

SURVEY OF STUDIES ON MICROBIAL CONTAMINATION OF MARKETED TATTOO INKS**Lucia Bonadonna¹**¹*National Institute of Health; (Rome, Italy)*

Tattooing has become a popular phenomenon during the late twentieth century. Because the act of tattooing involves repeated injection of ink through the skin, a risk of contracting infections from contaminated tattooing equipment, ink and surrounding environment exists. Progress has been made in infection control strategies; however, contraction of bacterial and viral infections by tattooing continues to occur. The risk of acquiring a tattoo-related infection largely depends on the hygiene conditions under which the tattoo is applied. Nevertheless, even when adequate hygiene and sanitation measures are taken, inks themselves may contain infectious microorganisms, able to survive under hostile conditions, such as inks. Results of the few studies on the microbiological quality of unopened and opened tattoo inks are reported. Some authors' conclusions put into evidence that the current ink sterilization systems show a low capability to inactivate microbial contamination in tattoo inks. At the moment the European Resolution (ResAP2008-1) recommends the ink to be sterile and supplied in containers which maintain the sterility of the product until application. In the light of the outcomes of published studies, at the moment the preservation of safe microbial quality of ink seems challenging and still difficult to reach.