

AE-PCOS

ANDROGEN EXCESS & PCOS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Strengthening care for women with Androgen Excess Disorders



Photo of New Zealand from AE PCOS conference announcement

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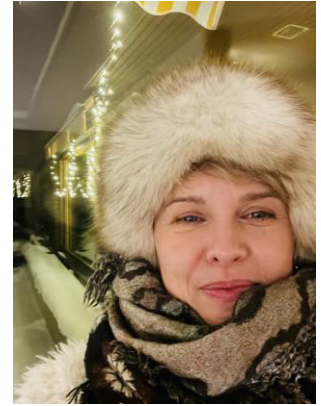
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

We are entering a new era in many ways. First, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Professor Joop Laven for his dedicated efforts as President. Fortunately, he will continue to serve on the board as one of our "backbones." I am also delighted to welcome Professor Rebecca Campbell as our President-Elect. Welcome aboard!

It is a privilege to take the helm of such a thriving society. Over the years, we have grown and prospered into a well-organized, truly international community. Several initiatives have been launched to enhance our functions, including improved web pages, an active social media presence, newsletters, early career programs, mentoring opportunities, patient engagement, and strengthened executive support roles. With a talented, experienced, and enthusiastic board and support team, I look forward to continuing this development during my term.

In terms of advances in our field, we have witnessed significant progress. The acceleration of high-quality data generation, processes from bench to bedside, and a more unified approach to patient care have all improved our shared goal to enhance health in affected persons. Despite the scarce funding landscape, I believe that with strategic planning, collaborative efforts, and our collective enthusiasm, we can push the boundaries of science and improve patient care for those affected by hyperandrogenism. There is still more to accomplish. As we look to 2025, we aim to keep you engaged through our activities, offer valuable networking opportunities, and create memorable experiences with old and new friends.



I hope to see many of you at our upcoming *Update Meeting* in Copenhagen, Denmark, organized by Professor Paolo Giacobini, Professor Madhur Patil, and Dr. Tania Burgert. This event, held in conjunction with ECE and ESPE, will focus on the theme, "*Brain-Body Crosstalk in PCOS.*" Additionally, our *Annual Meeting* will take place in San Antonio, Texas, under the guidance of Dr. Maria Forslund and Professor Aled Rees, and will be held in collaboration with ASRM. Several early career activities are also planned for the coming year—don't miss the chance to join this active and dynamic team!

We would also love to see more members actively engage with the society to further improve and develop our activities. If you are interested in contributing or have ideas for new initiatives, please let us know—we would be delighted to welcome your input and collaboration. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

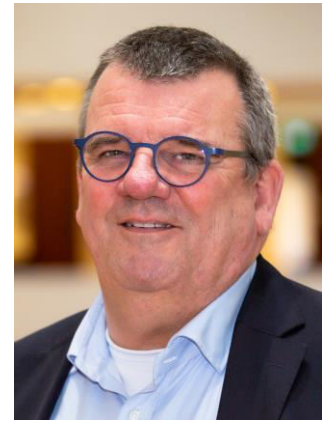
See you in 2025!

Terhi

Terhi Piltonen

President, AE-PCOS Society

FAREWELL FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Members of the AE-PCOS society,

As I stepped down per November 2024 as your president, I would like to thank you all for your continuous support. It was a great pleasure meeting a lot of you and interacting with you both in a scientific way as well as social way. I made a lot of new friends in the last two years. I also enjoyed your company and met a lot of you during the annual meetings in Rotterdam and Queenstown which both were well attended.

We initiated a few new things like the regular meetings with early career special interest groups. More recently we started a kind of TED talks addressing different issues that are important to patients. We also changed the content of the meetings in which nowadays much larger platform has been created for the young scientist and their contributions to either the update or annual meetings.

I also would like to thank the board of the AE-PCOS society for electing me as their chairman and president I hope I have met all the expectations you had in mind for me. We were able to increase the memberships as well as the sponsoring without which it would be impossible to continue the important work the society is delivering. Special thanks to our CEO Anuja Dokras who was a great help for me in the past two years.

