Body Art

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Objectives
- Review historical perspectives of body art techniques.
- Identify the medical complications of body art technique.
- Delineate the medical management of the complications of piercing, tattooing, and pubic hair shaving.

Historical Precedent
- Egyptian Pharaohs → Navels
- Roman Soldiers → Nipples
- Native Americans → Rites of Passage
- Victorian Women → Nipples
- Victorian Men → The Prince Albert
Who Is Getting Pierced?
Profile published by “Piercing Fans International Quarterly” (largest publication on body piercing).

- 83% attended college
- 24% had college degrees
- 33% gone on to postgraduate study
- 93% Caucasians

Reasons for Piercing

- Use of piercing as symbol of change
- Separation from authority figures (parents, employers)
- Social/Peer pressure; Fashion
- Acceptance in cultural group;
  Rite of passage
The Ritual Piercing Phases

- Pre-liminal: piercee researches the piercing process
- Liminal: piercee enters the studio and is prepared for piercing and is pierced
- Post-liminal: relief and pride of surviving the procedure. Identification with new group, rejection by the old.

Body Jewelry Content

- Surgical stainless steel
- Titanium
- 14 or 18 karat gold
- Niobium
Body Modification Techniques

- Tattooing
- Branding
- Scarification
- Earlobe and Tongue Stretching

Victorian women

- Late 1890’s “bosom ring” in France
- Medical community outraged
- In 1898, a Bond Street jeweler pierced 40 English ladies and young girls
Acceptable Nipple Jewelry

- Silver or any metal that tarnishes should not be worn
- Surgical stainless steel or gold (18K) should be worn in a fresh piercing
- Jewelry types: barbell and ball closure, ring (barbell heals quicker than ring)
Potential Complications

- Hepatitis B and C
- Localized bacterial infections
- Excessive bleeding
- Allergic reactions
- Nerve damage
- Migration of jewelry
- Keloid formation
- Dental damage

Organisms Identified

- Staphylococcus Aureus
- Pseudomonas Aeruginosa
- Group A, -hemolytic Streptococci
- Primary Tuberculosis
- Clostridium tetani
- Viruses (HIV → death)

Victorian Men

- Prince Albert’s penis ring
- Secured penis to the thigh to avoid a bulge in the tight trousers worn
**Pearling**

- Pearls are inserted under the skin.

**Navel Piercing Technique**

- Area is cleaned and marked
- Site is lightly clamped with forceps
- Piercing instrument is inserted (hollow needle with a plastic sleeve) in one motion.
- The jewelry is threaded through the sleeve.
Tongue Piercing

- Hole in midline with 14-gauge barbell
- Tongue and piercing site swelling
- Sucking ice for edema
- Rinse mouth with 1/2 strength Listerine and Glyoxine
- Smoking delays healing
Tongue Piercing Complications

- Pain, swelling and infection (Toxic Shock)
- Residual open wound (Risk of STDs)
- Mucosal/gingival trauma
- Chipped/fractured tooth
  - Salivary flow
  - Speech impediment
  - Choking on loose jewelry
Dental Complications

- Tongue swelling
  - Obstruction of airway
- Broken teeth
- Loose jewelry
  - Choking, swallowing
- Damaged cheek tissue
- Numbness and loss of taste
Specific Site Complications

- Ear
  - Torn, split lobe
  - Pseudomonas chondritis
  - Toxic shock syndrome
- Nose
  - Imbedded in subcutaneous tissue
  - Endocarditis
  - Staph in nose → Infection
- Nipple
  - Scar tissue constricts duct during lactation
  - Breast abscess
- Navel
  - Rejection of ring
  - Keloid
  - Persistent discharge
  - Infection (Pseudomonas)
Genitalia

- Common Sites: foreskin, penis, scrotum, clitoris, labia
- Coitus before complete healing increases risk of infection
- Penis piercing tissue destruction
Post-Piercing Care

- Avoid touching site unnecessarily
- Clean site BID
  - Soften crusties
  - Wash with liquid soap
  - Rinse well
- When infection occurs do not remove jewelry - abscess can result. Antibiotics and cleaning q.i.d.
When to Remove Jewelry
- M.R.I.
- Cat Scan

When to Leave Jewelry
- Airports
- Infection
- Road Breathalyzer tests
Tattoos - Historic Perspectives

- Tattoo is derived from Ta-Tau. Tahitian for “the results of tapping”.
- Polynesians use a raking process.
- Japanese prefer hand held instruments.
- Polynesia and Japan introduced tattooing via European/American sailors.

