

Ralph M. Trüeb
Won-Soo Lee

Male Alopecia

Guide to Successful
Management



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Male Alopecia

Preface

*Do you not see that I am too tall and comely to look on?
And yet the same fate awaits my hair,
and I bear with resignation the aging of my locks in youth.
Be assured that nothing is more pleasing than beauty,
but nothing shorter-lived.*

*Domitian (51–96 AD) on the condition of his hair.
From: Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars*

Male alopecia is a common complaint, with androgenetic alopecia representing by far the most frequent cause of hair loss in men. First signs may occur in adolescence, leading to a patterned, non-scarring, age-dependent progressive loss of scalp hair. Due to the frequency and the often significant impairment of life quality perceived by affected individuals, hair loss cures have been experimented on for centuries. What is remarkable about their history is that despite the more recent genuine advances in effective medical treatments, hair cosmetics, and surgical procedures, phony hair loss solutions continue to be marketed today with an amazing success. Therefore, competent diagnosis and treatment are particularly important in dealing with hair loss.

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) aims for the ideal that healthcare professionals should make conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of the best available evidence gained from the scientific method. However, EBM guidelines do not remove the problem of extrapolation to different populations or longer timeframes. Even if top-quality studies are available, questions remain as to how far and to which populations the results may be generalized. Certain patient populations have been under-researched, such as children, the elderly and ethnic minorities. Ultimately, EBM applies to groups of people, and knowledge gained from clinical research does not directly answer the primary clinical question of what is best for the individual patient. The limited success rate of EBM-guided treatments of male alopecia points to a more important complexity of the problem. One must remain open-minded for the possibility of other causes or a multitude of cause relationships underlying the hair loss problem, such as inflammatory phenomena and scarring; external factors, such as smoking and UV radiation, nutritional factors, medications; age-related phenomena; and ultimately the problems of comorbidities and multimorbidity in the elderly. Therefore, EBM should not preclude clinicians from using their personal experience in deciding how to treat each patient in an individual manner.

Good medical practice means integrating expert opinion with the best available external evidence from EBM. While mainstream scientist are working on gene polymorphisms diagnostics for prediction of risk, prevention, diagnosis, and targeted treatment development for male alopecia, on stem cell technologies, and on bioengineering of the hair follicle, health-care providers are becoming increasingly aware of a more holistic approach to the problem of hair loss. Ultimately, combination regimens and adjuvant treatments may act synergistic to enhance hair growth and quality.

The aim of this monograph is to provide specialists as well as primary care physicians with interest in hair with the practical know-how for successful management of male alopecia.

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Ανέγων, έγνων, κατέγων

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In the sick room, ten cents' worth of human understanding equals ten dollars' worth of medical science.

Martin H. Fischer (1879–1962)

We would like to acknowledge the many patients who over the years have taught us more about their hair loss and its successful management than any academic authority.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Symbolism of Male Hair	1
1.2	Brief History of Experiments on Hair Loss Cures	6
1.3	The Modern Age	13
	Further Reading	17
2	Examining Hair Loss in Men	19
2.1	Patient History	19
2.1.1	Family History	19
2.1.2	Personal History	23
2.1.3	Drug History	30
2.1.4	History of Hair Cosmetic Procedures and Trauma	30
2.2	Clinical Examination	31
2.2.1	Pattern Recognition	31
2.2.2	Black and White Felt Examination	39
2.2.3	Assessment of Hair Part Width	39
2.2.4	Hair Pull	39
2.2.5	Hair Feathering	40
2.3	Trichoscopy	41
2.3.1	Using the Dermatoscope for Diagnosing Hair and Scalp Disorders	41
2.3.2	Patterns of Scalp Disease Revealed by Dermoscopy	41
2.3.3	Follicular Patterns	41
2.3.4	Interfollicular Patterns (Vascular, Pigment)	46
2.3.5	Scaling	46
2.3.6	Hair Shaft Patterns	47
2.3.7	Exogenous Materials	48
2.3.8	Summary and Algorithm of Dermoscopic Features in Common Conditions	48
2.4	Trichogram	48
2.4.1	Trichogram Procedure	49
2.4.2	Trichogram Evaluation	55
2.4.3	Trichogram Interpretation	56
2.4.4	Light Microscopic Hair Shaft Examination	57

