

## Tattooed Individuals with Psychotic Symptoms

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### Abstract

Tattooing is gaining more importance in modern society, and the speed is picking up faster. And its popularity is not restricted to only one gender especially in adulthood. *Aim:* To assess the Psychotic symptoms in tattooed individual. *Methodology:* We conducted a cross-sectional descriptive study using Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS). *Results:* Results are depicted in the table with the majority of statistical significance. *Discussion:* Tattooed individuals may have the psychotic symptoms earlier to getting the tattooed done or may develop the psychotic symptoms after getting the tattoo, which was not very much clear in this present study. But definitely, these tattoos are related with the use of substances which causes the psychotic symptoms. *Conclusion:* As there is a definite correlation between the use of the substances and having a tattoo. This could be used in the form of signs for understanding the other substance user. And literature review confirms the use of the substance with psychotic symptoms. In the same way, tattooing also indicates the existence of the psychotic symptoms.

**Keywords:** Symptoms; Psychosis; tattoo.

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### Introduction

The term tattoo has been derived from Tahitian term ta tatau, meaning appropriate, balanced, and fitting<sup>1</sup> and tattooing is defined as the insertion into the skin of any coloring materials designed to leave a semi-permanent or permanent mark on the body<sup>2</sup>. Tattooing is gaining more importance in the modern society, and the speed is picking up faster. And its popularity is not restricted to only one gender especially in adulthood. Literature directs

the psychological dependence of these tattooed individuals; whereas this can be *vis a vis* tattooed individual may be suffering from a psychological disorder. For the same reason, few physicians have suggested thinking about the possibility of a wide range of psychopathology in these tattooed individuals. Some authors even concluded to a certain extent that if there is a tattoo of tumbling dice or a deck of card which signifies "fate" were having psychopathic deviant and diagnosed to be schizophrenic.<sup>3</sup> In the study by Farrow *et al.* indicated that drug and alcohol abuse was found to be very common in the individuals having tattoos easily visible.<sup>4</sup> In fact, tattoos are classified as "criminal tattoos" and non-criminal tattoos depending on the components of the tattoo. Criminal tattoos are the one which reflects the conflict with the law using such symbols which are high in the hierarchy of criminal activity. And non-criminal tattoos are not having any such conflicts with the law and these are always with the self-interest of the individual. And the number of tattoos on the individuals on an individual indicates his deviation from others in

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society. As the heavily tattooed individual are more deviant compared to a less tattooed individual. Tattoos are also considered as the highly encoded language of communication in which every tattoo has a specific meaning hinting the psychological backup of the individual.

### Aim

To assess the Psychotic symptoms in a tattooed individual.

### Methodology

We conducted a cross-sectional descriptive study using Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS).

The Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS) is a widely used methodology for assessing and scoring the positive, negative, and affective symptoms of individuals who have psychotic disorders, commonly seen in schizophrenia. It is highly-valuable for documenting the efficacy of treatment in patients who have the disease. It should be administered by a clinician who is knowledgeable in psychotic disorders and able to interpret and constructs used in the assessment. The BPRS contains 18 symptoms construct and takes about 20–30 minutes for the interview and scoring. The rater should enter a number ranging from 1 (not present) to 7 (extremely severe), 0 is entered if the item is not assessed [5].

### Results

**Table 1:** Tattooed individuals relation with Psychosis and Age.

Age	Psychosis								Total	Sig
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
<18	4	0	6	2	1	0	0	0	13	0.006*
19-21	5	0	15	12	1	0	1	1	35	
22-24	1	1	3	3	2	0	0	0	10	
25-27	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	
>28	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

**Table 2:** Showing relation with Psychosis and Gender.

Gender	Psychosis								Total	Sig
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
Male	5	1	21	8	1	1	0	1	38	0.034
Female	5	0	4	10	4	0	1	0	24	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

**Table 3:** Showing relation with Psychosis and Religion.

Religion	Psychosis								Total	Sig
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
Hindu	9	1	23	17	3	0	1	1	55	0.014
Muslim	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	
Christian	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Jain	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	
No answered	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

**Table 4:** Showing relation with Psychosis and Residence.

Residence	Psychosis								Total	Sig
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
Urban	6	0	17	15	5	0	1	0	44	<0.01*
Rural	4	0	8	2	0	1	0	1	16	
No answered	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

