

Time elapsed between onset of alopecia symptoms to the time of seeking care

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Introduction

- Alopecia has negative impacts on an individual's psychosocial well being and quality of life.¹
- Patients may delay seeking treatment for their alopecia for several reasons.
- Objective: Herein, we examine the relationship between onset of alopecia symptoms to the time of patients seeking care.

Methods

- A retrospective chart review was conducted at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) on 361 patients.
- Inclusion criteria: 18 years of age, history of hair loss, and no history of seeking care for hair loss prior to initial visit at VCU medical center.
- Variables examined: Age, sex, race, associated symptoms, and time elapsed between patient-reported onset of symptoms and time of seeking care.
- Statistical analyses: bivariate analysis, chi-square test for categorical variables, and non-parametric Wilcoxon tests for continuous variables.

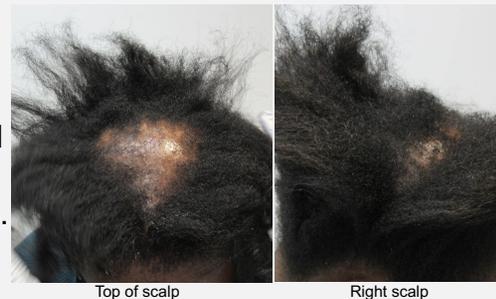
Results

- The Cox model showed no significant effect of patient age, sex, type of alopecia, and symptoms of alopecia on time elapsed between onset of alopecia and time of seeking care.
- Black/African American patients were less likely to report onset of alopecia early when compared to other racial groups (hazard ratio:0.566, 95% confidence interval:0.398, 0.807).



Figure 1. Female pattern hair loss (non-scarring).

Figure 2. Cicatricial Alopecia (scarring).



Discussion

- Race of patients was identified to be associated with time elapsed between onset of symptoms to time of seeking care.
- Black or African American patients presented to the clinic later for their alopecia when compared to other races.
- Black or African American patients have expressed concerns that physicians do not understand their hair, which may account for this delay in seeking treatment.²⁻⁴
 - Other reasons may be due to limited access to care and historical mistrust of the health care system.³⁻⁵
- **Conclusion:** Mitigating this delay in seeking treatment is crucial in preventing consequences of hair loss, such as negative impacts on self-esteem or irreversible scarring.

References

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