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RESEARCH PROJECT TATTOOISTS: HEALTH SCREENING REQUIREMENTS AND CURRENT PRACTICES IN SOUTH WALES

Stephanie Powell
Research Officer CIEH Wales

Tattooing



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- The procedure of having a tattoo involves penetration of the skin to insert a pigment/ dye into the second layer of the skin known as the dermis.
- The effects are permanent.



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Risks

- Hygiene:
 - Tattooing environment
 - Tattooing equipment
 - Disposal of sharps
- Health
 - Infection control procedures
 - Aftercare



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Legislative Control

- Legislation relevant in Wales:
 - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
 - Tattooing of Minors Act 1969
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

HSE Guidance – LAC 76/2: Health and Safety issues related to body piercing, tattooing and scarification

Phase 1 – Health Screening



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A secret shopper approach was used to determine the health screening practices implemented prior to any procedures being carried out by tattooists in south Wales.



Methodology



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The secret shoppers:

- Booked & attended a tattoo appointment
- Assessed the level of health screening carried out before having the tattoo done
- Withdrew from the appointment before the tattooing procedure began
- Recorded the findings from the appointment

Findings



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- Registered premises were listed from the following local authority areas :
 - Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda-Cynon Taf, Torfaen and Vale of Glamorgan
- Appointments at 33 registered premises were attended.

Question 1



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- Was any advice given prior to having the procedure?
 - 52% premises provided advice
 - 48% premises did not

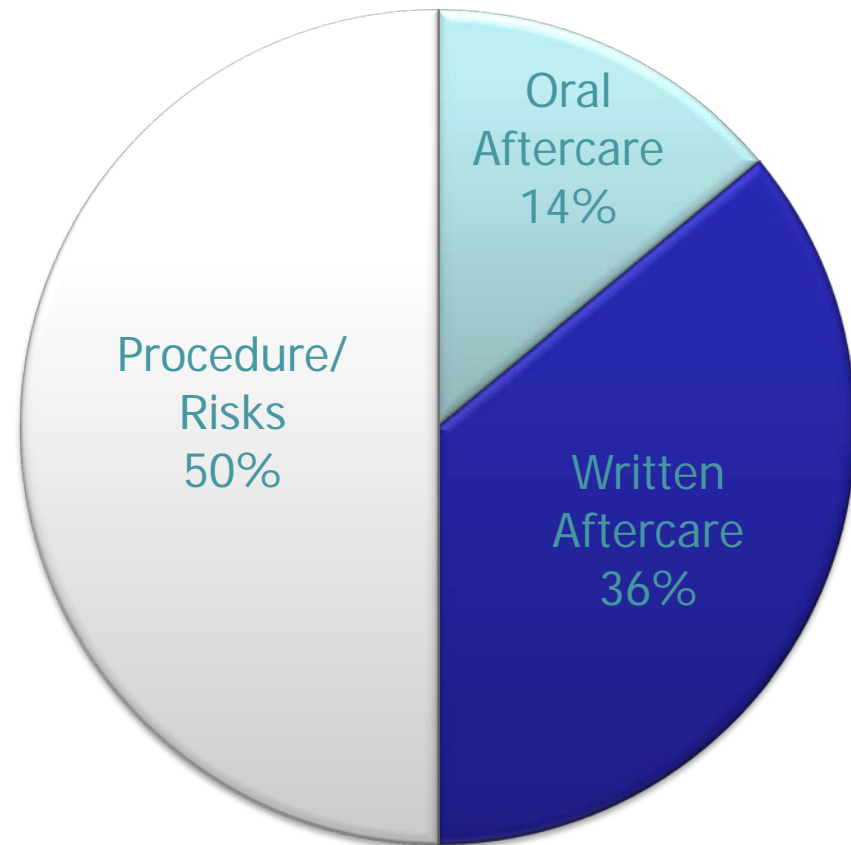
Question 1 [Continued]



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For those that
did provide advice:



Question 2



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- Was written consent obtained?
 - 52% of premises obtained some form of written consent before proceeding



Questions 3 & 4



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- Did the tattooist require you to be over 18?
 - Only 15% did not display a requirement for customers to be over 18 to have a tattoo
- Were you asked for proof of age?
 - 3 premises (7%) asked for identification to prove their age, the remaining 30 (91%) did not.

