



TOLERANCE AND SUITABILITY OF AN AFTERCARE ROUTINE FOR TATTOOS

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INTRODUCTION

Permanent tattoos are common in Western countries. According to a recent survey, 17% of French adults aged 18 and over have tattoos, women representing a slight preponderance (19% versus 14% for men). Tattoo aftercare is crucial to obtain the best initial result and to prevent scarring. In addition, customers may present with transient symptoms such as burning sensations, sensitivity, pain or itchiness during healing. While there is a wide number of aftercare products available on the market, tolerance and suitability are often lacking. The aim of this study was to evaluate the benefits of the application of a cleansing gel and a wound-healing product after tattooing in a use test.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

Individuals were included just after getting a tattoo in a professional tattoo shop. They received a cleansing gel and a wound-healing product that included a broad-spectrum UVA/UVB photoprotection associated with instructions for use. Subjects had to fill out an auto-questionnaire 15 days later regarding tolerance and interest in tested products for the aftercare management of tattoos.

RESULTS

Among the forty tattooed individuals (20 men and 20 women, mean age 32.8 ± 3 years), 75% (30) presented with light skin. Only 7.5% reported one unique tattoo and 60% 4 tattoos or above. For 9 subjects out of 10, it was not a first tattoo and more than 85% reported a previous good healing. In 70% of cases, the tattoo took 2 hours or more.

All subjects tested the products during a two-week period and used at least one product (38 used 2 products, 1 used only the cleansing gel, and 1 only the healing product). They used the products 2 or 3 times per day and at least 3 to 4 days per week. 50% of men and 80% of women agree or totally agree that the products are well tolerated.

85% of men and 90% of women say they have not exposed their tattoo to the sun in the past 15 days. The needs of subjects and quality of tested products are summarized below.

Number of tattoos	Men n = 20 (%)	Women n = 20 (%)
1	1 (5)	2 (10)
2-3	7 (35)	4 (20)
4-5	6 (30)	5 (25)
>5	5 (25)	8 (40)
ND	1 (5)	1 (5)

Cleansing gel used during the last 15 days	Men n = 20 (%)	Women n = 20 (%)
Every day	4 (20)	2 (10)
Every other day	3 (15)	1 (5)
2 days	4 (20)	6 (30)
3 days	3 (15)	8 (40)
4 days	6 (30)	3 (15)
Once a day	7 (35)	2 (10)
Twice a day	4 (20)	10 (50)
3 times per day	7 (35)	4 (20)
4 times per day	2 (10)	4 (20)

Location of tattoos	Men n = 20 (%)	Women n = 20 (%)
Back	2 (10)	2 (10)
Shoulder	3 (15)	6 (30)
Forearm	5 (25)	7 (35)
Leg	4 (20)	1 (5)
Trunk	2 (10)	1 (5)
Hand	2 (10)	3 (15)
Neck	2 (10)	

Wound-healing product used during the last 15 days	Men n = 19 (%)	Women n = 20 (%)
Every day	5 (25)	3 (15)
Every other day	2 (10)	1 (5)
2 days	5 (25)	5 (25)
3 days	2 (10)	9 (45)
4 days	5 (25)	2 (10)
Once a day	3 (15)	
Twice a day	6 (30)	4 (20)
3 times per day	7 (35)	10 (50)
4 times per day	3 (15)	6 (30)

Time for tattooing	Men n = 20 (%)	Women n = 20 (%)
Less than 30 min		
Between 30 min and 1 h	1 (5)	1 (5)
Between 1 and 2 hours	7 (35)	2 (10)
>2 hours	11 (55)	16 (80)
ND	1 (5)	1 (5)

	% AGREE or TOTALLY AGREE	
	MEN (n=20)	WOMEN (n=20)
The good healing of my tattoo helps me not to regret it	60	80
Having a specific routine for the maintenance of my tattoo reassures me	85	70
Since I have a routine to take care of my tattoo, I am less worried about the risk of infection	65	75
I'm not afraid to touch my tattoo	40	70
I'm reassured of the final rendering of my tattoo	75	80
I'm proud to show my tattoo	80	85
I'm able to resist the itch sensation so that my tattoo heals properly	50	65
Sun protection is reassuring	80	95
My tattoo healed well	65	75
The excess ink is gone	70	85
My tattooed skin did not become infected	55	80
My tattooed skin is soothed	55	65
My tattooed skin is less red	45	85
My tattooed skin pulls less	40	70
My tattooed skin burns less	45	70
My tattooed skin itches less	45	75
My tattooed skin is less swollen	65	70
The color of my tattoo is well preserved	60	90
My tattooed skin did not tan	75	90

CONCLUSION

This study indicates the interest of a well-tolerated aftercare dermocosmetic routine for the management of transient symptoms and increased satisfaction by individuals with tattoos.