Advanced Microneedling Technology Improves Safety and Profitability

Defining the Skin Barrier
THE Aesthetic Show Preview
Male Aesthetics & Women’s Health

March/April 2018
Circulation 25,000
www.aestheticchannel.com
When Merz North America (Raleigh, N.C.) announced a new marketing campaign for Xeomin® (incobotulinumtoxinA) and Ultherapy®, in partnership with supermodel, actress and celebrity entrepreneur Christie Brinkley in October 2017, it solidified a bold new business strategy. This strategy has, in turn, strengthened the company’s market position by increasing brand awareness, while disrupting the medical aesthetic industry.
This move has the company boldly entering the sacred celebrity-driven direct-to-consumer (DTC) marketing space, where some big players in the pharmaceutical industry have been before; however, this is a first for Merz, a global aesthetic and neurotoxin company.

“Ms. Brinkley is a patient of both Xeomin, a neurotoxin, and Ultherapy, an energy-based skin lifting and tightening procedure (*Xeomin and Ultherapy have not been studied in combination use),” expressed Bob Rhatigan, CEO of Merz North America. “That is one of the main reasons that Christie is the perfect partner, beyond the fact that she is stunning at age 64. She also shares our vision that adults, regardless of age, should feel confident in how they present themselves to the world.”

In addition, by making such an iconic figure the face of its brand, Merz has skillfully accomplished a marketing coup that upstages the competition in such a way that even if physicians had not considered using Merz products, such as Ultherapy and Xeomin, in their practices, consumers are showing up at offices

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asking for them by name. This is known as a pull-through marketing strategy.

As part of the partnership, Ms. Brinkley will speak about her own personal guidelines for achieving flawless looking skin, healthy hair, a strong body and a clean diet.

“Merz and I have the same goals,” stated Ms. Brinkley. We want women to get the message that their products can be used to help look their best. At my age, I am not trying to look 22 again. I just want to look natural and like how I feel on the inside.”

Although the Christie Brinkley campaign is only a few months old, the empowerment message has been well-received, illustrating how Merz products are differentiated, and letting the world know that Christie Brinkley is the new face of Ultherapy and Xeomin.

Additionally, throughout her 40-year career in the beauty industry Ms. Brinkley has been open about her personal beauty routine, tips and experiences as outlined in her best-selling book, Timeless Beauty.

“It is only natural that I share my positive experiences with Ultherapy and Xeomin,” she said. “I want all women who may feel like improving a little something to know that it’s okay to take advantage of these treatments intended to make them feel more beautiful and confident. It worked for me, so I wanted to share what I learned. Why keep it a secret? Again, if something is bugging you, why not check out what science and innovation offers you to feel great? I think today’s modern women support each other’s choices to look and feel our best.”

But what led her to make the choice of getting Ultherapy and Xeomin treatments? According to Ms. Brinkley, “I had Ultherapy to lift the skin on my neck, under my chin, and to improve the lines and wrinkles on my décolletage area. I’m thrilled with the results I’ve seen. I also had Xeomin to improve the appearance of my glabellar lines. I love that this procedure literally takes only a few minutes.”

It is no surprise, then, that when people bring up the subject of so-called “ageless beauty,” her name invariably comes up. “I do believe in staying on top of the aging process,” Ms. Brinkley added. “In other words, addressing the fine lines before they become deep lines, and definitely pushing back those boney old hands of time. I continue to be amazed by all of the science and innovation we are seeing in aesthetics today. I am a true believer that every choice is a personal one and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to aesthetics.”

When she talks about beauty tips, people listen. By association, Merz will become better known by “mainstreaming” its product brand names, which, in addition to Ultherapy and Xeomin, include a range of “face-to-body” treatments from the Neocutis® line of skincare solutions and the minimally invasive Cellfina®, to Merz’s line of dermal fillers.

Regarding Xeomin’s place in the market, although the major competing brands may have benefitted from high public recognition for many years, Xeomin will now enjoy the title of being the go-to injectable that Christie Brinkley uses to keep frown lines under control. Likewise, Ultherapy will also achieve similar recognition among consumers.

To the benefit of an expanding medical aesthetics field, the Baby Boomer crowd that represents the largest cut of consumers in the $11 billion industry will notice when one of its perennial icons
starts detailing that the tools in her successful beauty regimen include Xeomin and Ultherapy.

Added Mr. Rhatigan, “We think she is the perfect partner to help educate consumers about our products and encourage consumers to get into medical aesthetics, and not be fearful of stepping into a dermatology or plastic surgery office.”

In addition to prospective patients in their 50s and 60s, the Christie Brinkley campaign reaches younger generations of women as well. Ms. Brinkley hopes that those in their 20s and 30s feel empowered to learn more about the aesthetic options available to them.

