

Decorative Tattoos: Analysis of 100 Cases

Sir,

A total inspection of skin has been carried out on all new patients attending the dermatology department. We would like to report the following result:

Seventy patients had tattoos done for peer acceptance, 12 to enhance sex appeal, 12 to cement a relationship and 6 because they were in the armed forces. Seventy-seven had it carried out by a professional, 18 by friends and 5 did it themselves. Twenty-five recollected having it done with an electric needle, and the self-administered tattoos were carried out with hypodermic or darning needles.

A rudimentary form of asepsis either by flaming the needle or immersing it in disinfectant was carried out in all cases. Apart

from slight soreness at the site lasting a day or two, only 3 recalled pain and inflammation of longer duration. No authentic history of other sequelae could be obtained.

Of 30 patients desiring tattoo removal, 21 disliked its appearance and 9 wished it to be removed because of the ending of a relationship.

The study tends to confirm that tattooing is an impetuous adolescent phenomenon, and the subjects are usually unaware that removal of the tattoo is a very difficult procedure.

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