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Australian hair loss treatment could be worth \$10b plus

Hannah Wootton *Reporter*

Oct 7, 2022 – 4.39pm

An Aussie invention taking the hair loss industry by storm could be worth \$10 billion annually should dermatologists hit an “achievable” uptake target of 2 per cent of balding people in key markets globally, new data shows.

Traditionally used as blood pressure medication, the [use of minoxidil tablets to arrest balding](https://www.afr.com/companies/healthcare-and-fitness/the-australian-scientist-winning-the-hair-loss-battle-20220914-p5bi0i) and regrow up to 20 per cent of lost hair is growing in popularity across the Western world.

The treatment, which is not approved by the Therapeutic Goods Authority, so it can only be prescribed by doctors off-label, was pioneered by Melbourne dermatologist Rodney Sinclair in the late '90s.

He has since run several clinical trials and treated more than 20,000 patients with the medication, with other dermatologists across Australia, the [US and the UK also prescribing it in large numbers](https://www.afr.com/policy/health-and-education/study-shows-treatment-works-for-the-hair-loss-that-disrupted-oscars-20220329-p5a8zn)

[\[https://www.afr.com/policy/health-and-education/study-shows-treatment-works-for-the-hair-loss-that-disrupted-oscars-20220329-p5a8zn\]](https://www.afr.com/policy/health-and-education/study-shows-treatment-works-for-the-hair-loss-that-disrupted-oscars-20220329-p5a8zn).

Research by Samson Clinical shows that revenue from minoxidil pills would hit \$1.7 billion if just one out of every 1000 balding people took it.



Dermatologist Rodney Sinclair pioneered the use of minoxidil pills as a hair loss treatment.

The age-adjusted prevalence of balding among adult men is 45 per cent and for women is 32 per cent, research published by the Society for Investigative Dermatology shows.

The same study found that there are 1.35 billion balding men and 960 million balding women on the planet.

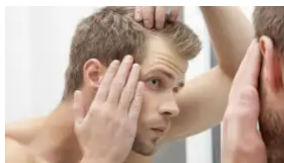
“If only one out of every 1000 balding persons wanted to take minoxidil that is still 2.3 million candidates ... based on a projected unit cost of \$2 per day and that lifelong treatment would be required to maintain efficacy ... that would generate revenue of \$1.7 billion per year,” Professor Sinclair said.

But uptake would likely be much higher in countries that “put a high value on hair”, the doctor added, which could drive the value of the drug north of \$10 billion.

“We believe an uptake of 2 per cent is achievable in developed countries such as the US, Europe and Japan as well as in less-developed countries that put a high value on hair, such as China, India, Brazil, Japan.”

However, he said it was “highly unlikely” uptakes rates would go as high as one out of every 10 balding people.

Professor Sinclair is currently patenting the light dose minoxidil pill in Australia.



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