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## Homoeopathic approach in autoimmune disease with case report: Alopecia

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### Abstract

*Alopecia areata* is a chronic inflammatory autoimmune disease involving the hair follicles in genetically predisposed individuals. Most of the times it is easy to make clinical diagnosis on the basis of presence of smooth patch of hair loss with no scarring, inflammation or scaling. It is believed to be an autoimmune disorder where the body cannot recognize its own cells, resulting in the subsequent destruction of the hair follicles. The efficacy of the available treatment is not adequate and remission of hair follicles is unpredictable. However, individualized homeopathy has shown great results in treating AA.

**Keywords:** Autoimmune hair loss, alopecia diagnosis, homeopathy for alopecia, reversible hair loss, individualized homeopathy, scalp bald patches, hair regeneration

### Introduction

Alopecia is condition occurring when immune system attack hair follicles and causes hair loss. Alopecia can be diffused or localized, temporary or permanent. Alopecia is Auto Immune condition affecting hair loss. It can affect both gender and all ages. Alopecia is rather a Sign than a diagnosis. Alopecia is broadly classified as Non Scarring & Scarring. A detailed history, physical examination and focused evaluation are necessary to determine the underlying cause, which helps in management properly.

### Etiology

**Etiology varies according to type and subtypes of alopecia.**

**1. Non Scarring Alopecia:** Hair follicles are preserved in non-scarring alopecia, thus hair loss is possibly reversible, and hair growth and regeneration is possible.

### Non Scarring Alopecia include

- **Androgenetic Alopecia:** Pattern hair loss include Physiological Male pattern hair loss & female pattern hair loss. Male pattern hair loss typically represents either receding front hairline, loss of hair on crown & vertex. Female pattern hairloss represents as diffuse thinning of hair across entire scalp occur after menopause.
- **Alopecia areata:** Spot baldness, this is non scarring condition appears as sharply defined Bald Patches on scalp, during active hairloss pathognomic "Exclamation mark" hairs are seen(broken off 3-4mm long, taper off towards scalp). May affect eyebrows, eyelashes, beard. Alopecia totalis is complete loss of scalp hairs & Alopecia universalis is total loss of all hairs.
- **Tinea capitis:** Fungal Scalp Infection, usually affects children, causing patchy hair loss with some scaling. Anthropophilic fungal infection (spread from child to child) account for major cause. Endothrix infection (within hairshaft) Eg-Trichophyton tonsurans cause uninflamed patchy baldness with hair breakage at skin surface ("Black Dot"). Ectothrix (outside shaft infection) by species of fungi such as *Microsporum audouinii* show minimal inflammation. Accurate diagnosis and identification of culprit fungus allows treatment and control of spread of fungus.
- **Telogen Effluvium:** Its non-inflammatory acute or chronic alopecia usually affecting the entire scalp in both gender in children, adolescents and adults. There is disruption in transition phase from anagen to telogen phase, hair loss occur approximately after 3months after triggering events, lasts for about 6 months.

## 2. Scarring Alopecia

Hair follicles are irreversibly destroyed in scarring alopecia leading to permanent hair loss. Most common scarring alopecia are FFA (Frontal fibrosing alopecia) & LPP (Lichen planopilaris)

- **FFA (Frontal fibrosing alopecia):** These are characterized by slowly progressive symmetric band of frontal hairline alopecia and primarily affects postmenopausal women. About 25% patients reports

itching, pain in affected area sometimes condition is also asymptomatic.

- **LPP (Lichen planopilaris):** Commonly affects women and initially presents with perifollicular erythema & follicular hyperkeratosis, evolving to single or multifocal patches of irregular alopecia on scalp vertex. Causes include localized scleroderma, radiation therapy, chemical or physical trauma, bacterial and chemical infections.

### Multiple causes includes

Autoimmune diseases	Hashimoto thyroiditis, vitiligo, SLE, diabetes mellitus type, 1 myasthenia gravis, ulcerative colitis, celiac disease.
Genetic cause (42%)	Male type & female type baldness (androgenic alopecia)
Environmental causes	Pollutants, microorganisms, viruses, radiations
Physical, Emotional, Mental stress.	
Medications	Anti-coagulants, Anti-hypertensives, Beta blockers, ACE inhibitors, Anti-depressants.
Radiation therapy to head	
Others	Hair pulling habits, wrong hairstyling, excess use of chemical induced cosmetic products over hairs.

