

O28. CLIENTS' RATING OF TATTOO REMOVAL BY Q-SWITCH LASER

K. Hutton Carlsen¹, J. Esmann², J. Serup¹

¹Department of Dermatology, the "Tattoo Clinic", Bispebjerg University Hospital, Copenhagen, Denmark

²Department of Laser Surgery, Centre for Laser Surgery, Hellerup, Denmark

Aim: To determine clients' reasons for tattoo removal, effectiveness of YAG laser, side effects and satisfaction with final outcome.

Methods: Tattooed clients, who had received YAG laser treatments from 2001-2013 at the private clinic "Centre for Laser Surgery", received a questionnaire after a minimum 2-year post-treatment period. All data handling was blinded to the laser surgeon.

Results: 154 clients participated (114 females, 40 males). Reasons for tattoo removal were stigmatisation (33%), too visible (29%) and poor quality (22%). Prior to treatment, clients' expectations were high, i.e. 66% expected complete removal without side effects.

Clients rated effectiveness of removal from 0 (no effect) to 10 (complete removal): blue 9.5, black 9.4, yellow 8.9, red 8.8 and green 6.5. After treatment at the "Centre for Laser Surgery", 80% had no scarring, however, hypopigmentation, minor scarring and shiny areas occurred in 20% despite qualified treatment. Clients were especially dissatisfied with green pigment remnants, mimicking bruising. Pain during treatment was moderate to extreme in 84%. Treatment assessment and results were rated to be acceptable to superb (85%) and inferior to unacceptable (15%).

Conclusions: Tattoo removal by Q-switch YAG laser was overall, rated satisfactory despite very high expectations prior to treatment, which were only partly met. During the treatment course, clients thus adjusted their expectations. The laser surgeon should be aware of his/her role as a tutor and prepare the client for a situation, where outcomes may not be optimal.