

2022



**Women's Sexual &
Reproductive
HEALTH
REPORT
INDIA**

A snapshot of the state of
women's sexual and reproductive
health in India

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Summary of Insights
- 3 Awareness and prevalence of various sexual and reproductive health concerns
- 5 PCOS
- 6 Hypothyroidism
- 7 Support and Guidance for women experiencing sexual and reproductive health concerns

Introduction

Women form the backbone of any household and yet the only time their health is considered important is when they are bearing a child. Outside of childbirth, a woman could face at least one reproductive health event in her life, which can manifest in the form of PCOS, endometriosis, sexual or pelvic health dysfunctions. The stigma associated with seeking care for these events is too high, and there are no affordable options that women can access discreetly without judgment. At Uvi Health, it's our mission to help women live a fulfilling life despite these disorders.

However, to help women overcome these disorders, we need substantive research to understand the factors, prevalence and treatment effectiveness of these disorders. Unfortunately, there is a lack of data that focuses on Indian women, their unique genetic and environmental risks that set them apart from women in other parts of the world.

Uvi Health is taking a small step in this direction, to help uncover the hidden reality which Indian women face with respect to sexual and reproductive disorders. We sincerely wish that this information is useful to practitioners, researchers and each and every woman suffering from a disorder, and also give hope to our readers dealing with these concerns. Remember, you are not alone.

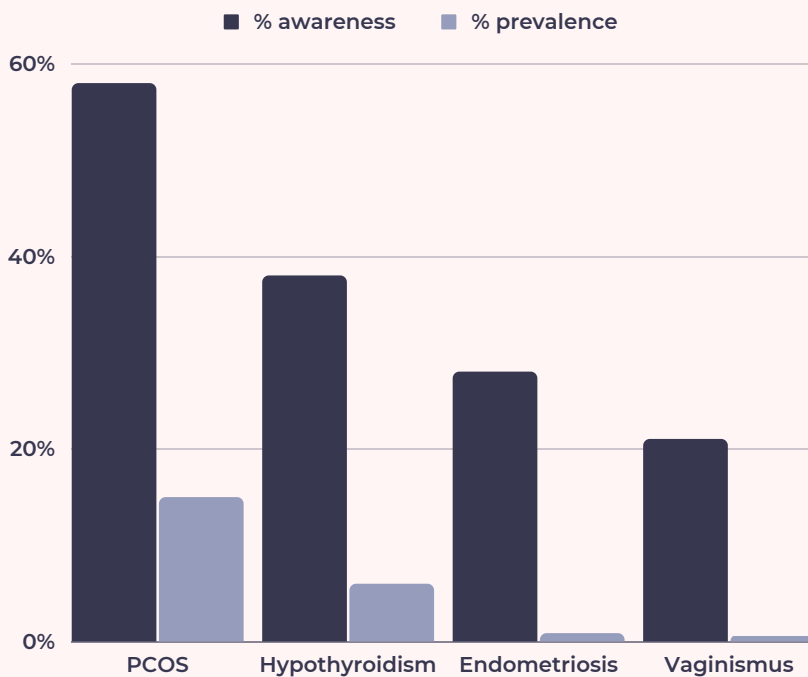
Mehak Malik,
Co-Founder & CEO
Uvi Health

Summary of Insights

We conducted a survey with ~2600 women from across urban India, between the ages of 15 - 73, asking them questions about women's sexual and reproductive concerns.

Awareness & Prevalence of various disorders

(2595 responses)

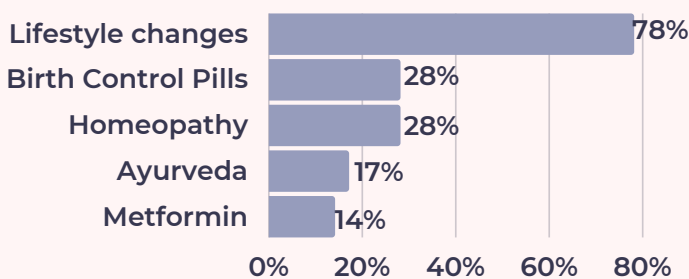


- <60% of the women are aware of PCOS, and of those 15% have been diagnosed with PCOS. The real prevalence rate is expected to be much higher.
- More than 60% of women are not aware of Hypothyroidism
- Awareness of Endometriosis and Vaginismus is even lower (<30%)

