

Finasteride: Side effects profile will be more rigorous

Editor's note: This English translation was done by a third party. The original report can be accessed at [Pharmazeutische Zeitung](#).

There is a known risk of mental and sexual disorders that result from treatment with the 5- α -reductase inhibitor finasteride. In a Red Hand Letter, the manufacturers of the drug request that patients treated with finasteride be informed about existing reports of mood changes, depressive mood, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Among the side effects listed in the specialized information and leaflet, "anxiety" has been added as a symptom. For 1mg preparations used to treat androgenetic alopecia, the side effect of "depressive mood" was changed to "depression" last year.

Patients should be monitored for mental symptoms. If symptoms occur during treatment for hair loss, patients should discontinue use and seek medical advice. If the disorders occur during treatment for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), the physician treating must be consulted.

Patients should also be aware of the risk of sexual dysfunction, including erectile dysfunction, ejaculation disorder, and decreased libido. According to the product insert, such problems are common when using finasteride 5mg in at least one in 100 patients; and occasionally with 1mg use: in at least one in every 1000 patients. According to case reports, symptoms can last for more than ten years after discontinuing finasteride.

Because of the risks, the benefits of finasteride treatment, especially in androgenetic alopecia, should be carefully and individually estimated for each patient. The Drug Commission of German Pharmacists (AMK) asks pharmacists to inform patients appropriately and report adverse drug reactions at www.arzneimittelkommission.de.

Read also:

[Red-Hand-Letter from 05.07.2018](#)