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## NASOLABIAL FOLD TREATMENTS: RESTYLANE PATIENTS PREFER JUVÉDERM

*San Antonio — In a small study, patients who had undergone previous nasolabial fold (NLF) treatments with Restylane (hyaluronic acid/HA, Medicis) exhibited a surprisingly strong preference for Juvéderm Ultra (HA, Allergan), the study's author says.*

The single-center, open-label trial included 30 patients who had undergone Restylane treatments for their NLFs within the previous year.

Mean time from previous treatment was nine months, while mean time to dissatisfaction with this treatment was 4.1 months. More importantly, three months after treatment with Juvéderm, 82.7 percent of subjects said this 24 mg/mL cohesive gel provided longer-lasting improvements than did Restylane, a 20 mg/mL gel particle suspension.

Moreover, compared with the 20 mg/mL HA filler, 96.6 percent of patients said Juvéderm provided better or much better overall improvement in their NLF, and 89.7 percent reported that Juvéderm provided a more satisfying reduction in NLF appearance.

"These results confirmed my experience in helping to conduct the original trial for Juvéderm — it's a very soft, natural-feeling filler," says **Jessica Wu, M.D.**, clinical instructor of dermatology at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, and the comparison study's author.

However, she says the strength of patients' preference for Juvéderm surprises her. "I thought it might have been more of a 50-50 split," she says.

Many studies — including this one — utilize objective scales such as the physician-evaluated wrinkle assessment scale (WAS), Dr. Wu tells Dermatology Times.

"But we were very specific in that we wanted to know how the patients felt and what their preferences were. That's what's significant to practicing dermatologists — what will make the patient happiest?" she says.

The study sample included 20 patients with moderate NLFs and 10 whose NLFs investigators evaluated as severe at baseline. Also at baseline, subjects completed questionnaires about their impressions of the previously used filler.

Study protocols required that Juvéderm injection volumes be less than or equal to total volumes of Restylane used, including Restylane touchups. However, no Juvéderm touchups were allowed. Along with baseline evaluations, Dr. Wu evaluated Juvéderm's effectiveness at two weeks and three months post-treatment, using the validated five-point WAS (0 = none to 4 = extreme).

At two weeks, patients' mean WAS scores declined 1.8 points versus baseline. At three months, the difference was 1.3 points.

Dr. Wu also compared the mean volume of Juvéderm versus Restylane required, and found that patients required 22 percent less of the former material.

"That was something that I had observed in my practice," she says, "but it was helpful to quantify the difference." Some physicians have expressed concern about the difference in volume between Juvéderm Ultra and Restylane syringes.

"It was important to show that even though a Juvéderm syringe contains 0.8 cc (versus 1.0 cc for Restylane), overall, Juvéderm requires less volume" to produce satisfactory corrections, Dr. Wu says.

Subjects also rated their appearance, satisfaction with treatment and improvement in NLFs.

At two weeks, 83.3 percent of subjects reported looking younger than their age, versus 50 percent at baseline. Three months after treatment, 65.5 percent said they looked younger than their age.

The proportion of patients who said they were very satisfied with the appearance of their NLFs grew from 16.7 percent at baseline to 70 percent two weeks after treatment.

At three months, 51.7 percent were very satisfied, 41.4 percent were satisfied and 6.9 percent were dissatisfied. Also at three months, 93.1 percent of patients said they would choose Juvéderm for future NLF treatments.

"We asked how patients felt about the signs and symptoms during the injection — namely, level of discomfort, degree of erythema and swelling afterwards. We also asked them to evaluate how the filler felt — whether it was lumpy or smooth and felt natural or artificial," Dr. Wu says.

Nearly two-thirds of subjects said Juvéderm was less painful during and after injection than Restylane, and 69 percent reported that Juvéderm produced less bruising, redness and swelling.

"From my perspective," Dr. Wu says, "I felt that the product was very easily malleable and did not require very forceful extrusion. That may explain why patients experienced very little discomfort and very few side effects." One potential study weakness involves the accuracy of patient recollections about their previous treatment.

For example, Dr. Wu says, "Patients may not recall how long ago their treatments occurred." To obtain accurate information, including volumes of Restylane used, Dr. Wu requested treatment records of patients whose Restylane injections occurred outside her practice. Ultimately, Dr. Wu plans to follow patients to nine months post-injection, again using both her assessments and their own.

John Jesitus

*Disclosure: Dr. Wu is an Allergan investigator.*