Our new CSO Lisa Stener Victorin for her relentless efforts to ensure that the scientific output is at the highest level. And last but not least, Terhi Piltonen my successor and your new president for all her support and her friendship in the past two years. So thank you all for your support, friendship and trust in me it was really a great privilege to serve you as a president. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very happy and healthy 2025!

Cheers,
Joop Laven MD PHD REI

AE-PCOS

ANNUAL MEETING

The AE-PCOS Annual Meeting took place from November 7-9 in Queenstown, New Zealand.

By Sujata Kar

Photo credit to Sandro Graca

This year's annual meeting started on a beautiful sunny afternoon, in a lovely boutique Millennium Hotel with the backdrop of the "Remarkables" snowcapped mountain range of Queenstown!

Prof Joop Laven, the President of AE-PCOS welcomed all to the meeting. Dr Anju Joham, the Scientific Chair of this meeting, gave a detailed overview about the planning, execution, the scientific content, social engagements, the venue and much more of this annual meeting.

The scientific proceedings started with one of the most important, yet often overlooked aspects of PCOS women, which is "**mental health issues**". We had two great speakers in this session. **Dr Katie Douglas** spoke on "Mood, anxiety & cognition ". She spoke about their research from New Zealand on the prevalence of PCOS across a range of mental health disorders, and associations between mood symptoms, cognitive function, and androgen levels in a sample of women undergoing naturalistic anti-androgen treatment for PCOS. She spoke about how derangements in the neurobiology of PCOS likely may impair cognition and worsen the symptoms of preexisting mental health disorders.

Dr Melanie Gibson, also from New Zealand, shared 15 years of her research with us on another closely linked topic "quality of life measurements in PCOS". She spoke about development of HERAQoL-P and discussed the recommendations in the 2023 international evidence-based guideline for PCOS related to quality of life and mental health screening. Three more research papers were presented based on related topics of eating disorders, sexual health and adolescents by **Emilia Pesonen, Hester Pastoor and A/Prof. Carolyn Ee**.

The evening ended with a lovely welcome reception, meeting old friends making new ones, networking with so many top researchers in the field of PCOS! Not to forget the good local "wine and Hors d'œuvre"!



Day 2 started with the session on **“obesity & adipose tissue disfunction”**.

Despite the clouds and the drizzle, we were full house for the **Winner of the 2024 Ricardo Azziz Distinguished Researcher Award, Professor Elisabet Stener-Victorin** from Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. She spoke about her research on molecular mechanisms at single cell level in target organs of women with PCOS.

A/Prof Anna Benrick spoke on “skeletal muscle dysregulation in PCOS” highlighting the role of skeletal muscles in maintaining metabolic health and the various molecular mechanisms by which that might be altered in PCOS women. The session generated extensive discussion Q & A from the audience.

Coffee was followed by two more award winning lectures. The **Azziz-Baumgartner early career investigator award** lectures were taken by **Anna Luyckc** and **Dr Singdha Alur-Gupta** on two very different topics: PCOS endometrium derived epithelial organoids and atherosclerotic cardiovascular risks in US PCOS women.

Session 4 of the meeting was on **“weight management”**. **A/Prof Lisa Moran** of Monash university spoke on **Lifestyle management in polycystic ovary syndrome – beyond diet and physical activity** speaking on the increasing evidence supporting psychological, sleep and complementary medicine approaches. **Prof Greg Andersen** from New Zealand spoke the **neurobiology of Kisspeptin and AgRP neurons** and possible role in treating PCOS symptoms. Some more very interesting and highly interactive oral presentations wrapped up this second day of the AE-PCOS annual meeting.

Certainly the highlight of this conference was the **“Walter Peak conference dinner”**. The weather turned around to a beautiful clear sky, and the short cruise on a “Steam cruise ship” (only one of the few remaining across the globe) was a fantastic experience. It was temperature controlled with wine and snack counters. Everyone went down to have a look at the coal steam engine and the sailors at work! The BBQ buffet dinner was amazing with options for everyone.



Photo: View of Queenstown from the conference dinner venue.

