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# Nevada studies fat-dissolving injections

January 20, 2008

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Nevada is exploring how to regulate cosmetic injections that dissolve fat.

Lipodissolve, a popular nonsurgical alternative to liposuction, is being used widely for weight loss even though the federal Food and Drug Administration has not approved it.

Physicians using the injections say they are safe and effective. Those who disagree are calling for some proof and urge patients to think twice before paying thousands of dollars for an unproven procedure.

In Nevada, a legislative subcommittee has been formed to study the use of such drugs and what, if any, oversight should be established to ensure safety.

“For every one person I see who is happy, there is at least one person who is not,” said Dr. Benjamin Rodriguez, a Las Vegas plastic surgeon and member of the state’s Board of Medical Examiners. “I only see the bad stuff, though. People come to me because of complications.

“It can be disfiguring and crippling.”

Dr. Ivan Goldsmith, an internal medicine physician who operates three medical centers in Las Vegas that offer several cosmetic treatments, injects his patients with a drug that melts away fat.

The cocktail has ingredients in common with lipodissolve, primarily phosphatidylcholine or PPC, and it operates on the same principle. But it shouldn’t be confused with the procedure advertised as lipodissolve by other companies, he said.

What Goldsmith offers is commonly referred to as mesotherapy, which also involves direct injections into the body; it too is not approved by the FDA.

“All we’re trying to do is get rid of fat cells, because people should not look like apples, they should look like pears,” said Goldsmith, who says he has lost more than 40 pounds through mesotherapy. At Goldsmith’s centers, mesotherapy is used in the treatment of cellulite and other skin conditions.

“Injecting an active fat-eating ingredient less than two inches into the skin is doing a lot of good for people,” he said. “The Europeans have been using this for 50 years.”

Rodriguez said he has treated several patients who have used such therapies in recent years who have experienced swelling, hard lumps and dark spots on their skin.

Rodriguez said officials need to examine whether the treatments have therapeutic value or are just moneymaking scams.

“I think the latter ... has more weight,” he said.

Lynnette Daniels, chief of licensing for the medical board, said the regulatory body was asked by the state’s Legislative Committee on Health Care to take part in an overall study of ophthalmology, dermatology, cosmetics and the medical spa industry.

The study is supposed to take six months.

“The board is very concerned about the medical spa industry, including the use of lipodissolve and botox,” Daniels said.

The committee also has set up a subcommittee to review the use of laser treatments and cosmetic injections.

The subcommittee met for the first time this month and plans to discuss cosmetic issues during its third or fourth meeting.