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SURVEY ON TATTOOING PRACTICE IN BELGIUM

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Aim: The increasing popularity of tattoos and permanent make-up has raised the concern of the Belgian authorities about these techniques. A committee has been set up on this subject within the Belgian Superior Health Council to realise an advisory report.

Method: In order to get an idea about the situation in Belgium, the committee organised a survey and invited all registered tattooist to take part in it. Of the 700 forms sent only 56 completed forms were returned.

Different aspects were addressed in the survey: training, hygiene and procedure, materials including inks, aftercare, documents including informed consent and registration of the inks used and complications.

Results of the survey are presented.

1. In general, hygienic measures are respected and sterile disposable needles are used
2. There is no standardisation of disinfection and aftercare. Every tattooist has his own "standard" method.
3. informed consent of the client is respected in 88% but registration of the products is only done in 60%
4. In 59% complications have been observed.

Comments: the tattooists expressed their concern about the "black-underground" tattoo activities; they asked for better training and information from the health authorities and the majority expressed good-will to cooperate to reduce complications.

Conclusion: the limited number of completed forms probably gives a false positive impression; we can presume that only the responsible professionals reacted. Education of the practitioners in cooperation with the sector can be improved.