On the last day of the conference, **Winner of the 2024 Walter Futterweit Award in Clinical Research, Prof Anuja Dokras** gave her award-winning oration. She spoke about her extensive research experience in translational medicine and clinical trials with a focus on understanding cardiometabolic risk and mental health co-morbidities associated with PCOS.

Session 5 had **Prof Ronald Ma** from China speak about “Diabetes & PCOS” and **Prof Raymond Rodgers** from Australia on TGFβ signalling and its links with the genetic and fetal origins of a predisposition to polycystic ovary syndrome.

Another highlight of the day was a lively **debate** between the two presidents of the AE-PCOS society, **Dr Terhi Piltonen** and **Prof Joop Laven**. Which ended in both of them almost agreeing with each other!



Thanks to all the speakers and delegates for two and a half days of excellent academics and networking. Looking forward to San Antonio, Texas in 2025.



Thank you to our meeting sponsors:



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SILVER SPONSORS



This Year's Award Winners

Dr Elisabet Stener – Victorin PhD

I'm honored and humbled to receive the **Ricardo Azziz Distinguish Researcher Award** and to be given the opportunity to share our past, present and ongoing research for the PCOS research community. The overarching goal of my research is to dissect molecular mechanisms and inheritance of PCOS enabling targeted treatment.

Highlights from the conference:

For me, the networking part, meeting young and "older" colleagues, is always what inspires most. The format of two senior presenters followed by shorter oral abstract presenters was excellent as well as the debate, and I honestly don't want to pick one pearl – all was great!



Dr. Elisabet Stener-Victorin

Professor, PhD

[@ElisabetStener](#)

Karolinska Institutet | Dept of Physiology and Pharmacology Stockholm, Sweden

Dr. Anuja Dokras MD MHCI PhD



Dr. Anuja Dokras

MD, MHCI, PhD

[@AnujaDokras](#)

Penn Medicine, Philadelphia

I am honored to receive the **Walter Futterweit Excellence in Clinical Research award**. My group focuses on understanding the determinants of cardiovascular health and the relationship between mental health and cardiovascular disease in PCOS. We have performed large randomized controlled trials to determine appropriate therapies for long term management of PCOS as well as interventions prior to pregnancy. We are also following a longitudinal cohort of women with PCOS to understand changes with each decade.

I was pleased to see the enthusiastic participation at the 2024 AEPCOS meeting from both clinicians belonging to various specialties and researchers studying impact of PCOS in different organs affected by PCOS. The annual meeting is truly a melting pot! I also want to give a shout out to the vibrant ECSIG - they participated in large numbers and were engaged throughout the meeting.



Lena Luyckx

Doctoral Researcher at KU Leuven (Belgium) and at Oulu University (Finland)
Herent, Flemish Region, Belgium

Lena Luyckx

Doctoral Researcher

Recipient of: **Azziz-Baumgartner Family Early Career Investigators Award**

Research highlights:

Because the PCOS endometrial epithelium is relatively understudied, we developed 3D lab-grown models of the uterine lining from women with PCOS to better understand their reproductive challenges. These models reveal how PCOS-related inflammation and differences in hormone response can impact fertility, offering new insights into endometrial health in both obese and lean women with PCOS.

What was your best takeaway/clinical pearl that you learned from this conference?

Coming from a basic science perspective, my overall takeaway from this conference was the realization that, even after many years of high-quality research, several fundamental mechanisms of the PCOS pathophysiology remain unresolved. In addition, it is critical to effectively communicate new discoveries to clinical and non-scientific audiences. Only through accessible knowledge-

Dr. Snigdha Alur-Gupta

Assistant Professor Snigdha Alur-Gupta is an Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Rochester, USA.

Recipient of: **Azziz-Baumgartner Family Early Career Investigators Award**

Research Highlights:

Our study showed that people with PCOS are at an increased independent risk for composite atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease events. This risk is therefore persistent even after accounting for many of PCOS's associated comorbidities.

What was your best takeaway/clinical pearl that you learned from this conference?

I learned that there is a lot of incredible research being done into the physiology and genetic/molecular origins of PCOS which could hopefully be used to tailor future targeted therapies.



