

CALL FOR EXTENSIONS TO BE BANNED

by **Andrew Don**

Reputable salons are being left to pick up the pieces from a dramatic increase in scalp damage and traction alopecia, caused by poorly applied and poor quality hair extensions, leading some industry observers to call for a crackdown on the market or even an outright ban on hair extensions.

An investigation by *SalonFocus* has suggested problems appear to be occurring because of cheap hair flooding the market and shoddy application.

But **Barry Stevens**, secretary of **The Trichological Society**, has argued it is often the extensions themselves that are to blame, with the glue and rings to bond them being aggravating factors.

He told *SalonFocus* he wanted to see extensions banned "because they cause so much hardship".

"We see increasing numbers of people coming to us with sad tales of hair loss... Overall, the process is not very satisfactory. There won't be an official ban but we think there ought to be," he added.

Hair transplant surgeon **Dr Bessam Farjo** said a growing proportion of his patients were young women looking to reverse the damage extensions had caused, with the glue attached to the natural hair sometimes being able to "burn and split" the ends.

Jonathan Long, founder of **Lockonego**, a salon in Chelsea, south-west London, said whether clips, glue bonds or keratin bonds were used depended on what was appropriate for individual hair types and the extensions used.

It was also important for technicians to explain aftercare to clients. "There are strict industry standards out there outlining how close extensions should be applied to the root of natural hair so as to minimise potential damage," he emphasised.

Anna Moxom, a hair extensions specialist at the salon, added: "Damage from hair extensions is most commonly caused by applying too many wefts of hair extensions at once, causing them to weigh your natural hair down and pull at the roots."

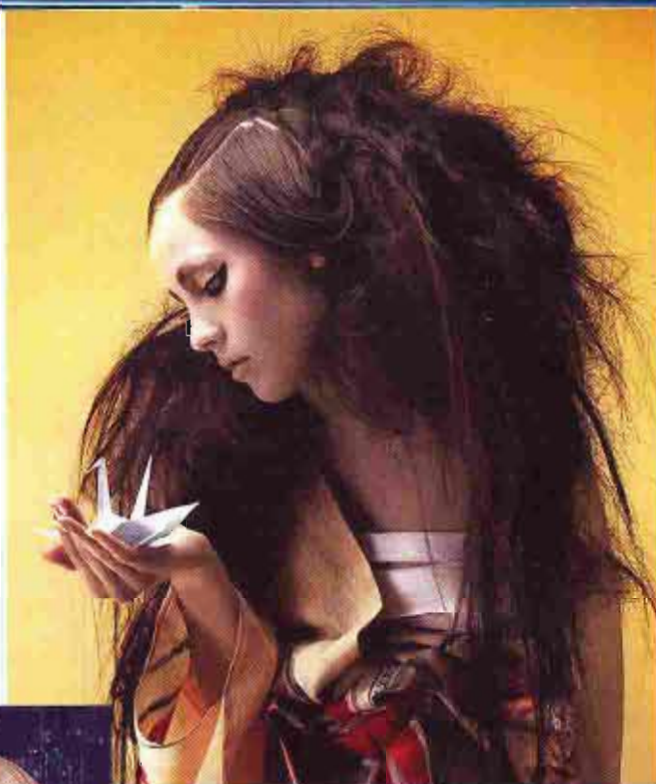
Tatiana Karelina, owner of **Tatiana Hair Extensions**, said traction alopecia was most often caused by a combination of inexperienced technicians not allowing enough time for



TATIANA KARELINA: SHOULD INDUSTRY BE REGULATED?



JOHN ARMSTRONG: NEED FOR TRAINING



EXTENSIONS: GOOD ONES WILL LOOK NATURAL

the chemicals to take effect to break the bonds, therefore requiring forceful pulling to remove the extensions:

"The real debate should not be whether glued extensions should be banned but whether this industry needs to be regulated," she explained.

Fenlery Georghiou, creative director at **Connect Hair Systems**, which has called for the creation of a governing body for extensions, said: "Clients should beware of the cheap hair that is now flooding the market... sometimes these cheap companies are using hair mixed with animal hairs which will cause tangling which, in turn, when brushed will cause tensions at the roots."

Mike Burns, owner of **Great4Hair**, a hair extensions supplier that has just launched "a transformation connection system" which, he says, uses "no heat, no glue and no harsh chemicals to remove", said most salons had no basic training and jumped on the bandwagon to disastrous effect.

"They just see hair extensions as a way of making money... they need to invest in having the correct education and correct advice on what system to offer," he added.

Proper training and regulation was the key to ensuring the public retained confidence in hairdressers, agreed **John Armstrong**, chairman of the NHF's training and education working party.

He added that mandatory registration of hairdressing might be one answer to ensure "these kinds of problems would diminish dramatically".

But **Alan Goldsbro**, chief executive of **Habia**, the government-appointed standards setting body for hair, beauty, nails and spa, stressed most hairdressers already got proper training.

"We cannot foresee a situation whereby the government is going to introduce legislation in the area of hair extensions in particular and a ban on bonding glue would have a disproportionate effect on the vast majority of professionals in our sector who do have the correct training," he warned.