

Women’s hair loss: Navigating the patient’s experience and emotional journey

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Introduction & Objectives

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Hair loss impacts women at different stages of life. There is typically a delay in treatment from the first time a patient realizes hair loss and thinks to start treatment, to when they start, and when they wish they had started treatment.
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Dermatologists’ expertise is generally sought long after patients have exhausted alternative options to minoxidil treatment and have grown frustrated with their hair loss. The patterns in treatment approach varies on a broad spectrum, which opens the opportunity to bring awareness, enlighten patients & healthcare professionals (HCP), and provide guidance towards earlier interventions.
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Previous research have highlighted areas to better understand the hair loss journey in women, which prompted the execution of follow-up surveys aimed to gather information on attitude and patterns in hair loss journey.

Materials & Methods

An online survey was conducted in the United States with 1200 participants. The response of 800 females aged 25-65 years who have seen signs of increased hair loss in past 12 months was assessed.^{1,2,3.}

Results

Women generally experience barriers to early minoxidil use: expense, adverse events, preference for natural solutions, and commitment to long-term use. In women, the delay to hair loss treatment is usually psychological, where there is denial in accepting that there is a hair loss problem.

Women who tried hair loss products in the past year were more likely to experience an emotional journey. They reported extreme concerns about losing their hair (62%), fear (68%), low self-esteem (57%), shame (59%), and guilt (50%). However, positive emotions were seen in their approach to hair loss as they were more hopeful (43%), open to trying new products (75%), and open to seeking advice from a dermatologist (52%). Women who did not try products were not as likely to experience many emotions as 24% reported extreme concerns about losing their hair (Fig. 1).

On average, 47% of non-triers reported fear, low self-esteem, shame, and guilt compared to 65% of triers of hair loss products.

Women acknowledged that earlier use of minoxidil is better, but data show that there is a three-year gap between when they wish they had started from when they started using minoxidil (Fig. 2).

Screening for women who have seen increase in hair loss in the past year, 19% acknowledged a hair loss problem, 46% described it as hair shedding, 22% reported they are not sure if they have a hair loss problem, and 13% denied having a problem (Fig. 3). After acceptance, patients try multiple hair loss treatment options that fail before seeking the help of a dermatologist.

The survey showed that 50% of women who acknowledged they had a hair loss problem have tried hair loss products, while 23% of non-acknowledgers tried products. Women who attempted to try products for hair loss were more likely to have experienced more hair loss issues with higher severity, more scalp issues such as irritation and dryness, more likely to seek professional advice, and more likely to believe hair loss can be managed, and early treatment is best.

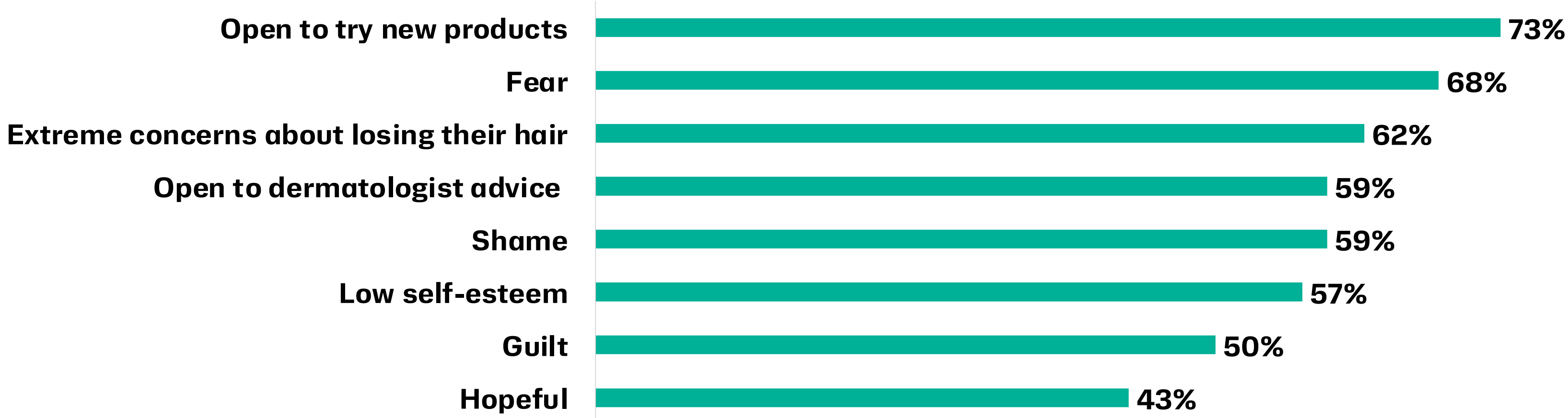


Figure 1. Emotional journey of women who tried hair loss products in the past year.