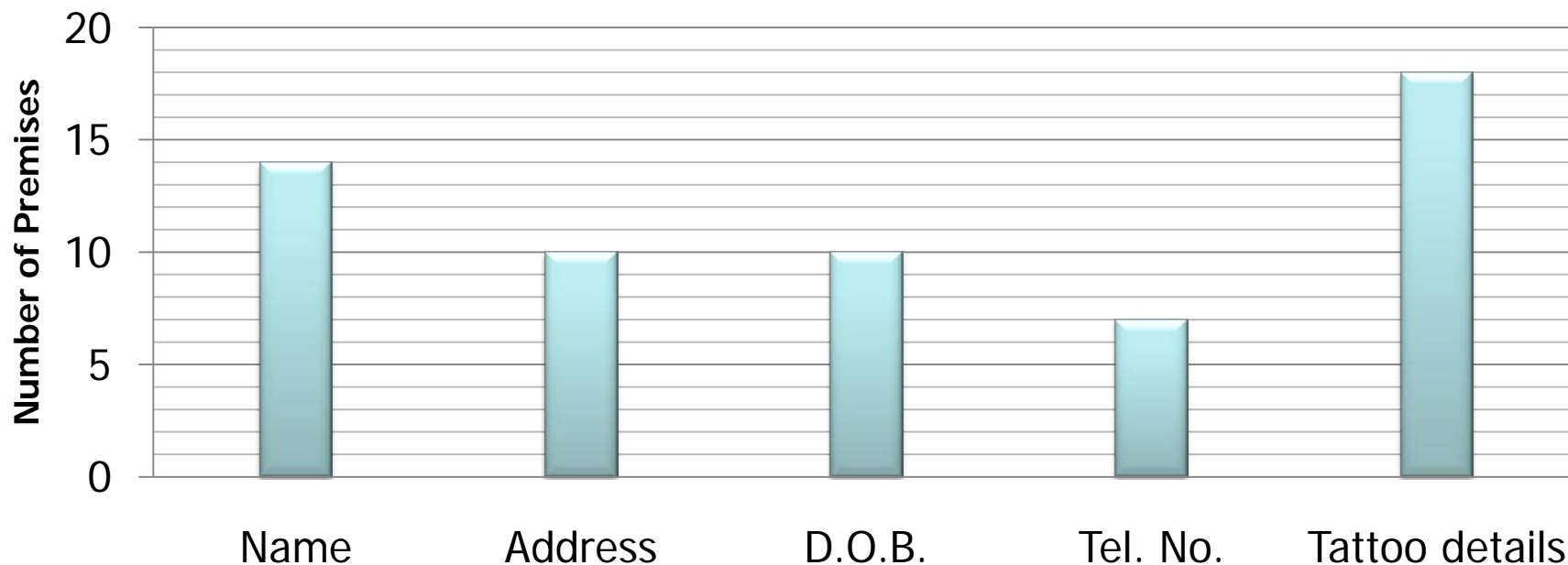
Question 5



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- Was personal information obtained?
 - 70% of premises requested some form of personal information