2.5	Laboratory Evaluation	60
2.5.1	Biochemical Investigations	60
2.5.2	Microbiological Studies	61
2.5.3	Misuse of Hair Analysis as a Diagnostic Tool	61
2.6	Scalp Biopsy	62
2.6.1	Algorithm of Scalp Histopathology	62
2.6.2	Procedure of Scalp Biopsy	63
2.6.3	Value of Direct Immunofluorescence Studies	64
2.7	Quantifying Hair Loss	65
2.7.1	Daily Hair Counts	65
2.7.2	Hair Wash Test and Modified Wash Test	67
2.7.3	Office-Based Computer-Assisted Image Analysis.	67
2.8	Hair Database Sheet	69
	Further Reading	70
3	Diagnosis and Treatment	75
3.1	Male Androgenetic Alopecia	75
3.1.1	Pathobiology of Androgenetic Alopecia	75
3.1.2	Androgens, Androgen Metabolism, and the Androgen Receptor	76
3.1.3	Genetic Involvement	78
3.1.4	Gene Polymorphism Diagnostics in Androgenetic Alopecia	79
3.1.5	Syndromatic Androgenetic Alopecia	80
3.1.6	Premature Alopecia	80
3.1.7	Clinical Presentations and Classifications	81
3.1.8	Comorbidities of Male Androgenetic Alopecia	87
3.1.9	Evidence-Based Pharmacologic Treatments	89
3.1.10	Autologous Hair Transplantation	93
3.1.11	Miscellaneous Treatments	94
3.2	Effect of Cigarette Smoking and UV Radiation	98
3.2.1	Effect of Cigarette Smoking on Hair Growth	98
3.2.2	Effect of UV Radiation on Hair Growth and Scalp Condition	101
3.2.3	Diffuse Red Scalp Disease	102
3.2.4	Erosive Pustular Dermatitis of the Scalp	103
3.2.5	Actinic Field Cancerization of the Bald Scalp	105
3.2.6	Hair Photoaging	107
3.3	Telogen Effluvium	109
3.3.1	Pathologic Dynamics of Hair Loss	110
3.3.2	Seasonal Hair Shedding	112
3.3.3	General Medical Problems Affecting the Condition of Hair	114
3.3.4	Drug-Induced Hair Loss	117
3.3.5	Antitumor Necrosis Alpha Therapy-Induced Alopecia	118

3.4	Hair Aging	119
3.4.1	Rare Premature Aging Syndromes.	120
3.4.2	Graying	121
3.4.3	Senescent Alopecia	123
3.4.4	Age-Related General Medical Problems Affecting the Condition of Hair.	124
3.4.5	Possibilities and Limitations for Reversal of Age-Related Pigment Loss	127
3.4.6	Possibilities and Limitations for Reversal of Age-Related Hair Loss	129
3.4.7	Dorian Gray Syndrome	131
3.5	Alopecia with Scarring Phenomena.	133
3.5.1	Inflammatory Phenomena and Fibrosis in Male Androgenetic Alopecia.	134
3.5.2	Male Frontal Fibrosing Alopecia.	135
3.5.3	Fibrosing Alopecia in a Pattern Distribution (Cicatricial Pattern Hair Loss).	135
3.5.4	Inflammatory Scarring Alopecias	136
3.5.5	Treatment	143
3.5.6	Alopecia Mucinosa	147
3.5.7	Alopecia Neoplastica	149
3.6	Dystrophic Anagen Effluvium	149
3.6.1	Alopecia Areata	150
3.6.2	Thomas More Syndrome	150
3.6.3	Treatment Algorithm for Alopecia Areata.	152
3.6.4	Postoperative Pressure Alopecia	157
3.6.5	Temporary Radiation-Induced Epilation Following Neuroradiologically Guided Embolization Procedure	158
3.6.6	Recommendations for Care to Minimize Scalp Reaction to Radiation.	158
3.7	Chemotherapy-Induced Hair Loss	158
3.7.1	Patterns of Chemotherapy-Induced Hair Loss.	159
3.7.2	Possibilities for Prevention or Reversal of Chemotherapy-Induced Hair Loss.	160
3.7.3	Side Effects from Molecularly Targeted Therapies for Cancer	161
3.8	Toxic Alopecia	162
3.8.1	Amalgam Illness	163
3.9	Loose Anagen Hair and Short Anagen Hair of Childhood	164
3.9.1	Loose Anagen Hair	164
3.9.2	Short Anagen Hair	165

