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Plump Lips Make Sex Symbols From Facelift Leftovers (Update1)

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(Adds Angelina Jolie information in fifth paragraph.)

By Elizabeth Lopatto

March 15 (Bloomberg) -- Angelina Jolie-esque lips may be closer than you think; as close as your own neck.

Implanting a neck muscle into lips can make them permanently redder and plumper, according to a study that followed 25 patients for an average of two years. At the end of that period, the subjects had lips that were almost a millimeter plumper and 23 percent redder, researchers reported today in the Archives of Facial Plastic Surgery.

As women age, their lips don't project as much and aren't as red. These changes cause many women to get lip augmentation procedures, said the authors, led by Anurag Agarwal, a plastic surgeon at the Aesthetic Surgery Center in Naples, Florida.

"All patients were subjectively pleased with their degree of lip augmentation, but one patient requested additional lip augmentation with Juvederm injectable gel," which contains hyaluronic acid and is made by Irvine, California-based Allergan Inc., the authors wrote.

Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie is so well-known for her full, pouty mouth that People.com described her as "bee stung- lipped."

"Since ancient times, women have used plant dyes and colored clays to enhance their lips" as a sexual symbol, the authors wrote in the study. Enhancing them using a muscle implant, can offer a safe, permanent solution, they said.

Harvested

The muscle was harvested during a face and neck lift. After the muscle was inserted into the lips, the lips were swollen, the research report said. About 75 percent of the initial plumpness following the procedure remained after the first month, and about 50 percent of the initial plumpness remained after a year.

The procedure avoids some of the hazards of other lip plumpers, such as allergic reactions and cysts. One patient developed a lump in the upper lip, which was resolved by injections of a steroid. There were no difficulties in moving the head, no increased neck pain and no nerve injuries, according to the study.

Lip augmentation is also done by injecting human collagen, which is marketed by Allergan as the product Cosmoderm, and by harvesting fat from the patient's body.

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