Baby Boomers Are the Biggest Users of Botox

BY DOUG BRUNK

LAS VEGAS — Dr. Alastair Carruthers remembers a time when the public perceived repeated injections of Botox as an experimental treatment reserved exclusively for the well-heeled crowd.

Today, the people most often requesting Botox treatment for dermatologic conditions are baby boomers who are accustomed to the concept of maintenance and are less concerned about vanity issues, compared with previous generations, he said at the annual meeting of the American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology and Aesthetic Surgery.

"They go to the gym regularly. They look after their diets. Having these same principles applied to their appearance is no great change for them," he said.

Baby boomers also are busy. "They don't have any down time," said Dr. Carruthers, who with his wife, Dr. Jean D.A. Carruthers, pioneered the cosmetic use of Botox.

"They're stressed, but they don't want to look it, and they have increased disposable income," he said.

Worldwide, Botox has 85% of the neurotoxin market while Dysport has much of the remainder, he said.

Despite its popularity and proven safety record over 2 decades of clinical studies, he finds so-called Botox parties a troubling development.

He described such parties as media events, pointing out that "you can't get proper consent because you don't have the individual in an informed consent situation. There's peer pressure, and [the drinking of] alcohol may be involved."

He showed a newspaper clipping of a Canadian dermatologist who applied the product at a Botox party without wearing latex gloves. "Need I say more?" commented Dr. Carruthers, who practices dermatology in Vancouver, B.C.

He went on to note that, while it's hard to imagine new uses for Botox, "I think we'll get better with it. I don't see expanding its cosmetic use. I think the lower face is still a challenge, even for expert injectors."

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DR. CARRUTHERS

Dr. Carruthers does not anticipate a dermal filler on par with Botox being developed in the future, but he noted that "there is certainly going to be increasing competition. Will the product itself be changed? There may be changes to increase purity; they may reduce the human serum albumin that's in there, but I don't see changes to the actual molecule."

He added that short-acting toxins such as BTX-E and BTX-F may be of value postsurgically or after trauma.

"Wouldn't it be great," he asked, "to have a short-acting Botox [to use] when you throw your back out, or if you have spasms in your back and you can't move around? Or you've had surgery and you need to rest an area in the face or elsewhere?"

Dr. Carruthers disclosed that he is a consultant and performs research for Allergan Inc., Merz GmbH & Co., and Biform Medical Inc. ■

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'Microbes have had 3.5 billion years to learn how to adapt. Given sufficient time and drug use, resistance will develop; there are no antibiotics to which resistance has never developed.'

Dr. Theodore Rosen, p. 41