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

Is Topical Finasteride a Better Alternative to Treat Alopecia?

A new topical finasteride medication, Fynzur, has come to market for prescription use. The medication is applied directly to the scalp, and the manufacturer claims that its safety profile is comparable to that of a placebo.

By Desiree Aberle, pharmacist

Androgenetic alopecia is thought to be caused by either an excessive concentration of dihydrotestosterone (DHT) or by hair roots that are overly sensitive to this androgen. Finasteride, a 5 α -reductase inhibitor, blocks the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone, leading to a decrease in the serum concentration of DHT.

According to the drug's leaflet, oral therapy with finasteride 1 mg may have occasional side effects, including reduced libido, depression, erectile dysfunction, and ejaculation disorders. In some cases, these symptoms, including insomnia or anhedonia, can persist even years after discontinuing finasteride, known as post-finasteride syndrome.

This syndrome is highly distressing for those affected, and there are currently no effective treatment options available. Therefore, it is worth considering whether local application to the scalp could reduce the risk of side effects.

Finasteride in a spray

As an alternative to oral finasteride, several European countries have approved solutions containing finasteride for external use, such as Caretopic in Italy. While there is no such approval in the USA, telemedical service providers offer topical finasteride, often in combination with minoxidil, after an online consultation that includes a prescription.

Recently, Fynzur for men 2.275 mg/ml, a prescription-only spray containing finasteride, has become available in Germany. It can be used once a day in men between the ages of 18 and 41 with mild to moderate androgenetic alopecia. In a double-blind, randomized-controlled phase III study, topical finasteride (n = 105) was tested against placebo (n = 97) and oral finasteride (n = 48) over 24 weeks (intention-to-treat population).

The effectiveness of topical finasteride was significantly better than placebo and similar to oral finasteride. The incidence and type of adverse events did not differ significantly between topical finasteride and placebo. Maximum finasteride plasma concentrations were more than 100-fold lower with topical finasteride than with oral therapy. DHT serum levels were reduced by 34.5 percent with topical therapy vs. 55.6 percent with oral administration.

The authors of the study conclude that the likelihood of systemic side effects is lower with topical therapy. However, the non-profit organization Post-Finasteride Syndrome Foundation has case reports on PFS with only topical use of finasteride, so patients should still be made aware of this possibility during the consultation.

Literature

Summary of product information for finasteride 1 mg. As of November 2020

New: Fynzur is now available in all pharmacies. Press release Dr Kaske, January 30, 2023

Piraccini BM et al. Efficacy and safety of topical finasteride spray solution for male androgenetic alopecia: a phase III, randomized, controlled clinical trial. *J Eur Acad Dermatol Venereol* 2022;36(2):286-294

What is PFS? Frequently asked questions. Information from the Post-Finasteride Syndrome Foundation, accessed February 3, 2023