Reply to the correspondence letter by N Kluger et al. ‘Medical alert tattoos in minors should not be advocated’

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We read with interest the correspondence from Dr. Kluger and colleague to our image article [1]. The authors express similar views with regards the need for better understanding of medical alert tattoos within the medical community and also the need for a recognised symbol and site for these tattoos, so they can be readily seen and acted upon in an emergency. However, the authors do not agree that tattooing should be advocated in minors. Their reasons are this is a decision which many adults take a long time to consider and something that should be approached with caution, particularly in diabetic patients. We agree that this does not apply to all young people with a chronic condition or severe allergy, but instead that clinicians should be able to support young people on a case-by-case basis who have taken the time to decide to obtain a medical alert tattoo and are fully aware of the risks, benefits and permanency of the procedure. This is particularly pertinent for UK paediatricians and general

practitioners as tattooing is illegal for minors under the age of 18 years in the UK.

This article and correspondence highlight an important issue for clinicians, as young people (as well as adults) are increasingly choosing medical alert tattoos over more traditional alert jewellery. We would be interested in Dr. Kluger and colleague expanding on their reasons for *not* advocating this in minors as we feel the support of clinicians should be available for a competent young person, and their parents, who have made the informed decision to obtain a medical alert tattoo.

Reference

1. Chadwick S, Shah M (2013) Tattoos: ancient body art may assist in medical emergencies. Eur J Pediatr. doi:10.1007/s00431-013-1971-1

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