**Table 5:** Showing relation with Psychosis and Complaints Post Tattooing.

Complaints Post Tattooing	Psychosis								Total	SIG
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
No Answered	4	0	9	6	0	0	0	1	20	<0.01*
Good	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
No Complaints	4	1	13	11	4	1	0	0	34	
Pain	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Redness Burning Sensation, Itching	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Redness for A-week	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Shaded	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Small Swelling	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Swelling of Hand	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Uncontrollable Pain	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

**Table 6:** Showing relation with Psychosis and no of Tattoo.

No of Tattoo	Psychosis								Total	Sig
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
1	8	1	10	14	4	0	1	0	38	<0.01*
2	1	0	9	2	0	0	0	0	12	
3	1	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	8	
4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

**Table 7:** Showing relation with Psychosis and Occupation.

Occupation	Psychosis								Total	Sig
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
Semi-skilled	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.014
Labour	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Professional	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Student	9	1	23	17	4	0	1	1	56	
No answered	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

**Table 8:** Showing relation with Psychosis and Education.

Education	Psychosis								Total	Sig
	1	2	4	5	6	7	10	14		
Illiterate	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.002*
Literate	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	
Primary/Secondary/SSLC	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	
PUC	4	0	9	9	1	0	0	0	23	
Graduate	4	0	10	5	4	0	1	1	25	
PG/PhD	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	5	
No answered	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	

## Discussion

The study was aimed to look at the possible relation between psychotic symptoms and having a tattoo.

When the same data has been subjected to statistics it has shown good values of significances and the results have been depicted in **Tables 1-8**.

Since the study was conducted in professional

colleges obviously the sample size is more in the second decade. In the case of a tattooed individual with the age group is compared with those having psychotic symptoms have shown significance statistically. The psychosis scoring is; Score 1-6 = 0-30; 7-8 = 31-40; 9-10 = 41-50; 11-14 = 51-70. BPRS (Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale) and CGI (Clinical Global Impression); Normal <30; mildly ill = 31; moderately ill = 41; markedly ill = 53.

The age group in the tattooed individuals is compared with the individuals having psychotic symptoms has shown:

The psychosis scoring is as follows; score 1-6 = 0-30; 7-8 = 31-40; 9-10 = 41-50; 11-14 = 51-70. BPRS (Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale) and CGI (Clinical Global Impression); Normal <30; mildly ill = 31; moderately ill = 41; markedly ill = 53. The psychosis scoring is divided into following categories for the statistical purpose the psychotic scoring by using BPRS is from 0-70; The numbering for statistical purpose is as follows 1-6 = 0-30; 7-8 = 31-40; 9-10 = 41-50; 11-14 = 51-70. Where 1-6 is normal; 7-8 is mildly ill; 9-10 is moderately ill; 11-14 is markedly ill. BPRS (Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale) and CGI (Clinical Global Impression); Normal <30; mildly ill = 31; moderately ill = 41; markedly ill = 53. The psychosis scoring is as follows; score 1-6 = 0-30; 7-8 = 31-40; 9-10 = 41-50; 11-14 = 51-70. BPRS (Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale) and CGI (Clinical Global Impression); Normal <30; mildly ill = 31; moderately ill = 41; markedly ill = 53. The psychosis scoring is as follows; score 1-6 = 0-30; 7-8 = 31-40; 9-10 = 41-50; 11-14 = 51-70. BPRS (Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale) and CGI (Clinical Global Impression); Normal <30; mildly ill = 31; moderately ill = 41; markedly ill = 53.

*\*Highly Significant at  $\alpha = 0.01$  (99% Confidence Interval).*

The association between tattooing and smoking may be largely related to non-rational decision making and non-planning behavior. Some studies found a significant association between tattooing and smoking.<sup>6-7</sup> And also high impulsive and risky decision-making behavior in the tattoo group may be related to smoking as a confounding factor. Some studies clearly indicate impulsivity as a precursor for smoking.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the association between tattooing and smoking may be related to the fact that both may have addictive characteristics.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

Even though the tattoos are used as languages for substance use, it has been reported very seldom in the literature about the development of Psychotic symptoms in the tattooed individual. It was not clear about the psychotic symptoms; whether the symptoms were existing before getting the tattoo done or after having the tattoo from our study as well as it was a pilot study to start the study in the large group. So the efforts will be made in future studies to categorize the relation of psychotic symptoms with relation to tattoo.

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