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TATTOOISTS, BODY PIERCERS AND BLOOD BORNE VIRUSES

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Background Body piercing and tattooing are increasingly popular invasive procedures with potential health risks. Operators and clients risk transmitting blood-borne viruses and a range of bacterial infections if the correct precautions are not taken. In South Australia there is no accredited system of apprenticeship for Body Piercers or Tattooists.

Aims/Objectives/Purpose This project aimed to prevent the incidence of workplace infection within body piercing and tattooing businesses located in South Australia.

Methods Specialist infection control and blood awareness educational workshops were designed for tattooists and piercers to focus on how to minimise risk to themselves, their employees and clients. The third workshop was developed for Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to provide them with infection control strategies to adequately inspect these premises with confidence.

Results/Outcome The workshops were successful as over 50 body piercers, 80 tattooists and 25 EHOs were trained. 73% of the respondents to the workshop evaluation stated that they had changed their workplace practices due to the workshop. The industry group also contributed to the development of industry specific resources.

Significance/Contribution to the Field This is a unique industry that has lived on the 'fringe of acceptance' for a long time. This project has given the industry the opportunity to work collaboratively with government agencies and contribute to improved safety of their industry.