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<b > Introduction of a scalp-cooling system Paxman for hair loss prevention: an Italian experience

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**Objectives:** Alopecia is a distressing and common side-effect of many chemotherapy agents, and prevalent in taxane-based regimens. A series of studies and reviews have considered scalp cooling as a means of reducing this side-effect without definitive results. The aim of our experience was to determine efficacy and patient compliance of scalp cooler Paxman of patients subjected to single agent docetaxel for breast cancer or non-small cell lung cancer. This is the first Italian experience

**Methods:** Eligible patients consenting to scalp cooling therapy complete patient priority scale for chemotherapy related side effects at baseline, in order to define, in this context, the role of the alopecia and before each successive cycle of therapy. Patients are treated with Paxman scalp cooler beginning 30 minutes prior to IV infusion of doxetaxel, and continuing for 45 minutes after infusion completion. After each scalp cooling, patients complete a questionnaire related to tolerance and side effects, including items on discomfort, headaches, anxiety, and any patient identified "other" to permit better description of experience. Hair loss is evaluated by nurses using World Health Organization (WHO) criteria at each chemotherapy cycle.

**Results:** The pilot study is ongoing with 5 patients enrolled to date and 9 chemotherapy cycles with the scalp cooler support. The treatment has been well tolerated, with 1 case of refusal at treatment onset and all others continuing with successive chemotherapy cycles.

**Conclusions:** Providing a means to reduce alopecia is important for patients for whom this is a distressing and feared side effect, and studies are warranted. Early data on patient acceptance to therapy are encouraging. Data on patient symptom priority, efficacy and further data on tolerance will be presented.