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## **Pioneering research into health benefits of beauty treatment**

Pioneering medical research is going on at the University of Leicester into the use of Botulinum toxin – commonly thought of as a beauty treatment – for bladder problems.

Dr Douglas Tincello, Senior Lecturer at the University's Department of Cancer Studies and Molecular Medicine and Consultant Gynaecologist at the Leicester General Hospital, is carrying out a randomised trial involving injecting botulinum toxin into the bladders of women who have overactive bladder disease.

The trial, which has received a grant of £158,000 from the Moulton Charitable Trust, involves women whose conditions have not improved after tablet treatment.

Overactive bladder is a condition in which the bladder tries to empty itself, rather than the patient retaining control. Symptoms include having to pass water very often day and night, not being able to put off the need to do so, sudden urgency to pass water and sometimes incontinence.

The botulinum toxin relaxes the bladder muscle so it cannot squeeze so hard, and so reduces the need to pass water frequently or suddenly. It may also reduce the sensation of having a full bladder. Dr Douglas Tincello commented:

Overactive bladder is very difficult to treat well. Lots of our patients try different tablets and pelvic floor exercises but at least a third of them will not be better. At the moment the only alternatives are to put up with it, or consider a very big operation which often means the patient ends up with a stoma bag.

Many patients just suffer in silence, but the quality of life when you live with overactive bladder is similar to that of a patient on kidney dialysis.

釘 otulinum toxin has been tested already in spinal cord injury patients. This study is important to ascertain if it is safe and effective in patients with overactive bladder. Botulinum toxin is a very exciting development and in the future may provide a simple and effective way to improve the quality of life in our patients."

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