

Clinical Pearls

University of Colorado Hospital Pharmacy

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Courtesy of the UCH Pharmacy Residents

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Eyelashes for Sale

As a woman who appreciates good mascara, I was intrigued by the recent FDA approval of Latisse® 0.03% (also known as bimatoprost). Bimatoprost, which is a synthetic prostaglandin analogue, is already on the market under the brand name Lumigan® for the treatment of glaucoma. It has long been reported by providers and patients that Lumigan causes the “side effect” of increased eyelash length, thickness and darkness. So, not to pass up an opportunity for a buck, the drug company sought and recently received FDA approval for this indication. New and improved eyelashes won't come cheap – the drug will cost \$120 for a 30 day supply, and it is available by prescription only. Results take about 16 weeks for full effect, and the effects will only last with continued use of the product.

There are a few side effects that have been reported which may include darkening of eyelid skin and increased brown pigmentation of the iris (which is likely permanent). Itchy eyes and irritation were also reported in the clinical trials. Be careful, because it can promote hair growth to any part of the body it touches! The drug is applied once daily to the lash line with a special single-use applicator, so the patient should be counseled to blot it off any other skin it comes in contact with. Amusingly enough, the phase III clinical trial that was used to approve the drug for this indication used the 4-point Global Eyelash Assessment Scale. This treatment may be helpful for chemotherapy patients who have lost their eyelashes as a result of their treatment.

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