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Side Effects: Hair Growth with Consequences

Post-finasteride Syndrome as Reflected in Science

It is not uncommon for safety signals from new active ingredients to appear only after a drug has been approved. This is true of finasteride: the first cases of post-finasteride syndrome appeared more than 10 years ago. Young men have reported persistent sexual and psychological side effects after taking the 5-alpha reductase inhibitor. However, the phenomenon has not yet been scientifically proven. Here is an update on possible explanations.

By Tony Daubitz

Many men who see their hairline disappearing in the mirror turn to their dermatologist with concern. In most cases, this can quickly confirm that the hair loss is androgenetically in nature, i.e., it is caused by hypersensitivity of the hair follicles to dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a harmless but mostly unaesthetic phenomenon of aging. Finasteride, which prevents the conversion of testosterone into the harmful DHT by 5-alpha-reductase and prevents the hair from falling out, has been approved to treat this condition since 1997. Finasteride mainly inhibits the type II and type III isoforms of reductase, which are found mostly in the prostate, skin and brain. The related dutasteride also inhibits the type I isoform that is expressed, for example, in the brain and skin [1]. The recipe for the effective substance is quickly issued and hair loss is halted for the time being...