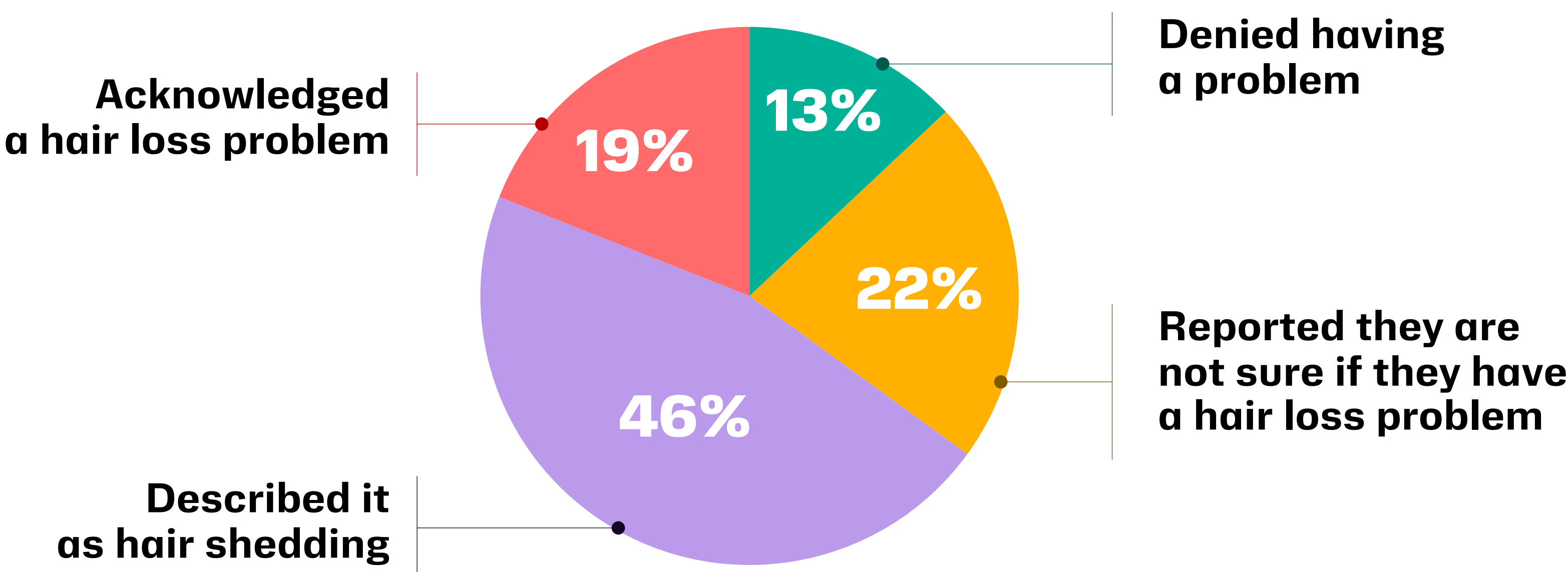


Figure 3. Screening for women who have seen increase in hair loss in the past year

Approximately
how old were you when ...?

Female

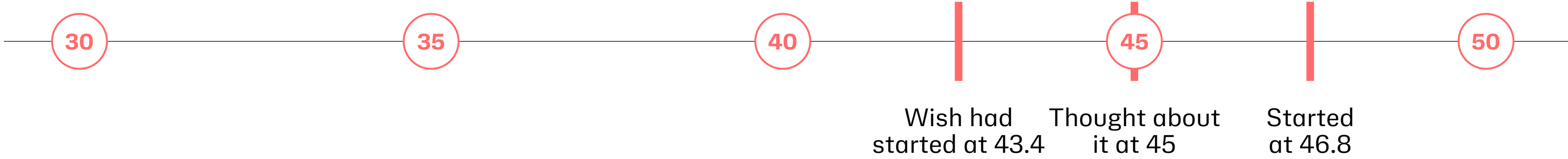


Figure 2. Timeline showing gap of when women wish they had started and when they started using hair loss products.

Conclusion

Hair loss treatment in women is multifaceted, and the path to meeting hair regrowth goals has shown to be emotional for patients. Providing evidence-based information and placing effort towards the desensitization of the stigma surrounding hair loss may be an effective strategy for treatment and compliance in women’s hair loss journey.

Through strategic educational support, the gap to starting hair loss treatment can be filled with minoxidil being considered as a first-line option.

Dermatologists are positioned to create treatment plans and set realistic expectations with a timeline for hair regrowth with their patients.

This survey insight can help HCPs to understand and address some of the challenges patients face as they navigate their hair regrowth journey.

References

1. Numerator Study: Hair Loss Consumer Journey. November 2023. Kenvue. 2. Women's Hair Loss Drivers and Barriers 2025. 3. Rogaine US Drivers and Barriers 2025.