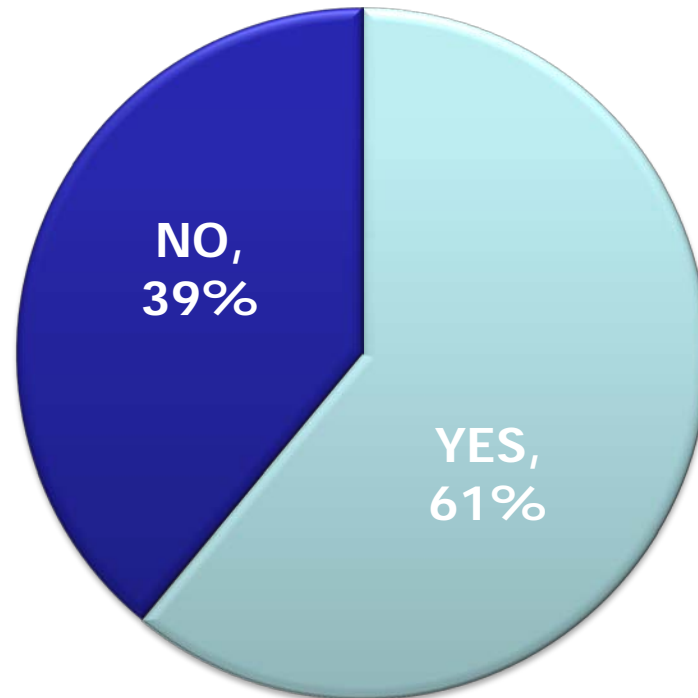
Question 6



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- Were you asked about any medical conditions?

