

The Bad and Ugly

Adverse events with fillers and tattoos – the bad and ugly side

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Filler treatment is one of the most popular minimal invasive methods of facial and body rejuvenation. Their use seems simple in comparison to a face lift. Generally, the procedure is safe if one knows the anatomy, the product to be used, and the wishes of the patient. Filler injections require skill and experience.

There is a dark side of fillers one should know. Major mistakes can happen due to lack of anatomical knowledge, use of unknown product, and substances not suitable for dermal filling. Lack of hygiene during and after the procedure also can lead to many complications. Several examples of misuse and wrong doing are presented.

Tattoos have also become a common way of body modification. Tattoos also include permanent make-up. There is a lack of regulations for inks and tattoo artists. This is potentially harmful to consumers. As with fillers, proper sterilizing techniques is an important issue. Severe infections have been noted in association with tattooing including hepatitis C, tuberculosis, atypical mycobacteriosis or MRSA infections. In addition, inks are not inert and may contain precancerous substances. They can cause allergic and pseudoallergic reactions. Furthermore, alterations of tissue and lymphatic vessels which occur with aging may lead to poor cosmetic outcomes in elderly people.

Fillers and tattoo injections can cause significant complications. I propose that there be a registration of adverse events that occur due to fillers or due to tattooing for both epidemiological reasons and consumer protection.