

## Blinded Evaluation of the Effects of Hyaluronic Acid Filler Injections on First Impressions

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As pointed out by this article, first impressions are made within milliseconds.<sup>1</sup> Frequently, they define the subsequent relationship between two people. When the first impression is between people of opposite sexes, the impression is based on some measure of the reproductive potential of the other person.<sup>2</sup> Botulinum toxins, which can relax the muscles of facial expression, can impart an appearance of welcome. This appearance can improve the first impressions between two people and create a sense of welcome. Conversely, when people are not treated with toxins, the false impression of anger or hostility that they project can have an adverse effect on the social and professional relationships that they form. Treatment with botulinum toxins also improves self-esteem and job performance.<sup>3</sup>

Hyaluronic acids alter facial features and first impressions in a way that botulinum toxins cannot. Whereas the botulinum toxins relax muscles, hyaluronic acids and other soft tissue augmentation products restore volume lost during the aging process. When used correctly, they help restore more youthful proportions. For women, this includes higher cheekbones, fuller temporal areas, and more sculpted facial features. More significantly, from an evolutionary and anthropologic perspective, they can restore lip volume. Because lip volume is one measure of reproductive capacity and may be associated with estrogen levels, these changes can have a dra-

matic effect on first impressions and on self perception. Hyaluronic acids may also be used to camouflage the bone loss associated with menopause and its loss of reproductive capacity. Transforming a postmenopausal face into one that has the features of a premenopausal face will have a profound effect on first impressions.

First impressions are also important in other relationships. The first impression between a patient and his or her physician, between a potential employer and a potential employee, or between two people conducting business frequently define the tone of the subsequent relationship. Although there are laws governing many aspects of relationship discrimination, people are hard wired to form initial impressions, and facial features are a significant component of how we decide who we like and who we do not.

The methodology employed in this study is commendable, and the data are fascinating. Hyaluronic acids continue to be one of the most popular dermatologic procedures performed. They are second only to botulinum toxins in terms of their popularity. The data from this study begin to shed light on why they are so popular. We now have some measure of the social effect that these fillers have. More importantly, this type of research can guide future development of hyaluronic acids and techniques for injecting them so that first

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impressions, self-esteem, and patient satisfaction may be continuously improved.

### References

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