

# XXVIII IFSO World Congress

9-12 September 2025 | Santiago, Chile



Professor Yitka Graham

# IFSO 2025 Santiago

Combined Therapies, The Dawn of a New Era

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# Disclosure Slide



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Canon			X					
Celebrate Nutritional Supplements			X					
Intuitive	X							
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# Psychosocial aspects in women before and after MBS

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# Females and living with obesity: biological factors



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- **Obesity may adversely affect**
  - Menstrual patterns
  - Fertility
  - pregnancy and conditions associated with pregnancy
- **Conditions associated with obesity include**
  - Polycystic ovarian syndrome
- **Menopause**
  - The relationships between weight, the menopausal process, ageing, and hormone levels remain poorly understood
  - The menopausal transition is associated with increased obesity, a transition from a gynecoid to an android body shape, increased abdominal and visceral fat, which increases associated cardiometabolic risks.
  - Whether this increased obesity is a consequence of menopause, age, genetics, or environmental factors has long been debated
  - Increased life expectancy means women spend up to 1/3 of their lives post-menopausally

Palacios S, Chedraui P, Sánchez-Borrego R, Coronado P, Nappi RE. Obesity and menopause. *Gynecol Endocrinol*. 2024 Dec;40(1):2312885. doi: 10.1080/09513590.2024.2312885. Epub 2024 Feb 11. PMID: 38343134.  
Opoku AA, Abushama M, Konje JC. Obesity and menopause. *Best Pract Res Clin Obstet Gynaecol*. 2023 Jun;88:102348. doi: 10.1016/j.bpobgyn.2023.102348.  
Pinto J, Cera N, Pignatelli D. Psychological symptoms and brain activity alterations in women with PCOS and their relation to the reduced quality of life: a narrative review. *J Endocrinol Invest*. 2024 Jul;47(7):1-22. doi: 10.1007/s40618-024-02329-y.

# Women's health across the life course



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## Obesity and MBS

Menstruation

Sexual health

Pregnancy and  
reproductive  
health

Menopause  
and health of  
the older  
women

Psychosocial Aspects

# Current position

- Only a small body of research into psychosocial aspects of life after surgery with women
  - Few studies which examine female aspects of life after surgery
- MBS is the conceptual divide between an 'old' and 'new life'
- The first two years are a time of rapid change, including
  - Weight loss
  - Physical appearance
  - Interpersonal relationships
  - Changed eating habits
  - Everyday changes – trial and error