Dr. Snigdha Alur-Gupta

Assistant Professor, MD
University of Rochester
New York, USA

Early Career Special Interest Group

BY JAMIE BENHAM

The Early Career Special Interest Group (EC-SIG) aims to support the professional development of early career professionals who have an interest in androgen excess disorders and polycystic ovary syndrome.

The EC-SIG objectives set by the Leadership Committee in collaboration with EC-SIG members are:

- 1) To expand collaborations between EC-SIG members.
- 2) To increase social media presence of EC-SIG to promote members and connect with early career professionals internationally.
- 3) To improve EC-SIG members knowledge about PCOS awareness initiatives.

The EC-SIG holds four meetings annually over Zoom. In addition, several Meet the Professor sessions are planned each year and in person events at AEPCCOS meetings.

Join EC-SIG!

Please contact EC-SIG if you're interested in joining:

aepcos.ecsig@gmail.com



2024 Leadership Committee

Faculty Lead

Marla Lujan

Chairs

Snigdha Alur-Gupta

Nour El Houda Mimouni

Upcoming EC-SIG Events

- EC-SIG welcomes nominations for a new Secretary to start in 2025 for a two-year term. Nominations for yourself or an interested colleague can be sent to aepcos.ecsig@gmail.com.
- Join us on zoom for the next Meet the Professor: **Jan 23, 2025 8AM EST** with our very own Dr Terhi Piltonen.
- The next EC-SIG meeting will be held in February with specific details to be sent out to members in the new year.

EC-SIG CORNER

EC-SIG HIGHLIGHTS

Many EC-SIG members had the opportunity to attend the AEPPOS Annual Meeting in Queenstown, New Zealand in November, and enjoy the EC-SIG events!

The meeting started off with a Meet & Greet for EC-SIG members. This pre-meeting session was a great opportunity to connect EC-SIG members from around the world.



A highlight of the conference was the Early Career Researcher Mentoring Session. EC-SIG members had the chance to meet with experts in the field to share experiences and discuss opportunities as well as approaches to challenges and setbacks.



EC-SIG members also enjoyed a Leadership discussion with Drs. Teede and Stener-Victorin where they had a chance to talk about work-life balance, careers, and mentorship advice.

EC-SIG looks forward to our next in person meeting at the AEPPOS Update Meeting in the spring!

EC-SIG MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

- To increase collaboration of early career researchers around the world and highlight successes and challenges related to administering PCOS care in different geographic regions, EC-SIG has been hosting international symposia for its members.
- The second symposium in the series occurred in September over Zoom. This symposium was hosted by EC-SIG co-chair Dr. Snigdha Alur-Gupta.
- The panelists shared insights on how they have been working to optimize PCOS care within their centres.
- An engaging discussion was had about barriers that they are working to overcome, and strategies that have worked to improve care for PCOS.



Research Updates

Glucagon-like peptide-1 Receptor Agonist in women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

By Dr. Joop S.E. Laven, Dept OBGYN, Erasmus University Medical Centre, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

The development of PCOS involves a combination of genetic, hormonal, and environmental factors, with insulin resistance and chronic inflammation being significant contributors to its progression and symptomatology. Treatment approaches have traditionally focused on symptomatic relief using hormonal contraceptives, insulin-sensitizing medications like metformin, and lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise². However, challenges exist in the effectiveness of these treatments and patient adherence. This has led to a search for treatment options to improve outcomes for PCOS patients. Hence, GLP-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1RAs) such as exenatide, liraglutide and semaglutide have emerged as new therapeutic options for PCOS due to their clear benefits in the treatment of obesity and metabolic disorders¹. Longer-acting GLP-1RAs and once-weekly formulations have shown better potential for lowering blood glucose levels and have less gastrointestinal discomfort compared to their shorter-acting counterparts. GLP-1RAs are also more effective in reducing weight compared to metformin showing more extensive improvement in metabolite profiles as a result of the regulation of multiple metabolism pathways involved in pathogenesis of obesity in PCOS patients. Moreover, GLP-1RAs are also more effective in reducing the amount of abdominal fat. However, despite their benefits, precautions need to be taken due to contraindications like a history of medullary thyroid cancer or pancreatitis, as well as the risk of potential adverse reactions such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, headaches, tachycardia, injection site reactions, pancreatitis, or gastroparesis.

