In 2009, a Botox® competitor was approved by the FDA in the United States for the treatment of glabellar frown lines. Dysport® has been used for many years in countries around the world but only reached the American market a few months ago. For practitioners and consumers alike, the natural question becomes, “which is better?” In fact, they both work, and the true answer may actually be an economic and personal choice.

The introduction of Botulinum neurotoxin as an aesthetic procedure changed the landscape of facial rejuvenation over a decade ago; it is now the most common aesthetic procedure in the United States. It has been well documented to be an effective, safe, and noninvasive method of improving facial appearance.

The two most frequently used serotype formulations of botulinum neurotoxin type A include Botox and Dysport. Botox is the 900 kDa formulation produced by Allergan Corporation of California. Dysport is the 500-900 kDa formulation produced by Ipsen in the United Kingdom and marketed in the United States by Medicis Corporation. Until 2009, Botox was the only formulation approved by the FDA in the United States. With no competition, Allergan raised the price of a vial of Botox every year—until this year. Dysport entered the market charging $50 less per vial and promoting more product per vial.

However, dilutions, diffusions, and injection volumes are different for each product. For example, 20 units is the recommended dose to treat glabellar frown lines with Botox. 50u is the corresponding dose of Dysport to treat the same area. Each vial of Botox contains 100 units and each Dysport vial contains 300 units. That corresponds to 5 areas per vial for Botox and 6 areas per vial for Dysport. A comprehensive evidence-based review by Klein et al compared the various Botulinum toxins and concluded that “formulations are not interchangeable by any single conversion ratio”\(^1\). To date more studies have been performed using Botox, and studies with both products are continuing.

Economics should not be overlooked when comparing these two products. Both Allergan and Medicis also sell hyaluronic acid injectables and Allergan sells breast implants too. Both companies have loyalty programs which can significantly affect the ultimate price of the product. The companies also market to the practitioner and to the consumer, offering rebates directly from the manufacturer.

Ultimately it is up to practitioners to decide which product is best for their patients. It is important to look carefully at patient experience and real cost per injection. As with many other aesthetic treatments, the physician must continually monitor results, and make adjustments accordingly.
Biography

Joshua M. Korman has been a member of the clinical faculty at Stanford University for over 15 years. He is the editor and chapter author of the upcoming book *The Business of Plastic Surgery—Navigating a Successful Career* (World Scientific 2010). He holds several patents on medical devices. Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, he practices in Mountain View and Monterey, California.

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