Correlation of Vitamin D with Obesity**

Vitamin deficiency was more pronounced in PCOS subjects who were centrally obese with waist circumference greater than 85cm (MSD1 18.42±5.45VDD grp, MSD2 15.33±4.95 non VDD grp) and the difference in waist circumference was statistically significant. Obesity can lower 25(OH) in circulation by trapping vitamin D on adipose tissue. Similar results were also observed in studies conducted by Recep Yildizhan et al,<sup>[32]</sup> Hahn et al,<sup>[33]</sup> Li Wang et al,<sup>[34]</sup> E Wehr et al,<sup>[35]</sup> Khosravi et al,<sup>[36]</sup> and Jin Ju Kim et al.<sup>[37]</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

At present, there is a considerable debate in the field regarding whether Vitamin has the capacity to influence ovarian folliculogenesis, as indicated by the AMH level, and what direction that influence may take. Numerous observational studies and a few interventional studies aimed at viewing the relationship between serum AMH and vitamin D levels, yielding largely conflicting results. In most of the studies Vitamin D had positive correlation with AMH levels particularly in non PCOS population while in PCOS the result was opposite suggesting the role of vitamin D as an optimizer of AMH levels for improved reproductive outcomes. This study specifically targets the correlation in PCOS and concludes that AMH has inverse correlation with vitamin D levels and it declines with correction of Vitamin D deficiency thereby

better reproductive profile is anticipated. Therefore vitamin D screening and treatment is suggested in PCOS for improvement in all the aspects of PCOS profile.

#### **Strength of the Study**

The study was pre designed and well planned. Patients were thoroughly evaluated and followed

#### **Limitation of the Study**

Sample size was small and it was not a case control study

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