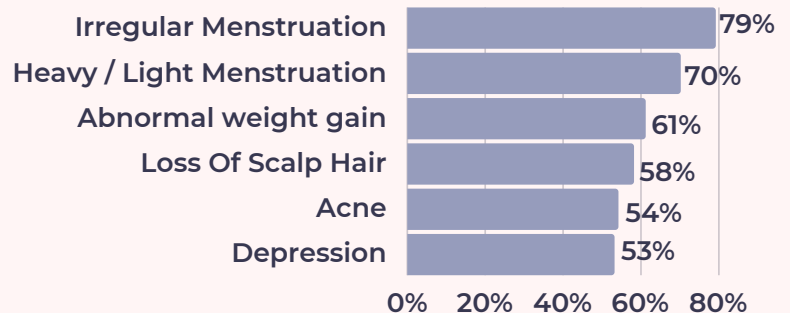
PCOS

(220 respondents)

Popular treatments used by women



Top symptoms experienced by women



17% Women said that their diagnosis was based on irregular periods, blood tests & ultrasound (Rotterdam Criteria)

57% Women have a family history of PCOS/ diabetes.

₹9.7k Women spend on average managing their PCOS per annum.

54% women think that PCOS has affected their ability to conceive

Awareness & Prevalence of Sexual and Reproductive Health concerns

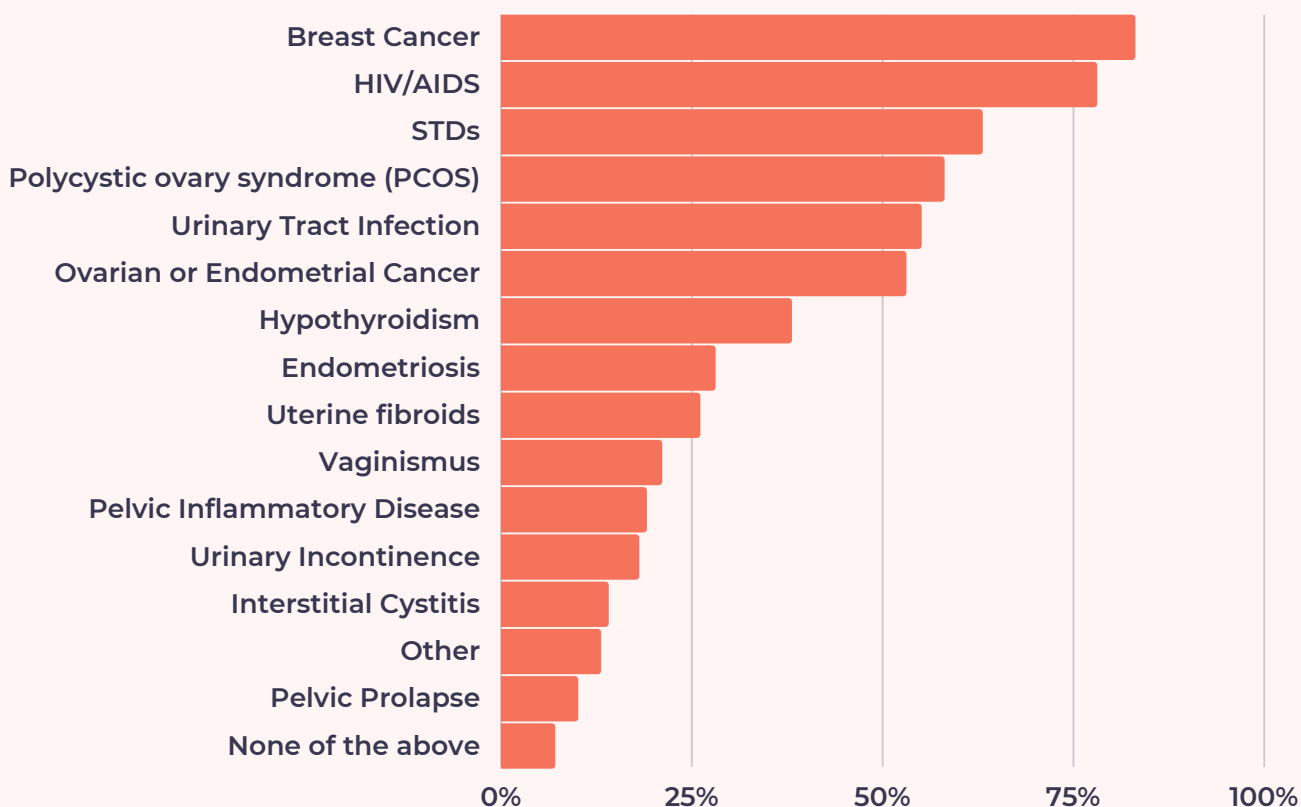
Awareness

Sexual and reproductive health education in India has long been mired in cultural furore and shame. In 2020, the Government of India took significant steps towards expanding the scope of the sex-ed curriculum to help young adolescents learn about sexual violence & rights, contraception, and substance abuse. However, awareness about chronic hormonal disorders, sexual dysfunctions, pelvic health is severely lacking among young adults. Lack of awareness often leads to delayed diagnosis, co-morbidities & complications and ultimately, translates to a higher cost of care.

Through our survey, we gathered responses from 2595 women & trans-women living in urban India to understand their knowledge and level of awareness about sexual & reproductive health (SRH) concerns.

- Awareness of breast cancer and HIV/AIDS is relatively high (>75%)
- <40% of the women are unaware of PCOS. This is a cause of huge concern considering the increase in the prevalence rate of this disorder in India.
- More than 60% of women are not aware of Hypothyroidism, again a very common disease among women
- Awareness of other sexual and reproductive diseases such as Endometriosis and Vaginismus is even lower (<30%)