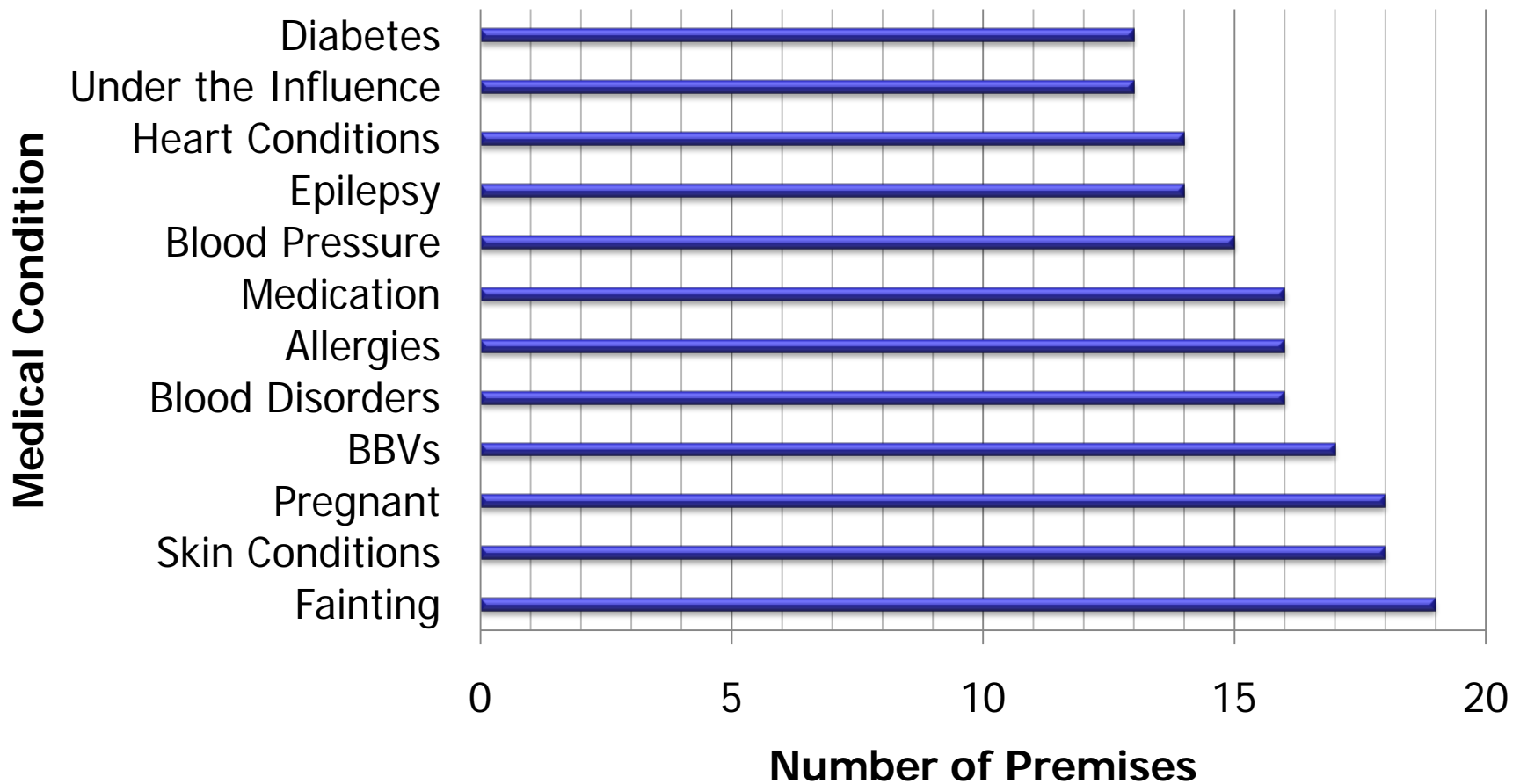


Detailed glance...



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Phase 2



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A telephone-based study to determine whether tattooists would be willing to attend a private party to tattoo guests attending the function.

Methodology



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- Using a list of tattoo establishments, from the south Wales area:
 - Telephone-based secret shopping was conducted to determine whether tattooists would attend a private function to tattoo guests.
 - Responses recorded during the telephone conversation.

Findings



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- Premises contacted from the following local authority areas :
 - Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda-Cynon Taf, Torfaen and Vale of Glamorgan
- 66 premises were contacted, 56 responses obtained.

Responses



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Responses to the invitation were categorised as:

- Outright refusal = 47
- Equivocal response = 3
- Provisional agreement = 2
- Agreed = 4

Follow-up



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- For the premises that gave an equivocal response:
 - 3 out of 5 agreed
 - 2 out of 5 declined

Final analysis of Phase 2 responses:

49 refusals and 7 acceptances

Discussion



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- The majority of tattoo businesses were carrying out health surveillance:
 - Providing advice prior to procedures
 - Displaying or stating the legal age limit, however with only 7% asking for proof of age there are potential issues around underage tattooing
 - Obtaining personal details of clients for record purposes

Discussion



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As under 40% did not ask about pre-existing medical conditions there are potential risks to compromised clients, particularly those who suffer from heart conditions, blood pressure, epilepsy or diabetes since these were asked about least.