It is crucial to evaluate their suitability before use¹. Although not yet fully elucidated, some studies suggest that women with PCOS have an impaired GLP-1 secretion most pronounced in women with PCOS and obesity. Last but not least there is accumulating evidence that GLP-1RAs are also effective in reducing the incidence of pre-diabetes in women with PCOS.

Until now 11 randomized controlled trials have been published to assess the impact of GLP-1 RA in women with PCOS (for review please see reference 1)³⁻¹³. Besides improving glucose tolerance and reducing fasting insulin and glucose levels GLP-1RAs seem to reduce abdominal fat³⁻¹³ and improve menstrual cyclicity^{4,10,11}, ovulation rates¹¹ and free androgens serum levels^{4,8,11} in women with PCOS. Weight loss achieved by GLP-1 RA use is more compared to weight loss induced by metformin therapy in women with PCOS¹⁴. are also reducing muscle and bone mass although to a lesser extent compared to the fat mass reduction.

PCOS is associated with chronic low-grade inflammation, contributing to its pathogenesis and associated comorbidities. GLP-1 RA are also effective in reducing inflammatory markers, such as C-reactive protein¹⁵. The anti-inflammatory effects of GLP-1 agonists may have broader implications for disease management and fertility outcomes as persistent low-grade inflammation is believed to be a trigger in the development of PCOS. Moreover, in women suffering from PCOS GLP-1RAs treatment showed significantly higher rates of natural pregnancy after alleviating insulin resistance¹¹. Similarly, GLP-1RAs in combination with metformin also improved *in-vitro* fertilization and cumulative pregnancy rates after pretreatment in patients who were previously resistant to ART treatment^{6,11}. Most of these effects appeared to be sustained for at least 3 months after cessation of the therapy.

The major concern is how to balance the reproductive and metabolic treatment strategies since the use of GLP-1 receptor agonists requires effective contraception while on therapy and a washout period before pregnancy. Both approaches are not mutually exclusive, yet the best choice requires a careful assessment of the clinical context. Knowing a patient's individual circumstances, precise clinical sub-phenotyping, and regular monitoring are crucial components for the safe and effective use of these new tools¹⁶.

Research Updates Continued

Unfortunately, after longer discontinuation of GLP-1RAs treatment most women with PCOS will gain weight again due to the transient effect of GLP-1RAs. Indeed, most studies indicate weight gain varying from 40% to 60% within one year after discontinuation. The weight gain seems to be attributable to a sole increase in fat mass.

In conclusion, the existing research on GLP-1RAs indicate a beneficial effect on weight and several metabolic parameters of PCOS although a specific therapeutic regimen is still missing. Additionally, the increased efficacy of the newer generation of GLP-1RAs, particularly in terms of dosage and duration of exposure, warrants more extensive research. Understanding the optimal dosing and treatment duration could significantly enhance the therapeutic use of GLP-1RAs in managing PCOS and its associated health sequelae^{1,16}.

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MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

We are pleased to share news from our members:

Voice of PCOS Society of Bangladesh



Prof. Laila Arjumand Banu, President, PCOSB



Prof. SK Zinnat Ara Nasreen, Secretary, PCOSB



Dr. Sharmin Abbasi, Joint Secretary, PCOSB



The PCOS Society of Bangladesh (PCOSB) was established in 2020 to raise awareness and provide support for individuals affected by Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). Its founding aimed to address the growing health concern surrounding PCOS, which affects a significant number of women in Bangladesh.

Recent events include:

- **1st International Scientific Conference of the PCOS Society of Bangladesh.**
- **PCOS Awareness Round Table in TV & Print media**
- **PCOS Awareness Month webinar in September 2024 theme “Voice of strength: Agents of change in PCOS”**

PCOS Awareness Month 2024
Webinar on
"Voice of Strength, Agents of Change"
26.9.2024 (Thursday) | 9 pm - 10.30 pm

Keynote Speaker
 Dr. Eileen Mansalo
Asst. Secretary General, IPPS
Topic: Does PCOS cause an increase in first trimester miscarriages?