% women aware of the SRH concerns



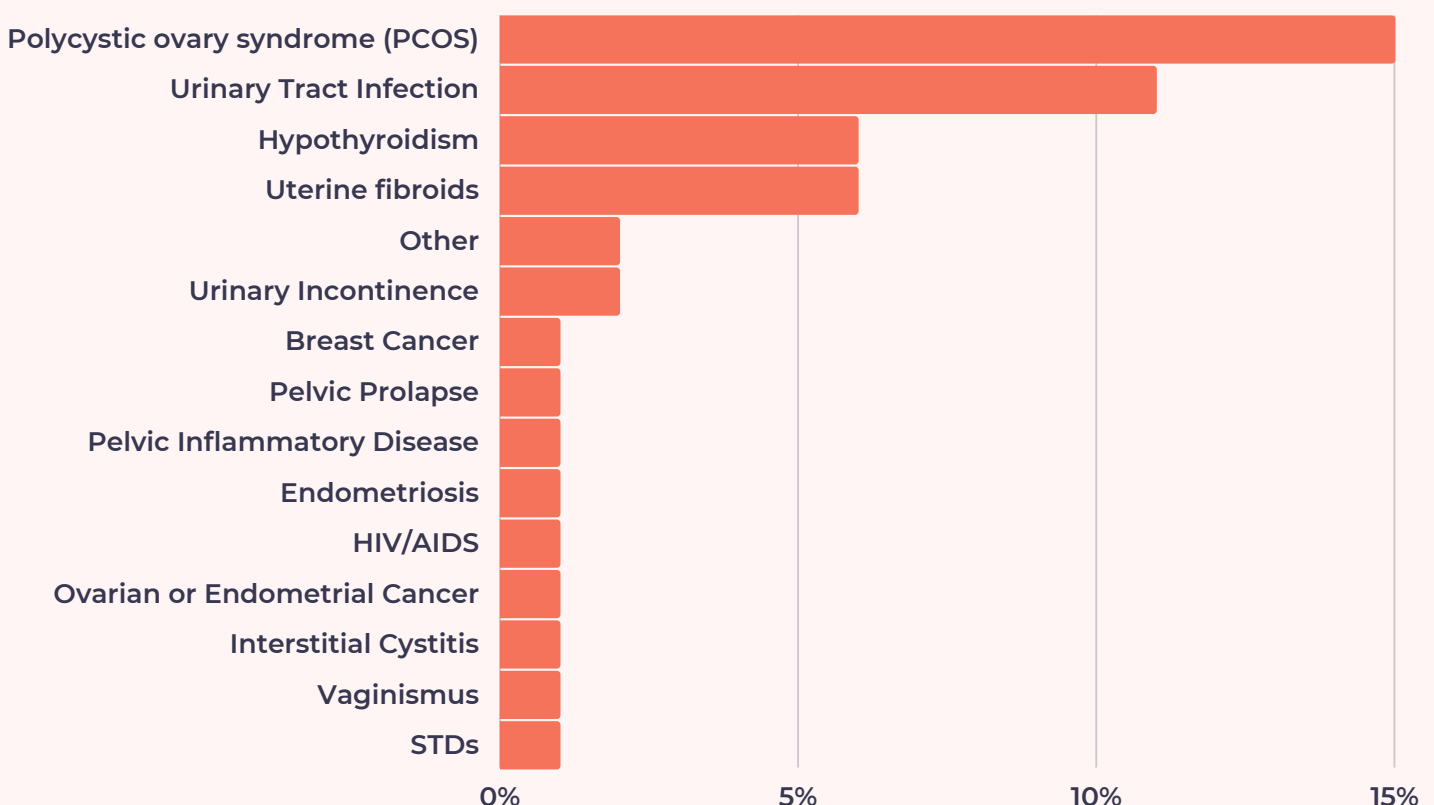
Prevalence

The prevalence of many sexual and reproductive concerns is a black box. Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) data is not part of the Census, which focuses more on socio-economic indicators but doesn't take health indicators into account. There are no systemic methods of collating data from Primary Health Centers, Public & Private Hospitals & Clinics to better understand the SRH disease burden in India. The most cited study on PCOS prevalence rate (1 in 5) comes from The Metropolis, a pathology chain that conducted an 18-month pan India study in 2016 to measure testosterone levels among women. However, given the complex nature of the syndrome, and the varying symptoms observed among different women this may at best indicate risk of PCOS over the actual incidence of PCOS. More research is needed in this domain.

Uvi Insights:

- PCOS is the most common sexual and reproductive health concern that women experience. ~15% of the women who are aware of PCOS have been diagnosed with the condition. The real prevalence rate is expected to be higher, as many women who have PCOS don't get diagnosed, due to the absence of a single diagnostic criterion is sufficient for clinical diagnosis of PCOS. Most studies in India report the prevalence of PCOS as 9.13% to 36%
- UTI's (11%), Hypothyroidism (6%), and Uterine fibroids (6%) also have high diagnosis rates among women who are aware of these diseases.

