
Subject: Hirshburg (2016). Adverse Effects and Safety of 5-alpha Reductase Inhibitors. A Systematic Review

Posted by [vmPFC](#) on Wed, 19 Oct 2016 19:06:58 GMT

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Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5023004/>

Abstract

Finasteride and dutasteride, both 5-alpha reductase inhibitors, are considered first-line treatment for androgenetic hair loss in men and used increasingly in women. In each case, patients are expected to take the medications indefinitely despite the lack of research regarding long-term adverse effects. Concerns regarding the adverse effects of these medications has led the United States National Institutes of Health to add a link for post-finasteride syndrome to its Genetic and Rare Disease Information Center. Herein, the authors report the results of a literature search reviewing adverse events of 5-alpha reductase inhibitors as they relate to prostate cancer, psychological effects, sexual health, and use in women. Several large studies found no increase in incidence of prostate cancer, a possible increase of high-grade cancer when detected, and no change in survival rate with 5-alpha reductase inhibitor use. Currently, there is no direct link between 5-alpha reductase inhibitor use and depression; however, several small studies have led to depression being listed as a side effect on the medication packaging. Sexual effects including erectile dysfunction and decreased libido and ejaculate were reported in as many as 3.4 to 15.8 percent of men. To date, there are very few studies evaluating 5-alpha reductase inhibitor use in women. Risks include birth defects in male fetuses if used in pregnancy, decreased libido, headache, gastrointestinal discomfort, and isolated reports of changes in menstruation, acne, and dizziness. Overall, 5-alpha reductase inhibitors were well-tolerated in both men and women, but not without risk, highlighting the importance of patient education prior to treatment.
