Frontal Fibrosing Alopecia and Its Relationship with Facial Care Products: A Cross-Sectional Survey Study

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BACKGROUND

- Frontal fibrosing alopecia (FFA) is a clinically distinct variant of lichen planopilaris and characterized as progressive scarring hair loss of the frontal hairline.
- Symptoms include pruritus, pain, or discomfort.
- Little evidence exists regarding triggers and correlated factors in its pathogenesis.
- Treatment options include finasteride/dutasteride, oral antimalarials, corticosteroids (topical, oral, and/or intralesional), and immunosuppressants such as methotrexate.

METHODS

- In this two-part cross-sectional survey study, an electronic medical record search from a large private community-based dermatology practice was performed identifying patients from January 1, 2005, to December 31, 2017.
- Adults 18 years or older with clinical and pathological diagnosis of FFA and without history of radiation or chemotherapy were included.
- The initial survey collected patient demographics, clinical condition, and potential contributing factors. Respondents that reported using facial care products were further queried in a subsequent survey.

RESULTS

- 49 of the 70 (70%) identified patients completed the initial survey. The mean age was 70.7 years with a median disease length of 3.4 years. The majority of respondents were postmenopausal, Caucasian females. Of significance, 75.5% (37 of 49) reported the use of facial sunscreens. 15 of those 37 respondents (38.5%) completed the second survey. The most reported ingredients included: Avobenzone (86.7%), Oxybenzone (73.3%), Octocrylene (66.7%), Octisalate (66.7%), Homosalate (53.3%), Octinoxate (46.7%), Zinc Oxide (40.0%), Dioxybenzone (6.7%), and Titanium Dioxide (6.7%). 73.3% respondents reported more than three times weekly use. Patients that reported hair loss after product use had a higher reported frequency use compared to those who did not (66.7% and 33.3%, respectively).

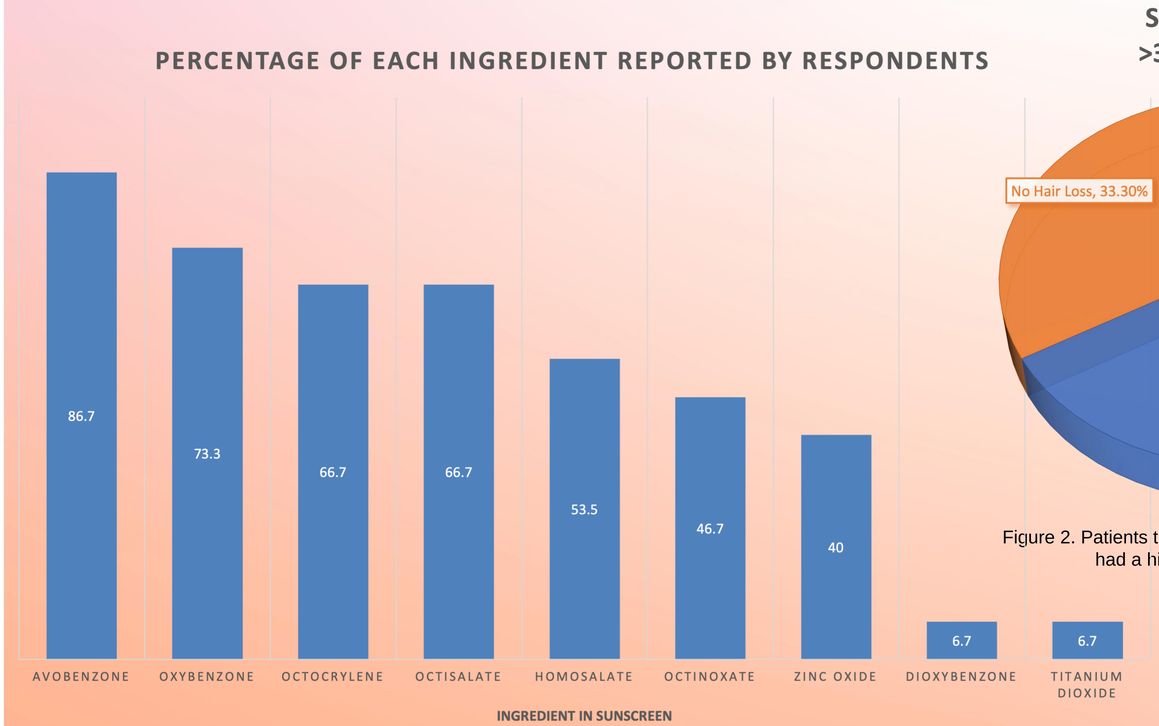

Figure 1. The most reported ingredients in sunscreen by respondents

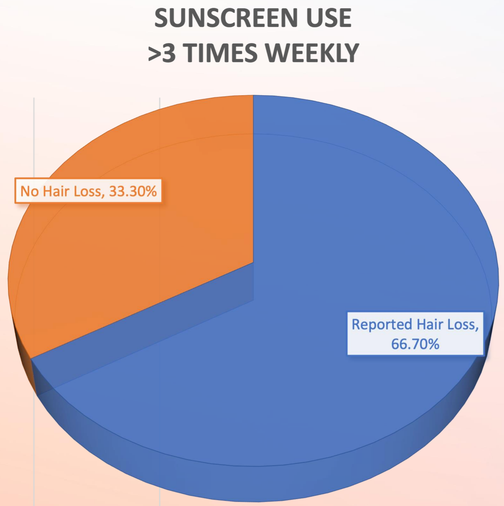

Figure 2. Patients that reported hair loss after product used had a higher reported frequency use

CONCLUSION

- Although no statistically significant correlative relationship was established, our data trended toward a positive relationship.
- Our study with subanalysis identifies and compares active sunscreen ingredients, suggesting a potential relationship with FFA.
- Dermatologists should still recommend sunscreen use and can further explain through published studies how currently no direct causal relationship can be concluded.
- Future research may include longitudinal, prospective studies to monitor sunscreen use and development of scalp alopecia.

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