

Tattooing and Different Personalities; a Comparison Study of Turkish Criminals and Control Sample

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Objective: The relationship of tattoos to the diagnosis of personality disorders was explored in a forensic psychiatric inpatient hospital setting. It was hypothesized that a greater proportion of forensic inpatients possessing tattoos had higher criminality and had personality disorders in comparison to the people with tattoos without criminal history. In this study we compared also the important sociodemographic characteristics of criminals with tattoos and the normal population with tattoos without criminality.

Method: Forensic male and female psychiatric patients (N=42) were administered a semi-structured interview to determine the presence of tattoo. Personality disorder was determined after clinical psychiatric examination by 5 different psychiatrists and additionally personality disorders criteria according to DSM-5 were checked out. The same semi-structured interview was applied on the control group without personality disorder evaluation.

Results: Patients with tattoos had a significantly less number of tattoos but tattoos on different areas of their body, and were more likely to have histories of substance abuse, sexual-abuse, unhappy childhood, enduring violence, traumatic life-experiences, and suicidal attempts than non-criminals.

Conclusion: This is the first study of which compares the forensic psychiatric patients with normal controls in means of tattoos, personality disorders and other demographic characteristics performed in Turkey. We concluded that there is an interaction between criminality and tattoos but the reverse is not always true at least in our control sample.