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The latest fashion must-have: eyeball jewellery



Wed Apr 7, 1:00 PM ET

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Body piercing and tattoos make way -- the latest fashion trend to hit the Netherlands is eyeball jewellery.



Reuters Photo

Dutch eye surgeons have implanted tiny pieces of jewellery called "JewelEye" in the mucous membrane of the eyes of six women and one man in cosmetic surgery pioneered by an ophthalmic surgery research and development institute in Rotterdam.

The procedure involves inserting a 3.5 mm (0.13 inch) wide piece of specially developed jewellery -- the range includes a glittering half-moon or heart -- into the eye's mucous membrane under local anaesthetic at a cost of 500 to 1,000 euros (270 to 540 pounds).

"In my view it is a little more subtle than (body) piercing. It is a bit of a fun thing and a very personal thing for people," said Gerrit Melles, director of the Netherlands Institute for Innovative Ocular Surgery (www.NIIOC.nl).

The piece of jewellery is inserted in the conjunctiva -- the mucous membrane lining the inner surface of the eyelids and front of the eyeball -- in sterile conditions using an operating microscope in a procedure taking about 15 minutes.

"Without doing any harm to the eye we can implant a jewel in the conjunctiva," Melles said. "So far we have not seen any side effects or complications and we don't expect any in the future."

The Rotterdam-based institute, which develops new ocular surgical techniques in corneal, cataract and retinal surgery, developed and patented the jewellery made with special materials and the surgical procedure.

The institute, which carries out the procedure in cooperation with an eye clinic near the city of Utrecht, said it has a waiting list for people who wanted the implant.

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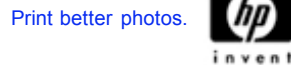
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