

Approval of Botox puts spotlight on KMR's PR tactics

By Sara Calabro and Julia Hood

NEW YORK: FDA approval of Botox for some cosmetic purposes means that Allergan, the manufacturer, has the green light to promote the drug and its previously unknown uses.

Last Monday, the FDA announced the approval of Botulinum Toxin Type A (Botox Cosmetic) for the temporary relief of frown lines between the eyebrows. Although the drug has been previously used for cosmetic purposes, Botox only had FDA approval to treat eye-muscle and neurological-movement disorders.

"Although everyone in LA and New York has been using Botox for cosmetic reasons, a large part of the population has never even heard of it," said Christine Cassiano, PR manager for Allergan. "This approval gives us the opportunity to educate the public and alleviate any concerns they might have."

JeanAnn Morgan, managing director at Burson-Marsteller (which helped Allergan secure FDA approval), said the move will increase the number of

Botox users. "There are still many physicians and patients out there who do not feel comfortable doing something that is considered 'off label,'" she said.

But on the day of the approval, two *Wall Street Journal* articles focused on the controversy connected to promoting cosmetic surgery, referred to Botox and buttock-enhancement surgery, as well as work done by KMR Communications.

One described the private Botox parties held by physicians and clients, including one hosted by KMR president Katherine Rothman. Indirectly suggesting that Allergan does not support these parties, Cassiano said, "Our long-term research has shown that satisfied customers are the ones who receive treatments in professional settings."

The other article featured KMR client Dr. Bruce Nadler, and his controversial buttock-implant surgery. Rothman said the article has increased her roster, not shrunk it, in spite of questions it raises about promoting cosmetic surgery.

"As far as other doctors taking exception to what was in that article, that's fine. They don't have to be in the media," Rothman said. "But they shouldn't criticize other doctors who use media coverage for promotion."