

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our Subscriber Agreement and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com).

<https://www.wsj.com/style/beauty/daxxify-botox-injection-wrinkles-ec778de2>

# Botox Has New Competition. Does It Hold Up?

Revance's Daxxify sold patients on longer-lasting smooth skin. Its first year on the market has had some wrinkles.

By [Sara Ashley O'Brien](#) [Follow](#) and [Jared S. Hopkins](#) [Follow](#) | Illustrations by Ben Wiseman for *WSJ. Magazine*

Nov. 29, 2023 11:00 am ET

**W**E'RE LIVING through a radical age for aging. Models over 60 and well into their 80s are fronting magazines in swimsuits and appearing on fashion runways. Platinum hair is trendy. Dressing like a grandmother? Chic.

At the same time, antiaging products are attracting ever younger consumers. Toxins, fillers, chemical peels and retinol creams are being marketed to girls in their teens and tweens as preventive measures. The market for skin-smoothing injections is expected to surge by roughly half by 2028, up from \$2.4 billion in sales last year. For all the celebration of looking older, women still want their wrinkles gone.

So when a new drug arrived last September that promised to make frown lines disappear and stay gone for longer than anything else on the market, patients started lining up.

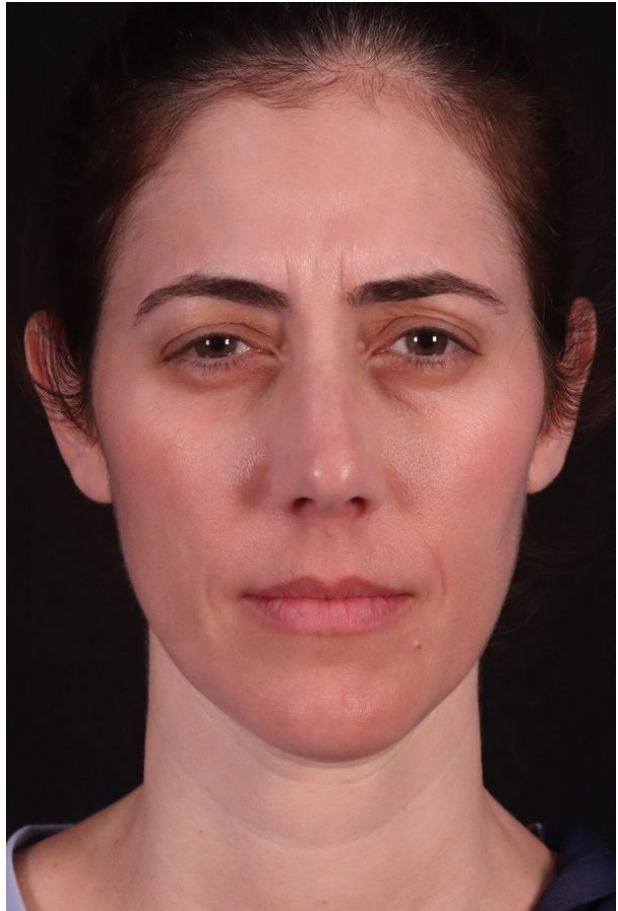
