What is the most talked-about subject in the English-speaking world today? Baldness! How do I know? Because there are more synonyms for the word baldness than for any other English word or term.

I refer, of course, to synonyms in essentially standard English, with only a nominal admixture of the mildest colloquial English. If we look at concepts such as drunk, stupid, crazy and prostitute, for example, in his book Words (New York: Delacorte Press, 1982), Paul Dickson lists 2231 synonyms for drunk. However, most of these synonyms are in the category of thoroughly colloquial, slang, or even obscene words and expressions. Compiling lists of such synonyms is an activity that does not belong in the rarefied atmosphere of true logology.

My discovery of the concept of baldness as the synonym kingpin in the realm of genuine logology is the result of my search for the largest single synonym group in standard English. No other concept can be clothed in as many different ways as can that of the absence of hair on one's head. This article presents my synonym list, 145 members strong. The source on which each term is based is given in coded form, to conserve space. The completed list of references follows the text of the article.

The list is intended to be one of genuine synonyms. Works such as Webster’s New Dictionary of Synonyms (Springfield, Massachusetts, 1968) compare and contrast the meanings of words sharing some important semantic element but differing substantially in other respects. Such word groups are not true synonym sets. Genuine synonyms are terms identical or virtually identical in meaning. For example, there is a tropical American mammal known equally well as the COATI, NASUA, PISOOTE, or TEJON. These four words are true synonyms, usable interchangeably. It is synonym groups such as this one that I sought, except on a much larger scale.

I feel certain that no other synonym group within standard English begins to approach the magnitude of the baldness group. On the other hand, I am equally certain that the subjoined list is incomplete. I am particularly concerned about the relative paucity of medical terms included in the list - there must be many more to which I have no access, short of scanning a series of medical dictionaries page by page - a most tedious exercise which simply isn’t my style. I shall, therefore, welcome substantial additions to the following list, contributed by readers with medical expertise.
greater than mine.

Even if you are unable to add to the list, you can now wax eloquent on the subject of baldness as never before. Using only one new term from the list each day, it will take you almost five months to make your first circuit of the list — the first of many, of course!

ABSENCE OF HAIR Baldness (F, see baldness).

ABSENCE OF HEAD HAIR Baldness (O, see baldness).

ACOMIA Baldness (W2).

ACOMOUSNESS The state of being acomous or bald (W2, see acomous). The suffix -ness may be added to any adjective or participle, irrespective of its form or origin (O).

ALOPECIA Baldness (O). The term most frequently used in medical literature. Do not confuse it with alopeke, an ancient Greek helmetlike cap made of foxskin (W2).

ALOPECIA CAPITIS TOTALIS The total loss of head hair (STE). Loss is the privation ensuing from a loss (W2). The qualifier total is understood in the ordinary use of the word baldness.

ALOPECIA MALIGNA Equated with alopecia totalis, which see below (STE). The qualifier complete is understood in the ordinary use of the word baldness.

ALOPECIA TOTALIS Complete loss of head hair (DOR).

ALOPECIA UNIVERSALIS Equated with alopecia totalis, which see above (STE).

ALOPEICALITY; ALOPEICALNESS; ALOPEICLITY The state of being alopecic or bald (DOR, see alopecic). The three terms are, respectively, modeled after tragic-tragicality, tragic-tragicalness, and concentric-concentricity. The suffix -ity is a common termination of nouns of Latin origin or formed after Latin analogy, from adjectives usually but not always of Latin origin or type (C).

ALOPECY Alopecia or baldness (O).

ANAPHALANTIASIS Baldness (F). The dictionary's qualification "especially of the front part of the head" indicates that, at least occasionally, the term refers to general baldness. It has no connection with elephantiasis.

ANAPHALANTIS Anaphalantiasis or baldness (F).

ATRICHIA Alopecia or baldness (W3).

ATRICHIASIS Absence of hair, which equates it with atrichia, above (GOU).

ATRICHICALITY; ATRICHICALNESS; ATRICHICITY The state of being atrichic or hairless (W3, see atrichic; O, see hairless). The three terms are, respectively, modeled after tragic-tragicality, tragic-tragicalness, and concentric-concentricity.
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ATRICHOSIS  Atrichia or baldness (W3, see atrichia and atrichosis).


BALDENING COMPLETED  Baldness (W2, see the verb balden, of which this is the gerund).

BALDHEADEDNESS  Baldness (WOR). See also the definition of bald-headed (W3).

BALSETHNESS COMPLETED  Baldness (W3, see balding).

