

**Complaint:** OMSA 16/016  
**Complainant:** A. Anderson  
**Media:** MediaWorks, Newshub website  
**Publication:** "Extreme body piercing: Shocking photos of body suspension".  
**Publication date:** 11 June 2016  
**Link:** <http://www.newshub.co.nz/world/extreme-body-piercing-shocking-photos-of-body-suspension-2016061114#axzz4BD4Mbdw>  
**Ruling Date:** 14 June 2016  
**Outcome:** No Grounds to Proceed

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**The Complainant, A. Anderson, said:** "The material is not in the public interest, it is glorifying a practice which is akin to Fetish and Torture. Posing as 'Art' it is not an article which children should be able to view at all. The practice is an extreme form of both 'cutting' and 'piercing'. Any parent who has a child who is struggling with cutting will be chilled by these pictures, which could encourage this behaviour. Children as young as 5yrs old can view this material freely when searching for news items to share during school time."

**The Chairman considered the relevant provisions of the OMSA Code of Standards, as identified by the Complainant, were Part C Standard 5 Discrimination and Denigration and Guidelines 5e and 5f.**

**The Chairman** accepted the Complainant was offended by the graphic body piercing images in the article and was of the view it encouraged young people to self-harm.

The Chairman considered in the context of the article in its entirety and the nature and images presented. He noted the warning in the title and at the beginning of the article which signalled to readers the content was shocking and graphic in nature. He said the majority of readers of the Newshub website would be adults and that children were not the website's target demographic.

While the Chairman acknowledged the images were graphic, he said they were not sexual or violent in nature as implied by Complainant. He said the body of the article gave clear context to the fact the woman was a willing participant and, despite the Complainant's concerns, there was no "cutting" shown or referenced in the article whatsoever.

Accordingly, the Chairman ruled the warnings were sufficient as the content subject to complaint did not reach the threshold to effect a breach of Standard 5 and guidelines 5e and 5f and there was no breach of the Code of Standards. The Chairman ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

**Chairman's Ruling: No Grounds to Proceed**

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**Content:** "Extreme body piercing: Shocking photos of body suspension".

Warning: This article contains graphic photos. [see link <http://www.newshub.co.nz/world/extreme-body-piercing-shocking-photos-of-body-suspension-2016061114#axzz4BD4Mbdfw>]

On the rooftop of an empty building in Zagreb, Dino Helvida carefully pierces his client Kaitlin's torso, legs and face before putting hooks through her skin.

Shortly after, he suspends her from a metallic frame, her heavily tattooed body dangling horizontally in the air.

*Image: Kaitlin suspended from hooks pierced through her skin by Helvida (Reuters)*

*Image: Helvida inspects Kaitlin as she is suspended from hooks (Reuters)*

Helvida, 27, is a professional piercer and body suspension expert from Bosnia Herzegovina, who for the last six years has been hanging up the bodies of those brave enough to partake in what is an extreme form of body piercing, sometimes for hours.

The process is carefully done, and in this case Helvida works with his girlfriend Zorana. It involves first piercing the skin with needles, putting through metallic hooks, which are then attached to a thin rope to lift the suspendee off the ground.

*Image: Helvida and Unkovic prepare Kaitlin (Reuters)*

*Image: Kaitlin suspended from hooks pierced through her skin by Helvida (Reuters)*

*Image: Kaitlin suspended from hooks pierced through her skin by Helvida (Reuters)*

"You can do one hook or you can do 100. You have different hooks for different positions and different hooks for different body parts," Helvida told Reuters.

"So everything is really calculated and it's safe."

It took Helvida around an hour to prepare Kaitlin, visiting Zagreb from the United States, for suspension. Devotees say the practice gives them a huge sense of well-being, and Kaitlin did not complain of discomfort once.

"It is painful. Piercing is painful, it's just like regular piercing," Helvida said.

"Every time it's a new piercing and the wound heals really fast, it can heal in two weeks. I had hooks in my forehead and nobody can tell I had them."

How long a person remains suspended varies, depending on their position and how they feel.

"Some people stay for four, five hours, some people need only three seconds," he said.

*Image: Kaitlin suspended from hooks pierced through her skin by Helvida (Reuters)*

*Image: Zorana Unkovic holds a rope for Kaitlin as she is suspended from hooks (Reuters)*

In Zagreb, body suspension -- which has elements of fetishism and performance art -- is not as popular as in some other places such as the United States, according to Helvida, whose main business is body piercing.

"I watched a documentary (about body suspension) and when I saw it, I knew I had to do it," he said.

"It's very hard to explain (what it feels like). For me, it's releasing all the negative and bringing all the positive in."

Kaitlin was suspended by Helvida earlier this week.

Reuters

Read more: <http://www.newshub.co.nz/world/extreme-body-piercing-shocking-photos-of-body-suspension-2016061114#ixzz4Bi5222Nc>