

A Viagra follow-up? Drug used to treat glaucoma actually grows human hair

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If you're balding and want your hair to grow back, then here is some good news. A new research report appearing online in The *FASEB Journal* shows how the FDA-approved glaucoma drug, bimatoprost, causes human hair to regrow. It's been commercially available as a way to lengthen eyelashes, but these data are the first to show that it can actually grow human hair from the scalp.

"We hope this study will lead to the development of a new therapy for balding which should improve the quality of life for many people with hair loss," said Valerie Randall, a researcher involved in the work from the University of Bradford, Bradford, UK. "Further research should increase our understanding of how hair follicles work and thereby allow new [therapeutic approaches](#) for many hair growth disorders."

To make this discovery, Randall and colleagues conducted three sets of experiments. Two involved human cells and the other involved mice. The tests on human cells involved using hair follicles growing in organ culture as well as those taken directly from the human scalp. In both of these experiments, the scientists found that bimatoprost led to [hair growth](#). The third set of experiments involved applying bimatoprost to the skin of bald spots on mice. As was the case with [human cells](#), the drug caused hair to regrow.

"This discovery could be the long-awaited follow up to Viagra that middle-aged men have been waiting for," said Gerald Weissmann, MD, editor-in-chief of The [FASEB Journal](#). "Given that the drug is already

approved for human use and its safety profile is generally understood, this looks like a promising discovery that has been right in front of our eyes the whole time. On to the front of our scalp!"

More information: *FASEB J* [doi:10.1096/fj.12-218156](https://doi.org/10.1096/fj.12-218156)

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