Taj Taher

Research Project 1

Assignment 1 – Research Proposal

*The Bare Truth about Androgenic Alopecia*

From a young age, my father has been warning me about taking care of my body. We have a family history riddled with diabetes, chronic heart disease, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and all manner of morbidities. The irony, however, is that the disease I fear above all is not life threatening, nor do I have any control over whether I contract it. Its threat looms over my head (literally), steadily eradicating my self-confidence and my hairline. Such is the potency of Androgenic Alopecia, otherwise known as Male Pattern Baldness.

All jokes aside, I really do believe that MPB could be a fascinating research project. It may not be as high-profile as other diseases, but its prevalence is astounding while its origins remain vague. In researching this topic, I intend to detail the mechanism of hair loss along with its etiology – particularly from a genetic and hormonal perspective. I’ll also look into how our limited knowledge of the disease translates to the kinds of limited treatment options available.

Most important of all, though, is the answer I hope to provide to this question: why do we care? Hair loss is an affliction that, in our society, is simply taken as a sign of aging. Men get taller, men get bigger, and then a lot of men go bald; we don’t give it a second thought. But there’s a lot that MPB might tell us, not just socially or psychologically, but about the mysteries of the human body. It seems strange that in an age where we can war with viruses or traverse the cosmos, the most widely used medication for hair loss was discovered on accident (and not the penicillin kind of “accident” either). At the very least, if this project accomplishes anything, it will be allowing me to make peace with my fate, and accept the baldness.

Taj, I think this is an awesome topic and I can’t wait for you to entertain us at your presentation! Now, that brings this question in my head: I’ve seen balding women too and was wondering if that is related to “M”PB? That may be something to look into! Good luck!! -- Yuki

Taj, great research proposal – you are a fantastic writer and drew me into your topic from the very start. If this translates at all to your presentation, you will do a fantastic job! It would be interesting to know if women balding is from the same types of issues that men experience – it wouldn’t hurt to see if you can find any information on that, just to anticipate audience questions at the end of your presentation. I think focusing on MPB is great and you should be able to get into details within your 5 min. limit. I look forward to learning more from you! - Nicole