% women diagnosed with SRH concerns

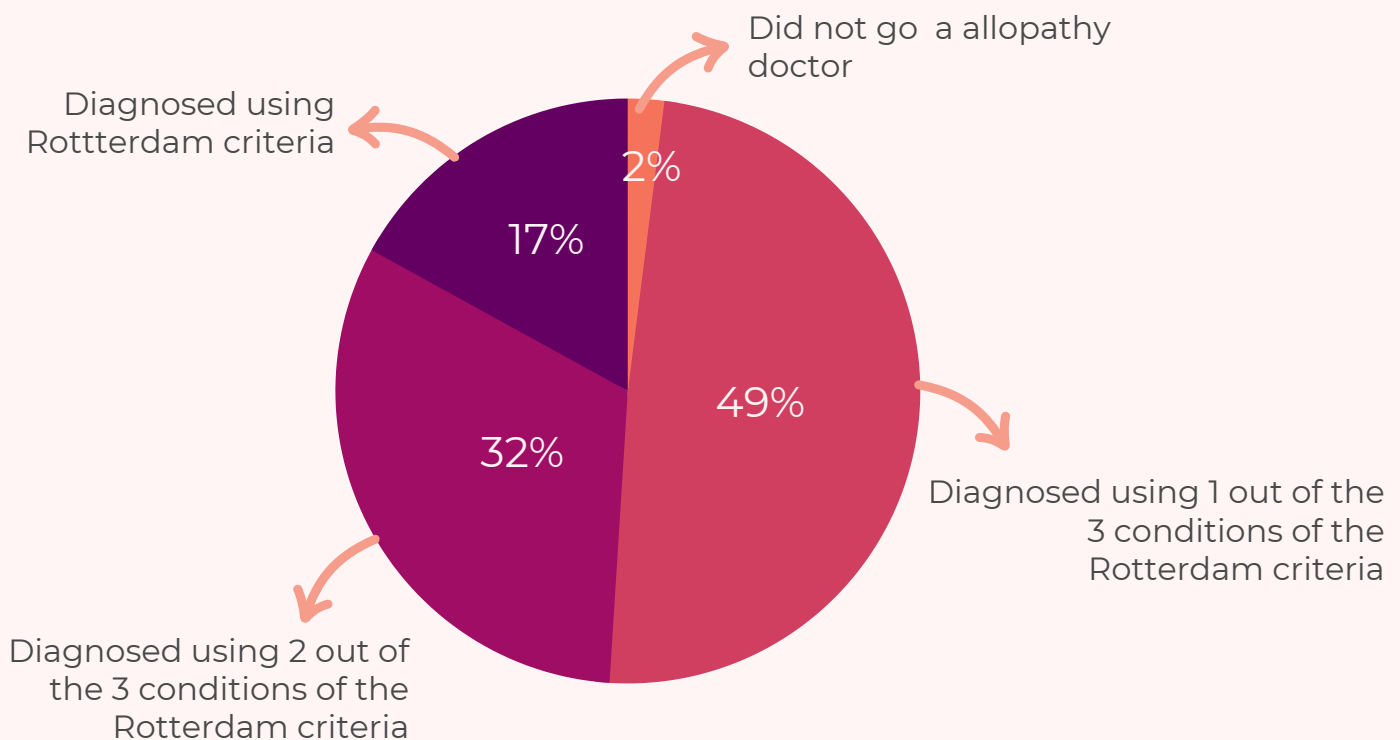


PCOS

PCOS is a very common disorder among women during their reproductive age. However, not a lot is known about how Indian women are diagnosed, what symptoms they face, what treatments they adopt, etc.

PCOS Diagnosis:

- It took on average, at least a year between the first set of symptoms and diagnosis. Our respondents, on average, noticed symptoms of PCOS when they were ~17 and got diagnosed with PCOS at ~18.
- The global gold standard for PCOS diagnosis is the Rotterdam Criteria. This Criteria, also recommended by the Endocrine Society, requires that a patient presents at least two of three conditions to get a clinical diagnosis. 1) Excess Androgens or Testosterones, 2) Menstrual Irregularities, 3) Polycystic Ovaries. In order to diagnose on the basis of these criteria - a doctor must recommend a comprehensive panel of blood tests and ultrasound. We wanted to understand whether this is translating into clinical practice in India.
- Only 17% of respondents said their clinician investigated all three conditions before providing a diagnosis. 32% of respondents were diagnosed based on only two of three conditions, 49% of respondents were diagnosed based on only one condition, and 2% did not go to an allopathic doctor.



PCOS - Symptoms and Treatment:

