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COVID-19 Vaccine & Dermal Filler/Toxin Guidance

Background

An FDA report "A Review of Efficacy and Safety of Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine" which reported that during the clinical trials of the Moderna vaccine, two people developed facial swelling after vaccination, both of which had a dermal filler treatment prior to receiving the vaccine.

This occurred in a 46-year-old female, who received a dermal filler 6 months prior to vaccine administration and developed facial swelling one day after vaccination. The second individual, a 51-year-old female who received a dermal filler 2 weeks prior to vaccine administration and developed facial swelling 2 days after vaccination. The FDA also reported that a 29-year-old female developed swelling in her lips and has a history of dermal filler injection in the lips, however unknown how long prior to vaccination. This 29-year-old female, reported having a similar reaction after receipt of the influenza vaccine in the past and this reaction was classified by the FDA as medically significant but not considered a serious adverse event.

The FDA reported that it is possible the localised swelling in these cases is due to an inflammatory reaction from an interaction between the immune response after vaccination and the dermal filler. This phenomenon has been reported after other natural infections e.g., after an influenza-like illness and an upper respiratory infection and is a well-known risk within the practice of dermal filler administration.

Therefore, the potential benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine outweigh the very small risk of an immunological reaction to dermal fillers. The current reported side effects have only been observed in the Moderna vaccine trial in 3 out of 15,184 recipients, the incidence of swelling or inflammation is therefore very low at 0.0001%.

Suggested guidance

The responsibility of prescribing and administering dermal fillers and any other aesthetic treatment remains with the prescriber and the trained practitioner administering the filler (if not the prescriber). A prescriber/trained practitioner should be well trained and competent to manage any post treatment complications including having the right interventions to hand in case of an adverse event e.g., Adrenaline injection and oral antihistamines.

Where the prescriber is not the individual administering the treatment and this is being carried out by a trained practitioner under the supervision of the prescriber, we kindly remind all prescribers that they are responsible for the clinical oversight of the patient and must exercise their professional judgement on a case-by-case basis. Having reviewed the FDA report and other guidance, our suggestion to prescribers and practitioners administering dermal fillers is as follows:

- A complete medical history should be obtained prior to any medical intervention and should include a history of COVID-19 infection, COVID-19 vaccination and the flu vaccine.
- Patients should **NOT** be discouraged from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine as the benefits outweigh the very small risk of facial swelling and inflammation if a patient has a history of dermal filler administration.

- Patients should be informed of the FDA findings prior to receiving a dermal filler and informed consent should be provided and documented.

Recent guidance issued by various aesthetic experts within the industry and aesthetic associations is to avoid administering dermal fillers two weeks (at a minimum) before or three weeks (at a minimum) after COVID-19 vaccination.

COVID-19 Vaccine & Botulinum Toxin

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination or infection has effects on other aesthetic procedures, including Botulinum Toxin. However, having reviewed industry guidance we suggest avoiding treatments for one week post vaccine, due to some patients becoming unwell and experiencing flu-like symptoms following vaccination.

Disclaimer: The guidance and findings reported within this document are based on information gathered in March 2021. As information and guidance in regards to this matter will constantly be evolving, please refer to your professional regulator, aesthetic associations and the manufacturer for up-to-date guidance.