

Letter to the Editor

Further to my article, "Successful treatment of grey hairs with high dose calcium pantothenate" published in the *Ind J Derm Vener and Leprol* 47 : 311, 1981, I have so far studied 19 cases of premature grey hairs. These patients were mostly girls between the ages of 13 and 25 years. Each patient was given 2 tablets of calcium pantothenate (50 mg per tablet) twice a day. The results were assessed at intervals of 6 months after treatment, to find out if there is a significant increase in the number of converted hairs compared to the number before the start of the treatment.

Out of 19 cases, 6 patients showed a good response, 10 patients showed only a marginal response, while 3 patients showed almost no improvement. It thus seems that calcium pantothenate is not effective in all the patients. The reason(s) for the lack of response in some cases are not known.

Majority of the patients have a hereditary background and premature greying seems to be far commoner among Punjabis. Some patients have a large number of spontaneous converted hairs; so it is essential to be careful in attributing the beneficial results to the treatment used.

There are at present no means to predict whether a particular patient is likely to benefit from the treatment or not. The best thing seems to be to examine the scalp for the presence of spontaneous converted hairs (before starting the treatment) and compare this number with the converted hairs which appear after the treatment. If there is a significant increase in the number of converted hairs, the treatment can be continued further. It is important to remember that the hairs grow at the rate of 1 cm per month and therefore it is essential to continue the treatment for at least 6 months before its effect is evaluated.

So far, no side effects attributable to calcium pantothenate have been noticed in any of the patients treated. The maximum duration of treatment has been more than 4 years, and in some cases, it is still being continued.

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