BALDINESS IN THE EXTREME  Baldness (W3, see baldish).

BALDNESS  The most common lay term for the absence of head hair (MWD).

BALDPATEDNESS  Baldness (WOR). See also the definition of bald-pated (W3).

BALLEDNESS  Baldness (O, see both baldness and balled).

BAREHEADEDNESS  The state of having one's head uncovered (W2). Since hair is the natural head covering (R, see hair), bareheadedness can be construed as baldness.

BARENESS  Bareheadedness, which see above (W3, see bare).

CALLOWNESS  Baldness (W2, see callow and callowness).

CALVEZ; CALVICIE  Spanish terms for baldness (R, page 1769; VEL, Part 1, page 112; VEL, Part 2, page 50). The growing Hispanic element in American society requires recognition of both terms in English contexts. The words are cognate with the English words callow ("bald") and calvities ("baldness").

CALVITIE  A French term for baldness (R, page 1720; LAR, Part 1, page 102; LAR, Part 2, page 49). The frequent use of French in fashionable society requires recognition of the term in English contexts. The word is cognate with the English words callow and calvities.

CALVITIES  Baldness (W3).

CALVITIUM  Baldness (DOR).

CALVITY  Baldness (W2).

CALVOUSNESS  The state of being calvous or bald (W2, see calvous).

CAPILLURGY, COMPLETE  Baldness (STE, page 699, column 1). Capillurgy is the removal of hair. See below depilation, complete.

CHAUVETÉ  A French term for baldness, related to the French adjective chauve ("bald"). See comments under calvité. I do not remember in what reference work I found chauvêté. Please help, readers!

CREW CUT, THE ULTIMATE  Baldness (MWD, see crew cut). A crew cut is a very short haircut, which see below.

DECAVANCE COMPLETED  Baldness (STE, see decalvant). Decalvant means "m. (O) and PA. (ant) in -ant (ant)."

DECAVATION  The action is a term in English contexts.

DELAUROY  Baldness (O).

DEFLATION  Loss of hair. I do not remember in what reference work I found delation. Please help, readers!

DEGLABRATION  The process of depilating.

DEHAIREDNESS  The state of being depilated.

DEPILATION  The process of depilating.

EPILATION  The process of depilation.
trichosis). Baldness is the condition of being bald, of which there are a number of terms in English: baldness, baldheadedness, baldnesses, baldnessy, baldnessy-ness, baldnessy-nesses, and baldnessy-nessy. Baldness is also the absence of head hair.

DECOLVATION means "making bald"; the noun suffix -ance is a living formative (O) and is of Latin origin, forming nouns from adjectives ending in -ant (C).

DECOLVATION, THE END RESULT OF Baldness (W2). Decolvation is the extraction of hair so as to make an individual bald.

DEFLUCTION IN THE EXTREME Baldness (O, see defluxion). Defluxion is a falling off of hair.

DEFLUVIUM Alopecia or baldness (W2).

DEFLUVIUM CAPILLORUM Alopecia or baldness (BLA).

DEFLUXIO CAPILLORUM Alopecia or baldness (GOU, see alopecia).

DEFLUXIO IN THE EXTREME Baldness (STE). Defluxio is a sudden loss of hair.

DEFLUXION IN THE EXTREME Baldness (O). Defluxion is a falling off of hair.

DEGLABRATION COMPLETED Baldness (GOU). Deglabration is the process of becoming bald.

DEHAIREDNESS The state of being deprived of hair, or of being depilated (W2, see the verb dehaired, and participle dehaired).

DEPILATION, COMPLETE Baldness (STE). Depilation is the removal of hair. Removal is the fact of being removed (W2).

DEPILOUSNESS The state of being depilous or hairless (W3, see depilous).

DESTITUTION OF HAIR Baldness (W2, see bald). Destitution is the state of lacking something (W3).

DODDINESS Baldness (F, see the Scottish word doddy). This is modeled after yeukie-yekieness, a Scottish term for the condition of itching (W2).

DODDINESS Baldness (F, see the Scottish word doddy).

DROPACISM, COMPLETE Baldness (STE). Dropacism is the removal of hairs by means of wax or a plaster.

ELECTROLYSIS, COMPLETE Baldness (FAM, page 929). Electrolysis is the permanent removal of hair by means of an electric needle.

EPILATEDNESS The state of having one's hair removed or eradicated: baldness (W2, see the verb epilate, and participle epilated).

