

US beauty pageant mom gives 8-yr-old Botox

An investigation is under way into a mother who was shown in a photo on national TV giving an anti-wrinkle Botox injection to her 8-year-old daughter, a beauty pageant contestant, even though the shots can be painful and aren't recommended for anyone under 18 for cosmetic purposes.

Trent Rhorer, executive director of the San Francisco Human Services Agency, told KGO-TV on Thursday that officials want to talk with Kerry Campbell and her daughter Britney.

"It's pretty unusual for a mom to be injecting an 8-year-old with Botox and certainly is grounds for an investigation," Rhorer told the TV station. He did not immediately return a call from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Campbell appeared with her daughter Thursday on ABC's Good Morning America.

She said she enrolls Britney in beauty pageants and got the idea to give her Botox from other pageant mothers.

"It's a tough world in the pageant world, I'm telling you," Campbell told the program. "The kids are harsh."

The Associated Press did not find a phone listing for Kerry Campbell in San Francisco and was unable to reach her.

Photographs purportedly taken during the treatment and displayed on Good Morning America show Britney with a bag of ice on her face in apparent discomfort. One picture shows Campbell injecting her daughter.

The girl said on the show that she experiences pain and sometimes cries a little, but has gotten used to the injections and looks better after the treatment. Asked why she got it, she first said she didn't know. But after appearing to be prompted by her mother, she said she saw wrinkles and didn't think they were nice.

Dr Isaac Neuhaus, a professor of dermatology at the University of California, San Francisco, told the AP that administering Botox to a child could paralyze developing muscles.

He said injecting the drug in the wrong spot or in the wrong amount could cause breathing problems or affect the child's ability to swallow.

"There is a lot of concerns you'd have for an 8-year-old who's being put through Botox treatment for wrinkles she doesn't have," Neuhaus said. "It's going to certainly have a significant impact on her body image."

The San Francisco Human Services Agency, which investigates reports of child abuse, received numerous calls from people concerned about Britney's well-being after the television appearance, Rhorer said.

Botox, which was introduced in 1989, is known for its ability to smooth wrinkles, but it is also approved to treat other conditions, including neck spasms, excessive underarm sweating and migraine headaches.

A purified form of the toxin botulinum, Botox blocks connections between nerves and muscle, temporarily paralyzing the muscle. Injections can be painful and are not recommended for anyone under the age of 18, the US Food and Drug Administration says on its website.

California regulations only allow the drug to be administered by a doctor or a nurse acting under the supervision of a doctor, said Kim Brown, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Consumer Affairs. Additionally, Brown said the drug requires a doctor's prescription.

Campbell declined to tell Good Morning America where she got the drug but said it was a trusted source.

- AP