



HAIR DISORDERS

UPDATE ON THE POST-FINASTERIDE CONTROVERSY

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Since the release of finasteride, 1mg, for the treatment of male pattern hair loss in the United States over 20 years ago, there have been a number of post-marketing reports, retrospective analyses and case reports/case series that report patients experiencing side effects while taking finasteride, or after having stopped finasteride, that persisted after discontinuation of the medication. This has led to changes in the labelling of finasteride, in a number of countries, including the United States, to include mention of the possibility of persistence of side effects being reported in a subset of patients.

In the original, double blind, placebo controlled studies conducted with finasteride, 1 mg, for the treatment of male pattern hair loss, a number of reversible sexually related adverse effects were described. However, persistence of side effects, or the appearance of side effects after stopping therapy, was not reported. Given this, there remains controversy in the literature as to the existence of a cause and effect relationship between these post-marketing, retrospective reports and their causative relationship to the drug itself.

In order to help understand the current understanding of the controversy concerning the cause and effect existence of a constellation of symptoms (e.g., decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, depression, oligospermia) referred to as the post-finasteride syndrome, this presentation will review the history of the controversy and look at the current understanding of the findings in the literature.

