

**IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION  
REGARDING BOTULINUM TOXIN PRODUCTS  
Botox<sup>®</sup>, Dysport<sup>®</sup>, NeuroBloc<sup>®</sup>, Vistabel<sup>®</sup>**

**RISK OF SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS DUE TO SPREAD OF TOXIN**

Dear Doctor,

Following discussions with EU regulatory authorities, including the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, we would like to alert you to the following safety information:

- **Serious adverse events related to the distant spread of botulinum toxin, including muscle weakness, dysphagia and aspiration, have been reported very rarely with all botulinum toxin products.**
- **There is a need for extreme caution when administering botulinum toxin products to patients with neurological disorders or a history of dysphagia or aspiration.**

Four different botulinum toxin-containing products, Botox<sup>®</sup>, Dysport<sup>®</sup>, NeuroBloc<sup>®</sup> and Vistabel<sup>®</sup> have a Marketing Authorisation. Vistabel<sup>®</sup> is only indicated for cosmetic use (for the treatment of glabellar lines).

**Further information on the safety concern**

Botulinum toxins act by preventing release of acetylcholine at the neuromuscular or other cholinergic junctions and produce a reversible partial denervation of the injected muscles or eccrine glands.

Serious adverse events suspected to be related to the spread of toxin have been reported very rarely with botulinum toxin preparations, including muscle weakness, dysphagia or aspiration pneumonia. There have been very rare reports of adverse events with fatal outcome. Patients with underlying neurological disorders or swallowing difficulties are at increased risk of these side effects and should be treated and monitored with extreme caution.

In the currently approved indications, the benefit-risk ratio is acceptable. In order to minimize the risk of serious reactions due to spread of effect of toxin, it is essential that the posology, warnings and precautions are strictly followed as stipulated in the Summary of Product Characteristics for the respective product.

**Further information to health care professionals**

- **Botulinum toxin products should only be administered by physicians with appropriate experience including use of the required equipment.**
- **Patients or caregivers should be informed about the risk of spread of toxins and be advised to seek immediate medical care if swallowing, speech or respiratory disorders arise.**
- **Botulinum toxin units are not interchangeable from one product to another.**
- **The recommended administration techniques and specific dosing guidance (including the recommendation to use the minimum effective dose and titrate according to individual requirements) should be followed.**

**Changes of Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC)**

The SPCs (Section 4.4 “*Special Warnings and Precautions for Use*” and section 4.8 “*Undesirable effects*”) for all four botulinum toxin products (Botox<sup>®</sup>, Dysport<sup>®</sup>, NeuroBloc<sup>®</sup>, Vistabel<sup>®</sup>) are being amended, regarding the risk of side effects related to spread of toxin. Current SPCs for the aforementioned products can be accessed on ‘emc.medicines.org.uk’ and ‘<http://www.emea.europa.eu/humandocs/PDFs/EPAR/neurobloc/H-301-PI-en.pdf>’ for BOTOX<sup>®</sup>/Vistabel<sup>®</sup>/Dysport<sup>®</sup> and NeuroBloc<sup>®</sup> respectively. The core elements of the amended SPC text are shown in Annex 1.

**Call for Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) reporting**

Please remember that any adverse event following the use of botulinum toxin products should be reported to the marketing authorisation holder and/or local regulatory authorities, in the usual way.

**Communication information**

For further information, please contact:

**For BOTOX<sup>®</sup> and Vistabel<sup>®</sup>**

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**For NeuroBloc<sup>®</sup>**

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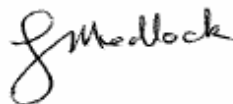
**For Dysport<sup>®</sup>**

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Yours sincerely



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## ANNEX 1

## SPC core elements

### Section 4.4 Special warnings and precaution for use

*Botox, Dysport, NeuroBloc*

Side effects related to spread of toxin distant from the site of administration have been reported (see section 4.8), sometimes resulting in death, which in some cases was associated with dysphagia, pneumonia and/or significant debility.

Patients treated with therapeutic doses may experience exaggerated muscle weakness. Patients with underlying neurological disorders including swallowing difficulties are at increased risk of these side effects. The botulinum toxin product should be used under specialist supervision in these patients and should only be used if the benefit of treatment is considered to outweigh the risk. Patients with a history of dysphagia and aspiration should be treated with extreme caution.

Patients or caregivers should be advised to seek immediate medical care if swallowing, speech or respiratory disorders arise.

*Vistabel (only approved for cosmetic use)*

Adverse reactions possibly related to the spread of toxin distant from the site of administration have been reported very rarely with botulinum toxin (see section 4.8). Patients treated with therapeutic doses may experience exaggerated muscle weakness. Injection of VISTABEL is not recommended in patients with a history of dysphagia and aspiration.

Patients or caregivers should be advised to seek immediate medical care if swallowing, speech or respiratory disorders arise.

### Section 4.8 Undesirable effects

*Botox, Dysport, NeuroBloc*

Side effects related to spread of toxin distant from the site of administration have been reported very rarely (exaggerated muscle weakness, dysphagia, aspiration pneumonitis with fatal outcome in some cases) (see section 4.4).

*Vistabel (only approved for cosmetic use)*

Adverse reactions possibly related to the spread of toxin distant from the site of administration have been reported very rarely with botulinum toxin (e.g. muscle weakness, dysphagia, or aspiration pneumonia which can be fatal) (see section 4.4)