

Teenagers with body piercings and tattoos

The search for social identity and social practice seems to be important to young ones. Body piercing and tattoos can be interpreted as ways for teenagers to express themselves. But it is unsure if this practice will be enough to attend to such needs in the future.

The article I have been studying is a survey about tattoos and body piercing which was carried out in Ålesund among youths between eleven and fifteen years of age. 1237 students answered the survey. Youths with body piercings and tattoos were compared to the youths without. The results show that youths with tattoos and body piercings are just as active in their spare time as their friends who do not have any kind of decor on their bodies. The ones who have some kind of body decor do also have a lot of friends, but they spend more time in larger groups of friends at the same time. They do also have less support from their parents than the youths without body piercings and tattoos. Body decor is generally seen in connection with risk behaviour.

Body piercing and tattoos can be interpreted as ways of showing one's identity. Some youths do it because they want to express a special passion or message. Others do it just for vanity.