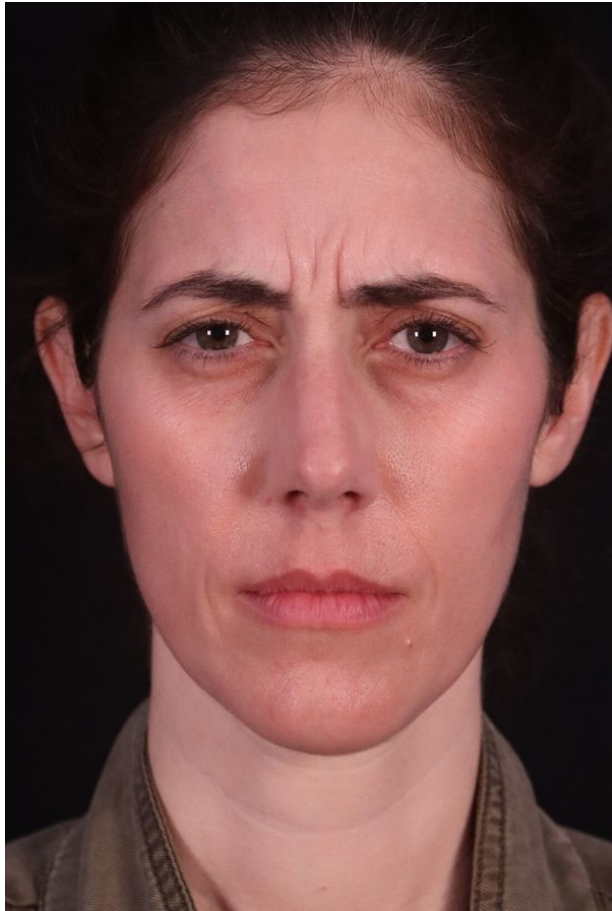
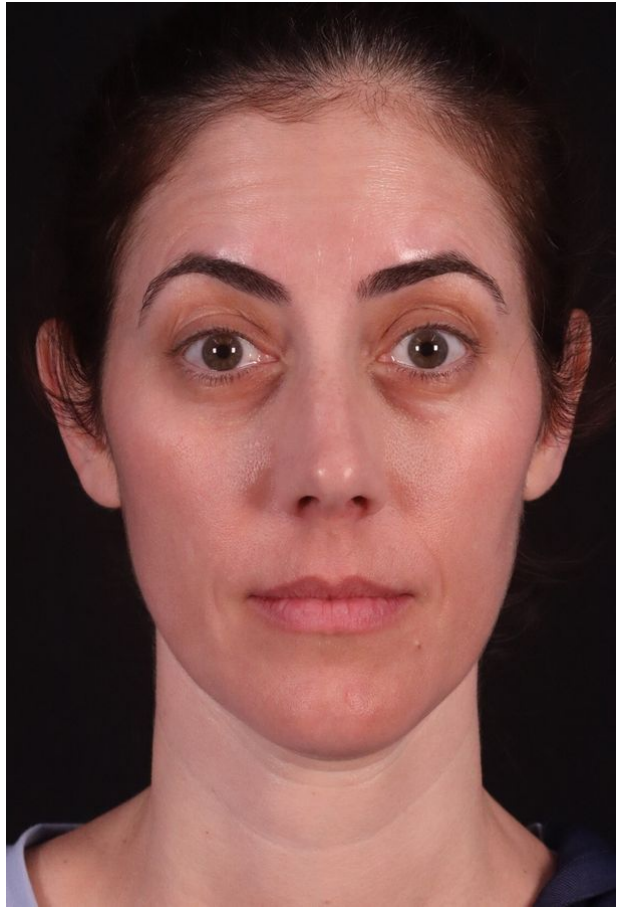
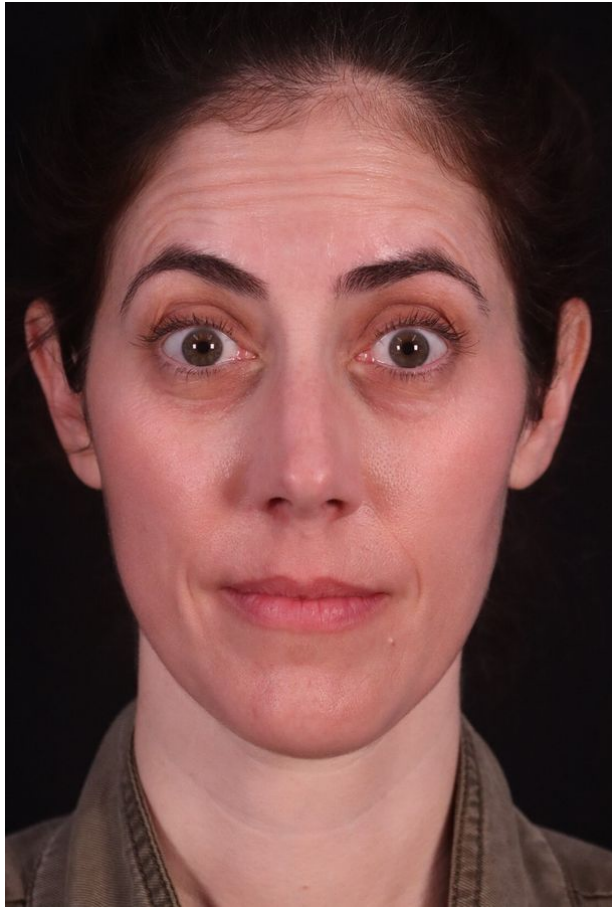
Daxxify's key selling point was duration: An injection could keep skin smooth in some people for six months and up to nine—far longer than Botox and other toxins, according to its maker, Revance Therapeutics. It was the most compelling pitch a Botox competitor had made in two decades.

Revance priced Daxxify at a significant premium compared to Botox. It recruited influencers to tell their followers to quit its biggest competitor; the campaign featured a jaunty jingle: "Gone so fast, why don't you ever last? / Botox, I'm breaking up with you."

Like so many sponsored posts these days, the videos were stealthy: None of the influencers mentioned that the company paid them to promote a competitor drug, nor did they note that Daxxify requires double the dose of similar drugs to deliver results. The simple message—*Botox, but better*—helped Daxxify differentiate itself from the competition. Botox's share of the market has declined as rivals have launched, but it still commands more than two-thirds of the cosmetic-neurotoxin market over Galderma's Dysport, Merz Aesthetics' Xeomin and Evolus's Jeuveau. Evolus's chief executive says Jeuveau has been the fastest-growing toxin in the aesthetic market in the past couple of years. Galderma and Merz declined to comment.