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“I think women should do what makes them most comfortable and feel their best. When considering their options, I do recommend they do their research and consult a board certified, trained aesthetic physician. And, keeping it natural rather than over-done always looks best,” she noted.

According to Patricia Wexler, M.D., associate clinical professor at Mt. Sinai Medical Center (New York City, N.Y.), “This innovative marketing campaign has been positive for physicians. When people see the campaign, they are going to ask their dermatologist or cosmetic physician about the products. They will ask you what you think of Xeomin or Ultherapy and whether or not that product will benefit them.”

The Christie Brinkley campaign has really struck a chord with people, according to Deanne Mraz-Robinson, M.D., a dermatologist in Norwalk, Conn.

“She is a radiant beauty who absolutely owns her sense of self and her sense of being the best you can be regardless of age. People are coming into aesthetic practices asking for the neurotoxin that Christie Brinkley uses; or, what is that procedure that Christie Brinkley is doing? They are inspired by her. As a result, this is bringing Xeomin and Ultherapy to the forefront,” Dr. Mraz-Robinson said.
The versatility of the Merz product portfolio appeals to both patients and physicians, noted Ava Shamban, M.D., a prominent cosmetic dermatologist in Beverly Hills, Calif. who is no stranger to aging celebrity clientele. “I see people come in, even those who have had work done, and their faces look tremendous but their chest, décolletage and hands look terrible. Merz offers us an option to treat those selective body areas. I don’t think that you can create beauty for any age, man or woman, unless you treat the entire body.”

Merz, therefore, excels in tailoring its products to patient needs, added Dr. Mraz-Robinson. “For example, Ultherapy is not just another blind technology like radiofrequency, or a device that offers just the same thing for everybody. Its utilization of visualization via ultrasound allows you to truly customize treatments for each patient’s needs. I love that latitude to be able to tell the patient, this is what you need; and I can look under your skin and see where we need to go and where not to go.”

The company’s range of products is its strong suit, Dr. Mraz-Robinson continued. Whether you need deep volume replacement, or to address fine lines and wrinkles, Merz’s range of dermal fillers has a solution. I’m lucky because I love to use these products and I use them myself, which gives my patients a sense of security and the ability to understand them, as well. I think that resonates with a lot of them. It also contributes to high patient satisfaction,” she stated.

While these products are good choices for new patients to consider prior to their first aesthetic procedure, “They are also for people that have already had surgical procedures,” noted Dr. Wexler. “They are for patients that feel that they are now losing the benefits of those surgical procedures, and they don’t want to have another.

As a result, thanks to Ms. Brinkley’s endorsement, prospective patients that had been apprehensive about using injectable toxins and skin lifting and tightening procedures can feel more open to them.

As noted by Dr. Wexler, “People have come in and asked for Ultherapy or Xeomin. These products did not have as much brand recognition prior to the Christie Brinkley campaign. She certainly has made a difference in terms of empowering people to talk about the procedures. It’s all about trying to look your best, and there’s no reason for there to be a stigma about looking the best you can.”

Dr. Mraz-Robinson concurred, adding, “My philosophy is that I want to give my patients a refreshed and rejuvenated version of themselves, and the Merz portfolio enables me to do that.

Merz also works hard to support its physician customers, stated Dr. Mraz-Robinson. “The company has done an excellent job of supporting me since my fellowship and even in research. The market research and direct-to-consumer advertising have been paramount in terms of their commitment to their customers. For instance, if I have a need with my Ultherapy device then they send a support person out to my practice that same day. It is a global company that has that small company feel, in which you know who to reach out to. They are responsive and that is invaluable,” she expressed.

The quality of leadership and physician relations at Merz has been very positive, according to Dr. Shamban. “They have been enthusiastic and have really embraced – and even enhanced the Merz philosophy. That level of commitment is not always echoed among all aesthetic product companies. They are a fun company to work with, and that’s unusual.”

Dr. Shamban added, “Merz is 100% dedicated. The people are congenial, but also extremely competent, from the top down. They
are very intent on meeting the educational needs of their customers, from the key opinion leaders to the physicians that are just coming onboard. They are focused on looking at what physicians need and want. There needs to be intelligent leadership and Merz has invested in that.

As Ms. Brinkley looks ahead; aside from beauty maintenance treatments, what additional treatments is she considering in the near future?

“Right now, I am extremely happy with the results I am seeing from my Ultherapy and Xeomin treatments,” she said. “These treatments, combined with my daily skincare routine, healthy diet, regular exercise and use of supplements, has helped me maximize my results, and makes me not only look my best but feel my best, too.”

