

## **Botox 'can treat sex disorder'**

30th June 2004

Botox can be used to treat a distressing disorder that prevents women having full sex with their partners, it was revealed today.

The injections are normally associated with celebrities who are rumoured to have employed them to keep wrinkles at bay.

But today an Iranian team presented new research showing how the treatment can help women recover from vaginismus.

The psychosomatic condition causes muscle spasms that prevent penetrative intercourse.

An estimated 27,000 women in the UK suffer from the disorder, which can last a lifetime. For some women, the effects can be devastating both for them and their relationships.

### **Psychological origin**

There are many causes of vaginismus, all of which can be traced to a psychological origin. It can be triggered by a traumatic event, abuse as child, relationship problems, or feelings of guilt about sex.

If successful intercourse is achieved, it helps to clear the psychological block behind the condition.

The researchers led by Dr Shirin Ghazizadeh, from Tehran University of Medical Science, found that botox injections can prevent the muscle spasms that cause vaginismus.

Botox is made from botulinum toxin produced by the bacterium which causes botulism food poisoning.

### **Fine lines and wrinkles**

In small controlled quantities it can interrupt nerve impulses and paralyse muscles. Used as a cosmetic treatment, botox smooths out fine lines and wrinkles on the face.

Dr Ghazizadeh's team administered botox to 20 women with an average age of 24 who had failed to respond to previous treatment for vaginismus.

Several injections were given around the vaginal area while the patients were either lightly sedated or under general anaesthetic.

All but two achieved satisfactory intercourse after one or two treatments.

Dr Ghazizadeh told the annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology in Berlin: "We have only had recurrence in one case."

Some of the women had since become pregnant, she added, and none suffered any serious side effects.

Local botox injections were a "safe, easy, rapid and cost effective way to treat refractory cases of vaginismus," the conference was told.