Tattooing Prevalence

Prevalence studies:
- Cross sectional convenience sample of 2101 Adolescents → 10% had tattoos (1997).
- 2003 Survey of 1010 adults (multigenerational) found 1 in 7 had tattoos.

Body Art associated with risky behavior

Secondary Analysis of national sample of adolescents 11 to 21 y/o. (N = 6702).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tattooed</th>
<th>Non-tattooed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Intercourse</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Binge Drinking</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marijuana use</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inflicted injury</td>
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<td>17%</td>
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<td>Gang membership</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Failure</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Tattoo Artist**

- No formal training in anatomy, universal precautions, disease transmissions, sterilization procedures, after-care.
- 3 states require examinations but no formal training. (Ak., KS., Or.).

**Tattooing Process**

- Tattoo is placed by the artist with an electric-powered machine which resembles a sewing machine.
- Several needles are attached to end and insert the pigment into the skin.
- The skin is repeatedly punctured (1-4mm.) using solid bore needles to leach the pigment into the skin.
- During tattooing blood and serosanguinous fluid collect on the skin.

**Tattooing Process**

- The chosen design is drawn by hand or a stenciling machine.
- Ink is applied by dipping needles into disposable ink cups.
- Petroleum jelly applied (↓ oozing).
- After Care → wash site B.I.D. with antimicrobial soap.
Systemic Infection with Body Piercing and Tattooing

- Tetanus
- Acute post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis
- Streptococcal septicemia
- Staphylococcal Toxic shock syndrome
- Pseudomonal abscesses
- Endocarditis
- Brain Abscess
- Hepatitis B and C
- HIV risk factor

Tattoo removal

- Abrasion - remove top layer of skin.
- Cryosurgery, cantery, surgical resection has to be used.
- Lasers → pulse fractures the pigment so it sloughs off or is ingested by macrophages.
- All methods potentially leave scars and may fail to totally eliminate the tattoo.
Shaving Pubic Hair
- A relatively new phenomenon among adolescent girls
- Attributed to the popularity of the Brazilian Bikini Wax
- Stated reasons: “I feel cleaner”, “I like the way it looks”

Consequences of Pubic Hair Shaving
- Razor bumps (pseudofolliculitis barbae)
  - Itchy → Scratching → Superinfection
- Post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation
- Permanent scarring
- Keloid formation

Mechanism
- Tightly coiled hairs penetrate the skin → loop
- A foreign body-like inflammation results
- A firm skin-colored, erythemotous, or hyperpigmented papule is formed often with a hair protruding
Treatment

- Acutely inflamed lesions
  - D/C shaving
  - Hot soaks
  - Antibiotics – topical, oral
  - Consider alternative hair removal techniques

Removal of Unwanted Hair

- At birth we have all our hair follicles
- Pubertal hormones activate characteristic hair follicles

Removal Options

- Plucking (Epilation)
  - Lasts 6-8 weeks
  - Painful, time consuming
- Waxing
  - Similar results to plucking
- Depilation
  - Chemically dissolve the hair
  - Lasts 2 weeks
Removal Options

- Shaving
  - Razor bumps
  - Pseudofolliculitis

- Bleaching
  - Masks unwanted hair
  - Side effects: irritation, pruritus, skin discoloration

Removal Options

- Laser
  - Expect less hair, thinner, lighter
  - Dark hair responds best
  - Multiple treatments required

- Electrolysis
  - The only permanent method
  - The hair follicle is destroyed by an electric current
  - Not regulated

Brazilian Wax and Vajazzle