

News & Comments

First Oral Drug approved for Alopecia

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Hair loss sufferers have hope. More than ten million people worldwide suffer from alopecia.

Scalp hair loss is usually caused by the condition. Children afflicted by alopecia also suffer from hair loss on their faces and bodies, resulting in dreadful consequences.

It is an autoimmune disease. Until recently, no drug could provide relief, but now there is.

An autoimmune disease that triggers sudden hair loss, alopecia areata, has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat with baricitinib, a once-a-day pill developed by Eli Lilly. In 2018, the FDA approved the drug for treating rheumatoid arthritis.

This drug belongs to the class of medicines known as JAK inhibitors. Hair falls out in clumps when the body attacks its hair follicles due to alopecia. An inhibitor of Janus kinase (JAK) interferes with the inflammation pathway by inhibiting the activity of several enzymes. This is the first approved treatment in the United States for this condition.

Baricitinib helps regrow hair by preventing the body's immune system from attacking hair follicles.

During phase III, when the drug was tested on 1,200 patients, 40% of them regrew all or most of their hair, during the 36 weeks. The patients received a 4mg dose of the drug daily.

At the moment, the drug is very costly, 2 mg tablet costs approximately \$2,497.20 for a 30-day supply. Also, it is not for everyone. Since, infections of the upper respiratory tract, headaches, acne, and high cholesterol are among the most common side effects of the drug, the medication should not be taken by people with ongoing infections, cancer, or a history of heart attacks or strokes.

KEYWORDS

Alopecia, hair loss, alopecia areata, baricitinib, inhibitor of Janus kinase (JAK), immune system, hair, FDA, first drug, Biology, Biochemistry, Clinical Trials, Drug Trials, Immune System, Vaccines