- 3.10 Psychocutaneous Disorders of the Hair and Scalp 165
 - 3.10.1 Classification 166
 - 3.10.2 Psychophysiological Disorders 167
 - 3.10.3 Folliculitis Necrotica 167
 - 3.10.4 Primary Psychiatric Disorders 168
 - 3.10.5 Neurotic Excoriations of the Scalp 171
 - 3.10.6 Imaginary Hair Loss (Psychogenic Pseudoeffluvium) 174
 - 3.10.7 Delusion of Parasitosis (Ekbom’s Disease) 176
 - 3.10.8 Trichotillomania 177
 - 3.10.9 Factitial Dermatitis of the Scalp 179
 - 3.10.10 Chronic Cutaneous Sensory Disorders 181
 - 3.10.11 Trichodynia 182
 - 3.10.12 Trichoteiromania 184
 - 3.10.13 Adjustment Disorders 185
- 3.11 Concept of Multitargeted Treatment 186
 - 3.11.1 Value of Nutritional Supplementation Therapy 186
 - 3.11.2 Targeting the Inflammatory Component in Androgenetic Alopecia 187
 - 3.11.3 Combination Treatments 191
- Further Reading 195
- 4 Follow-up 217**
 - 4.1 Global Photographic Assessment 217
 - 4.2 Hair Loss-Related Life Quality Index 218
 - 4.3 Patient Compliance Issues 219
 - Further Reading 221
- 5 Patient Expectation Management 223**
 - 5.1 Beyond Evidence-Based Medicine 223
 - 5.2 Listening to the Patient 224
 - 5.3 Tackling Side Effects 227
 - 5.3.1 Nocebo Effect 232
 - 5.3.2 Post-Finasteride Syndrome 233
 - 5.4 Cosmetic Camouflage and Hair Prosthesis 235
 - Further Reading 236
- 6 Hair Care and Cosmetics 239**
 - 6.1 Hair Weathering 240
 - 6.2 Shampoos 241
 - 6.2.1 Shampoo Surfactants 242
 - 6.2.2 Shampoo Additives 244
 - 6.2.3 Shampoo Conditioning Agents 244
 - 6.2.4 Shampoo Active Ingredients 245
 - 6.2.5 Dandruff 247
 - 6.2.6 Seborrheic Dermatitis of the Scalp 250
 - 6.2.7 Methods for Measuring Efficacy of Hair Care Products 252
 - 6.2.8 Product Safety 252

6.3	Conditioners	253
6.4	Hair Styling Aids	253
6.5	Hair Dyes	253
6.6	Cosmetic Treatment for Aging Hair	254
6.7	Adverse Effects of Cosmetic Hair Treatments.	256
6.7.1	From Inappropriate Washing: Hair Matting.	256
6.7.2	From Inappropriate Drying: Bubble Hair	259
6.7.3	From Inappropriate Styling: Cosmetically Induced Hair Beads	259
6.7.4	From Contact Sensitivity: Allergic Contact Dermatitis	259
	Further Reading	260
7	Epilogue: Male Hair in the Bible	263
7.1	Old Testament	263
7.1.1	Tzaraath Breaking Out on the Head.	263
7.1.2	Samson and Delilah	265
7.1.3	Absalom	266
7.1.4	Elisha and the Two Bears.	267
7.2	New Testament.	268
7.2.1	1 Corinthians 11:14	268
7.2.2	The Error of the Long-Haired Jesus?	269
	Further Reading	272
	Name Index	273
	Subject Index	275

Hair is the first thing. And teeth the second. Hair and teeth. A man got those two things he's got it all.

James Brown (1933–2006)

The face, including the cranial hair, represents an area of our body with a high impact on our social interactions. It is strongly associated with individual identity, and it communicates to others immediately information on our age, gender, individual, and group identity. Since our craniofacial presentation affects our self-perception, it has a bearing on our social behavior as well.

American sociologist Rose Weitz pointed out that the most prevalent cultural rule about hair is that women's and men's hair must differ from each other.

