

May 17, 2017

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our paper, *Tattoos as a Window to the Psyche: How Talking About Skin Art Can Inform Psychiatric Practice*.

To recap, this was an invited review (ID#: 02325255) submitted in July 2016. It was resubmitted in February 2017 based on reviewers' suggestions with a new ID# 02445209.

We are happy to see that it has now been returned with a recommendation for acceptance.

Reviewer #1 had no suggested revisions.

Reviewer #2 requested that a short paragraph be included describing the inclusion criteria for reviewed papers, especially with regard to publication dates. The following paragraph was therefore added:

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

An online search of PubMed and PsycInfo databases was performed using the search terms "tattoos," "tattooing," "tattoo," "skin art," "epidemiology," "stigma," "psychiatric disorders," "psychology," "perception," "self-perception," "removal," "depression," "anxiety," "self-harm," "deviance," "psychopathology," "prison," "military," and "veterans." Criteria for inclusion were original research involving human subjects, meta-analyses, reviews, published in the English language between January 1, 1990 and February 1, 2016 (with the exception of reference 7 which was included for historical purposes). The bibliographies of articles identified through electronic search were also reviewed for additional relevant publications including online resources such as the Harris Poll and military service regulations. Dissertations were excluded. Articles with a primary focus on dermatological/physical/physiological reactions to tattooing and tattoo removal or on diagnosis and treatment of the infectious sequelae of tattoos were excluded.

Reviewer #2 also highlighted several items warranting minor correction:

Page 12 - a page number has been added to the reference.

Page 16 - spelling error corrected

Page 25 - clarified as follows:

In the reverse direction, a 1998 survey found that physicians and registered nurses demonstrated *negative* biases against those with tattoos^[32]. Although the survey did not measure *providers'* actual attitudes towards *their* patients, it is important to be aware of the *potential* for *negative* bias as a clinician working with individuals with tattoos.

Page 17 – “a” added

Reference 20 – date added.

Reviewer #2 also suggested a concluding paragraph regarding study limitations, similar to Reviewer #3's request for a sentence on the limitation of data from Western industrialized cultures.

Accordingly, the final paragraph now reads:

Over the past century in Western society, tattoos have evolved from cultural taboo to mainstream fashion. Accordingly, historical biases and pathological implications about tattoos warrant revision for present-day tattoo wearers. Although the literature to date on tattooing is informative, *the available data are limited to subpopulations drawn from Western industrialized cultures and offer a narrow perspective on the interactions of other characteristics of tattoo wearers (e.g. age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) on public perception.* Clinicians are therefore cautioned against overgeneralization, and are instead encouraged to explore the personal meaning associated with individual patients and their different tattoos. We suggest that as a kind of augmentation of the physical exam, doing so with individuals who are engaged in psychiatric treatment provides a valuable window to the psyche that can reveal core aspects of self-identity and hidden emotions with the potential to facilitate and enhance clinical work.

We would like to thank the reviewers for their careful consideration. We hope that the changes that we've made in response to their recommendations will result in timely publication.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Pierre MD