



# Uniting the Tattoo Industry to Combat Misinformation and Protect Our Future

By Ben Shaw

In the ever-evolving world of tattooing, practitioners and industry professionals are facing a crucial turning point. The need to protect our industry and ensure the safety of both artists and clients has never been more evident. With various studies and discussions on the table, it is our responsibility to come together, share knowledge, and push for research that is applicable to the tattoo process.

Recent research has shed light on the complex nature of tattoo inks and their potential implications. However, it is essential to approach these findings with a critical eye. A study conducted by Kluger and Koljonen (2012) highlighted that, despite the presence of well-known carcinogens, no direct link between exposure to tattoo ink ingredients and local or systemic carcinogenicity has been established. It is important to note that this study utilized an online Google scholar search, uncovering only 53 articles related to contraindications with tattoo pigments or ingredients. This limited pool of research prompts us to consider the scale of the tattoo industry over the past decade and the need for comprehensive studies.

In the European Union (EU), regulations regarding tattoo pigments and ingredients remain in their infancy. Insufficient research has resulted in only ten countries adhering to the ResAP framework, leaving room for improvement and unified efforts towards ensuring safety standards. Dr. Serup, an influential figure in the EU, has been actively advocating for proper science and regulation, addressing the issue of pigment bans that have inadvertently led to illegal activities due to concerns among tattoo artists about compliant pigments.

While the toxicology of tattoo inks and their effects on the body are still being studied, several benefits of tattoos have also emerged. A study conducted at the University of Alabama found that tattoos may enhance general immune response and reduce cortisol levels, contributing to improved immunity and stamina (source: news.ua.edu). Additionally, anecdotal evidence suggests that tattoo pigments can act as a barrier against UV radiation, as experienced by individuals with conditions such as UV sensitivity.

Recognizing the need for collective action, the Association of Professional Tattooists (APT) has been working diligently to unify the industry and address pressing issues. The APT Pigment Committee, led by dedicated individuals, including the chairperson, has initiated discussions and strategies to navigate conversations with regulatory bodies like the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). By providing industry-specific research and establishing safe guidelines, the APT aims to ensure the quality and safety of tattoo pigments and products.

To achieve our goals, we must rally together and support the APT trade organization. By increasing our numbers and promoting collaboration, we can contribute to proper research and substantiate safety measures. This is a call to action for all tattoo practitioners, state representatives, and industry professionals to join forces under the APT and work towards a safer and more unified tattoo industry.

It is crucial that we remain informed and actively participate in shaping the future of our industry. By sharing opinions, concerns, and discoveries, we can collectively uncover truths and provide the government with reliable research to guide the development of regulations that reflect our industry's unique needs.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that the American Cancer Society website states that there is no correlation between tattoos and cancer. This information further emphasizes the importance of disseminating accurate information to counter misinformation and protect the reputation of the tattoo industry.

Let us seize this opportunity to come together, grow our numbers, and promote safer practices. Join the APT, engage in productive discussions, and support manufacturers who prioritize quality control. Through our unified efforts, we can elevate the tattoo industry, protect our livelihoods, and ensure the safety and satisfaction of our clients.

Together, we can make a lasting impact and shape the future of tattooing for the better. Join us in unifying the tattoo industry today!



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