EPILATION, COMPLETE Baldness (W3). Epilation is the loss or re-
moyal of hair.

EPILOSENESS; EPILOSITY The state of being epilose or bald (W1, see epilose). Epiloseity is modeled after verbose-verbosity.

FALLING HAIR, THE END RESULT OF Baldness (ROG, see falling hair, page 137, column 1).

FRAGILITAS CRINIUM, EXTREME Baldness (STE, see fragilitas crinium). Fragilitas crinium is the breaking off of head hair. Something that breaks off becomes detached from that to which it is attached, as a head hair from the scalp (AME).

GLABRATENESS The state of being glabrate or without hair (F, see glabrate).

GLABREITY Baldness (F).

GLABRECENCE COMPLETED Baldness (F, see glabrescent). Glabrescence is the process of becoming hairless. Adjectives ending in -ent are usually accompanied by derived nouns ending in -ence (C).

GLABRIFICATION COMPLETED Baldness (GOU). Glabrification is the process of becoming hairless or bald.

GLABROUSNESS Baldness (W3; STE, see glabrous).

HAIRCUT, THE ULTIMATE Baldness (W3, see haircut). A haircut is the hairstyle achieved by cutting.

HAIRLINE RECEDING TO THE NTH DEGREE, A Baldness (W3, see receding hairline under the entry hairline).

HOLACOMIA Total baldness (REV, page 26, column 2).

HYPOTRICHOSIS The entire absence of hair; hairlessness; baldness (GOU, see hypotrichosis). Hairlessness is equivalent to baldness (O).

LACK, HAIR; LACK OF HAIR; LACK OF HEAD HAIR Lack is the absence of something (R). The lack of hair is, therefore, the absence of hair, equated with baldness (F). Lack of head hair is a more explicit concept (AME, see bald).

LAPSUS CAPILLORUM Alopecia or baldness (GOU, see alopecia). The term is, just possibly, an error for lapsus pilorum, the term appearing as a regular entry in other medical dictionaries, even though it is analogous to defluvium capillorum and to defluxio capillorum, both above.

LIPSOTRICHIA, COMPLETE Lipsotrichia is a falling out of one’s hair (REV, page 157, column 2).

LIPSOTRICHIA, COMPLETE Lipsotrichia is a falling out of one’s hair (GOU). Probably a misprint for lipsotrichia, above.

LOSS, HAIR; LOSS OF HAIR; LOSS OF HEAD HAIR Loss is the state of being lost or destroyed (W2). The loss of hair is, therefore, the absence of hair, equated with baldness (F).
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SHAVEDNESS; SHAVENNESS The state of having had the hair severed from one's head: baldness (W3, see shaved and shaven).

SHORNNESS The state of having had one's hair cut off: baldness (W3, see the verb shear, of which shorn is the participle).

SMOOTHNESS The state of being without hair, or smooth (W3). See hairlessness for the equation of the latter with baldness.

THINNESS ON TOP, ULTIMATE Baldness (ROG, see thin on top, page 137, column 2).

TONSURE The state of being shorn of head hair: baldness (W2).

TONSUREDNESS The state of being tonsured or bald (W2, see tonsured).

TONSURING COMPLETED Baldness: the shaving of the head completed (W2, see the verb tonsure, of which this is the gerund).

TRICHOCLASMANIA, THE END RESULT OF Baldness (BLA, see trichoclasmania). Trichoclasmania is an abnormal desire to break off scalp hair. See comments under fragilitas crinium, extreme.

TRCHOKRYPTOMANIA Synonym for trichorrhexomania, which see below (DOR). The infix -krypto- is derived from the Greek kryptos ("secret, hidden").

TRICHOCLASMANIA Synonym for trichorrhexomania, which see below (DOR). The infix -krypto- is derived from the Greek kryptos ("crooked"), which seems incorrect.

TRICHOLOGY UNCHECKED; TRICHOLOGY UNCHECKED Baldness (BLA). Trichologia (or trichology) is the plucking out of one's hair.

TRICOMADESIS, TERMINAL Baldness (BLA, see trichomadesis). Trichomadesis is the falling out of hair that precedes alopecia or baldness.

TRICOMANIA, UNRESTRAINED A synonym for trichotillomania, unrestrained, which see below (BLA).

TRICOPHATHOPHOBIA REALIZED; TRICOPHOBIA REALIZED Chiefly, but found or ending three of the dictionary entries under trichophobiya. Both terms designate undue anxiety and fear regarding hair, its growth, and diseases affecting it. The single most common anxiety regarding hair is the dread of baldness. See comment under peladophobia realized, above.