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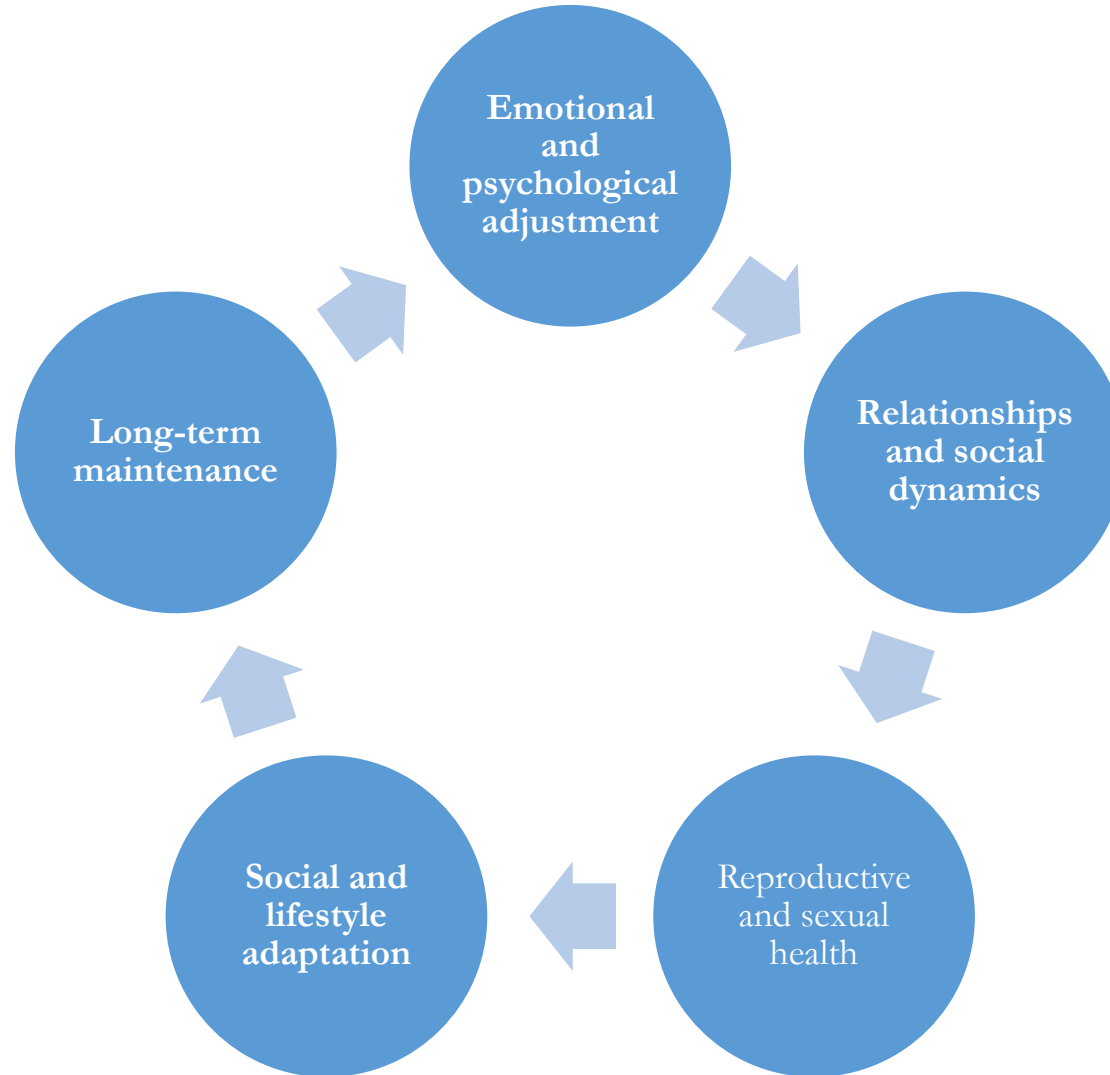


# Psychosocial aspects of MBS for women



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# Women's experiences of MBS, changes and womanliness

- A recent systematic review and meta-synthesis found 10 studies with 3 fusions of:
  - **Womanliness**
    - Defined as 'having the traits, qualities and behaviours that society regards as characteristic or ideally appropriate for adult women'
    - May be socially or culturally context-specific
    - Biologically and socially constructed
      - Return to femininity after weight loss through MBS
  - **Healthy and functioning body**
    - MBS invokes a restoration to a healthy body
    - Increase in energy and stamina
    - Need to interpret body signals
  - **Mind and body connection**
    - Living as a person without obesity
    - Rapid change in appearance unsettling
    - Dealing with people and society after weight loss



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# Quote from women with lived experience of MBS



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I'm not ill, I'm just  
different (B)

I feel guilty, when people  
say you are doing  
great...its like I'm  
expected to lost weight  
because I've had surgery  
(K)

• I used to hate eating in  
public...because you  
think people are  
judging you all the time  
(B)

My mind was telling me to do  
things my body couldn't (O)

I think people should be  
fat...once in their lives, just  
to be a little less narrow  
minded (C)

Your body give you new  
signals and you need to  
learn them...its hard to  
describe because I forgot  
about the way I used to eat  
before (P)

# Women's Health and MBS: a life course psychosocial perspective



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- **Menstruation**

- Restored or improved menstrual patterns and the impact on subjective wellbeing

- **Pregnancy and reproductive health**

- Fulfil desire to become pregnant and become a mother
  - Biological clock
- Reported gaps in women's knowledge and experiences of pregnancy after MBS

- **Improvement of conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)**

- Obesity
- Hirsutism
- Acne
- subfertility



Paul R, Drott J, Olbers T, Frisk J, Andersson E. Motherhood and motivations for bariatric surgery - a qualitative study. *Hum Fertil (Camb)*. 2023Dec;26(2):257-265. doi: 10.1080/14647273.2022.2045520. Benham JL, Corbett KS, Yamamoto JM, McClurg C, Piltonen T, Yildiz BO, Li R, Mousa A, Tay CT, Spritzer PM, Teede H, Boyle JA, Brown WA. Impact of bariatric surgery on anthropometric, metabolic, and reproductive outcomes in polycystic ovary syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Obes Rev*. 2024 Jun;25(6):e13737  
Goldenshluger A, Elazary R, Ben Porat T, Farhat HG, Levin G, Rottenstreich A. Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of women during pregnancy after bariatric surgery. *Surg Obes Relat Dis* 2020 Jul;16(7):925-936. doi: 10.1016/j.soard.2020.02.016.

