

Botanical Treatment Fails Trials

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Hair Loss News

Natural botanical treatment showed disappointing data as a treatment for male baldness...Shares in British biotechnology company Phytopharm Plc were rocked on Thursday after one of its products under research showed disappointing data as a treatment for male baldness...The company said intermediate Phase II data did not support the efficacy of P45 cream as a treatment for the condition although it was tolerated well and had a satisfactory safety profile. The news knocked off 162-1/2 pence or around 19 percent off the company's stock price to 700p by 1159 GMT.

The company did not categorically explain why study failed but said the outcome of the study may have been influenced by the large number of patients that failed to complete the 52-week treatment period. It also said there was a high placebo response rate. "We have not met our primary objective of demonstrating a difference between active and placebo groups in this study, and have experienced a large placebo response which has not previously been reported in clinical trials of this condition," said Phytopharm Chief Executive Richard Dixey. Dixey said that the product was still being studied as a treatment for alopecia areata and totalis, a skin disorder that leads to hair loss.

While the results are disappointing, it is good to see that the company was responsible enough to conduct clinical trials to determine its efficacy, rather than just releasing it as another cure for hair loss with no clinical trials whatsoever to back it. The results of these trials further verify the longstanding feeling skeptics have regarding the validity of entirely herbal based, and "natural" treatments for hair loss. Their performance has been lackluster at best in most clinical trials, and they make up the vast majority of snake oils out there on the market today.

It's interesting to note that the placebo group performed nearly as well as the treated group. This goes to show that the "natural solution" did no better than an inanimate substance applied to the skin did. Further interesting to note is the way in which they explained the placebo response. The implication was that there was an unusually high responses in placebo groups for this type of trial, which ruined the significance of results for the treated group. Maybe they should have tested the placebo instead.

Nevertheless, kudos to Phytopharm for having the guts to do a trial, keep a useless product off the shelves, and taking a hit to their stock price all in the name of good business.

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