

Botox may help ease 'burning mouth' syndrome

April 10 2017



(HealthDay)—Botox, long used to smooth wrinkles, may come to the

rescue for people with a painful condition called burning mouth syndrome.

A new study finds that Botox ([botulinum toxin](#)) "might be an effective, long-lasting, and safe treatment" for the disorder, says a team of Italian researchers.

According to the U.S. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, [burning mouth syndrome](#) is a chronic condition characterized by burning [pain](#) in the tongue, and sometimes the lips or roof of the mouth.

This pain "can last for months or years," the institute says. "Some people feel constant pain every day. For others, pain increases throughout the day. For many people, the pain is reduced when eating or drinking."

Certain medical [conditions](#), such as allergies, thyroid issues or drug side effects, can cause burning mouth syndrome. But in many cases, the condition is caused "by damage to the nerves that control pain and taste," the institute said.

Now, a team led by Dr. Domenico Restivo, of Garibaldi Hospital in Catania, says Botox might help ease the condition.

The small study involved three women and one man, all in their 60s or 70s. All had endured burning mouth syndrome on their tongue and lower lip for at least six months.

Each patient received a total dose of 16 Botox injections into the tongue and lower lip.

"In all patients, pain disappeared within 48 hours," Restivo's group reported. "The beneficial effects lasted up to 16 weeks after injection in

all but one patient, in whom they lasted up to 20 weeks."

In a separate experiment, two additional patients received "sham" treatments—saline injections— and saw no improvement in their symptoms, effectively ruling out a "placebo" effect, the researchers said.

No side effects from the treatment were noted, the team added.

Restivo's team said the positive results from this small pilot study are encouraging. "We believe that these findings should lead to a [larger] randomized trial," they concluded.

The study appears April 10 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

More information: April 10, 2017, *Annals of Internal Medicine*

For more on burning mouth syndrome, head to the [U.S. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research](#).

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Citation: Botox may help ease 'burning mouth' syndrome (2017, April 10) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-04-botox-ease-mouth-syndrome.html>

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