TRICHORREXIS, EXTREME Baldness (F, see trichorrhexis). Trichorrhexis is an obvious typographical error for trichorrhexis.

TRICHORRHEA, TERMINAL Baldness (W2, see trichorrhea). Trichorrhea is rapidly developing alopecia or baldness.

TRICHORRHESIS, EXTREME Baldness (DOR, see trichorrhexis). Trichorrhexis is the breaking off of one's hair. See comments under fragilitas crinium, extreme, above.

TRICHORRHEXOMANIA UNCHECKED Baldness (DOR, see trichorrhexomania). Trichorrhexomania is a morbid tendency to break one's hairs off by pulling on the roots of the scalp.
hairs off by pinching them with one's fingernails. See comments under fragilitas crinium, extreme, above.

**TRICHORRHOEA, TERMINAL** See trichorrhea, terminal, above (W2).

**TRICHOSCHISIS, EXTREME** A synonym for trichorrhexis, extreme, above (STE).

**TRICHOSIS ATHRIX** Alopecia or baldness (GOU).

**TRICHOSTERECTICITY** Baldness viewed as hair deprivation (GOU, see trichostereticus). The word is derived from the adjective trichostereticus ("causing loss of hair"), on the model of lubricous-lubricity (W2). Note that lubricous is derived from the Latin lubricus. The Greek word steretikos from which the term is partially derived means "depriving." Deprivation is the state of being deprived.

**TRICHOTILLOMANIA, UNRESTRAINED** Baldness (BLA, see trichotillomania). Trichotillomania is an uncontrollable impulse to pull out one's hair.

**TRICHOTOMY, TERMINAL** Baldness (W2, see trichotomist). Trichotomy - a back-formation from trichotomist, "a cutter of hair" - is defined as the cutting of hair. Be careful to distinguish the word from trichotomy, "a dividing into three parts" (W3).

**UNHAIRREDNESS** The state of having been made bald (W3, see the verb unhair, with the participle unhaired).

**VULPIS MORBUS** Alopecia or baldness (GOU, page 59, column 1). The term appears to be a typographical error for morbus vulpis, the term given in boldface type by various medical dictionaries, including this one.

**WITHOUT-HAIRNESS** The state of being without hair, hairless, or bald (FWC, see bald; R, see hairless).

My search for terms describing the absence of head hair has ended on a sad note. First, I had striven for 154 (= 22 x 7) terms, but found only 145. Second, only 17 of the 26 letters of the alphabet appear as initial letters in my list of terms, with the list ending three steps short of the end of the alphabet. Third, five of the dictionary terms located - lapsus capillorum, lipsotrychia, trichokypomania, trichorrhexis, and vulpis morbus - are under varying degrees of suspicion: they are anywhere from possibly to certainly dictionary errors.

In addition, some readers are going to accuse me of a ruthless manipulation of dictionaries to produce the foregoing list. Let them remember that iron-willed determination is needed to achieve spectacular results.
Fifteen of the twenty references cited in this article are extremely well-known. These are identified in abbreviated form. The remaining five references are less well-known and are, therefore, identified fully.

C The Century Dictionary, 6 volumes, 1889-1891
F Funk & Wagnalls New Standard, unabridged, 1963 Edition
FWC Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, 1973
GOU Gould's Medical Dictionary, 5th rev. ed., 1941
O The Oxford English Dictionary, 13 volumes, 1933
VEL Velázquez de la Cadena, Mariano, ed.-in-chief, A New Pronouncing Dictionary of the Spanish and English Languages, Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Company, 1942
W1 Merriam-Webster unabridged dictionary, 1st Edition, 1918
WOR The World Book Dictionary, 2 volumes, 1968 Edition

REFERENCES

One of the most fascinating aspects of the English language is its capacity to build new words from the mere shifting of syllable positions. As a result, the English language is also a rich source of words of deep-bodied rhythms, which, when arranged in the folds between vowels, can convert into stanzas. This process of concealing meaning, which is a challenge to the 13 volumes of The American Heritage Dictionary, can be further illustrated with the following examples:

- The original word, ASPIRE, converts into ASPIRE
- The original word, DESPAIR, converts into DESPAIR
- The original word, PARADISE, converts into PARADISE
- The original word, WOR, converts into WOR

For those interested in the origins of these words, we refer to the 13 volumes of The American Heritage Dictionary. By understanding the process of concealing meaning, we can appreciate the beauty and complexity of the English language.