

PRESS RELEASE

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COSMETIC TREATMENTS ON THE RISE, AS IS THE RISK

According to the Cosmetic Physicians College of Australasia (CPCA), Australians are continuing to spend up on cosmetic procedures with botulinum toxin anti-wrinkle injections appearing to be the most popular, followed closely by dermal fillers for the face.

CPCA estimates show that both anti-wrinkle injections and dermal filler injections, which can be used to add volume, sculpt and reshape the face, have seen a significant increase in popularity.

According to the CPCA, Australia's per capita spend on cosmetic treatments is amongst the highest globally. This, in major part, can be attributed to the impact of our harsh climate.

"While we are "the lucky country" with our amazing weather, the increased exposure to the sun's UV rays also means accelerated photo-ageing. This is one of the reasons we are seeing such an increase in cosmetic procedures among Australians. When performed well, these procedures generally make patients look better without really looking different. These treatments take away the tired look when patients don't feel tired or make their skin look clearer without making them look like a different person. This is what most people are looking for these days. They want to look better without the downtime, expense etc often associated with surgery or more-major procedures and they want it to fit into their busy schedule, relatively easily," said Dr Mary Dingley, Board Member of the CPCA.

While the popularity of these procedures comes as no surprise, the number of clinics exercising unsafe practice, may be a shock. The influx of non-approved Schedule 4 drugs in Australia is a huge issue regarding patient safety and therefore is a major concern for the CPCA. Schedule 4 drugs for cosmetic use include botulinum toxin and hyaluronic acid injection preparations (and other dermal fillers) and the illegal importation of these drugs is happening now in Australia.

The ABC recently reported on this, obtaining footage of raids of beauty clinics by the New South Wales Health Department, in which officials seized thousands of illegal drugs including non-approved dermal fillers, anaesthetics and more.

"While we are seeing some movement towards a clamp-down on illegal practices taking place, the CPCA would also like Australian Customs to take more seriously the threat from imported medications and be more active in detecting illegally-imported cosmetic medicines," said Dr Dingley.

Other concerns for the CPCA around patient safety and cosmetic injections is the competency of the person administering the treatment and the importance of a face-to-face consultation with a doctor before any patient undergoes a treatment.

"The HCCC is supposed to only respond to complaints about registered health practitioners whereas now it is obvious that many unregistered persons are acting like health practitioners. This is of grave concern and we would like to see such persons being investigated given the seriousness of what those persons are doing and a quick response when information is received about those practices," said Dr Dingley.

The increasingly aggressive advertising and marketing of high-risk practices among non-medically trained operators within the cosmetic industry is also of particular concern.

"Sadly, too many people are shopping for injectables on price and not on the competence of the injector which should be the primary consideration. It's imperative that people are made aware how vital it is to visit a medical practice where there are trained people to help you in a safe medical environment when having a cosmetic procedure," said Dr Douglas Grose, President of the CPCA.

We would also advise against seeing medical professionals that allow tele-consulting (Skype consultations). While this is legal, we would always recommend a face-to-face consultation and that the doctors are ready to deal with any unforeseen emergency situation that may potentially arise," said Dr Dingley.

When considering have a procedure, the CPCA says it's important that patients ensure they see a registered health professional who focuses on cosmetic procedures. Registrations and licences are a guarantee that people and products meet set standards and are held accountable if they don't.

About the CPCA:

The CPCA is the leading representative body for medical practitioners practicing non- or minimally-invasive cosmetic medical treatments in Australasia. The College, which evolved from the Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australasia, provides education, training and ethical practice standards for its Fellows and Members who are required to have relevant training and experience as prerequisites for admission to the College. Members are also required to keep abreast of the most up-to-date, relevant information and latest medical and scientific advances

Overall, the key role of the CPCA is to develop and maintain the highest standards in cosmetic medicine, which helps safeguard the public.

<http://www.cPCA.net.au/>

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