Discussion



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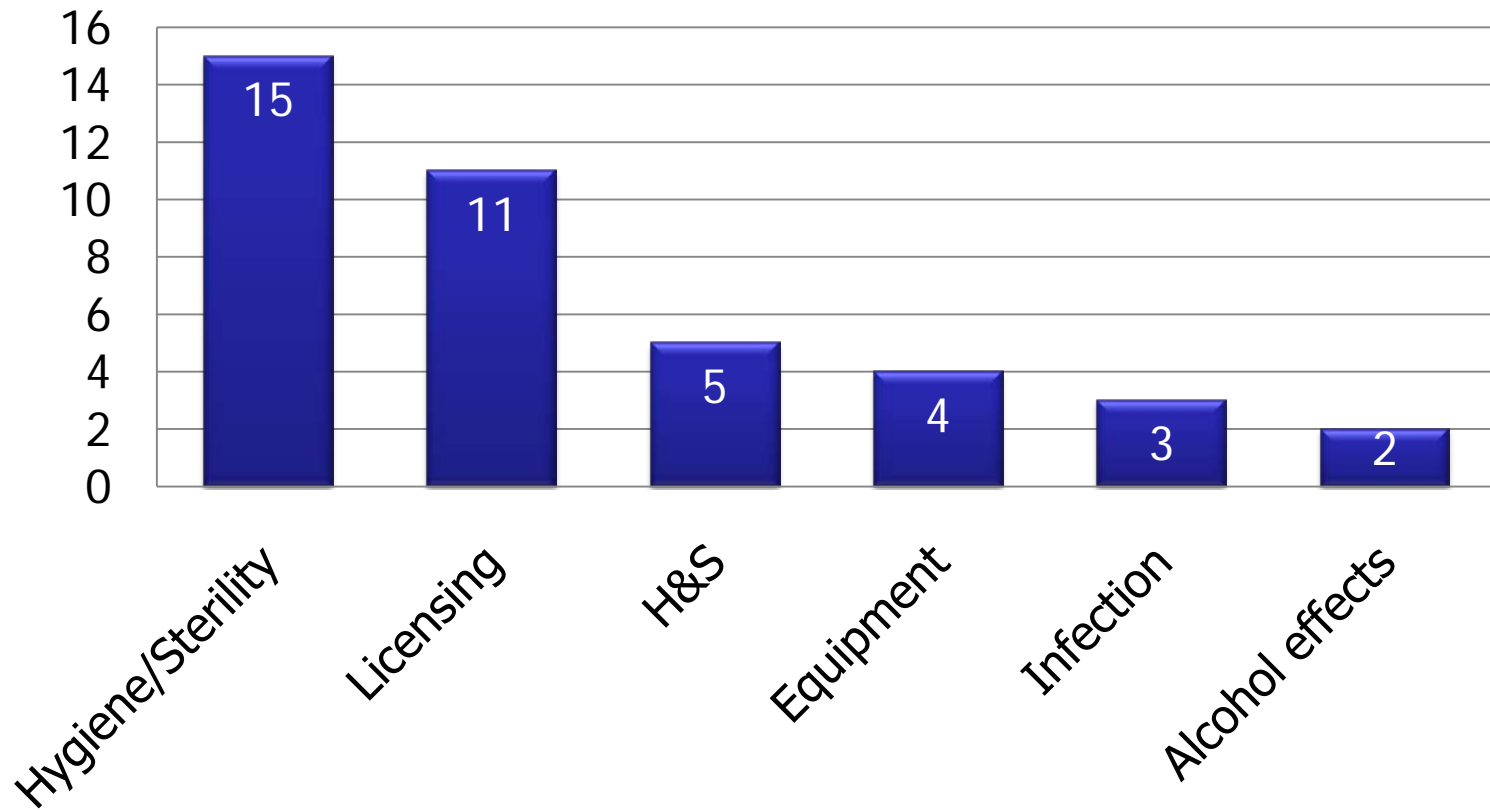
- The majority of businesses (87%) declined the invitation to attend the private function, a large proportion (57%) provided appropriate justification and conveyed information about the risks.



Discussion



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- An additional risk factor with tattooing is the ease with which online tattoo kits can be purchased from the internet.
- An online Google search for:
 - 'Tattoo starter kits' obtained about 1,680,000 results
 - 'Tattooing courses' obtained about 44,700,00 results

Discussion



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“UK Tattoo Starter Kit Great Christmas Xmas Gift Idea

Price £79.99 (p+p £9.99)”



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How to Tattoo part 1



A search on YouTube for 'Learn to tattoo' revealed about 2480 results.



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- The options available for getting a tattoo done:
 - Go to registered establishment
 - Get someone to tattoo at home/party
 - Purchase a starter kit online, access online how-to video clips & do it yourself!



Recommendations



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- EHPs should be promoting the implementation of health screening in tattooists:
 - For those with no health screening, procedures should be put in place
 - Consistent approach for health screening methods should be encouraged by local authorities

Recommendations



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- Review of licensing schemes to address mobile tattooing and the surrounding issues.
- The sale of tattooing kits online should be regulated.



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STEPHANIE POWELL
Research Officer CIEH Wales
wales@cieh.org