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Hair Therapy & Transplantation

ISSN: 2167-0951

Commentary

Genetic Causes of Hypotrichosis and its Diagnosis

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DESCRIPTION

Hypotrichosis is a rare genetic disorder characterized by reduced hair growth, which may be partial or complete. It can affect various areas of the body, including the scalp, eyebrows, eyelashes, and body hair. Hypotrichosis may be congenital, meaning present at birth, or it may develop later in life. This condition can be a source of significant emotional distress for those affected, as it can affect self-esteem and quality of life. There are several different types of hypotrichosis, each with its unique symptoms and underlying causes. Congenital hypotrichosis is the most common form of the disorder and is caused by genetic mutations that affect hair growth. This type of hypotrichosis may be inherited in an autosomal dominant or recessive manner. In autosomal dominant inheritance, the affected person has one copy of the mutated gene, and the other copy is normal. In autosomal recessive inheritance, both copies of the gene are mutated. Another type of hypotrichosis is acquired hypotrichosis, which develops later in life and can be caused by a variety of factors, such as medication side effects, hormonal imbalances, or autoimmune disorders. Acquired hypotrichosis can affect hair growth on various parts of the body, including the scalp, eyebrows, and eyelashes. Symptoms of hypotrichosis vary depending on the type and severity of the condition. In congenital hypotrichosis, affected individuals may be born with little or no hair on their scalp, eyebrows, and eyelashes. Body hair may also be sparse or absent. In some cases, hair growth may be normal at birth but may gradually diminish over time. Acquired hypotrichosis can cause hair loss or thinning on the scalp, eyebrows, and eyelashes. The hair loss may be patchy or diffuse and may occur suddenly or gradually over time.

Diagnosis of hypotrichosis is usually based on physical examination and medical history. A dermatologist or geneticist may examine the affected individual to determine the extent and pattern of hair loss and may perform genetic testing to identify any underlying genetic mutations. Blood tests may also be performed to rule out any underlying medical conditions that may be contributing to hair loss. Treatment options for hypotrichosis depend on the underlying cause of the condition. In some cases, no treatment may be necessary, and affected individuals may choose to wear wigs or hairpieces to improve their appearance. For some types of hypotrichosis, medications may be prescribed to stimulate hair growth, such as minoxidil or finasteride. These medications may be applied topically to the scalp or taken orally. However, these medications may not be effective for all individuals and may have side effects. Hair transplant surgery is another treatment option for hypotrichosis, which involves taking hair follicles from a donor site on the scalp and transplanting them to the affected area. This procedure is typically performed by a dermatologist or plastic surgeon and can be an effective treatment for some individuals with hypotrichosis. In addition to medical treatment, there are also several lifestyle changes that individuals with hypotrichosis can make to help manage their condition. Eating a healthy diet rich in vitamins and minerals that promote hair growth, such as vitamin C, biotin, and iron, may help improve hair growth. Avoiding harsh hair treatments, such as coloring or perming, may also help prevent further damage to the hair. Living with hypotrichosis can be challenging, as it can affect an individual's self-esteem and quality of life. Support groups and counseling may be helpful for individuals with hypotrichosis to connect with others who are going through similar experiences and to receive emotional support.

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Received: 14-Feb-2023, Manuscript No. HTT-23-22974; **Editor assigned:** 17-Feb-2023, Pre-QC No: HTT-23-22974 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 06-Mar-2023, QC No: HTT-23-22974; **Revised:** 13-Mar-2023, Manuscript No: HTT-23-22974 (R); **Published:** 20-Mar-2023; DOI: 10.35248/2167-0951.23.13.202

Citation: Goh C (2023) Genetic Causes of Hypotrichosis and its Diagnosis. Hair Ther Transplant. 13:202.