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How to advise a patient who wants a tattoo?

Tattooing is very popular and has become mainstream, mainly in individuals aged between 18 and 40 years old. Tattooing is not restricted to “healthy” people. Patients with skin lesions or with chronic skin or systemic diseases may also be interested to get a tattoo.

The motivations for getting tattooed are multiple, often complex and rarely restricted to one single reason. Motivation and decision of the design, the choice of the tattooist and time to reflect are important factors in its realization. Correct information and compliance with good after-care are essential steps to prevent complications such as infection and to achieve fast and successful wound healing with an aesthetic outcome. Tattooing should always be a well-informed decision to avoid regret and complications. Not only tattooist but also health care practitioners should be aware of potential problems and be able to give good advice in particular in patients with chronic diseases.

Keywords: tattoo, complications, chronic disease, contraindications

Biography:

Dr. Christa De Cuyper is a dermatologist. She was head of the Dermatology department of the Sint-Jan General Hospital in Brugge, Belgium from 1985-2015 and engaged in training of young dermatologists. Her core business has been clinical dermatology, mycology and laser therapy. She has been interested in tattoos and body art for more than 30 years and published several articles, chapters and two books on complications with body art, tattoos, permanent make-up and piercings.

Dr. De Cuyper is founding member of ESTP (European Society of Tattoo and Pigment Research) and active officer at the EADV (European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology) as chairperson of the NAWG (Nurse Association Working Group) and facilitator of the EADV Task Forces. Teaching and raising public awareness on dermatology related topics is part of her many hobbies.