

# INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE WORK

The dermatologist is often confronted with the problem of diffuse hair loss. Women complaining of diffuse hair loss constituted about 5% of patients coming to a dermatological clinic in Cairo (*Younis, 1990*). Usually the dermatologist is unable to judge the truthfulness of the complaint of diffuse hair loss especially in women and the common causes of the problem are not always easy to determine in the dermatologist clinic without resorting to expensive procedures.

More or less evenly distributed loss of hair occurs continuously but sometimes fluctuates in severity and is common in both sexes. It is seen more frequently in women over the age of 25, either because certain forms occur more often in women or because women are more eager to seek advice (*Rushton, 1993*).

Diffuse hair loss with excessive telogen hair shedding has been associated with a variety of hormonal and nutritional factors. Ingestion of various drugs, exposure to certain chemicals, systemic and local cutaneous disease and psychological stress, some of these associations are well documented, others are often quoted but less well established. Prognosis of hair regrowth is generally good if the cause of the telogen hair shedding can be found and eliminated and if the patient does not have associated androgenetic alopecia (*Olsen, 1994*).

Determining the etiology of diffuse alopecia is usually time consuming. Assessment includes a thorough history of the evolution of the hair loss, review of exposure to drugs and chemicals, dietary history, history of recent illness, family history of hair loss (e.g. androgenetic alopecia), hair grooming procedures, and evaluation for psychological stress. Evaluation of a role of stress is complicated significantly by the fact that hair loss usually provokes at least a moderate stress reaction, therefore, establishing a causal role of stress is difficult and often impossible. Many physicians and many dermatologist find the evaluation of hair loss to be difficult and confusing subject (*Leonard, 1996*).

**Aim of the work :**

The aim of this work is to evaluate the different causes of diffuse hair loss in women.