

Diagnosis and Management of Cicatricial Alopecia

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DESCRIPTION

Cicatricial alopecia is a type of hair loss that occurs when inflammation damages the hair follicles, leading to permanent scarring and hair loss. It is also known as scarring alopecia and can affect both men and women of all ages. This condition is relatively rare, affecting less than 3% of the general population.

Causes

Cicatricial alopecia is caused by inflammation that destroys hair follicles and replaces them with scar tissue. The exact cause of this condition is unknown, but it is believed to be related to an autoimmune disorder, genetics, or environmental factors. Some of the underlying conditions that may contribute to cicatricial alopecia include lupus, lichen planus, folliculitis decalvans, and frontal fibrosing alopecia.

Symptoms

The symptoms of cicatricial alopecia can vary depending on the severity and location of the scarring. Some people may notice small patches of hair loss, while others may experience more widespread hair loss. The affected area may be itchy, painful, or have a burning sensation. In some cases, there may be redness or swelling around the affected area.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis of cicatricial alopecia typically involves a physical examination of the affected area and a review of the patient's medical history. A dermatologist may also perform a scalp biopsy to examine the hair follicles and surrounding tissue. Blood tests may also be ordered to rule out underlying medical conditions.

Treatment

Unfortunately, cicatricial alopecia cannot be cured, and hair loss from this condition is permanent. However, there are treatments available that can help to slow the progression of hair loss and

manage the symptoms. Topical treatments such as corticosteroid creams or ointments can help to reduce inflammation and slow the progression of hair loss. In some cases, injections of corticosteroids may be used to target specific areas of scarring. Oral medications such as hydroxychloroquine or mycophenolate mofetil may also be prescribed to suppress the immune system and reduce inflammation. For some patients, hair transplantation may be an option. This involves taking healthy hair follicles from one area of the scalp and transplanting them into the affected area. However, this procedure may not be suitable for all patients, and it is important to discuss the risks and benefits with a dermatologist or hair restoration specialist.

Prevention

There is no known way to prevent cicatricial alopecia, but early diagnosis and treatment can help to slow the progression of hair loss and manage the symptoms. It is important to seek medical attention if you notice any unusual hair loss or changes in the appearance of your scalp.

Living with cicatricial alopecia

Cicatricial alopecia can be a challenging condition to live with, especially if the hair loss is widespread. Many people find that wearing wigs, hats, or scarves can help to boost their confidence and feel more comfortable in public. It is also important to practice good self-care and manage any underlying medical conditions that may contribute to the development of cicatricial alopecia. This may include maintaining a healthy diet, managing stress levels, and avoiding harsh chemicals or styling products that may irritate the scalp. Cicatricial alopecia is a rare but serious condition that can cause permanent hair loss. While there is no known cure, early diagnosis and treatment can help to slow the progression of hair loss and manage the symptoms. It is important to seek medical attention if you notice any unusual changes in your hair or scalp, and to work closely with your dermatologist to find a treatment plan that works.

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Received: 07-Feb-2023, Manuscript No. HTT-23-22991; **Editor assigned:** 10-Feb-2023, Pre-QC No: HTT-23-22991 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 27-Feb-2023, QC No. HTT-23-22991; **Revised:** 06-Mar-2023, Manuscript No: HTT-23-22991 (R); **Published:** 13-Mar-2023; DOI: 10.35248/2167-0951.23.13.201

Citation: Park H (2023) Diagnosis and Management of Cicatricial Alopecia. Hair Ther Transplant. 13:201.

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