### Pathophysiology

Immune trigger at hair follicles. Production of inflammatory reaction. Secretion of Interferon Gamma (INF Gamma) & Interleukin 15 (IN-15). These activate target immune cells via JAK-STAT signaling pathway. Inflammatory cells (CD4+T & CD8 +T) target Hair Follicle Matrix epithelium. Thus hairs undergo early cortical differentiation/anagen hair prematurity. Hairs characterized by thin proximal bulbar end than distal end. Hair fall out.

### Clinical features

Gradual thinning of hairs on scalp
Circular or patchy bald spots
Sudden loosening of hairs
Patches of scaling spread over scalp
Full body hair loss.

### Study

1) A 30 years old male presented with scanty hair on scalp, with 2 tiny bald patches on left parietal and sparse hair on right side since 3 months. He had taken allopathic treatment with no relief. In his past history, no major illness also no family history of baldness. Patient was ambithermal, with no bladder or bowel complaints. Desires meat and milk. No specific aversions. Sleeps well and moderate perspiration.

### Mind

Suppressed anger due to some conflicts in the family.

### On scalp examination

Hair, greying. No evidence of any lesion on the scalp.

### Clinical Diagnosis

Patchy Alopecia with premature greying of hair.

	nat-m	phos.	staph.	lyc.	ars.	sil.	graph.	sep.	calc.	aur.	ph.ac.	sulph.	apoc.	calc-p.	ign.	tub.	aur-m-n.	by.	carb.	moni.	aur-s.	trit.ic-vg.	vanil.	kali.c.	alays.	hep.	lach.	mag.c.	merc.	borx.	kali-l.	leues.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	
6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
12	12	11	11	9	9	7	7	8	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	
1. Clipboard 1																																	
1. MIND - AILMENTS FROM - anger - suppressed	(50)	2	1	3	3	1				1	1			2		2		1	2	1	1	1	1		1								
2. HEAD - HAIR - falling	(187)	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3
3. HEAD - HAIR - gray; becoming	(35)	2	3	1	3	2	2	1	1		2	1						1	1	1												2	1
4. GENERALS - FOOD AND DRINKS - milk - desire	(121)	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1		2		1	1	2	1	1	1
5. GENERALS - FOOD AND DRINKS - meat - desire	(163)	1	1	2	1		1	1	1	2	1	2		2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	2	1	1		2	2
6. HEAD - HAIR - falling - spots, in	(29)	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1		2		2	1	1	2							2		2							1



**Follow Up**

Date	Signs and Symptoms	Treatment
16.02.2023	Greying of hair still persistent, no much change of compliants	Staphysagria 30 4 Globules TID X 15 days Nat. Mur 6 X 4 Tablets OD X 15 days
03.03.2023	Tiny hair growth on right side of the scalp	Staphysagria 30 4 Globules TID X 1 month
12.04.2023	Greying of hair reduced. New hair growth seen over left as well as right parietal region.	Staphysagria 30 4 Globules TID X 1 month
11.05.2023	Greying of hair ↓↓ Two bald patches over left parietal almost disappeared	Staphysagria 30 4 Globules TID X 1 month
14.06.2023	No graying of hair. New hair growth over entire scalp.	Staphysagria 30 4 Globules TID X 1 month
11.07.2023	Bald patches almost disappeared. No graying of hair.	Staphysagria 30 4 Globules TID X 1 month
10.08.2023	Complaints NIL with much improvement in hair growth.	Placebo 4 Globules TID X 1 month

**Results**

Over an observation period of 5 months, beneficial result from homoeopathic medicine was seen, and so can be used by physicians in treating *Alopecia areata* as a complementary health practice.

**Conclusion**

Considering the multi-factorial etiology of *Alopecia areata*, HOM medicine and the auxillary line of treatment are effective in treating *Alopecia areata*.

**Conflict of Interest**

Not available

**Financial Support**

Not available

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