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**WHAT CAN REALISTICALLY BE IMPLEMENTED AND FOLLOWED:
THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE**

Alberto Renzoni¹, Antonia Pirrera¹, Marco Fontana², Manuela Agnello²

¹*Istituto Superiore di Sanità; (Rome, Italy)*

²*ARPA Piemonte; (Grugliasco (Turin), Italy)*

We observe a steady growth in the practice of tattooing in Italy, based on the first results of an ongoing survey. This trend is confirmed by the increase in the number of tattoo parlors; almost + 70% in three years (2012-2014).

Although tattooing and PMU are not covered by a specific national law, Italy has a regulatory framework that guarantees consumer protection. In Italy, ResAP (2008)¹, although not mandatory, was made binding by Decree no. 206/2005 and is applied uniformly throughout the country. Not all the Italian regions adopted the Ministry of Health “Guidelines for the implementation of procedures for tattooing in safe conditions”, creating a highly fragmented situation.

The Italian surveillance system appears to be working well and non-compliant and potentially unsafe inks are readily discovered and banned. In addition to the central Authorities’ surveillance at the national level, surveillance is carried out at the local level by Local Health Units. The latter, by adopting an annual plan of surveillance, inspect tattoo parlors and monitor the ink trade/production, especially regarding the containment of microbiological and chemical risks.

Consistent criteria for the definition of a uniform professional profile for tattooists, a register of professional tattooists and systematic monitoring of tattoo parlors can significantly reduce the number of illegal tattooists and therefore reduce health risks due to incorrect practices. This, along with a register of ink manufacturers, good market surveillance focused also on preventing counterfeiting, and information campaigns on risk awareness would help to ensure the safety of consumers.