Charlie Ware, 39 is accused of injecting unknown substances in a woman's face and another patient's breasts for antiaging and breast lift procedures in Hollywood, police said. The acupuncturist was charged with practicing medicine without a license. (handout, Sun Sentinel / October 17, 2013)

By Erika Pesantes, Sun Sentinel

5:59 p.m. EDT, October 17, 2013

The self-proclaimed Hollywood doctor injected the 44-year-old woman’s face with a substance he said would make wrinkles vanish, police say.

Viktoria Kogan, of Coral Springs, said she instead felt poisoned and what appeared were nightmarish side effects. Kogan said she felt electrical impulses and a freezing sensation in her head and beneath her face. She also had spasms, high blood pressure and heart palpitations — conditions that sent her to the emergency room five times, Kogan said.

The "doctor" — known to patients as Dr. Charlie Ware, according to his website — was arrested Tuesday at his office at 3800 S. Ocean Drive in Hollywood, authorities said. Charlie Ware, who authorities say had no medical training or a medical license, was charged with practicing medicine without a license.

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medical license, was charged with three counts of attempting to practice medicine without a license, records show.

He told investigators that he used the same product on at least a dozen patients, according to the police report. Authorities attempted to reach those clients and it's unclear if any others suffered similar symptoms.

During a U.S. Food and Drug Administration investigation, Ware told an agent that he had injected a skin-tightening product called Simildiet into Kogan’s cheeks and forehead, authorities said.

The agent found that the product’s manufacturer — a pharmaceutical company in Spain — states that the product only may be used externally. It also contains ingredients that the state’s health department says could be toxic, according to the police report.

Ware, 39, was released from jail Wednesday after posting a $4,500 bond, jail records show. Reached by phone Thursday, he declined to comment.

Although Kogan said her condition has improved since her February 2012 treatment, there have been residual effects, such as the sensation of coldness.

"I did not sleep one month. I could lie in the bed, but not sleeping," Kogan said. "This was so toxic. I was feeling like poisoned."

She called poison control and saw several doctor specialists, including a neurologist, she said. But they could do little to help, because they did not know what substance had been injected into her face, Kogan said.

"This was something unbelievable," she said.

Police said an investigation began after a Food and Drug Administration special agent contacted a Hollywood detective in July.

Kogan said Ware was recommended to her. According to a police report, she paid $180 for an anti-aging treatment to reduce wrinkles on her face. The substance was injected throughout her face, including under her eyes, the report said.

Initially, Kogan said she was hesitant about the procedure because she asked for reading material about the treatment that Ware could not provide. He told her not to be afraid because he was using "good ingredients," Kogan said.

About the same time Kogan was treated, Sandra Urquiza, of Miami, also was a patient of Ware’s after he advertised a $150 deal on the popular daily deal website Groupon, officials said.

She told authorities that she had a natural breast lift procedure — intramuscular injections into her breasts during two separate occasions— performed by Ware also in February 2012.

The report did not indicate whether she had any medical issues because of the injections.

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The police report did not indicate whether she had any medical issues because of the injections.

The women believed Ware to be a medical doctor, but he wasn’t, police said.

Ware, however, is a licensed acupuncturist who wasn’t permitted to perform the type of medical procedures Kogan and Urquiza allegedly received, authorities said.

Acupuncture, which is a traditional Chinese medical practice, involves needles placed at different points across the body that help trigger circulation or stimulate nerve activity to, for example, relieve pain.

A subspecialty of acupuncture called "acupoint injection therapy” requires additional training and allows practitioners to administer FDA-approved injections, said Ellen Teeter, the head of the Florida State Oriental Medical Association.

Ware, according to records from the state’s Department of Health, was qualified to practice such injection therapy.

Rodney Dunetz, a licensed acupuncturist from Boca Raton who also is chairman of the Florida State Oriental Medical Association’s ethics committee, said he treats whole families with this type of therapy.
The therapy is meant to heal, not harm, he said, and those who do put patients in danger should be held accountable.

"If it's done within the scope of the practice, there's basically no risk factor. The risk factor is minimal," Dunetz said. "If it's not approved to be injected, you shouldn't be injecting it. That's the standard that we go by."

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StonersAreEvil at 8:54 AM October 18, 2013

One time when I went back to my home town in western NY for a visit, I told friends & family up there about the "bootyologists" we have down here who enhance women's rear ends with injections of Fix-a-Flat. I made sure I brought certain print issues of the Sentinel with me so they wouldn't accuse me of telling them tall tales.

Stan Smith- American Dad at 10:50 PM October 17, 2013

injected the 44-year-old woman's face with a substance he said would make wrinkles vanish, police say.

I used that one before.