That “feel best” attitude also applies to Merz’s overall public-relations push, which is paying off. Many prospective patients that are considering injectable or skin rejuvenation procedures are likely to identify with Christie Brinkley, whether of a similar age or younger.

As such, the company’s bold celebrity-driven marketing campaign will no doubt continue to generate considerable buzz, noted Mr. Rhatigan. “We couldn’t have a better spokesperson and product user. This is really going to help increase the public’s awareness of our product offerings and take us to the next level in terms of market positioning.”

**INDICATIONS AND USAGE**

XEOMIN (incobotulinumtoxinA) for injection, for intramuscular use is indicated for the temporary improvement in the appearance of moderate to severe glabellar lines with corrugator and/or procerus muscle activity in adult patients.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS**

- Hypersensitivity reactions have been reported with botulinum toxin products (anaphylaxis, serum sickness, urticaria, soft tissue edema, and dyspnea). If serious and/or immediate hypersensitivity reactions occur further injection of XEOMIN should be discontinued and appropriate medical therapy immediately instituted. XEOMIN is contraindicated in patients with a known hypersensitivity to the active substance botulinum toxin type A, or to any of the excipients (human albumin, sucrose) in the formulation.

**WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS**

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- Use in patients with an infection at the injection site could lead to severe local or disseminated infection. XEOMIN is contraindicated in the presence of infection at the proposed injection site(s).

**WARNING: DISTANT SPREAD OF TOXIN EFFECT**

See full prescribing information for complete BOXED WARNING.

The effects of XEOMIN and all botulinum toxin products may spread from the area of injection to produce symptoms consistent with botulinum toxin effects. These symptoms have been reported hours to weeks after injection. Swallowing and breathing difficulties can be life threatening and there have been reports of death. The risk of symptoms is probably greatest in children treated for spasticity but symptoms can also occur in adults, particularly in those patients who have underlying conditions that would predispose them to these symptoms.
• Treatment with XEOMIN and other botulinum toxin products can result in swallowing or breathing difficulties. Patients with pre-existing swallowing or breathing difficulties may be more susceptible to these complications. When distant effects occur, additional respiratory muscles may be involved. Patients may require immediate medical attention should they develop problems with swallowing, speech, or respiratory disorders. Dysphagia may persist for several months, which may require use of a feeding tube. Aspiration may result from severe dysphagia [See BOXED WARNING].

• Individuals with peripheral motor neuropathic diseases, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or neuromuscular junctional disorders (e.g., myasthenia gravis or Lambert-Eaton syndrome) should be monitored particularly closely when given botulinum toxin. Patients with neuromuscular disorders may be at increased risk of clinically significant effects including severe dysphagia and respiratory compromise from typical doses of XEOMIN.

• Glabellar Lines: Do not exceed the recommended dosage and frequency of administration of XEOMIN. In order to reduce the complication of ptosis the following steps should be taken:
  o avoid injection near the levator palpebrae superioris, particularly in patients with larger brow depressor complexes;
  o corrugator injections should be placed at least 1 cm above the bony supraorbital ridge.

• XEOMIN contains human serum albumin. Based on effective donor screening and product manufacturing processes, it carries an extremely remote risk for transmission of viral diseases and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). No cases of transmission of viral diseases or CJD have ever been reported for albumin.

ADVERSE REACTIONS
Glabellar Lines: The most commonly observed adverse reaction (incidence ≥ 2% of patients and greater than placebo) for XEOMIN was Headache (5.4%).

DRUG INTERACTIONS
Co-administration of XEOMIN and aminoglycoside antibiotics or other agents interfering with neuromuscular transmission, e.g., tubocurarine-type muscle relaxants, should only be performed with caution as these agents may potentiate the effect of the toxin.

Use of anticholinergic drugs after administration of XEOMIN may potentiate systemic anticholinergic effects. The effect of administering different botulinum toxin products at the same time or within several months of each other is unknown. Excessive neuromuscular weakness may be exacerbated by administration of another botulinum toxin prior to the resolution of the effects of a previously administered botulinum toxin.

USE IN PREGNANCY
Pregnancy Category C: There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. XEOMIN should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus.

PEDIATRIC USE
The safety and effectiveness of XEOMIN in patients less than 18 years of age have not been established.

Ultherapy Important Safety Information
The non-invasive Ultherapy procedure is U.S. FDA-cleared to lift skin on the neck, on the eyebrow and under the chin, as well as to improve lines and wrinkles on the décolletage. The most common side effects reported in clinical trials were redness, swelling, pain and transient nerve effects. Reported adverse events from post-marketing surveillance are available in the Instructions for Use (IFU). Please see the IFU for product and safety information, including a full list of these events at Ultherapy.com/IFU.