



## British Association of Hair Restoration Surgery

### POSITION STATEMENT

It is the position of the British Association of Hair Restoration Surgery (BAHRS) that male patients should have a consultation with a suitably qualified healthcare professional where the benefits and risks of medications used to treat male pattern hair loss are discussed before they are prescribed, and that prescription-only medication used to treat male pattern hair loss should not be advertised to the general public.

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Alopecia (hair loss) has a number of causes <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hair-loss/>

According to the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD), male pattern hair loss (MPHL) is the commonest cause of hair loss in men. The BAD has guidance for the diagnosis and treatment of male pattern hair loss <https://www.bad.org.uk/pils/hair-loss-male-pattern-androgenetic-alopecia/>

In order to make a definitive diagnosis of MPHL, a full medical history needs to be taken and the patient's scalp needs to be examined although a presumptive diagnosis can often be made from photographs or appearance on video.

**It is the position of the BAHRS that male patients should have a consultation with a suitably qualified healthcare professional before medications used to treat MPHL are prescribed.**

In the UK, there are two licensed treatments for MPHL - 5% topical minoxidil is available over the counter whilst oral finasteride 1mg once a day is a prescription-only medication. There are a number of other medications used to treat MPHL that are either off-label or unlicensed. These include oral dutasteride 0.5mg, oral minoxidil at varying doses, topical finasteride at varying concentrations, topical minoxidil at various concentrations higher than 5%, and intradermal dutasteride at varying concentrations.

The BAHRS encourages its members to keep up to date with, and comply with, all guidance relevant to their prescribing practice.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) issued an update on oral finasteride in April 2024 <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/finasteride-reminder-of-the-risk-psychiatric-side-effects-and-of-sexual-side-effects-which-may-persist-after-discontinuation-of-treatment>.

The update provided advice for healthcare professionals to give to patients and caregivers which included warning that oral finasteride has been associated with depression, suicidal thoughts and sexual dysfunction (including decreased libido and erectile dysfunction). It also recommended that patients should be screened for a history of depression or suicidal ideation, that they should be monitored for psychiatric and



sexual side effects, that they should be advised to stop taking the oral finasteride if they develop depression or suicidal thoughts, and that they should see a doctor if these occur.

**It is the position of the BAHRS that the risks of oral finasteride should be discussed when recommending it to patients with MPHL and that healthcare professionals who prescribe oral finasteride to patients should follow them up for psychiatric and sexual side effects.**

The General Pharmaceutical Council issued an update on oral finasteride in October 2024

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/about-us/news-and-updates/regulate/update-provision-finasteride>

This update acknowledged that online pharmacies provide medications without seeing patients and gives guidance on how this should be done.

**The BAHRS does not endorse the provision of prescription-only medications to treat MPHL, which can have serious side effects, on the basis of a completed online form.**

The BAHRS expects its members to comply with advertising laws in the UK.

The UK government has regulations about advertising medicines <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advertise-your-medicines> This states that you can advertise over the counter medication but you can't advertise prescription-only medicines (POMs) to the general public.

**It is the position of the BAHRS that prescription-only medications used to treat male pattern hair loss should not be advertised to the general public.**