1.1 Symbolism of Male Hair

Hair has been significant to human civilization at all times and in all cultures in terms of symbolism for strength, sexuality, and magic. Throughout the ages people have represented through craniofacial characteristics their identities with respect to a wide range of social phenomena: religious, political, sexual, occupational, etc. Hair not only symbolizes the self but is itself a part of our body. Therefore, its condition also reflects our general health and mental status. Accordingly, any change in the appearance of our hair can be expected to have a major impact on the way we are perceived, on our self-perception, and ultimately on our well-being.

More specifically, the male expresses his ideologies and status in his hair. The biblical story of Samson and Delilah (Judges 16) shows how important a man's hairstyle can be. Short or long, loose or taut, men's hairstyles have passed through many stages throughout history. At most times and in most cultures, men have worn their hair in styles different from women's.

During most periods in human history when men and women wore similar hairstyles, as in the 1920s and 1960s, it has therefore generated significant social concern and approbation.

A hairstyle refers to the manner of arranging human scalp hair. Its aesthetic considerations are determined by a number of factors, such as the individual's physical attributes and desired self-image or the hairstylist's artistic intentions. Physical factors include natural hair type and growth patterns, face and head shape, and overall body proportions. Self-image may be directed toward conforming to mainstream values, identifying with distinctively groomed subgroups, or following religious rules.

Early in human civilization, voluntary cutting of one's hair has been related to spiritual expression: In Ancient Egypt, the priests of Amun-Ra shaved their heads, and wealthy men or members of the royal elite would cover their shaven heads with elaborate headdresses. Upon reaching manhood, Greek youths sacrificed their hair to the river. In ancient Rome, haircutting was a puberty ritual, with spiritual significance.

In stark contrast, the Germanic tribes Teutons and Celts refrained from haircutting in order to differentiate themselves from their shaven slaves.

Upon subduing the Gauls, who associated long hair with male dignity and liberty, Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) required them to cut their hair as a token of submission. That abundant hair symbolized power presented a problem for Caesar himself, since his hairline was gradually receding. First, he began growing it long in the back and combing it straight forward over his bald spot.

Ultimately, Caesar took to wearing a laurel wreath around his head to conceal his hair loss. The trademark wreath soon became a symbol of power and authority.

Following the downfall of the Roman Empire, most of Europe adopted the hair of the Germanic peoples. During the reign of the Merovingian dynasty, King Chlodio V (395–448) was nicknamed “Le Chevelu” because he wore his hair longer than most of his predecessors. During this time, long locks were a symbol of status. Royalty wore their hair long while members of the lower classes either had short hair or shaved heads.

During the English Civil War (1642–1651), the followers of Oliver Cromwell decided to crop their hair close to their head, as an act of defiance to the curls and ringlets of the king’s men. This led to the Parliamentary faction being nicknamed *Roundheads*.

In the seventeenth-century France, wearing a long wig was a sign of status, made popular by the French Kings Louis XIII (1601–1643) and Louis XIV (1638–1715). Louis XIII began wearing a wig to cover his thinning hair. Soon, members of the court followed his example, regardless of their own hair condition. Louis XIV, also known as “Le Roi-Soleil” (the Sun King), made public appearances and frequently posed for portraits in a long, dark brown wig with loose waves. Wigs became symbols of wealth and power, and the height, length, and bulk of wigs increased accordingly, with giant powdered wigs setting the trend in the French court.

In England, King Charles II (1635–1685) was restored to the throne after his exile in Versailles, France, where he had been exposed to the French

fashioning of wigs. During the Restoration period following Cromwell, the English were soon not to be outdone. Charles II was popularly known as the Merry Monarch, in reference to both the liveliness and hedonism of his court and the general relief at the return to normality after over a decade of rule by Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans.

Around 1710, in the Rococo era, the long-flowing *allonge* wigs went out of fashion, and hairdos stayed close to the scalp. Except for a few locks around the forehead, the main part of the hair (natural or artificial) was brushed to the back. Later on, some people wore a pigtail modelled on the hairstyle of the Prussian soldiers, a hairstyling still fashioned today by designer Karl Lagerfeld. He is well recognized around the world for his trademark white hair, black glasses, and high starched collars.

In the Americas, upper class American colonists picked up the wig fashion, and by the late eighteenth century, wealthy people wore wigs to signify their elevated class. Not until the American War of Independence (1775–1783) and in France the subsequent Revolution (1789), the look of royalty and elevated class distinction together with wigs fell out of favor.

