HOW TATTOOS AFFECT BLOOD DONATION SERVICES
Haema AG

modern and efficient enterprise in the field of blood donation and -banking

largest independent blood donation service in Germany

33 blood and plasma donation centres in 8 federal states of Germany

more than 1,600 dates for mobile blood donations

more than 1,100 employees and 1.1 million donations of blood, plasma or platelets in 2012
Background

- Non-disclosure of recent tattooing and/or piercing resulted in post donation reports
- 213 in 2010 & 253 in 2011

Trend

Result

- increase of:
  - blood product disposal, work load and cost

Conclusion

- adaptations in the obtainment of patient histories & examinations
- stricter criteria for donor recruitment
Tattoos and blood donation

Numerous potential or actual blood & plasma donors have **one or more** tattoos.

Currently, clear regulations exist only regarding the minimum donor deferral: → **4 months** following tattooing to the associated risk of infection with HBV or HCV.

Inconsistencies regarding max. tattoo **number**, **size** & **colour** composition at donor reentry.

Tattoos affect the work of blood donation service.
Tattoos and blood products

- There are currently no studies evaluating potential harm due to contamination of source plasma or clinical blood products with residual dye, ink and India ink.

- Is it possible/necessary to detect residual dye, ink and India ink or metabolites from blood samples of tattooed donors?

- Could it be necessary to defer donors who had one or more tattoos removed for longer than just the phase of wound healing due to possibly toxic metabolites?
Short and long term perspective

For now it may **not be reasonable** to adapt current guidelines.

→ However – studies evaluating potential harm from residual tattoo metabolites in recipients of clinical blood products should be conducted.

→ (Depending on their outcome) Might lead to adaptations of our current guidelines.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION