

Guiding hand for Botox

Using botulinum toxins cosmetically. Jean Carruthers, Alastair Carruthers. London: Martin Dunitz, 2003 (v + 81 pp + CD-ROM, \$372.00). ISBN 1 84184 217 6.

BOTULINUM TOXIN IS MAINLY known in Australia as Botox, one of its popular trade names. It has become a household word, not so much for its use as an exciting drug in almost every field of medicine, but as a deadly poison that has been somehow transformed into a softener of facial expression lines. This book on its cosmetic uses is a timely work indeed.

Jean and Alastair Carruthers are the mother and father of the aesthetic use of botulinum toxin. Jean, an ophthalmologist, and Alastair, a dermatologist, first noted the softening of expression lines in some patients being treated for oculospasm in the 1980s. From then on, through their relentless application of science and artistry, they have steered the course for the safe treatment of expression lines, initially of the upper face, and more recently those of the mid and lower face and neck.

Botulinum toxin injected in doses used for cosmetic enhancement appears to be a very safe treatment without



much risk to the patient's general health. However, there may be local effects, and the emphasis of this book is very much "safety first" through optimal dosing and careful injection placement. This short text presents the most up-to-date factual information that I have seen, and the accompanying procedural CD-ROM is a most interesting and highly effective teaching aid. Even the most experienced injector will learn tips and tricks from this work.

This book simply and succinctly acts as a step-by-step guide for the injector, but I feel it is being directed to those with some experience, rather than the complete novice — it should not substitute for mentoring and formal training. I would have liked to see the patients in the CD-ROM after their treatment, so the attempted outcomes and their subtleties could have been shown, but otherwise it is a wonderful instructional aid.

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