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Editor's note: This English translation was done by a third party. The original digital story can be accessed [here](#).

The dangerous drug: Finasteride use for hair loss

Alopecia. Is it wise to risk one's life or one's health for a purely cosmetic condition? The question arises incessantly with regard to finasteride, a drug approved to fight hair loss in humans.

These 1-milligram tablets, sold under the name Propecia and in various generic forms, has been available since the late 1990s, and is intended to fight androgenic alopecia, the most common form of male hair loss.

Each person has about 100,000 hairs, and naturally loses between 25 and 100 per day. Multiple causes can precipitate an increase in such loss. Androgenic alopecia is one of them. It leads to miniaturization of the hair in the center of the skull; the anterior region and the temples become bare. While most men accept this aesthetic imperfection, for some it touches off severe psychological and social repercussions.

Erectile dysfunction. Finasteride treatment, prescribed for mild or moderate alopecia, must be taken daily without fail—and forever—because its effectiveness ceases as soon as patients stop taking it. Because the density of hair on the top of the skull increases by only about 10%, the treatment is minimally effective.

By contrast, finasteride exposes patients the risk of erectile dysfunction, ejaculation disorders, low libido, testicular pain and gynecomastia, and may even cause breast cancer. It diffuses into seminal fluid so that the use of a condom is required in men with a partner who is or may become pregnant, because of a risk of abnormality in male fetuses.

Last but not least, suicidal thoughts and depression are regularly reported by users.

In France in early 2019, patients with serious adverse effects questioned the value of this product. On October 1, the National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products (ANSM) brought together patient representatives and health professionals to develop an educational document for users.

Would not it be wiser to stop the career of this dangerous drug and far from being miraculous?