CHRONIC TELOGEN EFFLUVIIUM

It has been estimated that the scalp normally contains about 1,00,000 hairs and average number of hairs shed daily is 100-150. And each hair grows at the rate of 0.37 mm/day.

The hair follicles undergo a repetitive sequence of growth and rest known as the hair cycle. Period of active growth is known as anagen and this goes on for about 2 to 6 years. Catagen phase is a transitional phase where all growth activity ceases lasting for about 1 to 2 weeks, with the eventual formation of telogen ‘club’ hairs. These telogen hairs are resting hairs which continue in this state for 3-5 months.

In telogen effluvium, there is excessive shedding of resting hairs. If this lasts for more than 6 months, it is called chronic telogen effluvium (CTE).

CTE is described as an idiopathic self-limiting condition without widening of the central parting. It is common in females. There is persistent severe shedding that runs a fluctuating course over several years, described by the patient as a reduction in the thickness of their ponytail or plait volume by up to 50%. The diagnosis of CTE is made by exclusion of other causes of diffuse hair loss.

As mentioned earlier, it is a self-limiting condition which resolves spontaneously over a period of time. The resolution can be hastened by therapy in selected patients although no established treatment has been described. Chronic telogen effluvium does not usually progress to patterned baldness but may be co-existent.