

Cosmetic Interventions for Scalp Psoriasis: Efficacy and Patient Satisfaction

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Introduction

Scalp psoriasis, a chronic and inflammatory skin condition, can cause significant discomfort and impact quality of life. Its visibility on the scalp often leads to emotional distress, including low self-esteem and social anxiety. While various medical treatments are available, cosmetic interventions have emerged as a less invasive alternative or complement to pharmacological therapies. This article examines the efficacy of cosmetic interventions for scalp psoriasis, with a focus on patient satisfaction. We review current research on cosmetic products such as shampoos, topical creams, serums, hair dyes, and camouflage techniques, exploring their role in managing symptoms, improving appearance, and enhancing quality of life for individuals affected by scalp psoriasis.

Scalp psoriasis is a form of psoriasis that affects the scalp, leading to red, inflamed, and often scaly patches of skin. The condition can be challenging to treat due to the delicate nature of the scalp's skin and the complexity of the disorder. Psoriasis is linked to abnormal immune responses and skin turnover, but the exact etiology remains unclear. Despite the availability of various treatment options, patients with scalp psoriasis often seek solutions that address the cosmetic impact of the condition, such as scaling, flaking, and hair thinning. Cosmetic interventions, which range from topical treatments to specialized shampoos and styling techniques, aim to improve the appearance of the scalp while potentially offering symptomatic relief. This article reviews the efficacy of these cosmetic interventions and evaluates their impact on patient satisfaction.

Description

Scalp psoriasis shares the same pathophysiological basis as other forms of psoriasis. The condition is driven by an immune system dysfunction, which leads to accelerated skin cell turnover and the formation of plaques. These plaques may be covered by silvery scales that shed easily, contributing to visible flaking. Scalp psoriasis can also lead to hair thinning or loss in severe cases. The chronic nature of the disease, combined with its visibility, often causes significant psychological distress for individuals, emphasizing the need for effective treatments that address both the physical and emotional aspects of the condition. Cosmetic treatments for scalp psoriasis can be categorized into several broad areas: medicated and non-medicated topical products, shampoos, camouflage techniques, and hair care routines. Below, we examine each category's efficacy and its impact on patients' quality of life. Several topical products are used in the management of scalp psoriasis, some of which have cosmetic benefits while also offering therapeutic effects.

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While not purely cosmetic, topical steroids and vitamin D analogues, such as calcipotriol, are often recommended for treating scalp psoriasis [1-3]. These treatments can reduce inflammation, scaling, and redness, indirectly improving the appearance of the scalp. However, long-term use can lead to side effects such as skin thinning, which may be a concern for some patients. Coal tar has been a staple in treating scalp psoriasis for decades due to its anti-inflammatory and anti-pruritic properties. Products like tar-based shampoos and ointments can effectively reduce scaling and flaking, although they may have an unpleasant odor and cause staining of clothing or bedding, which can detract from their cosmetic appeal. Numerous over-the-counter shampoos and creams designed specifically for scalp psoriasis are marketed to reduce symptoms like flaking and scaling. These include those containing ingredients like salicylic acid, zinc pyrithione, or ketoconazole. Salicylic acid works by exfoliating dead skin, while zinc pyrithione has antifungal properties. These products can improve the appearance of the scalp, but their effectiveness may vary depending on the severity of the psoriasis. Cosmetic camouflage techniques help hide the visible symptoms of scalp psoriasis, improving the patient's appearance and boosting confidence. These techniques often focus on concealing scaling, redness, and thinning hair.

Products like hair fibers and scalp concealers are popular for masking areas of thinning or hair loss. These products can be applied directly to the scalp to create a fuller appearance. While they do not address the underlying psoriasis, they offer immediate visual improvement and improve the patient's self-esteem. Various cosmetic products, such as tinted sprays or powders, are available to cover red patches and visible scales. These products are designed to blend with the natural color of the hair, offering an instant cosmetic improvement. However, these products can be difficult to apply evenly and may wear off during the day, requiring reapplication.

Hair care routines play a crucial role in managing the appearance of scalp psoriasis. Patients are often advised to use gentle, non-irritating hair care products to avoid exacerbating the condition. Recommended hair care practices include Patients should avoid harsh shampoos or those containing alcohol, which can irritate the scalp. Instead, moisturizing shampoos that soothe the scalp and reduce inflammation are recommended. Hot water can irritate the scalp, so patients are encouraged to wash their hair with lukewarm or cool water to prevent flare-ups. The efficacy of cosmetic interventions for scalp psoriasis depends on the severity of the condition, the chosen product, and the patient's response. Studies have shown that non-medicated shampoos and creams containing salicylic acid or zinc pyrithione can effectively reduce symptoms, especially in mild to moderate cases. Coal tar and steroid-based treatments remain highly effective for managing inflammation and scaling but may not always align with the patient's desire for a cosmetic solution [4,5].

In terms of patient satisfaction, cosmetic interventions are often preferred for their immediate, visible results. Many patients report improved quality of life after using products like hair fibers, scalp concealers, and gentle shampoos. These products allow them to manage the appearance of their scalp without the need for aggressive medical treatments. However, the success of these interventions can vary, with some individuals experiencing temporary relief while others may find limited efficacy. Patient satisfaction with cosmetic interventions largely depends on the severity of the condition, ease of use, and the extent to which these products improve the appearance of the scalp. For patients with mild to moderate scalp psoriasis, cosmetic treatments can significantly enhance self-esteem and reduce feelings of embarrassment or

social anxiety. Many patients find that their quality of life improves when they can manage visible symptoms without relying on more invasive treatments. Products that are easy to apply and require minimal effort are more likely to be preferred by patients. Interventions that provide lasting effects are more favorable, as patients are less likely to experience flare-ups. Some products, such as coal tar or certain shampoos, may cause side effects like odor or staining, which can reduce patient satisfaction.

Conclusion

Cosmetic interventions for scalp psoriasis offer a valuable tool for managing the visible symptoms of this chronic condition. While these treatments are not a substitute for medical therapies, they provide significant benefits in terms of patient satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life. The efficacy of these products varies, with some offering temporary relief from scaling and flaking, while others, like hair fibers and scalp concealers, help patients feel more confident by masking the appearance of psoriasis. A combination of cosmetic interventions alongside medical treatments may be the most effective approach for improving both the physical and emotional impact of scalp psoriasis. Future research should focus on developing new cosmetic products that not only improve the appearance of the scalp but also offer therapeutic benefits without compromising patient satisfaction.

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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