But once Daxxify was in commercial use, it didn't always live up to its own hype. Some patients were disappointed with the product's duration, which they say didn't justify the price. Injectors used the drug for the FDA-approved treatment of frown lines, as well as other areas of the face and body, where results weren't lasting as long. A year after its approval, Revance told investors that sales of Daxxify exceeded those of other competitor brands in their earliest days. The company also said it was lowering prices, in part to better compete with Botox.

Revance chief executive Mark Foley says the company remains confident in Daxxify. Six months was the median duration in clinical trials, and Foley says that's holding up in the real world. But the higher price and product marketing left all patients expecting those results. The price cut will help more patients see the product's value for themselves, Foley says. Interviews with two dozen dermatologists, plastic surgeons, nurse practitioners and patients reflected mixed results after Daxxify's first year on the market.



Patient photos from Dr. Jody Comstock. At left, patient raises eyebrows and frowns before Daxxify. At right, patient makes the same expressions six months after treatment.

SKIN SPECTRUM, DR. JODY COMSTOCK

**APRIL HARRISON**, a Houston-based injector, was one of the first to use Daxxify on patients last year. It was hard to figure out the right dose for off-label areas of the face, she says. She tried to base the dose on how much Botox or Dysport she'd use in those areas.

“Some were coming back and saying, ‘I didn’t feel like the forehead lasted as long or the crow’s feet lasted as long,’ ” says Harrison. She now references clinical-trial research for those areas.

Winning favor among injectors is key to a toxin’s success. Drug manufacturers know injectors serve as influential salespeople to their patients, and they work hard to position their products front and center. They’re known for providing perks to practices such as bulk savings and payment to injectors who train and speak on behalf of their companies. Many consult for toxin companies, making it hard for patients to distinguish a genuine recommendation from a sales pitch.

Revanche went out to 5,000 practices that have bought its fillers to offer Daxxify, but fewer than 2,000 placed orders by the end of this year’s second quarter. That’s less than 5 percent of the toxin market.

Erika Barry, an aesthetic injector in Potomac, Maryland, consults for all of the toxin manufacturers, including Revance. “I like to switch people up on brands because it’s like makeup.”

She has injected about 250 patients with Daxxify in the past year, among them Jessica Powers. The publisher at *DC Magazine* in Washington, D.C., Powers, 34, says she’s been getting toxin injections for seven years. In March, she got a full face of Daxxify, then did another round six months later.

“It made my skin look a little more glowy,” she says, but she didn’t notice a faster onset, which Revance and some injectors say Daxxify patients may experience. “I might stick with this because I just like the way it makes my skin look.”

**Abigail Calles**, a data analyst in San Antonio, paid almost \$800—a discount—for a full upper face of Daxxify in June. Her injector told her it would set in faster than other toxins and could last up to six months. Calles, 40, says she returned twice for additional injections in the same areas. “After the third round, I finally

saw some results,” she says, but they were mediocre. She says she’s going back to Botox.

**THOUGH REVANCE** had marketed its product on duration, some injectors have been careful about overselling its results.

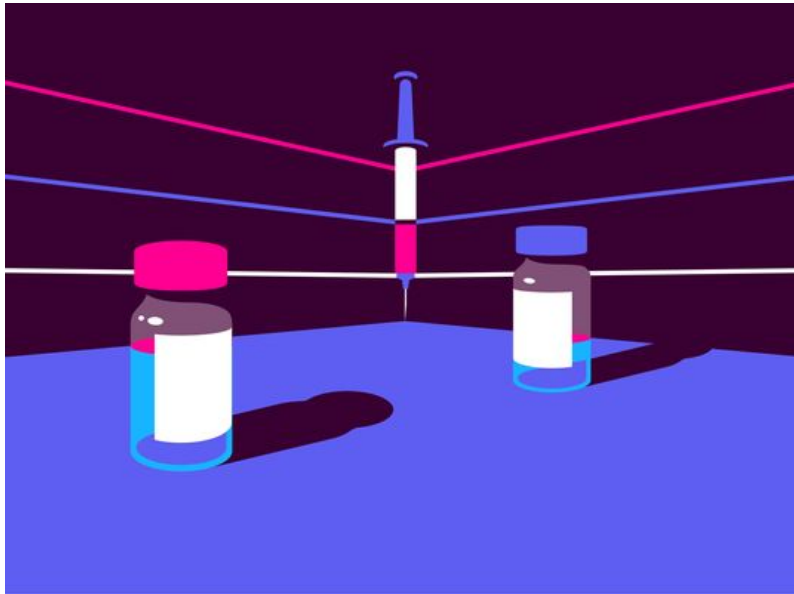
“They’re the ones who said six months,” says Dr. Shereene Idriss, a New York City–based dermatologist whose practice carries all five neurotoxins and who injects about 90 patients a week. She provides no timing guarantees. Daxxify ranked third among toxin brands in a recent doctor-satisfaction survey for duration, according to data firm Guidepoint Qsight. A Revance spokesperson says its market surveys and conversations with practitioners indicate most have been satisfied or very satisfied with the product.

