

From tiktok to table: A cross-sectional analysis of pcos diet content online

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Statement of the Problem: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) affects an estimated 1 in 10 women of reproductive age worldwide, with dietary management being a cornerstone of symptom control. TikTok is a dominant platform for health and wellness content, including dietary advice for women with PCOS. However, the quality and accuracy of this user-generated content have remained largely unknown. This study aims to analyze PCOS diet TikToks for the prevalence of evidence-based nutritional information compliant with the Johns Hopkins Medicine (JHM) PCOS dietary guidelines.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The top 100 TikTok videos under the hashtag #PCOSDiet were obtained using a web scraping tool. After removing non-English videos, 95 videos were divided by author role into “medical” or “non-medical”, then subcategorized as informational or personal. Informational content was assessed for reliability using DISCERN and PEMAT tools. Overall video quality was measured using the 5-point Global Quality Scale (GQS) for all videos. Unpaired two-sample t-test was used for analysis.

Findings: Videos from medical and non-medical creators had similar average daily views ($p = 0.052$) and interactions ($p = 0.497$). 96.2% of TikToks from medical creators were compliant with JHM PCOS guidelines, compared with 71.0% from non-medical creators ($*p=0.011$). TikToks by medical creators had higher average GQS scores than their non-medical counterparts ($p=0.004*$), though there was no significant difference in average PEMAT or DISCERN scores. 70.5% of videos were by creators diagnosed with PCOS. 3 users accounted for 38.95% of PCOS diet TikToks analyzed, with 2 being non-medical creators.

Conclusion & Significance: PCOS dietary information on TikTok comes mostly from non-medical creators and those diagnosed with PCOS. TikToks by non-medical creators were lower quality and less compliant with established guidelines than their medical counterparts. Understanding gaps in PCOS dietary advice on TikTok can help health professionals generate targeted content that addresses patient needs.

Biography

Jessica Sidrak is a third-year medical student pursuing an MD at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark, NJ. She graduated from Columbia University in 2023 with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and has extensive experience in community outreach and clinical research in obesity management, metabolic syndrome, and PCOS. Her current research aims to address health literacy, social media, and misinformation, with a particular focus on women's health.

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