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## FOLLICULITIS DECALVANS AND LICHEN PLANOPILARIS

### FOLLICULITIS DECALVANS

Folliculitis means inflammation of the follicles. Decalvans is the latin for "to cause baldness". Folliculitis decalvans is baldness associated with folliculitis. It is a slowly spreading inflammatory condition whereby destruction of the hair follicles gives rise to round or oval patches of permanent baldness.

A distinctive variant of folliculitis decalvans is tufted hair folliculitis whereby several hair shafts emerge from one hair follicle. This is because the deeper parts of some follicles are spared when their mid portions are destroyed by the inflammatory process. The hairs therefore find an intact follicle through which to emerge. Scarring is evident between the emerging tufts.

The cause is thought to relate to an abnormal immune response, possibly directed at staphylococci antigens in the hair follicle. Staphylococcus aureus is associated with the folliculitis.

Treatments include indocil, oral rifampicin plus oral clindamycin, 100 mg dapsone daily, flucloxacillin, nadifloxacin, erythromycin, and zinc sulphate (50 mg daily). A treatment that helps one person may not help another.

L-tyrosine, two grams daily, can also be effective in controlling folliculitis decalvans scarring alopecias.

### LICHEN PLANOPILARIS (LICHEN PLANUS)

Lichen refers to the specific type of skin lesion, which is a solid papule or pimple. Lichenisation describes the development of the lichen-like lesions on the skin. Lichen planus is a general term describing the eruption of lichen on the surface (plane) of the skin. Lichen planopilaris draws its name from the piliary apparatus, or hair follicle, and is the term applied to follicular lichen planus occurring in adults.

A similar problem to lichen planus is termed frontal fibrosing alopecia, which is characterised by scarring at the front and sides of the scalp, and is usually seen in women in their 50s or 60s. At a glance, it can look similar to genetic recession in women, but a careful examination will quickly indicate that the hair follicles have been destroyed.