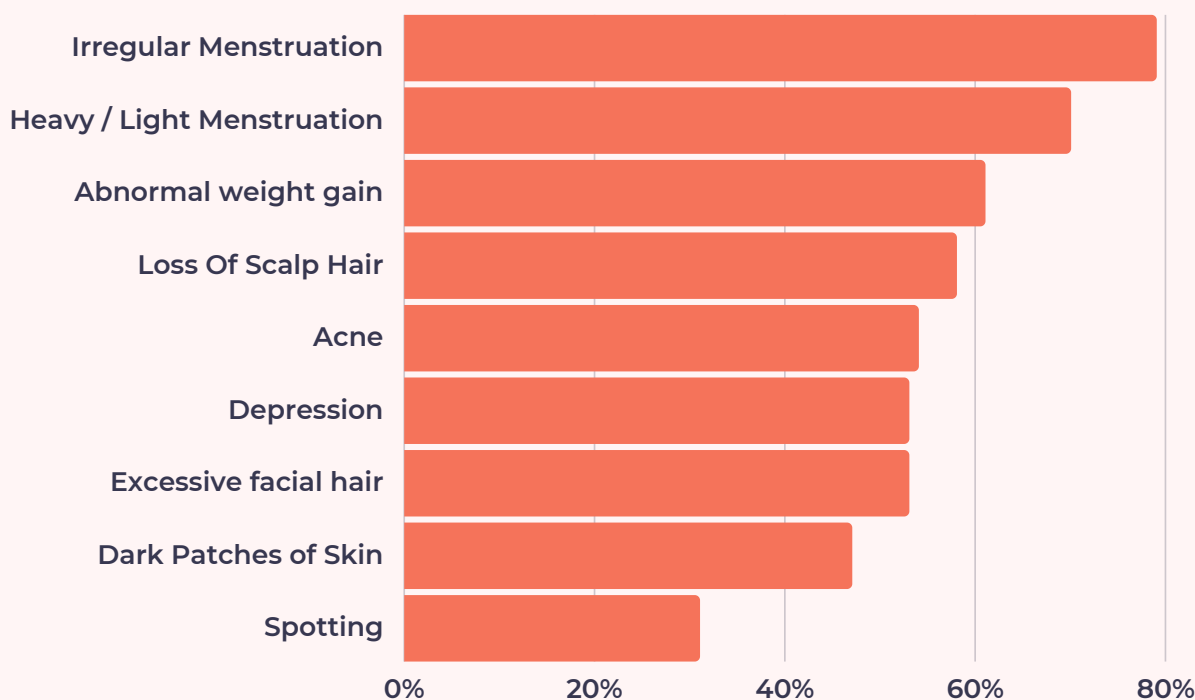
Having a history of diabetes or PCOS in the family increases the genetic risk of PCOS. Almost 57% of women said they have a history of diabetes or PCOS in their family.

Irregular menstruation or heavy/ light menstruation is the most common symptom among respondents, affecting close to 80% of women with PCOS. This is followed by weight gain (61%), hair loss (58%), acne (54%) and mental health (53%) concerns. 53% of respondents who had tried conceiving said PCOS has affected their ability to conceive.

Lifestyle management turns out to be the most popular treatment adopted among the respondents (78%). However, 3 in 4 women found it difficult to make these lifestyle changes on their own. 80% of these women who made lifestyle changes found it to be highly effective in their journey to reverse PCOS.

To combat PCOS, other popular treatments include birth control pills (28%), Homeopathy (28%), Ayurveda (17%), and Metformin (14%). On average women spend ~₹9700/ annum to manage their PCOS annually, and are ready to spend up to ₹11000 / annum. This is a sign of maturity in the market where awareness of holistic treatments and willingness to spend is on the rise.

% women who said they experienced the following symptoms moderately/severely due to their PCOS



