

Researcher finds association between finasteride and decreased levels of alcohol consumption

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Researcher Michael S. Irwig, M.D., F.A.C.E., assistant professor of medicine at the George Washington University (GW) School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) and director of the Center for Andrology at The GW Medical Faculty Associates, found that men who used the medication finasteride (Propecia) and developed persistent sexual side effects, are also drinking less alcohol than before.

This research will be published in the journal, *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*. While robust literature exists on the interaction between finasteride and [alcohol](#) in rodents, this is the first study to examine the role of finasteride in alcohol consumption in humans with male pattern hair loss. The findings from this research are consistent with the findings from research in rodents, identifying that finasteride has the ability to modulate alcohol intake.

"Finasteride use leads to decreased concentrations of important hormones in the brain called neurosteroids. Because this is a preliminary report, further research is needed on the effects of finasteride in the human brain," said Irwig. "This is an important step towards better understanding the breadth of side effects in humans from the drug finasteride."

Irwig administered standardized interviews to 83 otherwise healthy men who developed persistent sexual side effects associated with finasteride,

despite the cessation of this medication for at least three months. Information regarding [medical](#) histories, sexual function, and alcohol consumption before and after taking finasteride was collected. Of the 63 men who consumed at least one alcoholic drink per week prior to starting finasteride, 41 men (65 percent) noted a decrease in their alcohol consumption after stopping [finasteride](#). Twenty men (32 percent) reported no change in their alcohol consumption and two men (3 percent) reported an increase in [alcohol consumption](#).

Provided by George Washington University

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