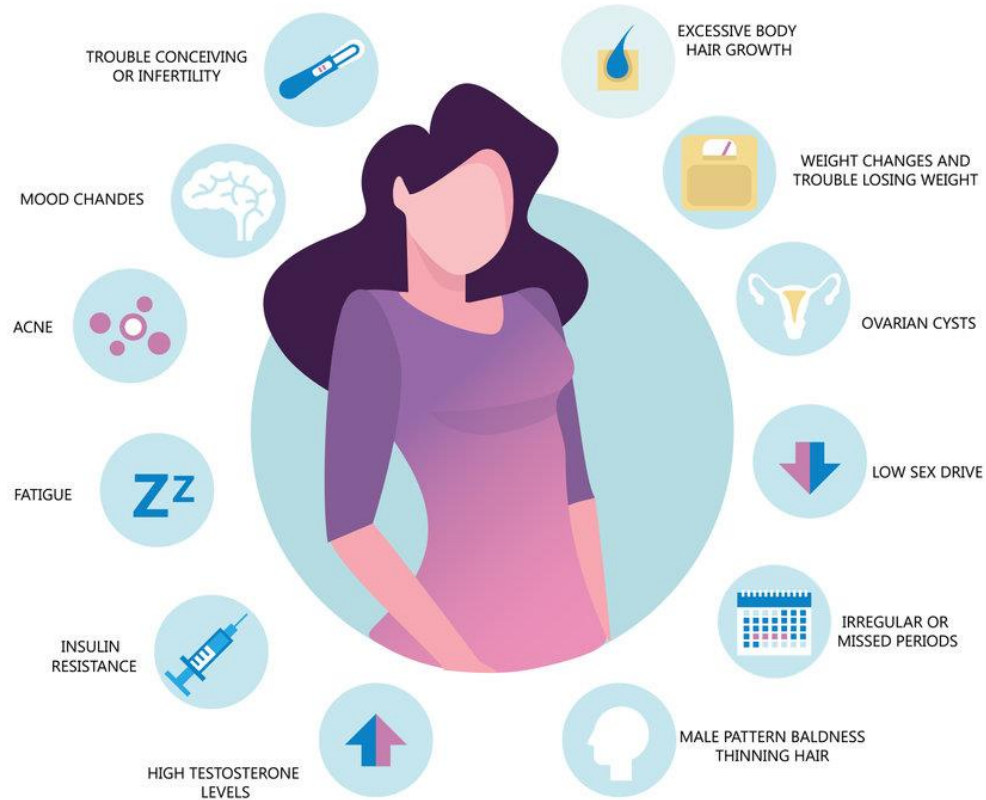
# What is the effect of MBS on PCOS?



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## PCOS SYMPTOMS



- Systematic review and meta-analysis of 8 studies showed anthropometric, metabolic, and hormonal improvements following MBS
- No psychosocial research
- No qualitative studies
- No studies from the patient/women with lived experience



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- **Sexual health**

- Weight stigma may have prevented functional relationships
- Self-perceived improved body image may increase confidence in sexual relationships

- **Menopause**

- Signals end of reproductive years and perception of femininity
- Often coincides with major life changes e.g. children leaving home, ageing parents or loss of parents
- MBS is a major life change – little research into MBS at the time of menopause
  - Support for women in the menopause and living with MBS?



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# Recommendations

- Further research into psychosocial aspects of MBS and women is needed
- Qualitative studies are needed
  - This methodology is appropriate for exploring the peoples' experiences and for social phenomena where little is known
- Collaborative work with women with lived experience is needed
  - Paucity of co-designed studies
  - Increasing requirement for funding
  - Good research practice
- Interdisciplinary studies
  - How can Obstetric and Gynaecological, Sexual Health and MBS colleagues work in an interdisciplinary manner to improve research and patient experience?



# Conclusion

- Psychosocial aspects of women's health across the life course are under-researched
- Strong evidence base of improvement of MBS on women's health throughout the life course
- The perspectives of women with lived experience into MBS and female health are needed



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# Thank you/muchas gracias