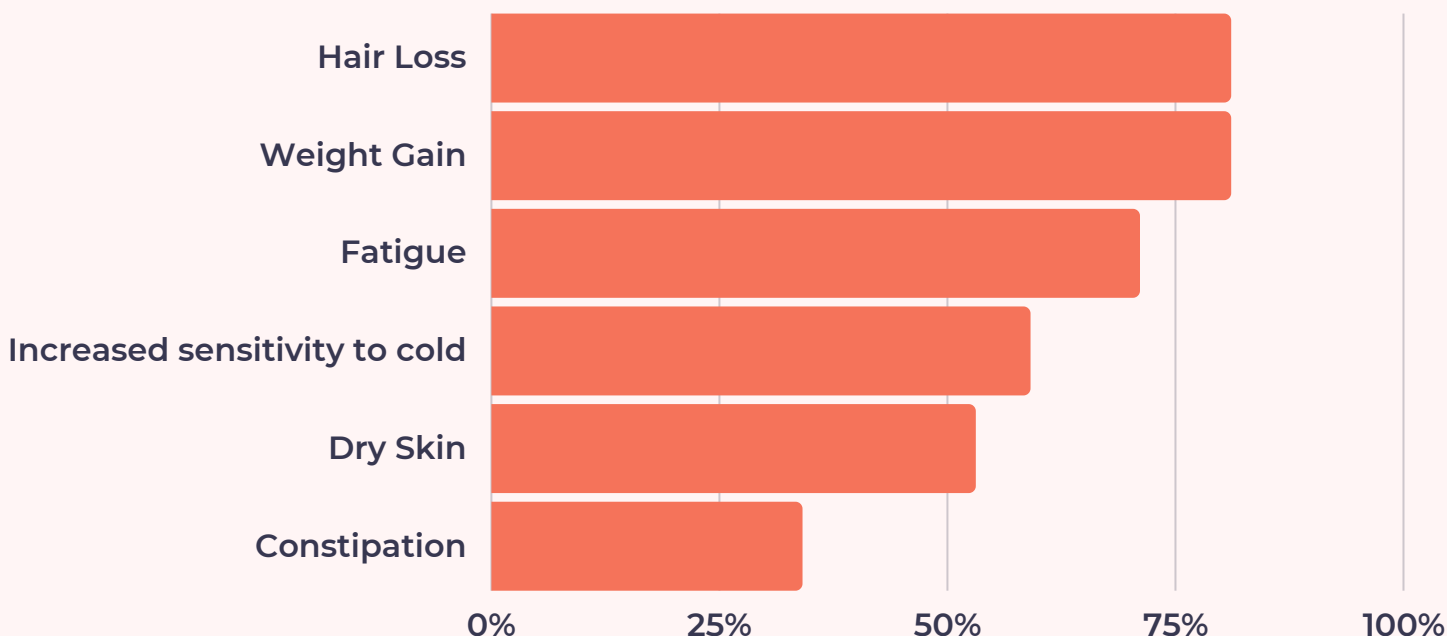
Hypothyroidism

After PCOS and Urinary Tract Infections, Hypothyroidism is the third most common disorder among the women surveyed. Its prevalence in India is estimated to be ~10%. In US and UK, the prevalence rate is much lower (<5%). This is possibly due to the long-standing iodine deficiency in India. Our survey was able to uncover the following insights on the basis of 58 women who said they had Hypothyroidism.

Uvi Insights:

- Among those who are aware of this disease, ~6% were also diagnosed with Hypothyroidism.
- On average, women started experiencing symptoms of Thyroid at the age of ~24.
- 81% of women experienced hair loss, 81% gained weight and 71% also felt more fatigued.
- On average, women spent ~₹5100 / annum to manage their Thyroid.

% women who said they experienced the following symptoms moderately/severely during their Hypothyroidism:



Support and Guidance for women experiencing SRH concerns

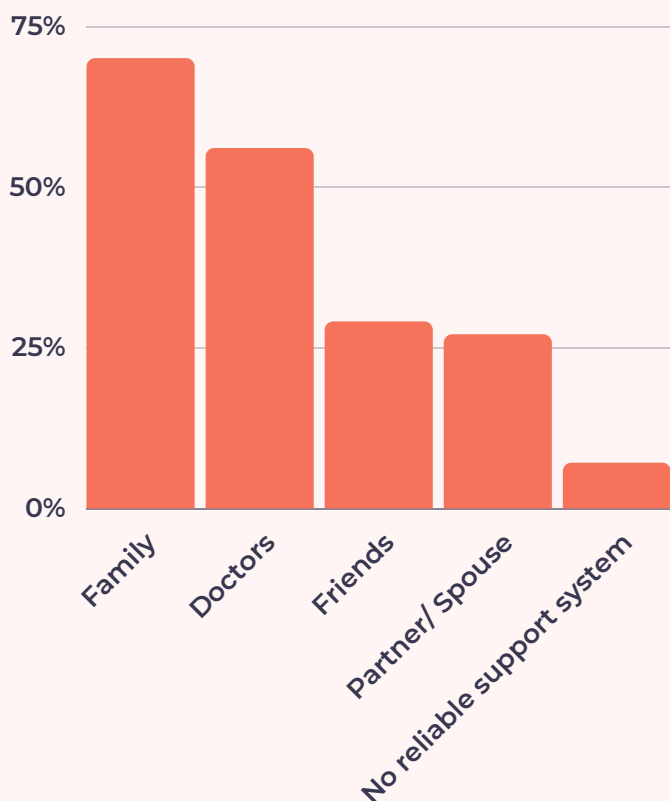
The physical symptoms which women experience with SRH concerns can be tough. However, a good support system can go a long way in helping these women manage their concerns.