At the end of the eighteenth century, men of fashion began to wear short and more natural hair, sporting cropped curls and long sideburns in a classical manner much like Grecian warriors and Roman senators.

A scarcity of flour to powder the wigs in 1795, combined with the introduction of a hair powder tax to raise state revenues, brought the fashion for wigs and powder to an abrupt halt. Men protested and a new more natural hairstyle became fashionable. The *Bedford Crop* became a hairstyle favored by the Duke of Bedford, who, in protest to the tax, abandoned his wigs in favor of a short cropped and unpowdered hairstyle. He challenged his friends to do the same. His natural-looking crop was parted on the side with a dab of hair wax.

The Romantic movement also influenced a natural, unpretentious aesthetic. A dry disordered look that used very few artificial products began to rule.

Dandy prototype Beau Brummel's (1778–1840) influence cannot be discounted: His own grooming included shorter hair and a clean-shaven face. Every morning he examined his face in a dentist mirror and plucked any remaining stray hairs with tweezers. Brummel was to become an iconic figure in Regency England, and the arbiter of men's fashion. He established the mode of dress for men that rejected overly ornate fashions for one of understated, but perfectly fitted and tailored clothing. Brummell is credited with introducing, and establishing as fashion, the modern men's suit, worn with a necktie. He claimed he took 5 h a day to dress and recommended that boots be polished with champagne.

The history of the Chinese dynasties is one of repeated conquests by foreign powers, who assimilated genuine Chinese culture but repressed the autochthonous Han Chinese. Upon subduing the Ming in 1644, the Manchus (Qing Dynasty, 1644–1912) imposed the partly shaven head and pigtail upon the Han men as a sign of submission. Breaking with tradition was dramatically put into scene in Bertolucci's epic cinema film "The Last Emperor" (1987), when young Emperor Puyi (1906–1967, reign 1908–1912) cuts off his pigtail.

In the 1920s, Actor Rudolph Valentino (1895–1926) lighted up the silver screen with his defined side part and glossy jet black hair in such films as "Beyond the Rocks" (1922) and "The Young Rajah" (1922). Western men soon began to wear their hair short, and either parted on the side or in the middle or combed straight back, and used pomade, creams, and tonics to keep their hair in place.

Finally, the crew cut originated when Yale rowing team members started to cut their hair short, presumably with the intention to differentiate themselves from members of the football team, who wore their hair longer for extra padding under their thin leather helmets. During World War II, soldiers sported crew cuts to help control head lice in their tight quarters.

In his monograph on *The Unconscious Significance of Hair*, psychoanalyst Charles Berg reviewed the anthropological literature on hair and developed Freud's insights into a cross-cultural theory of hair practices.

According to Berg, hair has practically no other significance except as a sexual symbol, and there is no normal individual without some degree of hair fetishism.

In a spiritual context, hair has been recognized to have two perceived symbolic meanings: shaven hair is a symbol of celibacy and chastity; in contrast, uncut hair is seen as a withdrawal from worldly concern and vanities. Sometimes long hair represents a concession to religion, such as in the Sikh religion, although today it has also become a symbol of identity. Ultimately, shaving the head is found in many faiths and cultures as a symbol of dedication to God, seen in ancient Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as in Christianity.

The Roman Catholic rite of admission to the clerical state by clipping or shaving the head of monks provides yet another example. In his Letter to the Corinthians, Apostle Paul indicates that it is unnatural and degrading for a man to wear long hair. A synod held at Elvira in 309 AD forbid women to associate with long-haired men, under penalty of excommunication. Therefore, any man aspiring recognition as a good Christian, as well as one simply seeking the consortium of a religiously respectable Christian woman, was provided with a motivation to trim his hair.

Today, long hair, especially in men, is often understood to signal ideological opposition to the establishment. People commonly make personality attributions that relate to intelligence, personality, social aptitudes, or deviation, based simply on appearance. Cutting the hair is understood to indicate submission to social control, whereas long hair suggests an intent to evade the rules and restrictions of society or institutions.

In the 1950s, Beat poets wore longer hair-styles, as did the urban gay culture, although long hair was far from popular. In 1960, a small *beatnik* community in Newquay, Cornwall, England, attracted attention by growing their hair to a length past the shoulders, resulting in a television interview on BBC television.

The 1960s also introduced "The Beatles," who initiated a more widespread trend toward longer