

Study: Botulinum toxin heals facial scars

August 8 2006

U.S. scientists say treating facial wounds during the early healing phase with botulinum toxin -- Botox -- improves the later appearance of scars.

"Our findings show that botulinum toxin offers an additional tool in preventing the formation of bad scars," said Dr. Holger Gassner, lead study researcher and former Mayo Clinic ear, nose and throat surgical resident. Gassner is currently a fellow in facial plastic surgery at the University of Washington.

"It will give us the option to optimize healing of forehead wounds in the first place and possibly allow us to avoid later surgeries to improve the scar's appearance," Gassner said.

The researchers say Botox is the first medication found to minimize scarring. They said an injection with botulinum toxin early after the occurrence of a wound -- such as trauma from a dog bite or motor vehicle accident -- paralyzes the region, creating a smooth surface in which the wound can heal. That prevents muscle movement from wrinkling the wound site, allowing for a flat surface for healing and leaving a smoother final scar.

The study is outlined in the August issue of Mayo Clinic Proceedings.

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Citation: Study: Botulinum toxin heals facial scars (2006, August 8) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-08-botulinum-toxin-facial-scars.html>

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