Welcome Address
 Prof. Nazrul Mahmud
Scientific Secretary, PCOSB

Moderator
 Dr. Sharmin Abbasi
Joint Secretary, PCOSB

Co-Moderator
 Dr. Hafiza Akhter
Consultant, OBGYN, DMCH

Chief Guest
 Prof. TA Chowdhury
National Advisor, PCOSB

Special Guests
 Prof. Ferdous Begum
Past President, PCOSB
 Prof. Firoza Begum
President-Elect, PCOSB

Chairpersons
 Prof. Laila Arjumand Banu
President, PCOSB
 Prof. Farhana Dewan
President-Elect, PCOSB

Panel of Experts
 Prof. Rashida Begum
Vice President, PCOSB
 Prof. SK Zinnat Ara Nasreen
Secretary General, PCOSB
 Prof. Salma Rouf
Secretary General, PCOSB
 Prof. Kamrun Nessa Runa
President, OCSB CTC Branch
 Prof. Fahmida Zabin
Chairman OBGYN, BSMMJ
 Prof. Tanzina Latif
Head OBGYN, MCHC
 Prof. Maruf Siddiqui
Treasurer, PCOSB



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

We are pleased to share news from our members:

VERITY PCOS

<https://www.verity-pcos.org.uk/>

Verity are proud to announce the launch of a James Lind Alliance priority setting partnership on PCOS in collaboration with Cardiff University. The JLA is a well-known process in the UK that aims to develop the top ten uncertainties in research for a condition.

Verity was involved with the acne psp many years ago and were always keen to develop one for PCOS. The process includes a working partnership of patients, patient representatives and professionals to ensure a thorough overview of the work going into the survey. The survey will then disseminate across the UK to identify the main working topics. This is then narrowed down to the top ten priorities at a working group next year.

This will ensure that professionals working in the area of PCOS will have additional information and resources when identifying areas of research and funding.

Shaping the future of PCOS Research

James Lind Alliance (JLA)
Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) for PCOS

#JLAPCOS

Pictured: (some of) the members of the #JLAPCOS steering group

verity
sharing the truth about PCOS

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL CARDIFF

James Lind Alliance
Priority Setting Partnership

With thanks to:
the waterloo foundation

CALL FOR NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Want to be featured in next issue? Share with us any news or announcements.

We want to hear from you!

Interested members please email newsletter@ae-society.org.

Use the subject line **"Member engagement"**

Join up on social media:

Our AEPCOS society has several social media accounts!

Please follow us on

X: **@aepcossociety**

Instagram: **aepcossociety**

Facebook: **Androgen Excess & Polycystic Ovary Syndrome**

EC-SIG plans to start a 'Ted Talks' type series **EDGE-PCOS** = Evidence-based **D**issemination of **G**uidelines and **E**xpertise (in) PCOS that features EC-SIG members.

Do you have ideas or want to contribute?

Contact dr.basselwa@gmail.com

CALENDER OF EVENTS

- May 2025 **European Society of Endocrinology** Copenhagen, Denmark <https://espe-ese-congress2025.org/>
- July 2025 **Endocrine Society**, San Francisco, Ca USA <https://www.endocrine.org/meetings-and-events/endo-2025>
- October 2025 **American Society for Reproductive Medicine Scientific Congress and Expo** San Antonia, Tx, USA <https://asrmcongress.org/>
- November 2025 **Obesity Week** hosted by the **Obesity Society** Atlanta, Georgia, USA <https://obesityweek.org/>

Next AEPCOS Meetings:

<https://ae-society.org/meetings/>

May 10, 2025

Androgen Excess and PCOS Society Update Meeting

Topic: Brain-Body Cross-Talk in PCOS



Oct 23-25, 2025

23's Annual AE-PCOS Society Meeting

San Antonia, Tx, USA

Prior to the ASRM Scientific Congress & Expo (Oct 25-29)