Dr. Jody Comstock, of Tucson, Arizona, says Revance could have launched its product with the price it’s offering now. “We’re much more forgiving when something is on sale or there’s a discount,” she says. In January, her practice tacked on a 35 percent premium, then lowered it once Revance revised its pricing.

During the second quarter of this year, patients spent an average of roughly \$700 on an injection of Daxxify, compared to about \$430 for Botox, according to Guidepoint QSight. A full face of Daxxify can run \$2,000, compared to \$1,800 for Botox, according to rates from Barry, the injector in Potomac.

Palm Beach, Florida, dermatologist Kenneth Beer says he has given Daxxify to about five patients, most of whom remained wrinkle-free for roughly four or five months. “It’s definitely longer than what’s out there if you give the recommended dose,” he says. But one of his patients was so disappointed with the duration that she returned to Botox, Beer says. He covered the cost of the injection.

His practice was one of the clinical trial sites for Daxxify. He thinks it’s too early to draw definitive conclusions about its duration. “It’s working,” he says, “but it’s not working so much that patients are saying, ‘I’ve got to have this.’”



**S**INCE IT WAS approved for cosmetic use in 2002, Botox “has completely been transformed as this hypernormalized, mundane beauty activity that is woven and integrated into the routines of everyday life for the American everywoman,” says Dana Berkowitz, the author of *Botox Nation*.

And not just women: Allergan, the maker of Botox, ran its first television ad campaign geared toward men in 2018. One year later, it began targeting millennials. (Allergan was later acquired by AbbVie.) Once people are sold on the product, Berkowitz says, it “creates this lifetime consumer.”

In June, Revance kicked off its “Break Up With Botox” campaign, using reality stars and influencers who’d been through public breakups to promote the product. The two companies have sparred over the effort, with Revance claiming AbbVie reported a dozen of the posts to Instagram for removal. AbbVie didn’t deny taking such action, saying the company has a responsibility to protect the Botox trademark.

Revance selectively used clinical-trial data in its marketing, promoting study results that said 50 percent of subjects had no wrinkles, or mild ones, six months after being injected. But the study, published in 2020 in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, the journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, also found in a separate analysis that about a third of subjects saw improvement over that time, which Revance didn’t promote. The FDA required a stricter measurement for success; by its scale, even fewer subjects saw improvement at six months. Revance said the FDA’s standard didn’t reflect how patients and



doctors typically measure success. Foley defended the company's marketing, saying it has been legal and compliant, and it was able to reinstate the posts.

David Maris, managing partner at Phalanx Investment Partners who covered toxin manufacturers as a Wall Street analyst, says that he was skeptical about Revance's duration claims because Daxxify relies on a larger dose. He says injectors already do that with other toxins, and higher doses don't provide consistency.

"This is a classic example of overhyping and underdelivering," says Maris. "At the very best you can say it's not clear to doctors that this offers any benefit versus Botox, and Revance promised that it would."

Foley says the formulation of Daxxify allows it to deliver more of the toxin into the body and therefore last longer. AbbVie and Evolus are also developing longer-acting toxins.

But Revance has tempered its messaging to injectors, Foley says, telling them, "you probably need to soften the duration expectation. As a result, you need to be very thoughtful about the premium that you charge."

Dr. Marina Peredo, a New York City dermatologist and investigator in Revance clinical trials, says her practice has injected more than 600 people with Daxxify. Some got it on her recommendation, after experiencing so-called Botox resistance, where the toxin lasts for a shorter time after frequent use.

Switching to a new brand could help, she figured.

Peredo, who conducts trainings for AbbVie and Galderma and has a vanity plate that spells BOTOX, says nearly all of her patients are satisfied with Daxxify. She calls each treatment a "spicy Daxxi" because she says the injection stings. Her patients' frown lines have disappeared for an average of six months, she says, though forehead lines and crow's-feet have come back sooner—around four months. Many patients have returned for second injections.

Impressed with Daxxify's results, including on herself, Peredo injected her 30-something daughter for her wedding in March. Later, the doctor posted before-and-after pictures and videos to her business Instagram, with the caption:

“Interested in getting rid of those wrinkles that feel permanent, message us to book your appointment today!”

Write to Sara Ashley O’Brien at [sara.obrien@wsj.com](mailto:sara.obrien@wsj.com) and Jared S. Hopkins at [jared.hopkins@wsj.com](mailto:jared.hopkins@wsj.com)