Unfortunately, due to such topics being taboo in Indian households and a lack of sex education - support and guidance for such women are rare.

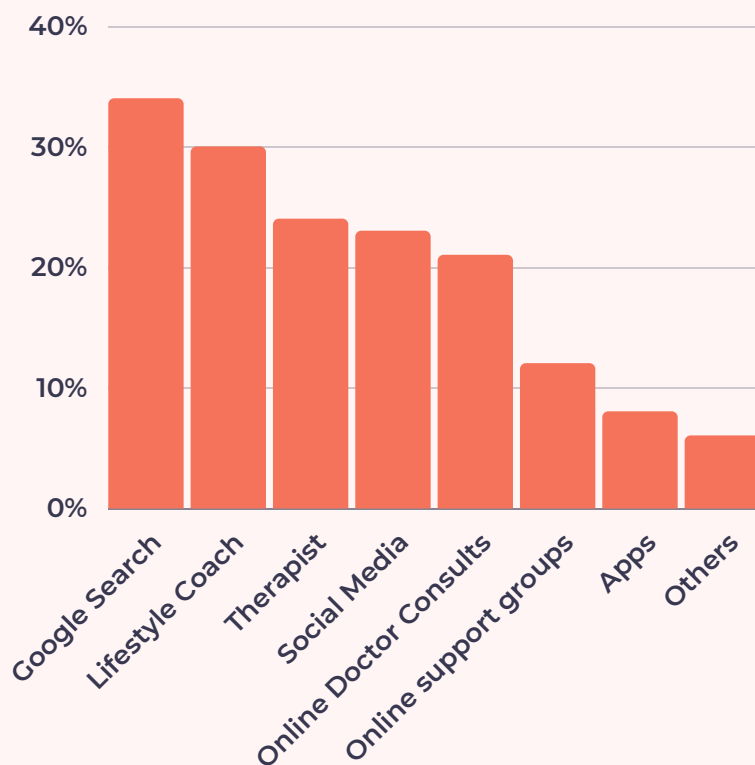
Uvi Insights:

- For women experiencing sexual and reproductive concerns, family is considered as the most trustable support system (70%) followed by Doctors (56%). Surprisingly, <30% of women consider their spouses and friends as the right support system.
- Women feel the most comfortable in seeking information from Google and a Lifestyle Coach (fitness or nutrition coach), followed by therapist and social media.

% women who consider the following as the right support system when dealing with their conditions



% women who feel comfortable in seeking information and guidance from the following mediums



About Uvi Health

Uvi Health is an all-in-one digital therapeutics platform that helps women manage their reproductive & sexual health concerns. Our current focus is to help women with PCOS.

We have a whole-body approach towards PCOS. Our all-inclusive plans help you eat right, be more active and empower you to take better care of yourself.

You can know more about us [here](#).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following organisations for their whole hearted support in the survey:

- Girl Up Pankh
- Girl Up Sheisha
- 180 Degrees Consulting Daulat Ram College
- 180 Degrees Consulting HR College of Commerce
- Consulting Club MDAE

Disclaimer

While we have made every attempt to ensure that the information contained in this survey is accurate, Uvi Health is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from the use of this information. All information in this report is provided "as is", with no guarantee of completeness, accuracy, timeliness, or of the results obtained from the use of this information, and without warranty of any kind, express or implied, including, but not limited to warranties of performance, merchantability, and fitness for a particular purpose. In no event will Uvi Health, its related partnerships or corporations, or the partners, agents or employees thereof be liable to you or anyone else for any decision made or action taken in reliance on the information in this report or for any consequential, special, or similar damages, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.

Contact Us

Uvi Health

No. 61, Sri Sadan, 6th Cross, 27th Main Rd, 1st
Sector, HSR Layout, Bengaluru, Karnataka
560102

support@uvihealth.in
+91-99720 17980