PEARLS

Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

What is the best treatment for alopecia areata?

Clinical Question	How effective and safe are treatments for alopecia areata (AA) in children and adult?
Bottom Line	Amongst the interventions evaluated, only baricitinib compared to placebo resulted in a beneficial impact on short and long-term hair regrowth with high certainty of evidence. However, we found inconclusive results for the risk of serious adverse effects with baricitinib compared to placebo with low certainty of evidence. No additional studies assessed long-term hair regrowth. Minoxidil compared to placebo may increase short-term hair regrowth, although the certainty of the evidence is very low. The remaining interventions showed little to no impact on short-term hair regrowth with low- or very-low certainty evidence.
Caveat	In general, the studies had small sample sizes and were judged to be at high risk of bias Except for baricitinib there was insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of many other treatments. In future studies should be designed with enough participants. This would allow valid and accurate estimates of the efficacy of therapies that have previously shown promising results.
Context	Alopecia areata is a common condition characterised by localised or diffuse hair loss on the scalp or around the body. Almost half of the patients have new hair growth without treatment, but a considerable number of them still require specific treatment. For patients who need medication, there are multiple treatments, including topical therapies, oral treatments, and localised corticosteroid injections.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Mateos-Haro M, Novoa-Candia M, Sánchez Vanegas G, Correa-Pérez A, Gaetano Gil A, Fernández-García S, Ortega-Quijano D, Urueña Rodriguez MG, Saceda-Corralo D, Bennouna-Dalero T, Giraldo L, Tomlinson J, Vaño-Galván S, Zamora J. Treatments for alopecia areata: a network meta-analysis. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2023, Issue 10. Art. No.: CD013719. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD013719.pub2. This review contains 63 trials with a total of 4,817 participants.

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Systematic review link:
https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD013719.pub2/full